

April 28, 2005

Hills Grove Baptist Church to celebrate 100th anniversary

By **DEAN PALMER**
Mid-South News Service

PILOT MOUNTAIN — Members, former members and others from the community will join together at Hills Grove Baptist Church Sunday for a day of activities commemorating the church's 100th anniversary.

The day will begin as so many Sundays have over the past decade with regular Sunday School at 10 a.m. to be followed by worship services. At the conclusion of morning services, probably around noon, those attending will gather for a meal.

The afternoon will feature a mixture of special music and some of the 28 pastors who have served the church sharing their memories. The church is located approximately four miles outside of Pilot Mountain, just off of N.C. 268 West.

Memories and church history will play a major role throughout the afternoon. Mary Lou Stewart, a member of the church for the past 55 years, has compiled highlights from the church's written history into a booklet especially for the day. Some 75 copies will be available at no cost to those attending.

The land that has served as home for the church was donated by Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Hill and deeded on January 22, 1897. For its first eight years of existence, congregations gathered for meetings in a brush arbor at the sight.

Hills Grove Missionary Baptist Church was erected as a frame structure in early 1905.

James Bennett served as first pastor, and membership in August of that year numbered 12 people.

In April of 1906, a special offering was taken to purchase the church's first Sunday School literature and 75 cents was received. According to church minutes, for the year of 1906, the pastor was paid \$4.05.

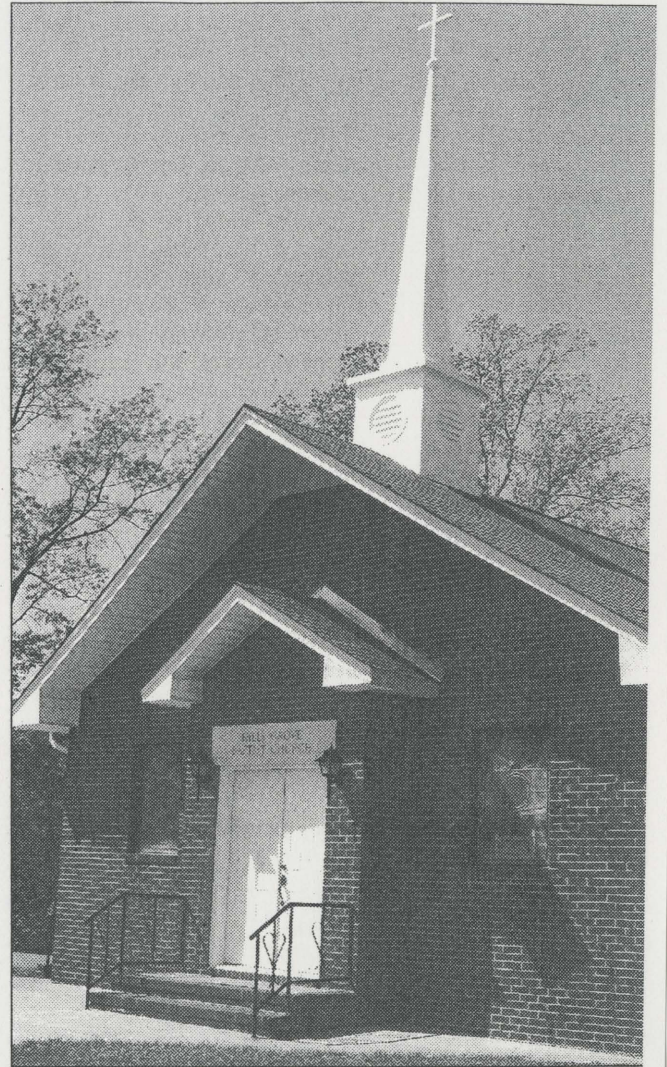
In November of 1914, during the young church's second baptismal service, Roscoe Hill was baptized. Hill was the grandson of W. G. Hill, and would go on to serve 23 years as church treasurer and 43 years as its clerk.

The original wooden structure burned in 1956, but was rebuilt soon afterwards with concrete and block. It was remodeled in 1964 with a brick exterior. Later additions included a basement, which eventually became a fellowship hall.

In 1997, a 3,000-foot addition was completed with much of the work supplied by men of the church. The project included a larger fellowship hall, a new baptistry and a steeple.

The church now has approximately 50 active members. Emmett Crofts, a resident of Cana, Va., has served as the church's pastor for the past seven years.

"We've had a small group the entire time," Stewart noted, "but this has always been a very close congregation. This has been a good, spiritual church and visitors have always commented on the warm greetings and presence of the Spirit. We're out in the country, but this church is a shining star to this community."



Dean Palmer/Mid-South News Service

Hills Grove Baptist Church will celebrate its 100th anniversary in special services on Sunday.