

PLEASANT HILL ACADEMY



for
Southern Highland Youth

Pleasant Hill, Tenn.

Mail may come directly to the post office at Pleasant Hill, Tennessee.
Express or freight to Crossville, Tennessee.

We hope that this little map will encourage you to include Pleasant
Hill in your itinerary.

VICTOR OBENHAUS
Principal





*Art room
Woodworking
equipment*



*The Barn—
milk cows,
horses, mules*

Our Students and Where They Come From

Contrary to the general impression, the mountains of the southern Appalachian range are densely populated. Good roads have not yet come within the reach of thousands of mountain people and only recently have full year elementary schools been available to many. Secondary schools are still inaccessible to large numbers.

The settlement of the highland region by the ancestors of such students as ours constitutes a thrilling chapter in American history. Seeking freedom from political oppression or the right to religious liberty or inexpensive land they came into the hills. Here they found asylum and freedom from interruption by governmental or ecclesiastical authorities. Many stayed because they could not easily go on further and they could eke out a modest living with small crops and occasional hunting.

Again many of our students' forbears came into this region with the opening of the coal mines. Today that activity on a commercial scale has ceased but the families remain. The problem of helping miners to become farmers is a large concern in our national life and on all sides of us we sense the pressure of this problem.



A deserted mining village nearby

Figures and Funny Papers

Pleasant Hill Academy does not head the list numerically. In fact the high school has about one hundred forty students, thirty being day students who can walk to school or come on the bus which serves the county seat, eleven miles east of us. There are six full time teachers and seven others divide their time between teaching and such activities as management of the farm, repairs on the buildings, library work, dietitian responsibilities, supervision of the labor program, supervising the dormitories and administration.

In addition to the secondary school there meets in our buildings the elementary school which is a regular county school. This is a continuance of the situation which prevailed before there were sufficient county elementary schools. Pleasant Hill Academy provides for the salary of one teacher in order that there may be three teachers for the ninety children in the eight grades. Also it is our privilege to select the other teachers that our staff may be homogenous. It is a source of no little pride to us that our elementary school headed the list of schools in this county according to the State ratings. Another advantage in our close connection with the elementary school is the possibility of setting a standard for the pupils who enter the Academy against which students from other schools can be judged. Many of the facilities of the Academy are available to the elementary pupils which in a considerable measure accounts for the superiority of our elementary school. The art work is supervised by the art department of the Academy and the same is true of the music department. A large share of the time of those working in such departments is given to the elementary school.



Pleasant Hill Freshmen

A source of consternation to faculty members is the fact that students who come to the Academy from these small rural schools have so little background from general reading and their sole interest in the newspaper is the funny page. It would be difficult for urban people to realize the lack of general information on the part of most of our students from mountain elementary schools. Even reading the funny page is a novelty for some and it is not to be wondered at, that this takes precedence over other forms of "literature." Since there is such a dearth of reading material in many homes, we must come to judge the students by the distances they have covered between their interests upon arrival and those at graduation rather than upon arbitrarily established standards. Despite this fact, it must be said that the students after a reasonable time in such a situation as is provided at Pleasant Hill can be said to compare favorably with high school students throughout the State.

Fortunately for the Academy, there come to its doors each year a few more privileged students whose parents or who themselves wish to take advantage of such opportunities as are available here. This fact materially strengthens the entire student life for it stimulates interest in a broader experience and brings into the school family new and helpful personal qualities.

Fellow Citizens as Fellow Students

Believing that a genuine community school serves all within its reach, we feel that the resources of this school belong to the surrounding population. If the standard of living for this region is to be raised this must come about as a result of assistance to our neighbors in the form of guidance in the operation of their farms and in assisting home makers to improve the quality and attractiveness of their homes. County Agents and Home Demonstration workers have satisfying occupations since their work has to do with just this. The Academy staff seeks to supplement their work and share the task for this region, and even with all available resources a number of workers many times greater would still leave the people of this mountain area without adequate guidance and encouragement.

Parents of students now in school are also members of our student body. We want to make our training so immediately helpful that it will have worth for the homes of the students in the form of assistance to their parents that together they may increase the quality of home life. Special occasions are arranged for parents that they may have access to the opportunities



*A faculty member points the way.
shared by their children.*

Kitchens, Cornfields, and Class Rooms



Senior cooperation in the food business

Books are essential but they are not a substitute for the experience in the things which bear directly upon our living. For example, the biology classes conduct a study of health conditions in our vicinity emphasizing especially the factors contributing to unhealthful surroundings. The value of cesspools to a home instead of the customary throwing of waste products on the ground is given a place in the study. The same is true for the placement of trash piles as the problem of disease germs and their breeding places is considered.

Similarly, agriculture classes study the influence of soil erosion both



Silo sorghum cane sweetens livestock dispositions

upon the school farm and the farms of our neighbors. We recognize the result of this incredible waste as it has proceeded for generations. Building up the soil as well as preserving what is here constitutes a practical problem of great importance to all rural dwellers and ultimately to every person. It makes the difference between securing a comfortable living and one which is fraught with deprivation.

A "model" house is furnished by the art and home economics classes at a cost within the reach of many families. Toweling and sheet materials provide the curtains, rugs are made from rags, plant holders and artistic shelf racks are constructed of wrought iron in our improvised blacksmith shop. Similarly, lamps are made for student rooms in the same place.



August canning makes an easier winter

Learning, Earning, and Living

Pleasant Hill Academy was established by far-sighted and generous church people to provide a place where boys and girls unable to attend public schools could labor while engaging upon their more formal education. In 1884 when the school was established, public education was practically non-existent in this section of the mountains. Today it is still inaccessible to many and both these and some students who might conceivably reach the county school bus routes are unable to meet the costs of schooling. For that reason Pleasant Hill must continue to provide what are known as self-help opportunities.

The idea of working to pay for an education is not the sole consideration today. We are desirous that all the work here shall be an integral part of the student's education. The classes in agriculture consist in ac-



Acquiring a useful skill

tual work on the farm for which labor credit is obtained. The students who prepare the food consumed by their fellow students do so under supervision of qualified teachers and likewise receive a measure of labor credit for the same. Practically all the work is done by students under supervisors who are also accredited teachers. We believe that the labor in such a setting as ours must not be thought of as something to be finished in order that education may proceed. The labor ought to be as much a part of their education as any other phase of the school life.

Making Rural Life Attractive in the Mountains

Already it is attractive in many ways, but young people are inclined to feel that city dwellers have many more advantages and satisfactions. A good life is achievable for our neighbors with the development of available resources. Around us are great tracts of land, some of which will be cleared, some used for pasture, and the rest set aside for forests. With improved methods of farming and a knowledge of what crops and stock will prosper on the Plateau, those living here have reasonable expectation of making a satisfying living. All the phases of life at Pleasant Hill Academy are conducted with that conviction strongly influencing our thinking.



Looking Ahead

Mountain Crafts a Rich Gift to American Life



Father and son producing artistic wrought iron work in Academy improvised "smithy"

value of the additional cash income for those in the vicinity who have the time and interest to engage in this work. Our students are given opportunity to discover whether they possess any of this skill and to develop such as they may have. Few of them prove to have great native ability but all can learn to appreciate the value of the craft products which are native to the mountains. Likewise, can they learn to add to their homes some of the articles whose construction was taught them in school. The whole art program is conducted with expectation that students will learn to add touches of beauty to their everyday life.

To some of our friends, Pleasant Hill is best known for its handicrafts, particularly its wood carvings and its wood work. Why do we spend so much time on these and give them such a prominent place in the life of the school? Many mountain people have a gift for whittling and possess the leisure time to engage in it. This skill could be developed and made both a source of added beauty in the home surroundings and a means of adding some cash income. Fortunately, there are individuals who appreciate the handiwork of others and who desire to possess the products of another's skill in the craft work. In a region where there is so little cash income, this item is one of considerable importance.

Our concern with the crafts is not primarily a commercial one even though we would stress the

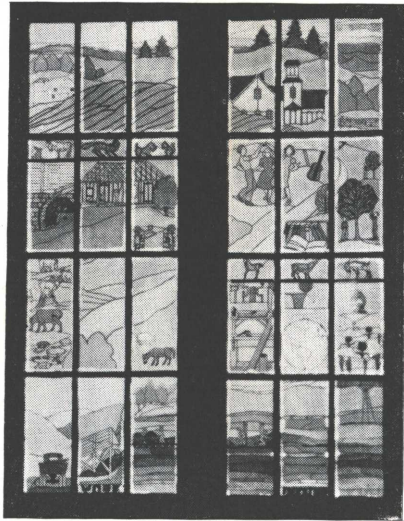


Wood carving and finishing in the Crafts Shop

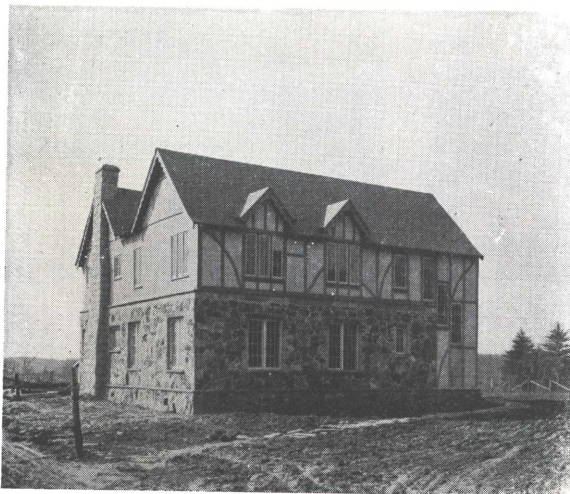
Our Students and Highland Religion

Though many of their ancestors came to this country to escape persecution, to worship and interpret the Scriptures in the Protestant tradition, the people of the highlands are today less informed in the meanings and content of the Scriptures than were their forefathers. This does not mean that they individually take religion any less seriously than their fathers, but that the necessity for studiously searching the Bible is probably less strongly felt and otherworldly type of religion is commonly accepted in the mountains. A premium is placed upon sudden inspiration and revelation, taking forms which puzzle those accustomed to less vigorous participation. It is a commonly recognized condition that anyone who stresses religion and daily conduct is considered to be tampering with things out of his province.

Religious meetings are the most common form of social intercourse and in many communities the only form. It is no wonder then that everyone in the community participates in this event. These occasional church meetings have made a profound impression upon the children.



Work and Education symbolized by Academy students in "stained glass" windows constructed for Community Church House



It is not our desire to set aside all that the student has acquired through this experience but since the students themselves are little impressed by the otherworldly nature of the religious emphasis they have witnessed, we conceive it our responsibility to at least acquaint them with other types of religious expressions.

Many students have little idea of the church as being anything other than the company of people attending the little box-like structure in their vicinity. Rivalries over what seem inconsequential differences are the commonly accepted state. We, here at Pleasant Hill, are trying to bring an appreciation of the church as being the entire company of people who are bound together in a common devotion to Christ, regardless of the congregation to which they adhere.

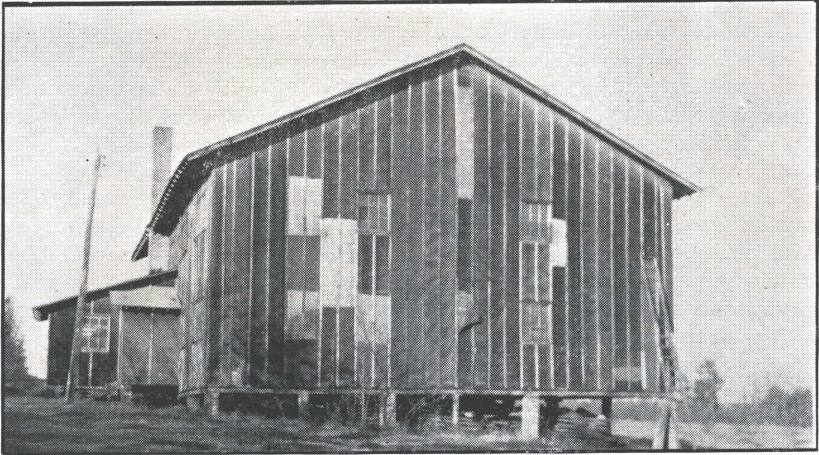
Since beauty both of the humanly created artistic variety and of the human spirit are inseparable from religion, we wish to give both a significant place in the religious life of the entire Academy. Since our Community Church in Pleasant Hill is a part of this yet greater Christian church our symbol of affiliation with the Greater Church is our relationship with this nearby company of fellow Christians.



"Trallen"—a singing game

"You Can't Dance Here"

Since the occasions for getting together are confined to religious services, people have looked with suspicion upon gatherings for sociability and enjoyment. Because serious abuses have arisen in such gatherings they have fallen into a questionable state. Recreation is one of the great problems in the mountains. Along with other mountain centers, we are trying to train leaders for this important aspect of people's lives that some of the drabness of isolated living may be reduced. It is difficult for city people to imagine being without radio, moving pictures, newspapers, and large gatherings of people. All of these are lacking in mountain life. It is not to be wondered at that many of our students have little or no experience playing in groups.



Recreation Building

“Much Play Makes . . .”

Recreation is a large part of living in its own right and we do not seek to “use” it for ulterior purposes. Nevertheless, when people gather together to share companionship they are interested in their individual and common welfare. Throughout the mountains people have sought to meet on just such a basis. Out of these gatherings have grown “study groups” which seek better means of making a livelihood. In many instances there have emerged Cooperative groups with the members banding together to purchase their necessities and perhaps market their products. Similarly, credit unions have arisen.



Games—Pleasant Hill Community Fair

Cooperative societies in the mountain regions have found the same values from their association as have such societies in many other places. Already there is sufficient evidence to show that mountain people can profit by working together for their common welfare. In the Academy there is a "Cooperative" at work studying the principles of cooperation and acquainting their fellow students with the values of such an organization. A member of the Academy staff has aided in the organization of a Cooperative group composed of the young people of this community, many of them graduates of the Academy. Their first venture was the conducting of a fair involving community, the Community Church, and the Academy.

Health in the Highlands

The mountains present a serious health problem with the prevalence of tuberculosis, pellagra, and other nutritional diseases. Hospitalization is rarely available and free ward treatment such as urban dwellers may use is unavailable. Complicating matters further is the customary rate of \$1.00 a mile for doctors' visits.

We are fortunate in our close association with Uplands Sanatorium. Dr. Wharton has for many years been the school physician along with her duties as head of the Sanatorium. Likewise, her associate, Miss Adshead, has taught the First Aid and Home Nursing courses in the school. This common bond has been a boon to the Academy.

Unaided by State support, it is impossible for the hospital to render the assistance required by the

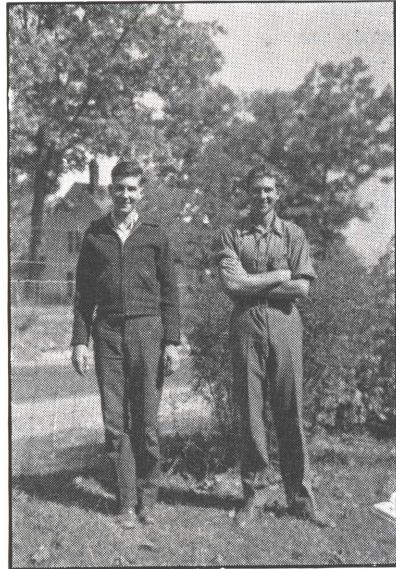


And Then What?

Almost daily we are asked what do our students do after graduation. Many of them would like to operate farms. It is not necessary to "sell" them on rural life. Some have already started to assemble small quantities of farming equipment and farm stock. Because of the large areas of timber land yet untouched for farming purposes, there is hope that many residents of the Upper Cumberland will find farming possibilities. Already many have launched upon such a life in a modest way.

True, many Pleasant Hill Academy students have gone to the automobile manufacturing centers, but likewise many of them have returned to the hills. Here on small farms they can make a living and they are not a burden upon the relief rolls of the cities.

It is our hope that ultimately some of the students can be aided by the Academy in securing small tracts of land and then given supervision by the staff of the Academy. There are numerous possibilities for community strengthening and family development in such a place.



Brothers

How High In Higher Education?

That just "going to college" has become a ridiculous objective no educators or thoughtful person will deny. Some of our students should go on to formal schools for further training. Others could profit more by a wholesome and rounded community life. Naturally, most of our students cannot attend colleges making the regular charges for tuition and living expenses. If a student gives promise of making good use of further training of the type obtainable in standard schools beyond the elementary level, we urge that student to seek admission, working for as much of the total cost as possible.

Many of the girls have attended business college or gone into teaching. It is a source of satisfaction to have our graduates filling places of responsibility in these several lines of work. Children coming to Pleasant Hill after being in the schools of our own graduates are generally better prepared.

There are many girls now in school who desire to live on the farm. If there were a chance for them to live with satisfaction they would choose that as most desirable. Others wish to secure further training with a view to becoming Home Demonstration Agents or teachers of Home Economics. Surely there is no art more useful or satisfying than that of home making.

"—but women's work is never done."

What kind for these three

Pleasant Hill sisters?



“The Proof Is In . . .”

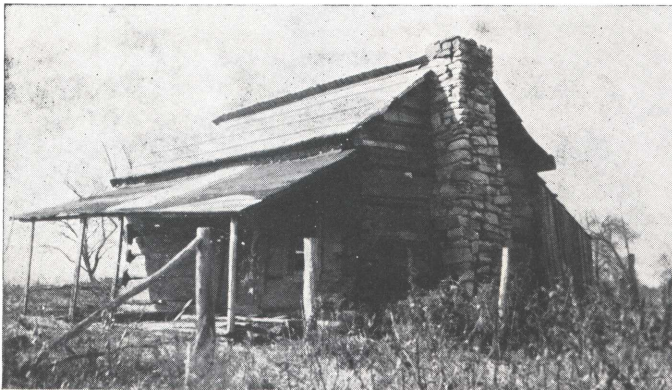
Not a single President of the United States has come from Pleasant Hill despite the number of log cabins represented by the alumni. Nevertheless, throughout the country, as well as this section of Tennessee, the Academy has placed men and women of integrity and ability.

Unfortunately, there is no complete account of the alumni either as individuals or by vocations. However, Miss Emma Dodge, daughter of the founder and for more than half a century associated with the Academy as teacher and librarian, has written a book about the school and traced many of the graduates in their varied activities.* They are in all the professions as well as on the farm and in the home.



The Boy with the Hoe

*History of Pleasant Hill, Emma F. Dodge, Kingsport Press, 1939, \$1.50.



Typical of countless mountain cabins

A Few Sentences . . . and Faces

Any discriminating contributor wants to know whether the object of his benevolence is still necessary. Three reasons compel us to make plans which assume continuance. First, there are still large numbers of students who cannot get to the County high schools. The best counsel we can get advises us that this condition will prevail for many years.

Second. Secondary education in many localities has been developed after the pattern of such schools as were generally thought to be "successful." There is a place where a demonstration is necessary to show what a truly community minded school can do to relate itself to the needs of students and on a basis which can be adopted in almost any community. Modest equipment and an alert socially minded staff can accomplish this.

Third. The day of the school set apart from the life of all the people in the community is past. The religious centered private school is in a position to make vivid the religious vigor which is inherent in it by enriching the common life of the community wherever it is touched by the school. Since education need never stop for anyone, then the school must dedicate itself to encouraging the educative process for everyone in the community.



Summing it all up

According to Ability

When the Academy bell announces the close of class sessions students may be seen going in many directions wearing work clothes and bearing tools. The boys may be going to the farm, to janitorial duties or repair activities; the girls to the kitchen or laundry. Both boys and girls will be working in the Crafts Shop. That does not mean that work is just beginning. It has been going on all day. At four-thirty the boys were milking and shortly after five the girls were preparing breakfast. All day the students have been working in the fields or in the kitchen. Now they are supplemented by those who have been in class.

What is this labor program which is carried on in such a school? Each student works at least two and a half hours a day and a half day on Monday, our "work" day. During the week the labor requirement is approximately the same for all. Those offering labor in lieu of cash payment will work the full day set aside for labor and a designated period in the summer.

"How much does a student pay?" we are constantly asked. The answer is simple yet it presents complications. We ask that the parents or guardians pay as much as they are able. They are informed of the average cost per student and then are asked to pay what they can toward the total cost. Payment may be made in anything usable in the dining room or on the farm of the Academy as well as in cash. The integrity of students' families in meeting as much of the cost as they are able is noteworthy. The difference between what the student can pay and the cost to the Academy must be met by help from friends interested in the school. About half of the students are unable to make any cash payment. No student pays the total cost.



The Elementary School

Under a Bushel or On a Stand?

Pleasant Hill Academy is a private school both because of choice and necessity. This may not always be the case but it will continue for many years. The American Missionary Association through funds contributed by churches and endowment meets about half of the total budget of the Academy. The remainder must come from gifts of individuals and organizations, from the old clothes Salesroom, the crafts work and the earnings of the farm. The Academy has several hundred dollars of endowment of its own. Being without tax support naturally places a burden upon such a school. But, likewise, it gives us the freedom to work out our plans, involving the inclusion of a wholesome religious program, without restriction.

Religion and the common life must be identified. We desire that the quality of work and the rigidity of standards shall not be sacrificed because of religious emphasis. On the contrary high personal standards and commendable workmanship are inseparable from the religious life.

As a private school, then, we must depend upon those interested in such an institution for the furtherance of its work. Accompanying this pamphlet there is a list of needs. In addition to some of these specific needs the Academy constantly faces the necessity for funds with which to meet operating costs involved in providing food, supervision, repairs, and the many expenses incident to operating a boarding school in which there is a farm, laundry, crafts, and shop department, etc. We would be much pleased if you would make inquiry concerning any special interest you may possess or to answer any questions concerning the total life here about which further information is desired.



"Terracing"—demonstrating soil conservation—Academy farm

Not the Last Word

For many this little pamphlet has perhaps served to provide their first glimpse of Pleasant Hill Academy. To them this is merely an introduction. For others it may serve as a reminder of their former relationship to this school. We trust this will be a means of renewing a friendship. For a still greater number who have been interested in Pleasant Hill through the years and have been wondering about its trends, we hope this will give a partial answer. We say "partial" because the life of such an institution cannot be included in a few pages. We have no illusions of being unique or alone in attempting some of the things mentioned in this pamphlet. Instead we take strength from the fact that there is a steadily increasing company of schools and communities in which the type of life for which we are striving is being achieved. We have drawn both inspiration and practical assistance from these friends.

Hence, we are not the "last word" because there are many from whom we have much to learn. We are, however, eager to share with any others whatever we have learned. In that sense, too, none of us will have the last word because we hope that each suggestion from you or any other friend will lead on to something better. For that reason, we invite your critical interest and friendly aid.



Staff—Pleasant Hill Academy and Elementary School