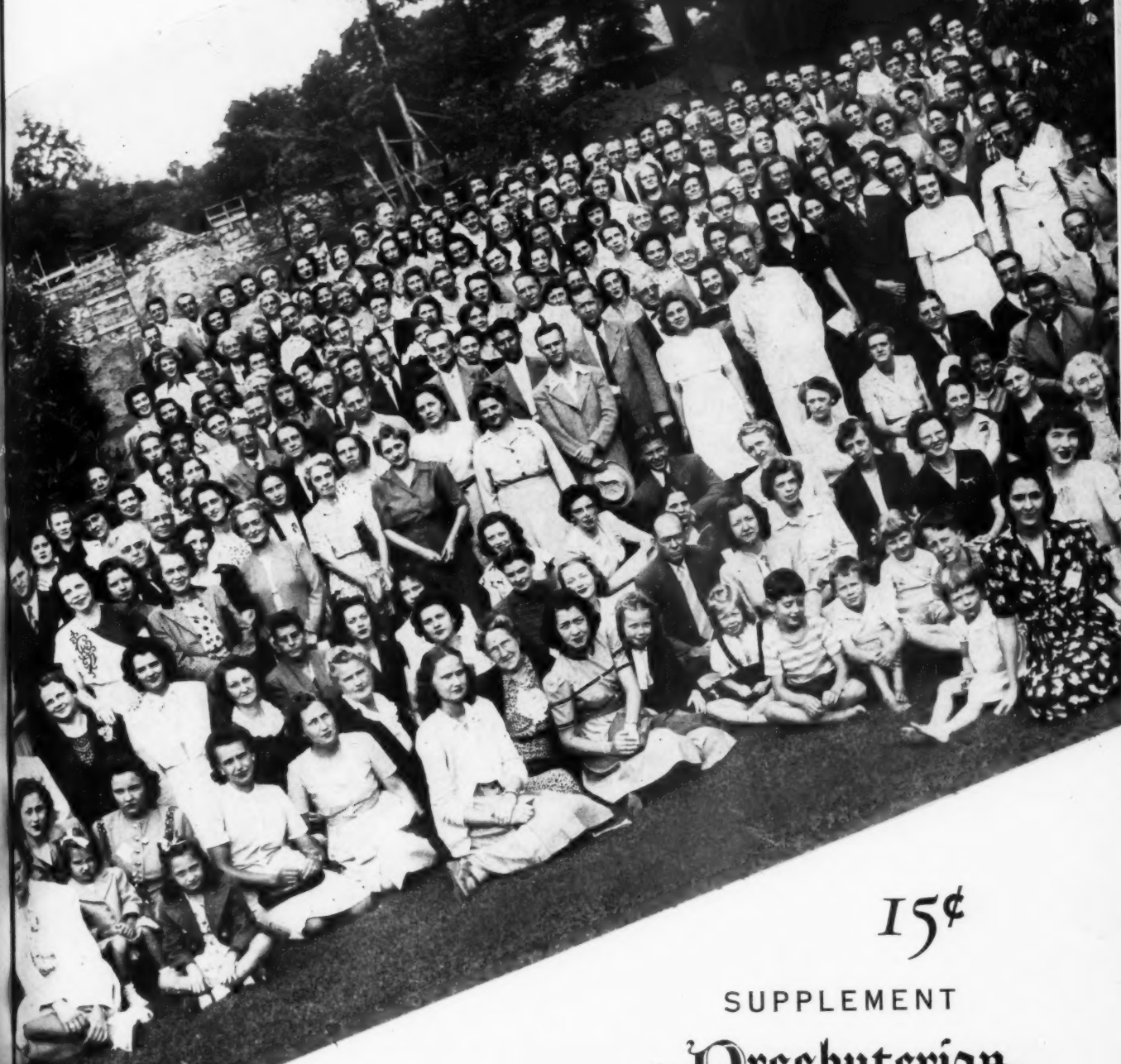


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# SUMMER CONFERENCE GUIDE

## 1947



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SUPPLEMENT

The Presbyterian  
Outlook



# Montreat's Early Years

**M**ONTREAT was originally founded by the Rev. John C. Collins, a Congregational minister from Connecticut. He was backed financially by Mr. John S. Huyler, candy manufacturer, who was a devout Methodist. Mr. Weston R. Gales, an Episcopal layman, and one of the Lord's noblemen, was put in charge. On the left of the road, a few yards after you enter the Montreat gate, you will see a large granite boulder bearing this inscription: "Montreat. Founded by John C. Collins in 1897." The inscription was put there upon the insistence of Mr. Huyler.

Mr. Collins was especially interested in religious conferences and conventions. He was well acquainted with those in the North, and felt that there should be established in the South a retreat where weary Christian workers might rest, and where assemblies might be held. The head passenger agent of the Southern Railroad suggested that he might be able to find a suitable location near Asheville, North Carolina. After investigating a number of possibilities he decided upon the present site of Montreat, purchased 4,000 or more acres of land, and named the place Mountain Retreat.

## Charter Is Granted

He and his co-workers secured a charter from the State of North Carolina, and went to work. A road was graded from Black Mountain to Montreat, a number of streets were laid off, a hotel accommodating 125 guests was erected on the present site of Assembly Inn; a church was built opposite the present postoffice, and numerous other things were done. In the meantime a number of families from New England and New York State followed Mr. Collins to Montreat, and built homes there.

My first visit to Montreat was in August, 1901. Mr. Gales invited me to make four lectures that year on "How We Got Our Bible." Dr. R. A. Torrey, the noted Bible teacher, was the principal speaker, and gave some great studies in the English Bible. Thus conferences were held each year from the beginning. But there was no supporting fund, and no money for improvements. Mr. Huyler kept on pouring in money until the original Montreat owed him approximately \$50,000. So Mr. Huyler took the place over, and for a while he owned practically the whole of Montreat.

## Presbyterian Beginnings

Dr. J. R. Howerton was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte.

\*President emeritus of Davidson College; platform manager at Montreat from 1910 to 1924 and program chairman.

By **WALTER L. LINGLE**

N. C., from 1895 to 1906. During his vacation he went to the mountains of North Carolina to fish. There he met a fellow fisherman who was agent for Mr. Huyler, and learned from him that Mr. Huyler would like to sell Montreat. So as Dr. Howerton fished he dreamed dreams and saw visions. Looking into the future he saw Montreat belonging to the Presbyterians, and growing into a great Presbyterian Assembly ground. He also conceived the idea as to how this could be done.

When Dr. Howerton got home he proceeded to make his dream come true. Through the church papers and by correspondence he asked 500 Presbyterians to give \$100 each. In return each one would receive a share of non-dividend paying stock, and a building lot to be drawn by lot. Some of the building lots were possible, and some were impossible, being either too remote or too nearly perpendicular. I was one of the original 500. My lot was impossible, so I bought another and built a cottage on it in 1911.

By the end of 1906 the 500 were secured. Later an additional 100 shares of stock were sold, making a total of 600 shares, and these stockholders owned and controlled Montreat. Dr. Howerton resigned his pastorate, came to Montreat and took charge. Many improvements had to be made, and there was no money. Montreat turned to Mr. Huyler again, and he kept lending the Presbyterians money until they owed him a total of \$24,000. There was a great deal of feverish activity around Montreat during 1907. The Alba Hotel was built; water and sewer lines were laid; electric light wires were strung; quite a number of cottages were built; a great tent seating 800 people was erected a hundred yards back of the Alba Hotel, and many other things were done.

## The 1907 Conference

The first Presbyterian conference was held at Montreat August 5-31, 1907. Dr. A. L. Phillips led off with a Sunday school conference. That was followed by the pastors' institute, which was in reality a summer school of theology. The following seminary professors gave twelve lectures each: Drs. W. W. Moore, Early Hebrew History; Edward Mack, the Psalms; W. M. McPheeters, the English Bible; R. A. Webb, Scriptural Doctrine of Adoption; C. K. Crawford, Messianic Prophecy; Walter L. Lingle (not then a seminary professor), Twelve Great Doctrinal Chapters in the Bible. On top of all this, Drs. Moore, McPheeters, Mack and Crawford offered courses in Beginners and Advanced Hebrew. It took only one sum-

mer to discover that this program was a bit heavy for pastors on their vacation.

Unfortunately, Dr. Howerton left Montreat in September, 1907, to become professor of philosophy in Washington and Lee University. That left Montreat to drift along for several years without a definite head. Some of us who were among the original 500 have some vivid recollections of those days. There was no money for anything, and Montreat was getting deeper into debt every day. The names of Mr. C. E. Graham, of Greenville, S. C.; Mr. R. E. Magill, of Richmond, Va.; Judge J. D. Murphy and Dr. R. F. Campbell, of Asheville; Mr. W. J. Roddey, of Rock Hill, S. C., and several others should be held in everlasting remembrance for the heroic way in which they labored to save Montreat in those early days. Added to this list should be the name of Mr. Frank L. Jackson, now for many years treasurer of Davidson College, who was elected treasurer and manager of Montreat in 1909, and gave his best to Montreat during four critical years.

Beginning with 1907 the conferences have been held at Montreat every summer without a break. I was associated with the program committee from the beginning. In 1910 I was elected chairman of the program committee, and platform manager, and served in that capacity to the end of the summer of 1924. There was very little money for the program in those early years. It was like making brick without straw. But the secretaries of the General Assembly's executive committees came to the rescue, and put on conferences representing their several causes. That has continued to this day, and has meant much to Montreat.

But the financial side of Montreat kept going from bad to worse. By the end of 1910 Montreat owed Mr. John S. Huyler \$24,000, and there was a floating debt of more than \$15,000. Most of the debt had been incurred for improvements. In this emergency Mr. C. E. Graham went to see Mr. Huyler in person, and secured from him a generous offer to cancel the \$24,000 owed him, provided Montreat would raise funds to pay the floating debt, and in addition raise \$10,000 for operating expenses.

## Dr. Anderson Is Secured

But how was Montreat going to raise the funds necessary to meet Mr. Huyler's offer? Dr. R. C. Anderson, at that time pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia, N. C., suggested the solution. Assess the 600 stockholders for the amount needed. If a stockholder should be unwilling to pay, then ask him to donate his stock to Montreat, so that it might be sold to someone else. Dr. Anderson generously consented to put this plan into operation

## He Brought It to It's Present Glory

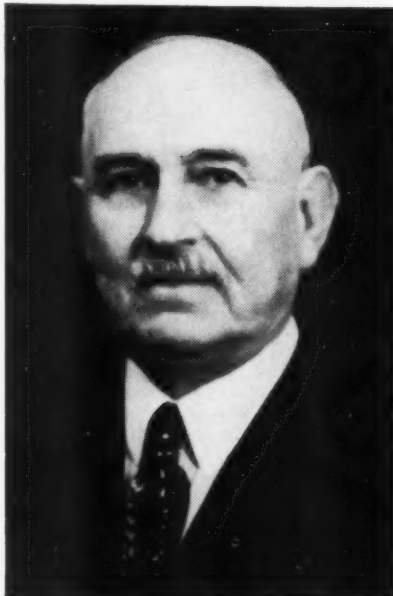
NO ONE takes seriously the idea that Montreat as people know it today could really have come into being without the grand vision and the dogged persistence of one Robert Campbell Anderson, who for thirty-five years has been this institution's guiding spirit. It is a far cry from the days of tents pitched on precipitous banks to the comforts of the Assembly Inn, and, even though some of the secondary roads could well use occasional attention, not to mention some major operations, the entire lay-out at Montreat strikes visitors to the place as a veritable mountain fairyland.

Dr. Anderson's strong individualism has been the secret both of the amazing development of Montreat and perhaps a partial explanation of many of its difficulties. He has got things accomplished, just as some feudal lord of olden days by dint of hard driving wrought his amazing achievements. They stand today for any man to behold and there is no denying their reality. Men of lesser drive and determination would not have had them. But strong individualists frequently find it difficult both to work with their equals or to enlist their enthusiastic cooperation. So, much, too much, responsibility and sacrifice and grinding labor have fallen on Dr. Anderson through all these years.

Mrs. Anderson, with her generous gifts, her encouragement and kindly spirit, has been a strong, behind-the-scenes helper in all that Montreat has become, or will.

Working as his own architect and

builder, Dr. Anderson has erected some amazing structures on the Montreat grounds—beautiful in their use of his beloved native stones and patterned floors (even though acoustics may suffer or inflict agonies) and though architects would have saved many errors that have been made.



R. C. ANDERSON

But for him, there might be no Montreat

But, don't you forget it, if it hadn't been for Dr. Anderson there might not be any Montreat at all—certainly not the Montreat as we have it today.

Apple of his eye has been his

beloved Montreat College through thirty or more years. Dr. Howerton saw the same opportunity in his brief tenure and planned also a school for boys in addition to a girls' school. Dr. Anderson saw the practical use to which the buildings could be put and he pushed ahead to achieve it whether any synod, presbytery or Assembly approved or not. In these latter years the college has loomed larger and larger in his plans while the original purposes of Montreat as a church and conference center have played second fiddle. But with his same individualistic drive he has pushed ahead to get what he wanted for Montreat and his college.

There's no estimating the good Montreat has done, and in its ever-widening influence none would take away one whit from the tremendous contribution of Dr. Anderson. He has made the place largely what it is. Now as he steps aside and another is given the place of leadership and responsibility, we would not have it done before we say to Dr. and Mrs. Anderson:

"Thank you, thank you, for your tremendous contribution to our church and to the Kingdom of God. You have given beyond measure; you have built a sturdy foundation—and more. From every corner of our Assembly we rise today to express our esteem and our deep gratitude. We believe in Montreat—in its present and in its future. In the fine things which yet lie in store for it, you will have the high satisfaction of knowing that you have done more than anyone else to make it possible."

as a work of love. This he did, and by the summer of 1911 had raised the necessary funds. Montreat was free from debt for the first time in its his-

tory. The directors and stockholders promptly elected Dr. Anderson president of Montreat. He accepted, was released from his church in October, 1911, and from that time to this has given himself to Montreat with the utmost devotion.

Instead of paying the assessment, quite a number of stockholders gave their stock. The stock thus given was sold to others. By this process some individuals came to own as many as twenty-five shares. Then it dawned upon lovers of Montreat that some unscrupulous person or group might some day acquire enough stock to control Montreat. Then it was that a plan was evolved by which stockholders could sign their stock over to trustee stockholders appointed by the synods and General Assembly to be held in trust for the use of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Thus Montreat came under the control of the synods and General Assembly, and thereby became officially Presbyterian.

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Henry S. Gehman	Bruce M. Metzger
Hugh T. Kerr, Jr.	Bela Vasady

#### Bible Hour by

Andrew Blackwood Robert E. Speer

#### Convention Period

Wilhelm Pauck Joseph Hromadka

#### Evening Meetings

John A. Mackay and other Preachers

For further particulars please write:

J. CHRISTY WILSON

Princeton Theological Seminary

Princeton, New Jersey