

Cemetery May Hold Clues To Past

By RALPH L. BULLA

On Sunday morning, May 26, the Holly Spring Friends Meeting and the Pleasant Ridge Christian Church, located near each other on the same road, held their annual memorial services.

On May 19, the Parks Cross Roads Christian Church, located not far away, held its annual memorial service.

All three churches have beautiful, well kept cemeteries on which much time, effort and money is spent in the maintenance thereof.

But in the heart of the section in which the cemeteries at Holly Spring, Pleasant Ridge and Parks Cross Roads lie, there is another cemetery which is not beautiful, not well kept and on which no time, effort or money is expended.

It is the Old Stone Graveyard, said to be so named because of a stone enclosure which formerly encircled the quarter of an acre burial plot.

But there is now no stone enclosure. It is instead a thicket of trees, shrubs, briars, grass and weeds, and the cultivated fields surrounds most of the cemetery area.

There is so much grass and foliage that few of the grave markers are visible. Some have fallen to the ground, others are leaning and many are just flat rocks and rocks of other variety with no identification marked thereon.

The Old Stone Graveyard is definitely believed to be a forerunner of the Holly Spring cemetery, where the first grave containing the remains of Joseph Bookout was located in 1793, and of the Holly Spring Meeting House, which was permanently established in 1818.

Located in the area formerly known as Cox's Settlement, it is thought that the Monthly Meeting at Holly Spring was first planned for the vicinity of the old graveyard. Minutes of the Cane Creek Monthly Meeting of 1765 refer to the "Meeting of Indulgence on the Mill Creek in Cox's Settlement" and it was felt that services of worship were held nearby.

For reasons unknown, how-



GRAVE MARKER — Burton Macon, Johnny Cox and Ray Byrd examine a grave marker in the Old Stone Graveyard, final resting place for the pioneers who established the Holly Spring Monthly Meeting and settled in the vicinity of the Holly Spring Meeting House, the Pleasant Ridge Christian Church and the

Parks Cross Roads Christian Church. It is believed that some of the persons buried in the old graveyard came to the vicinity over two hundred years ago. Macon and Cox are descendants of persons buried in the cemetery while Byrd is a trustee of the Holly Spring Monthly Meeting.

ever, the Meeting House was never established in Cox's Settlement. Some believed that due to the wide area in which the Quakers settled, the Meeting House at Holly Spring was a more central location and would prohibit the crossing of Richland and Mill Creeks, which streams would have had to be crossed if the Meeting House had been located in Cox's Settlement.

Even after the cemetery was started at Holly Spring, the interments continued at the Old Stone Graveyard in Cox's Settlement.

The few markers in the old graveyard which have the inscribed names and dates are Hannah Cox, who died in 1844, Charles Cox, who died in 1855, Amy Cox, who died in 1864, Emily Cox, wife of Eli Cox, who died in 1858, Rachel Cox, wife of Laurence Cox, who died in 1873. Nathan Cox, grandfather of local historian, Johnny L. Cox, was buried there in 1877. His wife, Sarah, was supposedly buried beside of him in 1890. However, there is no marker to her grave.

Nathan Cox, who has a great-grandson by the same

name living two or three miles away, is the ancestor of many Cox descendants still living in the general vicinity, especially in the Ramseur and Parks Cross Roads communities.

Nathan Cox's son, Calvin, the father of Johnny L. Cox, was buried in the Parks Cross Roads members of this particular family have followed suit. However, Rebecca Cox, daughter of Calvin Cox and half-sister of Johnny Cox, was buried in the old cemetery, having died before the burials of the family started at Parks Cross Roads.

On the other hand, descendants of Laurence Cox, whose wife Rachel was buried in the old cemetery in the year 1873, discontinued burials in the Old Stone Graveyard and started their burials in the Pleasant Ridge cemetery.

Included among Laurence Cox's descendants is Theodore Cox, a great-grandson, who owns and resides on the farm on which the old graveyard is located.

Descendants of Charles Cox, buried in the old cemetery in

1855, transferred their burial places to the Holly Spring cemetery where the Meeting House was eventually located and where it has existed for the past 155 years.

Among the descendants of Charles Cox is a great-great-grandson, Burton Macon, a trustee of the Holly Spring Meeting.

The people at Holly Spring outgrowth of the hardy pioneers who came to the community over 200 years ago to establish a Quaker Meeting House, and the people at Pleasant Ridge and Parks Cross Roads, whose ancestors are interred in the old graveyard, are asked to consider the restoration of the old graveyard.

They are asked to consider providing the same care and beautification for the Old Stone Graveyard that has characterized the care and upkeep of the beautiful cemeteries at their own respective churches.

The men and women who pioneered and blazed the way two centuries ago and later are entitled to a more peaceful repose in the silent cemetery of the dead.

