

How Cluster Got It's Name

Established in 1920, THE MERCER CLUSTER has since been a leader among small-college student weeklies. The name of the paper is somewhat unusual, and deserves explanation to those who may not be familiar with Mercer history.

We quote the following from Dr. Spright Dowell's A History of Mercer University.

He (Jesse Mercer) spent the year 1799 preaching in South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. Because of their respect for his reputation and character, large congregations attended his meetings. There was a lack of hymn books in the new and growing churches and to meet the need he collected and compiled a volume under the title, The Cluster of Spiritual Songs, Divine Hymns, and Sacred Poems; being chiefly a collection. To meet the popular demand seven editions were printed. The first was unbound and was printed in Augusta in 1813. This was followed in the same city by a bound and enlarged edition in 1815 and again in 1816. In 1817, while attending the Triennial Convention in Philadelphia, he published a revised edition. The use was widespread, and other editions followed in 1820 and 1835. By 1829, thirty-three thousand copies had been distributed in Philadelphia alone. The 1835 edition was the fifth to be copyrighted. Thomas, Cowperthwaite, and Company published it in Philadelphia and Collins and Brother in New York. Two copies of this edition are deposited in the Mercer Library.

This book has been permanently enshrined in The Mercer Cluster, the student weekly at Mercer University since 1920.

Tradition Live In 'Dr.' Battle

Lee Battle, 'friend of every Mercer alumnus, was janitor of Snerwood Hall for more than forty years. According to rumor, legend and facts, he was more than friend or janitor to the men of Mercer during his stay at Mercer.

"Doctor" Battle, as the aged Negro was known to students and alumni, was one of the institutions at Mercer. He was perhaps best known to Mercerians and Maconites for his zealous cheering at Mercer's home football games. His famous "Bear growl" at intermission was as inevitable as the kick-off and never failed to draw applause from fans. Equally inevitable was his prediction that Mercer would whip whatever team they happened to be playing.

He could never be forced to name his favorite player on these teams "cause they's all so good." Diplomacy was ever his forte.

His borrowing money "foe my insurance" was well-known to faculty members. This was his method of obtaining money to lend to some student who needed some extra funds on short notice. It was found at his death that this well-known insurance policy amounted to only \$36.

Remembered Students

Lee prided himself on his ability to remember faces and names of almost every person who attended Mercer after he came to the campus in 1900. It was said of him that he never failed to recognize a Mercer man.

"Doctor" Battle saw six Mercer presidents come and five go during his period of service. These were Doctors Pollock,



LEE BATTLE

Jameson, Smith, Pickard, Weaver. Dr. Spright Dowell was president of Mercer when Lee died.

At his death, his body lay in state at the University, an honor usually accorded only to Presidents and other high ranking officials of Mercer.

Lee's dedication to Mercer is attested by the fact that he was offered the opportunity of retiring at the age of 70 with the privilege of continuing salary. This was declined, and Lee continued with his duties to the end.

Dr. Dowell, in his History of Mercer, says that Lee "was a Christian gentleman with a radiant outlook on life and he was a true friend who was happy to be of help to all . . . He had a good word for everybody and shared their joys and their sorrows. He was on the field to cheer in every contest, to rejoice in every victory and to weep in each defeat. He was a humble Christian who gave his full life in service to Mercer University and the Mercer family."



PRAYER ROOM, recently constructed, symbolizes the religious force that moves Mercer.

BSU History Is Difficult To Find

By JUDY WILLIAMS

The beginning of the largest organization on Mercer's campus was heralded by a short article in the March 11 issue of the 1927 Cluster. The article began: "A new religious organization which will serve as an advisory body and meet the needs of the campus as a religious council is being planned and will be put into practice at an early date."

It would seem that tracing the history of such an important part of our campus life as the Baptist Student Union would be fairly easy. However, historians of our one hundred and twenty-seven year-old institution make very little mention of this organization for Baptist students.

The first information concerning the organization of the religious group came from an article in an educational journal written by a member of Mercer's English Department. During the term of President P. D. Pollock (1896-1905) the YMCA was organized on the campus and a YMCA building erected.

This organization, which later became a part of the BSU, was organized "because he (Dr. Pollock) believed that character development was required in a Christian college . . ." One of the projects of the group was to sponsor vespers in the YMCA building three times a week after supper.

The next bit of information about the BSU was found in a March, 1930 edition of the Cluster. Lee Knowles had been elected State BSU president. This meant going back to earlier issues of the Cluster.

At last in an inconspicuous corner of a 1927 edition of the campus newspaper was found this headline, "New Religious Body Planned." The article began with the purpose of the group and went further to say that it was suggested by the State President of the BSU.

The new organization was composed of the officers of the Volunteer Band, YMCA, Ministerial Association, all Sunday School class officers, Sunday School teachers and BYPU officers.

At the time of its beginning no name had been selected for the group, but the state president said that it would probably be called the Campus Religious Council. The state organization was called the Baptist Student Union, but the local group chose to change its name.

At the time the Mercer group was started, several other Georgia schools had acting councils—Bessie Tift, University of Georgia, Shorter and the State Normal School of Athens.

Sometimes during 1927 or 1928 the Mercer organization became officially known as the Baptist Student Union. The Cluster gave much information concerning BSU elections, study courses, etc. and there is much information about the work of the YMCA.

The present BSU is made up of an Executive Council, Greater Council, four unit organizations, and a Director of Religious Activities.



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