



BAPTIST PRESS

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October 16, 1973

NO

Authorities Puzzled By
Death of Mars Hill Coed

MARS HILL, N. C. (BP)--College officials and law enforcement authorities here are still trying to piece together and solve the mystery of a coed found dead about two miles north of the campus of Mars Hill College.

Two workmen found Sally Bell Moffitt, 18, of High Point, N. C., lying face down on a bank at the side of a newly constructed highway just out of sight of passing motorists.

An autopsy revealed the sophomore at the Southern Baptist school died of massive internal bleeding resulting from a severe blow on the back, fracturing ribs. One rib punctured a lung and another severed the pulmonary artery.

She had been dead six to eight hours before the body was discovered, fully clothed, at 8 a.m., Friday, Oct. 12.

Miss Moffitt also suffered facial wounds around the mouth and nose, but the autopsy revealed they could not have caused death. The autopsy also ruled out sexual assault.

Authorities, according to a college spokesman, believe someone may have brought the body to the site at which Miss Moffitt was found because of "indication that a vehicle had stopped on the highway and that her body had been dragged about 30 or 40 yards across fresh dirt. Her shoes left a trail across the dirt."

Investigators have not ruled out murder, the spokesman said, but "are working on the assumption she may have been killed accidentally in a fall from a car or a high place" and abandoned by someone who may have panicked.

She was last seen, leaving her dorm on campus, at 10:05 the previous night. She had not signed out, the spokesman said, probably indicating she had planned to return before midnight, the curfew for sophomore girls.

College officials cancelled classes the following Monday and asked all resident students to stay in their rooms for questioning by county and state law enforcement officials trying to piece together where Miss Moffitt went and what happened after she left the dormitory Thursday night.

After a 2 p.m. memorial service on Monday, classes, which would have been dismissed the following Thursday and Friday for the college's fall break, were cancelled for the rest of the week.

"Some apprehension existed on the part of parents, particularly parents of girls," said Walter Smith, Mars Hill's director of public information. "We doubled our security personnel, although I don't think you could say there's any degree of panic around here.

"We thought that extending the fall holiday would give authorities a week in which to work and perhaps turn up some more conclusive and settling evidence and allow the students to get over the shock," Smith said.

Funeral service for Miss Moffitt, the daughter of Mrs. H. A. Moffitt Jr., were held in High Point with burial there.

Seminary Gets \$370,000
Bequest For Endowment

NO

FORT WORTH (BP)--Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here has received a \$370,000 bequest for use as endowment.

The money came from the will of the late Laura Dunlap Sample, a philanthropist and active supporter of worldwide Baptist causes.

Mrs. Sample's bequest has been set up through the Baptist Foundation of Texas, as has a trust fund which she and her late husband, W. Emmett Sample, established to provide regular income to the seminary.

-30-

Former Executive Secretary
For Tennessee Baptists Dies

NO

10/16/73

TALLAPOOSA, Ga. (BP)--Funeral services were held here for Charles W. Pope, retired executive secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, who died at East Tennessee Baptist Hospital, Knoxville. He was 82.

Pope, Tennessee Baptist top executive for 14 years, previously served as pastor of Concord Baptist Church, Chattanooga, and First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, Tenn.

He also taught elementary school in Steadman, Ga., and missions, evangelism and Greek at Mercer University, Macon, Ga.

He earned both bachelor and master of arts degrees from Mercer and attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Two Tennessee schools, Carson-Newman, Jefferson City, and Cumberland University, Lebanon, awarded him honorary doctorates.

A native Georgian, Pope moved to Tallapoosa after his retirement in 1956. He is survived by his wife, Mattie Maye Willoughby Pope, and four children.

-30-

Flood Destroys Life and
Property in Oklahoma

NO

10/16/73

By Robert O'Brien
For the Baptist Press

A flickering porch light--the only light in the house still operable--probably saved the lives of a retired Baptist couple in Enid, Okla., during the height of recent flooding in northwest Oklahoma.

The flooding, precipitated by 16 inches of rain over a span of a few hours, caused extensive property damage, including Baptist facilities, and took at least eight lives, including the life of Ed Donnel, a member of Enid's First Baptist Church.

Orville Seale, 73, and his wife, Mary, 68, spent nearly four hours atop kitchen appliances as water rose neck-deep in their home before their dramatic rescue.

"Mom said they wouldn't leave the house because of the swift current," said her son, Tom Seale, art supervisor for the marketing services art section of the Broadman division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

"She said she could see cars tumbling down the street like pebbles," Seale told Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist news service.

Seale said his mother, hearing neighbors calling for help, waded to her front door in neck-deep water and saw men in a boat rescuing people across the street.

"So she flicked the porch light on and off to attract attention," Seale said. "It was the only light working. She didn't think they saw it because they left."

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But not long after she had climbed back on top of a washing machine, the Seales, both cold and weak, heard a bumping sound and voices calling.

They waded to the front door, but the water had risen so high they could see only the side of the boat at the front door, almost above their heads.

Seale said his mother and father stood on a chair and the rescuers "tipped the boat onto it's side in order to pull them up."

Another son, Robert L. Seale, also works for the Sunday School Board as supervisor of a design section in the art services department.

The flood waters, which severely damaged residences, also damaged Bass Memorial Baptist Hospital in Enid, although it didn't lose its power as did nearby St. Mary's Hospital, according to reports.

"Because the Catholic hospital was flooded and lost most of its power, the Baptist hospital handled many extra patients in its emergency rooms," reported the Baptist Messenger, Oklahoma's statewide Baptist news publication.

Doctors reportedly worked around the clock, and extra workers replaced those who couldn't make it to work. Hospital ceilings suffered damage, and the first floor had six to eight inches of water, but hospital operations soon were brought back to normal.

Donnel, a member of First Baptist Church, where the elder Seales attend, was one of the first fatalities of the flooding, the Baptist Messenger said.

Seale told Baptist Press his mother said rising water forced Donnel, an auto mechanic who had gone to his shop to remove cars, to climb on top of a vehicle. He reportedly drowned when he fell from it.

Three Baptist churches, First, Calvary and Trinity, all in Enid, were holding revival services when the flood hit.

Tornado warnings sent people to the basement of First Baptist Church, and some were stranded and spent the night. Heavy rains caused the ceilings in the nursery and education portion to collapse.

Young people spent much of the time helping to mop and sweep water out as it came through floor drains and toilet stools, but the revival continued and ended on schedule the following night, the Baptist Messenger reported.

At Calvary Church, the church building escaped serious damage, but the flooding damaged many of the members' homes and reportedly injured six to eight of them.

Calvary's pastor Jim Logsdon and the evangelist were stranded across town, and the revival ended early.

Revival at Trinity Baptist Church, which suffered no damage, continued as scheduled.

Reports also indicated that a newly constructed Baptist church, First Church in Dover, suffered extensive damage.

Several Baptist churches in Enid reportedly served hot meals to flood victims during the cleanup operation and have provided other emergency services.

CORRECTION

In graph 5, line 1 of Baptist Press story mailed 10/15/73, headlined Home Mission Board Creates Two New Staff Positions, insert the word --new-- after whose, making that read, Collings, whose new responsibilities, etc. Thanks.