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## Cemetery still marks site of 'old' church

Coming through where Dawson Springs is now located, was one time a buffalo trail. Used as a road, it ran in a north easterly direction across the country into Muhlenberg County, by way of the area of Woodruff (now St. Charles), then on to Greenville.

Can Run Creek, west of St. Charles, had no bridge over it and as it was quite deep, there was a fording place used by all. A fellow named Smith operated a store near this crossing and just north of Smith's home was the farm of C.B. Woodruff. Northwest of his home the Christian Privilege Church was built. It is almost certain it was built prior to 1833 and until it burned in March, 1980, was the oldest church in the county.

The Kentucky Legislature on Feb. 6, 1874, incorporated Woodruff into the town of St. Charles.

On May 19, 1833, Samuel Woodruff conveyed to Edward H. Earl, David Woodruff and Benjamin Durkin, "Trustees Christian Privilege Meeting House" one and a half acres of land, so as to include the Christian Privilege Meeting House.

The consideration was "five dollars." From all information it seems that the congregation had been organized and the church built before the deed was made sometime prior to, or about, 1832.

The first building was logs, which later caught fire and burned, and a new frame building was erected. Sometime after the



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building was erected, a concrete porch was built on its front and a bell was added to the church. A cemetery was also made on both sides of the church and is still kept in good condition.

When the mines closed and people began to leave St. Charles for other places, the congregation dwindled until it was no longer possible to keep the church open so it was closed. But in March, 1980 vandals set fire to the church and it burned to the ground. Today the cemetery is all that marks the place where it once stood.

The bell on top of the church was given to the Grapevine Christian Church and they have erected a nice small house outside their church, which now houses the bell.

It is nice that the Grapevine Christian erected this house for the bell in remembrance of one of our early Christian churches.

Be sure to go by the Historical Society, visit the birthplace of former Gov. Ruby Laffoon and the Museum and Historical Society, 107 Union Street.



Christian Privilege Church, Sept. 1975. It was still in use then, but later closed. The building remained until it was burned.

This writer is grateful to all the people that have told him how much they have enjoyed the "Then and Now" articles, and he appreciates all your nice remarks.

For three years "Then and Now" has been in the Saturday edition of the Messenger, giving photos and histories of things as they were, and as they are now in our county. However this is to be

the last article on "Then and Now" and we are glad that all of you have enjoyed it.

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