

# Hopewell Country Church

Dan Evans, 1979

Reading Truman Bonney presided over Sunday evening meetings at Hopewell Country Church.

An expiring sun etched a long, bronze beam across the room through the dusty panes of a window, profiling the pioneer preacher against the hand-hewn planks of the opposite wall.

As the darkness of space canopied Oregon's Willamette Valley, a chapter was read from the frayed pages of the scuffed leather-bound volume cradled in the preacher's callused hands. A prayer was said and an oil lamp flickered to the husky-voiced singing of familiar old hymns – many as familiar now as then and no less precious.

Standing tall and square before the Hopewell congregation in a dark, hip length coat and speaking of new babies, ailing seniors and “next Sunday's picnic and baptism down by the river” Truman always ended his announcements nearly chanting:

“and, there will be prayer meeting next Wednesday evening, at early candle lighting time.”

Verse 1 Standin' tall and square before the Hopewell congregation,  
Leading prayer and song on the Lord's day eventide.  
Speakin' plain and simple of the promises and mercies,  
Of the God who brought his family out in eighteen forty-five.

Refrain Say there, Truman, Grandpa preacher, speak them words out wise and clear;  
Ride your circuit safe and healthy cross the valley, down the river.  
And teach your children's children 'bout the way times used to be,  
And don't forget to remind the folks 'bout prayer meetin' Wednesday eve.

Verse 2 Crossed the plains, the rivers and mountains in our nation's early years.  
Two wagon loads of Bonneys, America's pioneers.  
They wanted neither fame nor fortune, just a place to raise their young.  
And found it in the country of the fiery setting sun...(ref)

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