

July 26th, 2017

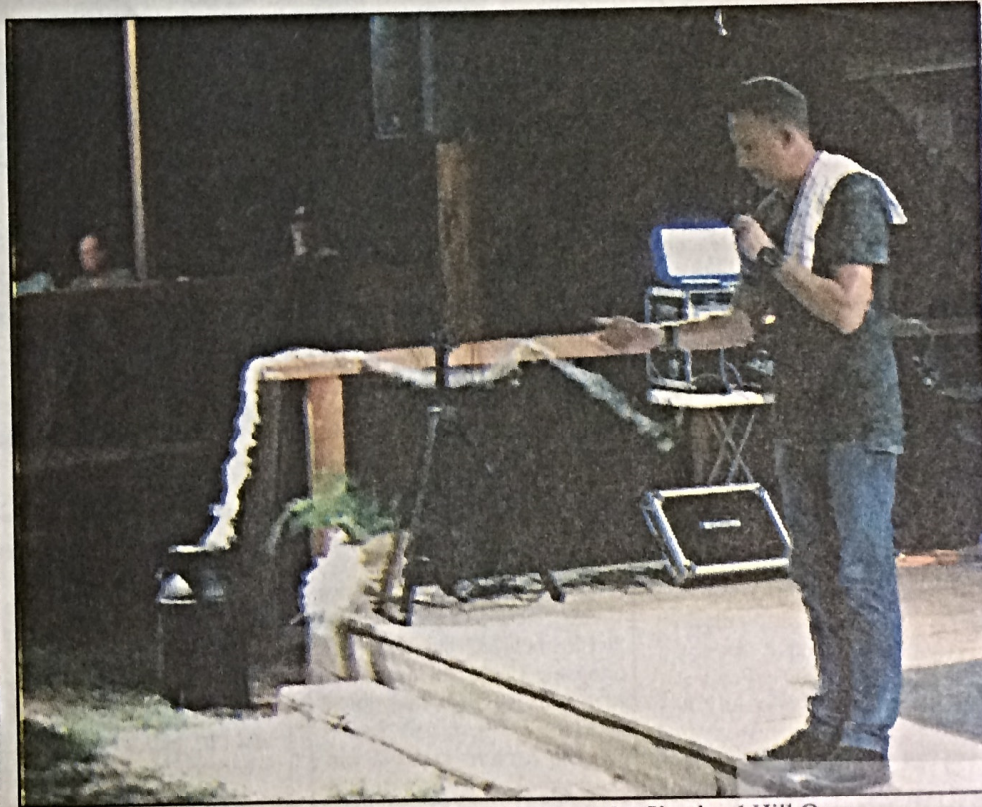
The Northport Gazette

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Hawkinsville, GA Duo Perform at Shepherd Hill Opry



Clay Holmes plays at the Shepherd Hill Opry.



Shannon Knight speaks to the audience at the Shepherd Hill Opry.

By **Brian Hamilton**

On Saturday, July 22nd, Shepherd Hill Opry hosted its first ever July edition of 'Concert on the Hill', as four musicians performed for those in attendance. Co-founder Becky Williamson Martin said that the turnout was a bit lower than usual, but suggested that it was due to the concert being the first ever in July. Approximately 30 people were in attendance to enjoy gospel music from Mike Till from Northport, Shannon Knight from Guin, Alabama, and Clay Holmes and Wayne Holcomb from Hawkinsville, Georgia.

Holcomb opened the evening by singing to the audience, followed by Till and Holmes, before Knight finished off the evening. Clay Holmes said that this was the third time he had played the Opry, but it was the first for Wayne Holcomb, as the two travelled from Georgia to perform at the Shepherd Hill Opry.

Clay Holmes said that he had not been singing gospel for very

long, but had become very fond of playing at the Opry during the past few years. "I've always played guitar for as long as I can remember, but I never got serious with it until I got serious with Jesus," Holmes said. "I went through drugs and alcohol, lost everything I had. Jesus is faithful. He never left me, and he never forsaken me." Holmes said he was saved six years ago and had been traveling the south and playing the gospel ever since. He has two albums that have been released, titled 'Finding My Way Home' and 'Wind Of Change'. "I love Shepherd Hill Opry," said Holmes. "The Williams are wonderful people. They're true followers of Jesus, there's no doubt in that. They love to offer a place for people to sing about the Lord."

Holmes met Wayne Holcomb through the ministry, and the two became very good friends. It was Holmes who encouraged Holcomb to make the trip to perform at the Opry his very first time this past weekend. Holcomb had always

been in the entertainment industry since his 20s, when he formed a band. "When I was almost 34 years old, I just bottomed out," said Holcomb. "I called on the Lord to help me and not leave me like I was; to help me be a good father; to help me be the right kind of husband." Holcomb said that it was only then that he truly gained enjoyment out of playing his music. "The Lord showed me that I could still love music and play music, and I could even come to places like this to play music."

Holcomb is pastor of Elko Baptist Church in Hawkinsville, and said that he was planning a trip to hear a gospel group perform at a church in Berry, Alabama when he was urged by Holmes to ride over with him and play the Opry. It



Mike Till performs at the Shepherd Hill Opry

was worked out with the Williams that the two were both able to travel together and perform on Saturday night. Holcomb said that he and Holmes' bond was so strong because they came from very similar situations to being called into the

ministry. "We did the honky tonk, we did the drugs, we did the alcohol," said Holcomb. "There's just not a life with meaning and purpose like living for Jesus Christ, and you don't have to stop having fun either."