

SKETCH OF THE COVENANTERS
OF
ROCKY CREEK, SOUTH CAROLINA
ABOUT
1750 TO 1840

Written by

MISS MARY ELDER, 1886

Dictated by her father,

MR. MATTHEW ELDER, YORKVILLE, S.C.

(First part taken from a "Sketch on the Covenanters", written by D. G. Stinson, Esq., of Cedar Shoals, S.C., an uncle of Miss Mary Elder; see the Chester Reporter, March 23, 1876, Chester, South Carolina.)

The earliest settlement of this part of Chester District took place in 1750-51, by a few emigrants from Pennsylvania and Virginia. Among these were Hugh and John McDonald with their families. Hugh settled where Mrs. Moore now lives, on Little Rocky Creek, five miles from Catholic church. John settled a plantation known as Davis Wilson's, at the south of Bull Run on Big Rocky Creek. He and his wife were both killed in 1761 by the Cherokee Indians, and their seven children carried off. (See Mrs. Ellet's 3rd Vol. Women of the Revolution - article by Catherine Steele: "The night succeeding this - the scalping of Barbara McKenny - preparations for hostile action was going on also at Steele's Fort. The Cherokees had passed over to Rocky Creek and still intent on rapine and bloodshed, had stopped at the house of John McDaniel whom they killed, with his wife, and carried away captive seven children, the eldest a girl fifteen years of age. The outraged settlers were not slow in collecting a party of 10 or 12 men to pursue them. Thomas Steele, the leader, was well calculated for the service, having been an Indian Trader and being acquainted with their language. The party followed the trail almost to the borders of the Cherokee nation. They came upon the savages at length, in dead of the night, assaulted and completely routed them. One of the white men, Thomas Garrett of Rocky Creek, chanced to kill the Indian who had tomahawked Mrs. McKenny and found the scalp in his shot bag. Other bloody trophies were recovered to carry back to the friends of the murdered, and then placing the children on their horses, the men retraced their steps homeward. The joy of the poor little captives at the sight of familiar faces was more than reward enough for their deliverance. They had no parents to welcome them home, but their uncle, Hugh McDaniel received them.")

In 1755 there was a considerable increase in the settlement by correspondence to Ireland and there commenced an emigration by way of Charleston. The settlers were a mixed mass as to religion, they were Associate Reformed, Presbyterians and seceders. Rev. William Richardson of Waxhaw was the only minister within a hundred miles, and they applied to him to supply them with preaching. He consented and directed them to build a church, as he would preach to them week days; the first preaching day was Monday. He named the church, which they built according to his directions, Catholic. It is situated 15 miles southeast from Chester Court House, near Rocky Mount Road. See Dr. Howe's History Presbyterian Church.

Rev. William Martin emigrated from Ireland at least as early as 1772; he was the first Covenanter preacher in the settlement. I have a letter in my possession from Henry Malcolm and Margaret Malcolm, written to his son-in-law, John Lin, in which they refer to Mr. Martin as being over here in this Rocky Creek settlement; this letter is dated May 30, 1773, in answer to one from his son-in-law; the reference to Mr. Martin is in these words, "We hear it reported here that Mr. Martin and his Covenanters had ill getting their land and that John Cochran was the occasion of all their trouble". I suppose the reason of this trouble about land was that they expected to settle all down close together, in a colony, but such was then the situation of the country that they had to scatter and select lands at a considerable distance from each other. They were entitled to bounty lands, 100 acres to each head of a family and 50 to each member -- those who had means bought from the old settlers. Rev. William Martin bought from William Stroud a plantation of a mile square, 640 acres, on the north side of Big Rocky Creek, on which he built a rock house and a rock

spring house. The place selected for a church was 2 miles east of Catholic on the Rocky Mount Road near the house now occupied by Mrs. Jas. Barbar Ferguson. It is described as a log building, was burnt down by the British in 1780. See "Women of the Revolution" 3rd Volume, Art. Nancy Green. Also, "Dr. Howe's History Presbyterian Church Art. "Lebanon Church" - Mary Barkley.

After Martin was released by Cornwallis at Winnsboro, owing to the state of the country, he went to Mecklenburg, N. C. There he met a Mr. Grier, a refugee from Georgia, whose son, Isaac, he baptized; he was said to have been the first Presbyterian child born in Georgia. This Isaac Grier was afterwards the Minister at Sardis; was the father of Robt. Calvin Grier, who was President for many years of Erskine College, Due West, - and his son, Wm. Moffatt Grier, is now the President of that College. After the war, when Mr. Martin returned to Rocky Creek, he was employed as supply at Catholic for 3 years; he was dismissed by the people of Catholic on account of becoming intemperate; he however, did not quit preaching; he preached at a Stand or School-house at Ed McDaniel's about a mile or two west of the place at which the brick church was afterwards built. He also went down to Jackson's Creek in Fairfield County and preached there. I recollect that Rachel Gladney was a Covenanter in that neighborhood and doubtless there were others. He was also in the habit of crossing the Catawba River and preaching at the house of Wm. Hicklin, who had moved from Rocky Creek to Lancaster. He frequently preached at other places, often at private homes. The congregation afterwards built him a church 2 miles from the site of the one formerly burnt, near the Rocky Mount road, on a beautiful hill in rear of what is called Earl's House, a fine grove of trees; the lands are now all cleared up and there is a negro's house now on the top of that hill where the church once was; in that hill and dale country it can be seen for miles. He must have continued to preach there until near his death. I have frequently heard him preach at that place as well as at my father's. Some two years before his death his rock house was burnt down, it was in the early part of the night. I suppose most of his property was saved. He sold his plantation for \$600.00, \$160.00 of it to be paid a year, after his death his widow received this payment. He had been three times married, but left no children, his only daughter, married John McCaw, had died before him. Shortly after his coming to this country, he took up about 400 acres of vacant land which he made a present to his nephews, Davis* and Wm. Martin, now Mrs. Gaston's. Mr. Martin often stayed at my father's for days or a week at a time. I do not remember ever seeing him under the influence of liquor but once, that was one day he came in company of some wagons, it was a wet day. My mother with the assistance of two negro women, her servants, got him to the back door, and bringing him in, put him to bed. She came out, I remember, with her face very long. The last visit he ever made to my father, after crossing the creek, he in some way got his horse's head turned up the creek, he fell off in the water, being old and feeble, he was unable to rise. He was found by a Mr. Thraelskill, he was said to be in the act of praying when found. Mr. Thraelskill understood from him where he wanted to go. My father sent for him and had him brought to the house; he had fever, and lay there for more than a month, in the delirium of fever he constantly quoted scripture. My mother becoming alarmed sent for my father, thinking Mr. Martin was near his death, but he recovered, got able to walk; my father mounted him on a horse

(* probably David)

and took him home. He soon again became confined to his bed and died in about six months, in 1806. He was buried in a grave yard near his own house; whether there is a stone to mark it, I do not know, though I have seen the grave. He was a large, heavy man, by those who knew him said to have been an able divine. He came here from county Antrim, Ireland. In the same party with him came my father, his brother, Jas. Stinson, Wm Anderson, his wife, Nancy, Alex Bracy and wife, Elizabeth; I think the Lin's and possibly the Kell's. Mr. Martin owned two negroes, I recollect Savannah and Bob by name. My father owned three, so did some others of the congregation. Some who owned slaves refused, in 1800 to submit to the regulations made by Mr. McKinney and Wylie, believing that the scriptures justified possession of the heathen, whom they as teachers were civilizing and Christianizing; it would be as cruel to free them as to turn a child out to be buffeted by the world.

After writing this and the following sketches a pamphlet was sent the author of the sketches purporting to be "Reminiscences of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in South Carolina", written by Mr. Farris, a son he supposed of the Rev. James Faris, a native of South Carolina; these Reminiscences were published in "The Reformed Presbyterian Covenanter", a monthly, from Pittsburg, Penn. This article he revises, exposing the many errors it contains. In this article it is asserted that Mr. McGarrah married himself; it was Mr. Martin, who married himself, and not Mr. McGarrah. This was a legal marriage according to the laws of South Carolina, "those whom God joined together let no man put asunder", found an easy acceptance here. Divorces were never granted until after Reconstruction. We close this with an anecdote related to Mr. Martin. When the "Red Coats" evacuated South Carolina, he was east of the Catawba River, preaching, as he was returning home, when nearing the residence of Mr. Lynn in Chester, he saw the lady of the house passing through the yard and called out in true stentorian style, "good news, great news, glorius news; woman, the British have sailed from Charleston for England, and may the devil go with them".

The next Minister of the Covenanters was Wm. McGarrah in 1791. He settled on the north side of Beaver Dam, a branch of Big Rocky Creek. His first wife died shortly after his coming, leaving one daughter, married Henry Lynn. Mr. McGarrah marrying badly the second time was the cause of his being for a short time separated. His second wife was Miss McCann; she was the mother of an illegitimate child, born before her marriage. She called it the child of her sorrow and named it John Kirkpatrick. By the second marriage he had sons, James, William, Joseph and David, all long since removed to the northwest. Mr. McGarrah died about 1810, was buried in what was called Paul's graveyard; his wife died soon after and was buried at the same place. The graveyard is on Rocky Creek, 15 or 16 miles east of Chester Village. More Covenanters are buried here than at any other burial place in the South.

Rev. James McKinney was the next in order. Where his residence was, I do not know; he served the congregation at the Brick Church and died in 1803, August, and was buried at the Brick Church. (xx(comes in at these crosses).

Rev. King arrived here in 1792 -- he settled on the south side of the Beaver Dam, near Mount Prospect Church, on the plantation now owned by Mrs. Backstrom; he died in '98 and is buried at the Brick Church. He left two children, both daughters, one of whom married Abram White, and was the mother of Rev. W. G. White, who is now pastor at Tirzah and Douglass Churches in Lancaster County. The other married to Archibald McGurken and emigrated to Illinois. Hugh McQuiston married the widow of Rev. King; they had three children, a son and two daughters., --they moved to Ohio.)

Rev. Thomas Donnelly was licensed to preach at Coldingham, June 1799 -- he settled first somewhere near Little Rocky Creek; he afterwards bought Stephen Harrison's place on the north side of Big Rocky Creek -- a plantation now owned by Mr. Geo. Heath. I recollect hearing him preach at a stand near his house some time in the year 1804. He was the only minister until the arrival of Mr. Riley in 1813, and preached at most of the churches that will hereafter be mentioned. After the Covenanters had generally removed from the country, Mr. Donnelly preached at Old Richardson, a Presbyterian Church -- a portion of the time at his own house, there being some of his people scattered in the country. He and the elder Thomas McClurken married two of the sisters of David Smith this connection was numerous on Little Rocky Creek. Mr. Donnelly's eldest son, Samuel, became a Presbyterian minister, now residing in Florida (deceased), his father frequently visited him when he lived at Liberty Hill, and presched in his son's church. Mr. Donnelly died in 1847 - his family after his death removed to Illinois; it consisted of John, Thomas (who was married to John Cathcart's daughter) and Nancy, she married in Illinois, Riley Lynn, the son of Henry. Mr. Donnelly was buried at the Brick Church by the side of McKinney and King - his wife also at the same place.

The next minister, Rev. Jno. Riley, came into South Carolina in 1813, settled on the south-side of Big Rocky Creek, about a half mile of Martin's first church, the one burnt. He was a popular preacher; his places of preaching were the Beaver Dam Church, the Brick Church, and Richardson. He died in 1820, is buried at the Brick Church, some distance from the other ministers -- All have appropriate tombstones.

The Brick Church situated three miles from Pleasant Grove, on the plantation now owned by John Hood -- all removed, nothing but the graveyard left. There was a considerable emigration to this country from Ireland after 1765, but whether this church was built before Mr. King came, or not, I do not know; it was first a log building, the brick building was built about 1810.

Hugh McMillan came to the section of country after 1786; his brother, Daniel, came at the same time. Daniel and his family went into the Associated Reformed Church. Hugh had sons, Daniel a merchant, John, David, James, Gavin and Hugh, the last two ministers of the gospel -- Covenanters. There was a family of Coopers, another named McKelvey, the Nesbits, the Hunter's, the Holliday's, William Harbison, Robt. Hemphill, Dorrence Woodburn, Munford, McQuiston and many others, - I do not remember, these however, composed part of the Covenanter's Congregation. James Wilson an elder was also a worshipper here.

The Beaver Dam Church on a branch, on the North side of Big Rocky Creek -- on the plantation now owned by Stephen D. H. Ferguson. The church was about a mile distant from Mr. King's and Mr. Garrah's, when organized I do not know, but probably about the time that Mr. McGarrah arrived in 1791. In the bounds of this congregation were the Kell's, the Ervin's, the Orr's, the Little's, the Rodman's, the Lynn's, the Bell's, the Ewing's and Blair's, John Rock, Paul Guthrei and many others.

The Richmond Church situated near the dividing line between Chester and Fairfield Counties, probably built before 1800, here worshipped the elder James Cathcart and his son John, the Marshalls, Richmonds, Jim Hood, Alexander Kell, Sproals, Hugh Henry, McMaster, Dan Wright, David McMille, James Stormont, with others. Rev. Maddon was their pastor.

The McNinch Church situated three miles east of Chesterville, built after 1813, at the expense of John McNinch, himself. Of the congregation, which, I think, was numerous, I now remember only a few, the McNinches, the Whanis, and Andrew Crawford.

The Smith Church was on Little Rocky Creek, on the south side about 6 miles west of Catholic Church. In this congregation were several families named Smith. They were relatives of Rev. Thomas Donnelly.

There was a church on Turkey Creek in York District (now county) three miles west of McConnellville on the Chester and Lenoir Railroad, where Rev. Hugh McMillan preached one third of his time to the Wrights, Wilsons, et al.

We will now go back to the close of the Revolutionary War. Martin's church being burned, he preached as a supply to the congregation of Catholic, through the years 1782, '83, & '84, at the same time visiting and preaching to different Societies of his own people -- as heretofore stated. In the year 1787, Matthew Lynn, of the Associate Reformed Church, came out as a Missionary; the next year Rev. James Boyce came and commenced preaching at the school-house near Edward McDaniel's, afterwards at a stand where the Hopewell Church now is. A large majority of the Covenanters at this time went into the Associate Reformed Church -- leaving a few scattered over the bounds of the different congregations. From the year 1785 until 1822, there was a considerable emigration coming every year from Ireland.

At the time that Mr. Riley came, in 1813, the congregations were pretty numerous, the restrictions on the subject of slavery took a good many Covenanters out of the church. Mr. Riley received into the church Mrs. Hemphill (Isabella) and her sister, Mrs. Jane Cloud, and her daughter, Mrs. Sarah Hicklin -- these ladies had been members of Mr. Martin's church. He had baptized their children, and each of them had a son called for him, they were received in the Richmond Church, notwithstanding their families were large slaveholders.

Mr. McGarrah, when he was restored, preached for a few in the Beaver Dam Church -- but not after the arrival of Mr. Riley in 1813. Mr. King preached at the Brich Church and probably at other small Societies scattered over the country.

At the Brick Church, Mr. John McNinch was tried in the Session, and the congregation became dissatisfied with Mr. Donnelly, which was eventually the occasion of the churches of Smith and McNinch being built.

John Orr emigrated to the United States between the years 1790 and 1800. He was a classical scholar and had taught school in Ireland before coming out here -- it is said that the Rev. Samuel B. Wylie and Rev. John Black of Pittsburg commenced their literary course with him in Ireland. After coming here he continued to teach, a good many young men started the classics with him. James A. Hemphill and Alex Curry, both afterwards physicians -- Rev. John Kell, who after being prepared by John Orr went to Scotland, also Judge John Hemphill of Texas, was among his scholars. Mr. Orr had a numerous family of sons and daughters; he removed from the state to Indiana in 1832. it was said that though over eighty years of age he walked every step to Indiana refusing to ride.

Rev. Hugh McMillan commenced preaching in the year 1822, at the Brick Church where he had a large school for a number of years, also one third of his time he preached at the Turkey Creek Church in York, about the same date Rev. Campbell Maddon commenced preaching at the Richmond Church and at a stand at Jonnie Orr's, he also taught a school, he had studied medicine before he came out here -- he spent a winter at Lexington, Ky., where he received a diploma, he commenced the practice of medicine but did not live long; had married a Miss Cathcart, left children, a son and two daughters now living in Winnsboro.

Rev. Hugh McMillan must have left the country as early as 1831, removing west. The Covenanters commenced emigrating soon after the death of Mr. Riley and continued to do so from year to year until the congregation became weak.

(Note by D. M. Little re-typing the above 1977: Hugh McMillan, brother of Gavin, born in Chester District, S. C., Feb. 1794, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. Returning home, he was elected Professor of languages in Columbia College. Determining to consecrate himself to the ministry, he entered the Philadelphia Reformed Presbyterian Seminary, and in 1820 was licensed to preach. After doing missionary work from Ohio to South Carolina, he was ordained and installed pastor of Rocky Creek Brick Church in 1821. He was married in 1822 to Mary Ann McClurg of Pittsburg and was the father of three children, of whom two died in infancy. He taught classical literature at the Brick Church for a number of years as well as ministering to the congregation there. He preached one-third of his time at the Turkey Creek Church. He was a man of great ability and his antipathy to slavery soon made his location untenable. In the fall of 1828, on his return from Synod, he visited his brother, Gavin, at Cedarville, O., and assisted in serving the Lord's supper. The congregation was so pleased with him, and since Gavin was spending only one-fourth of his

time with them, they gave Hugh a call, understanding that he wished to remove from Rocky Creek with as many of his congregation as would accompany him and settle in the free states. Upon his return to Rocky Creek, and after consulting with the congregation, he accepted the call, and in April 1829, he and a good number of his followers emigrated to Green County, Ohio. When he became pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Cedarville, Ohio in 1829, there were about 66 communicants, but within a few years with the addition of his people from Rocky Creek, the congregation more than doubled. The South Carolinians formed the larger part of the congregation for the next thirty years.)

Revs. Fisher and Scott supplied the churches in S. C. in the year 1832, that is during the winter of that year. Revs. Black and McMaster in the winter of 1833, these were licentiates. Rev. Gavin McMillan was here in the Spring of 1832, and held communion assisted by Fisher and Scott. John Kell in the Spring of 1833 held communions assisted by Black and McMaster.

The few Covenanters that remained, in time, went into the Associate Reformed Church: *Hugh Henry is the only one I now recollect who remained a Covenanter till his death, which took place in 1867; his family are now in the Associate Reformed Church.

Mrs. Maddon, her son and daughter have within a few years connected themselves with the same church.

*(Pen note found attached: All the Covenanters were gone to the northwest except Mr. Henry. All the children of this venerable patriarch had gone into the Associate Reformed Church and with them he regularly attended church, but never became a communicant. (Henry's great-grandfather - his mother's grandfather) ...
He, Hugh Henry, died Oct. 13, 1867, and his remains were laid in the cemetery $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of Richmond Church, by the side of his wife. Their graves are enclosed in a substantial iron fence. In June 1939 a marker was placed on site of this the Richmond Church - it was built in 1800.) (D. M. L.)

Remarks:

In 1801 Messrs. McKinney and Wylie with other ministers and elders of the church held a Presbytery at the house of John Kell. One of the Kell's owned a negro; at that time he probably was the only Covenanter that owned a negro except those heretofore mentioned. Mr. Martin was asked what he thought of slavery?. His answer was that he had a boy Bob who was unmanageable and for that reason he had sold him.

Rev. Samuel W. Crawford was raised with in three miles of Beaver Dam Church until he was 9. or 10 years of age. In a letter directed to me he states, while living at John Wylie's he went to the spring to bring a pail of water, while there he heard a cow bell, he looked and saw a negro driving a cow, he went to the house as fast as his feet could carry him, he says, you may imagine what I thought was. I got no sympathy, they merely said it was a negro

belonging to some one, lately moved into the neighborhood, and as I had never seen an African, you may know that they were not numerous in that section; at that period but few of the sons and daughters of Ham had cast their dark shadows over that country -- instead thereof it was thickly settled by energetic and industrious white population. In the bounds of 20 miles there were four Presbyterian Churches, two Associate Reformed Churches, three Covenanter, one Baptist, and Smyrna and Associate Church.

In every neighborhood there was a good school, the schoolmaster was abroad then, the Bible and Testament were the principal school books, the Catechism was also taught in the schools. The Covenanters had no difficulty about the jury law. Mr. Rossborough, the Clerk of Court, would state to the Judge that they had conscientious scruples which prevented their taking an oath of allegiance to the Government, consequently could not serve as jurors; the Judge would order them excused -- The Revolutionary War was notorious among them, all fought on the side of the country. Mr. Johnathan Henkle moved into the country about the year 1807, he states, that on Sunday, he thought a cow bell could be heard twice the distance that it was on another day such was the stillness of that day. John Rock, a Revolutionary soldier was his near neighbor, he was with him when he died, he was evidently dying, after a while he revived a little commenced singing one of the Psalms of David in a low voice, when he ceased singing he breathed his last. Mr. Henkle's remark was, "that it appeared to him a foretaste of the joys of Heaven".

Addenda By My Father, Matthew Elder,

who was born and raised among the Covenanters, the children of the younger McClurkens, the McMillans, James Wilson and others being his school-mates in childhood when Messrs. Galloway, Reedy, McMillan and Hemphill wielded the birch at old Associate Reformed Hopewell, emphatically the mother of Churches. Revs. Martin, McGarrah, McKinney, and King were before his day by their names were household words on Rocky Creek, so far back as his recollection carries him. He never saw Revs. Maddon and Riley but when a small boy heard his older brothers and sisters on Sabbath evenings, after their return from church speak of them and Rev. Donnelly and the sermons they preached at Orr's Stand and Agar's Meeting-house. He and John J. McClurken, an intimate youthful friend, who afterwards became a Covenanter preacher, boarded and studied for a while with the gentlemen who owned the house and plantation which belonged to Mr. Maddon during his pastorate of the Richmond Church, located two miles south, near the Fairfield and Chester line. He never visited the Church. Mr. Maddon was a regular practicing physician as well as preacher, and the shelves on which he kept his medicines still remained in the part of the house used by him as an office and study. He was a consumptive.

The Beaver Dam Church, named from a creek, a short distance west of which it stood, was a wooden structure, it's walls consisting of large pine logs, nicely hewn and the intervening spaces neatly lined inside with planks sufficiently broad to completely cover up the opening. The seats and pulpit were in harmony with the building. Here the Rev. John Riley, from 1813 until his death in 1820, preached

with great acceptance, not only to his own people but other denominations. He was a popular preacher, a fluent animated and attractive speaker, a much beloved and respected pastor and a universally esteemed neighbor and citizen. He had a wife but no offspring. He and Rev. Thomas Donnelly were intimate friends, their whole intercourse with each other being a living, practical exposition of the 133rd Psalm. In 1836, the narrator heard Mr. Donnelly preach in the Beaver Dam Church, and saw him on that occasion administer the ordinance of Baptism to an infant, the parents being Mr. J. Clark Lynn, the grand-son of Mr. McGarrah and Mrs. Lynn, the daughter of Wm. Ewing. Eleven years afterwards he taught this child spelling, reading writing and arithmetic, and heard her daily repeat from memory a portion of the larger Catechism. She was intellectual, and died before reaching maturity. This was the last time the walls of that old church ever echoed the sounds of salvation. The next Spring it's site became a portion of a large cotton field, the property of Mr. Stephen R. Ferguson. (The narrator is Matthew Elder, D.M.L.)

What was afterwards the Brick Church, was originally Agur's Meeting House, so called from some people of that name who lived in the immediate vicinity and were the prime actors in its erection. The old, dilapidated wooden building gave to a neat, substantial brick edifice of fair proportions, displaying some taste externally in the painting and pencilling of the walls and internally in the manner of arranging the seats for convenience and comfort, and in the improved forms of the pulpit. The material was furnished and the house built by the McClurkens, Covenanters. Here Mr. Donnelly preached for years. By those who ought to have been competent judges, he was pronounced a fine scholar and an able divine. He had not the commanding qualities of Riley but his voice was free from all harshness and sufficiently sonorous while his language was chaste and appropriate. His reading was extensive choice and varied; his memory retentive; his mental training thorough and his knowledge of the Scriptures critical and accurate. All this contributed to render his preaching, which was generally expository, profoundly instructive. Nature had given him a nose considerably tapering towards the point and when preaching he had a strange habit of wrapping his handkerchief tightly around four fingers of his left hand and then with this comparatively hard substance would give his nose two or three slight rubs on each side. W. R. Hemphill, afterwards an Associate Reformed preacher and dubbed a D. D., whose perception of the ridiculous was very acute, noticing this foible, waggishly remarked that Father Donnelly sharpened his nose with his pocket handkerchief.

Shortly prior to 1800 a recently married pair, Mr. Jno. McNinch and his wife Isabel, came over from Ireland. They settled in the suburbs of Chester, a little north of the tan-yard branch and on the west side of the Charleston Road, their house not being very pretentious in appearance. He commenced merchandising on a small but safe scale and his wife conducted a millinery establishment. Industry and economy soon gave them capital. In a few years the best house in Chester, and the most desirable site for business was for sale. Mr. McNinch disposed of the house he occupied and

purchased this valuable property. He then merchandised on a much larger scale, his wife still clinging to her millinery business. They were not wealthy. They were Covenanters and Mr. Donnelly was their pastor. His salary was small and he was raising a family. They had no children and were very liberal in their presents to their pastor. In this way his necessities were relieved while the comforts and conveniences of himself and family were greatly increased. Supposing he had now amassed a competency, Mr. McNinch sold his fine house and bought a plantation two miles southeast of the village. On it he built a much finer house and also a church at his own expense. Here Mr. Donnelly preached regularly to large audiences generally spending Saturday and Sabbath nights with Mr. McNinch. The narrator does not remember that any other preacher except Mr. Donnelly ever occupied that pulpit. Pama Clamosa now began to charge McNinch with the commission of a high misdemeanor, the circumstances attending the perpetration of the crime being of the most aggravated nature. He admitted the charge, was tried before the church court and was sentenced to be publicly rebuked. In the presence of a large congregation, standing up with handkerchief over his face, the rebuke was administered by the Moderator, taking as the foundation of his remarks, "What went ye out for to see? A Reed shaken with the wind?" Some were dealing very harshly with the offender and went even so far as to insinuate that the Moderator had manifested so much clemency and forbearance toward his former friend and benefactor as to amount to almost favoritism. Others thought that he had impartially and fully discharged his duty and done everything the interests and honor of Christ's house commanded. He preached no more in the Brick Church. This difference of opinion became so intense and the alienation of feeling assumed such proportions as to result in the erection of a new church, called Smith's meeting house, located on the plantation of David Smith, Mr. Donnelly's brother-in-law. It was a substantial frame enclosed and ceiled in a workmanlike manner, partially seated and had a pulpit apparently intended for only temporary purposes. This church was about one mile from the place where the first settlement was made on Rocky Creek, by John McDonald in 1752. In it the narrator heard Rev. Hugh McMillan preach once. Here and at McNinch's Church, Mr. Donnelly now officiated regularly. At the latter until and years after the death of Mr. McNinch; at the former until all the Covenanters were gone to the Northwest except Mr. Hugh Henry. All the children of this venerable patriarch had gone into the Associate Reformed Church and with them he regularly attended church at Hopewell, but never became a communicant. He was tall somewhat boney and slender, his head "silvered over the age", and when standing up in time of prayer reminded the beholder of some of those ancient Caledonian worthies so graphically delineated in Scottish History. One of his grandsons is now an able minister of the New Testament breaking the bread of life to an interesting congregation of Associate Reformed Presbyterians at Oak Hill, Ala.

In the vicinity of the place where Smith's Church stood the Rev. James Faris first saw the light and in it performed some of his pieces of trial. He married the daughter of David Smith and the very beginning of his ministry went with her connections and some others to Bloomington, Indiana where he became their pastor.

When preaching he had as strange a habit as Mr. Donnelly. Immediately after commencing his sermon he would throw his left foot and leg across his right and then bringing down his left foot square on the floor, would throw his right foot and leg over the left, and this exercise would continue as regularly as the falling of the spheres until the sermon ended. In the pulpit he was slow, dull, monotonous, chilling. Neither the glories of the transfiguration, the melting theme of redeeming love, nor the agonies of Gethsemane would move him. He appeared entirely destitute of all emotional nature. Out of the pulpit he was said to be more than a match for infidelity itself. The narrator knows by personal experience that he was a pleasant traveling companion, occasionally dropping from his mathematical storehouse a proposition suggested by a turn in the road or some other incident, thus affording food for the mind of a student seeking recreation during college vacation, and then while giving expression to something useful and profitable a smile of pleasure would play over and light up his otherwise seemingly imperturbable countenance. After spending with him two days and two nights by the gay-side and at the Inn, he parted from him with regret.

The light first dawned on the Rev. Ebenezer Cooker, in embryo in the immediate vicinity of the Brick Church. His parental education and training were, as they always ought to be, savoring of the Sabbath and the sanctuary. His English, classical and mathematical studies were pursued under the direction of the Rev. Hugh McMillan. After graduation he studied Theology with the Rev. Sam'l B. Wylie, D.D. He commenced preaching in 1829, spent a few months among the Rocky Creek Covenanters, married Miss Jean McMillan and then went to Ohio, and afterwards to Indiana. In the Spring of 1840, when the narrator was paying a visit from Bloomington to Xenia he had the pleasure of meeting him near his own home, and riding with him four or five miles to his country seat. He then had no regular pastoral charge, a situation in which no minister of the gospel can long remain without seriously impairing, if not entirely ruining his usefulness. He made no pretensions to brilliancy, but his pulpit exercises were moderately respectable and compared favorable with those of the religious fraternity to which he belonged. Nature, it is true, had denied him that gracefulness of dictation and delivery which commands and attracts, but she had made ample compensation in the bestowment of other qualities indispensably necessary. As a minister of the gospel the field is the world "why stand ye here all the day idle?" If his services are not acceptable in one place they will be in another.

The birthplace of Rev. Hugh McMillan was three miles west of the Brick Church. At the proper time, he entered the South Carolina College, and after graduating taught for some years in the upper part of Union County, S. C. He then studied Theology and when licensed to preach was chosen to be their pastor by the congregation in which he was reared. To these people he preached two-thirds of his time, and to a few families in York County one-third at a church called Turkey Creek, three miles east of McConnellsville, on the Chester and Lenoir Railroad. Immediately after his settlement he commenced teaching and continued to do so until he thought it best for him and his people to emigrate to a free state,

Accordingly in 1823 (sic. prob. 1828) he and a portion of them went to Xenia, Ohio, and the remainder followed as soon as possible. As a teacher his reputation was enviable and except Mr. Riley, the Rocky Creek Covenanters never had a more popular preacher. As a pastor and in every other respect his own congregation considered him unequalled. In sermonizing he was very systematic, announcing his text, going through his exercise or introduction stating distinctly the order he would pursue in the discussion of the subject and then pronouncing the proposition he intended to illustrate, as first. While doing this his style was didactic or conversational, his voice agreeable, and his position almost stationary; but when he had uttered a few sentences of his sermon proper he commenced pacing the floor of the pulpit and except the time occupied in laying down his secondly, thirdly, etc., the exercise continued until the end of his discourse. During the delivery of about the first third of each division, as he called it, the sound of his voice was pleasant, but then it assumed a strange singsong tone which detracted very much from the favorable effect it might otherwise have produced. His two sermons on Christ cleansing of the leper, and paying tribute to a government, wicked as Nero himself, were models of their kind. The generous Riley, the scholarly Donnelly, and the amiable Hugh McMillan, defended the peculiarities of their denomination with fidelity and zeal, but could never stoop to ridicule and abuse. In the Spring of 1840, the narrator visited Xenia, Ohio, and attended the church where Mr. McMillan and his people worshipped. Seeing and hearing the same preacher and beholding the same people about him, fancy seemed to whisper the interrogatory in his ear, are you not sitting in the Brick Church?

In the Fall of 1829 two licentiates, Fisher and Scott, were sent to Rocky Creek to preach to the remaining Covenanters. They lodged with merchant, Daniel McMillan. In the Spring of 1830, Rev. Gavin McMillan visited the place of his nativity, preached two or three Sabbaths and had communion at the Brick Church, assisted by those two probationers. On Saturday preceding the communion Sabbath the clouds were ominous and Mr. Fisher prayed for favorable weather. On Sabbath morning the heavens were dark and from 11 o'clock until 3 o'clock, April showers occasionally fell. The house was densely crowded. Rev. Gavin McMillan preached the action sermon which was long. His manner was exceedingly earnest, vehemently fiery and when combatting, what he called error or refuting objections, vindictive as an enraged yellow-jacket. He then fenced the tables taking up the Decalogue in detail and dwelling at great length on each precept of the moral code debarring himself and every person but notwithstanding the stringency of the terms when the invitation was offered to intending communicants to fill up the table the sacramental host was numerically respectable. When the communion exercises were over Mr. Fisher rose to preach the evening sermon. Like Elihu he was full of matter and dealt the moral thunders of Sinai with an unsparing hand. Either forgetting or not knowing that not a few for want of horses to ride, had walked thither that morning, he manifested no disposition to say "finally". The sun not showing himself through openings in the clouds announced that he was not 30 degrees above the western horizon. Mrs. Dan Wright, who had ten miles to ride, alarmed at the lateness of the hour, rose from her seat, went quickly to the door.

and calling the foot-boys, audibly said, "It seems as if some people will never learn any sense, we will give them a brief lesson, come boys, let's go", when she and they wended their way homeward. The Fisher of men immediately dropped his piscatory tackle, and the scene closed.

Mr. Fisher was fully six feet high, had long arms and large hands. On entering the pulpit he composed himself for a brief period, rose, reverently, invoked the divine blessing, read the portion of psalmody he intended the congregation to sing as their morning song of praise, thrust his hands halfway to the elbows into the pockets of his pants, allowing his arms to swing forward, as far as they would, in the shape of a bow already bent and ready set, commenced his explanation of the psalm and unless he had to turn a leaf or refer to a text, by way of proof, never drew them from their concealment until he was ready to sing. He was able in prayer, studied and prepared his sermons very carefully, delivering them with commanding deliberation and telling effect. Unfortunately he thought he was very learned -- and perhaps he was -- and when preaching he manifested a propensity towards ostentation in that direction which sometimes rendered him, almost, ridiculous. Two of his sermons, one from the text, "It is a word worthy of all acceptation", etc., and the other his valedictory from the text, "See that ye fall not by the way", very masterly productions, in them was no ostentation, but a dying man preaching to dying men and a spiritual guide exhibiting the beauties of brotherly love. We thought of the nightingale and glow worms, England's heavenly Bard.

Rev. Scott was a handsome young man, graceful, had an agreeable voice, his manner was pleasing, his delivery fine, invariably preached for the edification of his hearers, had his sights always properly adjusted and never missed his mark. He was content to follow Phillip Melancthon at a very respectful distance.

In the Fall of 1830 two other licentiates, Black and McMasters were sent to preach to the Rock Creek Covenanters. They were lodged with merchant Dan'l McMillan, and remained during the Winter. The Kells were singular in their manner and habits; of them were three brothers, Alexander, Thomas and John. Alexander never went to church Summer or Winter without his overcoat, except one day, and on that occasion was thoroughly drenched with rain. He and Thomas were farmers, John became a preacher. His academical studies were directed by old Mr. John Orr; he graduated at Glasgow, Scotland, studied Theology, was licensed, came home a preacher and at an early day settled at Princeton, Indiana. In the Spring of 1831, he visited his birthplace, preached two or three Sabbaths and assisted by the aforesaid probationers, dispensed the Lord's Supper at the Brick Church. The day of the communion was lovely and exercises were conducted at the Stand. The audience was large. The Rev. Kell preached the action sermon, which was tedious, debarred and invited as usual, served the first table and when he had given the symbols to the communicants at the second table became very pale and sick. He turned to the Stand and said one of the young men will serve out the table, then immediately lay down. Mr. Black looked at Mr. McMasters and beckoned him forward. Mr. McMasters, after a

negative movement of his head, returned the compliment. Mr. Black showed himself equal to the emergency. He rose and made a very appropriate address. When the table was cleared, it was nearly filled the third time. Mr. Kell put the elements in to the hands of the communicants, then again lay down. Mr. Black made the address, at the close of which, he returned thanks, sang a song of praise, pronounced the benediction and this was the last communion the Covenanters ever solemnized in South Carolina.

The Rev. John Kell had a large frame and on it was a sufficiency of flesh and muscle to weigh two hundred pounds. He had a wild wondering look, wore a wig, and generally spoke with tobacco in his mouth. As a preacher, he was nondescript. At a vast expense of power, he appeared to draw every word he uttered from some unfathomable depth and then let it drop half smothered from his lips. He was generally tedious but not uninteresting, especially to those who understood and appreciated Scotch-Irish pronunciation, which, to some extent, he still retained. He liked to dwell on the universal adaptation of the gospel to every class of the human family, contrasting the most civilized refined and polished people with the Great Mogul and his extensive empire. At his home he was hospital, kind accommodating and withal tried to be witty, saying to the narrator, "Greens in this country are not so bitter as in Carolina", and pressing him to try some. He had a paragon of a wife, but they were childless. He has long since gone to his reward.

Rev. John McMaster was of medium size, a warm-hearted Irishman, and a real pony in the endurance of fatigue. His arms were too short and thick for his coat sleeves, a circumstance which annoyed him very much in preaching. He was always trying to lengthen his arms by attempting to force his coat sleeves upward he never could accomplish. In after years, he completely remedied this defect by wearing a coat with sleeves adapted to the length and size of his arms. He was modest, unassuming and very companionable; he had intellect and learning and used them judiciously. His preaching qualities were above mediocrity, but he never assumed to know it. The people of Walnut Hill, Prairie, Ill., appreciated his worth and called him to become their pastor. He accepted and served them faithfully until he thought it prudent to be the successor of the Rev. Gilbert McMaster, D.D., at Princeton, Indiana, where perhaps a year ago his earthly career terminated.

The Rev. Andrew Black was born at Pittsburg, Pa., being a son of Dr. Black who resided there. He commenced preaching when very young; he was exceedingly nearsighted, being compelled to use continually double concave glasses to enable him to distinguish his surrounding, but if nature by malformation of his visual organs had given him distorted images of external things, or rather no images at all, she had ample compensation by the bestowal of superior mental endowments. The ingenuity of man has invented an effectual remedy for the defective vision with which he was affected, but if mind be wanting no adequate substitute has ever been found; careful study and untiring intellectual culture developed his natural capacities into the most energetic powers; hence those nice discriminations; that richness of diction, those beautiful thoughts, that incomparable

freshness of expression and that superior polish and finish which characterized all his pulpit exhibitions. But Death loves a shining mark, and in a few years, the King of terrors claimed him as a victim. He passed away and over his mortal remains for half a century the wailing winds have sung their requiem.

Among the first Covenanters who settled on the Beaver Dam Creek was Paul Guthrie, of Lancaster County, Penna. He raised a very respectable family of sons and daughters. Mrs. Mary Sledge of Chester, Mrs. Dr. J(?) Hicklin of Basconville, Mrs. Ellen Graybell of Mecklenburg, N. C., Miss S. Jane & Mr. R. B. Guthrie of Guthriesville, S. C., are his grandchildren.

The territory occupied by the Covenanters was perhaps 15 miles in length and from 4 to 10 in width. Within this same area and in close proximity to them, many Associate Reformed and General Assembly Presbyterians. These to their silent Sabbaths, worshipped with the Covenanters; but the latter did not reciprocate the favor, occasional hearing being with them a censurable offence; and if persisted in, the offender was rebuked, suspended and expelled. "You may come to us", said Rev. McGarrah to his very near Associate Reformed neighbor, Mr. John Lynn, "but we will not go to you". Mr. Lynn, whose brother was Mr. McGarrah's son-in-law, thought this a "hard saying".

Near the center of their territory, on the East side of Big Rocky Creek, was the residence of the Rev. Thomas Donnelly; and for the size of it, his plantation was the best on the creek. The narrator was intimate with the family. Necessity compelled him to play pedagogue for thirty years, during eight of these he taught a flourishing English and Classical school at Cedar Shoals Academy, six miles East of Mr. Donnelly's home. Early in the morning, of the day, appointed for one of his examinations, Mr. Donnelly put in his appearance to the no small terror of those who thought they had a trying ordeal to pass on that occasion. He was welcomed by the teacher and invited to take a chair. The examination proceeded and by and by the teacher requested Mr. Donnelly to propound the questions and take the examination pretty much in his own hand. He did so, and in a short time his gentle manner and encouraging words had won their way to every heart. Confidence took the place of fear and pleasure beamed from every countenance. At the close, a little girl between 6 and 7 years of age read a chapter in the Bible so admirably as to cause the "old veteran of the Cross" to bring his hands together and shout, "well done". The spectators, the patrons, the pupils and the teacher went home delighted with the visit of Mr. Donnelly.

To many, a Covenanter always has been, and is yet a creature of the imagination. A Presbyterian elderly man, a Mr. Frazer had occasion to visit Catholic Church on business. He lodged with a family living near Mr. Donnelly's. Incidentally the name and calling of the Covenanter neighbor became the theme of conversation. "A Covenanter", said Mr. Frazer, "is something I have never seen and which I know nothing". "I must see him" and suiting his action to the word paid Mr. Donnelly a visit. After a few general remarks, he made known his business and requested Mr. Donnelly to give him a brief outline of this Creed.

Mr. Donnelly, in a summary manner, ran over the 23 chapters of the Westminster Confession of Faith, bringing out the doctrinal points in bold relief, mentioned the Catechisms, Shorter and Longer, advented to their church polity including Synods, Presbyterian, and Church Sessions, and the Directory for public and private worship and was silent. "Why", exclaimed Mr. Frazer, "you would make a first rate Presbyterian". "Yes", replied Mr. Donnelly, "a Presbyterian of the first water"!

The narrator adds, "The fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, do they live forever?"

Mary J. Elser

January 28, 1886.

Cemetery Marker

A South Carolina Historical Marker was placed near the Mitford-Stover cross-roads last Friday. The inscription reads: "Here lie buried many of the Scotch-Irish pioneers, who, in 1772 under the leadership of Rev. William Martin, founded one of the first Covenant churches in upper South Carolina. Erected November 13, 1959."

In behalf of the community, Mrs. Rob McDonald placed a wreath at the base of the marker, in memory of the late Matthew Henry White of Chester, who had worked toward getting the marker. It was also sponsored by the Mitford-Stover Development Club.

