



May 10, 2013

To Whom it May Concern:

I have been made aware of Crooked Run Church's desire to remove the old church building off its property since it is no longer needed in the church's operation. As the museum director for the county and because of my concern for the demise of sites representing our early heritage, I visited the churchyard one Sunday afternoon recently. As cemeteries are so intriguingly full of information about Fairfield County's early settlers, I examined the names and "stories" on the tombstones. Sometimes, I guess it seems that I have a tendency to have private conversations with these symbols of the spirits of our predecessors, out of my devotion to learning about the families who came before us. Some of my own ancestors settled in that very same area of the county and one was scalped by Indians.

The overwhelming thought flowed in my mind that afternoon that some of these early graves mark the resting places for the people who lovingly built the old church. Generations of their offspring remained in the community worshipping at the place that represents the sweat of their brows. Our forefathers wrested their livelihoods out of the wilderness which was then Fairfield County and such structures as this old church represent their last whisperings of the struggles and ordeals they had to contend with in the olden times.

As I have been trying to help Crooked Run to save the building by searching for potentially interested individuals who may be able to remove the church intact to a receptive location, it is my fervent prayer that the members of the church not consider the exchange of a small monetary gain which would amount only to a drop in the deep well of your community's heritage. Instead of allowing the church to be dismantled for salvage, please allow me to appeal to several people who could possibly muster the resources that will be necessary for the careful removal and reconstruction of the church on a suitable site within the county or neighborhood.

If the congregation will allow a little more time to help in finding a way to save the building, I pledge my

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devotion to doing whatever I can to help. I have no available resources to contribute to the effort, but, if anyone from the communities will remember, back in the late 1990s, I was able to find the resources to help Mr. Willie M. Blair restore his ancient and very important old family home in the Simpson community. This structure dated back to the late 1700s and was used as a stagecoach stop in the community. It had come into terrible condition from neglect and, by most peoples' standards, should have been torn down for the vandalism and decay it exhibited. Somehow, I was able to arrange for the necessary reconstruction of the structure and it is now proudly occupied by a professional historian from the university. It was a long process though, and I hope that Crooked Run can see the advantage of allowing someone to try to preserve the history of this beautiful little country church.

Sincerely,

Pelham Lyles

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