

## North of the Broad River

## Cedar Creek

## Crooked Run Primitive Baptist Church

Below the old Stephen Smith homestead (old Doctor Lever home) Little and Big Cedar Creek join to form Cedar Creek. This combined creek flows for a couple of miles and joins Broad River near the old Southern Railroad station of Montgomery.

On a rocky hill just below the junction of Cedar Creek with Broad River, there is a small graveyard. Only two graves in this graveyard are marked: Sarah C. Bell, wife of Asa Bell, died September 5, 1845, aged 38 years 7 months; John Bell, son of Asa Bell, died October 4, 1845, aged 11 years. These marked graves and two or more unmarked graves occupy the southeast corner of an area approximately 60 by 100 feet that was marked off by a shallow ditch. This ditch was probably considerably deeper at one end and served as a drainage ditch. It is postulated that this area might at one time had a small church or home near this graveyard. At about the time of these burials, there was a schism in the Baptist Church and Asa Bell was a leading figure in this dissension.

On February 1, 1840, a minority left the Salem Covenant of the Baptist Church at the mouth of Little Cedar (sic) Creek and came out of there as a Primitive Baptist Church. Under this date, there is entered in the church minutes a statement of the beliefs of this group, and the intention of organizing itself into the Crooked Run Baptist Church. This group declared a disassociation from the "regular Baptists" of the parent church, Twenty-five Mile (later Sandy Level) Baptist Church. The following members of Twenty-five Mile Church declared their intention of going with the new church; and on March 7, 1840, were taken into the new church:

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The meetings usually included preaching and "exhortations" (exhortations). Asa Bell acted as preacher; Vincent Bell was a deacon with a license to preach; M. McGraw was the clerk with a license to preach and to lead the exhortations. The congregation was in correspondence with Ararat on Twenty-five Mile Creek, and together these churches attempted to raise five dollars in an abortive attempt to establish a Primitive Baptist Church near Aiken. The last minutes of the Crooked Run Primitive Baptist Church were written on Saturday, April 30, 1853, by William Nelson as clerk and Daniel Wootan as moderator. Several lines were skipped and this note reads: "By death and removal the Crooked Run Church was broken down!"<sup>1</sup>

The relationship of the Crooked Run Primitive Baptist Church and the present Crooked Run Baptist Church cannot be established - and probably there was no relationship except in name. On the front of the present Crooked Run Baptist Church is this plaque: "Organized at Crane Creek and moved here from Cedar Creek on September 28, 1836. This building erected 1826 and known as the Meeting House in Hendrix Old Field. Remodeled in stone in 1944!"

Fitz Hugh McMaster gives this account: the Rev. John Nicholas Martin, an early German Lutheran minister, preached overmost of Fairfield County and established Auf der Morven, an interdenominational meeting house in the southwestern part of the county, later the site of the present Crooked Run Church.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MS Minutes of Crooked Run Primitive Baptist Church, South Caroliniana Library.

<sup>2</sup> Fitz Hugh McMaster, History of Fairfield County, P.74