

The following article was written by Daniel G. Stinson and compiled and sent to us by Richard L. McDonald of Champaign, Illinois who is a great, great, great grandson of the Reverend Thomas Donnelly.

#### A SKETCH OF THE COVENANTERS ON ROCKY CREEK, S. C.

The earliest settlement of this part of Chester county took place in 1750 and 1751, 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 David Wilson's, at the mouth 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.\* (\*Mrs. Ellett's "Women of the Revolution," 3rd vol., article "Catherine Steele.") In 1755 there was a considerable increase in the settlement; and also by correspondence to Ireland there commenced an immigration by the way of Charlestown. The settlers were a mixed mass as to religion; they were Reformed and Presbyterian, and Seceders.

Rev. William Richardson, of Waxhaw, was the only minister within a hundred miles. They applied to him to supply them with preaching; he consented, and directed them to build a church, as he would preach for them on week days. The first preaching day was on Monday; he named the church (which they had built according to his directions) Catholic. It is situated fifteen miles south-east from Chester Court House, near the Rocky Mount road.\* (\*Dr. Howe's "History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina.")

Rev. William Martin emigrated from Ireland at least as early as 1772; he was the first covenanting preacher in the settlement. I have in my possession, from Henry and Margaret Malcolm, a letter written to their 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 30th, 1773, County Antrim, Ireland, in answer to one from his son-in-law, John Lin. 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 John Cochrane had the occasion of all their trouble." I suppose that 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, a hundred acres to each head of a family, and fifty to each member. Those who had means bought from the old settlers. Rev. William Martin bought from William Stroud a plantation one mile square, six hundred and forty 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 two miles east of Catholic on the Rocky Mount road, near the house now occupied by Mrs. James Barber Ferguson. It is described as having been a log building; was burnt down by the British in 1780.\* (\*Mrs. Ellett's "Women of the Revolution," 3d vol., article "Nancy Green," also Dr. Howe's "History of the Presbyterian Church," article "Mary Barkley.") After Martin was released by Cornwallis at Winnsboro, owing to the disturbed state of the country, he went to Mecklenburg, N. C. There he met a Mr. Grier, also a refugee, from Georgia, whose child Isaac he baptized. Isaac was said to have been the first Presbyterian minister born in Georgia. He was afterwards minister at Sharon, Mecklenburg county. He was the father of Robert Calvin Grier, who was president for many years of Erskine College, Due West, and his son, William Moffatt Grier, is now president of that college.

After the war, when Mr. Martin returned to Rocky Creek, he was employed as supply at Catholic for three years. He was dismissed by the people of Catholic on account of becoming intemperate. He, however,

stand or

did not quit preach. g. He preached at a school house at Edward McDaniel's, about a mile or two west of the place, at which a brick church was afterwards built. He also went down to Jackson's creek in Fairfield, and preached there. I recollect that Richard 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 William Hicklin, who had moved from Rocky Creek to Lancaster. He frequently preached at other places, often at private houses. A congregation afterwards built him a church two miles east from the site of the one formerly burnt down near the Rocky Mount road, on a beautiful hill, in rear of what was called Earle's House, in a fine grove of trees. The lands are now all cleared up, and there is a negro house now on top of that hill, where the church once stood. 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 after that lived in a log cabin. He sold his plantation for six hundred dollars, one hundred to be paid yearly. After his death his widow received the payments. He had been three times married, but left no children living. His only daughter, married to John McCaw, had died before him. Shortly after his coming to this country he took up about four hundred acres of vacant land, which he made a present to his nephews, David and William Martin. The land is now owned by Mrs. Gaston. Mr. Martin often staid 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 on a day in which he came in company with some wagons. It was a wet day. My mother, with the assistance of two negro women, got him to the back door, and bringing him in put him to bed. She came out, I remember, with a very long face. The last visit he ever made to my father's, after crossing the creek at Stroud's mill, in some way he got his horse's head turned up the creek by a path. He fell off in a branch; being old and feeble he was unable to rise. He was found by Mr. Thralekill; was said to be in the act of praying when found. Mr. Thralekill 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, and spoke of the crossing of Jordan. My mother became alarmed and sent for my father, thinking Mr. Martin was near his death. But he recovered and became able to walk. My father mounted him on a horse and took him home. He soon became again confined to his bed, and died in about six months, in the year 1806. He was buried in a graveyard near his own house. Whether there is a stone to mark it, I do not recollect, though I have seen the grave. He was a large, heavy man. By those who knew him, he was said to have been an able divine. He came from County Antrim, Ireland. In the same party with him came my father and his brother, James Stinson, then called Stevenson; William Anderson and his wife, Nancy; Alex. Brady and his wife, Elizabeth; I think the Linns, and possibly the Kells. Mr. Martin owned two negroes, I recollect, Savannah and Bob by name; so did some others of the congregation. Some who owned slaves refused, in 1800, to submit to the regulations made by McKinney and Wylie, believing that the Scriptures justified the possession of the heathen, whom they as teachers were civilizing and christianizing. It would be, they thought, as cruel to free them as to turn a child out to buffet with the world.

The next minister of the Covenanters was Rev. Wm. McGarragh. In 1791 he settled on the north side of the Beaver Dam, a branch of Big Rocky Creek. His first wife died shortly after his coming, leaving one daughter, who was married to Henry Linn. Mr. McGarragh marrying badly

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John  
of  
Chester  
McCaw  
or  
York McC

(with 2 negroes -  
taken from 2  
negro women)

(My Father  
owned three)

(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 S.C.  
written by Mr. Faris, a son he supposed of the Rev.  
Jas. Faris, a native of S.C. These Reminiscences were pub-  
lished in "The Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter,"

(manuscript from Fittsburg, PA.)