

## ***HISTORY – LITTLE RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH***



In the year 1762, Mr. Jacob Gibson moved from Virginia to South Carolina and settled in Fairfield County near Little River. In 1768 he built a small log church. Formally dedicated in 1771 and known as Gibson's Meeting House, it was the first Baptist church in Fairfield County. Mr. Gibson served as its Pastor from 1771 to 1790. In connection with the church, Mr. Gibson had a school, perhaps the first free school in the county.

In 1855 it was decided to build a new House of Worship. Mr. J. G. O'Neal donated the site on which to build the new church, some two and one-half miles from Gibson's Meeting House. The sanctuary, which is the one presently in use, was erected under the supervision of Mr. Jacob Bookman.

The building was finished in 1857. A marble-top communion table of crotch mahogany (still in use today) and an empire-style sofa were the main features of the furnishings. The inside walls were of white painted plaster, and the benches were dark mahogany in color. Another feature of the sanctuary was a low wall some three feet in height, extending through the center of the building from the front benches to the wall separating the auditorium from the front porch. As was the custom in those days, females entered the door at the right and seated themselves on the right-hand side of the wall and males entered the left door and seated themselves on that side of the barrier. When the church was restored, a portion of the wall near the entrance doors, was removed so that persons may now move freely from one side to the other in that area.