

Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Church  
A Short History  
Compiled by W. F. Kitchens (1911-1996)  
(date written unknown; abt 1982)

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The Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Church, located in Southwestern Jefferson County on Adger Route two is an impressive old building. It is on a ridge in a small valley overlooking Mud Creek, the winding stream that gives it its name. Mud Creek meanders to the northeast to run into Valley Creek not far from the Warrior River.

On each side of the church, east and west, are two deep hollows down which trickles the runoff from two springs that figure in the history of the Church.

In the early eighteen hundreds, restless white settlers found this pleasant valley and built homes in and around it. They were a part of the wave of settlers that moved into the newly formed Alabama Territory and very shortly turned it into a state, being joined by other pioneers. They came principally from Virginia and the Carolinas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia.

The first white settlers arrived in Jefferson County about the year 1815 and settled in Jones Valley. Elyton and Jonesboro became centers of population from which the settlers fanned out to take up land in the rugged wilderness. It is from these hardy people that the settlement of Mud Creek began. Early census records show a much larger Mud Creek Precinct than the community we know today as Mud Creek indicating that the name had become a political entity at a very early time.

These early settlers brought their God with them or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they recognized the fact that He was with them. Soon after arriving in Jones Valley the people began building churches in which to worship Him. It is interesting to note that no people could better qualify for the sometimes maligned title of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

Among those settlers were some who brought slaves when they came or acquired them afterwards. William Wood and Curtis Howton were two slave holders who figured in the history of Mud Creek Church in different ways. Church records indicate that at least two other families held one or more slaves. Three women "of color" were received into the Church, two by experience and one by letter. There are two reports of the latter, one of which says that she also was received by experience.

Church membership would dictate that the Blacks be baptized and attend the Church services. We are told that the slaves sat in the back of the Church. This was not an unusual custom. In the larger churches, "slave lofts" were provided in the rear of the auditorium.

The Mud Creek Church property lies in the southwest quarter of section three, township nineteen, range six west, astride the north-south line that divides the quarter section, in the south half.

The west half of the quarter section was originally patented to William Clark, while the east half was patented to William Wood. Eventually William Wood came into possession of the Clark land.

The Church Spring was originally known as the Clark Spring. From this spring a branch runs to the southwest and crosses the southern boundary of the quarter section.

Somewhat to the southeast of the Clark Springs and across the previously mentioned north-south line, also known as the Wood's line is the Old Wood's Spring, now known as the Hen Spring. The branch from this spring runs southward bearing slightly to the west to cross the southern boundary of the quarter section at a point a few feet west of the north-south line.

Almost on a straight line from the Wood's Spring to the Clark Spring was the Billy Wood cotton house. This log building was said to have been used as a meeting house for the slaves. Another source says that this building was used for the first church services for the whites.

Before the Mud Creek Church was established some of the people went to church at Rock Creek and even as far as Tuscaloosa. To get to Tuscaloosa they would cross the Warrior River and go downriver on the Walker County side. These visits would require several days and would provide an opportunity for kinfolk and friends to get together. This custom lasted for many years.

The original records of the Mud Creek Church were made by W. D. T. Culbertson, husband of Narcissa, sister of William Wood. Culbertson was chosen clerk of the organizational meeting and retained the office of clerk in the Church until 1844 when he moved with his family to Winston County, Mississippi.

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The records kept by Culbertson were said to be excellent in detail and penmanship. They were lost, however, in a fire that destroyed the home of W. B. Parsons in 1922. Fortunately extracts of some of those records are extant.

A brief commentary on the founding of Mud Creek Church is found in Hosea Holcombe's History of the Baptist in Alabama.

It reads as follows:

Mud Creek, Jefferson County, established in April 1837, by Elders Jesse Seal and H. H. Rockett, of 16 members. Mr. Rockett was called to the pastorate, and served them about 12 months, when J. M. Brown was set apart by ordination and became their pastor, but has very recently emigrated to the state of Mississippi. O. Franklin is a licensed minister in this church.

The above note on Owen Franklin fits an item in family history which states that Owen Franklin was the third pastor of the Church.

Following are some extracts from the original records concerning the organization:

State of Alabama, Jefferson County, April 1 to 18, 1837

1. The brethren Hosea H. Rockett and Jesse Seal met at Mud Creek Meeting and proceeded to constitute the undernamed brethren into a gospel church and finding them orderly and orthodox succeeded in accomplishing the object. Afterwhich Brother Seal acted as Moderator and Brother W. D. T. Culbertson appointed Clerk.
2. Agreed that the Church be called Mud Creek Church of Christ of United Baptist.
3. Brother Joseph M. Brown called to the work of Deacon.
4. Adjourned until Saturday before the first Lord's Day in May

Names of those brethren who came into the Constitution:

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Joseph P. Woodson | 8. W. D. T. Culbertson     |
| 2. Nancy Woodson     | 9. Narcissa Culbertson     |
| 3. Wych Goodwin      | 10. Elizabeth Johnson      |
| 4. Tabitha Goodwin   | 11. William Wood           |
| 5. Mark Goodwin      | 12. Randolph Johnson       |
| 6. Jane Brown        | 13. Curtis Howton          |
| 7. Joseph M. Brown   | 14. Dorcas Howton          |
|                      | 15. Thomas Burchfield, Sr. |

It seems probable that item four in the above is out of context or misquoted as there were other meetings in the session.

The date of April 1 to 18 indicates that there was an enormous amount of preparatory work by the Presbytery of Rockett and Seal, Missionary Pastors of the Canaan Association, before the task of organizing the Church was complete. This culmination of their labors must have taken place during the third weekend of April and included Monday and Tuesday of the following week. Some historians quote April 16 as the day that Mud Creek Church became an autonomous body. According to a calendar check, April in 1837 came in on Saturday. April 16 was the third Sunday in the month. Since in the early days Saturday was used for Church services and business meetings, we can safely assume that the organizational work was begun on that day. Naturally, to, some of the time would have been devoted to singing, praying, preaching, and "dinner on the ground".

There was a meeting in the session in which a compact called the Solemn Covenant of Mud Creek Church of Christ of United Baptist with an Abstract of Principles was adopted.

Following is the text of the Covenant with the Abstract of Principles:

Whereas, it is the incumbent duty of those who are favored with a dispensation of the Grace of God, to embrace His Covenant, acknowledge His Government, profess His name, and unite in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, we whose names are hereunto annexed do now in the presence of the Great Eternal God who knows the secrets of all hearts and in the presence of Angels and men acknowledge ourselves under the most solemn obligation to be the Lord's and do solemnly agree to keep up and maintain a regular Gospel Discipline among ourselves by the help and assistance of the Holy Spirit. And we further pledge ourselves to attend to the following Abstract of Principles.

1. We believe in the only true and living God and that there are three persons in the Godhead, i.e. the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. 1 John 5:7
2. We believe that the Old and New Testaments are the words of God and the only words of Faith and Life. 2 Tim. 3:16, Isa. 8:20.
3. We believe in God's free Electing Love through Jesus Christ and that all God's chosen peoples shall be called regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Eph. 1: 4-5.
4. We believe in the Doctrine of Original Sin. Isa. 51., Rom. 3:11.
5. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature by his own free will and ability. John 6:44, Eph 2:8.
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the imputed righteousness of Christ. Rom. 4:6.
7. We believe that the saints shall persevere in Grace and never fall finally away. John 6:39., 1 Pet. 1:5.
8. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are Gospel Ordinances and that true believers are the subjects of these Ordinances and that the only Gospel mode of Baptism is by immersion and that no person has a right to the Lord's Supper until he has been regularly baptized on profession of his faith. Acts 8:38, and 10:47.
9. We believe in the resurrection of the Dead and in a general Judgement. John 5:28-29.
10. We believe that the punishment of the wicked and the joys of the righteous saints will be eternal. Mat 25:46.
11. We believe in the right to assemble ourselves together often to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Heb. 10:25.
12. We believe it right to maintain the Gospel by supporting the ministers and setting them at liberty. 1 Cor. 9:14., Lev. 10:7.
13. We believe it to be our duty particularly to respect and submit to civil government as an ordinance of God.
14. We believe in the observance of the Sabbath day to be of moral obligation and that it is our indispensable duty to lay aside all unnecessary secular concerns, restraining our families from profaning that Holy Day and instruct them to attend to the duties of religion. Ex 20:8., Isa. 50:2.

Adopted by members of the church, whose names are hereunto annexed.

Names of Males:

Names of Females:

John P. Woodson  
Wyche Goodwin  
Mark “  
Joseph M. Brown

Nancy Woodson  
Tabitha Goodwin  
Jane Brown  
Elizabeth Johnson

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W. D. T. Culbertson  
William Wood  
Randolph Johnson  
Curtis Howton  
Thomas Birchfield, Sr.

Narcissa Culbertson  
Dorcas Howton

Apparently there was another meeting as the record continues:

The church being called to order, Bro. Seal was chosen Moderator and Bro. Culbertson (was) chosen Clerk.

(It was) Moved and seconded that the church be called Mud Creek Baptist Church.

(Conference) Adjourned to meet the first Saturday in May.

The records continuing:

Saturday, May 6, 1837

(The church) met (in conference) according to appointment. After singing and prayer by Bro. Brown, Bro. Brown was chosen Moderator, after which a door was opened for the reception of members. Bro. William G. Forbus came forward and put himself under the watch-care of the church until he could get a letter of dismission from the church to which he belongs. After which the church unanimously adopted the following

#### Rules of Decorum

1. A Moderator shall be chosen at the discretion of the members present, whose duty it shall be to attend to the following rules.
  - (a) The Moderator shall invite visiting brethren to take seats with us, etc.
  - (b) There shall be a door opened for the reception of members and stand open until the close of the meeting of each conference.
  - (c) Each conference shall commence at eleven o'clock A.M. by singing and prayer.
2. The Moderator shall be considered a judge of order in conference and shall be allowed the same liberty of speech as any other member, but shall not vote on any question unless the church be equally divided.
3. Every motion made and seconded shall come under consideration of the conference and after sufficient time being given for debate it shall be decided on unless withdrawn by him that made it.
4. A majority shall rule in all cases except cases touching fellowship.
5. But one member shall speak at a time who shall rise to his feet and address the brethren.
6. No member shall be interrupted while speaking unless he depart from the subject or use words of personal reflection.
7. No member shall speak more than twice to any subject without leave of (the Moderator) conference.
8. The appellation of Brother shall be used in conference.
9. Any member absenting himself during conference without leave of the Moderator shall be deemed in disorder and shall be dealt with accordingly.

Elder Hosea Holcombe of Canaan Church evidently thought that William Forbus, mentioned above was one of the charter members as he stated in his community that the Church was established with sixteen members. It has been suggested that Holcombe was one of the presbytery, however, that is

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unlikely since he was not mentioned in any of the available records of the proceedings, then too in his commentary he gave credit to Rockett and Seal. He could have had a part in the preliminary work.

Elder Holcombe was present at Mud Creek Church in the 1840 meeting of the Canaan Association.

Below is a copy of the 1840 minute which was brought back to Mud Creek Church in 1957 by the great-grand daughter of W. D. T. and Narcissa Culbertson. Miss Mary Lyn Holman of Noxapater, Miss.

The Minute:

Sat., July 4, 1840 the delegates met at Mud Creek meeting house according to previous appointment.

Elder H. Holcombe appointed moderator and Bro. Culbertson clerk.

Called for letters from the Churches comprising Dist. of Canaan Association.

From Canaan Church:

Elder H. Holcombe

A. J. Holcombe

From Rock Creek Church:

B. Gilbert

Wm G. Ford, Sr.

Wm Travis

From Union Church:

(So dim can't read)

From Liberty Church:

Amos Lee

From Mud Creek Church:

O. Franklin, Sr.

R. Jackson

W. D. T. Culbertson

1. Resolved that the union proceed to appoint the place of holding the Association for the year 1841, to be holden with Roupe's Valley Church near Bucksville, Saturday before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in September.

2. Resolved that the union meeting for 1841 be held with Canaan Ch. on Friday before the fourth Sabbath in July.

3. The following query was introduced and discussed.

Query: In what light ought a member of a Baptist Church be viewed who is in good circumstances in life and should refuse to take under his roof for the night, a traveling ministering Brother, out on a tour of preaching, having no other reason to assign, than, that, he didn't like to be troubled by travelers. A. J. H. (Holcomb).

Ans: We do not believe that any professor of religion who will under such circumstances refuse the hospitality of his house has any just claim to the character of a Christian.

Request the Association to spread the above query and answer on the minutes of the Association.

Three slave women accepted into the Church were as follows:

Caty Wood (col.) received by experience Aug. 5, 1837, dismissed Aug. 1839, by letter.

Polly Ann Johnson, received by experience, Oct. 1844, dismissed Oct. 1844, by letter. One account is that she was received by letter. She was a half sister to Harriet Howton (col.)

Sarah Cowen (col.), received by experience May, 1860, dismissed by letter 1869. She was known as Tito's Sarah because she was married to Titus, a slave of Jonathan Howton.

It is quite evident that William Wood provided land for Church use. although his reservations apparently were oral arrangements with the Church or its trustees. This opinion will be discussed more fully.

Originally Wood made three reservations, one was for a tract of land lying between the Clark Spring Branch and the Wood Spring Branch, seven acres more or less. As has been pointed out this land lay astride the north-south line between the two quarter-quarter sections of the southwest quarter of section three. The bulk of this land lay to the west of the north-south line on what was originally the Clark land. This north-south line is also known as the William Wood line. The northern boundary was a line from the Clark Spring to the Wood Spring. The southern boundary was the east-west line of the quarter section on the south.

Of the two other reservations, one was for a white cemetery west of the Clark Spring Branch and the other was for a slave cemetery east of the Wood Spring Branch. Neither of these cemeteries joined the land between the branches.

The first burial in the Negro cemetery is said to have been a man slave of Billy Wood. His grave, in the northwest quarter corner of the cemetery, was marked by a cedar cross that stood there for many years. The cemetery is still used by descendants of the Wood and Howton Negroes and others who keep it up and manage it.

The old white cemetery is the burial place of many of the earliest settlers, including at least four of the charter members of the Church, William Wood, Thomas Birchfield, Sr., Curtis and Dorcas Howton.

The William Wood reservations were, according to available information, made in 1837, however there was no transfer of title to the Mud Creek Church until Oct. 18, 1845 when Joab Bagley, Administrator, made such a conveyance which was filed Nov. 7, 1905. This warranty deed, however, consisted of four acres more or less lying between the Clark Spring Branch and the William Woods line. It did not mention the white cemetery and went due east from the Clark Spring to the Billy Wood line (William Woods line in the instrument). The boundary on the south remained the east-west line of the quarter section of the south. This deed, also ignored all of the original reservation that lay east of the William Wood line, including the slave cemetery. These omissions remain something of a mystery and will remain so unless new and different information comes to light.

If we cannot answer questions about why the omissions were made in the conveyance, we may suggest some possible reasons why, however academic it may be at this time.

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The William Wood line at the time the deed was made lay to the east of the present church and east of the road to the church property. Except for a small bit of level land between the Wood line and the Wood Spring at the northeast end of the property the land would have been of little use to the Church considering the depth of the Wood Spring Branch. The loss of this corner was at least partially compensated for by running the boundary due east from the Clark Spring rather than southeasterly as it was originally. There was also a small corner on the south as the Wood line intersected the east-west line to the east of the intersection made by the branch.

The transaction looks more like a change of mind on the part of William Wood than a mistake on the part of the Administrator.

Presumably the trustees of the Church, Thomas Burchfield and Raleigh Stone knew what was going on as did W. D. T. Culbertson who witnessed the proceedings. Billy Wood then was only a sprightly seventy years old.

Wood could have second thoughts about the matter because of proximity of the church property with his dwelling house and the water supply.

The Billy Wood house was four room log house with a leanto and rock chimneys, was located some one hundred yards northeast of the spring.

The 1845 deed (See Appendix B - *not included in this copy*) became a matter of record and as such the reservation has been preserved through a sequence of deeds.

As for the cemeteries, both have been preserved intact. The white cemetery was joined to the main body of church land by deed August 27, 1898 by G. W. Raney and wife. This deed included the cemetery (Old cemetery) and the area between it and the Clark Spring Branch. From the southwest corner of the church property an acre of ground was deeded to G. W. Raney and wife by Deacons of Mud Creek Baptist Church in exchange for the property deeded to the church.

The first church was built in 1837 of hewn and notched logs. (see sketch - *not included in this copy*). It was located on the ridge about the center of the New Cemetery and was said to have faced the west. It seems more likely that this building faced in a northwesterly direction. As late as the late 1940 years, a road ran by the present building on the north and down the rim of the Clark Spring Branch to the floor of the valley where it proceeded westward to a crossing on Mud Creek. Many of the early settlers had homes across the creek from the church. At the foot of the hill and just across the Spring Branch, J. W. Stringfellow and Ben Johnson had a steam cotton gin in the early nineteen hundreds. Downstream from the creek crossing was a watermill that was noted in a 1901 deed from G. W. Raney to J. W. Stringfellow in an exception.

The log church is said to have been used for the first township school. It is not known how long the log church was used but eventually a framed, weather-boarded house was built which was also used as a school. This house was used as a church until 1887 when a house was built with an upper floor to be used as a Lodge Hall for Masons. This building faced as did the log house. A painting of it hangs in the church auditorium. This building was not used as a school.

The previous building remained in use as a school until the county built a new building about where the table now stands.

The present church was constructed in 1905-1906 at a cost of \$1310.50. It had a very steep roof and a second story which was used as a Lodge Hall. In recent years the roof was modified to a lower pitch and Sunday School rooms were annexed.

About mid 1930 the Masons allowed the upper floor to be used as Sunday School rooms. After the Lodge was moved from Mud Creek the upper floor was remodeled to provide for social activities as well as Sunday School classes.

There is now a separate structure for social activities.

Near the church on Mud Creek are at least three "baptizing holes" that hve been used from early times. One, the nearest to the church, is just above where Big Branch runs into Mud Creek. There are some huge shelves of rock that jut out into the creek. This historic spot narrowly missed being destroyed by a Peabody Coal Company haul road. Just above the iron bridge at the foot of Celia Ann Hill is another

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place and there is another below the Jeff Cowen house in the curve of the road. There is now a baptistery in the church.

At its inception Mud Creek Baptist Church became a member of the Canaan Association. Presumably the Church was tended by pastors from within the Canaan Association. Because of poorly kept and poorly preserved records our knowledge of these early pastors is sketchy. Fortunately because of the great Hosea Holcombe's commentary on Mud Creek Church and some family history we know the names of the first three pastors. Incidentally, Holcombe's visit to Mud Creek in 1840 came about a year before his death.

Henry G. Smith was one of the pioneer preachers of the period. He is reported to have had a circuit extending from Mud Creek to Mt. Pinson which included Rock Creek and Village Creek. He is mentioned as being the pastor of Mud Creek Church during the years of 1850 to 1865. He is said to have made the distance on foot.

The Reverend P. A. D. Smith is recognized as one of the post Civil War pastors of this locality. He is reported to have come to Mud Creek in June of 1865 when the people were in a quandary as to whether they could continue with preaching services because their men and resources were gone.

Brother Smith responded to this line of thinking with "we can do without anything and everything better than we can afford to do without preaching". His thinking prevailed and he preached the remainder of the year for one dollar and fifty cents plus three pairs of wool socks knit by Aunt Julia Franklin of hand carded, home grown wool. (The foregoing anecdote is found in History of Mud Creek Baptist Association by W. B. Parsons.)

A roster of pastors made from available information is supplied in the Appendices.

The Canaan Association was formed in 1833 out of a dispute with other members of the Mount Zion Association over the question of "corresponding" with the Baptist State Convention and the Baptist Tract Society. A resolution for the discontinuance of this correspondence was introduced in the 1833 Associational meeting at Canaan Meeting house and it prevailed. An hour after the adjournment of the meeting a group of churches led by Canaan met and formed the Canaan Association. A principal leader of this rebellion was none other than Elder Hosea Holcombe.

His has a way of repeating itself, to use a timeworn quotation, for it appears that differences over missions and the education of ministers came to a head in 1870 with a split between the urban and the rural churches.

Dr. M. M. Wood writing later on the question spoke of a feeling that had developed in the Canaan Association "that the urban churches and those in the rural districts did not have a common interest". The meaning of the above statement when stripped of its diplomatic language is simply that the rural churches did not believe strongly in missions and education. There was, however, a progressive strain in the rural churches which was to be exhibited later. Nevertheless in 1870 four churches including Mud Creek requested dismissal from the Canaan Association. The other three churches to withdraw were Roupe's Valley, Pleasant Grove, and Big Creek.

In 1871 other rural churches joined the above mentioned four at Mud Creek and formed the Mud Creek Baptist Association. The new Association passed a resolution opposing missions, education and Sunday Schools.

Unfortunately the minutes of the earlier years of the Association have been lost as has the Associational Record Book. As the Church Records were also lost it is difficult to get a clear picture of the character of the Church in all its different roles.

From the remnants of financial records we can gather that missions and ministerial education was at least on the agenda. Of thirty three entries from 1837 to 1911 there was an average of \$3.51 per year. Ministerial education got two entries of \$210 dollars each in 1898 and 1902. Pastor's salaries averaged less than thirty dollars per month until 1900 when they went to around \$100.

In 1885 Brother S. A. Parsons at the Associational Meeting being held at Mud Creek made a Sunday School Report in which he appealed to the Churches, as a part of their Christian duties, to maintain Sunday Schools.

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W. B. Parsons in the History of Mud Creek Association makes the following statement:

“My father was trying to have such a school as he describes in his report for 1885 at Mud Creek at that time. He kept up his work in a feeble way until 1893 when J. C. Gilmer, a graduate of Howard College, came to teach school in this community and to serve as pastor of the Church. He promoted Sunday School in a broader way.”

Gilmer was replaced by Miss Alice Huey as teacher of the school in 1901. Miss Huey was a graduate of Judson. She was instrumental in organizing a Baptist Young People’s Union at Mud Creek which made it the second Union in the Association.

In the 1890 Associational Meeting a resolution was passed that changed the name of the Association to Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Association. This, however, did not signify that the missions question in the Association was settled.

An amendment was offered and passed in the 1895 meeting providing that each church should have the right to enact and carry out missionary work in all of its aspects and that giving or withholding would not be a barrier to fellowship in the Association. This amendment replaced Article 15 which provided for the keeping of an Association Book. The reason for this is not known.

At the 1913 meeting of the Association at Big Creek an ambivalence was displayed on the question of missions. The Report on Home Missions called for co-operation of the Churches in helping the destitute around them while castigating the injudicious use of funds by the Convention and Boards.

The report on Foreign Missions was a stirring appeal for a greater effort in carrying the Gospel to foreign countries.

Both reports were adopted.

From this meeting came a resolution that all contributions to Foreign Missions be made directly to laborers in the field.

A study of the minutes discloses a growing problem in the manner of representation. The 1913 minutes, for example, show that out of eighteen churches reporting a total of 1475 members, six churches have almost two thirds of the total. The extremely low membership in some of the churches, no doubt, created a suspicion of collusion to gain voting strength in the Association.

The provision of delegations in the Constitution remained at three delegates for each church. This rule was to be challenged in the 1915 meeting.

The 1914 meeting at Rock Creek appears to have gone routinely. Liberty was chosen as the 1915 host.

The Association met as scheduled on October 13-14. This meeting was anything but routine. It appears to have been dominated by a faction labeled Landmarkers.

Mud Creek, Liberty and Oak Grove requested and were granted letters of dismissal. About one month later, November 12-13, these three churches joined by Parson’s Chapel met at Mud Creek Church in what they proclaimed was the Forty Fourth Annual Session of the Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Association.

A committee on Resolutions was formed, composed of Rev. D. W. Howton, Rev. A. L. Nichols, and Mr. W. B. Parsons. This Committee prepared a resolution which would divide the Association into two separate bodies, the Missionary and the Landmarker. They very carefully stated their reasons for breaking with the Landmark leaning faction.

They declared: (1) that there existed a difference of opinion among the member Churches of the Association as to a plan for spreading the Gospel. (2) that the issue to cooperate or not to co-operate with the Southern Baptist Convention had been forced, (3) that a resolution providing for representation based on Membership was rejected.

The Resolution is as follows:

Resolved, first, that we go on record as favoring the plans fostered by the greatest leaders and thinkers of our denominational work rather than be aligned with the agitation against co-operation as now being directed by the old anti-mission spirit that has during the history of the

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Association first openly denounced education and then opposed the establishment of denominational schools and theological seminaries and now, under the guise of believing in missions, opposes the convention plan and advocates dealing directly with the missionaries on the foreign field:  
and be it

Resolved, further, That the delegates from this and other churches originally comprising the Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Association be empowered to urge in the next meeting a friendly division of the territory now embraced by the thirty four churches and that the Association be petitioned to grant Mud Creek and as many other churches as may adopt these or similar resolutions letters of dismissal with the privilege of retaining the name that embraces the history of all church work in this section.

Adopted by,  
Name of Church

Mud Creek  
Oak Grove  
Liberty  
Parson's Chapel

Signed by,  
Name of Clerk

W. B. Parsons  
J. B. Knight  
Ira Hancock  
H. G. Parsons

Following is a copy of a resolution prepared by the Resolutions Committee which is far less conciliatory than the above. It seems likely that the entire body was unwilling to take the more independent course as recommended by the Resolutions Committee, yet for some unexplained reason the Committee resolution was put into the record of the meeting. It is also notable that Parson's Chapel was not included in the resolution.

#### Resolution

Whereas, On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1915, a part of the Mud Creek Baptist Association passed a resolution separating themselves from the convention system of missionary work, which we have supported for these many years;

Whereas, We believe the organized is the best and most progressive way of supporting the missionary movement,

Therefore, be it resolved, That we, the Mud Creek, Oak Grove and Liberty Missionary Baptist churches ignore the asking of letters of dismissal from that part of the Association that has departed from all of the progressive movements pertaining to the spirit of missionary work which we have maintained for several years. We believe it right to be missionaries in the broadest sense of the term.

We declare that the Landmark faction of the Mud Creek Missionary Association did on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1915, by adopting resolution offered by one (See F.N.) who was not a messenger to the Association, the legality of which act the Landmark faction did not question, separate themselves from the principles which we have supported or contended. Said resolution put a lock on the organized missionary work for all time to come. We denounce such reactionary movements as being detrimental to the missionary cause.

Therefore, upon the foregoing acts of Landmarkers we do hereby declare ourselves separated from them, and do further announce and continue as the (original) Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Association in her forty fourth annual session.

Signed.

D. W. Howton  
A. L. Nichols

W. B. Parsons

Committee on Resolutions

Following this ringing declaration of independence the Minutes offer the text of the obnoxious resolution.

Substance of the Resolution by (See F.N.) at Liberty

Resolved, That we, the Mud Creek Baptist Association, withhold all contributions from the Southern Baptist Convention, and also that we cut loose from the board now, henceforth and forever.

Note: After some deliberation I thought it kind and quite just to withhold the gentleman's name. I knew him and his family many years ago after he was old and sick. He was a dedicated Christian. My father was his pastor and visited him often.

W. F. K.

Some changes were made in the Constitution. Messengers would be from Missionary Baptist Churches and each Church would be entitled to three messengers for a membership of fifty or under while an additional messenger would be allowed for each additional twenty five members or major fraction thereof.

A resolution offered by D. W. Howton of Mud Creek Church and unanimously adopted provided that Churches from the Landmark faction might be accepted in the Association without letters of dismission from the Landmark faction.

The next session of this Association was to be held with Oak Grove Church on Friday and Saturday before the second Sunday in October, 1916. No record of this meeting has been found, however, the 1917 meeting held at Concord called itself the Forty Sixth Annual Session of the Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Association which indicates that there was a forty fifth session.

At the meeting held October, 12--13, were representatives of Concord, Liberty, Mud Creek and Oak Grove.

Low Gap, Parson's Chapel and Williamsburg were on the roll but not represented.

The next session of this Association was to be held with Liberty Baptist Church on Friday and Saturday before the second Sunday in October, 1918. There is no record that this meeting took place. Instead, fifteen of twenty four churches met at Williamsburg and making Rev. Amos Nichols the moderator proceeded to heal the wounds of the Association, but without Mud Creek.

Why Mud Creek did not return to the larger body when its allies did is not known. It remained outside the organization until 1922 when its name again appears on the roster of Churches.

There is a warm and friendly look about the old church. On the right front corner of the building a Jefferson County Historical Commission plaque reminds us that the church links us with the past. We can call to mind the parade of our countrymen, family and friends, through the church, about the grounds under the giant oak trees.

The long table under the trees speaks of hospitality and fellowship.

The exterior and the interior of the church have been changed since those early days but there remains enough of the old time look to excite precious memories. The church was genuinely for

community use. Children attending the school, a few yards away, played around the building. In inclement weather they played in it.

There were two, widely separated, front doors with glass transoms, each having a set of steps. Two aisles extended from the front of the building to the rostrum. They separated three tiers of benches that stretched toward the rostrum. Among the benches of the center tier were the three turned columns that now stand alone in the center aisle.

Going back through the years one can see the interior without the lowered ceiling and the paneled walls. The walls were wainscoted and papered. Large windows were set in both side walls and the back wall.

The rostrum was spacious. It was shaped as an octagon with five sides extending into the room. A handsome balustrade enclosed it. At each angle was a stanchion topped by a sphere several inches in diameter. This elaborately crafted balustrade was varnished in a dark oaken color that matched the brown of the wainscoting.

The pulpit assemblage was composed of three separate lecterns, a larger one flanked by two smaller ones. Two impressive pulpit chairs added to the dignity of the pulpit.

Records show the purchased of an organ in 1898 for fifty five dollars.

Lighting was at first by kerosene lamps. Most of the overall lighting was accomplished by lamps with reflectors that hung on the walls. In 1903 twenty one dollars was spent for a chandelier. It is not known if this was equipped with mantles.

Eventually the smoky wick burning types of lamps were largely replaced by lamps equipped with mantles, and gasoline burning lanterns.

On the preacher's right a stairway went to the upper floor. Along the wall created by enclosing the stairs were two short benches. This was the amen corner. Looking toward the front from the pulpit and to the left a little less than midway of the auditorium was a large cast iron stove. In very cold weather the preacher would find most of his congregation seated in that area.

In hot weather hand fans were used to keep the breezes stirring. There were dainty little folding fans, large and small palmetto fans, cardboard fans with religious pictures on one side and advertising on the other, and there were fans made of turkey wings.

Even in these primitive circumstances, the people found light, warmth, and comfort in the Spirit that inspired them to sing, pray, preach, and shout the Glory of God.

To have a Church in the community was a worthy achievement. As the Church extended its services from the sporadic once a month gatherings to half time and full time ministries it played an increasingly important role in the lives of the people.

Mud Creek Church has history to be proud of. It provided leadership in a young and expanding country. It has been an influence for good in the lives of many people and through them its influence has spread far and widely.

There is an annual homecoming locally known as Memorial Day at which time families and friends who have a common interest in the old church and its cemeteries return for a day of fellowship and to pay their respects to the dead.

Helping to insure that there will always be a well kept cemetery, a perpetual care arrangement was instituted Dec. 30, 1970.

List of Pastors

Appendix A

Beginning and subsequent years are assembled with as much accuracy as possible to a single name entry.

Pastors	Dates
Jesse Seal	1837
Joseph M. Brown	1838-39
Owen Franklin, Sr.	1840 and 1851. It is not known if this time was unbroken.

Some pastors who served in pre-Civil War times or during the war are as follows:

Henry G. Smith	
Solly Thompson	
J. I. Gilbert	Dates are unknown
J. I. Grimes	
Thomas Norwood	

P. A. D. Smith	1865
T. A. Norwood	1879
J. M. Knight	1880
J. A. Markham	1881-82
J. N. McFall	1883-84-85. 1889-90-91-92
J. I. Gilbert	1886-87-88
J. C. Gilmer	1893-94-95-96-97, 1901, 1906
J. D. Martin	1898-99, 1900
M. M. Wood	1902
A. F. Loftin	1903-04
M. T. Branham	1905
C. M. Cloud	1907
A. L. Nichols	1908-09-10, 1912
	1932, 1941-42
J. F. Parker	1911
W. T. Burchfield	1913-14-15, 1927-28, 1938

There is a hiatus in the record at this point concerning the period between 1915 and 1920. The next pastor mentioned in records available is Dr. M. M. Wood in 1920. There is a possibility that Rev. Burchfield was pastor in 1916 and 1917 or later while Dr. Wood could have become the pastor before 1920.

In 1920 Dr. Wood and Rev. J. O. Oaks, pastor of Oak Grove entered upon a plan to establish a full time field in the two Churches through a cooperative pastoral arrangement. This lasted two years, Rev. J. O. Oaks appears as pastor and moderator in Church conferences in 1921.

D. R. Jackson	1922-23-24-25-26, 1929-30, 1935-36-37
S. H. Knight	1933
D. G. Walls	1939
T. G. Roper	1940

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(date written unknown; abt 1982)

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L. M. Nichols	1941-42, 1949-50
Hezzie Parsons	1943
J. T. Thomas	1944
H. P. Mixon	1945-46
E. F. Hill	1947
Van Franklin	1952
Kyle Staggs	1953-54, 1956
J. W. Simmons	1955
T. R. Ricketts	1958-59-60-61
Vernon Williamson	1962-63
L. M. Nichols	1965-66-67
Pate Hughins	1968-69-70-71
Homer Jordan	1972-73
Carl Bush	1974
Wallace Nichols	1975
Carl Hyche	1976-77-78-79-80-81
Claude R. Burns	1982

Note: Dates are assigned according to the years that the pastor's name appears on the records.  
No attempt is made to ascertain the exact length of service.

Rev. Paul Davis was inadvertently left off the list. His dates are unknown at this writing.

(Note: Hueytown Historical Society April 2004 - The original contains additional pages as Appendix B.  
Some are hand drawn pictures.)