1837 to 2012
Mud Creek Baptist Church
is celebrating 175 years of history by giving a short history of the people and events in its' past.

The past has much to contribute to the present

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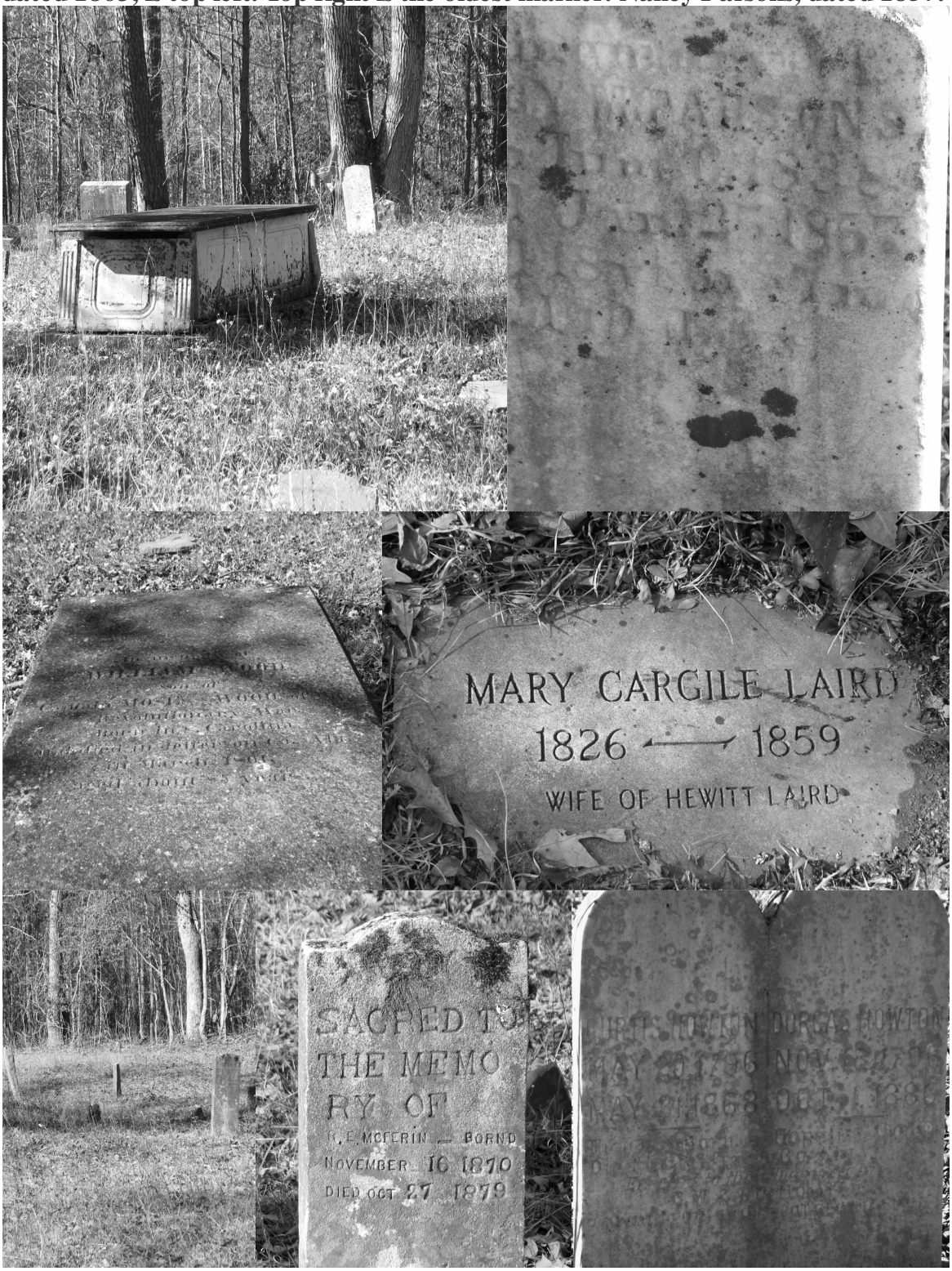
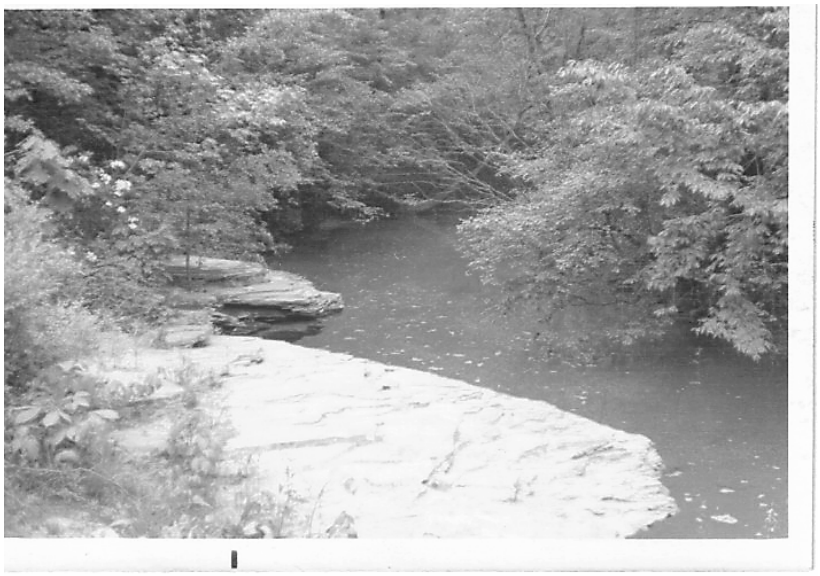
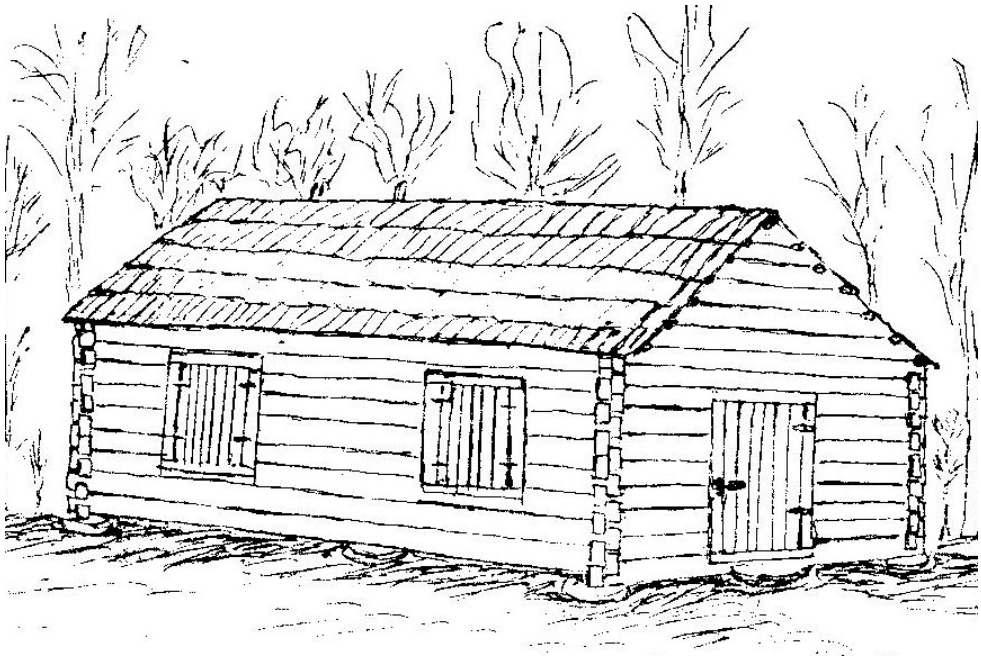
Mud Creek Baptist Church Cemetery No. 1, est. 1837. Billie Wood's marble crypt, dated 1863, is top left. Top right is the oldest marker: Nancy Parsons, dated 1857.



Mud Creek "Baptizing Hole", picture circa 1925

Mud Creek "Baptizing Hole" nearest to church





Artist conception of the 1837 church by Fred Kitchens.

1887 "Picture painted from partial photographs and description from some who knew the building: Meg Rogers and Eugene Johnson" Fred Kitchens, 1973

1930's picture of church. Note the stove pipe.

1947 (Picture from Birmingham Public Library Tax Archives), No electricity

1950's(?) Present church building before roof was lowered. Church has electricity.

Mud Creek School

March 11, 1899

As you are standing in the yard facing the two doors

1) Standing in the left school house door with hat on his head is; Winfield Rutherford Parsons; Dec 1882 to Jan 1948; UA graduate and a civil engineer.

2) On his immediate right; his twin brothers; William Blaine ("Will") Oct 1884 to 1966; and Wellington Cleveland ("Wed") Oct 1884 to Jul 1949 and I cannot tell you which one is Will or Wed. UA graduates; school teachers and farmers.
(Continued on the next page)

3) On the extreme left of the picture with hands in pockets; two pine trees in the back ground; their brother; Wiseman Thurman "Uncle Pugg" Parsons; Fox hunter and store keeper.

4) Smallest boy in the front row center; their brother; Woodfin Pelham Parsons; Oct 1894 to Mar 1912; died at age 18.

5) To Pelham's immediate left; Cora Laird; Jun 1892 to Jun 1941; later became Mrs. W. C. Parsons.

6) Just in front of the young lady in the white blouse; teacher behind her in the right school house door; is Margaret Virginia "Jenny" Laird Knight; later became Mrs. W. B. Parsons; The twin brothers married sisters.

7) Back to the left school house door; standing just in front of the student on the male teacher's left; B. R. Stringfellow; born and raised and lived his life just a stones throw from the school.

The Parsons' brothers were the children of Samuel Amon Parsons; 8 Oct 1858 to 1920 and Elizabeth Jane "Jenny" Roberts; 9 Feb 1862 to Dec 1943.

G.A. Parsons
(George Amon Parsons; son of Wendell Nelson Parsons & Cora Ellen Stewart)

Mud Creek Baptist Church Vacation Bible School, 1952

Mud Creek Baptist Church Vacation Bible School Con't

Preface

On May 12, 2012 Mud Creek Baptist Church, Mud Creek, Alabama, will celebrate its 175th Anniversary. There have been many changes in Mud Creek Baptist Church during its 175 years and yet some things have stayed the same. The author of this history has tried to record the important steps in the growth of this church and to recognize the individuals who had a part in its development.

Mud Creek Baptist Church has had an impact on the growth of the community, has been the center of the members' spiritual lives, and for many years served as a place of education.

The emphasis of this history is on the beginnings and the early years of the church. Information was taken from the original church records recorded by W. C. Parsons, 1912; a history written by W.B. Parsons, 1957; and a history written by William Fred Kitchens, 1984. Each author lends different aspects to the church's history including its buildings, land, members, education, missionaries, and the founding of the Mud Creek Baptist Association. New research involved the examination of records housed at Samford University and the Tuscaloosa and Birmingham Public Libraries. This history was compiled and edited by Barbara Jane Kitchens.

Appreciations

Many thanks to all the people of Mud Creek Baptist Church, past and present, who made this book possible. Heart felt appreciation goes to my husband Bill, my daughter Elizabeth, and to my church friends Rose Parsons Lawley and Carolyn Brewer for all their time and work they have put into this project. Appreciation also goes to the wonderful people at Samford Special Collection Library, Bessemer Hall of History, and Hueytown Historical Society.

History of Mud Creek Baptist Church: 1837 to 2012

Chapter One: The Beginnings:

"In this wilderness country where there never had been much preaching, the people were desirous for the word." (Bros. Waldrop and Smith, Canaan Baptist Association) In April of 1837, seventeen to eighteen people gathered together in Billie Wood's cotton warehouse in the Mud Creek Community to establish a new church. One-hundred and seventy five years later, people are still desirous of the word and are meeting together as a small part of the whole body of believers. This part is called Mud Creek Baptist Church.

The challenges of growing a group of believers, of deciding what principles their church would follow, of building a physical place to worship, of surviving the poverty of the Civil War and post-Civil War era, of remaining faithful over the years are all part of the rich history of Mud Creek Baptist Church.

Who were the early members of the church, who were so desirous of the word that they would travel by horse or wagon to meet in a warehouse? Where did they come from? What did they believe? Their beliefs, after all, shaped the future of the church.

The founding members were some of the earliest settlers in this part of Alabama and are the subject of Chapter Two. Where did they come from? In one sense they came as families and extended families from places such as South Carolina and Tennessee. In another sense they came from Rock Creek Baptist Church and Canaan Baptist Church and brought the beliefs of those churches with them. As the mother churches of Mud Creek Baptist Church, these two churches deserve a place in a re-telling of its history. Canaan Baptist Church was the first church established in Jefferson County. Organized in 1818 in Jonesboro, which is

west of present day Bessemer, it was the closest church for those living in the Mud Creek community until its members founded Rock Creek Baptist Church in 1822. But isn't planting a new church mission work? Unfortunately, that sort of thing was something Mount Zion Baptist Association, which included Canaan and Rock Creek did not approve of. In 1833, the Association discontinued itself from the Baptist State Convention of Alabama and the Baptist Tract Society. This left Canaan with nothing to do but pull out of the association, along with six other churches, and form the Canaan Baptist Association. There was a great deal of talk and some altercation among the area Baptists over the Canaan Association with its "different principles from those of the Old Baptists (anti-mission)". This was said of the Canaan Association by Hosea Holcombe: "we shall place before our readers the two obnoxious articles (which the Old Baptist found fault with) in the constitution of this Association (Canaan) so they can judge how far she (Canaan) has departed from the Scriptures of truth. Art. 9th: The design of this body is, to promote the cause of true religion by domestic missions, the education of pious and promising young men, and by other benevolent plans, so far as the churches may enable them by their voluntary contributions. Art. 10: In addition to the objects specified in the foregoing article, this Association will extend its favorable regards to all the benevolent plans now cherished and supported by evangelical Christians. In 1835: Resolved, that we do earnestly recommend to establish Sunday schools in each church. In 1836: Resolved, that we do recommend to our brethren, the Bible Society, and the cause of Domestic and Foreign Missions, as worthy of serious attention". (*History of the Baptists in Alabama* by Hosea Holcombe).

The Old Baptists or anti-missionaries considered missionaries and their churches as "…the enemy, bear them in mind; the howling destructive wolves; the ravenous dogs and their numerous whelps…" quoted in *The Alabama Baptist, December 6. 1973*. Thankfully, despite the ire of the Old Baptists. Canaan Baptist

Association continued to be engaged in domestic missions, and, only four years after its formation, the association launched a mission church in the Mud Creek community.

The founding members of Mud Creek Baptist Church embraced the principles of the Canaan Baptist Association. These principles of domestic missions, education, and Sunday School can be seen through out the church's long history.

The following Abstracts of Principles and the history of the founding of Mud Creek Baptist Church were copied from the original church records and preserved by W.C. Parsons for the 75th Anniversary of Mud Creek Baptist Church

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

1. The brethren Hosea H. Rockett and Jesse Seal met at Mud Creek Meeting House and proceeded to constitute the under named brethren into a gospel church and finding them orderly and orthodox succeeded in accomplishing the object. After which 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 Baptists.
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	7. Joseph M. Brown	13. Curtis Howton
2. Nancy Woodson	8. W.D.T. Culberston	14. Dorcas Howton
3. Wych Goodwin	9. Narcissa Culbertson	15. Thomas Burchfield Sr.
4. Tabitha Goodwin	10. Elizabeth Johnson	
5. Mark Goodwin	11. William Wood	
6. Jane Brown	12. Randolph Johnson	

The Abstract of Their Principles was adopted by the above members April 1 to 18, 1837. Apparently there was another meeting as the record continues:

The church being called to order, Brother Seal was chosen Moderator and Brother 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 continue:

Saturday, May 6, 1837

(The church) Met (in conference) according to appointment. After singing and prayer by Brother Brown, he was chosen Moderator, after which a door was opened for the reception of members. Brother William G. Forbus came forward and put himself under the watch-care of the church until he could get a letter of dismissal from the church to which he belonged. After which the church unanimously adopted the Rules of Decorum." The Abstracts of Principles, in its entirety, and the Rules of Decorum are listed at the end of this chapter.

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."

Mr. Holcombe states there were sixteen members. The church records state fifteen members. William C. Forbus (also spelled Forbis, Forbes) may have been counted as the 16th member by Mr. Holcombe because he came forward immediately as the door was opened for new members.

The original records of the Mud Creek Church were made by W.D.T. Culbertson, and he retained the office of clerk until 1844. 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 the records copied by W. C. Parsons have survived intact.

The Mud Creek Meeting House, where the first church services were held, was Billie Wood's cotton warehouse. After the church was founded, Billie Wood

issued three separate reservations: a seven acre tract of land for the Church to locate on, land for a white cemetery, and land for a slave cemetery, thus establishing the community of Mud Creek.

Solemn Covenant of Mud Creek Church of Christ of United Baptist

Abstract of Principles: Articles of Faith Adopted April, 1837

Where as, 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. 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 Timothy 3:16, Isaiah 8:20.
3. We believe in God's free Electing Love through Jesus Christ and that all God's chosen people shall be called regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:4-5.
4. We believe in the Doctrine of Original Sin. Isaiah 51, Romans 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, Ephesians 2:8.
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the imputed righteousness of Christ. Romans 4:6
7. We believe that the saints shall persevere in Grace and never fall finally away. John 6:39, I Peter 1:5.
8. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Super 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, Acts 10:47.

9. We believe in the resurrection of the Dead and in a general Judgment. John 5: 28-29.
10. We believe that the punishment of the wicked and the joys of the righteous saint will be eternal. Matthew 25:46.
11. We believe it right to assemble ourselves together often to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Hebrews 10:25.
12. We believe it right to maintain the Gospel by supporting the ministers and setting them at liberty. 1 Corinthians 9:14, Leviticus 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. Exodus 20:8, Isaiah 50:2.

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

Names of Males:	Names of Females:
John P. Woodson	Nancy Woodson
Wych Goodwin	Tabitha Goodwin
Joseph M. Brown	Jane Brown
W.D.T. Culbertson	Narcissa Culbertson
Randolph Johnson	Elizabeth Johnson
Curtis Howton	Dorcus Howton
Thomas Birchfield Sr	
Mark Goodwin	
William Wood	

Second Meeting:

The church being called to order, Brother Seal was chosen Moderator and Brother 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.

Saturday, May 6, 1837

(The church) Met (in conference) according to appointment. After singing and prayer by Brother Brown, Brother Brown was chosen Moderator, after which a door was opened for the reception of members. Brother William G. Forbis(Forbus)

came forward and put himself under the watch-care of the church until he could get a letter of dismissal 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.

Chapter Two: Members of the Mud Creek Baptist Church in 1837

From 1800 to the 1830's, on roads hewed out of the major Indian trails, came pioneers to Alabama on foot, horse back, and in wagon trains from the Carolinas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Georgia. They settled along the large bottom lands of the rivers and creeks. The settlers either purchased their land from the United States Government as Land Patents, homesteaded, received Indian Cessions, obtained bounty land, or were "squatters". The date of a Land Patent is only a general reference of the pioneers arrival in a given area. A better indicator of their arrival time is the birth of a child, and this information can be found in family genealogy records. Early church records also contain helpful information on the settlers. Many of the records of the first churches in western Jefferson County, including Canaan Baptist and Rock Creek Baptist, are still in existence. Some of the Mud Creek Baptist Church's charter members came from those churches.

A brief introduction is given to the founding members of Mud Creek Baptist Church and to members who joined the church in 1837. Their names will be in bold.

John P. Woodson and wife **Nancy Greer** migrated from South Carolina to the Mud Creek Community. John P. Woodson, son of Robert Woodson and Elizabeth Goodwin, married Nancy Greer in 1818. They had five children while living in South Carolina. John's first Land Patent was finalized in 1839. It was located near Mark Goodwin's property. John and his family left Mud Creek Baptist Church in 1841 and moved to Mississippi. He died in Oktibbeha County, MS in 1855.

The Goodwin families were a large party of pioneers that came from the Laurens District of South Carolina. They settled in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas. **Mark Goodwin, Jr.** and wife **Tabitha Parsons,**

daughter of Joseph and Alcey Parsons**,** were among those families. They were married in South Carolina around 1800. They had nine children while living in South Carolina: John, **Wych**, Elizabeth, Thomas, Mark III, Sally, Nancy, Peter and James. It is stated in genealogy records that they came to Alabama in 1832. Mark's first Land Patent was finalized in 1834 in the Jonesboro area and in the Mud Creek Community in 1837. Mark, Jr. and his family joined the Canaan Baptist Church in 1834 where they remained until becoming Charter Members of Mud Creek Baptist Church in 1837. "Tabitha and Mark Goodwin, Jr. remained members until death. They probably are buried in Theophilus Parsons graveyard near Denton Raney's place (Oak Grove)". (W.B. Parsons)

Among the Parsons coming from Laurens County, South Carolina to Jefferson County, Alabama around 1817 to 1819 was Joseph Garrett Parsons, Sr.. According to family genealogy records, his wife Alcey is said to have died in South Carolina. He died in Alabama in 1823, place of burial unknown. When his son **Littleton** and his wife Sarah (?) moved to Alabama is unknown. Daughter **Tabitha** and husband **Mark Goodwin, Jr**., mention earlier, came to Alabama in 1832. Littleton and his family were among the first members of Mud Creek Baptist Church, and they remained members until 1853. Littleton's Land Patent was finalized in 1837 in the Ezra Community not far from Joseph Brown's property. He and his family were members of Rock Creek Baptist Church before joining Mud Creek Baptist Church.

Whether the Goodwin's, Woodson's, and Parsons' traveled together is unknown, but is probable, given their family connections.

Joseph Martin Brown came from South Carolina in 1818 with his parents and at least three of his siblings. Joseph M. Brown and **Jean "Jane" Waldrop** married in Nov. 1822 in Jefferson County, Alabama and settled in the Ezra

community. The first of their eleven children was born in 1823, the same year his first Land Patent was finalized. Joseph M. and Jane Brown joined Mud Creek Baptist Church by letter from another church. Joseph M. Brown was ordained as a pastor in 1838 and served as Mud Creek Baptist Church's second pastor from 1838 to 1840. Joseph died in 1859 and Jane in 1868.

"Brown lived on Valley Creek near the H. R. Goodwin place on the River Road approaching Oak Grove. The ford on this stream, below the old bridge, was called the Brown Ford in honor of his name. This couple moved to Noxapater, Winston County, Mississippi in 1840 where he became the first pastor of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Noxapater, Mississippi. Miss Mary Lynn Holman of Louisville, MS, the great-grand daughter of Narcissa Culbertson and the great-grand niece of Billie Wood, furnished information in 1957 on the Joseph Brown and W.D.T. Culbertson families. The families moved together to Noxapater, Winston County, MS." (W. B. Parsons).

A brief biography of **W.D.T. Culbertson** online states: "17th of October 1862; Winston County, Mississippi – W.D.T. Culbertson, husband of **Narcissa Wood Culbertson**, has died. Mr. Culbertson was born the 25th of February 1787 near Spartanburg, South Carolina. He served in the 1812 War where exposure to serve cold crippled him and made him dependent on crutches the rest of his life. This infirmity did not keep him from living a full and productive life. He was a surveyor, church planter, Indian fighter, and pioneer. Mr. Culbertson and Narcissa Wood, daughter of Ann and Moses, wed 20th of July, 1815 in Greenville, South Carolina. Mr. Culbertson and his wife were members of a large party of South Carolina settlers who pioneered in Jefferson County, Alabama. There all but one of Mr. and Mrs. Culbertson's children were born. They were founding members of

Mud Creek Baptist Church in Jefferson County, Alabama. In 1844 the Culbertson family migrated to Winston County, Mississippi. It is there that he died".

Genealogy states: "the large party of South Carolina settlers which included Mr. **W.D.T**. **Culbertson**, wife **Narcissa Wood**, and their first child Martha, might have included numerous members of Narcissa's family, including her brother William (Billie) Wood. The Culbertsons settled first in the Jonesboro area, near modern day west Bessemer, and then in the Mud Creek area where Billie Wood and his mother had settled. W.D.T. Culbertson and his family "lived where John H. and Linda Batson later lived, and where the Al Bean sawmill site was last located up to the year of 1957. Culbertson Mountain is so named for him." (W. B. Parsons) Their land would not be far from present day Oak Grove Mine. W.D.T. and Narcissa had an additional ten children from 1818 to 1839 while living in Alabama. The Culbertsons were members of Canaan Baptist Church, 1824 to 1836, prior to becoming charter members of Mud Creek Baptist Church in 1837.

The exact time of **William (Billie) Wood's** arrival in Alabama and in the Mud Creek Community is difficult to determine. The auction of his first Land Patent was in 1820 in the Mud Creek Community. This Land Patent was finalized in 1839. In 1826 he purchased 80 acres of land west of his Land Patent acreage from his brother John Wood. Billie built his home, cotton warehouse and slave quarters on the land purchased from his brother (Figure 2). The United States Census of 1830 list the following entry for William Wood: "1 Male 50-60 yrs, 1 Female 70-80 yrs. and 12 Slaves". Presumably the "female 70-80 yrs" is Billie's mother. He attended the Rock Creek Baptist Church prior to becoming a charter member of Mud Creek Baptist Church. He hosted the first church meetings in his cotton warehouse in 1837 until the church built their first building. "The Billie Wood house, a four room log house with a lean-to and rock chimneys, was located

some one hundred yards northwest of the Wood Spring" (Fred Kitchens). Billie Wood was buried in 1861 in Mud Creek Baptist Church Cemetery No.1. He has a marble crypt above his grave. On the top is written his epitaph:

> "In Memory of William Wood, Son of Captain Moses Wood of the Revolutionary War, Born in S. Carolina, Died in Jefferson County, Alabama 1861, Age about 85 years"

A picture of his marble crypt is on page four.

Randolph Johnson, born in Tennessee in 1800, and **Elizabeth Ashley**, born in North Carolina in 1800, were wed on July 26th, 1823 in Jefferson County, Alabama. Randolph Johnson's Land Patent was finalized in 1837. They had five to seven children while living in Alabama. The Johnson's moved to Pontotoc County, Mississippi sometime after 1844. The Johnson's were members of Rock Creek Baptist Church prior to becoming Charter Members of Mud Creek Baptist Church.

The following was written by Dr.J. A. Hendricks of Howard College: "Two cousins, **Owen A. Franklin, Jr**. (b. 1790) and Thomas Franklin, Jr., migrated by wagon train in 1818 from Kentucky to Alabama. Owen A. Franklin, Jr. and Thomas Franklin, Jr. were both Baptist pastors. The Franklin family figured largely in the establishment of the Mud Creek Baptist Church". Owen A. Franklin, Jr. (b. 1790), wife **Hannah**, and their children, including **Owen A. Franklin III** (b. 1813), settled in the Mud Creek Community.

Owen A. Sr. (b 1760) and wife Nancy Gore son's included Owen A. Jr. (b 1790). Nancy Gore Franklin died about 1860, and is buried in Mud Creek Church Cemetery No.1, however it is unknown where Owen A. Sr. is buried. Owen A. Jr. (b. 1790) and wife Hannah had son Owen A. III (b. 1813). At some point in time Owen A. Jr. (b. 1790) was referred to as Owen A. Sr., and Owen A. III (b. 1813)

was referred to as Owen A. Jr. Owen A. Sr. (b. 1790) and Owen A. Jr. (b. 1813) were among the first members of Mud Creek Baptist Church, previously being members of Rock Creek Baptist Church. Owen A. Sr. (b. 1790) served as a deacon in 1839 and pastor of Mud Creek Baptist Church several times: 1840, 1851, 1853, and 1855 (**Statistics**). Owen A. Franklin, Jr. (1813) and wife left the church by letter in 1843. The first Owen Franklin Land Patent was finalized in 1837. Note: Land Patents do not list Sr. or Jr. after the surname.

One of Owen A. Franklin's (b. 1790) sisters: **Dorcas** (also spelled: Darcas, Dorcus), married **Curtis Howton** in 1816 in Caldwell County, Kentucky. Curtis and Dorcas and their first child, Lewis, came to Alabama from Hopkins County, Kentucky with his brother Abraham and his family. Along the way Abraham, who drove the hogs, stopped in Fayette County (Taken from: *The Heritage of Fayette County*). Family history states: while traveling the Huntsville Road, the brothers stopped in Walker County not Fayette County; Curtis and his family, leaving his brother, continued on to Tuscaloosa; and then up the Warrior River to settle in the Mud Creek Community near Owen Franklin. Dorcas and Curtis's second child, Jonathan was born in Alabama in 1820. Curtis's first Land Patent was finalized in 1833. Family history states they went to church in Tuscaloosa after they became settled. Later they were members of Rock Creek Baptist Church before becoming founding members of Mud Creek Baptist Church. Curtis and Dorcas are buried in Mud Creek Church Cemetery No.1.

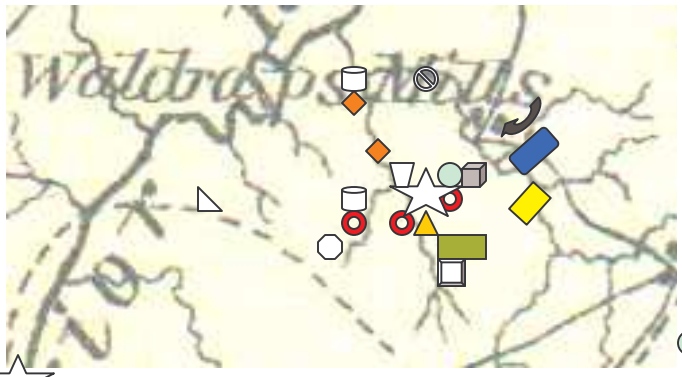
Thomas Burchfield Sr., also spelled Birchfield, was the last to sign his name on the Charter. His son **Thomas Burchfield Jr., (also spelled Birchfield),** and wife **Elizabeth** joined Mud Creek Baptist Church in 1837. The following information is all that could be found on "Thomas Burchfield". It is not clear if this

information is on Mud Creek's Thomas Burchfield; however the author could find only one Thomas Burchfield listed (no Sr. or Jr.) for the western area. The Canaan Baptist Church records show a Thomas Burchfield baptized in 1832 and dismissed in 1834 (no Sr. or Jr.). Records of Rock Creek Baptist Church show a Thomas Burchfield (no Sr. or Jr. given). "Thomas Burchfield, Sr. was dismissed by letter from Mud Creek Baptist Church in May 1847 and became a Charter Member of Big Creek Church in June of that year" (W.B. Parsons).

A Thomas Burchfield finalized two Land Patents in Jefferson County, Alabama in 1834 and 1839. They were located in the Big Shoal Creek Area.

Other original members of Mud Creek Baptist Church whose history could not be found at the time of writing are: **William G. Forbus** (Forbis, Forbes), **Melinda Robertson** (Roberts), **Calhoun Childress**, **Nat and Rebecca Birchfield, Sarah Parsons**, **Joanna Parsons**, and **Caty Wood**, slave of Billie Wood.

Before 1837 this area was wilderness dotted with a few farms. After the church was established a community spring up. Figure 1on the following page shows a portion of an 1865 Alabama map copied from Clement Evans' Confederate Military History. (http://history-sites.com) This map doesn't have a scale which makes distances a little hard to determine. The area shown is that of the Mud Creek Community and the surrounding area. It shows where the first church members' Land Patents were located, plus the location of the Church, Wood's house and cotton warehouse, a blacksmith shop, an area merchant, and local mills. Waldrop Mills were located on Valley Creek and the church was located above Mud Creek. John P. Woodson's property is located on Wood Creek. Creeks are shown but not labeled. This map shows how important worship was to the founding members by showing how far they traveled over rough terrain and in harsh weather to attend church. The pastors, deacons, and messengers of the church went to the Canaan Baptist Association meetings in Jonesboro, about 10 or more miles away, showing their devotion in being about God's work. The map also shows the route (-----) taken by General James H. Wilson, or Wilson's Raiders, through this area in March and April of 1865. *Historic Sites of Jefferson County, Alabama* prepared by the Jefferson County Historical Commission in 1976 states that General Wilson divided his forces into three divisions, one of which forded the Black Warrior River at the confluence of Valley Creek and the Warrior River. Perhaps the line on the map from Bucksville to the Warrior River should be more to the northeast. Either direction Mud Creek Community was close by.



- Mud Creek Baptist Church & School
- William (Billie) Wood Property
- Mark and Wyche Goodwin Property
- Joseph Brown Property
- Littleton Parsons Property
- Curtis Howton Property
- John P. Woodson Property
- W. D. T. Culbertson Property
- Thomas Burchfield Property
- Owen Franklin Property
- John C. Childress Property
- Randolph Johnson Property
- Merchant: 1st Laird/2nd Cain
- James Huey's Blacksmith Shop
- William Forbis Property

Chapter Three: Early Mud Creek Community

The 1850 Census is a good place to start with details of life in the Mud Creek Community by 1850. During that time Mud Creek was spelled with two d's. Mudd Creek Beat was one of five Beats for Jefferson County, and was drained by Valley Creek, Wood Creek, Big Blue Creek and Rock Creek. Table IX gives the following occupations in the Mudd Creek Community (Figure 1):

Table IX

114 Farmers

52 Laborers

1 Mechanic: Willis Brazeal, age 50. He lived with Benjamin Parsons in the Mud Creek Community.

1 Blacksmith: James Huey, from S.C., age 46.

1 Merchant: Robert Cain, age 25, from S.C. He lived in the Mud Creek Area.

1 Teacher: Terrell R. Waldrop, age 18, wife Jane and four children. They lived with his parents in the Mud Creek Area.

2 Preachers: (1) Owen Franklin, Sr.; (2) Unknown

1 Overseer: Joseph H. Frierson, Age 33. 2 Labors: Thomas Sexton, age 27 and George Keyton, age 45, born in Ireland.

16 Slave Holders (0 in the 1860 Census)

74 Number of Slaves (0 in 1860 Census)

157 Homes

732 Free Inhabitants

Schools: *Salmagundi*, by Hewitt Johnston, M. D. gives an excellent description of education in the 1800s in western Jefferson County. The first schools were privately funded, and they met in churches, meeting houses, and private homes. By the late eighteen hundreds Jefferson County public school system paid half of the teacher's salary, then later all of their salary – if they had the money. The early schools were taught in July and August for the benefit of the pioneer families. Spelling, reading, and arithmetic were the only subjects taught in these schools. Private schools, with boarding, were located in the Jonesboro area for those who could afford them.

Mud Creek Baptist Church always offered schooling to the community from its inception: first the log church building (page 6), and then the first weather boarded church building. "This building remained in use as a school until Jefferson County build a new building about where the picnic table stands today". (Fred Kitchens) The later two-story church buildings were not used as schools.

In 1891-1892, a nine month school was held at Mud Creek Baptist Church and was taught by Powell Johnston. At the end of the school year a concert was given.

"In 1893 J. C. Gilmer, a graduate of Howard College, came to teach school in this community and to serve as pastor of this church. … Gilmer was succeeded in 1901 by Miss Alice Huey, a graduate of Judson College. …" (*History of Mud Creek Baptist Association, from 1871 to 1957,* W. B. Parsons). There is a picture of Mud Creek School taken on March 11, 1899 (page 9). The description of the people in the picture gives a male teacher in the left hand door and a female teacher in the right hand door. There is also an adult man standing on the far right of the second row of students. Names are not given.

Post Offices: The Canaan Baptist Association Books, years 1837 to 1862, listed the Post Office for the Mud Creek Community as Jonesboro. In the Canaan Association Book of 1864 the Post Office for Mud Creek was listed as Waldrop Mills. In 1880 the mail hub for Mud Creek Area was Connellsville Junction where it is reported: "The rural Post Offices on this first route were as follows: The first of these offices was Razburg (Razberg), located at Cowen's store …it stood where the new highway (Ground Hog) intersects with the Mud Creek road. This little Post Office served the public here for about twenty years from 1880 to 1900… The first rural mail carrier on this route was Randolph Parsons… The other offices of this route were Ezra, Dave Stagg's store, and Toadvine." (W. B. Parsons)

On late eighteen hundred maps Razburg was often spelled Razberg. Before Razburg there was no name listed for the Mud Creek area, however the author has shown there was a Mud Creek Community. "Burg" is a German suffix meaning "city", while "berg" is a German suffix meaning "mountain". After much search no explanation could be found for naming the Mud Creek Community Razburg. Maps after the early 1920's show the Community as Mud Creek. Sometimes the Post Master would name the community as was the case in the naming of Toadvine (see "*Toadvine in Its Heyday*" by Simon J. Smith)

Roads and Mills: In the early eighteen hundreds the Waldrop Mills (page 30) and H. Laird Mills were located on Valley Creek near where the Lock 17 Road crosses Valley Creek. Local history has it that Curtis Howton and Owen Franklin each had mills on Mud Creek. "As late as the 1940's, a road could still be seen that ran by the present building (i.e. Church) 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. This road was used by these settlers to come to church and

school. 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" (Fred Kitchens). It is unclear when this watermill was built in the 1800's. At the foot of the hill and just across the Clark Spring Branch, J. W. Stringfellow and Ben Johnson had a steam cotton gin in the early nineteen hundreds.

Blacksmith Shop: The Blacksmith's shop owned by James Huey, located in the Mud Creek Community, Section 10, Township 19, Range 6 West, was sold on March 17, 1851 to Isham Hammond, Terrell Waldrop, and Reuben Cargile (Figure 1). It is unknown when James Huey and his family came to live in the Mud Creek Community. They lived in DeKalb County, Georgia in 1838. (Hueytown Historical Society)

Civil War Veterans: The following Chart gives the known names and information for the Civil War veterans who are buried in Mud Creek Baptist Church Cemeteries No.1 and No. 2.

Civil War Veterans, Cemeteries No. 1 and No. 2

Name	Born	Died	Cemetery	Unit
L. J. Adkinson	(?)	(?)	No. 1	26th AL Infantry Co. C
George E. Cargile	1822	Jun 1869	No. 1	28th AL Infantry Co. H
William C. Howton	Jul 1826	Feb 1883	No. 1	28th AL Infantry Co. H
Felix M. Laird	1844	Nov 1861	No. 1	18th AL Infantry Co. G
Joseph M. Howton	May 1844	Oct 1912	No. 2	43rd AL Infantry Co. G
William C. Howton	Oct 1844	Jan 1925	No. 2	18th AL Infantry Co. G
T. Melvin Parsons	Nov 1844	Apr 1904	No. 2	12th AL Infantry Co. D
James Raney	Jun 1822	Jul 1893	No. 2	18th AL Infantry Co. G
Sanford V. Travis	Apr 1839	Oct 1910	No. 2	28th AL Infantry Co. H

Chapter Four:

Reservations, Deeds, and Maps of Mud Creek Baptist Church

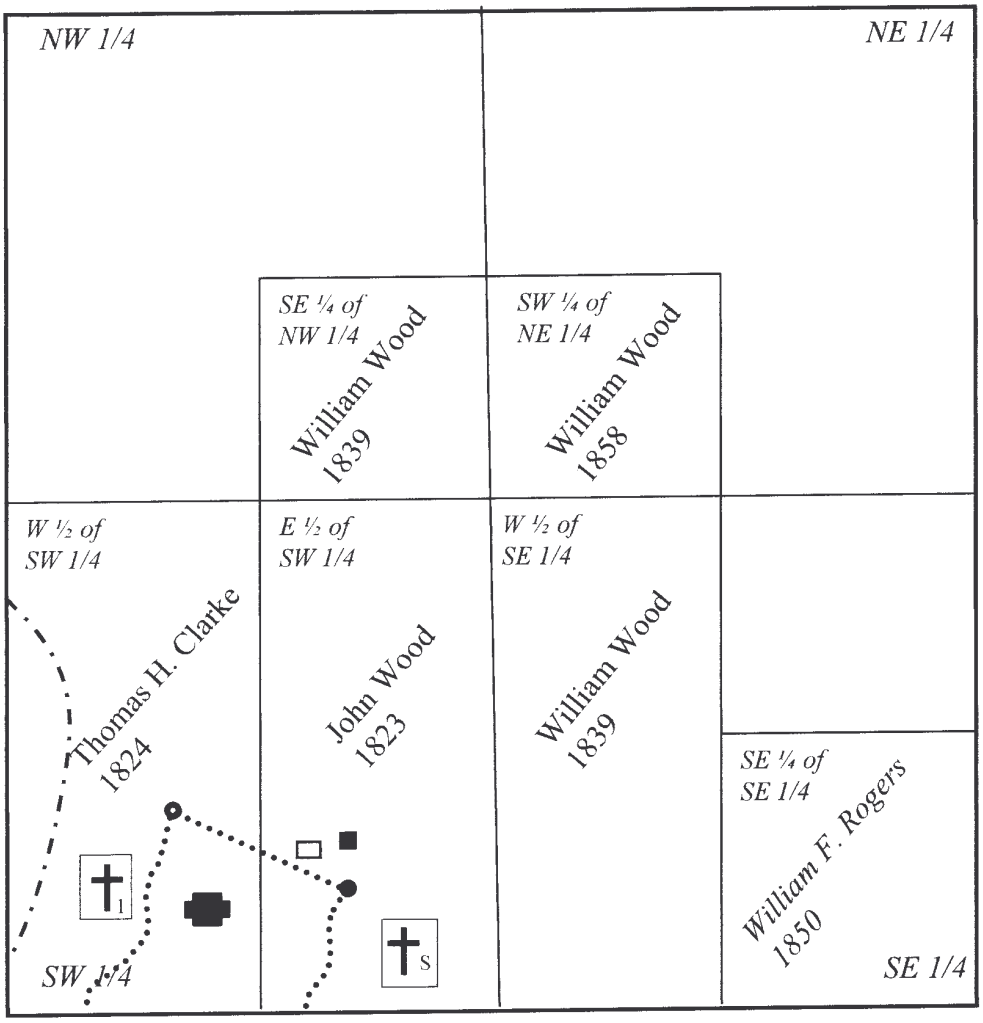
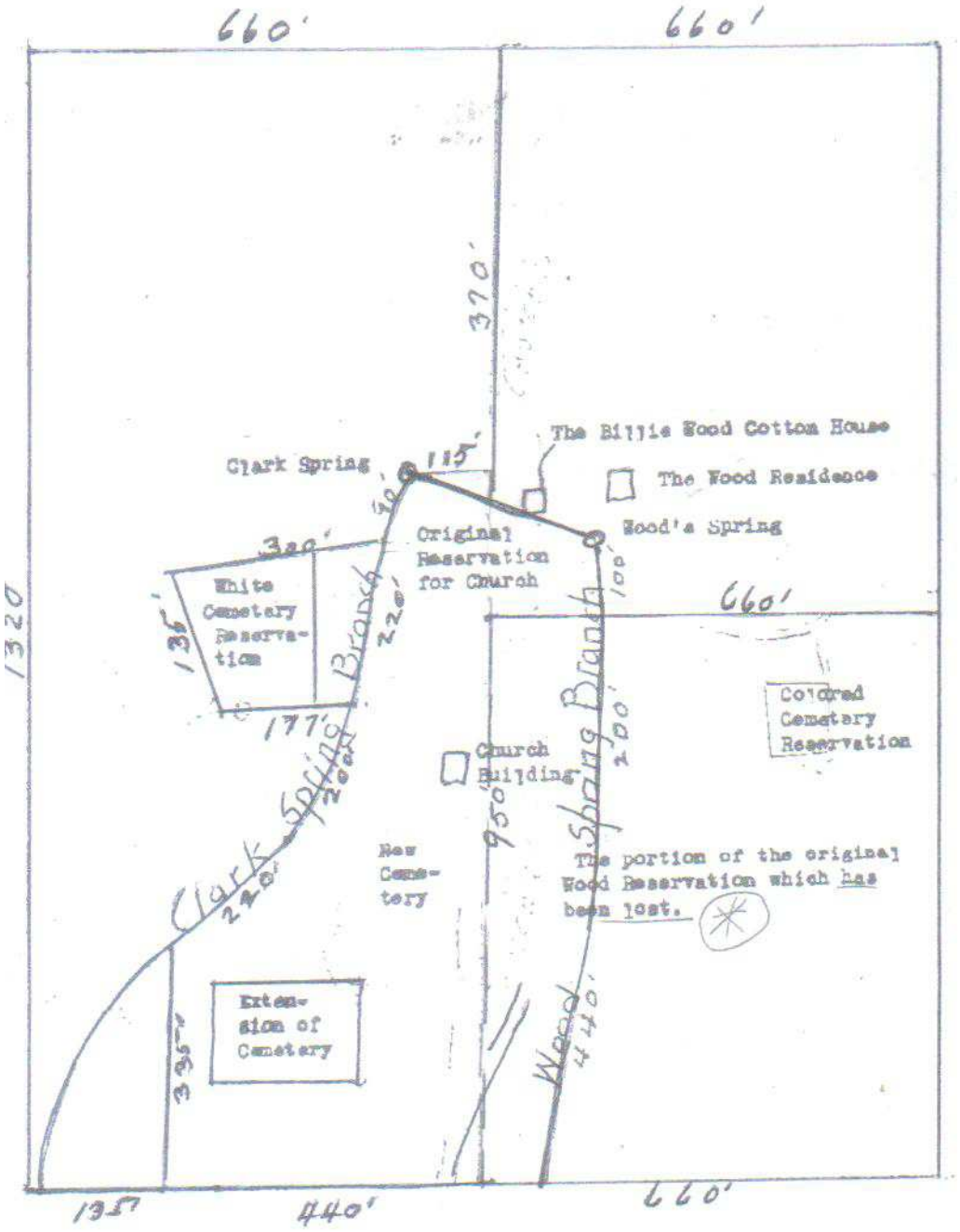


Figure 2- Federal Land Patents for Section 3, T19S, R16W

Map Shows Each Patent Holder and the Year the Patent was Finalized
Patent Data Taken From Family Maps of Jefferson Co., AL by Gregory Boyd, J. D.

William Wood bought the E ½ of the SW ¼ in 1826 from his brother, John Wood. William (Billie) Wood's reservation to Mud Creek Church is outlined in the dotted line. The reservation is bordered by Clarke Spring (⊙) and Wood's Spring (●). Other landmarks are: Mud Creek Church (▬), Mud Creek Baptist Church Cemetery 1(†1), Mud Creek Cemetery/Old Slave Cemetery (†s), Billie Wood's cotton warehouse (▭), and home (■), Mud Creek (dot and dashed line)

Map of the SW ¼ of Sec. 3, T19S-R6W



W ½ of SW ¼ of Sec. 3 **E ½ of SW ¼ of Sec. 3**

Figure 3: Map showing the reservation for Mud Creek Baptist Church and Cemeteries. This survey was done by W.R. Parsons, 1940.
W ½ of SW ¼ of Sec. 3, T19S-R6W

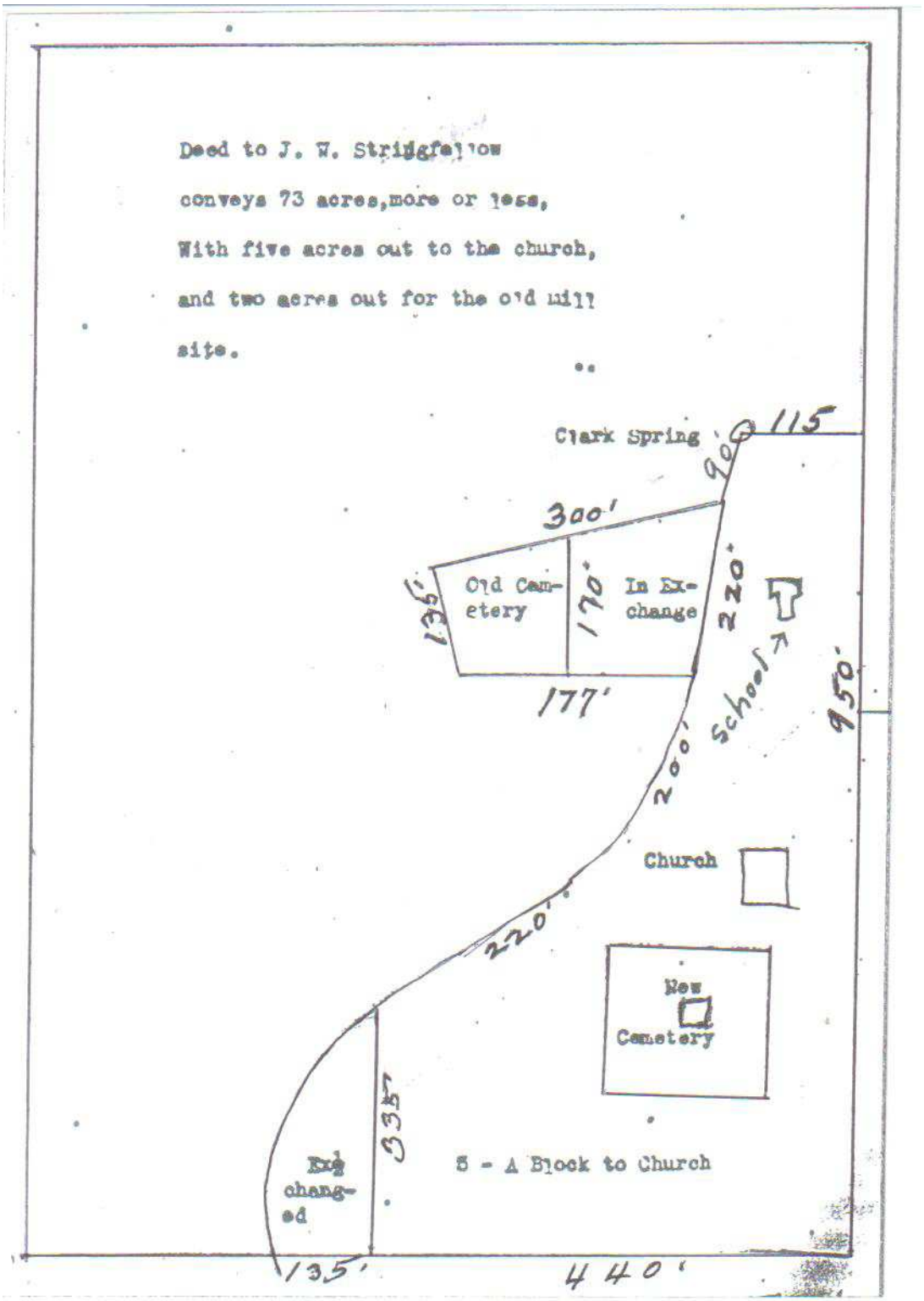


Figure 4: 1845 Warranty Deed to Mud Creek Baptist Church. Survey was done by W.R. Parsons in 1940. It lies in the W ½ of SW ¼ of Sec. 3, T19S-R6W.

As stated in Chapter One, the first members of the Church met in Billie Wood's cotton warehouse. "This information furnished by Sanford V. Travis, a Civil War Veteran from this Community" (W.B. Parsons). Billie Wood issued the Church a reservation which contained a parcel of land, seven acres more or less, for the use of the Church, located in the W ½ of SW ¼ of Sec.3 and E ½ of SW ¼ of Sec. 3, all in T19S-R6W (Figure 2a, 3). This land lay between Clarke Spring and Wood's spring and extended to the section line between Section 3 and Section 10. He also gave reservations for two cemeteries: one for whites and one for slaves (Figure 2a). A reservation, as Webster's Dictionary states is "an arrangement to have something held for one's use. Something reserved for a special use." "It was common practice for a land owner to give a deed, or reservation in this case, to a church for a parcel of land with the following exception: if the church dissolves or moves, the land returns to the original owner or their descendents" (Samford Special Collection Library). In 1845 Billie Wood, by way of his administrator Joab Bagley, gave a Warranted Deed, which contained five acres more or less, not the original seven, to Mud Creek Baptist Church (Figure 4). This land is situated in the W ½ of SW ¼ of Sec. 3, lying west of the Billie Wood Line that separates the W ½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 3 and the E ½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 3. This Deed was not filed until 1905. By 1845 the Church had built a log structure located in the SE ¼ of W ½ of SW ¼ of Sec. 3 on land contained in the original reservation (Figures 3, 4). The land in the W ½ of SW ¼ of Sec. 3 originally belonged to Thomas Clarke (Figure 2a, 2b) and later Billie Wood. There was no deed for the White Cemetery and the Slave Cemetery.

The church is indebted to the following:

William (Billie) Wood for a meeting place in his cotton warehouse, a reservation providing land on which to build the first free standing church building,

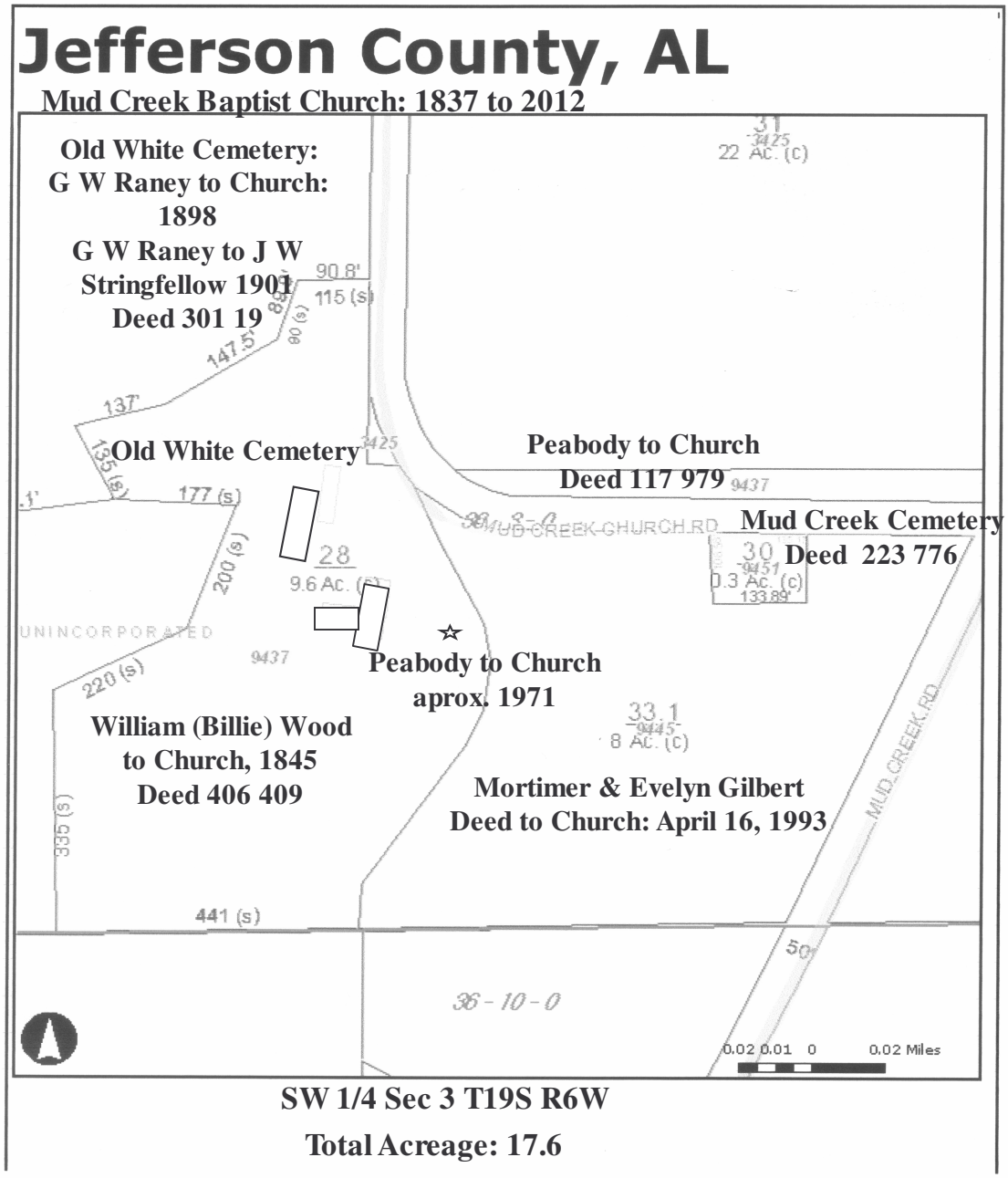
the use of nearby springs for water, a cemetery to bury their dead, and a Warranty Deed to the church in 1845 for five acres of land. This allowed Mud Creek Baptist Church to serve this Community from 1837 to the present - 175 years.

In 1898, G.W. Raney and wife gave the church a deed which added Mud Creek Baptist Church Cemetery No. 1 (White Cemetery) and the segment of land which connected the cemetery to the Church property (Figure 4), in exchange for an acre of land in the southwest corner of the church property. In 1901 G.W. Raney gave a deed to J.S. Stringfellow which excluded the five acres of land belonging to the Church and the two acres on Mud Creek used for a mill. (Figure 4)

Mortimer (Mort) and Evelyn (Sally) Gilbert for their gift of a Warranty Deed, April 19, 1993, to Mud Creek Baptist Church containing eight acres lying from Mud Creek Baptist Church east to County Road 23 (Mud Creek Road).

Peabody Coal Company for their gift of the deed of October 15, 1969, of 1.55 acres to the church which lies between Mud Creek Church Road and the south boundary of the land owned by Gary Smart, Parcel No. 31. Also for their deed, approx. 1971, to the church of land which lying east of the church to the original Mud Creek Church Road. This deed included the road.

The original reservation for the Slave Cemetery, given by Billie Wood in 1837 to slaves and their descendents, is the only title to this property. Jefferson County records show the cemetery belonging to Mud Creek Baptist Church, but this is not the case. In 1973, Peabody Coal Company gave a Quick Claim Deed for the Mud Creek Cemetery (Slave Cemetery) to its' trustees. For many years the cemetery was cared for by the descendents of the original slaves buried there. In the last 10 years the cemetery was cleaned by the Boy Scouts. A Tax Map of Jefferson County, Alabama, is located on the next page. It gives the dimensions and deed information of the church's property. The Church has the original deeds for viewing.



SW 1/4 Sec 3 T19S R6W

Total Acreage: 17.6

Figure 5

Chapter Five: "There is a warm and friendly look about the church" (William Fred Kitchens)

The following information on the Mud Creek Baptist Church buildings was taken from the accounts of W.B. Parsons and William Fred Kitchens. Pictures corresponding to the church buildings, cemeteries, and "baptizing holes" are located at the front of the book.

"The first worship services were held in Billie Wood's cotton warehouse located 300 feet north of the present church building on the line connecting Clarke and Wood's springs" (W. B. Parsons).

"The second building was built sometime after 1837 in the center of Cemetery No. 2. This building was built of large hewn and notched logs. The boxed-in pulpit was an oddity in this building" (W. B. Parson). Since this building had a boxed-in pulpit, it is likely the building had a floor. "Log churches of that time normally had dirt floors and puncheon seats" (*The Heritage of Jefferson County, Alabama*). It is not known how long the log church was used. Existing financial records show that in 1843 repairs were done to a church building.

"The third building was a weather board, framed structure, located on the same site as the present building, but standing at right angles to the same and facing the West. It was erected in 1878 at a cost of $158.00. The expenditures show that this house was covered in 1878 at an expense of $23.00. This financial report shows that this building was ceiled and seated in 1890 at an expense of $125.00. It is presumed that this amount was for the expense of material only" (W. B. Parsons).

There is a record of a two story building built in 1887, cost unknown, and facing west to northwest. (Fred Kitchens)

Local history states that at least one church building burned, but does not state which one(s).

The present church was constructed in 1905-1906 at a cost of $2,500.00. The church paid $1,310.50, and the Masonic Lodge paid the remainder. It had a very steep roof and a second story used as a Lodge Hall.

The first service in the new Mud Creek Baptist Church:

Sermon By:	Rev. T. A. Higdon
The first song:	"I Need Thee Every Hour"
The first lesson:	The 14th Chapter of St. John
The first text:	1st verse, 14th Chapter of St. John "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me"
The Theme:	Faith the source of joy and comfort
After the sermon a large Congregation sang:	"Draw Me Nearer"

The following descriptions of the 1906 church were written by Fred Kitchen.

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

Both the exterior and interior of the church have been remodeled since 1906. At first there were two widely separated front doors with glass transoms. Each door had 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 single center aisle in the present day building. The walls were wainscoted and papered. Small wooden pegged windows were replaced with large windows set in both sides and the back wall. In later remodeling of the church, oaken varnished paneling covered the walls.

The rostrum was shaped as an octagon with five sides projecting into the room and a balustrade enclosing it. At each angle was a stanchion and sphere several inches in diameter. There were three separate lecterns, a large one flanked by two smaller ones. Two impressive pulpit chairs added to the dignity of the pulpit. These two chairs belonged to the Masons and were carried to the Lodge at Oak Grove when the Mud Creek Lodge disbanded.

Records show the purchase of an organ in 1898 for fifty five dollars. One bought in 1910 cost seventy dollars.

In the earlier days light for the building was provided by kerosene lamps equipped with globes and reflectors. These hung on the wall. In 1903 a chandelier was purchased for twenty one dollars.

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

On the preacher's right an enclosed stairway went to the upper floor, and along this wall 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 (Page 7).

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

Over the years the 1906 building was successfully remodeled, changing from kerosene to electricity, from a cast iron stove to central heat, from hand fans to air conditioning, and from a large ornate rostrum to a smaller, less ornate one.

The following information is taken from the only available Minutes of the church from October 7, 1959 to September 17, 1967:

> "August 11, 1963: … motion to buy the piano in the Church's name to be paid by individual's donations carried.
>
> November 4, 1964: … motion and second to put the doors in the center and accept the doors from Wesley Kegley. …
>
> January 6, 1965: … motion and second to get 20 pews from the seat company in Leeds, AL (carried). … Motion and second to go ahead and get two chairs for the pulpit (carried).
>
> January 13, 1965: … motion and second for the porch to be fixed – pour out front.
>
> May 4, 1966: … Henry (Parsons) gave a bid on the painting of the outside of the church by Segars Brothers of $362.00 to put one coat over all the outside of the building which was accepted by the church. …
>
> Henry gave a price on the porch railings from Dixie Metal Craft of between $75.00 and $85.00 The Church voted to let them install them at this price. The total price paid was $84.75.
>
> January 4, 1967: … there was a motion and second to first work out a plan for changing the stairway to the Masonic Hall which will be satisfactory. Then begin the work on the lowering of the ceiling."

Peabody Coal Company re-sided the church building in the 1960's. (Date unknown). In the 1970's, the roof was modified to a lower pitch and Sunday school rooms were added to the back of the building.

Along Mud Creek, not far from the church, are at least three "baptizing holes" that have been used from early times. One, the nearest to the church, is just above where Big Branch runs into Mud Creek. Huge shelves of rock jut out into the creek at this spot which narrowly missed being destroyed by a Peabody Coal Company haul road. Just above the iron bridge at the foot of Celia (Sealy) Ann Mountain is the second baptizing hole. The third is below the Jeff Cowen house in the curve of the road. There is now a baptistery in the church.

There is an annual homecoming, locally known as Memorial Day, the Saturday before Mother's Day in May, 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.

To insure that the cemeteries will be well kept, a perpetual care arrangement was instituted December 30, 1970 for the church's three cemeteries.

The Mud Creek Baptist Church Cemetery No. 1 (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., and Curtis and Dorcas Howton. Many of the early graves in Cemetery #1 have markers of field stone rock with no inscription. Directly behind the church is Cemetery No. 2 which has many graves dating back to the late eighteen hundreds, some marked by intricately curved head stones. Cemetery No. 3, which is separated from No. 2 by the circular road, is home to the more recent graves.

Mud Creek Cemetery, the cemetery given as a burial place for slaves, is located 600 ft. due east of the church. It has field stone markers in the older part of the cemetery and marble and granite markers in the front of the cemetery. The first burial in Mud Creek Cemetery (Slave Cemetery) is said to have been a man slave of Billie Wood. His grave, in the northwest corner of the cemetery, was marked by a cedar cross that stood there for many years. The cemetery was used by descendants of the Wood and Howton slaves cared for by those descendants.

To have a Church in the community was a worthy achievement. As the Church extended its services for the early settlers from once a month gatherings, to half time, and to full time ministries, it played an increasingly important role in the lives of the people. Mud Creek Baptist Church has history to be proud of.

Chapter Six: Pastors, Deacons, Clerks, and Memories

A roster of pastors, deacons, church messengers, and secretaries was made from available information contained in the Canaan Baptist Association Books, 1837 to 1872, which were preserved in the Samford Special Collection Library. Church history provides additional names and dates (see the following pages).

In the *History of Mud Creek Baptist Association, from 1871-1957* by W. B. Parsons, additional information is furnished on the pre Civil War and post Civil War pastors. "Rev. Henry G. Smith and Rev. A. J. Smith were the pre Civil War pastors in this territory and Rev. P.A.D. Smith was the post Civil War pastor of this locality.

The Rev. Henry G. Smith was the pioneer pastor of the churches of the Association while they belonged to the Canaan Association. He had a circuit extending from Mud Creek to Rock Creek Church to Village Creek Church to Mt. Pinson Church, covering a distant of about forty miles one way. … He traversed this circuit on foot to meet his announced appointments (at each church). … He carried the local news as well as the News of Glad Tidings. He would tell the people… that he couldn't preach if they were not at church; and that he could preach so much better, if they were there. … He would spend the entire week with each community (preaching, visiting the sick or shut in).

(Additional information on Brother P. A. D. Smith is included in Chapter 8 in W. B. Parsons' One Hundred Anniversary speech.)

Rev. A. J. Nichols was another renowned pastor off his area. He was born in 1882, licensed to preach in 1905. He married Dessie Raney in 1907. He baptized an unusually large number of converts during his long ministry of 50 years, averaging 100 per year. He served 34 churches as pastor."

STATE OF MUD CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH: 1837 - 1872[a]

Year	Pastor	Deacons	Delegates	Clerk	Baptised	Received by Letter	Dismissed	Excluded	Restored	Dead	Males	Females	Colored	Total
1837	HH Rocket	R Johnson, J Brown[b]	WDT Culbertson, JM Brown T Burchfield[d], R Johnson	WDT Culbertson[b]	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	16	0	31[c]
1838	JM Brown[b]	(?)	(?)	WDT Culbertson[b]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1839	JM Brown[b]	(?)	(?)	WDT Culbertson[b]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1840	O Franklin Sr[b]	(?)	R Jackson, WDT Culbertson	WDT Culbertson[b]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1841	JM Brown[b] (?)	R Johnson, O Franklin Sr	O Franklin Sr, T Burchfield, O Franklin, Jr	R Johnson	0	1	2	1	0	0	-	-	-	29
1842	No publication available.				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1843	(?)	(?)	(?)	MJ Parsons	1	1	0	5	1	1	-	-	-	33
1844	J Elledge	R Johnson	I Elledge, WDT Culbertson, C Howton	R Johnson	0	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	22
1845	AJ Forrester	(?)	R Stone, C Howton, T Burchfield	R Stone, Peters	19	6	8	0	0	1	-	-	-	38
1846	HG Smith[c] (?)	None(?)	R Stone, J Hammond,	R Stone	0	3	0	3	0	0	-	-	-	38
1847	HG Smith[e]	R Stone	R Stone, L Parsons, Elijah Parsons	Parsons, Hamon	0	0	4	1	0	0	-	-	-	42
1848	HG Smith	Isham Hammon[d]	R Stone, C Howton	R Stone	5	0	3	1	0	0	-	-	-	38
1849	HG Smith	I Hammon, L Parsons	R Stone, L Parsons	R Stone	1	0	1	0	0	1	-	-	-	45
1850	HG Smith	(?)	R Stone, J Huey, I Hammon	(?)	0	3	1	0	0	1	-	-	-	44
1851	O Franklin[f]	Isham Hammon	James Huey		4	2	6	0	0	0	-	-	-	48
1852	(?)	(?)	R Stone, J Hammond, W Stone	(?)	3	0	0	2	1	0	11	29	1	41
1853	O Franklin	(?)	R Stone, J Hammond, MJ Parsons	(?)	1	1	4	0	1	1	15	29	-	44
1854	O Franklin	(?)	I Hammond, W Stone	(?)	5	5	3	0	0	0	19	31	8	53
1855	O Franklin	(?)	C Howton, Elijah Rodgers Miles J Parsons	(?)	3	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	49
1856	HG Smith[c] (?)	(?)	(?)	(?)	0	1	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	44
1857	HG Smith[e] (?)	(?)	Rawley Stone, Isham Hammonds, MJ Parsons	(?)	1	1	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	47
1858	HG Smith[c] (?)	(?)	J Hammond, MT Parsons	(?)	0	0	9	0	1	0	-	-	-	28

STATE OF MUD CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH: 1837 - 1872[a]

Year	Pastor	Deacons	Delegates	Clerk	Baptised	Received by Letter	Dismissed	Excluded	Restored	Dead	Males	Females	Colored	Total
1859	HG Smith[e] (?)	(?)	I Hammonds, MT Parsons, G Cargile	(?)	2	6	0	2	0	0	-	-	-	38
1860	HG Smith[e] (?)	(?)	I Hammonds	(?)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1861	JM Grimes	(?)	J Hammond, C Howton, MJ Parsons	(?)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1862	J Grimes[g]	(?)	WC Howton, LD Martin	(?)	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	32
1863	No publication available.				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1864	PAD Smith[h]		LD Martin	(?)	2	3	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	32
1865	PAD Smith[b]			(?)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1866	PAD Smith(?)[b]	(?)	LD Martin, WC Howton	(?)	0	0	2	0	0	1	-	-	-	34
1867	No statistics listed.				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1868	No publication available.				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1869	(?)	(?)	LD Martin	(?)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1870	No publication available.				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1871	(?)	(?)	(?)	JS Graham	4	3	-	1	1	0	-	-	-	42
1872	JM Grimes[i]	(?)	(?)	JA Graham	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	(?)

[a]Except where otherwise indicated, this information is taken from the Canaan Baptist Association books for the years 1837 to 1872, from the year the church was established to the year it and four other churches requested dismissal from the Canaan Baptist Assocation, subsequently forming the Mud Creek Baptist Assocation. Most of the church's own records were lost in a fire.

[b]Information taken from works by WB Parsons.

[c]There are some discrepancies between the statistics given in the Canaan Baptist Association books and that provided by WB Parsons. The differences may be due to variations in reporting periods. The information necessary to reconcile the two accounts is, as far as is known, unavailable.

[d]"Burchfield" was spelled "Birchfield" in the original records. Some documents list "Isham Hammon" as "Isham Hammonds" or "I. Hammond".

[e]HG Smith pastored Big Creek Baptist Church (1847, 1848, 1849), Salem Baptist Church (1849, 1850), and Canaan Baptist Church (1850) in addition to Mud Creek Baptist Church (1847-1850) due to a shortage of pastors.

[f]In 1851, 1853, and 1855, Owen Franklin pastored Big Creek and Prude's Creek Baptist Churches in addition to Mud Creek Baptist Church In 1854, he added Rock Creek Baptist Church to his circuit.

[g]In 1861, J Grimes pastored Pleasant Grove, Canann, and Shady Grove Baptist Churches in addition to Mud Creek Baptist Church.

[h]In 1864, PAD Smith pastored Prude's Creek Baptist Church in addition to Mud Creek Baptist.

Note: In addition to the above pastors, Solly Thompson and Thomas Norwood served as pastors in the pre-Civil War time, exact dates unknown.

[i]JM Grimes agitate for a new association after leaving Canaan Baptist Association. An assumption may be made that he pastored Mud Creek over the years following 1872.

MUD CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH: Pastor's List, 1873 to Present

Year	Pastor	Year	Pastor	Year	Pastor
1873	(?)	**1911**	J.F. Parker	**1947**	E.F. Hill
1874	(?)	**1912**	A.L. Nichols	**1948**	(?)
1875	B.S. Thompson	**1913-1915**	W.T. Burchfield	**1949-1950**	L.M. Nichols
1876	Col.[c]	**1916-1919**[a]	(?)	**1952**	Van Franklin
1877	Col.[c]	**1920-1921**[b]	Dr. M.M. Wood,	**1953-1954**	Kyle Staggs
1878	(?)		Rev. J.O. Oaks	**1955**	J.W. Simmons
1879	T.A. Norwood	**1922-1926**	D.R. Jackson	**1956**	Kyle Staggs
1880	J.M. Knight	**1927-1928**	W.T. Burchfield	**1957**	(?)
1881-1882	J.A. Markham	**1929-1930**	D.R.J ackson	**1958-1961**	T.R. Ricketts
1883-1885	J.N. McFall	**1931**	(?)	**1962-1963**	Vernon Williamson
1886-1888	J.I. Gilbert	**1932**	A.L. Nichols	**1963-1967**	L.M. Nichols
1889-1892	J.N. McFall	**1933**	S.H. Knight	**1968-1971**	Pate Hughins
1893-1897	J.C. Gilmer	**1934**	(?)	**1972-1973**	Homer Jordan
1898-1900	J.D. Martin	**1935-1937**	D.R. Jackson	**1974**	Carl Bush
1901	J.C. Gilmer	**1938**	W.T. Burchfield	**1975**	Wallace Nichols
1902	M.M. Wood	**1939**	D.G. Walls	**1976-1981**	Carl Hyche
1903-1904	A.F. Loftin	**1940**	T.G. Roper	**1982-1985**	Claude R. Burns
1905	M.T. Branham	**1941-1942**	L.M. Nichols	**1985-1996**	Richard D. Austin
1906	J.C. Gilmer	**1943**	Hezzie Parsons	**1996-2006**	Bruce Wangle
1907	C.M. Cloud	**1944**	J.T. Thomas	**2007- Present**	Billy Brewer
1908-1910	A.L. Nichols	**1945-1946**	H.P. Mixon		

[a] There is a hiatus in the record for the period between 1915 and 1920. The next pastor mentioned is Dr. M.M. Wood in 1920. There is a possiblity that Rev. Burchfield was pastor in 1916 and 1917 or later, while Dr. Wood could have become the pastor before 1920.

[b] In 1920, Dr. Wood and Rev. J.O. Oaks, pastor of Oak Grove Baptist Church, 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.

[c] Colored pastor. Record of his name has been lost.

Mrs. Emogene Johnson Harmon provided information on life in the community around the church in the early to middle Nineteen Hundreds.

"Our social activity was the functions of the church, Sunday School each Sunday with Preaching Services once a month. We looked forward to the revival meetings held once a year in the summer. The young people enjoyed getting there early so they could sit on the long table on the church grounds and talk and laugh. (Picture, Page 7 - Mrs. Iva Kitchens sitting on table)

The Masons had many scary tales to amuse the children of the community. The most famous tale was of keeping a goat in the upstairs of the church, and riding it.

My first memory of a musical instrument was an organ. Later the congregation bought a big old upright piano which was the pride of the entire body. The building was never locked and it was the duty of the members to sweep and clean up occasionally.

Last year as I sat with my mother, brothers and sisters, and looked out across that old hollow, we started singing "Precious Memories, How They Linger"! I realized then what this old building means to me."

Families living in the Mud Creek Community in the 1930's and 1940's that attended Mud Creek Baptist Church. This information was supplied by Mrs. Emogene Johnson Harmon and Mrs. Rose Lawley.

Mr. & Mrs. Ollis Goodwin, Walter,
Floyd & Ella Goodwin
Tom & Maudami Cook, Ervin, Woodrow, Ova and Ruby
Mr. & Mrs. Al Greer

Preacher & Mrs. David Roy, Sammy, Martin, and David

Athiel & Naomi Johnson

Eugene & Donie Johnson, Pelham, Melvin, Eula, Vivian, Edna, Emogene And Pauline

James, Mavis, and Joyce

Dell Howton & Husband

Jeff D. & Frances (Parsons) Cowen, Annie, Porter, Parker, Prude

Frank Davis, Fanny and Mae

Emmaree Martin, Ila Mae, Other, Arlie

Bessie Gilbert McGee, Howard, Christine, Gladys, Margaret, and Evelyn

Elisha & Viola Cargile and Myrtle

Tom Coffee & Family (Brady)

Rob & Etta Gilbert, Mortimer, and Lillian

Marshall & Mandy Howton, Amy

Venner B. & Ludie (Wiggins) Gary, Vauline, Myrtle, Talmadge

Tol Cargile Family

Brady & Minnie Stringfellow, Ila, Hazel and Roy

Fred & Iva Kitchens

Lucien D. & Mrs. Rodgers, Maggie Belle, Thera, Edna

Monroe & Lena Donaldson, Monroe Jr., Effie and Hazel

Val David & Nancy Jane (Parsons), Harmon, Jake, and Alva

Val & Eula Harmon, David, Nancy, Ann

Earl Joseph and Effie Harmon, Jane, Bobby Earl, Tommy, Phillip

Mr. & Mrs.Will Harmon, Willodean

George & Minnie Kegley; Noah and Wesley Kegley (Brothers)

Elery & Marie Parsons, Evelyn, Bob, Rachel, Ed, Henry, Ann, Helen, John, Janet and Linda

Nelson & Cora Parsons, Amon, Wendell, Frances, Irene, Jim, Rose & Lee

William B. & Jennie (Laird) Parsons, Margaret, Monte, Mary Elizabeth, Mildred, Mable and Myrtle

Albert Howton

Raymond Howton Family, Virginia, Gilbert Ray, Troy, Mildred, Glyn, and Carolyn

Galloway Family, Elmus Coffee (Mrs. Tom Coffee, Jr.)

Paul & Easter Davis

Melvin & Thera Scales, Mary Sue and Mavis

Rufus & Zula Cowen

Preacher David W. & Sara Jane (Glaze) Howton and Family (1930's)

Joe Howton Family (1920's)

Bud & Beaterice Saxon, Buddy

Bo & Irene Fields, Ann and Jan

Wilfred & Maude Watkins, Bill, Dan, Dot

Billy & Betty Reeves, Jimmy, Bobby, Roy

Roy & Judy Reeves, Cory, Roger, Michael

If any families have been overlooked we are sorry. (Author)

The following information is combined from the memories of Ann Fields and Rose Parsons Lawley as they remember growing up in Mud Creek Baptist church in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's and from the available Minutes: October 7, 1959 thru September 17, 1967:

Church Clerk – E. G. Johnson, Nancy Harmon, Zula Cowen

C. C. Pro-Tem. – Zula Cowen

Church Treasurer - Rufus P. Cowen

Sunday School Supt. – Wendell Nelson Parsons, George Edward Parsons, C. W. Norris, Bill Norris, Henry Parsons

Music Director - Venner B. Gary, Eugene Johnson, Janet Parsons, Ann Parsons

Pianists - Cora Stewart Parsons, Frances Parsons, Ann Fields, Jan Fields, Janet P. Smith Bryant, Mrs. Iris Hunnicutt, Eugene Johnson, Nancy Carroll

S. S. report – Helen Parsons, Nancy Carroll

B. T. U. – R. P. Cowen

W. M. U. – Zula Cowen, Ann Harmon, Mrs. Williamson

Treasure – R. P. Cowen

G. A. – Emogene Harmon, Nancy Harmon, Ann Harmond, Janet Parsons, Linda Parsons, Ann Parsons, Melba Johnson Scales

Extension Departments – Dona Johnson, Mrs. Hunnicutt, Eula Harmon

Sunday School Teachers, Bible School Workers, Messengers to the Association, and Committees:

Donnie Johnson
Cora S. Parsons
Dee Rogers
Rose Parsons Lawley
Virginia Howton Reynolds
Irene Parsons Fields
Billie Scales Golden
Eula Harmon
Mary Ann Cook
Albert Howton
W. B. Parsons
Robert Lee Parsons
Melvin & Jeanette Mathews

Bro. Williamson
Mrs. Williamson
Ann Harmon
Mrs. Marie Parsons
Rufus Cowen
Linda Parsons
Evelyn Gilbert
Libbie Howton
Minnie Mae Scales
Melba Scales
Dot Waldrop
Billie Ruth Scales
Nancy Carroll

Helen Parsons
Eugene Johnson
Effie Harmon
Emogene Harmon
Mrs. Hunnicut
Jane Harmon
Nancy Harmon
Janet Parsons
Evelyn Norris
Ann Parsons
Amy Gary
Henry Parsons
Rev. T. Rural Ricketts
Mrs. Ricketts
Knox Hughes
Alma Nichols
Zula Cowen
Milton Scales
R. P. Cowen
Minnie Stringfellow
L. M. Nichols
Alma Nichols
Rev. R. R. Fields
Mrs. Johnson
Ann Mc. Parsons
Floyd Goodwin
Bro. Ed Smith
Lenora Goodwin Hosmer
Monroe Donaldson, Jr.
Anniece Parsons

Prof. J. D Johnson – Old Mud Creek School, specialty was music.

Sunday School Records, 1974

Adult Class: Ladies

Alma Nichols
Jan Fields
Rosilyn Lawley
Shelba Jordan
Theara Hughes
Rachel Howton
Janett Smith
Mavis Lanier
Marie Parsons
Teacher: Trople Carroll
Mary Ann Cook
Ann Fields
Lenora Goodwin
Zula Cowen
Anniece Parsons
Eula Harmon
Nancy Parsons
Ann Parsons
Irene Fields

Adult Class: Men

Matthew Carroll
Rufus P. Cowen
Mathew Carroll
R. R. Fields
Floyd Goodwin
John Parsons

Adult Class: Men Con't

Troy Howton
Henry Parsons
Teacher: Knox Hughes
Bobby Smith

Intermediate Girls:

Lisa Howton
Karen Howton
Vicky Patton
Donna Hendrix
Shirley Salvage
Sondra Mullinax
Donna (Karen) Eaton
Tammy Scales
Teara Howton
Terri Mullinax
Sara Salvage
Vicky Scales
Nicole Parsons
Teacher: Shelva Jordan

Intermediate Boys:

Sherrill Howton
Greg Gilbert
Travis Jordan
Phillip Hendrix
Jeff Parsons
Brian Parsons
Teacher: Homer Jordan
Michael Howton
Cub Gilbert
Mark Allen Cook
Jim Salvage
Greg Parsons
Andy Cook

Nursery:

Barry Parson
Scott Smith
Steve Smith
Candy Harmon
Teacher: Mrs. Ann McMickens Parsons

Elderly Shut-In's:

W. E. Parsons
Mrs. Dale Howton
Parker Cowen

General Offices:

Homer Jordan
Henry Parsons
Linda Parsons

Additional Intermediate Boys:

Steve Reynolds
Wade Reynolds

Mud Creek Baptist Church Bus Ministry:

Drivers: Dave and Virginia Reynolds, Bobby Joe and Janet Smith, and Henry Parsons

From the memory of Ella May Fields: the Bus Ministry was from 1976 to 1981 (?1960's) under the leadership of Brother Carl Hyche. During his leadership the church grow from 25 members to 75 members. Every Sunday night after church, members loaded into the bus and went to Burger King in Bessemer for fellowship. The bus was also used to carry members of the church to area revivals where the Church's choir would sing. From March, 1977 to September, 1985 Ella May Fields played the piano and during that time period Nancy Parsons played the organ.

The membership list of 1960 to present is being prepared. We are sorry that it is not ready for this publication. The membership list for years 1912 to 1959 has been lost.

Current Church:

Pastor:	Brother Billy Brewer
Minister of Music:	Ann Parsons
Pianist:	Carolyn Brewer
Treasurer:	Janet Bryant
Bulletins:	Brenda Gilbert

Other Fellow Laborers and Friends of the Church: Brent Gilbert, Terry Harmon, Bill Kitchens, Jane Kitchens, Rose Lawley, Anniece Parsons, Dave Reynolds, Virginia Reynolds, and Keith Ward, among others

Brother Brewer has been Pastor since 2007. He has served as pastor and assistant pastor in several other churches in the area, including Loveless Park and Big Hurricane. His deep concern for the people of this church and community shows in his visitation, improvements on the church building, and caring for the sick in the church and community.

Chapter Seven: Anti-missions, Southern Baptist, and Mud Creek Baptist Association

The anti-missions groups, composed of Primitivism or Old Baptist, Hardshellism, Campbellism, and Landmarkism, were well entrenched in the southern states. The Anti-missions movement started in the 1820's and peaked in 1840's except Landmarkism which peaked in the 1860's and again at the turn of the century. All opposed missionary societies, Bible societies, Sunday schools, ministerial education, and tract societies. The anti-mission movement was not only complex in its roots, but the effects of its movement in the south were devastating. Communities, congregations, and associations were divided never to be the same again. The influence of these groups never completely disappeared, and this can be seen in the history of Mud Creek Baptist Church.

Another controversy of importance in the 1830's was Sectionalism. It begin between the Northern and Southern Baptists over the owning of slaves. The Northern Baptist were against the owning of slaves while the Southern Baptist were not only for the owning of slaves but believed a Christian could own a slave and do God's work. Many of the southern pastors owned slaves at this time. But in 1845 the differences between the two groups were considered irreconcilable and they separated. When the Civil War broke out "No other one group made any greater effort to support the cause of the Confederacy than Baptists". (*The Alabama Baptist, December 6, 1973)*

The following information has been taken from Fred Kitchens' *History of Mud Creek Church.*

> The differences over missions and the education of ministers came to a head in 1870's with a split between the urban and the rural churches. …

In 1872 four churches, including Mud Creek Baptist Church, requested dismissal from the Canaan Association. The other three churches to withdraw were Roupe's Valley, Pleasant Grove, and Big Creek.

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

A brief history of the Reconstruction years by the Author may help explain the formation of the Mud Creek Association, and their resolution opposing missions, education, and Sunday schools. The following information is taken from: *Southern Baptist Convention and Its People,* by Robert A. Baker. During the Reconstruction years, 1865 to 1877, the American Baptist (Northern) Home Mission Society of New York, whose authority came from the United States Senate, was in control of every aspect of missions and the publications for the southern churches, their Sunday schools, and the education of their pastors. By using agents they collected mission funds of which approximately 50% went to administration costs. Many of the rural churches had a feeling of mistrust of the larger organizations. They severed relations with them and form their own association.
(History of Mud Creek Baptist Church continues below)

Remnants of financial records of Mud Creek Baptist Church show the church supported missions and ministerial education. Of thirty-three entrees from 1837 to 1911 there was an average of $3.51 per year spent on missions and ministerial education. Ministerial education got two entrees of $210 each in 1898 and 1902. Pastor's salaries averaged less than $30 per month until 1900, when they went to around $100.

From 1837 to 1872 the Canaan Baptist Association promoted Sunday school in a big way to its members, but the churches of the association showed no interest in conducting Sunday schools. The lack of interest in promoting Sunday schools in the churches of the Mud Creek Baptist Association continued until 1885.

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

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 succeeded in 1901 by Miss Alice Huey, a graduate of Judson College. She was a boon to the Sunday school and the B.Y. P. U. work in this church. So the work begun at Mud Creek in 1885 lasted until (present day).
>
> By the year 1885, opposition to education began to disappear. The Association began working to establish a permanent association school for the purpose of educating children and ministers. The first was an eight month school located at Oak Grove Church, and was taught by Rev. O. J. Waldrop. Jerry Fountain was principal of the second session of the association school and Miss Bulal Bell assistant. This nine month school, called the Jerry Fountain School, was a boarding school and lasted for six years: 1886 to 1892."

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 association minutes. The reason for this is not known.

At the 1913 meeting of the association, the Report on Home Missions called for cooperation of the Churches in helping the destitute around them while rebuking the injudicious use of funds by the Southern Baptist Convention and Boards. Both reports were adopted. The report on Foreign Missions was a stirring appeal for a greater effort in carrying the Gospel to foreign countries. From this meeting came a resolution that all contributions to Foreign Missions be made directly to laborers in the field.

On October 13-14, 1915, the Forty Fourth annual session of the association met as scheduled. This meeting was anything but routine. It was

dominated by a faction labeled Landmarkers. A discussion of Landmarkism, Old Baptist, … is at the first of this chapter.

The Churches of Mud Creek, Liberty, and Oak Grove withdrew from this meeting. One month late, on November 12-13, these three churches, joined by Parson's Chapel, met at Mud Creek Baptist 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) there existed a difference of opinion among the member Churches of the Association as to a plan for spreading the Gospel, (2) the issue to cooperate or not to cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention had been forced, and (3) a resolution providing for representation based on Membership was rejected.
The Resolution of the above committee 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 old anti-mission spirit, that has during the history of the association, denounced education and opposed the establishment of denominational schools and theological seminaries …; and be it
>
> Resolved, further, That the delegates from this and other churches originally comprising the Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Association be empowered to (1) urge, in the next meeting, a friendly division of the territory now embraced by the thirty four churches and (2) that the Association grant Mud Creek Baptist Church and as many other churches as may adopt these or similar resolutions … the privilege of retaining the name of Mud Creek Baptist Association that embraces the history of all church work in this section.

Adopted by, Name of Church	Signed by, Name of Clerk
Mud Creek	W. B. Parsons
Oak Grove	J. B. Knight
Liberty	Ira Hancock
Parson's Chapel	H.G. Parsons

Following is a copy of a resolution prepared by the Resolutions Committee

> Whereas, On the 14th day of October, 1915, a part of the Mud Creek Baptist Association, the Landmarkers, 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 Baptist Churches will ignore the asking of letters of dismissal from that part of the Association, the Landmarkers, that has departed from all 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 14th day of October, 1915 … separate themselves from the principles which we have supported or contended. Said action of the Landmark faction separated themselves from 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
>
> ……

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 into the Association without letters of dismissal from the Landmark faction.

The 46th Annual session of the Mud Creek Association met at Concord Baptist Church on October 12, 13, 1917. Mud Creek Baptist Church was represented by J. K. P. Laird, Rev. D. W. Howton, W. B. Parsons, B. G. Johnson and Jeff Laird.

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 Baptist Church.

Why Mud Creek Baptist Church 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.

Chapter Eight: The Seventy-fifth and One Hundred Anniversaries of Mud Creek Baptist Church, written by W. P. Parsons, 1957

1912: "The Seventy-fifth Anniversary Celebration: Mud Creek Baptist Church, famous landmark of the Western part of Jefferson County, celebrated this three quarter of a century of her existence with appropriate exercises. Bro. S. A. Parsons gave a sketch of the Charter Members of the church and mentioned many of the members since that time. Bro. W.C. Parsons gave a complete financial statement of the history of the church. This has been preserved in the copy he made of the original Record Book of the church. Dr. A.P. Montague, President of Howard College at that time, gave the History of Baptists in Alabama. The Celebration was held in April 1912."

1937: "The One Hundred Anniversary Celebrations: The Mud Creek Baptist Church, a famous landmark in the Western part of Jefferson County, is 100 years old. She celebrated the Centennial with all-day excises, April 18, 1937. This celebration drew the largest concourse of people ever assembled on the grounds of this historical church.

The celebration exercises were begun at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, featuring a program reminiscent of slavery times. A section of the church was reserved for descendants of black families who were once members of the congregation. The program included the singing of plantation melodies and spirituals by the colored visitors. Also, short talks were made on what the blacks owe to the white man in a religious way. Only eight of their race attended and took part in the service. They were afraid that there might be some feeling of resentment against their presence in the meeting. But this was not the case, as the white people seemed to enjoy their participation in the service. The principal message of this service was delivered by A. L. Nichols, Moderator of the Mud Creek Baptist Association.

Sunday's program opened with a devotional at 10:00 a.m. led by Rev. T. B. Kennedy. After the devotional Dr. M. M. Wood of Birmingham Association gave a historical account of the church and associational history in the county. Next, a brief history of Mud Creek was given by W. B. Parsons. Following this, messages from former pastors were heard and read. The centennial message was delivered by Rev. C. C. Wilcut of Tarrant City, Alabama. His message brought old time shouting in the congregation.

The afternoon was devoted to singing of the old as well as the new type of songs. Such directors as John M. Dye, Ganus Brothers, P. B. Hughes and others

were heard. The Parsons Brothers-Hughes and the Ganus Brothers Quartets, and others rendered several selections.

Former pastors were given a special invitation to attend. A partial list of those living is: M. M. Wood, M. T. Branham, A. L. Nichols, W. T. Burchfield, and D. R. Jackson.

The oldest living former member of this church was J. W. Howton. The oldest living members are Sister Millie P. Cargile and Bro. D. W. Howton. Other living former members were Betsy Ann Martin, B. B. Hammond, and Rev. Peter Rogers. Both of the latter members are of Mt. Pleasant, Texas.

According to the original copy of the minutes, the church was constituted April 1st to 18th, 1837. The inclusive date is rather unusual. It is significant to note: By reference to the Century Calendar, the 1st of April that year fell on Saturday and the 18th ran through Tuesday of the third week.

They probably met on Saturday and continued on Sunday. At this first meeting of the Presbytery, composed of Hosea H. Rockett and Jesse Seal, their first act was to designate the name of the church as Mud Creek Church of Christ of United Baptist. Bro. Seal acted as Moderator and Bro. W.D.T. Culbertson was appointed as Clerk. Bro. Joseph M. Brown was called to the work of deacon. Adjourned.

At a subsequent meeting the Solemn Covenant of Mud Creek Church of Christ of United Baptist, with an Abstract of their Principles were adopted.

Each of the above documents is significant in its context; and the Biblical references are cited for each Article of the Abstract of Principles. The names of the Charter Members were annexed to the foregoing documents of the Constitution. At a later meeting (which is supposed to have been on April 18th) the following items are noted:

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.

Adjourned to meet the first Saturday in May.

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 (Forbis, Forbes) came forward and put himself under the watch care of the church until he could get a letter from the church to which he belonged.

We are fortunate in having this much information concerning the Constitution and the history of this old church by my Brother, W. C. Parsons,

which he had prepared for the Celebration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary in 1912.

Speech Delivered by W. B. Parsons at the Centennial Celebration in 1937:

We have met today to celebrate the centennial anniversary of that first gathering of devout Christians at this place in 1837. (April 1 to 18)

For the one hundred years this church as been the center of the community religious interest and the burying ground for the following families: Wood, Howton, Burchfield, Parsons, Goodwin, Gwin, Laird, Cowen, Travis, Rogers, Greer, Cargile, Raney, Franklin, Johnson, Stringfellow, Martin, Jones, Stone, Hammonds, Echols, McFerran, Hogg, Davis and others. ….

The church is located on a wooded knoll covered with a predomination growth of oak and hickory trees, with a rippling spring on either side of the Northern extremity of this knoll, which springs with their branches formed the original boundaries of the church property.

(Descriptions of the church buildings are in Chapter Five).

During the pioneer period before the War Between the States, little is known of the pastors that served the church. Thomas Norwood, Solly Thompson, J. I. Gilbert, Henry G. Smith, were remembered as the leading preachers of the time and place. During the Civil War, we are told, they had no regular pastor. (However documents have been found listing most of the church's pastors, see Chapter Six)

Bro. O. G. (Uncle Goobe) Franklin is the authority for this statement:

Immediately after the War the people had met at the church for the purpose of discussing whether they would try to have preaching, or not. Some suggested that as most of their men were gone and as most of their resources were gone, they didn't see how they could afford to try to have preaching.

Bro. P. A. D. (Uncle Pad) Smith arose and said, Brethren, it seams to me like we can do without anything and everything better than we can do without the gospel. That statement spread like wild fire in the congregation; and pretty soon they had decided to have monthly preaching.

He also said that Bro. "Pad" Smith preached for them the remainder of the year for $1.50 in money, three pairs of home knit woolen socks, and such other articles as were offered.

Today we boast about our knowledge of science. We claim to know all about the planets and how they spin in space. But I am impressed with the idea that those people were not thinking so much about how the heavens go, as how to go to heaven.

What difference a few years make. Three hundred (years ago) not a white person lived in Alabama. One hundred years may be along time when measured by

achievements. Today automobiles whiz along paved thoroughfares. Radios snatch out of the air sounds born a thousand miles away. Electricity makes the flour the Indians ground out laboriously between stones. Overhead airplanes have conquered the air ruled by eagles a hundred years ago. What would the charter members of this church think if they could come back and see the airplanes flying overhead, hear the loud speaker, and observe the other marvelous inventions of the present century?

A century may be a short time in the history of the universe; but this has been a century of great change and progress in economical and temporal (worldly) development. Sad, indeed, it is that our spiritual development has not kept pace with our temporal development. This is why our world affairs are so much unbalanced.

Several churches in Alabama have recently celebrated their Centennial years. It is a fact worth more than passing notice that our churches are among our oldest institutions. They surely have been founded on the Rock of Ages.

It was upon the Rock of the Bible that this nation was founded. Usually the first building in a community has been a church where the people might study the Bible. The first literature in this country was religious, and the first education was by the church.

Now, we have been looking back over the past hundred years. But we should be looking both ways in time in celebrating this centennial. And, perhaps, as Mud Creek extends one hand to the past and the other to the future, the spirits of the pioneers may be looking on and approving that while the one hand is pointing to the past, the other has been joined in its gesture to the future.

There are those who wonder if this country will continue to prosper and progress unless it keeps close to that Book of Books, which has played so far such an important part in our history.

What will the next one hundred years bring? Who knows?

Let us adjourn to April 18, 2037, 100 years from now. No one present today will be there. Or will this be the last Centennial meeting?

What will the world of 2037 be like?

Foot Note to this history:

Almost from the beginning this church concerned herself about the salvation of the souls of slaves. And the record shows that three colored women belonged to this church.

These entries are found on the pages of the old church book:

Caty Woods, a woman of Color; Polly Ann Johnson, Colored; Sarah Cowen, Colored who was known as Tite's Sarah because she married Titus, Jonathan Howton's slave. See Members: 1837 to 1911, for more details of these women.

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www.familytreemaker.genealogy.com, the Crandall Woodson Family Home Page

(2) Mark Goodwin and wife Tabitha Parsons, and son Wych(e):
http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com

(3) Joseph Martin Brown and wife Jane Waldrop:

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(5) Randolph Johnson and wife Elizabeth Ashby (Ashbay):

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(6) Curtis Howton and wife Dorcas (Dorcus) Franklin:

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(7) Thomas Burchfield, Sr.

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(8) Littleton Parsons and wife Sarah (and Tabitha Parsons Goodwin):

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