

Old Panther Creek Baptist Church

By Jerry Long
c.2025



Old Panther Creek Baptist Church. Picture by Jerry Long, 10 October 1983



Article	page
• “Biographical Sketch of Panther Creek Baptist Church” By Rev. Joseph Perkins Ellis (1811-1892)	3
• “Panther Creek” By Rev. Wendell Holmes Rone (1913-2003)	13
• “History Of The Old Panther Creek Church” By Oswald George Jett (1917-2003)	14
• “Panther Creek Church Marks Sesquicentennial” Messenger-Inquirer, 30 May 1965	18



**Old Panther Creek Baptist Church in Ohio County
near the intersection of three counties –
Daviess, Hancock & Ohio**



Biographical Sketch of Panther Creek Baptist Church

By Rev. Joseph Perkins Ellis (1811-1892)

The year of our Lord 1815 is memorable in the history of our country; in the victories gained over our country's foes; in confirming our people in the rectitude and love of our free American institutions, and in the organization of Daviess county to take rank as a county in the grand old Commonwealth of Kentucky, whose territory had hitherto been included in the county of Ohio. Also in the organization of Panther Creek Baptist Church, constituted on the 23rd day of September, by Elders Ancil Hall and Benjamin Kelley, with eighteen members, viz: James Helm, John Helm, James Thomas, Zachariah Briant, John Phillips, Shelton Gentry, Matthew Gentry, Seth Caldwell, Thomas Steerman, Elizabeth Helm, Sr., Elizabeth Helm, Jr., Catharine Fields, Elenor Holmark, Tabitha Briant, Agnis Phillips, Catharine Gentry, Sally Briant and Nancy Steerman, equally divided male and female, a rare circumstance, indeed I have no knowledge of a parallel case. Being organized a church chose Elder Hall pastor, their notion was not only that every church should have a pastor, but his membership should be with them, accordingly sent a letter and messenger to Mt. Pleasant church, Ohio county, holding Elder Hall's membership, asking that church to grant him a letter of dismission that he might join them, in order that he might be more efficient in serving them as pastor. The request was granted and at an early day we find Elder Hall a member of this young church. The church met in private houses for a time till she built a small log house, at a spring, near the late residence of Robert Miller, deceased, in Daviess county, on the present road from Whitesville to Knottsville, about midway between the two points, which at that early was almost an unbroken forest, with neither roads or bridges, and the few passways then being traveled through the country were known as traces, as the Hartford trace, the Yellowbank (now Owensboro) trace, &c. This church thus situated and surrounded by a large destitution, embraced in a territory extending from Mt. Pleasant, Ohio county, on the East into Henderson county on the West, a distance of perhaps 50 miles; and from Blackford, Hancock county, on the North to Beaver Dam, Ohio county, on the South, a distance of some 35 or 40 miles, perhaps making an average width of 25 miles of territory, including from 1,000 to 1,250 square miles, in which there was not found a Baptist church. Such being her surroundings, the church went to work under the faithful teachings of her pastor and soon organized an arm in the Forks of Panther creek, here she kept up regular worship and good success attended her efforts. Jasper Bristoe, a citizen of this community soon became a member of the church and licensed to preach, and subsequently ordained to the work of the ministry, took an active part in the work. Elder Hall, ever active in his work as pastor, though living fifteen miles distant from his flock, and often under the necessity of performing the journey on foot, he would start from home a day or two before the regular meeting, and would hold nightmeetings by the way at private houses, and so make his way on to his appointment, often gathering up company to go with him, so it was no unusual circumstance when they met to find their little log house crowded with interested worshipers, many of them having with their devoted pastor made their way up to the house of prayer on foot. And when met all was of one heart and one mind, and all seemed happy in the enjoyment of the hours and privileges of

the house of prayer. All on an equality as to privileges, and all were encouraged to tell the reason of their hopes, their fears, their comforts and sorrows, and to speak a word for Jesus, many were the happy seasons this church enjoyed under these exercises. So prompt and faithful was the pastor in his duties, that it became a saying among the members, "Let us all go to church, you know Bro. Hall will be there." The church prospered greatly under Elder's ministry, for he taught the members to cultivate the idea of personal and individual responsibilities, that every member had his or her place to fill in the body, and no one member could fill the place of another. He served the church twenty-five years, closing his labors in 1840.

February, 1825, lettered off a number of her members for the purpose of constituting a church in the Forks of Panther creek, at a point where she had for a time kept up worship and styled it an arm; preliminaries arranged, the members lettered off, with perhaps a few others, met and were duly constituted, and was recognized as a Baptist church of Jesus Christ. It was then proposed that they name it; Elder Hall being present suggested that it be called in honor of that place beyond Jordan where John was baptizing, the suggestion pleased the members and accordingly they adopted the name Bethabara. In this date (1826) we find the church having changed her location, and built a comfortable log house on a lot of ground obtained from James Miller, Sr., in Ohio county, five miles East of her old site. The church now much encouraged engaged in every good work was much strengthened and from time to time receiving additional strength in new members.

For a number of years now the church got along prosperous, having but little to mar her peace save occasional cases of dealing with members. A case of rather a novel character came before the church at its regular meeting February, 1837, in which one sister accused another of saying that she kept a gang around her to make fun of her when she came there.

At the April meeting, 1838, the church agreed and adopted the following resolution, viz: "That this church set apart Bro. Ancil Hall for the work of the ministry, and the church agree to give him a decent support, and appoint a committee of two to consult him on the subject and report to the church." At the May meeting Elder Hall accepted the proposition made by the church at the last meeting, to devote himself more exclusively to preaching. At the December meeting the church decided, through a committee, that it would take \$50 to supply Elder Hall the year, beginning at the October meeting, 1838; and to raise the money each male member pay \$1, if that is not sufficient then each pay as the Lord has prospered him.

September meeting, 1839, took up the matter of licensing B. F. Mitchel to exercise his gift, and referred it until next meeting. October meeting gave him license to preach. At this time the church concluded to continue meetings from day to day for a time, and to send an invitation to Mt. Pleasant church to join with her in these meetings. Elder S. Buchanan, the pastor came. The meetings continued from the 25th of October until the 3rd of November, during which there were seventy-two additions to the church by baptism. At the December meeting Elder Hall resigned, the church received his resignation, and, in view of the late large additions to the church, it was then agreed that all of the officers of the church now resign and all be elected at the next meeting. Church also agreed to build a new house 35x50 feet. January, 1840, Elders Hall and Bristoe were chosen, jointly, as pastors. At this meeting paid Elder Hall part of his salary. March meeting Treasurer reported \$33.70 paid on pastor's salary, leaving a balance of \$16.30. April meeting the balance of pastor's salary raised by voluntary contributions and paid him. Also ordered a subscription paper circulated for the purpose of raising money to pay the pastor.

October meeting, 1840, a charge was presented against a number of the members, who, under sanction and authority of the church, had formed themselves into a missionary society, charging them with immoral conduct for representing themselves in a council held at Goshen

church on the day next preceding the meeting of the Goshen Association. The accused plead that the charge was unconstitutional, and that the Association would sustain them in this view. Their accusers then declared non-fellowship with the Association. The question was then taken, and, by vote, the charge was taken up. The accusers then contended that the accused were under censure of the church, and consequently suspended. The accused seeing the situation, the clerk being one of them, and believing they stood on constitutional ground, appointed Bro. D. D. Neal Moderator, and he being disposed to take a decisive stand, directed the church to be dismissed in order. Bristoe, acting Moderator of the church, replied you are in disorder, and said we are the Panther Creek church of United Baptists, and then left the house requesting all who called themselves United Baptists to follow him, whereupon Hall and many others followed. It may be information to state right here that the council referred to in the above named accusation, was called from the churches of the Goshen Association, or as many of them as chose to go into it, for the purpose of devising plans and means for the more effectually supplying the destitution with the preached Gospel. Panther Creek church was called on to go into this council, but as a church refused to have anything to do with it, but agreed that any of her members, in their individual capacity could go and act for themselves as seemed right to them. Contention and strife now seemed the order for many months. Sometime in 1841 Elder Bristoe drew up and presented some propositions to each of the parties, from which I make the following extracts:

"Dear Brethren—After long deliberation and much thought on the subject of the differences amongst us, we, the church, have come to the following conclusions, that neither the majority nor the minority can claim the constitution of the church for the following reasons: 1st. The word of God makes it the duty of the church to attend to her preacher and supply his needs, and our articles of faith also bind us to do so, and the majority refuses to comply with both the word of God and our articles of faith, as we believe, and in substance say we will not do what God has made it our duty to do, therefore we feel afraid to stand identified with them."

[There was no provision made by the church to pay Elder Bristoe anything, though he was pastor jointly with Elder Hall.]

"2nd. We believe as the church was not constituted a mission church, after the present form of the mission system, and as the minority has united with the present mission system and is not assisting in the support of the church's preacher, but has gone into an unauthorized body, unknown in the word of God, we feel also afraid to stand identified with them. For we are confident that if the churches would do their duty there would be no place for any other mission society but the church."

"We therefore bind ourselves, so many of us as subscribe our names to the proposition, to comply with the word of God and our articles of faith by taxing of ourselves as the Lord has prospered us, so that by equality we may support the gospel amongst us—we mean not to ease one and another be burdened, but that we pay that preacher that the church shall unanimously call to preach to her for the time spent in complying with the call. What we mean by equality is, the man that God has blessed with a thousand dollars worth of property shall pay double as much as the man that God has blessed with five hundred dollars worth of property, and so in proportion. Any brother joining us will set down his name with the amount of his taxable property, and leave the rate to be fixed by a majority of those that unite."

I quote from a certified copy of Elder Bristoe's propositions, which is in my possession, bearing date November 20th, 1841. From the foregoing extracts it would appear that Elder Bristoe was decidedly in favor of Home Missions, and boldly working to have the destitution supplied in all our bounds, but he had his peculiar way of doing the work, as indicated in the above extracts,

while he utterly ignored the decisions and plans agreed upon by the brethren in council at Goshen church referred to above. While said council in their wisdom may have decided that the best plan to reach the desired end was to appoint an evangelist to take the field and preach the Gospel to every creature, and recommended liberal contributions for the support of said evangelist, in all this said council could see no infringement upon the rights of the church, as they recommend voluntary contributions, "That whatsoever a man proposes in his heart to give let him give, for the Lord loves a cheerful giver." But Elder Bristoe entertained different views, not, however, to the object, but to the plans and measures adopted in order to reach the object; he held that the individual church should occupy her entire field, have her own evangelist and every member should feel bound to contribute of his means as the Lord had prospered him, even to the taxing of themselves in proportion to what they were worth financially, to support the preacher that the church unanimously called to the work. Such appears to have been the difference and ground of contention between the parties at this early day. Hence the manifest anxiety on the part of Elder Bristoe, who seemed to be prominent in leading the opposition, in urging the adoption of his views, however, neither of the parties would adopt them, the party he was identified with utterly ignored them, and the mission party (as it was now denominated) determined to stand firm on the ground of voluntary contributions, and every member has the right to give as he proposes in his heart to give, accountable to God and his conscience for the manner he performs this duty. The annual meeting of the Goshen Association now approaching (of which Panther Creek church was a member), each of these parties (claiming to be the church) sent a letter and messengers, and demanded seats in the body. Their claims were investigated and the decision was that the mission party was the Panther Creek church and their messengers took their seats. This decision settled the matter as to which of the parties was recognized as the Panther Creek church. Elder Bristoe now set himself to work (as he said) to reorganize the church. Having procured a copy of the Articles of Faith and Rules of Decorum of the Panther Creek Church, his party met and organized, and finally located where Pellville now stands, under the significant cognomen of the Original United Baptist Church of Christ, called Panther Creek. It was called by them Old Panther Creek. For a long time this body made all the effort they could to keep up their organization and occupy this now important point, but their influence and ability to occupy the ground grew less and less till they despaired and surrendered the field, and has become extinct as an organization.

Pellville church now occupying the ground. About or near the time of the organization of this now defunct body another organization composed of members which left Panther Creek church along with Bristoe, arose and located at a place then known as Westpoint, but now as Roseville. This seemed to be a central point from which these people put forth their efforts to build up their cause, but with all their efforts, offerings, and sacrifices (which perhaps were not excelled by any other body of equal talent and means), yet they failed to succeed and build up their cause. The reason of this failure may we not find in the fact that they have no foundation upon which to stand and labor to build up an opposing institution; all claiming to believe in the one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, and each recognizing the order of the Master to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." How they should separate and work no more together is a problem that might be solved thus: All believed that it was the duty of the church to have the Gospel preached in the regions beyond. Bristoe believed that the church should send Peter to preach it, and the church was solemnly bound to sustain him, even by taxation. The other party believed that Paul would be more efficient, and sends him to do the work, pledging themselves to sustain him by their prayers and voluntary contributions. This is a plain illustration of the differences that existed between the parties. Many of those that went off with Bristoe, some of the

best talent they had, have returned to the church, and are now satisfied that those are no real grounds of difference and are doing a good work to harmonize the brethren, and from every indication the time is near when these differences will only be known in history.

At the November meeting, 1840, the church agreed, by motion and second, to call Hall and Bristoe, their former pastors, to come before the church at the next regular meeting to show cause why they should not be dealt with for withdrawing themselves from the church in disorder. Also appointed a committee of four to make out a fair record of the proceedings of the October meeting, and a council be called from sister churches, viz: Goshen, Bethabara, Owensboro, Hawesville, Blackford and Union to assist in dealing with their former pastors.

December meeting, 1840, by motion and second, it was agreed to entertain a charge against a number of brethren for acting in church capacity with Elder Bristoe, who was under the censure of the church, and appointed a committee to cite them to attend the next meeting. Then the committee appointed at the last meeting to make a fair record of the proceedings of the October meeting was called on made their report, which was adopted and ordered to be recorded. As to the council called from sister churches, as above named, whether that ever convened we know not, as the records are silent on the subject.

January meeting, 1841, took up the reference with regard to the dissenting brethren, and first considered the case of Elder Bristoe, and after due deliberation excluded him. Then took up the case of those acting with Elder Bristoe, Elder Hall being one of them, and on due deliberation excluded them. From this time on the parties stood aloof from each other, each working in their own way, but aiming at the same object, the spread of religion in the world, the glory of Cod, in the salvation of souls, how humiliating it is to see a large, and hitherto influential, prosperous church become divided, split and part asunder and strive to impede the progress of the other, especially, as in this case, where there are no real grounds for them to occupy in opposition to each other, each recognizing the last order of their Divine Master to His church, "to go into all the world," &c., as binding upon them, and each feeling the great importance of the work, and resolved to do all they can in the work, and carry out this last command of their glorified head, being of one mind in holding to the one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and harmonizing in their views as to the legitimate work of the church in the world, that they should differ so in the choice of the instruments or agents to be used in the performance of the work as to part asunder and walk and work no more together in carrying out the great object of the Master in organizing His church in the world. The mission party, as it was now termed, believed that there was a variety of gifts given to the church, and that it was frequently the case that good pastors did not make good and successful evangelists, and they could see no wrong in calling to the work one who was not their pastor, fix his salary and define the principle upon which it should be raised, especially when that principle commends itself to every man's conscience as inspiration, "That every one should give as the Lord has prospered him, and what he proposes in his heart to give let him give, for the Lord loves a cheerful giver." They defined this to be voluntary contribution. Yet these dissenting brethren do work, and at times doubtless need church contributions, upon what principle do they demand and raise funds for any church purpose? If not voluntary it must be by compulsion,

At this meeting the church agreed on a location of a new house, about: one mile east of her old house, which is to be a frame house, and the third house that she built.

At the February meeting, 1841, the church chose Elder Simeon Buckhanon pastor, but he declined the acceptance until the March meeting. At the March meeting agreed to commune at the May meeting, and invited Elder A. Taylor, R. Cottrel, H. H. Ellis, J. G. Howard, Wm. Head, T. Newton, R. Snider and J. H. Brown to meet with them on Friday before the 4th Sunday in May.

At the April meeting ordered the building committee to contract with Bro. James Miller, Sr., to build the meeting house.

November meeting agreed to ordain B. F. Mitchel to the work of the gospel ministry, which was done at the next regular meeting. Presbytery, S. Buckhanon, T. Newton and H. H. Ellis. At the May meeting, 1842, it was agreed that Bro. Richard Royal be licensed to exercise his gift in any way that he may think right under the watch-care of this church. At the August meeting following he is granted a letter of dismission. At the March meeting, 1843, Elder B. F. Mitchel resigned the pastoral care of the church, having served the church twelve months; but was again chosen at the June meeting following. September meeting following Elder Mitchel again resigns.

March, 1844, a resolution was adopted closing the doors of the meeting house against all who advocated the doctrines of A. Campbell and his followers, or whom we have reason to believe do so.

April meeting, 1844, a list of charges was laid in against Elder B. F. Mitchel, charging him of entertaining and teaching doctrine and sentiments peculiar to Alexander Campbell. Charges entertained by the church, and Mitchel called upon to answer. After a thorough examination, the church was satisfied that the charges were fully sustained; then by motion and second Mitchel was excluded from the church.

For several months following this event the church was much troubled, having many things of an important nature to contend with; having no pastor, the cause was running very low; and at the January meeting, 1845, all the officers of the church resigned—Moderator, clerk and deacons—while some of the members were asking the church to exclude them. Such was the sad state of affairs now. On the 3rd day of February, Elders F. Tanner, H. H. Ellis and J. P. Ellis visited this distressed and deeply troubled church, and tarried with them, preaching to them day and night till the 9th of the month, during which time the Lord poured out the blessing upon the efforts put forth and much good resulted; the church revived; seven precious souls converted and joined the church, and two members restored. This seemed to be a turning point in the history of this church. At the regular meeting in this month of February, 1845, the church gave the writer a unanimous call to serve her as pastor for one year. The call was accepted, and I entered upon the responsible duties of laboring to build up the waste places of Zion with a heavy-burdened heart. At the April meeting the church elected her officers. At the July meeting agreed to petition the Goshen Association for a letter of dismission, to join the Daviess county Association.

The divine blessing rested upon our labors during the past year, and the church and pastor were much encouraged. March meeting, 1846, the former pastor was unanimously chosen, and he continued to be pastor under an annual call till December, 1858. At the June meeting, 1847, by motion and second it was agreed that the church take up and consider the propriety or impropriety of receiving immersed members from the Pedobaptist, or Reformers. Further action deferred till next meeting. At July meeting the reference taken up, and by motion and second decided that the church considers it bad order, and then ordered that this decision be inserted in her letter to the next Association. At the August meeting the church called on the pastor, and Elder C. J. Kelly (he being present), to give their views in reference to Indian missions, which was promptly done, after which the church by motion and second unanimously decided in favor of Indian missions, and ordered that all the money in the hands of the treasurer be appropriated to that object. Prosperity and happiness seemed now to be the lot of the church, yet she was very strict in using her discipline, and frequently her work was to deal with some of her members for some misdemeanor or other, and almost always succeeded in reclaiming them. A good influence was thus exerted on her

membership, and not only so, but her light shone around with such brilliancy that many new members were added to her number.

At the January meeting, 1850, by motion and second, voted unanimously to co-operate with the Daviess county Association in her efforts to supply the destitution in her bounds with the preached gospel.

The church now adopted the plan of holding protracted meetings, not only at her house of worship, but at school houses and other places in her bounds, with good success. January 26, 1851, closed a meeting at Old Panther Creek (now Pellville), conducted by the pastor, during which there was one by letter, three by relation and eleven by baptism received. __1851 the Daviess county Association held her annual session with this church. November, 1851 the church agrees to release her pastor for three months, that he may go as missionary and preach to the destitute in the bounds of the Daviess county Association. November, 1852 closed a meeting of days at the school-house No. 62, Ohio county, during which there was one received by relation, two restored, and seventeen by baptism. December meeting, baptism 3. March meeting, 1853, received by experience and baptism 13. During a meeting at Norris school-house (reported by the pastor) held in November, received 25 members. Also at the March meeting, 1854, reported 18 members received by baptism. July meeting granted letters to 39 members for purpose of constituting a church at Whitesville.

January, 1856, by motion and second it was unanimously agreed to adopt the following preamble and resolution:

Whereas, we believe that our young brethren, J. B. Haynes, David Whittinghill and Daniel J. Phillips have gifts that should be cultivated, therefore Resolved, that the church liberate them to exercise and cultivate their several gifts as they may feel to do and act by and under the authority of the church, and as a church we will uphold them by our prayers.

May meeting, 9 members received by baptism. November meeting, the following preamble and resolution adopted:

Whereas, there are those who are engaged in buying and selling property, with the promise to pay or receive pay on condition of certain future events, and whereas such actions are by this church considered a species of gambling, therefore Resolved, that any member of this church who shall be known to thus act shall merit the censure of the church and shall be dealt with accordingly.

January 1857, received a letter from Bethabara church requesting the ordination of Bro. J. B. Haynes to the work of the gospel ministry so he might be qualified to serve her as pastor. Request granted, and the following churches solicited to aid in the work, and send their ordained ministers to set in council on the subject at the next regular meeting. The following churches responded and sent aid, viz: Bethabara, Deacon J. Gordon; Bellsrun, Elder J. P. Ellis and Deacons T. S. Taylor and B. Johnson; Whitesville, Elder J. S. Taylor and Deacon N. C. Tate and J. C. Miller; Zion, Elder J. R. Gillespie and Deacons H. Haynes and L. Owen. The council organized by appointing Elder J. P. Ellis moderator and M. C. Tate clerk, then proceeded in the work in the following order: 1st, a full and satisfactory examination of a candidate on his Christian experience, call to the ministry, and doctrinal views; the church and council unanimously agreed in setting apart to the work; ordination sermon by Elder J. R. Gillespie; prayer by Elder J. S. Taylor; imposition of hands by presbytery; presentation of the Bible to the candidate and charge by Elder J. P. Ellis; benediction by the candidate.

At the April meeting passed a string of resolutions in reference to her pastor who had been appointed missionary in the bounds of Daviess county Association, commending him to the confidence and prayers of the churches and ordering a copy sent to Western Recorder for publication, and the Tennessee Baptist requested to copy. October meeting, received and read a

letter from Pondrun church, Ohio county, requesting the ordination of Bro. D. Whittinghill to the work of the gospel ministry. Also a letter received and read from Bennettsville Baptist church, Hancock county, requesting the ordination of Bro. D. J. Phillips. Request granted, and ordered that the work in reference to both of the Brethren be attended to at the next meeting, the following churches being invited, responded by sending their ordained ministers instructed to aid in the work, viz: Whitesville, Elder J. P. Ellis and J.S. Taylor and Deacons F.W. Haynes and J.C. Miller; Bethabara, Deacon Hardin Haynes, Elder J.M. Dawson being present was invited to a seat in council. After a thorough examination of the candidates, proceeded with their ordination in the usual order.

February, 1858, Elder Ellis closed his pastorate, having served the church 13 successive years. Elder J. B. Haynes was then elected pastor; being present, accepted the position and entered immediately upon the work.

May meeting appointed a committee of five members to make out a list of the names of all the members of the church and report next meeting. June meeting the committee reported a list of the names of 200 members. A letter from Bellsrun church received at this meeting asking for ministerial aid in the ordination of Bro. T. S. Brooks to the gospel ministry. Request granted and her ministers instructed to meet with said church and act with her in the work specified at her July meeting next. October meeting the following order was passed, viz: That the Deacons shall report to the church when they administer to the wants of the poor and needy the cause which has produced their wants or necessities. August, 1859, appointed a committee to draft resolutions on Home missions, and report next meeting. September meeting the committee reported the following, which was adopted: Whereas there is yet a considerable amount of destitution existing in the bounds of Daviess county Association, and some even in the bounds of our own church, which we feel to be our duty to supply, and as far as in us is to aid in supplying the destitution of our Association, therefore Resolved, that we will supply our own destitution, and cheerfully aid in supplying the destitution elsewhere with the preached gospel. Resolved further, that we respectfully request the Association to endorse our resolution by requesting each church to make such resolve, that we with them will with our several ministers as so many missionaries, give to every neighborhood the preached gospel.

October meeting, by request of Cloverport church, ordered that her ordained ministers be instructed to meet with said church at her next regular meeting, sit in council and aid in the ordination of one of her members, E. Petri, to the work of the gospel ministry. November received 23 by baptism. December received by baptism 10, by relation 1. January, 1861, by baptism 2. March, Elder J. B. Haynes re-elected pastor, accepts. June meeting received a letter from Zion church asking ministerial aid in the ordination of Bro. Piam, a colored Bro.; request complied with. December meeting the pastor offered his resignation, which was accepted, and immediately called him again, the church agreeing to wait one month for an answer. I find no further record in reference to the case. Suppose Elder Haynes would not accept the call, having served the church acceptable and profitably for about three years, with much enjoyment; but now the scene was changed; a civil war was raging in our country, and the Elder became an object of persecution by a class claiming to be home guards, who arrested and reported him to the military, and they drove him from his home and family and parents to a distant city, and there confined for a time under military rule and dictation, but was finally released and returned to his family and home. Feeling that he must preach the gospel, he made his arrangements and moved to another part of the field, laboring with good success for a time in the counties of Hopkins, Webster and Henderson, till his permanent location in Union county, where he yet lives, an honored minister, doing a good work

for Him who said, "If any man serve me him will my father honor." At February meeting 1862, Elder D. Whittinghill was elected pastor; accepted at the April meeting. December meeting, Elder Haynes called for a letter of dismission for himself, wife and daughter, which was granted; but it seems afterwards there was an objection made to the Elder having a letter, which came before the church at her February meeting 1863. The objection was that Elder Haynes does not fellowship with a portion of this church. The church then appointed a committee to write to him informing him of the same. May meeting this committee presented a letter to the church from Elder Haynes, after the reading of which the objector withdrew the objection. February, 1864, Elder H. T. Lampton was elected pastor. At the April meeting, he being present, agrees to serve the church on the condition the church pay him \$100 a year. July meeting, received Bro. Calvin Voils and wife, and Bro. D. B. Voils and wife, by relation, also restored Bro. C. B. Phillips. These three Brethren were from the dissenting Brethren who left this church in 1840, and had each been minister in that body. August meeting, Bro. C. B. Phillips is granted a letter of dismission. October meeting agreed to take up the case of Brethren C. and D. B. Voils. On motion, agreed that each of them relate their Christian experience and call to the ministry, and be examined by the church and her pastor, after which agreed to recognize each of them as regular ordained ministers of the gospel in the general union, and that the clerk give each of them a certificate of these proceedings in their case. April 1865, received Elder Lampton and wife by letter. June meeting expelled Bro. D. B. Voils for joining another church not in our union. February 1866, Elder Lampton re-elected pastor. February 1867, again re-elected; and at November meeting received 41 by baptism. February 1868, Elder D. J. Phillips elected pastor; accepted. March meeting, received a letter from Friendly Grove church asking the co-operation and ministerial aid in the ordination of Bro. Hilery Head to the work of the gospel ministry, which was agreed to. December 1868, Elder Lampton again elected pastor and accepts. December 1869, Elder R. T. Bruner chosen pastor. January 1870, Elder Bruner accepts the call on condition the church pay him \$150. December meeting, re-elected Elder Bruner pastor, which he accepted. At this meeting agreed to change the rule respecting the election of officers; instead of electing them annually that they should continue in office at the will of the church. July 1872, adopted the following resolution, viz: That this church does not consider any person baptised unless they have been immersed in water in the name of the Trinity, by the authority of a regularly constituted Baptist church. December 1873, on motion and second agreed to rescind an act of the church of December 1870 in regard to the election of church officers, and adopted the old rule of the church, and elect at each December meeting; then proceeded to the election of pastor and other officers. Elder J. T. Ellis elected pastor and accepted. January 1874, ordained two Deacons May, appointed a committee to look over the list of members and see who are truly members of the church, and report; committee reported 171 names. November, 20 members received by baptism, 1 by restoration. December, re-elected Elder J. P. Ellis pastor, who continued under an annual call till December 1878.

April 1876, granted letters of dismission to 22 members for the purpose of constituting a church at Roseville, Hancock county, Ky. May meeting, sent help to aid in organizing the church to meet the 27th inst. Met on the ground, and having no house to meet in, applied for the use of the Westpoint house, but was denied; then went to the woods close by, and under the shade of the majestic trees of the forest proceeded to organize the church, which took the name of the Baptist Church of Roseville. The old church, feeling an anxious solicitude for the prosperity of this young interest, gave it encouragement in its work, and it was not long, through the untiring efforts of the new church, especially that of Deacon J. B. Phillips, till they procured a suitable lot and built a

comfortable and substantial frame house, complete, and paid for, while the Westpointers have give up the ground, demolished their house and retired back some distance among the hills.

July meeting, took into consideration the propriety of ordaining Bro. A. N. Whittinghill to the work of the gospel ministry, and decided to call a council to meet on Thursday before the fourth Sunday in September to consider and decide upon this matter. Thursday, September 21st, met pursuant to her call, and the following churches having been invited responded and sent ministerial aid, viz: from Whitesville, Elder J. P. Ellis and Brethren J. McCarty, J. R. Haynes and J. C. Miller; Blackford, Elders R. T. and H. V. Bruner; South Hampton, Elder W. H. Dawson; Pellville, Brethren R. Gabbert, S. Obenshain and Dr. W. A. Huff; Mt. Edin, Elder C. Voils; Zion, Elder C. B. Phillips and Brethren E. Morrison and C. E. Haynes. Council invited to act with the church, and Elder J. P. Ellis appointed moderator and Wallace Haynes clerk of the meeting; then proceeded with the work in the usual order. The exercises were instructive and deeply edifying to the large congregation present, this being the sixth minister this church has ordained and sent out into the world to preach the gospel.

November meeting, received 3 members by letter, 1 by relation and 14 by baptism. October 1877, sent Brethren to sit in council with other Brethren from sister churches, at Bethlehem church, Hancock county, to consider the propriety of organizing a new Association. April 1878, by request of Pellville church, sent her ministers to sit in council to consider the propriety of ordaining Bro. R. R. Gabbert to the work of the gospel ministry. June meeting agreed to request the Davies county Association to grant her a letter of dismission for the purpose of joining the Blackford Association.

December meeting, 1878, the old pastor declining a re-election, the church then elected Elder W. H. Dawson pastor, who accepted, and has continued to serve the under and annual call with good acceptance and profit, and is present incumbent. Also at this meeting sent Brethren to aid in organizing a new church at Bassham school-house, Ohio county.

March 1879, sent her ministers to sit in council with the Blackford church, by her request, to consider the propriety of ordaining one of her members, Wm. Bruner, to the work of the ministry. January 1881, agreed and decided to build a new meeting house, on a beautiful lot of ground donated for that purpose by one of her devoted members, Brother Edwin Miller, near the old grave-yard, that spot held sacred in the memory of many on account of containing the mortal remains of loved ones, of those who had wept and prayed for divine blessings to rest upon this church; here they had finished their work, and gone home, while their bodies were resting in quietude sweet in the old grave-yard. An appropriate place for their church-house, where they would often meet and spend sweet hours in meditation and prayer. Preliminaries arranged, they soon had the house under contract, and by diligent perserverance pushed it through to almost entire completion, giving it now some of the finishing touches in the way of painting, giving it a beautiful finish, in modern style, making it an ornament in the community, and, added to the beauty and joy of the enterprise, it will leave no burden of debt hanging over the church. This is the second framed house, and the fourth house this church has built during the almost 66 years of her existence. Still she stands forth in the vigor of manhood, looking back and comparing the past with the present, she can call to mind the large destitution in the midst of which she was located, and the sacrifices and hardships endured by the former members of the church to cultivate the field, then in appearance a wilderness. But now a well cultivated field, with more than twenty Baptist churches working and flourishing, and among them recognizing her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Surely it is pleasant to remember all the ways the Lord God has Brought his people, and of this old church it might be said, The Lord satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles."

July 26th, 1881

J. P. ELLIS



A History of the Daviess – McLean Baptist Association in Kentucky,
Rev. Wendell H. Rone (Owensboro, KY, 1943) pp.218-219:

PANTHER CREEK

PANTHER CREEK CHURCH was organized on September 23, 1815, by Elders Ancil Hall and David Jarrell Kelley. Her constituent membership numbered eighteen, viz: James Helm, John Helm, James Thomas, Zachariah Briant, John Phillips, Shelton Gentry, Matthew Gentry, Seth Caldwell, Thomas Steerman, Elizabeth Helm, Eliza Helm, Catherine Gentry, Elenor Holmark, Tabitha Briant, Catherine Fields, Agnes Phillips, Sally Bryant, and Nancy Steerman.

At first the Church met in private homes until a comfortable little log house was completed about the year 1817 in Daviess County on the road that led from Whitesville to Knottsville, about midway between the two points. In the year 1826 the Church changed location by building a second log house about five miles east of the old site. This location was in Ohio County. The third site was about one mile east of the second, where the Church built a fine frame building in the year 1881. This may be the present building still in use by the Church.

This Church is located in Ohio County but has held membership in Associations in three other counties. She became a member of the Gasper River Association soon after her organization. in the year 1818 her membership was cast with the newly organized Goshen Association. From 1845 to 1878 her membership was with the Daviess County Association. Since 1878 she has held membership with the Blackford Association.

This old Church was served by the following pastors and clerks prior to and during her membership in this Association:

PASTORS

Ancil Hall	1815-1840	D. Whittinghill	1862-1863
Jasper Bristow	1840	H. T. Lampton	1864-1 867
Simeon Buchanan	1841	D. J. Phillips.....	1868
B. F. Mitchell	1842-1 843	H. T. Lampton.....	1869
None reported	1844	R. T. Bruner.....	1870-1873
J. P. Ellis	1845-1858	J. P. Ellis.....	1874-1878
J. B. Haynes	1858-1861		

CLERKS

Not known prior to the year 1845	J. F. Bennett.....	1866
Martin Bennett	J. A. Miller.....	1867-1870
L. J. Bannon.....	T. S. Jett.....	1871-1875
T. Morrison	Oscar Haynes	1876-1878
T. S. Jett.....		

`The very effective and faithful ministry of Elders Ancil Hall and J. P. Ellis were determining factors in the progress of this Church. Near the close of Elder Hall's pastorate, in 1840, a storm broke over the subject of missions. The full account of this rift is given in the sketch of the life of

Elder Jasper Bristow who was the leader of the anti-mission group. This occurrence seriously crippled the work of the Church for a time but under the leadership of Elder Ellis the Church again came to the front as never before.

This old and respected Church has been the mother of several other Churches and preachers. She helped to constitute Bethabara Church in 1825; Blackford in 1825; Whitesville in 1854; Roseville in 1876; and others of which we have no information. Among the list of preachers ordained by this Church were Jasper Bristow in 1825; B. F. Mitchell in 1841; J. B. Haynes in 1857; D. Whittinghill and D. J. Phillips in 1858; Calvin and D. B. Voyles in 1864; and A. N. Whittinghill in 1876. This is a remarkable record for a Church—eight ministers ordained in sixty years. Elders Calvin and D. B. Voyles came from the anti-missionary Baptists and were examined and ordained by the Church. Elder D. B. Voyles went back to the anti-missionaries at a later date and his ordination was declared null and void by the Church. Elder B. F. Mitchell became imbued with the teachings of Alexander Campbell and the Church excluded him and declared his ordination null and void in the year 1844.

During all the years of her membership with the Daviess County Association she was faithfully represented every session by her letters and messengers. She entertained the sessions of the Association in 1851 and again in 1870.



Kentucky Family Records, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association,
(Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, Volume 17, 1993) pp.33- 37:

History of the Old Panther Creek Church

By Oswald Jett, Lexington, KY

There are many forks and branches in the network of streams that drain the countryside of Hancock, Ohio, and Daviess Counties, converging into the large creek called Panther that empties into Green River near Curdsville. Two of those branches have their sources within a mile of my birthplace in SW Hancock County, and join near the SW corner of the old Moses Carter (later Levi Voyles) farm to create a deeper and wider stream that flows southward a mile or so into Ohio County, to pass within 500 yards of the present location of the original Panther Creek Church.

It was one of the earliest United Baptist churches in the Daviess-Ohio County region. The term United originated early in the 19th century, when the Regular Baptists and the Separate Baptists merged. A pamphlet written by Rev. Joseph P. Ellis on July 26, 1881, titled A Biographical Sketch of Panther Creek Baptist Church described the primitive conditions of the period, and the various sites of that church. It was located at four different places between 1815 and 1881.

Elder Ellis described the wild nature of the sparsely settled wilderness in the early 1800s, which at that early time was "almost an unbroken forest, with neither roads or bridges, and the few passways then being traveled through the country were known as traces, as the Hartford Trace, the Yellowbank (now Owensboro) Trace, etc." This gives us an idea on the reason for many ministers and church members wishing to promote traveling preachers for delivering the gospel at isolated private homes (or schools), far from any established church. This culminated in a fierce controversy that eventually ended in several church schisms, over the method of paying the missionaries. So developed the so-called Missionary and Anti-missionary forces.

The Panther creek Church was constituted on Sept. 23, 1815, but the congregation met in private homes for a time before a small log church was erected near a spring on the farm of the deceased Robert Miller in Daviess County, about midway between the present towns of Knottsville and Whitesville. So the church must have been about three miles from each. The roads have probably changed since 1815, but the 1876 History and Atlas of Daviess Co. shows a 260 acre plat of a Robert Miller (a descendant?) about three miles to the south of Knottsville. Rev. Ancil Hall was the first pastor.

Rev. Ellis continued: "This church thus situated and surrounded by a large destitution, embraced in a territory extending from Mt. Pleasant, Ohio County, on the East into Henderson County on the West, a distance of perhaps 50 miles; and from Blackford, Hancock County, on the North to Beaver Dam, Ohio County, on the South, a distance of some 35 or 40 miles, perhaps making an average width of 25 miles of territory, including from 1,000 to 1,250 square miles, in which there was not found a Baptist Church. He reported that pastor Hall lived 15 miles distant from his flock, and often walked, starting a day or two in advance of the meeting.

The Panther creek Church flourished, and founded an arm near the main forks of Panther creek on Oct. 5, 1825, and called the new church Bethabara. Rev. Hall served as pastor of both churches until 1827, when Elder Jasper Bristow succeeded him at Bethabara. This church was a log meeting house on what was known as the D. A. Miller farm not far from the future village of Habit, which was about seven miles to the west of Panther Creek Church. In 1832 a new Bethabara Church was built about a quarter of a mile north of Habit and the site of the present church.

Not long before the first Bethabara Church was established, the Panther Creek Church built "a comfortable log house on a lot obtained from James Miller, Sr. in Ohio County, five miles to the east of its old site." This appears to place this second site near the present location of the Panther Creek Church, possibly at the same spot.

At the January 1841 meeting of Panther Creek the congregation agreed on building a new house about one mile to the east of the Church. At the April meeting of 1841, the building committee was ordered to contract with Bro. James Miller, Sr. to build a 35 foot x 50 foot frame house. The new location was on a ridge near the present village of Herbert, in Ohio County within a few hundred yards of the Hancock County line. An ancient Voyles cemetery, marked by a few field stones, is near that church site. It was on the 100-acre farm of Thomas Voyles, the brother of my gr. gr. grandfather, Levi Voyles.

The Church remained at this location for 40 years. In January 1881 the Church decided to build a new frame meeting house on land donated by church member Edwin Miller "near the old graveyard." Not to be confused with the Voyles cemetery, this graveyard is across the Herbert-Whitesville road from the present site of the Panther Creek Church (which was possibly the second location also). In any case, the cemetery is called the Panther Creek Church cemetery, and was there long before 1881. It is also about five miles east of the original church location. The county lines of Daviess, Ohio, and Hancock intersect about a mile and a quarter NW of the present Church.

Elder Ellis's memoirs suggest there is much misunderstanding of the difference in ideals between the Mission Baptists and the Anti-mission Baptists at the time of the schisms ca. 1840, among various Baptist churches. Elder Jasper Bristow was recognized as the most prominent Anti-mission Baptist, but Rev. Ellis wrote that the preacher was decidedly in favor of Home Missions, but differed in the way the missionary preacher would be paid. He favored "taxing ourselves as the Lord has prospered us," That is, "that the man that God has blessed with a thousand dollars worth of property shall pay double as much as the man that God has blessed with five hundred dollars worth of property."

In opposition to this theory, the Mission Baptists of the Goshen Association insisted on voluntary contributions by church members, "that whatsoever a man proposes in his heart to give, for the Lord loves a cheerful giver." It was Elder Bristow's experience that voluntary contributions did not pay off; and most ministers, whether pastors of a Church or a traveling preacher, were generally miserably paid, if at all. Pastor Hall had resigned in December of 1839, apparently because of this problem. So this was the gist of the real differences between the Mission and Anti-mission Baptists.

The church members were so strongly divided in their convictions that several schisms occurred among the Baptist churches around 1840. Elder Bristow succeeded Elder Hall as pastor of the Panther Creek Church, and was not long in leading two splitting forces in establishing Anti-mission churches. As the new pastor of Bell's Run Baptist Church, in 1839, he also led his followers in a split to organize a new Church some two and a half miles to the SW, to be called "The United Baptist Church of Christ at Barnett's Creek. The Bell's Run Church had been founded in 1820 as Barnett's Creek. Its name was changed to Little Flock ca. 1834, and it became Bell's Run in 1839.

On the 18th of January, 1841, as the Panther Creek Church was planning a new building a mile to the east, a rebelling faction left the church to constitute the Anti-mission West Point Meeting House at the village of that name, which lay in Hancock County about three miles to the east of the third Panther Creek site. Among the charter members of the West Point Church was my gr. gr. gr. grandfather, Charles Phillips. The West Point congregation evidently met in private homes for about 10 years, as no church deed has been found earlier than 1850.

Late in 1841 Elder Bristow led another faction from Panther Creek to the village of Pellville, about two miles to the NW, in Hancock County, where they set up a church called "The Original United Baptist Church of Christ called Panther Creek." The old Church, of course, retained its name of the Panther Creek United Baptist Church also. The Pellville faction eventually settled in a rude log building near the future home of P. A. Stevens. The deed to the one-acre lot was not acquired from the owners, William Obenchain and his son-in-law, Japeth Skinner, until May 8, 1849.

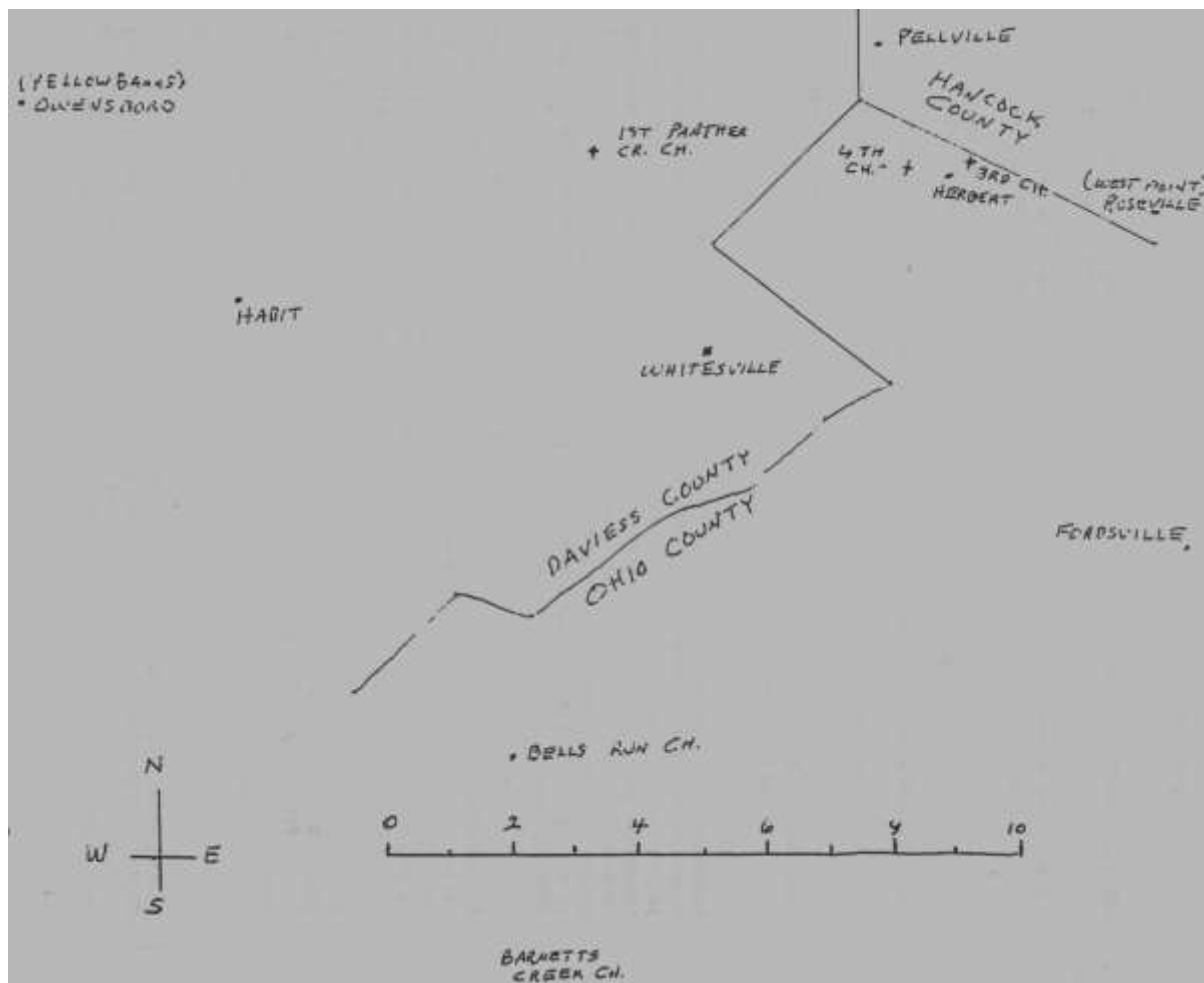
The West Point Church moved, around 1880, to its present site on the Pellville-Roseville road, about a mile and a half west of its original site in the village of West Point. Around the middle of the 19th century, the village became known as Lyonia, named after Ephraim Lyons, Jr., my gr. gr. grandfather, and the son-in-law of Charles Phillips. In April, 1876 the Missionary Panther Creek Ch. granted letters of dismissal to 22 members for the purpose of constituting a new church at Lyonia, to be named Roseville. Since then, the community has been better known as Roseville than Lyonia.

The Anti-mission Baptist Church in Pellville is not to be confused with the present Pellville Church. By 1861 the Anti-mission Church was defunct, as a new congregation moved into the log house.

This was the year the congregation of a Church called Bethany, at the hamlet of Baker (now Floral) moved to Pellville to occupy the vacated log building. The Church retained the name of Bethany until it joined the Daviess County Ass'n. of Baptists in 1869. On May 26, 1868 William and Mary Temple deeded the present lot in Pellville to the trustees of the Pellville Church, and the congregation of the new Pellville Baptist Church soon left the old log building for the new church down the street.

The Anti-mission factions thrived modestly for many years. The West Point and Pellville churches separated from the Goshen Association to form the Panther Creek Anti-mission Ass'n in

1842. They were joined the next year by the small church of Barnett's Creek in Ohio County. The combined membership for the three churches was 96, but by 1870 the Panther Creek Association included six churches, with 210 members.



Drawing by Oswald Jett showing locations of the Old Panther Creek Baptist Church

.....

Ten years later, the Anti-mission Association composed ten churches with a total membership of 470. At the 46th annual meeting there were 12 member churches, with 545 members. Included were: Barnett's Creek, Bethany, Clear Run, Friendship, Little Flock, Little Zion, New Liberty, New Zion, Pleasant Valley, Pleasant Zion, Sugar Grove, and West Point.

Both the Mission Blackford Ass'n of Baptist Churches, which by 1878 included the original Panther Creek Church, and the Anti-mission Panther Creek Ass'n called themselves United Baptists. The term United was being dropped by most churches soon after 1890. By 1896 the Anti-mission Association was defunct. This was the year West Point was accepted into the Blackford Association of Baptists, which included the Church it had abandoned 55 years earlier.

It is interesting that so many members of the Miller family were connected in some way with the Panther Creek Church, as it is doubtful that all of them were related. James Miller, Sr. (b. 1788) was the father of Edwin Miller (b. 1825), who donated the lot on the corner at the intersection of the Pellville and the Whitesville roads, where the present Panther Creek Church stands.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 30 May 1965, p.1C:

CEREMONIES TODAY
Panther Creek Church
Marks Sesquicentennial

The Panther Creek Baptist Church, located a few miles northeast of Whitesville, in the northwestern corner of Ohio County, will observe its sesquicentennial today. The church was constituted by two pioneer Baptist ministers, Ancil Hall and David Jarrell Kelley, on Sept. 23, 1815. The constituent members were: James Helm, John Helm, James Thomas, Zachariah Bryant, John Phillips, Shelton Gentry, Matthew Gentry, Seth Caldwell, Thomas Steerman, Elizabeth Helm, Eliza Helm, Catherine Gentry, Eleanor Holmark, Tabitha Briant, Catherine Fields, Agnes Phillips, Sally Bryant, and Nancy Steerman – a total of 18 persons.

At first the church met in private homes until a small but comfortable log meeting house completed about 1817. It was then located in Daviess County on the road leading from Whitesville to Knottsville. In 1826 the church changed its location from Daviess County to Ohio County by building a second log meeting house about five miles east of the old site. This third site occupied by the church is the present one, upon which a frame house of worship was erected in 1881. This building is still used by the church.

Although the church is located in Ohio County, it has held membership in associations of Baptist churches in four other counties. The church became a member of the Gasper River Association (now in Butler County) soon after its organization. Its membership was cast with the newly formed Goshen Association (now in Grayson County) in 1818.

From 1845 to 1878 the church held membership in the Daviess County (now Daviess-McLean) Association. Since 1878 its membership has been in the Blackford Association, in Hancock County.

The pastors of the church have been: Ancil Hall, 1815- 1840; Jasper Bristow, 1840; Simeon Buchanan, 1841; B. F. Mitchell, 1842-1844; J. P. Ellis, 1845-1859; J. B. Haynes, 1860-1863; D. J. Whittinghill, 1864-1865; D. J. Phillips, 1866; H. T. Lampton, 1867-1870; R. T. Bruner 1871-1873; J. P. Ellis (second pastorate), 1874-1878; W. H. Dawson, 1879-1882; R. T. Bruner (second pastorate), 1883-1887; J. Armstrong, 1888; W. H. Dawson (second pastorate), 1889; W. H. Bruner, 1890-1891; B. F. Jenkins, 1892-1898; J. D. Hocker, 1899-1902; R. T. Bruner (third pastorate), 1903-1906; W. H. Bruner (second pastorate), 1907-1910; G. H. Lawrence, 1911-1912; Frank Farmer, 1913; John Barker, 1914- 1918; Roy Gabbert, 1919-1920; J. Hobart Chisom, 1921; J. C. Craig, 1922-1923; F. M. C. Jolly, 1924-1940; Ezra D. Meador, 1941-1942; Argyle McCamish, 1943; Arnold Shultz, 1943-1947; Irlan Snyder, 1948-1950; John Hall, 1951-1953; Wayne Basham, 1954-1960; Von Norris Jr., 1961-1963; Henry Hylton, 1964, and E. W. Greenwalt, 1965.

This old church has given from her membership to constitute several other churches. Among these are: Bethabara (Daviess County), 1825; Blackford (Hancock County), 1825;

Whitesville (Daviess County), 1854; Roseville (Hancock County), 1876; Pellville (Hancock County), 1839, and others.

The annual sessions of the Daviess County Association in 1851 and 1870 were held at the church, as well as the annual sessions of the Blackford Association in 1887, 1910 and 1930.

The homecoming and sesquicentennial celebration today will feature a special sermon for the occasion, dinner on the grounds, and a presentation of the history of the church by the Rev. Wendell H. Rone Sr., pastor of the Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro, at 2:30 this afternoon.

[Note: Rev. Wendell H. Rone in his book, A History of the Daviess – McLean Baptist Association in Kentucky (Owensboro, KY, 1943) has biographical sketches of the following pastors of the Old Panther Creek Baptist Church: Ancil Hall (p.266); Jasper Bristow (pp.253-254); Joseph Perkins Ellis (pp.263-266); James Baxter Haynes (p.322); Henry Thornton Lampton (pp.329-330); Robert Tabb Bruner (pp.293-294); William Harrison Dawson (pp.311-313); Benjamin Fulton Jenkins (pp.326-327); and Meda Francis Farmer (pp.314-315).]



View of Old Panther Creek Baptist Church Cemetery. Church is in background. Picture by Jerry Long, 10 October 1983.



Grave of Robert Miller (1796-1828). His grave has the earliest death date on the monuments in the cemetery.

