

History of No Creek Methodist Church

By Jerry Long
c.2025

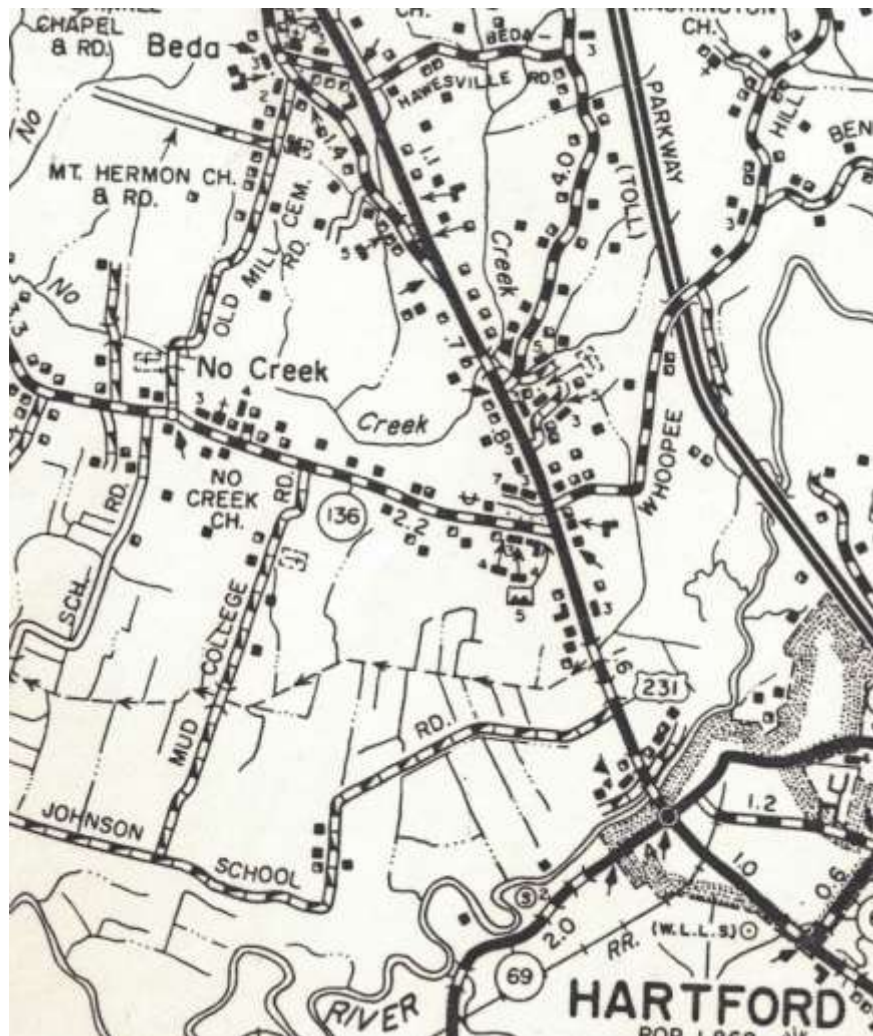


No Creek Methodist Church, Kentucky Highway 136 . Picture published in the Ohio County Times-News, Hartford, KY, 2 March 2000.



Kentucky Place Names, Robert M. Rennick (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1984), pp.214-215:

No Creek (Ohio County). This narrow strip of land extending for about a mile along KY 136, some 3 miles northwest of Hartford, was one of the oldest settled areas of the county. It was named for the stream that parallels it less than one-half mile to the north. This stream, a tributary of Rough Rover, is said to have been named by surveyors sometime before 1798 for its perceived dry bed, leading them to consider it "no creek at all. "The first settler, John Bennett, a Revolutionary War veteran, arrived in the area in 1798. The No Creek post office established on Feb 9, 1848, with A. A. Rowan, post master, was discontinued in 1849 and reestablished on Jan 17, 1901. It closed for good in 1907. (Source: *History of No Creek, Ohio County, Ky*, Harry D. Tinsley, Frankfort, KY, Roberts Printing, 1953.)



No Creek Methodist Church on KY Highway 136 about two miles west of KY Highway 231 & about three miles northwest of Hartford



Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 28 October 1903, p.3:

There was a large crowd in attendance at the dedication of the new Methodist church at No Creek last Sunday. Dr. W. B. Barnett, of Ohio, preached the dedicatory sermon. The debt was entirely liquidated and they now have a church edifice that they justly feel proud of. There was dinner on the ground for every one and to spare. Quite a number of Hartford citizens attended the meeting.



Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 6 March 1908, p.5:

Some Church History

The Methodist Episcopal Church at No Creek, Ohio county Ky., was organized on the latter part of the 18th or in the beginning of the 19th century. The original members were from the States of Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The first Camp meeting held in this country was held near Goshen, on land then owned by William Phipps who was class leader.

William McKender was Presiding Elder. The first circuit rider was Joshua Barnes. Jessie Walker was here about 1801 and organized many churches. In 1805 preaching was held at a school house that stood not far from the burying ground, near the crossing of No Creek and near what was called Bennett's Mill; a mill built by Asa Bennett on land owned by John Bennett.

Class meeting was held weekly at Jeffress Bennett's and quarterly meetings were held at the house of John Bennett's which stood in the field now owned by Joseph Condit Barnett (and at this writing the above named field is owned by David Moreland) the site of this house was a short distance Northeast Obed Bennetts barn at this time the members as far as can be ascertained were: Thomas Stevens who was class leader and Nancy his wife: Henry Stevens, Stewart and his wife Hannah, Higgeson Belt, and wife, Benjamin Benton and wife, Richard Stevens and wife, John Bennett Jr. and wife, Amos Hipsley and wife, John Bennett. Sr. and wife, Ruben Bennett, Jeffress Bennett Sarah Bennett. Mollie Barnett, Sally Barnett, Lucretia Barnett.

The first circuit extended from Salt river down to the Cumberland.

A log house was built about this time, at Bethel seven miles east of Hartford where the frame meeting house now stands. Here a church was organized; and among the first members were John Stevens; Class leader, also his wife, Stephen Stateler, and wife, William Stevens and wife, John Graves and wife, and several by the name of Leach.

All of whom came from Maryland. The descendants of these together with others who composed this church in 1845, went to the church South.

There was also in 1800, a church organized at Gosben, two or three mile South of Hartford.

Among the members were the Barnards, Phipps, Mockers and Coxes. William Phipps was also leader. This church also in 1845, went to the southern church. The preachers in the early part of this century (19 century) were James Axley, Jesse Walker, Goodman, Peter Cartwright, Franklin Travis, Thomas A. Morris.

Thomas Taylor moved here very early, he was a local preacher; for years he wielded great influence for good and to the building up of churches; but he became radical in his views and opposed the traveling preachers church government and authority and was according to the best authority we are able to get excluded from the church.

G. W. DAME.
Pastor No Creek Church.

P. S. – I copy this from an old church record that I find at the parsonage and I am not responsible for the mistakes, if there be any. I write this for publication by request of several of the old residents, belonging to both churches.

(Continued next week.)



Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 13 March 1908, p.1:

Some Church History
(Continued from last week.)

Extracts of a paper left by Thomas Baird, youngest son of James and Jane Baird.

Thomas Baird was born October 8th, in York county Pennsylvania, In the winter and Spring of 1790, the family emigrated to Kentucky, and settled in Nelson county near Bardstown, where they resided until 1796, when they moved to Hartford, then Hardin county, and sometime the following year, they settled in the neighborhood of No Creek. At that time they had but few neighbors; the whole country between Hartford and Yellow Banks, (now Owensboro) was unsettled, an entire wilderness occupied only by hunters, with bears, wolves, and some buffalos, and sometimes a few Indians. From such society no moral improvement, or instruction was to be expected.

No schools could be had in the neighborhood, but most of the few people who lived in this, then sparsely settled county could read and write.

Thomas was converted early in the 19th century, at a meeting carried on at first by the Presbyterians and Methodist, but afterwards by the Methodist alone. This meeting resulted in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal church at No Creek in the year 1802 or 1803.

John Phipps, who was for many years a traveling minister, but now and has been for many years a local preacher in Hartford; (and I suppose at this writing, he has long since gone to his reward) says the first church organized in this country, was that at Goshen, the second, the one at Bethel the third at No Creek, and the fourth one at Conditt's, near Point Pleasant. The last time Bishop McKindree preached at Hartford, he was too feeble to stand and preached sitting in a chair.

The first Sunday school in this county was organized by Gen. Robert Barnett about the year 1826. It was taught in a vacant house east of the Owensboro and Hartford road near where the Alexander school house now stands, two miles from Hartford. In the year 1825 a Sunday school was organized at the brick church by Rev. George McNeely, the Pastor. The officers were George McNeely President, John Denham, Vice President, Robert Barnett, Secretary and Thomas Stevens Treasurer; Thomas Baird, Higgason Belt, Samuel Bennett, G. L. Davis, and Joseph Bennett, managers.

G. W. DAME.

(Concluded next week)



Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 20 March 1908, p.1:

Some Church History.
(Continued from last week.)

On account of the neglect of several of our fellow Pastors to keep a record of their work we loose a long link, or a succession of links in the history of the church at this place: A fact that we very much regret we shall have to jump over a long period of time in which no doubt a great many interesting events happened.

We quit last week after writing about the organization of the Sunday school at the brick church by Brother McNeely, in 1828. The readers no doubt noticed the names of the respective officers, also the names of the offices instead of Superintendent, it was President, and Vice President; and then in addition to this they had as you will notice a board of managers.

But we have to leave them there and jump from this event in the year of our Lord, 1828, to the administration of Rev. J. T. Pender, in 1876, losing a period of 48 years.

Brother Pender says, – I took charge of No Creek circuit in March 1876 and am now closing up my second year as pastor, this March the 1st, 1878. During the two years, I have received 75 members into the church have organized two new churches, or societies at Washington school house and one at Island Station, McLean county, have had quite a number of good revivals. When I came to No Creek the church was not divided into classes but each society was in one class.

At Wesley Chapel, I made 4 classes then appointed 3 as we had one before. At this place I appointed the first woman class leader ever known on this charge; Mrs. Sarilda C. Stevens At White Oak (now Shinkle Chapel) I made a new class the first year and appointed J. D. Chapman class leader and the second year, I appointed Jas. Shaver leader of a new class at the same place. Also J. H. James was appointed to take charge of the infant class, or members. Very little system is carried out in anything, the people have been used to working without rule, traveling with guides, and in the main, are opposed to any definite plan of doing things. Though some little improvement is being made, and has been made in the past few years. Quite a number of the membership don't seem to care anything for the minister's welfare, scores of them never pay one cent to the support of the gospel.

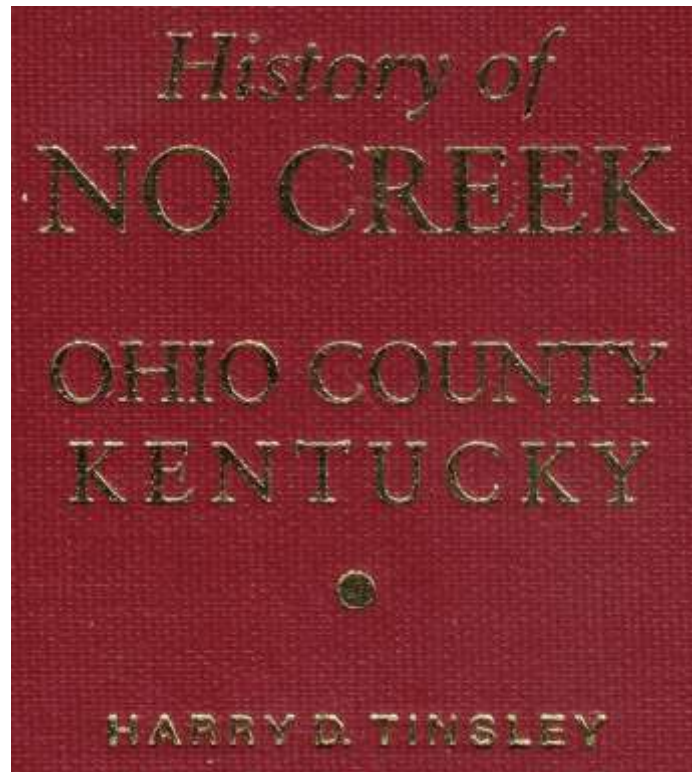
This is the closing of Benjamin A. Stubbins' fourth year as Presiding Elder – J. T. Pender.

I write Bro. Pender's name at the close of his record, as near like his own signature as possible. All that remains on record of the history of the church at No creek up to Brother Pender's time, is the names of the members of the church at No Creek in the year 1814. They appear on the old book as follows:

Thomas Stevens, class leader; Nancy Stevens, Henry Stevens, was Steward for 56 year; Hannah Stevens, Sarah Barnett, John Bennett, Jefferies Bennett, Ellen Bennett, John Bennett, Casander Bennett, Samuel Bennett, Lucrecy Bennett, Reuben Bennett, Thomas Baird, Mantia Baird, Benjamin Benton, Atheia Benton, Francis Chapman, Robert Bennett, Thomas Baird, Joseph Bennett, Titus Bennett, Obed Bennett, Tally Bennett, Elizabeth Bennett, Rebeca Bennett, Miranda Benton, Joseph Barnett, William Ford, Anna Ford, Jas. Ford, Sabra Ford, Anna Hoover, Charlotte Belt, Zechariah Fields, Higgeson Belt, Cephas Simons, Sarah Fields.

The record says that Henry Stevens has been class leader for 56 years, and that Higginson Belt, joined the church in 1815. The end.

G. W. DAME.



**History of No Creek, Ohio County, Kentucky, by Harry D. Tinsley
(Frankfort, KY: Roberts Printing Company, 1953, reprinted 2001)
chapter 1 – “Origin of the Name of No Creek”, p.15-16, and
chapter 6 – “No Creek Methodist Episcopal Church”, pp.52-68:**

ORIGIN OF THE NAME NO CREEK

The name of No Creek has several origins. One account claims that a stranger was journeying through the country, and, for his directions, he was told to travel until he came to a certain creek. When he came upon the dry creek-bed, he is said to have remarked, "Why, that is no creek!" The late L. R. Barnett, a descendant of Alexander Barnett, once related a slightly different origin. He said: "A number of the old Barnett surveyors were camped near a stream. One of them was loaded with whiskey, and he almost stumbled down the bank. When he was warned to be careful or he would fall into the creek, he replied, "That's no creek." However, or whenever, the creek was first called "No Creek," the name stuck, and the stream and surrounding community are called No Creek today.

The main stream of the creek begins about a mile and a half Northeast of Beda on the farm formerly owned by Ed Hamilton. Another fork of the larger stream originates on Mrs. Annie Leach's farm. The two merge together in the vicinity of the Joe Bill Bennett place. The stream

continues to roll Southward until it reaches the Alexander Branch, then turns on a Westward course.

Little No Creek rises within five hundred yards of the head of No Creek on the farm of the late Edward (Ned) Shown. In its course it passes through among others the farms of Forrest Hoover, the Baird place, by Shinkle Chapel Church, and the Lute Easterday place. The streams cross Highway 136 and unite on Bill Johnson's farm. The stream then continues to the Richard Ward place where it empties into Rough River, Ohio County's largest inland stream.

This farming community which is built around the fertile bottom-ground of No Creek and Rough River, which lies to the South, is located in the Western part of Ohio County along State Highway 136, a few miles from Hartford, the county seat.

The first deed recorded in Ohio County was between John Bennett, Sr., of the first part and Ignatius Pigman and Susanah, his wife of the second part and in consideration of the sum of \$1,500. It was for a tract of land containing 1,102 acres and located on the North or Northwest side of Ohio County and on the waters of No Creek adjoining a two-thousand acre survey in the name of Robert Barnett. These were the only callings that the tract had. Regardless of the origin, the name is as old and historic as the county.

Evidence that the Barnetts were surveying stock, is the fact that Alexander Barnett's son, Robert Barnett, two of his grandsons, Robert E. Barnett and Alexander Barnett Baird and one great-grandson, Elijah P. Barnett, served as county surveyors. The former served twenty years.

Today, the thriving community stands as an eloquent testimony to the fertility and productivity of the No Creek soil. The people, themselves—many of whom are descendants of the three pioneer families, the Barnetts, Bennetts and Stevenses—are blessed by the traditions and heritage of this pioneering stock which settled, worked, sweated, and died on this land before them.

NO CREEK METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

As in the State, so in Ohio County, the first in the evangelistic field were the Baptists. The first minister of that denomination to preach in the territory of what is now Kentucky was Rev. William Hickman, who came to the state in 1776. The first Baptist organization was in 1781. The first Presbyterian minister to preach in Kentucky was Rev. David Rice. That was in 1783 and the first organization of his church was in 1786. In the latter year Bishop Francis Asbury for the first time assigned ministers to the District of Kentucky, which was still a part of Virginia. They were Benjamin Ogden and James Haw. However, the first Methodist minister to preach in Kentucky was the Rev. Francis Clark, from "old Virginia" who came to this territory in 1783. All these ministers were in the central part of the state, later dubbed the "upper counties."

In the Green River Country, the Beaver Dam Baptist Church was the second congregation of that faith to be organized. The first Methodist Church organized in Ohio County was, at Goshen in 1804. Shortly afterwards, in the same year, the No Creek and Bethel Churches were founded. The Hartford Circuit first appears in the conference minutes in that year.

The year 1799 was remarkable for the beginning of the revival of religion in the West, since known as "the great revival," according to Rev. A. H. Redford's "Methodism in Kentucky." In this monumental publication, a copy of which belongs to Mrs. John A. Duke, Hartford, and has been made available to me by her kindness, Rev. Redford continues in regard to the spiritual phenomena which characterized the period:

"It commenced under the labors of the Revs. John and William McGee, two brothers—the former a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the latter a Presbyterian minister in charge of a congregation in Sumner County, Tennessee. They had resided in North Carolina

before coming to Tennessee. Laboring side by side for the promotion of a common cause, they started on a preaching tour through Tennessee and Kentucky. Two of these services were held in Logan County, Kentucky, the one on Muddy River, three miles East of Russellville, being attended by a multitude from far and near. The worshippers came on foot, on horseback and in wagons, and camped on the ground. This gathering is said to have been the origin of camp-meetings in the United States. Many souls were converted to God."

As the itinerary of the McGee brothers continued, members of all denominations took part in the meetings and the spiritual awakening they initiated. The camp-meeting was the mighty agency of pioneer evangelism. The scarcity of ministers as well as of commodious buildings in which to hold religious services led to frequent out-door meetings in the mild months of the year.

"To these," says the Battle-Perrin-Kniffin "History of Kentucky," "a preacher who touched the popular fancy would draw large numbers who gathered at the appointed time from miles around. The Methodists were the earliest to convert these services into a series of meetings held on successive days and nights, but the practice became general and each denomination commonly held a series of camp-meetings each year. In such cases the people came prepared with provisions to remain several days and even weeks on some occasions. In the meanwhile, when not in attendance upon the exercises, they found shelter in their wagons or in rudely constructed booths (sometimes called "brush arbors") in the woods. The earliest of these gatherings occurred (as above stated), in Logan County at the time of the great revival—in 1799."

A remarkable feature of many of these pioneer camp-meetings, held by various sects, was the prevalence of emotional manifestations characterized by vocal outbursts of sorrow, contrition and then joy in the salvation which the worshippers had sought and won, often accompanied by nervous bodily activity.

Up until "the great revival," Methodism had not greatly extended its influence into the counties in the Western part of Kentucky. In these counties, relates Rev. Redford, were to be found a good many scattering members of the Church, but without any organization.

Amongst those who professed religion in the Red River Circuit which was embraced in the Cumberland, later called Nashville, Circuit and included a part of Southern Kentucky, was Peter Cartwright, destined to be one of Methodism's most militant pioneer itinerants, whose father, about this time removed from Logan to Livingston County. Before leaving Logan County, Peter was licensed, by the Rev. Jesse Walker, to exhort and invested by the Rev. John Page, Presiding Elder, with authority "to travel through all that destitute region, hold meetings, organize classes (congregations) and, in a word, to form a circuit and meet him the next fall, at the fourth quarterly meeting of the Red River Circuit, with a plan of the new circuit, number of members, names of preachers, if any, exhorters, class leaders, etc."

Rev. Cartwright was successful and in the fall of 1803 reported to Revs. Page and Walker the establishment of the Livingston Circuit, with about 100 members, to which the latter was appointed as pastor the following year.

No Creek Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in the year 1804. A. H. Redford's book, published at Nashville, Tenn., in 1868, gives an account of the early churches of Ohio County from the Conference of 1787 to that of 1808. I now quote from the book: "The Livingston Circuit, which had been formed in 1803, under the indefatigable labors of Jesse Walker, had so extended its boundaries previous to the Conference of 1804 as to embrace the counties of Henderson and Ohio. In the Minutes of 1804 the work in this department is recognized under the style of Livingston and Hartford to which Jesse Walker and Joshua Barnes were appointed.

"Before Mr. Walker had embraced Ohio County in the Livingston Circuit, under the efficient labors of a few local preachers, societies had been formed at Goshen, Bethel and No Creek.

"The first Methodist Church organized in Ohio County was at Goshen, two miles South of Hartford, in the year 1804. Very shortly after this, in the same year, another church was organized at Bethel, seven miles Northeast of Hartford. Next and about the same time, in the same year, No Creek Church was organized.

"These churches were established as the result of a great revival which took place in December, 1803, carried on at first by the Presbyterians and Methodists but afterwards by the Methodists alone, and in connection with two or three local preachers who had settled in that part of the country.

"The first and leading local preacher connected with this work was Thomas Taylor, (great-grandfather of the late Mrs. Mary Taylor Logan, of Hartford), and through his influence the masses of the converts were led into the Methodist Episcopal Church. Associated with him were Lodwick Davis and Joshua Barnes.

"During the Conference year commencing in the fall of 1804, this circuit was blessed with extensive revivals of religion. They swept, like fire in dry stubble, all over the country. The people went from far and near to attend them —were awakened and converted to God.

"These early societies were a nucleus from which went out a fine religious influence into all the surrounding country. From the time of their organization to the present they have prospered, being the scenes of many revivals of religion." The author of the book received a letter from the Rev. H. C. McQuown, of Hartford, Ky., dated January 23, 1867, containing the above information.

Rev. Thomas Taylor, as above stated was the great-grandfather of the late Mrs. Mary Taylor Logan, who edited and published "Ohio County in the Olden Days" by Harrison D. Taylor, son of the pioneer Methodist preacher. According to his son, Rev. Taylor united with the Methodist Church at the age of twelve. He became a local preacher while quite young and remained one until the day of his death (April 25, 1836).

Other local Methodist preachers in early Ohio County, in addition to Revs. Taylor, Davis and Barnes, above mentioned, were Otho Williams, John James, Daniel and John Pinkston, Ignatius Pigman, Thomas Stevens, John Daviess, William Sandefur, Joseph Miller and John Phipps. It is remarkable how many local preachers performed marriage rites and how few itinerants so officiated, according to the Ohio County marriage records. However, this was, no doubt, due to the fact that the circuit rider could only get around at rather infrequent intervals while the local preacher was right in the midst of the people of the community all the time. I might add here a short note concerning a Presbyterian preacher who was also in the midst of the people, and who performed marriages rites, many of them being No Creek citizens. He was Rev. Bazzel Ward, who had a large family, among others being the late Ezra W., Joe B., Bazzel Len and Martha, who married Hiram B. Ward (the parents of the late Corvis Ward, of No CreekBeda area). His tombstone which stands in the family burying ground on his farm, located near Beda, and which was owned by the above last named son until his death in 1886, the farm now being owned by Alfred and Marshall Mills, reads: "Sacred to the Memory of the Rev. Bazzel Ward, Minister of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church who departed this life February 11th, 1847, aged 46 & one month & 27 days."

Joshua Barnes was the first (in this area) circuit rider and his circuit extended from the Salt River down to the Cumberland River and it required six months for the preacher to make his circuit. His trips were made on foot with a saddlebag containing a hymnbook and Bible, thrown across his

shoulders. The first Presiding Elder was William McKendree. As heretofore stated, "the Livingston Circuit, which had been formed in 1803 under the labors of Jesse Walker, had so extended its boundaries previous to the Conference of 1804 as to include the counties of Henderson and Ohio." The new field was listed under the style, "Livingston and Hartford," to which Revs. Walker and Barnes were assigned as ministers. Thus, Hartford Circuit dates from October, 1804. The next year Rev. Walker was again sent to the Hartford Circuit which had been separated from the Livingston Circuit, but still comprised all of Ohio County.

Other pastors of the Hartford Circuit during pioneer days from 1806 to 1826 approximately in the order named were: Benjamin Edge, John Craig, William Lewis, Samuel Sellers, Jacob Turman, Marcus Lindsey, Francis Travis, James Porter, John Allen, Benjamin Malone, William F. King, William Allison, (three separate pastorates), John Smith and George McNelly.

Probably the most distinguished of these ministers in later life was the Rev. Marcus Lindsey, to whom one of Louisville's oldest and most prominent churches is a memorial. Dr. Lindsey became a Presiding Elder and Pastor for many important charges both rural and urban. Hartford was his first charge, in 1810, and in later years he was Presiding Elder of the Cumberland District, which included the Hartford Circuit. Incidentally, a namesake of Dr. Lindsey was Lindsey Bennett, who was born October 14, 1829, at No Creek, the son of George P. Bennett.

As an example of the huge labors required of the Presiding Elders in early days, it may be noted that the Cumberland District, when established in 1804, extended North from Natchez, Mississippi, so as to comprise the territory now included in parts of the present states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Indiana and Illinois. However, at that time the Hartford Circuit membership numbered only 305 whites and 15 blacks.

Returning to Dr. Lindsey, he would probably have become a Bishop had he not been cut off in his prime in 1833, his death resulting from the Asiatic cholera then epidemic in parts of Kentucky and other Southern states. By the way, my great-grandfather, Absalom Tinsley, died of the same malady in 1850. Incidentally, two Presiding Elders who served the Hartford Circuit were elected to the episcopacy, Bishops McKendree and Morris.

Class meetings of the No Creek Organization, as they were then called, were held weekly at Jeifress Bennett's, on the farm now occupied by D. E. Ward, Jr., and Quarterly meetings were held at the home of John Bennett, which stood in the field now owned by H. H. Lindley's heirs. The site of the house was a short distance Northeast of E. K. Henry's present residence.

The members at this time, as far as can be ascertained, were: Thomas Stevens, who was class leader, and Nancy, his wife; Henry Stevens, who served as a steward for 56 years, and wife, Hannah; Higginson Belt and wife, John Bennett, Sr., and wife, John Bennett, Jr., and wife, Amos Hipsley, and wife, Reuben Bennett, Jeifress Bennett, Sarah Bennett, Mollie Barnett, Sally Barnett and Lucretia Barnett.

I will give the following extracts from a paper left by Thomas Baird, youngest son of James and Jane Baird, which succinctly describes the religious and cultural conditions of pioneer No Creek:

"Thomas Baird was born October 8th, 1786, in New York County, Pennsylvania. In the winter and spring of 1790 the family emigrated to Kentucky and settled in Nelson County, near Bardstown, where they resided until 1796 when they moved to Hartford, then in Hardin County, and sometime in the following year settled in the No Creek neighborhood. (The farm they settled on is located on Little No Creek near Shinkle Chapel Church and was inherited and owned for many years by Thomas' grandson, Esra C. Baird, who died in 1944. This farm is now owned by Kell Carson, who married a granddaughter of Esra C. Baird.)

"At that time they had but few neighbors, the whole country between Hartford and Yellow Banks, (now Owensboro) was unsettled, an entire wilderness occupied only by hunters, bears, wolves, deer, and sometimes buffalos and sometimes a few Indians.

"From such society no moral improvement or instruction was to be expected. No schools could be had in the neighborhood, but most of the few people who lived in this, then scarcely settled country, could read and write.

"Thomas was converted early in the 19th century, at a meeting carried on at first by the Presbyterians and Methodists but afterwards by the Methodists alone. This meeting resulted in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church at No Creek in the year 1804."

By 1814 the membership of the church had so increased that the following persons were included, in addition to those heretofore listed: Ellen Bennett, Cassandra Bennett, Mantia Baird, Athela Benton, Frances Chapman, Tally Bennett, Elizabeth Bennett, Rebecca Bennett, Miranda Benton, Joseph Barnett, William Ford, Anna Ford, James Ford, Sabra Ford, Anna Hoover, Charlotte Belt, Cephas Simmons, Sarah Fields, and Zachariah Fields.

As in other pioneer communities religious services in Kentucky were, undoubtedly first held in the homes of the church members. In fact, contemporary church records and memoirs of both clergy and laity show this to have been the case. The first edifice built in Kentucky for the express and sole purpose of Methodist worship was built about 1790 at Masterson's Station, near Lexington.

The first No Creek Methodist Church building, one of the three original societies or congregations, was built in about 1820. Though I have no records on the matter, houses of worship at Goshen and Bethel, the other two of the "first three" county Methodist organizations, had also probably been built by that time. The exact date of the building of the first church edifice is uncertain as the subscription list and the deed to the property vary on that point.

The first church edifice was located on the South side of the Hartford and Calhoun Road, now known as the Hartford-Livermore Road or Ky. Highway 136, a few yards East of the present church edifice. It was situated on a hill in a beautiful grove of large beech trees surrounded by an almost unbroken virgin forest. These beech trees, a few of which I can remember, like the individuals who gathered beneath them in those far-off days, have one by one, withered and died until not a single one remains today.

Miss Lenora Lindley, Livermore, Kentucky, a great-granddaughter of Henry Stevens, who was one of the trustees of the first church, has the original subscription list of contributors to the construction of the first house of worship here.

Its preamble reads: "We the underwritten subscribers bind and oblige ourselves to pay the Sums annexed to our names towards Building a Methodist Meeting House of Brick 40 feet in length and thirty feet in width in the No Creek Settlement which Sums of Money to be paid to Thomas Stevens, Benjamin Benton, Henry Stevens, John Bennett, Jr., and Robert Barnett, trustees in trust at any time when call'd on after the house is completed. 6th of July, 1819."

Subscribers names	\$ cts.
Thomas Stevens.....	\$25.00
John Bennett, Sen.....	25.00
John Bennett, Jun.....	20.00
Joseph Bennett.....	15.00
Jos. R. Midkiff.....	10.00
Samuel Bennett.....	20.00
Lewis G. Logan.....	5.00

Henry Stevens	15.00
Higginson Belt.....	20.00
Benjamin Benton	20.00
Jeffies Bennett.....	20.00
Bazzel Ward by Note	5.00
Thos. Baird	15.00
Thomas Brain	15.00
Obed Bennett	15.00
Robert Barnett.....	15.00
Titus Bennett.....	10.00
Michael Kelly	5.00

On September 11, 1820, John Bennett and Mary Bennett, his wife, in consideration of \$6.00 deeded two acres of land to the trustees named above in the preamble to the subscription list. The building, a brick structure, stood East of the present building and prints of the foundation can still be seen. An elm is now standing near the center of the original church foundation.

Since Ohio County up to 1810 embraced all of what is now Ohio and Daviess Counties and parts of McLean, Butler, Grayson, Breckinridge, Hancock and Henderson Counties, it is readily apparent what a huge task the pastors of the Hartford Circuit had before them.

The first Sunday School in this county was organized by General Robert Barnett prior to 1825. It was taught in a vacant house East of the Owensboro Road near where the Alexander schoolhouse stood. In 1825 a Sunday School was organized at the No Creek Church by Rev. George McNeely, the pastor. The officers were George McNeely, President, John Denham, Vice President, Robert Barnett, Secretary, Thomas Stevens, Thos Baird, Higginson Belt, Samuel Bennett, G. L. Davis and Joseph Bennett, managers, the present-day officer designations, such as Superintendent and the like, not yet being in use.

From this point for about 25 years the church records have not been preserved so that the next authentic information in regard to events in the history of the No Creek Congregation dates from the decade following the separation of Methodism into northern and southern branches as a result of the split over slavery in the 1845 General Conference. The No Creek Congregation was the only one in the county to split. The other two outstanding congregations, Bethel and Goshen, "adhere South" according to the "Plan of Separation" adopted by the General Conference of 1844 and the Louisville Convention of 1845.

Even before the "Christmas Conference of 1784," held at Baltimore, when the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was organized, there was awareness of the great spiritual earthquake which was to rend it apart in 1844-45. At a sectional Conference in 1780 there was voiced "disapprobation on all" Methodists who owned slaves and "their freedom" was advised. In the Conference of 1783 the question was asked: "What shall be done with our local preachers who hold slaves, contrary to the laws which authorize their freedom, in any of the United States?" The decision was to try them another year. This action caused some disturbance in Virginia, so, at the Conference of 1784, according to Dr. Redford, "while a more rigid discipline was adopted for the people, final action was suspended for another year against the preachers in Virginia (which then included Kentucky). At the same time more stringent measures were to be enforced against our local brethren in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The traveling preachers, also, who might own slaves, were to be suspended." Then at the Conference of 1785 it was concluded that the rule on slavery adopted at the Christmas Conference would do harm and it was resolved to suspend its execution for the present.

Methodist Church legislation on slavery had a great effect on the growth of the denomination in Kentucky. Many slave-owning immigrant families, in view of the failure of the Methodists to enforce the church's rule on slavery went ahead and connected themselves with this church. On the other hand, more of the slave-holding gentry, turned away from the church, on the statute-book of which prominently stood the declaration that "no person holding slaves shall in the future be admitted into the societies or the Lord's Supper till he previously complies with these rules concerning slavery," and joined other churches.

Thus, for many years, the numerical growth of the church was retarded for this reason. But as the years went on, unfortunately and sadly, political, partisan and sectional phases of the destructive conflict gradually outbalanced and overshadowed the great moral question involved. And then the nation rushed madly into an unnecessary civil warfare.

However, at the time the Northern and Southern wings of the Church were officially separated by the "Plan of Separation of 1844," its adoption was probably only due to the demand of church administration, rather than to any desire to pass on the moral questions involved. In fact, a majority of the Methodist ministers of the border states were definitely in favor of maintaining the Federal Union.

Ohio County first became known to fame as exponent of justice and morality during the early years of the slavery agitation within the Methodist Church. To quote Dr. Redford again: "In many communities this law (the church's rule on slavery) was enforced. In the Hartford Circuit the records of their Quarterly Conferences, from 1814 to 1825, show the continual agitation of the question in the examination of the characters of official members, who, by any means, had become connected with slavery . . ."

Continuing the noble record of the moral crusading of Hartford and adjacent circuits, we find that James Axley, campaigner par excellence against slavery, intoxicants and tobacco, was recommended to the Western Conference for admission on trial at a quarterly conference held for the Hartford Circuit at Isham Browder's on Pond River, on August 17, 1804. This was the beginning of a long, militant and useful ministry. At the Louisville Conference held in Hartford in 1915, in his article, "Hartford as a Center of Methodist Influence," read before the Conference Historical Society meeting, Reverend D. S. Campbell, himself a distinguished Methodist minister, said of Rev. Axley:

"James Axley, who was elected a delegate to the General Conference in 1812, offered there the following resolution: 'Resolved that no stationed or local preacher shall retail spirituous or malt liquor without forfeiting his ministerial characters among us.' It was sent to the table several times and then it was finally put to vote and lost. Again in 1816 he went as a delegate and offered the same resolution and this time it was passed by the Conference." (I might mention that Rev. Axley, like many of his co-workers, was equally militant against the manufacture of liquor, thus antagonizing those of the church membership engaged in distilling).

Still quoting Rev. Campbell: "Axley had a great aversion to slavery and would not open the doors of the church, if he thought a slave-holder wanted to join. He was also bitterly opposed to the use of tobacco."

Thus has the Hartford Circuit and Ohio County been a spiritual battleground where many battles for the right have been won. Incidentally, a namesake of Rev. Axley was James Axley Stevens born here at No Creek July 4, 1817 and became a minister. He resided near Bald Knob Church.

After the separation of 1844 most of the Hartford Circuit Churches, including the Hartford, Goshen and Bethel Congregations, "joined south," but here at No Creek there was a more even

division of sentiment and as far as I can ascertain, a majority here also joined the Southern jurisdiction. However, as was the case in many other border churches, the Plan of Separation's provision, "Let the majority rule," did not settle the friction here and the Civil Courts were asked to determine the ownership of the church property. The Southern sympathizers won possession of the church edifice and the members of it who preferred affiliation with the Northern division organized another Congregation and in a few years built themselves a church only a short distance from the original No Creek Church site. Here the two Congregations worshipped side by side until the great cyclone of 1890 damaged them both, the "Southern Church" so badly that it had to be entirely rebuilt.

After the the brick property of old No Creek was awarded to the Southern partisan by court action, it's members continued to use it as a place of worship for several years. I have no information concerning the exact date the brick church was torn down, but it must have been about the year 1865 or 1866. The late William F. Stevens, who was born in 1861, once stated that he could remember the old brick church. The following reprint from Redford's book, which was a footnote and which was contained in a letter to him from the Rev. H. C. McQuown, of Hartford, Ky., dated January 23, 1867, states:

"The society at Goshen now worships in a neat and commodious frame church, numbers nearly eighty members, and enjoys an average degree of spirituality. The society at Bethel enjoyed a fine revival of religion last spring in which thirty-five were converted and thirty-eight added to the church. Class meetings are kept up by them. They have a neat frame house of worship. The society at No Creek, three miles North of Hartford, had a good revival in January. Its fruits were thirteen conversions and twenty-one additions. It numbers now about ninety. They have a new, large frame church—the best in the country—and keep up class meetings."

The above mentioned church occupied about the same spot of ground as did the new Wesley Chapel Church, which was built in 1903 and which was wrecked in 1949 to be replaced by the present edifice. This church was much larger than the present church and had two single doors in front and was always kept painted. This church of which I have no definite information concerning its many happenings continued to stand until the night of March 27, 1890, when a cyclone from the Southwest blew it into a "thousand pieces."

It sounds miraculous but many witnesses say that the church was lifted from the flooring, leaving the sleepers and floor standing on the pillars, and that the lamp was left sitting on the stand. They say that the wind blew severely for only a few minutes and then it was calm. I suppose that as the church was lifted from the flooring the wind ceased.

At the time the majority of the members of No Creek M. E. Church South, lived in the vicinity of Beda and a vote was taken on moving the church nearer them. The new location was agreed upon and on August 12, 1890, my grandparents, Joshua and Miriam Tinsley, in consideration of the sum of \$60 deeded one and one half acres of land to J. A. Bennett, G. W. Bennett, W. P. Bennett, R. H. Bennett, J. S. Bennett, L. R. Barnett and J. N. Sanderfur, the trustees and building committee. The new home, located some two miles Northward from No Creek, near Beda was rechristened Mt. Hermon.

During the Summer of 1890 the lumber from the old church was removed to the site upon which the new building was to be built. It was commenced in the Fall of 1890, the carpenters being my uncle, James Shaver and Joshua Benton. The old framing and flooring were used in the new church.

The dedication service was held Sunday, October 2, 1892 by the Rev. E. M. Crowe, a former pastor and was attended by an unusually large crowd.

Upon moving the church they had no need of the lot at No Creek and on October 6, 1890, G. W., R. H., W. P., J. S. Bennett and J. N. Sanderfur, in the consideration of \$58 conveyed it to John P. Foster. He later sold the lot to the Baptists.



Mt. Hermon Methodist Church

This church continued to grow and prosper in its new location and was the scene of many glorious days in church work. The families which constituted this church were in part as follows: Bennetts, Wards, Tinsleys, Ellises, Sanderfurs, Barnetts, Parkses, Hudsons, Hoovers, Greers, McCormicks and Pirtles. The late William Q. Parks served as Sunday School Superintendent of this church from the time it was built until Pearl L. Sanderfur was elected and served for several years. The church does not have a Sunday School now, the last Superintendent being Mrs. Lonnie Hoover.

On June 10, 1897, Jesse N. and Lydia A. Hudson deeded the lot of one acre, known as Mt. Hermon Cemetery, for the sum of \$15 to Geo. W. Bennett, W. P. Bennett, R. H. Bennett and Thomas Greer. The first burial was that of John William McCormick, who was killed by lightning on July 9, 1897.

The No Creek-Mt. Hermon Church has, perhaps, the most complete church records of any congregation of that denomination in the county. Ernest Bennett, of this community and a Mt. Hermon member certainly has the most complete list of pastors extant. The earlier portion of his list was preserved by his grandfather, the late Alexander Barnett Bennett, long recording steward of the No Creek Church, and then brought down to date by Mr. Bennett and myself. Mrs. Belle (Pirtle) Duke, one of Hartford's oldest and most devoted Methodists, has almost as complete a pastoral list. The only difference between the two lists is that Mr. Bennett's goes four years further back, to the separation of the Church into two branches in 1844. There were a few years in the late 90's and early 1900's that the Mt. Hermon Church was on the Livermore Circuit. The church book also contains a list of the pastors extending back to the year 1883 while the church was still located at No Creek.

Comparing all three lists, I have tabulated the following list of pastors who have served the No Creek-Mt. Hermon Methodist Congregation:

PASTORS—NO CREEK - MT. HERMON CHURCH

.....Gardiner	1845-46	M. M. Hunter.....	1897-98
.....Sutton	1846-47	T. F. Barber.....	1898-99
.....Fisk.....	1848	Enoch M. Crowe.....	1899-00
George W. Crumbaugh.	1848-49	Robert D. Bennett.....	1900-04
John W. Rhoads.....	1849-51	W. C. Moorman.....	1904-05
H. L. Burge.....	1851-53	C. Fletcher Williams. ..	1905-07
Matthew N. Lasley.....	1853-54	Robert H. Hartford.....	1907-09
Timothy C. Frogge.....	1854-55	Virgil Elgin	1909-11
William Neikirk.....	1855-56	Thomas V. Joiner.....	1911-13
Schuyler L. Murrell.....	1856-59	W. E. Saville.....	1913
Enoch M. Crowe.....	1859-61	Baxter W. Napier.....	1913-17
J. M. Lawson.....	1861-62	A. D. Leitchfield.....	1917-19
Robert B. McCown.....	1862-64	E. Watt Smith.....	1919-20
George H. Hays.....	1864-66	T. T. Frazier.....	1920-24
Enoch M. Crowe.....	1866-69	R. L. Sleamaker.....	1924-28
Charles Y. Boggess.....	1869-72	V. B. D. Wheatley.....	1928-30
James R. Dempsey.....	1872-74	E. W. Ryan.....	1930-31
Bryant A. Cundiff.....	1874-75	H. H. Jones.....	1931-32
W. W. Cook.....	1875-78	K. K. Anderson.....	1932-33
T. J. Randolph.....	1878-79	Robert B. Prentis.....	1933-34
Joseph R. McDaniel.....	1879-81	William S. Buckner.....	1934-35
R. C. Alexander.....	1881-83	Squire Whitaker.....	1935-36
W. C. Hays & C. R. Crowe...	1883-84	D. R. Gant.....	1936-38
P. A. Edwards.....	1884-86	E. C. Whitworth.....	1938-39
Lewis E. Campbell.....	1886-89	Harold Miller	1939-40
Enoch M. Crowe.....	1889-91	Ferd N. Royster.....	1940-42
Eldred E. Pate.....	1891-94	W. F. Sharpe.....	1942-44
C. Fletcher Williams.....	1894-96	Hugh E. Delaney.....	1944-46
C. C. Black.....	1896-97	Joe Travis.....	1946-51
		J. M. Gold.....	1951-52
		Eugene Gibson	1952-



Ohio County Times-News, Hartford, KY, Thursday, 15 July2004, pp.1A & 8A:

No Creek church celebrating 200 years

Book written by Harry D. Tinsley gives history

BY DAVE MCBRIDE, Times-News staff writer

If Harry D. Tinsley doesn't know about it, it probably hasn't happened in the No Creek area of Ohio County.

Fortunately for those who care about history – especially when it comes to the county's rich church legacy – Tinsley does know and has gone to great lengths to record it.

The No Creek United Methodist Church is some 120 years older than Tinsley and come Aug. 7 at 3 p.m., the church will hold a homecoming that will mark its 200th year of existence.

Long since gone is the original church building, a house owned by Jeffress Bennett. The church's membership included Bennett, Thomas and Nancy Stevens, Henry and Hannah Stevens, Higginson and Charlotte Belt, Mr. and Mrs. John Bennett Sr., Mr. and Mrs. John Bennett Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Amos Hipsley, Reuben Bennett, Sarah Bennett, Mollie Bennett, Sally Barnett, and Lucretia Barnett.

Little did Jeifress Bennett and his followers likely know that the chartered place of worship would survive along with all else that transpired in an infant nation not far removed from its break with England.

Two hundred years ago, Thomas Jefferson was the third president of a 38-yearold nation and Meriwether Lewis and William Clark started their famed expedition to explore the American northwest. In his state of the nation address, Jefferson told the American people the national treasury had collected \$11.5 million in revenue and that \$3.6 million would be paid on the national debt.



No Creek United Methodist members Dane and Donna Milligan stand outside their church that was established in 1804. Dane Milligan has been a member since 1954 and his wife joined the church after the couple was married in 1961.

In his "History of No Creek, Ohio County, Kentucky," Tinsley notes that No Creek United Methodist Church originally started as the No Creek Methodist Episcopal Church.

Part of that fledgling membership came from the family of Gov, John Bennett who was born in Ireland in 1753. Other families involved belonged to Thomas Stevens, Montgomery County, Amos Hipsley, Maryland, and Colonel Alexander Barnett, a native of Nelson County in Virginia.

It wasn't until 16 years later in 1820 that the first No Creek Methodist Church building was constructed. It was located on the south side of Hartford on what is now known as Kentucky 136.

From this point, Tinsley noted, and for about the next 25 years, the church's records were not preserved. They picked up again around 1844, a time of relative unrest in local Methodism.

It was during that year that Methodism split into southern and northern branches as a result of disagreement in the church's general conference over the slavery issue. No Creek Methodist was the only church in Ohio County to split.

Tinsley notes that while most of the Hartford circuit churches joined the south movement, No Creek's membership was divided and the majority joined the southern jurisdiction. A dispute then surfaced over ownership of the actual church property and a court determined that the southern sympathizers would be the winner.

Because of this, the northern group, after a few years, built its own church a short distance from the original No Creek church. The two congregations worshipped side-by-side until 1890 when a cyclone damaged the southern place of worship beyond repair.

Even in the new northern church there was separation, according to Tinsley. The Wesley Chapel Congregation (northern) was built with a dividing wall squarely down the middle. Women sat on one side and men on the other. On one occasion, Tinsley notes, a young man entered the church with his girlfriend and tried to sit with her on the women's side.

On noticing the segregation discrepancy, the preacher (not known) asked the male member to retire to his side of the sanctuary. The youngsters failed to heed the minister's urging until he was approached by the clergyman.

"You will," the minister said as he walked toward the young man. And the young man did.

Again, there is no written record of this church from the time it was built until 1876. It was blown off its foundation by still another cyclone in 1890, repaired, and used until 1903 when another church was constructed.

The M.E. Church (South) was moved and renamed Mt. Hermon.

In 1939 the Methodist healing was started. The first official gathering following the reunion of the Methodist Episcopal, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Protestant churches under the name "Methodist Church" was held in Kansas City, Missouri.

The church built in 1903 was used until 1949 when the present structure was built. The 30 X 48 structure contains some of the wood used in the preceding church and the one before it. Along with some donated money and labor, the present church was constructed at a cost of about \$12000. A new fellowship hall was built in 1999 at the urging of and the assistance of the Dane Milligan family.

The facility's stained glass windows came out of the former Asbury Methodist Church in Owensboro. They are approximately 93 years old.

And in 2003, No Creek was named Small Membership Church of the Year.

The homecoming on Aug. 7 will feature Doug King and his Christian magic show from Beaver Dam Baptist, clowns and puppets from Cedar Grove Baptist Church, games, and a homemade ice cream and sandwich social.

The following Sunday worship service will feature Bishop James R. King, speaker, and the Rev. Glenn Sowards and the Rev. Edgar Goins. Gospel Music will be provided by Sacred Heart and the No Creek Community Choir made up of singers from the Woodward Valley Baptist Church and the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church will perform.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 7 August 2004, p.6B:



No Creek United Methodist Church



No Creek United Methodist Church

