

JOHN ROOKER

. . . .Dr. T. H. Pritchard, pastor of the church from 1893 to 1896, wrote in 1896 "The first Baptist known in Mecklenburg County was John Dinkins, the great-grandfather of the Rev. Dr. Thomas H. Pritchard. He was an Irishman, and a man of means, and resided on the Nation Ford Road, half a mile beyond the mineral spring, on Sugar Creek. He send his overseer to Richmond, Virginia, with a covered wagon, drawn by four horses, and brought to his plantation, on which he had built a parsonage, the Rev. John Rooker, whose family was supported almost entirely by him for some time".

However, Dr. T. J. Taylor thinks: "The late Rev. T. H. Pritchard was mistaken in thinking that Elder John Rooker moved from Richmond, Virginia, to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, for we learn in a sketch of his life, written by himself, that Mr. Rooker was born in Virginia, moved to Bute, now Warren County, North Carolina, about 1775. He was a soldier in the Revolutionary War; taught school in Warren County; was united in marriage to Ann Hawkins, daughter of John Hawkins, Esq., of Warren; joined the Baptist Church of which Elder Thomas Gardner was pastor (now Gardner's Church of Warren County) and was licensed to preach by this church. From Warren County he moved to the neighborhood where John Dinkins, the great-grandfather of Dr. Pritchard, resided. It is very probable that it was through the efforts of John Dinkins that Elder Rooker was induced to settle in that section.

"Evidently Elder Rooker's purpose in moving was that he might preach the gospel and establish churches in this inviting field; for almost as soon as he had located, he, with the assistance of Elder Abraham Marshall, of Georgia, constituted, on the first day of May, 1792, Flint Hill Church, which, although in York County, South Carolina, is only twelve miles from Charlotte, with wich place the Flint Hill neighborhood has always been closely identified. Some of the constituent members of this church moved with Elder Rooker from Warren County, others came from Virginia, and the remainder, like John Dinkins, had for some time resided in that community".

The records of Flint Hill Baptist Church (often called Sugar Creek, York County, South Carolina, begin thus:

"May 1st, 1792. This day, after examination into the faith and order of several members of the Baptist denomination, residing on the Catawba Indians' land and the vicinity thereof, was constituted a Baptist church

by the Rev. Abraham Marshall, minister of the Gospel, of the State of Georgia".

This church had twelve original members, of whom Rev. John Rooker was pastor, and John Dinkins and John Smith were deacons. John Rooker was pastor of this church for more than forty-two years.

An inscription on a stone in the Flint Hill cemetery reads:

In Memory of

ELDER JOHN ROOKER

Who was born on the 12th of March, 1755, in the State of Virginia, and departed this life on the 24th of June, 1840, in the 86th year of his age. In 1782, he united himself with the BAPTIST CHURCH.

In 1783, he entered the ministry, and in 1792, he became pastor of the SUGAR CREEK CHURCH in which charge he remained until the time of his death. He was a man sound in doctrine and earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints, as believed by the regular Baptists.

An inscription on a tablet in the Flint Hill churchyard reads:

In Memory of

ELDER JOHN ROOKER

Born in Virginia, March 12, 1755.
Came from Warren County, N. C., to
York County, S. C., November, 1790.
Pastor of Flint Hill Baptist Church
from its organization, May 1, 1792,
until his death, June 24, 1840.

Erected by the

MECKLENBURG-CABARRUS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
May 8, 1832

OBITUARY

Died, in the York District, South Carolina on the 24th ultimo, Rev. John Rooker, in the 86th year of his age. He was a true soldier in the Revolutionary struggle for liberty, a volunteer against the Indians and the Scotch Tories.

John Rooker was also an old and firm soldier in the cause of his Lord and Master, having been engaged in Ministerial duties as pastor for 48 years, at Flint Hill Baptist Church, South Carolina. During this period, gave honor to himself and to the causes that he promoted in his congregation. Charleston Courier, July 15, 1840.

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