

ERROR IN OLD APPLE CREEK CHURCH PUBLICATION

In the Old Apple Creek Church and Its Early Membership by John A. Hope of St. Louis Mo, published in 1926 by The Missouri Cash-Book in Jackson, Missouri, a Ross family is mentioned.

This publication is an address by John A. Hope at the celebration of the 105th Anniversary of the church given on Sunday, May 22, 1926.

In the Forward by the Cash-Book, we learn the Apple Creek Church is near Pocahontas, Cape Girardeau County, Missouri. A copy of the Address, along with Hope's research notes, were obtained by Senator Robert Burett Oliver, who was baptized in 1850 at the church. Along with these notes and those from his Grandfather, John Oliver's, diary and writings, and recollections of charter members, these foot-notes were created.

Reference is made to the **Presbyterian** denomination. Pleasant Hill Church is mentioned which is also Presbyterian.

The Church was organized May 1821, which is the year after the death of my **William Ross** mentioned in the book, who was **Baptist** and involved in the Apple Creek Church nearby of an earlier date which was Baptist.

The Address and footnotes begin with a list of initial members who met May 21, 1821. The Address and footnotes continue with those who joined the Church not long after the organization, and this list includes "**the Rosses.**"

An asterisk discusses the Baldwin family, being Baldwin's Tan Yard's location which is near **Zenas Ross** farm on the road from Pocahontas to Neely's Landing, but it does not state that Zenas is a member of the church, only used as a location reference.

On page 21, the Address begins discussing Oliver Harris, one of the first elders, with ten family members on the original roll, which was one-fifth of the congregation, who originated in a part of Pennsylvania that later became **Cabarrus County, North Carolina**, and then **Mecklenburgh County, North Carolina**. Oliver Harris married Margaret Shelby there in North Carolina.

The Address discusses more of the family in North Carolina and then mentions Margaret Shelby's relatives as moving to New Madrid and Perry Counties in

Written by Cheryl Rutledge-Brennecke on February 23, 2026

Missouri. Next on page 25, **William Ross's** son, **John Ross**, marries **Hannah Harris**, the sister of Oliver Harris. It is correct that a John Ross marries Hannah Harris, and it may be that John Ross's father is a William Ross, but it **does not seem correct that this William and John are one in the same as my William and John Ross** who lived across from the Thebes Bridge and were devout **Baptist**.

The Address has a "**reasonable conclusion**" that when Oliver Harris came to Missouri about 1810, he would have stayed near enough to visit his wife's relatives in Perry and New Madrid Counties, and near his sister who married John Ross, at Ross' Point while supplying Stephen Hempstead in St. Louis. Stephen Hempstead's Diary mentions that camping on the bank of the Mississippi with a Harris man.

Again, nowhere in the book does it say that William Ross or John Ross were original members of the church, only that the "Rosses" without first names were original members. As noted below, there is a John Ross buried at Apple Creek.

My John Ross is born in 1800 in Cape Girardeau County and marries **Annis Mae Galloway (Rothweld)** in Hempstead, Arkansas, where he dies in 1872. His father, **my William Ross** is born in 1760 in either Roanoke County, Virginia, or **Martin County, North Carolina** and dies in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri in 1820, having lived and owned land on the bank of the Mississippi River.

In comparison, **Zenas Nesbit Ross, Sr.**, is the same generation as **my John Ross** (1800-1872), being born in 1802 in North Carolina. Zenas marries **Sarah Fleming**. There are over 100 Ancestry trees that have Zenas's father as **my William Ross** (1760-1820) with his wife Elizabeth Jane Allen. **This is incorrect and everyone needs to fix their trees, being careful to use "leaf suggestions."**



Zenas Ross's father, **John Ross**, is the same generation as **my William Ross** (1760-1820), being born in 1773. This **John Ross** marries **Hannah Harris** in **Mecklenburg County, North Carolina**, which is a different county than where my Ross family resided in Martin County, North Carolina. Mecklenburg and Martin Counties, North Carolina, are not close to each other, so they were not created of the other nor did boundaries overlap. This John Ross was born in 1773 in Iredell County, North Carolina, and is buried at Apple Creek Cemetery in Pocahontas, Cape Girardeau County, Missouri.

Some trees have John Ross's (1773-1839) name as William John Ross, which may be what makes one think my William Ross (1760-1820) and John Ross (1773-1839) are one in the same, but they have two totally different families. This John Ross (1773-1839) has a Will recorded in Cape Girardeau County and my William Ross also has a Will recorded in Cape Girardeau County.

There are suggestions that this John Ross's (1773-1839) father is a William Ross, but I do not see where that fact comes from and it would be a different generation as well. This repetition of two family lines with a William Ross having a son John Ross is probably what is confusing the tree suggestions.

I have only studied these two families for a short period of time and this writing may contain some errors, but I am confident that these are two different families, one Baptist and one Presbyterian, and that this book may have misled some folks.

Written by Cheryl Rutledge-Brennecke on February 23, 2026

Old Apple Creek Church

AND

Its Early Membership



ADDRESS

BY

JOHN A. HOPE
of St. Louis, Mo.



At Celebration of the

105th Anniversary

Sunday, May 22, 1926

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The Missouri Cash-Book, Publisher, Jackson, Missouri.

1926

Old Apple Creek Church and Its Early Membership

ADDRESS

BY

JOHN A. HOPE

Sunday, May 22, 1926

oOo

I was born and reared in this neighborhood.

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd
As home his foot-steps he hath turn'd
From wandering on a foreign strand!”

In a farm home, only two miles away, my mother taught me the alphabet from the big letters on the outside covers and the fly leaves of an old Apple Creek Church Hymn Book. About a mile to the north, on the outskirts of Pocahontas was the home of grandfather Hope. ¹ A mile and a half to the west stands the home of my grandfather Thomp-

1. Robert Young Hope, son of Elder James Hope.

Not long after the organization of the church—very early in its history—the Luckeys, the Rosses, the Querys, the McCombs, the McNeelys, the Trickneys, the Russells, the Adams, the Woods, the Primms, the Alexanders, the Wilsons, ¹⁷ the Torrences, the

married Ransom Little in Missouri. John Oliver, Sr., Dairy; Mrs. Oliver History of John Abernathy Family.

John Abernathy, the father of these children, was a soldier in the Revolution. His father, Robert Abernathy, was an officer in the Colonial Militia (N. C. Col. and State Records. Vol. 22, pp. 307, 368, 369, 370, 372) and in the Armies of the Revolution; member from Tryon County in the Provincial Congress of 1776 which adopted the Declaration of Rights and Constitution for North Carolina as a State independent of Great Britain (10 N. Car. Col. and State Records, 913, 915, 924); and member from Lincoln County in North Carolina House of Commons, 1779, 13 N. Car. Col. and State Records, pp. 811 to 1000.

Joseph Abernathy, known as "Uncle Joe" was the head of another branch of this Abernathy family. He too was born in Lincoln County, North Carolina. He was one of the very earliest in the Apple Creek Settlement. His farm was just west of the Church grounds, on the south side of the road to Pocahontas. With straight black hair, dark complexion, high cheek bones, and erect stature, "Uncle Joe", according to the traditions coming down from early days, was part Indian—a descendant of the Virginia Princess, Pocahontas. The town of Pocahontas was named in honor of "Uncle Joe" and in recognition of his tradition. Evidently he was a relative—the testamentary proof indicates he was a brother—of the celebrated Elizabeth Abernathy, who married the son of "Gentleman" John Perkins, and who "was said to be the handsomest woman of her day. She was tall and handsome, and her form and moving was graceful and elegant. Her eyes were dark and sparkling, and her hair as black as the raven's wing. It is said the Abernathys received their dark complexion from their Pocahontas blood." See account of marriage of Ephraim Perkins and Elizabeth Abernathy, by Col. M. L. McCorkle, in "Gentleman" John Perkins, Lenoir News-Topic, Lenoir, N. C.

17. Thomas Wilson, a pioneer from North Carolina, was the founder of this family in Cape Girardeau County. Among his children were, Richard E. Wilson, Alfonso Wilson, and Addison Wilson, all leading and influential citizens. Their descendants, wherever they reside, many of them now living in Cape Girardeau County, are people of high standing.

Sloans, the Bulls, the Baldwins, * the McKees, the McKnights, the Walkers, the Robbs, and the Crawfords were in the congregation and members of the church. The McPhersons of Perry County, also the Knoxes intermarried with the McNeelys and the Wilsons—and the Baldriges from Tennessee—came into the congregation a long time ago. Practically all of them, both those on the original membership roll and those who came into the congregation later, were Scotch-Irish; all came from North Carolina, excepting perhaps the Russells, who, I believe, were from Virginia.

Cooperating with them in the Apple Creek congregation from the very beginning, were John Oliver, Senior, a North Carolinian of Virginia cavalier descent, and a prominent member of the church; the Brevards, ¹⁸ who were Huguenots, intermarried with

* Owner of Baldwin's Tan Yard, just east of the Zenas Ross farm on the road from Pocahontas to Neely's Landing. Like McGuire's Tan Yard at Jackson, the Glasgow Tan Yard on the old McCombs' Place, and the Statler Tan Yard on the creek between the Robinson Russell and the Gillispie Horrell plantations, it was a thriving and profitable business. The Statler Tan Yard especially was operated on a big scale, as, in addition to tanning hides of all kinds, it kept a force of skilled workmen employed and manufactured the leather into shoes, etc; had a ready market for its product, and made money. Militia musters and elections were held at Baldwin's Tan Yard in the early times.

18. Adelia, wife of Milton Harris and, with him, an original member of Apple Creek Church; was the daughter of Robert Brevard, Revolutionary soldier and patriot, Hunter's Sketches of Western N. C., Raleigh, 1877, p. 196. Robert Brevard was an early member of Apple Creek, Knox's Sketch, 1911, p. 4. He lived at Jackson; lies buried in the Jackson Cemetery. During the Revolution, Tarleton's dragoons destroyed the home and property of the widow Brevard, because, said the British, "she has seven sons in the rebel army." Ellet's Domestic History of American Revolution, Scribners, 1851, p.226; Ellet's Women of the Revolution, Baker and Scribner, 1848, pp. 300-303. Adelia Harris' father was one of the "seven sons"; brother of the distinguished Dr. Ephriam Brevard, Wheeler's Reminiscences and

Charlotte for this wedding. They are the Polks, Alexanders, Brevards and others. Here also we see the Olivers, Abernathys, Grahams and McCombs, who have come from the adjacent County of Lincoln to attend the nuptials of the popular couple and the incidental festivities. They came, I imagine, on beautiful and prancing steeds, for Lincoln County was a land of fine horses. ⁵²

After their marriage Oliver Harris and Margaret Shelby, lived, it seems, for some twenty-five years in the Poplar Tent Church neighborhood near Concord, North Carolina. There they reared, and educated under the tutelage of such men as "Master" Thomas Allison ⁵³ and the illustrious Reverend Doctor John Robinson, ⁵⁴ twelve children. But Mrs. Harris' cousin, Moses Shelby, had moved to New Madrid County, Missouri. David Shelby and Jonathan Shelby, relatives of Mrs. Harris, were living on the River in what afterwards became Perry County, Missouri. And it must not be overlooked that William Ross had a Spanish Grant in Scott County, Missouri, near the present Thebes Bridge. The place was then called Ross' Point. ⁵⁵ He had a son, John Ross, and Hannah Harris, sister of Oliver Harris, was the wife of John Ross. Isabelle, a daughter of Oliver Harris, had married William Johnston, and another daughter, Jane, was Mrs. Cyrus Henderson, as I have previously

52. "Gentleman" John Perkins, Lenoir, N. C., News Topic, 9.

53. Morrison's History of Allison Family, 144.

54. Harris' Historical Sketch of Poplar Tent, 17, 18, 20.

55. William Ross' Will, Cape Girardeau County Probate Record A, 115, May 24, 1820.

that William Ross was living on the River just below Cape Girardeau, that Oliver Harris' sister had married a Ross, and that Oliver Harris, on coming to Missouri, would naturally have selected a place on the River near his sister, and affording, in the then condition of the country, practically the only means of reaching or communicating with his Shelby relatives at New Madrid and in Perry, it is a reasonable conclusion, I think, that the Harris who supplied Stephen Hempstead, camped at or near Ross' Point, with provisions for the remainder of his voyage to St. Louis, was none other than Oliver Harris, who ten years later appears on the board of elders of Apple Creek Church. If so, he was one of the earliest, if not the very first, of the Apple Creek congregation to arrive in Missouri, excepting, of course, Elizabeth Byrd, who had been here since about 1800. He was an early land entryman in both Cape Girardeau and Perry Counties. He settled finally, I believe, on Apple Creek in Perry County among the kinfolks of his wife. He must have been buried in Perry County, because, if my information is correct, no tombstone in Apple Creek Cemetery tells of any Oliver Harris sleeping here. He was a leading citizen, an influential man, a conspicuous figure in early Missouri, as his antecedents had been in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. His selection by Moderator Giddings and that congregation of strong men and good women for the bench of elders confirms our estimate of him. It was doubtless on account of his high standing and qualities of leadership that the congregation named the place Apple Creek Church, because, as I have just said, his home seems to have been on Apple Creek.