

**Louise Pettus  
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May 4, 1992

For my fellow Rev. John and Anna Hawkins Rooker' descendants/researchers:

Zula Atwood, Sweeny, Texas (Eleanor Rooker m. James Harper)  
Alton Douglass, Woodbridge, Va.(Eleanor m. Harper)  
Dr. Jim Parker, Dahunega, Ga. (Joseph Dorris Rooker m. Hannah Faris)  
Marilyn Ellison, Lake Oswego, Or. (Jennings Rooker m. Rebecca Wood)  
Marjorie Malloy, Newnan, Ga. (John Hawkins m. Anne Garland Thomasson)  
Iris Wood Mayo, Hurst, Texas (Elizabeth "Betsy" m. William Reeves)  
From Louise Pettus (Mary Wyatt Rooker m. (1) Richard Spears; (2) Elias Alexander)

Flint Hill Baptist Church celebrated its 200th anniversary yesterday (actually May 1 was the date). They did it with style, too. I was not able to go to the morning service but went about 1:30 when people were finishing up the meal under a huge tent (food was abundant and looked luscious). At two p.m. there was a "drama" in the sanctuary that was most effectively done. A former pastor played Rev. Rooker and four or five rows of costumed "actors" were seated in front of him. The first scene was the founding of the church with Abraham Marshall of Georgia constituting the church and the roll call with each of the founding members standing (I am descended not only from Reverend Rooker but also from William Pettus and James and Allie Spears who I believe were either the parents or grandparents of Richard Spears who married Mary Wyatt Rooker. This belief is based on the line of descent of a Catawba Indian lease which went from James Spears to William Spears to Richard Spears.)

Back to the drama: two verses of Amazing Grace were sung (between each act an old hymn was sung), then a very short sermon and the ordination of Rev. Robert Mursh, his wife and child, Pamunkey Indians who became missionaries to the Catawbans. Then there was a scene in which a man is dismissed for playing a fiddle at a dance and two women who had quarreled were reconciled. Then a scene that recalled Rev. Rooker's last sermon in 1837. I enjoyed it very much and I believe the audience did, also.

There was a display of pictures and objects associated with Flint Hill history and I went through it. Then outside I found Dr. Jim Parker of Dahunega, Ga. and he asked if I had seen a small handwritten notebook inside. I had missed it so went back in and found it. I noted that it was written by James F. Boyd who died in 1955 and was a long time clerk of the church. His little notebook was based on interviews with descendants of the

Rookers. In it I found things I never knew before. I could copy it all and I don't know whether the church owns it or someone loaned it and didn't find anyone who knew but I plan to pursue it further and perhaps can get a complete copy. I also only had a few cards with me that were printed on one side with reminders to members of the York County Genealogical and Historical Society, whose Quarterly I edit, to renew their subscriptions. On those cards I jotted down the following:

"Elder Rooker's widow died at the Reaves who lived near Gastonia in August 1845 or 1846 and on account of weather conditions was buried in a field on the farm once owned by them, with her two sons Jennings and Doris [Dorris] and one of Doris' children (Robert). This spot is unmarked and the surrounding field is owned by Harold K. Davis. Jennings Rooker was the father of John Bunyon Rooker and Presty (?) Rooker. John Bunyon Rooker was the father of James Marion Rooker.

"Betsy Rooker married Reeves and moved to Tennessee. Jennings Rooker married Rebecca Wood, lived in that neighborhood and died there and on account of high water was buried on the home place at that time in the woods but now out in an open field. The grave is unmarked.

"John Rooker moved to Georgia but later returned to Lancaster, S. C. and died there. Dorris married Hannah Faris and lived there in the Finley neighborhood and is buried in the same plot as Jennings. He has one child buried there also. The Finleys told me Rev. Rooker lived there all the time he was pastor at Flint Hill until 1836 when his home was burned. He then moved to the Flint Hill neighborhood and lived there for three years. Then he moved back home and died there in 1840. His widow was buried in the now open field - no stones except for Dorris whose stone is so broken that it cannot be read.

"Jacob Rooker was Dr. and lived on Allison Creek in Bethel township and married Sarah Stewart and they had a daughter who married Green Finley and lived west of Wright's Cross Roads on Boyd Bridge Road going to Clover, S. C."

The above tells us where Anna Rooker was buried (he is buried at Flint Hill Baptist Church) and that the grave never had an inscribed tombstone (presumably).

Now as for the location of the Rooker home and this really came as a surprise to me. They lived across the Catawba River from Flint Hill church which is on the east side of the Catawba. Boyd Bridge, generally termed Buster Boyd Bridge is on Highway 49, if you happen to have a map of this area. The reference to Wrights Cross Road is I suppose is the same as was later called Wright's Ferry Road and the ferry was where the bridge is

now. (The Catawba has been so dammed up by Duke Power Co. and the large Lake Wylie impoundment has so changed the nature of the river that it is hard to get an exact reference.) But there is an 1825 map by Robert Mills that takes care of the river before it became a lake and which has a "Rooker's M.H."--Rooker's Meeting House on it west of the river and north of Mill Creek, I would guess on State Line Road, west of present-day Highway 274. By taking a modern county map and using its scale and a ruler, I calculate that from "Rooker M.H." to the ferry (and in 1792 there was not even a ferry, so that he would have had to ford the river) would be about 2 1/2 mile and from the river to Flint Hill Baptist is another 3 miles. This 5 1/2 miles is a bee-line, mind you, and we know he could not have travelled an absolutely straight line to the church, so add a mile or more. Also, the river was not so controlled then as now and flooded periodically. I knew about Rooker's M.H. but always thought it a place where he preached occasionally, perhaps on a weekday (as often happened at meeting houses); I never dreamed that he lived on the west side of the river. What is more, he had an Indian lease not too far from Flint Hill Church and I thought he lived there. So, he lived outside the Catawba Indian Land not far below the NC line. David Hutchison once wrote that Rooker loved to hunt. I gather from that and his living so far from Flint Hill that he must have been a hearty outdoorsman.

One other comment. The bit on John Hawkins Rooker dying in Lancaster County, SC convinces me that my great aunt, Rena Spiers [or Spears] Perry Kell, was correct when she said that John H. Rooker was buried at Six Mile Presbyterian Church (in upper Lancaster County, Belair community, Indian Land Township) beside Clarissa Amelia Spears Morrow, wife of Allen Morrow. There is an empty space there and Aunt Rena's son, John Allen Kell, told me that his mother worried about it and talked of putting up a stone for him. She said John Rooker was surveying (his name is on many of the 1841-42 Indian Land surveys that followed the Nation Ford Treaty of 1840) and got sick at Allen Morrow's house and died and that it summer and too hot to take the body all the way to Flint Hill so he was buried at Six Mile. Clarissa Amelia would have been his niece, the daughter of Mary Wyatt Rooker and Richard Spears (their only child, too). I have never been able to find where she was buried. Elias Alexander, a Presbyterian, died a couple of years after she married him in the early 1840s. What happened to her after that I do not know. Found that Mary Rooker Spears Alexander was

If I find out more I will send it along. Buried in Meriwether Co., GA.

Sincerely,

Louise