

CASSEL METHODIST MEETING HOUSE

By John H. Burleson

Last week I was researching an application for a DAR membership and saw a reference to The Cassel Meeting House on a deed. I have seen maybe one or two other references before but

had no idea where it was located or had no time to search. Locating the meeting house was not my priority, but luckily this deed happened to be the last document I had for the DAR project.

Grant # 8447 Grantee: Burleyson, Joseph 50 acres adjoining Isaac Burleyson's line, southwest side of Pee Dee River, on the waters of Little Bear Creek, of Long Creek, a 100 acre tract belonging to heirs of Isaac Burleyson deceased, about 100 yds. From The Cassel Meeting House, a bank of a dreaan. Entry: 9 Jan. 1822, warrant: 18 April 1822, survey 17 Jan. 1824 chain carrier: David Burleyson and Martin Almond.

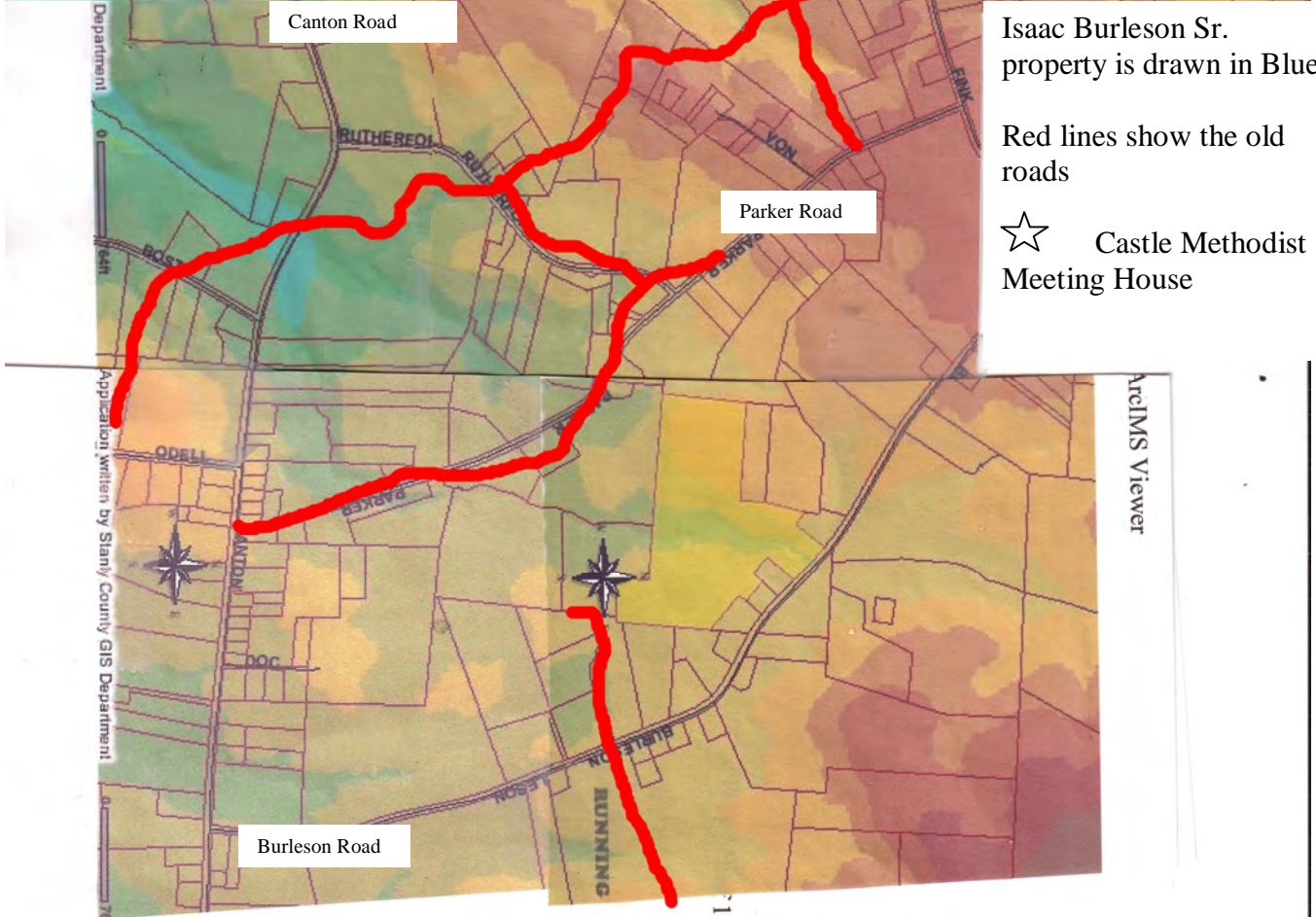
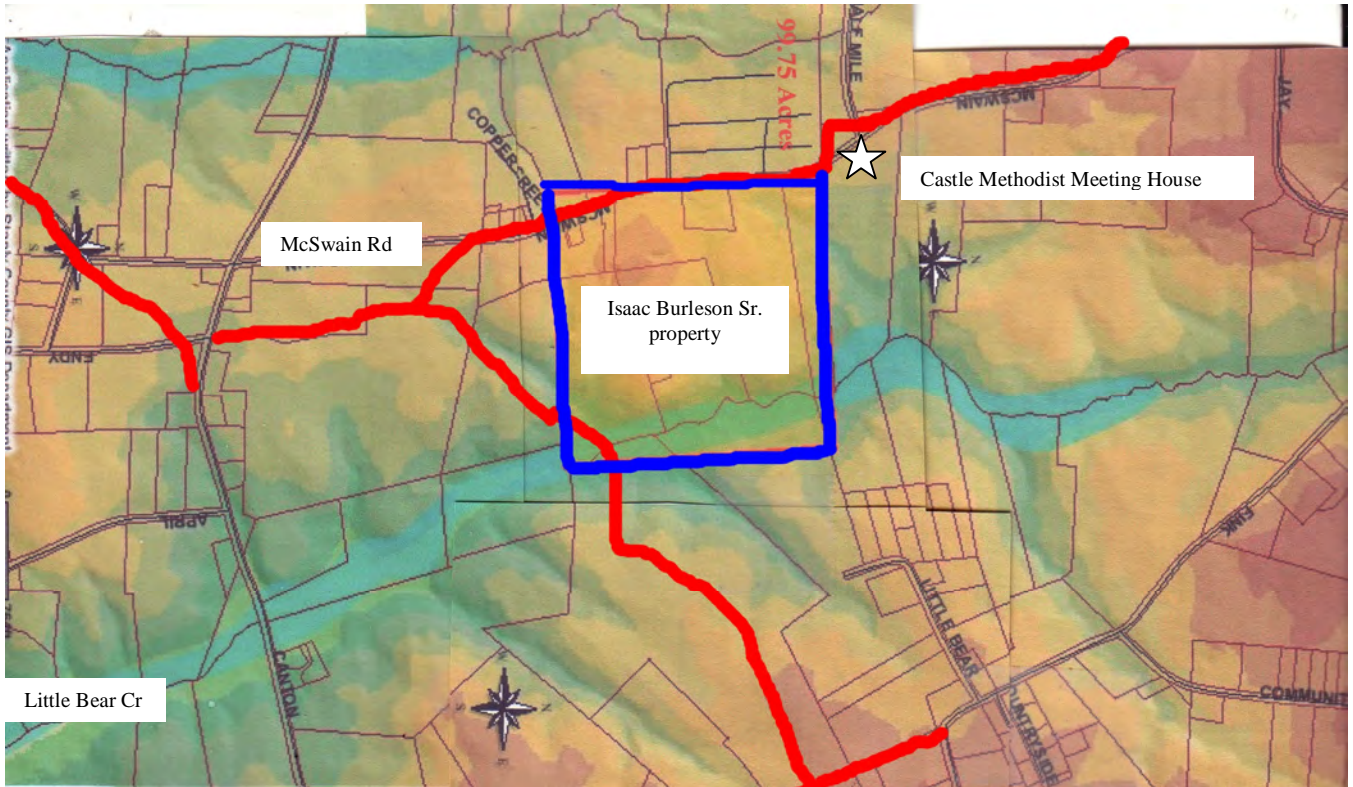
The general location would be in Almond township of Stanly Co. N.C. This grant would tell us of the Meeting House location within 100 yards if we can determine where Isaac Burleyson Jr. line/lines were and the 100 acres of land held by Isaac Burleyson Sr. heirs. In the last 183 years the ownership of the property and the lines have surely changed many times and the meeting house has long, since gone to dust.

In 1794 Isaac Burleson Sr. was granted one hundred acres on Little Bear Creek. The key to the Meeting House location is to determine where Isaac Sr. settled over two hundred years ago. In 1822 this land was still held by his heirs after Isaac Sr. death between 1810 and 1812. The reason it was not divided up among his sons and daughters is that his widow Martha (Patsy) was still living and the land was being used for her underaged children's support. I have a copy of a letter by a relative written the 15th of January 1822 by Sara Rowland states "*Old aunt Martha is still living at hir old place and hir youngest sun lives with hir and is single*".

The 1794 grant to Isaac Burleyson states the survey starts at a point about 300 yards below the mouth of the running branch of Little Bear

Creek and runs south 127 poles, west 127 poles, north 127 poles to a red oak corner and return east 127 poles to the beginning. The headwaters of Little Bear Creek has only one fork. The east fork is fed by a spring located between Fink Road and Community Road and runs the year round. The west fork does not run in the dry summer. I know this by years of bird hunting and exploring in my youth. Since the northwest corner (the red oak corner) would be closest to the Meeting House, I wanted to check to see if this east to west line was still a property line. The best way to do this is go to the Stanly County GIS web-site. After measuring down about 300 yards from the mouth of the running branch fork of Little Bear Creek, I was surprised to find there still exists an east to west property line after over 200 years. This line still runs from Little Bear creek and crosses McSwain Road just south of the intersection of Half Mile Road.

According to Joseph's grant, somewhere about one hundred yards north of this line should be the location of the Meeting House and here today we find a very old abandoned cemetery in a field about 100 yards north of Isaac's red oak corner.



I'm sure the cemetery is all that remains of The Cassel Meeting House. It contains approximately 50 to 60 graves. The first third of the graves are aligned in rows but the remaining two thirds are not. The uniformity was lost as later burials took place. Some are not marked at all. All but two are fieldstones and only three are inscribed. The three inscribed markers are for Elizabeth Vanhoy and Dollie Burleyson (both are grandchildren of Isaac Burleyson, Jr.), and an Almond youth.

The earliest graves are on the west side; the latest graves seem to be on the east edge. A short distance to the west is a level grade where I think

May session 1860 Stanly County court, John M. Almond is ordered to be overseer of the road from the Meeting House Road to the Morganton Road and Larkin Almond, John Hatley, John F. Vanhoy, Daniel Bowers, Green Hatley, Elmon Hatley. John Burriss, Elisha Huneycutt, John ___?___, Nathan Almond, Nathan Burleyson, William Hatley, Moses M. Lowder, David M. Hatley, Hardy Hatley, Jacob Hurlocker, William Almond and Simeon Herlocker, to be assigned to work as hands.

The road referred to in this order is the Austin Road. The Morganton Road is basically highway 73 today and is approximately three miles distance north from the Meeting House /Half Mile Road along the Austin road. Along this route close to the Meeting House lived

the Meeting House stood. Until forty years ago McSwain road had two 90-degree curves at this location. The two curves would route the road to the Meeting House and then around.

To find some way to prove my assumptions that a Meeting House was at one time located with the cemetery that is there now, I went to the Stanly Co. Court records. In the 1860's instead of charging a tax to maintain roads in Stanly County, the court required the citizens to maintain the road. Normally a three mile section was assigned an overseer and all male adults living along the road were assigned to work as hands for the overseer to maintain the road.

Larkin Almond, John F. Vanhoy, and Daniel Bowers. Then going north on the Austin Road we find Green Hatley, Jacob and Simeon Hurlocker, William Almond. Close to the Morganton Road / Hwy. 73, we find Moses Lowder and William Hatley.

May session 1860 Stanly County Court, William Hatley is ordered to be overseer of the Austin Road from the Meeting House Road to Bear Creek and that Joseph Morton, William Hatley, Davidson Furr, Green D. Whitley, Thomas Whitley, John M. Morton, William Kiker, William E. Furr, William Dick, Farrington Furr, Simeon Morton, Ransom Dick, Miller Kiker, Jesse Morton, Lee Lowder, Christopher Sholfe, Amos Vanhoy and Ed Dick ordered to work as hands.

All these men lived south of the Meeting House Road mostly in the Bloomington area and along Big Bear Creek.

I now know the location of the Cassel Meeting House by deed references, county road orders, and I have a cemetery; but who built it, when was it built, how long did it last and what denomination did the Cassel Meeting House serve?

The answers to all these questions are contained in the obituary of William

Castle/Cassel in 1870. The obit was republished by the Burleson Family Association and was provided to J. D. Burleson and the Burleson Family Research Group of Stanly County.

