Volunteers restore church

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SEVIERVILLE — An old church started to get a new look this weekend.

A group of restorationists began work on New Salem Baptist Church at 601 Eastgate Road Saturday. The 116-year-old church has recently been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places and will be up for review in January 2003.

One of the people restoring the church was Robert Birden, whose relatives were involved in the building's construction.

"They made the brick and they built the church," Birden said. A plaque outside the church credits Birden's great-grandfather, Isaac Dockery.

The church has stood for more than a century despite its propensity for flooding because of a nearby creek.

"It's flooded in here ever since the church has been erected," Birden said. "It's amaz-