

Historical Notes and Legend

The Feasterville Female Academy came into being in 1842. Later, male students also attended the academy and at that time it became known as The Feasterville Female and Male Academy. It was built by John Feaster.

John Feaster was the son of Andrew and Margaret Fry Feaster and he was born in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania in 1768. His father, Andrew, came to America with his father, Peter Pfister, from the canton of Berne, Switzerland, in 1754 on the ship, "Brothers." These Pfisters settled in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and in 1767 changed their name to Feaster. Andrew Feaster married Margaret Fry of Philadelphia. They left for the South either in 1770 or 1780. Grants of land were given to Andrew Feaster. Peter Feaster by now was an old man and he died on the journey to South Carolina and was buried in Virginia.

John Feaster married Drucilla Mobley. Drucilla was a granddaughter of Hans Wagner. Hans Wagner, a very early settler in the area, built Fort Wagner for protection against the Indians. It is believed that Drucilla was about 16 years of age and John about 18 years old at the time of their marriage in 1786. Drucilla died at the age of 33 and John died at the age of 80. They had seven children.

The Feasterville Academy was completed in 1842. The story is told that John Feaster was at a Christmas party in Winnsboro and noticed the superb supervision of the party by a Mrs. Catherine Stratton Ladd. Later, Mrs. Ladd's husband, George Williamson Ladd, was painting John Feaster's portrait, and while sitting for this portrait, Feaster remarked to Mrs. Ladd, "You ought to be teaching in a school."

Mrs. Ladd replied that if she had a school that she would teach.

John Feaster said, "I will build you one."

In 1842, John Feaster sent Catherine Ladd the message that the building was complete and ready for occupation. Some students boarded at the academy while local students walked or rode in daily. At first, the academy was only for females. Actually, the academy known as the Feasterville Female Seminary officially opened in 1845. An advertisement appearing in the Columbia newspaper, "The South Carolinian" of October 24, 1844 advertising the seminary included an interesting item. It said: "Board, washing, lights, etc--\$8.00 per month."

Long after the academy closed, the school house, itself, was used as a rural one-teacher school. In 1929, it, too, closed when a country consolidated school replaced seven one-teacher schools. The school house was built in 1840 and used for 87 years. Prior to building the school house, classes had been held in the church.

John Feaster built the Liberty Universalists Church in 1836. A group known as the Universalist Democrat Society was organized in 1777. They met in the homes of its members until the church was built.

The story is told that people questioned Feaster as to who would preach being there was no minister available. Feaster replied, "I'll build a church and God will supply a minister."

In his will, John Feaster left the academy and church in trust to his three sons, Andrew, Jacob, and John Mobley. Today, there are still three trustees managing the property. Their terms expire at their deaths or when they choose to resign. The two remaining trustees appoint

the third one. Twelve sets of trustees have held this trust. The present trustees are: Miss Mary Bess Coleman, Sam P. Bolick, and Robert C. Blair.

The Coleman-Feaster-Mobley Association was organized in 1941 and this association maintains the up-keep of the buildings through donations of its members. A meeting is held annually in October and several hundred descendents attend the picnic and church services.

The portrait of John Feaster painted by Catherine Ladd's husband, George Williamson Ladd is in the Fairfield County Museum in Winnsboro. Also in the museum is the Liberty Universalists Church communion service set--a gift from a Universalists church in Boston.