

# History of Feasterville, Fairfield Co., SC

by Mark McKee Rigsby

The Coleman, Feaster, Mobley Family Association was formed in 1941. The group owns and maintains the Feasterville Boarding House and Schoolhouse, the Liberty Universalist Church, the Antioch Methodist Church and family cemeteries.

The Feasterville Historic District is in the western part of the county in the Blair mailing area. This area is rich in history from its first settlement by the Lyles family in the 1740s.

Originally Feasterville was called Hill's Box after the Simeon Hill family. It was said that during elections many candidates who had run well elsewhere failed there. "As Hill's Box goes, so goes the county," was a popular refrain. Hill's Box earned the nickname of "Hell's Box" for so often giving candidates hell.

The community was next named Feasterville after John Feaster, born 1768, died 1847. Feaster, with contributions from others, built Liberty Universalist Church in 1832. In 1840, he built the schoolhouse. Prior to that, classes were held in the church. During 1841 - 42, Andrew Feaster, born 1793, died 1869, supervised the building of the Boarding House for his father and by 1844 it was known as the Feasterville Female Seminary with Catherine Ladd as principal. Prior to Mrs. Ladd's tenure, the Rev. L. F. W. Andrews, a Universalist minister, taught "the usual English and Classical Branches" from 1842 - 44. The school was open until 1929 when a county consolidated school replaced seven rural one-teacher schools.

After the closing of the school, the Boarding House was used as the Feasterville Community Building. The buildings were renovated as a WPA project and the grounds were landscaped in 1937 by Mother Walker of Winthrop College. In the 1930s and 1940s the Feasterville Demonstration Club used the first floor and the Coleman Masonic Lodge No. 97 occupied the front upstairs rooms. The schoolhouse was used as a polling place until the 1980s.

The Coleman Masonic Lodge was chartered in 1860 and originally met in a building on the grounds of the Boarding House complex. It was named for Dr. Robert Williams Coleman (1822 - 1873).

The Antioch Methodist Church was built in 1891 by William James Jenkins on land given by Mrs. Charles W. Faucette, who was Mary Ann McConnell prior to her marriage. Jenkins also made the pulpit and the pews from wood cut on the W. J. Wolling place and dressed at his sawmill.

The association holds a reunion each October of descendants of the three families. Last year members celebrated the centennial birthday of the group's oldest member, Mary Bess Coleman, who is the great-granddaughter of Henry Jonathan Coleman, who was born June 27, 1793 and died Feb. 3, 1861; one of the original trustees of the Feasterville Academy.

Her grandfather, Dr. Robert William Coleman, who was born Oct. 3, 1822 and died May 27, 1873, built a one-room schoolhouse for black students circa 1867 - 68. It was known as St. Cecilia's and stood at the intersection of Road 99 and Road 33 in Shelton until it was torn down in the early 1970s.