



# FAMILY TREE NEWSLETTER

## SEPTEMBER 2024

*Feasterville Home Demonstration  
A Glimpse Into The Past...  
Schoolhouse escapes damage  
The Lost Depot  
Saturday Tours*

**84th Annual Coleman-Feaster-Mobley Reunion is just around the corner! Join us Saturday Oct. 5th and Sunday 6th for another great celebration of family, friends, and history**

### Unsung Heros

By Ron Chicone, Jr. & Teddi Miles

The Feasterville Home Demonstration Club was in existence from the 1920's through 1957 and is a great example of how folks in this area organized and worked together for the betterment of the

### Sunday Festivities

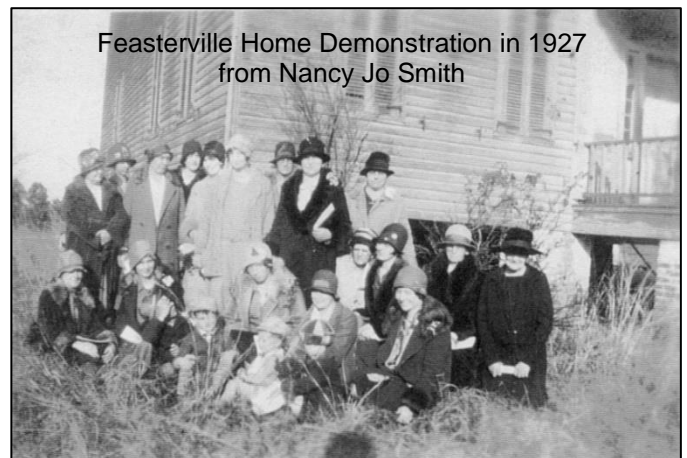


Liberty Church service and C-F-M business meeting will be held from 11AM to 12PM. This is a great chance to experience the Sacred as they did in the 1800s, and to hear all the latest news of

the Association.

Of course, the high point of the Reunion is the food. Forty plus feet of tables filled with home-cooked main dishes, side dishes, desserts, and sweet iced tea. The secret to a covered dish dinner is the individual quality of each item, made with extra care by families that are a part of something grand and historic. The cost of all this? Bring a dish, register and pay dues at the registration table, and enjoy the afternoon. The Association provides plates, utensils and napkins. Some tables and chairs will be provided, but bringing your own is always a good idea. Also, Hot Rod Ice Cream truck will be joining us again.

We will have a convenient and clean, handicap-accessible toilet on site again this year, in addition to our two bathrooms in the Boarding House.



community. The club's minutes demonstrate how the women of the club were not just sipping tea and sharing recipes. They were engaged in promoting a deeper understanding of topics like farming practices and child psychology, as well as having some well-deserved fun. For example, in the 1930s they recorded: "The meeting was called to order after a very interesting talk by the farm agent." And, "The lesson for the afternoon, 'Parent-Child Responsibilities in the Home,' was given by Miss Pender, who explained in detail several types of parents." But it wasn't all business. "After the devotional, the salute to the flag was led by Miss Atkinson and all joined in singing Carolina... The prize in the 'Cat' contest was won by Mrs. J.R. Shelton." And there was a "peanut guessing contest" too. Now I'm not really sure what a cat contest or a peanut guessing contest is, but they both sound exciting, especially when you consider that HGTV or the WNBA hadn't been invented yet. Of course, the

refreshments included, "Shivar's Orange soda," and I'm sure nothing available today is better than that.

In 1937, an article in the News and Herald stated, "To help the hot lunch work at Monticello High School, the club members planted a garden, the produce from which was donated to the school." So, if you thought community gardens were a recent, eco-activist, tree hugging, hairy-earrings hippy-girl kind of enterprise, well now you know better. Feasterville area resident Ms. Odell Boulware remembers being taken to meetings as a child as she recounted to me in her authentic South Carolina accent which includes throwing in an endearing "you know" at the end of a sentence. "I was there in the fifties...you know, they were havin' the Home Demonstration Club up there over the store [in Shelton]. My mother-in-law, Marion T. Boulware, thought I was supposed to be drug around to everything she went to, haha. She was prominent in the community...you know. The Lady would come and show'em how to set out the Nandinas; you trim'em in February so the pretty red berries would be ready for Christmas time."

The "Lady" she was referring to was most likely the famous South Carolina demonstration agent Dora Dee Walker. Ms. Walker was affectionately known as "Mother Walker" by all the folks whose lives she touched. Walker was appointed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a County Collaborator in South Carolina in 1911, which earned her the distinction of being the first home demonstration agent in the world. For more than 35 years she traveled throughout the state, working with home demonstration clubs, fostering aid to areas devastated by the boll weevil, and helping to beautify and develop farm communities. The minutes from the Club's February 12, 1937 meeting mention that "Mother Walker will be with the Club March 2nd at 2 PM." She was a woman with a vision and a fierce promoter of the role and responsibility women had in building a worthy society. According to Winthrop University, "The development of leadership among farm women and girls was one of her most satisfying accomplishments. When she began her work, women shunned public activities."



If it wasn't for these visionary women, these unsung heroes, we may not have the historic

Feasterville buildings and their beautiful grounds today. They undertook the 1930s renovation work that restored the property to its rightful place as the heart of the community. And, they did it in the middle of the Depression. Here are just a few quotes from the Club's 1936-37 meeting minutes:

- "Met at Feasterville School House. Mrs. A.F. Blair moved that the Club assume the debt of \$176.00 [\$4,000 today] toward repairing the Boarding House."
- Met at Boarding House. Membership now \$45. \$40.40 in treasury, voted to spend \$34.25 to buy paint to be used by WPA workers in painting the Boarding House."
- "After a discussion on condition of upstairs, it was moved that club apply for continuation of work on Boarding House thru WPA funds."
- "Mrs. J.R. Shelton moved that the Club buy 3 1/10 acres of land in front of B. House between old road and Hwy. 215."

One of the members, Mrs Jennie Isabelle Coleman, gives us more details in an interview she did with the Federal Writers Project. "The question now arose as to what could be done with 'The Boarding House.' We raised...money and sponsored a W.P.A. project, whereby the building was remodeled, covered and painted. The interior now consists of three rooms and a large clubroom on the first floor," and "a large dance hall" upstairs.

She also asserts that "Many are beginning to make 'The Boarding House' a shrine of interest and pilgrimage...Luckily the old building has not been allowed to rot and moulder away. It is still an object of beauty in the community's landscape, a center of recreation and enjoyment, still possessing some semblance of the founder's ideas of usefulness and culture to the community."

That was over 80 years ago, and since then the C-F-M Association has continued to protect and honor the Feasterville properties with financial and community support. Last year we established a Building Fund to restore and maintain these structures, just like the Home Demonstration Club did. Because, we are again in need of a few more "unsung heroes."



## A glimpse into the past leads us forward

By Nancy Jo Smith

Chaney Feaster's father, John Feaster opposed her marriage to Henry Alexander Coleman because three of his children had married Colemans. Thus, Chaney and Henry were married October 13, 1853, at the home of her sister and brother-in-law, Susan and Robert Fitz Coleman.

Henry Alexander Coleman was the fourth son of David Roe Coleman and Edith Beam, and a grandson of the patriarch, Robert Coleman, of the Fairfield County Colemans. Several of his siblings moved West as new lands opened, but Henry and Chaney bought two tracts of his father's farm and raised their family in the vicinity of the Coleman Cemetery on present day Clowney Road. Their oldest son, David Andrew Coleman, settled a short distance away on Ashford Ferry Road he called Banks Old Field. Two daughters married and moved to Georgia, and the other sons lived in Fairfield County. Tragically, John A. F. Coleman was the only son to live beyond 1865.

John was married with two children when he enlisted in the Buckhead Guards. He served alongside his brother-in-law, Andrew J. McConnell until the latter's death at Petersburg July 30, 1864. He continued McConnell's diary until his return home. Because they had been tent mates, McConnell's death was especially grievous. He oversaw his immediate burial, and the transfer of his body by rail to Winnsboro.

John was paroled April 12 and reached home April 22. "I got rested and became engaged in making a crop for Pappa and my folks... In July we made a contract with ours to work to the end of the year, giving them (former slaves) 1/3 of the corn, peas, molasses and potatoes. I hope the damage may prove beneficial to all."

"The parents, Chaney and Henry, so sorely berift [*sic*] in many ways, called on their only son left, John, to come to their home and manage the large farm, part of which had a mortgage of \$9.500 on it, made during the war when Henry A. Coleman bought the lands of Solomon Coleman, very near his own home. And never did a son and daughter-in-law, more nobly fulfill all the duties in their old days." *Cousin Jennie* [R.C. Book pp. 312-313]

John Albert Feaster Coleman and his wife, Juliana Stevenson were parents of six children, four living into the twentieth century and each making an impact on their community. John, himself, continued to farm and was an active member of Liberty

Universalist Church, and a trustee of the Feaster properties that we treasure today.

Their eldest daughter, Jennie Isabel Coleman, gleaned a wealth of knowledge from living near her elders. Her "Black Book" offered firsthand family history knowledge. Her appreciation for connectivity fostered this association even though she did not live to see its fruition. That's the way we pass along our heritage.

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## Penny-wise But *Almost* Pound-foolish

By Ron Chicone, Jr. & Bob Blair, Jr.

The lush, sloping forest of tall hardwoods comes up the hill from the old spring right to the back of the schoolhouse. There are some beautiful oaks, hickories and elms shading this senic



landscape. One of those trees was a Southern Red Oak that was stretching out from the forest reaching for some extra light. Only thing was, it was leaning out toward the old schoolhouse. I'd looked it over many times, estimating the likelihood of it falling and damaging the structure. But the tree was very healthy and, even though growing at an angle, appeared quite stable. Plus, to remove this tree safely would require a large bucket truck or an expert climber, both of which would cost a lot of money. So I decided it would be enough to just "keep an eye on it."

One thing I didn't consider in my assessment – the roots. What's going on "under the surface" (a lesson that can be applied to many aspects of life). These clay and rock Piedmont soils can be very tough. Years and years (going back to the 1700s) of cotton farming, forestry and erosion have stripped the organic content leaving a hardpan of caked orange and nearly impenetrable ground. The roots were tough, and they spread out along the surface finding footholds where they could. But ultimately,

they failed to keep a grip as a summer thunderstorm ripped through Feasterville. Whether it was just luck or something more otherworldly, the tree missed the 190-year old schoolhouse by several feet. In the future, I do hope to better calculate the perils of being “penny-wise.”

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## Tour of Historic Sites

**Saturday October 5<sup>th</sup>, Fairfield Co.  
Historical Museum in Winnsboro, 10AM to 3PM**

**Feasterville Boarding House 9:30AM –  
12:30PM**

This year we are taking a casual approach to the Tour giving folks lots of options. Eddie Killian, President of the Fairfield Genealogical Society, will be at the Genealogy Library inside the Fairfield Museum in Winnsboro to show you all the Feasterville history and family connections. Self-guided tour maps will be available and there are several good choices for lunch within walking distance of the Museum.

Pelham Lyles, Museum Director, and Ron Chicone, local history buff, will be at Feasterville to lead folks on a driving tour of historic sites guided by participant interest. Liberty Church, Antioch Church, local graveyards, the ghost town of Shelton, the ruins of the world-renowned Shivar Springs, and various historic homesites are all on the list. One of the oldest landmarks in South Carolina, Lyles Ford, may also be a possibility for the really adventurous (it involves crossing a trestle).

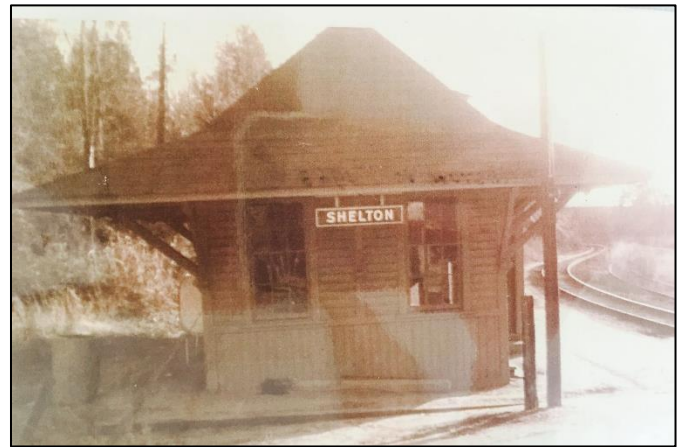
We can break for a bring-your-own picnic lunch at the Boarding House, then head out again. These historic sites may require some walking over rugged terrain so bring your hiking shoes, water and sun protection. No need to RSVP, we're playing this one by ear. We will also have a self-guided driving tour of the Feasterville historic sites available.

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## The Lost Depot

By Ron Chicone, Jr.

An April 1891 News and Herald article, *SHELTON TO BOOM*, tells us exactly when the ghost town of Shelton's passenger railroad depot was built. “The Richmond and Danville Company are going to build a depot at Shelton and the hands have already arrived. This will add greatly to the convenience of the community. Shelton is about to be on a boom...” But what happened to this old depot? One of the few



existing photos of it is from the late 50s or early 60s and comes to us from the Wright family descendants. Back in the day, most every small town or community with proximity to rail established a depot, and these depots become the hubs for commerce and transportation. But they were more than that. They were the very cornerstone of these small towns. Shopping, travel, news of the world, all revolved around the depot.

There are lots of personal references to the Shelton depot in old diaries, and a few of our Association members were around when it still functioned as the heart of Shelton. Henrietta Morton (when she was very young y'all) remembers how the stationmaster would adjust the telegraph “sunder” and open the depot windows so he could hang out across the tracks at the Wright Company Store and still hear the “tap tap tap” of important wire communications that would echo through the streets.

These old passenger depots from the late 1800s were beautifully styled with carpenter gothic features. They were meant to promote both the glamor and the efficiency of rail travel. But sometime in the 1960s, as the little hamlet of Shelton was dying and people no longer traveled much by rail, the old depot was dismantled and sold to a local farmer. And like most of the old Southern depots, it was forever lost to times gone by. Or so we all thought.

There were rumors that the old depot might still exist on a local property. Some said they had run across it while hiking back in the woods near Shelton, others said it had been moved to someone's house on Lake Murray. Then just last year I spoke with a couple who attends the Runions and lives just north of Feasterville. They told me the old depot was on their property. I was intrigued, but not totally convinced it was the Shelton Depot that they had, or that it could really still be standing after



good amount of “covered dish” food so we can fill the tables.

all these years. Then they sent me some pictures. And there it was, just like in the Wright family photo, still hanging on after living a somewhat less glamorous second life on the farm. It turns out that the wife is the daughter of the farmer who bought the old depot in the 60s. She and her husband still live on the family property where it was reassembled. They told me the building had always been used to store hay, and that they would like to see it saved. Perhaps there is yet hope for reviving this 133-year-old faded lady. After all, she is the last surviving building from the old ghost town of Shelton.




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### Update from the Board

- Contractor Harry Evans cut down three dead/dying pecan trees close on the right side of the Boarding House. One of these had already dropped a large limb and damaged the building. The cost was \$1500, but note that two buildings and the long shed were not hit when these trees came down. Most of the firewood size limbs were removed by Michael Blair at no expense. The main trunks were removed by Brad Hoffman, a local farmer with a sawmill, at no expense.
- Bob Blair organized the cleanup effort for removing the fallen schoolhouse oak tree. The Hoffman family was nice enough to salvage the wood, and our groundskeeper Mr. Jackson handled the rest.
- Both doors at Antioch Church are still in critical condition and need to be replaced.
- The Fairfield County Genealogy Society will have a booth again this year and we have a few other local vendors at the Reunion.

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### Check Out Our Stats!

	Sixty-three years ago yesterday was the 1961 Coleman-Feaster-Mobley Reunion. Yes, it was held in the sweltering heat of JULY y'all! Why? Because folks used to be tough. And, they had those little cardboard hand fans to keep them cool of course. Haha. The entire article...	Post reach	Engagement
	Wed, Jul 24	387	249
	Here is a just found, rare photo of Shelton, SC that includes the Freight Depot. There is no other known photo of it. It is barely visible behind the circa 1891 Passenger Depot on the left. The Freight Depot is important because it's construction marked the beginning of the...	Post reach	Engagement
	Tue, Jul 2	272	282
	The Civil War was a violent, deadly conflict that resulted from deep and controversial divisions in our, at the time, relatively young country. Those divisions finally reached critical mass in 1861. The legacy of that war still haunts South Carolina. But those who went into...	Post reach	Engagement
	Sat, Jul 27	249	142

Our top three facebook posts over the last 90 days have had a total of: **908** “people reached,” and **673** “reacting or commenting.”

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### C-F-M Family Association Website

Our Association President, Eddie Killian, has added many pages to this awesome collection of documents, newsletters, photos, family information, and history on our official Association website. Just google “coleman feaster mobley” and it comes right up or click here.

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**Rules about food:** Please practice good food safety. Put your name on your dish and provide a serving spoon if necessary. The Picnic depends on the honor of each family and attendee providing a



## Schedule of Events:

### Friday Sep 29th

- Fairfield County Museum, Winnsboro open 9AM to 5PM
- Tent and RV camping set up all day (please RSVP on CFM website)

### Saturday Sep 30th

- Research assistance at Fairfield County Museum Genealogy Library, 10AM to 3PM.
- Feasterville tour of historic sites 9:30 to 12:30
- Bring your own picnic lunch
- Tour of Cemeteries, Antioch Church or other sites 1:30 - 5:00
- DNA Round Table with presentation at 7:00PM to 8:30PM at CFMA Picnic Shelter
- FCGS-sponsored barbeque supper at Feasterville Academy grounds and campfire

6pm – until. Please RSVP Eddie Killian at [fairfieldgenealogy@truvista.net](mailto:fairfieldgenealogy@truvista.net)

### Sunday Oct 1st

- Research assistance Feasterville Academy 8:30am - 11:00am
- Registration, Dues, Donations and visiting 10:00 - 11:00
- Booths/Tents available to visit with local genealogy or historical societies, and CFM items
- Services at historic Liberty Universalist Church 11:00 - 11:45
- Annual Business Meeting at Liberty Church 11:45 - 12:15pm
- Reunion group photo 12:45 - 1:00
- Association and friends family picnic 1:00 - 2:00

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## Association Officers and Committee Members

President .....	Eddie Killian, <a href="mailto:fairfieldgenealogy@truvista.net">fairfieldgenealogy@truvista.net</a>
Vice-President .....	Pelham Lyles, <a href="mailto:fairfieldmus@truvista.net">fairfieldmus@truvista.net</a>
Secretary .....	Samantha Blair, <a href="mailto:blairsam95@gmail.com">blairsam95@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer .....	Teddi M Miles, <a href="mailto:milesteddi@gmail.com">milesteddi@gmail.com</a>
Chaplain .....	Rev Dr Steve Mentzer, <a href="mailto:drstevementzer@gmail.com">drstevementzer@gmail.com</a>
Genealogist .....	James W Green III, <a href="mailto:jwgreendna@gmail.com">jwgreendna@gmail.com</a>
Historian .....	Henrietta R Morton, <a href="mailto:mortonhr34@gmail.com">mortonhr34@gmail.com</a>
Webmaster .....	Eddie Killian, <a href="mailto:robertekillian@yahoo.com">robertekillian@yahoo.com</a>
Newsletter Editor .....	Ron Chicone, Jr., <a href="mailto:rchicone@yahoo.com">rchicone@yahoo.com</a> , Robert Blair Jr., <a href="mailto:rblair1926@gmail.com">rblair1926@gmail.com</a>
Past President .....	Dru Blair, <a href="mailto:drublair@drublair.com">drublair@drublair.com</a>
Nominating Committee.....	Sally Shedd Garner, Chairman
Communion Committee.....	Wylie Blair Parham, Allison Blair Hunter
Picnic Arrangements .....	Sally Garner, Samantha Blair, Garrett Hunter, Chris Parham, Coleman Whitesides
Cemetery Committee .....	Robert Blair, Jr. (Chairman)
Fort Wagner Monument.....	Bryan Greer
Trustee .....	Robert Blair Jr., <a href="mailto:rblair1926@gmail.com">rblair1926@gmail.com</a>
Trustee.....	Teddi M Miles, <a href="mailto:milesteddi@gmail.com">milesteddi@gmail.com</a>
Trustee.....	Ron Chicone, Jr., <a href="mailto:rchicone@yahoo.com">rchicone@yahoo.com</a>

Coleman-Feaster-Mobley Family Association

1926 Old Blair Rd Blair SC 29015.

Questions? Ron Chicone, Jr. 321-946-6352, [rchicone@yahoo.com](mailto:rchicone@yahoo.com) or Robert Blair, Jr. 803-635-1054