

The Legend

Of Bonnie Mary McMorris

By Faye Johnson

How would you like to be twelve years old, crossing the ocean going to make your home in a new and strange land, and finding yourself about to be eaten?

It may sound like a story on TV, but it actually happened, over two hundred years ago, and it took a miracle to save young Mary McMorris from cannibalism.

Back in the 1700s, many people came to America from way across the ocean, from such countries as England, Scotland and Ireland. Although we think of settlers going west in covered wagons where we hear the word "pioneer", these people who came across the ocean were our early pioneers. Some of them helped settle Fairfield County, and Mary McMorris' family was among these settlers.

Mary's family left Ireland in the 1700s. Crossing the ocean in those days was very risky. The ships depended on winds to fill their sails and move them across the water. During Mary's trip, the winds grew still and the ship came almost to a stop. The journey had begun with only enough

rations of food to last a certain length of time. As the ship drifted in the water, the food gave out. The situation was desperate and it looked as if everyone aboard would starve.

According to legend, the travelers decided to eat one of their number, and lots were cast to see who would be eaten. Mary's name was drawn. Now Mary was an especially sweet and lovely young girl, and no one really wanted to eat her. They decided to cast lots again. Once more, Mary's name was drawn! How frightened she must have been! Still, none of the travelers wanted to eat her, and, being religious people, they began to pray. All night they prayed that they would not have to eat Mary or anyone else.

Then, in the morning, a miracle happened! Another ship was spotted, and happily this ship had plenty of food aboard—enough to share with the people on Mary's ship.

Mary McMorris and her family settled in Fairfield County and when she grew up she married James Kincaid. Captain Kincaid fought in the American Revolution, and he built the beautiful house now known as "Fairfield" (owned by the Crosby Lewises). He and Mary were members of the Old Brick Church, birthplace of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod, and Mary McMorris Kincaid is buried in the churchyard there.

Several years ago local historian and songwriter Nelle McMaster Sprott wrote a song about Mary McMorris' adventures for her public school music students. It goes like this:

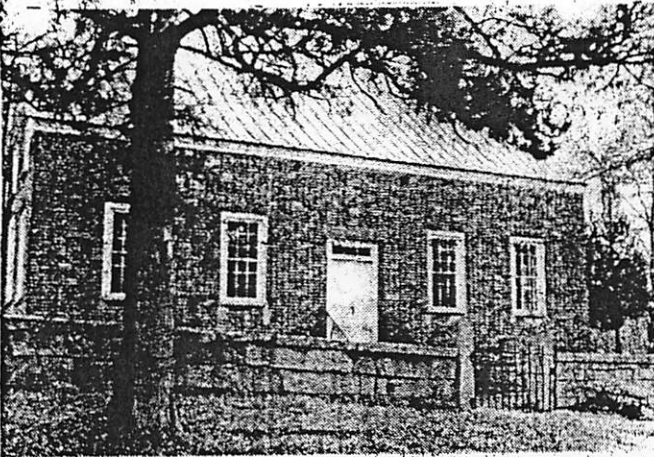
BONNIE MARY McMORRIS

Bonnie Mary McMorris, sailing over the sea
Bonnie Mary McMorris, O what will her sad fate be?

Mary's hair was like sunshine, Mary's voice like a dove,
Mary's smile was like music, coming from Heaven above.

Bonnie Mary McMorris was a gentle child.
She left her home in Ireland to sail to America wild.

Storms churned up the Atlantic, the food was running low,
The men of the ship cast ballots to see which member must go.



Old Brick Church

The Old Brick Church was once known as Ebenezer Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and it was here in 1803 that the ARP Synod of the Carolinas was formed. The churchyard is an interesting place to visit, as there are tombstones dating back as far as 1811. The church was built in 1788, with brick made by hand by the members. (Photo by Renee McCabe)

from the sun/They counted their lots that morning to die was the fate of one.

When they counted the ballots to see who the victim would be/The lot fell to Mary McMorris, there on her father's knee.

"No, not Mary McMorris, not this bonnie child- We cannot kill bonnie Mary, Mary so sweet and mild."

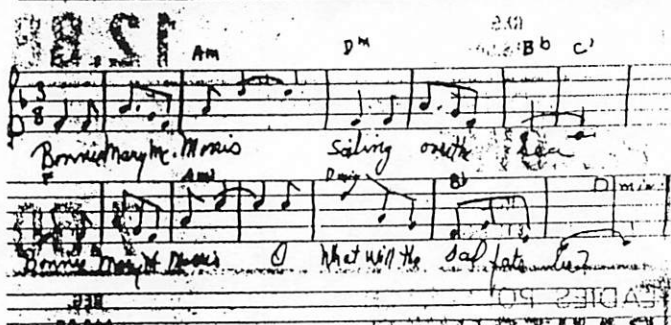
They voted again the next morning to see who the victim would be./The lot fell again on Mary, child on her father's knee.

"No, not Mary McMorris, not this bonnie child- We cannot kill bonnie Mary, Mary so sweet and mild."

The third day they called all together, hunger was starving the crew./They prayed that the Lord would show them what they ought to do.

And then in desperation, they looked out to the sea/And saw a great ship coming and Mary would now be free.

Bonnie Mary McMorris reached America's shore- She made her home in Fairfield and lived happily there evermore.



By Nelle McMaster Spratt

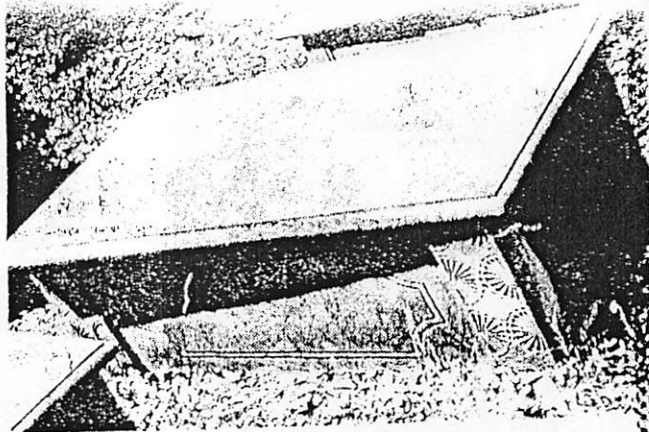
Mrs. Mayes, An Author-Musician, To Study in N. Y.

Mrs. Edith Beam Mayes, author-musician, who now resides at Blair with her sister, Mrs. Grace Beam Howard, recently had a story published in the June issue of The Pee Dee Review, a magazine devoted exclusively to "the creative abilities of South Carolinians." The issue is on sale at The Colonial and the short story is titled "Mr. Holsclaw's Dilemma." Two other stories have been accepted by the magazine.

For the past year, Mrs. Mayes has been studying at Winthrop College, and although she had previous instruction in New York, Paris and Milan, she gives great credit to Winthrop and to Prof. Willard Marsh for her recent progress in the writing field.

On the basis of the three articles for The Pee Dee Review (published in Latta, S. C.), Mrs. Mayes has been accepted in the Graduate School of Writing at Columbia University, New York City.

Mrs. Mayes attended Lenoir Rhyne College, studied music in Paris three years, Italy two years and at the Julliard School of Music six years. She has written several



Mary Morris Kincaid's Grave

Mary Morris Kincaid, who was saved as young girl from being eaten by what appeared to be a miracle, is buried at the Old Brick Church. Her husband, Captain James Kincaid, died while visiting at Charleston and had to be buried there. However, there is a marker at the Old Brick Church in his memory. (Photo by Tommy Robertson).

unpublished books, and because of her recent success and future study at Columbia, she hopes to write a novel which may have wide readership.

Born in Kings Mountain, S. C., she has lived and studied in North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Paris, and Italy, where she was associated with the great and the near-great. She met her late husband in Paris and at the time he was president of Rio Grande College in Ohio. There she served as librarian. Subsequently, Mr. Mayes practiced law in New York and worked with S. R. Guggenheim and Gustavus Town Kirby in helping raise money for the Public School Athletic League for the City of New York.

Later, Mr. and Mrs. Mayes went to Washington as head of a school for training of ambassadors. In Washington, says Mrs. Mayes, "I developed an avid taste for books. The late Senator Clyde Hoey (D., N. C.) would send me 25 or 30 at one time from the Library of Congress.

"One day the Senator said to me, 'Edith, why don't you write? I'll bet you have the ability to do a peach of a book.'"

And, partly due to the Senator's encouragement, Mrs. Mayes embarked on a writing career which she hopes will come to fruition following her study, soon to begin at famed Columbia University.

Fairfield citizens will doubtless watch her progress with keen interest.