

## FEASTER FAMILY EARLY PIONEERS

### Feasterville Community Takes Name From Family Of Swiss Emigrants

This locality takes its name from the Feaster family. The progenitor of this family was a native of the Canton of Berne, Switzerland, and emigrated from his native land to America in the seventeenth century. The name was originally Pfeister, but was changed to Feaster in the early days of this country. This Swiss emigrant, Andrew Feaster, Sr., came to Fairfield from Lancaster county, Pennsylvania. He married Fry Cooper, a widow, of Philadelphia. The grants of land to him may be seen in the Secretary of State's office, in Columbia, and record of his military service is with the South Carolina Historical Commission. He also furnished a field of grain to the cause of independence.

Andrew Feaster was a Dunker in religious faith, and a public advocate of that faith, and he preached frequently, as tradition testifies, in advocacy of the final salvation of all men. His son John, who was born in 1768, also advocated the same doctrine in public and it was this son, John Feaster, who is probably more responsible for the community being called Feasterville.

He founded Feasterville Academy and the Boarding House at Feasterville and deeded them to his descendants. The church was built in 1832. It was called "Liberty-Save All" but the deed from John M. Feaster calls it the 1st Universalist Society of Fairfield County, S. C."

In the old days people came from long distances to attend services at the church, from Newberry, Laurens and other points which were at that time quite a journey away. John M.

Feaster appointed his three sons, Andrew, Jacob and John as trustees and other trustees have been elected on down the years.

In the time of John Feaster, indigo, till then the money crop, ceased to be profitable on account of competition with India, and there was great unrest in the land, and most of the neighborhood moved west rather than change their crop. Some one asked John if he wasn't going too. He answered, "No. Stay where people are leaving. Don't go where they are crowding in." He remained, and cotton came in, and he prospered.

It is said that while Mr. Ladd was painting a portrait of John Feaster, Mrs. Ladd accompanied her husband to Feasterville. During one of these "sittings" Mrs. Ladd asked Mr. Feaster why he did not build a school there. He replied by asking, "If I do, will you teach in it?" She replied that she would and he built the school which stands today, and which at least five generations of his descendants have attended. Later he built the Boarding House near it, where pupils from afar could board.

The old John Feaster Manor, a few miles off the highway to the west, is very interesting. It was built in 1806, and is said to have had the first glass window panes in that part of the country. There is painted in colors, on the ceiling of the front porch of this house a huge American eagle, with the words "E Pluribus Unum."

During the Civil War, when the house was occupied by the Northern troops, it was not burned on account of the eagle. The walls of the upstairs rooms and the ceilings are very crudely painted. A short distance west of the house in the old Feaster family burying ground, where Andrew Feaster, Sr., the Revolutionary soldier, and his descendants lie.

Contemporaries of the Feasters who went to make up the neighborhood in the early days were: Colemans, Moberleys, Wagners, Beams and others.

David Roe Feaster

He was a Confederate soldier, enlisting in the Buckhead Guards, E. J. Means, captain; Boykin Lyles 1st lieutenant, Robert Starke Means, 2nd lieutenant; J. Y. Legg, 3rd lieutenant and S. B. Clowney, 1st sergt.

Mr. Feaster first married Victoria Rawls. On her death, he married Hattie Coleman, a widow, with five children. These, with the seven by the first wife and the six that he begot by the second wife, made a tribal family of 18, under one roof. The first time I dined with them, I was a horse back mail rider, 16 years old. I could not help from turning to my hostess and asking her if she were the mother of all. She smiled back and said "yes." It remained for Capt. Feaster to explain the wherefore.

Capt. Feaster's memory after a half century is still cherished in Fairfield. He did his part in wresting the government from the hands of Scott, Moses, Chamberlain and Cardoza and should have been given more recognition for his services than he received in his life time. He was one of the organizers of the Grange, out of which grew the reform movement of the farmers of 1888 and then merged afterwards into the Farmer's Alliance. I used to listen to him at Porters Mill, when he would converse on the subjects of free silver and green back money. His ideas expressed were about as follows: "The jugglers of high finance, try to show a distinction between the government's promise to pay in specie and a simple promise to pay. Reduce this to a final analysis and you find a distinction without a difference. A silver or gold certificate or a greenback bill promise to pay each depends upon the perpetuity of your government. If the government ceases to be a nation, it can no more pay its silver and gold certificates than it can meet its greenback promissory note. Have we not come around to his way of thinking? This was 50 years ago.

All the time, since those who prospered most have produced least, and it is this class you find who are shedding tears for Hoover's return and have an attitude toward the present administration that Alexander Pope so well described, those who:

"Damn with faint praise,  
Assent with civil leer,  
And without sneering, teach  
The rest to sneer.  
Willing to wound and yet  
Afraid to strike,  
Just hint a fault, and  
Hesitate dislike."

Mr. Hoover and his racketeers are fighting hard to preserve the poverty-breeding corpse of the old financial system and refuse to face the pressing problem of squaring production with distribution. This specially privileged crowd now, as in the past, still believe or profess to believe that all wealth should be identified with gold. With iteration and reiteration, they would have you believe that the debts of the farmers, of the merchants, of the municipality, and the state which were contracted through the operation of a wild cat inflation, of manufactured book-keeping money, and checking accounts, should be paid back to them in honest, sound currency which simply does not exist, nor has existed since 1873. They are opposed to the philosophy that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof and that he who owns property cannot use it or its increase contrary to the common good. Such thoughts and ideas were in the brain of Dr. Feaster 50 years ago and he was hooted at. Was he in advance of his age?

Sleep on brave patriarch in thy grave in far off Arkansas and to your young kindred now in South Carolina I repeat the lines that you said to me one day in riding from the mill to your home:

"Sow an idea and reap a thought;  
sow a thought and reap an act; sow  
an act and reap a habit; sow a  
habit and reap a character sow a  
character and reap destiny."