

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.