

THE FEASTERS (PFISTER) and FEASTERVILLE

by
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Some time subsequent to 1735, a certain Peter Pfister, with his son, Andrew, and others, decided to leave their native Canton of Berne, Switzerland, and seek their fortunes in one of the colonies of youthful America. It required many days and not a few hardships for them to cross the Atlantic, but they probably knew much of the hard life while living among the mountains of their native land. There may have been other sons.

On reaching America, they established themselves in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. About 1767, Andrew Feaster married in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a widow, Mrs. Margaret Fry Cooper. Her first husband's name was Peter Cooper. She had by him two or three children, Adam, Eve (or Elizabeth), and Peter. Andrew Feaster had also been married before. We do not know the name of his first wife, but by his first marriage he had a daughter, Martha, who married William Colvin.

Peter Pfister (Feaster) was now very old, and in discussing the problems of moving further South, over rough roads and through a region sparsely settled, someone asked; "But what shall we do with Uncle Peter?" He had grown old and infirm, and seemed hardly able to endure the laborious journey. But he had been listening, and promptly replied: "Take me along, and if I die, bury me by the road-side. God is just as near one place as another." On the hard journey, Uncle Peter did die, and his body was buried as he had directed. Somewhere in Virginia, in a churchyard, lies the dust of this brave old pioneer, the grave unmarked, but those in who followed after, he has continued to live as an inspiration. The family was six months on the journey South.

It appears that the Feasters had been connected with the Dunkard faith in the land of their fathers, and it is possible that they were drawn to Southern Pennsylvania in order to be associated with others of like religious convictions. After moving South, we find the next record of them in Wilkes County, Georgia, in 1774, petition "Andrew Feaster, 150 acres of land on Funderburg Branch. Wife, four sons, four daughters, aged 18 to 2 years, from Pennsylvania."

There is also in the Georgia records, petition of John Feaster, "asking 100 acres of land between Francis Pavy and Thos. Marthaison, on Great Ogeechee" (Granted conditionally), and other Georgia records.

Two or three years after the above record of Andrew Feaster, in Georgia, the British were agitating the Georgia Indians to attack the Carolinas and all the white settlers. Andrew moved back into a more thickly populated section with the large family he had to protect, and, unlike some others,

failed to move back to Georgia. This is borne out by the fact that there is no record in Georgia of Andrew selling his land. He simply walked off and left it.

Andrew Feaster and wife, with his son, John, and others, finally arrived in Fairfield County, South Carolina. Martha, daughter of Andrew Feaster by his first wife, also came with them. We are told that with Andrew there also came his nephew, John Feaster (probably the one referred to in the Georgia records) from whom there descended in Edgefield County, South Carolina, Andrew, Lawrence (Laurens), Elizabeth, and Irene Feaster, who were brought back to Fairfield County by Andrew and Mary Norris Feaster, after a visit they made with Mary Norris' family.

Andrew Feaster and family settled in Fairfield County on what was later known as the Wyatt Coleman place, later owned by the family of Hugh Stevenson. Here the family decided to cease their wanderings, establish their homes, and engage in agriculture. Among these hills, which doubtless reminded them of their beloved Switzerland, descendants of the Feasters have resided for more than 170 years.

Andrew Feaster was born in 1735, and died July 15, 1821, aged 86 years. Six children were born to him and Margaret Fry Cooper, as follows:

- (1) Martha (daughter by his first wife, name unknown), married William Colvin when she was 16 years old. On the day she married, she knew for the first time that Margaret was only her step-mother, and she wept bitterly.
- (2) Susan married Moses Cockrell.
- (3) John, born 1768, died in 1848, married Drucilla Moberly, daughter of Samuel Moberly, Private Quartermaster and Riding Express, in the Revolutionary War; and his first wife, Mary (Polly) Waggoner, daughter of Hans or Jans Waggoner, who built Fort Waggoner, in the Cherokee Indian War, 1760.
- (4) Margaret, married Ezekiel Wooley.
- (5) Alice, married Hudley McShane.
- (6) Andrew, born 1776, died January 25, 1808, unmarried.
- (7) Jacob, married Margaret Cannamore. No children.

Andrew Feaster served in assisting in the establishment of American Independence during the War of the Revolution as follows: "Furnished a mare and a field of growing grain to Colonel Henry Hampton's Dragoons." (See South Carolina Stubs to indents, Book O, page 321.)

The name Pfister is of Swiss origin, and was changed to Feaster by Andrew Feaster, Sr.

The locality in which Andrew Feaster settled took its name, FEASTERVILLE, from Andrew Feaster, and is so called today. He was a public advocate of the Dunkard faith, and preached frequently, as tradition testifies, in advocacy of that faith among his neighbors. His son, John, born 1768, also advocated the same doctrine in public, and it was he who built and gave the land and buildings for Liberty Universalist Church, at Feasterville, the Feasterville Male and Female Academy, and Feasterville Boarding House. The church was built in 1832, and organized in 1877, but the group of Universalists, as they called themselves, instead of Dunkers, was there before 1777.

Mrs. Jennie I. Coleman's record of the building of the "Boarding House," and the Feasterville Male and Female Academy just across highway 215 from Liberty Universalist Church, is as follows:

"Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Ladd came from Virginia to Winnsboro, South Carolina seeking work. He was a painter of portraits, and came to Feasterville to make a portrait of my great-grandfather, John Feaster, about 1840. The portrait is still in the family. Mrs. Ladd came with her husband, and spent the time at the Feaster home. She was pleased with the neighborhood. Especially, she noticed the number of fine, beautiful girls and remarked to Mr. Feaster that there should be a school for them. He at once said, 'If you will teach it, I will build the house.' It was finished about 1845, and always has been known as the 'Boarding House.'" His son, Andrew Feaster, supervised the building, two stories, four rooms upstairs for the young ladies, and four downstairs with a double kitchen in the back yard, and everything desirable, on a five and one half acre plot of land.

"When all was finished in 1845, the Ladd family moved from Winnsboro. Her mother, Mrs. Stratton, from Virginia, came with them, to keep house. Many ladies came to the school from Laurens county, Chester, Newberry, Blackstock, and all around the neighborhood.

"Mrs. Ladd, a fine musician, gave lessons to a number of girls, taught music, various kinds of fancywork, beautiful quilting, painting, and needlework of many kinds. There were families of Feasters, Colemans, and neighbors, to keep the surrounding alive and interesting."

Mrs. Ladd, on leaving the community, went back to Winnsboro to live, and was there when Sherman came through from Columbia. She was a very remarkable woman, and most of us have heard the story of her saving the Masonic jewels from the Northern troops.

The Reverend B. D. Clayton, in his book, "FORTY-SEVEN YEARS IN THE UNIVERSALIST MINISTRY," states that he taught in the Academy from 1864 until the end of 1865. We know Mrs. Ladd was teaching there in 1848. Mrs. Julianna Stevenson Coleman stated that she went to school there in 1848, and boarded with Mrs. Ladd in the "Boarding House." Other girls rode horseback from their homes. Miss Margaret Narcissa Feaster, daughter of Andrew Feaster and Mary Norris, was teaching in the Academy in 1860-61, according to her diary. Mr. Feaster Lyles and his sister, Isabelle, taught there after the war.

In his will, dated November 25, 1847, John Feaster states:

"My will is that the lot of land on which the Female Academy and Boarding House stands at Feasterville, containing five and one-half acres, I give and bequeath to my three sons, Jacob Feaster, Andrew Feaster, and John M. Feaster, in trust and for the benefit of the Feasterville Male and Female Academy, and I hereby appoint and constitute them trustees of the same." From that time, when a trustee died, or removed from the community, another trustee was selected by the two other trustees. The trustees control the "Boarding House" property, but may not sell it. When the building ceased to be used as a residence, it came to be used as a community building. The grounds were landscaped in 1937 by Mother Walker of Winthrop College.

Coleman Masonic Lodge No. 97, organized by the Colemans and Feasters in 1860, occupies the front upstairs rooms for their meetings.

In the Feaster Family Cemetery at Feasterville, Andrew Feaster's monument bears the following inscription:

ANDREW FEASTER, SR.
Departed this life
15th July 1821
in the 86th year of his age
a native of the
Canton Berne
Switzerland
Margaret, his wife,
departed this life
10th Octr 1823
aged 95 Years
A native of Philadelphia.

John Feaster built a two story frame building near the Cemetery, about 1806. This house had the first glass window panes north of Beaver Creek, and people came for many miles around to see them.

Also, an American eagle, in colors, was painted on the ceiling of the front porch, and when the Northern troops came through during the War Between the States, they did not burn the house for this reason.

In the time of John Feaster, indigo was the money crop. Because of competition with India, it ceased to be profitable, and many of the planters of this section thought that they were unable to change to anything else so sold their farms and went West. John Feaster said, "Don't leave your land to go where they are crowding in." He stayed in Feasterville, changed over to cotton and became very prosperous.

Some of the early pastors of Liberty Church were: Reverend Giles Chapman, Mr. McMorries, the Reverend Doctor Shinn, Doctor D. B. Clayton, Mr. Andrews, and others. The last was Doctor Thomas Chapman of Atlanta, Georgia and Saluda, South Carolina.