

## Papers of the Coleman, Feaster, and Faucette Families, 1787-1943

Members of the Coleman, Feaster, and Faucette families represented in this collection of one thousand, six hundred twenty-three manuscripts, twenty bound volumes, and two hundred nine photographs and two photographic albums lived in the Fairfield County communities of Feasterville and Shelton. The Feasters (Pfisters) originally came to this country from Switzerland and settled in Pennsylvania. About the time of the Revolutionary War, the family migrated to Georgia but later moved to South Carolina to distance themselves from the dangers of attacks by Indians on the frontier. The Feasters were members of the Dunkard or Universalist sect. John Feaster (1768-1848) donated the land and built the Liberty Universalist Church at Feasterville, the Feasterville Male and Female Academy, and the Feasterville Boarding House. [See also, description of [Photograph collection of the Coleman, Feaster, and Faucette Families.](#)]

Among the early documents in the collection is a letter, 1 February 1831, from Thomas Whittemore, Boston, appointing R.D. Coleman agent for Fairfield District and requesting him "to obtain the names of a few *responsible* persons as subscribers." Whittemore was eager for Coleman to sell Universalist books and pamphlets for, he declared, "I know of nothing better to spread Universalism." The growth of the church in South Carolina is indicated in a letter, 30 September 1857, of A.G. Teague, Edgefield, to J.C.C. Feaster. Teague approved of the appointment of "a Southern Convention of Universalists" and discussed the organization of a church in Edgefield. Teague expressed interest in having the convention meet in Edgefield although he recognized that being "25 miles from a Rail Road will be a disadvantage we will labour under." The Edgefield congregation had contacted several prospective ministers, including the Rev. Taylor of Maine who "would not take less than 800 Dollars...[and] I do not think his politicks would Suit us." A bound volume, 1896-1898, 1908-1921, contains records of the Universalist church in South Carolina.

The Feasters and Colemans planted a number of crops, including cotton, grains, and corn. In addition to planting, Andrew Feaster served as agent selling yarn and cloth manufactured by Bivingsville Manufacturing Company located in Spartanburg District. A receipt dated 18 March 1841 paid Feaster a commission of five per cent. Receipts in August 1841 and April 1842 paid Feaster commissions of ten per cent. In February 1844 Feaster was awarded a contract for a mail route from Buckhead. Feaster also was experimenting with cultivating fruits. A manuscript dated 4 April 1843 is a "Schedule of Apple grafts and trees Maid out by A. Feaster." This schedule and another document dated 1844 includes a record of the trees that Feaster purchased from Charles Mack of Davidson County, N.C., and the location of where the various varieties were planted. The 1844 item includes a register of apple grafts as well as references to pear and nectarine trees. Records of grafts and fruit trees are found in a farm journal, 1847-1857, which includes a grafting register for various varieties of apples and references to nectarines and apricots. Estate records, a list of slaves, and records of cotton picked are also included in this volume.

With all these enterprises, Andrew Feaster apparently accumulated some wealth, for over the years he acquired stock in various companies including the Charlotte & South Carolina Rail Road Company (3 shares, 4 April 1853), the Spartanburg and Union Rail Road Company (40

shares, 16 May 1853), the Charlotte & South Carolina Railroad Company (4 shares, 19 December 1862), and the Columbia & Augusta Rail Road Company (4 shares, 6 July 1869).

The farm journals provide a broad overview of crops and plantation work in the Feasterville section of Fairfield District. There are several weather journals (1834-1838, 1847-1850, 1850-1854). Other journals contain accounts of slaves and their allowances, references to hog and ham production, cotton accounts, records of purchases and sales of molasses, and "Account Book for Sails of Cloth for the Bivingsville Factory for 1841."

The journal of John Albert Feaster Coleman (1828-1898) covers the period between November 1848 and December 1851. Coleman was in Columbia for the first entry in the journal where he sold cotton at 5 1/8 cents per pound-"Sorry price that." Coleman participated in many activities of the community in addition to farming. His journal records his attendance at church, elections, political meetings, dances, family gatherings, and other social events as well as his participation in such leisure activities as hunting and fishing.

On 13 November 1848 Coleman attended a show at Monticello "where [he] was shown animals of various classes," including lions, leopards, monkeys, bears, reindeer, and an ocelot. He noted that "The Lion was drove in Harness but it was a very short *Drive*. A man and his wife entered his cage and cut some very *distressing circumlocutions*." Coleman was a regular worshiper at several churches in the area, and rarely did he fail to offer some comment on the message that was delivered. On 1 April 1849 he attended church at Red Hill where he recorded, "E. Faunt delivered a sermon that was not fit for dogs to hear-it is surprising that he is permitted to pretend to preach. I consider his preaching ridiculous." After church he returned home and went on patrol. Attending Red Hill again on 17 June 1849, he noted the Rev. Nicholson's reference to an infant being "as great a sinner in its youth as in the years of discretion...no matter if it should die when only a month old-hell would be its portion." Coleman reacted that "No man should preach such doctrine if he was posse[sse]d of a good heart." The Rev. Buchanan preached at Red Hill on 5 August 1849 "but to no purpose."

Coleman's journal documents many of the events in the community. Most were pleasant social occasions; a few were tragic. He attended a frolic on the evening of 10 February 1849 and danced until 11:00 p.m. A "Cotillon party" on 21 February 1850 began at 7:00 p.m. and continued into the morning until 2:00 a.m. The following day Coleman posed for a daguerreotype by the photographer John Schorb. Another activity was partridge hunting which required several individuals to net the birds. His entry on 23 May 1849 records the death of overseer Daniel Kitchens, who, along with his brother, "ate a weed they thought to be jelico, but turned out to be hemlock." Kitchens died that night and the prospects for his brother's recovery were not encouraging. On 5 August 1849 Coleman related a "horrible deed" on the first of August by George L. Dye "who shot his wife...with a double barrel shot gun.... She was a mother of four or five children....after killing his wife [he] shot himself with another gun by putting the muzzle...under his chin and pulling the trigger with his toe....It need not be said that drunkenness was the cause. He had shot at her several times before this."

On several occasions Coleman recorded accounts of disciplining his slaves and witnessing or participating in the disciplining of others. On 10 August 1850 he simply notes, "I gave Dave a

thrashing." On 1 November Coleman joined others on patrol at night and recorded that he "lashed several." On 2 November he whipped Ike in the morning and reported that he was missing after breakfast. He attended a "negro trial" on 9 August 1850-"The Court after much and long deliberations decided that three should have one hundred lashes-one seventy five and another ten." Later that year, 20 November 1850, Coleman instructed the postmaster to stop his subscription to the *Yankee Blade* because of its position on abolitionism and fugitive slaves.

Coleman seldom ventured far away from Feasterville except for occasional trips to Columbia to sell cotton or attend to other business. On at least one trip, however, in company with Dr. John P. Feaster, he "visited all the principal places of importance-such as the tressel work on the railroads-some of which are magnificent-being nearly fifty or sixty feet high." He also visited the asylum "where I saw a large number of unfortunate lunatics" and the South Carolina College "precincts where I saw some beautiful buildings including the Episcopal Church." His visit took him to the Crawford house built by former governor Hammond and other houses and gardens around the town.

Andrew Feaster and other members of the Feaster family were among the most prominent members of the Feasterville community. Several of Feaster's children attended the Feasterville Female Academy presided over by Mrs. Catharine Ladd. In addition to receipts for tuition, the collection contains financial records of the school and information on construction of buildings.

Also included is family correspondence from the Norris family of Leesville. A letter, 8 May 1842, of E.H. Norris, Piney Woods, Leesville, reports that his family's health was good with the exception of Nathan who had been suffering with a headache for two days-"last night I bled him and gave him some pills he says he feels better this morning." Members of the Norris family were involved in searching for gold. Nathan apparently was experiencing some success in locating gold with a "Rod [which] works admirably...they have three more attractions from hear which they expect to run out as soon as our crop will admit."

Some discord in the Feaster family is implied in a memorandum of 5 July 1850 of "A. Feaster's Expences building Brick hous for son John CC Feaster & intended to be a hous Jointly for him JCC Feaster & his brother EH Feaster but they not agreeing I feel it my duty to make this statement to show that I have paid for said building...which JCCF must pay with Interest if he holds the house & one hundred acres of land..." A letter, 27 May 1855, from Andrew Feaster's son Jacob indicates that he was establishing himself in Greenville where he was working in a store with "the Messrs Williams [who] seem much pleased with me as a partner." He reported that the price for provisions was high and that his vegetable garden was prospering-"I do not think I ever saw a more promising garden for the season."

The collection contains little Civil War material, but correspondence resumes in the years after 1865. Members of the Coleman and Feaster families and friends from Feasterville emigrated to other states after the war, and there are letters from Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Texas. Farming remained the principal concern of those who remained in Fairfield County. There are a number of crop lien agreements as well as other agricultural documents, including an agreement, 12 February 1874, between Black's Improved Fertilizer Company and J.A.F. Coleman, H.J. Coleman, D.R. Feaster, G.W. Coleman, and J. Feaster Lyles for the exclusive right to sell the

product. Minutes of the Little Saluda Grange are found in a volume, 1874-1878, which also contains minutes, 1894-1895, of the trustees of Emery High School.

Crop conditions and prospects apparently were never far from anyone's mind. Writing on 29 July 1887, Lizzie Busby informed her husband D.A. Busby in Saratoga, N.Y., that "farmers say they have never seen a fuller crop this month" although there was concern that heavy rainfall might injure the cotton. In addition to heavy rains, cotton farmers faced the threat of the boll worm. The farm labor situation was a topic that was discussed more frequently in letters during the 1890s.

Correspondence during the period from 1880 to 1920 portrays life in rural South Carolina and in other areas of the South. Farming, social activities, education, marriages, births, and deaths are topics that are discussed in general. The migration to towns and changes brought by industrialization also can be found in the correspondence. A letter, 8 February 1898, from "Stella," Chester, informs Jennie Coleman that she and her husband were fixing up their "nice home" which included a lawn in front with "ornamental trees" and terraced flower beds. Stella was treasurer of her literary club which met once a month. Her husband was chief bookkeeper "at Wylies"-"They have a real nice office now & quite citified." Azalee Lumpkin, who lived in Stover, was pleased to have boarders who were working on the dam and the railroad. According to her letter of 31 August 1905, one of the boarders was installing electric lights in the hotel which also had a telephone.

The principal correspondents after 1910 were Jennie Coleman who returned to South Carolina from Alabama and young Andrew McConnell Faucette ("Andy") whose various girl friends provided a regular stream of correspondence in the 1920s. A veteran of World War I, Faucette was elected to the Seventy-fifth General Assembly (1923-1924) while attending law school at the University of South Carolina. After graduation Faucette entered into a legal practice in Spartanburg with another young attorney, Olin D. Johnston. He later was employed by the Veterans Administration in Columbia; but even as he practiced law and worked in Columbia, Faucette found it difficult to divorce himself from the family land in Fairfield County. In a letter of 11 July 1924 to Grace Dodican, he acknowledged-"Not knowing anything about the farm it is hard for you to realize the worry and anxiety connected with it. I love it though, even with all its faults." A severe storm in September 1928 reminded Faucette of the perils of farming-"I am very blue over the cotton situation. I hardly know what to expect. I am sure now that I will stop farming after this year. I am sure now that the crop this year will be a total failure in the end."

The collection contains two volumes seemingly unrelated to the Feaster, Coleman, and Faucette families. The first, a plantation book, 1825-1829, 1841-1869, of the Samuel T. Guild family of Williamsburg District, records corn and cotton production and also cattle. Birth records and ages of slaves are listed as well as information on the estates of D. Michau and Samuel Guild. Another volume, kept by the Rogers family of Marion, includes store accounts, 1817-1818, with a record of charges for stamps and mailing letters and genealogical records, 1835-1880. The collection also includes genealogical information on the Coleman and Feaster families. One volume, 1824-1828, is a record kept by D.R. Coleman "of Property Given by me to My Children as they Married and Left me." In addition, the Civil War career of Andrew J. McConnell, Co. B, 17th South Carolina Volunteers, is documented in typescript volumes, 1862-1865.