

Fairfield Uniquely Religious In S. C.

From its beginning, no part of the state is said to have had more religious communicants than Fairfield; and as soon as the settlers had constructed their own living quarters, they congregated for worship.

In 1762 Jacob Gibson, a Baptist minister, moved from North Carolina to Fairfield where he lived for about 40 years.

Another distinguished theologian, John Nicholas Martin, a Lutheran from Germany, built Bethesda Auf der Moven in southwestern Fairfield. The church was eventually located at the site of the present Crooked Run, a Baptist church, near the Richland County line.

OLD BRICK CHURCH

One of the more historic churches in Fairfield County is Ebenezer Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, better known as the Old Brick Church.

It was here, on May 9, 1803 that the southern branch of this denomination organized its synod, separating it from the northern branch, which became the United Presbyterian denomination.

The original Ebenezer church, which had served for many years, was replaced by the present brick one in 1788. It stands today just as it was built, four unadorned walls of handmade brick, with simple windows.

It took a long time to build the church. After the crops were laid by, the workmen would go to the brick yard.

They would tramp mud into mortar, put it into moulds

with their hands, carry it out in the sun to dry, then bake it in kilns which were operated day and night.

DESTROY BRIDGE

Confederate soldiers, when returning before Sherman in his march through this part of the state, destroyed the bridge near the church. Sherman's men tore up the flooring and sleepers of the church for material to rebuild the bridge.

One of the Federal soldiers, seeing the desecration of the Lord's House, wrote these words in pencil on the wall: "Citizens of the Community: Please excuse us for defacing your house of worship so much. It was absolutely necessary to effect a crossing over the creek, as the Rebs destroyed the bridge. A Yankee."

METHODISTS

The Methodist Church movement in Fairfield County began about 1808. The Rev. James Jenkins was urged by Captain Buchanan's wife to send an appointment to Winnsboro. The Reverend Mr. Jenkins preached first at the Courthouse. In 1810 a church was dedicated and the congregation was visited many times by Bishop Francis Asbury from 1809 to 1814.

St. John's Episcopal Church has continued to grow in strength and number, with its congregation assuming leadership positions throughout the community in Winnsboro.

Since the church and parish house will be included on the Historic Tour during Fairfield County's Tricentennial Week, the vestry has included redecorating in the parish house in its budget for this year; the young people planted a border garden last year, and recently Dr. and Mrs. John C. Buchanan Jr. donated a holly hedge to complete a semi-cloister garden.