

## CLOWNEY HOUSE

ASHFORD – CLOWNEY – METTS – BROWN

his old house sits high on a hill overlooking the broad Broad River and on across many miles of Newberry County. The early history of the place is somewhat cloudy. It is situated on lands that belonged to one time to the Strothers and later to the Ashfords.

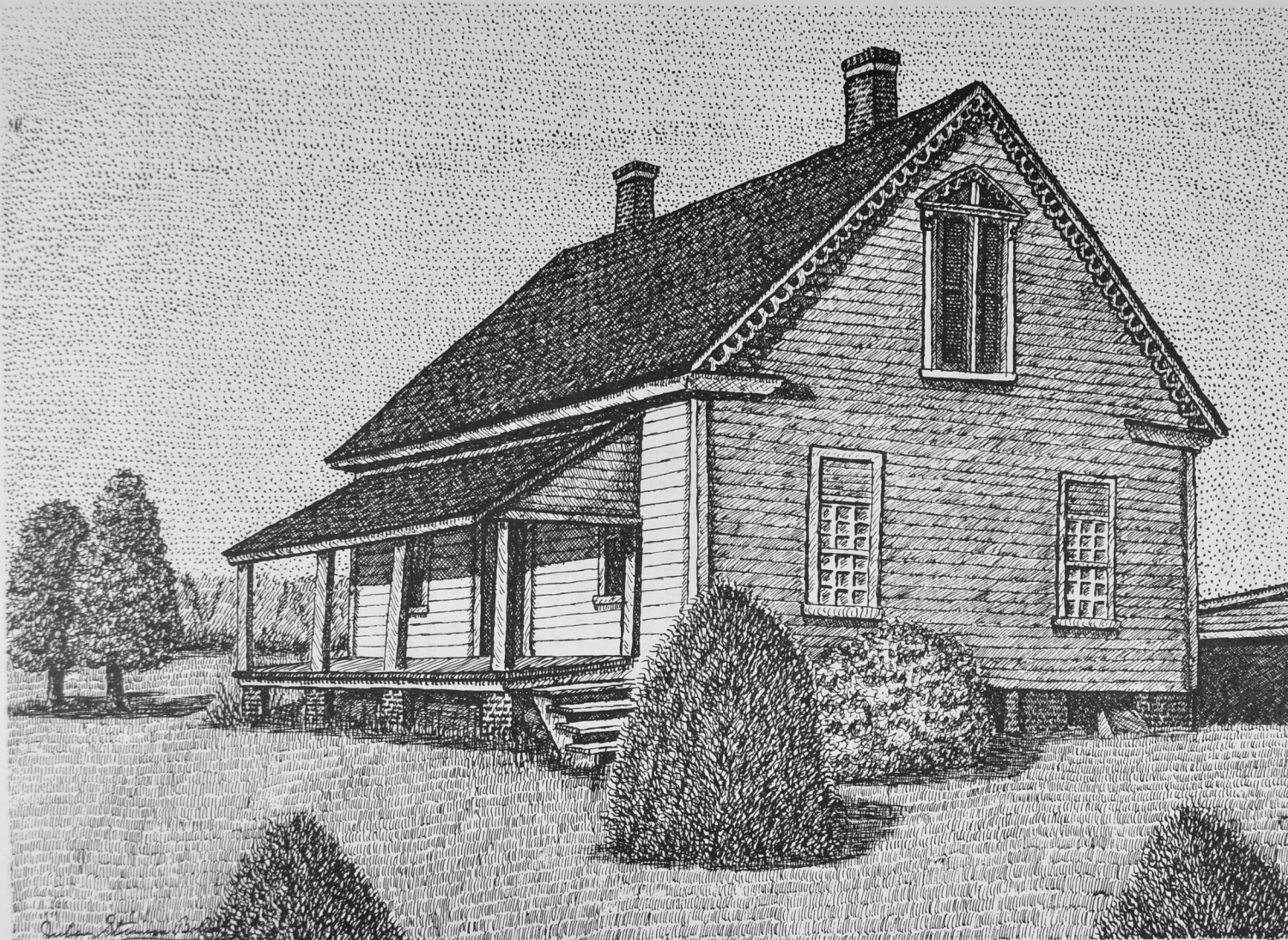
To the rear of the building and quite near the highway from Newberry to Winnsboro is an intriguing old cemetery enclosed with a heavy granite wall. The ancient graves that are marked tell of the people who lived here before 1800. Some of those interred in the plot are Ashfords. The map of Fairfield County in Mills Atlas was made in about 1820 and shows this as Ashford property with the ferry below called Ashford's Ferry and the road to Winnsboro called the Ashford's Ferry Road. Through Colonial, Revolutionary, and Confederate eras on up until the present, this has been one of the most travelled and historic arteries of traffic to and from the county.

The old house on the hill, though now neglected and over-grown with brush and grasses, still stands. Upon close observation it is a quaint building and the Victorian "gingerbread" woodwork in the gables is deceiving as to its age. Upon closer inspection the bricks and fundamental construction shows that it is of a much earlier period. Inside chimneys allow each of the rooms a fireplace. It is a simple rectangle of one and one-half stories covered with a gabled roof. On one side is a very plain shed porch covering the main entrance. An oversized, elongated window capped with a gabled cornice, lights and ventilates the second floor. Another interesting feature is the design of the first floor windows. They, too, are elongated, nine panes over nine, with frames including louvred openings above the windows proper.

Tradition says that this building was constructed to serve as a ferry house, a place in which the ferryman lived and with accommodations for guests in case of bad weather or hindered crossings of the river. It is said to have been built by the Ashfords whose home was nearby.

About the time of the War Between the States, and for many years afterward, this old house was occupied by William Clowney and his family. Since that time various tenants have lived here. It is now the property of Mrs. Hunter Brown of Newberry who has extensive tree farms in the area.

One interesting and rather romantic story is told about the place. A beautiful daughter of the house was in love with a young man but her father discouraged their marriage. The young man left Fairfield and went to Texas, where he made a fortune, and returned years later to claim her for his bride. Again he was discouraged but before returning to his adopted state he persuaded his sweetheart to elope with him. The attempt was unsuccessful for the father discovered the ladder at one of the gable windows and knew what was about to take place. He went to his daughter's room, found her bags, and hid them, forbidding her to carry out the proposed elopement. The lover returned at the appointed time, waited for several hours and when she did not make an appearance he returned to the west. Many years later, when they



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were both well along in middle-age he heard of her father's death and came home again for his love. This time they were married and returned to Texas and their descendants are now counted among the well-to-do first families of that state.

## ROCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

The ROCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH appears to be a new building but such is not the case. It has merely been repaired and brick veneered in recent years which gives it this "new look." The congregation dates back to the very early 1800's and the little building probably to the 1830's. No history of this church has been made available but it is known that at one time a school was also located on the site and was sponsored by this congregation.

## FAIR VIEW

MEANS – BLAIR – FRAZIER

FAIR VIEW is situated on one of the highest hills along the Broad River in the Blair section of Fairfield County. For many miles from the Newberry County side of the river it can be seen boldly looking down from the pinnacle that it has crowned since its erection a few years after the Revolutionary War. This house was built to stand; it still does, and proudly, too, in spite of having been neglected and deserted for about a quarter of a century. To reach the site one has to walk over rough, rocky terrain through a fast growing forest that is veritably making its way to the front door of the old mansion. This place is so remote and overgrown that it reminds one of the castle of the "Sleeping Beauty" in the fairy tale by that name.

The builder of the house was General Thomas Means of Colonial and Revolutionary fame who died in 1807 and is buried in the yard. His grave and the weathered old tombstone may still be found hidden among the vines, overgrown shrubs, and briar roses that cover the place. General Means also represented Fairfield County in the Legislature in 1798 and 1799. His son, John H. Means, was Governor of South Carolina.

The house is built of hand-made bricks that were made on the plantation by the slaves. The main body of the structure is a rectangular two story building covered with a hipped roof. From the rear extends a two story ell with a gabled roof. This ell has long porches or galleries extending the full length of both stories on one side. The solid brick walls are twenty inches thick and are plastered on the interior. This plaster is still in remarkably good condition considering that the house has been open to the elements. The drawing-room ceiling has a handsome molded chandelier ring in the center of a beautifully molded circular floral design. The bricks on the outer walls are plastered with cement. In a semi-circle over the front door and molded into the cement