

BLAIRSVILLE ACADEMY

Bullocks Creek's sister community of Blairsville had an influential school that began about 1830. It is believed a man by the name of Aaron Williams was its teacher, instructing young men who sought a higher education.

Rev. R. Y. Russell (1800-1866) was in charge of the academy from 1849 to 1858. Mr. J. L. Strain described Headmaster Russell as "*strict but not tyrannical*". For a number of years Rev. Russell's brother, E. Giles Russell, assisted him and in 1857, his son, W. B. Russell (1825-1860) was listed as his assistant. (W. B. Russell was a recent graduate of the College of South Carolina and was probably helping his father until he was admitted to the bar. In November 1859, W. B. was admitted and practiced one year to the day he died in 1860.)

The first building has been described as a frame building about forty feet long with a chimney at both ends and having two doors and four windows. The site is located on Highway 49 and is marked by a granite marker erected by a local women's club.

An announcement in the *Yorkville Enquirer*, dated January 8, 1857, gave the rates of tuition for a five month session:

Primary English branches	5.00
Elementary branches	6.00
Higher branches	8.00
English, Grammar, Geography & History	9.00
Moral & Natural Philosophy & Rhetoric	12.00
Latin & Greek Classes	15.00
Classics & Mathematics	17.50

The next year the following advertisement ran in the January 7, 1858 issue of the *Yorkville Enquirer*:

"The exercises of this institution will be resumed on the First Monday in January, under the superintendence of Rev. R. Y. Russell. The Primary English branches will be taught at five dollars per Session; the Higher Branches at Eight; and the Latin and Greek Classes at fifteen. Good board can be procured in the Neighborhood at Seven and Eight Dollars per month.

Rev. R. A. Ross)
 Dennis Crosby) Trustees
 Samuel Blair)

Palmer Grier Sherer, in his *A Partial History of the Early Schools & Educational Movements of York County*, tells us that the Blairsville Academy was closed from 1859-1860 because a building could not be secured. We are left to wonder at to what had happened to the original building. Mr. Sherer also informs us that there was a number of years when the teachers were changing, beginning with it re-opening in 1861 with Rev. R. A. Ross as the instructor. In 1862, Lizzie Russell, daughter of Rev. Russell, was the teacher, followed by Mattie Crosby from 1863 to 1864. Then Mary Wallace was the instructor from 1865-1866.

An announcement in the January 1, 1866 issue of the *Yorkville Enquirer* reported that Rev. Russell was planning to open the school the 1st Monday of that month. Mr. Sherer said that Carrie Russell, daughter of Rev. Russell, told him the school failed to open because a building could not be found again. This does not seem consistent with Rev. Russell's life and organizing abilities that he demonstrated throughout his life. It seems unlikely that he would make the announcement one week before it was to open and did not have a building ready. Rev. Russell died the following November.

Like so many of the local academies, Blairsville Academy faded into the public school system of the twentieth century. The Blairsville School for whites was last located a mile north of the original site on the J. L. Rainey place.