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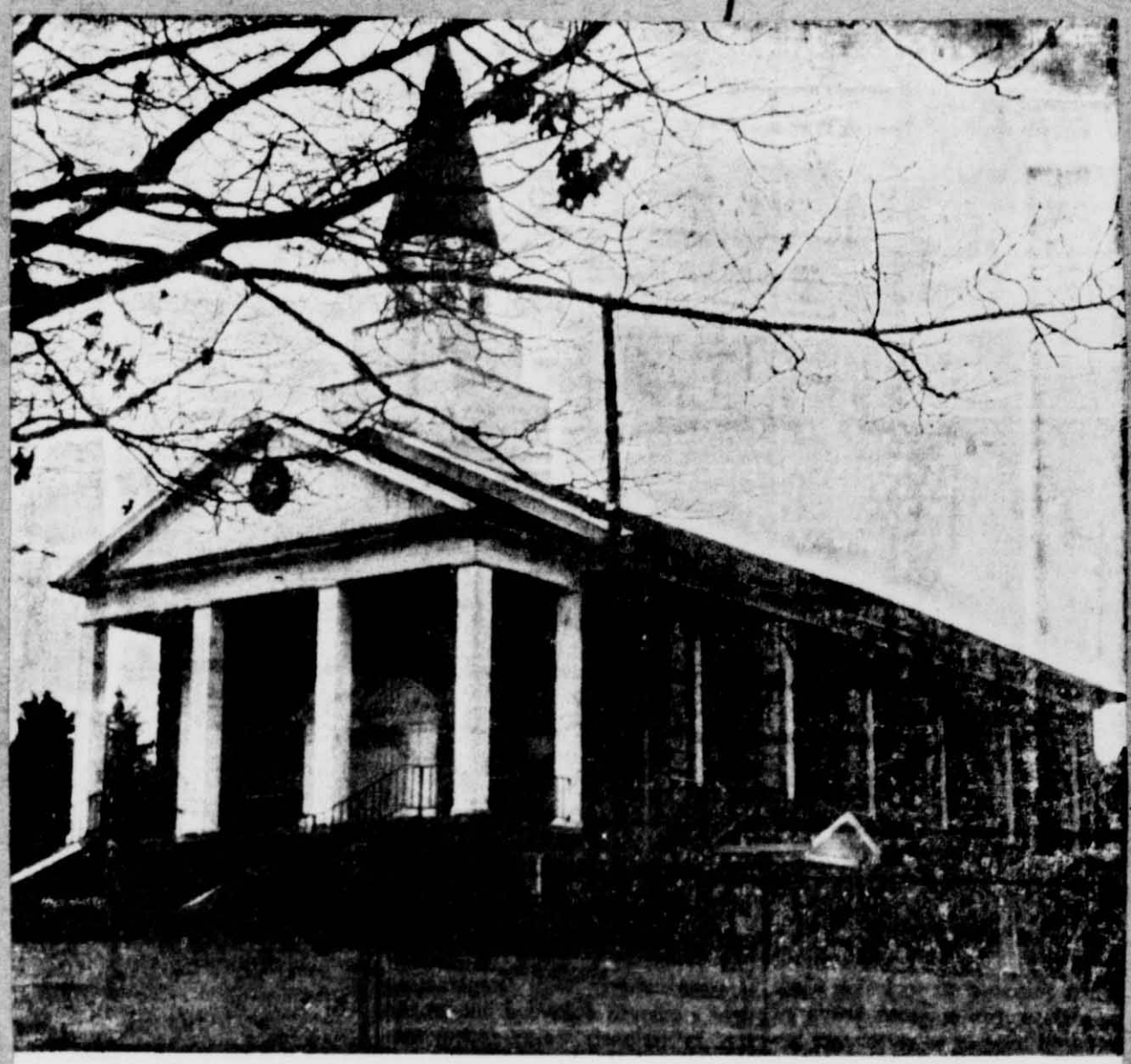
S.C. - Counties - York - Churches, Presbyterian

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2 York Churches Mark 190th 190th



Bullock Creek — Sam L. Feemster Sr. and his son, Sam Jr., stand before historic Bullock Creek Presbyterian Church. They're descendants of Mary Feemster, who occupies the first marked grave in the church cemetery. She was buried in 1776.



Presbyterian Church Is Center Of Bullock Creek Community

Early Bullock Creek Pastor Brought Bible, Gun To Pulpit

By JOHN SMITH

There is no doubt that the church is the center of the Bullock Creek community in York County. The building, sitting on the crest of a hill, is surrounded by a scattering of homes. The farm land stretches away in all directions from the little settlement.

Although the church building is comparatively new, Bullock Creek Presbyterian Church is nearly 200 years old. Settlers came into the area in the 1750's. There are land grants for acreage in the section as early as 1763. These people were some of the county's early Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who formed the first settlements in York County.

By 1766 these people had issued a call for a ministerial supply.

The previous year a protracted meeting had been held in the community. There is a claim that the church was organized in that year, 1765. Howe's History of the Presbyterian Church says that the church was formally organized in 1769. Regardless of the actual date the area was settled by these Pres-

byterians and undoubtedly they gathered into some organization from the very early days.

The most famous minister of Bullock Creek and a man historically significant was Dr. Joseph Alexander, a leader during the Revolutionary struggles. Dr. Alexander was a Princeton graduate and into the wilderness that was York County in those days, he brought his Bible, his diploma, his books, his beliefs and his gun. He evidently knew the value of each one.

Wearing a skull cap that many moderns might consider popeish, he often entered the pulpit armed with both his Bible and his gun. He was outspoken in his ideas and especially about the British troops who occupied most of South Carolina, except for York County. Because of Alexander, and other ministers, Presbyterian churches were known as "sedition shops" to the British.

Dr. Alexander called together the Patriot leaders of this area at his church and appealed to them to continue the war for freedom. They were apparently stirred by his sermon and agreed to con-

tinue. Shortly afterward the first armed resistance in the State, after the fall of the capital city of Charleston, took place in York County. It was followed by a series of battles and skirmishes in this area.

Realizing the importance of education to a people who planned to govern themselves and the requirement of an educated clergy in the Presbyterian church, Dr. Alexander opened a school at Bullock Creek just after the end of the Revolution. It was the first classical school in this section of the State and one of the two oldest in upper South Carolina.

A number of men who were later prominent in political life as well as the ministry attended his school. These included William H. Crawford, who later ran against Andrew Jackson for the presidency and Governor Johnson of South Carolina.

The State Legislature chartered Alexandria College in honor of Dr. Alexander. The school was to be located not far from Alexander's home in the Pinckneyville section. However, the school never became

a reality. A volume of Dr. Alexander's sermons was published in the early 1800's.

The entire Bullock Creek section was a Whig stronghold during the Revolution. An historical marker on the grounds of the church commemorates these facts.

The first marked grave in the Bullock Creek cemetery is that of Mary Feemster who died in 1776. Her son, Capt. Joseph Feemster, and his son, Lt. John Feemster, were both officers in the Revolution and elders of the church.

In 1910, the Rev. William Cummings Davis became the second minister of the church. He fell into doctrinal error with the church and withdrew to organize the Independent Presbyterian Church. From this date until 1864 there were two Presbyterian churches in the little community. There were a number of other Independent churches organized in the county. In 1864 they united with the regular body.

It was under the pastorate of Dr. Tilden Scherer that the present large brick building was erected. It stands on the site of the earlier building, which was dedicated in 1860 and which it replaced. The congregation met the challenge of the effort needed to erect the new building.

Today the Rev. John Vernon, a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, is minister at Bullock Creek. He and his family live near

the church in the attractive brick manse that is new and also a sign of continuing vigor in this 200-year-old congregation.

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