

JAMES BRADLEY

His parents left Glasgow, Scotland, in 1695 for near County Down, Ireland. I am not sure where I got the birth year of 1705 (if correct, then he was born in Northern Ireland). His wife is thought to have been Margaret or Mary Witherspoon. James brought family to USA in 1734 on the ship Snow Eagle. He petitioned the S. C. Council & was given a 400 acre tract in Williamsburg Township (an anti-Indian stockade was built where Williamsburg cemetery is today).

In 1749-50, a dreaded epidemic (flu?) killed at least 80; and he and brother Samuel founded Salem Black River Presbyterian Church, east of present-day Mayesville, S. C. Early on during the 1700s, herdsman traveled throughout the Salem area. Prior to the turn of the century, the first permanent settlers arrived. They included John Anderson, Samuel Bradley, and James Bradley.

A school was established in the Salem community on land donated by James Bradley in 1778. In 1782, he was elected to the Fourth [evidently for only one term] S. C. General Assembly. The Rev. Thomas Reese taught there until the Revolution touched the area, when he escaped to North Carolina (after the war he returned and reopened the school). Three of Salems's citizens were killed in their homes by a band of Tories who were from an area east of present day Bishopville, S. C. Later, the British commander, Lt. Colonel Tarleton, arrived with his troops in Salem, disguised as Colonial soldiers. Tarleton introduced himself to James Bradley as Colonel Washington of the Colonial Army. Bradley was fooled and led Tarleton and his troops over Bradley's Crossing, after which he was arrested by Tarleton and jailed in Camden, S. C.

In 1792, Salem was formed from the eastern part of Claremont and Clarendon Counties. A six acre tract of land was given by David Reese and later deeded to Gershon Benbow. This tract is believed to have been the court house town of Salem. Tradition holds that the town was located just southeast of the Brick Church. A library was built at Salem Church at an unknown date. James McBride left money to the Salem Library in his will.