



The Godfrey Dreher Chronicles

While our chapter was named for **Godfrey Dreher, Sr.** (1720-1798), his son **Godfrey Dreher, Jr.** (1760-1815) could certainly have qualified as our namesake. Indeed, both Patriots made contributions to the founding of our country.

After the American Revolution, the grandson of Godfrey Dreher, Sr, **Godfrey Dreher III** (1789-1875) made notable contributions to the life of the Lexington area through his Lutheran ministry that introduced services in English.

Below is information we have discovered that discusses each and their contributions. This information will be under perpetual maintenance and updated as more information is discovered.

Nelson McLeod, our chapter president, has been a great resource in discovering much of this information.

Edited by Jim Herritage, Technical Vice President, Godfrey Dreher Chapter, SCSSAR
August 2025

Godfrey Dreher, Sr. and Jr.



In 1744, German wheelwright, Gottfried "Godfrey" Dreher immigrated to South Carolina and was granted land along Twelve Mile Creek in what was then known as Saxe Gotha and would later become Lexington County. On this property, he established a grist mill. Cherokee Warriors raided farms and attacked settlers as far south as Orangeburg during what was called the Cherokee War (1759-1760). To protect his family and fellow settlers, Dreher erected fortifications around his house. In May 1760, 120 refugees were temporarily living in the fort.

During the American Revolution, Godfrey Dreher supplied the Patriots with food while his son, Godfrey Dreher, Jr. fought for the Patriots along with his brother-in-law Johannes Kinsler. While on furlough in late 1780, Kinsler was allegedly ambushed and murdered by a Loyalist neighbor. The neighbor was soon hanged from a nearby tree, possibly by Godfrey Dreher Jr. In July 1781, British Lt. Col. Francis Lord Rawdon sent a detachment of soldiers to attack Dreher's Fort and capture Godfrey Dreher, Jr. According to family legend, when the Drehers realized the soldiers were coming, Dreher Jr. had the other family members go upstairs and make as much noise as possible so that the approaching soldiers would be under the impression that many armed men were in the building. As the soldiers came inside the house, Dreher Jr. shot the first man. Upon hearing the commotion upstairs and being fired upon, the soldiers fled, saving the fort and the people within. After the war, Dreher Jr. moved to Georgia then Louisiana in the early 19th century.

Credit given to: J.R. Fennell; Director of the Lexington County Museum

<https://lex-co.sc.gov/lexington-county-museum>

Godfrey Dreher Chapter chartered

By Redding I. "Rick" Corbett III, PhD
Vice President for New Chapter Formation
and Development

COLUMBIA — At the Oct. 10 Board of Governors meeting, a charter was granted to the South Carolina Society's newest chapter — the Godfrey Dreher Chapter.

Previously, the petition filed by 11 founding members had been approved by the executive committee of the South Carolina Society. President General Edward F. Butler Sr. presented the charter. This is the first time that a charter has been presented by the president general to a new South Carolina Society chapter.

The Godfrey Dreher Chapter was formed after it was determined that there was sufficient interest in Lexington County and that the formation of a new chapter would not injure nearby chapters, especially the Col. Thomas Taylor Chapter in Columbia. The Col. Thomas Taylor Chapter was the

sponsoring chapter for the petition.

Several members of the Godfrey Dreher Chapter will maintain dual membership with the Col. Thomas Taylor Chapter, and the presidents of each of these chapters have promised to work together for mutual benefit. It is hoped that this pledge of cooperation and its ultimate results will be a model for other chapters. Ten additional applications are in process, and a number of possible applicants have been identified.

Godfrey Dreher was one of South Carolina's many little known patriots. He was a member of the first Provincial Congress Committee, when the Battle of Lexington was fought. He was a grand juror, and also when the Revolution reached the Back Country, he built a fort on his property. The fort site is below the current Lake Murray Dam beside Zion Lutheran Church.

This chapter has a special interest in and duty to promote the Revolutionary War history of Godfrey Dreher and Lexington County.

Article from 2009 appeared in the Palmetto Patriot

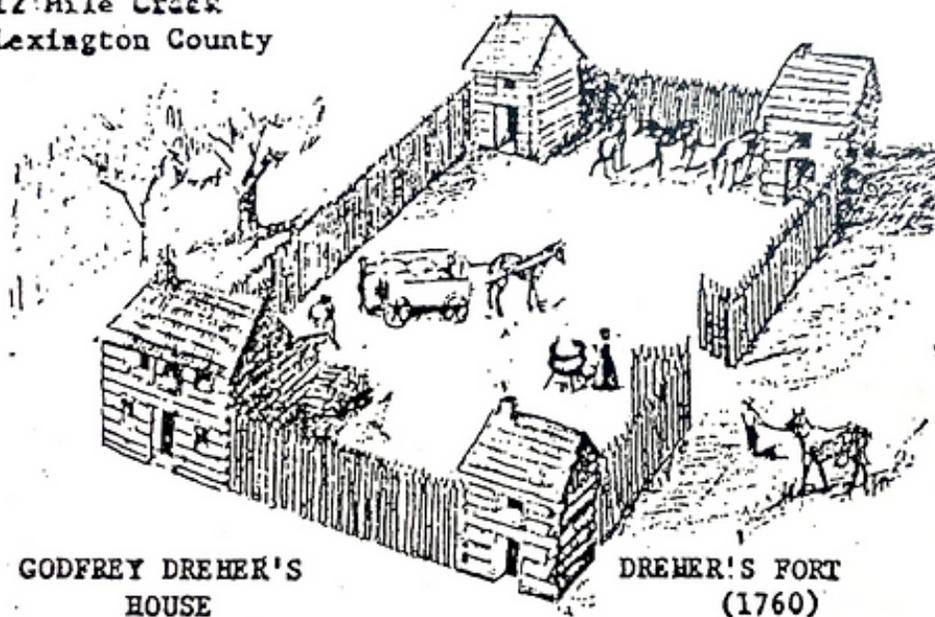
Godfrey Dreher, Sr. - Our chapter's namesake

- Godfrey Dreher, Sr. (often "Gottfried" Dreher)
 - Birth: May 6, 1720 (Erpfinden, Württemberg, Germany). [FamilySearch](#)
 - Death: November 5, 1798 (Lexington District, South Carolina). [FamilySearch](#)

(Note: some local and lineage sites list only "1798" or even "1790," but FamilySearch's compiled profile—based on multiple sources—gives Nov 5, 1798.)

GODFREY DREHER

12 Mile Crack
Lexington County



IN PERSPECTIVE FROM INFORMATION AND DATA OBTAINED
BY
CLAYTON B. KLECKLEY

Dreher's Fort — Lexington County, SC (Cherokee War Context)

Historical Background

- **Location & Builder:** Dreher's Fort was not a government military outpost but a fortified homestead built by *Godfrey Dreher* on land he acquired in the 1740s, near what is today Zion Lutheran Church along Twelve Mile Creek. [zion +4](#)
- **The Cherokee War (1759–1760):** This period of frontier conflict in the backcountry of South Carolina led settlers to construct defensive structures like Dreher's Fort for communal protection. [Lexington County +3](#)
- **Refuge for Settlers:** In 1760, during heightened hostilities, Dreher's fortified home sheltered approximately 121 men, women, and children seeking safety from raids. [zion +5](#)

Broader Significance

- **Colonial Settlement Strategy:** Dreher, among many German and other European settlers, participated in the Saxe Gotha Township initiative—an effort begun in the 1730s to establish buffer settlements along the frontier. [zion +1](#)
- **Survival Amid Conflict:** The Cherokee War stalled growth in the region but also resulted in community resilience. Townships like Saxe Gotha (later Lexington County) continued to flourish, even after the conflict and the subsequent Regulator unrest. [lexsc.gov +6](#)

Above rendering courtesy of the Lexington County Museum

**A BIOGRAPHY OF
GOTTFRIED DREHER, SR., OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

by John T. Nichols

Gottfried Dreher, Sr., a Wheelwright by Trade, born 6 May 1720, Erpfingen (now Sonnenbuehl), Baden Wuerttemberg, Germany, died unknown in South Carolina. Gottfried was the son of Andreas Dreher, born 21 Dec 1683, died 1727 in Meidelstetten, and wife Anna Maria Siger, born unknown, died 1723. Gottfried was the paternal grandson of Johannes Dreher, born 1626, died 28 Aug 1699, and wife Agatha Munz born, 1642, in Meidelstetten, died in Erpfingen on 1 Nov 1685. Agatha Munz was the daughter of Jacob Munz and wife Barbara _____, of Meidelstetten. Gottfried arrived in South Carolina in 1744 (believed to have arrived on the ship St Andrew 1743/4) with wife Maria Barbara _____, and one child.

He was granted 150 acres 13 March 1745, plat in name of Trayer, grant 6 June 1747, in name of Trayer. His grant was in the Saxe-Gotha Township area of present day Lexington County, South Carolina. Name of wife and child not revealed in the historical records at time of arrival.

Gottfried Dreher, Sr., erected and operated a grist mill on Twelve Mile Creek (Lexington Co, SC), a short distance from the Saluda River. Later on, he erected and operated a grist mill on the Saluda River (Lexington Co, SC) a few miles upstream from the confluence of Twelve Mile Creek with the Saluda River. The Saluda River Mill was at Dreher Shoals which is now mostly covered by the Lake Murray Dam.

Central South Carolina was experiencing the Ravages of the Cherokee War of 1757 - 1761. During the years 1759 and 1760, the people in Saxe Gotha suffered the ravages of the Cherokee War. About 1759, Gottfried Dreher, Sr., erected a fort near Twelve Mile Creek to provide refuge for local citizenry during the Cherokee Indian hostilities.

Gottfried Dreher, Sr., a miller, gave patriotic service during the American Revolution. Although not a member of the American Militia, he gave patriotic service by providing provisions (flour, corn, beef, pork and other items) to the Patriot Forces per Audited Accounts for Revolutionary War Service, No. 348.

From: <https://www.dutchforkchapter.org/families/dreher.html>

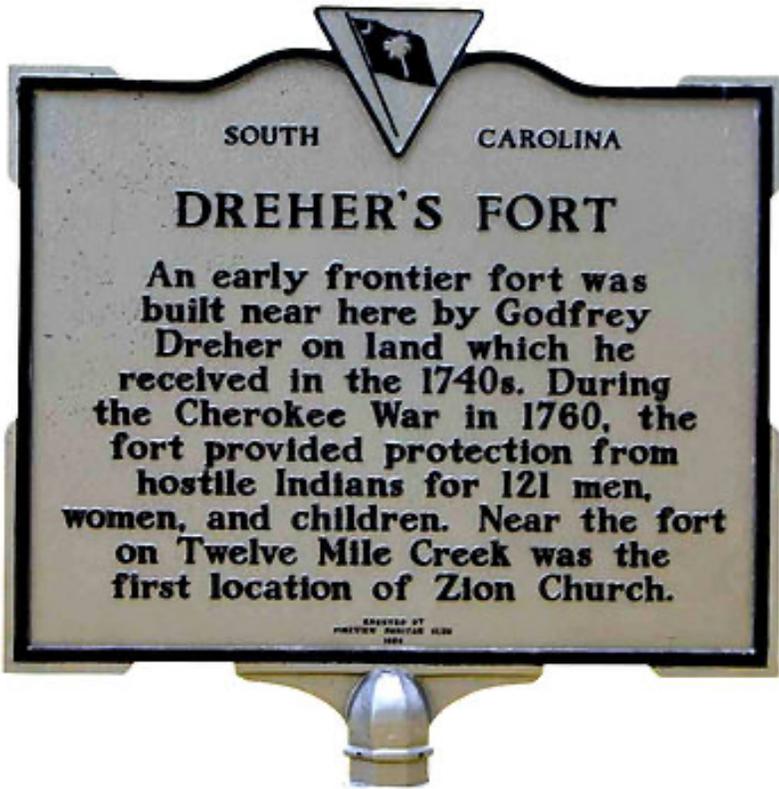
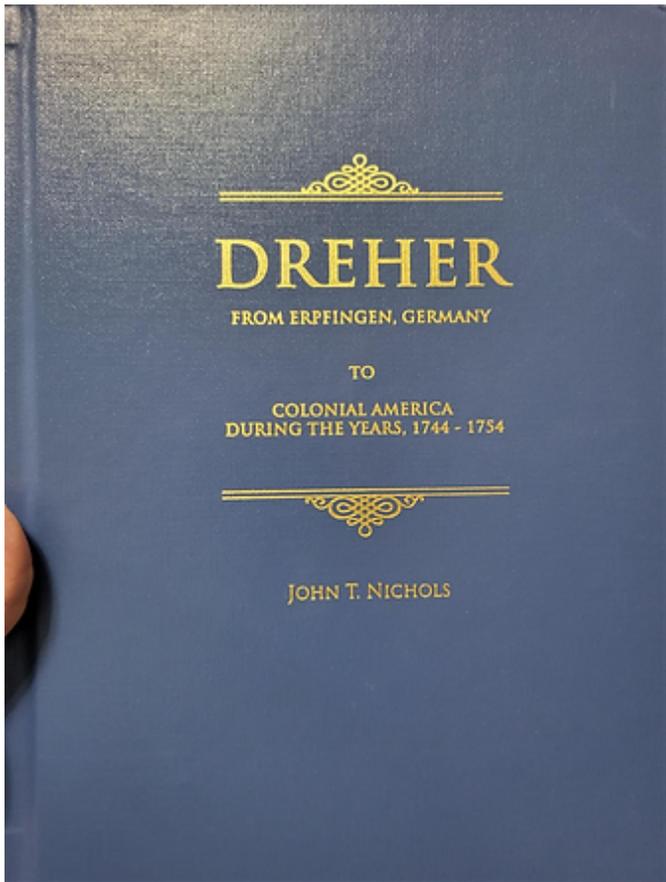


Here on the Saluda River frontier, Zion Lutheran Church traces its roots to the 1740s, when German-speaking settlers were drawn to the Saxe Gotha Township laid out by royal authorities as a defensive buffer around the Lowcountry. Though surviving papers are sparse, Zion's own history and local markers agree that a first meetinghouse stood near the river—by Twelve Mile Creek—serving a scattered farm community worshiping in the Lutheran tradition as early as 1745.

Life on the edge of the colony demanded both faith and fortitude. Near Zion's first site stood Dreher's Fort, erected on land held by **Godfrey (Gottfried) Dreher**. During the Cherokee War of 1760, the

little stockade sheltered 121 men, women, and children from raids that rippled across the backcountry. The fort and the nearby meetinghouse anchored a settlement that blended worship, mutual defense, and the rhythms of frontier agriculture.

By the 1780s, as the Revolution's upheavals subsided, Zion emerged as a regional center of Lutheran life. In 1787, pastors and lay leaders gathered "at Zion" to organize the Corpus Evangelicum, a cooperative body linking fifteen congregations to supervise German churches in South Carolina's interior—a landmark in building church order after years of frontier improvisation. This early synodical impulse helped stabilize preaching, catechesis, and record-keeping across the district. (from ChatGPT 5.0)



Godfrey Dreher, Jr.

- Godfrey Dreher, Jr. ("Captain" Godfrey Dreher)
 - Birth: 1760 (then Orangeburgh/Lexington District, South Carolina). [Geni](#) [FamilySearch](#)
 - Death: May 5, 1815 (Algiers, Orleans Parish, Louisiana). *(Some discussion threads and family notes say May 15, 1815; the most commonly cited date in compiled trees is May 5.)* [Geni](#) [History Hub](#)



Image created by ChatGPT 5.0, Prompt by Jim Herritage, 08/28/2025

ANECDOTES

OF THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE TALENTS AND VIRTUES

OF THE

HEROES AND PATRIOTS,

WHO ACTED

THE MOST CONSPICUOUS PARTS THEREIN.

BY **ALEXANDER GARDEN,**
Of Lee's Legion.

SECOND SERIES.

In their commendation I am fed,
It is a banquet to me.—*Shakspere.*

CHARLESTON:
PRINTED BY A. E. MILLER,
No. 4, Broad-Street.

1828.

910
348

Library of Congress
1867
City of Washington

1

The Author

Digitized by
INTERNET ARCHIVE

Original from
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

REVOLUTIONARY ANECDOTES. 217

GODFREY.

Captain Godfrey, and his brother John Dreher, were assailed by a party of tories, about thirty in number, headed by a British officer. Leaving their horses under a guard, these unwelcomed intruders quickly surrounded the house, when the officer entering with a few of his men, demanded of the terrified

218 REVOLUTIONARY ANECDOTES.

mother where her sons were. Aware that their object was to destroy them, she raised her voice, that they who were at the time in an upper room might hear and be apprized of their danger, demanding by what authority they sought them, and what they wished to say. The Captain perceiving a staircase leading to an upper story immediately advanced towards it. Her sons, who from the perilous position of their habitation, were ever in expectation of attack, and prepared for hostility, flew to their arms, and met their adversary at the head of the stairs, each presenting a cocked pistol. Lieut. Dreher, immediately fired, and mortally wounded his enemy, who, falling back on his comrades, so completely intimidated them, that they fled with precipitation towards their horses, and communicating their panic, the whole ran off, leaving their entire spoils and property to the victors. The brothers, as they quitted the house, opened the upper windows, and firing several shots, gave alarm to the neighbouring whigs, who quickly collecting, secured the prize they had gained. Returning to the house, every attention was given to the wounded officer, but in vain; he speedily expired, owning that his object was to destroy both the house and its inhabitants.

The Lexington Dispatch

G. M. HARMAN, Editor and Publisher.

LEXINGTON, S. C.,
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 1901.

"Scraps of History."

GODFREY DREHER.

There have lived in the past many specimens of a splendid manhood who have by their lives and deeds reflected credit on the county of which we are now justly proud, but the names of none of them stand out more prominently on the pages of Lexington's history than that of the fearless soldier whose name graces the page on which we now write.

The date of his birth and parentage, so far as is now known, is lost to history. That his ancestry was among that peerless band of German immigrants who peopled the fertile banks of the Saluda river about the middle of the eighteenth century is quite certain.

Godfrey Dreher was doubtless in the prime of young manhood during the Revolutionary War. He was contemporary with Johannes Kinsler and Gabriel Friday and "Gig" Clark and James Calk and others whose names are now cherished as a proud heritage, and with some of them he was so closely connected that his life story cannot be written properly if entirely separated from theirs.

His home was on the west side of the Saluda not far from what is now known as Loxick's Ferry.

His sister Mary had married John Kinsler before the war began, and their happy home was on the Saluda above, opposite the locality now known as Counsville. The property was owned subsequently by a Mr. Dreher, and in recent years passed into the possession of the Seay family. Mr. Kinsler was a brave officer in the Colonial army, and was seriously wounded at the engagement at Fish Dam Ford. While at home on furlough soon after, he was walking in his yard one bright Sabbath morning, caressing an infant he held in his arms when he was shot from ambush by a vindictive Tory neighbor and instantly killed. It is pleasing to write that the murderous scoundrel was soon dangling from a limb near the scene of his bloody crime.

In July, 1781, when Rawdon, retreating from Ninety-six, passed down west of the Saluda and took possession of the Fort at Granby, Mr. Dreher was at his home on furlough, after an arduous campaign. He was well supplied with arms as was the custom. A detachment of cavalry from the British army was sent to capture him. In his home at the time was his young brother John, a mere lad; his widowed sister, Mrs. Mary Kinsler, and some other ladies, and among them the maternal grandmother of the venerable M. J. Henry A. Meese Catherine Drafe. Mrs. Kinsler first observed the approaching troops, and called out excitedly: "Herr Jesus! The Red-coats! The Red-coats!" The cool and thoughtful young officer sent his brother and the ladies to an upper chamber and placing himself, well armed, at the head of the stairs shot the leader of the band dead as he began to ascend. The ladies and the brave boy, under instructions from their brother, made all the noise possible with tables and chairs, and produced the impression that there were armed men in the building, while Mr. Dreher called out "Come on boys we'll kill the last man," as he continued to fire. Another man was shot down and others were wounded as they quickly fled from the premises, leaving dead their comrades in the hands of the victorious young "rebel". The servant, Toney, raised a rebel yell and said he believed young "master" could win the devil himself." When Charles Sumner intimated in the United States Senate that the South did little in the War of the Revolution, Senator Butler, in reply, related this incident and declared it the bravest and most successful struggle of the entire war, in which one man by his boldness and courage defeated and put to flight a whole company, after killing two and wounding others. Mr. Dreher came safely through the war and wore his honors as modestly as he had borne his wounds and his labors bravely. Some years subsequent to the close of hostilities he moved West and died there after a long and useful life.

Mr. Dreher's brothers remained in Lexington. John was prominent and influential, and was one of the Commissioners appointed to locate the county seat when Lex. District was formed from a portion of Saxe-Gotha. His home was near Loxick's Ferry and Zion church. He had a piano in his home as early as 1810 or 1812—and probably earlier. This was doubtless the first instrument of its class ever brought to Lexington.

There now lives in the county, in an honored old age, a venerable lady of ninety-two years who is a daughter of John Dreher and a niece of Godfrey; who talks intelligently and pleasingly of these scenes of the long ago, as she heard them from the lips of the living actors.

She tells the story of a venerable German musician (Mr. Krantenfinkel)

who was chorister or organist at Zion church (the oldest church in the county), for many years, and who lived in the home of her father. There were those who told and believed that the old minister after his death returned at periods to the church, and brought sweet strains of music from the old pipe organ then in use.

Who will say after this that we are not rich in legendary lore!

Among the descendants of the Dreher brothers are some of the best people who have lived in the county, and under a forest family name are still reflecting on an honorable ancestry. While the sister, Mrs. Kinsler, who acted herself with conspicuous bravery in the sortie of her courageous brother, and who afterwards married the gallant Major Gabriel Friday, was the grandmother of the Kinsler brothers of Congaree township, who were strong and influential and two of whom served the county efficiently in the House of Representatives. The venerable Mrs. George Kaigler of Sandy Run township is of the same honored lineage. A nephew of Godfrey Dreher, who went by the name of a certain honored uncle, became a soldier of the Cross, and for many years was earnest, useful and efficient in the Gospel ministry. The writer hopes at some future quiet period to be so placed as to be able to say much more of this excellent man.

It is well known that there were many Tories in the State during the Revolution, and while they were naturally regarded with ill favor, truth compels the statement that there were among them some of the more intelligent and wealthy men of that day.

Doubt as to the chances of success, and the fear of the confiscation of property and of the possible danger to their persons in the event of failure caused many to refuse their aid to the struggling colonists. Some, too, were pets and favorites under the King, and it is told also that the British government was partial and indulgent to the Carolinians. It is also true that affluence, real or imaginary, estranged those who otherwise would have joined the patriots. "Bloody Bill Cunningham" was among the last named class. It is told that he volunteered in the American army. He was young, handsome, intelligent and popular. He was first disappointed in the promise, or at least, the confident expectation of preferment. He became irritated, then reckless, desperate and at last insubordinate. Punished, it is said, under the lash for his offenses, his proud spirit revolted and he became the bitterest and bloodiest of the Tory leaders. It is easy to see that it required nerve and courage and disinterested patriotism to impel the brave men of whom we write to devote their earnest and self-sacrificing efforts in defense of their liberties. Godfrey Dreher and Johannes Kinsler! Hail! and farewell!

The writer hesitates to indite the closing sentence of this paper without paying some small tribute to the memory of his friend and co-laborer, Major Edward Kinsler, grandson of the Revolutionary hero. His contemporaries are still here and we all know that the simple, unadorned story of his spotless life is all the panegyric needed. He served his country faithfully and with unquestioned purity of purpose. He was a cultured gentleman of the old school, having graduated from the South Carolina College in his young manhood.

Always quiet, unassuming, gentle, modest as a woman, his sense of honor extremely acute, he was entirely incapable of any act which savored of dishonor. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1832 and performed his official duties with earnestness of purpose, with entire disregard of self interest and with the sole object of advancing the interest of the people and the State. It was his rule which was never broken, to support any measure which he believed to be wise and right whether to do so would render him popular or otherwise.

Duty was his watchword and he performed what he believed to be his duty "uncaring consequences."

He has passed to his reward and left us the example of a guiltless life.

"Green be the tree above thee,
Friend of my earlier days,
None k or thee but to love thee,
None named thee but to praise."

W. T. B.
Swasee, S. C., March 13, 1901.

A Good Cough Medicine for Children.

"I have no hesitancy in recommending Chamberlain's Cough Remedy," says F. P. Moran, a well known and popular baker, of Petersburg, Va. "We have given it to our children when troubled with bad coughs, also whooping cough, and it has always given perfect satisfaction. It was recommended to me by a druggist as the best cough medicine for children as it contained no opium or other harmful drug." Said by J. E. Kuyfman.

It is generally a race between the honey-moon and the lace night-gown to see which will disappear first.

This article reports that South Carolina Senator Butler praised the heroic actions referenced above before the U.S. Congress, presumably back in 1856. That statement has not yet been documented. Jim Herriage

The American Revolution in South Carolina

Drehr's Plantation*			
July 1781			
Patriot Cdr:	Capt. Godfrey Drehr, Jr.	British Cdr:	Unknown
Killed:	0	Killed:	Unknown
Wounded:	0	Wounded:	Unknown
Captured:	0	Captured:	Unknown
Old District:	Orangeburgh District	Present County:	Lexington County

The US Revolution in Present-Day Lexington County

*aka Dreher's Plantation

Skirmish, Capt. Godfrey Drehr, Jr. (Orangeburgh District Regiment of Militia) vs. British Regulars (?).

Capt. Godfrey Drehr, Jr., and his family (?) drove off a detachment of "Regulars" that had been sent from Fort Granby (?) to arrest him. Problem is - Fort Granby had been taken by Lt. Col. Henry Lee on May 15th. So, perhaps Capt. Drehr's opponents were local Loyalists?

Lake Murray Dam becomes Dreher Shoals Dam

February 11, 2005

Contributed by Cathy Dreher



Ernest Dreher for whom
Dreher High School is
named

A bit of Midlands history will be corrected February 20, 2005, at 3 pm. On Thursday, February 10, 1928, the SC General Assembly passed a Concurrent Resolution naming the dam across Lake Murray Dreher Shoals Dam.

It read,

“Whereas, it has come to the General Assembly of the State of SC now in Session that the dam now being erected across the Saluda River is being erected at point thereon which has been known for more than 150 years as Dreher Shoals, and

Whereas, the name Dreher is one of the oldest in Lexington County and is intimately associated with the history and progress of that county and section of the state; and

Whereas, according to the present plans this is to be one of the largest earth dams in the world and will impound waters from a large area, thereby forming a large clearwater lake covering probably 80 square miles of land, which body of water this General Assembly, by a former resolution, designated as Lake Murray in honor of the foresightedness and untiring efforts of a renowned engineer, William Spencer Murray of New York City.

Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, by the House of Representatives concurring;

That in honor and appreciation of the part that the people of this section who have borne the name of Dreher have played in the history of Lexington County and of the State of South Carolina and to perpetuate the name which has heretofore attached to the Shoals at this point on said River the Dam across the Saluda River now being constructed, be and the same is hereby designated and named Dreher Shoals Dam.”



Now covered by Lake Murray, the Rock House was in the vicinity of the dam site. It is believed to have been home for the canal locks' keeper and built in the early 1800s.

Through efforts spearheaded by Senator Jake Knotts, this Concurrent Resolution will become reality at a ceremony at St. Michaels Lutheran Church to unveil signs reading Dreher Shoals Dam to be erected at each entrance of the dam during the month of February.

As work began on the dam site, workers unearthed remnants of John Dreher's grist mill. Note the array of equipment, from mule-powered drag pans to steam-powered trains and packers.

"I'm pleased to finally have the opportunity to accomplish something that should have been done 77 years ago," Senator Knotts said. "Lake Murray has always had a tremendous impact on the tourism industry of our area through its recreational assets. So many people know the physical features of the lake, but little is known about the



As work began on the dam site, workers unearthed remnants of John Dreher's grist mill. Note the array of equipment, from mule-powered drag pans to steam-powered trains and packers.

rich, interesting history of the Dutch Fork area that dates back before the Revolutionary War. I believe this action highlights that rich heritage especially when the majority of residents in Lexington County have moved here within the last 25–50 years. People should know that that lake has only existed for 77 years. Many Dutch Fork families had farmed that area since the 1740s when they gave up their land to be flooded in the late 20s. Indians, Tories, and Redcoats used to roam this area. Sherman's troops burned many homes where the lake is now."

Martha Counts Dreher surrounded by her eight surviving sons in 1908. Out of 11 children born to Martha and John Jacob Dreher, there were 10 boys and one girl. Front row: Thaddeus Whitfield Dreher, Julius Daniel Dreher, William Counts Dreher, and Bachman Luther Dreher. Second row: Charles Baxter Dreher, Edward Lawrence Dreher, Ernest Shuler Dreher, and Heber Ruff Dreher.



Martha Counts Dreher surrounded by her eight surviving sons in 1908. Out of 11 children born to Martha and John Jacob Dreher, there were 10 boys and one girl. Front row: Thaddeus Whitfield Dreher, Julius Daniel Dreher, William Counts Dreher, and Bachman Luther Dreher. Second row: Charles Baxter Dreher, Edward Lawrence Dreher, Ernest Shuler Dreher, and Heber Ruff Dreher.

Dreher Shoals got its name from the owners of the land where the dam now exists and surrounding property. The first known Dreher was Gottfried Dreher (1731–Revolutionary War) whose home was in the vicinity of Zion Lutheran Church on Corley Mill Road and is buried there. During the Cherokee War, he built the stockade known as Dreher’s Fort near his home to protect the citizens in the area. During the Revolutionary War, he contributed to the American cause through generous supplies to its troops.

Gottfried Dreher had two sons, Godfrey II and John. Godfrey II was a teenager and fought during the Revolutionary War. On a visit home, he learned Tories were coming and ordered his younger brother

of 11 or 12, John, and other members of the household upstairs with pans and chains. He stationed himself at the front door. When the Tories came, he had a gun waiting for them while family members proceeded with a loud commotion with the pans and chains upstairs. The Tories turned and fled. Godfrey II later moved to Louisiana.



St. Michaels Lutheran Church (off Highway 6 above Yacht Cove.)

John Dreher, who died in 1847, is the forefather of many of the Dreher descendants today. His home still stands off of River Road close to St. Michael’s Lutheran Church and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was bought by Dr. Austin Moore and is privately owned by his son. Sherman’s troops visited the home, but it was saved.

John Dreher was a prosperous businessman and farmer in the area. At the particular Dreher Shoals site, there was his grist mill, Dreher’s Canal and locks, and Dreher’s ferry. The canal was built in the early 1800s to facilitate smoother passage around the rapids while moving cotton from

the Upstate down the river. Dreher was a religious, responsible citizen. He donated the land for St. Michael's Lutheran Church where he is buried.

John Dreher had three wives: Ann Hollinshed Dreher, Elizabeth Parler (Holman) Dreher, and Catherine Lever Dreher. Ann had two children, Godfrey III and Polly. Godfrey III, John's first-borne, was born in 1790. He is also known as the Rev. Godfrey Dreher, a very well known Lutheran minister of Dutch Fork, and the first president of the Lutheran Synod of SC, which was formed at St. Michael's Lutheran Church.

Elizabeth had one daughter, Nancy. Catherine had five children: Rev. Daniel Dreher, who died early in life; Jesse; John; Barbara; and Katie. Daniel Dreher is the direct ancestor of Ernest Dreher, for whom Dreher High School is named.

"The Dreher family is so appreciative of this gesture," said Cathy Dreher and Jane Dreher Emerson, descendents of Gottfried and John Dreher. "It's been a topic of discussion for our family for a long time. We're also very humbled. We know this could just as easily be named for the Kleckleys, Meetzes, Corleys, Shealys, Wessingers, Caughmans, Eptings, Wises...any of the good German-Swiss names that characterize the rich history of this area. It was simply a Dreher that owned the land where the dam now exists."

The public is invited to attend this special occasion February 20, 2005, especially those related in any way to the Drehers. For further information about the event, contact Cathy Dreher at cdreher@scpress.org. SC ETV will be filming the event.

Godfrey Dreher, III

Birth: December 4, 1789 — Lexington County, SC

Death: July 28, 1875 — Lexington County, SC

Godfrey Dreher III (December 4, 1789 – July 28, 1875) was a formative Lutheran minister in what is now Lexington County, South Carolina. Born at the close of the eighteenth century to the prominent Dreher family of the Dutch Fork, he matured into a bridge between the region's German-speaking colonial church and a rapidly Anglicizing South Carolina in the new republic. His lifespan—spanning from the first generation after the Revolution into Reconstruction—made him a steady pastoral presence in a community undergoing profound linguistic, cultural, and political change.

By local recollection and later church histories, Dreher helped organize and then led St. Michael's Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1814, a congregation founded explicitly to offer worship in English. The initiative drew members from German-heritage congregations—Zion, Bethel, High Hill, and Twelve-Mile Creek—who had been meeting in a schoolhouse since 1812. Land for the new church

was provided by the minister's father, John Dreher. This "Old Blue Church," as tradition calls it, became a focal point for English-language Lutheranism west of the Congaree.

Dreher's ministry, however, radiated well beyond a single pulpit. He supplied and assisted neighboring congregations across the Dutch Fork, part of an era when a handful of pastors rode circuits to knit scattered settlements into a functioning ecclesial network. Bethel Lutheran records remember him arriving as an assistant pastor by 1817, while other congregational histories note his steady service to churches that had not yet bound themselves to a synod. An 1827 notice places him preaching at Bethlehem (Bookman's) on the Broad River, baptizing and catechizing in the midst of seasonal itineration. Together these snapshots convey a portrait of an energetic churchman whose influence was pastoral, practical, and quietly institutional. dutchforkchapter.orgst-jacobs.orggenealogytrails.com

Dreher's roots tied him to one of the county's oldest Lutheran communities. Zion Lutheran Church—whose earliest site stood near Dreher's Fort on Twelve-Mile Creek—traced its origins to the 1740s, when German settlers fortified homesteads against the dangers of the backcountry. In the nineteenth century, ministers like Dreher inherited Zion's legacy while adapting worship and governance to American patterns and English speech. The result was a Lutheranism both recognizably confessional and regionally distinctive, shaped by migration, frontier realities, and the religious democratization of the early republic.

Late in life, Dreher remained active in the orbit of family and parish. Contemporary memorials and compiled genealogies agree that he died on July 28, 1875, aged eighty-five, and was buried at St. Michael's Lutheran Church Cemetery. An obituary summarized by later compilers situates his death at Pine Ridge, after which clergy and laity gathered for services reflecting the affection he had earned over decades. Though many of his sermons and letters have not survived, the congregations he stabilized—and the transition he shepherded from German to English Lutheranism—are enduring monuments to his vocation.

(The article was created by ChatGPT 5.0, prompted by Jim Herritage.)

"The Old Blue Church" Since 1814

At a school house in the Pleasant Spring Community of the Dutch Fork in South Carolina, members from Bethel, High Hill and Zion, Twelve Mile Creek gathered to worship starting in 1812. By 1813 they understood their need for an English-speaking congregation and founded Saint Michael's Lutheran Congregation. Within a year, a Church was constructed and they affiliated with the North Carolina Synod, on October 18, 1814.



German settlers arrived in South Carolina, bringing with them their evangelical Lutheran faith from the Palatine area of the Prussian Empire (now Switzerland) in the 1740's, settling in the Orangeburg District and the Saxe Gotha Community near the fork of the Broad and Saluda Rivers. This area became known as the "Dutch Fork" because of its deep attachment to its German roots. The first building on the site, now occupied by the Church, Parsonage and Cemetery, was a one-room schoolhouse which served a short time as the place of worship for the group of young people seeking services, education, and devotional life in the English language. The first Holy Communion recorded by the English-speaking group of Lutherans was celebrated on the fifth Sunday in June, 1814. St. Michael's was received into membership in the North Carolina Synod at Organ Church in Rowan County, North Carolina on October 18, 1814. As was common during that time in the Up-Country of South Carolina, adherents to the polity of Lutheran and Evangelical Reformed Churches founded congregations that met both communities' needs for faith and life. St. Michael's first Elders reflect that tradition with four Lutheran Elders—John Dreher, Thomas Shuler, Samuel Wingard and John Wyse, and in addition to these Lutherans, a "Presbyterian" Jacob Hemiter served until his death in 1816. John Dreher also gave six acres of land for the use of the Church and for a Cemetery.

The first Church was built in 1814 and was 24x32 feet, with a gallery for the use of the enslaved people in the community. The Church was painted blue on the exterior and was called "The Blue Church". In 1880 the Church was

expanded to 32x50 feet, painted white on the exterior, and the ceiling of the Sanctuary was painted blue, preserving the name into the twentieth century. In 1921 the present Church was built in the Carpenter-Gothic style at a cost of \$8,000, much of that offset by member donations of material and labor.

For much of its history St. Michael's has been yoked to other congregations in a parish—Pastorate #9, most notably with St. Andrew's. In 1950 the last parish arrangement ended and a new parsonage was built across River Road (on the site of the schoolhouse). The former parsonage, still located near Highway 6, had been sold in 1923. In 1954 a Christian Education Building was added next to the Church, and a Fellowship Hall was built in 1988. An accessible ramp to the Church was added in 2007, and a Memorial Garden for cremated remains was created in 2010.

The South Carolina Synod was founded at St. Michael's in 1824 and meetings of that organization were held here in 1826, 1857, and 1924. A special Conference of the Synod of North Carolina was held at St. Michael's on April 30, 1816, which was the first Lutheran ecclesiastical meeting in the State.

Pastors who have served the Congregation are:

Godfrey Dreher 1812-34

Preached in English beginning 1812 at the Pleasant Springs Schoolhouse.

John Yost Meetze 1814-22 - Licensed (1812) Ordained (1822)

John Christian Hope 1834

John G. Schwartz 1835

George Haltiwanger, Sr. 1836-40

George Haltiwanger, Jr. 1840-50

James D. Stingley 1850

Jesse B. Lowman 1853

James H. Bailey 1854

Daniel M. Blackwelder 1861-65

J N. Derrick 1866-70

William Alexander Houck 1871-73

John Eusebius. Berly 1877

Levi Bedenbaugh, Supply 1874-75

Jacob H. Hawkins 1876-78
Peter Miller 1880-83
Willis Alexander Deaton 1891
Henry Julian Mathias 1898
Shadrack Laban Nease 1902
Victor Clarence Ridenhour 1905
William Pinckney Cline 1907
Henry Maxwell Brown 1913
M. D. Huddle 1914
R R. Sowers 1919
John Wesley Magnum 1923-25; 1946-49
David Bittle Groseclose 1925-28
Fred Louis Lineberger 1929-32
John Carnahan Peery Sr. 1932-39
James David Kinard 1939-42
George Frederick Schott 1942-44
James Kivett Cobb 1945-46
Stafford LeRoy Swing 1950-53
David Frederick Castor 1955-59
Robert Martin Weeks 1960-64
Henry Newton Brandt 1965-1977
Dwight C. Wessinger 1978– 2016
Frank W. Anderson 2016-present