

Making Of A Map

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Professor Spearheaded 1815 Project In Upstate Counties

The first county maps of Lancaster, York and Chester districts came into existence after George Blackburn, a professor of mathematics and astronomy at South Carolina College, in 1815 persuaded the S.C. General Assembly to initiate a state-supported survey.

Blackburn pointed out that South Carolina was the only state in the nation that had no large-scale map. The War of 1812 had just ended, and the legislators were aware that accurate maps are essential to warfare. Blackburn extended his argument to say that such maps were needed by the historian, the geographer, the legislator and the statesman.

The project took 10 years. In the first phase, Prof. Blackburn made the astronomical observations necessary to establish latitude and longitude. The second phase required surveying each of the 16 districts.

Charles Boyd surveyed the Clover District. Boyd completed his task in 1818 and claimed that Gov. Andrew Pickens had commissioned him to survey York District also, but York was given to Gordon Moore. Stephen Boykin surveyed his native Sumter District and then surveyed the Lancaster District. Moore and

Boyd completed their maps in 1820.

In 1820, Joel Poinsett, head of public works, requested that engraved maps be made available for use in laying out a public road from Charleston to the Saluda Mountains. His request coincided with the return of Robert Mills, America's first native-born architect, to South Carolina. Mills took over the district map project and spent two years copying and arranging the surveyor's work. The district maps were reconstructed on the scale of 2 miles to the inch.

Chester's original map as drawn by Charles Boyd survives, but there is not a manuscript map of Lancaster or York.

The Chester map shows the courthouse town of Chesterville as the hub with seven roads entering it like the spokes of a wheel. Yorkville had four roads entering — the most prominent was the famed Camden to Salisbury "Great Road," a link of the main road from Philadelphia to Charleston.

The Lancaster District map showed Andrew Jackson's birthplace and incorrectly spelled Buford by referring to the battle site as "General Beauforts Battle Ground." The Lancaster map shows the names of many more private dwellings than the maps of Chester and York Districts. All three district maps, however, show villages, name roads, identify ferries and bridges, and locate a number of churches and businesses.

Chester County historians can locate Major Hill's Distillery, Terry's Tan Yard, Pinchback's Mill and Lackey's Fishery. Along the Catawba River one can find the toll house at Land's Ford, Westbrook's Blacksmith shop, Patton's Island, Mountain Island and the Great Falls of Catawba with the notation that the river falls 178 feet in 8 miles. On the Broad River, three mills are identified: McCaw's, Lockhart's and Hughes. An Indian mound at the mouth of the Turkey Creek and the Broad River is marked.

Notable places in York District are Hills Old Iron Works, Henry Knob, Kings Mountain Battleground, Long Island (a large island in the Catawba River now covered by Lake Wylie), Thorn's Ferry, Old Nations Ford, Ebenezer Church, Rookers M.H. (meeting house) and Bethesda M.H., among others. The York map shows the Catawba Indian boundary with dotted lines. To designate the Catawba villages, there are nine triangles in a cluster.

Mills hoped to sell 500 copies of his atlas at \$15 each. The State of South Carolina bought 80 copies, but few individuals were interested. Mills lost money. Today, the original copies are so highly prized that they are often sold as works of art.



Nearby
History

Louise
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