

ROCKS AND MORE ROCKS

In this area there are rocks that are natural wonders; they are among "nature's curiosities." There are rocks that are known because of their association with important people and events. In a few cases, the rocks are all of the above.

Three great curiosities are in Lancaster County.

Forty Acre Rock is a National Natural landmark and held by the Heritage Trust Program. Its unusual status is partly the size of the mammoth outcropping but chiefly because it furnishes a natural environment for several rare species of plant life.

Lancaster County's Flat Rock, around 500 yards in diameter, is a great mass of granite pock-marked with numerous pits or cisterns. It is supposed that these cavities were dug out by long-forgotten Indians as areas for storing water.

Anvil Rock in Lancaster county is shaped, as its name implies, like a blacksmith's anvil, the rock forming its own narrow base. The over-10-ft-tall rock in the Beaver Creek area has been sought out by curiosity-seekers for more than two centuries.

Another curiosity is "Sachem's Pipe," a large three-tiered rock in the Osceola community of Indian Land in Lancaster County.

In the heart of uptown Chester is a rough-hewn rock on which in March 1807 Aaron Burr, vice-president of the United States and a prisoner of the United Army charged with high treason, stood and appealed to Chester citizens to help him. Chester folks didn't help Burr, but in 1938 the Mary Adair Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution did place a plaque on the rock to mark the historic incident.

And there is the famous Hanging Rock which gave its name to a nearby creek and was the site of two battles. On August 1, 1780, Maj. William Richardson Davie surprised a British force and, although greatly outnumbered, killed or wounded most of them while losing few of his own men. Gen. Thomas Sumter's most famous victory of the Revolutionary War occurred at Hanging Rock on August 6, 1780. (Hanging Rock is located 3 miles south of Heath Springs off Hwy 58.)

There is another Lancaster County rock that is not unusual within itself but has served as a 3-foot-tall marker for the right-angled juncture of the states of North and South Carolina since 1813. The

spot is known as Old North Corner and is located on an unpaved road that makes a loop off the east side of Hwy 521 about a mile south of Andrew Jackson State Park.

Much of the river bed of the Catawba River is composed of rock. Before the river was dammed the most notable example was plainly visible at the Great Falls where great boulders forced the stream to narrow and churned the waters into a remarkable display of nature's power. In 1904 the Mountain Island Dam tamed the falls and greatly added to the electric power generated in the area.

At Landsford, the Catawba was spanned by another great outcropping of rocks that allowed travelers to ford the river. In 1823 Robert Leckie was employed by the state of South Carolina to build a canal Landsford which is located between Chester and Lancaster counties. His stonework is still visible. Also, some of the same stone was employed by Leckie to build the unusual "Leckie Enclosure" at Old Waxhaw Presbyterian Church around the graves of Leckie family members who died while he worked on the canal.

There are other examples of the use of stone in the area. There are the quarries at Stoneboro in lower Lancaster County with its fine granite where stone was quarried at the turn of the century for use in buildings, tombstones, the pedestals of monuments, markers, etc.

The Indians had quarries where they mined quartz and other stone for their arrowheads. Evidence of the Indians' handiwork is scattered over the three counties.

If this area had been sandy like the lowcountry of South Carolina our history would be very different.