

Many changes here between Revolution and Civil War

We ended our previous account of Indian Land history (in March) with the end of the American Revolution and establishment of the state of South Carolina. The state constitution of 1785 created seven counties out of a large area that had been called the Camden District.

Back then, Lancaster County did not include the Indian Land area. What is now considered Indian Land was part of Catawba Indian Land. The newly created Lancaster County did not have any jurisdiction over the Indians' property, which was leased to settlers by the Catawba Indians. The British had given the Catawbas complete sovereignty over an area that covered 15 square miles (144,000 acres) as a reward for the Indians' service in the French and Indian Wars. The Catawbas chose to be affiliated with South Carolina rather than North Carolina, but they had no relationship with the state.

To complicate matters, there was no established border between North and South Carolina other than a winding wagon road at North Corner that shifted when it became too rutted to navigate. This also served as the eastern boundary of Catawba Indian Land.

Indian Land settlers could not vote because they did not own the land. They had no county magistrate to witness legal documents. The county kept no records on the people of the Indian Land area until 1819, when the Indian Land people were permitted a militia "beat" (patrol) and a magistrate.

In 1840, the state of South Carolina purchased the Catawba Indian Land by the terms of the Nation Ford Treaty. The new name dropped "Catawba" and became just plain Indian Land.

Here are some interesting facts about Indian Land between the Revolutionary-

PANHANDLE PAST



Indian Land native Louise Pettus is an area historian.

PETTUS TO SPEAK

Local historian Louise Pettus will be a keynote speaker at the dedication ceremony at the Black Plantation/Hampton Rally historical marker in Rock Hill at 11 a.m. Thursday, May 15. The event will be held in the Hampton Street parking lot between Main and Black streets in Rock Hill. The marker honors S.C. Gov. Wade Hampton and Alexander Templeton Black, whose plantation became downtown Rock Hill.

War and the Civil War, a period of 78 years:

The first name for Twelve Mile Creek was Line Creek because it was the boundary line between Catawba Indian Land and the rest of South Carolina.

The oldest known tombstone in Indian Land was erected at Old Six Mile (on Henry Harris Road, then called the "Great Road to Philadelphia") and bore the name of Col. William Hagans, a Revolutionary War hero.

In 1803, the Rev. John Rooker, founder of Flint Hill Baptist Church north of Fort Mill, established a missionary school led by James Lewis "on the eastern side of the river" for Catawba Indian children. The school also served as a house of worship. After several years the Indians "became inattentive and the school was discontinued and the preaching was afterwards given up."

As early as 1808, there was a settlement called Bel Air (later Belair) which had an academy, a store and an inn. By 1813, there was a post office with Fowler

Williams appointed as the first postmaster. Williams' son, George Washington Williams, born in 1808, has been described in state histories as "the greatest lawyer of his time."

In 1819, B. Harper and other church officers of Six Mile Presbyterian Church paid the Catawba Indians rent for "five and one half acres at the rate of twenty-five cents per year."

There were no mosquitoes here before about 1820 when the cultivation of cotton began to change drainage patterns.

In 1831, the Charlotte and Camden Stage, which stopped at the Hagins Inn in Bel Air, announced a fare of 6.25 cents per mile or 5 cents per mile each way for the round trip.

In 1846, the state gave a charter to the Charlotte & South Carolina Railroad. It was to parallel the Camden to Salisbury Road (now U.S. 521), but when surveyors and engineers began laying out the line they found that the area on the North/South Carolina border had a hill too high for the locomotives of that day to negotiate. (That hill is in the area of Ardrey Kell Road, but it is considerably shorter now.)

So they shifted to a route that would go through Chester and York counties. The result was that in 1852 the Charlotte, Columbia and Augusta Railroad was laid out with depots in what became Rock Hill and Fort Mill.

If it had been possible to lay down railroad tracks in a straight line from Columbia to Charlotte without having to cross the Catawba river twice, then Belair in Indian Land would likely have become a city and there would be no Rock Hill at all.

Louise Pettus' Panhandle Past column runs once a month. If you have a question about Indian Land's past, call (803) 283-1154 or e-mail your question to cgnews@thelancasternews.com.

