

NEARBY HISTORY: Hutchinson land legacy

Family obtained acreage leases from Catawba Indians for many familiar local areas

In 1773, John and Sarah Hutchinson, accompanied by five sons (Alexander, James, John, Samuel and David) and one daughter, Sarah, migrated from Ballyrooney in County Antrim, North Ireland, through the port of Charleston. Like so many other Scots-Irish, whether they came down from Virginia or Pennsylvania, the Hutchinsons sought a home amid the Scots-Irish Presbyterians who had settled in what is now Mecklenburg County and York and Lancaster counties.

John Hutchinson died in Mecklenburg in 1776 on the eve of the American Revolution. His four oldest sons signed up with Gen. Thomas Sumter to fight the British. Alexander, the eldest, died in the Battle of Hanging Rock below Heath Springs in Lancaster County.

After the end of the Revolution, Hutchinsons' contacts with Catawba Indians who had also served under Sumter enabled the family to get leases of large acreages of Catawba lands on both sides of the Catawba River.

David Hutchinson, the youngest son, had a special association with the Catawbans and be-

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came a state-appointed agent charged with looking after the Catawbans' affairs. He also helped his white neighbors by drawing up their wills and administering a number of estates. He left behind a large collection of papers including a number of poems he composed.

The first written lease made by the Catawba Indians was to Samuel Knox in March 1785. In July of the same year, David Hutchinson obtained his lease for land described as on the west side of the Catawba River on Nation Ford Road. The area now known as Hutchinson Estates was most likely a portion of David's grant.

In November of 1792, Hutchinson got a second lease — this one on Saluda Road at Liberty Hill, on the waters of Half Mile Creek. Liberty Hill is the place where the famous battle between the Catawbans and the Cherokees occurred before the

arrival of white settlers. The battle resulted in an agreement between the two tribes that they would not again conduct war with each other in the area between the Catawba and Broad rivers. Today Liberty Hill is near Rock Hill's Red River Road.

In his will, David Hutchinson wrote that he should be buried in a "plain pine coffin not stained or lined and no headstone or monument put at my grave by any of my relatives." That instruction was ignored. In the Ebenezer Cemetery there's a headstone that reads: "David Hutchinson, Died Oct. 10, 1845. Aged 77 years. Native of Ireland."

David Hutchinson's brother, Capt. John Hutchinson, in 1822 secured the first lease from the Catawba Indians of land on the east side of the Catawba River on White Oak branch, including Turkey Hill and Horse Hunting road. The 750 acre tract was then part of the "Kings Bottoms" and is today mostly inside the Sun City Carolina Lakes development. Hutchinson paid a bounty of \$800 for the prized land.

Sarah Hutchinson, David and John's only sister, married the

Rev. William Blackstock of Mecklenburg County. Blackstock also acquired an Indian lease. His lease, dated March 11, 1799, was shared with John Harris Sr. It was located on "Fuller's Cr., Sturgis Ferry road, near Old Nations Ford" and included a grist mill site.

In 1969 Elizabeth Reed interviewed Samuel Hutchinson of India Hook, York County, about an old house built by his great-grandfather Alfred Hutchinson. Samuel believed that the house was built before 1832 and that it was built for Alfred's son, also named Samuel, and his bride, Susan Adkins.

This old Hutchinson house was built on the west side of the Catawba on Nations Ford Road. Like so many of the time, the house was constructed of immense squared logs daubed with mud. There were three rooms downstairs and an unfinished area upstairs. One of the rooms was very large but the other two were just a little larger than the space needed for a bed.

Louise Pettus is a retired Winthrop University history professor. Her column appears Sundays.