

# COMMUNITY

## In 1770s, York County gained an 11-mile chunk from N.C.

**B**ack in 1772, present-day York County was mostly in South Carolina, but a considerable portion 11 miles deep was a part of Tryon County, North Carolina. Not only was the area part of North Carolina, but York County was the site of the Tryon County, N.C., courthouse.

Originally there was only the province of Carolina. Then in 1729 the two colonies were separated, and the crown ordered a boundary line to be surveyed. The first attempt stopped in 1734 before it reached the 35th parallel line as instructed.

After the French and Indian Wars ended in 1763, another attempt was made to draw the boundary line. This time the surveyors began at 34-49 and were to draw the line so that the Catawba Indian reservation would be entirely in South Carolina. The surveyors were too far south and stopped at a spot which now is at the right angle line separating Lancaster County and Union County, N.C.

In 1772 they tried again. Using the old Salisbury to Camden road, the survey party headed north and crossed Sugar Creek at the northern corner of the Catawba Indian lands.

Louise Pettus



NEARBY HISTORY

Gen. William Moultrie, who headed the S.C. surveyors, noted in his journal that the land was good, "... the people very thickly settled close to the Indian Line, some of their houses almost upon it. They have an advantage that they have a fine range for their cattle, which in all probability will continue many years until the Catawbias are extinct or bought out."

At latitude 35-8, Moultrie reported that the two survey teams, representing both colonies, set their compasses together and began their westward course.

When the survey was completed and accepted in London, South Carolina had gained west of the Catawba river the 11 miles lost in 1763 on the east side of the Catawba river. Henceforth, the northern part of York County would be called the "New Acquisition."

Tryon County, N.C., had only been in existence for three years. Its courthouse and jail happened to have been located in the New Acquisition. But exactly where?

Old court records seldom give details. It was a time when land was plentiful and surveyors might mark corners with notations such as "dead chestnut" or "rock in stream." Mapmakers might place a site 20, even 50, miles from its actual location. Mouzon's map did not show the courthouse.

In 1961 the York County Historical Commission decided to place a marker on the Tryon Courthouse site. Local historian W.J. Davis of

Clover was keenly interested in the matter and was asked by the commission to chair the site search.

Davis said that he was shown the spot many years before and was not at all sure that he could relocate it. Uncle Jake Falls, an ex-slave, had shown him the site in 1914.

After much effort, Davis and the party located the spot three-fourths of a mile south of Henry's Knob. As it later turned out, they had found not the courthouse but the old jail site, which was located on William Henry's land.

The true location of the courthouse has been established through a discovery made by Elmer Oris Parker while he was an assistant in the Old Military Records Division of the National Archives. He found an old journal kept by Pvt. Arthur Faires while a part of the Cherokee expedition in the summer of 1776. The crucial line was, "We marched from Cap't Clinton's to William Hall's at the Court House and Camp."

That journal and additional research by Ferry Gettys of Rock Hill proved that the Tryon Courthouse was at the home of Charles and Susannah McLean at the head of Bullocks Creek in the years 1769, 1770 and 1771.

In May 1982 the Tryon Courthouse marker was moved two miles farther south on S.C. 161.

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