

3/14/2004

Spot between old fort and grist mill became ... you guessed it ... Fort Mill

Here's how towns and communities in our region got their names

According to historian Douglas Summers Brown, when the South Carolina and Charlotte Railroad was laying track back in 1851, a construction crew member asked "What is the name of this place?"

Looking at the cut through rock, J. Lawrence Moore, a local landowner, responded: "Rock Hill." Fort Mill, which was created by the same railroad as Rock Hill, was given the name because it was located between a 1763 fort, built by North Carolina (who claimed the area) and a grist mill on Sugar Creek that is now on the Anne Springs Close Greenway.

The town of York before 1916 was known as Yorkville. The county seat of York got its name from the settlement of Scots-Irish from York, Pa.

Country churches often became the center of later settlements; thus, Ebenezer, Sharon, Smyrna, Tirzah, etc.

Hickory Grove and Lake Wylie are obvious. A large clover patch grew at a railroad depot's water-

ing tank; thus the town of Clover.

Tega Cay, dating only to the 1970s, was the creation of a real estate developer trying to evoke an image of a Polynesian paradise.

King's Mountain was named for the king of England.

Henry's Knob, a lesser mountain, early dubbed "little mountain," was named for William Henry, who received an original grant from King George III.

'Grant' an S.C. term

Actually "grant" is an S.C. term. Henry received a "patent," or deed, issued by Anson County, N.C. Anson County, then much larger, included present-day Mecklenburg County (created in 1769).

When Henry received his patent in 1765, North Carolina claimed land that was later the upper 11 miles on the west side of the Catawba River in what is now South Carolina. The present location of Henry's Knob is about three miles northwest of Clover in York County.

Henry's patent was for 336

NEARBY HISTORY



Louise Pettus

acres and was surveyed by Francis Beatey with the names David Watson and Thomas Clark, "chain bearers" on the back of the plat. A 1925, description of the surviving condition of the plat stated that, "The parchment is cracked in several places by reason of constant folding; but not too hurt; and bears evidence of the fact that those old-time paper manufacturers knew their business as did the manufacturers of ink in the days before a new nation was born."

The king's rent was "Four Shillings proclamation money, for every hundred acres hereby granted. ..." The rent was due the second day of February at the residence of the royal governor, wherever he might reside. In exchange for the rent, the king gave Henry rights to "all woods, waters, mines, minerals, hereditaments and appurtenances ... one half of all gold and silver mines excepted."

There was another important requirement. The patent was void unless Henry cleared at least three acres within three years for each 100 acres granted.

That would mean that Henry had to have cleared a little over 10 acres in three years or lose the title to the land. Henry's Knob, on the headwaters of Allison's Creek,

was not the only tract gained by William Henry. He had additional land on Crowder's Creek and Fishing Creek. William Henry was too old to fight (age 60) when the Revolution broke out but he had four sons who fought against the king.

Revolutionary role

Lawrence Wells, a historian and a descendant of Henry, has thoroughly researched the Henry family's role in the Revolution. Wells says that two Tories were carrying a message from British Col. Patrick Ferguson to Lord Cornwallis on Oct. 6, 1780, presumably requesting aid from Cornwallis.

The messengers stopped at the Henry house in search of refreshments, which they were given but the messengers were so hasty in leaving that Henry's sons followed them.

The messengers, anticipating that they were being followed, took a circuitous route. They got to Cornwallis but too late for him to send aid to Ferguson. The Tories lost the battle of Kings Mountain and Ferguson lost his life.

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



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