

## **The Origin of Cross Community ~**

Cross is the typical rural community that grew up around the families that settled there. Some of the family names that have been there since its beginning are: Austins, Grooms, McCants, Winningham, Droze, DeHays, Livingstons, and then came the Cross and Bradwell families among others.

The community name originated with John Cross, who purchased 500 acres from the Austins, Winninghams, and McCants families in 1844. Other tracts were added from the Livingston and Droze families. John and his son Adam added additional acreage and developed it into one of the most productive farms in the area.

John Cross was a member of the Black Oak Agricultural Society and between 1842 and 1862, he received a medal for his experimentation with agricultural lime. Then in 1852, he received a silver cup for a bay stallion that he had raised.

Adam, son of John Cross, added a store and a cotton gin, sawmill, grits mill, rice mill, and turpentine still. In 1879, the Cross Post Office, originally named **Cross Mill**, was established, and Adam was named the first postmaster in May of 1888.

J. Russell Cross tells us that Adam Cross, upon returning from the Confederate War, taught a short term of three months of school at Friendship and then opened a store at Moss Grove. He felt it was wrong to become wealthy by selling to his neighbors, so his store had very reasonable pricing for goods and services.

The Cross storekeepers went to Charleston weekly to buy goods for the General Merchandise business, as they sold everything the families would need, including groceries and drygoods, hardware and building materials, horses, mules and wagons, plows, and all the farming supplies needed, including seed and fertilizer. After the railroad, some materials were shipped by rail from Moncks Corner through Chicora to Cross. Much of the heavy equipment, such as grits mills and sawmills were brought up that way.

John Cross was held in such high esteem by both Blacks and Whites that the plantation was not harmed by the Army of Northern soldiers and freed Blacks from the Sea Islands that plundered this section. While John was away with a group of old men at Pocotaligo and Adam, his son, was with the Confederate Army in Virginia, the Blacks hid all the livestock in the swamps as a security measure, and the foreman, Henry Brown, told the invaders that the place belonged to him, that he was a free Negro, and the place was not touched.

Cross community, today covering a large landscape in western Berkeley County, boasts of history through and through, both with people and places. Two of these places are the **Cherokee Path** (or Trail) and the **Forty-five Mile Tavern**.

The original Indian Path was also known as the Congaree River Road, and extended beyond 500 miles to connect trade centers of our neighboring states of today. Indians carried skins for trade, while the traders and pack horsemen carried bullets, small shot, guns, powder, looking glasses, colored beads, axes, hoes, hatchets, tools, English cotton cloth, and whiskey to trade back to the Indians. Plantations sent staves, shingles, beef, pork, rice, peas, Indian corn, and leather from their tanning vats. These items went from Colonial Monck's Corner to Stony Landing and on to Charlestown by water.

The Path was used by British soldiers and local militia in colonial days, government agents negotiating peace with the Indians, British and American troops in the Indian Wars and the American Revolution, and by troops during the Confederate War. During the Cherokee wars, this route was used by a Regiment of Highlanders who destroyed the Cherokee around Keowee. In 1761, the path was again used to end the war with the Cherokees, and Attakullakulla, a great Cherokee Chief, used this route to go to Charlestown to meet with the Governor.

The route is shown as coming out of Charlestown between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers, across Goose Creek, along the highlands west of the Cooper River, into what is now Moncks Corner, through the area now covered by Lake Moultrie, and coming into SC Hwy No. 6 in Cross going west on to Eutaw Springs and northwest upstate.

Many taverns along the route accommodated the travelers until the route lost its significance in the nineteenth century. The Forty-Five Mile Tavern, or Martin's, or Barnet's Tavern (different names at different times, but same place) is only one of those, and was located at this present intersection of Ranger Road and Old Highway No. 6 (the location of the old colonial Road to the Congarees).

Over the years, and depending upon the map you're looking at, this road could be called the Cherokee Path, the Congaree Road, Road to the Congarees, Nelson Ferry Road, or S.C. Highway No. 46. Basically, all are one and the same road, with only minor branch differences.

A few more places of interest and historic significance are the following: **Duck Pond House** – very interestingly originally built on Duck Pond Plantation. This plantation was purchased about 1900 by Elvin and Benjamin Singletary.

Another was the **Williams House, ca. 1898**. James L. Williams began this house prior to his marriage to Eliza Singletary in 1900. It is believed to have been begun in 1898, where local labor was used, and it was finished for the married couple to occupy. In addition to farming, Williams was a fine brick mason and carpenter. Later, the Williams moved to Duck Pond for a larger house to accommodate their growing family. They had twelve children. This house passed on to his son, Jerry Williams, who lived there with his wife, the former Hattie Grooms, all their married life. This was their home until Hugo destroyed the detached kitchen-dining room and porch.

**Moss Grove Plantation House, ca 1880** – is known as an I-house for its distinctive narrow rectangular form. It is a two-story home, gable roofed structure, with end chimneys. The chimney bricks are said to have been salvaged from a previous house at Moss Pond (owned by Peter J. Couturier), which had burned. It has a shed-roofed extension in the rear and a one-story piazza with square posts and horizontal board railing.

The land on which the house was built was acquired by John J. Cross in 1844, and the house was built for his son, Adam. Adam had just recently returned to Moss Grove after serving in the Confederate War.

According to Henry Dwight, an early Berkeley County historian, Moss Grove was the house where the entire community dined on “Mill Day.” Also, J. Russell Cross tells “every person who visited the mills or Adam Cross’s store ate dinner as a guest of the Cross family at Moss Grove. All of the food was grown on the farm, and a sheep was butchered every Friday to supplement the beef, pork, chicken, and cured meat.

**Loch Dhu Plantation, ca 1812** – the present home, probably built in 1812 by Robert Kirk, is located very close to Lake Marion on a high bluff. The name Loch Dhu is a Scottish Gaelic term for “Black Lake,” there being a small, dark, natural spring located near the house, but is now under Lake Marion.

Built a little differently from most of the houses in the area, it has a high hipped roof with tall flanking chimneys. The structure is full two-stories with the usual arrangement of windows.

In the Simons family for many, many years now, the home's interior is fairly simple in design, with well-designed trim. The woodwork of the drawing room had gouged and carved festoons and sunbursts in friezes of the mantles and main cornices.

During the Civil War, Loch Dhu was used as a hospital for the Confederate wounded. A previous owner, Dr. Kirk of Loch Dhu, saw service in the Civil War as a surgeon in the Confederate Army. Union troops came to burn the house, but the women caring for the soldiers refused to evacuate the house, thus saving it.

Across present-day Highway 45 and south of Loch Dhu Plantation is **Lawson Pond** plantation house – willed to Charles Cordes Porcher (1801-1878), son of Philip Porcher of Oldfield in St. Stephen Parish, who is considered to have built the house as a residence in anticipation of his marriage in 1823 to Rebecca, the oldest daughter of Francis Dwight Marion.

This house sits high above the ground on massive brick pillars, underneath, massive hand-hewn timbers, held together by wooden pegs, with space for storage and plantation activities. It has a porch across the front and on the east side. The house is constructed on a grand scale and is “greatly enriched” from the two matching front doors throughout with “excellent trim” on doors, windows, cornices, and mantels. Of architectural importance, and so very interesting, is the fact that not a drop of paint has been applied to the exterior, and the color that has come to the weatherboarding through years of weathering.

Without going into detail, ownership of the property was vested in Mrs. Elias F. Couturier in 1880, along with Dr. Kirk, Trustee, and her ownership became absolute with the death of her husband.

J. Russell Cross tells, “his father, J. Pressley Cross, born 1877, recalled that as a boy, he went with his grandfather, John James Cross, to a fair held at Lawson Pond by the *Black Oak Agricultural Society*, of which his grandfather was a member. He was particularly impressed by the large pits in which whole oxen were being barbecued. This home had ample grounds to take care of the crowds that attended these fairs.

There's many more places and family names of historic importance to the Cross community that need to be talked about . . . another time.

Keith Gourdin

*References:* Anne Dreher Propst, Past President of the Berkeley County Historical Society, and *Historic Ramblin's Through Berkeley*, by Jr. Russell Cross

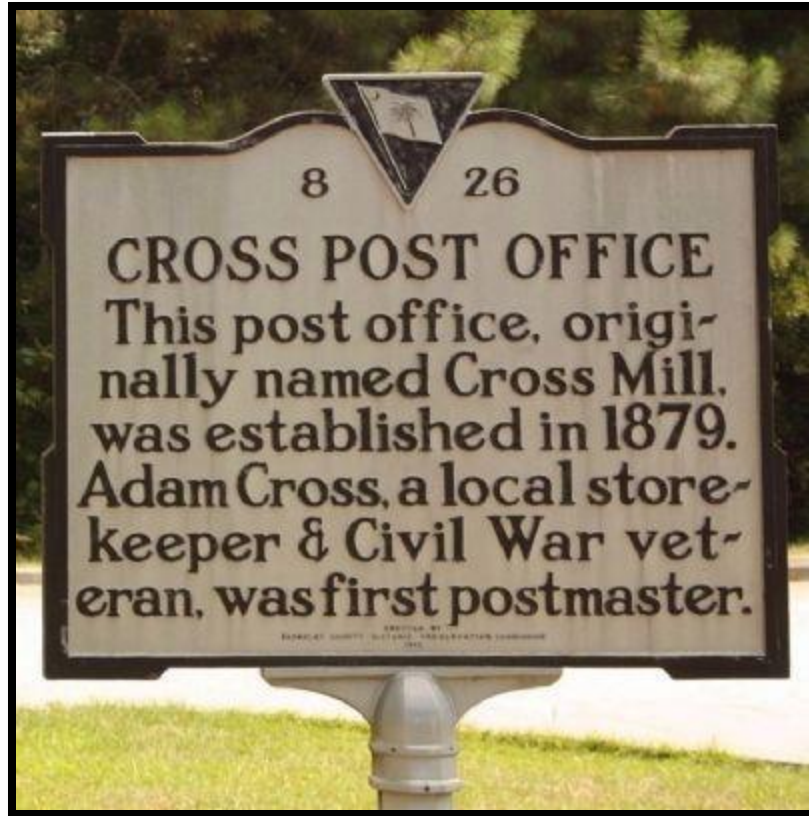


Photo by Keith Gourdin



Lawson Pond photo from collections of Keith Gourdin