

LeNud's Ferry

LeNud's Ferry was located where U.S. Highway 17A crosses the Santee River just above Jamestown. History records it was started as a private ferry by a LeNud, a French settler of the region, before 1731. Lenud is also an Anglicized version of the French 'LeNud.' The LeNud's were among the first settlers here and operated boats from Ferry Lake (look that up, very interesting!). LeNud's was the entry point for most of the early settlers of Williamsburg County. This ferry was one of the oldest ferries in South Carolina.

A note of interest was found by this author in the book *St. James Santee Plantation Parish*, p. 392, that states, "Peter Le Nud of the Parish of Prince Frederick, Bachelor, and Lydia Jaudon of the Parish of Prince Frederick, Spinster, were married at the Dwelling House of Mr. William Leigh of the Parish of Prince Frederick, by License, this ninth day of January, 1783, by me, S. F. Warren of the Parish of St. James Santee, Clerk." This may be ferry LeNud's son or even grandson.

On August 20, 1731, the legislature established it as a state monopoly and invested it in Jonathan Skeine for seven years. On April 3, 1739, Skeine's Ferry, as it was then called, was invested in James Kinlock for seven years. A gentleman Huguenot, Abraham Micheau, had gone to great lengths and expense in building a road leading to a landing on the north side of the Santee River, the ferry on that side was vested in him for seven years, provided he make payment of 20 shillings annually to Kinlock.

After having recently been entertained by a north Santee Frenchman, on a trip heading to Charlestown in February of 1785, Bishop Francis Asbury described as he was crossing the Santee at Lenud's, "the best I know on the river." This was a common, but always welcomed, remark heard about the ferry.

Then it apparently became a private ferry again. In or before 1796, Theodore Gourdin acquired it, for in 1796 the legislature re-established the ferry as a state monopoly and invested it in him for fourteen years. This author could find no further mention of it after 1796, when it had reverted to its original name of LeNud's Ferry, until 1825 when the legislature once again invested the ferry in Theodore Gourdin for fourteen more years.

A most noteworthy American Revolution action occurrence on May 6, 1780, at the ferry, is recorded this way:

"The Continentals, which included Lt. Col. William Washington (3rd Continental Light Dragoons) made their way to the Santee River, where Col. Abraham Buford (Va) was supposed to be waiting with boats. Col. Buford had halted his march to Charlestown when he had learned of the siege and was awaiting new orders at Georgetown. However, Col. Buford was late and had not arrived at

the Santee River when the cavalry arrived with their prisoners (from the previous day's skirmish at old Monck's Corner). Lt. Col. Anthony Walton White decided to rest his men on the south side of the river while he waited for Col. Buford to arrive with boats. Lt. Col. Washington recommended that they go ahead and cross the river, but Lt. Col. White dismissed this precaution as unnecessary.

In the meantime, British Lt. Col.-Banastre Tarleton received information about the strength and movement of the Patriots from a Loyalist at Ball's Plantation that morning. At about 3 p.m. on May 6, 1780, Lt. Col. Tarleton attacked Lt. Col's. White and Washington near Lenud's Ferry.

The Continentals were caught completely by surprise. Col. Buford's men had just arrived, were across the river, and could do nothing but watch the slaughter. Lt. Cols. White and Washington escaped by swimming across the fast-moving river. Forty-one Americans were killed or wounded, and sixty-seven more captured. The British lost two dragoons and four horses. All of the British prisoners captured earlier that day escaped and rejoined Lt. Col. Tarleton.

The American "cavalry" was now in complete disarray. Both Lt. Col's. White and Washington went to Halifax, North Carolina to begin rebuilding their regiments. Lt. Col. White went on to Virginia where he remained until after Lord Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown on October 19, 1781. He rejoined Major General Nathaniel Greene in 1782. Lt. Col. Washington rebuilt and trained his new recruits in time to rejoin Maj. Gen. Greene in December of 1780 in North Carolina and was sent with Brigadier General Daniel Morgan and fought with him at the Battle of Cowpens on January 17, 1781.

A bright note to this Action: after the British rounded up the Patriot horses, two youths, Francis Deliesseline and Samuel Dupre, went on a mission to steal some of the horses back for the Patriots and returned fourteen horses to Georgetown Patriots' leader Major Jamieson, refusing any reward.

And a distasteful note of fact about British Lt. Col. Tarleton: his troops were allowed to commit deeds of violence, thefts, murder, etc. and this was arousing indignation among his friends, though he charged it to the Tories and Indians. These deeds of cruelty by Col. Tarleton's men brought many men to Gen. Francis Marion's help.

Now . . . back to Lenud's Ferry. One must consider the ferry was used as a close means of communication with Charlestown. The planters depended on this route to Charlestown, most especially depending on the travel across the Santee provided by the ferry.

An interesting article found in the *City Gazette* of Charlestown, SC in 1808 states the following: “Lenud’s Ferry. Those who wish to cross Santee, at Lenud’s Ferry, will be put over immediately – as there will be no delay in passing the river, and no swamp or bog on either side, makes it the most eligible ferry on Santee River to cross. And as the Dwelling House at said ferry was wickedly and willfully burnt to ashes, on the 1st of last November, Five Hundred Dollars will be paid on convicting the incendiary or incendiaries, if when, a House will be immediately put up, and Mrs. R. Anderson will, as formerly, keep the best Entertainment for Travelers, and a plenty of Forage for Horses. There will be a Store kept with Groceries, liquors, &c., &c. – and a good Boat will be kept constantly running from the Ferry to Charlestown.”

Quickly, before running out of time (and space), we skip forward to June of 1941. “Ferry Soon Will Be a Thing of the Past” when the announcement was made that “in a few weeks, the South Carolina state highway department will award a contract for construction of a bridge over the Santee between Jamestown and Andrews, which will eliminate Lenud’s Ferry, the last ferry in the state’s highway system.” Stay in touch for the continuing Lenud’s Ferry and ‘Bridge Opening’ saga coming soon.

By Keith Gourdin

References: Charleston News and Courier, Charleston, SC; Historic Berkeley County 1671-1900, by Maxwell Clayton Orvin; Historic Ramblin’s Through Berkeley, by J. Russell Cross; www.Carolana.com website by J.D. Lewis; St. James Santee Plantation Parish, History and Records, 1685-1925, by Anne Baker Leland Bridges, Roy Williams III; University of South Carolina, Institute of Southern Studies-Names in SC website, and family records, photos, and collections from the library of Keith Gourdin.