More Names in Berkeley County . . . With a Bit of Story Behind the Name ~

All readers are invited to submit information concerning origins of place names in our Berkeley County, most especially authenticated origins or interesting legends.

Somerset Plantation was located just beyond the tip or northern end of what is now the Pinopolis Peninsula. In 1682, William Screven brought a group of Baptists over from England and they settled here at Somerset which the Rev. Screven named after his ancestral home in England. The settlement did not last long, for by 1697, most of these men had moved to Charleston where they founded the First Baptist Church. It is said that before the waters of Lake Moultrie covered this plantation that the various fields were still called by the names of these early settlers.

Hog Swamp is one of the few Negro communities to be found in the area now covered by the waters of Lake Moultrie which was not connected with a plantation. It was located a little over a mile northwest from the present north end of State Highway 181 on the Pinopolis Peninsula. It is said to have been the site of an early, or post, 1865 swamp so named from the custom people have of releasing the hogs from their pens in the late summer and early fall to fatten on acorns, or possibly from a Shawnee Indian village by that name.

Fanny Branch was the pre-Lake Moultrie name for Pinopolis Inlet, a branch fed by springs which separated Pinopolis, the Negro community of Kittfield, and the town of Moncks Corner. It is said to be found on early maps as "Fanny her branch." This implies perhaps a band or village of Settlement Indians, Indians who have in the main adopted white man's ways, but who kept enough of the Indian ways to still be apart.

Ticksville community is located in the woods about two miles east-southeast of the junction of State Highways 6 and 311, and about half a mile south of State Highway 6. Its name is obvious to anyone who ever went into the woods in the Carolina Lowcountry in the summertime.

Banister Down was, until the community decided to improve itself, also called by the corrupted names of Banister Town and Vancy Down or Town. It is located about two miles from the intersection of State Highways 6 and 311. It is said to have been established in the 1880's when a Scottish Sea Captain named Banister bought a tract of land here to raise sheep on the "Downs" or pastures. His venture failed, but the settlement survived.

Chicora, in spite of what the Berkeley County Highway maps say, does not exist today. The plantation upon which Chicora was built was previously known as Ward's Plantation and owned by Dr. Philip G. Prioleau. After his death, it was bought by Samuel DuBose. Later it became the property of the Porcher family of Ophir Plantation and eventually was sold to A.S. Emerson of New York. Emerson laid out lots in the edge of the swamp about 1890 and established the Twon of Chicora (or New England City), as it was sometimes called. A spur line from the old Northwestern Railroad (later, the Atlantic Coastline Railroad) ran from Moncks Corner to Chicora. An undated plat in the Berkeley County courthouse shows seventeen houses there. Malaria, wild ??? foxes and swampiness of the soil put an end to Berkeley County's first real estate subdivision many years before the waters of Lake Moultrie covered the site in 1938. The town was located about four miles west of the present village of Pinopolis. The name is Indian and is said to be a corruption of a Siouan Indian tribe named Shakori, which is supposed to have been in the area.

Pinopolis started out as a pineland summer village for the plantations in the area. In 1826, or thereabout, three houses had moved here from the original site of Raccoon Hall (not the same as Raccoon Hill). The name means Pine village. The "e" of "pine" was dropped for sake of spelling. "-opolis" is from the Greed meaning village, or town. The name started as a joke by Frederick A. Porcher, but caught on and was accepted. Around the turn of the century, the Pinopolis Academy, a private school, was built here and lasted until the 1930's. The newer part, or front, was moved to Moncks Corner and became the Berkeley County Public Library. The older part has since been remodeled into a home. An Episcopal church and a Methodist church were built here, probably before the Civil War, and are still in existence today. A Post Office was established here and Elizabeth P. Ravenel was the first U.S. Postmaster on February 10, 1894. The original Post Office is next to the present-day Post Office. Of the old village houses, it is reported that only nine now remain. New houses are being built, and recent subdivisions have become a part of Pinopolis. Pinopolis is located about three miles northwest of Moncks Corner, on a peninsula sticking (that's the Berkeley County word for protruding) out into Lake Moultrie.

Sugar Hill is part of Pinopolis located on State Highway 315 (Sugar Hill Drive) between State Highways 5 and 6. It is said to have been so called because the people there were in the midst of plenty.

Green Hill, a Negro community, is located on the western side of the Pinopolis Peninsula about a mile from the junction of State Highways 4 and 315. Some say the Green family, from which the community gets its name, refugeed there when Lake Moultrie covered Somerset Plantation; others say that the Greens have been where they are now longer than that.

Murraysville, a white community composed of the Murray family and their connections, is located on State Highway ???? present Murrays moved there out of the Wassamasaw(?) area after the Civil War. In time, his sons and daughters grew up, married and also settled here. So, it is difficult to say when this community became a community.

Tuckertown. Almost all white communities have a Negro community nearby. Tuckertown joins Murraysville on its southern border, which is a strip of trees and State Highway 16. It takes its name from the Tucker family who live here.

Wild Cat Ridge is an old name for a ridge on the southeastern edge of Black Tom Bay. It is located about five miles due east of Oakley.

Pine Forest, a white community, is located about a mile due north of the intersection of U.S. Highways 176 and 17-A. It takes its name from the pines which grow (grew) on the sandy hills of the region. This community has been in existence for at least seventy years.

24 Mile, Poor Man's Range or Carns Crossroads community lies about a mile northwest of the intersection of U.S. Highways 176 and 17-A. It is said to be twenty-four miles from the City of Charleston and so named/called. Reportedly, this was an old tavern or stagecoach stop, dating back to the Revolutionary War (or before). Poor Man's Range, probably an inventive term by my informant, is due to the sandy soil, which prevented good crops from being grown successfully. The name Carns Crossroads, located at the intersection primarily, was a family name (living there).

Old Oliver Place is located about half a mile to a mile northwest of Carns Crossroad on U.S. Highway 176. It consisted of four houses, two on each side of the highway and represented a division of a Mr. Oliver's land to his four children. The people of 24-Mile do not quite consider it to be a community. It has been in existence since the 1920's.

Carns Crossroads, the intersection of U.S. Highways 176 and 17-A, takes its name from a rather well-to-do landowner by the name of Dallas VanBuren Carn (why the State Highway Department insists upon spelling his name Carnes is a mystery). He

was born on April 11, 1877, and died November 1, 1936, according to his tombstone in the graveyard of Wassamasaw Baptist Chapel. His house (used to be) standing on the western corner of the crossroad. It was a four or five-room house, painted bluish green, with a rather high sloping roof line. He is said to have moved to the crossroads, which now bear his name, around the turn of the century, from down near Ancrum Swamp (named, no doubt, for the Ancrum family, perhaps one-time landowners there) located a few miles southwest of here.

Varner Town is so called from the Varner family who live(d) here, although it also has (had) a large Filipino population, which moved here following World War II. Years ago (nor sure if it's still there now) it had a small one-room schoolhouse for some of its residents. It also has a Pentecostal Holiness Church. The age of this community is unknown, but it may be fairly old. The County Highway map gives the name of the school here as the Cherry Hill School. So it may be that the original name of this community was Cherry Hill, possibly from a plantation of that name that may have been here at one time. Varner Town is now usually referred to as Carns Crossroads, located about half a mile east northeast of the Crossroads (intersection of U.S. Highways 176 and 17-A).

Wide Awake is a white community located on U.S. Highway 17-A about a mile and a half west of the intersection of 176 and 17-A. it seems to date back at least to the beginning of the 1900's. in the 1920's, the community is said to have been quite Wide Awake politically(!), and this is the reason for its name. And then there are those (reportedly) who say that regardless of the time of day or night, someone is Wide Awake to watch what their neighbors are doing.

Ladson used to be a small town . . . no longer, serving the three counties of Dorchester, Charleston, and Berkeley with a consolidated school. Some sort of community seems to have been here for a long time. In the first part of the 1700's, a small Huguenot church was built in this area (this would be Goose Creek area now). Beginning with the Blue House Tavern, or perhaps even earlier, there was a tavern here which was likely a stagecoach stop as well. Mill's Atlas shows a tavern here in the 1820's. Ladson as an official place did not come into existence until the Southern Railroad built a station here prior to 1905 on lands belonging to, or formerly belonging to, the Ladson family. The town is located three miles west of the Town of Goose Creek, on U.S. Highway 76.

Edited by Keith Gourdin