HISTORICAL SURVEY
OF THE LANDS COMPRISING
AND SURROUNDING
HARRISON STATE FOREST

Pat Aiken
Columbia College

Edited By
Ron Ferguson
S. C. Forestry Commission

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Every parcel of land possesses a history. When a land's history is examined the focus is generally upon the significance of the geological formation of the site, or possibly on the land's influences on social and cultural development. This report about the lands of Harbison State Forest primarily deals with the social land use patterns and ownership throughout the past three hundred years. The research and original text was compiled by Pat Aiken, a 1981 graduate of Columbia College, Columbia, South Carolina. The report was a volunteer effort for the partial completion of a special projects course. During the term of the course the student was to define, then perform a task for an agency or professional working group in order to acquire knowledge about the functioning of the agency.

The study will be incorporated into the Harbison State Forest Master Plan. It will be included as a part of the interpretative prospectus, possibly being used to generate ideas for future exhibits, programs, or publications.

The study's maps and drawings were contributed by Anne Kyle of the South Carolina Forestry Commission.

Ron Ferguson
Forester
Harbison State Forest
S. C. Forestry Commission
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Indian Hunting Grounds

The present day boundary along the northeastern edge of Harbison State Forest is the Broad River. However, to the Cherokee and Catawba Indians it was known as the Line River, meaning that it marked the line dividing the hunting territory of the two tribes. It is not known whether native American Indians maintained permanent camps or villages in the Harbison area. However, it can be said with near certainty that the natives transversed the forest because of the close proximity of an ancient fording place on the Broad River.
"Faustford" was the first fording place on the River above the present city of Columbia. The ford was discovered by an early settler named Faust while pursuing buffalo and wild cattle. An ancient saltlick was said to be on the hillsides in this area. Mills, in his Statistics of South Carolina, indicated that Faustford deserved notice because it was the first fordable place on the Broad River and that most of the early roads and paths led to it. Mills noted that the "Catawba track" was still seen in the area in 1826, suggesting that it was an ancient Catawba fording place. During the Revolutionary War thieves used the ford to escape to what was then the "western wilds"--on the western side of the Broad River.

"Faustford" is located just above Sharp's Ferry on this 1825 map.
"Faustford" is located above the mouth of Burgess Creek on the current map. The road presently leading to the area is Frost Mill Road. The ford is just upstream from the area at the end of this road.

Peter Rentfro: (1749)

The First Registered Owner

Harbison State Forest is contained within the area currently known as the "Dutch Fork." The name is an Americanized version of "Deutsche volk," meaning German people, or folks. Nearly all the early settlers within the area came directly from Germany. However, from Pennsylvania, or possibly the Jerseys, a man named Peter Rentfro became the first person to acquire a warrant for land on or near the present location of the Forest. In 1749 Rentfro obtained a precept from the Crown's Surveyor General office located in Charleston directing a deputy surveyor to lay out 500 acres along the western bank of the Broad River. At that time, petitioners for land were allowed to obtain 100 acres as the head of a household plus 50 acres
per family member. Servants and slaves were considered family members. Therefore, because Rentfro acquired 500 acres, it is assumed that the household included nine persons. With the survey completed and certified, Rentfro traveled to Charleston with his plat in order to petition the Council for his land grant. The grant was approved, making Rentfro the first recorded owner of the future Harbison State Forest property.
Devils, Demons, Indians, and Outlaws

During the late 1750's, the so called "Weber Heresy" occurred.

Hans Georg Schmidtpeter organized a cult which believed that Jerusalem was waiting to descend on the vicinity of present-day Irmo. Schmidtpeter proclaimed that he himself was Jesus Christ. Jakob Weber was hired to manage the cult's property. Later, Weber became convinced that he was the Lord God, his wife Hannah the Virgin Mary, and Schmidtpeter was declared to be Satan. In a fit of religious zeal, Weber led some of his followers to murder Schmidtpeter. Weber was arrested, tried in Charleston, and hanged for the crime. He vowed to rise from the grave in three days, but was never heard from again.

In 1760 the Cherokee Indians made one last attempt to drive off the settlers that had taken over their hunting grounds. They raided down into Dutch Fork, burning out some settlers and killing livestock.

Outlaws, bandits and no-account types used the Faustford to escape to the "western wilds", (the west bank of the Broad River). These outlaws banded together, stole what they wanted, and destroyed the rest. When there were not enough women in the outlaw ranks, new recruits were abducted from the local area. Because of these disturbances in the neighborhood, a group of concerned citizens banded together in 1767 and became known as the "Regulators." The leaders drafted a petition to the Assembly in Charleston calling for, among other things, the establishment of circuit courts, jails, public schools, and marriage laws. As a result of the petition, the Assembly deputized 54 of the Regulators to clean up crime in the Fork. Many outlaws were executed at the point of capture and by 1768, the outlaw problem was solved.
George Lorick: Landowner (1825 - 1852)

The next known landowner was George Lorick. However, when or how Lorick obtained the land is not known. Several Loricks are listed as residents in the first U. S. Census of 1790 in the Orangeburg District North. In Judge O'Neall's Annals of Newberry, a Lorick family is listed as original German settlers of Dutch Ford. Lorick's name and residence appears on the Lexington County map published in Mill's Atlas, 1825.
Lorick's home was known as a "mustering place." During the formative years of this country there was a distinct dislike and mistrust of standing armies. Militia units were established, composed of local able-bodied men ages 18 to 45. The smallest unit of the militia was called a "beat company." The call to muster came by beating out a particular rhythm on a drum. All men within hearing distance when the beat sounded mustered for drills at the appropriate place, thus being known as a "mustering place."

**Family Lifestyles**

The German families of the "Fork" were noted for their individual industriousness, honesty, and superstitions. Nearly every home had a horseshoe nailed to its step to ward off evil spirits. The practice of laying on of hands to exorcise illness was common. The German language was spoken in homes, schools, and churches until the early 20th century.

Most residents of the area were farmers. Their crops included corn, wheat, flax, and garden products. Before cotton was introduced, hemp was the main cash crop. The Dutch Fork farmers supplied the raw materials for General John J. Faust's rope factory in Columbia. According to an 1883 South Carolina Department of Agriculture publication, Dutch Fork hemp was the finest and most durable in the world for vessel cordage.

**John Saunders Swygert : 1852**

At the time of George Lorick's death in 1852, his estate was in excess of 10,000 acres located on both sides of the Broad River. His will named his sons and son-in-law as executors, each purchasing a portion from the other. A 3,649.25 acre tract, which included the present Harbison Forest, was purchased by John Saunders Swygert, husband of Harriet Lorick Swygert. The boundary of Swygert's land holdings extended from the Broad River to the old State Road, today known as U.S. Highway 176. The Swygert family built a two-story wooden house which they occupied until 1887.
The property remained in Swygert's hands throughout the Civil War. The house was not damaged when General Sherman moved through the Lexington and Columbia area during February, 1865, even though some of the Federal troops were camped just 1.5 miles away. (This campsite is presently an open field located on the south side of U.S. 176, directly across from the S. C. Forestry Commission Headquarters.)

Swygert was a farmer, with most of his tendable land probably devoted to raising cotton.

He died in March, 1900. His grave and tombstone remain on the Forest near his old homeplace.

The remains of the old Swygert homeplace still exist on Harbison State Forest along the east side of the county road just before the Forest "middle road." This home, long abandoned, was destroyed by a forest fire in the 1930's.
In 1885 John Swygert mortgaged the 3,649.25 acres to the F. W. Wagner Company. According to D.A. (Pete) Swygert, a descendent of John Swygert, the property was mortgaged in order that John, Jr. could open a retail store in Columbia. The business was unsuccessful, the note could not be paid, and on March 4, 1887, the property was ordered by the court to be sold. The F. W. Wagner Company purchased the property for $3,000.00.

In 1913 the entire 3,649.25 acres was mortgaged by Mrs. John T. Caldwell. During her ownership over 1,000 acres were conveyed to T. B. Stackhouse, who later conveyed it to the State of South Carolina. (This conveyance is now part of Willow Lane, a girls' reformatory operated by the State, adjacent to Harbison State Forest.)

It is not known exactly when logging began in the forested area, but according to Haskel Bouknight, long-time Dutch Fork resident, logging operations were being carried out in 1918. A Mr. Green was in charge of the operation, and tram roads had been constructed to transport the logs to his mill that was located at Leaphart Crossing near the present Allied Corporation plant. The remains of these tram roads can still be seen in several places in the forest.

In a 1920 court action the F. W. Wagner Company again became the owner due to Mrs. Caldwell's non-payment of the mortgage.

In 1921 Peter Jennings purchased the property, then sold it to The Board of National Missions for the Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in The U. S. A.
Board of National Missions for the Freedman of the Presbyterian Church

Before purchasing the Jennings' property, the Board of National Missions were already landowners in the area. They had previously acquired land in the Dutch Fork area in order to establish a school for Negro children near Irmo. The school was constructed in 1911-12. According to Mrs. Jenny McAdams, daughter and former secretary of a Harbison College President, the school was sorely needed in the area. The school year for Negro children in the public schools lasted only three months. The Harbison School educated boys and girls grades one through eight. The girls' education ended at the eighth grade, but young men could continue through junior college. The purpose of the school was to educate blacks in order that they could become useful, productive citizens. Samuel P. Harbison was the school's benefactor, therefore, the school was named for him. He was a business partner of Andrew Carnegie in U. S. Steel.

The Harbison School managed 3,304 acres for the Presbyterian Church. Most of this land was for sale to blacks in hopes that a self-supporting black community would develop. The land sold for $10 to $15 per acre. Even though the terms were very generous, few took advantage of the opportunity.

During the time that the Church owned the Harbison Forest tract the trees were utilized for several forest products. Mrs. Clara Miller, a nearby resident, burned earth-covered mounds of pine wood in order to produce charcoal, selling the charcoal to Columbia residents. The remains of several of these circular charcoal pits can still be seen in the forest (see appendix).

Around 1900 an enterprising black man, John Anderson Shumpert, opened a turpentine still on Lexington Avenue in Chapin, S. C. For a time the pines close to the still furnished enough pinegum to make turpentine. As these sources were depleted
other stands of pine had to be located and leased. Beginning around 1925, the Harbison College lands were leased to Mr. Shumpert. John Shumpert's son Pat was in charge of collection on the college lands. Pat Shumpert remembers rolling barrels of raw gum on the old tram tracks out of the forest to be taken by wagon to the still in Chapin. Mrs. Pearl Jenkins, John Shumpert's daughter, remembers playing around the still as a child. Mrs. Jenkins also remembers her mother selling 10-, 15-, and 25-cent balls of the sticky sap as salve for insect bites and constantly stepping in the sticky substance that invariably covered the ground. After the gum was boiled and the turpentine distilled off, it was sold to the Keenan Company for further distribution. Because of poor economic conditions the still was closed in 1936 and the collection sites abandoned.

When the still was closed, another of Shumpert's sons, Ben, entered the logging business. At first he and his brothers traveled the state, cut hardwoods and sold the logs to Columbia Lumber Company for finishing. When they realized the value of the pines in the Harbison tract, Ben Shumpert leased the acreage for logging. An office and sawmill was located on Piney Grove Road. Later, in 1940, the sawmill was moved to the present Broad River Road location near Columbia. The Shumpert Lumber Company continued logging operations on the Harbison tract until the Forestry Commission purchased the property in 1945.

South Carolina Forestry Commission (1945)

On June 1, 1945, the South Carolina Forestry Commission purchased 2,201 acres on the southwest side of Broad River. The property was purchased for the sum of $21,000.00. According to the agreement between the Presbyterian Church and the Forestry Commission, the lands would be designated as "Harbison State Forest" and the name would be prominently displayed on signs along the highway.
The first caretaker of Harbison State Forest was Roof Lowman, employed in 1945. His main duties were to protect the forest from wildfires and to assist in the timber management practices. Roof remained as the caretaker for 34 years, until retirement in July, 1979.

George Pettigrew was the first forester assigned to manage Harbison. In 1946 he mapped the location of the various tree species and developed a management plan. Over the years from 1945 until 1964 sawtimber, pulpwood, and firewood improvement harvests were conducted throughout the forest. A main concern for these cuts was to remove the badly scarred pines remaining from the past turpentine operations and to harvest southern pine beetle-infested timber.
Several suggestions for the use of Harbison Forest lands have surfaced over the past 36 years from within the Commission and from other sources. In April, 1960, the Forestry Commission approved plans to develop a recreational area for Negroes similar to Sesquicentennial State Park, then operated on a segregated basis. These plans came to an abrupt halt when another proposal was published in May, 1960, by Leigh Fisher and Associates. Leigh Fisher and Associates had been retained to study the rebuilding or relocating of the Columbia Airport. Although the Harbison State Forest was not the only site suggested by Leigh Fisher, it was the primary site for relocation proposed by the $15,000 study. By the close of 1960, a decision was made to rebuild at the present airport site.
In 1964 the South Carolina Forestry Commission Headquarters and Shop facilities were constructed on the Forest along Broad River Road. The headquarters building was constructed by the firm of J. A. Metze and Sons, Inc. All of the shop complex buildings were dismantled at the Savannah River Plant then re-erected by Forestry Commission personnel.

At the time of the buildings' construction, there were many comments about the fact that the Commission was building so far away from Columbia in a non-populated area. However, in 1981 the Forest is being surrounded by residential and commercial development.

In an editorial, "The State," October 19, 1968, William D. Workman suggested that five hundred acres of the Forest be sold at $4,500 per acre for private housing. The resulting $2.25 million was to be added to the South Carolina State Treasury.

In 1970, the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division was seeking land in order to build a Criminal Justice Academy. They reached an agreement with the Forestry Commission to acquire 16.41 acres of Harbison State Forest. However, the deed was not properly filed until 1979.

In 1971, five more acres along Broad River Road were deeded to the State Development Board to erect a building to house the Division of Geology.

In 1980 the City of Columbia approached the Forestry Commission about acquiring one acre of land for the installation of a water tower. The location is to be on a knoll along the eastern side of the Forest, adjacent to an existing power line right-of-way. In 1981 the Forestry Commission approved the land transfer. The tower will be constructed in 1982.
### Landowners Adjoining Harbison State Forest

1. Martin Merieta Corporation - 86 acres (1144-1-5)
2. Becker Sand & Gravel - 35 acres (1144-1-6)
3. Sidney L. Bouknight - 50 acres (1144-1-4)
4. Martin Merieta Corporation - 31.3 acres (1144-1-3)
5. Becker Sand & Gravel - 26.5 acres (1144-1-2)
6. Emily Odom - 32 acres (1144-1-1)
7. B. H. Biggins - 97.94 acres (1149-1-45)
8. Thomas F. Jenkins - 28.98 acres (1149-1-14)
9. B. H. Biggins - 48.03 acres (1149-45)
10. Tom Jenkins - 3 and 17.67 acres (1145-1-15; 1145-1-13)
11. Holly Development Company - 62.5 acres (1145-1-12)
12. Jimy S. Jones - 3 acres (1145-1-18)
13. Frank Burt - 6.77 acres (1145-1-17)
15. Geiger Carnell (1145-2)
16. Pearl Shumpert - 10.65 acres (1146-3-11)
17. Criminal Justice Academy
18. Geology Department
19. S. C. Department of Corrections
20. Harbison Development Corporation
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CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF LAND COMPRISING
HARBISON STATE FOREST

1749 - Peter Rentfro, first registered landowner of future Harbison State Forest property.

Late 1700's - George Lorick, a German immigrant, settled in the Dutch Fork area.

1833 - George Lorick recorded his will which identified his estate.

1852 - George Lorick's death; his total estate was in excess of 10,000 acres along both sides of the Broad River.

1852 - John S. Swygert, husband of Harriet Lorick Swygert, purchased 3,649.25 acres from the Lorick estate. Swygert built his home on the property. The cleared land was devoted to farming. Swygert mortgaged the acreage to the F.W. Wagner Company in 1885. When the note was not paid, the property was sold by order of the court.

1865 - Federal troops, under the command of Gen. Tecumseh Sherman, loot and burn Columbia and Lexington. Some of these soldiers set up camp on the south side of Newberry Road adjacent to John Swygert's property.

1887 - F.W. Wagner Co. purchased the 3,649.25 acres for $3,000.00. During their ownership extensive logging operations were carried out in the forest area.

1913 - Mrs. John T. Caldwell purchased the whole tract of 3,649.25 acres. During her ownership over 1,000 acres were conveyed to T. B. Stockhouse, who later conveyed it to the State of South Carolina. Extensive logging operations in the forested area were common. Tram roads were built through the forest to bring out timber. In 1920, due to non-payment of the mortgage, the property was court-ordered to be sold.

1920 - F.W. Wagner Co. once again becomes owner.

1921 - Peter Jennings purchased the property and then sold it to The Board of National Missions for the Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in The U.S.A.

1921 - The 2,000-plus acre tract became part of the Harbison College lands. The Presbyterian Church had acquired land around Irmo in 1911-1913 and constructed a school for Negroes. The College was named in honor of Samuel P. Harbison, business partner of Andrew Carnegie. Mr. Harbison contributed heavily to the college in hopes that the former slaves would have a better life. The property was for sale to Negroes in hopes that they could build a community for themselves. During this time, the Shumpert family tapped for rosin to make turpentine. Later this same family began cutting timber from the forest. Charcoal operations were also carried out at several locations in the forest.

1945 - The South Carolina State Forestry Commission purchased the 2,210.1 acre tract. In accordance with the terms of the sale, the property was named Harbison State Forest in honor of Samuel P. Harbison.

1964 - Forestry Commission built state Headquarters in the Forest along Broad River Road.

1970 - Agreement reached to convey 16.41 acres to the State of South Carolina for a Criminal Justice Academy. The deed was properly filed in 1979.

1971 - Agreement reached to convey five acres to the State Development Board to erect a building to house the Division of Geology.

1974 - The Board of National Missions conveys remaining property to Harbison Development Corporation. Harbison New Town is begun shortly thereafter.