

## EARLY HISTORY OF SNEE FARM

Fifteen thousand years ago, the Snee Farm climate was much cooler. Mammoth, mastodon, horses and bison roamed what was a grassy plain. When the golf course was constructed in 1969, mastodon bones were found to the left of the third fairway near the green, and the University of South Carolina's Department of Archaeology excavated and discovered bones and artifacts at least 10,000 years old.

As the Ice Age ended and the climate became warmer, mastodon and bison were replaced by deer and squirrel. A vibrant stream running through the property became a calm brook, which was the center of life for prehistoric tribes. Two thousand years ago all of Snee Farm was controlled by the Seewee Indians, who called it "Mock Land", meaning our land. A thriving Indian city, Datab, was established on the brook leading to the Wando River.

The Seewee were allied with the Kiawah and Wando tribes when the English arrived. The Indians persuaded the Captain of the ship, Caroline, which entered Bull's Bay in 1670, to go on to what is now Charlestowne Landing. The English were perhaps outwitted, because this placed them between the Seewee and the fierce Westos tribe to the south. The Seewee's pottery and wood working skills stimulated a lively trade with the English.

In 1698, King William III of England granted the land that is now Snee Farm to Nathaniel Law who, in 1706, donated it for Christ Church. The original property consisted of 1100 acres and has changed size and owners many times over the years. In 1754, Colonel Charles Pinckney received the land, now part of the National Park Service, from John Savage as a fee for legal services. After building the simple Snee Farm house (the word Snee means bounteous or plentiful in Olde English), Colonel Pinckney settled into what was designed as a lawyer's country retreat rather than a working plantation. Colonel Pinckney's main abode was in Charles Towne, now known as Charleston, and he also owned Fee Farm at Ashepoo.

When the British seized Charles Towne during the Revolution, Colonel Pinckney, under pressure, took an oath of loyalty to the crown in 1780. Subsequently, many prominent men captured by the British were paroled to Snee Farm including Charles Cotesworth, Pinckney, and Colonel William Moultrie. One brief skirmish between the British and Patriots, possibly where the manor section is now, was the only actual fighting in the area.

After the Revolution, many who, like Colonel Pinckney, had taken a loyalty oath to the crown were "relieved" of their property. However, Snee Farm remained in the Pinckney's hands because of the patriotism of the Colonel's son, Charles. When Colonel Pinckney died, Charles inherited the land. He served four terms as Governor of South Carolina and was famous nationally. At the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, Charles presented a complete plan of Government: the "Pinckney Draft". The final Constitution contained over thirty of his proposals.

In May 1791, George Washington ate breakfast at Snee Farm under a huge oak. A silver spoon he may have used was found during restoration of the Pinckney house in the 1930's, and donated by Joyce Hollowell, a later owner, to the National Park Service. After breakfast, Washington took a ferry to Charles Town. He was greeted in the harbor by a boat carrying the St. Michael's choir, and met on land by dignitaries including Governor Charles Pinckney.

In 1817, Charles Pinckney sold Snee Farm to pay off debts. The next owner, William Matthews, built the standing structure in 1828 - the wings were added in the 1930's.

In 1853, owner William McCants destroyed much of the allee' of oaks leading from the house to the Georgetown Highway. Early 19<sup>th</sup> century plats of Snee Farm show much of the land as woodlands, with areas for "provision crops" and "rice lands". Indigo cotton and later pecans were also cultivated. The present lakes were not created until the 20<sup>th</sup> century for hunting and fishing.

During the Civil War, Snee Farm slaves were recruited to supply labor for defense works around Charles Towne. After the War (and emancipation), the South's plantation system was in ruins, and Snee Farm suffered. In 1935, Ann S. Ewing bought the property for \$15,000 and began restoration with her husband, the Canadian Ambassador to the Netherlands. Many camellias around the house were gifts from Queen Julianna of the Netherlands.

In 1966, the plantation was purchased by Snee Farm Golf Club, and the house and adjoining grounds by Joyce and Guilds Hollowell. The Hollowells continued restoration, and in 1974 the house was designated a National Historical Landmark. The Friends of Snee Farm purchased the historic house and its 28 acres in the late 1980's. The core of Snee Farm is now known as the Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, a unit of the National Park Service.

So, you see, this is no ordinary community. Think of the mastodon and his successors who roamed where we now live and play. You will now understand what appear to be odd street names such as Law Lane, Ambassador Way, Governors Road, DeLeisseline Boulevard, Casseque Province, and Cotesworth Court. When you walk behind the tennis courts and look at the historic Pinckney house, think of George Washington having breakfast under a large oak after, it is believed, his arrival by horse through our beautiful allee' of the Grande Oaks of Snee Farm.

*Originally Researched and Written in 1976 by Skippy Adkins*

*Amended October, 2007 by Dottie Teetor, Assisted by Carlin Timmons of the National Park Service*