

I. THE EVOLUTION OF ORANGEBURG COUNTY.*

By A. S. SALLEY, JR.

Under instructions from the proprietors of Carolina to the Surveyor General of South Carolina May 10, 1682¹, three counties were layed off in South Carolina shortly thereafter. These were: Berkeley, Colleton and Craven counties. Berkeley lay between the Seewee² and Stono rivers and extended inland to the heads of the Ashley and Cooper rivers, or about thirty-five miles. To the westward of Berkeley was Colleton, and to the eastward Craven. For each of these counties the governor appointed a sheriff, who was the peace officer and judge for his county. Each county had a militia organization and each was a unit from which representatives were elected to the Commons House of Assembly. Neither of them included within its bounds any of the territory now included in Orangeburg County.

In 1704 an act was passed by the General Assembly of the province dividing the inhabited portion of the province into parishes, but the act was vetoed by the Proprietors because not constitutional, but it was reenacted in 1706 with the unconstitutional provisions eliminated. One effect of this act was to disestablish the counties as political subdivisions of the province. Each parish was made a legislative and, to a limited extent, an executive unit. The militia organizations that existed in each county continued to occupy the same grounds and bear the names of the counties. Notwithstanding the abandonment of the counties officially, the custom of describing lands as lying within one of these counties was adopted and, as the settlements extended into the interior of the province, the northern bounds of the former counties were pushed back and the separating lines extended in indefinite fashion until they extended to the northernmost limits of the settlements.

When settlers began to filter into the territory now embraced by Orangeburg County, at the beginning of the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the old eastern line of Berkeley County, extending from Seewee inwardly about thirty-five miles, was lengthened until it struck the Santee River at its great bend just above Eutaw Springs, and then the river was followed up and, as the settlers pushed upward, the line followed the

¹ 'British Public, Record Office, Colonial Entry Book, Vol. 20., p. 179. (Copy in office of Historical Commission of South Carolina.)

² Now, and for over two centuries last past, known as Awendaw Creek. The bay into which this stream empties is still known as Seewee Bay.

Congaree and, farther up, the Broad. At the same time and in the same manner the western line of Berkeley County was lengthened from the head of Rantowle's Creek, the headwaters of Stono River, to the Edisto River about where Four Holes Swamp enters it, then up the Edisto and the north fork thereof to its source. In the same manner the bounds of the other counties were stretched. Westward of the Edisto and its north fork was Colleton County. This extension or enlargement of the counties was done by the General Assembly merely for the purpose of describing the location of lands granted to settlers beyond the limits of the parishes. It furnished no other advantage to settlers. Those settlers who lived outside of the limits of the parishes had the privilege of voting for members of the Commons House of Assembly in the parish nearest to which they lived. What is now Orangeburg County lay partly within the imaginary county of Berkeley and partly within the imaginary county of Colleton. A small part of the territory now embraced by Orangeburg County lay within the bounds of St. James's Parish, Goose Creek³, and a small part within the bounds of St. John's Parish, Berkeley, and that little corner was annexed to the county from Berkeley County in 1910.

The first official subdivisions that affected the territory which was subsequently erected into Orangeburgh District were four townships which were created under the terms of an act of the General Assembly, passed in 1730. This act directed that eleven townships be layed out in South Carolina for the encouragement of additional settlers. Each of these townships was designed to be promoted to a parish so soon as it should attain a population of one hundred families. All of them were layed off on the banks of rivers and most of them were named in honor of the Royal family of England: Kingston, Queenstown, Fredericksburg, Williamsburg, Amelia, Orangeburgh, Saxe-Gotha and New Windsor filling that description, while Purrysburgh, on the Savannah River, and two with fanciful names in what is now the state of Georgia, completed the eleven. . The four townships in question were: Amelia, named for the Princess Amelia, daughter of the King (George II), lying on the west bank of the Congaree and Santee rivers; Orangeburgh, named for William, Prince of Orange, husband of Princess Anne, daughter of the King, lying on the east bank of the Edisto River; Saxe-Gotha, named for the wife of Frederick, Prince of Wales, who was a daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, lying on the west bank of the Congaree River; and New Windsor, probably named for Windsor, the home of the

³ So named to distinguish it from St. James's Parish, Santee. Goose Creek flowed through the parish. The Santee formed the western boundary of the other parish.

Royal family in England, lying on the east bank of the Savannah River. Only about one-third of New Windsor lay within the bounds of what later became Orangeburgh District. The lands of these townships were granted out to settlers in the proportion of fifty acres for each member of a family. In each township there was a town laid off in streets, squares and lots and each settler was allowed a town lot in addition to his bounty land.

Before 1735 a few settlers had established themselves in these townships, but in that year over two hundred settlers from Switzerland located in Orangeburgh Township and for four or five succeeding years other immigrants from Switzerland and a few from Germany and Holland either joined the Orangeburgh settlers or journeyed on to the townships of Amelia, Saxe-Gotha and New Windsor. The men in these townships capable of bearing arms, were organized, as provided by the militia laws of the province, into such militia units as their numbers warranted; the Governor and Council, in naming Justices of the Peace for the province, named one or more for each township, and the Public Treasurer of the province was authorized to allot to each township its proportion of the public fund for parochial charges, that is to say, for securing religious services, for supporting the paupers and schooling the children of the poor, and that was the extent of local government in the townships. The courts for the whole province were held in Charles Town and all civil processes were recorded there.

In 1765 the townships of Amelia and Orangeburgh, with a little additional territory, were erected into St. Matthew's Parish, and the bounds fixed therefore were: a line from the plantation of Jared Nelson on the Santee River, inclusive, to the point where a road leading from the plantation of Tacitus Gaillard to the road connecting Charles Town and Orangeburgh intersected the line between St. George's Parish, Dorchester, and St. James's Parish, Goose Creek, and thence along that line to its second intersection of Four Holes Creek, thence up that creek to its intersection of the southeastern boundary of Orangeburg Township; thence along that boundary line to the southward until it intersected the Edisto River; thence up the course of that river to where it was intersected by the northwestern boundary line of the township; thence along that line northeastwardly to where it joined the southwest boundary of Amelia Township, and thence a line running northeasterly until it reached Beaver Creek; thence down the Congaree and Santee Rivers to the starting point.

The act whereby this parish was established provided that it should have two representatives in the Commons House of the province, but this

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provision meeting with the disapproval of the Board of Trade in London, which feared that too great an increase of the Commons House would make it unwieldy, the act was vetoed by the crown. In 1768 the act was renewed with the provision as to representation so changed as to provide for but one representative from St. Matthew's Parish and the reduction of the number of representatives from St. James's Parish, Goose Creek, from four to three. The new act was allowed to stand.

On April 12, 1768, the General Assembly divided the province into seven judicial circuits and provided for the establishment of courts and the construction of court houses and jails in each of them. One of these districts was Orangeburgh, which took its name from the town of the same name, which had long been the most considerable village in the territory layed off for the district, and which, under provision of the act, was made the seat of the district. The boundaries of the district were as follows: a line from Nelson's Ferry, on the Santee River, directly to Mathew's Bluff, on the Savannah River, the Savannah River to Silver Bluff thereon; a direct line from Silver Bluff to the mouth of Rocky Creek, on Saluda River; thence in the same direction to the Broad River; the Broad River, Congaree River and Santee River to the starting point.

Each of these districts had a clerk of court and a sheriff, appointed by the governor. These districts were only judicial subdivisions of the province. No records were kept therein save of the cases adjudicated in the courts of common pleas and general sessions. All civil processes were returnable in and recorded in Charles Town. All wills, administrations, deeds, etc., were recorded in Charles Town, and the parish continued to be the unit of representation in the General Assembly.

When the British Parliament passed the Boston Port Bill, by which the port of Boston was blockaded, in 1774, the people of the several American provinces were so outraged that mass meetings were spontaneously held in the various towns of the several provinces and general conventions were thereupon assembled in all of the provinces. The convention for South Carolina, which convened in Charles Town in July, 1774, was composed of volunteer delegates almost entirely from only the parishes of the province. It was thereupon proposed that a provincial congress be convened early in 1775, to be composed of delegates from every quarter of South Carolina elected by the people at local elections. As the parishes all lay in the Low-Country, below the Fall Line, the British government having always discouraged the laying out of new parishes and enlarging of the membership of the Commons House, provision had to be made for establishing

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legislative units in the entire Up-Country and in certain portions of the Low-Country. The convention and the proposed congress being both extra-legal bodies (the entire population of the province still acknowledging allegiance to Great Britain) new parishes could not be established. The convention, therefore, divided all territory outside of the existing parishes into election districts, defined by natural or existing boundaries. Each of these districts was allotted representation according to estimated population. The first Provincial Congress, the first session of which met in Charles Town in January, 1775, was, therefore, the first deliberative body composed of representatives from every section of South Carolina that had ever met therein, and the policy there and then established of having the parish as the legislative unit for one portion thereof and the election district as the legislative unit for another portion thereof prevailed until 1865, or for ninety years. In addition to St. Matthew's Parish, there were three of these election districts so inaugurated in 1774: Saxe-Gotha, which lay from the northern line of St. Matthew's Parish to the Saluda River and from the Congaree to the north fork of the Edisto River, the lower district between the Broad and Saluda Rivers, and the district between the north fork of the Edisto River and the Savannah.

On March 16, 1778, the township of Orangeburgh was cut off from St. Matthew's Parish and erected into Orange Parish. The bounds of the new parish were: on the north, the northern boundary of Orangeburgh Township from the northwest boundary of Amelia Township to the North Edisto River; on the east, the boundary line between Amelia and Orangeburgh townships to its junction with Four Holes Swamp and that stream from that point to its intersection by the line between Charles Town and Orangeburgh Districts; on the south by the said line between Charles Town and Orangeburgh Districts and on the west by the North Edisto River.

On March 16, 1783, a commission was appointed for each of the districts of the state to subdivide it into minor judicial subdivisions called counties, for the purpose of establishing courts of inferior jurisdiction therein. On March 12, 1785, an act was passed for laying oft the several counties and erecting the public buildings therein. Orangeburgh District was divided thereby into four counties; one, bounded by a line beginning at the point of intersection of the line between Charles Town and Orangeburgh Districts with Four Holes Swamp and following the main branch of that swamp to its head; from thence northwest 25° to Beaver Creek, and thence along the same to the Congaree River, thence down the same and the Santee to Nelson's Ferry, and thence along the line between Charles Town and Orangeburgh districts to the starting point, known as Lewisburgh County;

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one, bounded by a line beginning at the intersection of the line between Charles Town and Orangeburgh districts with Four Holes Swamp and following the Lewisburgh County line to its junction with Beaver Creek; thence southwest 54° to the road leading from Orangeburgh to Ninety Six; thence south to the head of Little Salkehatchie; thence down that stream to the line between Orangeburgh and Charles Town districts; thence along that line to the starting point, called Orange County; one, bounded by a line beginning at the mouth of Beaver Creek, thence along the line of Orange County, thence southwest 54° to the road leading from Orangeburgh to Ninety Six, thence along that road to the line between Orangeburgh and Ninety Six districts, then following that line to Saluda River, and thence along the same line to Broad River, thence down the Broad and Congaree rivers to the starting point, called Lexington County, and one, bounded by a line beginning at the junction point of the Little Salkehatchie River and the Orange County line, thence along the line between Orangeburgh and Beaufort districts to the Savannah River, thence up that river to where it was intersected by the line between Orangeburgh and Ninety Six districts, thence along that line to the intersection thereof by the South Edisto River; thence down that river to Tyler's Ferry, thence a direct line to the Salkehatchie River, where the line between Beaufort and Orangeburgh districts intersects, to Orange County line, thence to the head of Little Salkehatchie, thence down that stream to the starting point, called Winton County.

By an act passed February 19, 1791, county courts were discontinued in Orangeburgh District, the records of the several counties were consolidated in the several offices of the districts and the counties passed out of official existence.

On December 21, 1798, the nine judicial districts of which the state was then composed, were further altered and the state divided up into twenty-four districts. Orangeburgh District was divided into two districts: Orangeburgh and Barnwell. Barnwell District comprised that part of the former Orangeburgh District which lay between the South Edisto River and the Edisto River and the Savannah River. The rest of the original district remained as the new Orangeburgh District.

Six years later, on December 21, 1804, an act was ratified by the General Assembly, by which another district was carved from Orangeburgh District. That portion of the former Lexington County lying north of the North Edisto River was erected into Lexington District.

The constitution of 1868 changed the names of the districts to counties and made each county an election district. About this time also the final "h"

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to Orangeburgh was dropped in official records and in historical ignorance thereby legislated out of existence.

By an act of the General Assembly, approved March 10, 1871, Aiken County, composed of parts of Orangeburg, Lexington, Barnwell and Edgefield Counties, was created; that part of Orangeburg County lying between the North Edisto and the South Edisto , rivers and northwest of a line running in a direct course from the point of intersection of the Orangeburg and Lexington line with the North Edisto River to the head of Tinker's Creek in Barnwell County.

By an act approved February 14, 1908, Calhoun County, composed of parts of Orangeburg and Lexington counties, was established. To Calhoun was given that part of Orangeburg County lying east and northeast of a line beginning at the point of intersection of the line between Caw Caw and Elizabeth townships, with the line between Orangeburg and Lexington counties and following "said line southwest to the Joe Amaker old mill on Lime Stone Creek, then north forty-five east to Little Lime .Stone, then same creek the line north to poplar on Robertson Plantation Road, then south 76° east to the Kennerly Road, crossing the Kennerly Road one-half mile south of Moody Godwin's house, continuing the same line crossing the Columbia Road nine miles north of Orangeburg, continuing to the Southern Railroad crossing eight and one-half miles northeast of Orangeburg court house, continuing from said point on Southern Railway eight and one-half miles northeast of Orangeburg court house to a point on Four Holes Creek marked and designated by an ash tree X and witnessed by maple and gum trees, said line having the following course: S. 49° 00' E and being about 47,550 feet, thence the creek the line to the line of Jacob Riley, the said land line out to the State Road near Fred Dantzler's, then the Dantzler land line to point on Haigler land line, Haigler's land line, the line to public road, oak X 3 N near David Smith's residence, said road the line to a branch southwest of T. V. Bair's residence, then up said branch 40 chains to stake X 3 N, then northeast across A. C. L. R. R. to stake 66 feet from centre of track, then up the said right of way north 57%, west 120 chains to stake on the Orangeburg Road 66 feet from center of A. C. L. R. R. track, Orangeburg Road, the line to the Monck's Corner Road, then north 73 east passing to the north edge of the old Santee Graveyard, continuing to a stake X 3 N north of C. W. Shumaker's residence, then south 67 east to a stake by road of Capt. George D. Rast's estate land, then north 79° and 45' east to an oak on the road near Trinity Graveyard, then north 69 east to a stake on Two Chop Road by Neighborhood Road, intersecting on J. A. Johnson's land, then south Two Chop Road the line to Little Poplar Creek, distance, 37 chains; then down

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the said creek the line to McCord's Ferry Road, said road the line south 45° east, 209 chains to Hydrick's old mill on Big Poplar Creek, said creek the line to Santee River."

Up to the year 1910 Orangeburgh District and Orangeburg County had been losing territory by the formation of new districts or counties, but in that year Orangeburg County acquired some additional territory. In the preceding year a part of Berkeley County, under authority of a provision of the constitution of 1895, voted to join Orangeburg, and by an act of the General Assembly, approved February 23, 1910, that election was ratified. By that act there was annexed to Orangeburg County "all of that certain territory or portion of Berkeley County embraced within the following lines and boundaries, to wit: Beginning at a point located on Four Holes Swamp at the intersection of the boundary lines of Orangeburg, Dorchester and Berkeley Counties, and extending in a southeasterly direction, along Four Holes Swamp, the same being the boundary between Dorchester and Berkeley Counties, to a large cypress which stands at the confluence of Four Holes and Dean Swamps, at the upper part of Turkey Lake; thence up and along the run of Dean Swamp as it meanders to a point where Dean Swamp and Black Creek unite; thence up Black Creek to the point where Big Black Creek and Little Black Creek unite; thence up Little Black Creek to the point where the "new road" crosses said Little Black Creek; thence northerly up the "new road" to the Monck's Corner public road, near Mark Richardson's place; thence north ten chains to a pine; thence north fourteen degrees east, 38 chains to a stake; thence south 37 degrees 15 minutes east, forty-nine chains to stake; thence east 9.70 chains to a stake; thence north 39.50 chains to a stake; thence north 87 degrees east, thirty-four chains and ten links; thence north fifty-four and one-half (54½) chains to a stake; thence north 1 degree, 30 minutes west, eighteen chains and sixty links to a stake; thence north 8 degrees, west, eleven chains to a cypress at the river road and Rock Creek Bridge; thence northeast along Rock Creek to where Rock Creek empties into the Santee River; thence up the Santee River to the mouth of Eutaw Creek, where the Orangeburg and Berkeley lines connect; thence southwest along the boundary line between Orangeburg and Berkeley Counties to the point of beginning."

Notwithstanding all of these gifts to new political units, Orangeburg is still one of the largest and most populous counties of South Carolina, under the census of 1920, ranking third in size, with 1,131 square miles, and sixth in population, with a population of 64,907.

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