



JUNE 2015
Issue 90

OUR TOWN'S HISTORY

Present day Blackville was considered part of the Backcountry in the 1700's. Transportation was by horseback, wagon, and possibly boat, and was slow and tiring. There was a need for an easier, faster way to travel and transport items.

To enable Charles Town to remain a business center and port of importance, a group of businessmen formed the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company in 1827. They made plans to build a railroad from Charles Town (Charleston) to Hamburg. Hamburg is near present day North Augusta. A steam engine was purchased and brought by ship from New York to Charleston. The engine was named the "Best Friend" and made the first passenger run on Christmas Day of 1830 on the short six-mile portion of the track which had been completed.

The "Best Friend" engine exploded after only six months due to carelessness of the fireman. Parts were salvaged from the wreckage and another engine was built and named "The Phoenix" after the bird of Egyptian legend which was consumed by fire and rose anew from its ashes.

In October, 1833, the railroad was completed. It was then the world's longest railroad. The track was 126 miles long from beginning to end. The train reportedly could run between 15 and 25 miles an hour, but had to stop every 10 miles for fuel and water.

Mr. John Alexander Black was head of the railroad's Committee of Inquiry, and was given the responsibility of choosing the sites for fuel and water stops. Since the location of present-day Blackville was as far as they could travel in one day, it was designated the overnight stop. A village began to grow around the railroad tracks and became a town which was named for Mr. Black. The train burned wood so a bright glow could be seen down the track when the train approached. As the darkness came earlier during the winter months, often a fire was built of pitch pine on layers of dirt on a flatcar in front of the engine so the engineer could see the track immediately ahead.

A place was needed to house the travelers overnight, so a rough building was erected near the railroad. Following is an excerpt from the book Centennial History of South Carolina Railroad by Samuel M. Derrick, who rode one of the first trains: "...Stopping, then going fast, then slow again - we arrived at two or three log houses, and one half built 'tavern' amid a half burnt forest of pitch pine. Here was Blackville. A few fires glimmered on the ground: a square rough boarded fabric stood by the roadside that was the 'storehouse.' Here was to be our tarrying place for the night. Five rooms were available to be shared by twenty-five to thirty passengers, both men and women.

Having begun, the town continued to grow and people of several different nationalities, German, Irish, Scots and others, settled in the community. The town was chartered as the village of Blackville in 1837. It is not clear why the name was changed to Clinton in 1849, and changed back to Blackville by late 1851.

The railroad was of vital importance during the Civil War. Since it was used by the South to transport troops and supplies, it was a special target of Sherman's Army. Thousands of Union troops camped in Blackville in early February of 1865 near what is now Hilda Road on the edge of town. While here, they destroyed the railroad, made large bonfires and heated the metal rails and twisted them until they could not be used again. This was done in numerous places up and down the rail line. It is said that General Sherman met here with his officers during this time. On February 12th the army marched out of Blackville, leaving a trail of smoke behind them. A few homes and other buildings survived due to the vigilance and fast work of the villagers.

Blackville has been called the "Town of the Phoenix" since it survived several sweeping fires in the main part of town during the 1800's. There were many fires during the time wood and coal burning train engines were operated. A fire might begin from cinders which have fallen near the tracks and ignited debris or grass. Sometimes buildings burned before the grass fires could be extinguished.

After the Civil War, homes, churches and businesses were slowly rebuilt. There were some political changes and Blackville became the county seat in 1869. Court was held in the Baptist Church building, among other places, until a two-storied court house was erected. The political climate changed again and the county seat was moved back to Barnwell in 1874.

Information received from Internet

MEETINGS

June 4, Blackville Community Development Corporation, Town Hall, 6:00pm
June 8, BHHS, District 19, School Board Meeting, Board Office, 7:00pm
June 9, Neighborhood Watch, Tabernacle Baptist Church, 6:00pm
June 9, Barnwell County Council, Agriculture Building, 6:00pm
June 15, Blackville Town Council Meeting, Community Center, 6:30pm
June 22, Barnwell-Blackville NAACP, Macedonia Baptist Church, 7:00pm
Blackville Civic Club and Blackville Downtown Development Corporation will not meet in June.

SCHOOL NEWS

June 3, Half day
June 5, BHHS Graduation - 8:00pm

**CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF 2015**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Ethel Washington, **June 1**
Mrs. Ada Felton, **June 1**
Allan Harrison, **June 2**
Rev. Inez Raysor, **June 4**
Lucille Kearse, **June 5**
Shirley Taylor, **June 9**
Robbie James, **June 10**
Edwin Felton, Jr., **June 13**
Delores Jeter, **June 16**
Desiree' Pernell, **June 16**
Dan James Felder, **June 20**
Dyann Felder, **June 22**
Kanne Peeples, **June 27**

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

**June 21, 2015
MACEDONIA BAPTIST
CHURCH**

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

June 8 -June 12, 2015
9:00AM-12NOON
Transportation provided
Contact information
803 284-3311/803 284-2803

LIBRARY NEWS

10:30am
June 8, Ruth Patrick Science Education Center: Learn about the local ecology with live animals.

2:30pm
June 18, Magician Chad Crews: Don't miss the coolest magic show around!

FAMILY FREE MOVIES!

"PADDINGTON"
June 13, 2015 – 6:30pm
**Barnwell State Park
Community Building**

"PIGEONS"
June 27, 2015 – Dusk
Barnwell "YMCA" Grounds
(Bring chairs and blankets)

Father Son Bike Ride
June 20, 2015
Contact

Published by the Town of Blackville and Blackville Community Development Corporation. Send information to: Blackville@bellsouth.net or

vtalston@bellsouth.net add "Newsletter" in subject
line.