

FOLKS BOARD CORNER

By Dale Wilde, FOLKS President

In 2023, the special edition celebrating FOLKS's 30th anniversary focused on our organization's history. In 2024, we continued to move forward and remain relevant in the watershed, we reflect on the history of the watershed and provide a glimpse of the future of the watershed. I have discovered since purchasing my property on Lake Keowee in 2012 and joining the FOLKS board in 2018, that South Carolina has a rich history.

The history of the Carolinas dates back to the 16th century when Spanish and French explorers arrived in the area that was already inhabited by Native Americans. In 1663 King Charles II granted the land of Carolina to eight English noblemen. The establishment of separate colonies did not officially occur until 1729.

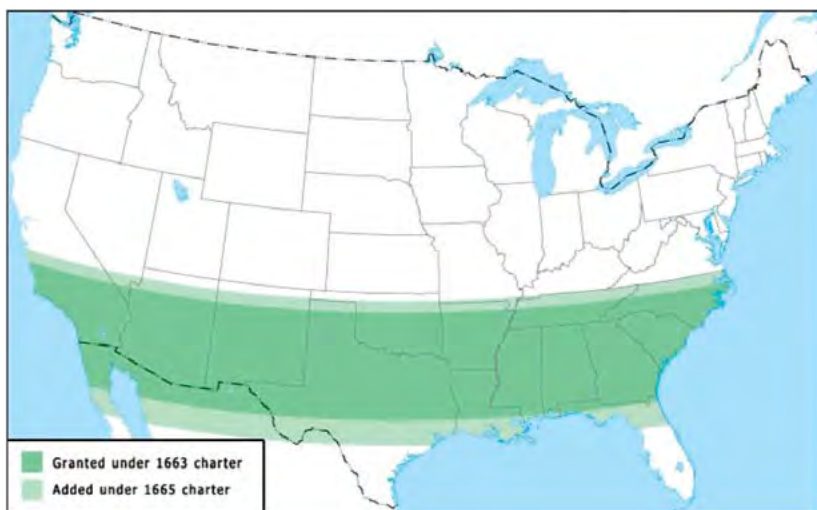


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On May 20, 1777, delegates from the Lower Towns of the Cherokee Nation and officials from the regions of South Carolina and Georgia met to sign the Treaty of Dewitt's Corner to end the Second Cherokee War. By signing the treaty, the Cherokees relinquished almost all their lands to South Carolina including what is now Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, and Pickens Counties. (See [map of South Carolina tribes on page 4.](#))

South Carolina ratified the U.S. Constitution on May 23, 1788, to become the eighth of the original 13 states to join the Union and North Carolina became twelfth state in the Union on November 21, 1789. From the time of colonization through the Civil War period, the Carolinas were poor, rural, and largely agricultural. This connection to agriculture is key to understanding how the Duke family sought to harness the power of water and its subsequent economic development of region.

(continued on page 4)

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James and Benjamin Duke, for whom Duke Energy is named, played a pivotal role in pioneering the electric power industry that has been a major factor in the twentieth-century development of the Carolinas. Their interest in hydroelectric power was an outgrowth of their investment in the textile industry in the Carolinas. They were among the wealthiest businessmen, largely from their original business success in the tobacco industry, which provided the capital to invest in large-scale hydropower development. James Duke's goals and vision were to develop a comprehensive water powered system in the Carolinas instead of the random development of power generation at isolated locations that was occurring elsewhere in the

South Carolina Tribes – 1776

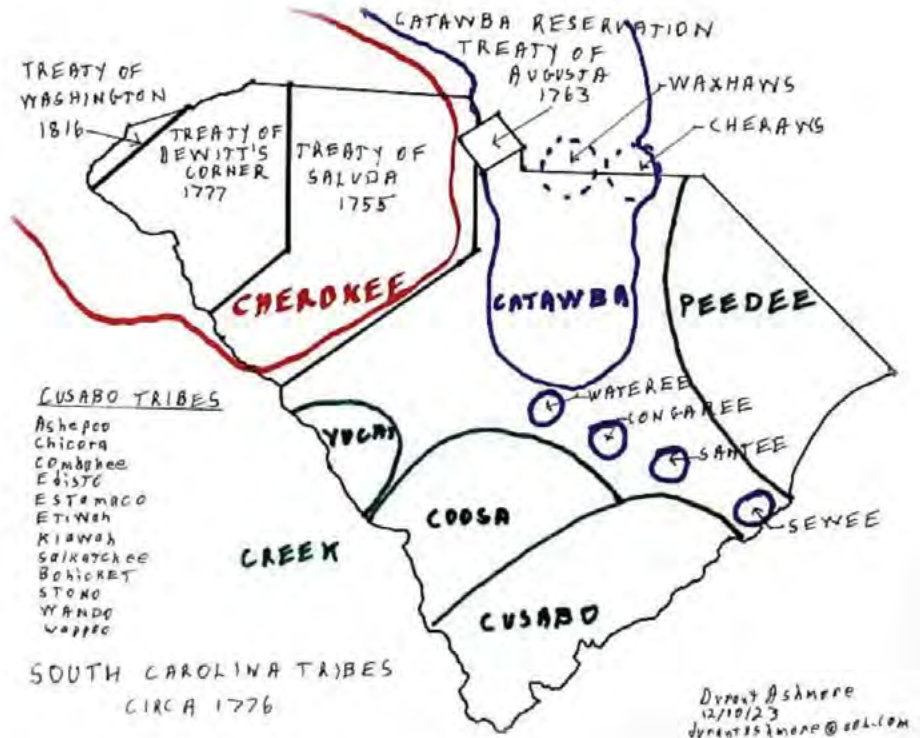


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early 20th century.

It's not easy to just drop a pin on the dateline of the development of this region. The land in this region was first inhabited by the Native Americans, namely, the Cherokees and to the east the Catawba, which is the only federally recognized tribe in South Carolina. The historical record for that time period is rich, therefore, this magazine issue will jump ahead and focus on the initial modern development of the region and its harnessing of hydroelectric power that was the driving force of its modernization.

The articles in this special edition are intended to help you, our members, understand the history behind the effort that created the lakes in the watershed and enabled us all to live in this region and enjoy the beauty that surrounds the Upstate.

The timeline at the end of this section details key dates and identifies milestones in history that have led this region to be one of the most sought-after places to vacation, live, and work.

View the historical timeline on page 6.