Friends of Congaree Swamp

www.friendsofcongaree.org
Summer 2009

Advocates for Congaree National Park and its unique environment.

KINGVILLE

Elizabeth Almlie —For this article, I will try not to repeat the most common information about Kingville, but share some of the other stories I came across in my summer research internship for Congaree National Park that was made possible by a research grant from the Friends group (so thank you!). My research this summer focused on two structural remains on the park-side of the railroad tracks near the Kingville sign and two former farmsteads previously owned by the families of Joe Garrick and Carrie Ann Portee. The function of the two Kingville structures is still unknown--archival research unfortunately turned up very few specifics on individual buildings at the station. Rather than discuss the two Kingville structures, I will provide some historical content for Kingville from my report; Congaree National Park and the Friends of Congaree Swamp will both receive copies in the near future.

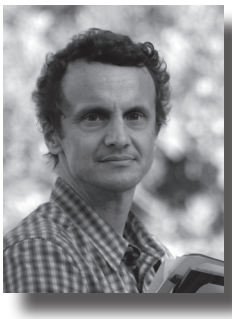
During the Civil War, transportation on the railroad became essential for troop movements as well as for civilians supporting the war effort. Many diaries, memoirs, and other records mention traveling through Kingville and the wayside hospital established there by the Young Ladies' Hospital Association in order to "provide food and drink for all men in uniform and aid the sick and injured in transit." The memoirs of William H. Wesson, who traveled through Kingville in 1862, relate that he "had gotten up a subscription for the relief of delayed and passing soldiers, at the horrible place, Kingsville, South Carolina," and then that "delayed and half-famished soldiers were fed at Kingsville." In the "personal recollections" of General Edward Porter Alexander of the Confederate Army, he explained that for a time the only route from battles in Virginia back to the South was the line from Weldon and Wilmington through Kingville to Atlanta. He, in fact, traveled through Kingville on the way to support Longstreet's troops at the Battle of Chickamauga. A refugee camp was located at Kingville for a time, hosting many former slaves of Combahee River rice plantations, as the new freedmen attempted to return home after being forcibly moved from threatened areas by their owners during the war. Other accounts included those in Mary Boykin Chesnut's diary, in Jefferson Davis' papers, in remarks made by the Rev. W. J. Lunn at the South Carolina Baptist Convention in 1863, in the writing of the Reverend William Wyndham Malet, in W.J. Andrews' memoir of Company K, 23rd S.C. Volunteers, and in General Sherman's memoirs. None of these authors being locals, they seemed generally to dislike Kingville as a dismal outpost on the edge of a swamp, but knew its importance as a transportation facility, as a hospital and as a site of relief work that served the soldiers. At the end of the war, Sherman's memoir mentioned destroying tracks "down to Kingsville." There were also multiple skirmishes in the swamps along the rivers during that campaign, mentioned in an 1893 account by an unnamed Union veteran in the *New York Times*. The rail line from Columbia to Charleston served as an important chain of supply for the Confederacy and therefore as a target for Union troops. Union forces had, however, repaired the main line to Columbia by 1866, and the line to Camden by the next year.

Media coverage of Kingville, sparse as it was, mostly focused on its role as a busy train depot. Many articles which mentioned Kingville simply reported on the train schedules and changes to them. Between 1869 and 1920, *The State* reported on several accidents and instances of violence, and on railroad employees' poor opinion of waiting at Kingville between trains:

- In August 1891, *The State* reported that an "unknown Negro" had been found near the track with a crushed skull, suspected to have resulted from a failed attempt to steal a ride on a train.
- That September, a "sleeping Negro" on the tracks was fifteen feet from being run over.
- In November, a man from Charleston was badly hurt when he stepped off the tracks. In April 1892, officers arrested two men with stolen train tickets.
- In October 1893, on the platform, a white clerk in a Kingville store shot a news agent from Blacksburg who had been harassing him.

Kingville cont. on page 3

President's Corner



Dr. John Grego

The park's staff has had an astonishingly busy fall, in between their work preparing and presenting *Congaree Campfire Chronicles*, and preparing and staffing the large and impressive exhibit in the Ellison Building during the State Fair. I hope everyone had the opportunity to attend at least one of these events, and I encourage you to personally thank Park staff members for their hard work next time you see them.

Facebook

Upon the urging of a couple Friends' members, we recently started a Friends of Congaree Swamp fan page on Facebook. You don't have to be a member of Facebook to view the page (it's at www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Congaree-Swamp/125681429748), but you do need to be a Facebook member to receive a notice any time new material has been posted to the fan page.

Mitchell West took the initiative to create the page, and we now use it to post photos and reminders of Friends events. Facebook isn't set up for longer documents, so we often use the fan page to point to items on our webpage (www.friendsofcongaree.org) for additional information.

The language of Facebook can be quite arcane to newcomers (e.g., what's a "fan"?), so we have enlisted Mitch to explain how to create a Facebook account and become a Friends fan (see article). Whether you join Facebook or not, be sure to visit the page. We have 145 fans now, and they represent a refreshingly young demographic.

Images of Congaree donation

Carolinas' Nature Photographers Association (CNPA) recently made a generous donation of 2500 copies of *Images of Congaree* to Friends. Friends of Congaree Swamp had collaborated with CNPA to produce *Images*, but CNPA owned the copyright. With the donation, we were presented with a dilemma—where do we store that many books, and how do we sell all of them? Kate Hartley, our membership Chair, discussed the matter with Congaree National Park staff member Justin Woldt, and Justin came up with an inspired solution.

Congaree National Park will store the books, and Friends of Congaree Swamp will receive proceeds from Eastern National (the vendor for national parks in the eastern US) for each book sold through the bookstore (an outright donation to the park was not possible). Friends of Congaree Swamp now owns the copyright for the book, and will be responsible for any additional printing when all of our copies are eventually sold.

A New Friends Benefit!

During the *Images* discussion, Eastern National agreed to provide members of Friends with a **15% discount** on all items sold at the Harry Hampton Visitors Center. Be sure to notify park staff that you are a member whenever you purchase items at the park.

Development Roundtable and Richland County's Stormwater Ordinances

As part of its second vote on a new stormwater ordinance back in February, Richland County Council had tasked the Development Roundtable with developing a final set of recommendations for wetlands, lake, and stream buffers. The Development Roundtable, a group of conservationists, developers, regulators, resource specialists and county staff, was organized by Center for Watershed Protection, which was hired by Richland County to develop an entire suite of Site Design principles.

The Development Roundtable reached a unanimous consensus on all 22 design principles, including such far-ranging topics as:

- Open Space Design and Open Space Management
- Tree Conservation
- Stream Buffer Systems
- Vegetated Open Channels
- Stormwater Outfalls
- Parking Lots and Parking Lot Runoff
- Land Conservation Incentives and Natural Resource Protection Inventory
- Rooftop Runoff

These principles were adopted by Richland County Council on November 3, and the council authorized a group of 12 members of the Roundtable to finalize specific language for all the principles, with a priority on buffers and storm water outfalls. Myself, Friends member Carol Kososki (in her capacity as Richland County Conservation Commission Chair) and Park Superintendent Tracy Swartout have been invited to be members of that group. The third and final vote on the stormwater ordinances should take place this winter.

Upcoming Field Trips & Events

Congaree Swamp Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 20, 2009
7:00 AM at the
Harry Hampton Visitors Center parking lot

Each year since 1900, bird enthusiasts have been conducting Christmas Bird Counts in North America. A Christmas Bird Count (or CBC) is an all-day effort to find and identify as many wild birds as possible within a 15-mile diameter circle. This effort, which now includes over 2,000 circles and 50,000 participants annually, is sponsored by the National Audubon Society; results may be reviewed at http://www.Audubon.org/bird/cbc. We have a CBC for the Congaree Swamp (founded by Robin Carter) that includes most of the national park and adjacent areas, from Gadsden in Richland County to St. Matthews in Calhoun County.

We have had some interesting counts recently. In 2006, with 4 teams from the Ivory-billed Woodpecker research group helping out, we observed the largest number of Barred Owls in the country, and were second in the country for three different woodpecker species. In 2007, two different parties saw a White-tailed Kite, and each of the last two years, huge flocks of blackbirds have been recorded in Lower Richland County.

Join us to help out. You do not have to be an expert birder, just someone who wants to help and is willing to walk a few hours on the park trails with an expert birder as a guide. You may stay as long as you like--many participants stay for a few hours, but some will bird all day. Meet at the visitors center parking lot at 7:00 AM on Sunday, December 20, 2009. There is a $5.00 participation fee that goes to the National Audubon Society to help cover the costs of processing the data. If you have any questions please contact John Grego at 331-3366 (C), 777-5110 (W); email jrgrego@mindspring.com (H), grego@stat.sc.edu (W).

Hike to Shivar/Garrick/Kaminer Site

January 23, 2010
9 AM-Noon

Friends of Congaree Swamp helped sponsor USC History Ph.D. candidate Elizabeth Almlie's research of two tracts in Congaree National Park. This is an opportunity to see and hear first-hand what Elizabeth uncovered at one site. We will meet at the Harry Hampton Visitors Center then carpool to South Cedar Creek Road. From there, we will hike to a site last owned by Carrie Shivar. Elizabeth will discuss her work on the site, and we will inspect remaining site features.

Meet at the park's after-hours parking lot at 9; we will carpool from there to South Cedar Creek Road near Red Bluff Road. We will need to hike a total of one mile along a firebreak, down a jeep road, and then briefly through the woods to the site. So the hike is short, but part of it will be off-trail. This trip will be limited to the first 30 that sign up; contact John Grego at jrgrego@mindspring.com or call 803-331-3366.

Kingville cont. from page 1

- In December 1902, the paper reported several times on passengers' unfortunate experience of waiting at the Kingville station between trains. They apparently waited four hours "cold, hungry, and worn out with the tedium of a four hours stop in the middle of a swamp."
- In June 1904, one brakeman shot another in the leg after a disagreement.
- Another article in November 1907, called Kingville "simply a 'death hole' during the summer and fall months." That article went on to state that the railroad employees were willing to forego their expenses as long as they did not have to spend the night at Kingville.

Granted, many railroad depots were probably stages for the reporting of sensational crimes and accidents —places where strangers came and went. However, several of these articles in particular show how integral Kingville's location was at the edge of Congaree Swamp in a predominately African-American area— how the negative connotations of the Swamp persisted and influenced the experience of white urbanites riding on the railroad through Kingville.

In the 1920s, an improved road system became the main venue for transporting timber and crops to town and Kingville —reliant on the railroad, and without a highway— experienced a significant loss in traffic. Most of the few residents left in Kingville worked for the Holly Hill Lumber Company which owned much of the neighboring land, and from there the town of Kingville faded away into memory. The highway became the main avenue for the transportation of timber and no highway went through Kingville, so the station closed and one by one the buildings have disappeared. It has since faded completely into the rural landscape.

Friends Finds Home on Facebook

Mitch West —Friends of Congaree Swamp now has a site on Facebook. Facebook is a social networking site that allows you to maintain a personal site that you can update with information about yourself, find and communicate with friends and join networks organized by workplace, city or school.

If you already have a Facebook account you can search for the Friends' site from within Facebook and click the Join button to become a member of the Friends' site. The Facebook site contains information about Friends of Congaree Swamp including upcoming events and photos from past events. As new additions are made to the site you will be notified automatically through your Facebook account.

If you are not a member of Facebook, you can still access most of the content on the site. You can search the web for "Friends of Congaree Swamp Facebook" and find a link that takes you to the Friends' Facebook site. You will see the updates and photos added to the site. If you decide you want to join the site, you will need to create a Facebook account. You can create an account by clicking on the Sign Up button. The website will prompt you to provide some basic information such as name, email and date of birth, most of which you can keep private if you choose. For more information on creating and using a Facebook account, go to the Getting Started Guide at http://www.facebook.com/help/new_user_guide.php.

Congaree Receives $1.32 Million for Riverstone Acquisition

…Another memorable October in the history of Congaree National Park.

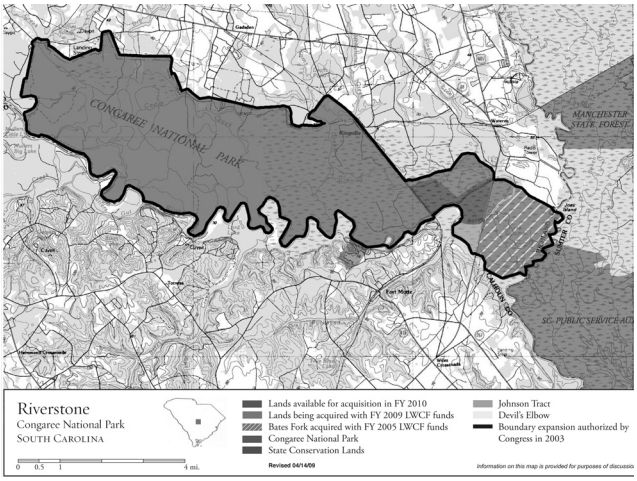
On October 29, 2009, Congress completed work on Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 appropriations for the Dept. of the Interior, which includes the National Park Service. This appropriations bill – now Public Law 111-88 – allocates $1.32 million in FY 2010 for Congaree National Park land acquisition.

We are grateful to Senator Lindsey Graham and Congressman Jim Clyburn for their leadership and dedicated efforts to obtain this funding for Congaree National Park.

The 1,840-acre Riverstone tract – along U.S. 601 – is the link to connect a conservation corridor of more than 42,000 acres along the Congaree, Wateree, and upper Santee rivers.

National Park Service acquisition of the Riverstone tract for Congaree National Park has progressed in several phases. The Park Service purchased 156 acres in 2008, and purchased 838 acres in 2009. With $1.32 million in FY 2010, the Park Service will purchase approximately 410 acres.

After pausing to rejoice about FY 2010 funding for the Riverstone tract, Friends of Congaree Swamp will soon ask Congress to allocate the final $1.37 million in FY 2011 for the National Park Service to complete Riverstone acquisition.



Annual Business Meeting and Oyster Roast Enjoyed by Members and Their Guests

In spite of competition from the newly-founded Canalapalooza event, Friends of Congaree Swamp had a strong turn-out for our Annual Meeting at Belle Grove. Belle Grove was a great meeting site—convenient, with plenty of space to park, good facilities, and easy access to the impressive bluff on this portion of the Congaree River floodplain. Hosts Kevin and Hank Asbill had arranged for Guy Johnson, Jack Hodges, and Robert Harris to lead tours of the property, including a green pond created by beaver activity along Mill Creek.

At the business meeting, Friends acknowledged our guests from the park, including Tracy, Tom and Grayson Swartout, Fran and Elizabeth Rametta, Stuart Greeter and Philoma Skipper, and Kate Hartley. We then nominated five current board members for new terms: Andy Fiffick, Kevin Fisher, Sharon Kelly, Sally Knowles, and Richard Watkins. A motion was made to accept the entire slate by acclamation and passed.

Friends of Congaree Swamp then honored LaBruce (Brusi) Alexander with the Order of the Cypress. Friends president John Grego noted Brusi's initial activities with the Congaree Swamp Action Project as President of the Audubon Society in the 1970s, and her continuing efforts through today:

LaBruce (Brusi) Alexander, left, is presented the Order of the Cypress by her good friend Harriott Hampton Faucette.

"Brusi has not only stayed active in conservation efforts, she has been a leader and creative force. She was the founder and president of the South Carolina Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, president of Friends of Congaree Swamp for most of its formative years, and is on the steering committee of the newly-formed Sustainable Midlands… Friends of Congaree Swamp would like to acknowledge Brusi as a well-spring of creative and original ideas, and for her courageous stances on behalf of the environment."

Brusi's long-time friend and Friends board member Harriott Hampton Faucette then presented Brusi with the Order of the Cypress, which cited Brusi "for her enduring efforts and leadership in protecting Congaree Swamp."

Throughout the business meeting, we anxiously awaited the arrival of our Bowen's Island oysters, which had been held up by a wayward cooking pot lost on the journey up I-26. Robert Barber's crew showed up just in time, and had more than enough oysters, even for us! The oysters were accompanied by desserts and snacks brought by board members, chili, roasted vegetables, and barbequed chicken prepared by Andy Fiffick. Friends would like to thank Andy, Kate Hartley, Bob Render, Helen Madden, and Virginia Winn for their excellent work in organizing the event.

Friends line up for oysters.

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Advocates for Congaree National Park and its unique environment.

Join Friends of Congaree Swamp today!

Yes, I would like to support conservation of Congaree Swamp for future generations. Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution made payable to Friends of Congaree Swamp.

❑New Member ❑Renewing Member ❑Corporate Member

❑$ 15.00 Individual ❑$ 50.00 Advocate ❑$ 500.00 Benefactor
❑$ 35.00 Family ❑$ 100.00 Partner ❑$ 1000.00 Patron ❑Other _____

Name(s): _____
Mailing Address: _____
City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____
Hm Phone: (___) _____ Wk Phone: (___) _____
E-mail: _____

Please keep your email address current to receive special notices about new field trips and other events, scheduling changes, and acknowledgements.

In addition to my membership, I would like to give $ _____ as a donation to Friends of Congaree Swamp:
In Memory of: _____
In Honor of: _____
As a Gift Membership to: _____

Please provide contact information so we can inform the person or family:
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

I would like to work on the following committee(s):
❑Field Trips
❑Public Relations
❑Education
❑Events
❑Newsletter
❑Research
❑Fundraising
❑ Membership
❑Advocacy
❑Other: _____

Thank You For Your Support of Friends of Congaree Swamp!