Location of "Indian Lands", 1670-1732
Adapted from Crane, 2004
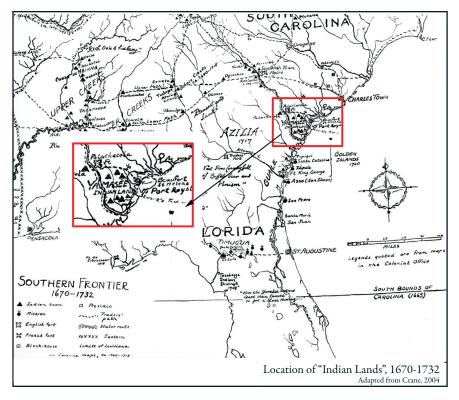
From the Yamassee Indians to the visionary developer Charles Fraser, many people have had a hand in shaping the history of the Point South area. During both the American Revolutionary War and the Civil War, Point South was recognized as a strategic location and it continues to be today, due to tourists travelling along Interstate 95.

In 1707, South Carolina set up a reservation for the Yamasee Indians near the area now known as Point South. At first, the relationship between the colonists and the Yamasee tribe was friendly, but soon deteriorated due to encroachments on Yamasee territory by white settlers. The disputes culminated in the Yamasee War of 1715, the greatest threat the young colony had faced. The colonists persuaded the Cherokee Indians to join them in fighting the Yamasee, and by 1716, the uprising was surpressed and the Yamasee Indians driven south to Florida.

During the colonial era, South Carolina had a diverse economy that included rice and indigo production, trade in deer skins, raising of livestock, and naval production. The diversification of South Carolina's economic landscape assisted in the rapid accumulation of wealth for the colony's residents. At this time, South Carolina was considered the wealthiest society in British colonial America (Weir 1983:153, 214). This wealth was "highly concentrated in a few hands" within the Lowcountry.

As the colonies prepared to go to war with England, Point South became an important location because of its position between Charleston and Savannah. As the British troops moved up from Florida toward Charles Town through this area, Point South because the site of many battles. A general panic ensued within the area as British forces ravaged the countryside, plundering and burning numerous plantations and significant buildings such as the Sheldon Church. By the autumn of 1780, the British worked to consolidate their control over the Beaufort District. In an effort to reinforce their offensive line and maintain communications and supply lines between Charles Town and Savannah, the British constructed Fort Balfour along present-day U.S. Highway 17 between the Coosawhatchie and Pocotaligo Rivers. The abandonment of Charles Town by British troops in December of 1782 essentially ended South Carolina's involvement in the war.

Yamasee Indians

Development of Port Royal area, mid-18th century
Bowen 1752

Frampton House

During the antebellum period there was a remarkable increase in the state's three major 19th century cash crops – rice, cotton and tobacco. In 1840, rice was Beaufort County's principal crop. The area experienced immense prosperity during this time and in the 1850s, a railroad connecting Savannah and Charleston was constructed, which opened the previously isolated area to commerce, trade and communication.

Local families were also thriving. By 1860, the family of John Frampton, who settled on Grahams Neck in the late 1700s, had grown substantially. Five generations had passed since the first Frampton came to America and Beaufort County and John Edward Frampton (1810-1896) was a wealthy planter, as well as a force in local and state politics. The Frampton Plantation House still stands and now serves as the Lowcountry Visitors Center and Museum.

During the Civil War, Point South's proximity to the headwaters of the Broad River and the nearby railroad from Savannah to Charleston made it a strategic location for the Confederacy. Early in 1862, General Robert E. Lee built earthen fortifications near the Frampton House to establish a stronghold against Union troops. During the 1862 Battle of Pocotaligo, Union soldiers attacked, but Lee's stronghold held and the Confederacy prevailed in the area until the end of the war.

Map of Rebel Lines during Civil War
O.M. Poe (National Archives RG77 in Schmidt 1993:xxxiii)

Charles Fraser, the visionary developer of Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island, bought land at Point South in the mid- to late-1960s in anticipation of Interstate 95 that was built through the area between 1965 and 1980. Fraser's plan for a unique commercial development at Point South recognized the area's unique location as a crossroads of the Lowcountry, at the intersection of Interstate 95 and Highway 17.

LEARN MORE about the HISTORY of POINT SOUTH

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