

*Published June 2020 during the COVID 19 Pandemic*

## **Dunbarton Lives On...**

*It was not just a place; it is the people.*

Perry Sprawls

### **Dunbarton, South Carolina**



**Railroad Depot  
1950**



**Former Residents  
Visit 2018**

During this time of social isolation and limited activities it is a great time to explore Barnwell County...if we keep our distance! The internet or “cyberspace” provides that opportunity. We can travel around to the different communities and go back in time and visit places of the past. This week we are visiting the small town and community of Dunbarton. Over 65 years ago it was physically destroyed but it continues to live in many ways-- memories, displaced families, relocated homes throughout Barnwell County, relocated cemeteries, reunions and visits--and all connected through Virtual Dunbarton on the web at: <https://www.bcvn.org/Dunbarton/> Here we can see who were the displaced families, old school photographs, many of the homes that were moved, and much more.

Now a brief history review to share with our homebound students. In the early 1950s the Federal Government took over a large area in Barnwell and Aiken Counties for the construction of a facility to produce materials for nuclear or atomic bombs. It was officially named the Savannah River Project but locally we generally knew it as the “bomb [pronounced bum] plant”. It was a major economic contribution to the community but was devastating to the many families who lost their homes. Businesses, farms, and churches and were evacuated. The properties were purchased by the Government and with the payments many relocated in surrounding communities. The Dunbarton Community was a major part of Barnwell County

affected. These residents, though now spread apart in location, have maintained a rich bond in remembering and honoring their very special place in history and their unique heritage.

Margaret Rountree has led this effort in many ways. Her extensive shared memories, along with the archives and collection of items, has made her home place near Elko the place to learn about the people and life back in the “good old” Dunbarton days.

The relocated cemeteries from the Dunbarton Community are major links to former families going back for many generations. An example is the Canaan Fair Methodist Cemetery, now relocated to Williston, which can be visited online at:

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2590778/canaan-fair-methodist> .

The Annual Reunion of former residents, families, and friends each year in May at the Barnwell State Park has provided a special opportunity for the Dunbarton Community to come together and “live on.” Unfortunately this year the Reunion had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 virus. Tony Dicks, Barnwell Fire Chief, is the president of Dunbarton Citizens Group that is working on the restoration of the Reunion and other activities like visits to the old Dunbarton site as in the photograph.

For now, we can visit Virtual Dunbarton at <https://www.bcvn.org/Dunbarton/> and share this part of our Barnwell County history, especially with our younger generations and students.