

Charles Towne Landing: Colonial Beginnings

A Site of Wonder

Opened in 1970 for South Carolina's tricentennial, Charles Towne Landing marks the historic spot where, in 1670, British settlers (primarily from Barbados), along with indentured servants and enslaved Africans (some already creolized), established the Carolina colony.



Arrival at Carolina, 1670



Roots in Barbados



Charles Towne Landing Today

The Barbadians: Founders of a New Colony

From 1670 to 1680, this site was actually a place of beginnings. Those who gained experience with the rigors of establishing a new colony in Barbados became the leaders. These experienced settlers, who embraced the moniker **Barbadians**, were powerful, confident, and unapologetic about their abilities and dexterity at establishing a colony. Some owned or had interests in plantations in Barbados.

They went on to etch their names in South Carolina history as Founding Fathers, with iconic plantations along the Ashley River, centuries before Charles Towne Landing earned its distinction as "**The Birthplace of South Carolina.**"

- ❏ South Carolina's history and the pivotal and defining role of the Barbadians cannot be overlooked or dismissed. Plantation owners told the stories of their families and those of others similarly situated. They influenced not only the American South but the entire nation. Their stories have been told and retold over the centuries, embedding the profile of settler families in the awareness of many.

A Walk Through the Birthplace of South Carolina

A Moment of Pondering

While on an invigorating walk through "the Birthplace of South Carolina," the quietude was disturbed by chirping birds and scampering squirrels jumping from branch to branch, but lulled me into a state of pondering: *What were the emotional responses of those who endured the long, treacherous journey from Barbados to Carolina?*

An Intoxicating Expanse

Barbados' 166 square miles, which yielded immense wealth for Barbadian planters and the British crown, was but a plot compared to the expanse of land reaching from the east coast to the west coast. It had to be intoxicating. What an eye-popping, jaw-dropping reaction when they set foot on solid ground so vast and opportunities draped in uncertainty.

Old Town Plantation replaced the first settlement, following the model of a Barbados plantation.

A Time-Travel Thought Experiment

I mused further: *if I were able to time-travel back three centuries and have a conversation with each group, what lessons or takeaways would I bring back to the present?*



The Planter Class

Envisioned wealth, power, control, thousands of acres of land, and many enslaved people to labor to realize their dreams and ambitions.



The Indentured Servants

Anticipated serving out their indentureship, getting beyond that period of limitations and restrictions imposed by circumstances and conditions on those more powerful than they were.



The Enslaved Ancestors

Were aware of the fate that awaited them. Their hopes and dreams were of elusive freedom, justice, and equality. They understood it would require strength, resolve, and struggle for the long haul.



The Native People Groups

Traversed the lands and never espoused ownership as the newcomers did — faced with a cultural hurdle that would play out to their detriment.



The Planter Class: Visions of Power and Wealth

The planter class envisioned wealth, power, control, thousands of acres of land, and many enslaved people to labor to realize their dreams and ambitions.

These were the Barbadians — powerful, confident, and unapologetic. Some owned or had interests in plantations in Barbados before making the journey to Carolina. They became the Founding Fathers of South Carolina, their names etched into history through iconic plantations along the Ashley River. Their stories have been told and retold over the centuries, embedding the profile of settler families in the awareness of many. They influenced not only the American South but the entire nation.

The Indentured Servants: Bound by Circumstance



The indentured servants anticipated serving out their indentureship — getting beyond that period of limitations and restrictions imposed by circumstances and conditions on those more powerful than they were.

They arrived at Charles Towne Landing with a future that held both **immense possibilities and immense perils**.

Their fate, while constrained, carried within it the hope of eventual freedom and a new life on the other side of their service.

Immense Possibilities and Immense Perils

A New Beginning

This was a site of a new beginning for each person: the place where every new settler landed and began their new adventure. For the indentured servant class, that adventure was defined by the terms of their bondage — and the distant promise of what lay beyond it.



The Enslaved Ancestors: Strength, Resolve, and the Long Haul

I put myself in the status of enslaved ancestors who were aware of the fate that awaited them. Their hopes and dreams were of elusive freedom, justice, and equality. They understood it would require strength, resolve, and struggle for the long haul.



Already Creolized

Some of these enslaved Africans were already creolized — shaped by the experience of Barbados before being brought to Carolina.



Foundational Yet Denied

Their presence was foundational to the colony's survival and prosperity, yet their humanity was denied.

Charles Towne Landing is also their story — a story of endurance, of hope deferred, and of a people whose contributions to South Carolina and to the nation cannot be overlooked or dismissed.

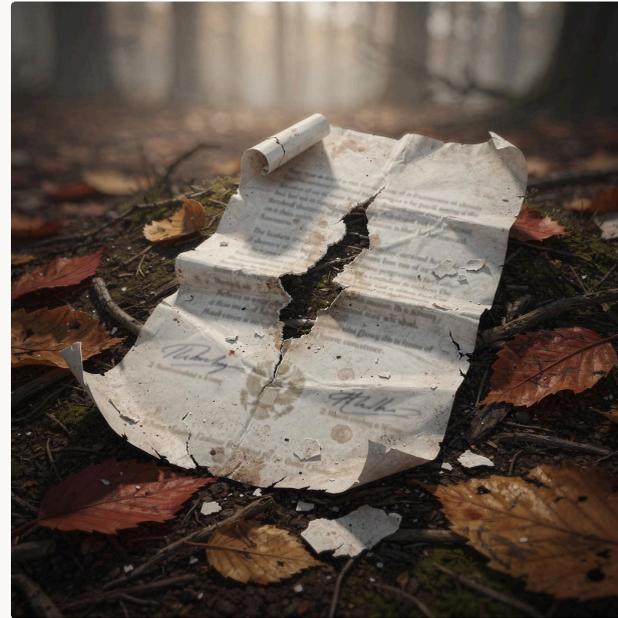
The Kiawah and the Native People Groups

The native people groups who traversed the lands and never espoused ownership as the newcomers did were faced with a cultural hurdle that would play out to their detriment.



Hospitality Extended

The Kiawah extended hospitality and helping hands to the arriving settlers, offering guidance and goodwill to those who came to their lands.



Promises Broken

Only to be deceived by broken promises and interactions — a pattern that would define the relationship between native peoples and European settlers across the continent.



A Cultural Hurdle

The concept of land ownership as practiced by the newcomers was foreign to native ways of life — a difference that would play out to their profound detriment.

Returning to the Trek: A Landscape of Memory

I return to my invigorating trek through Charles Towne Landing, punctuated by age-old trees and marshy areas, with bodies of water that meander across the landscape toward tributaries that flow into the Atlantic Ocean. On this site, native birds, crocodiles, and sometimes wild animals still roam, seemingly oblivious to human encroachment.

Designated the "**Birthplace of South Carolina**," where everyone landed and started a new life. The future held immense possibilities and perils for each person — the planter class, the indentured servant class, and the enslaved people whose fate was not in their own hands.

□ This was a site of a new beginning for each person: the place where every new settler landed and began their new adventure.

The People's Landing: Wonder, Magic, and Many Questions

Charles Towne Landing is still a place of wonder, magic, inspiration, hope, and many questions. It is where imaginations can be three-dimensional, past, present, and future. It is a place where past and present history collide, a place where everyone can capture their story and share it.

My takeaway for today is that Charles Towne Landing is still a place of wonder, magic, inspiration, hope, and many questions. It is where imaginations can be three-dimensional — past, present, and future.



Past and Present Collide

A place where past and present history collide — where the stories of planters, servants, enslaved ancestors, and native peoples all converge on the same ground.



Everyone Can Capture Their Story

A place where everyone can capture their story and share it — where imagination is three-dimensional, reaching across centuries.



The People's Landing

It is my opinion that this is **the People's Landing** — belonging not to one class or one story, but to all who arrived, all who endured, and all who remember.