

Kenmure History

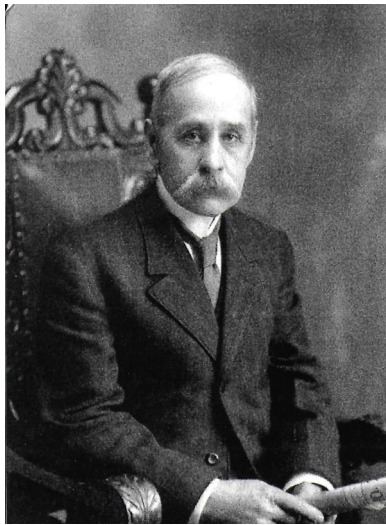
Galen Reuther

The beginnings of Kenmure go back to the Revolutionary War, and it has developed into a vibrant community which is now Kenmure and is part of the Village of Flat Rock. The Village of Flat Rock is now registered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Kenmure began as a tract of land known as the Kuykendall Mills, with grist and saw mills. Abraham Kuykendall, who was awarded land grants in thanks for his service in the Revolutionary War, died in 1812, leading us to believe the mills were in operation as far back as the turn of the century. The property changed hands after his death, bringing us to an important person in Flat Rock's development, Colonel John Davis.

John Davis (who left the service as a Sergeant-Major) was a veteran of the War of 1812. Born in Virginia in 1781, he saw action in Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Louisiana under Colonel Coffee. After his service, John Davis settled in SC, where he married and started a mercantile business. He knew this area from earlier visits, so in 1823, he and his new bride came up "the winding stairs" through Saluda Gap, and he purchased the mills, making Flat Rock home.

John Davis was an educated, well-traveled and well known man - perhaps that's why he was called Colonel. His mill manager, Lincoln Fuliam, operated the mills while John Davis ran a tavern. Through his friendship with Colonel Coffee, it was John Davis who was mostly responsible for bringing postal service to Flat Rock. He was appointed Flat Rock's first Postmaster on June 29, 1829.



Just one year later, on October 12, 1830, Davis sold his house, mill and 1,400 acres to Judge Mitchell King, a prominent lawyer, judge and railroad speculator, from the low country. Mitchell King, being a Scot, and not wanting to waste extra dollars on his summer house, moved into the Davis house and had Argyle built around it, making Argyle's core the oldest surviving structure in the village. Here he and his family spent long summers while he increased his land holdings, raised cattle and pursued his railroad interests. He would become one of the most beloved of Flat Rock's summer residents. Kenmure, originally named Glen Roy, reflecting his Scottish heritage, was built when Judge King's son, Dr. Mitchell Campbell King, decided to return to his beloved mountains to practice medicine. He spent the rest of his life tending to the sick of this community.

Dr. King

Galen Reuther and
The Georgia Historical Society

An interesting note – while Dr. King studied medicine in Europe he saw how fresh air and altitude improved peoples’ health. Dr. King was partially responsible for beginning the Florida tourist trade in Henderson County when he encouraged those suffering from the Yellow Fever epidemic in Jacksonville, to come to the mountains to recuperate. They came in droves, and many families settled here in the mountains.

Winter Scene, Summer House & Barns

Galen Reuther and the McCabe Family



Dr. King purchased 293 acres of Argyle lands from his father, and set about to build Glen Roy, now named Kenmure. He employed a Scottish architect and shipbuilder from Charleston to design and build the house. It was completed c1850 along with a medical office, which still stands, in its almost original condition, just behind the main house. He practiced medicine here for 60 years, throughout the Civil War, until his death in 1901. He willed the estate to his sister, who then sold it to Dr. King’s daughter Henrietta Bryan.



In 1920, Gordon McCabe II, of Charleston, purchased the estate and it was he who changed the name to Kenmure, the Scottish ancestral home to the Gordon clan. He extended the acreage to 1,007 acres. The McCabe’s made the first alterations to the main house, built the lake, and a highly sophisticated complex of barns as part of their cattle operation.



W. McCabe, Jr. , Director of J. P. Stevens Textile Co. later inherited the property from his father’s second wife, and purchased his brother’s one-half interest in the estate, becoming its’ sole owner. He continued the cattle operation, added extensive gardens including the refurbishment of the boxwood garden, which is still visible today. During this period of time, Kenmure was called “The most beautiful house in Flat Rock”.

In 1978, the McCabe's sold the estate to Vincent and Gudrun Romeo, who subdivided the land, built a golf course designed by Joseph E. Lee, and converted the house into a clubhouse. In 1981, Romeo declared bankruptcy and the property and development thereof was purchased by Kenmure Properties, Ltd. (KPL) in 1985. KPL became Kenmure Enterprises, Inc. around 2005 and is now referred to as KEI.

For about 17 years KPL had almost total management control over all aspects of the Kenmure development under the terms of the Kenmure declaration that only KPL could amend. The one exception was the Kenmure Road Maintenance Homeowners Association (KHRMA), which KPL established in 1988 to give property owners responsibility for road maintenance.

In 2002 a property owner initiative, which was not challenged by KPL, brought Kenmure under the NC Planned Community Act (PCA). This was a momentous achievement for Kenmure property owners. The resulting amended declaration transferred virtually all of KPL's management control of the development to the Kenmure Property Owners Association (KPOA), while KPL retained complete control of the Kenmure Country Club (KCC).

Kenmure Club in 2015

