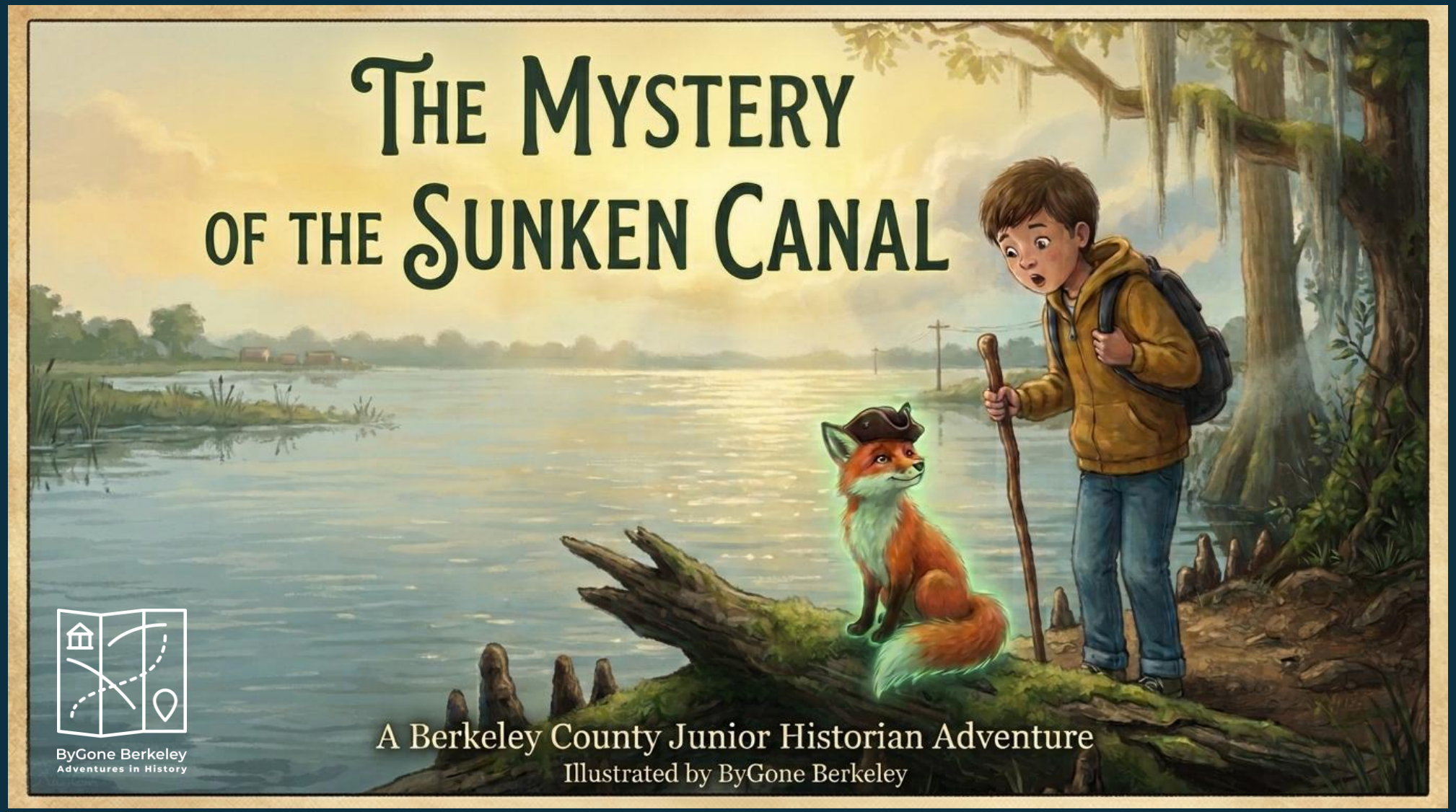

The Mystery of the Sunken Canal
ByGone Berkeley
Adventures in History
A Berkeley County Junior Historian Adventure
Illustrated by ByGone Berkeley

Toby loved exploring the outdoors near Moncks Corner. One misty morning, the fog parted to reveal a red fox sitting on a fallen log. The fox offered a polite nod. “Greetings Junior Historian!” a familiar voice said. It was his friend Francis. “Follow me if you want to go on another Berkeley County historical adventure.”



Before Toby could blink, Francis bounded toward Lake Moultrie. Toby scrambled after him until they reached a quiet overlook. “Look closely,” Francis whispered, pointing a paw at the murky depths. Beneath this lake lies America’s first ‘true’ or ‘summit’ canal.” Toby peered down and the scenery shimmered.



The modern lake vanished, replaced by a muddy construction site cutting through the wilderness.

“The year is 1793,” Francis explained. “For seven long years, nearly a thousand men cleared these swamps with axes and shovels, carving a twenty-two-mile water highway! It was created to provide a safer, direct trade route connecting inland South Carolina to the port city of Charleston. It’s recognized as one of the earliest major construction achievements in the United States. The lead engineer was Colonel John Christian Senf. The work was considered brutal, grueling and highly dangerous, and many men died from the construction.”

Toby watched ghostly laborers craft ten brick and stone locks designed to lift boats over the county's high ridges.

"Opening in 1800, this canal connected the Santee and Cooper rivers, changing South Carolina commerce forever!" Francis said.

Toby saw wooden barges laden with heavy goods glide gracefully through the locks. "But by the mid-1800s, steam railroads arrived, making this all too slow for 'modern' times."



"Where did it all go?" Toby asked. Francis's face turned solemn.



“In the 1930s, in an effort to bring electricity to all of Berkeley County, workers cleared 160,000 acres of timber and built the Pinopolis Dam. By 1941, this area was flooded to make Lake Moultrie.” Francis said in a hushed voice.

Toby watched an artificial tide swallow the landscape, submerging houses, farms, historic creeks and the canal itself.

The vision faded, returning the two history pals to the modern shoreline. Toby smiled, realizing the lake is a living library of history.

Stay tuned for more adventures with Toby, the ByGone Berkeley Junior Historian!

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