

## BUZZARD ROOST PROJECT

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Lake Greenwood is an impoundment on the Saluda River in the counties of Greenwood, Laurens, and Newberry. It was formed in the mid-1930s by the construction of a dam and hydro-electric generation plant known as the Buzzard Roost Project.

In Britain, the term "buzzard" is used for large soaring hawks of the genus *Buteo*. In North America, the familiar Red-tailed Hawk is in the genus *Buteo*. The term "buzzard" is colloquially applied to vultures. In Laurens County, SC we have two species of vultures: Turkey Vulture and Black Vulture. Vultures like to roost and gather in groups. The Black Vulture is the most gregarious species, although Turkey Vultures can also often be found roosting with Black Vultures.



Vulture roosts are rather unpleasant places due to the smell that the birds derive from their food, their defecations, and noise. In the eastern United States, there are many places known as buzzard roosts. One such roost was located along the Saluda River near the site chosen for construction of the dam which formed Lake Greenwood. "The name 'Buzzard Roost' dates back to a time 'whereof the mind of man (the white settlers at least) runneth not to the contrary.' It is Buzzard Roost now because it always has been Buzzard Roost. It got that name because it was actually a place that describes just what happened every night." (1)

When it was decided that a Park would be constructed near the dam, many locals objected to naming it "Buzzard Roost Park." However, some locals endorsed the name. "As soon as the news came that Buzzard Roost would be built, the Chamber of Commerce [Ninety Six, SC] adopted the name, 'The Power City, the Home of Buzzard Roost,' ...." (2) When I was a child, many people referred to the lake as "Buzzard Roost."

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(1) The Index-Journal (Greenwood, South Carolina) · 11 Mar 1936, Wed, Page 4.

(2) The Index-Journal (Greenwood, South Carolina) 07 Apr 1938, Thu, Page 81.