



WHITAKER MILL - 31FK165

aka: Alford, Goswick, Simms, Wm Jones Mill (1826)
circa: prior to Mac Rae-Brazier Map 1833 - marked as mill *



LOCATION

Redacted per OSA request

ACCESS

Redacted per OSA request

REFERENCES

<https://lynchcreek.com/2008-apr-lynch-creek-mill-tour-with-tom-magnuson/>

<https://lynchcreek.com/2008-jan-lynch-creek-journal-by-bob-radcliffe/>

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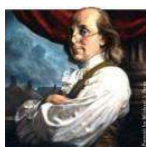
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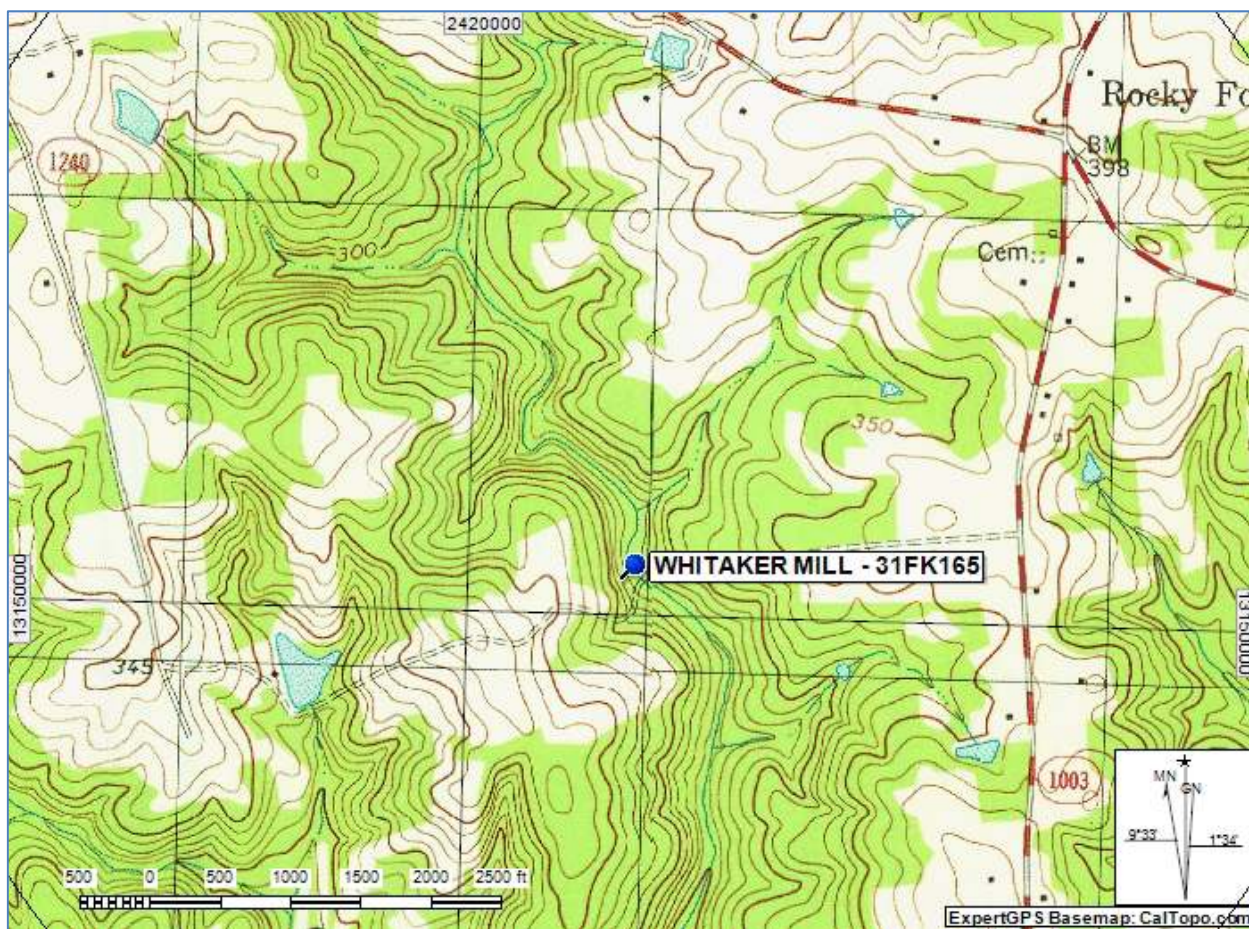
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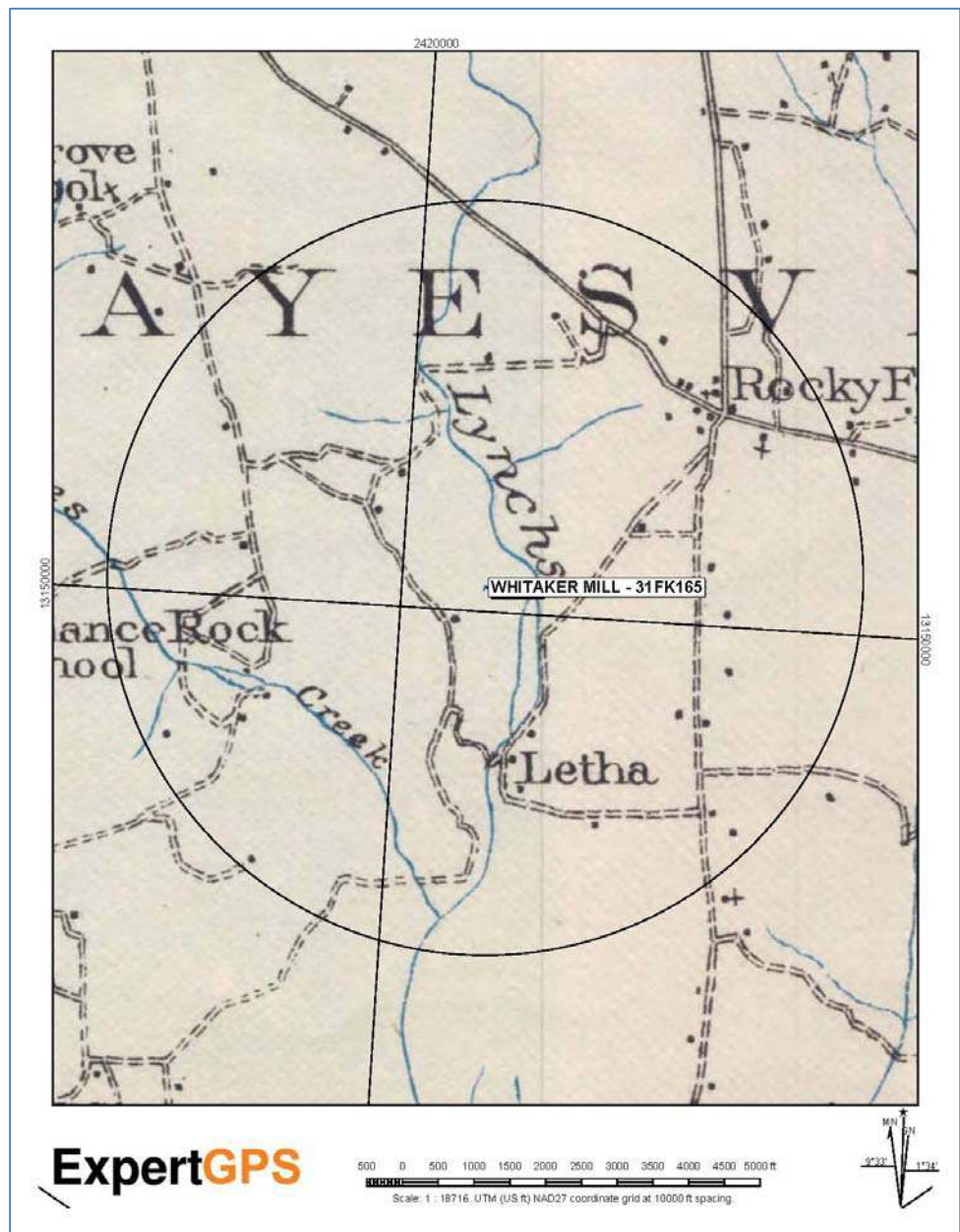
===== MAPS =====



[USGS Topo NC Ingleside, 1:24000, 1979] Notice dotted-access path and Lynch Creek stream crossing - West towards Sims Bridge over the Tar River - East terminating at Sims Bridge Road. Evidence of cart-wheel tracks in the rock at the Lynch Creek stream crossing remain to this day.

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Scanned Map - Franklin County, NC PRATT MAP 1906-1907 - with approximate GIS registration, showing: 1-mile circle, now abandoned town Letha near Whitaker Mill Site, and proximity to town/crossroad Rocky Ford and local structures noted (square dot). The PRATT MAP was later used as the Base Map for the USDA Franklin County Soils Survey published in 1931 by W.A. Davis.

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===== PHOTOGRAPHY =====



Dam north of Whitaker Mill Site on Lynch Creek - now breached - date unknown. Earthen Mill Race and Gate to right (east side).

Photo from Gordon Ward (gordon@ward.org), 219 Walnut Lane, Bossier City, LA 71111 on Feb 15, 2011 from the William Carl Whitaker genealogy booklet he made in 2007. All photos are online at <http://www.thewards.info/mauldin>



Breached Whitaker Mill Dam - looking downstream (south) - by Skip Stoddard, NCSU Geology Professor and USGS Quad Map Contractor taken in February 2010 while performing field work on the NC Ingleside Quad

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Best available Whitaker Mill Complex Photo: Mill to left with Overshot Wheel and wooden raceway from earthen race paralleling Lynch Creek; older Mill to right with Turbine/Tub-type Wheel and similar elevated wooden raceway - date unknown (prior to 1960)

Photo from Gordon Ward (gordon@ward.org), 219 Walnut Lane, Bossier City, LA 71111 on Feb 15, 2011 from the William Carl Whitaker genealogy booklet he made in 2007. All photos are online at <http://www.thewards.info/mauldin>



Showing Overshot Wheel (20 ft Diameter, 4-feet wide - estimated measure by Bob Radcliffe from onsite remains in 2008) Date unknown (after 1960)

Photo from Gordon Ward (gordon@ward.org), 219 Walnut Lane, Bossier City, LA 71111 on Feb 15, 2011 from the William Carl Whitaker genealogy booklet he made in 2007. All photos are online at <http://www.thewards.info/mauldin>

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Photo showing deterioration - missing structure - date unknown (after 1960)

Photo from Gordon Ward (gordon@ward.org), 219 Walnut Lane, Bossier City, LA 71111 on Feb 15, 2011 from the William Carl Whitaker genealogy booklet he made in 2007. All photos are online at <http://www.thewards.info/mauldin>

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Present day Whitaker Mill foundation remains - photo looking east taken in 2008 by Bob Radcliffe while performing field work for the Franklin County Grist Mill Inventory Project of the Ben Franklin Society (www.benfranklinsocietync.org)

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Present day Whitaker Mill foundation remains - Waterwheel driveshaft opening - photo looking north taken in 2008 by Bob Radcliffe while performing field work for the Franklin County Grist Mill Inventory Project of the Ben Franklin Society

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Present day Waterwheel Driveshaft iron casting outside foundation - photo taken in 2008 by Bob Radcliffe while performing field work for the Franklin County Grist Mill Inventory Project of the Ben Franklin Society (www.benfranklinsocietync.org).

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Present day Waterwheel Gear iron casting - photo taken inside foundation in 2008 by Bob Radcliffe while performing field work for the Franklin County Grist Mill Inventory Project of the Ben Franklin Society (www.benfranklinsocietync.org)

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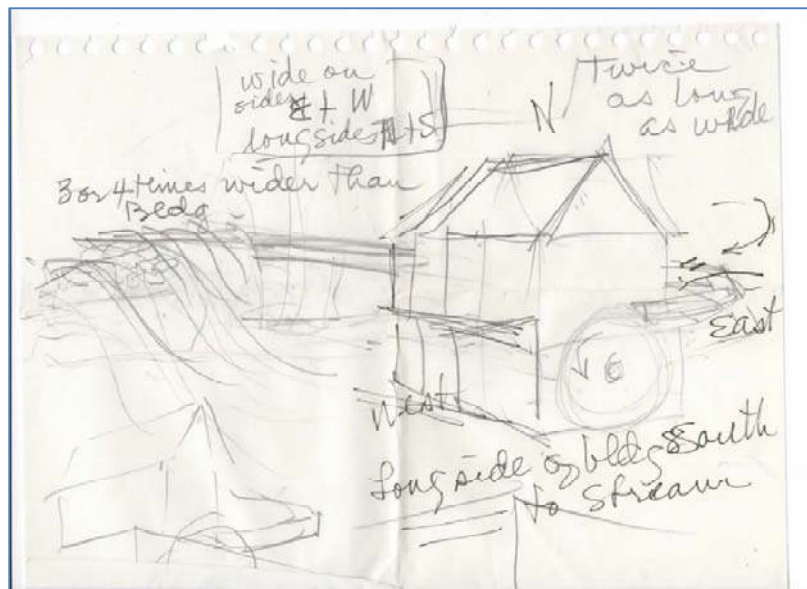
Miller's House - near Whitaker Mill - former town of Letha - photo taken in 2008 by Bob Radcliffe while performing field work for the Franklin County Grist Mill Inventory Project of the Ben Franklin Society (www.benfranklinsocietync.org)

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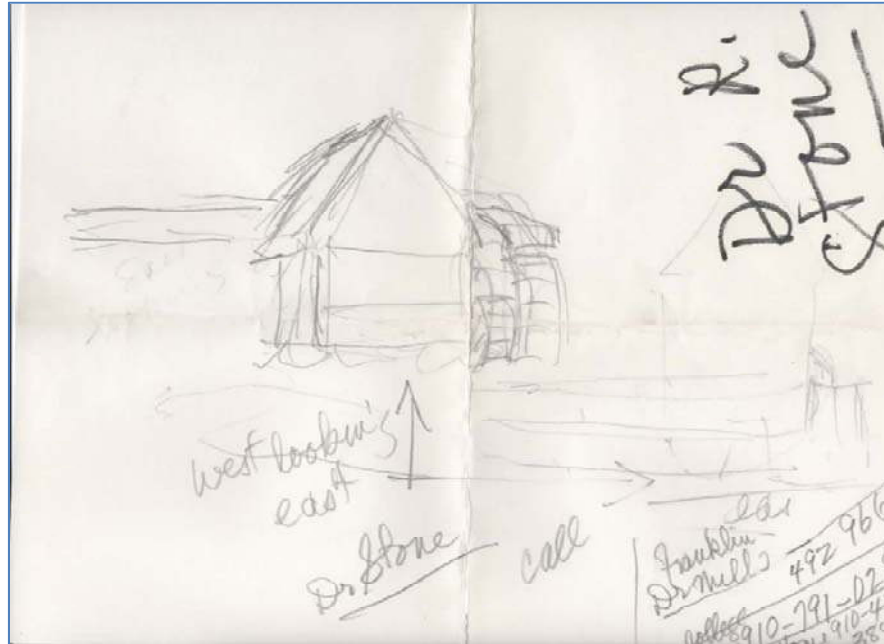


===== ART WORK =====



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Three sketches by now deceased local Louisburg, NC artist, Mabel H. Allen. Date of sketches unknown. Dr. Raymond Stone, property owner on west side (opposite Mill) of Lynch Creek - had considered having Mabel Allen paint a picture of the Mill Site in the early 2000's (at which time the Mill structure did not exist).

Conversations in December 2018 with Raymond Stone (now 94 years old and living in Hendersonville, NC) by Bob Radcliffe confirmed this fact. A painting was never commissioned.

Digital images of these sketches were given to the Ben Franklin Society by Ben Allen, son of Mabel, who is a Woodworker and lives nearby on Rogers Road, Kittrell, NC. See <http://benallenwoodworks.com/aboutme.asp>

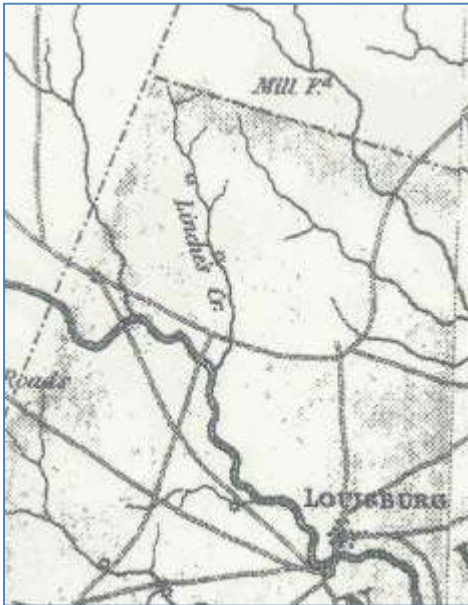
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The first hand-drawn overlay version (1868, NC State Archives) of the 1869 Fuller Map (with Goswick's Mill noted) exists and references an earlier Josiah Bridges 1840 (May 20th) Map that was mandated by NC State statute to establish School Districts – fifteen in all – indicating that the Sims/Goswick Mill existed prior to 1840. No copy of the 1840 Bridges Map itself has been located, but a written description of the school district boundaries has been located (Will Book "K", Page 247). It appears that the first overlay version of the Fuller Map was hand-drawn to either reconcile the 1840 Bridges Map to the desired scale of the 1869 Fuller Map or to re-create Bridges Map from the written description.

The earlier 1833 MacRae-Brazier North Carolina State Map shows (via its Legend) both the Gill and Whitaker Mill sites. Both Mills therefore pre-date 1833 and had dams across Lynch Creek.



Segment of North Carolina 1833 MacRae-Brazier Map showing present-day Gill and Whitaker Mill locations on Linches Creek

The present Lynch Creek Farm property (1973 Rocky Ford Road, Kittrell, NC) was once part of the Gill Lands. Document research of the Gill Mill has been progressing slowly; however, that for the Whitaker Mill has yielded significant results.

In a NC State Archive document (Shop Work Journal of Joseph W. Johnson for R.F. Gill – from the Will Folder of R.F. Gill) dated 12th July 1899, it appears that much unpaid repair work was performed on the Gill Mill from the period 13th November 1893 through 16th August 1897 prior to R.F. Gills death in 1898 (*From the records of the Plank Chapel Cemetery, Vance County, North Carolina, 3046 Bobbitt Road, Kittrell, NC it is noted: Gill, Robert F, b. 1831, d. 1898, Plot #61*). The probated will document itemizes many new mill "picks", cold chisels, water wheel bands, rivets, threaded bolts etc. suggesting this may have also

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been a Saw Mill. (an aside – thanks to Doug Swords, the mystery of the term “frick” vs. “pick” in the hand-written manuscript was solved by a hand-writing expert). Payment to Johnson at times in the Journal was made in cash, or in bushels of Corn and Corn Meal. John A. Rogers recalls that Johnson (a black man) had a blacksmith/repair shop on now John Rogers Road opposite his present residence at 2543 Rocky Ford Road.

Because currency was scarce in rural areas, barter was common practice. A miller typically retained **one-eighth part of wheat and one-sixth part of corn** as compensation. What did millers do with all the grain they accumulated? Time and again, old timers say “Where there’s a Mill, there’s a Still nearby”.

A later Deed (DB 146, pg 413) dated February 16, 1889 from Joseph E. Alford to T.H. Whitaker conveys “one hundred acres more or less and known as the Alford Mill track” for the sum of three thousand five hundred dollars.

Research Notes *The NC General Assembly in 1715 delegated to the precinct courts authority to grant franchises in their respective jurisdiction for the construction of both wind and water mills. Two acres or more were to be set aside for the construction of a mill powered by water and one-half acre set aside for the use of a wind-type. Jason Goswick died in 1854 with a will to William H. Goswick. An Inventory of Property stated “One hundred acres of Land on which is a good mill” and other property valued at \$1700 dated 20th September, 1871. Jason Goswick’s will was not probated by William who died intestate (without a will), so the fate of the Mill rested in the hands of heirs: Engrid(?) Power wife of Edward Power; Caroline Hight wife of Isaac Hight; Lucy Rudd, Emily Goswick, Mary Goswick, Robert Winn (infant), W. H. Goswick, Georgianna Goswick, Louisa Hister wife of W.H. Hister – all of Franklin County, NC – and Jason Goswick, Charles Goswick and Kurdred(?) Goswick infants of Warren County, NC. [Probate Court document dated 3rd September, 1871., NC State Archives]*

From the 1860 Slave Census Schedules in Franklin County, NC, we find that Robert Gill had 24 slaves, Eli Alford had 20 slaves, and Thomas (T.H.) Whitaker was not listed at all.

From The Franklin Times, dated June 28, 1935 in an article by Dr. D.T. Smithwick, Historian for Franklin County, titled “Some Franklin County History”, subsection “Early Industries of Franklin County”, several interesting statements were made:

The first “meal mill” (i.e. grist mill) was by Gideon Glenn at the Seaboard Airline Railroad crossing of the Tar River. About 1770, Glenn built the mill now known as Whitaker Mill.*

*The cotton gin was designed by Eli Whitney in 1793, became in general use on Franklin County about 1800. These gins were made “by George Sims**, a great mechanic, stone mason, patriot and farmer who operated the first ferry at Sims Bridge. Sims later built a bridge over that stream (Tar) – Sims Bridge.*

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FRANKLIN COUNTY, NC

The first of these gins had from three to five saws and were operated by hand. Later they had fourteen saws and were operated by water power. (Saws were wires that pulled cotton fiber from the seeds and other debris, unrelated to a saw mill)

In 1876 Col. Jordan F. Jones built the Laurel Cotton Mill on Sandy Creek.

* Gideon Glenn – b.1715-1720, d. 1808, Franklin County, NC

** Made by George Sims, not Joseph Sims

The Whitaker Mill (noted on earlier maps as the Alford, and/or Goswick Mill) operated into the late 1950's. A review of Franklin County Aerial Photography dating back to 1936 (on file at the Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation office) failed to reveal a level of detail to establish the existence of supporting buildings in the vicinity of either Mill. A Franklin County Deed (DB 29, pg 608) dated August 15, 1848 from Joseph Sims to Jason Goswick conveys "a parcel lying on both sides of Lynches Creek . . . one hundred acres more or less . . . including my Mill and all the appurtenances thereto . . . for the sum of two thousand dollars" establishes that the Goswick Mill pre-dates 1848. Evidence is mounting that the Whitaker Mill may have been built in the 1770's.

The January 2008 photographs below (taken by Bob Radcliffe) show the foundation remains of the Gill and now Whitaker Mills. Gill Mill foundations were of loose stone; whereas, the Whitaker Mill was of cut and fitted stone. See separate NC Archive Archaeological Site Filing for GILL MILL on Lynch Creek.

Gill Mill Foundation (on MacRae-Brazier Map 1833) on Lynch Creek



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FRANKLIN COUNTY, NC



Whitaker Mill on Lynch Creek (on MacRae-Brazier Map 1833)

Below - earlier photos of the Whitaker Mill and Dam by Gordon Ward (gordon@ward.org), 219 Walnut Lane, Bossier City, LA 71111 on Feb 15, 2011 from the William Carl Whitaker genealogy booklet he made in 2007. All photos are online at www.thewards.info/mauldin



Whitaker Mill (left); older tub-mill (right)



Whitaker Mill Site Dam on Lynch Creek

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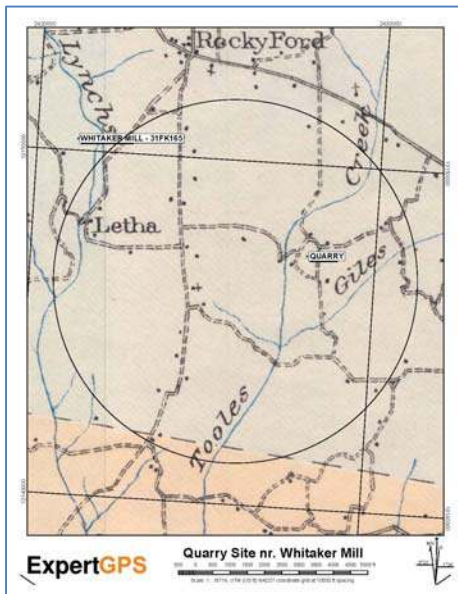
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The exact construction dates for both mills and the source of stone for the Whitaker Mill and Dam are being researched (see photos below). Nearby Cascine (Perry) Mill (30'x40', three grinding stones) located on Cedar Creek below Louisburg is of similar construction (foundation stone and cast metal gearing) and dates between 1825-1830. It seems likely that the Whitaker Mill (25'x30', two grinding stones) replaced the older and less capable (or destroyed) Gill Mill (and Dam).

The Whitaker Mill and Dam building stone was probably quarried and dragged by sled from a nearby quarry on Tooles Creek just east of Sims Bridge Road. The 1906-07 PRATT MAP segment below shows pathways to the general location of a Quarry near Tooles Creek east of Letha and the Whitaker Mill Site.



Local historian Joseph Elmore (now 84 years old) directed me to this site. It is now a swampy area (due to beavers), but was a quarry according to Joe E. Elmore (Emeritus Member - Ben Franklin Society) who visited the site years earlier. The photos taken by Bob Radcliffe below in 2009 show evidence of this - *Possible Whitaker Mill Quarry Site – Drill Hole in Rock and Rough Stone Blocks in nearby Tooles Creek*



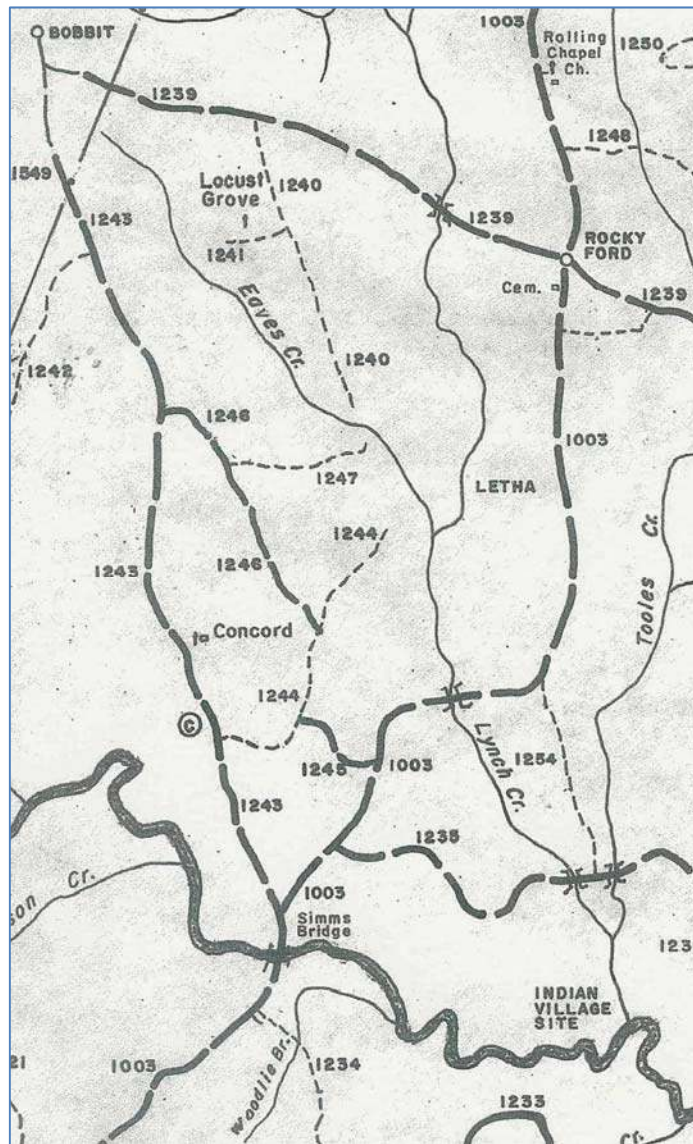
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Letha

A nearby town named [Letha](#) (pronounced "lee-tha", smaller than [Rocky Ford](#)) once flourished in the vicinity of Whitaker Mill, and was designated a US Postal Office from 1890-1910. See the 1982 G.P. Stout Historical Research Map of Franklin County segment below.



Take note of the annotations on the Map above: Rocky Ford, Letha, Lynch Creek, Toolies Creek, Simms Bridge (spelling varies) over the Tar River, and Indian Village Site.

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Letha, like most mill sites, was a busy social and business gathering place - as patrons of the mill waited in a line of mule- and oxen-drawn wagons to unload and process their grain and then pick up their flour (and other goods - lumber, cotton etc).

Letha consisted of a General Store, Post Office, the Mill, a Miller's House (prior photo), supporting storage buildings, and a cemetery. The photo shown was taken in July 2008 by Bob Radcliffe, Ben Franklin Society.



Foundation remains of Letha General store

Mill operator, Thomas H. Whitaker (T.H.), is listed as a "Merchant not in Towns" from Letha in the 1907 North Carolina Year Book section on Franklin County.

Surprisingly, Letha vanished in the 1950's, but Rocky Ford remains - if only as a namesake for the forgotten Haysville-Millford Crossroad.

NOTE: The name Letha is a variant "Lethe" from Greek Mythology which is one of five Rivers in Hades that means "River of Oblivion". A cup of water from "Lethe" makes you forget everything from your former life. Your soul may then cross the River Styx with help from Charon the Oarsman.

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