

## Roads, Mills and Dams.

Milburnie Area

### Roads

From the early times when the **Hinton** plantations were first here up until about 1900, this area was covered by a number of roads or trails. These early trails were used by the postal people on horseback, the early stagecoachs and by the family and or slaves of families for their general travel across the countryside.

In 1775, The Henry Mouson map showed a “**Smiths Ferry**” located some distance above the bend in the Neuse river at a point which could have been in the path of the **Tarborough road** (Tarboro).

*A local historian, well known to this writer, indicates that the best information available can do no more than suggest that the operator of the ferry was John Smith Sr. The senior Smith is the father of John Smith Jr (b=1736) the well known founder of Smithfield in Johnston County. John Jr purchased the land for Smithfield from John Sr in 1762 and it already had a ferry crossing the river on that land since 1759 or 60.*

In 1808, The Price Strother map shows a trail and a bridge crossing the Neuse river.

One of the older roads that can still be seen in this area is the Tarborough Road that ran east out of Raleigh and proceeded through this area on the route to Eagle Rock, or Wakefield, or Earpsboro and eventually on to Tarboro. This road was a part of the postal and stage coach routes and went from Hillsboro to Tarboro and other points.

In 1833, The McRae-Brazier map shows a road (Most likely the Tarborough) and a notation for Hinton's Bridge.

Another series of roads were originally meant to travel between plantation houses and a map from December, 1908 shows the following named or unnamed roads:

- The road from **Midway Plantation** to the **Oaks Plantation**, called the old **Hinton Road**. ( This passed by the eastern edge of Planters Walk Subdivision and was visable to the writer in 1988 when I moved to PW)
- A road cutting from the Oaks to Shotwell and passing Paschalls store probably for use on the way to church at Oaky Grove.
- The Raleigh – Wilson road which nearly paralleled the road to Shotwell. (Poole Rd today)
- The main plantation road which bisected the Hinton road and lead west to **Panther Rock** and the **River Place** on the Neuse River.
- From many of these can be seen stubs that lead to **Milburnie** or the **Clay Hill Plantation** or toward Knightdale or some of the many other homes located in the area.
- The oaks road which lead from the corner of Hodge & Poole Rds. to the Oaks plantation area.

## Mills

In 1855, The first documented mill at Town of Milburnie, known as **Milburnie Mills** and later as **Neuse Mills** was purchased by Neuse Manufacturing Company and had 19 male and 12 female employees in 1860. The mill had outputs as high as 520,000 pounds of paper per year and was a favored supplier to the **New York Times** via a standing order for all the paper it could supply. The mill continued in operation thru the Civil War until finally being burned by the troops in April 1865.

*SEMI-WEEKLY RALEIGH REGISTER, May 7, 1861<sup>1</sup>*

*Rags—Neuse Manufacturing Company—Our customers will please hold up their Rags for a few weeks, until we can find, or make a market for our paper. This will probably be soon after the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, of which notice will be given in the public press. For the present, we only want enough to keep the machines from rusting.*

*Sion H. Rogers, President.  
H. W. Husted, Treasurer.  
James D Royster, Mill Supt.*

*SEMI-WEEKLY RALEIGH REGISTER, June 19, 1861<sup>1</sup>*

*The Neuse Manufacturing company have on hand a general assortment of News and Book paper also, Post Office, Newspaper and Cartridge Wrappers, prime quality, and a large quantity of common writing paper.*

*Address  
H. W. Husted, Treasurer*

*SEMI-WEEKLY RALEIGH REGISTER, November 13, 1861<sup>1</sup>*

*Milburnie Paper Mills,  
Raleigh, N. C.*

*The Neuse Manufacturing Company [will] pay cash and the highest market price for  
Cotton and Linen Rags,  
(N. B.—Not Woolen Rags.)  
Present price 3 cents per pound, delivered at either Depot in Raleigh.*

*Address  
S. H. Rogers, Pres't  
H. W. Husted, Treas'r*

A local resident, whose family had moved into the area from Franklin County describes his time working at the paper mill. Workers alternated in twelve hour shifts, six days a week starting at midnight on Sunday. This worker eventually got sick of this schedule and in a short time period had gotten together with a friend to start a venture into the printing business, probably utilizing the very paper produced by the mill. The worker **Cornelious B Edwards** and friend **Needham B Broughton** spent many long years in their new company named Edwards & Broughten Printing (1871-1946).<sup>2</sup> Much of the history for this type article can be learned reading books printed by this firm.

A Union map from war records shows Hinton's bridge and a structure labeled as Neuse Mills, both south of the road and on the west side of the Neuse river.

On April 13, the 15<sup>th</sup> Corp moved across the river utilizing Hinton's bridge. The bridge was later saved from destruction by a charge of the 29<sup>th</sup> Mounted Missouri troops while the Confederate Cavalry was trying to destroy it.

The mill was never replaced, but a combination grist mill and a saw mill were built on the site after the war. These 2 buildings were operated until about the 1880 time frame.<sup>3</sup>

Two years after the war there were about 50 mills operating on the many waterways around Wake County. These mills consisted mainly of flour, grist and sawmills through the county. Along with these were 2 turpentine distilleries, a cotton seed oil mill run by W. Miller and the paper mill at Falls of Neuse. The town of Rosinburg supported the only rosin mill in the county.

A post office was located in Milburnie as early as 1858 and went by that name until 1892 when it was changed to Pett. It operated as Pett Post Office until 1902 when it was closed.

## More roads

Today we have a fine road (Hwy 64 separated dual lanes) leading to Raleigh, but over the years, there were a number of routes that one would take to get to Raleigh.

1. The Tarborough road (an unimproved dirt base) generally followed a path similar to Hwy 64 starting in perhaps Tarboro and traversing through what was soon to become Knightdale. Traveling west past the front of the **Midway Plantation** one would soon veer in a west-north-westerly direction in front of and crossing the corner of the present day May-Mak land. This continued until you would reach the Tar Heel Club Rd. ( Old Milburnie Rd.) where there was a slight jog and then continued in the same general direction, eventually leading to the ferry or a bridge over the Neuse River.

This bridge was located about 100 yards above the present Milburnie Dam which is about ½ mile north of present Hwy 64. At the intersection of the road and the river, in the south east corner, a store had been operating at one point in history ( probably owned and run by Mr Frazier as it was on his land). Once on the other side of the river, the road followed a path which today is the Raleigh Beach Road. This eventually brought you to a point where it continued on what is now Hwy 64 in the back of Northern Tool and in front of todays Elevation Church. At the river edge and a point where the old road crossed, one can still find on the west side two large stone and mortar piers, which supported the original bridge.

2. In 1925 the first bridge was built over the river at its present location. (which handles west bound traffic today) The road was semi-improved and ran on the present day Farmwell Road, which is in front of **Poole Well Drilling**. This road and the first bridge then handled two way traffic.(same road-same bridge) Upon crossing the bridge, 2 way traffic then proceeded up the hill on old Hwy 64 as it can still be seen. After passing through what is Rodgers Rd today it came out at the old paint place and returned to todays highway. For some time during the late 20s and early 30s this road was called Hwy 90 and was the longest road in the state.

It was during this time frame that a building known as **King's Riverside Restaurant** was situated just west of the river and sitting in the exact position where today's east bound lane is. This 3 story building had what one might describe as the bottom floor almost underground or sitting at the river level, 2 stories high in reality. All of their **bar-b-que** was cooked at the **pit** which is still to be found adjacent to the west bound lane today. They had a large open field in the rear which was the home to picnics, motorcycle racing and the yearly gathering of the Gypsies.

Another attendee at this spot was the **Goat Man** who was of slight stature, full beard and a rustic felt hat. He had a small wagon which contained all of his possessions and many other items that he would sell for a small amount, maybe even sharpen your scissors. The wagon had a small tarp which covered his sleeping quarters with no apparent bath facilities. The wagon was pulled by 6 or more of the goats and another dozen or so followed behind. He was seen traveling far and wide and could be heard as well as lead goats all wore bells.

3. In 1964 the second bridge was built over the river, and with its construction the traffic was divided and this bridge carries east bound traffic only. Also because of the new bridge, all traffic was rerouted onto a new road surface, leaving the old Hwy 64 going up the hill vacant and now used only by speed patrol cars as a place to wait for those of us going a wee bit to quick.

During construction of this new road, the Riverside Restaurant was demolished and leaving only the fire pit for our memory. Also, during this construction, on the east side of the river the crew was surprised to find a lot of very large cut stones which turned out to be the foundation of the **Clay Hill Plantation House** which had burned down in 1923. Its location similar to the restaurant was in the right of way of the east bound lane at the corner of today's cabinet shop.

## Dams

The first dam built at Milburnie was a wood structure that had a fall of about 8 feet. It was built in connection with the paper mill and supplied power for the mill.

In 1899, E C Hillyer of the **Raleigh Ice and Electric Company** began construction on a new **hydroelectric plant** and a new stone dam at the river. The somewhat lower eastern bank required the dam apron to be extended more than 100 feet out from the river. The dam is built on a foundation of very large rocks which are ubiquitous in this area. The presence of a form of granite known as **Rolesville Pluton** can be found at surface level throughout a 150 square mile area, covering from northern Johnston county thru Wake and Franklin and some further north. (see panther rock pictures)

Construction on the dam was complete in 1903 and later that year they leased the plant to the Raleigh Electric Company, which operated it until July 1913. The power from the Raleigh Electric Company was used to run Raleigh's streetcars and the transmission of this 6,600 volt line (six miles) into Raleigh was an outstanding accomplishment for this period of time.

On June 30, 1916 Carolina Power & Light purchased the plant as a part of the state consolidation of hydroelectric plants and it was dismantled in 1918.

The following information from Howard Twiggs:

*By 1929, all equipment had been removed from the site and sold as scrap. On October 31, 1934, the site was sold to my father (Raleigh cotton broker – Samuel Warren Twiggs) who operated a grist mill there from 1934 until the early 1940s, at which time the mill was shut down. The mill building, which was the old power house, has burned and the only thing remaining is the mill stones, mill pulleys and the brick walls.*

The mill operated by Twiggs produced the famous “Milburnie Mill Meal,” which ran in stiff competition with the fine Cornmeal from **Lassiter's Mill** located at the dam on Crabtree Creek.

People were allowed to fish below the dam for a few cents a day, and a nearby black church used the shallow river for its full-immersion baptisms. The beach and area surrounding the dam became a natural good will spot where blacks and whites could find recreation for their families. In later years, the place earned the nickname “**Raleigh Beach**” and was a location for much enjoyment and one or two bad incidents which shall go unmentioned.

Two other spots that are nearby and relate to this subject matter are:

- Lee's Mill and mill pond which can also be seen from Old Milburnie road. The mill is replaced by a small building for viewing the pond, but the water chase and dam are still there. This today is known as Neuseoco Lake. This mill was later run by Rocky Hester who was also the well known weather forecaster in the area.
- The dam on Milburnie Lake (fishing club lake) was known as Hinton's Dam in old records. Hinton's falls are located on the Neuse adjacent to the River Place.

#### **Notes:**

- The Neuse river is estimated to be 2 million years old.
- During the time that the Tuscarora indians lived in this area, there also was another neighboring tribe called the Neusiok. It is from this tribe of people that the Neuse got it's name and that it's meaning is peace.
- Land on both sides of the river were originally owned by T.L.Eberhardt and were sold to Raleigh Ice and Electric company for \$38,000 dollars in 1899.
- A Raleigh resident, Fad Montague born in early 1882 helped with the reconstruction of the new dam.<sup>2</sup>
- The power plant at the new dam is thought to be the first Hydroelectric plant in Wake County.
- Sion H Rodgers of the paper mill was a colonel in the war and a member of the Forty Seventh regiment – Company C of Raleigh.
- July 5, 1875, It was decided that Pools store would be the new polling place in Milburnie.
- Joseph B Dunn was the physician in Milburnie from 1867 – 1872.
- In July of 1895 The News & Observer reported a liquor license issued to F.S.Garrett for the only bar outside of Raleigh.
- C.T.Hester ran a general store and Liquor business in Milburnie.
- A 1928 Hwy map names Hwy 64 as “New Milburnie Hwy”.
- Dr J.R. Rogers operated the Hygeia Creamery and ran a large farm with many fine cattle. He is the original builder of the Barbeque pit and stairs leading up the hill. He had intended to build a hotel at the top of the hill, but later only built the now vacant stone houses. (Pics)

## Additional notes from the war time era:

### *Acknowledgment of Contributions.<sup>1</sup>*

Chas. E. Johnson,  
Surgeon General, N. C.                      Raleigh, Oct. 2, 1861.

*P. F. Poscud, Chairman of the Army Committee at Raleigh, has received and forwarded W. P. Munford, for sick and disabled soldiers, under the supervision of the Army Committee at Richmond, Va., the following articles and cash, contributed since 19th September, 1861:*

*Miss E. C. Boddie, Mrs. Needham Price, \$5 each; Miss Mary Stronach, \$2; Mrs. Jos. Fowler, 2 sheets and a lot of towels and pillow cases; Mrs. Jos. Cook, \$5; Mrs. Larkin Smith, 1 bed quilt, 2 pair socks, and a lot of sage, Mrs. Wiggs, 1 bed quilt, sage and red pepper; Mrs. Larkin Smith 1 bed quilt, 2 pair socks and some sage; Miss Nannie P. Jones, (a little girl) 1 bottle of strawberry wine; Mrs. E. T. Jones, 1 flannel shirt, 3 pair of flannel drawers, and 3 pair cotton drawers; Mrs. P. H. Mangum, 2 woolen blankets; Mrs. Needham Price, 4 woolen blankets, 4 sheets, 12 pillows, 18 pillow cases, 6 towels, 1 flannel shirt, 6 pair drawers, 25 pair socks, bag sage, bag red pepper, 1 bushel dried apples, 24 pounds soap, 4 bottles blackberry wine, 3 bottles strawberry wine, 1 jar blackberry jelly, 1 jar apple jelly; Mrs. E. A. Nixon, 4 blankets, 6 bottles blackberry wine, 1 package black tea, 1 package castile soap, 4 bottles mustard, 1 bag sage, 3 vests, 1 bottle camphor, 7 pillow cases, 6 pair woolen socks; Miss L. M. Hill, 1 package sugar and coffee; Mrs. John Primrose, 1 lot loaf sugar, tea coffee, &c.; Miss Helen Litchford, 1 package sugar and ground coffee; Mrs. B. F. Moore, 2 bottles domestic wine; Mrs. G. B. Bagwell, 1 box soap, lot of loaf bread, rice cakes, preserves, pickles, sugars, coffee, and old linen; Mrs. E. C. Fisher, 4 bottles very superb wine, and \$100 in cash, received at the lecture of Rev. Dr. Read.*

### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Semi Weekly Raleigh Register.

<sup>2</sup> Murray, Elizabeth R – Vol 1. Wake County book.

<sup>3</sup> Swain, George F – 1885.

My thanks go out to Grady Poole who generously answered my many questions about this area and then gave me a truck ride and tour of the area that will never be forgotten.

*Wayne Schultz*