Mitchell Mill
State Natural Area:
A Cultural History

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This revision seeks to correct errors in the original paper written in 2015, as well as add additional information gathered through continued research into this subject. I would like to thank all those who contacted me to share their expertise and information.
Introduction

Mitchell Mill State Natural Area is located in the Little River Township in Eastern Wake County near the intersection of Mitchell Mill Rd. (S.R. 2224) and Zebulon Rd. (NC 96). The tract is approximately 105 acres in size and is situated on the Little River\(^1\) in the Neuse River Basin and includes the intersection with the Cedar Prong Creek.

Once known as “Hartsville\(^2\),” Mitchell Mill State Natural Area was the heart of a thriving community complete with a grist mill, saw mill, general store, blacksmith, church and school making it a center of commerce in this portion of Wake County\(^3\). Local farmers would bring their wheat, corn or barley to the mill to have it processed. Many folks would gather at the general store to purchase tools or food, or just to get caught up on the goings-on in the community.

The people who lived here during this time helped to shape the surrounding communities, such as Louisburg and Rolesville as well as other towns in Wake and Franklin Counties. One citizen even had a forceful hand in deciding where the boundary would be located between Wake and Franklin Counties; a line that would be contested for over 100 years. Some even touched American history, through their participation in events such as the American Revolution, slavery, and the Civil War. Of the five original residences believed to have been used by the former owners, only two remain.\(^4\) They are the Green-Hartsfield House located 1/4 mile East of the property on Halifax Rd. and the Hartsfield-Perry Farm, located 1/2 mile West of the property off Mitchell Mill Rd. Both houses are still in use and privately owned.

The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation came into possession of the bulk of Mitchell Mill State Natural Area through a purchase from the Martin Marietta Corporation in 1976, with several smaller sections added from private landowners in the late 1980's\(^5\). Today, the land is now home to rare, threatened and endangered flora and fauna, such as Narrow-leaf Blue Curl (\textit{Trichostema setaceum}), Elf Orpine (\textit{Diamorpha smallii}) and the Neuse River Water Dog (\textit{Necturus lewisi}). These species are currently threatened by illegal human activity, such as all-terrain vehicle (ATV) traffic, camping and vandalism, as well as from invasive and exotic plant species, such as Chinese privet (\textit{Ligustrum sinense}), Asiatic dayflower (\textit{Commelina communis}) and Japanese stilt grass (\textit{Microstegium}...
vimineum).

There are also unique geological features present at Mitchell Mill State Natural Area. It sits atop one of one of the largest granite domes on the east coast called the Rolesville batholith. The batholith measures around 30 miles long, 13 miles wide and 40,000 to 60,000 feet deep. This dome was formed through weathering near the earth’s surface during the late Paleozoic era (about 300 million years ago)\(^6\). Today, the rock face is pitted and worn and covered in “potholes” called ephemeral pools. These pools fill with water when it rains and are periodically home to salamanders, frogs, crayfish and other organisms.

While there is literature on the flora and fauna in the area, very little is known about the cultural history of this scenic natural area. This paper explores that history in order to give visitors, future park managers and others a glimpse into a life and culture long forgotten.

### Prehistory

300 years ago, the area where Mitchell Mill State Natural Area sits was the north western territory of the Tuscarora Indians. The Tuscarora were once one of the largest bands of Native Americans in the colony. They occupied territory along the Roanoke, Pamlico, Neuse and Cape Fear rivers. There were two factions of the Tuscarora. Chief Blunt (Blount) led the northern Tuscarora, and Chief Hancock led the southern faction.

For years the Tuscarora, especially those in the southern territory, had been subjected to forced expansion into their territory as well as poor treatment by European traders. Some of their kin were kidnapped and sold into slavery. A land surveyor named John Lawson, who surveyed much of North Carolina for the King of England and had prior dealings with the Tuscarora, noted in his journals:

"They are really better to us than we are to them; they always give us Victuals at their Quarters, and take care we are arm’d against Hunger and Thirst: We do not do so by them (generally speaking) but let them walk by our Doors Hungry, and do not often relieve them."

When German and Swiss immigrants founded the town of New Bern along the banks of the Neuse River, this was seen as the last straw for the Tuscarora. In September 1711, John Lawson, along with Christoph von Graffenried, left New Bern on an expedition to locate the source of the Neuse River. They had not secured permission to cross Tuscarora lands. Chief Hancock and his band of Tuscarora captured, tortured and killed Lawson. Von Graffenreid, being more of a diplomat, was able to talk his way out of the encounter and lived to document the event. Shortly after, the Tuscarora attacked New Bern. Hundreds of settlers were killed and many homes and fields were burned. These acts launched the Tuscarora War.

Upon appeal from North Carolina’s governor, South Carolina sent approximately 600 armed militiamen along with 350 allied Yamasee Indians to help fight back against the Tuscarora. In March 1713, the army met the Tuscarora at their stronghold of Fort Neoheroka (Nooheroooka) located near present day Snow Hill in Greene County. The army laid siege to Neoheroka for 3 days until the Tuscarora were defeated. Many men, women and children burned to death during a fire that destroyed

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6 Email correspondence with Edward F. Stoddard, Professor of Geology (ret.) at NC State University, Mar. 14, 2018
7 [https://waywelivednc.com/before-1770/tuscarora-war.htm](https://waywelivednc.com/before-1770/tuscarora-war.htm)
Those that survived (around 950 persons) were captured and sold into slavery. Many of the remaining Tuscarora fled North Carolina. Some joined with the 6th nation of the Iriquois Confederacy in the colony of New York. Some sought refuge in Virginia. Those who remained stayed under the leadership of Chief Blount, who signed a treaty with the colony and was granted 56,000 acres of land to live on along the Pamlico River in what is now Bertie County. By 1802, that land had dwindled to just over 2,000 acres⁸.

A Drawing of Baron von Graffenreid, John Lawson and an enslaved person held captive by Tuscarora Indians. Image from Archive.org.

Shortly after the Tuscarora left North Carolina, many settlers moved into the area. Much of the lands in the northwestern area of the former Tuscarora territory, located in present day Wake and Franklin counties, was settled by a man named Osborn Jeffreys.

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuscarora_people
The People of Mitchell Mill

Osborn Jeffreys (1715-1793)

Osborn was born sometime about 1715 to Simon Jeffreys and Elizabeth Pottle in Virginia. His father died when he was only 16 or 17 years of age. Osborn followed in his father's footsteps of land acquisition by taking up acres through grants from Lord Granville. Land at that time was leased from Lord Granville at the rate of three shillings sterling for each 100 acres and was collected twice yearly. Osborn leased the land in this way until North Carolina officially declared independence from Great Britain.

In 1777, the Provisional Assembly of the State of North Carolina declared itself sovereign over all the lands between Virginia and South Carolina, although it recognized claims to land granted by the crown and proprietors prior to July 4, 1776.

The Provisional Assembly called for the confiscation of all lands and property of persons who supported the British and as a result, Lord Granville's lands were confiscated by the State of North Carolina. After the war, the newly formed United States had difficulty paying off its debts, and in order to compensate those who supported the war effort, the government gave land instead of money. Osborn was granted private land ownership of all the lands he had previously leased from Lord Granville. When this happened, Osborne became one of the largest landowners in the area. It is believed that he owned at least 19,000 acres in Bute County (in 1764 Bute County was formed from Granville County and named for John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute, Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1762 to 1763. In 1779 it was divided into present day Franklin and Warren counties, Johnston County (later Wake and Franklin Counties), Northampton County and other Piedmont and eastern NC counties, with some unconfirmed anecdotal reports suggesting that he owned over 100,000 acres in total. He also owned over 200 enslaved persons.

Osborne Jeffreys was a Justice of the Court of Common Pleas (dealing with civil matters) most of the fifteen years that Bute County existed, being the presiding justice of the court after 1772. He gave Sheriff's Bond to King George III of England on August 12, 1768 and again on the same day of

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10 http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GId=116481009, James Patterson, 2013 HEREAFTER referred to as James Patterson, 2013

11 John Carteret died in 1763, leaving his son, Robert, owner of these lands. Robert died in 1776. After the Revolutionary war, the Carteret family was compensated by the Crown for their lost land. (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Carteret,_2nd_Earl_Granville)

12 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bute_County,_North_Carolina
Osborn was named with Joseph Harris to procession all the land south of the Tar River. He also was on the committee for building bridges and he was granted a license to keep a tavern at his home in Lewisberg (present day Louisburg).

Richard Caswell, the first elected governor of North Carolina named Osborn Jeffreys, Esquire a justice of the state court in 1777. Osborn then administered the State Oaths to Benjamin Ward, James Ransom, Jr., and Henry Hill, Esquire who in turn administered oaths to Osborn and five other men chosen by the governor. He was a member of the Bute County Committee of Safety, which at a meeting of the Freeholders on June 23, 1775, shows the Freeholders favoring independence from England. Osborn rose to the rank of Colonel, having served in the Granville County Militia under General William Eaton and no doubt was active when Bute County was formed from part of Granville County in 1764.

In 1771, Wake County was formed from portions of Johnston, Orange and Cumberland counties. In 1779, Bute county was dissolved and divided into two new counties: Franklin and Warren. Osborn was one of 5 men appointed as county commissioners and were tasked with laying out the new town of Lewisburg, which was to be the seat of government for the newly formed Franklin County. Shortly after, as the Franklin/Wake County line was being surveyed (some of Wake County was being incorporated into the new Franklin County), Osborn allegedly approached the surveyor and inquired as to where his land would fall in relation to the new county line.

The surveyor told Mr. Jeffreys that the county line would run through his property. Mr. Jeffreys is said to have responded by pointing a firearm (some report it to be a flintlock pistol, others a shotgun) at the surveyor's head and threatened to “...blow [his] brains out”. This allegedly resulted in Osborn's lands staying in Franklin County. This border would be in constant dispute until finally resolved in 1915, where it remains today. When Osborn Jeffreys died, his lands and enslaved persons were divided up amongst his heirs. His oldest son, William, inherited four enslaved persons and the tract of land where Mitchell Mill now stands.

**Capt. William Jeffreys (1750-1802)**

Unfortunately, not much is known about William Jeffreys. He was the youngest son of Osborn Jeffreys and Patience Spear. He rose to the rank of Captain in the North Carolina Militia and it is believed that he served during the American Revolution.

Upon the formation of Wake County, the State of North Carolina was looking for a place for the new seat of state government. A tract of land owned by William Jeffreys along the banks of the Neuse River, which was then navigable, was one of the sites considered. William argued that this would be a great center for trade in the region. The City of Raleigh was eventually formed from 100 acres owned by Joel Lane.

William Jeffreys sold "A certain tract or parcel of land in Wake County containing two hundred

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13 James Patterson, 2013
14 Correspondence of William Tryon and Other Selected papers: Vol 2, Pg, 144, Edited by William S. Powell, NC State Archives Digital Collection
15 The State Magazine, 14 November 1941
16 The Last Will and Testament of Osborne Jeffreys, Probated in Franklin County, NC, December 1793
& fifty two and a quarter acres it lying and being on the south side of the seeder [sic, Cedar] prong of
the little river...it being part of a tract of land granted to the [a]i[d William Jeffreys by the State of
North Carolina dated the first day of April one thousand seven hundred and eighty..." to Andrew
Hartsfield (1765-1862) "...for the sum of five hundred & a half silver dollars..."

**Senator William Andrew Jeffreys (1817-1845)**

William Andrew Jeffreys has no ownership connection to Mitchell Mill, but he was the great-grandson of Osborn Jeffreys, the first
documented owner of the property and grandson of Andrew Hartsfield, the
man responsible for the mill’s original construction. He lived a short
distance away from Mitchell Mill and has a rather unique history that needs
to be told.

William was born January 23, 1817 to William Hudson “Billy”
Jeffreys and Elizabeth Hartsfield Jeffreys, daughter of Andrew Hartsfield,
owner and proprietor of the Hartsfield Mill (present day Mitchell Mill)
located on the Little River. William married his first cousin (a practice not
uncommon in those days), Martha Hart Jeffreys on June 8, 1840. They
had three children.

William studied law and practiced from his Franklin County
plantation (The William A. Jeffreys House, listed on the National Register
of Historic Places, located near the intersection of NC 98 and US 401)
beginning in January, 1840\(^{17}\). He was a staunch supporter of the Democratic Party\(^{18}\) and, in 1844, was
elected to the N.C. Senate and was seated in the “new” State Capitol building (the first having burned
to the ground in 1831).

Shortly after he was elected, he and some other delegates from North Carolina took a trip to the
Republic of Texas in the late spring of 1845 \(^{19}\) to deliver correspondence to the legislature there. His
friend, Robert Gilliam of Louisburg, wrote in an introduction for him:

> “Permit me to introduce to your acquaintance, Mr. W. A. Jeffreys.
> Mr. J is a gentleman of the first standing in this section of Country.
> [He] has filled a highly honorable political station in the legislature
> of the State and both in his public and private capacity commands
> the confidence of all who know him.”\(^{20}\)

Here is where William's story gets a little interesting. Shortly after his return, he fell ill with
fever. He told his father, William “Billy” Jeffreys, that, should he die, he wished to be buried in “the
rock”, a place where he had played as a child. This rock is about 10 feet tall and about 20 feet in
diameter and stood out prominently against the surrounding farmland. Billy, believing his son would be
just fine, agreed to William's death bed wish. Unfortunately, William died of Typhoid fever a few days
later. His death came as a shock to everyone that knew him as he was very well-liked and admired in
the community.

Family tradition holds that William Sr. traveled to Raleigh and hired a stone mason named
Patrick H. McGowan, whom his son had supported for the doorkeeper position at the State Capitol

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\(^{17}\) [http://files.usgwarchives.net/nc/franklin/newspapers/wajeffre99nnw.txt](http://files.usgwarchives.net/nc/franklin/newspapers/wajeffre99nnw.txt)

Historic Places – Nomination and Inventory. North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. HEREAFTER referred to
as William A. Jeffreys House Nomination 1976

\(^{19}\) William A. Jeffreys House Nomination 1976

\(^{20}\) *The Unique Tomb of William Andrew Jeffreys, by H.G. Jones*, Our State magazine, December 1988, pg. 8-9
building. Mr. McGowan agreed to excavate the tomb, stating that it would take a long time. McGowan then spent the next year chiseling out the tomb. During this time, William's body was kept in a small brick structure near the rock. The tomb was to be covered with a marble slab. When it arrived, it was found to be smashed inside the crate, so another was ordered. Nearly another year passed when the second inscribed slab arrived, and William's body was finally interred.\footnote{The Unique Tomb of William Andrew Jeffreys, by H.G. Jones, Our State magazine, December 1988, pg. 9}

The story of William's burial spread and, over time, became quite embellished. Rumors flew about William's body being kept in a barrel of brandy and lowered beneath the cool waters of the Little River for preservation.\footnote{Massive Stone Became Tomb for Young Man, by Mary Ann Sandy, Date published unknown, publication type unknown} Then, when the tomb was completed, there was a huge celebration. William's body was interred, the brandy was said to be served to those in attendance, though there is no evidence that any of this ever happened. Other rumors stated he was buried with a gold ring and other valuables\footnote{The Unique Tomb of William Andrew Jeffreys, by H.G. Jones, Our State magazine, December 1988, pg. 9}, leading to his tomb being ransacked and desecrated over the years. The most popular theory is that states that William's body was been kept in a barrel of brandy and lowered beneath the cool waters of the Little River for preservation.\footnote{Massive Stone Became Tomb for Young Man, by Mary Ann Sandy, Date published unknown, publication type unknown}

Once the tomb was completed, there was a huge celebration and after William's body was interred, the brandy was served to those in attendance. There is no evidence that any of this actually occurred. A personal account, which mentions the rumor involving the body being preserved in brandy, was published March 17, 1940 in the New and Observer in Raleigh, and states:

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"...Georgiana [Norwood] vividly recalls as told by her mother the burial of Senator Jeffreys. His body was kept in a vault while a Scotch mason from the North, who had been working on the State Capitol, took 11 months to chisel laboriously a recepticle in this huge rock for the Senator's casket. She recalls when her master Billy Jeffreys, with a red and white plume waving from his hat, paraded forth from the Civil War. Little later and she and her anxious mistress were hiding their valuables in turn from Wheeler's cavalry and Sherman's Yankees. There is a tradition that when Senator Jeffreys died in 1847 at the age of only 28 his body was preserved in brandy until the tomb could be completed. However that is denied. There is no doubt that the tomb was carved in the heart of this great rock, which raised 20 feet or more from a level field, that the casket was lowered into this vault and the top sealed with a marble slab on which are inscribed:

Sacred to the memory of William Andrew Jeffreys of Franklin County. Attorney at law and Senator from Franklin in the General Assembly Session 1844-1845. Born January 23, 1817. Died on the third day of October, 1845. He was a kind husband and parent, an honest man and an able and faithful public servant.

The fondness of a creature's love, how strong it strikes the sense!
Thither the warm affection move Nor can we call them Thence.
'Tis finished, 'tis done, the spirit is fled!
The prisoner is gone, the Christian is dead!
The Christian is living through Jesus' love,
And gladly receiving a kingdom above"
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There was once a highway historical marker along US 401 that indicated the location of the tomb. This was removed in 2008 after complaints from the family regarding vandals damaging the cemetery. Vandals smashed and removed the slab covering the tomb. It has since been pieced back together and replaced as best as could be done. The tomb is located on private property.
Andrew Hartsfield (1765-1862)

Andrew Hartsfield was the first son (fourth child) born to Jacob Hartsfield and Sarah Lynn McElroy. According to the 1790 census, Andrew was living alone and owned one enslaved person. Unfortunately, due to the destruction of many deeds and other documents, it is impossible at this point to establish when Andrew arrived at present day Mitchell's Mill State Natural Area. However, a partially mutilated 1798 deed between William Jeffreys and Andrew Hartsfield suggests that Andrew purchased the property during this time. This cannot fully corroborate his arrival due to the fact that the date on the deed is missing and the deed itself cannot be found through a search of the Wake County Register of deeds. Shortly after acquiring the property, Andrew began construction on the area's first dam and grist mill. The site made for a perfect location for a dam site due to the shallow bedrock, most of which was already exposed. He also built a small house just to the west of the mill.

Construction of the dam began circa 1800. Grist mills such as this operated by using water pressure from impounded water. The stones for the dam were most likely quarried from behind the dam location that would later become the impounded millpond. Using slave labor, drills and wedges were used to split the rock into sections. The rock was then dragged to the dam site by oxen and mortared into place.

As the dam was constructed, two openings were initially placed into the dam wall. One opening, located near the top left of the dam, was called the forebay and was opened and shut using a wooden gate. This gate allowed for the controlled flow of water to the waterwheel, which, operated the grist mill. When the gate was opened, water would travel down a wooden sluice down to the waterwheel. The weight and pressure of water striking the wheel would cause the wheel to turn. Gears connected to the waterwheel would also turn, operating the grist stones and grinding down the corn, wheat or other material put on the stone.

The other opening, located in the lower center portion of the dam, was also gated and allowed for the complete drainage of the millpond, which was done every two to four years to remove sediment and debris from the millpond. The draining of the millpond became a community event. The farmers living in the surrounding area would come lend their services, or the services of their enslaved persons, to remove the sediment that had collected in the millpond, while the women cooked for them.

The first grist mill was built entirely of wood. Though wooden mills were very sturdy, constant exposure to harsh conditions necessitated frequent repairs. Within five to ten years, all parts of the waterwheel were likely replaced. These parts, which were in constant contact with water, were likely made of cypress, red cedar or pine heartwood due to their natural resistance to rot.

Mill operators during this time did very well for themselves and typically would become the center of commerce in a given area. Hartsfield's Mill was no exception. Farmers would bring their corn, wheat or other crops to the mill to be ground into cornmeal, grits, or flour. The final product would then

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26 A Supplemental History, Angley, 1983, pg. 1
27 A Preliminary Investigation, Fabric, 1976, pg 10
28 His son, Wesley, would later add on to the house. Present day Hartsfield-Perry house
29 A Preliminary Investigation, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 13 Fig. 3
30 A Preliminary Investigation, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 12
be bagged and given back to the farmer less 10% - 15%, which the mill operator would keep as payment. The mill operator would then sell that product in a general store located nearby, or keep some to feed his own family. The total cost for construction of the grist mill was $1939.37.\textsuperscript{31} The mill brought in over $4,000.00 between 1838 and 1852 (after Andrew's son, Wesley took over operations).

In 1805 and 1808, Andrew added considerably to his property. He purchased land adjacent to his existing holdings from Nathan Barham and Benjamin Barham as well as lands further upstream along what is referred to as “the middle prong creek of Little River”\textsuperscript{32} By 1819, Andrew Hartsfield had amassed nearly 1700 acres of land in Franklin and Wake Counties and owned at least nine enslaved persons.\textsuperscript{33} In 1797, William Jefferys sold a tract of land along the Little River in eastern Wake County to Andrew Hartsfield.

In 1829, Andrew, who was a minister in the Methodist Church, played a prominent role in the founding of the Antioch Church, which was located on the property near the grist mill (off present day Pulley Town Road) about half way between Mitchell Mill Rd. and the bridge crossing the Cedar Prong Creek. Around this same time, Andrew also founded the Hartsfield Meeting House near Forestville and preached to both congregations until their merger in 1850 to the Rolesville Methodist Church. Sometime in the 1930's, the church relocated to neighboring Wake Forest and became the Wake Forest United Methodist Church. This church stands today at the intersection of Highway 98 and Main Street in Wake Forest.\textsuperscript{34}

According to a 1938 Wake County deed, we know that Andrew's youngest son, Wesley, had taken over operations of the mill when Andrew, who it is believed had devoted his life to the ministry, purchased 285 acres of land adjoining the mill property.\textsuperscript{35} The 1860 federal census lists Andrew as being a Clergyman in the Methodist Church. Andrew lived in the house he built, along with his son, Wesley, located just to the west of the Mill property (now called the Hartsfield-Perry House). Andrew died in December of 1862 at the age of 97. He had seen more events than many of his time. He had been born under rule of King George III of England, lived through the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Revolution and the birth of the United States of America, the war of 1812 when England invaded the United States in a last ditch effort to bring the country back under British rule, and he witnessed the country rip itself apart over slavery and states’ rights during the Civil War. He was also able to witness “the offspring of his fourth generation, and his posterity grow to near 100”\textsuperscript{36}.

**Dr. Wesley Hartsfield (1810-1880)**

Wesley Hartsfield was the youngest son of Andrew Hartsfield and Siddie Braswell. In 1839, Wesley took over the dam and grist mill from his father. Wesley was a doctor in Rolesville, having studied medicine in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Along with what he received from his father, Wesley purchased land from Bryan Green and William Jeffreys accumulating sizable holdings on both sides of the Little River prior to the Civil War.

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\textsuperscript{31} A Preliminary Investigation, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 16 Fig. 6
\textsuperscript{32} Map of Wake County, Fendol Bevers, 1870
\textsuperscript{33} A Supplemental History, Angley, 1983, pg. 2
\textsuperscript{34} A Supplemental History, pg. 4
\textsuperscript{35} Wake County Deeds book 14, pg. 48
\textsuperscript{36} Andrew Hartsfield Obituary Notice, The Weekly Standard, Wednesday January 14, 1863, NC State Archives
War. He had nearly 1,470 acres of farmland and around 40 enslaved persons.\

1835, Dr. Hartsfield added a second story onto his father’s house (now known as the Hartsfield-Perry House) about a half mile west of the Mill. He also built a small office out front (small building on the left of the above photograph) around 1840 where he would practice medicine. The crawl space below the doctors office, which is about three feet tall, was used as a morgue.

In addition to his occupations of physician and farmer, Wesley Hartsfield took over operation of his father's grist mill on the Little River in 1838. He also built a sawmill in 1851 and a new grist mill the following year. The sawmill was located on the north side of the Little River. A second forebay was installed to direct water to that mill. By 1850, Wesley’s holdings included some 750 acres of cultivated land, 1,360 acres of unimproved land and 30 enslaved persons. Ten years later, his unimproved lands increased to 1,470 acres and he owned 40 enslaved persons. His overall land value had increased by $17,000.

In 1859 Dr. Hartsfield served as secretary of the Botanico Medical Society, a short-lived organization which sought to reduce the use of "mercurial and other poisons, bleeding, blistering, freezing, starving and the knife" through treatment of diseases with herbs and other plants.

In 1861 the United States of America descended into Civil war. Initially, Wesley was against North Carolina’s secession from the Union. Once secession occurred, he had little choice but to accept it and, for the most part, supported the State of North Carolina and the Confederacy as he would later testify:

“I was for the Union up to the time the State went out of the Union. I voted for the Union Candidates, W.W. Holden & George E. Badger. I voted the whole ticket. I was bitterly opposed to Secession. After the State went out of the Union, I sympathized with it for about one year, under the first excitement. I then changed my sentiments and went back to my first position that it was wrong. I saw that Secession was a failure. One thing was we were forced out of the Union against my will and I did not know what else to do but to go along with the State for a time being. I felt very sad when the State went out of the Union, some seemed to rejoice but I could not. After the second year of war, I was for peace on the best terms we could get. I have been a Union man ever since. I was an old Jackson democrat. I now vote the Conservative ticket, and vote for men that I consider in favor of the Union.”

Wesley also recalled a bitter argument with his Son-in-Law, William McKay about the war. McKay was a Confederate cavalryman and staunch supporter of secession. Wesley would later recount:

“I had a strong argument with my nephew, at Rolesville, who was a strong secessionist. My feelings were harassed and distressed with threats and contentions with several persons.”

Dr. Hartsfield and his wife, Candace Smith Hartsfield, had nine children; four daughters and five sons. Not much is known of the daughters, other than 3 grew to adulthood and were married, 

37 A Supplemental History, pg. 4.  
38 This opening is located beside the present day breach in the dam.  
39 After the War, Wesley testified seeking reparations from the US Government for the items taken from his lands by Union soldiers. A copy of the transcribed testimony is in the possession of the author. Date of this testimony is unknown. [HEREAFTER referred to as Testimony of Dr. Wesley Hartsfield]  
40 Testimony of Dr. Wesley Hartsfield
raising families of their own. One daughter died at birth. Of their five sons, three died during the Civil War. The Hartsfield sons were:

**John Wesley Hartsfield** – Born in 1837, John was an Orderly Sergeant in Co. I, 1st N.C. Troops of the Confederate Army. He died during the Battle of Mechanicsville, Va. on 26 Jun 1862.

**Jacob Andrew Hartsfield** – Jacob was born December 18, 1838 and volunteered in Co. I, 1st N.C. Troops in August of 1861. He served under General Joseph E. Johnston. In June, 1862 he was appointed to the rank of Orderly Sergeant shortly after the Battle of Mechanicsville and upon the death of his brother, John, whom he replaced. Jacob fought at Mechanicsville, Gaines Mill, Malverne Hill, Boonesboro Gap, Sharpsburg and Fredericksburg.

After Sharpsburg, Jacob's unit was reorganized into Gen. Stonewall Jackson's Corps. He was elected Lieutenant shortly after Sharpsburg and advanced to First Lieutenant after Battle of Fredericksburg.

Jacob was captured at the Battle of Spotsylvania and was imprisoned for 13 months. He was sent to the Capitol Prison in Washington D.C. for 30 days, then to Ft. Delaware. After some time there, he was shipped to Morris Island near Charleston, S.C. and from there was moved to Ft. Pulaski on Tybee Island. In March 1865, Jacob was sent back to Ft. Delaware where he remained until the end of the war.

**Flavius Josephus Hartsfield** - Flavius was the third son of Dr. Wesley Hartsfield and Candice Smith. He owned 545 acres of farmland, valued at $4,000, and was the proprietor of the Mitchell Mill general store after Wesley Hartsfield. He earned a living repairing watches of all sorts and would later open a shop on Wilmington St. in Raleigh. The building is still there today.

In November 1866, someone broke into the general store and stole several watches that were left for repair. Flavius took out an ad in the local paper,
Alva Curtis Hartsfield - Alva was born in 1844 and enlisted as a Private in the Confederate Army. He was a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). He fought and was wounded at the Battle of New Market on 15 May 1864. Alva later died of Measles in Petersburg, Va. in 1864.

The following excerpt from a letter written by Jacob Andrew Hartsfield on October 27, 1909 details the circumstances surrounding the death of his brother Alva:

“*We had a letter from [Alva] after the Battle of New Market giving a description of the fight. Spoke of putting the Yankees to flight and of pursuing them. Also spoke of meeting me in a few days. He was taken sick with measles in camp and sent to the hospital at Richmond. After he was convalescent a relative succeeded in getting a furlough for him to come home and as the Yankees had cut the [railroad] between Petersburg and Richmond, he attempted to walk the distance. The exertion caused a collapse and he was found unconscious in the streets of Petersburg and sent to hospital there where he died June 26, 1864. I went to Petersburg after the war in order to bring his remains home but failed, as I found the graves so badly mixed I had to give up the attempt.*”

Henry Applewhite Hartsfield - Henry was born in 1846 and was the youngest brother of Jacob Hartsfield. He was a cadet in the Military Academy in Hillsborough, N.C. and was Orderly Sergeant in a company of junior reserves. He died of Typhoid Fever at the close of the Civil War. It is unclear if he ever served in combat.

On April 13, 1865 having heard about the devastation in Atlanta, Ga. and Columbia, S.C. at the hands General William T. Sherman, and with no standing army to protect it, the City of Raleigh peacefully surrendered to Sherman’s forces. Shortly after the Surrender of Raleigh, Wesley rode to Rolesville and took the Amnesty Oath. On Monday, May 1, 1865, according to Wesley’s sworn testimony, soldiers under the command of General John Logan passed by his farm (present day Hartsfield-Perry Farm). They had camped nearby since the previous Saturday. According to his overseer, Mr. Green Perry, who was in charge of farm and possibly mill operations, some of the soldiers approached Wesley’s farm and demanded provisions, including hundreds of bushels of corn, pork and other food, as well as 3 horses, several live hogs, saddles and harnesses and tools, which Wesley gave to them. Wesley would later request reparations from the U.S. Government for his lost belongings.

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41 The Corps Forward: The Biographical Sketches of the VMI Cadets who Fought in the Battle of New Market by William Couper (2005), pg. 89
42 Oath of allegiance to the United States, which was required of those who supported the Confederacy
43 Testimony of Dr. Wesley Hartsfield
In 1866, Wesley conveyed to his son, Flavius, 566 acres of land lying east of the Little River and north of the Halifax Road (present day SR. 2224). Located on this land was Flavius Hartsfield's residence, which still stands on the south side of SR 2303 and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1989 as the Green-Hartsfield House.

In August of 1879, Wesley sold 23 acres, which included the Mill tract, to Andrew Jackson Pickney Harris for the sum of $2,790. Wesley passed away a year later. By 1887, a small community had sprung up near his father's mill seat known “Hartsville”\textsuperscript{45}. The area would later become known as “Mitchell's Mill”, after Richard Calvin Mitchell, who would purchase the mill from Mr. Harris.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{1887_Map_of_Wake_County_by_A.W._Shaffer,_Raleigh_NC}
\caption{1887 Map of Wake County by A.W. Shaffer, Raleigh NC}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Andrew Jackson Pickney Harris (1835-1919)}

Not much is known about Andrew Jackson Pickney Harris\textsuperscript{46}. The 1870 Federal Census listed Andrew as being a merchant. According to the 1910 federal census, Andrew lived in the Harris Township of Franklin County and worked as a farmer.

On August 11, 1879, Andrew purchased the 23-acre mill tract from Dr. Wesley Hartsfield. Andrew, which included the mill house, gin house and cotton gin, as well as the saw mill and general store\textsuperscript{47}. Andrew operated the mill until 1883, when he sold it to Richard Calvin Mitchell for the sum of $4,500.\textsuperscript{48}

\textbf{Richard Calvin Mitchell (1848-1900)}

Richard Calvin Mitchell, known as “Calvin”, was born in December of 1848. According to the 1870 Census, Calvin’s occupation was listed as “miller.” It is not positively known at what mill he worked, but one could speculate that he was working the same mill he would later purchase. He was believed to be working at the Hartsville Mill prior to 1884 when he purchased it from A.J.P. Harris.\textsuperscript{49} Calvin ran the mill along with his brother-in-law, Rufus Stone (who was the miller and blacksmith), until his death in 1900 at the age of 51. Calvin also purchased a house from the widow of Wesley’s son,

\textsuperscript{44} Transcribed testimony of Dr. Wesley Hartsfield, date and author unknown.
\textsuperscript{45} Shaffer’s Map of Wake County, 1887\textsuperscript{45}
\textsuperscript{46} Donna Fabric, in her 1976 paper titled “A preliminary Investigation into the Social and Economic History of Mitchell’s Mill”, erroneously listed his name as A.J.P. Hams.
\textsuperscript{47} A Supplemental History, pg. 5-6
\textsuperscript{48} A Supplemental History, pg. 6
\textsuperscript{49} A Supplemental History, pg. 7
Flavius. This house is known today as the Green-Hartsfield House and is located approximately ½ mile east of the mill on Halifax Rd. It was about this time the area began to be referred to as Mitchell’s Mill, though the post office retained the name Hartsville.

In 1887, Calvin permitted the Beulah Baptist Church to use a small tract of land located off present day Pulleytown Rd., possibly at or near the same site as the 1829 Antioch Church location. Previously, the church had congregated “...under a bush arbor since there was no building for this church” due to its split from the Rolesville Baptist Church prior to 1887. This is where the first Beulah Baptist Church building was believed to have been constructed. Calvin donated all the lumber used for the church’s construction. In 1931, with the church building falling apart (and due to people wandering over the church grounds to swim in the river), the congregation decided to move to a new building about one mile west down Mitchell Mill Rd, where it stands today.

Calvin died in 1900 at the age of 51. That year’s census indicated that he was a farmer at that time. Upon his death, Calvin left the Mill to his daughter, Hattie, and her husband Stanley Hilliard Jones. Sometime around 1913, the mill and several buildings, including the cotton gin and stables, burned to the ground. A man by the name of Carrol Pulley allegedly claimed on his death bed that he was responsible for burning the mill down, but this has never been substantiated. Stanley built a new, smaller mill and continued to operate it until 1915, when the mill closed down operations for good. Stanley would go back to farming the surrounding land.

In 1926, Hilliard and Hattie Jones sold the property to Raleigh Granite Company (later bought out by Martin Marrietta), who ran test bores throughout the property. Their goal was to open a quarry to compete with the Rolesville Quarry (now Fantasy Lake Scuba Park) located a few miles to the west. Many of these test boreholes can be seen near the base of the dam today. There is also what is believed to be a broken drill bit lodged in the solid granite face just to the right of the central drainage opening at the base of the dam. For unknown reasons, the plans for the quarry were abandoned and the property sat unused for decades.

In 1976, the bulk of what became known as Mitchell Mill State Natural Area was purchased from Martin Marietta Corporation by the State of North Carolina for use as a state natural area. In 1983, the State of North Carolina purchased a tract of property located behind Mitchell's Store on N.C. Highway 96 from Raymond and Patricia Nipper, completing acquisitions for the state natural area.

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50 Wake County Deed Book 76, pg.s 252 and 544
51 Green-Hartsfield Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, Dr. Surry Roberts, Claudia Brown, October 1989
52 A Preliminary Investigation, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 6
53 See Figures 1 & 2
54 1976, “Our Past, History of Greater Rolesville Area” by Eloise Averette Freeman, pg. 72
55 1976, “Our Past, History of Greater Rolesville Area” by Eloise Averette Freeman, pg. 72
56 Hand-written notes taken by unknown staff member at William B. Umstead State park, date unknown
57 A Supplemental History, pg. 6
58 Wake County Deeds, Book 4305 Pg. 573
Mill Construction and Operation

Mitchell Mill State Natural Area was once the location of a small farming community. Most grist mills in Wake County, like the one that was built here, operated using water from an impounded source, such as a millpond. The only surviving structure on the site, the mill dam, measures approximately 400 feet in length and 15-20 feet high and was constructed using slave labor sometime around 1800.

The stones of the dam were quarried locally and believed to have been cut from where the millpond would be located. Through a very laborious process, holes would be drilled into the rock about 4-6 inches deep. Then, steel wedges would be placed into the holes. The wedges would then be driven into the rock with a sledgehammer or similar tool until the rock split. Then the rock would be removed using a series of ropes and pullies. Large animals, like oxen, were then used to drag the stones to the dam wall where they would be lifted and mortared into place.\(^{59}\)

As the dam was constructed, two openings were initially placed into the dam wall (a third opening would be added later). One opening, located on the top left side of the dam, was called the forebay and was opened and closed using a wooden gate. This gate allowed for the controlled flow of water down to the waterwheel. When the gate was opened, water would travel down a wooden channel called a sluice to the waterwheel. Water would pour over the top of the waterwheel. The weight and force of the water striking the waterwheel would cause it to turn. Gears and pullies connected to the waterwheel would then turn, operating whatever contraption they were connected to. This was referred to as an overshot waterwheel. In the case of Mitchell’s Mill, they were connected to the grist stones, a cotton gin and later, a saw mill.

\[\text{Forebay opening} \quad \text{Top view of forebay opening on millpond side of the dam. There are grooves where the wooden gate would be raised and lowered, controlling water flow.}\]

The second opening was located in the center of the dam wall at the base of the dam. This opening was also gated and allowed for the complete drainage of the millpond. The millpond had to be drained every few years in order to remove sediment and debris to keep the millpond from filling in.\(^{60}\) The draining of the millpond became a community event. Area farmers would lend their services to remove the sediment. While the men worked to remove the sediment, the women would cook the meals. This was a time for hard work, good food and reconnecting with friends and family.\(^{61}\) In 1851, Dr. Wesley Hartsfield had a third opening added to the dam. This would divert water to the saw mill he

\(^{59}\) _A Preliminary Investigation_, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 10
\(^{60}\) _A Preliminary Investigation_, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 13, Fig. 3
\(^{61}\) _A Preliminary Investigation_, Fabric, 1976, Pgs. 8-9
had built on the north side of the river.\textsuperscript{62}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image1}
\caption{Millpond drain opening located in the center of the dam wall}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image2}
\caption{Third opening, added in 1851, to divert water to the sawmill}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{62} A Preliminary Investigation, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 5
Another feature of this dam was the construction of the top, which was slanted back at an angle towards the millpond. One of the problems with any mill dam is that they would occasionally get flooded during periods of heavy rain. With flooding came debris from upstream. The purpose of this slanted design, as described in “The Young Mill-Wright & Millers Guide” written by Oliver Evans and published in 1795, was to allow for sticks, logs and other flotsam to pass over the wall and not become log jammed. This decreased the likelihood of damage to the dam wall.

Hand drawn side view diagram of the dam wall and sluice

After the completion of the dam, Andrew Hartsfield constructed the grist mill. The first grist mill was built entirely of wood. Though wooden mills were very sturdy, constant exposure to harsh conditions necessitated frequent repairs. Within 5-10 years, all parts of the waterwheel were most likely replaced. It is likely that the parts that were in constant contact with water were made of cypress, red cedar or pine heartwood due to their natural resistance to rot.

Mill operators during this time did very well for themselves and typically they would become the meeting place in a given area. Hartsfield's Mill was no exception, as the area soon became a center of commerce and trade known as Hartsville, complete with a general store, cotton mill, blacksmith and even a post office. Farmers would bring their corn, wheat or other crops to the mill to be ground into cornmeal, grits, or flour. The final product would then be bagged and given back to the farmer, minus 10% - 15%, which the mill operator would keep as payment. The mill operator would then sell that product in a general store located nearby, or keep some to feed his own family. The total cost for construction of the grist mill was $1939.37. From 1838-1852 the mill brought in over $4,000.00.

In 1851, Dr. Wesley Hartsfield built a sawmill on the north shore of the river across from the grist mill. The saw mill cost $437.41 to construct. A third opening was added to the dam to allow water flow to this new mill.

As mentioned above, there were several other buildings in the area as well. The cotton gin was

63 See Figures 1 & 2
64 See Figure 3
65 See Figure 3
located halfway between the grist mill and the dam, with water being diverted from the grist mill headrace to power it. Although the gin was in operation in 1910, there is no further information on when it was constructed or what machinery was used. The general store stood facing the Old Stage road near the south west end of the dam. It is unknown if the store was built by the Hartsfields or Calvin Mitchell. There was also a blacksmith shop located just above the general store, and an ice house was dug into the river bank near the smith. Some locals say there was a school located near the mill site, but that is yet to be verified.

There were three houses that were within the boundaries of the park. None of them are standing today. The first was the High House, which was located just north of where the Mitchell Mill Road bridge spanning the Little River now stands. Originally it was thought this house got its name from the fact that it stood on a high ridge overlooking the mill property, but it seems much more likely that it was named after the High family that resided there. There is a natural spring located nearby where the women would take their laundry to wash, then lay them out on the rocks to dry. The location of this spring has been found, but due to the thick brush an exact location of the High House cannot be made.

The second house, known as the Miller's House, was located across the street from the mill. As with the High House, the exact location of this building’s remains is in doubt due to the thick brush that covers the area. This was a plain building that was most likely occupied by the tenants or hired help. The third house was known as the Mitchell House and was located on the southeast corner of the intersection of present day Mitchell Mill and Pulleytown roads. It stood until about 1976, when it was demolished. Not much else is known about the structure.

The only remnants of any other buildings are partial foundations that are heavily overgrown with brush. The only way anything is known of where these buildings once stood is due to the work of Donna Fabric in 1976. The millpond is about 60% - 70% silted in, and trees have grown where water once was. Sometime in the mid 20th century a large storm (Hurricane Hazel according to some locals) created a breech in the northern portion of the dam wall. Today, the Little River flows through this breech.

The Mill Today

The people living around the mill found it to be an attractive place to visit for many different social and recreational uses. Families would visit and picnic while children played in the cool waters of the river. Others would bring fishing poles to pass the time while their product was being milled.

The general store was also a gathering place for locals to talk about the goings on in the area, politics, or whatever happened to be the topic of the day. There was a post office inside the store, which was also used as a voting precinct.

In the mid 1900's, when motor vehicles became more common, families and friends would congregate along the Little River, even driving their vehicles down onto the flatrocks to the river, to wash their trucks after working the fields. Unfortunately, many people also used the area as a dumping ground for their household or commercial waste.

Today, the Mill is a shadow of its former self. All the buildings are gone and the only things remaining to remind anyone of its past are the mill dam and old trash piles that are buried deep in the brush near where the homes and buildings once stood. Mitchell's Mill State Natural Area is now home

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66 Present day S.R. 2224 – Mitchell Mill Rd.
67 See figures 1 & 2
68 A Preliminary Investigation, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 4
69 A Preliminary Investigation, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 8
70 A Preliminary Investigation, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 9
71 A Preliminary Investigation, Fabric, 1976, Pg. 8
to a myriad of rare, threatened and endangered plant and animal species, such as the Neuse River
Waterdog (*Necturus lewisi*), a species found only in the Neuse and Tar River basins, and nowhere else
on Earth. It is also home to threatened and endangered plants, such as the Narrow Leaved Blue Curl
(*Trichostema setaceum*) and Small's Purselane (*Smalls portulaca*).

These species are not only under constant threat from invasive and exotic plant species, like
Japanese Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) and Chinese Privet (*Ligustrum sinense*), but also from
illegal human activity such as vehicular traffic into the unit and illegal camping. Campers cut down the
trees in the area, and in doing so are destroying the Eastern Red Cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*). Removing Red Cedars allows for the spread of invasive species like the Mimosa Tree (*Albizia
julibrissin*). Illegal campfires splinter and crack the fragile granite rock face and kill off the bacteria
necessary for the mosses to grow. Litter left behind kills organisms in the ephemeral pools, and broken
glass creates a safety hazard to families and children who visit the area to enjoy the beauty they find
here.

In 2013, park staff took on these challenges in the hopes of protecting these rare natural
resources within the natural area. They began a rigorous effort to enforce park rules. Targeted herbicide
application under the supervision and guidance of Division biologists have begun killing off vast areas
of the invasive Chinese privet. Park staff have also coordinated with prescribed fire management staff
to develop a burn prescription for the area. Through these actions, along with assistance from the
public, we hope Mitchell Mill State Natural Area will be saved for future generations to enjoy.
Figure 2 - Historical map of the Mitchell Mill area using information found in "A Preliminary Investigation into the Social and Economic History of Mitchell's Mill" by Donna S. Fabric November 25, 1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses for Gear'd Mill on Little River:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2500 feet of lumber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 kegs nails from Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Rock Walls for House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castings from Petersburg (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrstones &amp; bolting cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smut machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building millhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Gear, Smith's bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 200 feet long &amp; foby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Petersburg. extra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Raleigh, do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1851 - Sawmill Expenses - Sept. 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting &amp; Hauling Lumber</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Block walls</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotchkeys (?) verticle wheels &amp; Bireland Saw from Petersburg</td>
<td>38.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irons from Bunns, Raleigh</td>
<td>42.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Wheels, complete</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Griffin's Bill</td>
<td>150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Board</td>
<td>32.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plank &amp; Sets &amp; Flooring for Sawmill</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>407.41</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logway nails to (?)</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>427.41</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron for tang shafts</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$437.41</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3 - Expense reports from Wesley's Mill Book, transcribed by Donna S. Fabric