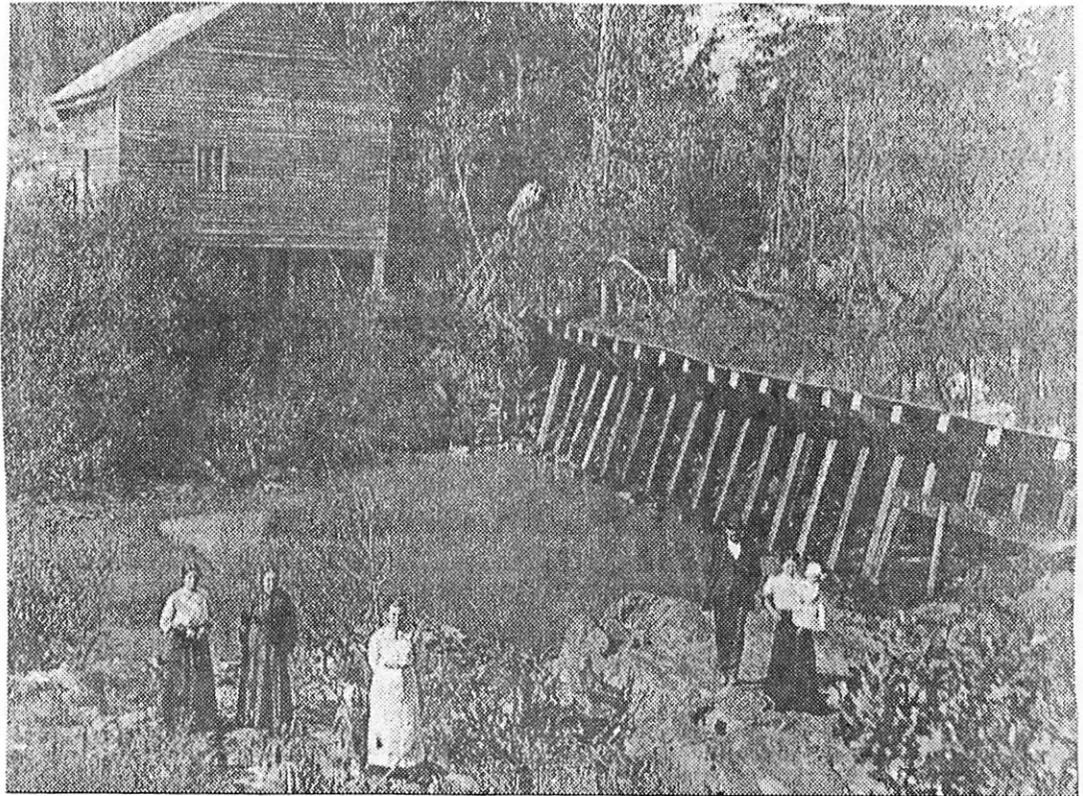


# Grains started first industries

June 16 1991

## Theodoric Webb's grist mill was part of town's namesake



The John F. Wilson family, circa 1914, is shown in front of a grist mill at the point where Six Mile Creek enters Twelve Mile

Creek in Lancaster County's Indian Land community. Allen Morrow built the first mill at this site before 1835.

The first industries in this area were not cotton mills, but grist mills. Located either on the river or on creeks — any place that had enough constant water power — the mills ground the corn and wheat of the first settlers.

White's Mill on Fishing Creek in Chester District was an early important mill, well known in the Revolutionary period. Also well known was Webb's mill on Steele Creek. Theodoric Webb's grist mill provided half of the name for Fort Mill.



**Nearby history**

**LOUISE  
PETTUS**

In March of 1832, John Springs III of Fort Mill wrote to his son Leroy in New York City: "Twelve days ago Andrew and myself took water at the Old Nation Ford with 46 bales Cotton and in five days landed it safe in Camden and sold for 10 cents & the Boat on its return is bringing two paid Mill stones for a Mill Wm. E.

White and myself are now engaged in erecting at the Ford."

The mill was erected on the west side of the Catawba River on the land owned by William E. White. There is no further record of this mill until the U.S. Census Industry Schedules were taken in 1850. The industry reveals the name as "Springs and White" and the value of the mill was placed at \$6,000. The previous year the water driven mill had handled 10,000 bushels of wheat, 5,000 bushels of corn and 10,000 feet of lumber. There were two employees.

White acquired the mill at Old Nation Ford after the death of John Springs in 1853. White changed the name of the mill but there seems to be no record of the new name. Neither the industry census in 1860 nor White's estate records give a name. Perhaps it was the mill called "Rough and Ready" or the mill named "Laurel."

White died in 1866. His estate records show the sale of the mill for nearly \$6,000 and also show substantial sales of beef, bacon, hams and hides at the mill.

On the Lancaster County side of the river south of where Sugar Creek enters the Catawba River, there was another large mill known as "Turkey Point Merchant Mills." The mills were owned by four partners, all large land holders, John M. Doby, Rev. Adam Ivy, Benjamin Massey and James Stewart.

In 1855 Doby, as part of his preparation for selling his land holdings and moving to Arkansas, sold his one-fourth interest in the mills to Ivy who later became the sole proprietor. The mills became known as the Ivy Mills and prospered until the Great Flood of 1916 when the mill was washed away.

Up the Catawba River at the present-day Buster Boyd Bridge on S.C. 49, there was Hand's Mill operated from 1906 to 1922 at the site of Wright's Ferry.

Hand's Ferry was a large two-story wooden building. There had probably been a mill at that site since Biggers Ferry began operation ca. 1788, later replaced by a ferry known as Mason's.

A trip to the mill was an exciting adventure for the children. Iris Johnston Bunton wrote of Alexander Sutton Hand's mill:

*"The bins of yellow corn mill,  
Of coarse bran and flour; The whitened  
rafters high above,*

*The rough stairs to the tower.  
The miller's great old grinding stones  
Was a mystery complete,  
A fearsome thing to childish mind  
As it crushed the corn and wheat."*

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*Louise Pettus is a retired history professor from Winthrop College. Her column appears Sundays.*