

WATERBURY CLOCK COMPANY - BULLOCK'S CREEK, SC

The Suggs family of York County begun making clocks at Bullock's Creek in the early 1830's. Production continued into the early 1850's. yet few persons outside of the museum field have ever heard of the Waterbury Clock Company. There are good examples of these clocks at several museums and owned by local individuals.

Mr. T.E. Suggs (1803-Feb. 1, 1887) was the 1st known clock manufacturer in York County. He was born in the Mill Creek Community not far from Bethel Church. He moved to the Bullock's Creek - Pinkneyville community as a young man and began assembling clocks. The label in the back of his handsome pieces states that they were made at Waterbury, York District, South Carolina. However, to date no such location has been documented. Several other sources state that the clocks were made at Bullock's Creek. Therefore, Waterbury seems to have been a name used to claim association with the clock manufacturing town of Waterbury, Connecticut.

The manufacturing of clocks was no small undertaking in the mid 19th century. T.E. Suggs got help from none other than Connecticut's clock manufacturer, Seth Thomas. Sources from Bullock Creek Presbyterian Church, Union County and York County court house records suggest that Mr. Suggs lived in Union County at Pinkneyville and used the ferry to cross the Broad River in route to the manufacturing site at Bullock's Creek. He also was an active member of the Bullock's Creek Church making the trip across the river for services. Unfortunately, it is unknown exactly why he lived in this arrangement. It would have been much simpler to have lived and work in one location. Perhaps the answer is found in his ownership of property in the town of Pinkneyville which he was trying to promote for financial gain. Due to heavy debts by the late 1840's he was forced to sell some of this property to pay \$4,000.00 owed to Seth Thomas.

It is unclear just when and for how long Suggs continued to manufacture the Waterbury clocks. Several different types of labels have been used in these clocks, each giving different information. The early labels printed by Patrick Carey of Yorkville, South Carolina were the 1st to appear in the early 1830's. These were followed by labels stating that the Waterbury Clock Company was owned not just by T.E. Suggs but also by his half brother G.W. Suggs. These labels were printed by Mr. J.E. Grist of Yorkville after 1833/. Waterbury clock labels also turn up with only G.W.'s name. Since T.E. moved to Alabama in the late 1840's or early 1850's it appears that he sold the business to G.W. who used his own name and new label. Manufacturing of the Waterbury Clock ceased in the mid 1850's.

J.N. Russell the son of the Rev. R.Y. Russell of Bullock's Creek stated: "At one time T.E. Suggs lived in the Taylor house, he came from Waterbury, Conn., his clocks had wooden wheels and works, were considered good time pieces and were made at Waterbury clock factory at Bullocks' Creek."