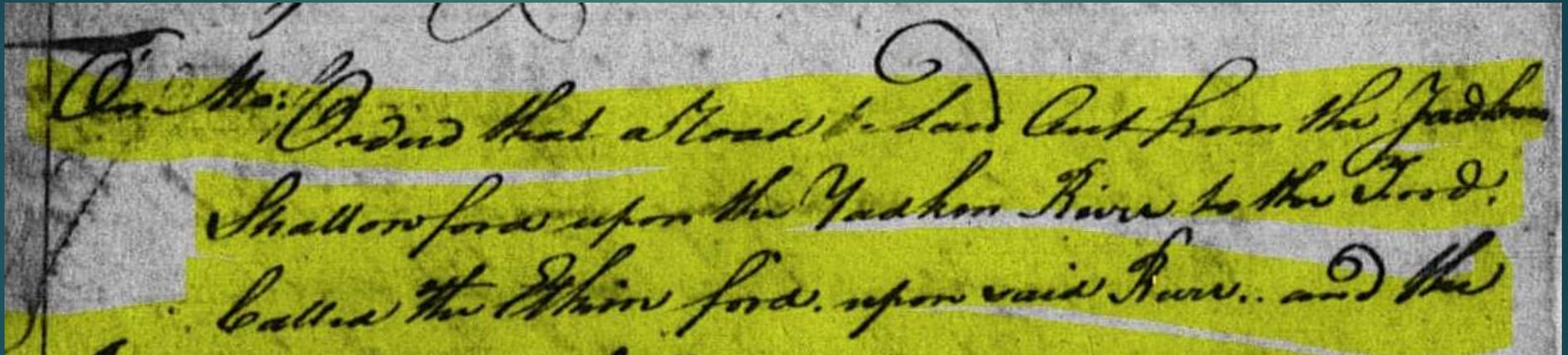




# David Allen's Iron Works

# “Elkin” 1766

- ▶ 10/17/1766 Rowan P&Q Minutes – Earliest mention of “Elkin” in a road order running “from the Yadkin Shallowford upon the Yadkin River to the ford called the Elkin ford upon said river”.



The text is a handwritten entry from the Rowan P&Q Minutes, dated 10/17/1766. It describes a road order running from the Yadkin Shallowford upon the Yadkin River to the ford called the Elkin ford upon said river. The text is written in cursive and is highlighted in yellow.

On Mo: 17<sup>th</sup> 1766 that a Road be laid out from the Yadkin  
Shallowford upon the Yadkin River to the Ford,  
called the Elkin ford, upon said River, and the

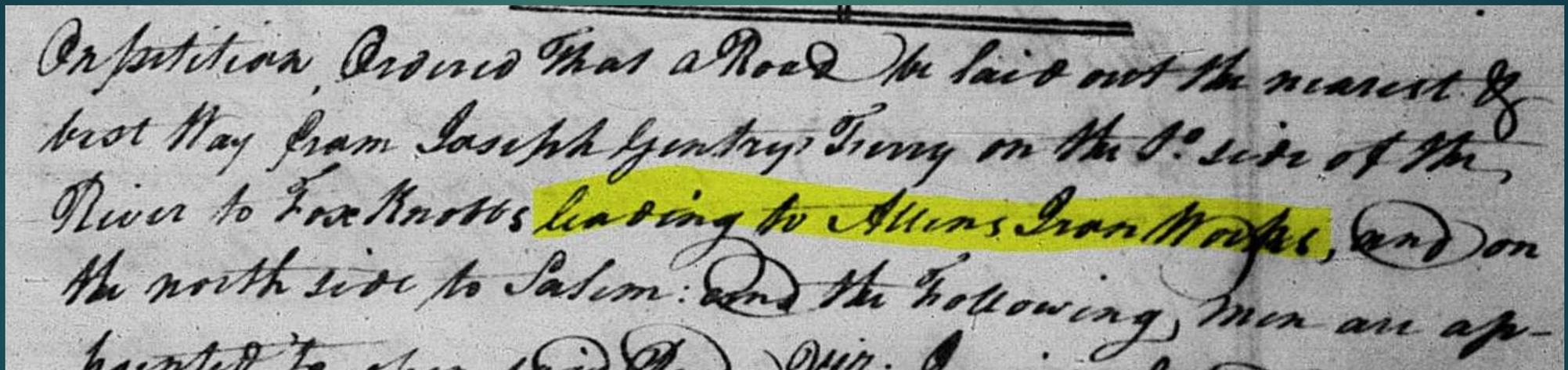
# David Allen

- ▶ David Allen arrived on the Big Elkin about 1764.
- ▶ He was about 50 years old and arrived with his family from New Jersey.
- ▶ In 1768 his saw mill produced lumber for the Moravians in Salem over 30 miles away.
- ▶ In 1772, traveling minister George Soelle referred to the area on both sides of the Yadkin River as **Allen's Settlement**, a testament to how prominent David Allen was to this new community.



# David Allen's Iron Works

- ▶ 2/4/1773 Rowan P&Q Minutes – A road order is the first mention of David Allen's Iron Works. The road would lead from the south side of the Yadkin, crossing the river to the iron works, then along the north side of the river to Salem.



Resolution, Ordered That a Road be laid out the nearest & best Way from Joseph Gentrys Ferry on the S<sup>o</sup> side of the River to Fox Knobs leading to Allens Iron Works, and on the north side to Salem: and the following Men are appointed to survey said Road.

Roads are being constructed with David Allen's iron works as a defining point along the route.

# An Ideal Location

- ▶ David Allen's iron works was located on the east bank of the Big Elkin Creek, between where the dam and the library are today.
- ▶ Readily available iron ore and water power made this an ideal site for the operation.
- ▶ Plenty of trees for producing charcoal for fuel.



# An Ideal Location

- ▶ The iron works is at a shallow section of the Big Elkin Creek, making it easier to transport products east and west.



- ▶ The Yadkin River could be forded at two nearby locations when the water was low.

# Colonial Service

- ▶ The State of NC Public Accounts records a payment to David Allen in 1775.
- ▶ David Allen hauled provisions and assisted in taking prisoners to Hillsboro.

No. 9

By David Allin, with  
his Waggon 5 Days  
halling Provision  
for the Regulars on  
their Expdition  
to Cress Creek a  
15/ per Day

£ 3:15: 0.

By Halling Provisions  
& Baggage 38 Days  
for Cap<sup>t</sup> Waltons  
Company of Minute  
Men when  
disarming Tories &  
on their Expedition  
to Cross Creek &  
Conducting  
prisoners to Hillsb<sup>o</sup>  
a 15/ per Day

28:10: 0.

---

£ 32: 5: 0.

Waggonage for  
Regulars disall<sup>d</sup>

3:15: 0.

---

28:10: 0.

28:10: 0.

# David Allen

- ▶ Served on the Surry County Committee of Safety in 1775 to discuss safety measures against Native American and Tory invaders.
- ▶ David Allen sold iron to the Moravians in 1776.

5/10/1776. We heard that two Expresses from Wilmington had brought the news that Lord Cornwallace, with 7000 English soldiers, had run in by Brunsweig, and had landed. The iron ordered from Allen's furnace arrived just in good time. (p1063)

*Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*

*by Adelaide L. Fries*

# Elihu Ayers at the Iron Works

- ▶ 17 years old when he arrived from Virginia in January 1778 and volunteered as a private in the Wilkes Militia.
- ▶ Per his 1833 pension, he was stationed at David Allen's iron works to guard and protect the surrounding neighborhood.
- ▶ Protected against tories, outliers, and robbers.
- ▶ After various Tory expeditions, he would always return to the iron works, "that place being the headquarters of the company called the Iron Works Company".
- ▶ In 1780 he was assigned to Capt. Salathiel Martin of Surry Militia. Served at Shallow Ford, Kings Mountain, and Guilford Courthouse.
- ▶ Discharged 1781.

# The Iron Works, a Military Mustering Ground

- ▶ The iron works was not simply producing iron. It was a military gathering place and hub for expeditions to search for Tories.
- ▶ In September 1780, Joseph Winston mustered 150 men along the Big Elkin Creek above the iron works before heading west to join others. When they reached Kings Mountain, there were over 1,800 volunteer militiamen.
- ▶ The Kings Mountain victory over the British was the first patriot victory after the invasion at Charleston. Thomas Jefferson called it “The turn of the tide of success.”



The road to victory at Kings Mountain began at the mustering ground along the Big Elkin Creek.

# David Allen Injured

- ▶ David Allen was injured in 1780 at the Battle of Shallow Ford on October 14. Moravian records show that he was treated at Bethania on Oct 25. He remained there until December.

10/25/1780. Br. Bonn was called to Bethania to attend the wounded, it being said that the elder Allen was in very bad case, though he was not in as serious a condition as was reported. (p1573)

12/4/1780. Br. Joseph Dixon came (to Bethania) to dress the wounds of the older Allen. (p1645)

12/7/1780. Mr. Allen visited us this morning for the first and last time since he has been here under treatment. In leaving, he expressed regrets that he had not been to see us more often. Next day he left for home in a wagon brought by one of his sons. (p1646)

*Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*

*by Adelaide L. Fries*

# Iron Works Exemptions

- ▶ On June 30, 1781, the NC House of Commons resolved that 12 people were exempt from military service for the purpose of working at David Allen's Iron Works.

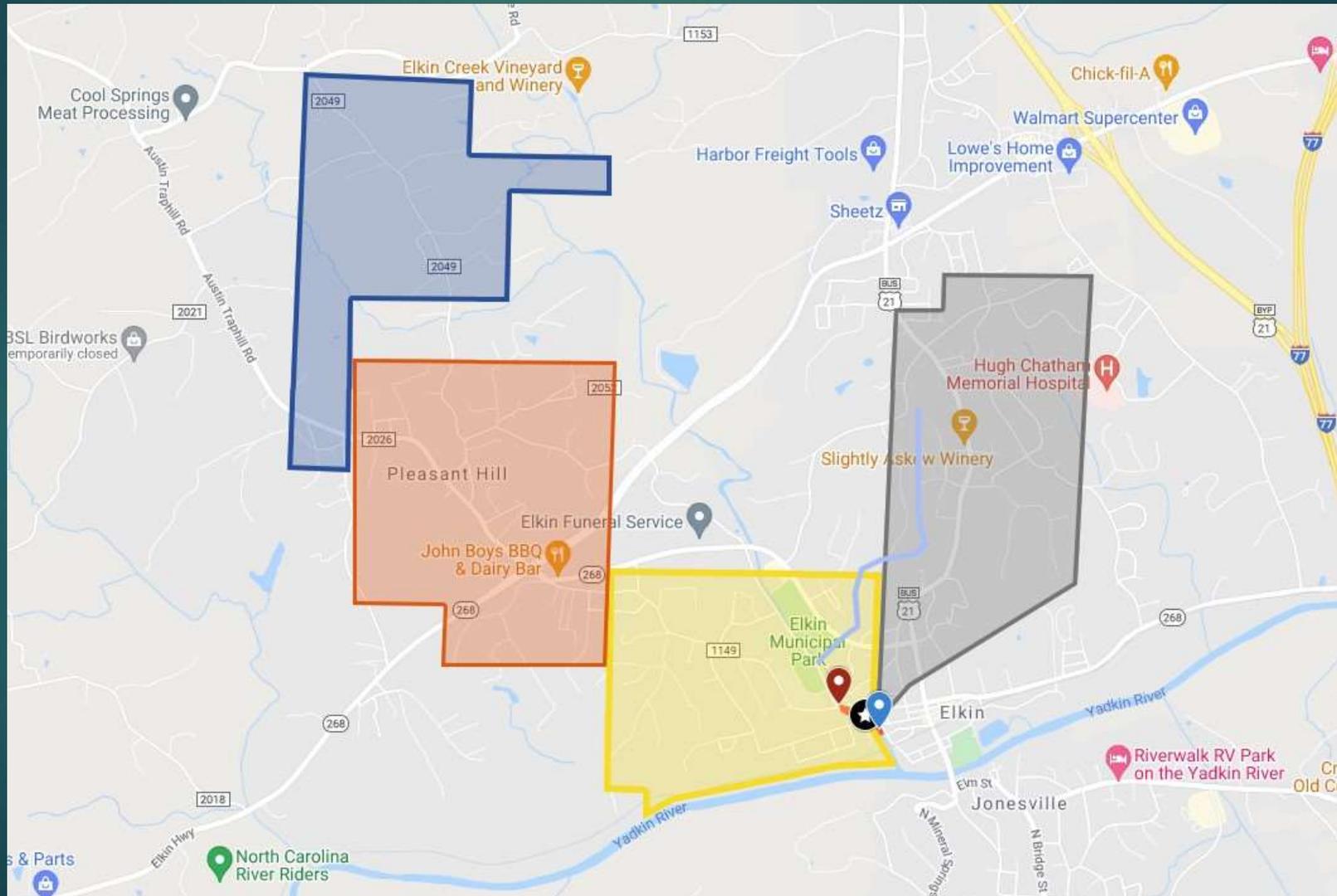
Whereupon, Resolved, That any twelve persons who shall be employed by David Allen & Company, in the business of the Iron Works, shall during the time they shall be so employed be exempted from all Military duties and drafts whatsoever, provided such persons oblige themselves at the time of entering into the said business to continue therein for the space of at least six months.

*Minutes of the NC House of Commons General Assembly*

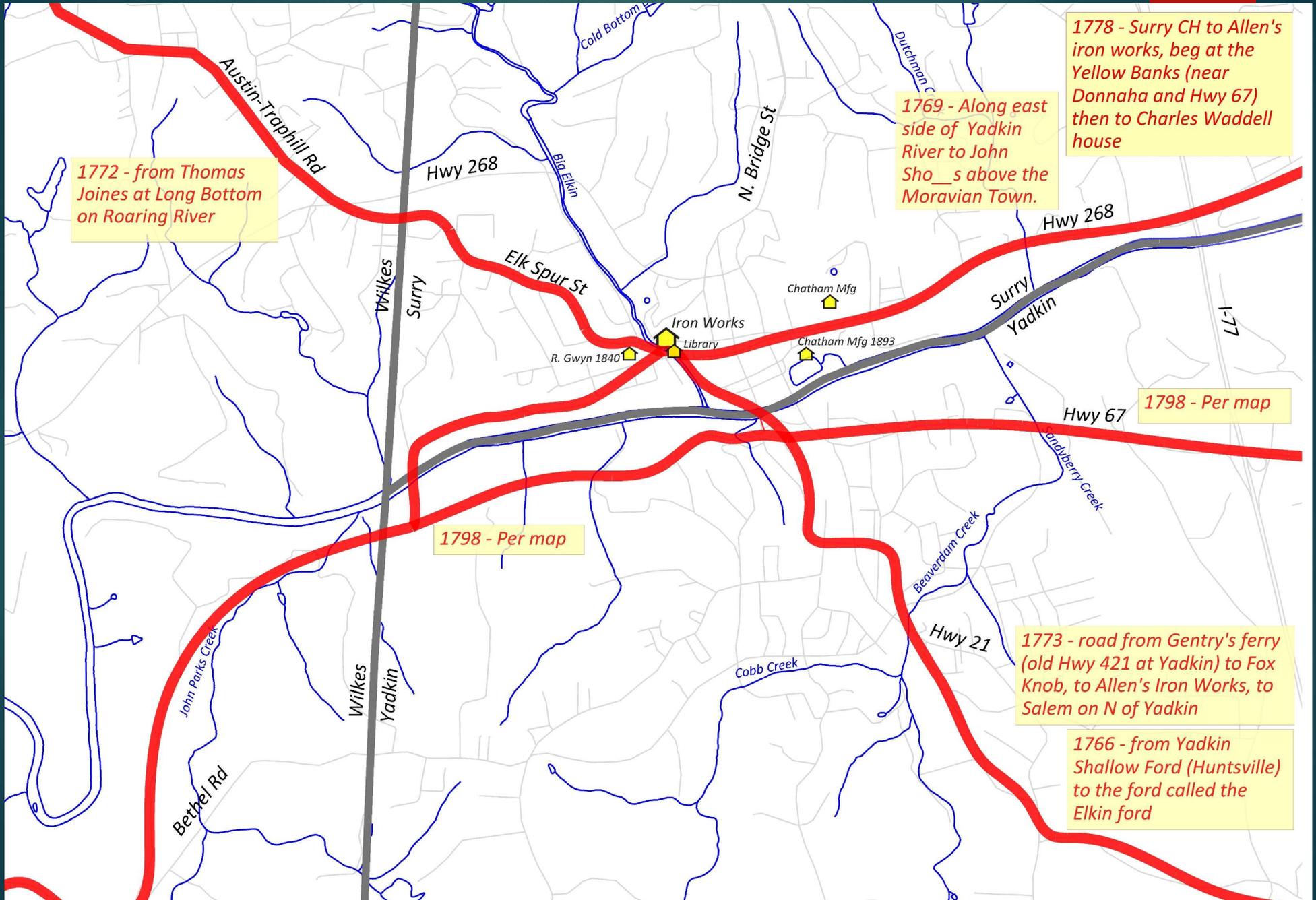
*6/30/1781, Vol 17, p917*

# David Allen's Land

- ▶ In 1779, the state of NC began selling land to residents. David Allen quickly purchased 2,482 acres across much of the Elkin area.

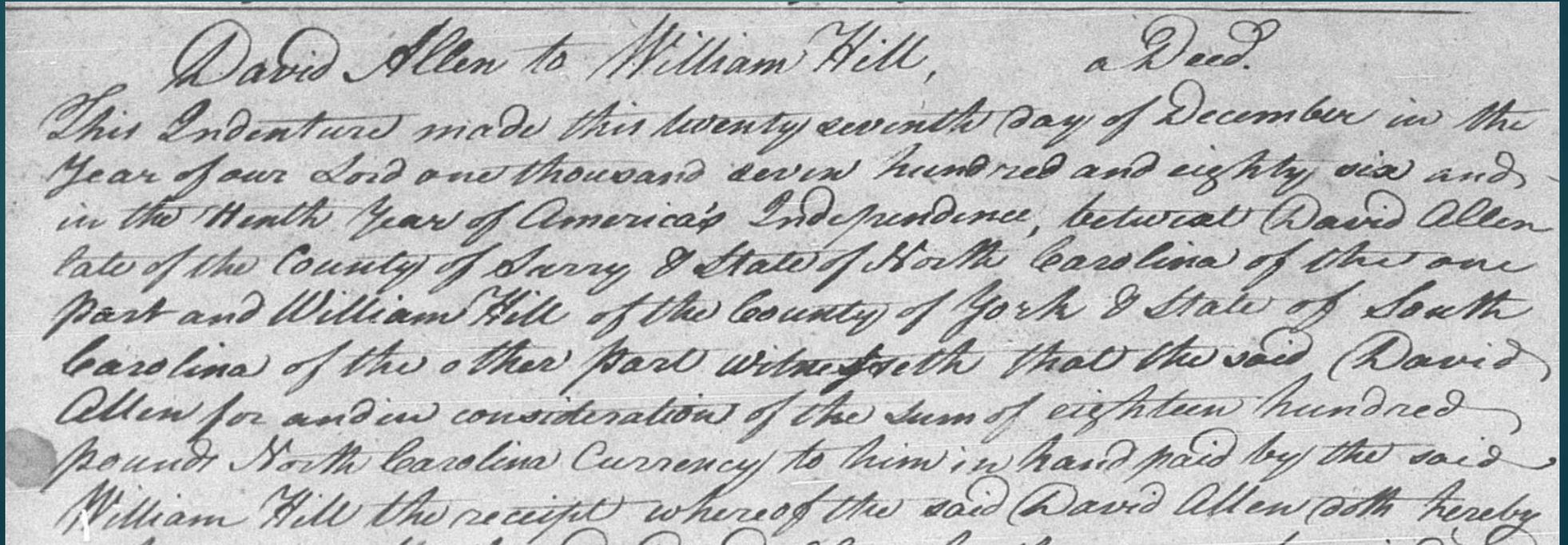


# Hub of Travel



# Land is Sold

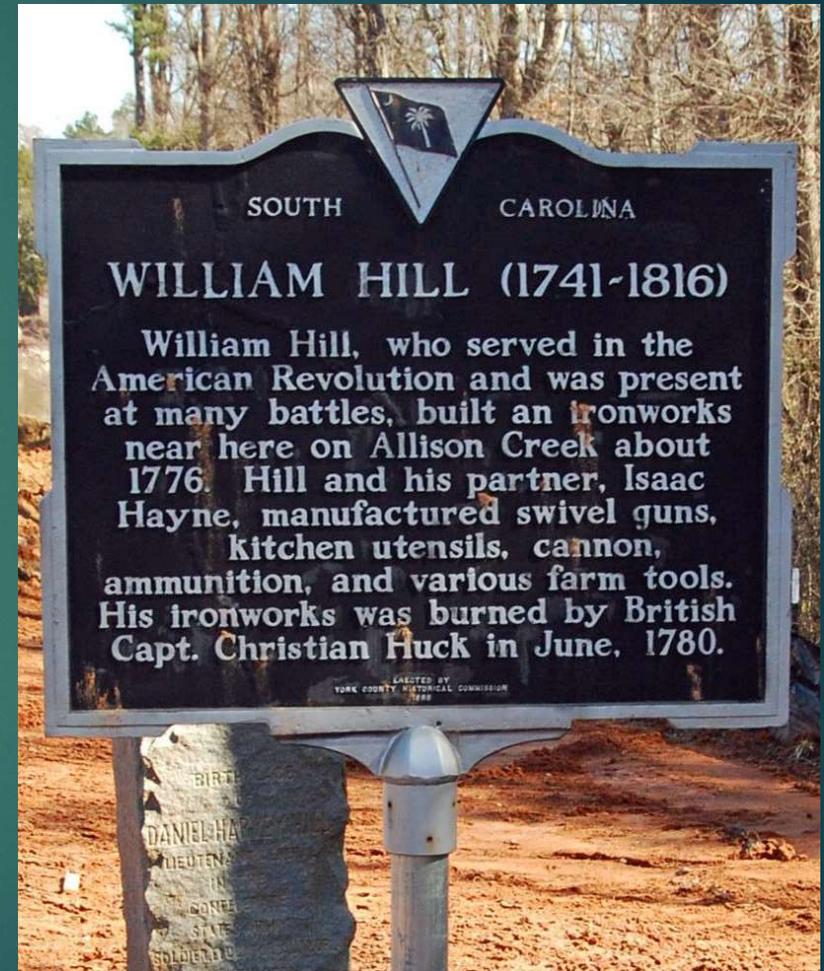
- ▶ 12/27/1786 – David Allen sold all 2,482 acres to William Hill
- ▶ David Allen, now in his 70s, moved to Georgia to live with his son.

A scan of a handwritten deed document. The text is written in cursive and is somewhat faded. The document is titled "David Allen to William Hill, a Deed." and describes the sale of land from David Allen to William Hill on December 27, 1786. The land is located in the County of Surry, State of North Carolina. The purchase price is stated as eighteen hundred pounds North Carolina Currency. The document is signed by both parties.

David Allen to William Hill, a Deed.  
This Indenture made this twenty seventh day of December in the  
Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty six and  
in the tenth Year of America's Independence, between David Allen  
late of the County of Surry & State of North Carolina of the one  
part and William Hill of the County of York & State of South  
Carolina of the other part witnesseth that the said David  
Allen for and in consideration of the sum of eighteen hundred  
pounds North Carolina Currency to him in hand paid by the said  
William Hill the receipt whereof the said David Allen doth hereby

# William Hill

- ▶ Colonel in Revolutionary War from SC.
- ▶ Ran a successful iron works in eastern York Co, SC, in 1770s and 1780s.
- ▶ His iron works was destroyed by the British in 1780 despite being guarded by 50 militiamen.
- ▶ He rebuilt it in 1787.
- ▶ Purchased David Allen's operation in 1786.
- ▶ Iron works property abandoned by the early 1800s.



# Commerce Begins Again



- ▶ The iron works property was largely unused until Richard Gwyn bought it in 1839. The land offered him the same benefits as it had David Allen 75 years earlier:
  - ▶ steady and reliable supply of water
  - ▶ elevation allowed for a dam to be constructed for power
  - ▶ nearby Yadkin River fords at low water level

# Commerce Begins Again

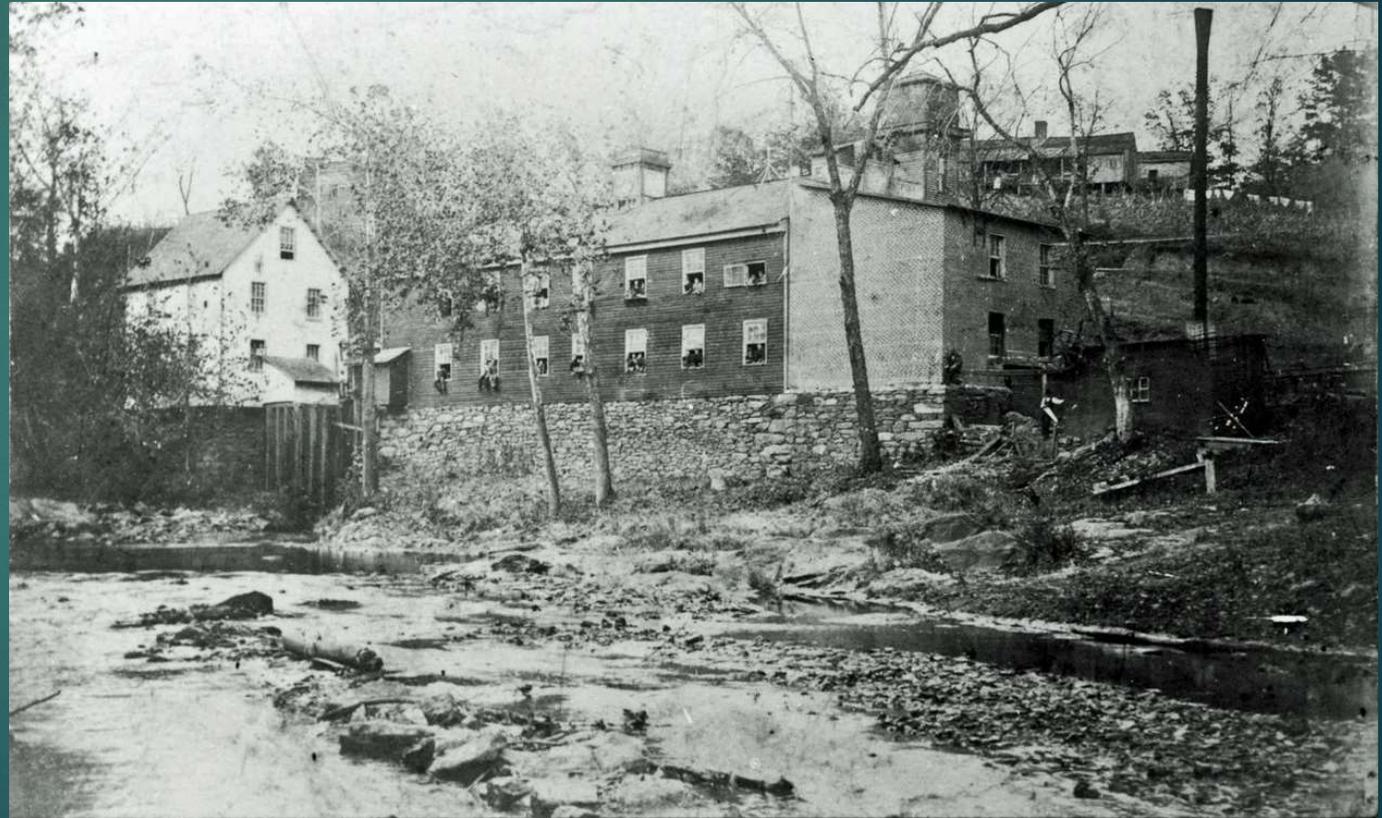


- ▶ The iron works property was largely unused until Richard Gwyn bought it in 1839. The land offered him the same benefits as it had David Allen 75 years earlier:
  - ▶ steady and reliable supply of water
  - ▶ elevation allowed for a dam to be constructed for power
  - ▶ nearby Yadkin River fords at low water level
- ▶ Additionally, Richard Gwyn was able to take advantage of the improvements made by David Allen:
  - ▶ cleared and developed land on which to build mills and establish a community
  - ▶ an established network of roads in all directions to bring in raw materials and send out finished products

# Richard Gwyn

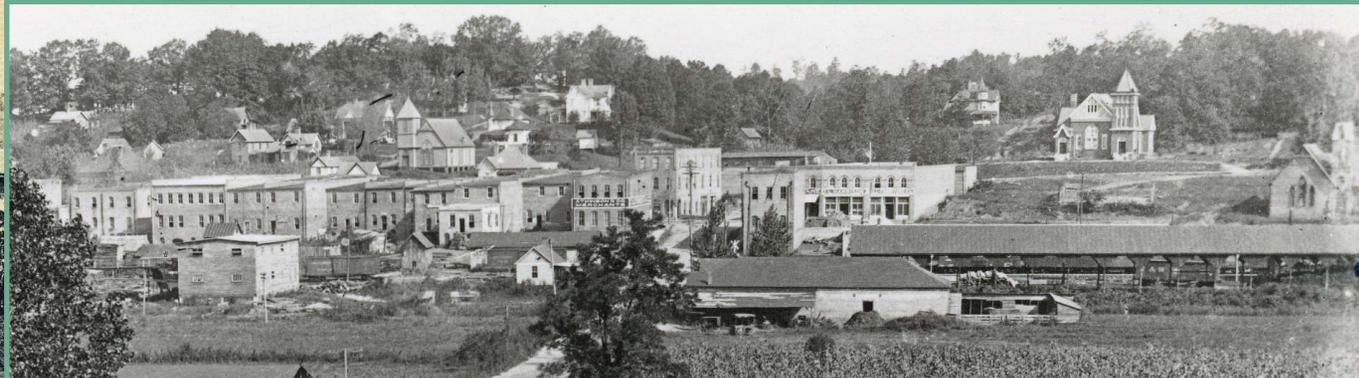
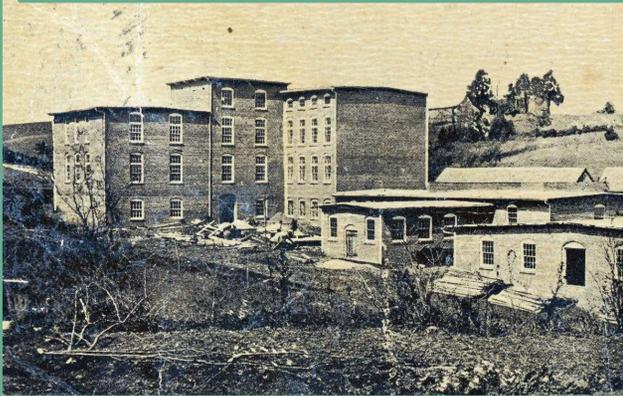
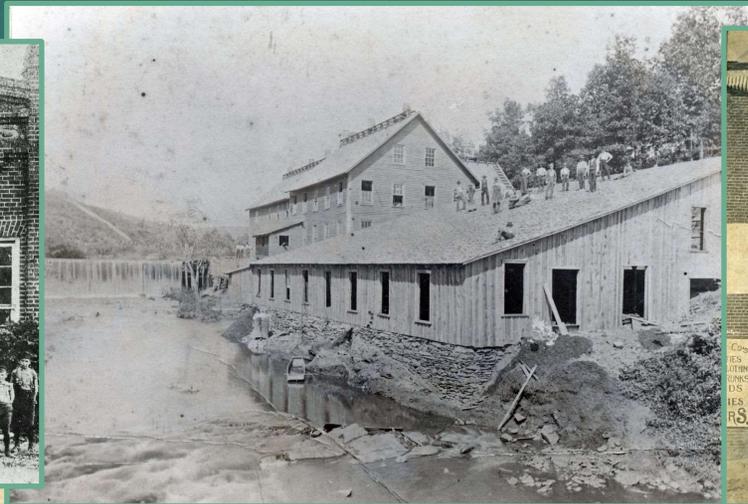
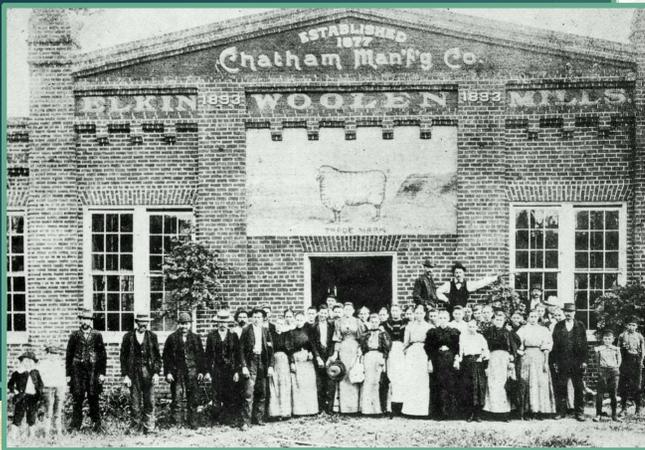
- ▶ In 1840, Richard Gwyn built a grist mill on the bank of the creek.
- ▶ In 1847, he built a cotton mill beside it.

Both operations were built at the exact location as the old iron works.



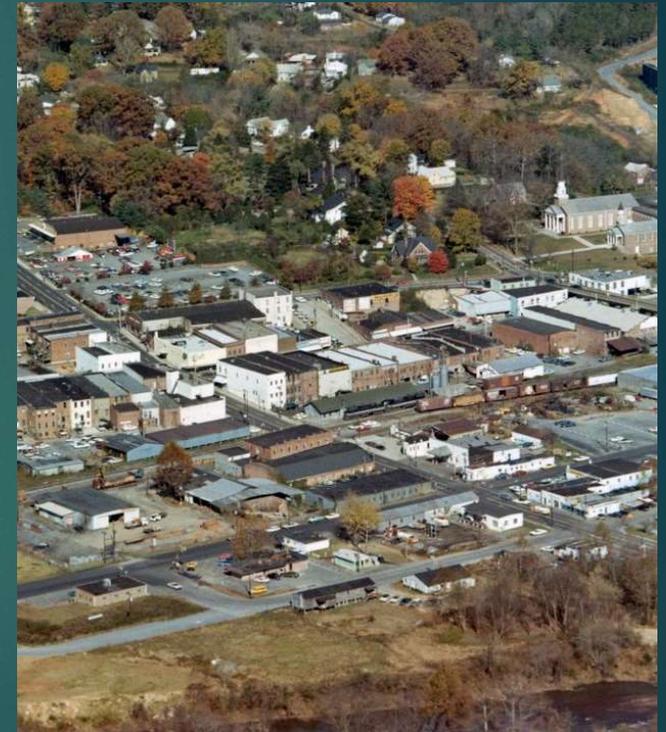
# Elkin Begins

- ▶ Richard Gwyn's success led to the creation of other businesses including Chatham Mfg, the shoe factory, schools, churches, a network of downtown stores, and the incorporation of the town of Elkin in 1889.



# Elkin Begins

The infrastructure created at David Allen's iron works facilitated the early factories around which the town of Elkin grew.



David Allen

Factories

Elkin

# Discovering the History

- ▶ Slag is the waste product created by smelting iron from crushed rocks.
- ▶ 100 pieces were found in the first 3 months.
- ▶ Over 1,500 pieces were found in the first year.



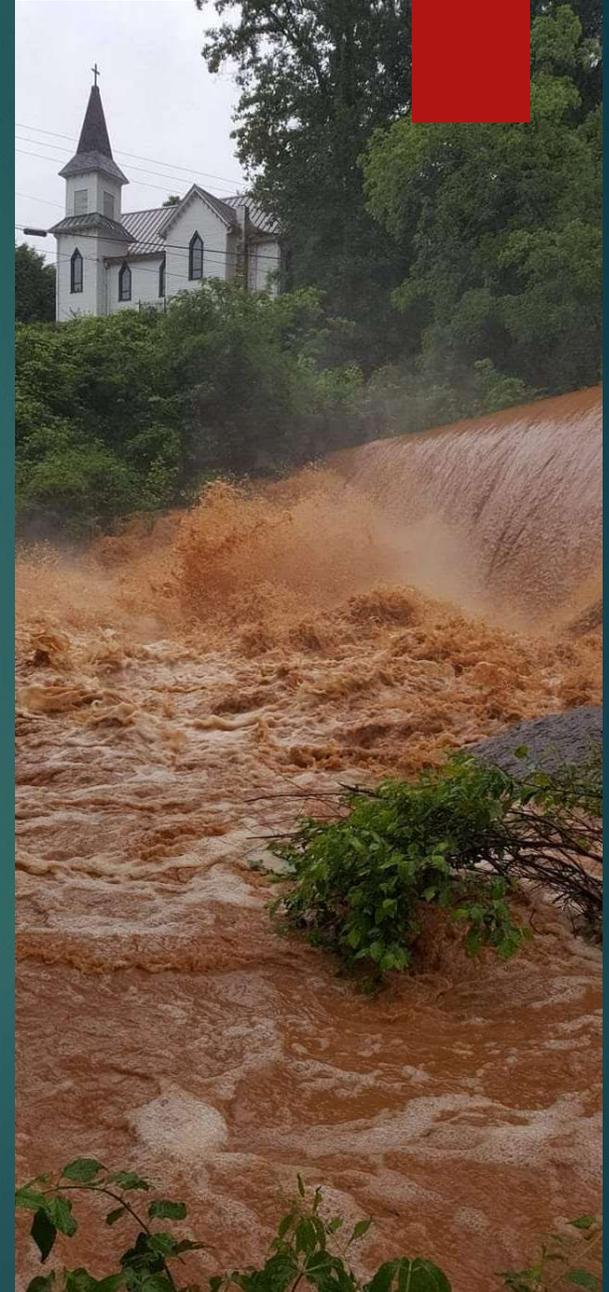
1<sup>st</sup> piece – Nov. 11, 2020



100<sup>th</sup> piece – Feb 28, 2021

# Discovering the History

- ▶ Flooding and heavy rains uncovered pieces of slag that had been hidden underwater for over 200 years.



# Discovering the History

- ▶ Following the old methods of making iron.



# Discovering the History

- ▶ The bloom is removed from the furnace.
- ▶ It is hammered to remove slag, contaminants, and air pockets.
- ▶ As it cools, the bloom becomes a more solid and homogeneous block of iron.



# Discovering the History



# Discovering the History

- ▶ In October 2021, a tool was discovered at the site of the iron works in the same area where most of the slag has been found.
- ▶ The iron head is 4" wide. With the remains of the wooden handle, it is 12" long.
- ▶ Perhaps it was used to gain access to the bloom through the wall of the furnace.
- ▶ Or, it might be the reinforced hub of a shovel with the blade rusted away.



# Discovering the History

- ▶ Over 2,500 pieces and over 500 pounds of slag have been discovered so far.



# Historical Marker

- ▶ In June 2021, the site of the iron works was marked by the installation of a historical display funded by a donation from the family of Dr. Hal Stuart.



## DAVID ALLEN'S IRON WORKS

### David Allen, Eighteenth-Century Entrepreneur

Allen was an early and successful entrepreneur in the history of the state. He was born in 1740 in the town of New York, New York, and moved to the state of Georgia in 1770. He was a member of the Georgia Trustees and was instrumental in the establishment of the colony. He was a successful businessman and was involved in the iron industry. He was a member of the Georgia Trustees and was instrumental in the establishment of the colony. He was a successful businessman and was involved in the iron industry.

### Producing Wrought Iron

Allen was one of the first to produce wrought iron in the state. He used a blast furnace to produce pig iron, which was then refined in a charcoal furnace to produce wrought iron. This process was labor-intensive and required a large amount of charcoal. Allen's iron works were one of the first in the state to produce wrought iron. He was a successful businessman and was involved in the iron industry.



Small illustration depicting a blast furnace, a key component of the iron-making process.

### An Exceptional Location

Allen's iron works were located in an exceptional location. The site was near a large body of water, which provided a convenient means of transportation for raw materials and finished products. The location was also ideal for the production of iron, as it provided access to the necessary resources. Allen's iron works were one of the first in the state to produce wrought iron.



Map showing the location of David Allen's Iron Works on the Yulee River.

### Allen's Iron Works on the Big Elk Creek

Allen's iron works were located on the Big Elk Creek. The site was near a large body of water, which provided a convenient means of transportation for raw materials and finished products. The location was also ideal for the production of iron, as it provided access to the necessary resources. Allen's iron works were one of the first in the state to produce wrought iron.



Historical illustration of a large iron works facility, showing multiple buildings and a large furnace.

### The Iron Works

The iron works were one of the first in the state to produce wrought iron. They were a significant part of the state's early industrial development. The works were located on the Big Elk Creek, which provided a convenient means of transportation for raw materials and finished products. Allen's iron works were one of the first in the state to produce wrought iron.



# David Allen's Iron Works

More information at:

<http://webjmd.com/elkin>