

Anderson Mill History



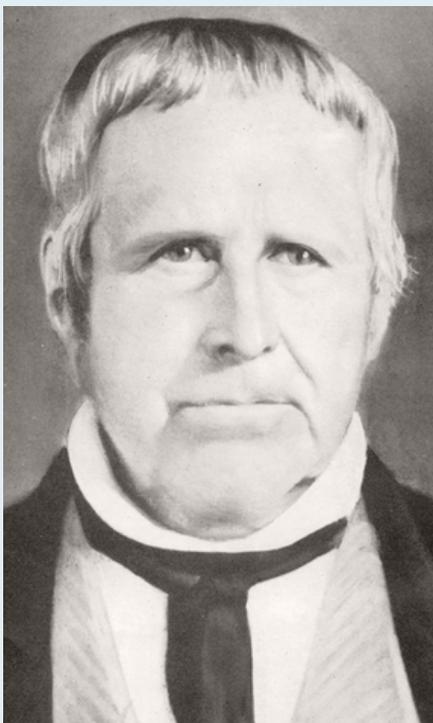
During the 1750s, as colonial settlements ventured from coastal areas into the Carolina frontier, the Cherokee, native inhabitants of this land, were pressured through war, economics, and diplomacy to relinquish their seasonal hunting grounds in the Piedmont. For a time it was a dangerous place of rogue frontiersmen and competing nations, set in an idyllic landscape of forests, meadows, and clear, quick waters. As settlers moved in, they tended to form small communities of related families along rivers, where they could be assured of safety, a good water supply for crops, and easy travel to towns and markets downstream.



Anderson Mill in the 1950's

The Tyger River Settlement was distinctive among these communities for its many families of interrelated Scots-Irish Presbyterians. Most had traveled south along the wagon roads that paralleled the Appalachian Mountains, secured land grants, and built up large estates that produced a bounty of crops. It wasn't long before they set their sights on constructing

amenities for the common benefit, including churches such as Nazareth Presbyterian and water-powered grist mills such as Anderson Mill.



"Tyger Jim" Anderson

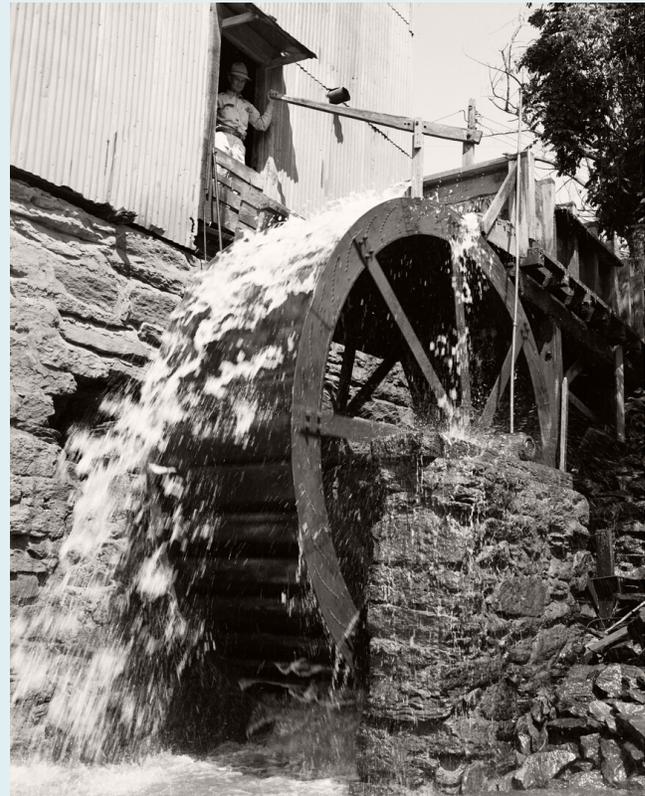
Although this mill's exact construction date hasn't been determined, it's certain that a mill stood on this site by the 1780s and timbers still standing in the mill seem to date from that period. Millwright John Nichols developed a handful of mills along the many forks of the Tyger River between the 1770s and 1790s, including the one here. But despite the unclear and incomplete records, one fact is clear: in June of 1785, when the newly created county of Spartanburg needed a well-known, centralized place for the first public meeting of the county court, officials chose the mill here to serve that role, which is why Anderson Mill can lay claim to being the birthplace of Spartanburg County government. In later years, the mill and the surrounding lands would belong to a succession of owners until 1831, when "Tyger Jim" Anderson acquired the mill. Ever since, the mill has carried his name.

Anderson Mill History

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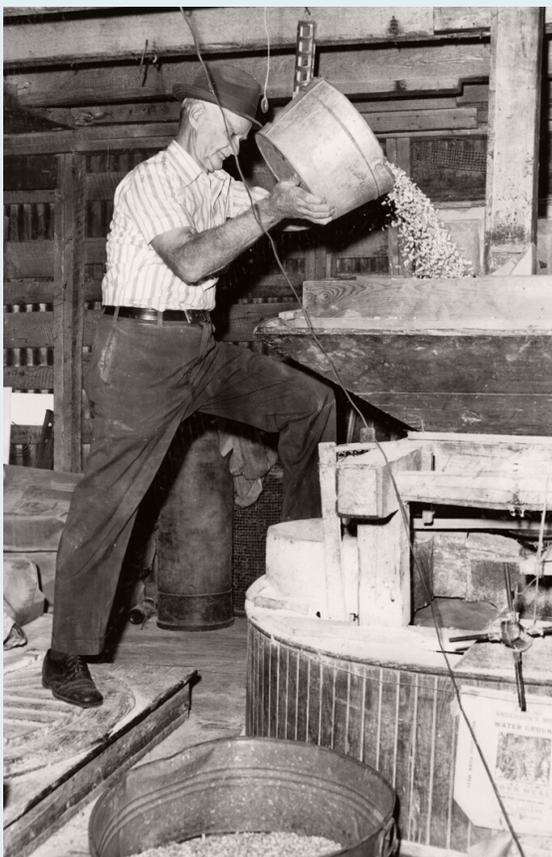


Over the years, there have been many changes to the mill. Generations ago, families might spend the day here, catching up on news and swapping with neighbors while the miller would grind grain. Once a sawmill and cotton gin were added to the operations, the mill's social and commercial importance grew further still. The mill was heavily damaged by catastrophic floodwaters in June of 1903 when a massive rainstorm brought destruction to mills and bridges all across Spartanburg County, including those here. It was soon reconstructed atop its rock foundation walls using a mixture of older and newer lumber. But despite the setback, the mill kept going strong into the middle part of the 20th century. Anderson Mill flour was even offered for sale in Community Cash grocery stores.



By the waterwheel in the 1950's

Lumber production and cotton ginning phased out as larger electrified facilities took on this role, offering more capacity at less expense. By the early 1970s, even commercial milling had ceased, but the mill still whirred into operation whenever nearby families had grain to grind. But it all came to a close when the last miller, A. A. Sellars, retired in 1975 after 30 years of grinding grain and rigging old machinery. When Mr. Sellars retired, so too did Anderson Mill. For a time, it was hoped that production might begin again, but with the future uncertain, the mill was closed up and it remained in stasis for the next forty years. In recent years, the Tyger River Foundation has acquired Anderson Mill and undertaken a massive rehabilitation, using as much of the remaining lumber and machinery as possible. The Tyger River's same renewable power, used here for nearly 250 years, will soon once again turn millstones to grind Spartanburg County grain!



Miller A. A. Sellars in 1974