

## WOODSIDE DAMS HISTORIC DOCUMENTATION

### *I. INTRODUCTION*

Location: The Woodside Dams are located on Twelve Mile Creek in the community of Cateechee, SC, approximately 10 miles northeast of the City of Clemson, SC.

Quad: Six Mile, SC

UTM: Woodside I  
X: 337187.0631 m  
Y: 3849478.8286 m

Woodside II  
X 336023.917163 m  
Y 3848547.257534 m

Date of Construction: 1895 (Woodside II); 1937 (Woodside I)

Present Owner: Schlumberger Technology Corporation

Present Use: Abandoned dams

Significance: The Woodside Dams were constructed in association with the Norris Cotton Mill in Cateechee, SC, and were designed to impound water that could provide hydromechanical and hydroelectric power to the mill.

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## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

What now are known as the Woodside Dams on Twelve Mile Creek are parts of a rich history in upstate South Carolina of industrial development using water power. This history reaches back to the late eighteenth century and continued well into the twentieth. Jerry Alexander has written a detailed history of Catechee Village, where the mills are located, including the dams and the mills that they supported. The following narrative, drawn primarily from Harvey (1999), Harvey et al. (2002), and Kleinschmidt (2007) provides a brief overview of the deeper tradition of the region's industrial development, particularly textile mills. All of these earlier reports, meanwhile, draw heavily from the important work by David Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina 1880-1920* (Carlton 1982) Although the Woodside Dams are located in Pickens County, the bigger story of which they are part takes place across the upstate, including Pickens, Greenville, and Spartanburg Counties.

## **EARLY SETTLEMENT**

English settlement in the South Carolina colony began along the coast in the late seventeenth century, and only slowly extended into the interior parts of the colony in the mid-eighteenth century. The new royal governor, Robert Johnson, arrived in 1730 with a plan to create townships throughout the colony as a way to ensure the orderly settlement of the backcountry, and used the headright system to encourage settlement inland from the coast. By creating these settlements, Johnson helped to provide a buffer from attacks from both Native Americans and other European settlers. These settlements grew slowly through the 1750s, when the backcountry population was approximately 20,000, about one-third of the total Lowcountry population.

By the 1760s, population growth and limited judicial facilities in the backcountry regions combined to generate severe lawlessness and discontent in the backcountry. In the face of unrest and violence in the backcountry, the Regulator Movement emerged among commercially-oriented farmers and slaveowners, those who sought to maintain control of the region in the absence of an official colonial presence was a response to this situation. In response, colonial authorities in Charleston agreed to set up a series of judicial districts through the area. In 1769, the governor authorized seven districts throughout the colony. What is now the upstate, however, remained outside the boundaries of the South Carolina colony, and remained in the hands of the Cherokee Indians.

Attempts to wrest the land from the Cherokee Indians coincided with the American Revolution, and with attempts to put down signs of loyalty to the Crown in the backcountry. Both the British and the Americans sought to win the support of the Cherokees, but in doing so they ventured more and more into the Cherokees' territory. In the spring of 1776 Cherokees began attacking the patriot (American) forces. Leaders in Charleston, in coordination with leaders in North Carolina and Virginia, commenced counter-attacks. By the end of the summer of 1776, the Cherokees were ready to admit defeat. In May 1777, the Cherokee Indians ceded the territory that included much of what is now Anderson, Oconee, Pickens, and Greenville Counties in the Treaty of DeWitt's Corner.

With this treaty, combined with the end of the War in 1781 and the ratification of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, white settlers became more interested in taking up the new lands. Surveys of the new territory, and sales of tracts, began in 1784. The population of the former Cherokee territory grew quickly in the late eighteenth century, and the South Carolina General Assembly created the Spartanburg District in 1785 and the Greenville District in 1786. The Pickens District, meanwhile, emerged in 1825 after a number of divisions of larger districts.

#### ***ANTEBELLUM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT***

In the early decades of settlement in the upstate, agriculture clearly was the dominant, nearly exclusive, component of the region's economy. Although there were several large plantations in the area, most settlers worked on small farms and practiced a diversified agriculture, or what several recent historians have called "safety-first" farming. Small farmers, who constituted the majority in the upstate, in particular sought to protect themselves from the risk of market fluctuations by producing enough subsistence crops to be largely self-sufficient. The region thus developed a subsistence agrarian economy with an emphasis on cotton, corn, and tobacco as cash crops. The introduction of the cotton gin into the region during the early 1800s, however, led to a rapid expansion of cotton agriculture and slavery.

Statewide, the increase in cotton production in the South Carolina upcountry was dramatic in the early nineteenth century; from 94,000 pounds produced in the state in 1793, the state's annual output reach some 50,000,000 pounds by 1810. It is important to realize, however, that despite the rapid increase in the amount of cotton produced in South Carolina, the upstate region continued to produce more wheat and corn than cotton through the antebellum era. Likewise, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the region was home to a diverse set of industries.

The numerous rivers and creeks in the area provided many opportunities for the development of manufacturing. Given the topography, the upstate is riven with numerous creeks and rivers that had numerous shoals and steeper falls. As new farms emerged to take advantage of the new local markets, mills were constructed at these favorable locations on tributaries and streams in order to process the various agricultural products from the plantations. In a recent article on the importance of the various rivers and streams in Spartanburg and the surrounding counties, John Lane (2002:30-31) summarized the development in industrial power from the eighteenth into the nineteenth centuries:

*As soon as Europeans began to settle the interior in the 1750s, log dams were constructed and gristmills, iron works, saw mills, and a little later, cotton gins, began to cluster along significant shoals such as Nesbitt's Shoals on the Tyger, Mountain Shoals on the Enoree, Hurricane Shoals on the Pacolet, and Glendale Shoals on the Lawson's Fork. These small operations, locate on what industrial entrepreneurs called "mill seats," captured the power of falling water and generated 10 horsepower or so, enough to turn a saw, grind corn, or work a bellows or tip hammer at an ironworks. These gave way to textile manufacturing, and by the end of the 1800s, almost every significant shoals in the county had its red-brick cotton mill.*

Examples of early patterns of industrialization can be found throughout the upstate region in the early nineteenth century. The Spartanburg District, for example, was sometimes called "The Old Iron District" given the prevalence of iron mining in the region. The iron industry, while having a relatively mild impact on the state's economy, was an important element of the upstate's antebellum economy. The modern industrial development of what is now Spartanburg County began in 1815, when the Weaver brothers from New England arrived by way of Charleston. The Weavers had experience in using water power for textile mills in their native Rhode Island, and found a useful source of power on the region's many rivers and streams. Spartanburg County is located on the fall line, where water from the mountains of North and South Carolina drains into larger streams that then pass over a series of falls and shoals before broadening out into mature rivers. This drop in elevation takes place in rivers that contain flows that are large enough to provide power and yet small enough to be controlled by dams (Willis 2002).

In addition to the Weaver brothers, several entrepreneurs attempted to establish water-powered textile mills in Spartanburg in the early and mid-nineteenth century, including the Hill brothers (also from Rhode Island), Thomas Hutchings, Simpson Bobo, Joseph Finger, James Bivings, and Dexter Edgar Converse. Most of these incipient mills lasted for only a few years, plagued by the combined difficulties of lack of capital, shortage of workers, limited distribution routes, and insuperable competition from more established textile mills in New England and New

York. Only Converse successfully spanned the Civil War (Willis 2002).

Throughout the upstate region, there were several textile mills by the eve of the Civil War, many of them of substantial size. William Bates' mill on Rocky Creek in Greenville County, for example, operated 1,200 spindles and 36 looms in 1860. Most of these textile factories before the Civil War, however, were scattered and small in scale.

### ***POST-WAR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT***

The end of the Civil War brought vast changes to South Carolina, and particularly to the upcountry. While the impact of Emancipation throughout the upstate was muted relative to its impact on the Lowcountry counties, other changes were more sweeping. In particular, new ways of doing business came to the fore, which placed a premium on the small, but growing, inland towns and their merchants. Two interrelated forces in particular spurred growth in towns in the late nineteenth century: the railroads, and textile manufacturing. Neither was completely new after the Civil War. Instead, each drew upon antebellum roots which were strengthened in the new, and relatively open, economic and social conditions of the late nineteenth century.

Improvements in transportation also laid the foundation for the region's industrial development in the nineteenth century and beyond. A wagon road extended through Greenville County to the western mountains by 1797, which connected the new territories with the ports of Georgetown and Charleston. A road connecting the new courthouse town of Greenville to the town of Laurens was created in the early nineteenth century; when Robert Mills published his map of Greenville District in 1825, the road was still known as the "New Road from Greenville to Laurens Line."

Greenville County had its first railroad connection in 1853, with a rail line to Columbia. By 1854, there were daily trains leaving Columbia for Greenville. During the Civil War, Union forces attested to the vital nature of the railroads in South Carolina by seeking them out and destroying them. When U.S. General William T. Sherman led troops against Columbia in February 1865, the railroads were a particular object of attention. All of Columbia's rail connections were destroyed, along with many of the depot and office buildings. What Sherman failed to do, nature completed as forty miles of track were washed away in a flood in early 1866.

Recovery was swift, however, and by September 1866, all of the rail connections were once again in place. While the Greenville and Columbia Railroad was a financial failure by the early 1870s, it had proved the usefulness of railroads for the region. The Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line, which was completed in early 1873, gave the town of Greenville an added impetus for growth.

There were few towns of any size throughout South Carolina during the early and mid nineteenth century. By 1850, barely 2.5 percent of the state's population outside of Charleston lived in communities of over 1,000 people; the rest lived scattered throughout the countryside. As railroads began to spread throughout the state in the 1850s, however, towns emerged as depots and commercial entrepôts. The town of Anderson, for example, had sixteen people involved in trade in 1850. Ten years later, after the arrival of the railroad, 44 people were involved in trade in the town. Meanwhile, the Air Line Railroad (Southern Railway) was extended into Pickens County in 1872, and the towns of Easley, Liberty, Central, and Calhoun grew up along the line. In 1898, the Pickens Railroad was constructed, connecting the town of Pickens to the Air Line Railroad at Easley.

The emergence of new towns came in part through individuals who were able to take advantage of the new economic order, and who saw the intimate connections between the growth of their towns and the growth of their own fortunes. The access that these merchants had to northern commercial centers through the railroads, brought northern business ideals and methods to the new towns, including an interest in manufacturing. With a combination of new local capital as a result of the new business climate and the migration of capital from Charleston, local and regional wealth prompted the initial organization of most of the backcountry's new cotton mills. Most of the mills in upstate South Carolina were relatively small, local, and independent enterprises; only in the twentieth century did the region's manufacturing enterprises go through consolidations into larger corporations.

In addition, the diversified agricultural economy which had dominated the upstate before the Civil War gave rise to a heavy reliance on cotton. The amount of cotton relative to the amount of corn grown in Greenville County, for example, jumped over 15 percent from 1850 to 1900. All of this cotton was grown to fuel the rapidly increasing and expanding cotton mills of the Piedmont.

In the 1870s, local investors began to emerge who took advantage of these developments in agriculture, financing, and transportation to create a new age of textile mills in the upstate that lasted into the late twentieth century. Agriculture was depressed throughout

much of the 1870s, and those with money to invest found an outlet in textile mills. The county had no shortage of cotton immediately available, an abundance of workers, and plentiful waterpower (Racine 2002:37). In addition, new railroads provided outlets to markets and ports in the northeast. Edgar Converse, for example, started Spartanburg County's post-war industrial development in 1880 with the completion of his Clifton Mill No. 1, located on the Pacolet River northwest of the Pacolet Project.

In 1881, the successful Spartanburg mercantile company of Walker, Fleming under the leadership of John H. Montgomery created the Pacolet Manufacturing Company. Under Montgomery's leadership and with an eye to the success of Converse's Clifton Mill, Walker, Fleming bought Trough Shoals on the Pacolet River and began planning their mill. For additional financing they invited Seth Milliken to invest. Milliken was the head of Deering, Milliken, a New York City-based mercantile firm that specialized in selling woolen products from New England's mills. Milliken then advised Montgomery to hire Amos Lockwood as an engineer to design the mill. Lockwood then hired Stephen Greene, an architect, and the firm of Lockwood Greene and Company was created in order to design the Pacolet Mill.

In Pickens County, meanwhile, the railroads, the extensive fields of cotton, and waterpower supplied by the Seneca River and its tributaries, made the area ideal for the textile industry. The first cotton mill established in Pickens County, Norris Cotton Mill, was built in 1895; this was the mill served by the Woodside Dams. By 1900, there were three cotton mills; during the next 40 years the textile industry gradually became as important to Pickens County as agriculture.

While the production of cotton increased rapidly throughout the upcountry, the price of cotton fell to new lows. Many small farmers found that they could not make a living, and moved themselves and their families to the new towns to work in the mills. Early mill owners, seeking both to provide for their workers and to control them such that they would be a stable, undemanding work force, generally provided housing to their workers. As a result, mill villages began to spring up on the edges of towns adjacent to the textile mills throughout the region. Many of these mill villages offered schools, stores, churches, and recreational activities for their workers and their families.

One of the most important side-effects of the textile boom in the Piedmont was the creation of a new class of citizens, the mill operatives. For the first time in southern towns and cities, there were spatially and socially distinct blue-collar neighborhoods. The new class of mill operatives was a potentially threatening force to those who were still unsure about the rapid

social changes of the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s. As one scholar has noted, the creation of mill villages and the attendant schools and churches was at one level a public relations gambit. "Cotton mill paternalism," as it was called, "was the principal means by which the new industrialists and their apologists sought to reassure their fellow citizens that they had nothing to fear from the creation of a wage-earning white industrial class."

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