

SOCIAL EVENTS

Monday-Friday

12-1 p.m., Brown Bagging the Arts, Cleveland County Arts Center, 111 S. Washington St., Shelby. Free one-hour art demonstrations and lectures. Take bag lunch. Drink and dessert furnished. For more information or to reserve a seat call 484-2787.

10 a.m.-12 p.m., 12:30-2:30 p.m. - Backcountry Farm and Catawba Village, Schiele Museum of Natural History, 1500 E. Garrison Blvd., Gastonia. Guided tours available Monday-Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. and Sunday at 1:30 and 3 p.m. through August 11 (except July 4). For groups of 15 or more call 854-6676 to register.

Monday-Saturday

10 a.m. and 2 p.m. - Nature and History programs, Schiele Museum, 1500 E. Garrison Blvd., Gastonia. Also, Sunday 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. Meet live reptiles and amphibians in hands-on program for all ages. Monday is alligator day; Tuesday and Saturday snake days; Wednesday and Sunday turtle days; Thursday amphibian day; and Friday, lizard day.

Mondays

7 p.m. - Second Monday of each month, Kings Mountain Board of Education, Central School, 105 East Ridge St.

10 a.m. - Beginning line dance, every Monday, Shelby Senior Center.

10-11 a.m. - Sitting for Fitness, every Monday, Shelby Senior Center.

12 noon - Boiling Springs Rotary Club, Ritch Banquet Hall, Gardner-Webb University.

4:15-5:15 p.m. - Cardio tone class, every Monday, Shelby City Park.

5:30-6:30 p.m. - Overeaters Anonymous, every Monday, Central United Methodist Church, Kings Mountain.

5:30-6:30 p.m. - Early Evening Aerobics, every Monday, Shelby City Park.

7-8 p.m. - Evening Aerobics, every Monday, Shelby City Park.

7 p.m. - Parents Without Partners, every Monday, Shelby Presbyterian Church. For more information call Alan Smith at 481-2986.

7 p.m. - Hurting Families Support Group, every Monday, Christopher Road Baptist Church, Shelby. For information call 538-0410.

8 p.m. - AA Big Book Study, every Monday, Serenity Club, Highway 74 at Bethlehem Road, Kings Mountain.

Tuesdays

6 p.m. - Cleveland County Board of Commissioners, first and third Tuesdays, County Administration Building, Shelby.

7 p.m. - Kings Mountain City Council, last Tuesday of the month, City Hall, East Gold St.

Thursdays

10-11 a.m., every Thursday, Sitting For Fitness, Shelby Senior Center.

11 a.m. - every Thursday, Self Care Program, Bliss Center in Lawndale, Kings Mountain Senior Center, Boiling Springs United Methodist Church, and Charles Place, Shelby. Call Amanda Helms at 482-3488 for information.

12 noon - Kings Mountain Rotary Club, Ramada Ltd.

1 p.m. - Every Thursday, Aerobics, Shelby Senior Center.

6 p.m. - Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club, Central United Methodist Church.

7 p.m. - Broad River Genealogical Society, fourth Thursday, Senior Center in Shelby.

Thursday, June 8

5:30-8:30 p.m. - Uptown Alive After 5 block party, Washington St., Shelby, featuring Band of Gold. Call 484-3100 for information.

Friday, June 9

10-11 a.m. - Summer Reading Program kick-off, Mauney Memorial Library, Kings Mountain. Mark Lippard will perform comedy, juggling, unicycling and more. For information call Christy Key at 734-4486.

Sunday, June 11

2 p.m. - Grabblin' and Fly Tying, Broad River Greenway, under the bridge. Demonstrations by expert grabbler Lyman Jones and area fishing enthusiasts.

Wednesday, June 14

8:30 a.m.-12 noon - Free diabetes classes, Cleveland County Health Dept., Shelby. Call 484-5225 to register.

Thursday, June 15

1-4:30 p.m. - Free diabetes classes, Kings Mountain Hospital. Call 484-5225 to register.

Friday, June 16

8 p.m. - Full Moon Canoe Trip, Broad River Greenway. Meet at parking lot. \$15 for canoe and shuttle. Call 434-6375 for reservations.

10 a.m.-7 p.m. - Shelby Jubilee open house show, Cleveland County Fairgrounds. Free to spectators. For class sheets and information call Jo Herndon at 482-1564.

Saturday June 17

11 a.m.-1 p.m. - Catawba Indian Nation Dancers and Drummers, Kings Mountain State Park Farm, 1277 Park Road, Blacksburg, SC. Each dance tells a story that holds important meanings.

10 a.m.-4 p.m. - Midsummer Festival 2000, Schiele Museum, Gastonia. Family fun and special activities on Nature Trail and in Backcountry Farm & Catawba Indian Village, & the Schiele Planetarium. Guest performer Pamlico Joe adds his blend of coastal ecology & environmental music at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the NC Hall. Outdoor activities & Pamlico Joe performances are free; Museum admission & Planetarium fees.

7 p.m. - JMX Motocross, grandstand, Cleveland County Fairgrounds. For more information call Joe Williams at 460-0408.

7:30 p.m. - Miller-Rowe Consort, Kings Mountain National Military Park. Hammer dulcimer and classical guitar, Appalachian, Celtic, early American and traditional music. For information call (864) 936-7921.

Down By The Old Mill Stream



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY NC DIVISION OF TOURISM, FILM AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

BY ALAN HODGE Staff Writer
LAYOUT BY SHELLEY CAMPBELL

Long before there were cornbread mixes that just needed water to make batter, folks took their corn to mills and had it ground into meal. Today, there are still a surprising number of water-driven grist mills remaining in North Carolina. Though they may be from a bygone era, the old mills of North Carolina still command a place of interest in our digital age.

According to the book "Exploring the Old Mills of North Carolina," there are several dozen grist mills left in the state. Though some are in need of tender loving care, many have been restored as historical attractions or business ventures. Legacies of the days when streams and rivers were a major source of power for many North Carolina industries, these mills have stood the test of time.

The closest grist mill to Cleveland County is Cleghorn Mill in Rutherfordton. Located on the grounds of Rutherford Country Club, the Cleghorn Mill is currently in a state of disrepair. Age of the structure is uncertain, though hand-hewn framing indicates it could be quite old.

Basic configuration of Cleghorn Mill is two stories. One end of the building is embedded into an embankment and makes the mill appear shorter. The lower end is made of stone. A few pieces of mill machinery remain on this lower floor.

The dam at Cleghorn Mill provides a pond that is part of the golf course. Cleghorn's water wheel is a steel affair that spans 20 feet. The mill is located on State Road 1148 behind a hill at the edge of a green.

Next closest mill to Cleveland County is Murrays Mill off Highway 16 near Catawba. Operated by the Catawba County Historic Association, Murrays Mill is one of the finest examples of a Piedmont region water-powered grist mill in existence.

Situated on Balls Creek, Murrays Mill dates back to the late 19th century. Power for the mill's internal workings is via a 28-foot wheel. The dam at Murray's Mill was originally made of wood, but the current one is a sturdy concrete affair. The dam has formed a large pond on Balls Creek that makes for a scenic spot to picnic or stroll.

A lot of time, effort and money has been spent on Murrays Mill. The mill innards are restored and tours to see them are available. Next to the mill itself is a two-story grain house that's also been reworked. Other buildings on the site include a large barn, several storage buildings, the restored home of John Murray, and a couple of other houses which have recently been moved to the other side of the pond.

Just across the road from the mill is an old time country store that sells candy, drinks, curios, and other items. Visitors can sit in rockers and spend some time reflecting on how calm life used to be.

Union Grove in northern Iredell County just off I-77 is home to Linneys Mill. This mill is one of 11 such structures that have at one time or another been on the banks of Rocky Creek. Linneys Mill is

reached by State Road 1598 about four miles west of Highway 155.

Linneys Mill is constructed of the remains of what was called Mayberrys Mill. That mill had a history that went all the way back to 1836. The building that visitors to Linneys Mill see these days is the result of a 1937 restoration by the Linney family.

Mechanical workings for Linneys Mill include a 16-foot by 8-foot overshot water wheel that is supposedly capable of producing 40 raging horsepower. The wheel twirls vertical Meadows millstones and grain cleaning machinery. Linneys Mill mainly produces stock feed, but can also make meal for human folks.

The property around Linneys Mill is used as a campground these days. Besides hookups, the grounds have a swimming hole on Rocky Creek and bathhouses. Churches sometimes use the swimming hole for baptisms.

Not far from Salisbury, Kerr Plantation Mill was once part of the estate of planter Joseph Kerr. This gent's holdings in 1820 consisted of over 1,000 acres of land and 45 slaves to work them. The mill is a sturdy brick structure on Sloans Creek. Unlike too many grist mills who are abandoned and allowed to self-destruct, Kerr Plantation Mill was given by the Sloan family to Rowan County for preservation. Work to preserve the mill was also kicked off by a \$25,000 grant from the North Carolina Legislature. The project was directed by the Rowan County Historic Properties Commission.

Perhaps the most interesting part about Kerr Plantation Mill is its construction. When this mill was built, only the best would do. Heavy interior sills and joists are all hand sawn and form an interesting pattern. Sturdy brick walls rise up from stone bases and are capped by molded brick cornices. Inside, there's even a large fireplace.

During its days as a working establishment, Kerr Plantation Mill was mainly used as a source of grain and meal for the farm itself. Old records indicate that around the time of the Civil War, relatively little product was sold on the open market.

One of North Carolina's largest water wheels can be found at Stepps Mill less than an hour from Cleveland County near Hendersonville. At over 34 feet in diameter, the wheel at Stepps Mill is a steel, overshot type that never fails to impress visitors with its girth.

Located on State Road 1734 at the intersection of Highways 26 and 64, Stepps Mill has a history that goes back to the latter part of the 19th century. Over the decades, the mill and its dam have risen progressively higher. Inside, some of the original millstones are still in place. One part of the original machinery is called a Midget Marvel Mill and produces flour. Author Carl Sandburg used to be a frequent visitor to Stepps Mill when he was in town.

An unusual adaptation of an old time grist mill can be found near Flat Rock. Known as Jordans Mill, this structure dates back to 1830 and has not only acted as a place for grinding meal, but once

saw use as a furniture factory. Today, Jordans Mill is a popular lodging place where visitors spend the night in the mill itself.

Even though Jordans Mill is now a place for tourists to lay their heads, it was once a rather thriving commercial mill. From the 1860s, it continued to provide a variety of meal products until at least 1930. The main mill building has nothing to fear from rot - it's constructed of solid concrete.

Winebargers Mill near Boone has been in continuous operation by the Winebarger family since 1840. The current mill building was built in 1910 to replace the original which was destroyed by fire. Located off Highway 194 near the Meat Camp Volunteer Fire Department, Winebargers Mill is operated by an unusual water wheel called a pitch back type that throws the water back into buckets. It sounds complicated, but has served Winebargers Mill quite well for many decades.

Water to the mill comes from Meat Camp Creek via a headrace and last section of 24 inch metal pipe. The mill makes corn meal, and rye, wheat, and buckwheat flour. Local stores are big customers as are area residents and tourists. The mill works themselves include a "Midget Mill" that was purchased in 1929 for \$550. Winebargers Mill has also made the movies. In 1973, the mill was used as a backdrop for the film "Where the Lilies Bloom."

One of the most popular, if not the most popular grist mill in North Carolina is Mingus Mill four miles north of Cherokee on Highway 441. Dating back to 1886 when Dr. John Mingus contracted Virginia millwright Scion Early to build it, Mingus Mill is now the property of the National Park Service.

A three-story building located at the end of a lovely trail through the rhododendrons, Mingus Mill still cranks up its wheels and turns out meal for sale. When the Park Service took over the mill, its output was as high as 40 to 50 bushels per day. Power for the operation comes from a three-foot-wide flume that spins out 11 horsepower from the turbine at 400 RPM.

One last old time grist mill in the western part of North Carolina is Weaverville Milling Company on Rheems Creek in Weaverville. In operation as a grist mill from 1912 until 1965, the building has since 1981 been a highly popular restaurant.

If ever a place exuded what restaurateurs call "atmosphere," then Weaverville Milling Company does. Hanging from nearly every inch of the restaurant's interior are old time objects of every sort. Though no part of the original milling machinery is in action, diners do plenty of grinding with their teeth on the good food the restaurant serves.

For more information on the subject of our state's rich grist mill heritage, get a copy of "exploring the Old Mills of North Carolina" by Grimsley Hobbs.