

Berry Cochran Mill

Berry Wynn Cochran also built a mill for himself in 1870 on the main branch of Bear Creek. The mill site is less than a mile from his brother's establishment on Little Bear Creek. It is one of the few sites in the country where no dam was needed. Big Bear Creek cascades about 30 feet down a steep granite face. Berry Cochran built a flume from the top to his tall overshot wheel, and dragged a heavy log into the shallow side of the stream to guide the water in the opening. Years later he built a stone dam, five feet high across the ledge.

A change in farming methods started about 1904 when the price of cotton began to rise. Cotton became practically the whole crop and people bought their flour and meal, so the milling business slumped. During this time, Berry Cochran's son, Berry Jr., attended the Georgia Institute of Technology. He modified his father's mill in 1909 by installing a 50 kilowatt generator. Berry Jr. ran wires to Palmetto and provided the first electric power to the city. There were no appliances in those days. All people wanted were lights, so the generator ran only at night. The water power was available during the day for milling.

In 1917, the predecessor of the Georgia Power Company bought out the operation and Berry Jr. sold the mill to W. B. Russel. Mr. Russel operated the mill for several years. The next owner was Braxton Blalock Jr. who inherited the property from his mother's family. Blalock then sold the mill to Dr. Hiram Evans, head of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1930s. Then the mill was auctioned and Braxton Blalock Sr. bid it and then sold it to Jerry Bartenfield in 1963. Jerry and his wife lived there a few years and then Fulton County purchased the mill in 1967.



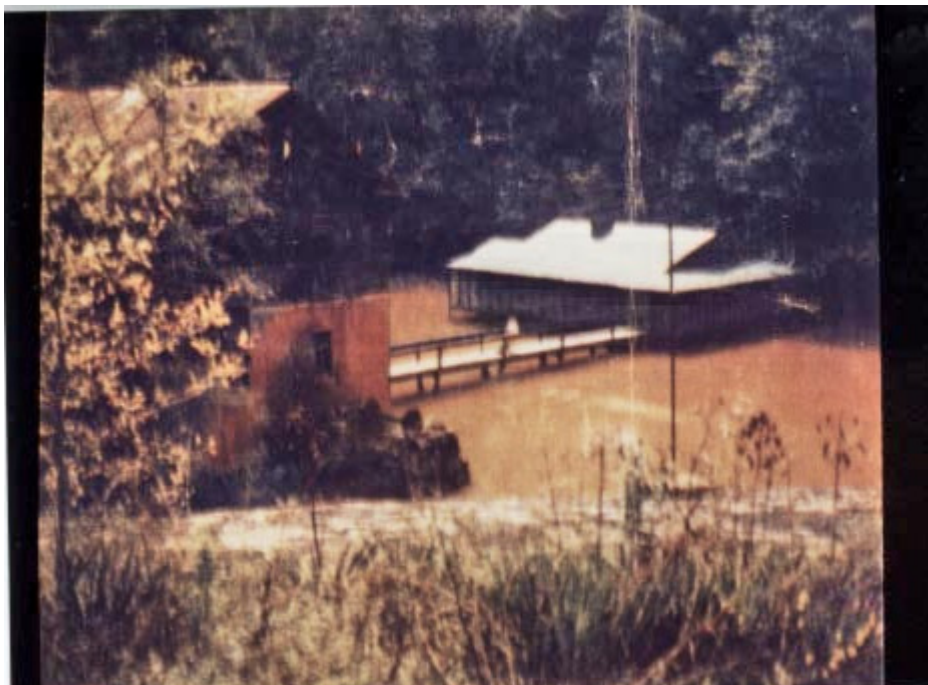


The mill stood to the right of the rock.
The rock is where the wood water wheel spun.





These are photographs from the Atlanta Weekly October 3, 1965.
The pictures are reversed but accurate in detail. Braxton Blalock, Jr. built the house and another dam to make a beautiful country home.





This is the original dam about the mill. Blalock built a lower dam to make the pond. The upper dam was made of stacked stone and the lower dam was made of concrete. Like the mill building, the upper dam was destroyed.



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Berry Cochran Mill – 35



This is the lower dam made for the pond. My great-grandfather and grandfather helped build this dam for Mr. Blalock. The County blasted part of the dam years ago to drain the pond.





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Berry Cochran Mill – 37



Rock formations and the shoals at the Berry Wynn Cochran Mill.
Below: This is a picture of the once full pond and location of the mill.

