

The following was taken from a 26 page document from Maryland State Archives on the mills of Cecil County

Cecil County Mills

SMITHS MILL (VINSINGERS) (3)

William Smith built the first mill in present Elkton at the east end of what was first known as Head of Elk Town on the west bank of Big Elk Creek upon the Queen's Road—during the reign of Queen Anne—about 1706. In 1707, William Anderson petitioned the court for permission to retail strong liquor at the Head of Elk, “he being a poor man and much incumbered with people passing and repassing to said mill along Queens Road,” ESMV, p. 1040. Smith's Mill was mentioned in a 1710 road list (MGS 3:123). William Smith's son and Ross Hinton sold the mill on November 8, 1711, to Thomas Jacobs, bolter, of Chester County, Pa. The deed gave Jacobs the right to cut enough timber (and no more) on Smith's remaining property to rebuild the mill and put up a dwelling.

The mill continued in the Jacobs family until 1784. In that year, Thomas Jacobs, grandson of the first Jacobs owner, went into partnership with Zebulon and Hollingsworth and invested £ 700 in a new mill which stood until 1970. The articles of agreement called for a stone mill, 50 x 32 ft, two stories high, “with a cedar roof; furnished with one pair of stones of the French burrs, one pair of country mill stones, a complat set of boulting cloths, and every necessary and convenient gear and geers, wheel, wheels, granaries . . . dam .” The partners were to “dig a head and tail race of proper depth and tight banks . . .” and the firm of “Jacob & Co.” was to “keep a regular set of books” (Cecil County deeds, Liber BW 1:433, MSA). Later a frame third story was added. Levi Hollingsworth developed a large flour shipping business in Philadelphia, CCM, p. 58; HCC, p. 225f. Partridge Papers, MHS Special Collections, Ms. 642.

In 1799, Thomas Jacob, grandson of the founder, sold to Tobias Rudolph and Samuel Briscoe (Cecil County deeds, Liber JB 5:284). John King briefly held an interest, and in 1818, Adam Whann acquired a one-third interest, as did James Sewall. By 1819, Whann was sole owner but mortgaged the merchant mill to the Elkton Bank (Cecil County deeds, Liber JS 16:347).

A future President of the U. S., James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, had been quartered in the mill house in 1813, while serving with the Lancaster County militia in protection of Elkton from British raiders. The 1820 census of manufactures listed Adam Whann with a stone mill building and frame sawmill in Elkton. Known as Elk Mills, the works had 2 pair of 5-foot burrs and 1 saw, elevators, packing press, and 3 bolting reels, the whole in good repair and capable of producing 5 times the 12,000 bu wheat and 2000 bu corn ground that year. Somewhere in that period, it was called Alexanders Mill as shown in a plat of the millrace in Land Commissions, Liber 1:227.

In 1830, Whann's Mill was put up for sale and bought by Jacob Casho [Casheau] Howard, who sold it to his brother Thomas Howard, Jr., in 1834. The *Cecil Whig* in its tabulation entitled “Big Elk,” October 18, 1845, still listed it as Whanns Mill, the lowest on that stream, with a 14-foot fall. James Partridge, however, listed the fall as 8 ft. The 1850 census of manufactures listed Robert Wamsley water mill with \$9000 capital investment, 4 employees, 2 run of stones, 2 saws,

and annual output of 720 bbl flour, 5000 bu meal, 2000 bu corn and oats, and 300,000 board ft (\$13,825).

Whann's Mills were reported sold by trustees to a Mr. Watson of Baltimore, *Cecil Whig*, May 29, 1852. The 1858 Martenet county map showed Thomas Watson's grist and saw mills. A note of ca. 1860 in the Historical Society of Cecil County files reads, "Frederick Stump has purchased the saw and grist mills of Thomas Watson east of Elkton for \$9,500." The 1875 *Boyd's Directory* listed Campbell and Vinsinger Mill. The works passed to the Mitchell family of Elkton, and the 1877 county atlas showed it as Dr. H. H. Mitchell's at the corner of Howard Street and Delaware Avenues (Also, HCC, p. 224).

The 1880 census of manufactures listed Henry Vinsinger with \$10,000 capital investment in the mill, now with a third set of stones, producing \$20,426 in products annually, including 3000 bbl flour. Maximum daily capacity was 300 bu, and 33% of the business was custom. An 11-foot fall drove two 60 hp, 3-foot turbines at 120 rpm.

Henry Vinsinger was listed in the 1887 State business directory. The *American Miller*, 23 (March 1, 1895): 305, reported, "Henry Vinsinger, miller of Elkton, Md., has been succeeded in the business by his son and his former head miller, M. Davis." In the late 1890s, the works became known as the Davis-Vinsinger Mill for Alfred Davis and William Vinsinger. Their hired miller was Mr. Cavanaugh. A creamery stood next-door, run by Harvey Groves about 1912. Davis and Vinsinger sold out to the city of Elkton, which needed a water supply site. G. A. and J. L. Allender bought the mill in 1915 and entered a contract for pumping city water and using any surplus for milling. By 1926 the city needed all the water, and the Allenders split up and vacated the mill which reverted to the city (*Cecil County Directory*, 1956, p. 270).

The mill was used by the city as a storage building for vehicles; first a portion near the creek was torn down and then the entire structure, which was supported by massive wooden buttresses, was torn down in late 1970 to make room for a new vehicle building (Perkins ms., p. 3). See also, Edith Howard Rowe, "Mrs. Rowe Writes About Several Historic Mills," *Cecil Democrat*, February 9, 1956. The aged timbers were made available to the local historical society for restoring other buildings. Location was grid 13-B-9 in the ADC Street Atlas.

William Smith & family's arrival in December 1699 with William Penn on the Canterbury are based on: Myers, Albert Cook (1902). *Quaker arrivals at Philadelphia 1682-1750: being a list of certificates of removal received at Philadelphia Monthly Meeting of Friends*, Philadelphia: Ferris & Leach

History of Cecil County Maryland by George Johnston (org published 1881) P 225 – 6 "John Smith was the son of William Smith, who is supposed to have been the person who erected the first mill at the Head of Elk. This mill is known to have been there as early as 1706, and the next year one William Anderson petitioned the court for leave to retail strong liquors at the Head of Elk, "he being a poor man and much incumbered with people passing and repassing to the said mill along the Queen's road," which then ran from the lower ferry at Perryville via North East and crossed the Big Elk Creek at or near where the bridge now stands at Mitchell's mill, and ran down the peninsula east of the heads of Back Creek, Bohemia and Sassafras rivers.

Three months after John Smith received the deed for the one thousand acres before referred to, he and his wife and father-in-law sold the mill and eight acres, on part of which it stood, to Thomas Jacobs, bolter, who is described as being of Middletown, Chester County, Pa. This land is that south of Main Street and west of the road by the mill. Jacobs also bought another tract containing twenty-one acres on the west side of the creek and running a considerable distance up the stream above the breast of the dam. It was stipulated in the deed that Jacobs was to have the right to cut as much timber as would be required to build a dwelling-house and also to rebuild the said mill and no more upon the other land of Smith free of charge. It is worthy of remark, as showing the condition of the country and the customs of the people, that "the fishings, fishing places and fowling ways" are specified as being conveyed to Jacobs.

This mill continued in possession of the Jacobs family till 1784, at which time it was in a very bad condition, and Thomas Jacobs, the grandson of the person who purchased it from Smith, entered into a co-partnership with Zebulon and Levi Hollingsworth for the purpose of carrying on the milling business. It was at this time that the old mill now standing was built by the Messrs. Hollingsworth, who built the mill and furnished it with a pair of French burr millstones and put £700 into the business. The third story of the mill, which is frame, was subsequently added to it."

The following is from a history/genealogy of John Hiatt: "A deed not included in the Hiatt-Hiatt book was located in the Maryland records (Cecil County, Md. deeds, Vol II, page 321). It was dated 26 May 1715 and indicates that John Camp (Kemp or Kempson) and wife Mary of Elk River in Cecil County sold 50 acres of Dare's Desire to John Hiatt of the same place. The deed was witnessed by John Smith and Edward Jeffes. Earlier, on 27 July 1708, John Hiatt was appointed administrator of the estate of William Smith in common with James Robinson and Sampson George. (Testamentary Proceedings, Cecil County, Maryland, Liber 21, folio 61) John Hiatt and this William Smith appear to have been brother-in-law, and this William also appears to have been the son of Williams Smith, Sr. who died in 1710. John Hiatt had married prior to 1700 Mary Smith, daughter of William Smith, Sr. who had been living in Cecil County along the Elk River since at least 1703. Cecil County Deed, Vol 2, page 321.

According to the will of William Smith, Sr. dated 8 September 1708 (Cecil County Wills, Liber AA folio 135) administrators of the estate of William Smith, Sr. were William's son, John Smith, Nicholas Hyland and Sampson George of Cecil County. The John Smith who witnessed the 1715 deed between John Hiatt and John Camp and the William Smith for whose estate John Hiatt was administrator were almost certainly Mary's brothers. These events indicate that John and Mary Smith Hiatt were living in Cecil County, Maryland, as early as 1708. Their land was located on the Elk River adjacent to land owned by the Smiths and several members of the Hollingsworth family."

My Mother is descended from William Smith Jr who predeceased his father leaving a daughter Hannah (born between 1700 and 1706) who we are descended from. Hannah's oldest son William Dyer would marry Mary & John Hiatt's granddaughter, Margaret. According to William Smith Sr.'s will probated May 20, 1710, William's wife Grace would receive ½ the household goods, and younger son John would receive "all the plantation I now live on" which included 1000 acres a grinding and saw mill. Mary Smith Hiatt, her husband John and Hannah

each received one English shilling each. (Found in The Maryland calendar of Wills (1703-1713) by James Baldwin Cotton) According to the History of Cecil County Maryland he would sell the mill, some of the property and in the receive 1400 acres of adjacent land for an unrepaid loan his father had made to a Phillip Lynes.

Smith's choice of land: William Smith was almost prescient in his choice of property (1,000 acres) & mill site. He was either a talented miller or millwright from England or had them in his employ. The mill located on the Queens Road (now Delaware Ave.) was placed between 3 and 4 tenths of a mile above the Elk Creek tidal line and within 650 feet of its intersection with the Indian trail that would become part of the Kings Highway (today Main Street and Old Baltimore Pike). The Pike would in fact cross the mill race from dam to mill and the Big Elk Creek. The section of the Big Elk from Smith's mill to the Elk River & on into the Chesapeake Bay was navigable in small flat bottom boats at a time when roads were non-existent or at best muddy and rutted paths with no bridges over streams.

As late as 1910 a picture shows small masted and steam vessels, which handled business needs, behind what is now American Home and Hardware less than a mile downstream. He took advantage of a U bend in the stream to gain additional fall of about 8 to 10 feet for more water power without running a long mill race paralleling the stream as seen along the DuPont Brandywine mills in Wilmington, Delaware. The stream bed from dam to mill was about 3,800 feet, while the mill race cutting across the top of the U was only about 1,780 feet in length.