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## ***A Search for Hatch's Mill***

by Jane Pyle

### **Part II**

*The first part of this article described the search for verification of the existence and location of Hatch's mill on Roberson Creek and introduced the Hatch family of Chatham County.*

### **The Hatch Family Matures**

Henry H. Hatch (1796-1867) married Martha Ward (1791-1874), and they had three sons and five daughters: John W. (1819-1902), Robert J. (1823-1884), Elizabeth (1825-1877), Frances (1826-1896), Emeline (1828-1871), Mary Ann (b. 1831), William H. (1834-1899), and Indiana (b. 1850).

Henry Hatch came to Chatham County sometime before 1820 (see Part I). Before 1850 he was engaged in commerce; from 1850 he called himself a farmer, as did children and neighbors, even though pursuing other occupations. Eldest son, John Hatch, was a justice of the peace and served on the county school board. He was the last county examiner (questioning teachers on ability and morals) before reorganization of schools in 1881. He was a county

commissioner from 1876-1878.<sup>12</sup> The Rev. J. W. Hatch was also a minister at Hanks Chapel Church (dates unknown).<sup>13</sup> John certainly, and Robert and others possibly, were involved in the operation of Hatch's mill, described in Part I of this article. John's grandson, E. B. Hatch, was the county's Clerk of Court from 1925-1955.

Second son Robert and his wife Celia deeded land (BK/380) in 1880 for an African-American school that was open until after the Second World War. In addition to farming, he is listed as a grocer in the 1880 census, probably in nearby Pittsboro.

William H. Hatch was the Public Register for Chatham County from 1865 to 1869, an office that became the Register of Deeds with the reorganization of county government, and he continued in that position until 1878. He then served as county commissioner from 1880-1894.

The children all subsequently married, almost all into neighborhood families. Henry's three oldest daughters married local farmers John Bland, William Bland, Jr., and John T. Ferrell, Jr. Mary Ann married Thomas Lilly, a house carpenter; Indiana, or Anna, married Britton Utley of Wake County, a physician. Interestingly, her occupation in the 1880 census is listed not as "keeping house" but as "fine arts."

Two of Henry's sons-in-law and three grandchildren served the Confederacy during the Civil War. Mary Ann's husband, Thomas Lilly, served in Co. I of the 6th Senior Reserves, and Anna's future husband, Britton Utley, enlisted at age 19 in Wake County, was captured two years later at the Battle of Gettysburg, exchanged, and captured again at Petersburg. John's son Theophilus, 20, enlisted in 1861, was wounded at the Battle of Malvern Hill, and died of his wounds in 1862. Two of Robert's sons served, Sylvanus in Co. D of the 35th NC Regiment and Leonidas in Co. H, 70th NC Regiment.<sup>14</sup>

*Now used as a barn, the Hatch-Farrell House on Hanks Chapel Road is thought to have been built by a Hatch in the early 19th century.*



*(Photo courtesy of NC Archives)*

*A Farrell Family, 1940s*



In 1842 Henry Hatch began deeding land to his children, starting with his eldest son, John, then about 23 years old. The reason, he says in the deed (AF/260), is his natural goodwill and affection for his son and for his better maintenance, but he cautions John to “keep up good fence” as long as either parent lives or forfeit the land. In 1843 he deeded 200 acres (AO/355) to his son Robert (20 years old); this deed is not recorded until 1870, shortly after Henry’s death. In 1845 Robert also received 130.5 acres (AG/209) from William Bland, his father-in-law, “so that he would receive an equal amount as other children.” These two deeds may explain the two farms reported for Robert in the 1870 census.

Hatch did not consistently record his deeds with the county Register of Deeds, and I could not find deeds to other sons-in-law until settlement of Hatch’s estate in 1870. In 1867, soon after his death, Martha Hatch petitioned the court for her dower land, saying that Henry left several tracts of land totaling over 900 acres to his children, whom she named. Her dower was laid off (AN/72) by a jury of prominent Pittsboro leaders and comprised 285 acres including the dwelling house. Among the surviving estate papers are deeds to sons-in-law Thomas Lilly (90 acres) and Britton Utley (75 acres), both tracts on Roberson Creek.<sup>15</sup> Three years later, William H. Hatch, the youngest son, paid \$1,500 to the other heirs for their rights of inheritance to the 284 acres known as the “home place” on Roberson Creek (AO/358), the dower land granted to Martha three years earlier.

### **Nineteenth-Century Agricultural Life**

While I lack a farming background, I gained some insights into the Hatch ways of life through study of surviving records of special schedules of the censuses of agriculture for 1850 through 1880. The four sets of data are not entirely comparable; however, all give acreage and value of the farm, amounts of food and commercial crops raised, and farm animals used. Table 1 records selected data from the special schedules, supplemented by information from the census of population—age of the head of household, number of people in the household, number of slaves, and declared value of real and personal property.<sup>16</sup>

In 1850, Henry Hatch was 54 years old and reported having 70 acres of improved land (both tilled and pasture). An 1,450 additional acres raised the value of his farm to \$3,500, although the value of his farm tools came to only \$115. He had three horses, four milk cows, eight other cattle, and twenty swine. With only five in the household, he must have been raising crops well beyond his needs, for he reports production of 120 bushels of wheat, 375 bushels of

Indian corn, and 100 bushels of oats. Henry’s eldest son, John, 31, also with five in the household, reported only fifty improved and sixty unimproved acres valued at \$1,000. His farm animals were roughly similar to his father’s, and he added nine sheep that produced ten pounds of wool. He harvested 400 bushels of Indian corn, but only 30 bushels of wheat, ten bushels of Irish potatoes, and 100 bushels of sweet potatoes. He reported no butter from his three cows and no hay, compared with his father’s 100 pounds of butter and five tons of hay.

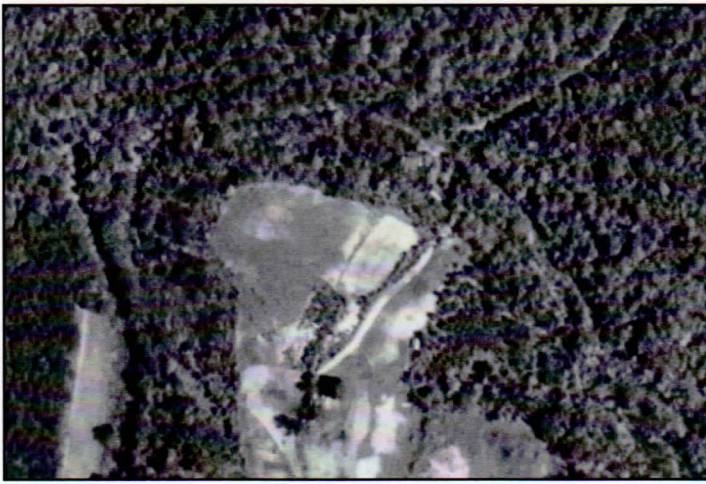
Second son Robert, 27, with four children and a mechanic living in the household, had 60 improved acres and 250 unimproved acres, valued at \$1,500; he put a value of \$60 on his farm implements. His animals include four horses, two cows, six other cattle, fourteen swine, and five sheep. Thirty bushels of wheat and 200 bushels of Indian corn are added to but one bushel of Irish potatoes and ten bushels of sweet potatoes. His farm production is rounded out with fifty pounds of butter and one ton of hay.

William H., the youngest son, is living at home in 1850. In 1860, now married with two children and listed in the census as a separate household, he is apparently still farming on the family farm. Perhaps the 300 acres of improved land reported by Henry Hatch is in part farmed by his son. Production for both William and Henry is similar, each with 15 swine, 200 bushels of Indian corn, and 200 bushels of oats.

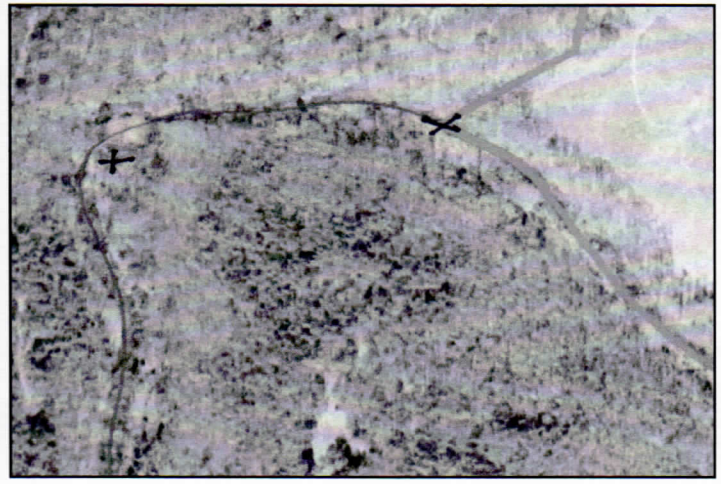
In 1860 it is Robert whose farm appears most prosperous, with 150 improved acres valued at \$5,000, but the total value of John’s real and personal property is much higher. Possibly Hatch’s mill affects this valuation, but the capital invested that he reports for the mill is only \$1,000. John’s agricultural production, otherwise similar to his father and brothers, adds 200 pounds of tobacco and 38 swine. Robert’s 40 swine, 375 bushels of Indian corn, and 3 tons of hay increase his production above the others.

The inflated values of pre-Civil War property have crashed and remain low in 1870 after defeat and reconstruction. John maintains his dominant position in relation to his brothers, but the differences in production are small. Robert’s two farms are reported separately, possibly because they lie in different census tracts. Another possible explanation is that he was running his father’s farm as well as his own. In 1870 his widowed mother, Martha, is reported as part of his household, although she received her dower land of 285 acres, including the family home (AN/72) in 1867. The lower quantities and values reported by William H. Hatch can probably be attributed to his role now as civil servant with less dependence on the farm for livelihood. Noteworthy in the





1938



2007

Comparison of aerial photographs taken in 1938 and 2007<sup>17</sup> record a dramatic change in land use as farm land is replaced by forested terrain. The farm at the top of a deep bend in Roberson Creek just south of Hanks Chapel Church, cultivated in 1938, is replaced by pine while mixed hardwoods remain in former woodlands. Marks on the 2007 image indicate the location of the remnant of stonework (+) pictured in Part I of this article and the site of the ford (x) leading to Hatch's mill. The precise location of the mill, dam, and mill race are yet to be explored.

1870 reports is cotton production by both John and Robert, who had not raised cotton earlier and ten years later reported only minimal amounts.

The 1880 census did not collect information on real and personal property values. Value of farms suggests that the economy had improved considerably, with John's farm valued at \$4,000 in 1880, an increase from \$1,100 in 1870. William reported an increase from \$200 in 1870 to \$1,000 in 1880. The four tons of hay reported by William suggest that he had turned much of his farm into pasture.

The statistics recorded in the censuses of agriculture over these thirty years, describe families in a farming community slowly turning away from agriculture, mirroring the experience of the larger world at the beginning of the industrial revolution.

### Conclusion

No land today is registered in the Hatch name in the Roberson Creek area of Chatham County. Traces of their presence on the landscape have almost disappeared and even memories of their contributions are almost forgotten. The questions that remain — or better, the questions that arise from an examination of deeds and censuses, gravestones and history books — may still be satisfied in a stash of letters in an attic, a diary or three in an old cupboard, or a dusty forgotten photograph album. If they look, the Blands and Farrells, and no doubt other families still living in the area, should find a Hatch down on the lower branches of their family tree.

### NOTES

12. Wade H. Hadley, Doris Goerch Horton, and Nell Craig Strowd, *Chatham County 1771-1971*, (Pittsboro NC: Chatham County Historical Association, Inc., 1971). See index for Hatch entries.
13. "History of Hanks Chapel," *Chatham Record*, 6 Sep 1972.
14. *North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865: A Roster*. (NC Office of Archives and History). Multiple volumes.
15. Loose estate papers, NC Archives, Raleigh.
16. Schedules, "Productions of Agriculture," in the U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880. U.S. Censuses of Population, 1800-1900, *op. cit.*, footnote 10, Part I. Table cells are blank where no data were collected or no production was reported.  
In 1840 three of Henry Hatch's household were engaged in agriculture; Henry himself was in commerce. Two of these three were probably slaves. Special schedules were prepared for the slave population in 1850 and 1860 censuses of population; how the slaves were employed was not recorded.
17. 1938 aerial photograph: NC Archives, Raleigh; 2007 aerial photograph: [www.chathamgis.com](http://www.chathamgis.com), Chatham County GIS, Pittsboro, NC.

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Table 1.-- Agricultural Production of Four Farmers in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Chatham County, North Carolina\*

name	Henry H. Hatch			John W. Hatch					Robert J. Hatch					William H. Hatch		
	1850	1860	1880	1850	1860	1870	1880	1850	1860	1870a	1870b	1880	1860	1870	1880	
year	1850	1860	1880	1850	1860	1870	1880	1850	1860	1870a	1870b	1880	1860	1870	1880	
age	54	60		31	41	51	61	27	36	47	47	57	24	36	45	
# household (# slaves)	5 (3)	4 (1)		6 (4)	9	6	3	2 (1)	8	8	8	5	4 (1)	11	13	
value of real property	\$3,000	\$7,800		\$700	\$13,500	\$2,000		\$1,100	\$3,500	\$1,500	\$1,500			\$1,000		
" personal property		\$3,000			\$10,000	\$2,500			\$4,000	\$600	\$600		\$500	\$600		
improved acres	70	300		50	70	70	63	60	150	75	75	46		40	38	
unimproved acres	1,450	1,000		60	123	259	107	250	500	425	150	79		436	217	
value of land	\$3,500	\$2,500		\$1,000	\$2,000	\$1,100	\$4,000	\$1,500	\$5,000	\$550	\$2,000	\$1,000		\$200	\$1,000	
value of implements	\$115	\$100		\$125	\$125	\$100	\$100	\$60	\$150	\$200	\$250	\$100	\$100	\$50	\$50	
horses	3	1		3	1			4	1	1	1		1			
asses or mules	2	3		2	4	3	2		2	3	3	3		2	2	
milch cows	4	4		3	4	3	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	4	1	
swine	20	15		25	38	26	20	14	40	26	20	9	15	9	10	
wheat (bushels)	120	250		30	200	130	96	30	250	140	140	92	150	50	60	
Indian corn (bushels)	375	200		400	200	125	200	200	375	75		300	200	50	225	
Irish potatoes (bu.)		10		10	30	20	20	1	15	25	25	10	20	25	40	
sweet potatoes (bu.)	40	25		100	100	50	75	10	50	150	30	30	100		50	
butter (pounds)	100	52			100	150	150	52	100		150	50	100	200	50	
oats (bu.)	100	200			200	200	100		100	160	120	50	200	100	50	
hay (tons)	5				1		1	1	3	2	2	3			4	
tobacco (pounds)					200		75			20		100				
cotton (400-lb. bales)						20	1			15		1/4				

\*For notes and sources, see end note #16.