

Shotwell Area

Shotwell is located between Marks Creek and Poplar Creek, an area south of Poole Rd and adjacent to Smithfield Rd. It is named for **Randolph Abbott Shotwell** a Civil War soldier. Despite his conviction as part of a large group involved in Klan activities, he received a pardon after one year and returned to Raleigh where he worked on a paper (Farmer & Mechanic) until his death.

The original land was a plantation belonging to **Malichai Hinton** via a land grant from the King of England. His original grant was for 430 acres in July of 1761, he also received a grant for 640 acres in October of 1782. The Wake County Court Minutes of June, 1777 state that a deed from Malichai Hinton to **Thomas (Miles) Mial Sr.** was in open court duly proved by oath of Dempsey Welch, a subscribing witness thereto and ordered to be registered.

These same minutes state that **Dempsey Welch** petitioned the court to build a public water grist mill and that he then own the land on the one side of the stream and that the proprietor of the land on the other side (towit) Thomas ??? gave his consent that the said Welch might have an acre of land for that purpose. Thomas (Miles?), John Baughcum and Robert Traywick were appointed to lay out and value an acre of land on the other side of the stream and report their proceedings thereon to the next court.

The Mill Tract (Lake Myra)

The above states that the owner of the mill pond and possibly a grist mill was Thomas ????. This could have been Thomas Mial Sr. d=1811, for we know that part of Marks Creek mill tract and any existing dam was later requested by **Thomas Price Jr.** at the court session of Feb 1812 and owned by him until his death in 1830. Thomas Price was a wealthy man and owned about 2100+ acres and 20+ slaves in the later years of his life. He owned some five mills in this corner of the County, one of which was in Johnston Co. At his death the mill tract descended to his daughter Sheherazade² and was said to contain 1,000 acres.

n.b. Thomas Price Sr d=1780, Johnston Co.

Both Sheherazade Price and Rev Bennett T. Blake had been previously married, she to

Thomas Mial Jr. and he to Fetna, the then deceased sister of Sheherazade. Two days before their marriage February 18, 1837 they signed an indenture which put much of her property in holding for her. Most of this property was sold to her brother **Needham Price** for safe keeping in trust and for her use if she should survive the said Bennett T Blake.

Sheherezade died in 1853 and the mill tract remained with Needham until his death in 1870, at which time he willed it to his wife Nancy and later in her will of 1874 it went to one of his daughters Mary T Mangum and husband Priestly Mangum.

Looking at Emerson's NC Tobacco Belt Directory of 1886, shows W.H.Hood operating the following: General Store, Saw & Grist Mills and a Cotton Gin. In 1909 a deed selling 100 acres of land is described as being called the W.H. Hood mill place and further described as the former Needham Price mill place. In the 1919 to 1921 timeframe various plots of land were sold to a group of physicians from Raleigh, creating the Doctors Lake Milling Company.

Lake Myra

“The group of doctors sold the house, lake, and mill tract to the Stone family of Raleigh in the mid-1920s. The Stone family used the lodge as their personal residence and continued to operate the lake and mill. The lake became a popular recreation spot about this time for picnics and swimming. It is assumed that the name of Doctors Lake changed to Lake Myra while the Stone family owned the property in honor of Mr Stones wife, Myra.

The Stone family sold the tract to the Woodall family of Raleigh about 1929. The Woodalls continued to operate the mill and lake and live in the house overlooking the lake. The Woodalls also added a general merchandise store onto the mill, adjacent to the dam to promote enjoyment of the lake’s resources.

In 1939 financial problems forced the Woodalls to convey the property in its entirety to Wake County, and in December of 1939, Charles M. Martin, a local cotton ginner, saw mill operator, and real estate investor bought the land contents from the County. Martin, having already owned the adjacent tract on the northwest side, combined his prior holdings to this newly-purchased tract. Mr. Martin and his wife, Annie, and two of their children, Clarence and Eleanor, began to use the Woodall’s house as their primary residence. The Martin family began to improve the property, and in 1940 Mr. Martin erected a new store building, which exists across from the house, and added concrete to the existing dam to raise the lake’s water level. Improvements were added to the house, and Martin used the surrounding property to raise cattle.

In 1958, Mr. Martin gave about nine acres across the lake behind the store to his daughter Eleanor and husband John Yeager for the building of a home. Shortly after, in 1959, Mr. Martin gave the remaining balance of the lake property, including the old house, to his son Clarence.

The mill's final operation ceased about 1962. C.M. Martin died in 1967, and Clarence continued to operate the store and continued to live in the old homeplace overlooking the lake.

At Clarence's death in 1979, the old house and entire Lake Myra property was passed to his sister, Eleanor. The store continued to operate under Eleanor's husband, John, until 1995. In this same year, the property again was portioned so that five acres were given to Eleanor's son Charles Martin Yeager (Mart) for building a new home, and another five acres, including the old Martin home overlooking the lake were given to another son, Dr. John A. Yeager III.

At this time, the lake remains open to fishing year-round, but the store and mill remain reminders of the lake's history."

Dr. John A. Yeager, III

Names and places

Walnut Hill, the plantation of **Alanzo T Mial Sr.** b=1823, d=1897, son of Thomas Mial, was one of the last remaining large plantations of the area. Mial maintained his large plantation status nearly to his death date by working both with tenant farmers and wage laborers. The original cotton gin (cir 1845) can still be seen and is being converted into a home.

Henry R. Goodson was one of the most affluent black landholders in this area and ran a large tobacco farm for many years. He was also the only black jail warden in Wake County at this time in history.

The old Montague store burned a few years back but was a site of historic memories. Cotton hanging inside as well as tobacco and the better share of all purchases being made on a tab. The store dates to about 1880 and was the center of business in town.

An application for a post office in Shotwell was filed on Mar 10, 1883 and opened in Jun of

1883. The PO was robbed in Dec 1897.

1884 – 1902 Joseph Blake was a county land surveyor. He was the only child of Bennett Blake and Scheherazade.

Feb 23, 1887 **Llondon L Doub** married **Pattie Anderson**. They were well known in and around Shotwell and were parents to nine children.

Jan 11, 1896 William B Doub and wife Josephine sell a 300 x 300 ft tract of land to Landon Llewelyn Doub for the cemetery located along the road from Shotwell to Clydes Chappel (today's Turnipseed Rd.). This land adjoined the NE corner of A T Mial Jr's property.

Millard Mial b=1852, d=1933, Wake, NC. Clerk of Superior court for many years. He was the son of Alonza T Mial and Eliza Ann Lemay.

Bailey Williamson got CP&L to run an electric line to Shotwell about 1934. It was the first electric in that part of Wake County.

Jun 1973 A \$ 200,000, 16 room house owned by Williamson Farms burned at 12:54 am. It was scheduled to become a drug rehab center and there had been much conflict over this plan. A member of the Williamson family stated, the cause of this fire was never determined . 5 fire trucks from Knightdale along with others, responded to this fire.

Robert Williamson's home was later moved about a mile, to the foundation of the burned home and can be seen today along with the iron fencing which was moved from a post office in Raleigh.

Roads

Several roads still run through this area which deserve proper mention. The first of these of course is the Mial Plantation road which runs through the center of Walnut Hill Plantation and takes you from Shotwell to Clayton and if you see fit to return, then it is called Shotwell Road on the other end in Johnston County.

Another road which ties Knightdale and Shotwell together is the Smithfield Rd. This road begins in the heart of Knightdale at a point just out front of the Beaverdam plantation house at a point of intersection with the old horse path now called Forestville Rd. Historic thinking led one to believe you could jump on your favorite horse and follow this road direct to Smithfield, but we know this is not true today.

The third road of mention in this area is the Poole Road. So why even mention these roads? Well, if you have read any of my other articles you know that I have been trying to follow the path of the old Tarborough Rd. During research for this article, I find reference to Poole Rd. being referred to as the Tarboro Rd. This is somewhat confusing because I know that in the Knightdale area it generally followed today's Hwy 64 and was thought to lead straight east to Eagle Rock.

Another map of the Shotwell properties indicates a road traveling from the southwest (Auburn) and marked as coming from **Battles Bridge** (Civil War rest spot early 1865) and running into Poole Rd. along the same path past the Needham Price mill site and then marked "to Tarboro". This road request was made to the court in Aug 1815 and described as running from Mrs. Mial's home to the river. The person appointed to work on and oversee construction was none other than Mr. Battle.

In the past, the general stage and mail route out of Raleigh crossed Hinton's bridge at the Neuse and then went east to Eagle Rock, east to Wakefield, then east to Tarboro with a stub which picked up Earpsboro. At the time the post office request was made it described that the postal route would change, coming first to Shotwell and then return north to Eagle Rock and so forth.

One last road to comment on is the Major Slade Road. Undoubtedly named after a gentlemen of Colour whose name appears many times in deeds & documents, but with little explanation of who he was. Generally referred to as S. M. R. Slade and also in one of the census's as Sir M. R. Slade. *Research ongoing.*

Oaky Grove Church *See pic's.*

Oaky Grove Methodist Episcopal Church has not always been located in the spot it holds today. In years gone by another sat in a fine grove of Oak trees that were probably north of the Tarborough Road (today's) Poole Road. In old documents, it can be seen that on July 1, 1837, Charles L Hinton, Needham Price, Turner Pullen and William Smith pay \$5 each to Bennett T Blake for land to build a Methodist Episcopal Church.

In the 1876 time frame, the present land was selected adjacent to that of A. T. Mial and the present church was built. Many folks report that the church was built by request of his fiance and that she would not marry him until he built the church. A slight disagreement might be noted here for they were married in May of 1850. See son Millard reported above.

In July of 1917, the Knightdale United Methodist Church was organized by Rev. L. E. Sawyer and a dozen members. Those folks that were members of Oaky Grove began attending the church in Knightdale.

An old church register shows many family names that are familiar to us even today: Debnam, Hodge, Doub, Mial, Blake, Faison, Woodard, Wall and Lassiter. The C. L. Hinton family surely attended the church also, as mentioned above and by way of a map of his Oaks Plantation which portrays a road leading east from the plantation labeled "to Oaky Grove".

It should be remembered that the Hintons and most of the other members of the church were traveling to church via horse or mule drawn wagons of the day.

Frog Pond Academy

This one room school was built in 1860 by A. T. Mial for the children of the area. This fine little place got its name from the children as a result of the frogs that could be seen in the puddles around the school after a rain. The little school still stands a few hundred yards to the west of the church and is still used periodically.

It is said that L. L. Doub and wife Pattie taught at the school at one point in time. Another instructor at the school was Civil War **Capt John J. Fray.**

Notable

An interesting connection between Shotwell and Knightdale lies in the genealogy of the Price family. Needham Price (son of Thomas Price Jr) and wife Nancy Sa(u)nders had two daughters, the first of which was Elizabeth Temperance Price. Elizabeth only lived 33 years but during this time she married Alpheus Jones of the Knightdale area and they had three children. The first son was named Needham Price Jones after his grandfather. It is at this point that a reference to the "Railway article" and its attached deeds will show that **Needham P. Jones** and **Henry H. Knight** were the folks that sold land to the railroad in the hopes it's coming would improve the town. The railroad being the real reason that Knightdale is on the map. Elizabeth Meto Jones wife of Needham is the daughter of Kimbrough Jones.

It is ironic to note that at the present time Wake County is planning a park system around the lake and south thereof. This requires a good deal of planning and the purchase of a lot of land for parking and various facilities. As noted above, in the 1939 time frame the County actually owned all of this land and sold it at auction on the court house steps.

Landon A. Doub, a mayor of Knightdale was the son of L.L. Doub and Pattie Anderson named above. He was a lawyer by trade, and operated a general merchandise store on Railroad St.

Memorial

Eastern Wake Fire Department, Firefighter **Todd Alan Blanchard**, 31, died July 14, 2005 from injuries suffered at a fire at the intersection of Turnipseed Road and Major Slade Road in the heart of the Shotwell area

Wayne Schultz

July 2008

[See Shotwell picture album](#)

Addendum

No article about Lake Myra should be published without mention of the very large carved head that was on the north end of the lake. The writer knows about the head but does not know if it was actually carved into a tree trunk, or if it was simply mounted up on a tree trunk.

The picture in the gallery was taken in the 1936 time frame, long after the head had fallen or been taken down. It is unknown if the head was representative of anyone or just general art.

The gentlemen standing behind the head were employees of the Royal Baking Co of Raleigh. The fellow in the center being the owner and the other two were Foreman and Plant Supt.

WS.