

CAR-5

Linchester Mill

Linchester

Private

1754 or later

Linchester Mill is located in the southern corner of the village of Linchester, south of Preston. The building is a frame structure built on a masonry foundation with an inoperative overshot wheel. The majority of the structure dates from the period of the Civil War when it was reported in poor condition.

A mill was in use as early as 1754 on land called the Plains belonging to John Dickerson. After 1755, the mill was owned by Dr. William Murray and descendants for forty years, during which time it supplied the Revolutionary troops at Valley Forge. It was known by several different names, mostly the owners names.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Linchester Mill

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

South side of Md. Rt. 331 and on west bank of Hunting Creek

CITY, TOWN

Linchester

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Caroline

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mildred L. Glessner

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Rt. 2, Box 273

CITY, TOWN

Preston

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21655

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Caroline County Courthouse

Liber #: 190

Folio #: 549

STREET & NUMBER

Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Denton

STATE

Maryland 21629

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Linchester Mill is located on the south side of Maryland Route 331 and on the west bank of Hunting Creek. The present mill machinery is mostly from the twentieth century, but part of the mill structure is early nineteenth century and land records indicate a mill site in the mid-eighteenth century.

The present mill structure is two storys, frame with a tin covered gable roof. The north facade has a loading ramp with a two story high roof. The ramp has a small shed to the east side and borders the north facade which has two entrances and two 6/6 pane windows on the first story and three 6/6 windows on the second story. There is also a large door between the floors. The west gable end has a one story shed addition. The south facade contains the metal mill machinery and overshot wheel.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

See attached pages from "Mollinography of Caroline County" by John McGrain .

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

McGrain, John, Mollinography of Caroline County.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael Bourne, Architectural Consultant, & Joe Getty

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

May, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Shaw House, 21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

NAME Linchester Mill or Hunting Creek Mill
ADDRESS Maryland Route 331, east of Preston
CITY
PERIOD mid-18th century and post-Civil War
RESEARCHER Frank S. Langrell

Linchester Mill is often said to date from 1681 or before and to be the oldest continuous business in the United States, but with many of the "oldest," "only," "unique" stories, Linchester Mill building does not have the age or importance according to an examination by the architectural historian from the National Park Service. Nevertheless, the mill is one of the very few grist mills operating today.

In 1966, Sara Salter of the Hall of Records ran the chain of title (researched again in 1970 by John McGrain) and found that the existing mill stands on a tract of ground called "The Plains," surveyed for William Watson, April 26, 1682. The first mention of a mill dam occurs in a deed of 1754 from Thomas Pitt to John Dickinson. The following year Dickinson sold seven acres to Dr. William Murray and when Murray wrote his will in 1762, he bequeathed the land and mill to his son David. When the boundaries of Caroline County were established in 1773, the mill of James Murray was sited as a landmark, the same structure, but no legal document for the transaction has been located. During the winter of 1777-78, flour from this mill was shipped to the revolutionary troops stationed at Valley Forge, several Maryland mills having supplied flour to the troops during that winter.

A survey team from the National Park Service headed by Jack McDermont visited the mill on March 14, 1968, and reported that the mill structure dated around 1800 and was vastly remodeled after the Civil War (a statement in the Chancery records verify its poor condition in 1865). Most of the machinery with the exception of the stones and other related parts date from after 1900.

page 2

The fact that the frame, two-story mill, dating from the nineteenth century and the product of constant remodeling and improvements, is still in operation as a business is a monument to the industry. Only one other mill is in regular operation on the Eastern Shore, which is Double Mills, Wicomico County. Wye Mills, at the town of the same name, is in operating condition and was in operation during the summer of 1971.

Mr. Frank Langrell, the owner and miller since 1914, is now in his 80's and is continuing as well as can be expected. Mr. Langrell and his mill have received much publicity in the past six years, including a television show and articles in the Washington, Baltimore and New York newspapers. A group of citizens under the leadership of Mr. Max Chambers, editor of the local paper, Preston "News and Farmer," has tried to get National Landmark recognition for the mill, but since they were trying to say it was the remains of a seventeenth-century mill, recognition was denied.

Recorder: Michael Bourne
Maryland Historical Trust

LINCHESTER MILL (4) ④

1. Linchester Mill is on Md. 331 east of Preston, on the south side of the road and on the west side of Hunting Creek; it was still in use in 1970 and running with water power. An ancient lineage is claimed for this mill, possibly through misinterpretation of land records. Edward T. Tubbs contributed the Catoline County chapter to Swepson Earle's 1916 book, Maryland's Colonial Eastern Shore, where on p. 164 he dates the mill at 1681 and states, "The first mention of a mill at the site of the present Linchester is found in the Dorchester Rent Roll where a survey of May 20, 1682 for Thomas Pattison is described as being on Hunting Creek 'above the mill-dam.'" Marion Nicholl Rawson in Little Old Mills, p. 55, says it was "originally the property of Thomas Pattison." The Tubbs chapter was repeated in Chesapeake Bay Country, p. 384.
2. However, a check in the Dorchester Rent Roll (Liber 10, f. 422) shows two Thomas Pattison tracts dated May 20, 1682 entered on the same page; one tract, Rinionle, was indeed on Hunting Creek, but the certificate description (Liber 21, f. 437) makes no mention of a mill; the other Rent Roll entry is for a tract of land called Carleton, and the capsule description includes the words "by the Branch Side above the Mill Dam," But on searching out the certificate for Carleton (Liber 21, f. 436), the tract turns out to be in the present Dorchester County on Cabin Creek.
3. In a title search performed at the request of Governor Tawes by Sara Salter of the Hall of Records in 1966, the Linchester Mill is clearly demonstrated to stand on part of a tract called The Plains, surveyed for William Watson, April 28, 1682, Liber 21, f. 539 and Liber IB & IL No. C, f. 539; the certificate of The Plains makes no reference to a mill dam, and in fact, the first mention of a mill in this chain of descent is in a deed of 1754.
4. Watson sold the 300-acre Plains in 1684 to Thomas Taylor who sold it to Joseph Smith, 1685; Smith sold to Anthony Squires in 1688, and 1694 Squires sold half the tract to Phillip (sic) Pitt. Pitt died leaving to his son Philip (sic) the "land at Hunting Creek purchased of Anthony Squires," MCW, 2:173. Pitt's grandson, Thomas Pitt, heir at law to Captain John Pitt, in 1754 sold the 150 acres to John Dickinson, "on the north side of the Head of Hunting Creek and next adjoining the mill dam," Dorchester Old Liber 15, f. 25.
5. In 1755, John Dickinson sold 7 acres of the Plains to Dr. William Murray, and in 1762, Dr. Murray made a will bequeathing to son David "the Plains whereon I now dwell that part of the Plains I bought of Mr. John Dickinson where on the mill is built," (Dorchester Wills, Liber 31, ff. 1037-39.) However, in 1763, Murray conveyed the same 7 acres "upon which the Mill house now stands" by deed to David Murray for L 7. (Old 18 356).
6. David Murray left the mill and a bake house to his brother James Murray in 1764, Dorchester Wills, 32:135. James Murray's Mill was cited as a landmark in setting up the bounds of Caroline County in 1773. The 7-acre site appears on a 19th Century plat as The Mill Lot -- the adjoining tract was Painter's or Panthor's Range.

#8 Continued

7. The unbroken descent for 59 years through the Pitt family makes it difficult to equate this mill with the "Hunting Creek Mill" bequeathed by Elizabeth Lowe in 1719 to her son Vincent Lowe, "the water mill in Dorchester at the head of Hunting Creek," Talbot County Wills, Liber 15:248-254. The Lowe Mill was apparently slightly downstream, on Squires Chance, but still in present Caroline County.
8. Colonel James Murray, described as "physician of Annapolis," acquired other properties including half of Grantham, which he bought in part from Joseph Bland, Jr., in 1765 and purchased the other half from James Taylor, Jr. of Virginia on October 17, 1775 for L 37-10/0. Swepson Earle places Colonel Murray's holdings at 2551 acres (op. cit., p. 384). Flour from this mill was shipped to Valley Forge. Colonel Murray's farm was ransacked by Captain Richard Andrew of Caroline County in a search for salt at meat-curing time in 1776, HDC, p. 222; this account describes the place as the Billup farm of the 1920's.
9. Some of the more fanciful accounts date the mill at 1670 and state that it was washed out and rebuilt. In some versions, the mill was floated to its present location by a freshet. If the mill could be dated at 1681, it would clearly be the oldest going concern in the United States.
10. In 1792, William Littleton Murray devised "my mill in Caroline County and all the appurtenances thereunto belonging" to William Robertson, Chancery Records, Liber B56, f. 52. The mill was shown as Robertsons on the 1795 map by Dennis Griffith.
11. Littleton M. Robertson in 1831 sold to Jacob C. Wilson "all them Mills and Mill Seat ... known by the name of upper Hunting Creek Mills," Liber Q, f. 534. Wilson's executor, Turpin Wright, sold Upper Hunting Creek Mills to John R. Stack, 1855, Liber BB, f. 576, for \$3002. Wilson's widow in 1851 had sold her dower right in the mill to Job D.A. Robinson, TCF No. AA, f. 19.
12. John R. Stack died 1865 and in Stack-vs-Stack, his widow sold her infant heirs to acquire title to the mill and sell it for their benefit. Jesse Hubbard, one of the commissioners appointed by the court reported of the mill "that it is in very bad repair and depreciating in value daily ... it would be decidedly to the advantage of the parties interested to sell it; for unless something be done to the mill property, it will fall down," Caroline Chancery Records, Liber JWT 7:9. The court ordered the property sold.
13. The late Stack's mill and four dwellings were auctioned off with John R. Nichols buying the mill for \$7200. A sale notice in the American Union, Denton, October 5, 1865, offered the mill, saw mill, and carding machine situated at Upper Hunting Creek. Both Nichols and the trustee David Blocksom died before a title was conveyed and the mill passed to his son, John E. Nichols, the widow, and the infant heirs.

14. John E. Nichols deeded his one-eighth share to his mother, Mary E. Nichols, in 1875 (JNT 37:58). In Nichols-vs-Nichols, Mary E. Nichols was sued by Francis E. Nichols for a division of the property, which included four mills (CLN Chancery Records, LHG 12:37-53). Hunting Creek Mills was advertised in the Journal, Denton, December 15, 1877 as 4.5 acres plus pond. "The grist mill is in good running order, an excellent stand, and has steady custom work. The saw mill is supplied with a Rich wheel, and has been recently put in thorough condition." The trustees, W. Spry Shreman and Robert J. Jump, sold the mill to John Webster, 1879, (JWT 41:272) 5.5 acres known as Hunting Creek Mills.
15. The 1877 atlas of Dorchester County shows the mill as A. Griffin's (presumably a tenant) and the 1887 State directory lists W.A. Tuff as miller, although neither appears in land records.
16. Hunting Creek Mill was sold by the trustees and devisees of John Webster in 1889 to Samuel L. Webster, Liber LHG 54:188. S.L. Webster appears on the 1897 map by Saulsbury. In the 1902-03 Maryland State Gazetteer, S. and J.B. Webster are listed as owners of the flour mill and John Foley and Jesse T. Legar were millers. The Peninsula Directory of 1908 showed John A. Williams and W.T. Swiggett as millers at Linchester and the general store keepers as J.R. Blanche and R.D. Bradley and Son. In 1911, J. and S.L. Webster were listed as owners.
17. Samuel L. Webster conveyed Hunting Creek Mills and "priviledges" to Hynson Cole, 1912. Cole sold "Hunting Creek Mills and more recently called Linchester Flour Mills" to Robert H. Williamson, February 4, 1913. Williamson sold that August to Walter P. Taylor, who in 1914 conveyed to Frank S. Langrell, who carried milling on actively until 1970. (Recorded in Liber JKS 77, f. 13; plat, DRH 156, f. 421.
18. According to Swepson Earle, the mill was rebuilt by Wright and Corcoran in 1800, Chesapeake Bay Country, p. 384. Hunting Creek was a port of entry until the 1840's, and "flour from this mill was loaded onto scows and then reloaded on ships anchored in deeper waters to be shipped far and wide," ESMV, p. 112. A sunken vessel of some sort has been identified in the bottom of the present pond. In 1856, the Upper Hunting Creek post office was moved to Preston, previously called Snow Hill. The mill village was named Linchester in 1860, a combination of Caroline and Dorchester. A Linchester post office existed from 1881 to 1905. The name does not appear in deeds on the mill property until 1913.

PRESTON QUADRANGLE
USGS 7.5 minute map
scale: 1: 24 000
1944

Jonestown

Preston

Linchester

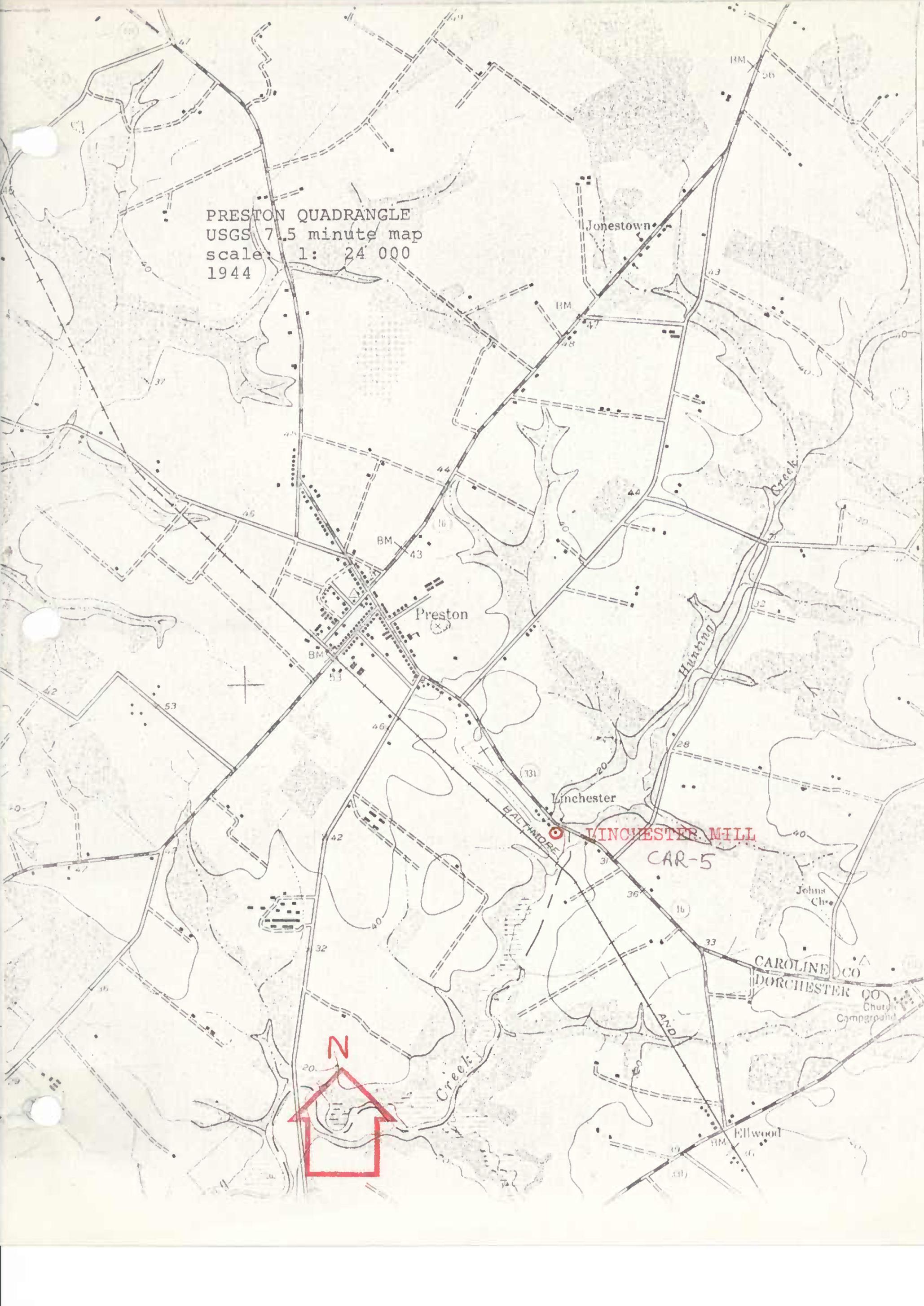
WINCHESTER MILL

CAR-5

Johns Ch.

CAROLINE CO
DORCHESTER CO
Church
Campground

Ellwood





Linchester Mill - CHAR-5

Caroline Ct

607-9

CAROLINE COUNTY, EASTERN SHORE, MARYLAND B-16



CAR-5

Linchark Mill



Linchester Mill . CAR-5

Caroline Ct.

607-8

CAROLINE COUNTY, EASTERN SHORE, MARYLAND B-16



CAR
S

Lincoln Mill



CAR
S

Lindbergh Mill



Linchester Mill - CAR-5



689-9



Linchester Mill - CHR-5

8-609



SITE
2



LINCHESTER
CIRCA 1681

SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HUNTING CREEK GRIST MILL PRIOR TO 1681. A MILL ON THIS SITE HAS SERVED FARMERS. KNOWN DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR AS MURRAY'S MILL. IT SUPPLIED PROVISIONS TO THE CONTINENTAL ARMY. LINCHESTER ALSO WAS A COLONIAL PORT OF ENTRY.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CH-5

Lynchester Mill
Lynchester, Md.

Michael Bourne

1977