

GEHR Watershed Minute #42

Bevis Mill: (230 words)

2.2 miles of Lakes Creek in Egg Harbor Township, from its confluence with the Great Egg Harbor River to the first dam upstream, was added to the National Wild and Scenic River System in 1992. That first dam on Lakes Creek was built for the carding of wool and the preparing of sumac for market by Thomas Bevis around 1835.

Many farmers along the Great Egg Harbor River had flocks of sheep for the production of woolen cloth, and the earlier practices of hand carding of wool were replaced by the water powered carding machines at Bevis Mill. The raw wool was drawn between two rollers and combed by mechanical devices like dog brushes to create an organized and untangled flat orderly mass of fibers called a bat, ribbon, or roll, ready for spinning.

Other work performed at the Bevis Mill was the preparation of sumac for market, where local sumac tree leaves from the nearby woods were dried and crushed beneath stones somewhat similar to the millstones used in grinding corn. The prepared sumac was shipped by boat from nearby Jeffries Landing where it was sold for the tanning of leather for shoes.

The 20 foot by 40 foot, one story Bevis Mill building, was closed in 1865. If you drive down Bevis Mill Road today, you can still see the old foundations of the Bevis Mill and dam.