

RE: Historic Legacy of Henderson's Estate

August 16, 2001

Dear Neighbor:

You are cordially invited to an intimate meeting at St. Bede's Episcopal Church (2601 Henderson Mill Road) on *August 30 at 7:00 PM* to discuss **preserving/recognizing the legacy of Greenville Henderson's estate**. The Henderson Family is very supportive of efforts that might result in better care of their historic landmarks—they have provided a copy of *From Mill to Mall* for the meeting. DeKalb Historic Society's Director, Sue Ellen Owens has been invited to provide us with our **first historic map of Northlake**. Also, citizen representatives to the DeKalb Green Space Commission will be attending to hear our perspectives about preserving common area.

What does the history of the Henderson estate have to do with you? Your home would probably not be here if Greenville Henderson had not been the patriarch of over 2,300 acres of former Creek Indian land. It is certain that St. Bede's church would not be where it is located today—the patriarch's "Jesus Patch" covenant was in place for almost 100 years before it was released to St. Bedes' founders—ensuring the **pastoral and communal character** of the area. That is part of a cultural legacy that passionately celebrates its virtue and embraces a "Northlake" awareness.

The August 30 meeting is being held at St. Bede's Episcopal Church because it is at the epicenter of the Henderson Estate. St. Bede's is an emblem of duty and openness to the community, availing its private property for visitation and use by the public. The church currently serves abundant numbers of unaffiliated and affiliated visitors in its Day School, "English as a Second Language" (ESL) curriculum, civic association meetings and Northlake Community Alliance forums. This example shows us how to gain the greatest value from community spirit—experiencing the joy of people sharing public use of the historic areas near Midvale Road and Henderson Mill Creek.

Some facts may be of interest to you:

- **Greenville Henderson** is buried (among approximately 30 family members and several slaves) in the current Glenrose subdivision overlooking Midvale and Henderson Mill Roads.
- Mark Henderson, Greenville's great-great grandson, now 82 years of age, points to three houses on a high point above Henderson Mill Creek on Lauderdale Road (immediately upstream of St. Bedes), as the site of the former **Home** of the patriarch. A massive 300 year-old oak tree marks the site.
- **Henderson's Mill** was one of five mills that help drive DeKalb's new 19th century economy. It was located in the flood-plain across present-day Henderson Mill Road from St. Bedes. Henderson's 3,000 acres stretched from what is now Chamblee-Tucker Road to Lawrenceville Highway, and what is now Main Street Tucker to The Mill.
- **Midvale Road** means *middle valley*, either mid-way between Chamblee-Tucker Road and Lawrenceville Highway or the valley *between the highest points* on Henderson's land (separating the Glenrose Hill burial site and manor home). The remainder of "Old Midvale Road" is now the long driveway for Mrs. Chamblee's land across from St. Bedes.
- The current site of **St. Bede's Episcopal Church** was a property of spiritual significance to Greenville Henderson. The site remained unsold (undeveloped) for nearly 100 years, preserved by family covenant as Greenville's "Jesus' Patch". A civil war marker on Henderson Mill Road commemorates the property as a Union Army encampment during the Civil War's Battle of Atlanta.

Some modern news that may shed some light on the importance of taking steps to preserve our historic landmarks:

- The **Korean Full Gospel Church** across from St. Bedes is for sale and possibly under contract to a residential developer. Henderson's Mill was located in a flood plain area that is part of this "for sale" parcel—steps can be taken to ensure public access to the Mill site in the future.
- The **Midway Baptist Church**, built in 1910 (on Henderson Mill Road across from The Mall) is approached incessantly by prospective property buyers. Graves at Midway are marked with some of the most notable DeKalb family names.
- **Greenville Henderson's grave** is in disrepair. Is the care of this public asset solely the responsibility of the Henderson Family and nearby homeowners or does cultural stewardship include a more public call to duty? An easement exists between two homes, negotiated by Mark Henderson for care and visitation.

There might be several outcomes from the August 30 discussion about the Henderson Estate (from least difficult to most difficult):

1. Create an on-going project to maintain the Henderson Family Grave Site (involving students, neighbors and local businesses);
2. Create a living record of maps, facts and stories about the Henderson sites—and disseminate the works in a newsletter and on a web site;
3. Involve St. Bede's Church formally offering to serve as the "Land of Henderson" historic repository;
4. Place signage on Henderson Mill Road and appropriate historical markers directing visitors to a historic "experience" at each site.*

*(Park and Green Space advocates will also be able to provide their perspective about the need for preserving a natural/environmental legacy in the area.)

Representatives of St. Bede's Episcopal, Glenrose Civic Association, Tucker Civic Association's Historic Committee, Northlake Community Alliance, DeKalb Historic Society and DeKalb Parks & Recreation have been invited to this historic meeting. We have also invited representatives from nearby affinity groups that are interested in recreation and green space. I hope you can attend and/or invite others that have expressed curiosity and interest in the **Henderson Legacy**. Please call me at 770-908-8583 or e-mail at doolittle@bellsouth.net if you plan to attend.

Sincerely,

Tom Doolittle

Member, St. Bedes Episcopal Church

Founding Trustee, Northlake Community Alliance, Inc.

Member, Henderson Mill Civic Club

Former Member of Board of Directors, Leslie Beach Club

FROM MILL TO MALL

When you think of Briarcliff Road, LaVista Road, Hugh Howell Road and Chamblee Tucker Road, you no doubt picture shopping malls like NorthLake, grade schools, grocery stores, the over 2000 homes in the Smoke Rise neighborhoods and many, many cars. But this area wasn't always a shopper's haven.

Tucker and Smoke Rise's transformation from Indian forest land to five-lane paved roads began 40 years before the Civil War.

Our neighborhood landmark, Stone Mountain, received its first mention in print about 1600. A Spanish explorer told the tales he heard about a mountain in Georgia, "very high, shining when the sun set like a fire." Within the next hundred years, the area around the mountain was criss-crossed with trading paths which connected native settlements with the Atlantic coast and the Chattahoochee River. Many of those trails are now local highways with names such as Rockbridge, which refers to an easy natural crossing site on the Yellow River. The only undisturbed path from the years of Native American inhabitation here is the footpath which goes up the west slope of Stone Mountain. Humans have taken that route for centuries and continue to do so daily.

The Cherokee nation occupied the northern part of Georgia by the 17th century. Our area was part of a vast woodland reserved for hunting by both Cherokees and their southern neighbors, the Creek tribes. The land would not stay quiet for long, however, European settlers had begun filtering up from the settled areas of the coast. Though treaties and federal policy protected the Cherokee and Creek claims to their land, various strategies were employed by the State of Georgia to open large tracts of land to white settlement. Our area lay in a parcel which was ceded to the State of Georgia by the Creeks in 1821.

In December of 1822, DeKalb County was incorporated from that land. The county was named for a heroic Prussian general who gave his life to America during the Revolution. The county seat of the newly settled area was named after the naval hero Stephen Decatur.

The names of some of the earliest settlers are still found on local maps, clinging to roads winding through former fields, names like Rosser and McCurdy.

The village of Stone Mountain clustered around the extensive quarrying operations there. There are a few traces in our neighborhood of these 19th century developments, though anecdote suggests that a blacksmith's shop once stood on Silver Hill Road, near a one room school house. The oldest home in the neighborhood, barely visible from Silver Hill, is a cottage built for the school marm. Silver Hill, one of the oldest roads in our neighborhood, makes its first appearance on a 1915 map of DeKalb County. It was a dirt road then and remained so until the late 1960s.

Several of the earlier farms which were in our area were purchased in the late 1930s by an Atlanta attorney named Hugh Howell. The tract of land he assembled near Stone Mountain seems to have been intended for hunting and entertaining purposes. He built a country house with access to the road which would become the Stone Mountain expressway. The road that bears his name was a later addition, a dirt track which connected Lawrenceville Highway and the village by the mountain.

Mr. Howell was a native of Warrenton, GA. The name is Welsh and the branch of Howells who emigrated to Georgia seem to have arrived by the early 19th century. Hugh Howell's father was a carriage maker and was present at the surrender of Robert E. Lee's forces in 1865.

In 1930 Mr. Howell became the Chairman of the Democratic party of the State of Georgia. In 1938 he became a candidate for the Governor of Georgia but was defeated by incumbent E. D. Rivers.

Mr. Howell decided to sell his acreage for development in the late 1950s. He insisted that land be set aside for a new school, which is now Smoke Rise Elementary, which opened its doors in 1969.

Mr. Howell died in 1979 at the age of 90.

The Smoke Rise name was coined by developer Bill Probst, who is responsible for many of the first homes built in the next phase of development, Smoke Rise, during the 1960s. Neighborhoods began to form up and down

Hugh Howell as land changed hands. The McCurdy family's farm and hunting fields became The Forest, for example, the family name remained on the road which led to the property.

Tucker opened to settlers in 1821. Land was parceled out by way of lottery. To qualify, participants had to be 21 years old and residents of Georgia for at least three years. A lottery ticket cost \$19, inexpensive enough to take a risk even back then. Winners got a 202 acre lot of timberland, much of it swampy. With the land came a deed from the Governor, giving winners the right to sell, hold or settle on their land. Those who settled cleared away the forest and built modest log homes. Most of the earlier settlers were cotton farmers.

Henderson Mill Road, Henderson Road, Henderson Middle School were all named for Tucker's one-time wealthiest business owner, Greenville Henderson, my great-great-great grandfather. The Henderson family history dates back to the 1700s when Greenville's parents, originally from Scotland, settled in South Carolina.

Greenville Henderson was born in 1792 in Greenville, South Carolina. His wife, Nancy Barnett was born in 1790 in Greenville and they were married in 1813. They moved to DeKalb County probably sometime around 1820 on a 3000 acre tract of land. This land was valued at 50 cents an acre at that time. The land roughly encompassed the area from Main Street of Tucker to below the present location of Northlake Mall on LaVista Road, East and West, and from the Lawrenceville Highway (U.S. 29) to beyond Henderson Mill Road, North and South to Chamblee Tucker Road, the present site of Embry Hills Shopping Center.

Settling on this huge tract of land, Greenville worked large apple and peach orchards and corn fields. He soon began operating a prosperous whiskey and brandy making business shipping the finished product to Savannah by wagon train since there was no railway nearby. Just imagine how long the journey must have taken and the hardships they endured. There the spirits were exchanged for window glass, salt, sugar, coffee and building brick which had been brought to the Savannah seaport by ships from Europe.

As the Union soldiers marched toward Stone Mountain along Fellowship Road, Confederate soldiers fought hard to stop the march. The Union troops reached Stone Mountain and destroyed a 2 mile section of the Georgia railroad tracks, several culverts and the water tank. Approximately 150 Confederate soldiers who were killed in defending the railroad are buried in a small cemetery near the mountain with a marker that reads: "**Here lie, known only to God, Confederate dead.**"

Meanwhile the mission at Stone Mountain accomplished, Federal troops withdrew from Browning's Courthouse to the site of the Henderson grist mill on the evening of July 18 to camp near a water supply. Early the next morning they were joined by other Union troops near Midway Baptist Church, which is the small church across from NorthLake Mall on Henderson Mill Road and marched toward Decatur to fight in the Battle of Atlanta.

In 1869, four years after the war, Greenville died at the age of 77. He is buried in a small family cemetery which is now surrounded by GlenRose Homes at the corner of Midvale Road and Henderson Mill Road. Buried with him are the graves of about 30 relatives including his wife, Nancy, who died in 1892 at the age of 102. The Henderson plantation dissipated into smaller tracts of land over the years to follow.

I mentioned earlier that I would explain the reports of gold being buried with Greenville. About 20 years ago, in his zest to create an interesting and colorful story for a local publication, a reporter made statements in an article that in fact, Greenville had buried gold near his home place upon hearing of the Union troops coming to this area. Until then the existence and location of the cemetery had been unknown except to Greenville's descendents.

Curious pleasure seekers began digging and demolishing the existing graves and markers in their efforts to uncover the buried treasure. My Daddy, although not too active in historical preservation at the time, became very angry about the situation and put up a temporary fence and "**NO TRESPASSING**" signs. This seemed to deter the pirates and soon the excitement was over. No gold was ever uncovered.

Shortly before the Civil War, he built the historic grist mill on Henderson Mill Road. Near the mill was the old frame Henderson Post Office. Mail was brought by horse and buggy from Decatur for local residents. The post office was abandoned in 1895 and the mill was demolished in 1911. This is now the site of St. Bedes Church at the corner of Midvale Road and Henderson Mill Road. There is a historical marker on this site.

Life continued peaceful and prosperous for Greenville and his family until 1861 when the Civil War swept the countryside. Seven of his sons left to fight in the Confederate Army. Two never returned.

On a hot summer day in 1864 word came to the area that the Union Army was coming. Hearing of this, it is rumored that Greenville buried thousands of dollars in gold, along with other supplies. This rumor reported many, many years later had a tremendous impact on the area and to my Daddy, which I will explain later.

The army of Tennessee decided to come to the Southeast to cut off the Georgia railroad near Stone Mountain so that Atlanta would be isolated from the East. The Federal's 15th Army Corps crossed the Chattahoochee River at Roswell and detoured to Browning's Courthouse in Tucker to give support in the destruction of the railroad. Union troops, in their move on the Georgia Railroad between Stone Mountain and Decatur occupied the courthouse in July, 1864.

The Browning's Courthouse, the oldest standing building in Tucker was built in 1860. It was named for Andrew Browning and the area was then known as Browning's District. It was originally located at the corner of LaVista Road and Fellowship Road. The Browning's Village Shopping Center now occupies this site. Until the early 1960s, it served as a Justice of the Peace Court and as a quaint public meeting place. Through the efforts of many of Tucker's citizens and business leaders and the DeKalb Historical Society, the courthouse was not demolished as was planned by the developer and it was moved to its present location in front of Tucker Recreation Center (previously Tucker Elementary School) on LaVista Road.

Greenville's grave and the cemetery were left alone for many years until approximately 10 years ago when the property was sold to a developer in Florida who released his plans to build the Glen Rose cluster home community on the site. Well, as we all know, cemeteries and grave sites are protected by very strict laws. The problem was, this developer either did not know about the cemetery or had no respect for the law protecting it, and cared even less about Greenville Henderson who had been dead for over 100 years. He had no plans to save the cemetery. When the grading and clearing of trees began they got a little too close to the cemetery to suit my Daddy. He saw this as a personal attack on his heritage. Through his tireless efforts, he was able to get a restraining order to halt the destruction. You know a developer can bulldoze down 100 year old trees or buildings in the blink of an eye, but he better not mess with cemeteries. The area which had been destroyed had to be restored and the developer was ordered to put up a fence separating the cemetery from his development and an easement for permanent access was granted.

From this experience and a previous experience with the owners of Amoco Oil Company, Daddy established The Henderson Family Cemetery Foundation. He had had a similar battle some years earlier with Amoco when they built the station at I-285 and LaVista Road. I'm sure many of you have noticed the cemetery there. The outdoor advertising company who owns the billboard there pays the Foundation monthly rent and these funds have been used to restore that cemetery and Daddy's current project is the restoration of Greenville Henderson's cemetery.

In preparation for this program, I had to do quite a bit of research and since it had been a very long time since I last visited the cemetery, I decided to get in touch with my roots, so to speak. I drove up the street where the entrance to the cemetery is. I walked around the area and looked at some of the markers which identify the graves. As I stood there trying to read some of the names, many of which are hardly legible, I marveled at my experience. To think that I was standing on that historical site, even with all of the noise of passing cars on Henderson Mill Road and I-285 made me very proud.

Growth was steady in the Tucker area after 1892 when the Georgia, Carolina and Northern built the railroad through the center of what is now called Tucker. The area was known as Browning's District until 1907 when the Seaboard Line Railway acquired the railroad and surveyed the unincorporated town of Tucker and named the town after an officer of the company, Captain Tucker.

Andrew Browning was another of Tucker's earliest settlers. His son, Tom, added spice (or vice, according to some) to the lives of Tucker's residents when he opened a horse race track on Fellowship Road at Lawrenceville Highway. Towne Square Shopping Center now sits on the site of the race track. He also built a saloon on the land Tucker High School now occupies. My mother, myself, my brother and sister and my mother's seven grandchildren all attended Tucker High School.

Farmers spent the day at the track, then congregated at the saloon to celebrate their wins. Tucker's drinkers and gamblers made Tom Browning a rich man. He was a familiar sight on the dirt roads, riding in style in his **Two-Horse** carriage. Think for a moment, just how many area restaurants serve alcohol and how many convenience stores sell Lotto tickets in Tucker now, those earlier patrons of Browning's Saloon would be in what they considered Heaven, if they were still alive today.

As Tucker became more populated, businesses were created to serve the needs of farm families. Following the construction of the railway system, shipping supplies to distant buyers became easier. Train travel introduced prospective residents to Tucker, too. For years, people had called Tucker "a bump in the road", but they took a closer look after seeing the little town from train windows. Soon there were blacksmith shops, several saw mills, a post office, general stores and on Hugh Howell Road, a government still which produced peach and apple brandy, as well as corn whiskey. When a local resident bought 5-1/2 acres of the Main Street area in 1908, his friends thought he was foolish paying \$100 per acre. He soon proved them wrong when he opened a cotton gin, grist mill and saw mill. The businesses were on Railroad

Avenue between 4th Street and Main Street. The railroad ran conveniently alongside.

Churches flourished in early Tucker. Fellowship Primitive Baptist Church was founded in 1829, thrived throughout the 1900s and now is in its third century. The First Baptist Church of Tucker was organized in 1893. I grew up attending that church and my husband, Buddy, and I were married there in 1964. In the late 1950s when Buddy's family was on their way to Lake Lanier outings (they lived "in town near Decatur"), they would drive through Tucker and make jokes about the little country town. Little did he know that some years later he would meet "the girl of his dreams", one of those country girls, and be content to make Tucker his home.

Tucker Methodist Church started with a revival meeting in 1903. Midway Baptist Church on Henderson Mill Road was organized in 1915. This is where my mother's family attended church and her Daddy's funeral was held in that church in 1953. I was 9 years old at the time, but I still remember the service.

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church was formed in the 1960s from a group that left Fellowship Presbyterian Church.

The first car in Tucker was a 1910 REO. Medical services came to Tucker with Dr. Walter W. Andrews, a dapper, popular man. He owned Andrews Drug Store on Main Street in the early 1900s. Dr. Andrews delivered lots of Tucker babies, charging \$10 for one baby, \$15 for twins. One of Dr. Andrew's granddaughters was a childhood friend of mine.

Another childhood and present friend of mine is Alice Matthews Green whose father and his brother opened Matthews Cafeteria in 1960. Alice and I and 3 others were the members of the first graduating class of Stephens Kindergarten which was on Moon Street at the time.

In 1918 Tucker had its first woman Postmaster. Her father operated a combination post office/general store. By coincidence, the current Tucker Post Office occupies the same spot that used to be her father's property.

L. J. Hewatt opened Tucker Mattress Company, the oldest Tucker company still in business, in 1917. Originally located at the corner of Morgan

Road and Chamblee Tucker Road, across from Tucker High School, it moved to its present location on Lawrenceville Highway in 1937. It is across the street from Towne Square Shopping Center, the site of the old horse racing track. Mrs. Hewatt is still active in the day to day operations of the business established over 80 years ago.

Tucker's first bank was opened on Main Street in 1919. It paid 1 percent on savings and loaned money at 4 percent. It was open from 7:30 A.M. to 7:30 P.M., six days a week. The books were kept with pen and ink, just imagine, a bank without any ATM machines, how could customers survive?

Another Tucker landmark began in 1919 when Reid and Kelly Cofer opened Cofer Brothers General Store with \$500 which they had borrowed. The Cofer Brothers married sisters, whom were affectionately known as Ms Belle and Ms Louise to locals. My mother's Daddy worked in the saw mill and made cabinets. As a young girl, many of my clothes were bought in their general store. When the young girls of Tucker announced their plans to marry, one of our first assignments was to "register" at Cofer's store. Ms Louise would help us pick out our trousseaus and order special gifts.

In the 1980s Cofers closed the general store. The building materials and hardware business is a thriving multi-million dollar business with the third generation now involved. Most of the homes in Smoke Rise were built using Cofer Brothers building materials.

Growth and development were steady but not dramatic until 1956. One of the major factors in the growth was the opening of Tucker Federal Savings and Loan Association in 1957. The first office was located on Main Street in Tucker on the present site of a book store. This enabled people to turn savings accounts into instruments to finance further growth. The area began to develop at a very fast pace in the early 1960s and with the growth came many financial investors. The Pattillo Industrial Park on Mountain Industrial Blvd. brought many businesses into the area.

My mother's maiden name was Weed. Her family's home was on LaVista Road at NorthLake, now the site of Nations Bank. My Granddaddy Weed was a

cotton farmer in the early 1920s later working for Cofer's. His grandfather's family moved here from South Carolina in 1850. Their home site was on Chamblee Tucker Road across from the present site of the Gresham-Weed Family Cemetery at Embry Hills Shopping Center. My mother was the only daughter with 5 brothers. She is the only survivor of her immediate family. She just celebrated her 86th birthday. Her parents, five brothers, their spouses and many, many relatives are buried in the Gresham-Weed Cemetery. My Granddaddy Weed's mother's maiden name was Gresham, thus the two names for the cemetery.

My Mother, 86, and my Daddy, 88 were married in 1935. In 1941 they built their home on LaVista Road and every time you turn South on I-285, you ride right through what was at one time my bedroom in that house. In 1942 during the war, Mother and Daddy moved to Charleston, South Carolina, where Daddy worked at the navy yard as a welder. I was born there in 1943. They returned to Tucker in 1945. They had rented out their home on LaVista while they were gone and moved back to that location. Most of my childhood memories are those of playing with cousins who lived up and down LaVista Road and of spending much time at both of my grandparent's homes.

In the mid 1950s the Georgia Department of Transportation approached Daddy about purchasing his property for the Interstate Highway we now know as I-285. At that time the State offered him a total of \$17,000 for six acres of land. Many years passed before the actual acquisition of the land began and by that time the surrounding properties had escalated in value. The property presently occupied by a car dealership sold by a neighbor for over \$100,000 for less than 2 acres. But the State's best offer to my parents was \$20,000 total for the six acres. Luckily for Daddy, there was a little strip of land that the State did not need (this the little strip between the state right-of-way and the dealership as you exit onto LaVista Road) and Daddy sold that for about \$30,000. I-285 was completed in 1969.

In 1959 my Daddy left his good paying, stable job at General Motors in Doraville to fulfill a dream. He opened Tucker Concrete Company in May of 1959. The business opened with 2 ready mix trucks and a little shack for an office on Moon Street off Brockett Road. I remember well sitting and typing invoices on a manual typewriter. Through the many years of hard work, the devotion of all of my family and God's rich blessings, the company has thrived and expanded to 8 plants in DeKalb, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Newton, Cherokee and Hall counties. The company now has the third generation working in it. Daddy still goes to TUCCO every day in his beat up red truck with the "FOUR-MORE CLINTON/GORE" sticker on the back of it. A while back I needed to talk to him and I finally tracked him down up on his tractor on a vacant lot over at the plant. When he climbed down, I told him that assuming that he was going to Heaven when he died, I hoped that God had a tractor up there with a sign on it that reads: **"This is the personal property of R.M. Henderson"** and that there would be lots of dirt to be moved around. Otherwise, he would not be a happy and contented camper. His reply to me was "Well, Sis, I hope so too, but I'm not ready to go just yet. There's still a lot to do here."

NorthLake Mall which opened in 1971 was built on properties once owned by the Weed, Price and Cash families. The sprawling mall with its acres of parking lots sits in former fields where cotton and soybeans grew. The only soybeans found at NorthLake now are at the mall's health food stores. At the turn of the century, Briarcliff was a dirt road called Wallace Mill. In the early 1900s, it became one of DeKalb County's first roads paved with crushed stone. Traffic consisted of mules and horses.

Time has not obliterated all of the old sights. The familiar WSB tower has stood on LaVista Road since 1935. Probably one of the most disciplinary actions that my brother ever received was when he and two of our cousins at about the age of 12 slipped off and climbed half way up the tower. My brother tells of how scared he was when he looked down and realized how high up he was. He knew he would pay the consequences for his thrill when he finally came down.

Today the earlier settlers who congregated at the local saloon and horse track in Tucker and Greenville Henderson would barely recognize his old homestead. Cluster homes, theaters, banks and church signs with Korean lettering are worlds apart from the Henderson Mill Road he knew. Briarcliff and LaVista Roads are congested with cars where an occasional horse and buggy once passed.

It took more than a century for the NorthLake area to evolve from mill to mall.

A hundred years from now, NorthLake Mall and Smoke Rise and Tucker will seem as quaint as Henderson's Mill does today.

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This information was compiled from Family Bibles, newspaper articles from The Smoke Signal, The DeKalb Neighbor, The Eagle (a publication from Tucker Federal) and my personal memories.

Marsha Henderson Pittard
December, 2000

907 Penn Avenue, N.E.

Atlanta, Ga.

Mr. David W. Ausley, President
DeKalb Historical Society
Decatur, Georgia.

Dear Mr. Ausley:-

Under separate cover I'm sending
the map of the site of Henderson's Mill, which I
spoke to you about the other day. If desired, this map,
being on tracing paper, can be blue-~~print~~ printed - of
course, photostated.

Some years ago Franklin Garrett cited to me an
Industrial Survey of DeKalb County that was
somehow involved with the DeKalb census of
1870. We found copies of both at State Depart-
ment of Archives & History. The survey states
that Henderson's Mill - a grist mill - owned by
Rufus Henderson represents a capital investment
of \$7,500, . . . it had an 18 foot overshot wheel.

Rufus was Greenville Henderson's son.

The Greenville Henderson monument inscription:

In Memory of
Greenville Henderson
Was born Nov. the 10, 1792
and died Aug. the 14, 1869.

I saw this box tomb and inscription a year ago this month. I think Garrett gave me the data on Greenville's son Rufus: - 1823-1872.

Greenville, of course, was the operator (presumably, the builder) of the mill and at his death, Rufus took over. Garrett said there were two cemeteries - (Henderson family cemetery) near mill site; I never saw but the one - where Greenville is buried as shown on map. Greenville Henderson's will is dated: 11/4, 1868. He was born in South Carolina - acc. to Census of 1850 and/or, 1860.

The mill is cited several times in Federal reports and correspondence. Logan's 15th Corps camped there, night of July 18, 1864 - for one of two reasons - most likely for both. Logan's troops had gone east from Mrs. Rainey's plantation (about old Camp Gordon site) to where Pleasant Hill Church now stands - where it turned S. to Tucker - to support Garrard's Cavalry enroute to tear up the Georgia R.R. at Stone Mountain depot. Most of Logan's troops remained at Tucker (Browning's Court House) all day the 18th - just in case Garrard didn't get away with his mission to Stone Mtn. Logan's march to Browning's made a wide gap in McPherson's front - the 16th & 17th Corps being on the Shallow Ford Rd, near Blake's

(3)

Mill - some miles to the westward of Browning's.
The high brass thought Logan should be pulled back
nearer the 16th & 17th Corps troops - on account of
that gap - so Logan moved from Browning's
(presumably by Midvale Rd) to the mill - which
narrowed the gap somewhat. Another reason
for this move was lack of water at Browning's; there
was plenty of "branch water" at Henderson's Mill, so
that was where Logan's troops camped - night of the
18th - and ~~for~~ from there marched to Decatur via
Lawrenceville Rd., on the 19th - July - 1864.

Mr. Gregory has the microfilm of the James P.
Snell Diary !!! it was delivered to him yesterday.
He said he would have it copied and would deliver
the copy to you.

Very truly yours,

Wesley S. Kirtley

May 25, 1955