

# Saxapahaw Current

An independent self-reporting news source in and for the community of Saxapahaw.

A Quarterly Newsletter

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## “The Water Friends”

by: Linda Pucci

We take water for granted because it is a natural part of our lives. Aside from its direct human uses – drinking, bathing, agriculture, it is central to transportation, recreation and industrial applications. Water has consistently been a focal point in the development of this area. For almost 3 centuries, the shoals of the Haw River at the point where it glides past our Saxapahaw, served as a convenient river crossing. Native peoples crossed as they traveled up and down their trading paths. Early Mill owners crossed to get to work. Eventually the river was harnessed to move the Mill’s heavy machinery.

Today we watch the Haw thunder by after torrential rains and marvel at its rocky profile when the water is low. Water is more than a substance it is a driving force in human relations. So here is a little local history about one of the smallest water companies in North Carolina - how it was developed and how it has been maintained to this day by the community it serves.

In the early 1940’s Mill expansion required additional housing for the workers. Eventually some 40 mill houses were constructed along what is now Moore’s Chapel Cemetery Road and Bethlehem Church Road. In addition to providing waste management for the houses on Bethlehem Church road, the Mill owners dug a well to provide water to the Mill houses and private dwellings in the area. In the early 1980’s the Mill owners began selling these mill houses. As the new owners settled in, they realized the water system needed expanding and upgrading.

Writers Wanted. Got something to tell us? Do you have a favorite topic about Saxapahaw? Send us your article [saxapahawcurrent@gmail.com](mailto:saxapahawcurrent@gmail.com).

In 1982, they founded the South Saxapahaw Homeowners Association (SSHA). They received support from the county commissioners and took out a loan from the Federal Housing Administration to make necessary changes. The Mill supported the endeavor with an additional \$12,000 allowing the community to take over responsibility for providing water to residents.

The “Water Friends”, as they called themselves rallied, organizing teams. They set about assessing their needs and finding financial support for their endeavors. They worked closely with an engineer to design the system. Some dug trenches for the new trunk line. Others laid the six inch PVC pipes to increase the water volume and quality. Still others worked on the actual hook ups under the direction of a local plumber. Virtually every household participated in this venture. Of the 40 households, 36 provided 28 labor hours, with a few going far beyond the required minimum. Those households who couldn’t participate in the work donated \$240 each to help the cause.

The water system was for everyone and everyone was for the water system. They cheered each other on as they laid pipes, established hookups and installed meter boxes. Once established, the first SSHA Board enlisted an unpaid certified well operator, and carried out all the practical aspects of administration. This little community across from the Mill in our Saxapahaw had risen to the needs of its residents.

It is important to note that Water Friends persist to this day. People come and people go. Houses are sold, and bought and built and SSHA with its Board consisting of residents prevails. *(To be continued in Fall issue.)*

Saxapahaw Historical Museum is open, Monday-Friday 10-5. Saturdays by appointment only. Check it out!

The Saxapahaw Current would like to add you to our email list:  
[saxapahawcurrent@gmail.com](mailto:saxapahawcurrent@gmail.com)

## Saxapahaw Island Park

In our winter 2016 issue of *Saxapahaw Current* we discussed the history of the river island you cross traveling south on Bethlehem Church Road. The island now, Saxapahaw Island Park, is slowly being returned to a recreational site reminiscent of activities there in the mid 1900’s. I recently spoke with Guil Johnson, Haw River Trail Coordinator, who told me about progress being made. The Parks Department has employed a herd of Spanish and Boer goats to clear the area. Seems these goats consider kudzu, privet, and poison ivy gourmet eating. Pictured below, Otis is hard at work! Soon guinea hens are coming to get the wood ticks! The parking lot is also in the works for a packed gravel 20/30-car parking area. Our good neighbor, Woody Clore, has offered an easement so that hiking trails can be extended. Soon the park crew will clear away brush and complete final details for the nature play-education area. Grand Opening planned for June 2017. Stay Tuned. *(LGP)*



## Undercurrents

**Craft Workshop Series:** Ramble Supply Company is offering a **summer workshop series** right here in Saxapahaw. Ramble's goal is to encourage and support local artisans as they develop natural products and processes. This can be anything from dyed quilts to natural remedies. For a schedule see: [ramblesupplyco.com/events](http://ramblesupplyco.com/events).

**Free Feast in Saxapahaw:** Interested in getting to know your neighbors and at the same time learn about their lives in today's complex world? Do you like good food? If you said "yes" to these questions, there's a rare opportunity starting up right here. Get involved in the First Saxapahaw Free Feast. For more information contact Alex Stayer-Brewington at <mailto:astaybrew@gmail.com>. (ASB)

**Haw River Assembly:** The twenty-seventh **Learning Celebration of the Haw River Assembly** will take place 9/24 – 10/14. It offers fourth-graders an opportunity to learn about nature. Day-long fieldtrips take them to sites along the Haw River. Want to know more about the Learning Celebration, visit <http://hawriver.org/projects/4th-grade-field-trip> (EC)

**New Eatery in Town: Reverence Farms,** previously known as the Haw River Ranch, is opening its café, Reverence, this summer. It's located at the sight of the former Martha's on Hwy 87 between Saxapahaw and Eli Whitney. Check it out. (SN)

**Supporting SAFE (Southern Alamance Family Empowerment):** During July, the General Store will donate 5% of Tuesday café sales from 5 -9 pm. The Eddy will also donate a portion of proceeds from sales of a designated dish for the month of July.

**Summer Storytime for Kids:** Sandy at our very own **Saxapahaw book store, Red Door,** (beside the post office on Jordan Drive) will be entertaining school-age kids with stories and fun activities on Thursdays. Storytime starts at 10:30 and lasts from 1 to 1 1/2 hours. For more information and directions **call (336) 525 2553.** (OS)

You remember **Trust the Bus.** Well if you don't, you'll get lots of chances in August. Simon Lee and our own Kellie Ann Grubbs will entertain bus riders on August 13, 20 & 27. There are three trips each day 5pm, 6 pm and 7 pm. It will be a ride you won't forget.

## What's in a name? Saxapahaw – Sissipahaw

by Joseph Pio Asterita

In our winter and spring editions, we introduced you to the native peoples who populated the area of Saxapahaw long ago. These peoples were known by various names such as Sissipahaw, Saxapahaw, Shakori (Shoccoree) Shakory and Shacio. We reported that as early as 1569, Spanish explorers identified the people living in this area as Sauxpa. In earlier editions, we also followed them describing how they moved around in the area and how they established deerskin trading first with Native peoples and then with English.

Conflicts between native peoples and the English resulted in wars in which the Tuscarora who had suffered greatly sought allies in the Sissipahaw. One claim is that when this didn't work, the Tuscarora, either fearing that the Saxapahaw would ally themselves with the English or to set an example to other tribes who would not join the war, raided the Sissipahaw killing many and destroying their settlements. A second decisive war against the settlers ignited in 1715. The remaining Saxapahaw warriors now living with the Sukori united with other tribes against the advancing settlers. This war, along with disease and famine decimated these tribes. The remnants joined the Catawba tribe to the west for defense and to retain a sense of identity. We can determine that sometime after 1716, the Saxapahaw after almost four hundred years of living along the Haw River ceased to exist and passed into history.

We are now entering the Tri-centennial of the passing of the Sissipahaw whose land we inhabit. It is a fitting tribute that the Village, named for them, is a pleasant residential community as well as a center of art, entertainment, education, refreshment, food and culture. Let's keep their tradition alive by honoring our land and continuing to enjoy life along the Haw.

## Goin's On

So much happening in the village and so little space in the Current. Not to worry – you can find anything you need to know at [saxapahawnc.com](http://saxapahawnc.com). The tiles lead you to whatever you're interested in – food, drink, lodging, health, farms and Saturdays in Saxapahaw, of course! It's all there.

## PS to What's in a name?

At the Raleigh Native American Festival last fall, I was examining a collection of artifacts/tools and remarked to the attendant, that I had found several artifacts while readying my garden. She asked where I lived and when I said Saxapahaw, the women replied that she also lived near there. During our conversation, she pointed out that when native peoples married others, they often took on cultural aspects/names of their new family. Hence a Native American person marrying into a Portuguese family became Portuguese. She concluded "but we're still here – we're just invisible"



HAIKU TO YOU  
Saturdays are loud  
Markets and music abound  
Sunday's silent clouds



Check out Kid's Storytime  
at the Red Door

