

Some Notes for a Talk about the Valley of

# NEW HOPE CREEK

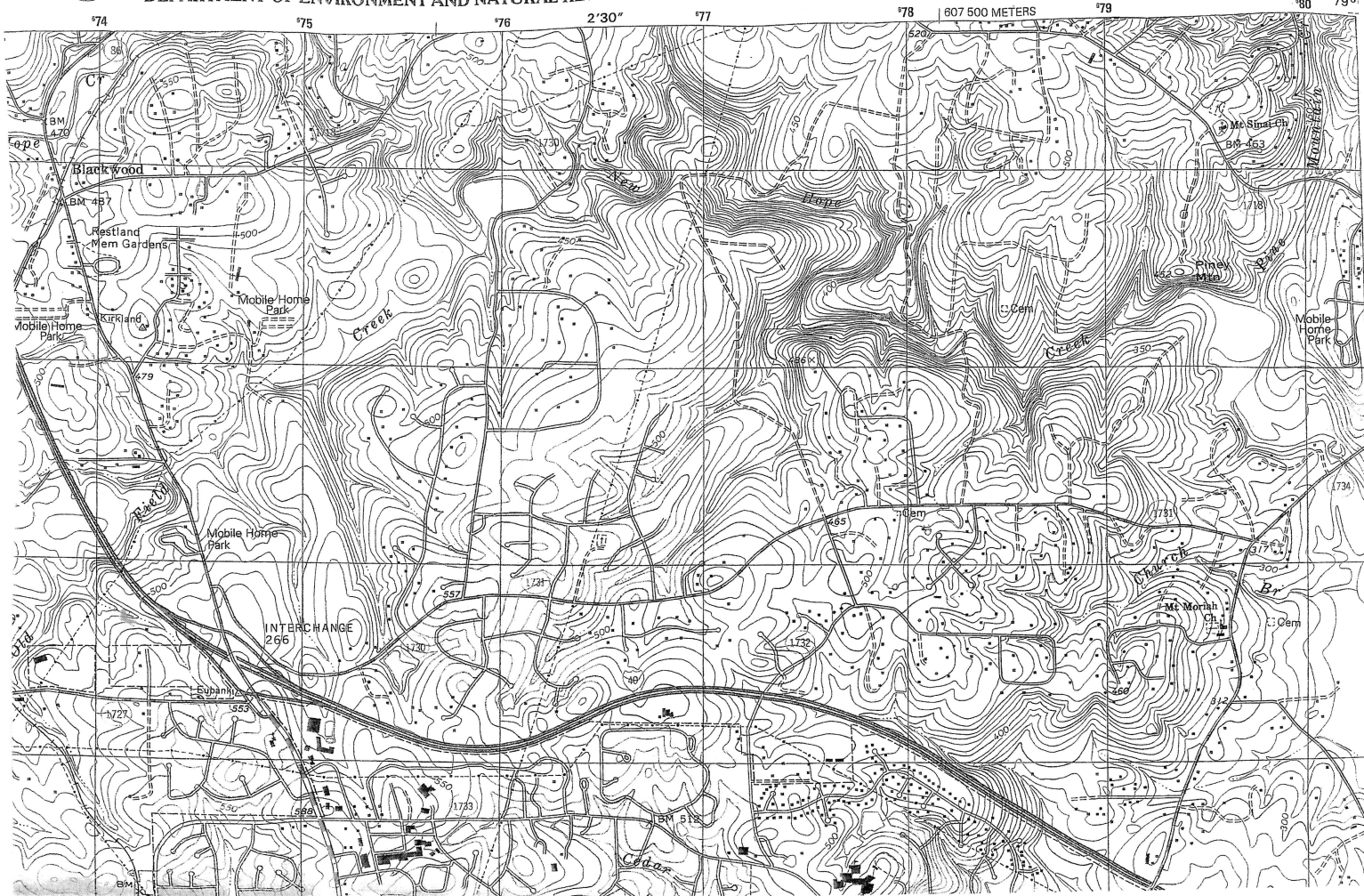
from NC highway 86 eastward through the Korstian Division of Duke Forest  
to Erwin Road and the new parklands just beyond

Where New Hope Creek is bridged at NC 86, the elevation above sea level is 470 feet. With a significant rate of fall eastward over a very short distance, the creek drops to below 300 feet above sea level at Erwin Road.



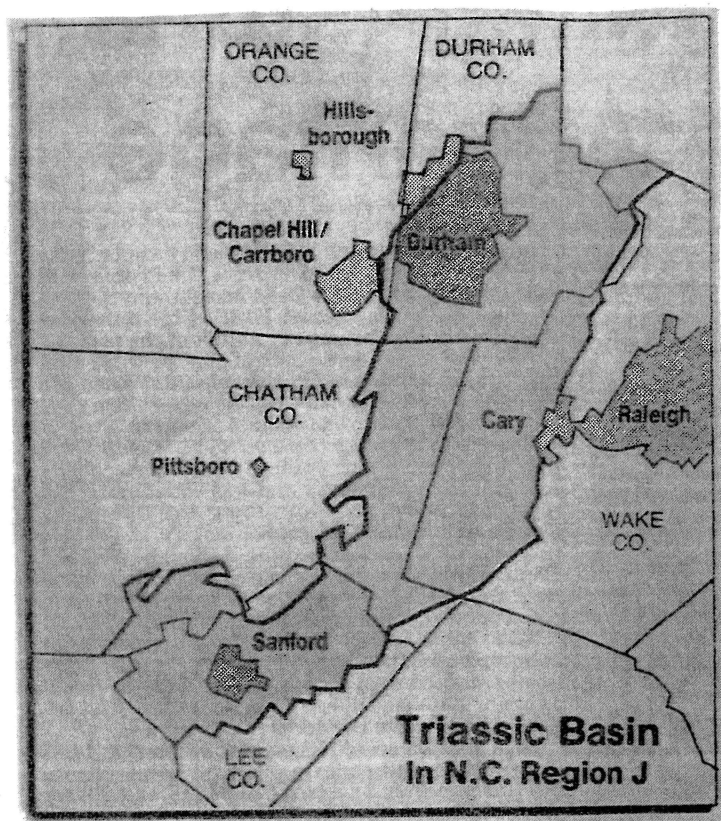
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
NORTH CAROLINA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

CHAPEL HILL QUADRANGLE  
NORTH CAROLINA  
7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



A parallel range of hills sloping eastward toward Erwin Road, such as the one on Whitfield Road and others on Mount Sinai Road, Interstate 40, Weaver Road, Franklin Street, and US 15-501 Bypass, attests to the descent toward a primordial coast line adjacent to an ancient inland sea. This 225-million-year-old sea bed, dubbed the Triassic Basin more than a century ago by UNC geologist Collier Cobb, is a large depression that has been much studied, and many articles have been published concerning its features. Professor Cobb spoke at length about Piney Prospect, the site of Gimghoul Castle in Chapel Hill, where one could see for miles eastward. Duke University professor emeritus of geology Duncan Heron remains, in my opinion, the current authority on the Triassic Basin in these parts. From a spot on Kerley Road, just north of Mount Sinai Road and not far from the Heron's homeplace, one can see many miles eastward, and there are similar views at the aforementioned parallel spots.

<http://www.ncpedia.org/biography/cobb-collier>



This three-mile section of New Hope Creek (a misnomer, New Hope Creek being in all ways a river) once supported at least four water-powered mills: Charles Johnson's, Robson's, William Courtney's paper mill, and Mann Patterson's mill in sight from Erwin Road in winter. The soil east and west of Erwin Road is vastly different in constituency and drainage. Stewart Dunaway has written extensively on the mills in these parts and has lectured at this very venue.

<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/sedunaway>

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/stewart-dunaway/history-of-patterson-mill-new-hope-creek-orange-co-nc/paperback/product-18899201.html>

East of Erwin Road where New Hope Creek enters the Triassic Basin, the soil changes dramatically. Vestiges of the Triassic Basin are noted by frequent examples of petrified wood, being ancient tree-ferns called cycads.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cycad>

When I lived in the woods near Randolph Road, in the development now called the Carillons, I collected numerous specimens. Additionally, when gardening per the French Intensive system, I turned up many spear points. Dating these lithics against specimens at the Anthropology Lab in the basement of Alumni Hall at UNC, I learned that they were mainly older than Abraham; that is, at least 5 thousand years old, or older. Such specimens bear names like Guilford, Kirk, Savannnah, &c. Older points, some very crude, may have been of Hardaway culture, being very ancient in comparison.

<http://www.arrowheads.com/flint-artifact-collections/432-paleo-period-points-of-the-carolina-piedmont>

I would make a case for more or less continuous occupation of New Hope Creek in the vicinity of today's Erwin Road as village sites and hunting grounds for first Americans over a period of more than five thousand years culminating in the village of Adshusheer that John Lawson visited in the company of his guide, Enoe-Will, in late winter 1701. By the time of the contact era in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the piedmont of North and South Carolina was populated by various Sioux-speakers, not so long separated by their more established Sioux kin west of the Mississippi. The Catawba nation were the principal tribe, but we know related tribes in these parts by the names Eno, Occaneechi, Saxapahaw (Sissipahaw), Tutelo, Saponi, Saura (Cheraw), Waccamaw, Waxhaw, and other kindred names. Within less than a generation after John Lawson's visit, these nations were decimated by smallpox and other maladies and had left an empty wilderness, but in 1701 they had active and healthy villages at sites near present-day Hillsborough, the new park at Erwin Road, and on the Eno River near the Teer quarry just downstream from Roxboro road.

Much of what we know of this was brought to a fore via Douglas LeTell Rights's brilliant book *The American Indian in North Carolina* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1947, reprinted Winston Salem: John Blair, 1957). Bishop Rights, Moravian church director and UNC alumnus, founded the North Carolina Archaeological Society and collaborated frequently with such anthropologists as Joffre Coe of the UNC faculty in the 1940s.

<http://www.ncpedia.org/biography/rights-douglas-letell>

<https://www.ncdcr.gov/blog/2015/07/05/joffre-coe-father-of-north-carolina-archaeology>

<https://www.amazon.com/Formative-Cultures-Carolina-Piedmont/dp/086526323X>

Reading from John Lawson's *A New Voyage to Carolina* (1709) concerning the village of Adshusheer and why I have concluded that it was on New Hope Creek in the vicinity of Erwin Road. Lithics, a fishdam, salt licks, and the availability of game. The path called the New Hope Road (later University Road or Oxford Road, now mostly the track of Erwin Road) that connected New Hope chapel in Chapel Hill with the Great Trading Path at Snow Hill.

European settlers, the first of these being John Patterson, whose plantation is shown on John Collet's 1770 map of North Carolina.

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/9635/rec/3>

Other early grantees in the immediate area were the Blackwoods, the Trices, the Nunns, and the Bolans. Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Baptists

Enslaved West Africans whose descendants remain in the area, principally around Mount Sinai Baptist Church. Trice's School.

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/9749/rec/2>

The community around Mann Patterson's mill and Trice's store was later served by Hollow Rock County Store. The Browns and the Whitfields.

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/634/rec/2>

Local cemeteries including those of Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Mount Sinai Baptist Church, and these family plots: Patterson, Pickett, Jenkins, Whitfield, Nunn, and Robson. "Baxter Bolin Dyed in the Year 1771"

<http://cemeterycensus.com/nc/orng/>

In Scots, the language of Lowland Scotland, *hope* is defined as a small enclosed upland valley or hollow among hills. Many of the earliest residents of the described area were of Scots descent and worshipped at New Hope Presbyterian Church. The Pattersons, also of Scots descent, were Baptists and gave the land for Mount Moriah Baptist Church. African American members of that congregation formed their own church, Mount Sinai Baptist Church, during Reconstruction.