

## Lexington Yesterday

# A cotton mill at George's Pond

By Jerry Bellune

With renewed interest in redevelopment of the old cotton mill at the foot of East Main Street as a shopping mall, we thought readers might be interested in the history of one of the first mills in the state. This was the cotton mill at George's Pond which G.M. Harman wrote about in *Uncle Josh: Remembrances of Old Lexington County*.

Some alert readers will remember that until a few years ago the remains of a flour mill stood at George's Pond on Gibson Road until it, too, burned.

The flour mill was built by Samuel George sometime in the 1800s and operated after his death by his son Irby and grandson Dibble. The early cotton mill on 12-Mile Creek also was built by Mr. George, who came over from Cedar Creek in Richland County looking for a mill site.

Mr. George had worked all over the state and gained a reputation as a gifted millwright. Based on his reputation, several prominent business people invested with him and built Laurel Falls Mills. Uncle Josh wrote from memory of the mill in 1923 but did not say in which year it was built.

The falls took its name from the dense growth of wild evergreen Laurel with its well-known flowers which grew on both banks of 12-Mile Creek.

The mill was well-equipped and employed up to 75 workers, who lived in what Uncle Josh called the "comfortable" mill village Mr. George's compa-



From the Lexington County Museum collection  
**Laurel Falls Mills on 12-Mile Creek.**  
ny built on the hill near his own home.

A Mr. U.V. Bacon, a "northern man" said to possess all knowledge of factory machinery, was named superintendent. But he was discharged later for "dissatisfaction" with his work.

The mill mysteriously burned shortly after. The George family tried to rebuild it but finally gave up and devoted their energy to the flour mill.

"The rock pillars of the once proud old mill are the only evidence now left of the noisy hum and rattle of factory machinery," Uncle Josh wrote. "The lively village of Laurel Falls passed with the days of long ago but are faintly remembered by some of our elderly folks still living."