



SOME ORIGINAL LAND GRANTS IN MILL CREEK HUNDRED

And Stories about the Families
and Properties

Walt Chiquoine
Mill Creek Hundred

Early Land Research

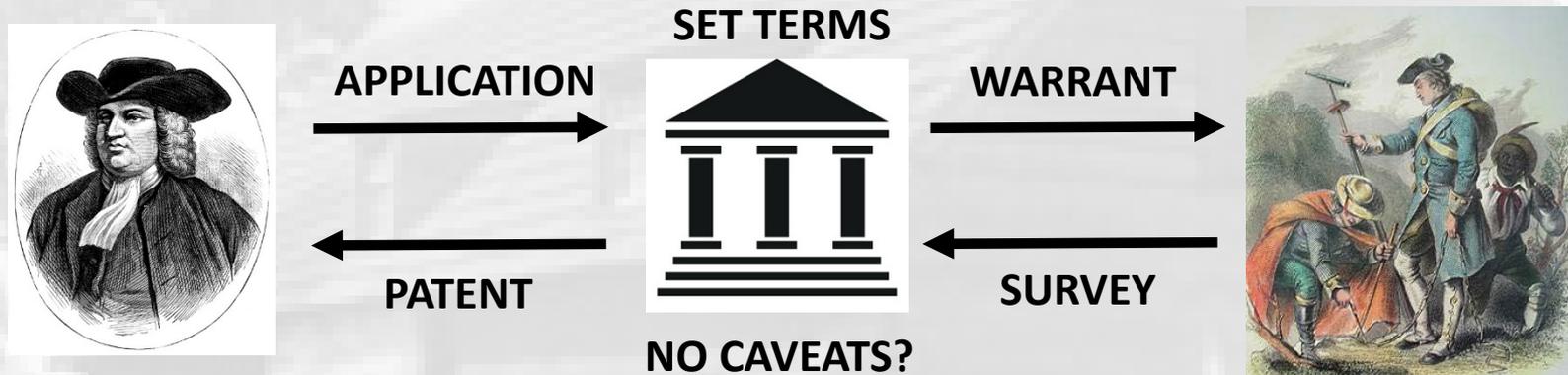
- Research gives context for historical preservation
- Almost nothing remains of the 17th century structures
- The early settlers had a difficult life, but they did leave records of their existence

The Earliest Grants

- The Swedes did not grant land
- Dutch grants were along the Delaware River, and came from New Amsterdam
- Likely that early settlers moved further into MCH before 1670
- By 1700, Delaware was a melting pot:
 - Swedes, Finns, Dutch, English, Irish, Welsh, Scots, French, German, and African

Obtaining an English Grant

- A complicated process after 1664, based on English feudal law



- Could take several years
- Over time, any of these could be a legal claim to property in subsequent deeds

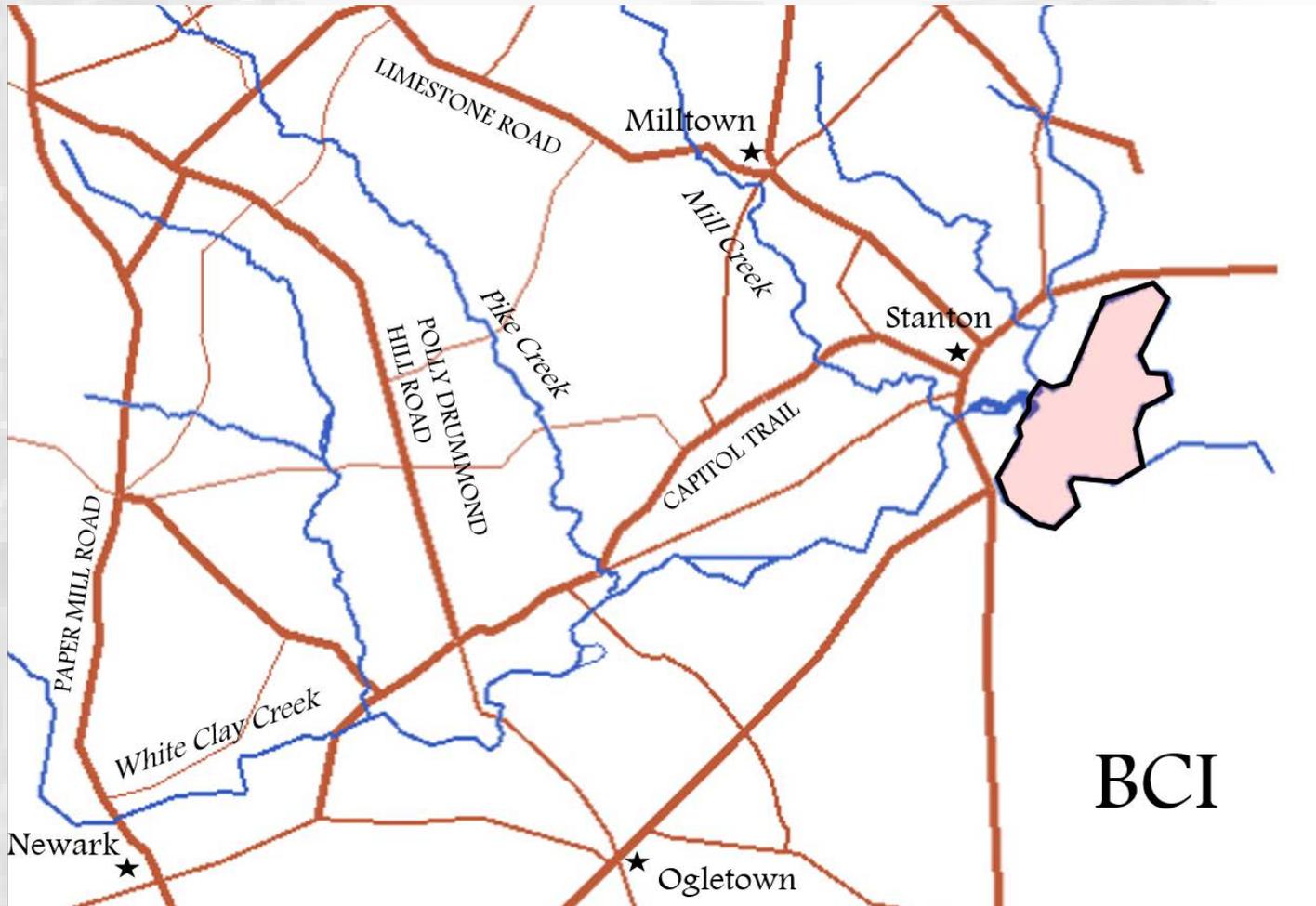
Some Observations

- Some land was settled before application for a patent – squatters?
- Surveys were questionable
- Boundaries changed over time
- There were land speculators
- Very difficult to determine the first European settler in MCH

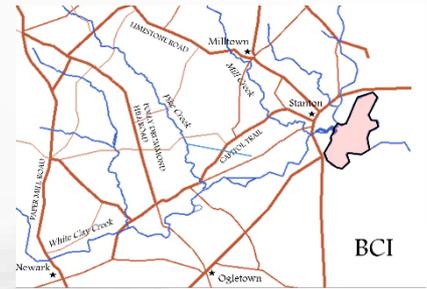
Why Settle in MCH?

- Hilly, wooded, and cut by steep valleys
- Not the most desirable land to farm
- Settlers were already moving into Chester and Lancaster counties late 17th century
- MCH had three strengths:
 - Water power for milling
 - Nearby access to light shipping ports
 - The gateway from interior Pennsylvania

Bread and Cheese Island

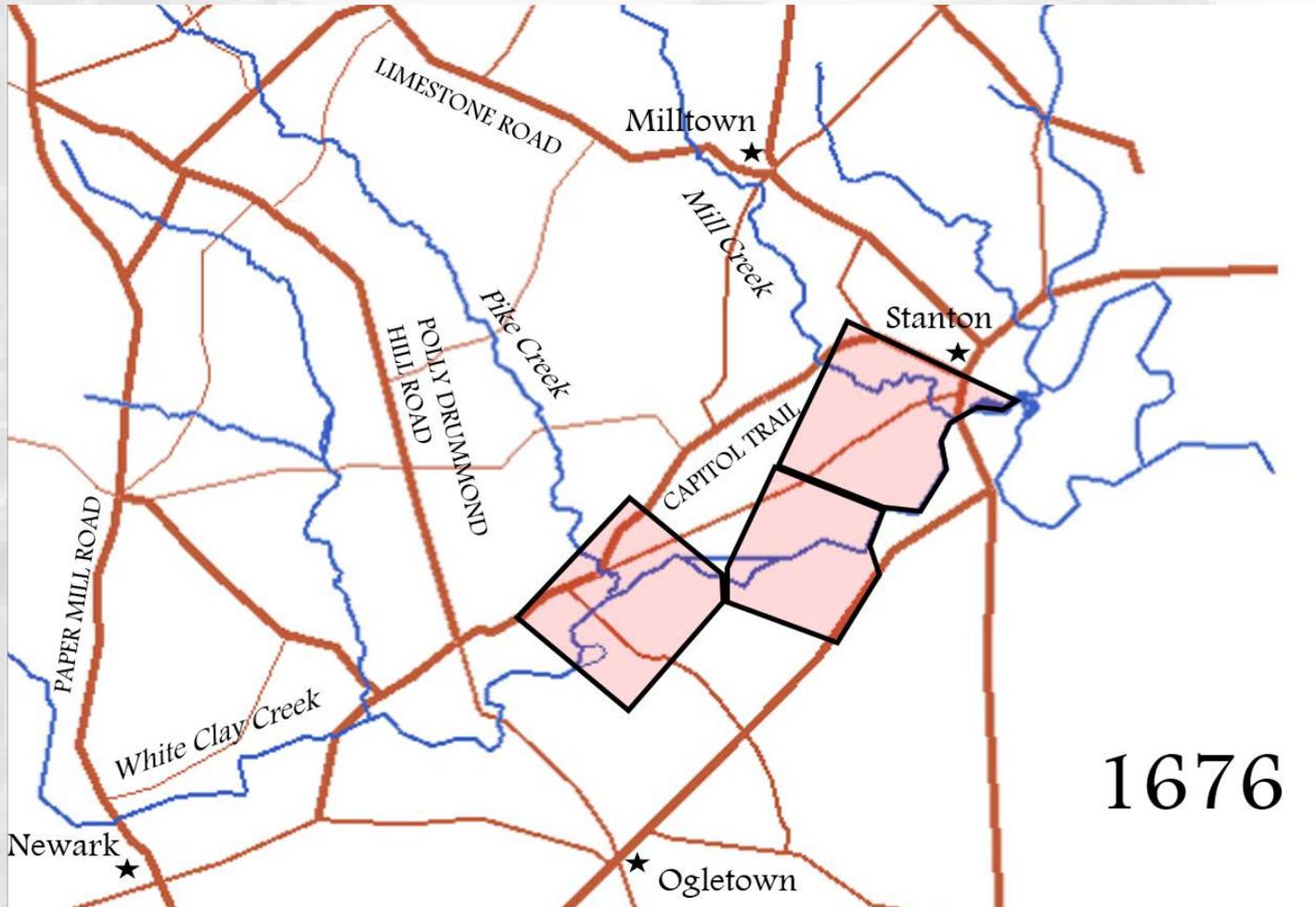


Bread and Cheese Island



- Settled about 1656, warranted in 1666
- Thomas Jacobsson and Olle Paulson, Finns
- Jacobsson was renowned for his civil protest in 1671
 - The British left the Dutch in charge
 - Dutch justice Hans Block wanted a dike
 - Local labor was conscripted by the court
 - Jacobsson organized a strong protest
 - Block supported by New York, protesters were fined

From Edmund Andros: 1676



Charles Rumsey 1676



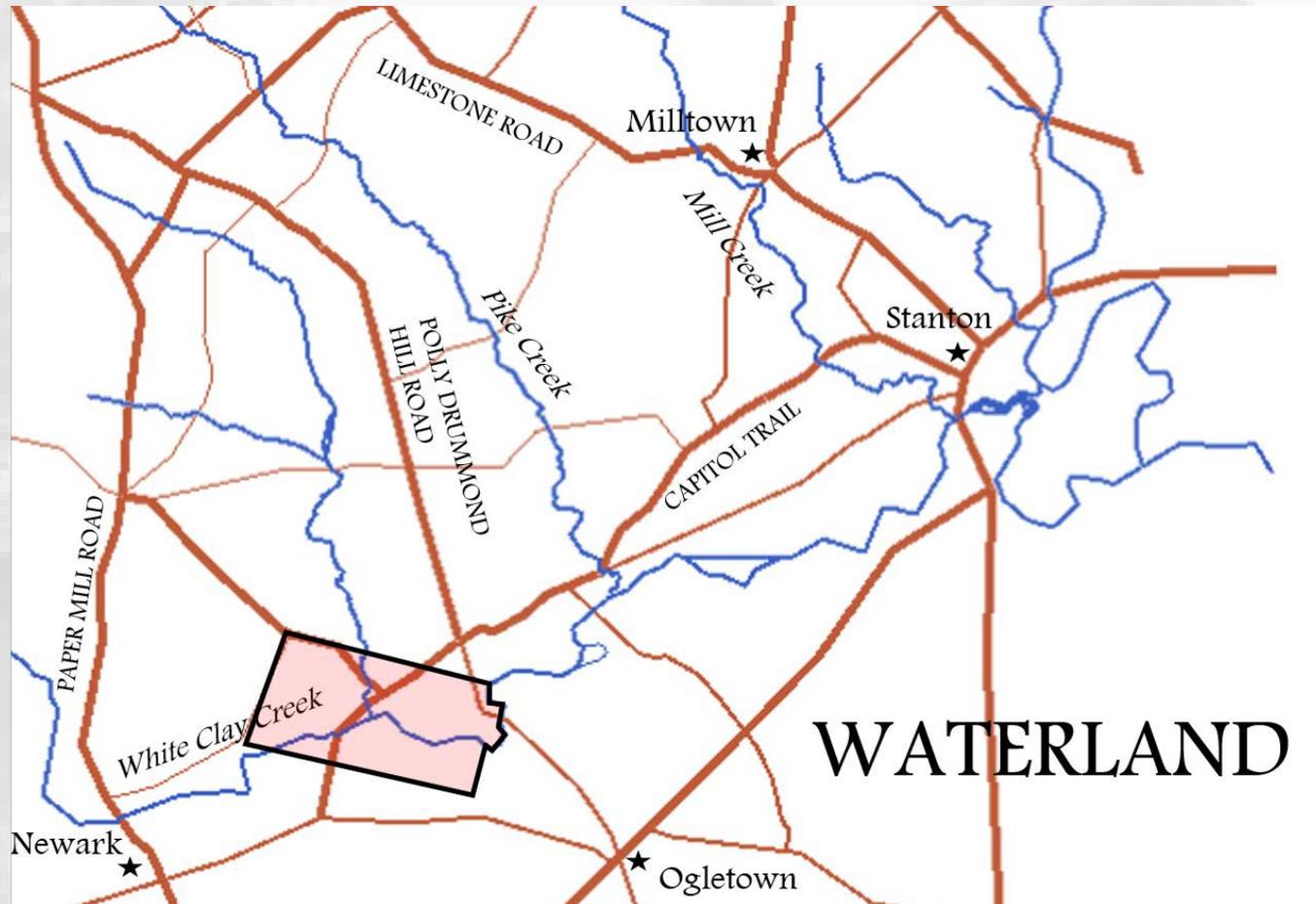
- NE boundary became Telegraph Road
- Rumsey and John Watkins petitioned to build a grist mill in 1679, the first in MCH
- Petition offered a site on Mill Creek, but the mill was built on Red Clay Creek instead
- **THE MILL WAS NOT ON RUMSEY'S PROPERTY!**
- Rumsey sold his interest about the same time

John Nomers 1676

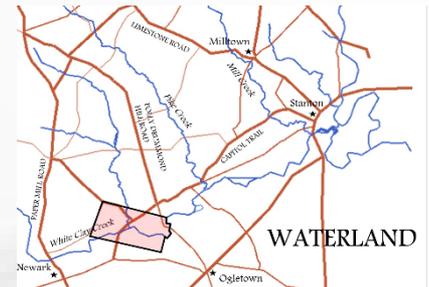


- Johan Ommerson in the 1693 Swedish census
- In 1682, he sold the land north of White Clay Creek to Thomas Wollaston and Joseph Barnes

Broer Sinnexson 1683

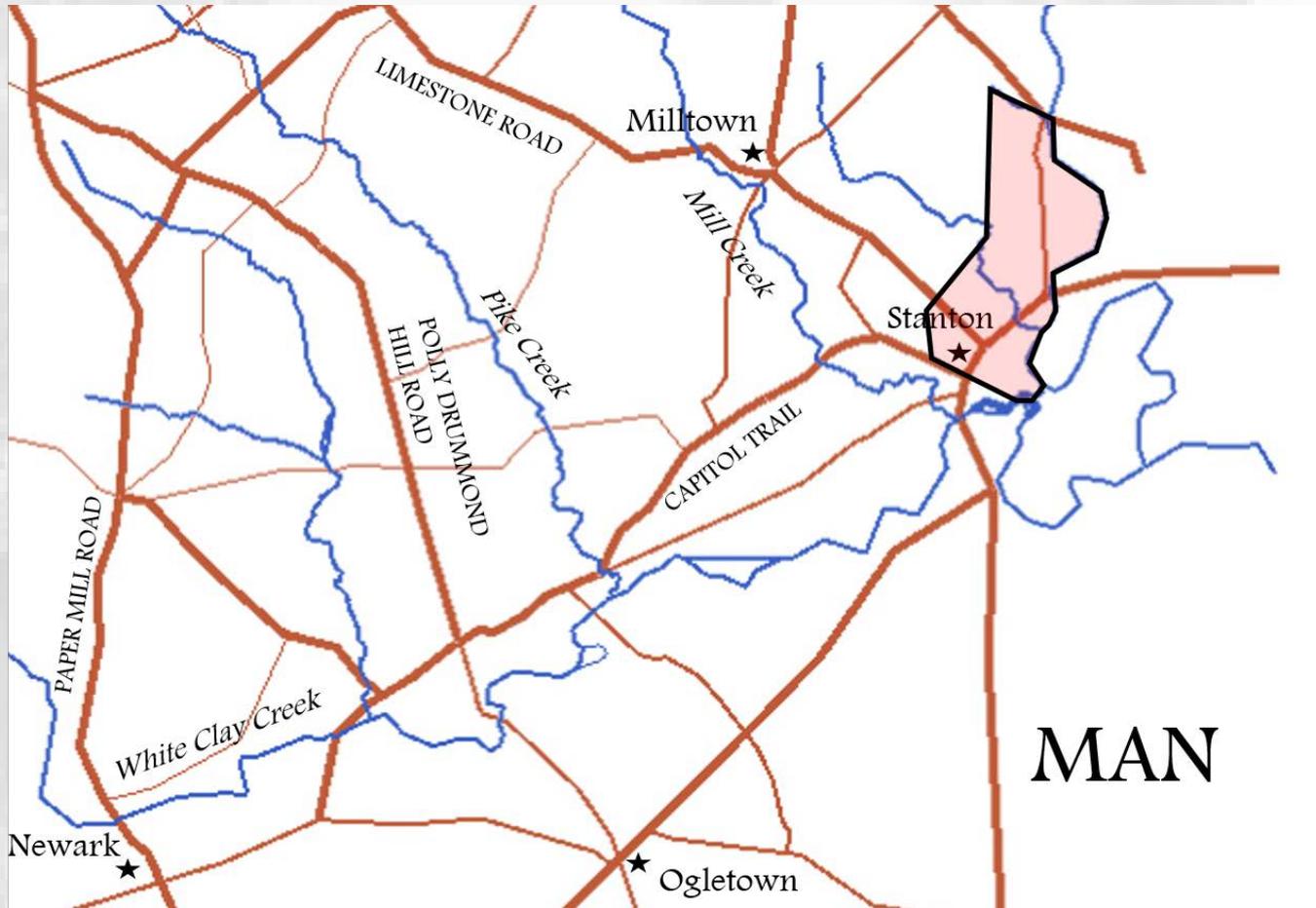


Broer Sinnexson

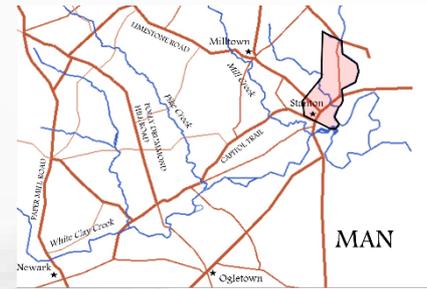


- Another Swede
- Patented a tract named “Waterland” in 1683
- The location of his house was shown on survey
- The stream entering White Clay Creek was known as Muddy Run, and it was the western branch
- The northern creek was known as the middle branch
- Today, it has all become known as Middle Run

Abraham Man 1684

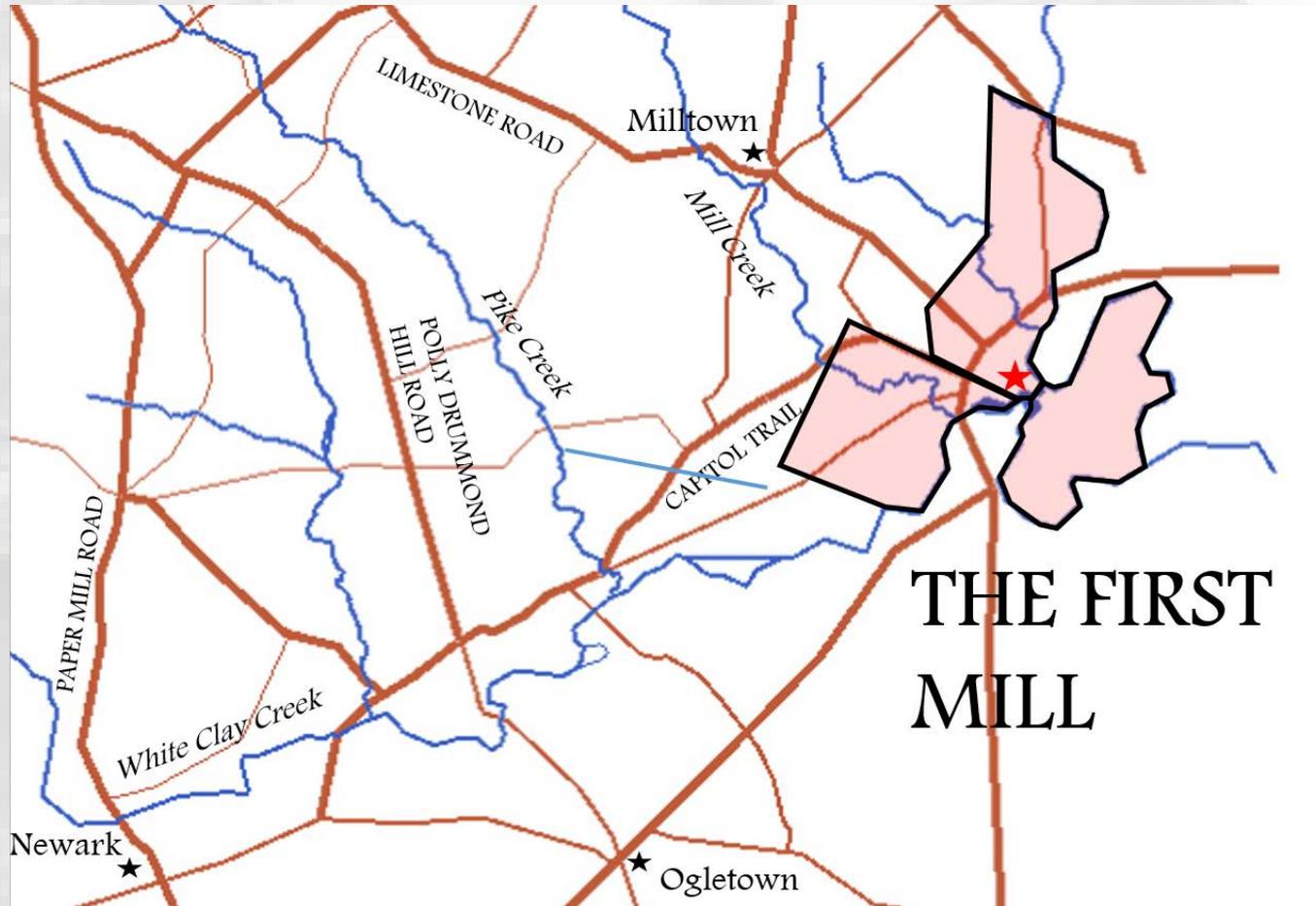


Abraham Man

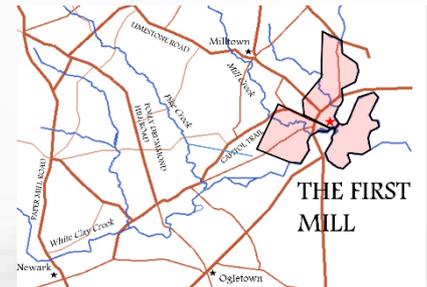


- Likely settled before 1679, patent in 1684
- Also a man of means, a justice on the court
- A contentious guy, picked fights with other justices
- Later reference mentions the road to Man's house
- Gave us the name for Ham's Run
- Lost the property at sheriff's sale in 1687 to pay a debt

Empson vs. Guest

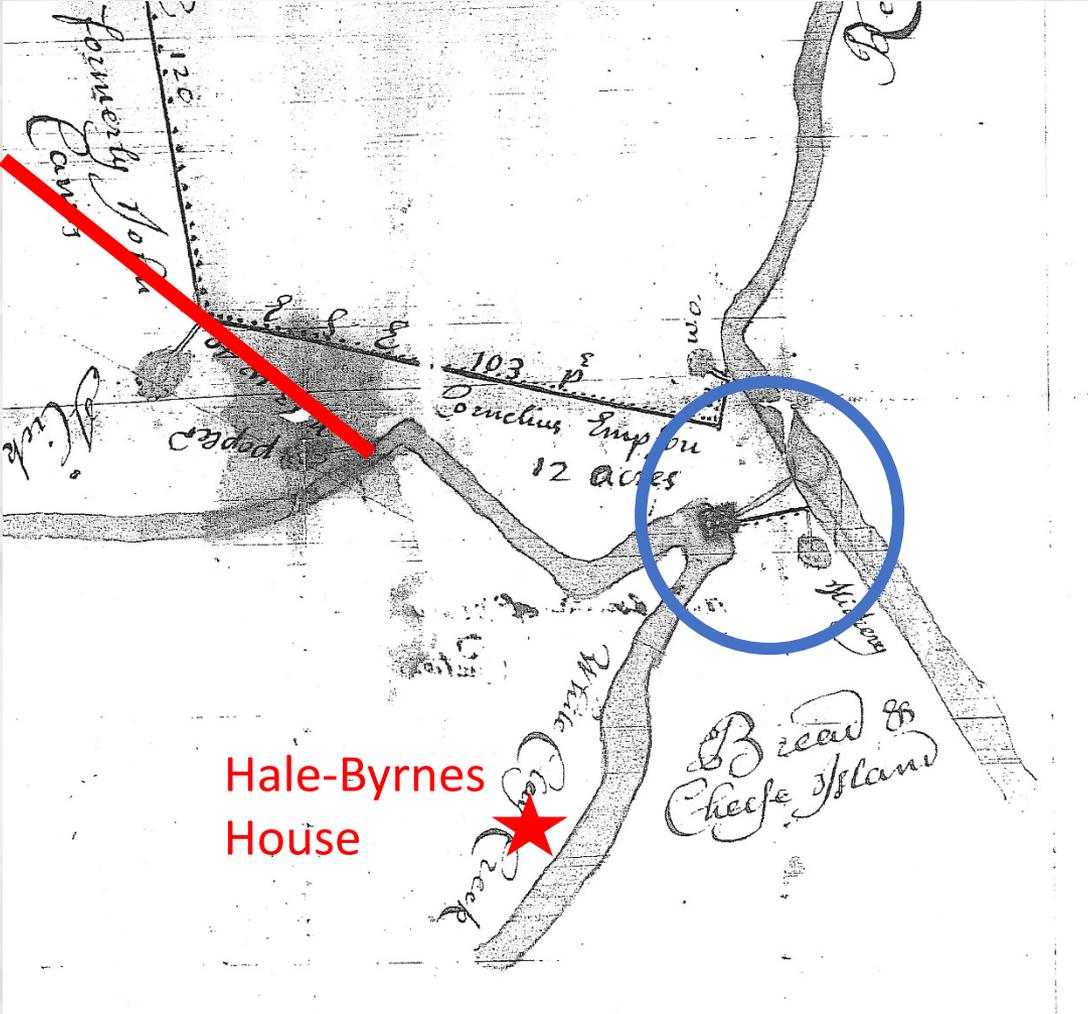


Empson vs. Guest

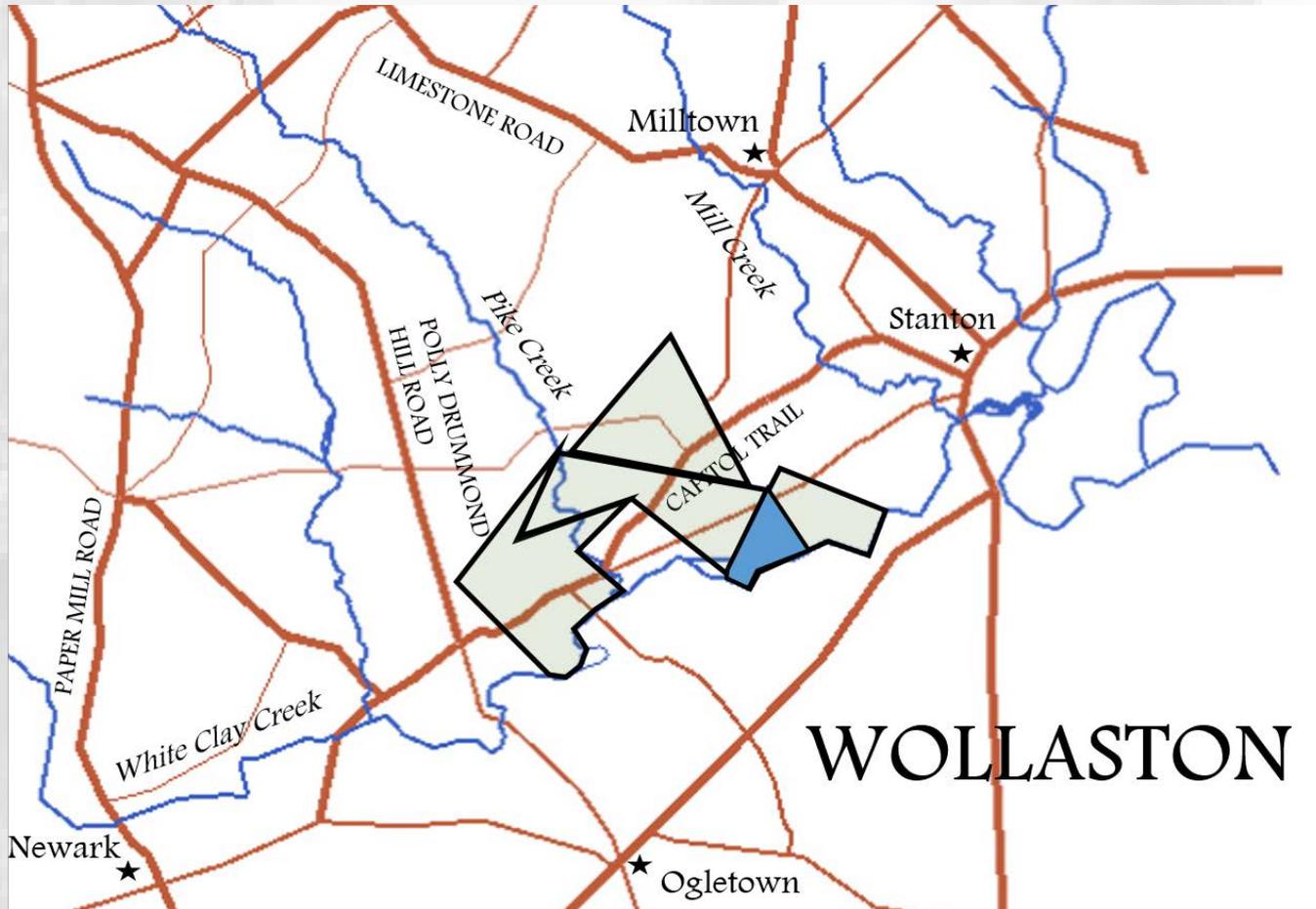


- William Guest bought Man's property at sheriff sale in 1687
- Meanwhile, Cornelius Empson, a Brandywine miller, acquired interest in the mill
- Guest sued Empson – mill was on Guest's property
- Guest finally won the battle in 1710
- And William Guest may have been the cuckold of Cuckoldstown
 - He took his first wife, a much younger woman, while in his 60's

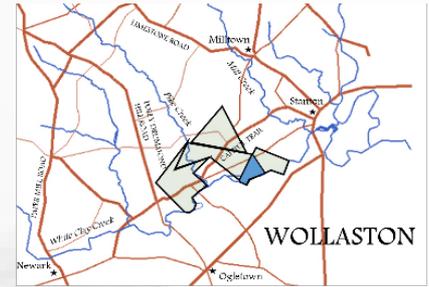
So Where Was the Mill?



Thomas Wollaston

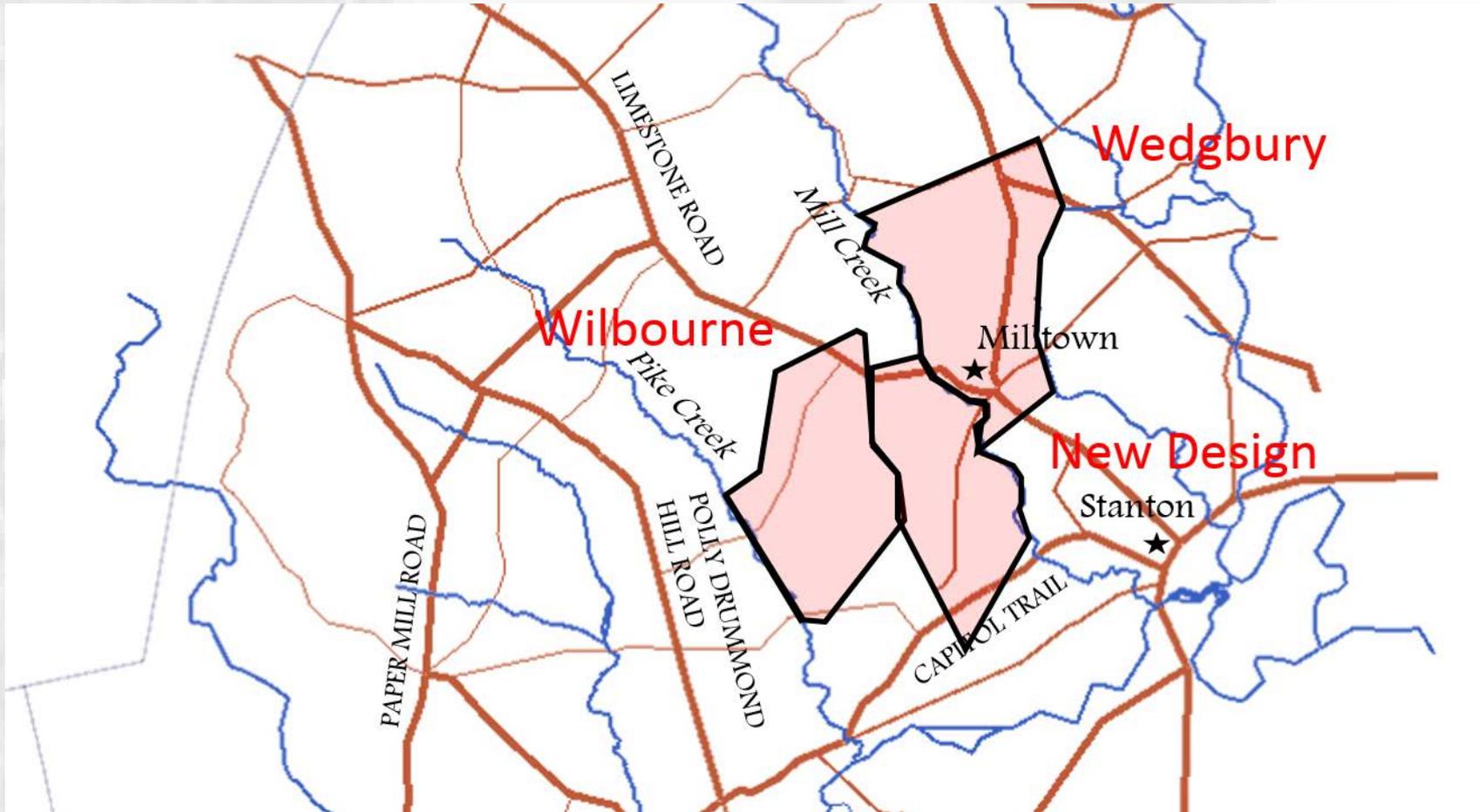


Thomas Wollaston

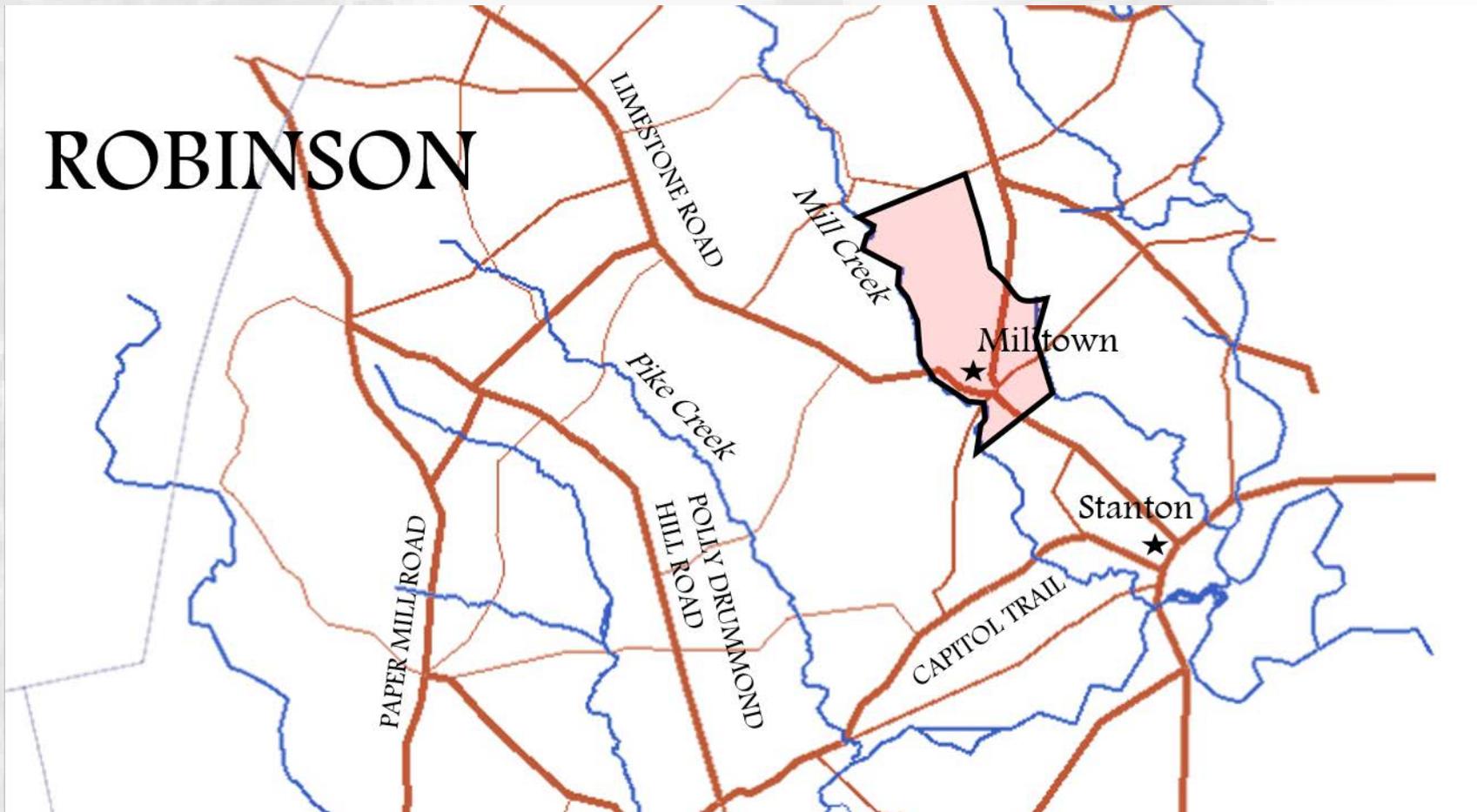


- English soldier at capture of New Amstel
- Originally seated on Muscle Cripple
- Scharf says first settler in MCH, I say doubtful
- Nomers tract 1682, his own tract in 1686
- Four sons and their sons expanded their lands in early 18th century

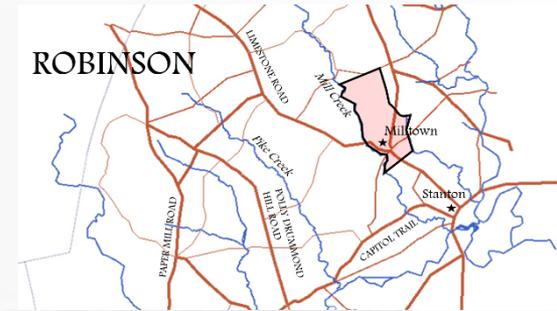
Three Tracts to the North 1680's



The Robinsons

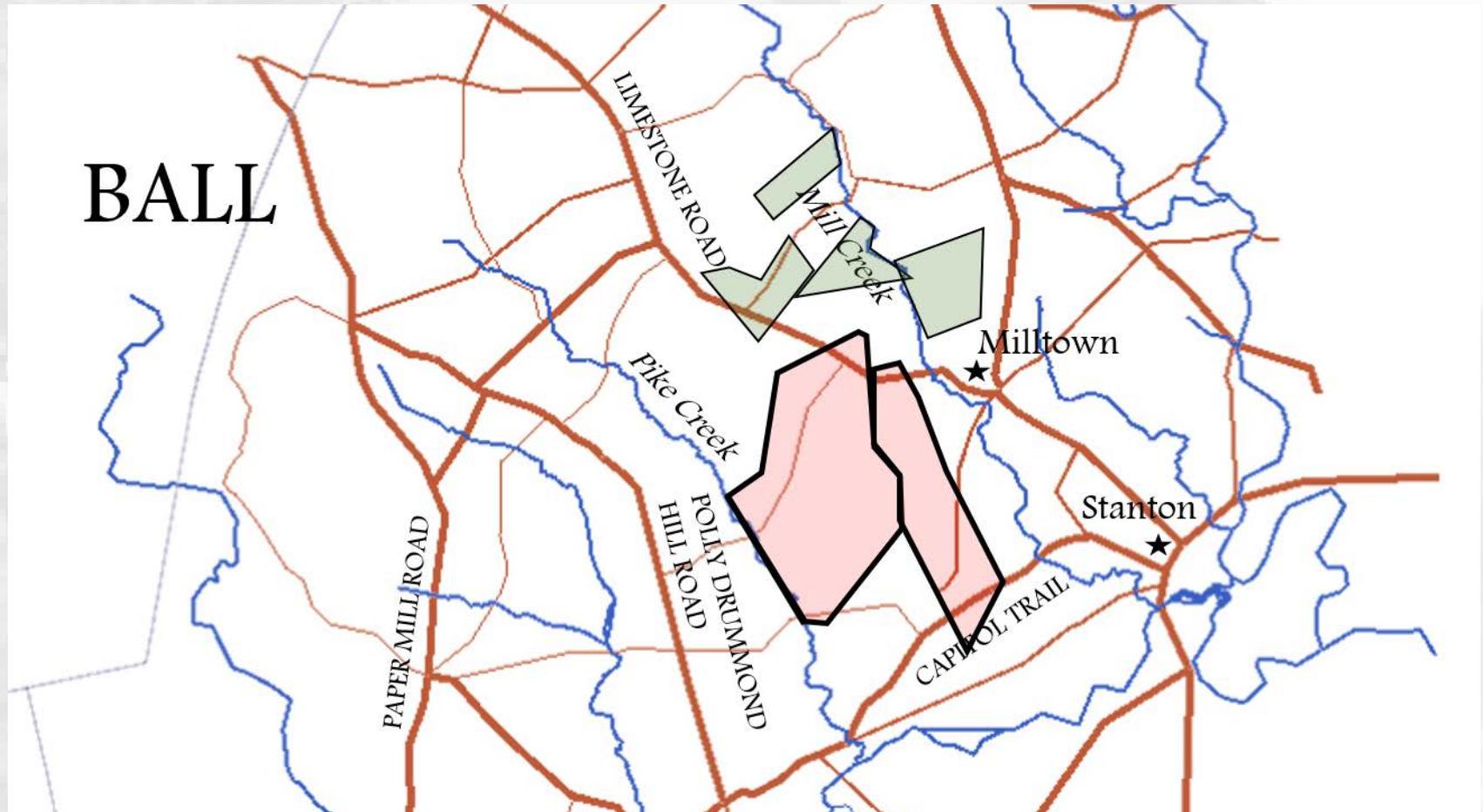


The Robinsons

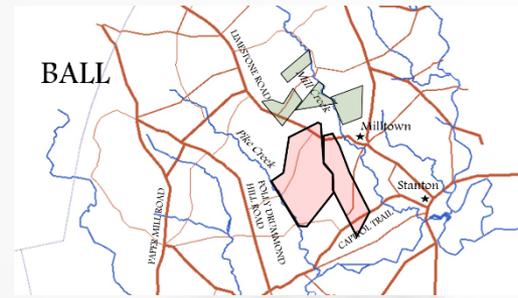


- Guest's Wedgbury sold to Anne Robinson, widow of George Robinson
- Son James established St. James Episcopal Church
- Built the earliest mill at Milltown, date unknown
- Grandsons rebuilt the mill and sold it
- All of the grandkids gone by 1768
- The original miller's house survived into the 20th century?

The Ball Family

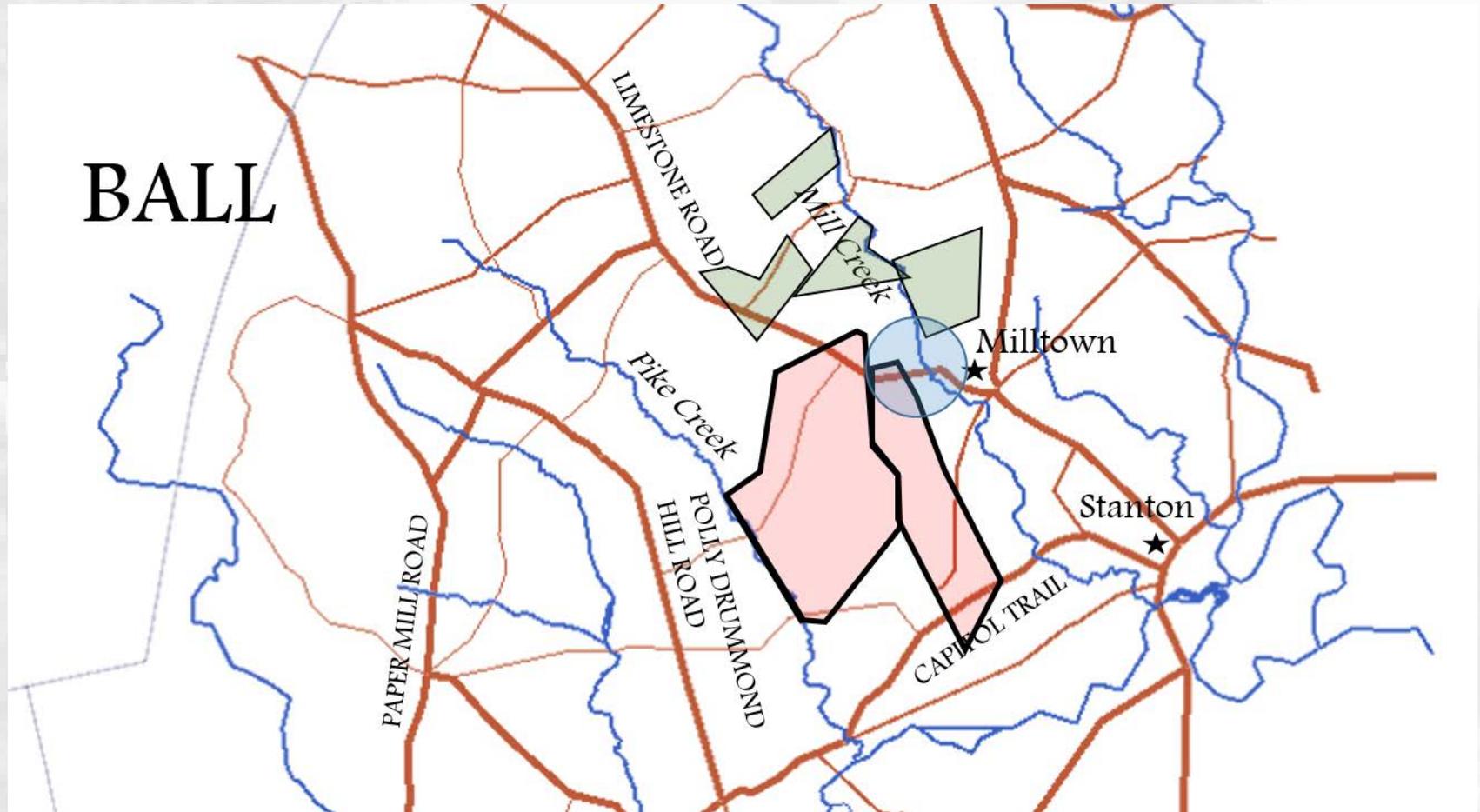


The Ball Family

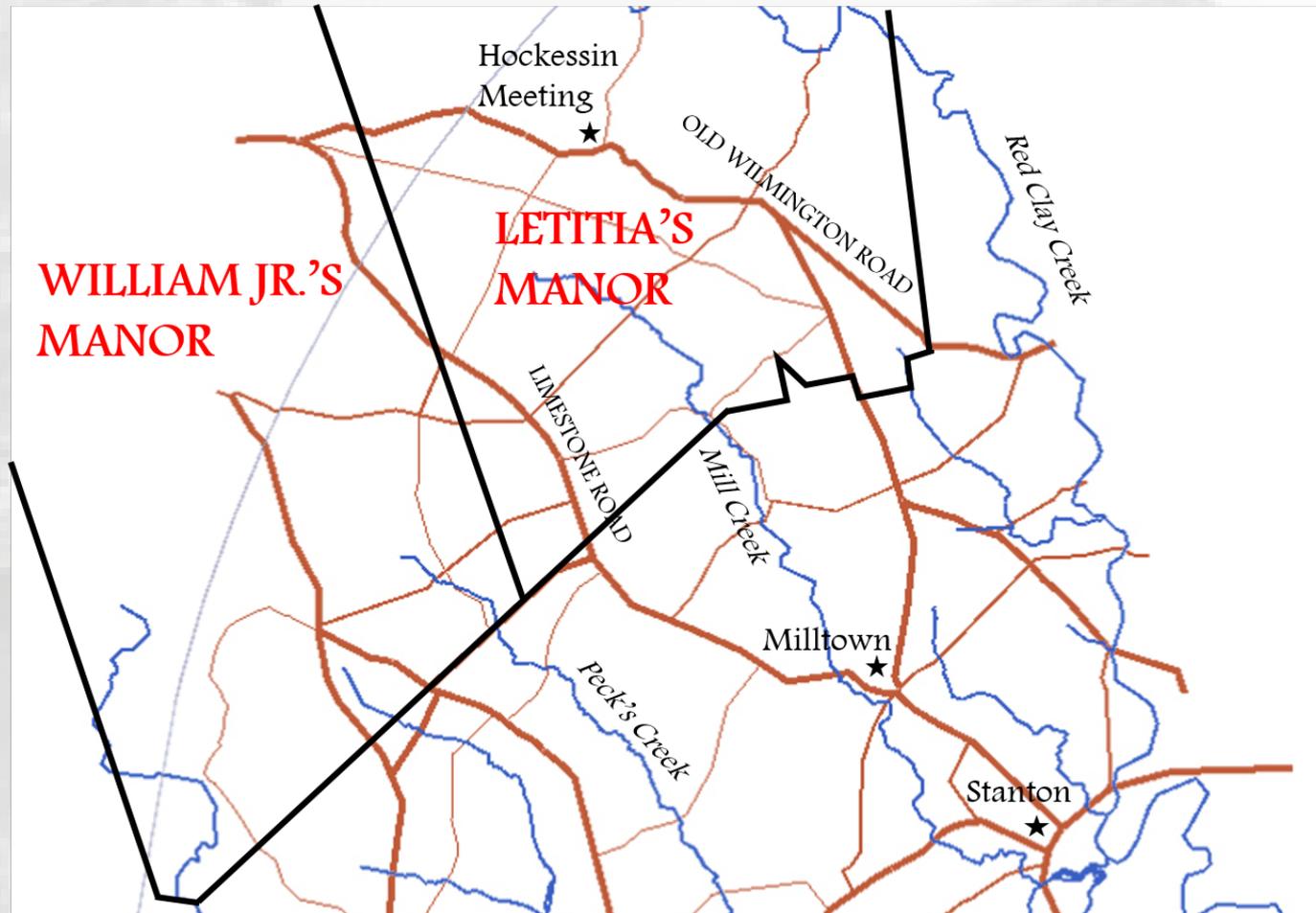


- Wilbourne purchased by William Ball in 1689
- Half of New Design purchased for son John Sr., then a tract above Wilbourne
- Wilbourne passed to sons George and Jeremiah
- John Sr. and his family legacy:
 - Favored eldest son William by first wife Mary
 - William got the Mermaid property
 - Several deeds to sons didn't hold up
 - Built his house on an adjacent tract
 - Sold 60 acres he didn't own
 - Second wife retained control beyond her dower share

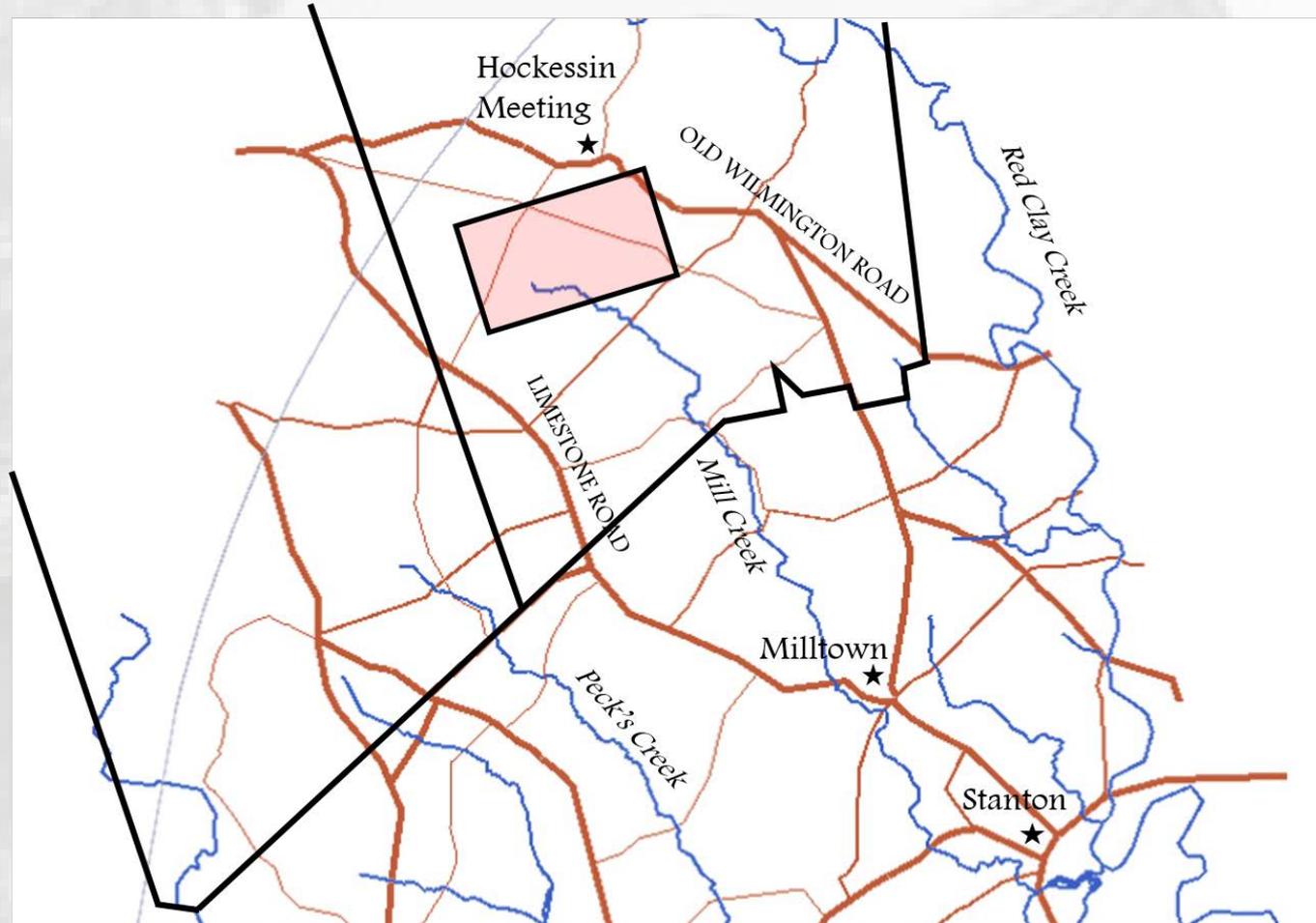
John Ball Sr.'s Ooops



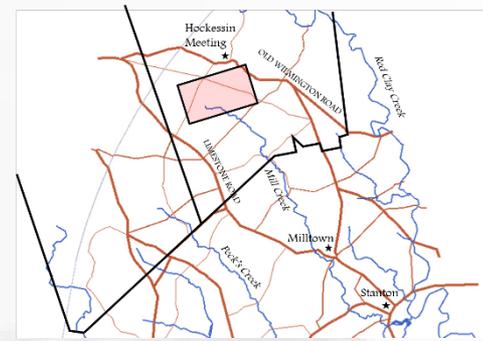
Steyning Manor 1701



The Dixon Brothers 1715

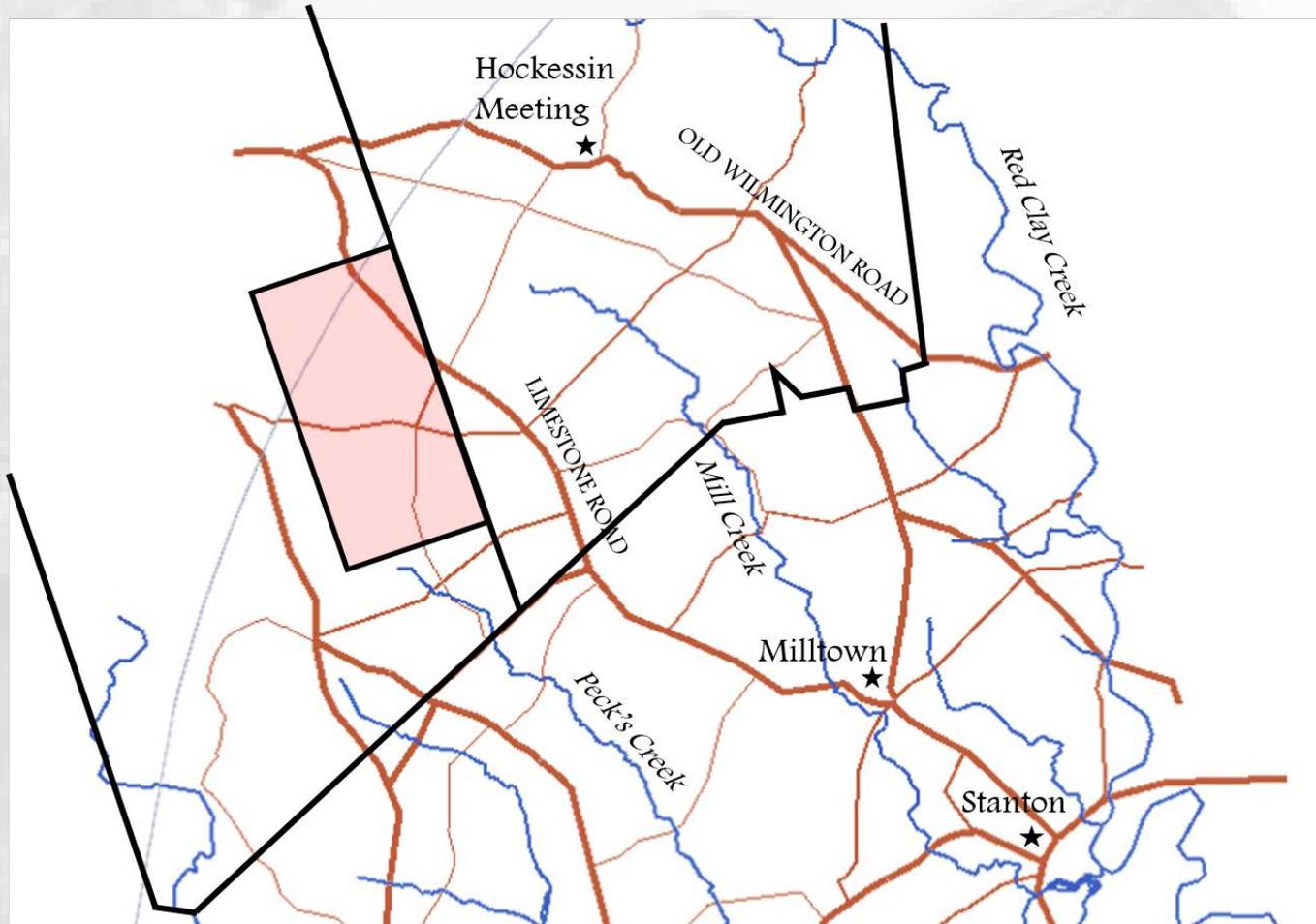


The Dixon Brothers

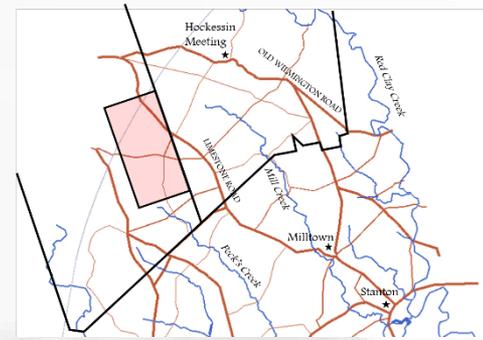


- Land purchased by John Houghton, step-father to the sons of William Dixon of Christiana Hundred
- A swap for their claim to William Dixon's land
- 800 acres split between (west-east, l-r)
 - John
 - Henry
 - William
 - Thomas
- John Dixon purchased additional land, his family remained for many years

Simon Hadley 1717

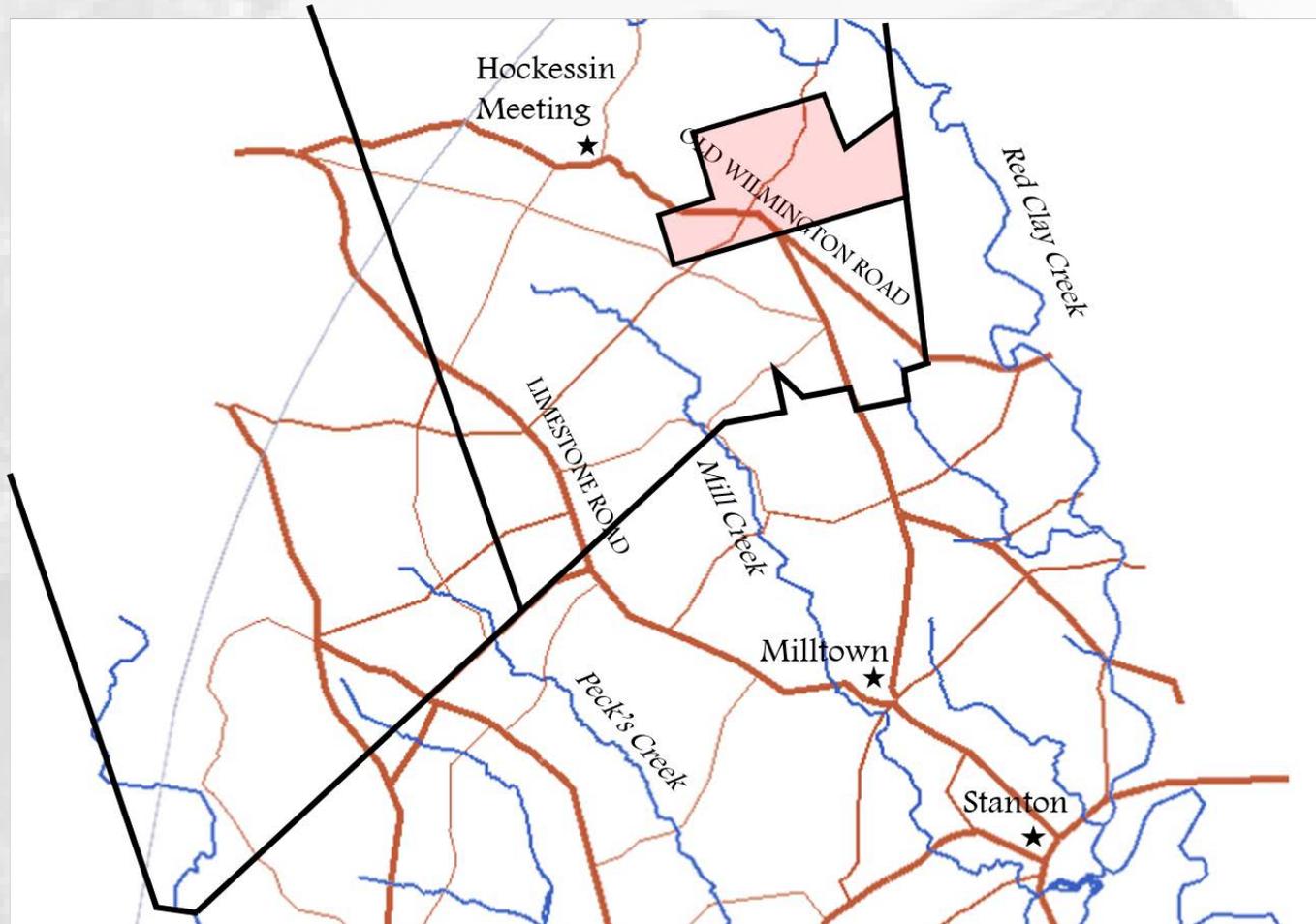


Simon Hadley

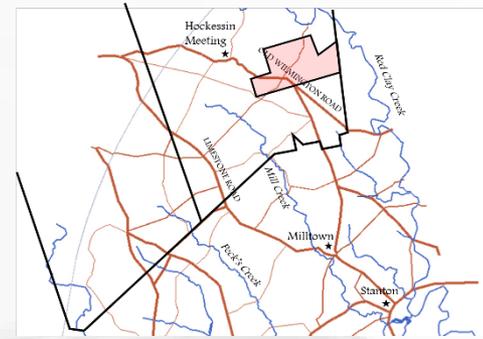


- 1000 acres in William Jr.'s manor
- Another 93 acres in Letitia's manor
- One of the richest men in northern Delaware
- A Quaker, served as county judge
- Passed his property to sons, sons-in-law, and grandsons
- His timber house, built in 1717, still exists

John Montgomery 1731



John Montgomery



- 800 acres to his three sons
- Die-hard Presbyterians, John fought at Boyne Water
- Grandson John founded the Mount Pleasant Inn
- The Montgomery clan were ardent Patriots during the Revolutionary War
- The house of grandson Moses is on Mitchell Road

So Many Other Early Families

- Rice, Ogle, McDonald...
- Cox, Hollingsworth, Gregg...
- All were social, spiritual, and economic leaders
- Little evidence of pre-1700 in MCH
- Good inventory of 1720-1750 structures
- Tip o' the hat to sound and reasonable preservation

Preservation50

1966 - 2016



OUR LEGACY, OUR FUTURE