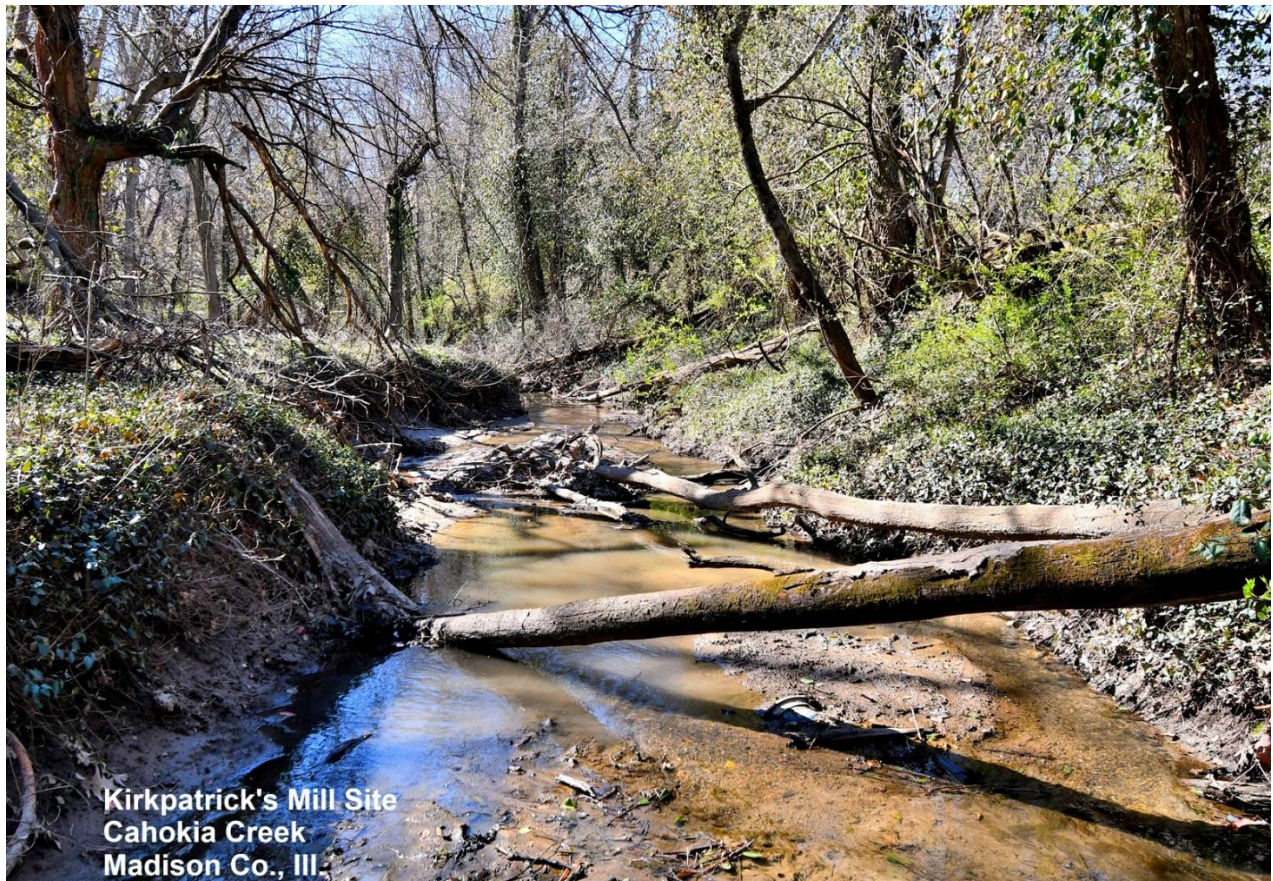


The Location of Kirkpatrick's Mill in Madison County, Illinois

By: Luke Moore and David Brady

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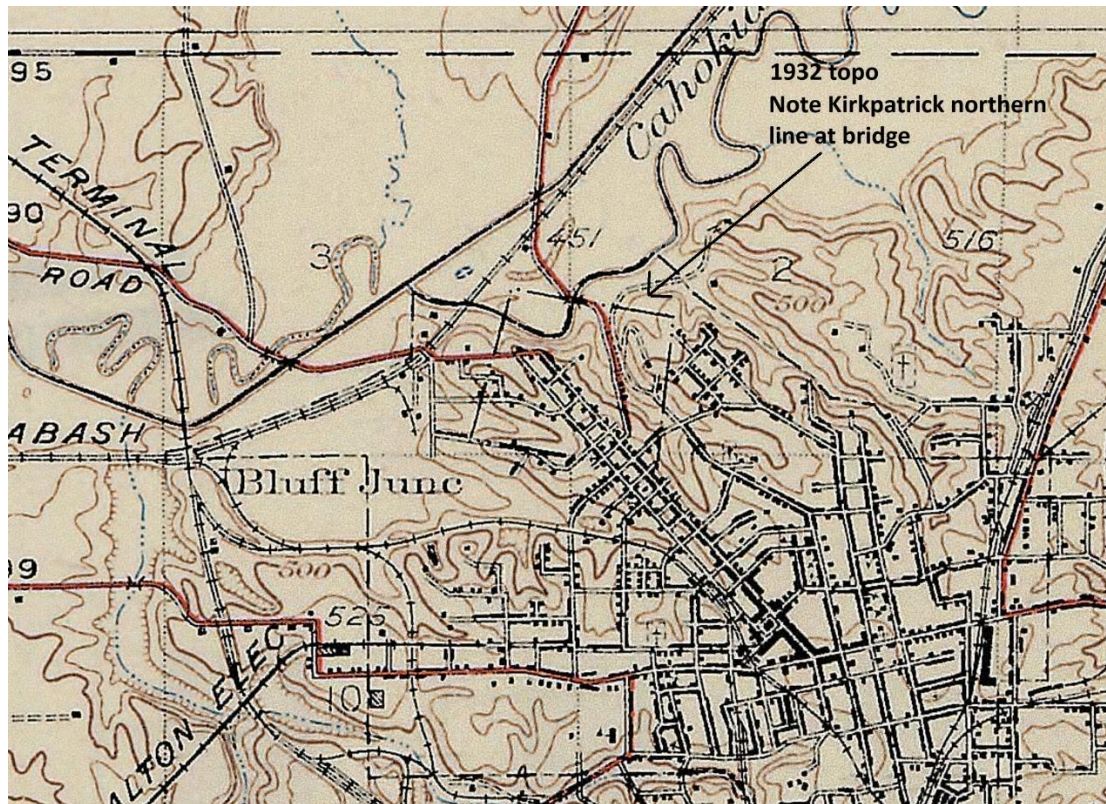
On Saturday March 22nd, 2025, we visited the area of where Thomas Kirkpatrick's Mill on Cahokia Creek was suspected to be. Our goal was to see if any remnants of the old dam were visible to suggest its location and to document with photographs. Having been among the first settlers in the present city of Edwardsville in 1805, he soon after built a structure to provide grain milling for the emerging farmers in Madison County and assist in its settlement on the frontier of the Illinois Territory. He purchased 100 acres on the banks of the old Cahokia Creek channel, which would eventually be diverted to expedite drainage, and today is known as Moody Creek, a much smaller tributary than its old bed.



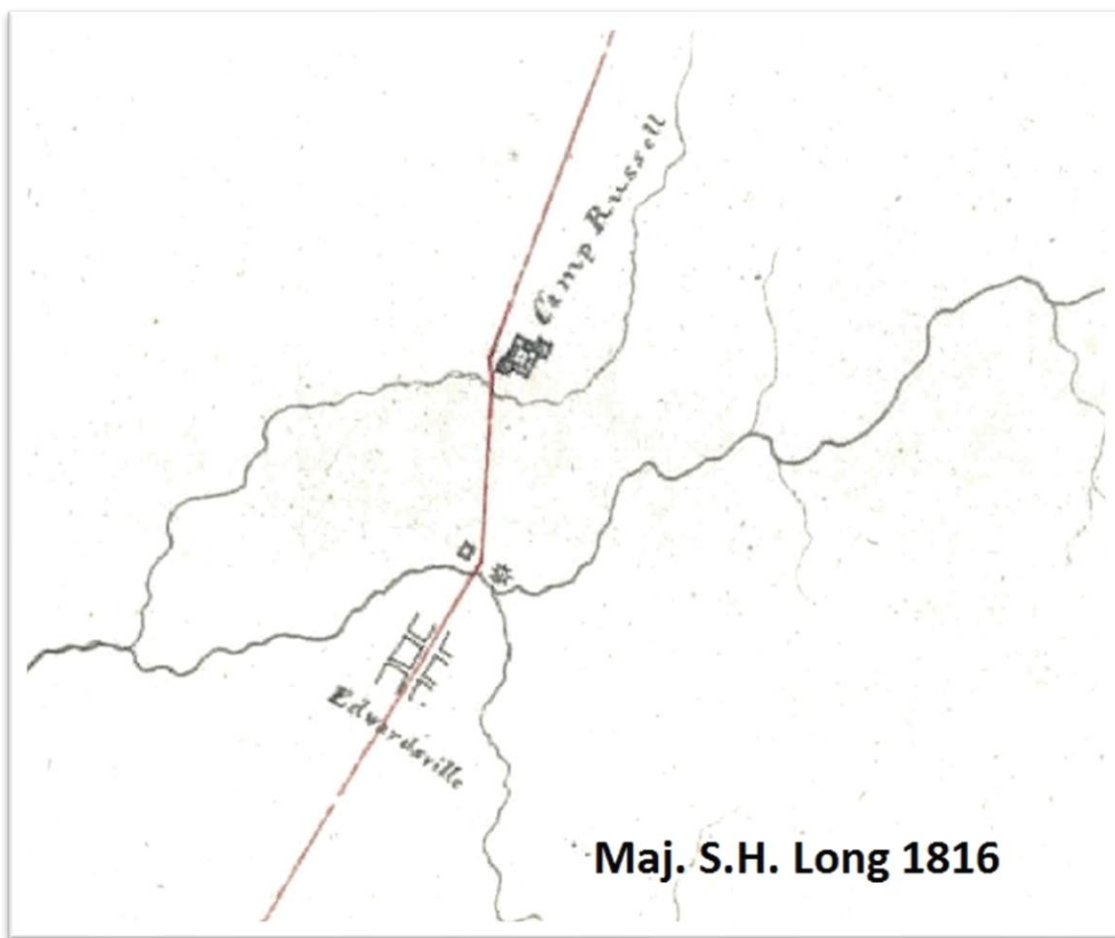
Approximately 50' downstream (south) of the old Springfield Road Bridge, looking south. On either side of the stream, we found limestone rocks of substantial size to suggest the old mill's location.



The Kirkpatrick land warrant of 100 acres extends up the old bed of Cahokia Creek as the 1932 topographical map below shows, terminating the northern boundary at the Springfield Road Bridge. He would have built his mill south of the northern line of his property, so the blocks we found 50' south of the bridge would be within his property lines and possibly associated with the mill's construction in the early 1800's. We did not find limestone blocks in the creek having waded it with hip-waders, but then too the siltation deposits were extensive, and dredging may have occurred to facilitate water movement off the landscape of cultivated fields.



In 1816 Major Stephen H. Long of the U.S. Topographical Engineers was sent from Fort Bellefontaine north of St. Louis to map and report on the Illinois Territory from St. Louis to Chicago. His map showed that he followed an old Indian trail which became known as the Edwards' Trace, made famous in 1812 when Territorial Governor Ninian Edwards marched with some 350 Militia and Regular Army soldiers to do battle with Native Americans in the Peoria Lake area thought to be aligned with the British. From his map we learn that he camped at the Kirkpatrick Mill location and included an icon to represent the mill's position on the Cahokia Creek of 1816. Our reconciliation of his map onto modern topography suggests that the mill was in fact just south of the bridge on Springfield Road, now closed to traffic, and where we found the limestone blocks on our survey.



The mill icon is the round circle with spokes sticking outward. The square icon is where he camped next to the mill. We suspect that Camp Russell, some 1.7 miles north, was abandoned by this date, though the footprint likely survived for Long to make his inclusion on his map. As he drew the mill downstream of the junction of Cahokia Creek and the smaller tributary, this aptly describes the bridge site of today.

Based on our observations of our brief pedestrian survey of the creek and surrounding environs, coupled with period mapping, the location where the stones were seen some 50' south of the bridge could very likely be the old Kirkpatrick Mill site. Perhaps someday a learning institution will perform a more detailed sub-surface survey in this location and proof the site.

Much thanks to the very accommodating Smith Family for allowing us to visit their beautiful property!



David standing on the tributary bridge to the west of the Kirkpatrick Mill Site. The new Cahokia Creek Diversion Channel lies behind David in the distance adjacent to the railroad track bed.

End.