

In 1962 the New England Wild Flower Preservation Society, Inc. organized a canoe trip down the Nissitissit River. They were so impressed by its wild and natural state that after the trip they decided to organize a group to preserve the river. In 1968 the Nissitissit River Land Trust, Inc. was formed. Since that time they have bought up many acres of land with the help of: Beaver Brook Association, Hollis; Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources; Fish and Game Departments of New Hampshire and Massachusetts; New Hampshire Natural Preserves Forum; New Hampshire Office of Planning and Research; Town Conservation Commissions of Hollis and Brookline, New Hampshire and Pepperell, Massachusetts; and the New England Wild Flower Preservation Society, Inc. The first piece of land they bought was the Dame lot along the river. Since then they have been buying the rest piece by piece to protect the river and wildlife.

Trescott Abele told us how he got involved with the organizations. "A canoe trip, well let's see, I guess it really started on the wild flower trip of the New England Wild Flowers Association. Some of the women were so impressed by the Nissitissit, wild flowers along the Nissitissit River that they felt that something should be done to preserve that area, so Mrs. Cottrell, I think the President of the New England Wild Flower Association at that time, got to work on it and invited officials from several New Hampshire state organizations and some people from Pepperell for a canoe trip down the river to show them how beautiful it was and how important it was to preserve it.

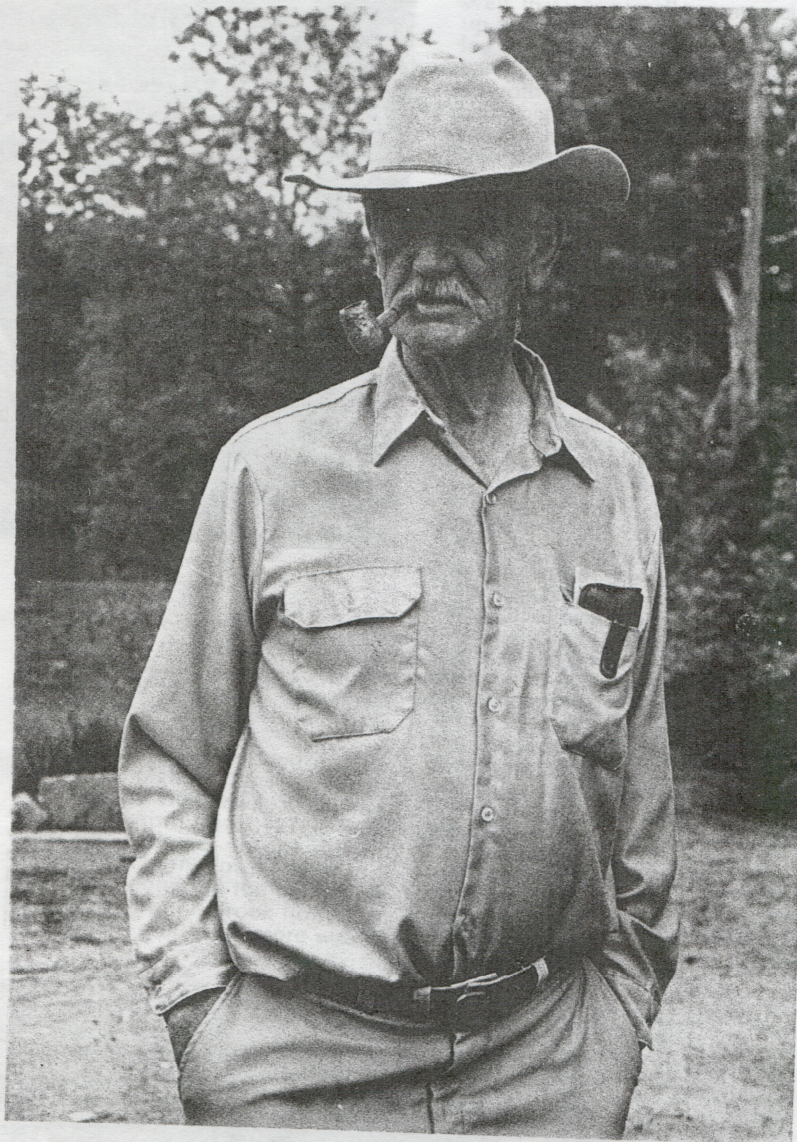
"The first I knew of that was when Jeff Smith came down to call on me one night.

"Abely," he said, "What do you know about somebody stealing the Nissitissit River?"

"Mercy," I said, "I had not heard about anybody stealing the river but if somebody is I'll get my gun and go out and protect it. She's an old friend of mine.

"Well, he handed me this letter and said what do you make of this SAVE THE NISSITISSIT RIVER. Well, we didn't make too much of it but it was an invitation for a canoe trip down the river and I don't turn down an invitation for a canoe trip on the river so we went to find out who was stealing it."

"They explained there was a new law that if towns had conservations commissions in Massachusetts, the conservation commissions could get



Trescott Abele of Pepperell, Mass.

half the cost of buying land (. . .) that needed to be preserved for conservation and we ought to get going on it in Pepperell. That's the first we had heard of conservation commission and we got going. This group that went down the river met informally for two or three years and we finally incorporated as the Nissitissit River Land Trust Inc. First thing we did, had an opportunity to buy the Dame lot of 60 acres for \$9,000 (\$150 an acre). They promised they would hold it for us something like three weeks if we could raise the \$9,000 in three weeks. We didn't have any money at all. In three weeks we rais-

ed \$10,000 and bought it. We continued raising money and have been buying all the land we could since then."

#### Mills On The River

When the settlers first came here they built mills on the tributaries of the Nissitissit River. When you were working by yourself with a team of oxen it was pretty hard to dam up a big river. It was hard enough to dam up the brooks. Most of the brooks gave power for only six to ten weeks in the spring.

In 1828 there were mills located in two places along the river at East Village and North Pepperell in