



Pepperell, Massachusetts. At North Pepperell there were grain and lumber mills. Trescott Abele remembers: "In East Village where the dam is was Blakes Mill and that was still operating when I came to town. It was a machine shop and then cross the street also running on power from that pond was a big red factory building that the towns' people always referred to as the Harp Shop. At one time they manufactured harps there and they have used it for a great many different purposes. There was also a paper mill in the same area but it is no longer there."

Trescott Abele of Pepperell, Massachusetts told us some stories about mills on the river: "When I first came to Pepperell I used to haul logs with my one horse through the woods over to the sawmill at West Hollis. That was run by Proctor brothers at that time. It was a big outfit with five men. They had several other mills in other towns, also. It was a big outfit and I thought it was very poorly run. Course I had no kick myself but the bosses were generally loafing and when the bosses loaf the men are loafing. They did not know they were working for somebody else. But when it burnt down, well, as I say I did not think the thing looked too profitable to me and they never built it up again."

"When Proctor brothers went out of business, Albert Charay bought up the rights and he started a sawmill the same way as people started two hundred years ago. He set up a small sawmill that he and his wife, Amy,

ran together and they worked an awful lot harder than the guys who had been working for pay previously for Proctors. His set up was very much the same as what it was in the early days in the sawmills.

Bill Henry Sharp, Trescott Abele's next door neighbor, also ran a sawmill, down on Gulf Brook, a tributary of the Nissitissit River. "The mill, when first built was on one side of the brook. It burnt down I guess and Bill Henry rebuilt on the other side because where this brook flowed in here gave it a little bit more water.

Well, that was a small two man outfit up to Proctor's when you sawed the log it would take about five men to handle it. Bill Henry handled it with one other man. Except one year he had a big rush order, he had to hire a third man to keep his pipe lit for him because he did not have time to light his pipe.

"Bill Henry Sharp was a lumberman by profession. In late summer and fall he would be cutting trees. When the snow fell he would slide the logs through the woods to the mill. Spring thaw melted the snow and gave him enough water power to run his mill for about four to six weeks in the spring. That was when he made his money. When the water got low he would shut down his mill and push a plow around his fields and keep his family and animals fed.

"Another mill operator was Jerry Sartell. He ran his mill on a tributary, Sucker Brook. His grandfather started the business which soon became too busy for that amount of water they brook gave and switched to steam power. It burnt down and they could not afford to rebuild it so they switched to an automobile engine to run it. When Henry Ford was refinishing the Wayside Inn, he needed a timber something like 25 feet long. The only sawmill in the state that he could find that could cut a timber that long was Sartell's mill."

Recreation on the Nissitissit

On one side of the Nissitissit there is a bare trail running along the river used by hikers, boatless fishermen and sometimes a wet canoeist. The

