

The Mill Stream

The area that we think of today as “the Mill Stream” was also called “Pulpit Harbor Stream” and the “Old Bark Mill Brook” earlier in the history of Pulpit Harbor. The Stream and the land bordering it on both sides played a significant role in the development of the Pulpit Harbor community because of the energy arising from the ebb and flow of the tides provided power for a number of operations and because rich farmland was nearby the stream. There were two sites for early mills, one way up at the outlet of Fresh Pond and another lower down the Mill Stream at the site of the current “causeway”. Up until the days of the late 19th century, schooners that came into Pulpit Harbor sailed up the Mill Stream and anchored close to the site of the lower dam in order to take on wood that had been cut during the winter. Large quantities of wood from North Haven helped fuel the lime burning industry on the mainland.

According to Seward Beacom, an old 1785 map shows a saw mill at the outlet from Fresh Pond. By 1824, there was also a bark grinding mill and a tannery at the same location; a grist mill was operated by Thomas Beverage while his son James ran the tannery. It is believed that one of the island’s brick works was also located there.

Sam Beverage salvaged an unattributed sketch which shows the location of a working water power mill that was built around the 1900’s by Will Sampson. The dam backed up the pond water and “killed a lot of trees, especially in the swamps to the east and west ends.” Charles F. Brown, the boatbuilder, collaborated with Sampson in the design of the mill which produced all of the lumber used to build Calderwood Hall. This upper mill was in operation for around 15 years. “Logs were fed into the mill from the east end and the finished lumber was cut by a circular saw and piled up on the west side. There was also an edging saw.”

Hiram Beverage, Sam’s father, worked at the mill in the spring and summer of 1909. His job was to take the boards as they came out of the mill and pile them up for drying. The mill was essentially an open air operation with a wind break on one side.

Lower down the Mill Stream, a dam of some sort existed as early as 1794. The original dam had two waterways for two large water wheels which powered a saw mill, a grist mill and a shingle mill at various times.

In the 1860 census, the value of the annual production from the three mills was listed as: \$3,000 from sawn boards, \$1,200 in ground meal and \$375 from the production of shingles. Many of the older houses in the vicinity of the Mill Stream have planking that was cut by an up-and-down saw of the sort used by the nearby saw mill.

In 1888, the lower dam was purchased by Harrison Beverage. It was in very poor condition and Harrison built a bridge at the site. Finally, in 1932, Hiram built the present day dam— causeway more or less in the configuration you see today. When he built the dam, it was with the understanding that a culvert would be part of the construction to serve as a “fishway” so that alewives could spawn in Fresh Pond. Since that time, repairs have been made by the abutting landowners.



**A dam of some sort was first built at the Upper Narrows around 1794 to utilize the tidal power of the Mill Stream.
A dam or dam-causeway has existed ever since.**





Mill Stream, Pulpit Harbor, Me.