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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE
MILL DEVELOPMENT
OF
AROOSTOOK COUNTY

BY
MAPLE ISMAY PERCIVAL

THESIS
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
M.A., 1940

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ORONO, MAINE

AN INVESTIGATION
OF THE
MILL DEVELOPMENT
OF
AROOSTOOK COUNTY

A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS (in History and Government)

BY

MAPLE ISMAY PERCIVAL
B.A. UNIVERSITY OF MAINE, 1929
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ABSTRACT

This study of mill development in Aroostook County attempts to survey a phase of Aroostook's industrial history up to the time of the County's definite emergence as a predominantly agricultural area. The treatise likewise has tried to show how the present status has been achieved out of a definitely varied background. The scope of treatment has been, of necessity, somewhat restricted because, by and large, source materials relating to the County's history are scattered and fragmentary. In only a few localities have there been any attempts made toward a concrete analysis of the town's activities, economic or otherwise. Where possible the author consulted all records such as town and county histories, town meeting records, the newspapers printed in the various towns from the time of their establishment, statistical surveys made of the State as a whole in which a recognition had been given to this County, State year books, and business directories. A direct approach was made through a systematic series of interviews with individuals in every town who would be best fitted by virtue of age and residence or business and social association to know something at least of this phase of Aroostook's past history. This type of information is more possible and valuable in Aroostook than it would be elsewhere in the State because of the comparative immaturity of the County's settlements, the beginnings of

many being easily within the memory of living citizens. This information has been substantiated from the newspaper citations of the time, and dates were confirmed in many instances by consulting the files of recorded deeds in the County Court House in Houlton.

Aroostook is rich in certain resources particularly in the abundance of water power, fine lumber, and smooth tracts of fertile soil. Because of its lack of a transportation system to outside markets, the early industrial history of the towns individually and of the County collectively was uniformly connected with varying phases of the production of lumber. Saw mills, therefore, claim a major consideration in this analysis. Since farming could be used to guarantee an existence, the citizens found in their forested areas the most natural means for an economic livelihood. This material advantage has been by no means exhausted, but its opportunities gradually diminished as those of agriculture noticeably increased after transportation facilities were provided with the outside markets by the completion of the Canadian Pacific and the Bangor and Aroostook Railways.

As a purely industrial area, Aroostook is undoubtedly too far removed from business centers to attain anything approaching the success it has enjoyed as an agricultural section. The industries which have continued to flourish in the few larger towns have found their chief markets among local people and in nearby business centers. Although the Aroostook of today

seems remote from the primitive saw and grist mill developments of the nineteenth century, evidences of these former mills can still be traced in towns from one end of the County to the other. In a few cases they serve the same purpose as did their predecessors of an earlier period, local depots of service in food and building materials for a constantly growing population.

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Grateful appreciation is hereby extended to the following who have, by their opportune assistance, facilitated the task of compiling the basic information contained in this thesis: to the State of Maine Library of Augusta, to the Abbott Memorial Library of Dexter, and to the Cary Library of Houlton, for their kindness in readily supplying books and research material; to the citizens of Aroostook County, who have with never failing courtesy and cooperation, made the quest for information there a pleasant task; and to all others, who by their encouragement and actual assistance, have helped immeasurably in the completion of this work.

THE AUTHOR

The author of this thesis was born in Dexter, Maine, October 29, 1907. Her early education was received in the public schools of that town, from which she entered the University of Maine. She was graduated from the University in 1929 with an A. B. Degree. Since then, she has been engaged in the profession of teaching in the states of Connecticut and Maine. At present she is on the Houlton High School Faculty at the head of the Social Science Department. The advanced work directed toward a Master's Degree was undertaken at the University of Maine during its summer sessions.

PREFACE

The very early history of Aroostook, like that of any other frontier land, affords examples of latent opportunities, unending routine of toil and hardship, and fleeting glimpses of future success. Because of its remote geographical position, the land retained its frontier characteristics long after contemporary outposts had passed the frontier stage of development. Rumors of Aroostook's possibilities as an agricultural or lumbering area were slow to reach populated centers where an adventurous man-power could be procured. Thus the early economic history of the entire region boasts no amazing development. The account is merely one of earnest husbandry in the endless task of winning a livelihood from a begrudging nature.

The people who came to the upper reaches of the Aroostook and St. John Rivers were unpretentious, persevering folk who desired above all else a home niche which would assure them a chance for that economic independence which was so dear to the early pioneers. The settlers in the southern part of the County were largely of sturdy English stock either from the sea coast or from Canada. To the north, shut off by acres of towering pine and spruce, was a distinct group of pioneers, French in language and custom. This settlement antedated the southern location by nearly a quarter of a century. The Acadians, who came and settled in the region along the

river from Van Buren to Madawaska, were but a remnant of those exiles, immortalized by Longfellow in his Evangeline. They had wandered from place to place seeking security from English guns and foreign wars. There, midst another "forest primeval", they built their homes and made friends with the Indians. With the latter's help, they cultivated the wild buckwheat or Indian wheat, which grows in lavish abundance in the Maritime Provinces, but which will grow in no other region in the United States except this section of northern Maine. It was the "staff of life" to many of the Aroostook pioneers. Even today this same buckwheat is harvested extensively in a manner very nearly identical to that of the eighteenth century.

The early accounts of Aroostook give little indication of the prominence that the potato was to assume in later days. Thus the first pages of its history may prove somewhat surprising to those to whom the name Aroostook spells potato production. Between the early hand-to-mouth existence of the pioneers and the present extensive cultivation of the same acres for table and seed potatoes, falls a period of rich interest and daring lumbering enterprise. It is, therefore, of and for this County of Aroostook that this attempt has been made to show how its present productivity has been achieved out of that overwhelming wilderness of forests and rivers which greeted the first settlers on every side.

 1 Ashby, W.T., "History of Aroostook County", Mars Hill View, (Mars Hill, Maine), September 1, 1910.

Chapter I

AROOSTOOK - THE EASTERN FRONTIER

The first economic development in Aroostook County fell into two classes both of which, typical of early movements elsewhere, were largely primitive in nature: the gradual cultivation of the land for the sustenance of life and the building of crude mills for grinding grain and sawing lumber. An outside market for produce had little or no part in the consideration of the people at this time. They were concerned only with getting a living. Toward this end, mill construction was frequently used in compliance with a State policy to gain land for farms and to build towns.

Geographically, then, this early period of 1805 up to the time of the Aroostook War is best divided into three distinct parts: the early development in Houlton; the parallel growth on a smaller scale of the outlying areas near Houlton; and the first mill sites in the more northern sections of the County around Presque Isle, Caribou, and the St. John River.

Even a superficial knowledge of American history reveals, among other things, one marked characteristic: a keen unrest of nation and citizen following a war period. Out of these turbulent intervals have grown great movements of expansion. The Revolution was our first national war; it was followed by the pioneering of the Ohio Valley and the fertile lands beyond the Appalachians. The government then, as at later periods,

found in the vast land wealth an easy means of payment to the soldier who had fought to establish that same government. Land was plentiful; money was not, if one means money with a value behind it! Vast areas were accumulated by land companies who bought up the holdings of the ex-soldiers and who purchased large tracts from the government on the installment plan. One of the companies built up for western land speculation was the Ohio Land Company, a New England concern, whose membership included the name of one Rufus Putnam. Likewise a pioneer, but not so well known as his cousin, was Aaron Putnam of New Salem, who with nine others took up the New Salem grant to lands, not in Ohio or on the broad plains of Kentucky, but rather to the far east in Aroostook. That these pioneers were faced with just as grave dangers as confronted their kinsfolk on the Ohio is demonstrated by the story of the early days of the settlement, soon to be named Houlton after Joseph Houlton, one of the leaders of the New Salem Company.

The act of the Legislature of Massachusetts under which this land was granted required that six families should be settled on the land within five years or the conveyance would be void. This grant, originally made in 1799, was intended to compensate veterans of the Revolution.¹ The first owners probably expected to sell at a profit - the first advent of speculation in Aroostook - but the threat of war and discord among

 1 Barnes, Francis, "The Story of Houlton", Aroostook Pioneer, (Houlton, Maine), January 27, 1921.

the new states and their citizens prevented buyers from venturing so far afield. As timberland, also, the grant was valueless, for at this early date it had not become possible to operate so far inland. These holders, however, were down east Yankees, noted for their thrift; so, rather than forfeit the claim, they took steps to develop the township by appointing Joseph Houlton surveyor of the grant. He came to the new land in the fall of 1801,² and, on his recommendations, shares were drawn by lot, and the first efforts made toward opening a road from the Penobscot River northward. The enterprise was tremendous; the distance, vast; and the hazards, unfathomable; therefore, for two years or more the fate of the new settlement remained uncertain. Many of the owners evinced a desire to sacrifice what they had rather than to jeopardize their lives as well as their fortunes in such an undertaking. It was not so with Mrs. Lydia Putnam, by some alluded to as the "guardian mother" of the early settlement. She inspired with her own magnificent courage and enthusiasm the flagging zeal of those most closely bound to her - her son Aaron, her sons-in-law Joseph Houlton and Varney Pearce, her nephews John and Joshua Putnam, her niece Betsy with the latter's husband, Dr. Rice.³ This group bought out some of the other holders' interests with the result that in 1805 and 1807 the Aaron Putnam and Houlton families moved to Aroostook. The family of Aaron Putnam was left at Woodstock, New Brunswick, while the husband

 2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., February 3, 1921.

and father with his boys went to the new claim to plant a crop of wheat and a patch of potatoes.⁴ In that first summer of 1807 near the juncture of Cook's Brook and the Meduxnekeag Stream, where nature provided steady power, Joseph Houlton built a dam and a crude grist mill at which each man was free to do his own grinding of wheat.⁵ The granite mill stones were roughly cut from the native rock of the countryside. There is little in the bustling activity of the present shire town to suggest this early provision for food and life, but, even now, on Cook's Brook can be found the remnants of this pioneer mill. The stream is almost as wood-blanketed as it must have been when Joseph Houlton first arrived; and few of the present day inhabitants, except among the older residents and fishermen, have seen, near a small falls in the brook, the two broken and chipped mill stones whose original size must have been from four to five feet in diameter. The dam itself has been washed or carried away bit by bit. Even the mill stones of which there were at least five,⁶ fifty years or so ago, have disappeared one by one until only two, grooved as they were in 1807, remain with the murmurs of the waters falling over the neighboring falls to bear witness to the courage and trials of these men.

4 Ibid., February 10, 1921.

5 Personal interview with Franklin Hall of Houlton, June 28, 1938. Mr. Hall is a local historian who has devoted much time to the collection of such material on the early history of Houlton as geneologies and deed transactions.

6 Personal interview with Walter Cary of Houlton, June 30, 1938. Mr. Cary is the grandson of Shepard Cary, the great Aroostook lumber magnate. He has in his possession old letters and papers of his grandfather.

In 1809 Aaron Putnam built a dam on the falls of the Meduxnekeag Stream around which the town later grew up. Time and again the water tore it away, so the log mill, started in 1809 to saw the timbers for the early settlers, was not finally completed until 1813.⁷ This mill enabled the inhabitants of Houlton and adjacent settlements to have lumber sawed and grist ground more conveniently. The facilities were immeasurably increased with the building of a saw mill in 1821 by Ebenezer Warner on a dam constructed by him near his residence at the falls of the south branch of the creek, now in West Houlton,⁸ two miles above the Aaron Putnam mill. In the autumn of 1823 James and Peleg Lander, having purchased the mill of Aaron Putnam, removed it and erected a new saw mill on the same site.⁹ In the meantime, in 1815, Messrs. Carr and Carle from Kennebec County came to Houlton and built a flour mill just across the stream from Putnam's saw mill.¹⁰ This mill site, now the location of two mills, proved to be a spot of great potential value. During the next twenty years this site, known as lot 38 in the original survey, was sold, resold, and leased in a series of legal transactions, including mortgage foreclosures and even a bankruptcy suit until, at times, one wonders if the

7 Interview with Franklin Hall, June 28, 1938.

8 Kendell, Joseph, History of Houlton, (Haverhill, Massachusetts, 1884), p. 44.

9 Ibid., p. 49. The deed, dated October 29, 1821, is recorded

In the County Records located in the County Courthouse in Houlton. Further references to the Registry of Deeds will be to the one at Houlton unless otherwise indicated.

10 Ibid., p. 22. The deed, dated January 3, 1815, reads: "Aaron Putnam to Sam Carr of Winslow for \$75 one-half acre of land for grist mill. Latter to pay 25% for upkeep of dam."

11

persons involved really knew who owned the property. Throughout it all, however, the lot kept increasing in value, and as long as water power remained the only available means of driving wheels or turning mill stones, the ownership of the property proved a source of affluence in the community.

A genuine community spirit existed in Houlton as was true in most of the early towns. In times of need, those who had gave generously to those who were without. In this case, the village was fortunate that it had men of some means such as Joseph Houlton and Aaron Putnam. In the difficult years from 1816 to 1820 the settlers might easily have been forced by the rigors imposed by nature to give up the struggle had it not been for the generosity and foresight of the leaders.

Up to 1814 the crops had been more than adequate for their use. With care and untiring work the settlers had cleared, in the usual fashion, acre upon acre of land marked even then for its fertility. Then came the cold summers of 1814, 1815, 1816,

- 11 The following transactions involving lot 38 up to the middle of the century give some idea of its increasing value:
- a. July 23, 1821. $\frac{1}{2}$ acre Rice to Amos Putnam for \$20.
 - b. October 19, 1827. Peleg Lander sold $\frac{1}{2}$ interest in mill to Aaron Putnam for \$300.
 - c. January 8, 1834. Joseph Houlton $\frac{1}{4}$ interest to Edward Kelloran of Portland for \$300.
 - d. November 17, 1835. Mortgage filed to value of \$16,500 on two saw mills with three gang saws. Kelloran to Frothing, Noyes, and Tenney.
 - e. October 6, 1841. Frothing and Noyes sold $\frac{2}{3}$ interest in saw mills to Zebulon Ingersoll.
 - f. October 29, 1844. Putnam redeemed in quit claim against Kelloran (lot had been deeded to daughter, but the latter was forced to sell).
 - g. May 2, 1851. Zebulon Ingersoll sold to Jeremiah Trueworthy for \$650 $\frac{1}{2}$ the grist mill interest.

the latter made famous by frosts every month of the year and the appearance of snow in Madawaska in July. The crops were ruined; the price of flour rose so high that it was impossible for many people to get bread at all.¹² " In the second cold year, the straits were severe. The family of Joshua Putnam were six weeks without a mouthful of bread of any kind in their house."¹³ The government of New Brunswick had to come to the relief of the people at large by holding cornmeal and rye flour, selling at \$17 per barrel, in reserve at Fredericton, from which people could procure limited quantities.¹⁴ At such prices bread, even rye, could only be for the wealthy; for the others, various expedients were tried such as changing new milk into curd, mixing that with cream and sugar, and serving it as a nutritious substitute for custard.¹⁵ The difficult times had still another effect.

During these hard times lumbering, however delusive, absorbed the capital and controlled the enterprise of the people of the country. 18 inch shingles were \$3 per M, boards \$10 and \$12 per M. From the signal failure of crops the farmers, as an alternative, changed their occupation for a time and became lumbermen, consequently their farms were neglected.

Boards and shingles were run in rafts to Woodstock and Fredericton which were their principal places of market.¹⁶

Possibly this early necessity showed them the opportunities of the vast lumber enterprise which for over half a century was to dominate Aroostook.

12 Barnes, op. cit., March 3, 1921.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Kendell, op. cit., p. 29.

16 Ibid.

While, however, throughout most of this early period produce could be raised to satisfy daily wants, and clothes could be made by the simple process all frontier peoples have followed, there was nothing to give any marked impetus to the settlement. People were coming in to be sure, but slowly; some were Canadians while others, interested by the reports borne back to Massachusetts, left their "urban" homes of Salem to throw in their fortunes with the pioneers at the front.

It was the boundary dispute, which, while impeding settlement in the remainder of Aroostook, made possible the first important progress in Houlton's growth. The development of the settlement had been slow until the threat of war arose and federal troops arrived in 1828 under the command of Major Clark. A tract of twenty-five acres of land was purchased by the government from Joseph Houlton in order to build a post and stockade.¹⁷ This stockade was located on what is now Garrison Hill, the leveled summit of which today bears evidence to the size of this early undertaking. It was reported to be one of the finest parade grounds in the country. Naturally much labor was required so employment and good wages were provided for every man and boy willing to work.

For some time the payroll to these workmen amounted to about \$2000 a month. This large amount of money was of incalculable benefit, and from this time dates the assured prosperity of this banner town of Aroostook.¹⁸

 17 Wiggins, Edward, History of Aroostook, (Presque Isle, Maine, 1922), p. 13.

18 Ibid.

Not only was the population increased by the presence of these troops, but in many cases their families, at least those of the officers, moved to Houlton. These groups created a market for produce, including potatoes, which was paid for in gold. As a result, money for the first time replaced barter as a medium for trade. Thus, during the thirteen years of the garrison occupancy, the settlement of Houlton expanded and thrrove.¹⁹

The advent of the military was of great benefit in another sense as well. One never reads of the arrival of the early pioneers without encountering the fearful transportation difficulties which they had to overcome. The government could hardly afford the time or expense of such hazards; so, after the experiences of the first trip, Major Clark had a military road built direct from Bangor to Houlton. It was finished in 1832. This became one of the finest routes of mail service in the State.²⁰ Eventually it fell largely into disuse, but it has since been rebuilt and is today²¹ one of the most accessible routes to Houlton.

Not often are the civilian and military relationships of a post town maintained on such a high plane as the early records²² convince us those of the post at Houlton were. The

 19 Barnes, Francis, "Potato in Aroostook", Agriculture in Maine, (Augusta, Maine, 1887), p. 102.
 20 Wiggins, op. cit., pp. 13-14.
 21 All but two short sections has been completely rebuilt in recent years.
 22 Wiggins, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

officers' families were soon included in the social life of the little town, and those without families - soldiers as well as officers - in many cases married local girls. Among these marriages, for example, was that of Colonel Bowen to Kate Cary, a sister to the famed lumber operator, Shepard Cary. Thus it is no wonder that the citizens of Houlton beheld with acute misgiving the final removal of the troops after the Webster-Ashburton Treaty had settled the boundary to the satisfaction of the government if not to that of the high-spirited Maine citizens who lived on the border! In this case Uncle Sam proved himself something of a Shylock for not only did he take their source of gold, in the withdrawal of such splendid cash markets, but he also took, in many instances, Houlton's daughters.

In the later years, while the Civil War was being fought, the names of a number of the officers who had served at the garrison must have been especially familiar to many of the Houlton recruits.

Among those who later obtained military fame were Lieutenants Hooker, McDowell, Ricketts and many others of the Union Army, while Lieutenant Magruder, afterwards of Rebel fame, was remembered by the older citizens as a dashing and popular young officer.²³

The soldiers' departure probably dovetailed with the after effects of that notable Panic of 1837 to bring to Houlton and the surrounding towns an acute slump in their economic condition. Money which had flowed so freely from Garrison Hill now became

23 Ibid., p. 15.

very scarce, and the general prosperity of southern Aroostook was markedly retarded. Once again, as in the dark years of 1814-17, the farmers turned their attention from their farms to lumbering and the raising of supplies of hay and grain for woods' operations. "This with the making of shaved shingles in the winter, and the raising of beef cattle which drovers took out of the County was for a long time the business of the farming population."²⁴

Thus the early history of Houlton was dominated very largely by the economic necessities of the time. The crops were those best adapted to the population's use - wheat, rye, buckwheat, oats, potatoes, and the livestock which would afford them meat, milk, clothing, and shoes. The seeds for a vast economic awakening had been planted, but at this early period in our story they were only latent potentialities.

In the remainder of the southern part of the County, squatters, for such they might be termed, continued their avid quest for land. As a result, the beginnings of other settlements in Aroostook in this pre-boundary era all seemed to fall more or less in one short decade from 1820 to 1830. The increasing agitation in the thirties dampened the ardor of the home-seekers. Since these settlements were, with the notable exceptions of Presque Isle and Caribou, nearly all in the country surrounding Houlton, they thus reflected many of the characteristics of the shire town. In several cases the

24 Ibid.

settlements were off-shoots from the Houlton colony, although the majority came, as in the case of Houlton, from Massachusetts or more often from the southern part of Maine.

The State of Maine adopted a very generous policy in order to encourage land settlements. To anyone who would build a saw mill, the State granted 640 acres of land, or 1000 acres if both a saw and grist mill were built.²⁵ The procedure was almost invariably the same after 1820. A grant was made by either Maine, Massachusetts, or both; the first settlers then arrived, and mills were started almost immediately. This was not mere chance; it was dire necessity. Many of the lands' possession, as stipulated in the title of the grant, depended upon this fulfillment; and, in the second place, not even the most fortunate could subsist long in such a wilderness as Aroostook was without a secure shelter and food supplies. Their own mills could best provide these needs. In most places one individual or family dominated the early activity of the town in so much as it was he who had probably secured the State's grant and had promised in return some specified development.

True Bradbury and Christopher C. Bradbury came from Limerick in 1820 to occupy their new land purchase in the Limerick Academy grant. Soon afterwards the former built a mill on the Meduxnekeag Stream to supply the early settlers with lumber for their homes.²⁶ This saw mill, started presumably at first to

²⁵ Public Acts of Maine, 1824, (Augusta, Maine), chapter 280, pp. 993-997.
²⁶ Wiggins, op. cit., p. 58.

provide for the settlers' needs by what was termed "custom
²⁷sawing", remained in active operation in the same family
 for many years. It was run by True Bradbury himself until his
 death in 1844, and then by his son Thomas until 1861 when the
²⁸latter moved to Houlton.

Another "first family", the record of which almost dupli-
 cates that of the Bradbury family, was that of Captain Moses
 Drew, who likewise came in 1820 to New Limerick. For some time
 he was content to allow the Bradburys a monopoly in the lumber
 business, but in 1844 he bought a lot at the foot of Drew's
 Lake and built a saw mill which was run by water power and used
 the early style of the "up and down"²⁹saw as did all the early
 mills. He also operated a lime kiln there, the lime for which
 came from nearby Linneus. The saw mill was operated by the same
 family for three generations; until 1877 by the Captain himself;
 after his death in that year, by Moses Junior, who built a new
 dam, and installed in the mill a rotary saw, a planer, a clap-
 board machine, a lath machine, and a machine for planing and
³⁰fitting clapboards; finally by his grandson, Hudson Drew,
 who eventually sold the plant. After a few years of unsuccess-
 ful operation by different owners, the mill finally burned, and

 27 Custom sawing was a policy of paying for the service of saw-
 ing by giving the owner a stipulated amount of lumber. A
 similar policy was used to pay for grinding grain.

28 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 58.

29 An "up and down" saw used a single straight saw blade instead
 of a circular saw and was forced by water power up and
 down its full length to saw the logs.

30 Wiggins, op. cit., pp. 59-66.

31

that project was abandoned.

In Ludlow, the first settler to arrive was General John Cummings in 1825. He was accompanied by his son Bradford, who built a mill on the stream now known as Mill Brook, which flowed across the southwest corner of his lot. ³² The mill contained the usual type of saw and engaged in custom sawing for the settlers' homes. The mill was operated by the Cummings family until after the Civil War when it was sold, and after a number of years, it was abandoned and fell to ruin. The same fate awaited a small grist mill which was built by Silas Hilton about the same time as the saw mill. ³³ Mill Brook flowed through his property, affording him sufficient power for the mill stone grinding. The proximity of the Houlton flour mills, however, probably provided a more proficient service than could be maintained at the Hilton grist mill.

Smyrna and Merrill were almost twin townships; and mills which served both communities have been located in either town. Nehemiah Leavitt, a Methodist minister of Royalston, Vermont, was the first to arrive in the town of Smyrna about 1830. He had already received a grant of the township in return for which he had promised to provide the town with 100 settlers, a saw mill, a grist mill, and four school houses all within five years.

 31 Personal interview with Ellsworth Lougee of New Limerick, June 28, 1938. Mr. Lougee is one of the oldest residents of the town and knew the Drew family very well.

32 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 145. Also Registry of Deeds, II, 135.

33 Ibid., p. 147.

His first clearing was on the banks of the East Branch in the southwest part of the town, and there he built his mill. The five years found Leavitt with his quota of settlers still unfulfilled so he gained an extension of an additional five years from the State.³⁴ Before this time was up, he sold his claim to Messrs. Dunn and Jefferds, lumber brokers, who built in 1842 on the east side of the East Branch a saw mill in which there was an opportunity for grinding meal as well.³⁵ After the building of Cary's mill at Houlton, this Smyrna mill was allowed to decay.

There was also an early mill operated by Osgood Pingry near the bridge and dam on the main street in Smyrna. From later owners, Isaiah and George Stetson, in 1873 George Gardiner of Brooks, Maine, bought the mill and served the public for both sawing and grinding.³⁶ For this he received his pay in grain which he could sell to settlers nearby. He was assisted by his two sons, John and Enoch. Ill fate seemed to pursue the Gardiner enterprises. A large mill, which the success of the small one seemed to warrant, was built further up on the East Branch. Fire twice destroyed these mills, the second disaster occurring about 1897. Discouraged by their lumber enterprises, the Gardiners converted the office of the saw mill plant into a grist mill which was located a half mile below the former mill and was operated by steam. In this mill a grinder reduced

 34 Ibid., pp. 62-63.

35 Registry of Deeds, IV, 220.

36 Ibid., XLVIII, 402.

the buckwheat to meal for cooking.

Fire not only destroyed many mills and other property, but it likewise took its toll of the town records which were completely destroyed in a big fire on May 17, 1928.³⁷

In Hodgdon, too, the same opportunities for land ownership were given the first settler, John Hodgdon, Senior, provided he could furnish twenty families within five years and build mills to grind wheat and saw lumber. In his grant, a road instead of the schoolhouse was stipulated.³⁸ To conform to this provision of the State, Hodgdon commissioned Jabez Bradbury to build the dam and mill on the Meduxnekeag Stream. The land was obviously furnished by Hodgdon because the enterprise was in the form of a partnership, Hodgdon and Bradbury.³⁹ The interests of Hodgdon were later bought by David Bradbury, Jabez's son. The new firm installed leffel wheels to run the mill,⁴⁰ and built a grist mill on the opposite side of the stream, close to the bridge, using a long flume to run it. After the death of Jabez, his two sons, David and George, carried on the operation until 1855⁴¹ when they sold out to William Robinson.

37 Personal interviews with Roy Gardiner and Mrs. Enoch Gardiner of Smyrna, June 23, 1938. Mr. Gardiner, the present Town Clerk of Smyrna, is the grandson of George Gardiner. Mrs. Gardiner is the widow of one of the former owners.

38 Personal interviews with Mrs. Robert Cox and Harry Williams of Hodgdon, June 25, 1938. Mrs. Cox, the granddaughter of Jabez Bradbury, owned some of the property. Mr. Williams was a member of a committee to prepare data for an historical pageant of Hodgdon in 1932.

39 Registry of Deeds, V, 335.

40 Interview with Mrs. Robert Cox, June 25, 1938.

41 Registry of Deeds, XIV, 427.

A little to the north of Houlton in the present town of Monticello, known as Wellington Plantation until its incorporation as a town in 1846,⁴² was likewise started a mill in partial fulfillment of the obligations of a land grant made to the first settler, General Joel Wellington. The dam and mill were built about 1832 on the Meduxnekeag.⁴³ This was of great importance to the people in the vicinity as there was a constantly increasing demand for sawed lumber. The spring freshet of the stream in 1840 or 1841 swept away the dam, the mill, the machinery, and a large supply of sawed lumber. Wellington soon afterwards selected a site for a new mill which, when built, was equipped with a clapboard in addition to the regular saw. The saw frame moved up and down in smooth grooves made in two large upright timbers and was connected to the water wheel below by a long perpendicular shaft.⁴⁴ Wellington operated the mill for a time, employing men in town to assist him; later, however, he leased it to his neighbors one of whom was Jake Williams. Of the latter, who was addicted to the use of intoxicating beverages, it has been said that in low water time the saw moved so slowly that he could set the log for boards, then travel 60 rods to the tavern, imbibe his measure of rum, and get back to the mill before the log had fed its length to the saw.⁴⁵

 42 Maine Register, 1852, (Augusta, Maine).

43 Stackpole, L.E., "Notes and Incidents in the Early Settlement of Monticello", Mars Hill View, (Mars Hill, Maine), January 7, 1909.

44 Ibid., January 14, 1909.

45 Ibid., January 28, 1909.

General Wellington, a man of foresight as well as executive ability, provided another servicable product by building a rough mill in which to grind the clay used in brick making. This mill was operated by a sweep to which a horse was attached, the horse providing the power by traveling in circles around the mill.⁴⁶

There is no record of a grist mill having been built in Monticello at this time. This seems somewhat surprising of so enterprising a leader as Joel Wellington, but the absence is substantiated by two accounts, related by L.E. Stackpole, a commentator of Monticello, during the 1830's taking grists over a difficult twelve miles to Houlton to be ground. The first wheat is supposed to have been raised here about this time.

The early citizens of Bridgewater started their industrial development, even as those to the south of them did, with the paramount objective of obtaining the necessities from which to build permanent homes. Later this community developed a thriving business from marketing its hemlock bark; but that was remote from the thoughts of Nathaniel Bradstreet and his sons, John and Joseph, who came to the wood-laden acres on either side of the Presque Isle of the St. John (referred to by present citizens also as the Presteel) Stream in 1827. There they purchased a mill privilege⁴⁷ and at once proceeded to build a dam across the stream. In the next two years a saw mill was built so that

46 Ibid., February 11, 1909.

47 A special right which a person bought to use and control the water power on a certain body of water by the construction of a dam for operating some industrial plant.

by 1829 the border settlement had its own lumber supply.⁴⁸ This mill was located a very short distance west of the later established boundary, but at the time its builders could not be sure whether they would remain Americans as they were born, or become Canadian subjects. The next settler, so our authority states,⁴⁹ was a Canadian from New Brunswick, a Joseph Ketchum, who arrived in 1829. By 1832 he had sowed on his burnt over land the first wheat in Bridgewater. After the road was cut through to Houlton, then something of a metropolis to these settlers, others speedily came to Bridgewater, securing land at \$1.50 per acre which the State allowed them to pay for in labor on this road.

The Bradstreet mill was sold in 1841 to a partnership - Harvey and Trask - which operated it for five years. At the end of that time the mill became the property of Jesse Moulton.⁵⁰ He also added to his "stock in trade" by opening a store near the mill. In 1851 the entire business was purchased by John D. Baird. The new ownership gave the "border mill" site the name of Baird's Mills, which name the place still bears.⁵¹ Baird tore down the old mill and built a new improved plant in which he installed a gang saw and a shingle machine. To this, in 1856, he added a grist mill with two runs of stones, one for wheat, the other for buckwheat and feed. Somewhat later this efficient

48 Wiggins, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

49 Ibid., p. 111.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., p. 113.

plant was sold to the industrial genius of Bridgewater, George
52
W. Collins. Of this development under the latter's ownership
more attention will be given later.

The third part of this early Aroostook chronicle not only
conveys glimpses of stirring pioneer life, but also vividly
shows the importance and influence of that agitated boundary
question on the early settlements to the north of Caribou
and Presque Isle and upon their citizens.

In May, 1819, there came to the Aroostook River Peter Bull,
a Canadian, with the intent of claiming from the New Brunswick
government a grant of 600 acres of land for the construction
of a mill.⁵³ The Aroostook River seemed to furnish the necessary
power for such a project and accordingly he set to work, select-
ing his site not far from the juncture of the river and the
Presque Isle Stream. He completed his dam and mill the day be-
fore Christmas.⁵⁴ There were only a few settlers near, but he
seemingly believed that this convenience would lure in his fel-
low Canadians. Unwisely, however, he built the mill so that the
floor was level with the water's edge. When the waters rose the
following spring, his mill became, of necessity, idle. After the
overflow had receded, he discovered to his chagrin that his dam
was too low to hold enough water for turning the great over-
shot wheel more than an hour at a time. His mill was built, but
his lack of foresight had cost him a good business and a liveli-

52 Ibid.

53 Ashby, op. cit., April 7, 1910.

54 Ibid., September 29, 1910.

hood. By this time, in his little clearing, he had discovered the amazing fertility of the soil, so he decided to become a farmer instead. He had kept his part of the obligation to the government, naturally he expected to receive his government deed in return. This proved difficult to procure as his land was included in that vast tract then in controversy.⁵⁵

Thus the matter drifted along until one day in 1827 a typical Yankee squatter arrived in the person of ambitious Dennis Fairbanks from Troy, Maine, and formerly of Connecticut.⁵⁶ He had read of the great valley of the Aroostook and was anxious to realize on the State of Maine's generous offer of 640 acres for a saw mill or 1000 acres for the building of both a saw and grist mill. Since the jurisdiction of the valley was in question, the State also offered to pay for the property if the land in dispute should be assigned to New Brunswick.⁵⁷ He dreamed also of founding a town to bear his name. Its location was not to be any haphazard choice, but was to be selected carefully and laid out systematically. His preference was immediately made; the Bull mill site was the ideal place to build the mill as well as the future town of Fairbanks. With the characteristic assuredness of the Yankee, Fairbanks told Peter Bull he would be glad to buy his nondescript mill and give a fair price. Peter Bull was a Canadian and had all the patriotic faith in his government that Fairbanks had evinced in that of the

 55 Ibid.
 56 Ibid.
 57 Ibid.

United States. The former's deed had not come, but he believed that it would arrive any day, so he clung tenaciously to his mill and site. Failing to secure the coveted land, Fairbanks moved up the Presque Isle Stream and there built a high dam, much more extensive than was customary, a short distance south of the marked trees which denoted Peter Bull's property. Just above the dam the river widened out, forming an excellent spot for a mill pond. After the dam was built, ten acres were cut between the east side of the stream and the Bull claim. Fairbanks then closed the heavy gates of the dam, left two men to guard the property, and departed for the southern part of the State.

During the following winter of 1828-29, the machinery for a saw and grist mill was hauled through the woods from Bangor. It was a long arduous task to haul and drag such heavy tools over the roughest of thoroughfares. The Fairbanks crew followed the Penobscot River, on ice or on old lumber roads, until they had to cross to the Aroostook, then they came down this on the ice, finally reaching the future Presque Isle in late winter. In charge of the transportation project was a young man by the name of Washington Vaughan, who was later to become a distinguished leader in the development of Caribou.⁵⁸

Although the location for the new town was not just what Fairbanks wanted, he proceeded to lay it out to the best of his

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

ability. It is said that this is the first instance of such
 59
 painstaking civic planning. The greater part of the original
 plan is now covered by the present town, and the streets, for
 the most part, are today as Dennis Fairbanks laid them out. This
 then answers the question one might ask as to why the town of
 Presque Isle does not lie along the river. Two stubborn men and
 a government's promise to a clear deed held the key. And what
 of Peter Bull? Naturally the competition of the new plant, added
 to the misfortunes of his own mill, finally convinced him that
 milling was not for him, but he did keep his land for farming .

The grist mill built by Fairbanks on the west side of the
 stream contained one run of stones, and the saw mill was a prim-
 itive affair with the old-fashioned "up and down" saw for cut-
 ting out the lumber needed in building the new town. In the
 grist mill all varieties of grain raised in the community were
 60
 ground in this one run of stone. It may, therefore, be easily
 conjectured that the flour which these housewives used was not
 of the finest quality. But not to Mr. Fairbanks or to Peter
 Bull belongs the honor of grinding the first flour used in Pres-
 que Isle, for, previous to this, Joseph Ireland had a hand mill
 turned by a crank which offered a limited milling service to
 the very few settlers in the area. It was called by them "Ire-
 61
 land's coffee mill".

Dennis Fairbanks had to provide his settlement with all

60 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 93.

61 Ibid.

supplies, so he very early built a store to which the people could bring their produce as barter for his wares. From the account of the experiences of Captain Rolfe, one of those early settlers, and the first to come by land, we find that he "bought his first bill of supplies from Fairbanks, paying \$50 per barrel for pork, \$20 per barrel for flour, \$1 per pound for tea, and \$1 per gallon for molasses".⁶² At the same time his oats were valued at 50¢ a bushel, potatoes at 50¢ a bushel, buckwheat at \$1 and wheat at \$2 per bushel.⁶³ This was his money for supplies!

Just how important Dennis Fairbanks' establishment really was may be better seen from the following report:

Mr. Fairbanks has dwelt there (on the Presque Isle Stream) nine years. He makes his own agricultural tools and his machinery, even his boots and shoes. His mills are three stories high on the outside, two on the other; the buildings are shingled and painted. In this building is an excellent flour mill and it is kept in continual operation. Part of the building serves as a carpenter shop. He also has a saw mill and saws boards which are sent to the boundary line for sale.... His barns are crowded with wheat, rye, and oats. This would estimate 800-1000 bushels of grain from less than 30 acres of land.⁶⁴

At just about the same time as Dennis Fairbanks was scanning the Aroostook for his future settlement, Alexander Cochran,⁶⁵ a Scotchman from Nova Scotia, came up the St. John to Tobique and crossed the old Indian trail to the Aroostook. He, too, was

62 Ibid., p. 101.

63 Ibid.

64 Jackson, Charles T., Second Annual Report on Geology of the Public Lands in 1837, (Augusta, Maine, 1838), p. 43.

65 This was in 1827.

looking for a mill site and the New Brunswick grant of 600 acres of land that went with it. There was not enough grain raised in the whole Aroostook Valley then to keep one of the later grist machines running two hours; but Cochran recognized the possibilities and the next year, 1828, he came back and built a small grist mill on the Caribou Stream. This land had been surveyed by the American surveyor, Park Holland, and was designated by the latter H, Range 2 on the State map.⁶⁶

Although Cochran was a good mill wright by trade, he was forced to build his grist mill out of the materials at hand and, consequently, it presented a rather crude appearance.⁶⁷

Every wheel was made of wood, the belting was made of moose hide, and the mill stones he made from two boulders lying on the shore. The linen for bolting was made by an Acadian woman at Violette Brook; the nails used in covering the structure were made from discarded horseshoes and scraps of old iron found around the timber camps. The boards were cut out with a whip saw, and the timber hewn with a broad ax.⁶⁸

Since this mill was the only one for many miles up and down the river, it was a great convenience to the Aroostook settlers. To assist them in transferring the grist from the stream to the mill Cochran kept a horse to haul the grist and grain to and from the river.⁶⁹

Cochran never got his land from the Canadian Government

66 Ashby, op. cit., April 7, 1910.

67 Ibid., April 14, 1910.

68 White, Stella K., First Sketch in the History of Caribou, (State Library, Augusta, Maine), p. 1: "...one run of stone quarried from a granite boulder at Masardis and rafted down".

69 Ibid.

any more than did Peter Bull, but, at the close of the Aroostook War, the State of Maine deeded him a block of land a mile square at the mouth of the Caribou Stream.⁷⁰

This really marked the beginning of the Caribou settlement to the time when the menace of war deterred even the most daring from settling what it seemed probable might be the next battlefield. For ten years scarcely anyone came, but with the fourth decade of the century dangers seemed abating, and gradually a few hardy individuals entered. For this reason then, the actual development of Caribou comes at a later day and will receive later consideration.

The next and last part of the chronicle for this period seems only a fragment with no nearby locations to give it support. Previous to the settlement of the boundary dispute, the pioneers who entered the County and built mills to secure their first claims came into the southern part with the exception of those who built or settled near the Cochran mill at Caribou and the plant of Dennis Fairbanks at Presque Isle. Despite the isolation of the upper St. John, a mill wright did come to the northernmost section, now Fort Kent, a Daniel Savage of Anson, Maine, who arrived in 1827 and built a mill on Fish River soon afterwards. Fred Hathaway of Fredericton, likewise had a grant to this obviously desirable (since two men wanted it and two governments granted it!) mill site from the British Government. After the Webster-Ashburton Treaty was

 70 Ashby, op. cit., April 14, 1910.

signed in 1842, the title of Hathaway was confirmed by the commissioners, and Savage was obliged to remove himself some eight miles up the river.⁷¹

This, however, did not end all disputes although the question had ceased to be of international importance with the signing of the treaty. Lumbering parties from Maine and New Brunswick carried on extensive operations in the surrounding forests, and soon trouble arose in regard to the disputed rights of lumber ownership. It will here be recalled that the governments in Washington and London had agreed to the treaty terms, but the citizens involved on both sides of the questioned territory had no admiration for the labors of Webster and Lord Ashburton, and felt that they could settle it more satisfactorily. Naturally the question as to who really owned the timber and held lawful operators' rights arose. Verbal issue alone did not suffice; timber booms would be corralled, and then the lumber would be stolen. This did not add to a pacific understanding. In 1843 the firm of Niles and West bought the power site and privilege of Hathaway as well as the land connected with it.⁷² They removed the old Savage mill, renovated the dam, and built a large mill, in which two clapboard machines and two shingle machines were added to the regular sawing facilities. This alleviated the trouble somewhat, so that the lumber could be

71 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 169. Also Pinkham, Mrs. Niles, A Brief History of The Mill Site on Fish River on Fort Kent, p. 1. An unpublished manuscript at Fort Kent, a copy of which is in the author's possession.

72 Ibid.

rafted down safely to Fredericton and St. John without quite the former dread of broken booms.

This new mill had been built on the east side of Fish River. In 1827 Colonel David Page of Waterville and Cyrus K. Bodfish of Gardiner bought the west half of the property, and, in 1849, Major William H. Dickey bought the share belonging to his brother-in-law, Cyrus Bodfish.⁷³ This purchase also included one-half of the dam and privilege. Page and Dickey prepared for extensive lumbering operations by building a saw mill which, in addition to the conventional saw, had a clapboard machine and a shingle machine. To this, in a short while, Dickey⁷⁴ added a store and a boarding house, now the Pinkham homestead. The magnitude of this undertaking may be better realized by the knowledge that Major Dickey brought his supplies and materials by four eight-horse teams from Bangor to Masardis, a distance of about 140 miles, where they were put on rafts and carried by the Aroostook River as far as Ashland. There they were loaded on teams and hauled to Portage from which point they could be⁷⁵ rafted down Fish River to the mills. It is of interest to note that Major Dickey came to Fort Kent only because he had heard⁷⁶ that it was the best climate in the State for weak lungs. With his health completely restored, the Major sold out his interests

73 Ibid., p. 173.

74 Ibid. Also Pinkham, op. cit., p. 1.

75 Pinkham, op. cit., p. 1.

76 Ibid.

in 1854 to Levi Sears. The grist mill, which also had been built by Dickey as a part of his enterprise, was included in the Sears' purchase.⁷⁷

Meanwhile the earlier lumber operations under the ownership of Niles and West continued very satisfactorily until the death of Niles in 1852 dissolved that partnership. In 1854 the river went on a rampage, cutting around to the east of the mill and thus washing away about three acres of land. The mill, however, had been built on a piece of substantial ledge and was saved. The river in its new channel made the old dam inadequate, so, during the following summer, the dam was continued and a large new mill was built for the manufacture of "deals"⁷⁸ for the English market. The mill had a gang of six saws and other powerful machinery.⁷⁹

From 1854 until 1879 Levi Sears was the principal promoter in both mills and, in fact, was the largest lumber operator in Fort Kent. The same year that he bought the Dickey mill interests he also acquired an interest in the former firm of Niles and West by marrying Amanda, the widow of Mr. Niles.⁸⁰ Other lumber operators bought into this firm, but it was Levi Sears who contributed most to the successful lumber operations in Fort Kent until the mills on the east branch were burned in 1868.⁸¹

77 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 173.

78 Fir or pine wood cut into boards of a certain size. The term frequently refers to the boards themselves.

79 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 172.

80 Pinkham, op. cit., p. 1.

81 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 172.

The mills on the west bank were kept in constant operation until they too burned in 1879.⁸² Sears immediately rebuilt the saw mill and made extensive repairs on the grist mill. After his death in 1883, his widow operated the mills until her death, in 1886, left the direction of both plants in the control of her sons, Silas Niles and Cassius Sears.⁸³ Another wash-out in 1887 carried off the eastern portion of the dam and about an acre of land. The following year the dam was rebuilt, and a new substantial bridge built above the dam. Toward the construction of this bridge the State gave \$1000 in aid.⁸⁴

Fort Kent had a few miscellaneous grist mills, small and scattered about on the various brooks. Of this unpretentious utilitarian group, one of the best known was operated by Aime Corriveau on Perley Brook. He belonged to the family of millers who were to be found all along the St. John to Fort Kent. Their mode of grinding was merely an elaboration upon the primitive style used by their ancestors who came in as exiles in fear from England's king. Although these establishments were not ambitious in scope, they played their small parts in providing the early peoples with food and life. They also served a social purpose for while the farmers awaited the grinding of their sacks of wheat, or other grain, they found a good opportunity

82 Aroostook Times, (Houlton, Maine), June 26, 1879: "We regret to learn that the large saw mill owned by Levi Sears and son at Fort Kent was destroyed by fire. Loss 4000 dollars."

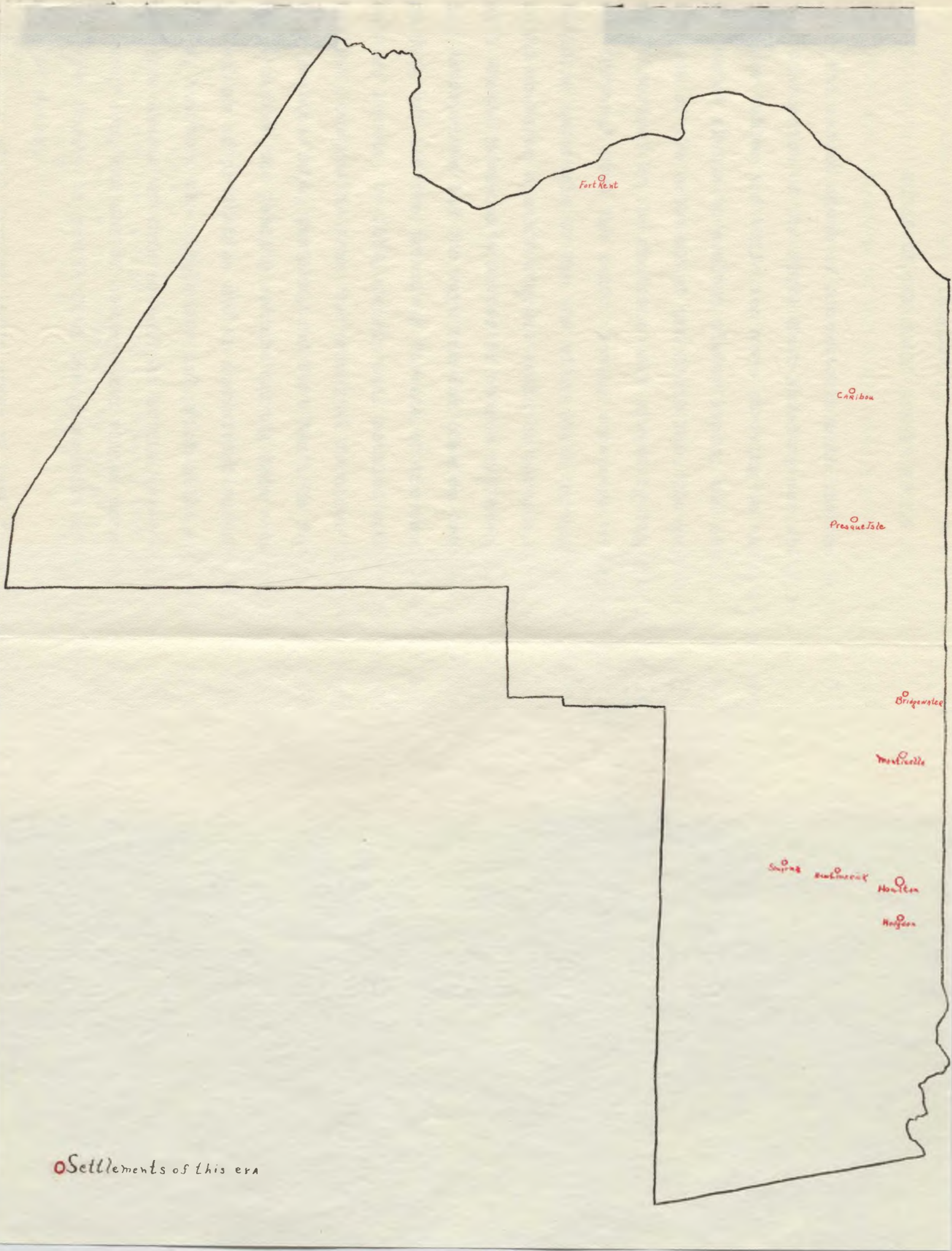
83 Pinkham, op. cit., p. 2.

84 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 173.

to "swap" stories with their neighbors, often ten or more miles distant, without fear of censure from the "good wife" when they reached home.

The State's generous land policy had amply fulfilled all the objectives of its promoters. Beginnings had been made in Aroostook from north to south, and mills of various types had been built by all manner of frontiersmen in compliance with the regulations of the grants. From these initial settlements industrial life spread in all directions, and interest prevailed to encourage pioneers of the next two decades to extend the success which this first period had started on its way.

The Aroostook War fittingly divided the first more or less "hand-to-mouth" existence from the development of great lumber enterprises. Not much large scale production was even attempted because of the difficulties of ownership connected with the boundary question. As a result, the men who came to Aroostook and the towns which were established from the State's grants witnessed many turbulent days which were forerunners of the "roaring forties and fifties" of the big lumber period to follow.



○ Settlements of this era

Chapter II

MILLS OF THE EARLY LUMBER EPOCH

The second epoch of Aroostook's mill history opened while the discussion of the North East Boundary was still on conference tables and while men were striving to assert their governments' claims to wealthy timber lands, and continued up to the eve of the outbreak of the Civil War. The period was largely characterized by the dominant part played by lumber whether it was "driven" down the swift flowing waterways or made into building materials in the saw mills which sprang almost overnight wherever a swift current could be harnessed to turn a mill wheel. Towns as a matter of course followed wherever milling enterprises led the way. One can observe from the accompanying map how the tractless forests of the early part of the century became, by 1860, fairly well settled with villages and hamlets, outgrowths from the principal frontier posts of Houlton, Presque Isle, Caribou, and Fort Kent. In fact, these early towns became the leading centers during this second period in the volume of production and in industrial versatility. By and large, however, the simple saw and grist mills were still the valuable assets of this as well as of the pre-boundary controversy era, and men of courage and vision were still coming into the County to profit from the generosity of the government of Maine.

 1 The State still granted large areas of land for mill building.

Since the boundary argument so affected development in Aroostook, a little of the actual circumstance may help to show how the expansion of the subsequent period was a direct outgrowth of the fever for land and timber which gripped the citizens of the two countries in all parts of the disputed area.

The State Land Agent had discovered about 1835 that New Brunswick was trespassing upon lands claimed by Maine. A boom was put across the Aroostook and Fish Rivers about 1839, but the American claimants felt that logs were being removed from the boom.² Additional complications were caused by the fact that, under dual rights,³ the Massachusetts' agent had granted permits even after 1820 to persons from New Brunswick to cut lumber along the Aroostook Valley; this naturally made it difficult to enforce Maine's act against foreign trespassers. As soon as this cross-purpose of the acts was revealed in 1840, no more permits were granted, and a new policy was substituted by the Maine Legislature. Actual settlers in Aroostook were allowed to cut fifty tons of timber for their own possession without right of transfer, and the next year a resolve authorized the settlers of St. John and Aroostook waters to cut and

 2 Wood, Richard G., A History of Lumbering in Maine 1820-1861, (Orono, Maine, 1935), p. 52.

3 At the time Maine separated from Massachusetts the mother State retained certain land privileges such as a tentative right to issue lumber permits. No complications from such dual action was foreseen, but after trouble arose in this and other sections of the new State, both governments agreed that single jurisdiction by the State of Maine was necessary.

saw boards up to 500,000 feet, if their need could be proved.⁴

It was while the boundary was still undetermined that the new State of Maine attempted to take drastic action to prevent Canadian seizures of Maine timber wealth. The act promptly passed by the Legislature to " arrest, detain, and imprison all persons found trespassing upon the state's lands" was applicable to everyone, although it was primarily aimed at the people of New Brunswick.⁵ The action which was taken against such trespassers in defense of the State's policy was a strong factor in the subsequent outbreak of the "Bloodless War". Despite the treaty settlement which came in 1842, trespassing still continued. It had been roughly estimated that all of 400,000 dollars was thus illicitly taken from the public domain of Maine in one decade.⁶

The question of land rights and the war itself had served, however, to focus attention on the timber wealth of the upper river valleys; therefore, it is not surprising to find that extensive lumber operations and large numbers of saw mills became the characteristic feature of this second era of Aroostook's development.

Probably no single epoch in all Aroostook history possesses such glamor, romance, and lure of keen adventure as does the period preceding the Civil War which was dominated by the large lumber operators. By few stretches of the imagination is it

4 Wood, op. cit., p. 52.

5 Ibid., p. 69.

6 Ibid.

possible to conceive that undertakings of such magnitude could be started and, more amazing still, brought to such a triumphant finale. In more ways than one it suggests the days of the Forty-niners in California; yet the latter have been heralded in song and legend while to few, except those directly descended from some of the early lumber kings or those sufficiently curious to brouse in old newspapers and musty records, do the names of Shepard Cary or John Goddard mean a thing. It was not the story of small settlement development, but rather of mammoth exploits conceived and carried to a successful finish by the executive genius of a few daring individuals. It was the epoch dominated by the saga of the Maine lumberjacks and the virgin forests, the saga chanted to the accompaniment of the roaring cataracts of the great rivers of the north- the Allegash, the St. John, and the Aroostook. While the small owner was bemoaning the fact that there was no inland communication system to help him get his goods to market, millions of feet of the finest timber were swept every spring to the sea where it was welcomed in every building center of the world.

These early lumber owners have been referred to as barons or kings of the timber lands; perhaps the term robbers might not be entirely amiss. Even as the mining companies in the gold-veined valleys of the West despoiled the country side, leaving only scarred earth fissures to mark where nature had hidden her wealth; so here, in the land of Aroostook, the great lumber operators slashed at random among the giant pine, hemlock, and

fir, and left ragged acres with only stumps and chips to mark where towering trees had formerly held sway. It was a time when a single tree might bring a thousand dollars.⁷ Even as late as 1862, newspapers sited the fact that Colonel Drew of New Limerick cut a pine tree which measured five feet in diameter at the butt and was 180 feet high.⁸ Even at that time this was hardly rated as an exceptional tree. Well could the owners afford to send couriers from one part of the County to the other with sealed orders and money. They themselves rode about in strangely elaborate equippages, carrying their wealth - gold and silver - in special satchels made for that purpose! The period brought wealth, of course, but to the operators not to the average citizen of the state; and so, with one author, we question whether they did not do more harm than good.⁹

To understand this era more clearly it is necessary to know the men who made it. Of John Goddard less by far is known than of Shepard Cary, but this little reveals him as a decided paradox. He came from Portland about 1842 with the expressed determination of making all the money he could in the shortest span of time.¹⁰ If he was not always as considerate of others as he might have been, it was explained by his ambition for financial success. It seemed as if he could almost hypnotize his crews into working longer hours for less pay than those of

7 Personal interview with Franklin Hall, June 28, 1938.

8 Wood, op. cit., p. 29.

9 Ashby, op. cit., August 11, 1910.

10 Ibid.

his competitors. He rapidly acquired large tracts of state land, in some places whole townships. He also rented a vast number of acres of crown lands in New Brunswick, until in a few years he became one of the greatest lumbermen on the St. John and its tributaries. He quickly used up all the pine that was salable and then began on the spruce. In his lumber operations he used oxen instead of horses, and for a part of the supplies for his operations he cleared a farm where he could raise hay and grain. The remainder were all obtained from St. John where he built a large saw mill. Because of this interest he exerted his influence to have a line of steam boats put on the St. John River to replace the slow and clumsy horse boats.

When the Civil War broke out, he raised a regiment of men and became Colonel John Goddard. He was sent South, but when he discovered that he could not command the whole Federal Army, he resigned, came home, and went to lumbering again.¹¹ Until his death in 1869 from an accident, he consistently opposed the extension of railroad facilities into this northern region, sensing quite correctly that it would spell the doom of such as he.

As none had a more direct influence on the times and the place than did Shepard Cary, his activities afford the best example of large scale lumbering projects in Aroostook. Cary's achievements can not be linked with any single locality. They extended from St. John, New Brunswick, where his shipping

11 Ibid.

office was located, to the far recesses of the Allegash, Fish, and St. John Rivers. He was connected with industrial developments in Houlton and Fort Kent that spelled commercialism on a large scale for the first time. He developed business plants that gave employment to thousands and put money into the pockets that had been empty since the soldiers all along the border had been withdrawn.

By 1822, William Cary and his son Shepard arrived in Houlton from New Salem, Massachusetts.¹² The rest of the family arrived soon afterwards, but little attention seems to have been accorded them. From the first, however, this young man¹³ gave evidence of unusual energy and executive ability. He assisted his father in erecting a home in the heart of the new community,¹⁴ and then hired himself out for a short time in New Brunswick. But working for someone else was much too tame for this future business star so he returned home and, in 1826, he opened a store, carrying everything which could be procured at the time and that the settlers would buy. In a very brief time he took into partnership with him Collins Whitaker, his brother-in-law, for the trade of the military post had given him a little capital and a big incentive. The new partnership was concerned largely with the buying and selling of lumber. Thus was started

 12 Wiggins, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

13 Shepard Cary was born July 3, 1805, so he was then 17 years old.

14 This house, in the early New England colonial style, is still standing. It is located on upper Main Street or Garrison Hill as it is still called.

the nucleus of that vast business control which was to dominate the County. They began leasing and buying timber lands on the upper St. John and Allegash and driving the squared pine timber into Fredericton and St. John.¹⁵ For the logs of one drive alone,¹⁶ Shepard Cary received \$600,000 in cash.

To cut lumber on such a vast scale, large crews of both men and horses were required. This army of men although not entirely unique did establish for themselves a type classification that again affords some comparison to the frontiersmen of the West or the Forty-niners. Although the description which follows may not have fitted the Aroostook lumberjack in every detail, it serves to create a general impression of this most picturesque laborer:

They are a young and powerfully built race of men, mostly New Englanders, generally unmarried, and though rude in their manners, and intemperate, are quite intelligent. They seem to have a passion for their wild and toilsome life and judging from their dress, I should think possess a fine eye for the comic and fantastic. The entire apparel of an individual consists of a pair of grey pantaloons and two red flannel shirts, a pair of long boots, and a woolen covering for the head, and all these things are worn at one and the same time.... Their wages vary from twenty to thirty dollars per month, and they are chiefly employed by the lumber merchants of Bangor who furnish them with the necessary supplies.¹⁷

The wages were never valued in proportion to the magnitude of the work or the danger involved. It was not an easy life in

15 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 11.

16 Wilson, Charles Morrow, Aroostook Our Last Frontier, (Brattleboro, Vermont, 1937), p. 98.

17 Lanman, C., Adventures in the Wilds of the United States, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1856), I, p. 330.

any respect, but it must have had its attractions, for the camps were always well filled. The wages of the men varied with the type of work which the lumberman was doing - chopping, teaming, and the like. By the middle of the century, wages tended to rise. An official report informs us:

Men who work in the woods are better fed and better paid now than when I began business, and up to the time of the Civil War, when all wages were raised. Then the swampers got ten or twelve dollars a month, and the highest wages paid to any of the men was twenty dollars, while the head man's pay ranged from twenty-five to forty dollars. Now the swampers receive from twelve to fifteen dollars a month, the choppers, teamsters and sod tenders from twenty to twenty-six, and the head man's pay ranges from thirty to sixty dollars. The cook gets from thirty to forty dollars, while the cookee gets only ten to twelve dollars a month.¹⁸

To care for this small wood-army, Cary next procured a site called Seven Islands, some 80 miles above Fort Kent on the Allegash (north branch) and spent sixteen years in building a private road to the farm.¹⁹ He cleared there not only an extensive but also a remarkably attractive farm. This became his depot for supplies for the whole northern area.²⁰ Here he raised immense quantities of hay and grain for the lumber operations. The crews remained in the woods throughout the year, some being employed in cutting and hauling timber, and others in work on the farm. Teams of six and eight horses were used in hauling this timber, so it is not surprising to learn that some times

 18 Thirteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine, (Augusta, Maine, 1889), p. 72.

19 Wilson, op. cit., p. 98.

20 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 12.

as many as 300 men and 200 horses were in the firm's employ.²¹
 The director of the woods operations was a brother, W. Hol-
 man Cary, Junior, and the selling office was ably superinten-
 ded by Collins Whitaker, who was thus kept most of the time
 on the market front at St. John.²²

Over it all was the guiding genius of Shepard Cary, the
 dominant figure in that business house of S. Cary and Company,²³
 which continued in business for over twenty years. He could
 not be content to manage successfully a colossal lumbering
 enterprise and various industrial plants as well as a large
 farm, but he must concern himself with politics as well. He
 was the acknowledged leader of the Democratic party in the County,
 and was most influential throughout the State. From 1832 to 1854
 he served the County almost continuously, first as a member of
 the Maine House of Representatives and later in the Senate;
 from there he was sent to the House of Representatives in Wash-
 ington.²⁴ He was one of the presidential electors from Maine for
 Van Buren in 1836. All this party activity would be thought
 quite adequate by our politicians of the day to keep them oc-
 cupied. He was, however, during all this time, actively super-
 intending every little detail of his economic ventures in Aroos-
 took. An examination of some of his correspondence reveals to
 one as nothing else could do the superior executive ability

 21 Ibid.

22 Interview with Walter Cary, June 30, 1938.

23 Barnes, op. cit., March 10, 1921.

24 Congressional Globe Appendix. For First Session of the 29th
 Congress, (Washington, D.C., 1846), p. 1347.

which was his and the forethought for detail.²⁵ Here one finds an instruction to Silas Plummer,²⁶ dated May 6, 1849, directing him to send a man with a letter to Holman Cary relative to operating the drive on the Allegash in case of low water. A sum of money was stipulated to be sent also by the courier by the West Aroostook Road to Fort Kent. Again, writing in 1851 from Augusta, he advises Plummer to sell oats to relieve the burden of stock and orders him to buy a large number of hogs. The letter also counselled a close watch over Holman as to the latter's spending - "he would pay off every loafer he sees".

Let John (the miller) grind 100 bags of flour so as to lighten his wheat at the mill and give him more room. Tell him he must keep a close watch upon his grain bins and thin it or it will surely must.²⁷

In a third letter, dated August 17, 1852, Cary informs Collins Whitaker of the arrival of a dam builder and mill wrights for the Allegash dam on the falls and his plans for the same.

In 1832 Cary bought land at West Houlton from Ebenezer Warner and built, thereon, in company with Henry Houlton, a large grist mill.²⁸ Ever since then West Houlton has been called Cary's Mills. This mill was built in Cary's usually efficient manner, and fitted up with four runs of stones to do the best of work. Houlton contributed \$6,000 as his share of the

25 The original letters are in the possession of Walter Cary of Houlton, Maine.

26 Plummer was his chief supervisor and was principally located in Houlton.

27 Mss. letter, Shepard Cary to Silas Plummer, March 10, 1851.

28 Registry of Deeds, II W, 186; II W, 297.

enterprise. When the mill was completed, it was, and so remained for years, the one good mill in a very large section of the country. In 1850 Houlton sold his share to Cary, who thus became the sole owner. Sometime later he determined to build on the same site - at the juncture of the South Branch or Hodgdon Stream with the Meduxnekeag - a foundry and machine shop.²⁹ The two latter plants were run by a large flume which connected the water power of the grist mill plant to the wheel house of the machine shop, several rods across the road. These wheels, both for the grist mill and the machine shop, were immense over-shot wheels, more than thirty feet in diameter. The machine shop was filled with the best of tools and the foundry was prepared with equal care. Likewise at this industrial center Cary had a saw mill which supplied the firm's building wants, a tin shop where, with the foundry, repair work was done and stoves made, a furniture shop,³⁰ and a carding mill. Nothing was lacking which would in any way add to the industrial usefulness of the plant or which could supply any other department or place which needed materials.

Something of Shepard Cary's inventiveness is shown by his oat kiln which he built to dry the oats so that they would be suitable for grinding at a time when a wheat weevil had destroyed all the wheat in that part of Aroostook.³¹ Ironically enough, by the time the kiln was working satisfactorily, a good crop of

29 Barnes, op. cit., March 17, 1921; March 24, 1921. Also Registry of Deeds, IX, 244.

30 Interview with Walter Cary, June 30, 1938.

31 Ibid. Also Barnes, op. cit., March 24, 1921.

wheat and buckwheat prevented its wide adaptation. The foundry remained the property of the Cary family until 1875 when it was bought by Charles Getchell and Son, who came to Houlton from Machias.³² The new owners removed the tools and appliances³³ to the village the next year.

A half interest in the grist mill was finally sold by Cary to Henry Sincock, an Englishman.³⁴ The Sincock cousins had first settled in St. John, where they ran a tide-water grist mill. On arriving in Houlton, Henry at first operated and later, in 1857, bought the grist mill owned by Rufus Mansur. Sincock sold his mill three years later and almost immediately went to the Cary mill at West Houlton.³⁵ This Cary grist mill, as it was when Sincock owned it, is accurately described in an advertisement which appeared in the Aroostook Times on May 17, 1872:

A grist mill, 40 x 50 feet, four stories and one-half with stone basement, has 5 run of French burr stones, 3 cleaners, and all other machinery necessary for the business.

The Sincock ownership of the grist mill was neither very long, nor entirely successful. Sincock's poor health evidently convinced him that it would be expedient to lease or sell the plant.³⁶ Just before his death, the mill was destroyed by fire

32 Barnes, op. cit., March 24, 1921. Also Aroostook Times, December 23, 1875.

33 Aroostook Times, April 27, 1875.

34 Ibid., December 6, 1861, "Cary's grist mill will commence running again on Friday the 13th. Cary and Sincock." See also Registry of Deeds, XXIII, 343.

35 Aroostook Times, September 28, 1860.

36 Ibid., December 20, 1867 to May 17, 1872.

in December, 1872, but it was soon afterwards rebuilt by his eldest son, William.³⁷ After many years and various transfers of ownership, the old mill was finally razed.

Meanwhile extensive sawing operations were in progress at the large saw mill which Cary had built below the foundry. Into this was put the first clapboard machine ever to be used in this section.³⁸ The surrounding acres of timber land, already purchased by Cary, kept a ready supply of lumber on hand. In addition to his own stock, the mill was used also for custom sawing. Even after Shepard Cary's death, his sons, Theodore and Jefferson,³⁹ continued the saw mill enterprise. They did, however, offer for sale the remainder of the West Houlton property at varying intervals.⁴⁰

Cary's real estate included a large farm of 500-600 acres on the Woodstock Road just beyond Garrison Hill, a farm of 75 acres on Main Street in Houlton where the Cary homestead is now situated, and countless acres of wild timber land in the north and north-central part of the County, and in the present

37 Personal interview with Frank Sincock of Houlton, June 28, 1938. Mr. Sincock is a younger son of Henry Sincock, the owner of the mill. Also Barnes, *op. cit.*, March 24, 1921. Also Aroostook Times, July 18, 1873.

38 Barnes, *op. cit.*, March 24, 1921.

39 Aroostook Times, May 1, 1868 to January 3, 1878, a series of advertisements showed the saw mill to have been in constant operation, with improvements being made from time to time. The paper of August 9, 1866, gives the obituary notice of Shepard Cary.

40 Ibid., January 13, 1876 to October 26, 1876, a series of advertisements for the sale of various property. The last stipulated all lands as well as parts of the plants. By January 3, 1878, the saw mill was for sale.

township of Cary, which fact gave the town its name. He was constantly buying and selling lumber lands in the upper regions of the County, so it is almost impossible to estimate even the extent of his real estate ventures there. On a great part of his lands, of course, he conducted lumbering operations, but many of his purchases were for speculative profit. The type of lumber which Cary, in common with other great operators, exported by way of St. John and Fredericton was termed "ton timber". The name was derived from the fact that forty-two cubic feet of such lumber weighed a ton. It was cut or squared because such even dimensions could be contained in the hold of a ship with greater economy of space than could round logs. The timber was roughly squared on the spot with a narrow axe and then dressed over again before the logs were finally exported. Timber twenty-two inches square or even larger was not uncommon on the upper St. John.

Various buildings were constructed by Cary in Houlton such as the large building which housed the Aroostook Times and likewise furnished the town with a recreation center. Many allusions are found to musicales, dances, or plays which were held at Cary's Hall.

This, in brief, gives a partial picture of a phase of one of Aroostook's industries in the pre-Civil War period. Throughout southern Aroostook and to an almost equal degree in the very

41 Wood, op. cit., p. 177.

42 This, Houlton's first paper, was owned and edited by Cary's son, Theodore Cary.

northern watersheds there was little of industry or society that was not colored by the vigorous and dominant personality of Shepard Cary, who, from academic standards, was an unlettered but self-made man. He had no educational background, as such, yet his letters and his speeches reveal a thorough and varied realm of understanding and a lucid power of expression. This, as in the case of many others, could have been attained only by vigilant observation and extensive reading.

In the central part of the County, the influence of the lumber magnates was felt to a smaller degree. The development was no less sure if decidedly less spectacular. It will be recalled that Presque Isle and Caribou had been surveyed for mill grants and the first mills had been constructed and were in operation during the last part of the previous period. Now, however, these settlers who had already arrived felt confident that they could go ahead and build with an eye to the future. Others from outside states as well as from the southern part of Maine, understanding that there was no longer the acute danger of forfeiting lands to a foreign country, boldly entered the land that gave so much promise. From these settlements already under way, others spread out in spider web fashion. Thus this period was one of fairly rapid settlement growth as well as mill productivity.

In Presque Isle the dominant figure coloring the economic picture was Dennis Fairbanks. ⁴³ The town he had dreamed of

43 See above p. 23.

became an actuality first under the name of Fairbanks and later of Presque Isle. Unfortunately for Fairbanks and his heirs, the contributions which he lavished upon the little community were not entirely constructive. His aggressive and somewhat stubborn disposition could brook no compliance with social laws. His desires were the only code he recognized. His indiscreet nature, in the course of time, caused more than misunderstanding with the people of Presque Isle, until it became obvious even to him that prudence and safety required that he leave at once. The exact date of his departure is uncertain, but about 1845, most allusions agree, he was in New Brunswick, near the Tobique River, where his death occurred in 1867.⁴⁴ His mills in Presque Isle were closed and idle for a while, but eventually John Allen opened a mill there, and a little later Albert Hoyt followed suit. Since the original Fairbanks' buildings had burned in the winter of 1863, the following year Sidney Cook purchased the mill privilege and rebuilt the mills at an expense of \$20,000.⁴⁵ This plant, containing a new clapboard machine and the improved rotary saw as well as stones for the grinding of grist, was in operation by the latter part of 1866.⁴⁶

There were other mills in Presque Isle, but their existence seems to have been of shorter duration. Doubtless the economic pressure of the times exercised much influence. As some new settlers came, new enterprises were started. The Hon. C.F.A. Johnson

44 Aroostook Times, November 15, 1867.

45 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 94.

46 Aroostook Times, October 19, 1866.

came in 1858 and laid the foundation of the business which
 was later carried on under the name of Johnson and Judd.⁴⁷

There was also an old lumber mill and grist mill owned and run
 by James Barto. This was , in 1882, bought by Arthur Gould,⁴⁸
 who organised out of this the Aroostook Lumber Company.⁴⁹ This
 mill was located at the east end of the bridge in Presque Isle.

On the opposite side of the stream was a grist mill owned
 for many years by Asa DeWitt. In this mill, run by water power
 from the stream, were the old mill stones typical of the period.
 This mill must have seen many busy days for the majority of the
 settlers had no nearer facilities for obtaining flour. Although,
 during the period the business of the village was almost wholly
 connected with some phase of lumbering, nearly every man had a
 farm which enabled him to provide amply for his daily needs.
 Grist mills, as a result, remained just as important as at any
 time before. During the war period and immediately afterwards
 flour sold as high as from \$7.50 to \$8.50 per barrel.⁵⁰ It seems
 that the good prices must have resulted in heavier wheat crops,
 for in the years around 1878-79, a thriving business was done

47 Gregory, J.C., (Committee chairman), Presque Isle, 1820-1920,
 (Presque Isle, Maine, 1920), p. 4.

48 Maine Register, 1873-1883.

49 Gregory, op. cit., p. 8.

50 Aroostook Times, April 26, 1867, and May 3, 1867, respectively:
 "Present high price of flour is believed to be not the re-
 sult of speculation but of scarcity, caused by short wheat
 crop last year." "Present high price of flour should in-
 duce our farmer friends to raise more wheat.... Every far-
 mer in Aroostook should at least raise all the flour re-
 quired for home consumption."

51

by the mills, and the following Aroostook Times article of March 6, 1879, bears quoting in connection with the trend back to wheat raising:

The want of grist mills to grind the large grain crops raised in the northern part of the County is greatly felt and farmers are compelled to go many miles to get their grain ground. Mr. Reed of Westfield came to this town (Houlton) Tuesday, a distance of 32 miles, to get grist ground. He usually goes to Presque Isle, but the mill there is full of grain - more than they can possibly grind for a month or six weeks to come.

The mill referred to was probably the one owned by Sidney Cook because he had started such a mill in conjunction with his clapboard and saw mill in 1866; there was also another operated for some time by S.Cox and later by George Cox.

52

At the time of the war itself there were several woolen mills in the County, but after the government had stopped its purchases, there was not so much incentive for sheep raising. R.W.Blair of Presque Isle owned a carding mill just beyond the DeWitt grist mill, but the falling market in wool obviously discouraged this business.

53

There was one other plant during this time in Presque Isle, a match factory, owned by Freeman Hayden. It burned in 1864, and there was no reference of its being rebuilt. Mention

54

51 Ibid., November 14, 1878, "The grist mill at Presque Isle ground last year 23,000 bushels of wheat raised in that vicinity."

52 Ibid., July 27, 1866, a quotation cited from the Presque Isle Pioneer. Also Maine Registers, 1871-1890.

53 Ibid., "The wool market is dull and depressed. All woolen goods can be had at very reasonable prices."

54 Ibid., January 1, 1864.

of it is included to indicate something of the economic versatility of these early inhabitants.

Thus did economic affairs of the world outside affect these semi-isolated settlers. If an industrial market were high, and goods could be hauled at a profit, wool, long lumber and its products, even matches, would be produced; but after an economic depression, such a one as the country experienced in 1873, even these people in far off Aroostook felt its effects and turned back to their never-failing source of livelihood, their farms. Come what may, these would always assure them of food to eat. No wonder then, when they could survive satisfactorily if not with affluence, that their "economic units", their farms, made the people so independent. If money was lacking, as it usually was, the old expedient of barter remained.

In Caribou the growth was not dissimilar. Since it was in proximity to Presque Isle, it embodies many of the latter's characteristics.

Two of the future important leaders in Caribou came there just after the boundary dispute was settled. Samuel Collins of Calais and Washington Vaughan of Brookfield, Massachusetts, arrived in the little settlement in the spring of 1844.

Vaughan had been in the County since 1829 when he had first assisted Dennis Fairbanks of Presque Isle in bringing his mill

55 Ibid., February 22, 1867, "Shingles are used as a substitute for money in Presque Isle and are considered 'legal tender'. The best quality sold at \$4.50."

56 White, op. cit., p. 2.

machinery through to Presque Isle from Bangor. For the next nine years he was engaged as an aide to Fairbanks. Then he went to St. Stephens, New Brunswick, where he met Samuel Collins.⁵⁷ Together they returned to Caribou, pitched their camp on the north side of the Caribou Stream, and built, in the following summer of 1844, a grist mill which is still standing and in active use.⁵⁸

By this time, according to State laws, a settler could procure two lots of land for every mill he built on certain specified streams of which the Caribou was one.⁵⁹ Collins and Vaughan took advantage of this provision to secure two more lots by building a saw mill on a site owned by Herschel Collins.⁶⁰ Vaughan also bought lots 19 and 20 for which he paid the State twenty-one dollars in road labor.⁶¹

In the saw mill which they built they sawed the great pines into square timber for shipment to England, floating it down into the St. John where it was loaded on vessels. This was a project similar in nature and difficulty to the Cary lumber activities except that the Caribou drives were limited to the timber in the immediate vicinity. The saw mill was burned in the winter of 1848 and was rebuilt in the following year. In 1864 the mill was again destroyed by fire. In the same year

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid. Also Ashby, op. cit., November 10, 1910.

59 White, op. cit., p. 2.

60 Registry of Deeds, XXIII, 475.

61 White, op. cit., p. 2. Also Registry of Deeds, XXIII, 475.

62

an enlarged mill was built.

Their grist mill was also a marked success. It was difficult indeed to get the heavy mill stones and machinery necessary for grinding through the woods. The company had two runs of stones and a cleanser. One set they hauled from Lincoln to Ashland, where they placed the stones on a raft and floated them down the Aroostook River to the mill. The other set was towed on a raft up the St. John and Aroostook Rivers from New Brunswick. The owners were able to commence grinding in the fall of 1848.⁶³ Grist was brought to them "all the way from Ashland and Masardis by canoe or log dugout for some years thereafter."⁶⁴ It will be observed that such settlers often had to travel many more miles to use water ways than the straight line through the dense forests would encompass.

Even with the State's generous land policy - lands at \$1.25 per acre, 25¢ to be paid in cash, the rest to be worked out in road labor on the settlers' own roads -,⁶⁵ success in settlement seemed difficult to attain. Supplies for the most part had to be hauled from Bangor, 170 miles away. The first portion of the journey had been simplified by the building of the Military Road, but the remainder was very difficult indeed. Some goods were shipped to St. John, thence sent by river boats or "skulls" up to

62 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 120. Also Aroostook Times, February 26, 1864, "The saw mill of W.A. Vaughan at Caribou village was destroyed last week by fire. Loss \$2,000. No insurance."

63 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 62.

64 White, op. cit., p. 3.

65 Ibid.

Andover, from which they could be hauled across the border to Caribou. Andover thus achieved some prominence as a trading center. The following is the list of prices for common articles which the settler at Caribou was forced to pay: flour, \$12 to \$20 per barrel; pork, \$4 per barrel; molasses, \$1 per pound;⁶⁶ salt \$2 per bushel; and common cloth, 15¢ to 20¢ per yard. This was no more than people in other sections were forced to pay, but it seemed a fortune when there was so little money.

In 1845 a shingle and clapboard mill was built by Winslow Hall on Hardwood Creek. This was the first shingle establishment to be built in the region, but a small crude clapboard mill had been built four years before in the southern part of township H by Caribou's second settler, Justin Grey.⁶⁷ In 1858 Sylvertre Washburn built a sash and blind factory. It was afterwards destroyed by fire and then rebuilt.⁶⁸ In this decade before the war, a building was constructed by J.C. Barnes of Fort Fairfield for a woolen mill. Although it was not actually used for this, a carding mill did active business until it was bought by Albe Holmes in 1871 for a starch factory.⁶⁹

Throughout this whole time, with the coming and going of the above small establishments, the steady business operations of Collins and Vaughan assured Caribou of economic stability. The village naturally grew up around their mill and store as a

66 Ibid.

67 Ashby, op. cit., November 3, 1910.

68 Wiggins, op. cit. p. 121.

69 Registry of Deeds, XX, 522.

nucleus. This company alone probably supplied more employment both in the mills and the nearby woods than all the rest of the owners combined. The store furnished the workers with their produce, and the mills, with the money with which to buy their provisions. In 1857 the partnership of thirteen years was dissolved, and their holdings were divided, Sweden Street marking the extent of the land property - Collins to the north and Vaughan to the south. Samuel Collins naturally had intact the saw mill on his son's site, while Vaughan retained the grist mill. The latter's father-in-law, Joseph Bickford, ran the mill for him for awhile; then later it was sold to Abram Sawin. Under the name of the Sawin Brothers this grist mill business was carried on until 1873 when the firm sold to John Sincock, who with his cousin, Henry, had come from England. He had been located for a time in Houlton, removing from there to Fort Fairfield and thence to Caribou.⁷⁰

The interests which Collins had kept in the original plant were finally sold in 1890 to H.A. Edwards and his brother, Del,⁷¹ for \$2,500. The former remained in the firm which was later established, but Del left and bought a similar mill in Fort Fairfield. With H.A. Edwards were associated two other business men who had come there from Bethel, Maine, George O. Smith and Joseph Goud. The new proprietors materially improved the plant by the addition of wheat rollers - the Nordyke-Marmon type -

70 White, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9. Also Registry of Deeds, XLVIII, 356.
71 *Ibid.*, CXIX, 295.

similar to those used in the very large western mills, so that it became one of the finest in that whole area.⁷² In 1905 the entire business was sold to Jeremiah Smith for \$6,000. In the following year the new owner took into partnership George Cox,⁷³ who furnished the executive ability while Smith supplied the capital. Seven years later, Cox purchased for \$7,000 the whole business and conducted it until his death in 1919.⁷⁴

His widow has continued the ownership of the old mill. At first she hired men to operate the business for her, but at present one of her sons, James, has full direction of the mill. It is run by water power whenever there is enough pressure to operate the 30 horse-power machines; at other times electricity is used. The wheat mill and buckwheat mill are entirely separate; rollers are used in both. For feed, a grinder is used which makes 3,600 revolutions a minute and will grind 60 bushels of oats or barley in an hour. This mill has patrons from the immediate vicinity as well as north to Van Buren and south to Presque Isle. Toll grinding is very little used now, the greater part of the payments being made in cash on the price basis of 20¢ per bushel for wheat, 10¢ a bushel for buckwheat, and 25¢ a barrel for feed.⁷⁵

The business of this mill, as in the case of every mill where

72 Personal interview with George O. Smith of Caribou, May 14, 1938.

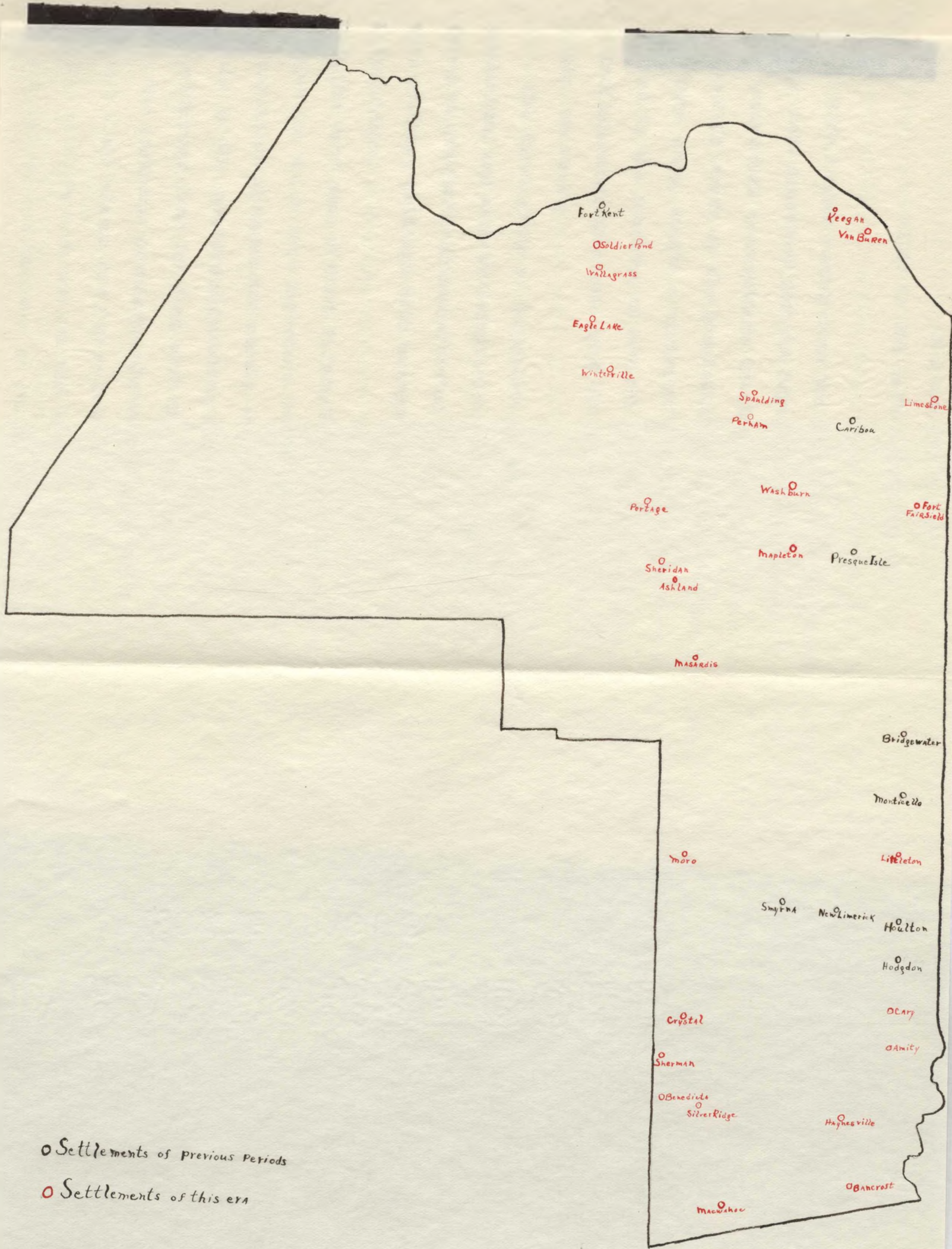
73 Registry of Deeds, CCIX, 580.

74 Ibid., CCLX, 513; CCLXIV, 156. Also personal interview with James Cox of Caribou, May 14, 1938. Mr. Cox, the son of the former owner, now manages the grist mill.

75 Interview with James Cox, May 14, 1938.

active milling is still going on, depends exclusively upon the potato yield and more especially upon the potato market. A poor price will generally boost the buckwheat acreage. The greater the yield of buckwheat and grain, the more business that comes to the few mills which provide a constant and efficient service to an ever-diminishing population that depends upon the grist mill of old for its flour and feed.

The early part of the lumber epoch thus merely witnessed the fulfillment of the tentative beginnings which the Aroostook War had so rudely interrupted. It, therefore, made of these first settlements post towns which could assure the incoming settlers of some certainty of help and supplies in case of need. It likewise served to focus a new interest in this section of Maine by the magnitude of the timber activities in the annual drives down the northern rivers.



○ Settlements of previous periods

○ Settlements of this era

Chapter III

MILLS OF THE LATER LUMBER EPOCH

With lumber coming down the principal rivers, with men going into Aroostook for the huge timber operations, and with the commercial transactions involved, the people became increasingly aware of the possibilities of this farthestmost County. Some came, caught a vision of its future greatness, and helped in the founding of several new communities. With these establishments, this last part of the lumber epoch is principally concerned.

The first group of these new communities sprang up on the borderland and were so definitely a part of that area which Canadian and Maine citizens wanted that the first locations were military holdings with barracks and soldiers as stabilizing links.

The very name of Fort Fairfield definitely conveys the purpose for which this important border town was established. Its earliest existence was merely as a fortress for the border patrols in the questioned territory. Soon after the State troops were withdrawn from the Fort with the signing of the treaty settling the northeast boundary, pioneers entered the area anxious to stake their claims for future homes. A few of the earliest of these settlers were men who had been at the fort defending the area and who now hastened to return for permanent settlement.

As in the case of other towns, the impetus to definite settlement came with several State grants to various citizens for the building of mills. Among these were grants of lots numbered 15 and 19 to James and Samuel Fitzherbert respectively which were made on January 12, 1841.¹ A third grant of 3,000 acres was made to Dudley Leavitt of Bangor in 1841 for which he was to build a saw mill on Fitzherbert Brook.² He began the mill but soon afterwards sold out his interests to Pattee and Frisbee, likewise newcomers to the settlement who finished the long lumber mill in 1841. From this ownership, the name of the stream was henceforth known as Pattee Brook.³ Almost immediately Frisbee sold to Albion P. Haywood, and it was under the name of Pattee and Haywood that the business was carried on for several years. This was the first mill built in Fort Fairfield.⁴ A little later this long lumber mill was supplemented with a clapboard mill, immeasurably increasing its service value to the early inhabitants. After Haywood retired, his share was purchased by H.W. Hyde.⁵

Among the early settlers were Joseph Wingate Haines and his wife, Mary. They brought to the border town interest in an old religious movement - the Society of Friends. Joseph and Mary were very enterprising citizens and shortly afterwards

1 Registry of Deeds, II, 199; II, 201.

2 Ibid., II, 366-367.

3 Ashby, op. cit., June 30, 1910.

4 Ellis, C.H., History of Fort Fairfield, (Fort Fairfield, Maine, 1894), p. 120.

5 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 86.

they persuaded others of the same faith to join them. Around the saw mill which Haines built in 1844, in return for his grant of 1,000 acres from the State, these settlers gathered, forming that part of Fort Fairfield which was and is known as Maple Grove.⁶ Dissatisfied with his "up and down" saw venture, Haines soon sold out and turned his full attention to his farm. The mill was eventually bought by Luther Bryant who operated it for many years.⁷

The first shingle mill in Maple Grove was located about 60 rods below the Haines saw mill and was operated by C.F. Ellis; while just a mile below this was a similar mill run successively by Osco A. and John F. Ellis. This last mill was also managed for a time by Henry W. Hyde, who included a long lumber and clapboard mill with it.⁸

William A. Sampson, one of the Quaker friends of the Haines, arrived in that migratory movement of 1858-59, bought the shingle mill of C.F. Ellis, converted it into a grist mill, and erected another building for wool carding machines. He used steam power for his operations.⁹

The very earliest dwellers had been obliged to take their wheat and grain to the distant Cochran mill on the Caribou

6 Ellis, op. cit., pp. 209 and 273.

7 Ashby, op. cit., June 30, 1910.

8 Ibid.

9 Ellis, op. cit., p. 209. The Aroostook Times, October 10, 1862, mentions the completion of this mill. The issue of October 30, 1863, states that "W.A. Sampson's mill at Maple Grove grinds daily 250 bushels of buckwheat."

Stream, or, if this were impossible, to grind it at home laboriously in small coffee mills. In 1848 E.P. Whitney had built a mill on Lovely Brook to remedy this grave need.

The next mill for grinding grain had been built by Deacon Daniel Foster and Chandler Randall in 1858 on the site of the old Pattee-Haywood mill which they had purchased from H.W.

¹⁰Hyde. Following Randall's death in 1860, his son, John H. Randall, took over his interests until Foster bought the remaining half of the property in 1868.¹¹

The mill building was purchased about this time by John Barnes, who had operated the carding mill for W.A. Sampson. Barnes removed the mill to the Whitney site on Lovely Brook which he had bought and there he operated two mills, one for wheat, and the other for buckwheat.¹² He thus provided one of best milling facilities in northern Maine. After 1871 the mill changed hands several times until in 1890, it finally became the property of Alfred A. Hockenhull, who had come to Fort

10 Registry of Deeds, XXI, 58, gives the date as June 1, 1860. Aroostook Times, December 21, 1860, confirms the above-mentioned date of 1858 thus: "Subscriber...offers for sale the Grist mill belonging to the estate of the late Chandler Randall, situated at the village of Fort Fairfield in the center of a large and grain-growing country. Said mill has been built two years and is in good repair. It contains two run of 4½ foot burr stones, two bolts, and a smut machine, all of the best quality. The above was built under the direction of Asa Thurlough of Moro, Maine, to whom reference can be made.... For further particulars apply to J.H. Randall on the premises or the subscriber at So. Montville -- M.T. Randall". (This notice ran through 1863.)

11 Registry of Deeds, XXXIV, 460.

12 Ibid., XXXVI, 316.

13

Fairfield from England. This mill could be easily run by water power as the stream quickly filled the mill wheels so that ready power was always available. Hockenull, becoming impressed with the opportunities for building, added to his grist mill a long lumber mill.¹⁴

After the removal of the buildings by Barnes, the mill privilege in the lower village on Pattee Brook was sold to Stephen Phipps in 1871.¹⁵ He conducted a grist mill there until 1882 when he sold out. Soon afterwards it was bought by W.A.Haines.¹⁶ The saw mill site on the opposite side of the brook had been bought years before, in 1865, by his father, Henry Haines.¹⁷ Now the two combined in a very flourishing and profitable business to supply the town with both building materials and food supplies. In 1895 both the saw and grist mills were sold to D.E.Edwards for \$4,500.¹⁸ Edwards, who had been in business with his brother in Caribou since his arrival in Aroostook from Bethel, Maine, was a very progressive business man, adding many new features to his plant. He was proud to advertise that his was the first roller flour mill in the State. This method of grinding wheat by two large steam rolls is based

13 Personal interview with Alden Nightingale, Fort Fairfield, May 14, 1938. Mr. Nightingale was for many years an owner of a grist mill in Fort Fairfield and has been closely associated with industries in Fort Fairfield.

Also Maine Register, 1890.

14 Maine Register, 1923.

15 Registry of Deeds, XLI, 269.

16 Ibid., LXXVI, 209; LXXV, 168.

17 Ellis, op. cit., p. 343.

18 Registry of Deeds, CL, 483.

on the same principle as that used in the large flour mills
of the present day.¹⁹ The grist was then sifted through ma-
chinery with silk-like sieves, and the remains reduced again
and again until the desired texture of salable flour was ob-
tained. The Edwards' mill was operated by water power until elec-
tricity was available; after that the various types of power
were alternated.²⁰

In 1909 Simeon Nightingale purchased the mill and privi-
lege from Edwards and started a flour business which lasted
until 1929.²¹ His son, Alden, as a boy, aided his father, his
duties increasing until the business became known as Simeon
Nightingale and Son. This mill, too, used water power when the
water level was sufficient for the necessary power, supple-
menting it with electricity when the hydraulic pressure was
too weak.

In 1920 the Nightingales, father and son, decided on a
change of location.²² In February of that year they removed
their entire equipment to the building now occupied by the
Alden Nightingale farm machinery plant. It would seem that Fate
had shown an unwonted streak of clemency by giving them a pre-
monition of coming disaster, for, but one month later, in March,
one of the worst floods in years caused the waters to rise so
as to sweep over the old site and leave nothing but desolation

19 Interview with Alden Nightingale, May 14, 1938.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid. Also Maine Register, 1909.

22 Interview with Alden Nightingale, May 14, 1938.

to mark a spot where so many tons of grain and flour had been ground. Their plant provided two distinct mills, one for wheat, the other for buckwheat; the feed was still mashed by imported stones as in the earlier days. It was sometime during this ownership, approximately twenty years ago, that again the weevil got into the wheat, destroying large quantities of it. Even the machinery was so obstructed by the residue in the grist that for a short time mill operations had to be suspended to allow for a thorough cleaning of bolts and sieves.²³

Much business of the Nightingale firm came from across the international boundary line. There were Canadian mills, but they were not so easily accessible as the one at Fort Fairfield; so for many years this trade favorably augmented a business that was gradually losing in its competition with the now well-established potato business. Finally in 1929, the mill under the Nightingale management was discontinued and in 1932 this remnant of a once-indispensable industry came into the hands of the present owner, Percy Fields, a former employee at the Nightingale mill.²⁴ It is now only a feed mill as the flour and buckwheat facilities have been discontinued. It is operated entirely by electricity, and the procedure is not dissimilar to that of the earlier plant. It may be due to a fairly

23 Personal interview with C.C. Harvey of Fort Fairfield, May 14, 1938. Mr. Harvey has been for many years the editor of the Fort Fairfield Review and is keenly interested in local history.

24 Interview with Alden Nightingale, May 14, 1938. Also personal interview with Percy Fields of Fort Fairfield, May 14, 1938. Mr. Fields is the owner of the present feed mill in town.

poor potato market, but, whatever the cause, Fields is encouraged by a gradually increasing volume of business in his custom grinding of grain.

During the latter part of the 19th century other similar establishments existed. In 1868 John Rackliffe purchased from John Chase lot number 11 on Johnson Brook with the right of flowage and the permission to build a dam for a mill, but in 1871 he sold his lot to James Doran. This mill was for grinding the farmers' grain. In 1872 and 1874 Doran sold his interests to Albert Hoyt, who installed a new set of stones, not for oats or barley but for grinding Tobique plaster.²⁵ This plaster rock, found on the Tobique River just across the line in New Brunswick, was almost pure gypsum and was of great value for enriching potato soil. It was used extensively in Aroostook before the advent of the present commercial fertilizers on such a broad scale. Hoyt also set up wool cards in a part of his mill for the carding of his customers' wool. His well-equipped plant did not remain long in his possession, for in 1875, he sold the site to Benjamin Gathercole for his starch factory. This was not the full lot but merely a part with the right to use water for cleansing the starch and for steam.²⁶

 25 Personal interview with George Ashby of Fort Fairfield, August 5, 1938. Mr. Ashby has written a local history which is as yet unpublished. This is largely based on knowledge and anecdotes related by his grandmother, the first American child born in Fort Fairfield. See also Registry of Deeds, XXXV, 270; XXXV, 254; XLI, 350; XLIII, 502; XLIX, 164.

26 Registry of Deeds, LIII, 16.

After Deacon Foster had sold the mill privilege on Pattee Brook to Stephen Phipps in 1871, he and his son, Lincoln, proceeded to build a mill further down near the dam which had been put in to hold the water for their mills at the village. This mill sawed lumber, shingles, and clapboards. In 1871, one-half interest in the mill was sold to Henry W. Hyde. Eventually this too was purchased by Gathercole for another of his starch factories.²⁷

Another who for many years contributed much in service and in business to the successful growth of Fort Fairfield was Deacon Hiram Stevens. He had first come to Fort Fairfield as a volunteer in a detachment to protect Maine's boundary.²⁸ During his service, he had had various tasks assigned to him which took him from one end of the County to the other. This afforded him an excellent opportunity to become acquainted with the country and thereby to select his future home near the center of letter D township, later to be known as Fort Fairfield. His first business venture was a steam shingle mill which he built in 1867 in the midst of some very valuable cedar timber near the banks of the Aroostook River.²⁹

His first mill was so successful that he was encouraged to build another. He bought in 1879 a more desirable farm with a mill site on the Aroostook River. In 1881 he sold his farm

 27 Ibid., XLI, 460; LX, 300; LXVI, 97; LXXXII, 232.

28 Ellis, op. cit., p. 328.

29 Ibid., p. 330.

and the first mill for \$5,000 and with the help of his five sons, he devoted his energies to lumbering and milling.³⁰ Out of this development the Stevens Lumber Company, which was incorporated in 1893, emerged. The location of the company's activities lay along the south bank of the river upon which was built the mills consisting of six shingle machines, one clapboard machine and clapboard planer, one rotary saw with gang edge, a lath machine, and a board planer.³¹ He likewise built in connection with the mills six fine residences which were occupied by the several members of the firm, a large boarding house for the men in his employ, as well as several smaller houses. In addition to the home property, the company owned a large mill on the Salmon River, one of the best water power sites in New Brunswick. The latter mill had two more shingle saws, but in other respects it was the counterpart of the home plant. The actual operation of the Fort Fairfield mill gave direct employment to 94 men, and the work of loading the cars and handling the lumber in the boom as well as securing the timber in the winter increased this number to at least 300 men.³² All this made of Stevensville an enterprising part of Fort Fairfield.

Such business firms as these indicate the importance of lumbering as a leading industry in and about Fort Fairfield for over a quarter of a century.

 30 Ibid., p. 331.

31 Ibid., pp. 331-332.

32 Ibid., pp. 332-333.

Just to the north of Fort Fairfield, where the true heart of the potato industry is today located, was the final destination of General Mark Trafton, a former land agent of the State, who conceived the idea of building a mill upon the forest tract for the purpose of manufacturing clapboards to be shipped to Boston.³³ Limestone, for so it was later named, contained the two principal necessities - heavily forested land and a strong flowing stream, which finally joined the Aroostook just above the latter's junction with the St. John.

B.D. Eastman of Washington County, at that time living in Fort Fairfield, likewise became interested; so the two, having already obtained from the State Legislature a grant of 160 acres in aid of building such a mill, commenced to clear a tract of land on the bank of Limestone Stream or Little River in June, 1845. The new company was called the Limestone Mill Company after the admission of a third member, Mark Trafton, Junior. A substantial dam was built across the stream, and upon this was finally completed in the fall of 1846 the saw mill, containing, as well as the saw, a clapboard and shingle machine.³⁴ Because the new settlers would need to have grinding facilities near at hand, the company built a small grist mill with only one run of stones. This demonstrated better than anything else the faith they had in the new enterprise and in the future town. The shingle machine was a Muzzey machine built

33 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 197.

34 Ibid. Also Ashby, op. cit., October 27, 1910.

in Bangor and hauled by ox-team to Houlton and thence across to Woodstock. From this last point it was boated up the St. John and Aroostook Rivers to Fort Fairfield from which it was hauled over the last lap of the circuitous journey.

No time was wasted in putting the new mill to work. During the fall of 1846 they started sawing clapboards which they hauled the following winter to Merritt's Landing, ten miles below Grand Falls, over a road which they had "swamped" from the mill.³⁵ When the ice went out, the clapboards were rafted and floated down the river to Fredericton and then shipped to Boston.

The Traftons, father and son, sold out to George A. Nourse, and in 1848 the firm of Nourse and Eastman built another small clapboard mill a mile up stream.³⁶ Since timber conveyance to the St. John was so expensive, in 1849, this firm undertook the rather hazardous experiment of "driving" bunches of clapboards down stream with the intention of taking them from the water when the miniature drive reached the St. John, and putting them on rafts. The men turned 400,000 pine clapboards, in bunches, into the Little River and started to drive them as they would logs. The clapboards, however, broke through the boom, resulting in the loss of nearly the entire lot. Such a costly beginning added to other misfortunes proved more than the business could sustain with the result that the firm failed in 1851, and

35 A swamped road is one which is crudely cut through any wooded area by merely felling the trees and removing large obstructions which would hamper logging facilities.

36 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 197.

not much business was done at the mills.

The land was first opened up for settlement at the usual cost of \$1.25 per acre, 50¢ of which was to be paid in cash, the remainder in road labor. Trafton, now elected to the State Legislature, fought consistently for a reduction in land prices until he finally secured a rate of 50¢ an acre, the whole amount to be paid in road labor.³⁸ This was practically giving the land away, but, even with all this inducement, the settlers drifted away apparently because of the failure of the mill.

In 1857, Ephraim Osborn and Dan Libby obtained possession of the mills, and business at once revived. During the next four years there was a heavy migration into the town, and many lots were taken up under the State's generous terms. Libby was appointed land agent, and many of the present roads were laid out by him. Libby and Osborn fought over the control of the business for some time until the property was lost in a bankruptcy case in 1868. Dennis Getchell in 1871 procured the property through a receiver in Bangor.³⁹ The new owner at once set about improving the operation by installing a rotary saw and planer. The mill continued to be operated by water power, generated by a big wooden wheel on the principle of the present

37 Ibid., p. 198. See also the Aroostook Times, May 8, 1866, for a foreclosure notice which mentions the mill property of Nourse and Eastman.

38 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 198.

39 Personal interview with Lyman Getchell, Senior, of Limestone, July 8, 1938. Mr. Getchell is the grandson of the Dennis Getchell who bought the mill property. Also Registry of Deeds, XL, 316; XXXIV, 510.

turbines. Both mills burned in 1877, but they were rebuilt by Getchell's sons, the father having died about the same time. The operation of the mills continued under the firm name of the Getchell Brothers until 1915. During this time it was again burned and rebuilt, but, after a fire in 1915, the Getchells felt there was not enough lumber in the immediate vicinity to warrant its continuation. They sold out to Alfred Noyes, who built a new and expensive mill which he operated until about 1933, when the old dam went out. A new dam was constructed as a W.P.A. project, and, in 1935, the citizens of Limestone bought the mill site for a community swimming pool.⁴⁰

The State awarded to Dennis and Daniel Getchell a grant of 160 acres of land in 1870 as an inducement to build a grist mill. This grant is the present location of the Getchell farm and extends right down to the stream. The brothers added to this original concession until the family owned practically all of the northeast part of Limestone. In the mill, which the brothers constructed, an old water wheel was used, and the mill stones, characteristic of the period, ground the grist. For the wheat, granite stones were used; for the buckwheat, French burr stones made by the Blanchard Company of Boston; and for the oats and other mashed feed, grinders were employed. This flour and feed mill was in operation until 1910 when the mill pond became so filled up with sawdust that the water power was inadequate.⁴¹

40 Interview with Lyman Getchell, July 8, 1938.

41 Ibid.

One other wheat mill was also built, but the operations here were not very extensive. This was also true of the small mill which Alfred Noyes built in 1905 and which he later converted into a starch factory with a small section reserved for grinding grain.

On the St. John River, a little to the north of Limestone, was a settlement, the first residents of which belonged in that early migration of the Acadian French. The history of the early days would, therefore, be the history of the Madawaska settlement and largely one of daily struggles for existence.

The first mill in Van Buren of which there is a record was a grist mill built by Vital Thibodeau on Violette Brook, on the site where the present grist mill stands. This privilege was purchased from Benoi Violette in a deed dated July 7, 1844.⁴² The original owner of this site on Violette Brook was Francois Violette who became the first miller of Violette Brook, as the French designated Van Buren.⁴³ The Thibodeau mill was likewise primitive, but it served very satisfactorily the needs of the people who, at this time, had probably done their grinding in small hand mills.

The second mill, as one would expect, was a saw mill, with a small shingle attachment. This, too, was on Violette Brook

42 Registry of Deeds, (Fort Kent, Maine), III, 369.

43 Personal interview with John Pelletier of Van Buren, July 8, 1938. Mr. Pelletier, a lawyer in Van Buren, has, through his familiarity with various legal transactions in the town, amassed considerable information concerning Van Buren history.

and was first owned by George W. Smith and Charles I. Crosby, who bought the land in 1855 from Benoi Violette. This mill eventually became the property of the Van Buren Lumber Company, or the Hammond Lumber Company as it was then called.⁴⁴

The third mill was a shingle mill built on the river itself on lots numbered 302-303-304, an expanse of 800-900 feet just below the location of the International Bridge. It was built about 1880 by the firm, Stetson Cutler and E.R. Burpee, from St. John, New Brunswick.⁴⁵ The mill was afterwards owned by the Van Buren Shingle Company and later by the Van Buren Manufacturing and Lumber Company. It was soon transferred to the Van Buren Lumber Company and was destroyed by fire in June, 1912.

The next lumber venture was a custom saw mill built sometime between 1880-90 by Chrysologue Soucy, on the site later called Allendale on Violette Brook. It was operated, however, by Joseph Thierrault and Allen Hammond (hence presumably comes the name Allendale for the site). This mill having burned, another was erected in 1901 or 1902 by the Van Buren Lumber Company, but this time the mill was located on the St. John at Chapel Eddy and not on the former site on the brook. After the mills at Chapel Eddy had been moved to Lille or Keegan, as it is now called, and taken over by the Madawaska Company in 1916 from a receiver, Allen Hammond built a second mill back on the original location of Allendale. Ill fortune seemed to follow in

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

the footsteps of this lumber operator for again he lost his mill, this time in a lawsuit. Later the mill itself burned.

The site at Lille, to which the Madawaska Company moved the mills, was that of mills earlier built by the St. John Lumber Company. The new corporation, however, had much more extensive operations, and the site was advantageously located for easy access to one of the best lumber markets along the entire coast, St. John. Fire destroyed the plant at Lille and immediately the owners, the Madawaska Company, rebuilt on an even greater scale. Today this mill at Keegan occupies many acres and is now the only lumber mill on the American banks of the St. John which is in successful operation.

The Aroostook Pulp and Paper Company started the operation of a pulpwood mill in Van Buren in the spring of 1919, but after two years it was taken over by the International Paper Company. This ownership, too, was brief, for in 1923 the mill was shut down and finally dismantled.

Without any question the lumber business "made" Van Buren. If any town could be said to be the product of the great lumber enterprise that began with the great drives sweeping down the St. John to the sea, and continued into the manufacture of all of this timber wealth into long and short lumber, into clapboards, and into shingles that found a market wherever people needed the best quality for building projects, it would be Van Buren. During the World War, when the lumber market increased by leaps and bounds, and in the years following, the climax of

this whole industry was reached. It brought tremendously improved living conditions to these people by good sized pay checks. Naturally such a satisfactory labor center could not fail to attract large numbers of people both from the Provinces as well as from all over Maine and even from other states. From 1918 to 1922 Van Buren could boast of the St. John Lumber Mill, the pulp mill, the mill at Allendale, and another at Chapel Eddy. This brought to the town a weekly pay-roll of \$65,000 to \$70,000.⁴⁶

Today the only remains of these "boom" days are the Madawaska Company at Keegan and the grist mill at the mouth of Violette Brook owned and operated by Paul Marquis.

Meanwhile throughout the rest of the County small mushroom developments were pushing back the cloistered silence of the hills and conquering mile by mile the trackless expanse of the virgin timber. Geographically these settlements were grouped in the west along the old West Aroostook "highway" to Fort Kent and to the extreme south and east. In both cases one or two towns became pivot centers for the area, but for the rest, they assumed a pattern-like similarity. To tell of one is, therefore, to discuss them all with minor exceptions.

The western section of settlements, owing their origin to the extension of the lumber business was found in the area of the Fish, the St. Croix, and the Ashland Branch of the Aroostook Rivers. Their people, for the most part, came in with the big crews, saw the opportunities, and, with a little encourage-

46 Ibid.

ment from others, came back to start lumber mills.

Within this group are included the present townships of Moro, first organized in 1850 as Rockabema Plantation, and Masardis, which was first claimed for a mill grant as far back as 1837 by Joseph Pollard of Old Town.⁴⁷ The larger areas include Ashland, Washburn, and Mapleton. Some of the smaller of these townships are now little more than names on a map, for much of this area is still relatively unsettled, with hunting lodges and a few portable saw mills holding almost undisputed sway. In fact, for the period before the Civil War and up to approximately 1910, far greater activity prevailed than now. A large number of mills was started; in Moro alone, during this time over 25 long saw mills were built on the Ashland Branch and its tributaries.⁴⁸ Some of the first of these employed the old-fashioned sawing facilities and were occasionally accompanied by crude accommodations for grinding grist. Still others, built a little later, were more efficiently equipped with the new rotary saw, shingle and clapboard machines, and sometimes with a planer. The facilities for a livelihood were not always entirely adequate for not infrequently these settlers endured privations as is shown in this extract quoted from one of the first settlers:

47 Holmes, E., Exploration and Survey of the Aroostook Territory, (Augusta, Maine, 1839), p. 40.

48 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 259.

John Knowlen left his wife and four children alone while he went to Presque Isle, then called Fairbanks, to get supplies. They had but one pint of Indian corn and a cow to keep them from starvation. For three days Mrs. Knowlen ate nothing but wild chocolate root boiled. A neighbor finally brought a little flour and tea. At Fairbanks he could get no flour so he had to journey on to the mouth of the Aroostook where he paid \$22 for a barrel of flour and \$18 for a barrel of herring. He was gone ten days in this quest for food.⁴⁹

In Masardis, mill owners came and went in a greater number than was found in Moro. Probably the outstanding example of such lumber operators was Shepard Boody of Old Town, the John Goddard of West Aroostook, who bought the mill holdings from the Fish Company in 1852, and enlarged the project with extensive operations upon the head waters of the Aroostook.⁵⁰ At this time pine lumber sold at a much higher price in Bangor than in St. John, so Boody for a number of years, revised the usual procedure by driving his lumber to the mouth of the Munsungren where he took it from the water with teams and derricks and hauled it across to Sebois Stream on the Penobscot River. From there it was quite easy to float it to Bangor. After several seasons of financial reverses, the mills were sold to first one lumberman and then another, and Boody, completely discouraged by his lumber failures, turned from business and began preaching the Methodist Faith.⁵¹

By 1890 steam power mills were competing with the water power type for supremacy. On the St. Croix River such plants

49 Ibid., p. 156.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

were built by several operators in Masardis. Even women entered this competition in 1893. In a day and age when woman's place was thought to be unmistakably in the home, the steam lumber enterprise of Miss Sara Simpson and Miss Yates, built a mile above Masardis, attracted considerable attention. By this time, however, the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad had been built through Masardis, so lumber could be shipped as well as floated to market.⁵² These ventures may afford an idea of the type of enterprises which characterized this section.

Ashland has from the very beginning been the headquarters of the vast lumbering business on the upper Aroostook and has played a most important part in the business history of the whole County. Its prominence as a lumbering center, and the opportunities which were so easily available - limitless expanse of the best timber lands and a choice of swiftly flowing rivers and streams - have had a tendency to retard the town's development as an agricultural locality. What farms were taken up were used almost exclusively to raise hay or grain, the items which were assured a lucrative market.

A company in 1838, consisting of George W. Buckmore of Ellsworth, William D. Parsons of Eastbrook, and James McCaron of New Brunswick, was formed for the sole purpose of building a mill near the mouth of the Big Machias River.⁵³ In that year

52 Personal interview with Charles Weeks of Masardis, July 6, 1938. Mr. Weeks is a former lumber operator and mill owner in Masardis.

53 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 68.

a dam was put across the river about a half mile above its confluence with the Aroostook. In the spring of 1839 a high freshet carried the dam away, so that the owners were obliged to build a new dam the following September. At the same time they also succeeded in building their mill.⁵⁴ This, too, was a replica of many others, containing besides a saw, a run of stones and a bolt for preparing flour and meal for the people who settled in the area. After a year or two, James McCaron bought out his two associates, but after running the mill alone for about three years, he sold out, and the mill passed through several hands until it was finally purchased in 1870 by C.W. Clayton, a lumber operator of the Allegash Territory.⁵⁵ The Clayton and Sons firm was one of the largest lumber companies along the Aroostook water shed. The saw mill, as they improved it, contained all the appliances of that day - a rotary saw, a clapboard machine, planer, lath machine, and barrel machinery. The mills sawed about 500,000 feet of long lumber a year for the local market as well as making 200,000 clapboards annually. The best quality of both was hauled to Presque Isle and from there shipped by rail to Boston. This plant also made all the barrels which were used at the company's two starch factories.⁵⁶ In their shingle mill alone they manufactured as many as

54 Ibid.

55 Aroostook Times, June 1, 1866. "A large drive of pine logs containing 3 to 10 million feet belonging to Jewett and Clayton is being tied up on the Allegash for want of water."

56 The Claytons had built a starch factory near the mills in Ashland in 1878; the other plant was in Masardis on Squa Pan Stream.

3,000,000 shingles in a year. These, too, were shipped, at least the superior qualities, via Presque Isle to Boston.⁵⁷ In addition to supplying employment in their various mills, a great number of workers were used in the woods, cutting and hauling the lumber to the mills. Those who did not work directly for the Clayton establishment made a profitable living by the sale of supplies for the lumber crews in the woods and in the mills.

Ashland also had other mills both for sawing lumber and grinding flour and grain. Of the several owners, Isaac Hacker⁵⁸ who came to Ashland from China, Maine, in 1843, and Parker and Abner Weeks of Masardis, were probably the most successful; but their mills did not begin to compete with the larger Clayton plant.

Just a short distance above Ashland on the Aroostook River is the tiny town of Sheridan. Here in 1896 was built one of the largest lumber mills in the whole State.⁵⁹ The mill was owned and operated by a corporation, the Ashland Manufacturing Company, but a Mr. Stetson from Boston really controlled the company. The corporation leased the stumpage from local owners, sawing up from 10 to 15 million feet of logs a year, and shipping to outside markets, principally Boston. The company employed over 200 men the year round, so that when the mill was closed down

57 Wiggins, op. cit., p.73.

58 Ibid., p. 71.

59 Personal interview with Ralph Bearce of Ashland, July 6, 1938. Mr. Bearce, as a hardware store proprietor, has been connected in business negotiations with the industrial firms in Ashland and vicinity for many years.

in 1922 it affected disastrously the people in Ashland. Soon after, the plant was dismantled and the old buildings converted into a pulp-loading repository by the Great Northern Paper Company which shipped from there the pulp to their mills in Millinocket.⁶⁰

At Portage one finds one of the few lumber mills in the entire region that is still in active use, Portage is, as it was from the first, a lumber town. Other small mills had come and gone, but in 1896 Oscar Ivensen from New Sweden, and earlier direct from Norway, came to Portage and built a long lumber mill.⁶¹ He was not so successful as he had been before his mill burned in New Sweden, and he finally sold out to Fred Robinson of Robinson's Mills in Blaine. No more successful than the former owner, Robinson too sold out to I.R.Lenfest of Presque Isle, who was buying considerable lumber property at this time. By then, 1902, the mill had been enlarged to manufacture cedar shingles as well. The other large mill in Portage finally became the property of the Blanchard Company, a long lumber firm from New York. This firm continued the operation of the mill until 1930 when the site was purchased by John Cormier, a woods' foreman for the Blanchard Company. By him the present large and modern mill was built on the Ivensen site. The old Blanchard buildings are still standing although Cormier has removed what

60 During the summer of 1938 the owners loaded over 80,000 cords of spruce pulp for the Millinocket mills.

61 Personal interview with Oscar Ivensen of Portage, July 6, 1938. Mr. Ivensen was the owner of one of the mills in Portage.

equipment he needed for his new plant. He uses the location principally for storage and loading. The present mill saws out as many as 30,000 feet of lumber per day. This lumber is shipped to Boston and New York through the agency of the Blanchard Lumber Company.⁶²

St. Froid Lake in the town of Winterville was the location of several small mills of no ambitious scope. Here, too, in 1904 at that part of the town called Quimby, there was a veneer mill built by the Standard Veneer Company in which Allan Quimby⁶³ was the principal director. A.E. Baxter was brought to Winterville by the company to take charge of the work at the plant in Quimby. In 1908 the mill was torn down and the machinery and other usable parts were taken to Stockholm to be added to the company's mill in the latter town.⁶⁴ At least one small grist mill for flour and feed was built in Winterville but it was located on Fish River where water power could be used to turn the big wheel and thence the old granite stones. This was torn down before the turn of the century.

The story of Eagle Lake has been one of many interruptions and promises without fulfillment. The advent of the railroad gave the Fish River Lumber Company the encouragement to build a large saw mill on the west shore of the lake.⁶⁵ This mill ran

62 Ibid.

63 Personal interview with W.N. Baxter of Stockholm, July 9, 1938. Mr. Baxter is the son of the former manager of the plant at Winterville.

64 Ibid.

65 Ashby, op. cit., December 1, 1910.

for about fifteen years until the interest in an international pulp mill turned the attention of the people toward paper making. This latter enterprise never reached materialization, however, for when the company realized the extent of its land obligations, it abandoned the project.⁶⁶

On the Wallagrass River there is one of the oldest milling establishments in the area. This is a combination long lumber and grist mill which was built about 1878 by Aime Corriveau.⁶⁷ It was originally run by water wheels, had an "up and down" saw, and the old mill stones for grinding out the wheat and buckwheat which was brought from far and near. The mill was sold by Corriveau to Dennis Plourde in 1924. The new owner installed rollers for the wheat, but continued the use of the stones for the mashed feeds. Grinding buckwheat at present constitutes the greater part of the milling business, which like the sawing, is entirely custom work. Plourde also put in new turbine wheels to replace the old water wheel.

Still in the western part of the County although not on the West Aroostook Road itself, lies Mapleton, another of the towns which had their inception in the story of pine and spruce timber. Three men came into the new territory at nearly the same time and with the same purpose. George Emerson in 1858 built a mill, and in the year following, Freeman Ball and Reuben

66 Interview with Remi Daigle, July 7, 1938.

67 Personal interview with Dennis Plourde of Wallagrass Plantation, July 6, 1938. Mr. Plourde is the present owner of the grist and saw mill located there.

Huse came from Hallowell to commence a mill on the Presque Isle Stream in the southeast part of the township.⁶⁸ These last two men had been in the vicinity the previous summer at which time they had selected their mill site, claiming the grant of a square mile of land which the State still offered to mill builders. Even then, it was rather expensive for it cost them \$80 per ton to transport their machinery and goods as far as Presque Isle, and there was still a distance of 14 miles to their mill site with nothing but a crooked tote road and sleds to use.⁶⁹ This saw mill became the nucleus of the town, then called Ball's Mills. A year or so later, the partners installed a shingle machine. About the same time Ball sold out his interests to his associate, Huse, who in turn, about 1868, sold out the whole mill. Finally the mill was bought by Messrs. Stewart and Morton, who installed rotary saw and a planer. This firm went through bankruptcy about 1893, and the mill was then bought by I.R. Lenfest of Presque Isle, who operated it himself for over 25 years.⁷⁰

In the early days the settlers had to take their grist to Presque Isle or to a small mill on Salmon Brook in Washburn. This inconvenience was not conducive to the raising of much grain. The first grist mill, an electric plant, was not built until just before the World War by Frank Chandler. This mill

68 Wiggins, op. cit., pp. 251-52. Also Registry of Deeds, XX, 377.

69 Ashby, op. cit., January 12, 1911.

70 Personal interview with Hazen McIntyre and George Thomas of Mapleton, July 9, 1938. Messrs. McIntyre and Thomas were formerly employed in these mills of the town.

was burned in 1920. Feeling the need of a local milling center for their buckwheat crops, the farmers of Mapleton organized a cooperative union to rebuild the plant in the same year. In 1924 the mill was purchased by the present owner, Orin L. Winslow, who has run it seasonally since then.⁷¹ This mill uses rollers for wheat and the buckwheat and two sets of attrition or steel plates, being turned very rapidly in opposite directions, to grind the oats and barley.

A near neighbor to Mapleton, but settled much earlier, was Washburn. Isaac Wilder, its first settler, came to Aroostook in 1840 from Pembroke as a carpenter at the barracks at Fort Fairfield. After his services there were completed, he pushed on up the river until he came to Salmon Brook where he built the first saw mill. This had a clapboard machine in addition to the old-fashioned saw.⁷² The task of getting his clapboards and lumber to market was quite a laborious one. The long lumber was made into raft-form upon which the clapboards were piled, and the cargo was floated down stream on the river as far as the Aroostook Falls where the raft had to be removed from the water, hauled around the falls, reconstructed,⁷³ and floated out into the St. John and so down to Fredericton.

Wilder continued to operate his mill until 1879 although during this time it was twice burned and rebuilt. On the

71 Personal interview with Orin L. Winslow, July 9, 1938. Mr. Winslow, the present owner of the grist mill, lives in Mapleton.

72 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 128.

73 Ibid., p. 129.

occasion of the last fire he started for Bangor for new ma-
 chinery before the fire was even fully out.⁷⁴ Wilder also had
 a small grist mill for buckwheat, wheat, and grain. For this
 grinding he used water-driven wheels to turn the granite mill
 stones. This old mill site is now occupied by the Washburn
 Community Swimming Pool.

Wilder sold the entire property in 1879 to Johnson and
 Phair of Presque Isle. The mill was thus operated with con-
 stantly increasing business until 1886 when the partnership
 was dissolved, and the plant became the property of Thomas H.
 Phair. David Duncan, who had worked for three years in their
 mill office in Presque Isle, was made foreman of the entire
 Washburn plant on Phair's ascension to ownership, a position
 which he held for 31 years until the owner's death in 1916.⁷⁵

Phair built a new grist mill several years later by the
 side of his saw mill on the east branch of Salmon Brook. He
 installed large rollers for the wheat, but used the mill

74 Aroostook Times, February 3, 1876. A news item mentions a
 fire in the mill. The article described his mill as having
 "...a rotary saw mill, shingle machine, 6 circular saws,
 stave machine, clapboard machine, planer, sapping ma-
 chine, a veneering machine, 3 water wheels, and a large
 amount of shafting and belting. Loss about \$8,000. Mr.
 Wilder will rebuild." Also personal interview with David
 Duncan of Washburn, June 29, 1938. Mr. Duncan was the
 former foreman of the Phair plant and is well informed
 on the growth of mills in Washburn.

75 Mr. Duncan came to the Phair employ from Scotland and was
 given \$500 for his salary as foreman in 1886. He was
 obviously trusted implicitly by Phair since he was com-
 missioned to carry the pay and supply money to all of
 the 18 factories which Phair owned. This was all in gold
 and silver and was for potato payments as well.

stones for the buckwheat and feed. When this was first completed, he hired a man to come from the West to take charge of the plant and to serve as an instructor for a local foreman. The grinding was very largely custom work for which toll or cash was received, the latter being at the rate of 10¢ per bushel. At one time, when wheat was scarce, Phair bought a shipment of western wheat from Indiana, had it ground in his mill, and then sold it at his store. Finally both the grist and saw mill burned in 1912. The latter was rebuilt on the same site.

The saw mill was likewise of much importance to the industrial development of Washburn. Duncan would be sent out to buy logs and then in the summer he would put crews of men to work peeling them. The hemlock bark would be shipped to the tanneries in New Limerick and Island Falls, and the logs would be driven down stream to the saw mill. It was not unusual for the crews to drive as many as 6 or 7 million feet of lumber down the river in a spring. The spruce sold for \$9 to \$10 per M, while sawed pine brought a higher price. One of the best markets in the late part of the 19th century was the railroad which used the pine for construction purposes. Even the best "cleared" timber brought only \$12 per M while today the price would be at least three times as much.

76

These mills provided steady employment for the citizens

 76 Cleared timber is the highest grade of lumber. It is supposed to be quite free from all imperfections.

in and around Washburn for a long time. The wood crews received \$15 or \$16 per month including their living expenses; the teamsters with horses received \$26 per month; and the men in the mill earned on an average \$1.25 per day.

After the last large saw mill burned again, it was rebuilt, but since 1920 it has remained partly idle.

In Perham and Spaulding one feels as though he had stepped back into the virgin forest country and the stream-driven mill days. For miles and miles dark green acres of timberlands cover the hillsides. This gives one a fairly accurate impression of what feelings must have been aroused in the mind of the Rev. William Morse, who first arrived in Perham in 1862 from New Sharon in Franklin County. Morse took up a homestead on the two 160 acre lots which he had received from the State for building a mill and a bridge.⁷⁷ By 1865 his mill, located on Salmon Brook, was completed with its quaint old saw driven by an old-fashioned under-shot wheel, the slowest kind of water power. This wheel was 10-12 feet long with paddles on it. The water ran under the wheel instead of over it with just enough current to move the wheel.

The mill was useful in sawing out the lumber needed by the early settlers for their homes, but it did not prove a very successful financial venture for the Baptist clergyman. After the

77 Ashby, op. cit., November 24, 1910. Also a personal interview with Will Bragdon of Perham, June 29, 1938. Mr. Bragdon is an elderly farmer whose grandfather Reed was the local land agent in 1862.

Washburn mill was built on Salmon Brook, he finally sold out, saying sadly, "The dam wasn't worth a mill and the mill wasn't worth a dam!"⁷⁸

This mill burned and another was built by Hiram Morse in the fall of 1880.⁷⁹ This, with its rotary saw, shingle and lath machine, was a more improved mill than its predecessor and used a turbine wheel. Later the power was changed to steam. The mill was bought and sold several times until about 1917 a group of shareholders of the Milliken-Tomilson Company in Bangor formed the Perham Lumber Company, and hired Charles Peary and his son Herbert to operate it for them. During the war there was much lumber put in under the general direction and specifications of the War Administrator. This region had a vast amount of virgin spruce which would naturally saw most advantageously as heavy timber "clears". The government required that this "clear" lumber be sawed one inch thick without edging, so that it could be used for airplane construction. Great amounts were thus sawed in readiness for the order to ship, which never came. After lying about for two years, the stripped lumber was finally sold for what it would bring. Since this was practically nothing and since the delay and final loss had so tied up the capital of the company that it could not cut the lumber on the stumpage-land permit in time, the entire plant was taken over by the American Realty Company. The mill buildings were finally torn

78 Ashby, op. cit., November 24, 1910.

79 Interview with Will Bragdon, June 29, 1938.

80

down about 1924.

Today only one or two small portable, gasoline-operated saw mills remain of this former industry. The fate of such mills as these is quite typical of the County as a whole where this occasional activity reminds the older residents of days when the axes were never quiet, and the saws hummed an incessant song.

For the group of settlements in the south and east of the County emphasis on individual development was if anything less marked than in the preceding localities. Many of them gained their only importance in this lumber era, and have become faded and depleted in population with the subsequent years. A few episodes have been found of interest for some little unique feature.

Like a hushed murmur out of a dim past comes the brief glamor that once belonged to Bancroft located at the southeastern extremity of Aroostook on the banks of the Baskahegan Stream. Here the log drives went on with an excitement hardly conceivable for a place no larger than Bancroft is. In respect to its lumbering interests, Bancroft was more distinctly a Penobscot than an Aroostook town. The Baskahegan flows into the Penobscot River, so the drives eventually reached Bangor where the lumber was sold. Financially then, Bangor was to these people what St. John and Fredericton were to dwellers along the northern streams and the Aroostook rivers. At one time, when the great timber business was at its height, Bancroft had several hotels which were normally, at the "peak of the season", filled to overflowing

80 Ibid.

with its river guests. These river-drivers, picked from the best of their kind, descended upon the little town to assist in sending the great logs on their way to market. Bancroft was likewise the convenient "stopping place" of the crews going into the woods in the late summer and fall. In fact, until the lumber-jack came no more with his cant dog and peavey, and the railroad was built through Danforth instead of Bancroft, as had been expected, the Bancrofts, North and South, presented a scene of stirring activity.

The year 1834 marked the date of the first arrival, Daniel ⁸¹ Bean, from Cumberland County. Here on the falls, in what is now South Bancroft, he built a saw mill and its ever-faithful twin, the grist mill. Bean carried on successfully an extensive business in lumbering, milling, and farming until about 1850 when he sold the property to John Pomroy and moved to Haynesville. Even today that part of the stream where the falls are located is known as Bean's Falls. Pomroy operated the farm and mills until Lincoln's call for more volunteers in 1862 caused him to drop the hoe and forget the saw. When the war was concluded, Pomroy, a captain, to take up his old life where he had left it. As a lumberman and trader he became quite influential. Later on, when it was apparent that the heyday of Bancroft was over, Pomroy went to Minnesota.

Many of the other active citizens moved to new centers, and gradually the little town's importance shrunk as that of

81 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 239.

its rival, Danforth, grew. Today its citizens cut and sell wood pulp, and talk about the glories that belonged to a bygone day.

In the same vicinity one finds the adjacent settlements of Glenwood Plantation and the town of Haynesville. In many respects the early history of Haynesville is but a repetition of Bancroft. This town, too, had its days of excitement when, at one time, over 75 lumber-jacks would be guests at the three hotels in the town waiting for a big drive to start. As a matter of course, mills were built in both towns. Most of the first ones had the cumbersome saw attachment which not infrequently would be supplemented with a more efficient rotary saw. Shingle machines as well as others for laths and clapboards were quite generally included in the equipment. One of the owners of such a mill in Glenwood, George Carpenter, shipped his long lumber to outside markets via the Maine Central Railroad at Wytopotlock Station, but many owners used tributaries of the Penobscot River to market their lumber in Bangor. ⁸² The Springer Lumber Company, composed of Alfred G. Chambers, Henry Springer, and John W. Hinch, was without doubt the largest single firm to carry on lumber operations in the area. The company had mills at Wytopotlock, Kingman, and Green Lake, as well as at Haynesville. It was during this time that these men handled one of the biggest drives ever made on the West Branch of the Penobscot.

"Beginning on the Mattawamkeag, we drove 90,000,000 feet of logs down the West Branch to the boom at Greenbush. Something like

82 Ibid., p. 237.

110 lumber-jacks were engaged in this drive. Other drives ranged from 15,000,000 to 60,000,000 feet of logs.⁸³"

Just below Hodgdon, on the road to Calais, there are two towns which, while not reflecting the era of the log booms as those of Bancroft and Haynesville, nevertheless gained their early starts during this period. The first, Cary, named for Shepard Cary, who at one time owned half of the town as wild timber land, had a small grist mill as well as a saw mill built by Rufus Mansur of Houlton. Both these mills were on the Meduxnekeag Stream, but were not of such prime importance to the town because of the very fine facilities at Cary's Mills in West Houlton. The saw mill was later modified so that starch could be ground in the fall, and in the winter and spring the farmers' lumber could be sawed.⁸⁴

A similar though earlier history marks the activities in Amity to the south of Cary. Here the saw mill was built by Israel Davis of Concord, New Hampshire, in 1836 on a tributary of the Meduxnekeag Stream. In time this fell into disuse and thence ruin.⁸⁵

Littleton, likewise, was started about this time. Martin Johnson came to Aroostook in the days of the Aroostook War, and

83 Personal interviews with A.G.Chambers and H.F.Smith of Haynesville, June 25, 1938. Mr. Chambers is the former president of the Springer Lumber Company, while Mr. Smith has worked much of the time in the various mills.

84 Personal interview with Miss Geneva Tracy of Cary, June 25, 1938. Miss Tracy is the granddaughter of one of the earliest residents.

85 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 45.

after awhile decided to remain to engage in farming. Here in Littleton in 1843 he built the first mill in town on what became known as Johnson Brook.⁸⁶ For many years he was engaged in trading and lumbering. The only contact with the outside world which the settlers had was over an old lumber road which led out to the main road from Woodstock to Houlton. During all these early years, the inhabitants had to take their grists over this road to Houlton to obtain flour. This mill was later sold to Frank Titcomb of Houlton, who operated it with his other plants in different towns until it was destroyed by fire in 1881.

The only remaining mill there today is Jennings' custom saw and shingle mill, located about one-half mile above the Martin Johnson site on the same brook. This mill was built about 1878, and is today housed in the original building.⁸⁷

To the extreme south, bordering on Penobscot County, there was some mill development, but the greater part was concentrated in Sherman and Sherman Mills. There were never any extensive industries in either the town of Macwahoc or Silver Ridge Plantation; rather their part seemed to have been to furnish areas of forest land to satisfy the hungry saws further south and the insatiable demands of the lumber operators for more and more

86 Ibid., p. 165. Also personal interview with Frank Leavitt of Littleton, June 29, 1938. The old timbers in the Leavitt barn are marked with an iron brand such as Mr. Leavitt's grandfather, one of the first settlers, described was used by the Johnson mill.

87 Interview with Frank Leavitt, June 29, 1938.

wealth. There was a mill in Macwahoc built as early as 1829 on the Macwahoc Stream, and a few others appeared with later developments,⁸⁸ but for the most part all the able-bodied men worked in the woods for the lumber bosses or on the rivers during the spring drives. If there was any custom sawing or grinding to be done, both the timber and grist were taken to Sherman.

The town of Sherman was the industrial center for the area round about it. It must have occupied a position somewhat similar to Houlton, just to the north. The first settler was Alfred Cushman of Sumner in Oxford County, who arrived in 1832, buying 200 acres of land at the rate of \$1.75 per acre. He built no mill for some time, but rather cleared the land, planting it to hay, his first crop of which brought \$25 per ton, and grain.⁸⁹ These products found a ready sale at a lumber camp not far away.

The history of the larger industrial center, Sherman Mills, began in 1840 with the arrival of the first mill wright, Morgan L. Gary from Hingham, Massachusetts.⁹⁰ After burning and clearing a site of land, he built a mill in 1841 on Molunkus Stream. This first mill was burned in 1846, but Gary rebuilt it, adding to his sawing facilities a small mill for grinding corn. This the settlers jocularly referred to as Gary's "Coffee Mill". This was operated until 1856 when Gary sold it to Spaulding Robinson. The latter dismantled the mill in 1862, and, under the new firm name of Robinson and Bean, the owners rebuilt a

88 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 260.

89 Ibid., p. 131.

90 Ibid., p. 134. Also Aroostook Times, January 18, 1861.

grist mill in which there were three runs of stones.⁹¹ Very shortly afterwards the same firm built a saw mill with a lath saw and planer as well as the saws.

The growth of the village was rather slow during the war years, but with the end of the fighting there came a revival of business and a new impulse to the settlement.⁹² The Robinson family long occupied a position of prominence in Sherman. Robinson, in addition to holding public positions in town, was a representative to the Maine Legislature and for a time was the local agent for State lands.

Lorenzo Bean finally sold his share of the grist business to Spaulding Robinson. This mill was leased to various people, but at the death of Robinson in 1876, the direction was taken over by his son, A.T. Robinson, who operated the mill until 1902. During this time he employed different people to manage it until he sold the mill to William Tilley, the present owner. Business has been more or less desultory for some time. The people have ceased to have their former interest in grain raising until a poor crop of potatoes recalls to their minds that wheat and buckwheat still grow very well there.

The saw mill business, started by Gary in 1841, continued under various owners until it was finally bought in 1905 by the

91 Ibid., p. 135. The Aroostook Times, December 4, 1863, notes that, "Robinson Esq. of Sherman has just completed his new grist mill, and it is now in active operation."

92 Aroostook Times, April 17, 1868, "Our saw mills and grist mills are in operation day and night." (This was found in the Sherman news letter.)

93

Gallison Brothers. One of the brothers, Perl, eventually took over the full management of the mill which he still continues to operate.

There was also at Sherman Station a large lumber mill which was first owned by the Robinson Brothers. It is actually located in the town of Stacyville and indeed is the only industry there, the town being a typical farming center. This mill at Sherman Station is now owned by the Sherman Lumber Company, and to it, as well as to the Gallison mill, people from all the surrounding area bring their lumber to be sawed.

A little to the northwest of Sherman there started up a small settlement of people called Crystal about the saw mill which was built there on Crystal Stream in 1842 by Jedediah
94
Fairfield of China, Maine. Two or three other mills were likewise built, but the trade was mostly for custom sawing, so the settlement did not contribute much to Aroostook sales.

Likewise near Sherman is the enterprising little town of Benedicta. It was not for its industries or for its participation in the logging career of the County that Benedicta made its bid for recognition; rather it was for the unique purpose of its establishment. In 1834 Bishop Benedict Fenwick, then stationed in Bangor, conceived the idea of establishing a modern Utopia in the forest wilds of Aroostook County. This

93 Personal interview with Perl Gallison of Sherman, June 23, 1938. Mr. Gallison, the owner of the mill, has been connected with it as worker and owner for 46 years.

94 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 264.

settlement was to be so far cut off from outside contacts and the temptations of liquor, that its citizens, selected by Bishop Fenwick from the lower strata of society, would become desirable homesteaders. He applied for a grant of cheap lands, but he did not receive a title to this area until 1846.⁹⁵ On this grant he proceeded to found a Catholic colony and a Catholic College. The people whom he brought there were mostly Irish, a hard working class when "unencumbered". Abstinence was the major law of the community. Today the thrifty homes in Benedicta have more than justified the good Bishop's hopes. It has always been an agricultural community, and in the early days supplied produce - hay and grain - for the nearby lumber camps.

The Bishop realized, however, the need of a mill of sorts, so he procured a site on Molunkus Stream, later given the name of "Bishop's Meadows", about four miles below Sherman Mills. The saw mill was built under the direction of Henry Stubbs of Sherman and was completed and in running order about 1840.⁹⁶ Plans were made for a grist mill to the extent that a "nice set of imported stones costing about \$500 was landed on the banks in the field. A good mill house was built, the field cleared, and an expensive and thorough dam was built".⁹⁷ After all this preparation, it was found that the pond was inadequate to

 95 Wiggins, *op. cit.*, p. 138. Although the actual granting of the land was delayed until 1846, Fenwick started his colony and industrial plans almost immediately, (1835).

96 Gerry, I.B., Incidents of the Settlement of Sherman, (unpublished manuscript), at Sherman, Maine.

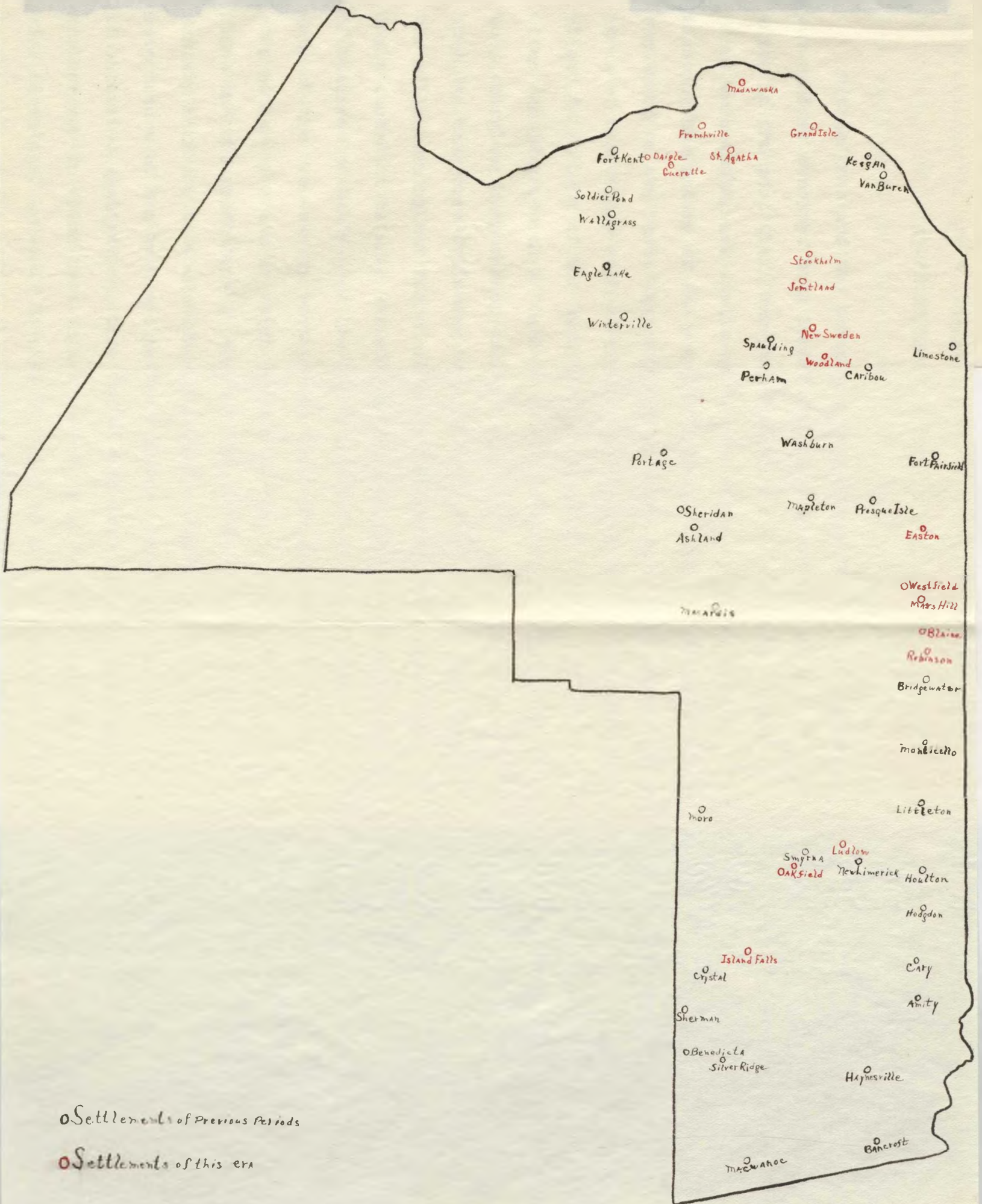
97 Ibid.

supply power, and the stones remained in the meadows, a spoil for the curious. The people had to go to Patten for lumber and to Sherman or Lincoln for their milling. This attempt to start mills was often alluded to as "Bishop's folly". Despite the inconvenience of transportation, the people thrived, and the community grew although somewhat slowly. Today, however, it has lost some of its population in the all too familiar post war migration to larger centers.⁹⁸

It is not hard to see why this second period in the economic life of Maine's most northern county should have witnessed a nearly unparalleled growth in man power as well as in mill development. The scene was laid, as it were, by the settlement of the northeast boundary. The agitation itself had attracted sufficient attention to the locality that plain curiosity and elaborate rumors drew settlers in ever increasing numbers. Thus we have seen that from north to south, from east to west, the forests fell back before the axe and plow of the homesteader and the ceaseless activity of saws, both large and small. Because the trees must be disposed of before any cultivation of the soil could begin, the period was essentially one of timber and lumber enterprises. The heavier long lumber, of course, held first importance, but already its use for smaller products as laths, clapboards, and shingles had definitely pointed to the position these were to maintain in the coming

98 Maine Register, 1930.

years. For a long time all of these activities developed side by side, but gradually, as the virgin timber was depleted, the shingle trade came into its own because smaller and lighter lumber could be thus used.



Chapter IV
BY-PRODUCTS OF THE WOODS

Within this and the preceding chapters years and industrial enterprises overlap. Long lumber mills by no means ceased to exist in the post Civil War period, but more and more the older firms were adding new appliances to the mills' equipment. Considering the nature of the product, lumber, this can easily be explained on the basis that progress did not go forward in all parts of the County with a uniform rapidity, and in the second place, in so many of the smaller settlements one mill would so often combine several of these separate industries - long lumber, shingles, clapboards, and even tanning - all under one roof. Thus, in the years following the Civil War, while one still finds the mills turning out large amounts of wood products, these products tended to be more varied than before. The greatest volume of business probably grew out of the production of shingles both of the hand-shaved variety and that made by machines operated either by steam or water power. The tanning of leather and hides and the production of the tan extract furnished a supplementary activity to the ordinary woods operations. Although the manufacture of tan bark was neither of very long duration nor of extensive application, this use of the hemlock trees afforded another way in which less valuable wood could be used to financial advantage. As would be expected, new settlements grew up in the wake of the mills, and, as formerly, many of the lands

were received as grants from the State. So the development of the County went on, rounding out the structure which had already been outlined by the establishment of the older towns.

By 1850 or a little later the tall virgin pine timber had already been largely cut. ¹ Left in its place was the crooked timber for which a new use was speedily found in the four-foot clapboard lengths. This helps to explain why during the decade of the 60's so many of the saw mills began installing the clapboard units. At first these clapboards were floated down the St. John; later, however, mills were built all along the Aroostook border from Houlton to Fort Kent. The machinery for these for the most part came from Bangor and had to be hauled over land where water ways were not available. The rest of the machinery found its way into the Aroostook woods over that ever-useful highway, the St. John River. Mills were also built along the Aroostook rivers as far west as Masardis, and many an enterprising adventurer saw in a swiftly flowing trout stream the power which could be made to operate a clapboard machine. Rude, over-shot wheels were made by these self-styled mill wrights to operate the machinery. The clapboards were put up in bunches, fifty in a group, and securely bound with withes, after which they were usually driven down the brooks in single bunches to the river. There a boom stopped them at the mouth of the brook, and they were transferred to rafts to be sent on their way again. On a few rivers, notably the Aroostook, another step was imperative.

1 Ashby, op. cit., May 24, 1910.

The bunches had to be taken from the water before reaching the Falls and hauled around the basin below the cataract, where they could again be floated on.² Those men who came into Aroostook to manufacture pine clapboards as a rule came from the "outside", by which was meant any part of New England. In this effort to industrialize the State, 400 acres of land were granted for each mill.³

The hand made shingle industry came in at very nearly the same time as did the clapboard business. This shingle trade was outstandingly popular since it required no capital and only such rudimentary machinery as anyone could fashion in a few hours' time. The business particularly attracted the element of the population that did not know how to farm or that did not want to know - the vagrant land prospector. His manner of life was so simple that it reminds one of the early nomadic days. Such a person as a rule kept a "cow, a few sheep, an old horse, or a yoke of oxen with which to raise a small field of buckwheat and a little patch of potatoes."⁴ The rest of the time, which meant practically all the daylight hours, these people made shingles. The women and children could give the few crops such care as was deemed necessary, and then they too assisted the shingle weavers.⁵ The land that best suited this group of people was the cuttings after the big lumber had been driven away or

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., June 2, 1910.

4 Ibid.

5 This term was applied to the persons who shaved shingles by hand.

sawed up. Cedar was the choice wood, the butts of the trees being made into shingles.

The making of shaved shingles wasted about one-half the wood. This, however, was not really conceded to be a waste for such lumber was not valuable in those days to the early settler. In fact, he usually regarded it as a distinct handicap when he wished to clear his land, and customarily chopped large piles which he burned. This disposed of the lumber and furnished wood-ash lime for the first crop.

The shingle weaver's outfit was simple and did not cost much - an axe, cross-cut saw, shingle knife, a froe,⁶ a bunching gaze,⁷ and a shave horse were the only tools required.⁸ A few of these were as indispensable as food; no man thought of going into the woods without an axe and cross-cut saw.

6 A froe was an iron wedge to split the wooden block for the shingles.

7 A bunching gaze was a crude gage to measure the number of shingles for an authorized bunch.

8 Ashby, op. cit., June 2, 1910: "The shave horse was made of wood about five feet long; two wooden legs a little above the center with an outward slant, and the bottom held it in position; one end rested on the ground, and the body of the horse pointed toward the operator at an angle of about 45 degrees. A small piece that came up through a mortise in the center of the horse was fastened in place by a wooden pin. At the bottom of the horse head was a stirrup made of a twisted withe, through which the operator put his foot and held the shingle fast; with the 'froe end' fastened securely, he would draw the keen knife toward him, quickly shave the solid cedar to a point, and it would become a shingle. A good shingle weaver would make a shave horse almost as quickly as I have written how it was done; this was all the horse many of the shingle weavers owned."

The best trees only were selected and cut. The weavers had their pick of the huge cedar trees, and conservation was a word not found in their vocabularies. The trees were sawed into lengths or "bolts" four feet long, and split into quarters. The "bolts" were then sawed twice each; this made three 16-inch blocks. These were set on end and split with the froe; each shingle would be split as nearly as possible to one-half inch in thickness. Then came the shaving, using the shave horse.

The shingle weavers never became rich. A man working alone would easily make six bunches a day which could be sold for at least \$1 per bunch.⁹ Other men might make fortunes, but not the shingle weavers. A man might make a good wage, \$6 per day, but it would all or very nearly all be "eaten" up in the excessively high cost of living. Goods, for the most part, had to be brought from Bangor, and the cost of transportation was high.¹⁰ Although the weavers could have made themselves nearly self-sufficient with the crops which they could have raised, this class of men, like their fathers the timber makers, despised the tillers of the soil. They would prefer, instead, to pay the storekeepers their high prices- \$1 per gallon for molasses, \$1 per pound for tea, \$1 per pound for tobacco. These prices were just a sample of their wares and the rest, clothes particularly, were

⁹ Ashby, *op. cit.*, June 2, 1910: "Aroostook shingles brought a dollar more a thousand in the Boston market than those made in Canada or in any other part of Maine."

¹⁰ Aroostook Times, February 6, 1863, "...it cost \$20 a ton for transportation of merchandise per 100 miles on an ordinary road; \$2 per ton on a railroad; and 20¢ on the ocean, for the same distance."

proportionally high. The shingle weavers like their compatriots of 1939, the share-croppers of the South, were almost never out of debt. They would buy the goods they needed on credit, paying for them with their shingles which the storekeeper accepted at the current price. More often than not the shingle buyers were the owners of the stores, so they usually doubled the prices¹¹ on the goods.

These nomadic shingle weavers were an ever-inconstant people. Instead of exhausting the soil as the plantation growers of the South did and then moving on, they used all the best of the cedar, and then moved to a new "homestead". The case of William Field illustrates this tendency. In the years between 1850 and 1865, he and his family built 36 log houses on 36 different farms, all within a mile of the Aroostook River. He did not remain on any one long enough to acquire a title, even by "squatter rights";¹² so that, when he died, he did not own¹³ a square foot of earth.

For twenty years, the so-called shingle fever raged in¹⁴ Aroostook County. The industry afforded an "easy going" life for this unambitious population, but when the fever was spent, it left its victims, both man and land, fully depleted of their

11 Ashby, op. cit., June 2, 1910: "...shoes costing \$5 a pair would be retailed at \$10; flour at \$10 a barrel would be sold to the shingle weavers at \$20."

12 The State gave 160 acres of land for five years' occupancy of a farm.

13 Ashby, op. cit., June 2, 1910.

14 Wood, op. cit., p. 174, "It was estimated that 75,000,000 shingles were manufactured yearly by hand in the St. John and Aroostook valleys even as late as the middle of the 19th century."

energies and resources. The Acadians contracted the epidemic, and, despite the fact that they have never become pine timber makers, they did develop into expert weavers. It was generally affirmed that they made the best shingle that went to market. When the mills came and ruined the hand industry, these simple folk regarded the mills as a plague sent by the Almighty to punish them for their sins. For the most part, the shingle mills were introduced at the close of the Civil War when the country was emerging from the paralyzing state of uncertainty to engage in a building boom.

All over the County and State these mills sprang up. Some of them have already been mentioned; a few in the central part of the County attained such a singularly independent position that they deserve a separate consideration. In some localities the shingle industry was a prime factor in the motivation of people to the new unsettled lands.

In the southern part of the County, a few lumber magnates developed a decided propensity for the shingle trade. It is true that shingle manufacture did not often represent the full-time interest of these men; but such products of the timber lands could be made use of to supplement the magnate's revenue, as a sort of by-product. Of the other by-products, tan bark from the hemlock trees was perhaps the most outstanding; and as ever, the long lumber market continued to be a sure source of income.

In Hodgdon several new mills were started in this era in

which shingle plants were of marked importance. Two business men, B.H.Durrell and Gilman Jewett, came from Dexter in 1861 looking for mill property.¹⁵ The best location seemed to be that owned by William Robinson, and he was quite willing to sell the property which consisted of a saw mill with shingle, lath, and clapboard machines, a grist mill, and a carding mill. The grist mill contained three run of stones for wheat and buckwheat as well as a mill for preparing oats for grinding. Immediately the new owners started work repairing and enlarging the saw mill, substituting a new rotary saw for long lumber to replace the cumbersome old one. The men were very thorough in their activities, for they tore down the grist mill, building a new one on the same site. This became so popular that settlers came from many places to have wheat ground. They had bolting machines to separate the wheat from the bran but since the wheat was still too dark, it was subjected to two runs of stone to make it finer and it was then put through the bolting machine a second time before it was ready for use. The mill, at the height of the season, ran day and night, necessitating the services of two millers. It was operated successfully until 1900, at which time the new wheat-rolling mill at Houlton took some of its business by supplying a better grade of flour.¹⁶

The owners added fulling and cloth-dressing machinery to the carding mill. The wool market was at its height with the

15 Wiggins, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Also Registry of Deeds, XXVII, 514; XX, 390.

16 Interview with Harry Williams, June 25, 1938.

additional demands of wool for war purposes, so they were able to carry on a financially profitable business in this department of the plant. Later, about 1873, they sold the machinery from this mill to Charles Tarbell, who moved it down the stream to a building better fitted for wool carding.¹⁷ At a later period Tarbell sold the wool carding mill to Charles Bassett also of Dexter, who ran it until his death. His two daughters then sold the mill privilege to Robert Cox, Violet Cox, and Fannie Bradbury. The mill, after some years, was torn down because of the excessive taxes, but Mrs. Cox still owns the mill privilege.¹⁸

Captain Thomas of Bangor leased the saw mill for a number of years and carried on a large business in the manufacture. After the Captain relinquished the lease and moved to Veazie, the mill was next hired for a few years by Lewis Brown of Houlton. During this time various operators leased the saw mill until the building burned in 1882. After Durrell's death in the same year, Jewett continued the entire ownership of the mill which had been immediately rebuilt.¹⁹

Meanwhile another mill had been started in 1854 by C.C. Hutchinson, who came to Hodgdon with his father from Turner.²⁰

 17 Wiggins, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Also Aroostook Times, November 6, 1873: "On Monday last I visited C. Tarbell's woolen mill in Hodgdon. He cards the wool, weaves, dresses, colors, and fulls the cloth. He seems to be doing a good business this fall, and wool had been brought 30 miles to his mill. He has two looms in operation and will weave some 10,000 lbs. of wool the present season."

18 Interview with Mrs. Robert Cox, June 25, 1938.

19 Wiggins, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

20 Ibid., p. 24.

In 1860 the mill was enlarged, and a rotary saw replaced the earlier model. Hutchinson also added a clapboard machine and a lath saw. He was one of the most active men in the early life of the town until his death in 1883, after which his son, Alonzo, undertook to carry on the business. When the mill burned two years later, he built a steam mill near Linneus Corner. This was later sold. In 1879 Hutchinson formed a partnership with Levi Berry, and together they built a steam saw and shingle mill at Hodgdon Mills.²¹ This last mill was later sold and eventually was bought by the big shingle operators, Sharp and Ketchum. The lumber from this mill was principally hauled to Houlton whence it was shipped to Boston and New York markets.²²

A shingle mill was started by William Adams of Hodgdon in 1872 on Day Brook, after a dam had been built there to supply the power.²³ In this mill, too, Leffel double turbine wheels were used. This enterprising mill was kept in operation at least until 1879.²⁴

Another profitable business in Hodgdon was the manufacture of potato barrels. This was, of course, much later after the first crops of potatoes had been taken to the starch factories.

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- 21 Ibid. Also Aroostook Times, November 20, 1879: "The new steam saw mill erected the past season at Hodgdon Mills has just been started by Berry and Hutchinson, the owners. The mill, 80 x 35 feet, runs a rotary saw doing custom work sawing at the rate of 8 to 10 M feet per day; also a shingle mill by which 8 to 10 M are made each day."
- 22 Interview with Mrs. Robert Cox, June 25, 1938.
- 23 Aroostook Times, July 26, 1872.
- 24 Ibid., September 5, 1878.

It was rather a ludicrous sight to observe the multiplicity of containers appearing on the scene - boxes, crates, baskets, sacks, even pails, and almost anything and everything was pressed into service in those first seasons. Immediately some enterprising person started to experiment to make a barrel which would be durable enough to withstand the wear of loading and shipping and light enough for expeditious handling. One of the largest of such barrel factories was the one located in Hodgdon. For a time this factory supplied the greater part of Aroostook with its potato barrels. Other similar plants were later built in Presque Isle, Mars Hill, Ashland, and Caribou. This barrel industry served a double duty; in addition to providing the much needed barrel, it furnished a further use for the wood products, and thus helped to link up in another fashion the two dominating interests in this economic development of Aroostook County.

In Houlton new mills sprang up to manufacture shingles. In the shire town there was a greater diversity of interests so that occasionally the plants produced new articles and goods for consumption.

As we have already mentioned, the Cary Mills property was still in operation, either under the direction of the owners or by the leasees. Lew Merriam belonged to the last category, for by 1870 he had an active business at the Cary saw mill in which there was a clapboard mill, a planing machine, a circular saw, and two shingle mills. He also owned a similar mill on the

25

B Stream site.

In 1872 Robert Sinclair built a carriage-building factory on the Meduxnekeag Stream. This was sold two years later to Frank Titcomb, who had come to Houlton from Foxcroft. Titcomb renovated the building, putting in a steam engine of 100 horse power for the use of his plant in the manufacture of doors, sashes, and blinds. He also built a large steam saw mill. Within the year Titcomb added a grist mill and a steam shingle mill which produced approximately 200,000 feet of shingles each week. This volume of business can readily be appreciated if one considers that one saw alone produced from 20,000 to 25,000 shingles in a day. The business occupied an ever-increasing place of prominence for the next few years. The greatest part of their business seems to have been in the production of cedar shingles. Most of this lumber, both long and short, was shipped to outside markets over the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

Another large shingle mill in town was built by J.S. Leighton. This was a two story building located near the old railroad station. The machinery was driven by steam power from the Shaw Tannery Plant. In that same year the latter firm also installed a shingle mill in conjunction with their bark extract plant.

25 Ibid., December 8, 1870.

26 Ibid., July 5, 1872.

27 Ibid., June 18, 1874.

28 Ibid., April 18, 1875; June 10, 1875.

29 Ibid., October 8, 1874.

30 Ibid., February 17, 1876; April 20, 1876.

31 Ibid., June 3, 1875.

32 Ibid., May 24, 1877; June 19, 1877.

The Ingraham Brothers had a mill on Mill Brook in which they operated a large rotary saw plant. For many years this was run by Matthew Wilson, a name which is even yet often used for the brook. Benjamin B. Logan did a fairly extensive lumber business, and Hickory A. Mansur, a nephew of Rufus Mansur, operated a large saw mill on Mill Stream. This mill had four gang saws, a lath, shingle, and clapboard machine.

Of more varied type we find the carding mill of William Esty in Houlton, and the mill built by Cary at West Houlton where Andrew Bodwell was conducting a carding business, including dyeing and fulling.

Grist mill development kept an even pace with that of lumber and shingles during this period. The latter successes brought increased demands for flour facilities. Page and Madigan, foremost business men of Houlton, owned the old Putnam grist mill site and carried on an extensive milling business. The building where the old Page and Madigan mill was located is still in use as a garage.

A mill for grist grinding was built by E.C. Blake on the site of the former Kelloran mill and just across the stream from the Page and Madigan mill. This new plant had burr stones,

33 Interview with Franklin Hall, June 28, 1938.

34 Aroostook Times, June 15, 1866; May 27, 1875; February 17, 1876.

35 Interview with Walter Cary, June 30, 1938. This lease of property was referred to in one of the letters, dated October 16, 1868, in Mr. Cary's possession.

36 Aroostook Times, July 13, 1870 to February 28, 1878.

a bolting machine and a smut mill as well as a cleanser.³⁷ It was sold in 1882 to E. Merritt and Son. The new owners built, in addition, the first light power plant which supplied the town of Houlton with its electricity until the present lighting system was inaugurated. The building of the light plant was razed, but the present grist mill still occupies the original grist building as constructed by Blake.

The grist mill had the burr stones run by water power from the dam until 1910 when wheat rollers were installed. During this time T.C.S. Berry was employed intermittently by Mr.³⁸ Merritt. From 1912 until 1918 Berry operated the mill with Merritt on a share basis. The next five years W.C. Carr ran the mill. In 1923 it was purchased by Berry in company with his son, and they have continued its operation to the present. Although the volume of business has, year by year, receded as the potato market has increased, the mill still operates constantly. They produce wheat flour as well as that of buckwheat and the mashed feed. In the "good years" as much as 5,000 bushels of wheat and more of buckwheat would be brought to this mill; the quantity of oats and barley was much greater. Whereas the former grinding was for toll, this mill is now operated on a purely cash-payment basis - 20¢ per bushel for wheat, 12¢ for³⁹ buckwheat, and 5¢ for mashed feed.

37 Ibid., October 18, 1877; December 28, 1878, "For sale at Blake's flour mill! 100 lbs. corn meal for \$1.25."

38 Personal interview with T.C.S. Berry of Houlton, June 30, 1938. Mr. Berry, the owner of the present grist mill, came to this mill as early as 1889 and has been associated with it ever since.

39 Ibid.

In Ludlow and New Limerick shingle mills were also constructed. In the latter town the only other such plant, besides the Shaw saw mill, ran in conjunction with the tannery, was built by the Bradbury Brothers at Drew's Lake. This mill was used exclusively for the manufacture of shingles. It was destroyed by fire in 1879 with a loss of \$15,000, none of which was covered by insurance. It was later rebuilt.⁴⁰

The Ludlow saw mill had been built as early as 1855 by Levi Berry and T.C.S. Berry. In 1859 the land privileges and machinery were sold to Peleg Berry for \$1,000. Eight years later the latter owner sold the full business establishment to Julia Oakes. The property kept increasing in value with each successive sale until it was purchased for \$4,250 by Peter Cochran. This, of course, included the entire equipment which had been added by the last owners. Cochran continued the operation of this long lumber mill on the lake, which bears his name, until 1881 when he sold to Frank Titcomb of Houlton. Titcomb remodeled the mill somewhat and built a shingle mill below it about 1890. Llewellyn Powers, a land speculator in Houlton, bought Titcomb's holdings together with other land property in 1907.⁴¹ These mills finally came into the possession of Arthur Moran and Bert Carter. The site is still owned by Moran, who even now lives in the old mill boarding house

⁴⁰ Aroostook Times, January 22, 1879.

⁴¹ Registry of Deeds, XVII, 514; XXXI, 228; XXXV, 547; LXXVI, 151; CCXXVI, 284.

42

which was formerly used for the employees.

About 1878 Daugherty, an itinerant lumber man, started up a water mill on the stream at Monticello for the sawing of custom lumber. In addition, he had a small grist mill attached to it. This was later purchased, around 1886, by H.C.Sharp, an important lumber operator, who for a long period conducted the principal long lumber and shingle mills in this section of the County.⁴³ The products of the Sharp mill, boards and shingles, were largely shipped over the railroad to outside markets. This mill was later sold to the Great Northern Paper Company by whom it was dismantled.

In the shingle industry at Bridgewater, as in the tanning market, George W. Collins was long the dominant figure. Collins came to Aroostook in 1861 and very soon associated himself with some of its financial interests.⁴⁴ He bought the site and the mills built by John D. Baird, and immediately made extensive repairs and additions by installing a planer and groover. In 1876 he built a saw mill with a shingle machine on Whitney Brook. This he sold to T.G.Huntington, but the plant was soon afterwards destroyed by fire. Collins then built a new

42 Personal interview with Sedgfield Shaw of Ludlow, June 23, 1938. Mr. Shaw is a life-long resident of Ludlow and knew the late mill owners well.

43 Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, The New Northeast, (Bangor, Maine), September, 1894, p. 52. Also personal interview with Hiram Garrison of Monticello, June 29, 1938. Mr. Garrison is one of the oldest residents of Monticello.

44 Personal interview with Harvey Tompkins, Maine State Senator, resident of Bridgewater, June 30, 1938. Mr Tompkins is keenly interested in local history.

mill on the site of the other. This one he sold to C.P.Church.⁴⁵
 Another mill was built by Collins at Bridgewater Center in 1882.⁴⁶
 This last mill, still in operation, is at present owned and man-
 aged by C.L.Sharp, and is today the only mill in Bridgewater.⁴⁷

In addition to a shingle mill built in 1860 by John McKeen⁴⁸
 of Kiswick Ridge, New Brunswick, there was one built in 1884
 by E.E.Milliken and E.Tuttle on the Presque of the St. John
 Stream.⁴⁹ Later Milliken became the full owner and added a long
 lumber mill. This he at first operated by water, later changing
 it to steam power. In the spring when the water was sufficiently
 high, this was used to saw the large logs; in the summer, the
 steam power was used to saw the shingles. This mill was burned⁵⁰
 July 1, 1915, and was never rebuilt.

Shingles and shingle mills were just as popular in the
 northern part of the County as to the south.⁵¹ That the indus-
 try was gaining in favor and in financial success was shown by

45 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 115.

46 Ibid., p. 116.

47 Interview with Harvey Tompkins, June 30, 1938.

48 Ibid.

49 This stream is so termed to distinguish it from the major
 Presque Stream which flows through the town of Presque
 Isle and empties into the Aroostook River. The Presque
 Isle of the St. John is known by various names: Prestile,
 Presqueel, and Presteele.

50 Ibid. Also interview with Cookson, June 30, 1938. This date
 was secured from Mr. Cookson's diary of 1915.

51 Aroostook Times, May 8, 1863, "...there was a raft of shingles
 at the wharf in Presque Isle 118 feet long, 24 feet wide,
 and containing 600,000 shingles belonging to J.W.Hines and
 N.Perry and Company. 150,000 more are to be taken on about
 three miles below. They will be run down the river to St.
 John and shipped from there."

the following clipping from the Aroostook Times of June 23, 1871:

Mr. Hatheway informs us that about 35 millions of Aroostook shingles are now on their way down the St. John River to market. Nine millions of the lot are owned by S.W. Collins of Lyndon (Caribou), a similar quantity by Page and Seeley of Fort Kent, and the balance by different parties up the river. The revenue collected on the whole lot by the government amounted to about \$10,000.

A merchant in Presque Isle, Amasa Howe, started a shingle plant during this period. He had bought shingles at his store in Presque Isle for some time and now he began producing them. His first mill was built in Fort Fairfield in 1884 on the north side of the river. This mill was operated by steam. Two other similar mills were afterwards built by Howe, one on the Woodland Stream and the other on the Madawaska Stream. These mills were all operated by steam power which could be easily obtained by burning shingle butts and sawdust for fuel. There was also a shingle mill built in Caribou, on the Limestone road, from which lumber was shipped annually to Bangor, Maine, and Providence, Rhode Island. Howe gave up this business after his mills⁵² burned, the last, the one at Fort Fairfield, in 1897.

James Barto of Presque Isle, who had a grist mill, also sawed lumber. Another lumber concern of prominence in Presque Isle was that of N. Perry and Company. From 1877 until 1883 Alexander Kennedy operated a shingle mill at Kennedy Brook. In 1890 A.R. Gould, in addition to his other enterprises, built a⁵³ shingle mill. This was later consolidated into the Aroostook

52 Personal interview with Leon S. Howe of Houlton, July 13, 1938.

Mr. Howe is the son of the Amasa Howe referred to above.

53 Maine Registers, 1878-1895.

Lumber Company.

Collins and Vaughan, and later S.W.Collins and Company, furnished the major impetus to the short lumber and shingle market in Caribou. During this period others who entered the shingle production were: Arnold, Dwinal and Company; Merrill and Collins; Runnels Brothers; Sweet and Lincoln; I.H.Nickerson; G.W.Gary; and C.W.Porter. There were often many transfers of property from one to the other of these owners, but they all had their share in adding to the prosperity of Caribou. At the height of the shingle interest, there were four mills in Caribou dealing in this commodity alone - F.LeVasseur, E.P.Grimes,⁵⁴ Warren Runnels and Albe Holmes.

At Fort Fairfield as far back as 1855, J.W.Haines and Henry Hyde had two successful saw mills. These were sawing largely for a local market. In the 70's and 80's, as has been mentioned, the principal lumber firm was F. and H. Haines. Others who came into this business at about this time were Hyde and Foster, Hiram Stevens and Company, Leonard Bryant, and C.C.Barnes. Many of these men combined the shingle mills with their other sawing activities. During the latter part of this decade, 1884-1889, several more men started shingle mills, notably G.A.Gannett,⁵⁵ M.Trafton and Son, I.S. and W.H.Smith.

A further understanding of the growth of mills in Aroostook but more particularly those producing shingles may be obtained

54 Ibid., 1875-1886.

55 Ibid., 1871-1890.

from the following comparison in this growth over a period of
⁵⁶
 fifty years:

YEAR	GRIST	SHINGLE	TANNERY	CABINET	LUMBER	CARRIAGE
1856	16	12	3	2	17	6
1866	6	2	3	4	17	8
1876	10	11	2	6	37	17
1886	27	39	5	6	49	18
1896	37	29	4	3	80	23
1906	37	26	7	1	96	24

This table is only of limited worth since it gives the number of plants but not the capacity for production, the number of men employed, or the actual value of the plant. It does, however, indicate that there was a fairly steady growth from the sharp rise during this period in shingles, lumber and carriage plants, and that, without doubt, more citizens were turning to such occupations for livelihood.

This era was somewhat unique in at least one of the new settlements whose economic life was, at first, so bound up in the shingle industry. Nine miles north of Caribou an experiment was put to trial for which its most zealous exponents were at the best only tremendously hopeful and toward which the rest of

 56 Ibid., 1856-1906.

57

the County, for the most part, manifested open skepticism. A small colony of Swedish people was lifted bodily from all that was familiar in the old country and transported to New Sweden, a tractless forest in which not even a clearing had been made. In the years to come the belief and confidence in this people of W.W.Thomas, Junior, the State agent who had arranged for this Swedish migration, was more than justified. Not only did these people of foreign customs and tongue remain, but they so won over the obstacles of nature and distance that, within a remarkable short time, they sent a personal dispatch in the form of one of their members to the homeland to prove their success to their doubting kinfolk. More people came until there was a little bit of old Sweden brought to life in the wilds of Aroostook. From the Capitol where the nucleus of the little colony was first established, the farms of these pioneers spread out until Stockholm, Sweden, and Jentland had been added. The former was a distinct town.

The first thing the settlers did after the log homes were built was to plan a way by which they could speedily earn money to pay the State for the lands which they had been granted. The simplest and, individually, the least expensive way was to make shaved shingles. The woods abounded in excellent cedar, and, from the first, these people showed themselves expert in manufacturing the hand shaved shingles. It was soon admitted by

57 Fogelin, Olaf, Norberg, Michael, and Westen, Johan, (Committee on Publication), The Story of New Sweden as Told at the Quarter Centennial Celebration June 25, 1895, (Portland, Maine), p. 2.

Aroostook traders that Swedish shingles were among the best made in the County. The people became so accustomed to the sight of shingles that, as in Presque Isle a few years earlier, it became convenient to use the bunches of shaved shingles as currency.⁵⁸

A common legend, based on an actual happening in the first days of the settlement, is widely known in the country.⁵⁹ Mrs. Kjersti Carlson, whose husband was ill and in need of medicine and whose children were hungry, went forth into the woods outside her home, felled a cedar tree, sawed it up into the necessary lengths, shaved a bunch of shingles, and then, carrying them on her back, sought the nearest store five miles away. There she exchanged them for food and medicine. This illustrates in a very poignant fashion the intrepid courage of these people in overcoming the obstacles that confronted them daily.

The settlers' other effort to pay off the indebtedness was a collective movement - the building of saw mills which would enable them to manufacture shingles more rapidly. In 1871 they prepared to carry the project out. The first mill was built on a site on Beardsley Brook, four miles from the Capitol, and the foundations for a grist mill were also laid.⁶⁰ At first the citizens had used hand grinders which they had carried with them to grind the wheat which they bought in Caribou.⁶¹ The grist

58 Ibid., p. 78.

59 Ibid., p. 76.

60 Ibid., p. 71.

61 Personal interview with John Johnson of New Sweden, July 9, 1938. Mr. Johnson, one of the earliest settlers, owned one of the numerous shingle mills for a time.

mill does not seem to have succeeded, for there is no further mention of it. The following year, however, two steam mills were erected so that by the summer of 1872 large quantities of shingles and some boards were sawed.⁶² The first of these mills was built on a cooperative plan by the Baptist Association on the site where the Aroostook Valley Railroad Station is; the other was a similar project started by the Lutherans of the colony just over the township line in what is now Woodland. The shingles from these mills were hauled overland to Mattawamkeag, the nearest railroad center, and shipped to Boston. After about three years,⁶³ both of these mills were abandoned.

The years 1888-1895 were the most prosperous one for the shingle market and for New Sweden. By that time, the Canadian Pacific Railroad had been extended to Caribou and, after a short haul of nine miles, the shingles could be shipped by rail. New Sweden never drove its shingles to market; from the beginning, they were always shipped by railroad, even though it meant hauling them by horse teams a distance of over 80 miles.

Several mills sprang into existence during the high tide of the shingle market. The first was built by John Johnson and A.H. Tornquist. This mill was operated for about eleven years, by which time most of the lumber in the immediate vicinity of the mill had been cut off. A store had been built by the same

62 Fogelin et als., op. cit., p. 71. Also Aroostook Times, November 14, 1872, "The Swedes at New Sweden have two steam saw mills in operation. These are the only mills driven by steam in this County; they cut at the rate of 14 M per day."

63 Interview with John Johnson, July 9, 1938.

company, so, when the partnership was dissolved, Johnson kept the mill, and Tornquist the store. The former later sold the boiler and tore down the mill.

Another mill, operated by C.A.A. Johnson, Jacob Hedman, and John Berlind helped to swell the yearly production of shingles.

A third mill of the same type was started by Oscar Ivensen, who had come to Caribou from Norway and operated a store there. He started his mill about 1890 only to move to Portage after the mill had burned in 1895.⁶⁴

During this interval of less than ten years, the town was dotted with the same small mills. Although they were not the large plants that could be found elsewhere in the County, they efficiently filled the freight cars with bundles of shingles and bright clean lumber, and the pockets of the Swedish people with much needed money. No more thrifty people ever came into the State. The lands which the State of Maine had granted them were soon paid for, and the citizens could turn their attention to the building of prosperous farms and stores.

At Stockholm the story is one of greater industrialism, with outside capital supplementing the resources of the people. Because this town was an outgrowth of New Sweden, it did not bear the scars of such hardships as were theirs, and its development came slightly later.⁶⁵

64 Ibid.

65 Personal interviews with Perl Cyr and Carl Tjernstrom of Stockholm, July 9, 1938. These two men have been closely associated as employees or supervisors in these mills.

The first industry was a long lumber mill established by Perry and Yerxa about 1898-99. Although it was located on the Madawaska Stream, the mill was operated by steam. This last characteristic seems to have been true of all the Swedish enterprises.

A little later, 1901-1902, the mill was sold to Charles Milliken,⁶⁶ who in a short while organized the Stockholm Lumber Company. This firm supplied both the local and outside lumber markets. Shortly after the World War broke out, this mill was torn down, and the machinery was taken to Howe Brook where there was a similar mill in which Milliken had financial interests. The site was afterwards sold to Allan Quimby of Greenville.

About 1902-1903 Quimby started a veneer plant on the same stream but on the opposite side from the lumber mill. Associated with him in his enterprise was Mr. Trafton and A.E. Baxter, and the firm was known as the Standard Veneer Company.

Meanwhile, in 1906, the farmers of the community organized a company to build a starch factory. This enterprise did not meet the expectations of its promoters, so it was sold to Quimby. He operated it as a starch factory for a short time and then converted it into a box factory under the name of the Standard Box Company. The firm title was later changed to the Allan Quimby Box Company, and eventually the whole plant - veneer mill and box factory - was known as the Allan Quimby Company.

66 This was the father of ex-Governor Milliken.

A fire during the early period of this establishment destroyed the mill, but Quimby rebuilt and operated the mills until 1924 when he sold all to the Atlas Plywood Corporation, a firm trying to gain a monopoly of the veneer production. About 1930 the new owners tore the mill down because they already had mills in southern Canada and in Vermont from which they could export more cheaply than they could from Stockholm owing to the extremely high freight rates imposed by the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad.

In 1934 the corporation sold all the land and buildings on the left side of the stream to the Collins Lumber Company of Caribou. The latter firm built up the plant for new merchandise - clothes pins, snow shoes, axe handles, chair seats, and boxes for shipping fruit. Although not all these products are money-making, the company has found it cheaper in the end to sacrifice a little capital here as it affords them a wide income tax-exemption list. In 1936, the same firm bought the remainder of the Atlas property on the right side of the stream, the plywood box factory, and has converted that into a saw mill. Thus once again the mills are active, and the people are afforded employment although the wages are low.

The Swedish people started the beginning of the present town of Woodland by building a small mill on a little brook running into the east branch of the Caribou Stream. This was a steam shingle mill, but it was not entirely successful, so after a few years it was abandoned and the machinery was

removed.⁶⁷ In 1878 a steam mill was built by York and Merrill.⁶⁸
 Around this later mill the little settlement of Woodland grew.

The present enterprise or plant in that part of Woodland known as Colby Siding⁶⁹ was started in 1918 by a group of six business men - Frank Anderson, John Carlson, Colby Buswell, Samuel Bishop, Orin Anderson, and Carl Johnson. The nucleus for the establishment had been supplied by the saw mill, started in 1914 by Carl Johnson for the sawing of long and short lumber and laths.⁷⁰ The other plants were added until there is now an industrial center composed of a grist mill, a machine shop, and a wood-working shop where frames, doors, and other house furnishings are made. The machine shop, as is true of the others as well, occupies a small building by itself. There, all kinds of farm machinery can be repaired as well as parts for the other mills made. This shop is electrically operated. The grist mill was first run by Diesel oil engine, but this was later replaced by electricity. All kinds of grain may be ground here, and it rivals the grist mill at Caribou in supplying the northern section of Aroostook with buckwheat meal and mashed feeds. A roller is used for the wheat and buckwheat, but for the oats, a high speed grinder - 300,000 revolutions per minute - is used. The best business that this mill did was right after the war in 1920.

 67 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 141.

68 Ibid., pp. 142-143.

69 The term "siding" is used for this part of Woodland because it was from here that all goods, potatoes, and lumber were loaded and shipped.

70 Personal interview with Carl Johnson of Woodland, July 8, 1938. Mr. Johnson is the operator of the first saw mill and one of the owners of the Colby Siding Plant.

Every year had witnessed a slight decrease in the volume of business until the last two or three years when there has been a little more interest manifested in the raising of buckwheat and oats. The rates for grinding are: 10¢ per bushel for buckwheat, oats and similiar grains, and 20¢ per bushel for wheat and rye.⁷¹

Despite the fact that it would be an exaggeration to say that the towns to the south of the Swedish settlements were equally dependent on the success of the shingle market, they did attach tremendous importance to the cedar sticks. In nearly all these towns bunches of cedar were accepted in lieu of paper money. In Easton, the town records of 1862 show that it was voted that taxes could be paid in grain or shingles at market price in Fort Fairfield, and that the collector should give each payer 30 days' notice.⁷² The shingles were thus shown to be at that time used as currency and were openly regarded as about the only resources the settlers had for the payment of debts.

Mills to produce these articles were, therefore, of prime importance in Easton and any other similiar locality. The first such mill, referred to among the early records, was built about 1859 by Isaac Wortman on the River de Chute in the eastern part of the town. This mill was burned in 1870 and was not rebuilt.

71 Ibid.

72 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 245.

73 Ibid.

The second to appear in this town was in 1860 and was built at the village of what came to be called Sprague's Mills by D. Russell Marston. At first the mill was but a counterpart of the Wortman mill, but later Marston installed a shingle machine which he bought of Isaac Hacker of Fort Fairfield. Marston continued to run the mill until 1870 when he sold to J.H. and E.W. Sprague, who made extensive repairs. In 1879 the mill was purchased by Johnson and Phair of Presque Isle. This lumber firm was buying extensive property all over the north central part of Aroostook for shingle mills and later for starch production. After the partnership had been dissolved, Phair continued to operate the mills, installing new machinery for better production.

In 1879 after the Sprague Brothers had sold their mill, E.W. Sprague built himself a new mill. This was in the west part of the town, near Sprague's Mills. It was a steam shingle mill, equipped with a balance wheel. It was the proud boast of Sprague that his mill could turn out as many as 24,000 shingles in ten hours' time. After running but five years, the mill was burned and was not rebuilt. The engine, however, was saved and was later removed to Robinson's mill in Blaine.

At very nearly the same time Andrew B. Walker built the first grist mill in the town. It was located only three-quarters

74 Ibid. Also a personal interview with Fred Smith of Presque Isle, July 8, 1938. Mr. Smith, a former resident of Easton, is well known in Aroostook on the radio for his anecdotes of early history.

75 Ibid., pp. 245-246.

of a mile above the saw mill on the Presque Isle of the St. John. Although the grist mill contained three runs of granite stone and was very well equipped, Walker had operated it only a few years when he sold it to E.W.Sprague, who installed two shingle machines and steam power. Walker removed the wheat stones, taking them with him to Masardis where he had already built another grist mill. After a time the original mill building was allowed to lie idle, probably because of a slackening of the shingle market.

The year 1883 saw the erection of another steam shingle mill, this time on Spear Brook near Easton Center. It was built by Kimball and DeLaite, but it was scarcely started when an accident occurred which nearly ruined the business. The boiler in the plant burst, killing one man, Edward Lord, and very seriously scalding several others. Steam was not so common then as it was to become and naturally, the people were very skeptical of it as a substitute for the water wheels. In consequence, the mill was discontinued not long afterwards for want of business.

Two other shingle mills were built in Easton, one by Arno Fling on the River de Chute,⁷⁶ and the other by Simenson and Stephens. The latter mill was burned twice. It would have been a fine contribution to the town,⁷⁷ but the owners were doubtless discouraged by the fire hazard.

Between Presque Isle and Mars Hill one finds the small town

76 Wiggins, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

77 Interview with Fred Smith, July 8, 1938.

of Westfield. Its first and most outstanding industrial stimulus came in 1859 when the Peavy Brothers of Bangor built on Young's Brook a factory to produce peavy stocks from the maple wood in the vicinity.⁷⁸ The mill was a good one containing a fine 25 horse-power engine, a 50 horse-power boiler, saws, laths, and finishing machines. This mill alone in 1889 produced 35,000 stocks for ironing.⁷⁹

The plans for a future Mars Hill went back to a period contemporaneous with the founding of Houlton. Mars Hill was originally laid out as grants for the Revolutionary soldiers who were citizens of Massachusetts, and the lots were inscribed with the names of these same Revolutionary heroes, "for the soldiers of the late Continental Army who enlisted for the duration of the war as a part of the State's quota of said army and served three years under this enlistment".⁸⁰ It might be inferred that there was not the financial support to be obtained to warrant a venture so far from home, or some unforeseen circumstances prevented the actual occupation of this grant. At any rate, there were no settlers here until 1845-46, when Moses Snow, Holman Bridges, and John Ruggle arrived.⁸¹ They built no mills, for the first account of any industry's being established was not until 1845 when Henry Wilson arrived from Easton, selected a lot at King's Grove on Rocky Brook, and by June, 1846,

78 A peavy stock is the wooden handle used in the peavy or cant dog. This tool is used to manipulate heavy timber.

79 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 296.

80 Ibid., p. 148.

81 Snow, S.L., "History of Mars Hill", Mars Hill Review, (Mars Hill, Maine), April 15, 1909.

82

had built a saw mill. Here the first logs in the town of Mars Hill were sawed into boards.

John McGee in 1876 built a saw mill, run by an old-fashioned water wheel, in the village. This was nothing more than a long lumber mill. It was purchased in 1885 by P.F.Jones, who hired H.L.Dillon, a local miller, to work in the mill as well as in his store. Jones built a grist mill in addition to his saw mill. Following Jones' death, Dillon at first operated the mills for Mrs. Jones from whom he bought them in 1903.⁸³ He then remodeled the grist mill, using the wheat rollers instead of the former stones. For awhile, and at the time the mill burned, Dillon was in partnership with Recent York. The plant, built on the location of the old grist mill, was a starch factory erected about 1913 by York.⁸⁴

The present saw mill, which has a shingle as well as a long lumber machine, was built about 1904 by Jonathan Currie. It was later bought by the York Brothers and eventually became the property of the present owner, Lee R. Bubar of Blaine. It is in operation only about two months of each spring when the farmers bring in their logs for a little new lumber.⁸⁵

The industrial life in Blaine is located almost exclusively in the southern part of the township, at what is known as

82 Ibid., April 22, 1909. Also Wiggins, op. cit., p. 149.

83 Maine Register, 1903.

84 Snow, op. cit., May 6, 1909.

85 Personal interview with Almon O. Nutter of Mars Hill, June 29, 1938. Mr. Nutter, one of the older residents of the town, has been on the Board of Selectmen for the last thirty years.

Robinsons. The latter site earned its name from the family who for some time dominated this half of the town and its entire industrial life.

In 1859 William Robinson came to Blaine from Nova Scotia and purchased 260 acres of land in this section of the town a short distance above the junction of Three Brooks with the Presque Isle. This land afforded an excellent mill site so upon it in 1862 Robinson built a shingle machine.⁸⁶ After the Civil War,⁸⁷ he sold out to two of his sons, Harrison and Fred. The brothers improved the plant and changed from water to steam power. Harrison later sold his interests to Fred, who carried on an extensive lumber and shingle business until his death⁸⁸ about 1908. This was one of the largest shingle mills in the central part of the County. After that the operation of the mills was directed by another brother, William, and Fred's two sons, Vaughan and Oscar. The present business is but a shadow of that thriving enterprise which caused this part of Blaine to be called Robinson's Mills and finally just Robinsons. The mill is now operated only a few weeks in the spring and then only long lumber is sawed. At present Vaughan Robinson controls⁸⁹ most of the interest in the land and buildings.

 86 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 222. Also a personal interview with Mrs. Abner Robinson of Robinsons, June 29, 1938. Mrs. Robinson, the postmistress of Robinsons, is the daughter-in-law of the William Robinson who established this business.

87 William Robinson died soon after this in 1873.

88 Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, op. cit., p. 53: "F.C. Robinson who runs a starch factory and lumber mill at Blaine will ship about a million feet of long lumber and from one to two million shingles yearly."

89 Interview with Mrs. Robinson, June 29, 1938.

The Hachetts from Pittsfield also built a "shook" or box factory for fruit shippers in 1896. These boxes were sent to Sicily off the coast of Italy to the lemon growers, where they were set up, filled with fruit, and then returned to be sold in Aroostook.

There is very little business going on in Robinsons now as the land operators have choked out the industries by the control which they exercise over stumpage land.⁹⁰ Memory alone bears witness to the activity of a former day.

Island Falls proper was early established for the satisfaction of lumbering. When the first people came, the lack of available markets discouraged much emphasis upon agriculture. Lumbering with cedar shingles was then for many years the chief source of income for the early settlers.

The first saw mill was built in 1862 on the banks of the Mattawamkeag River by David Sewell, Simeon Curtis, and Oliver Dow under the name of the Island Falls Mill Company. This was an old type saw and shingle mill.⁹¹ It was located right on the falls of the river, so it was afforded every advantage. The mill and privilege were purchased in 1889 by C.S.Perry, James Carson, and Fred Sherman. They installed rotary saws but continued to use the river for water power. In 1905 they sold to the Emerson Brothers who continued this operation for some

90 Ibid.

91 Personal interview with Fred Sherman of Island Falls, June 23, 1938. Mr. Sherman was one of the owners of the mills.

92

years until the mill was destroyed by fire. The logs for the saw mill were brought from all the surrounding areas and the lumber was hauled to Houlton, twenty-nine miles to the north whence it was shipped to Boston over the Canadian railways. Shingles were also sent out of Island Falls to some extent. After the railroad came in 1893, the lumbering business naturally increased, and the trade and manufacturing sprang forward rapidly.

93

Another mill was built on Cold Brook Stream in the southern part of the town by M.L.Young. He had received a grant of land from the State with the stipulation that he build a mill. After a few years, Durgin and Harriman, mill men, bought out the mill and operated until it was finally closed, and the mill fell to ruin.

94

In 1870 there was much agitation for a mill of some sort that would enable the farmers to get their meal and feed ground without being forced to go so far from home. The movement went

92 Registry of Deeds, CXIV, 58; CXIV, 175; CCXIV, 459.

93 Interview with Fred Sherman, June 23, 1938.

94 Personal interview with Seth Campbell, an attorney of Island Falls, June 23, 1938. Mr. Campbell owns the deed to this mill property.

95 Aroostook Times, June 7, 1870. A letter from Island Falls to the editor: "We need a good grist mill here; and as one evidence of the prosperity of Aroostook, showing the amount of grain raised in the County, I will simply say that every grist mill is crowded full of wheat in every town where there is a mill. Hundreds of bushels of wheat are piled up in our flour mills waiting to be ground so that it is difficult to get a grist ground without waiting several days and sometimes weeks. In fact, it has been so troublesome to get it ground that some farmers have left off raising wheat altogether and raise oats which they sell readily to the lumbermen for cash and buy their flour. Yet it pays well to raise wheat. We find no difficulty in raising from 20-25 bushels of wheat per acre and sometimes from 35-40 bushels per acre."

so far that Charles L. Berry started a grist mill, but he died⁹⁶ before the mill was ready for business, and no one else seemed sufficiently interested to carry on the project even though⁹⁷ there was a good market price for grain.

The town of Oakfield received its economic birth in a mill built in 1872 at the foot of Spaulding Lake by Avon D. Weeks. A very small mill had been built in 1852 by Joseph Crandell, but it had long since fallen to ruin before Weeks came to rebuild and enlarge the facilities. His mill contained a rotary,⁹⁸ lath machine, and a planer. This was run by a water wheel and a dam built at the foot of the lake. Each night the gates of the dam were lowered, so that enough water collected to run the mill the following day. After the nearby lumber was all exhausted, Weeks left his mill, which gradually fell to ruins, took his machinery with him to Weeksboro on the Ashland Branch⁹⁹ and built a new mill in 1890. From there Weeks went to Masardis, bought the mill from Sara Stimson and started business anew. After the river boom broke and he lost his lumber, he gave up this mill too.

A small grist mill was built about 1888 by Swan Higgins and W.H.Gerrish. This was located on the same lake. The mill

96 Interview with Fred Sherman, June 23, 1938.

97 Aroostook Times, March 11, 1870, price quotations: "oats sell for 55¢ per bushel; wheat, for \$2; potatoes, for 50¢; and buckwheat, for 45¢."

98 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 290.

99 Personal interview with Mrs. Henry Corliss of Oakfield, June 23, 1938. Mrs. Corliss' account was substantiated by an old book of family records.

contained two runs of stone, so that feed could be ground and
 buckwheat flour bolted.¹⁰⁰ There was not enough grist brought
 to keep the mill in constant operation, so after the new im-
 proved grist mill at Smyrna had been started, this Gerrish
 mill was discontinued.¹⁰¹

In 1901 Will Corliss and Henry Corliss¹⁰² built a small
 mill, containing a shingle and lath machine, on Sherman Brook.
 These owners also moved when lumber was no longer easily acces-
 sible in Oakfield to Shorey's Siding on the Ashland Branch.
 After four years of operation, the mill burned, and the site
 was sold.

The importance of the northern part of the County to
 lumbering activities had been first demonstrated by Shepard
 Cary, and this importance had not diminished with the years.
 It is not surprising, therefore, to find that around Fort Kent
 developed one of these lumber centers or that as early as 1871
 large quantities of shingles were being rafted to St. John via
 the Fish and St. John Rivers. This was the only route to a
 market until the coming of the Temiscouta Railway across the
 St. John in 1890 furnished another. In 1902 the arrival of the
 Bangor and Aroostook Railroad facilitated shipping still further.
 During the last forty years of the 19th century, the name of
 Levi Sears was identified with Fort Kent's extensive lumber

 100 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 290.

101 Interview with Mrs. Corliss, June 23, 1938.

102 These were the father and husband respectively of Mrs.
 Corliss.

enterprises. His place and reputation were admirably filled by the Fort Kent Mill Company. During the 28 years this firm operated, it specialized in a fine grade of cedar shingles, which found a ready market in Boston. The company employed the year round about 150 men in the woods, about 60 in the mills,¹⁰³ and ran a large farm and company store. After the shingle trade diminished, the owners continued to fill the surrounding woods with pulp crews to provide this new lumber product.

There was another tremendous effect which these lumber, shingle, and sawing industries had upon the river populace that can not be found in the dividends paid to the stockholders or even in the comfortable homes which the woodsmen eventually built, and yet it was more lasting than either of these. It was imprinted upon the group personality of these people living up and down the river. The effect had its origin in the native joyousness of the French settlers who first came into the region. No hardship was ever so great that it robbed these delightful people of their ability to laugh. They were not the greedy money hoarders that their "Yankee bosses" were; a simple home, food to eat, and security from molestation were about all they asked. They provided their own recreation by their native love of music and gayety. This background, supplied with the ready money that came from the prosperous lumber concerns, made of the St. John Valley folk a gay and happy people. They were cut off from the rest of the State, and they spared no pains to satisfy their

103 Pinkham, op. cit., p. 2.

fundamental aptitudes. They soon realized the keen enjoyment to be experienced by horse racing, both in summer and winter; so in Fort Kent were to be found some of the finest stables in the State. The inhabitants were a gregarious people, so open hospitality became second nature to them. This characteristic is usually the first to be observed among the valley dwellers. Few other people are more universally generous and courteous than are these. Although they did not blend easily or rapidly with their English neighbors to the south, by this gradual assimilation, the State of Maine has been tremendously enriched in these gifts of fresh gayety and kindly hospitality.

From Fort Kent, the most northern town in the State, there are two thoroughfares which have penetrated the forest, lake and river region of this northern tip of Maine. The lower route leads right into the heart of the lake district and is the most popular avenue with the hunters in the fall. Some of the towns on it, such as Daigle and Guerette, exist largely by and for the sportsman-camps which provide for and continue their existence. The permanent inhabitants have built a very few mills but, for the most part, the people are entirely agricultural, hauling their harvests to St. Agatha or to Stockholm, from which places potatoes are shipped to outside markets or made into starch.

Through this hunters' paradise of Long Lake, one finally reaches St. Agatha, a very thrifty and enterprising community. It was here that the elder Corriveau lived whose sons and des-

cendants had grist mills at Fort Kent and Frenchville. He built his first mill about 1878 on a stream near Long Lake, nearly three miles from St. Agatha. ¹⁰⁴ Wheat, buckwheat, and oats were ground here with the old mill stones operated by great water wheels. This mill was run by Corriveau for nearly 30 years at which time it was taken over by one of his sons, Joseph, who continued grinding the people's grain until three years ago. The original building is still standing but it is somewhat in need of repairs from lying idle.

This same Joseph also had a mill of his own on the other side of the lake operated under his own name. This mill was not built until about 1914, so rollers were installed from the first. This, too, has been inoperative but only for about one year.

Ovela Pelletier built his grist mill, which is located on the shore of the lake right in St. Agatha, in 1913. He has always used gasoline power to drive the wheat rollers for his grist work. This mill is, likewise, equipped to do any kind of grinding - wheat, buckwheat, or oats and barley. It is entirely custom work, and, although the mill does not have the amount of business it did a few years ago, at the time of the World War when flour was so scarce, it is still kept in continual operation. The people in this area have never lost their interest in or their skill in cooking buckwheat food.

 104 Personal interview with Ovela Pelletier of St. Agatha, July 7, 1938. Mr. Pelletier is the present owner of the grist mill in this town.

There is a long lumber mill which was built by Herbert Corriveau, a brother of Joseph, about 1908. The mill is still in operation and saws the lumber for most of the camp-building operation up and down the lake.

A seasonal industry is provided by the two starch factories, one built and owned by Albert Michaud about 50 years ago, the other built about 35 years ago by the Farmers' Cooperative. Although buckwheat is very popular, the people raise quite a few potatoes, many of which are taken to these two starch factories during the two months when the plants are in operation.

Frenchville was settled by the Acadian migration, and their struggle for existence duplicates that of the St. John Valley in general. The mills which had been built have been for the most part small grist mills and custom saw mills with occasionally wool dressing or carding facilities being included as in the case of the present mill owned by George Corriveau. Although this is run by electricity, it affords one an opportunity to see the interesting manner in which the native sheep's wool, brought to the mill as of yore in sacks, bags, or any other container, is made into soft fleecy rolls which will eventually find themselves made into warm socks and mittens by the native housewives. A charge of 9¢ a pound is made for carding the wool at this mill. ¹⁰⁵ There are other mills in operation both in Frenchville and Upper Frenchville, but they

 105 Personal interview with Laurier Lagasse of Upper Frenchville, July 7, 1938. Mr. Lagasse, a son of a former owner, Joe Lagasse, is the present operator of the Corriveau mill.

like the rest, running only on part time are dependent on the seasonal activities.

Over the very earliest mills, built by the Acadians at Madawaska, there is a cloudy haze of vague recollections which makes it difficult to acquire accurate and trustworthy information. The first of these mills was established by those peasant folk on concessions granted by the British Government with some slight compensation for the building of the grist mill.¹⁰⁶ About the first in Madawaska was started on Gagnon Brook by Paul Potier.¹⁰⁷ It was undoubtedly a simple grist mill. A later owner, Vilas Cyr, had, as well as the grist mill, a saw mill, and an apparatus for shelling barley for soup. In the same building he had another machine in which he took the home spun cloth, which was made by the various families, put it through a process to prevent shrinking then pressed it, returning to the owner a very finished looking piece of cloth.¹⁰⁸

Further up, opposite Edmunston, a small saw and grist mill combined was erected on Church Brook, near St. Luce church. This was built by Regis Daigle a little before 1900. The grist mill, in some way, set fire at one time to the church, a fact which caused the mill to be discontinued at once and later dismantled.

In 1924 a big paper mill was built in Madawaska by the

106 Interview with Remi Daigle, July 7, 1938. The records of these were made in Canada so bear the term, York Deeds.

107 Wilson, op. cit., p. 70.

108 Interview with Remi Daigle, July 7, 1938.

Fraser Company of Madawaska. The pulp for this mill was furnished by a pulp mill on the province side, in Edmunston. The ground pulp, a mushy mass, is fed by force pumps through large pipes under the water in the river to the American factory where it is made into bond paper. A greater part of the cheaper grade of this paper is sold to Montgomery Ward and Sears Roebuck Company for their catalogues. This mode of procuring the pulp is used to evade the excessively high duty that is imposed upon Canadian-made paper. The business, though not so extensive as that of the Great Northern Paper Company, has made for prosperity in Madawaska. It has increased the value of real estate and afforded fairly constant employment to the citizens. Although the Fraser Company has huge lumber holdings from which it cuts the pulp, it also buys from stumpage leases. To get these logs, the Company uses both drives on the Madawaska River and railroad shipments.

The present grist mill, located on Gagnon Brook two miles below the center of Madawaska in the church parish of St. David,¹¹⁰ was built in 1914 by Joe Gagnon. The grist mill, steam driven, is located in the upper part of the mill and is used for grinding the conventional buckwheat, oats, and barley, though occasionally a little wheat is also ground. Since it is operated only when the farmers bring in their grain, the

109 Interview with Remi Daigle, July 7, 1938.

110 Personal interview with Joe Gagnon of Madawaska, July 7, 1938. Mr. Gagnon owns and operates both the saw and grist mill.

running is rather intermittent. For his services, Gagnon receives 10¢ per bushel; but, in the majority of cases, he receives the old form of pay - a bushel of meal or feed for every ten bushels which he grinds. The saw mill, located in the basement, has a rotary saw for long and short lumber as well as a shingle machine and a planer. The rate for sawing limber is \$4 per M.

Closely associated with the industrial activities of Madawaska was Grand Isle, whose first settlers were likewise fragments of the Acadian immigration. Here the very first grist mill was built on Soucy Stream by Batiste Soucy probably about 1850 or even earlier.¹¹¹ Although the mill was razed many years ago, for a long time the old mill stones were on the site. They were over four feet in diameter, were one foot thick, and had been brought there from Riviere du Loup in Quebec Province. The old water wheel had, however, been destroyed with the building.

Other mills were built for similiar purposes and in a similiar manner as follows:¹¹²

- (1) a grist mill on Thierrault Stream in 1860 by Thierrault;
- (2) a combination lumber, grist, and carding mill on Thibodeau Stream in 1873 by Joseph Corriveau;
- (3) a small shingle and saw mill on Thibodeau Stream by Michael Martin;

 111 Personal interview with Florent Sanfacon of Grand Isle, July 7, 1938. Mr. Sanfacon, an aged resident, is unusually well informed on mill history by his own connections with the mills.

112 Ibid.

- (4) a saw and buckwheat mill on Thierrault Stream about 1860 by Firmin Cyr;
- (5) a shingle mill in 1884 by Albe Holmes in which there were 11 shingle machines, one for long lumber, for clapboards, and for laths;
- (6) a combined long lumber and grist mill on Morneault Creek in 1878 by Father Pineau;
- (7) on the St. John River a steam-operated saw mill in 1888 by Charles Morneault.

There is one other mill which is at present in operation. It is a saw and grist mill with wheat rollers run by P.A. Daigle. It serves the same purpose for Grand Isle that Gagnon's mill performs for Madawaska, the occasional sawing and grinding which people desire.

There are similarities immediately obvious as one scans the stories of these towns along the St. John. There are none of the smaller ones, with the exception of Madawaska, that pretend to a more ambitious development than the simple establishments which will satisfactorily serve their needs as others, on whose ruined sites these were perhaps built, have provided places to which their fathers and grandfathers before them could take a grist of grain, a sack of wool, or a few logs for a new addition to the house.

This, in brief, has concluded those settlements in which there has been found traces of milling industries of one sort or another. Some occupied positions of strong importance,

commanding a place in outside markets as well as in local business; others have justified their existence on the principal basis of a depot for local service. This latter type must not have its importance minimized, for without these small mills, the settlers in those places would have found the obstacles of founding a town nearly insurmountable. As such, they deserve only the highest commendation.

The last major type of industry which came into prominence during this period before starch mills gained their importance was that of making tan-bark and the tanning of leather from hides. In this industry it was merely another case of bringing the mountain to Mohammed. For the tanning of leather, the hemlock tree was all important. The tanning process consisted, in brief, of grinding the hemlock bark from which an extract was thus made and then soaking the hides in this solution until they became pliable and soft for fashioning into boots and shoes. ¹¹³ As soon as it was found out that such fine hemlocks grew in Maine, interested capitalists began to make arrangements to use this excellent product of the Maine woods. During the middle of the 19th century, small and then larger tanneries sprang up and met with an almost over-night success. In the lower part of the State, native hides were used somewhat, but for the large tanneries of Aroostook, those located at Island Falls, New Limerick, and Bridgewater in the heart of the northern hemlock growth, the skins were brought by boat and

113 Wood, op. cit., p. 182.

train. While the industry lasted, there was an immense profit derived, but for those who tried to prolong the natural life of the industry, there was only financial failure.

One of the important tanning firms in this southern section of the County was that of Charles and I.W. Shaw of New Limerick. They came into Aroostook in 1875 from Dexter, Maine, and located on the Meduxnekeag Stream near Drew's Lake in New Limerick.¹¹⁴ They built at first a saw mill with a shingle mill in which to manufacture the lumber they would need for the extensive building of their other plants. This saw mill alone was estimated at the time to cost \$10,000.¹¹⁵ When it was completed and in running order, they built the tannery. The two mills could be operated profitably side by side, because the peeled logs could be used for some grades of lumber export, and the bark fed into vats that were ever waiting for this tanning agent.¹¹⁶ The tan-bark mill was open for business in 1876. A market was thus created on a new scale for the woods' produce of the region, and from far and wide the logs were brought to the Shaw plant. This provided employment for many, and the money, much needed for the development of Aroostook County, found its way in from the outside financial centers. This one locality hired as many as 200 men at one time in both the mills and the woods. It was the greatest single industry New Limerick ever

114 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 62.

115 Aroostook Times, June 10, 1875.

116 Ibid., February 10, 1876.

had. It was continued until 1910 when the Shaws were forced in-
to insolvency, and the mills were dismantled by the order of
the Court of Assizes.¹¹⁷

In Houlton there was a firm of similar name, F. Shaw and
Brothers of Kingman, Maine, who came there in 1875 to build a
tannery.¹¹⁸ By this time it had become apparent to business men
outside that the hemlock bark of Aroostook was of a superior
quality for the tanning of leather, and they were anxious to
share in its profits. This tannery, started in 1876,¹¹⁹ was
suddenly destroyed by fire in 1877 after it had been running
only six months, but it was rebuilt in November of the same
year.¹²⁰

Also in Houlton was a tannery operated by Cornelius Mul-
herrin on the west side of the Meduxnekeag Stream and dam. This
plant had at first been fitted out for a grist mill, but about
1865 leather was tanned there - on a smaller scale, however,
than at the Shaw Brothers Plant.¹²¹

A small tannery was operated at Hodgdon for a time, but at
this only the tan-bark extract was made. Some was sold to the
surrounding leather tanneries, and some to the markets outside.¹²²

117 Interview with Ellsworth Lougee, June 28, 1938.

118 Aroostook Times, June 10, 1875.

119 Ibid., March 30, 1876.

120 Ibid., July 12, 1877; November 1, 1877.

121 Personal interview with R.W. Shaw of Houlton, June 28, 1938.

Mr. Shaw, an elderly lawyer, is very interested in local
history and, in fact, has organized the Aroostook His-
torical Museum of Houlton.

122 Interview with Harry Williams, June 25, 1938.

Of all these tanneries, by far the most important was located in Island Falls, a town long dominated by the lumber industry. The new factory, however, without any doubt gave Island Falls a greater boost toward development and prosperity than it had known before or has experienced since. In the words of one man,¹²³ the tannery just made the town and it has not been the same since. The plant was built in 1894 in the central part¹²⁴ of the town on Mattawamkeag Stream by F.W.Hunt of Boston. This area was in the very midst of the best hemlock grove in the County. The hides and skins were shipped into Island Falls and other Aroostook towns from the far West as well as from South America.¹²⁵ Huge vats were installed for the making of the tan-bark. It required 3,200,000 feet of lumber to construct the building itself.¹²⁶ Therefore, it may well be imagined what prosperity this brought to the entire area in employment, both in the mills and in the woods, and in a cash market for the hemlock wood. After Hunt's death, the business diminished. He had had serious disputes over the excessive freight rates, and this burden seemed too much for his successors with the increasing competition from outside plants. After lying idle for some time,¹²⁷ the building burned, and the wave of prosperity receded.

About the same time, 1877, B.H.Towle of Lee came to Sherman

123 Fred Sherman.

124 Interview with Fred Sherman, June 23, 1938,

125 Aroostook Times, January 24, 1878, "...buffalo hides from the far western prairie are brought here by the car loads to be made into leather."

126 Interview with Fred Sherman, June 23, 1938

127 Ibid.

and built a tannery near the mill. This was operated until 1888
 when it was destroyed by fire and was not rebuilt.¹²⁸ The year
 following, the Shaw Brothers of Kingman and Houlton erected a
 large bark extract mill which promised a brilliant future for
 the countryside as a whole as a market for many products. This,
 however, failed after five years because of financial insecurity
 within the firm.¹²⁹

To the north, a tannery was started by George W. Collins
 of Bridgewater. As in the case of the Shaws at New Limerick,
 Collins built his saw mills and the tannery in close proximity
 to make the service of one available for the other.¹³⁰ This
 was but a novice's attempt. With his second saw mill, he built
 a fine new tannery for the manufacture of upper leather,¹³¹ but
 had just started it in successful operation when the mill was
 struck by lightning and burned.¹³² Not discouraged by the fire
 loss of both plants, Collins built another tannery for the manu-
 facture of sole leather. This he sold in 1884 to Charles Church.¹³³
 These mills were built before the railroads came through, so the
 finished leather was hauled by horse teams to Houlton, and the
 hides and supplies brought back on the return trip, a total

 128 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 135.

129 Gerry, op. cit. Also Aroostook Times, March 1, 1877.

130 Aroostook Times, July 12, 1872, "An extensive tannery is
 building at Bridgewater by G.W.Collins which will re-
 quire 50 men or more to run."

131 This leather is that from which the upper part of the boots
 or shoes were made. The leather of the lower part of the
 shoe was termed sole leather.

132 Aroostook Times, July 23, 1878.

133 Interview with Harvey Tompkins, June 30, 1938.

distance of forty-two miles. Later this tannery which Church had bought was sold to Frank Hunt of Boston, the owner of the plant at Island Falls, but it was discontinued after the death of the owner.¹³⁴

The tannery farthest north was one built at an earlier period and for the local market, not for the outside world. In 1852 Collins and Vaughan built such a plant on the Caribou Stream just below their grist mill.¹³⁵ It was operated by William Farrell, who bought hides from the farmers and even the lumbermen, who sometimes drove beef cattle into the woods to be killed. Farrell manufactured the leather into thick boots for the lumberman to use. This was then really but a part of that economic system in Caribou to provide completely for all phases of its industrial life, and, therefore, the mill had no connection with the prosperous industry which was built up in the southern part of the County.

This particular type of lumber enterprise was successful only within a limited area or belt where the hemlock trees grew most prolifically. The industry had enjoyed wide prosperity in the central part of the State until the diminishing supply of the necessary bark caused the tan-bark promoters to shift the scene of their activities to the north, into Aroostook County. When that, too, was nearly exhausted, other ways and means were found to create a synthetic agent to replace the

134 Interview with A.C.Cookson, June 29, 1938.

135 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 120.

136

natural hemlock bark.

The tannery interlude lasted but a relatively brief period; for the time being, however, it more than justified the hopes of its promoters. The expense of transportation in time spelled the downfall of the industry. It became impossible to bring the heavy hides by rail from the sea ports. This expense coupled with diminishing areas of hemlock finally caused experimentation to create a tanning fluid which could be manufactured as a substitute for the real tan-bark. The market then shifted to the sea ports or other places where the hides were more easily accessible.

The industrial growth had progressed to a remarkable degree if the difficulties and expense of transportation of supplies and produce are taken into consideration. With this growth, a thriving population had kept pace, at the same time the cause and the result of such activity. By 1873, at what might be termed the beginning of the break between industrial and agricultural Aroostook, the following computation of business and industries shows the progress which had been made:

136 Wood, op. cit., p. 182.

137 Whitman, William E.S., Wealth and Industry of Maine 1873
First Annual Report, (Augusta, Maine), pp. 312, 330-332.

INDUSTRY	CAPITAL	VOLUME OF PRODUCE	VALUE OF PRODUCE	POWER CAPACITY	NUMBER EMPLOYED	YEAR WAGE TOTAL
2 starch plants	\$ 4,000	75 tons	-----	-----	6	-----
8 grist mills	\$17,000	52,000 bu. grain 1,400 bu. wheat	\$36,000	194 water wheels	13	\$1,870
2 tan- plants	\$17,800	-----	\$ 9,200	-----	3	\$1,500
21 saw mills	\$42,000	8,320 M long lumber 1,066 M short lumber	\$47,600	35 steam engines 605 water wheels	68	\$8,728

Although many of the mills continued in their production of shingles, tanned leather, clapboards, or miscellaneous articles much later than 1875, the attention of the County by then was turning in an entirely new direction. Until 1873 the forests had been the ever ready source for actual money, but with 1875 the first use of potatoes, or in fact the land, for an actual commercial product came to the fore, and the heyday of wood and timber was over. For a period it had seemed that this shingle and lumber industry would be the key to Aroostook's success; but the "handwriting was on the wall" in the thinning

forests of cedar and spruce. They too had had their day, but they had served to bring in capital and to incite an interest in the County. From this time on Aroostook has become associated in the public mind more and more with agricultural production.

Chapter V

THE STARCH PRELUDE

The transition from the use of forest products to those of the soil on a commercial scale was more abrupt than that for the preceding periods, but as in the case of these eras the industries overlapped to a considerable degree. In many cases, shingles and starch were manufactured in the same mill at varying intervals in the year. Thus the development of Aroostook went on apace, with land and forest complimenting each other to a far greater degree than would at first be deemed possible. The starch factories, in other words, were the means by which Aroostook was introduced to the outside world; they afforded the preface to its career as one of the heaviest potato producing areas in the United States.

A century ago a geological survey was in progress. It had been authorized by the State in order to learn something of the earth formation of Aroostook County and its possibilities. In that year of 1838 one of the surveyors made the following report:

The staple crop of the Aroostook farm is, and ever must be, wheat. For this the climate and most of the soil is exceedingly favorable. The variety of this grain mostly cultivated is the spring wheat although some experiments with winter wheat have been eminently successful. It is usually raised upon a "burn". The trees are cut in the spring, they are then burned, and the land sowed to wheat immediately. This has the disadvantage of making the crop late so that frosts and snow destroy it. It is better to fall the trees and "limb" them in June; in the course of a summer put in the fire, then "junk" and "pile" and sow the seeds earlier in the succeeding spring. This gives

the wheat the advantage of an early start. Land prepared as above produces an average crop of 20 bushels to the acre. Winter wheat is very successful on the Aroostook Road, the St. John River above Madawaska, due to the very heavy snows; in 1837 Fish and Wiggins raised in township 4 on Aroostook Road 1,250 bushels of wheat on 50 acres of burnt land, averaging 25 bushels to the acre. 140 of this was winter wheat on 7 acres, with an average of 20 bushels to the acre....Wheat during that year (1837) was worth \$1.75 per bushel.

But very little rye is cultivated in this region. It is, however, a sure crop and a profitable one. It can be made use of in many parts for fattening hogs, combined with potatoes boiled. I saw a white variety at Mr. Fairbanks' mill the flour of which is as white as that of wheat. It is a spring grain and yields as much as darker kinds.¹

There was just one thing that the above survey did not take into consideration and that was the simple matter of transportation. The soil held a potential value, but the trees afforded an immediate cash return. Wheat or any other grain could not very readily be "driven" to market on the St. John River; logs preferred this mode of exit. When the attention of Aroostook was next turned seriously to the agricultural possibilities of its acres, the great wheat belt of the middle West was brooking no competition in the larger markets, and it seemed that what wheat Aroostook raised would have to find a market within
²
 its own borders. This has continued to be the situation.

Up to the time of the Civil War, the production of potatoes had been desultory; a comparatively few barrels were marketed, for the greater part was used for home consumption. The Civil

1 Holmes, E., Territory on the Aroostook River, Report of 1838, (Augusta, Maine, 1838), pp. 53, 58.

2 Aroostook Times, October 5, 1860, "Aroostook enjoys a monopoly of this crop (wheat) and alone of all the counties, can raise bread for her people."

War raised the demand as well as the price of this commodity as it did for all other goods and food supplies, but it did not lead to greatly increased production or sales. The principal reason for this lay in the expense and difficulty of transportation. ³

When the railroad came within hauling distance of the Aroostook towns, the County could develop its versatile resources and better still send the produce to outside markets. It was not, however, until 1870 that the Canadian Pacific was extended to Houlton, although it had reached Woodstock, New Brunswick, in 1862. In 1871 this railroad facility was further extended by the completion of the European and North American Railway to Vanceboro by a circuitous route which brought Houlton into direct line with Bangor and the great American markets. ⁴ From that date, until the roads were extended to the northern part of the County, Houlton was a terminus of railroad communication for southern Aroostook. By virtue of this, Houlton became the trading outlet of the large and fertile agricultural region to the north.

The effect of the railroad facilities was immediately felt on all production. Regions which had not been accessible for lack of transportation could now market their produce, and develop their land facilities as well. Of such agricultural commodities the greater emphasis was laid on the potato because it was immediately valuable for the manufacture of starch.

³ Ibid., June 27, 1866, "Potatoes are dear in Boston and plenty in Aroostook, but it does not pay the expense of transportation even when they sell here for 50¢ per bushel."

⁴ Wiggins, op. cit., p. 15.

The potato as a food supply had long been raised in Aroostook. Of this, Holmes, the surveyor, gave no mention except to state that, boiled with rye, potatoes would fatten animals. The very earliest settlers, however, could have told of many times when starvation was averted by the potato. It is quite to be forgiven him, perhaps, when one realizes that wheat and not potatoes was universally recognized as the "staff of life".

How and when the first crop of potatoes was harvested seems somewhat in controversy. One account is as follows:

The first potatoes planted in the Aroostook Valley were planted at the mouth of Lovely Brook in Letter D (Fort Fairfield), by one William Lovely, one of the early settlers. This was a variety called the "Early Blues" or "Bluenoses". When the soldiers came, they were supplied with this variety and they began calling the people who raised them "bluenoses".⁵

Another account would place the date as early as June 1, 1807 when Joseph Houlton planted his first crop and included a few of the variety of the "Early Blues"⁶. At any rate, according to this latter authority, "When Mrs. Putnam came six years later, and the settlement consisted of four log cabins and a camp, the settlers had a supply of this kind of potatoes".

From these reports it would seem safe to say that the first potato raised was the "Early Blue" variety. The procedure of planting as described in the early accounts was not dissimilar to that used for wheat.⁷ After the trees were chopped and burned in early spring, the soil was raked over with

5 Ashby, op. cit., April 7, 1910.

6 Barnes, Potato in Aroostook, op. cit., p. 102.

7 Ibid.

the wood ash, and the seed planted in hills among the tree stumps. No hoeing or after-care was required until the fall brought digging time.

...the "Black Christy" variety was always grown as a later keeping potato than the "Early Blues"....A variety called the "Saco" was early introduced to the settlements and used for cattle. It had a very large, round, two-fisted sort of shape and was white. This potato had altogether disappeared before the advent of present varieties. Mrs. Putnam states one day she pared one of the mammoth "Saco", cutting quite deeply, and, after paring was done, she took the skin out to the barn, scratched a slight trench between the black logs and planted the skin there, laying it along full length. In the fall she dug up 36 potatoes as the yield of the skin, some few of good size, the rest were small.⁸

Memory may have enhanced the potato yield of this early time, but it shows how the soil, even at this period, had demonstrated its superior composition for this purpose. The Aroostook Valley has been claimed as one of the most fertile areas, in all respects, east of the Mississippi Basin. It has a peculiar formation of calcareous ledges over which is lavishly spread a layer of light yellow loam, in which, it is boasted, anything will grow. The soil has proven itself admirably adapted for the raising of potatoes because of the comparative newness of this same soil and the remarkable absence of surface stones. It is upon this limestone base that the great Aroostook potato empire has been created. Until the arrival of the railroad, however, all this fertility was merely taken for granted, and no one outside knew enough of the chemical composition of this

⁸ Ibid., pp. 103-104.

light loam and the superior quality of the potatoes which could be raised in it to create a revolutionary business. The native Aroostook farmer continued to raise enough for his own family supply and for this a simple technique and equipment were adequate. The fashion had not changed very much from the first days.

Finally some business men from New Hampshire happened to read a bulletin, published by a railroad, in explanation of new lines which had been extended into Aroostook County. The article aroused these gentlemen's curiosity to such an extent that they sent one of their members, a man by the name of Hale, to investigate the possibilities of the potato in Aroostook for starch manufacture. Meanwhile another financier, Albe Holmes of Medford, Massachusetts, likewise interested in two or three starch factories in New Hampshire, was so noticeably impressed with the information in the railroad bulletin that he came personally to Caribou in 1871 to look over the possibilities.⁹ The object of Hale and Holmes was the same, but Holmes, acting independently, could purchase at once, whereas Hale, since he represented a firm, was compelled to wait for the company's action. Holmes lost no time in buying of John Barnes the old, abandoned Alex Cochran mill property for his starch plant.¹⁰ He began the construction of the building and made contracts with the farmers for planting a larger acreage of potatoes. In many instances,

9 White, op. cit., p. 7. Also Registry of Deeds, XLI, 522.

10 Registry of Deeds, XLI, 522.

the money was even advanced for this purpose. In Caribou, therefore, one finds the beginning of the potato industry of Aroostook County. It seems strangely coincidental that Kimball and Company of Boston should have chosen this same time, in which to establish a branch office in Houlton for buying potatoes.¹¹ The year of 1872, therefore, marks in two varying aspects the beginning of the transition of Aroostook from an industrial, lumber-shipping section of Maine to the agricultural center of today.

In 1872 there were 752 farms in the County, but these included only 31,676 acres improved land as contrasted with 158,000 acres of unimproved land. The total valuation of the land and buildings has been given as \$387,281.¹² When the market opened at the starch factories and later potato brokerage offices came into existence, men gradually invaded the waste tracts until, in an unbelievably brief time, the whole countryside was transformed into wide-lying productive fields, the potato empire of Maine.

The following table shows the production of these 752 farms in 1873:¹³

 11 Barnes, Potato in Aroostook, op. cit., p. 102.

12 Whitman, op. cit., p. 366.

13 Ibid.

PRODUCT	NUMBER OF ACRES	NUMBER OF BUSHELS	VALUE OF SAME
Indian corn	42	726	\$1,501
Wheat	590	9,794	\$18,722
Rye	20	300	\$300
Barley	82	1,160	\$1,110
Buckwheat	3,019	63,188	\$21,052
Oats	3,796	92,906	\$42,003
Potatoes	678	74,165	\$21,222

Ten years later, after a successful decade of starch factories, the number of farms had increased to 5,354, and the cultivated areas now outdistanced the waste lands by 221,682 acres to 70,666 acres. Of these farms, 4,224 were occupied by their owners while 301 were leased by tenants. The number of farm laborers employed was 1,130, and their average monthly wage was \$17.91. Under this increased cultivation 2,525,538 bushels of potatoes were raised of which it is estimated ¹⁴ 1,294,051 were sold or shipped to outside markets.

The factory first built by Holmes was enlarged several times over a period of years, until it became one of the greatest in the County. Factories were also built by him in

 14 Statistics of Maine, (compiled by the Secretary of State), (Augusta, Maine, 1883), II, p. 56.

15

Van Buren and Grand Isle. This starch industry created a cash market that was greatly appreciated from north to south, and farming, as an occupation, took on a more encouraging outlook. In this respect, Holmes may be considered as a real pioneer. In some instances, he combined lumbering with his starch enterprises, using the late winter and early spring months for saw-
 ing long lumber and manufacturing cedar shingles.¹⁶ This tendency became quite common in a few years especially in the smaller towns. Starch machinery would be installed as an addition to the saw and shingle mills, and both activities would be carried on, one supplanting the other.

Hale had also correctly estimated the value of the potato for starch production. He returned in 1874 with the objective of ascertaining the interest among the farmers in such a project, for, without their cooperation, he realized he was powerless to succeed. At Houlton and Fort Fairfield he met the same response - either a cold indifference or a marked skepticism. Finally in Presque Isle's Dr. G.H. Freeman he found someone who would at least listen with an open mind. Dr. Freeman was not an active practitioner at this time. The people in Presque Isle had been too healthy to afford him a living; so he had, ere this, started a store, at first for the sale of drugs, and later for hardware. It may have been as a result of a slight financial interest that his cooperation with Hale was first elicited. At

 15 White, op. cit., p. 8.

16 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 122.

any rate, whatever the motive, Freeman saw the possibilities and began to talk with the farmers as an advance agent of the starch company. They too soon caught his enthusiasm and the following contract was duly drawn up and signed:

We the undersigned agree to deliver to the Presque Isle Starch Company the number of acres of good merchantable potatoes between the 1st of September and the 20th of October for four years respectively set against our names for which Company agree to pay 25¢ for 63 lbs. to be paid on completion of our contract each year. This contract is to take effect from and after September 1, 1875. Dated at Presque Isle, Maine, October 15, 1874.¹⁷

The number of signers being sufficiently adequate for the owners to undertake the project, the factory was built in the summer of 1875 by Edson, Hale, and Wheeler of Littleton, New Hampshire, near the site of the grist mill.¹⁸ The factory did not want for publicity. From the moment of Hale's first arrival,¹⁹ the project was advertised in the County newspapers.

The experiment was quickly recognized as a success. The potato farmers who had made the venture were amply paid, and the starch fever began to rage. Those who had joked and derided the first season were now anxious to add their names to the contract sheet. The venture was just as profitable for the owners. The price of starch was high that year, and the profit from the first year's output paid the entire cost of the plant.²⁰

17 Ashby, op. cit., December 8, 1910.

18 Ibid., December 1, 1910.

19 Aroostook Times, February 26, 1874, "A starch mill is to be erected at Presque Isle the coming season." Also, April 22, 1875, "Presque Isle is to have a steam starch factory." Also, September 9, 1875, "The new steam starch factory will go into operation about the 10th of this month."

20 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 98.

Not to be outdone by "outsiders", the lumber dealers of Presque Isle, Johnson and Phair, decided to enter the race. That same season under the direction of these two men, a starch company, the Aroostook Starch Company, was established, and a factory was built at the Aroostook bridge in that part of Presque Isle that was originally the separate town of Maysville. Together the two factories consumed about 2,000 bushels of potatoes daily.²¹

Interest grew with each succeeding year. In 1877 a third starch plant was erected in Presque Isle by G.W. Collins and Bedford Hume, who started starch plants in other towns as well.²²

In time the others were outdistanced in the competitive race by Johnson and Phair, who bought out the New Hampshire firm and who built factories in nearby towns, until the name of T.H. Phair was very nearly synonymous with starch production everywhere. Even today he is remembered all over Aroostook as the "starch king of Aroostook County".

The partnership was terminated in 1886 when the senior member, C.F.A. Johnson, retired and departed for California.²³ This left the prestige of the famous firm to be carried on by the indefatigable energies of the junior partner, and he proved himself fully equal to the task and worthy of the title he later won. He enlarged the Presque Isle plants until the one at Maysville alone converted 1,500 bushels of potatoes into starch

 21 Aroostook Times, October 14, 1875.

22 Ibid., December 14, 1876.

23 Interview with David Duncan, June 29, 1938.

daily.²⁴ He bought out the rival firms in adjoining towns until at one time he had eighteen factories with a yearly output of 3,000 or 4,000 tons of starch,²⁵ The Phair operations gave a great impulse to business since it was not only tremendously beneficial to the farmers in putting more money than they had hithertofore dreamed of in their pockets, but it also stimulated the general building up of business in Presque Isle.²⁶

The same could be said of almost every town where T.H. Phair bought property for his starch factories and his lumber mills. Here it must be observed that not infrequently he operated both establishments together with a diminishing overhead to his own business house, as well as a noticeable increase in the volume of business.

In Washburn the original starch factories were owned by the Washburn Starch Company under the direction of Miller, a starch promoter from New Hampshire. One plant was built at the village itself about 1875 and the other a few years later at East Washburn.²⁷ From this initial start the farmers were so well pleased that they responded readily to the later leadership of

24 Aroostook Times, October 22, 1879. Also Bangor and Aroostook, op. cit., p. 35, "The starch mills of Johnson and Phair start September 1, and run two and one-half months, two crews of men work twelve hours each."

25 Gregory, op. cit., p. 9. Also interview with David Duncan, June 29, 1938.

26 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 102, "By the state valuation of 1876, the average amount of property to every person in town (Presque Isle) was about \$200, which consisted almost wholly in farm property in Maysville."

27 Ibid., pp. 130-131.

28

Phair. The development of Washburn really dates then from the impetus given it by T.H.Phair. At first he went among the farmers with contracts for their crops at twenty and twenty-five cents per bushel from the field. Later on, the outside potato market began to consume the finest part of the crop, and the "skulls", a cheaper grade of potato, were used in the manufacture of starch. This is today universally true unless a poor market leaves the farmer with the starch factory as his only alternative.

The Washburn starch factory was bought in 1917, upon T.H. Phair's death, by his son, T.F.Phair, and shortly afterwards the latter sold it to the R.L.Pitcher Company, which bought out many of the Phair plants.²⁹ The new owner tore down the country factories and concentrated attention on those located in the major towns.

A starch factory was also built in Mapleton during the same period by Phair. In a forest fire which swept over the countryside in 1877, this starch factory was burned with a consequent inconvenience to the farmers in the vicinity. They were thus forced to haul what was then an unusually large crop of potatoes to Maysville. This naturally caused an over-concentration at the latter plant so that often as many as 80 teams would be waiting at once to unload. The starch factory was re-

28 Aroostook Times, January 27, 1876, "The farmers of Washburn and vicinity, being so well satisfied with their last year's potato crop, have signed 50 acres additional for their starch factory."

29 Interview with David Duncan, June 29, 1938.

built in 1879, but it was again destroyed, this time by lightening,³⁰ in 1886. Once more it was rebuilt. After Phair's death, the mill was operated by his son until it was eventually sold to I.R.Lenfest. After the latter's death the plant was retained³¹ by Mrs. Lenfest, who still owns it.

Another of the Phair potato starch factories was located in Ashland. The plant had been started by Charles Clayton, the lumber operator of the Allegash region, but it was later acquired by Thomas Phair in his zeal for controlling the starch market. Even as far north as Perham one of these plants was likewise located. This was purchased from the estate by T.F. Phair the year following his father's death.³²

In 1877 in Easton, Johnson and Phair built a starch factory at what was then Sprague's Mills. The factory had only one dry house when it was first built, but a second one was added a few years later.³³ The beneficial results of the Johnson and Phair factories were felt in Easton as they never failed to be wherever one of their plants was located. Here it did more than anything else to build up the stragglng Mills into the thriving town of today. The contract plan was used as it was in Washburn, each farmer promising to cultivate a specified number of acres for the factory and to deliver the potatoes for twenty-five cents per bushel. Even after the demand for Aroostook

30 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 253.

31 Interview with Hazen McIntyre, July 9, 1938.

32 Registry of Deeds, CCCI, 176.

33 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 246.

potatoes induced the farmers to increase their yield, the starch factory remained a steady friend to use their potatoes if the outside market failed. In the fall of 1884, in the middle of the starch-making season, the factory caught fire and was destroyed. It was rebuilt the next year. After the death of Phair in 1916, it was operated by his son, and later was taken over by a cooperative company of Easton people, which still continues its operation.³⁴

In Van Buren the starch industry was started by the construction of a factory by Joseph Martin on Violette Brook about 1876.³⁵ This later was purchased by Allan Hammond. Martin built in 1894 another, a steam power factory on Violette Brook.³⁶ Henry Gagnon built a smaller plant in Cyr Plantation and a third was built on Thibodeau Stream in Grand Isle in 1901 by A.E. Hammond of Van Buren. This plant afforded rather an interesting example of multiple transactions. When Allan Hammond was at the height of his financial power, he expanded by building several mills, among them this one operated by steam. Then, it will be recalled from the mill history of Van Buren, he lost most of his holdings in a law suit. The starch factory was sold to Florent Sanfacon in 1912, but in 1922 the plant was bought back by Hammond, probably with the hope of making another start. In 1925 he sold to George Lundy, who ran the factory until he tore it

34 Interview with Fred Smith, July 8, 1938.

35 Interview with John Pelletier, July 8, 1938. Also Aroostook Times, November 29, 1877.

36 Bangor and Aroostook, op. cit., p. 52.

down in 1935 and took the machinery to Van Buren where he proceeded to erect a new plant. In 1938 Lundy was back in Grand Isle, building a new starch factory on the old site. This was to be operated, however, by a gasoline engine.³⁷ Albe Holmes of Caribou extended his starch domination even into Van Buren and Grand Isle by the operation of two plants with the same successful management that characterized the factory in Caribou. The only one in Van Buren now is located on the Main Street of the town, and is operated by the firm of Philbrick and Lundy.³⁸

Fort Kent's contribution to the development of the potato business came with the establishment of a starch factory in 1880 by Bedelle and Gathercole. This factory changed hands many times, in 1904 coming into the possession of Hamlin Page by whom it was run until his death. The operation of this plant was continued by his son, George Page, until June, 1938, when it was destroyed by fire.³⁹

With the fine start given by the Holmes' starch plant in 1872, other interests in Caribou readily responded, and the potato starch trade grew in this and surrounding areas. The very first year the Holmes' plant had to close down because the new demand had exhausted the potato supply.⁴⁰ The Yield was increased the following year, and Holmes enlarged his factory until in 1876, this plant alone made 200 tons of starch during that

37 Interview with Florent Sanfacon, July 7, 1938.

38 Interview with John Pelletier, July 8, 1938.

39 Interview with Remi Daigle, July 7, 1938.

40 Aroostook Times, November 7, 1872.

41
fall.

In Jemtland of New Sweden Jacob Hedman in 1894 built a starch factory with a capacity of 200 tons. This was a decided boon to the farmers in the immediate area, who had been obliged to haul their potatoes much further.⁴² In 1912 at New Sweden village a group of local business men started a similiar plant. It ran for only a few years before it was abandoned. The market by this time, the early years of the war, was relatively poor for the starch factories since practically all the potatoes were shipped for other uses at very much higher prices.⁴³

Previous to the establishment of this mill, there had been another in New Sweden owned by a Boston firm, doubtless the same in which Holmes was interested. It was located on the present site of the Aroostook Valley Railroad station and was operated from about 1885 to 1890.⁴⁴

There were two starch factories built in Woodland at this time. One was operated by George Goodwin, and the other was owned by the New Sweden Starch company. Both of these factories have been discontinued. The present factory, a very modern plant, was built in the fall of 1937 by the Colby Cooperative Starch Company.⁴⁵

Naturally Limestone, in which it is said more potatoes are raised per acre and more potatoes are raised in comparison

41 Ibid., December 7, 1876.

42 Bangor and Aroostook, op. cit., p. 53.

43 Interview with John Johnson, July 9, 1938.

44 Ibid.

45 Interview with Carl Johnson, July 8, 1938.

with the population than in any other town in the whole United States,⁴⁶ had its starch factories since it was these that really gave potatoes their first start as an independent industry. In 1876 such a factory was built at the Mills by the firm of Eustis and Aldrich of Boston and Alfred Lovering of Colebrook, New Hampshire.⁴⁷ This gave a great stimulation to business in town as well as an incentive to the farmers to smooth up their fields to fit them for the use of farm machinery, and a more extensive cultivation of potatoes than they had heretofore known. The money from the first few years' yield enabled them to purchase more and better machinery, and to improve their farms by constructing better buildings.

This factory was bought by C.W. Trafton, who, in 1889, manufactured nearly 250 tons of starch.⁴⁸ In 1885 Josiah Noyes bought the mill privilege where the Nourse-Eastman clapboard mill had been, and constructed a fine new starch plant there. He took over the mill in 1902 from Trafton, and, after it was burned, he built a saw mill which was operated for some time. Finally, however, he lost the mills and the site as a result of financial reverses. The plant is still in operation in Limestone, but it is now owned by the Aroostook Starch Company.⁴⁹

Fort Fairfield likewise had its starch promoter in the person of Benjamin Gathercole, who came from Boston only a

46 Ashby, op. cit., October 27, 1910.

47 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 199. Also Aroostook Times, January 13, 1876, "A starch factory is to be erected at Limestone next season."

48 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 199.

49 Interview with Lyman Getchell, July 8, 1938.

little later, 1875, than his contemporaries, Holmes and Wheeler. In 1876 the speculators bought potatoes to be shipped to Boston at thirty cents per bushel.⁵⁰ This interval did not retard the general starch plant impetus, for in the succeeding years other plants were established, although the Gathercole Company continued to dominate the field.

In the town of Fort Fairfield in 1893 there were six starch factories in active operation with an estimated output of 10,000 tons of starch.⁵¹ This alone shows the strong movement starch factories gave to potato growing. Other plants built during this time were by Parsons and Foss, A.M.Hill and Company, and John Lundy.⁵² These plants were scenes of extensive operations. Another plant had been built in 1883 on the site of the old Foster and Hyde mill.⁵³ Soon a new industry was brought into existence by the needs created by the starch industry. This was a plaster grinding mill built in 1875 by Drew and Long to supply Fort Fairfield and the neighboring farmers with a valuable fertilizer.⁵⁴

Mars Hill at one time had three starch factories all operating at once. The first of these was built in 1877 by Collins and Hume, who owned similiar plants in Presque Isle.⁵⁵ It was later bought and operated by Hume alone until 1888. In 1885

50 Aroostook Times, September 28, 1876.

51 Ellis, op. cit., p. 157.

52 Maine Registers, 1884-1897.

53 Aroostook Times, May 20, 1875.

54 Registry of Deeds, LIII, 16; LXXXII, 232-233.

55 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 154.

Collins started an independent factory which he operated until
⁵⁶ 1896. Nelson Parsons built a steam starch factory of 200 tons
 capacity on Rocky Brook, four miles from Mars Hill, in 1894.
⁵⁷
 In addition, in the next two years, the following firms and in-
 dividuals started starch plants; York and Luce, F.G.Richards,
 and Richards and Thurlough.
⁵⁸ Eventually these were all dis-
 continued or dismantled. The Collins plant was later purchased
 by the New England Starch Company, which installed electric
⁵⁹
 power.

Bridgewater's George Collins became the starch promoter
 for south central Aroostook. His endeavors in the lumber and
 shingle field have already been discussed. The first starch
 factory in the town, however, was built in 1876 by George Hib-
⁶⁰
 bard. This was bought in 1879 by Collins, who made starch
 there for many years. Although the factory burned and has been
 rebuilt three different times, it remains today in good running
 order under the operation of the Aroostook Starch Company.

Monticello's starch activity was started in the last decade
 of the 19th century. Although its plant has changed hands several
 times, it is still in operation today under the proprietorship
 of C.A.Powers and Company of Fort Fairfield. In 1894 John Watson
 of Houlton built a large and thoroughly modern plant. This fac-
 tory had a capacity of 500 to 700 tons of starch per year. It

 56 Maine Registers, 1884-1897.

57 Bangor and Aroostook, op. cit., p. 53.

58 Maine Registers, 1894-1897.

59 Interview with A.O.Nutter, July 9, 1938.

60 Aroostook Times, November 2, 1876, "George Hibbard had taken
 the starch from 12,000 bushels of potatoes at his factory
 in Bridgewater...at 25¢ per bushel."

was of great benefit to the farmers of Monticello because it created such a substantial cash market right at home.

In some respects John Watson was the T.H.Phair of southern Aroostook. In addition to building a large plant in Houlton, in which he was the prime motivator even though he was at first in a partnership, he built many others in the surrounding sections.⁶¹ One of the most important was the one already mentioned in Monticello. Another was built in Smyrna, and for a long time it constituted the chief use for which potatoes were raised in that area.⁶² In New Limerick likewise he owned a profitable plant. It had been originally built by Charles Mansur,⁶³ but within two years Watson had gained control. These various enterprises not only made wealth for Watson, but tended to increase the commercial prestige of Houlton and keep it as the trading center of southern Aroostook since the markets there materially dominated the branch factories. The Watson plant is now operated by the New England Starch Company.

Another tremendously influential firm in the starch industry in Houlton was that of R.M.Mansur and Son. Its factory⁶⁴ was located in West Houlton in 1875. It did for many years a

61 Maine Registers, 1880-1897.

62 Interview with Roy Gardiner, June 25, 1938.

63 Interview with Ellsworth Lougee, June 28, 1938.

64 Aroostook Times, February 9, 1875, "We understand that Reuben Mansur and Sons intend to erect a starch factory at Houlton this coming season.... It will pay our farmers well to raise potatoes and sell to the starch factory for 25¢ per bushel. It will pay better than raising potatoes for market as there is no sorting, although the price obtained may be large."

Also September 16, 1875, "R.M.Mansur and Sons Starch Factory at West Houlton will commence operations next week."

very thriving as well as profitable business.

In 1890 others also started similiar plants among whom were Waldo G. Brown and the partnership of Norton and Bradbury. This firm, however, remained in business only two years. All in all the turn of the century saw a strong market for the development of the potato. There was a perfect labyrinth of starch factories over the County, and at least fifteen were within a radius of ten to fifteen miles of Houlton.

New Limerick was also one of the spots visited by the prospective starch capitalists from outside. This was one of the earlier of such enterprises and was very successfully operated. The first was at Drew's Lake and must have been built by the Hibbard Brothers of New Hampshire in the latter part of 1872 or early 1873.⁶⁵ By 1875-1876 the plant had been purchased by Hubbard and Rice.⁶⁶ This, with the Watson interests, constituted a profitable market for New Limerick potatoes.

A firm composed of S.S.Merrill, L.G.Piper, and John Libby of Colebrook, New Hampshire, built a starch factory at Sherman Mills in 1877.⁶⁷ George M. Frye afterwards bought Libby's

65 Ibid., April 26, 1872, "We learn that a starch factory is to be established at Drew's Lake in New Limerick by Messrs. Hibbard Bros. from New Hampshire. The cost of establishment when in running order will be about \$5000." Also, November 3, 1874, "The starch mill at New Limerick is doing a good business this season. From 300-500 bushels of potatoes are received daily. The price paid for these is 30¢ per bushel without sorting or choice variety."

66 Ibid., January 6, 1876, "...70 tons of starch were made at the Hubbard and Rice plant the past season."

67 Wiggins, op. cit., p. 136. Also Aroostook Times, February 22, 1877; October 25, 1877.

interest, and soon he and Piper took over the Merrill shares. The mill finally came into the possession of Frye alone, and after his death in 1894 his wife continued the operation of the mill which had in 1893 produced 125 tons of starch. The plant was later improved by Mrs. Frye until the capacity production of 200 tons was reached.⁶⁸

The starch factories having been erected, immediately large tracts of rough, stumpy land, that had been formerly used for pasture or even allowed to produce a second growth of timber for cutting, were cleared and smoothed for planting to potatoes.⁶⁹ The first year these tracts were seeded down to a broad rolling field, and in the next, the Irish Cobblers, the Green Mountains, the Chippewa, and other varieties were planted, until acre upon acre passed before the view.

Almost immediately another change was apparent. The starch financiers related "big stories" of the size and excellence of Aroostook grown potatoes. These were elaborated upon by a few who had been to Aroostook until quite unintentionally this talking campaign began to have an effect. Potato buyers from outside markets came, and they too went away convinced that here was the possibility of a new product for remote Aroostook. With that, the final period in the development of Maine's potato empire emerged. Brokerage offices were established, potato loading houses were built in which the size and number of doors

68 Bangor and Aroostook, op. cit., p. 53.

69 To plant a rough field to any good grass seed preparatory to the major crop the following year. It smooths the ground.

told to a knowing public how prosperous a shipping center this or that place had become. And the farmer, too, had met the new challenge; more and more acres were seeded down to be planted to potatoes the next year as the new fever for raising potatoes swept the people. The shingle tools were left to rust in the swamps. The saw and shingle mills were not quite so rushed as they had been. Neither wheat, nor cedar, nor pine was the topic of conversation, but potatoes! Everyone talked potatoes. Now, wherever men met in groups, the size and yield of this field or that variety of potato were all that one could hear. The magnitude of a log drive or a large sawed-lumber shipment were all things of the past in the public consciousness. A new era had dawned for Aroostook with the elevation of the common-place potato to first importance. Thus we see that a new industry had emerged that was to furnish money for the improvements that were to lead the County from its isolation to contacts with the outside world, from its lumber and grist milling industries to land specialization.

In 1895, two years after the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad was opened to Houlton, 62,203 acres were planted on which 10,139,089 bushels of potatoes were raised.⁷⁰ In 1937 the total number of farms had increased 40% over the 1883 figures, but the improved acreage had risen more than that year.⁷¹ With the increased number of farms and the greater acreage planted to

70 Maine Central Railroad, Potatoes in Maine, (Portland, Maine, 1910), p. 7.

71 Wilson, op. cit., p. 136.

potatoes, farm values could not remain static. A 160 acre farm in Presque Isle, purchased for \$6,000, brought \$14,000 in six years' time; another farm of 250 acres rose in value from \$5,000 to \$20,000 during a period of eighteen years; while still a third, a farm of 150 acres located one mile from Presque Isle, was bought for \$1,800 and in twenty-two years the owner refused to sell for \$25,000.⁷² These concrete cases show how real estate had been affected by the change from forest to land. By 1910 it was estimated that good potato land was worth \$100 an acre, and by the time of the World War land became practically the sole indication of wealth in Aroostook County.

The lumber barons' opposition to the railroad was based on a fear that their principal channels of wealth would be diverted into others more accessible to the average citizen. And for a long time the Goddards and their type subtly opposed any extension of lines into Aroostook. This was costly to the County's progress and wealth. The new era has given a more opportune chance for all, but it has likewise created an aristocracy of the farm lands as well. The story of the rise of some of these potato kings sounds much like the Cinderella tale. One of the greatest of this type, which included the Husseys, the Parkhursts, the Reeds, the McIlwains, and the Nichols, all large potato producers, is Walter Christie.

Intermittently for the past twenty years or more Walter Christie has been one of the greatest potato growers of Aroostook

72 Ibid., p. 145.

County, and once at least, he won widespread fame as the "big-
⁷³gest farmer" in the United States. His career as a potato
 producer is an example of what others have been. He came to
 Aroostook from Canada as a farm-hand in his late teens to work
 on a farm in Presque Isle. He became an enthusiastic admirer
 of potato production, and a few years later, when the ownership
 of the farm was changed, Christie was offered a chance to buy
 a hundred acres. Naturally he pointed out the all too obvious
 fact that he had no money to pay for one hundred acres or even
 one acre. The owners replied that he "had worked well, proven
 a real attachment for the labor of farming and had set a place
 for himself; therefore they would take his work as credit, let
 him pay for the land out of crops." Christie purchased the farm,
 hired a team, and planted his first crop. That was thirty-five
⁷⁴years ago. In 1938 Walter Christie owned four large potato
 farms, had twenty-five teams of horses and eight tractors to
 assist him in putting his 1,200 acres under cultivation.⁷⁵ One
 single crop he sold for \$300,000, and possibly the next year he
⁷⁶lost as much. That is Aroostook. There are others among the
 big growers who have duplicated Christie's rise to affluent
 ownership.

For the County as a whole the comparative valuation of
 farms in 1937 is shown in the following table:

 73 Ibid., p. 145.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid., p. 55.

76 Ibid., p. 179.

6% of the farms are valued less than \$10,000

59% of the farms are valued between \$10,000 and \$30,000

27% of the farms are valued between \$30,000 and \$50,000

8% of the farms are valued at or more than \$50,000.⁷⁷

The potato industry, as it necessarily developed under the stimulation of the profits of the starch factories, brought in revolutionary methods of planting as well as new machinery. Formerly the farmer hastily made a trench, added a little seed, gave the plants one spraying, and the crop was his. Now the farmers have made potato raising a science which has become characteristic of Aroostook. Rotation of crops was adopted much earlier in the development of the County than in the rest of the State. It was relatively simple and amazingly effective; the first year the earth is plowed and planted to potatoes; the second year the land is sowed to oats or wheat; and the third it is seeded down with clover which may be either cut or plowed under. Then they are ready to start all over again with another crop of potatoes. Many acres of beautiful clover are merely plowed under; for the Aroostook farmer has found that the cheapest and yet the best form of soil nutriment as it provides the much needed nitrogen and, at the same time, leaves the soil light and porous, two indispensable qualities for good potato production.⁷⁸

77 Ibid., inside of front cover.

78 Ashby, op. cit., December 15, 1910.

At first weeds, common to any place and to any crop, had troubled the potatoes. With their usual manner of circumventing nature, the farmers resorted to a mode of cultivation that did a double duty; it was the potato horse hoeing that buried the weeds so far under a mound of dirt that they were stifled and at the same time banked up the young plants to protect them and give them strength. The first horse hoes and cultivators that were adapted for potato raising were made at the Getchell Foundry in Houlton.⁷⁹

The first years were rather laborious ones for the farmer with the methods of harvesting the same that had been used for generations. Each year brought improvements in the manner in which the farmer planted, cultivated, harvested, and even cared for his produce. With the introduction of the Hoover digger, the acreage was immediately increased; but there was still the problem of safeguarding the potatoes from the rigors of the Maine cold if the market was not high enough to warrant sale from the fields. This last, of course, was a difficulty which had been the result of marketing the potatoes in the big commercial centers rather than selling them in the fall to the starch factories. Yet the larger prices seem to compensate them for all the trouble they had to undergo. Even the large barns were not adequate. These had been built as the people became more settled because the small ones, built at first with the little houses, were not capacious enough to hold the ample harvests in the fall.

79 Ibid.

With the years these large barns and small houses became characteristic of the northern countryside. The homes the farmers clung to as their last reminder of their early toils, and the barns became symbolical of the success which had attended their labors. Once more their native Yankee ingenuity prevailed, and the Aroostook potato cellar came into existence. This is adjudged unique of its kind. A deep excavation was made in which were constructed stone or cement walls. After the necessary height had been attained, a small wooden building was placed on the walls. The earth was then filled in until the walls were completely buried to the eaves of the shingled roof. Here below frost level the potatoes could be stored. At leisure, the men could work in the cellars sorting and packing until a favorable market would start them hauling to the railroad station.⁸⁰

More and more inventions have come to the aid of the Aroostook farmer until now his equipment is as scientific as his method of raising the famed potato. One of the latest of these improvements has been the use of airplanes for the dusting of the plants instead of the older method of the spray. The experiment was first tried on July 25, 1936, simultaneously by three of the large potato growers, Woodman, Smith, and Parkhurst. The cost for this initial attempt was thirty cents per acre. It meant a considerable saving in time, but the material was wasted. Since then, the method has been improved upon as it has become

80 Ibid.

81

more commonly adopted. Nothing has been neglected which will increase the potato yield and the subsequent profits.

The potato industry has left its mark on the character of the people as nothing else has unless one except the shaved shingle industry upon the itinerant weaver, and that was limited in scope. The people became convinced that potatoes had given them their first real chance in a competitive world, and the best was none too good. They saw failures, but they had witnessed years when a single crop would pay for an entire farm. When they planted, they realized that a poor market or a good one awaited them; but they would stake everything and borrow what they lacked in capital on the chance that it would be the latter market. It has made of the Aroostook farmer, in a sense, a gambler. In the southern part of Maine, the average farmer would, in a good year, lay aside something for the proverbial "rainy day". It is not so in the land of Aroostook. A good profit means ready spending - new machinery, new additions to the farm and buildings, more land, new cars and college for the sons and daughters; a poor market spells retrenchment and often actual hardship. If a person in Aroostook has a dollar, the tendency is to spend at least two-thirds of it. He is as free with everything he owns as he is with his money. His home is always open to all. The hospitable characteristic, to be sure, can be traced in part to the heritage from the St. John Valley, but it has been increased by the partial isolation of many farm areas

81 Wilson, op. cit., p. 153.

and the spirit of lavish spending. The people are cordial, interested in civic improvements, and avid to take advantage of every device to improve what they already have. There are some who prophesy that the potato has had its day, but few in Aroostook seriously believe it; nearly everyone still thinks the "next year" will be the "good year". In the meantime every season finds new improvements in the ever-constant manufacture of potato starch and the type of equipment which is being more widely used.⁸²

From a mere promise, a speculation, the starch factories developed in less than five years into a profitable source of income for farmer and operator alike. In less time than that the new enterprise had turned the citizens from the manufacture of wood products and the cultivation of oats, rye, wheat, and buckwheat, to the raising of potatoes as the chief product of the County. This position the potato has never relinquished.⁸³ The number of starch factories grew rapidly from 16 in 1877,⁸⁴ to 23 in 1879,⁸⁵ to 67 in 1910, a truly great number. By the latter year, the outside market for table and seed potatoes had equaled if not exceeded the starch market. While formerly the whole crop, or very nearly the whole, was hauled to the great

82 One of the latest of such factories was built in 1938 in Houlton. This is a copy of the German method of production; in fact, German experts were brought to Houlton to supervise its construction and to instruct local foremen.

83 Aroostook Times, December 27, 1877.

84 Ibid., November 13, 1879.

85 Ashby, op. cit., December 15, 1910.

grinders, it soon became apparent that only the inferior grades were bought for starch, and the best had been selected to be shipped to Boston or elsewhere. The "skulls" made good enough starch, but the important factor was the growing emphasis of the potato in a world market.

The banner year for starch mill production was 1914 when the potato market was wretchedly poor. In that year alone, 20,000 tons of starch were manufactured in Aroostook County.⁸⁶ Yet in just two years' time - 1916 and 1917 - almost all the starch mills were idle, for, although every available inch of land had been planted to potatoes, the war had placed a premium on them, and they were selling as high as \$10 and \$12 per barrel.

Despite the greater value of potatoes for seed and table use, vast quantities are still manufactured every fall into potato starch. Of all the potato starch produced in the United States, at least ninety per cent is manufactured in the State of Maine. Of this amount, the principal part is made in Aroostook County.⁸⁷ Thus this potato market must not be forgotten even though it does not afford the spectacular lure of the car loads of potatoes, steaming southward toward New York and Boston.

86 Hurst, L.A., Soil Survey of the Aroostook Area, (Washington, D.C., 1921), p. 13.

87 Hussey, Frank, Beck, Andrew J., (Committee chairmen), Long-Time Agricultural Program for Aroostook County, (Caribou, Maine, 1936), p. 34.

CONCLUSION

A century has elapsed since Aroostook became a separate County, and slightly more than a century and a quarter since the first pioneers approached the deep recesses, alive with possibilities for them and their descendents to develop. In that century great progress has been made. The attempt to analyze its development in the field of industry and its transition to one of land specialization has only served to make one realize how broad and varied has been its march forward, and how little after all is touched upon in the foregoing pages. But it is hoped that one may come to appreciate the fact that Aroostook has had colorful years and varied activities apart from the potato fields of today.

Although predominately Aroostook stands for potato production, these other phases of its economic life are still pulsing with some importance. There can be found examples of almost every aspect of its industrial history in active operation today if one but take the trouble to look about and to take into consideration the place and time. Today it is pulp wood that swirls swiftly down the rivers with the current, and plywood mills afford the twentieth century version of the old long lumber and shingle mills of yesterday. There are many of the latter type still in existence, but they lack the full time activity of their ancestors. Even grist mills, some with modern equipment and others employing more primitive facilities, supply

many families with flour and meal as earlier mills have done since 1807.

Partly because of circumstance and partly because of the endowments of nature, this north County of Maine has, for the time being, turned its back on mill industrialism and has cultivated the favors of its land. The possibilities of an industrialized Aroostook still remain, but its remote location from the great merchant centers seems the greatest obstacle to such a forward change. There may come a day, however, if the land ceases to furnish its citizens with all the endowments of its heritage, when once again mills and shops will step into first importance. Possibly the present is but an interlude between the mill preface of a former day and the true destiny of Aroostook.

Meanwhile the industrial march goes onward. For the most part the Aroostook of today is the Aroostook of potato growers with their boundless - or is it blind? - faith in that product which they have so helped to perfect. The gamblers of the north-land refuse to believe that that particular star of their success has set; and so potatoes are planted and are harvested while the mill wheels turn more slowly or lie abandoned along Aroostook's swiftly flowing rivers.



Cook's Brook in Houlton where Joseph Houlton constructed his crude grist mill. This scene shows the falls and the location where the primitive dam was built. See page 6.

The only remainder of the first grist mill in Aroostook County is the two broken granite mill stones half submerged in the waters of Cook's Brook. See page 61.





This is the old Jewett-Durrell grist mill in Hodgdon. The log dam is still in fair condition. See page 110.

This scene represents the activities of the crews to rebuild the old Jewett-Durrell grist mill. See page 110.





This grist mill at Caribou is in the original building which housed the grinding plant of Collins and Vaughan which was started in 1844. See page 54.

At Colby Siding in Woodland large quantities of grain and buckwheat flour are still prepared for this section of northern Aroostook. See page 129.





These two buildings were constructed nearly a hundred years ago for a grist mill. T.S.C. Berry of Houlton still carries on grinding operations here. See page 116.

The weather beaten building to the right is the original building of the Page and Madigan Grist Mill, a former milling plant in Houlton. See page 115.





The gasoline-operated
grist mill of Ovela Pel-
letier at St. Agatha.

See page 142.

The grist mill and
log dam of Joseph Cor-
riveau in St. Agatha.
This mill is the oldest
in St. Agatha. See
page 142.





The grist and carding mill owned by George Corriveau at Upper Frenchville. See page 143.

A typical scene along the St. John Valley. The grist mill of Alex Forten in Frenchville. See page 144.



The saw and grist mill of Joe Gagnon at Madawaska. See page 145.



The general store of
T.S. Pinkham and Company
at Fort Kent Falls. This
marks the site where the
enterprising lumber busi-
ness of Levi Sears and
the subsequent owners was
carried on. See page 31.

The saw and grist
mill of Dennis Plourde
on the Wallagrass River
in Wallagrass Planta-
tion. See page 85.





This dam on Violette Brook affords power for the operation of Van Buren's grist mill. See page 77.

The grist mill of Paul Marquis in Van Buren conveys fairly accurate ideas of the appearance of similar mills of an earlier period. See page 77.



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