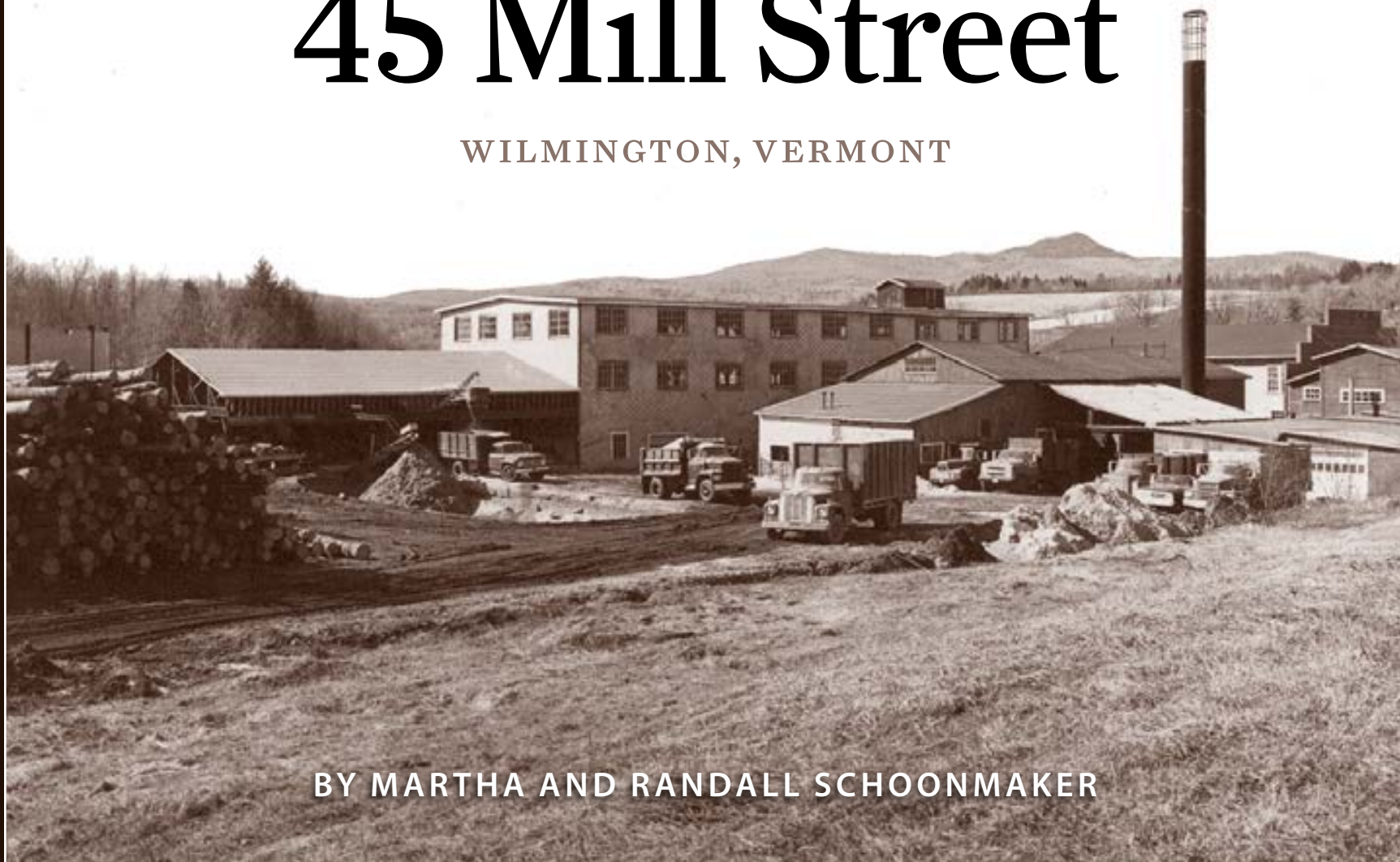


THE HISTORY OF
45 Mill Street

WILMINGTON, VERMONT



BY MARTHA AND RANDALL SCHOONMAKER

THE HISTORY OF
45 Mill Street

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Photos courtesy of The Historical Society of Wilmington; Deborah and Jay Canedy; George Davis; Brian Donelson;
Blanche Mills; James Raymo; Randy Schoonmaker; Mike Eldred; Jay David Wolf; Mark Bannon; *Rockon* and *Rokonworld*.

This book is dedicated to all those – past and present – who have worked at 45 Mill Street.



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PREFACE

In 1996, the Deerfield Valley Transit Association (DVTA), nicknamed the MOOver, was established to provide public transportation for southern Vermont's Deerfield Valley. The company rented offices in West Dover and bounced around its garage, drivers, and mechanics to separate sites in West Dover and Wilmington.

Four scoping studies and lots of paperwork later, the DVTA bought a 9.5-acre site on 45 Mill Street in Wilmington from Bob Grinold, from whom they had rented a one-bay garage on the site since 2000. Eighty-two thousand square feet of falling down, hazard-ridden space had been hodgepodged together for 88 years by a number of previous owners for different uses. The DVTA spent three years trying to see what purposes (including public transit) the structure could serve and how to raise funds to meet those needs. But the building decayed beyond repair by 2006.

The company applied for an earmark and permits to build a new facility in 2008. The historical permit process required a sign-off by the Historical Society of Wilmington, and their sign-off required the DVTA to document the history of the facility.

We offered to do some research and then produce a scrapbook, to which the Historical Society agreed.

OPPOSITE
The once-bustling factory floor, as seen in 2009.



A scrapbook would not do the site's history justice. We became hooked on the written part of the task and decided to produce a book rather than a scrapbook.

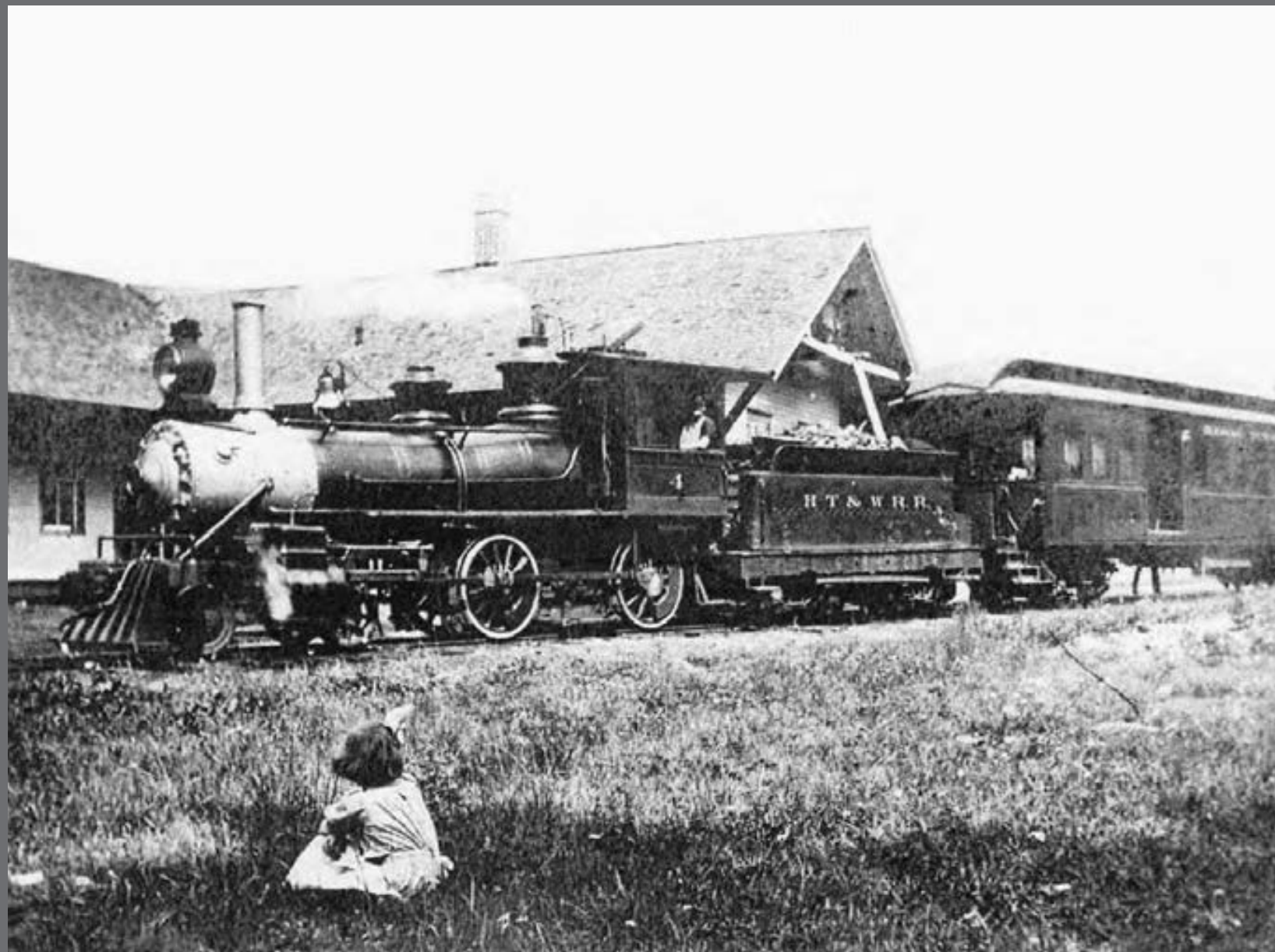
The Historical Society of Wilmington, Pettee Memorial Library, and author Brian Donelson (*The Coming of the Train, Volumes I and II*) contributed huge files of pictures, old news clippings, and resources. Along the way we met and interviewed descendants of those who worked at the site and others who provided anecdotes or suggestions for further research. Of invaluable help were the Society's Julie Moore; former mill workers George Davis and Jim Raymo; Deborah and Jay Canedy whose father Jean was plant manager in the 1980's; Gary Lackey who worked at the site for many years; and Blanche Mills who worked in the factory with her father in the 1940's.

It is odd to document something you have to destroy. Few people today know of the fortunes made and lost, the lives changed, the pride generated and the work done by hundreds of people at 45 Mill Street. This is their story.

Martha and Randall Schoonmaker, May 2012

OPPOSITE

A proud group of workers at the Ludington
Woodenware Co. factory, circa 1915.



The Train Comes To Town

1891 - 1914

Did you ever hear a music
Sweeter than the one that thrills
As it floats along the Deerfield,
As it echoes o'er the hills
How we watch that little engine
As it stalks across the plain;
Was there ever music sweeter
Was there ever sight completer
Than the coming of the train

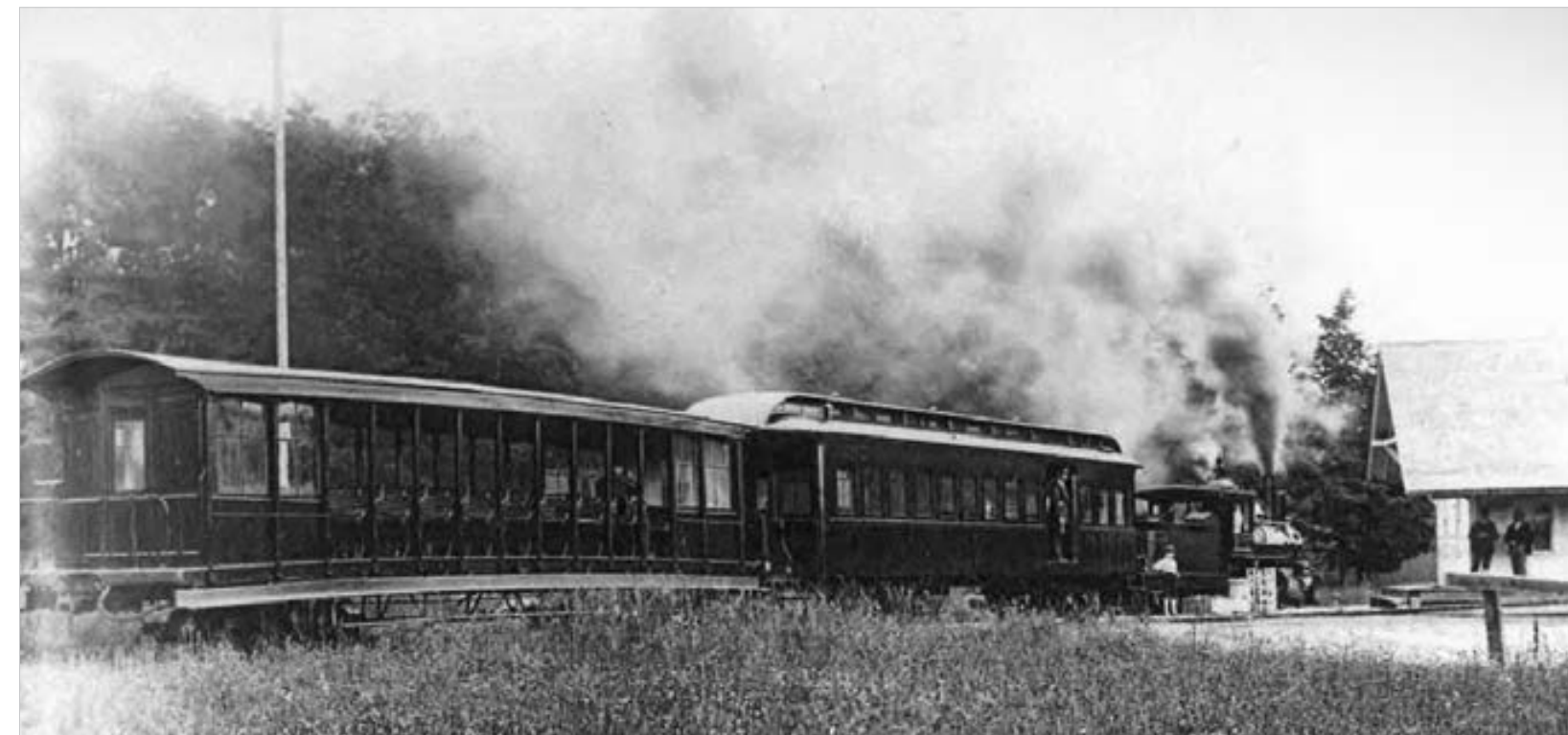
Ho! Ye sturdy care-worn farmers;
Ye who toil the long day through
In your quiet fields and meadows
Patient as your hearts are true
Tell me as ye pause and listen
As ye sow and reap the grain
Heard ye ever music sweeter
Saw ye ever sight completer
Than the coming of the train?

— E.A. Fitch, Wilmington

Before the train, the Deerfield Valley was isolated and detached. It took an entire day to make a trip to Brattleboro or Bennington to buy products not available locally. The area was colonial, not industrial. Its citizens relied on poor agricultural conditions to make a living. Several tried to start their own businesses using local resources—especially lumber. There was more than enough timber to encourage profitable logging trades but there was no place for the lumber to go. For this and a number of other reasons, nothing was successful. Many families gave up and left the area.

In 1885 the Hoosac Tunnel & Wilmington Railroad, fondly known as the “Hoot, Toot & Whistle”, was extended to Readsboro from North Adams, Massachusetts. By 1891 it was

Below: The Hoot, Toot & Whistle arrives in Wilmington.



“Vermont is often thought of as the epitome of rural New England — pastoral, pure, and primeval. But Vermont also has its place in the history of American industrialization. Vermont led the nation in the development of the kind of precision tool making that made the technological revolution possible. Factories dotted along the state’s waterways and rail lines supplied the rest of the country with manufactured goods from agricultural equipment to washboards. The Deerfield Valley was home to several manufacturing facilities — most of which took advantage of the area’s natural abundance of lumber. Few of the valley’s old factories still stand; most succumbed to fire or fell into disuse and disrepair and were eventually demolished.”

— Mike Eldred, *Cracker Barrel*

extended to Wilmington. At first, this simply meant the valley had exports. Profits were made by sending lumber south to mills and factories.

Then the Deerfield Valley began its own industrial growth, creating new businesses like the Wilmington Grain and Lumber Company located on North Main Street. In 1904 the Choate Manufacturing Company built its furniture factory, known today as the Old Red Mill. Other notables included the Readsboro mills and the Mountain Mills pulp mills.

In less than 30 years, the valley transformed into a modernized industrial district. People could travel and access goods outside of the valley. Residents depended on the railroad and the products it imported and exported from the region. More opportunities followed, including new products fed by the region’s timber supply.



OPPOSITE

The Choate Manufacturing Company’s furniture factory in Wilmington.

THIS PAGE

Photographs of the town of Mountain Mills.

Left: The second of two pulp mills built by Deerfield Pulp Company at Mountain Mills which used the sulphate method for pulp production in 1916.

Below left: The Hoot, Toot & Whistle had to cross the trestle over the waterfall to reach Wilmington.

Center: The folding room where pulp was folded and stored before shipping.

Right: The first pulp mill at Mountain Mills which used the ground-wood method for making pulp.



The First Factories

1915 - 1941



Pins, Bowls, and Butter Molds

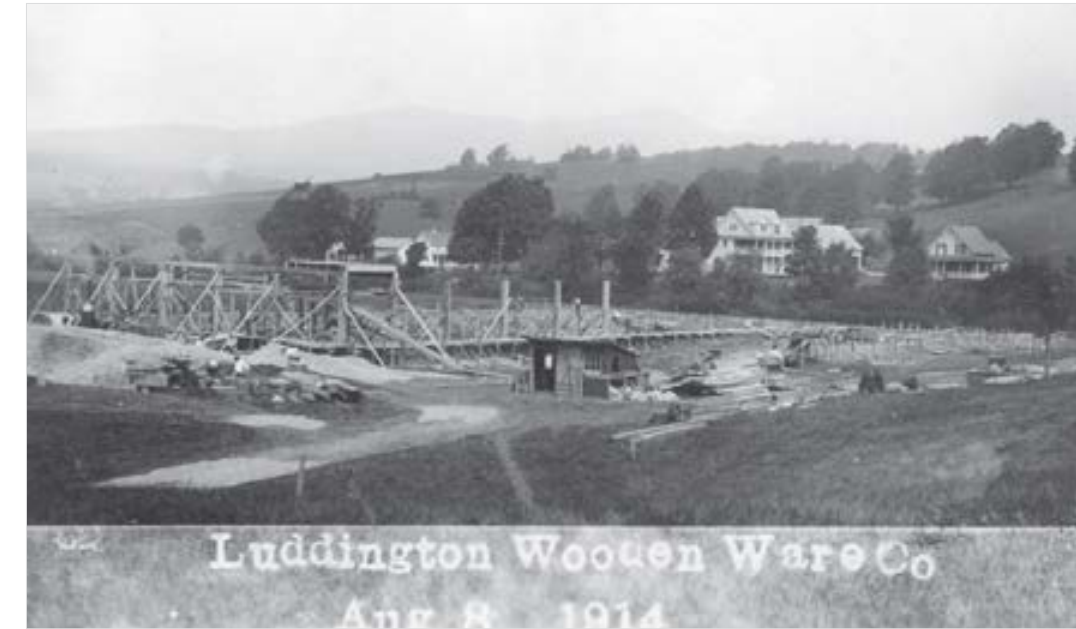
In 1889, Captain Henry B. Smith established the Ludington Woodenware Company in Ludington, Michigan. The factory produced clothespins, wood bowls, dishes, and butter molds. Ludington's products were displayed at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago — the third World's Fair.

Due to a scarcity of hardwood in Michigan, the company moved to Mill Street in Wilmington on land adjacent to the railroad. Eyeing the valley's hardwood supply, Ludington leased the site for one year before buying it in 1914 from the Deerfield Lumber Corporation for \$1,500 (\$33,000 today). Smith built the first of several factories on the site.

The Ludington Company often sent managers to Wilmington to oversee operations at their eastern plant. One of them was Clarence Budington Kelland, a writer and a principle stockholder in the company, whose wife was one of Smith's daughters. He bought a Victorian house located at the corner of South Main Street and Beaver Street, which is now Wilmington's municipal parking lot.

PAGE 16

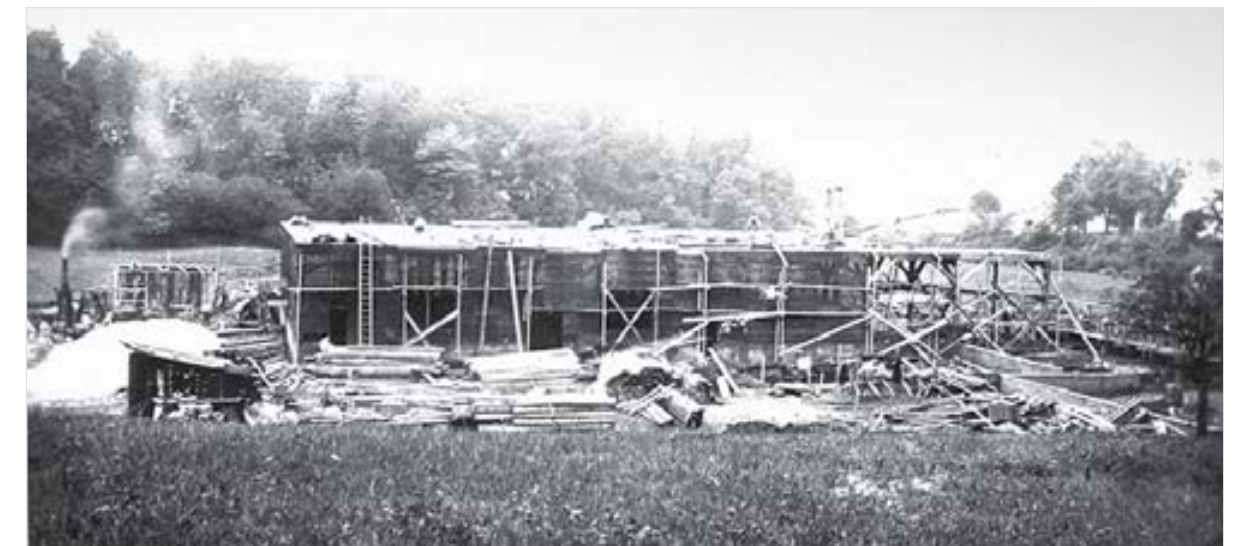
Looking north, the first factory under construction with workers (lower right corner) taking a break.



Left: Looking northwest at the building site, with Haystack Mountain in the background. The large white house visible behind the trees later became housing for mill employees.

Below left: Ludington manager Clarence Budington Kelland, author of *Scattergood Baines*.

Below right: The view looking west as construction on the factory's main block progressed.



Kelland's most famous novel was *Scattergood Baines*, a humorous tale of a clever entrepreneur who arrives in a New England village, makes good, and becomes part of the fabric of the community by dispensing Yankee wisdom from across the counter of his store. *Scattergood Baines* was so popular that it became the basis of a radio show and, in 1941, the first of three movies named after him.

THIS PAGE

Right: Note the cylindrical sections of the smokestack lying on the ground. A large wood-fired boiler, connected to the smokestack, produced steam that spun a turbine to produce electricity for the plant.

Below: As seen from the west, the factory evolves; the tallest section is a dry kiln.

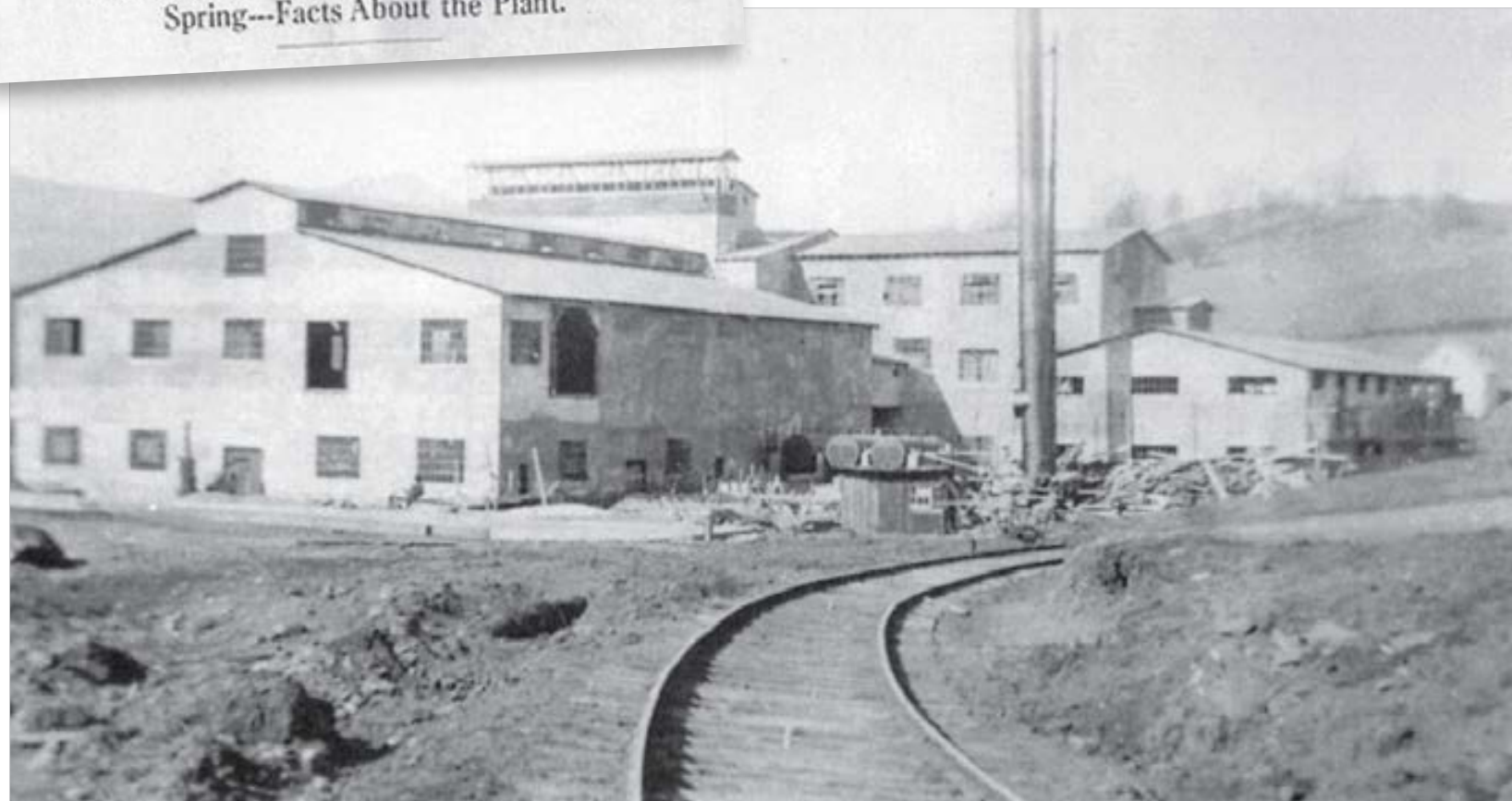
OPPOSITE

The assembled stack being raised into place; the boiler room was added next. The stack remained standing through fire, flood, and additions, until 2006 when it was taken down and recycled.

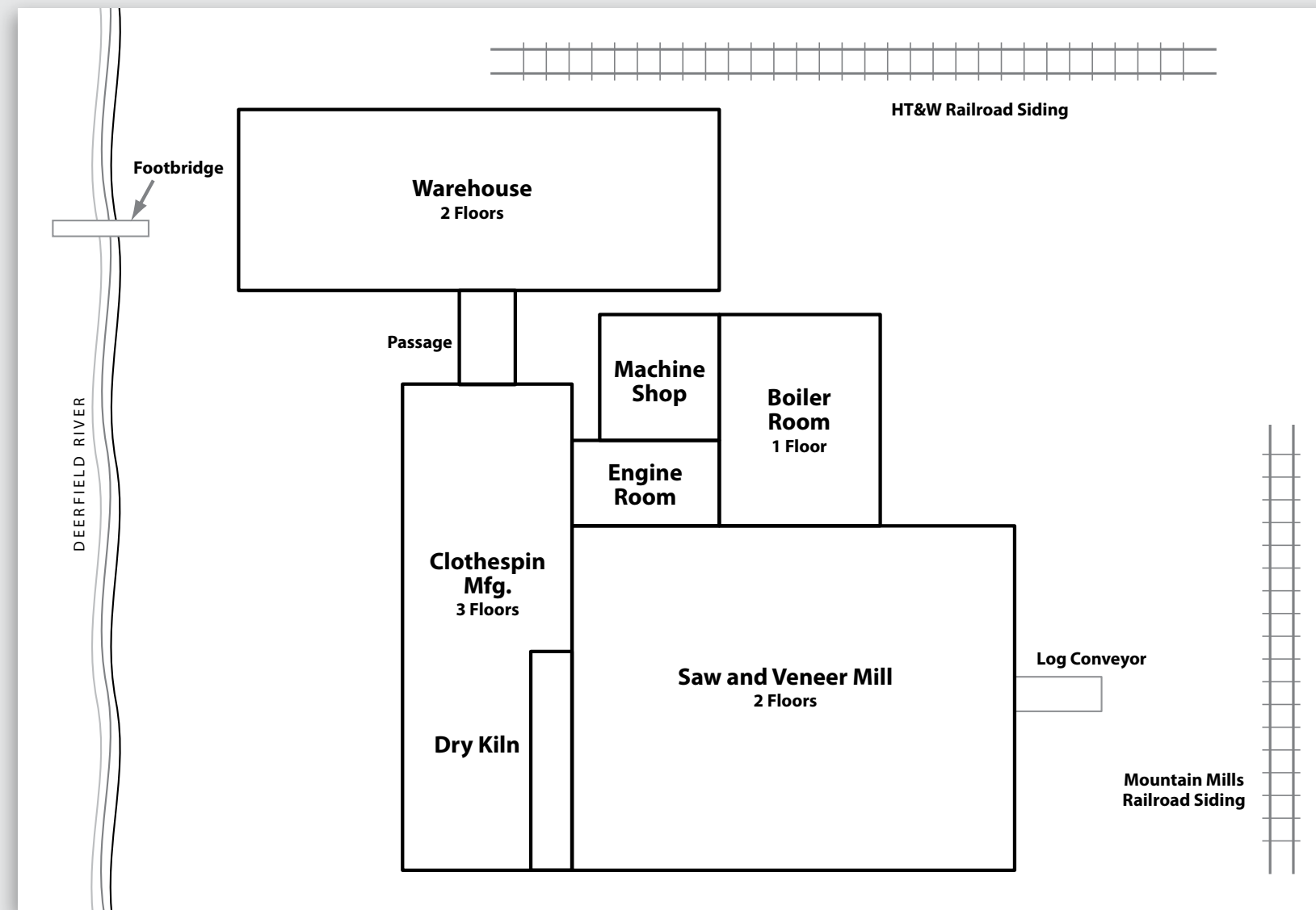


MONT, THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 22, 1914
**CONSTRUCTION WORK
 NEARING COMPLETION**
 Plant of the Ludington Woodenware Company Will
 Not, However, be in Full Operation Before
 Spring---Facts About the Plant.

Below: The large smokestack is in place. Two smaller smokestacks were
 attached to steam boilers for additional power. These can be seen in operation
 on page 26. A rail spur extended from the train station to the factory. Rail
 service was key to Ludington's early success. A second rail spur from Mountain
 Mills delivered logs to the factory's log yard, while the pictured spur sent
 boxcars of finished product out. Each rail line was a different gauge,
 necessitating the two spurs.



LUDINGTON WOODENWARE COMPANY
ORIGINAL FACTORY FLOOR PLAN





604,800 Clothespins A Day

When it opened in June 1915, the 57,670 square-foot Ludington Factory employed 68 women and 60 men. Later, it had 160 employees, which was 7% of Wilmington's population at the time. The company added a footbridge across the Deerfield River to access employee housing.

Local beech, maple, and birch were made into wooden dishes, bowls, spindles, butter molds, mop and broom handles. Ten dish machines made 350,000 plates daily and twelve clothespin machines made 125,000 pins per day – later, 604,800 a day. The factory shipped five boxcar loads of goods each week with a monthly gross of about \$15,000 (\$314,000 today).

A sawmill at the plant cut to size the 15,000 feet of logs needed for each day's production. Three boilers supplied heat and steam for various operations, and an onsite machine shop produced the tools and parts needed to keep the machines operating. A giant 450-horsepower Corliss steam engine ran the factory's machinery through a system of driveshafts, belts, and pulleys known as a lineshaft.

The Ludington Factory also produced plywood trays. The trays were used in the delivery and sale of butter, lard, and other commodities at grocery stores. Large yarn bobbins, used in woolen mills, were also produced at the plant.

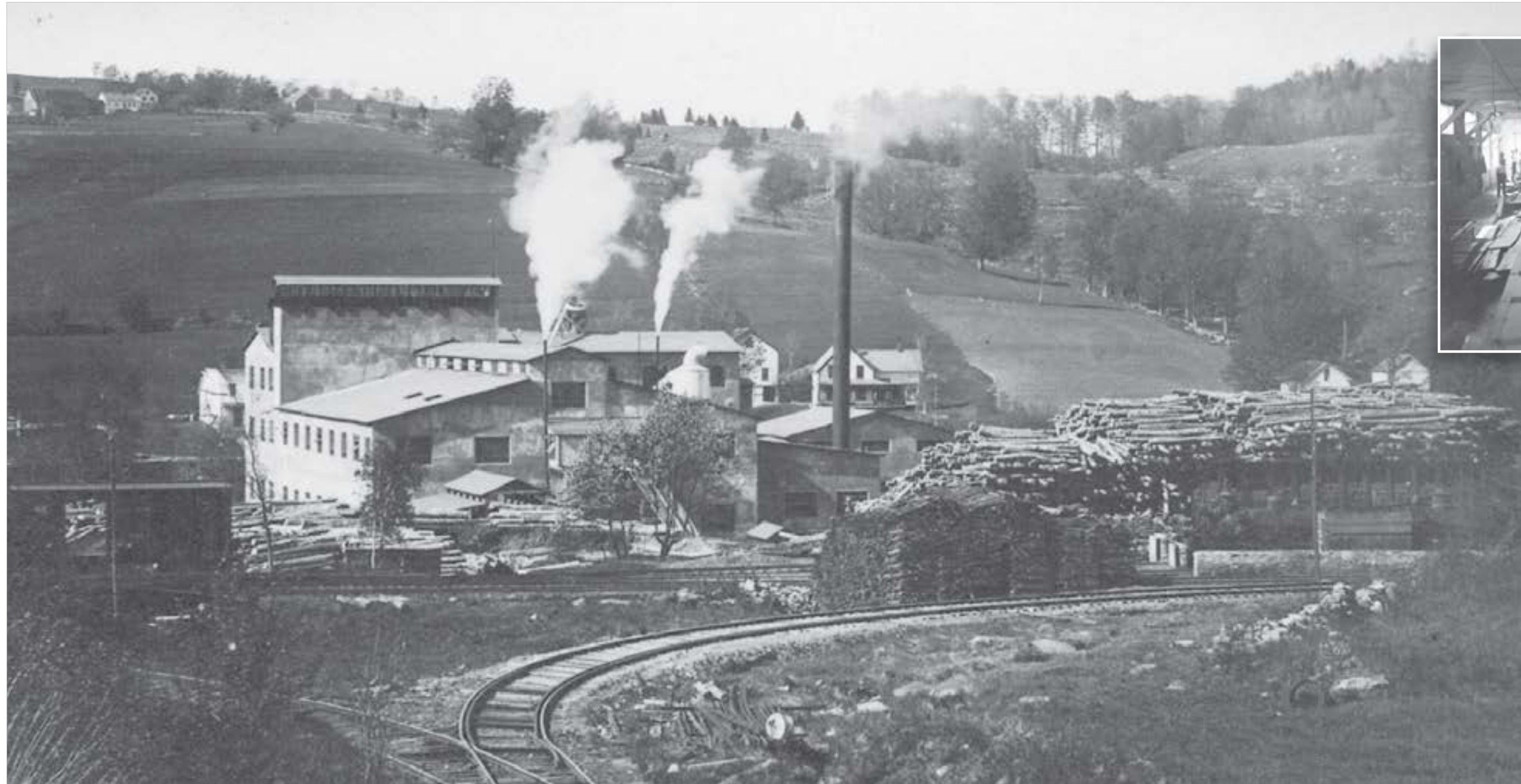
OPPOSITE

Employees pose in the veneer-making area on the top floor.

THIS PAGE

In the lower right of the photograph is the first bridge across the river to access employee housing.





OPPOSITE

Smoke coming from all three steam boilers. An empty freight car is seen at left. Note the huge piles of logs that fed the factory.

THIS PAGE

Left: The third floor of the main block.

Below: The Ludington Factory in operation. Logs were sawn in the open shed at far left, and some of the sawn wood was conveyed at the second floor via the ramp. At right near the bottom of the smokestack is wood leaving the building via another conveyor.



WILMINGTON, VT
 Plant of Ludington
 Company Burned.
 Fire Causes \$175,000 Damage,
 Throws 160 Out of Work.
 Plans Already Under Way
 for Rebuilding.

Special Dispatch to the Globe.
 WILMINGTON, Vt, Nov 28—Fire early
 this morning destroyed the plant of the
 Ludington Manufacturing Company,
 erected last year, causing a loss of
 nearly \$175,000, which is the greatest this
 town ever sustained. About 160 persons
 are thrown out of employment, a third
 of whom are women and girls.
 The property was insured and plans
 already are under way for rebuilding.
 The plant consisted of a clothespin fac-
 tory 130 by 45 feet, three stories high; a
 saw and veneer mill 122 feet by 92 feet,
 two stories high; dry kilns, a water
 house and other buildings, aggregating
 \$100,000 in value, besides a large amount
 of specially made machinery, lumber in
 the process of manufacture and a ware-
 house full of finished stock. The lum-
 ber piles were not destroyed.
 The mill contained 12 sets of clothes-
 pin machines, turning out 4200 gross a

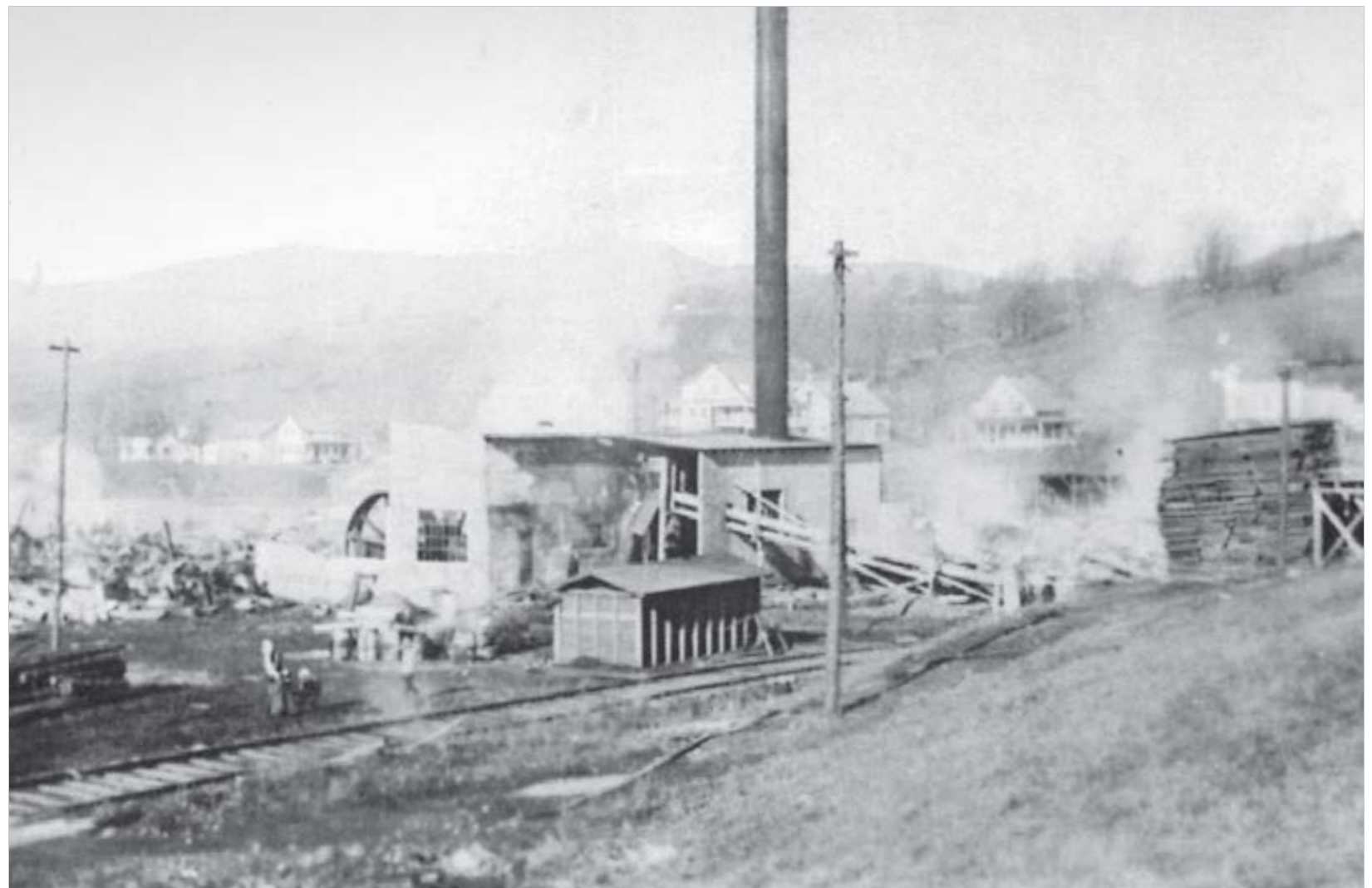


Fire & Flood

On Thursday, November 28, 1915, two watchmen were eating dinner when one of them stepped outside. When he returned, he found a fire in the boiler room. Flames quickly spread into the factory through a conveyor that moved waste from the mill to the boiler room. The two men sounded the alarm. Firemen arrived, but the flammable material was too consumed. In two hours everything had burned. Firefighters managed to save the Corliss engine, the veneer machines, and three large boilers. All of the building's other machinery and the finished stock were destroyed. Between \$140,000–175,000 was lost. One news article said it was the greatest loss the town had sustained up to that time.

OPPOSITE | A tangle of steel and machinery adjacent to the main boiler room. The news articles on the following page provide an informative account of a mad dash inside by the bookkeeper to save the company books, efforts to keep the fire from spreading through the village, and the impact on the local workforce. Kelland was one of three men who saved the bookkeeper's life when he was overcome with smoke.

THIS PAGE | After the fire, the brick boiler room and smokestack were all that remained of the first Ludington Factory.



Fire Wipes Out Big Ludington Plant; Town Threatened with Destruction

Wilmington, striving to readjust itself to a realization of its loss, is mourning the total destruction of the Ludington Woodenware Co. plant early Sunday morning with a loss estimated to be approximately \$1,500,000 and with only partial insurance.

Flames were discovered in the machine room at 12.05 Sunday morning by the fireman, who is alleged to have been absent from his post in the boiler room at the time, the night watchman, William Bassett, being off duty for his lunch hour. How the fire started is still a mystery, though it is thought it may have been due to sparks blowing out of the firebox and falling in combustibles in the adjoining room. Less than an hour after the discovery of the fire the building was plainly doomed and at 4 o'clock nothing but a blazing heap of ruins and red hot machinery marked the spot where the largest industry of the village had been located.

Alarm at Midnight

Mr. and Mrs. F. S. Crafts and Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Kolland, returning from a surprise party at the home of V. L. Adams at which the guest of honor was Mrs. Howard B. Smith, daughter-in-law of H. B. Smith of Ludington, were standing in front of the Kolland residence when the alarm was first given. Mr. Kolland ran to the plant immediately, being one of the first on the scene, while Mr. Crafts hurried to the Masonic temple and sounded the alarm on the bell. For half an hour he, with Albert Huel, the next arrival, kept the bell hammering out its alarm. Men out of the town hurried out for all stages of dress and headed for the factory, where by the time the bell had ceased half the village had gathered.

Employees of the plant were the first to arrive and held two lines of hose from hydrants on the company's property, playing one stream on the roof of the main building adjoining and just above the boiler room and the other, a few minutes later, on the

For a few minutes there appeared to be a chance that they might hold the flames back from the office and the books back from the office end of the building, and then another line of hose been available would probably have done so. Three times they stopped the advancing wall of fire, only to see it break out 50 feet further along toward the office. No sooner had they donned the second coat of flames than the fire broke outburst of flames than had just left, out in the spot they had just left, until finally they were driven from their posts by the intense heat.

Rapid Spread of Flames

Spreading over the boiler room the flames ate their way into the machine shop. Creeping along the ceiling, up the wall and eating through the floor of the second story the fire soon burned a way to the roof and from then on its progress was rapid, sweeping to the west end of the building in less than 20 minutes and in another 20 minutes reaching the office addition.

Even at this point there was a chance to hold back the flames had two lines of hose with anyone with a knowledge of fire fighting been in charge. A sheet of water swung across the main building at the head of the main building at the office would have been a waste of water.



SHOWING PILES OF RUINED

unable to reach clearer air at once were forced to throw themselves face downward on the ground, get a few breaths of the clearer air there, run a few yards and repeat the operation until they reached places of safety.

Saved Company's Books

When it was evident that there was no chance of saving any part of the building several men started into the office building in an effort to rescue the books and papers of the concern. They were unable to ascend the stairs owing to the clouds of smoke which greeted them when the door was opened and finally leaned a ladder against a window on the west side and thus gained entrance. Papers, files, card index cabinets and other office paraphernalia were handed out to men on the ladder and removed to a place of safety and when the fire came uncomfortably close most of these things went out the window without formality. Considerable property in the storekeeper's room, time clock, etc., were removed before the workers were forced to give over their task.

Protecting the Town

In an hour it was plainly evident that the fire had spread to the town. The fire department was called and the town was threatened with destruction. The fire was finally extinguished after a long and hard fight.

Woodenware Plant Almost Certain to be Rebuilt on its Former Site Here

It is practically assured that the Ludington Woodenware Co. will remain in Wilmington. The company has suffered a heavy money loss but at the present time it is able to give positive assurance that no one, either in Wilmington or elsewhere in the country, will be a loser by the fire.

Efforts were gotten under way directly following the fire to finance the construction of a new mill and the purchase of new machinery. These have been, in a measure, successful; nevertheless before the enterprise can be assured of complete success further backing may be required.

According to the present plans of the company the same number of clothespin machines and wire and dish machines will be installed. The output of the plant, when complete, will be equal to that of the plant destroyed and practically the same number of hands will be employed.

The company is not yet prepared to make a statement as to the precise kind of building it will erect nor as to the cost but it will be sufficient and will be equipped from top to bottom with the newest and most efficient machinery for its purposes.

The company desires to extend its hearty thanks to the people of Wilmington for the willing aid given on the night of the fire but much more than that for the fine spirit of sympathy and of encouragement which they have manifested since that time.

WET ROOFS ONLY THING THAT SAVED WILMINGTON

Wilmington owes its existence to Saturday afternoon's rain, which, though light, wet down the roofs sufficiently to prevent flying sparks from setting fire to a score of places. The wind was blowing across the burning mill and sweeping the embers diagonally across the build-

After some speculation, the factory was rebuilt and went back into production in May 1916 – less than six months after the fire. The new 47,000 square-foot structure had a main three-story block, a store, a warehouse, and a boiler and engine house. The new wood-drying buildings were built of brick. The lower floor of the main block had a shafting room and packing rooms. The second floor had clothespin machines, a sawmill, and veneer machines. The third floor had dish machines, spindle lathes, wooden bowl machines, and wooden kitchen utensil machines.

Below: The second mill. This photo shows the conveyors in and out of the three-story building and the new, smaller woodworking building (right).



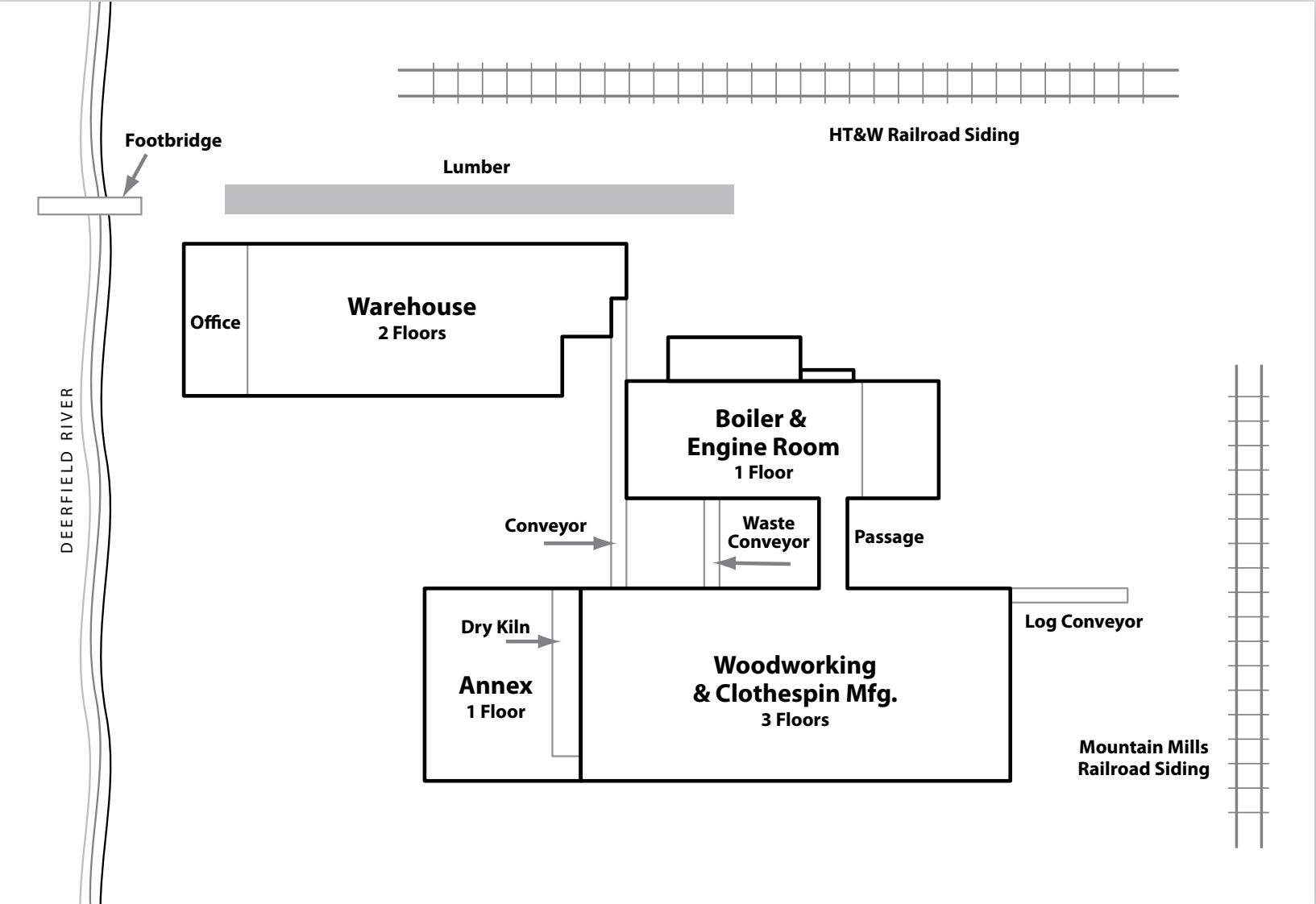
A series of difficulties arose. The insurance did not cover the entire loss. The company was forced to restructure in January 1918 for financial reasons. The clothespin production unit was moved to a company-owned mill in Maine. In April, Smith passed away.

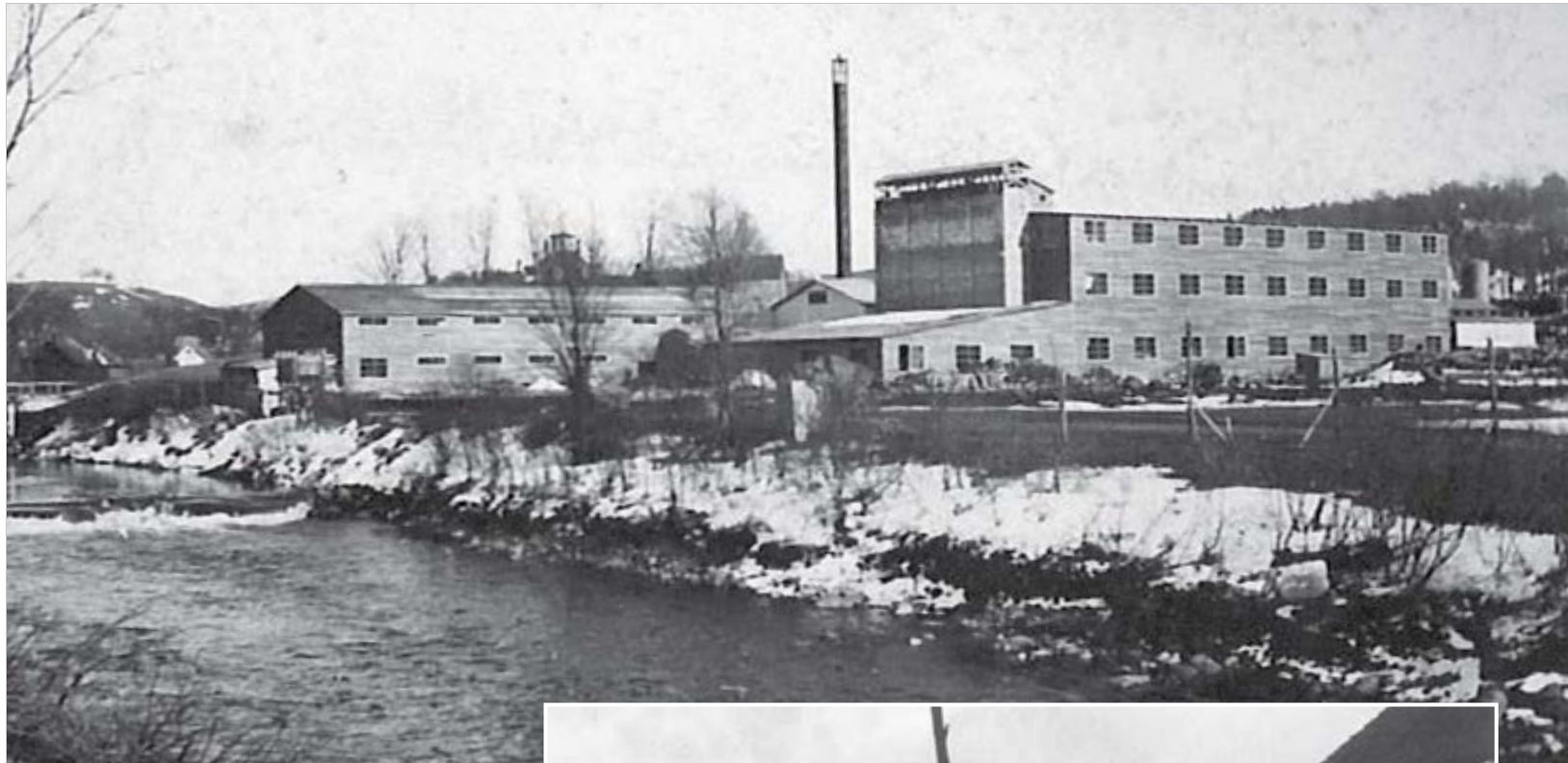
In 1923 the pulp mill at Mountain Mills closed when the Harriman Dam was built on the Deerfield River, and water covered the factory and town sites. This created the Harriman Reservoir, known today as Lake Whitingham. When the dam was built, a section of railroad tracks was relocated to the west side of the Deerfield River, and a trestle was built across it to connect to Wilmington.

Below: Logs are piled in the yard randomly before processing; later, a log pond was built there. The two-story building at the far right housed many functions over the years and collapsed in the spring of 2008.



LUDINGTON WOODENWARE COMPANY
REBUILT FACTORY FLOOR PLAN





Above: On the far left are the remnants of an old dam foundation.

Right: View of the second Ludington Factory from the train station. Note the locomotive on right.



Due to a shortage of local timber, the Ludington Factory also closed. In 1927 the mill was sold to the Deerfield Valley Plywood Company from Greenfield, Massachusetts. The deed mentions that the factory had a steam engine, boiler, electric motors, electric light fixtures, an electric generator, a heating plant, a sprinkler system, a log carrier, mill conveyors, a machine shop, a sawmill and planer, and a dry kiln. During their ownership, the Deerfield Valley Plywood Company sold part of the site to the Deerfield Valley Grain Company. They deeded rights of way to the Hoot, Toot & Whistle Railroad and the newly-formed New England Power Company. The company built several additions to the Ludington Factory including a two-story structure.

Below: The saw room was expanded and enclosed in the front of the factory. An additional small saw room was attached to the west side.





Above: The effects of the 1927 flood on West Main Street (left), and along the river's edge on South Main Street (right).

OPPOSITE

The Mountain Mills rail trestle was completely destroyed by the hurricane of 1938.



In the spring, melting snow caused the monumental flood of 1927. The rail trestle at Mountain Mills was destroyed. Water reached well above street level in the village. The railroad bridge was replaced two years later and the Hoot, Toot & Whistle returned to town.

But in 1938 a hurricane swept through the valley. Among the damage was the destruction of the Mountain Mills rail trestle. It was beyond repair, and Wilmington never again saw rail service. The Deerfield Valley Plywood Company ran into financial difficulty and the factory's production slowed dramatically.





“The Plywood”

1941 – 1963

Big Help from a Small Valley

The factory withstood the last stages of the Great Depression but in 1941 it was sold by Deerfield Valley Plywood Company to the New England Box Company, also of Greenfield. This company produced plywood boxes, the majority of which were bread and banana containers designed for commercial use. The breadboxes were large enough to hold about a dozen loaves for delivery. They were relatively light, and could be stacked without crushing their contents, similar to the plastic trays that are still used today for delivery of bakery products.

Shortly after New England Box bought the factory, the United States entered World War II and the company's product line quickly changed to meet wartime needs. During the war, the company designed and manufactured storage boxes for military equipment, boxes for shipping precision manufactured parts such as gun barrels, armament and ordinance boxes, and military footlockers.

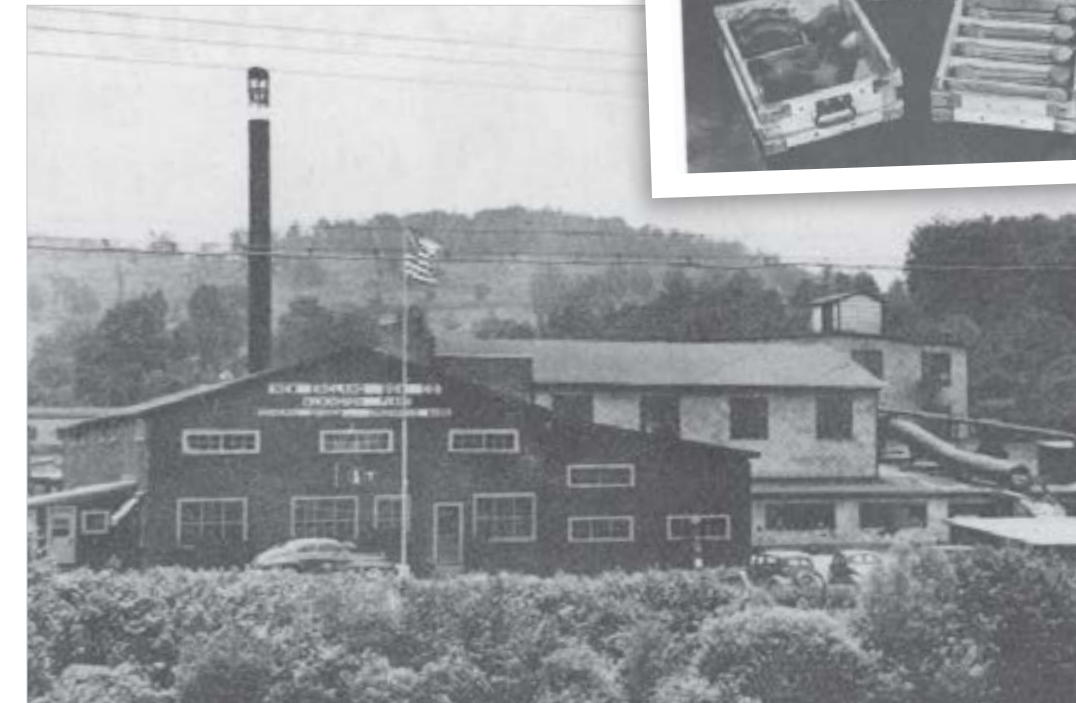
Hardwood logs used to produce boxes were harvested in nearby forests. The logging camps were, by necessity, active during the colder months. Provisions were hauled into the remote camps by tractor until the ground froze and trucks could safely make the journey. The logs were hauled down to the road by tractor and sled, loaded onto trucks, and delivered to the factory in Wilmington.

During the war, the factory's production capacity challenged the area's logging supply. Skilled teamsters and loggers were in short supply as men entered the armed services. Women of all ages worked throughout the factory to keep production levels high.

Most of the wartime images and captions seen on pages 38–53 came from a 1944 New England Box Company newsletter provided by Blanche Mills. Blanche and her father, Howard Farrington, worked in the mill for many years.

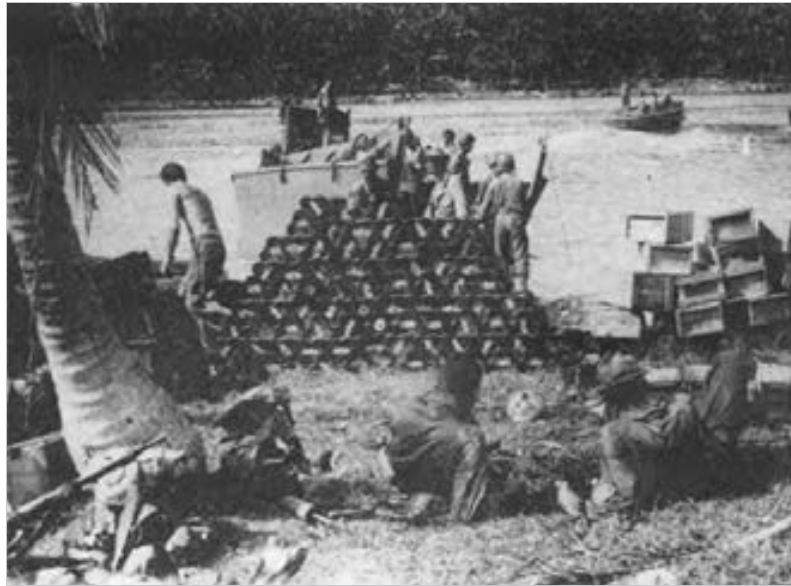
PAGE 38

"'Presents for Hitler' being wrapped in 'New England' boxes — Here is the final step in a big plant making bombs that are devastating Hitler's homeland. As they come off the assembly line there are 'New England' boxes ready to carry them by rail, sea and air to our fighting fronts all over the world."



Above: A brochure produced during WWII shows a variety of boxes served many uses during the war (left), and "Lillian the Riveter" works to support the war effort at New England Box Company (right).

Left: View from across the river looking south toward the New England Box Company Factory, known during the war as "Mill Y".



This Tunisian donkey is hauling wartime materiel in a box made at Mill Y half a world away.

OPPOSITE | New England Box Company boxes supplied troops on many WW II fronts. Shown (clockwise from top left) are New Georgia, Iceland, Australia, and the Russell Islands.

Making Plywood Boxes

Key insights for the plywood box production process were provided by East Dover's Jim Raymo during a walking tour of the factory in 2009. Jim worked at the factory with his father for several years in the late 1950's and early 1960's as a relief operator, filling in anywhere on the production line where needed. As a result, he developed a thorough understanding of the entire process and provided details for the diagrams of the box production processes that follow on pages 46–52. Workers like Raymo referred to the factory as “The Plywood”.

To produce plywood, hardwood logs were soaked in a pond outside the mill to raise their moisture content. Then they were cut to length in the factory's saw mill. After spending 24 hours steaming in a kiln they were mounted on a large lathe which shaved off a thin, continuous sheet of veneer. To manufacture veneer, each of the two large lathes required five workers—a machine operator and four people who stacked the sheets coming off the lathe for drying. Layers of veneer were glued together and pressed overnight in a drying room to produce a sheet of plywood. In another area of the factory, the plywood was cut into various component parts for each type of box.

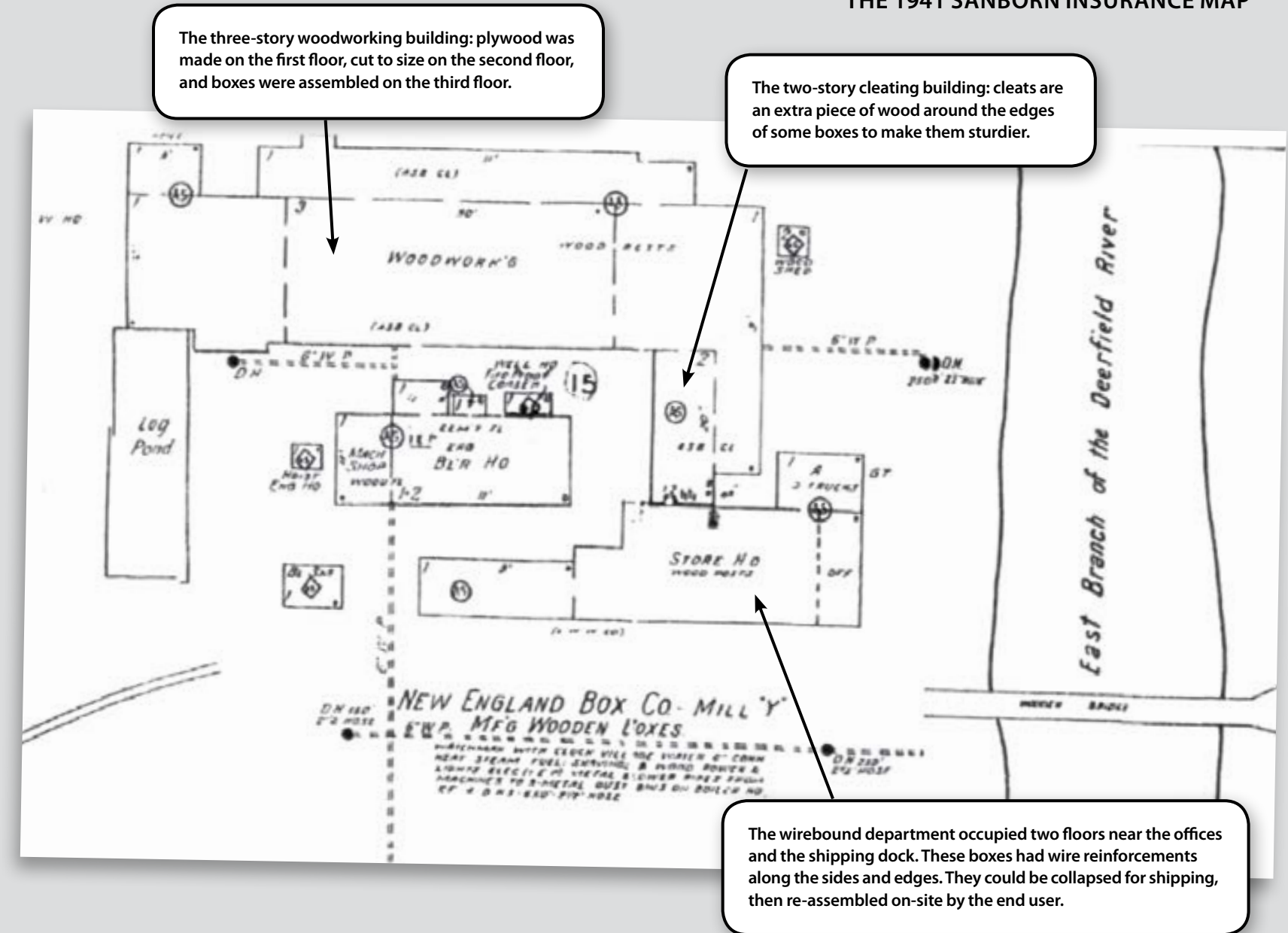
The 1941 Sanborn Map on page 45 shows that a one-story addition was added to the south gable wall of the main block and a shallow one-story structure was added along the west wall of the block which housed the second lathe.

Below: The log pond (also shown in the insurance map, opposite), empty of water.

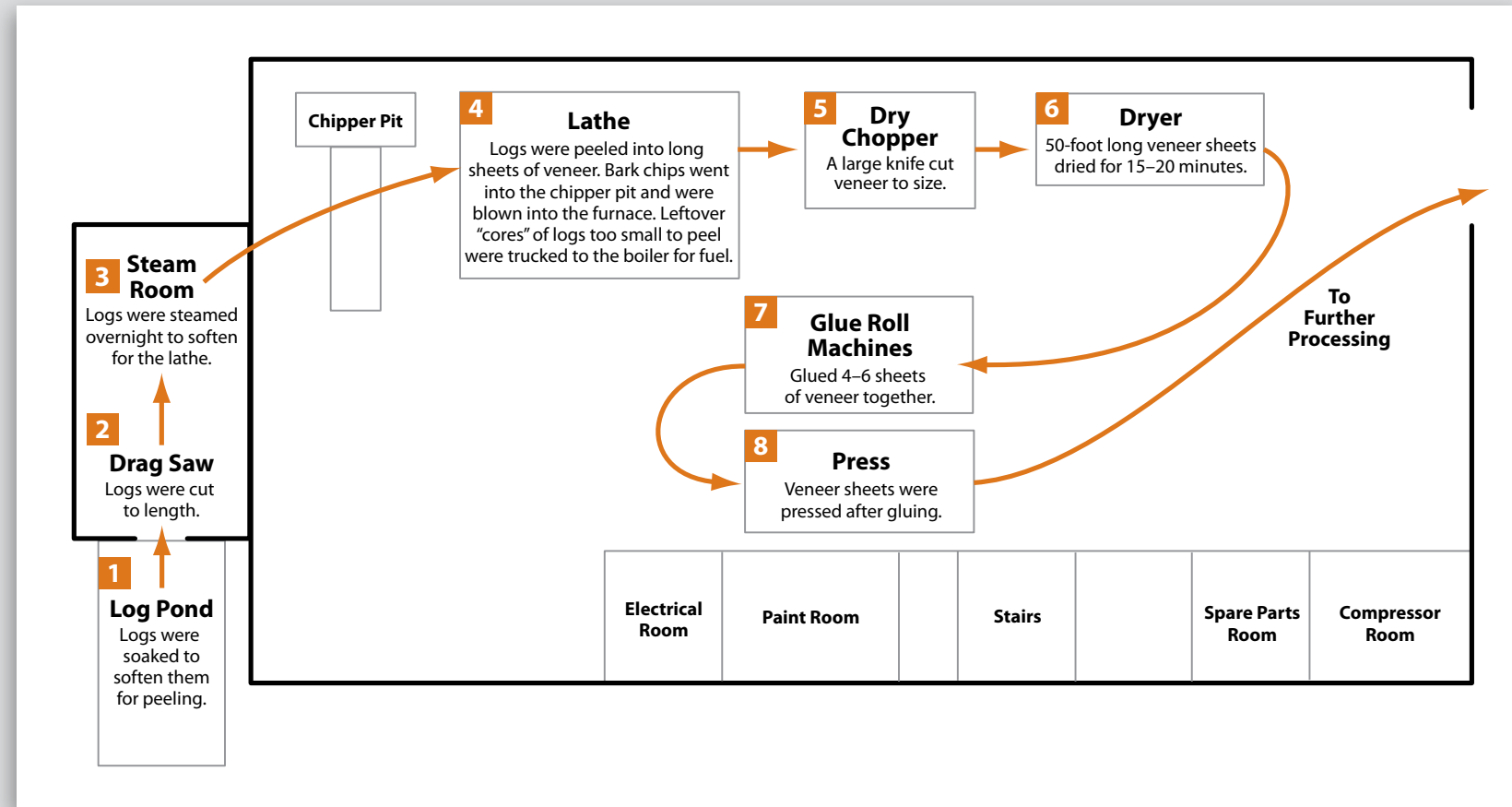
Bottom: Sawmill workers Elmer Chase, Ray Lackey, and Red Lazelle pose at the beginning of the box making process.



THE 1941 SANBORN INSURANCE MAP



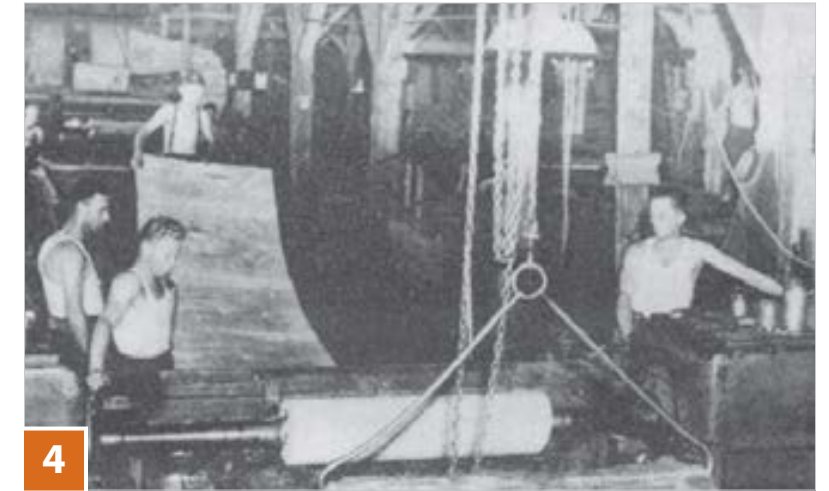
WOODWORKING BUILDING / FIRST FLOOR — Making Plywood



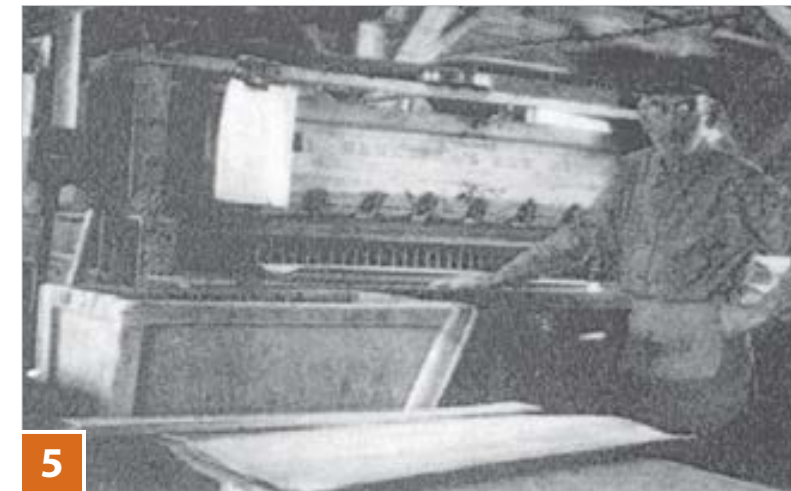
The diagrams on the following pages show the production process that New England Box used in making its plywood boxes. The photos are keyed with the corresponding numbers in the diagrams.



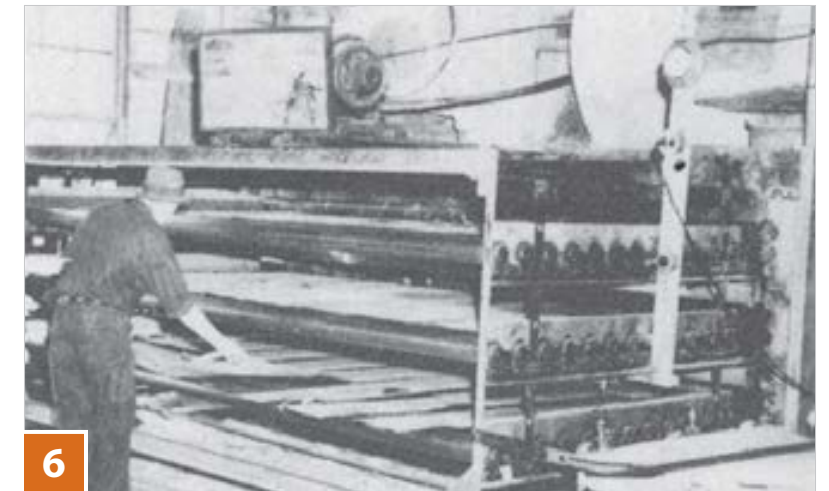
2 The "Drag Saw Gang" make short ones (logs) out of long ones. In the back are Perley Sage (pond) and Harold Stetson (operator). In the front is Howard Wright who wields the tongs.



4 Operating the Merrit Lathe are (foreground, left to right) Freeman Becker (matcher), Wallace Bly (breaker), and Ray Lumbra (lathe operator). In back are Sam Boyd (wet clipper operator) and Harold Lazelle (blocker).

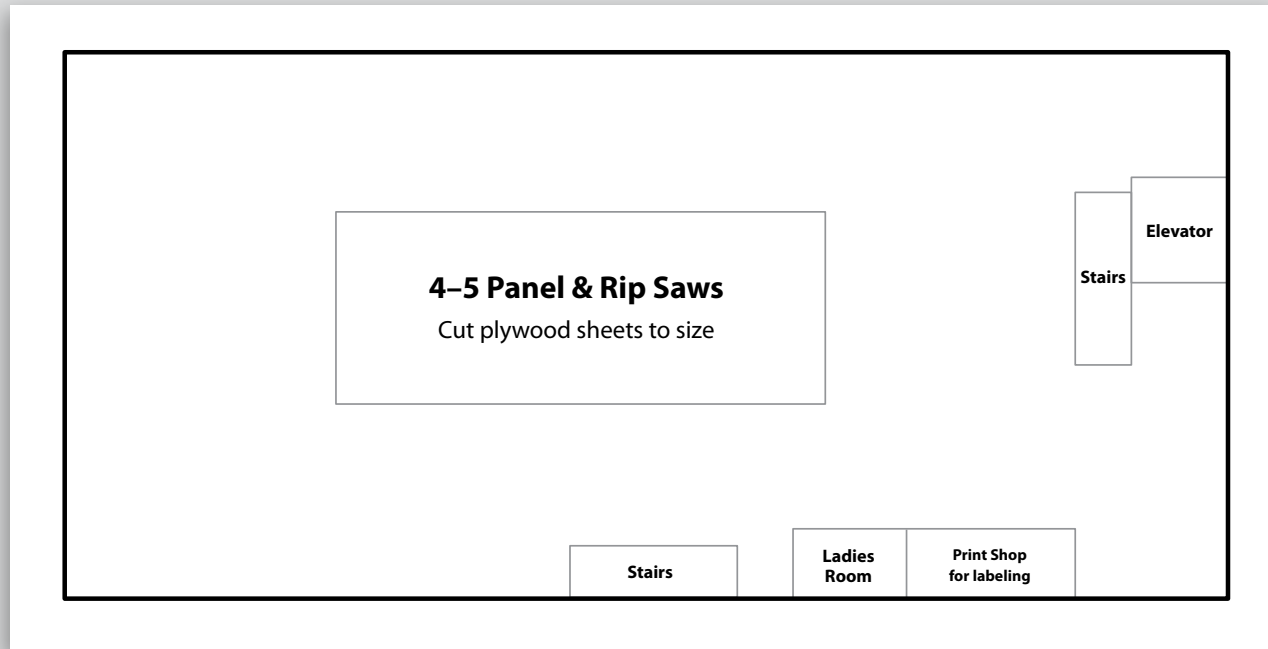


5 Here's "Pop" Gilbar operating the dry chopper.

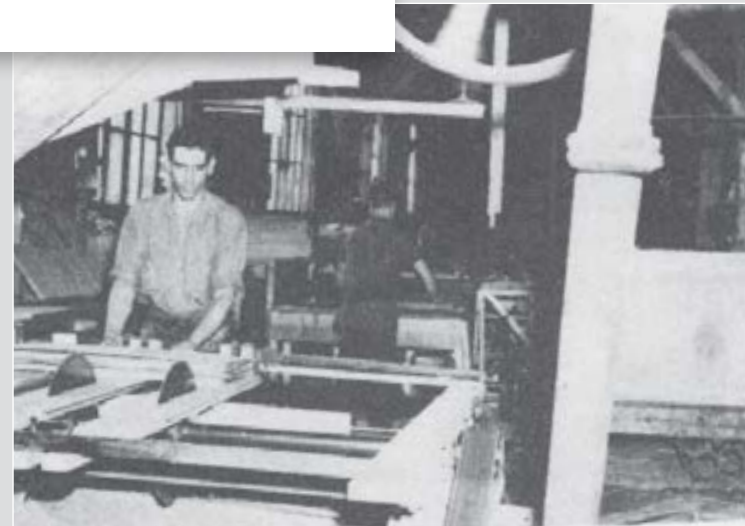


6 The dryer being operated by Earl Upton.

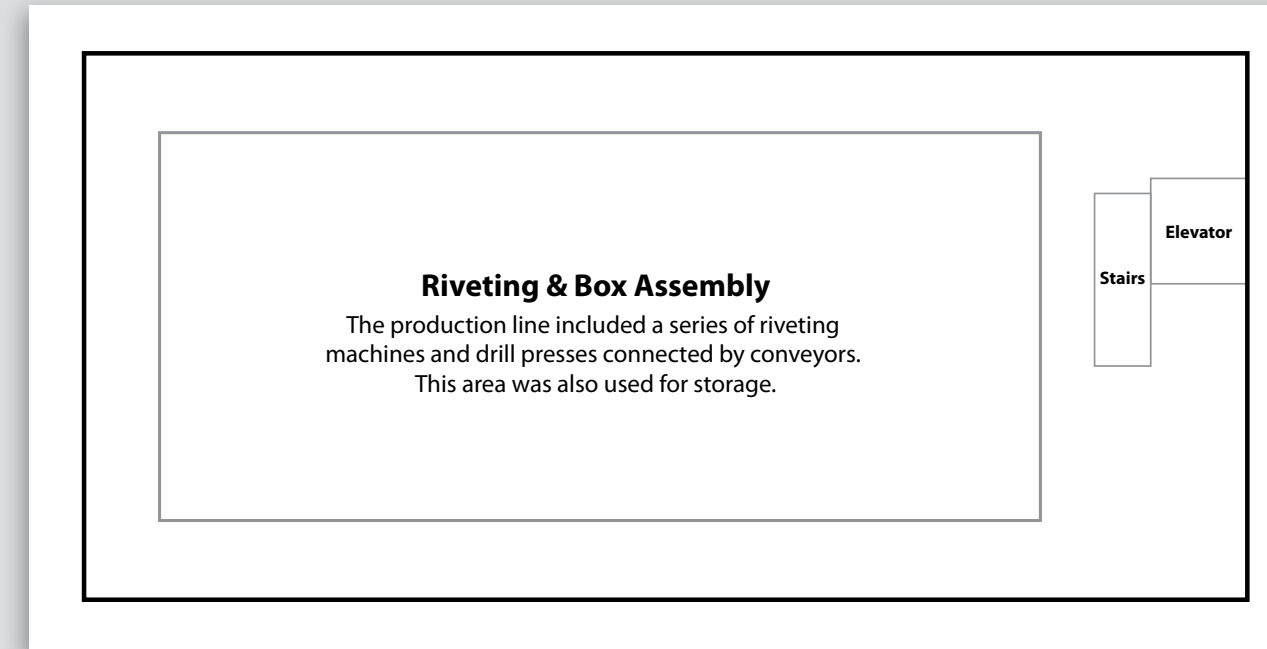
WOODWORKING BUILDING / SECOND FLOOR — Sizing Plywood for Box Construction



Albert Brissette operating the panel saw on the second floor and Edward Davidson behind him as off-bearer from the rip saw.

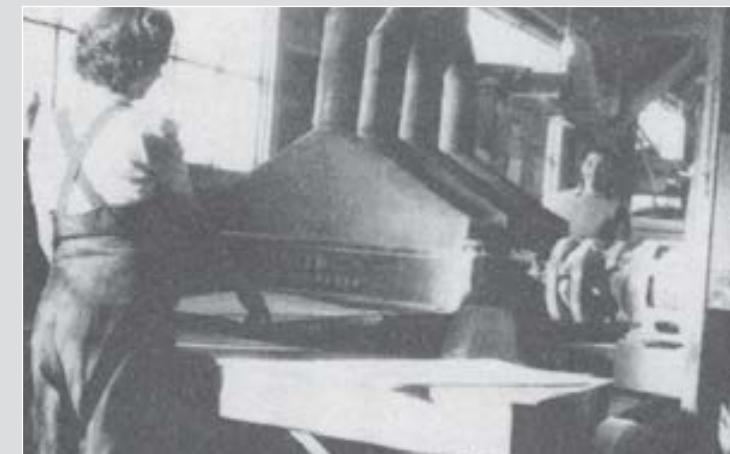


WOODWORKING BUILDING / THIRD FLOOR — Assembling Boxes



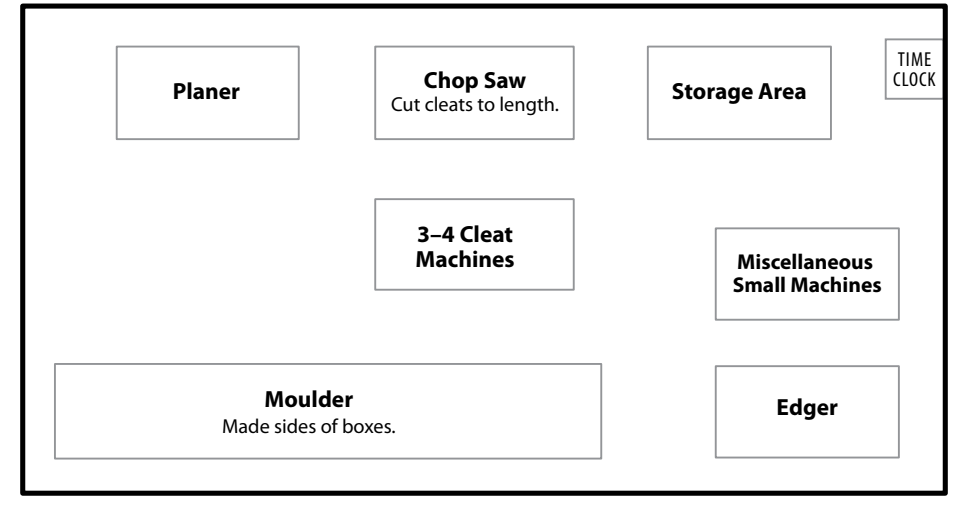
Left: The sander is run by Leola Parsons (left) and Alice Rogers as off-bearer and inspector.

Right: Boxes being made for Pratt & Whitney (an aviation and war materials plant in Hartford, CT). Here's (left to right) Glenna Sheltra and Ida Reynolds riveting and Hazel Cole and Mabel Wheeler assembling.



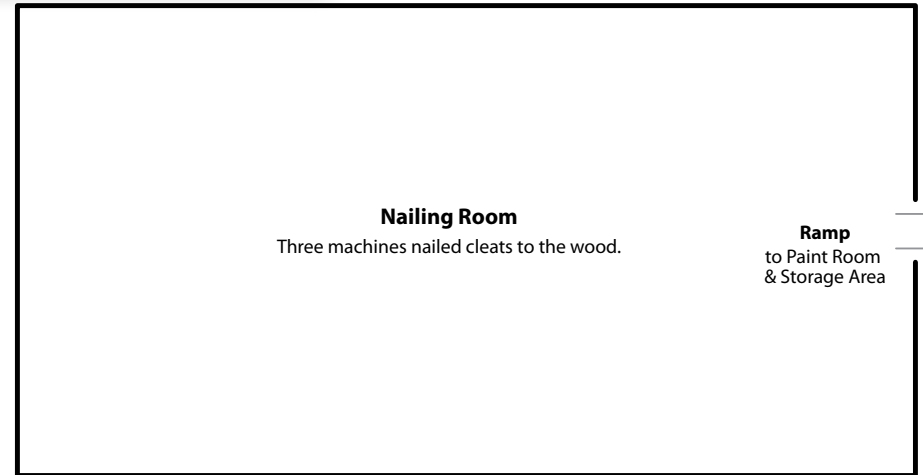
NEW ENGLAND BOX COMPANY
CLEATING DEPARTMENT

FIRST FLOOR



Working in the cleat department are Muriel Shippee (off-bearer), Earl Rathburn (foreman and railroad saw operator), and Joe Coleman (off-bearer to double surfer).

SECOND FLOOR



Cleat nailing is done by Eliza Look (cleat placer) and Ray Davidson (operator), and in background, Gladys and Thelma Thomas (operator and placer).

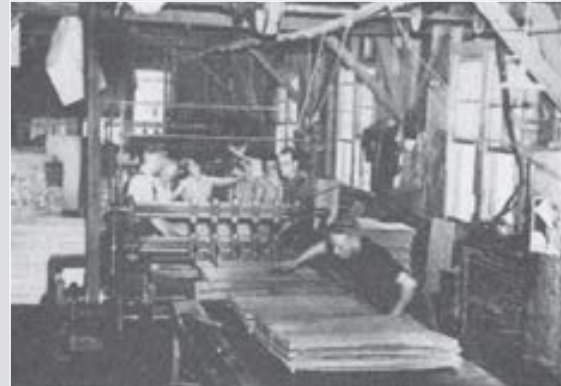
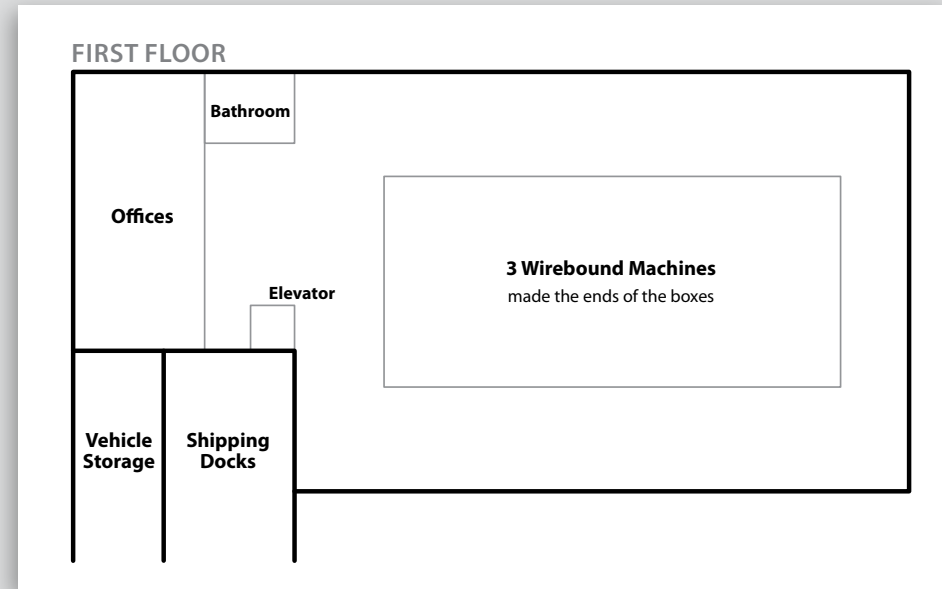


Blanche Mills has a cleated bread box made in part by her father, Howard Farrington, who operated one of the Merrit Lathes.



Jim Raymo has kept a cleated foot locker made at the factory during World War II.

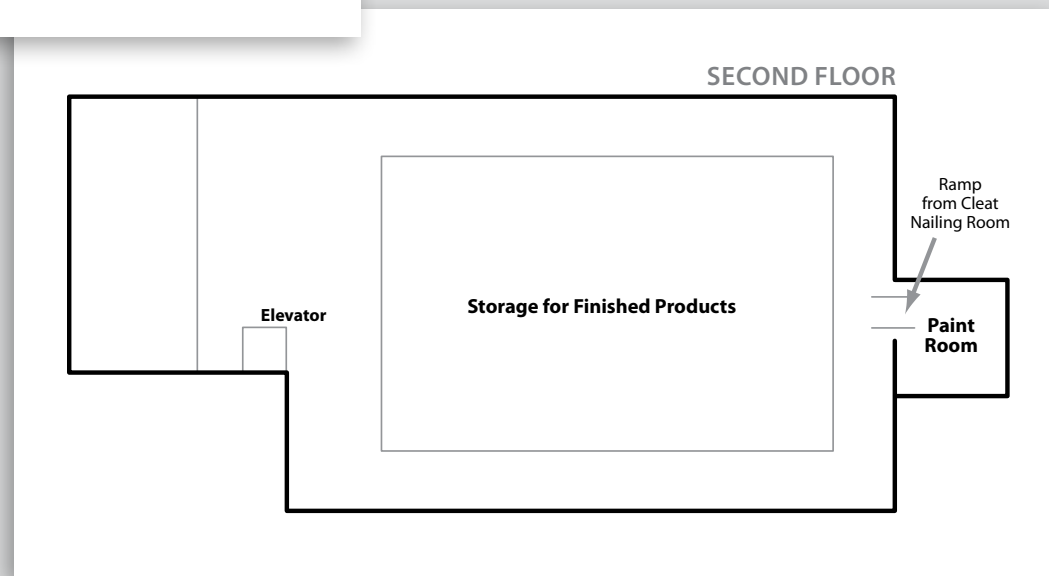
NEW ENGLAND BOX COMPANY
WIREBOUND DEPARTMENT



Working in the wirebound department are (left to right) Joe Day (foreman), Gladys Murdock (stock placer), Alice Sage (cleat placer), Goldie Green (stock placer), Mickey Maher (operator) and Ed Bartlett (off-bearer).



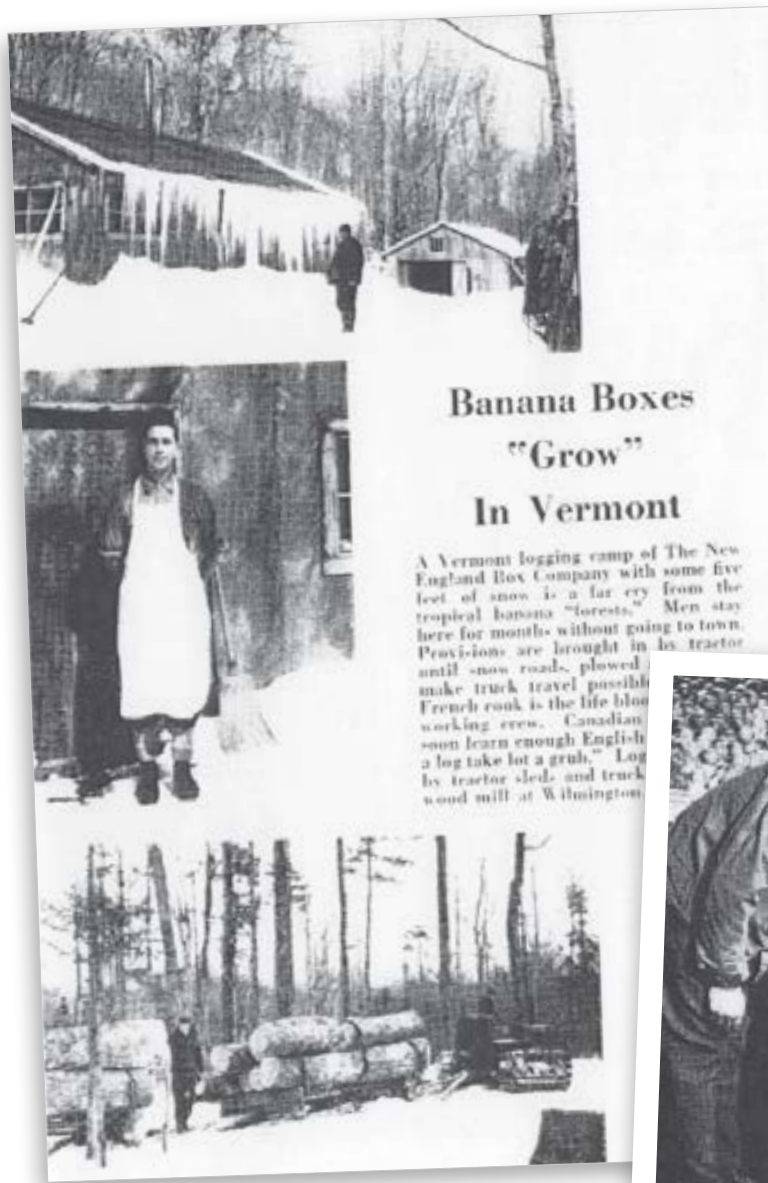
Making wirebound-cleats are (left to right) Betty Jacobs (off bearer), Ivan Bartlett (operator) and Gladys Murdock (sorter).



Right: Harry Holden, truck driver at Mill "Y" had been on the job ever since New England Box Company started operating its own trucks.

Below: Carts and tracks were used to move material in the backyard of the factory (left), and working in the office are Laurel Stinson and Gladys Hurley (right).





“Harder to Peel Logs Than Bananas”

So reads a post-war “banana box” brochure from the New England Box Company. When the war ended, “The Plywood” returned to making primarily bread and banana boxes. The brochure highlights how many logs were needed to feed the plant year-round and what it took to get them ready for production: “In the Wilmington mill where 100 skilled hands fabricate all kinds of plywood boxes, the logs are cut to length, steamed and turned into veneer on powerful lathes. It is a fascinating sight to see a log 50 inches long and 20 inches in diameter



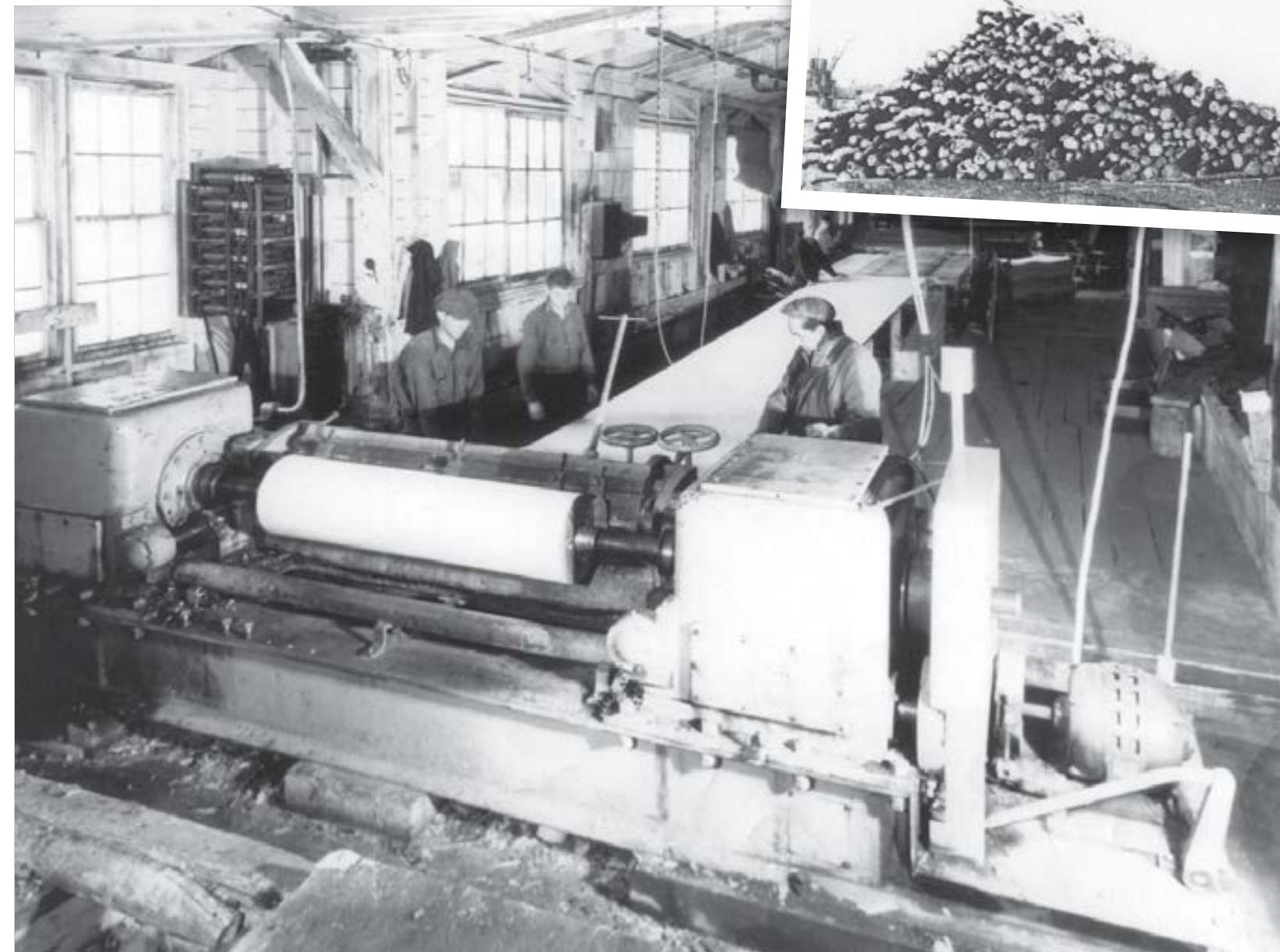
slowly disappear and run down the table as a thin ribbon of wood 1/16 inch thick.”

Gradually, cardboard boxes replaced wooden boxes like those made by New England Box. Production faded, and the company closed.

Left: Images from the post-war brochure.

OPPOSITE

The lathe creates a long ribbon of veneer. Blanche Mill’s father, Howard Farrington, is seen (center right) operating a second lathe. Inset, from the brochure: “In the mill yard ... logs are piled high as a reserve for summer use. Snow furnishes the transportation system to bring the high grade logs in from the distant hills.”



Recollections of a Wilmington resident

"During my school years, I lived directly across the Deerfield River from The New England Box Company. I was told they made wooden boxes for shipping bananas. Some people called it The Plywood Factory. They had a big yard over there with lots of lumber piles on it.

It was the main industry in town for several years and many people were employed there. My father, who was a carpenter, worked there some winters when his work was scarce.

I remember we often knew the correct time by the mill whistle. It would shrilly announce at 6:45 am that it was "time to come to work"; at 6:55 it would blow a real short hoot to "get ready to work" and at 7:00 am a real long one to let employees know that they had better stop fooling around and "get to work". Another long hoot at noon signaled the lunch hour. Again at 12:45, 12:55 and 1:00 pm the three whistle alert system sounded and the "day's work is done" blast went off at 5 pm. That whistle was a big help in getting us up and off to school in the morning.

During my earlier years there was a wooden bridge across the river. When I was about ten years old, it was getting rotten and full of holes and so was closed to traffic. Once in awhile we children would go on it to play. My mother would get really angry at us when she finally noticed us, and we would get some well-deserved scoldings and sometimes a little more!

After we realized the dangers on the bridge, and as we got a little older, we went a few feet down river to the dam. When the water was low enough, we would go across the dam and into the lumber yard. We had more fun climbing up on those lumber piles playing imaginary games.

Why some of the mill officials never saw us, I'll never know. The bridge and the dam are now long gone. Another piece of Wilmington history now in the book!"

— *Barbara Haskins Look*



Above: A view of the second bridge leading to the employee housing. By the late New England Box years, the bridge became so decrepit it had to be torn down. The dirt road is now Route 9.

Inset, left to right: Factory workers Earl Crawford, Everett Cannon, Pete Reando, and Ray Lazelle.

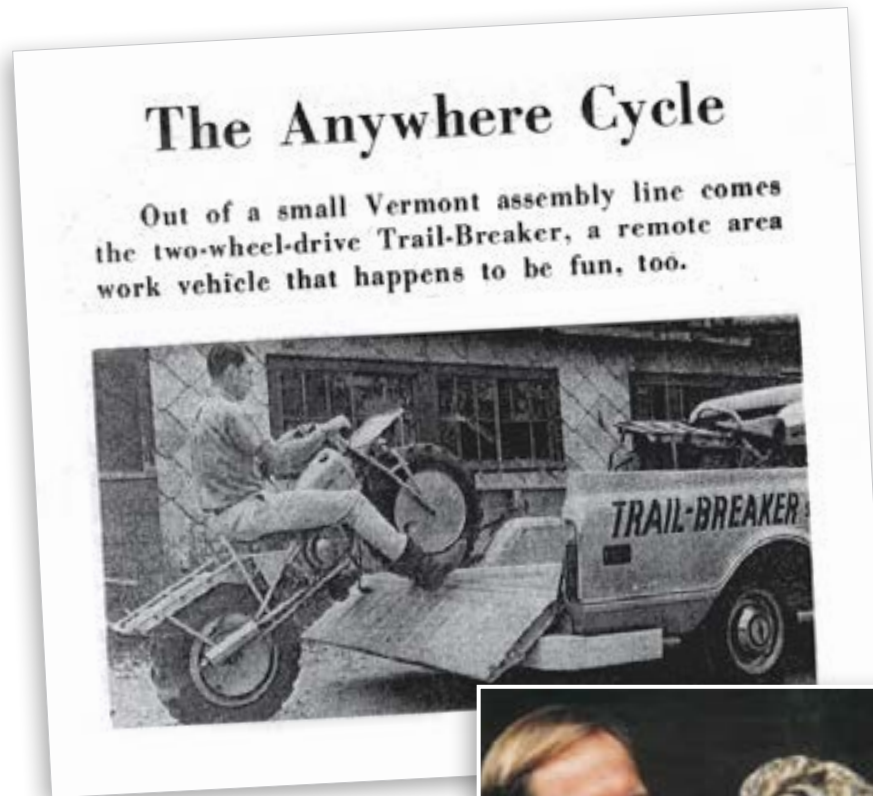


Crawls over boulders and logs.
You can drive over obstacles 28 inches high —
even small fences. No need to dismount and
manhandle the machine.



Buddy, Can You Spare A Dime?

1963 - 1971



Above: A newspaper extols the virtues of the unique two-wheel-drive motorcycle.

Right: Wild Kingdom's co-host, Jim Fowler.

OPPOSITE

A vintage Trail-Breaker; image courtesy of Jay David Wolf.

PAGE 58

Rokon owner Orla Larsen riding a Trail-Breaker in a 1966 company brochure.



Breaking Trail

After years of dormancy the factory was auctioned in 1963. Local entrepreneur Eddie Barber was on his way to town when he heard about the auction. Interested buyers were instructed to call the bank in Greenfield to make a verbal offer. Barber had never seen the factory but he decided to place a bid. Having only a quarter in his pocket, he borrowed 10 cents to make the 35-cent call. Several hours later, his bid of \$10,000 had won. He and partner Thomas Bumferd were the proud owners of a dormant factory. Barber sold the factory's production equipment, and so the building was empty as well as silent.

Not long thereafter, Jim Fowler, of the popular television show *Wild Kingdom*, was traveling through Wilmington and left his unique front-and-rear-wheel-drive dirt bike called the "Trail-Breaker" at Greene's Service Station for repairs.



The bike originated in California where it was designed by Charles Fehn. His concept was a lightweight, durable, and reliable off-road motorcycle that could travel over obstructions and in mountainous regions, on snow and soft ground. Fehn patented the hollow aluminum wheels, each holding 4.5 gallons of liquid ballast or fuel. When the wheels were empty, the bike could float. A company called Nethercutt Industries agreed to produce the “Trail-Breaker”.

Successful businessman Orla Larsen and friend Nick Harris saw the bike at Greene’s, became dealers, and then bought the company in 1965. They renamed the company “Rokon” after Larsen’s local lodge “On the Rocks”. Eddie Barber leased them the factory, though Rokon did not utilize the whole site.

Larsen and Fowler promoted the Trail-Breaker to *Wild Kingdom* host Marlin Perkins, and subsequently the bike appeared on the program. Fowler’s televised rides in Peru and Kenya made the bike famous.

Beginning in 1966, they produced a model called the Mark III Explorer, one of Rokon’s most popular models. It could climb a 60-degree pitch, weighed only 180 pounds and could go virtually anywhere. Larsen paid local high school kids \$2 per hour to test-ride the bikes up and down Mount

Snow. Improvements were made when parts failed. Twenty employees assembled up to seven bikes a day. There were 157 dealers at one time, 55 of which were in New England.

In late 1968, Larsen decided to move the factory to Keene, New Hampshire, to increase the company’s production capacity, which had almost reached the million-dollar mark.

Larsen remained involved with Rokon until 1981. Rokon moved several times around southern New Hampshire. It operates today in Rochester, New Hampshire.



Above: Inventor Charles Fehn riding the first prototype of the Trail-Breaker in 1956.

OPPOSITE

Excerpts from a late-1960s Trail-Breaker brochure.

Problem:
Controlling remote-area fires while they're small.

Solution:
The Trail-Breaker fire-fighting system.

Almost any vehicle can be fitted with some kind of fire-fighting equipment. But four-wheeled conveyances can't penetrate dense forest. And other two-wheeled vehicles are treacherous on rough terrain. Or bog down in marshy areas. Trail-Breaker, by contrast, can go through anything.

It can climb steep slopes. Creep back down under full control. Trail-Breaker can glow through knee-deep muck. Ford streams 2 feet deep. Trail-Breaker is easy to operate, too. Clutch on the 3 speed transmission is fully automatic.

Big tires plus two-wheel drive give unbelievable traction.

Trail-Breaker is the world's first two-wheel, two-wheel drive vehicle. Through a special coupling, each wheel finds its own best speed for crossing obstacles. This, plus a 15" ground clearance, allows Trail-Breaker to crawl right over large boulders and fallen logs.

Incredible mobility plus carrying capacity.

Many authorities feel Trail-Breaker could prove to be the fire-fighting breakthrough of the decade — for forestry services, paper companies, rural communities — anyone concerned with remote-area conservation. Its unparalleled mobility can take fire-fighters places no machine has been before — and get them in or out quickly.

Trail-Breaker fights fires as it, or lets you remove and set up the pump, using the vehicle itself to service the fire line, transport supplies, put men where you need them.

What's more, Trail-Breaker is plenty light enough to air-drop — just 190 pounds, or with pump, 235 pounds. It's more than sturdy enough, too. Designed throughout with fail-safe factors. And, Trail-Breaker can carry heavy or awkward loads, including fire-fighting equipment that would normally take 5 or more men to carry.

Pumper out-pumps units several times its size.

Our pumping unit has been specially adapted for use on the Trail-Breaker. It can pour on up to 92 g.p.m. Pressures to 310 p.s.i.

Built for remote-

The pumper water with no plenty of use even for its even automatic out- setting — it set up.

How to find out

You'll find out details of the pumper on price and delivery — or to answer any questions — write: Rokon, Inc., Wilmington, Vermont 05363. Or call (502) 486-5021.

TRAIL-BREAKER
fire-fighting system
Goes places no machine has been before.



The Not-So-Secret Formula

1971 - 1988

The Factory Comes Alive

Lincoln Haynes had done numerous innovative projects in the valley over the years. Haynes approached Barber to buy the again-dormant Mill Street site, perhaps to make it into a door factory. After years of bargaining, Barber finally sold Haynes the site in 1971 for \$75,000. But instead of making doors, Haynes chose a different product.

Authentic weathered siding from barns' exterior walls was a high-demand product in the 1970's. It could only be procured by prying the siding off unused Vermont barns. The supply quickly dried up and greatly increased the price for the product.

Haynes saw the opportunity, but wanted to keep his idea for meeting the demand a secret from his competitors for as long as possible.

Haynes' idea was to make fresh cut lumber look old. He developed a formula that quickly became "not-so-secret" to make local pine and hemlock look weathered. He formed the Vermont Barnboard Company to produce lumber, barnboard, and by-products.



Right: Haynes freshened the plant's visibility from Route 9 while at the same time making long-overdue infrastructural improvements.

PAGE 64

Lincoln Haynes, inventor of the Vermont Barnboard Company's "not-so-secret" process.



The factory in operation in the 1970s before many of the additions were added. Trucks are ready and in motion to take products or byproducts from the Vermont Barnboard Company to markets all over the Northeast. Note the log pile. Like the site's predecessors, Haynes needed tons of logs to keep the factory fed. In his case, he used mostly pine and some hemlock.

The factory's old electrical generator is exposed (left), cut up, and removed (right). It was replaced by three-phase power from New England Power along the old Hoot, Toot & Whistle Railroad rail bed.



Upper left: The site of the previous electrical generator was razed to build a maintenance garage for Haynes' fleet and a new power system. Note the piles of logs in the background.

Upper right: A view of an old steam boiler that was removed.

Lower left: The three-bay building under construction.

Lower right: Haynes used cinder block instead of wood for most of the new additions to the plant.

The factory was in poor shape. Before he could produce anything, Haynes had structural work to do. He spent a year repairing roofs, fixing plumbing and electrical systems, and replacing windows. Whenever beams or posts got in the way, Haynes replaced them with huge steel beams which allowed forklifts and tractors to move faster and more freely.

The factory was also too small and outdated to manufacture the product line Haynes envisioned. He needed a new energy source to replace the outdated electric generator built during the Ludington days. He needed much more energy – heat and steam – to fire bigger kilns and run more machines. Haynes needed a fleet of trucks, a place to maintain them, more room for sawing logs, and offices to manage his booming business. He would build additions that, over the next 14 years, ballooned the factory's footprint to 82,000 square feet. See a diagram of this expansion on page 77.



Power-Producing Innovations

Haynes always envisioned the future. He worked constantly to change and improve the output and efficiency of the factory.

Two bays of his new addition housed a two-story steam boiler and a three-story sawdust bin. The boiler was designed to turn the factory's sawdust into heat for the factory and steam for the new kilns. Sawdust was collected throughout the plant via a series of pumps and blowers, fed into the bin, and then conveyed and blown into the boiler.

The boiler was so large that it had to be lifted and welded into place. Then cinder block walls and a wood roof enclosed it. Local handyman Gary Lackey welded tubes throughout the boiler where water was pumped in, heated, and then converted to steam. He later added a catwalk that the boiler operators used.

Below: One of the frames built to hoist the big boiler into place.

Center: While the boiler temporarily rests on the ground, the second half of the frame is built.

Right: The boiler core being hoisted into place.



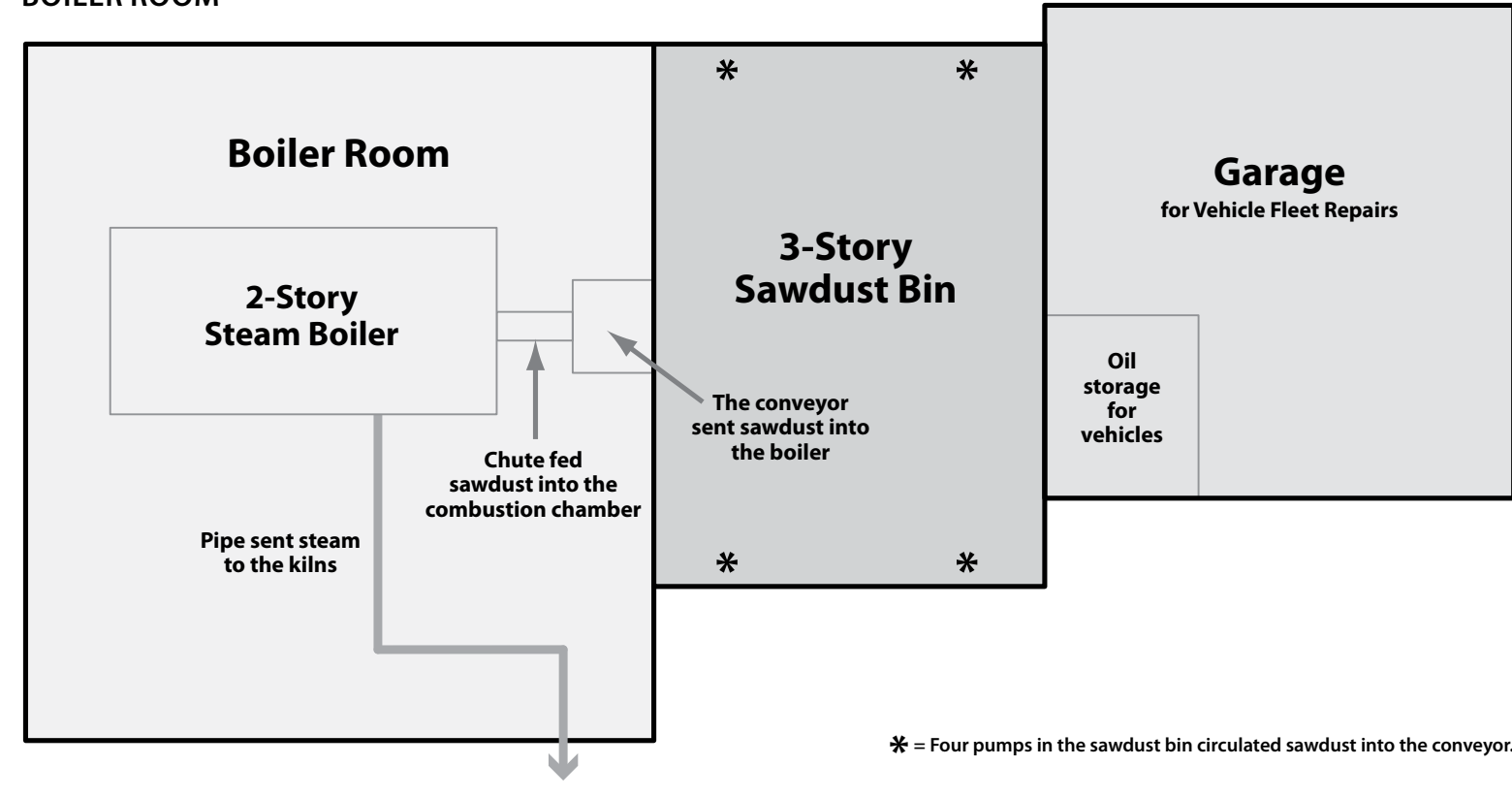
Left: The production line used by Lackey to make the steel roof rafters which supported the boiler room, sawdust bin, and garage roofs.

Right: Lackey's rafters ready for installation.

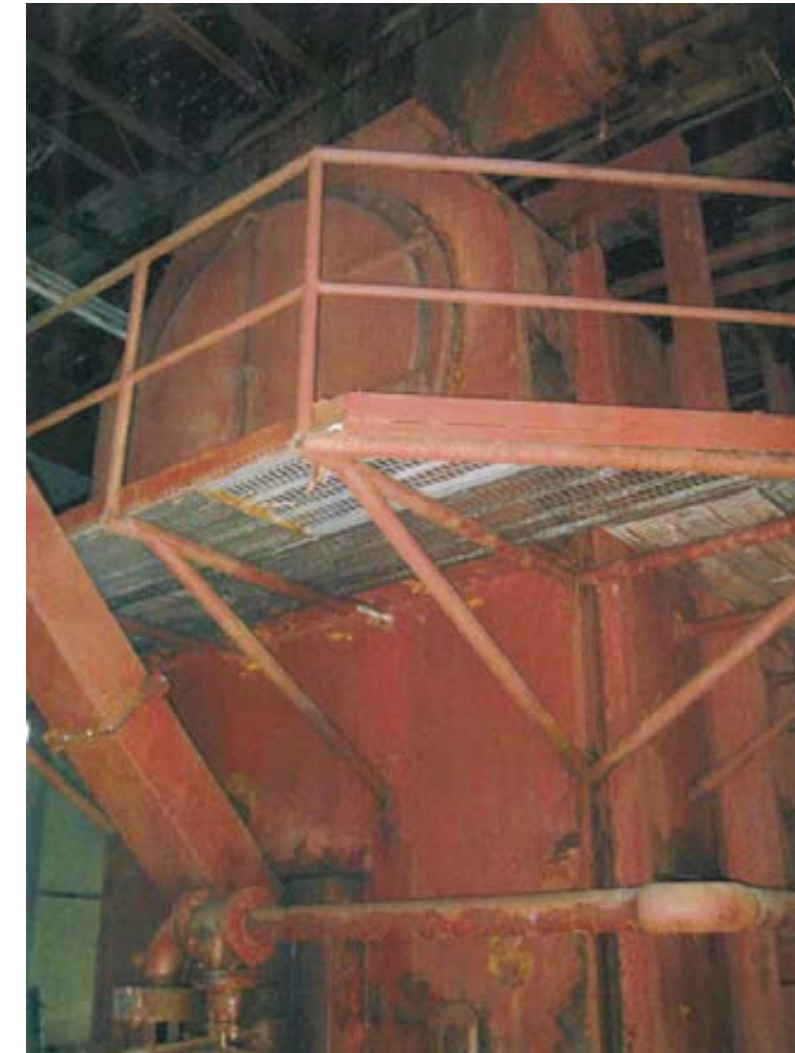
Below: The boiler room roof rafters. The new boiler system connected to the 1915 smokestack. When the smokestack was torn down in 2006, it resisted mightily.



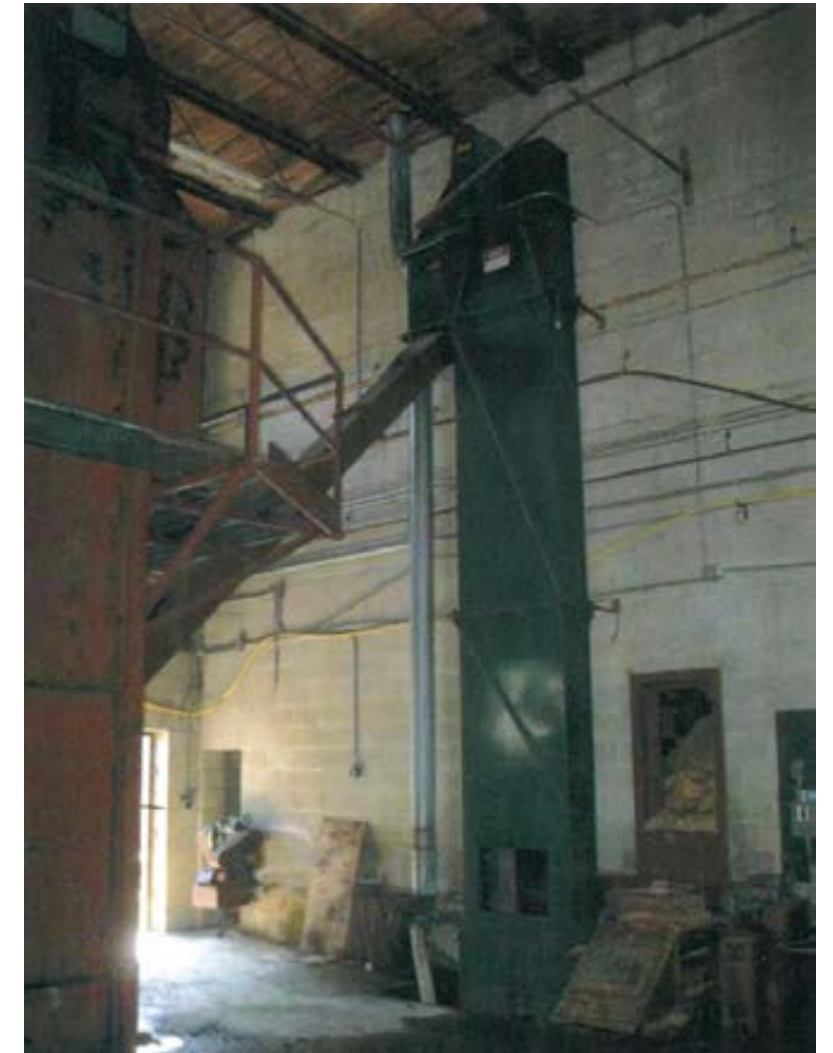
BOILER ROOM



To produce steam for drying large quantities of wood in the kilns, an intricate system of blowers and belt-driven electric pumps fed sawdust into the boiler’s combustion chamber. The boiler was staffed around the clock in shifts of two operators, one of whom would venture into the sawdust bin and stir the pile to keep it from clumping. He wore a rope around his waist to be pulled out in case the pile collapsed.



A side view of the two-story steam boiler with a catwalk for the boiler operators who worked in shifts around the clock. The lower level housed the combustion chamber, while the upper story had pipes in the core filled with 2000 gallons of water that, when heated, produced steam.

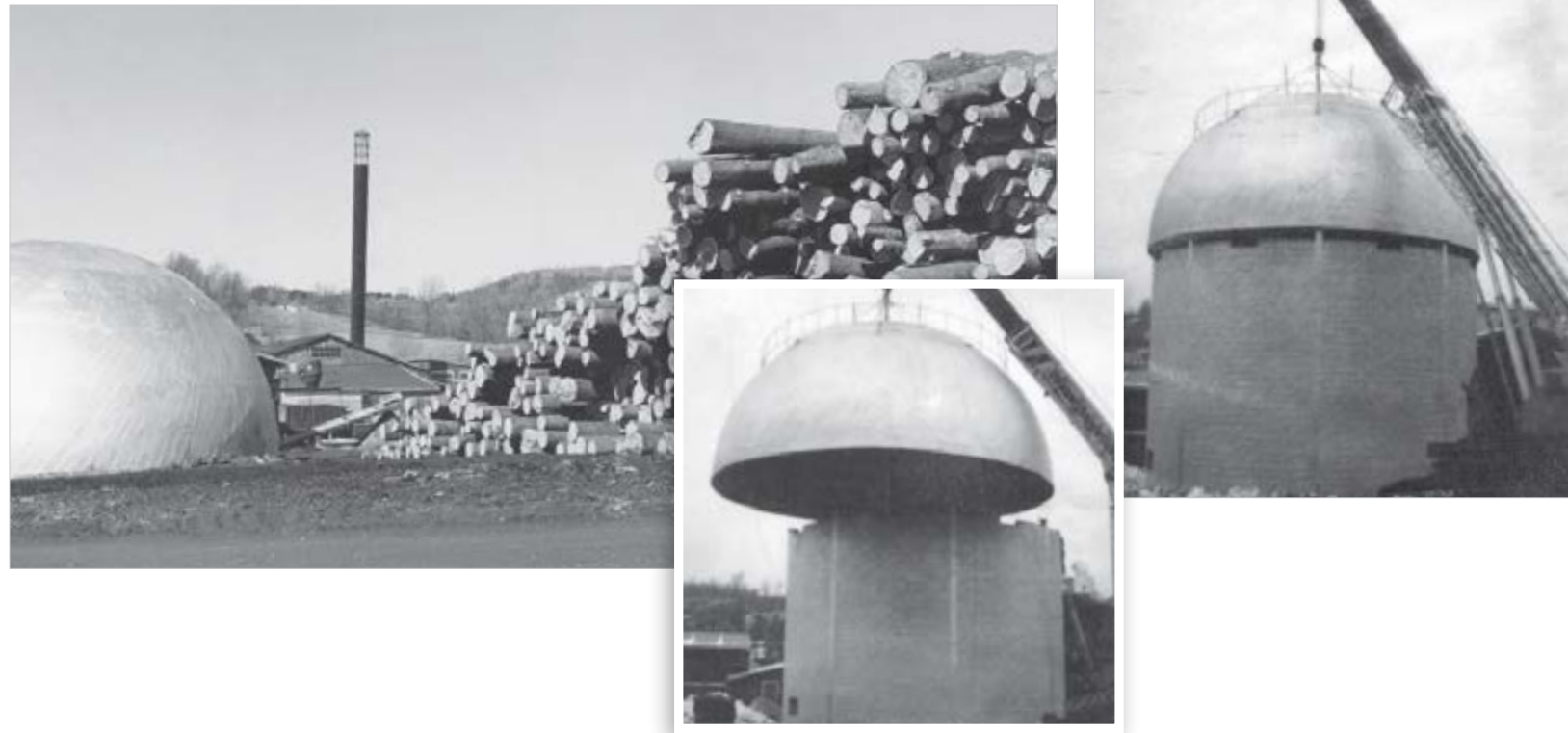


The green tower houses a conveyor belt to draw sawdust from the three-story sawdust bin via a series of blowers and pumps. When the sawdust reached the top of the tower, it was blown down the chute and fed into the combustion chamber. A series of pipes, blowers, and pumps throughout the factory gathered sawdust to fill the bin. See the photo of the roof-top pipes on page 76.

As large as the three-story storage bin was, Haynes ran out of space to store the immense piles of sawdust his factory was producing. He designed and built a three-story silo adjacent to a large new log room where the production process started. The silo's dome roof was so heavy that the first crane brought onsite could not lift it, so a second, larger crane was used to finish the job. Several augers rotated at the bottom of the silo to keep the sawdust pile from clumping.

After the silo was filled, the factory still produced more sawdust than it could store under cover. Huge piles of sawdust and mulch were created on the west end of the property.

Below: The 37' diameter silo roof was built on the ground, lifted (center) and set in place (right).



Left: The kiln roof vents and heat exchanger tower vent. Note the piles of finished product in the background and the end of a large bark mulch pile.
Below: The kilns under construction.

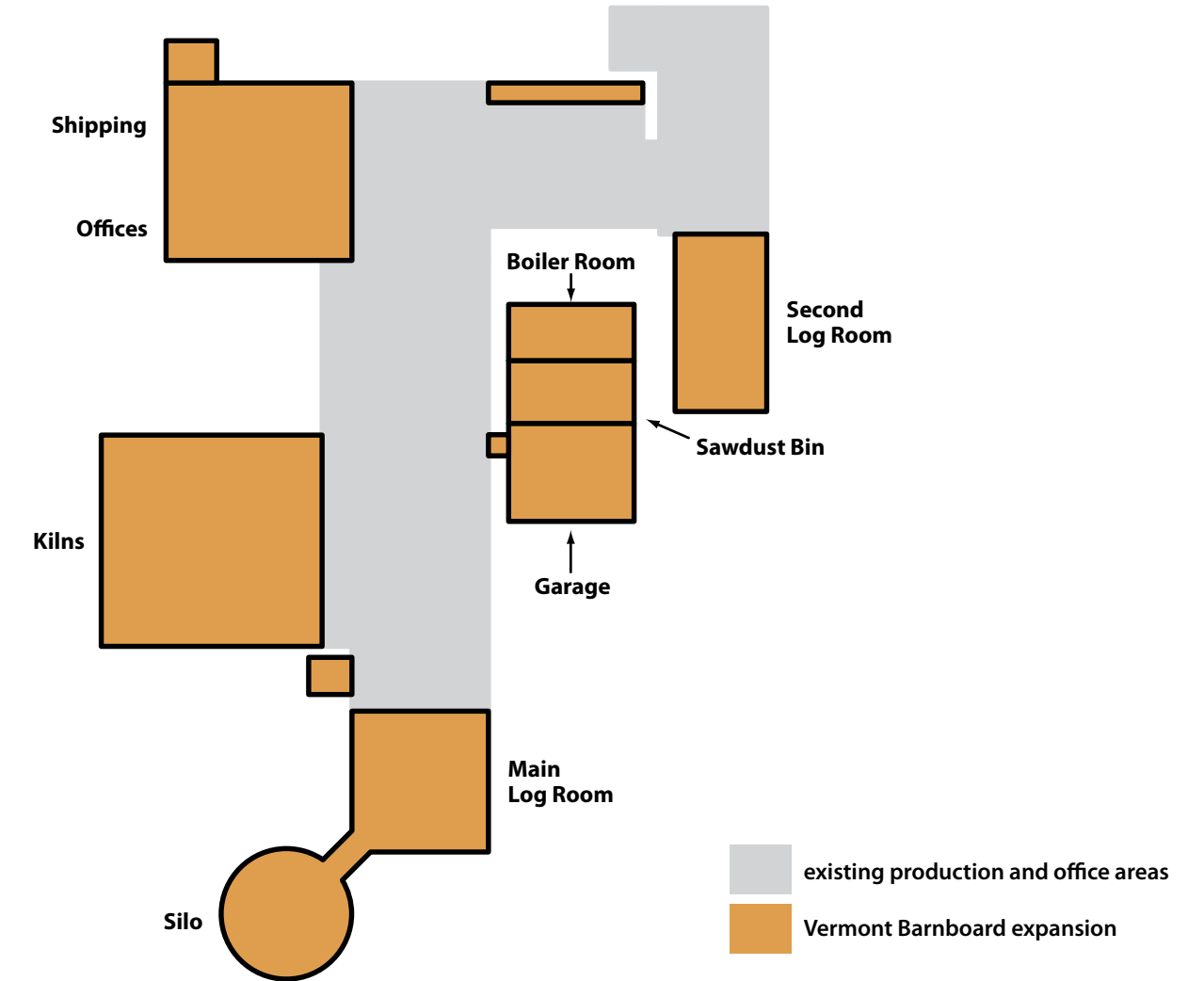


The not-so-secret formula required a much larger wood drying capacity than the old kilns could handle. Haynes built three large cinder block bays adjacent to an open-sided shed-roofed staging area to move stacks of wood in and out of the kilns. He brought in a two-story propane boiler that barely made it through the local roads, only to reconsider its energy costs and then send it back. Instead, he decided to use steam generated by burning sawdust to dry his wood. Each of the kiln bays was climate-controlled with automated roof vents and heat exchangers to manage the temperature and humidity.



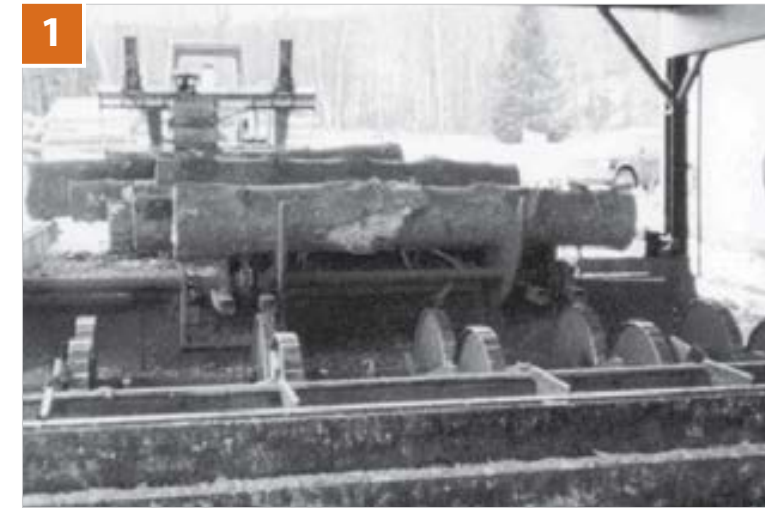
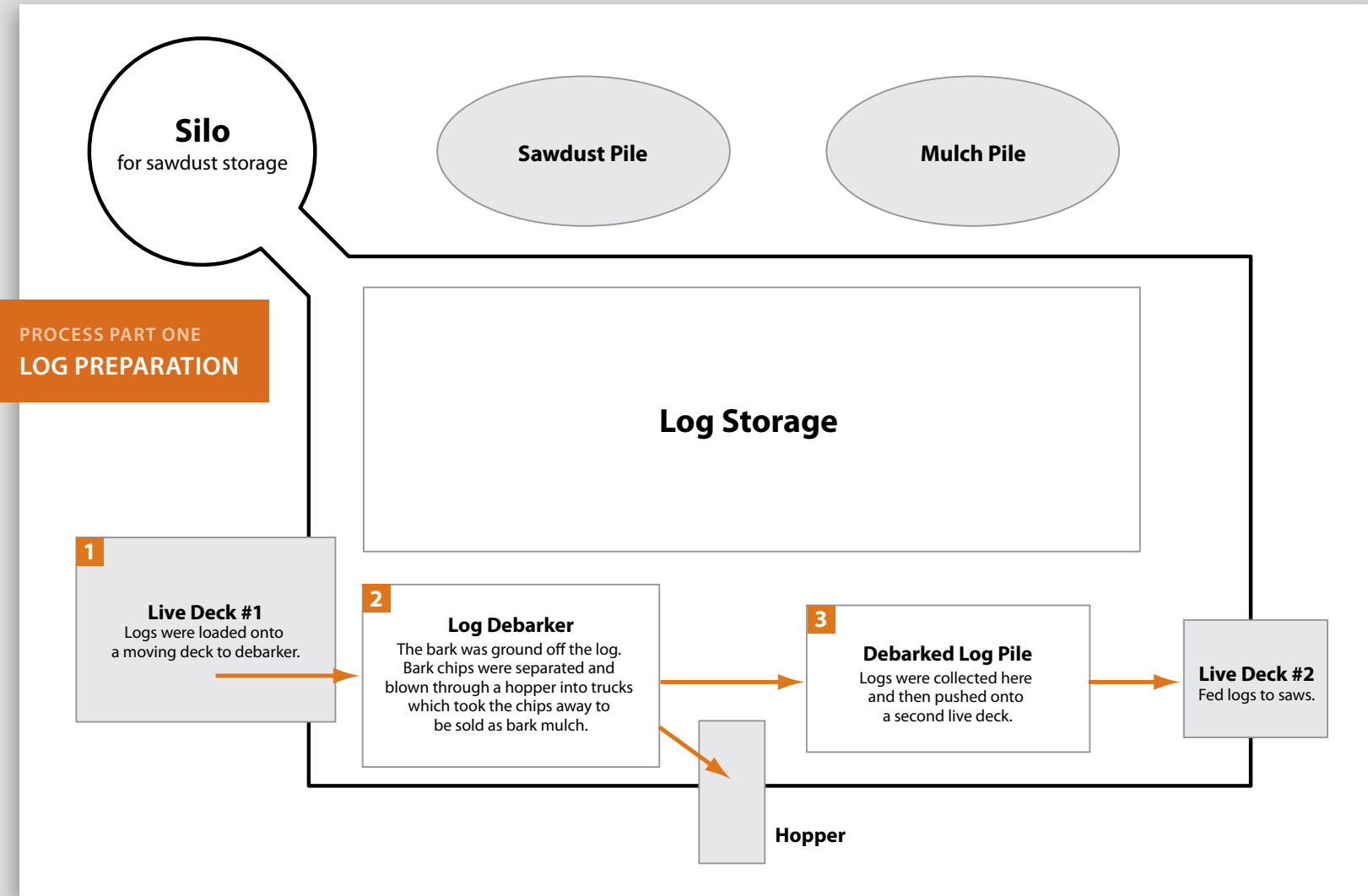
This aerial view was taken after the silo and boiler room complexes were built, but before the second sawroom was built (far right, just to the right of the smokestack). The foreground illustrates a recurring theme for 45 Mill Street – huge piles of logs. The factory started out using hardwood in the early 1900's and switched to softwood by the late 1900's. The rail spur changed to an entry road (center) while a new road (far right) was added and nicknamed Plywood Street during the New England Box Company days. Note the series of pipes along the roofs of the main block and boiler room that collected sawdust for the huge boiler.

VERMONT BARNBOARD COMPANY
BUILDING GROWTH : 1971-1988



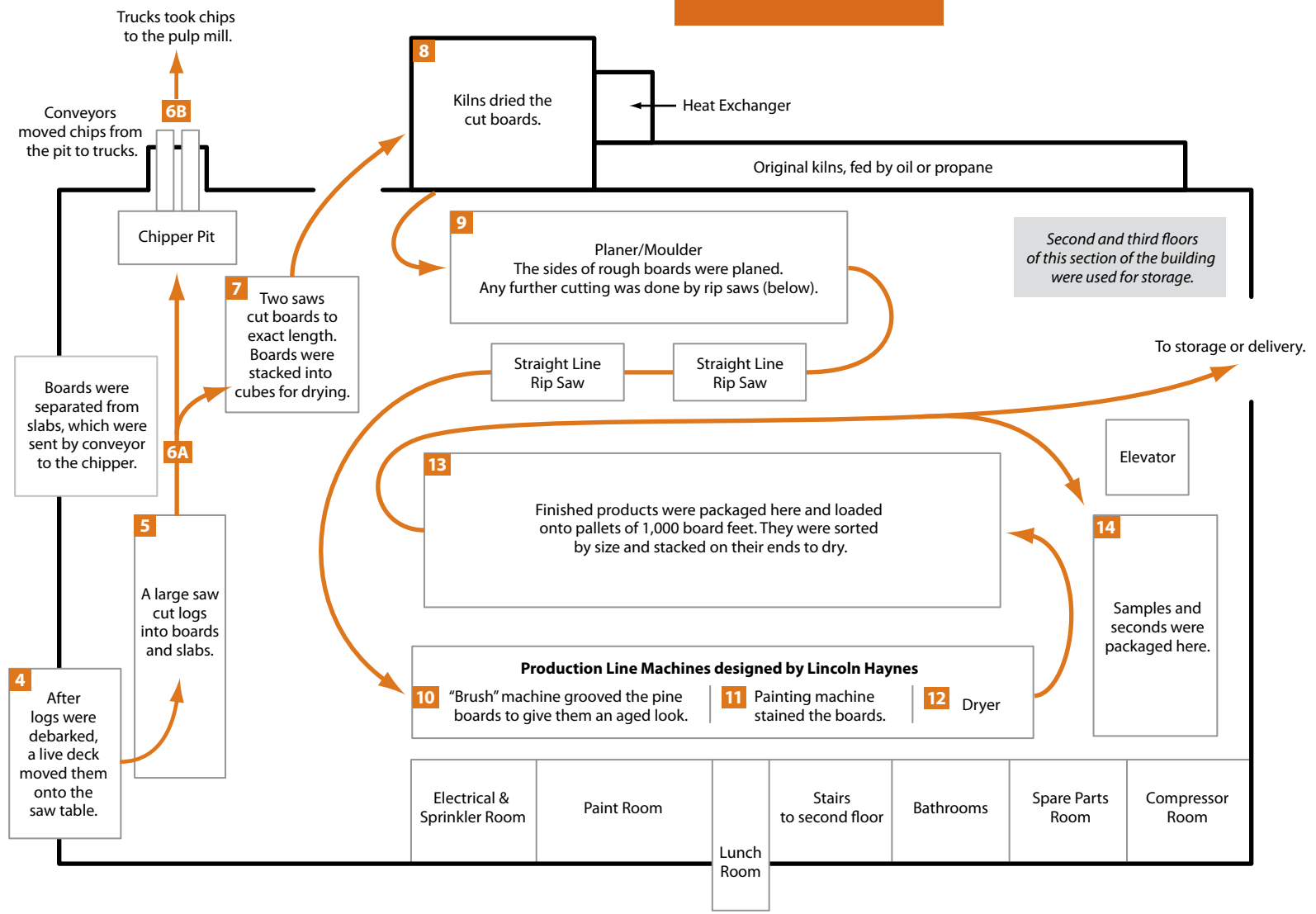
Making “Vermont Barnboard”

George Davis worked at Vermont Barnboard for many years. His experience is the basis for the diagrams below and on Page 80 that depict the barnboard manufacturing process. Most steps are numerically keyed to pictures on the following pages.



Logs started the production process in the newly-made log room (1) by being placed on the first live deck. The debarker stripped away the bark (2). Davis loaded debarked logs onto the second live deck (3) which sent them inside the factory.

**PROCESS PART TWO
MAIN PRODUCTION**

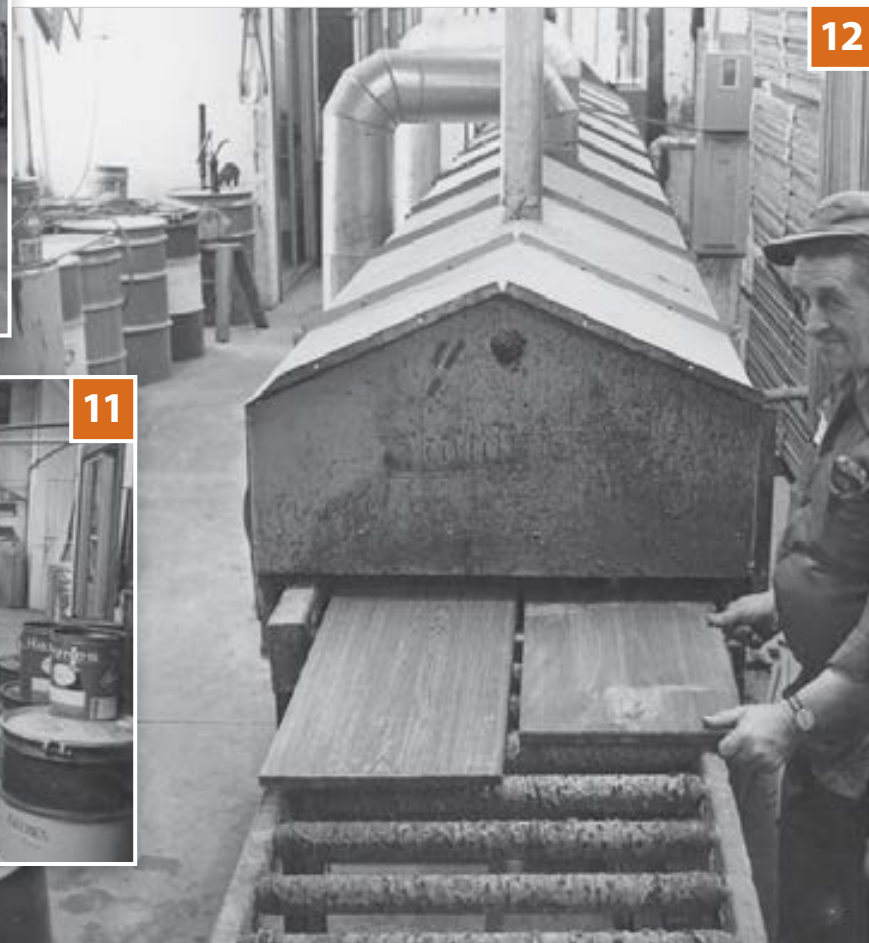


5
Logs were ripped into boards and slabs (5) which were dropped into a pit and chopped into bark mulch.
Men stacked freshly-sawn boards (7) into "cubes" for drying.
Cubes were made ready (8) to be picked up by forklifts and placed in the kilns.





Dried boards from the kiln were fed onto a long machine via conveyor to undergo the critical phases of the not-so-secret process. First, the boards (10) were scratched by spinning wire brushes to create a weathered look. Next, the boards were stained (11). Haynes mixed his own stains in a large shower stall next to the machine (upper left of photo below). Then the boards were fed into a dryer (12).



When the boards were dry, they were ready for sorting and packaging (13).
Not all barnboard came out good enough to sell by Haynes' standards, so he established a "seconds" market. At the end of the production line, workers collected the imperfect boards to make furniture, boxes and other products (14).



Haynes tried to sell or use every by-product at the site. He sold the chips from the log debarker as bark mulch. He built a hopper to load trucks with the chips, and sold them as far away as Boston. The log slabs were chopped and loaded into trucks via a subfloor conveyor line. They were sold to a paper mill in Ticonderoga, New York to be made into pulp. The sawdust, though, was the largest manufacturing byproduct. Some of the sawdust hill still remained in 2011.



Above: In the center of the photograph are several sections of the Somerset water pipeline that Haynes bought cheaply. He set up a portable sawmill behind the factory and sold sections on a retail basis for customers wanting the creosoted products for drains and culverts.

Right: Wood chips were blown into dump trucks.



Above: Plant manager Jean Canedy captured this view of the sawdust hill on the left and the bark mulch hill on right. Note how small the bulldozer looks in the right center of the sawdust pile.

Right: The mulch pile dwarfed the loader.





Ahead of His Time

Haynes' energy transcended the life of the valley. He was involved on numerous boards and committees. He provided more jobs than anyone until his friend Walter Schoenknecht's business overtook him in the late 1970's. Almost 100 people, including Jean Canedy, worked at the Vermont Barnboard Company.



Above, top: Haynes accepts an award.
Above, center: Plant manager Jean Canedy.
Right: Haynes and his staff.



Lunch break at Vermont Barnboard.

The demand for barnboard – similar to the demand for wooden bowls and plywood fruit boxes – eventually slowed. Haynes sold the factory to Ted and Mavis Boggio for \$413,000 in 1986, and he stayed on part-time to assist them with the production of barnboard. At that time, the factory employed less than 30 people. When demand died, the mill equipment was auctioned. In 1988 the barnboard franchise and trade name were sold to a Maine competitor.

Haynes' health faded and he passed away in December of 1988. Coincidentally, the factory went silent at almost the same time.

Prominent Wilmington resident Lincoln W. Haynes dies at 80

WILMINGTON — Lincoln Wallace Haynes, age 80, prominent Wilmington manufacturer and general contractor, died Friday morning at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

He was born Nov. 1, 1908, on the family homestead in Wilmington, the son of Wallace and Rosina (Richardson) Haynes.

He is survived by his wife, the former Catherine Ann Ramsey of Wilmington; his children, Thomas Haynes, of Chittenango, N.Y., and Mrs. Eleanor Brux of Tacoma, Wash.; and his grandchildren, Katherine and Grant Brux of Tacoma.

Also surviving are his sisters, Florence Haslund of Wilmington, Edith Burchards and Margaret Manley, both of Brattleboro, and Bertha Robb of West Brattleboro; several nieces, nephews and cousins. He was preceased by a brother Merrill Haynes and a sister Marion Allard.

Funeral services will be held Monday at 1 p.m. at the Wilmington Congregational Church with the Rev. Theodore Newcomb III, pastor, officiating. Interment will follow in Riverview Cemetery.



LINCOLN HAYNES

Friends may call at the Covey and Allen Funeral Home in Wilmington on Sunday from 1-4 p.m.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Lincoln W. Haynes Memorial Fund through the Covey and Allen Funeral Home, PO Box 215, Wilmington, 05363.



An Ending And A Beginning

1988-2012

Newfane man buys Vt. Barnboard

By KATHY McMASTERS

WILMINGTON — A Newfane businessman bought the 81,000 square foot Haynes Products Inc. Vermont Barnboard factory at auction in Wilmington Wednesday but he refused to discuss his plans.

"I'd rather not have this in the paper," Kevin Moore said immediately following the auctioneer's bidding.

Moore, a co-owner of W.W. Building Supply Co. in Newfane and Wilmington, bid \$500,000 on the property and afterward, left the area quickly.

He said he had personal reasons why he did not wish to see the announcement made in the paper but that he understood the news would be published.

The business was put up for sale in three stages by Theodore and Mavis Boggio who purchased the woodenware factory from Lincoln Haynes in 1986. Haynes stayed on to assist the Boggios in operating the business and another co owner, Jean Canedy, and about 25 employees also stayed on to work.

Moore purchased the post and beam frame 81,000 square foot factory building with a waste burning system and dry kilns and three years worth of sawdust piled outside.

The sale also included an historic, octagon shaped two-story family dwelling and a 4,500 square foot apartment building. All of it is located on 13.5 acres beside the Deerfield River on Mill Street Extension.

Ted Boggio said he and his wife decided to sell the company because of the "insufficient bottom line." It was not earning them enough money.

He also said his own health was failing as was Haynes' and that he had trouble finding people to work.

Boggio also said the employees have all relocated to other jobs.

The business had been sold in three stages starting earlier this year and the auction was the last in the

process, he said.

"Technically we stopped filling orders in February," Boggio said.

Earlier this fall, the franchise and tradename were sold to a friendly competitor, Boggio said, the B&H Chadbourne Co. of Bethel, Maine, and Wolcott, Vt., Boggio said.

"So the Vermont Barnboard products continue to be produced and sold," Boggio said.

The inventory was sold at public auction on Sept. 24.

Then the final auction for the property closed the chapter on Wednesday at noon.

As the auctioneer, Michael Fox, of Baltimore, Md., opened his bid at \$900,000, one of the co-owners, Jean Canedy, watched the bidding as did long-time employee Millie Holland and Henry Davis.

Canedy, chairman of Wilmington's Board of Selectmen, said he keeps busy working as the town building inspector among other things.

Holland said she has found work but also continues to work for Haynes.

The auction drew about a dozen interested bidders, which included several local developers and business owners, some of them expecting the house to be sold separately. The octagon shaped house was originally a train depot.

Boggio said some speculators talked about buying it to develop affordable housing, another as a sports arena and ice skating rink. There was even talk of a movie theater, he added.

Fox began by telling the bidders that the building alone was assessed at \$999,000.

However, he soon dropped the opening bid to \$200,000 and ran the bid up to \$425,000. After a short recess, he announced the owners would accept a \$500,000 minimum bid which was met by Moore.

Constant Change

The factory was sold at auction to local businessman Kevin Moore, former co-owner of W&W Building Supply. The local lumber and hardware business was booming in the late 1980's, and Moore picked up the 13.5-acre Mill Street site for \$500,000 in January, 1989. In subsequent years he sold off two parcels until 9.5 acres remained.

Moore focused on the first floor of the factory and created a storefront on the backside of the building called Mill Street Lumber. The site briefly saw activity. During the 1990's space was rented to several cottage industries including an electrician, a small engine shop, and a stone carver who made, among other things, headstones.

Soon, though, Moore ran into financial difficulties. The Vermont National Bank held Moore's mortgage and began foreclosure proceedings in 1996. The bank auctioned the building, which was devoid of a water supply for its sprinkler system because the water pipe located under the Deerfield River that fed the system had cracked.

Local entrepreneur Bob Grinold won the auction in the fall of 1996 at just \$13,000 for the 82,000-square-foot building and its immediate 9.5 acres. His concept was to renovate the building into a conference center, but conditions were not right at the time. He leased parts of the site to a garage door company and started Mill Street Storage for boat and car storage.

That same year, the Deerfield Valley Transit Association was formed as a private, non-profit corporation to provide public transit to the valley. Nicknamed "The MOOver", its buses were spotted to look like Holstein cows by artist Skip Morrow. By serving the region's



seasonal tourist demand as well as developing year-round local ridership, the DVTA rapidly expanded to become the state's third largest transit provider. Ridership ballooned to 293,000 rides per year on the 23-vehicle fleet.

The company had no real home. The DVTA leased garage space where it could find it, and rented a small office space in West Dover. In 1998, the DVTA received grants and an earmark from Senator Leahy to determine what site in the Deerfield Valley was best suited

for its home. Numerous needs and scoping studies were done, and all of them determined that 45 Mill Street was the best site for the DVTA.

A New Tenant

In 2000 Grinold rented the one-bay garage and the former log yard to the DVTA.

Before buying the recommended site, a series of studies were done: environmental, structural, commercial, and brownsfield studies, all looking for practical ways to save the aging structure. The DVTA researched how to fit its

bus maintenance and operations into spaces not meant to accommodate something as large as its 40-foot vehicles. The research proved conclusively that the factory could not be renovated to accommodate the DVTA's needs and requirements.

When Grinold put the site on the market, the DVTA secured a note from him and bought the property in July 2004 for \$285,000.



Above: The DVTA provided more than 293,000 rides in 2011.

OPPOSITE
The site in 2003.



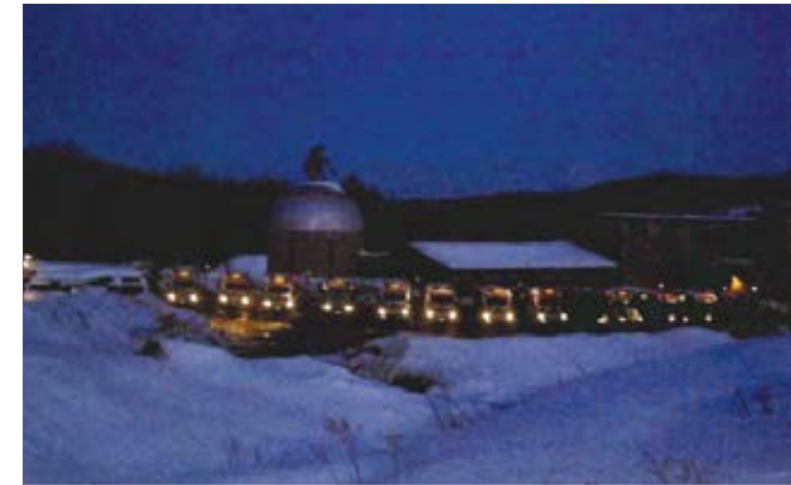
The Tradition Continues

The MOOver kept expanding. Service spread from two towns to six, and the original ragtag fleet was replaced with newer buses requiring modern technology. The company added new routes for the elderly or disabled, and ridership continued to increase with new service to Brattleboro, Readsboro, and East Dover.

The MOOver continued the site's innovative past. Mechanics Glen Beattie and Dave Meeks began producing biodiesel fuel, and the DVTA became one of the first and few public transit companies in the country to produce some of its own fuel. Proprietary bike, ski, and snowboard racks were designed and produced here.

From 2004 to 2010, the MOOver spent over \$47,000 to reinforce the structure, prevent its collapse, fix roof leaks, and clean out years of illegal waste that had been left on the site.

Below: Meeks and Beattie posed in front of the commercial biodiesel production machine (left), making batches of 85 gallons of fuel at a time. In the adjacent second saw room, Rick Kauffeld (shown, right) and Tom Baltrus built ski racks for the buses in the off-season.



The idea was to stabilize the structure and potentially find other uses for it. Concepts included a teen center, adult day care, congregate meal site, senior or low-income housing, and other human service functions.

The DVTA spent another \$88,000 to remove identified liquid and solid hazardous materials including asbestos, large quantities of stain and oils, and hazardous pipe insulation. Local environmental consultant Catamount Engineering and other firms spent several years removing these materials that were commonly used and accepted long before they were known hazards.

But the structure had gone too long without maintenance and could not feasibly be renovated to meet current safety code requirements. Many sections of the building had weakened and collapsed. The DVTA Board of Directors was left with no choice but to plan for a new building, and in 2009 demolition of the factory began.

The demolition process was designed from the outset to focus on recycling material and minimizing the amount of debris going to the landfill. Over 98% of the factory debris was reused or recycled.

Left: Buses warm up for a busy day's work at Mount Snow and throughout the Deerfield Valley. Right: In 2000 the company added service to the region's elderly or disabled riders.



Above: The former Mill Street Lumber storefront as it looked in 2003. The asbestos siding on the three-story section was removed in 2009. Lincoln Haynes' office was in the shingled section on the left.

OPPOSITE | Clockwise from top left: The open area was where the second lathe operated during the peak of the New England Box era (see page 55); what remained of Mill Street Lumber's main salesroom; the bottom photos depict the collapse of the wirebound department used during the New England Box era.





The three-story block began to visibly buckle in May 2011. It threatened the garage next to it and was condemned. An emergency demolition (below) took place in June 2011. The photo sequence shows the block's collapse as it is gutted from the opposite side by an excavator.



Above: Demolition resumed in July 2011 and site clean-up continued throughout that summer. First, the kilns were torn down (upper left), then the circa 1925 building (upper right), and finally the 1916 offices section (lower left). After the buildings hit the ground, they were plowed into a debris pile (lower right) to begin the material recovery and recycling process.



Above: Wooden remnants were fed into a huge tub grinder which reduced them to coarse mulch. The pile on the right was the building after its first pass through the grinder. On the left were the remains of the Somerset pipeline pieces that Haynes did not sell.

Below: The tub grinder in action (left). Steam rose from the mulch when it was disturbed. After the initial pass through the grinder, the building mulch was sent through a second time to generate a high-quality mulch. A loader (right) placed the refined mulch into a truck which transported it to locations throughout the valley.



Above: Leon Boyd, whose uncle, Herb, worked for Vermont Barnboard and is shown on pages 83 and 87, cut up steel beams from the kilns to be recycled.

Left: The concrete slab floors, footings, and frost walls were eagerly sought for clean fill immediately after Tropical Storm Irene in 2011.



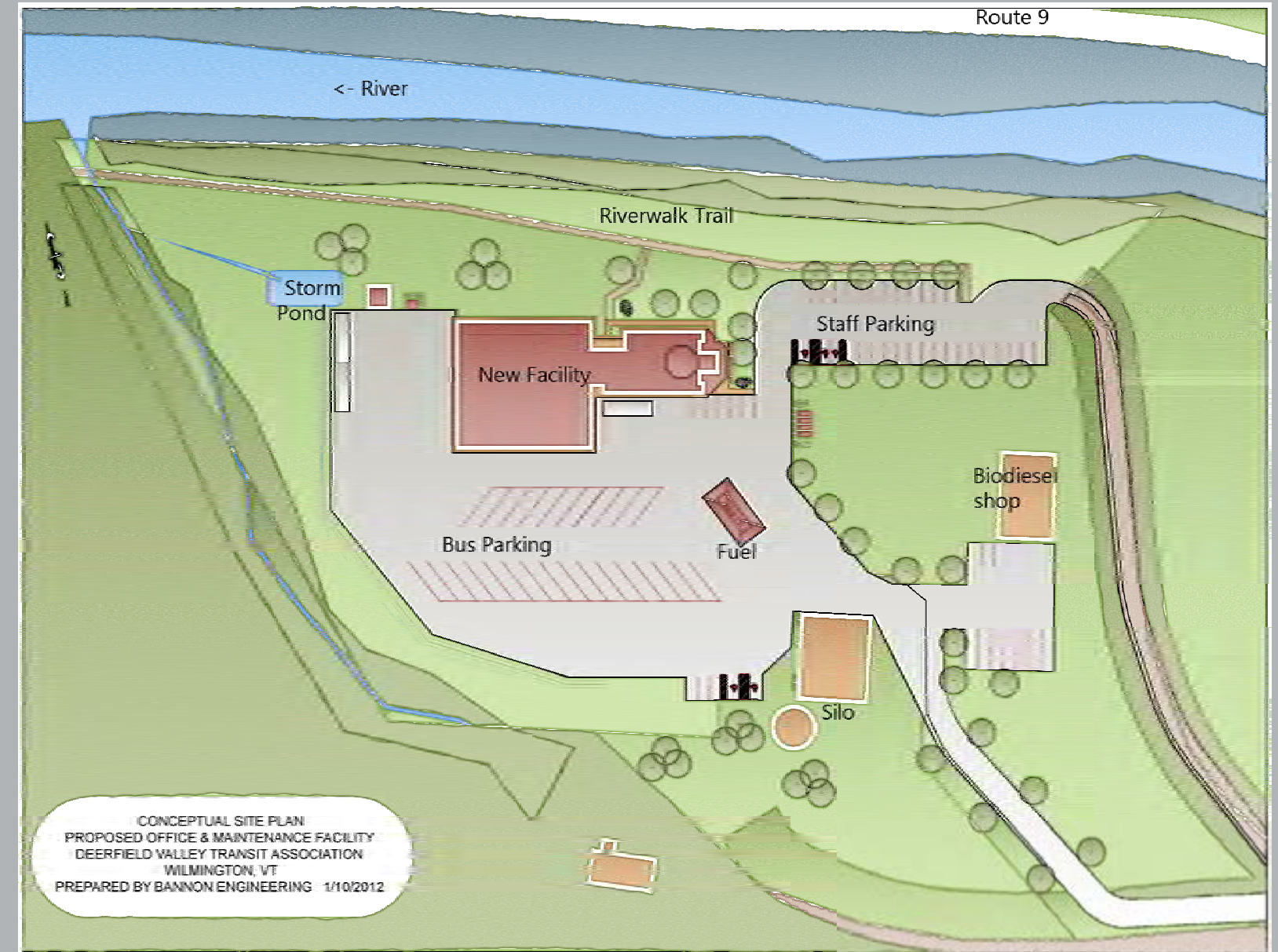
Plans for the Future

The DVTA designed a 16,000 square-foot structure which was a fraction of the 82,000 square-foot buildings Haynes operated. But it would finally provide one home for the DVTA including offices, multiple vehicle maintenance bays, fueling and washing systems, and drivers' facilities.

The new design connected the site to its railroad past. The old rail bed of the Hoot, Toot & Whistle Railroad will be converted to a recreational trail from Lake Whitingham to the factory. A Riverwalk Trail leading across the site's riverfront to the village center is also planned. Both trails would be accessed by trailhead parking and supported with signs and historic displays of 45 Mill Street's colorful past.

But several parts of the Haynes' structure remained. The DVTA repaired and renovated the second saw room into a workshop that housed the biodiesel production. The iconic silo and attached log room were saved for a future purpose yet to be determined.

Partial funding for this new structure and demolition was provided by Vermont's Senator Leahy, and the DVTA continues to seek funding for the balance of the project.





The site as it appeared in 2012, ready for the next 100 years.

CLOSING COMMENTS

When looking at what remains of 45 Mill Street we might remember only the ruins of a building: rotted wood, twisted steel, cracked concrete, and nails, screws, nuts, bolts, and rivets, all coated with the rust of time. However, if we look beneath and beyond our memories of the physical structure of that complex of buildings, we see much of our nation, our state, our town, and ourselves.

In the late 19th century, when our nation was experiencing industrial growth and the demographic shifts from rural to urban that accompanied it, we see the Ludington Woodenware Company contributing to the trend by transforming Wilmington into a southern Vermont center of manufacturing and commerce. A half-century later, we see a small Vermont factory known locally as “The Plywood” playing an important role in supporting America’s wartime troops in every part of the world.

In each enterprise that occurred at 45 Mill Street we see the ingenuity, resourcefulness, innovation, and strong work ethic that have always been the hallmarks of Vermont’s entrepreneurs and dedicated workforce. Whether it was the manufacture of clothespins in the 19th century or housing a regional public transportation system today, 45 Mill Street and the enterprises it has housed epitomizes the best of Vermont values.

Even as parts of 45 Mill Street decay and fade away, we still see the spirit of Wilmington and the Deerfield Valley, and the dreamers and doers who have lived here. Look at the photos of the buildings at and near 45 Mill Street. Some are gone but others remain and serve us still. Look at the names of those who worked at 45 Mill Street. Those names live on today in our friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

As buildings crumble and memories fade we do our best to preserve our heritage as part of our individual and collective past. With the photos, personal memories, and historical accounts in this book, the significance of 45 Mill Street and those who worked there will remain for generations to come.

David Larsen

History Teacher, Wilmington Middle/High School

Former State Representative and Deputy Secretary of Education, State of Vermont

TIMELINE of 45 MILL STREET

1889

The Ludington Woodenware Company is established in Michigan.



1891

The Hoosac Tunnel & Wilmington Railroad (Hoot, Toot & Whistle Railroad) comes to Wilmington.

1893

Ludington products are exhibited at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

1913

Ludington leases the Wilmington site from the Deerfield Lumber Corporation.

1914

Ludington buys the land for \$1500 and begins building the first factory on the site to make clothespins, wooden dishes and bowls, and broom handles among other products.

1915

The Ludington factory burns down, and 170 employees are out of work.

1916

Ludington rebuilds on a smaller scale.



1918

Ludington begins building an addition for offices and storage; construction continues until its completion in 1924.

1923

The Harriman Reservoir is built, and the Mountain Mills factories are shut down.



1927

The railroad trestle at Mountain Mills is washed out by The Flood of 1927.

The Deerfield Plywood Company purchases the Ludington mill.

1929

Rail service returns to Wilmington.

1938

The Hurricane of 1938 destroys the railroad bridge and ends train service to Wilmington.

1939

A one-acre parcel of the site is sold to the Deerfield Valley Grain Company, and eventually becomes home to Guy Hawkins, plant superintendent during the 1940's.



1941

The New England Box Company buys the property and produces wooden boxes for fruit, meat, ammunition and other war goods.

1950s-1960s

Cardboard replaces wooden boxes, and the factory slowly winds down.

1963

Thomas Bumferd and Ed Barber purchase the site unseen at auction for \$10,000. They sell most of the mill and production equipment.



1965

Orla Larsen leases some of the facility to produce Mark III Explorer Trail-Breaker motorcycles. This unique two-wheel drive bike is featured on the popular TV show *Wild Kingdom*. Larsen eventually

buys the company and names it Rokon after his lodge called On The Rocks.

1968

Larsen moves Rokon to Keene, NH.



1971

Lincoln Haynes of Haynes Brothers buys the factory for \$75,000. His new company is called Vermont Barnboard.

Haynes adds on to the complex with saw rooms and kilns to produce his unique barnboard with a stained "not-so-secret" formula finish to make it look weathered. He builds a huge two-story steam boiler to burn sawdust into power and heat for the factory. Several other additions are built including a silo. The building balloons to 82,000 square feet. The improvements continue into the 1980s.



1986

Haynes sells the company and factory to Ted and Mavis Boggio of Haynes Products Company for \$413,000.

1988

The Vermont Barnboard franchise and trade name are sold to a competitor in Maine as demand for barnboard slows. Boggio sells the inventory and land in two stages, both of which are auctions. The property is purchased by Kevin Moore for \$500,000.



1989

Moore builds a storefront for a new lumber store, Mill Street Lumber, and renovates the first floor of the 1916 block. Several cottage industries share the site.

1995

The Vermont National Bank forecloses on the property and puts the 9.5-acre parcel containing the factory up for auction, as well as the one-acre home adjacent to it.

1996

Local businessman Bob Grinold purchases the factory for \$13,000 and the home for \$27,000 at auction.

Grinold leases portions of the factory to various businesses.



2000

The Deerfield Valley Transit Association leases the garage portion and parking area from Grinold for its public transit business.

2004

The DVTA buys the property from Grinold for \$285,000.

Removal of hazardous materials and decades of waste begins and continues into 2009.

Several studies are commissioned to determine additional viable uses for the building.

2006

The building's decay becomes so severe that the DVTA determines that it needs to be torn down.

The DVTA begins planning for a new facility on the property.

2010

The DVTA is awarded an earmark to tear the facility down.

The DVTA finalizes plans for a new 16,000 square foot facility.



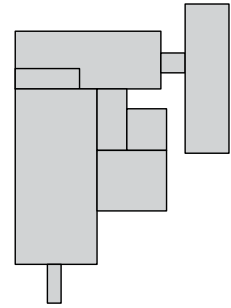
2011

Most of the structure is torn down and the site is returned to its 1914 state.

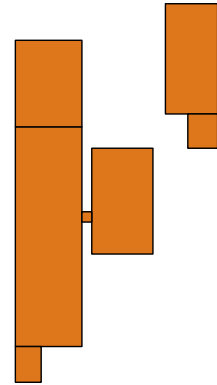


FOOTPRINT THROUGH THE YEARS

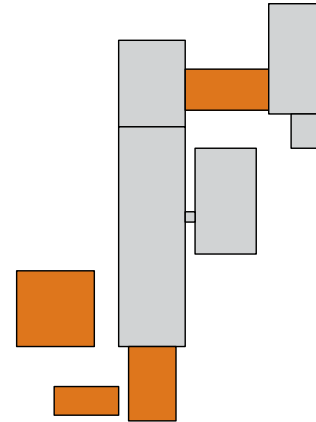
Ludington Woodenware : 1915



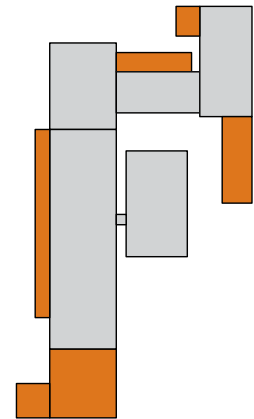
Ludington Woodenware : 1916–1927



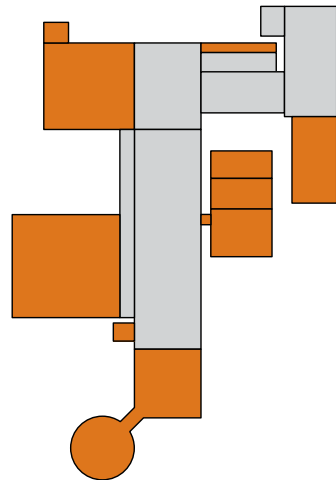
Deerfield Valley Plywood : 1927–1941



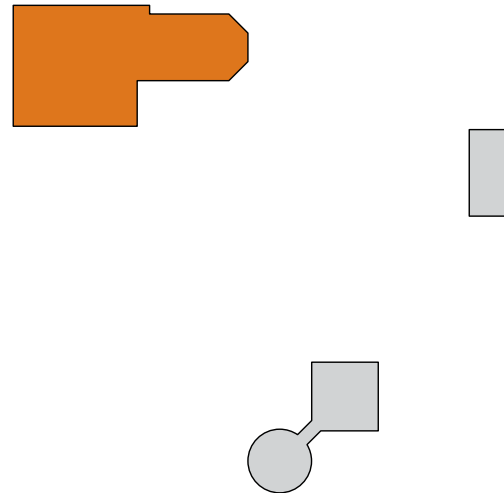
New England Box : 1941–1963



Vermont Barnboard : 1971–1988



Deerfield Valley Transit Association : 2012



OWNER HISTORY of 45 MILL STREET

PURCHASE DATE	OWNER	PURCHASE PRICE
1913	Deerfield Lumber Corporation	Unknown
June 14, 1914	Ludington Woodenware Company	\$1,500
July 8, 1927	Deerfield Valley Plywood Company	Unknown
July 31, 1941	New England Box Company	Unknown
December 2, 1963	Edward Barber and Thomas Bumferd	\$10,000
January 25, 1971	Haynes Brothers (Lincoln Haynes)	\$75,000
December 31, 1986	Haynes Products (Ted and Mavis Boggio)	\$413,000
January 6, 1989	Kevin Moore dba Mill Street Lumber	\$500,000
March 7, 1996	Vermont National Bank	Foreclosed
September 19, 1996	Rivermill Inc. (Robert Grinold)	\$13,000
July 14, 2004	Deerfield Valley Transit Association	\$285,000



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We've walked through the factory many times, but when we toured it with Jim Raymo and George Davis everything changed. With their help we were able to visualize the many manufacturing processes diagrammed in this book.

Brian Donelson, author of *The Coming of the Train Volumes I and II*, provided invaluable help with files, drawings and research. He was vital in getting this book published.

This book is made possible by the efforts of many people. We borrowed research from writers and historians who gladly shared all they knew, and several DVTA staff contributed in many ways. Of great value were conversations with those who worked there or whose relatives worked there. Because of all of them this book is made possible.

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