Mills

The Gristmill was located on Main St., just north of the intersection with Elm Street.

In 1881 J. M. Fisher said of Cabot village: "There are people living in the village that well recollect when the Common was a frog-pond and filled with fir and alder bushes and was so muddy through the street, ox-teams were stuck in the mud before where [the village store] now stands." (Hemenway)

Hardly an auspicious site for development, nevertheless, here was good water power, and so here was the place that Thomas Lyford built the first gristmill and sawmill in town about 1790. Around them the village grew. The gristmill stood in what today is a vacant lot at the corner of Elm and Main streets and remained there until the 1940's when it was torn down.

"The grain was bagged and stored and you took it as you needed it down to the grist mill at the village and had it ground and then you took it back home, to feed to the cattle and the horses. As a matter of fact we used to ride to school in the morning with a load of grist and then it would be ready to be taken home when we went home from school at night. There were several different people that ran the grist mill. I remember Ernest Bliss being one. At one time Lawrence Farrington ran the place, and his son Raymond. I think they were still using millstones. I don't think the mill ever functioned without them, but I don't know that. Of course the grist mill was called that after it had ceased to be doing any grinding, it was a place where grain was brought in and sold. I never went in to watch grain being ground, no. We weren't very old and I guess just kids weren't allowed in places like that."
— Jennie Donaldson

"I remember going down probably about the last time— took a bunch of buckwheat down to be ground — seeing the old big mill wheel turning. Yeah, I can just barely remember it. Making a rumble, rumble, rumble when they turned."
— Roger Walker

"My father, John Barnett, had the grist mill quite a few years. There were no stones in the mill at that time. It was a funny looking grinder. I don't know if the grinders were steel rollers, I think so, I'm pretty sure they were. It was quite long, then it had a big hopper up in the top of it. Then, of course, the grain would come in to the depot at Walden. It come in as whole corn, oats. I don't know if wheat did — must have. All loose. I think there was twenty tons to a car. I think it come from Wisconsin or somewhere. It come to Walden in railroad cars, then they'd go with their teams and bag it. They had to bag it with a shovel, then bring it down to the grist mill and pile it along the porch and then wheel in a bag at a time. We ground the corn separate. We ground oats separate. Called it cornmeal and we called it ground oats. Then we had them come together and then we called it Provender.

"Yeah, the water wheel was a big one. [It was] at the bottom. Then the shaft come up through the floor. Of course they had a big flume, they call it a flume. The water come down . . .

The gristmill appears to the left of Betty (Pike) Bolton in this 1943 photo.

Part of the Cabot Carriage Company, shown on the 1870 village map as the Carriage Factory, just below Elm Street.

and then it went in a box that was down below that floor, see. Then up to the main floor, and from there up to the next one was this great long shaft and played off that was this big wheel that the belt went around. Then way upstairs there, really be one, two, three floors, there was a shaft [that] had a wooden handle on it. Then you could open that so that the water would turn the wheel. Then when that shaft turned, that great big wheel, seemed as though it was going pretty fast. That run all the mill, run all of the mill! I remember, would it be '27 flood I think we ground grain there. I think it was three days and two nights, day and night, because in the flood we had a lot of water. There was a big set of scales up where the blacktop is. That was scales you could drive on with horses. They begun to drive on them with trucks when trucks begun to come around." — Nip Barnett

There were other dams both upstream and downstream from the grist mill dam. There was a dam approximately in back of the current post office and it supplied power to a building there called Veterans' Hall, or as Fred Blodgett called it, 'John Brown's shop.' This was the first dam built for a sawmill by Thomas Lyford:

"A small dam here furnished power for running some wood working machines. John Brown did a general wood repairing business, particularly of wagons, sleds and sleighs. On the second floor was a hall and ante rooms. Here the Grand Army of the Republic and Sons of Veterans and Women's Relief Corps had their meetings. Often very good amateur plays were presented as there was quite a commodious stage at the north end of the hall." (Blodgett)

A short way down-stream from the grist mill dam was another dam, in the hollow off Elm Street where Ed Hinkley lives now. Several shops have been located there. In the early nineteenth century there was a wool-carding and cloth-dressing mill and below that a starch factory, and later the Cabot Carriage Company which made buggy wagons and sleighs. In 1954 Fred Blodgett wrote:

"At its height, [about 1880], I would say there were not more than ten or a dozen men employed by the Carriage Company . . . The business soon became unprofitable and, as I recall it, passed into the hands of Mr. John A. Farrington, a long-time Cabot merchant and business man. One of the treats of my early boyhood was to be able to get into what seemed then that great maze of buildings and wander about the workshops and especially into the painting department where the skilled hands of the painters put the lines of decoration and bouquets of flowers onto the sides and dash of those wonderful sleighs and then go on into the storage rooms where such surplus as might be on hand, was stored. Since then I have been privileged to wander through the maze of exhibits in three World Fairs, but none of them could ever give me the thrill I experienced at the Cabot Carriage Shop. . . Later the buildings were gradually demolished and one of them taken over by Bert Ainsworth and Frank Paquin as a wood working shop. . . I think Ernest Peck was the last owner and did woodworking there." (Blodgett)

"I've heard Raymond Farrington say that there was a rope drive, a Waterloo with a rope drive and a rope went under the road, to the mill. I don't know, but there was a dam evidently and water power, and rather than have a gear drive, they had a rope. It went around pulleys and went a long ways through the mill. I'm sure it would have been a turbine, but I don't know, I didn't see it. It would have been Raymond Farrington's father, Lawrence." — Hap Hayward

Across the river from the carriage shop, on the east side of the river, was another mill: *"Well, Raymond Farrington's mill at Cabot. That was about where Ann Greaves' trailer is. That was 1927. I remember the steam mill when it was there. Just sawed lumber."* — Nip Barnett

Cabot Carriage Company employees. A list on the back reads as follows:

Mr. Britt
Mr. Marshal
Mr. Buchanan
Charlie Willy
Charlie Green
Harry Clark
Kelsey Freeman
Fred Whittier
Mr. Goodwin
Mr. Clark
Hugh Everett
Mr. Mallard and Son

Below: Burt and Kate (Russell) Lyford at their home on West Hill Pond.

West Hill Pond has long been a source of water power for mills at West Hill and between West Hill and Lower Cabot and then contributing water to the Winooski River which then powered more mills at Lower Cabot. Sometimes the area—about 60 acres—is a pond and sometimes it isn't.

"Previous to 1820 the bed of this pond was the 'great meadow' of good service to the early settlers in furnishing grass and hay. . . Avery Atkins in 1820 built a dam across the lower end of the meadow and flooded it. From that time it has been the 'West Hill Pond'." (Hemenway)

"I had heard the supposition that the Indians used to raise corn and things there, not a permanent settlement, but a temporary one. There are stories that Enoch Hoyt used to take a hand sled — now that would be a wide one, and the runners would be like skis, they wouldn't have any metal on them — and harvest their hay there and stack it. And then on snow haul it home to where his farm was [Charlie Bothfeld's]."

— Jennie Donaldson

Albert Noyes' mill at West Hill Pond, ca 1900.

Geraldine Bickford recalled: *"Yes, it was a field and Burt Lyford and his father used to hay it. And the first flush toilet in town was underneath the bridge down here at West Hill and Aunt Miranda had it. She would just walk right down underneath the bridge and that was it."*

"My father, Albert Noyes, ran a saw mill on the four corners where Ann Harding lives now. He ran a little saw mill. He made chair stock and shipped it to Gardner, Mass., I suppose, by the railroad in Marshfield. He used horses then, no trucks. He said he built the West Hill Pond from the bed of the brook up. I've heard that so many times. His family were farmers on the Bothfeld farm. His father died and his mother sold the farm, and my father was angry about that. He should have inherited it. I suppose she set him up in the West Hill mill. He hired quite a few men. My mother either boarded them or she furnished their lunches for noon. She used to drive a horse and buggy up to the mill at noon and carry their dinners in dinner pails. He employed half a dozen more or less."

— Geraldine Bickford

"Of course in the summer, if we had dry summers they'd open that dam right up and let the water go and then it would be just a little brook running down through there. . . mud flats. Somewhere I read about Indians camping where the Nett house is [A. Landa, 1999]. There was a raise in the ground there."

— Roberta Bothfeld

"I think Fred Lyford was probably one of them that helped build that pond. Because Burt [Lyford] remembered it — probably been built in the last hundred years, early nineteen hundred about. Because Burt could remember when that was good trout fishing in that pond and then perch and pickerel got into it. When they first dammed it up there was trout in that brook and they did well." — Walter Bothfeld

About half way from West Hill Pond to Lower Cabot was another sawmill. It was operated by Charley Utley. The foundations are directly across the road from the house built by Utley (Sucher, 1999).

Above: Wagon manufactured by C.H. Utley, Cabot, Vermont.
Right: The crew at the Utley Mill below West Hill Pond.
Below: Haines Woolen Mill in Lower Cabot. Burned 1925.

"I can remember old Fred Lyford, he'd tell how in the winter, you know, he worked for Utley and hauled logs. They'd cut all the way back up in Hugo Meyer's land. They'd come across East Long Pond, bring them into this mill down here. 'Make two trips a day,' he said, 'but it was pretty dark some nights when you got in.' They wouldn't haul more than probably seven, eight hundred feet in to a load. But they'd hire half a dozen farmers to haul them in as they got them cut."
— Walter Bothfeld

"When they got done haying in the fall I went over to that piece of land that Charlie Utley owned. He had a saw mill right up above Wilfred Lamore's house, you know. Water powered some times and steam powered some times. Made his own slabs to burn there. Then his son Merle Utley took that over."
— Francis Foster

"And then you go up to Utley's mill where I think this picture is, that was steam. There's a dam there, but it never run the mill, there was not enough power, 'cause they had a small water supply, small dam. And they owned half of West Hill Pond water rights.

Horace Haines (1803-1871) built the woolen mill.

They'd go up there and open them. But they run mostly with steam. I think they might have run the mill a little bit, you know, like planing or something with water power. That would be a turbine."

— Harry Thompson

At Lower Cabot the confluence of Jug Brook with the Winooski river provided enough water to power the Haines Woolen mill and several other mills. The Haines mill, which was later turned into a wood-working shop, was built about 1825, and burned in June, 1925.

Harry Clark dismantled the Baptist Church/Paquin paint shop building on the Southwest Hill road and used the lumber to build a new, but less imposing, shop and sawmill on the site of the burned factory (E. Larson Mill, 1999).

"There was a butter box shop here in Lower Cabot behind my house. It made wooden boxes and lined them with butter paper which was very transparent. We used it for tracing paper, we kids. They were square ones, oblong. They made power from the water wheel that ran the mill. They furnished Clark's which is the next house down. My father worked at that mill in his old age after we moved here, and this house hadn't been wired for electricity before that so we got the power from the mill. It was DC power. Got our house wired. And that was the only electricity and at night the lights would start fading, and they'd go off. He'd turn them off every night so it wasn't running all night."

— Geraldine Bickford

"Well, I can remember when old Chub Clark had the mill. His father had it before that. I can just barely remember his father, Harry. Chub, you know, he never tried to outdo anybody, but he would saw what logs he wanted to everyday. And nothing ever bothered Chub very much. He got what he got done when he got done and that was it, and he didn't have to have all this fancy equipment and stuff to run a sawmill. He made do with what his father had before him and kept it tinkered up. I remember he bought a diesel engine to run his sawmill because the water power some summers dried up and he'd empty West Hill Pond. You see he had the rights to West Hill Pond up there and he could go up and drain it to run his sawmill with. And then it got so that if he sawed enough so as there wasn't enough water in West Hill Pond — he'd used it all up — and then the river wouldn't run enough to run the sawmill, so he bought this diesel engine. But Chub was a little bit on the tight side in the world and he never run that diesel

True A. Town's mill and foreman's house (Cabinet Shop & T. A. Town on the 1870 Lower Village map). This mill was later owned by Fowler Ford and his son, Walter. Everything burned in 1936 when owned by Budd Bruce.

Clifton "Chub" Clark at the Lower Cabot Store.

unless he absolutely had to. As long as there was enough water to turn that wheel to make that saw go around he didn't run the diesel engine. Then he sold the mill to Dan Davis and Dan run it for a year or so, and then they had bigger ideas and they went up above and built a big new sawmill. They was going to saw a lot of lumber, but then the lumber business went to pieces and they couldn't sell what they sawed and then he just went out of it and sold it to another guy and he didn't last very long either. Now there isn't any mill up there."

— Carlton Domey

Hap Hayward was owner and operator of the sawmill in Marshfield for many years. He remembered Clark's mill in Lower Cabot: *"Chub Clark and his father had the mill in Lower Cabot there. I don't know if Chub's father, Harry, had a mill before he had that one or not. But I don't think Harry run that as a sawmill too many years. I can just barely remember seeing his father. He had a full beard as I remember. At that time there weren't many beards like there is now. I knew Chub's mill quite well, but I could never run it! He had a lot of levers he had to pull and twist and turn, but they'd all work! The water turns the turbine, and the power goes up your shaft, and on the other end of your shaft is a gear, and that gear usually has wooden teeth; the other gear is all iron that it runs against. So just one gear wears. One is going up vertically, and one is horizontal. The one gear has wooden teeth so that it will self-align itself some and it absorbs all the wear so you never wear your gears out except the wooden teeth and you just put new teeth in. They're usually pretty much the same size, but Chub had one little bit of a gear and a big gear, to get more power I think. He had a little gear driving a big gear. Turbines don't turn fast. I'm guessing small turbines like in a mill like this — around twelve, fifteen feet of head — wouldn't turn much over a hundred, somewhere between hundred, hundred fifty rpm. You have to gear it up in order to get your speed. Chub had his belted onto a long horizontal shaft, it went crossways of his mill. He could belt down from that to several different machines, you see. And then you want to go start a machine, you'd just walk along to the machine you want and you'd just throw a belt onto this countershaft overheard. The worst part is just keeping everything lined up and maintained. 'Cause all these belts and stuff have to line up or they don't work. And you'd have to set your machine up somewhere in line with this shaft, to make it work right. As I remember he had a great big wheel inside the mill. You turned the wheel and it opened the gate that let water in. This big, iron wheel was in a big cement wall. He'd spin that wheel and it opened the gate and the mill works would start picking up speed, and get going faster and faster and there was DC lights and they'd come on just a little spark and they'd get brighter and brighter. And the building would just about take off when the belts would start running. It made a terrific rumble as it got going. It's the wooden gears, that was what made most of the noise. Especially if you was working them, they get to grinding a lot, it's quite a racket. I guess he was using diesel out to the sawmill. But he also had a different turbine for out there in the saw mill. It's inside a steel presshead, they'd call them. Years before that his father had a great monstrous one-cylinder engine down in the cellar, underneath there somewhere. They called it a helper engine. Burned kerosene. And it was a monster. I don't remember ever seeing it, but I've heard people tell about it. Then Chub bought that diesel engine, and he run them both together on the board saw. And if it was water, he'd put that on, and I guess sometimes they'd run them both at the same time. The sawdust just went down underneath. See, the road was right there. He didn't have any place to put a sawdust bin really. He didn't have much place for anything, really. This is always the thing with all sawmills, you've got stuff piled here and there. You never throw a board away even if it's no good, you keep it for some reason, I don't know what! One thing about Chub, he never hurried, took him forever to put a shoe on. He was slow-speaking too, very slow. Had everything all figured out what he was going to do before he did it. A nice fellow."*

— Hap Hayward

Barre Daily Times

Lower Cabot Butter Box Shop Burns

H. L. CLARK'S LOSS $10,000

Several Thrown Out of Work

Wind Saves More of the Village

Owner Had Just Made Extensive Additions to Plant

Cabot, Jan. 27, 1925. The butter box factory owned and operated by H. L. Clark at Lower Cabot was entirely destroyed by fire between 8 and 9 o'clock this morning entailing a loss of about $10,000 which is partly covered by insurance carried in the Lumber Mutual Fire Insurance Co. of Boston. Apparently fire started in the engine room gaining rapid headway after being discovered. Men were summoned from both villages and from nearby farms but were unable to save the building. Fortunately the wind was blowing from the north, otherwise surrounding buildings surely would have burned. Much sympathy is felt for Mr. Clark in his misfortune as the box factory was a growing industry and gave employment to a number of people in Lower Cabot. He had just completed extensive modern improvements in and around the factory involving quite an outlay of money. There was about $4000 worth of machinery in the factory.

Chub had a huge furnace towards the back of the shop. It took four foot wood. Despite the shavings and litter and wood stuff all around, the building never caught fire.

In the early days the need for power was so compelling even small streams were utilized, and the invention of turbines

made accessible sites that could not accommodate large water wheels. Still later came the development of mills run by steam engines. All the water needed to run a steam mill could be found in a fairly small brook. These mills could be moved relatively easily and were set up somewhere near the timber supply, as are the portable band saws of today.

Dam and penstock at the Haines mill, Lower Cabot.

"Well there was steam mills evidently years ago stuck everywhere 'round through the woods you'd see them. Up near Pete Persons' farm, down by the pond, down there one time there'd been a mill. And there was a dam of some sort, but I'm sure it must have been a steam mill." — Hap Hayward

The mill pond Hap refers to still exists on the Persons farm (Wil & Alison Ameden, 1999). It supplied water for a starch mill. A tall stone foundation for the water wheel also still exists. There were mills for every purpose scattered about all over the town. They supplied power not only for sawing lumber or grinding grain but for weaving cloth and fulling cloth and carding wool and making starch and tanning hides and making shingles, chair stock, butter boxes, cheese boxes, clothes bars, coffins, caskets, boot-crimps, tennis rackets, bobbins, and even miniature baseball bats.

Sometimes the remains of a stone dam may be found on some remote brook, but most of these industries have disappeared without a trace, for instance a mill in Lower Cabot where Donovan Houston worked:

"There was a sawmill right across from Clark's. In the field right across the road. I went to work for him, drove his team when I was sixteen. I drew logs from East Long Pond down across, well, we were going to go across the upper end of East Long but the ice was so thin. . . After we crossed it without any logs, I broke roads for George Hammer who had the mill and I worked there, stacking lumber. Bernard Urban drew logs at the time I was working down there and Will Clark was the one that was on top of the stack. That mill was a steam mill. We just sawed lumber, inch boards, two by fours, whatever. It run from seven in the morning till five at night. He burned the slabs that came off, they cut them up into four feet long. 'Course the other mill was running too—Clark's mill—and that was water power. I don't think they was in competition with each other. They didn't saw only about five thousand feet per day—this Hammer's mill."

— Donovan Houston

Leonard Spencer and his family have lived in Lower Cabot since 1975 in the house that True A. Town built. Leonard spoke of the mills that once were such busy industries along the Winooski River there:

"The mill dam that went with my house was probably built by John Damon in the middle or early nineteenth century, 1830 or so, and he had a sawmill on the site and also a starch factory. . . In 1866 he sold that mill site to True Asa Town who had grown up in South Woodbury and came from a family of mill owners there. Town's uncle, William Abner Town, was an inventor and he invented a machine that allowed you to make unusual wooden shapes."

Above: Dam and penstock at Ford's Mill, built by John Damon and later owned by True Town.

Below: House across the bridge from Town's mill, occupied by Lee and Clara Shortt, and later, Sumner Perkins.

"True, once he got through with the Civil War, moved over to Lower Cabot, rebuilt the sawmill extensively and put in a circular saw, replacing the up and down saw that had been there. The mill was referred to in the 'Cabot Advertiser' as a 'circular board saw-mill'. He also expanded the starch factory into a wood shaping shop or parts shop, where various things were made, such as butter molds, boxes for shipping butter and creamery products, carriage parts, coffins. And for a while he had a shingle mill set up there to make wood shingles. There were two parts to this operation: the millpond

which was more a long, narrow channel type thing with a maximum depth of fourteen feet and was used to store the softwood logs which would float; and the hardwood logs which did not float were pulled by sled or wagon up along the ridge that still exists. . . and turned off onto the hillside so they could be gravity maneuvered down the hillside onto the saw carriage when wanted. Also across the little bridge was a separate little tenants' house. In the 1950's it was burned down by the volunteer fire department for practice because it was in ruins at that point.

"When Town became the operator of the composite mill there he sometimes had eight or ten employees. He was subject to the whims of nature in terms of having power. The story goes that when the water was up he sawed night and day and when it was down, of course, he worked on other things. He built the schoolhouse, and his own house, and he built Herman Osgood's, his foreman's, house in 1878. This house is next door and to the north of mine.

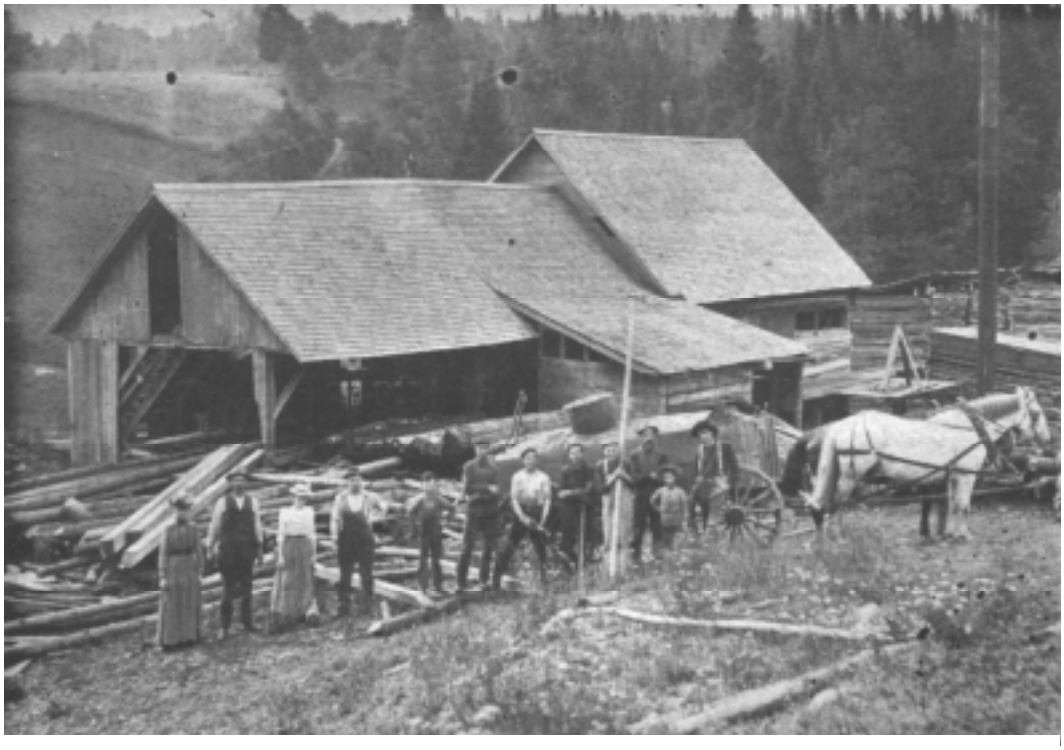
"In 1885 Town went bankrupt and lost the whole thing—was foreclosed. The executors sold everything including the water right to West Hill Pond. The person who bought the mill and house was Roxana Melissa Ford, who was a Sprague from Cabot. Her husband, Fowler Ford, came from England to take part in the gold rush in California and somehow ended up in South Peacham and ran a mill there for a time. Then in 1901 or '02 the operation was turned over to his son, Walter, and Fowler and his second wife moved to the [house where Linda Fowler lives, 1999]. Walter Ford ran the mill complex for some time but in 1920 moved to California. The new owner was Budd Bruce who had been living on South West Hill at the Persons/Ameden farm and had built the house there. He came down and ran the mill for several years, but times were changing. . . and the mill became obsolete. Emerson Lang, playwright and Lower Cabot teacher, remembered Budd Bruce taking him through the mill which at that time was not operating but was still operable, and going from machine to machine moving over the belts on the big pulleys that ran off the jack shafts that ran up and down the mill to power everything. Power came off the turret wheel which was fed from the penstock under the road that took the water from the dam. As Budd went down the mill turning on machine after machine after machine, and as he got them all operating the whole mill just vibrated . . . jumping up and down gently. Emerson was impressed. The last time the sawmill was used was in the winter of 1929-'30 and John Lamberton and his father ran it. Subsequently they built a mill in the field across from the house they lived in at that time—which is now Cabot Greenhouse."

— Leonard Spencer

Ford's mill as seen from the tenant's house across the brook.

"I didn't go to it, but my father drawed logs into Walter Ford's mill down where Sumner Perkins was. You go up on the ledges and rolled the logs down in there. You used to drive the horses right up there on that ridge and dump the logs down over the bank and then they would roll in and wait to be sawed there."

— Francis Foster



This mill at Petersville burned down in 1908 or 1909. Fred Lamberton rebuilt after the fire, and remained on the site until 1916. The area was later flooded by the Green Mountain Power reservoir (See article on Petersville). From left are Marian & Fred Lamberton, Maud & Edgar Kidder, Raymond Lamberton, and the boy with the pole is Fred Lakin.

"My father, Raymond, and grandfather, Fred, had lumber operations around town, mostly in Cabot really. The first sawmill that I know of was over where the Molly's Falls reservoir is now. It was on the brook almost where you turn on the old road there, where you turn and go up the hill to Hookerville and right down there when the water's low you can see the concrete foundation. That was the first sawmill that I know of. And then he had a sawmill up on the farm where Persons is now, where I was born. It was down, as you go up the hill it was on that brook that you cross only way down to the left near the woods. Then they moved on the other side of Cabot, what we call the Jacobs place, in fact Coit's Pond was on the property that they owned. We didn't know 'Coit's' Pond. I didn't even know 'Coit's' Pond till I saw it on a map years later. We called it 'Mud' Pond. But we had a sawmill over there. There's a small building there, on the right just before you get to the pond, a red camp. That was what was left of the shop. It was a fairly large shop. We had a bandsaw and sawed chair stock. See, their big business was chair stock — good, solid maple chair stock, rockers and arms and all that. My father marked them on the boards and my grandfather ran the bandsaw and sawed them out. They had a sawmill too and they sawed everything. The sawmill was further down that brook — the brook that crosses the road right there. It was a beaver pond there last time I was over there. They sawed everything for lumber but they saved out the good maple and made this chair stock. That was kind of a big business." — Phillip "Bob" Lamberton

Hall Mill at Hookerville, operated last by the Perkins family.

The steam which provided the power for a steam engine was made in a boiler which was kept at very high pressure. Not surprisingly the boiler sometimes exploded. Jane Brown recalled a story she heard about her grandfather, Aaron Bolton, Sr.:

"There used to be a sawmill on the brook running into Molly's Pond [near the present Brookside Statuary]. When my grandfather was a young man the mill had been shut down for a safety inspection. When he heard they were hiring help again he hitched a mare to the buggy wagon and set off for the mill. The mare was balky and stopped several times along the way and he knew if he was late all the jobs would be taken. Finally he reached the top of the hill overlooking the mill just in time to hear the whistle blow for work to begin. Then there was a tremendous explosion and he saw the mill blow up, scattering debris and men everywhere. One man was flung high over a limb of a tree. My grandfather hurried down to help where he could and after all the injured had been cared for some of the men found a stick and poked the hanging man out of the tree. He was miraculously alive and not seriously injured. Had it not been for the old balky mare, my grandfather said, he would doubtless have been caught in the explosion. This would have taken place sometime before 1890." — Jane Brown

Hookerville, also called South Cabot, is a little community which time and U.S. Route 2 have bypassed — twice in the case of Route 2. Before the highway through Petersville was closed to make way for the Molly's Falls reservoir, the main road between Marshfield and Danville passed through the middle of the little village. When the reservoir was built the highway was moved a little west of the village, and more recently a wider highway with a climbing lane was built still farther to the west. Today just a few families have homes there, and there is no trace of the busy scene described by J. M. Fisher in 1881:

"This place now contains 13 dwelling houses, one store, a post office, saw-mill, grist-mill, blacksmith shop, and schoolhouse; also a large shop for the manufactory of wagons, etc. There was formerly a large shop in which wood and iron work was done, which was burned in 1876." (Hemenway)

Frank Perkins was probably the last person to work in a mill at Hookerville in the 1930's. Forty years later his widow, Lettie, remembered:

"At that time the saw mill was quite active in Hookerville. My husband and my son used to work in that sawmill. They ran it. They made clothes bars. Yes, and they sawed personal lumber for people. Just my husband and my son. They got the mill from Wesley Hall."

Neal and June Sargeant were two out of about a dozen people still living in Hookerville in 1993. Neal said: *"I'd like to have known this place when there was, I think, four water rights here. There was a machine shop. There was a wheelwright and the mill. Used to have a post office. There was a cedar still. . . I'd like to have known it back then."*