

The Story of Draperville

Compiled by the Grantham Historical Society
with resources of the Grantham Town Archives

The Draper Corporation of Hopedale, MA made high-speed, automatic looms that used its patented bobbin design.



Model "A" Northrop Loom, 1894

Draper's quest for quality bobbin wood led them to build a blank mill in North Newport in 1907.



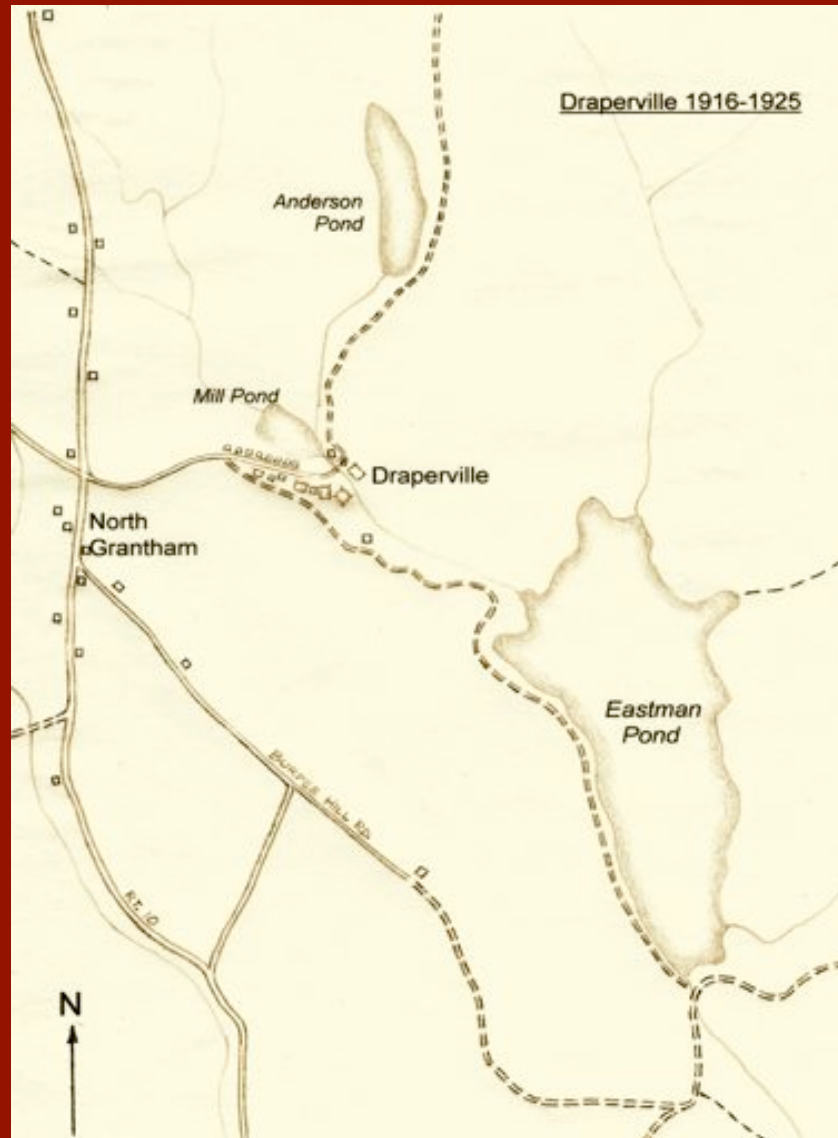
The mill was known as "The Park."

After nine years hauling logs to the mill from the area, the supply ran out.



A renowned, four-horse "Park Team"

The Draper bobbin operation was moved to North Grantham in 1916.



It was later moved nearer Eastman Pond.

The Draper mill was located near the site of an earlier, water-powered mill.



Machinery in the Draper mill was powered by steam.

The operation became a company town, and was called
“Draperville.”



Many employees lived where they worked.

A large boarding house served meals and housed single employees.



There was also a store.

Families were housed in cottages.



The cottages were located by a millpond on
Butternut Creek.



Outflow from Anderson Pond was diverted by a sluice down to the pond.

They kept a dairy herd of Guernseys.

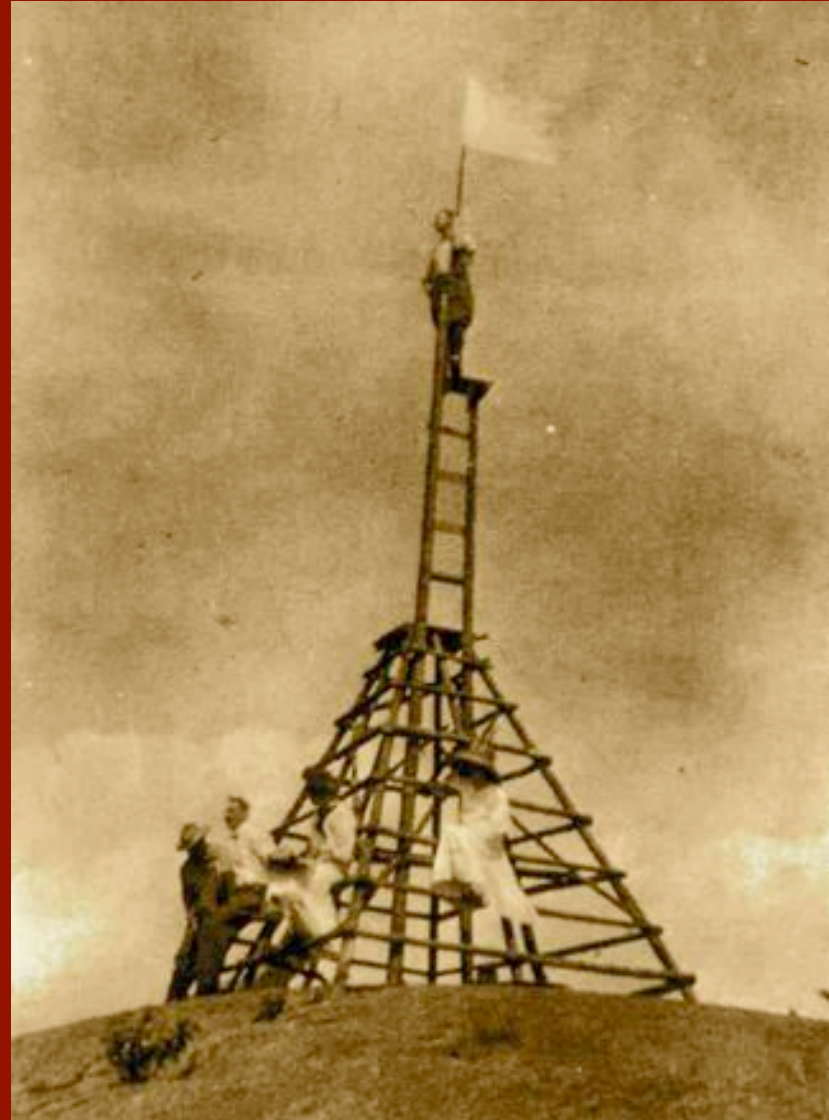


Willena Hastings Spooner recalled Draperville in her 2005 talk at the Grantham Historical Society.

“There was a machinery shop, 60-head horse barn, water tower, large boilers with men firing them all the time to keep steam up for power. They wheeled the ashes across a narrow bridge and had them in a pile as big as any sawdust pile I ever saw. The hardwood logs were piled so high they drove horses under arches they made of logs.”

A tower was built on Croydon Mountain.

Its purpose was to keep watch over Draper-owned land.



Hardwood trees, particularly maple, were cut.



Logs were loaded on sleds in winter.



Sleds were hauled by horse teams to the mill.



A log chute was used on Grantham Mountain.



Reed and Buswell had sold this operation to Draper in 1907.

Concord log wagons were used in summer.



They hauled logs over corduroy roads covered with shavings and sawdust.

Logs were decked at the mill.



Draper-fitted cant dogs, or Peaveys, were widely known.

They were regarded as legal tenders for a gallon of either beer or cider.



Maple and birch logs were sawed for making bobbin blanks, and the scraps fed the mill boilers.

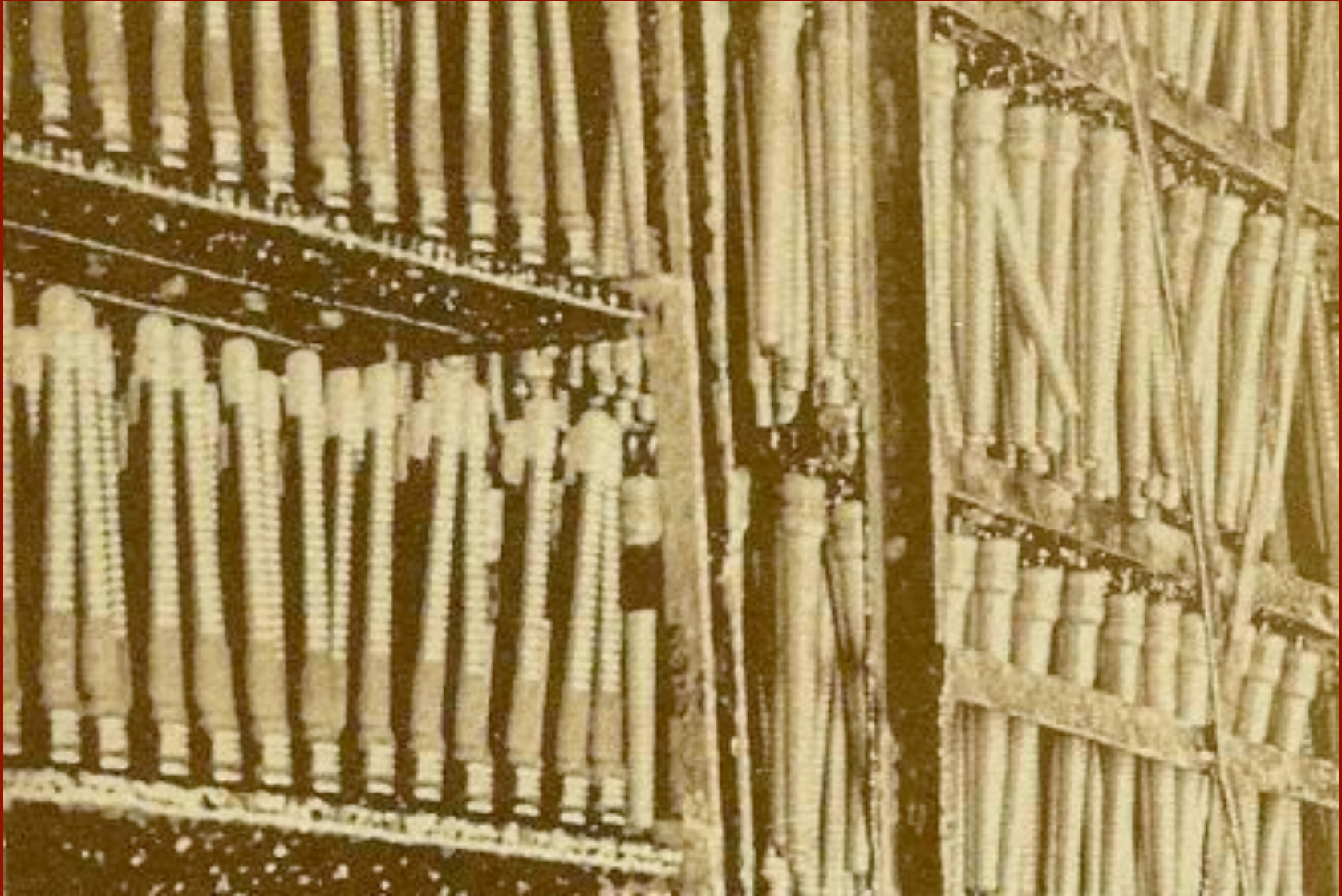


Metcalf Charlie Peacor Silas Moulton Melvin Green

Bandsawed blanks were progressively turned into bobbins.



The finishing was done at the plant in Hopedale, MA.



Bobbins were turned, sanded and painted, then placed in a baking oven.

Bobbins took a variety of shapes and colors.



A split ring wire device enabled high-speed changing on the looms.

Bobbins, wound with yarn, were inserted in a shuttle.



Draper purchased the Beebe River Mill in Campton, NH.



It was built in 1917 by Parker Young.

By 1925 the supply of logs at Draperville was exhausted,
and the operation moved to Beebe River.



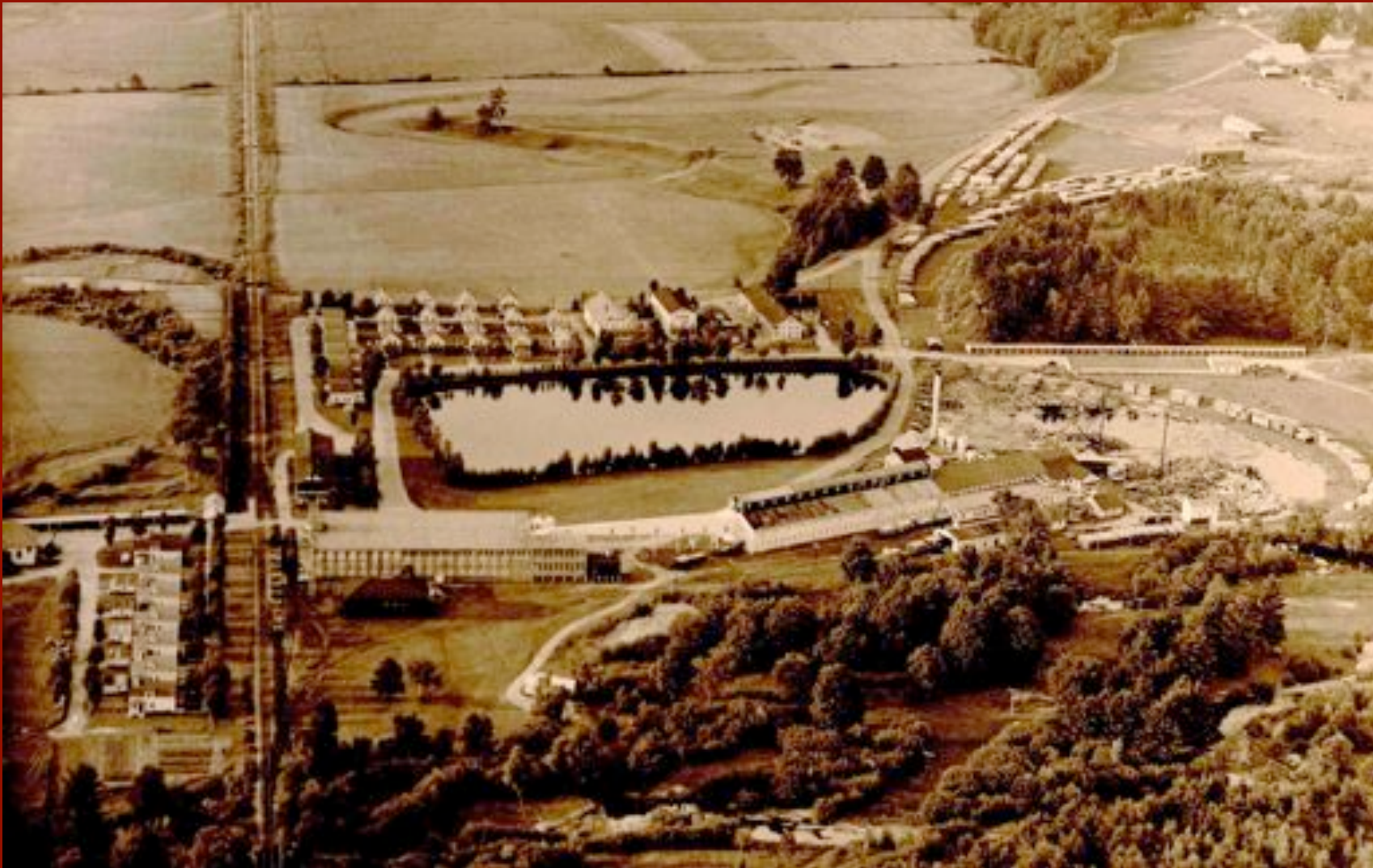
Draperville closed after nine years, having cut 25 million feet of logs.

Like Draperville, it had a company town with housing for employees.



Many Draperville workers moved to Beebe River. The population of Grantham declined from 550 to about 275.

The Beebe River mill was more permanent, using rail and trucks instead of horses to haul logs.



A map based on a 1927 aerial survey shows several buildings still remaining in Draperville (center).



Others had been moved or torn down.

Some of the workers cottages were auctioned
and moved to other locations.



Barbara Holmes Mutney stands before one that was relocated to
Burpee Hill. It burned in the fifties.

The Draperville acreage was purchased for \$450,000 by the Controlled Environment Corporation for the Eastman Community development in 1969.



A map study at the time shows 5 cellar holes, 5 springs and a mill footing remaining at the Draperville site.



What remains of Draperville today?

Eastman houses and condos now stand where
Draperville buildings and cellars once were.

The millpond has been restored.



A new dam was built.

One of the springs that provided water remains.



This spring is located high above old Draperville near Bobbin Hill.

Iron pipes that fed spring water to the tower and boilers protrude from the ground.



Mill foundations are visible near West Cove.



Large timbers that once supported machinery are found near the bridge at Cove Drive.

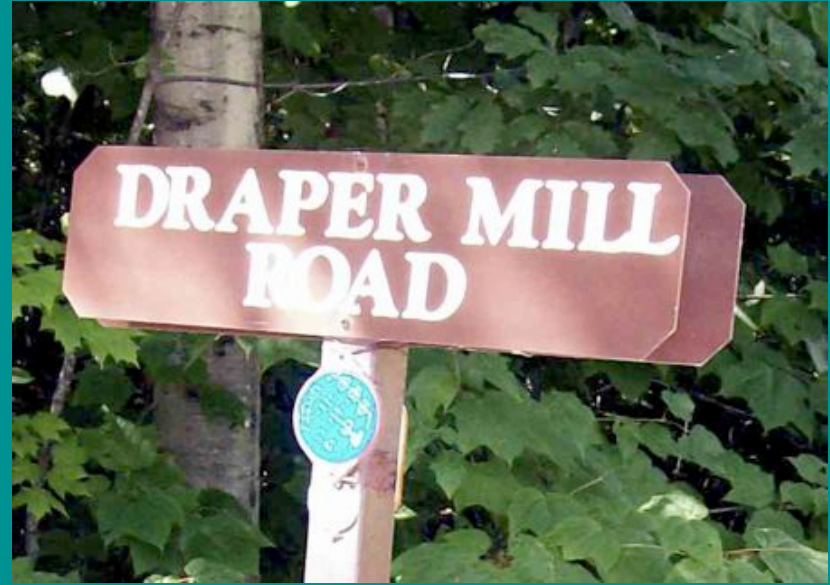
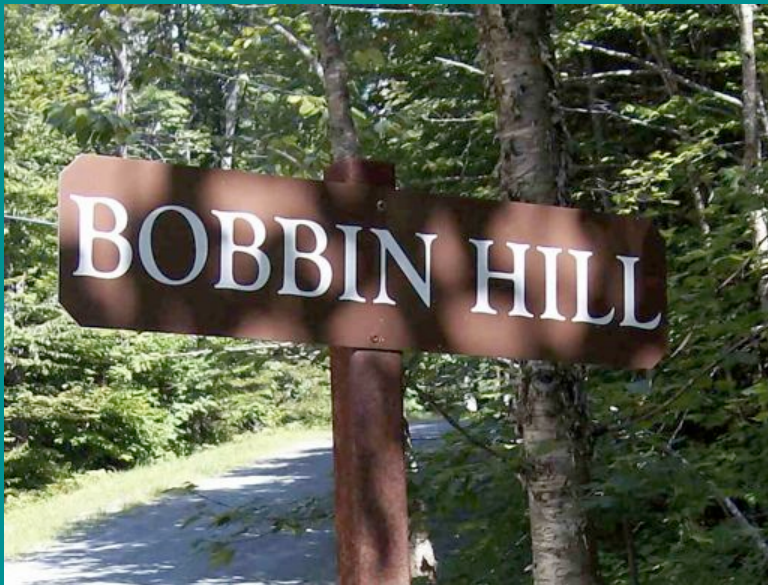


Another of the cottages was purchased by Ralph Barton and moved to South Route 10 in Grantham.



It was remodeled with a porch and dormer.

Eastman road signs recall Draperville's history.



Grantham Historical Society

The End

