

Borderlands Report

A 2019 note from the author:

The report that follows was prepared in 2004 on the cusp of good digital reproductions – the images here leave much to be desired and you might want to check out Pierre Humblet's recommendation for better pictures:

A lot of the postcards and pictures about Royalston were originally stereographs by J. French, in Keene NH. We believe most were taken at the request of H.C. Bartlett. One displays a building that was moved in late 1874, and another one a building that was built in 1872, so they would date from 1872-1874. For example go to:

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/robert-n-dennis-collection-of-stereoscopic-views#/?tab=navigation> and type "departed power" or "looking up the glen" (including the quotes) in the search box.

At the time this report was written, maps were photocopied only – those referred to in this report are housed either in the Massachusetts Archives, the Royalston Historical Society, or assorted other repositories in the county. There is a wealth of information in many of the maps, and you are encouraged to seek them out.

A note about notes: footnotes are located at the bottom of relevant pages and provide relevant commentary; source citations (Arabic numbers) are relegated to endnote status at the end of the report.

As you wade through the minutiae included in this study prepared for a management plan, I hope you will discover bits & pieces of life, work and land back then that help Royalston's – and your – history come alive.

ekt 2019

BORDER LANDS

**Land Use History and Cultural Resources
at
Royalston Falls Reservation
Jacobs Hill Reservation
Doanes Falls Reservation

Royalston, Massachusetts**

A report prepared by
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for The Trustees of Reservations
2004
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CONTENTS

SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW OF HISTORIC LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

I.	Introduction: Purpose and Scope	1
II.	Methodology and Sources.....	2
III.	Prehistory	4
IV.	The Youngest Town (1750-1800).....	8
V.	New Kid on the Block (1800-1850).....	12
VI.	The Agricultural Continuum (1800-1910).....	14
VII.	The Power of Wood	19
VIII.	Royalston Outpaced: Industry After 1850	23
IX.	Royalston Redefined: 20th Century Change.....	24

SECTION TWO: ROYALSTON FALLS RESERVATION

I.	Royalston Falls Summary of Ownership and Occupation	30
II.	Local Land Use History – Introduction	32
III.	Families at the Falls	32
IV.	Falls Road Farms	36
V.	The 24th Reservation	40

SECTION THREE: JACOBS HILL RESERVATION

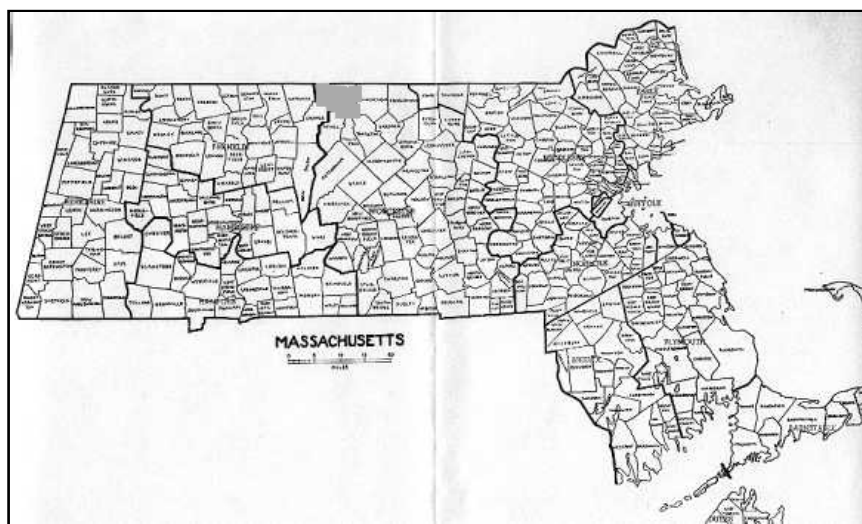
I.	Jacobs Hill Summary of Ownership and Occupation	45
II.	Local Land Use History – Introduction	48
III.	What’s in a Name?	48
IV.	Owners and Abutters	52
V.	The 60th Reservation	53

SECTION FOUR: DOANES FALLS RESERVATION

I.	Doanes Falls Summary of Ownership and Occupation	57
II.	Local Land Use History - Introduction	65
III.	The First Privilege	66
IV.	Amos Doane and His ‘Unique Concern’	71
V.	The Doanes Falls Neighborhood	74
VI.	Water and Edward Bragg	77
VII.	The 32nd Reservation	81

SECTION FIVE: DOCUMENTATION

- I. Appendices
 - A. Photographs
 - B. Disposition of Isaac Royall Lands
 - C. Prouty's Mill
 - E. Deed Transcriptions and Excerpts
 - 1877 Whipple to Wheeler (Royalston Falls)
 - 1863 Perkins to Perkins (Jacobs Hill – Thompson parcel)
 - 1873 Ripley to Clement (Jacobs Hill – Hill parcel).....
 - 1797 – 1913 Nichols Mills (Doanes Falls)
 - 1827 – 1859 Amos Doane Property (Doanes Falls)
- II. Bibliography
- III. Endnotes



SECTION ONE

OVERVIEW OF HISTORIC LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT ROYALSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The western flank of the central uplands is one of Massachusetts' best-kept and most spectacular secrets.

James Skehan, Roadside Geology of Massachusetts, 2001

Not only do the hill-tops present scenes of beauty, but the streams in the valleys below contain gorges and waterfalls, with the grandest and wildest of natural scenery.

George W. Horr, "Royalston," History of Worcester County, 1879

I. Introduction: Purpose and Scope

The town of Royalston, 42.4 square miles in area, is the third largest town in Worcester County and one of its least known. Located in the far northwest corner of the county on the New Hampshire line, Royalston is centered on a 1,000 foot high plateau to which roads climb from Athol, Templeton and Winchendon to the south and east; Warwick and Orange to the west. North of the center the land continues to rise toward New Hampshire, with Prospect Hill, about 1500 feet high, the highest elevation in town. Roads, ridges and rivers tend to run north-south, their routes determined, as in much of central New England, by a series of glacial advances and retreats.

The true *western flank of the central uplands*, however, as Skehan describes it, lies west of Royalston Common, where the ridge line that includes Jacobs Hill and Prospect Hill plunges as much as 500 feet down in as little as 500 feet across, to the Tully River valley. On the west side of the river, similarly spectacular though less consistent inclines rise to Davis Hill and Wyman Hill.

The Tully valley and its flanking uplands are thought to be visible remains of the greatest earth-

moving event in local history: the creation of Pangaea, when the Laurentian and Gondwanan terranes collided 400 million years ago.¹ More recently, glaciers worked at carving through the gneiss that underlies much of Royalston (located on what geologists call the “Tully Dome”) with uneven success, creating the falls that are the centerpieces of Royalston’s three Trustees of Reservations properties.

Doanes Falls, Jacobs Hill and Royalston Falls Reservations owe much of their character to geological events that shaped the landscape millennia before humans began using the land. The severity of these events was also the main reason that George Horr, writing in 1879, could still marvel at *the wildest of natural scenery* in a region where most waterfalls had been thoroughly developed for industrial use years earlier.

An understanding of the permanent impact of nature on culture at The Trustees’ Royalston reservations is best achieved within the context of the town’s land use history. Royalston’s history is shorter, and more sparsely populated than that of most Massachusetts towns. It is a border community – between states, between counties, even between prehistoric continents. Historically, border lands attract, and hold, smaller populations than other areas. They are border lands for any number of reasons, from difficulty of access to paucity of natural resources to challenging climate – usually a combination of all three.

II. Methodology and Sources

What follows is an outline of Royalston’s historic and archeological past. It focuses on the town’s natural resources and the ways they were used by its inhabitants to make a living, support families, define lifestyles. It looks at shifts in land use over time, leading eventually to the conditions and mind set that resulted in permanent conservation of perhaps twenty different parcels under the management of The Trustees of Reservations. The Trustees’ parcels constitute less than two per cent of this large town – only 439 acres altogether – but they include what are arguably its three most spectacular landscape elements.

The more intimate histories of the families who settled around and worked at the three Trustees reservations will be examined separately, set against the town’s broader historical context. Finally, identification and evaluation of surviving cultural resources, together with management recommendations for each of the properties, will be included in individual property management reports.

Two starting points for any Massachusetts land research are first, the late 19th/ early 20th century town and county histories prepared during the first wave of colonial revival enthusiasm and second, a series of town and county maps beginning in 1793/4 and extending to a set done under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1939/40. These sources serve as a framework for any more recent or more specific research.

Royalston’s development was described in two town histories, two county histories and a commemorative address (see bibliography), but much of the material is redundant and transparently borrowed. Federal and state censuses from 1790 to 1930 are helpful, especially

mid-19th century agricultural and manufacturing schedules, although they do not include addresses and thus require some geographic guesswork in order to reach land use conclusions.

Reports of archeological investigations filed with the state and recent periodical articles contribute bits of information, while Worcester County deed and probate records pin down property owners and boundaries for the parcels in question. Local informants including John McClure, curator of the Royalston Village Improvement and Historical Society; Dick O'Brien, Central Region Superintendent for The Trustees; Kathy Morris and Gina Verrelli of the Phinehas Newton Library; Jeff Mangum, Park Manager for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers; and the Rev. Philip Jacobs, descendant of one of the town's early families, have provided irreplaceable information about events of the recent past and unrecorded local lore. Additional thanks are due Ginny Slack, keeper of lists at The Trustees' Land Conservation Center; and Tim Silva, recent Superintendent of the Quabbin Management Unit, patient and knowledgeable field guide.

Despite all these sources, and others listed in the bibliography, much of what follows is deduction – extrapolation from one site or set of circumstances to the Trustees properties and their owners through time. As such, it is offered as a 'best guess' outline of the sequence of opportunities, decisions and events concerning historic land use in Royalston and its impact on 436 acres within the town.

III. Prehistory

Of the occupants of these hills and valleys prior to the advent of the white man, little is known. Ex-Governor Bullock says in his Centennial address, [Royalston is] “a precinct that bears no vestiges of the aborigines, and is in this respect so unlike the more southerly towns, which had half a century of life crowded with Indian traditions, that I cannot find that those original lords ever lighted a pipe or a fire here.”
George Horr, “Royalston,” History of Worcester County, 1879

A hundred and twenty-five years after Horr wrote his observation, there is still little known specifically concerning native American presence in Royalston. Three focused archeological surveys have taken place recently, precipitated by highway improvements on Route 32 running from Athol through West Royalston to Richmond NH (1987), and by Army Corps of Engineers' management planning for Birch Hill Dam in the southeast corner of the town (1991), and for the Tully Lake area (2000).²

None of these surveys identified more than a handful of stone flakes that could be classed as prehistoric (pre-1600) artifacts, with the single exception of two partial projectile points in the vicinity of Doanes Falls.³

A report prepared by University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services for the Route 32 project provides a generally applicable summary of findings for Royalston. The survey team could identify no local prehistoric artifact collections, nor did they identify any prehistoric sites among the 34 locations they tested. The few flakes they found led them to predict the following probable prehistoric land use:

Small temporary camps, probably strategically located to exploit specific resources, are predicted for the project area ... primarily hunting and gathering, fishing, or raw material collecting and processing.

....

Immediately to the south in Athol, a number of prehistoric sites are reported in the river valleys. Some of these are quite large. However, activity in the hills in the north was apparently sparse and probably limited to occasional hunting and foraging without any permanent settlement.⁴

The survey from which these conclusions were drawn followed the highland route of Route 32, some distance away from water sources. By contrast, archeologists from the Public Archaeology Laboratory (PAL) found slightly larger assemblages in the Tully River basin. One site produced *a total of four felsite flakes, four quartz chipping debris and two quartzite chipping debris*,⁵ while a second included the points mentioned above. These finds are consistent with the U.

Mass. model quoted above, since PAL's test excavations were adjacent to running water in comfortable valley settings: likely spots for a fishing or hunting camp that also offered the additional benefit of varied plant life as food and raw materials.

Royalston was not an area ignored by the Nipmuc who occupied central Massachusetts, however two maps illustrate why so few prehistoric remains have surfaced in the town. *Contact and Plantation Period Trails* (Map A) and *Core Areas* (Map B), from the state Historical Commission's study of central Massachusetts cultural resources, show Royalston on the periphery of use zones in prehistoric times just as during the historic period.⁶ Significant native populations had settled in the vicinity of Lancaster (Nashaway), Mendon (Nipnet), Worcester (Quinsigamond), Oxford/Dudley (Pegan) and the Brookfields (Quaboag), but there is little documented occupation of areas northwest of these until one reaches the Connecticut River Valley. Within Worcester County, Royalston is literally as far away as possible away from these settlement cores.

Similarly, while major trails traverse and intersect the heavily occupied areas, only three minor trails pass through Royalston. It is likely that even those three existed only because of the extremely difficult terrain: one heads northward from Pequog, now Athol, probably along the route of Athol and Fitzwilliam Roads. A second ran north-south in the vicinity of Route 32 or Bliss Hill Road. A third, east-west trail apparently cut across the middle of the town toward Winchendon and Ashburnham. It avoided much of the natural resource area along the Millers River in Royalston, because of extensive wetlands (located within what is now Otter River State Forest).

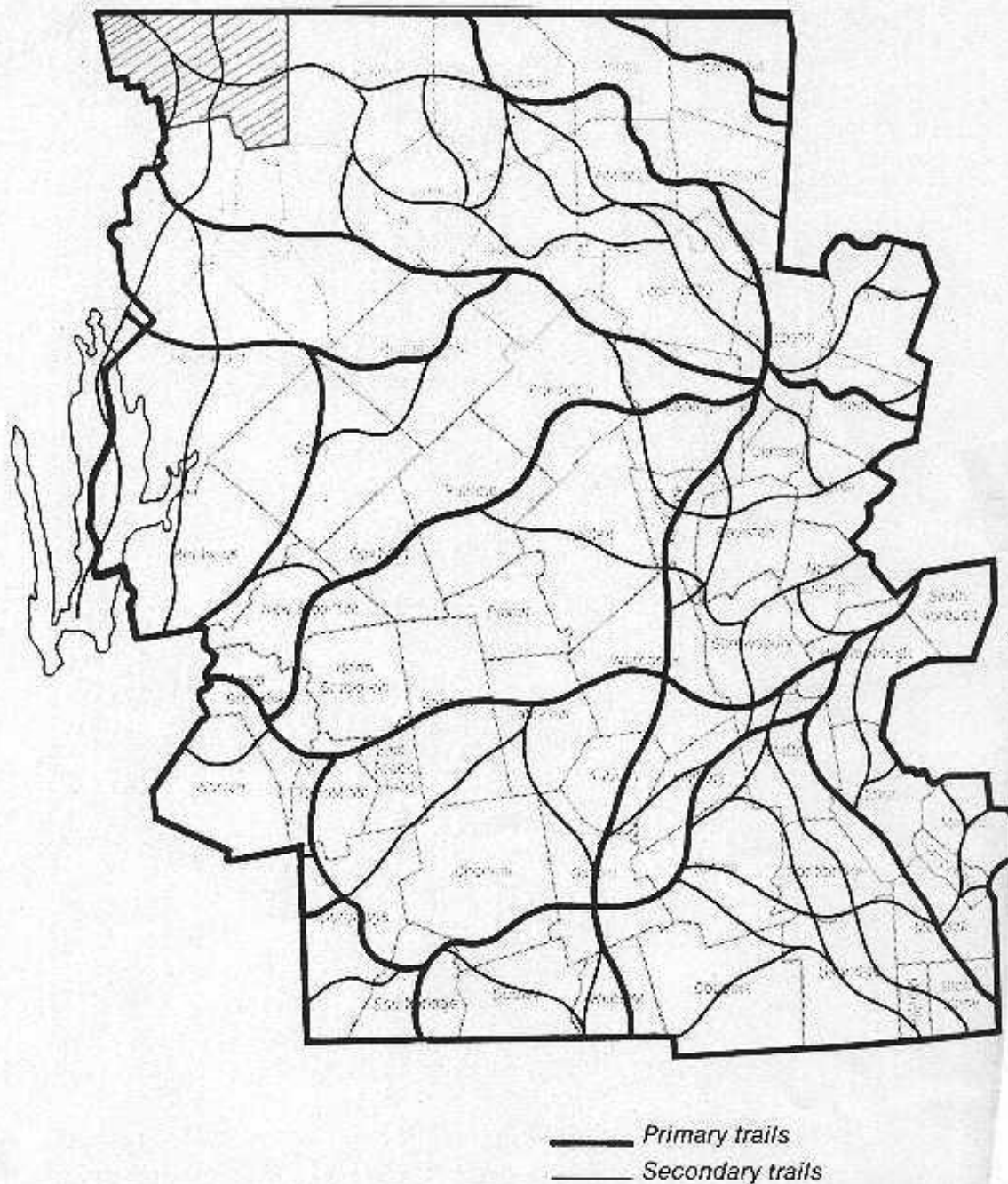
Kerrylynn Boire and Suzanne Cherau, in their Tully Lake report (2000) theorize that areas such as the Millers River were natural locations for Native American activity, but they go on to point out two of the reasons there was so little contact between the town's first European settlers and Nipmuc peoples.⁷

...the riverine environments created by the Millers and Tully rivers would have encouraged Native American activity and settlement. The shores of these rivers and Long Pond were likely occupation sites.... [but] actual settlement of Royalston did not begin until after the close of King Philip's War (1675-76) and the French and Indian War (1755-1763), two episodes that would have cleared the territory of many of its usual inhabitants. The epidemic of the 1630s that spread eastward from the Connecticut valley also contributed to the reduction in native populations.

Two further statistics shed light on the lack of Indian occupational evidence in Royalston: an estimate of Massachusetts Native American population at the time of Plymouth's settlement (1620), sets the total population at no more than 10,000 in the whole commonwealth. After the smallpox epidemic, when the Reverend John Eliot began his missionary work twenty or thirty years later, he estimated the number of Indians in the central Massachusetts area at only 1,150.⁸

Contact and Plantation Period Trails

1500 – 1675



Map A. (Source: Mass. Historical Commission *Resources of Central Massachusetts*)

IV. The Youngest Town

This is, as to the original grant and settlement, doubtless by many years, the youngest town in the county....

The lands in this town consist generally of hills and valleys; and the soil is very excellent, being suitable for tillage, pasturage, mowing and orcharding. The natural growth of wood is of various kinds, as oak, chesnut [sic], beech, ash, white, black and yellow birch, maple, or sugar tree, bass, alder, and the ever greens, as pine, hemlock, hacmatack and spruce, &c.

This town is exceedingly well watered by rivers, rivulets and springs....

Peter Whitney, History of Worcester County, 1793

Peter Whitney, writing the first overview of Worcester County in 1793, devotes only three pages to Royalston, much of that on its settlement and first churches. Although he describes the soil as *very excellent*, it is probably significant that he quickly moves on from agricultural considerations to a detailed enumeration of the forest species found within the town. Whatever changes in land use have occurred over time in Royalston, wood and wood products have remained the town's economic staple throughout its history.

The town is located near the southern edge of what is classed as *northern hardwood-conifer forest*, characterized by the hardwoods listed by Whitney, along with spruce and fir predominating among the softwoods.⁹ The presence of northern forest species in the Royalston area was due originally to the natural combination of cool climate, evenly distributed rainfall, and shallow acidic soils. That the northern forest cover in Royalston managed to perpetuate itself, however, was largely due to two cultural considerations.

First, a large percentage of the town's land was too steep or too rocky for intensive agricultural use. Second, the town's numerous water falls, although too small for major industrial use, provided easily-harnessed power for the low power demands of sawing and woodworking. This, in turn, allowed for the transformation of unwieldy, low-value cut timber into easily transportable, value-added market goods.

Royalston's settlement and its political and social history have been efficiently described by a number of authors. Boire and Cherau's report includes the most recent capsule summary, written as background to their study of cultural resources in the vicinity of Tully Lake. Some of that summary will be included below, as a framework for additional information derived from the present research project.

The territory of present day Royalston was among the last in Massachusetts to be divided by the General Court for settlement.¹⁰ Twenty-three hundred acres had been granted between 1737 and 1742 to four proprietors, as reward for services rendered to the Crown. Three of the grants were known as Pierpont's, Priest's and Hapgood's Farms, plus a joint grant to Benoni Moore, Joseph

Petty, and Robert Cooper that later became known as Hunt's Farm.¹¹

In 1752 the General Court ordered that all the remaining lands not yet granted lying between Athol (Pequog), Templeton (Narragansett Number Six), and New Hampshire should be surveyed and sold at public auction. *A genuine closing-out sale*, Fred W. Cross termed it in a later historical address.¹² Successful bidders included a number of Boston's most influential and best-connected men: Samuel Watts, Thomas Hubbard, Isaac Freeman, Joseph Richards, Isaac Royal, Caleb Dana, James Otis, Joseph Wilder, Jr., and John Chandler, Jr. They purchased 28,357 acres of unclaimed territory around the "farms" for 1,348 pounds sterling – or about a shilling an acre.ⁱ Over the next decade a number of other investors including John Hancock, James Bowdoin, and the widow of Sir John Temple joined the original list, buying portions of auctioned lots from their original owners.

This was an era without banks or stock exchange, when liquid assets were scarce. Established merchants and wealthy landowners of the settled southeast viewed land in frontier New England – undeveloped tracts of northwestern Massachusetts and the northern states – as an investment vehicle. Proprietor's lots were bought, sold, and traded, sight unseen. Their market value was based on two sound economic assumptions. First, a tract of undeveloped land had to include marketable natural resources, the most obvious one being virgin forest cover. Second, the acreage with or without forest had to increase in value as the region was settled and its land improved.

Mindful of the need to nurture their new investment, the proprietors held their first meeting a year later in Boston. The purpose of the meeting was to satisfy the Crown's requirements for settling a new town. They voted that the tract be called Royalshire, *whereupon the Honorable Isaac Royal generously gave his word to give twenty-five pounds sterling towards building a Meeting-House in said town*.¹³ They determined that sixty 100-acre lots be laid out for settlers. They designated other sizable tracts as income-producing land to pay a minister, support religious worship, and fund a school.

Even with all the land that had been set off for other purposes, the small group of original proprietors could anticipate substantial returns on their shilling-per-acre investment. What they may not have anticipated was the eight years of rural warfare that immediately followed. Although some Royalston lands had been in private hands for much of the 18th century, actual settlement stalled because of frontier hostilities during the French and Indian War. The town, although distant from Native American core areas in Massachusetts, was also distant from the protection of colonial settlements (refer to Map B) and adjacent to the largely unsettled lands of New Hampshire.

Evidently, some few early land owners from nearby towns began to work their Royalston tracts prior to the outbreak of war,¹⁴ but it was not until 1762 that six families, from southern and southeastern Massachusetts, established permanent homesteads in Royalston. At that point the proprietors set off ten acres on the central plateau to be used for a training field, a burying ground, and the site of a meetinghouse, where both civic and religious functions would take

ⁱ At the time, a single milk cow could be worth as much as 90 shillings. (cf. William Choate 1785 estate inventory, Essex Probate 357:544).

place. This became the town's core, the Royalston Common that has since been described as *the best example of early 19th century town commons in Massachusetts*.¹⁵

In 1765 the town, by then forty families, was officially incorporated.¹⁶ In recognition of this progress, the proprietors voted to privatize additional lands including some lots of 200 acres, as well as meadowland sliced into ten-acre parcels. The town was officially named Royalston, in honor of early proprietor and benefactor Isaac Royall.ⁱⁱ By 1767 the proprietors had seen to the basic common land needs of a new town. They had surveyed and divided all other land within the town's borders among private landowners. The original, largely nonresident proprietors resigned their civic duties and Royalston became a town governed from within.

What was this new community like? How did it relate to the surrounding area? Period data is scarce, despite there being a series of documents that sheds light on many other towns. Two colonial tax valuations offer detailed statistics on population and land use in many towns in 1771 and 1784. Unfortunately, surviving 1771 schedules exist for only half the Massachusetts towns, with even fewer still extant from 1784.¹⁷ Royalston is not among either group, but glimpses of surrounding towns set a scene for later developments.

In 1771, Petersham was one of the largest towns in northwest Worcester County, counting 210 *polls ratable* – men with taxable property – among its inhabitants. Due north of Petersham was Athol, with 130 taxpayers. Templeton, to the east, had 173 and Ashburnham, incorporated the same year as Royalston, claimed 100. It is reasonable to assume that the total population in any of these towns was about four times as large as the number of ratable polls: 400 for Ashburnham and probably, similar numbers in Royalston.¹⁸

A few family names in surrounding towns can be associated with Trustees properties in Royalston: Nichols (Princeton); Estabrook (Princeton and Rutland); Fisk, Goddard, Pierce and Shepherdson (Templeton). The Forbes name, long associated with Royalston Falls, appears in Oakham, Rutland, Westborough and Barre. Most of the early Royalston landowner names, however, do not show up in surviving lists from neighboring towns.

By 1790, when the first federal census did include Royalston, the situation was very different.

1790 (first national population census)

total Royalston population: 1,130 (195 families)

white males: 557

white females: 571

other persons: 2 (under name Reuben Kendol)

identified owners of subsequent Trustees' property, resident in town: James Forbes (RF); Ebenezer Eliot [Jr.?] and Daniel Woodbury (JH); Henry Nichols (DF)

Five hundred fifty-seven white men and boys, 571 white women and girls lived in the town plus

ⁱⁱ Ironically Royall, lauded for most of his life as an upstanding and worthy American, sided with the Loyalists during the American Revolution and returned to England, where he stayed for the remainder of his life. See Appendix for discussion of the disposition of Royall's proprietary lots.

two “other free persons” including Reuben Kendol (a likely variant of Kendall, the family whose servant Reuben may have been). Whitney’s 1793 history of the town states that *the soil is very excellent* and, whether it was or not, one can assume that most of those 195 households were engaged in some amount of farming, including sizable efforts to clear land for pasture and tillage. Many households included more than one adult male,¹⁹ as son and father, or brother and brother shared the massive efforts of starting from scratch.

Land clearing had important side benefits. The 1985 MHC report on central Massachusetts identifies some of them.

One of the few agricultural products that could be classed as a cash crop during this period was flaxseed....increased trade with Ireland stimulated a large trade [in which] the Worcester County towns of Barre, Royalston, Millbury, Lancaster, Lunenburg and New Braintree were particularly active....

Important products of agricultural towns, especially of the younger towns whose farmers were particularly in need of marketable products while establishing their farms, were potash, pearlash, charcoal, and bark. Potash was produced by burning wood, something a new farm had large quantities of, passing water over the ashes to produce lye, and boiling the lye down until it evaporated, leaving a residue. Pearlash was produced by further heating the potash until the impurities burned off. Both [products] were important ingredients in soap and glass making, as well as many medicines. Small in bulk but highly valued, [they] were easily transported

Another byproduct of land clearing that was easily marketable was charcoal. Bakers, blacksmiths, foundries, forges [to name a few] needed great quantities

The tannery was another outlet for forest products. Bark from sumac, chestnut, oak, and hemlock were especially desired by tanners for the processing of hides and skins.²⁰

While production of these materials waned elsewhere as land was cleared in heavily agricultural towns, Royalston and other hill towns continued to export wood and wood byproducts through the nineteenth century.

In fact, one of the town’s economic survival techniques was its adaptation of raw materials processing to the changing demands of regional industry. Thus, one of Royalston’s first documented industries was potash processing as early as 1760.²¹ A tannery was one of the first manufactures established in the town, located within easy reach of the prized hardwood bark stripped from abundant northern forest trees.²² Later, mid-nineteenth century censuses (see below) identify specialized manufactures such as shoe pegs to serve the shoe industry of nearby towns, and chair parts for Gardner’s burgeoning furniture manufactures.

Other agricultural processing industries were essential to development in a new town. The Royalston proprietors, as early as 1765, commissioned Benjamin Marsh to build the town’s first mills – both grist and saw – on Lawrence Brook at the site that would become known as Doanes

Falls. Marsh built the mills but sold out to fellow proprietor Isaac Gale in 1769. By 1794, surveyor William Town, preparing Royalston's first official town map, carefully enumerated: *There is Seven Saw mills in this Town and three grist mills and one fulling mill.* One each of these mills was located at Doanes Falls, but the saw mills were scattered all over town, as close as water power would allow to the timber stands they served. (See 1795 map in Appendix.)

V. New Kid on the Block (1800-1850)

1810

total Royalston population: 1,415

white males: 683

white females: 725

other persons: 7 (under names Abraham Toney, Cesar Toney)

households: 235

-- identified owners of subsequent Trustees' property, resident in town: James and Calvin Forbes (2 households, RF); Silas Hales and Daniel Woodbury (JH); Henry and Elijah Nichols (2 households, DF)

1850 (first federal census to include schedules for agriculture and manufactures)

total Royalston population: 1,529

white males: 784

white females: 745

no persons identified as 'colored'

houses: 310

households: 334

farm owners: 101 (210 acres average)

manufactory owners: 15 (154 employees total)

-- identified owners of subsequent Trustees' property, resident in town: James Forbes, Otis Whipple, Calvin Forbes, Luther Ballou (RF); Ebenezer Perkins, Rufus Bullock, Daniel Hubbard (JH). No known property owner at Doanes Falls correlates with manufacturers' names on the census except, possibly, Henry Nichols.

Over the first half of the nineteenth century Royalston did not so much grow as it came of age. Any comparison of manufactures, buildings, or agricultural output between 1800 and 1850 would tend to suggest a corresponding big jump in population but in fact, the town's highest population count, in 1840, was only one eighth greater than that of 1810. Nevertheless, by any other benchmark the pre-1850 period was one of dramatic growth.

What must be borne in mind is that Royalston, youngest of Worcester County towns, had a lot of catching up to do. While agricultural land in older, south county towns had been cleared and worked for up to a century,²³ much of Royalston was still uncut forest. While surrounding towns

had established mill villages and commercial networks, Royalston had a handful of saw mills and a post road to New Hampshire. Older towns were running out of the timber that covered most of Royalston, and older farmers were running low on cultivable land that could be divided among younger farming sons.

Within this regional context, Royalston began its catching up at the moment in American history when small New England towns, after decades of sedate social and economic development or decline, were rushing forward into a brief golden age of agricultural and industrial hegemony. In the new republic, small towns and small waterpower sources provided the perfect setting for industrial experimentation and development while industries, in turn, provided a market for a surplus agricultural labor pool and a demand for farm products. It is no surprise that Royalston blossomed during this period.

Royalston's 1840 population high of 1,667 was encouraged by the growth of a small manufacturing center on the Millers River in South Royalston. The keystone of this activity was the Royalston Cotton and Wool Manufacturing Company, founded in 1813 during the first flush of American domestic manufacturing zeal, when anything seemed possible and manufacturing promised a road to certain wealth.

Manufacturing censuses and local histories sketch fluctuations in this corporation as it progressed from a pre-industrial spinning and finishing operation to include in-house weaving processes; through complete destruction by fire in 1833 and resurrection in a stone building, with production focused on woollens, the next year. The South Royalston factory attracted mill hands from other states, eventually including a group of Finnish immigrants among its labor force. The mill burned again in 1892, but revived to continue production until most of its infrastructure was swept away when the breakup of winter ice dams in 1936 flooded most of the south village.²⁴

A locus of activity developed around the textile mill and its associated water power, as was also happening on a larger scale downriver in Athol. Smaller factories, primarily engaged in woodworking activity, were built nearby and housing, civic buildings and churches multiplied around them. The industrial health of Royalston's factory village was given a boost by the opening of the Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad in 1847 along the Millers River corridor, with a station at South Royalston. Railroad workers became a new occupational title in census listings.

The early mills at Doanes Falls continued in use and expanded during the first half of the nineteenth century. Here, as in the mill village, manufacturing activity focussed on wood processing, with mills and craft shops turning out chair stock, wooden pails, and window and door parts. None of these mills required a large immigrant work force though, instead drawing their handful of employees from neighboring farms and perhaps the town center. (See section on Doanes Falls for further detail.)

John Barber's 1839 description of Royalston includes figures from the first census of Massachusetts manufactures.²⁵

In 1837 there were two woollen mills, 6 sets of machinery; 72,000 yards of

cloth were manufactured; value \$72,000; males employed 34; females, 34; there were 129,000 palm-leaf hats manufactured; value \$16,225; three manufactories of chairs and cabinet ware; value of articles manufactured, \$15,041; hands employed, 17; there were 11 saw-mills; value of lumber \$18,165; hand employed, 22.

The list is impressive but on closer examination, barely a hundred people were employed in Royalston manufacturing, plus the women engaged in the cottage industry of palm leaf hat weaving. Two men, on average, ran each of the town's eleven saw mills. Out of a total population of 1,660, very few counted industry as their source of support.

Royalston Common, although laid out in 1765, evolved into its present form during the early 19th century, as a small residential and commercial center developed along Main Street. A handful of professional men – doctors, lawyers, clergy, school teachers – built Federal and Greek Revival style houses around the common for their families. North of the common a cluster of small-scale craft operations, including a blacksmith and a wooden dry measure manufactory, worked with bellows and lathes powered at one time by water diverted through a canal from Little Pond. (See section on Jacobs Hill for further detail.)

VI. The Agricultural Continuum (1800-1910)

The land surrounding Royalston Common to the north and east, together with the ridge known as Chestnut Hill south of Doanes Falls, provided the best farming in a town which, despite its assorted industries, was still categorized as a dispersed farming community.²⁶ But farming meant different things, at different times, in different parts of Royalston.

A first view of Royalston farming practices comes from about 1800, when the early proprietors, most non-resident, sold their parcels to families whose names thereafter dominated the town's history. The language of those early deeds gives an indication of the mental, as well as physical distance between the first owners and their land.

Most parcels are described in only the vaguest terms.ⁱⁱⁱ Boundary referents are limited to general compass directions with "stake and stones" bounds interspersed. Natural features are not identified, even such dramatic ones as the falls that are today the defining feature of Trustees properties. Few abutters are named, and the parcels are most often defined as constituting some portion of an original proprietary lot. Mention of buildings is almost wholly lacking, as are the ubiquitous stone walls that outlined so much of southern New England by that time. Occasionally, a linear feature such as Falls Brook or Lawrence Brook is used as a boundary line,^{iv} and roadways are similarly useful. In general, however, the deeds identify a landscape that is unoccupied and unimproved.

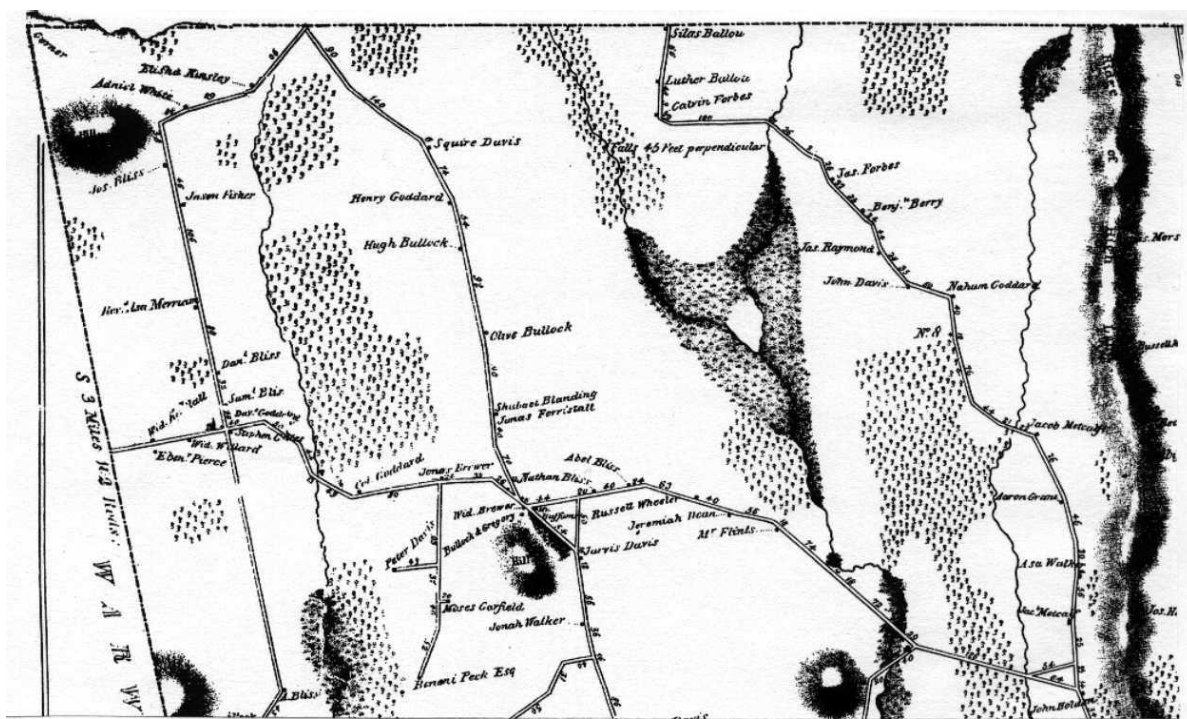
The particular deeds consulted for this research project may not be fairly representative of other areas of Royalston by 1800. Within ten years of that date the town had 235 households, and a

ⁱⁱⁱ See, for instance, the deed transcriptions in Appendix C.

^{iv} only as "the brook", however, not named.

population of 1,415 occupying its land. Each of The Trustees' properties, however, is located at the edge of a population core in the town.

Royalston Falls lay at the northeast edge of an active community forming around the intersection of Routes 68 and 32, that came to be known as West Royalston or "the City."^v Farms were developed early along the north-south axis of the Athol-Richmond Road (Route 32), especially west of the road, including the mid-18th century Hunt's Farm grant. The Davis, Goddard and Bullock names were long associated with that corridor. Still farther west, a series of Bliss family farms lined the road bearing their name. But just east of this core lay an extensive stretch of steep ravines and swampy intervale that defined the Tully River drainage.^{vi} There was a small section of decent upland at the north end of the drainage, including what is now Royalston Falls Reservation, but it was difficult to access from Royalston center. Not surprisingly, therefore, some of the landowners in this area came (and still come) from New Hampshire, rather than from the south.



Map D: northwest Royalston, 1831

Jacobs Hill, or Jacobs Ridge, was the east margin of the Tully drainage. Less than a mile east of the ridgeline, North Fitzwilliam and Prospect Hill Roads defined another linear swathe of high farmland paralleling the ridge, extending into New Hampshire from Royalston Common.

^v 'City', according to Christopher Lenney, *has been an ironic designation since early colonial times for a ... seat of industry even when remote from population.* [Lenney, p. 29]

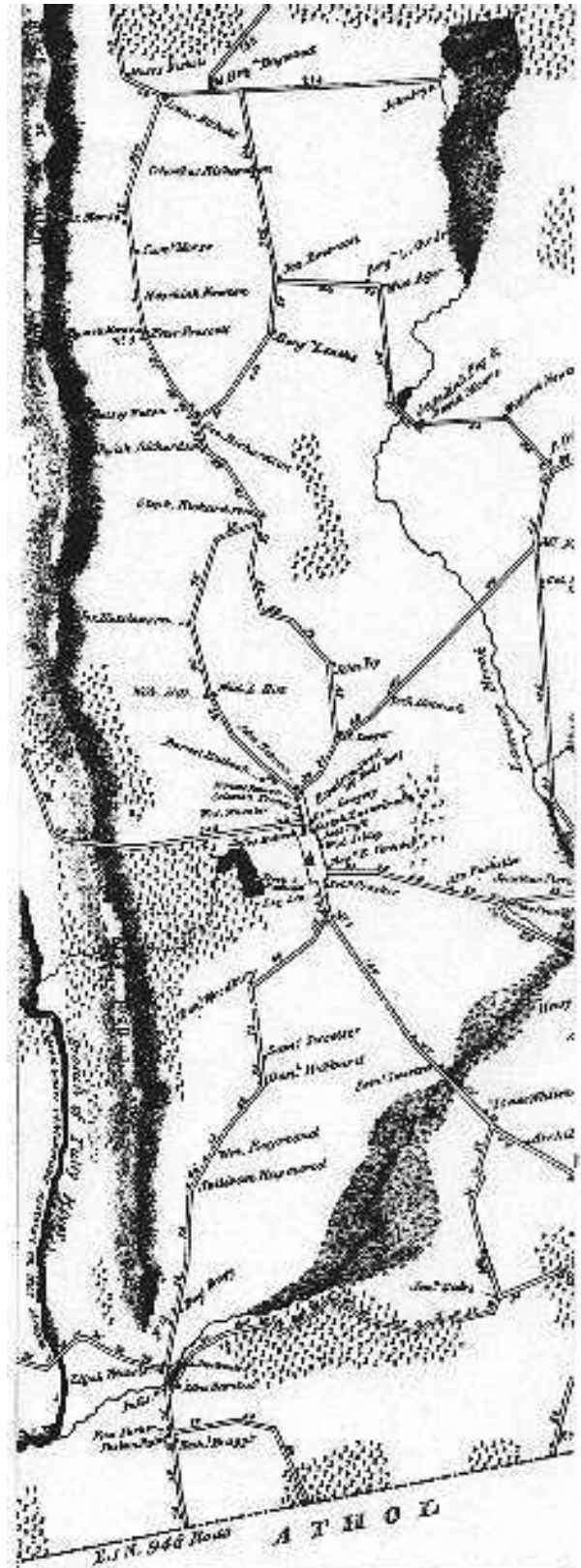
^{vi} Significantly, this area was not always called the Tully River. Town's 1795 map of Royalston indicates the flow south of Long Pond with the note: *Dead River, so called, Running Nearly South six rods in Breadth.* It is likely that it was characterized as 'dead' due to its slow flow and swampy margins.

Nichols, Newton, Morse and Richardson families improved this area. Meanwhile south of the common, Raymonds, Hubbards and Woodburys farmed along Athol Road.

One section of this generally workable plateau was not particularly useful for agriculture. That was a parcel of land south of Warwick Road (Route 68) east of the ridgeline. Part of the problem was the rough exposed outcrops of the ridge's east face. More of the problem was a sizable swamp, which Warwick Road carefully skirted. The center of the swamp was Little Pond, known to townspeople later in the century as a delightful place to play, and useful even recently as a fire pond.^{vii} To the Woodburys, Bullocks, Fries and Goddards who farmed around the periphery of Little Pond, however, their Jacobs Hill holdings were useful only as back wood lots or wooded pasture land. As such, they received little attention even into the twentieth century.

The major portion of the **Doanes Falls** Reservation was seen as patently unfit for cultivation from the town's earliest white settlement. Land both north and south of it was part of the central agricultural ridge, but the rapid 200 foot descent of southwest-flowing Lawrence Brook into the swampy Tully River valley discouraged any thought of cultivating the immediate vicinity. This was actually fortunate for the proprietors who did not have to mediate between millers' dams flooding meadows and farmers defending upstream haying rights above the dams.²⁷

Jonathan Blake's 1831 map, a detail of which is shown at right, is a valuable source of information on land use townwide (also see full map in appendix.). Blake clearly distinguished between open land and *Forest Trees & Woodland*. A swathe of forest and swamp extends from the New Hampshire border down Falls Brook and almost the entire Tully River drainage, including the swamp land west of Little Pond, to the Athol and Orange line. The cultivated Royalston plateau east of that drainage is interrupted by another long parcel of swamp land that stretches along Lawrence Brook



Map E: Royalston central plateau, 1831

^{vii} See section on Jacobs Hill Reservation.

from east of the Common to Doanes Falls. But elsewhere on the map, woodlands are delineated as carefully defined, discrete wood lots, as much a result of a landowner's choice as of difficult terrain.

The first substantive agricultural statistics for Royalston do not appear until 1850, when the federal government instituted a separate schedule detailing agricultural land use and products as part of its census.^{viii} This was the point in history when southern New England had the greatest number of acres cleared and under cultivation.²⁸ South of Royalston in the Quaboag Valley, for instance, West Brookfield listed 78% of its farm acreage as *improved* – cleared, grazed, hayed or planted. Royalston's total was nowhere near that: less than 62% was improved land, and this did not include the 6000 or so acres belonging to landowners other than farmers.

Royalston's johnny-come-lately status among Worcester County towns worked to its advantage during the second half of the nineteenth century. Farmers in older towns were beginning to recognize that the expenditure needed to fertilize and maintain marginal agricultural land – land already worked for as much as a century – was not worth the return on investment. Consequently, Worcester County as a whole showed a steady decline in cleared acreage from 1850 on. By contrast, at a time when much of the area was in reversion, only 240 of Royalston's 22,000 agricultural acres were listed by their owners as abandoned or unimprovable. Figures from 1880 even show improved land area as having increased by one percent.

Part of this stability was a result of farmers adapting to changing demands for agricultural products. Figure 1 documents a shift between 1850 and 1880 from generalized farming and crop production, to more limited products that met specific consumer demands and required less fertile growing conditions. Apple orchards increased in size and productivity; poultry farming became significant. Wood and maple sugar were added to the products enumerated by the census takers.

Figure 1: Comparison of Royalston Agricultural Summaries, 1850 and 1880²⁹

name	improved acres	unimpr .acres	milk cows	other cattle	[editorial comments]
1850: 101 farm owners (210 acre average)	13,174	8,218	495	975	cattle, butter & cheese, potatoes, corn, maple sugar (wood not surveyed)
1880: 171 farm owners	13,863	8,368	409	848	cattle, butter, orchard and wood products

The cattle that were a constant in Royalston farming are indicative of another form of agricultural specialization, as seen in the following Figure. In 1880, the largest amount of acreage – one half of the total – was classed as pasture or meadow, an average of one acre per cow. Farms in the northwest section of town, which tended to be larger in acreage but challenged by thinner soil, rougher terrain and colder microclimate than elsewhere, raised cattle that could be sold for beef and for the hides that were welcome in the shoe factories of neighboring towns.

^{viii} It should be noted that during the mid-nineteenth century there were similar schedules prepared for state censuses as well. The purpose of including 1850 and 1880 figures here is not to present exhaustive details but rather, to get a feel for land use and its changes during Royalston's most active agricultural era.

Farmers along the central plateau had smaller spreads and a higher percentage of milking herds. Both groups produced butter (and, in the earlier years, cheese), a market commodity that was always in demand.

Figure 2: Comparison of Royalston Agricultural Statistics, 1850 and 1880

Names given are those closely associated with Trustees properties. Editorial comments are this author's.

1850

name	improved acres	unimpr. acres	milk cows	other cattle	editorial comments
Daniel Forbes	60	35	4	6	RF area:
Otis Whipple	75	25	3	5	significant
Calvin Forbes	125	50	1?	25	corn and
Luther Ballou	125	45	5	11	maple sugar
[Joseph] Davis	200	75	4	2	production
(2 Newton families	with 650 A	land and	36	cattle)	
Ebenezer Perkins	60	140	4	--	JH/DF area:
Rufus Bullock	150	124	9	--	more ox
[Daniel] Bullock	80	70	2	14	teams used;
Daniel Hubbard	100	100	2	1	varied livestock
Stephen Burbank	100	125	4	2	
Seth Holman	35	35	2	2	also on mfg. census

1880

RF area:					
Raymond J. Walker	100	250	6	5	500 cds wood - \$5,000
George D. Bolton	110	20	3	2	40 cds wood - \$360; [also see Royalston Falls section]
Benjamin A. Frye	17	40	1	3	renter, not owner
Charles W. Craqui	70	60	3	5	only neighbor with ox team
Alfred D. Raymond	425	75	4	35	
Edward E. Newton	240	500	8	14	no 'wood products' listed, but there are 2 Newton lumber mills in Athol
Maynard Partridge	64	130	1	--	income from apple orchard
JH/DF area:					
Silas Whipple	160	100	2	5	poultry farming,
Lucy A. Paine	70	60	1		apple orchards,
Nathaniel W. Bragg	115	160	5	3	hay and dairying
Byron Doane	56	--	1	1	typical of this area

Royalston's improved land never approached the high percentages found in towns to its south and east, primarily due to the large tracts of land that could not be considered "farm" land by any stretch of the imagination. Almost a quarter of the town, 6500 acres, was not accounted for in the agricultural surveys. This, plus the 8000 acres of woodland associated with farms, was predominantly northern forest or swamp land. Farm owners alone cut 2,000 cords of wood from their land in 1879. Some of this was firewood, or swamp saplings used in furniture or woodenware manufacture, valued at only \$1 to \$2 per cord. Other timber must have been good quality hardwood for lumber, for it was worth up to \$10 a cord and came from managed woodlots in the northwest part of town.

The 1910 census, last of those consulted for this project, still listed 135 farmers and farm laborers among Royalston's declining population of 781 people. In addition, twenty-one men identified themselves to the census taker as loggers or wood cutters, wholly apart from the 15 engaged in woodworking trades. Not surprisingly, almost all the wood cutters lived north or west of the Common. Farmers concentrated in the west and center of town, while tradesmen and industrial workers dominated the southern census area.

VII. The Power of Wood

The emergence of wood-based manufactures in Worcester County in the nineteenth century, as well as the growing need for construction materials and fuel, enabled saw milling to prosper and lumbering to become a profitable business. Specialized woodworking activities were firmly established in the northern towns by the mid-1800s. The manufacture of tubs, barrels and pails were important industries not just in Royalston, but also the surrounding towns of Ashby, Townsend, Winchendon, Templeton and Athol. Winchendon led the state in production of tubs and pails.³⁰

Beginning in 1805, when James Comee began to produce wood chair seats in Gardner, that town and others – notably Sterling – developed chair making into the single most important woodworking industry in the region. By 1837, Gardner alone supported 25 chair shops and factories, including a number that specialized in particular types such as flag-bottomed and cane seat chairs. Large manufacturers were supplied by ancillary mills like Royalston's, where *chair stuff* and *chair parts* were listed as products. The refinement of water-powered lathes and other wood turning machinery made it possible for small wood shops with minimal capital and expertise to support themselves by providing a single specific element required for a complex piece of furniture. Thus in 1850, for instance, Nathaniel Greely could make money from turning stove legs that probably came from the odds and ends of his lumbering operation.

In 1850 Royalston was a prosperous town with at least fifteen different mills and manufactories drawing power from its streams and providing employment for more than 140 people.^{ix} The major industrial output was woodenware of one sort or another, although the mill owned by Rufus Bullock in South Royalston's mill village produced cassimere and other woolen fabrics.

^{ix} This number is estimated to be almost half of Royalston's adult males at the time.

Figure 3: 1850 Products of Royalston Industry^x

company name	industry	# hands	products	[comments]
Beckwith? & Twichell	Furniture	2	tables & stands	
B--nes & Denis	shoe pegs	10	shoe pegs	
Luther? Harrington	doors & blinds	3	doors, sashes, blinds	
Salmon S. Farrar	wooden ware	7	dry measures, slats & hoops	N. of common
Vose & Battell	chairs & b.wood	9?	brush woods ¹ , [] furniture	
Wm. H. Prouty	dry measures	3	dry measures	Lawrence Brk, S. of common
Joseph Sawyer	furniture	15?	cradles, stands	N. of common
Lyman Stone	sawing & turning	2	lumber, chair stuff	
Jona. Shepardson	sawing lumber	5	lumber, pail staves, shingles, pail bottoms, [dashers?] matchsticks	Tully River at (now) Tully Lake
Dexter Underwood	sawing lumber	4	lumber, pail staves, chair stuff	
Nathaniel Greely	sawing lumber	2	lumber, [handles?] & stove legs, washboards, shingles	
[Benoni?] Pine	pails	5	pails, lumber, shingles	
Seth Holman	sawing lumber	3?	lumber, chair stuff	Doanes Falls
Rufus Bullock	woolen mnfg.	70	cassimere, [fustian?]	South Royalston
William Kendall ²	grist mill	2?		Doanes Falls?

Benjamin Bragg, listed as “manufacturer” on the population census, does not appear here although his house is located northeast of Doanes Falls. Bullock (1865) notes that Bragg’s satinet factory was burned out in 1850, and not rebuilt.

1: “brush woods” include handles and the heads into which brush material is inserted.

2: information taken from population schedule.

A recent economic depression had probably lessened demand for some of Royalston’s products. Benjamin Bragg’s satinet factory at Doanes Falls burned down during the year, adding to local troubles. These two factors undoubtedly contributed to a small decline in the town’s population: down to 1,529 from its all-time high of 1,667.

Although lumbering and sawmilling maintained their importance throughout the county during

^x This census, on microfilm at the Federal Records Center in Waltham, is written in faint, elaborate script and was out of focus when it was filmed. Names and numbers are best guesses. Where no guess is possible, a bracket so indicates. Comments are editorial, not part of the original schedule.

the whole of the 19th century, forest industries were a major stabilizing factor in Royalston's economy for three decades after 1850, due to the town's continued high proportion of forest cover.^{xi} A. H. Bullock, delivering Royalston's centennial address in 1865, observed:

the fathers lived *in* the forests; their children live *off* of them. We are getting out of the woods, and 'a man is famous, according as he lifts up axes upon the thick trees' – certainly a man is accounted *rich* as he *has thick trees* upon which to lift up axes.³¹

Some of those *thick trees*, Bullock notes, are located at Spirit Falls. *There*, he writes, *the original forests have not been disturbed*. Bullock also acknowledges the recent decline in local farming, but points to the 'crop' that would replace grain in Royalston's economy.

In this, as in other towns, resolute and intelligent farmers make shining farms, and flourish in their honorable occupation. But the popular current is not in that direction, and in consequence not a little of our land is given over to "saplings." These, especially the pines, make rapid growth and are esteemed a good investment.³²

Numerous deeds from the period support Bullock's contention. In 1868, for instance, Joseph Perkins was willing to turn over his entire half of a 171 acre farm to his brother in law (?) Franklin Goddard – with one exception: *reserving my undivided half of all the cut wood and timber now on said farm, and also my half of the hemlock and chestnut wood and timber standing....*³³ xii

The pattern of declining cultivation and forest resurgence during the second half of the nineteenth century in rural New England is a familiar one, having been documented and discussed in a number of classic sources.³⁴ Less familiar is a process documented in Royalston, but likely practiced elsewhere in the central region as well, in which lumbering and agricultural interests cooperated for the benefit of both. A selection of timber leases executed by the Prouty family (see appendix for Prouty's Mill) during the early 1850s outline the process.

Nov, 1851: Seth Holman to William H. Prouty [WD 542:472]

for \$512 Holman conveys "the timber part of a lot of marked trees, ninety three more or less ... also a certain lot of oak trees standing and lying on (Hutchinson land) namely all of the Red oak trees ... meaning such trees as are suitable for manufacturing into measures."

Feb, 1855: Asa Bacheller to John and William Prouty [WD 542:470]

for \$400 Bacheller conveys "all the wood & timber standing or lying on a certain lot of

^{xi} Land clearing peaked in much of New England during the 1850s and 60s, so that forest cover overall was at its lowest point in history. (MHC, p. 299)

^{xii} Admittedly Perkins was a real estate speculator and may never have personally worked this farm. He still prized the commercial value of its timber.

land near the center of Royalston Also all the wood & timber except twenty marked maple trees on one other lot of land known as Bacheller's cow pasture...."

March, 1855: John Leathe to John and William Prouty [WD 542: 473 & 474]

"(all the timber on a lot of land in the Northerly part of Royalston, beginning) three rods North of a hedge fence on the North line of Leathe's cleared land ... also all of the hard wood & hemlock trees standing on said strip of land 3 rods wide on the north line of the fence aforementioned that are over 12 inches diameter at the butt and all of the pines of all sizes Also grant and give the Proutys the privilege of going on to said land to cut and carry off said wood and timber at any time within four years from the first of April next and no longer...."

--- "(also) one old pine tree near the Northwest corner of the Hews lot and two saplin pines North of said old pine ... and three saplin pines East of said old pine...."

March, 1855: Henry Nichols 2nd, Joseph Eaton and William Emerson to John and William Prouty [WD 542:471]

for \$400 they convey "all of the trees standing on the East side of the road passing through the farm which we now own called the David [Ames?] farm, that may be suitable for to saw and manufacture into timber boards and all kinds of lumber except the pine trees and fruit trees and (hemlocks, and Also) the trees standing on the Wset side of the road on said farm that may be suitable for timber & lumber ... except the pine trees and fruit trees and the hemlocks, and should any hemlock trees be found standing one year from [now] said Proutys are to have such hemlocks as are left suitable for timber or manufactures.

In the process of selling the standing timber, these landowners are re-clearing land that is already or has been in use as farm land: they receive not only cash but services in exchange for unwanted trees. Leathe's deed is perhaps the most convincing. He is specifically directing the Proutys to clear a new parcel for him *North...of Leathe's cleared land*.

The elaborate language of Bullock's memorial address served to highlight the vital importance of forest products to the local economy. He cited 1865 census figures including 1,400,000 feet of lumber cut for market, 285 cords of staves, 50,000 shingles, chair stock valued at \$5,650; 32,000 chairs, 36,000 pails, 6,000 bushels of shoe pegs, \$12,000 worth of assorted woodenware, and 1,585 cords of firewood.

At the same time, however, Bullock described the narrowing range of Royalston industries.

Our shoe-shops, smithies, grist-mills and cider-mills [have all but disappeared]; while our oil-mill, clothier's mill, carding-mill, hatter's shop, trip-hammer, nail machine, potashes, brick-yards and tanneries have all, and utterly disappeared. And so have the factory chambers....^{xiii 35}

^{xiii} An oil mill was used to grind flax seed into linseed oil. Many of the other defunct industries Bullock lists had

VIII. Royalston Outpaced: Industry After 1880

What neither old-timers nor more recent immigrants could foresee was that Royalston would continue the economic decline only hinted at in 1850, over the next half-century. Royalston's census would present a very different appearance by the start of World War I.

1880 (last federal census with separate agriculture & manufactures schedules)

total Royalston population: 1,192

white males: 605

white females: 587

other: 0

houses: 271

households: 303

farm owners: 171 (130 acres average)

manufactory owners: 8 (69 employees total)

-- identified owners of subsequent Trustees' property, resident in town:

George Ballou, Silas Whipple (RF); Nathaniel Bragg (DF)

1910

total Royalston population: 781

white males: 418

white females: 363

no other persons

houses: 196

households: 210

farmers/farm laborers: 135

loggers/wood cutters: 21

manufacturing: 44

-- identified owners of subsequent Trustees' property, resident in town: none.

By the late 19th century Royalston had become a one-product town – perhaps not literally, but certainly in terms of manufacturing raw materials. Its eight mills were all engaged in woodworking, still relying on waterpower and on the wood that was its largest crop.

Figure 4: Royalston 1880 Manufacturing Schedules

Lumber and Saw Mills	# hands	months open¹	1000s ft lumber²	1000s shingles	1000s staves	% own logging	power source	fall ht.	power type
M & JM Partridge	6	11	520	--	--	4/5	Lawrence Bk.	14	turbine
Abel Merriam	3	6	600	50	300	N	Lawrence Bk	23	turbine
Wendall Pike	3	½ time	50	20	--	N	Lawrence Bk	15	jack/tub

been located at Doanes Falls. The 'factory' (woolen mill) must have been in one of its dormant phases.

Lyman Stone	10	11	380	100	--	1/3	Beaver Brook	16	breast
Leonard G. Moore	11	9	280	--	364	9/10	Tully Brook	10	'U.S.'
Salmon S. Farrar	10	2	150	50	--	2/3	Millers River	10	'U.S.'
Other Mfg.									
George Whitney	18	---	chairs and furniture				Millers River	10	3 turbines
Caleb W. Day	8	---	brush woods				Millers River	4	2 Anderson wheel

1: number of months per year the mill is in operation

2: lumber, laths, shingles, staves, headings, and bobbins & spools are classed as "proper saw-mill products"

-- additional saw mill question : do you remanufacture any of your product into sashes, doors, clapboards [etc]?

Farrar indicated half his product was remanufactured, employing 3 men doing it.

-- additional saw mill question: source of logs? "from the vicinity"

During the 1870s and 80s, new rail lines were completed, connecting the abundant hardwood forests of northern New England with major cities of the northeast and bringing new competition to the wood lot owners and woodworkers of north county towns. Coupled with this challenge was the almost universal change of motive power from water to steam in manufacturing. Mills were no longer tied to rivers – much less to seasonally variable streams such as Lawrence Brook.

As a consequence of these and other drastic economic changes across the nation, not the least of which was the sea change brought about by the Civil War, massive, efficient factories in easily accessible urban areas drove the previous era's independent, water-powered mills out of business. Royalston's manufacturing statistics are not unusual: in 1850 the town listed 15 separate mills^{xiv} and manufactories employing 154 laborers. By 1880 there were only 8 mills, all woodworking, with a total of 69 employees. In 1910 the numbers were even lower: 42 industrial workers. (If railroad workers and all those associated with wood cutting and sawing are included, the number increases to 73.)

Other populations declined as well: from 171 farm owners in 1880, the number dropped to 135, including hired labor, in 1910. And across the board the town of Royalston shrank in population to numbers not seen since the early Republic.

IX. Royalston Redefined: the Twentieth Century

Royalston was slowly losing its historic core. By the late nineteenth century, as diverse industries closed down or left town, local residents were forced to depend more broadly on the resources of surrounding communities. Jobs and consumer goods were still to be found farther to the south, and Royalston's population declined as residents chose to relocate closer to more lively

^{xiv} excluding grist mills, which fell into a gray zone between agriculture and manufacturing, apparently ignored by both. In any case only one gristmill can be tracked down through the population census – not surprising since production of food grain and hence its processing was among the first 'industries' to leave New England, while processing of oats and other livestock feed was apparently taken over by individual farmers using small steam-powered mills. [Barnwell & Giles, p. 77 ff.]

economic areas.

The outmigration continued as a post-war recession and the Great Depression during the 1920s and '30s shut down many of the factories in what had still been viable neighboring industrial towns. Concurrently, development of synthetic materials undermined the demand for wood products that had sustained Royalston's remaining industrial base. Plastic pails, metal chair parts, even plywood from huge lumber operations in Maine and the northwest, eliminated the specialized economic niche that had kept wood-based manufacturing profitable for so long. Shrinking population figures summarize the town's retrenchment.

1790:	1130
1810:	1415
1840:	1667
1850:	1529
1860:	1486
1890:	1030
1910:	781
1930:	744
1940:	795

Declining population was followed by a decline in housing stock as well, the number of houses in town dropping from 271 in 1880 to 196 in 1910.^{xv} Remaining farmers found it difficult to compete against large scale midwestern farms trading in a national economy.

As a result of all these factors, large tracts of land in Royalston became no longer useful, or desirable, to families whose previous generations had found some minimal use for every acre. This, in turn, opened the door to a new generation of land buyers, including those who purchased what is now Trustees' reservation land.

Some buyers, like the original proprietors, bought inexpensive Royalston acreage as straightforward investment, like the series of buyers who owned the Thompson parcel of Jacobs Hill between 1921 and 1967. Here, a tract of wooded land was purchased, its wood rights were leased out for a few years, and then the non-resident owner sold again for a small profit.

Some out-of-towners found in Royalston a perfect rural vacation spot, whose isolated tracts of woodland held both peace and a special fascination. Such was the case of Charles and Beirne Brues, whose 68 acres at the base of Spirit Falls now forms the Tall Timbers reservation managed by the Harvard Forest. The property had belonged to Mrs. Brues' grandfather, but she and her husband made the property – including a small parcel across Long Pond where a cabin was located – their own. Charles Brues was an entomologist in the Harvard University Biology Department. The small woods camp on Long Pond was a perfect staging area for extensive studies he undertook on New England aquatic insects.

Similarly, the twentieth century owners of Coddington Meadow (see section on Doanes Falls) built

^{xv} Thinking in terms of present cultural resources, those figures suggest that the town's landscape is strewn with at least 80 cellarholes and foundations of houses alone, to say nothing of accompanying farm- and out buildings.

a small vacation camp on land that had earlier been useful primarily as floodable meadow upstream from Doanes Falls and its manufacturing activities.

Less isolated but equally rural, the white houses of Royalston Common drew summer residents from the late 19th century on. Favorite sons, like a number of the Bullock family, left town to build fortunes and reputations elsewhere, but escaped the summer heat of New York and Boston by returning to family holdings around the Common. Other visitors, like the Empress Zita of Hungary and her entourage, provided more famous topics for backyard discussions. As recently as this past year, one of the Common's elegant Federal houses was purchased by a Boston museum curator. The contrast of milieus is self-evident.

Other investors engaged in more focussed economic activity, like the Russell-Foote family whose holdings included Royalston Falls. Beginning with an original parcel purchased in 1906, Burton Russell acquired 320 contiguous acres by 1911. After 1929 Russell's nephew, George Foote, himself employed in industry, engaged a forestry organization^{xvi} to manage the property. The Foote family continues to log the acreage they still own, meanwhile having donated over 200 acres to The Trustees of Reservations. George Foote Jr. clearly spelled out the family's complex understanding of highest and best use for their 20th century woodlands.³⁶

My family and I have considered our land to be a long term asset with a time scale measured in generations. We viewed the Royalston Falls as a natural asset which should be preserved for all to enjoy....In the twenties, we had the Yale School of Forestry come and plant a sizable plantation of three species of softwoods, which have since been harvested. The land continues under management of the New England Forestries Foundation.... [W]hen part of the land was given to the Trustees of Reservations, those parts [that would constitute good house lots] were retained to preserve the value of the asset.

Foote's inclusion of public benefit in a list of otherwise private benefits to be gained from this tract of land is a true late 20th century mindset.

After World War II, Royalston's population remained low until the 1960s when the first of two back-to-the-land movements inspired an immigrant wave of sorts. The town's population jumped by 18% during the 1970s. The head count topped 1,000 by the time Don Lessem wrote a profile of Royalston for *Worcester Magazine* in 1985.³⁷

There are now three elements ... to the Royalston community, according to Rev. James Willis.... "There are people born and raised here who don't know anything else. There are young families not right in the center of town from the '60s and '70s who came to get away from things, and [more recently] people now looking for a quiet place to bring up children. And there are retired people looking to get away from things...."

Lessem refers to the most recent newcomers as *the vanguard of the suburbanizing horde that has*

^{xvi} The New England Forestry Foundation; see further mention ahead.

overtaken Princeton and Harvard. He quotes a local realtor's observation that *no one can afford to live in Harvard anymore* but that Royalston houses were still eminently affordable, even on the Common.

The juxtaposition of back to nature and suburbanizing horde have led to some interesting clashes in Royalston's recent past. The town's chief constable in 1985 was quoted as saying:

Everyone comes here and says, 'What a beautiful little town. I'm so glad we found it.' Then they try and change it. I hope nobody comes here. We don't want city ways or city taxes here.³⁸

The threat of development, however, has also engendered support for a number of initiatives designed to leave Royalston's land and its cultural resources relatively untouched. Royalston Common, long heralded as *the most perfect example of the New England white farm village in existence*,³⁹ was designated a historic district in 1980.

Away from the center, however, land protection efforts had actually begun as early as 1915, when Otter Creek State Park was set aside as protected space spanning the Royalston border into Winchendon and Templeton. Otter Creek was the first state park established in Massachusetts. Protection of additional vast tracts of undeveloped land began in the aftermath of the 1938 hurricane. In 1939 the Army Corps of Engineers began work on the Tully Dam and Lake flood control project, erecting a sixty-two foot high dam on Royalston's southern border, below the conjunction of Lawrence Brook and the Tully River. By 1949 the government had purchased 1,300 acres of watershed land upstream of the dam, to 668 feet above sea level.⁴⁰

From that time to the present, a diverse group of public and private organizations have acquired and protected additional parcels of land in the town of Royalston. These parcels, totaling over 8,000 acres, include wildlife management areas, state forest and managed timber tracts as well as The Trustees' three reservations. Many of them are non-contiguous. A majority of them encompass areas considered *unimprovable* in agricultural parlance. But the net effect of this collection is a town, the majority of which appears to be more natural than cultural.

Figure 5. Land Protection in Royalston⁴¹

<u>type of protection</u>	<u>number of acres</u>
federal	1,708
state	4,924
nonprofit organization	720
conserv. or agric. restrictions	628
miscellaneous	80
Total acres protected:	8,060
Total area of town:	27,232
percent of town protected:	29.6%

Some of the parcels were acquired by purchase from conservation supporters. Others were gifts, often from descendants of families who had farmed the same acres in earlier years. Property histories for The Trustees' reservations (see following sections) include specific examples of both forms of acquisition, but profiles of two Royalston tracts owned by the New England Forestry Association are not atypical.⁴²

-- Chase Memorial Forest had been in the Chase family since 1841 when Mrs. Glassett's grandfather, Francis Chase, bought the initial 75 acres of the family farm. Mrs. Glassett was born on the farm in 1902, where cows, horses, sheep, apples of twelve varieties, various grains, and vegetables provided everything the family needed. In 1920 a fire destroyed the farm buildings, and afterwards the land, which had been farmed since 1765, was used to grow hay, pasturage, firewood, and timber.

-- Dr. and Mrs. Robert W. Ehrich of Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, gave this forest to NEFF in 1979. The property, located at 2,000-foot elevation, was purchased in 1962 as a buffer to land which they already owned. The Ehrich's goal was to preserve their land while producing valuable timber.

Continuing state support of private and public conservation efforts has been an essential link in Royalston's successful preservation of varied historic landscapes. The most recent example of this support is evidenced by the opening of the Tully Trail in 2001. This particular story of cooperative achievement began more than four years earlier, with eight organizations and state offices, local governments and volunteers forming a partnership to construct an 18 mile loop trail around the Tully River drainage.

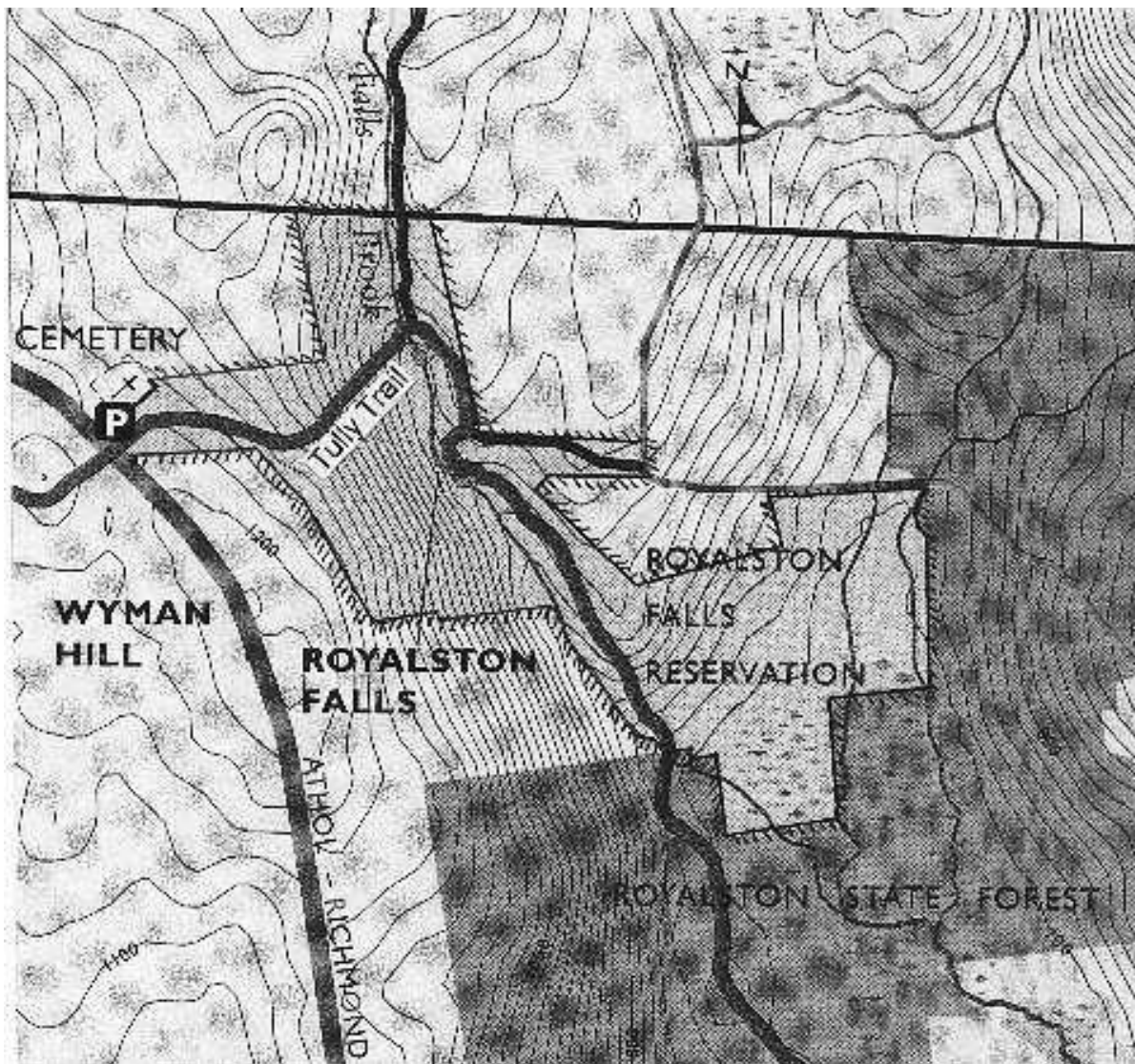
The Trustees' Central Region Director Dick O'Brien participated in an official 1997 kick-off ceremony for the project, held at the Jacobs Hill Overlook. "It was magic," he said. "[Commonwealth Environmental Secretary] Bob Durand and a lot of other dignitaries came. They were just stunned by the view." By the time the guests left, over two million dollars in state conservation money had been earmarked to protect that view. Two years later, through conservation restrictions and some purchases, an additional 9,000 acres had been permanently protected. The view – and the ecosystem – of the Tully River Valley was secured.

Worcester County historian George Horr might well be surprised, were he to return to Jacobs Hill. He would still see *the grandest and wildest of natural scenery* as he had 120 years earlier. The fact that so much open space could still appear as *natural scenery* across the town is due in large part to Royalston's enduring status as border land. But Dick O'Brien puts it another way.

Royalston's a quaint little community. Nice people. It has a lot and not a lot going for it, if you know what I mean. It's a very independent town.

SECTION TWO

ROYALSTON FALLS RESERVATION



I. ROYALSTON FALLS

History of Ownership and Occupation

italics = Ballou property, adjoining The Trustees to the north on Falls Road. [M] = map

1765 [M]	original proprietors: Lot #79 & 80 – David Bullock Lot #45 – Thomas Hubbard Lot #42 – Samuel Watts
	-- gap in records --
1803 WD 155:114	<i>Isaac Estey to Russell Ballou: part of Lots #79 & 80.</i>
1806 WD 167:626	James Forbes (Royalston yeoman) to Calvin Forbes (son, Royalston yeoman): 54 A. in Lot #45 plus other tracts
1806 WD 160:471	Ebenezer Blanding (Royalston yeoman) to Calvin Forbes (Royalston yeoman): 112 A. in Lot #45 for \$1550 plus assumed \$500 mortgage
(1818)	<i>Russell to Luther Ballou: undivided half of home farm (same as Estey to Ballou)</i>
1819 WD 214:407	Forbes to Silas Whipple: 112 A. of Lot #45
date unknown	[Whipple to Bartlett]
1821 WD 249:264	Levi Bartlett (Rutland) to Calvin Forbes: 112 A. Lot #45 for \$578 w/ assumed mortgage
1831 [M]	<i>“Luther Ballou” house</i> <i>“Calvin Forbes” house</i>
1833 WD 296:300	Forbes (Royalston yeoman) to Rufus Bullock (Royalston Esq.): same tracts as James to Calvin Forbes, 1806, for \$2800.
1835 WD326:3	Bullock to Silas Whipple
1848 WD 764:366	<i>Russell Ballou (Jr.) to Luther Ballou: other ½ of home farm</i>
1857 [M]	<i>“L. Ballou” house</i> <i>“Mrs. Forbes” house</i>

1868 WD 761:557	<i>Luther Ballou mortgages farm to H. Pearson</i>
1870 [M]	<i>"Gibson" (Ballou location)</i> <i>"S. Whipple" (Forbes location)</i>
1872 WD 880:457	<i>(Pearson forecloses on Ballou's mortgage in 1870 and sells to M. T. Nash & William Brown of Winchendon) Nash & Brown sell to Silas Whipple: 68 A. of lot #80 & 22 A. of lot #79 – the "home farm"</i>
1877 WD1010:314	Whipple to Benjamin Wheeler: land from 1835 and 1872 purchases; i.e. the <i>Ballou</i> and Forbes properties
1890 [M]	<i>unnamed house (Ballou location) and possibly 2 other buildings to the west;</i> no representation of Forbes house
1892 WD 1377:584	estate of Wheeler to Alfred A. Putney
1898 [M]	<i>"A. Putney" large house and barn (Ballou location)</i>
1899 WD1611:167	Putney to Albert J. Sampson (Athol)
1906 & 1908 WD1843:113; 1894:161	Sampson to Burton C. Russell (Keene NH): 5 tracts between 1906-1911. These two include 272 acres including the falls, and two lots of 14 and 15 acres east of the falls.
1929 WD4326:257	Russell (single, of Keene NH) to niece Doris Russell Foote (Dublin NH): 320 acres +/- in 5 tracts
1929 [Foote 1984]	<i>Russell to Hoffman & Prince: "one of the old Ballou houses"</i>
1939 [M]	<i>vacant building (Ballou location)</i>
1951 WD3389:338	George L and Doris R. Foote to The Trustees of Reservations: 200 acres
1954 WD3614:521	George L and Doris R. Foote to The Trustees of Reservations: 5 acres
ca. 1981	<i>Ballou house destroyed according to Foote 1984 letter</i>
2002	Lee Loy to The Trustees of Reservations: 12.2 acres

II. Local Land Use History - Introduction

An early Trustees write-up on their new Royalston Falls Reservation described the property's most notable feature under the heading 'physical and biological characteristics':

The topography is quite startling. Whether one travels from Route 32 in New Hampshire or from Route 68 in Massachusetts, over Falls Road, one travels through gently rolling woodlands and past fairly level fields. A short ¼ mile walk from Falls Road one is abruptly halted by the chasm-like gorge of Falls Brook. The floor of the gorge stands at 700 feet, the height east of the brook is 850 feet and on the west bank Wyman Hill rises to an elevation in excess of 1150 feet.

The soil, though stony, has a rich, wet loam cover that is productive of rapid growth rate in forest tree species and interesting ground cover plants.⁴³

An internet web site includes a more dramatic description, focusing on the Falls' geology.

Falls Brook flowed over a single, large drop of 60 feet to splash into a circular pool below. The walls of the gorge were sheer.... I wanted to walk up the stream at the bottom of the gorge so that I could get a view of the entire falls from below. Alas, a large, deep circular pool blocked the way...

I noticed that the circular pool that blocked my path looked very similar to the circular pool into which the falls was spilled. I realized that I was looking at an ancient pool that was once filled by the falls. In time the falls cut into the rocks, backing gradually into the hillside. Currently it's creating another pool several yards upstream, leaving the downstream pool to be just a stopping place on the water's seaward path.⁴⁴

The falls are, almost literally, the centerpiece of a 217 acre tract of land, most of which is now heavily wooded. It was undoubtedly heavily wooded when Native Americans passed to the west of it and when colonial proprietors bought it at auction and sold it to later settlers. Between past and present, however, for a period of somewhat less than a hundred years, this same tract was a heavily worked landscape. Owners who lived along upper Falls Road and those whose houses were closer to the 'civilized' village of West Royalston or across the New Hampshire border in Richmond experimented with a variety of means to make their shallow-soiled parcels of upland turn a profit, or at least provide some benefit to humans.

III. Families at the Falls

A 1987 archeological survey of the north-south Route 32 corridor to the west of Royalston Falls

describes a landscape that is the twin of the Falls Road area.

All of Route 32 in Royalston contains visible remains of 18th and 19th century occupation. The narrow road is lined almost continuously with fieldstone walls. Many of the houses date from the late 18th century. The landscape of the road is in many areas a nearly intact example of a once common agricultural style of settlement.

.... Many areas are altered however. Most of the fields are now overgrown and covered with second-growth forest. Roughly half of the houses shown on 19th century maps no longer exist. One house is known to have been moved to a new location. At other sites, more modern 20th century houses have been built on the old homesites.⁴⁵

The description of cultural resources needs only slight amendment to suit the appearance of Falls Road, from the point where it branches north from Route 68. The stone walls are there. The forest is third- or fourth-growth. The houses tend to be early to mid-19th century, with cellarholes and 20th century additions interspersed. Farther north along the road, in the vicinity of The Trustees' reservation and abutting land, cellarholes win out.

The houses lining Richmond Road (Route 32) and Falls Road testify to the presence of early settlers who, it can be assumed, did not come to the area to marvel at the falls. In fact the immediate area around Royalston Falls was undoubtedly the least desirable land in the neighborhood, from a settler's perspective. The falls were too violent, and their gorge too narrow to be useful as a water power source. The brook was too near the headwaters of the Tully River, and too seasonal in flow, to make for useful fishing. The steep drops on both sides of the brook were deadly for livestock, requiring installation of fencing or walling before the surrounding uplands were safe for summer grazing.

Nevertheless, the vicinity supported a handful of multigenerational farm families from the time of Royalston's first settlement in the 1760s and '70s, well into the twentieth century. This was especially true on the west side of the brook, where Bullocks, Davises and, later, Newtons anchored a linear community of farmsteads. East of the brook, Falls Road was the transport route for Forbes, Raymonds and more Davises who intermarried with Ballous from over the New Hampshire line.

Testament to this essentially 19th century community is the small cemetery adjacent to The Trustees' recently installed parking area on Richmond Road. Although called the Newton Cemetery, its headstones are dominated by Davises, along with Weeks, White, and Wheeler. The oldest legible stone is that of Deacon Moulton Bullock, one of Royalston's original settlers, who died in 1818.

Bullock's brother Hugh and their cousins followed him to Royalston, buying proprietary lots and settling in the same vicinity before the Revolution.⁴⁶ Within twenty years the Bullocks had neighbors. John Davis, from Haverhill, already 54 years old, brought his large family to Royalston in 1788 and settled next door. It is possible that the Davises and Bullocks were

already acquainted, for Hugh Bullock married a Rebecca Davis in the late 1770s.

However the acquaintance began, family intermarriages and land exchanges became a neighborhood norm. The following series of interactions may seem somewhat byzantine, but the net result was the building of a like-minded, interrelated, multigenerational community of farmers in Royalston's northwest corner.

- John Davis's son Squire (also spelled Squier) married Althea (also Althea, eventually Welthea) Bullock.
- Squire and Althea Davis established a farm north of his father's, on land located in proprietor's lots #79 and 80 – land that had belonged to one of Althea's Bullock cousins.
- 1803: Russell Ballou, from Richmond, New Hampshire, bought the other portion of Lots 79 and 80.
- 1818: Ballou deeded one half of his "home farm" to son Luther who has just turned 21.
- At about the same time Luther marries Clarissa Davis (daughter of Joseph Davis, Squire's brother)
- 1824: Joseph Davis (son of Squire) marries Tamarin Ballou of Richmond, New Hampshire. She was likely a cousin of Luther's.

It was a dispersed community, not like the cluster of houses and public buildings that defined the village of West Royalston. Houses were strung out on the edge of Richmond Road and Falls Road, their facades oriented to the south or southwest to absorb sunlight no matter where the road ran. Barns and outbuildings stood in scattered arrangement behind houses. Fields, orchards and pasture land fanned out beyond these. At the back of rectilinear lots were forest lands. Many lots included Falls Brook (unnamed) as a boundary line.

Squire and Althea Davis's small cape house still stands just south of Newton Cemetery, where they are buried. The cellarhole of the Ballou home farm dominates upper Falls Road and will be discussed further.

Interestingly, the Forbes name does not appear in the town's genealogies, although a later generation receives recognition through "Forbes Falls", one-time name for Royalston Falls. Deeds and maps, however, substantiate that the Forbeses owned large tracts of land on Falls Road prior to 1806 (see History of Ownership chart) and Calvin Forbes is mentioned as late as circa 1870 in association with the area.

By the time of the 1850 federal census, the Royalston Falls neighborhood was thoroughly settled. The population schedule affords a snapshot of families in the area, as the census taker went door to door taking down information in geographic sequence:

- **James Forbes**, farmer, was 60 years old, living with his wife Rachel and three older children on Falls Road.
- North of Forbes was **Otis Whipple**, farmer, age 50 with wife Mary and eight children between 8 and 20, of whom seven were males.
- Next came **Calvin Forbes**, James's brother, 66 year old farmer with his wife Polly and two women in their mid-thirties who may have been daughters. The Forbes family

included Hannah Raymond, age 81. Hannah might have been Polly's mother (hence another example of neighborly intermarriage), or simply an aging neighbor whom they had taken in, for a town map drawn 20 years earlier shows James Raymond living just south of Forbes property.

- Next was **Luther Ballou**, age 52, born in New Hampshire; his wife Clarissa, and six children from 5 to 20. 95-year-old Mary Bullock lived with them, a great-aunt of Clarissa's.
- The northernmost house, where Luther's brother had lived in 1831, was now occupied by **Benjamin Whitcomb**, a young man of 25 who, with his wife Nancy, lived alone. Whitcomb may have been a tenant on Ballou land, for he was not listed on the agriculture schedule as a farm owner.

The census taker proceeded to cross the brook from Whitcomb's to the Richmond road, and began working his way southward.

- **Joseph Davis**, farmer, age 58, had taken over ownership of his father's house. He lived there with his wife Tama [sic] and four children between 9 and 23. His father was still alive however and living with them. At age 88, "Sqeir" Davis still listed himself as a farmer. A 50-year-old woman also lived with the family, probably either a relative or hired help.

South of Davis began the Newton farms. The Newtons had apparently bought up much of the Goddard and Bullock family land, amassing 650 acres and significant herds of cattle by the time this census was taken. A comparison with the other farm holdings nearby convey a sense of land use in the immediate vicinity.

Fig. 6: Royalston Falls Farmers, 1850

name	improved acres	unimpr. acres	milk cows	other cattle
Daniel Forbes	60	35	4	6
Otis Whipple	75	25	3	5
Calvin Forbes	125	50	1?	25
Luther Ballou	125	45	5	11
Joseph Davis	200	75	4	2

Interestingly, Daniel Forbes appears as a property owner on this schedule, rather than his father James. This Forbes family owned only half the land Calvin did, due to some complicated land purchases earlier in the century (see ownership chart). But Daniel and James supplemented their income from crops and cattle by also raising ten sheep and engaging in some sort of "household manufacture" (the census does not specify). Theirs is the only farm in the vicinity that chooses this route. The others, with substantial "improved" acreage – which could mean anything from crop land and fields to orchard and pasture – lead the town in numbers of livestock, especially non-dairy herds.

Spread across the two page schedule is what looks like an ongoing competition between Calvin Forbes and Luther Ballou, the two men who farmed the ridge at the top of Falls Road. Forbes has

175 acres; Ballou, 170. Forbes had a sizable herd of cattle, but Ballou's dairy cows are worth so much more per head that the two men's total livestock valuations are almost the same. The men are among the largest growers of Indian corn in town: 100 bushels each. Forbes' oat crop beats out Ballou's two to one, but Ballou has an orchard valued at 2 ½ times that of the other man.

Among all the Royalston Falls families, potatoes were a major crop in 1850, averaging 90 bushels per farm. This specialized agriculture (no wheat, rye, peas or beans) must have begun because both the demand and the growing conditions made it worthwhile. While it could not have been exactly easy to grow a tuber crop in the rocky soil of Royalston, it was *possible*, both because potatoes do not require highly fertile soils, and because cultivation of the plants required *raising* dirt around developing tubers, rather than cultivating deeply for tubers that reach downward into the soil, as carrots do.

The final product of Royalston Falls that was listed by the census taker was *Maple sugar, lbs. of*. Ballou did not get involved in sugaring, but Forbes, along with most of his neighbors, tapped enough of their maples to produce 200 pounds of sugar, on average, per farm.^{xvii}

Ironically, wood and other forest products were not included on the 1850 agricultural schedule. The population list lists only five men in all of Royalston as "sawyer" and terms such as logging, woodsman, lumbering do not appear. All five of the sawyers lived in the northwest part of the town, though, and included two Shepardsons and Nathaniel Greeley (refer to Figure 1: 1850 manufactures). Given the lack of documentation, a small leap of faith is required to abstract from the *unimproved land* listings around Royalston Falls, to an active and ongoing lumbering operation in the vicinity.

IV. Falls Road Farms

Over the next three decades a number of changes occur that disintegrate the Royalston Falls community. Luther Ballou loses his farm due to an unpaid mortgage, and it is bought by Silas Whipple – possibly one of Otis's seven sons – who had begun buying upper Falls Road land in 1835. In 1870, Whipple was living in Calvin Forbes' house on Falls Road while an unfamiliar name was associated with the old Ballou place. Seven years later, Whipple sells off all his Falls Road property and disappears from the neighborhood. By 1890, the Forbes house is not even represented on area maps.

Meanwhile the Ballou place had undergone a major transformation as well. By 1870 Luther was no longer living there, although he did not lose ownership of the property until 1872. The 1870 map labels *Gibson* as occupying his house. The 1880 federal census tells a much more complete, and surprising, story. In 1880 the ex-Ballou farm was occupied by George Bolton, a 33-year-old farmer who was apparently tenant farming for the owner, Benjamin Wheeler.

The itemization of Bolton's property does not make him out to be anywhere near as wealthy a farmer as his predecessor had been. He declared 50 acres of tillable land (including hayfields

^{xvii} 200 pounds of maple sugar is equivalent to 25 gallons of maple syrup, requiring approximately 1,000 gallons of maple sap.

growing 15 tons of hay); 60 acres of pasture, and 20 acres of forest. The barn behind his house held two horses, three milk cows that produced 200 pounds of butter annually, plus two calves. Ten hens helped feed the household and meanwhile produced an estimated 100 eggs per year. Five pigs would end up as large quantities of inexpensive meat.

Bolton grew no grain crops at all, but in the space of two cultivated acres he produced 100 bushels of potatoes. Three acres of orchard – 150 trees (see 1930 timber map in appendix) – grew 50 bushels of fruit. Finally, he harvested 40 cords of wood from his forest acres and at an average \$9 a cord, this must have been quality lumber.⁴⁷

But Bolton had another source of income to supplement the money he derived from agricultural and forest products. The 1880 population schedule listing all the occupants of the house, tells the story.

George Bolton, 33	farmer
Jennie F., 26	wife
Leota M., 4	daughter
Lewellyn, 1	son
Foster, Benoni, 83	pauper – married (blind)
Foster, Huldah, 84	pauper – married
Wheeler, Lizzie, 83	pauper – single
Hale, Lydia, 75	pauper – widowed
Forbes, Sally, 65	pauper – single
Greeley, Dilliania, 72	pauper – widowed
Foster, George, 25	pauper – single
Bolton, George, 14	nephew

Bolton, father of a young family, was willing to live at the far edge of town because he ran the town's poor farm. Royalston was not exactly beset by paupers. Most of the people listed as boarding with Bolton's family were elderly women with local relatives who couldn't or wouldn't care for them: Wheeler, Hale, Forbes and Greeley are all family names from the immediate vicinity. So George Bolton and his wife, assisted by their nephew, took them in, in return for a monthly stipend out of the town budget. Nathaniel Bragg had done the same thing twenty-five years earlier, just south of Doanes Falls (see Doanes Falls section).

It is likely that most of Bolton's farm products were not for direct sale at all, but went to feed family and boarders: eggs, butter, pork, potatoes, apples and an occasional chicken dinner. Some of the wood harvested had to stoke the stoves, but perhaps George "improved himself" by selling the rest.

It is possible that during this period one of the house's boarders was Nancy Whipple, whom Caswell describes in his 1917 history as *a remarkable woman and known far and wide as old Nance Whipple, the fortune teller*. Caswell goes on to quote a poem written about the mysterious woman who lived on the hill, describing her in terms better suited to a witch than a fortune teller.⁴⁸

Clearly the farm had become a site of rumors and superstition, a place and a population on the very fringes of society. The Boltons left Royalston Falls for the more settled, south side of town (see Jacobs Hill section) at an unknown later date – probably before 1892 when Alfred Putney bought the property and apparently moved into the house. It was vacant by 1939; destroyed in 1980 or 1981.⁴⁹

Today the land around Russell Ballou's home farm still shows signs of its last occupants including wire fencing, and high-bush blueberries filling in between huge sugar maples that line the roadway. The house's asphalt shingled roof has collapsed into the cellar on one side of a massive central chimney. Rotting floor sills attest to a rambling complex of rooms back of the chimney, where a later hearth was built onto the main stack. An uncapped well sits just inside the southwest corner of the foundation. Outbuilding remains have been largely destroyed by recent earthmoving activity done to clear Ballou's side yard. It now serves as a log landing for ongoing timber operations.

Calvin Forbes apparently chose to move away from Falls Road before the Ballou's house changed hands. Deed evidence shows him selling -- or possibly mortgaging⁵⁰ -- a sizable portion of his property at the Falls in 1833 (see History of Ownership). An 1857 map labels the house, previously indicated as *Calvin Forbes* (1831) as now belonging to *Mrs. Forbes*. The same house is occupied by Silas Whipple in 1870, while *C. Forbes* (presumably a son of the Falls Road Calvin) is shown located immediately north of West Royalston village, on the Richmond Road. (Refer to Appendix for maps cited.)

Perhaps it was Silas Whipple, or the mysterious *Gibson*, who came up with a novel way of making money from Royalston Falls' poor land. Historian Lilley Caswell, in 1917, describes an unexpected land use of part of *the Forbes Farm*, which a 1952 Worcester newspaper article elaborates.

Previous to 1870 the owner of this Forbes Falls property erected a flight of stairs from the foot to the top of the falls and provided seats, tables, swings and other accessories of picnic grounds, and the place became a resort for recreationists, parties sometimes going there from Winchendon, Athol and other far away places, in spite of distance and hard roads.

The news article adds *a dance pavilion ... and swings in an adjoining grove*. It continues:

The spot was so popular that thousands of persons by buggy and bicycle visited it annually. Summer evening band concerts drew residents of surrounding towns. Old timers in Royalston and neighboring communities can still remember the gay times they had at pavilion dances.^{xviii}

Caswell abruptly ends the story by commenting:

But it was improbable that the proprietor could get enough out of his desultory visitors to compensate him for his outlay in maintaining such

^{xviii} See Appendix A for a photo of this scene.

conditions, especially the stairs.

The Worcester Telegram, on the other hand, draws some creative conclusions, partially based on their mistaken assumption that Forbes himself was still involved. (Although Forbes' death date has not been tracked down, were he still alive, he would have been approaching 100 at the time).

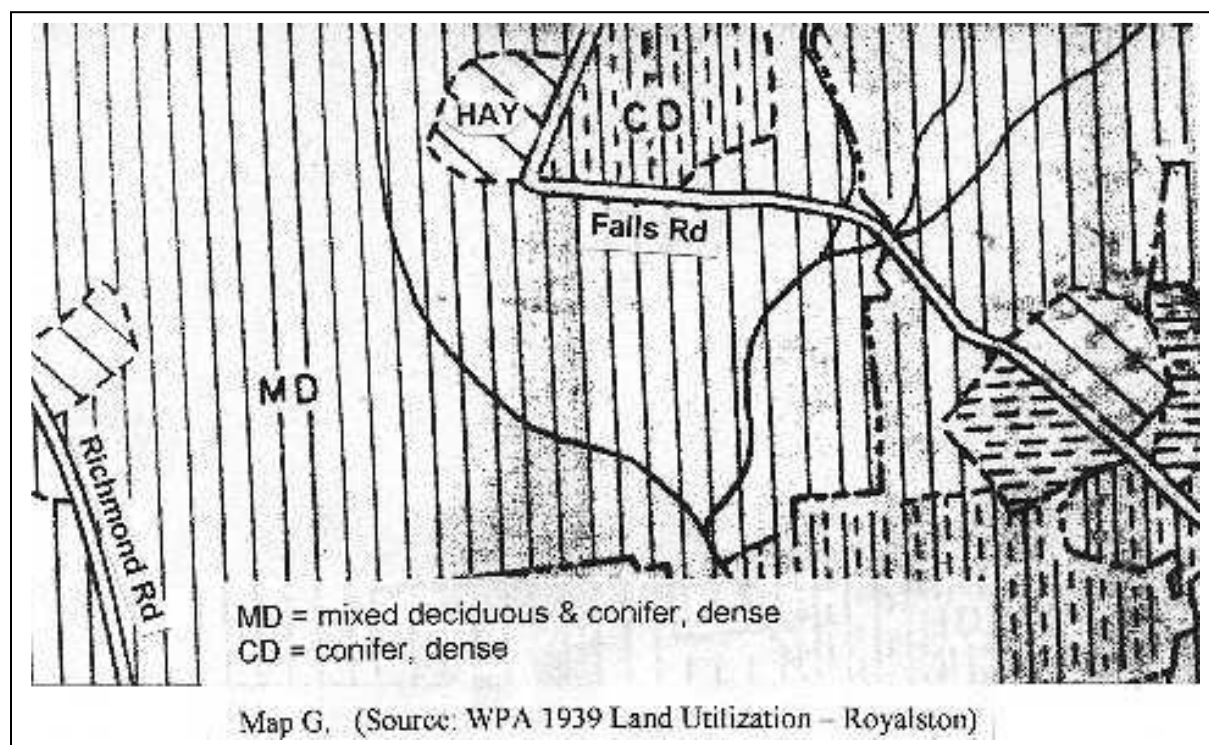
Gradually the scenic spot went into disuse after Mr. Forbes' death, and in September, 1938, the hurricane raised havoc with the timber and left the place virtually inaccessible.⁵¹

Strange as this popular public use may seem to modern readers, the Forbes Falls promoter – whoever he was – was actually building on an entertainment trend that had gained great momentum during the late nineteenth century, a sort of compromise between the appeal of carnivals and fresh air “physical culture.” Summer weekends, especially, saw thousands of urban dwellers and rural village residents flocking to outdoor venues such as boat rental facilities and dance pavilions. Well-known examples are the Dedham Boat Club and nearby Moseley's on the Charles. Exotic natural attractions became picnic destinations for trolley riders (the Rock House in West Brookfield was a favorite) and energetic bicyclers, as the quote above suggests.⁵²

Whoever the developer was of tourist facilities around the falls, he was undoubtedly inspired by this national trend, encouraged by the post-Civil War growth of summer vacation travel and local increase in summer residents. The site was a stunning natural attraction; it was cool on hot summer evenings; the cost of erecting rustic facilities must have been minimal in that pre-OSHA era, and it was likely that he faced very little in the way of entertainment competition. The formula was so successful that the town of Royalston held an annual community picnic at the Falls for years.⁵³

The newspaper's description of the Falls as being *virtually inaccessible* following the '38 hurricane probably goes a long way toward explaining the Ballou house abandonment as well. The article, announcing the Footes' gift of the Falls area to The Trustees, concludes by saying: *it is hoped that the trustees will again develop the area, clean out the fallen timber and rebuild a road to the site.*

V. The 24th Reservation



Royalston Falls did not look like a stunning natural phenomenon in 1951.

March 1951: Mr. Ellery brought up an offer made by Mr. George L. Foote of some land and a waterfall in Royalston without an endowment....

June 1951: The suggestion was made that just the 105 acres including the falls could be accepted. Others thought that Mr. Wharton might estimate the value of the standing timber....

July 1951: It was pointed out that the annual income from a \$1000 endowment would be sufficient to maintain the property....

August 1951: ... the report of Mr. Wharton [stated] that on a recent visit he found all marketable timber growth had been knocked down by two hurricanes and that the falls were nearly dry....Mr. Greeley...reported that his visit to the Falls had made him believe that the Falls were of slight beauty with a bad approach.

The Standing Committee of The Trustees of Reservations had their own reservations about accepting the gift offered by George Foote. Determined not to accept property without funding to maintain it, the discussion continued until a \$5000 endowment fund was in place.

By the end of 1951, 200 acres of Royalston Falls land was transferred from George L. and Doris R. Foote to The Trustees, forming the organization's twenty-fourth reservation.

Later Standing Committee minutes, annual reports and Central Region files document subsequent management decisions and activities at Royalston Falls Reservation. Additional Foote acreage abuts the reservation, and

- 1954: Reservation opens to the public.
 ...in order to provide access to the Falls from the high road ...Mr. and Mrs. Foote made an additional gift of [5 acres]...A small parking space was laid out at the entrance and signs erected. The path as rerouted is shorter, if a little steeper, than the old one. The most important change was the construction of a fence of iron posts and wire along the east side of the chasm....it was a regrettable necessity from an aesthetic standpoint.
- 1954-56: Local property committee was formed including, over the next two years, Mr. Foote, William Greeley, Philip Orcutt and Professor William Thompson.
- 1958: concern about lack of visitors: *the access road leading to it is a dirt road which appears to frighten away many of the moderns.*
- *In 1959 floods washed out both access roads on two occasions limiting the number of visitors. This was unfortunate as the Falls were spectacular in this wet season.*
- 1960: vandals removed all signage for second year in a row, and beaver dammed the brook above the falls – resulting in *a more uniform and adequate flow of water over the falls.*

Following this initial burst of attention, Royalston Falls Reservation settled into a quiet, low-maintenance routine. Occasionally the larger world intruded, and Central Office personnel and supportive neighbors addressed an issue at hand. Such was the case in 1984 when the town, in an effort to cut highway expenses, considered discontinuing Falls Road as a public way. George Foote, son of the donor, wrote a tightly reasoned protest, arguing that discontinuing Falls Road would effectively eliminate the development potential of his land, thereby drastically cutting property value. *Since, in the process of discontinuing the Road, the Town will also be taking from me the value of my land, I would have to seek immediate compensation from the Town for the amount by which it has decreased the value of my land.* Foote concluded by pointing out that continued minimal maintenance of the road would prove substantially less costly.

As a result of this letter and The Trustees' appearance at the next Selectman's meeting, the proposal was tabled. Today, Falls Road continues to be minimally maintained. It is regraded annually, during late spring or summer, but there is no snow plowing done between the last house and the New Hampshire border. A sign warns travelers that the road is not routinely maintained.

- 1990: Another threat to the Reservation's status quo emerged as property owners

immediately over the New Hampshire line proposed construction of a “Sport Skeet-Shooting Center” on their land. Dick O’Brien went on record in a letter to the Selectmen. He wrote that the proposed facility would destroy *the serenity and quiet that visitors come here to enjoy. Without that value the property loses its special character and appeal.* Apparently the proposal was dropped.

A longer-term issue was first raised in 1988, concerning forest management and potential timber harvesting. A draft letter in the files indicates that *the next step is to put into place a master plan for the property [and a subsequent silviculture plan] which will guide the periodic timber harvesting and timber stand improvement projects in the future.*

This may have been a cover letter, sent out to George Foote, soliciting his comments on a new, multi-page Forest Management Policy statement dated May 16, 1988. The Policy’s initial premise is that *a Master Plan must be in place for all reservations on which active cutting operations are desired, addressing vegetation management in relation to scenic and historic preservation and public use of the property.* A June 1988 response from Foote addresses the same issues. It is quoted at length since it includes both history and proposals for the property that are relevant today.

The major goals as I see them are: first and foremost of course, to preserve and provide public access to the beautiful geologic anomalies associated with the falls; secondly to provide a healthy and varied habitat in which a wide variety of animal and plant species can be found; and finally, to provide resources (particularly financial) to better carry out the prior goals.

It is in the implementation of the second and third goals that commercial forestry operations should be considered. Prior to giving the property to the Trustees in the 50’s, my family had actively managed the eastern portion of the property. The western part, to my knowledge was never cut for lack of access although access might be obtainable from the western side. For the last half century, no management practices have been done on the Falls Property....^{xix}

As to the location of the proposed trail/woods road to be used as the backbone for management operations, I am very strongly in favor of developing a network of access. It serves two purposes: first it allows more of the public to enjoy more of our property; and second it provides an ability to deal with fire should it ever occur.

The Trustees’ forest management policy has been refined since the 1988 iteration was prepared, and specific forestry guidelines are now included in the organization’s ecology guidelines handbook. Management planning – the requisite first step – for Royalston Falls has been delayed for a number of years as other Trustees’ properties and local development of the Tully Trail required prior attention. At present, a management plan for Royalston Falls Reservation is scheduled for completion in early 2008. This report is a preliminary step in the process.

^{xix} See Appendix B for 1930 timber map of the Foote property. The land east of Falls Road shows mid-1920s plantation while the age of west side trees suggests logging in the late 19th century toward the brook. West of the brook there is 80 year old forest cover.

The most recent addition to the Falls Reservation was the purchase in 2002 of a 12.2 acre parcel of land on Richmond Road from Ronnie Lee Loy. The Lee Loy parcel provides access to the Falls from the west, off a road that is consistently maintained and navigable by other than four-wheel-drive vehicles. The parcel was additionally important as the means to forge the northernmost link in the Tully Trail.

Subsequent improvements of this property have included connecting the trail from Falls Road to this Richmond Road trailhead and development of a parking area adjacent to the Newton Cemetery. Most recently, during the fall of 2003, Trustees staff and Tully Trail volunteers completed construction of a permanent shelter hut below the Falls.

Other pages from the files, and field survey observations identify recent uses of this isolated reservation.

- a Royalston scoutmaster is given permission for his troop to camp below the falls.
- an internet writer exploring the area in April encountered *quite a few people ... practicing their rock climbing skills in the gorge*. One of them commented on the ice still clinging to the west wall and wished he had come during the winter.
- Trustees entrance signs have been used for very skilled target practice – presumably by hunters in the vicinity.
- Tim Silva, Quabbin Management Superintendent, cited his own experience this past fall. At least two or three groups of hikers would pass his volunteer crew each weekend as they worked on the shelter hut. “Granted it was fall,” Tim commented, “normally a high visitation time in this area, but some of those weekends were cold!” Silva noted that the Tully Trail opening had improved both access and visitation to Royalston Falls.

I. SUMMARY OF OWNERSHIP AND OCCUPATION

A. Jacobs Hill – Thompson Parcel

(probable) 1837, Dec. 18	Silas Hale to Ebenezer Perkins – 70 acres bounded by Bragg, Ripley and Woodbury
1863 WD 707:468	heirs of E. Perkins to Joseph L. Perkins (Royalston): parcel 4 [see deed abstract including reference to <i>meadow</i>]
1883 WD 1162:233	Flora H. Perkins (Jos. L's wife, Fitchburg) to Benjamin Snow (Lunenburg)
1888 WD 1259:639	Holman et al (assignees in bankruptcy of estate of Benjamin Snow) to Joseph F. Perkins
1889 WD1361:254	Joseph F. Perkins back to Joseph L. Perkins (Fitchburg)
1891 WD 1361:255	Flora H. Perkins (Fitchburg) to William A. Garno (Lunenburg): 70 acre parcel [description repeats bounds and language of 1863 deed]
no date	partition of Garno estate?
1921 WD 2259:313	Gertrude H. Porter to Luke B. Shepardson (Royalston)
1923 WD 2321:416	Shepardson to Damon C. Aiken (Royalston): <i>land...being the greater portion of</i> [Perkins to Garno 70 acre parcel] plus a right of way
1945 WD 2964:96	Christena C. Aiken (widow, Royalston) to Lynwood M. Crumb (Royalston)
1959 WD 4073:362	Crumb to Harold A. Case (Athol)
1962 WD 4334:181	Case to Louis Nelson (Athol)
1965 WD 4532:285	Nelson to Chester E. Pultorak (Hubbardston): three parcels of which this is <i>tract I</i> .
1967 WD 4763:130	Pultorak to Leonard B. Thompson (Gardner): <i>tract one of the premises conveyed to me by</i> [Nelson] plus 1 ½ rod wide right of way
1975, June 27	Leonard B. Thompson to The Trustees of Reservations (no acreage given)

B. Jacobs Hill – Hill Lots

[2 nd division]	grant from Town to Ebenezer Eliot
[gap in info.]	
1805 WD159:630	John Sweet to Samuel Godard Jr. 95 acres for \$700
1805 WD159:215	Samuel Godard Jr. (Royalston yeoman) to Giles Alexander (Charlestown merchant): 95 acres for \$900
1806 WD163:327	Giles Alexander to David Wood (Andover esquire): 95 acres for \$1150
1811 WD180:468	William & Timothy Wood (Boston Merchants; executors of David Wood's estate) sell this land in 2 parcels. One parcel for \$520: 70 acres <i>including the house being sold to Ebenezer Cutler</i> [WD163:327]; the second parcel of 21 acres, 84 rods for \$75 to Rufus & Moulton Bullock.
[no date]	___ Bullock to Emily (Bullock) Ripley
1873 WD913:614	(see transcription for description of lot and abutters – but this transfer was way of legally putting property in Emily B. Ripley's name alone)
	estate of Emily Ripley to Emory Holden
	estate of Emory Holden to Frank E. Holden
1928 WD2465:341	Frank E. Holden (Athol) to William Frye (Royalston)
1931 WD2539:258	William Frye to Donald M. Hill
Middlesex Pro. 369822	Donald M. Hill to Malcolm T. Hill
Worcester Pro. 267586	Malcolm T. Hill to heirs
1978 WD [?]	heirs of Malcolm T. Hill to The Trustees of Reservations: 82 acres total south of Route 68 ("West Road") including the 21 acre Frye-to-Hill parcel. One southeast boundary described as <i>by the West side of canal</i>

C. Jacobs Hill – The Ledges

1818 WD213:492	Daniel Woodbury (Royalston Gent.) to Daniel Hubbard (Royalston Housewright): <i>farm...with buildings...75 acres</i>
1865 WD713:200	Daniel Hubbard (Athol) to James Lamb (Athol) for \$1400: <i>farm...with buildings...75 acres</i>
(no date)	(heirs of James Lamb to Nathaniel W. Bragg)
1878 WD1029:314	Nathaniel W. Bragg (Royalston) to George D. Bolton (Royalston): <i>tract of land about one mile from center of town on the road from Royalston to Athol, reserving on the north side about ¾ acre walled in and containing a spring</i>
1940 WD2799:376	[settlement of George D. Bolton's estate: siblings Rena A. Bolton (Boston) and Llewellyn S. Bolton (Royalston) inherit]
1961 WD4234:476	Llewellyn S. Bolton (Brookline) to Llewellyn S. Bolton III & wife Nancy (West Medway)
(1974)	Plan drawn up of property by surveyor Szoc – on file at WD – identifies 3 separate parcels as below
1985 WD8786:154	Nancy Bolton (Royalston) conveys her right to husband Llewellyn (Worcester) in 3 parcels: -- Parcel 1[sic]: 2 ¾ acre houselot on Athol Road -- Parcel B: abutting 40 acre parcel, also on road -- Parcel A: no acreage given; lies west of Parcel B
1992 WD14708:56	Llewellyn S. Bolton (Worcester) to Mark and Darlene Willhite (Royalston): <i>Parcel "A" of 1974 plan with 50' right of way over an existing cart road.</i>
1994	Willhites to Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust: Parcel "A"
1994	Mt. Grace LCT to Massachusetts Land Conservation Trust: Parcel "A"
	MLCT to The Trustees of Reservations

II. Local Land Use History – Introduction

There are two ponds in the town; one small, a little west of the meetinghouse; the other about a mile further westward, called *Long Pond*. A small stream runs out of the lesser into the greater.

Although the distance between these two ponds is but a little more than half a mile in a direct line, yet the little pond is at least an hundred and fifty feet higher than the other. There are in both ponds, various sorts of fish, and in great plenty; those in the larger are most excellent.

Peter Whitney, 1793

The area encompassed by Jacobs Hill Reservation is as much a border land within Royalston as Royalston is to the rest of the world. The statement made in the Overview section concerning its situation within the town bears repeating.

Jacobs Hill, or Jacobs Ridge, was the east margin of the Tully drainage. Less than a mile east of the ridgeline, North Fitzwilliam and Prospect Hill Roads defined another linear swathe of high farmland paralleling the ridge, extending into New Hampshire from Royalston Common. Nichols, Newton, Morse and Richardson families improved this area. Meanwhile south of the common, Raymonds, Hubbards and Woodburys farmed along Athol Road.

But one section of this generally workable plateau was not particularly useful for agriculture. That was a parcel of land south of Warwick Road (Route 68) east of the ridgeline. Part of the problem was the rough exposed outcrops of the ridge's east face. More of the problem was a sizable swamp, which Warwick Road carefully skirted. The center of the swamp was Little Pond, known to townspeople later in the century as a delightful place to play, and useful even recently as a fire pond. To the Woodburys, Bullocks, Fries and Goddards who farmed around the periphery of Little Pond, however, their Jacobs Hill holdings were useful only as back woodlots or wooded pasture land. As such, they received little attention even into the 20th century.

III. What's in a Name?

The names associated with this area hint at interesting cultural ramifications. Who was Jacob or Jacobs? Did he live in the area that is now the reservation? Why is the fall from Little Pond called Spirit Falls? Research and research attempts to answer these and other questions have turned up little of substance to flesh out the area's history. The 'meanings' of these names are probably not much more significant than the paired Little Pond and Long Pond: they are names snatched by some person to distinguish one place from another, that seem to have stuck.

Jacobs Hill, or Jacobs Ridge, appears to have been named for one or more members of the Jacobs family who lived, not on Trustees' holdings, but on the west side of the ridge.⁵⁴ Whitman Jacobs was the first of the family to come to Royalston, called to be pastor of the Baptist church in 1770. The original Baptist church was located at the foot of the ridgeline, on Warwick Road

by Tully Brook. A number of the congregation are thought to have lived in the vicinity before the church was moved, or rebuilt, at the western edge of Royalston in the vicinity of Bliss Hill Road.

Underhill Cemetery, that served the original church neighborhood, still exists south of old Warwick Road, approximately at the meeting point between that road and the Tully Trail. Many of the stones are unmarked or illegible, while others may have been removed. The only remaining inscribed names are those of Estabrook and the Kinney brothers.

Legend has it that two of Whitman Jacobs's sons – John and Joseph – shared a house about 1800, uphill to the east of the first Baptist church. The legend goes on to tell of a falling out between them of enough significance that Joseph, the younger brother, literally took his part of the house and moved it to another site, leaving John with the remaining half. Recent explorations by a Jacobs descendant, of the small house that still stands on the south side of Warwick Road, halfway down the hill, suggests that the legend may have a basis in fact. Mr. Jacobs describes the building's rafter pattern as predictably even-spaced across the attic until it gets to one end. There the final rafters are only about a foot apart as if, he said, the roof had been chopped off at that point. John Jacobs, the older brother, may have occupied the house that is now only a cellarhole on the north side of Warwick Road, downslope from Joseph's house.

If one looks at this legend together with what is known about the landscape, it rings true. Floods were a regular occurrence on Tully Brook – bad enough that the road itself was finally rerouted to higher ground. It is likely that one of the factors convincing Royalston's Baptist congregation to relocate was a wise decision to move the church above flood waters, onto the western plateau. (The Congregationalists already held the eastern front, on Royalston Common.)

Whether Joseph Jacobs chopped a house in half, or whether he may have salvaged part of a house from one such flood, he apparently did move to higher ground. The 1831 town map of Royalston clearly labels a house at this location south of Warwick Road, *Jos. Jacobs*, with *John Holden* living in the house that might have been originally brother John's.⁵⁵ The 1831 map does not identify names of hills. Stretching north to south across the town is a delineated area labeled simply *Ridge of High Land*.

The final resting place for Joseph's house is not a likely farm site: the building perches halfway up the steep west side of the ridge, seemingly threatening to pitch into the valley at any moment. Was this as far as Jacobs was willing to struggle up the rise? And could his massive effort have given Jacobs Hill its name? There were other houses in the vicinity and other farms over the years, but perhaps none made such a dramatic story.^{xx}

Dramatic stories aside, it is interesting that none of the deeds consulted for this reservation identify Jacobs Hill by name. The same is true of **Spirit Falls**, the series of steps and splashes that drains off the Little Pond wetland into Long Pond. Bullock's centennial address waxes poetic about this waterfall.

^{xx} Another Jacobs story, recounted by John McClure of the Royalston Historical Society, tells of Whitman Jacobs' wife planting a line of maple trees along the edge of the road, up and over the crest of the hill which thus was referred to as "Jacob's Ladder."

Near the meetinghouse is a pond which empties itself into [the Tully] valley by plunging rapidly down a steep declivity, which must be 800 or 1000 feet high. It then empties into another large pond, or rather a remarkable expansion of a small tributary of Miller's river [i.e.: Long Pond]. At one part of the descent of the brook above named, it falls at least 200 feet by several leaps within a distance of a few rods, forming several very beautiful cascades. There the original forests have not been disturbed. The trees overhang the murmuring waters, half concealing the stream, while broken trees are plunged across it in all directions.⁵⁶

As in the case of Jacobs Hill, local maps and deeds are disappointingly silent about these falls. Nineteenth and early twentieth century writers *suggest* names for this locale as they do for others around town, but not "Spirit Falls." Archeological survey work at the foot of the falls found little evidence of Native American occupation or visitation of the site. The two most recent suggested derivations are personal responses to the remote and wispy nature of the cascade.

Spirit Falls (the name is said to come from its dissolution in spray before reaching the Millers River far below)....⁵⁷

Another interpretation:

You have to go to the bottom to know why. Best time is late spring, a misty day. Canoe up the Tully to Long Pond and take the trail to the bottom of the falls. There are some big old tall trees there and, with the mist and the water and all you won't ask why it's called Spirit Falls.⁵⁸

East of the ridgeline that includes Jacobs Hill, **Little Pond** marks the low point in an extensive wetland area that flanks the reservation's southeast boundary. South of the pond, the boundary line follows a meandering brook through the wetland. At the northeast edge of the reservation, in contrast, the boundary, still along what appears to be a brook, is arrow-straight until it reaches Warwick Road. This suspiciously straight waterway is one of the reservation's only cultural artifacts. It is the remains of a canal excavated in the mid-nineteenth century. Bullock's 1865 history elaborates:

Dea. Joseph Sawyer, by diverting the waters of Little Pond from their natural out-let, and leading them around, by means of a canal, to the hollow north of the Common, procured water-power for his cabinet-shop.⁵⁹

Joseph Sawyer appears on the 1850 manufacturing census as a maker of *furniture* consisting of *cradles and stands* (see Section I; Figure 1). His attempted hydraulic engineering also had some social ramifications, described by Bartlett in a later Royalston history.

... between 1850 and 1860 a row-boat of fair proportions was in commission on Little Pond. It may have been built and launched at an earlier time, by the fellows at the furniture shop; but in the years mentioned it was captained and

manned by boys from the Frye, Wheeler, Pierce and Bullock families, and probably others, who gallantly took high-school girls and others on limited trips. The boat was of a flat-bottom, raft-like construction, which would not be easily upset; and so long as it did not leak in water faster that it could be bailed out it was passably safe; but the pond had a muddy and rooty bottom, and with a load spilled into it probably not all would have escaped drowning.⁶⁰

The *muddy and rooty bottom* is appropriate description for a flooded wetland area. Even today, for instance, Chickering Pond in Medfield (The Trustees' Rocky Woods Reservation) is still lined with the remnants of trees and stumps left to rot in place when the area was flooded during the 1920s.⁶¹

Apparently Sawyer's attempt to develop a small manufacturing center by the Common was not particularly successful. Bullock goes on to observe:

[This waterpower is not] now used; and we see no good reason why the natural out-let of Little Pond should not be reopened and its waters, no longer in bondage to man, allowed to run singing along their primeval and romantic channel, down to Long Pond and the classic Tully.

Bullock did have an ulterior motive for his recommendation. *And we should like to see the now useless, unseemly, and unhealthy canal filled up*, he concludes. Not coincidentally, the Bullock family land and its mansion on Royalston Common backed up on the *unhealthy canal*. Apparently Bullock eventually got his wish. There is little evidence left of any canal between Little Pond and Warwick Road unless, perhaps, the Royalston emergency fire access point marks what was once the head of the canal.

Other than a brief – and anachronistic? – 1978 reference to part of Malcolm Hill's boundary running *by the West side of the canal*, there is nothing more known about this end of Sawyer's waterpower scheme. The other end of this project, though, left more lasting remains.

Commonly, on small waterpower sites, water above the power dam is ponded in order to control the flow and maximize the power potential. For Sawyer's experiment, he – or someone – constructed an earthen dam across the point where the wetlands begin their drainage down to Spirit Falls. The plan was reasonable: dam the outlet to the swamp, and the natural springs and high water table will fill up the lowland area, flooding Little Pond and providing even more water that might be diverted through the canal. Undoubtedly the local dam builders knew that the brook from Little Pond was not a perennial stream; that some dry seasons the Falls dried up to a trickle. But they could reasonably hope to improve that situation with a broad dam, even to the point of having water available all year, at least if the seasons were wet.

We can only speculate that they were overly optimistic. The low earth dam, perhaps 200 feet across, still retains some semblance of a pond at the point where Jacobs Hill begins its descent to the west, despite its having been purposely breached at some point in the past. Evidence of beaver activity nearby may point to reconstruction now underway, that may once again flood

Little Pond to its mid-nineteenth century level.^{xxi} A stone wall that parallels part of The Trustees' parking lot trail is likely indication of the pond's industrial high water mark, its stones demarcating high land from swamp that was dangerously wet for abutters' grazing livestock.

IV. Owners and Abutters

The Little Pond / Jacobs Hill area is a part of Royalston where abutting landowners and abutting land users may not have been the same people during much of the town's history. A glance at the property owner profiles that begin this section show many who lived out of town, especially in Athol. Some of these owners, like the proprietary speculators of the eighteenth century, bought lots with the primary intention of resale for later profit.^{xxii}

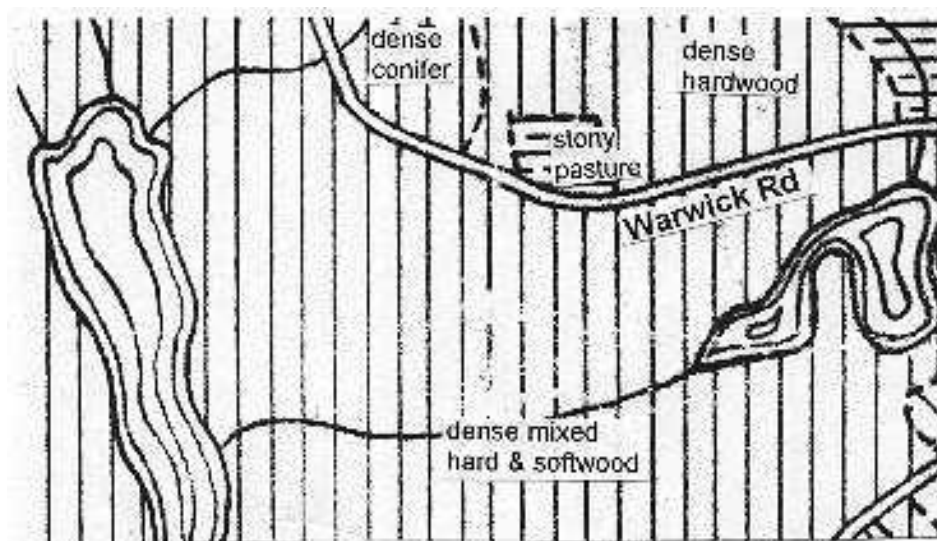
Transfers of the so-called "Thompson" 70 acre parcel during the 1800s give a feel for similar transactions on the other parcels. The Perkins family had owned this sizable tract of woodland for fifty years when a heir sold it (mortgaged it?) to Benjamin Snow, of Lunenburg. Snow never had any intention of personally working the property. A search through period deed listings makes it clear that Snow was a major real estate broker in Worcester County. His deeds and mortgages take up 14 pages of *index* between 1840 and 1889. Apparently his dealings were a bit too risky, however, for when he died, his estate went into bankruptcy and his real estate holdings were assigned to creditors. The Perkins family reclaimed their land and held it until 1891.

The Perkinses were not exactly small-time farmers either. Ebenezer and later, Joseph, did live in Royalston. When Ebenezer died in 1863, Joseph inherited five separate parcels of his land in town (including the Jacobs Hill parcel) from the other heirs. Registry of Deeds indexes show Joseph, at least, to have been a major land speculator, especially in the Royalston area between 1854 and 1887. He was even briefly owner, in 1864, of Prouty's sawmill (see appendix). After Perkins' death his widow, living in Fitchburg, sold off the family holdings. The 70 acre parcel then went through ten transactions over the next eighty years, often sold together with other parcels, never with any change in description that might suggest it had found a particular use or significance for its owner.

Today, as it has for an unknown length of time, a wood road leads south from Route 68 into the Perkins-Thompson lot, attesting to the property's usefulness for logging at some time in the past. This use has certainly not been in recent years, though, based on the "good-sized trees" noted by Dick O'Brien, who estimates that the area has probably not seen any logging for a century. The 1940 WPA Land Utilization map supports this estimate, showing the whole stretch south of Route 68 from the Common to west of Long Pond as uniformly "mixed hardwood and conifer – dense." A tiny patch of "stony pasture" across the road from Jacobs Hill is the only interruption in this uniform cover. It probably marks the location of the house that is today surrounded by chain link fence, at the top of the rise.

^{xxi} See Appendix A for photos.

^{xxii} – although it should be noted that original proprietor Ebenezer Eliot was one of few proprietors who actually did settle Royalston.



Map H. (Source: WPA 1939 Land Utilization – Royalston)

The Ledges, Jacobs Hill's non-contiguous parcel, offers the only other notable cultural association within reservation boundaries. Until 1992, the Ledges parcel was part of a larger tract that faced on Athol Road, where resident landowners including familiar Royalston names – Woodbury, Hubbard, Bragg (more often associated with Doanes Falls) – built one or more houses. In 1878 this large holding was sold to George D. Bolton, a name associated with Royalston Falls earlier in this narrative. Bolton was keeper of the poor farm at the Falls in 1880 but moved to the Athol Road site probably around 1890. The land remained in the Bolton family for the next hundred years, although they appear to have moved out of town by 1961.

V. The 60th Reservation

A 1977 property appraisal of Malcolm T. Hill's estate in Royalston states:

There is a pond (Little Pond) approximately 10 acres which has been reclaimed and stocked with fish by the Commonwealth. A stream and waterfall (Spirit Falls) is the outlet from the pond.... The growth on the land is varied, mostly ground cover and no timber per se.⁶²

There was undoubtedly timber on other parts of the three contiguous parcels that The Trustees purchased from the Hill family heirs in 1978, but trees were not the immediate reason for the purchase. *We are in the process of purchasing some 80 acres on Jacob Hill*, writes Trustees Director Gordon Abbott to Hill & Barlow, the Boston law firm established by the Hill family, *as part of a program to protect the ridge north of Doane's Falls, a spectacular part of the world!*⁶³

Protection of Jacobs Ridge became an ongoing thrust of Trustees' land acquisition planning over the next twenty years. The Hill Lots were a second round of land purchase in the immediate

vicinity, following acquisition of the 53-acre Thompson lot in 1975. Jacobs Hill lay halfway between Trustees' reservations at Royalston Falls (1951) and Doanes Falls (1959). While the valley at the foot of the ridge was effectively protected the Army Corps of Engineers and the Harvard Forest (see Overview section), a majority of the environmentally significant ridgeline itself was still in private hands.

Just how sensitive the high land was, was brought home in 1992, when the long-time landowning Bolton family sold a back lot of their property to a couple who had very different ideas of appropriate land use for the area. The new owners, intending to build a house on the crest of Jacobs Ridge to take advantage of its panoramic view, applied for, but were refused a variance from the town's Zoning Board of Appeals.⁶⁴ Neighboring landowners and Trustees' representatives had been unified in their opposition to the development proposal, thereby incurring the owners' wrath and adamant refusal to sell at less than an exorbitant mark-up. Two years and a number of transactions later, the 38.6 Ledges parcel was finally added to Jacobs Hill Reservation, thus averting the most immediate threat to the pristine ridge line.

A 1993 Trustees proposal places its Royalston properties within a bigger picture.

[TTOR] owns three scenic and natural, but discontinuous properties in the beautiful town of Royalston. Each property includes a waterfall.... The ridge line that connects these waterfalls is characterized by dramatic overlooks with a broad view west overlooking Tully Lake and the Tully River towards Mt. Grace and Tully Mountain.

TTOR has a longstanding goal to connect the three outstanding waterfalls, thus combining properties to create one of the most spectacular conservation areas in Massachusetts. [Each property abuts areas already protected by other organizations.] Thus TTOR's holdings are a part of a natural area with large tracts of land already under protection. Protecting the few remaining privately held lands between these special places, and providing for perpetual access would create one of Massachusetts' most spectacular natural areas, including a hiking trail that would surely rank as one of Massachusetts' most scenic.⁶⁵

Eight years later, when the Tully Trail opened, this long-term vision was realized, due to a level of cooperation that may not have been imagined by the author of the "Ridge-Line Greenway" proposal quoted above.

Field operations within the Jacobs Hill Reservation have been much less dramatic than the visioning and negotiations required by the Tully Trail initiative. A protracted but relatively low-key problem developed in the mid-1980s, when Dick O'Brien discovered town trucks dumping loads of fill at the edge of Little Pond. It turned out that Royalston was trying to improve access to the pond, so that tanker trucks could draw from this nearby water source in case of fire emergency in the village.

Initial heated discussions concerning trespassing, right of eminent domain, water pollution and cooperative action eventually resulted in a compromise acceptable to all those involved. The

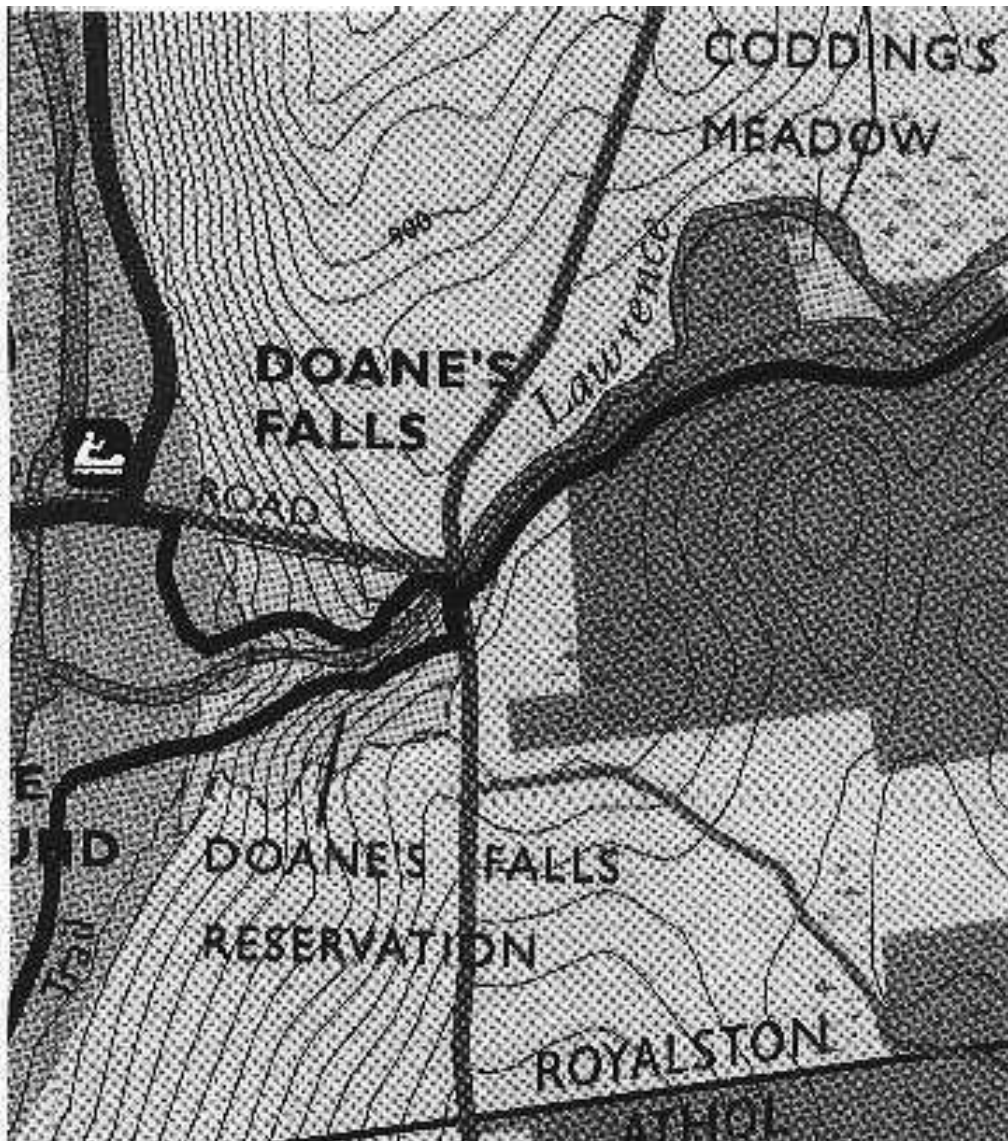
Trustees concluded that dredging of material already deposited by the town would cause more environmental harm to Little Pond than allowing it to remain in place. The town, on its side, agreed to halt extension of its access road 40 feet short of what was originally intended. Instead, Royalston fire fighters now use a portable floating pump to draw water from the pond. In the long run, access granted by The Trustees provides better fire protection to the municipal buildings and historic houses that surround Royalston Common, which in turn prevents major increases in insurance rates for the Common area.

Over the past decade, Trustees staff have worked out from short logging trails on the reservation to construct a trail system linking the three Jacobs Hill parcels. A small parking area on Warwick Road, constructed ten years ago, was improved in 2002 with gravel surfacing and a sign board. While the signage includes information on the Tully Trail, helpful to long-distance hikers exploring this new *most scenic* Massachusetts trail, local visitors also come to this property within easy walking distance of the town center. During a recent field survey, staff encountered a group of elementary school students, teachers and moms exploring the varied natural landscape that lies just beyond the parking lot.

A management plan for future administration of Jacobs Hill Reservation is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2007. This report is a preliminary part of the plan.

SECTION FOUR

DOANES FALLS RESERVATION



I. SUMMARY OF OWNERSHIP AND OCCUPATION

Doanes Falls – Nichols Mills (‘Dickinson Privilege’)

-- Benjamin Marsh Jr., the mill builder, bought a proprietary share in Royalston in 1753 [WD 34:28]. Marsh, together with George Marsh, Antipas Holland and Isaac Gale purchased 2 lots “in ye north part of Town – No. 13 and N0. 15 lying together.” Benjamin Marsh was called a “gentleman” while the others were “husbandmen.”

-- According to town histories, Benjamin Marsh was commissioned to build saw and grist mills on Lawrence Brook. He did so but later did not satisfy the town’s expectations. He was sued for defaulting. The first sale of the mills probably paid the damages he owed to the town.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1769 | Benjamin Marsh (Sutton Gentleman) to Isaac Gale Jr. (Sutton Yeoman) for L222.6.8 [WD 78:449]
150 acres with “the mills and buildings thereon” and right to flow the proprietors’ land. |
| 1784 | Peter Gale (Royalston Miller) to Henry Nichols (Royalston Husbandman) for L270 [WD 92:515]
45 acres? “with my buildings and half a saw mill and one quarter of a grist mill”
<i>Isaac Gale seems to have set up his son as miller in Royalston. The fractional ownership indicates that there were other investors in these early industrial enterprises, including William Brown, a tanner from Reading. By 1797 Brown had abandoned tanning for farming.</i> |
| 1797 | William Brown (Royalston Yeoman) to Elijah Nichols (Royalston) for \$533 [WD 130:135]
“all my right title and interest in” ½ acre & 50 poles land, water, grist mill and saw mill with right of flowing as far as shall be necessary. |
| (1831 map | icons for grist mill and saw mill) |
| 1836 | Elijah Nichols to Israel Lamb for \$2500 [WD 312:474]
“the premises familiarly known by the name of Nichols’ mills.”
<i>See Appendix for excerpt. Nichols apparently turns over half-ownership of all his property to Lamb in this deed – six parcels in all.</i> |
| 1837 | Israel Lamb (Royalston Miller) to Alpha Bemis (Spencer Miller) for \$1450 [WD 338:164]
Half of same tract as Holman to Bemis below, described as land, water “and a grist and saw mills [sic]” “with the privilege of flowing as far as shall be necessary” - plus another 59 acres of “timber and wood land” nearby. |

Bemis finances this purchase by mortgaging the property back to Lamb for \$750 [WD 328:36 – Aug. 22, 1837] Around 1850 this mortgage was assigned to someone else [WD 474:564]

- 1845 Seth Holman (Royalston) to Jonas Bemis 2nd (Spencer) for \$600 [WD 418:263]
Half of a “tract of land and water with buildings and mills ... and privileges ... one half acre and fifty rods ... with belts, tools, machinery, Shingle Mill” etc. which Holman owns with Alpha Bemis. It is currently being leased to Garnet Bullock and Holman will pay off a \$250 mortgage on the property.
--Holman acquired this half from the estate of Franklin Gregory on October 1839; Jonas Bemis is Alpha's brother.
- 1847 Alpha and Jonas Bemis (Charlton and Spencer) to Sullivan Raymond (Royalston) for \$1500 [WD 453:333]
“1 ½ acres land ... mill, mill dam & mill privilege ... near the house of Benjamin Bragg, called the Nichols Mills” **see excerpt**
At the same time Elijah Nichols sells to George L. & Sullivan Raymond “part of Lot #91” – which is almost entirely meadow land bordering Lawrence Brook upstream from the mill.
- (1856 Elijah Nichols dies)
- (1857 map “Saw & Grist Mill” – 2 dots between Lawrence Brook and Athol Road)
- 1867 Sullivan Raymond (Royalston) to Elizabeth Leonard (Northfield) for \$1800 [WD 751:630]
This deed specifically “includes all rights of flowage and fixtures belonging to said mill and privilege and hereby reserving all machinery and shafting now in the story above the said mill.”
Between 1847 and 1867 the Raymonds had enlarged and improved this mill, adding a second story with additional (woodworking?) machinery, and probably raising the mill dam and thus flooding the land they bought from Elijah Nichols in 1847.
- 1869 Elizabeth (Leonard) Stratton to Frederick Leonard
- [n.d.] Merriam bought from estate of Frederick M. Leonard
- 1881 Abel Merriam (Royalston) to Obadiah Walker for \$1200 [WD 1105:385]
land on the main road from “Athol by Quarrelville to Royalston” – 1 ½ acres with mill, mill dam and water privilege; plus other tracts adjoining (see Bolton to Stimson for description)
Walker pays for this purchase by borrowing the whole \$1200 from George Bolton, who then holds a mortgage on the property [WD 1105:387]. This was the form often taken by a partnership, or by a business investor securing his investment.

- 1884 Obadiah Walker (North Reading) to George D. Bolton (Royalston) for \$600 [WD 1178:647]
 one half of sawmill and associated property (see above description)
 After 3 years as mortgage holder, Bolton is taking ownership of half the property, presumably because Walker couldn't pay off the loan. Note that Bolton promptly turns around and sells his half to Royal Stimson two days later, making a \$25 cash profit as well as keeping all the goods and lumber to himself.
- 1884, 1887 George D. Bolton to Royal E. Stimson for \$625 [WD1181:555 – 1884] and
 Harriet W. Walker et al to Charles A. Stimson [WD 1256:622 – 1887]
 - 2 halves of sawmill lot plus 3 associated lots – over 3 acres total (See excerpt in Appendix)
- (1898 map “S. & G. Mill C.A.STIMSON”)
- 1913 Elmer & Henrietta Dickinson (Buffalo NY) to Edward F. Bragg [WD 2020:87]
 “land with the buildings thereon” – unspecified acreage, but lot extends “to the dam at the Sawmill on Lawrence Brook... with all machinery, fixtures & tools in and about said mill” – *Dickinsons claim title through deeds from the Stimsons.*
- 1975 Bragg Family Trust to The Trustees of Reservations with other parcels.

Doanes Falls – Amos Doane Property

- 1827 Franklin Gregory (Royalston Gent) to Amos Doane (Royalston Carpenter) for \$300 [WD 255:313 – Mar 26, 1827]
1 acre land [across stream from Nichols mill – corner of Athol and Doanes Hill Roads] (See abstract in appendix)
-- Doane pays for property by mortgaging it back to Gregory for \$375 – the additional \$75 is presumably capital with which to build. [WD 256:47]
-- *This was apparently Doane's first land purchase, at age 24. Gregory's large loan is an indication that he is actually investing in Doane's proposed manufacturing business, as are his later mortgages in 1830, 1831 and 1833. At same period Gregory either owned or held a mortgage on Nichols Mills as well.*
- 1830 Doane mortgages the property again to Gregory (described here as “trader”) for \$300.
Property described as one acre land and water privilege with “all the benefits that may arise from a policy of insurance from the Worcester County Mutual Fire Insurance Company on the Shop on said premises.” [WD 284:66 – recorded Oct. 1831]
- 1831 (Sept) Elijah Nichols (Royalston yeoman) to Amos Doane for \$22 [WD 288:172 – recorded June 1832]
½ acre land “Beginning at the northeast corner, being in the center of the wall at the southeast corner of Nichols garden” – a quasi-rectangle 40’ wide abutting the west side of Doane’s 1-acre parcel, “passing over or on the west side of a large stone marked A.D. in a straight line to the middle of Lawrence brook”.
1833 Nichols sells Doane another very small parcel, apparently to straighten out lot lines WD 297:41
- 1831 (Dec) Doane takes out another mortgage with Gregory, for \$400 this time describing property as 1 ½ acres with “buildings, fixtures, machinery & apparatus.” Property bounds include reference to “Elijah Nichols and Joseph Stockwells mill dam.” Doane is to repay loan beginning 1835, ending 1837. [WD 288:175 – recorded June 1833]
- 1833 3rd Doane mortgage to Gregory, for \$100 with property described as 2 acres “with the buildings thereon... southerly line [of the property] being in a direct line with the west sills of *the barn and house* to the middle of the river; thence upstream in the River including the *dam across said river built by said Amos Doane* to Elijah Nichols & Joseph Stockwell milldam thence Northwest by the road....” [WD 297:42 – Sept. 10, 1833]
-- The same year, Elijah Nichols technically “buys” Doane’s original 1 acre for \$200 [WD 296:478]. *Presumably Nichols, who lives across the road and is easing himself out of the mill across the brook, is investing in Doane's business.*
- 1836 Doane buys 2 acres wrapping around “Lamb’s mill yard” [= Nichols Mill] south

of Lawrence Brook, from Charles Angier (Royalston yeoman) for \$180. [WD 405:392 – Sept. 12, 1836, recorded 1845]

- 1837 Doane mortgages his 2-acre homestead lot to Elijah Nichols for \$1,000 [WD 321:483 – Feb. 21, 1837]. Property described as “land with buildings”; west boundary runs “as the wall now stands in a direct line with the West sills of the Barn & House” to the middle of Lawrence Brook; Nichols Mills now referred to as “Gregory & Lamb’s Mills.” Doane is to pay off mortgage over 8 years.
-- *Nichols is investing for what should be a guaranteed annual income.*
- 1843 Doane buys 32 acres from Elijah Nichols for unspecified amount [WD 385:270]
-- this is south of Doanes Hill Road (called “the old road to Stephen Burbank”), west of Athol Road, to Tully River. It is probably the parcel described in 1894 Johnson to Barrett (see below)
- 1859 estate of Calvin A. Drury (Royalston) to Amos Doane (Royalston) for \$25 [WD 871:96, recorded 1872]
“land with a blacksmith shop thereon” on east side of Athol Road by Nichols mill pond (see excerpt in appendix).
-- Doane finances this with a mortgage on the 32 acres downstream (west side - see 1843) to Jonathan Drury Junior (Calvin’s son) [WD 612: 584]

Between 1835 and 1878, Amos Doane was listed as “grantor” in 35 transactions In Worcester County including Royalston, Charlton and Athol. Most of the transactions are listed as mortgages, tax deeds or sheriff’s deeds – i.e.: when he failed to pay his mortgage loans or his taxes. He was also “grantee” in a number of deeds besides those listed above, purchasing property in Charlton and Spencer in the late 1830s and apparently added to his holdings whenever he could find a good deal – such as the tax taking by which he acquired property from Angier in 1868.

- 1868 Doane acquires 4 acre “Angier lot” that surrounds Nichols Mill property, south of Lawrence Brook, for \$59.82 back taxes owed to Town of Royalston [WD 760:623 – Feb 8, 1868]
- 1875 Doane to George D. Colony (Fitchburg) [WD 965:86 – Sept. 23, 1875]
mortgage for \$700 on “land with buildings ... it being my homestead place.”
--*This is one of three mortgages Colony holds against Doane.*
- 1876 Amos Doane dies without will [WP 382:282]
- 1879 George D. Colony (as Administrator of estate of Amos Doane) to Augustus A. Barrett [WD 1050:533 – June 28, 1879]
-- apparently the “homestead place” Doane to Colony; this is associated with:
- 1894 Edwin H. Johnson to Augustus A. Barrett [WD 1448:276; July 14, 1894]

- 1905 J.B. Pierce (Buffalo NY) to Winslow Blanchard [WD 1820:299]
-- 2 Barrett parcels as above
- 1907 Winslow Blanchard (Brookline) to Edward F. Bragg (Cambridge) [WD 1845:347]
“Land known as the Doane’s Falls property” – 2 parcels bounded by Athol Road, Doanes Hill Road, Dead (Tully) River, Lawrence Brook “excepting Stimpson’s [sic] Mill dam”
-- the final problem being that the descriptions of the two Barrett parcels contained in this deed appear to be redundant: the boundary descriptions differ but the location seems to be the same,,,, Could this in fact be true, and that the descriptions simply represent two different mortgage deed sequences? Certainly Amos Doane’s mortgage history is convoluted enough for this to have happened.

Doanes Falls – Coddings Meadow

TRACT I: “land with the buildings thereon” (see next page: 4 parcels, acreage not specified)

1877 appraisal of Sullivan Raymond property to be sold in payment of taxes [WD 1008:150]
[two tracts of land of which one is] “7 acres more or less bounded beginning at the northeast corner on the west side of the brook at the end of a ditch thence westerly by land now or late Nathaniel Bragg about 15 rods to a stake, thence south 8 degrees west by land of Bragg about 8 rods to a stake and stones by a large rock; thence southerly parallel with the edge of the meadow by land now or late of Bragg to the Fayerweather lot so called thence east by the northerly line of said Fayerweather lot to the east end of the Drury Meadow thence as the brook runs to the corner first mentioned.”

The 7-acre description is, verbatim, the description of the fourth lot included in Tract I of Coddington Meadow Realty Trust to MLCT (see below). What of the other three lots? The chain of title cited in later deeds is incomplete. It is possible that at least lots 2 & 3 of the MLCT deed were under water in 1877, since town maps as late as 1939 indicate mill ponds still extant east of the Athol Road. What does seem clear is that this tract includes what was called “Meadow” – a designation reserved for hayable wetland.

Sullivan Raymond & sons had manufactured pails and tubs at the third privilege, above Doanes Falls [Caswell 449], as well as operating the sawmill at the first privilege. The appraisal quoted above was not intended to reflect all of the Raymonds’ land holdings – just enough land to cover the back taxes of \$139.06 that were due.

ca. 1877	(sheriff’s deed – property of) Samuel S. Raymond to Kendall [WD1182:459]
[n.d.]	John Henry Kendall to Barrett
1896	Martha A. Barrett to Clarke [WD 1498:650]
1912	Belle T. Clarke to Stimson [WD 2015:373]
1943	Charles A Stimson to Whitney [WD 2904:507]
1951	Wayne W. Whitney to Ball [WD 3750:214]
1962	Clayton W. Ball (Athol) to Patrick [WD 4314:467]
1975	Edward T. Patrick (Middletown CT) to Gourson [WD 5793:319]
1981	Sherryl Gourson (New Britain CT) to Winns [WD 7197:158]

Perhaps about this time the Winns built a cabin on the property because future deeds include reference to “buildings.” Dick O’Brien describes the camp as being old and unused in 1992.

1984 Charles J. & Linda A. Winn (Athol) to Coddington Meadow Real Estate Trust [WD 8437:38]
“land with buildings” – same bounds as on preceding deeds.

TRACT II: “a piece of meadow land containing five acres”

1979 Annabelle H. Bragg to Randall Bruursema [WD 6817:62]
 numerous parcels from Athol line up to Lawrence Brook, including 5 acres
 meadow

This is the 19th century Bragg family property; the meadow land likely associated with flowage for Joel Nourse’s – later Benjamin Bragg’s -- nineteenth century mill at the third privilege. Title not searched prior to this transaction, but it is probable that the first Nathaniel Bragg purchased all or part of a 200 acre proprietor’s lot in this location from Benjamin Marsh Jr. at the time Bragg came to Royalston, circa 1776. [refs: reconstruction plan of proprietors’ lots; Caswell p. 304]

1984 Randall Bruursema to Coddington Meadow Realty Trust for \$2500 (with another
 parcel) [WD 8503:399]

1992 Coddingtons Meadow Real Estate Trust to Massachusetts Land Conservation Trust
 for \$30,000 [WD 14256:138]
 5 parcels of land divided into two “tracts” – Tract I including “the buildings
 thereon” – all located on the south bank of Lawrence Brook and north of Gale
 Road.

II. Local Land Use History – Introduction

Two miles south of Royalston center, on the road leading to Athol, is another cascade on a larger stream. Its width, indeed, must be as much as 25 feet, and its depth considerable ... Toward the upper part of the descent, several mills are erected; but a small part only of the water power is employed. Below the mills the stream passes into the woods; and toward the lowest part of the descent, we get a single view of two falls of about 25 feet each. There is more of beauty and less of wildness at this spot than at the Royal Cascade [Royalston Falls]. This stream also has been, and still more extensively can be, applied to useful purposes. Perhaps therefore... this may be denominated the Republican Cascade. But if I can induce persons of taste and leisure to visit it, I care but little for the name.

Prof. Edward Hitchcock, writing in 1841, quoted in Bullock, p. 87

Despite Professor Hitchcock's recommendation, the cascade south of Royalston common was known far and wide as Doanes Falls before the end of the nineteenth century. Ironically, the history of Doanes Falls is not so much the history of the Doanes – even of notably eccentric Amos Doane – than of the Nichols family of Royalston. Town histories barely acknowledge the presence of Elijah Nichols at the falls, but Elijah was one of the first settlers there, owning a house at the intersection of *the road to Royalston meeting house* and the *old road to Burbanks*. Over his long life, even after selling his interest in the saw and grist mills he had run for forty years, Nichols had a hand in much of the business and land speculation activity that went on in that part of Royalston.

Long before Elijah Nichols was born, however, the Doanes Falls vicinity was occupied by Native Americans, one of the only places in Royalston where this is known to have been so (see Overview section). A few artifacts recovered in an archeological survey conducted for the Army Corps of Engineers indicate occasional Native American presence near the base of the falls during the Late/Transitional Archaic and Woodland Periods (7,500-450 B.P.). This area, at the confluence of Lawrence Brook and the east branch of the Tully River, was a marsh environment that would have been rich in natural resources prior to its 20th century flooding as Tully Lake.

The archeological survey team found almost no evidence of hearths, storage pits or middens, however, features that would suggest long-term habitation or multi-generational occupation of the area. The resulting conclusion was that Woodland and/or Contact Period Nipmuck groups, like their ancestors, were likely to have set up *seasonal, temporary, and task-specific camps* at the falls during the warmer months, possibly to take advantage of spring and fall fish runs and waterfowl migrations.⁶⁶

While Native Americans found the base of the falls most beneficial, colonial settlers identified an entirely different use for the 200 foot drop taken by Lawrence Brook as it leaves the Royalston plateau. The top of the cascade, where it drains out of extensive marsh land through a narrow rock gorge, was a perfect location for a water-powered mill. Considerations in its favor were its easily accessible siting (unlike Spirit Falls), its proximity to the planned village center (unlike Royalston Falls), its relatively reliable flow of water (how did they know?), and its location on an already-extant north-south Indian trail that would become the Athol-Royalston Road.

Local historians agree that the site was designated as a *mill privilege* at the time of the town's founding. Legally, waterways are held to be the inalienable property of the state, which has the authority to grant, or authorize a town to grant, permission for an individual or corporation to 'draw water' from the watercourse for purposes of power (as in a milldam with sluiceway) or navigation (as in a canal). This is referred to as *granting a privilege* of the waterway. It does not confer ownership of the streambed or shoreline, which are solid ground and thus governed by the standard laws of transfer of property. A potential mill owner must obtain both land on which to build his mill and water rights or, more correctly, a privilege to divert the water. The privilege, once obtained and exercised, may be sold along with the mill property.

In due course, two – if not three—additional privileges were granted in the vicinity to men wanting to draw on the water power that Professor Hitchcock felt was underutilized in 1841. Unfortunately, mill privileges and the vagaries of their ownership and uses, are among the most complex and obscure histories to trace. Each documenter of Royalston history has told a slightly different version of what went on at Doanes Falls during the hundred and fifty years the falls were put to industrial use. Subsequent owners and other interested parties put their own 'spin' on the subject of falls ownership and use. Most of what has been written would appear to be, if not completely wrong, then at least confused.

The present study attempts to straighten out some of the confusion, and add to what has already been written, but research is by no means complete on the landscape and the people who altered it. It is possible to outline a sequence of ownership and function for the three Doanes Falls privileges. It is also possible to sketch at least some of the land uses in the Falls neighborhood – but the terms *outline* and *sketch* also indicate the incompleteness of available data. It is virtually impossible to unravel the byzantine business relationships that tied multiple generations of millers, merchants and farmers together through (often unrecorded) deeds, mortgages, and leases to keep the mills running and the investments profitable.

III. The First Privilege

Caswell, Royalston's 1917 town historian, assigns first use of the Lawrence Brook falls to Benjamin Marsh, who apparently received a grant from the original proprietors to build a mill for the new town's benefit⁶⁷ It had been common practice in New England from the time of first English settlements, for a new town's proprietors to put out a call for a miller – flour or grist miller especially – to construct a mill and operate it, in exchange for a sizable land grant as well

as whatever profits the milling might produce.

This assignment actually required two different, and not necessarily compatible, skills: the engineering ability to construct a building next to running water with a wheel, gearing and set of stones or a saw, which would both function properly and withstand seasonal floods and the stress of interlocking moving parts. The other skill involved training in materials processing: the knowledge of how to work with different grains and the millstones that needed constant retooling, or with different woods and a vertical saw in need of constant sharpening plus, in either case, understanding the necessary adjustments that constituted control of the motive power driving the machines.

Even in the mid-18th century, it is unlikely that there were many men in Massachusetts who were equally adept as builders and millers. According to Caswell, Benjamin Marsh was not one of them. He *gave his bond to build and maintain suitable mill accommodations; but failing to meet the conditions of his bond the proprietors recovered L200 in a suit at law....* Among the proprietors was Marsh's old friend Isaac Gale, who paid Marsh twenty pounds more than the cost of the suit to purchase a hundred-acre parcel of land on Lawrence Brook, *with the mills & buildings thereon ... [also] the liberty of flowing the proprietors land.*⁶⁸ Gale set up his son Peter as miller at the falls, and it may have been Peter who built the first house in the neighborhood.

By 1784 Isaac had died, the Revolution had been won, and Peter Gale decided it was time to move on. He raised capital by selling his rights in the mills to his new stepfather, Henry Nichols.

*I Peter Gale of Royalston...Miller for...270 pounds... paid by Henry Nichols of Royalston, Husbandman grant...three tracts of land in Royalston containing about 45 acres more or less with my buildings thereon and half a saw mill and one quarter of a grist mill thereon.*⁶⁹

Gale's fractional ownership of the mills is an example of another early American investment strategy. Investors during the colonial and federal periods received, in return for their capital, literal shares in industrial real estate. In this case, one of the investors was William Brown, a man who had moved to Royalston to practice his trade as a tanner. Brown purchased a number of parcels of land in town, but he also invested his money in what he understood best: water-powered industry. Brown kept his share of the Doanes Falls mills until 1797, by which time Elijah Nichols, in a move that echoed the Gales' father and son arrangement, operated the mills his father had bought.

One particular puzzle emerges from these transactions, with substantial consequences for cultural resource evaluation. The deed refers to *a grist mill and saw mill*, as do later documents – but the phrasing is obscure. Were Nichols Mills two buildings or simply two different sets of machinery within the same building? The question is not so strange as it may first seem. Many of the deeds quoted below can be read either way. Three other considerations need to be factored in, as well.

- Historic postcards, as well as a reconnaissance survey of building remains at the site show evidence of only one building at this location on the south side of the brook substantial enough to support the water wheel, gearing and mill stones needed for a

grist mill; yet later 19th century deeds (see below) lead one to believe that this was the building used solely as a saw mill by the 1880s.

- The survey did identify a second stone foundation on the south bank of the brook, downstream from this one. There is no documentary evidence that this was Nichols' property, however, perhaps being associated instead with the May/Doane dam discussed later in this section.
- The Oxford English Dictionary, in its 2 ½ pages of "mill" definitions, makes it clear that the term applies equally to a *building* in which certain processes are performed, and the *machinery or apparatus* that performs the processes.

Not far from the confusing mill(s), on the ridge across the brook, Nichols built a house for his family with a garden and orchard,^{xxiii} at the northwest corner of the Doanes Hill Road intersection. (The present house on the site is of mid-20th century construction.) For the next 39 years, Nichols ran the grist mill and saw mill, establishing enough of a reputation that he could refer to his mills as *the premises familiarly known by the name of Nichols' mills* when he finally sold them in 1836. During that period Nichols also acquired a substantial amount of land on the north side of Lawrence Brook in what is today Doanes Falls Reservation. That property was the source of his involvement with Amos Doane – a story better told in relation to Doane's mill.

Elijah Nichols finally sold his mills when he was sixty-six years old, to a younger miller. One might speculate that Israel Lamb may have been working with Nichols prior to the transfer of mill ownership but in any case, Royalston's leading saw and grist mill went to an owner who was, himself, in the trade. The next phase of Nichols Mills became more complicated, involving multiple owners and investors.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1836 | Elijah Nichols to Israel Lamb for \$2500 [WD 312:474]
<i>the premises familiarly known by the name of Nichols' mills</i> (See excerpt in Appendix – Nichols actually appears to sell off much of his Doanes Falls property in this transaction) |
| 1837 | Israel Lamb (Royalston Miller) to Alpha Bemis (Spencer Miller) for \$1450 [WD 338:164]
Half of a tract described as land, water <i>and a grist and saw mills [sic]</i> ... <i>with the privilege of flowing as far as shall be necessary</i> - plus another 59 acres of "timber and wood land" nearby. |

Bemis financed his purchase by mortgaging the property back to Lamb for \$750 [WD 328:36 – Aug. 22, 1837] Lamb and Bemis might have been going into business together, and the mortgage was Lamb's way of 'tying' Bemis to the mill. Around 1850 this mortgage was assigned to someone else [WD 474:564]. Note that the nearby timber and woodland provided a ready source of supply for the saw mill.

^{xxiii} the garden is documented in a Nichols – Doane deed: *the wall at the southeast corner of Nichols' garden*; remains of the orchard were recorded by the WPA survey team in 1939.

- 1845 Seth Holman (Royalston) to Jonas Bemis 2nd (Spencer) for \$600 [WD 418:263]
 The other half of same tract as above described as a *tract of land and water with buildings and mills ... and privileges ... one half acre and fifty rods ... with belts, tools, machinery, **Shingle Mill*** etc. which Holman owns with Alpha Bemis. It is currently being **leased to Garnet Bullock** and Holman will pay off a \$250 mortgage on the property. (Jonas Bemis was Alpha's brother.)

Holman acquired his half interest in the mill property from the estate of Franklin Gregory in October, 1839. There is more of a story here, but without documentation. Gregory was a successful merchant in Royalston, to whom many people would have been indebted. Did his executor call in the debts after he died – leaving Lamb no choice but to sign over his half of the mill? Seth Holman became involved because he was one of Royalston's other millers. At one point Holman ran the sawmill that was located on Tully Brook at the intersection of Falls and Warwick Roads; later he ran the cabinet shop north of Royalston Common.⁷⁰ Purchasing half of Nichols/Lamb's Mills was an investment for him. Based on the next deed, however, it appears the Bemises may have been thinking along the same line, since neither of them actually lived near the mill. They would have to have hired a superintendent to live on or near the site, who would be responsible for monitoring stream flow and flood conditions.

- 1847 Alpha and Jonas Bemis (Charlton and Spencer) to Sullivan Raymond (Royalston) for \$1500 [WD 453:333]
1 ½ acres land ... mill, mill dam & mill privilege ... near the house of Benjamin Bragg, called the Nichols Mills
 At the same time Elijah Nichols sells to George L. & Sullivan Raymond *part of Lot #91* – which is almost entirely meadow land bordering Lawrence Brook upstream from the mill.

Elijah Nichols died in 1856, having watched at least four different men oversee operations at Nichols Mills during half the span of time he had earlier done so on his own. The 1857 map of Royalston shows two dots at the site (yet another confusing piece of information) and labels them "Saw & Grist Mill."

Between 1847 and 1867 the Raymonds enlarged and improved their mill, adding a second story with additional woodworking machinery, and probably raising the mill dam for additional power, thereby flooding the land they had bought from Elijah Nichols in 1847. Caswell says the Raymonds *carried on the manufacture of wooden pails* but seemed to think their operation was located farther upstream.

- 1867 Sullivan Raymond (Royalston) to Elizabeth Leonard (Northfield) for \$1800 [WD 751:630]
 This deed specifically includes *all rights of flowage and fixtures belonging to said mill and privilege and hereby reserving all machinery and shafting now in the story above the said mill.*

The Raymond to Leonard sale marks the beginning of a different arrangement of business and ownership at Nichols Mills. The Leonard family and after them, Abel Merriam, owned the

property from 1867 to 1881 but may not have taken any part in running the mill which seems to have been solely devoted to sawing and woodworking. Caswell fills some of the blanks left by deeds:

Sometime in the seventies the mill came in the possession of John Kendall & Son, who made many improvements, putting in two turbine wheels and a circular saw mill, and engaged in getting out all kinds of turned chair stock.

The federal census of 1880 contributes further detail about the operation, in its Schedule of Manufactures.⁷¹ There, Abel Merriam is listed as owner of a lumber mill on Lawrence Brook, running one circular saw driven by (one of) two turbines powered by a 23 ½ foot waterfall. Merriam is one of six lumber mill owners in Royalston, including two others on Lawrence Brook (M & J M Partridge, and Wendall Pike). The Doanes Falls mill was sited on the highest fall in town used for industrial purposes. It operated at the fastest speed (185 r.p.m.) to produce the greatest power (60 hp.), sawing 600,000 board feet of lumber, splitting 50,000 shingles, and producing 300,000 barrel (or pail) staves. Lest this be mistaken for a major lumber operation for the period, it should be noted that Merriam's sawmill only operated six months out of the year, and employed only two men.

The 1880s saw another shift back to owner-operators, in what would prove to be the final phase of Nichols Mill operations.

1881 Abel Merriam (Royalston) to Obadiah Walker for \$1200 [WD 1105:385]
land on the main road from *Athol* by *Quarrelville*^{xxiv} to *Royalston* – 1 ½ acres with
mill, mill dam and water privilege; plus other tracts adjoining.

Walker pays for this purchase by borrowing the whole \$1200 from George Bolton, who then holds a mortgage on the property [WD 1105:387]. This was the form often taken by a partnership, or by a business investor securing his investment, but three years later:

1884 Obadiah Walker (North Reading) to George D. Bolton (Royalston) for \$600 [WD 1178:647]
one half of sawmill and associated property

After 3 years as mortgage holder, Bolton is taking ownership of half the property, presumably because Walker couldn't pay off the loan. Note that Bolton promptly turns around and sells his half to Royal Stimson two days later, making a \$25 cash profit as well as keeping all the goods and lumber to himself. Caswell comments that Bolton and Stimson *did general sawing for many years*. Bolton turned his interest over to Stimson's son:

1884, 1887 George D. Bolton to Royal E. Stimson for \$625 [WD1181:555 – 1884] and
Harriet W. Walker et al to Charles A. Stimson [WD 1256:622 – 1887]
2 halves of sawmill lot plus 3 associated lots – over 3 acres total (see excerpt in
appendix)

^{xxiv} An early 20th century deed calls this *Quarryville*. Which was the misunderstanding and what was the significance of the name?

The mill was still operating in 1898, when a Royalston map labels the site “S & G Mill C.A. STIMSON.” Was the inclusion of “G” (grist) in the label a cartographer’s slip, or did the Stimsons still maintain some semblance of a grist mill along with their sawing? Grist mills have been documented in Massachusetts towns including Natick, Medfield and Sandwich, among others, in operation as late as World War I. Unfortunately Caswell is silent on the subject.

Caswell does record the end of Nichols Mills however, writing: *The old mill which had been a landmark for nearly a hundred years fell down Jan. 3, 1911.* Probably prior to that time the Stimsons sold out to Elmer Dickinson who, in turn, sold to Edward F. Bragg in 1913. The deed does not specify acreage of the property but describes it as *land with buildings thereon [extending] to the dam at the Sawmill on Lawrence Brook... with all machinery, fixtures & tools in and about said mill* [WD 2020:87].

Even after its apparent demise, Nichols Mills continued to present puzzles. Were one to believe the deed and not the historian, it would appear that the mills (*buildings... with machinery, fixtures & tools*) were still standing on the small piece of land beside Lawrence Brook. Edward Bragg’s interest in the property had no connection, however, with either saw or grist milling. The Bragg investment, and eventual transfer of the property to The Trustees of Reservations, is discussed in Part VI of this section.

IV. Amos Doane and his ‘Unique Concern’

The application of Amos Doane’s name to the falls on Lawrence Brook undoubtedly came about more because of the owner’s memorable behavior than any remarkable products manufactured by him. Doane, who had grown up elsewhere in Royalston, came to the Falls area in 1827 when he was twenty-four. At that time he bought an acre of land from Franklin Gregory, a local merchant with a large hand in local real estate dealings – or at least in their financing. Gregory apparently served as an informal mortgage lending institution for the community. (See Gregory’s association with Nichols Mill property above.) Ebenezer Perkins, the town’s second minister, did much the same, his name appearing on numbers of Royalston deeds and mortgages, and Elijah Nichols would follow suit as he grew older. All three men were substantial land owners in the vicinity of the Falls, and were thus affected by the vagaries of Amos Doane’s finances.

The site of what one town chronicler described as *Amos Doane’s unique concern* [bullock 183] had been used for water power before Doane arrived on the scene. According to the two town histories, a cloth finisher or clothier named Benjamin May had built a fulling mill at the base of the falls sometime in the eighteenth century, which was later operated by Joel Nourse.

Sometime after its construction the fulling mill was relocated some distance upstream, but still below Nichols Mills.⁷² The falls do form a number of natural pools scoured by strong currents that would have been likely places to situate a cloth finishing operation. A cut-granite partial foundation located on the south bank of the brook, approximately 80-110 feet downstream from Nichols Mills, may possibly be associated with this mill.

Apparently May and Nourse were granted the second privilege to draw water from Lawrence Brook at the falls. By the time Doane arrived, Joel Nourse had moved his business even further upstream and above the sawmill. Thus the acre lot Doane bought in 1827 included the second, unoccupied, mill privilege.^{xxv} The site was in a good commercial location, at the intersection of Athol Road and what is now Doanes Hill Road (the vicinity of the present Trustees' parking area) and in the vicinity of other successful businesses (Nichols Mills). Carpenter Doane need go no farther than across the brook to acquire lumber for his proposed manufacturing enterprise.

There is little question that Doane bought the property as a site for his business as well as a place to live. A number of real estate transactions over the next six years document this.

- 1827 Franklin Gregory (Royalston Gent) to Amos Doane (Royalston Carpenter) for \$300 [WD 255:313 – Mar 26, 1827]
 1 acre **land** (See abstract in appendix)
 -- Doane pays for property by mortgaging it back to Gregory for \$375 – the additional \$75 is presumably capital with which to build. [WD 256:47]
 Gregory's large loan is an indication that he is actually investing in Doane's proposed manufacturing business, as are his later mortgages in 1830, 1831 and 1833.
- 1830 Doane mortgages the property again to Gregory (described here as "trader") for \$300.
 Property described as 1 acre land and water privilege with "all the benefits that may arise from a policy of insurance from the Worcester County Mutual Fire Insurance Company on **the Shop** on said premises." [WD 284:66 – recorded Oct. 1831]

The 1831 Royalston map provides correlative evidence: the icon representing "cabinetmaker" is shown across the stream from Nichols Mills. Whether Doane was actually manufacturing furniture, as that word normally implies, or whether the map maker could not find a better word for house parts, is not clear. It was not absolutely essential for a small woodworking operation to have water power, so possibly Doane began his operation with foot- or horse-powered machines.

- 1831 (Sept) Elijah Nichols (Royalston yeoman) to Amos Doane for \$22 [WD 288:172 – recorded June 1832]
 ½ acre land "Beginning at the northeast corner, being in the center of the wall at the southeast corner of Nichols garden" – a quasi-rectangle 40' wide abutting the west side of Doane's 1-acre parcel, "passing over or on the west side of a large stone marked A.D. in a straight line to the middle of Lawrence brook".^{xxvi}
 1833 Nichols sells Doane another very small parcel, apparently to straighten out lot lines WD 297:41

- 1831 (Dec) Doane takes out another mortgage with Gregory, for \$400, this time describing

^{xxv} Note that Doane's first parcel was on the *north* bank, not the south. He did not acquire any land south of the brook until near the end of his career.

^{xxvi} A recent attempt to locate the "A.D." boulder was unsuccessful.

property as 1 ½ acres with “**buildings, fixtures, machinery & apparatus.**” Property bounds include reference to “Elijah Nichols and Joseph Stockwells mill dam.” Doane is to repay loan between 1835 - 1837. [WD 288:175 – recorded June 1833]

- 1833 Third Doane mortgage to Gregory, for \$100 with property described as 2 acres “with the buildings thereon... southerly line [of the property] being in a direct line with the west sills of the **barn and house** to the middle of the river; thence upstream in the River including the **dam across said river built by said Amos Doane** to Elijah Nichols & Joseph Stockwell milldam thence Northwest by the road...” [WD 297:42 – Sept. 10, 1833]
 -- The same year, Elijah Nichols technically “buys” Doane’s original 1 acre for \$200 [WD 296:478].

Presumably Nichols, who lived across the road and was easing himself out of running the mill across the brook, was investing in Doane’s business. Doane had clearly decided that harnessing some of Lawrence Brook’s water power was essential to enlarging his own business, and borrowed money to pay for construction of a dam at the second privilege. From that time on however, he encountered as many setbacks as successes to his great plans. Lilley Caswell, writing in 1917, makes short work of Doanes Mill:

He owned the land around the falls and built a large mill in close proximity, but which was never utilized to any great extent for manufacturing purposes. It stood for many years an interesting and unique landmark, and finally was torn down a piece at a time.⁷³

Bartlett, amending Caswell ten years later, insists that Doane did make doors, window sash and blinds at his mill.⁷⁴

Amos Doane did not become a lasting figure in Royalston history for his wood products, as the rest of Caswell’s description of the man suggests. *He was a well known character in Royalston and surrounding towns*, Caswell writes, the word choice suggesting eccentricity and a certain infamousness. *He was a man of great height, ... and was engaged in many law suits. He was a familiar figure in Athol, where he commenced the erection of a large building which was never completed and which was known for a long time as “Doane’s Castle.”* Caswell’s summary remark on the subject leaves a great deal unsaid:

Many interesting anecdotes are related of him.

While a great deal more research might be done on the social (litigious?) history of Amos Doane, for present purposes it is enough to note that between 1835 and 1878, Amos Doane was listed as “grantor” in 35 transactions in Worcester County including Royalston, Charlton and Athol. Most of the transactions are listed as mortgages, tax deeds or sheriff’s deeds. In other words he frequently found himself in trouble for failing to pay his bills, his mortgage loans or his taxes.

Doane was also “grantee” in a number of deeds besides those listed above, purchasing property

in Charlton and Spencer in the late 1830s and apparently added to his Royalston holdings whenever he could find a good deal – such as the tax taking by which he acquired four acres of farm land for \$59.82 back taxes owed to Town of Royalston in 1868.

By the time of his death in 1876, Amos Doane owned a considerable amount of land on the north side of the falls.^{xxvii} Much of it stretched westward from Athol Road down to the Tully River; one or more parcels were located above the sawmill on the borders of Nichols mill pond. Almost predictably, Doane died without a will. His heavily mortgaged holdings were sold to Augustus Barrett and, two transfers later, to Edward F. Bragg who already owned the Nichols Mill property across the brook.

From the scattered and incomplete information on Amos Doane it would appear that he was a man of clichés – who dreamed great dreams but whose reach exceeded his grasp. The single obscure picture of Doane’s Mill^{xxviii} echoes Caswell’s description of ‘Doane’s Castle’ in Athol: a massive L-shaped structure, four stories high and perhaps fifty feet long, with a remarkable number of windows for a factory, unless they were meant as advertisement *in situ* for what went on inside. Doane’s constant refinancing efforts were aimed at building the dream bigger. Perhaps because he was so tall, his head was in the clouds.

Ironically, his son Byron learned his father’s lesson, but with very different results. When Amos Doane’s estate was finally settled, Byron looked around the neighborhood where he had grown up. There was Benjamin Bragg’s old property, just a bit up the Athol Road, most recently owned by John and Henry Kendall. The Kendalls – operators of Nichols Mill during the 1870s – had gone bankrupt in 1877 and the land was put up for auction to pay their debts. Byron Doane bid \$775 for 56 acres, a house and two barns, and won the bid. He paid for the property – an echo of his father – with two mortgages that totaled the entire cost. There the resemblance ends. The younger Doane paid off both debts and did not engage in any other property transfers for the rest of his life in Royalston.⁷⁵

V. The Doanes Falls Neighborhood

The geographic, economic, and social neighborhood of Doanes Falls extended beyond the relatively small parcels held by Nichols, Doane and their successors. In order to understand the land use history of Doanes Falls Reservation it is necessary to look westward toward Tully River, south to the Athol line, and upstream on Lawrence Brook at least as far as Coddings Meadow. This is primarily Bragg and Shepardson territory. More mill privileges were involved, as were the agricultural interests that dictated land use away from the brook.

Briefly, through the nineteenth century the Shepardson family controlled sizable tracts of land west of the Tully River. Shepardson names appear associated with houses near the intersection of Doanes Hill Road and Route 32 on the 1831, 1870 and 1898 Royalston maps. More pertinent, Jonathan Shepardson was listed among the town’s manufacturers in 1850, producing lumber, paper

^{xxvii} Virtually none of the later deeds specify exact acreage.

^{xxviii} See photo in Appendix A.

components, shingles, even matchsticks at his sawmill on Tully River (see Overview, Fig. 3). How Shepardson managed to draw power from a stream that was also called “Dead River” because of its extreme sluggishness is not clear. There was no mill operating at the site in 1880.

The Shepardsons owned much of the land that abutted Amos Doane. They may have been business competitors of Elijah Nichols and his successors in the mid-nineteenth century. Alternatively, they may have provided components for a pail manufacturing business above the falls.

Upstream from Doane and Nichols, Lawrence Brook descends through a series of rapids before reaching the high falls at the Royalston-Athol Road. Here, according to Caswell, Joel Nourse built a dam to pond water for the fulling mill that he had tried unsuccessfully to operate at the falls themselves. This was the third privilege on Lawrence Brook. Someone, drawing on the same low-powered water supply – perhaps Nourse himself – also built a blacksmith shop on the south side of the brook, which included nail-making machinery.^{xxix} The town historians do not date these enterprises but, based on similar small-scale operations in other parts of Massachusetts, it is likely that the nail making experiment took place sometime between 1800 and 1820 or so.^{xxx} The blacksmith shop remained – a useful adjunct to a manufacturing neighborhood – at least through 1859, when Amos Doane bought it at an estate auction.^{xxxi}

The name most closely associated with the third privilege was Benjamin Bragg, who apparently bought out Nourse’s privilege and set up a wool carding operation on the site. Historian Caswell is equally vague about the specifics of this operation, noting only that Bragg *afterwards converted it into a satinet [woolen] factory, where quite a business was done for a number of years.*⁷⁶ Caswell does add that Bragg’s factory burned down in 1850.

A few pieces of information can be added to round out this picture. Maps, deeds and background research indicate that Bragg had added spinning jennies and looms to his carding operations sometime prior to 1837, when Barber’s book on Massachusetts towns mentions them.⁷⁷ Bragg had built a house just north of the bridge by 1831, and a building shown north of the falls on the 1831 map may have been his ‘manufactory.’

Benjamin Bragg identified himself as a “manufacturer” on the 1850 census, but there is no listing for his mill, suggesting it had already burned when the census taker came by. He died two years later, without rebuilding. Sometime before 1870 Sullivan Raymond and his son, who ran Nichols saw mill, bought the Bragg property including house and mill privilege. They may have rebuilt the mill, or perhaps refitted the old blacksmith shop on the south bank of the brook, to use in

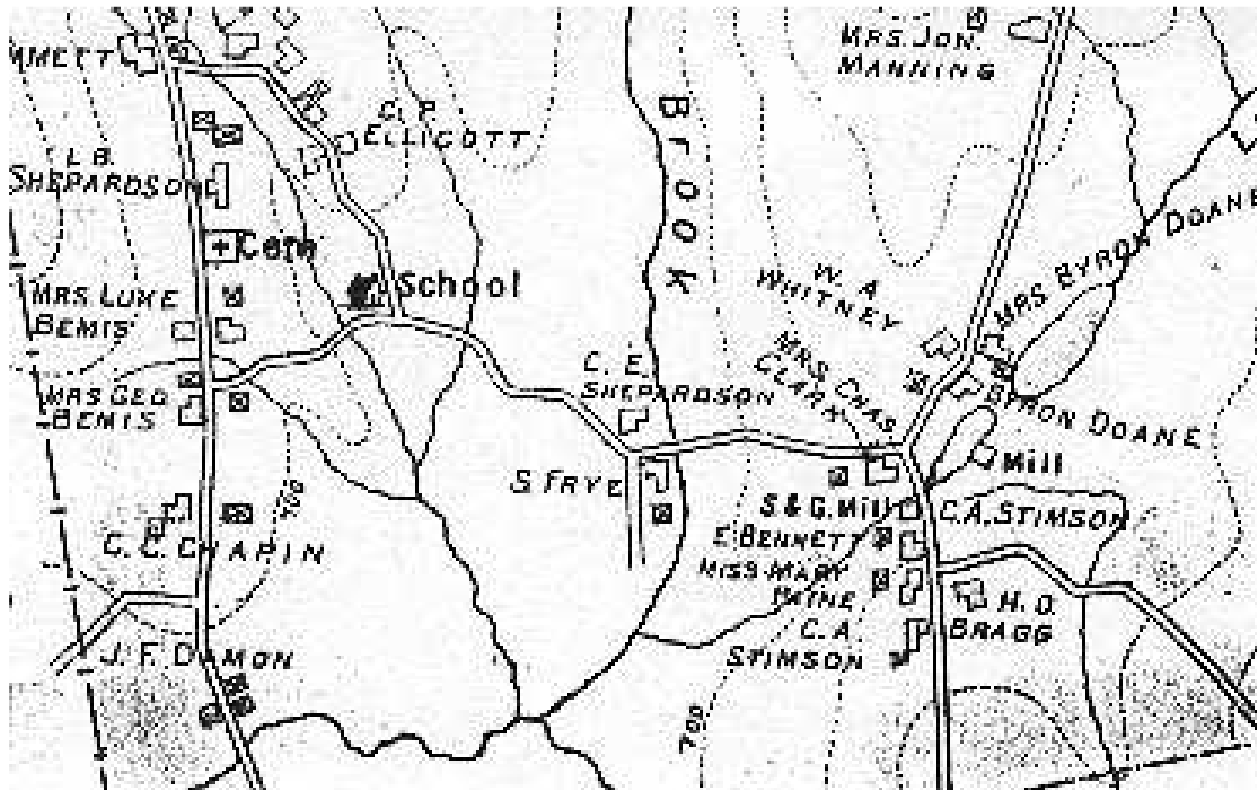
^{xxix} It is not clear whether the Nourse/Bragg enterprise was on the north or south bank. The manuscript 1831 map seems to show a *blacksmith* or *triphammer* icon south of the brook, with a *clothier* icon on the north side substantially upstream. Both the scale of the drawing and the cartographer’s eccentricities argue against taking the information at face value, however, the remnants of two stone-walled foundations – one on each bank – seem to argue in favor of this interpretation.

^{xxx} In Norfolk County, for instance, early attempts at nail manufacture began in the 1790s. Most enterprises collapsed during the 1817-1819 economic depression.

^{xxxi} WD 871:96. The previous owner of this property had acquired it from Simon Doane – a relative? – who went bankrupt. It is apparently one of the parcels that made up the Coddings Meadow Trust land. (See Drury to Doane abstract in appendix.)

conjunction with the sawmill for the manufacture of pails and tubs. “J. Raymond” is indicated at the Bragg house location in 1870.

The Kendalls succeeded the Raymonds until their business went bankrupt in 1877, following which Byron Doane is known to have purchased the house and other Bragg property, although the property description on Doane’s deed begins *below the old Bragg Factory Dam* and runs westward (downstream) from there [WD 1067: 555]. Probably this was one of the lots bought by the Stimsons along with the Nichols mill in the 1880s: a building on the south bank of Nichols Mill pond is labeled *MILL* on an 1898 map, without clear attribution of ownership.



Doanes Falls Neighborhood, 1898

A final passing reference offers the only hint about any of the buildings that once stood at this dam. Caswell, combining history and reminiscence in 1917, mentions Joel Nourse’s dam and locates it as having been *north of the old red pail shop*. Allowing a somewhat flexible interpretation of this reference, we are led to the conclusion that the third privilege dam was upstream (*north* – actually northeast) of the building labeled *MILL* in 1898 and apparently still standing in 1917 – the Raymonds’ *old...pail shop*. Which leaves one final question: was it the pails or the shop that was red? Likely it was the shop, resembling a small country barn situated close to the water.

Building a dam at the third privilege had the effect of flooding another stretch of meadow above the falls, upstream from the Nichols mill pond that already existed. This was the area of the Coddings Meadow parcel that was acquired by The Trustees in 1992. Historically, flooding a

tract of fresh meadow meant an economic loss to its owner, a farmer who would have hayed the meadow once or twice a year under normal circumstances. Upstream meadow lots were therefore frequently purchased (or less often, leased) by the manufacturer-dam builder in order to avoid litigation with abutters.^{xxxii} Coddings Meadow appears to have been an area where multiple owners worked out different solutions with the mill owners downstream. A portion of the fourteen acres that came to The Trustees belonged, in 1877, to pail manufacturer Sullivan Raymond, who may well have bought it as part of a package with the rest of Benjamin Bragg's holdings. Here was an example of the manufacturing interest taking direct ownership of upstream property abutting a mill privilege.

Another parcel of the Coddings Meadow land, described as *5 acres meadow* in a 1979 deed, illustrates an alternative ownership route. This parcel still belonged to the Bragg family – perhaps to Nathaniel Jr.'s branch rather than Benjamin's. It was sold in 1979 together with numerous other tracts that together comprised the nineteenth century Bragg family homestead and farm property, stretching from the Athol line all the way to Lawrence Brook.

An outline of what is known about the history of Coddings Meadow is located at the start of this section. Who Mr. Coddings was, for whom the meadow was named, is one of many unknowns about this property. The name does not appear elsewhere in Doanes Falls area documents.

Despite the gaps in our knowledge of the specifics of land ownership and construction above Doanes Falls, a picture still emerges of a busy, noisy 19th century neighborhood of small-scale sawyers and manufacturers – many related to nearby farming families – whose lives and work revolved around the falls on Lawrence Brook. The height of their success and the neighborhood's significance was from perhaps 1820 to 1850. In the long run, they did not have the success of manufacturers in South Royalston for a number of reasons including the natural limited waterpower of the site, and the 1847 routing of the Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad through South Royalston, that diverted traffic and business away from Doanes Falls.

VI. Water and Edward Bragg

By the end of the nineteenth century major change in land use was taking place in Royalston, especially on the peripheral lands that had never been agriculturally successful. Examples of lumbering, conservation and vacation uses have been cited in previous sections of this report. The Doanes Falls area experienced a significant change as well, instigated by Edward Franklin Bragg.

According to Bragg's daughter, Edward Bragg was a descendant of the family whose agricultural land holdings defined south central Royalston, and whose earlier manufacturing exploits had shaped Lawrence Brook above the falls [1976 letter from Jean Bragg Ebaugh to The Trustees].⁷⁸

^{xxxii} Massachusetts mill owners and legislators spent almost two hundred years working out this solution. Early town records, including those of Royalston (see, for instance, Bartlett's description of the Newton-Holman controversy, pa. 63) are full of complaints from agricultural interests, while mill deeds found it necessary to specify in painstaking detail the exact height to which a miller may raise his pond during which months of the year.

Town histories do not list him in the local family lineage, but Mrs. Ebaugh's genealogical notes indicate that his father, Jesse Kendall Bragg was the son of Nathaniel Bragg Jr. The Royalston ancestry would be as follows:

Nathaniel Bragg (b. 1747) ; m. Sarah Wilson 1771; to Royalston ca. 1776.
*settled near the Athol line, close to what is now known as Doane's Falls*⁷⁹
 Nathaniel Bragg Jr. (b. 1780); m. Polly Kendall 1807.
 Jesse Kendall Bragg (b. 1811?)
 Edward Franklin Bragg (1863 – 1923)

Edward Bragg graduated from M.I.T. in 1890. For much of his life he owned the Everett Hale Rubber Company in Boston, which manufactured deep sea diving suits. Bragg also patented an automatic rubber mixing machine which his company manufactured and marketed.

Unfortunately, writes Mrs. Ebaugh, the chemicals used poisoned him and made him an invalid for twelve years before his death. [1975 letter, Ebaugh to Abbott]

Bragg's immediate connection with Doanes Falls began in 1894,

by purchasing his first parcel toward what was to become 1600 acres along both sides of Lawrence Brook and Miller's River, with riparian rights so that he could develop water power in a natural setting. [Ebaugh]

Another of his relatives further described Bragg's intentions:

In the mind of Edward F. Bragg the land had very substantial value for hydroelectric development and was to provide security for his descendants for years to come. [1973 Josephine Ashenden letter to The Trustees]

On Lawrence Brook, Bragg was thorough about his purchases. He bought up land on both sides of the falls from the Royalston-Athol Road downstream to its intersection with the Tully River. Bragg also acquired parcels above the falls, in the vicinity of Benjamin Bragg's old dam and, even farther upstream at the White Privilege (Prouty's Mill).^{xxxiii} The upstream purchases were presumably made to protect his right to control stream flow and water level at Doanes Falls. It is not known whether the approximately 1,000 acres along the Millers River later proved profitable or not, but the hydroelectric potential of Lawrence Brook was never developed.

Edward Bragg died in 1923, before he could realize his hydroelectric dream. His will established a family trust to manage all his land holdings, which was maintained through two more generations. At first there appeared to be development potential for the property. The Ashenden letter continues:

In the late 1920s serious negotiations were carried on with New England

^{xxxiii} Bragg's piecemeal accumulation of land and water rights proved a challenge to The Trustees in later years. The language in many of the deeds had not changed from the 19th century, and some boundaries were impossible to pin down with any exactness. The "White Privilege" deeded to Jean Bragg Ebaugh in 1975, was at the time generally agreed to be an unidentifiable tract of land, which she chose to hold on to "for sentimental reasons."

Power concerning development but nothing came of this because the potential was not quite great enough to interest them. Even by that time small scale hydroelectric projects were becoming of questionable economic value. The depression completely ended any potential for hydroelectric development and rendered the hundreds of acres of land of very questionable value.

Other events sounded the death knell for Bragg's vision. In 1930, possibly as a WPA project, the Athol Road bridge over Lawrence Brook was rebuilt. The new, concrete arch bridge was constructed in essentially the same location as the old one but with one significant difference: the bridge footings on the south side of Lawrence Brook were extended to a large, midstream ledge. This had the effect of strengthening the bridge. It also permanently sealed off the natural channel that had been used as the sluiceway for Nichols Mills.^{xxxiv}

Another series of events permanently altered the downstream end of Doanes Falls. As early as the 1930s, state officials had considered acquiring Doanes Falls. Worcester County historian John Nelson, writing in 1934, noted:

The Doane's Falls Reservation has been authorized by the Massachusetts Legislature, but has not yet been purchased by the county. The falls ... are impressively beautiful, particularly in times of high water The setting is most picturesque – a deep, forest-bordered ravine, with nearly perpendicular cliffs. Nothing in the county compares with this rushing, roaring, tumbling torrent.^{80 xxxv}

The Hurricane of '38 resulted in a different government priority for this watershed area. During the 1940s, as part of a flood control project for the Connecticut River basin, the federal government took ownership of large parcels of land along the Tully River. Between 1947 and 1949, the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) completed Tully Dam at the Orange / Athol / Royalston town line, reserving the land upstream as a dry bed reservoir to impound water during flood conditions.

All these changes were not without impact on the abutting Bragg holdings. The 1940s federal takings included the western end of the Bragg Family holdings, where Lawrence Brook flows into Tully River. TTOR's Standing Committee records indicate that the Bragg family had been encouraging public use of the Falls area. Committee minutes from 1951 note that the family trust *courteously invites the public to inspect Doane Falls* by posting signs in the area. But the property was clearly not immune to outside interference.

In 1954 there was talk that the state might take the remaining Doanes Falls Bragg property by eminent domain. This was discussed in the context of a much more ambitious state plan. Neither the Bragg Family Trust nor The Trustees of Reservations liked that idea, commenting that *the*

^{xxxiv} A hint of the sluiceway can be seen today where a trickle of water leaks through the abutment at the south end of the bridge, into the wheelpit of Nichols Mill.

^{xxxv} Nelson's comments appear in a chapter unexpectedly titled *The Conservation Movement in Worcester County*. He dates the local beginnings of the movement to the World War I era.

area was more appropriate ... to maintain in a natural state than for the state to develop for greater parking with picnic tables, etc. At that point the Braggs indicated they might entertain an offer from The Trustees to buy the property.

In 1955 the USACE leased over a thousand acres of their Tully River land to the state Department of Environmental Management, for recreational development and natural resource management. Apparently the proposal to incorporate the Bragg property was dropped. Nevertheless, the idea of government taking and control of nearby lands had been planted in the minds of nearby landowners.

Two years later, Professor Francis Bragg – not directly related to the Edward F. branch of the family – and his wife offered The Trustees an option to buy part of their land south of Lawrence Brook *extending to within 10 feet of the water's edge*. In July 1959, 12 acres of Francis and Annabelle Bragg's land became the first parcel in the eventual Falls Reservation.^{xxxvi}

Attention continued to be focussed on protecting the remainder of the land surrounding Doanes Falls. 1962 Standing Committee minutes note: *The state is interested in assuring that this area will be preserved and is unable to accomplish any dealing, except eminent domain, with the [Bragg family] Trust we are trying to see what can be accomplished with the Trust to assure the preservation of this area.*

The state, cooperating with the USACE, were able to accomplish other achievements in the area, however. In 1966 the dry bed reservoir behind Tully Dam was purposely flooded to form a 200-acre "summer conservation lake." By the late 1970s the state DEM had constructed a campground with boat launch facilities on a peninsula at the north end of the lake.

Meanwhile, sixteen years and a large stack of legal documents later, the Bragg Family Trust and The Trustees of Reservations finally completed transfer arrangements for the Trust's 18 acres on both sides of Lawrence Brook. In March 1975, The Trustees' Director Gordon Abbott reported to the Standing Committee that the process was complete. The whole of the long-imagined 32nd Reservation was in place, and one of the abandoned mill stones from Nichols Mill was brought across the stream and erected as a memorial. An inset bronze plaque was inscribed:

Tribute to Edward Franklin Bragg
August 28, 1863 – June 2, 1923
His love for these Falls and his appreciation
of their beauty will always be remembered.

Funding for purchase of the Braggs' eighteen acres came largely from an unexpected source. A November 1970 letter to Gordon Abbott from Trustees' Vice President John Woolsey elaborates:

A man who identified himself as Richard Bullock telephoned me out of the blue from Fitchburg this afternoon. He said that he had long been interested

^{xxxvi} This branch of the family, also descended from Nathaniel, held onto a large portion of the original grant lands extending from just south of Doanes Falls to the Athol line until the mid-20th century. See Coddings Meadow for further discussion.

in Doane's Falls and wanted to take steps to see that this area is preserved. In this connection he had written to various members of the Bragg family and had been referred to me.

.... Mr. Bullock ... said that if the purchase price is not too great he would like to contribute the land as a memorial to his father who was born and lived in Royalston. As you remember, there are other Bullocks now in Royalston, including Hugh Bullock of New York.

The Bullocks, one of Royalston's oldest and most influential families, had numerous land holdings in town, especially around the Common, where family members had built at least three of the imposing white houses that define that area. Many of the later 19th and 20th century family members made their marks outside of Royalston, but continued to return to town for summer vacations. Richard Bullock's father was born and lived in Royalston, although Richard himself divided his time between Fitchburg and *one of the Bullock houses in Princeton*, according to Woolsey's letter.

Interestingly, despite the family's widespread investments, the Bullock name is completely absent from records of historic land dealings in the Doanes Falls area. Nevertheless, Richard Bullock remained true to his initial pledge, providing seventy-five per cent of the purchase price for the Bragg acreage. His one request was that a memorial marker be erected on the reservation in honor of family members.

VII. The 32nd Reservation

The Bullock memorial became the first management issue to confront The Trustees at their new reservation. Mr. Bullock, having received Trustees approval for his preferred inscription, apparently paid for and arranged for installation of the memorial himself. The stone, a massive block of granite, was installed overlooking the entrance to the new reservation. It both preceded geographically and outdid in size the Bragg memorial, causing a substantial outcry among Bragg family members and others.

When The Trustees' Management and Protection Committee formulated its first policy guidelines for Doanes Falls two years later, the document recognized the markers as significant, but proceeded to address issues that more urgently required attention.

[There are] no stipulations in the transfer deeds or by the financial donor for specific management ... [except that] the memorial markers to Bullock and Bragg shall be maintained. [*General Policy Management Guideline; Nov. 14, 1977*]

In an early recognition of the necessity to manage cultural as well as natural resources at the falls, the guidelines suggest that *it may prove feasible to preserve enough of the stone 'ruins' to be meaningful to students of such workings*. Then the committee makes its first observations on the one constant issue of Doanes Falls management: public safety.

Practice has developed another use of Doanes Falls Reservation to a very marked extent – swimming and jumping into the two pools. To negate this use would be extremely difficult; to control it in any significant way will pose real problems.

Jean Tikka, a young woman had died while swimming at the falls in 1960. Although no other deaths had been recorded since that time, accidents had been numerous and had kept the Royalston rescue squad busy during summer months. Over the following years, a number of factors were identified that aggravated the inherent dangers involved in water sports on Lawrence Brook. Excerpts from Headquarters files document the challenges and chronicle land management at Doanes Falls.

1982 The goal here is to maintain a cleaner, more orderly reservation through the hiring of a weekend warden, regular policing during the week, and the banning of glass containers.
Weekend warden hired for summer months.

July [young swimmer broke his leg jumping from a hemlock tree into the lower pool]
Aug. [another swimmer received head lacerations from slipping on rocks]

1983 [letter from superintendent Philip Truesdell to the Athol Daily News] The good old days when only locals came to swim and the falls were never crowded are gone forever. Gone with them are the days when the owners could allow unrestricted use of the property.
Ban on alcohol consumption instituted

-- [Athol Daily News article on alcohol ban: Fire Chief Wayne Newton reports that the Fire Department rescue truck was dispatched to Doanes Falls twenty-three times over the past three years --but only four times this season – a difference Newton attributes to ban on drinking.]

-- Preparation of master plan suggested but postponed.

1984 [Local committee minutes] The group again acknowledged that visitors come to the falls from all over Massachusetts; it is no longer a predominantly local crowd. Chief Newton states that largest number of emergency requests he could recall was 18 in one year – most serious injuries were to outsiders.

-- Conway School of Landscape Design contracted to prepare a study of the reservation. The result, *A Study in Preservation for Doane's Falls*, included observations on parking, foot traffic, cultural resources and fragile natural communities and environments, with recommendations for improvements. The report's characterization of Doanes Falls offers a summary of its late 20th century dilemma.

The foundations are all that remain of the once active mills and farmhouses, and the fields have returned to forest. Now the falls are attracting visitors because of their dramatic beauty and the refuge they

offer from an increasingly urban world. Once the favorite playground of local families, the falls have become a victim of suburban expansion. Word of mouth reports bring rising numbers of outsiders from sprawling suburbs and cities into the site to swim, dive and picnic.

.... The recent ban on alcohol has reduced some of the dangerous and obnoxious behavior, but there still remains concern over campfires, vandalism, and user-made paths to precarious ledges above the falls.^{81 xxxvii}

A number of the study's landscape observations and recommendations remain valid today and are worth consulting by those engaged in the present management planning process. Recommendations concerning cultural resources will be reviewed in the cultural resource management section of this report.

1986 *Two seasonal wardens are hired to "patrol and manage" the reservation between Memorial Day and Labor Day; admission fees charged to non-Royalston residents.*

This change in management seemed to have had beneficial effects. One letter to Superintendent Dick O'Brien observes:

The character of the Falls has made a drastic change this summer with the Wardens on duty. Even driving by, there are no more beer drinking crowds on the road, and this past Saturday I saw an elderly couple coming up the path. This was a [sight] I've never seen in past years. [Norris to O'Brien letter, 1986]

1987 Dick O'Brien, in a 1987 communication to the Royalston Board of Selectmen, clarifies The Trustees management policy after hiring wardens for a second year:

With regards to swimming and diving our policy will remain one of non-encouragement due to the potential for serious injury, but not one of prohibition. Although our wardens will advise visitors of the dangers involved, they will not act as lifeguards nor are they required to have those skills.

1988 Dean Bastarache, 19, of Gardner, dies at Doanes Falls.

1989 Lloyd Newton, 16, of Athol, president of the high school junior class, drowns at Doanes Falls as he and friends are celebrating a school team victory.

-- A citizen petition is submitted to the Royalston selectmen "after a recent drowning and an

^{xxxvii} The two decades from the mid-60s to the mid-80s saw a major change in public behavior at recreation sites throughout the commonwealth. At The Trustees' properties at World's End (Hingham) and Rocky Woods (Medfield), for instance, increases in vandalism, drinking, teenage parties and other *obnoxious behavior* resulted in major changes in management policy.

attempted suicide at the Falls” to close Doanes Falls to swimming.

1991 Brian Lanou, 18, of Orange, drowns at Doanes Falls.

Brian Lanou’s death highlighted a different source for concern about swimming at this location than alcohol impairment or daredevil recklessness. Lanou had gone swimming with friends in August, four days after an extremely heavy rainfall. Unusual for that season, the brook was still at near-flood conditions, the water high and the current extremely fast. He and a friend jumped in, not recognizing the strong circular undertow in one of the pools. Both tried to climb ashore but, while the companion was rescued by other friends, Lanou lost his grip and was pulled under.

As a result of this tragedy, the Doanes Falls Safety Committee was formed, chaired by Janice Lanou, the boy’s mother. The committee, together with The Trustees’ Central Regional Committee, held two public meetings about safety issues at the falls, and out of these they developed a new safety plan which The Trustees adopted in January, 1992. Much of the plan echoes recommendations in a thoughtful statement written by Mrs. Lanou after her son’s death. The plan included:

- stronger warning signs
- installation of emergency phone on site
- safety equipment (life rings) at four locations
- development of water safety awareness program for junior/senior high school
- at least one warden on duty during “dangerous” (either high or low) water conditions

Nov. The Royalston Fire Department buys “specially designed rescue equipment for use at the Falls during emergency rescue situations.” The Trustees make a donation toward the equipment cost.

-- The Department of Environmental Management terminates its operation of Tully Lake Campground due to budgetary constraints. By 1993 the campground is permanently closed. According to Dick O’Brien, the impact on Doanes Falls management was to reduce professional presence in Doanes Falls / Tully Lake area although Trustees and USACE rangers continued to patrol area.

1992 The Trustees add **Coddings Meadow** to Doanes Falls Reservation. Acquisition of this property, together with Massachusetts Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife purchase of the adjoining acreage, protects a portion of the floodplain upstream from the falls.

During negotiations for the sale, an oil spill was discovered on the property which required removal of over 35 tons of home heating oil-contaminated soil from the area immediately adjacent to the roadway. An old cabin on the property was also torn down.

1999 The Trustees **lease Tully Campground** from the USACE and assume management.

The property is operated under an annual lease and provides the geographic connecting

link between Doanes Falls and Spirit Falls / Jacobs Hill. Doanes Falls wardens use guard shack as local base of operations, thus providing a building for emergency phone, storage, and indoor rest spot. The arrangement is beneficial for Doanes Falls Reservation as the infrastructure for a “strong professional presence” in the area.

2002 Steven Vaughan, 44, of Orange, dies at Doanes Falls.

Vaughan, who had been diving at the Falls since his youth, was teaching his daughter how to do so, when he slipped on one of the high ledges and fell to his death.

*The Trustees immediately institute a new **policy, specifically forbidding all swimming, diving, and wading** in Lawrence Brook at the Falls.*

Currently underway:

- Additional life safety improvements installed in immediate vicinity, including:
 - stabilization of masonry wall at edge of parking area;
 - additional cable fencing;
 - improved site drainage away from foot paths;
 - rerouting of heavily eroded and steep trail sections.
- Management Plan for Doanes Falls Reservation.

SECTION FIVE

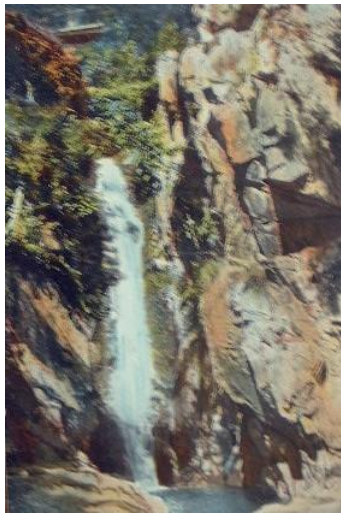
DOCUMENTATION

- I. Appendices
 - A. Photographs
 - B. Disposition of Isaac Royall Lands
 - C. Prouty's Mill
 - D. Interesting Deed Transcriptions and Excerpts
 - 1877 Whipple to Wheeler (Royalston Falls)
 - 1863 Perkins to Perkins (Jacobs Hill – Thompson lot)
 - 1873 Ripley to Clement (Jacobs Hill – Hill lot)
 - 1797 – 1913 Nichols Mills (Doanes Falls)
 - 1827 – 1859 Amos Doane Property (Doanes Falls)
 - E. Royalston Maps and Plans
- II. Bibliography
- III. Endnotes

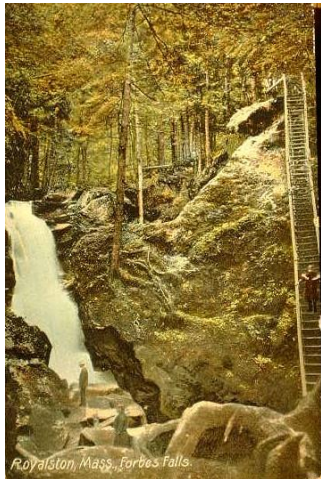
APPENDIX A -- PHOTOGRAPHS



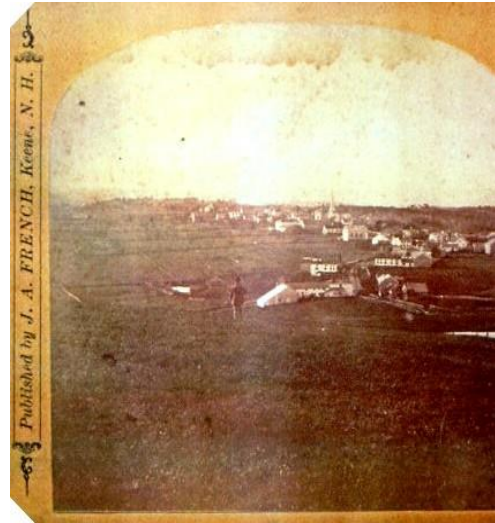
"Panorama of Royalston, Mass." [postcard]



Royalston Falls postcard [note platform]



"Royalston Mass Forbes Falls" [postcard]



View of Royalston center
[stereocard]



"The Glen" (Royalston Falls with dam in
foreground)
[photo, ca. 1880, out of focus]



“Long Pond from Jacobs Hill”
[Draper photo ca. 1880]



Nichols dam and base of mill
[Draper photo ca. 1880]



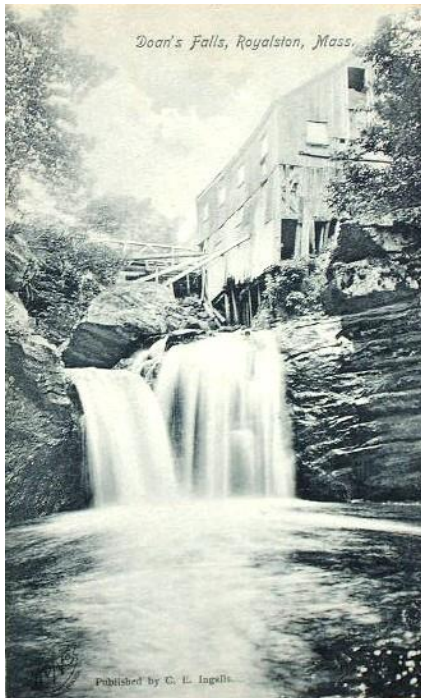
old Doane Hill Road



Benjamin Bragg house
Athol Road



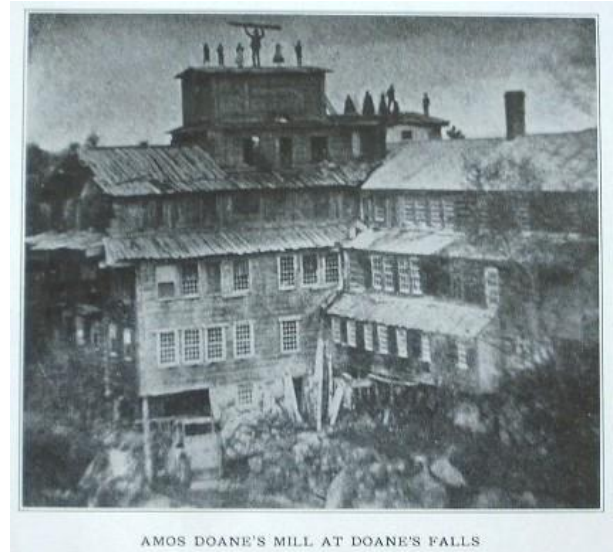
“Royalston Mass. Doan’s Upper Falls”
(Nichols Mill)
postcard



“Doan’s Falls, Royalston, Mass.”
(Nichols Mill)
postcard



Bragg Memorial, Doanes Falls Reservation
(millstone from Nichols Mill)



“Amos Doane’s Mill at Doane’s Falls”
[photographic plate in Caswell, *Royalston*]



“Departed Power” stereocard
(Doane’s Mill being dismantled)



Doane barn foundation

APPENDIX B

Disposition of Isaac Royall Lands

Isaac Royall, one of the town's original proprietors, was a wealthy and influential member of the colonial aristocracy in Massachusetts. When the Revolution came, he remained loyal to the crown, and returning to his estate in England. Royall left behind an elegant mansion in Medford, and sizable land holdings in other parts of the commonwealth, including at least seven proprietor's lots in Royalston.

Following the war, a series of state "confiscation acts" were passed, which defined the terms by which local government could seize land held by absentee (loyalist) owners. The acts were aimed at improving state finances by payment of past real estate taxes and development or use of unoccupied properties.

Royall, whose holdings included over 2000 acres in Worcester County alone, filed suit against this action in the 1790s. He finally received a settlement in 1815, and was so incensed by the legal manipulations that he donated the entire amount to Harvard University to fund a professorship in law.

The following deed exemplifies hundreds of similar transactions from the period, and indicates one of the ways in which a rural investor with a small amount of money (and the right family connections) could become rich through land speculation in the years of the early Republic.

To all People to whom these Presents shall come I Samuel Goddard Collector of Taxes for the Town of Royalston in the County of Worcester for the year 1794 legally chosen and sworn send greeting. Whereas the Assessors of the said Town of Royalston for the year aforesaid legally chosen and sworn have agreeably to law assessed the lot of land in said Town, N^o 63 to the Executor of Isaac Royal Esq. which in their list of Assessments they have committed to me to collect the sum of one Dollar and seventeen cents. And whereas no person has appeared to discharge the said taxes although I have advertised and posted the same in the papers and towns as the law directs – Therefore Know ye that I the said Samuel Goddard in consideration of the sum of seven dollars and sixty two cents to me paid for discharging the taxes and necessary intervening charges by Samuel Goddard J^r of Royalston in said County have granted bargained and sold and do hereby grant bargain sell and convey to the said Samuel Goddard Jun^r his Heirs Assigns forever part of said Lot of land N^o 63 beginning and bounded as follows vix: beginning at the Northwest corner of said lot thence Southwardly on line of said lot Ninety rods to a stake and stones thence Eastwardly one hundred and fifty rods to Winchendon line thence Northwardly on said line Ninety rods to the Northeast Corner of said lot thence Westwardly on line of said lot one hundred and fifty rods to the first mentioned bounds containing eighty four Acres and sixty rods; the same having been set off to the said Samuel Goddard Jun^r he being the highest bidder therefor, legally notified begun and held at the house of Oliver Warrens Innholder in Royalston on the ninth day of June 1796. To have and to hold the same to the said samuel Goddard Jun^r his Heirs and Assigns forever to his and their only proper use and behoof forever subject however to the said Proprietor or Proprietors right of repemtion thereof at any time

within two years from said thirtieth day of June the time of sale aforesaid. And I do covenant with the said Samuel Goddard Jun^r his Heirs and Assigns that the taxes aforesaid were Assessed and published and notice of the intended sale of the said lands given according to law and that in all respects I have observed the directions of the law whereby I have a good right and full power to sell and convey the premises to the said Samuel Goddard Jun^r to hold as aforesaid. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this twenty third day of June Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and ninety six.

Samuel Goddard

Signed sealed & delivered in presence of us

William Town, Phillip Sweetser

APPENDIX C – PROUTY'S MILL

NOTE: *This piece of property and its accompanying mill privilege lies upstream of Doanes Falls. It is not owned by The Trustees of Reservations, having been conveyed by them to R. Jean Bragg Ebaugh in 1974 and described as “premises known as “The White Privilege and Millyard” or “The White mill privilege.” The White mill history and the documents relating to it offer useful evidence of the lumbering, sawmilling, millworking and business practices that took place in a number of locations throughout Royalston during the nineteenth century.[Note that White did not own this property until 1892.] For further Prouty documentation see examples of his timber leases in the “Power of Wood” section of Overview chapter.*

1806 Isaac Prouty of Royalston, Tanner, buys 50 acres of land from Stephen Batcheller [WD 176:484] and David Lyon [WD 176: 485] who were both Royalston men. Prouty has already established a tan yard near the center of town (see location on 1831 map, which conforms to Batcheller deed description of a tract “in front of said Proutys tan yard.” The location of Lyon’s acreage is not clear, but appears to be toward the east side of town.

It is also unclear how William Prouty came by the mill on Lawrence Brook – no deeds exist to suggest he bought and built from scratch, nor do we know that Isaac ever bought the land and set William up on it – a common form of parental support-in-lieu-of-inheritance.

1831 map no evidence of mill

1850 census “William Prouty – dry measures”

1852 Isaac Prouty (father of John and William) dies [WP 91:760 written Oct 23, 1851; entered April 6, 1852]

-- no mention of any mill in Isaac’s will, but he leaves William \$1500 and the rest of his estate to eldest son John M. who is expected to care for his mother and a “dependant sister.” A year later, John sells all of this to William [WD 510:502]—presumably with the agreement that William will take over responsibility for widow and sister?

1851-1855 John and William Prouty put the (promise of) William’s inheritance to use, buying up timber leases from Royalston land owners. See excerpts in Overview chapter.

1859 John M. Prouty dies [WP #48149]

-- His estate is declared insolvent by a commission composed of Joseph Raymond and John L. Perkins. They spend the next 15 months sorting out the case and finally sell off the ‘widow’s dower’ right to the mill and John’s share in the business to Peter Woodward in 1860.

- 1864 1. William H. Prouty (Royalston) to Joseph L. Perkins (Royalston) for \$100 [WD 684:110]
all his "right, title, interest and estate in a certain sawmill shop together with about 4 acres of land" See excerpt next page.
2. Peter Woodbury (Royalston) to Joseph L. Perkins for \$200 [WD 680:576 – May 9, 1864]
his right to this property including "a saw mill and Wooden Ware shop."
A month earlier Woodward had sold John Prouty's widow's dower right to the property to Perkins for \$250.
- 1864 Joseph L. Perkins (Royalston) to Franklin H. Goddard (Royalston) for \$560 [WD 1039:532 – Nov. 25, 1864; entered 1878]
-- a) ½ of "Prouty Mill ... with ½ of the machinery ... subject to Peirce's right of flowage" – also subject to mortgage of \$1200 held by Fitchburg Savings Bank of which Goddard assumes half.
-- b) ½ of "dwelling house near said Mill, called the 'Town House' subject to mortgage to Town of Royalston for \$480 of which Goddard assumes half.
-- *Perkins had only just acquired both of these properties [WD 691:401 and below]. He was a substantial real estate investor, especially in Royalston, Athol and Phillipston, including the "Thompson Parcel" of Jacobs Hill Reservation. By the 1870s and early 1880s he had also invested farther afield in Fitchburg, Gardner and Templeton as well. In any case, neither he nor Goddard was a sawyer. Perkins, age 36 in 1865, listed himself as "Farmer" on the Massachusetts census. Goddard does not appear.*
- 1877 Abel Merriam to Childs (Fitchburg) & Goddard (Royalston) for '\$1 and other considerations' [WD 1015:82 – Aug 7, 1877] See excerpt next page.
A transfer seems to be missing here, but it is clear from the deed that Merriam was working at the mill, if not its sole operator. It is likely that his "payment" was in the form of partial ownership. Childs, from Fitchburg, may have gotten involved with the mill when the Fitchburg Savings Bank called in the mortgage listed above.
- 1892, 1893 Franklin Goddard, Frederick A. Childs and Martin Fallon to Millard White [WD 1389:2; 1394:247 & 250; 1414: 184 & 185]
Childs & Goddard were the then current title holders to what was described as "Prouty Mill pond, dam, mill buildings, mill privilege, machinery & c." Fallon owned the abutting property. It is not clear whether Fallon was associated in business with the other two, or whether Millard White was simply buying up abutting land parcels.
- 1912 Millard H. White to Spencer [July 25, 1912]
1912 Perry F. Spencer to Edward F. Bragg [WD 2094:377 – Aug. 21, 1912]
Then through Bragg Family Trust and The Trustees to R. Jean Bragg Ebaugh, 1992.

Prouty's Mill – Deed Excerpts

1864 William H. Prouty to Joseph L. Perkins [WD 684:110]

all my right title interest and estate in and unto a certain sawmill shop together with about four acres of land and the water priviledge thereto belonging ... also all right that I now hold in and to land which is flown by water caused by the mill dam to said mill and priviledge meaning so long as said land or lands are flown with water by said mill dam & priviledge in case said mill and priviledge should be discontinued I do not here quitclaim my right to said meadowlands now flown after said mill shall not require said flowage lands also here quit-claim... to said Perkins all of the machinery shafting benches saws belting, mill bars, drums and pullies that I now have and own in said mill and shop also one iron vise and stove & funnel in the upper room and the lathe bars reserving to take out from said mill and shop all of the lumber and other articles now in the attick story also all of the lumber and other articles now in the west-room over the same mill except a bench and a shaft attached to the building also three turning lathes in the upper story with out belts one grind stone in the upper room with out belt also a stretcher machine and appurtenances thereto except a belt attached to the shaft below a bench and saw and belt in the center of room a stone [stove?] machine bench & saw thereto with out belt a lap machine with out belt a plainer with out main belt; all of the lumber & other articles over the saw mill and under the floor above the saw mill a guage lathe belt & counter shaft over it; a basket machine with out belt and all basket machinery except the post they are keyed into and a small counter shaft at the east side of the shop and the grind stones with out belts, one iron kettle unset in the bending house all other articles in said bending house except steam box, all of the chair stuff & wood in and about the mill yard and all tools of every name and description excepting the mill bars above conveyed also reserving ten fair days from the date hereof to remove the aforementioned reserved property agreeing to clear out such apartments as said Perkins may direct first, also reserving fourteen fair days ... to clear out my stock of logs & lumber in the mill yard ... also reserving all stoves & pipes in the mill except the one conveyed above....

signed: William H. Prouty – May 6, 1864

entered: May 9, 1864

1877 Deed: Merriam to Childs & Goddard [WD 1015:82]

the same tract of land with the Mill privilege & water wheel thereto belonging conveyed by Joseph L. Perkins to said Childs & Goddard, including in this conveyance another water wheel put in by me....

interestingly, Merriam's title is encumbered by a mortgage which he will continue to pay: an annual sum of \$33 for the lifetime of Horace Pierce, payable semi-annually. This would have resembled a retirement fund for Pierce.

APPENDIX D – DEED TRANSCRIPTIONS AND EXCERPTS

DEED ABSTRACT: Whipple to Wheeler 1877 – WD 1010:314

*Note: This deed includes descriptions of both the Forbes and Ballou farms at **Royalston Falls**. Earlier and subsequent deeds use the same boundary descriptions.*

Grantors: Silas and Tamma Whipple (Royalston)

for \$2,000

Grantee: Benjamin Wheeler (Royalston)

the following real estate in Royalston:

1) tract of land *with the buildings thereon* bounded beginning at the southwest corner at st & st *in a brook*;

thence east by land formerly Calvin Forbes about 260 rods to st & st by a road;

thence [north] by the east side of said road until it comes to land of Silas Ballou now or formerly owned by heirs of Addison Paine;

thence west by land formerly Ballou to st & st;

thence north by former Ballou land to *the line of the State of New Hampshire* 34 rods to st & st;

thence west to the brook;

thence *down the middle of said brook* to the first mentioned corner

-- it being part of Lot #80 – 68 acres +/-

2) tract of land, 22 acres +/-, part of Lot #79, beginning at NW corner at st & st;

thence south by land formerly Ebenezer Ingalls 104 rods to st & st;

thence east by land of Square [sic] Davis and others now owned by one T. Cass to st & st in a brook;

thence northerly on said brook to the New Hampshire line;

thence west by the line to the first mentioned bound.

Title: to 1 and 2: M. T. Nash and Wm. Brown to Silas Whipple 9/20/1872, WD 880:457

3) tract of land, part of Lot #45 bounded beginning at northeast corner,

thence west on land of Russell Ballou to northwest corner of this lot;

thence southerly on land of Square Davis about 80 rods to st & st;

thence easterly by land of Henry Goddard about 50 rods to a brook and st & st;

thence southerly down said brook to the south line of said lot;

thence east on the lot line to the southeast corner of the same;

thence north to first mentioned bounds.

4) as much of Lot #42 as lies north of the road which leads to Richmond and west of the road which leads to Josiah Hix's and south of said Hix's land.

5) tract of land northeast of the above [i.e.: 4] bounded beginning at the northeast corner at st & st;
thence west 9 degrees north 63 rods by land of Silas Ballou to st & st;
thence south 9 degrees east $9\frac{3}{4}$ rods by land of R. Ballou to the end of the stone wall;
thence south 30 degrees east 17 rods by land of R. Ballou;
thence south 25 degrees east 9 rods;
thence south 59 degrees east 9 rods;
thence east 1 degree south 33 rods to st & st;;
thence south 1 degree west $36\frac{1}{2}$ rods to st & st;
thence south 61 degrees east 10 rods to st & st by the Hunting Brook so called;
thence north 10 degrees east 40 rods and near said brook on the west side;
thence north 16 degrees west 33 rods to the first bounds
with all the privileges belonging to the same.

Title to 3, 4, 5: Rufus Bullock to Silas Whipple, June 1, 1835; WD 326:3.

signed by Silas, Tamma and Melinda C. Whipple, June 25, 1877

entered June 28, 1877.

Jacobs Hill – Thompson Lot

DEED ABSTRACT: Perkins et al. to Perkins

1863 – WD 707:468

GRANTORS: A.E.P. Perkins (Ware, Hampshire Co.)
Charles L. Woodworth & wife H. A. (Amherst, Hamps. Co.)
Mary C. Perkins (Royalston)
Horatio D. Newton & wife Annette G. (Royalston)
Daniel C. Perkins (South Danvers, Essex Co.)
Benjamin C. Perkins “ “ “

in consideration of \$4,510 paid by

GRANTEE: Joseph L. Perkins (Royalston)

grant all our right, title etc. to the following parcels of Real Estate:

1) land in the Southerly part of Royalston containing 55 acres bounded: beginning at the northeast corner, one rod west of the southeast corner of Joseph Estabrook's land; thence west 3 degrees south by land of said Estabrook 95 rods to a stake & stones; thence south 30 minutes east, by land now or formerly of Peter Woodbury 80 rods to st & st; thence east by land now or formerly of Charles Goddard 46 rods to st & st; thence southerly by land now or formerly of Goddard 40 rods to st & st; thence east 30 degrees north by land formerly of Rufus Bullock 20 rods and 20 links to a maple tree marked on the edge of the meadow; thence north 59 degrees east by said meadow 16 rods to st & st; thence north 24 degrees east by said meadow 4 rods and 23 links to st & st; thence north 10 degrees east 18 rods and 18 links to st & st; thence northeasterly on the edge of the meadow and as the wall runs to the Whittemore land; thence on said Whittemore land to the point of beginning.

TITLE: conveyed to Ebenezer Perkins by Charles Goddard April 8, 1848 “and called the Copeland lot.”

2) land adjoining the aforesaid lot between said lot and the town road leading from the Goddard house to the school house and bounded: beginning at the corner on said road and land of Estabrook near the cow barn thence running westerly on Estabrook and Copeland lot to the Goddard place: thence southeasterly on the Goddard line to said town road; thence northerly on said road to point begun at.

TITLE: E. Perkins from Charles Goddard by 2 deeds: April 8, 1848 and Feb. 19, 1857 “and called the ‘orchard lot’.”

3) land being meadow and upland in Royalston, 30 acres +/- bounded:
on north by Benjamin Brown about 80 rods
on east by Israel Wetherbee about 63 rods
on south by Paul Peirce about 60 rods
on the west by the road leading from Peirce's blacksmith shop to Benj. Brown's about 61 rods;

TITLE: one of lots described in Bullock & Gregory assignees of Asa Batcheller to E. Perkins, April 10, 1833.

4) land in Royalston, 70 acres +/- bounded beginning at the southeast corner at st & st;
thence running westerly by land of N. W. Bragg 118 rods to st & st;
thence northerly by Emily Ripley 8 rods to st & st;
thence easterly by said Ripley 23 ½ rods to st & st;
thence northerly by Ripley 14 rods to st & st;
thence easterly by Ripley 84 rods to a hackmatac tree marked to land of George Woodbury;
thence southerly by Woodbury 102 rods to 1st mentioned corner.
ALSO a strip of land 1 ½ rods wide beginning at last mentioned corner running easterly by said Woodbury's land to the road. Meaning to convey a good passage way to the road.

TITLE: #4 plus passageway: Silas Hale to E. Perkins Dec. 18, 1837

5) parcel of meadow and upland in south part of Royalston, 5 ¾ acres +/-, bounded beginning at st & st at northeast corner of lot
running westerly by land of Woodbury to st & st;
thence southerly by Woodbury to Lawrence brook to st. & st.;
thence easterly by said river to st & st. by land formerly of J. Prouty;
thence northerly by Prouty's land to first bound.

TITLE being the last described lot in William Raymond to E. Perkins, October 4, 1826.

Written: September 9, 1863

Entered : September 13, 1865

Jacobs Hill – Hill Lot

DEED: Ripley et al to Clement et al

1873 – WD 913:641

... we William D.

Ripley and wife Emily B[ullock] Ripley in her own right of Royalston ... in consideration of six hundred dollars paid by William W. Clement and Horace Fisher of Royalston [... do hereby sell unto the said Clement and Fisher] a certain tract of wood and timber land lying in Royalston near the center of the town and bounded as follows viz: Beginning at the Southeast corner thereof at a marked tree formerly which is also the Northeast corner of J. S. Perkins Sweet lot of land so called, thence Westerly by said land of Perkins about eighty four rods to stake and stones at the lower edge of the ledges, thence Northerly on the lower edge of the ledges and by the Pond pasture forty one rods to stake and stones thence Easterly about eighty four rods by the grantor's woodland called Estabrook lot, to stake and stones at the Southeast corner of the grantor's Estabrook lot thence Southerly by land formerly of Thomas Beale forty one rods to the first named bound and corner first named containing twenty onre acres and eighty four rods be the same more or less. Being the same lot of land conveyed to Rufus and Moulton Bullock by W^m and Timothy M. Wood by deed dated February 18th A.D. 1811 ...
[standard release verbiage]

signed December 23, 1873

entered December 30, 1873

DOANES FALLS – DEED EXCERPTS

Nichols Mills

1769 Marsh to Gale [WD 78:449]

I Benjamin Marsh of Sutton...Gentleman for...two hundred twenty-two pounds six shillings & eight pence...paid by Isaac Gale Jun^r of Sutton...do freely, fully and absolutely give, grant, bargain unto him...two certain Tracts or parcels of land...in Royalston...

*-- one containing by Esteemation one Hundred acres butted and bounded:
beginning at a stake & heap of stones by the land that William Marsh bargained for with the s^d Benjⁿ Marsh being the southeast corner
then running north by sundry marked trees to a stake & heap of stones the north side of the brook called Lawrence Brook
then running westerly by sundry trees marked 163 rods
then running south until it comes to the land Benj. Marsh sold to William to a stake & heap of stones
then running by s^d land 163 rods to the first bounds
together with the mills and buildings thereon
-- also another Tract containing 50 acres [on Athol town line]
-- the said Gale is also to have the liberty of flowing the proprietors land that they gave s^d Marsh.*

Signed: Benjamin Marsh – June 26, 1769

entered: Oct. 7, 1777

1784 Gale to Nichols [WD 92:515]

I Peter Gale of Royalston...Miller for...270 pounds... paid by Henry Nichols of Royalston, Husbandman grant...three tracts of land in Royalston containing about 45 acres more or less with my buildings thereon and half a saw mill and one quarter of a grist mill thereon bounded... beginning at the southeast corner...

*thence north by Lot #51 to the brook
thence west by said brook to land of David Fish's [sic]
thence south by said Fish's land to the dam of Nathaniel Bragg
thence east by Braggs land to the bounds first mentioned
-- also [2 other tracts, of which one is upstream; second may be at base of falls]*

Signed: Peter Gale – July 7, 1784

entered July 8, 1784

1797 Brown to Nichols [WD 130:135]

I William Brown Juner [sic] of Royalston...Yeoman for ... \$533 ...paid by Elijah Nichols of Royalston aforesaid [no occupation] grant ... a certain tract of land...in Royalston containing half an acre and fifty poles of land and water and a grist mill and saw mill on said premises and is bounded as followeth, viz. beginning at the Northwest corner at a stake & stones thence East 18 south eleven rods to a stake & stones thence South 7° west by land of the grantors twelve rods to a stake & stones thence West 19° north by land of the grantors fifteen rod & a half rod to a stake & stones thence Eastwardly ten rods to the bounds first mentioned – and also to have a privilege of flowing said Browns lands as

far as shall be necessary for the use of said mills ---
 signed: William Brown, Betty Brown – Aug 28, 1797
 entered: Aug. 30, 1797

1836 Nichols to Lamb [WD 312:473]

Elijah Nichols of Royalston...yeoman in consideration of \$2500 paid by Israel Lamb of Royalston yeoman... do convey the following parcels ... in the South part of Royalston

Parcel 1: 36 acres beginning at NE corner s&s

thence S 10° W 18 rods to s & s by the river [=Lawrence Brook]

thence westerly by river 122 rods to the river running from Long Pond [= Tully River]

thence Northwardly by [Tully River] 52 rods to s & s on the South side of the road

leading from said Nichols to Orange [= old? Doane Hill Road]

thence Eastwardly on sd. road as it now lays 149 rods

excepting a small piece of land sold to Amos Doane off the east end of the lot

-- title: bought of Jonathan Kendall Nov. 14, 1811 [WD 184:120]

**** Parcel 2:** *Also one undivided half of a parcel of land and water and grist and saw mills with the privilege of flowing as far as shall be necessary for the use of said mills bounded beginning at NW corner s & s*

thence E 18° S 11 rods to s & s

thence S 7° W 12 rods by land of Charles Angier

thence W 19° N 15 ½ rods by Angier to s & s

thence Eastwardly 10 rods to the bounds first mentioned

**** containing half an acre and fifty rods...being the premises familiarly known by the name of Nichols' mills. ****

Parcel 3: one undivided half of 12 acres meadow and upland

bounded W on river running out of Long Pond

S by David C. Shepherdson's land

E and N by Samuel Sweetser's land

-- title: bought from Nathan Godard [sic] Feb. 20, 1802 [WD 184:119] and from William Knight Mar 3, 1815

Parcel 4: one undivided half of 59 acres timber and woodland bounded: beginning at SW corner – s & s by Nathaniel Bragg, Ebenezer Perkins

thence N 3° W 116 rods by Perkins and Artemas Raymond – s & s

thence S 87° W 85 ½ rods by Benjamin Bragg – s & s

thence southerly by Charles Angier about 100 rods to s & s by the road leading from said Angier's to William Ford's

thence Easterly on sd. road and land of Nathaniel Bragg to first corner

-- title: bought of Josiah Child June 29, 1809 [WD 173:344]

plus quitclaim from Benjamin Bragg May 7, 1827 [WD 237:495]

Parcel 5: 2 acres bounded beginning at s & s by Angier's property

thence Northerly by the road 18 rods to s& s by Angier

thence West by Angier 21 rods to s & s
 thence South 18 rods by Angier to s & s
 thence East 16 rods by Angier to beginning

Parcel 6: about 18 [square] rods of land on opposite side of the road
 bounded beginning at s & s at NW corner of spot where an old barn formerly stood by
 Angier's land

thence Northerly by road 4 rods to s & s
 thence East 3 rods to s & s
 thence South 5 rods to s & s
 thence West 4 rods to beginning
 -- bounded on N, E, & S by Angier's land

signed: Elijah Nichols and Asenath Nichols (wife) – Jan. 6, 1836
 entered: Feb. 1, 1836

1847 Bemis to Raymond [WD 453:333]

Note: the 1/3 acre associated w/ this seems to have changed bounds:

one third of an acre more or less (conveyed by Leonard Wheeler to Alpha Bemis)
 bounded on the South by the Mill lot, Westerly on the Pond, Northerly on land of Calvin
 A. Drury & Easterly on land of Charles Angier.

1884 Bolton to Stimson – sawmill lot [WD1181:555]

-- one undivided half of a tract of land in Royalston on the main road from Athol, by
 Quarryville to Royalston containing one and one half acres more or less with the Mill
 thereon, Milldam, and Mill Privilege connected therewith. Also one undivided half of a
 certain other tract of land containing one third of an acre ... South of and adjoining the
 tract first mentioned.... "I hereby convey to said grantee one undivided half of all the
 right I may have to draw water from the Pond above." Also one undivided half of a
 certain other tract of land, bounded as follows, viz.: Commencing at a corner near the
 bridge which spans the old Nichols Mill Pond, thence Northerly on the road leading from
 said Royalston to said Athol about twenty-six rods to a corner of land formerly of Harriet
 Drury; thence Easterly about eleven rods to the said Mill Pond, thence Southerly about
 twenty-six rods to the first mentioned bound containing one acre more or less. Also one
 undivided half of one other tract of land lying on said road and bounded on the East by
 said road, on the North by the Mill Yard formerly owned by John and Henry Kendall, on
 the West by the river, and on the South by land formerly of Artemas Raymond. I also
 convey to the said grantee one undivided half of all the *tools machinery and fixtures*
contained in the mill above described, save and except a lot of carpenters tools, some five
or six cords of wood, between two thousand and three thousand feet of lumber, about one
cord of long slabs, and one half of some twenty cords of hard wood timber, all now upon
 said premises which I hereby reserve, together with the right to enter with men and teams
 upon these granted premises for the purpose of removing the same. Meaning to convey to
 said grantee all the [property] conveyed to me by Obadiah Walker by deed dated October
 18th A.D. 1884....

signed: George D. Bolton, Jennie F. Bolton [wife] October 20, 1884

1913 Dickinson to Bragg [WD 2020:87]

a certain tract of land with the buildings thereon. the mill privilege and water privilege and easements connected therewith, situate in ROYALSTON. Worcester County, Massachusetts, on the main road from Athol by Quarryville to Royalston; bounded and described as follows, viz: Beginning at the northwest corner of said tract at a stone bound on the easterly side of the highway leading from Athol to Royalston and at land of Jane E. Doane; thence south seventy degrees (70 °) east eighty-six feet (86') to an old stone wall; thence easterly by said old stone wall forty feet (40') more or less to the westerly side of the mill pond on said tract; thence south sixty-six degrees (66 °) thirty minutes (30') east across said mill pond and the Old Gale Road, so-called, one hundred and fifty (150) feet more or less to a stone monument in an old stone wall; thence southerly following the line of an old stone wall, and by land of Ozi Bosworth five hundred. and fifteen (515) feet more or less to the above mentioned highway from Athol to Royalston; thence across said road to the westerly line thereof; thence southerly by said road two hundred and fifty-two (252) feet more or less to land of Mary E Paine, formerly of Artemas Raymond; thence north eighty-four degrees (84°) west by land of said Paine two hundred and seventy-three (273) feet to a stone monument at the end of an old stone wall; thence north fifty degrees (50 °) west one hundred and sixty-four (164) feet to a large rock marked with the letters "A. D." in Lawrence Brook; thence northeasterly up the center of said brook to the dam at the sawmill on said tract; thence westerly by the line of said dam to an iron pin in the ledge at the westerly end of said dam; thence easterly across the aforementioned road from Athol to Royalston to a point at the easterly side of the bridge on said highway; thence northerly by the easterly line of the above mentioned highway three hundred and twenty-nine (329) feet more or less to the place of beginning, with all the machinery, fixtures and tools contained in or about the mill also all rights we may have to draw water from the pond above.

signed: Elmer E. Dickinson, Henrietta C. Dickinson (wife) – Feb. 3, 1913
entered: Feb. 10, 1913

DOANES FALLS DEED EXCERPTS
Amos Doane Property

- 1827 Gregory to Doane [WD 255:313]
land in south part of Royalston – 1 acre +/- bounded beginning at NW corner (s & s) by
the road leading from Elijah Nichols mills to John Burbanks [= Doanes Hill Road];
thence S'ly by Nichols to middle of Lawrence brook
up brook in middle of stream to Nichols mill so as not to injure mill
N'ly below the mill dam
E to road leading from said mills to Royalston meeting house
N or road to a corner by the road leading to Burbanks
NW on said road to bounds first mentioned.
- 1843 Nichols to Doane [WD 385:270]
30 acres bounded beginning at the corner of the road wh/ is the N corner of the lot near
the house of Benjamin Bragg; thence
NW by the old road to land of Stephen Burbank
thence by Burbank to s & s
W by Burbank to Dead River
S by Dead River center of stream to Lawrence brook
NE upstream by center of brook to a stone in the brook marked "A.D."
E by land of Jonas Bemis to s & s
E by land of Artemas Raymond to the Road
N'ly by the road to the "sawmill and now occupied" [word missing? or should it be
'land'?] by Simon Doane
W'ly by said mill yard to s & s
NE'ly by said mill yard & mill to a s & s on the N side of the Road not including the mill
dam nor the road
NW'ly to place of beginning
-- plus a 2 acre meadow lot also on the "old road" which Doane had formerly purchased
from David Bartlett
- 1859 Drury to Doane [WD871:96] *note abutter history*
tract of land with a blacksmith shop thereon situate in the Southerly part of Royalston and
is bounded on the West by the stream or mill pond of the sawmill lately owned by Alpha
Bemis and now occupied by Sullivan Raymond & his sons (*Nichols Mills*), on the North
by land late of Benjamin Bragg now occupied by said Raymonds, on the East by a road
leading from said sawmill to the place where Jonathan Gale formerly lived (*Gale Road –
leads to Coddings Meadow*), and on the South by land late of said Alpha Bemis and now
occupied by said Raymonds the same being the lot of land first mentioned and described
in a deed from Barnet Bullock Assignee of Simon Doane to Calvin A. Drury [WD 438
(488?):89]

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Maps and Plans

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III. ENDNOTES

¹ Skehan, p. 11 ff. His first chapter is an excellent introduction for the neophyte to this mind-boggling clash of the titans.

² See bibliography for listings.

³ See Doane Falls cultural resources report.

⁴ McArdle & Whitney, pp. 12, 15.

⁵ Prehistoric Archaeological Sites survey form on file at Massachusetts Historical Commission; not publicly available.

⁶ Although these particular maps refer to the last pre-European years (ca. 1500-1675), reconstructions for earlier native occupation and use show very similar patterns.

⁷ Boire and Cherau, p. 43.

⁸ Statistics in Nelson, *History of Worcester County*, p. 22. He does not cite his sources.

⁹ Foster, "Land Use History..." p. 93.

¹⁰ This section includes information from Boire and Cherau, p. 47.

¹¹ MHC *Reconnaissance*, p. 3.

¹² quoted in Crane.

¹³ Horr, p. 244.

¹⁴ Whitney, p. 262.

¹⁵ Lessem quoting 1974 preservation planning report.

¹⁶ Whitney, repeated in Horr, p. 244.

¹⁷ Pruitt, intro.

¹⁸ the 'four times' figure is derived from later Royalston census data, which is remarkably consistent. Through the nineteenth century approximately equal numbers of males and females lived in the town. Similarly, half the males were under 16 (under age for military service) as were half the females. There was a slight tendency to younger families in the earlier census years sampled, which may be attributed to younger couples moving into and remaining within the town.

¹⁹ Based on the above, 557 males would be likely to include about 275 over age 16. Since there were only 195 households documented, almost half the families included one or more 'extra' adult males who, traditionally, were family members working to improve one sizable land holding before going out to establish a second nuclear household.

²⁰ MHC, *Central Massachusetts*, pp. 273-274.

²¹ MHC *Reconnaissance*, p. 3.

²² 1793 town map et al.

²³ See Tritsch, *The Farm Adjoining to Pontauge Hill* (2002) for an example of this earlier agricultural development in West Brookfield. The small-town context described in this and the following paragraphs is outlined for Norfolk County in Tritsch, *Men of Useful Trades* (1982).

²⁴ Lessem.

²⁵ Barber, p. 600.

²⁶ Boire and Cherau, p. 51.

²⁷ Protracted battles over meadow rights took place in many New England towns from the time of their settlement through the early nineteenth century. See, for instance, William Prouty's deed in the Appendix, in which he carefully reserves his land rights in a meadow parcel, should it no longer be part of a mill pond. See also Tritsch's 1996 report on Medfield's Fork Factory Reservation.

²⁸ See Raup and Foster articles in bibliography.

²⁹ Information in Figs. 1 and 2 was abstracted from the federal census, agricultural schedules of 1850 and 1880.

³⁰ MHC, *Central Massachusetts*, p. 298 ff.

³¹ Bullock, p. 184.

³² Ibid., p. 86, 87.

³³ WD 971:5 Perkins to Goddard, 1868.

³⁴ See, for instance the Foster citations in the bibliography.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 183.

³⁶ March 14, 1984 letter from Geo. R. Foote Jr. to the Royalston Planning Board, page 1.

³⁷ Lessem.

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- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Globe architecture critic Robert Campbell, quoted in Lessem article. Campbell concludes: *And it's almost totally unknown.*
- ⁴⁰ Young, pp. 351-352.
- ⁴¹ Data from The Trustees' Land Conservation center; acreage is not exact; totals given are as of 2002.
- ⁴² "Foundation Forests of Massachusetts" at www.newenglandforestry.org
- ⁴³ Central Office Files, "Royalston Falls Reservation," undated typescript.
- ⁴⁴ "Royalston Falls," part of list of New England waterfalls compiled by Peter Chapin, copyright 1997.
- ⁴⁵ McArdle & Whitney, p. 33.
- ⁴⁶ Bullock information from Caswell, p. 178 ff.; Davis information, pp. 309-311; Ballou information, pp. 209-210
- ⁴⁷ See discussion of 1880 figures in Royalston overview section.
- ⁴⁸ Caswell, p. 214. See book for text of poem.
- ⁴⁹ See History of Ownership.
- ⁵⁰ Deed language was frequently confusing concerning land transactions. A normal mortgage deed would specify terms by which the property could be reclaimed. There are numerous examples, however, of deeds that read like straightforward sales, but that subsequent transactions prove to have been mortgages.
- ⁵¹ clipping from Worcester Sunday Telegram, Feb 10, 1952, announcing the gift of land from the Foote family to The Trustees.
- ⁵² It is likely that *old Nance Whipple* became a local folklore figure in association with this venture. What could be more exciting than a walk up the hill to the Ballou place, to visit this old woman muttering by the fire?
- ⁵³ John McClure, Royalston Historical Society, personal communication.
- ⁵⁴ Credit for much of the following information goes to the Reverend Philip Jacobs, of Canton and Royalston, who has compiled extensive genealogical information on the Jacobs family, as well as their associations with Royalston.
- ⁵⁵ An 1804 deed indicates that by then, John Jacobs was living and running a store farther west on the Warwick road in the vicinity of Fish Brook. (cf: WD 157:314).
- ⁵⁶ Bullock, p. 86
- ⁵⁷ Lessem, column 3.
- ⁵⁸ Dick O'Brien, personal communication, Dec 2003.
- ⁵⁹ Bullock, pp. 184-185.
- ⁶⁰ Bartlett, quoted by Mensch; no page citation.
- ⁶¹ See Tritsch, "Land Use in Rocky Woods..."; report for The Trustees.
- ⁶² property appraisal in The Trustees Headquarters files
- ⁶³ G. Abbott letter, March 31, 1978 in Trustees Headquarters files
- ⁶⁴ The parcel required a driveway whose length exceeded that stipulated by the town's bylaws.
- ⁶⁵ "Ridge-Line Greenway" proposal, Central Region files.
- ⁶⁶ Boire and Cherau, p. 40 ff.
- ⁶⁷ All of the Caswell references in this section come from pp. 448-449.
- ⁶⁸ WD 78:449.
- ⁶⁹ WD 92:515.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid; also p. 451.
- ⁷¹ United States Census of 1880, Royalston Mass., Schedule of Manufactures
- ⁷² Bartlett, p. 62.
- ⁷³ Caswell, p. 347.
- ⁷⁴ Bartlett, p. 62.
- ⁷⁵ WD 1067:555, 556 and 1070:195.
- ⁷⁶ Caswell, p. 304.
- ⁷⁷ Barber, p. 600.
- ⁷⁸ All correspondence and minutes cited in the following pages are from organizational files of The Trustees of Reservations.
- ⁷⁹ Caswell, p. 304.
- ⁸⁰ Nelson, p. 555.
- ⁸¹ Babize, McCargo & Roberts, p. 4.