

DATA SHEET

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Hampshire
COUNTY: Hillsborough
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE JUN 10 1975

1. NAME

COMMON: Contoocook Mills Industrial District

AND/OR HISTORIC: George Little's Mill--Marcy Mills--Smith Mills--Denison Bros. Grist Mill--Contoocook Mills Corporation--Hillsboro Woolen Mill Company

2. LOCATION NE corner of Mill Street and Contoocook River

STREET AND NUMBER: Mill Street

CITY OR TOWN: Hillsboro

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Second

STATE: New Hampshire CODE: 03244

COUNTY: Hillsborough CODE: 011

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	apartments	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Paul and Leslie Belliveau

STREET AND NUMBER: Mill Street

CITY OR TOWN: Hillsboro

STATE: New Hampshire CODE: 03244

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Hillsborough County Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER: 19 Temple Street

CITY OR TOWN: Nashua

STATE: New Hampshire CODE: 03060

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: New England: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial sites The Historic American Engineering Record

DATE OF SURVEY: 1974 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service, US Department of the Interior

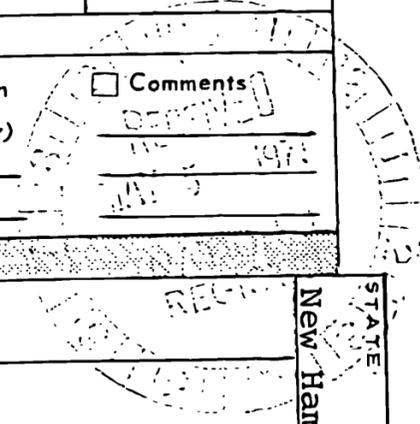
STREET AND NUMBER: 18th and C Streets, NW

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: D.C. CODE: 20240

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

only in inventory



STATE: New Hampshire

COUNTY: Hillsborough

ENTRY NUMBER: JUN 10 1975

DATE:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Contoocook Mills are located on the south bank of the Contoocook River, immediately east of NH Route 149, on the north side of Mill Street in the area historically known as Bridge Village, now the population and commercial center of the Town of Hillsboro, New Hampshire.

The largest structure in the complex is referred to as the "Main Mill" and is the product of two construction methods, reflecting the age of each. The building is basically post and beam construction, but the older part (first and second floors) c. 1865¹ was built of massive handhewn timbers in comparison to the newer section (late nineteenth century) which has much lighter saw-cut members. The building measures 50' x 60', has four full floors, loft, and granite basement which houses the water turbine. The slate roof is a partial hip and is supported by wood trusses independent of a second set of trusses which support the fourth floor, thus producing a complete clearspan on the third floor. The wood double-hung windows are 6/6 and the exterior skin of the building is pine clapboard.

Attached to the Main Mill building, on the west elevation, is a 40' x 70' three-storied flat-roofed building. Although now joined, these two buildings appear to have been constructed independently of each other, perhaps at different times. The construction, also timber post and beam, seems to be of work indicating newer construction. This building has many more windows, providing an interior environment much more pleasing because of the abundance of natural light.

Incorporated at the southwest corner of this building is the original water tower, 15' square and rising 20' above the flat roof. The tower roof provides a base for the 10' square and 10' high belfry, which has identical arched openings on each of its four elevations.

The 40' x 60' brick picker building (begun 1845² with door lintel dated 1846) is perhaps the most beautiful, because of its simplicity. It was constructed as a grist mill and made part of the textile mill at a later date. The building rests on a cut granite foundation and has a gable roof. The original roof was slate, meeting a soft, subtle corbelled brick detail at the gable ends. The roof was rebuilt and the roofing material changed to wood shingles; dormers were added to provide necessary light and air to the upper lofts. Window openings have cut granite lintels and sills with 6/6 wood double-hung windows.

The brick boiler house, 1888 (date appears on the building), is 30' x 40' with a slate gable roof. The square brick stack rises 75' and is topped with a spectacular corbel which is repeated at the gable ends and eaves. The window openings are corbelled arches with granite sills. The windows are 6/6 wood double-hung. The original boilers still exist, with decorative cast iron doors marked "Hodge Boiler Works, East Boston, Massachusetts."

The brick office building, c. 1865³ is 25' x 53' and has two full floors. The roof is hipped but has only a slight pitch which gives it the appearance of being flat. The window openings have corbelled arches with wood

Continued on Continuation Sheet 1

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 1

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Hillsborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 10 1975

(Number all entries)

7. Description, continued.

sills. The windows are 6/6 wood double-hung; the second floor window locations are a duplicate of those on the first floor. The building's straightforward appearance seems to communicate its function of office.

The wood dye house, c. 1865,⁴ is typical wood post and beam barn construction with mortise and tenon joints. The building is 40' x 52', and 42' high at the ridge pole; there are two full floors and a half loft. The structure is supported by a brick and granite foundation and has a pine clapboard exterior. Windows are 6/6 wood double hung.

On a map dated 1884,⁵ the grist mill is shown as Denison Bros. Grist Mill Flour Grain and Feed (the grist mill later became the picker building, as part of the Contoocook Mills). The main mill is shown as two attached buildings as it is today, only the belfry was located on the eastern-most part of the other building instead of on the western corner of the flat roof as it is today. Since 1884 the main building has added another floor and a slate hipped roof as is also evidenced by the difference in interior construction methods. The boiler house in 1884 was located off the eastern end of the main mill where the sorting house was later attached (sometime after the 1888 boiler house was completed). The sorting house was of wood with the first floor wall facing the river of brick. The dye house in 1884 appears to be the same as it is today with the stables (now removed) attached to the east side. The office building also remains much the same, although it is missing the clerestory shown in 1884, and some of the doorways have moved (as they have in some of the other buildings; some became windows). Sheds connecting the main mill and the office building have come and gone. The main six structures are still standing today with only the changes mentioned above.

In 1972, Paul and Leslie Belliveau purchased all the buildings mentioned above located on the north side of mill street. The sorting house, the coal shed, and the stables were all removed as they had deteriorated beyond repair. A new roof was put on the picker building; the office building has been preserved without major change. The main mill, the boiler house, and the dye house all remain to be rehabilitated.

¹G. Waldo Browne, History of Hillsborough, New Hampshire 1735-1921; Volume I History and Description. (Manchester, New Hampshire: John B. Clark Co., Printers, 1921).

²Ibid., 379.

³Ibid., 380.

⁴Idem.

⁵"Map of Hillsborough Bridge, New Hampshire" (Brockton, Massachusetts: Norris and Wellge, Publishers, 1884). Map on file in office of Donald E. Knapton, Town Clerk, Hillsborough, NH.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1738, c. 1769, 1806, 1895-6, 1865, 1888, 1972

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Contoocook Mills property is significant for several reasons. The Contoocook River, the northern boundary of the property, was revered by the Indians; the falls and rapids of what is now the mill area were an important fishing site for them.¹ The first European settlement in Hillsborough was in the falls area,² which later became the industrial and commercial center of the town. Industrial development in Hillsborough was early and advanced in comparison to that of other New England towns;³ what is thought to have been the first twine ever made was manufactured in a mill still standing opposite the Contoocook Mills property.⁴ The saw mills, grist mills and textile mills of Hillsborough all took their power from the river; even today the two remaining active mills retain their belt-driven machinery and keep their penstocks open. The Contoocook Mills buildings, no longer used for manufacturing purposes, are being revitalized with a long-range program of residential and limited commercial adaptation.

Col. John Hill and Gershom Keyes, Trader, both of Boston, were the founders of Hillsborough, their rights granted by the courts of Massachusetts January 16, 1735 (OS)⁵; the first settlement in Hillsborough, in 1738, occurred in the area of the falls.⁶ According to records now lost, it was part of the settlers' contract to erect a sawmill; all joined in the construction of the mill, although it somehow became Keyes' personal property.⁷ The sawmill must have been built almost immediately after the settlers arrived, as mortgage deeds on the mill and dam were conveyed from Keyes to Anthony Caverly of Boston on December 22, 1739 (OS) and later to Col. John Hill on January 20, 1739 (OS:1740[NS]). The town was abandoned in 1746 due to the threat of Indian attack⁹ and the sawmill either deteriorated or was destroyed.¹⁰ Resettlement occurred within fifteen years¹¹ and as early as 1769 a sawmill and grist mill were reestablished in the Bridge Village area; the first house in Antrim, NH (1769) was built from trees cut near the Hillsborough falls, sawn into boards and lumber there, and taken to Antrim on sleds, over the ice of the frozen river.¹²

About 1805, Rev. William Sleigh smuggled carding machinery from England into New Hampshire; he then set it up, operated by horsepower, in Deering, NH.¹³ In 1806, the machinery was purchased by George Little of Hillsborough who brought it to a small building, on the site where the grist mill

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Browne, G. Waldo, History of Hillsborough, NH 1735-1921; Vol. I History. Published by the Town. Manchester, NH; John B. Clark Co., Printers. 1921.

Chermayeff, Ivan and Er Witt, Elliot. Observations on American Architecture. New York: The Viking Press. 1972.

Zimiles, Martha and Murray. Early American Mills. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1973.

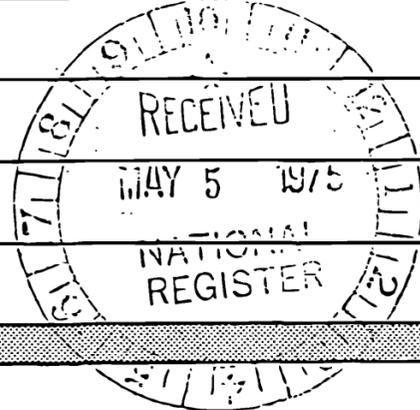
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		43° 6' 50"	71° 53' 38"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: just under one acre (31,600 sq. ft.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Leslie F. Belliveau and Paul Belliveau

ORGANIZATION: **Bean Mountain Corp.** DATE: **March 8, 1975**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Mill Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Hillsboro** STATE: **New Hampshire** CODE: **03244** STATE CODE: **33**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *Leslie F. Belliveau*
Commissioner, DRED
Title State Historic Preservation Officer
Date April 30, 1975

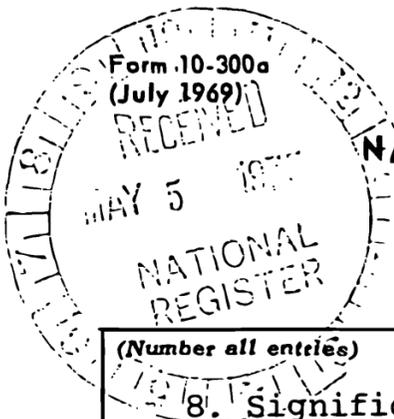
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

A. R.uerbeuen
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 6/10/75

ATTEST:
W. M. ...
Keeper of The National Register
Date June 9 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 2

STATE	New Hampshire	
COUNTY	Hillsborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		JUN 10 1975

(Number all entries)

8. Significance, continued.

(present picker house) was subsequently built; the carding machines were run by a small breast wheel fed through a canal which had been dug on the south side of the river in June 1805.¹⁴ Later moved across the river to the "Red Factory," the machinery was eventually sold to Imri Wood, who moved it to West Henniker, NH, where it was destroyed in a fire.¹⁵

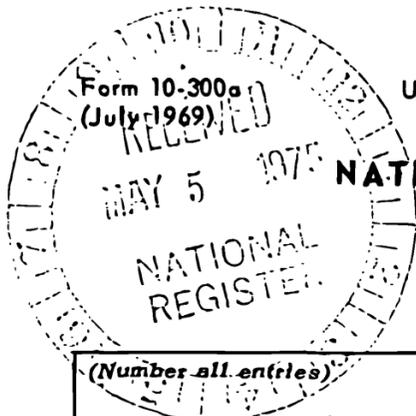
The direct antecedent of the present mill complex was a mill, still standing, built by Joshua Marcy on the south bank of the river, but south of Mill Street, below the rapids; it began operations in the fall of 1828. Beginning with cotton yarn, wadding and batting, it also later produced candlewicking and, as the town history states, the first twine ever made.¹⁶ According to a contemporary record, by 1841 there were in Bridge Village two cotton factories, two grist mills and two sawmills.¹⁷ In 1845-46, Marcy acquired a sawmill and built a brick grist mill, which was noted at the time as the best mill of its kind in the state, on the present Contoocook Mills property.¹⁸ Although the grist mill eventually became the present picker house, it remained a grist mill at least until 1884.¹⁹ Marcy died in 1848; his heirs continued the business, successfully, for seventeen more years.²⁰

John Butler Smith (Republican governor of New Hampshire, 1893-95) bought out the Marcy heirs in 1865; shortly thereafter he built the wooden Main Mill, the brick office building and the brick dye house; he repaired the existing buildings.²¹ As "Smith Mills" the enterprise was a successful manufacturer of woolen goods; in 1882 Smith incorporated his business as the Contoocook Mills Corporation,²² which it remained until it was purchased by the Williams family in 1943 and became part of the Hillsboro Hosiery Mills. In 1888,²³ with the construction of the boiler house and attached coal shed, the Contoocook Mills complex was completed.

Employing a large proportion of Hillsborough's population, for decades the Contoocook Mills produced woolen underwear; in November, 1919, the Contoocook Mills Corporation was awarded a certificate of merit by the US War Department, Washington, D.C., in recognition of its services to the World War I effort.²⁴ Later, as Hillsboro Hosiery Mills, the factories manufactured both woolen underwear and hosiery. Now "Millstone Spinners," the Hillsboro Hosiery Mills continue under the management of Duane Williams to produce textiles with belt-driven machinery in buildings on the south side of Mill Street opposite the Contoocook Mills property: The fibers spun are neither cotton nor wool, but acrylic.

The architectural diversity of the Contoocook Mills complex was the principal attraction to the present owners: "The unaltered brick chimney built in 1888, the 1846 brick picker house, and the beautiful slate roof on the Main Mill just are not seen in today's architecture. Inside the buildings

Continued on Continuation Sheet 3



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet) 3

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Hillsborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 10 1975

(Number all entries)

8. Significance, Continued.

are beams 40' long; some beams on the first floor of the Main Mill measure 18" by 18". The truss systems devised through the years to carry heavier loads of machinery are truly ingenious. In every building one can find beautiful details that had a function as well; brick corbelling is another art which is only seen on our older buildings. These buildings have withstood fires, floods, hurricanes and decades of New England winters as well as years of heavy use. Today two of the buildings serve as residences and another is soon to be a restaurant and garage. They will never become obsolete. For all these reasons: historical, industrial, commercial and architectural, we believe the Contoocook Mills are significant."

The Contoocook Mills complex, herein nominated as the Contoocook Mills Industrial District, is a distinct visual and functional entity. The property is bounded on the south by Mill Street, on the east by a former open area now covered with brush and very young mixed hardwoods, and on the north and west by the Contoocook River; the foundations of the Main Mill and the Boiler House, as well as foundation remains of buildings no longer standing, are integral with the granite and brick retaining walls which define the river's southern bank. Immediately southwest of the western corner of the property, at the intersection of Bridge Street, Mill Street and the Contoocook River, stands a large millstone; the stone, approximately four feet in diameter, is set vertically on a trapezoidal concrete base, and bears a bronze plaque with the inscription:

"On this site:
1806 George Little
Wool Carding
1828 Josiah Marcy
Cotton Wadding and Batting
1865 John Butler Smith
Woolen Underwear
Contoocook Mills Corp'n.
1943 Dwight S. Williams
Woolen Hosiery and Underwear
Hillsboro Hosiery Mills"

The ratio of intrusions to the total number of buildings is 0/6.

Note: To alleviate possible confusion about the various spellings of the name "Hillsborough", it should be explained that a post office named "Hillsborough Bridge" was established in the town March 6, 1827; by petition, the spelling was changed to "Hillsboro Bridge" on January 8, 1894. The word "Bridge" was eliminated on February 19, 1908.²⁵ However, the spelling of the town name, as opposed to that of the post office, has remained "Hillsborough," as appears as such on the town seal.²⁶

Continued on Continuation Sheet 4

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 4

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Hillsborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 10 1975

(Number all entries)

8. Significance, continued.

- 1 G. Waldo Browne, History of Hillsborough, New Hampshire 1735-1921; Volume I, History and Description. (Manchester, New Hampshire: John B. Clark Co., Printers, 1921), 34; 471-2.
- 2 Ibid., 55-60.
- 3 Ibid., 378.
- 4 Ibid., 379.
- 5 Ibid., 17
- 6 Ibid., 55-56.
- 7 Ibid., 58-60.
- 8 Ibid., 61.
- 9 Ibid., 69.
- 10 Ibid., 81-82
- 11 Idem.
- 12 Ibid., 474.
- 13 Ibid., 377.
- 14 Ibid., 377-378.
- 15 Ibid., 379.
- 16 Idem.
- 17 Ibid., 467.
- 18 Ibid., 379.
- 19 "Map of Hillsborough Bridge, New Hampshire" (Brockton, Massachusetts: Norris and Wellge, Publishers, 1884). Map on file in office of Donald E. Knapton, Town Clerk, Hillsborough, New Hampshire.
- 20 Browne, op.cit., 379.
- 21 Ibid., 380
- 22 Idem.
- 23 Date on building.
- 24 Document found in building.
- 25 Browne, op.cit., 386.
- 26 Personal interview with Donald E. Knapton, Town Clerk, Hillsborough, New Hampshire, April 21, 1975.



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet) 5

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Hillsborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
10	5/5

(Number all entries)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA, continued.

10.2 UTM References

Zone 19

Easting: 2-64-500

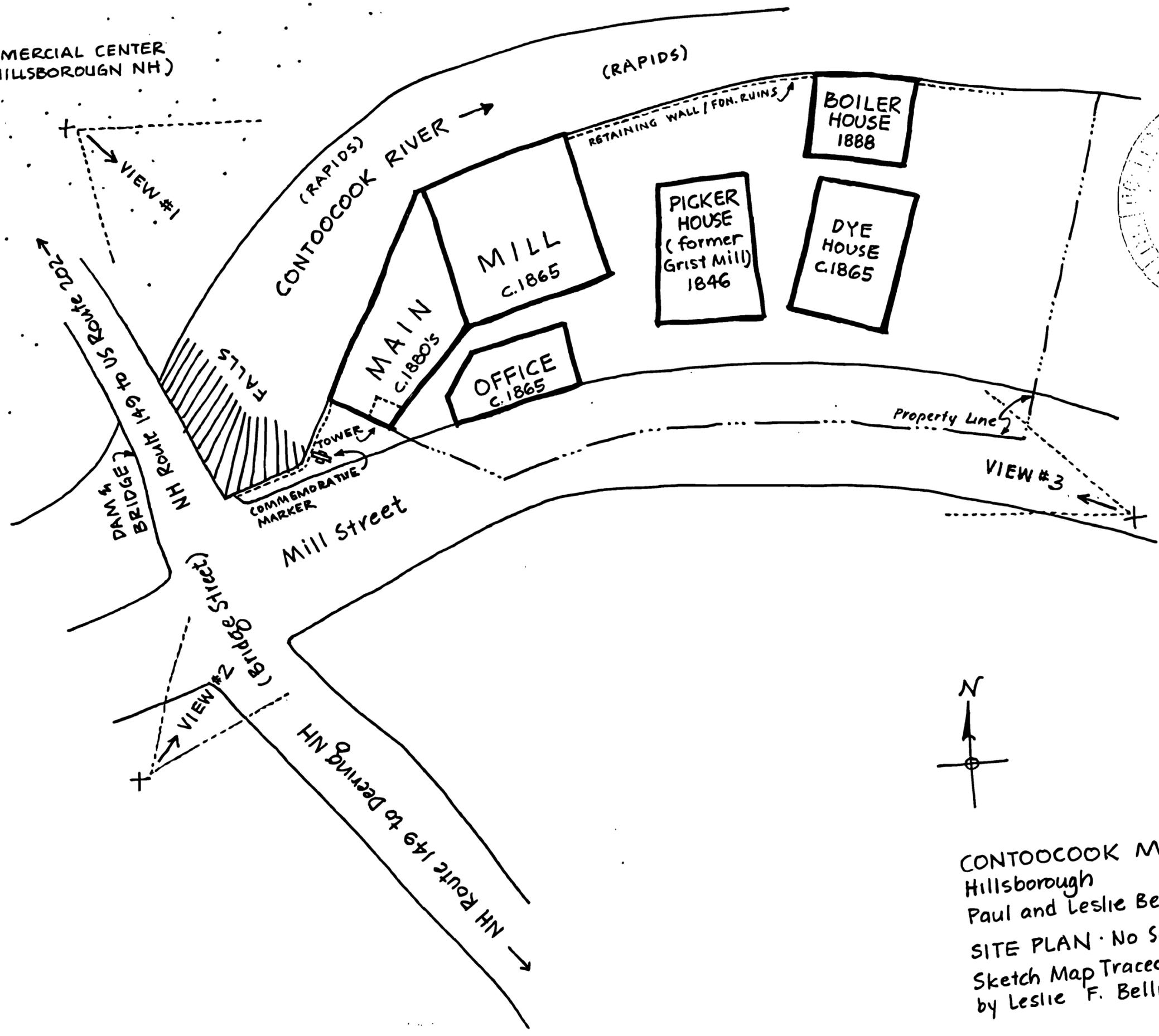
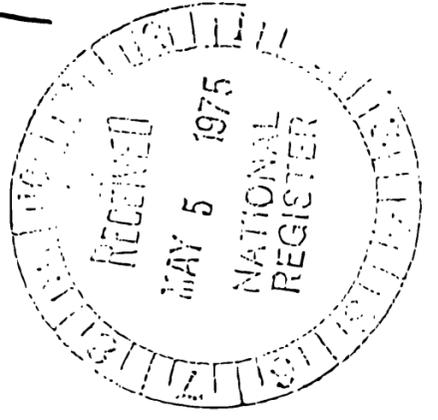
Northing: 47-77-250

UTM OK
TL



(COMMERCIAL CENTER
OF HILLSBOROUGH NH)

(RAPIDS)



CONTOOCCOOK MILLS PROPERTY
Hillsborough New Hampshire
Paul and Leslie Belliveau Owners
SITE PLAN · No Scale · April 8 · 1975
Sketch Map Traced from Map Drawn
by Leslie F. Belliveau for NH·HPO