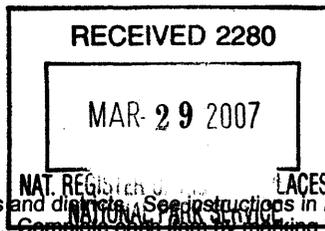


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United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dennis Johnson Lumber Company Mill
other names/site number Johnson Mill

2. Location

street & number Northeast side of Route 5, .3 miles north of Silas Brown Road. N/A not for publication
city or town Waterboro N/A vicinity
state Maine code ME county York code 031 zip code 04061

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 3/23/07
Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

[Signature] _____
Signature of the Keeper
Edson W. Beall _____
Date of Action
5.8.07

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
 private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
 building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
1		structures
		objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY / Manufacturing Facility

TRANSPORTATION / Road related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

TRANSPORTATION / Road related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style (Mill)

Other: Concrete Arch Bridge

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD

roof METAL / Steel

other METAL (Smokestack)

METAL (Wire rope railings)

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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DENNIS JOHNSON LUMBER COMPANY MILL

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DESCRIPTION

This nomination encompasses a small complex containing the steam powered Dennis Johnson Lumber Company Sawmill and the adjacent Johnson Bridge, mill race and former mill yard.

Mill Site. By 1920. Contributing site

The complex is located along Johnson Stream on the northeast side of Route 5 in the north section of the town of Waterboro in York County, Maine.¹ The wood framed sawmill faces southwest, perpendicular to the road. (For ease of reference in this nomination it will be referred to as facing south.) On the south side of the roadbed shallow swampland was historically dammed to create a water source for the mill. The remains of the now-breached dam are located almost directly under the Johnson Mill Bridge (state bridge # 3876) which carries the two lane Route 5 over the outlet. Between the facade of the mill and the bridge underpass are a pair of concrete sluiceway walls that were utilized to direct the stream into a holding basin at the foot of a wooden ramp leading into the mill building. From the catch basin logs were attached to a never ending chain and pulled up the ramp and onto the mill floor for processing. The water level in the catch basin was regulated by a gate in the eastern sluiceway wall which, when opened, allowed overflow to drop into the natural stream bed. The natural course of the stream first flows to the east and then meanders northeast past the mill yard which occupied a grassy plain above the streambed and north of the building. West of the mill is a dirt lane that runs between the mill and the former residence of the mill owner's family. Several hundred feet north of the mill yard is a modern house, which is also accessed by the dirt lane.

Johnson Bridge. 1920, altered 1953. Contributing.

The single span reinforced concrete arch was built by the Town of Waterboro and designed by Dennis Johnson, the mill owner, in 1920. As originally constructed the bridge was twenty-three feet five inches long and twenty-one feet four inches wide with closed spandrel concrete abutments. The bridge deck is twelve feet above the streambed and provides a nine-foot six-inch under clearance. The abutments of the bridge also form the sluiceway walls and the southern abutment returns eastward against the road bed and forms a retaining wall above the stream. As originally built pipe railings lined the sides of the bridge and retaining wall. They were subsequently replaced with low concrete walls, and in 1953 a concrete rail stretched between four concrete posts was installed on the north. The bridge was also widened at that time on the south side with a concrete slab addition. Although this alteration has changed the overall nature of the bridge, when viewed from the mill the integrity of the earlier section remains intact.

Mill Building. C. 1902. Contributing.

¹Johnson Stream was also known historically as Cunny Brook and Pigeon Brook.

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The mill building is composed of three sections. The main section is a one and one-half story front-gabled, wood frame building that runs parallel to the dirt lane. This portion of the structure is itself comprised of a one and one-half story section in the east (with a single, small shed dormer on the west slope of the roof), to which is attached a full depth one story shed roof section on the west. Both of these are set over a full basement with a concrete foundation. Attached to the southeast corner of this mass is a wing situated with its ridge running parallel to Route 5. This is the file shop, and while it also one story in height (and the interior floor level is consistent with that of the main shop) the western end of this wing is supported on tall concrete pylons over the natural streambed. The third section of the structure is positioned at the foundation level. This section contains the steam boiler, and is located off the east side of the main shop under a metal shed roof punctuated with a tall steel smoke stack. All three sections of the mill are topped with a corrugated steel roof. The main shop and file shop are sheathed in board and batten siding. The boiler room has a high exposed concrete foundation above which is board and batten siding.

There is no prominent facade to the building nor a formal entrance. The southern elevation contains (from east to west) a hinged pedestrian door (under the shed roof) and a large cargo bay with a interior swinging door positioned in line with the sluiceway and loading ramp. East of this bay is a small one-bay, gabled roof projection cantilevered from the south wall which has a single six-over-six window. Another six-over-six window is located under the half-story of the main roof. The west side of the building contains one external sliding door in the south, next to which is a six-over-six window. North of these are two interior swinging, top hinged wall segments that provide additional light, ventilation and access to the mill interior. The north elevation contains a pair of two leaf, hinged utility doors. Between these doors, in the middle of the wall, is an opening through which the out-feed segment of the jointer/edger protrudes. Each of these doors is built of vertical boards and battens. The file room has four six-over-six double hung sash equally spaced on the south wall, and two of the same on the east and north walls. The boiler room contains a two-leaf wooden door on the north wall (below the grade of the lumber yard, and accessed by a driveway that circles down the slope of the yard), and several six-over-six windows, and a blocked door on the east elevation.

The interior of the main mill shop is characterized by plank floors, exposed side wall studs and low pitched roof trusses. The only structural differentiation of the interior space is a stud framed, partially-sheathed, partition wall that runs under the plates at the junction of the main and shed roofs. The remainder of the space is functionally defined by the machinery and support structures. The easternmost bay of the building (as defined roughly by the projection on the south elevation) is dominated by the rails and saw carriage, the latter of which is now positioned at the south end of the building. Set just to the west of the carriage track and located midway in the structure's length is the housing and machinery for the large bandsaw. Marked "Yates R5" and "Berlin Machine Works" this unit carried a 9" blade on two wheels, one of which is set below floor level in the basement. Originally, a line of out-feed steel rollers led north from the bandsaw towards the easternmost utility door on the north wall. The rollers have been removed, however, the housing for the jump saw (a cross-cut saw for trimming the ends of the boards) remains in position along the line. North of the bandsaw and west of the jump saw is the edge/jointer machine, which is positioned with the out-feed

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protruding through the north end of the building. Immediately to the west of the bandsaw is a large winch, connected to a never-ending chain, which extends over the loading floor and out the south loading bay and over the loading ramp. The loading floor, located between the saw carriage and the shed partition wall consists of several (four or five) wide thick planks laid east to west. The planks are elevated above a sub-floor that slopes in segments (between each plank). This facilitates movement of the leading ends of the logs over the planks and also provides footing for the mill workers. The shed bay (west) is divided front to back by the location of a large 'National' brand planer.

Compared to the mill shop space the interior of the file shop is more 'finished'. Unpainted horizontal boards sheath the walls and ceiling and compliment the plank floors. Attached to the ceiling are two sets of brackets and racks upon which two pairs each of band saw blades are stored in gentle figure-eight folds. The room contains wall-mounted cabinets over work benches in the north east corner and additional cabinets on the south wall. Positioned mid-point along the south wall are two machines used to sharpen the saw blades. The Hanchett Swage Works swager was used to fine tune the cutting width and angle of each tooth on the saw. Adjacent to this is a vise manufactured by Baldwin Tuthill and Bolton of Grand Rapids Michigan which was used to hold the blade straight while the teeth were being swaged. Against the north wall is the tension bench, upon which the blades were hammered and pressed into an appropriate, slightly concave form. Each of these mechanisms were used up to four times a day on each of the mill's blades to keep them performing in top condition.

The basement level is accessed via a steep staircase located in the east wall of the mill shop. The staircase terminates on a concrete platform in the shed addition. This platform is actually the top of the steam boiler's furnace box. To the south a small, slightly raised room opens under the western portion of the file room. Into this space a conveyor brought the saw dust and slab wood used to fire the furnace. Immediately to the north of the platform is the bulk of the massive boiler. This unit, which is approximately twenty-two feet long is enclosed in an arched brick casing. Two cast iron doors, stamped 'Portland Company, 1902' access another fire box and the steam tubes. Another steep staircase descends west of the platform and provides access to yet another low room below the sawdust storage area. The main furnace doors are located in this space, although a hatch in the platform could also be raised and the furnace fed from the upper level. The basement under the main shop is divided into two sections by a concrete wall. The southern two thirds is a tangle of belts and wheels used to power the machines above as well as sawdust chutes which carried the waste towards the conveyer and furnace. The rear section of the basement contains the long steam engine, manufactured by Soule Steam Feed Works, Meridian, Mississippi, which runs the piston and main flywheel.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

C. 1902 - 1957

Significant Dates

C. 1902 - 1920

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Johnson, Dennis

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository:

Maine Dept. of Transportation, Waterboro Historic Soc.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Dennis Johnson Lumber Company Sawmill (a.k.a. Johnson Mill) was an industrial fixture in Waterboro, Maine from at least 1869 to 1963. Over its long history the mill manufactured long and short lumber, shingles and wooden box components. In the 19th century it utilized water power from Johnson Stream before upgrading to mechanical power provided by a steam boiler just after the turn of the twentieth century. Although closed since 1963, the mill complex, consisting of the mill building, sluiceway, lumber yard and associated bridge, retains most of its machinery, including the bandsaw, carriage, edger, joiner, associated belts and massive steam boiler. A wing off the building, known as the file room and dedicated to maintaining the nine inch saw blades, still contains the sharpening equipment and spare blades. The Johnson Mill is also significant as one of the few industrial structures to remain in the town from before 1947. The Dennis Johnson Lumber Company Sawmill is nominated to the National Register at the local level of significance under criterion A for its association with the lumber manufacturing industry in northern York County.

According to the 1869 edition of The Water-Power of Maine, there were eight existing mill privileges in Waterboro powering at least 6 different sawmills and one planing mill including the one on Johnson's Brook which ran 'two saws half the year.' (Wells, p. 489). In 1862, at the age of 23, Waterboro resident Dennis Johnson started the process of developing the mill site. According to deed research conducted by the Waterboro Historical Society, (owner of the mill):

...he received deeds from John B. Roberts and Charles Hill to build a dam on Cunny Brook [Johnson Brook]. Charles...also gave Dennis the privilege of flooding his swamp from September to June, as well as "a strip of land one rod wide for a watercourse ending at the road near the old school house." Eventually Dennis would receive permission from other land owners "to turn the waters of Cunny Brook from its natural course at any convenient place, reserving their right for the spring fresh let to run over their meadows". For even more water to keep the mill operating year round, a canal was dug in the mid-1860s. This did not prove practical and was later abandoned as the water seeped into the ground before it reached the mill pond. (Waterboro Historical Society, p. 71).

The earliest form of the mill and waterpower system is unknown. A photograph in possession of the Waterboro Historical Society dated 1890 shows a wide, gable-front wood frame building with a gable roof overhang extending above two wide doorways. Logs are piled in front of the overhang and outbuildings are shown to the rear of the structure. The building is in dilapidated condition with patchy shingles on the overhang and long boards covering the main roof. According to the Maine Business Directory Johnson's enterprise was identified as a shingle mill between 1871 and 1875; from thence forth it was advertised as a sawmill. The 1870 Industrial Census for Maine valued Johnson's sawmill at \$1000 in capital. It ran four months of the year, employed a single operator and produced 40,000 pine shingles from a 20 horsepower water system. Ten years later both the operation and the information recorded about it had increased. Three employees kept the circular saw and mulley saw in operation three months each year. The 18 horsepower Tyler turbine produced

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enough power from the twelve foot falls to produce 50,000 board feet of lumber and 100,000 shingles. As with the other five mills in the town, the lumber was harvested locally, although the Johnson operation did not do its own logging. Sporadic but brief entries in both The Maine Register and the Maine Business Directory indicate that the mill operated more or less continuously through the end of the century.

Lumber was a historically important industry in Waterboro as it was throughout the state. The 1903 Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics states that "the cutting and manufacture of lumber has always been an important factor in the development of the State, in fact it has been one of its leading industries from the days of the early settlements until the present time, and bids fair so to continue for an indefinite period." (Page 188). Reflections of Waterboro provides the following summary of the lumbering operations in Waterboro.

For many years lumbering was a large part of the income for many people in Waterboro. Most farmers and large landowners depended on this industry to supplement their yearly income. Farmers usually lumbered during the winter months and the sawmills depended on this winter harvest for a large portion of the logs they sawed....For years the main sawmills were as follows; Johnson Lumber company in North Waterboro; Deering Lumber Co. In East Waterboro; and the Smith Lumber Co. In South Waterboro. There also was a box shop in So. Waterboro next to the railroad tracks. (p. 61).

In 1903 the Annual Report recorded that a new sawmill costing \$2,200 and employing 12 workers was erected in Waterboro (1903, p. 36). At the turn of the century there were four sawmills in town, with a fifth recorded in the Maine Register for the first time in 1901/02 and a sixth emerging in 1902/03. While it is not possible to determine if the "new mill" referred to an expanded Johnson operation or one of the other mills, it is clear that Dennis Johnson started to revamp his facility about this time. According to the Waterboro Historical Society:

The mill operated...with power furnished from the steam plant rather than the usual waterpower. Logs were dropped into the water or on the ice on the west side of Route 5, floated under the road and drawn up to the circular platform for the final cutting. The water from the mill eventually ran down Pigeon Brook into the north end of Little Ossipee Pond. Johnson's mill produced many thousand board feet of pine for home construction, and during World War Two much of the lumber was sent to the box factory and Hollis and Biddeford.

The mill passed from generation to generation; Dennis to Frank to Donald. Frank Johnson, a very enterprising man, bought large tracts of forestry land in Waterboro and employed as many as twelve people... (p. 72).

The structure that make up the Johnson Mill today represents a significant departure from the nineteenth century water power technology first utilized at the site. This change was engineered by the shift to steam powered, belt driven machinery. Between 1902 and 1920 the structure was

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altered, a new sluiceway configured and a new bridge erected over the outlet stream. The old building was either torn down or expanded. The new structure was erected over a full concrete foundation, and on the east side of the building, at foundation level, a shed addition was constructed to house the massive steam boiler. This unit was manufactured by the Portland Company, Portland, Maine, and stamped "1902". Although the specific model could not be discerned, it is a horizontal tubular boiler outfitted with an extension furnace. The approximately 92 eighteen feet long tubes were capable of furnishing up to 1200 horsepower at 125 pounds working pressure.² The fuel for the boiler were the waste products of the mill - wood slabs and sawdust. While all the features of the complex were eventually fully integrated it is likely, based on the date of various pieces of machinery, that the changes were incremental. For example, the Yates Bandsaw is stamped with patent dates through 1916, suggesting that it was installed no earlier than that year.

The 1919 *Annual Report of the Town of Waterboro* indicates that by that year the bridge in front of the mill needed repairs. Over \$400 was subsequently spent of which Dennis Johnson provided more than \$175 worth of labor, lumber, cement and 'bridge planks'. The following year the bridge was rebuilt entirely at a cost of \$1,200.88. According to the 1924 survey of Maine's bridges undertaken by the Maine State Highway Commission, the new bridge was built by the Town of Waterboro and Dennis Johnson. The design of the bridge, with its high arch and abutments that act as and extend further to form the sluiceway (or 'concrete log chute' as described on the survey form), was obviously designed to facilitate the transportation of logs into the mill. As such, the Johnson Bridge is a significant part of the functional history of the mill.

The Johnson Mill is also important as one of the few structures in the entire town of Waterboro to avoid being consumed by devastating wild fires in the fall of 1947. Starting on October 17th, and continuing unchecked for over a week, wildfire devastated the town, destroying over 60 houses and approximately 20,000 of the towns 26,000 acres. Portions of the town, including South and North Waterboro, and the cottages around Ossipee Lake, were almost completely destroyed. The fire burned the box shop of the Smith Lumber Company and destroyed much of the wood at the Deering Mill. At the Johnson Mill concerted efforts managed to save the saw mill structure, and the house immediately to the northwest, but over a million board feet of sawn lumber stored in the yard to the north and east were lost to the flames. In order to process the large amount of standing timber scorched by the fire portable sawmills "were set in town and much of the logs were sawed and the lumber stacked" (Waterboro Historical Society, 2000, p. 61). However, after these recovery efforts concluded the remaining sawmills, including the Johnson Mill, found the local timber supply - which had been vital to the prosperity of the town - was depleted. As a result, timber had to be hauled from greater distances. The mill remained open for another 16 years, but as a result of aging machinery and more stringent safety regulations Dennis Johnson's grandson, Donald, chose to

²The specifications cited here are based on a c. 1905 advertisement for horizontal tube boilers manufactured by the Portland Company. The advertisements are in the collections of the Maine Historical Society.

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close the mill in 1963. In 1974 the Waterboro Historical Society obtained the building and undertook minor modifications, including repairing broken windows and sash and securing the building from vandals. All of the machinery remains in place and it is the hope of the Historical Society to eventually restore the building as a working mill museum.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property contains the Johnson Mill as described in the deed from James E. Carll and Judith E. Carll to the Waterborough Historical Society, dated November 30, 1974 and recorded in the York County Registry of Deeds in Book 2061 page 632-3. The nominated property also contains the adjacent Johnson Bridge, (State of Maine Bridge # 3876), and its abutments.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the nominated property include all the surviving historic features associated with the Johnson Mill. The Johnson Bridge was determined eligible for listing in the National Register by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in consultation with the Maine Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration in 2004.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
18 October 2005
West and north elevations; facing southeast.

Photograph 2 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
18 October 2005
South facade and mill race; facing north.

Photograph 3 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
18 October 2005
Interior, file room; facing northwest.

Photograph 4 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
2 October 2006
Interior, basement level. Portland Company boiler head; facing north.