

5-3-2016

HISTORICAL SIGNAGE PROPOSAL: Part One

The following proposal for signage to be placed at the former site of the Hapgood/Hamlin Carding Mill on Park Street in South Waterford is the first step of what the Waterford Historical Society Trustees hope will be a multi-year project to commemorate the industrial history of this village along the spine of City (Mill) Brook running from Keoka down to Bear Pond as well as other significant mill sites in other villages.

Carding Mill History:

In 1810 Oliver Hapgood (b.1762), a recent arrival in Waterford from Stow, Massachusetts, built a small mill on the western bank of City Brook on what is now Park Street. Although this manufactory, located on the 7th mill privilege on the City Brook, is referred to as The Hapgood/Hamlin Carding Mill, no evidence exists as to whether its earliest use was to process wool or not. However, extensive research by Old Sturbridge Village (OSV) in MA shows that by the 1830's cleaning and carding of wool was its main function.

OSV, in an extensive research/dismantling/restoral project running from 1955 to 1970, purchased the building and equipment from Albert Hamlin for \$100 and moved it piece by piece to its historic campus in Sturbridge where it was to become the "nucleus of a projected re-creation of a New England mill village" much like South Waterford or "The City" was in the mid-19th century. Much of the funding for the relocation was provided by the Rice family of Waterford and Connecticut.

Research revealed that, as with the other industrial buildings in Waterford, the Hapgood/Hamlin mill served multiple purposes in sheds which had been attached to the original structure over many years. The antique wool picking, carding and batting equipment, however, occupied the bulk of the structure and was still in good operating condition. W.K. Hamlin and family had been processing wool fiber seasonally during the 1930's until the sale of the building in 1963.

Project Goals: Part One 2016

1. Replace a simple sign which was erected in 1964 by Mr. Arthur Sanderson adjacent to the former mill site on Park Street. That sign and the fence upon which it hung were knocked over by snow plowed from the street during the last 52 years. Remnants of the fence still remain and will be removed.

2. The sign could be located in one of three possible locations. First would be the site of the original sign on Park Street directly across from Brookways, the home of Nancy Forest and Peter Lawton. Second would also be on Park Street, but further to the north at the rear of the

Haynes barn where the former snowmobile trail entered the mill site. Third would be on Cross Street halfway between the entrance of Park Street and the closed bridge.

Considerations of the three sites:

- Original location: closest to the mill site, already some landscaping in place, but it is very close to Brookways and needs thinning of the underbrush for view from the sign and is exposed to snow plowing.
- Behind Haynes barn: best view of the earthen dam, can be set away from plow zone, but may require posting of Haynes property line and encourages pedestrian access and needs site work.
- Cross St: provides broad view of site and brook, is not in plow zone, but will require site work and opening of view.

3. Design: The interpretive sign would consist of an 18 x 24" laminated exterior graphic panel mounted on a two-legged frame and bracket of pressure treated 4 x 4's set 3' into the road verge within the 6' set back.

4. In order to finish the site a concrete or granite landing would be set in front of the sign and several low-growing native shrubs planted on either side. Installation would be done in-kind by local contractors.

5. Maintenance of both the mill and sign sites will be provided by volunteer and contracted labor under the coordination of Friends of City Brook a local non-profit organization.

6. A dedication ceremony will take place on August 13, 2016 two days after a program commemorating the Carding Mill is presented at the Wilkins House by Waterford Historical Society.

Continuing Program

Following the initial installation, W.H.S. foresees a series of sign installations along City Brook at the former locations of up to 10 historic industrial buildings. A minimum of one sign each year would be proposed.

At the W.H.S. Town House Museum a file will be set up for each project so that residents and visitors may study all of the information collected during the preliminary research for each sign.