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Gray's Mill: History of Gray's Mill

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History of Grays Mill

Adamsville (formerly known as Taborville) was originally settled in the late 17th century. A mill pond was created when the Adamsville Brook, which flowed through the village, was dammed. A grist / saw mill was built and powered by a wooden wheel set in the Adamsville Brook. This mill was responsible for providing ground meal for human use, fodder for animals, and sawed timbers for construction. The economic hub created by the mill resulted in a number of other businesses locating themselves within the mill's vicinity, including a black smith, meat market, bakery, harness shop and ice houses.

The Industrial Revolution resulted in changes to the power source of the mill. Specifically, in the mid 19th century, the mill incorporated a turbine into the redesigned mill. However, a hurricane that swept through the area in 1938 destroyed both the mill and the new turbine. Subsequently, the mill was rebuilt to be powered by a gasoline engine. This caused the pond to be abandoned as the mill's power source.

The mill and its associated property, including Grays Mill Pond, were acquired by Mr. Ralph Guild in 1980. At that time, Mr. Guild restored the mill, and continued production of Rhode Island's famous Jonnycake meal for almost another two decades. However, when the mill was no longer a profitable venture, the applicant was forced to shut it down in 1999.

Loss of Grays Mill Pond

With the incorporation of a gasoline powered engine for Grays Mill in 1938, there was no longer a reason to maintain the mill pond. Over the years, the lack of maintenance have caused a significant decrease in the overall size of Grays Mill Pond. In 1939, the estimated size of this mill pond was 139,500 square feet. By 1997 however, the amount of open water was reduced to 79,500 square feet. This approximate 43% reduction in the ponds size resulted from an increase in organic matter and sedimentation, as well as the encroachment of vegetation into the pond.