

1714 ROBINSON SAWMILL



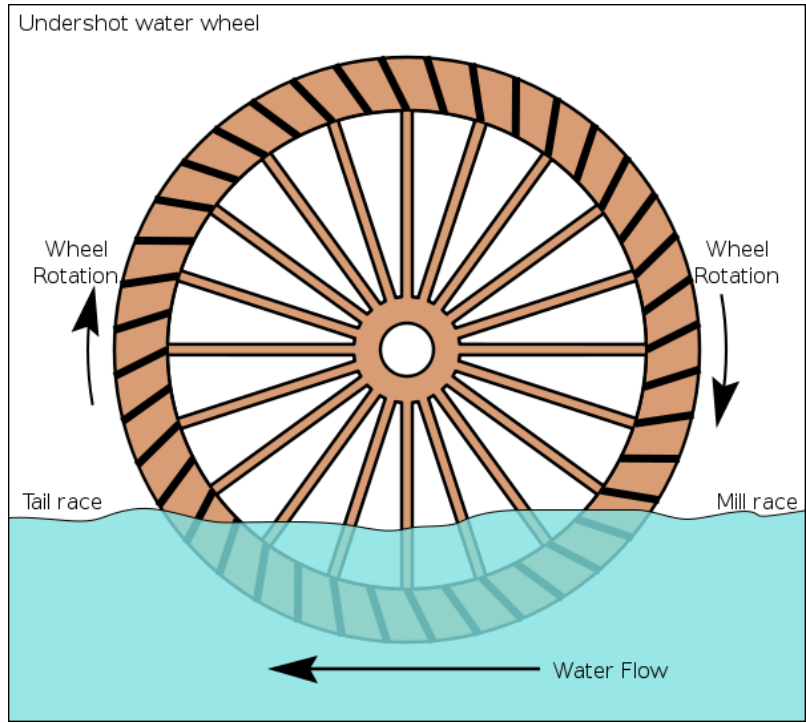
An approximate representation of an undershot sawmill

In September of 2012, the foundation of the 1714 Robinson Sawmill Site was located. The crumbling loose stone foundation is now located underwater. The site was photographed and a preliminary survey was done.

The original Sawmill was built on Webster Lake in 1714 to supply Cedar beams and boards used in the development of, what would become eventually, the Town of Webster. This is probably the first industrial site that used the power of the water in Webster Lake. Samuel Slater's Green Mill would not appear until 1812.

The majority of the Lake at that time was surrounded by White Cedar Swamps. These Cedar trees were perfect for making shingles and siding.

The easiest way to utilize the power of the lake would be to install an undershot waterwheel to run the saw. Although not the most powerful type of waterwheel, it was the easiest one to build and did not require a mill pond for water storage.



During the winter the men could cut down the trees and tow them back to the mill using horses with studded horseshoes. In the spring, once the ice melted, the sawing would begin.



Remaining Loose Foundation



Remaining Loose Foundation



(Left Picture) One of two Wooden Pilings found at the base of the Foundation

In 1719 George Robinson bought land in the North Pond & Mill Pond area and built one of the first sawmills in the area. This sawmill derived its power from the exit flow of Webster Lake.¹ The lumber to feed the mill came from the numerous White Atlantic Cedar Swamp Forests surrounding the Lake shoreline. It is estimated that within a few decades all the cedar forests surrounding the lake were clear-cut. Until 1812, these forests were probably trying to regenerate. Around 1812, Samuel Slater built two dams to power his new cotton mill, raising the level of the lake by approximately 3 to 5 feet. This action flooded the cedar forest areas eliminating the habitat of White Atlantic Cedar around

Webster Lake. These areas then became man-made swamps. Around the beginning of the 20th Century, a blight would eliminate all the White Atlantic Cedar in southern New England. The project intends to take one of the surviving Cedar Stumps and Carbon Date the wood. If the Carbon Date Range falls within the suspected time period, hopefully, a slice of the stump will be sent to the University of Arizona's Dendrochronology Lab for exact dating someday. The results will then be entered into the Global Data Base for Climate History White Atlantic Cedar Stump located in Stump Pond



Stump Pond



White Atlantic Cedar Stump



The emergence of a Red Cedar at Stump Pond on Webster Lake (This is the only type of cedar tree that remains in the area)