One years' supply, seven million feet of spruce lumber.

Campton Historical Society

This informational brochure was produced by the Campton Historical Society, founded in 1991 to preserve the community's heritage, and to recognize and protect significant historic structures and sites.

The Society's headquarters is the 1855 town House, located one mile north of Blair Road and Route 175.

For further information, write to us at PO. Box 160, Campton, NH 03223, or visit our web site at www.CamptonHistorical.org

Campton Pond and Dam

This site is located at the junction of routes 49 and 175.

This brochure is underwritten by:

Campton Pond and Dam

The area around the Campton Pond and dam has been an important part of the history of the town. The first dam at this site was built in the early 1890's by the Winnepiseogee Paper Co.. It was used to hold the 16' logs that came down the Mad River in the spring from the logging operations in Waterville Valley. The sawmill here cut the logs into 4' length for the area pulp mills, and used the best quality wood in the making of pianos. In 1892, a railroad spur was built from the main B & M line 1 mile south, up along what is now route 49. At the pond, it was loaded onto flat cars for shipping to mills in Franklin and Lincoln.

The present concrete dam is 20' downstream from the original. This dam was built in 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps that also worked on extending Tripoli Road into Waterville Valley. CCC Camp #1101 was located at the northern end of the pond, and this crew also built a beach and bathhouse that was washed away by a flood in 1959.

The area surrounding the pond and northward is now owned by the U.S. Forest Service, as part of the White Mountain National Forest. The original purchase was in 1928 from the Woodstock Lumber Co. It was done under the Weeks Act of 1911, which allowed the government to acquire forests to protect the headwaters of navigable rivers. An additional purchase was made in 1937, and a donation of land from the lumber company completed the area.

The first bridge here was a covered one, and known as the Grist Mill Bridge. It was destroyed by fire and not re-built. The replacement bridge was also destroyed in 1867 when a team of horses, pulling a load of supplies, collapsed the structure. All four horses died, but the driver, George Wyatt, and his crew survived. The third bridge was made of iron, and lasted until 1926. At that time, a "Lombard" tractor hauling a load of logs caused a collapse, resulting in the loss of one life. The present bridge is an 86- foot clear span concrete arch bridge. This was designed by the N.H. D.O.T., and built in 1927 by Robie Construction Co. at a cost of $18,929. It is one of the highest scoring bridges in the state, and has unusual architectural and engineering details and proportions.

The section of the Mad River below the dam was also the site of several mills. The most visible is the now inactive red Dole Mill, founded in 1820 by Moses Cook. It was one of the oldest woolen mills in the country. Some of its products included Campton Pants, which "never wear out", woolen socks made during WW2, and carpet yarns made until 1965. Other mills along the Mad River made shutters and blinds, caskets, furniture, and excelsior.

Water was an early source of power for these mills, and was also used to generate electricity for the village. A privately owned hydro electric plant was completed here in 1983, and the Mad River Power Company is still using the flow of water for generation of electricity through a permit with he U.S. Forest Service.

In recent years, the Campton Garden Club has completed several beautification projects at this site, starting with the flower boxes on the bridge. Next was the rewiring and restoration of the period light fixtures. The welcome sign and plantings were completed in 2007. The club also maintains these plantings through the service of many dedicated volunteers.