

***Libby & Woodman and Chick Mill (27-CA-170)***

In contrast to the Campbell and Woodman sites, the Chick mill site has endured to the present day. Visible components of the site include dry-laid stone walls representative of a portion of the original mill foundation and a modern earthen and concrete dam, which was applied to generate electric power by and for the land owner. The mill foundation walls consist of multiple courses of dry-laid stone on the right bank of the stream immediately below the dam. While these walls form a terraced landscape, used as lawn and gardens by the property owner, they continue to provide a sense of the scale and position of the former lumber mill.

A Francis turbine was used at this mill. The turbine was removed from the base of the original dam and is in a good state of preservation. This type of turbine was developed in 1848 by James B. Francis, an engineer working in Lowell, MA. Capable of a very high efficiency, the Francis turbine became a favorite of New England millers. By replacing wooden, vertical waterwheels, the Francis turbine, used with the same water flow, more than doubled the power output to operate the mill's machinery.

The Chick mill and dam endured floods and demise, continuing to saw lumber into the 1930s before it collapsed. The dam created a mill pond that was used to store logs and which provided power into the mill building. The turbine, an innovation of 1848, reflected an up-to-date approach to milling and was probably in use during the 1850s mill operation. Historic photos attest to the quantity of lumber processed at the mill, depicting logs being hauled by horse, logs stored in the pond, and stacks of material in the lumber yard adjoining the mill.

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Chronology and Evolution**

1892 – Hurd map depicts Libby & Woodman mill at location

By 1908 – George Chick had acquired mill

By 1962 – mill collapsed



*A historic photograph of the wooden-framed Chick's Mill and lumber yard. The mill pond is to the left. Logs stored in the pond were drawn up a ramp on the left end. Sawn lumber was removed on the right end, and waste was tossed through the opening on the side.*



*A second historic photograph view of Chick's Mill from the mill-pond side. The dam is to the left of the ell that rests on it. (Both of the historic mill photographs are after Wakefield-Brookfield Historical Society 2006:90.)*



*A historic photograph showing a method of hauling logs to Chick's Mill (after MacRury 1987:123).*