

## 2017-2018 Mills of Lebanon Survey – Project Background

*Last updated 12/1/17*

The City of Lebanon’s Heritage Commission is comprised of volunteers with professional as well as personal experience and interest tying the community’s past and present. The Commission holds monthly public meetings and is supported by City staff and authorized by State and Local statutes to (1) monitor and regulate the Lebanon Historic District, (2) to educate Lebanon residents about local historic and cultural heritage, and (3) to help preserve where feasible those resources that add to an appreciation of our heritage. The 2017-2018 Mills of Lebanon Survey will primarily build a body of evidence related to the history of pre-industrial water-powered mills at properties within City limits and educate the public about the character of such resources, while future projects may help to identify auxiliary resources of historic value, address opportunities for archaeological research, and outline key recommendations for maintenance, repair, preservation and recognition efforts at City-owned properties.

### ***Why is the City conducting a survey of mills?***

The City of Lebanon, NH, has a deep history that it seeks to retain and keep building knowledge of to facilitate recognition of and preservation approaches for significant cultural and historic resources. The City of Lebanon Master Plan identifies preserving historic character as a key priority for any new development. To help achieve the goals of the Master Plan, one of the ongoing purposes of the City of Lebanon Heritage Commission is to identify historic resources and manifestations of these elements throughout the City.

Most recently, the City completed a modified city-wide survey funded by the 2015 Certified Local Government (CLG) grant that it received via the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources (NHDHR). The survey identified several historic areas and features of Lebanon that call for additional study—including standing and prior mill sites. To build upon the work undertaken to complete the city-wide survey, the Lebanon Heritage Commission applied for and received funding for a citywide mills survey under the 2017 CLG Grant Program Cycle. Surveys and Public Awareness and Education efforts are both Priority I projects eligible for CLG grant funding.

Although not a neighborhood per se, collectively these mills tell the story of Lebanon’s economic and social development from its origins as an industrial manufacturing community before the Civil War to a now vibrant technology, health care, and service based economy. In addition, the surviving mill buildings are excellent examples of 19th century industrial architecture. An excerpt from the [Lebanon, New Hampshire Reconnaissance Survey of Historic Resources, 2016](#), as described by consultant, Lyssa Papazian explains the historical importance of these mills:

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*The Central Village or Lebanon Center was the third village established in Lebanon the 18th century after the earliest settlements at West and East Lebanon. It emerged as the primary one in the 1840s after the devastating fire at East Lebanon which destroyed most of the village and the industrial facilities at the mouth of Mascoma Lake. The water power of the Mascoma River, which falls 450’ from the Mascoma Lake to the Connecticut River, supported many mill seats and many of these clustered*

*at the geographic center of Lebanon (the Central Village area) which was also the junction of the several early turnpikes that defined the development of the town.*

*The rise of the mills and shops of Lebanon Center was testament to the superior water power here versus that at East Lebanon where the shops were largely not rebuilt after the fire. The crossroads and river defined the Central Village which grew quickly when in 1848 the railroad joined the turnpikes in providing excellent transportation options for industry and trade. A map of 1853 shows the Central Village becoming more urban and busier with four dams on the Mascoma supporting a dozen shops including blacksmiths, a foundry and machine shop, tannery and carriage manufacturers.*

*The period between the coming of the railroad around 1850 and first of two devastating downtown fires in 1887 saw considerable growth in Lebanon Center and is well illustrated in the 1884 birds-eye of the town. The street grid of the residential neighborhoods of the Plain, Bank Street, and some of the Church Street and Young Street Hill neighborhoods were built and filling with homes. The growth of the mill district was substantial. Although there was a fairly healthy complement of industry around the time the railroad arrived and shortly thereafter, by 1872 a town resolution to offer 10-year tax abatement to anyone willing to re-activate and capitalize existing or establish new manufacturing in Lebanon, described the situation as follows: "Whereas the town of Lebanon does possess great natural facilities and inducements for manufacturing by the large water power on the Connecticut and Mascoma rivers, now lying idle and unoccupied.. " A few years later in 1875 the town incentive resolution noted the water power was underused (not idle) and sought to specifically target woolen mills . By 1886, as described in the Childs Gazetteer of that year, the water power on the Mascoma in Lebanon Center was far from idle with the large mill of the Lebanon Woolen Company – 1 Foundry Street) and the Mascoma Flannel Co. mill (85 Mechanic St.) in operation and another under construction. Along with these mills, four dams powered a flouring mill; tool companies such as Marston Drag Rake and Baxter band saws; manufacturers of building components such as stairs, sash and blinds, as well as toys and tags; a foundry and two machine shops; two saw mills; and the Kendrick watch key factory (Water Street). A bit further west on the Mascoma in Scytheville another dam served the scythe, snath, and rake factory. In the village were also the large Carter & Churchill overall factory and a few other shops making organs and wire novelties and mops. Collectively these businesses employed hundreds and created the demand for housing that caused the Center village's neighborhoods to grow and develop.*

*The 1887 fire started in one of the mills and destroyed a majority of the industrial buildings along the river. Although the nature of Lebanon's industry changed significantly after the fire from a mix that included many wood-based industries to one dominated by large scale woolen mills, the recovery was immediate with all the mills sites rebuilt and soon producing again. The significance to Lebanon Center of*

*the mills in conjunction with the railroad serving them cannot be overstated. The town's population increased 48% between 1880 (3,347) and 1900 (4,965), bringing ethnic diversity to Lebanon with many coming for the mill work. The mills continued producing and anchoring the economy well into the 20th century.*

*After the all the textile mills had shut down in the 1960s, a period of decline and underuse ensued but many of the mills buildings are today occupied by a number of industry and commercial uses. They remain a well preserved collection of industrial architecture*

*The Mills neighborhood has several good examples of 19th century brick textile mill and factory buildings using the American Round-Arched style . The Kendrick Watch Key Factory/ Whitman Press on Water Street is quite plain except for the simple segmental window arches. The 1881 Rockdale mill complex is generally fairly plain as well but has exposed rafters and robust architectural detail of decorative corbelling at the eaves and slightly recessed panels around the banks of segmentally arched windows on its corner tower. The tower likely houses a stair to segregate the vertical shaft from the main mill floor as a fire precaution. Later brick additions to these complexes display the more streamlined c. 1900 century look of square topped windows framed by plain pilasters and recessed panels with wide bands at the top of shallow stepped brick. A simple brick frieze that appears striped at the flat roof eave echoes this band. An example of this is at the Rivermill complex at 85 Mechanic Street. In the 1920s and 1930s, new brick buildings in the factory complexes are even plainer and use the steel industrial windows that were developed at that time. An example is at 1 Foundry Street, at a complex which also has a landmark brick smokestack with colored bricks at the top spelling "LWM" or Lebanon Woolen Mill. The complexes also include some heavy timber frame factory structures and even later mid-20th century expansions of the brick buildings.*

*Adjacent to the mills and factory buildings themselves, are houses and small commercial buildings and shops along Mechanic Street and Blacksmith Street which include examples of duplexes and boarding houses, a row of originally identical houses, some single family homes, and 20th century automobile service stations.*

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### **What is the Mills of Lebanon Survey project?**

The project is a consultant services effort to develop a detailed survey of the 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> century mill buildings and sites within City of Lebanon limits, primarily along the Mascoma River. These locations span from the Mill Parcel at Mill Street (archaeological site of a slate mill, edge tool mill, and bobbin mill in East Lebanon), to the renovated and fully occupied mill buildings of downtown Lebanon, to the Scytheville mill sites at Slayton Hill Road.

A. Project Name: Mills of Lebanon, NH Survey – A Priority 1 NH DHR Survey Project, CLG 2017

- B. Selected Vendor for Qualified Archaeologist and Architectural Historian Team:  
[Monadnock Archaeological Consulting, LLC](#)
- C. Timeline: October 2017 to September 2018, per CLG 2017 grant cycle requirements
- D. Purpose: Conduct a Phase IA survey of approximately 22+ historic mill sites in the city.
- E. Scope: detailed historic survey of the mill buildings that remain standing. Contracted services include the following, and additional archaeological study and historic documentation of sites where mill buildings formerly stood may be requested via future projects.
  - i. Field work
  - ii. Research
  - iii. Baseline information
  - iv. Methods and purpose statement
  - v. Geographical context
  - vi. Historic Background and Context
  - vii. Preparation of Final Survey Report

The team will look at historic maps through time to identify where the mills that are no longer standing were located. They will then conduct site visits sites to identify whether there are any physical remnants (both standing and in ruins) and to document the areas. There will be no ground disturbance as this will only be a reconnaissance effort to identify what is visible on the landscape. Following the site visits, the team will conduct additional background research to gain a better understanding of the historic context of each site, and to present a narrative with maps and photographs in a written report as a final product.

- F. Budget: \$11,698 with 100% federal share administered by the NH DHR
- G. Locations: Many of the mill sides are on City-owned property. Where access to private property is required for site visits and photographic documentation of historic resources, notice will be provided and permission obtained. Some sites have been redeveloped and no longer have standing structures; others may host intact or partially intact complexes of buildings and yet unidentified sensitive cultural resources. For this reason, a map of preliminarily identified locations will not be published but a list of sites and each one's general characteristics and an inventory of standing structures will be public information.

### ***What types of mill sites are being assessed?***

For the 2017 CLG grant cycle, only pre-industrial *water-powered mills* and their directly associated structures are being assessed, with a focus on mills along the Mascoma River. Other historic elements such as mill yards, mill building complexes, manufacturing buildings that were tied to the mill power generation equipment via electricity, dams, and refuse may be the subjects of future studies. Specifically, Lebanon's recent history is often viewed in terms of "before" and "after" the calamitous fire of 1887 that leveled 80 buildings. Many mill sites were rebuilt after the fire, and of those, electrification that did not require direct connection to water-power changed the nature of where manufacturing facilities such a woolen textiles could be located; this period and the following 60 years, approximately, are regarded as the advent of the industrial era in New England. While some of these larger scale *electric-power mill* operations existed in Lebanon, due to redevelopment of the sites and their distinctiveness from pre-industrial enterprises, the 2017-2018 Mills of Lebanon Survey does not detail them. At the start of the project—and this number will be updated—it was estimated that there are at least 50 pre-industrial mill sites in Lebanon's bounds, falling under just as many or nearly as many names, many of which are related to the landowner/operator's name.

There were likely more than 50 mills at these sites through the course of history; often, when a property changed ownership, there was a fire, etc., a mill would get rebuilt and/or be operated as a new enterprise.

### ***Who can see the sites?***

Until the project results are final, site locations will not be described in detail. Note that general visitation to sites is considered trespassing unless the property is publicly owned and not signed. Metal detecting and treasure hunting in New Hampshire follows legal requirements including the Archeological Resources Preservation Act (ARPA) which carries penalties for digging for artifacts. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) also applies. See NH state code for related guidance. Please respect the common heritage of Lebanon's past, current and future inhabitants, tread softly, and enjoy educating yourself and others about our region's history by visiting City libraries or contacting us for more information.

### ***Have other communities benefitted from studying mills?***

The City of Lebanon is excited to build upon the success of similar studies that have been completed in New Hampshire. Notably, the Town of Wakefield, NH, a community located to the east of Lake Winnepesaukee, published the [Wakefield Heritage Commission Survey of Water-Powered Mill Sites and Dams, a Historical Research and Archeological Field Documentation study](#), in 2011, with support from the NH DHR. The study culminated in a public [presentation](#), as we will do in Lebanon. Material brought to light by the Wakefield study have helped to inform decisions in the community, such as priority locations for follow-up restoration and preservation projects, critical engineering and repair needs, maintenance approaches, and pursuit of historic designations

### ***How will the Mills of Lebanon Survey be used?***

This project is intended to facilitate significant and long-lasting impacts on local historic resources. The project will identify mill sites that are likely rich in historical importance but are unprotected. Understanding the significance of these areas will help the City determine how best to preserve and protect them from future development, natural degradation, and extreme weather. For existing sites, the Heritage Commission intends to use the project report as a springboard for discussion about how best to protect, preserve, and celebrate the salient and significant historical features. These efforts could involve local landmark designation, local zoning protections, federal historic building designations, and/or creation of a federal historic district. Outreach and education efforts will be part of the project process.

Future steps will require continued resources and assistance. The City values the support of CLG grants and potential follow-up steps from the mill survey project will be proposed in the 2018 CLG Letter of Intent (LOI). A running list of *preliminary ideas for next steps* includes:

- Actual archaeological study of where mills and mill buildings one stood
- Identify and assist with identifying relevant regulations and securing protection and/or designations for priority sites
- Identify and plan steps for industrial architecture worthy of further study, documentation, and possibly, protection in the form of local regulations and/or state or federal historic designations

- Develop a city historical site tour (physical or online or both) of, or including, these mill sites and other sites of interest from prior surveys
- With the 2017 and 2018 documentation City staff will collaborate with consultant to develop public presentation and storytelling collateral for the Historical Society and/or Heritage Commission webpages
- Identify optimal feasible preservation approaches for priority sites
- Revise/expand Historic District style review criteria to mill sites and associated buildings which are not in the district but would benefit from it, like as was done for Crafts Ave. Once you have a characterization of a site or area, that can be premise.

***How will the public be informed about the purpose of this project and the value of historic preservation? (note: public information and education is a required component of all CLG grant projects)***

The Lebanon Heritage Commission believes that the main goal of their work is to educate the public about the rich cultural and architectural heritage of the City. As part of the mill survey project, City staff and the Heritage Commission will continue to work on this community outreach and anticipate taking the following steps:

- Hold a community “kick off” meeting with the consultant(s), most likely to be held in conjunction with a regularly scheduled meeting of the Heritage Commission.
- Provide periodic progress updates to the public.
- Hold a publicly advertised meeting with the consultant(s) once the draft report is finalized at a convenient, central location (most likely City Hall). The goals of this meeting will be to:
  - Inform property owners and Lebanon residents of the Heritage Commission's efforts to survey, document, and preserve the City's historic heritage.
  - Inform property owners about the project findings, with follow-up discussion about what the most desirable ways for preserving this history and heritage may be.

The City will use a variety of traditional methods to disseminate information related to the above, including press releases, updates to the City’s website, and notices in the City’s weekly e-newsletter.

***How can I learn more for now?***

City of Lebanon Heritage Commission: <https://lebanonnh.gov/502/Heritage-Commission>

City of Lebanon Historical Society: <http://www.lebanonnhhistory.org/>

NH Division of Historical Resources: <https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/index.html>

- Certified Local Government Program: [https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/cert\\_loca\\_govt.html](https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/cert_loca_govt.html)
- State Conservation and Rescue Archaeology Program: [https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/scrap\\_about.htm](https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/scrap_about.htm)

***What staff and community support is being provided for this endeavor?***

City of Lebanon Planning and Zoning staff

City of Lebanon Heritage Commission

- Robert Welsch, Ph.D. – Chair of the Heritage Commission, Associate Professor of Anthropology
- Edward Ashe – City Historian, Member of Heritage Commission

If you have information of potential value to this initiative, such as property records and historic photographs, please contact the City Planning Office by calling 603-448-1457 or sending an email [here](#).