

Richards' Dam



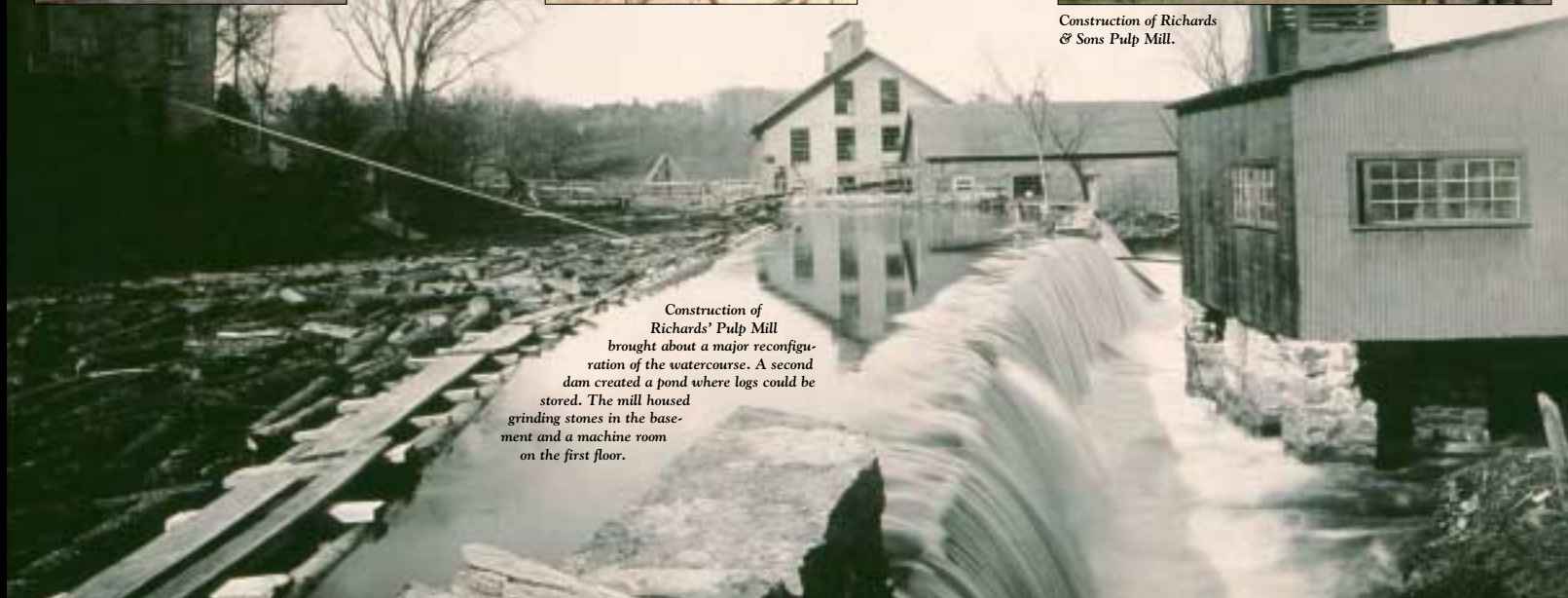
The workforce for the mills lived nearby, often in multi-family houses. This tenement house stood behind the Black Watch Library until the mid-1960s.



The 1884 survey of Ticonderoga Pulp and Paper Company holdings drawn by D. M. Arnold shows a simple dam across the main stream of the River directing water to the machinery of the Treadway Woolen Mill.



Construction of Richards & Sons Pulp Mill.



Construction of Richards' Pulp Mill brought about a major reconfiguration of the watercourse. A second dam created a pond where logs could be stored. The mill housed grinding stones in the basement and a machine room on the first floor.

At 18 feet, this dam is the lowest of the six surviving dams, but it supported several of the most productive enterprises in Ticonderoga. Of all the mill sites along the River, the Richards Dam alone retains a historical reference in its name. Ironically, the pulp mill whose name survives did not last as long as the woolen mill before it.

Hiram & Thomas Treadway built a woolen mill here in 1834, riding the early 19th-century boom in sheep farming. The sheep were Merinos, a breed imported from Spain for their long-staple wool which spun up into very fine yarn. The Champlain Valley

became a center for breeding prize ewes that brought great wealth to local farmers. Farmers eventually undermined their business by exporting breeding ewes to the west.

In 1893, E. Richards & Sons took over the site to take advantage of the next great opportunity in the north woods: the making of paper pulp. Richards' Pulp Mill was the fourth pulp manufacturer to locate on the LaChute, and went into business the same year as the Essex County Pulp Mill, just upstream from here. By 1906, Ticonderoga Pulp & Paper Company had purchased the site and installed a "dynamo" to generate electricity.