

HATCH MILL NEWS

DECEMBER 2025



PROGRESS UPDATE

Since 1968 when the Marshfield Historic Society bought the building, and then later in 2004 when the non-profit Hatch Mill Group took it over, there have been a few simple (or as it turns out, not-so-simple) goals in order to turn the Hatch Mill into a museum that can be enjoyed by the entire South Shore Region. These goals are:

→ ***Restore the Building***

Most people reading this letter are aware that a beautiful restoration of the building was completed in 2016.

→ ***Restore the Sawmills***

In 2025, we have made great progress in restoring the 1872 Forsaith circular sawmill (*see page 5*) and in creating a museum that visitors enjoy.

→ ***Restore the Pond***

We are hoping to start preliminary work on the pond dam in 2026.

None of this progress would have been possible without the enthusiasm, care, time, and donations of Hatch Mill supporters. With your generosity and support, we look forward to furthering our restoration in the coming year.

See you in 2026!

OPEN HOUSES

We continued to host our increasingly well-attended open houses monthly, May through September. This has been a great way to introduce first-time visitors to the Mill, and to catch up with existing friends, neighbors, and supporters.

GROUP VISITS

Several wonderful groups reached out to us, and we hosted tours specific to their interests:

- Marshfield High School Construction Technology Class
- North Bennet Street School
- Plimoth Grist Mill Staff
- Oakman Family Reunion
- Scituate Historical Society
- Marshfield Historical Society
- Inly School Elementary Woodworking Camp

ON THE ROAD

The “Hatch Mill Road Show” was also busy this year, tabling and giving presentations and talks for the following groups:

- North River Pop-Up Museum in Norwell
- Scituate Historical Society
- Marshfield Historical Society

FRIENDS & RELATIONS

It is always fun to meet Hatch Descendants at the Mill. This year, in addition to the Oakman Family (most of whom are also Hatches), we also hosted Rhiannon & Vincent Hatch, Eric & Mandy Hatch, Mert Caton & Family, Robert Winslow Hatch & Family, and Russell Hatch & family.



MCN // North River Pop-up Museum 2025

EXHIBITS COME TO LIFE

Amy Boyce (Board Member & Curator) has been hard at work this year, designing interactive displays and exhibits that challenge and engage everyone who comes to the Mill.



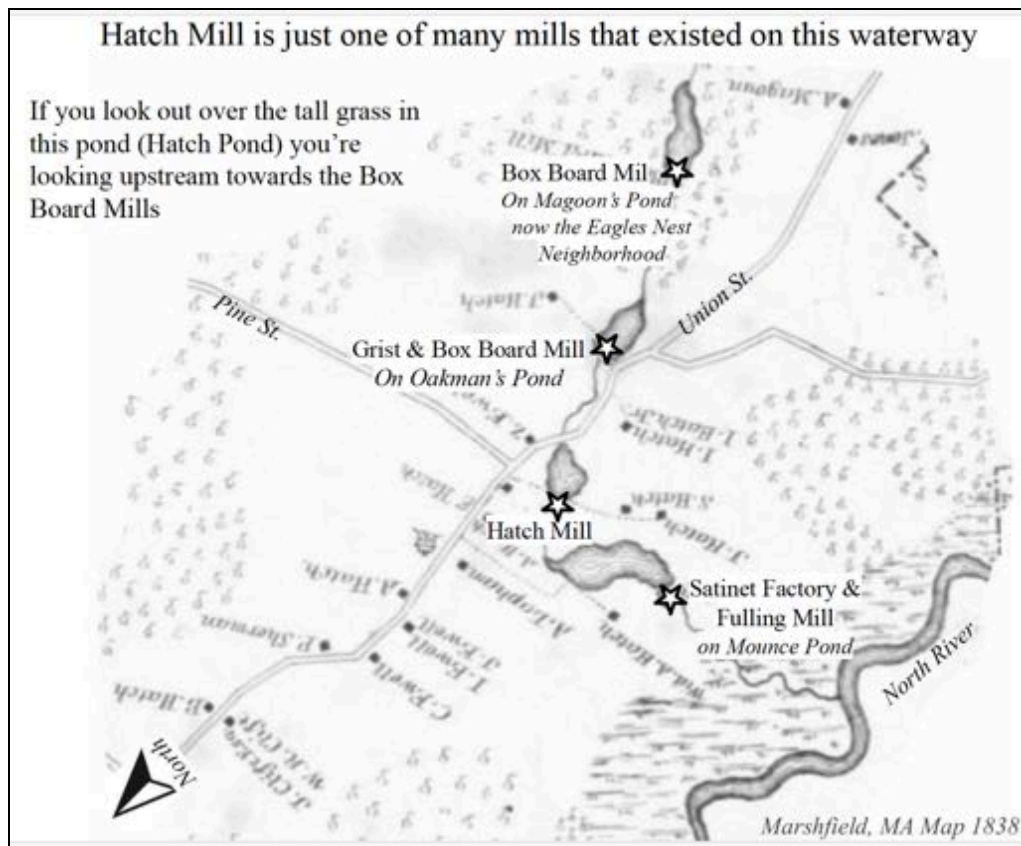
These have been popular with visitors of all ages—including that older kid in the red shirt!



Human powered machines have also been a popular exhibit. There was a surge in this type of tool in the late 1800s era that the Mill represents. We let visitors try out our vintage tools as much as possible.

NEW INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

We have added more signage to explain the history of the mill and how it operated.

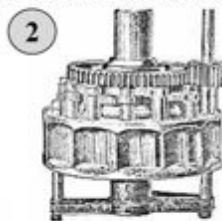


How the Turbine Works

1

Simplified concept: the turbine is a water wheel set horizontally in a container.

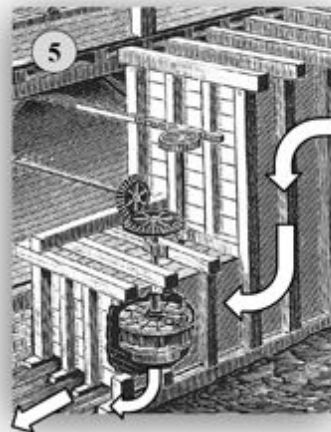
Here's a drawing of the Hatch Mill's last operating turbine, made by the manufacturer Bradway. Check out the real one outside!



3

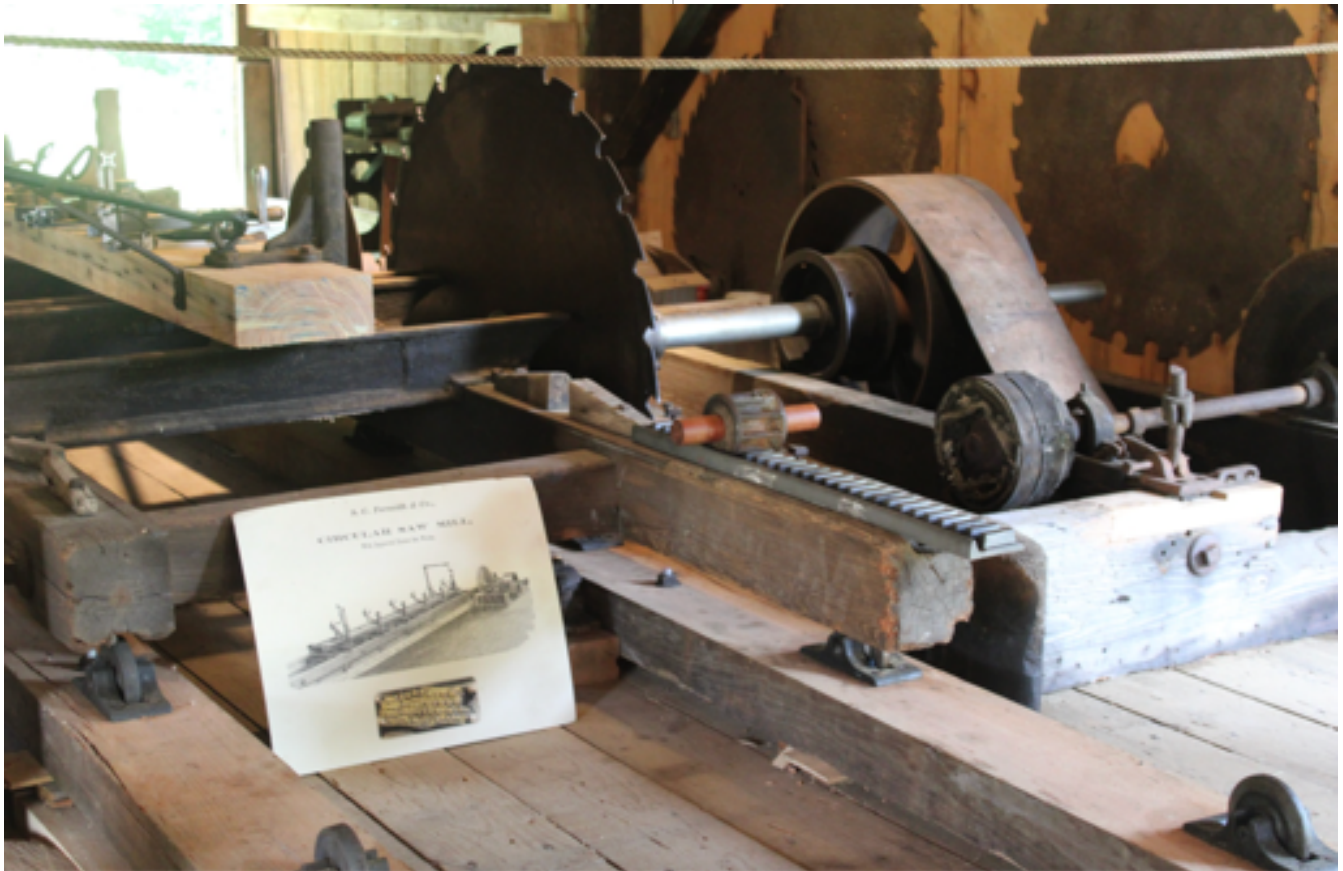
This cutaway drawing partially shows the inside of the turbine, which has that horizontal water wheel called a "runner". The "gates" or "wickets" on the outside are the doors that control water flow into the turbine.

4 This is what a runner looks like



Water flows from the pond into a wooden flume that channels the water toward the turbine. Water flows into the turbine, spinning the runner causing the vertical drive shaft and the gear it's attached to, to spin. Water exits below the turbine and flows downhill down the tail race.

The 1872 Sawmill Restoration Continues!



In the 3½ years since we determined the origin of the Forsaith Sawmill, we have yet to find any other original parts. Old Forsaith Sawmill advertisements claim “over 100 sold,” but it appears that we may have the only remaining example. As we proceed with the restoration, each part is evaluated to determine whether it should be reused, repaired, or replaced. When it comes to replacement parts, we try to replace them with another vintage part, but that isn’t always possible. In those cases, the parts need to be recreated. These replacement parts may be cast, fabricated with machine tools, or blacksmithed. We find ourselves asking each other, “What would Decker do?”

This year, we have finished acquiring most of the major parts. The arbor was assembled and the blade was installed. Castings of gears and racks were completed after wood casting

patterns were made. Feedworks shafts and pulleys were repaired or replaced.

One example of a repair was repouring the arbor bearings. The original cast iron shells are “one of a kind” that we wanted to reuse if at all possible. The original babbitt bearing material was worn out and needed to be replaced. Babbitt is a low melting point alloy of tin, copper, and antimony. Pouring bearings was a common repair 100 years ago but has become a “lost art”.

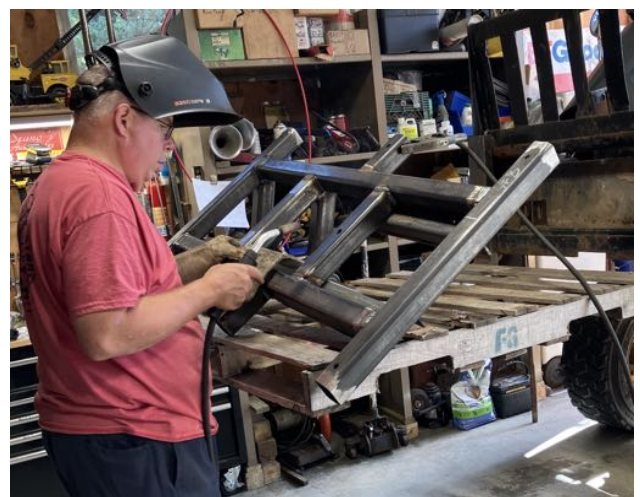
Prep work involved notes from a course Amy attended a few years ago, and textbooks that Bert kept from his Marine Engineering courses 50 years ago (and that were already obsolete back then). We bought materials, gathered our oxygen-acetylene torches, and went at it.

POURING BEARINGS



ELECTRIC POWER (FOR NOW)

To get the Sawmill running, we are installing an electric motor to help keep the restoration momentum going. The motor will help us see exactly how much power is needed to operate the Saw, which will help determine our next steps with the Turbine and Pond.



Federal 1880 Industrial Census of Lumber Mills & Sawmills

We found this census several years ago, but recently had the opportunity to look at it more closely. It is a great snapshot of the Mill operation in 1880, when Samuel F. Hatch owned the sawmill and was in his prime working years. He had purchased the Mill from his father ten years prior and made several upgrades. By 1880, the main level of the Mill would have been much like it is today. Along with two helpers, Sam was running the Forsaith sawmill, short boxboard saw, and edger saw. He was 37 years old and married with two children. One of those children was his one-year-old son, Franklin Decker Hatch. Born in 1879, Decker would go on to be the last family owner/operator of the Hatch Mill.



Owner:	<i>Samuel F Hatch</i>
Capital Invested:	<i>\$3,000</i>
Greatest number of hands employed:	<i>2</i>
Over 16 years of age:	<i>2</i>
Number of hours in ordinary day (May-Nov):	<i>10</i>
Number of hours in ordinary day (Nov-May):	<i>10</i>
Average days wage, skilled mechanic:	<i>\$1</i>
Total wages paid during the year:	<i>\$400</i>
Months in operation:	<i>10</i>
Months idle:	<i>2</i>
Saws:	
Number of gangs:	<i>1</i>
Number of saws in gang:	<i>3</i>
Number of Circular Saws:	<i>3</i>
Cost of materials:	
Value of Logs:	<i>\$2,400</i>
Value of Materials:	<i>\$25</i>
Total value of all materials:	<i>\$2,425</i>
Proper Saw Mill products:	
Number of thousand feet of lumber:	<i>[Illegible]</i>
Total value of products heretofore mentioned:	<i>\$4,000</i>
Total value of all other products:	<i>\$75</i>
From what region do you procure your logs?	<i>Marshfield</i>
Do you do your own logging?	<i>Yes</i>
If so, what proportion of your logs do you bring in?	<i>2/3</i>
Do you ship your own products?	<i>Yes, by horse team</i>
Power used in manufacture	
On what river?	<i>Small stream, no name</i>
Height of falls?	<i>12 feet</i>
Wheels number	<i>1</i>
Type:	<i>Houston Turbine</i>
Breadth, in feet:	<i>2 1/2</i>
RPM	<i>140</i>
Horsepower	<i>20</i>



HATCH MILL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Amy Boyce
David Caron
Jack Clancy
Dean Copeland
Bert O'Donnell



We need volunteers for open houses and restoration projects! If you have previously offered to help but haven't heard from us, we apologize. It seems we may have misplaced some hand-written notes. We would still love to have you! If interested, please send a note to hatchmillinc@gmail.com.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The restoration of the Hatch Mill is funded by donations and grants.

The Hatch Mill Group, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and qualifies as a charitable organization. Your deduction is tax deductible.

Donate Online:



<https://www.hatchmill.org/donate>

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Many thanks to these important benefactors:

