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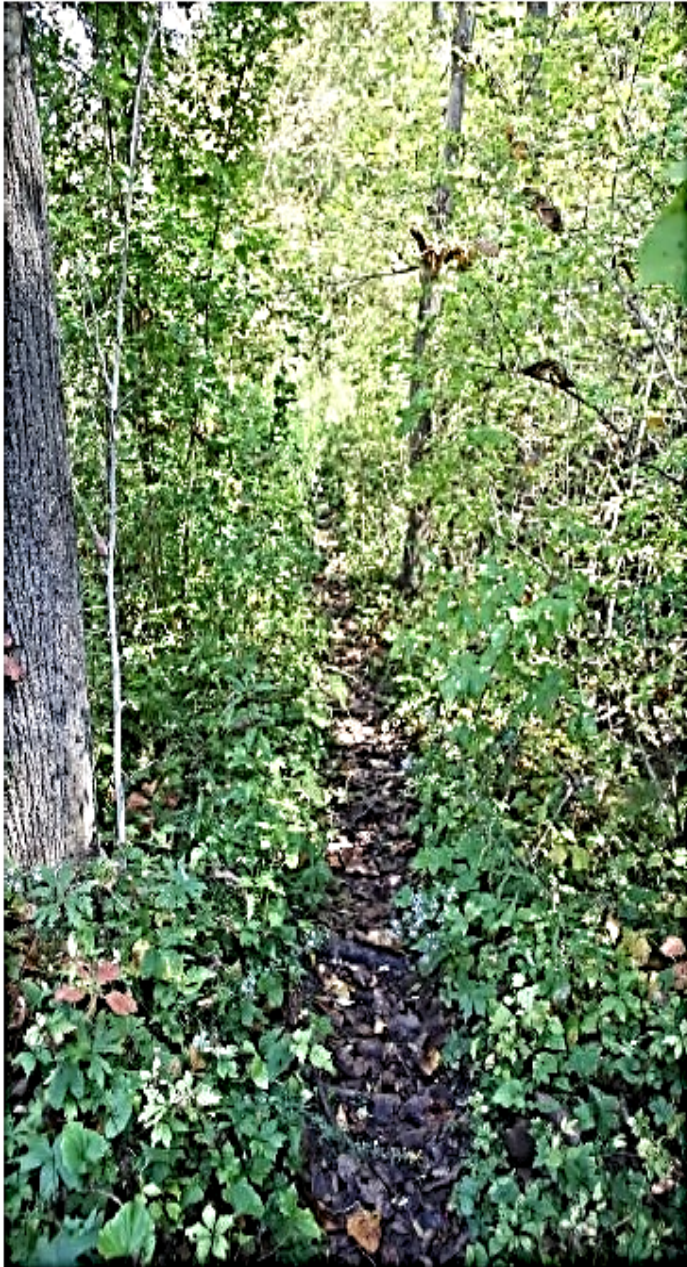
**Fred Hall's Ashley Falls**  
(1079 Ashley Falls Road house is  
on the right of Hall's Monumental Works.)

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**1079 Ashley Falls Rd. Built @ 1850 (Picture taken in 1973)**





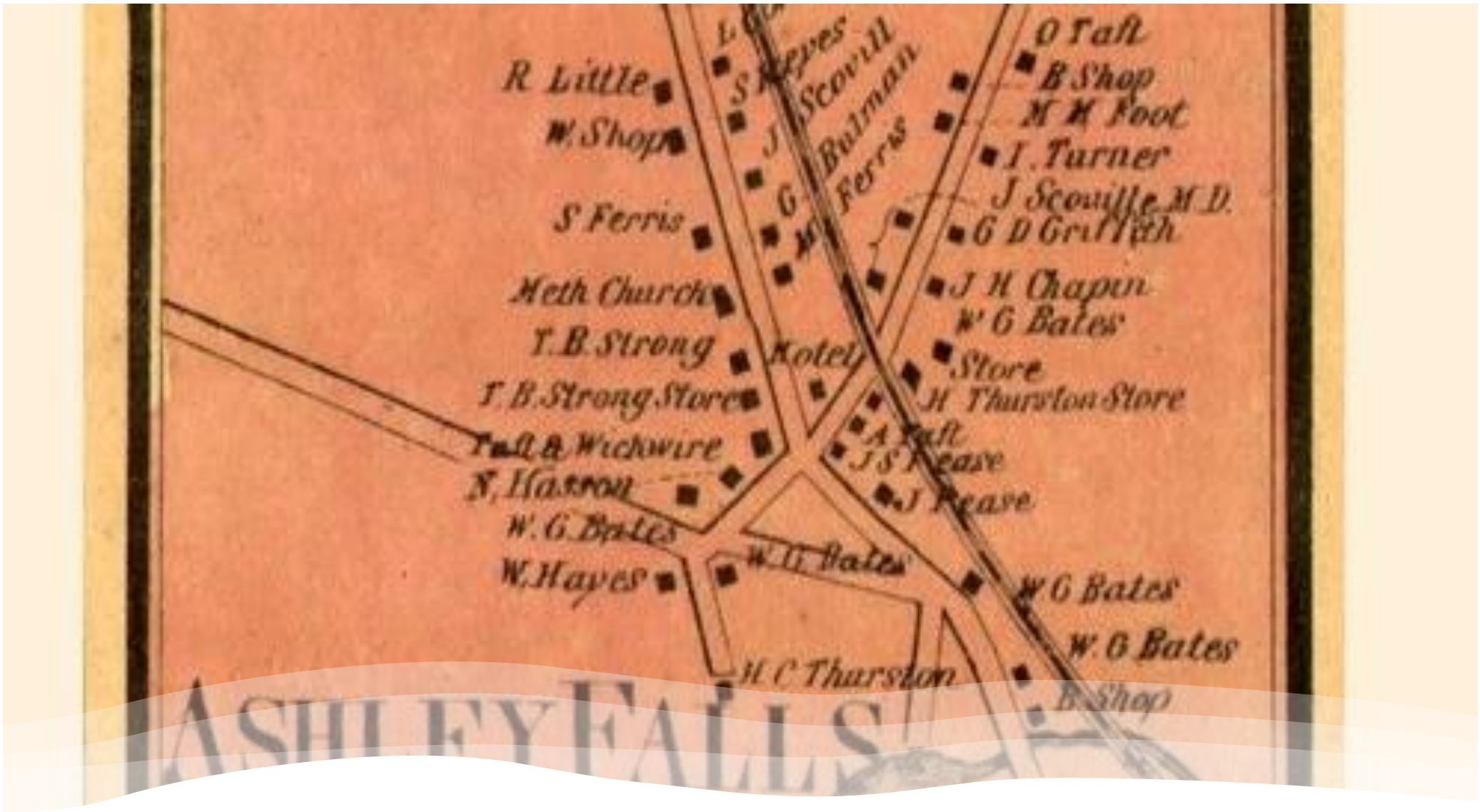
## What an Early Woodland Path Might Have Looked Like

In 1725, with authorization from the Massachusetts General Assembly a committee bought from Sachem Konkapot the southwestern corner of what would become Berkshire County. The tract was about 12 miles wide and 18 miles long and included much of modern-day Sheffield, Great Barrington Egremont and Mount Washington as well as parts of what would become Alford, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge and Lee.

### **Purchased from Chief Konkapot**

Originally called *Outhotonnook* (later corrupted as Housatonic), meaning “on the mountain”, the land was purchased by a committee approved by the General Court on April 25, 1724, from Chief Konkapot and 20 other Mahican Indians. Its price was 460 pounds, 3 barrels of cider and 30 quarts of rum. The committee was to manage apportionment of land and supervise settlement (see [New England Town Formation](#)).





R Little

W Shop

S Ferris

Meth Church

T. B. Strong

T. B. Strong Store

T. A. Wickwire

N. Hasson

W. G. Bates

W. Hayes

L. G. ...

S. Peaves

J. Scovill

G. Bulman

M. Ferris

Kotel

A. Galt

J. S. Pease

W. G. Bates

H. C. Thurston

O Galt

B Shop

M. H. Foot

J. Turner

J. Scoville M.D.

G. D. Griffith

J. H. Chapin

W. G. Bates

Store

H. Thurston Store

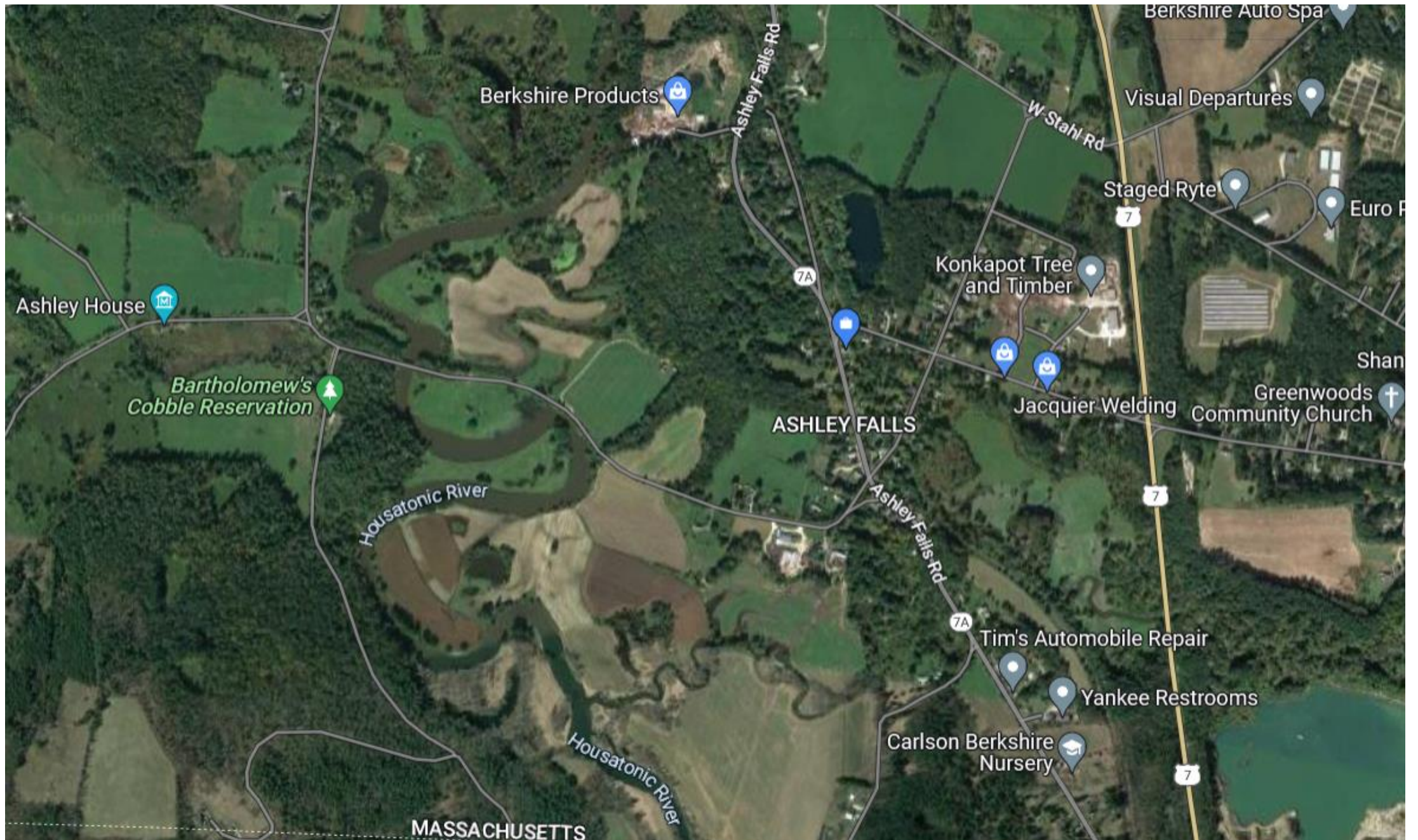
W. G. Bates

W. G. Bates

B Shop

ASHLEY FALLS





MASSACHUSETTS

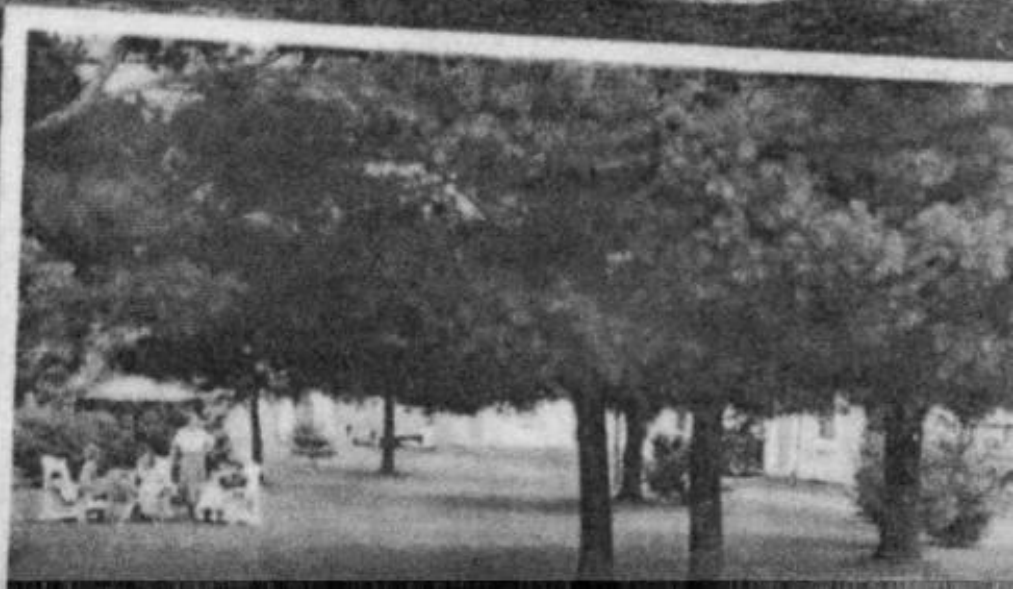
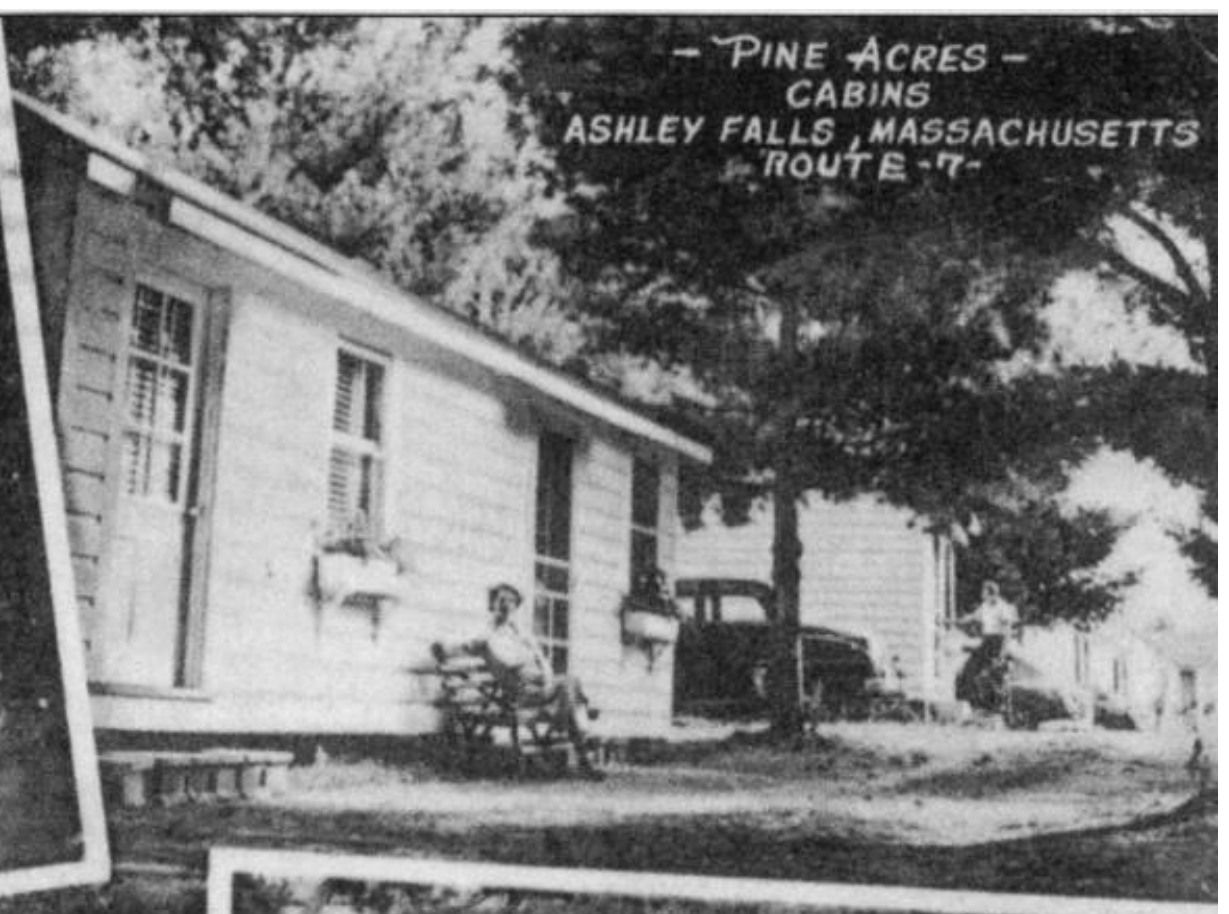


# MASSACHUSETTS

## AN HISTORIC DISTRICT

ON APRIL 25, 1724, CHIEF KONKAPOT OF THE MAHICAN INDIANS SOLD A TRACT OF LAND, INCLUDING THIS VILLAGE, TO SETTLERS FOR £460, THREE BARRELS OF CIDER AND 30 QUARTS OF RUM. THE VILLAGE WAS NAMED IN HONOR OF CAPT. JOHN ASHLEY, COL. JOHN ASHLEY, A LEADING STATESMAN, AND GEN. JOHN ASHLEY, VETERAN OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. COLONEL ASHLEY AND TEN TOWNSMEN DRAFTED THE SHEFFIELD DECLARATION HERE IN 1773. THIS SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE INSPIRED A YOUNG VILLAGE SLAVE, MUM BETT, TO SUE FOR HER FREEDOM IN A LANDMARK CASE HELPING TO ABOLISH SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS.





Waterfall  
next to the  
Old Mill







Looking  
towards the  
bridge and  
Old Mill  
across the  
Konkapot  
River.



**Building the Ashley Falls Railroad Bridge**



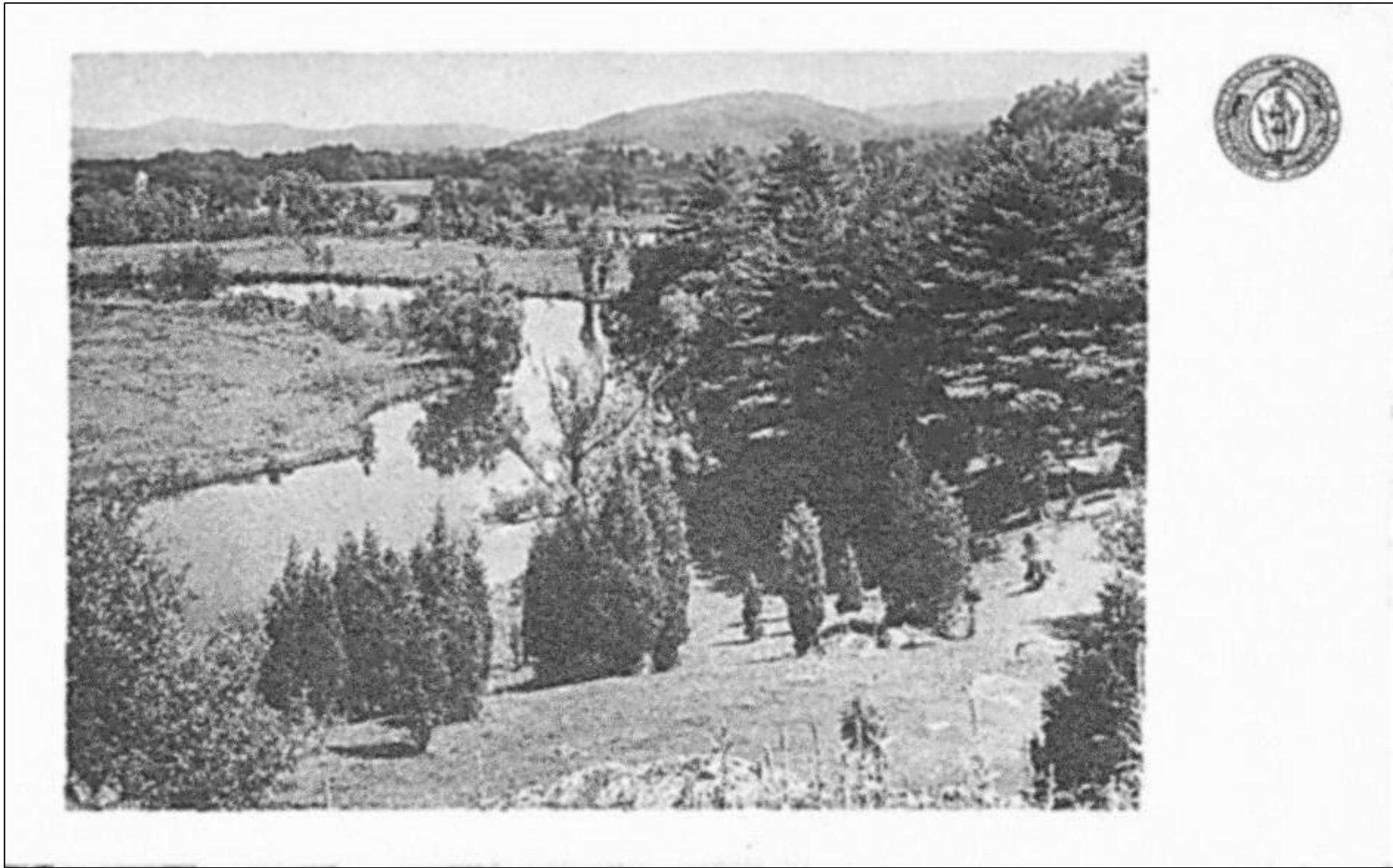


RED MILLS, ASHLEY FALLS, MASS.



**The “downstream” view of the Old Mill**





**Bartholomew's Cobble**





**Conklin House on Ranapo Road**



**Ashley House on Cooper Hill Road**



**The Sheffield Declaration, also known as the *Sheffield Resolves*, was a Colonial American petition against British tyranny and manifesto for individual rights, drawn up as a series of resolves approved by the Town of Sheffield, Massachusetts, on January 12, 1773 and printed in *The Massachusetts Spy, Or, Thomas's Boston Journal* on February 18, 1773. It is said that the meeting took place in the Colonel John Ashley House located in Ashley Falls, MA.**

**(See last slides at the end of this presentation for more detailed Mumbet history.)**





**In January 1773, 11 men met in an upstairs room of Col. John Ashley's house in Sheffield. Together they wrote a declaration against British tyranny and for the rights of the people of the colonies. They were Theodore Sedgwick, Silas Kellogg, John Ashley, Lemuel Bernard, Aaron Root, John Fellows, Philip Callender, William Day, Ebenezer Smith, Nathaniel Austin and Stephen Dewey.**

**There is a preamble and 12 "resolves." Written three years before the Declaration of Independence, the Resolves include no taxation without representation, the right to a trial, the right to peaceful enjoyment of a citizen's privileges and equality under the law.**





**The Freeman Room in the Ashley House in Sheffield, Mass., includes a portrait of Elizabeth Freeman.**

**Nancy Eve Cohen/New England Public Media**

**Nearly 250 years ago, a group of white men gathered in a house in Massachusetts to draft a document on independence aimed at the British crown. A woman who was enslaved in the house overheard the discussion and determined that the words applied to her, too.**

**Bett, who was later called Mumbet, was born enslaved south of Albany, N.Y., around 1742. In her teens, Bett was brought to the home of John and Hannah Ashley in Sheffield, Mass., where she cleaned, cooked and served the family.**

**In the upstairs study in January 1773, John Ashley and 10 other men gathered to write what became known as the Sheffield Resolves.**





**Looking to Ashley Falls and  
Sheffield from Cooper Hill Road**



HOUSATONIC RIVER.

ASHLEY FALLS, MASS.



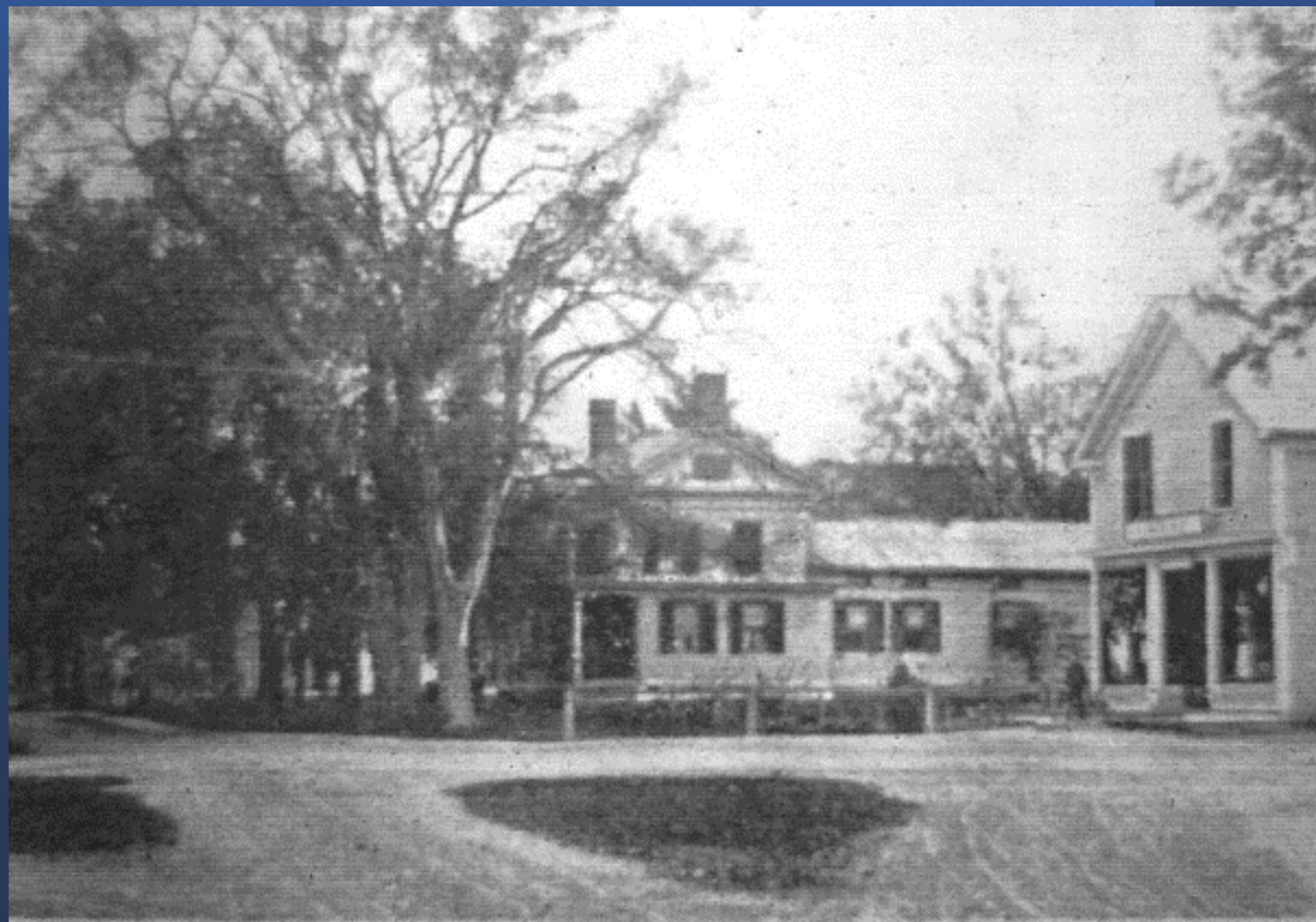












South Main Street, Ashley Falls, Mass.



**View of the now Route 7A and East Main Street Intersection**





**Located Across from the Maplewood Inn**



SCOTT AND ROOD STORE, ASHLEY FALLS MASS.  
96





1157

METHODIST CHURCH, ASHLEY FALLS, MASS.



M. E. CHURCH, ASHLEY FALLS MASS. 91.





POST OFFICE, Ashley Falls, Mass. (Pub. for J. F. Rorabach.)

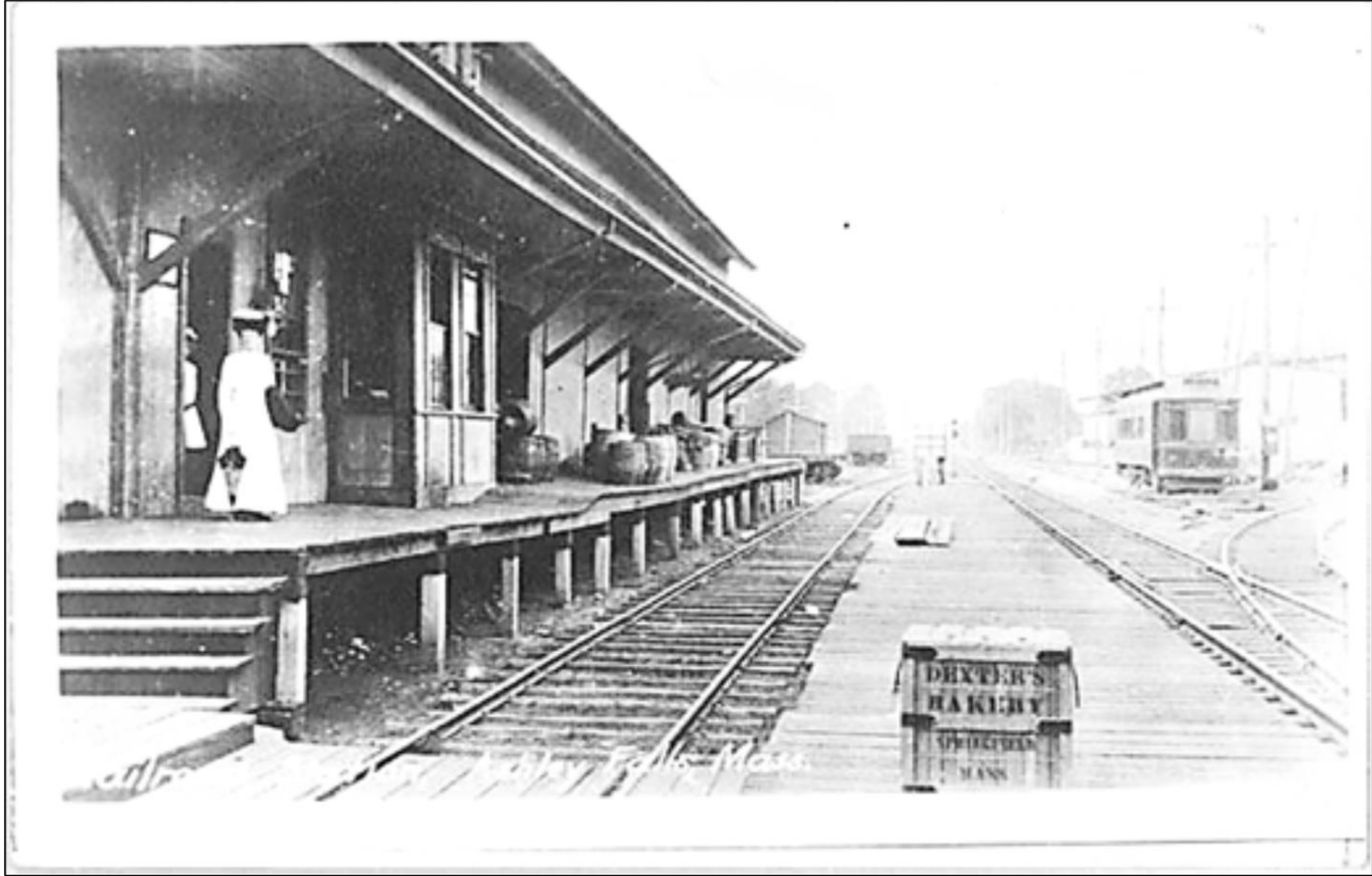
**AKA William and Blanche Bennet home. Now owned by the Greene family.**





**Ashley Falls Congregational Church on Est Main Street**





**First Ashley Falls Train Station**



**Second Ashley Falls Train Station**

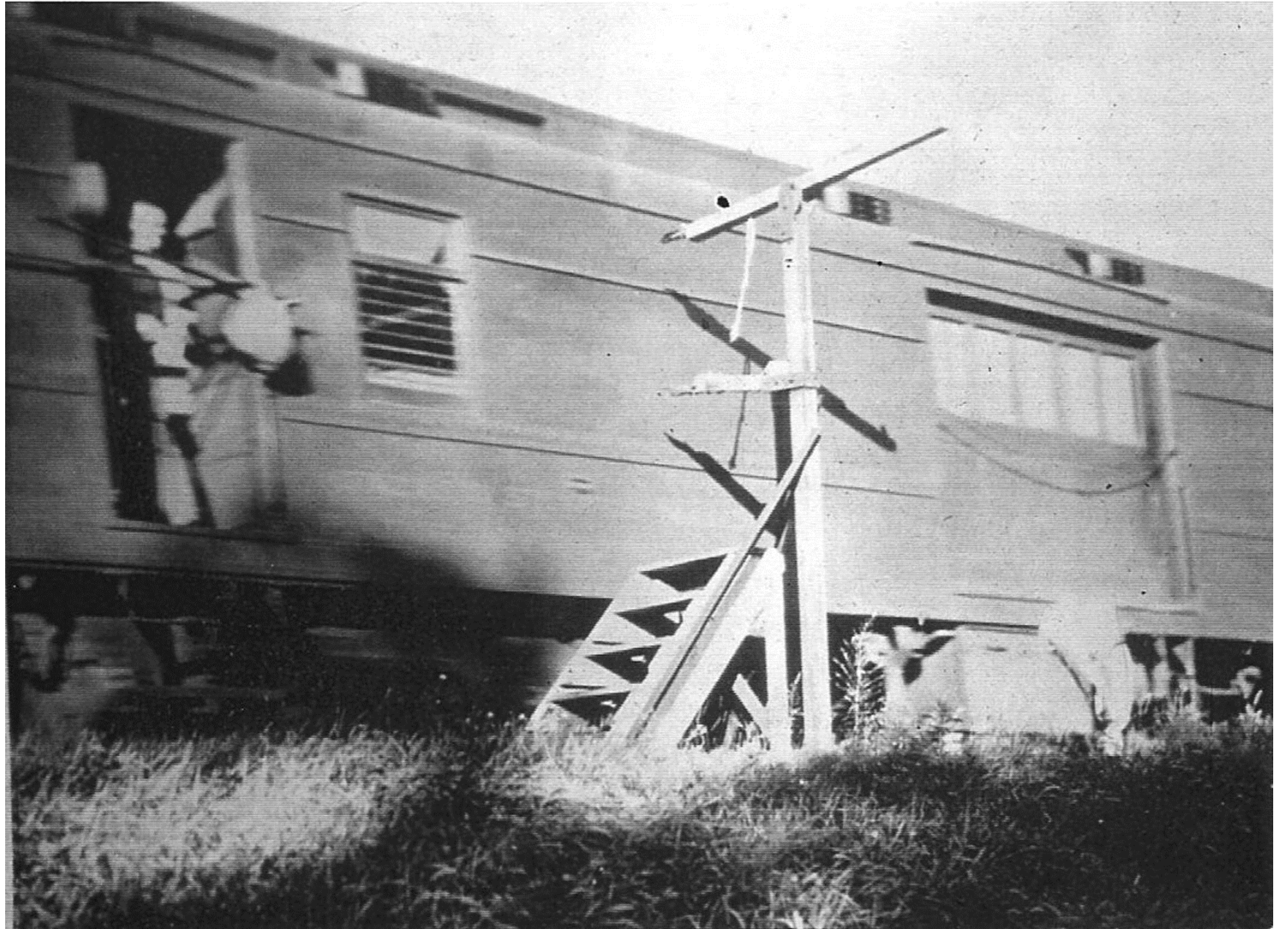




**Last Ashley Falls Train Station**



**Picking up  
the mail in  
Ashley Falls  
using a type  
of “hook” for  
the moving  
transfer.**







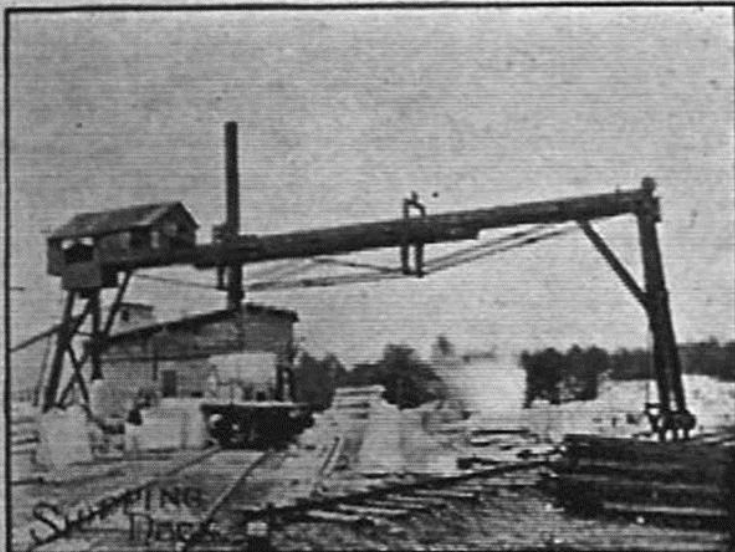




*come John*

Quarry Office,  
Ashley Falls,





SHIPPING DECK



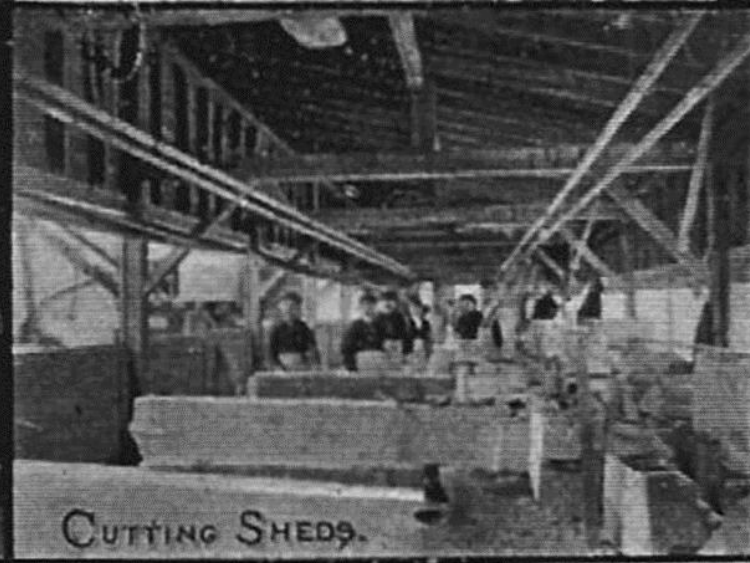
VIEW IN QUARRY



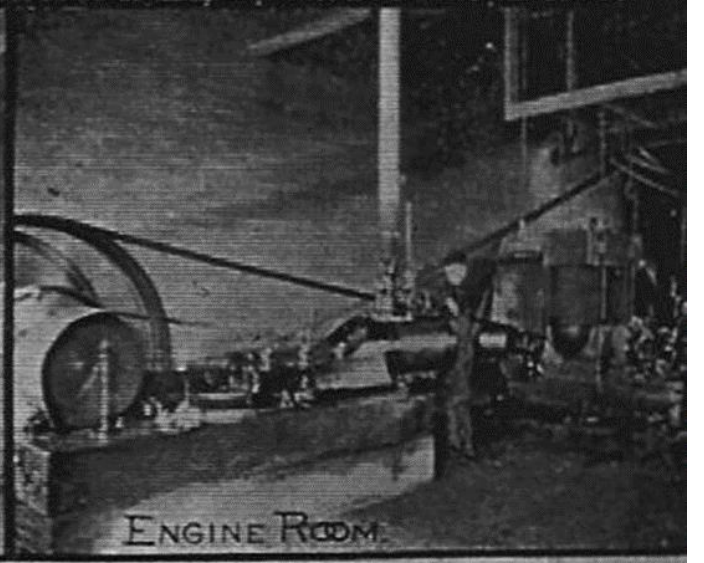
FACE OF MILL



VIEW IN MILL



CUTTING SHEDS



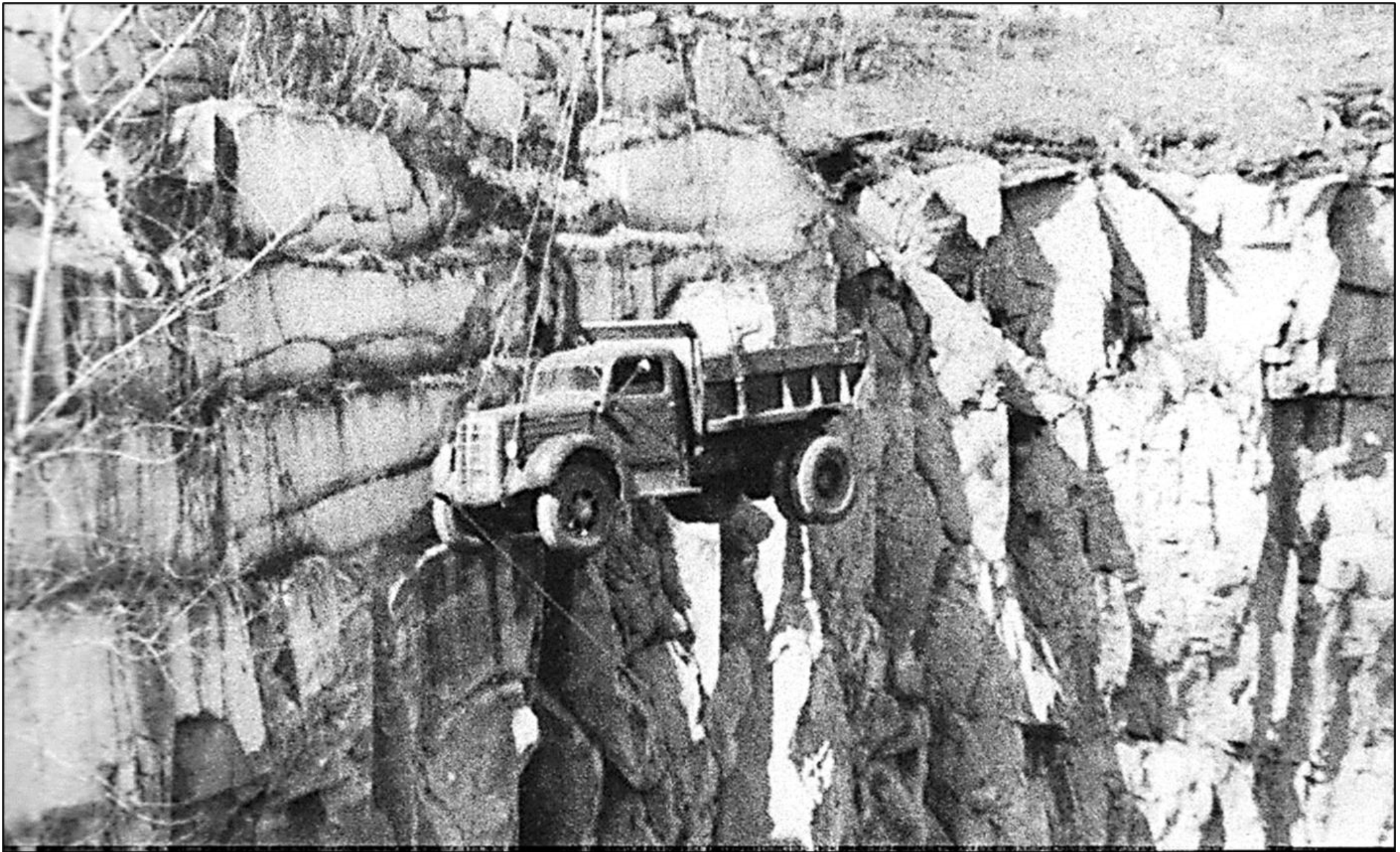
ENGINE ROOM

Ashley Falls Marble Company's Works, Ashley Falls, Mass.

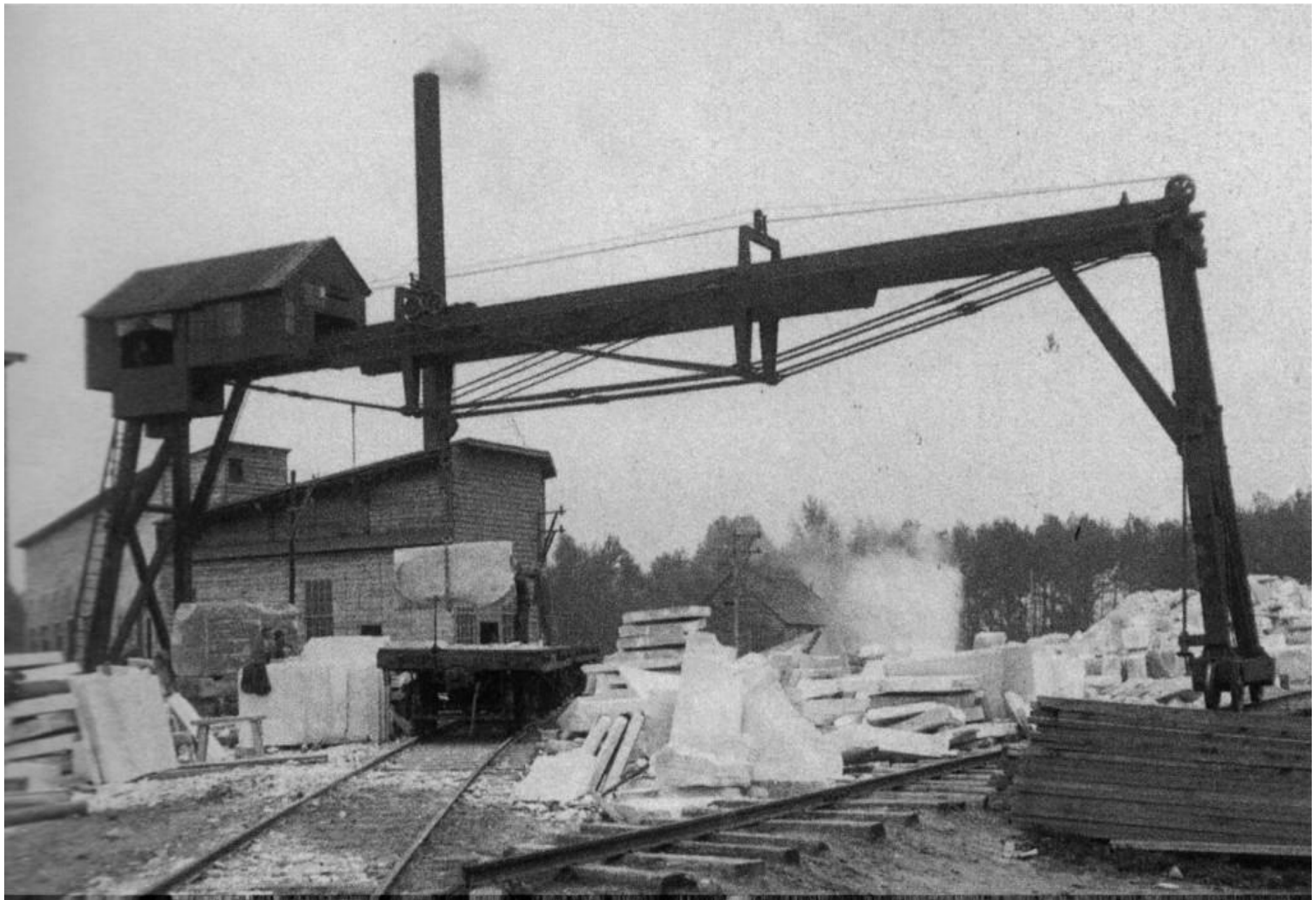








**Lowering equipment into the Ashley Falls quarry.**



**Moving the stone.**





**Colonel Ashley monument in the Clayton Road Cemetery**





**Community Center On Clayton Road near the cemetery.**



Blodgett's Bridges, Ashby Falls, Mass.



**The Ashley Falls Road Bridge, also known as Blodgett's Bridge, is located in the southeastern section of Sheffield. It is approximately 1.5 miles north of the Massachusetts/Connecticut state line and approximately 2,700 feet west of Route 7. The bridge is owned and operated by MassDOT. This area of Sheffield is surrounded by farmland and only partly developed. Wilhelm's Farm\* lies to the northeast of the bridge, Howden Farm\*\* lies to the northwest of the bridge, and Bangs Farm\*\*\* is located to the southeast of the bridge on West Stahl Road. All of these farms operate within Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs). Low density, single-family residences line Ashley Falls and West Stahl Roads where they intersect south of the bridge. The Housatonic freight railroad crosses the River approximately 20' downstream on the western side of Ashley Falls Road via a short deck girder bridge.**

**\*Under new owners      \*\*Famous for corn and pumpkins      \*\*\* Not farmed by owners**





The Lodge Cabins Route 7 Ashley Falls, Mass.

**On Ashley Falls Road, Rte. 7A, just north of Blodgett's Bridge.**

## Col. John Ashley House – Ashley Falls, MA

In 1735, at the age of 25, Colonel John Ashley built this house, the oldest in Berkshire County, for his Dutch bride, Hannah Hogeboom. The Ashley House was the center of social, economic, and political life in south Berkshire County in the eighteenth century. The famous Sheffield Declaration, a petition against British tyranny\* and a manifesto for individual rights, was drafted in the upstairs study of the house and published in 1773. The cause for abolishing slavery in America was strengthened in the celebrated 1781 Massachusetts state court battle that freed the Ashleys' slave, Elizabeth Freeman (nicknamed Mumbet) under the new state constitution.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, the Ashley House exemplifies early 18th century architecture. House furnishings and items date from the 18th and early 19th centuries.

**\*At the time of this era, these peoples were still citizens of England!**

### Added Note:

When the Massachusetts State Constitution (1780), which was the world's first written constitution, asserted that all men are created "free and equal," Sheffield black slave Elizabeth Freeman ("Mumbet") brought a legal claim to obtain her freedom, which courts granted. This led to Massachusetts being the first state to abolish slavery, in 1783.





**While the colonists were fighting the American Revolutionary War to break free of the tyranny of British rule, Mumbet sued the colony of Massachusetts for her freedom from slavery.**

**Inspired by the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights which stated “All men are born free and equal,” Mumbet, with the support of her lawyer, was awarded her liberty.**

**“Any time, any time while I was a slave, if one minute's freedom had been offered to me, and I had been told I must die at the end of that minute, I would have taken it—just to stand one minute on God's airth [sic] a free woman— I would.”**

**— Elizabeth Freeman[1]**

**For teachers or further information on Mumbet's journey:**

<http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/classroom/afam/landmarksafam/pdfs/mumbets-declaration.pdf> ;

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth\\_Freeman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Freeman) ;

Or: <https://thetrustees.org/content/elizabeth-freeman-fighting-for-freedom/>

# *The End*

*Sponsored by the  
Ashley Falls Village Improvement Society*

Compiled and edited by Dale L. Alden March 2023