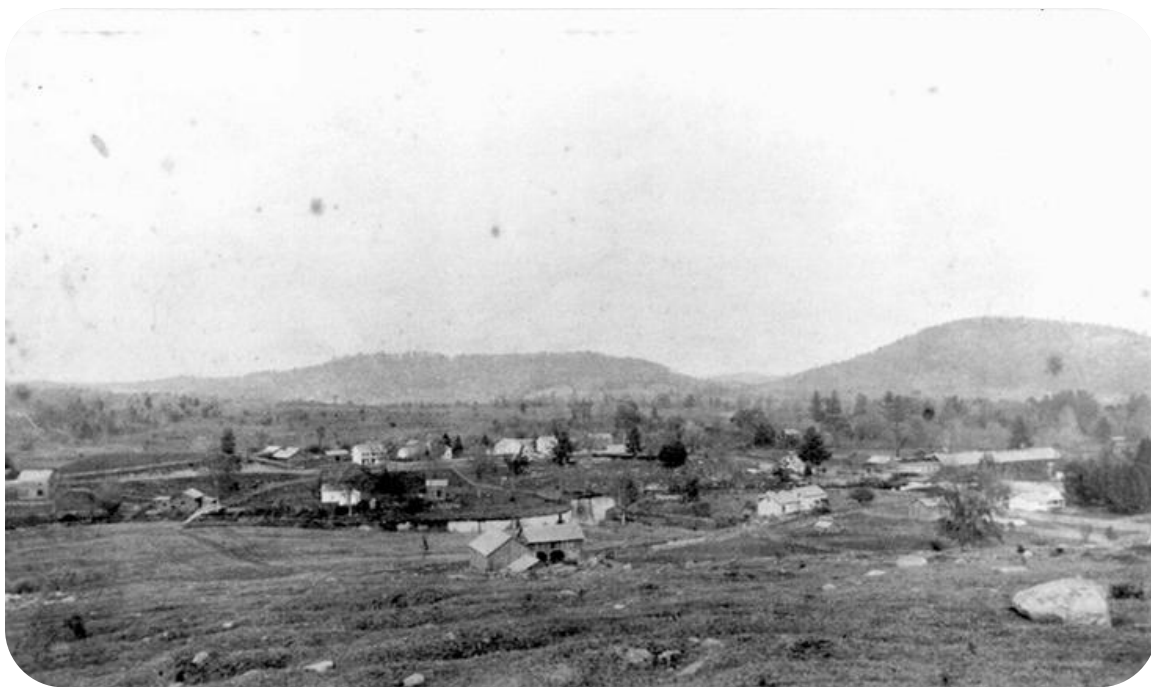




History Reclaimed:

Authentic American Vintage  
Lumber from the William Waddell  
1870 Barns in Wevertown, NY



*View of Wevertown, NY and Mill Creek, circa 1900*

## Wevertown

Nestled within the southern Adirondack Mountains, the town of Johnsbury was formally founded on April 6th, 1805. Johnsbury's eastern most border is formed by the Hudson River and is rich with lofty mountains adorned with abundant old growth timbers. The greater part of the town is solid rock and too rough for cultivation, save for narrow valleys formed by rivers and streams.

Among the first settlers of Johnsbury in 1795 were Robert Waddell and John and Andrus Weaver. Shortly thereafter John Weaver founded the village of Weavertown within the town of Johnsbury, which is presently known as the Hamlet of Wevertown.

In the early 1800's the business of tanning hides to make leather by a process using hemlock was flourishing in the northeast. Hides were brought into New York harbor from the west and south, up the Hudson River, on barges to the Champlain Canal, the Feeder Canal and onto Glens Falls, NY. From there the hides were hauled to Wevertown by horse and wagon.

William Watson and James Wasson of Blandford, MA were seeking a location where they could build a tannery. They learned of large tracts of land in the Town of Johnsbury and found that a site in Wevertown to be ideal, given its ample supply of hemlock timbers from which they could harvest the bark necessary to the tanning process. Also, the large waterfall on Mill Creek was well suited to build a dam for water power to grind the bark.

In June 1832 Watson and Wasson purchased the land and commenced construction of the tannery. The building was about 45 feet by 400 feet, with the west end housing the waterwheel, machinery and boilers. The east of the building comprised hundreds of vats for the soaking of the hides, with the upper floors utilized to hang and finish the hides. Once completed, the finished goods followed the same trip back to Glens Falls and onto the manufacturers of leather goods.

Wevertown, having been geographically desolate, was transformed nearly overnight into economically vibrant community, giving employment to the men, creating a market for logging, and for the provisions to supply the immediate area's growth.



*The Wevertown Tannery and Tannery Dam, Circa 1885*

## The Waddell's

Robert Waddell was born in June 1752 in Durham, England to parents William and Mary. Durham is a historic city in Northeast England on River Wear and is known for its 11th Century Norman Cathedral. Robert married Jane Swainston on May 15, 1777 in Durham, and had two children John and Elizabeth. Unfortunately after only 2 years of marriage Jane died in 1780 at the age of 33.

Robert emigrated from Durham to the United States with his two children in 1791 and eventually settled in Johnsbury, NY. In 1793, Robert married Nancy Ann Hodgson in Thurman, NY. Robert and Nancy had 10 children, their sixth being Hugh Waddell, born on May 6, 1805 on Elm Hill in Johnsbury. In 1808, Hugh married Susan Eveline Waldron and they had 5 children including Robert Waddell who would follow in his father Hugh's footsteps and serve as the Town of Johnsbury Supervisor. Hugh served in 1854 and his son Robert, from 1862 – 1865.



*Robert Waddell Headstone in the Johnsburg Methodist Churchyard, reads:*

*ROBERT WADDELL  
Emigrated from  
England to Johnsburgh,  
Warren Co., in 1791  
DIED  
Feb. 12, 1824*

*Erected by his Grand Son  
Robert Waddell in 1865*

Robert's younger brother, William Waddell was born July 15, 1837 and married Mary Jane Kenwell in 1862. Like his brother and father, William served as the Johnsburg Town Supervisor for numerous years.

Seeing an opportunity to serve the growing local market, spurred by the successful tanneries, in 1865 William and Robert built their first general store in Wevertown. Over the next four decades, the Waddell's grew to become one of the area's leading merchants. William was a partner in the Riverside-Schroon Lake stage lines which moved people and supplies from the newly built railway along the Hudson River, to tourist's summer homes on Schroon Lake. The brothers bought buildings at the North Creek railroad depot to house horses and provisions. Beyond the typical general store supplies, the Waddell's bought and sold cattle, lambs and supplied feed to locals farmers.



*Brothers Robert and William Waddell, Circa 1870*

## The Barn

Having built a bustling business, in 1870 William commissioned the building of the Hutchins House near the four corners in Wevertown. Built on 250 acres, the house was the most prominent on Wevertown's main street.

A significant portion of William's acreage within the Mill Creek valley was cleared to farm. It's harvest was used to both supply his homestead and stores. To support the large operation, two sister barns were also constructed in 1870. Hand hewn from old growth softwood timbers, the barns were expertly designed and built by a professional construction team. The smaller 22' x 46' barn was used as a carriage house with storage of equipment and hay in its loft. The main 30 x 46' barn housed horses and grain. A natural spring was diverted to run through the field to water the farm's animals. A large run-in shed attached to the main barn housed the farm's livestock that grazed in the large fenced field adjacent to the house.

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William Waddell passed away on 18 July 1903 at the age of 66. Many of his descendants still live within the Adirondack Mountains in which he built his business, homestead, barns and family.





*The William Waddell's 1870 House and Barns in 1894*



*The Waddell Store in North Creek, NY, Circa 1935*





*The Hutchins House, Circa 1935*



*The William Waddell 1870 Barns in 2014*



*The William Waddell 1870 Barn Frames during Reclamation in 2014*



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