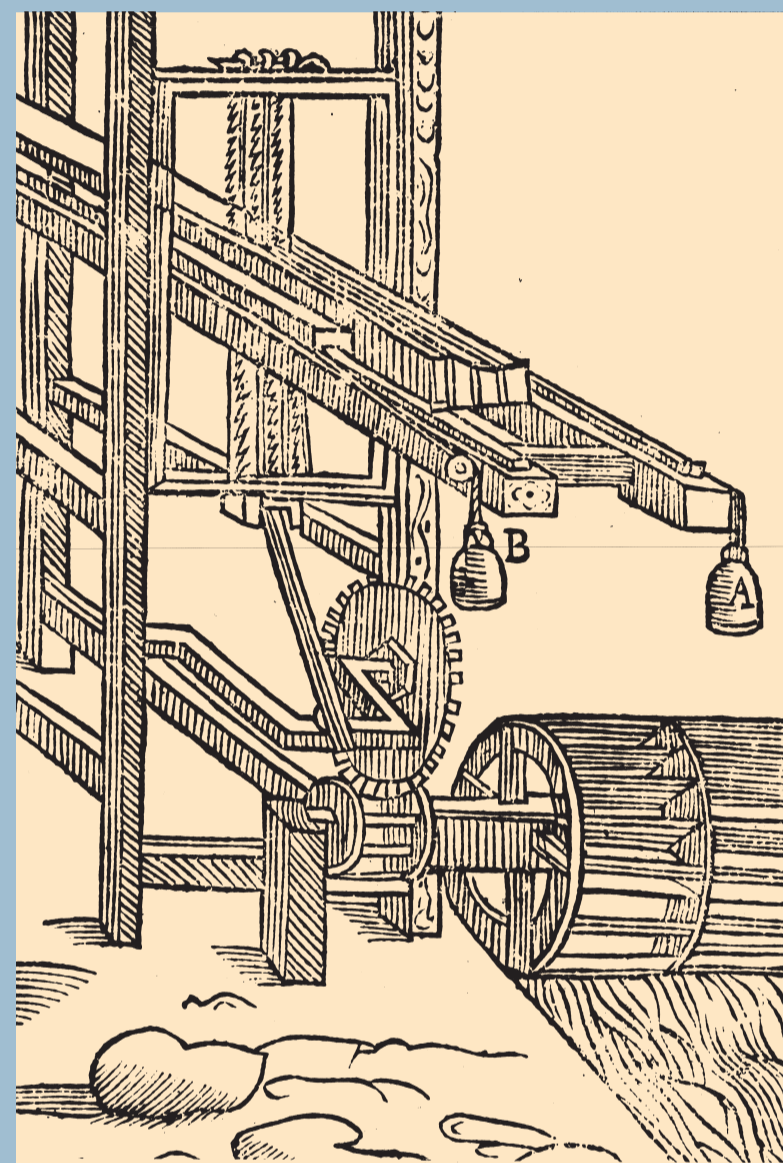




PORTSMOUTH'S SOUTH MILLS

PORTSMOUTH'S COASTAL LOCATION offered few waterpower sites, as compared to the many inland sites on tributaries feeding the Piscataqua River. In the 1650s, this tidal outlet of the South Mill Pond was granted to John Pickering as a mill site. He and his heirs operated a gristmill here until 1790; others continued to use the waterpower at this location for nearly a century more until the late 1800s.



DRAWING of 17th CENTURY MILL

Unlike colonial saw mills along inland streams and rivers, the one at South Mills derived its power from seawater impounded in the pond across the street. Because the mill could operate only when water from the millpond flowed riverward, night-time operations were frequently necessary.

17th century woodcut of a water-powered saw mill, from E. Williams, *Virginia...Richly and Truly Valued*, London: 1650.



MAP of the PISCATAQUA, c. 1660

In the 17th century, this region was one of the most heavily industrialized areas in the New World. This 1660 map illustrated, in the words of its dedication, "how England's strength doth lye unseen in the Rivers of the New Plantations." The letters in the key (left) show dozens of water-powered saw mills along the Piscataqua River and its tributaries. The whole region was clear-cut within a few generations.

Map of Piscataqua in New England, attributed to John Scott, c. 1660. Courtesy of Crown Collection, Map Room, British Library.



CHENEY PAINTING of SOUTH MILL BRIDGE

As a condition of his land grant, John Pickering agreed to build and maintain a footbridge over his milldam for those passing to and from the 1658 meeting house on the southside. A new meeting house was built in 1731 atop a nearby hill (the present location of its 1866 replacement). The bridge has been rebuilt and replaced many times. This painting by Russell Cheney depicts it and many nearby buildings as they looked in the 1930s.

Russell Cheney, *Old Mill Bridge*, Oil painting, c. 1936. Private Collection.

SOUTH MILLS

From 1658 to 1881, tidewater impounded in the South Mill Pond powered a series of gristmills at this location, and by 1867 a sawmill as well. This photograph is the only known pictorial record of that historic industrial structure. Around 1881, the city acquired and removed the building.

Photograph, *Historic Portsmouth, Early Photographs from the Collections of Strawberry Banke*. Courtesy of Strawberry Banke Museum.



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