

# MILL RIVER FLOOD 150 YEAR COMMEMORATION MAY 16, 1874


The sudden collapse of the Williamsburg dam in western Massachusetts let loose a flood that swept away parts of Williamsburg, Skinnerville, Haydenville, and Leeds. It killed 139 people, all within an hour.

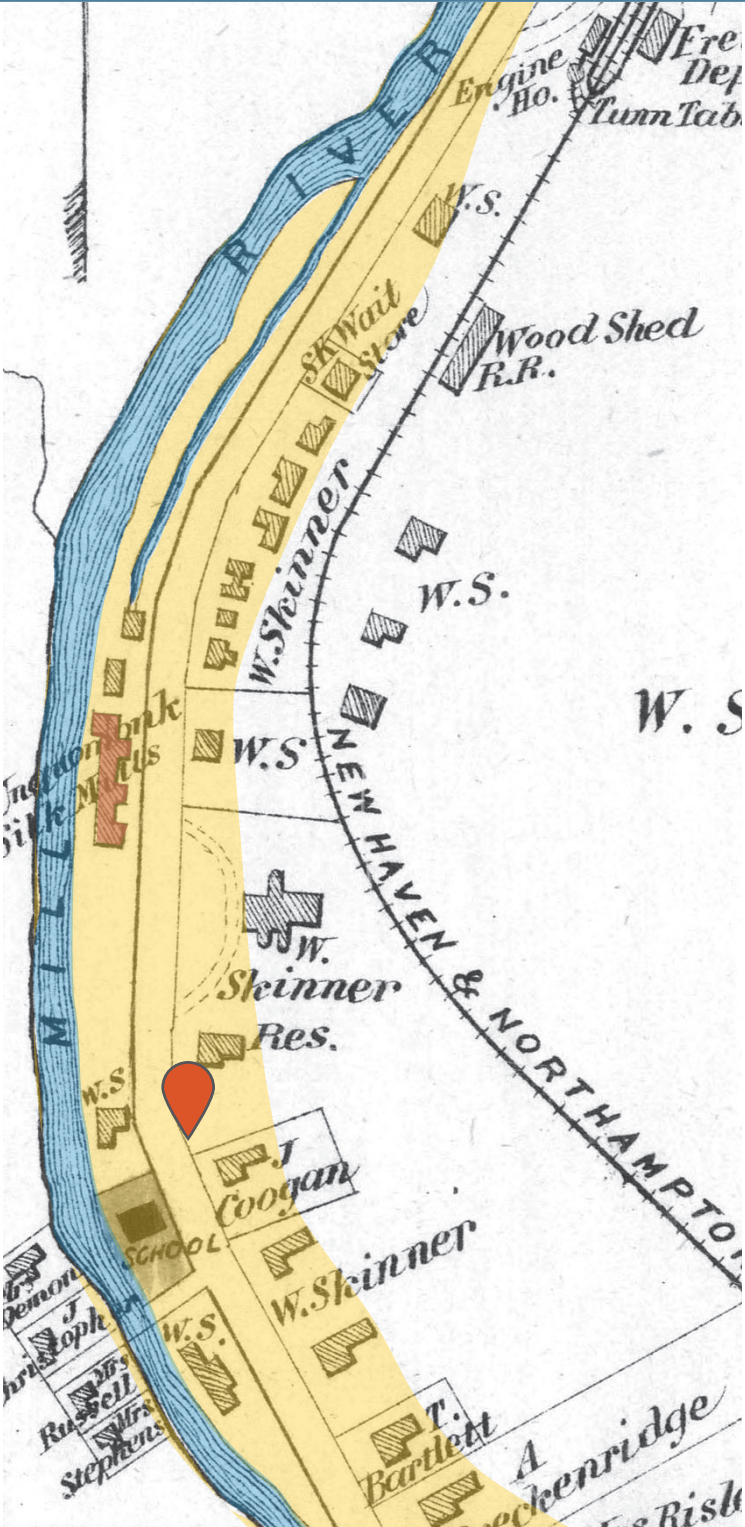
SKINNERVILLE  
MARKER  
1

## FLOOD HITS SKINNERVILLE

The flood swept over the village of Skinnerville, which occupied a thin, half-mile-long strip between the Mill River and the railroad tracks. William Skinner’s Unquomok Silk Mill, which employed 100, was destroyed. Seven mill-owned houses collapsed or were carried off by the flood. Four people died at or near their homes. After the flood, Skinner built a new silk mill in Holyoke and moved his large house there. The village was never re-established.


The flywheel remained after the silk mill was washed away.  
*Historic Northampton*

 You are here on map (just south of Skinner’s house).



MILL RIVER FLOOD  
STORY MAP



 FLOOD'S PATH  RIVER'S NATURAL COURSE  
*County Atlas of Hampshire, Massachusetts (1873)*

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 SMITH COLLEGE



 Mass Cultural Council  
WILLIAMSBURG





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## COLLINS GRAVES WARNS SKINNERVILLE

Graves pulled his milk wagon up to William Skinner's silk mill (A) and warned Nash Hubbard, who was standing in the doorway. A swarm of 100 workers streaked out of the factory, across the road, and up the railroad tracks (B) to the east of the river. They saw what looked like a huge cloud of thick smoke up in Williamsburg. It was the 20-foot-tall flood wave wrapped in a dense white spray that rose another 10 feet. Graves took off for Haydenville and didn't stop until he reached the brass works.

(A) Silk mill was here (about 500 feet south of where Kellogg Road meets route 9).  
(B) Railroad tracks. (C) William Skinner's house, which was removed and rebuilt in Holyoke (now Wistariahurst).

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### SKINNERVILLE HOUSES PUSHED DOWNSTREAM

Several houses, including Thaddeus Bartlett's, pictured here, were thrown across the flat but later put back on their sites. Houses constructed with heavy timber frames, like post and beam, could be uprighted. Many are occupied today.

Thaddeus Bartlett was a farmer whose 2 sons and a daughter worked at the silk mill, while another son worked at the brass works in Haydenville.

*Historic Northampton*

*Go past the Brass Works (on your right) and park behind the Haydenville Congregational Church, on your left.*

MILL RIVER FLOOD  
STORY MAP

