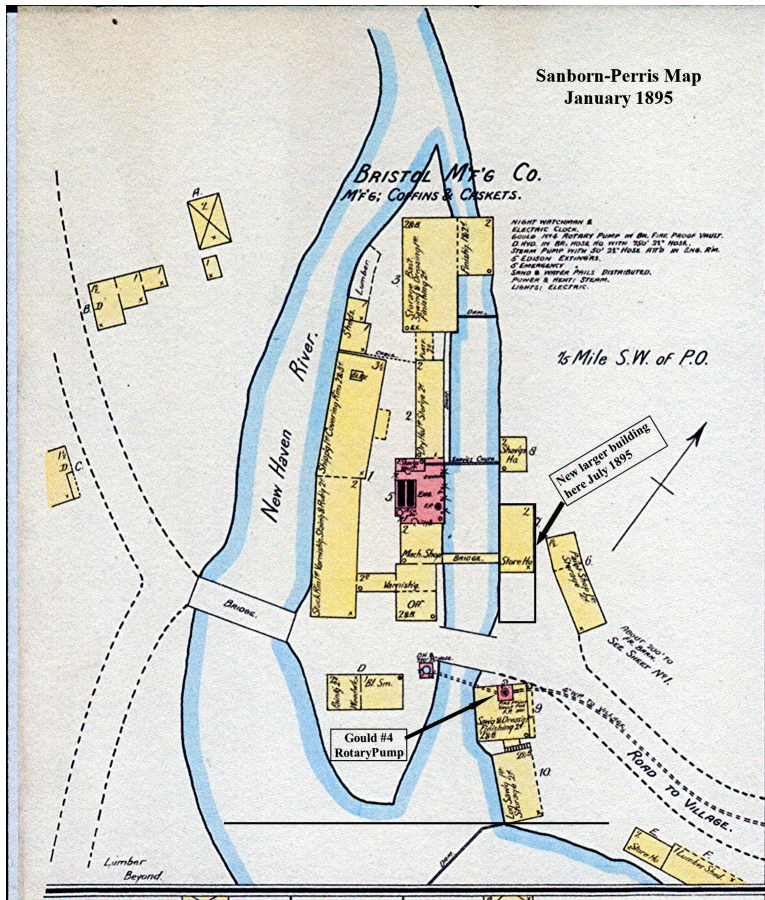
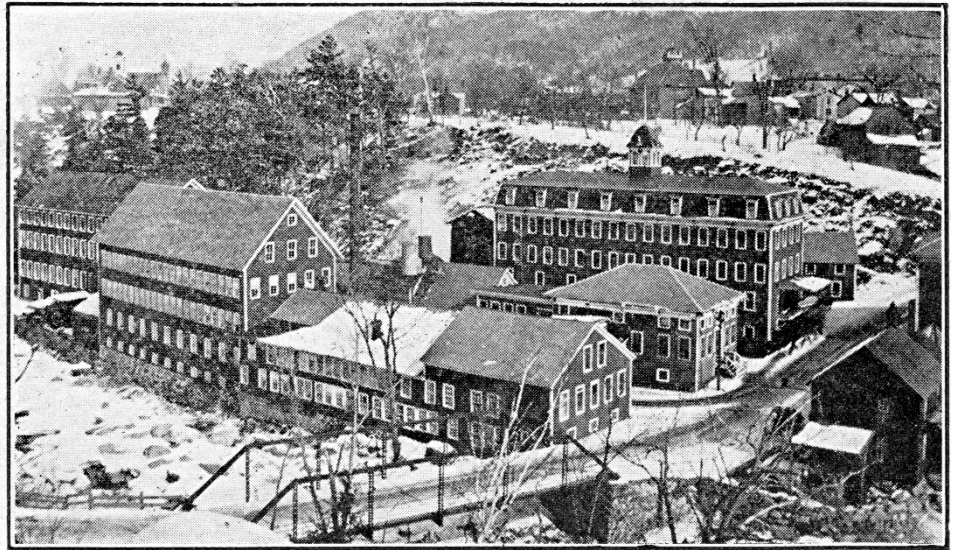


SECTION 1

The year is 1909. Before you, the massive buildings of the Bristol Manufacturing Company rise along the riverbank and hillside. It's just after 6pm, and men and women stream from the buildings, headed home after a 12-hour day at the casket factory. Their voices mingle with the clatter of hooves as a horse team trots across the bridge, pulling an empty sleigh after delivering logs to the mill yard. Bristol Manufacturing Company is in its heyday, employing 150 people to produce more than 20,000 coffins a year.



Though it may be hard to imagine now, this site buzzed with activity for 89 years, first as a sash and door factory, then for 70 years, as the Bristol Manufacturing Company coffin factory. Come walk through these woods and step into Bristol's past. Look carefully among the trees, and you'll see many stone foundations and other remnants of Bristol's biggest manufacturing industry.

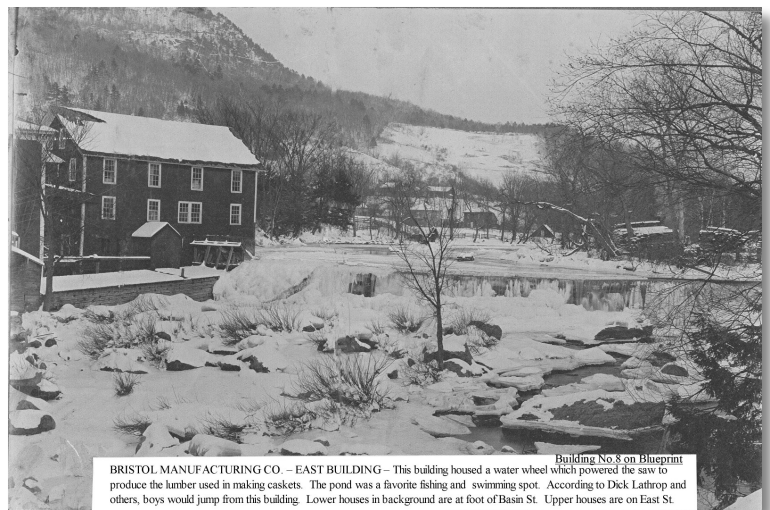
SECTION 2

Charred boiler room after a fire in 1901, looking southeast. Filled with flammables - from sawdust and lumber to varnishes - and constructed entirely of wood, the coffin factory met the threat of fire by forming its own fire company.



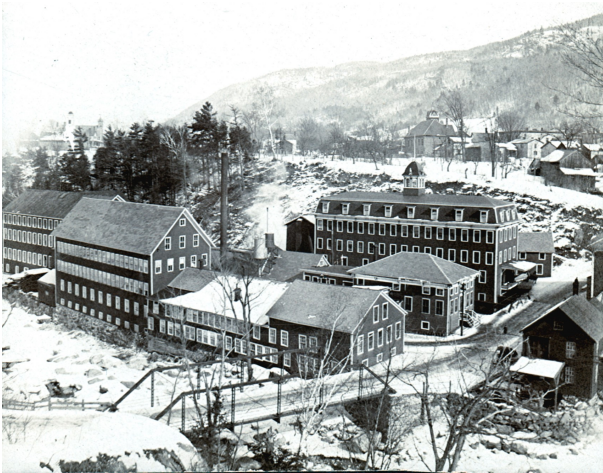
With fire an ever-present danger, the company took the precaution of constructing a bump-out in the office building (arrow) to house the safe. If fire swept through, the safe would fall outside the building.

Within this building, a water wheel powered the saw that cut logs into lumber for caskets. The low dam across the river maintained a steady supply of water for the wheel and formed a favorite community swimming hole.



SECTION 3

Factory employees, 1910. Bernard Bosworth, grandson of company co-founder David Bosworth, recalled “those whose whole lives were bound up in the factory, many of them literally so, since in the early days the hours ran from 6 to 6, six days a week.”



When you walked down South Street in the early 1900s, these were the first coffin factory buildings you encountered. Workers varnished and stored coffins in the building on the right.

Logs at the coffin factory, 1909. Since logs were delivered by sleigh, the factory needed to lay up a year's supply of wood during winter months - as much as 1-2 million board feet of logs.

Title: LOGS - HIGHER PRICES THAN EVER
At our Bristol Mill. At Smith Child and Co. Mill, Weybridge. At New Haven Junction Yard.

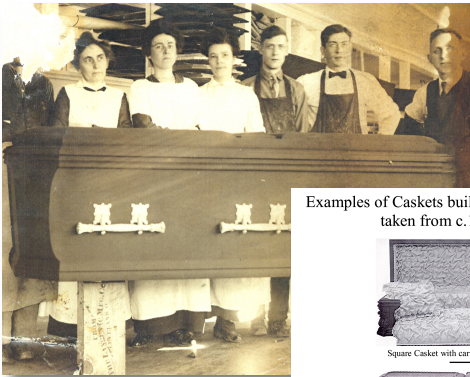
On all logs hauled to our Bristol Mill, we will pay toward the hauling cost, an additional 50 cents per thousand feet for each mile of haul in excess of five miles. Write for our Price Card.

BRISTOL MFG CO. Bristol, Vermont.

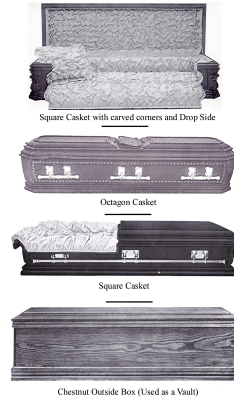


Bristol Mfg. Co. Logs rec'd in 1909 Measured & Piled by Edward Quinlan
Edmund/Edward Quinlan was Carol (Jacobs) Burbank's great-uncle, brother of her grandmother, Agnes (Quinlan) Beers, mother of Carol's mother Ruth (Beers) Jacobs.

SECTION 4



Examples of Caskets built at the Bristol Mfg. Co. taken from c.1910 Catalog



Beginnings and Endings

After floods destroyed the sash and door factory at this site in 1869, the owners quickly rebuilt and began manufacturing baby carriages and caskets, catering to the start and end of life. Endings proved more profitable. For the next 70 years, the Bristol Manufacturing Company produced finely crafted caskets of basswood, oak, birch, ash, butternut, poplar, and maple, reflecting the diversity of trees in nearby forests.

The Power of Water

Listen. You can hear the factory's lifeblood flowing strong. The New Haven River powered the company sawmill, turning thousands of logs into casket lumber each year. But the river's power carried danger too. Floods damaged factory buildings, as in this 1938 photo.



Casket sticking out window after 1938 Flood
South East corner of Building No. 1 on blueprint



Where did it all go?

In 1939, Bristol Manufacturing Company closed its door. A Rutland entrepreneur bought the buildings, aiming to re-purpose the factory to make wooden parts for airplanes during World War 2. These plans never launched. On June 12, 1947, fire tore through the neglected buildings, sending flames and smoke high above the village. Six of the nine buildings burned to the ground in just four hours.