

Mills on Dingmans Creek

Delaware Water Gap
National Recreation Area

National Park Service
Pennsylvania/New Jersey



The Creek

Dingmans Creek is approximately eight miles long and originates in Silver Lake, which is owned by a private club. A secondary source is Lake Nichercronk, where Judge Dingman maintained his woodland haunt during the summers of his retirement in the mid-19th century.

As it descends from the Pocono Plateau, Dingmans Creek creates beautiful waterfalls, the main ones being Factory, Fulmer, and Deer Leap Falls in Childs Recreation Site, and the spectacular Dingmans Falls which, at 130 feet, is the second highest waterfall in Pennsylvania.

Grist, lumber, and cider mills

Until the advent of the steam and gasoline engines, streams were the only source of power in the Pocono ravines. Dingmans Creek boasted a dozen mills at its peak.

The first gristmill, the Mollineaux Mill, was built about 1827 along the road leading to Dingmans Falls. The building burned down in 1899.

Among the other mills which have operated on Dingmans Creek are Dingman saw mill, the Dingman-Darragh gristmill, the Angle saw mill, the paper mill at Nycles Pond, and the Hazaldine saw mill.

The Adams saw mill, under the name of Beaver Dam Sawmill, was the last active mill on Dingmans Creek, and was destroyed by the flood of 1955. An engine-driven saw and cider mill also operated on the Old Milford Road where it crosses the creek.

The Wool Trade

About 1826 Joseph Brooks, a Welshman who had immigrated to Philadelphia, built a woolen mill of stone, 3-1/2 stories high. He employed about 80 workers.

His sheep, though, were devoured by wolves or died from eating poisonous sheep-laurel. Supplies, operatives, and materials such as

expensive raw wool, had to be brought in from Philadelphia, and the finished products shipped down to this city by wagons, a trip which took 10 days.

Brooks died in 1832 and the mill was abandoned. You can still see its ruins in Childs Recreation Site.

Tannery and Town



Pipe in the streambed of Dingmans Creek marked: 1908 RDW & Co.

In 1851, John Fulmer built a tannery up creek from Childs Recreation Site. He had three essential elements for success: running water from the creek, tannin from the bark of abundant hemlocks, and lye, which was plentiful in the Delaware riverbed. By 1853, the community boasted housing for the workers, a schoolhouse and a post office.

In 1866, the tannery was sold and soon after the business failed, the school closed, and the post office moved to a more active location, the town of Dingmans Choice.

However, the post office did not think this unusual town name was acceptable, and the name Dingmans Ferry was chosen instead. The name of the town persists to this day, even though no ferry has operated here since 1900.

In 1910, the Dingmans Ferry Water Company built a dam near the falls and piped the filtered creek water by gravity to 130 village homes. The company abandoned the project in 1930, and the 1955 flood washed out the dam. However, depending on creek conditions, you may still see remnants of the cast iron pipes in the creek bed downstream of the footbridge.