Mill Pond

Early attempts (c.1636) to harness the tide of the North Cove were thwarted; however, in 1643 the Town Council granted land and the entire cove to a group of proprietors, headed by Henry Simons, on the condition that they erect a grist mill powered by the tide. The town also promised that it wouldn't allow for any other mills to be erected provided the proprietors keep the mills functioning in perpetuity. Those grantees built up the natural causeway into a mill dam creating a mill pond, which when drained by the outgoing tide, provided the community with a source of tidal water power. The proprietors were also required to make a gate through the dam so that boats could enter the Mill Pond. The Mill Dam was constructed in the vicinity of present day Causeway Street, with an outlet from the pond at Mill Creek (Blackstone Street), which connected the North and Town Coves. Drawbridges were also built by the proprietors at North and Hanover Streets spanning the creek. Tide operated grist (grain flour), water and sawmills were built at various locations on the pond; and as early as 1770 there appears to have been a chocolate mill (cocoa from West Indies) at north mill site near the bend on current day Endicott Street.

In 1769, Boston’s selectmen determined that the heirs of the original grants had let the mills deteriorate; under threat of the town, the mill owners built a new mill and refurbished the others continuing to operate.