

# *Flett's carding mill now site for club*

by Joe O'Neill

NELSON/MIRAMICHI- The network of cross country ski trails on Repap's 600 acre Carding Mill Brook woodlot is interwoven with the 100+ years history of the wool trade that was an integral part of life in South Nelson.

The wool industry started in South Nelson in 1851 when two brothers, John and William Flett, built a carding mill, on a small stream which become known as Carding Mill Brook. The mill was the only carding mill in northeastern New Brunswick. Wool was cleaned and carded at the mill

then local women spun the carded wool into yarn at their homes. Farmers welcomed the carding mill as they got rid of a time consuming job. The Fletts collected raw wool for the mill from farms throughout northeastern New Brunswick.

Thomas Ambrose Brown of Nova Scotia began running the mill in 1852. His grandson, Harry Brown started working at the mill in 1904 and took over the running of it in 1908 after his grandfather's accidental death.

Fletts operated the carding mill at the brook site until 1932 when Brown bought the mill and

relocated it a little farther up river on the South Nelson Road. Spinning wheels were added to the new carding mill to produce yarn in skeins on site. The capacity of the mill was increased by 40% to 350 pounds a day during World War II so that local women could knit thousands of socks, mitts, sweaters, scarves, etc. for the Canadian Armed Forces and for refugee children. Brown expanded the mill in 1953 and continued to operate it until he closed it in 1969.

*(Joe O'Neill former director of Repap)*