

Great Dam Remembrance Committee

*Seeking public input on how to mitigate the loss of the
Great Dam after it is removed.*

Committee members and Section 106 consulting parties:

Bill Jordan, Chair

Pam Gjettum, Exeter Historic District Commission

Dick Huber, Exeter River Study Committee

John Merckle, Exeter Heritage Commission

Barbara Rimkunas, Exeter Historical Society

Donald Robie, Exeter Investment Co.

Brian Griset, Private Citizen

Email your suggestions to:

exeterdam106@gmail.com

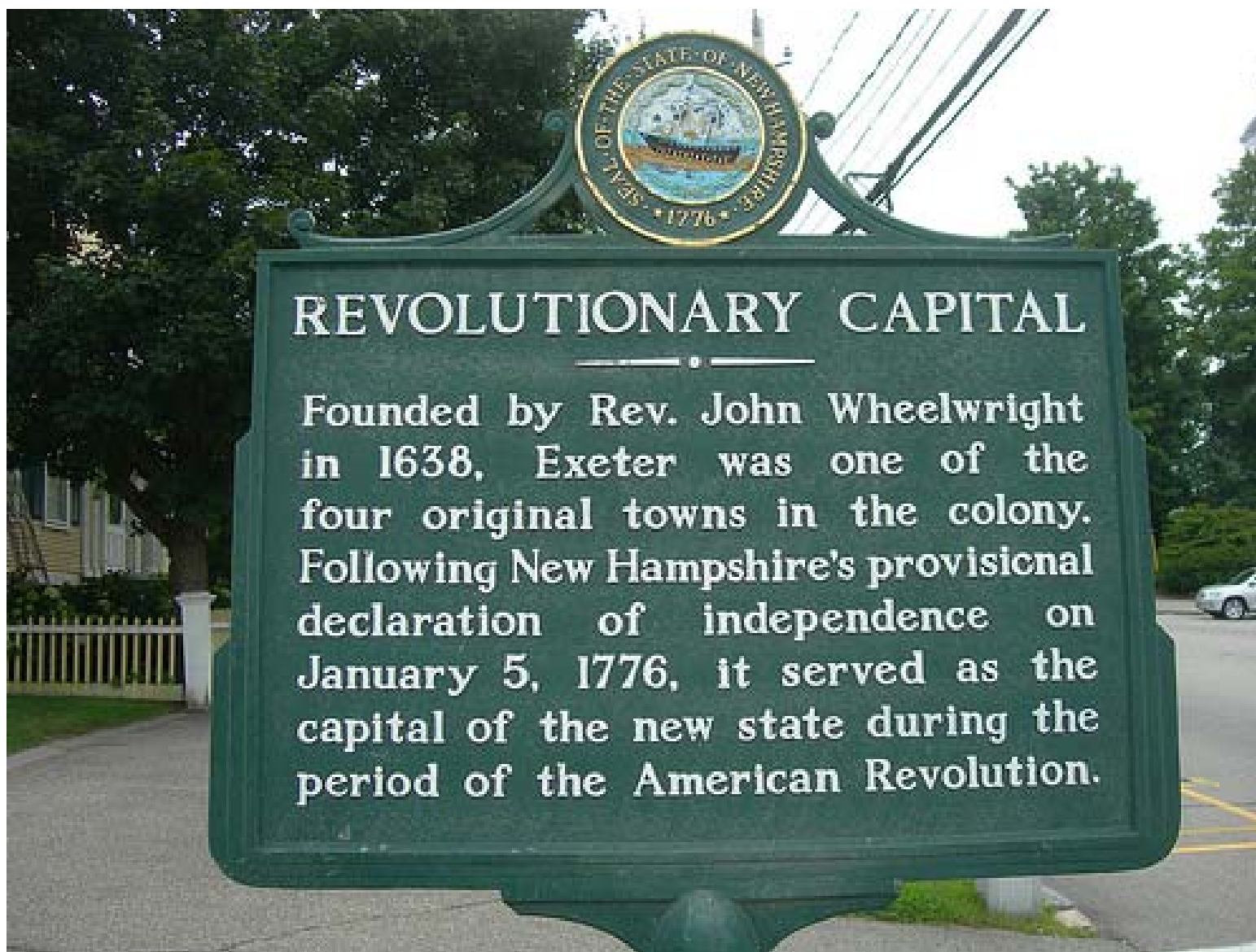
Exeter, before . . .



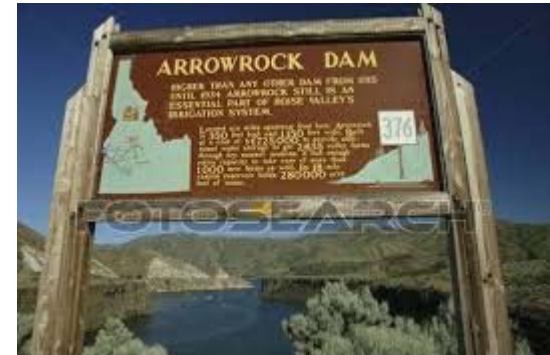
... and after dam removal



Signage



Different kinds of signs



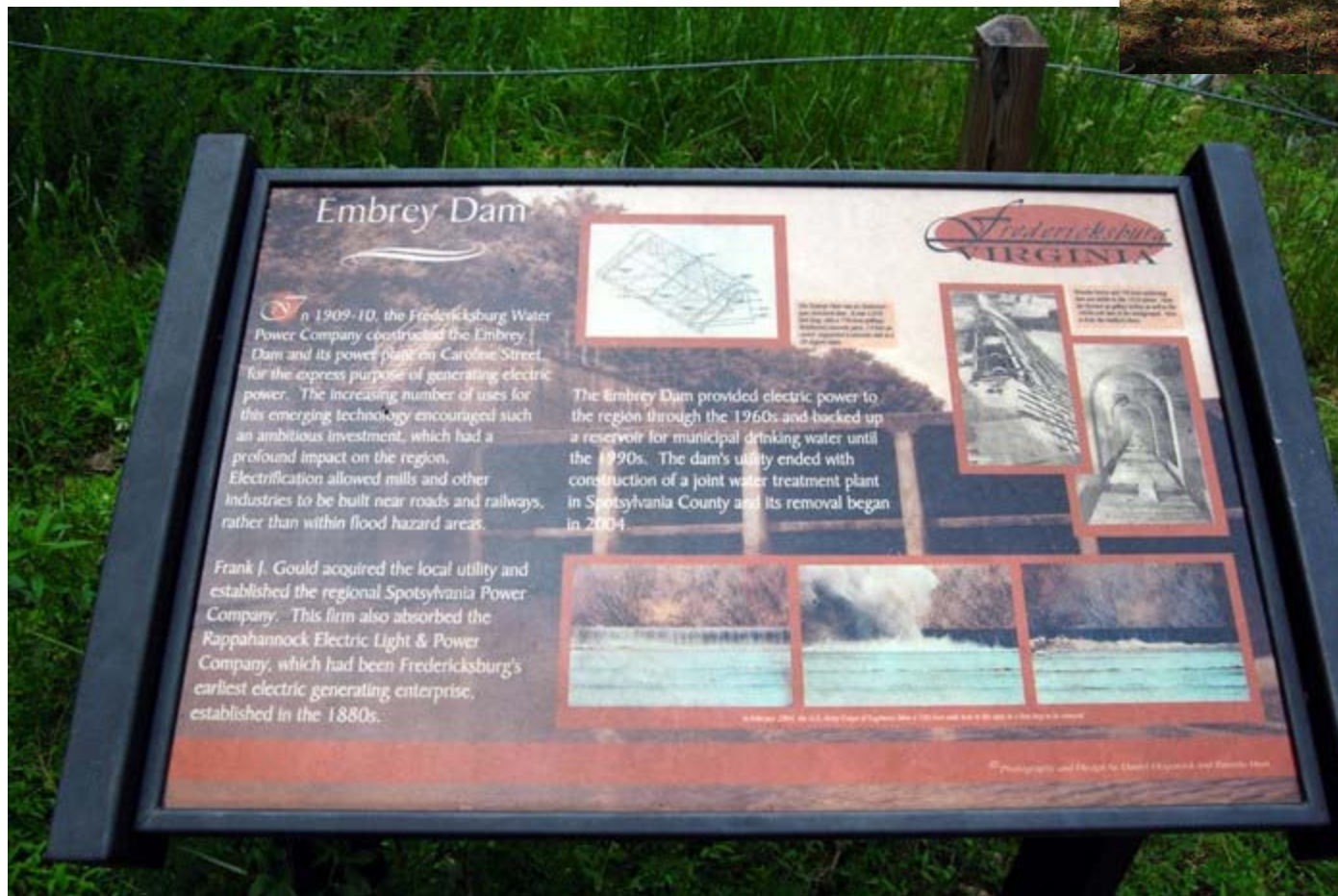
u15759019 fotossearch.com

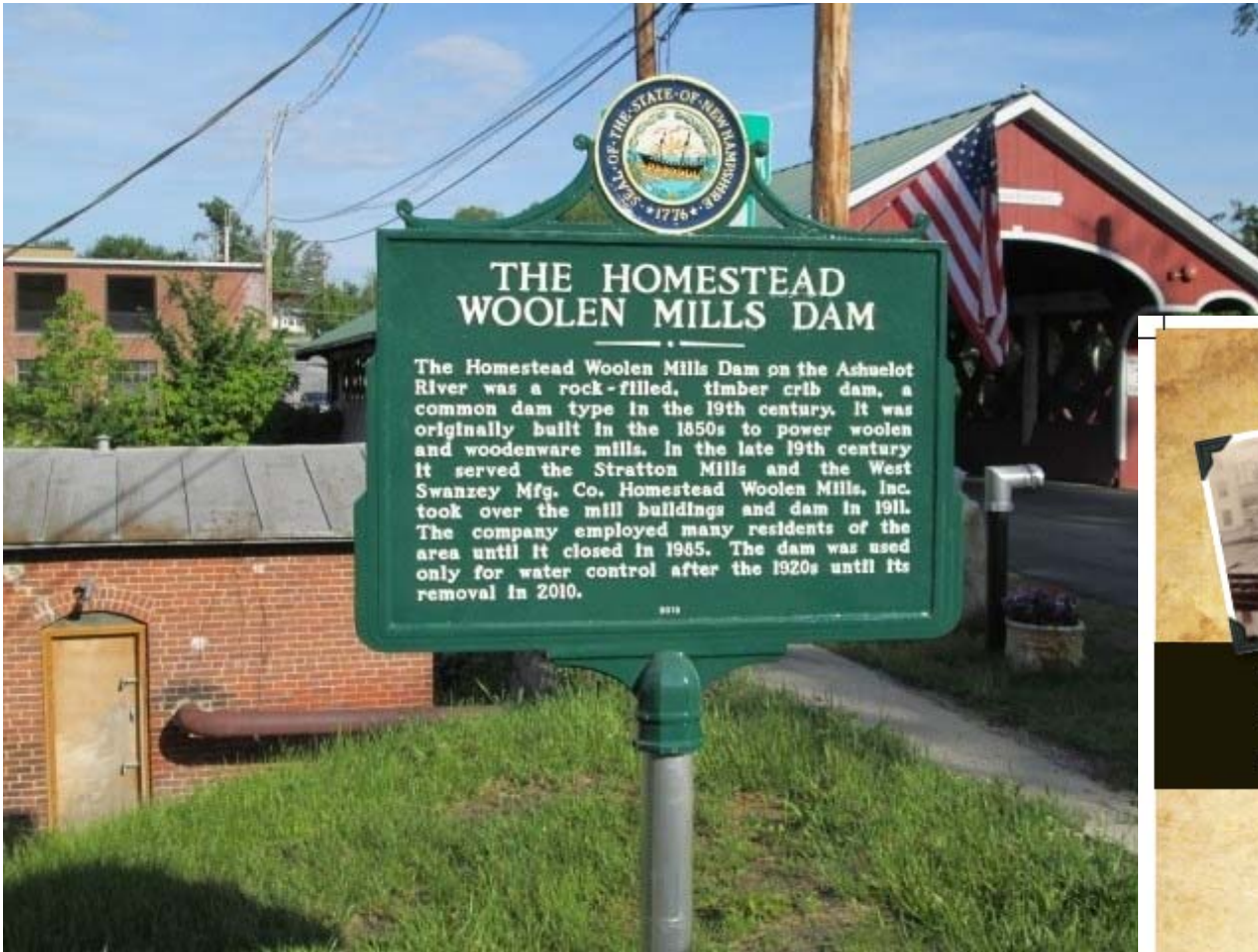


Panels




Panel closeup





Public education




Homestead Woolen Mills Dam ca. 1880

West Swansey Village Historic District Walking Tour

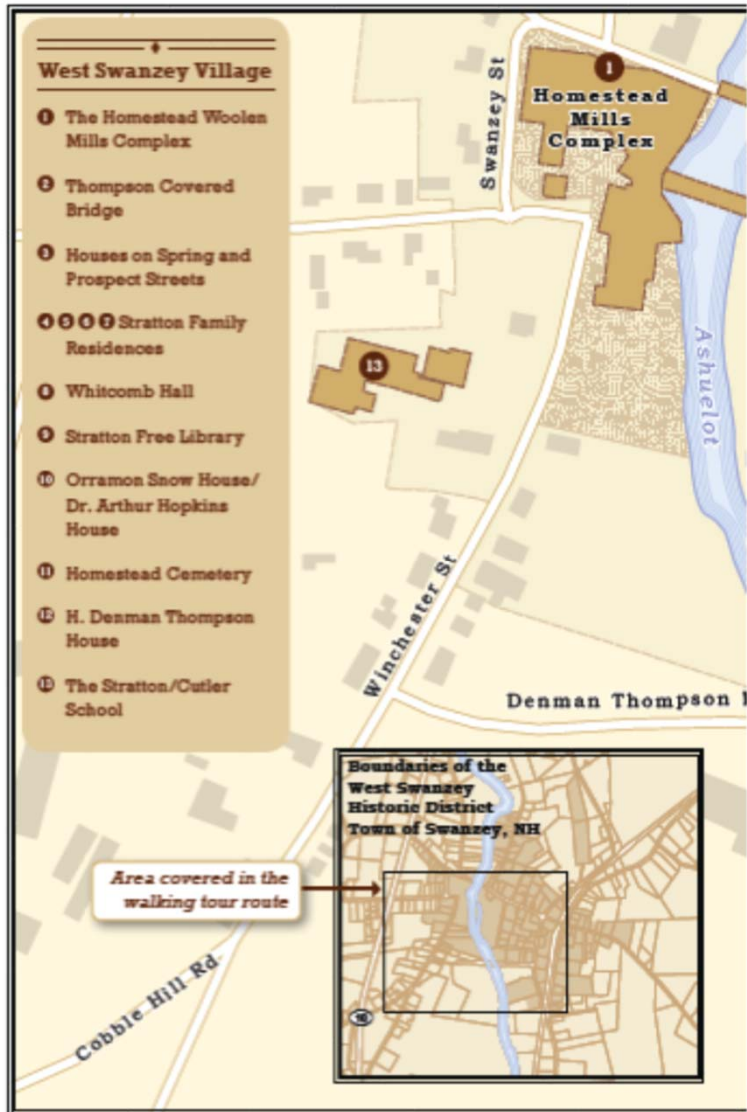
West Swansey, New Hampshire

This walking tour brochure highlights important places and people in the West Swansey Historic District, a mill village whose history and intact appearance make it eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Developing in the 18th century around the falls in the Ashuelot River, the small village grew and prospered as the river was dammed, enabling mills of various kinds to tap the energy potential of the 55-mile long river. Manufacturing flourished in the 19th and 20th centuries, as larger operations in woodworking and textiles took advantage not only of the mill dam, but eventually of steam power, railroad transportation, and finally electrification. The closure of the last and largest mill, Homestead Woolen Mills, in 1985, left the Homestead Dam – itself the last timber-crib dam on the Ashuelot – without purpose and increasingly vulnerable to river flooding. After a formal review process, the dam was removed in 2010. This brochure is one of several measures taken to document the context in which West Swansey evolved.



West Swanze Village

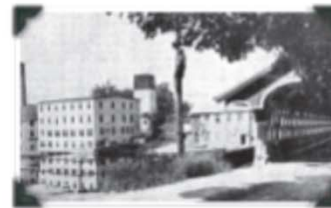
- 1 The Homestead Woolen Mills Complex
- 2 Thompson Covered Bridge
- 3 Houses on Spring and Prospect Streets
- 4 4 4 Stratton Family Residences
- 5 Whitcomb Hall
- 6 Stratton Free Library
- 7 Orramon Snow House/ Dr. Arthur Hopkins House
- 8 Homestead Cemetery
- 9 H. Denman Thompson House
- 10 The Stratton/Cutler School



By the early 20th century, manufacturing eclipsed agriculture and lumbering as an economic driver in the community. Difficult economic times forced the closure of most of the manufacturers in the area by the 1930s, but West Swanze managed to maintain a manufacturing economy until the closure of the Homestead Woolen Mills in 1988. This company, founded in 1911 in the former

mills of the West Swanze Manufacturing Company, employed many of the residents of West Swanze and the surrounding area. Today, West Swanze is primarily a residential community with a number of small-scale commercial and industrial operations in the former Homestead Woolen Mills buildings and on the outskirts of the village.

Points of Interest



1 Homestead Mills Complex



2 Thompson Covered Bridge

1 The Homestead Woolen Mills Complex

The complex on the west side of the Ashuelot River includes the Stratton Woolen Mill (1866), the Stratton Woolen Company Brick Mill (1868) and the South Mill (ca. 1950), as well as several special function buildings: a boiler house (ca. 1930), a pre 1913 dye house, a picker house (ca. 1930), and a wool storage building (1924-1932). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the mill was used for finishing, weaving, carding, and spinning wool, but by 1924, it was used only for finishing and storage. The complex was leased to Henry W. Brown in 1911, who established the Homestead Woolen Mills here.

2 Thompson Covered Bridge

(NH #5 bridge on the Covered Bridge Tour of Southwest NH and world-wide # 29-03-04)

Swanze carpenter Zadoc Taft supervised the construction of the West Swanze (Thompson) Covered Bridge in 1832 to replace an earlier bridge built in 1774. The superstructure of the bridge has a lattice truss system developed by Ithiel Town, and originally had suspended pedestrian walkways on both sides of the bridge structure. The Thompson Covered Bridge was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 for its significant design and its role as a vital transportation link for the village.

Documentation



Interpretive park



Partial preservation



Briggsville Dam, from Rte 8



Outlet gear works (to be preserved in situ)

Headworks/Abutment from Great Bridge



From String Bridge



From Founders' Park



Penstock Gate Gearworks



Wooden Bulkhead/Trash Rack



- **Signage**
 - NH Historical Highway Marker
 - Other types of signs
 - Panels with illustrations and more explanation
- **Public Education**
 - A public display in a public place.
 - A narrative history of dams in the Historic District going back to 1640.
 - Walking tour
 - A website
- **Documentation**
 - Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) by VHB
 - Photography and videography; aerial photographs.
 - Archiving
- **Preservation of portions of the structure.**
 - Penstock, headworks, and other artifacts of the dam.
 - Leave in place, or
 - Use artifacts from the structure as part of memorial exhibit.
- **Cultural preservation: restore centrality of River to the town**
 - Extend Squamscott boardwalk to Great Bridge
 - Improve access to the River from Library, String/Great Bridges for fishing, other uses.
 - Clean up and riverbank and minimize visual obstruction of the river.
- **Other?**

Steps toward choice of a memorial

