

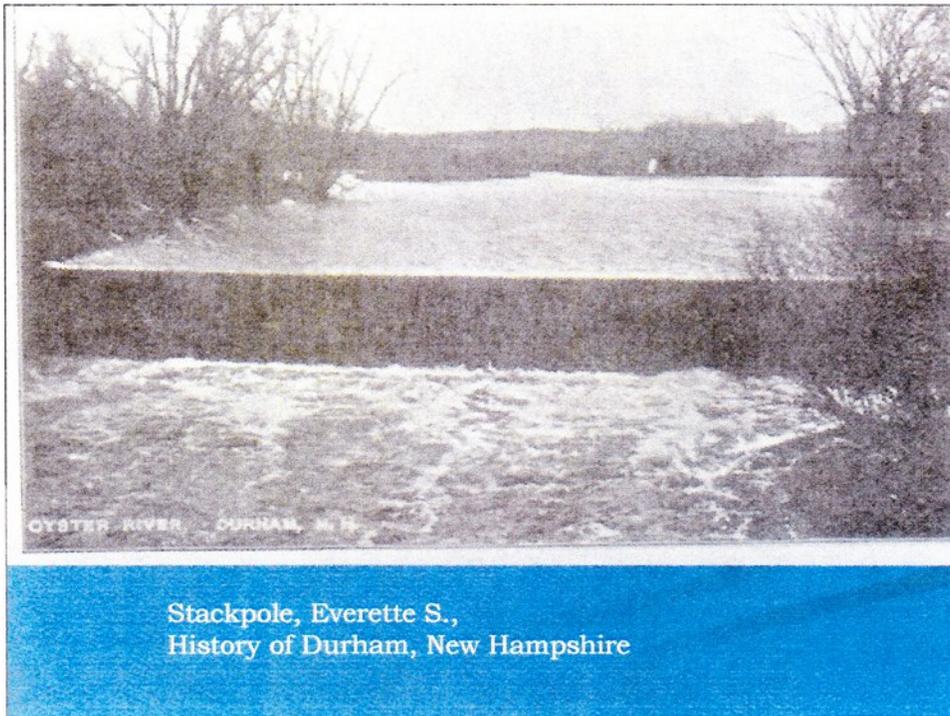
Anyone ..who has walked , jogged, ridden a bike or driven down Rte 108 Newmarket Rd has seen the water tumbling over the historic Mill Pond dam.

The dam with the Mill Pond that it creates, is a "living" record Of over 3 centuries of history for the Town of Durham

The Dam marks the boundary between the fresh waters of the Oyster River and the brackish waters of the Great Bay

The dam is located on the lower falls of the Oyster River and lies within the HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places recognized for architecture and engineering.



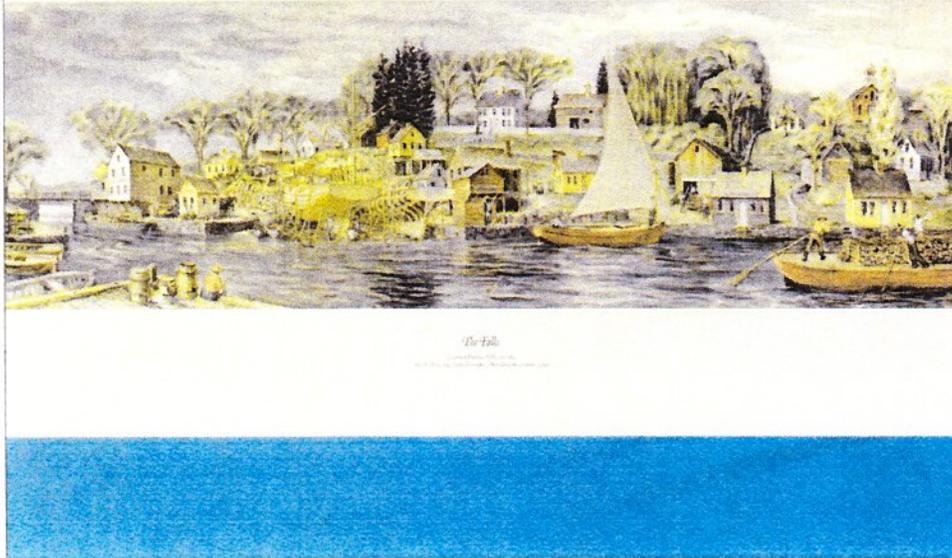
In 1649, the first water privilege was granted to Valentine Hill
He built the first timber dam and mill at the Falls

His homestead (now 3 Chimneys and Frost Sawyer Tavern) is the
oldest house in Durham
and one of the oldest buildings in New Hampshire.

It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places,

There were a series of timber dams at this site until 1912.

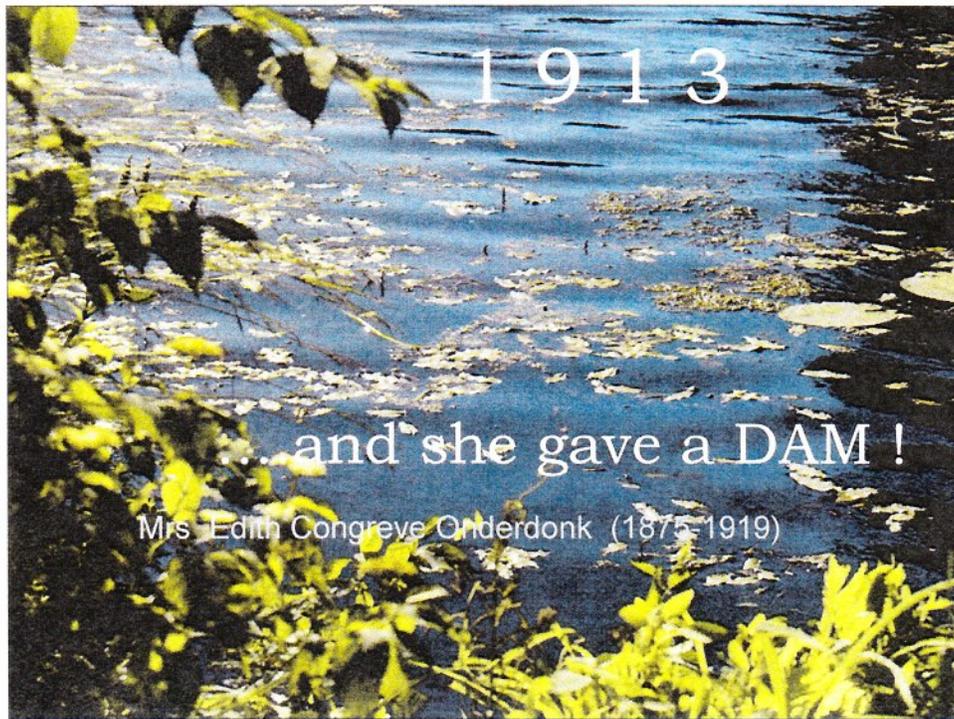
c.1812 – John Hatch painting THE FALLS



Shipbuilding was concentrated below the Falls in the Oyster River

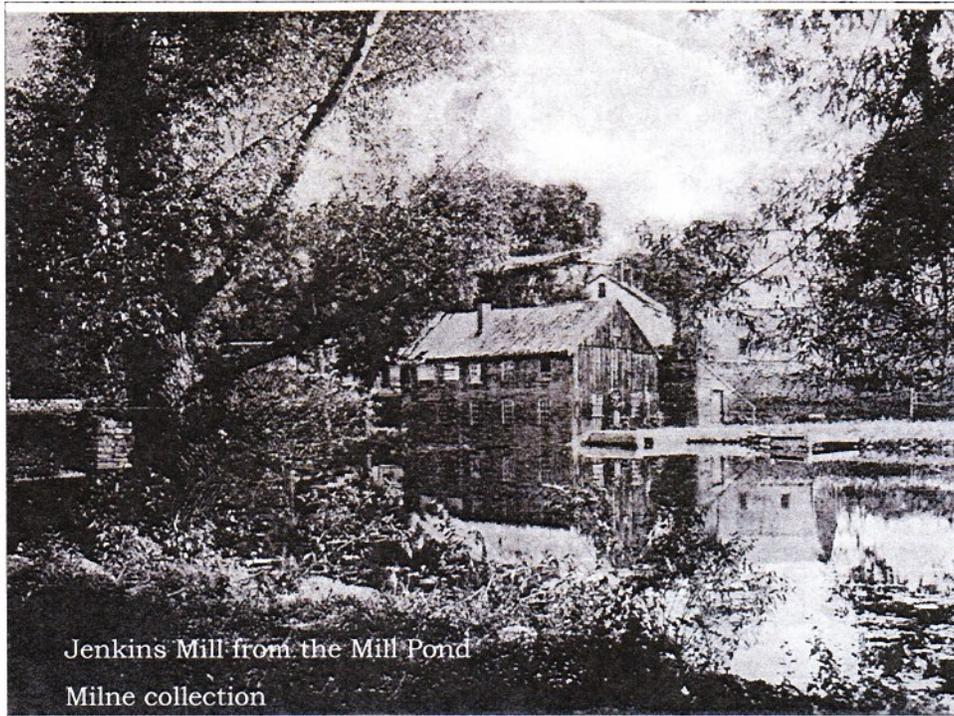
Durham played an important role in the Port of Portsmouth
part of the Piscataqua River Basin

Shipping was the most advanced delivery system in the world.
The last of the boats were built in 1829



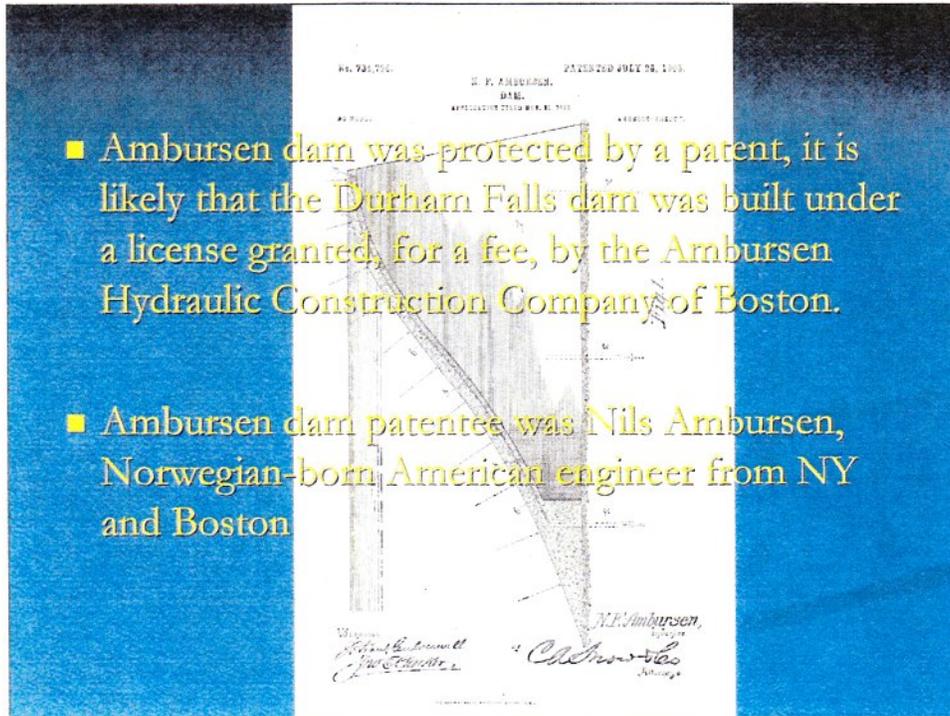
Mrs. Edith Congreve Onderdonk (1875-1919)

gave the funds to build the Mill Pond/Oyster River dam
to maintain the beauty of the Mill Pond



The dam supplied water power to the adjacent Jenkins Mill.

The Jenkins Mill was acquired before 1800 and continued in operation for a variety of uses through the early twentieth century.[1]



There are 5000 dams in NH

There are only 7 known intact examples of concrete buttress-type of Ambursen dams.

The Durham Falls Dam is the earliest yet identified in New Hampshire

The Oyster River Dam 1913 Construction Photos



Photos from an album
from the Edith Onderdonk estate
(c) Durham Historic Association

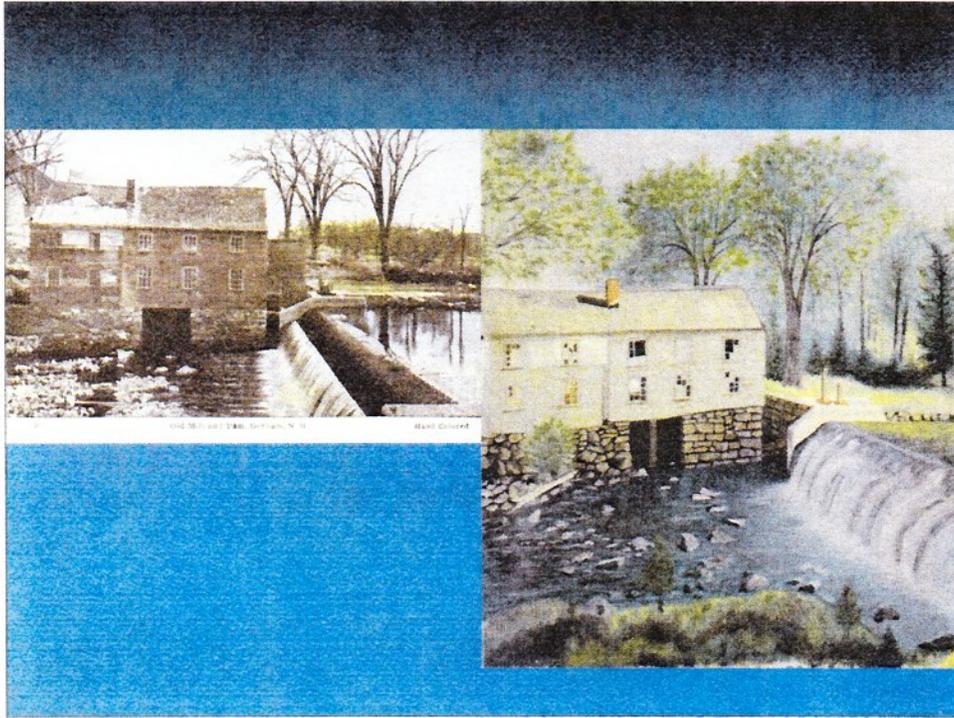
The engineer of record for the dam was Professor Charles Elbert Hewitt, the 1st head of the Dept of EE at the nearby NH College of Ag and the Mechanic Arts, now the University of New Hampshire.

The dam was built by Daniel Chesley of Durham, a noted stonemason and contractor, who pioneered in the use of concrete in this area.

The Durham Falls Dam measures 140 feet wide and is 10 feet high.

It drains an area of some 20 sq mi.

The dam impounds the MillPond, approximately 24 acres of surface area



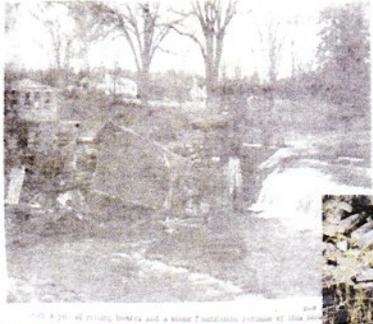
The historic Jenkins Mill and the Mill Pond dam were the subjects of artistic photographs, post cards, and artwork during the first half of the twentieth century.

Landmark Victim of Time, Elements

DURHAM, April 26—The old Jenkins Mill, one of the last remaining pieces of old Durham's commercial activity, has joined the many historic landmarks which due to one have disappeared, the victims of rotting time. The Mill, which stood on the south side of the Oyster River Park, was a picturesque reminder of an almost forgotten era when Durham was a promising trading and industrial center.

Last year the roof of the mill began to sag dangerously, and an attempt to repair it was made. But the side of the building had rotted, and it was impossible to save the structure from collapse.

Under the weight of the winter snow the roof sagged more and more, and finally collapsed, the whole weakened structure crumbled to the floor of spring winds and rain and fell into the river which had supplied it with power for so many years.



dry-laid stone foundation south end of the dam



In 1955,
it was reported by a neighbor listening to the radio,
Jackie Robinson hit a home run in the World Series
Dodgers beat the Yankees
and the Jenkins Mill fell in the River

1975

Mill Pond Project Progressing Well



DURHAM — The level of work on the new dam project for the Mill Pond has been slightly over the past few weeks, but it is being controlled so that the water will not overflow into the river. The project is progressing well, according to Durham Superintendent of Public Works George Crumley. The project is moving along well. Construction and repairs will continue this fall and winter as long as weather permits. It would seem likely, however, according to Crumley, that the project will be delayed because of cold weather and next spring.

The town approved that \$27,000 be expended for the purpose of repairing the dam at the March 1975 Town Meeting. At the 1974 Durham Town Meeting, the town approved the expenditure of an additional \$200,000 to be used to reconstruct a fish ladder at the dam site.

In 1975 the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department planned and designed a fish ladder for the Durham site. The design was approved by the Fish and Game Department. The project is progressing well, according to Durham Superintendent of Public Works George Crumley. The project is moving along well. Construction and repairs will continue this fall and winter as long as weather permits. It would seem likely, however, according to Crumley, that the project will be delayed because of cold weather and next spring.

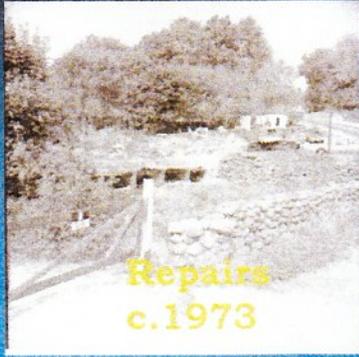
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"The project's going well," according to Durham Superintendent of Public Works George Crumley. Repair of the Mill Pond dam and construction of a fish ladder and holding pen at right were begun late this summer and, weather

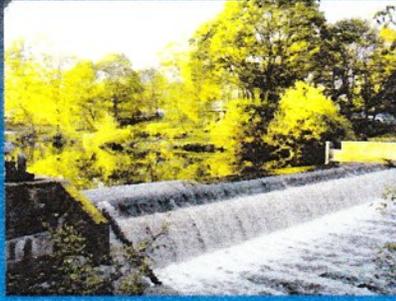
permitting, may be completed some time this late fall or this winter. In all likelihood, however, construction will be delayed until next spring.

In 1975 the town together with NH Fish and Game repaired the dam and built a fish ladder. The cost to the town was \$27,000

A local newspaper reported "The repairs being made to the Mill Pond dam were intended to preserve one of Durham's most cherished landmarks".



Repairs
c.1973



2003





The top of the fish ladder structure bears a bronze tablet indicating that the fish-way was constructed by the NH Fish and Game Department in cooperation with the Town of Durham and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Mounted at the head of the fish ladder is a second bronze tablet that was undoubtedly affixed to an original abutment of the dam before fish passage was provided in 1975. The tablet reads:

This dam was erected
By Mrs. Edith Onderdonk
in memory of her father
Hamilton Smith
—1913—
Charles Elbert Hewitt, engineer
D. Chesley & Co., contractors