

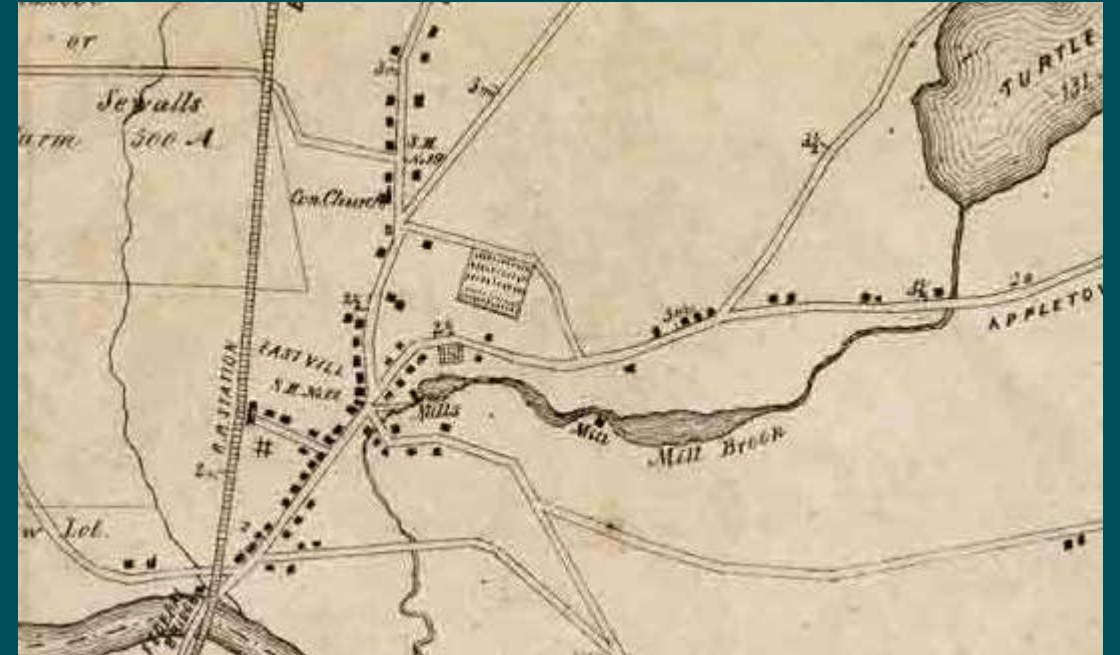
HISTORIC MILL DISTRICT

This area was one of the historic mill districts of Concord. From the mid 1700s until the late 1800s, this site housed a variety of water-powered mills. The earliest mills included a sawmill, a blacksmith shop, a horse-drawn carriage axel shop which provided axles for the Lewis and Downing Carriage shop, and a fulling mill which made woolen cloth.

The first mill on the site was a sawmill. A key piece of the metal equipment soon broke and since the nearest blacksmith was in Haverhill, Massachusetts, the mill went unused for quite a while. Eventually, lumber was needed for housing in the expanding settlement. A local man, Isaac Eastman, was hired as the Town's first blacksmith to repair the saw to meet this demand. He was promised 100 acres of nearby land with the stipulation that he work for 10 years as the Town's blacksmith.

Historic records indicate that the 1850s era mills included a sawmill, a plaster lath mill, and a carding mill which prepared wool for spinning.

The sawmill located adjacent to the east end of the dam was likely powered by a horizontal turbine. The foundation of an "over-the-top" water wheel-powered mill can be found on the south side of the trail and likely powered the plaster lath mill. A few hand set stones can be found along the stream just below the bridge and is most likely the site of the other mills. The falls below the dam were originally known as Trumball Falls and provided enough drop in elevation to support water-powered mills until technology allowed more efficient water-powered mills to be built on the area's larger rivers.



From the 1855 Map of the City of Concord, S.C. Badger



From the 1858 Map of Merrimack County, H.F. Walling



Remnants of the earthen dam and two of the water-operated mills

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Hoit Road Marsh Wildlife Management Area

Hoit Road Marsh was acquired in 1972 by the State of New Hampshire Fish and Game Department as a wildlife management area to create habitat for water fowl.

This Wildlife Management Area consists of a 101-acre marsh and adjacent upland. The marsh is maintained by a small man-made dam on Hackett Brook that was constructed by Fish & Game in 1972.

The marsh has a diversity of habitat types, including emergent, deepwater and scrub/shrub vegetation. The upland habitat surrounding the marsh is forested, and consists of mixed hardwood and softwood stands, as well as an old pasture reverting to forest.

During the fall, visitors can see American black ducks, mallards, green-winged teal and Canada geese. In the spring and early summer, wood ducks and hooded mergansers use the wood duck nest boxes. Look for wading birds, such as green and great blue herons, along the marsh edges. Tree swallows, belted kingfishers and common yellowthroats are abundant in the summer. On the uplands, listen for ovenbirds and veery. You may also see moose, deer, otters and beavers. The marsh has a limited warm-water fishery that includes pickerel and horned pout (or brown bullhead).



Photos courtesy of Sandra L. Morrison

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INTERPRETIVE STOP

Mill Brook Overlook and Brickyard

Mill Brook, the stream flowing through this marsh, was once known as Turtle Brook (because it flows from Turtle Pond) and also Eastman Brook after the Eastman family, one of the early settlers of East Concord. This marsh was formerly a mill pond known as Cate's Pond when the mills were in operation.

A brickyard was located across the brook and operated throughout the 1800's. The clay bricks were arranged into beehive-shaped ovens and as the bricks were fired, the bricks on the inside of the oven would come out darker than the ones on the outside of the oven. This is why you often see different colored bricks in old chimneys. In the early 1890's, this brickyard supplied bricks for the construction of the Page Belting building located on Commercial Street.

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INTERPRETIVE STOP

John Hoyt's Tavern

This is the site of John Hoyt's tavern which operated from 1780 to 1805. It was one of the popular stopping places for stage coaches, sleighs, and ox teams traveling through this area.

Historical records claim that this tavern had a very large beehive oven that easily supplied bread and cooked meats to patrons.

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INTERPRETIVE STOP

Cellar Hole

This fieldstone cellar hole was the foundation to a colonial era farmhouse that was occupied by David Sargent and his family in the 1850's. The farmhouse was abandoned around 1900.

One of the reasons this area was originally settled upon was for the nearby source of marsh grass which supplied a highly nutritious source of hay for cattle until the forests could be cleared for pastures and hayfields.

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INTERPRETIVE STOP

Apple Orchard

Look down the hill and you will notice a few apple trees in the field. These trees were once part of a larger orchard that occupied this slope. The orchard was harvested by the many occupants of the land throughout the years.

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INTERPRETIVE STOP

Hackett Brook Dam

This small concrete and fieldstone dam was used to regulate the water level on Hackett Brook to provide grazing cattle a regular supply of drinking water.

Notice that there is barbed wire around the property. The barbed wire tells us that this area was formerly used as a cow pasture. Sheep pastures did not use barbed wire as the wool would get caught in the barbs.

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INTERPRETIVE STOP

Ice House or Root Cellar

The structure in the side of the little knoll is not common for the area. It is believed to have been an ice house for ice taken from the former pond across the road. Another theory is that that it was a root cellar for Hoyt's Tavern. The root cellar may have been located here as the area around the old tavern site is quite flat, which does not allow for a dry underground food storage area.

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INTERPRETIVE STOP

Glacial Erratic

A glacial erratic is a piece of rock that differs from the size and type of rock native to this area. "Erratics" take their name from the Latin word *errare* (to wander), because they were carried by glacial ice often over very long distances.

This erratic was carried here during the last ice age when glaciers covered this land with ice a mile high. This rock was picked up by the moving ice and left here when the glacier started to recede.

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INTERPRETIVE STOP

Beaver Pond Cycle

Beavers build a dam to flood the lowlands along a stream, allowing them to swim to transport their food supply of twigs and bark. Their preferred tree species are Aspen and Basswood. Staying in the water also protects them from terrestrial predators. Eventually, the food supply is depleted and the beaver abandon the pond. The dam starts to break down due to the lack of maintenance, exposing a nutrient rich floodplain as the pond drains. As the site dries out, early successional tree species start to return. As those trees mature, a new food supply is created, eventually attracting new families of beavers, often building a new dam on the site of the previous dam. Beaver ponds also create habitat for many other wildlife species such as herons, ducks, ospreys, muskrat, mink, fish, frogs and turtles.

Many of the early settlers depended on the marsh grass found growing in the dried out beaver ponds to feed their livestock until the uplands could be cleared for hayfields and pastures.

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Lower Trail

Vista Way Trailhead
on
Shaker Road



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