

UNION POND

HISTORY HIKE

Sponsored by the Manchester Historical Society, with Susan & Cynthia Barlow, hike leaders
 The Union Village Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places

More info at www.manchesterhistory.org

Union Pond was created by damming up the Hockanum River. Mills in the area led to the growth of two communities: “Oakland” and “Union Village,” both of which existed long before Manchester became incorporated as a town in 1823. Today’s walk goes past the former Oakland Paper mills (also known as Hudson Paper Mills), the Union Cotton Mills, and through Union Village, the “first viable industrial community in Manchester, historically significant as the embodiment of the development of textile and paper manufacturing in central Connecticut. Evolving from a pre-industrial mill site into a ‘company town’ by the mid-nineteenth century, it flourished into the first half of the twentieth century as an ethnically and industrially diverse working-class village.” (From the nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places). Sources of more information, available at online used book sites and at public libraries:

A New England Pattern, the History of Manchester, Connecticut, by William E. Buckley, 1973, Pequot Press.

History of Manchester Connecticut, by Mathias Spiess and Percy Bidwell, 1923, available in PDF at our web site www.manchesterhistory.org

Drawing: “Hurlbert” paper mill, 1880, also known as Hudson mill, Oakland mills, established 1784 by Butler and Hudson, operated under various owners and through various reorganizations. The mills manufactured high-quality papers, including bank-note paper and all the post-card paper for the U.S. government. In 1899, the American Writing Paper Company, an early conglomerate, bought the Oakland Mill, and replaced former wooden buildings with brick. Like many businesses, the paper mills suffered financially during the Depression, and went out of business in 1933. Dexter Company of Windsor Locks, bought the mills and processed pulp there for a while.



Other businesses have used the buildings since then: Raybestos, Conyers (cement casting), and a recycling center.



Overview of Today’s Hike

★ Indicates Union Dam. *Courtesy of Mapquest*

Union Cotton mill shipping label, courtesy of Joe Tully.

These mills were founded by Samuel Pitkin & company in 1794, & taken over by Watkinsons in 1819. They were located downstream of the large dam at Union St., a dam built to impound the Hockanum River for water power.

