



Manchester Urban Ponds Restoration Program

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The History of Crystal Lake

“For years a popular resort for swimmers the lakefront has experienced an annual increase in the numbers of visitors and last summer soldiers from the Manchester Air Base taxed the facilities.” (Union Leader, 1942)

Crystal Lake was historically known as Skenker’s Pond and later as Mosquito Pond. In 1919, the City of Manchester created a municipal bathing area on 19 acres at the pond’s north end. This consisted of a bath house and picnic grounds near the beach (Connor, et. al., 1985). This area was used for city-sponsored swim meets in the 1920’s for Manchester children ((Manchester Park, Common and Playground Comm., 1929). Due to the area’s popularity, “the accommodations at Crystal Lake (were) entirely inadequate, and the bathhouse (needed to) be enlarged.” (Manchester Park, Common and Playground Comm., 1928). A new bathhouse with modern improvements for an estimated 1,500 bathers was constructed and the beach was extended in 1942 by the Works Progress Administration (Union Leader, 1942). In 1987, the fieldstone-constructed bathhouse underwent a renovation sponsored by the City Parks and Recreation Department (Union Leader, 1987) and still stands at the site today.



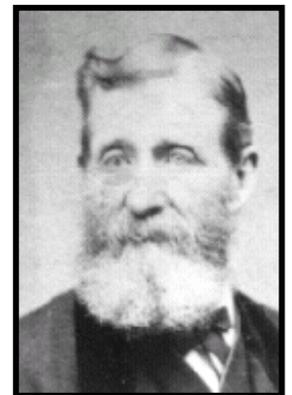
Crystal Lake Beach (1920s).

“The Hermit of Mosquito Pond”



Charles Lambert at Crystal Lake. Photo: History and Genealogy of Manchester, Hillsborough County NH

A local story tells of a man known as “the hermit of Mosquito Pond” who lived self-sufficiently near Crystal Lake. Charles Alan Lambert came to Manchester in the 1840’s and after a number of heartbreaks retreated to the woods to live a life of quiet solitude. He purchase approximately 40 acres near Crystal Lake and built his own hut using logs and old lumber that remained on the property from prior uses. He grew most of his own food and traded with local apothecaries with his home-grown herbs. Over the years his hermit lifestyle made him into a kind of local celebrity, and he became the object of many a curiosity seeker. In spite of his choice of a reclusive life, hundreds of people would visit him in the summer months (Perreault, 1984).



the last two years of his life with the Sisters of Mercy at the House of St. John for aged men. He past away in 1914 and his body now lies in St. Joseph’s Cemetery marked by a plain white tombstone, inscribed “The Hermit” (Perreault, 1984).