



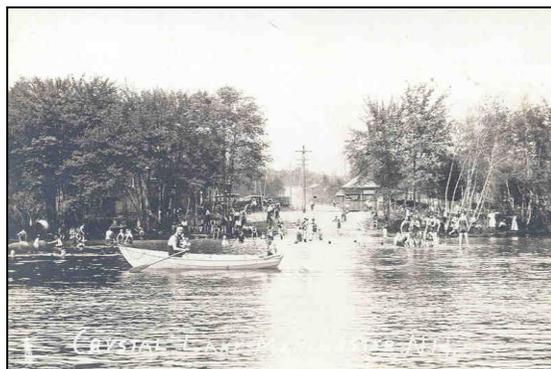
Manchester Urban Ponds Restoration Program

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The History of Crystal Lake

Crystal Lake was historically known as Skenker's Pond and later as Mosquito Pond. In 1919, the City of Manchester created a public swimming area at the lake's north end. This consisted of a bathhouse and picnic grounds near the beach (Connor, et. al., 1985). This area was also used for city-sponsored swim meets in the 1920's (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 pavilion with modern improvements for an estimated 1,500 people was constructed and the beach was extended in 1942 by the Works Progress Administration (Union Leader, 1942). And in 1987, the fieldstone-constructed pavilion 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.
Manchester Historic Association photograph.

"The Hermit of Mosquito Pond"

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 purchased 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). Mr. Lambert lived at his homestead for over 60 years, spending the last two years of his life with the Sisters of Mercy at the House of St. John for aged men. He died in 1914 and his lies in St. Joseph's Cemetery marked by a plain white tombstone, inscribed "The Hermit" (Perreault, 1984).



Charles Alan Lambert, the "Hermit of Mosquito Pond"
Manchester Historic Association photograph.

Melody Pines Day Camp

Camp Melody was started in 1951 by Andrew Dominick with support from his wife Mary. It started with an old station wagon and a summer rental of the Greek picnic grounds on Bryant Road (about a 1/2 mile from the camp's current location). He then purchased 510 Corning Road and opened the camp in its current location under the name of Melody Pines Day Camp in 1952. He gradually purchased adjacent land, removed an existing camp, and constructed a recreation hall and gym. In 1967, after 17 years in business, Andy's oldest daughter Mary and her husband Tom Connors began to run the day camp and later decided to buy it from Mary's parents. Things only improved at Melody Pines Day Camp under Tom and Mary's ownership. In 2001, Mary's son Stephen and his wife Erika became the third generation to own and direct the camp, and do so with their three children. In 2002, they improved their office and living quarters by tearing down the original cabin and building a new office. The walk-out basement houses the office, nursing station, staff lounge, and repair area.