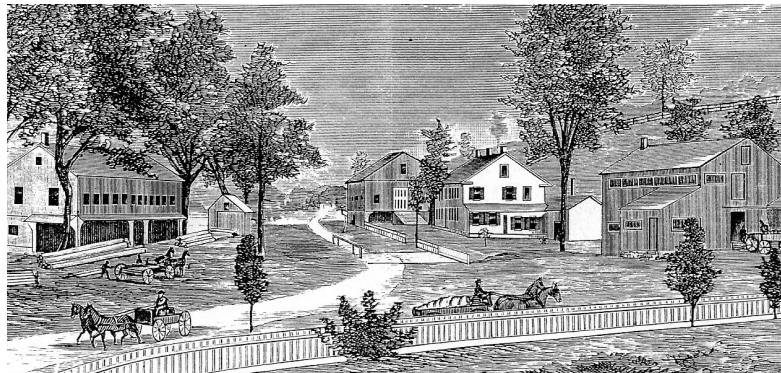


*Whitmore's Mills*  
*and*  
*the Connecticut River:*  
*A Social and*  
*Natural History Tour*

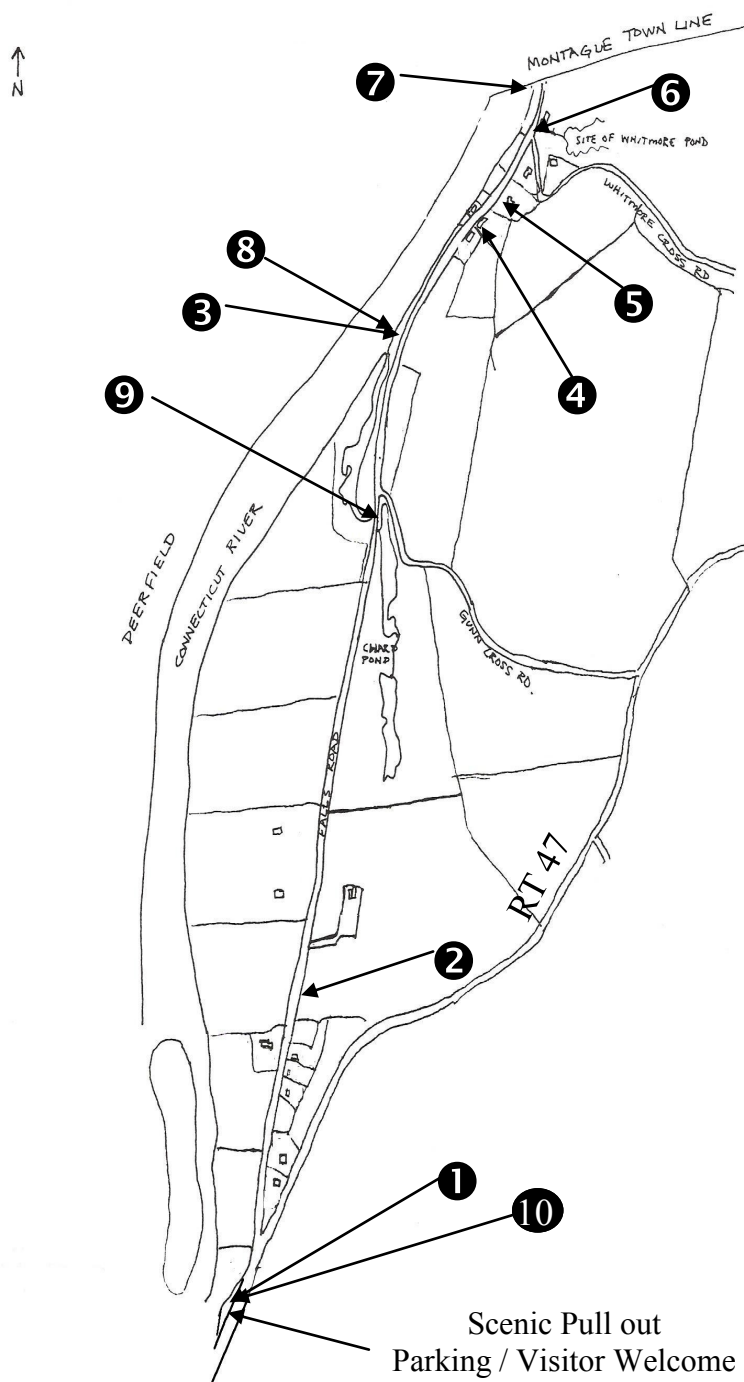


Presented by members of the Sunderland Historic Commission  
Published October 2010

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# TOUR GUIDE MAP



## TOUR GUIDELINES

- *This 4 mile round trip tour can be walked, biked, or driven.*
- *Falls Road is a country road and is not normally heavily trafficked; however, we encourage everyone to use recommended safety measures specific to your chosen mode of transportation; walk facing traffic, bike with traffic and wear a helmet, pull your car to the side of the road when stopping.*
- *Unless otherwise noted, the land on either side of the public road is privately owned; please be respectful of local property owners by sticking to the public roadways throughout the tour and leaving no trace or trash behind.*
- *please note there is poison ivy growing along the side of the roadway.*

## TOUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*This tour is sponsored by the Sunderland Historical Commission and 88.5 WFCR FM 640 WNNZ and funded in part by a grant from Mass Humanities, a state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Sunderland Cultural Council, a local agency which is sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. We also give special thanks to Mary Whitmore for sharing her memories of Sunderland.*



**Whitmore's Mills and the  
Connecticut River:  
A Social and Natural History Tour**

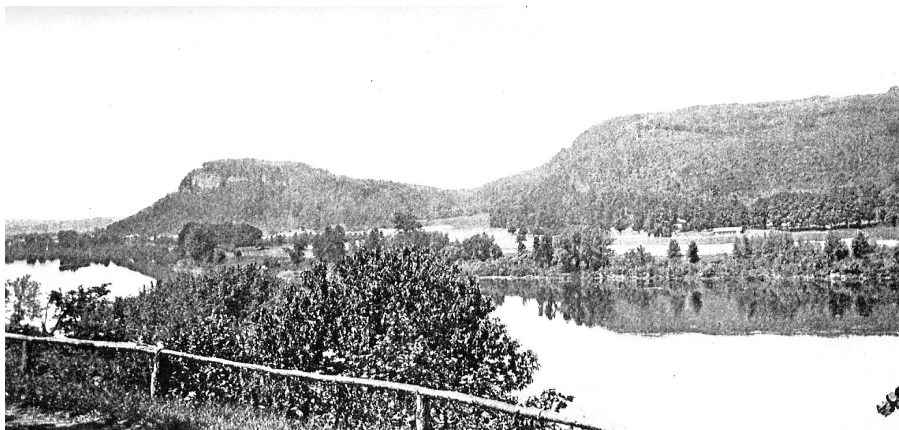
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**Welcome to North Sunderland and the  
Connecticut River Valley**

**Start Location for Tour: Scenic Pull Out on Route 47  
(approximately 1 mile north from Sunderland center)**

*Welcome to Whitmore's Mill Village in North Sunderland, Massachusetts. This tour consists of 10 stops along a 4-mile round-trip route that will take you to the Sunderland/Montague town-line and back. At each stop you will hear about the natural, social, and economic history of this village, Sunderland, and the middle Connecticut River Valley.*

**To begin the tour, please walk over to the welcome  
sign at the south end of the pull out.**



View from Highland Point (now RT47 scenic pullout)  
c. 1890

*This scenic stretch along the Connecticut River has sustained communities for thousands of years—from the Paleo-Indians who hunted and fished here 10,000 years ago to the late Woodland people, known as the Pocumtuck, who settled here 1,000 years ago, to the English colonists who migrated to this area in the 1670s and called it Swampfield. Pocumtuck, Swampfield, Sunderland—all of these place names tell us something about how the people who lived here thought about the landscape.*

*Our story begins in 1673, English residents of the town of Hadley—a settlement centered round a bend in the Connecticut River about ten miles south of this spot—successfully petitioned the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony for the good farming land they called Swampfield northward along the river. Although the English inhabited Swampfield briefly in the 1670s, it was not incorporated as the township of Sunderland until 1718.*

*Just about ten years after that, Sunderland residents successfully petitioned the General Court for more land to the east, so that by 1730 Sunderland encompassed all of present-day Sunderland and Leverett, as well as the larger part of Montague and portions of Wendell. Before the century came to a close, the northern and eastern-most sections of Sunderland had grown enough to be set off as the separate townships of Montague and Leverett, reducing Sunderland more or less to its original and current land area. Nonetheless, by the time of the American Revolution, Sunderland was one of the wealthiest and most highly developed towns in the region, largely due to its location along the fertile floodplains of the Connecticut River, some of the best farmland in the United States.*

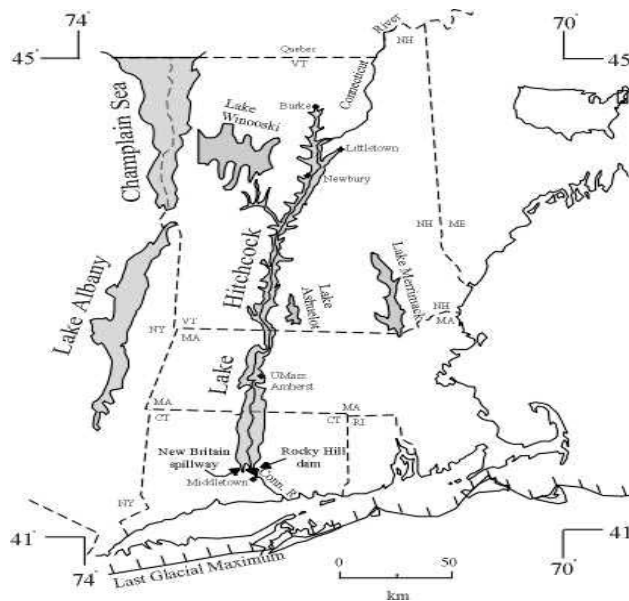
*But Sunderland was never just a farming community! The North section of Sunderland - Whitmore's Mills - was also an industrial center and a transportation hub situated in one of the most unique natural landscapes in the country. Did you know that Sunderland once had its own water-powered electric company on Falls Road? Or, that at the turn of the last century there were so many log drives down the Connecticut River that Sunderland employed a log-man to prevent "log jams" at the bridge? Can you believe that fish fossils*

*more than 180 million years old have been found right here underneath your feet? Or, that Monroe Smith, founder of the youth hostelling movement in America, was born right here on Falls Road?*

**Please take a moment to peruse the welcome sign for a broad overview of Sunderland's natural history. Then, walk over to the western edge of the pull out so that you have a clear view of the Connecticut River below.**

### ***Stop 1: The Last Ice Age, Lake Hitchcock, & First Peoples***

**(Location: River Overlook at Pull Out)**



*It is hard to imagine now, but there was a time when all of New England was covered in a sheet of ice. In this area, the sheet of ice was up to two miles thick! As the ice began to melt around 15,000 BC it formed a glacial lake, later named Lake Hitchcock to honor Amherst College geologist and President Edward Hitchcock, who first recognized the existence of the pre-*

*historic Lake in 1818.*

*Stretching 350 miles from Burke, Vermont, to Rocky Hill, Connecticut, Lake Hitchcock was held in place by a series of natural sediment dams for several thousand years. Look up past the tree-*

*tops and toward the sky. Lake Hitchcock was more than 150 feet deep and you are currently standing close to the bottom!*

*Eventually, the natural dams eroded and the waters of Lake Hitchcock overflowed southward into the Atlantic Ocean, transforming the natural lake into the body of flowing water that we now call the Connecticut River.*

*Today we tend to experience rivers as barriers over which we must build bridges to pass, but for most of human history, waterways—whether frozen or flowing—have served as conduits of community life. The Connecticut River and its tributaries—the Deerfield River, Green River, Millers River, and so on—have provided an important regional transportation and trade system for people living in this valley for thousands of years.*

*In this region, the complex network of waterways have also helped create the fertile soils that enabled the first English settlements, which were sustained by farming, to prosper in the mid-1700s.*

**To learn more about local agriculture, travel along Falls Road for about 3/10ths of a mile, past a small collection of contemporary houses on your right, so that you have a clear view of the farmland to your left.**

## ***Stop 2: A Unique Landscape & Early English Settlement***

**(Location: The Fields)**

*Beneath the fields, outcroppings, asphalt and well-kept lawns along Falls Road is a rich, reddish soil comprised of the soft silt, sand, and mud left behind by Lake Hitchcock as it drained into the Atlantic Ocean. The lowland towns of the Connecticut River Valley like Sunderland, Deerfield, Northfield, Montague, Whately, and Greenfield contain the largest areas of this fine, well-drained soil in Franklin County.*

*The prehistoric Lake Hitchcock accumulated more than thirty meters of sediment before it drained to form the Connecticut River. This mass of sediment smoothed the valley in certain areas, making it unusually flat—so flat in fact, that the Connecticut River doesn't quite know which way is downhill! The Valley slopes to the south only about a half a meter per kilometer and, as a result, the Connecticut River is more meandering than linear with a series of picturesque oxbows made famous in paintings by Thomas Cole, founder of the Hudson River School of Art.*

*By the time of the first English settlement, European explorers had been navigating up and down the Connecticut River for some time and had already established settlements alongside native villages at Springfield, Hadley, and Deerfield. When Metacom's Rebellion, also called King Philips War, broke out in 1675, many English and Native villages throughout Massachusetts were devastated or disbanded completely, including Swampfield. It would be forty years before the English would attempt to resettle the village. In 1718, Swampfield was incorporated as a township under the name Sunderland, in honor of Charles Spencer, the Earl of Sunderland and Prime Minister of England.*

**Continue along Falls Road past Chard Pond on your right until you see a dirt pull out on your left at about 1.5 miles. As you travel, take note of the rock outcroppings on your right.**

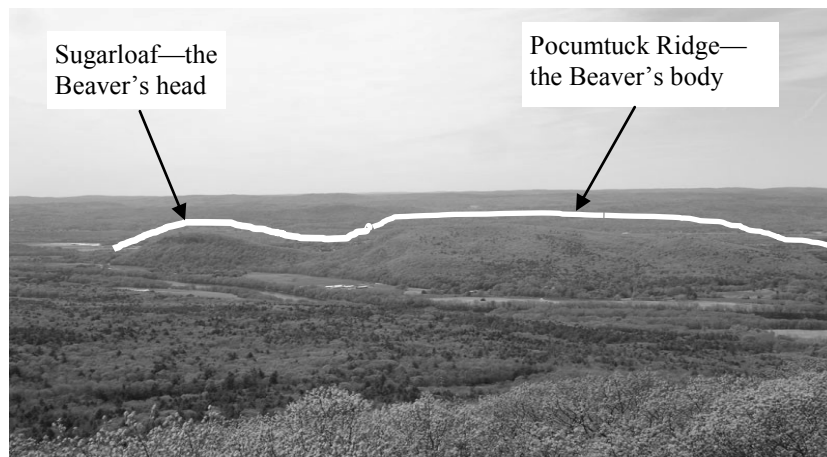
### ***Stop 3: Studying Rocks & Overview of Falls Road Village***

**(Location: Second pull out)**

*Look through the trees and across the river to the west bank. Imagine in your mind the outline of Mount Sugarloaf and the Pocumtuck Range, the long ridge just to the north of Mount Sugarloaf. Can you see how the abstract outline of these mountains takes on the shape of an animal with a long body and an even longer tail? The native peo-*

*ples of Pocumtuck have a story about these mountains that explains the natural history of the valley.*

*The story takes place thousands of years ago, when a Great Beaver lived in a pond that encompassed the entire valley. The Great Beaver created a dam in the pond that caused a lot of trouble for the fish. Often, the Great Beaver came ashore to eat Indians living along the banks. Finally, the people decided to have a ceremony to raise Hobomock, a spirit giant, to kill the Great Beaver. When the Great Beaver realized that Hobomock was after him, he tried to escape by digging himself into the ground. But Hobomock was too quick, and jammed a stake into the Great Beaver's neck.*



View of Mt Sugarloaf & Pocumtuck Ridge, 2010

*According to the story, the Great Beaver's head is buried under Mount Sugarloaf and the rest of his body is buried under the Pocumtuck Range. The story offers one way of understanding how these natural features, the mountain and the range, came to dominate the landscape. But the story also correlates with the geological narrative you heard at the beginning of this tour, which explained how a glacier melted to form Lake Hitchcock at the end of the last Ice Age. In both stories, powerful forces, a 'glacier' and a 'Great Beaver' dammed and flooded the valley.*

*Archeological evidence that humans lived in this valley before the melting of the last glacier is unavailable because the glacier itself*

*scoured any trace of evidence that may have been left on the landscape. But the story of the Great Beaver suggests that humans may have observed the formation of the glacial lake and dam, and preserved their observations in a story that would help to explain what happened.*

*Now, turn away from the riverbank and notice the rock outcroppings on the opposite side of Falls Road. Have you ever wondered why this is called Falls Road? Later in the tour you will have a chance to see an active cascade and waterfall, but there was once a time when fresh water from Mount Toby flowed over many of the outcroppings you see along Falls Road. How do we know? Walk across the road to get nice and close to the rock that juts out closest to you. Make sure to keep an eye out for poison ivy and make sure to bring your observation skills!*

*These rocks are sedimentary, formed from gravel, sand, and silt deposited here by water. The rock consists of layers of sediment that are mostly oriented, or tilted, to the east, away from the river. Now look very closely at the outcropping, can you see the horizontal layers and grooves? Each layer looks a bit different, some are coarse and some are fine. Some are broad, others narrow. Look closely again. Do you see bits and pieces of milky-white pebbles? These are called clasts. In this case, the clasts are pieces of quartzite, an extremely compact and hard rock.*

*Philip Smith was the first person to settle and operate a gristmill along what is now Falls Road in 1720. By the 1790s there were two gristmills in operation, one at Whitmore's Pond and one at Chard Pond, but the village did not expand much until the 1820s. Most of the houses you will see as you pass through the village date to the 1820s and 30s and reflect the Federal or Greek Revival-style architecture that was popular in those decades.*

**Continue until you reach 300 Falls Road, the second house on your right.**

## ***Stop 4: North Sunderland Baptist Church***

**(Location: 300 Falls Road, former  
Baptist Church )**

*Sunderland's English settlers were heirs to a movement of religious dissenters who came to North America in order to purify the Church of England. Today, we remember them as "Puritans" for that reason. They hoped to bring the church back to basics. Their church, the Congregational Church, dominated New England towns in the eighteenth century.*

*It didn't take long, however, for alternative religious groups to dissent from the Congregationalists. In Massachusetts, the Baptists and the Society of Friends, or Quakers, were among the first. By 1771, enough Baptists had gathered in Sunderland that they successfully challenged their obligation to pay taxes in support of the local Congregational church. Town officials allowed them to support the church they attended instead, the Baptist Society in North Leverett.*

*Most of Sunderland's Baptists lived in the northern section of town and in 1822 they came together to form their own church. When the church was built at this site the following year, Sunderland's Baptists no longer had to travel to North Leverett or Montague to attend services. Instead, people from Montague and Deerfield traveled to Falls Road to attend the North Sunderland Baptist Church. By 1900 the congregation grew to about forty people and the small church building became overcrowded. In 1903 the congregation decided to raze the first church and erect a larger structure in its place.*

*What you see in front of you now is the same structure that opened in 1904 as the North Sunderland Baptist Church—or is it? Are you surprised to learn that this was once a church? Does this look like the archetypal New England country church? How is it different? What elements are missing? What looks out of place?*

*In 1904, this structure stood with its peak, or gable, facing Falls Road. At that time the sash windows you see now were leaded glass, and the northwest corner of the structure boasted a tall bell tower.*



2nd North Sunderland Baptist Church c. 1880

*The congregation also erected a marble memorial corner stone, in memory of four people who left legacies to the church. That memorial stone is no longer here, but it is still on view at the Swampfield Historical Society Museum in the Graves Memorial Library at the center of town.*

*Though the North Sunderland Baptist Church had been active for more than one hundred years, by the 1940s it had been in steady decline for some time. In 1945, the church officially closed and members of the parish left to join the Baptist Church in Turner's Falls or the Baptist Church in North Leverett, or even the Congregational Church in Sunderland center. The following year the Church sold the structure to Chester Clark who removed the bell tower and leaded glass windows and converted it to a private home. A few years later the structure was converted into a two-family unit, which is more or less how you see it today.*

**Please proceed to the foot of the driveway  
That leads to the next house on your right.**

## ***Stop 5: Roadways Old & New***

**(Location: 312 Falls Road, Horace-Dexter House,  
south of the driveway)**

*You are standing at what is believed to be the site of an old intersection where Highway One met North Sunderland Road. The North Sunderland Road followed roughly the same path as Falls Road does today, but the old highway split off to follow the steep incline where there is now a driveway. That Highway continued along the top of the ridge behind the house you see in front of you.*

*At the top of the incline, just behind the old Whipple Tavern and D. D. Whitmore house, which you'll see at the next stop, there was a wheelwright shop for fixing and making wheels. The Whitmore family built the wheelwright shop in a prime location—right along the stagecoach line that ran from Hartford, Connecticut to Springfield, Massachusetts and on to Brattleboro, Vermont. The wheelwright shop was built in 1830 and it still stands today, though the road no longer passes it by. As you continue along Falls Road, look closely. Can you find any old hitching posts for the horses that pulled the stagecoaches?*

*Believe it or not, Highway One was not the only road up on that ridge. At different points in time three or four other roads enabled people to travel up and over the ridge. None of these roads was paved until the latter part of the twentieth century, and for most of the year they were so muddy that a horse was kept harnessed and ready to pull out wagons and automobiles. In the 1920s a school bus painted bright blue, green, and red traveled over the ridge along a bumpy dirt path to take children living in Whitmore's Mills to school up on School House Road.*

*When Mary Whitmore attended the school in the 1920s she was one of only three students of English descent, or Yankees, in a class of thirty-one. "Stiff Yank," the other kids would call her, teasing. By that time, Whitmore's Mills and the town of Sunderland had welcomed many families from Eastern Europe, most of whom worked in*

*the onion and tobacco fields that continue to contribute significantly to Sunderland's economy and culture. As a sixth-generation New Englander in North Sunderland in the 1920s, young Mary Whitmore was in the minority. "But we all became great friends as we got older," she recalled.*

*Agriculture has long been one of the most important industries in Sunderland, and even though the Whitmore family, whom you will learn more about at the next stop, operated mills, they also farmed. As a child, one of Mary's summer jobs was to open the vertical slats of the tobacco sheds near her home. With the slats open, the tobacco leaves would dry faster. In autumn, Mary's father would ship off the leaves, which were used to make cigar wrappers. In 1927 the family started a vegetable garden business, too. They transported vegetables along these roads to Vermont and Boston by truck.*

*When the Great Depression hit Sunderland in the 1930s, the roads along the ridge and through Whitmore's Mills witnessed a new kind of traveler—unemployed men looking for something to eat or a place to stay. As Mary recalls, her mother always set them to work raking or weeding and offered them a hot meal and shelter in one of the barns. The Whitmore's vegetable garden and cows helped them to make the best of hard times. Mary remembers that they often made campfires and played charades or listened to radio shows like Amos 'n Andy or The Safety Crusaders. But she also remembers that she only had one winter dress for school—a green jersey dress with a white collar and cuffs. Every Friday, her mother would cut off the collar and the cuffs, wash them, starch them, iron them, and sew them back on for the following week. Mary, like many of her neighbors, learned by heart the old saying, "use it up, wear it out; make it do, or do without."*

**To learn more about the Whitmore family and the hey-day of Whitmore's Mills, proceed until you reach an old dirt road on your right, just south of Whitmore's Falls—you can't miss it!**

## ***Stop 6: Whitmore's Mills & the falls of Falls Road***

**(Location: 324 Falls Road at Whitmore Cross Road)**

*Imagine it is sometime in the later 1800s. You are visiting friends in Montague, but it is Sunday and they are attending services at the North Sunderland Baptist Church. As you travel south along the river to the Church with your friends you pass through Whitmore's Mills. It is a bustling, busy place! You stop with them to look at the waterfall. There is a large gristmill that straddles the canal at the bottom of the fall. On the side of the road closer to the river, there is a saw mill straddling the canal.*



Whitmore's Gristmill & Sawmill c. 1890

*"Is that a saw mill?" you ask your friends. "Yes," they tell you. "They cut and sell a lot of lumber here and then they ship it right down the river on steam boats! Oh, but you should come back at the end of the summer to see the log drive," they say, excitedly. They tell you about the logging men who guide and prod and push mil-*

*lions of logs down the Connecticut River all the way from Canada to the paper mills at Mount Tom. “The men jump from log to log to keep all the logs from getting jammed, but they get jammed up at the Sunderland bridge or around the islands sometimes and that’s fun,” they laugh. You hear from your friends all about the Canadian logging men who camped in the barns along the river while they worked on the jam or stopped for their meals as the logs floated by. It does sound like fun to you—what a treat to meet those logging men!*

*Looking around, you begin to see the other buildings in this mill area – a plaster mill, a sash and blind manufactory. Wow, you think to yourself, everything you need to build a house! Your friends point out another smaller building along the river. “That’s an ice house,” they say. “In the winter, the Whitmore’s cut ice from the pond at the top of the falls and they send it down to the ice house to keep it cold.”*

*Returning to present time, look around you. What do you see? Houses, trees, rocks, a waterfall... is there any evidence of all the mills that dominated this landscape during the late 1800s and early 1900s? Perhaps not at first glance, but upon closer inspection there are two key pieces of evidence left on the landscape that provide physical clues this was once an industrial site.*

*Remember that the gristmill and sawmill straddled a canal? If you follow the water from the falls as it travels beneath the bridge you’re standing on, you’ll notice the well-constructed walls of that old canal. The Whitmore’s constructed these walls of a natural material, fieldstone, but they are designed to effectively channel water toward the river and to maximize waterpower for the mills. Now, look around the edges of the pool of water at the base of the fall. Can you make out other neatly stacked stonewalls? These are remnants of the foundation for the old gristmill. Most of the foundations for the old mills and barns are still here, but the forests that have grown up and around Whitmore’s Mills hide them from plain sight.*

*At the height of productivity here at Whitmore’s Mills, most of the trees had been cleared from the landscape. In fact, the hill just north*

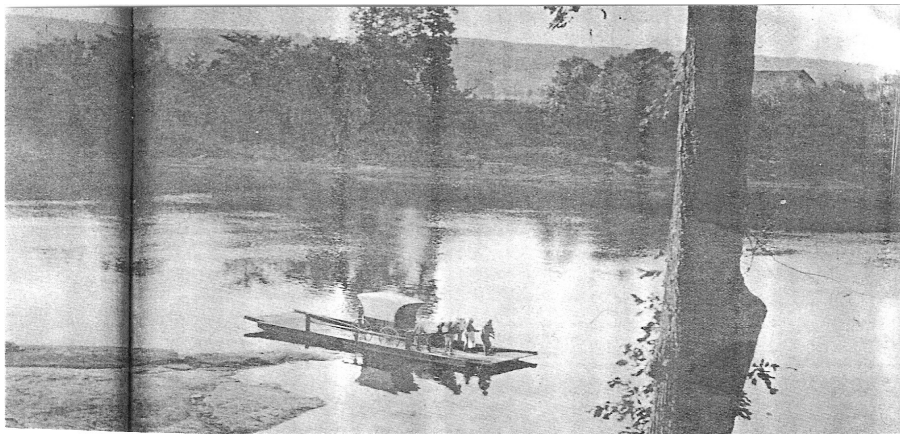
*of here was pastureland for the Whitmore's cows. Today, it is forest. Look again at the waterfall. This tour has focused largely on the history and influence of the Connecticut River, but it was not the River that powered the mills here at Whitmore's Village. Waterpower comes from the natural streams and waterfalls and the manmade channels and canals that flow into rivers.*

**Proceed north along Falls Road to the Sunderland/  
Montague town line. Pause at the boundary marker.**

### ***Stop 7: River Crossings and Transportation***

**(Location: Sunderland/Montague Town line)**

*Standing here by the town line, turn and look south down the river. On October 6, 1812, Sunderland residents celebrated the opening of the first wooden trestle bridge across the Connecticut River, which was slightly north of the site where route 116 crosses the river today. But by then people had been crossing the river by ferry for almost a century. Here, you are standing just north of the eastern landing point for Whitmore's ferry, one of four busy ferry crossings in Sunderland.*



Whitmore Ferry c. 1880

*Whitmore's ferry, however, was the longest running ferry crossing*

*in Sunderland. The first crossing here may have been as early as 1764 and the last crossing as late as 1914—more than a century after the first bridge was built! Whitmore's ferry remained a crossing point for so long partly because of its distance from the town center and partly because of its proximity to the North Sunderland Baptist Church that was formed and built on Falls Road in the 1820s. Foot passengers paid ten cents to cross, and it cost twenty-five cents to cross with a horse and wagon, but people crossing to attend services at the Baptist Church were permitted to cross free. Travelers blew horns or rang bells arranged at either side of the river to get the ferryman's attention. As automobiles grew in popularity, Whitmore's ferry lost business. The small boat, pulled hand-over-hand by the ferryman along a cable wire stung across the river, could not accommodate automobiles as efficiently as the iron bridge built at the center of town in 1877.*

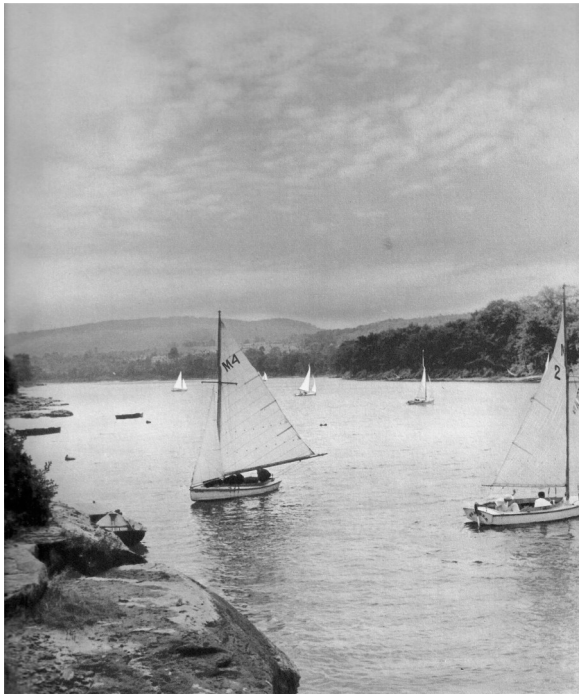
*The stagecoach line that ran through Whitmore's Mills made it an ideal place for a tavern, and by 1820 Daniel S. Whipple opened a tavern right here by the ferry crossing. Whipple's tavern was a regular stopping and gathering place for local residents to exchange news, socialize, dance and pick up their mail, but it also provided accommodations for travelers using the stage line and the "boatmen" who traveled up and down the river with their freight. In 1831 Whipple's tavern burned to the ground, but he replaced it with the two-story Federal-style house that stands now at 336 Falls Road and overlooks the old ferry crossing. The new tavern changed hands several times until the Whitmore family purchased the tavern and turned it into a farmstead in 1838. The Whitmore's continued to run the post office out of the sawmill that straddled the canal.*

**To learn about recreation and wildlife along the Connecticut River, travel south back through Whitmore's Mills and stop again at the pull out that overlooks the river on your right. You won't miss it; it's where you learned how to study rocks!**

## ***Stop 8: Recreation Along the River and in the Soil***

### **(Location: Return to Second Pull out)**

*Sundays at Whitmore's Mills were exciting. In 1932, in the midst of the Great Depression, Sunderland boys and parents organized a Boy Scout Troop. The troop quickly grew in popularity and in 1937 the older boys joined Skipper Ripley of Montague to take part in the Sea Scouts. The Sea Scouts constructed their own wooden sailboats under Skipper Ripley's direction and on Sundays they raced their boats down the Connecticut River.*

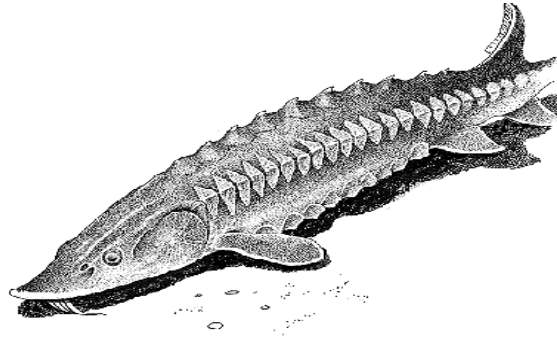


*One of the boats was constructed so well it received the Flagship Award for the best ship in New England. Mary Whitmore remembers everyone gathering on the riverbank by Whitmore's Ferry to watch the races. One year, some of the girls got tired of watching from the riverbanks and took an old rowboat out to cheer on the boys. They called their boat, a tiny dory, "The Hunky Dory".*

Sea Scouts sail boats on the Connecticut River at Whitmore's Ferry c. 1938

*Children swam and fished in the river, too. Did you know that Connecticut River has been home to the shortnose sturgeon. Since the end of the last ice age? If you have ever seen a sturgeon, you probably remember its distinctive appearance, which has been described*

*as a prehistoric cross between a shark and a catfish.*



Shortnose Sturgeon

*In this region, sturgeon can grow to about three or four feet in length and weigh around 14 pounds. The shortnose sturgeon is an amphidromous fish, meaning that it feeds in one part of the river and migrates upstream to spawn. But in 1849*

*the construction of a large dam in Holyoke, about thirty miles south of Sunderland, disrupted the migratory patterns of the sturgeon. Now there are two disconnected populations of sturgeon, one north and one south of the dam. Sturgeon born upstream near Sunderland can and do swim downstream, but returning north to spawn again has proven a significant challenge for the species. As a result, too many sturgeon do not spawn and their population has been greatly reduced.*

*In 1955, Holyoke built a fish lift—the first successful fishway on the Atlantic Coast to help the sturgeon and other species of fish, like Atlantic salmon and American shad, swim back upstream to spawn. Though the lift has been successful for the salmon and shad, it has not been a great success for the sturgeon because their bodies and fins cannot turn sharply enough to negotiate the lift. In 2007, only six sturgeon were lifted over the dam, in 2005 only one. The Holyoke Gas and Electric Company, which now owns and operates the dam, is required to redesign an improved fish lift to help the sturgeon swim upstream as part of a re-licensing procedure, but the change is not likely to happen for several years. Since 1967, the shortnose sturgeon has been on the federal endangered species list and will likely remain there until appropriate fish lifts can be designed to reunite sturgeon populations separated by dams.*

*Take a look at the woods around you. Depending on the season*

*you will notice different types of plants growing. Among her memories growing up in Whitmore's Mills, Mary Whitmore remembers it could be a bit lonely. especially since there were so few girls her age around. After school, Mary took to wandering through the woods on her own and studying the plants she found. "Before we knew that picking flowers and plants out of nature was bad," Mary recalls, "I would pick a few species, run home, and just spend hours and hours looking them up and studying them.. Right here, along this ridge, she found Dutchman's Britches, Yellow Violets, and Dogtooth violets.*

**Continue along Falls Road until you reach the dirt road just north of Chard Pond on your left.**

### ***Stop 9: Electricity, Industry, and the Natural Environment***

**(Location: Falls Road at Gunn Cross Road, Chard Pond )**

*Pick a shady spot along this dirt road so that you have a nice perspective of the pond. You are now standing at the site of Sunderland's first gristmill, built and run by Philip Smith in 1720. Although the gristmill changed hands, it operated here for many years.*

*In 1826, Thomas Munsell, who lived in the house that still stands across the street from the former North Sunderland Baptist Church, took over the site and started both a fulling mill and a wicking factory. Munsell also built a unique combination bridge and canal out of stone across Chard brook. If you peer under the Falls Road Bridge you can see the stones that continue to support the bridge today.*

*By 1855 Munsell was earning \$7,000 a year in the manufacture of wicking. Chard Pond had made Munsell a successful industrialist!*



Chard Pond Bridge 1994

*Today, Chard Pond is larger than it was when Munsell's wicking factory was here. In 1904, William P. Abbey and Harold C. Pomeroy, bought Munsell's property and replaced the old wooden plank dam with a newer, stronger dam made of concrete and stone. They hoped that the new dam would help them harness enough waterpower to support their new company, the Sunderland Electric Light and Power Company. After building the dam, they constructed a power house and generating plant on the west side of the road and shortly thereafter they ran lines of electricity to the North Sunderland Baptist Church and to the Whitmore's house by the falls. But within a year heavy rains washed away the new dam draining Chard Pond and the Electric Company's main source of power. As the company rebuilt and expanded, its founders realized that the little pond alone could not supply enough energy to power their new customers, so they invested in the steam engine. By 1906, however, the*

*whole operation had become so expensive that the founders abandoned the plant altogether and Sunderland began to get its electricity from Amherst.*

**Proceed back to the pullout where you began your tour,**

*But as you do, be sure to notice one last point of interest. The third house on your right, at 55 Falls Road, was once the home of Monroe Smith, the founder of the youth hostelling movement in America. The movement es-*



*ta-  
blished a series of places for young travelers to stay overnight in dormitory-style rooms for very low costs. In 1937 the house was donated to the Youth Hostel organization and run as a hostel until 1978 when it was converted back to a single-family home.*

*By the mid-twentieth century, North Sunderland was no longer a gathering place for river men, logging men, and stagecoach travelers, but it continued its legacy of welcoming travelers through its connection to the youth hostel movement.*

### ***Stop 10: The End — Stewardship & Conservation in the Connecticut River Valley***

**(Location: Pull out on Route 47)**


*Welcome back to your point of departure, we hope you have enjoyed your tour of the Whitmore's Mills section of Sunderland and have learned a lot about the natural, social, and economic history of the*


*area. By taking an interest in, respecting, and seeking to understand the natural and built environments in which we all live, you have become a steward.*

*Like Whitmore's Mills, all communities are products of the many interactions between humans, animals, nature, and a Variety of forces over thousands—even millions of years. Today, we are all part of this important process; how we interact with the environment matters in shaping the future of our communities.*

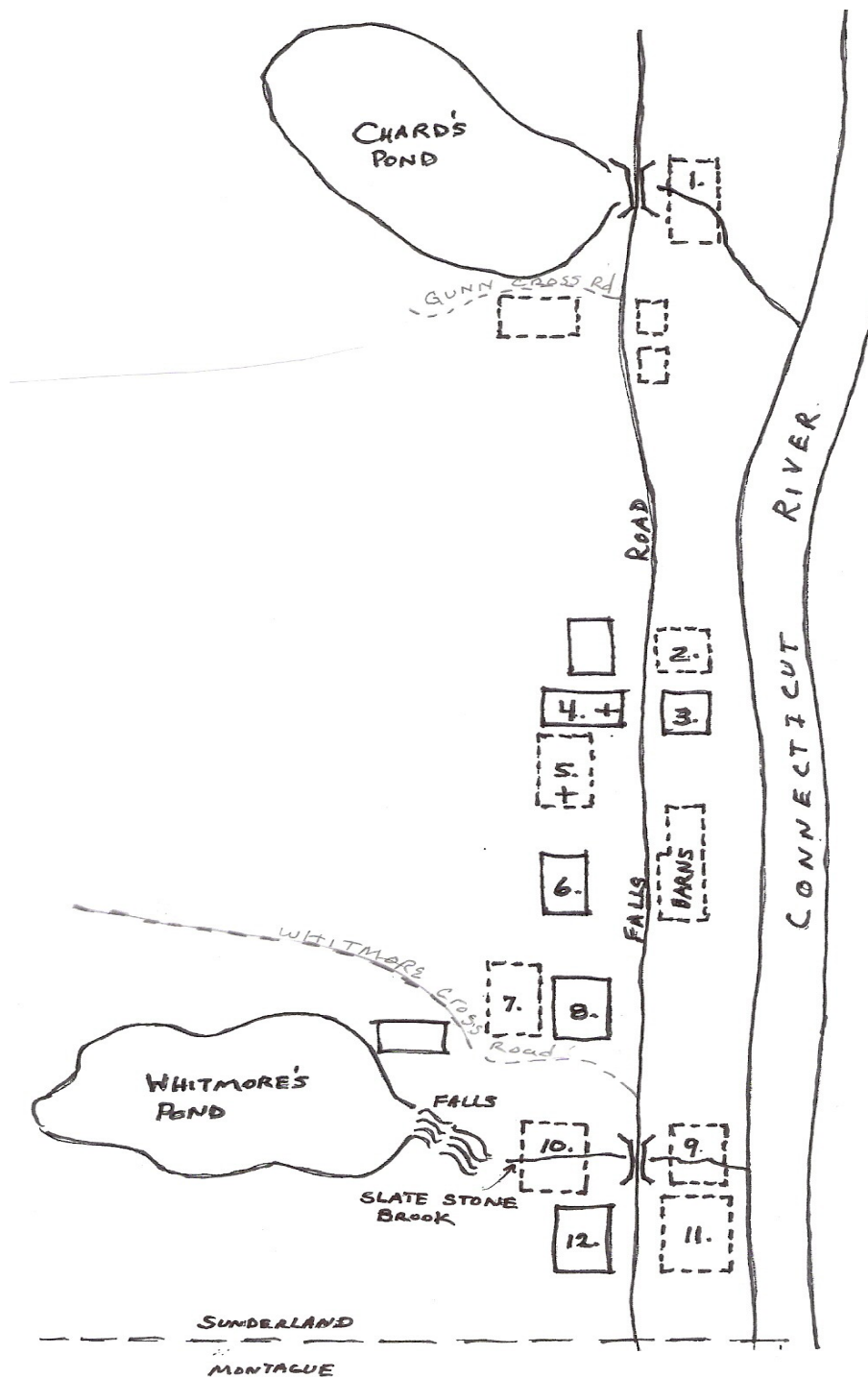
*We thank you for your interest in our town and invite you to learn more about it at - [WWW.TOWNOFSUNDERLAND.US](http://WWW.TOWNOFSUNDERLAND.US)*

## KEY

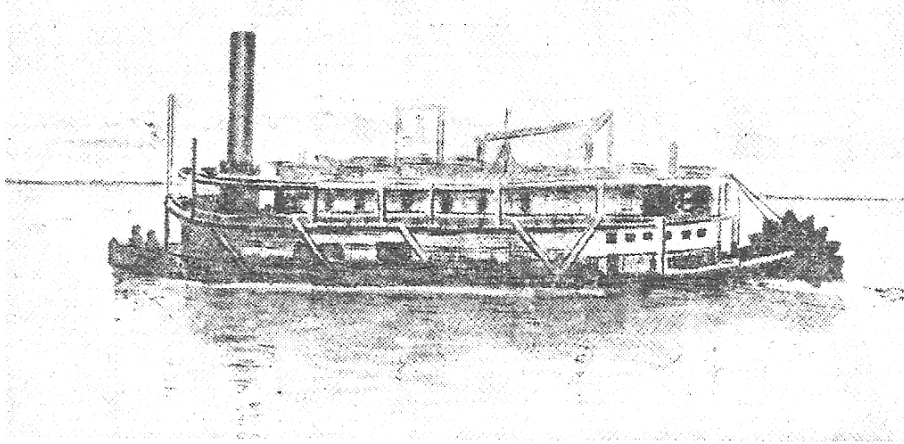
Buildings Standing = 

Buildings Gone = 

1. Site of Sawmill, Gristmill, Fulling Mill, Electric Power Plant
2. Site of One-room School
3. Thomas E. Munsell House
4. 1904 Baptist Church (now private residence)
5. Site of Original Baptist Church (1822—1903)
6. Horace Dexter / Clifford Root's House
7. Oaks—Whitmore House
8. Charles M. Whitmore House
9. Site of Gristmill (18th Century) and Sawmill (19th—20th Century)
10. Site of Gristmill (19th—20th Century)
11. Site of Original Whipple Tavern
12. Site of 2nd Whipple Tavern



#### LITTLE KNOW FACT



Picture taken from "My Sunderland"  
250th anniversary town celebration book

Steamers were introduced into the Connecticut River, designed to tow cargo. Such a one was the *Ariel Cooley*, a commodious stern-wheeler, 90 feet long, 18 feet wide. It stopped at the foot of Bridge Street in Sunderland and left its Hartford freight, continued onto Cheapside (Greenfield), picked up on the return journey items such as wood, shingles, brooms, and staves.

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Cover picture: Pen and ink drawing Whitmore Mills about 1840.