

Lower Lamoille River



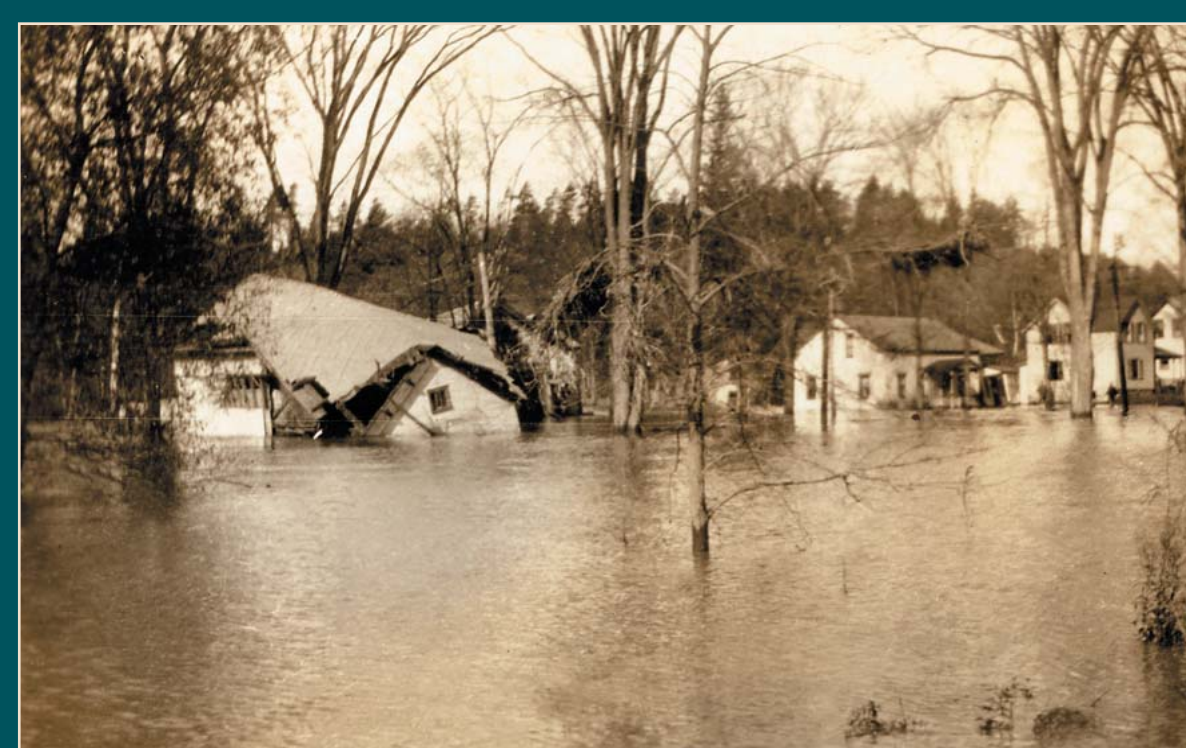
You are looking at a lower stretch of the Lamoille River, an 85 mile waterway that flows west into Lake Champlain, 8 1/2 miles from here. In addition to farms, early settlers developed logging into a primary industry. Water-powered sawmills and gristmills were developed along the rapids and at six of seven natural falls. Barges carried massive timbers downstream to the lake, then north on the Richelieu River where they were then shipped from Québec to markets in England to be made into ships' masts.

The last and largest mill on the river was the International Paper (IP) pulp mill which operated from 1899 to 1925 at the foot of the Great Falls, located just downstream from here. Using a dam originally built by the Ritchie family in 1893, IP constructed a lengthy penstock to convey water to the mill. In 1926 the Public Electric Light Company (PELCO) bought the IP property and built a powerhouse in 1929. Remnants of the IP mill foundation can still be seen there. Two additional power dams, also built by PELCO are still functioning today. Clark's Falls Dam, located just upstream, was built in 1937, and created Arrowhead Mountain Lake. The third, Peterson Dam, located downstream in West Milton was completed in 1948.

The river has been both an important natural amenity and a major influence on the Town's economy throughout its history. The lower Lamoille River is a beautiful river to paddle, requiring only one short portage around Peterson Dam before reaching Lake Champlain. The Lamoille River Walk, a 1.1 mile public walking trail, is also nearby. It starts beyond Ritchie Avenue near the powerhouse and extends to the end of Field Ridge Drive.



View of the Lamoille River as seen from the Lamoille River Walk Trail. Native Americans used the Lamoille to canoe between Lake Champlain and inland areas for harvesting fish, especially pike. Courtesy of Town of Milton.



A view of the 1927 flood as seen from where you are now standing, looking south on River Street/U.S. Route 7. Courtesy of Huard.



Past and Present: Aerial view of the Lamoille River before and after the 1937 placement of Clark's Falls Dam. Courtesy of Bailey/Howe Library, UVM (past) and Elizabeth Stanley Mann (present).



Funded in part by Federal Highway Administration.