

## VILLAGE OF OAKLAND

One of the many villages comprising the Town of Burrillville, Oakland, along with Harrisville, are the only two which have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. From the 1895 Pascoag Herald Memorial Edition, Oakland is noted as a pretty village clustered around a substantial stone mill, situated on high ground, overlooking a millpond of about 75 acres. The railroad from Providence runs along the lower shore of the pond at the other end from the mill, which seen from a passing train over the intervening water, and backed by the woods, the meadows, and the adjoining houses, makes a very pleasing scene. The Mill Pond holds the combined waters of the Clear and Chepachet Rivers, renamed as the Branch, it begins its journey downstream to join the Blackstone River. The mill itself has disappeared as has the railroad tracks, but the houses remain, along with the substantial homes of the former mill owner, superintendent, etc. In 1938, 13 single and 18 double houses were sold at auction along with the superintendent's house, which contained 12 rooms. The mill workers had the opportunity to purchase their own homes at a reasonable cost which most of them did at that time.

In 1987 Oakland was placed on the National Register of Historic Places as representing the typical ideal mill village. Both the mill and the village owed its origins to John L. Ross who bought seven acres in 1849 and built the dam. He constructed the original mill in 1850 along with housing for the workers. The Metcalf family bought out the property from Mr. Ross and continued improving conditions. They built artesian wells, provided electricity from the mill to the homes of their workers, installed a sewer system, opened a company store, and provided everything a person would need to enjoy the good life. Good working conditions and a pleasant home for the family ensure the continuation of mill workers through the generations. A recreation hall was built as a gathering place and assembly hall for the workers. Over the years, it contained a billiards room, athletic locker room for the local teams, stage, reading room, barbershop, and finally, a variety store in the lower section.

In the early days, two separate railroad stations were located in Oakland. The one at Oakland Centre was served by the Woonsocket and Pascoag Railroad Company. The other, at the site of Remington Lumber Co. at the other end of Oakland, was served by the Providence and Springfield Branch of the NY and NE Railroad Company. Unfortunately, both lines disappeared and the tracks were removed. Today, Oakland is certainly still one of our prettiest villages. Its quiet streets and quaint appearance make it a great place to live.

2003 Patricia A. Mehrtens,  
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