

THE VILLAGE OF WALLUM LAKE

Wallum Lake is located in the most northwesterly part of Burrillville and is noted for the Zambarano Memorial Hospital which was built in 1905. It originally was built as the State Sanatorium for Tuberculosis for the treatment of patients suffering from that disease. The farmlands bordering the lake appeared to be an ideal spot amply providing the rest, fresh air, and good food upon which the physician relied as a possible cure for the dreaded disease. It was a self-sufficient operation with farming facilities, greenhouse, hen coops, slaughterhouse, storehouse and stable providing the essentials needed. The necessity for all of these operations ceased in 1958 when modern discoveries for treatment and sophisticated equipment replaced the older methods. Today, the geriatric and acute care patients at Zambarano still enjoy the clean air, clear water and good care, all hallmarks of the hospital at Wallum Lake.

Lets go back now to 200 years ago and see what was located there previously. Drawn to this wooded spot in Northern RI was Jeremiah Ballard who bought a tract of land in 1766 and built a house, a corn mill, and a sawmill. Prospering for over ten years, he sold his land and contents to Timothy Jenne, who had even broader plans for this location in the forest. In the late years of the 18th century, a thriving settlement, replete with sawmills, gristmills, cotton mills, a tannery brickyard, blacksmith shop, coopers and wheelwrights shops, a store, schoolhouse, and many prosperous farms lay in the hills north of the village of Pascoag and formed a striking part of the New England landscape.

Witnessing the success of the Jenne clan, a man named Bani Phillips built a cotton mill in 1805. Employees of the mills erected homes and a school flourished with about a dozen sturdy scholars. Through these colorful phases of life, a beautiful body of water kept rolling silently through the wilderness. To an Indian with a soul of a poet, it looked like a silver blade cutting a gash through the harsh wilderness. He muttered fine, handsome, good. He muttered these words not in English, however, but in the tongue of the Nipmucks, an early New England tribe. They sounded like Allum, or Wallum, which meant something clear, rich, and beautiful. So it became Wallum Pond, and later Wallum Lake.

Mammoth icehouses were built at Wallum Pond by a group of investors from Burrillville and Providence in 1894. These consisted of five buildings which held 19,500 tons of ice. Constructed by over 100 workers who lived on the site, 400,000 feet of lumber was used to build them. The ice was sent by train all the way to Providence to quench the thirst of the inhabitants there. The convenience of the train also furnished the way for people from other parts of the state to visit Wallum Lake and enjoy the clambakes, etc., put on by the local proprietors. It became a well-known vacation spot to relax in those early days. Now, the relaxation is done by the many residents of the Zambarano Hospital. A wonderful facility for those who reside there.

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