

Historic Resources Assessment Report  
for  
Brown's Pond Dam Study

Submitted to the Town of Hamptonburgh, NY  
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By:

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## **I. Background**

In order to gain a better understanding of existing conditions and the potential benefits and impacts of removing or repairing the dam at Brown's Pond, the Town of Hamptonburgh received a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River Estuary Program that was awarded in 2013. This report on historic resources was completed as part of this larger study, and is intended to provide a compilation of existing information available from readily-identifiable sources to inform planning and management decisions by the dam's owner and other stakeholders interested in the future of this dam and of Brown's Pond.

## **II. History of the dam at Brown's Pond and related resources**

### Dam, Pond, Creamery and Ice House

The NY State Dams Inventory, which is maintained by NYS DEC's Dam Safety Office, is an online database that lists the Brown's Pond dam with a State ID of 195-0519, and in the online record the Year Completed for this dam is listed as 1800. This record was downloaded on August 31, 2014, and it lists the dam as Hazard Code A, Low Hazard. A separate DEC inspection form dated in 2008 that was apparently the basis for this hazard rating lists Burnside as the location and Borden Milk Company as the dam owner (this ownership information on that date is not believed to be accurate – see more below). A report about the dam from 1912, which was reportedly the basis for listing this completion date as 1800, was obtained from the NY State DEC Dam Safety Section. In a telephone call, Scott Braymer in this DEC office explained that there are other similar dam reports on file from that era and noted that, like some of the others about dams in Orange County, this 1912 report was signed by A.F. Pickernell and initialed by someone he identified as Alexander Rice McKim. (See attachment 1 with annotated sketches from it at the end of this report.)

The 1912 report lists the dam owner as Borden's Milk Co., the uses of the impounded water as "ice pond and old grist mill", and it includes some notes about the materials in and construction of the dam. A sketch of the dam and notes on the first page indicate that there was a new wall built behind the older dam a few years before the report and shows this new wall as being 2' thick. On the second page, this report shows the ice house, the "old unused grist mill", and what may be the building that is still in use at the site across Rt. 207 from the dam, which is identified by that building's owner as the old store described in historical information and shown in at least one old photograph (more details below.)

A deed conveying property that apparently includes the Brown's Pond dam lists a prior deed for some portion of this property when it was purchased by the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company in 1898 (that prior deed is at Liber 437, page 152 in the Office of the Orange County, NY Clerk.) After Gail Borden in the U.S. had invented the first canned condensed milk process in the 1850s (according to other historical accounts), the Anglo-Swiss firm was established to produce condensed milk in Europe. Years later, after expanding into the U.S., the firm decided to re-focus on markets in Europe and it is described as having sold their American business to Borden in 1902 (for this and many other details, visit <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/history/Mi-Nu/Nestl-S-A.html#ixzz3KBsJQVGk> ). It's not clear from this reference exactly when the creamery facilities at Burnside came under the Borden ownership and name, or what the relationship may have been between

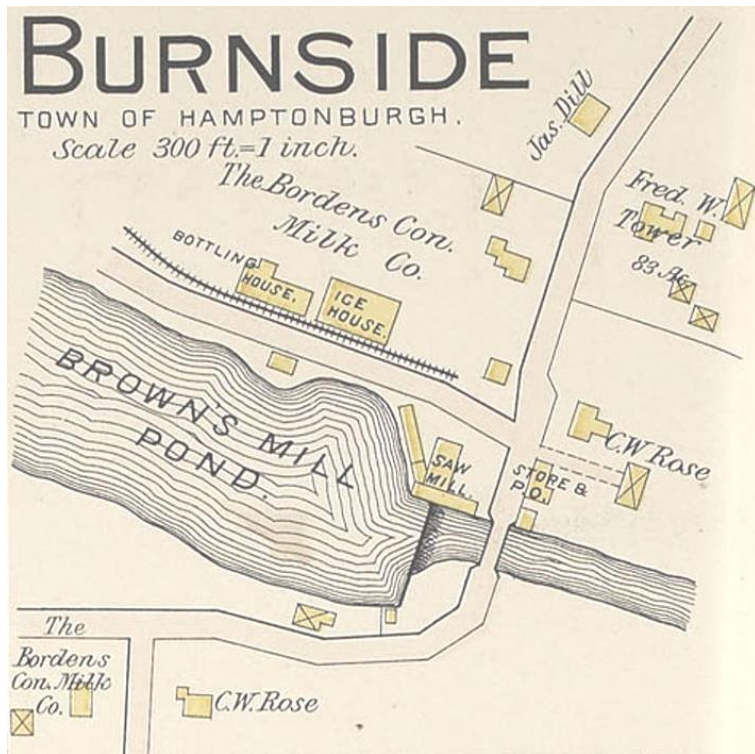
Anglo-American, Borden and the New York Condensed Milk Company (see more under Proposed Timeline).

*The History of Orange County New York*, Edited by Russel Headley and published by Van Deusen and Elms in Middletown, N. Y., 1908, is archived at this URL in several forms:  
<https://archive.org/details/historyoforangec00head>

Searching the scanned text version of this history at the site above, several separate entries were found that are relevant to the dam, mills and creamery at Burnside. They are excerpted here in the order in which they are published in the file at this URL -- bold emphasis was added to highlight the material relevant for this report, and they're numbered for reference.

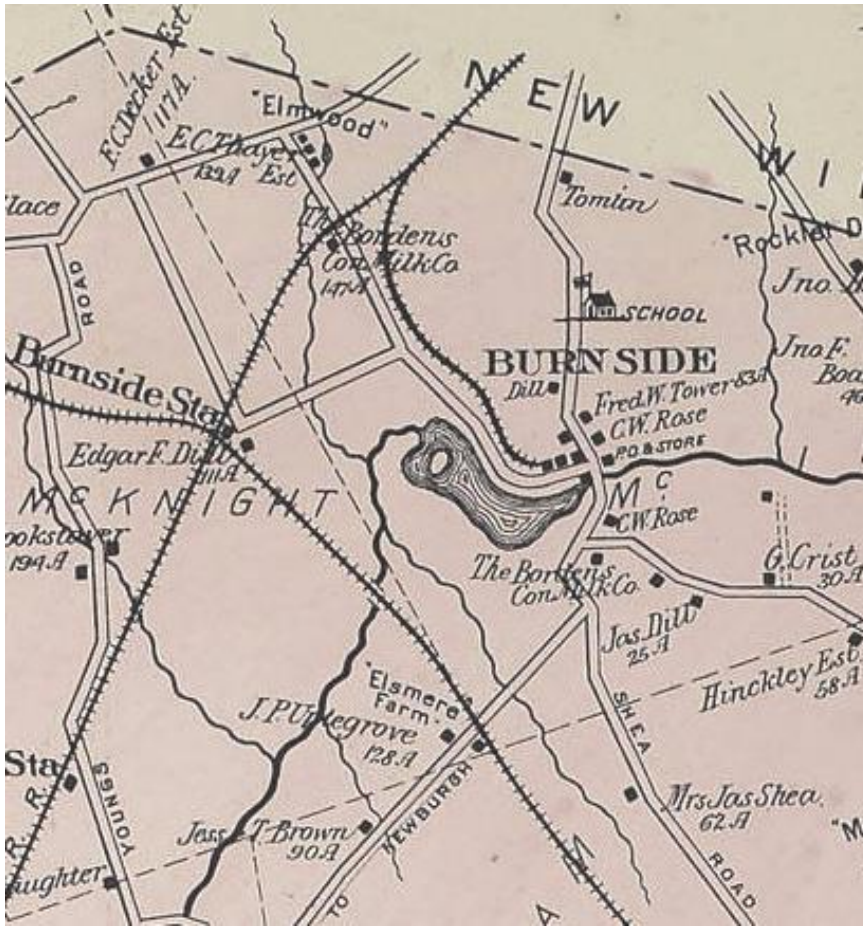
1) **"WILLIAM HENRY CODDINGTON** was born in Ulsterville, Ulster County, N. Y., June 15, 1872, and was one of five children, whose parents were William Henry' and Susan Coddington. After attending" the district school he assisted his father on the farm and was engaged at blacksmithing for six months. **In 1893 he became connected with the New York Condensed Milk Company, now known as the Borden Condensed Milk Company, and was gradually promoted from the position of helper to foreman, at Johnsons, N. Y. In 1905 he was transferred to the Burnside Creamery and is now its superintendent.**" (Headley, page 812. )

2) **"CHARLES W. ROSE** was born September 9, 1836, at Canajoharie, N. Y. He attended the district school at Amsterdam. At an early age he learned the milling business, and has been identified with that for many years. He worked at the Tivoli Railroad Mills, at Albany, which was built previous to the Revolutionary War. In 1850 he operated the Garden City Mill, at Chicago, for two years. He was an engineer on the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad between Albany and .Syracuse. He returned to Albany and ran the engine in the same mill for a period of four years after it was operated by steam. **In 1863 he went to New York City, taking charge of the William Tildert & Nephew Varnish Works, which position he held for twelve years, after which he spent two years abroad. Mr. Rose then came to Burnside, Orange County, and purchased the saw and grist mill, which he operated for eight years in connection with a general store. He has been postmaster of Burnside for several years.**" (Headley, page 930.)



Above is an inset map from Plate 19 in the *Orange County Atlas*, published by A.H Mueller & Co., in 1903, accessed from <http://www.hrvh.org/cdm/ref/collection/tpl/id/3576> in November 2014. The atlas is in the collection of the Tuxedo Park Public Library.

The map excerpt above, from a map showing a larger area described as “Chester Town, Campbell Hall, Salisbury Mills, Oxford Depot, Sugar Loaf, From the atlas Orange County 1903 published by H. A. Mueller in 1903,” depicts the “Brown’s Mill Pond”, saw mill, “store and P.O., ice house, bottling house, and several other buildings that are labeled “C.W. Rose,” all clustered around the downstream end of Brown’s Pond. This map also shows the “Borden’s Con. Milk Co.” as the owner of the ice house and the bottling house, along with several other buildings. The location of the ice house and bottling house shown on this map may be important evidence about when a new creamery building was built at this site. In this map, the bottling house is shown as being farther northwest along what is now called NYS Rt. 208, with the ice house to the southeast closer to what is now NYS Rt. 207. But in two photos described and included below (*from Salisbury’s Book of Historic Orange County Pictorial* and an article in *The Evening News*), the creamery is visible to the southeast of the ice house, rather than to the northwest. A reasonable explanation for this is that the older creamery was located as shown on the map above, then a new one was built southeast of the ice house, and this was the new creamery mentioned in the 1989 *Evening News* article discussed below.



Above is from Plate 22 in the Orange County Atlas, published by A.H Mueller & Co., in 1903, accessed from <http://www.hrvh.org/cdm/ref/collection/tpl/id/3576> in November 2014. The atlas is in the collection of the Tuxedo Park Public Library.

This is excerpt of a map of Hamptonburgh showing a larger area around Burnside, including the Burnside Station railroad station along the New York, Ontario & Western Railway line -- the line traversing from the lower left corner in the map towards Burnside Station, then connecting with a spur line to Burnside where it ran alongside the Borden's creamery and ice house (see more below about railroads in the area.) In this map, another Borden's facility is marked near the intersection of the spur line to the main line, and the Borden Co. had other sites and facilities in the Orange and Ulster county area at the time.

### 3) "Burnside has a sawmill, a store and a Borden's creamery."

Another online source includes an article by Margaret Crawford Jackson that's listed as being from the same 1908 history by Headley, at this URL:  
<http://history.rays-place.com/ny/ora/hamptonborgh.htm>

That source includes one sentence that may not be included in the scanned version cited above, apparently about the same sawmill, store and creamery at Burnside, as follows:  
"Burnside has a sawmill, a store and a Borden's creamery."

**Proposed timeline -- history of the mill, creamery, and ice house**

Based on the information summarized above, a working understanding of the chronology for these resources is that the dam was built c. 1800, Charles Rose purchased the saw and grist mill at Burnside in 1877 and ran it until 1885, and whenever the second passage excerpted above (#2) was written, he was serving as postmaster at the time. Then, according to passage #1 above, William Henry Coddington began working for New York Condensed Milk Company in 1905. The creamery was apparently purchased by the Borden Condensed Milk Company sometime between 1893 and 1903. By the date of a photo dated c. 1922 (see below), the mill house had apparently been taken down and the gate in the dam is clearly visible. A new creamery was reportedly built in the late 1930s (according to a 1989 article described below), and by the date of the photo below of the dam (from *Salisbury's Book* cited above), this new creamery had been built. As discussed above, the new creamery was apparently built in a different location on the site, where it is visible in the photos below, after the older creamery had been located where it's shown on the 1903 map above.



*Aerial view of Brown's Pond, from Bing Maps, which has it labeled as "Burnside Mill Pond" in November 2014.*



*Photo showing Brown's Pond dam at Burnside, NY, with the mill house in the foreground apparently enclosing the gate in the dam, and the ice house is in the background. The conveyor system reportedly used to move ice from the pond into the ice house is visible in the upper center of the photo, leading from a structure in the pond to the ice house. This photo was kindly provided by the Rowe family from their family archives. For some details about the ice harvesting process recalled by Charles Rowe and recounted by his son, see Attachment 2, below.*

Several other photos, one captioned as the *Borden's Ice House & Bottling Plant, Burnside*, and one that is apparently the old building across Rt. 207 from the dam, captioned as *Junction of 207 & 208, Burnside Post Office, c. 1922*, are reproduced in *Salisbury's History of Orange County*, a book owned by a Hamptonburgh town official who provided photocopies of these photos – see below.



*Junction of 207 & 208, Burnside Post Office, c. 1922.  
Burnside Post Office, from "Salisbury's Book of Historic Orange County Pictorial"*



*Borden's Ice House & Bottling Plant, Burnside.*

From Salisbury's Book of Historic Orange County Pictorial

By the date of this photo above, the mill house had been taken down and the gate in the dam is clearly visible near the right end of the dam, with the Borden's creamery and, behind it, the larger ice house and the conveyor system for ice from the pond. The Evening News article described below cites a "late 1930's" date for the construction of a new creamery, believed to be the one above.

Additional details about the creamery are described in a news article, entitled *This is Burnside: Photos tell story of small community home of a Borden Company farm site*, published in The Evening News on Sunday, July 2, 1989, which is archived online as a scanned image at <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1982&dat=19890702&id=Gu5GAAAIBAJ&sjid=zDMNAAAIBAJ&pg=1618,164584>



Article in The Evening News in 1989, by Ruth Valenti





*Photo above is from the 1989 article in The Evening News, written by Ruth Valenti, in which she mentions that she lived in the store and post office building described above “one very cold winter.” Local residents remember the creamery building in the foreground (see Borden’s sign on the front), and the larger ice house in back of it.*

This article describes the bridge along Rt. 207 just downstream of the dam at Burnside as being under reconstruction at the time, forcing drivers to take a detour that summer, and that the new bridge would be the third one over this span. A local resident reported that she remembers when this detour was in place. The article describes the old ice house that was used to store ice cut from Burnside Pond, a structure which some local residents remember according to comments by local residents at the recent public meeting held for the current dam study. Some of these residents remember that the ice house was burned by the local fire company and the fire lasted for several days. The Evening News article describes the Otterkill Engine Company burning it around 1950, and also states that a new creamery had been built in the late 1930s when the Borden Company was operating it. But Chuck Rowe, a local resident whose family has lived and farmed nearby for generations, remembers seeing the ice house burning and was not born until several years after 1950, so the actual date it was burned is apparently later.

The Evening News article cited above includes several other photos, one of which shows the house that was reportedly the Burnside Post Office and store mentioned and pictured above. The current owner of this house, which is now rental apartments, believes it dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This building is located across Rt. 207 from, and on the downstream side of the dam, on the northeast side of Otter Kill Creek. This building also housed a bar, which according to the Evening News article was called the Swiss Inn Bar, and local residents who frequented it remember it as Bobo’s Swiss Inn.

Old foundations are clearly visible in aerial images on Bing Maps, on the east side of Rt. 208 just north of the existing building located on or very near where the old creamery was apparently located and may still include part of the creamery building. The current owner of this property reported that these walls include the foundation for the ice house. In a house next door to his property, which is apparently one of the buildings shown on the 1903 map as being owned by Borden's, he described old documents from the Borden company that were found stuffed in the walls. He described this house as having been built as offices for Borden's and designed as such.

### **Railroads, stations and related facilities nearby**

There was a railroad spur from the New York, Ontario and Western Railway along the northeast side of what is now NYS Rt. 208 (Lathrop 1903). This line ran alongside the creamery and ice house and was clearly used to transport milk products to market. (It also seems likely that ice from the ice pond was used to keep products cool during transport.) The Lehigh & Hudson Railway crossed the Ontario & Western at Burnside Station, the namesake of Station Road nearby. The Ontario & Western Railway Historical Society website includes listings for two rail-related facilities near Burnside, at the *O&W By The Mile* page, one called Burnside Station and the other Burnside Tower. See <http://owrhs.comp-wiz.com/new/index.php/the-ow/mileposts-stations-towers-junctions-telegraph-calls>

In a conversation, Matt Kierstead of Milestone Heritage Consulting, who specializes in cultural resources assessment, noted that the Maybrook rail yard was the largest rail yard in the Northeast U.S. Maybrook is not far from Burnside, so milk products may have been shipped from this location through Maybrook to areas farther away. Another old railroad right-of-way that runs north-south is located just west of the upstream end of Brown's Pond, and this rail corridor is shown on the tax parcel map and is visible in aerial images. It is no longer used and the tracks that presumably crossed Rt. 207 at grade west of Brown's Pond are no longer visible along Rt. 207.

### **II. NY State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation response**

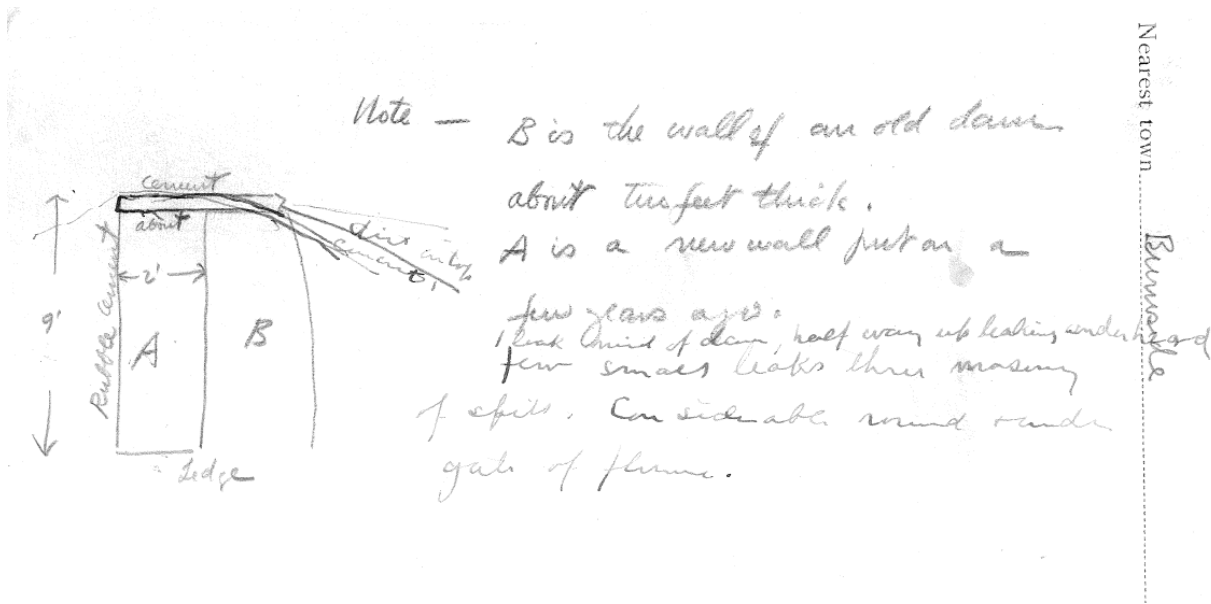
In a letter responding to a request for information about this site for the current dam study referenced above, the NY State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation stated that the office reviewed this project in accordance with Section 14.09 of the New York Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law and relevant implementing regulations. They concluded that:

*“Based on the Department of Environmental Conservation's delineation of the project area, which encompasses areas upstream from the dam, the project lies in an archeologically sensitive area. Once a project design is developed, OPRHP recommends further consultation with this office to identify areas that should be subject to archeological examination.*

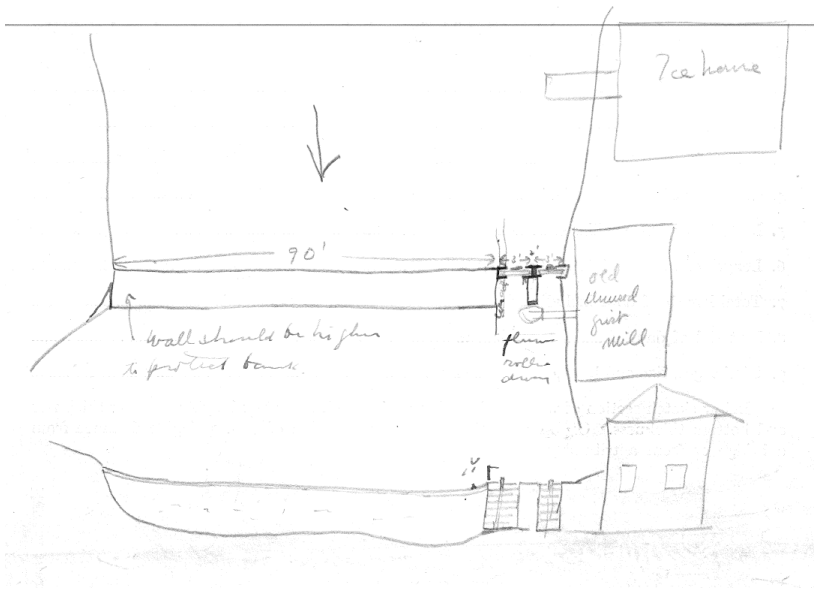
*“OPRHP recommends that the dam itself, as an architectural feature, is not eligible for listing on the State or National Registers of Historic Places.” (Letter from Philip Perazio dated November 7, 2014.)*

**Attachment 1 to Historic Resources Assessment Report for Brown's Pond Dam Study – annotated compilation of sketches from 1912 report from NYS DEC**

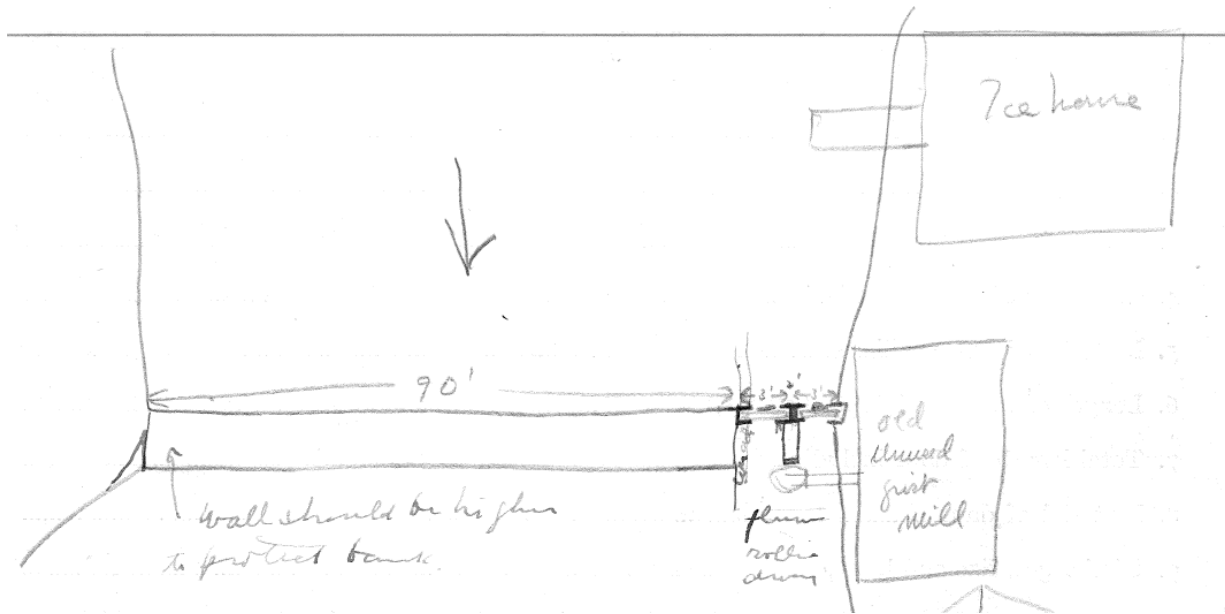
This is a compilation of sketches from the 1912 report about the Brown's Pond dam in Hamptonburgh, NY, aka Burnside Pond, annotated with captions to help understand what these sketches illustrate and how they're relevant for understanding certain details about the dam's history, construction, etc. The report lists the nearest town as Burnside, and aside from listing the Borden Milk Co. as the owner, there is no other information about the dam's location in the report.



The drawing above is one of the sketches in the two-page report about the Brown's Pond dam dated July 19, 1912, which was obtained from the files of the NY State DEC Dam Safety Section in 2014. As is listed in this 1912 report, DEC lists the original construction date for this dam as being "about 1800", the uses of the impounded water as being "Ice Pond and old grist mill," and the owner as being Borden's Milk Co., 108 Hudson St. NY City. Notably, the sketch on the first page, above, shows two parts of the dam, labeled A and B, and the note above states: "B is the wall of an old dam about two feet thick. A is a new wall put on a few years ago." It is believed that the new wall was built on the downstream side of the old dam, and that as part of this project, the height of the dam was raised. In the sketch above, the height of the dam is shown as being 9'.



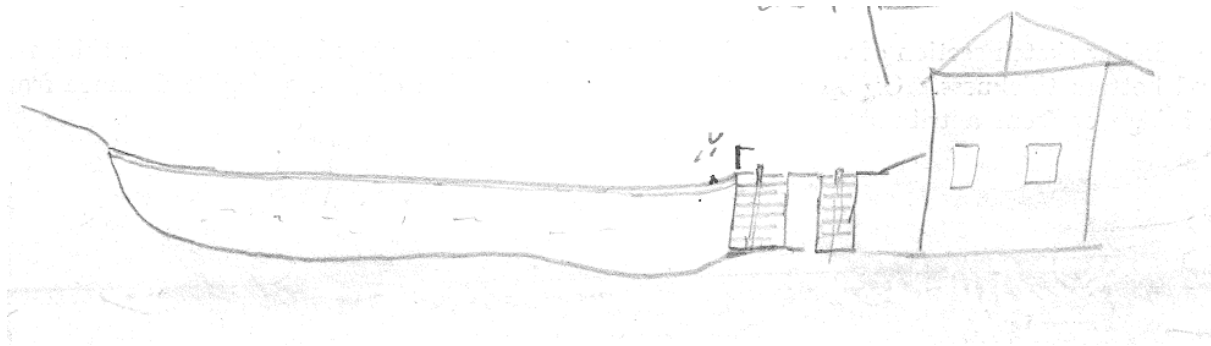
The sketch above is from the second page of the 1912 report, and is shown above in its entirety for context regarding the details below about what this sketch contains. It seems this includes two separate drawings, as described below.



The portion of the sketch shown above (from the upper portion of the full sketch above) apparently depicts a plan view (i.e., as if looking down from directly overhead) of the dam, together with the “old unused grist mill” and the Ice house on the right side of the drawing. Also visible in this sketch is the gate structure that’s still visible in the dam in 2014, at the right side of the drawing next to the grist mill. Based on oral history information collected from local residents who have lived nearby for several generations, this gate was used to lower the water level in the pond each summer in anticipation of harvesting ice the following winter, to control weed growth near the surface of the pond so that harvested ice would not

Brown's Pond Dam Study – Historic Resources Assessment Final Report 12/07/2014

contain weeds in it. By showing the gate structure as visible and exposed, with the old grist mill adjacent but not covering it, this drawing may contradict other available information compiled for this report, a photo showing the dam, the old mill building and the ice house, and in this photo the gate is not visible and the mill house looks like it extends over part of the dam and presumably the gate is enclosed inside it.



This portion of the sketch taken from page 2 of the 1912 report shows the lower portion of that sketch. This drawing is apparently a side view from the perspective of someone standing downstream of the dam, showing the face of the dam, and on the right side the gate structure and the mill building. As noted above about the other portion of this sketch, this lower section also shows the gate structure as visible and not enclosed by the mill building.

**Attachment 2 to Historic Resources Assessment Report for Brown's Pond Dam Study – notes on ice harvesting process**

The photo on page 7, above, and below for reference, was provided by Charles "Chuck" Rowe and his wife Jo, from his father's collection, showing the Brown's Pond dam, the building that apparently housed the mill at this site, and in the background the ice house with the conveyor system used to move ice over the road and into the house. His father worked on harvesting ice from the pond in his youth. As reported by Mr. Rowe, they used gas-powered saws to cut most of the way through the ice to make smaller blocks that might have been 1-2 feet on a side, but did not cut all the way through, leaving these blocks connected in larger sections. These larger sections were moved towards the conveyor using horses. At the conveyor, which was powered by a John Deere H engine, they'd finish separating the individual blocks using a metal tool driven by hand to break them along the pre-cut lines, and then load them onto the conveyor to carry them into the ice house.

To avoid any weeds in the ice, the water level in the pond was managed during the season by lowering the level sometime later in the warm season so weeds would die back, then they would let the pond fill up again before winter. This prevented weeds in the top layers of pond water when ice froze.

The article in Evening News from 1989, This is Burnside, cites a date of c. 1950 when the ice house was burned intentionally by the Otterkill Engine Company, but Chuck Rowe said he remembers it burning and he was born in 1952 so he says it was later than this. Chuck and Jo Rowe had one of their first dates rowing on the pond and had to lean down low to get under a bridge just upstream at the golf course, she said wistfully at the September 2014 meeting about possible dam removal. At the Nov. 12 meeting, they said the Rowe family's been on their farm for 7 generations now.

