

LIVERMORE FALLS GORGE: A TIMELINE

[Originally known as Little's Falls after Moses Little]

- pre-1750 Evidence of indigenous Native population who must have fished for salmon/shad/alewives at the falls. Early settlers and the king's agents recorded finding fields of corn on the interval just below the falls. Native artifacts have since been uncovered at numerous sites all along the Pemigewasset River.
- 1750 Samuel Lane, as the King's surveyor, starts survey of what is to become New Holderness starting The Great Falls (Livermore) arriving June 25. He puts into the river 10 miles below the falls and enters the following in his log: *...having thus traveled and viewed the country, we judge the land will admit of 4 good townships...two on each side of the river; two of which may be laid out above the great falls, one on the W side, and the other on the East Side...also two below the great falls...*(1st New Holderness Charter)
- "...and you came here believing this to be a vacant country?" – Abenaki tribeswoman to an English settler
- 1751 The first charter of New Holderness to Thomas Shepard and 60 other proprietors to run along the East side of the Pemigewasset River starting at the great falls and to be 6 miles by 6 miles in area lapses when no one settles.
- 1752 24 October. Second survey to subdivide New Holderness Township into lots and ranges. Lane is joined by surveyor Joseph Blanchard.
- 1759 Defeat of the French by the British at Quebec makes New Holderness safe to settle.
- 1761 Charter for establishment of New Holderness is regranted by Royal Gov. Benning Wentworth in Portsmouth...*Beginning at a red oak tree at the foot of the Great Falls, thence running E 6 miles...*
- 1763 End of Seven Years (French & Indian) War. Region now safe to settle.
- 1771 Moses Little purchases thousands of acres around the falls. Water power allows for establishment of saw and grist mills.
- 1773 A grist mill is constructed at Livermore Falls by _____
- 1788 State's first fish hatchery is built on the E side below the falls to encourage salmon runs.
- 1827 Judge Arthur Livermore acquires the Moses Little property on Pemi River

naming the falls after himself. The Little house (built in 1786) passes through several hands including the Holmes (Academy?) family on land of the original Sceva Speare Hospital on Rte. 3 at the Plymouth/Campton Town Line. It became known as the Riverview Hotel before becoming a hotel. Arthur then sells land around falls to James Joy, a Pittsfield farmer.

- 1850 James Joy sells land to James Whitten for use as a railroad right-of-way north of Plymouth to the J.E. Henry mill in Lincoln and hotel.
- 1870 Eastman's White Mountain Guide lists Livermore Falls and "...wild and romantic scenery...not surpassed..."
- 1869 A replacement bridge is constructed by Holderness, Plymouth and Campton which lasts only 14 years. (see photo)
- 1886 The Berlin, Connecticut Iron Bridge Company, builds for \$7,100 a 263 ft. long double-span inverted deck truss 'Pumpkinseed' structure 103 ft above the water which today is the only one remaining. It is closed in 1959 by cutting loose and dropping the easterly span which remains there to this day.
- 1875-95 Heath & Sons establish tannery on East side of river.
- 1877 First N.H. state fish hatchery is constructed on the E side below the falls with help from the Massachusetts Fishery Commission..
- 1888 A paper pulp mill in constructed on the W side of the gorge by Arthur Momans but it is destroyed by fire the following year.
- A replacement pulp mill was constructed by the Fibrewood Company but that too burned in 1890, and again in 1894.
- 1889 A much larger capacity pulp mill was built upstream by the J.E. Henry Co. and later taken over by Parker Young Corp. in 1917 remaining in production without fires until the 1950s.0
- 1899 J.E. Henry buys the gorge property, constructs 5-story pulp masonry mill.
- _____ Baker State Forest established
- 1917- Parker Young Company buys out J.E. Henry
- 1950s Pulp mill ceases operation. Is later torched by vandals.

- 1959 Iron bridge across gorge is closed to traffic. The E span is cut loose and dropped, remaining wrought iron is sold to a local scrap dealer who only removes the decking and some railing.
- 1962 Holderness 'Townscape' study by U/Conn Profs. Rudy Favretti and John Alexopolis hails Livermore Falls as a "priceless natural asset"
This study is underwritten by Spaulding-Potter Charitable Trust and becomes a template for *townscape* planning.
- 1973 Dam and power house are destroyed by flooding of the river.
- 1978 Legislation by Rep. M. Taylor (R-Holderness) establishes the *Livermore Falls Gorge Study Commission*. State Sen. Ray Conley (R-Sandwich) eventually becomes its chairman.
- 1988 Proposal for a hydroelectric power plant is denied by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission following numerous hearings
Would have flooded parts of Campton Lower Village and as far upstream as North Woodstock.
- 1989 (March 12) Campton Town Meeting votes not to continue participating in the Pemi River Study; supports hydro study instead.
- 1991 Pemi R. is nominated for inclusion in the N.H. Rivers Management and Protection Program in opposition to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hearings on the hydro-power potential of Livermore.
- 1990 (Aug. 10) Pres. G.W. Bush signs into law the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Pemi W&S study authorized by Congress, to take 3 years by National Park Service.
- 1991 (May 1) State Sen. Mark Hounsel enters HB 674 to preclude any dam on the river. Legislative hearing raises question of whether the river belongs to riparian land owners or to the people of N.H.
- (Oct. 11) Letter from National Hydro Pres. Robert L. Winship taking issue with objectives of the Pemigewasset River hearings..
- 1992 N.H. Dept. of Resources and Economic Development purchases from Gary Farina 41.8a around Livermore Falls Gorge with Land Conservation Investment Program funds compromising two miles of river frontage and 35.4a in Holderness, 6.4a in Campton & 2.5a between Rte. 3 and the former Boston & Maine (now state-owned) railroad tracks. as per the Aug. 12 Governor & Council approval, all for \$393,500.

- 1992 PSC Prof. Dave Switzer (PSC) leads Wild & Scenic Rivers study of area around the gorge for the National Park Service with Gary Weiner of that agency as project director.
- 1993 Hearings on Wild & Scenic designation of Pemi river held in Thornton, Campton, Plymouth, Holderness, Ashland, Bridgewater and New Hampton.
- 2004 New Hampshire Pavilion at the Eastern States Exposition (Big-E) features Livermore Falls in its listing of places to visit.
- 2012 With Executive Councilor Ray Burton, Holderness police visit the site to discuss area's misuse and resulting enforcement challenges.
- 2013 PSU students take part in community survey on attitudes of Livermore Falls, help with clean-ups.
- Friends of the Pemi/Livermore Chapter is formed to substitute stewardship for defensive position.
- \$10,000 grant is received from NH/VT Chapter of Rotary International to reboot interest in Livermore Falls Gorge.

Sources: Campton Historical Society
 Ruell, David, Ashland, N.H.
 State of New Hampshire, Div. Historic Resources
 Local town reports
 Upper Pemigewasset Historical Society, Lincoln
 N.H. Dept. of Transportation, Division III
 U.S. Forest Service, White Mt. National Forest
 Plymouth Historical Society
 Former employees