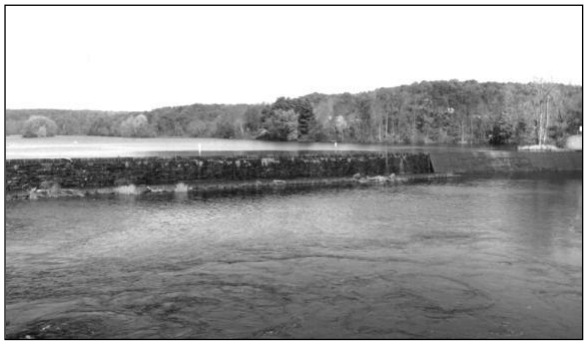
National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
Occum Hydroelectric Plant and Dam
Norwich, Connecticut

As part of a re-licensing process, the City of Norwich, working with the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, arranged for AHS Senior Historian Bruce Clouette, Ph.D., to prepare a National Register of Historic Places nomination form for its hydroelectric facility located in the Occum section of Norwich. In addition to a small early 20th-century brick powerhouse, the complex included a stone dam and headgate structure that had been built in 1865 to power a nearby textile mill. The dam's spillway is 450 feet in length and is constructed of large granite blocks; some 170 feet were washed away by the Hurricane of 1938 and rebuilt using reinforced concrete.



The Occum dam (1865), with the portion rebuilt in concrete after the 1938 Hurricane on the right.

Powerhouse, 1934.

The National Register document explains the property's significance as an example of 19th-century civil engineering by a prominent Connecticut engineer, Henry T. Potter (1821-1897); as a historic resource that recalls the all-important role played by the textile industry in the economic history of eastern Connecticut; and as an example of early 20th-century hydroelectric engineering practice.

Following approval of the nomination by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Board, the property was listed on the National Register on December 6, 1996 as a complex that included the dam, headgates, powerhouse, and internal machinery and fixtures.

The powerhouse contains a single generating unit,an 800kw alternator made by the Electric Machine Manufacturing Company of Minneapolis.

AHS CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT