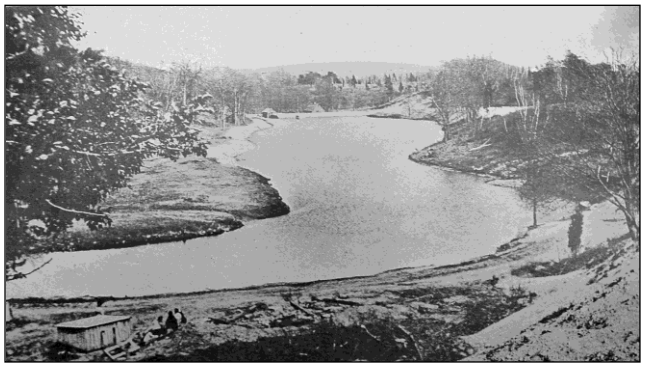
Norwich State Hospital Dams and Reservoirs
Norwich and Preston, Connecticut

As part of the historical and archaeological services for the disposition of the former Norwich State Hospital property, AHS prepared written and photographic documentation of a number of historic resources, including the hospital's water-supply system. The work required on-site investigation of the various water-supply features, digital photography, and research using archival maps and photographs and the hospital's annual reports. The hospital's water supply system was started while the hospital buildings themselves were going up (1906). A dam was constructed across a stream east of the hospital, creating a reservoir of some 6 million gallons. The water was pumped from the main reservoir to a smaller gravity reservoir on a nearby hill, which provided the necessary water pressure for the system. Within two years, it became apparent that the stream could not provide enough water, so the first of numerous deep wells were sunk, necessitating adding a series of pump houses to the system. In 1916 the dam was raised, nearly doubling the size of the reservoir. Finally, in 1920, the hospital connected to the Norwich municipal water supply, necessitating the construction of a large cylindrical metal water tower and associated brick pump house/transformer building; the hospital maintained the earlier water-supply features as a back-up system.



Main reservoir shortly after its completion in 1906.

In addition to written descriptions of the dams, outflow structures, pump houses, and other associated features, the report included a history of the water-supply system, reproductions of archival photographs and maps, 18 digital photographs documenting the resources, and an evaluation of the significance of the system and its components (the recommendation was that the system had historical interest, but was probably not National Register-eligible).

Gravity reservoir outflow structure.

Typical deep-well pump house.

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