

Preface

In writing a history of Underhill, it is impossible to leave out the section of Jericho known as Riverside, which is so intimately associated physically, economically and socially with the area of Underhill referred to as Underhill Flats. Riverside is a small area adjacent to the Town of Underhill and separated from larger Jericho by a curve in the Browns River.

Here were located the Methodist and Episcopal churches, the Waters Library, a major sawmill, a creamery, the Dixon House Hotel which was the social hub of the region for so many years, and a stagecoach stop along the major highway north to Cambridge, the pharmacy, the GAR Hall, a movie theater, the Mansfield Women's Club, the B&L Railroad line from Burlington, several stores and craft businesses and more. While most of the historical enterprises are gone, Riverside is still closely associated with Underhill Flats, sharing a water district and a school district. The two towns share the Underhill-Jericho Fire Department, the new Deborah Rawson Library, and the Jericho Underhill Boy Scouts. The ID (Incorporated District) School, the Chittenden East District's Browns River Middle School, the Rawson Library and much of Mills Riverside Park also serve both towns but are actually located in Riverside.

When Underhill and Jericho were chartered within a day of each other in 1763, little attention was paid to the nature of the land which was subdivided. As Underhill and Jericho grew into real towns, it was the local topography that was important to the residents, not the boundary that separated them for the purposes of municipal governance. Buildings and a park came to straddle the town line and no one in Underhill Flats or Riverside paid much attention. No one knew how Underhill Flats, the economic and social focus of the town of Underhill, was municipally related to the Riverside area of Jericho – or cared.

The differences became noticeable only as land grew in value, taxes escalated, and the two towns began Planning and Zoning, wherein the municipal governance in the two towns was not always the same and when larger, modern school districts were created which encompassed both towns. The differences in listing and taxation and zoning became problems. The ID School created problems for both towns as to which resident could vote on which issues at town meeting.

The historical ignorance of the Town boundary which essentially merged Riverside with Underhill Flats seem to remain, even though the map boundary separating Underhill and Jericho has been well established.