

Quabbin Voices

The Friends of Quabbin Newsletter



Summer 2020
Vol.33 No.2

We must hear and listen to all of Quabbin's many Voices. Voices of the Past, as well as Voices of the Present and of the Future. Voices of the Trees, the Sky, the Rain that falls, and all the Wild Things; Voices of the People who depend on this valuable resource for their daily needs of clean water, and Voices of those who draw upon it for deeper needs of the Soul.

—Les Campbell

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All meetings and events may be cancelled due to the Coronavirus. Check the organization's web page or call beforehand.



The Digital Access Project—Part 2: How It Happened

by Sean M. Fisher

The Beginning of the Photographic Documentation 1895-1926

What you are now able to see as the online compilation of thousands of photographs taken of the real estate and cemeteries of the Swift River Valley prior to Quabbin Reservoir represents a long history of novel and fortuitous initiative, hard work, tedious cataloging and preservation and long-term care of the resource. In Part 2 of this presentation on the Quabbin collection, we introduce you to the effort required up to the age of digitization.

Between 1895 and 1947, four related state agencies within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts created about 26,000 unique photographic images of the real estate takings for and construction of the water supply and distribution system for Metropolitan Boston. These include the ones taken for the Quabbin project. Two official print copies were made in addition to other copies for staff use. In total, nearly 100,000 images in negative and print format were potentially created.

Briefly, between 1895 and 1921, the Metropolitan Water Board, and its successors, the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board, and the Metropolitan District Commission's Water Division, created 7,672 sequentially numbered photographs, with the bulk of them (6,000), created prior to 1907.

Known as the Metropolitan Water Works System, these photographs document the real estate takings for and construction and operations of the Wachusett Reservoir, Wachusett

Dam, Wachusett Aqueduct, Sudbury Reservoir, Sudbury Dam, Weston Aqueduct, Weston Reservoir, and the expansion of a water supply distribution system throughout metropolitan Boston, including pipe-lines, pumping stations, reservoirs, and standpipes.

The images of real estate takings include residential homes and buildings, businesses, mills, town buildings, schools, churches, cemeteries, and railroad stations. These images represent the Metropolitan Water Works System prior to the 1926 to 1940 expansion of the system that included the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir, and mostly derive from 7,839 glass plate photographic negatives that survive today, along with each numbered photo print.



Katy Purington (l) and Sean Fisher (r) with original camera #2 used for Swift River Valley pictures.

By 1985, this photograph collection had been split across seven different agencies and organizations. It is included in the Digital Commonwealth Collection. (continued on p.10)



Gene Theroux

President's Message

Summer 2020

Quabbin to cancel annual events such as the Annual Meeting and the Memorial Day Services at Quabbin Park Cemetery. Personal losses of family members and friends and other tragedies have touched all of us. Over the past few months, we have lost many friends, heroes, and family members (see the In Memory section in this issue). I am saddened to report the



Dottie Bish and Earl Cooley

The last several months have been difficult for all of us. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted each of us personally and organizationally, the pandemic caused the Friends of Quabbin to cancel annual events such as the Annual Meeting and the Memorial Day Services at Quabbin Park Cemetery. Personal losses of family members and friends and other tragedies have touched all of us. Over the past few months, we have lost many friends, heroes, and family members (see the In Memory section in this issue). I am saddened to report the passing of heroes, such as Raymond Cook and Earl L. "Bumpa" Cooley both of whom were members of America's greatest generation and veterans of WWII. Most recently, Dorothy "Dottie" Jasnocha Bish died on May 27, 2020. Dottie Bish and Earl Cooley had both been active members of the Tuesday Tea group and both will be missed.

Even more recently, our Vice-President, Cindi LaBombard, died on July 1, 2020. Her untimely death shocked us all.



Left to right: Mike Knodler, Jane Johnston Knodler, Dan Jamroz, Ellen Johnston Jamroz. Sisters Jane and Ellen are granddaughters of Robert Victor and May Louise Johnston, daughters of Samuel Ervine and Florence Louise Lamotte Johnston.

I've had the opportunity to spend some time in the beautiful Quabbin Park Cemetery on multiple occasions after it was reopened and before the Memorial Day holiday. On one of those occasions, I met the granddaughters (Jane and Ellen) of former Smith Village resident and WWI veteran, Robert V. Johnston. Jane Johnston Knodler with husband Mike and Ellen Johnston Jamroz with husband Dan were at Quabbin Park Cemetery visiting the Johnston family gravesites of their grandparents and parents and having little family picnic at the cemetery.

Jane and Ellen's grandfather Robert Victor Johnston was one of fifty-one residents from Enfield who served during World War I. The names of the fifty-one WWI veterans are on the Enfield Honor Roll that is on the Quabbin Park Cemetery



A Johnston family photo in Enfield. Left to Right Back Row: May Louise (Erving) and Robert Victor; Middle Row: Samuel Erving and Betty Jane; Front Row: Robert Phillip and Roberta

Administrative Building. In 1917, Robert V. Johnston married May L. Ervine; he became a member of the Enfield Bethel Masonic Lodge and enlisted in the United States Navy that same year. Robert Johnston served his country in the United States Navy as a Yeoman during the war. After the war, Robert had a passion for hunting and fishing which took him all over the townships of Enfield, Greenwich, Prescott, and portions of Pelham. Robert and May Johnston would take their children on family trips and picnics to Enfield.

Robert settled in Springfield and became a member of American Legion Post 21 and was elected as the American Legion Post 21 Commander on October 4, 1934. While in Springfield, he became owner of Smith Carriage Company



Robert Victor Johnston, American Legion Post 21 Commander (ca. 1934)

which was a custom auto body repair shop. Past Commander Johnston was one of many Post 21 Past Commanders and officers who helped plan, organize, and to host the American Legion Department of Massachusetts Annual Convention in 1936. The award winning American Legion Post 21 Drum and Bugle Corps performed in many parades and competitions including the 1936 Department Convention parade in Springfield. There were 72 members of the American Legion Post 21 Drum and Bugle Corps unit including my maternal grandfather Francis Charles Parker, who grew up in Enfield on Hill Street.



*Right: Francis Charles Parker
Francis Charles Parker
(right), member of American
Legion Post 21 Drum and
Bugle Corps.*

Robert V. and May Johnston's son Samuel "Sam" Ervine Johnston and his wife Florence are interred in the Johnston family plot at Quabbin Park Cemetery. Sam and his wife Florence were both members of America's Greatest generation during WWII. Sam served as a Sonarman with the United States Navy on the U.S.S. Davis, a Destroyer built at the Bath Iron Works (Bethel, Maine), that performed patrol and escort duties in the Caribbean and last performed escort duties from New York to English ports and participated in the D-Day invasion of Normandy. Florence served in the United States Marine Corps during World War II stationed at Cherry Point, NC. Upon returning to Western Massachusetts after WWII. Sam completed his Bachelor of Arts degree at Williams College and a Master of Education at Westfield State University. He retired after a long successful career teaching sixth grade at Frank H. Freedman Elementary School in Springfield. Sam married the love of his life, Florence, Thanksgiving Day on Nov. 27, 1947.

They chose the Thanksgiving holiday for the day of their wedding because they could think of no other thing than having found each other, for which they were most thankful. Together they had seven children, 23 grandchildren and 32 great grandchildren.

On another visit to Quabbin Park Cemetery, I found Jenny Kirley hard at

work maintaining flowers at the gravesites of her parents, Frances Elizabeth Griswold and Benjamin W. Kirley, and her aunt Eleanor Griswold Schmidt. Jenny also paid tribute to her uncle Edward "Sarge" F. Griswold who is interred a short distance from his sister Eleanor. Jenny and her sister Sandra normally attend each Memorial Day Services at Quabbin Park Cemetery and each sister has participated in the placement of the wreaths for either the town of Prescott or the Eleanor Schmidt memorial bench. Jenny's uncle Edward "Sarge" Griswold served in the United States Air Force for twenty years and retired as a Technical Sergeant. Jenny and Sandy's father Benjamin W. Kirley who served in the United States Army during WWII and was a member of America's greatest generation.



Cousins Lorraine Lynch and Cheryl Sawicki planting flowers at their family plot with family member Emma Weaver supervising.

On my visits to Quabbin Park Cemetery, I witnessed many families who had come to the cemetery to plant flowers at their loved one's gravesites. The new well and water distribution system installed at Quabbin Park Cemetery with its four strategically placed spigots were used by visitors to water the recently planted flowers. There is plenty of water pressure available from the new well for both watering of plants and cleaning of stonework. For cleaning stones, it is important to apply for and receive an approved Intent to Clean Stonework form from DCR/Quabbin prior to any cleaning. The Intent to Clean Stonework form is available at: <http://www.foquabbin.org/stoneworkclean.pdf> The process is defined in the Quabbin Park Cemetery Management and Operations Manual that is available at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/quabbin-park-cemetery-management-plan/download>. Cleaning must follow the procedures defined in that manual. If you want to clean your family memorial stones, you must obtain a signed Intent to Clean Stonework form by completing the form and sending it to Dan Clark at DCR, Quabbin. If you wish to ask the Friends of Quabbin to help with the cleaning, obtain the signed form and send a copy to Gene Theroux at the Friends of Quabbin address shown on the newsletter or to his home address shown under the Board of Directors listing.



Jenny Kirley and Gene Theroux

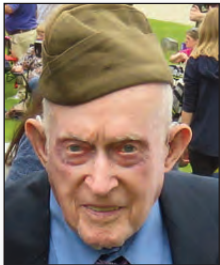
The Friends of Quabbin would like to again express our sincere appreciation to the Fred Lansky of the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority “MWRA”, the MWRA Board of Directors, including Jennifer Wolowicz, the statutory representative of the Connecticut River Basin Trust Board, the MWRA Advisory Board, to DCR, and all who helped to make a suitable water supply at beautiful and historic Quabbin Park Cemetery a reality.

I also met April Burke Driscoll of Belchertown, a Find-a-Grave contributor, taking photographs of gravestones in Quabbin Park Cemetery. She is using my photo shield to capture the inscriptions on the tombstone. April is contributing by helping to capture images of the missing 1,800 photographs of headstones or footstones for memorials in Quabbin Park Cemetery contained on the Find-a-Grave website.

April Burke Driscoll photographing a memorial for Find-a-Grave.



A Remembrance of Some Friends We've Lost Recently



Earl Cooley, originally from Dana
October 4, 1924 – April 25, 2020.
Regular at Tuesday Teas.



Larry Lowenthal,
March 12, 1940 – March 20, 2020.
One of the major interviewers in
the Friends Oral History effort.



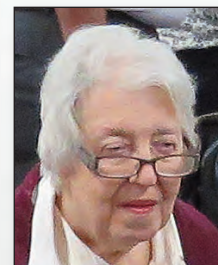
Dorothy Bish, originally from Enfield.
March 30, 1934 – May 27, 2020,
86 years old.
Regular at Tuesday Teas.



Raymond Cook, originally from Enfield.
August 21, 1924 – March 8, 2020.
Honoree at Enfield Bicentennial
Anniversary.



Rob Cox, died May 11, 2020,
61 years old. Head of Special
Collections and University Archives,
University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



Cynthia (Cindi) D. LaBombard from
Ware. August 23, 1946 – July 1, 2020,
73 years old.
Friends of Quabbin Vice-President.

In Remembrance

Over the past two years, family and friends have donated to the Friends of Quabbin in memory of the following:
Brandon Conroy, Dottie Bish, Eugene Robitaille, Gerald Paquette, Sr.,
John Paul Flamand, Stephen Huntington, and Richard Parker

We are deeply sorry for their loss, hope that our small but sincere expression of sorrow helped them through the time, and thank them for their donation.

Life at the Eagle's Nest

by Anne Ely

The warm sun filters down through the trees
 That sway to and fro in a gentle breeze.
 Big puffy white clouds go scudding by
 Enhancing the beauty of clear blue sky
 I keep my eyes glued to a tall pine
 And position myself in a straight line
 For the best view of the nest that's there.
 It's an eagles' nest, constructed with care
 Amid sturdy branches deep and wide
 It's safe and secure for the chicks inside.
 For the chicks have hatched now, I can tell;
 Tiny cheeps and squawks tell me all is well.
 But Mom's restless and she scans the sky
 Dad's late with lunch, too much time has gone by.
 It's always a worry 'til he's here
 And she does seem a bit concerned, 'tis clear,
 But wait, here he comes, flying in low
 With a good catch; time for the lunch-time show.
 The once peaceful scene is now hopping
 The chicks want their food and there's no stopping
 The increasing volume of their cries
 Dad's done his job so off again he flies
 But Mom's ok with the job ahead
 It's not the first time that these chicks she's fed.
 Although to me it doesn't seem fair
 That the biggest chick gets the biggest share,
 But I sit and watch as with her beak,
 She tears off bits of food that the chicks seek.
 Soon their cries cease and there's not a peep
 Their crops are full, the chicks are fast asleep.
 Mom relaxes and begins to preen
 Leaving me to smile at what I've just seen.
 While the warm sun is still shining down
 And the puffy white clouds still hang around.
 The trees are still swaying to and fro
 As the gentle breeze continues to blow.
 Before long all will be repeated;
 The chicks will be clamoring to be fed,
 And whether I will be here or not,
 Mom and Dad will still give it their best shot.



Interpretive Services Report

Summer 2020

by Paul Godfrey

Clif Read Retires!

There's been a major change in interpretive services at the Quabbin. Clif Read has retired after 32 years as director of Interpretive Services for the Division of Watershed Management at Quabbin. This role was a new one created by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) following the creation of the Friends of Quabbin and agreement between the Friends and the MDC to support a visitor center. The Friends operated the visitor center for 2 years (1986-1988) with volunteers, but gaps in coverage made it clear that professional staff would be better. Clif was hired in March 1988, in part to solve the manpower problem at the visitor center. As part of his role as the first Director of Interpretive Services, he hired Terry Campbell who had been a key visitors center volunteer, in effect the manager, and Jim Lafley as Program Coordinators. Later that spring, he added Dale Monette, who shared time between Interpretive Services and the wildlife section.

While the primary motivation to create the position may have been operation of the visitors center, Clif was hired to also add or expand other aspects: implementation of education programs, coordination with the media and outreach; all tasks that were minimally conducted prior to the creation of his position. Each of those aspects had many facets that could have been ignored or treated in a routine way. Instead, he has done it in a creative way that involved many other groups and individuals, in a way that helps insure the long-term viability of each approach.

For example, the original property photos collected during the creation of the Quabbin have been carefully cared for and displayed for visitors to view. More importantly, visitor center staff have provided copies of the photos and any other information to those pursuing their family history in the Swift River Valley. Clif also worked closely with the Massachusetts DCR archivist Sean Fisher for many years to make those photos



available on the web, a development that has come to fruition very recently (see Digital Collection article in this issue).

Another example is his nurturing of the Tuesday Tea group. Initially started by Terry Campbell, it has been maintained even after her departure. The Christmas Party has been a mainstay, started by Terry Campbell but continued by Clif, including the traditional cake from La Florentine that Clif has personally ordered. Recently, Tuesday Tea Treks have enabled participants to visit many historic sites.

Clif worked with Lois Barnes on the Swift River Valley Oral History Project to capture and preserve the stories and memories of the former Swift River Valley residents, visitors and Quabbin Project workers. He worked with Lois and Lisa Yeisley on the script, design and development of the tape/CD that used excerpts from different interviews. Under his supervision, all the oral history tapes have been converted to CDs and indexed and entered into a searchable database.

He worked with Tom Mahistedt, MDC archeologist, on the development of a Cultural Resources Inventory of Quabbin that documents all of the known cultural sites/resources with the Reservation. It serves for the long-term protection of these resources.

Clif served as MDC/DCR liaison to the Friends of Quabbin, Inc. and Swift River Valley Historical

Society and attended their Board of Director and annual meetings to report on the activities of the agency. On occasion, he even filled in as editor of the *Quabbin Voices* during editorship gaps. In 2016, He formed a working group of DCR staff and Friends of Quabbin and Swift River Valley

Historical Society to plan the bicentennial of the creation of the town of Enfield. From porta-potties and tents to speakers,



From porta-potties and tents to speakers,

fire trucks, Native American dances, various historic war re-enactors, birthday parties and even old-time baseball, the smooth coordination of these groups created a fantastic commemorative event.

He has coordinated the planning and organization of the Memorial Day Services at Quabbin Park Cemetery working with the DCR, the Belchertown Veterans Council and other veterans organizations, Friends of Quabbin, Swift River Valley Historical Society, regional state legislative representatives and local historical organizations, the Belchertown Community Band, Belchertown High School and local businesses to create an appropriately sensitive occasion.

He served on the MA Envirothon Committee for nearly 20 years, including chairing it for a handful of years. He coordinated the Envirothon Field Competition Day at Quabbin in 1996 and again in 2015. Once again, he demonstrated the



goal of bringing various groups together from state and federal environmental agencies, conservation/environmental organizations, academic institutions and local governments to create quality learning opportunities for high school aged youth.

For many years, he has worked with the Student Conservation Association to maintain the hiking trails around Quabbin. The SCA's mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of our environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land.

He has given innumerable presentations on watershed management and water quality to school groups of all ages. The Enviroscape provided by the Friends of Quabbin has been a helpful tool in those presentations.



He served on the Steering Committee for the 2002 Canon Envirothon held at Hampshire College. This week-long program for winning teams of the state and provincial competitions for the U.S. and Canada hosted over 500 guests from all over North America and shared our Massachusetts environment with them.

He worked with Natural Resources staff to develop a trail, known as the Forest Stewardship Trail, that highlights different forest management practices and funding opportunities to implement these practices for private land owners.

He conducted annual Breeding Bird Surveys to record nesting bird populations. As he says, "it was always nice to begin your day out in the Reservation at 5 a.m. with a chorus of birds and in some of the most special parts of the watershed."

He worked on the publicity, including an information video, for the Biomass Heating System, a wood chip heating system in use at the Quabbin Administration Building.

There have been some unique challenges. In 1991, a program for a controlled deer hunt at Quabbin began to reduce and manage the deer herd that was altering the habitat in undesirable ways. It was very controversial and elicited very strong statements/opinions on both sides of the issue. Interpretive Services was very involved in implementation of the program, dealing with the press, convening public meetings, etc. Ultimately, the program was expanded to all of the Quabbin and is now an accepted part of deer management in Quabbin.

Equally controversial was the proposed introduction of rattlesnakes to Mt. Zion island for their protection. Based on the successful eagle restoration program, the Endangered Species Program in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife wanted to protect the diminishing population of timber rattlesnakes by locating a new population of them on the isolated island, Mt Zion in Quabbin Reservoir. Interpretive Services provided information to the public and media on the DCR role in the plan. The plan has yet to be implemented.

The discovery of zebra mussels, a species known to clog intake pipes, in western parts of the state resulted in closure to the reservoir to private boats. In order to allow private boat use again, a boat cleaning and certification program was initiated. Interpretive Services was very involved with development of



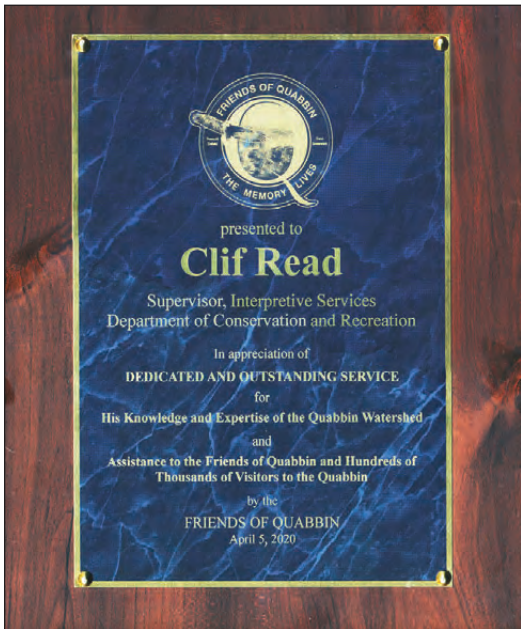
the program and education efforts. The program continues without problem today.

In 2001, the 9/11 attacks drastically altered public access to Quabbin and resulted in closure of the reservation for several months. Keeping the public informed on new restrictions and later partial openings fell to Interpretive Services.

He worked with the Dana Reunion Committee to achieve Dana Center National Historic District designation in 2013 and for years has worked with them and DCR staff on preparations for the annual summer gathering at Dana Common.

He has been an integral part of working committees for the development and writing of different management plans including: Quabbin Park Plan, Land Management Plans, Watershed Protection Plans, Public Access plans for both Quabbin and Ware River water, and Quabbin Facility Use Master Plan.

An avid biker, he has participated in the Around Quabbin annual bike circuit and, once, biked across America with his wife and friends. He had planned to do the latter again but was thwarted by the pandemic.



It was the plan of the Friends of Quabbin Board to present a plaque in recognition of his 32 years of excellent service. That plan fell by the wayside as the pandemic forced the cancellation of our Annual Meeting.

Any sort of physical presentation appropriate for a recognition award by the Friends of Quabbin seemed impossible, except one—the newsletter. *The Friends of Quabbin hereby present to Clif Read this plaque in recognition of his 32 years of excellent service to all those interested in the Quabbin, its history, its environment and its future.*

At this time, Maria Beiter-Tucker is filling in while Clif's replacement is being considered. Since his retirement (but not because of), the Quabbin Visitor Center has been closed with staff working from home. For up-to-date information on access to various aspects of Quabbin, check at www.mass.gov/locations/quabbin-reservoir

'Twas a Virtual Memorial Day

by Paul Godfrey

Planning begins early for the annual Memorial Day commemoration at Quabbin Park Cemetery. At the January meeting of the Friends of Quabbin Board of Directors, the Board approved the purchase of new wreaths to be laid before the town memorials and Eleanor Schmidt bench. The old ones were beginning to show their age. The Friends purchased two Honor and Remember flags to fly starting on that day. Thoughts were given to rousing the volunteers for food to have at the event. Plans were being made by DCR to contact the usual array of speakers, the Belchertown Civic Band and others and orders were placed with the weatherman for a beautiful day.



Gene Theroux, President of Friends of Quabbin, raising the Honor and Remember Flag

But all that planning was quickly undermined by the pandemic. Every public gathering was cancelled. The Quabbin Administration Building was closed to the public and the access road blocked to all but authorized staff. The cemetery gate was locked and all other access to the Quabbin watershed boat ramps, hiking trails, etc. were closed. DCR staff were to work from home. Friends of Quabbin arranged to pick up our mail every two weeks behind the Administration Building where Dan Clark would pass it to me, arms outstretched by both of us. FOQ cancelled its annual meeting and Board meetings.



Keith Poulin, Past Commander of American Legion Post #239

It looked hopeless for a Memorial Day commemoration. The consequences ran deep. Prior residents of the Swift Valley and veterans would not be properly remembered. Further, a codicil of Eleanor Schmidt's will that provided for a distribution from her trust required that the towns and historical society march and carry

their flag in the Memorial Day parade at the Quabbin Park cemetery. But DCR Visitor Center Staff Manager Maria Beiter-Tucker rose to the occasion with a novel plan: a virtual Memorial Day. She also contacted the bank trust officer to see what could be done. I got a request for photos from earlier Memorial Days. And some of the usual participants got asked



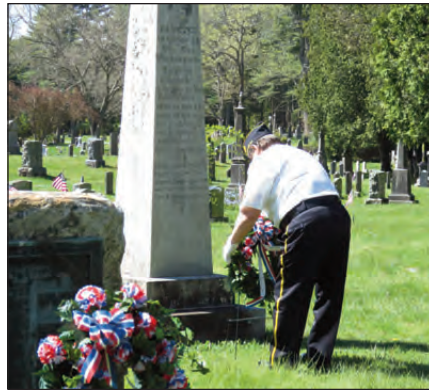
Gene Theroux reading the Gettysburg Address while Maria videotapes



New Wreath



Mary Catherine Knight placing Dana wreath



John Goulette placing Prescott wreath

to participate in video taping the basics of the typical Memorial Day commemoration.

The select few were asked to meet at the Quabbin Park Cemetery on the morning of May 20th for the video-taping. There, socially distanced and masked, the participants raised flags, made their shortened speeches, laid wreaths at the town markers, while Maria videotaped everything on her smartphone. We took one group photo to prove we were all masked except when speaking. The pictures tell the story.

The result was a video that can be seen on either the Friends of Quabbin website, Facebook page, or YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0U-6hqTsm2E>.



*(above) Ray Janke placing wreath at Eleanor Schmidt bench
(left) Dave LaVallee placing the Greenwich wreath*



Senator Ann Gobi



Representative. Susannah Whipps



Gene Theroux placing the Enfield wreath

Digital Access (continued from page 1)

Continuation of the Photographic Archiving Process for Quabbin Reservoir 1927-1947

Whereas the earlier pre-Quabbin collection became divided between 7 entities, for official Quabbin photos, there are only 3: the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Massachusetts State Archives, and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA).

Let me dispel a common myth of Massachusetts 20th century history: the Metropolitan District Commission (the MDC) did not construct Quabbin Reservoir. Yes, the MDC Water Division was a major player in the planning for the Quabbin project during the early 1920s, as the operator of the system. However, the Legislature decided to authorize a new state agency to oversee the capital construction, and then, when completed, turn the new water supply infrastructure over to the MDC Water Division to operate. That new agency was called the Metropolitan District Water Supply Commission, established in 1926. By legislation, its chairman was the MDC Commissioner, thus linking the 2 agencies. This new agency lasted until 1947.

The new agency hired a young engineer who had been with the Metropolitan Water Board on the Wachusett project in the late 1890s to be the chief engineer on the Quabbin project. Frank E. Winsor was a young civil engineer when he worked for the Metropolitan Water Board on the Wachusett project. Between then and 1926, he worked on the Scituate Project, the largest reservoir in Rhode Island. He received his PhD in engineering in 1929 from Brown University. In 1926, he was appointed chief engineer for the Massachusetts Metropolitan District Water Supply Commission and held that position until his death in 1939 at 69 years of age,



Frank E. Winsor when working at the Metropolitan Water Board on the Wachusett Project

In the late 1890s, during the Wachusett Project, he probably witnessed first-hand the value of real estate and construction photography in his profession. As chief engineer for the Quabbin Project, he very early initiated the photography effort that we now find extraordinary. In a May 6, 1927 internal memo, Chief Engineer Winsor recommended the taking of photos of buildings and cemeteries in the Swift River Valley. One month later, in June, based on employment applications coming in, he recommended a Mark L. Dodd as photographer, and outlined the photo work, and set the standard for the use of 5"x7" images. In July, the camera was ordered, along with a photo printing and developing outfit. The 2nd Water Supply Commission Annual Report of 1927 included the first reference to real estate photos being taken in the Swift River Valley.

As for the Metropolitan Water Works, the photographs were mostly taken by low-level engineers employed by the Commission and pressed into photographic service, though Dodd and Burbank did have previous photography experience. Remember that large format photography was not something most people had experience with at that time nor was it as convenient as reaching in your pocket for your smartphone and taking a snapshot. Rather, professional, large format cameras were huge affairs requiring tripods and a nearby dark-room. Unlike the available Brownie cameras that many had, the large format camera requires setting the focus, exposure and shutter speed. It is remarkable that low-level engineers, mostly untrained in photography, got it so right.

Surviving are employee history cards for Water Supply Commission staff. Here is the card for Charles Chetwynd whose job title was "rod man," the fellow who hold the calibrated pole for the surveyor. The employment applications for some employees also survive in the Archives, including for some photographers. There were about 10 major engineering photographers, 8 of whom took photos in the Swift River Real Estate, Quabbin general engineering, cemeteries, and Quabbin Park Cemetery sets.

Employee History Card of Charles Chetwynd, Quabbin Photographer

Unlike the Metropolitan Water Works, which inter-numbered real estate photos with construction photos, mixing them together, the Water Supply Commission divided its photographic documentation into 5 main sets, all with their own sequential numbering system: real estate for Swift River Watershed; real estate for Ware River Watershed, cemeteries for Swift River Watershed, Quabbin Park Cemetery, and contract construction. In a 1930 internal memo, Chief Engineer Winsor outlined the numbering style for each photo set. The Water Supply Commission was also an early adopter of aerial photography as a new means of visual documentation. They used it at 4 different intervals, each with its own numbering system.



An agency darkroom was created in what was then still Enfield, first in downtown Enfield at the Felton and Bartlett Blocks through 1928, then, beginning in 1930, at the agency's joint Chemical, Soil and Photo laboratories, in a former house, called the Barlow House.

A single, 5"x7" view camera was used. A 2nd camera was not purchased until 1937. It is the one between us in the first photo. Its arrival was documented in a photographer's diary. Both cameras used the new photographic film rather than glass plate negatives used before this.



Agfa 5"x7" View Camera #24 used for the Quabbin photography, 1937-1947.

As was learned much later, this nitrate-based film was not stable over time, unlike today's acetate-based film.

All Water Supply Commission photographs share a similar style. They were 5"x7" in negative size. Each image was captioned across the bottom; called titling by the photographers. Each image was numbered in the lower right.



Nearly each caption included the photographer's last name, also usually in the lower right. While the caption style changed slightly over time, it was basically consistent. Nearly all

real estate photos included a chalk board in the image providing real estate and image information. How the chalk board was to be used was outlined in a December 30, 1927 memo. The engineering photographers documented their daily work in annual diaries, some of which survive in the Archives.

For the 2 official sub-sets, the photo prints were backed with a white linen cloth, and mostly stamped in red with the agency's name and Boston office mailing address. Between 1926 and 1947, there were 2 different addresses. The linen cloth had an extra left margin that is 2-holed punched. Fifty consecutively numbered photo prints were loosely bound with brass fasteners and covered with front and back boards with a spine piece added. A label was added to the front cover, providing details about the photo volume; and summarized on the spine. Most importantly, the front cover label identified the sub-set as for the Commission's "Secretary" Office, or for the Commission's "Chief Engineer" Office. This was consistent with how the Metropolitan Water Works made their official sub-sets a generation earlier. The Commission also created a reference sub-set for the field office, known as the triplicate set. These prints are not stamped on the back and have a simpler front cover label.

For the real estate photos, the 2 official sub-sets were also annotated on the print with more specific real estate information. Also, a fourth additional partial sub-set was created using cheaper blueprinting technology. These were taken into the field by the engineers, and marked-up with various annotations. The image quality of the blueprint photos was not as good as standard photo prints.

It should be noted that the Commonwealth is no longer in possession of the complete set for the Swift River Real Estate, with many volumes missing, from

56 of 59 volumes survive from the Reference/Triplicate Set (43 photos are missing within these 56 volumes)
3 volumes are completely missing: Volumes 6, 45, & 55



both the Secretary sub-set, and the Chief Engineer sub-set. In fact, across all 3 sub-sets, 2 volumes are

completely missing. We are hoping that as the public and other organizations see these photographs online, we will be informed of the location of the other missing photo volumes. I will make site visits, and accept anonymous "returns."

The Secretary and Chief Engineer sub-sets for the cemeteries volumes survive in full. Commission staff and engineers, contractors, and the public (mostly local residents) were also permitted to buy photos at 7 cents per print, and did so with varying degrees of quantity. These original prints have no linen cloth backing; they have the standard matte backing of the time.

The situation for the cemeteries and Quabbin Park Cemetery sets is better: the two complete official sub-sets of photo prints survive today.

This provides a quick overview of the incredible resource that we assembled to create the Digital Collection of real estate and cemetery images for Quabbin. In the next issue of the *Voices*, we will describe the steps we took to convert those photos and their accompanying data into that on-line database.

You can look at the database at either of the following:

Swift River Real Estate:

<https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/collections/commonwealth:qr46sf05h>

Cemeteries: <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/collections/commonwealth:76537133j>

Mass. Archives main page: <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/institutions/commonwealth:k35698213>

You can hear and see Sean's presentation at:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/MassEEA> or

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPvfwkHymOc>

About the Author:

Sean Fisher is the general collections archivist for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Prior to DCR's formation in 2005, he was the archivist for the Metropolitan District Commission beginning in 1993. Sean is a graduate of the master's archival management program at Simmons University Library School, and of the public history graduate program at Northeastern University. In his 27 years at MDC and DCR, Sean has visited the Quabbin Administration Building scores of times, cataloging its archival records. He works in DCR's Office of Cultural Resources.

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Call for Member Submissions

This is your newsletter. We invite members to submit stories, articles, or reminiscences about the human or natural history of the Swift River Valley and Quabbin Reservoir.

Please send e-mail to Paul Godfrey at godfrey@umass.edu, or mail items to:
The Friends of Quabbin
485 Ware Road, Belchertown, MA 01007



Quabbin Voices

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of Friends of Quabbin, Inc.

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