

# Quabbin Voices

The Friends of Quabbin Newsletter



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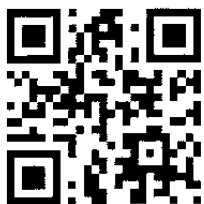
*We must hear and listen to all of Quabbin's many Voices. Voices of the Past, as well as Voices of the Present and of the Future. Voices of the Trees, the Sky, the Rain that falls, and all the Wild Things; Voices of the People who depend on this valuable resource for their daily needs of clean water, 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 3

### From File Boxes to the Internet

by Sean M. Fisher and Katy Purington

#### Initial Steps in the Digital Process by Sean M. Fisher

As described in Part 2 of this series, the earlier images of the Metropolitan Boston water supply and distribution system, exclusive of Quabbin Reservoir, went online in 2014, with supplemental photos in 2015. I began planning for a similar effort on the state-created Quabbin Reservoir photographs in 2014.

In 2014, I inventoried and catalogued nearly all state-created Quabbin photo volumes at our 3 agencies, with additional inventorying in 2019. The cataloging stumbling block for the Quabbin photos is the quantity, 18,000; double from the earlier generation set. Digital imaging of historical photographs requires extensive cataloging for each image. In fact, cataloging takes significantly more time than the physical act of digital imaging. While I undertook most of the cataloging for the 1895–1921 set, my expanded archival management duties since the 2003 creation of DCR did not allow me the time to catalog each Quabbin photo myself.

This is where the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority literally saved the project from endless delay. In spring 2018, MWRA Librarian Karen Graham made an offer to use the library's occasional graduate school paid internship program for cataloging the Quabbin photographs, and that she had a potential candidate for the project: Katy Purington, a student in the library and archives graduate program at Simmons University.

The three of us met, and discussed the idea with our superiors, and met with BPL Digital Services. On July 30, 2018, the metadata project was up and running. We met with the State Archives senior staff in late September. In early October, we submitted a formal application to BPL Digital Services for the project, and for it to be added to their queue.

For a little background, Digital Commonwealth technically began in 2006/07, through the state-wide network of Massachusetts regional library networks. With start-up funding from a federal grant, and through a modest annual membership fee, public libraries would submit historical photos from their local history collections, and the regional library networks would provide digital imaging services, and then host the image collections through a new web portal called Digital Commonwealth.

I am not aware of the details, but this regional library digital imaging service did not last. It was replaced in 2011 by an official partnership with the Boston Public Library. The BPL began developing its own digital services program for internal use in about 2005. By 2010, it was ready to expand its services to other public libraries and archival repositories in the state. After initial start-up funding from a federal grant, the program is now funded through a line item in the annual state budget; called Library of the Commonwealth. Based on a sliding scale and on the size of the institution, there is an annual membership fee for institutions; for DCR, the current rate is \$200. Institutions receive free digital imaging services

*(Continued on page 5)*



Gene Theroux

## President's Message

### Winter 2021

This past year has been difficult for all of us; this pandemic brought tragedies, sorrow, grief with many challenges and difficulties to all of us. The pandemic

has forced all of us to adjust our lifestyle and our plans to respond to lockdowns and restrictions. It does not appear that the Quabbin Visitors Center will be reopening anytime soon.

The pandemic brought opportunities to some, such as to Quabbin Historian and Friends Chairman, J.R. Greene, who took advantage of this time to write his recently published book, *The Old Quabbin Valley in 100 Objects* and to publish his 36th consecutive Quabbin Historical Calendar for 2021.

With the Visitors Center closed, it became difficult to impossible to hold a Board of Directors meeting. Worse yet, the pandemic made our annual meeting completely impossible. Despite being well along in making arrangements for the annual meeting, all was cancelled and our checks returned. This left us with a serious problem that was made worse a couple months later. By circumstance, two of our officer's, President and Treasurer, terms expired in April 2020 along with another Board member. And then in July, another officer, Cindi LaBombard died unexpectedly, leaving us with only Chairman J.R. Greene as an officer. Under normal rules of operation, nearly the entire group of officers of the organization were eliminated by the pandemic.

However, on March 10, 2020 Charles D. Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issued the proclamation that a STATE OF EMERGENCY was effective immediately and will remain in effect until notice is given, pursuant to Governor Baker's judgment, that the STATE OF EMERGENCY no longer exists. This was a critical first step in the survivability of the Friends of Quabbin.

On April 3, 2020 the State Legislature provided the next critical step by approving State Law Act, 2020, Chapter 53. In part, it

"allows a director or officer to continue to serve during the Governor's March 10, 2020 state of emergency and until the director's or officer's successor is elected, appointed or designated; provided that directors and officers whose term is extended pursuant to this section shall continue to serve until the director's or officer's successor takes office, despite the expiration of a director's or officer's term; (iv) allow a director to participate in a regular or special meeting by, or conduct the meeting through the use of, any means of communication by which all directors participating are able to simultaneously communicate with each other during the meeting." In short, this act automatically extends the terms of officers and Board members until 60 days after the end of the State of Emergency that is currently in effect and not likely to go away until we are all vaccinated. It further allows us to have Board meetings by virtual means (Zoom online web conferencing). It reduces the quorum requirements and does several other things that are life savers for small non-profits like us in this difficult time.

But that news was slow to reach us. Yet, with those uncertainties and difficulties of closure of the Visitors Center for the foreseeable future, many of the normal functions of the organization continued without a pause, i.e. the Newsletter. Even when we learned of the two state actions to ease the requirements, we still had to overcome the difficulty of including some Board members without the full capabilities required for a Zoom meeting. Despite it all, the Friends of Quabbin held a Directors meeting on December 3rd, using Zoom to convene our Directors meetings and be able to keep our Directors safe and to comply with the COVID-19 restrictions. During the business meeting, Mark Thompson, a past President of the Friends of Quabbin, volunteered to be the interim Vice President of the Friends of Quabbin until the next annual meeting when we will have our usual election of officers and directors. The Friends of Quabbin is seeking additional members of the Board of Directors. There are opportunities to be an active member or a reserve member. What is a Friend of Quabbin and why be a Friend of Quabbin? Former president of the Friends of Quabbin, Joseph Wm. Russell, wrote a "sense of place," which expresses with clarity and simplicity the spirit of our organization and, particularly members of the Board of Directors.

*"I am a Friend of Quabbin because the very nature of this special place nurtures my mind and renews my spirit. I am a Friend of Quabbin because I subscribe to the belief that in passive recreation I may both best appreciate and yet actively participate in the quiet beauty and unspoken knowledge that surrounds me in this place. I am a Friend of Quabbin because I support the preservation and the protection of this place, and because I believe that education programs about Quabbin offer the strongest guarantee that future generations will see before them the beauty I see today. I am a Friend of Quabbin because I believe that collective friendship produces collective wisdom. And in collective wisdom lies the best approach to the preservation of Quabbin."*

If you share these sentiments and would like to be a Director with the Friends, please contact either Paul Godfrey or myself and we will assist you with any additional information and guide you to becoming a Director.



J.R. Greene with his new book, *"The Old Quabbin Valley in 100 Objects"* and his 36th edition of the *Quabbin Historical Calendar*. Photo courtesy of Springfield Republican.

There is a new book about the Quabbin in the works. Elisabeth “Beth” Rosenberg’s book on the construction of the Quabbin, *Before the Flood*, is due to be published by Pegasus Books this summer. Her focus is on the Quabbin engineers—a subject that historically has not received much attention. Beth is currently a resident of Virginia but lived in Massachusetts for more than 20 years. She has made numerous trips to the area over the years to do research and has attended Quabbin Park Cemetery Memorial Day Services. She has found our catalog of oral histories especially helpful.

Numerous oral history interviews have been added to the Friends of Quabbin Oral History Catalog over the last few weeks. The Oral History Catalog is available from the Oral History tab on the Friends of Quabbin website. One of the interviews now included is that of Willard “Bill” B. Segur Jr., son of the Valley doctor. Historian Larry Lowenthal conducted the interview. Bill was a former resident of Enfield where he spent much of his childhood years hiking the surrounding terrain

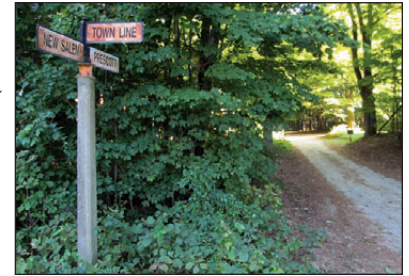


*Historians feted photo 1986 Christmas Party—Left to right: Lois Doubleday Barnes, Andrew White, Bill Segur and Harvey Thresher*

including Mt. Ram and both Little and Great Quabbin Mountains. Bill also worked for the MDWSC (predecessor to MDC and DCR) in a survey team from 1938 to 1942; served in World War II; and for the next 30 years operated a shoe store on Main St. in Ware. His father, Dr. Segur, was a real *ol’ hoss-n’-buggy* doctor. He often took his young son Bill along on his many journeys throughout the Valley making house calls. When it was cold, Bill’s mother, Laura Segur, would bring out a hot brick wrapped in towels to put under the robe in the buggy or sleigh to keep her boy warm on the doctor’s rounds. In these early days, the Doc kept four horses, so he would always have a fresh one for emergency calls. During the interview, Bill stated that his father was one of the first to have an automobile, but that many times the roads were impassible due to ruts and that the doctor was met by a horse and buggy or had to walk the distance to the patient’s home.

Bill Segur served his country during WW II in the U.S. Army and obtained the rank of Private First Class. Bill Segur and his wife Rose were active members of the Tuesday Tea group. They are both interred at Quabbin Park Cemetery.

We recently learned of some troubling news, that of a theft of a historical sign that had been removed off its concrete pole on North Prescott Road in New Salem at gate 20. For years that sign has been right at the sharp corner across from the Mountain View Cemetery before gate 20 at the Quabbin Watershed. It is a three-bladed sign. One says Town Line; one says New Salem; and the third one says Prescott. We suspect the sign has been there since the 1920s or earlier. It was still very readable. It was on top of a ten-foot-high cement post. Four bolts were sticking out of the cement and it was bolted to these four bolts. A DCR ranger reported that someone must have come by and sprayed WD 40 or the equivalent to soak the bolts, then came back, removed the bolts, and took the sign. What a selfish and despicable act of thieving a historical artifact. Our hope is that this sign is returned to its mooring.



In Quabbin Park Cemetery news, a hearty thanks to Bill Cote who singlehandedly replaced each veterans’ flag at Quabbin Park Cemetery for Veterans Day. The existing cemetery flags had been placed prior to Memorial Day and had become stained from biological growth, faded, torn, staff broken or rendered unserviceable from the weather. Bill made two trips to QPC to swap out over 500 flags. On this 75th anniversary of the end of WW II, Bill Cote went the extra mile to ensure that all 125 members of America’s greatest generation were not forgotten.

We received an update from Mr. Fred Laskey, the Director of the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority “MWRA,” on the capital improvement project for Quabbin Park Cemetery. The update from MWRA provided information on the Quabbin Park Cemetery Building Demolition and Hazardous Materials Abatement Project including the schedule for completion. There will be demolition of two old buildings (old pump house and storage shed). There will be lead and asbestos abatement from the QPC administration building (shown below). The maintenance garage (also shown in the picture) and doors on the old receiving vault are scheduled for lead abatement with a



*Quabbin Park Cemetery Administration Building and garage in rear*

completion date of spring 2021. We would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Fred Laskey, the MWRA, the MWRA trust, the MWRA Citizens

Advisory Committee, and to all involved to make the capital improvements at the Quabbin Park Cemetery, a reality. May the year 2021 bring an end to the pandemic and a gradual return to life as we once knew it. The best of health to all and Happy Holidays!

## *Tribute to Les and Terry Campbell*

# Quabbin Visitors Center Re-Naming Project

by Annie Tiberio, Chair of the Les and Terry Campbell Memorial Committee, PVPA President

with committee members:

Anne Ely, (PVPA, FOQ Board, QPG); Paul Godfrey, (FOQ Board, Treasurer & Newsletter Editor); Robert Hallock, (PVPA, FOQ); Luis A. Rodriguez, (PVPA Web Manager)

The Valley has lost Les Campbell, a significant force in the life of the Quabbin and in the evolution of the many groups he founded. Les dedicated 75 years of his 95-year life to all aspects of the Quabbin. We, the beneficiaries of Les's life works, have bonded together to propose a tribute to Les that will be a lasting memory of his contributions to this uniquely wild and special place we know as the Quabbin. Collectively, we are Pioneer Valley Photographic Artists (PVPA), Friends of Quabbin (FOQ) and Quabbin Photo Group (QPG). We are proposing to memorialize Les by re-naming the Quabbin Visitors Center after him and his dear wife, Terry. Both Les and Terry were equally instrumental in nurturing a small idea into reality. Without them, the Visitors Center might never have been born.

Les's life in so many ways captures the evolution of the Quabbin from a simple water supply for millions to a managed wilderness for all. And we use the word capture carefully because much of his life was spent capturing that special character of the Quabbin on photographic film and encouraging others to do the same. And with time, he realized more than most the need to make Quabbin and all its many facets more available to all. He saw before anyone else the need for an educational center, a visitors center, to help others understand what was given up for the creation of Quabbin and what was gained by its creation.

Quabbin captured Les's imagination even while he was in high school. Following his graduation from Ware High School in 1944 at age 19, he began as a summer civil engineering aide for the Metropolitan Water Supply Commission Water Division, managers of the Quabbin, that soon became the Metropolitan District Commission Water Division. He made a 44-year career of that involvement eventually becoming a senior sanitary engineer in charge of the Water Quality Laboratory at Quabbin. He participated in many of the aspects that have made Quabbin unique among reservoirs, e.g. public access and recreation. But during that career, he also became a highly respected photographer, winning many prizes for his work, usually of the Quabbin and nature. From early on, photography was not just a hobby; he felt a special obligation to help others to enjoy and share photography, nature and the Quabbin as a hobby and profession as well.

In 1975, the idea of a Visitors Center came to him as part of his participation in a committee to investigate and report on extended use of Quabbin Reservoir and its watershed, but it wasn't until 1983 that the right circumstances aligned to make it possible. With the support of State Senator Robert Wetmore

and MDC Commissioner William Geary, Les began the creation of a solid foundation that became the Visitors Center and its supporting organization, the Friends of Quabbin. The early definition of the Friends of Quabbin fell to a special and highly diverse committee that advised Les on the framework for the Friends of Quabbin.

The physical operation of the Visitors Center fell to volunteers, most notably Les's wife, Terry who began with an empty room. It was Terry who foresaw the need for a discussion group of, originally, former residents called the Tuesday Tea group. It was Terry who started selling books on the Quabbin. It was Terry who set up the membership system for the Friends of Quabbin. It was Les and Terry who created a newsletter for members of the Friends of Quabbin. It was Terry who started providing information to visitors and made it obvious that permanent staff were needed for that task. And she became the first Visitors Center staff member hired by MDC. So when we think "Visitors Center," we are describing the prime efforts of two people who provided much of the vision and work for its creation. It is, therefore, very appropriate that we shine a light on their role in the creation of the Visitors Center by naming it for them:

### *The Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitors Center*

In this way, we hope that all who pass through its doors in perpetuity will always remember in gratitude the vision and dedication shown by Les and Terry.

For further information on Les Campbell, see the Fall issue of this newsletter. It contains a tribute to Les written by Paul Godfrey, FOQ Treasurer and Newsletter Editor, that offers a peek into Les's remarkable life and vision for sharing and teaching about what the Quabbin is and has to offer. You will also find Les's own words sharing the story of how he labored to turn an idea about a Visitors Center into reality, as well as the endorsement of this idea by former MDC commissioner, William Geary.

Les Campbell's treasured words remind us all of the special nature of this unique area and of the people who once lived there:

*"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."*

With the above describing the “why” of this proposal, we now turn to the “how”. What our collective group envisions is that once accepted by the appropriate administrative officials, minor, new signage changes outside and inside the Visitors Center will display the new moniker: The Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitors Center. Additionally, we would like to include a plaque that briefly summarizes who Les and Terry were to visitors of the Quabbin Visitors Center, which will permanently teach all visitors how this wonderful resource was imagined and created. All costs of these new signs will be borne by the aforementioned groups which Les founded: Friends of Quabbin, Pioneer Valley Photographic Artists, and Quabbin Photo Group.

What we now seek is official approval of the re-naming of the Visitors Center which will eternally keep Les and Terry’s inspiration alive. The “when” begins the moment the requested approval is granted. We believe, if approved, DCR will be the appropriate body to mount a re-naming ceremony and hope our three groups will be invited to take part.

**[Editor’s comment]** *The Friends of Quabbin Board overwhelmingly approved this effort. Please let us know what you think. It will help us as we go forward with this proposal. Send comments to Paul Godfrey, 47 Harkness Road, Pelham, MA 01002 or godfrey@umass.edu. I will share them with the rest of the committee and with others that we ask for help.*

## The Digital Access Project

(Continued from page 1)

and web-hosting through the Digital Commonwealth portal. BPL Digital Services is the IT developer and administrator for Digital Commonwealth. However, Digital Commonwealth remains independent, registered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit since 2012.

The BPL Digital Services staff are comprised of professionally educated and trained archivists with specialties in digital imaging and metadata cataloging; and use state-of-the-art equipment. They are located in the lower level of the Johnson Building, at BPL’s Copley Square Main Branch. BPL Digital Services provides the membership institutions with a metadata cataloging template in an Excel worksheet.

It is the institution’s (DCR/MWRA, in this case) responsibility in this relationship to provide the metadata cataloging for each image, using the template. Our goal in the metadata cataloging phases was to start out on the simpler side, using the combined cemeteries and Quabbin Park Cemetery sets, totaling 2,100 images. Then, Swift River Real Estate, followed by Ware River Real Estate, contract construction, and lastly, aerial photography.

## The Metadata Cataloging by Katy Purington

My role in this project was to create the metadata for the Swift River Valley Cemeteries Collection, and the Swift River Valley Real Estate Collection. The Digital Commonwealth team provided us with a spreadsheet template for organizing the metadata; Sean and I narrowed that down to 38 relevant fields. The information from the spreadsheets was then used to fill in the Item Information box below each item in the Digital Commonwealth Display.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O			
Filename	File path	Local accession	id_social-other	id_social-accession	id_social-identifier	Primary title	Primary title in Cataloger	Other title information	Name	Name Type	Name Authority	Name Value URI	Role	Role Value URI	Type of resource	BASIC genre/form	BASIC Value
NDWSC_Cem_0001	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0001/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0001/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0001			Brown Cemetery Hill Cemetery, Block 1, lots 3, 4, 5, Enfield, Mass., ca. 1920				Nelle E. Brown, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0001	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0001
NDWSC_Cem_0002	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0002/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0002/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0002			Brown Cemetery Hill Cemetery, Block 1, lots 3, 4, 5, Enfield, Mass., ca. 1920				Nelle E. Brown, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0002	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0002
NDWSC_Cem_0003	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0003/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0003/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0003			Ashtaboth, Rehoboth Cemetery, lot 2, grave nos. 7-13, East face of monument, West of Mass., ca. 1920				Charles A. Abbott, Representative, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0003	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0003
NDWSC_Cem_0004	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0004/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0004/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0004			Ashtaboth, Rehoboth Cemetery, lot 2, graves 7-13, West face of monument, West of Mass., ca. 1920				Charles A. Abbott, Representative, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0004	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0004
NDWSC_Cem_0005	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0005/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0005/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0005			Charles H. Hale, Pine Grove Cemetery, lot 204, North Dana, Mass., ca. 1920				Francis L. Oles, Representative, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0005	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0005
NDWSC_Cem_0006	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0006/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0006/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0006			J. J. Woodbury, Pine Grove Cemetery, lot 188, North Dana, Mass., ca. 1920				Mrs. Ardetta F. Wood, Representative, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0006	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0006
NDWSC_Cem_0007	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0007/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0007/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0007			J. J. Woodbury, Pine Grove Cemetery, lot 188, North Dana, Mass., ca. 1920				Mrs. Ardetta F. Wood, Representative, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0007	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0007
NDWSC_Cem_0008	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0008/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0008/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0008			Henry L. Adams, Woodman Cemetery, new section, lot 12, Enfield, Mass., Sept. 6, 1920				Mrs. Nellie F. Bryant, Representative, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0008	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0008
NDWSC_Cem_0009	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0009/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0009/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0009			John Vanaton, Woodman Cemetery, new section, lot 11, Enfield, Mass., Sept. 6, 1920				William J. Vanaton, Representative, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0009	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0009
NDWSC_Cem_0010	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0010/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0010/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0010			R. L. Thayer, Woodman Cemetery, new section, lot 10, Enfield, Mass., Sept. 6, 1920				Mrs. Helen T. Zabor, Representative, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0010	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0010
NDWSC_Cem_0011	digital_commonwealth/EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0011/DCCom_Statewide/Cemetery/0011/DCR/MWRA/7FFF	EN/06080X/NDWSC_Cem_0011			John E. Hees, Woodman Cemetery, new section, lot 10, Enfield, Mass., Sept. 6, 1920				Henry E. Hees, Representative, Release	Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Water Supply corporation/Commissioner/Charles B. 1900-1904		at	Sponsor/Photographer	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0011	all image	Photographs	http://id.oc.gouv.ca.us/ark:/61902/3Q96-C6Y9-0011

As an example, this is what my spreadsheet for the Cemeteries collection looked like. Don’t worry, I’m not asking to look at any of the details, just giving you a peek at the volume of data I was working with.

Note that this is only columns A–O, but the spreadsheet continues to the right all the way to column AL—a full 38 columns. This is why you’re guaranteed to find a few errors when looking through the images—it’s easy to go cross-eyed from staring at a spreadsheet like this for too long!



used to describe the natural and built environment, and the Library of Congress Subject Headings, which has a larger choice of terms for people, plants and animals. We used another thesaurus, the *Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names*, to ensure that place names are consistent.

The cemetery photos were fairly easy to assign subjects to, because the images were fairly consistent. Each image depicts a cemetery plot with one or multiple grave markers. There are also a handful of images depicting storm damage and vandalism to graves, and there is a general view of each cemetery. Each plot photo had handwritten titling at the top, indicating the owners of the plot or next of kin, if known, and whether the grave was moved to QPC or returned to the families to reinter elsewhere. The Quabbin Park Cemetery photos also include images of the war memorials relocated from town centers to the front entrance of the cemetery.

The real estate photos were more varied, showing anything from residential homes and house fires, commercial buildings, municipal buildings and church buildings, to the flood of 1938, initial water quality testing, watershed reforestation efforts, and the dedication of the Windsor Dam. It was fascinating to learn about the people and industries present in the Swift River Valley through the photographs I was handling.

Each town had a church, a post office, and a general store. Every village had a school and a gas station. Residents were largely farmers, mill workers, and tradesmen. Anyone with more than an acre of land had chickens. The number of female landowners in the region was higher than I expected, and few of these women were mentioned in the Quabbin history books available to me at the time.

But the most interesting property, to me, was the ice cutting business owned by Addison D. Moore and his wife. I grew up in the age of refrigerators, so while I've heard of ice houses, I've never given much thought to where the ice came from. I got to see a lot of ice houses throughout the collection, but getting to see an entire industrial ice cutting operation from lake to warehouses to loading platforms was fascinating to me.

## Digitizing and Implementation by Sean M. Fisher

For the cemeteries and Quabbin Park Cemetery sets, the two official sub-sets of photo prints survive today. Katy and I compared the image quality and annotation notations of the sub-sets, and determined that the "Chief Engineer" sub-set was the better of the two to use.

For the Swift River Real Estate, we were forced to use the nearly complete reference triplicate sub-set, even though this sub-set has no real estate annotations on the prints. Only 9 Secretary and 4 Chief Engineer sub-set volumes survive; there should be 59 volumes for each. Where there are missing prints from the triplicate sub-set, we drew from the surviving volumes of the two official sub-sets, and from surviving original

negatives. Thus, sprinkled in a few places are annotated real estate images, which will also provide the public with an example of photos which we are trying to locate.

The original photos and the metadata worksheet are provided to BPL Digital Services simultaneously. BPL needed the photos unbound before received, and Katy did this work, keeping each photo volume in a folder, with its front cover.

The best practice imaging standard in the archival management profession is the *Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Cultural Heritage Materials*.

Here are some photos I took of the BPL Digital Services imaging technician working on the cemetery photos. While the glass keeps the photo prints flat, the added glass layer does slightly lower the degree of image quality. You will notice that there is no flat-bed scanner. It is standard practice in archives management for professional digital imaging to be undertaken using a fixed digital camera from above. The digital imaging room is also painted and lit in a very specific manner. Each digital image goes through post-image capture processing steps. It is BPL Digital Service policy to take a photograph of the full image and its margins and support, if any; nothing is cropped.



*Digital technician Rose Ingerman, a 2018 graduate of the Simmons Library School/Archives Graduate Program*

After post-processing, BPL Digital Services has metadata reviewers who, in great detail, compare the metadata with the image, and the caption on the photo print, when there is one. For the quantities in the Quabbin project, this process takes months. While some basic corrections are made by the metadata reviewer, the institution is responsible for correcting most discrepancies and questions. For the cemeteries photos, Katy undertook the corrections, with my final oversight. For the Swift River Real Estate photos, I made the corrections, as Katy's tenure had ended by that time.

The surviving Water Supply Commission archival records include a set of files from its Photography Department. Here, were found folded maps of many of the cemeteries, created by the Commission, laying out the cemetery lots. These maps are annotated with the photo number for each lot. While not all photo annotated cemetery maps survive, for those that do, clearly, these too should be digitized, and were.

Additionally, various surviving planning maps of the Quabbin Reservoir were later annotated by Commission engineers plotting the location of the cemeteries. These too were determined to be useful for the digital project. Katy created the cataloging metadata for these maps too. I suspect the Commission engineers did the same for the real estate photos, plotting camera location and direction on a set of the real estate taking sheets, as indicated in a December 17, 1927 memo. However, no such plans have been located. The Metropolitan Water Works a generation earlier did do this, and these plans are on Digital Commonwealth as a related collection to the photos.

The Quabbin Photographs Digital Access Project is being cataloged under the Massachusetts Archives, as the permanent repository of public archival records created by state agencies of the Executive Branch. As with the 1895-1921 Photograph Collection, the repository stated in the cataloging record for each analog original and digital image is the "Massachusetts Archives"; not DCR or MWRA. The MDC/DCR are acknowledged as to where the original images came from, to the State Archives; and when coming from the MWRA, they too are acknowledged.



Massachusetts Archives

In 2018, the Massachusetts State Archives launched its public online digital repository, for analog-to-digital, and for born-digital electronic public archival records. As analog collections are digitized through Digital Commonwealth / BPL Digital Services, the State Archives uploads the digital files from BPL Digital Services to their Digital Repository. To date, the Quabbin Cemeteries Photograph Collection has been uploaded. Here, the State Archives is keeping the photo volumes grouped together, digitally; a nice feature.

After the pandemic, DCR will be transferring its remaining portions of the original Quabbin cemeteries and Swift River Real Estate photographic prints to the State Archives, for professional-level preservation, for future generations.

Throughout the project, I have scoured the MDWSC photo collections within the three agencies, and located numerous unnumbered 5"x7" MDWSC-created photographic negatives and prints that fall within the Swift River Real Estate / Quabbin General Engineering set, but, for whatever reason, were not selected for the bound photo volume set. These are gradually being included in the digital access project, as addendums. The MWW did the same, and all of them that were found are included in that digital collection.

It is hard to believe that in seven years, it will be the 100th anniversary of when this photographic documentation began.

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>

If you think you may have information on the missing photo volumes, contact Sean Fisher at: [sean.fisher@mass.gov](mailto:sean.fisher@mass.gov).

**Sean Fisher** is the general collections archivist for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Prior to DCR's formation in 2003, 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.

**Katy Purington** was the project's metadata cataloging archivist intern from July 2018 through June 2019, working in the MWRA Library, Chelsea. Katy did this paid internship while attending the master's level archives management program at the Simmons University Library School; graduating in 2019. Katy is currently a digital asset administrator for Hasbro, Inc., in Providence, Rhode Island; and grew up in Colrain, Massachusetts.



# Routine Maintenance

by Nancy Huntington  
Visitor Services Supervisor

It is a cool fall day somewhere in the Quabbin Watershed. Clear skies, a soft breeze blowing towards a woodland stream that is flowing full. The leaves are just starting to turn, but there is still lots of green vegetation on the ground. The flying and scurrying critters have left their neonatal homes and have not yet settled into winter quarters. Mixed in with the rich aromas of the forest, you can just detect the hint of what must be a campfire; that instantly recognizable scent of burning wood and smoke lifting up to intertwine with the clouds.

But....there are no campfires allowed on the Quabbin Watershed? A closer look and there, some distance from the stream, just past a space strangely devoid of much of its plant material, there is indeed a fire upon the ground; a low fire, mostly creating that smoke which is blowing with the wind towards the stream, blackening the earth between them. Searching the land for answers you see another fire, far away from the first, but this one is larger, this one is blazing, this one, is meant to spread....

To many people, the above scenario sounds like the beginning of a tragedy. It may immediately bring to mind the devastation suffered in California every summer, in Australia last year, and in many other places we see on the news, when wildfires are raging out of control, leaving nothing but destruction in their wake. To others, however, such as foresters, ecologists and biologists following in the footsteps of the Native Americans, it is routine maintenance.

“Prescribed Burns” (in one form or another) have been used for thousands of years as an effective tool for healthy forest management. Evidence shows that the Native Americans burned regularly: *“Besides leaving the forests passable for hunting and gathering, broadcast burning would have had other advantages. One objective of Indian fires was to produce fresh and sweet pasture, for the purpose of alluring the deer to the spots on which they had been kindled”* (Indian Fires in the Prehistory of New England, Patterson & Sassaman, 1988). One can see what this might have looked like in the dioramas at Harvard Forest:

<https://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/dioramas>

Native Americans burned some parts of the landscape for hunting and knew that certain plants would grow better after a fire. Today, some tribes are finding that with increased use of fire for land management, they are able to restore some of their cultural traditions. We have learned from these traditions, coupled with extensive scientific research, that prescribed burns offer an extensive list of benefits to native flora and fauna and also, believe it or not, for safety. Studies of areas that have been affected by fires (wild or intentional) have shown the following:

- “Controlled” fires reduce the amount of accumulated debris on the forest floor which can be fuel for “uncontrolled” wildfires, which cause extensive damage to the environment, wildlife and residential areas.
- Help reclaim habitat that has been taken over by invasive species, giving hardy native plants an opportunity to thrive.
- Foster regeneration of diverse native tree species that are stronger and more resilient.
- Produce demonstrable positive influence on water quality.
- Research has shown prescribed burns can reduce some tick populations by 75–80%.

There are many reasons that a prescribed burn would be useful in any number of habitats. However, using fire as a management tool is not something that is ever gone into lightly. It takes months, sometimes years of coordination between multiple agencies. It is not just a decision made by the landowner! Analysts and biologists have to thoroughly examine a site for topography, timing, wildlife concerns, rare or endangered species, and short and long term effects. Both DCR and local Fire Control has to approve the location and ensure all the safety protocols are in place, which can change on the day based on wind, weather, any other potential influences; Extensive burn plans, proposals and paperwork have to be submitted and approved. Local ordinances and regulations have to be considered. And any number of other issues must be addressed before a single site is prepped.

DCR currently has several burn projects in the works within the watershed: Barre heathland restoration in Barre, New Salem heathland restoration and fields on the Prescott Peninsula. Others are being considered, as part of DCR’s ongoing mission of sustainable forestry management for water quality. For more information, please see the following:

<https://masseoeea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=e16365af6d034cdcb16e26f2793517e9>

<https://plymouth.wickedlocal.com/news/20180514/feeling-burn-at-myles-standish-state-forest>

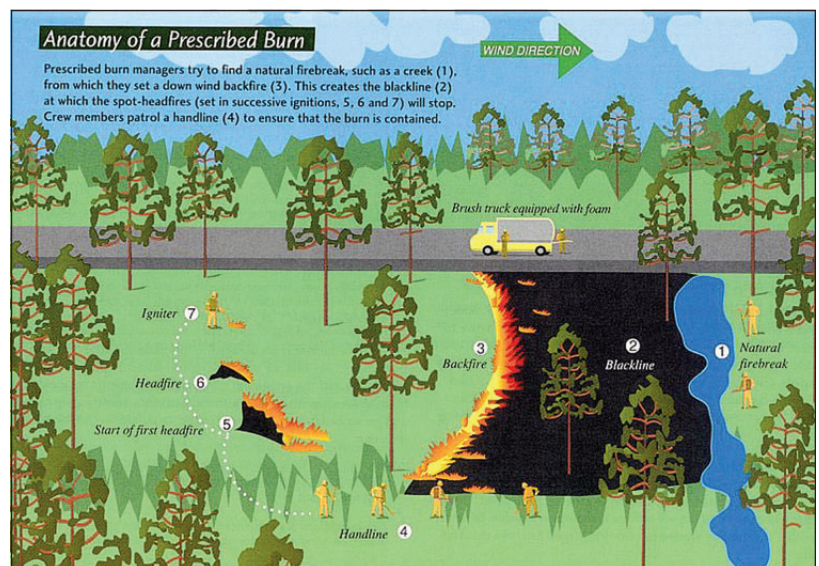


Image courtesy of the Florida Forest Service

# First Snow

by Anne Ely

The season's first snow. Only three inches or so, but it's turned the fields and woods into a magical fairyland. I'm heading for Quabbin. It should be beautiful there.



Along the way, in a nearby field, snow covered cornstalk stubble morphs into white suited soldiers marching in formation. Seemingly cheering them on, snow crowned Queen Anne's Lace seed heads wave in the breeze.

Arriving at the entrance to Quabbin, I find the gates closed. I sort of expected that, so I came prepared to walk. Gathering up all my gear I attach my camera to my tripod and head out. But after a few moments I realize I'm just walking without any real purpose. So, I stop, close my eyes, and let myself just listen and feel. I was expecting a deep silence, but within moments I'm enveloped in sound. The twittering of birds, the murmuring of a soft breeze, and over it all the sound of rain. Rain? Opening my eyes, I see it is indeed raining... raining leaves. Looking up I see them twisting, turning, dancing in the breeze on their downward journey. Dozens and dozens of them, their semi frozen shapes creating a cacophony of rain-like sounds as they bounce off bare branches and each other; some making it all the way to the ground, others catching on the snow laden evergreens.

A few yards ahead a fluttering of leaves along the ground turns out not to be leaves at all, but several tiny birds hopping among the bare spots in the snow, searching for seeds. As I watch through my binoculars, I see white throated sparrows joined, here and there, by a tufted titmouse. Busily going about their business, they don't seem to mind me standing nearby. When I move forward, they



briefly scatter and then, as one, descend on a new spot a short distance ahead. I hear a chickadee somewhere in the nearby trees but can't locate it. A movement close to the ground nearby catches my eye; just another leaf landing. No, a quick look though my binoculars shows it to be small bird, a brown creeper. I've not seen many of those, so even though it's fairly dark under the branches, I try for a couple of photos as it works its way up the trunk of the small evergreen searching out edibles tucked away in the bark.

Continuing on my way, I'm much more aware of the sounds and movements around me. My eyes now see potential pictures everywhere;

small evergreens cloaked in white from their very tips to their downward hanging lowest branches. Yet, the next tree over, in a shaft of sunlight, shows the green of snowless branches. Released by the warmth of the sun the snow has slid silently off onto the ground in soft mounds.



A loud rat-a-tat-tat cuts through the crisp cold air. I search the trees in the direction of the sound and finally spy a pileated woodpecker busily attacking the bare trunk of a tall dead pine. His long strong beak making short work of the soft weathered wood and any insects or grubs hiding there.

I stop suddenly. There, not 10 yards ahead on the right, two deer stand motionless, surveying this stranger in their midst. As slowly as I can I ease my tripod into position and focus my camera. Now, one of the laws of nature is that all creatures know instinctively just when the click of the camera shutter is about to happen and either blink, or disappear the split second before that occurs. These deer had learned this well and timed their departure perfectly. They had moved off behind a small group of evergreens. Maybe they hadn't gone far and I could still find them. Sure enough, as I slowly and stealthily moved a bit to the left, there they were. This time I



was ready and the moment one turned and looked right at me... click. My Christmas card for this year.

The sun has risen higher and the trees that are arching high over the road are dumping their snow. It lands with audible plops showing no discrimination as to where: the ground, my, thankfully covered, camera, or my head.

I've made it to the Goodnough Dike, stopping every little way to photograph something. Everything is so beautiful, even a fallen oak leaf which has landed stem end down in a patch of fresh snow. Backlit by the sun it is worthy of a click or two of the camera.

Turning around, I begin my way back. Seeing the same scenes from a different angle means more stops and more photos. The deer have disappeared, but a rustle of leaves nearby catches my attention. It's a chipmunk who must have had a successful food foray as his cheeks are stuffed, giving him the appearance of having the mumps. He pauses for a split second, his black eyes giving me the onceover before, with a flick of his tail, off he goes. The pileated is still pounding away on the same tree; must be a good one.

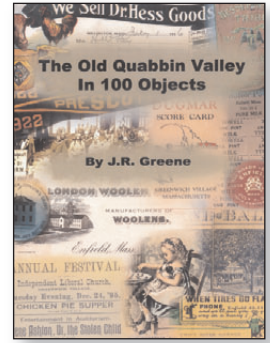


It has taken me about two hours to travel this winter wonderland mile and by the time I reach my car, the sun was announcing that it planned to hang around. Its warming rays were doing their job. Gradually, as they reached further into the woods, the only difference from yesterday before the snow, would be a few more bare branches and a thicker carpet of leaves. Hopefully, I will have captured some of the ephemeral beauty with my camera, I know I have captured it with my heart.

*"The Friends of Quabbin realize that for many, times are very difficult. For that reason, if you are unable to renew your membership at this time, we will continue to send you the newsletter until the pandemic is over, regardless of your membership status. If you have simply forgotten to renew, we hope you will do so at your earliest convenience. Your membership status appears on your mailing label."*

### New from J.R. Greene

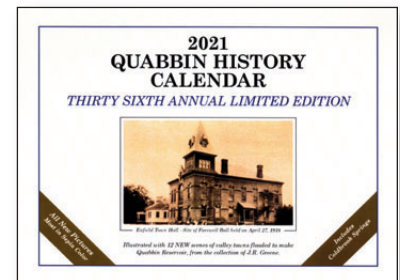
## The Old Quabbin Valley in 100 Objects



In his first book in six years, Quabbin Reservoir historian J.R. Greene presents a different kind of history of the old Swift River Valley. Using actual ephemera items from valley businesses, industries, and societies, their story is presented with illustrations of the objects, views of the buildings where they originated, and portraits of some of the people behind them. The accompanying text outlines the story of these valley institutions, with much new information not previously published in any book. Cost: \$19.99. The book will be available at the Visitors Center when it reopens. The Friends do not have an interim arrangement for purchase; contact J.R. Greene directly (see below).

**[Editor's comment]** *As the readers of this newsletter know, a picture almost always generates interest in the story. J.R. has taken this further by removing the disguise from what I call the "National Geographic approach," and focusing on the picture and supplementing it with the story. It makes for interesting reading and reading that you can pick up anywhere in the book and be entertained by the "ephemera" of history.*

## 2021 Calendar



The tradition of the J.R. Greene calendar exhibiting pictures of the Swift River Valley before being flooded by Quabbin Reservoir is

continuing. To maintain the goal of providing large size reproductions of views from the old Swift and Ware River Valleys, the calendar includes views of a one room school, a church that was torn down around 1900, a summer camp with an elaborate "Welcome" sign, and even an abandoned hearse house. Highland Press of Athol is the printer. It will be on sale at the Quabbin Visitors Center when it reopens. In the interim, you may mail order it by contacting Paul Godfrey at 47 Harkness Road, Pelham, MA 01002 (godfrey@umass.edu. Enclose a check for \$14.95 to cover the calendar and \$1.85 shipping and handling.

Both items will also be on sale at some outlets in towns around the reservoir; or Greene can be emailed at [jrg01331@webtv.net](mailto:jrg01331@webtv.net) for ordering information. Both will be available at the Visitors Center when it reopens.

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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](mailto: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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### Quabbin Voices

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