

Quabbin Voices

The Friends of Quabbin Newsletter



Spring 2022
Vol.35 No.1

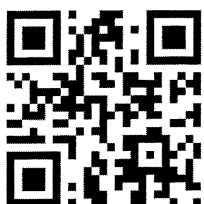
We must hear and listen to all of Quabbin's many Voices. Voices of the Past, as well as Voices of the Present and of the Future. Voices of the Trees, the Sky, the Rain that falls, and all the Wild Things; Voices of the People who depend on this valuable resource for their daily needs of clean water,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



Remembering Prescott

Part 1: Before Incorporation

by Gene Theroux

The bicentennial of the former town of Prescott would have been on January 28, 2022 if it weren't for the Quabbin Reservoir project. The town of Prescott was the smallest and most rural of the four valley towns. The town was founded on January 28, 1822. Three villages coalesced within Prescott: North Prescott, Atkinson Hollow and Prescott Hill. Prescott farmers made use of the excellent drainage provided by miles of glacially-crushed gravel left on the ridge to plant fruit tree orchards. Apples were the main crop, and many of the varieties grown are now considered "extinct," like the "Search-No-Further: apple, and the "Crows Egg" apple. The latter was smaller and sweeter than a Red Delicious. Prescott also had many successful diary farms, sawmills, and charcoal kilns.

The southern part of Prescott, originally part of Pelham, was probably first settled, in the year 1741. At that time, Pelham had only about forty families and New Salem was just



Probably the William Conkey house

receiving settlers. Among the first in Prescott were the McConkeys (afterwards Conkeys), McMillins, (later Millins and Mellen), Grays, Crossetts, Peirces and Berrys. There were four

Conkey brothers, John, William, Alexander, and Thomas. The last three settled along the banks of the Swift River near "Bobbinville." John lived on Prescott Hill near the location of the Congregational parsonage. The house used by William Conkey, not far from "Rattlesnake Mountain" and near the "old east cemetery," was still standing in 1910. On a heavy stone over the ancient fireplace there was neatly chiseled the inscription, "William Conkey, June Ye 21 st. 1776."

The Berry family settled in town about 1755, coming from Rutland, Massachusetts, and finally settled at a farm in Prescott. The family



Charles Berry house and barn, Prescott
December 21, 1927

consisted of the great grandfather who was a cloth weaver and a farmer. He had four sons: James, Alexander, and two others who went west. James located on the Gilbert place and Alexander stayed at the farm. Alexander had four sons: John, James, Lockes and Alexander, Jr. John stayed on the farm and died there in January 1873 at the advanced age of eighty - four years. He had two children: John and Betsy. Betsy stayed at the farm and John lived on a farm south of the Berry farm. He had several children: Monroe, (Continued on page 4)



Gene Theroux

President's Message

Spring 2022

Spring is coming and I for one am eager for the arrival of longer days and warmer weather. The easing of restrictions such as wearing of masks and social distancing will help the return to normal events. A significant annual event is the **Memorial Day Service** at Quabbin Park Cemetery. Normally held on the Sunday closest to May 30th, the event has been "virtual" for the past two years. This year, the event will return to normal with public invited. It is scheduled for **Sunday, May 29th**. Refreshments will be served at 10:00 a.m. Step-off March and Ceremonies at 11:00 a.m.



Section 2 after removal of the arborvitae tree

Visitors to the beautiful and historic Quabbin Park Cemetery will see that the row of arborvitae in Section 2 have been removed. The removal of these overgrown trees will help to mitigate the risk of falling limbs and slow the growth of lichens and other biological growth.



Example of biological growth of monuments in Section 21

The Friends of Quabbin have a special Quabbin Park Cemetery project starting when the weather warms. We will be seeking volunteers to assist with surveying each section within the cemetery to identify missing gravestones, to record the conditions of the gravestones and monuments. These data will be installed in a computer database to guide future remediation. We know this will not be an easy task as hundreds of gravestones have so much biological growth and staining from air pollution that they are hardly readable; a prominent number of unreadable gravestones are in section 21. Another objective of the survey will be to identify and photograph monu-

ments with missing pieces of ornamentation. The goal is to match monuments with pieces that have been stored in the Quabbin Park administration building over the years so that we can restore these pieces to the monuments.



Various pieces broken from monuments and stored in the Quabbin Park Cemetery Administration Building

Those interested in assisting with the survey project, please send an email of your interest to Friends of Quabbin president Gene Theroux via email President@foquabbin.org.

In the last issue of the *Quabbin Voices* newsletter, I mentioned the need for the conservation of the Enfield Civil War soldier bronze sculpture and the Dana Honor Roll bronze plaque. We have obtained a projected cost of \$18,000 for this work. The Friends of Quabbin will be seeking to have these two conservation projects completed.

There is also progress being made with the initiative to have Quabbin Park Cemetery added to the National Register by the Ware Historical Commission and assisted by the Friends of Quabbin director Elena Paladino.

As readers of *Quabbin Voices* will know, serious damage to the Keystone Bridge in New Salem (Gate 30) was discovered last summer. As soon as the damage was reported to DCR by Friends of Quabbin members, Janice and Randy Stone, the road to the bridge was closed to prevent further damage and avoid any injuries. DCR contracted with an engineering firm last fall to provide an estimate of the bridge's reparability. That firm considered three options: leave alone, repair, and remove. They recommended removal. However, they admitted that they had no experience with dry-stone masonry, i.e. without cement. Dan Clark, DCR Regional Director, Quabbin/Ware Region believed the historical importance and uniqueness of Keystone Bridge merited getting the opinion of a dry-stone mason. He contacted the most experienced one in New England. But that person in Vermont was not listed as a Massachusetts vendor and, thus, could not be hired by DCR until he was. Into that breach stepped the Friends of Quabbin; we could act as the contractor for this second opinion and possible contractor for restoration if that is possible. If we get to that restoration stage, FOQ will be seeking outside donations to help with the cost.

In a somewhat similar vein, FOQ will be providing modest support for the construction of an HO model of the Rabbit railroad at the Swift River Valley Historical Society Carriage House (see article in this issue).

While it seems that the worst of COVID is over, it still presents us with difficulties in conducting an annual meeting in April, as we used to do. Two years ago, we had to cancel the annual meeting entirely, and last year our effort at a meeting was insufficiently attended to allow a legitimate election of the Board of Directors. We substituted a mail ballot for that annual

meeting election and were pleased that more people were able to vote than ever before. There are still difficulties with scheduling an annual meeting, so we have decided to defer that until late summer or early fall. The election will again be held by mail-in ballot that will be sent out in April. We will not use the email ballot, solely the regular mail ballot. You will receive

a letter with the slate of Board members up for election and a brief description of their qualifications. Also included will be a pre-stamped postcard ballot that can be checked and dropped in the mail. It will be simple, independent of your schedule or location and COVID. Please take a moment when you get the letter to vote.

Winter Best Days

by Mary Midura

January 30 through February 1, 2022 were beautiful winter days for snowshoeing in the Quabbin! We were the first on one trail, until we were overtaken by a hiker. We also met



several other snowshoe hikers. Eventually, the very nice Quabbin plow driver reminded us all that the Quabbin Park was actually closed. We meant no disrespect, but the driver must realize that this was the best time to snowshoe in the Quabbin!

Near Goodnough Dike, we encountered a lone porcupine eating berries for breakfast. He was not concerned with our presence.

We returned to the trail as the winds increased. I have always loved the sound of trees rubbing together, almost creating a new song. The sun on the fields, the sound of your snowshoes marking another path, the new snow in drifts and ice on the water—these are the beauties of Quabbin on a winter's day.

Dorothy Johnson Remembered

by Paul Godfrey

Thirty-four years ago (1988) to mark the 50th anniversary of the disincorporation of the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott (1938), The Friends of Quabbin produced a

special musical. Using “local” talent with much more than local fame and experience, that musical “Quabbin: A Musical” was performed to acclaim. Nine years ago (2013), in the midst of the 75th remembrance of the Enfield disincorporation, Friends of Quabbin brought

February 22, 2022. She was born on March 2, 1933 in South Hadley, Massachusetts, received a BA from Mount Holyoke College and an MA from Smith College.

For a time, she worked for Xavier University in New Orleans and MacMillan Publishers in Manhattan, but in 1971, she settled in New Salem, MA. She and her life partner, Doris Abramson, opened the Common Reader Bookshop on the New Salem common until her retirement in 2000. She was very active in town affairs, including writing books and lyrics to musicals that she also directed for townspeople to perform in and enjoy. She started a Reading Aloud program in the town library that continues, wrote poetry, including her latest compilation *My Heart Remembers*, and in 2011 wrote *A Swift River Anthology* in which she imagined the lives of people in the drowned valley. The Friends were very fortunate



“Quabbin: A Musical” love scene, 2013



“Quabbin: A Musical” cast, 1988

back “Quabbin: A Musical.” The musical was based on the human side of the history of the approximately 2500 people who gave up a ‘way of life’ in order to provide a ‘healthy life’ for the citizens of Boston and other communities.

The book and lyrics for “Quabbin: A Musical” were written by Dorothy Johnson and the music composed by Steven Schoenberg, both from New Salem. Dorothy Johnson died on



for her talents in creating “Quabbin: A Musical.”

Dorothy Johnson with Steven Schoenberg about the time of the 75th Anniversary of the disincorporation of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott Musical presentation

Remembering Prescott

(Continued from page 1)

Charles, Annie, Henry and Frank. John Berry died in June 1901, the largest man to live in Prescott. He weighed 354 pounds at one time. Betsy lived at the farm for many years and later, her nephew, Charles, son of brother John, lived there until the farm was sold to the Water Commission.

The town of Prescott was established after people from the East Parish of Pelham and the south part of New Salem wanted to be a town by themselves long before 1822. They were opposed by Pelham, but the opposition proved of no avail. Prior to incorporation, the residents of the area assembled and chose the name of Warren, in commemoration of General Warren who was killed at Bunker Hill. They sent a messenger, Caleb Peirce, to the Legislature at Boston with their request. When he arrived there, he found the name had been granted to another town about an hour before. Rather than take the long journey again, perhaps without any better success, he decided to consider another name for the town. Someone suggested that he name the town after Colonel William Prescott of Pepperell, who had command of the American forces at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Then and there, Caleb Peirce decided to give the town the name of Prescott. So the town was incorporated on January 28, 1872 as Prescott.

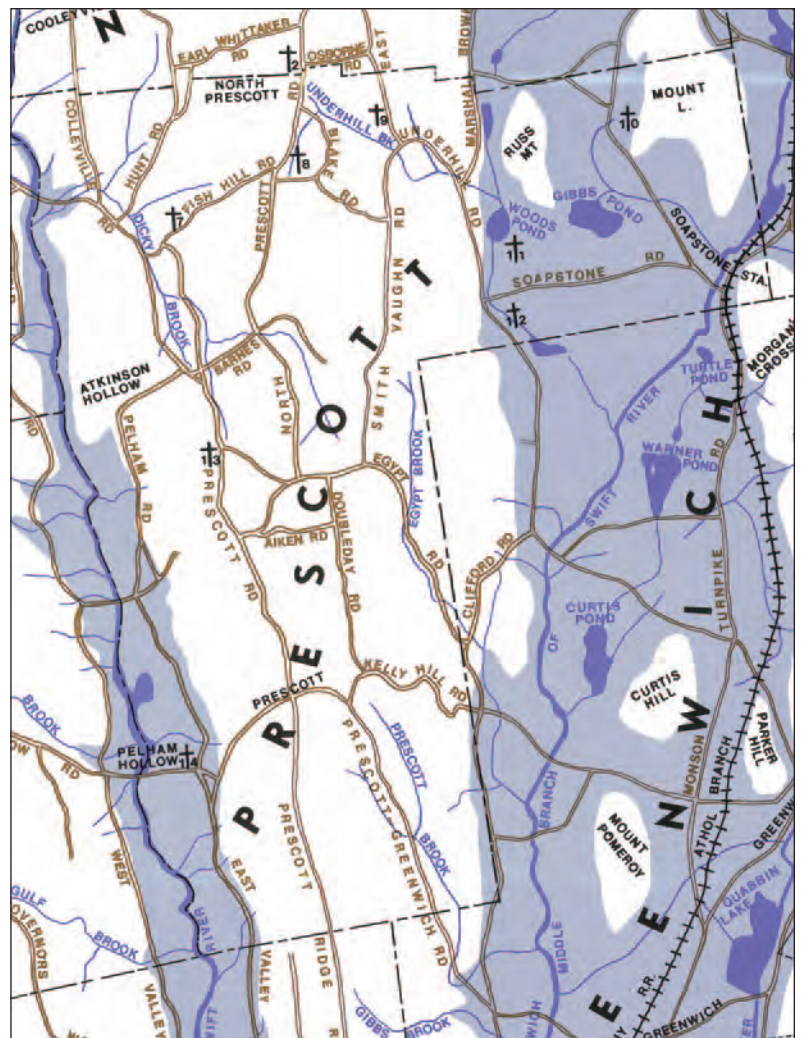
Prescott, which was shaped like an “inverted L,” was bounded on the north by New Salem; on the east by Dana and Greenwich and south by Enfield; on the west by Shutesbury and Pelham. The western branch of the Swift River formed the boundary line between Prescott and the towns of Pelham and Shutesbury. In the extreme eastern part, for a short distance, the middle branch of the Swift River flowed. Some of the other brooks were Egypt Brook, Schoolhouse Brook, Pegmill Brook and Sugar Brook. There were several small brooks that flowed into larger ones.

The first notable event in the new town was the birth of its first child, Chauncy Upton, born on February 7th, 1822. On February 13, 1822, the warrant of the first town meeting was issued by Barna Brigham, a Justice of the Peace, at the written request of Samuel Henry, Caleb Peirce, Nathan Felton, Abel Gilbert, Josiah Hemenway, Proctor Peirce, Charles Staples, Stacy Lindsey, Chester Gray, Brigham Mills and Joseph Hodgkins. The moderator chosen for the first town meeting was Josiah Peirce, and Chester Gray was the clerk. The first selectmen were Barna Brigham, Caleb Peirce and Nymphas Stacy. The assessors were Moses Gray, Henry Haskins, and Josiah Peirce. The first town clerk was Chester Gray.

There were five cemeteries in the former town of Prescott: No. 1, Fish Hill; No. 2, Pine Grove; No. 3, Town House; No. 4 Jason Powers; and No. 5, Bobbin Hollow. The latter one in the southwest part of the town near “Bobbinville” (or what was Pelham Hollow) was the oldest, in use before the town was

incorporated. Some of the stones bear dates as far back as 1767. It was laid out in 1744, in conformity with a vote passed on April 26th of that year, to the following effect: “Voted that there be one acre of land fenced with a Good Stone wall, and also that Robert Peibles, Samuel Gray and Robert Lothridge oversee ye Building of ye sd wall at their own Charge.” That vote was later rescinded, and instead it was “voted yt ye Burying Place be fenced with good five Rail fence, ye Reals ten feet Longe, and twelve Lengths to Each Quarter.” This fence was built by John Conkey for 5 British Pounds and 10 Shillings and was probably the first fence to be put around the cemetery.

Many of the interments in these five Prescott cemeteries were later moved to Quabbin Park Cemetery. Among the early



From a map of the “Plan of Proposed Reservoir on the Swift River and Its Tributary Watershed”

gravestones are those of William Conkey, who died on November 5, 1788. William Conkey was an original proprietor of the town of Pelham, MA, and the owner of Conkey’s Tavern where Daniel Shays and his followers planned an insurrection against Massachusetts. William Conkey had served the town of Pelham in numerous positions that included town clerk, moderator, selectman, and others such as Fence Viewer in

1745–1746, Surveyor and Warden. Another early gravestone was that of “a ruling elder,” James Berry who passed in his sixty-seventh year. Other older gravestones include that of John Conkey, Margaret Taylor, 1781; Joshua Conkey, son of Capt. John Conkey, April 12, 1790; Isaac Gray, 1730–1786, a veteran of the American Revolution who served as a Captain who fought in the Battle of Bunker Hill. Other historic gravestones include Samuel Crossett who served in the American Revolutionary War and is a beautiful slate gravestone. The cemetery that stood in the rear of the Town House contains one and a quarter acre of land and was laid out in 1838. Eliza Ann Titus, who died March 4, 1840, was the first person to be buried in this cemetery. Her grave was moved to Quabbin Park Cemetery and now has heavy biological growth.

Remembering Prescott

Part 2: Participation in America’s Wars

by Gene Theroux

In the military records of Prescott, there were seven men who served in the Revolutionary War and lived in the part of New Salem that would become Prescott. Ten years after the war

(1786), many would participate in Shays Rebellion; the people of the town are said to have been sympathetic to the rebellion’s cause and many participated in the insurrection, Jacob Sampson was one of the principals of these. At the time of the uprising, Daniel Shays, the recognized leader of the movement, lived within the limits of the town of Prescott, occupying the house where Ansel Johnson had lived. Here the first councils were held, and the first troops were mustered at the inn of William Conkey, near “Bobbinville,” later known as the Milo Abbott house.

In the war of 1812, there went from the territory of what was later Prescott: John. T. Conkey, Samuel Sampson, Caleb Peirce, Isaac Upton, Andrew Newhall, Chester Gregg, Levi Davis, Samuel, and Luther Hunt, from New Salem, near the Prescott line.

There were forty-six men from Prescott who served during the Civil War to preserve the Republic. Of the forty-six, eight of them died in service. Among those who died from disease were Daniel Lombard and William H. Oakes. Private Isaac Powers of B Company, Massachusetts 27th Infantry Regiment was wounded on March 14, 1862, at New Berne, N.C. and later died in an accidental fall. Joseph N. Shaw was a 29-year-old farmer from Prescott who served in Company H of the Massachusetts 3rd Cavalry and after the war, was a member of the General William S. Lincoln Grand Army of the Republic Post 211

(Enfield). His grandson, Willis, would die in service in WW I. Of the thirteen Prescott residents who served in the Great War (WW I) four died in service; three of influenza (John M. Currier, Harold F. Peirce, and Willis E. Shaw) at Camp Devens and one killed-in-action (F. Conrad Lincoln).

There will be more about the history of Prescott in following issues of *Quabbin Voices* including the schools, the Griswolds, Prescott Historical Society and other subjects.



Conkey’s Tavern, Prescott—a painting by Burt Brooks

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The Rabbit in Miniature

by Ken Levine

The brief life of the Short Line Railroad that ran through the Swift River Valley, known as the Rabbit Railroad or Bunny Hop because of its frequent stops is being recreated in miniature in the Carriage Shed at the Swift River Valley Historical Society in North New Salem on Elm Street. The 24-foot display designed and constructed by me (Ken Levine of Petersham) over several years is nearing completion in time for the Spring season of the Historical Society.

It is an HO scale model with versions of the four lost towns, farms, businesses, industries and landscape with a working model train. The display depicts the valley as it was before the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir in the 1930s.



The "Enfield," an American class (4-4-0) wood-burning locomotive entering Millington/South Athol

Using archival photos, information from local authors, and historical societies, the diorama depicts the people and their daily lives, all of whom were connected and served by the RR. Sometimes called the Soapstone Limited because of the soapstone that was transported from the quarry in North Dana, the train also provided service to fabric mills shipping wool and cotton goods, box and barrel shops, palm leaf hat factories, and other commercial establishments. Ice, cream, butter and cheese went to Athol or Springfield. Live turkeys, cattle, lamb, eggs and chickens all travelled on the RR. High school students took the train to Athol for school and back, as did commuters and tourists.

The railroad line was created in 1871 after years of false starts and modest investment. When opened it was called the Athol and Enfield RR and then in later years as a branch of the Boston and Albany RR and Fitchburg line. It was 50 miles long and made up to 19 stops along its route. Two round passenger trips a day with freight trains in between. At its zenith it had three locomotives, parlor cars, mail cars, box and flat cars and handcars for track inspection. Athol had a roundtable to turn the train each trip and a three-bay engine house (still in exis-

tence), water tank, depot and freight house. On its last run it was packed with people sadly experiencing the end of an era, all fearing the dread of losing their communities and their Rabbit.

I have constructed the entire display with generous funding from many Quabbin area local

Cultural Councils in the towns of: Athol, Orange, Petersham, Wendell, Royalston, Warwick, New Salem, Northfield, Hardwick/North Brookfield, Shutesbury and Pelham, as well as donations from the historical society and Friends of Quabbin. A sturdy system of benchwork made of hemlock and plywood and rigid foam, donated by Heyes Forest products supports the model. It was a cold fall when I hammered and glued the pieces together in the unheated carriage shed, laid the cork roadbed and attached the rails. Precision was crucial for the electrification, using several gauges of wire, soldered to the rails from below and fed to a special transformer and controller that uses WIFI signals to control the locomotives independently. The trains finally had a successful test run before winter and a few small tour groups viewed the partially finished layout. One family who visited is now living in the last station still standing. Converted to private housing years ago, it sits on the former RR bed off South Athol Rd. I told them I'd put their house/depot in the display. Also, the family who formerly owned the Model Bakery in Enfield stopped by and that will appear as well.

Then came the landscaping of the valley. To capture the many varied activities, the scheme depicts spring in the East, summer in the North changing through fall in the West and winter in the South. Using a hot knife to carve the river and ponds in the foam base, I then filled them with resin poured over painted river and stream bottoms to create the water, with falls and rapids. A large pond with beaver and moose flows under the famous Keystone arch bridge in New Salem. The Soapstone quarry is in the northeast corner of the diorama. It is made of plaster and foam, paint and



Ken Levine and more trees to be placed on the layout when things warm up a bit.



The Keystone Bridge in New Salem



Romeo and Juliet on a date on Turtle Pond

wood and shows the process of mining the valuable mineral. Factories, scratch built using foam board and cardboard, represent various industries, a charcoal kiln, an ice pond and ice house give a realistic view of local commerce. Farming is represented in a plowed field (corrugated painted cardboard and



Ice harvesting on Greenwich Lake. On the left, horse and plows are defining the cutting lines, in front cutters are cutting lines; in back horse-drawn sleds are hauling ice to storage and in the middle, an ice cutter is being rescued.

Apparently, Zeke imbibed a little too much antifreeze last night and fell in. Authorities rush to rescue him before he becomes someone's ice cube.

made of dried plants and flowers flocked with painted sawdust to represent the four seasons along the 24 feet of the display, from early Spring in North Dana to Winter in Enfield in the South. Coniferous trees are created from cut and shaped pieces of green furnace filters, glued to painted bamboo skewers, two types of astro turf,



A barn raising with local help and observers

regular and Fescue, add to the surface greenery. Backdrops were painted with clouds and storms, hills and mountains in three dimensions were made using layers of styrofoam and polyester batting glued and painted, with the colored sawdust and other materials to blend with the seasons. Telephone poles of those same wooden skewers and small glass beads for insulators line the roads and tracks, stone walls of tiny pebbles run through the landscape giving a realistic appearance, a couple slowly row their rowboat on Turtle Pond among the lily pads (hole punched green paper circles and white and yellow beads of styrofoam board) while the train, rolls by.

Three types model trains from the late 1800s and early 1900s are in the display. The earliest, a 1871 wood burning 4-4-0 American called the Enfield followed by a 4-4-0 coal burner and then a more powerful 4-6-2 steam locomotive complete the consist that powers the short line. Various vintage RR cars and antique model autos fill the tracks and roads of the four Lost Towns.

The SRVHS plans to open for the season on June 22nd on Sundays and Wednesdays 1-4 by appointment and three open houses, no appointment needed on the first Sundays of July, August and September. The museum closes on 9/14 for the season. I plan to give a free talk on the history of the railroad and the creation of the display as part of the Petersham Historical Society annual meeting in the Petersham Town Hall on June 5th at 7 p.m. The public is invited.

And the detail goes on!



Sleepy Ike needs a little nudging from his horse to get back to work.



Bert and Ernie study the process of barn raising at close hand.



Three-finger Joe does the local woodwork.



The "Rabbit" stopped for practically everything on its route but not sure if the "Rabbit" stopped to pick up deer.



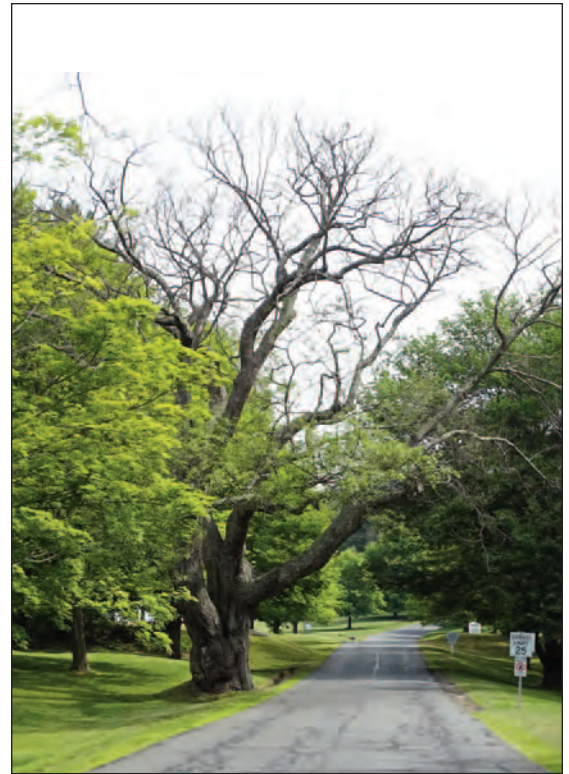
Preparing to pick apples

Chronicle of a Tree's Life



Around 1938 during reservoir construction.

The Quabbin Oak 8-9-1945



6-18-2018 after the Gypsy Moths had finished.



10-31-2014 in vigorous health captured by Elaine Darr-Morton.

9-27-2018 Cutting all but the main trunk down.



2-8-2022 Unannounced, the remainder of the trunk is removed.



3-7-2022 A very hollow stump remains.

The Quabbin Oak
is Gone!

Eagle acrobatics over Quabbin, photo by Anne Ely

Enfield

by Anne Ely

Standing here at the Enfield Lookout I looked down
 There, beneath the water before me, was once a town.
 A small town, along whose streets my parents once did walk;
 The stores where they shopped, meeting neighbors who stopped to talk.
 In my mind I see it; it's summer, no more school.
 It's down to the ol' swimming hole... last one in's a fool.
 Barefoot children with fishing poles, heading down the lane
 After that granddaddy catfish; bragging rights to gain.
 Farmers in the fields gath'ring hay that had been mowed
 Soon wagons filled with it will be coming down the road.
 They need to get it in the barn; there's talk of rain.
 A friendly wave from those who pass heading for the train
 Going, perhaps, to work, or shop in the next town.
 No matter where my mind wondered, contented life I found.
 Of course, I was picturing things in warm weather.
 Would winter bring a different mindset altogether?
 But from the things I've read and the stories folks tell,
 Though 'twas a might colder, the town was happy and well.
 There were bonfires, skating parties and carol sings,
 And although there were many fun and good-time things
 Work knows no season, be it sunshine or snowfall
 And sometimes those winter snows could slow things to a crawl.
 So, day after day, the everyday life went on;
 Hopefully the cattle feed would last 'til winter's gone.
 Neighbors would help neighbors get through the winter woes,
 But it wouldn't be long before those with bare toes
 Would stub their way back down the road setting their sights
 On ol' granddaddy catfish, and who'd get bragging rights.



Quabbin Interpretive Services Spring 2022

by Maria Beiter-Tucker

The new year is starting off well for the Quabbin Interpretive Services. We were able to offer five remote programs this year. The first three: “Discovering the Other Lost Valley” about the Ware River Watershed area and reservoir project, “Life of the Common Loon,” and “Beyond the Flood,” were well attended with approximately 30–40 participants each. Although we weren’t able to record them, we hope to provide recorded versions of any future programs. We had two more remote programs scheduled in March before this newsletter was published: on March 6th, “The Bald Eagle and Quabbin Reservoir” and on March 20th, “The Buzzing of the Bees” about native pollinators.

Along with offering our own remote programs we will be doing outreach to libraries and other community groups to share the programming we can offer for free to the public.

As well, we held several outdoor hikes in January and February and look forward to plenty of outdoor programs this spring. Nancy Huntington is planning a series of spring walks in Quabbin Park on the first Thursdays of March, April and May to explore plant habitats. On March 5, we offered another Quabbin Park Cemetery Tour at 1:00 p.m. As we head into spring we are excited to expand our outdoor programming and will have more to share at: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-conservation-recreation/events> or email quabbinvisitor.center@mass.gov for more information.

May and June are typically our busiest season working with schools. This school year is different again but we will begin outreach to schools we have worked with over the years to bring students back to Quabbin for outdoor programs.

The Quabbin Visitor Center continues to be open every day (excluding Wednesdays) 8:30–4:30. Please stop by to see our occasional updates like our newest addition... a pair of moose antlers!

Lastly, after two years, Cliff Read’s position was posted in December and a decision was made to hire me as the new Interpretive Services Supervisor. I am very much looking forward to the challenges this new job will bring.

Recent Winter Group Hikes in Quabbin Park

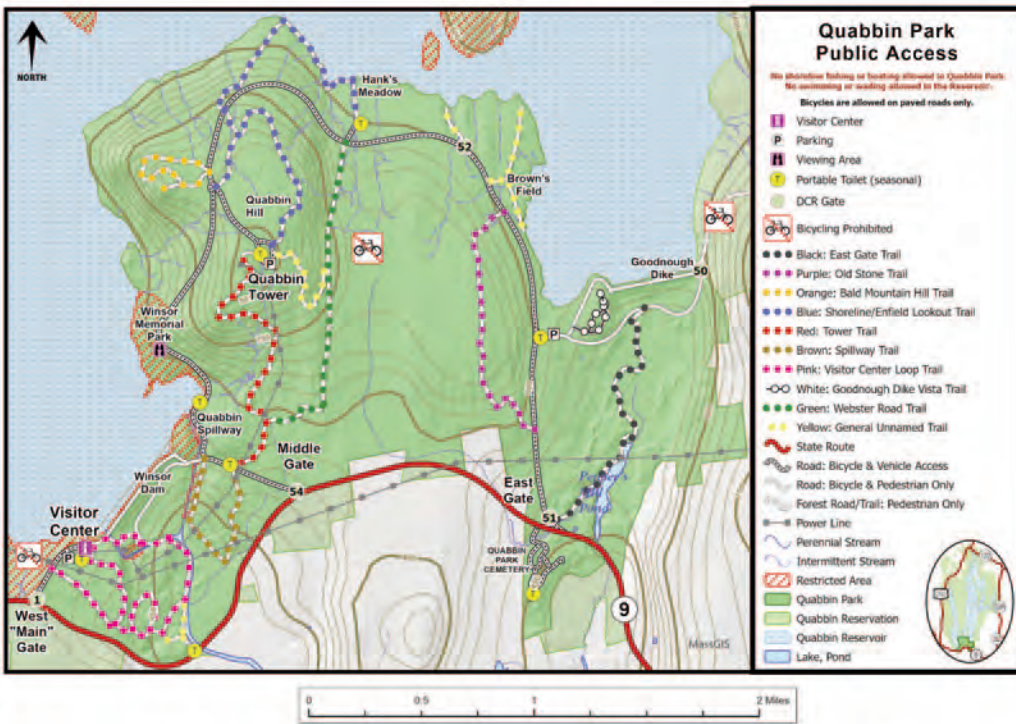
by Justin Gonsor

Beginning in 2021, Quabbin Interpretive Services initiated an update of the Quabbin Park trail network (see *Quabbin Voices*, Fall 2021). The project was a collaboration between the watershed rangers, our GIS analyst, and one of our carpenters. Trails were given specific names, a unique blaze color, and a new map of Quabbin Park was produced. The endeavor is mostly complete, but a few signs and blaze markers still need to be installed. With the new trail system in place, the Visitor Center is planning to offer at least one guided group hike a month for the foreseeable future. The goal is to start with hikes in the park and then expand out to the east, north, and west sides of the reservoir.

On January 22nd, I led a group of about a dozen folks for a hike around the Goodnough dike area. It ended up being one of the coldest days of the year with weather in the single digits. But the lack of wind and a clear blue sky really made things enjoyable. Our group started at the parking area, walked below the dike, and followed a forest road northeast of gate 50 for about a half-mile or so. That road was covered in snow/ice, but we all had traction support to add to our boots. There were some experienced hikers in my group that day and we covered a ton of ground. We then turned around and walked back via the road atop the dike. Everyone was bundled up for the cold and a great time was had by all.



My next group hike took place on February 19th and we hiked on the Tower Trail, which leads from the middle gate parking area up to the observation tower at Quabbin Hill, and then loops back down to where we parked via Webster Road. Again, we had around a dozen people signed up for the hike, but half the people ran into conflicts that morning, so we ended up with 6 people in total. There was almost no snow or ice on the trail for this hike. This hike had two memorable highlights. On our way to the tower, we stumbled upon two pileated woodpeckers, one of them chipping wood at the base of a tree not more than 15 feet away from



Pileated Woodpecker (Dryocopus pileatus) seen on hike.

storm on our way back to where we'd parked. Another successful afternoon was had, and a few new people were introduced to the park's trail system.

us. We stopped and observed the behavior for about 5 minutes. For most, it was the closest they had ever seen a pileated woodpecker, the largest in the state. The second highlight was the view from Quabbin Hill. That afternoon, snow squalls were predicted throughout the valley, and we could see them off in the distance. Then we actually got caught up in our own snow-

Going forward, we are going to do our best to continue offering guided hikes on a monthly basis. If you are interested in joining the mailing list for the hiking group, you can email me at justin.gonsor@mass.gov, and you'll receive an email anytime a new hike or event is offered by the Visitor Center.

Meetings & Events

Tuesday Tea, Tuesday, April 5th

The first Tuesday Tea since COVID will be first Tuesday in April, April 5th, at the usual time of 1:00-3:00 at the Quabbin Visitor Center. You may wear a mask if you wish, but they are not required. All are invited.

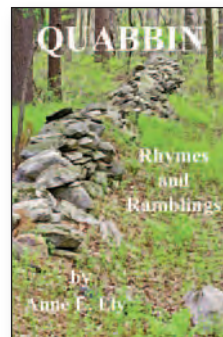
Annual Meeting

There will be no annual meeting again in 2022 because of COVID created uncertainties with planning. We hope that there will be a special meeting later in the summer or early fall with a special program.

Election of the Board of Directors, April

Like last year, the annual election of the Board of Directors will be done by mail, approximately half are up for election each year (last year saw them all up for election because there had been no election the previous year under special state COVID provisions). Because more people were able to vote than ever, it was decided that the election would be by mail-in ballot. In April, you will receive a letter with information on the candidates and a stamped postcard to return with your vote. Election results will be posted in the summer Newsletter.

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE, Sunday, May 29th commemorating veterans from the four towns at the Quabbin Park Cemetery. Refreshments served at 10:00 a.m. Step-off March and Ceremonies at 11:00 a.m.



Quabbin: Rhymes and Ramblings

by Anne E. Ely

Quabbin: Rhymes and Ramblings is a little book of poems and essays. Written over the years, it's based on the author's thoughts of, and feelings for, the beautiful place known as the Quabbin; touching

on both its past and present. Some of the writings are accompanied by the author's photos which were the inspiration for them. Price – \$8.00

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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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