

Quabbin Voices

The Friends of Quabbin Newsletter



Spring 2024
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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

CONTENTS

- Rutland Prison1
- President's Message2
- Deanna Krusiewicz3
- Expanded Deer Hunt5
- Swift Removal6
- Interpretive Services9
- Enfield Lookout Poem9
- Annual Meeting9
- Meetings/Events10

The Prison You'd Want

by Nancy Huntington

Program Coordinator, DCR Quabbin

Information and photos provided courtesy of the Rutland Historical Society

On a hillside in the town of Rutland, where the clean, clear air is renown, nestled on the banks of the Ware River, was a fully sustainable, independent, and idyllic farming community. The workers shared a large cozy bunker and were treated to different meals everyday including oatmeal, eggs, muffins, bacon, roasted chicken and pork, mashed potatoes, spinach, braised beef and chocolate pudding, to name just a few menu items. They raised prize winning cattle and horses, farmed over 150 acres which provided fresh vegetables and fruits to themselves and the local towns and their eggs, milk and goats were sold as far as Worcester. Fresh air, wholesome foods, plenty of rest, and honest down-to-earth work during the day was the prescription for a life that was productive and meaningful. If you were an inmate at the Rutland Prison Camp.

The late Victorian period was a time of paradox. On the one side, factory work was on the rise with inhumanly harsh and filthy conditions, large cities and industrialized communities were rampant with pollution and disease, women used organ crushing corsets and poisons like lead and arsenic to obtain then current standards of beauty. But there was also a growing movement to get back to the earth, protect land and create parks and sanctuaries, advances in medicine, science and understanding of nutrition, and an overall focus on physical and mental wellness not seen in previous times.

It was with this latter mindset in 1898 that Prison Commissioner Frederick G. Pettigrove first proposed a radical idea for a new type of

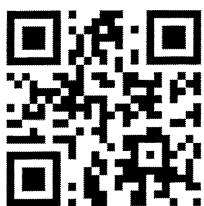


Overview of prison camp from hospital, DCR Digital Collection 12-7-1934

prison. According to a 1904 newspaper article on the opening of the camp: *"For many years the prison commissioners have been considering what plan they could adopt whereby the short-term prisoners could be provided with some sort of employment, the policy of the state being to eliminate all work in the prisons which in any way competes with honest labor outside."*

Pettigrove had observed that many hundreds of acres of old farmland had been neglected and gone to waste over the years as factory work took over and many old farms went out of business. He proposed using prison labor to revive the old farms, doing the hard work to build them up and make them productive again, then handing the fully functioning land over to local people to maintain. His idea was for a Temporary Industrial Camp for Prisoners, where low level offenders who had proven themselves trustworthy and were not in for severe crimes would live on and work the property. Then the settlement would be torn down and rebuilt on another property somewhere in the state, to continuously repeat the process on other abandoned plots of land. His proposal was approved, and over 900 acres in Rutland was chosen as the flagship farm.

The land that was to house the prison buildings was the former Capt. Phineas Walker homestead. The Walker *(continued p.4)*





Gene Theroux

President's Message

Spring 2024

The last few months have been very busy, and many successes have been achieved. One of the successes that I'm proud to report is the monument that will be placed at Quabbin Park

Cemetery prior to the 2024 Memorial Day Services. The bronze plaque has forty-three names of American Revolutionary War Patriots. It has been cast and received by Westfield's Smith Monuments. The bronze plaque will soon be mounted onto a granite slanted monument and the monument installed at Quabbin Park Cemetery. This monument will honor America on its 250th Anniversary and to the forty-three Patriots who are interred at Quabbin Park Cemetery (see the Memorial Day announcement below). On the reverse will be an inscription that acknowledges those who helped sponsor the monument financially.

A goal of the Friends of Quabbin is to have the Enfield Soldier Monument bronze soldier sculpture, and several bronze plaques restored to their former glory this summer. We're also looking to shore up the Keystone Bridge located in New Salem to prevent it from falling into the Middle Branch of the Swift River. These projects will cost a significant amount of money. A major fundraising campaign is underway to fund these two projects that will cost a significant amount of money. Donations can be made to the Friends of Quabbin.

At the February 2024 meeting of the Friends of Quabbin Board of Directors meeting, the Directors voted to donate some books to the Westfield Athenaeum through the Friends of Quabbin Book Donation program. It was my honor, representing the Friends of Quabbin, to present the five books to the Westfield Athenaeum to enhance their collection of Quabbin titles. There

In honor of America on its 250th Anniversary sponsored by:

Friends of Quabbin
 MA Department of Conservation & Recreation
 Anonymous DAR Donor
 New Salem Academy Trustees
 With help from State Senator Jake Oliveira
 Massachusetts Sons of the American Revolution
Dedicated May 26, 2024

Those who helped sponsor the Revolutionary War Memorial



Gene Theroux with Kevin McKenzie, a reference librarian at the Westfield Athenaeum.

is a strong connection to the former Swift River Valley and the City of Westfield. For example, the Drinkwater sisters (Mary and Charlotte) attended and graduated

from the Westfield Normal School—an unusual achievement for rural women of that era. In 1901, the Drinkwater sisters Charlotte V. Drinkwater and Mary Drinkwater Warren founded the Hillside School on their family farm in Greenwich. Until the Hillside School was incorporated in 1907, Hillside was completely dependent upon the Drinkwater sisters for total management of the school. The elderly ladies not only taught, cooked the meals, laundered, sewed the boys' clothing, and oversaw the operation of the farm, but served as surrogate parents for each of the thirty or so boys in their care. Charlotte, with failing eyesight, and Mary, who was then in her mid-sixties, were indeed remarkable women.

Annual Memorial Day Commemoration Services

Sunday, May 26, 10:00am–12:00pm, Quabbin Park Cemetery

Refreshments will be served for the first hour at the Quabbin Park Cemetery Building, then the March Step-off commences at 11:00am, followed by Services at the Town Monuments. The event is co-sponsored by the Friends of Quabbin, the Belchertown Veterans Council and the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and features the Belchertown Community Band. A special focus of the ceremony will be the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War and new monument for the Revolutionary War Patriots to be accompanied by the placement of special medallions on the grave sites of those patriots by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).



Deanna Krusiewicz

February 25, 1938 – February 16, 2024

by Paul Godfrey, Anne Ely and Gene Theroux



From the obituary in the *Springfield Republican*, Friday, February 23, 2024

Deanna Hazel (Hamilton) Krusiewicz, born February 25, 1938 in Dana, MA to the late Clifton and Mary (Doane) Hamilton, passed away peacefully in her sleep on February

16, 2024, nine days shy of her 86th birthday. Deanna was very proud to be the last person born in Dana, MA before it was transformed into the Quabbin Reservoir. She eagerly participated in many events supporting the history of the area. In addition to her parents, Deanna was predeceased by her three brothers: William "Bill" Milton, and Albert "Jack" Hamilton. After growing up in Wilbraham, Mass. and California, Deanna was a long-time resident of East Longmeadow, MA, spending the majority of her life in town with her late husband Arthur Krusiewicz. Deanna and Arthur were happily married for over 50 years and had two beloved children, Steven Krusiewicz and his widow Pamela (Suzor) and Janet Wrinkle. Deanna was a proud grandmother and great-grandmother to Shelly Krusiewicz and her daughter Chelsea of Wilbraham, MA; Steven Krusiewicz II, his wife Allie, and their daughter Ryleigh O'Neil of Stafford Springs, CT; Kelly Wrinkle of Cedar Park, TX; Caitlyn (Wrinkle) Ostin, her husband Ruddy, and their sons Emerson, Trevor and Kyle of Cromwell, CT. Deanna was heavily invested in documenting her family history and a proud member of The Friends of Quabbin. She loved to cook and bake, knit, and garden. Nothing brought more joy to Deanna than spending time with her family and friends, including Betty Ann Krusiewicz, the Dempsters, Jouberts, Niemics, and her many cousins, nieces, nephews and neighbors. Memorial contributions can be made to the 501(c) "The Friends of Quabbin, Inc." and mailed to: Friends of Quabbin, Quabbin Administration Building, 485 Ware Road, Belchertown, MA 01007.

From my heart (Paul): Deanna will be greatly missed at Tuesday Teas. We all remember her as the small, seemingly shy (upon first meeting) person who brought the brownies every time; and those brownies were eagerly sought out by everyone else at Tuesday Tea. She was an active participant in the discussions, and her smile revealed how much she enjoyed those discussions. She also went on all the Tuesday Tea Treks where her apparent shyness was quickly set aside as she avidly participated in our explorations of historic building sites, historic pictures of the way the visited sites used to look and wildflowers. She became quite practiced at Holiday Party cuttings of the famous cake with other old timers who had lived in the valley before its flooding. As I looked at one of those pictures, I realized she was the last of them. Sadness overwhelmed me. All of them are greatly missed.

From my heart (Anne). She was a faithful Tuesday Tea participant and I will miss her smile and humor. I loved the pictures and tales of her dogs she shared with me. And her brownies... every once and a while she would



Deanna Krusiewicz, Dottie Bish, Stanley Boyko, and Howard Frost cutting Holiday Party cake, December, 2018.



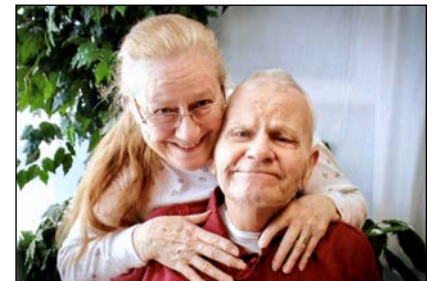
Fran and Alberta Martin and Deanna being presented Friends of Quabbin awards by President Gene Theroux, April 3, 2016.

whisper to me that she had made the kind I liked... the chewy ones. Although she was three years my senior, I admired how she hiked right along with the rest of us on our Tuesday Tea Treks. It won't be the same without her.

From my heart (Gene). I had spent quite a bit of time with Deanna from

learning of her time with her aunt Hattie Doane living in Pasadena, CA. I wrote about Hattie several years ago (*Quabbin Voices*, Spring 2017). She was a WWI Army Nurse Corps nurse in France. Hattie's name is on the Dana Honor Roll and also on the Honor Roll on the Quabbin Park Cemetery Administration Building, the only woman.

I had submitted Deanna's husband's name, Arthur, (a Korean War veteran) as a candidate for the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal to the Republic of Korea Consulate in Boston. Deanna went to Boston with several family members and the medal was presented



Deanna and Arthur Krusiewicz at the Soldiers' Home.

to the family by the Korean Consulate. Deanna's late husband was a Corporal in the U.S. Army who served one year and 18 days in the Republic of Korea. Her late husband's military awards included the Combat Infantry Badge, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, and the United Nations Service Medal.

Deanna and I went to a Veterans Day performance at the Swift River Elementary School together and then went to Mount Hope Cemetery and cleaned some of her family gravestones. We also visited her Doane family plot(s) in Quabbin Park Cemetery. I will miss her.

Prison

Continued from page 1

house and an old schoolhouse were renovated, and a temporary barracks was built to house the first wave of prisoners. Once prisoners arrived, they would be responsible for virtually all the ensuing construction from barns and outbuildings to massive stone and concrete structures like the vegetable cellar, solitary cell block and superintendent's house. The prisoners were responsible for all land clearing, planting, animal husbandry, cooking, cleaning—in short, they were fully self-contained and self-sustaining. Initially the men sent to the camp were low level offenders with short sentences, many were alcoholics in for 2–4 months, but in the later years of the camp there were some hardened criminals amongst the population. Once a prisoner's sentence was up and he left, another would take his place. Because of the mostly short terms, there was much turnover, and some years could see as many as 300 or more inmates. Most were there during the warmer months of spring through fall, with only a handful staying on through the winter to maintain the buildings and the animals.



Prison barracks, Rutland Historical Society

The conditions the men lived in were clean, comfortable, and they were treated as human beings. This was a primary order of the camp from the onset. The principal idea was that the inmates were men who had simply fallen into bad ways

but with steady guidance and proper care could be redeemed into healthy and productive members of society. It was a somewhat revolutionary idea, but not altogether unusual for the time. A similar concept led to the creation of the Hillside School in Greenwich by the Drinkwater sisters, though the charges in their care were young boys from the city who were often orphans and always poor. Not only were the conditions so favorable that hardly any prisoners tried to escape (the guards didn't even carry guns), but one local widower even committed a minor offense just so he could go there, saying the prisoners lived better than he did!



Prison Camp and Hospital showing quadrangle and office, 12-7-1934, DCR Digital Collection

There was a 6-cell solitary confinement building that was hardly ever used. The men instead lived in a large barrack building, with individual cots and side tables, but no other cells. They had use of the prison yard when they



Root cellar, 12-7-1934, DCR Digital Collection

were not working and their meals were abundant and varied, the foods supplied by their own hands. As often as

possible the men were put to jobs that best suited them, either from their prior experience or from their desire to learn something new. An inmate who in his previous life had been a banker expressed interest in taking care of the goats. Under his care the herd grew to the point that they were selling 100 goats every Easter, and upon his release he bought the herd from the prison and started a whole new career.

Rutland was already home to a state run tuberculosis hospital. Tuberculosis (known as TB) was a rampant disease that was of grave concern for hundreds of years. *“By the late 19th century, 70 to 90% of the urban populations of Europe and North America were infected with the tuberculosis bacillus, and about 80% of those individuals who developed active tuberculosis died of it.”* (Tuberculosis in Europe and North America, 1800–1922; Contagion-CURIOSity Digital Collections [harvard.edu]). For most of that time, it was thought to be a genetic disease, as it tended to run in families. It wasn't until 1882 that *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacteria that causes tuberculosis was discovered. Once that happened, treatment was greatly improved, as doctors began to isolate patients and enforce sanitary conditions. There were still no effective medicines yet developed for it, so the standard course of treatment was cleanliness, fresh air in abundance, rest and a healthy diet. TB causes a wasting of the body, so a rich, high protein diet consisting of milk, eggs, butter, custard, and similar foods was given to try to keep weight on the patient. TB hospitals, often called sanitoriums, opened across the country, specifically to provide “the cure” as the treatment was popularly called (those who took it were said to be “taking the cure”).

As isolation from the non-infected was critical in controlling the spread of the disease, only TB patients were seen at these hospitals. It was next to impossible to isolate and treat tubercular patients in prison environments, so in 1905 the state decided to utilize the property at the temporary prison camp



Rutland TB hospital, Rutland Historical Society

to build a TB hospital exclusively for prisoners across the state. As with the other buildings, the massive, multi-level stone fortress that would be the hospital was built by the prisoners. The hospital would be for all prisoners across the state, not just the lower-level offenders usually incarcerated at the camp, so it was built to ensure the patients had no means of escape. While the camp inmates had a considerable amount of trust and freedom, the hospital was built as you would expect a prison hospital to be, with iron grates on every window, and the entire open-air yard enclosed in a galvanized sheet iron fence.

With the opening of the hospital in 1907, it was decided that the Temporary Industrial Camp for Prisoners would be made permanent. Buildings were rebuilt and reinforced to last, and indeed the vegetable cellar and the solitary cell block can still be seen today. The entire complex was renamed the Prison Camp and Hospital. At its height, it boasted 60 head of Holstein cattle, which supplied milk to the entire complex plus an additional 400 quarts a day sold to the community, \$12,000 in poultry and egg sales annually (\$392,760 in 2023 dollars), prize-winning horse breeding, 200 tons of hay produced annually, and 200-300 tons of ensilage grown just for the cattle. By all accounts, the prison camp and hospital were a great success—economic and humanitarian. Sadly, it was not to last.

With the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir and the taking of land around the Ware River, the Prison Camp and Hospital were forced to close, as they existed within the bounds of the watershed. The process began in 1931 and buildings were fully empty in 1934. They were torn down, except for those few structures built of stone and concrete that even a wrecking ball could not affect. The land that so many hands worked to restore was abandoned once again. The remaining structures fell victim to decades of vandalism as local troublemakers took souvenir pieces of concrete and covered every visible inch with graffiti. Even before 1955, the iron crosses which marked the graves of the 59 prisoners who died in the hospital were stolen. In 1995, an Eagle Scout took it upon himself to replace those crosses with wooden ones, which have been maintained and replaced by DCR ever since. A bronze plaque commemorates that final resting place.

The Rutland Prison Camp and Hospital was a remarkable instance of humanitarian prison reform. For reasons unknown, it was not replicated despite its great success. Only the fields and foundations remain, and echo with the memory of men trying to find hope and purpose in a world where they would have been discarded.

More information is available at the Rutland Historical Society.

Expansion of Quabbin Reservation Deer Hunt in 2023

by Hillary Siener, Wildlife Biologist
Department of Conservation & Recreation
Division of Watershed Protection (DWSP)

A two-day controlled deer hunt was held in Quabbin Park in 2023 for the first time, after more than 80 years of no hunting. The opening of Quabbin Park to hunting marked an expansion of the Quabbin Deer Management Program.

Natural Resources, Forestry and other DWSP staff and scientists advocated for several years for an expansion of the controlled deer hunts into Quabbin Park due to the documented deer density and impacts on the forest. In 2019, a public meeting about hunting in Quabbin Park was held, and the DCR Commissioner approved a hunting plan. A lottery was held to select 93 hunters (roughly 1 hunter per 35 acres) to participate. Unfortunately, just weeks before the hunt was planned to start, it was canceled pending further stakeholder input. Following the 2020 pandemic, DCR renewed its efforts, and in 2023 the hunt was approved to move forward.

DWSP honored the winners of the 2019 lottery. Emails and letters were sent to the hunters to confirm their continued interest, and they received an access permit and Quabbin Park antlerless deer permits after they completed an online orientation and knowledge-check. Signs at the Park entrances and information posted on the DCR webpage provided advance notice to visitors that the Park was to be closed for the hunt.

In total, 72 of the 93 hunters attended the December 4th and 5th Quabbin Park hunt. After a very foggy start that limited visibility on the first day, hunters were treated to calm, cool weather, ideal for hunting that time of year, minus perhaps the absence of a light dusting of snow. Hunters harvested 37 deer in the Park,

which is an average hunter success rate of 51%. Deer densities were reduced from 50 per square mile to 9.1 per square mile. Furthermore, 86.5% of the harvest were females,



Two deer on Quabbin shore, photo by D.R. Davis

including 70.3% adult does. This far exceeds other female harvest results for all two-day controlled hunts since 1991, suggesting a strong first step in the reduction phase of the hunt for this program. Overall, DWSP was happy with the results from the first year of the hunt—a significant number of does were harvested and the hunt went smoothly and safely. Deer density estimates will be reevaluated in 2024, regeneration will continue to be monitored, and hunting will continue at Quabbin Park as part of the regular, adaptive Quabbin Deer Management Program.

Swift Removal

The Effects of Reservoir Construction Upon the People of the Swift River Valley

(Part 2: The People of the Swift River Valley)

by Rob Lewis

Part 1, *Quabbin Voices*–Fall 2023, described the history of Boston’s ever increasing need for water and engineering efforts to identify ways to supply the city. Part 2 discusses political opposition and social resistance to the reservoir project and begins to describe some of the feelings expressed by valley residents.



During the first 30 years of the 20th century, political opposition to the Quabbin Reservoir project in western Massachusetts existed, but much more powerful eastern Massachusetts

politicians eventually crushed it. Inhabitants of affected Swift River Valley towns vowed their resistance and were joined by representatives in the legislature. Early opposition from residents appeared in a *Boston Sunday Herald* article in November 1920 when Mrs. Susan J. Crane of Enfield told a reporter, “I hope they take it; it will poison you all.” The reporter noted that Crane’s smile made it appear as if she was “not as bitter as her words make her appear.”¹ A February 1921 article in the *Springfield Union* stated, “There are alternatives, to be sure, but they are considered inferior and little or no consideration has been given to them.”² On May 4th, 1922, according to the *Springfield Republican*, more than 400 citizens of Enfield, Prescott, Dana, Greenwich and New Salem appeared at a meeting of the legislative committee on water. The audience consisted largely of women who “did not confine their interest to listening alone” and took the floor to address the committee. The *Republican* reported, “Outstanding among the features of the hearing was the willingness voiced by citizens to give up farm and home for the general good of the community.” Many residents argued that delaying a decision regarding the fate of the valley would lead to a deterioration in property values.³ Many residents felt the project was inevitable and wanted to sell their properties while they were still able.

Valley towns organized “scattered opposition” led by Representative Roland Sawyer of Ware.⁴ Sawyer, who had attended the May 4th meeting in Enfield, supported the second plan which would involve filtering water from rivers much closer to Boston. Some residents, believing the state would eventually take their land, opposed Sawyer, feeling he was delaying the inevitable. Sawyer’s fierce defense of the people

of the valley was evident after a May 22, 1922 hearing in Boston which allowed residents from Dana, Prescott, Greenwich and Enfield to speak. Those who spoke, many of whom were real estate dealers from valley towns, implored the state legislature to take immediate action in deciding the fate of the Swift River Valley towns.⁵ J.H. Johnson of Enfield argued against Sawyer “that the property owners of the Swift River valley should not longer be held in suspense,” urging immediate action “in order that the people of the Swift River Valley who will lose their homes if the valley is to be flooded may know what to do.” Sawyer responded,

I propose to fight this bill at every step and I am certain that the people of the towns concerned are with me. There are certain interests about the state house that have long sought to create the impression around here that most of the 2800 people to be ousted really want to go. This is the situation and I am sure that the remarks by this delegation (which included Johnson and others) will help to scatter that rumor and do harm to the fight...I shall fight for those who want to save their homes and preserve these towns regardless of their numbers. I shall not play ‘cozy’ or relinquish this fight because of slurs from those who hope to profit by the misfortunes of their neighbors.⁶

Former Enfield resident Donald Howe, in his book *Quabbin: The Lost Valley*, described Sawyer as “an eloquent speaker...sincerely interested in the human side of problems presented, and, convinced of the fact that other sources of water supply should be exhausted by all parties at interest, he spearheaded the opposition (to those urging immediate action).” Sawyer contended that some residents sided with the state and intended to capitalize on the project (which they deemed as inevitable) by profiting on the sale of real estate. Howe argued that some representatives in the Swift River Valley, adversaries of Sawyer, stood only to gain by discord.⁷ Sawyer felt that the project was a “scheme...an attractive proposition for engineers, contractors and politicians” and that Goodnough had “falsely claimed there was an emergency.”⁸ After extended debate and re-examination of the proposals, the state legislature eventually adopted Goodnough’s plan in 1926, authorizing the immediate purchase of Swift River valley lands. The Massachusetts General Court passed the Swift River Act on April 26, 1927, authorizing construction of the reservoir.⁹

Resistance to reservoir construction came not only from affected western Massachusetts citizens but also in the form of a federal lawsuit filed by the state of Connecticut. In 1929, Connecticut sued Massachusetts, claiming that creation of the Quabbin Reservoir would divert water from tributaries of the Connecticut River and reduce the flow of the Connecticut (which flows south from Massachusetts into Connecticut). Connecticut claimed, “the proposed diversion will take water tributary to the Connecticut entirely out of its watershed, will impair navigability of that stream, will take floodwaters, and thereby cause damage to agricultural lands that are subject to yearly inundation.” Connecticut further argued that the reservoir would destroy the property of Connecticut and its inhabitants without due process of law. Massachusetts responded that the diversion would not cause injury or damage, that the

amount of water to be taken was negligible compared with the flow of the river where it entered Connecticut. In a landmark case *Connecticut v. Massachusetts*, the United States Supreme Court ruled that Connecticut failed to establish that the taking of floodwaters would hurt fishing or increase pollution in the river. The Court found no evidence that “any real or substantial injury or damage” would result from diversions in Massachusetts authorized by the Acts of 1926 and 1927. The Court ruled that it would “not exert its extraordinary power to control the conduct of one state at the suit of another unless the threatened invasion of rights is of serious magnitude and established by clear and convincing evidence.”¹⁰ With this ruling, Massachusetts cleared the last significant roadblock in the project, opening the door to construction and effectively ended any realistic chance Swift River Valley residents had to remain in their homes.

The valley had already begun to change once people became aware of the strong possibility the state would take their land, homes and businesses. The populations of Dana, Enfield, Prescott and Greenwich had steadily declined since the late 1800s when authorities began investigating the valley as a potential water supply, and by 1930 Prescott’s population had shrunk to a mere 48 people from its high of 758 in 1830. Both Prescott Post Offices had closed by 1928, and, in 1930, the majority of Dana Center residents voluntarily decided to give up their land. In 1935, the Athol and Enfield Railroad made its last run and the last factory in the valley closed.¹¹

When remaining residents of the Swift River Valley finally had to leave, their emotions over forced removal were mixed. The thought of the government announcing one day that everyone in a town must pack up and go is unthinkable in today’s world. The idea that the same government offered no assistance in moving or finding new homes or employment is also unimaginable today. People in 1938 were generally much more trusting in their government; protests were few and far between and mass media did not exist to spread information as it does today. People living in rural communities probably had even less awareness of their rights and of what was fair. Feelings about forced removal may have markedly changed by the time residents discussed them years later.

Bitterness and skepticism toward the government of Massachusetts were the leading and most documented reactions to the state takeover. Many former residents expressed these attitudes during interviews more than thirty years after their homes were destroyed and the valley flooded. Eleanor Griswold Schmidt explained that in the late 1920s after the state legislature passed the Swift River Act, fires were intentionally set by people who were angry with the Massachusetts District Water Supply Commission (MDWSC). Schmidt added, “They (MDWSC) wanted your land...they are not going to provide anything to make you happy.” Schmidt expressed bitterness describing her father working on the roads for one dollar a day and later four dollars a day, only to die of a burst appendix in 1937.¹²

Robert “Bob” Wilder, a young child when his family left Enfield, felt that the MDWSC mistreated his grandfather when it

purchased his Enfield farm for \$1,500 after his grandfather had asked \$5,000. Wilder was especially bitter that his family lost possession of a farm which had been in his family for five generations. Other farmers were not happy because they also felt they did not get a fair price for their farms. Wilder’s family was never satisfied with what the state paid them, “strictly from our point of view.” Wilder’s interviewer, Lois Doubleday Barnes, also a former valley resident, expressed her frustration, stating that by 1930, the MDWSC had purchased most properties and then rented them back to some who wished to stay. Many families rented farms and made a living from them during the Great Depression. Barnes had mixed feelings about the subject because while she felt it was good that the state provided jobs for people in need, she felt “the MDC (MDWSC) did nothing for dislocated families.”¹³

Phyllis Hamilton Frechette, a former resident of the village of Millington in New Salem, vividly recalled her first experience with death in the fall of 1937 when her Grandfather Whittier committed suicide. Whittier had suffered a heart attack more than a year earlier and was unable to farm for a year. During that year, Whittier was forced to sell his cows because the MDWSC was able to prove that a brook running through the farm ran into the Quabbin Reservoir watershed, potentially allowing his animals to foul the water of the reservoir “even seven or eight miles away.” After suffering a second heart attack, Whittier was told he could no longer farm and became increasingly depressed. Frechette’s grandmother found he had shot himself one day. Frechette also explained that MDWSC’s shutting down of the valley caused her father to lose access to the places he counted on for the best ferns, greens and other supplies he needed for his florist business.¹⁴

Former Prescott and Enfield resident Sidney St. Peters felt that people wasted much of the water supplied by the Quabbin Reservoir and did not think that people could be convinced in the present day to support a similar project. St. Peters recalled that the project became unpopular and that people who relocated out of the valley “hadn’t melded into neighboring communities the way they hoped.”¹⁵ Mabel Mann, who taught school in Dana, described hiking back years later to find remnants of the chimney of a house where she lived, skeptically stating, “They didn’t raze all the buildings.” Mann, who later moved on to teach in Foxboro, Massachusetts, expressed sadness over the reservoir project, stating, “Every time I shed tears over those stories...lovely, lovely homes that were smashed down and dug up.”¹⁶ Amos Dwayne White left Dana to join the military in the 1920s, knowing little about the reservoir project until he returned home from his military duty station in Minnesota only to learn that the MDWSC was taking over, removing cemeteries and tearing down houses.¹⁷ Former Prescott and Greenwich resident Raymond Lego provided a powerful expression of resentment during a 1969 interview when he said, “If this thing hadn’t been hanging over the head of the valley so long, they would have had more improvements and some business might possibly have come in....This had been hanging over them since 1895....it tended to hold the valley down.”¹⁸ Lego made a valid point; in the late 19th century, the state began investigating the possible conver-

sion of the valley into a water supply. An 1899 *Springfield Republican* article discussed a state board of health investigation into potential water supplies, stating that Engineer Goodnough “will be in the city (Springfield) again in a few weeks, and will then investigate Swift river as a new source of supply, a plan the water commissioners have been working on for three months past.”¹⁹ This investigation and discussion by Massachusetts officials were widely reported and likely deterred businesses and potential new residents from moving into the valley due to uncertainty.

There is further evidence to justify the doubt expressed by former residents. Amy Spink and Mabel Jones discussed public concern that state workers did not use adequate care when removing bodies from valley cemeteries for re-interment in the newly created Quabbin Park Cemetery in Ware and other cemeteries.²⁰ In the 2001 documentary *Under Quabbin*, Massachusetts State Police divers explored the floor of the Quabbin Reservoir to find evidence of the former towns. Divers discovered 19th century marble tombstones and older slate tombstones, things the state had assured residents it had relocated (most to the Quabbin Park Cemetery in Ware, Massachusetts) before the flooding of the valley.²¹

Even surrounding towns shared in the resentment created by the construction of a reservoir they never wanted, as evidenced in a 1938 *Belchertown Sentinel* article stating:

*Yes, drown out the valley as one may beneath this lily pad and that, people will still visualize this family and the other, driven from their abode and while Belchertown and other towns profit by the exodus, we still have a heart-throb for the people departing and wonder if the prognosticators are right who predict that the trend of population to the rural areas will be greatly accentuated, and visualize the day when the reservoir will be drained and building lots apportioned to Bostonians in need of relief, with permits available from the town clerk to sink their own wells and sing “The Old Oaken Bucket.”*²²

Amy Spink and Mabel Jones discussed animosity shown by residents toward the government and the workers sent to build the reservoir, describing a quiet, prosperous valley filled with satisfied, law-abiding people of whose homes, businesses and associations the project would deprive them.²³ Evelina Gustafson felt it was “sacrilege to destroy such perfect examples of early American architecture,” adding that many houses were constructed using hand-made nails and hand-hewn beams.²⁴ The 1939 MDWSC Annual Report dispassionately states the harsh reality of what residents faced: “Real Estate: To date, a total of 80,600 or 126 square miles purchased or taken by eminent domain.”²⁵ Town records occasionally emanated hints of bitterness as did the report of school superintendent Flavel M. Gifford in Dana’s 1932 Annual Report which stated, “The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has followed the policy of equalizing somewhat the financial burdens due to public education particularly in small towns.”²⁶

Future articles will continue to describe the wide variety of feelings expressed by valley residents and how memories of people’s final years in the valley varied greatly depending

upon age, social status, financial status, and family situation. Coping with the inevitable end will also be discussed; former residents established meeting groups, held reunions and collected documents and artifacts to help preserve the memory of their drowned towns. Finally, the discussion will include how Massachusetts created thousands of new jobs to facilitate the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir and the inevitable corruption that accompanied such a massive project.

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- 2 H.L. Gray, “Wipes Out Hampshire Villages—Plan for Enlarging Water Supply of Boston Metropolitan District That Would Create Huge Lake in Ware and Swift River Valleys Now Occupied by Prosperous Farming Communities,” *Springfield Union*, February 6, 1921, Box 069, Folder 08 “Nellie L. Brown Material,” Archival Holdings of the Belchertown Historical Association, The Stonehouse Museum, Belchertown, MA.
- 3 “Hundreds Attend Hearing at Town Hall in Enfield,” *Springfield Republican*, May 5, 1922, 1–2.
- 4 Donald W. Howe, *Quabbin: the Lost Valley*, (Ware, Massachusetts: The Quabbin Book House, 1951), 29–30.
- 5 Fern L. Nesson, *Great Waters: A History of Boston’s Water Supply*, (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1983), 49, and “Swift River Bill Going to 1923-Committee Will Recommend This Today—Sawyer Criticized at Hearing and Strikes Back at Critics,” *Springfield Republican*, May 23, 1922, 4.
- 6 “Swift River Bill Going to 1923-Committee Will Recommend This Today—Sawyer Criticized at Hearing and Strikes Back at Critics,” *Springfield Republican*, May 23, 1922, 4.
- 7 Howe, 30–32.
- 8 Nesson, 51.
- 9 Nesson, 68–70.
- 10 Connecticut v. Massachusetts, 282 U.S. 660 (1931).
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- 12 Eleanor Griswold Schmidt, Oral History, February 21, 1988, Friends of Quabbin Oral History Collection, (Belchertown, MA).
- 13 Robert (Bob) Wilder, Oral History, May 17, 1989, Friends of Quabbin Oral History Collection, (Belchertown, MA), Wilder and Elwyn Doubleday, Oral History, May 1994, Friends of Quabbin Oral History Collection, (Belchertown, MA).
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- 15 Sidney St. Peters, Oral History, April 9, 1988, Friends of Quabbin Oral History Collection, (Belchertown, MA).
- 16 Mabel Mann, (Dana, Mass.) Oral history, November 1, 1980, Audrey R. Duckert Quabbin Valley Oral History Collection (MS 756), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
- 17 Amos Duane White, (Dana, Mass.) Oral history, July 6, 1977, Audrey R. Duckert Quabbin Valley Oral History Collection (MS 756), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
- 18 Raymond and Celia Lego (Prescott and Greenwich, Mass.), Oral History, July 22, 1969, Audrey R. Duckert Quabbin Valley Oral History Collection (MS 756), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
- 19 “Investigating Water Supply, Swift River Plan Considered,” *Springfield Republican*, August 26, 1899, Springfield, MA, 4.
- 20 Amy Ann Whitford Spink, Mabel Louisa Jones, Robert V. Johnson, Terry-Ann Campbell, and Leslie A. Campbell, Letters from Quabbin: *Springfield Union*—Springfield, Massachusetts, 42.
- 21 Edward J. Klekowski, Libby Klekowski, Jonathan Williams and Michael Volmar, *Under Quabbin: The Search for the Lost Towns*, Aired August 21, 2001 on WGBY, Springfield, MA. DVD. 58 minutes.
- 22 “Chasing the Skyline,” *Belchertown Sentinel*, August 5, 1938, 3.
- 23 Spink and Jones, Letters From Quabbin, 39.
- 24 Evelina Gustafson, *Ghost Towns ‘Neath Quabbin Reservoir*, (Boston: Amity Press, 1940), 109–110.
- 25 Massachusetts, *Annual Report of the Metropolitan District Water Supply Commission for the Year Ending November 30, 1939*, (Boston: The Commission, 1941), 36.
- 26 *Annual Reports of the Town Officers and Committees of the Town of Dana, Massachusetts (1932)*, (Dana, Massachusetts), 41.

Interpretive Services Report

March 2024

by Maria Beiter-Tucker

After a quiet December, the Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center staff started 2024 with a hike in the Ware River watershed on January 6. It was well attended and is a good start to our plans to offer more programming in that area.

Our Sunday presentations have received great feedback. Besides Maria's presentation on the Construction of the Dam, Dr. Becky Seifreid from UMASS presented on how LIDAR technology can be used to discover land use of the reservoir forest from the era prior to 1927. Last Sunday we were fortunate to have Cheryl Stedtler from the Nipmuc Nation to discuss Project Mishoon, the discovery of three canoes at the bottom of Lake Quinsigamond. Her presentation gave insight to the history and culture of the indigenous people of the Quabbin area. We welcomed Ken Canfield, our chief forester, as he presented on watershed forestry. There is a lot of misunderstanding on this topic, so he was able to provide a better context for our visitors. Nearly all of our presentations will be recorded and shared on the DCR DWSP YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2yN9X7t6shr1ASUNCA2B8Gk0EHa7sDWH>

We are looking forward to a great spring season of programming. Check out our list of upcoming programs in the Meeting and Events section of this Newsletter.

The Enfield Lookout

It once was fluffy snow
that now crunches underfoot,
And icy footprints show
that here people came to look.

A small sign tells the tale
of that town that once was there;
Fond memories still prevail
in the hearts of those who care.

Underneath cloudless skies
and beneath the waters blue;
Hard now to visualize
that place which everyone knew.

Homes where once children played
right there on that Valley floor;
Churches where people prayed,
shops, factories and so much more.

There farmers grew their crops,
kids went fishing after school;
Soft breezes through treetops
the hot summers helped to cool.

They live on in the heart;
a passed-down story or book.
To share it all is our part
with all those who come to look.

—Anne Ely



Friends of Quabbin Annual Meeting

Sunday, April 7, 2024, Time: 12:30 to 3:30pm

Fellowship Hall at the Belchertown United Church of Christ (BUCC), Park St., Belchertown, MA

(in the center of town on the road running parallel to Rte 9
and across from the town common gazebo in the shadow of the water tower)

Social time with refreshments: 12:30–1:30pm; Business Meeting at 1:30–2:00pm; and Program: 2:00–3:30pm

The Program will be presentations by Representative Aaron Saunders about a bill that he and Jo Comerford submitted to their respective branches of the legislature called **H. 897 / S. 447—An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity**. Among its several features, it would establish a Community Trust Fund based on a levy of 5 cents per 1000 gallons of water drawn from of Quabbin. At least 70% of that fund would be used to support municipal operations and capital improvements of the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed Communities and up to 25% would go to non-profit organizations directly serving the health, welfare, safety and transit needs of the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed Communities. Following their presentations, questions will be entertained.

Meetings & Events

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Spring Presentations Offered by the DCR Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center

For all presentations, please dress appropriately and protect against ticks. Dogs are not allowed.

Exploring the Ware River Watershed—group hike near Muddy Pond

Saturday, April 13, 2024 11am–1pm; 4.1 miles, moderate

Ware River Watershed, Route 122 rest area parking lot, Oakham, MA 01068

Join us for a 4.1-mile looped hike in the Ware River Watershed. The route climbs/descends roughly 140 ft. in elevation. The footpath we will travel on is non-technical. The last mile of the hike is on a scenic section of the Mass Central Rail Trail. We will all meet at the Route 122 rest area parking lot in the town of Oakham. The hike begins/ends north of Muddy Pond. Visit the following website for additional information on the route: <https://www.trailforks.com/route/4mi-loop-near-muddy-pond-from-rest-area/>

Register here: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/ab0e732a488d4dfda9847662dfe78286>

Vacation Week Program! Habitat Investigations

Thursday, April 18, 11am–12:30pm; 1 mile, easy

Meet at the Hank's Meadow parking lot. <https://goo.gl/maps/4RiEq17PCNEf6s9E7>

What kinds of critters live around us? Join one of our staff while we explore the Shoreline Trail and look for signs of wildlife. **No registration needed.**

Exploring Quabbin Park via the Tower Trail and Webster Road Trail

Saturday, May 11, 2024 11am–1pm; 3.1 miles, intermediate

Quabbin Reservoir, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA The hike will begin at the Tower Trail parking area which is located just inside the Middle Gate off Rt. 9 in Belchertown. We will hike up to the Observation Tower and take in the scenic view. The tower is currently closed indefinitely for repairs, so we won't be able to go inside. We'll then utilize a connector trail down to Webster Road, and then loop back to where we began. In total, the hike will cover 3.1 miles. The trail to the tower gains 475 feet of elevation.

Register here: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/ce6482dfca1943e78057b9bf42c06a5c>

Quabbin's Hidden History: Webster Road

Sunday, May 12, 2024 11am–1:00pm; about .5 mile, easy

Meet at the Hank's Meadow parking lot. <https://goo.gl/maps/4RiEq17PCNEf6s9E7>

Quabbin's ghost towns are hiding in plain sight—if you know where to look. This two-hour guided interpretive walk will teach

you how to read the natural landscape as you uncover clues that reveal the hidden history of Webster Road. Explore old cellar holes and historic stone walls, get to know some native and invasive plants, and learn more about the families who lived in the town of Enfield a hundred years ago.

Register here:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/8fa0a8815fd1474c801926220047b22f>

Quabbin Park Cemetery Tour—Memorial Day Edition Sunday May 26, 2024, 2pm–3pm; easy walk, uneven ground

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/rv4tzdEPproba1jv9>

After our Memorial Day remembrance ceremony, join us for a cemetery tour focused on the stories of some of the Valley residents that served and lost their lives in service to the United States. The tour will begin at the town monuments.

Register here:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/31306340e82941628d5e7fb1bee3b017>

Exploring Quabbin Park via the East Gate Trail and the Goodnough Dike

Saturday, June 8, 2024 11am–1:30pm; paved walk, 4.2 miles, intermediate

Quabbin Reservoir, East Gate entrance, Rt. 9, Ware, MA 01082

Join us for a 4.2-mile hike that will feature the scenic view from the road at the top of the Goodnough Dike. We will be walking on a mix of foot paths, forest roads, and paved roads. The hike is mostly flat except for walking up and down the road to the Dike. Hike begins at the East Gate parking area. The parking area is located on the north side of Rt. 9 in Ware, across from the Quabbin Park Cemetery.

Register here: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/8690ed7c74ab40f982865ddeae94fd8a>

Explore the Road to Dana Common

Saturday, June 15, 10am–1pm, 3.6 miles, moderate

Meet at Gate 40 on Rt 32A in Petersham <https://goo.gl/maps/d4RxN91vsyHUzhEE6>

The old foundations, stone walls, and shade trees of Dana Common will transport you to the past as you explore Quabbin's unique history. This hike will introduce you to some of the notable residents of Dana as you discover what life was like in the Swift River Valley over a hundred years ago. Photos and letters illustrating Quabbin's past will bring Dana to life before your eyes. **Register here:**

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/6741b6657b6948c5b5239c7120a0ea1c>

Exploring the Ware River Watershed—Rutland Prison Camp

Sunday, June 16, 2024 11am–1pm; approximately 1 mile, easy, uneven ground

Meet at Rutland Prison Camp, main parking lot, 299 Intervale Road, Rutland, MA 01543 <https://maps.app.goo.gl/J1iuV7QGB3rEAbxJ9>

Fresh air, three home-cooked meals a day, comfortable sleeping quarters and a private hospital—sounds like a delightful retreat for... a prison?? Indeed, it was! Join DCR staff as we explore the remains of this surprisingly successful social experiment.

Register here: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/27b860913b844a109280f0a3506f0381>



First Thursday Habitat Hikes

Quabbin is an area of immense diversity of habitat, from shady vernal pools to sunny mountaintops. Staff from the DCR Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center

Quabbin will be hosting hikes one Thursday each month (weather permitting) to spotlight some of these beautiful landscapes. Hikes will vary in location and intensity and may focus on an individual species or on a more general area. For more information and to register scan the QR code to visit <https://www.mass.gov/locations/quabbin-reservoir> Questions? email QuabbinVisitor.Center@mass.gov

Wetlands Walk

Thursday, April 4, 2024, 11:00am–12:30pm;
1.5 miles, easy <https://goo.gl/maps/RvC5y8AMtmWToTTq5>

This Habitat Hike will visit 2 different types of wetlands. It will begin at the parking area for Goodnough Dike in Quabbin Park and walk the Dike Road down to the wetlands' location and back, covering approximately 1.5 miles round trip. Be prepared for wet/muddy conditions. **Register at:**
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/fe46ba08256404fa1bd49660f68c624>

Gate 37 Forest Walk to Wetlands

Thursday, May 2, 2024, 11am–12:30pm; 1.5 miles, easy
<https://goo.gl/maps/wPedFYxiN5Qp8sVv9>
Meet at Gate 37 off Route 122 in the North of Quabbin Reservation. Parking is limited.

This Habitat Hike will be a short walk down a forest road to a stunning wetland habitat. It is a little over 1 mile round trip. Those who are feeling adventurous may opt to hike further, up the side of Soapstone Mountain to a spectacular view of the Quabbin, though be advised this portion is difficult and will not be a part of the official hike.

Register at: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/c3936c4d26c8443694b6b3fc0beb97d4>

Tower Trail Habitat Hike

Thursday, June 6, 2024, 11am–1pm, 3 miles, moderate
<https://goo.gl/maps/9K3L4xf44nbVK4bG7>

This hike will meet at the parking area inside the Middle Entrance off Route 9. It is a moderately difficult hike, approximately 3 miles round-trip up Quabbin Hill through woodland and mountain habitat and back. Due to safety issues, we will not be able to go up to the tower itself, as it is currently closed for renovations. **Register at:**
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/c2dd1551fbb7467bbdda704a469c7929>

Tuesday Teas

On the first Tuesday of each month at the Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center at 1:00pm, an interested group assemble to chat about a variety of things ranging from genealogies, recent happenings, new photo discoveries, etc. Please come and bring any relevant Quabbin items or topics you would like to discuss.

Pioneer Valley Photographic Artists

www.pvphotoartists.org
Please visit website for more details.

March 28: Something in the Middle, Baystate, Springfield

April 25: A Bridge, Hope United Methodist Church

May 30: Flower(s), Hope United Methodist Church

June 27: Black & White, Hope United Methodist Church

Hope United Methodist Church
31 Main Street, Belchertown, MA

Quabbin Photo Group

March 25: Zoom meeting only. Anyone interested in attending the meeting should email Gail Platz at gspltz@verizon.net to get a zoom link. It is a member's night where people show six images around a theme.

April 22: Live at Hope Methodist Church, 31 Main Street, Belchertown, MA. It will feature a talk by Mark Lindhult entitled "Photography with AI—It's Here."

Other live meeting dates will be May 27 and June 24.

Swift River Valley Historical Society

Sunday, April 30: EARLY SPRING HIKE, Gate 26 area East Main Street, New Salem. Meet at New Salem Common for 11:00am departure. Carpool may be necessary.

Sunday, May 21: SPRING HIKE Gate 33 area Meet at SRVHS, 40 Elm Street, New Salem for 11:00am departure. Carpool may be necessary.

Sunday, May 28: MEMORIAL DAY COMMEMORATION at Quabbin Park Cemetery. Refreshments at 10:00am Parade and services at 11:00am

Wednesday, June 21: MUSEUM OPENING DAY

New Friends of Quabbin Bookstore Catalog of Items for Sale

The last catalog was developed in 2016 and it wasn't widely made known. A number of new books and other materials have been added since then, a few have been dropped. The 2024 37-page catalog gives a detailed description of each item with a picture. The new catalog is now available to view on our website <https://foquabbin.org> and Facebook page. You may also request a digital copy from godfrey@umass.edu that is suitable for printing or viewing.

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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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Quabbin Voices

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