BACKGROUND ON GREENWICH, MASS.

First granted in 1737 to descendants of the veterans of King Philip’s (Metacomet’s) War, and incorporated as Quabbin Parish in 1754, the town of Greenwich sat astride the East and Middle branches of the Swift River and formed the eastern boundary of Hampshire County. The first town to occupy the valley, its unforgiving and rocky soils were devoted largely to agricultural use and pasturage, with light industry developing during the nineteenth century. A woolen mill; scythe, rake, fork, and broom manufactories; at least two saw mills; a match factory; and a plating operation employed a handful of workers each. Ice harvesting and a small cottage industry centered on the manufacture of palm-leaf hats providing additional employment. Before the turn of the twentieth century, the rise of a tourist industry exploiting the town’s numerous ponds and lakes became an important element of the local economy, with the Quabbin Inn, Greenwich Hotel, and Dugmar Golf Course becoming popular summer destinations.

Well connected to neighboring towns by two turnpikes and the "Rabbit Run" Railroad, the two principal villages (Greenwich Plains and Greenwich Village) supported a population of nearly 1,100 before declining slowly after about 1850. Like the other towns in the Swift River Valley (Dana, Enfield, and Prescott), Greenwich’s fortunes dimmed considerably after the 1890s. Confronted with a critical demand for water in the Boston metropolitan region in 1895, the Commonwealth authorized the new Metropolitan Water District to seek new supplies in the western parts of the state. Construction of the Wachusett Reservoir along the Nashua River (1897-1908) bought time, but ultimately failed to meet projected demand, and by 1922, the MWD officially signaled its intention of damming the Swift River Valley, signifying an end to habitation there. All residents were ordered removed from the valley, with homes, farms, and places of business systematically destroyed, the land cleared, and graves removed.

Work on the Quabbin Reservoir began four years later with construction of the Ware River Diversion, a tunnel connecting the Wachusett Reservoir with the Ware River, followed in 1936 by...
construction of the Goodnough Dike and Windsor Dam. Greenwich was officially disincorporated by the state on April 28, 1938, with the above-water portions annexed to nearby Hardwick, New Salem, Petersham, and Ware. On Aug. 14, 1939, the reservoir began to fill.

**Contents of Collection**

As the first town settled in the Swift River Valley, Greenwich, Mass., offers a long perspective on the history of the region inundated to create the Quabbin Reservoir. The core of this collection consists of the records of town meetings and the Selectmen of Greenwich from the Proprietary period in the 1730s through disincorporation in 1938, but there is some documentation of the town’s Congregational Church, a local school, the library, and the Greenwich Improvement Society. This finding aid includes both materials held by SCUA and those held at the Swift River Valley Historical Society in New Salem, Mass., that were part of a cooperative digitization project centered on the records of the Quabbin towns.

**Collection inventory**

- Book of records of agreements, fence viewers etc. commencing November 22 1866; stray beasts and lost goods commencing June 1st 1873; Also liens, 1866-1888 (1866) 1866-1888
  - Location of originals: Originals held by the Swift River Valley Historical Society (SRVHS)

- Complete record of the names of all the soldiers and officers in the military service, and of all the seamen and officers in the naval service of the United States, from Enfield, during the rebellion begun in 1861: together with the authentic facts relating to the military or naval career of each soldier, seaman and officer 1863-1882
  - Location of originals: Originals held by the Swift River Valley Historical Society (SRVHS)

**Contents:**
- Blank book with manuscript records of Greenwich soldiers added by H.B. Hodgkin, appointed clerk March 6, 1882. Another unbound copy with no volume indication but "Waste Part No." at head of title, has same records but lacks final thirteen. This copy is accompanied by an unbound index volume.

- Complete record of the names... v. 1 1863
- Complete record of the names... v. 2 1882

**Greenwich (Mass.) churches**

1895-1940

The churches of Greenwich, Massachusetts, were both places of worship and centers of fellowship. With the congregations disbanded and the buildings razed during the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir, this collection of programs, circulars, and news clippings preserves a snapshot of the churches and the communities they fostered.

- Blodgett, E. P., Circular letter to the "Beloved Church in Greenwich" 1897 Dec. 27 Box 1: 1
- Kebbe, David L., Christmas and New Year's Greeting [printed letter] 1904 Box 1: 1
- Spring convention, Ware Valley Christian Endeavor Union, Greenwich: Program 1910 6 copies Box 1: 1

- Dedication services, Greenwich Church Foundation and memorial, Ware, Massachusetts: Program 1935 Box 1: 1
- Greenwich Church Foundation and Memorial, Announcement: Sixth Annual Reunion of the residents and former residents of Greenwich, 1940 Sept. 19 Box 1: 1
## Greenwich Improvement Society

**Location of Originals:** Originals held by the Swift River Valley Historical Society.  
**Contents:** Includes constitution, minutes of annual and executive meetings, lists of members, and (some on laid in slips) records of dues received. The Greenwich Improvement Society was formed in April 1897. The object of the Society was "the construction and care of side-walks, the improvement of streets, the planting and cultivation of trees, the beautifying of the public grounds and such other improvements as the Executive Committee may order."

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## Greenwich (Mass. : Town). School District no. 5

Register for winter term 1873-1874 for School District No. 5. Includes list of students, attendance, headmarks, visitor records, and a few statistics all kept by teacher Ernest Howe Vaughan, who later became a lawyer involved with handling claims associated with the taking of property for the Quabbin Reservoir.

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## Greenwich (Mass. : Town). Town Records

1734-1916 6 vols.

**Location of Originals:** Originals held by the Swift River Valley Historical Society.

- **Greenwich Proprietors Records, v. 1** 1734-1778  
- **Greenwich Town Records, v. 2** 1782-1816  
- **Greenwich Town Records, v. 3** 1805-1827  
- **Greenwich Town Records, v. 4** 1828-1866  
- **Greenwich Town Records, v. 5** 1866-1895  
- **Greenwich Town Records, v. 6** 1895-1916

## Greenwich (Mass. : Town). Town Reports

1873-1938

**Note:** Title may vary from year to year.

- **Annual reports of the Selectmen, Overseers of the Poor, and Treasurer of the town of Greenwich** 1873-1907  
  - Internet Archive
- **Annual reports of the town officers of Greenwich** 1908-1921  
  - Internet Archive
- **Assessor’s valuation list and annual reports of the town officers and committees of Greenwich, Massachusetts** 1922-1932  
  - Internet Archive
- **Assessor’s valuation list and annual reports of the town officers and committees of Greenwich, Massachusetts** 1933-1937  
  - Internet Archive

- **Records of fires in Greenwich, Mass.** 1885-1928  
  - Swift River Valley Historical Society

**Contents:** Heads include: date of fire; class of buildings (wood, brick or stone); how occupied (dwelling, store, manufactory); names of owners and occupants; valuation, damage, and insurance information concerning the building and the contents; total or partial loss, cause of fire, remarks

- **Records of the rise and proceedings [sic] of the first Social Library in the first Parish in the Town of Greenwich, 1812-1831 (1812)**  
  - Swift River Valley Historical Society

**Contents:** Includes constitution, minutes of meetings and transfers of shares

## Greenwich (Mass. : Town). Treasurer

2 vols.

- **Treasurer’s accounts, v. 1** 1769-1818  
  - Swift River Valley Historical Society
- **Treasurer’s accounts, v. 2** 1770-1862  
  - Swift River Valley Historical Society

## Greenwich (Mass. : Town). Photographs

1912-1990

The collection contains five photographs of envelopes bearing the Greenwich postmark, 1826, 1829, 1831, and two unidentified by date. It also includes three photographs of W. Walker’s store and post office in Greenwich Village, showing the sign of the last owner, S.R. King, before the town was flooded for the Quabbin Reservoir in 1938.

- **First store in Greenwich -- Estey Place (photo of watercolor painting)** ca.1915  
  - Realphoto postcard
- **Glazier and Estey Pond** ca.1915  
  - Realphoto postcard
Greenwich postmarks: images of decorative and straight-line cancelations for Greenwich
c. 1990 5 items Box 1: 3

House of Albert Root
c. 1920 Box 1: 3

King, Dorothy P., postmaster, and mail contractor standing in front of S.R. King store (later reprint)
c. 1935 Box 1: 3

King, Dorothy P., postmaster, and mail contractor standing in front of S.R. King store (later reprint)
c. 1935 Box 1: 3

King, Dorothy P., postmaster, standing under Greenwich Village post office sign
c. 1935 Box 1: 3

Postcard: "It is often necessary and kind..." with inset photograph "Along the shore of Quabbin Lake, Greenwich, Mass."
c. 1912 Box 1: 3

Schoolhouse
c. 1915 Realphoto postcard Box 1: 3

Warner Pond
c. 1915 Realphoto postcard Box 1: 3

Quabbin Inn
c. 1920 2 items Box 1: 4

Brochure advertising Quabbin Inn, proprietor Otis Emerson Dunham, and its amenities and vacationing opportunities.

Administrative information

Location of Originals

This finding aid includes materials digitized in partnership with the Swift River Valley Historical Society in 2014, where the originals remain.

Provenance

Gift of Donald W. Howe, 1960; digital content made possible through a collaboration with the Swift River Valley Historical Society.

Processing Information


Related Material

Additional material relating to the history of the four Quabbin towns is indexed in SCUA’s online catalog, UMarmot, and includes the following of note:

- Benjamin Dunham Papers
- Howe Family Collection
- Dana Collection
- Enfield Collection
- Prescott Collection

The Swift River Valley Historical Society contains other records for the Quabbin towns that have not been digitized. These include photographs of residents of the town and materials relating to town finances and taxation.

Digitized Content

The official records of Greenwich have been largely digitized and are available both through the Internet Archive and Credo.
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