



Spring 2022

The Swift River Diary

*No winter lasts forever
No spring skips it's turn*

Dear Readers,

The past two years of “social distancing” have indeed seemed very long.

The museum has been closed but by no means inactive. The regular monthly board meetings have been held. New artifacts have been received and are now on display. The Rabbit Train exhibit is complete and will be on display during regular visiting days and hours. Many visitors are expected.

Programs appealing to all ages have been planned and we are looking forward to a busy 2022.

Elizabeth Peirce
Curator/Historian

The Rabbit Train

The Rabbit Train, also called the “Bunny Hop” or “Soapstone Limited” was so called because of frequent stops. It was established in 1871 and demolished in 1935. It was 50 miles in length with regular stops making the trip each way.

It was vital to the valley as a way of sending and receiving goods and services, transporting students to high school, carrying mail and for pleasure.

Many charming stories are told concerning it's service to the Quabbin Valley.

ENFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH COMMUNION TABLE

This past January the Jones Library in Amherst donated the communion table from the Enfield Congregational Church to SRVHS. They were rehoming some of their collection and felt the table was more suited to our museum.

The Enfield Congregational Church was built in 1786, when Enfield was still the south parish of Greenwich. Though the church building burned to the ground in 1936, the last service of the church community was held on June 26, 1938 and the church was disbanded on June 27, 1938.



We are sincerely grateful to the Jones Library and proud to have the table in our collection

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SRVHS to Launch Capital Campaign this Spring

The Swift River Valley Historical Society is gearing up for a capital campaign and we need your help.

The Historical Society has many treasures, among which are its three museum buildings – the Whitaker-Clary House, the Prescott Church, and the Peirce Carriage House. The House is the oldest of the three buildings – nearly 200 years old, constructed in 1816. The Historical Society recently replaced the roof on the House using endowed funds to expedite the repair. But there are other critical capital needs that we need to address as soon as possible.

The first is accessibility. The Whitaker-Clary House is not accessible to people with disabilities. This issue is overdue to be fixed so that all visitors can enjoy the museum and learn about the towns of the Swift River Valley. There's also an additional layer of urgency because the Historical Society is unable to obtain grants and other funding because of this compliance issue. The main needs are to build a handicap ramp to the House and also to enhance the House's exhibits so they are accessible for everyone, including people with mobility and sensory limitations. We expect these updates to cost approximately \$10,000.

The second capital issue to address is the electrical system. The wiring in the Whitaker-Clary House is 80 years old and desperately needs to be updated. We are unable to light all exhibits adequately given the limited electrical capacity. We would like to have the House fully updated, which we expect to cost approximately \$10,000.

We will be launching a capital campaign to raise the \$20,000 needed to fund these two critical capital needs. No donation is too small to assist in this effort. Please consider donating via the website today, and be on the lookout for a letter from the Historical Society about this effort.

Our Archivist

Some of our readers will be familiar with or have been in touch with our Archivist, Megan O'Loughlin. Megan has left SRVHS for a position as Human Resources Coordinator in the Geosciences Department at UMass Amherst.

She will be greatly missed here at the museum but we wish her all the best in her new career path.


Contact Information

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<https://swiftrivermuseum.org>
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Affiliations

The logo for Giving Tuesday, featuring the words "GIVING TUESDAY" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter "I" in "GIVING" is stylized with red and white vertical stripes.

Out of the Past

1947 Electricity was first turned on in the Village of North New Salem on June 6, 1947.

Prescott—October 1900 Waldo Peirce is so much better he sits up.

Dana 1926 The following students at the Center School had a perfect attendance record for the month of November: Lois Carrington, Florence Carrington, Ernest Carrington, Robert Carrington, Robert Darling, Estella Eddy, Arlene Cotton, Roy Simmons, George Eddy, Theresa White and Howard Vaughn.

Greenwich—1904

Greenwich celebrated its 150th anniversary. Greenwich was named for the Duke of Greenwich who quelled a rebellion in Scotland.



In 1904, Greenwich celebrated its 150th anniversary in a big way. Mount Pomeroy is shown here in the background. Today, only the tip of the mountain is visible above the Quabbin's waters.

SRVHS Photo Collection



The Congregational Church decorated for the 150th anniversary of the town in 1904.

SRVHS Photo Collection



Quabbin Reservoir

Photo courtesy of DCR

1938—The four towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott were no longer in existence after April 1938. The reservoir was filled by 1946.

Swift River Valley Historical Society
*Keeping alive the stories of the villages and four
"lost towns" of the Quabbin*

2022 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Museum open Wednesdays and Sundays 1:00 – 4:00 P.M. June 22nd through September 14th
The first Sunday of July, August and September will be Open House
All other visitation days are by appointment only (contact information can be found at the end of the schedule)
Admission to the museum is free

***SRVHS depends on donations to sustain our mission of preserving
the history of the taking of the Swift River Valley***

MAY

Sunday, May 15th **SPRING HIKE** Gate 46 to Greenwich Plains. Limited parking so please meet for car pooling at Hardwick Common for 11:00 a.m. departure.

Sunday, May 29th **MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE**

commemorating veterans from the four towns at the Quabbin Park Cemetery from 11:00 a.m. to noon. Refreshments and music.

JUNE

Wednesday, June 22nd **MUSEUM OPENING DAY**

JULY

Sunday, July 3rd **OPEN HOUSE** 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 10th **BIRDS OF PREY** with Tom Ricardi – on the grounds of SRVHS at 12:00 noon. Free

Sunday, July 17th **DANA REUNION** – Dana Common Gate 40 opens at 11:00 a.m. Event concludes at 3:00 p.m. Free

Sunday, July 24th **DANA VESPERS** – Prescott Church - on the grounds of SRVHS at 2:00 p.m. Cake and lemonade served after the concert. Free

Sunday, July 24th **SUMMER HIKE** Gate 22 Puppyville to the shore. Limited parking so please meet for car pooling at New Salem Common for 11:00 a.m. departure.

AUGUST

Sunday, August 7th **OPEN HOUSE** 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 21st. **PRESCOTT BI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION** with a Time Travel Tour presented by Jon Melick. In the Prescott Church on the grounds of SRVHS at 1:00 p.m. Free

SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 4th **OPEN HOUSE** 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 10th **ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING** on the grounds of SRVHS at 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, September 14th **MUSEUM CLOSING DATE**

Sunday, September 18th **PRESCOTT HIKE** area t/b/d. Car access through the gate, meet at Cooleyville Crossing for 11:00 a.m. departure.

OCTOBER

Sunday, October 16th **FALL HIKE** interior Prescott Loop. Car access through the gate, meet at Cooleyville Crossing for 11:00 a.m. departure.

GENERAL INFORMATION for HIKES: Bring a lunch and prepare for insects/ticks. Follow all DCR rules. Light showers do not cancel a hike. Donations to SRVHS for these hikes would be greatly appreciated.

ANY NECESSARY CHANGES, CANCELLATIONS OR POSTPONEMENTS IN SCHEDULING WILL BE POSTED ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE.

Swift River Valley Historical Society
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