



Spring 2024

The Swift River Diary

*I run along a long, decommissioned road
beside towns submerged a century, the Quabbin,
their fairs, courtships, and prayers now a blue vacuum
where the only stolen kisses come from aquamen.*

*It is a ghostland's coast, a cloistered ocean,
this infrastructured state's most dominating lake
ringed by hills left somehow uninhabited,
unaccountably unknown by most of those awake.*

*And, after miles of flirting with the shoreline,
my road runs into the water, its terminus;
its crumbling pavement sinks, an ill-fated spit,
seeming to render its span, in retrospect, pointless.*

*Yet it continues unseen, underwater,
where cellar holes hide greater treasures to discover.*

*Afterlife at Gate 35
- Tristan Macdonald*

What is a Genealogist?

The Family Storyteller:

We are the chosen. In each family there is one who seems called to find the ancestors. To put flesh on their bones and make them live again, to tell the family story and to feel that somehow, they know and approve. Doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts but, instead, breathing life into all who have gone before. We are the storytellers of the tribe. All tribes have one. We have been called, as it were, by our genes.

Author Unknown

Family Reunion

Dot Frye, Museum Administrator

A string of events; a host of random remembrances; nagging pieces of information buried in the recesses of my mind; a penchant for “figuring things out”. With my eye on the prize of securing an uninterrupted night’s sleep.....I took the names Peirce, Bowen and Canney and reunited the portraits of Frank Bowen (Prescott MA) with his descendants. The following is an excerpt from a thank you note....

Hi Dot,
Well, the magic has happened. Peter (Peirce) and I have finally come together. That fine gentleman visited our home today and we were overwhelmed with his two gifts. We were both amazed as to how you were able to find us with only Frank Arthur Bowen’s name..... Thank you again for making this special moment happen and here is a picture of that moment.



Peter Peirce (left) reuniting family heirlooms with David Canney (right) descendant of Frank A. Bowen.

Sincerely,
David & Sandy Canney

Photo SRVHS Collection

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Judith McIntosh

In September 2023, I started my fifth year as president of the Swift River Valley Historical Society. When I started, little did I realize that I would oversee the closing of the museum, for a year, and a year of appointment only visits, because of a pandemic. But we survived and came back on a full schedule in 2022 and 2023.

During 2023, we welcomed a record-number of visitors, almost 800 people. They came to see our traditional programs, such as the Memorial Day event, the Dana Vespers and to participate in our hikes. But they also came to see new and improved events about the Rabbit Run exhibit, exploring Quabbin Valley history through gravestones, and various other journeys through historical research.

I cannot and will not take personal responsibility for the incredible success of the SRVHS. Dot Frye, our administrator, keeps things running and stays on top of the myriad details necessary for the seemingly effortless running of the museum. Each year, a staff of new docents joins our returning ones, all eager to learn about the museum and the Swift River Valley, so that our visitors can be met by a knowledgeable and pleasant person and have the best experience possible. The Board of Directors meets throughout the year to address ongoing issues and to create and implement a vision for the future. Every part of the museum requires the talents and efforts of many people.

This is my Thank You to everyone who has worked at the museum, contributed money to the historical society, volunteered their time, visited us in the summer, or otherwise contributed to the SRVHS. None of this would be possible without you.

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Affiliations



Of Interest

SRVHS One of the Three Chosen!!

- Dot Frye, Museum Administrator

The Massachusetts State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) recently completed a field fellowship in the Archives Room of SRVHS. The Massachusetts SHRAB provides leadership, advocacy and guidance to help ensure the identification, preservation, and use of the state's historical resources (public and private). The Massachusetts SHRAB encourages and supports communication and coordination among the historical records communities and the public.

In response to my application to host an 'archival field fellow' and receive regrant funds for archival supplies, I was notified in September of 2023 by John D. Warner, Jr., Archivist of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts of SRVHS being a possible host site for a field fellow grant. We were subsequently awarded the grant to re-house our glass plate negative collection and a kick-off was planned for November 27th .

The Archival Field Fellowship is a grant offered by the Roving Archivist Program. The Fellowships increase hands-on assistance to Massachusetts repositories and provide emerging archivists with professional experience and mentorship. In 2023-2024, three institutions representing a diverse cross-section of archival repositories hosted field fellows. As the fellowships were completed, field fellows shared reflections and insights about their site experience on the MA SHRAB blog. This program is funded through support from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Linda Woodland, Archival Field Fellow, was placed with SRVHS to process our collection of approximately 600 glass plate negatives showing life in the Lost Valley c. 1850-1939. Linda meticulously inventoried and stabilized the collection in archival enclosures making them ready for future digitization. This was a challenging task considering the extent and fragility of the collection; skillfully navigated by Linda over the many hours she invested in the fellowship. Sarah-Jane Poindexter, Roving Archivist and mentor, wrote on behalf of SHRAB thanking Linda for her "exemplary work and for setting the bar high for the archival field fellowship. It was a genuine pleasure to work with you, and we have tremendous respect for what you accomplished during this fellowship."



Left: Ambrotypes change from negative to positive when backed with white vs black.

Right: Arranged intellectually and physically, the SRVHS photographic glass plate collection is ready to be digitized.

*Photos SRVHS Collection
(continued on p.4)*

SRVHS One of the Three Chosen!!

(continued from p.3)

On behalf of myself and that of SRVHS, I sincerely thank SHRAB – especially Sarah-Jane Poindexter and Linda Woodland – for all of the expertise, energy and dedication they put into this project. The opportunity to work closely with these professionals has increased my own knowledge and understanding of archival storage procedures, and provided me with an education in the history and mechanics of early American photography. The Swift River Valley Historical Society is now closer to being able to digitize these collections, preserving the images, and making them more accessible to others.

Linda's blog post for the SHRAB about her fellowship can be accessed at the following link.

<https://mashrabblog.wordpress.com/2024/03/04/when-you-hear-hoofbeats-sometimes-they-are-zebras/>



*Linda Woodland,
Archival Field Fellow*



The program kick-off. Left to right – Dot Frye, Museum Administrator; Judith McIntosh, President SRVHS Board of Directors; Dr. John Warner Jr., Archivist of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Coordinator of SHRAB; Linda Woodland, Archival Field Fellow; Tom Doyle, Roving Archivist; Shelley Small, SRVHS Board Member; Sarah-Jane Poindexter, Roving Archivist; David Frye, Board Member, not pictured.

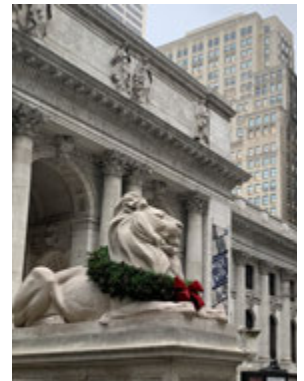
Photos SRVHS Collection

Out of the Past

Edward Clark Potter, “Enfield’s Gift to Sculptural Art” 1857-1923

Elena Palladino

Edward Clark Potter, “Enfield’s gift to sculptural art,” grew up in the Swift River Valley. He was born in New London, Connecticut in 1857 and was raised in Enfield, Massachusetts by his mother Mary. Potter attended local schools and later entered Williston Seminary in Easthampton followed by Amherst College. After two years at Amherst, he decided to study art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and later studied sculpture at the Académie Julian in Paris. His reputation grew over the years until he was known as one of the most outstanding animal sculptors working in the United States who had a particular talent for sculpting horses. His studio was located in Enfield for many years, and “many former Enfielders recalled with pleasure the happy hours spent watching the talented sculptor at work in his studio in the valley.” Potter later settled in Greenwich, Connecticut. Among Potter’s most famous works are the pink marble lions in front of the New York Library and the General Joseph Hooker equestrian statue in front of the Massachusetts State House, both pictured here.



Compiled from various sources. Quotes are from p. 153-154 of Quabbin: The Lost Valley by Donald Howe.

Printed as found in a 1932 diary of Miss Helen Paige of New Salem.

Wednesday, March 16. Went to South Athol to the supper and play. Stayed for the dance. Had a good time. Red Gertrude Wayne and I went for a ride before the dance. Red and Freddy Malet took us home. Got out of gas coming home and the boys stayed in the middle of West Hill until daylight.

Thursday, March 17. Went to school but am rather sleepy. The Boys had to walk after gas this morning. Things going all right here. Asa came over to take me to Enfield’s dance but I didn’t go with him. I’m to sleepy.

Sunday, March 21. Dad and Ma did the washing. We went up to Athol. Gertrude and I went to the York Theater and saw Charles Bickford and Helen Twelvetrees in “Panama Flo”. Grama Meuse does not feel so good. Went to see Jimmy.

Sunday, March 27. Easter. Didn’t get much sleep. Had pop corn before we went to bed this morning. Went to church, Myrtle and Harry had all their kids baptized. Wayne, Bill, Freda, Gertrude and I went. Played ball with Wayne when we got home. Dad and Ma came after us.

Thursday, March 31. The state surveyors are out here. Gertrude is flirting with them. Stayed home today.

Friday, April 1. Lois and I went to school. Had basketball. Wayne hasn’t even called me up.

Saturday, April 2. Got ready to go to the dance and Wayne didn’t send a letter. Grampa got stuck in the mud tonite. Dad came home.

Friday, April 22. Dorothy was here this morning. Went to the game in Belchertown with Doubledays. Came home with “Pop” Keller. Didn’t get home until late.

Tuesday, April 26. Went to Brattleboro tonite saw “Tarzen the Ape man” was good. Sid and Gertie here this afternoon.

Swift River Valley Historical Society

40 Elm Street, New Salem MA 01355

Keeping alive the stories of the villages and four "lost towns" of the Quabbin.

2024 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Museum open Wednesdays and Sundays 1:00 – 4:00 P.M. June 19th through September 18th
Admission to the museum is free.

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

APRIL

Sunday, April 28th **EARLY SPRING HIKE** Carter Road area. Meet at Gate 43, and park at fishing area 2. Hike departs at 11:00 a.m.

MAY

Sunday, May 19th **SPRING HIKE** Gate 26/27 area. Meet at New Salem Common for possible carpool to gate (limited parking) Hike departs at 11:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 26th **MEMORIAL DAY COMMEMORATION** at Quabbin Park Cemetery. Refreshments at 10:00 a.m. Parade and services at 11:00 a.m.

JUNE

Wednesday, June 19th **MUSEUM OPENING DAY**

JULY

Sunday, July 21st **DANA REUNION** – presented by the Dana Reunion Committee. Dana Common Gate 40 opens at 11:00 a.m. Event concludes at 3:00 p.m. Free Admission

Sunday, July 28th **DANA VESPERS** will be held in the Prescott Church on the grounds of SRVHS at 2:00 p.m. Cake and lemonade served after the concert. Free Admission

AUGUST

Sunday, August 4th **QUABBIN RESERVOIR AND WATERSHED PROTECTION** with Maria Beiter-Tucker, Interpretive Services Supervisor, MA DCR Division of Water Supply and Protection – will be held in the Prescott Church on the grounds of SRVHS at 1:00 p.m. Free Admission

Sunday, August 11th **MYSTERIES OF THE SWIFT RIVER VALLEY, SOLVED AND UNSOLVED** with Peter Peirce, Professional Photographer – will be held in the Prescott Church on the grounds of SRVHS at 1:00 p.m. Free Admission

Sunday, August 18th, **THE MYSTERY OF THE PRESCOTT QUILT OF NAMES** with Karen Traub – will be held in the Prescott Church on the grounds of SRVHS at 1:00 p.m. Free Admission

Saturday, August 24th **SNAKES OF THE SWIFT RIVER VALLEY** with Michael Jones, Massachusetts State Herpetologist - on the grounds of SRVHS at 1:00 p.m. Free Admission

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 7th **ANNUAL FRIENDS MEETING** on the grounds of SRVHS at 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 14th visit SRVHS's booth at **NEW SALEM OLD HOME DAY** from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the Common in New Salem Center.

Wednesday, September 18th **MUSEUM CLOSING DATE**

Saturday, September 21st **BIRDS OF PREY** with Tom Ricardi – on the grounds of SRVHS at 1:00 p.m. Free Admission

Sunday, September 22nd **PRESCOTT-GREENWICH ROAD HIKE**. Meet for 11:00 a.m. departure at Cooleyville Crossing (field at intersection of Gate 17 road and Route 202). Carpooling will be necessary as only a limited number of vehicles are allowed in the restricted area. All hikers must enter and leave together due to DCR restrictions. **THIS HIKE IS LIMITED TO 25 GUESTS. YOU MUST PRE-REGISTER BY EMAIL TO dotfrvsvhs@gmail.com OR TELEPHONE 978-544-6882.**

Wednesday, September 25th and Saturday, September 28, 2024, programs in conjunction with the Athol Library. Subject and times TBD.

OCTOBER

Sunday, October 20th **FALL HIKE** Gate 37 North Dana. Meet at Petersham Common for possible carpooling to gate (limited parking).

GENERAL INFORMATION for HIKES: Light scattered showers do not cancel, steady rain does. Bring a lunch (optional) and prepare for insects/ticks. Follow all DCR rules. Dogs not allowed. All hikes meet for 11:00 a.m. departure. Hike lengths and times vary, due to either weather, "cellar hole poking", conversations, and terrain difficulty. The general window for most hikes is 4-6 hours. 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.

<https://www.facebook.com/swiftrivermuseum/>