

Tyler Callahan

March 16, 2004

21H.421

Annotated Bibliography, Quabbin “News” topic

(May 23, 1937). Big reservoir dam begun in bay state. *New York Times*, p. 37.

Retrieved from: ProQuest

This article actually talks about some of the engineering aspects of the building of the dam for the reservoir. It discusses how dirt will be moved around, and how watchtowers are being built so that work can be done at night. This article wasn't hugely relevant to a discussion on the development of the Quabbin Reservoir, but it is one of two articles I located from the time of its development.

(Nov 16, 1986). Boston delays water diversion plan. *New York Times*, p. 56.

Retrieved from: ProQuest

The article talks about how in the year 2020, the Quabbin may not be able to supply water for all of Boston's needs. The choices were to divert more water from other rivers, or to try to conserve current resources better. The decision was made for the latter, and will begin by fixing 6400 miles of leaky pipes, which have been estimated at losing between 7 and 25 percent of their water. Environmentalists were pleased that diverting water was avoided, and argued that it would be very costly and would contaminate the pure water from the Quabbin Reservoir.

Allen, Scott. (November 2, 1994). Quabbin didn't sink town memories. *Boston Globe*.

Retrieved from: Boston Public Library

This article contains the opinions of some former residents of the towns displaced by the Quabbin Reservoir. There was a feeling of sadness and nostalgia, in addition to some bitterness. The article also mentions a ceremony the night before which gave about a

dozen former Quabbin residents a certificate commemorating their loss, from Secretary of State Michael Connolly.

There is an added insight to the history of the decision to build the Quabbin Reservoir. Residents felt it was done unfairly, with all the decision-making being down in Boston, and with people who would benefit from the reservoir making up a third of the Legislature.

Tying the Quabbin happening with current developments, Boston was recently looking west to find water again. Many residents, including some people displaced by the Quabbin, resisted, and it was found that a lot of water was being lost from the Quabbin through leaky pipes on its way to Boston. The fact that the pipes have been fixed and that the Quabbin is well taken care of has erased some of the bitterness felt by past residents.

Bullard, F. L. (July 31, 1927). Reservoir to cover 3 bay state towns. *New York Times*, p. E9.

Retrieved from: ProQuest

This is one of two articles I found dating back to the time of the actual Quabbin development. The article first discusses the towns that the reservoir will cover, including what they're like and what important and well-known things came from them. The next section discusses water shortage, and how the other reservoirs used for the metropolitan area were being depleted. It mentions a series of investigations, hearings, and debates leading up to the decision to build the Quabbin. Next the cost and general plans are discussed. Finally, the last part is quite different from what articles today say about the situation. It reads, "The people of the valley of the Swift accept these facts with some resentment, but in the main with resignation and with dignity. And Greater Boston by no means is indifferent to the tragedy which the need of the city inflicts upon these innocent bystanders."

Davis, William A. (September 26, 1998). Quabbin: the state's oasis. *Boston Globe*.

Retrieved from: Boston Public Library

This article describes the Quabbin region as a remote wilderness, rather than as an engineering triumph. The main success of the article is to give a feeling of what it might be like to wander around the Quabbin area today. It sticks to the idea that it is a beautiful site, but with a sad history. The article sums up its feeling about the four disbanded towns with this: “The subject of man books, stories, and legends, the towns over time acquired almost mythic status, transmuted from pleasant but ordinary country communities into symbolic rural Edens sacrificed to satisfy big-city needs for water.”

Gaines, Judith. (November 29, 1992). Recalling the towns drowned for Boston. *Boston Globe*.

Retrieved from: Boston Public Library

This article depicts past residents as bitter about Boston just taking whatever it wants, and they're resentful that “they can never really go home.” They recall the Enfield Ball in 1938, and mention that another blow was when 7613 dead were removed from the valley's 34 cemeteries. The people resent the fact that most Bostonians don't even know where the water comes from, and also mention the grievance that towns near the Quabbin can't access its water.

Lamb, Gregory M. (Dec 1, 1982). Quabbin: the valley where time went backward. *Christian Science Monitor*, p. B26.

Retrieved from: LexisNexis

This is a good article that has several anecdotes about some of the resistance and feelings had by people at the time that the development was going on. Article also discusses a bit about current problems with the reservoir, and the hope that it can maintain its usefulness so that four towns won't have been destroyed for nothing. A lot of water is lost and the acidity of the water may be changing so that harmful metals are picked up.

Simurda, Stephen. (April 17, 1988). The Quabbin reservoir: then... and now. *Boston Globe*.

Retrieved from: Boston Public Library

This article has another set of reflections by former residents of the disbanded towns, and mentions a ball being held in Amherst, exactly 50 years after the one held on the last night of the towns' existence, at the Enfield Town Hall. In looking back, they mention how they called the workers "woodpeckers," as they were just destroying and pecking away at the wood, and didn't really know what they were doing.

There is a discussion of how this event (the removal of people from their towns) could have ever happened, and mentions that there wasn't much organized protest. It "just wasn't a popular course," and in addition it was difficult for residents to get to Boston to speak against the proposal.

Again, the people were frustrated that most people in Boston don't even know where there water comes from, and that if this plan was proposed today it would die quickly.

Turner, Robert L. (Nov 20, 1988). State problems, rural solutions. *Boston Globe*, p. A27.

Retrieved from: LexisNexis

The article starts by addressing Boston's arrogance, by ruining rural peoples' way of life to solve their own problems, producing results that the rural people never benefit from. The article discusses the proposed building of a prison in New Braintree, to help alleviate the state's shortage of prison space, and relates this event to the building of the Quabbin Reservoir.

Weiss, Joanna. (August 22, 1999). For 60 years the Quabbin has provided water, refuge, pride - and resentment. *Boston Globe*, p. B1.

Retrieved from: LexisNexis

This article contrasts people living in the Quabbin area with those living in Boston. For the people around Quabbin, their use of water changes with the season, and the reservoir

is a preserve for fishing and recreation, anything but a source of water. For Boston the Quabbin Reservoir is freely used and largely ignored, as most residents don't know where their water comes from.

The Quabbin development was compared to the current Big Dig, where Boston gets a new road system while in rural areas, roads crumble.

Recalling the time that the reservoir was built, residents recall that it was good in some ways. For one, if it hadn't been built people may have started moving west for water, and the people in the rural areas would rather not have that kind of development. Second, it created jobs. Last, there is resentment that the government didn't compensate very well the people forced to move out of the valley.

Also mentioned:

Greene, J. R. (2002). *The Creation of Quabbin Reservoir: the Death of the Swift River Valley*. Athol, Mass.: Transcript Press.

Greene, J. R. (1985). *The Day Four Quabbin Towns Died*. Athol, Mass.: Transcript Press.

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21H.421 Introduction to Environmental History
Spring 2011

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.