



Greenwich (Mass.) Collection

1734-1940

1 box (0.25 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS011

Collection overview

Granted in 1737 and incorporated in 1754, Greenwich, Mass., was the first town in the Swift River Valley settled by Europeans. Sitting astride the East and Middle branches of the Swift River and forming the eastern boundary of Hampshire County, Greenwich was primarily an agricultural town with light manufacturing and, beginning in the later nineteenth century, an active tourist trade. The town's population peaked at over 1,100 early in the nineteenth century, declining slowly thereafter.

The records of Greenwich, Mass., offer 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 reflects both materials held by SCUA and materials digitized in partnership with the **Swift River Valley Historical Society** in New Salem, Mass.

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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.

Scope 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.



Dorothy P. King, postmaster, Greenwich Village, ca.1935

Inventory

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- **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

SRVHS

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

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		SRVHS
Location of originals: Originals held by the Swift River Valley Historical Society			
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		SRVHS
➤ Complete record of the names. . . , v. 2	1882		SRVHS
Greenwich (Mass.) churches	1895-1940		
Contents: 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
Contents:			
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, Mass.	1940 Sept. 19		Box 1: 1
Smith, Henry W. (?): A prayer by the Liberals of Greenwich Plain, Mass. [broadside]	undated		Box 1: 1
Contents:			
Newspaper clippings	1938	2 items	Box 1: 1
Contents: Clippings on burning the church mortgage and churches of Enfield and Greenwich			
➤ Greenwich Improvement Society	1897-1923		SRVHS
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."			
Greenwich (Mass. : Town). School District no. 5	1873-1874		Box 1: 2
Contents: 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.			
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		SRVHS
➤ Greenwich Town Records , v. 2	1782-1816		SRVHS
➤ Greenwich Town Records , v. 3	1805-1827		SRVHS
➤ Greenwich Town Records , v. 4	1828-1866		SRVHS
➤ Greenwich Town Records , v. 5	1866-1895		SRVHS
➤ Greenwich Town Records , v. 6	1895-1916		SRVHS
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		SRVHS
<i>Location of originals:</i> Originals held by the Swift River Valley Historical Society			
<i>Contents:</i> Headings 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 proseedings [sic] of the first Social Library in the first Parish in the Town of Greenwich, 1812-1831 (1812)	1812-1831		SRVHS
<i>Location of originals:</i> Originals held by the Swift River Valley Historical Society			
<i>Contents:</i> Includes constitution, minutes of meetings and transfers of shares			
Greenwich (Mass. : Town). Treasurer		2 vols.	
<i>Location of originals:</i> Originals held by the Swift River Valley Historical Society			
➤ Treasurer's accounts, v. 1	1769-1818		SRVHS
➤ Treasurer's accounts, v. 2	1770-1862		SRVHS
Greenwich (Mass.). Photographs	1912-1990		
<i>Contents:</i> 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	Box 1: 3
Glazier and Estey Pond	ca.1915	Realphoto postcard	Box 1: 3
Greenwich postmarks: images of decorative and straight-line cancelations for Greenwich	ca.1990	5 items	Box 1: 3
House of Albert Root	ca.1920		Box 1: 3
King, Dorothy P., postmaster, and mail contractor standing in front of S.R. King store (later reprint)	ca.1935		Box 1: 3
King, Dorothy P., postmaster, and mail contractor standing in front of S.R. King store (later reprint)	ca.1935		Box 1: 3
King, Dorothy P., postmaster, standing under Greenwich Village post office sign	ca.1935		Box 1: 3
Postcard: "It is often necessary and kind..." with inset photograph "Along the shore of Quabbin Lake, Greenwich, Mass."	ca.1912		Box 1: 3
Schoolhouse	ca.1915	Realphoto postcard	Box 1: 3
Warner Pond	ca.1915	Realphoto postcard	Box 1: 3
Quabbin Inn	ca.1920	2 items	Box 1: 4
<i>Contents:</i> Brochure advertising Quabbin Inn, proprietor Otis Emerson Dunham, and its amenities and vacationing opportunities.			

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

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

Location of Originals

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

Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Ken Fones-Wolf, Linda Seidman, and others, 1984-2014.

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**.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use ([More information](#))

Cite as: Greenwich (Mass.) Collections (MS 011). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Congregational churches--Massachusetts--Greenwich--History
- Education--Massachusetts--Greenwich--History
- Fires--Massachusetts--Greenwich--History
- Greenwich (Mass. : Town)
- Greenwich (Mass. : Town). School Committee
- Greenwich (Mass. : Town). Treasurer
- Greenwich (Mass.)--History
- Greenwich (Mass.)--History--19th century
- Greenwich (Mass.)--Politics and government--19th century
- Greenwich (Mass.)--Religious life and customs
- Greenwich (Mass.)--Social conditions--19th century
- Greenwich (Mass.)--Social life and customs--20th century
- Libraries--Massachusetts--Greenwich
- Public schools--Massachusetts--Greenwich--History
- Quabbin Reservoir Region (Mass.)--History
- Quabbin Reservoir Region (Mass.)--Social life and customs--20th century
- Quabbin Reservoir Region (Mass.)--Surveys
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

Contributors

- Enfield (Mass.) **[main entry]**
- Greenwich (Mass. : Town)
- Greenwich (Mass. : Town). School Committee
- Greenwich (Mass. : Town). Treasurer
- Greenwich Improvement Society

Genres and formats

- Account books
- Photographs
- School records

Link to similar SCUA collections

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