



Audrey R. Duckert Quabbin Valley Oral History Collection

1966-1980

51 audio recordings (0.25 linear feet)

Call no.: MS756

Collection overview

The linguist Audrey R. Duckert was a pioneer in the study of American regional English. Born in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin, Duckert studied dialect at the University of Wisconsin, and after completing her doctorate at Radcliffe College in 1959, she joined the faculty at UMass Amherst. During her forty year career at UMass, Duckert became a founding member of the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (1965) and she was the first UMass woman admitted to Phi Beta Kappa. In addition to her linguistic work, she developed an avid interest in local history and was involved with several local historical societies, including the Swift River Valley Historical Society in New Salem.

The Duckert oral history collection consists of a series of 53 audiocassette recordings containing interviews with persons displaced when the Swift River Valley was flooded to create the Quabbin Reservoir in 1939. The histories include rich recollections of life in the towns of Greenwich, Enfield, Dana, and Prescott, with village life, education, family, and the changes that accompanied the inundation of the region. The original audiocassettes are in the possession of the Swift River Valley Historical Society.

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Background on Audrey R. Duckert

The linguist Audrey R. Duckert was a pioneer in the study of American regional English. Born in the small town of Cottage Grove, Wisconsin, Duckert took up the study of dialect at the University of Wisconsin during the 1940s, and after completing a doctorate in linguistics at Radcliffe College in 1959, she joined the faculty at UMass Amherst. During her forty year career at UMass, Duckert became a founding member of the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (1965) and she was the first UMass woman admitted to Phi Beta Kappa.

In addition to her linguistic work, Duckert harbored an avid interest in local history, working closely with several local historical societies on projects that united her interests in dialect and daily life. Her most fruitful work may have been with the Swift River Valley Historical Society in New Salem where for two decades, she participated in an oral historical program, interviewing persons who had displaced from the Swift River Valley during the 1930s when the Quabbin Reservoir was constructed to provide drinking water for Boston. On

September 6, 2007, Duckert died in Hadley, Mass., at the age of 80.

Scope of collection

The Duckert oral history collection consists of 53 audiocassettes containing interviews with persons displaced when the Swift River Valley was flooded to create the Quabbin Reservoir. The histories include rich recollections of life in the towns of Greenwich, Enfield, Dana, and Prescott, with village life, education, family, and the changes that accompanied the evacuation and inundation of the valley. In addition to the formal interviews, the collection also includes recordings of public presentations and genealogical programs relating to the Quabbin region offered by the Swift River Valley Historical Society, tours of Quabbin sites led by former residents, and radio broadcasts.



Audrey R. Duckert

Series descriptions

Dana, Mass.

1969-1980

13 tapes

Situated in Worcester County at the northern end of the Quabbin region, due east of Greenwich, New Salem, and Prescott, the villages of Dana Center and North Dana had barely 700 residents at the turn of the twentieth century. In addition to agriculture, Dana had a biox manufactory and was a center for production of palm-leaf hats.

Enfield, Mass.

1974-1979

5 tapes

Located in the southernmost portion of the Quabbin Valley, Enfield was the largest and most important of the four Quabbin towns. With over 1,000 residents at the turn of the twentieth century, its industrial base in woolen and grist mills made it the wealthiest of the four towns, and along with Greenwich, it was home to the only printers to operate in the Valley, Solomon and John Howe.

Greenwich, Mass.

1966-1979

8 tapes

The first of the Quabbin towns to be incorporated, Greenwich was settled in 1739 along the banks of the East and Middle branches of the Swift River. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the lakes and hills of Greenwich became a popular spot for vacationing tourists.

New Salem, Mass.	1974-1975	5 tapes
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Although the town of New Salem was not dissolved by construction of the Quabbin Reservoir, one of its villages, Millington, was inundated. With a population of just over 800 at the turn of the century -- and half that by the time of completion of the Reservoir -- New Salem grew considerably in size when it annexed the northern portion of Prescott that remained above water after the flooding.

Prescott, Mass.	1967-1979	12 tapes
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The smallest and westernmost of the four Quabbin towns, Prescott was incorporated in 1822, having been divided out from portions of the adjacent towns of New Salem and Pelham. In 1900, its population was barely over 300 residents, about 50% lower than at its peak, with most residents engaged in agriculture, lumbering, or domestic manufactures.

Quabbin Region, Mass.	1968-1979	8 tapes
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Lectures, programs, and interviews pertaining to the Quabbin region generally.

Inventory

Dana, Mass.	1969-1980	13 tapes	
<p>▶ Baxter, Charles and Barbara Baxter oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Orange, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Days in North Dana, lumbering.</p>	1974 June 7	01:24:33	Box 2 (21)
<p>▶ Blodgett, Catherine oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Dana, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recollections of Dana: low-fidelity recording made during hike to the former Dana Common</p>	1974 Apr. 17	01:27:19	Box 2 (17)
<p>▶ Cornauskus, Joe and Elizabeth Peirce, tour of North Dana with Katharine Reed (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> "Joe Cornauskus takes Katherine Reed (Kitty) on a nostalgic trip to North Dana (Zib Pierce also)."</p>	1969 May 26	00:43:34	Box 4 (49)
<p>▶ Doublebday, Warren Nehemiah and Sig Doubleday oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Dana, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recorded on a hike to Doubleday Village and North Dana; poor quality audio. Original tape held in the collections of the Swift River Valley Historical Society.</p>	1974 May 0	00:34:14	Box 2 (26)

<p>▶ Doubleday, Warren Nehemiah oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Lecture on stone structures in New England.</p>	1967 June 10	00:00:00	Box 2 (24)
<p>▶ Doublebday, Warren Nehemiah oral history with Audrey R. Duckert</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recollections of early automobiles.</p>	1979 July 19	00:53:46	Box 2 (20)
<p>▶ Doubleday, Warren Nehemiah; Herman Hansen; Gertrude Whitney Ward; and Eleanor Schmidt oral history with WFCR (North Dana, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i></p>	1980 Oct. 15		Box 4 (50)
<p>▶ Goodnow, Clarence; Put Crowl; and George Hodgson oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Phillipston, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history regarding the Goodnow Orchestra.</p>	1980 Sept. 18	00:39:55	Box 4 (41)
<p>▶ Grover, Marion Moore and Lester Hager oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Orange, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recalling life in North Dana: high ambient noise level.</p>	1975 Feb. 25	00:35:17	Box 2 (25)
<p>▶ Mann, Mabel oral history with Janet Carson (Bloomfield, Conn.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recalling her life in Dana.</p>	1980 Nov. 1	00:46:45	Box 2 (23)
<p>▶ Nickerson, Helen Doane and Lester Hager oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Orange, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recollections of life in North Dana, Mass.</p>	1974 Nov. 7	00:56:15	Box 2 (19)
<p>▶ Vaughan, Myron; Lester Hager; and Warren Nehemiah Doubleday oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Dana, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recollections of Dana: low-fidelity recording made during hike to the former Dana Common.</p>	1975 May 10	01:29:19	Box 2 (16)
<p>▶ White, Amos Duane oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recollections of Dana, Pottapaug Mountain, Bear's Den, Indian kitchen, July 4th pranks, Dana waterworks, Snow's glass coffins, and family.</p>	1977 July 6	01:30:15	Box 2 (18)

Enfield, Mass.

1974-1979

5 tapes

<p>▶ Boynton, George oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Ware, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with former resident of Enfield, Mass., Quabbin River Valley. Tape noted by Duckert as incomplete.</p>	1974 May 20	01:02:34	Box 1 (1)
<p>▶ Phillips, Alice Twible oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Gilbertville, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with former resident of Enfield, Mass, Quabbin River Valley, recalling Smiths Village and Enfield. Phillips, daughter of James Twible, was born in 1896.</p>	1976 Sept. 16	00:46:18	Box 1 (5)
<p>▶ Terry, Gertrude Whitney Ward oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Belchertown, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with Mrs. Stalbird Terry, former resident of Enfield, Mass, Quabbin River Valley. The Terrys were the last couple married in the Congregational Church in Enfield.</p>	1979 Aug. 20	01:27:18	Box 1 (4)

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| <p>▶ Thayer, Fred; Alice Thayer; and Eleanor Schmidt oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Belchertown, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with former resident of Enfield, Mass, Quabbin River Valley, and other towns. Fred Thayer, who would turn 85 in October 1975, drove horses all over the Valley.</p> | 1975 June 5 | 01:30:52 | Box 1
(6) |
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| <p>▶ Ward, Ruth and Eleanor Schmidt oral history with Audrey R. Duckert and Eleanor Schmidt (Hadley, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i></p> | 1976 Mar. 4 | | Box 1
(2) |
|--|-------------|--|--------------|

Greenwich, Mass.	1966-1979	8 tapes	
<p>▶ Billings, Robert P. oral history with Audrey R. Duckert and Eleanor Schmidt (Belchertown, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with Billings, a resident of Anchorage, Alaska, formerly of Pittsfield, Mass., regarding his family in Greenwich, Quabbin River Valley, Mass.</p>	1976 Apr. 27	00:22:25	Box 1 (11)
<p>▶ Jones, Mabel and Marjorie Moore oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Ware, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with former residents of Greenwich, Mass., Quabbin River Valley, recorded at Greenwich Foundation Reunion in Ware; hymn singing.</p>	1966 Oct. 1	00:41:16	Box 1 (14)
<p>▶ King, Stanwood; Eleanor Schmidt, and Dorothy Moulton oral history with Audrey R. Duckert and Eleanor Schmidt (West Brookfield, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with King and Schmidt (former residents of Greenwich, Mass.) and Moulton (former resident of Millington), Quabbin River Valley. Recorded at King's home.</p>	1975 Apr. 8	00:57:36	Box 1 (3)
<p>▶ Lego, Raymond and Celia Lego oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with former resident of Pelham and Greenwich, Mass., Quabbin River Valley, recorded for the Newton Public Schools.</p>	1969 July 22	00:27:23	Box 1 (12)
<p>▶ Parker, Sally Fillebrown; Everett Coit; and Walter King oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with former residents of Greenwich, Mass., Quabbin River Valley, including discussion of Greenwich genealogy.</p>	1979 Aug. 8	00:46:31	Box 1 (13)
<p>▶ Parker, Sally Fillebrown oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Pelham Hill, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with former resident of Greenwich, Mass., Quabbin River Valley. Recorded outside while walking to where Parker taught school in Pelham Hill (Bobbin Hollow).</p>	1969 July 22	01:29:34	Box 1 (8)
<p>▶ Parker, Sally Fillebrown oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Pelham, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with former resident of Pelham and Greenwich, Mass., Quabbin River Valley, on life there in the 1920s.</p>	1975 Apr. 14	00:53:21	Box 1 (10)
<p>▶ Segur, Bill and Eleanor Schmidt oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Belchertown, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with former resident of Enfield, Mass., Quabbin River Valley.</p>	1975 June 25	01:02:34	Box 1 (7)

New Salem, Mass.	1974-1975	5 tapes	
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<p>▶ Ashley, Ruth Ballard oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Shutesbury, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> "Talking about the old days, the Ballard family, New Salem people, the New Salem Academy, old fashioned foods;" also Ballard Tavern, sugaring off, brown bread, brewis, bread coffee, bubble and squeak.</p>	1975 Nov. 4	01:16:32	Box 3	(27)
<p>▶ Brown, Murray and Bea Brown, tour of North Prescott, Millington, and South New Salem (Millington and South New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recorded on site, entering the Quabbin Resevation at Gate 22: Puppyville, site of house, North Prescott, New Salem, Millington. Poor audio quality for first 30 of recording</p>	1974 June 6	01:28:06	Box 4	(51)
<p>▶ Fisher, Roy oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Discussing growing up in New Salem when residents were self-sufficient; New Salem Academy.</p>	1975 Jan. 6	01:01:56	Box 3	(29)
<p>▶ Fittz, Dorothy Bullard oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Triple wedding of the Paige sisters at Hop Brook Farm, 1906, New Sale; genealogical quest for Phineas Stevens.</p>	1975 June 18	01:26:36	Box 3	(33)
<p>▶ Newton, Fay and Reita Newton oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Westminster, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Mr. Newton (Fay) discussing Millington and other Quabbin towns; Mrs. Newton (Reita) discusses Ballard family of New Salem and her outdoor wedding in 1923.</p>	1975 June 11	00:00:00	Box 3	(28)

Prescott, Mass.

1967-1979

12 tapes

<p>▶ Etta Berry and Emma Bowen tour of North Prescott (North Prescott, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Two interviews recorded at Berry's home near Gate 20 of the Quabbin Reservoir. The first includes a discussion of the botany of the region and folk names for the plants; second interview includes discussions of North Prescott, the Prescott Church, and New Salem.</p>	1967 June 19	02:11:32	Box 4	(53)
<p>▶ Blakesly, Jim and Eleanor Schmidt oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Belchertown, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Blakesly lived on Grout place at Prescott; tour of Prescott; Schmidt interviewed by Belchertown student; "a good bit on haying." Poor audio quality.</p>	1975 Aug. 23- 1975 Sept. 05	00:57:50	Box 3	(32)
<p>▶ Coolidge, Ellen oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Regarding moving the Prescott Church to the Swift River Valley Historical Society; inventory of Prescott Historical Society Museum; memories of Prescott. Oren Jones.</p>	1977 Aug. 04	01:59:34	Box 3	(36)
<p>▶ Jones, Oren: Swift River Valley Historical Society walking tour (Prescott Peninsula, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Swift River Valley Historical Society walking tour to Prescott, led by Oren Jones, with contributions by Althea Daniels, Robert Johnston, and Miriam Putnam.</p>	1975 May 17		Box 3	(37)
<p>▶ Mackie, Eunice Mitchell; Sally Parker; Raymond Lego; and Celia Lego oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Oral history interview with former residents of Prescott and Greenwich, Mass., Quabbin River Valley, responding to questions posed by students of the Newton Public Schools.</p>	1969 July 22	01:29:34	Box 1	(9)

<p>➤ Mackie, Eunice Mitchell tour of the Swift River Valley Historical Society (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Guided tour of the Whitaker-Clary House, Swift River Valley Historical Society.</p>	1969 Aug. 6	01:01:49	Box 4	(46)
<p>➤ Schmidt, Eleanor oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Belchertown, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Memories of Schmidt's family (the Griswolds) and Prescott; recorded at Schmidt's home on Ware Road, Belchertown.</p>	1975 Mar. 11	00:57:38	Box 3	(35)
<p>➤ Wendemuth, Julia oral history with Audrey R. Duckert and Eleanor Schmidt (North Brookfield, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recorded in Julia Wendemuth's house, with Eleanor Schmidt.</p>	1975 Apr. 8	01:00:21	Box 3	(38)
<p>➤ Wendemuth, Julia; Hazel Johnson; and Eleanor Schmidt oral history with Eleanor Schmidt and Audrey R. Duckert (North Brookfield, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Recorded while looking at old photos of Prescott.</p>	1979 May 6	01:01:59	Box 3	(31)
<p>➤ Wendemuth, Julia; Hazel Johnson; and Eleanor Schmidt oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (North Brookfield, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Miscellaneous topics, including doctors, home remedies, schools, old times. Recorded at the Wendemuth home in North Brookfield, where the family moved after leaving Prescott.</p>	1979 July 26	01:15:27	Box 3	(34)
<p>➤ Wendemuth, Julia; Herman W. Wendemuth; Hazel Johnson; and Eleanor Schmidt oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Interview with three former residents of Prescott, Mass. "Much on picture recognizing."</p>	1976 Apr. 11	01:33:25	Box 3	(39)
<p>➤ Wendemuth, Julia; Herman W. Wendemuth; Hazel Johnson; and Eleanor Schmidt oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (North Brookfield, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i></p>	1977 Mar. 11		Box 3	(30)
Quabbin region, Mass. 1968-1979 8 tapes				
<p>➤ Coolidge, Rosamund lecture on Coolidge genealogy (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Discussing Coolidge family genealogy at the Swift River Valley Historical Society.</p>	1979 July 18	00:54:27	Box 4	(43)
<p>➤ Fittz, Dorothy Bullard lecture on Paige-Tyler genealogy (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Lecture on genealogy at the Swift River Valley Historical Society, including the Paige, Haskell, Whitaker, Tyler, and Whitney families.</p>	1979 July 11	01:02:12	Box 4	(42)
<p>➤ Harris, Glensys oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Lecture is part of the genealogy series of the Swift River Valley Historical Society. "Speaks a bit about the Mormons."</p>	1979 Aug. 1	01:17:49	Box 4	(45)
<p>➤ Hemenway, Ruby, "I remember when" (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Talk at the Swift River Valley Historical Society based upon her newspaper column.</p>	1979 June 23	00:00:00	Box 4	(44)
<p>➤ Ryther, H. Morgan, "Ghost post offices of the Quabbin Valley" (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Slide show and lecture delivered at the Swift River Valley Historical Society.</p>	1968 Sept. 21	00:41:16	Box 1	(15)

<p>▶ Miner, Beatrice Fiske oral history with WCAT Radio (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> From typed note: "Mrs. Beatrice (Fiske) Minor of North Orange being interviewed on Radio Station, Orange. Taped from a radio receiver 10:30 AM 18 February 1976. Bun Doubleday."</p>	1976 Feb. 18	00:25:23	Box 4 (48)
<p>▶ Remembering the Grange in the Valley: a panel discussion (New Salem, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Panel discussion held in the barn at the Whitaker-Clary House, Swift River Valley Historical Society. Panelists include Roy Thayer, Lester Hager, and Sally Fillebrown Parker. Also speaking from the audience: Raymond Lego, Ruth Newbury Bassingthwaite, Rieta Balland Newton, and Dorothy Fittz.</p>	1975 June 21	00:45:25	Box 3 (40)
<p>▶ Tandy, Spencer E. oral history with Audrey R. Duckert (Athol, Mass.)</p> <p><i>Contents:</i> Coon hunting in Quabbin region, hunting dogs; music and the Good News orchestra; Minute Tapioca Band; dances.</p>	1974 May 10	01:27:19	Box 2 (15)

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

The original audiocassettes were donated to the Swift River Valley Historical Society by Audrey R. Duckert. In 2012, the Historical Society agreed to work collaboratively with Special Collections to digitize the cassettes

Location of Originals

The original audiocassettes are held in the collections of the **Swift River Valley Historical Society**, New Salem, Mass., who generously permitted SCUA to digitize the content.

Digitized content

Digitized versions of the recordings in this collection are made available through **Credo**. The original audiocassettes have been returned to the **Swift River Valley Historical Society**.

Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Sept. 2013.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: Audrey R. Duckert Quabbin Valley Oral History Collection (MS 756). Special Collections and University

Search terms

Subjects

- Dana (Mass.)--History
- Dana (Mass.)--Social life and customs
- Enfield (Mass.)--History
- Enfield (Mass.)--Social life and customs
- Greenwich (Mass.)--History
- Greenwich (Mass.)--Social life and customs
- New Salem (Mass.)--History
- New Salem (Mass.)--Social life and customs
- Prescott (Mass.)--History
- Prescott (Mass.)--Social life and customs
- Quabbin Reservoir (Mass.)--History
- Quabbin Reservoir (Mass.)--Social life and customs
- Swift River Valley (Mass.)--History
- Swift River Valley (Mass.)--Social life and customs

Contributors

- Duckert, Audrey R. **[main entry]**
- Doubleday, Warren Nehemiah
- Fittz, Dorothy Bullard
- Goodnow, Clarence
- Hemenway, Ruby
- King, Stanwood
- Mackie, Eunice Mitchell
- Newton, Fay
- Parker, Sally Fillebrown
- Schmidt, Eleanor Griswold
- Segur, Bill
- Terry, Gertrude Whitney Ward
- Wendemuth, Julia
- Wendemuth, Herman W.

Genres and formats

- Audiocassettes
- Oral histories

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