

Session Five

OLLI: A Walk Through Berkshire History

Spring 2019 © Michael Forbes Wilcox

Quick Review of first three properties

This session: Alford Springs & Parsons Marsh

Next Up: Keystone Arch Bridges (Session Six)

<https://ucc-lee.org/wp-content/uploads/Fountain-Preservation-info.pdf>

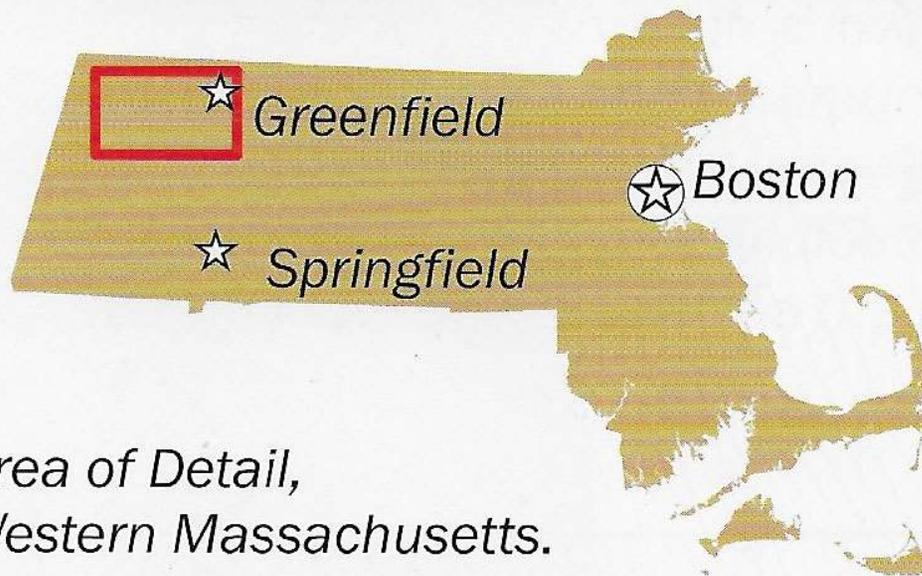
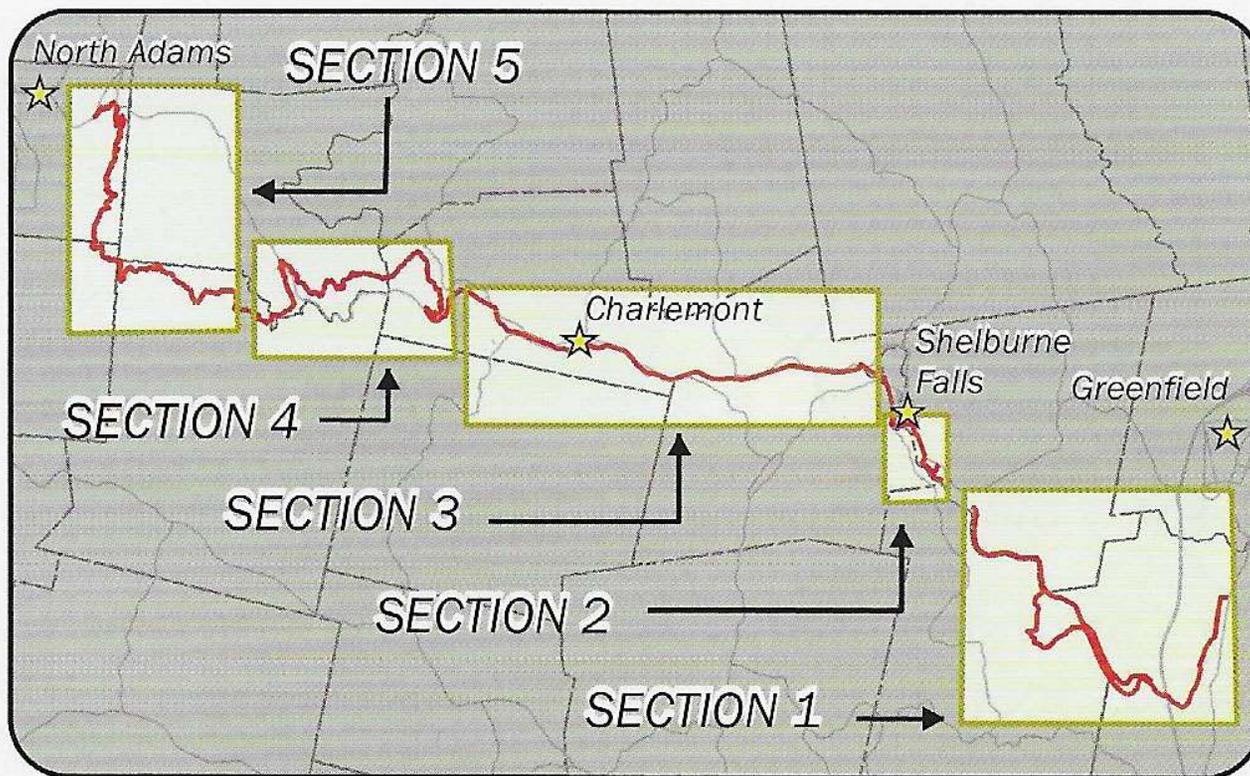
- <https://www.berkshireeagle.com/stories/mohicans-and-the-mohawk-trail-nothing-about-us-without-us,573028?>

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Nothing About Us Without Us

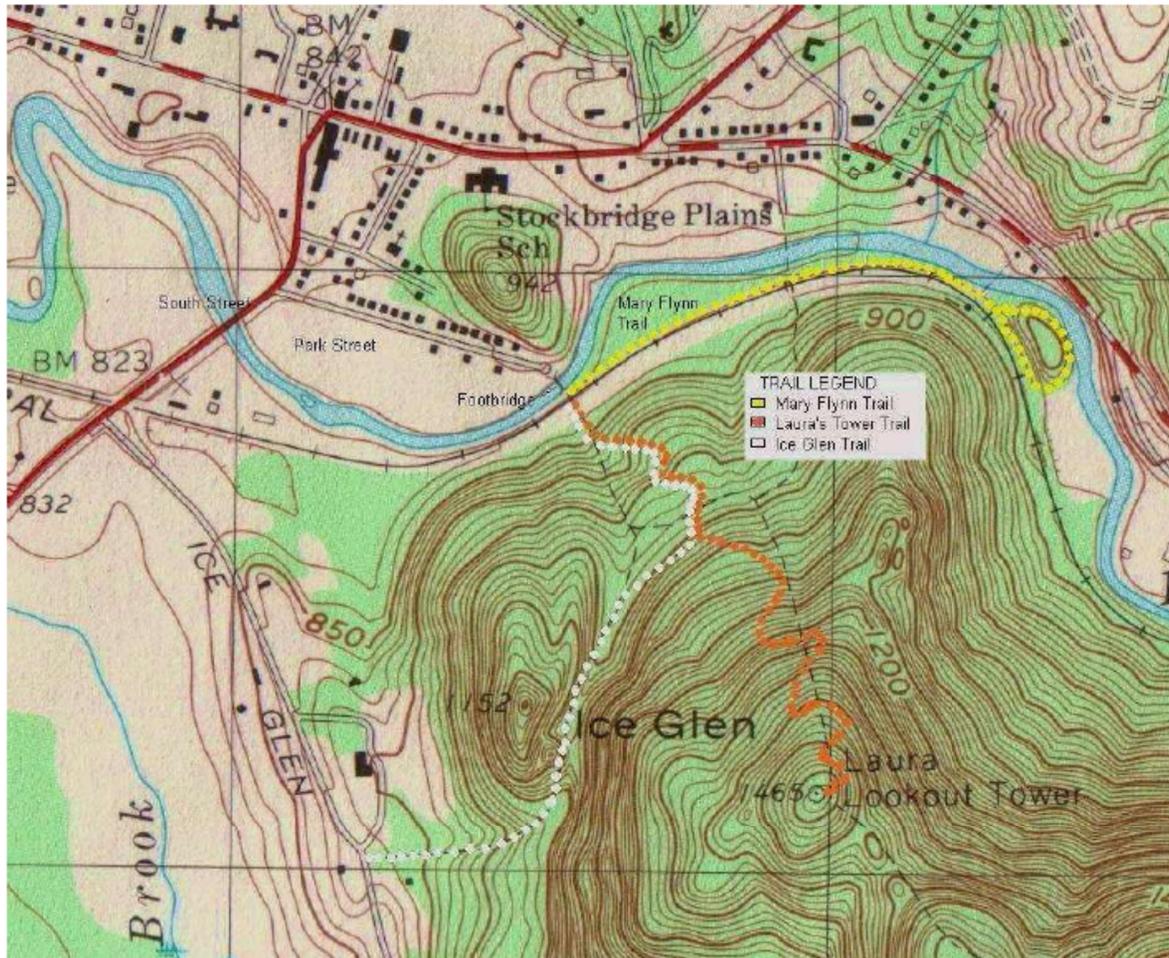




Area of Detail,
Western Massachusetts.

TRAIL MAP

All three trails start after crossing the Goodrich Memorial footbridge, located at the end of Park Street.



TRAIL LEGEND

Yellow		Mary V. Flynn Trail
Orange		Laura's Tower Trail
White		Ice Glen Trail

THREE TRAILS

Maintained by the
LAUREL HILL ASSOCIATION
Stockbridge, Massachusetts



**THE MARY V. FLYNN
TRAIL**

LAURA'S TOWER TRAIL

ICE GLEN TRAIL

The Laurel Hill Association is the nation's oldest village improvement society, founded in 1853 by Mary Hopkins Goodrich.

To become a member, or to donate toward the maintenance of these trails, please contact:

*The Laurel Hill Association
P. O. Box 24
Stockbridge MA 01262*



THE BIDWELL HOUSE MUSEUM TRAIL MAP

TRAIL MAP KEY

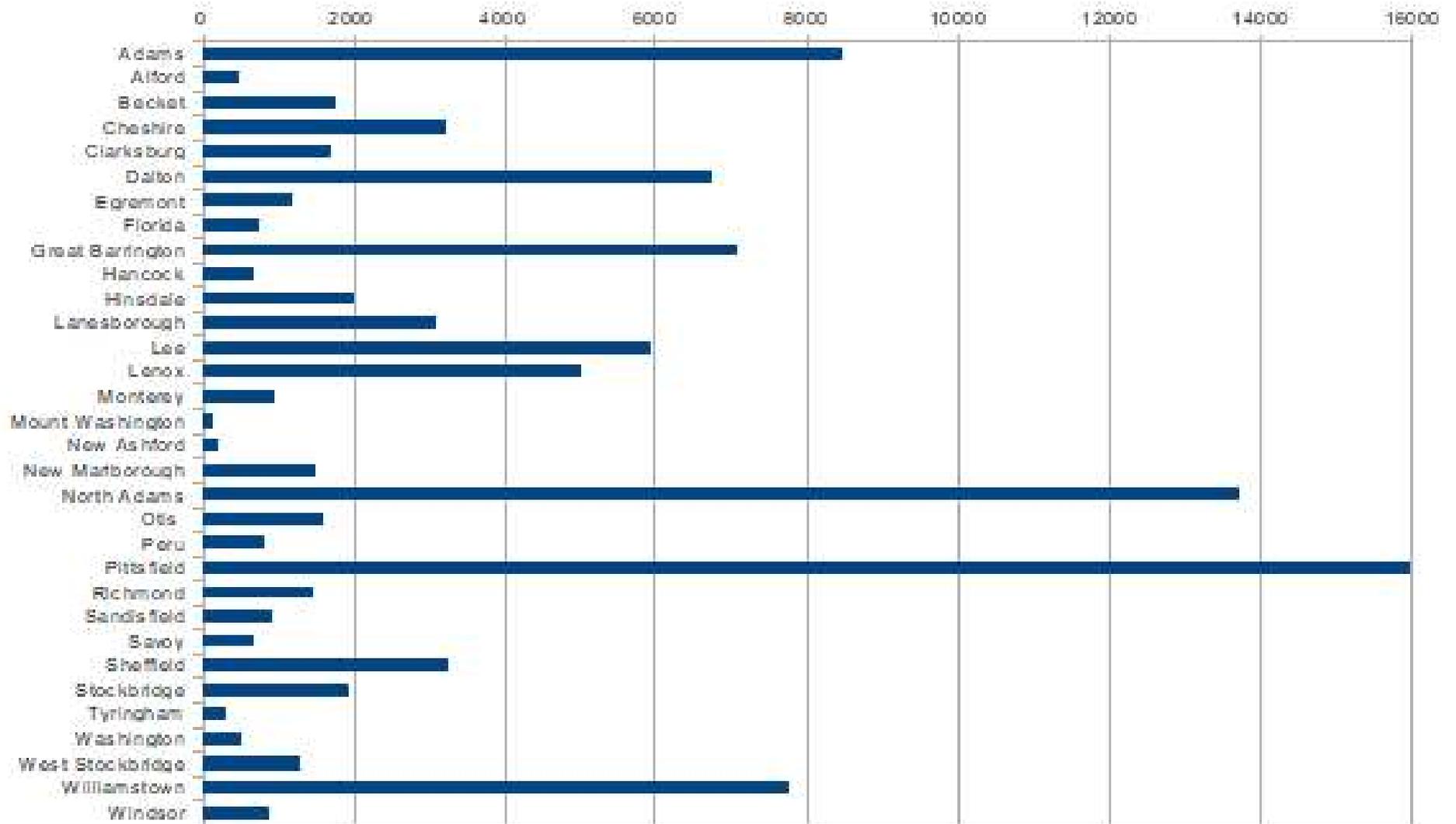
	TRAILHEAD KIOSK		INTERPRETIVE EXHIBIT
1	MEETING HOUSE TRAIL (TRAILHEAD)		
	- 3/4 MILE LOOP		
2	STONE WALL LOOP		
	- 3/4 MILE LOOP OFF MEETING HOUSE TRAIL		
3	CAIRN TRAIL		
	- 50 YARD SIDE TRAIL		
4	CELLAR HOLE TRAIL		
	- 200 YARD SIDE TRAIL		
5	BARN LOOP - 200 YARD LOOP		
6	ROYAL HEMLOCK TRAIL (TRAILHEAD)		
	- 1/2 MILE EACH WAY		
7	TURKEYBUSH TRAIL (TRAILHEAD)		
	- 3/4 MILE TO ROYAL HEMLOCK TRAIL		
8	CHAMPION OAK TRAIL		
	- 1/10 MILE EACH WAY		
9	SUGARBUSH TRAIL		
	- 1/4 MILE, OFF ROYAL HEMLOCK TRAIL		

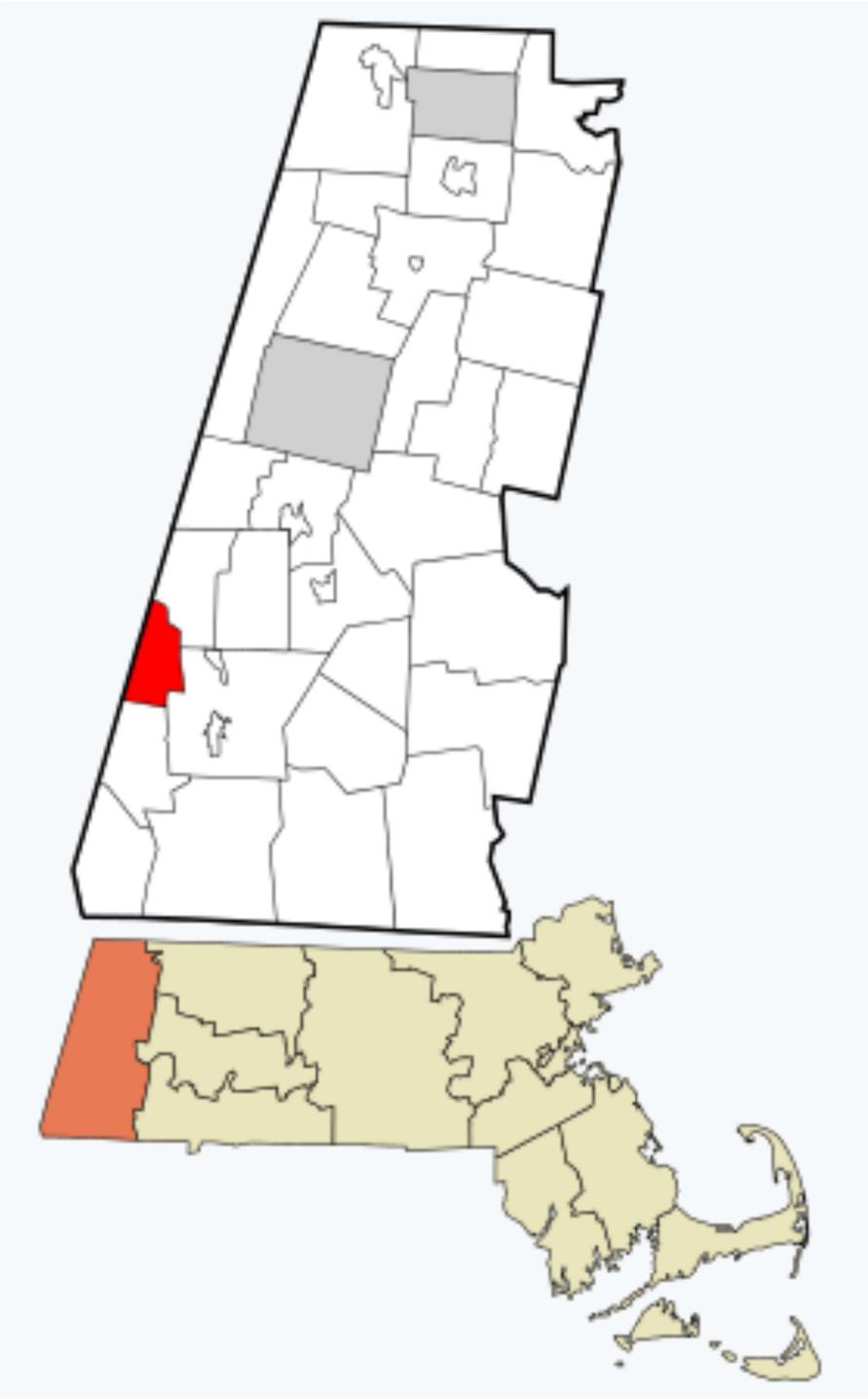

the Bidwell House
 museum

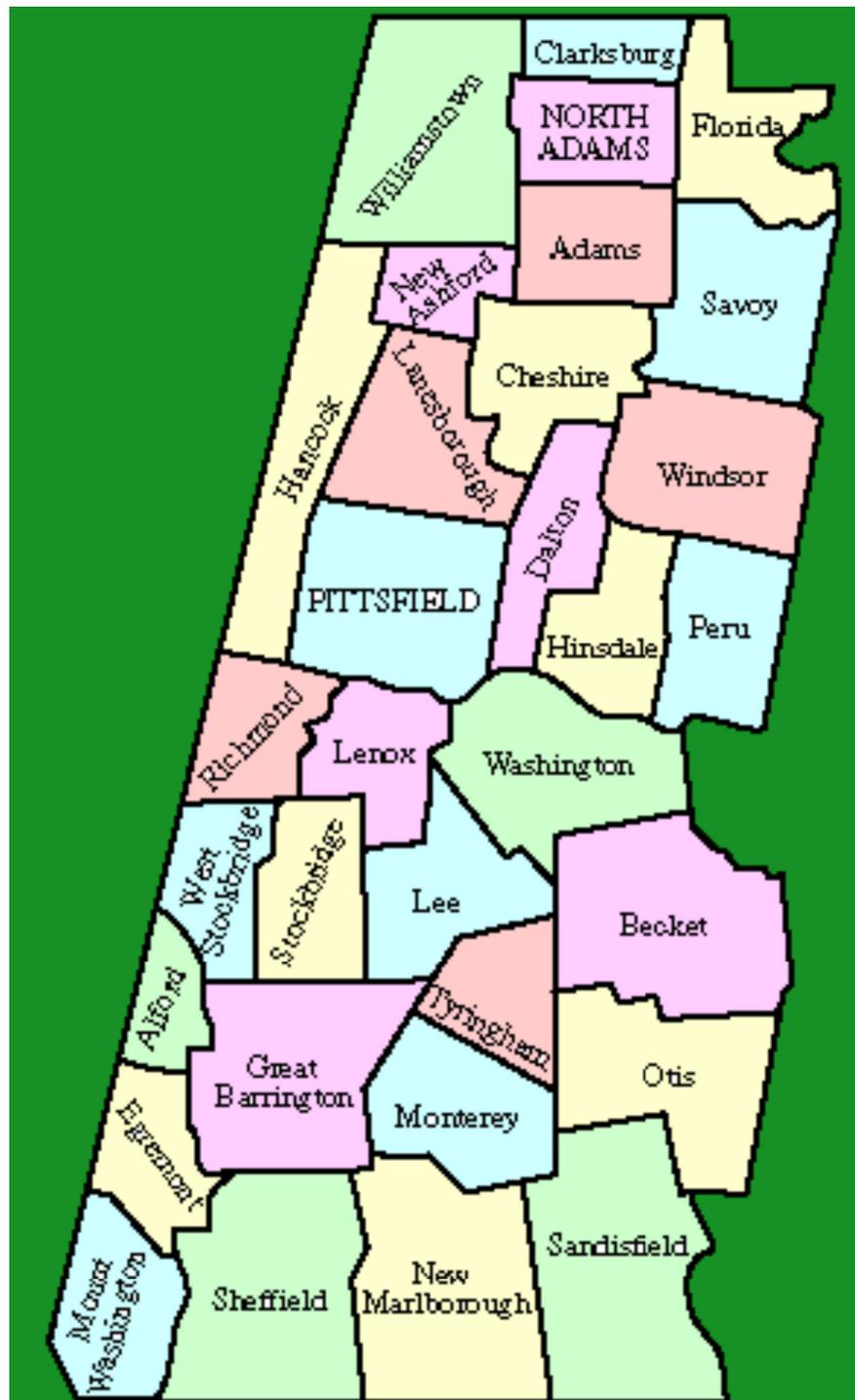
100 Art School Road, Monterey, MA 01245
 413-528-6888 www.bidwellhousemuseum.org

Rev. May 2017

Population by Town 2010 Census







Alford Factoids

- The first English squatters came in 1750
- Land formally conveyed by the Natives in 1762 in two parcels:
 - Shawenon Purchase of the central and southern part of town
 - Greenland Grant in the northern part
- Incorporated in 1773, named after
 - A town in England
 - John Alford of Charlestown (1686-1761), founder of the professorship of natural religion, moral philosophy, and civil polity at Harvard University, supporter of the society for the propagation of the gospel among the Indians
 - Colonel John Alford of Charlestown, who was known for his work in preaching Christianity to Native Americans, and for sponsoring a theology professorship at Harvard College's Divinity School* *[town website] *did not exist until 1816*

Podunk

The place we now call Alford, after a town in England, or John Alford, or my father's story, was originally known as Podunk. Place names in the Algonquin languages are descriptive, and there are many places in the Northeast that were called Podunk, which means something like "the place where you sink in" – in other words, a marshy area. If you're familiar with the center of our valley, you can see why it was called that. The stream we now call the Alford Brook was once called the Seekonk River. Seekonk is an Algonquin word probably meaning "black goose" or perhaps "wild geese."

The Wilcox Name

Alford's first Town Meeting was held in February 1773. David Ingersoll was the Moderator, and he was also our Representative to the Great and General Court in Boston. A fellow named Sylvanus Wilcox was constable and collector, and he later became a Selectman and a Captain in the Continental Army.

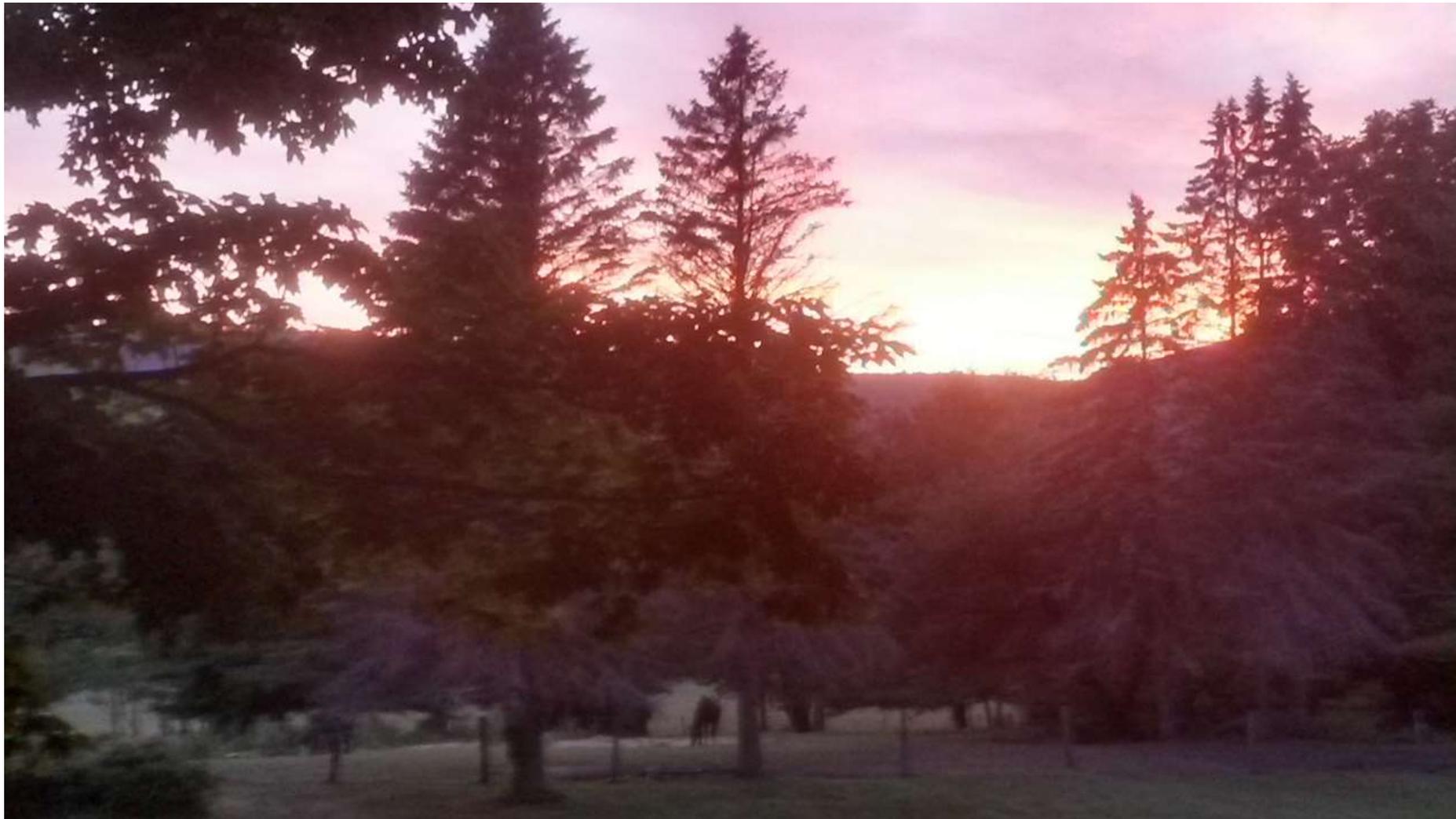
Old Beaver Dam along the Alford Brook (Seekonk River)









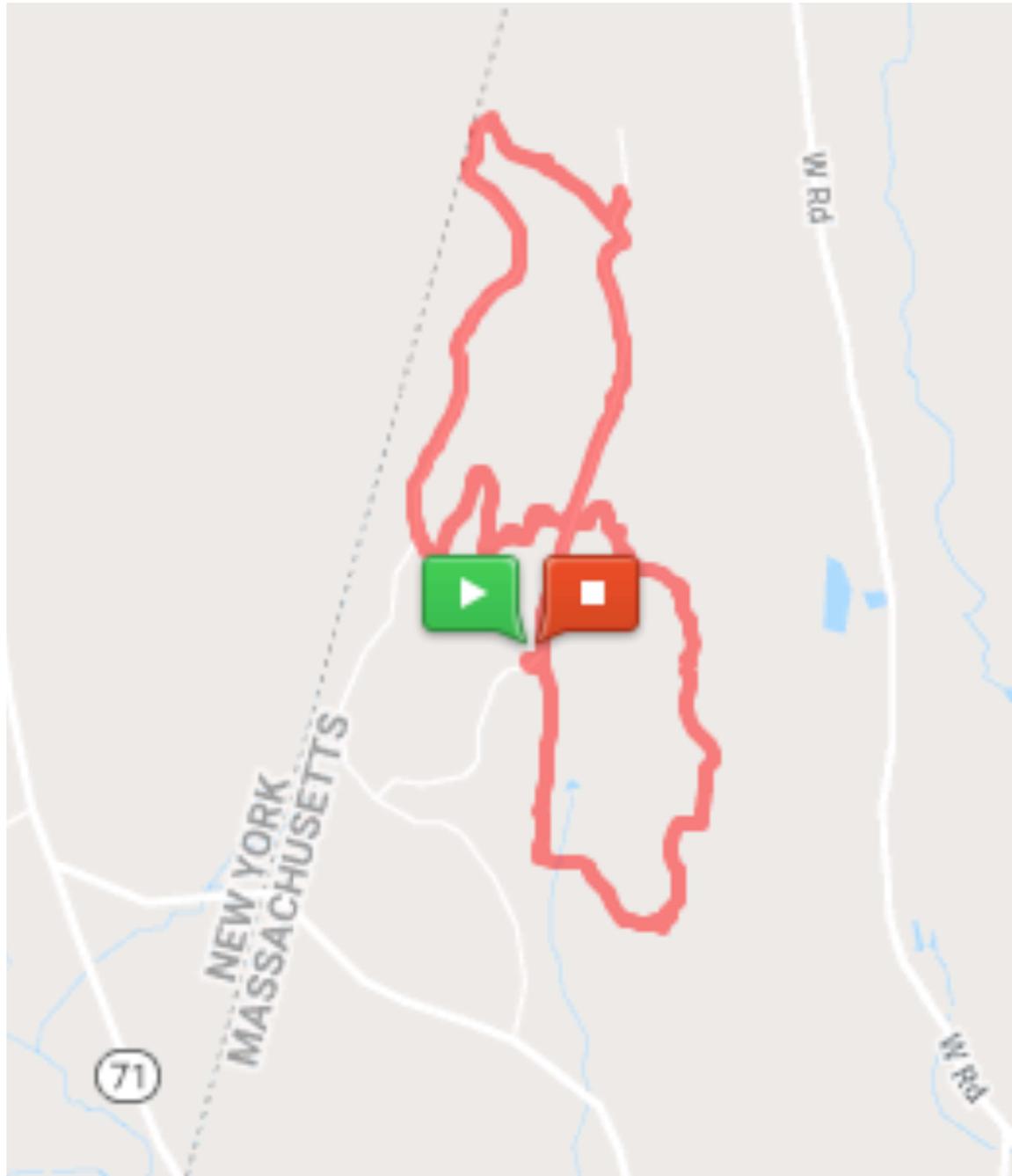


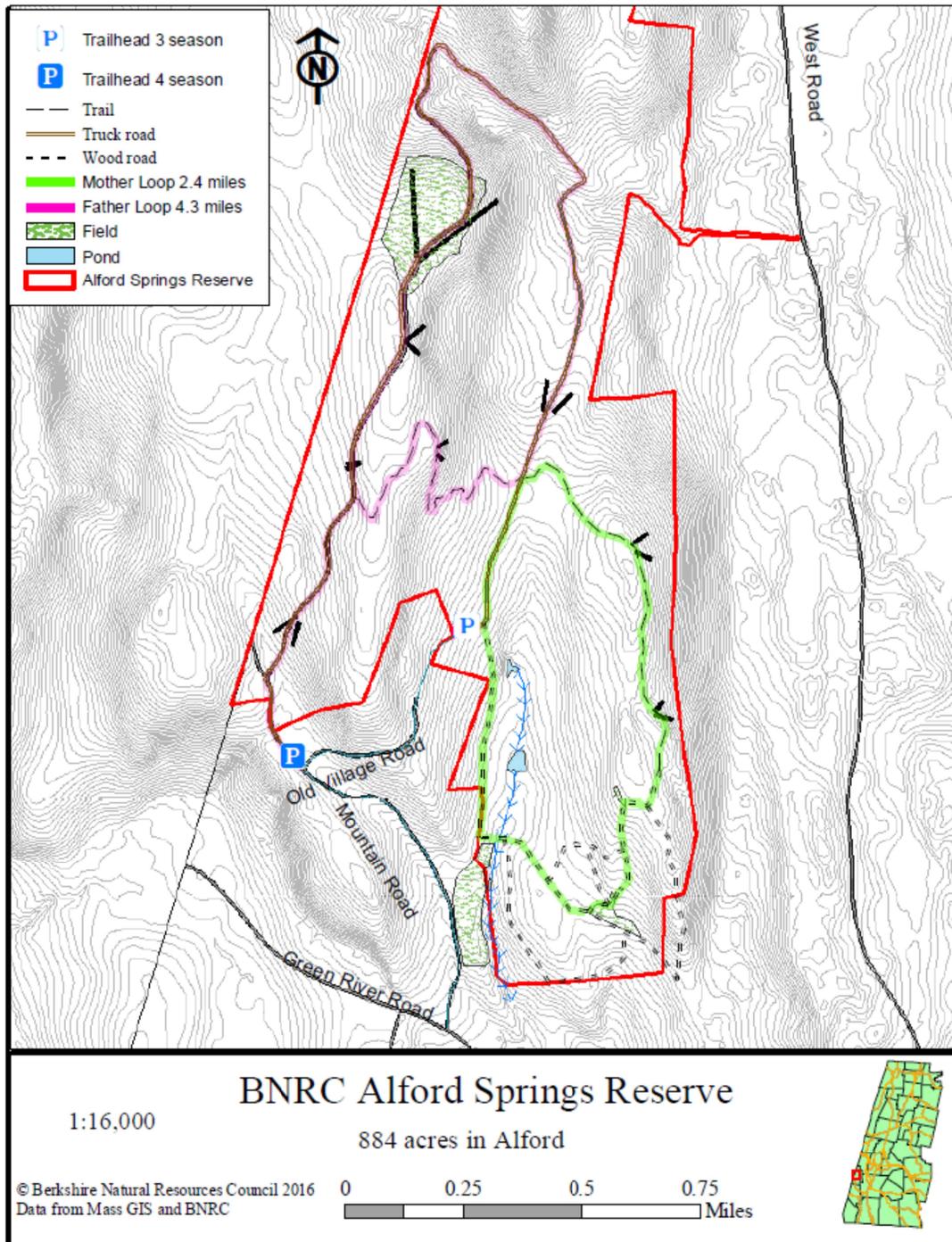


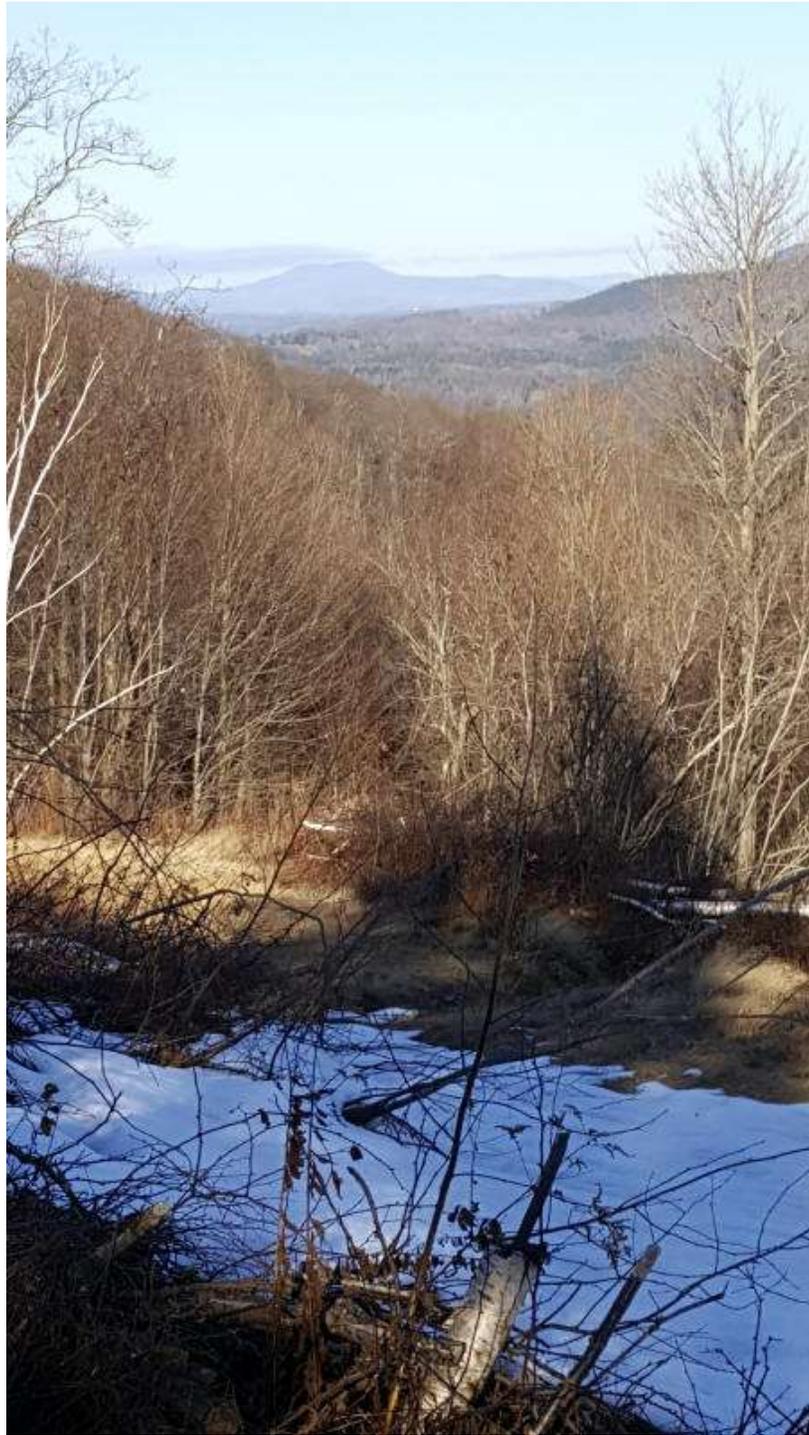




6.3 miles







View south from the corner of Alford Springs



Dr. Richard Beebe

1884 History of Berkshire County

Alford page 594

Richard Beebe, a graduate of the Berkshire Medical College in 1854, is now the only doctor in town.

Richard Beebe, M. D., of Egremont, Mass., who was employed by the Cattle Commissioners to examine into the causes of a mysterious outbreak of disease in that vicinity, reports concerning a cow which died very suddenly, that he found the stomach apparently healthy, small intestines and bladder ulcerated, and quite full of thin, bloody water. When he came to the spleen it retained its shape, but the moment he touched it, it broke and run like water. He could not do anything about weighing it, but judged it would have weighed eight pounds; there was no coagula about any of the blood in any part of the animal, not even the cavities; there did not appear to be any fibrine in the blood. This would seem to indicate that the disease in question there, was splenic apoplexy.‡

Epilepsy.

Dr. Richard Beebe, Alford, Mass., reports a case of epilepsy of twenty years' standing, treated with Peacock's Bromides, and cured. He says this preparation will do what other bromides can not.

(#18) 227 Egremont Plain Road (EGR-75), Tullar Tavern/Elm Court Inn

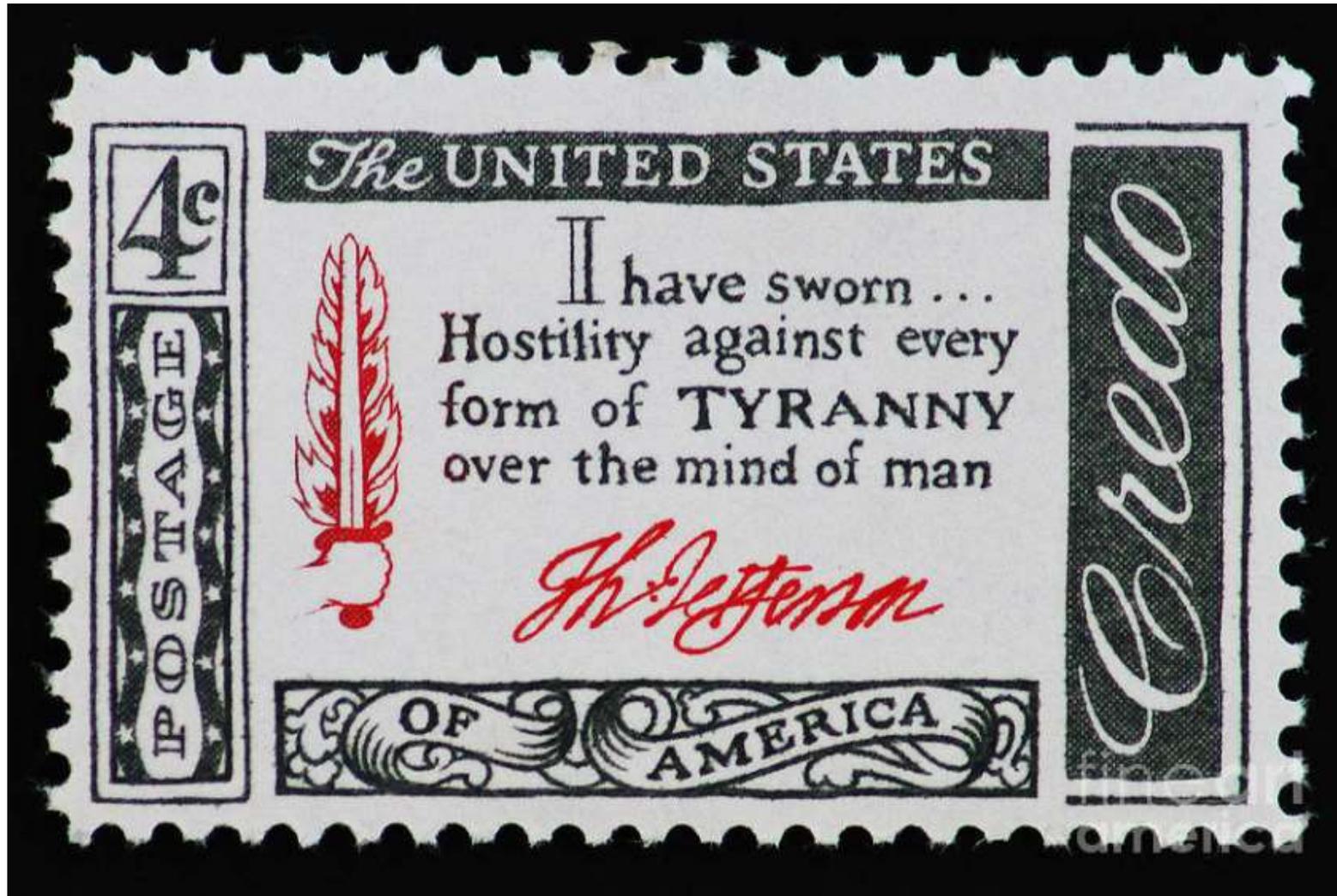


In 1790, prominent citizen John Tullar III, whose father built Egremont's oldest surviving house on its Sheffield border, built this structure to house his tavern, which for many years was an active center of village life. Grange meetings were held here, and in 1824 it became a Post Office and tavern called the Elm Court Inn. Over the years, the building has had many locally important owners and innkeepers: Joshua L. Millard; George N. Lester; and Dr. Richard Beebe. In 1885, Lyman Brusie bought the tavern from Dr. Beebe and ran a cider mill and livery stables here. The Ayre family bought the Inn in 1945 and turned it into one of the most popular places in the county. For many years during the 1990s and 2000s, it was the site of the popular Elm Court Restaurant. Today it is a private residence.

Lenox and Parsons Marsh

- First English inhabitant of Lenox was Jonathan Hinsdale of Hartford in 1750
- Reeve – in Anglo-Saxon times, the chief magistrate of a town or district
- Later, the term was used more broadly; a Shire Reeve (Sheriff) had wider jurisdiction
- Lenox elected Deer Reeves until 1774 to enforce the hunting ban on deer and moose from December 21 to August 11.
- Until 1782, there was a bounty of 80 schillings (half paid by the province) for wolves
- In 1762, the province (under Governor Bernard) decided to offer 10 townships for sale, over the objections of the resident Indians
- Township #8 had already been sold by two sachems known as Yokun and Ephraim – in 1765 #8 became Richmond (a misspelling of the Duke of Richmond, Charles Lennox). In 1767, Yokuntown and part of Washington became Lenox, and Mount Ephraim became Richmond.

Scott #1141



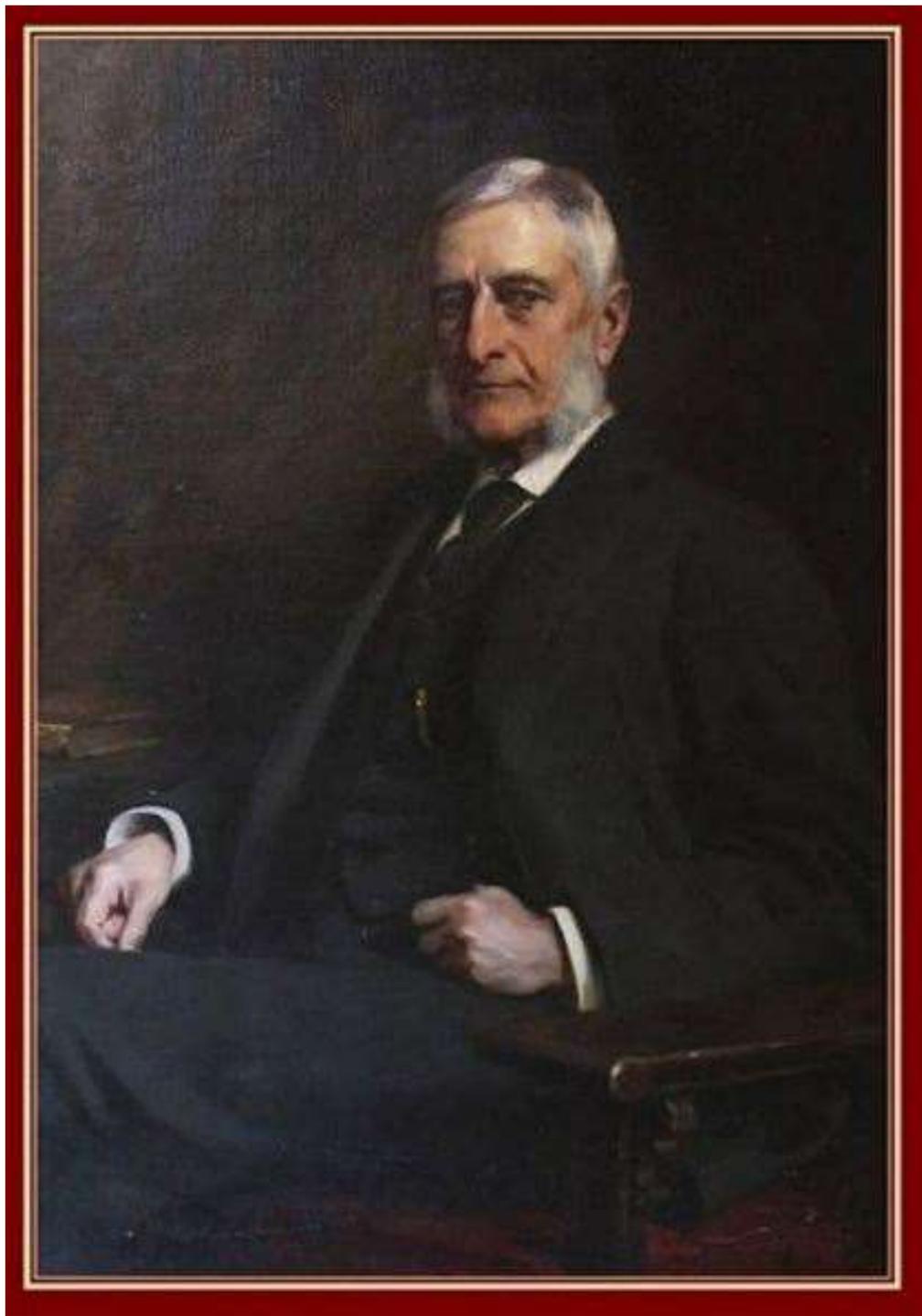
Thomas Jefferson *September 23, 1800*

... that delusion on the clause of the constitution, which, while it secured the freedom of the press, covered also the freedom of religion, had given to the clergy a very favorite hope of obtaining an establishment of a particular form of Christianity thro' the U. S.; and as every sect believes its own form the true one, every one perhaps hoped for his own, but especially the Episcopalians & Congregationalists. The returning good sense of our country threatens abortion to their hopes, & they believe that any portion of power confided to me, will be exerted in opposition to their schemes. And they believe rightly; for

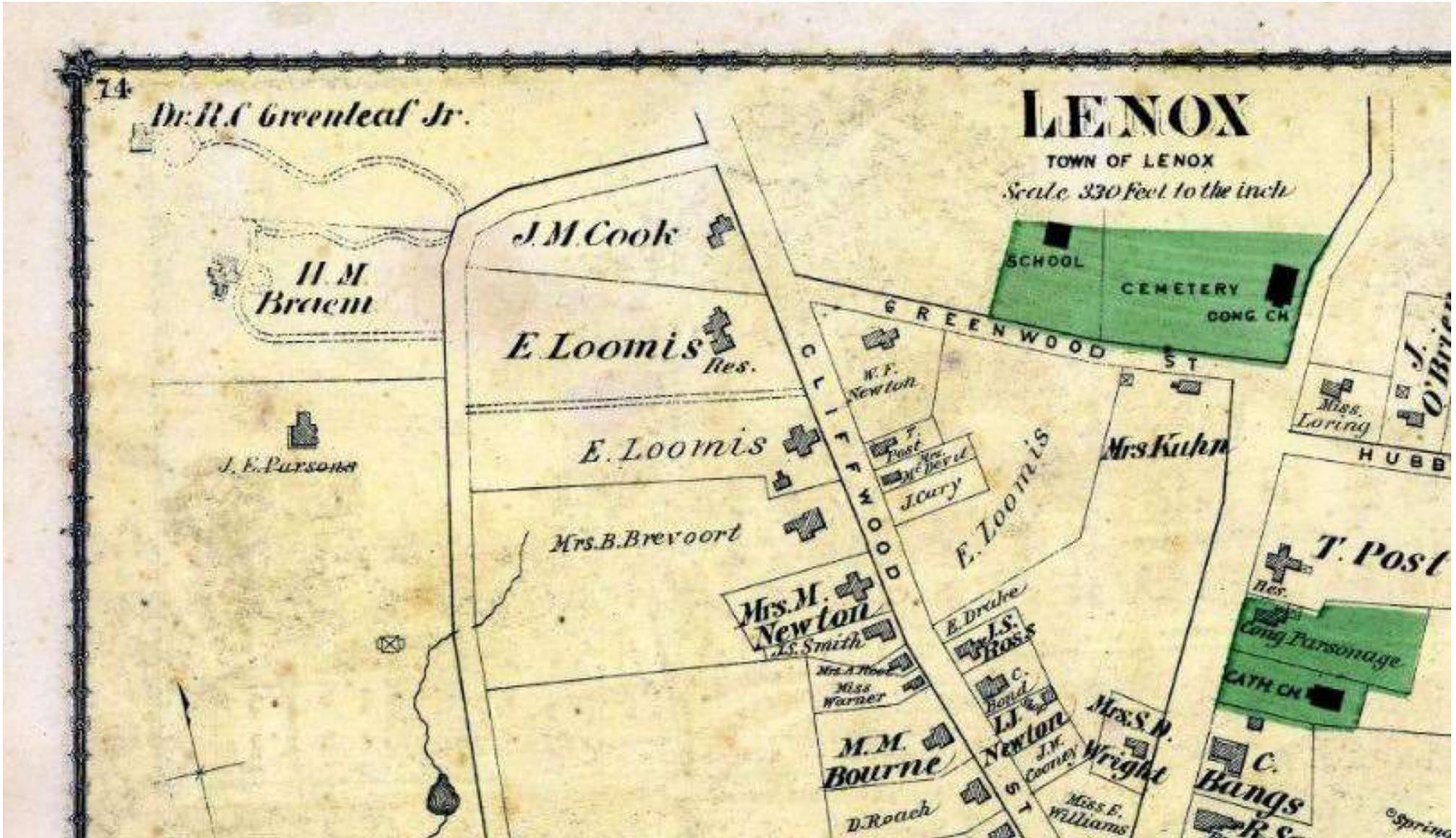
I have sworn upon the altar of god, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.

More Lenox Factoids

- In 1794 non-Congregationalists were exempted from paying the church tax (to support the Minister):
 - 40 Episcopalians
 - 25 Baptists
 - 11 Methodists
- On July 6, 1774, Lenox sent a delegation to the Berkshire Congress in Stockbridge. In early 1775 a delegate to the Provincial Congress was selected, and it was decided to purchase muskets, bayonets, et cetera.
- April 19, the Battle of Lexington; Berkshire County sent at least five companies of soldiers to the east. After the British Evacuation (March 17, 1776), the Massachusetts regiment marched toward Canada, but were turned back by American defeat in Quebec before they arrived, and were involved in the capture of Burgoyne at Saratoga, and the battles in Trenton and Princeton, with General Washington.



1876 Map



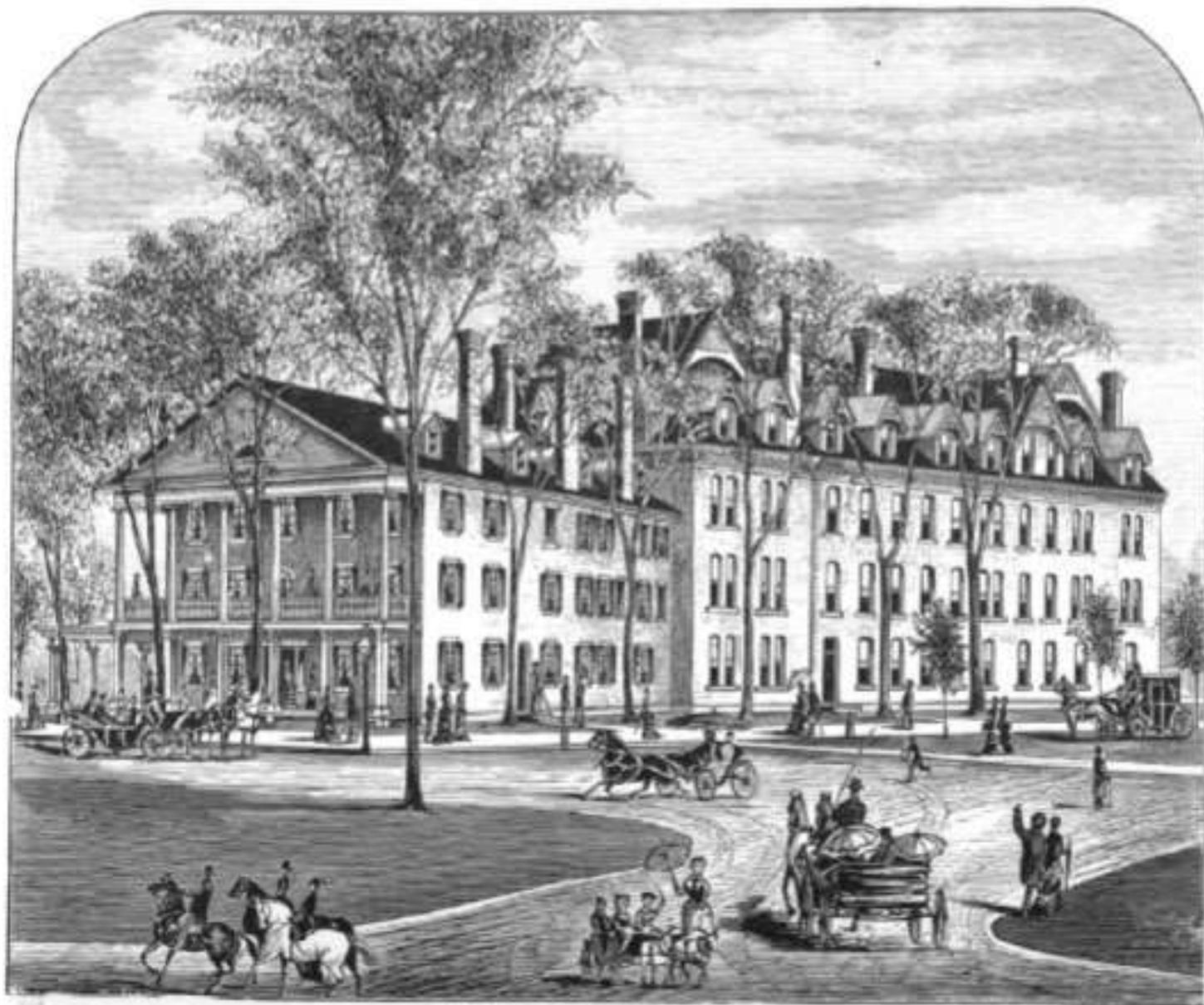
Now the Lenox Club (1914)

1924 golf course expanded to 18 holes

1932 Aspinwall Hotel burned down



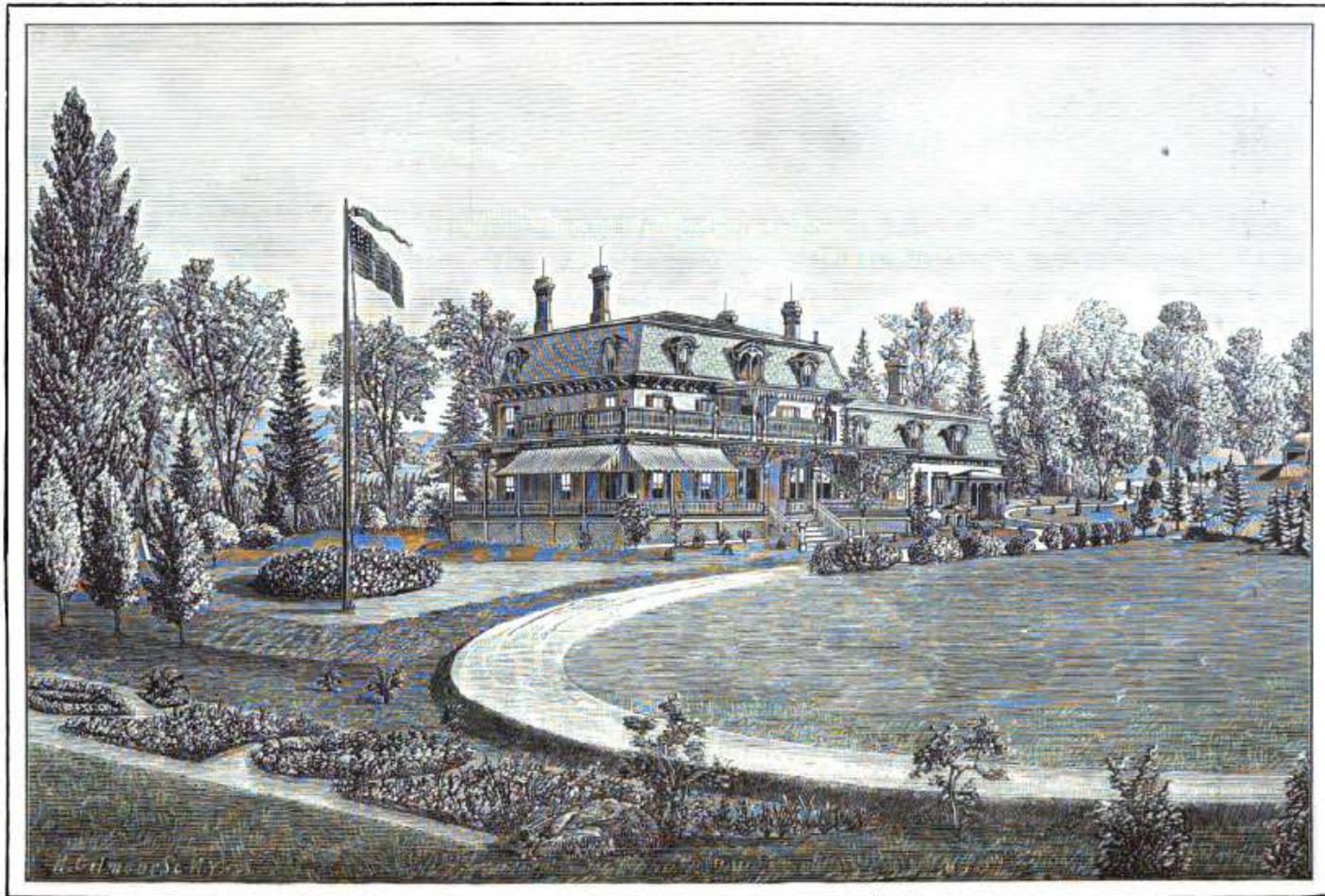
RESIDENCE OF DR. R. C. GREENLEAF,
LENOX.



W. O. CURTIS, Propr.

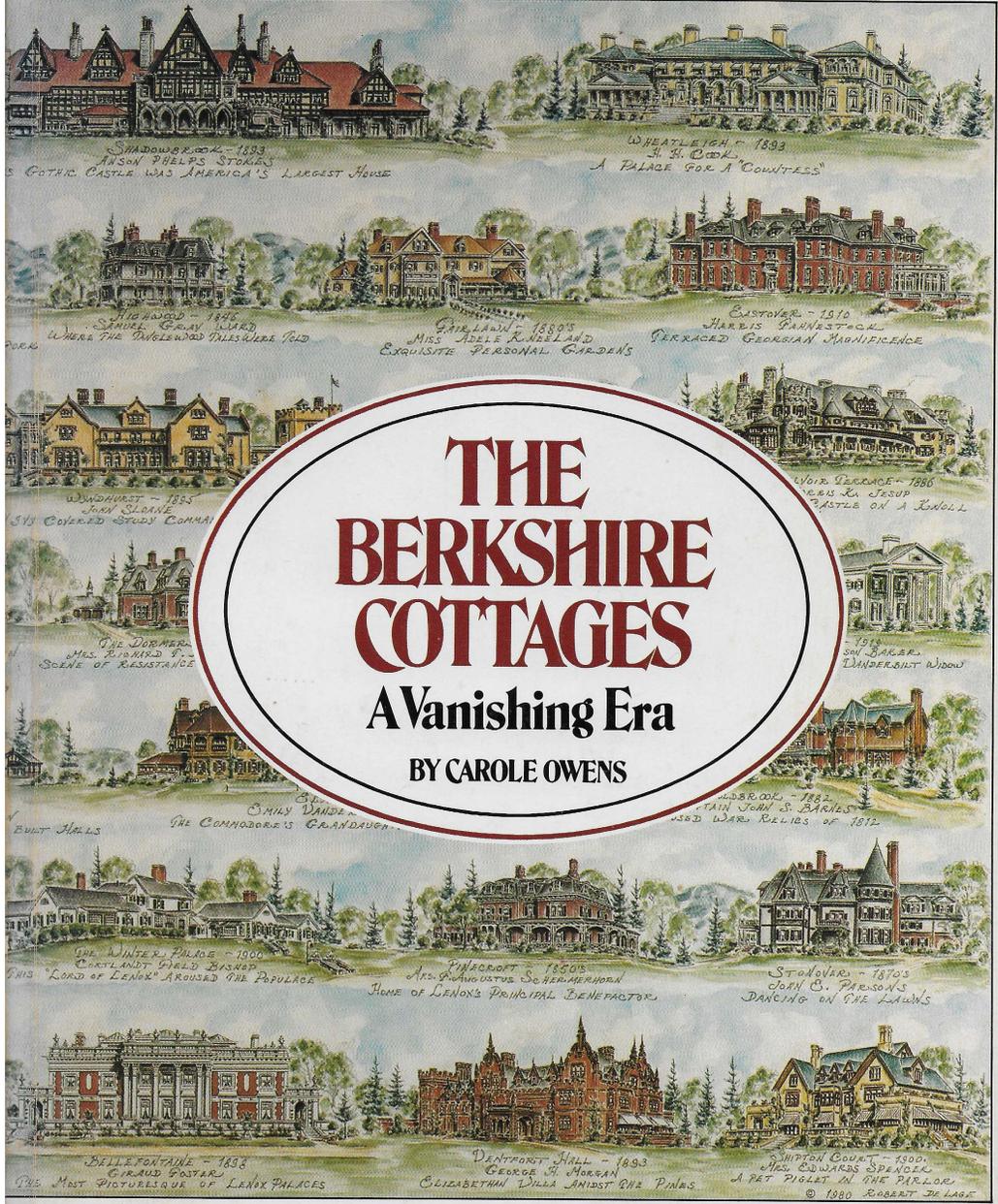
CURTIS HOTEL,
LENOX.

In 1901, the widower Parsons married into more money, in the person of the widow Mrs. David Wolfe Bishop, who owned another of the cottages nearby, Interlaken. She was fifty, he was seventy.



INTERLACKEN.
RESIDENCE OF DAVID W. BISHOP,
1901.

In 1875, Parsons built a mansard-roofed home, called “Stonover,” on Yokun Avenue near the village center, to which he made substantial additions ten years later. Until the 1870s, most Berkshire country houses were modest wooden structures. The peak building years were from the 1880s to 1920s as increasing wealth generated larger and more elaborate mansions. Stonover was among the earliest of these so-called “cottages” that wealthy families from New York, Boston and elsewhere built in Lenox from the end of the Civil War until the start of the Great Depression.



THE BERKSHIRE COTTAGES

A Vanishing Era

BY CAROLE OWENS

SHADOWBROOK - 1893
ANSON PHELPS STOKES
GOTHIC CASTLE WAS AMERICA'S LARGEST HOUSE

WHEATLEIGH - 1893
J. B. COOK
A PALACE FOR A COUNTLESS

HIGHWOOD - 1846
SPRING CANY WOOD
WHERE THE DWELLED TALES WERE TOLD

ENGLAND - 1890'S
MISS ABLE KNEELAND
EXQUISITE PERSONAL GARDENS

ESTOVER - 1810
HARRIS BANNESTOCK
TERRACED GEORGIAN MAGNIFICENCE

WINDHURST - 1855
JOHN SLOAN
3 1/2 COVERED STUDY CORNERS

WOLF TERRACE - 1880
MRS. LA JESUP
CASTLE ON A KNOLL

THE DORMER
MRS. RICHARD P.
SCALE OF RESISTANCE

1878
SUN JAGGER
LANDSCAPE WOOD

LEWIS HALLS

SMITH DANDEL
THE COMMODORE'S GRANDDAUGHTER

WILDEROOD - 1882
TAMM JOHN S. BARNES
USED WAR RELICS OF 1812

THE WINTER PALACE - 1900
CANTLAND WILD BIRDS
THIS "LORD OF LENOX" AROUSED THE POPULACE

PINECROFT - 1850'S
ALVA QUAINMASTER SCHUMMERHORN
HOME OF LENOX'S PRINCIPAL BENEFACTOR

STONOVARD - 1870'S
JOHN C. PARSONS
DANCING ON THE LAWN'S

BELLEFONTAINE - 1838
GIRARD GOSTER
THE MOST PICTURESQUE OF LENOX PALACES

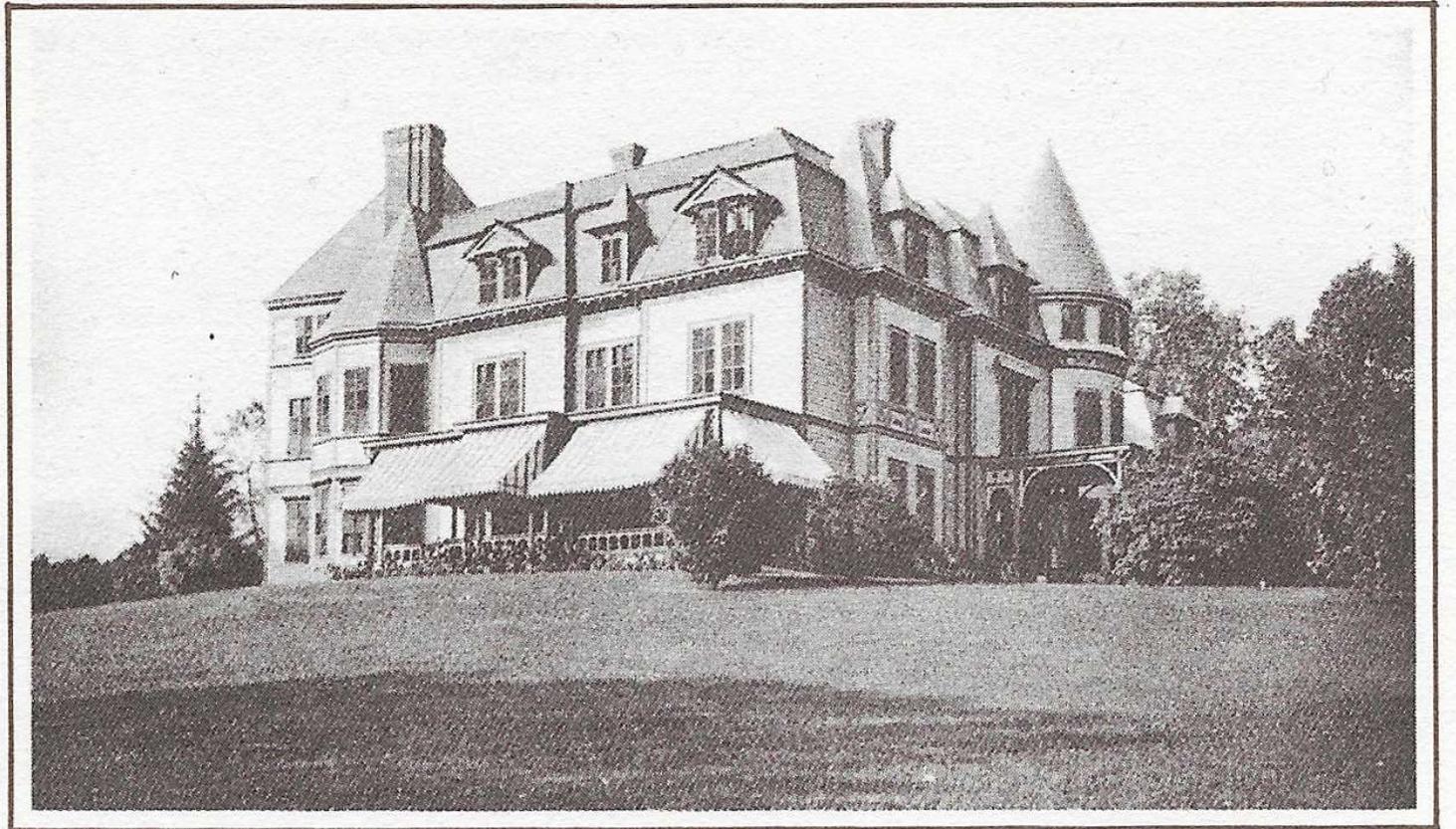
DENYMOY HALL - 1893
GEORGE H. MORGAN
ELIZABETHAN DILLA AMIDST ONE PINE

SUNSHINE COURT - 1900
MRS. EDWARDS SPENCER
A PET FIGHT IN THE PARLOR
© 1980 ROBERT DE LANE

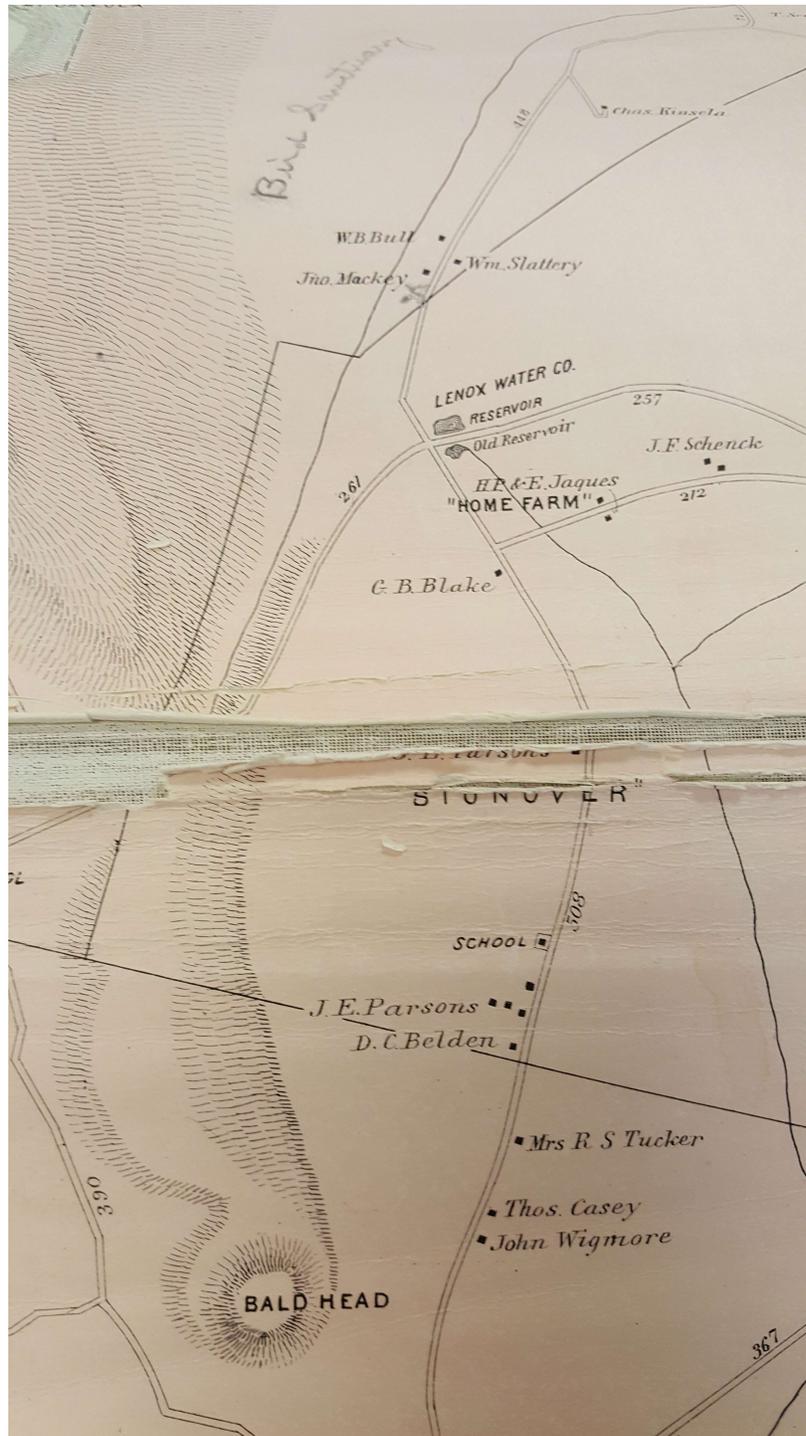


Stonover - 1870's
JOAN B. PARSONS
DANCING ON THE LAWN'S

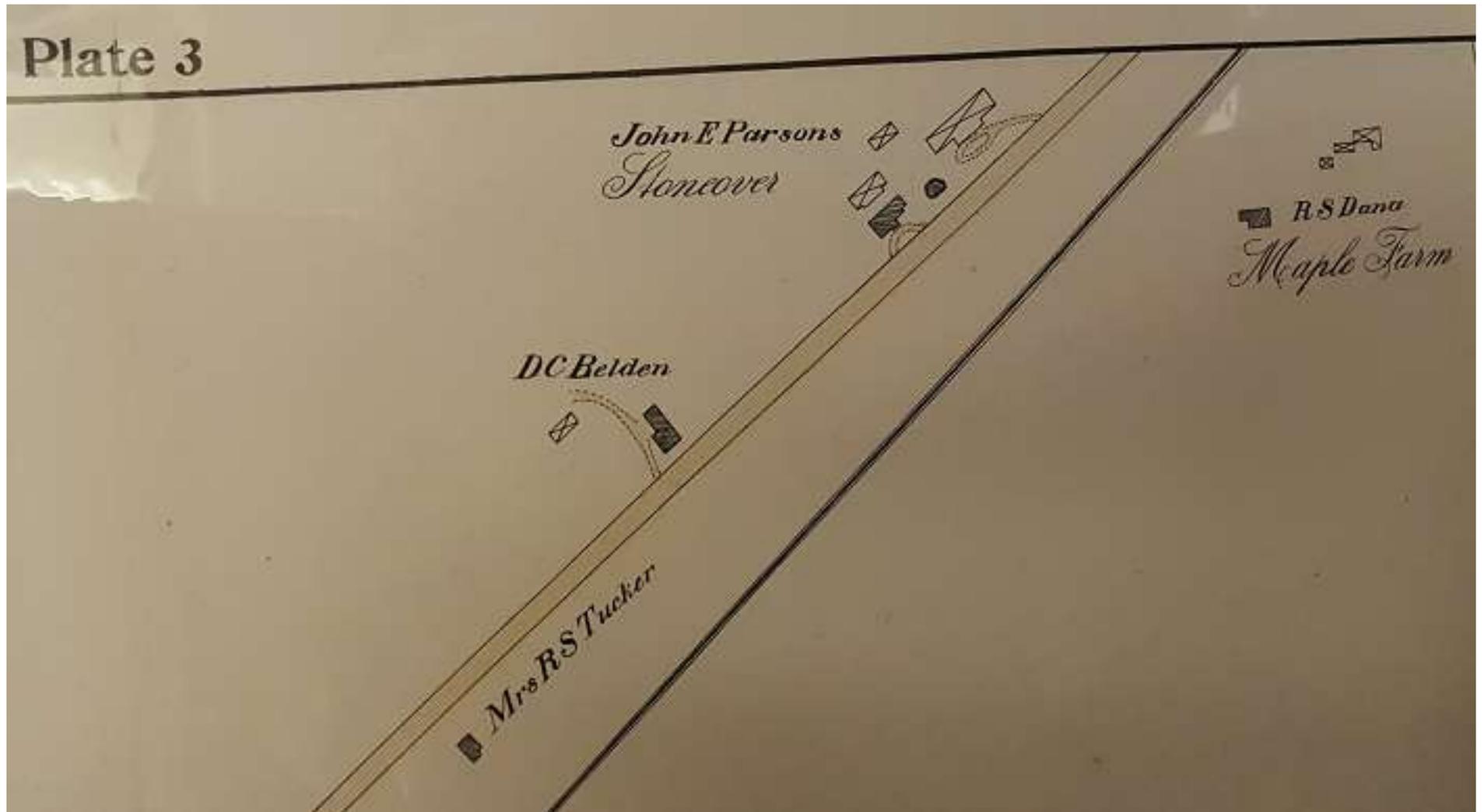
Stonover,
John E. Parsons'
cottage



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



circa 1895



from Book of Berkshires 1904

Mr. Samuel Munson was ordained, November 8th, 1770, on a salary of £45, to be ultimately increased to £60 and his firewood annually. He also received the lands that had been set apart for the first minister. Eighty years later his successor, Dr. Shepard, said of him: "He was a graduate of Yale College in 1763, and was a man of good abilities and ardent piety, sound in the faith, and zealous in promoting the cause of the Redeemer. He lived, however, in troublous times. The Revolutionary war occasioned very bitter animosities among the people; and subsequently what is called the 'Shays Insurrection' was productive of much evil in the town. Such was the state of the church that for seven years the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not administered to its members." Disaffection on the part of a minority of the church, and the ill health of Mr. Munson, led to his dismissal in 1793. He returned to New Haven, where he died in 1814. His house stood on the knoll now occupied by the residence of Mr. John E. Parsons.

Stonover Farm

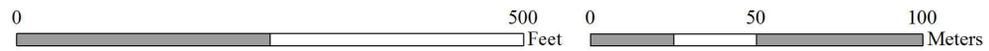




Mass State Plane Projection
1:2,000

© Berkshire Natural Resources Council 2016
Data from Mass GIS and BNRC
Not to be used for conveyance.

PRELIMINARY Parsons Marsh Trail Layout: 10/26/2016
Berkshire Natural Resources Council
Lenox Community Preservation Fund Application



Lenox

- John “Jack” Drummond Kennedy 1897-1975
- Married to Elsie Parsons
- Another Parsons daughter, Mary, owned land that eventually became the Mass Audubon Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary.