

The Scituate Reservoir

By Jane M. Bamberg

What?

- drains 93 square miles of land.
- contains nearly 56 billion gallons of stored water.
- approximately 4000-5000 bodies were moved from cemeteries.
- cost \$20 million to build

The Scituate Reservoir



- It took a full year for the reservoir to fill up.
- Seven million trees were planted around the watershed.
- The average depth of the water is 32 feet; maximum depth is 87 feet.

Gainer Memorial Dam

- Formed by earth filled dam spanning North Branch of the Pawtuxet River.
- An aqueduct carries water to the water treatment plant which filters the water.



Providence Public Waterworks

The Providence Public
Waterworks from the aerated
fountain and currently under
reconstruction view.



Providence Public Water Works

This is the Providence Public
Water Works located on
Route 116



Aqueduct Mound



- original aqueduct is 90 inches and 4.5 miles long that ends in Cranston.
- second aqueduct is 78 inches and 102 inches respectively and 9.5 miles in length . It was built in the 1970's
- 75% distribution is by gravity and 25% by pumping
- design when completed was considered state-of-the art.

- Plans for the reservoir were held in secret meetings in 1913
- Produced both good and bad consequences
- Most residents were forced to move. Rockland, Kent, Ashland, Wilbur Hollow, South Scituate, Richmond, Saundersville, Ponaganset, North Scituate, and Clayville
- Approximately 1600 quiet, hard-working, rural folks answered the 1916 knocks at their doors.

The Water Sharks

The water sharks of Providence
Good judgment seem to lack
If they will take a trip up here
They'll find us on the map

Providence newspaper 1918

Human Sacrifices

- On May 23, 1916, Frank and Lyman Knight received \$12,150 for the holdings in Scituate. 406 acres, two barns, and an ice house on Knight Brook. The bill of sale included two houses. “1 burned.” Their ancestors think they understood the entry. How about you?
- A farmer in Ponaganset told his daughter he was going outside to feed the livestock, walked into the barn and hanged himself. While his neighbor slit his throat.

- Shirley Arnold, tries to picture her mother, grandparents, and great-grandparents living in a condemned village. “You can imagine how they might have felt- over 200 years of family history, gone”
- “People didn’t really understand what was happening” It was pretty much a done deal when the folks heard about it.
- Local history archives at North Scituate library have records and interviews conducted by Shirley Arnold with former residents referring to the “old place” But no one ever described leaving; no one would talk about the end and how it felt.

Building and Business Losses

1195 buildings

- 375 houses
- 233 barns
- 7 schools
- 6 churches
- 30 dairy farms
- 11 ice houses
- post offices
- taverns
- general stores
- blacksmith
- wheelright shops
- fire stations
- 6 mills
- Providence and Danielson Electric Railway

Mill Losses

- Hope Furnace (Hope Manufacturing Company
- Jackson Mill
- Scituate Manufacturing Company
- Richmond Mill
- Rockland Mill # 1 and # 2
- Ashland Mill
- Saundersville Mill
- Clayville Mill
- Due to monitored and reduced flows from the Mowansicut, Ponaganset and Pawtuxet Rivers S.H. Green & Sons as well as others were forced to close.

- Providence and Danielson Electric Railway was abandoned
- 26.4 miles of new roads needed to be built for the 36 miles of abandoned roads

Scituate Reservoir from Route 101



North Scituate Dam with an egret perched atop.



N. Scituate dam



Backend of the dam area



Dam causeway



Route 116 view of the reservoir



Rockland Cemetery

Final Resting Place for those long lost.



Bibliography

Camarda, Nicole. "The Story of the Scituate Reservoir." *Riroads.com*. Web. 05 Apr. 2011. <http://riroads.com/members/scituate_reservoir.htm>.

"History of Providence Water and the Scituate Reservoir." *New & Improved Providence Water Internet Website*. Web. 05 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.provwater.com/history.htm>>.

"Scituate Early History." *Bryant University*. Web. 05 Apr. 2011. <http://web.bryant.edu/~ehu/h364proj/sprg_97/pease/scithist.htm>.

"Scituate Reservoir, Scituate, RI." *National Weather Service Eastern Region Headquarters*. Web. 05 Apr. 2011. <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/nerfc/basin_info/Scituate.html>.

"Scituate Reservoir." Web. 05 Apr. 2011. <www.absoluteastronomy.com/topic/Scituate_Reservoir>.

"Scituate Reservoir." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 05 Apr. 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scituate_Reservoir>.

Scituate, Rhode Island. Dover, NH: Arcadia Pub., 1998. Print.

Smith, Robert L. "The Power of Words. Scituate Reservoir: A Story of Sacrifice." *Rhode Island, Providence, News, Sports, Entertainment, Ads | Projo.com | The Providence Journal*. Web. 05 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.projo.com/words/stor0602.htm>>.

Consulted the North Scituate Library for use of historical documents compiled by retired Librarian Shirley Arnold.

Photographs were taken by my "graduate assistant" Ellen Bamberg with her Nikon Digital Camera