

WORCESTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

30 Elm Street
Worcester, Massachusetts

ARCHIVES

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
2014.FIA.01

Processed by Caleigh Ross
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Collection Information

Abstract : The collection contains documents pertaining to Lake Quinsigamond in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Among the documents are a signed petition from the Lake Quinsigamond Improvement Association, records of the Quinsigamond Boat Club (originally known as the Phantom Boat Club from 1859-1866), and a series of correspondences among concerned citizens involving the question of the adaptation of Lake Quinsigamond and the surrounding land into a state reservation during 1910-1913.

Finding Aid : Finding Aid in print form is available in the Repository.

Preferred Citation : Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Provenance : Found in Archives (Series 1 donated by American Antiquarian Society in 1975)

MARC Access :

Historical/Biographical Notes

Series 1: Lake Quinsigamond Improvement Association

In September 1913, the Lake Quinsigamond Improvement Association submitted a petition to the County Commissioners of Worcester County with concerns regarding the construction of a bridge across the lake. On June 10th, 1913 the association passed a resolution to draft a petition outlining the concerns of local citizens regarding the size and usability of the proposed bridge. The association urged that, unless a bridge built using the allotted funds would be large enough to handle the foreseen traffic and frequent use by the public, its construction be postponed until further funding became available. The petition was drafted in July of 1913 and sent to local organizations. Throughout the month of September, the petition was approved and signed by the following organizations: The Svea Gille Association, The Washington Club, The Lakeshore Improvement Society, the Tatassit Canoe Club, The Worcester Fire Department, The Lake View Improvement Society, the Free Public Library of Worcester, and “Town of Shrewsbury Officials.”

History of the Bridge:

The first floating bridge across Lake Quinsigamond was built in 1806 in an attempt to shorten travel to Boston. In 1817 the bridge, which had proven to be unstable was rebuilt as a suspension bridge, which also did not last. Next was another floating bridge that lasted until 1861. Two years later, an earthen causeway was completed. The causeway was expanded to include trolley tracks in 1900. In 1919 it was replaced by a modern bridge of stone, cement, and steel. Another bridge, built in the 1960s to accommodate Route 290, is about to be replaced in 2014.

Series 2: Quinsigamond Boat Club

In 1859, John Heywood formed the Phantom Boat Club following the first college regatta held in Worcester on July 26th, 1859. Initially, the club did not own a boat for competing. They practiced instead in pairs in a little sheet iron lifeboat. In the autumn of 1859, the club purchased a 40 foot long cedar boat from the Atlantas Boat Club. In 1866 the club changed its name to the Quinsigamond Boat Club. The club also sold their old boat and had a new cedar shell constructed. The club would enjoy its heyday in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In a June 3, 1953 article in the Worcester telegram, the club was described as “a sort of ruling body” of lake activities. “In its day it was known as perhaps the richest independent boat club in the United States. It had means. It had sailing talent. It had a fine tradition. It had fun.” The club disbanded in 1948.

History of Rowing on the Lake

Lake Quinsigamond was first used by college rowers in 1857, with college rowers flocking to the lake, enamored by the beauty of the lake and the natural features that provided an ideal race course, described in an article in the Worcester Telegram on September 7, 1947: “Sheltered by high hills, which eliminates any wind advantage. There are no real currents, and deep water does away with the possibility of weeds.” The first college regatta, featuring rowers from Harvard, Yale, Brown and Trinity, was held on July 26th 1859. The advent of the Civil War put a temporary pause on racing, which quickly resumed after the end of the war. Following the

deeply controversial regatta in 1870, there was a lull in the popularity of rowing on the lake. Interest in the sport experienced a resurgence around 1890, and continued through the early 1900s, which are considered the heyday of rowing on the lake. In 1920 and 1932, Olympic tryouts were held on the lake. As recently as 2005 and 2012, the USRowing Masters National Rowing Championship was held on Lake Quinsigamond.

Series 3: Lake Quinsigamond Reservation Documents

In December 1909, several concerned citizens began to consider the idea of turning Lake Quinsigamond and the surrounding land into a reservation. Among these concerned citizens was Conrad Hobbs, a Bostonian who took great interest in the reservation question. Between December 1909 and November 1911, he corresponded with several prominent Worcester citizens regarding the necessary steps for converting the lake and surrounding property into a reservation. Among those with whom he corresponded are: Worcester Mayor James Logan, attorney Frank Dressler, attorney Charles Tatman, Springfield City Treasurer E.T. Tiffs, Crompton and Knowles President Charles H. Hutchins, Consulting Engineer Wm Barclay Parsons, Worcester Board of Trade member Homer Gage, Lake Quinsigamond Commission Secretary Rufus Bennett Fowler, and landscape architect Arthur A. Shurtleff. Throughout the correspondence, Hobbs and his colleagues on the Worcester Board of Trade worked to appoint a committee to officially inquire into the conditions at the lake, and formally report suggestions and recommendations for what ought to be done to preserve conditions at the lake to benefit the public.

An official governor-appointed commission was appointed, consisting of three members: Hon. John R. Thayer, Judge William T. Forbes, and Rufus B. Fowler, Esq. The commission also consulted with landscape architect Arthur A. Shurtleff. The commission's official recommendations for the lake included three main points: Police supervision and fire and forestry regulation; that the state lend credit for as well as directly purchase land surrounding the lake, to be used for the public or park purposes; and that the state construct public roads around the lake. The ensuing public discussion tied in the question of replacing the causeway across the lake with a bridge, which soon became the central focus of the debate.

Series 4: Stephen C. Earle Lake Park Statue Proposal

On May 5th, 1889 architect Stephen C. Earle sent a letter to Martin Green, enclosing his designs for a proposed statue at Lake Park, titled the Pioneer Pedestal. The statue was never built.

Scope and Content

This collection includes documents from the Lake Quinsigamond Improvement Association in 1913, pertaining to the construction of a bridge on the lake. Also included in this collection are documents from the Quinsigamond Boat Club, originally called the Phantom Boat Club from its inception in 1859 through 1910. The collection also includes a series of correspondence between 1909 and 1911 among several concerned citizens looking for the state to convert the lake and the surrounding land into a reservation. The collection also contains an original drawing for a proposed statue for Lake Park, drawn by Stephen C. Earle.

Series Descriptions

Series 1: Lake Quinsigamond Improvement Association

Series description: This series contains a formal petition from the Lake Quinsigamond Improvement Association, as well as signatures from other notable organizations in the Worcester area including: The Svea Gille Association, The Washington Club, The Lakeshore Improvement Society, the Tatassit Canoe Club, The Worcester Fire Department, The Lake View Improvement Society, the Free Public Library of Worcester, and “Town of Shrewsbury Officials.”

Series 2: Quinsigamond Boat Club

Series description: This series contains treasurers books, receipts, membership information, bylaws, correspondence, personal papers, and a written history of the Quinsigamond Boat Club (originally known as the Phantom Boat Club from the club’s inception in 1859 to 1866). Records range from 1859 to 1910.

Series 3: Lake Quinsigamond Reservation Documents

Series description: This series contains correspondence between December 1909 and November 1911 between Conrad Hobbs and several prominent Worcester citizens regarding the question of converting Lake Quinsigamond into a reservation. The series also includes a document outlining reasons that Worcester in particular was deserving of state assistance, as well as the formal recommendations of a commission appointed by the governor to officially inquire into the conditions at the lake.

Series 4: Stephen C. Earle Lake Park Statue Proposal

Series description: This series contains a letter and original drawings from architect Stephen C. Earle outlining a proposed statue at Lake Park.

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 1: Lake Quinsigamond Improvement Association
 Subseries 1: 1913 Petition
 2014.FIA.01

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	2014.FIA.01.1.1.1	September 24, 1913, Formal petition to the County Commissioners of Worcester County. Original accession number 1975.46.1
1	1	2014.FIA.01.1.1.1.A	Copy of petition, signed by Charles E. Squier, Clerk.
1	1	2014.FIA.01.1.1.1.B	Copy of petition, approved and signed by 175 members of the Svea Gille Association, Sept. 8, 1913.
1	1	2014.FIA.01.1.1.1.C	Copy of petition, approved and signed by 135 members of The Washington Club, Sept. 8, 1913.
1	1	2014.FIA.01.1.1.1.D	Copy of petition, approved and signed by 125 members of the Lakeshore Improvement Society.
1	1	2014.FIA.01.1.1.1.E	Copy of petition, approved and signed by 200 members of the Tatassit Canoe Club, Sept. 17 th , 1913.
1	1	2014.FIA.01.1.1.1.F	Copy of petition.

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 1: Lake Quinsigamond Improvement Association
 Subseries 2: Signatures
 2014.FIA.01

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	2	2014.FIA.01.1.2.1	61 pages of signatures of members of local organizations including The Svea Gille Association, The Washington Club, The Lakeshore Improvement Society, the Tatassit Canoe Club, The Worcester Fire Department, The Lake View Improvement Society, the Free Public Library of Worcester, and "Town of Shrewsbury Officials."

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 2: Quinsigamond Boat Club
 Subseries 1: Phantom Boat Club 1859-1866
 2014.FIA.01

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	3	2014.FIA.01.2.1.1	1860—Phantom Boat Club Bylaws. Back pages include measurements of members in the summer of 1860 and weights of members in 1866.
1	3	2014.FIA.01.2.1.2	1860—Measurements of members of the Phantom Boat Club, including measurements of boat.
1	3	2014.FIA.01.2.1.3	1862—Edwin Brown's Treasurer's Book. Includes assessments and expenses of the club.
1	3	2014.FIA.01.2.1.4	1864-1869—P.B.C. Treasurer's Book. Includes expenses and receipts of the club from 1864 to 1869.
1	3	2014.FIA.01.2.1.5	June 4 th , 1862—receipt from H.W. Eddy, thirty-five dollars for moving and preparing part of the boat house.

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 2: Quinsigamond Boat Club
 Subseries 1: Phantom Boat Club 1859-1866
 Continued

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	3	2014.FIA.01.2.1.6	July 21 st , 1864—receipt from S.S. Ellis, ten dollars for four iron rowlocks.
1	3	2014.FIA.01.2.1.7	1864—receipt from G. Hutchinson, three dollars for blue and red paint.

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 2: Quinsigamond Boat Club
 Subseries 2: Quinsigamond Boat Club 1866-1910
 2014.FIA.01

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.1-5	1866—Club receipts for 1866.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.6-7	1867—Club receipts for 1867.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.8-9	1868—Club receipts for 1868.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.10	1869—Club receipt for 1869.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.11	1870—Records of regatta Committee, made By J.B. Hamilton. Clerk, 1870.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.12	undated—Twenty-eight page written history of the Quinsigamond Boat Club, beginning from its inception in 1859 through 1875.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.13	March 19 th , 1903—Letter to James P. Hamilton from Robert Pratt, turning down the position of clerk of the club.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.14-14.A	March 13 th , 1906— Letter to James P. Hamilton from Chandler Bullock, turning down the position of censor of the club. Envelope with letter.

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 2: Quinsigamond Boat Club
 Subseries 2: Quinsigamond Boat Club 1866-1910
 Continued

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.15	Sept. 4 th 1910— Written invitation to L.K. Erskine from Charles Thayer, offering the Privileges of the boat club for a period of two weeks. Original accession number 1981.140.13
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.16	undated—Label describing theatrical performances held by the boat club between 1877 and 1888.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.17-17A	undated—Letter to a Miss Kimball from John Heywood, inviting her to his rooms on Saturday evening, August 29 th , at 9 o'clock. Envelope with letter.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.18	undated— Letter to Mr. Hamilton from John Heywood, inviting him to his rooms on Saturday evening, August 29 th , at 9 o'clock.
. 1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.19	undated—Invitation to a reception at the lake, Saturday June 26 th , from 5 to 7 pm.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.20-21	undated— lists of Quinsigamond Boat Club executive officers.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.22A-B	undated— Invitation to meeting at the boat house on Monday, June 14 th at 6 PM for the opening of the season. Two copies.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.23	undated— Letter to Mr. J. P. Hamilton from Geo. J. Dewey, informing him of his appointment to the Membership Nominating Committee.
1	4	2014.FIA.01.2.2.24	undated— Alphabetical list of members of the Quinsigamond Boat Club.

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 3: Lake Quinsigamond Reservation Documents
 Subseries 1: Conrad Hobbs Correspondence
 2014.FIA.01

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.1	December 23 rd , 1909—Letter to Mrs. H.W. Beal, from Counsellor at law Robert M. Washburn.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.2	December 30 th , 1909—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Worcester Mayor James Logan.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.3	January 14 th , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Frank F. Dresser.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.3	January 14 th , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Frank F. Dresser.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.4	January 19 th , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Frank F. Dresser.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.5	February 4 th , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from U. Waldo Cutler.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.6	February 5 th , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Frank F. Dresser.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.7	February 10 th , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from U. Waldo Cutler.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.8	February 11 th , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Charles T. Tatman.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.9	February 11 th , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Frank F. Dresser.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.10	undated—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Springfield City treasurer E.T. Tiffs

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 3: Lake Quinsigamond Reservation Documents
 Subseries 1: Conrad Hobbs Correspondence
 Continued

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.11	February 17 th , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Crompton and Knowles Loom Works President C.H. Hutchins.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.12	February 19 th , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Wm. Barclay Parsons.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.13	February 21 st , 1910—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Homer Gage, M.D.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.14	March 29 th , 1911—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Worcester Mayor James Logan.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.15	October 2 nd , 1911—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Rufus Bennett Fowler.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.16	October 9 th , 1911—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Rufus Bennett Fowler.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.17	October 14 th , 1911—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Rufus Bennett Fowler.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.18	October 16 th , 1911—Letter to Rufus Bennett Fowler from Arthur A. Shurtleff. Carbon copy.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.19	November 13 th , 1911—Letter to Arthur A. Shurtleff, unsigned. Carbon copy.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.20	November 13 th , 1911—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Rufus Bennett Fowler.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.21	November 17 th , 1911—Letter to Rufus Bennett Fowler from Arthur A. Shurtleff. Carbon copy.

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 3: Lake Quinsigamond Reservation Documents
 Subseries 1: Conrad Hobbs Correspondence
 Continued

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.22	November 17 th , 1911—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Arthur A. Shurtleff.
1	5	2014.FIA.01.3.1.23	November 17 th , 1911—Letter to Conrad Hobbs from Rufus Bennett Fowler.

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 3: Lake Quinsigamond Reservation Documents
 Subseries 2: Lake Quinsigamond Commission Documents
 2014.FIA.01

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	6	2014.FIA.01.3.2.1	undated—"Lake Quinsigamond Redeemed." 17 page document outlining the reasons that the state should provide funding for the reservation project. Carbon copy.
1	6	2014.FIA.01.3.2.2A-C	undated—Lake Quinsigamond Commissioners recommendations. Carbon copy.

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
 Series 3: Lake Quinsigamond Reservation Documents
 Subseries 3: Oversize Maps
 2014.FIA.01

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
SPR OVS		2014.FIA.01.3.3.1	undated—Map of Lake Quinsigamond. Pencil drawing. 18x23.75 inches.
SPR OVS		2014.FIA.01.3.3.2	January 1912—Map of Lake Quinsigamond. Lake Quinsigamond Commission District Boundary Line. 26.75x40.75 inches.

Lake Quinsigamond Collection
Series 4: Stephen C. Earle Lake Park Statue Proposal
2014.FIA.01

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
SPR OVS		2014.FIA.01.4.1.1-1A	May 15 th , 1889— Letter to Martin Green from Stephen C. Earle. Envelope with letter. Original accession number: 1974.4.3
SPR OVS		2014.FIA.01.4.1.2	May 15 th , 1889—Pencil drawing of proposed statue base.
SPR OVS		2014.FIA.01.4.1.3	May 15 th , 1889—Illustrated drawing of proposed statue.