



The Hourglass

CCXXVII NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY January 2014
www.Northboroughhistsoc.org NHS1906@verizon.net

January 24, 2014 - Historical Trivia Night - How much do you know about Northborough, Mass., New England and the USA? Join us for a fun night of Trivia with Henry Squillante.

Hosted by Dick and Cindy Atwood

“Add Births: 1 New Hill”

Let us go back to 1935. A newspaper column, captioned as above, probably from the *Worcester Telegram or Gazette*, is dated “Shrewsbury, Oct. 3.” The sub-caption is “Mapping Party Locates a New Elevation Near Northboro,” and the article begins thus: “An unknown hill, overlooked for 50 years by topographical mapping parties, has suddenly ‘bobbed up’ to confound a modern surveying party seeking to sight upon Boston Hill three miles away in Northboro.”

Boston Hill had been known for a long time. What was this “new elevation”? If you look at the map section from the 1983 *Marlborough Geological Survey Map*, you will see it south of the cloverleaf which joins Route 9 (the heavy black line) and Route 20. This cloverleaf is unusual in several respects. Not quite perfect, it is of a type sometimes called a *parclo* (partial cloverleaf). Also, unless you call this section of Route 20 a north-south route, for it is a generally east-west federal highway, this cloverleaf joins routes that do not meet at anything like a wide angle. Seventy-eight years later, there is still no north-south road nearby. Furthermore, it is one of the earliest cloverleaves in the United States. It was made to accommodate what we generally call the “Southwest Cutoff,” constructed only four years earlier as a new section of U.S. Route 20 (numbered in 1926) to facilitate travel to such places as Hartford and New York City. In that respect it has since been superseded by the Massachusetts Turnpike, although it continues to be a well-traveled road.

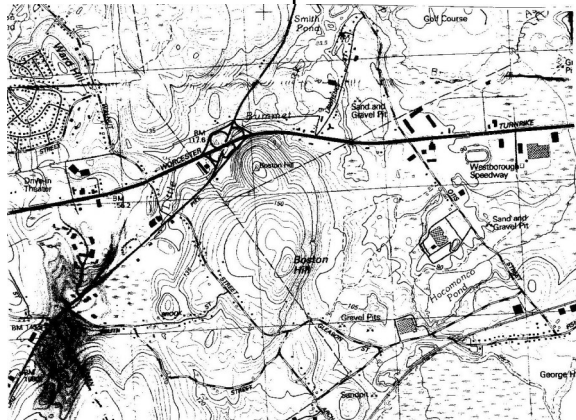
Back now to the new hill. The article refers to “Prospect Hill” in Shrewsbury,

reportedly 580 feet high, while Boston Hill is said to be twenty feet lower. An observer, Lester W. West, discovered “that there is another hill, about 25 feet higher [than Prospect Hill] between the two hills.” To investigate the situation he gathered ten assistants, and they went out, managing “fully 100 miles of automobile travel along winding roads” to establish Boston Hill as the “control station,” the master hill, so to speak. “Surveyors had a little difficulty, as the summit is located in three towns, Westboro, Northboro, and Shrewsbury. They finally picked a high ledge in the Northborough part.”

How many hills are there? The map shows Boston Hill with two peaks, one clearly in Northborough hovering just over the cloverleaf, the other about a half mile away to the south-south-west. It is one hill with two parts, so to speak. The map does not show any Prospect Hill.

For a long time Boston Hill seems to have been a quiet place from which, depending on the extent of tree-cover, you might, having done a little climbing, look down upon a busy intersection. Not until a few years ago, when a YMCA was erected on the hill, did it seem to have any occupant. Now it is being developed residentially and will probably prove popular with the growing population of people *in*, but not exactly *of*, Northborough.

In our archive we have a newspaper with an aerial photograph of the 9-20 intersection when it was new--too large, however, to display handily here. If the photographer had taken a picture of Boston Hill while cruising by, those surveyors perhaps would not have had to motor all over the countryside. If they had had MS-GIS, presumably no one would have had to go any-



place.

Consider these Northborough features: (1)the Mt. Pisgah recreation area, (2) the extensive wildlife area which can be seen from Route 135 while approaching Westborough and extends into Northborough near Juniper Brook Road, (3) the Mary Goodenow grave and Goodenow garrison site, and (4) the scene described above. What do they have in common? They are all at the corners of town, northwest, southeast, northeast, and southwest respectively.

Bob Ellis, Historian

Kent's Current Events

Jan. 25, 1916. A Public Meeting, of Republicans was held in the lower town hall this evening, for the purpose of backing up our Governor, Samuel W. McCall, in his effort to reduce the cost of our State Government. In his inaugural address on the sixth of January, he recommended that some of the state commissions be abolished and that others be united. And he has a bill in the present legislature to this end. There are more than one hundred such commissions in our State, each with its costly retinue of office assistants. This system of commission Government is very inefficient and extremely costly. Gov. McCall is a statesman of proved ability, and he is determined to make an heroic effort to improve the science of government and to reduce the cost. He has started with the commissions.

The meeting this evening was held for the purpose of letting our representatives and senators to the Legislature know that the Republicans of Northborough are in sympathy with the Governor's effort. George A. Brigham was made chairman of the meeting and Clarence E. Buckley, secretary.

Mr. Brigham in opening the meeting read a paragraph from the Governor's inaugural in which he referred to the rapidly increasing state debt, the increased cost of our State Government and the inefficiency of our many

commissions. Dr. John L. Coffin made a very lucid address in which he cited many instances on inefficiency which had come under his own personal observation (he having been President of the Board of Trustees for the Westboro State Hospital for many years).

I made an address in which I called attention to the fact that in Mr. McCall. Massachusetts has a Governor who is a statesman; and that when such an official as he undertakes to do a big thing for the State he ought to have the support of every patriotic citizen, and especially those of his own party.

One or two others spoke a few words, and finally the secretary read a resolution which the Republican Town Committee had drawn up. This resolution calls upon our representatives and senators in the legislature to support the Governor in this matter. The resolution was signed by those present.

**Director's Meeting
January 14, 2014
7:30 PM
Northborough Historical Society
Building**

**Membership
Northborough Historical Society**
**Membership Dues:
Regular \$15.00; Student and Seniors
(65 and over) \$10.00; Family \$35.00;
and Life \$250.00.**
Dues should be sent to
Judy Bissett
300 Ball St.
Northborough, MA 01532
Checks should be made out to the
Northborough Historical Society
**Red square on your label indicates
that it is time to renew your membership.**



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