

CHAPTER 6

HISTORICAL AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Shutesbury's historical resources are "heirlooms" entrusted to current day care by preceding generations. Many of Shutesbury's natural scenic features are the result of historic human events and activities. Together these irreplaceable historical and natural features provide a scenic backdrop that enhances the quality of everyday life in Shutesbury. The purpose of this chapter is to promote an appreciation of the wealth of Shutesbury's historical and scenic resources, which will ensure their continued protection.

What follows is a limited summary of Shutesbury's vast historical and scenic resources to give the reader a flavor of close to 300 years of documented history, preceded by thousands of undocumented years, and of countless hours of scenic hiking and exploring. A comprehensive written history that would similarly document Shutesbury's recent history to follow Louis Everet's 1879 treatment of Shutesbury's early history in the History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts is one important recommendation noted in this chapter.

Subsequent to the July 1998 start of the development of a Master Plan for the Town of Shutesbury, the Historical Commission has been actively involved in the identification and protection of historical resources. Two major projects that spawned subsequent preservation activities are:

1. *The Community Documentation Plan*. This plan was drafted during winter 2000/2001 by William F. Carroll, CA, consulting archivist for the Massachusetts Historic Resources Advisory Board (MHRAB) Community Heritage Grant, with the cooperation of municipal officials and representatives, participating non-profit organizations, and with the collaboration and assistance of the Records Review Grant Committee members. Shutesbury resident Carrie Stone directed the effort. The project mission was to ensure the collection and preservation of records and materials that document all aspects of daily life in the Town of Shutesbury, to provide access to such records and materials, and to raise awareness of and appreciation for the heritage of the Town of Shutesbury.
2. The *Shutesbury Historic Resources Survey* prepared in 2001-2002, by Margaret Hepler. Margaret reviewed the existing Massachusetts Historical Commission forms, updated the Shutesbury Historical Commission inventory, and created a complete and accurate inventory of the town's most important architecture, cultural landscapes, structures, and other visible aboveground historical features.

The Final Report of the Shutesbury Historic Resources Survey 2001-2002, written by Margaret Hepler lists fourteen individual properties and two area properties as potential candidates for the National Register of Historic Places. The Historical Commission will advise and support property owners who want to have such designation placed on their properties. The Commission will explore securing registration for appropriate historical

town owned properties including the Town Common, with the listed historical resource preservation partners.

This chapter was prepared under the guidance of the Shutesbury Historical Commission, the Master Plan Committee, the Town Administrator and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) Planning Department. Other resources include:

- Archaeological resources information, provided by Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Archaeologist Thomas Mahlstedt, was revised and adapted for the Shutesbury Master Plan by DCR Planner and Shutesbury resident Leslie Luchonok, and the revision reviewed by Professor Emerita of Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Dina Dincauze.
- Surveys conducted in preparation for writing this chapter include:
 1. The 2000-2001 Master Plan Survey completed by the residents and property owners of Shutesbury.
 2. The June 2001 *Community Documentation Plan* written by William Carroll, Certified Archivist.
 3. The August 2002 *Shutesbury Historic Resources Survey*, completed by independent preservation consultant Margaret Hepler.
- A 2002 graduate student project undertaken by Alex Ganiaris and Andrea Morris of the Conway School of Landscape Design entitled the Town Center Plan was commissioned by the Master Plan Committee to provide various perspectives on the preservation of Shutesbury's historic town center.
- The Goal and Objectives of this chapter, based on the 2000-2001 Master Plan survey, were compiled by William Labich, FRCOG Land Use Program Manager and approved by the Shutesbury Master Plan Committee.

Goal and Objectives

Goal:

- Identify and protect historical and scenic resources including buildings, sites, and landscapes.

Objectives:

- Review the existing **Massachusetts Historical Commission forms** and the updated Shutesbury Historic Commission inventory to determine if any actions are still needed to create a complete and accurate inventory of all historical buildings, sites, foundation holes, important stonewalls, and landscapes.

In 2001-2002, the *Shutesbury Historic Resources Survey* surveyed eighty-six individual property forms and four area forms. These include 125 buildings, seven cemetery-associated resources and twenty-nine structures, landscapes and objects.

The town's many mill sites, stone chambers of undetermined origin, hearthstones of "Hearthstone Hill" and other archaeological sites may be subjects for a future survey. This will be balanced with the risks of vandalism imposed on irreplaceable archaeological resources after their publication. A guiding principle of the Shutesbury Historical Commission is that historical treasures are "heirlooms" entrusted to our care by the generations preceding us. Shutesbury has treasures few other towns have the opportunity to preserve, and is dedicated to their protection.

- Consider adopting steps such as implementing a **demolition delay by-law** to support the protection of significant historical structures in Town.

The Shutesbury Historical Commission uses the guiding principal of not imposing on private property owners but believes that the Commission should advise and support property owners who want to act on their own. The Commission will collaborate with the municipal groups listed in the resources section, to develop a position on a demolition delay by-law for town-owned property.

- Identify and pursue **federal and state grants** in support of historical resource protection especially for the old Town Hall.

The Shutesbury Historical Commission is unanimous in its position that the objectives of the Master Plan should be met with local resources and not with state or federal grants—which can introduce outside requirements or control. The founding mission of the Friends of the Historical Commission is to support the preservation of the Old Town Hall.

- **Identify, document, and protect significant historical and scenic landscapes** especially remaining agricultural and community development landscapes.

This will be balanced with the risks of vandalism imposed on irreplaceable archaeological resources once locations have been published. A guiding principal of the Shutesbury Historical Commission is that Shutesbury's historical treasures are "heirlooms" entrusted to our care by the generations preceding us. Shutesbury has treasures few other towns have the opportunity to preserve, and the Historical Commission is dedicated to their protection.

- Develop a **policy for use of the Town Common, Spear Memorial Library, and the Old Town Hall**, which respects the traditional uses of these buildings while at the same time, providing access for all town residents to these popular community resources.

The Conway School of Landscape Design study presents multiple preservation possibilities. The Shutesbury Historical Commission will collaborate with the previously listed, town historical resource preservation partners in development of such policy.

- Adopt **local scenic road designation** for Shutesbury’s most scenic roads.

The Historical Commission will work with the Planning Board and other historical resource preservation partners regarding scenic roads, including the protection of trees and stonewalls.

- Explore the feasibility of National Historic designation for the Shutesbury Town Common.

Historical and Natural Scenic Features of Shutesbury

Shutesbury is a small, hill town situated in southeastern Franklin County along the high drainage divide between the Connecticut and Swift River basins. Most of the town is above 1,000 feet in elevation, with the town center at 1,225 feet above sea level. The highest elevation is 1,305 feet at “Meetinghouse Hill,” so-called in the July 1756 Proprietors meeting record, two miles north of the town center. The lowest elevation is around 400 feet, near Pratts Corner in the southwestern part of the town. The town contains twenty-six square miles of territory.¹

The Shutesbury Town Common, lying on the crown of the ridge, is a largely open space from which views could once be had on clear days as far west as Mt. Greylock, as far east as Mt. Wachusett, and as far north as Mt. Haystack. Early twentieth century photographs show how dramatic those views were before a number of surrounding view-blocking plantings and woods grew in height and breadth.²

In the northwest corner of Shutesbury, Lake Wyola, a 125-acre dammed pond is the center of a thriving summer cottage community that is increasingly a year-round residential village. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was a millpond called Lock's Pond that supplied a series of mills on the outflow stream, Sawmill River, which flows into Leverett one quarter mile west of the lake.³ The current dam, built in 1888, commands a 125-acre body of water and offers a scenic gateway to Lake Wyola for travelers from the west. A view, not soon to be forgotten, is that of the full moon rising over the lake as seen from that town-owned dam.

On a hilltop in northeast Shutesbury, about one mile east of Lake Wyola, stone features from the nineteenth century-Mt. Mineral Springs Hotel today form part of the landscape of Temenos, an active center for meditation and retreat. The site, in a remote forest-covered part of Shutesbury, is accessed via an unpaved road (Horse Hill Road) which winds uphill from Mt. Mineral Road through ledge studded slopes to a small level clearing near the top of the hill. Here a small pond, cottages, and stonework from the era of the resort surround small

¹ Louis H. Everts, *History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts*, Vol. II (1879) p. 757.

² Margaret Hepler, “Final Report of the Shutesbury Historic Resources Survey” 2001-2002.

³ *Ibid.*

mineral spring pools. A large weathered ledge displays graffiti also from nineteenth century activity.⁴

Other stone features associated with the site include a three-foot high by two and a half-foot wide exposed stone with an enigmatic carving of a figure in a bell-shaped frame, on top of Mt. Mineral, and an underground stone chamber at the mountain base. These suggest an earlier, undocumented history for the site.

A primitive woodland trail from the Temenos cabin complex leads the hiker to a west-facing ledge out-cropping. From that out-cropping, one has a clear-day background view of Mount Greylock above a close-up panorama of the Ames pond and bog. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) holds a Conservation Restriction on a 140-acre area that includes the Ames pond, bog and surrounding land, site of the late 19th and early 20th century Ames Sawmill.

In the southern end of Shutesbury, Baker Reservoir, dammed in the 1890s, is a pond covering about four acres surrounded by marshland and woods. Currently ungated, the dam opening releases pond water into a culvert under the road, which then flows into a small brook on the north side of Baker Rd. The small brook becomes one of the tributaries of Baker Brook, which flows under West Pelham Rd to the site of the former Baker sawmill. Albert Baker, of 7 Baker Rd, was a member of the third and last Baker generation to run the sawmill located West of West Pelham Rd,⁵ buying the sawmill at the public auction of his father's John J. Baker's estate in 1878, and selling it to Henry Adams of Amherst in 1905. As viewed from Baker Rd, the Baker Reservoir transitions into a swamp at its south end with much wetland vegetation growing in the water.

Just east of Baker Reservoir, on land owned by the Sirius Community, a series of hearthstone shaped stone structures are scattered across a hillside. Future research may link them to an early 19th century survey referencing "Hearthstone Hill." Currently lost amidst a forest, it is thought that these structures may once have graced an open west-facing slope.

Atkins Reservoir, in the southwest corner of Shutesbury replaces the Amherst Water Company's 1900 Atkins Pond source of water for North Amherst. A 1930 Tighe and Bond survey prepared for the Amherst Water Company and housed in the Shutesbury Assessors' oversized "black book" identifies private lands taken to create the larger reservoir. At full capacity, the 64-acre reservoir contains 295,000,000 gallons of water. At low capacity, the pre-1930 location of Cushman Road with flanking stonewalls is visible along the southeast side of the reservoir. At high and low capacity, today Atkins Reservoir provides a scenic view of water, shores and waterfowl for travelers of both January Hills and Cushman Roads.

The state-owned Quabbin watershed dominates Shutesbury's eastern border. On April 28, 1938 at 12:01 AM, the four towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott were unincorporated to create the Quabbin Reservoir. A large portion of Shutesbury's most fertile farmland in the valley of the West Branch of the Swift River was sacrificed for Boston's

⁴ Margaret Hepler, "Final Report of the Shutesbury Historic Resources Survey" 2001-2002.

⁵ Ibid.

historic watershed. Currently valued for scenic hiking down historical woodland roads the watershed area was once the home of many prominent town officials including Benjamin Winter, Selectman for eight years and Representative to the General Court, George A. Berry, Selectman for five years and Town Clerk for two years, Harrison Hamilton, Town Clerk and Selectman for three years, H.C. Winter, Selectman for four years and Jesse and Jonas Winter, each with Select Board terms. The stone walls and foundations, the giant sugar maples and crippled old fruit trees, and the still flowering lilies and lilacs, suggest the relative prosperity of the specific property owners listed on the 1871 Beers Atlas (Appendix G -I) to present day hikers.

The 2000-2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan contains a complete Inventory of Shutesbury's "Scenic Resources and Unique Environments." (Appendix G-II)

Archaeological Resources

State of Knowledge

In reviewing the archaeological data of the Quabbin Watershed, within which a portion of Shutesbury lies, one is impressed first with the number of prehistoric sites, and secondly with the poor quality of the data concerning the formation processes. Unfortunately most of the sites in the former Swift River Valley and along its tributaries have been disturbed in one way or another, so there is little substantive information regarding prehistoric occupation in the area.

Analysis of artifacts from prehistoric sites in the greater Quabbin area reveals a pattern of multiple, recurrent occupation. Few sites have yielded artifacts from a single cultural/temporal period. Instead, artifacts from several periods have typically been recovered from sites. This suggests that some particularly well-sited locations were occupied, or otherwise utilized, more than once. Recurrent, though intermittent, occupation of a single site, sometimes over a period of several thousand years, appears to have been the prevalent pattern of prehistoric site development in this region.

Small groups, probably based on kinship, would have found the uplands most attractive for short-term occupation. Settlement is likely to have occurred on virtually any elevated, level and well drained surface that was located immediately adjacent to sources of fresh water, including the headwaters of ephemeral streams, springs, and small wetlands and ponds. Rock shelters and other natural overhangs, and locations with southerly exposures would also have been utilized.

Archaeological resources are fragile and non-renewable. Once destroyed they are gone forever; they cannot be re-grown, rebuilt, repaired or otherwise brought back to health like many of our natural systems. Similar to endangered and threatened species of flora and fauna, the fragility of these resources places a value on them that is difficult to calculate.

Currently, the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has records for over seventy prehistoric sites on the state-owned Quabbin Watershed Reservation. Although Quabbin Watershed Reservation includes only a small portion of the town Shutesbury, it nevertheless

provides meaningful context and suggests the archaeological potential for this area. While informative, this figure is artificially low. Although the MHC's records are the single most complete archaeological data bank in the state, they represent but a small fraction of the actual number of sites that are known to vocational archaeologists and collectors.

Prehistoric Overview

Existing archaeological evidence derived from MHC records of the Quabbin Watershed Reservation suggests that Paleo-Indian hunters and gatherers, the first human inhabitants of the New World, reached the Swift River drainage sometime between 9,500 to 12,000 years ago. Approximately 9,500 years ago climatic warming responsible for melting the last glacier created an environment in southern New England that supported a mixed pine-hardwood forest. Archaeological sites further indicate that human occupation of the area continued during the *Early Archaic period* (ca. 9,500 to 8,000 years ago).

During the *Middle Archaic period* (ca. 8,000 to 6,000 years ago) climatic and biotic changes continued and the mixed deciduous forests of southern New England were becoming established. Significantly, the present migratory patterns of many fish and birds are believed to have become established at this time (Dincauze; 1974). During spring, those rivers, streams and ponds, which were utilized by anadromous fish for spawning would have been particularly important for fishing, and the former Swift River, and its East and West Branches seemed to have played a major role in this important subsistence activity. Small groups, comprised primarily of extended families, are likely to have traveled considerable distances to camp adjacent to falls and rapids where they could easily trap and spear the salmon, herring, shad and alewives that were on their spawning runs. This subsistence strategy persisted throughout prehistory. Archaeological sites indicate evidence of Native American occupation of the Quabbin region during this *Middle Archaic period*.

Many sites within the Quabbin Watershed have yielded diagnostic *Late Archaic period* (ca. 6,000 to 3,000 years ago) materials. The marked increase in site frequencies and densities is consistent with findings throughout most of southern New England, and may document a population increase during this period. Each of the three traditions - the Laurentian, Susquehanna and Small Stemmed Traditions - is well represented in the archaeological record of local sites. Terminal Archaic activity (ca. 3,000 - 2,500 years ago) is also suggested at archaeological sites.

During the *Early, Middle and Late Woodland periods* (3,000 - 450 years ago) Native Americans continued to occupy the Swift River drainage. Regionally, horticulture was introduced during the Late Woodland and small gardens may have been planted in clearings located on the fertile alluvial terraces next to the Swift River and its larger tributaries.

Native American Settlement at the Beginning of the Colonial Period

According to The Major Tribes of New England ca.1635 map (Appendix G IIIa), at the time of colonial settlement, the Pocumtucks and Nipmucs inhabited the area of Shutesbury.⁴ According to Shutesbury – Historical Notes (from the Booklet published September 6, 1937), “Perhaps the earliest record of Shutesbury lands is in an Indian deed. This conveyance ‘unto Major Jon Pynchon of Springfield’ was dated December 5, 1658 and signed by ‘Umpanchla alias Womscom,’ ‘Quonquont alias Wompshaw,’ and ‘Chickwolopp alias Wowahillow —ye sachems of Nolwotogg.’ It included parts of the present towns of Shutesbury, Amherst, Belchertown, Pelham and Hadley ‘being neare about nine miles in length from ye south part to ye North part, And all within ye Compass from Quenecticot River Eastward Nine miles out into ye Woods’.”

Historical Sites

In addition to prehistoric archaeological sites, Quabbin watershed contains a wealth of historic archaeological sites. Since 1736, colonists have been drawn to the Swift River Valley by its water resources for manufacturing purposes and the valley's rich alluvial soils.

By 1822, Prescott, Enfield, Dana and Greenwich had a combined population of 3,000 people and they were incorporated as towns. Over the ensuing century, these communities prospered but retained their small size and rural characteristics.

The Swift River Act of 1927 appropriated funding to build the Reservoir. The lands within the four Swift River communities were appraised and purchased by the Commonwealth as plans for the Quabbin Reservoir were finalized. With additional land from adjacent towns, the state acquired a total of 80,433 acres by 1938. During this time, 650 houses and 450 structures were removed from the valley. Many of the superstructures of these buildings were relocated to other communities, and some had their cellar holes filled, leaving little or no trace of their existence. The filling was especially prevalent in Prescott. However, the foundations from farmsteads and mills in the other communities were often left intact. Also scattered across the landscape is a maze of stone walls, farm roads, wells and other cisterns, and refuse piles that further document the historical land use of the Swift Valley. A historical site inventory performed by the former Metropolitan District Commission from 1994 to 1998 identified thirty-one historical archaeological sites just in the portion of Shutesbury that lies within the Quabbin Watershed Reservation. These remnants of the Swift River Valley’s historical past represent a valuable cultural resource.

Due to popular interest in archaeological sites in other parts of Shutesbury, in 1979 the University of Massachusetts-Amherst Archaeological Field School systematically explored Shutesbury’s major above ground and underground sites, to answer the basic question, “How could the structures and other material remains illuminate understanding of past life in New England, historical or prehistoric?” The conclusion, written by University of Northern Iowa’s

⁴ Vaughan, Alden T. New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians 1620 – 1675. W.W. Norton & Company, N.Y. 1979.

John R. Cole and published in the fall 1982 issue of *Man In The Northeast* was that “No evidence was found to suggest that structures preceded historical settlement.”

Early Settlement In Shutesbury

In about the year 1733, ninety-five persons, a majority of whom resided in Lancaster, constructed a road, wide enough for a cart to pass, from that town to the Connecticut River, and upon the plea that their private enterprise, effected at considerable cost, had resulted in great public benefit in shortening the distance from certain towns in Hampshire County to Boston, they joined in a petition to the General Court asking for an appropriation of lands to recompense them for their outlay. On December 11, 1734, the House of Representatives ordered "that the petition be granted and the petitioners allowed and empowered by a surveyor and chainman, on oath, to survey and lay out a tract of the unappropriated lands of this province of the contents of six miles square"⁶ (Appendix G IIIb). The tract of land was named Roadtown.

On May 8, 1781, a large northern tract of Roadtown was annexed and joined with a portion of Ervingshire to become the new town of Wendell (Appendix G IV). A smaller eastern tract of land was broken off on February 20, 1824 to become a part of New Salem (Appendix G V). Additional historical maps were surveyed in 1795 (Appendix G VI) and again in 1830 (Appendix G VII).

On May 13, 1735, the Proprietors of "Roadtown" held their first meeting in Lancaster. A committee was appointed to lay out the tract in lots to be apportioned to the proprietors, no one whom, however, was to draw his lot until he had paid into the common treasury five pounds ten shillings for past and future charges (Appendix G VIII).

In the assignment of lots, a tract of 500 acres lying south of the road from Lancaster to Sunderland was reserved for use of the then Governor, Andrew Belcher. This tract was known as "the governor's farm," and out of it the governor deeded four acres adjoining the road to the inhabitants of Roadtown "for the building of the meeting-house and schoolhouse, and for a burying-place and training-field, forever."⁷ This is the former site of the Shutesbury Centre School and the site of the current Town Hall.

Many mills and small manufacturing establishments were located on various streams including:

- The first sawmill built soon after 1737 on Roaring Brook.
- The first corn mill built on what is now Atherton Brook, by Benjamin Harris about 1745, a millstone from which, discovered during the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir, was dedicated as part of the Town Common World War Memorial on May 31, 1937.
- Another gristmill was built about 1754 at Locks Pond.

⁶ Louis Everts, History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts, Vol. .II (1879) p. 757.

⁷ Roadtown Proprietors Records 1735 – 1763.

In 1855, there were about fifteen sawmills in operation. There were numerous boot and shoe shops, Crossman's rake shop and Haskins' gold pen shop were all in operation at one time. The Adams-Fitts sawmill at Pratt Corner operated continuously for over 150 years and was the last water-powered mill to cease operation, a casualty of the development of Atkins Reservoir. Remnants of these endeavors remain to be enjoyed by the casual hiker. Some have been documented with photos and measurements.

A 1931 microfilm inventory from the "Corbin Collection," housed at the Special Collections room at the Jones Library in Amherst, lists the following Shutesbury cemeteries:

1. The Old Cemetery
2. The West Cemetery or Town Cemetery
3. Stetson Burying Ground
4. Pratt Corner burying ground (no entries)
5. Hamilton burying ground
6. Lock's Pond cemetery

The handwritten information includes helpful historical information as well as epitaphs such as the following from the grave of Lydia Clark, wife of Capt. Nathaniel Clark, who died January 15th, 1816 in the 74th year of her age:

*"The sweet remembrance of the Just
Shall flourish when they sleep in dust."*

The epitaph of Chs. W. Williams, killed by the "wreckless" carelessness of his FELLOW SOLDIER while engaged in a show fight on parade, was killed Sept. 16, 1845 Æ 22:

*A lovely youth beloved by all
By old and young, by great and small.
By rich and poor, by high and low
By everyone that did him know.*

Due to copyright concerns, the Jones Library cannot allow the entire record of town cemeteries to be printed from the microfilm for local use in Shutesbury.

Cemetery Commissioner from 1952 to 1985, Oscar Norell wrote the following chronology of town cemeteries for the February 1, 1986 *Roadtown Grapevine* {with additional factual information in brackets]:

"The first burial ground, the Center Cemetery, was established shortly after the town was settled and was located where the Town Hall now stands. It was a part of the four acres which was known as "the Governor's Farm," deeded to the town by the Governor. This was used until the late 1700s.

In 1796, the town purchased one acre of land to be known as the West Cemetery. Other parcels were added on in 1858, 1895, and two in 1954.

[In accordance with the an act of the Legislature of 1937, which was accepted by a vote of the Town Feb. 7, 1938, graves of about twenty persons buried in the old Centre Cemetery were opened and remains transferred to that portion of the cemetery reserved for a burial ground.] In 1949, the remains from the Centre Cemetery were moved to the West Cemetery in order to make room for consecutive new school buildings. Most of these remains and monuments are located on the east end of West Cemetery near Leverett Road. The oldest known grave marker is that of Aholiab Wilder, 1759. [The Aholiab Wilder marker was evidently broken off at some point. The top is housed in the Town Hall with Historical Commission records, with the approval of descendants' of Aholiab.]

In 1858, the town bought a small piece of land, 12 by 20 feet in area, on which to build a hearse house. The hearse house is still standing [on the roadside at the north end of the cemetery]. On the north side of Leverett Road, directly across from the cemetery is the West Cemetery tomb bought from William Crossman for \$50 in 1880. The Luther Henry Tomb Yard was a private cemetery acquired by the town in 1954.

Other cemeteries in town are the Pratt Corner Cemetery, located in the Southwest corner of town, which was purchased from Mr. Wheelock in 1823 and the Locks Village Cemetery located near the north end of Locks Pond Road on the west side and purchased in 1808.

The first meetinghouse was built about 1740, just south of the current Town Common approximately where Cooleyville Road runs today, and a church organized on October 5, 1742. The present church building on the Town Common was dedicated January 1, 1828; the first Congregational church (now privately owned) was built in 1836; the Methodist church at Locks Village was built in 1851; and a “new” Congregational church, built in 1884 to sit northwest of the church currently gracing the Town Common, burned on May 19, 1911 when it was struck by lightning.⁸

The historical nature of the Town Common invites tranquility and contemplation to those who stop by. It is a welcoming site to weary commuters returning home at the end of the day. It provides an open area, accessible to the public, for stargazing and offers the lingering essence of pink and purple sunrises (still felt, but mostly obliterated with neighboring trees) to the observant commuter heading off to another busy day. Its fragile future was well documented in the Town Center Study undertaken by the Conway School of Landscape Design in 2002.

Municipal Records

Unique primary source records document the people of Shutesbury and the municipal history from 1735 to the present, and have permanent and enduring value to the local and regional history and genealogy. Of particular interest are records of earmarks from the 18th century, and records of municipal actions during the Civil War.

⁸ Shutesbury 1761 – 1961: Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Settlement of the Town, 1961.

Municipal records in Shutesbury are stored in several locations. Most active administrative records are stored in the Town Hall office or storage areas. The Town Hall, built as a school in 1950, was gradually converted to municipal office space in the 1970s.

Most inactive municipal government records from the 1735 Roadtown Proprietors records to recent records are stored in the vault and storage areas in the Old Town Hall along with some 500 linear feet of historical publications and artifacts of the town's historical heritage. The Old Town Hall was built in 1829. It is Shutesbury's oldest municipal building.

Textbooks from the 19th and early 20th centuries, along with assorted artifacts and other documents, are stored in the old West Schoolhouse. Fire Department records and Highway department records are stored in their separate buildings.

Environmental, security, and space utilization needs for the various buildings in which records are stored are treated separately in the Long Range Historical Records Strategy Plan developed by William Carroll, Certified Archivist.

A companion plan to the Long Range Historical Records Strategy Plan, entitled the Community Documentation Plan, also developed by William Carroll is a practical guide for a town to follow to ensure that important historical records of daily life in the community are preserved and cataloged for the use of present and future generations. Its mission is "To ensure the collection and preservation of records and materials, which document all aspects of daily life in the Town of Shutesbury, Massachusetts; to provide access to such records and materials; to raise awareness of and appreciation for the heritage of the Town of Shutesbury." The long-term goals include "development of a framework within which the documentation of Shutesbury's historical heritage will be preserved and made accessible, and an increase in public awareness of and appreciation for Shutesbury's unique history."

Historical Preservation Resource Groups

Board of Library Trustees, established in 1936.

Friends of the Shutesbury Historical Commission, Inc. established in 2000 by members of the Historical Commission and the Old Town Hall Sub-Committee of the Town Buildings Committee, with a founding mission of preserving the 1829 Town Hall.

Friends of the Spear Memorial Library, Inc. established in 1997.

Lake Wyola Advisory Committee, established in 1990.

Town Buildings Committee, created by the 1988 Annual Town Meeting.

Old Town Hall Sub-Committee, established in 1999.

Shutesbury Board of Selectmen, established in 1761.

Shutesbury Cemetery Commission, established in 1912.

Shutesbury Historical Commission, created by the 1974 Annual Town Meeting.

Shutesbury Memorial Day Committee, establishment date unknown.

Shutesbury Recreation and Open Space Committee, established by combination of the pre-existing Recreation Committee and the Open Space Committee in 2002.

Shutesbury Planning Board, established in 1964.

Shutesbury Town Center Committee, established in July 2002.

Shutesbury Town Clerk, first clerk elected in 1761 upon the incorporation of the Town of Shutesbury.

The above listed local historical preservation resources can be reached c/o Town of Shutesbury P.O. Box 276, Shutesbury, MA 01072.

Private organizations in Shutesbury considered as historical and scenic resources preservation partners include: the **Lake Wyola Association, Morse Hill Recreation Center, the Shutesbury Community Church, the Sirius Community, and Temenos.**

In addition to local Shutesbury resources, members of the Shutesbury Historical Commission consider planning, open space, recreation and historical preservation organizations of such neighboring towns as Amherst, Greenfield, Hadley, Leverett, Montague, Pelham, New Salem (including the Swift River Valley Historical Commission) Wendell and other local communities, to be potentially important partners in historical preservation efforts.

In collaboration with local historical resource preservation partners, the Shutesbury Historical Commission welcomes and considers all suggestions for preservation activities that will honor the unique historical, scenic and rural character of Shutesbury that residents and property owners made special effort to identify as high priorities in the 2001 Master Plan survey. The guiding principle of the Historical Commission is that Shutesbury's historical treasures are "heirlooms" entrusted to current day care by preceding generations.

Recommendations

The Shutesbury Historical Commission, in collaboration with the listed historical preservation partners will continue to identify and protect historical and scenic resources including buildings, sites, and landscapes through:

- Review and follow-up on the documentation and preservation goals presented in the 2000/2001 William Carroll *Community Documentation Plan* and the companion *Long-Range Historical Records Strategic Plan*.

- Review and follow-up on the recommendations of the August 2002 *Shutesbury Historic Resources Survey* by independent preservation consultant Margaret Hepler.
- Collaboration with local and neighboring preservation groups as listed.
- Seek permanent town ownership of the Old Town Hall, the West Schoolhouse, the Town Hall, and the Spear Memorial Building.
- Promotion of a historic curatorship of the Lodge at Lake Wyola. Ensure preservation of the associated barn by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.
- Compilation of Shutesbury's late 19th and complete 20th century history into a book.
- Collection and preservation of Shutesbury's historic artifacts and documents.
- Collection and preservation of oral interviews.
- Purchase of Franklin County reel #36 of the Corbin Collection that contains a 1931 inventory of cemeteries of Shutesbury.
- Continue to offer public education and activities that promote long-term appreciation and protection of Shutesbury's historical resources.