

Directions: Read the following story and answer the question about it on the next page.

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At Quabbin Reservoir

Memories under the reflections

By Robert B. Streeter

WENDELL

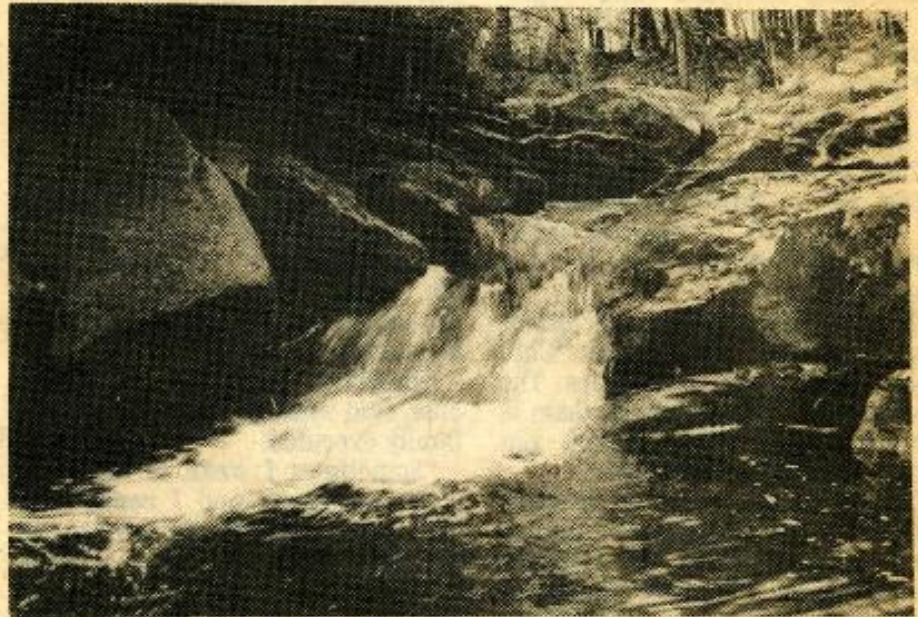
WE HAVE come to this end of a dirt road in New Salem, Mass. A sturdy iron gate suggests we drive no further, and we do not. We have come to walk. A sign reading "Gate 22, Quabbin Reservoir" hangs from the gate, a rather cold and austere greeting to a land alive with Indian summer and the memory of four towns.

At midnight on April 27, 1938, the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott officially ceased to exist in the valley of the Swift River. A legislative act of 1926 provided for the taking of the Swift River and the 40 square miles of the four towns, all with the intent of creating Quabbin Reservoir to increase the Boston metropolitan water supply. By 1939 the valley was ready to receive the water.

Gone were approximately 2,500 people and 650 homes. The dead were also gone; almost 8,000 bodies in cemeteries were moved. Buildings were demolished or removed to other towns, 1,040 structures in all. The valley was totally cleared, including the trees.

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Amy and I walk around Gate 22 and head down a winding dirt road. It is too warm for late October, the temperature just doesn't match the aura of the woods, the naked trees and the silence. Stone walls line the road in many places, outlining homesteads of 50 years ago. We see an occasional cellar hole, an unpruned apple tree, some large rock maples. I picture the hanging buckets of sap, the steamy breath of horses pulling a wagon.



Robert B. Streeter

The road crosses a stream which flows into Quabbin. There is a magnetism to the sound of running water. We walk down to it. The ravine is steep which takes us to the stream. Huge hemlocks keep the hillside intact. The air is cool and moist, rocks are covered with moss. I hear only the rushing water.

We follow the stream for a short distance, stopping at a swimming hole. I photograph the falls which fill the pool, thinking the unthinkable. It is too cold, but two months ago I would strip in a minute. Amy finds the remains of an early 1900s shoe. Others have stripped here.

Out the ravine and back down the road. We assume the old road once led down into the valley, part of it now submerged. A curve to the right and a glister is seen through the trees. We follow the road to the

water, and the road is swallowed. I sit on a rock facing the hills and water of Quabbin.

* * * *

I cannot love or hate Quabbin. I watch its beauty with an ambivalence I rarely feel in a wild setting. Loons call from these waters, eagles ride the wind. It is an enclave of open space and silence in a region where both are at a premium. But for those who know its history, a sojourn in Quabbin can be painful, its beauty terribly artificial. There are memories beneath the reflections, memories of four communities working the land, memories flooded by a city which refused to recognize the limits of its own natural resources.

My visits to Quabbin are short. There are memories here.

Question

In the article you just read, Robert B. Streeter says, "I cannot love or hate Quabbin. I watch its beauty with an ambivalence..."

Read the following definition for the word ambivalence and, on a separate piece of paper, write a brief paragraph telling what you think the author means when he says he is ambivalent about the Quabbin Reservoir. Why might he both love and hate the Quabbin Reservoir?

ambivalence am·biv·a·lence *noun*

Having two opposite attitudes or feelings at the same time, such as love and hate, toward a person, object, or idea.

[Click here](#) to go to a Web page where you can click on the speaker icon to hear the word spoken. 