

Natural & Human History of the Wilbur Property, Northampton, MA

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Summary

The acquisition of the 53-acre Wilbur property fills in another important piece of the complicated jigsaw puzzle of parcels that form the Broad Brook-Fitzgerald Lake Greenway, the City's largest (>900 acres) and most visited conservation area. Bounded by Boggy Meadow Road on the northeast, this land is surrounded on its northern half by protected open space. To the south, the future use of the abutting parcels is mostly known: the Lathrop Community is fully built out and the cemetery land's use is designated (Figure 1).

Most of the property is forested, rocky uplands, much of which was timbered during a 2018 shelterwood cut that created multiple small openings that are now succeeding into thickets. In addition, the property includes a wooded stream (Pine Brook), two areas with perched wetlands, and part of a beaver pond and shallow marsh. Collectively, these habitats support a higher-than-expected number of plant species, which in turn increase its animal diversity. In addition, the land's location, not far from the Connecticut River, heightens its value for migratory birds and the property's position within a larger block of protected land makes it of greater value to wildlife with larger home ranges, e.g. bear, moose, bobcat and forest specialists, like wood thrushes and scarlet tanagers.

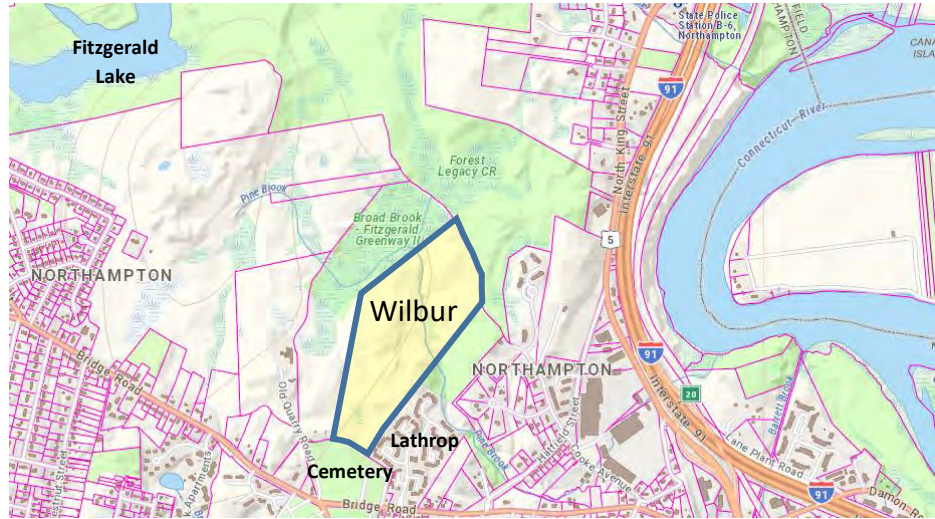


Figure 1. The Wilbur property is located not far from the Connecticut River and walking distance to Fitzgerald Lake.



A small cove of open water and shallow marsh on the Wilbur property. This area connects to a much larger marsh, which can be seen in the distance and is readily visible from Boggy Meadow Road. A beaver dam was installed at this beaver dam to regulate the water level. From here, Pine Brook flows almost due south, through the Lathrop property, under Cooke Avenue and then through a culvert below the Big Y parking lot, Route 91 and the RR tracks before daylighting near the horseshoe bend in the Connecticut River.

Although the property lies outside of any Priority Habitat for Rare Species (dark green), it does include Critical Supporting Landscape (light green with hatching and dark blue) (Figure 3).

Furthermore, this area provides habitat for many species in decline and also appears to include suitable habitat for the endangered Bush's Sedge (*Carex bushii*).

When it comes to management concerns, most of the property is free of invasive plants. Of the

invasive species present, the most widespread is Asiatic bittersweet. Other invasive plants on the site include, in order of frequency, multiflora rose, garlic mustard, Japanese barberry, winged euonymus, Morrow's honeysuckle, tree-of-heaven, autumn olive, Amur corktree, glossy buckthorn, Norway maple, winter creeper, myrtle and ragged robin. The highest concentrations of invasive plants occur along Boggy Meadow Road and in the property's southeast corner, near the boundary between the Lathrop property and the cemetery land owned by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Springfield. Other occurrences are isolated and show up along the stream corridor, in the clearings created through the recent timber operation and on some of the rocky knobs.

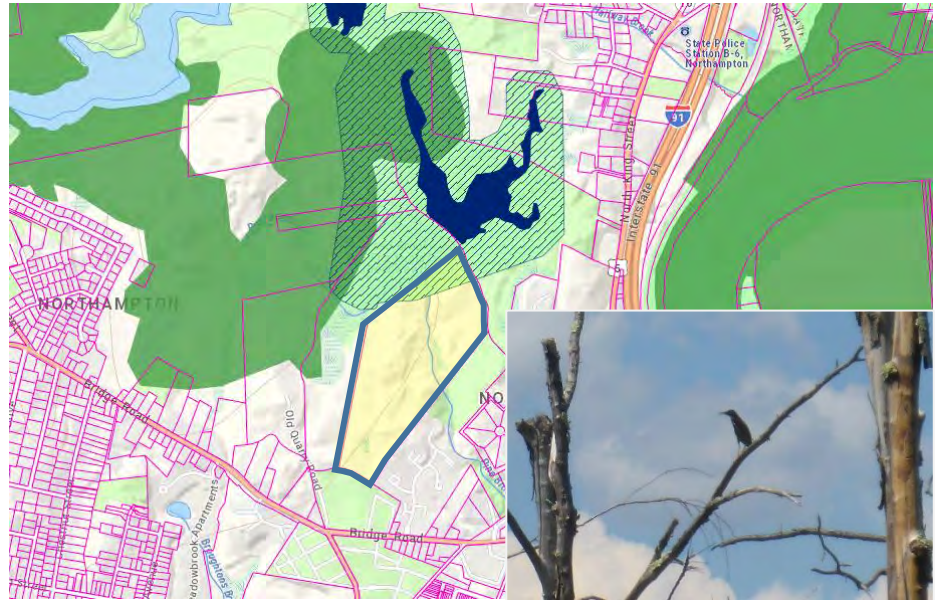


Figure 3. The north end of the Wilbur property (yellow) includes Critical Natural Landscape Habitat and supports species in decline, like the green heron in the photo.



Above, one of many young tree-of-heaven saplings (*Ailanthus altissima*) found growing in the sunny clearings that were created during the 2018 timber harvest. In the foreground is another non-native, one of two stems of woodland figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*) found on the property. Left, a single Amur corktree (*Phellodendron amurense*) was found growing near the beaver pond. Both tree-of-heaven and corktree should be controlled.

From a recreational standpoint, the protection of the property has multiple benefits. It ensures that (1) Boggy Meadow Road will retain its sole status as a trail (vs trail + private driveway access), (2) incorporates a short foot trail with great views of the beaver pond, and (3) has the capacity for additional trails. New trails could connect to the adjacent Lathrop property, via a new public access point near the cemetery, and/or by improving the old skid roads created during the 2018 timber harvest, with connections to Boggy Meadow Road, the cemetery or Lathrop property.

A final aspect of significance is this parcel’s ownership history. At this point, the ownership records have been traced back to the mid-1800s and past owners include some of Northampton’s most noteworthy residents.

The remainder of this report includes more detailed descriptions of the property’s geology, ownership history, and habitat characteristics.



One of two great blue heron nests observed in the large beaver pond on abutting City-owned conservation land. In 1993 this area was in private ownership and was a dense red maple swamp. Back in the 1800s it had been cleared and was a “boggy meadow”. Times change!



Above, Boggy Meadow Road, which borders the property, is one of the primary access points into the Broad Brook-Fitzgerald Lake Greenway and links to miles of walking trails.

Below, an unofficial foot path from Boggy Meadow Road heads on to the Wilbur property. Located next to the beaver pond, the trail goes over rocky knobs and includes excellent vistas and vantage points. The trail ends after ¼ mile, but could easily be extended.



Bedrock Geology

The 53-acres that form the Wilbur property are underlain by 420-360 million year old igneous rock known as monzodiorite (green in image), which is also regularly exposed at the surface as bedrock knobs and small outcrops. Composed of a mix of feldspars, biotite, hornblende and a small amount of quartz, it formed as a pluton, a giant mass of magma that intruded older metamorphic rock and then slowly cooled and crystallized deep below the earth's surface. Over the last ~400 million years, this once-deeply buried rock formation has been exposed through erosion and weathering.

In addition to monzodiorite, portions of the Wilbur parcel are covered with reddish sands and gravels, probably glacially derived from an extensive and much younger sedimentary rock formation (only ~200 mya) found to the north, east and south of the property. The evidence for this is the presence of red, iron-stained sands, which can be found along the lower sections of Pine Brook, not far from the border with the Lathrop property. The red sandstone, clearly exposed in outcrops along Rt. 91 just north of the Deerfield River, was deposited when the giant supercontinent of Pangaea split apart and caused the incipient rift valley that underlies and predates the Connecticut River Valley.

The composition of the two bedrock types and their weathered derivatives are significantly different and help explain the suite of plants they support. The soils derived from the monzodiorite, for instance, are more acidic than those formed from weathered sandstone.

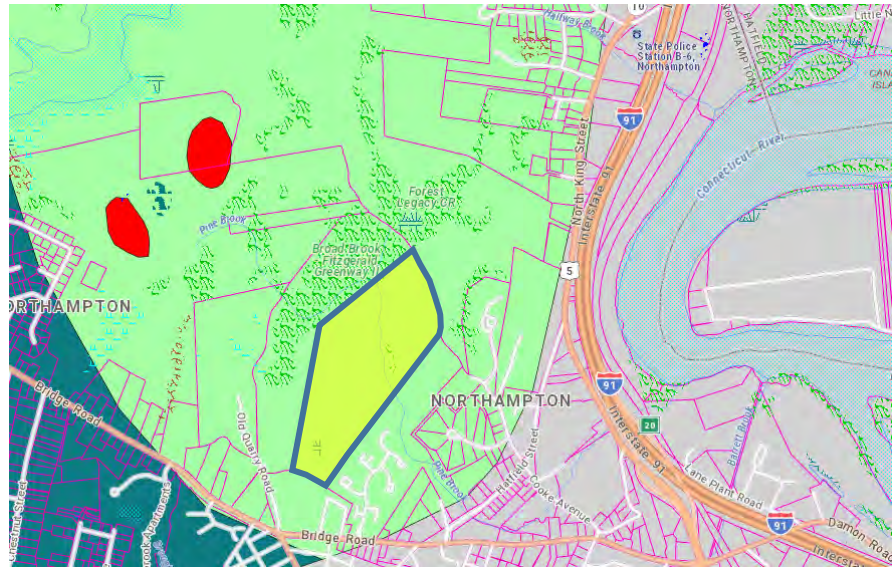


Figure 4. This image shows the approximate location of the contact zone between older igneous rock (green) and younger sedimentary rock (gray).



Above, exposures of local bedrock as well as large boulders carried south by the glacier are common on the property. They provide some variation to the topography, where elevations range from 220-264 feet above sea level. Below, reddish sands along the stream show that sedimentary sandstone is nearby.



Continental Glaciation, Glacial Lake Hitchcock & Current Surficial Geology

If we could go back in time and visit Northampton 20,000 years ago, we'd find ourselves in an entirely unrecognizable landscape—all of the features we know would be hidden below a mile or more of ice.

About 18,000 years ago, the climate changed and the continental glacier began melting. As the ice retreated, some of the topographic features that are now familiar landmarks like Mount Tom and Mount Holyoke were revealed. As the glacier melted, the unconsolidated boulders, cobbles, gravels and sands that had been carried and pushed along were left behind. This layer of unsorted material is known as till and, as shown on the graphic above, all of the Wilbur site is covered with a thin veneer of till (green) and most of it has bedrock close to or exposed at the surface (horizontal red hatching).

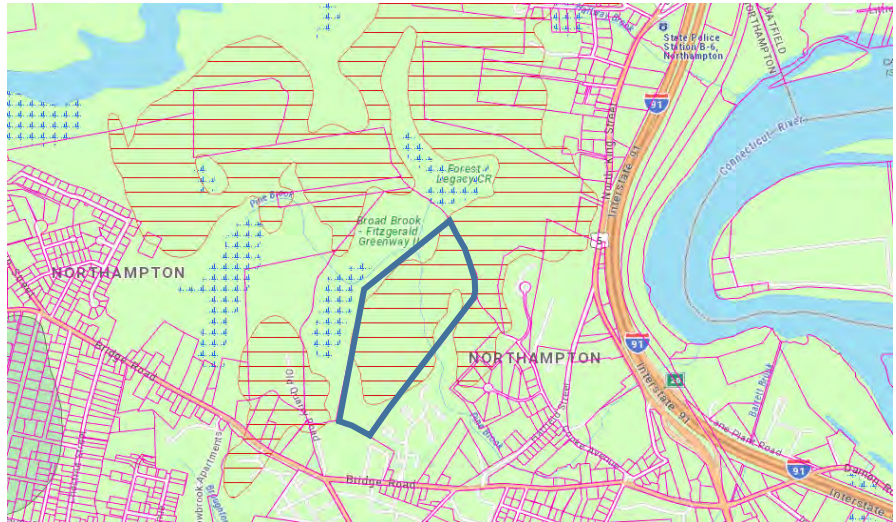


Figure 5. Till deposits (green) and bedrock exposures (horizontal red hatching) cover the Wilbur property.

As the glacier continued to melt, a dam of glacial debris formed in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, and around 15,500 years ago, a long, narrow glacial lake known as Glacial Lake Hitchcock filled the Connecticut River Valley, extending from Rocky Hill, CT to White River Junction, VT. At the lake's maximum height, the Wilbur property would have been covered by 40 to 50 feet of water (aquamarine color). After the dam in Rocky Hill let go, the lake dropped to a lower level (darker blue).

Glacial Lake Hitchcock lasted about 3,000 years, and since its disappearance ~ 10,000 years ago, the thin veneer of silts, clays and sands that were deposited in the uplands have washed into the low-lying depressions. This helped create the perched wetlands found at this site and, due to the presence of clays, led to pockets with more fertile conditions. This glacial history is the reason why this site includes wetlands with swamp white oak and richer soils where sugar maple, ironwood, hornbeam, silvery spleenwort and miterwort also occur.

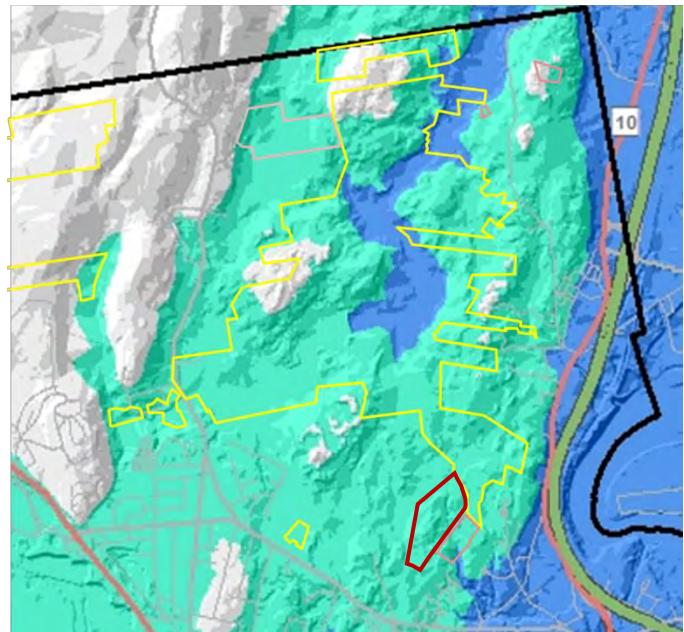


Figure 6. The location of the Wilbur property (outlined in red) and the rest of the Fitzgerald Lake (yellow) during the stages of Glacial Lake Hitchcock.

Had Glacial Lake Hitchcock and its accompanying fine sediments not covered this area, the flora of this site would be much less diverse. These richer pockets, however, make up only a very small fraction of the site. According to the NRCS soils map, 98% of the site is characterized by droughty, acidic, nutrient-poor Charlton-Rock Outcrop-Hollis soils, with 8-15% slopes. The remaining soils are either loamy sand (near the cemetery and part of a former glacial delta) or the more recent silt-loam deposits in wetland areas. (Appendix 1-Soils).

Topography

The topography on the site includes mostly level, rocky terrain, interrupted by bedrock knobs and exposures and occasional valleys. A shallow, virtually level isolated wetland occurs near the cemetery, while a larger perched wetland drains into the Pine Brook, which cuts across the property. The stream is bounded by rocky outcrops in some areas, but also flattens and meanders across a narrow alluvial floodplain that supports richer soils and a more diverse flora. The stream bottom includes a mix of sand and rounded cobbles, good hiding places for Northern Two-lined Salamanders.

Ownership History

The ownership history has been traced to 1847, when the land was acquired by Samuel Hill, Samuel Parsons and Joseph Conant for \$2,500 from Julia and Sarah Clarke (Book 119, p. 498). At that time, the land was described as bounded by Slough Hill Road (long since abandoned and no longer visible), Boggy Meadow Road (which led to a farm and pasture that we now know as Cooke’s pasture) and Millstone Mountain Road (now known as Quarry Road). The sisters had received the land through the will of their father, Christopher Clarke. Sometime after this, Hill, Parsons and Conant gave the land to another Northampton resident, Harrison Otis Apthorp. When, how or why this happened remains unknown.

By the late 1830s, Apthorp had moved to Northampton and in 1841, he married Helen Maria Clarke, the older sister of Julia and Sarah (mentioned above) and Christopher Clarke (the 2nd) who, among his many accomplishments was instrumental in booking Jenny Lind in Northampton, protecting Pulaski Park, securing the funds for Memorial Hall, advocating for forests and trees, and helping with the preservation of Mount Tom, Mount Sugarloaf and Mount Holyoke (among others). Helen Maria was also the niece of John Clarke, who founded the Clarke School for the Deaf.

Apthorp was a graduate of Bowdoin, an elocutionist, and French teacher. He did everything from sell apples and pianos to rent houses and buy and sell land. He donated funds to the Civil War effort and was among the City’s highest taxpayers.

FOR SALE,

A BOUT eighty acres of good land, on the west side of Mill River, adjoining the Bensonville Manufacturing Company’s Estate, suitably proportioned for a farm. The Thompson dwelling house, barns, sheds, &c. will be sold therewith if desired.

Also about twenty acres of valuable meadow land, lying north of the above tract, between the highways and adjoining the premises of the Northampton Water Cure Establishment.

Also, twenty Building Lots on the hill north of Bensonville Factory, pleasantly and conveniently situated, for the residence of persons engaged in business at Bensonville, Hopeville and the Northampton Association. Tenements are much wanted for the accommodation of the increased an increasing manufacturing and mechanical business, at these places.

Also, about forty five acres of land on the west side of Slough hill road, (so called) a little north of Northampton village, being conveniently located for village pasture.

The above named property will be sold at moderate prices and a credit given for one year for a part, or the whole of the purchase money, if the responsibility of the purchaser is satisfactory.

For further particulars enquire of S. L. HILL at the Northampton Association.

Northampton, March 15, 1847. L30

Ten Dollars Reward !

BOOKS MISSING !

THE owner of the volumes named below will gladly pay a reward proportionate to the value of the books, to any one who will restore them to his Library.

The Greek Testament,
 Latin do,
 Liber Facietiarum (in English),
 Homer’s Odyssey (in English),
 Cambridge Mechanics,
 Pitt’s Virgil, also the third volume of
 Brumoy’s Greek Theatre (London Edition.)

Ten dollars will be paid for the last named book. (Pasted within the cover is a crest inscribed John Apthorp.) H. O. APTHORP.

Northampton, Nov. 22. 16

In 1866, three years after H.O. Apthorp's death, his eldest son, the executor of his will, sold the "Wilbur" land to Thomas Munroe Shepherd for the sum of ... one dollar! Again, how or why this transaction occurred like this is a mystery. Perhaps it was used as collateral for an outstanding debt that the elder Apthorp had with Shepherd? The answer, at this point, is unknown.

Like Apthorp, Shepherd was part of a prominent family, with long ties to Northampton. He and his wife, Edith Carpenter Shepherd, lived in his boyhood home at 66 Bridge Street, which is now part of Historic Northampton. Shepherd was a banker by profession, but he was also an accomplished artist. In 1883, he designed the City seal, which is still used today.

After Thomas Shepherd died in 1923, Edith held on to the land. Like her husband, she was keenly interested in local history and thanks to her efforts, Historic Northampton now owns all three houses and barn that form its campus. When Edith died in 1969, the remains of Thomas Shepherd's Trust was used to fund the Historical Society's first paid staff.

In 1975, the bank holding the Trust's remaining assets sold this parcel for \$36,000 to Keith and Ruth Wilbur, both of whom had known Edith and like her, were passionate about local history. According to their daughters (pers.

comm. Jody Kinner and Carol Menke), their parents purchased the land as a place to reconstruct local historic homes that were slated to be demolished. The couple soon realized that the site was not ideally suited for this purpose and decided instead to begin planting trees and use the property as a place for family excursions and picnics. At that time, Keith was also the head of the newly formed Northampton Historical Commission and Ruth was the director of the Northampton Historical Society. Wilbur, who was a doctor at Cooley Dickinson Hospital and the Smith College Infirmary, authored and illustrated 14 books on local history and medicine, built a dugout canoe, and among his many accomplishments, carved a bust of Jonathan Edwards that traveled the country. In the 1970s, he also played an instrumental role in championing the preservation of Northampton's 19th century buildings. Ruth, meanwhile, established professional standards at the Historical Society, organized the collection, opened the historic houses for tours, and developed an active programming schedule that included a school curriculum.

In 1994, the couple deeded the land to their four children, who have retained it ever since. In 2002 the Wilbur family filed a court case against the Roman Catholic Bishop of Springfield to assert their rights to access the property via the former Slough Hill Road along the cemetery.

1981



Preserving history:
Dr. Keith Wilbur recalls battles he led

By PAUL DUNPHY

During his seven years as chairman of the Northampton Historical Commission, Dr. C. Keith Wilbur was an advocate of architectural preservation in a community that sometimes preferred the modern look.

Notions of putting stainless steel and glass on Main Street largely have given way to thoughts of restoration. But the change did not come without skirmishes between the opposing camps, Wilbur recalled in a recent conversation.

"I was told early on by a banker to basically mind my own business," he recalled the banker telling him: "This is our downtown. We want it modern and none of these ideas of being old-fashioned."

After seven years as chairman of the historic commission, the Northampton physician resigned last month. However, he expects to remain an active member of the board which he had led since it was formed in 1973. Wilbur was succeeded by Jean Kitley as chairman.

Picking up disciples along the way, the historical group under Wilbur's leadership pressed ahead with recommendations to turn back the clock in the downtown area by promoting projects consistent with the 19th-century spirit of the area.

Young entrepreneurs who moved to Northampton during the early 1970s deserve much of the credit for shaping the look of the city, Wilbur said.

"They're the ones who saw the downtown for what it was" and carefully worked to bring out its best features, he said.

While Wilbur speaks with satisfaction about the restoration renaissance, he shakes his head at the setbacks and lost opportunities the commission experienced.

"We had a few failures," he noted.

Setbacks recalled

Among the defects Wilbur recalled was the loss of the "cracker building" — a round brick building near the Masonic Street parking lot once used as a cracker factory and later as a stable.

Talks between the historical commission and the owner of the property, the New England Telephone Co., indicated that the company was interested in seeing the building preserved, said Wilbur.

Acting on that assurance, the commission put together a slide presentation "showing some of the possibilities for the downtown, including the cracker building," Wilbur said.

However, the preservation plans were not to be realized. The day after the first screening of the slide show someone telephoned Wilbur to say that a crew was flattening the old structure with a bulldozer.

"I grabbed my camera and went right down. The guy in the bulldozer didn't want any pictures but I took a few. He was

(Continued on page 9)

"My parents bought the property because my father wanted to save old homes from being torn down. He thought it would be great to move those homes to the property. I think he learned pretty quickly that it would be very costly to do that. But he loved the property so he turned it into a tree farm. I remember helping him plant white pines I think they were. ... It is a beautiful piece of land. We have tried hard to care for it and follow the forestry plan. We still just go for walks there!"

Jody Wilbur Kinner, June 21, 2020 via email.

In 2011, City of Northampton planner Wayne Feiden approached the Wilbur family about selling the land for conservation (pers. comm, Wayne Feiden). The family wasn't interested at the time, but Feiden called "every couple of years" to inquire.

In 2017 a forest cutting plan was prepared and the family had the timber, mostly white pine and oaks, harvested (Figure 7). After the cut was completed in 2018, the family put the land up for sale and in 2020 the four agreed to sell all 53-acres to the City.



Fig. 7. Today the land is currently considered Prime 3 Forest Land.



Although marketed as potential pasturage in 1847, the land has been forested since at least 1958 (photo). Since the Wilbur family purchased the land in 1975, they have managed the forest as a tree farm and for timber. The dashed line is a rough approximation of the property's boundaries. Note that the forested area to the south; today it is open and functioning as a cemetery. Meanwhile much of what's now the beaver pond was then an open pasture.

Photo courtesy: *University of Massachusetts Amherst. Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management. Hampshire County: aerial photograph, July 17, 1958. William P. MacConnell Aerial Photograph Collection (FS 190). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. dpb-2t-11 July 17, 1958.*

Habitat Descriptions

Using the MA Natural Communities Classifications Guide (Swain & Kearsley, 2000), there are four broadly defined natural community types on the property: (1) Mixed Oak Forest; (2) Swamp White Oak “perched” swamp; (3) Red Oak-Sugar Maple Transition Forest, and (4) Shallow Marsh (Figure 8). These boundaries are rough and were generated following a single visit on June 22, 2020.

Mixed Oak Forest (1) covers virtually all of the upland areas, or about 80% of the site. The canopy includes a mix of oak species, most commonly red oak (*Quercus rubra*), black oak (*Q. velutina*), and white oak (*Q. alba*), with lesser amounts of scarlet oak (*Q. coccinea*) and on some of the drier rocky outcrops, chestnut oak (*Q. prinus*). Other hardwoods in the canopy are hickory (*Carya* spp.), red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and black birch (*Betula lenta*). White pine (*Pinus strobus*) is also common, but not nearly as widespread as the oak. Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) occurs infrequently in the uplands, and is concentrated along the lower stream corridor. As expected, it is infested with wooly adelgid.

In the areas where the harvest was light or didn't occur, the understory includes beaked hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*), witch hazel (*Hammamelis virginiana*), maple-leaved viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) and chestnut (*Castanea americana*). The most common herbaceous species are wild sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*), starflower (*Trientalis virginiana*), common wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*), Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*), dewberry (*Rubus* sp.), Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*) and Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus virginiana*). The most common ferns are hay-scented (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*), New York (*Thelypteris novaeboracensis*) and bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*); in wetter spots, sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), interrupted fern (*Osmunda claytoniana*) and cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*) are common.

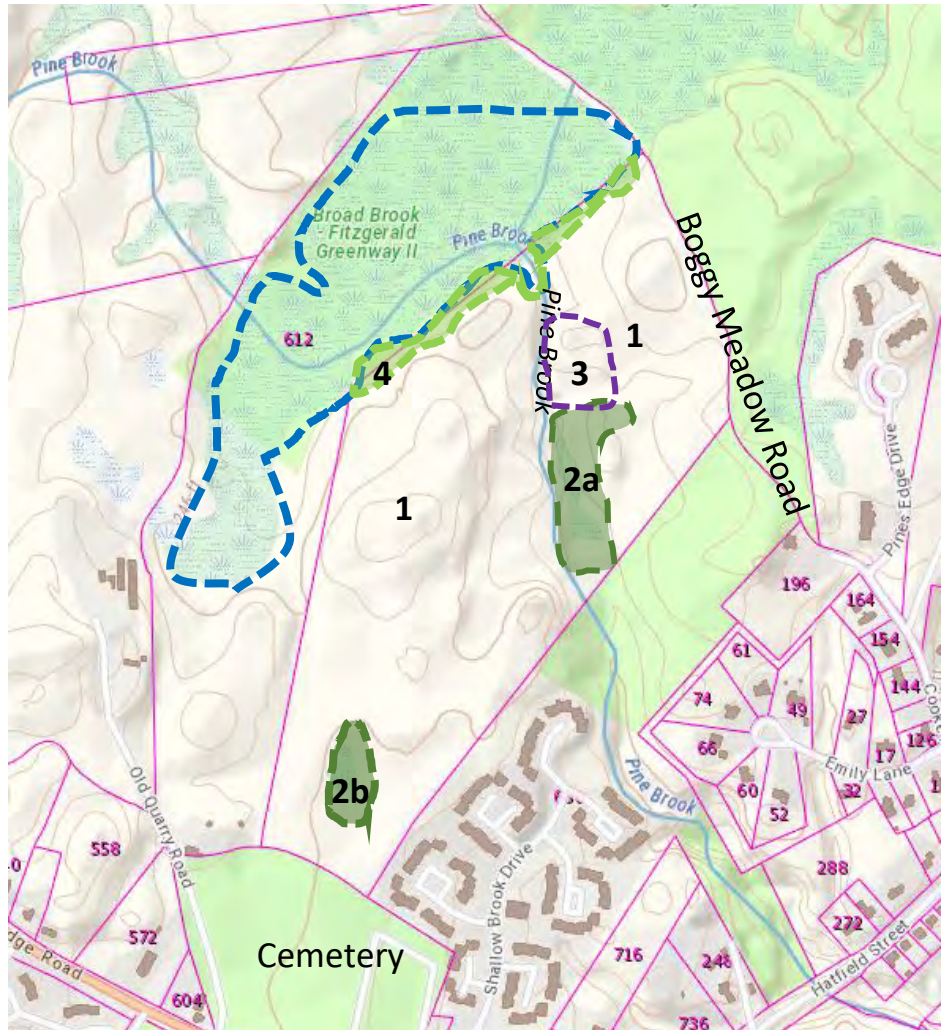


Fig. 7. The property outline, with topography and locations of four natural communities.

Because of the 2018 shelterwood cut, the property now includes frequent openings, especially near the center. Where the disturbance was most intense and the clearings are larger, the landscape is now dominated by hay scented fern, blackberry (*Rubus* sp.), pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*), sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina*) black huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and lots of young black birch. It was in these more disturbed areas where several young saplings of Tree-of-Heaven were (alarmingly) observed; multiflora rose and Japanese barberry were also present. In less disturbed sites, huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*) and blueberries (*Vaccinium pallidum*, *V. angustifolium*) are abundant. Other regularly encountered species include whorled loosestrife (*Lysimachia quadrifolia*), hog peanut (*Amphicarpa bracteata*), Indian cucumber root (*Medeola virginiana*), and in wetter areas, jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) and spotted touch-me-not (*Impatiens capensis*). Asiatic bittersweet can be a pest in these areas.



This Google Earth image of the site from December 2001 shows the uneven distribution of white pine and hemlock across the site.



These images show how varied the look and species composition of the upland forest is, especially in areas where logging recently occurred.



Left to right, Blueberry (*Vaccinium pallidum*) is one of the most common woody plants in the upland areas. (*Center*) Bristly dewberry is common where the soils are partially wet or shaded, and often where there was a disturbance. (*Right*) Mountain laurel occurs on the site, but is not as common as expected.



Left to right, While this property has been forested for decades, the adjacent property- the Boggy Meadow—was cleared and open during the 19th century when its peat was harvested for fuel for the brickworks off North Elm Street. The barbed wire indicates that it was used to pasture animals too. (*Center*) Rock outcrops are common throughout the property. (*Right*) Polypody fern grows in abundance along the slope of a rock exposure.



The new clearings in the property's southeast corner is much more impacted by invasive plants than the rest of the acreage. (*Left*) Asiatic bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) winds over the vegetation. (*Right*) Not far away grows a patch of Japanese meadowsweet (*Spiraea japonica*), which has naturalized in the forest and may be a cast off garden plant from the nearby Lathrop community.

Swamp White Oak “Perched” Wetland (2a and 2b)

In Massachusetts, this natural community type is restricted to the Connecticut River Valley and within Northampton, this community type is known from less than six sites, most of them concentrated in the Broad Brook-Fitzgerald Lake Greenway. These wetlands are underlain by lake bottom clays, overtopped with sandier soils. On the Wilbur site, these wetlands, while relatively small, significantly increase the property’s overall plant diversity.

2a (Figure 7) is a significantly larger and more diverse than 2b and drains to Pine Brook. It supports red maple, swamp white oak, pin oak (*Quercus palustris*), hemlock, shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) and ash (*Fraxinus* sp.) in the canopy. The understory vegetation was dominated by a variety of sedges and grasses, as well as sensitive fern and false nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*); in the shrub layer, winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), arrowwood (*Viburnum recognitum*) and ironwood were common. Other plants of interest found only in this area on the property included woodland horsetail (*Equisetum sylvaticum*) and golden ragwort (*Senecio aureus*).

2b is a smaller, isolated depression that is dominated by broad patches of bare, wet organic soils, plus swaths of sedges, grasses, wool grass, ferns and other herbaceous plants (skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), Virginia creeper, violets (*Viola* spp.), fringed loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata*), jack-in-the pulpit, bittersweet nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*)). The canopy includes black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*), swamp white oak, slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*), and an abundance of red maple and red oak. The shrub layer is dominated by winterberry, arrowwood and high bush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*). This area also had been disturbed and Asiatic bittersweet was common.



Red Oak-Sugar Maple Transition (3)

This community type is associated with the alluvial stream and adjacent perched wetland. It is one of the few sites where plants like sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) can be found. Yellow birch (*Betula lutea*), ironwood, and a variety of herbaceous plants not seen elsewhere on the property occur in this small, richer pocket. Some of the other plants are jumpseed (*Persicaria virginiana*), hellebore (*Veratrum viride*), Virginia creeper, halberd-leaved tearthumb (*Persicaria arifolium*), clearweed (*Pilea pumila*), silvery spleenwort (*Deparia acrostichoides*), crested shield fern (*Dryopteris cristata*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), mad-dog skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*), and a variety of sedges. The shrubs include winterberry, ironwood, as well as less commonly seen species on this property, like speckled alder (*Alnus rugosa*), flowering dogwood (*Benthamedia florida*), and spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). Unfortunately there are also some invasive plants in this corridor, including Japanese barberry, winged Euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*), and garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*.)



These images show the variety of microhabitats along Pine Brook, including seepy drainages, lush alluvial "floodplains", meanders and variations along the stream corridor.



Shallow Marsh and Beaver Impoundment (4)

Sometime around 2014 beavers arrived on Pine Brook and established a dam, which now floods about 20 acres. Most of the flooding is on city-owned conservation land, but about ½ an acre is on the Wilbur property. The beavers' activity transformed the landscape; what was once a red maple swamp is now a broad pond, full of dead red maple trunks. The vegetation along the newly created shorelines varies with light levels and disturbance: some are open, while others are thick with sedges, grasses and other herbaceous species. It is possible that some area within this stretch might be suitable habitat for Bush's sedge, a state-endangered species that was historically found in the vicinity.

On the Wilbur property, the vegetation surrounding the open water is rife with sedges, grasses, cattails (*Typha latifolia*), swamp candles (*Lysimachia terrestris*) goldenrods (*Solidago* spp), asters and rushes. This is also, unfortunately, a few stems of Canada thistle (*Cirsium canadense*) and two corktree saplings that have gotten a toe hold.

The open water portion is covered with water shield (*Brasenia scheberi*), cow lily (*Nuphar* sp.), duckweed (*Lemna* sp) and in a few places, bladderworts (*Utricularia* sp).

This area is a boon for wildlife. During my brief visit I saw wood ducks, great blue herons and Canada geese with young and heard green frogs, bullfrogs, kingfishers, green herons, red-winged blackbirds and more.



Acknowledgments: Thank you to Wayne Feiden for providing supplementary resources and information; to Jody Kinner and Carol Menke, for the information about their parents, Ruth and Keith Wilbur; to Barbara Pelissier for historical research; to Pete Westover for the creation of maps; and to Arthur Haines for the identification of *Scrophularia nodosa*. Andrew Kuether created the map depicting changing levels of glacial Lake Hitchcock. I am grateful to Fred Morrison and Lydia Morrison for comments and edits.

Swain, Patricia C. and Jennifer B. Kearsley. 2000. DRAFT-Classification of Natural Communities in Massachusetts. MA NHESP. Westborough, MA.

University of Massachusetts Amherst. Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management. Hampshire County: aerial photograph, July 17, 1958. William P. MacConnell Aerial Photograph Collection (FS 190). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries

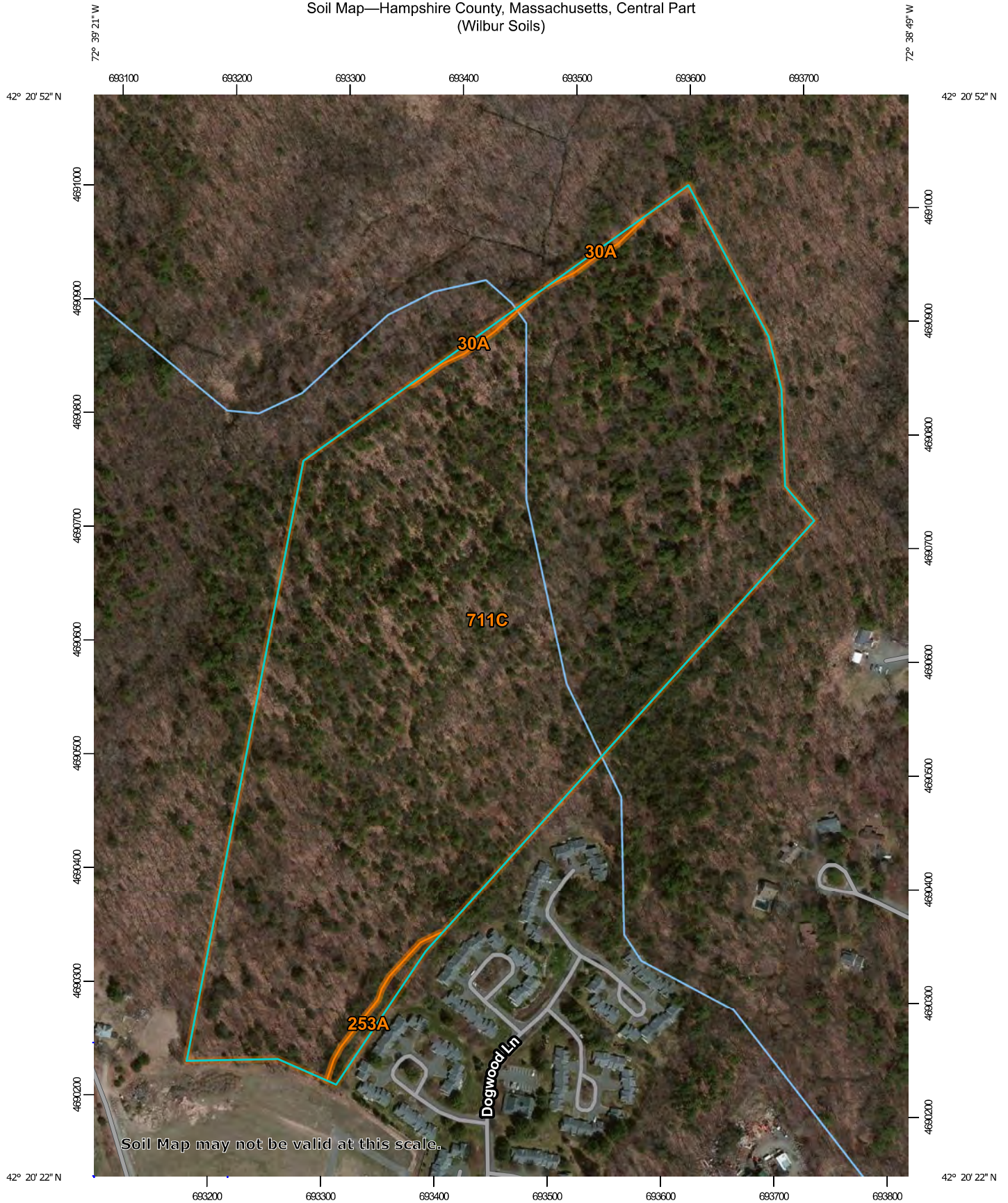


The decaying remains of a stump from an earlier timber harvest, probably 15 or more years ago.

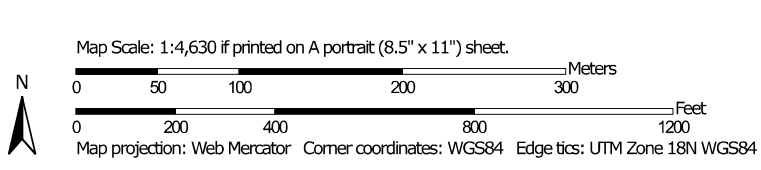


White pine stump from the 2018 cut.

Soil Map—Hampshire County, Massachusetts, Central Part
(Wilbur Soils)







































Soil Map may not be valid at this scale.



Soil Map—Hampshire County, Massachusetts, Central Part
(Wilbur Soils)

MAP LEGEND

Area of Interest (AOI)		 Spoil Area	
	Area of Interest (AOI)	 Stony Spot	
Soils		 Very Stony Spot	
	Soil Map Unit Polygons	 Wet Spot	
	Soil Map Unit Lines	 Other	
	Soil Map Unit Points	 Special Line Features	
Special Point Features		Water Features	
	Blowout	 Streams and Canals	
	Borrow Pit	Transportation	
	Clay Spot	 Rails	
	Closed Depression	 Interstate Highways	
	Gravel Pit	 US Routes	
	Gravelly Spot	 Major Roads	
	Landfill	 Local Roads	
	Lava Flow	Background	
	Marsh or swamp	 Aerial Photography	
	Mine or Quarry		
	Miscellaneous Water		
	Perennial Water		
	Rock Outcrop		
	Saline Spot		
	Sandy Spot		
	Severely Eroded Spot		
	Sinkhole		
	Slide or Slip		
	Sodic Spot		

MAP INFORMATION

The soil surveys that comprise your AOI were mapped at 1:15,800.

Warning: Soil Map may not be valid at this scale.

Enlargement of maps beyond the scale of mapping can cause misunderstanding of the detail of mapping and accuracy of soil line placement. The maps do not show the small areas of contrasting soils that could have been shown at a more detailed scale.

Please rely on the bar scale on each map sheet for map measurements.

Source of Map: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Web Soil Survey URL:
Coordinate System: Web Mercator (EPSG:3857)

Maps from the Web Soil Survey are based on the Web Mercator projection, which preserves direction and shape but distorts distance and area. A projection that preserves area, such as the Albers equal-area conic projection, should be used if more accurate calculations of distance or area are required.

This product is generated from the USDA-NRCS certified data as of the version date(s) listed below.

Soil Survey Area: Hampshire County, Massachusetts, Central Part
Survey Area Data: Version 14, Sep 13, 2019

Soil map units are labeled (as space allows) for map scales 1:50,000 or larger.

Date(s) aerial images were photographed: Mar 28, 2011—Apr 18, 2011

The orthophoto or other base map on which the soil lines were compiled and digitized probably differs from the background imagery displayed on these maps. As a result, some minor shifting of map unit boundaries may be evident.

Map Unit Legend

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
30A	Raynham silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	0.2	0.4%
253A	Hinckley loamy sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	0.5	0.9%
711C	Charlton-Rock outcrop-Hollis complex, sloping	53.4	98.7%
Totals for Area of Interest		54.1	100.0%

1981

Feb. 9, 1981

Preserving history:

Dr. Keith Wilbur recalls battles he led

By PAUL DUNPHY

During his seven years as chairman of the Northampton Historical Commission, Dr. C. Keith Wilbur was an advocate of architectural preservation in a community that sometimes preferred the modern look.

Notions of putting stainless steel and glass on Main Street largely have given way to thoughts of restoration. But the change did not come without skirmishes between the opposing camps, Wilbur recalled in a recent conversation.

"I was told early on by a banker to basically mind my own business." He recalled the banker telling him: "This is our downtown. We want it modern and none of these ideas of being old fashioned."

After seven years as chairman of the historic commission, the Northampton physician resigned last month. However, he expects to remain an active member of the board which he had led since it was formed in 1973. Wilbur was succeeded by Jean Kiteley as chairman.

Picking up disciples along the way, the historical group under Wilbur's leadership pressed ahead with recommendations to turn back the clock in the downtown area by promoting projects consistent with the 19th-century spirit of the area.

Young entrepreneurs who moved to Northampton during the early 1970s deserve much of the credit for shaping the look of the city, Wilbur said.

"They're the ones who saw the downtown for what it was" and carefully worked to bring out its best features, he said.

While Wilbur speaks with satisfaction about the restoration renaissance, he shakes his head at the setbacks and lost opportunities the commission experienced.

"We had a few failures," he noted.

Setbacks recalled

Among the defeats Wilbur recalled was the loss of the "cracker building" — a round brick building near the Masonic Street parking lot once used as a cracker factory and later as a stable.

Talks between the historical commission and the owner of the property, the New England Telephone Co., indicated that the company was interested in seeing the building preserved, said Wilbur.

Acting on that assurance, the commission put together a slide presentation "showing some of the possibilities for the downtown, including the cracker building," Wilbur said.

However, the preservation plans were not to be realized. The day after the first screening of the slide show someone telephoned Wilbur to say that a crew was flattening the old structure with a bulldozer.

"I grabbed my camera and went right down. The guy in the bulldozer didn't want any pictures but I took a few. He was

(Continued on page 9)



DR. C. KEITH WILBUR urged restoration, rather than modernization, in the city during his seven years as chairman of the Northampton Historical Commission. (Photo by Paul Dunphy)

Front page!

— Preserving

(Continued from page 1)

bigger but I was madder," he said, finally able to joke about the incident.

"We were naive," he shrugged, adding that the commission has since learned to mobilize its forces in defense of preservation.

Any attempts to substantially change the outside of the Bay State Gas Company's old roundhouse behind City Hall would be opposed by the commission. Using the property for a restaurant or commercial space makes good sense to the group but "the exterior should not be tampered with," Wilbur said.

Sitting in the antique-filled living room of his large Prospect Street home the other day, Wilbur recounted one of his favorite daydreams.

A plan is taking shape in his active mind for a museum to display the city's history so that visitors would not only see it, but also touch it.

Near the entrance would be an Indian wigwam that children could go in. And in the rest of the room would be a variety of Indian artifacts. From there, visitors would walk into a room filled with articles used by the early white settlers.

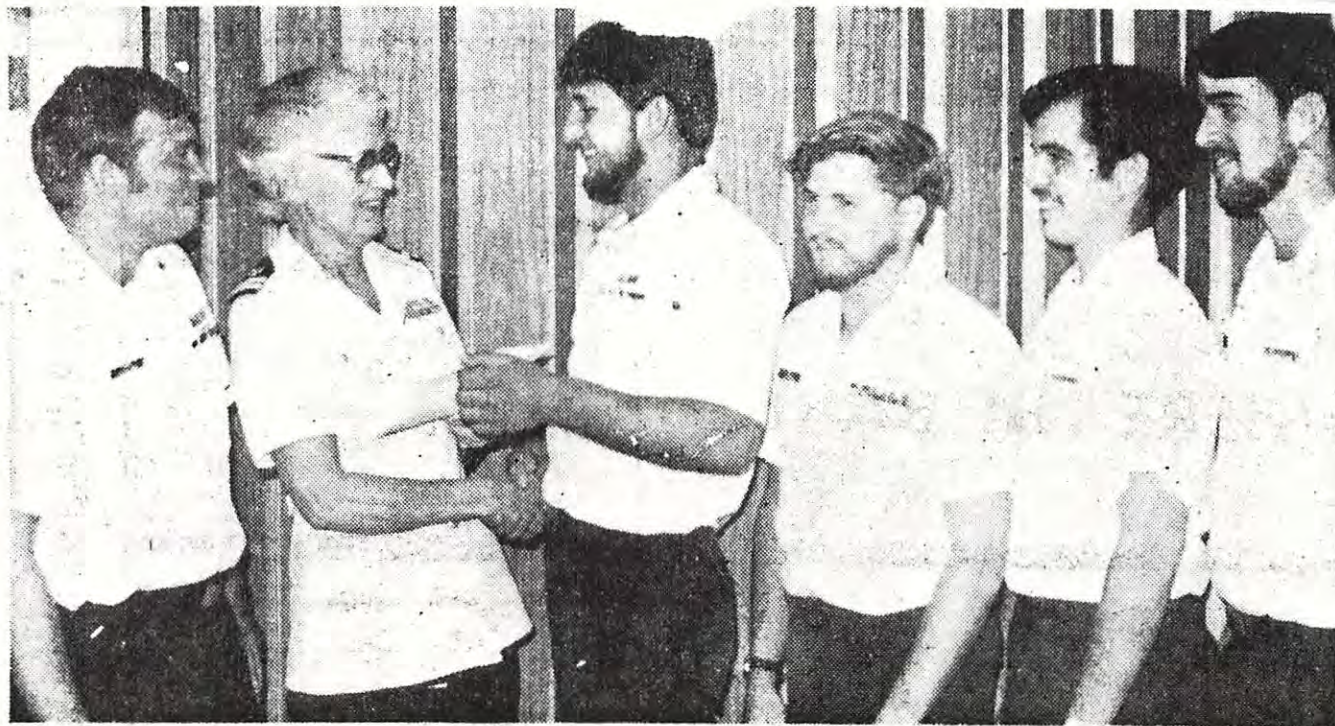
"Every time you'd go around a corner there would be a new surprise. We could really give school kids a first-class history lesson," he mused.

While the plan seems full of promise, it may be difficult to find the right building and finance its renovation, he acknowledged. The project would be run by the Northampton Historical Society, a private group in which Wilbur is also very active.

People frequently confuse the historical commission and the historical society, said Wilbur. He noted that the former is a government board and the latter is a private group.

Membership to the commission is by appointment. Anyone in the city can join the society.

And they should, urges Wilbur. After all, it is their heritage.



Sailing salute

Spring 1981

FOUR UNITED States Coast Guardsmen from the Marathon station recently received sailing and seamanship certificates after completing a 12-session course presented by the Big Pine Key U.S.C.G. Auxiliary Flotilla 13-3. Looking on as flotilla commander Tillie Bates presents a certificate to U.S. Coast Guard Boatswains Mate 3rd Class Christopher Knowles is, from left: Chief Petty Officer David Kinner, Boatswains Mate 2nd Class Robert Welz, Machinery Technician John Catanzaro and Seaman Apprentice Paul Burns.

Ten Dollars Reward !

BOOKS MISSING !

THE owner of the volumes named below will gladly pay a reward proportionate to the value of the books, to any one who will restore them to his Library.

The Greek Testament,

Latin do,

Liber Facetiarum (in English,)

Homer's Odyssey (in English,)

Cambridge Mechanics,

Pitt's Virgil, also the third volume of

Brumoy's Greek Theatre (London Edition.)

Ten dollars will be paid for the last named book. (Pasted within the cover is a crest inscribed John Apthorp.)

H. O. APTHORP.

Northampton, Nov. 22.

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FOR SALE,

ABOUT eighty acres of good land, on the west side of Mill River, adjoining the Bensonville Manufacturing Company's Estate, suitably proportioned to meadow, pasture, tillage and wood land, for a farm.

The Thompson dwelling house, barns, sheds, &c. will be sold therewith if desired.

Also about twenty acres of valuable meadow land, lying north of the above tract, between the highways and adjoining the premises of the Northampton Water Cure Establishment.

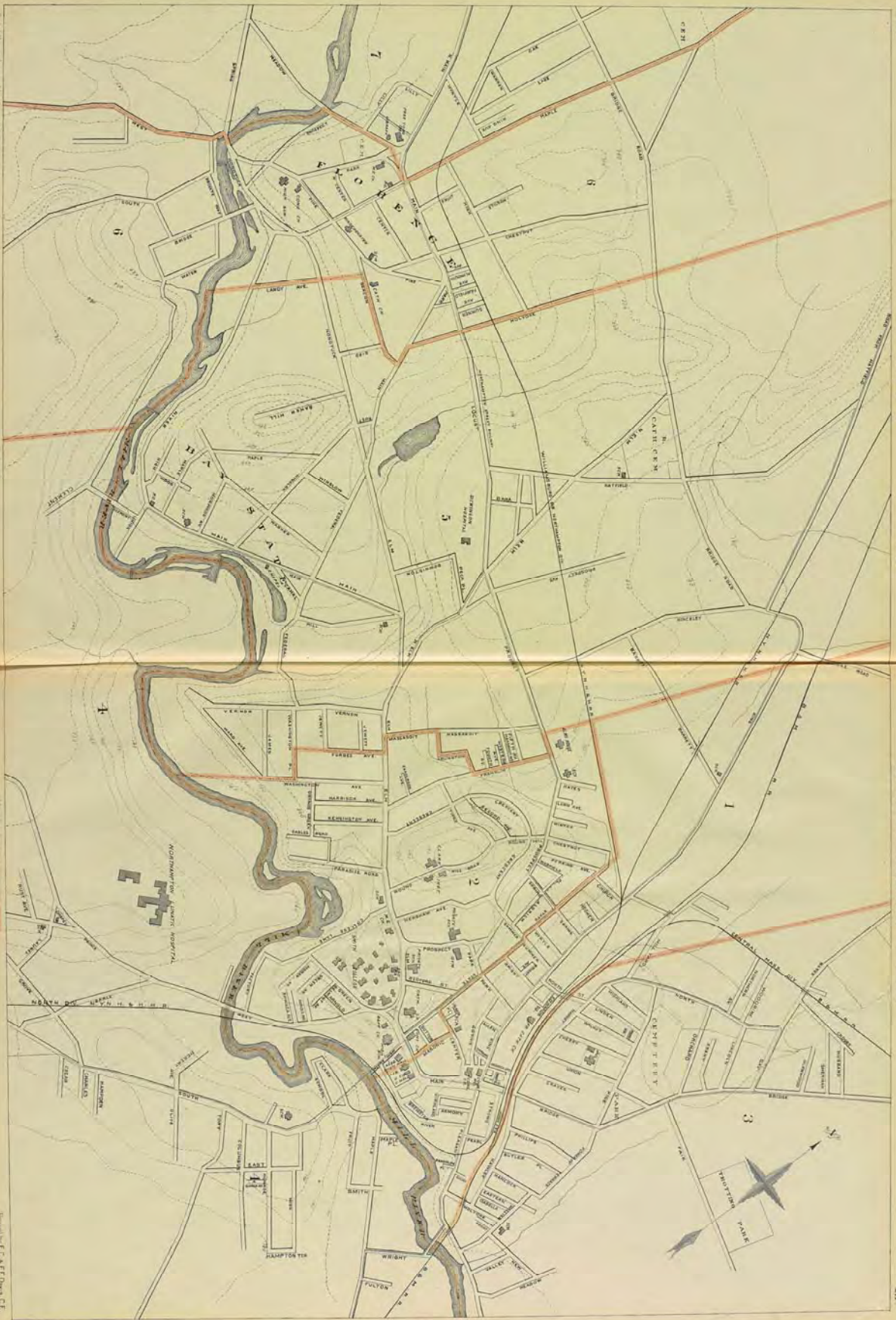
Also, twenty Building Lots on the hill north of Bensonville Factory, pleasantly and conveniently situated, for the residence of persons engaged in business at Bensonville, Hopeville and the Northampton Association. Tenements are much wanted for the accommodation of the increased and increasing manufacturing and mechanical business, at these places.

Also, about forty five acres of land on the west side of Slough hill road, (so called) a little north of Northampton village, being conveniently located for village pasture.

The above named property will be sold at moderate prices and a credit given for one year for a part, or the whole of the purchase money, if the responsibility of the purchaser is satisfactory.

For further particulars enquire of S. L. HILL at the Northampton Association.

Northampton, March 15, 1847.



Copyright 1901 by Geo. W. M. & Co., Boston.

Map of Northampton, Mass., showing the city grid, the Northampton River, and various landmarks. The map is oriented with North at the top and includes a scale bar and a north arrow.

Engraved by F. C. Redwood & Co.

Julia Clark
and
Sarah W. Clark
to
Joseph Conant
Samuel Parsons
and
Samuel L. Hill
Near Bogy Meadow
Northampton

Know all men by these presents, that we Julia Clark,
and Sarah W. Clark both of Northampton, in the County
of Hampshire, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
in consideration of twenty five hundred dollars, paid
by Joseph Conant, Samuel Parsons, and Samuel L.
Hill, all of said Northampton, the receipt whereof
we do hereby acknowledge, do hereby give, grant, bargain,
sell and convey unto the said Joseph, Samuel and
Samuel L. their heirs and assigns, a certain parcel of
situate, in said Northampton near Bogy meadow
is called, beginning for a description at the old highway
leading from Slough Hill to Mill Stone mountain,
thence on the highway south 65° 30' west 25 rods 13 links,
thence north 18° east 51 rods 5 links, thence north 15° 40'
east 19 rods, thence north 27° 15' east 8 rods 23 links,
thence north 49° east 12 rods 10 links, thence north 63°
45' east 32 rods, thence north 60° east 22 rods, thence

north 62° 20' east 13 rods 6 links, thence north 55° 15'
east 11 rods 14 links to the corner of Spencer Clark
fence on the Bogy meadow road; thence following
the road leading from Bogy meadow to Slough
Hill, north 20° 10' east 22 rods 16 links, thence south
15° east 18 rods; thence south 5° 30' west 18 rods to
line of John Clarke and George Cooks land; thence
following the line of said Clarke and Cooks land,
south 43° 30' west to the center of the old highway
leading to Mill Stone mountain, being the same
parcel land set off to said grantors as a portion of
their shares in the division of the estate of their
father Christopher Clarke last spring recorded in
the Probate Office to which reference may be had.
We have and to hold, the beforegranted premises,
with the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging,
to the said Joseph, Samuel and Samuel L. their heirs
and assigns, to their use and behoof forever: and we
do, for ourselves, our heirs, executors, and administrators.

ties, covenant with the said Joseph, Samuel and
Samuel S. their heirs and assigns, that we are
lawfully seized in fee of the foregoing premises,
that they are free of all incumbrances, that we have
good right to sell and convey the same to the
said grantees, and that we will warrant and de-
fend the same premises to the said grantees, Joseph,
Samuel and Samuel S. their heirs and assigns for-
ever, against the lawful claims and demands of all
persons. In witness whereof, we the said Julia and
Sarah W. have hereunto set our hands and seals
this first day of August, in the year of our Lord one
thousand eight hundred and forty seven.

Signed, sealed and
delivered, in presence of }
L. J. Washburn } Julia Clark & Seal
C. P. Huntington } Sarah W. Clark & Seal
Hampshire S. Aug. 7th 1847. Then Julia Clark & Sarah W. per-
sonally appeared and acknowledged the foregoing instrument
to be their free act and deed before me.

C. P. Huntington Justice of the Peace.
Hampshire S. Aug. 10th 1847. 11^o clock, 51 min. A.M. The foregoing
is a true copy of the original, received, recorded & compared, by
Harvey Wickland Register.

John V. Athorp
 Justice
 St. V. Athorp
 To
 Tho. M. Shepard
 Northampton

Know all Men by these Presents, that I, John
 V. Athorp of Boston in the County of Suffolk
 in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Justice
 under the last will of Harrison O. Athorp late
 of Cambridge, in the County of Middlebury and
 Commonwealth aforesaid, deceased, which will
 was duly proved and allowed by the Probate

Court for said County on November 27th 1833
 do by virtue and in execution of the power to
 me given in and by said will, and of
 every other power and authority me hereto
 enabling, and in consideration of the sum of
 One Dollar and other valuable consideration
 dollars to me paid by Thomas M. Shepard
 of Northampton, in the County of Hampshire
 in said Commonwealth the receipt whereof
 is hereby acknowledged hereby grant, bargain,
 sell and convey unto the said Thomas M.
 Shepard, a lot of land situate in said
 Northampton, being the same land as
 described in the deed of the heirs of
 Christopher Clark to Joseph Bennett, Samuel

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Parsons, and Samuel L. Hill, bearing date
 August 7th 1847, and recorded in Hampshire
 Registry of Deeds in Book 119 at Page 491
 and therein described as near Boggy Meadow
 so called, and bounded as follows. Beginning
 at the old highway leading from Slough Hill
 to Millstone Mountain, thence on said high-
 way North 65° 30' West 25 rods, 13 links, thence
 North 18° East 51 rods, 5 links thence North
 15° 40' East 19 rods, thence North 27° 15' East
 8 rods, 23 links; thence North 49° East 18 rods, 10
 links; thence North 63° 45' East 32 rods; thence
 North 60° East twenty two rods; thence North 62°
 20' East 13 rods & 6 links; thence North 55° 15' East

11 rods 14 links to the corner of Spencer Clark's fence on the Boggy Meadow Road: thence following the road leading from Boggy Meadow to Slough Hill South 20° 20' East 22 rods 16 links; thence South 15° East 18 rods; thence South

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5° 30' West 18 rods to line of John Clark and George Cook's land: thence following the line of said Clark and Cook's land South 40° 30' West to the centre of the old highway leading to Millstone Mountain, or however otherwise the same may be now bounded, and described.

To Have and to Hold the above granted premises, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, to the said Thomas M. Shepherd and his heirs and assigns, to their own use and behoof forever. In Witness Whereof I the said John V. Apthorp Trustee as aforesaid hereunto set my hand and seal, this Eighteenth day of May in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty six.

me to 20/20 Perfect Vision Land Records I2 - Google Chrome

secure | masslandrecords.com/Hampshire/ImageViewerEx.aspx

1 of 1



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Signed and sealed in presence of
J. W. Horner } John V. Apthorp Trustee

Commodore of Massachusetts.

Suffolk ss. May 22nd 1886. Then personally appeared the above named John V. Apthorp Trustee and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his free act and deed. Before me

Joseph W. Horner, Justice of the Peace.
Hampshire ss. August 6th 1884. 1: 55 - P.M.

The foregoing is a true copy of the original.

Amey P. Willing Registrar