



## QUABBIN VISITOR CENTER SUGGESTED BOOK LIST

Quabbin: The Accidental Wilderness – Thomas Conuel (1981). \$14.75

Originally published as the annual publication of the Mass Audubon Society, the book provides an excellent overview of Quabbin history, creation of the reservoir and current management of the watershed.

The Lost Towns of the Quabbin Valley – Elizabeth Peirce (2003) \$23.35

Quabbin Valley People and Places – Elizabeth Peirce (2006) \$23.35

Quabbin Valley Life As It Was – Elizabeth Peirce (2014) \$23.35

A photographic trilogy published by the Swift River Valley Historical Society from their archival collection showing various images from the former valley with informational captions.

The Creation of Quabbin Reservoir: The Death of the Swift River Valley – J. R. Greene (1981) \$15.90

The best comprehensive overview of the development of the Boston water system and the subsequent construction of the Quabbin Reservoir. The publication details the politics and legislation associated with the search for clean water.

From Valley To Quabbin: 1938 – 1946 – J. R. Greene (2010) \$15.95

This book is a companion to J. R.'s The Creation of Quabbin Reservoir and picks up the story of the reservoir's construction where the earlier book ends. It traces the final transition of the Swift River Valley from a place where people lived and worked, to a large protected reservoir.

The Day Four Towns Died – J. R. Greene (1985) - \$12.55

Written from the perspective of the residents of the Swift River Valley, the book focuses on the Farewell Ball on April 27, 1938 which effectively marked the end of the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott. Consistent with the language of the Swift River Act in 1927, the towns were disincorporated at the stroke of midnight.

Quabbin Facts and Figures – Friends of Quabbin (1996) \$3.20

This publication is a compilation of statistical information about the Quabbin Reservoir and its watershed. It also includes a chronology of important milestones in history from the perspective of the Swift River Valley and the development of the Boston area water supply system.

Letters From Quabbin - \$16.00

In 1938 the Springfield Union newspaper published a series of 28 articles (although they are numbered 1 – 29, the number 21 is missing from the series) on the history of the Swift River Valley, the people/places/buildings from the valley, the plans to build a large reservoir and the process of construction. Written by Swift River Valley residents and reporters Amy Spink, Mabel Jones and Robert Johnston, the articles appear in their original form with photographs, and a retyped version of the text in an easier to read format.

Someday – Jackie French Koller (2010) \$16.00

A historical novel written from the perspective of Celie, a twelve year old grappling with the rapid transition of the Swift River Valley from the home of her family to a large water supply for Boston. In addition to the many changes faced by young adolescents, the story also documents the life changing events brought by the reservoir's construction. The book is appropriate for upper elementary grades and middle school aged students.

Letting Swift River Go – Jane Yolen (1992) \$5.35

Written by two-time Caldecott Medal Winner author Jane Yolen and beautifully illustrated by Barbara Cooney, the book is an excellent resource for elementary aged students learning about the Quabbin Reservoir. Told from a young girl's perspective, the story follows life in the Swift River Valley from the pre-Quabbin days to the plans to build the massive reservoir to the dismantling of the valley towns to the current day. The story is told in simple, but powerful language and can be used in many different contexts to teach and learn about Quabbin history.

## Friends of Quabbin Book Donation Program

by Gene Theroux

### Westfield Memorial Day Assemblies

The city of Westfield has a long tradition of hosting veterans visiting the schools and speaking to the student during Memorial Day assemblies. This tradition began in the city of Westfield with the Grand Army of the Republic “G.A.R.” Lyon Post # 41 in the late 19th century when Memorial Day was known as Decoration Day. I wrote an article previously about the Memorial Day School visits for *Quabbin Voices*, Summer 2014 that is still available on the Friends of Quabbin website: [www.foquabbin.org/voices\\_vol27\\_num2.pdf](http://www.foquabbin.org/voices_vol27_num2.pdf). Then, I was American Legion Post 124 Commander; now I serve as the Post 124 Americanism Committee Chairman. In that role, I continue to visit every school that is on the schedule for Memorial Day Assemblies. For those Assemblies, each school puts on a production for the visiting veterans and members of the armed forces that continue to serve. The production may include songs by the school chorus, a performance by the school band,

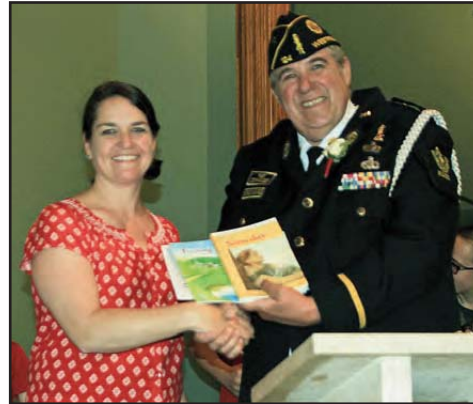


Gene Theroux presenting two copies of Jane Yolen's children's illustrated book, **Letting Swift River Go** to Munger Hill Elementary School Principal Marcia Estelle. Far left is Geoffrey Gould of Belchertown, the Lead Teacher—Primary Music Education for Munger Hill and Abner Gibbs Elementary Schools.

reading of poems, displays of artwork and in the middle schools, the reading of essays of “What Memorial Day Means to Me”. In most instances, the school principal serves as the master of ceremonies introducing me. I, in turn, will introduce the veterans and military service personnel in attendance. However, at two of the elementary schools this year, Geoffrey Gould of Belchertown served as the program director for those assemblies. He is the Lead Teacher – Primary Music Education at both the Munger Hill Elementary School and Abner Gibbs Elementary School. I’ve come to know Mr. Gould from my visits over the last several years, discovering that he grew up on Old Enfield Road in Belchertown. Mr. Gould is both quite knowledgeable about the Quabbin and does an outstanding job with the chorus and the band for the two elementary schools.

When my opportunity to speak at the assemblies arrives, I inform the assembly that those veterans in attendance are the

lucky ones, since so many of our comrades did not return. Then, I share some words of encouragement to the students before I introduce each of the veterans and speak about their



Gene Theroux presenting two books to Saint Mary's Parish School Principal, Lynn Collins.

military service that includes branch of service, military grade, where they may have served, including wars, campaigns and/or operations and their current occupation. The veterans that regularly attend these assemblies include America's greatest generation (World War II), a Korean War combat veteran who is a survivor of the Chosin Reservoir Campaign, Vietnam era through Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom thru Operation Freedom's Sentinel (today's ongoing operations in Afghanistan).

As part of its book donation program, The Friends of Quabbin Board of Directors' coordinating committee decided to donate books to each of the ten schools, eight elementary schools and two middle schools, in the city of Westfield Public Schools Memorial Day Assemblies schedule that I visit. In addition to the Memorial Day Assemblies, two of the high schools (Westfield High School and Saint Mary's High School) in Westfield received a donated book from the Friends of Quabbin for their school library during their awards ceremony for the graduating seniors. During the book presentation to the schools, I would inform the group that the Friends of Quabbin donated the books to commemorate what would have been the former town of Enfield's bicentennial. A total of nineteen books were donated to the twelve schools. The titles included: *Letting Swift River Go* by Jane Yolen, *Someday* by Jackie French Koller and *The Creation of Quabbin Reservoir: The Death of the Swift River Valley* by J.R. Greene.

The goal of the Friends of Quabbin Book Donation Program is to keep the Swift River/Quabbin Valley story alive for future generations through donations to schools and libraries. I'd like to thank the Friends of Quabbin coordinating committee members, Paul Godfrey, Cindi LaBombard and Clif Read, for helping me further that goal in Westfield.

As a member of the Friends of Quabbin, we encourage you to talk to your school principal or teachers and town librarian about submitting a proposal to the Friends to request a donation of books about the Quabbin. The process is very simple and the judges are eager to get the Quabbin story to a new generation. It's not necessary, but the support of a Friends member will catch our attention. The Friends of Quabbin book donation process is described in detail on the Friends of Quabbin home page: [www.foquabbin.org](http://www.foquabbin.org), or write us for a printed copy. Contact your school or library today!