



The Billerica Historical Society *presents*

Yankee Doodle Times

A Quarterly Publication of Historic News and Events

SPRING 2023

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



The Billerica Historical Society has been busy the last few months. We have put the finishing touches on the Barn at the Clara Sexton House, ordered display cabinets for the Barn, restarted Open Houses, and had fundraisers at local restaurants.

Shelves were installed in the Barn loft. We plan on storing many of our artifacts there. We have ordered several display cases, which have arrived and are in the Barn. We are in the process of filling the cases with some of our collections. Pavers have been installed in front of the Barn entrance. Clara's bedroom has been repainted and spruced up. We submitted a Community Grant proposal to the Billerica Select Board and they awarded us \$4,700 to replace the two front concrete walkways with pavers.

The Billerica Minutemen were present at the April open house. We ran successful "Dining to Donate" fundraisers at Mike's Chung King restaurant and at Stelio's. We received 20% of the proceeds on those nights for those showing our flyer.

In April, we participated in Billerica Green - Up/Clean - Up Day by cleaning our property along the Shawsheen River near the aqueduct.

The next upcoming event is the Vintage Tea fundraiser on **May 20 at 3 PM**. Diane Douglas is coordinating this event. It is almost sold out. Contact her at (978)807-4439 to purchase tickets.

Our next "Dining to Donate" fundraiser will be at Casa Blanca on **May 25 from 3-9 PM**. Use the flyer on the right when you dine.

We will have a quilt exhibit during our August open house on **August 6 from 1-3 PM**. Jeannette Pothier is coordinating this event.

Later this year, we will have a celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Clara Sexton House being built, and also the Grand Opening of the restored barn. We have

tentatively planned to have this celebration in September.

We are having the Annual Meeting on **Friday, Oct 27 at noon**. (Notice the noon hour. We hope the time will be more convenient for our seniors.) It will be 100 years to the day since the Society's Time Capsule was sealed. We will open it at the meeting and expect to find many letters, photos, and Society and Town of Billerica documents. We will then place current documents in the Time Capsule and reseal it. Save the date and plan on attending.

We still have BHS tee shirts with the front having the Society's insignia with Billerica's founding family names and the back has the names of the 113 Billerica Minutemen who went to fight the British at Merriam's Corner in Concord on April 19, 1775. Contact us if you would like to purchase one.

Our costs to maintain the Clara Sexton House continue to rise. Your generous contributions are still very much needed.

Regards, John Bartlett



Enjoy a meal at

Casa Blanca Restaurant

May 25, 2023

3-9 pm

Present this flyer and

20% of your bill will be donated to

The Billerica Historical Society

Dine-in or Take-out

99 Chelmsford Road, North Billerica, MA 01862

Phone: (978) 262-9030 | Fax: (978) 262-9031



A Cottage at the Lake
by Alec Ingraham



I purchased this postcard from a vendor on eBay. As postcards go it does not have much value, but it does have a story to tell. The lake front cottage in the picture was situated on Lake Street in Nutting Lake Park; Section B in Billerica, Mass. The photograph is believed to have been taken some one hundred and eight years ago (1915). In March of 1914 William J. Howe sold the property with building to Elmer F. Butler. Howe was a shoe salesman from Somerville, later of Cambridge and Butler was a laundryman, a quite successful laundryman, from Cambridge. Six months later Elmer would marry Julia Winnifred Doe. It was his first marriage and her second. He was 49 years old and originally from New York State and she was ten years younger and originally from Maine. I wondered if that is Elmer sitting in the rocking chair enjoying a break from the laundry business during a long weekend at the Lake. In any event, if you lived in Boston or its suburbs, the Lake was the place to be in the 1920's

In the August 7, 1921 issue of the *Boston Globe*, the following advertisement appeared. "Well Furnished, 5 room cottage, Lake St., Nutting Lake, Billerica, Mass; screened piazza, 16 x 20; on water front, all complete; best place on the Lake, \$2200. Elmer F. Butler, Cambridge; phone 2211-M. By 1930, the property was owned by Lilian A. Lord. In fact, she not only owned the Butler Cottage but three others in close proximity. The records suggest that Lilian passed away in 1936 and her husband, George, established residence, shortly thereafter, in one of her cottages. If you are curious the name of the cottage is ROCK-FERN, as indicated by the sign hanging above the porch.

Beginning around 1910, the Suburban Land Development Company of Boston purchased large tracts of land on Nutting Lake. The acreage was subsequently subdivided into small lots, some less than 1/4 acre.

Nuttings Lake Park

BILLERICA, MASS.

"THE BRETTON WOODS OF MASSACHUSETTS"

Bill's Eye View of Nutting Lake Park Region

NUTTINGS LAKE PARK achieved Fame, so to speak, over night. In less than two years attained a prominent position as a summering place and a fame for beauty and health invigorating ozone of pines, not only in Massachusetts but beyond its boundaries

The People of Greater Boston are flocking to
NUTTINGS LAKE PARK
and there's a REASON, read it

NUTTINGS LAKE PARK is the only summer resort around Boston that has a **RUNNING WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM**. It can be reached in 50 minutes from Boston to Turapike Station on the B. & M. R. R. It can be reached in Autos over two good roads.

Nuttings Lake Park has a frontage of 4 homes on a picturesque lake, surrounded with virgin pines. It offers good Fishing, Bathing and Boating. It is served by two different lines of Electric, one out of

HARVARD SQ., the other from SULLIVAN SQ. It has two stores with abundant supplies and plenty of Fresh Farm Products at low prices. It offers everything that goes toward making one's Summer months pleasurable.

Cottage Sites
\$19 to \$89
\$5. to \$8. down
\$6. to \$10 a week

4-Room Cottage
Ready To Move In
\$25.00 to \$75.00
\$9. to \$30. down
\$8. a month

How to get to Nuttings Lake Park.
From HARVARD SQ. SUBWAY - Take Lowell car, quarter of and quarter past the hour, and get off at Middlesex, Turapike, in Billerica. Free auto-ombus to the Lake.
From SULLIVAN SQUARE - Take Lowell car via Billerica, quarter of and quarter past the hour, and get off at Levington Road, Billerica. ASK THE CONDUCTOR.
On the B. & M. R. R. From NORTH STATION to TURPIKE (Billerica) Summer Umbrella provides for excellent week-day service.

You can't help finding NUTTINGS LAKE PARK as shown above

Automobile Service By Appointments • Make Reservation
and our Auto will call for you

Come out Today Agents at the Office at the 08/25/20

Suburban Land Co., 834 Old South Bldg., Boston
Telephone Main 2350 and Billerica 8080 (112)

Many people from the Boston area purchased these lots and erected summer cottages, as a refuge to which to escape the city for a summer weekend or a month to enjoy the recreational opportunities afforded by the Lake. By the 1930's some of the owners retired to the Lake but many more lost their heavily mortgaged city homes during the Great Depression and sought shelter at their summer houses. By 1950, 12% of Billerica's total population was living in the Nutting Lake section, however, it comprised only 3% of the Town's area when measured in square miles. A report rendered by the State in 1981 reads "Concurrent with the transition of summer homes to permanent residences was the deterioration of the lake water quality brought on by unsewered homes and extensive use of the land adjacent to the lake. The deterioration is not only manifested by reduced water clarity, high algae counts, and

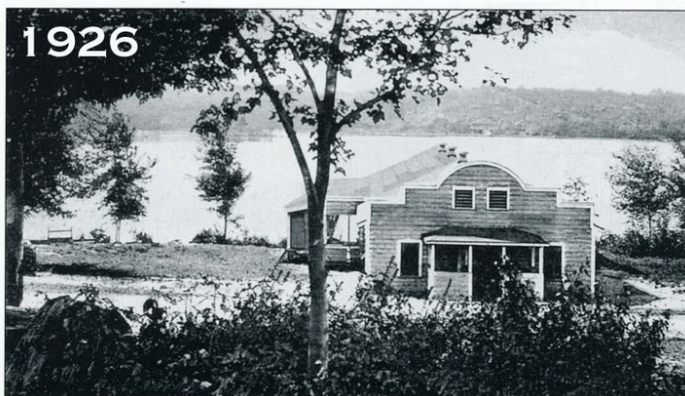
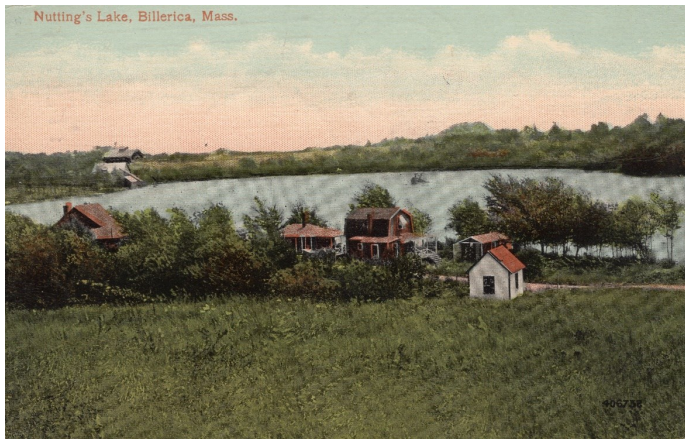
extensive weed growth, but also in the lack of recreational use of the lake.

Historically, the principal uses of Nutting Lake have included swimming, boating, and fishing. At the time of the lake's restoration program initiation (circa 1978), there was only limited fishing and virtually no swimming. Boating was also nearly non-existent due to the degraded water quality and weed growth." As a result of the restoration project conditions at the Lake did improve.

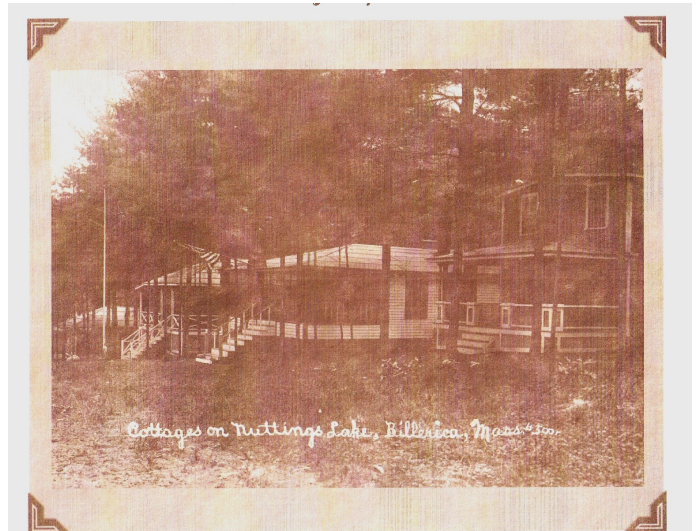
On July 10, 1987, Barry Holt, a Lowell Sun correspondent wrote "In what was a polluted pond (Nutting Lake) children splash and play at the newly opened Nichola Micozzi Beach. They enjoy a natural treasure that had almost slipped away..."

This is the story the creased postcard told to me. I hope you enjoy the article as much as I did writing it!

More photos of Nuttings Lake



NUTTINGS LAKE DANCE HALL



The following quote cited from a 1925 postcard is very telling. "Nutting Lake Park, Billerica, Mass. The summer playground of the elite of Greater Boston. Fishing, bathing, boating, shady walks, good auto roads. By train from North Station to South Billerica or Turnpike Station; by electric - Lowell Cars from Harvard Square subway or Sullivan Square."



**Clara E. Sexton Memorial
House Museum,
circa 1723
Headquarters of the
Billerica Historical Society**

36 Concord Road
Billerica, MA 01821

(978)667-7020
Billericahistory.org



BHS Officers and Board 2022-2023

Officers:

President	John Bartlett
Vice President	Richard Hawes
Treasurer	Ann Stadtman
Secretary	Diane Douglas

Directors:

Cathy Burns	Alec Ingraham
Mary Jones	Richard Kunicki
Michele DeParasis	



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Upcoming Events

May 25: Dining to Donate at Casa Blanca, North Billerica

May 27: Vintage Tea Fundraiser, 3-5 PM, at Bennett Public Library, (978)807-4439 to purchase tickets.

Aug. 6: Quilts on display at open house

Monthly Open Houses:

First Sunday of the month, 1-3 PM

Billerica Minute Man T-shirts

The historical society is currently selling T-shirts with the BHS logo on the front and the list of the minutemen who marched to Merriam's Corner on April 19, 1775 on the back.

Sizes include:

Men's - Medium, Large, XL - \$20
XXL, and XXXL - \$25

Women's V-neck - Medium,
Large - \$25

To order, send request, size,
number of shirts, cost of shirts
plus \$5 for shipping to:

Billerica Historical Society
PO Box 381
Billerica, MA 01821



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