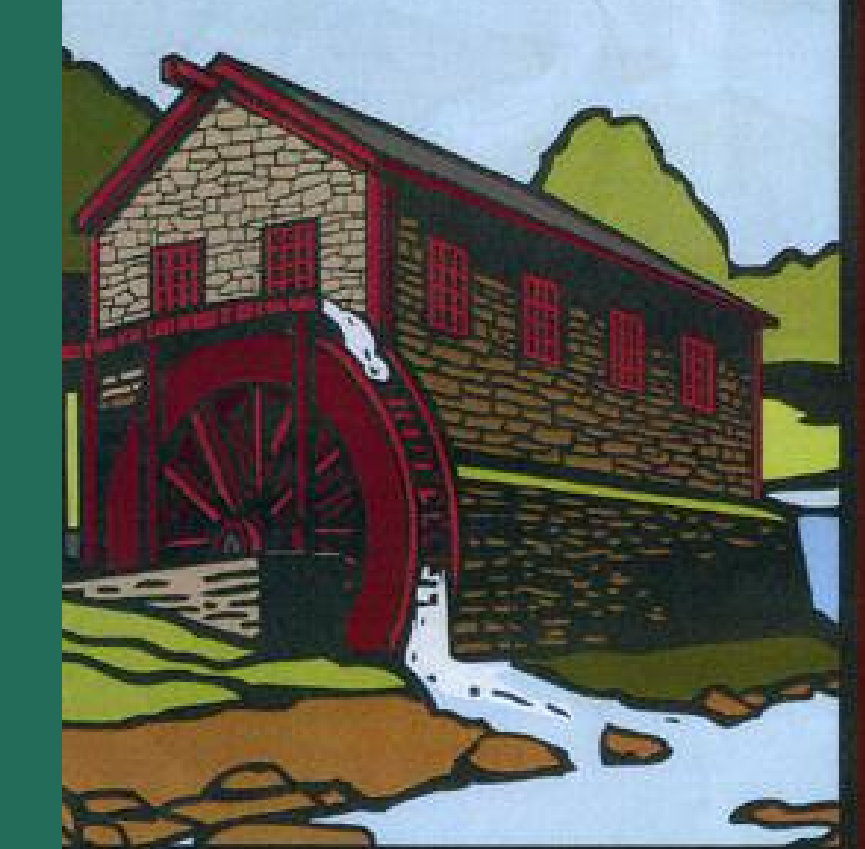




ROUTE 122 ~ LOST VILLAGES SCENIC BYWAY

Welcome to Oakham

Home of the Lost Village of Coldbrook Springs



MASSACHUSETTS
SCENIC
BYWAYS

ROUTE
122

A History of Oakham

Pre-1675 The present town of Oakham was virgin forest occupied by Nipmuck Indians who made seasonal camps in the area for hunting, fishing, and farming.

1675 During the King Philip War (1675-1676) a 150 square mile area known as Naquag became the stronghold for Indian activity. This included what is now Barre, Rutland, Hubbardston, parts of Princeton and Paxton. Menemset, just west of Naquag and Mount Wachusett, in present day Princeton, served as gathering places for the Nipmuck, Narragansett, and Wampanoag tribes. Many of the surviving Native Americans left the region looking for new homes. Those that remained were forced to live in four "Indian Towns" under close supervision by the colonists. This left the area of Naquag open for colonial expansion.

1686 In 1686, five Nashaway Indians, who claimed ownership of Naquag, sold this territory to a group of land speculators from Lancaster for "25 pounds hard cash."

1722 Scotch-Irish immigrants began to buy lots in this area; the town of Rutland was incorporated as a Congregational community.

1742 Beginning in 1742, Scotch-Irish Presbyterians began to buy land in what was then called "Rutland West Wing" (now Oakham) in hopes of incorporating their own town.

1762 After two failed attempts to incorporate, due to Rutland's opposition, Oakham was finally incorporated as a district in 1762.

1776 By the beginning of the Revolutionary War, Oakham's population had grown to nearly 600 people. Oakham was strongly pro-revolution and local loyalists were forced to leave their property and flee to British strongholds in Boston and Canada.

1799 The sixth Massachusetts Turnpike was built between Pelham and Shrewsbury. This 43 mile toll road followed Oakham's Old Turnpike Road and remained in service until 1828; making travel to and from Oakham easier and faster.

1812 50th ANNIVERSARY. Although Oakham voted not to go to war with Great Britain, when the war finally did break out, Oakham and New Braintree raised a company of 34 Grenadiers, who were sent to Boston to help prevent a British attack.

1862 100th ANNIVERSARY. The country is embroiled in Civil War. Although Oakham had a population of less than 1,000 citizens, nearly 100 of Oakham's finest men volunteered for service. One fifth of these soldiers would not live to see Oakham again.

1887 The Central Mass Railroad, a branch of the Boston & Maine, opened, providing quick transportation for both people and goods throughout the East. A Depot in Coldbrook Springs helped this section of Oakham to grow and prosper. Coldbrook Springs at its peak had two hotels, a post office, bowling alley, a store, a basket company, and large community hall with a market, sawmill, school, and 35 homes.

1912 150th ANNIVERSARY. Town population (~500 people) is on the decline as people begin to leave farms and move to industrial centers.

1930 Oakham enters the depression era with more bad news. As part of the Quabbin Reservoir construction project, the State bought all of Coldbrook Springs to provide a clean watershed area for the upper Ware River. Water from the Ware River would be sent via underground aqueduct to provide fresh drinking water for the Boston metropolitan area. To create this watershed, all buildings had to be removed, all residents relocated, and the Railroad Station dismantled.

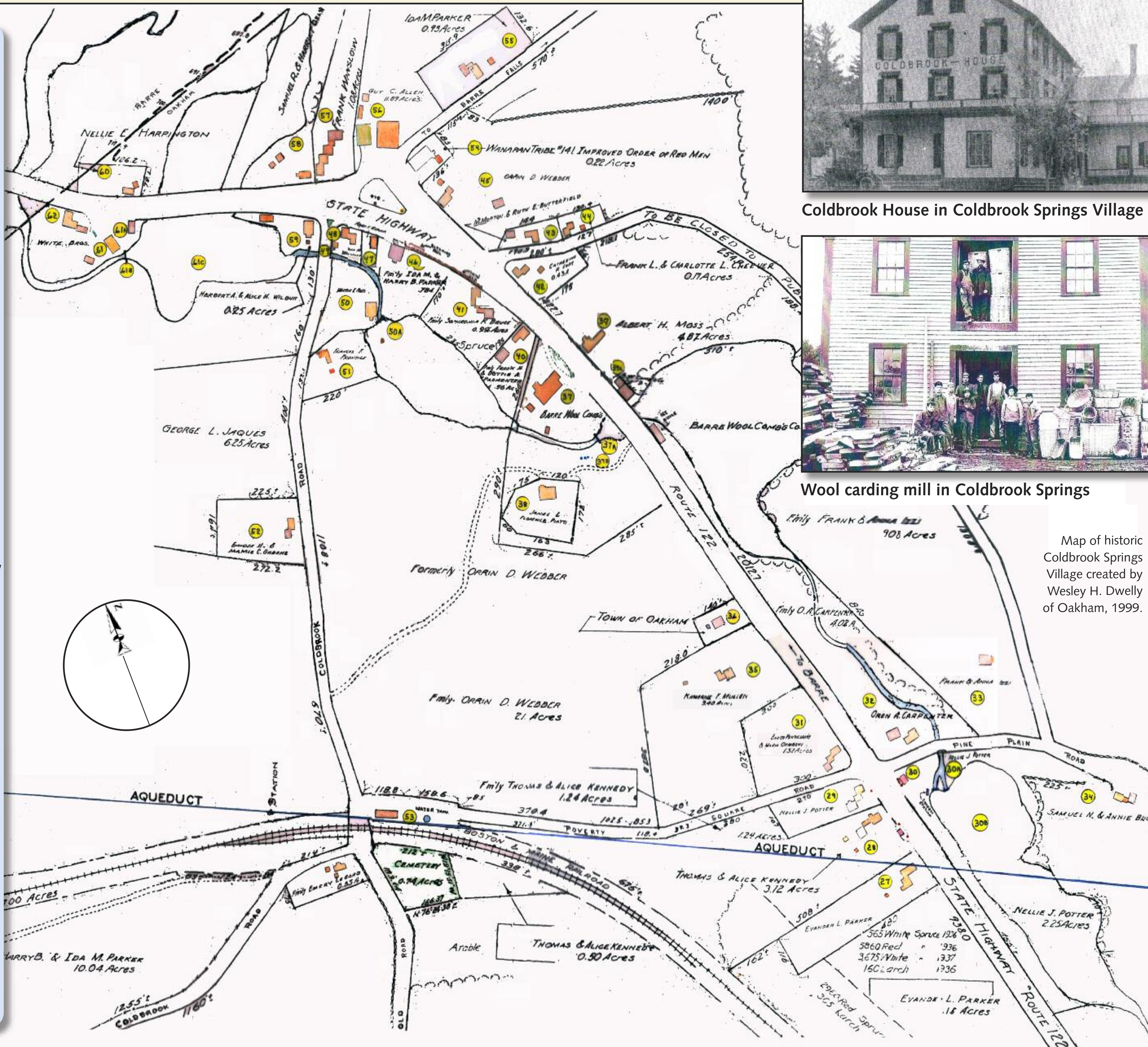
1962 200th Anniversary. Oakham's celebration comes at the height of the Cold War and in the midst of the Cuban Missile Crisis. After decades of declining or no growth, the population in Oakham rises to 600 people.

2012 250th Anniversary. Oakham has settled into the 21st century as a quiet bedroom community. Population has reached about 2,000. Recreation is a focal point with two campgrounds and an 18-hole golf course. The abundance of State-owned land provides open space that can be enjoyed all year long including ice fishing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, hiking trails, and horse bridle paths. The Boston & Maine railroad bed has been converted into a popular bike trail.

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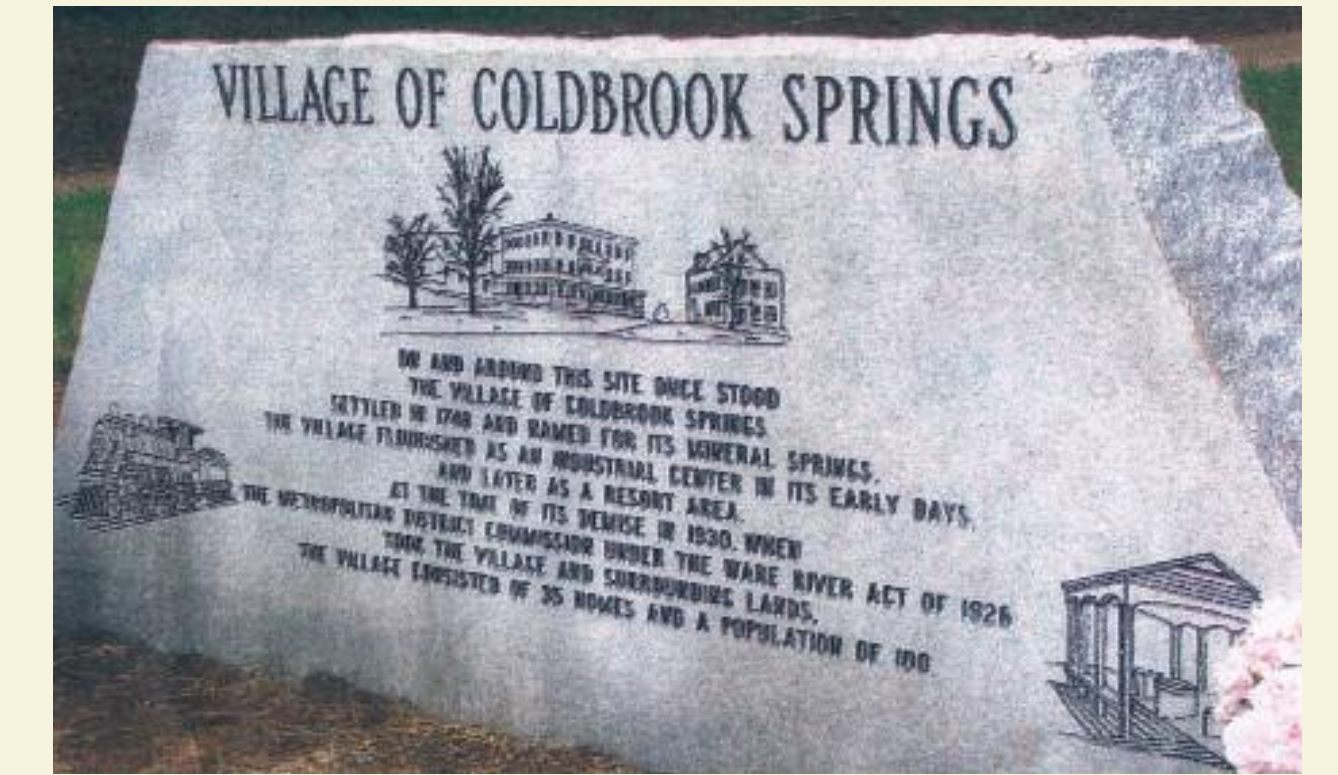


Coldbrook House in Coldbrook Springs Village



Wool carding mill in Coldbrook Springs

Map of historic Coldbrook Springs Village created by Wesley H. Dweilly of Oakham, 1999.



The once bustling village of Coldbrook Springs is now a scenic byway with no evidence of its past history except for the stone monument erected in 2005 by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation.

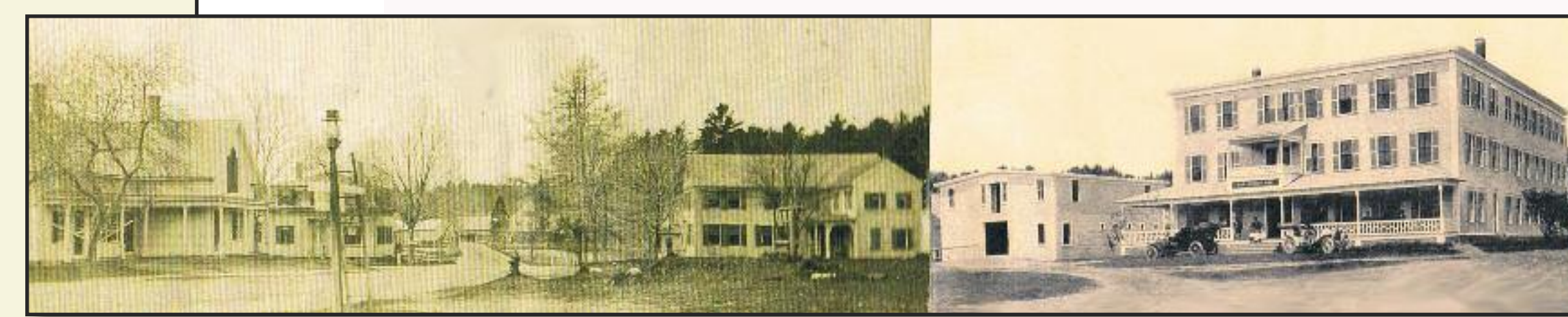
In 1748 several members of the Craige and Parmenter families became the first families to settle in the northern part of Oakham, later called Coldbrook Springs.

For the first several decades, farming and innkeeping were the primary occupations of the residents. A grist mill and sawmill were the earliest businesses. At the early part of the 19th century and continuing over the next 150 years, Coldbrook Springs grew to include a variety of businesses including a cotton factory, wool carding & fulling mill, tannery, blacksmith & wheelwright shops, more sawmills and a grist mill, boot shop, grain store, post office-general store, bowling alley, two filling stations, and the homes of its residents. Because of its location on the main route from Worcester to the western side of the State and its closeness to water power from the Cold Brook, this section of Oakham flourished.

In the mid-1800s, Coldbrook Springs became a resort area. The fame and reputed medicinal powers of the mineral springs in the village attracted tourists from near and far. News was widespread that the Spring waters were "pure from nature's laboratory" and beneficial to invalids. The waters were used for the treatment of many ailments including rheumatism, gout, diabetes, and those diseases "peculiar to women." Two railroads with Coldbrook stops and one just over the line in Barre provided transportation for visitors. The Eagle Inn and Coldbrook House offered lodging and catered to the needs of the countless tourists who came to be "healed" at the Springs.

In the early 1900s the need to provide a water supply to the growing Boston area instituted the Quabbin Reservoir project. Several towns, including Coldbrook Springs, became extinct as the then Metropolitan District Commission took over the required expanse of land needed for the Quabbin project. By the 1930s, nearly every building had been torn down or moved. The once thriving, bustling village ceased to exist.

The monument unveiled on June 18, 2005, is in remembrance of this lost village and its residents.



Coldbrook Springs Village, Main Street looking west



Main Street looking east

The Route 122 Scenic Byway is a collaborative project of the five towns of Barre, Oakham, Paxton, Petersham, and Rutland, in partnership with the following agencies:



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

For more information about the Route 122 Lost Villages Scenic Byway and Western Mass Scenic Byways, please scan:

