



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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December 24, 2012

**DANA COMMON HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISTRICT, PETERSHAM, APPROVED FOR
NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Dana Common Historic and Archaeological District in Petersham for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its December 12, 2012, meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Dana Common Historic and Archaeological District will help recognize and preserve an incomparable and highly significant historic landscape, an enduring legacy of a historic community that was moved in order to create the Quabbin Reservoir.”

The Dana Common Historic and Archaeological District, located today within the town of Petersham, Worcester County, was formerly the institutional center of Dana. The Metropolitan District Commission acquired the town of Dana along with three adjacent towns—Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott—to create the Quabbin Reservoir, which would become the major source of drinking water for about two million people in and around Boston. All structures, most of which had been constructed between 1840 and 1855, were demolished or moved away, and in 1938, the towns were formally disincorporated. While much of the land taken for the Quabbin Reservoir was flooded, the Dana Common district is above the reservoir flow line in the watershed, and is the best-preserved and most easily accessible of the former villages that made up the pre-Quabbin, Swift River Valley towns. The area is characterized by woods, fields, brooks, stone walls, and a network of dirt and paved roads, and includes the sites of approximately thirty former buildings. Although no buildings remain, the locations of almost all of them can be identified by their extant foundations and cellar holes. These include the Dana Town Hall, the local school, the Congregational Church, a hotel, and about two dozen modest and high-style residences.

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State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

The district also includes the sites of the former Dana Center and Brown's Evergreen cemeteries. Before the area was flooded for the reservoir, most of the cemeteries' graves were moved to the Quabbin Cemetery in Ware. Eleven stone fence posts still mark the southern edge of the Dana Center cemetery today.

The focus of the Dana Common Historic and Archaeological District is the small grassy triangle of land that was once Dana Common. The common once featured a monument to the Universalist minister Hosea Ballou, a Civil War cannon, and a monument to commemorate Dana's veterans of World War I. All three memorials are now located at the Quabbin Cemetery. The common, cemetery site, and sites of the former buildings are kept open to memorialize Dana Center and the four towns taken to form the Quabbin Reservoir. For many years, the Dana Reunion Committee has organized an annual Dana Reunion on Dana Common. In 1996, the group erected a granite memorial at the eastern end of the common, dedicated to all those who sacrificed their homes and way of life for the reservoir. The 75th anniversary of disincorporation of the town of Dana will be commemorated in 2013.

Today, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) manages the Quabbin Reservoir lands, which are open to the public for hiking, cycling, and fishing, and other recreational and educational activities. Dana Common remains a place whose landscape of foundations, cellar holes, stone walls, open spaces, and roadways provide an evocative and moving record of its past history.

The Dana Common Historic and Archaeological District is one of 6 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation's official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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