



Kathryn Toomey
Register of Deeds

Hello and welcome to our Newsletter.

We spotlight one community per month and hope to share with the other communities in our district some historical or social significance of the region. In this introduction I like to let you know what is going on in our district and in our office.

For the town spotlight, we chose Douglas. Douglas is celebrating their 275th Anniversary this October 2, 2021.

As a young person my family would visit state parks for seasonal activities. My parents relocated to central Massachusetts from the urban Cambridge/Boston area. My dad was inspired by the open spaces and the parks. He grew up in a three decker in Cambridge, so visiting Wallum Lake and having a picnic or BBQ was a real adventure.

I remember what seemed like long car rides to magical destinations. Today, I realize it might have been his

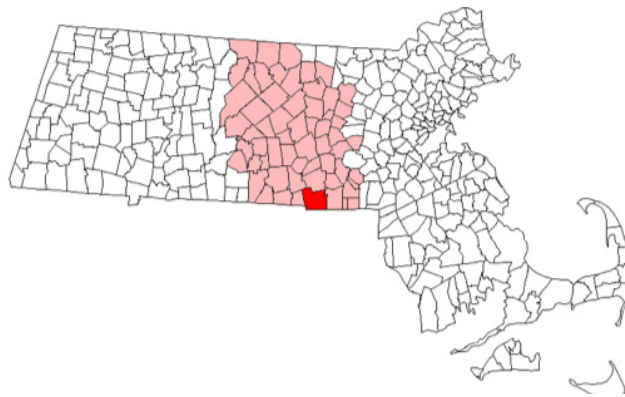
Worcester Registry of Deeds

Newsletter

September 2021 ~ Issue #12 ~ Town of Douglas

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singing along with cassette tapes of show tunes that made the trip seem long, now I realize this beautiful town is a short drive away. The beauty of Douglas is breathtaking.

This month I am sharing all the tidbits I have learned over the years as a central Massachusetts resident and subsequently searched on the internet and reached out to people.

Community Statistics

228

Number of Recordings in July 2021

\$304K

Median Home Value

80%

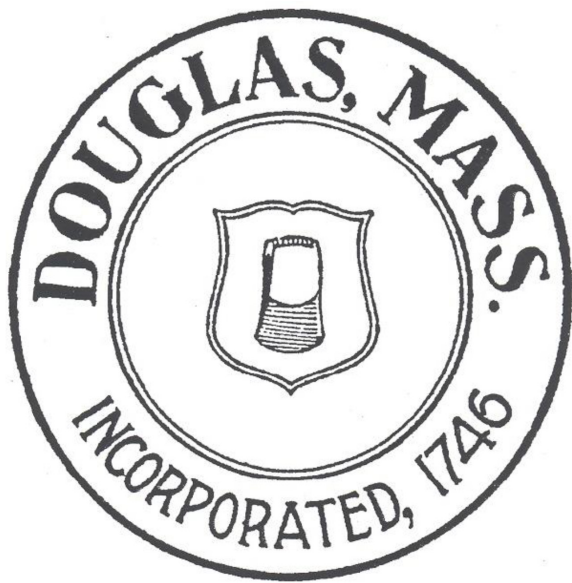
Homes Owned vs. Rented

3,306

Total Housing Units

91

Density (Houses per Square Mile)



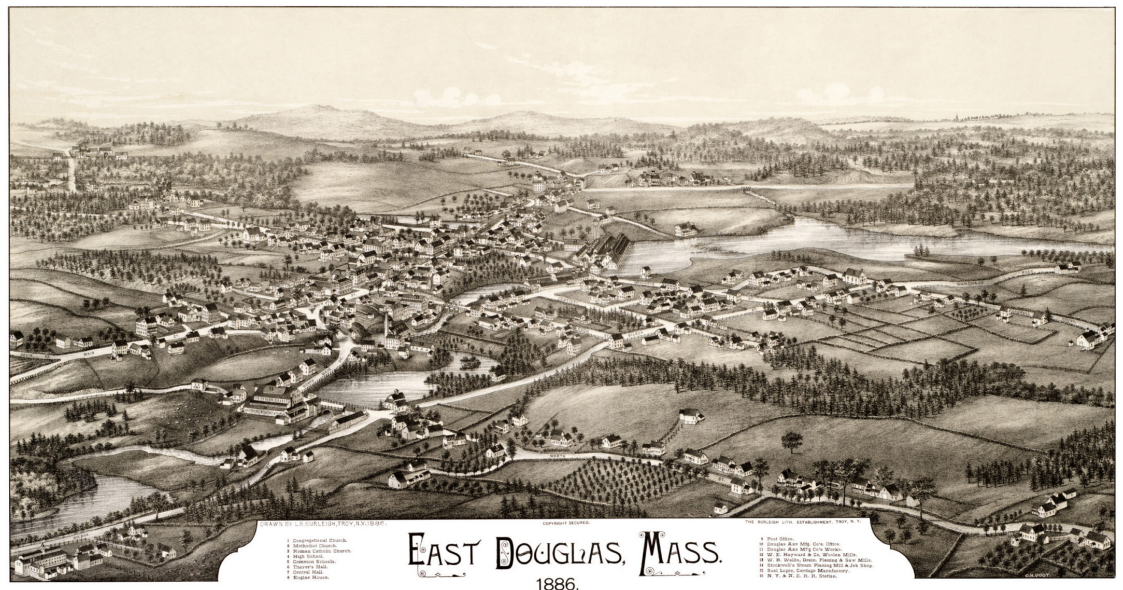
Town Spotlight

DOUGLAS

By Kathryn Toomey Registrar of Deed's

As we enter October 2021, the Town of Douglas is celebrating its 275th Anniversary. I have been to Douglas many times in my life, but honestly needed a little help from Google and Wikipedia to get more background on its history and facts. Here is what I learned and I look forward to learn more when I go to their celebration on October 2, 2021.

The name of Douglas was first given to the territory of the town in the year 1746. New Sherborn or "New Sherborn Grant" had previously been its designation, since its first occupancy by the English settlers which was as early as 1715. The first English settlers came primarily from Sherborn, although many hailed from Natick as well. New Sherborn was removed from Suffolk County or Middlesex County (the historical data was not confirmed as to which county) to Worcester



County at its formation on April 2, 1731. We started recording deeds in Worcester County in April 1731.

The name Douglas was given in 1746, when Dr. William Douglas an eminent physician of Boston, in consideration of the privilege of naming the township offered the inhabitants the sum of \$500.00 as a fund for the establishment of free schools together with a tract of 30 acres (12 ha) of

land with a dwelling house and barn thereon. It is said that there were subsequent pledges made by Dr. Douglas in the form of a bell for the Center School and 50 sterling pounds for seven years to support the ministry but quite a portion of these pledges were not received by the Town.

Douglas's forests gave rise to a woodcutting industry and the Douglas Axe Company. A woolen manufacturing com-

pany, on the Mumford River in East Douglas, in recent times held by the Schuster family, has been prominent in the history of this community.

General Lafayette, of France, stopped in Douglas during the Revolutionary War, to change horses, on his way to Boston to join General Washington.

Lafayette was a hero of the American Revolution and



the French Revolution.

From a very early period reaching beyond 1635, bands of Native Americans, principally the Nipmuc Tribe, dominated this region of Worcester County. The Blackstone River was once called the Nipmuc River. Most of Douglas is part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

The underlying geology consists of rocks rich in quartz, feldspar, and mica. Boulders are plentifully scattered all over town, and gold and silver ores are said to be found in some localities. Large quantities of building and ornamental stone are quarried from the granite ledges found in the center of town which is shipped to almost every section of New England.

A common misconception in Douglas is in regard to the New England Trunkline Trail. Many believe that railroad tracks were laid here for commuting from northern Connecticut to northern Massachusetts. In fact, they were

used to haul ice from Wallum Lake as interstate commerce. Today you can hike these trails through Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The New England Trunkline was originally planned as a railroad, but the financier died in the sinking of the Titanic.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 37.7 square miles (98 km²), of which 36.4 square miles (94

km²) is land and 1.3 square miles (3.4 km²), or 3.57%, is water. It includes the Douglas State Forest and is home to Wallum Lake and Whitins Reservoir.

The principal elevations are Bald Hill, 711 feet (217 m), Wallum Pond Hill, 778 feet (237 m), and Mount Daniel, 735 feet (224 m). There are numerous ponds in Douglas: Wallum Pond in the southwest section, covering about 150 acres (61 ha); Badluck Pond in the western part of town, covering about 110 acres (45 ha); the largest pond is Whittin Reservoir also in the western part of town, covering about 400 acres (160 ha); and Manchaug Pond in the northern part, about 93 acres (38 ha).

As of the census of 2000, there were 7,045 people,

2,476 households, and 1,936 families residing in the town. The population density was 193.7 people per square mile (74.8/km²). There were 2,588 housing units at an average density of 71.2 per square mile (27.5/km²).

From 2000 to 2010 there was a population increase of 20.24%.

I was required to look on line, in light of Covid I was not inclined to ask the Historical Society to meet me, but I plan on visiting with them soon, to expand on the information I learned from their webpage. This is what I learned:

The E.N. Jenckes store and museum sits on Main Street in the village of East Douglas. Ebenezer Balkcom opened a small store at the corner of Main and Pleasant (now



Depot) streets during the 1830s, when East Douglas was becoming the economic center of the town. The store changed hands (sold to Gardner Chase) until he retired and sold the building to Edward L. Jenckes. After Jenckes death in 1924 his daughters E. Mialma and Helen R. continued to run the store until the store closed in 1964. The store remained closed until 1972 when the property was donated to the Douglas Historical Society, where it was carefully restored to its original general store appearance of 100 years ago.



DOUGLAS WORD SEARCH

DOUGLAS

TIGERS

BREEZY PICNIC

DEED

WORCESTER

MORTGAGE

JENCKES

WALLUM LAKE

HOMESTEAD

TOOMEY

B	A	W	A	L	L	U	M	L	A	K	E
J	R	Y	K	H	W	Q	I	B	T	P	A
H	W	E	D	O	U	G	L	A	S	M	T
O	D	E	E	D	Q	P	E	N	M	O	S
M	Z	H	A	Z	E	A	J	Y	X	R	Y
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S	O	Y	I	V	T	P	A	Z	E	G	A
T	Z	I	F	G	H	W	I	N	D	A	H
E	D	O	R	W	E	L	J	C	Y	G	T
A	H	M	Q	X	N	R	U	Q	N	E	W
D	J	E	N	C	K	E	S	A	K	I	R
W	O	R	C	E	S	T	E	R	C	C	C