FORM H – PARKS AND LANDSCAPES

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Photograph

View looking north

Locus Map

Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.
**Town/City:**  Georgetown  

**Place (neighborhood or village):**  
   Pentucket Pond  

**Address or Location:**  Lee Way  

**Name:**  American Legion Park  

**Ownership:**  ☒ Public    □ Private  

**Type of Landscape (check one):**  
   X park    ___ farm land    
   ___ green/common    ___ mine/quarry    
   ___ garden    ___ training field    
   ___ boulevard/parkway  

   ___ other (specify):  

**Date or Period:**  1946  

**Source:**  deeds, monument  

**Landscape Architect:**  unknown  

**Location of Plans:**  Town of Georgetown  

**Alterations/Intrusions (with dates):**  none  

**Condition:**  good  

**Acreage:**  8.69 acres  

**Setting:**  The park is situated at the southeast end of Pentucket Pond in a reclaimed industrial area in the core of the town center.
VISUAL/DESIGN ASSESSMENT

The American Legion Park was created in 1946 with the acquisition of 6.69 acres of land on the southeast shore of Pentucket Pond where ice houses and related harvesting and transportation equipment had been located. For many years it was fairly passive with few amenities other than a beach and picnic areas. The park was enlarged in 1966 with the addition of two acres on the west side of Pentucket Avenue. In recent years the Town of Georgetown has expanded the park by providing more amenities and active playing areas.

The topography of the park is flat with a gentle slope descending to the shoreline of Pentucket Pond. It is accessed from the east by Lee Way and the west by Pentucket Avenue. Both streets end in a large paved parking lot, which the park areas abut on the north and west. (See aerial view and key below.) A sandy beach distinguishes the pond’s shoreline with a playground and picnic area on the west side and another picnic area with a pavilion and grills set within a grassy area on the east side. A large ballfield with lights for nighttime games is located east of the picnic pavilion, while a smaller ballfield with a comfort station and concession stand is sited on the west side. A bandstand has been constructed adjacent to the small ballfield. Other than lawns and mature trees, there are no other planted areas. A monument was erected near the parking lot recognizing the people who initiated the town’s land purchases for the park.

The following numbered list corresponds with the aerial view below.

1. Bandstand
2. Small Ballfield
3. Comfort Station & Concession Stand
4. Playground & Picnic Area
5. Beach
6. Picnic Pavilion
7. Monument
8. Large Ballfield

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The first part of American Legion Park, on the south shore of Pentucket Pond, was created when Henry R. Johnson of Reading, Massachusetts, sold five acres there to the town of Georgetown.¹ Both this parcel and a parcel added to the park in 1966 had once been land owned and used by a succession of companies harvesting, storing, and shipping ice from Pentucket Pond. The pond and the adjoining ice hoists and ice houses became obsolete with the advent of electrical refrigeration in the 1930s, and by then the town was interested in pondside park land.

Of the four local histories, only the 1922 history by Benjamin F. Arrington discussess the local ice industry. Arrington noted that “Little and Tenney” had begun harvesting ice for commercial sale in 1853. Arrington was referring to George J. Tenney and Samuel Little, who had begun to harvest ice on Pentucket Pond probably by 1850.² They continued their operation until 1870,

¹ Henry R. Johnson, Reading MA, to town of Georgetown, 4 May 1946, SECD 3463:48.
² Clark Dean Tyler to George J. Tenney, 6 June 1850, SECD 429:152, conveyed to Tenney for $5 Tyler’s land adjoining Pentucket Pond as far as the water of the pond flowed onto that land, between land owned by Andrew Bettis on the west and the flume owned by Paul Dole on the northeast, “for the purpose of cutting and carrying away ice.”

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when they sold it to two Newburyport men, Philip H. Blumpey and Henry Russell Perkins, who sold it three years later to a group of Georgetown men including Samuel Little who planned to incorporate an ice company. By 1880 the Tenney-Little operation had been sold to Martin L. and Charles N. Hoyt of Georgetown, who operated an ice business here until late December 1892. They sold it to Middlesex Ice Company, which had just organized in Melrose. The deed conveyed the right to cut ice on Pentucket Pond and the right to adjoining land “‘for the purpose of carrying away ice from said pond, and the right to carry ice over said land, also the right to carry ice from said Pond; also all the right to build and construct railroad tracks on said land, and to dig, carry away, and use what gravel may be necessary to build ice houses and grade railroad tracks on said land; also the right to build ice houses on said land and the right to pass and repass to and from the same to the Newburyport Railroad Depot in said Georgetown.” 

Middlesex Ice Company sold its Pentucket Pond property to Fells Ice Company of Malden in 1894, and in 1906 the latter company bought lots 20 to 24 in an 1883 subdivision platted by Boyd B. Jones and Ralph C. Huse on the pond shore. These lots were located on the south side of Pentucket Avenue and the east side of Lee Way; an ice house is shown abutting three of the lots on the 1883 plan. In 1913 Fells Ice Company sold most if not all of its Georgetown holdings to Pentucket Ice Company, which Alfred B. Fuller operated on the pond through at least 1918. Another concern, Highland Ice Company of Boston, had operated on a part of the Jones-Huse subdivision in the 1910s and sold part of its property that had been set aside for company president Ichabod Bunker to Nova Scotia native David Day Hemeon, who operated Pentucket Pond Ice Company from 1922 to at least 1932.

Porter-Milton Ice Company of Kittery, Maine, apparently began harvesting and processing ice on Pentucket Pond in March 1919 on the shore abutting the Jones-Huse subdivision. According to Arrington, both Porter-Milton and Middlesex Ice Company (though apparently not in business in Georgetown under this name after 1900) did an “enormous business up to 1918 and 1920, when all of the houses belonging to these companies were destroyed by fire. At this time no ice is being cut except for local trade by Adams & Bailey.” In March 1937 Porter-Milton Ice Company sold much of its property to Henry R. Johnson of Reading, Massachusetts, who transferred title to the town of Georgetown in 1946.

A granite marker on the grounds credit Barney Camenker and Henry Dea as having the vision for creating the park in 1946. Evidently, these men had a role to play in the transfer. Barney Abraham Camenker ran a poultry farm—Cambro Poultry Yard—at 188 East Main Street for many years with his older brother David; both men were bachelors. They had immigrated from Koretz, Russia, at different times, David in 1904 and Barney in 1909, and settled in Beverly where they started their poultry business. Barney was a veteran of the First World War, and when he applied for naturalization in 1919 he pointedly renounced his allegiance to “the present government of Russia.” He registered with the local draft board in 1942, but it is not clear if he actually served; he was then 49 years old. In 1957 he was director of the Northern Essex Veteran Service District. It likely was through this association that he acted to create a memorial park for the American Legion. Henry Dea was the town treasurer in 1940, as

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9 Arrington, Municipal History, 262.

well as proprietor of the Lake View House at 83 West Main Street. Prior to this, Dea was also a poultryman and was possibly associated through this business with Barney Camenker.

One year before Porter-Milton sold its land, Pentucket Ice Company sold its land and rights to the pond to Donald C. and Harold H. Elliott of Georgetown, in business as coal and ice dealer Elliott Brothers. In 1966 Elliott Brothers Inc. transferred to the town 1.8 acres adjacent to the land Johnson had given the town two decades earlier. The American Legion Park includes a beach on Pentucket Pond, a playground, and a music shell.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

AmericanAncestors.org.
Assessor’s Records, Georgetown and Rowley. 1883, 1902, 1920, 1933.
Southern Essex County Registry of Deeds website, salemdeeds.com.

DIRECTORIES


MAPS


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Footnote: 9Pentucket Ice Company to Donald C. Elliott and Harold H. Elliott, 31 March 1936, SECD 3069:172; Donald C. and Harold H. Elliott to Elliott Brothers, 28 April 1954, SECD 4088:328; Elliott Brothers Inc., to Town of Georgetown, 18 February 1966, SECD 5356:406. The last deed states that the conveyed parcel was Parcel B on “Plan of Land in Georgetown, Mass., as Surveyed for the Town of Georgetown,” January 1966, by Charles H. Morse and Son, but this deed has not been located on the Southern Essex County Registry of Deeds website.
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This 1920 plan (SECP 2513:198) shows former Georgetown Ice Company land abutting Porter-Milton Ice Company land, both now part of American Legion Park.
PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)

Aerial view from east with numbers indicating locations of park features. Source: bing.com/maps.

9. Bandstand
10. Small Ballfield
11. Comfort Station & Concession Stand
12. Playground & Picnic Area
13. Beach
14. Picnic Pavilion
15. Monument
16. Large Ballfield

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View of parking lot from south on Pentucket Ave.

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.
View of bandstand (1) and small ballfield (2) on west side of Pentucket Ave.
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Bandstand (1) on west side of Pentucket Ave.
**GEO.904**

**220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125**

Comfort station and concession stand (3) on west side of Pentucket Ave.
Playground and picnic area (4) on west side of Pentucket Ave.
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View of beach (5) looking NE from parking lot.
INVENTORY FORM H CONTINUATION SHEET

Massachusetts Historical Commission

GEORGETOWN  AMERICAN LEGION PARK
Area(s)  Form No.
GEO.904

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

View of beach (5), picnic pavilion (6) and monument (7) from west.

View of monument (7) and picnic pavilion (6) from parking lot.
View of large ballfield (8) from SW.
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View of parking lot from Lee Way.