

Learned's Pond



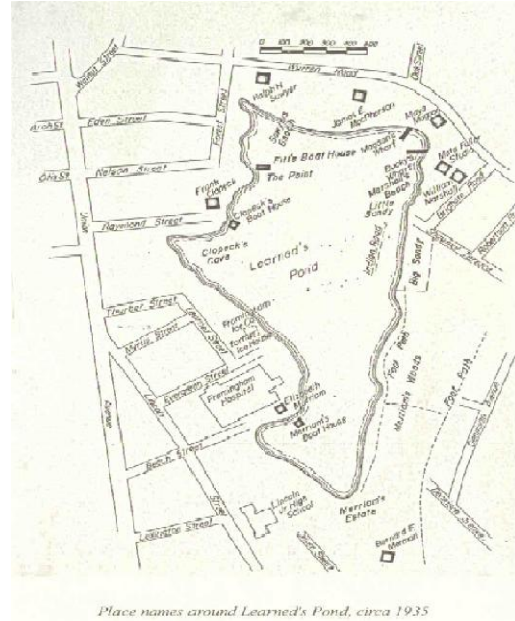
“Wherever men have lived there is a story to be told,” states Henry David Thoreau (Dyer vi). Thoreau’s quote is the impetus that ignites the curiosity of E. Otis Dyer to explore the stories that may be told about his Warren Road residence in Framingham, Massachusetts. From its original wilderness landscape in the 1600s to the thickly settled residential neighborhood it known as today, the area holds many stories about its known residents: the Nipmuck Indians, early families who inhabited the large farms, and the developers who brought not only residential expansion, but military training (Muster Field) and a State arsenal to the area. Like Dyer, the families who lived in Warren Road have their individual stories to tell. One such family, that of Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller, famed psychiatrist who emigrated from Liberia and wife Meta Warrick Fuller, internationally known artist and sculptress, can tell stories of their life at 31 Warren Road as the only black family living in this middle class neighborhood in 1908 (Dyer 127). In addition to their home, Meta Fuller had an art studio at 135 Warren

Road. It is easy to understand why Meta Warwick Fuller chose this setting for her studio in 1930. The studio looked out over Learned Pond, a body of water spanning 36 acres. It is Learned Pond that intertwines the tales of many of the residents and holds several mysteries of its own.

Learned Pond is one of two ponds in the Warren road neighborhood; Gleason Pond is the other. The Nipmuck Indians were the earliest known residents in Framingham. Artifacts found in the area, specifically on Dennison Hill, reveal that the Indians found the area around the two ponds a pleasant place to live (Dyer 179).

During the next two hundred years, the neighborhood was principally a farming community with some residents were employed in the professions while also serving as part-time farmers. By 1700, seven farms were established in the area, one of which was the Isaac Learned Farm in 1679. Learned's family came to the area from Surry, England. Learned Pond is named after Isaac Learned, who settled along the pond's southern border (Temple 21).

As one looks at a 1935 map of Learned's Pond the names of residents of the area emerge. The studio of Meta Fuller can be seen on top of the bank behind Bucky's Wharf (Dyer 182). The wharf is named for George W. Buck, who developed the second half of Warren Road. Buck was a successful traveling salesman for a large textile manufacturing company, the Lawrence Webster Company, located in Malone New York. Known as a railroad hub in eastern, Massachusetts, Framingham was an ideal place for a salesman



like Buck to live and from which to begin his travels. He did not inherit the land as the first developer, Emily Warren after which the road is named, but he had the foresight and risk-taking ability to invest in such a real estate project (Dyer 189). In addition to Meta Fuller and George Buck, the Learned Pond families along Warren Road included Mayo Magoon, principal of the high school (Magoon's Wharf), Robert Sawyer Jr. who enjoyed hunting and fishing, keeping a rowboat at the beach (Sawyers Beach) in the summer and in winter fishing through holes in the ice, and James McPherson.

Neighboring the Sawyers, at northwest corner of the Pond a swampy cove existed. Partially filled in 1905 by the Fitts brothers, room was made to further development of the land they owned on Forest Avenue. Fred B. Fitts owned one of three boathouses and a beach that was located on the Pond. Clopeck's Cove, just four-hundred feet from Fitt's Point, contained a wharf, boat, and boathouse. There Jack Clopeck, a Framingham athlete, class of 1943 practiced hockey on a rink built on the Cove with his teammates. Until abandoned in 1930, George T. Steven's icehouse stood on the other side of Clopeck's Cove (Dyer 188).

The Warren Road shore locations were not ideal for swimming because of the murky pond bottom; however, at places where the shoreline provided gravel and sand, land gave way to beaches like Big Sandy located along Shawmut Terrace and Little Sandy located just 100 feet north (Dewar & Gilbert 94). In 1929, the Town of Framingham purchased Big Sandy and enough land surrounding it to build a small parking lot. In 1948, the town extended the beach south into Merriam's Woods, given by Elizabeth Merriam, benefactor to the town, hospital and churches. The woods and estate of Bernard Merriam occupy substantial property around the pond. Within the woods,

close to the shore of the pond, was an ancient path worn by generations of children as a short cut to school and by adults walking down to town. Before the development of the Polio vaccine in 1955, parents often associated swimming with the spread of polio. Big Sandy and other beaches were closed during this epidemic (Temple 108).

The Lincoln Jr. High School was located at the south end of Learned's Pond. Pupils living on the north end of the Pond would walk on the Pond's winter ice as a shortcut to school. Not far from the school was the Framingham Union Hospital. Today the complex is much larger than the original (Herring 220).

It is not only the immediate residents of the area that bring story to Learned Pond during the early part of the twentieth century, but residents of Framingham such as Joseph Brandish, son of Joseph and Mary Brandish who resided in Framingham in 1672. Joseph Brandish Jr. went to sea, serving as a boatswain's mate on the merchant ship Adventure (Parr & Swope 32). From boatswain to pirate, Brandish and crew mutinied the ship with Brandish voted by the crew as captain. The cargo of the trading ship was split among the crew including money and jewels (Temple 107). Brandish's escapades end with imprisonment and hanging in England, but not before he shared a jail cell with Captain William Kidd. So it may very well be Brandish's roots in Framingham from which the legend of pirate gold buried on the shores of Learned Pond evolved.

Tradition tells that a chest of gold was sunk near the west shore of Learned's Pond by Captain Kidd or some other noted pirate, perhaps Joseph Brandish Jr. himself. Sight of a mysterious chest beneath the water's surface by early settlers was reported. The mystery imbedded in this story is related to the belief that the treasures were guarded by a sort of spell that required certain conditions to be met in order to secure the treasure.

This entailed the presence of three people who would place themselves in a formation like points of a triangle, the three individuals to remain in perfect silence while keeping eyes fixed to the chest as they moved toward it maintaining their triangular position, while one was to lay a key or iron tool on top of the chest allowing it to become subject to their control. The superstitious and impossible conditions that surround the acquisition of the treasure are perhaps the reason that no one has ever had the courage to secure it. Nathaniel Pratt Jr. is the last reported person to have seen and had contact with the treasure as he tried unsuccessfully to lay his jackknife on the covered treasure (Temple 107).

Just as the story of sunken treasure carries on for generations, so too do the beliefs of children who lived near the pond. Off Big Sandy Beach, 150 feet from shore, is a gravel ridge that exists where the water is only four to five feet deep. Such topographic features lead the curious to hypothesize as to its origin. The children of the area believed the ridge had to do with the Indians. They referred to this land formation as the “Ridge Indian Road.” Over the years, the ridge has diminished as swimmers have moved stones from the ridge and piled them to form a diving platform (Dewar & Gilbert 95).

What else could lie beneath the waters of Learned’s Pond? A report to police that military missiles lie at the bottom of the Pond, brought divers to defuse and remove the missiles until it was determined what they really were. As the tale unfolded, the missiles were in fact reported to be airplane wing tanks that were used to fashion a raft. Paul Rosenberg, present owner of the Macpherson estate, made the raft from barrels and the airplane wind tanks and moored it off the beach. Over time, the barrels rotted, sinking the raft (Dyer 187). When young swimmers spotted the wing tanks, concern

arose as to their identity. One can only imagine the stir that this caused. A chronicle about missiles certainly lends itself to intrigue.

From the natives to the first families to current day life, experiences of people live on through story. Whether they are cultivators of the earth, developers that change the landscape or residents who live in the fully expanded neighborhoods around Learned Pond, history weaves the tales that reveal the traditions and beliefs that are important to preserve. Traditions from homelands such as England or Africa and experiences such as Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller in his immigration to America are the basis of such stories . Their accounts allow us to better understand the characteristics of the moments in which they lived and serve to document change over time.



The former Meta Fuller studio, 135 Warren Road

The studio, a private home since 1950, is a copy of the famous sculptor Francois Rodin's studio in France, where Meta Fuller studied.

Photo courtesy of Charlotte Pattison.



Same view today.

Other than an addition built in 1957 and some improvements in 1960, little has changed since it was a studio in the 1930s: the driveway is still narrow and gravel and the front, rear, and side yards are still oak woods.

Artist unknown, courtesy of Charlotte Pattison.

Annotated Bibliography

Dewar, Martha E. and Gilbert, M. Joan, editors. Framingham Historical Reflections. McGregor and Werner, Inc., Washington, D.C., 1874.

The mainstay of this book are the articles and speeches collected from the personal files of Raymond J. Callahan, late Editor-in-Chief of the Framingham News. Such topics of “Ponds and Streams of Framingham” provided added insight into their background and use within the context of the town.

Dyer, E. Otis. *A Warren Road Neighborhood*. William S. Sullwold Publishing, Taunton, Massachusetts, 2006.

Dyer’s book chronicles a three hundred year history of the settlement and development of a neighborhood in Framingham, Massachusetts, 1670-1970. From the first farming to the development of the land, to a fully developed neighborhood, Dyer does an excellent job showing change over time due to the railroad expansion. This source was not only helpful in learning about Learned’s Pond, my focus location, but the families who lived around the pond and their contributions to the community.

Herring, Steven W. Framingham, An American Town. The Framingham Historical Society, Framingham, Massachusetts, 2000.

This compilation of stories, biographies, anecdotes and facts, stretch back almost 400 years. Herring states that Framingham exemplifies the traditional forces of American History, including western migration, the railroad era, immigration, industrialization, suburbanization and the growth of technology in our lives. His clear narrative helps to better understand what brought many residents to Framingham and the emergence of communities through land development.

Parr, James L. and Swope, Kevin A. *Framingham Legends and Lore*. The History Press, Charlstown, SC, 2009.

Part archaeologists, part storytellers, the authors have dug through Framingham’s history for anecdotes and folktales that correspond to broader trends across the nation. The tale of Captain Kidd and his buried treasure at Learned’s Pond provided rich detail for my project. The complete poem, “Kidd’s Chest of Gold – A Legend of Learned’s Pond” by Clara Augusta Trask helped in the development of the lesson plan associated with the Pond, allowing for an excellent example for student analysis and poetic element review.

Temple, Josiah H. *The History of Framingham Massachusetts*. New England History Press in collaboration with the Framingham Historical Society & Natural History Society, 1887.

For over one hundred years the Reverend Josiah H. Temple’s History of Framingham has been considered the single most authoritative resource in the investigation of the town’s past. His work serves as a fund of information dating from 1640-1880. His work has given me greater insight into the families that lived in the Warren Road neighborhood during the first section of its development as well as the institutions in place during this time period. The reader can clearly connect with resident’s beliefs and their life within the context of the times.

The Eyes of Learned Pond

Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 3 and 4

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

English and Language Arts

Standard 14: Poetry Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the themes, structure, and elements of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

- **14.2:** Identify rhyme and rhythm, repetition, similes, and sensory images in poems.

Standard 15: Style and Language Students will identify and analyze how an author's words appeal to the senses, create imagery, suggest mood, and set tone, and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

- **15.2:** Identify words appealing to the senses or involving direct comparisons in literature and spoken language.

History and Social Science

Cities and Towns of Massachusetts

- 3.8 On a map of Massachusetts, locate the class's home town or city and its local geographic features and landmarks.
- 3.9 Identify historic buildings, monuments, or sites in the area and explain their purpose and significance.
- 3.11 Identify when the students' own town or city was founded, and describe the different groups of people who have settled in the community since its founding.
- 3.12 Explain how objects or artifacts of everyday life in the past tell us how ordinary people lived and how everyday life has changed. Draw on the services of the local historical society and local museums as needed.

Regions of the United States

- **4.15** Describe the diverse nature of the American people by identifying the distinctive contributions to American culture of:
 - A. several indigenous peoples in different areas of the country (e.g., Navajo, Seminoles, Sioux, Hawaiians, and Inuits).
 - B. African Americans, including an explanation of their early concentration in the South because of slavery and the Great Migration to northern cities in the 20th century, and recent African immigrant groups (e.g., Ethiopian) and where they tended to settle in large numbers.
 - C. major European immigrant groups who have come to America, locating their countries of origin and where they tended to settle in large numbers (e.g., English, Germans, Italians, Scots, Irish, Jews, Poles, and Scandinavians).
 - D. major Spanish-speaking (e.g., Cubans, Mexicans) and Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese) immigrant groups who have come to America in the 19th and 20th centuries, locating their countries of origin and where they tended to settle in large numbers. (H, G)

- 4.16 Identify major immigrant groups that live in Massachusetts and where they now live in large numbers (e.g., English, Irish, Italians, French Canadians, Armenians, Greeks, Portuguese, Haitians, and Vietnamese). (H, G)

Student Objectives

- Students will brainstorm poetic devices such as simile, metaphor, repetition, imagery, rhyme, rhythm, etc.
- Students will analyze poems from children’s poetic anthologies in order to add to their list of poetic devices
- Students will analyze the poem, “Kid’s Chest of Gold – A Legend of Learned’s Pond” by Clara Augusta Trask
- Students will identify poetic elements and discuss what can they learn about the Pond
- Students will analyze the map of Learned’s Pond to determine residents who lived along the shoreline
- Students will select four of the poetic devices from their list to incorporate into an original poem
- Students will select a resident and read a short biography about them
- Students will write an original poem about Learned Pond through the eyes of their selected resident incorporating relevant information

Materials:

- A selection of Children’s Poetry Anthologies
- The poem, “Kidd’s Chest of Gold – A Legend of Learned’s Pond” by Clara Augusta Trask
- Activity Sheet: “Poetic Elements”
- Activity Sheet: “Short Biographies of Learned Pond Residents”
- 1935 Map of Learned Pond
- Picture of Learned Pond

Pedagogical Techniques: Critical Thinking; Use of Primary Documents

Lesson Procedures

Day 1

1. Explain to students that they will be engaged in writing original poetry from the point of view of a person who once lived in Framingham, Massachusetts along the shores of a legendary pond.
2. Distribute the 1935 map of Learned’s Pond to students. What can students discover about the pond through the analysis of the map? Have students work in small groups, approximately four to five, to participate in a carousel brainstorming session.
3. Post chart paper around the room, each having the following headings: Families of Learned’s Pond; Features of Learned’s Pond; Surrounding Landmarks; Questions about Learned’s Pond; Conclusions about the Neighborhood. Have student-groups circulate around the room, visiting each topic where they will

brainstorm all possibilities associated with the analysis of the map and the topic. Allow 5-7 minutes at each area.

4. Once students have visited each area, conduct a “Gallery Walk.” This entails students having a chance to walk around to room to revisit each area briefly so they can see what other groups have added to the topic lists.
5. Highlight some of the interesting facts, questions and conclusions students have identified.
6. Distribute the activity sheet: “Short Biographies of Learned Pond Residents.” Explain to students they will assume the role of one of these residents. They are free to choose whomever they would like to represent. Discuss how each of these residents connect to the area in terms of time and place (see the Learned Pond background information).

Day 2

1. Explain to students that the residents of Learned Pond past and present have many stories to tell about the Pond. The most noteworthy legend is about buried treasure owned by Captain Kidd. Distribute the poem, “Kidd’s Chest of Gold – A Legend of Learned’s Pond” by Clara Augusta Trask.
2. With a partner have students read the poem and decide upon the course of events related to the treasure. What seems unusual about this particular buried treasure? What is the mood of the poem? What words or phrases stand out? Have student list the poetic elements of the poem. Is there rhyme? How does this contribute to the mood or message of the piece?
3. Allow students the time to add to their list of poetic elements of which they are aware (simile, metaphor, repetition, etc. To enable students to develop a comprehensive list, have several children’s poetry anthologies available for them to peruse.
4. Students should review their lists and select their favorite four poetic devices that they will incorporate into the poem they will write during their next class session.

Day 3

1. Distribute a picture of Learned’s Pond. Explain to students that they will be looking at the Pond through the eyes of the resident they had selected in the previous class. Given the biographical information of their character, how would they look at the pond? Would they recall their immigration from another country? Would they explain why the Pond drew them to settle in the area? Would they recall an event where the Pond played a major roll in an experience they encountered? Remind students to use the four poetic elements they selected. Encourage them to use vocabulary that appeals to the senses.
2. Provide time for student writing. Circulate to encourage the use of vivid language. Help students connect to their character.

Day 4

1. Provide an opportunity for students to share their poems. Create an ambiance of a “coffeehouse” experience. Serve hot chocolate instead of coffee, of course.
2. Students may wish to compile their poems into a class anthology and provide a copy for their school library.

“KIDD’S CHEST OF GOLD – A LEGEND OF LEARNED’S POND”

By Clara Augusta Trask

If to my story listening ears you kindly will incline,
I'll sing the legend of the lake hidden in woods of pine—
Cradled amid the fern-clad hills and fed by living springs;
And here the sun shines warm and bright, and here the wild bird sings,
And boding ravens flap their wings on leafless birch and oak.
And shock the sylvan silences with harsh, discordant croak.

By Learned's pond, tradition says, in years long gone before,
The Captain Kidd who “sailed and sailed” the high seas o'er and o'er,—
Who robbed and plundered all mankind, and never mercy shew,
With black flag nailed against the mast, above a pirate crew,-
Sought out this lake, and sank within its waters calm and cold,
And placed thereon the pirate's “charm,” a chest of yellow gold!

The legend goes that, oftentimes, this chest arose to view,
And showed its gruesome mystery unto a favored few, -
And ancient crones to wandering ears the tales full oft would tell,-
How odd and thrilled by the strange sight, none dared to break the spell,
But fled in terror from the place, nor dared they to look back,
Lest pallid ghosts should wave their hands, and follow on their track.

‘Twas said if three men silent stood, and fixed their steadfast eyes
Upon the chest they might, perchance secure the wondrous prize,-
If on its lid an iron key the boldest one might lay,
Before the sand-glass ran the hours of eventide away,-
And as the story ran, no power save this could break the spell,
And who had heart to brave the test, no mortal tongue could tell!

Nathaniel Pratt was the last man whose awestruck eyes beheld
The mystic chest rise into view, by his strong will compelled,-
But startled by the uncanny sight, Nat's heart stopped with a thud,
And instantly that chest sank down, “and squiggled in the mud!”
So ran Nathaniel's plaintive tale, and his fond hopes grew dim,
Because that golden coffer was no longer in the swim.

Now listening hearers, warning take, and lovers pray be shy
Of Learned's pond, when evening shades steal down the darkening sky,-
For Captain Kidd, who “sailed and sailed, and spied three ships from Spain,”
Is watching still his treasures hid on land, and on the main,
And if you broke the magic spell laid on the chest of gold,
The pirate's ghost might drag you down in Learned's waters cold.

Short Biographies of Learned Pond Residents

Nathaniel Pratt

Nathaniel Pratt Jr. is the last reported person to have seen and had contact with the treasure as he tried unsuccessfully to lay his jackknife on the covered treasure.

Meta Warrick Fuller

Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller (June 9, 1877 - March 18, 1968), wife of Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller is best known as a multi-talented artist who created poetry, paintings. She is mainly known as a sculptor. Meta Fuller occupied a studio that can be seen on top of the bank behind Bucky's Wharf. It is easy to understand why Meta Warwick Fuller chose this setting for her studio in 1930. The studio looked out over Learned Pond, a body of water spanning 36 acres.

Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller

Solomon Carter Fuller was born on August 11, 1872 in Monrovia, Liberia. He came to the United States at age seventeen to take advantage of the educational opportunities to further his destined career in medicine. Solomon Fuller, the first black psychiatrist in the United States, played a key role in the development of psychiatry in the 1900s. In addition, as a professor at Boston University School of Medicine for more than 30 years, Fuller helped train the next generation of psychiatrists. Solomon and his family settled in Framingham, living at 31 Warren Road. He and his wife were the first black residents in this middle class white neighborhood.

Isaac Learned

By 1700, seven farms were established in the area, one of which was the Isaac Learned Farm in 1679. Learned Pond is named after Isaac Learned, who settled along the pond's southern border.

Nipmuck Indian

The Nipmuck Indians were the earliest known residents in Framingham. Artifacts found in the area, specifically on Dennison Hill, reveal that the Indians found the area around the two ponds a pleasant place to live.

George W. Buck

George W. Buck developed the second half of Warren Road. Buck was a successful traveling salesman for a large textile manufacturing company, the Lawrence Webster Company, located in Malone New York. Known as a railroad hub in eastern, Massachusetts, Framingham was an ideal place for a salesman like Buck to live and from which to begin his travels. He did not inherit the land as the first developer, Emily Warren after which the road is named, but he had the foresight and risk-taking ability to invest in such a real estate project.

Emily Warren

Emily Warren was the daughter of Isaac and Sally Warren and was brought up at the Warren homestead. Later Emily moved in with her brother and began to show her independent spirit. Emily began to see that the family's land north of Learned's Pond was an ideal location for development. Emily was responsible for having the ability to see the benefits of developing this land. Thus, Warren Road is named after Emily as she was the first to develop the initial portion of this neighborhood.

Jack Clopeck

Jack Clopeck, a Framingham athlete, class of 1943 practiced hockey on a rink built on the Cove with his teammates.

Mayo Magoon

Mayo Magoon lived on Learned's Pond and served as principal of the high school.

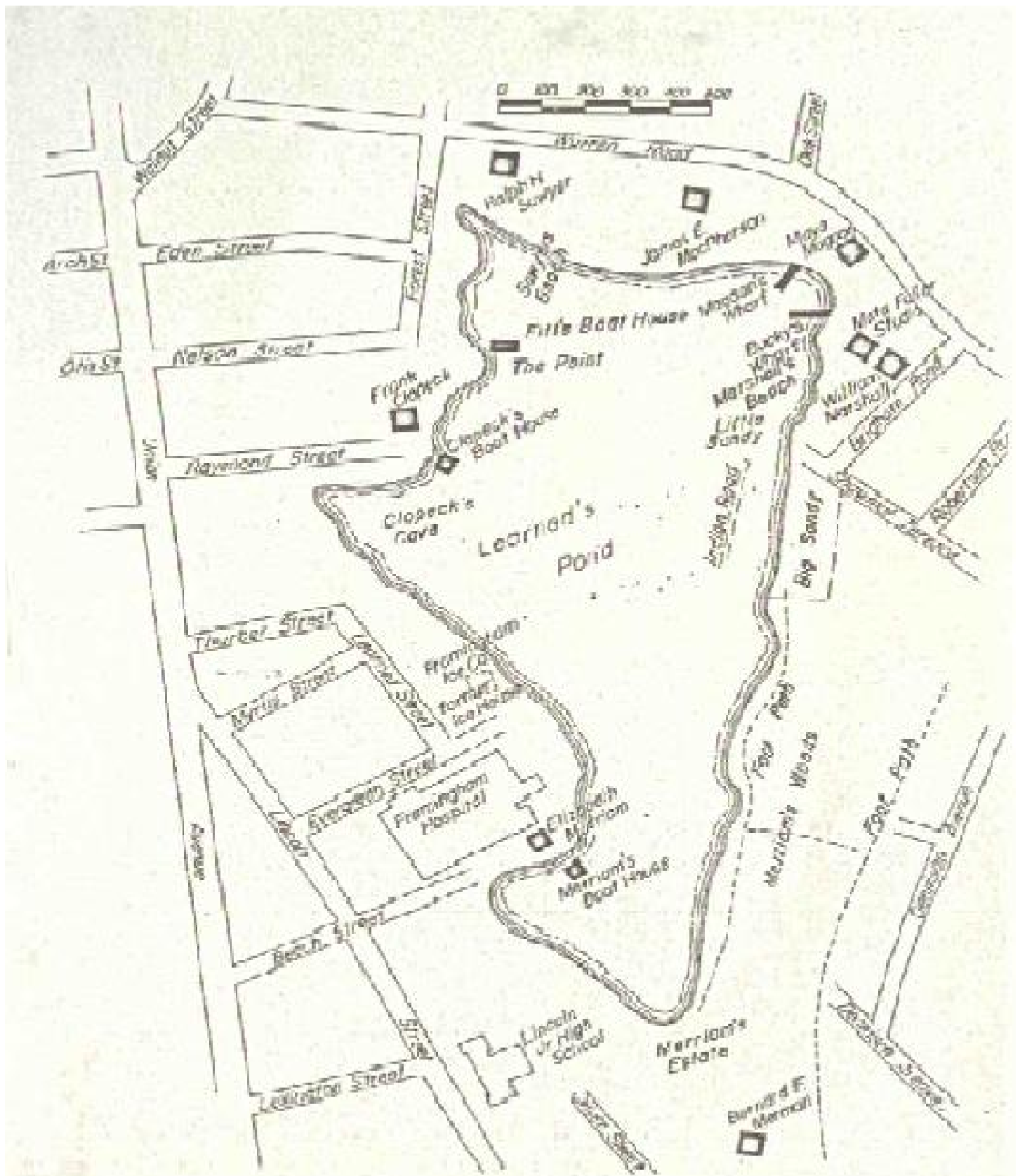
George T. Stevens

George T. Stevens, 1869-1933, was born in Framingham, the son of Charles C. Stevens, the founder of the C.C. Stevens Ice Company on Learned's Pond. By 1904, George became a partner with his father and together they ran the business under the name of C.C. Stevens and Son. After George took over the company, he changed the name to Framingham Ice Company. Stevens would clear off the snow from Learned's Pond to harvest the ice.

Joseph Brandish

Joseph Brandish, son of Joseph and Mary Brandish was born in Framingham in 1672. Joseph Brandish Jr. went to sea, serving as a boatswain's mate on the merchant ship Adventure. From boatswain to pirate, Brandish and crew mutinied the ship with Brandish voted by the crew as captain. The cargo of the trading ship was split among the crew including money and jewels. Brandish's adventure ended with imprisonment and hanging, but not before he shared a jail cell with Captain William Kidd.





Place names around Learned's Pond, circa 1935