

Beaver Brook Canoe Trip Proves Popular

By Gordon B. Seavey

WESTFORD — Renewed interest is being shown by nature lovers in the three-mile canoe trip on Beaver Brook as paddlers wind their way through historic but abandoned farm lands toward the eastern entrance to Forge Pond, as described in a recent article in this newspaper.

The recommended starting point is at the narrow cement bridge on Route 119, less than a mile north of Littleton Common. Shortly after leaving this busy highway for the quiet sanctuary afforded by the little valley, to the right will be seen Fletcher Hill. The Littleton-Westford town line bisects this hill and then continues south to bisect Washoba Hill.

Not named on old maps, Fletcher Hill no doubt received its name from Samuel Fletcher who settled on the east side of Beaver Brook on 1679 and built a block house for protection against the Indians. He subsequently made additions to his original grant of 26 acres until he owned some 400 acres. Part of this later became known as the Howard and Flagg farms.

About mid-way on the trip, the stream widens to some extent as the floor of the valley spreads. This divides the lands that later became known as the Parker Farm and is connected by a private bridge.

Gliding beneath the bridge, the stream opens into much marshland and connects with what the early settlers called Great Tadnuck Meadow. It is believed that Beaver Brook split here at one time, with the west branch entering Forge Pond and the other branch continued beneath Concord, Patten and Cold Spring Roads to enter Steady Brook near the foundry in Graniteville.

The Fletcher family, through one of its descendants, Sarah Fletcher Parker, donated one-half acre of its land for use by the town in 1761 for the West Burying-Ground. It is here that one of the area's most outstanding Revolutionary hero, Colonel John Robinson, is buried.