Reservoir Hill

History and Development
Cambridge Historical Commission
December 10, 2015
Reconstructed plan of Cambridge and environs in the 17th century
The boundaries of Cambridge at its greatest magnitude, 1642–1655. At this time Sparks Street and Vassall Lane formed the western boundary of present-day Cambridge.
A plan prepared for the legislature in 1754 showing land in Watertown (west of Sparks Street and Vassall Lane, including present Reservoir Hill) and Charlestown whose owners wished to be set off to Cambridge.
Loyalist Estates in 1775
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The Reservoir Hill Study Area occupies portions of the Lechmere, Lee and Ruggles estates.
Tory Row in 1775, looking east

Lechmere estate in the foreground
Tory Row in 1776
PLAN OF
CAMBRIDGE
FROM SURVEY TAKEN in JUNE 1830
by Jno. G. Hales.

This Plan of the Town of Cambridge was taken by order of the Selectmen, and is conformable to Resolves of the Legislature passed March 17, 1830, requiring each Town in the Commonwealth to cause a survey and plan of its territory to be made.

EXPLANATION
Churches and Houses of Public Worship
Waters shown shaded
Salt and Fresh Meadows shown shaded
Mills

Distances from Cambridge Court House
To Boston... 8. 2
To Warren... 12. 4, 28
To Central Court House... 13. 2, 2
To East Cambridge Court House... 32, 38
Harvard Branch R.R. ran to a station opposite Cambridge Common from 1849 to 1854.
Horsecar routes through Cambridge in 1865
Horsecar traveling eastbound on Brattle Street passes the corner of Riedesel Avenue, ca. 1890.
Reservoir Hill in 1854

The mapmaker placed the reservoir on the wrong side of Reservoir Street, but the map is otherwise accurate.
Lechmere-Sewall-Riedesel house and barn, 149 Brattle Street (1761), looking west from the corner of Craigie and Sparks streets toward the Joseph Lee mansion (153 Brattle Street), ca. 1870
Hooper-Lee-Nichols house, 159 Brattle St. (ca. 1690).
Photo ca. 1895.
Thomas Fayerweather house, 175 Brattle Street (1764). Painting by unknown artist, before 1854.
William G. Stearns’s subdivision of the Fayerweather estate, 1852
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William G. Stearns house, 45 Fayerweather Street (1846; demolished 1937)
Reservoir Hill houses in 1873, as originally sited.

The Stearns house is labeled “B.G. Smith”
Cambridge Water Works reservoir and standpipe, ca. 1895. Demolished 1902.
Prof. Charles H. Dunbar house, 64 Highland Street (1860; demolished 1963). Photo 1949
Alvin F. Sortwell house, 61 Highland Street (former reservoir site) (1902, E.S. Child, architect; demolished 1948). Photo 1903.
This view shows the foundation of the Alvin Sortwell house, which remained as a landscape feature after the site was cleared in 2003. Photo ca. 1960.
Joseph Lee estate, 1803.
The 49-acre estate included a 3-acre field north of Vassal Lane and 17 acres with river frontage south of Brattle Street.
"WHO FORTH FROM CROWDED CITY LEAD THE LENGTHENING STREET."

William Cullen Bryant
The division of Mrs. Deborah Carpenter’s estate in 1861. “English Thomas” Lee’s house and barn at 153 Brattle Street are at right; the Hooper-Lee-Nichols house at 159 Brattle is at left.
James Read Jr. house,
88 Appleton Street (1859).
Photo 1896.
Lechmere-Sewall-Riedesel house on its original site, after John Brewster raised it and inserted a new ground floor in 1869. In 1886 William Brewster removed the original top story and moved the house to 149 Brattle. Photo 1885.
5, 7, and 9 Riedesel Avenue (left); 17-19 and 23-25 Brewster Street (background). Photo 1885–1887
Charles Deane house, 80 Sparks Street (1858) and stable (1867)
Dr. Morrill Wyman house, 77 Sparks Street (1860; demolished 1945). Current site of Hemlock Road. Photo ca. 1938.
James A. Noyes house, 1 Highland Street (1893–94, Longfellow, Alden & Harlow, architects).
Huron Avenue in 1883
Huron Avenue in 1889
Huron Avenue in 1894
Gen. Edward Hincks house, 333 Huron Ave./81-83 Fayerweather St. (1892). The photographer was standing near the intersection of Reservoir Street and Huron Avenue, looking northwest. Photo ca. 1895.
Auction of lots formerly owned by General Hincks and built up by Bernard Rice with houses at 306, 312, 316 and 320 Huron Avenue in 1896
VIEW OF RESERVOIR STREET FROM HURON AVENUE, SHOWING THE TYPE OF DESIRABLE HOMES THAT MR. HURLEY HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN PROMOTING IN CAMBRIDGE.
Forris Norris stores, 342-356 Huron Avenue (1912). Photo 1939.
Three-deckers and two-family houses north of Huron Avenue from Chilton Street (foreground) to Lexington Avenue. Photo 1929.