

Wachusett Lake & Park



1873 to 1923



Area Happenings

Summer 1866

William Morse:

- Trail behind the Mountain House Hotel
- 2 - wheeled cart
- Canadian pony
- Makeshift booth
- Selling candy & cigars to other visitors

Area Happenings

1869-70

- With Railroad under construction
- Wachusett House in Princeton is expanded
- Many other Hotels, boarding houses and outdoor activities expanded by 1900



Area Happenings

1870

William Morse:

- Realizing he has developed a successful summer business.
- Builds a small stone house on the Summit
- He operates it for 4 more years.



Area Happenings

1871

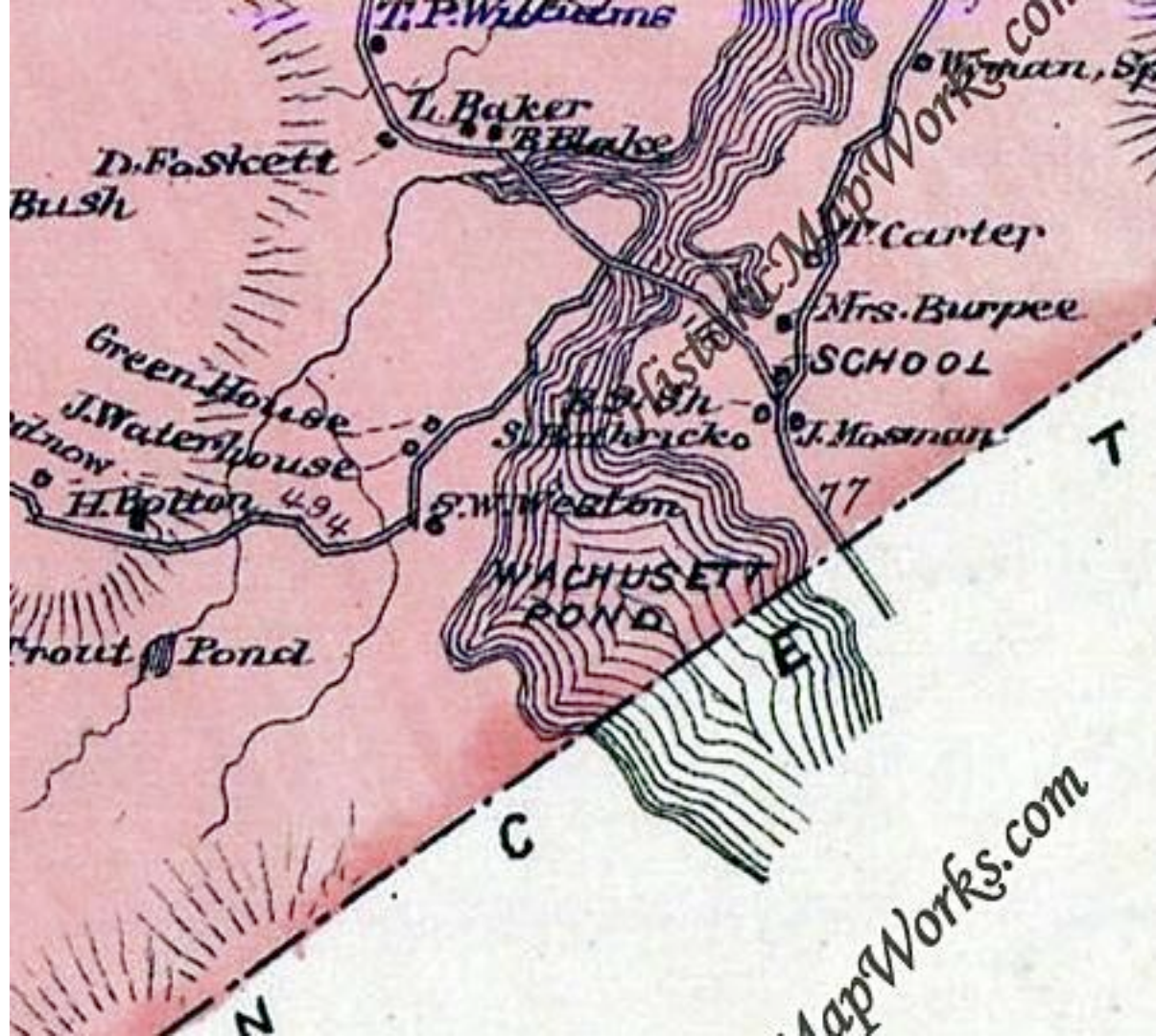
- Worcester, Holden, Princeton, Gardner Railroad line completed.

1874

- Wachusett Mountain Co. builds a 25¢ toll road from opposite Pine Hill to the mountain top.

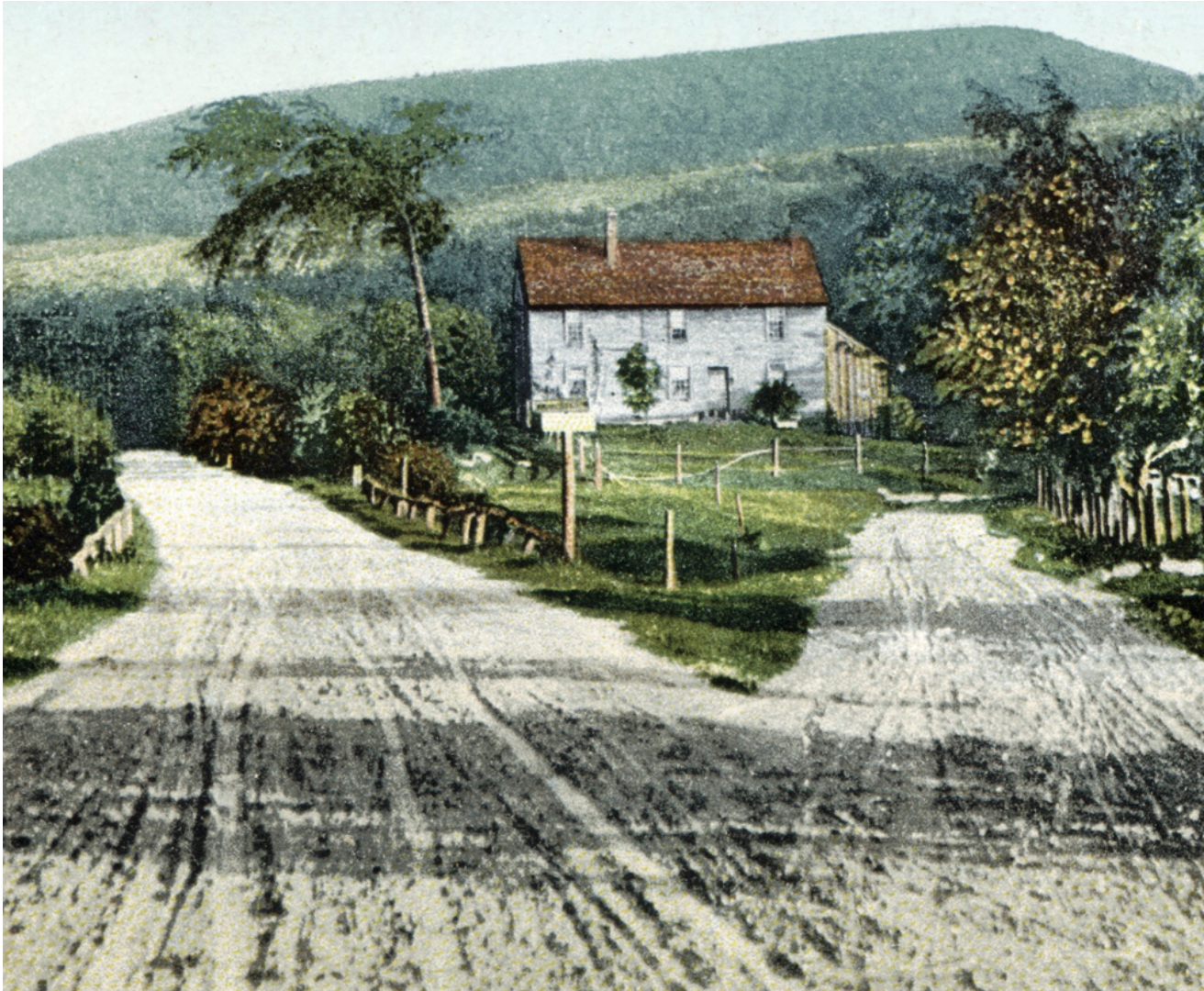
Gardner News





1870 Map

**Future
Mt. Road**



Bolton Rd.

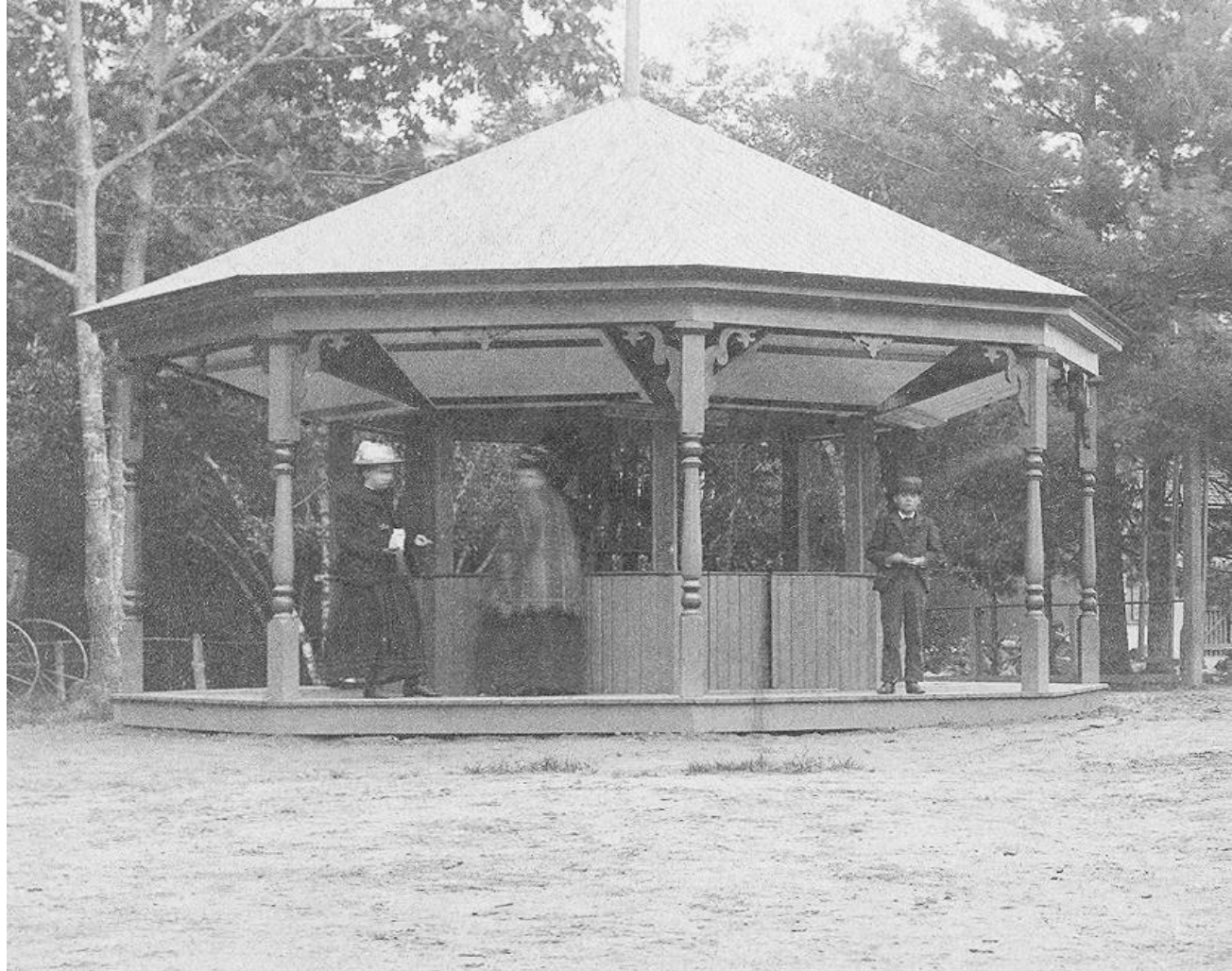


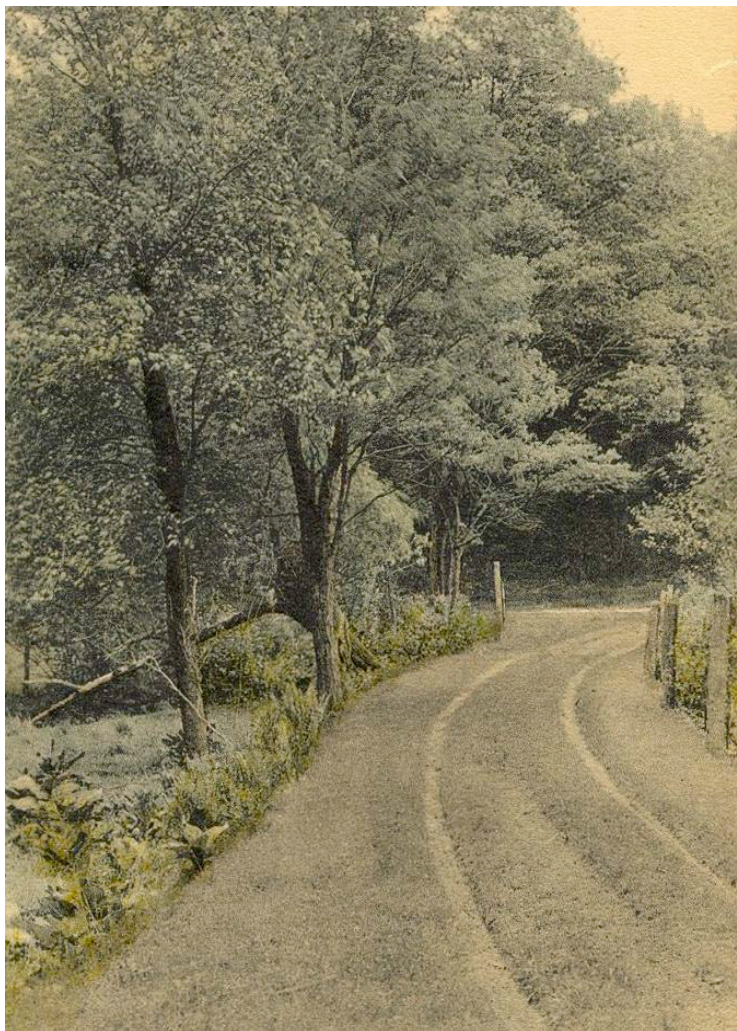
Initially Known As Bolton Park 1873

Simeon Bolton:

- Purchases several acres
- West side of Wachusett Lake.

- Trees are thinned out
- A pavilion is built
- A public park/picnic area is started
- Part of the pavilion is closed in for cooking





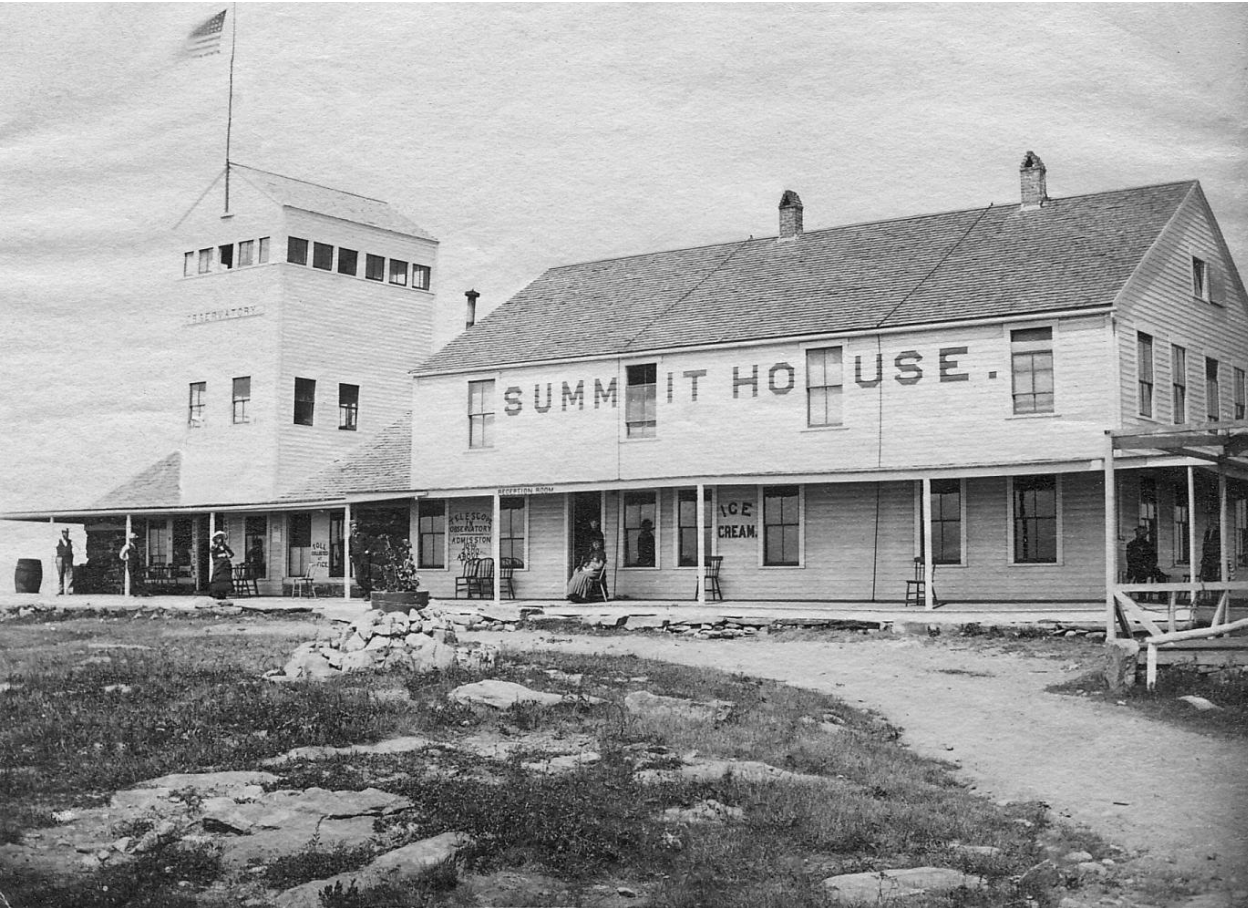
1874

- Bolton opens his Park to the public >July
- Many groups/families from Worcester, Sterling, Leominster and Fitchburg.
- 800 visitors visited Wachusett Park Last week. >August

Princeton: Every coach from the Railroad stations brings parties who expect to spend the summer at the different hotels and boarding houses.

1875

- Mountain Proprietors are seeking a Lake hotel site. >June
- Attendance averaging forty-fifty per day: Lodge members, Veterans groups, and Religious societies. >August
- Mr. Bolton starts digging a well for running water.



1874-75

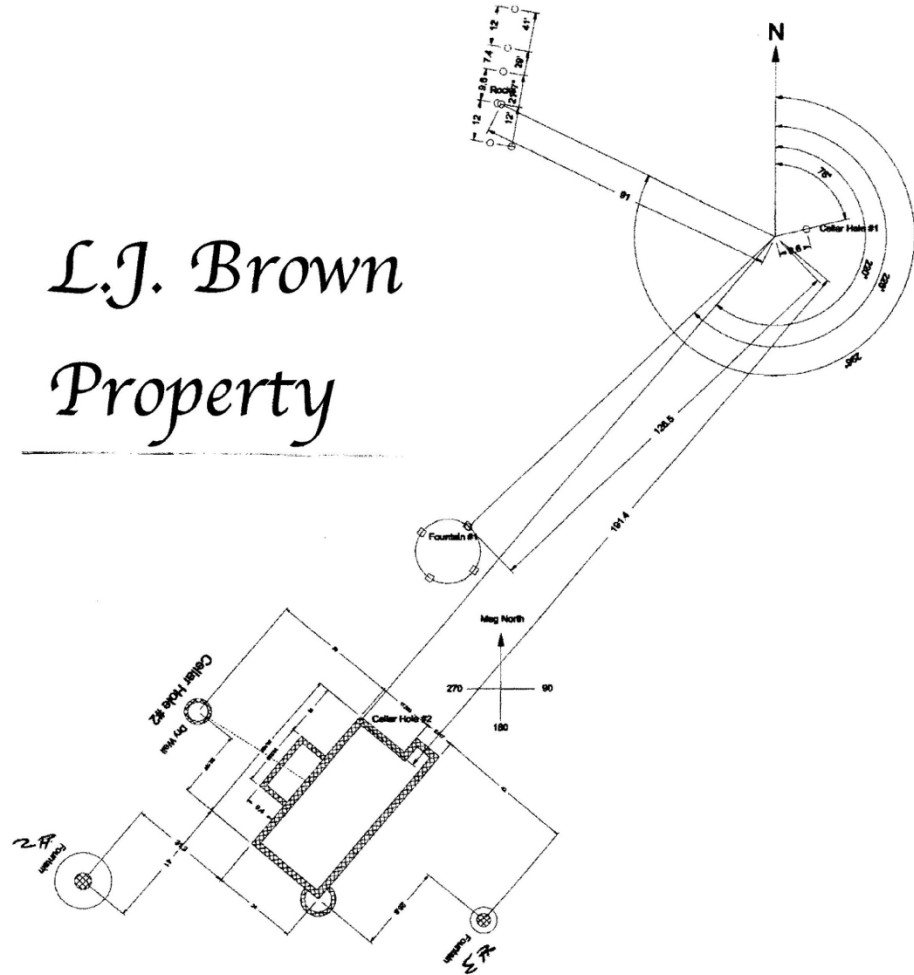
Wachusett Mountain Co.

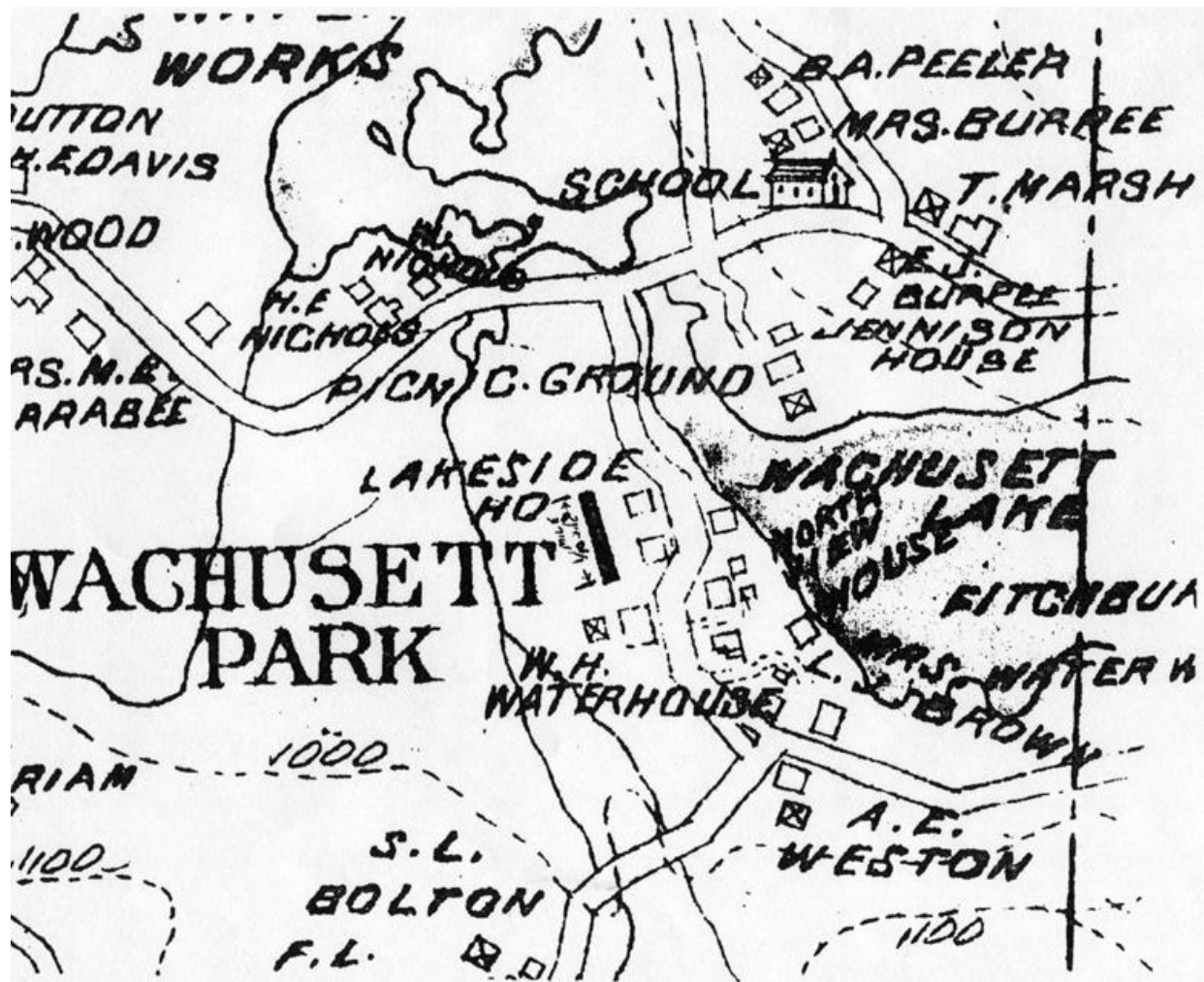
- Expands Morse's stone building to provide more space and a barn.
- Builds a 25¢ toll road to the Summit from Smith house on Pine Hill.
- Continues to expand the wooden portion of the Summit House in to include a bowling alley.
- Stephen Perkins opens a similar park and the Lake Shore House

1877

- Fitchburg's L. H. Brown buys eight acres
 - His home and estate become a showplace
 - Wachusett Park visitors enjoy peaceful walks among his exotic shrubs, trees, rare flowers, and fountains. >March
- Almost daily excursions to Mt Wachusett from the surrounding towns to enjoy distinct and distant views. >June
- Five hundred people, mostly from Westminster, attended the largest picnic ever thus far at Wachusett Park. >August
 - A special effort was made to entertain the children.
 - The little steamboat the "Mayflower," was piloted by W. G. Hosmer to the joy of all.
 - The Westminster Brass Band rendered some of their best music this summer.

L.J. Brown Property





1877 cont.

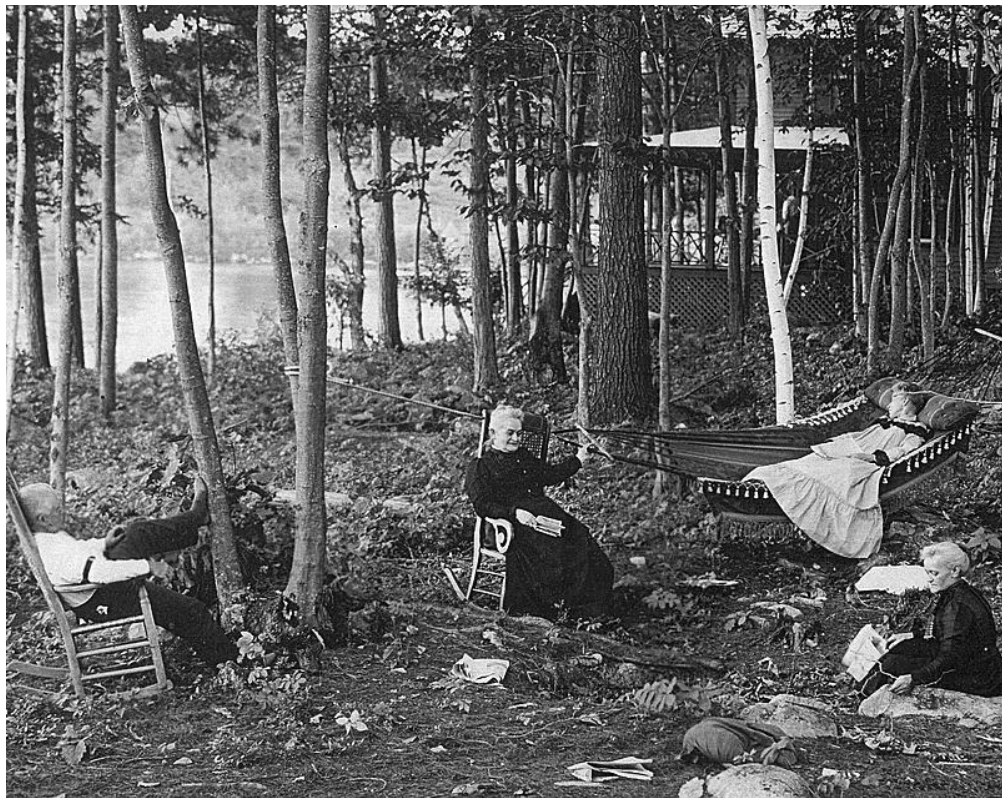
- Stephen Perkins' Lakeshore House was sold at auction to Joseph Waterhouse, for \$540. >November

Boston Post correspondent writes after visiting Mt. Wachusett :

- “Princeton, Wachusett Park, and Wachusett Mountain are a pleasant place for hot weather idling.”
 - Almost every village of Worcester County is set on a hill, and more than thirty towns/villages and twenty beautiful lakes, large/small, are spread out like a map at the feet of the visitor so that each building may be picked out and identified. With good glasses, portions of about three hundred cities and towns and villages may be seen, as well as parts of 5 states.”
 - “The top of the mountain includes two acres of level land, and there is a lakelet of pure, clear water within twenty feet of the summit level, and also a curious cavern. A neat and pleasant hotel of about thirty rooms provides a homelike feeling to all visitors.”
- The Summit House has from two to three hundred visitors a day on weekends.
 - A billiard hall is opened and a bowling alley will open soon.

1878

- The largest snowdrift ever seen on the north side of Mt. Wachusett has washed away. >May
- First Old Folks Picnic was held: >June
 - 87 three score & ten people were honored
 - By 400 family and friends.
 - A Brass band furnished good music,
 - A choir of old singers were heard.
 - Many dignitaries spoke & poems were read.
- An open-air theater was erected: >July
 - Dressing rooms on the sides of the stage
 - On a natural slope of the land by the lake.
- A ravine makes a natural path to the water where a wharf and boathouse were built.





1878 cont.

- A beach opens across the lake for swimming
- Nearby numerous private businesses begin
 - Arthur Stone's photography/tintype studio,
 - Livery services for stabling personal horses,
 - Barges to bring visitors the 5 miles from the railroad station in Westminster.
- Wachusett Park is deservedly becoming a very popular picnic and camping ground.
- Upwards of ten thousand people have visited the park this season. >September
- The steamer, "Wachusett", was very popular this year. The parks will close around Oct. 1.



1879

- **Princeton:** Carpenters and painters are busily engaged in getting things ready for the summer guests. >May
 - More people during the warm months than last year.
 - Already many of the most desirable rooms are taken
 - A Philadelphia group are taking twelve rooms at the Wachusett House.
- Summit House on Wachusett Mt., is open for summer guests. > May
- Repairs on the carriage road to the summit are nearly complete and the highway is now "safe and convenient."
- Large numbers of people are visiting Wachusett Park and Mountain, coming from all directions. >June



1879 cont.



- Since the railroad arrived Princeton, each year, there has been an increase in the number of summer boarders who have engaged rooms for three and four months. >June
- The "Lake Shore House," is renamed Lake Shore Cottage and extensively repaired, updated and painted. >June

Ad: "Lake Shore Cottage is ready to accommodate Picnics and Pleasure Parties on short notice. Steamer Wachusett will run on the lake for the season. Moonlight excursions a specialty. A good fleet of boats are available for rowing and fishing, as well as bowling, dancing, skating, rifle shooting, and other small games. Good stable for horses, grounds free to all; Ice cream and Candy Stand on hand. Fish dinners served in the best style."

1879 cont.

- Second Old Folks' Picnic, has its largest crowd yet, of over 700 former residents, and friends attended, and many young folks were there to assist the old people in having a good time. The steamer "Wachusett" ran all day under the very efficient management of Mr. W. H. Hosmer. >July 4th
- Already, 10 large picnics have taken place at Wachusett Park.
- Mr. F. A. Beaman of the Wachusett House was quite seriously injured while firing a cannon on July 4th. Bruised and burned on the face, but his eyes were uninjured. >July
- A large amount of trade to the mountain from Westminster is beginning to call for a road from Mr. Weston's place to intersect with the Mountain Road. >August
- Westminster Engineers surveyed proposed mountain road.
- Mr. Bolton is preparing to build a hotel at Wachusett Park, next spring. Several other building projects are rumored in the vicinity. >December

1880

- A branch of the Old Colony railroad from Pratt's junction to Wachusett Mountain is being discussed.
- Mr. Bolton open his new hotel. >May
 - Two stories high with a very large attic,
 - Office, parlor, large dining room, seating 50, kitchen, washroom, pantry, etc., 1st fl
 - Black walnut staircase leads to the 2nd floor with 7 very good large sleeping rooms with large closets,
 - Arranged as suites for families if desired.
- The hotel has:
 - A large, broad piazza on two sides & balcony.
 - With large 4 light glass windows
 - Painted in two shades of gray, a light body, with dark trimmings, a
 - Known as the "**North View House.**"



1880



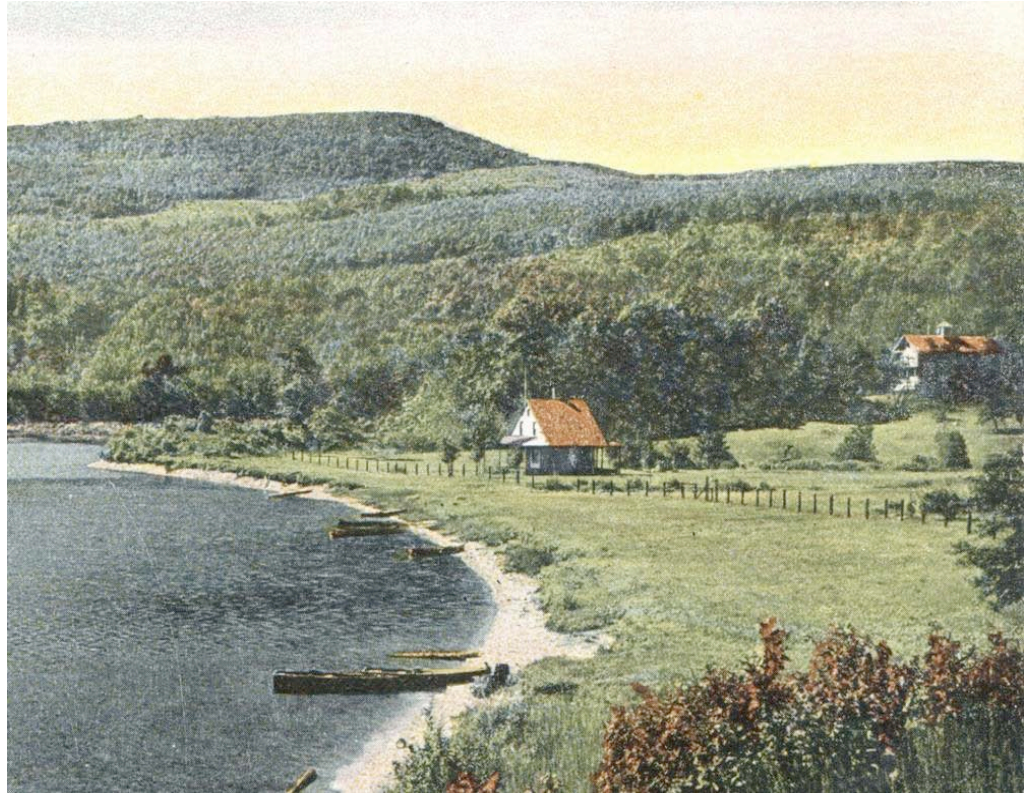
- The proposed road to connect Wachusett Park with the Mountain Road in Princeton is under review by county commissioners. >June

Princeton: All hotels are opening for guests by June 1st.

- The steam yacht "Wachusett" has been sold by Mr. Hosmer to J. H. McGrady of Boston. The patrons of Wachusett Lake will miss this steamboat.
- Mr. Bolton has secured the fast sailing steam yacht "Continental."
- Grounds filled all day for the Citizens Picnic. >July
 - A grand time was had by many
 - Music for dancing was furnished by Carter's Orchestra
 - All day the new steam yacht "Continental" toured about the lake.

1881

- Mr. Charles Kirby of Fitchburg erects a cottage and barn on Wachusett Lake.
 - He leases the the land,
 - Plans for Fall occupation.
 - It is 25 by 30 house has a five-foot piazza around it. >May
- For future development, Mr. Bolton builds roads and drives.
- Mr. Bolton pipes water to the North View House, and will also make use of it for adornment. >June





1881 cont.



- Camping parties are quite numerous in the vicinity of Wachusett Lake. Mr. Bolton provides food for such parties. >August
- Wachusett Lake experiences a "low water mark", >November
 - Engineers are brought in to examine why.
 - Conclusion: Wachusett Lake was made by a gradual filling up of what is known as the Wachusett Valley - later determined to be spring fed.
- P. A. Beaman, proprietor of the Wachusett House, has bought the Wachusett Mountain from parties in Fitchburg. >December

1882

- The yearly ritual, of filling ice houses for summer use is in full swing.
- Griswold renames Lake Shore Cottage to Lakeside House.
- The summit road has been put in perfect repair. Buildings repairs and improvements are in progress.

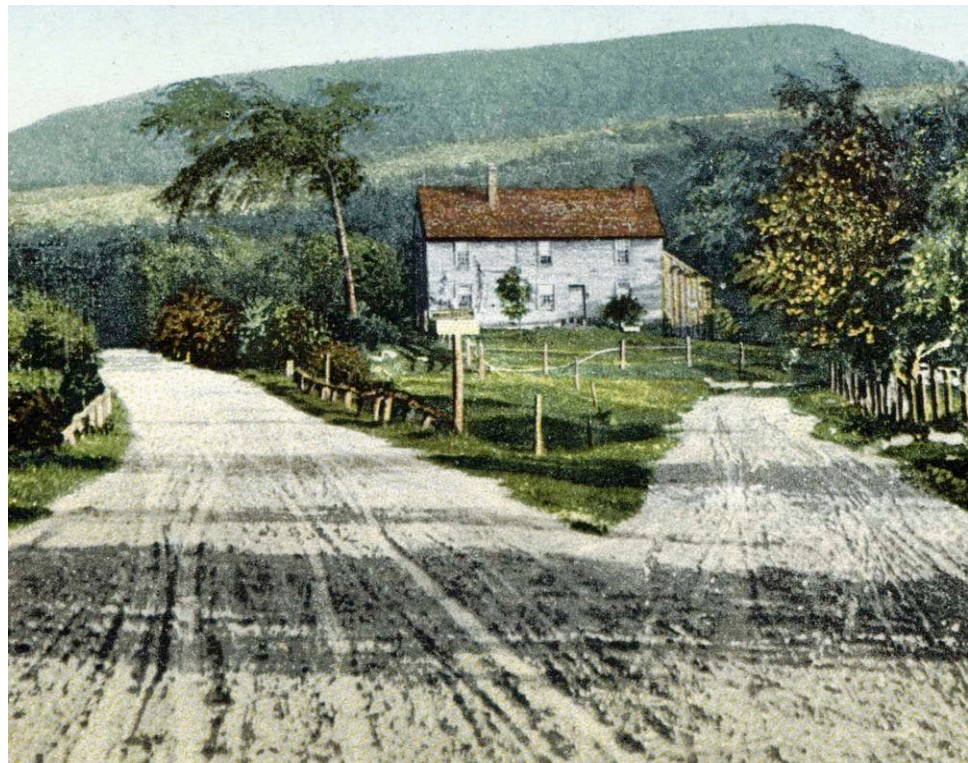
Princeton: The summer visitors on outward-bound stages are rather heavily laden, but their places are being filled by others who come to spend the month of September. >August

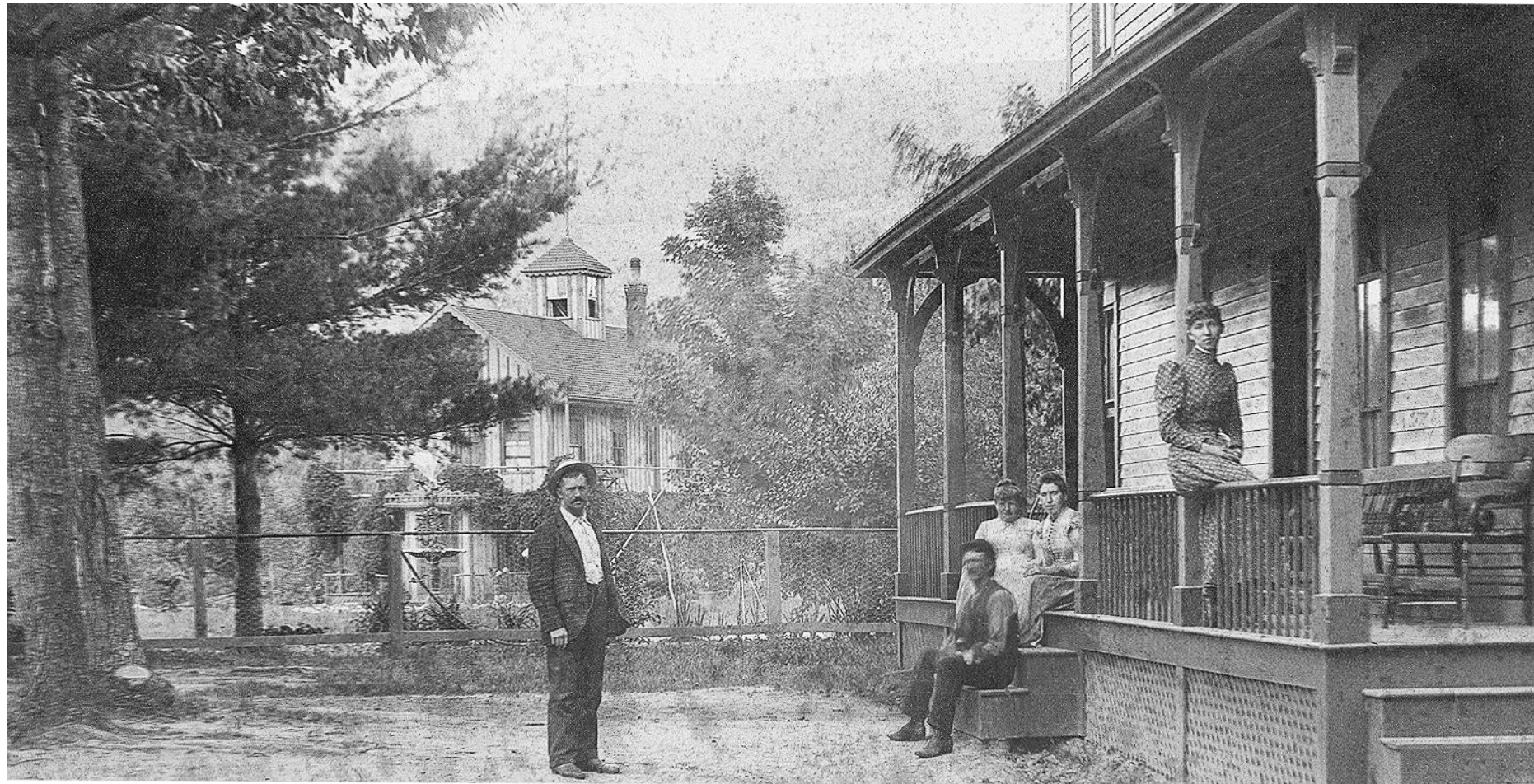
- Landlord Griswold holds a moonlight dance, with music by the Russell Orchestra of Fitchburg. >October
- The county commissioners will give the petitioners for the new route up the mountain from Wachusett Park another hearing, under the old petition. Westminster chose a committee to oppose it.

1883

Princeton: New road leading from the West Village to the Mountain House has begun. Some fifteen or twenty men are employed at the present time, and many more are expected next week. >June

- Several parties from over seas attend the sixth annual “Old Folks Picnic” at Wachusett Park.
- The proposed new route up to Mountain Rd. will:
 - Start near Fairmont Park, the summer residence of L. J. Brown,
 - Pass east of A. E. Weston's house, the Foskett place,
 - In nearly a direct line just east of the Roper barn,
 - Meet Mountain Road near the Summit Rd.
> August





1883 cont.



- Wachusett Lake is not as full as a few years back.
- The Park has never in better condition,
 - Trees are pruned and thinned,
 - Undergrowth has been cut and the roads, walks, and paths have all been repaired.
 - Hotel has been put in nice order, with new paint in the dining room and office.
 - Walls and parlors have been newly papered
 - Constant running water is piped from the mountain to the watering trough.
- The Westminster end of the Mile Hill Road is nearly completed.
- The Princeton end is more difficult, will be completed next summer. >November

1883-4

- S. L. Bolton has contracts to have built a 40x80 foot rock maple floored skating rink. >December
- Summit House is rebuilt by Beaman and Son
 - 30,000 visitors to the summit last year.
 - Thirty rooms, for 10 to 15 dollars a week, or 2.50 a day.
 - All rooms have gas and connect to the office by electric bells. (Frank Brooks).
 - The Summit pond supplies the house and barn with water for washing
 - Water is pumped to a holding tank on the second floor by a windmill.
 - Drinking water is carried from a spring a mile down the mountain.
- Mile Hill Rd. is completed from Mt. House Hotel to Wachusett Park. >May



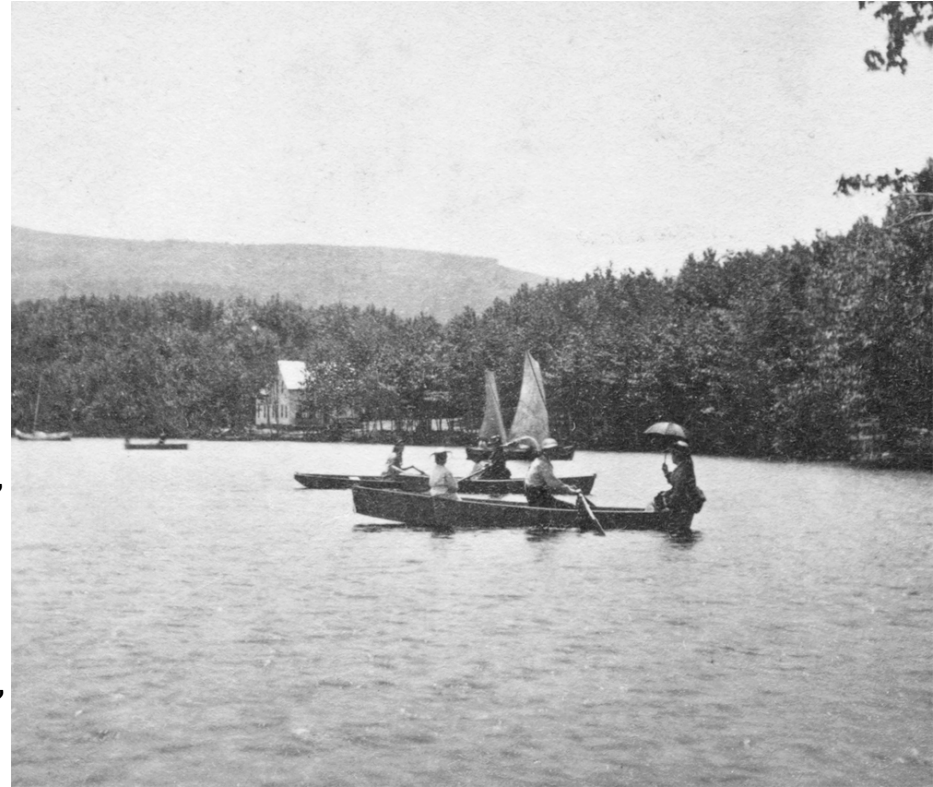
1884



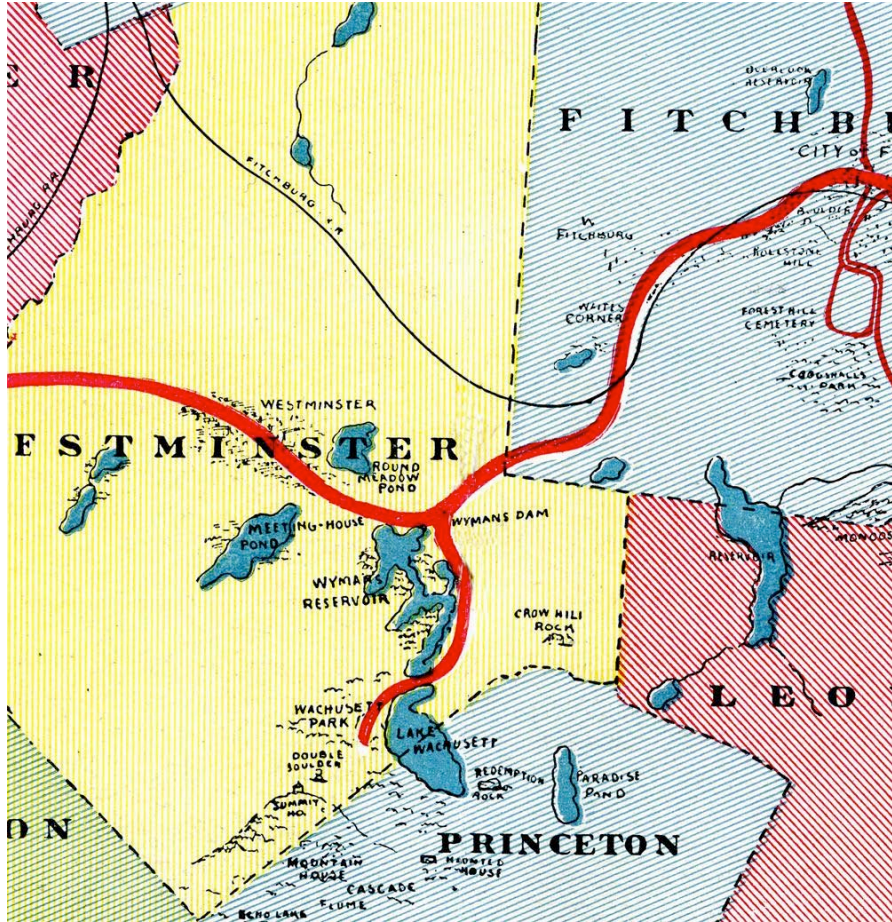
- Mr. Bolton opens his skating rink on Memorial Day.
>June
 - Professional skater Lester Forbes from Fitchburg
 - He runs the rink, and give instructions.
 - Music furnished by the Howard & Millers orchestra.
- Tremendous crowds use Wachusett Park and its various attractions. Griswold's Lakeside Hotel, and Jennison's were also liberally patronized. >July
- An exhibition of fancy skating is given at Wachusett Park, by Prof. Erni, the one-legged skater. >August
- Numerous Spiritualists and Post groups find Wachusett Park a great place to hold their events.
>October

1885

- Wachusett Park skating rink opens with additional improvements to the park.
 - Mr. Bolton installs six street lamps around the park.
 - An abundance of "pout" this season. >May
- Witcliffe Waterhouse installs telephone poles from Wachusett Park to the Summit. >June
- The Jennison House, on the left side of Wachusett Lake, is open. >July
 - John Parkhurst, who managed at Paradise Pond for the past two seasons, is the new proprietor.
 - They can accommodate for twenty-five boarders,
 - Amenities include boats, a bowling alley, swings, etc. for boarders to use for free.
 - No liquors will be allowed on the premises.



1886



- Mr. Bolton has purchased a new and valuable boat, which he had made to order.
- The “pout” market at Wachusett Lake was overstocked last week, one party from East Princeton bringing 2,400. The park is a great place for “pout dinners.”
>July

1889

- Gardner, Westminister, Fitchburg Railway Company builds a trolley spur to Wachusett Park built (Griswold Hotel and buildings removed)

1892

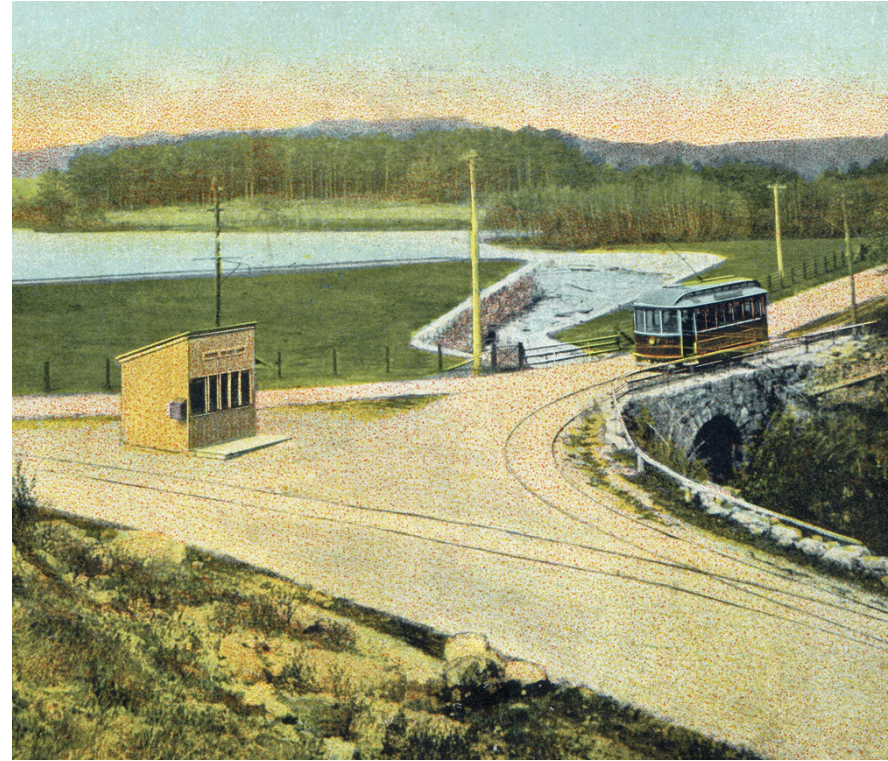
- City of Fitchburg given authority to take water from Wachusett Lake.

1902

- Gardner, Westminster, Fitchburg Railway Company purchases the 35 acres of Bolton and Griswold Parks, and completes an electric trolley spur to this area.
- Discussions begins about installing an electric trolley, partially cable driven, to the summit of Wachusett Mt. from Wachusett Park. Two routes are selected and surveyed. >October
- A trolley route is selected, stock is floated, and cars are ordered. >December

1903

- Commissioner expect the cable-line trolley to be operational by the 4th of July. > January
- Franchise to build a railway line to the top of Mt. Wachusett is removed due to lack of activity. A source of much disappointment to the locals. >June



1908

- Third Summit House is finished and roads rebuilt after being washed out. >June

1910

- Summit House Annex is built with billiard room, laundry, and several more sleeping rooms.

1919

- Water is pumped from Echo Lake to Summit House.

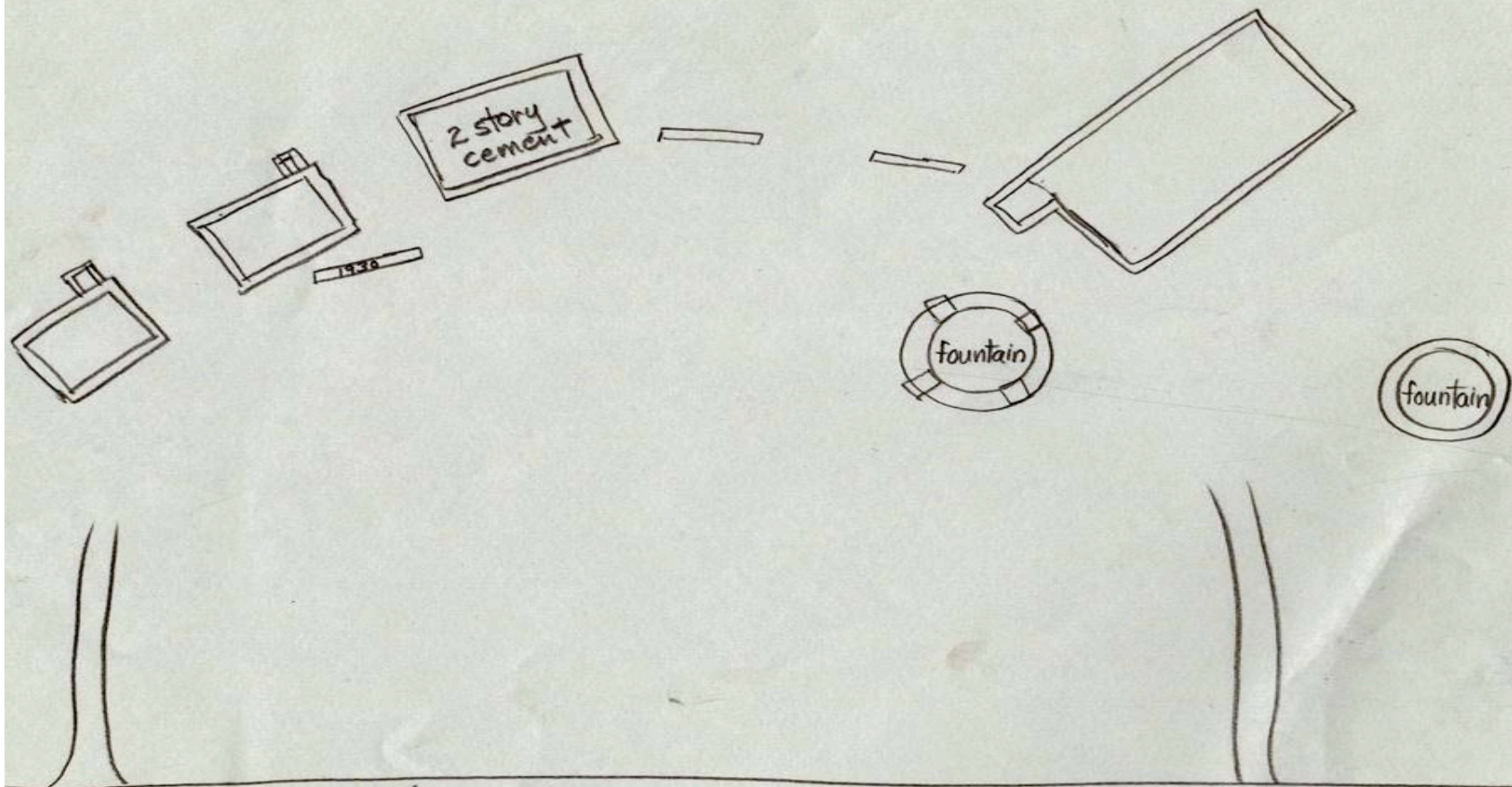
1930's

- Overnight visitors have dropped considerably. Soon the only amenities offered were a restaurant, souvenir shop and observation rooms.



- With the taking of Wachusett Lake by Fitchburg as a water supply, the beauty and accessibility to water activities gradually lessened.
- Visitors still came to picnic, have meetings, bowl, skate, attend the summer theater, and enjoy nature at this location.
- And because Mountain Road had been completed, these visitors also explored and enjoyed the 900 acres of Wachusett Mt.; it's unparalleled views, Echo Lake, and the Deer and Elk Park.
- The number of visitors dropped off incrementally with the rise in use of the automobile: the Park closes and trolley line is removed by 1923.





Mile Hill Road







