Bates Observatory 119 Years Old and Counting . . .

1893





2012

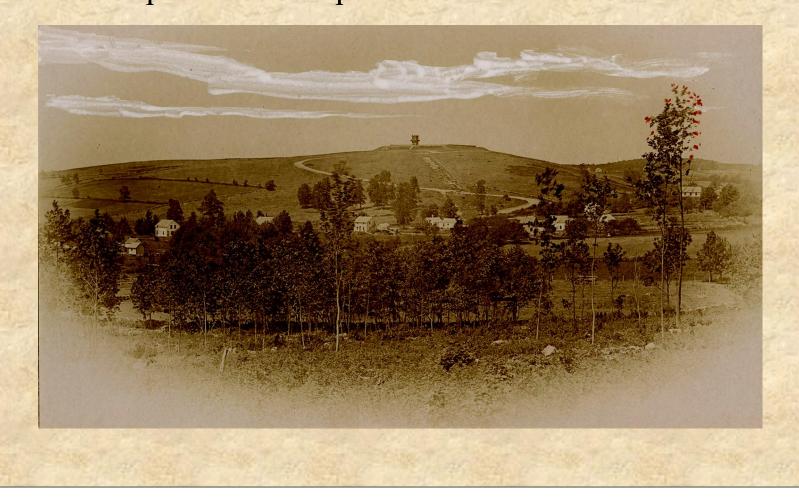
Meeting of the North Brookfield Board of Selectmen December 4, 2012

The George H. Doane Bequest

October 2004 February 2006 \$20,147.71 <u>\$70,059.26</u> \$90,206.97

Specific:

"For the maintenance, restoration and upkeep of Bates Observatory" The Bates Observatory was a \$1,000 gift to the townspeople from Theodore C. Bates (an amount equal to \$25,641 today, adjusted for inflation). It opened to the public in November 1893.



 1942 — used for Civil Defense Air Spotting Service Location during World War II — at that time it was in a state of disrepair

 1985 — Town voted down request to support renovation

 1997 — impending construction for Water Treatment Facility at Bell Hill

 1998 — Historical Commission began activity to place the Observatory on the National Register of Historic Places

1999 — Town voted to pursue listing
*** The effort was abandoned ***

 2000 – Graves Engineering backfilled reservoir and stabilized Observatory – continued to be considered a hazard to public safety

 2002 — Fence installed by Water Department to secure the facility

 2007 — The Observatory was listed as a Scenic and Unique Environment in Town's Master Plan

 2008 – The Observatory was listed as Priority #4 on the Town's Heritage Landscape Inventory Priority #1 – Downtown Development District Priority #2 – Bates Farm Area Priority #3 – Coy's Brook Corridor

*** To date Priority #1 work is still in progress ***

Timeline of Activity - Conclusion

 2008 — The Historical Commission sought bids from area construction firms to assess renovation

> Most comprehensive bid (\$63,000) <u>excluded</u> windows, doors, stairs, the catwalk, concrete and brickwork

 Board of Selectmen requested clarification and price cap to confirm scope of work

******* The project was abandoned *******

Next Steps

 Solicit input from Water and Police Departments, Historical Commission and Historical Society (other groups?)

 Share detailed timeline of activities and identify or locate missing materials, if possible

Sample Questions to be Considered by Groups

- Is \$90,000 enough to restore and maintain the Observatory?
- Who would be responsible for future maintenance and supervision (costs and manpower)?
- Are there any suggestions/alternatives that might serve to memorialize the gift at Bell Hill or elsewhere?
- Who would lead the project?

Conclusion

 Retrieve public input BEFORE asking townspeople to decide on future a course of action

 Proposed timeframe for town vote/decision – Late Spring/Summer 2013

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