



Colloquy

Sunday, May 6, 2018, at 1 PM, the Middlesex Canal Association, 71 Faulkner St, Billerica, will host a colloquy about Robert Thorson's book, *The Boatman: Henry David Thoreau's River Years*. For example, the Billerica town historian has been invited to discuss the credibility of Thorson's aspersion, p. 206, on the character of Daniel Wilson (1790 - 1861):

The next witness was Daniel Wilson, supervisor of the Middlesex Canal before and after construction of the great stone dam. He flatly stated that the dam had not been raised in 1828. He claimed that the flashboards for that dam, even when fully raised, were the same height as those of the older, 1798 dam. You, the reader, can contradict this statement by going to North Billerica and having a look, or by using Google Earth to see that the older dam is submerged by the present one, built in 1828.

Judge Samuel P. Hadley wrote in "Boyhood Reminiscences of Middlesex Village", c1905, that Wilson was a man of "sterling worth" to whom his father, locktender at the Merrimack River, was warmly attached. Thoreau said of the father in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*:

By noon we were let down into the Merrimack through the locks at Middlesex, just above Pawtucket Falls, by a serene and liberal-minded man, who came quietly from his book, though his duties, we supposed, did not require him to open the locks on Sundays. With him we had a just and equal encounter of the eyes, as between two honest men.

The father, locktender and honest man, friend of Wilson, is in the photo.