



MIDDLESEX CANAL FALL TALK

Sunday, October 30, 2016 at 1 pm, Bill Gerber will describe the “Landings” that were part of the canal and river interstate waterway between Boston Harbor and Concord NH before the steam locomotive transformed transportation.

In the first half of the 19th century a 120+ mile system of canals and navigable waterways provided ‘heavy lift’ transportation services through the Merrimack Valley and the area north of Boston. Over its lifetime, among the myriad of items that were shipped, this system transported countless logs and timber products for construction, heating, shipbuilding and export; granite and brick building materials, gunpowder and chemicals, and boatloads of cotton bales and textiles in support of the growing New England textile industry. Interspersed throughout much of this system were more than three dozen “Landings”, which provided shipping and receiving services for those who had goods to transport. It is these latter portals that are the subject of Bill's talk.

The talk will be in the Reardon Room of the canal visitor center/museum at the Billerica Falls of the Concord River, 71 Faulkner St, Billerica 01862. The visitor center opens at noon. The annual meeting of the Middlesex Canal Association will take a few minutes before the talk.

At 11:30, all are welcome to join proprietors of the Middlesex Canal on the porch of the visitor center for a walk to the **giant beaver lodge** recently built on the Thoreau Towpath, a round trip of less than two miles. A car could park at the Middlesex Canal sign at 100 Brick Kiln Road, Billerica 01862, approximately 1200' from the beavers. Henry Thoreau traveled on this part of the canal September 1, 1839, and wrote as follows:

"in the lapse of ages, Nature will recover and indemnify herself, and gradually plant fit shrubs and flowers along its borders. Already the kingfisher sat upon a pine over the water, and the bream and pickerel swam below. Thus all works pass directly out of the hands of the architect into the hands of Nature, to be perfected." *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.*

The walk is an opportunity to experience Thoreau's prediction after a lapse of 177 years.

Directions. Rte. 3 to exit 28, Treble Cove Road, then follow the Middlesex Canal signs. After crossing the Billerica Falls bridge over the Concord River, the parking lot is 100' on the right. Treble Cove Road, exit 28, is 7 miles north of Rte. 128 (I-95).

On I-495, take the N. Billerica exit south to the road's end at a T intersection, turn right, then bear right at the Y, go 700' and turn left into the parking lot. The visitor center is across the street. North Billerica, exit 37, is between Rte. 3 and I-93. By train, take the Lowell line to N. Billerica Station and walk west two blocks.