

## Middlesex Canal Association

P.O. Box 333 ☆ Billerica, Massachusetts 01821

May 1, 2020

Mr. Arthur T. Demoulas, trustee  
Telemachus and Irene Demoulas Family Foundation  
286 Chelmsford Street  
Chelmsford MA 01824

Re: Middlesex Canal

Dear Mr. Demoulas:

The Middlesex Canal Association has begun the adaptive reuse of a 150-year-old wool cloth storehouse as a visitor center/museum for the Middlesex Canal after issuance of a building permit on October 15, 2019. The general contractor (\$188,000), steel fabricator (\$225,000), and mason (\$166,000) have started work. The first phase of construction, renovation of the building, is expected to be completed with a new roof this summer.

The second phase, completing the building as a replacement for the existing visitor center/museum, will cost more than \$500,000. A link to the architect's drawings is enclosed. Billerica town meeting granted the Association \$100,000 in community preservation funds for the first phase but a second grant is not assured. The National Park Service provided \$11,500 for two grants under Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Wild and Scenic River Assistance. Past donors will likely continue to fund much of the work, but the need is large. The Telemachus and Irene Demoulas Family Foundation could be the funding that completes the new visitor center "for the benefit of the present & all Future Generations" as prayed at the groundbreaking for the canal in 1794 at the very location of the visitor center.

My bona fides can be established by speaking with Mike Psoinos, best friend of my nephew Ed Filistowicz, and with my cousin, Christina Facella.

Very truly yours,

*J. Jeremiah Breen*  
president

Enclosures  
List attached.



## Middlesex Canal Association

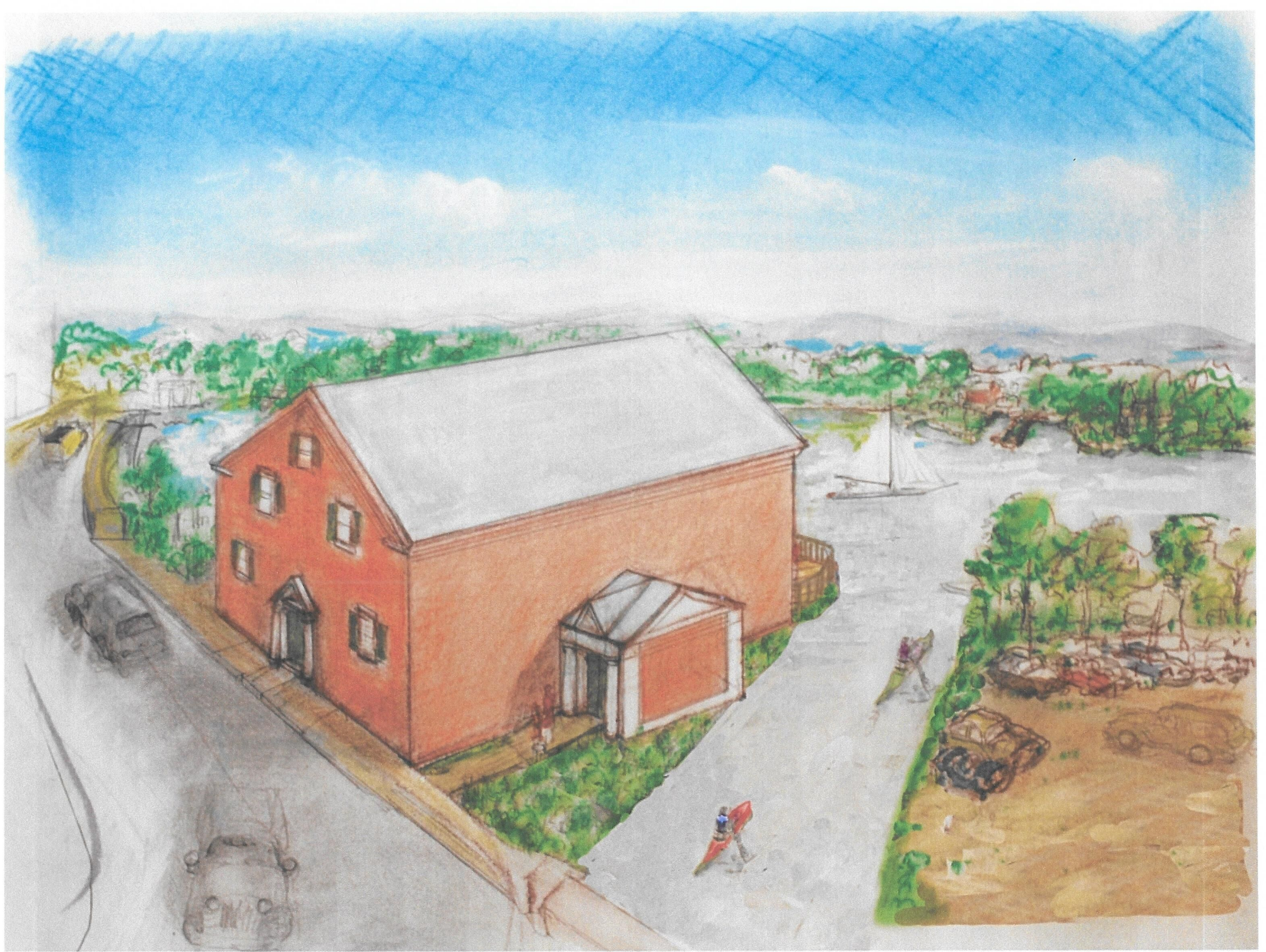
P.O. Box 333 ☆ Billerica, Massachusetts 01821

Enclosed with letter to

Telemachus and Irene Demoulas Family Foundation

1. Future MC Visitor Center by Dahill.
2. View from south, Oct. 20, 2019, groundbreaking practice.
3. View from south, Jn 11, 2020, winter shutdown.
4. Location on plan of MC Park.
5. MCA property, 14 acres, Maple Meadow Brook.
6. Walk on Thoreau Towpath, Oct. 19, 2014.
7. Best Smile, 2012 bike tour from Lowell.
8. *Lowell Sun* article, two pages, July 6, 2014.
9. Market Basket No. 4 aside canal, Chelmsford.
10. Hadley Field plaque.
11. "Future Home of MC" text.
12. "Future Home of MC" fundraising, summit pond view.
13. 2020 Schedule.
14. "Middlesex Canal Association" summary. Louis Eno.
15. The MC brochure with the Hoxie map.

Caveney Architecture's drawings, 54 sheets, can be downloaded as a PDF from the Middlesex Canal Association website,  
<http://www.middlesexcanal.org/photos/Permit%20Drawings%202019-08-30.pdf>  
or  
<https://tinyurl.com/1793MiddlesexCanal>.



Future Middlesex Canal Visitor Center/Museum, 2 Old Elm St, Billerica MA 01862



**View from south, Oct. 20, 2019  
Groundbreaking practice during towpath walk**



**View from south, Jan. 11, 2020  
before winter shut down**

Proposed  
**Middlesex Canal Park**  
 at the summit pond  
 Billerica MA 01862



**FAULKNER MILL /  
 MIDDLESEX CANAL  
 MUSEUM**



**Talbot Mill**  
 CAMBRIDGE TOOL & MFG. CO. INC.  
 C/O LEGGETT & PLATT INC.

**warehouse, 40' x 60'**  
**40' ground to roof peak**

**AREA 2:**

- 2.1 RESTORATION OF GUARD LOCK
- 2.2 OVERLOOK TERRACE
- 2.3 TRAFFIC CALMING PAVING

CONCORD RIVER

← **AREA 1**  
 Red Lock Area

SUMMIT POND  
 HISTORIC LOCATION OF  
 FLOATING TOWPATH

**AREA 3:  
 MILLPOND WEST**


- 3.1 MIDDLESEX CANAL MODEL
- 3.2 RECONSTRUCTED SEGMENT OF FLOATING TOWPATH
- 3.3 RESTORED PORTION OF TOWPATH
- 3.4 BOAT LAUNCH
- 3.5 PUBLIC ACCESS & PARKING

**AREA 4:  
 MILLPOND EAST**

- 4.1 STREET LEVEL OVERLOOK OF CANAL
- 4.2 WETLAND BOARDWALK
- 4.3 CANAL BOAT WALK
- 4.4 RESTORED PORTION OF TOWPATH
- 4.5 RECONSTRUCTED FLOATING TOWPATH SEGMENT



At Maple Meadow Aqueduct leading north toward 1.8 mile of canal  
in Wilmington donated by Nancy Webber and Julia Ann Fielding



Walk on Thoreau Towpath  
Middlesex Canal, Oct 19, 2014





Best smile  
2012 bike tour of  
Middlesex Canal  
from Lowell train station

Lowell Sun/  
July 6, 2014

# Just like those barges, they're on the move

## Middlesex Canal Association acquires new home for museum, visitor center

By Rick Sobey  
rsobey@lowellsun.com

**BILLERICA** — When Betty Bigwood asks tour groups whether they'd like to hand-dig a 27-mile canal with pick axes and shovels, parents look the other way while children raise their hands, not knowing exactly what goes into such an arduous project.

"It was the greatest work of its kind in the country," said

Bigwood, one of the 13 directors of the Middlesex Canal Association. "There was nothing like it."

To continue preserving the canal's history and inform the public about its significance throughout Greater Lowell and Boston, the Middlesex Canal Association is planning to move into a permanent home with a much larger space

Please see **MUSEUM/5**



A canal boat model on display at the Middlesex Canal Museum and Visitor Center in Billerica. The museum plans to move to the 1880s Talbot cloth warehouse.

SUN / BOB WHITAKER

# Like those barges, canal museum on the move

**MUSEUM/**From Page 1

for exhibits.

The association has purchased the 1880s Talbot cloth warehouse for \$1, in the hopes of using it as the future Middlesex Canal Museum and Visitor Center in Billerica.

The warehouse is adjacent to the site where construction of the canal began 220 years ago, and it borders Summit Mill Pond, the highest point of the 27.3-mile canal, from the Merrimack River to the Charles River in Boston.

"It will be our own place at the highest point of the canal, and we sure hope the community rises to the occasion

## Watch Video



Exclusive video at [www.lovelisun.com](http://www.lovelisun.com)

with fundraising," added Bigwood, of Wilmington. The initial goal is to raise \$100,000 to replace the roof that's caving in.

This future home would be at 2 Old Elm St., diagonally across the street from the current museum in the Faulkner Mills at 71 Faulkner St. in North Billerica.

After renting space in the Faulkner Mills for 13 years, the association decided it had to take advantage of the old cloth warehouse for \$1, purchasing it from next-door neighbor Pace Industries.

"Coming up with rent is a constant challenge for us, so this will be more much stable to have our own, wonderful space across the street," Bigwood said. "It will be much bigger with more exhibits. It's



"Coming up with rent is a constant challenge for us, so this will be more much stable to have our own, wonderful space across the street," said Betty Bigwood, right, one of the 13 directors of the Middlesex Canal Association, with Billerica resident and community activist Sandy Libby, who is helping with the project.

a major step towards preserving the canal's history."

The renovation of the 40-foot-by-60-foot abandoned building will be expensive, Bigwood stressed. As a result, the Middlesex Canal Association reached out to Billerica

resident and community activist Sandy Libby, who works on several projects and is "such an asset to the town," according to Bigwood.

Libby has already helped map out a fundraising plan, soliciting businesses and

looking for state and federal grants. There's also a grass-roots campaign to acquire funding from the community.

"We see this as an educational resource, a wonderful history of Yankee ingenuity," said Libby, also the playground coordinator for the Billerica Recreation Department. "This is such a huge part of history, and the whole history of transportation is an important lesson for both kids and adults.

"This was such an incredible engineering feat, and you never know how you can impact and inspire kids in life with this engineering history," she added. "You need to expose kids to this."

The start of the project will include rebuilding the roof and constructing a bridge to access the building, said Libby, who called the abandoned warehouse a "well-made, solid, beautiful building." The association wants skylights with the new roof, as well as three floors in the building with an elevator.

A structural engineer will be checking out the building next week.

The Middlesex Canal Association also plans to attend a future Billerica Farmer's Market on a Monday evening, asking for donations for the project.

Donations of \$10,000 or more will earn Platinum Status, \$5,000 or more will earn Gold Status, \$2,500 or more will earn Silver Status, and \$500 or more will earn Bronze Status. Contributing businesses will be featured on a permanent display in the museum, on its website and in



The Middlesex Canal Association has acquired the 1880s Talbot cloth warehouse, at 2 Old Elm St. in Billerica, in the hopes of using it as the future Middlesex Canal Museum and Visitor Center.

SUN PHOTOS / BOB WHITT

its literature. Donations will qualify for 501(c)(3) tax status.

The museum at 71 Faulkner St., all volunteer-run, is open for free on Saturdays and Sundays from 12 to 4 p.m. It costs \$10 per year to become a member and \$20 per year to become a voting member of the Middlesex Canal Association.

There are more than 250 members in the association,

learning the history of the canal and helping save the historic remnants of the Middlesex Canal.

For more information on the museum and the Middlesex Canal Association, visit [www.MiddlesexCanal.org](http://www.MiddlesexCanal.org), call 978-670-2740, or email [fundraising@middlesexcanal.org](mailto:fundraising@middlesexcanal.org).

Follow Rick Sobey on Twitter and Tout @rsobeyLSun.



A view of Faulkner Falls by the old Talbot cloth warehouse in Billerica. Plans call for making it the new home of the Middlesex Canal Museum and Visitor Center.



A museum mural shows a scene from the canal's heyday.



## MIDDLESEX CANAL 1793-1853

At this location canal boats pulled by horses carried freight and passengers between Boston and the Merrimack River at Lowell before the days of railroads.

The canal ran from Charlestown through what are now Somerville, Medford, Winchester, Woburn, Wilmington, Billerica, and Chelmsford to Lowell.

The canal was just over 27 miles long. It was 20 ft. wide at the bottom, 30½ ft. wide at the surface, and 3½ ft. deep. There were 20 locks, 8 aqueducts, and 50 bridges.



ROUTE OF OLD MIDDLESEX CANAL THROUGH LOWELL

PLAQUE ON GRANITE COLUMN, HADLEY FIELD, LOWELL

## Future Home of the Middlesex Canal

March 6, 2014, the Middlesex Canal Association was given a 150-year-old wool cloth warehouse. It is at 2 Old Elm Street, Billerica 01862. In the story of the canal, it is at the location of the ceremonial groundbreaking, September 10, 1794, which made simple the decision for some directors of the Association to vote yes on the motion to accept the gift, honoring the prayer at the groundbreaking, "May the Eye of Wisdom and the Eternal Mind aid this work designed for the benefit of the present & all Future Generations".

The enclosed fundraising flyer and location plan show the warehouse on its point of land in the Concord River, across the canal from the proposed Middlesex Canal Park. With two floors and a walk-in attic, the future visitor center/museum would have 25% more floor space than the existing museum, an historic location, a river view, be adjacent to a park, and be rent free.

An architect has given an estimate of \$320,000, but the details indicate \$320,000 would be a starting price for the adaptive reuse of the renovated warehouse as a visitor center. Right now the need is to replace the roof as the enclosed view of the building from the south shows. While the granite foundation and 18" thick brick walls have lasted 150 years, the years under a leaking roof have rotted the wood. The first phase of construction is to gut the building, replace the wood beams and columns with steel, new floors and roof, and repoint the walls. With the October 15, 2019 building permit in hand, the preconstruction meeting was two weeks later, October 29.

# The Middlesex Canal Association

## **Future Home of the Middlesex Canal Museum**

2 Old Elm St, North Billerica, MA

[www.middlesexcanal.org](http://www.middlesexcanal.org)

[fundraising@middlesexcanal.org](mailto:fundraising@middlesexcanal.org)

978-670-2740



## **Get Involved**

**Join our campaign**

**Become a member**

**Visit for FREE**

The Middlesex Canal Museum is currently across the street at 71 Faulkner Street in the Faulkner Mill open Saturday and Sunday 12-4pm

## 2020 Schedule

Winter Meeting, 1 pm, Sunday, Feb 9  
Alison Field-Juma, "Assabet, Sudbury, and Concord Rivers"

Hike Beautiful Billerica, 9:45 am,  
Saturday Mar. 7, Canal South  
Billerica Falls Park, meet at gazebo

Spring Walk, 1:30 pm, Sunday, Mar 22  
Billerica South to Smallpox Cemetery cancelled

Bike Tour South, 10:44 am, Sunday, Apr 19  
cancelled

Spring Meeting, 1 pm, Sunday, May 3  
Bill Gerber, "Early Canals in England"  
Zoom video conference

Riverfest, 10 am, Saturday, June 2  
Thoreau Towpath to Chelmsford  
<https://riverfest.sudbury-assabet-concord.org/>

18th Bike Tour North, 9 am, Saturday, Oct 3

Fall Walk, 1:30 pm, Sunday, Oct 18  
Wilmington Town Park to Patch's Pond

Fall Meeting, 1 pm, Sunday, Oct 25  
Dick Hawes, "George Mansfield - Billerica & Bedford Railroad"

Visitor Center/Museum open Sat and Sun, noon-4, except on a holiday (April 12, Easter). Board of directors meets the 1st Wednesday of each month, 3:30-5:30, except July and August.

# Middlesex Canal Association

The Middlesex Canal Association began in 1962 after a rousing talk on the canal at the Billerica Historical Society where the speaker challenged those present to do something to preserve the canal. The first president of the Association, Arthur L. Eno, served for ten years. Louis was a founder of the Lowell law firm of Eno, Martin, and Donohue. In 1963 the first canal property was donated. In 2009 the 27¼ miles of canal was included in the National Register of Historic Places.

In its 58th year, the Association had a schedule of three public meetings, two walks and two bike rides. See enclosed "2020 Schedule". Also enclosed are flyers and photos of past events. More information on past events is at [www.middlesexcanal.org](http://www.middlesexcanal.org). The website has a copy of every issue of the Association's journal, now published three times a year, since the first in 1963.

The visitor center/museum is open every Saturday and Sunday except Easter. It is located at the Billerica Falls of the Concord River in 4500 square feet of rented space in the Faulkner Mill, 71 Faulkner Street, Billerica. Several hundred Wilmington third graders have a hands on history lesson, at the museum. The meeting room was used for baby showers, first communions, etc. Notable were rentals for a fashion shoot and a section meeting of SAE International with electric cars on exhibition in the Faulkner garage. The Society of Industrial Archaeologists met at the museum for a bus tour of the canal.

While much of the 27¼ miles of canal between Lowell and Boston has been built over with only historical markers like that in Lowell, photo enclosed, to identify what had been, much of the canal was built in wetlands and exists. A map showing what was built over and what exists is in the enclosed brochure, *The Middlesex Canal, 1793-1853*. Some of the canal has been protected from building by having been given to the Association, for example the Webber gift in Wilmington of 0.8 miles, which is now part of a beautiful canal walk shown on the enclosed photo. Five years ago 1 mile of canal in Billerica was offered by the Shaffer family. The Middlesex Canal board of directors voted to accept the gift, but as the 1 mile comes with 106 acres, including an EPA Superfund site, the acceptance is conditional. An easement like that granted on UPS property in Chelmsford would have been better for the Association but not for the Shaffers.

In Boston, the builder of *One Canal Street*, a 12-story mixed-use building with 310 apartments, commissioned Thomas Dahill, a director of the Association, to do a painting of the Middlesex Canal for the entrance pavilion. The 7x20' high painting represents the canal as part of the waterway stretching from Boston Harbor to Concord, New Hampshire. The painting is above a bronze map of the canal with the words, "The Middlesex Canal, uniting the waters of [the Merrimack] river with the harbor of Boston, is ... the greatest work of the kind which has been completed in the United States." Albert Gallatin, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, *Report to Congress on Public Roads and Canals*, April 4, 1808.

Market Basket #4 is within 300' of an extant part of the Middlesex Canal as shown on the enclosed Google Earth photo.





The  
MIDDLESEX  
CANAL

1793-1853

*FLOATING TOWPATH  
across the Concord River, Billerica,  
by William Barton (1825). Courtesy,  
Billerica Historical Society.*