



In 1915, the general assembly appointed the Providence Water Supply Board to condemn 14,800 acres of land in rural Scituate. The hardworking people of the five villages were devastated. By December 1916, notices were delivered to the villagers stating that the homes and land they had owned for generations were to be taken and destroyed. Construction was well under way by 1921, and water was being stored by November 10, 1925. On September 30, 1926, the treatment plant began operation. It now serves more than 60 percent of Rhode Islanders. The \$21 million project was the largest ever undertaken in the state at the time. Today these quiet villages lie up to 87 feet beneath the cold, dark waters of the Scituate Reservoir.

Raymond A. Wolf lives in a small village called Hope, in the Town of Scituate. His mother, Helen O. Larson, also lived in a small village in Scituate, called Rockland. It was one of the five villages that were destroyed to build the Scituate Reservoir. Through her stories, poems, and extensive research at the Providence Water Supply Archives, he has compiled volumes of information on the lost villages and the construction of the Scituate Reservoir. As one reader commented: "Most importantly, his books contain written work of his mother's poetry. Through her work she has given us a chance to step back in time and feel what people were going through first hand." Wolf is available for 60 – 90 minute presentations of his books. Check his web site, www.raywolfbooks.com for more details.

In 1772, a portion of Providence received water through a system of hollowed out logs. By 1869, seventeen years after Zachariah Allen campaigned for a public water supply, the public voted in favor of introducing water into the city from the Pawtuxet River in Cranston. By 1900, it was clear that more, purer water was needed. On April 21, 1915, the General Assembly created the Providence Water Supply Board and granted them the Power of Eminent Domain. The dam that annihilated the villages is 3,200 feet long and 100 feet high and holds back more than 40 billion gallons of water. Today the the largest inland body of water in Rhode Island is the Scituate Reservoir.

