

he way it was:

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OK history buffs, get out your pencils

By George A. Parkhurst

Are you one of the thousands of people who enjoy the popular pastime of Trivial Pursuit?

If you are, here is a chance to see how well you are informed on local history concerning the naming of a few selected locations in Chelmsford.

The answers will be found at the end of the article. (No fair peeking!)

1. Where was the bridge from which Bridge Street derived its name?

2. Did we once have a subterranean transit system that provided the name for Subway Avenue?

3. From where did the name Turnpike Road come?

4. Whose drum gave Drum Hill (and Drum Hill Road) its name?

5. Why was Canal Street so named?

6. How did Riverneck Road get its name?

7. Where was the gold mine that prompted naming the intersection of Chelmsford and Steadman Streets Golden Cove?

8. Brick Kiln Road has been in the news lately. How did it get its name?

9. Why is the street at the head of the Center Common called Academy Street?

10. Did Robin Hill get its name from the large flocks of red-breasted birds found there?

Now let's see how many of the above questions you answered correctly.

1. Bridge Street was not named for a structure but got its name from the Rev. Ebenezer Bridge, who served as the fourth minister of the First Parish Church between 1741 and 1792, and lived in the vicinity.

2. No, what is now Subway Avenue was a trail used as a short cut between Chelmsford Street and Stearns Square (intersection of Dalton Road and Steadman Street). The dense growth of pine boughs overhead probably gave it the appearance of a subway. The 1921 town report states, in connection with the approval of Subway Avenue, ... "raise and appropriate the sum of \$700 for the purpose of straightening, grading and improving a section of the Subway, so called."

3. Turnpike Road is a short section of the Middlesex Turnpike (1810), the stage coach route from Boston to Concord, N.H. The Turnpike crossed Chelmsford Street at Emerson Avenue (next to Dunkin' Donuts) and continued to Route 4 at Drum Hill. Portions of the abandoned right of the way can be traced by the straight stone walls that bordered it. Old Middlesex Turnpike Street follows part of the old road.

4. There is no drum associated with Drum Hill. It is so named because the hill in the vicinity of the Route 3 rotary is a drumlin, a distinctive geological formation in the form of a ridge formed of material left by the glacier.

5. Canal Road is a section of the abandoned tow path of the Middlesex Canal that connected the Merrimack River in Chelms-

ford (near Alexander's Market on Middlesex Street) with Boston.

6. Riverneck Road was the road to the "neck," as it was known. This was the neck of land between the Merrimack and Concord Rivers. It was originally East Chelmsford but became the Town of Lowell in 1826 and the City of Lowell in 1836.

7. The name Golden Cove appeared in the records as early as 1688 but its origin has not been definitely established. There are three versions based on the sand that covered the bottom of the old fordway, the yellow lilies once numerous there, a story that the Indians had found gold there — possibly iron pyrites or "fools gold." Cove denotes a sheltered nook.

8. Brick Kiln Road was the way to the kiln where bricks were made about 1800. It is believed that the bricks for the 1802 schoolhouse on Westford Street came from this kiln.

9. A private secondary school known as "Chelmsford Academy" was opened in 1859 in a building located where the Central Baptist parsonage stands today. The coming of the Civil War forced it to close in 1862.

10. No, Robin Hill did not derive its name from the birds but rather from the Indian Chief Robin who had a corn field on its slopes when the first settlers came here in 1653-54.