

A description of Bullough's Pond from...

King's Handbook of Newton

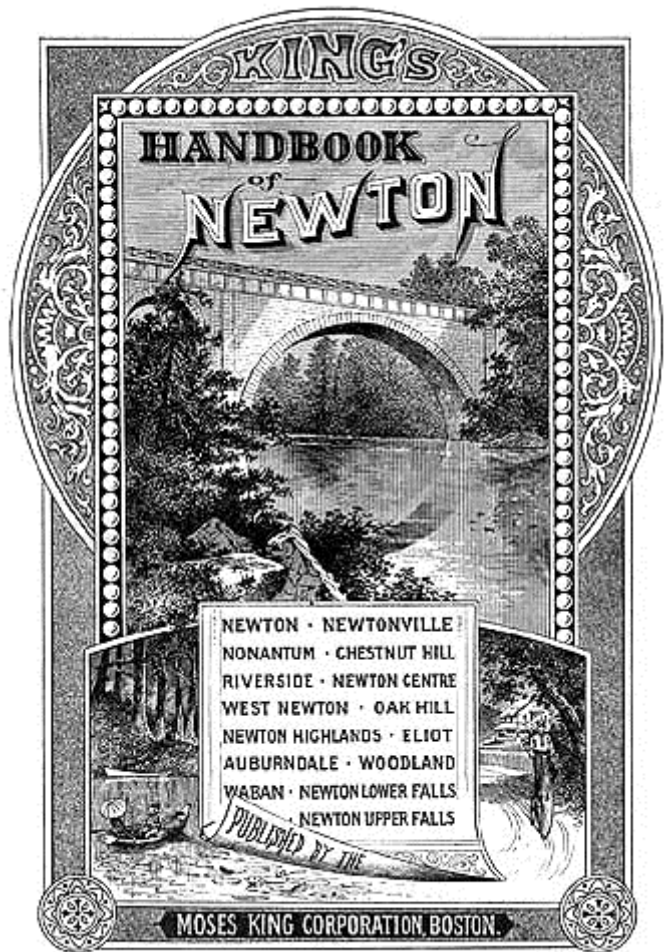
by **M. F. Sweetser**

Published 1889

A little way beyond the Claflin estate, Walnut Street enters the beautiful region around Bullough's Pond, and so passes on, by the great Newton Cemetery, to Newton Centre. Bullough's Pond is near the geographical centre of Newton, rather less than a mile from the Newtonville station, or from Newton Highlands, or Newton Centre, being somewhat nearer the first named, by the lovely avenue of Walnut Street. It is a deep basin of pure spring-water,

nearly half a mile long; and Walnut Street divides it into two parts. The glen is surrounded by hills of singular beauty, covered with tall forests, and rising gracefully on either side, so that, as the poet historian of Newton says, it resembles "a sapphire gem set round with emeralds." A few years ago, an attempt was made to convert these lovely glens and dales and highlands into a public park, for the enjoyment of the city; but the great attendant cost militated against the scheme and it was allowed to fall into abeyance. This Central Park was to have included 174 acres of land, then valued at \$87,000; and in the hot debates which preceded the adverse settlement of the question (in 1883), Messrs. Farlow and Pulsifer championed the cause of the park, while Farquhar, Bacon, and other tribunes of the people vigorously opposed it. Since that time, much of the land has been acquired by George W. Morse and Austin R. Mitchell, who have opened magnificent avenues across it, and have even schemed to render it more accessible by building a horse-railroad from Newtonville square to Newton Highlands. On the high ridge west of and overlooking the pond a line of handsome houses was erected, in 1887. An attempt has been made to change the ancient name of Bullough's Pond to "Pearl Lake." The pond commemorates John Bullough, an old-time miller, whose estate extended along the west side.

Early in the present century, the wild places of the woods in this locality were the haunt of another Bullough, the terror of the town, a desperado and ne'er-do-well who stole General Hull's horses, and spent much of his time in the State Prison. It was the son of this hapless village convict who redeemed the



clouded fortunes of the family by becoming an honest miller, in the old mill on Walnut Street. Tom Bullough, the bandit, was a merry and waggish fellow, withal, and one of the first of the Socialists, averring that he never *stole* things but merely converted the superfluity of rich men's goods to the use of the poor, of whom he was chief. One day he made a foray on one of the neighboring farms, and began to measure off with his cane a piece of new homespun cloth, then drying on the grass. The housewife demanded to know his purpose; and he rejoined: "I'm measuring off enough for two shirts." To which she made answer: "Tom Bullough, if you take any of that, you will answer for it at the Judgment Day." And lightly tossing all of it on his shoulder, he replied: "Well, then I'll take the whole piece," and so retired to his den among the rocks by the pond. Dreadful stories were told of this outcast and the "lewd fellows of the baser sort" whom he used to gather around him here; and the Puritan mothers of the adjacent valleys used to frighten their refractory children with the grim name of Tom Bullough.

At the outlet of the pond, Ensign John Spring erected his mill, before George Washington was born; and in 1737 the town's surveyors of highways "Voted, to stake out the way that leads from Dedham road to Ensign Spring's mill, called Mill lane." This was the first grist mill in Newton, and among its part-owners were the Parks, Williamses, Wards, and Trowbridges. Before the dams were built, sea-fish ascended the little stream to the pond; and its name of Smelt Brook was derived from the schools of smelt that used to run up its limpid course. In the lowlands south of the pond are deposits of bog-iron ore, which used to be sent in large quantities to the forges at Easton, early in the present century.

On a dreamy day of Indian summer, one can hardly choose a lovelier rambling-ground than these voiceless solitudes about Bullough's Pond, amid the scarlet glories of the barberries and sumachs, the vivid gold of the witch hazel, the pyrola's pale green, the wild cherry's orange and crimson, the oak's sprays of fiery glow, the deep green of the bittersweet, the sombre shadows of the evergreens. The metallic blue of the lakelet is overhung with a glamour of haze; troops of fearless squirrels scamper over the falling leaves; and the sound of the woodsmen's axes comes far, faint, and dull on the sweet and languid air. In the old days game abounded in these forests, then much more extensive, and in fact hardly broken by the infrequent clearings of the settlers. Bears were shot from the door-yards of the farms and the town treasury paid out many a pound sterling for wolf-scalps. In 1717 and in 1741 the town appointed Deer Reeves, to prevent the wanton extermination of its deer. Bounties were paid by the selectmen for the killing of blackbirds, woodpeckers, and jay birds; and a goodly fine was imposed upon all dogs "that shall be taken damage feasant."

http://books.google.com/books?id=cTEAAAAAYAAJ&dq=king%27s+handbook+of+newton&source=gs_navlinks_s