

Historical Odds and Ends About Colebrook, II

1732, May It was enacted by the Governor, Council and Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same that an act appointing and empowering sundry persons in the Town of Windsor, their heirs and assigns, that are proprietors of several parcels of land lying westward of Farmington and Symsbury, to meet and make partition of said parcels of land amongst themselves.

Mathew Allyn, Roger Wolcott and Samuel Mather Esquires, of the Town of Windsor, with sundry other inhabitants of said Windsor, obtained a patent duly executed under the seal of this corporation, dated May 22, 1729. [Northwestern Connecticut]

The third parcel of land, containing 18,199 acres, bounded northerly on the Colony line [Massachusetts], southerly partly on land belonging to Hartford grantees [Winchester] and partly on land belonging to the grantees of Windsor [Barkhamsted], westerly on land belonging to the Governor and Company of Connecticut [Norfolk], easterly on land belonging to the grantees of Hartford [Hartland], is hereby called, and shall forever hereafter be called, Colebrook.

PUBLIC RECORDS OF CONN - Vol. X, page 389.

1744 The appropriation meeting [of the Town of Windsor] was opened according to the adjournment from Feb. 14, 1743/4. The proprietors of said meeting do order and agree that no tree or tree of wood or timber shall be fell or carried away in the boundaries of Colebrook nor any entry or improvement shall be made upon the land in Colebrook without liberty granted from the proprietors in their appropriation meeting or until the appropriation shall agree to an appropriation of the land.

[This is evidence that the Proprietors of Windsor had sent work parties into Colebrook to girdle certain trees in the future Town of Colebrook probably in the early 1730s. This would kill the huge trees within an area deemed a future site for a farm or community center. In this area, pine and hemlock trees will grow large enough to be of economic importance within 35 years or so, and could have been targeted by timber thieves from surrounding towns, all of which had been inhabited for years before Colebrook saw her first house (in 1766). In an area that only had two paths (hardly worth the term "highway"), there was no possible way to utilize or transport the huge trees of the virgin forest, but a young pine 12 to 14 inches in diameter could be converted into usable timber. The first building in Colebrook was a lumber mill, in use by May, 1766, in Colebrook Center, built by Erastus Wolcott at the request of the Connecticut General Assembly. Wolcott also constructed a sawyer's house at the top of a nearby rise, which is still in existence as the central portion of 561 Colebrook Road (the Draper estate, currently for sale). The following February (1767), Samuel Rockwell, who had become business partners with Wolcott, moved from Windsor into this dwelling with his family, and Colebrook has been enlarging ever since.]

1760 The proprietors of Windsor in 1760 underestimated the actual land area of Colebrook by some 2,921 acres. They accepted the figure of 18,199 acres, and proportioned out the town

accordingly. Today we know that the township contains 33 square miles, which equals 21,120 acres.

1786, May 2nd General Assembly of the State of Connecticut.

Upon the petition of David Crissey, Nathaniel Bissell, Abel Hoskins, Abel Hoskins Jr., Elijah Andrews, Elijah Andrews Jr., Preserved Crissey and Israel Crissey, all of Winchester, in the County of Litchfield, they presenting to this assembly that they live in the 3rd tier of lots from the east side of said Winchester, that they live in a situation much more convenient to attend meeting for religious purposes in the town of Colebrook than in said Town of Winchester and praying that about one mile of the north part of said tier bounding north on said Colebrook and extending south to the south side of the said Nathaniel Bissell's land may be annexed to and made part of the Ecclesiastical Society in said Town of Colebrook as per petition on file dated May 10, 1786.

[It was so passed by the General Assembly.]

1812 On the 2nd day of March, 1812, appeared before me Silas Bethes of Sandisfield, County of Berkshire, and acknowledged himself guilty of blaspheme swearing in the Town of Colebrook on the 29th day of January last past. It is therefore considered of me that he pay a fine of one dollar to be disposed of as the law directs, which fine I have this day received.

Reuben Rockwell, Justice of the peace.

1815, August 21 A complaint by mister Rockwell, Grand Juror, for theft in taking sundry articles from the blacksmith shop of Elisha Sage. The delinquent, Henry Lamphin, was arrested and tried before me and pled guilty on the complaint. The court considered that the said delinquent be taken to the signpost in Colebrook and whipped on his naked body ten stripes and pay to the said Elisha Sage twelve dollars and the cost of prosecution, placed at \$2.92, which judgment was carried into effect by N. Porter, constable.

1828 Linus Bidwell, brought to court for having possession with intent to pass twelve counterfeit bills. Complaint on file was bound over, found guilty before the Superior Court in August, 1828 and interned for three years to the state prison.

1880s The Sawyer Cotton Mills in Colebrook River, made, among other items, heavy cotton bags, somewhat like today's mail pouches, which the Ladies Aid Society of the local church made money by hemming. They received the princely sum of .01¢ for each.

Historic Bytes
Bob Grigg