

Reuben Rockwell's Lost Journal

The historical records of the Town of Colebrook would not be complete without the inclusion of Reuben Rockwell's lost journal. Reuben is best remembered for his "Reuben Rockwell's Journal – 1835", in which he gave his account of the first 78 years of European habitation in Colebrook. This consists of 16 pages of typewritten text. What most people don't know is that there is another account, far shorter, that came to light after a false bottom was discovered in a buffalo hide-covered travelling trunk that contained two pages of difficult to read notes in which Reuben gives what he portends to be the real history of the town that his family was to be so instrumental in developing and guiding. Here, as best as we can ascertain (given the poor condition of the faded parchment), is that journal:

"I, Reuben Rockwell, having been a resident of the town since before it was a town, do, in the twilight of my life, wish to set upon parchment a true history of what really transpired here, unfettered by the constraints of church, society and special interests."

Be it known that the reason Colebrook was the last established township carved from the original virgin forest was not because it was hilly, devoid of rich soils and minerals and all the other reasons put forth by so-called historians, but because of the pre-existence of an established fraternal organization located upon the banks of the sparkling and pristine Sandy's Brooke, so called.

This fraternity, or club, as it was sometimes called, had established itself here in very ancient times, much to the great annoyance of His Majesty the King back in Jolly old England. They had felt the Royal ire on more than one occasion, and finally, a few decades prior to Columbus' departure from Spain in quest of the Indies, the members of the ancient fraternity set sail in an old caravel to seek their freedom in unknown parts. They completely dropped from sight until the explorations of John Cabot revealed their existence on the western side of the Atlantic.

Immediately the British king resumed his attempts to subvert the goals of the ancient club that had so long been a burr under the saddle of the royal family. The basic cause of this rift centered on the fact that the club members were, to put it in plain words, "hard drinkers", subsisting on a basic diet of gin and codfish cakes, while the royal family was comprised of thin-lipped, narrow-minded, meat-eating tee-totalers. As they remained adamant as to the drinking and fish eating issues, they were denied the privilege of becoming members.

Be that as it may, the king sent over Sir Edmund Andros to bring back not the charter of the Colony of Connecticut, but that of the Sandy's Brooke Ancient Order of Gin Drinkers and Cod Eaters (SBAOGD&CE for short). This historical blunder has been mis-interpreted by virtually every history book ever written, and it is high time the error be corrected."

"Failing to penetrate the trackless, forest-covered hills of the northwestern section of the Colony of Connecticut, Andros, from his hotel suite at the Charter Oak Inn in Hartford, did his best to destroy his enemy by sending hoards of unemployed lowlanders into the back country with instructions to rip up and destroy all juniper bushes, which, as any civilized citizen knows,

produce the berries from which the flavor is derived for the liquid ambrosia known by the name of gin.

They failed completely in this endeavor however, when the Royal Botanist confused the common North American juniper with frankincense, which at that time grew in only two locations on the face of the globe – the Middle East and the Litchfield Hills. As a consequence, they completely eradicated the frankincense, while leaving intact the juniper population.

Andros, not wishing to leave a stone unturned in his efforts to eliminate the club, next turned to the fishermen who plied the waters of the North Atlantic, off New England's coast. The Royal Ichthyologist, intent upon teaching these uneducated fishermen the fine points of identifying cod from other species of fish, managed to totally defeat his nefarious purpose when the fishermen, unfamiliar with the British accent of the Royal Ichthyologist, mistook his pronunciation of "cod" for "caad", a very ancient species of fish already on the endangered list. In a very short time the 500 million year old existence of the caad was relegated to the ranks of extinction. It is for this reason that not only are there no caad in New England's waters, but the very name itself is to be found nowhere in our reference books.

Be that as it may, a dangerous chapter in the long and illustrious history of Colebrook's ancient fraternity can be documented. It is my hope that this true and accurate history will survive unaltered."

Reuben Rockwell, you were one of a kind – where would we be without your foresight and dedication to the history and well-being of Colebrook? Caadfish cake anyone?

Historic Bytes

Bob Grigg