

## Colebrook Schools

**December 13, 1779** At the first town meeting held by and for the Town of Colebrook, it was voted that the listers [tax officials] set up notification on the two school houses and signpost in town.

**1781** Colebrook was organized into two school districts. All inhabitants living within two miles of the Winchester town line were to constitute the **south district**; the remainder would be in the **north district**. For several years, ten pounds of money was paid out of the town treasury to each of these districts for the support of schools. This would have been about \$50.00 for each district.

**December 19, 1785** At the annual town meeting it was voted that the people on **Beech Hill** should produce proof that they had expended money to have their children attend other schools the past year, whereupon the town would erect a schoolhouse within the district. This they did at the intersection of what today is Simons Pond Road, the uncompleted north section of Moses Road and the abandoned road that once connected Colebrook River with Beech Hill, and thus the rest of the town.

**October 20, 1796** At a meeting of the inhabitants of the Society of Colebrook held at the Meeting House, it was voted to form a **School Society**. It was also voted that the school committee have the power to warn school meetings by posting up warnings on the several school houses or places of keeping school in each district at least seven days before the holding of said meeting. The first order of business for the new School Society was to organize the entire town into manageable districts; the result was the creation of seven school districts.

District #1 was named the **Sandisfield Road District** and utilized the existing North (Rock) School. It encompassed the area from Colebrook Center northwest to the Massachusetts border.

District #2 was named **Pinney's District** basically took in the south central portion of Colebrook and utilized the South School, located at the intersection of Bricklemaier Road and Old North Road. It also included one square mile of adjacent Winchester.

District #3 became the **Beech Hill District**, basically covering the north central portion of town, but also the few families who had moved into the northern part of Colebrook River. The schoolhouse sat at the intersection of Simons Pond Road and the northern, unfinished end of Moses Road.

District #4 was named the **Old Forge District** (It seems strange that in 1796 they referred to it as the "Old Forge"! ) It embraced the southeast part of Colebrook. There was no schoolhouse, although we feel that in all probability, school was held at the home of Lt. John Burr, located on the location of present day 17 Old Forge Road.

District #5 became **Porter's District** and took in the southwestern corner of town. Initially there was no schoolhouse.

District #6 was named the **River District**, which encompassed all the territory from the West Branch of the Farmington River at the Massachusetts border, east on the

Hartland line and south to approximately where the Colebrook River Dam now sits. There was no schoolhouse.

District #7 became **Hart's District** and completed the southwestern region not already assigned to Porter's District and Pinney's District. There was no schoolhouse.

**October 1797** The School Society voted to combine districts number 5 and 7. No name was mentioned, but commencing with 1804, they referred to it as the **Southwest District**.

**October 1, 1798** At a meeting of the School Society held at the Meeting House, John Burr, Grove Pinney & Arah Phelps were chosen a committee to affix a stake for a schoolhouse in the sixth, or **River District**, so called.

**October 7, 1799** At a meeting of the School Society held at the Meeting House, it was voted that the warnings for the **Old Forge District** be posted up on Lt. John Burr's house [today #17 Old Forge Rd.] in lieu of the school house for warning of meetings for this society.

**October 7, 1805** At a meeting of the School Society held at the Meeting House, it was voted that the south part of the North District from David Munson's [Today this is 596 Colebrook Road.] have liberty to set up a school and draw their proportion of public money expended for the ensuing winter school. [This was the inception of the **Center School District**.]

**May 8, 1808** At a School Society meeting held at the Meeting House, they voted a new school district [This is the formation date for the **Center School District**.] to include David Munson, Ovid Williams, Elijah Andrus, Elijah Andrus Jr. and Mr. Hoyt and all living on the road between said inhabitants. [Between the intersection of the Old Colebrook Road and Wheeler Road on the south and 600 Colebrook Road on the north.]

**February 26, 1810** The School Society appointed a committee to view and ascertain a place in the **Southwest District** for erecting a new schoolhouse.

**March 5, 1810** The aforesaid committee recommended that the place for erecting said schoolhouse ought to be on the easternmost knoll on the cross road leading from Pinney Street westward by Church's old sawmill – on which said knoll we have this day erected a stake and stones.

**January 28, 1811** A committee was appointed by the School Society of Colebrook for the purpose of affixing a place for a schoolhouse in the newly created **West District**. This they did by setting their stake "at the corner north of the Turnpike Road [Stillman Hill Road today] and east of the road by John Phelps and about 660 feet west of the dwelling house of Frederick Brown." Today the schoolhouse is 124 Stillman Hill Road, Brown's house is the Morgan Horse Farm and John Phelps lived where the Cords now live at 61 Phelps Road.

**April 10, 1815** At a special School Society meeting held at the Meeting House, it was voted that Capt. Arah Phelps, Reuben Rockwell Esq. and Selah Treet be a committee to fix on a place for a school house in said **Old Forge District**.

**October 6, 1817** At a School Society meeting held at the meeting house, they voted Asaph Pinney, Wm. Swift and Theron Rockwell a committee to fix on a place for a school house in the **South District**. *The sequence of events concerning the South School is this: The building was initially located at the intersection of the Old North Road and Bricklemaier Road (modern terms) in 1779, or possibly even earlier. In either 1816 or 1817, this building burned down. The inhabitants of the district must have petitioned the School Society to take some sort of action, which they apparently did not act upon in what the inhabitants though was a timely fashion. They thereupon took matters into their own hands and decided upon a new site at the intersection of Old North Road and Smith Hill Road. (This was built in front of the present brick building, built in 1842, which was the replacement for the 1817 schoolhouse.) As a result, the committee went to the new site, saw that the residents had already begun construction of the new building, and thought it best that they fulfill their obligation to affix a stake at their chosen location by setting it in front of the doorway of the building under construction.*

**Sept. 9, 1823** On a motion for a new school district to be made, it was voted that all that part of the North School District north of Capt. Arah Phelps' on the Miner Road to Norfolk line, on the turnpike to Norfolk line, on the Sandisfield Road to Massachusetts line, and extending east on the road to Beech Hill by Isaac Thompson's and including Nathaniel Cobb Jr. and north by David Viets to the state line and likewise including all the families on the Peck road, so called, be made a new school district. This new district was named the **North District**, and the remainder of what had originally been called the North District became the **North Middle District** [Rock Schoolhouse].

**October 1, 1827** At a meeting of the School Society, held at the Meeting House, it was voted that Eliphath Tyrell, Earl Peck, Sidney Peck, Elias Beach and Charles Hays be and are hereby constituted a school district with the privilege of drawing and expending their public money where it shall be most convenient for them to school their children. [This was known as the **Mountain District**. It used private homes, probably the Peck household, rather than a schoolhouse.]

**June, 1834** A committee appointed by the School Society to fix on a site for a school house in the **Old Forge District** report as follows: That they have attended to the duty of their appointment and after measuring such distances as judged necessary and having such representatives as the inhabitants of the district were pleased to make the committee unanimous by fixing on a situation for said school house. Sixty or seventy rods (by estimation) [About 1,000 feet] southeasterly from the dwelling house of Allen Deming on the northerly side of the Sandy Brook Turnpike Road and erected a stake and stones in the spot designated.

**September 16, 1839** The **Center District** voted to build a new schoolhouse. The building turned out to be a two-storied structure. The floor plans were drawn in pencil on the inside cover of the district's ledger. The location was essentially the same as number 11 Schoolhouse Road.

**October 24, 1846** At an adjourned meeting of the school society, it was noted that whereas Winsted School Society has released the sixth school district in said society from their connection with the same on condition that said district be received by Colebrook School Society. Therefore voted that the members of the sixth district in Winsted School Society be received as members of Colebrook School Society and annexed to **South School District** in said Colebrook School Society, and that the limits of Colebrook School Society be so altered and extended as to embrace the aforesaid sixth school district and that they be entitled to all the rights & privileges of said district. [This consisted of one square mile of Winchester more or less centered on Losaw Road.]

**Dec. 11, 1848** At a special meeting of the School Society, a vote was taken to divide the **River District** into two separate districts; the motion was defeated by a vote of 45 against, 20 in favor.

**October 7, 1850** In the notes of this meeting, reference was made to the "**Rock District**", which had formerly been designated as the **North Middle District**.

**August 12, 1854** At a special meeting of the School Society, a petition of Lyman Benedict and others to form a new school district from the **Forge, River, South, Beech Hill and Center Districts** was read.

**October 2, 1854** The committee appointed at the special meeting August 12, 1854 reported in favor of the formation of a district to be called the **Sandy Brook District**.

**April 6, 1857** A special town meeting voted to implement the recommendation of the Oct. 2, 1854 vote and establish the **Sandy Brook School**.

Town Records II, p. 9

**October 19, 1857** The **Mountain District** is combined with the **River District**.

**September 5, 1881** The **Center School Society** voted 12 to 5 to build a new schoolhouse. The entry went on to say that they "invite the ladies to attend & express their views." This is the earliest reference to a gender change of attitude to be found in any Colebrook document.

**October 15, 1882** The new building was completed. It was constructed immediately east of the old schoolhouse. Its two-storied predecessor stood on the side lawn of the present residence.

**1901** The **Southwest District** School closes its doors, and the few remaining students are transported to Winsted.

- 1905**                    The **Sandy Brook School** District combined with the **Forge District**.
- 1908**                    The **West School** closes its doors and transfers its students to the **Center School**.
- 1911**                    The **Beech Hill School** and the **Rock School** close their doors and their students merge with the **Center School**.
- 1914**                    The **Center School** was made into a “model school”, meaning that it would be considered the primary school in the order of importance among the Colebrook schools.
- 1916**                    A 12 foot by 36-foot addition was applied to the **Center School**, making the room much larger. The **South School** and the **North Colebrook School** combine with the **Center School**. The school districts, now comprising **Colebrook River, Robertsville (Old Forge) and Colebrook Center**, remained unchanged from this date until the completion of the Consolidated School in 1949.
- 1917**                    It was found that the one large room at the Center School didn’t work all that well, and a partition was added, making it into a two-room schoolhouse. Grades one through four were assigned to the back (new) room; the fifth through eighth grades were placed in the front (original) room.
- March 1, 1920**            Town meeting to discuss the sale of the **Rock Schoolhouse** and the **North Schoolhouse**.  
Town Vol. II, p. 518
- July 28, 1923**            Special Town Meeting to authorize the sale and conveyance of all rights, titles and interests of the town in and to the **West, Southwest and South Schoolhouses** with the land belonging thereto.            Town Vol. II, p. 531
- October 1, 1923**            Annual Town Meeting – voted that the Town School Committee purchase a plot of land with a spring of water thereon and a right of way for the laying and maintaining of a pipe or aqueduct from said spring to the **Forge School**, so called, so as to provide suitable water for said school.            Town Vol. II, p. 534
- October 6, 1924**            Voted that the selectmen buy a playground for the **Colebrook River School** not to exceed \$200.00.            Town Vol. II, p. 563
- October 4, 1926**            Voted to appropriate \$7,000.00 for schools. Voted to authorize the selectmen to sell the **Millbrook Schoolhouse** and transfer title of land.            Town Vol. II, p. 563
- March 7, 1927**            Special Town Meeting to see about laying water pipes and install running water to the **Center School** and to see if the Misses Carrington would allow water to be taken from their pipe. [Springhouse] Note No water pipes were ever laid.            Town Vol. II, p. 567

**March 1945** All town lands, including the **Colebrook River School**, lying east of the realigned Conn. Rt. 8 was sold to the Metropolitan District Commission for \$25,000.00. The school remained open for the remaining school children until the completion of the Consolidated School.

**September 25, 1945** The town voted to purchase a plot of land from William Mather Lewis for the new central schoolhouse for a cost not exceeding \$2,000.00.

**September 1949** The 1949 – 1950 school year commences at the new **Consolidated School**.

**1950** The town sold the **Forge Schoolhouse** to the Victory Grange for \$750.00.

**January 17, 1961** The final sale of the original Colebrook schools takes place when the town sold the **Center Schoolhouse** to Dr. David Luchs for \$625.00.

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