

Colebrook Town Expenses, 1814 – 1825
(Brown Suede “Contra”)

There was a previous ledger alluded to, but we don't have it. When the entries cease in this volume, expenses were kept in the selectmen's journals.

1814	John Tyler received for services as selectman for 1814	\$15.59
	Tyler, for carting and putting on planks on the bridge near his house83
	Seth Whiting, on Nov.8, for planking a bridge75
1815	Seth Whiting, for opening 6 graves in 1815 & 1816	10.00
	Selah Treet, on Apr. 10 for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a bu. of rye	1.00
	For Mrs. Sweet [ward of town], 1 pint of gin36
	Enoch Horton, by building bridge over Farmington River	235.00
	By 2 string pieces extra	10.00
	By drawing timber for bridge	<u>12.58</u>
		\$257.58
1816	Elijah Grant, for 6 days as selectman	6.00
	9 yards of flannel for John Wright and Reuben Bobbs' child	6.68
	Mrs. Holcomb, for keeping your child up to the 15 th of Sept. @ \$55.00 per year	41.25
	Bildad Seymour by work and plank for bridge near Couets	2.60
	Daniel Stillman, by pair of shoes for Rowley Burnham	1.00
1817	(June) 137 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. rye flour @4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢	6.19
	2 bu. potatoes	1.00
	For repairing Forge Bridge	10.76
	By 13 lbs. of mutton for Solomon Moor65
	By 3 pecks of rye and 54 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. flour	2.66
	By $\frac{1}{2}$ bu. turnips12
	By moving Solomon Moore & family from Winsted	2.75
	By 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. tobacco for Mrs. Sweet, plus postage for 1 letter23
	Daniel Phelps by plank for the bridge east of our house, & putting on50
	(Sept. 15) By 215 feet of plank for Sandy Brook Bridge	2.50
	By 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ days work at bridge	3.50
	By oxen to draw timber for the same68
	By 4 strong pieces for the bridge	2.00
	By 375 feet of plank for bridge	3.75
	By 2 quarts of brandy40

	(Sept. 18) Erastus Seymour, by building a bridge by Elisha Sage's shop. [The bridge at the Center on Rt. 183.]	21.00
1818	(January) Levi Hitchcock, by boarding Thomas Simons and wife and child 3 weeks and 2 children 4 days	7.00
	(Sept.) John Minor, by building part of the bridge near Capt. Phelps with Alpha Simons	8.55
	By making an abutment to road west of the river in company with A. Simons	7.50
	(Oct. 19) Jesse Carrington, for doctoring the Town poor to date	50.00
1819	Martin Rockwell, by building Mill Brook Bridge	15.00
1820	Jan. 1820 thru Jan. 1821, Mrs. Holcomb's son kept one year	64.67
1823	(May 11) by 245 feet of plank and putting on	2.80
	(Sept.) Jonathan Stillman, by work at Viets Brook Bridge	1.00
	(Oct.) Henry Bass, by 121 lbs. of pork @4 ¾ ¢	6.12
1824	(Jan. 10) by repairing Simons' Bridge	5.75
1825	(Jan. 4) Nathan Bass, by building a bridge across Wright's Brook	5.00
	(Jan. 5) By repairing bridge	5.00
	(July) by labor, plank and timber for bridges	18.70

[I find it interesting every so often to review public expenses. The old ledgers of towns, businesses, physicians, tradesmen and just plain farmers sit on shelves (if they are fortunate enough to have survived at all) unread and unnoticed, and yet they will reveal a wealth of information if given half a chance.

It is comforting to know that poor Mrs. Sweet, although a ward of the town, probably through no fault of her own, receives her gin and tobacco, and there was no public outcry by holier-than-thou residents as to the expenditure of public funds for such a purpose.

Wages were low almost to the point of being nonexistent. The Town allowed .68¢ to be deducted from property taxes for spending a 10-hour day working on the highways, but when you read these figures, it becomes understandable. And before you think of these as "the good old days", remember that most of the graves Seth Whiting dug for 1.67¢ each probably was for someone who would have easily survived if living today.]

Historic Bytes
Bob Grigg