

Brookside Pond Talk

Jan. 1, 1772 Joseph Rockwell negotiates a land deal with Benjamin Houghton. From then until May 15, 1813, the land was used as a farm.

On May 15, 1813, Hezekiah Woodruff, Theron Rockwell and Jasper Grinnell built the dam, which flooded the meadow to the north of the Hartland Turnpike Road. The purpose was to power a sawmill.

June 25, 1816 Phineas Shepard, who owned the water rights for the stream that flowed through the meadow, leased, for \$5.00 from this date and until so long as timber may grow or water run, the privilege of damming the stream.

Sometime between 1816 and 1827, Theron Rockwell built a tannery near the east end of the dam.

In 1859 Patrick Ryan purchased 10 acres with a house and barn north of the pond.

In 1863 Ryan purchased another 40 acres of adjacent land.

The Town of Colebrook abated Patrick Ryan's tax bill \$5.00 a year because his driveway was so long.

In 1887 the Pasco brothers purchased the old Theron Rockwell farm (recently owned by Martha Powell) of 241 acres, with a right of way through those lands for Patrick Ryan to pass to and from his farm. Ryan had to promise to keep the fences up and the gates closed so that cattle may not escape.

May 4, 1903 Warham Williams, trustee for the town of Winchester, purchased all the lands now owned by the owners of Brookside Pond.

In 1913, Gaylord built his farm, now 77 Deer Hill Rd.

Around 1934, several of the members purchased a caboos from the New Haven RR, which had just abandoned the roadbed between Winsted and Poughkeepsie. The cost was negligible, but how were they to transport it to Colebrook and climb Deer Hill? The time was February, and the ground and pond were frozen solid (Well, the surface was frozen solid!) It was decided to remove the iron RR wheels and replace them with wagon wheels. By this method, they hauled the caboos (probably to the delight of all the local youths) up Route 8 and then up Deer Hill, using a truck (or trucks). Upon arrival, the discarded caboos was wheeled out to the center of the pond. A large bonfire was built, and partying, ice-skating, ice fishing and general revelry was enjoyed. The caboos, which boasted a stove, served as a warming station. As the party began to wind down, it was decided to pull the caboos over to the west side of the pond, where it began its slow descent into oblivion. Each year saw it decay a little more, so that by the 1950s, about the only recognizable feature of the old caboos was the arched ends of the roof. By 1990, the last time the site was visited, only scraps of iron marked the spot where Colebrook's only claim to the railroad era came to an end not with a bang, but with a whimper.

For many years a boathouse stood on the site where Jake Thompson's cabin now stands.