

Colebrook Bridges

1765 Two bridges were constructed along Highway #3 (the portion now covered by Conn. Rt. 183). The southernmost crossed the stream known as Loon Brook as it flows under the bridge, only to emerge on the downstream side as Center Brook. This is just north of Colebrook Center. The northern bridge crossed Sandy Brook at the south end of Phelps' Flats.

1772 The Colonial legislature approves Richard Smith's road, which includes a bridge over Sandy Brook at the same site as the present one. **Smith's 1770 map (CHS)**

Dec. 14, 1786 Voted that there be £27 for the use of bridges expended (if need be) at the bridge near the mouth of Sandy Brook (so called). Voted a three-man committee to erect the bridge over Sandy Brook near the mouth. (Today on Old Forge Rd.) Voted a three-man committee to erect two bridges over Sandy Brook, the one to accommodate a road to the Beech Hill (so called), the other across Saw Mill Brook on a road leading to Orvis' in Norfolk. (This road is long since abandoned.) Voted that the men employed to work at said bridges be allowed 4 shillings per day for their labor after the month of May commences, they finding themselves with victuals.

April 11, 1791 A committee for and in behalf of the town to sell and dispose of a certain lot of land lying in the 1st tier originally laid out to James Ham and to convert the avails thereof according to their best discretions on building bridges and opening the River Road so called in said Colebrook.

Dec. 5, 1791 Voted that the town will do something in repairing the South Bridge by Capt. Rockwell's, the bridge by Aaron Simons (Loon Brook), the bridge on Viets Road (McClave Rd.) and the bridge by Daniel Phillips.

April 8, 1799 Voted a committee to view the place proposed on the main river (West Branch of the Farmington) for building a bridge and to report at the next meeting. Voted that the town make some compensation to John Burr for building his bridge over Still River near his mill. [Today this is the Old Creamery Road Bridge.]

Sept. 15, 1800 The selectmen were directed to rebuild Sandy Brook Bridge near the old forge at their best discretion.

Nov. 8, 1814 Paid Seth Whiting .75¢ for planking a bridge.
Town Expense Book

Feb. 1815 Expenses for building a bridge over the Farmington River, \$235.00. The cost of 2 string pieces extra, \$10.00. The cost of drawing timber for the bridge, \$12.58. Leaves a grand total of \$257.58.

Nov. 13, 1815 Voted a bridge over Sandy Brook on the New Turnpike Road leading from the Baptist Meeting House to the bridge over the Farmington River near Seleh Forest's the ensuing season. (Today, Conn. Rt. 8 from the Winchester line to the south bridge in Colebrook River.)

Sept. 1816 Paid Bildad Seymour for work and planks for the bridge near Couets, \$2.60. (This is on Phelps Road over Loon Brook.)
Town Expense Book

1817 Paid Daniel Phelps for supplying planks for the bridge east of our house, and putting it on, .50¢. **Town Expense Book**

June 1817 For repairing the Forge Bridge \$10.76
Town Expense Book (brown suede) (unnumbered)

Sept. 15, 1817 Paid for 215 feet of plank for the Sandy Brook Bridge, \$2.50. For 3½ days work at the bridge, \$3.50. For oxen to draw timber for the same, .68¢. For 4 strong pieces for the bridge, \$2.00. For 2 quarts of brandy, .40¢. For 375 feet of plank for the bridge, \$3.75, having a total expense of \$12.83.
Town Expense Book

Sept. 18, 1817 Paid Erastus Seymour for building a bridge by Elisha Sage's shop, \$21.00. (This is the South Bridge, last worked on in Dec.1791.)
Town Expense Book

Sept. 1818 Paid John Minor for building part of the bridge near Capt. Phelps' with Alpha Simons, \$8.55, also for making an abutment to the road west of the river in company with Alpha Simons, \$7.50.
Town Expense book

1819 Paid Martin Rockwell \$15.00 for building Mill Brook Bridge. (This is the bridge under Conn. Rt. 183 in the Center.)
Town Expense Book

Sept. 29, 1823 Paid Jonathan Stillman for work at Viets Brook Bridge, \$1.00. (This is the bridge on Beech Hill Rd.) **Town Expense Book**

Jan. 10, 1824 For repairing Simon's Bridge, \$5.75. (This is on Phelps Rd. by the outlet of the pond.) **Town Expense Book**

Jan. 4, 1825 Paid Nathan Bass \$5.00 for building a bridge across Wright Brook. (Smith Hill Road.) **Town Expense Book**

July 1825 Cost of labor, planks and timber for town bridges, \$18.70.
Town Expense Book

Oct. 27, 1829 "32 feet of Hemlock plank on bridge near Joel North's sawmill."
Joel North's Acct. Book

Dec. 10, 1830 "Two days at Old Forge to get new bridge built across Sandy Brook near Jared Deming's, \$2.00." **Joel North's Acc't. Book**

Sept. 5, 1833 "Going to Mr. Moore's to get a bridge built across Sandy Brook." Another entry, dated Sept. 20, states: "Going to Moore's to accept bridge."
Joel North's Acc't. Book

Sept. 20, 1837 "Going to Beech Hill to see Viets Meadow Bridge." (This is on McClave Road as it crosses Lake Triangle.)
Joel North's Acc't. Book (1st Selectman)

Oct. 18, 1858 Voted that the town pays George Burke sixty dollars for expenses incurred in building a bridge near his house – provided said Burke shall assume the entire responsibility of keeping said bridge in repair. (This today is the bridge leading to 148 Sandy Brook Road. At the bottom of the same page is a note that the payment of \$60.00 be reconsidered, but it didn't give an outcome.)

November 13, 1884 At a special town meeting to see what action the town would take in regard to building an iron bridge across the [West Branch of the] Farmington River near Thomas B. Spencer's. (This was the bridge at the south end of the valley over which Conn. Rt. 8 crossed.) Also to see what action the town will take in regard to the expense of the same, and to do any other business.

Pursuant to the foregoing notice, a meeting convened at which R. D. Baldwin stated that the Berlin Bridge Co. of Berlin, Connecticut would furnish an all wrought iron bridge for \$1,800.00 and R. F. Hawkins of Springfield, Massachusetts would furnish one partly of wrought iron and partly of cast iron for \$1,750.00. The town was to provide the necessary abutments.

Voted the selectmen ascertain the cost of a wooden bridge by estimate and report back to the town.

Colebrook Town Meeting Book, vol. 1, p. 270

November 28, 1884 Adjourned town meeting: R. D. Baldwin submitted certain estimates as to the cost of abutments and a wooden bridge.

A vote to instruct the selectmen to contract for an iron bridge on best time procurable – motion failed.

Voted that the selectmen be instructed to erect a wooden bridge on best terms available. (No figures for any of this exist.)

October 3, 1892 Town meeting – it was voted that if it becomes necessary to rebuild the bridge near the factory at Colebrook River, it be replaced by an iron bridge. (This is the bridge still to be seen today when the water level is sufficiently low at the north end of Colebrook.)

Colebrook Town Meeting Book

July 23, 1899 At a special town meeting to take action on an act passed by the last legislature for the improvement of public roads, chapter 175. The subject of this meeting is to get an expression from the town in regard to making an appropriation from the town treasury under the provisions of the act. The Highway Commissioner, James H. Macdonald, will be in attendance.

At the meeting, the voters elected to appropriate \$2,000.00 for the purpose of taking advantage of the new law relating to state aid in constructing and repairing our main roads.

Colebrook Town Meeting Book, vol. 1, p. 395

Oct. 6, 1902 At the town meeting, attention was called to the condition of the bridge near the North Colebrook church and the one below the Jerry Sullivan place. (Today, the bridge between #189 and #199 Sandy Brook Road.)

July 14, 1919 At a special town meeting it was voted to instruct the selectmen to have made and placed two steel bridges with concrete flooring; one at North Colebrook [near the church], one on the Tolland Road.

Colebrook Town Meeting Book, vol. 1

April 27, 1922 Town voted to replace the bridge over Sandy Brook near the late residence of Anson Barnes with a steel structure. (This is the first bridge over Sandy Brook north of the intersection with Conn. Rt. 8.)

Also voted to build a new bridge at Colebrook River near the schoolhouse, on the Trunk Line Road, so called. (This is where Slocum Brook passed under Conn. Rt. 8.)

Levied a special tax of 5 mills on the dollar to the grand list of October 1st, 1921 to cover the cost of the two bridges.

Colebrook Town Records (brown suede), vol. II, p. 531

July 25, 1927 A special town meeting to see if the town will vote about building or improving sections of roads or bridges under provisions of Chapter 263, Public Acts of 1925, and Chapter 120, Public Acts of 1927.

Dec. 6, 1927 A special town meeting to raise a special tax to raise money to repair or rebuild roads and bridges destroyed by the recent flood. Also to see if the town will pay ½ or some other amount toward repairing the bridge over Sandy Brook leading to Ellis Mattson's house. (Today, this is 148 Sandy Brook Rd.) Voted to pay him \$100.00 and to pay him \$5.00 yearly toward maintaining the bridge.

Colebrook Town Records, vol. II, p. 576

Sept. 17, 1928 Notice of discontinuance of highway – the highway crosses Sandy Brook stream by a bridge that is out of repair, which road and bridge are a short distance southeasterly from the residence of Homer Deming in said town, and is the road lying between and connecting the old road leading from the state highway to the old Colebrook Creamery, thence running westerly to a road that leaves the state highway near the residence of Homer Deming and runs southeasterly towards Riverton. (The old Creamery is today a private home at 31 Old Creamery Road; the road and bridge were almost directly opposite the building.)

Colebrook Town Records, vol. II, p. 579

Oct. 1, 1928 Annual town meeting – voted not to close the road and bridge crossing Sandy Brook near Homer Deming's, but to improve or replace it.

Colebrook Town Records, vol. II, p. 585

October 7, 1929 Annual town meeting – voted to repair the crossroad leading from the Sandisfield Road, so called, up the hill to the road running past the Fairview club to Claude Wolford's. (Today this is Wolford Hill Rd.)

Sept. 26, 1931 The selectmen authorized to build and construct a new bridge to span Still River stream, so called, and abutments thereof and approaches thereto; said bridge to be located on practically the same place as the present bridge, between the residences of H. Parks Holcomb and David Taylor in Robertsville.

Colebrook Town Records, vol. II, p. 626

April 22, 1932 At a special town meeting it was voted that in the future, all "Town Aid Roads" be made of rolled, bank run gravel, 16 feet wide (up from 12 feet wide.)

Colebrook Town Records, vol.2 (red leather), p. 9

March 26, 1934 At a special town meeting, it was voted to construct a bridge over Chenery Pond Brook. (Today, the bridge crossing Viets Brook on McClave Road at the YMCA's Lake Triangle.)

Colebrook Town Records, vol. 2, p. 17

April 2, 1936 At a special town meeting, it was voted to reconstruct a bridge over Sandy Brook near the residence of Arthur French. (This is on Old Forge Road.)

Colebrook Town Records, vol. 2, p. 34

Oct. 29, 1938 At a special town meeting, it was voted to replace or reconstruct three bridges; namely: **1.)** The bridge across Sandy Brook from the main highway, called [Conn.] Rt. 8, to the property of Robert S, Seymour and property supposed to be owned by Charles Arnold in Robertsville. **2.)** The bridge across Sandy Brook from Sandy Brook Road to the property of William Matson. **3.)** The iron bridge across the West Branch of the Farmington at the center of the village of Colebrook River.

It was ultimately decided to reimburse Bill Matson and Bob Seymour \$200.00 each, and that the iron bridge would be replaced by a Federal grant.

Colebrook Town Records, vol. 2, p. 57

(Same date) Joseph Rowley moved that the footbridge be reconstructed at the site of the foundation of the old footbridge. (Seconded and passed.)

May 22, 1939 At a special town meeting, the first order of business was to see if the town will advise and instruct the selectmen to replace 5 bridges that were washed out in the flood of September 21, 1938 and make the necessary appropriations for the same. Three bridges on Sandy Brook, one in Colebrook River, one near Lawrence's icehouse. [This is the bridge over Mill Brook on Millbrook Road.]

The estimate for the bridge in Colebrook River was \$6,000.00 for superstructure and plates. \$1,000.00 for planks and other necessary work, providing the abutments are sound.

The approximate estimate of repairs to the two lower bridges (on Sandy Brook near Conn. Rt. 8) was \$15,700.00 and \$17,800.00 or \$33,000.00 for the two bridges.

Voted to replace the bridge on Beech Hill near Miss. Anderson's at a cost not to exceed \$2,500.00. (This is the bridge over Viets Brook.)

Colebrook Town Records, vol. 2, p. 60

Sept 2000 The new Sandy Brook Bridge on Beech Hill Road is completed.

May 2001 The new bridge over Viets Brook at Lake Triangle (YMCA Camp Jewell) is completed.

Summer 2002 The new bridge on Millbrook Road crossing Mill Brook was opened to the public.

Autumn 2005 Wolford Hill Road Bridge, crossing Sandy Brook, is completed. This leaves only two more bridges slated for upgrading in town; the bridge on Bunnell St. and the replacement of the Sandy Brook bridge above 334 (LaPenna's in 2007) after which we should be well into the twenty-first century before any more of our bridges need to be replaced.