

Colebrook Schools Graduation – June 9, 1930

In 1930, Colebrook had three elementary schools; Colebrook Center, having two rooms, Colebrook River and Forge (Robertsville) both had one room each. Here is the program for graduation from the eighth grade as reported in the Winsted Evening Citizen on June 5, 1930. It consisted of a play with each school represented as a ship in a fleet. The teachers and school officials were the officers, the children the sailors.

Only one person of the graduating class is still with us, and that is the sole member of the Colebrook River School, Lillian Osborn, now Mrs. Paul Hamilton of Barkhamsted. When I discovered this entry in the old newspaper, I immediately called Lillian, and she shared her recollections of those days with me. Most of the personal comments that follow are hers.

Marion Hart was known to all her friends throughout her life as “Nikki”. She was the wife of Joseph Locassio. Nikki was a nickname her father gave her when she was just a little thing, and it stuck with her the rest of her long life. She was brought up in the building described in the poem about the Bunnell house a couple of weeks ago in this column.

Gladys Matteson was the daughter of Charles Mattson, who lived where the Rathbuns now live at 159 Sandy Brook Rd. She married Ken Millard.

Louise Jasmin was the eldest daughter of Felix and Irene Jasmin, and also lived on Sandy Brook Rd.

John Durst, son of Gus, as well as Herman Tamminen, lived on Eno Hill.

Parks Holcomb originally hailed from West Hartland, and at the time of his graduation, lived at 1 Old Forge Rd. Later he would own and operate Holcomb’s Nursery on Rt. 8 in Robertsville.

Lillian told of Clarence Bunnell, who was the president of one of the Winsted banks, and who lived on Eno Hill by the pond, making regular trips to the Colebrook schools carrying small stamps which could be exchanged for money and placed in a booklet which when filled, could be brought to the bank and added to their bankbooks. This may sound peculiar today, but in those days, trips to “town” were few and far between, and this was a good way to instill into children the habit of saving money.

And now for the graduation program:

“Promotion exercises of the Colebrook schools will be held at Community Hall in Colebrook Center next Monday evening at 7:30, standard time. An interesting program will be given and eight graduates will receive their diplomas. The program to be presented is as follows:

Crossing the harbor bar and entering
Port
The voyage is o’er, our dangers now
Are past
And sails are furled against the idle mast.

A march, performed by the sailors, followed by a song “Happy the Children”, sung by the sailors. This was followed by a prayer for the sailors by the Reverend J. B. Robertson. All the sailors then sang “Song of the School fleet”.

“THE SHIPS OF THE FLEET COME INTO PORT WITH TREASURES FROM THE SEAS.”

“The purpose of our year’s voyage on the history seas has been to find how the long-departed people of the mighty past help us today.”

River Ship sails on Colonial seas – embarkation – Emma Gernannt.

“Song of the Sea”, sung by Lorraine Ray, Mary Whipple and Emma Gernannt

“Colonial America Brings Enlightenment to the Sailors.” By Lillian Osborn.

Sailors pipe up the “Minuet” by Lorraine Ray, Emma Gernannt and Mary Whipple. This was followed by the “Town Song” sung by all the sailors.

Center Ship Plows Governmental Seas – “Building the New Constitution” by Marion Hart.

“Charting the Voyage” by Gladys Matteson.

“Launching the Constitution” by Louise Jasmin.

“Song of the Sailor Boys” sung by the primary sailors.

Song “Harbor Bells” sung by the sailors.

The Good Ship Forge Spreads Her Sails for the Homeward Trip.

“Weighing Anchor” by John Durst.

Civil War Play “On Rough Seas”, performed by John Durst, Edward Kisiel, Parks Holcomb and Herman Tamminen.

“How the Mails Have Been Safely Delivered in the Past and Present” by Herman Tamminen and Parks Holcomb.

Song “Our Anchor Holds” by the Forge sailors.

“Great Inventions That Have Contributed to the Past and Present” by Edward Kisiel and John Durst.

Song by all the sailors – “End of the Voyage”.

This was followed by “A Welcome to Sailors as They Reach Port”, delivered by Lewis S. Mills, supervisor of the Colebrook schools.

Then followed the presentation of diplomas by Homer P. Deming, Chairman of the School Committee.

The program closed with the singing of “America the Beautiful” (first two stanzas) by all those present.

“The graduates include the following: (sailors) Colebrook River ship, Lillian Osborn; Colebrook Center ship, Marion Hart, Louise Jasmin and Gladys Matteson; Forge ship, John Durst, Parks Holcomb, Edward Kisiel and Herman Tamminen.

The class colors are white and gold and the class motto, “Sail On.”

The class flower is the yellow rose.

The teachers are as follows: (Captains) Colebrook river ship, Ada Harrington; Colebrook Center ship, Katherine Kinville and Ellen Grant; Forge ship, Elizabeth N. Greenlaw.

The school committee is made up as follows: Homer P. Deming, chairman; James M. O’Neil, secretary; Mrs. Wally Vining, Gus W. Durst, Edwin Merritt and Mrs. Mabel Lawrence. Lewis S. Mills is supervising agent and also admiral.

Historic Bytes

Bob Grigg