

Colebrook Town Expenses For 1826

Bridges Building bridge at the new gristmill at Jason Sage.....\$32.00

This bridge, or rather its successors, have stood since this date. The town usually contributes toward the repair or in some cases the replacement of this bridge. The town policy was that any business that served the public and required a road or bridge for the public to access the business would be given that aid. Today this private bridge provides access to 148 Sandy Brook Road.

Erastus Stillman for planking Viets Bridge.....\$2.16

This bridge, near the western end of Beech Hill Road, like all such bridges needed to be replanked every so often. The last town-built bridge at this site prior to the present concrete bridge built by O&G, consisted of railroad track to which were attached three-inch planks. Due to the difficulty of securing these planks to the iron rails, a very loud clatter arose whenever a car or truck passed over it. This could be heard at least as far as the intersection of Beech Hill Road and Chapin Road, a distance of about a mile and a half. As not more than three or four cars a day passed over Beech Hill in those days, the noise of the planks alerted the three or four families who lived there and had someone "out", that they would soon be home. In the evening, after "choir time" (7:00-7:30) the two Gray brothers, George and Bill, who were courting the Moore sisters who lived in Tolland, would drive ("fly" might better describe it) over the Sandy Brook and Viets Brook bridges, and we could tell which one was which by the clatter of the planks. (George drove faster than Bill, and thus created a louder noise.) About two minutes later the sound of tires scattering gravel and the subsequent cloud of dust marked the passage of "the Gray Boys", on their way down the steep portion of "the back hill", across Colebrook River and up Harvey Mountain to Cliff Moore's farm. (And it took them less time than it took me to type this!)

Nathaniel Cobb for building Viets Meadow bridge.....\$10.00

Initially, this crossing was served by a ford, as there wasn't all that much water going down Viets Brook, most of the time anyway. However, in 1826 the residents must have felt the need for something more substantial, hence the bridge. In 1858, the meadow was flooded behind a dam backing up water to power a lumber mill that was slightly downstream from the present dam at Camp Jewell. The present concrete bridge was constructed in 2001 and cost somewhat more than \$10.00!

Reuben Chatfield for repairing bridge.....\$1.00

In all probability, this was one of the small bridges on the east side of the Farmington River in Colebrook River, as Reuben's farm was over there.

William Manchester for repairing bridge and furnishing plank.....\$1.00

This, like the previous entry, would have been on the east side of the Farmington.

Eli Marshall for putting on a rider and two braces on the Sandy Brook Bridge near Allen Deming's for \$8.00. Now due him.....\$5.00

Today, this is the location of the bridge over Sandy that carries Conn. Route 8 in Robertsville.

To repairing bridge by Jared Deming near his house.....\$9.11

The high concrete bridge we enjoy today has replaced all the previous bridges at this site just upstream from the confluence of Sandy Brook and Still River, the first of which was constructed in 1772. It is far easier and safer to traverse than the originals, which were built quite close to the water, leaving very steep approaches at either end.

To building bridge near Thomas Conklin's.....\$189.74

This bridge site was at the south end of Colebrook River and spanned the Farmington. In later years it was generally known as the Spencer Bridge. The last bridge was of concrete and still exists beneath the waters of Colebrook River Lake, but never comes into view as does the Factory Bridge at the north end near the Massachusetts border.

Total expenses for bridges for the year.....\$250.01

Town Poor There were 9 indigent persons in Colebrook in 1826 whose expenses ranged from a high of \$63.00 to a low of \$1.00. The grand total was \$376.89.

Miscellaneous Expenses This consists of assessor's bills, sexton's bills (for digging graves), postage (.56 cents for the year), damages to a colt and highway repairs. Also under this heading was the salary of the selectmen. First selectman received \$16.00, second \$11.38 and third \$8.00. This totaled \$98.10.

Thus the grand total of town expenses for the year was \$725.00.