

## Historical Odds and Ends About Colebrook (Vining)

**House of J. W. Jones burns.** Flag Hill Farm, the 13-room house of J. W. Jones, situated half a mile east of the Norfolk-Winsted Road in the township of Colebrook, was totally destroyed by fire in December 1922. The property was formerly known as the Emmons place, also in the early days as the Cowles place.

**Bement House Burns** Interbrook, the summer home of Professor Howard Bement on the Sandy Brook Road in Colebrook, was totally destroyed by fire on the afternoon of June 25, 1920. The loss was estimated at about \$3,000. Mr. Bement is on the faculty of The Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. [Today 189 Sandy Brook Road]

**Rockwell Farm Sold** On January 23, 1875, the farm formerly owned by J. S. and J. T. Rockwell near Albert Kelsey's in South Colebrook, was sold for \$12,000. The prospect that the Lee and New Haven RR would pass through Robertsville and near this farm probably had something to do with the price. A narrow gauge road up Tannery Hill to the tannery was spoken of. This farm is now known as Brookside Farm.

**Horace White House Burns** The house of Horace White of Water Street (Center Brook Road) in Colebrook Center burned to the ground on the morning of March 17, 1922. It started from a defective chimney. The roofs on Mrs. S. A. Cooper's, Mrs. Carrie Sparks' and the farmhouse of Mrs. E. J. Bulkley's houses all caught on fire from the sparks driven by the high winds, but they were extinguished by a bucket brigade made up of the older children from the Center School and a number of Colebrook women.

**Old Hitchcock House Burns** The old S. Hitchcock house and barn, located on the corner opposite the Beech Hill Cemetery and owned by James Anderson of Brooklyn, N. Y., was destroyed by fire during the late morning of a September day in 1917. In recent years it has been known as the Simmons Place. It was occupied by Alvin Johnson, the lumber dealer. Loss was estimated as about \$3,000.

[This house site remained unoccupied until the early 1940s when Fred and Amelia Wilber had the stone house built that they remained in during their lifetime. The house had an interesting history. In the attic was a large iron ring bolted securely to the center of the floor. The floorboards around it were worn thin in a circle, the result of insane people being chained there until they finally died. It sounds pretty horrible today, but isolated farm communities in the early days, part of a society that provided little if any support for mental health, had to deal with their problems by themselves as best they could. When the Wilbers built, they chose a site slightly back of the original, as the old cellar hole, which they filled in, was quite close to the intersection of Beech Hill and Simons Pond Roads.]

**Farm Purchased on Stillman Hill** Frank D. Thompson, a real estate dealer and proprietor of Thompson's Hotel at Colebrook Center, sold a farm on Stillman Hill to W. A. Coffil, a New York sea captain, on May 11, 1895. [Today, this is referred to as Stillman Hill Farm, located at the crest of the hill on the west side of the road. Coffil sold the farm to Richard A. Wagner in 1941. Today it is 33 Stillman Hill Road.]

**C. F. Stotts Buys Northrop Store** Clarence F. Stotts of Colebrook has bought of C. C. Middlebrooks, administrator of the estate of H. D. Northrop, the general store where he has worked for the past 19 years and will take possession tomorrow (Nov. 1, 1924). The purchase includes stock and fixtures. Mr. Stotts plans to renovate the interior and make some improvements. Mr. Northrop purchased the store of C. L. Smith over 25 years ago.

**Dish Mill Brook** Dish Mill Brook starts from a swamp south of the Old Colebrook Road at its junction with the Colebrook-Winsted Road on land of H. L. Culver and the Wheeler Farm. (E. B. Hawksley) flowing south through land of F. C. Thompson, Charles Seymour, now owned by A. Godenzi, then through land of Col. Henry Terrell, crossing the Colebrook-Winsted Road (formerly known as The New Road) at the Colebrook-Winchester town line, thence, following the highway on one side or the other, joining with Indian Meadow Brook, and entering Mad River in Winsted near Dudley's Tannery (now owned by Dudley Vaill), was known as The Dish Mill Brook. It got its name from the dish mill that stood on the Charles Seymour farm. This mill turned out wooden dishes.

[Today, this is named "Colebrook Brook". Using modern terminology, it arises from a spring on property owned by the Colebrook Land Conservancy on the southwest corner of the intersection of the Old Colebrook Road, Stillman Hill Road and Conn. Route 183. The Seymour Farm was located about where numbers 382-386 are presently situated. The tannery was near the present location of Montano-Shay Funeral Home. This was not the only stream with the name Dish Mill Brook; the outflow from Rowley Pond, where the bricks were made during the nineteenth century, as it flows through Colebrook to enter Brookside Pond, also carried the same label. At this writing I am not sure whether this mill was located in Winchester or Colebrook.]

**Wakefield Brook** The Wakefield Brook, starting in swamps south of the Colebrook-Norfolk Road near the Colebrook-Norfolk Town Line, running south in back of the Norfolk Town Farm, across the American Legion land [now Algonquin State Forest], then the lands of William Donaldson, Deacon Grant, Lewis T. Allen, Lawrence Ice Pond, A. B. Ferry, then through Hannafin Meadow and finally into Mad River near the underpass, east of the former Brooks Place.

[Today, this brook is named "Mill Brook". The land through which its headwaters arise was owned by two generations of Wakefields, Adin and Hezekiah. It flows through the swamps through which Hannafin Road (the former route of the Waterbury River Turnpike) travels before connecting with U. S. Route 44. The underpass refers to the concrete arch, still visible, where the railroad crossed the brook and began its run past Colebrook Station and the Danbury Quarter section. The Brooks Place, located on Mad River in Winchester, was removed when the dry dam was constructed in the 1950s.]

**Historic Bytes**

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