

Sarah Carrington's Recollections, 1926

In the archives of the Colebrook Historical Society resides a small volume penned by a Colebrook native who was born here May 3 1846, and who spent her entire lifetime at the family home in the Center, passing away on November 13 1934. This manuscript is the result of a request made to her by her friend and neighbor, Mabel A. Newell, who asked "Miss Sarah" to write her recollections of the residents of the town as a reverse birthday present, given to the Town of Colebrook as a gift by the lady on her 80th birthday, May 3rd 1926.

This amounts to six typewritten pages, but is a little longer with clarifying notes inserted for the modern reader. These notes will appear in italics. Throughout this work it is interesting to note how little the area covered has substantially changed, although she apparently was familiar only with the Center. This fits the expected pattern, as residents of one district usually had little or no contact with members of another. I wouldn't be surprised if she had never set foot in Colebrook River or Robertsville throughout her four score years in town. Here then are the recollections of what occurred in her circle of friends and acquaintances as far back as the Civil War period:

"Having reached four score years, and being one of the few persons born in the neighborhood, I will attempt a record of the inhabitants during the years of my recollection.

I am living in the house built by my grandfather, Dr. Jesse Carrington, which has been continuously occupied by his descendants from 1804 to 1926. I make no other record. [*Today, this is 20 Schoolhouse Road.*]

The house opposite [*now 17 Schoolhouse Road*] was built by my uncle, Dr. William Carrington. He died in 1847 and his widow, Katherine Phelps Carrington, lived until her death in 1897. She bequeathed to my sister, Katherine, who sold it to Howard Smith, who took summer boarders. After his death, Mrs. Smith sold house and furniture to Henry Vincent of New York, who uses it as a summer home.

Below us to the east is the house built for Beebe Rockwell, [*now the home of Dr. & Mrs. William McNeill at 36 Schoolhouse Road*] son of Reuben Rockwell [*the younger*] who went to live in Winsted, and it has had many tenants; Theron Parsons, before he came to our tenant house, being one. It was struck by lightning and blown to pieces while occupied by Tracy Whiting and family. Edwin Terrell rebuilt and occupied it for a while. Mrs. Seth Whiting bought it from Miss. Susan Whiting, and bequeathed it to her son's wife, Mrs. Julius Whiting. [*Dr. McNeill's wife was a descendant of these Whitings.*]

Beginning at the Center, the two houses and store were built by Reuben and Martin Rockwell, early settlers of Colebrook, and are occupied by descendants chiefly as summer homes. [*Now, 549 and 561 Colebrook Road. Rockwell Hall, so-called, at 549, is still owned by Rockwell descendants.*]

The house behind the church [*1 Thompson Road*] was built for William Rockwell, son of Martin. He moved to Honesdale, Penna. [*25 miles ENE of Scranton*] and a man named Clark is said to have lived there. Tracy Whiting came there from the old Whiting house, a mile south, in my early remembrance, and William Smith, who married Tracy's daughter Harriet, owned the place many years and raised a family. He sold the place to Walter Read and went to Flushing. [*Queens, N.Y.*] After a few years Read sold it to

Reuben Rockwell [*the younger*] who rented it to Hitchcock and to Skilton. Joseph and Ralph Turner bought from Reuben Rockwell, and when both died, Lester Smith bought it and sold later to Ralph and Norman Thompson, who now own it. [*Norman's grandson's family, Jonathan (Jake) and Tara Thompson now own and occupy the property.*]

Smith sold the farm [*now 434 Smith Hill Road*] to Mr. William Mather Lewis, who built the bungalow. [*now occupied by his descendants*].

William Smith built a house for his father, also behind the church. [*467 Smith Hill Road*] After the deaths of Mr. & Mrs. Sylvester Smith, Edward Oles owned the place for many years. Mrs. Lathrop, descendant of Martin Rockwell, has sold it to her sister, Mrs. (Margaret) Thompson. [*Now owned by her son's family, Mr. & Mrs. Norman F. Thompson III.*]

My first recollection of the house opposite the William Rockwell house [*464 Smith Hill Road*] is of Dr. Lancelot Phelps living there. Later by two of our ministers, Mr. Hartshorne and Mr. Clarke. Reuben sold it to Albert Kelsey, and he in turn sold it to Mrs. Blaire. After that, it was bought by Hiram Northrup, whose widow is living there. [*It was this Northrup who owned the Colebrook Store, and who maintained a feud with his next-door neighbors, the Coopers, who owned the competing store.*]

The next house Dr. Jarvis occupied [*474 Smith Hill Road*], but I first recollect Amos and John Corbin living in it. John lived in the wing part. Amos' widow left it to Samuel Cooper, who finally gave it to his son, Wilber, with store and post office. [*Wilber's son, Ralph, lived there and raised a family. His widow, Dorothy, sold the property.*]

The Colebrook Inn [*558 Colebrook Road, now the Colebrook Historical Society*] was built by Mr. Underwood for his daughter, Aphia, who married Rufus Seymour. They kept a hotel. After them, Charles Hunt lived there and Eugene Barber, who married Abbie Hunt. Eugene Barber sold to E. Carrington, and various tenants occupied it. In 1867, Miss. Brigg's school occupied the ball room. After Mr. Carrington's death, Frank Thompson purchased it, and lived there a number of years, finally selling to Samuel Johnson. Mrs. Hinchliff is present owner, with Mr. Wolfram occupying it. Mrs. Hinchliff made Community House of the horse shed. [*now the Colebrook Senior and Community Center at 2 Schoolhouse Road.*]

Next to 'Rockwells', on the site of the old meeting house, Dr. William B. DeForest built the house now known as 'Quietude'. [*Now 563 Colebrook Road.*] I first remember it occupied by Dr. Pease. Reuben Rockwell owned it and lived in it during his married life, then sold it to Mr. Plumb, by whom it was sold to Mrs. Bulkley. Her niece, Mrs. Prentice, inherited it, and is the present owner. [*Although the house has been sold, a large amount of acreage in and around the Center is still owned by Mrs. Prentice's granddaughter, Justine Trowbridge, who, although no longer a resident, retains her love of, and interest in Colebrook.*]

The next house was built, I believe, by a man named Walter, [*now 569 Colebrook Road*] who owned a wagon shop opposite. [*There is a note in the margin signed by Mabel A. Newell, which states: "This house was built by a man named John Rogers who came to Colebrook from Cornwall. This I can find in the deeds. His great, great granddaughter showed me. M.A.N. 1959.*] James Dunwell, our blacksmith, lived there in my youth. After his death, Reuben Rockwell bought and rented it to his storekeeper, C.L. Smith; to Jared Butler and to the Baldwins. At the time Mrs. Bulkley bought it, Horace

White was living in it and removed to the Barney Kilbourn House on Water Street. [Today this is 2 Center Brook Road.] Mrs. Bulkley enlarged and remodeled it and tore down the old blacksmith shop. It is now owned and occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kelly Prentice. [Today, Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Strickler.]

Beyond the bridge, the next house was built by Calvin Sage before 1830. [Now 579 Colebrook Road.] Sage owned the tannery under the hill, now torn down. Bliss, who ran the paper mill on Sandy Brook, [Today the site of 3 Campbell Road.] lived there awhile after his son, Sam Sage, went to Norfolk. It was sold with the paper mill to the Vernon Brothers of Brooklyn. Mr. Russel and the Baldwins lived there. Later the Mushons used it as a summer home. It is now occupied by Mrs. Pine, who has rented it to Rev. Warren S. Archibald. [Now Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Spencer.]

The next house up the hill was built by Dr. Chauncey Lee, [Now 593 Colebrook Road, but she is wrong here, Lee was the third person to live in this house.] pastor in the Colebrook Congregational Church. I first remember it occupied by Andrew Bailey, and the newer part built by his son, Seth Bailey. Birdsey Bailey, son of Seth, lived there and raised a family. Afterward, it was owned by the Leonards and sold by them to Arthur Johnson, the present owner.

Ezra Gilbert and family lived in the next house, [Now 597 Colebrook Road.] and the stocking family, missionaries from Persia, [Iran] came there. Mr. Stocking died, and his wife, who was Jerusha Gilbert, continued to live with her sisters. Later the Baglin family, now Mr. William Mills.

Ezra Stocking, the youngest child of Jerusha, built and occupied the next house. [Now 603 Colebrook Road.] The old Taintor barn, opposite, a little north, was then standing. [About where Henry James Mills lives today at 600 Colebrook Road.] Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Malison from South Sandisfield bought and owned it. Their daughter, Mrs. Julius Barnard, inherited it and lived there a few years. Wilber Mills now owns it. [Now owned by Colin McMartin.]

The parsonage in early days belonged to Ozariah Clark. Rev. Mr. Ives lived there in my early childhood. Then Harvey Whiting, his wife and wife's sister, Mrs. Chloe Bass. Miss. Bass bequeathed the house to the Colebrook Church. Mr. & Mrs. S.A. Cooper lived there before they went to live with Mrs. Amos Corbin. [At 474 Smith Hill Road.]

Beginning at Water Street, the house now owned by Mrs. Newell [Today, the home of Beverly and Robert Fallon, at 1 Center Brook Road.] was built and owned by Mr. Walter of the carriage shop. The first occupant I remember was Lorenzo Sage, whose three sons and daughter were my schoolmates. Lorenzo worked in the tannery opposite. Edmund Ryan owned the house many years, and the daughter, Mrs. Martin Berry. The Barry children sold the house to Mrs. Oakley, who fitted it up and sold to Mabel Newell.

The house opposite [Today, 2 Center Brook Road, the home of Ronald and Pauline Abbott.] had many occupants. Virgil Bishop, whose wife Calista Smith died there, is the first occupant I remember. Then the Bentley's, whose daughter Fanny went to school with me. For a number of years the Connor family lived there 'til they moved to the Kilbourne House. Mike Conroy built a blacksmith shop there. Green, a blacksmith, and the Parish family also lived there. Albert Kelsey bought and fitted it up and after his death, Arthur Knox, who sold it to the present owner, Theodore Phillips.

The next house was the property of Barry Kilbourne and his sister, "Aunt Sally". Their father owned before them. Opposite was the loom where Aunt Sally wove rag carpets. When Barry was old, Mrs. Lamson and family lived there. Later, for years the Connor Family, and after them, the Baglins. Horace White, the present owner of the property, was living there when the house burned down. He made himself a small house out of the barn.

Alpha Rockwell, son of Elijah Rockwell, whose house had been on Sandy Brook, where Charles Matson lives, [*Today, 148 Sandy Brook Road (with the private bridge).*] occupied the next house. [*Today, number 8 Center Brook Road, the home of George Bodycoat.*] A family named Culver had lived there previously. Alpha moved away. His sister, Miss. Sophia Rockwell, lived there alone. Afterward Truman Skilton and an old Civil War veteran, Charles Morris. Finally, Mrs. Bulkley bought it for her farmer, Mr. Mills, the present occupant.

The next house [*Today, 10 Center Brook Road, the home of Michael and Judy Hurd.*] was occupied by William Seymour, son of Rufus Seymour. Afterward, Lyman Beecher, who married Rufus' daughter, lived there. Then a widow, Mrs. Watson, and then Mrs. Kiturah Bigelow and her two nieces, Mary and Mattie Smith, daughters of Milton Smith. Next Misses Ann and Eliza Gilbert became owners. Mr. Edward Horrax, who married their niece, bought it, [*in 1888*] and Mrs. Horrax is the present owner. [*The Horrax family sold to the Hurds, after the property had been in their family for approximately 110 years.*]

The two cottages across the street were built by my father, Edward Carrington, as tenant houses. [*Today, numbers 7 and 9 Center Brook Road.*] After the tannery was given up, one was often occupied by some men working for my father. A French Family named Basney lived in one. The father had a shoemaker's shop over father's store. A family named Webster lived in the other. Theron Parsons, who worked for father, lived in one, David Durand in the other. Martin Barry and family in one now owned and occupied by Mrs. S.A. Cooper. Luther Sparks bought the one now owned by Mrs. Sparks.

Father's store is now a tenant house. [*Burned by the fire department years ago, it was located where the driveway to 16 Schoolhouse Road is now located.*]

Going south from the church, [*Now 522 Colebrook Road (Rt. 183).*] the house now owned by Mrs. Wheeler, was once lived in by Horace North, also by John Corbin. Osborn Stillman gave it to the church as a parsonage. Our Scottish minister, Mr. Geikie, lived there. Mr. Solomon Sackett, to whom it was sold, lived and died there. It was sold to Mr. Earl, who sold it to Mrs. Wheeler, the present owner. [*Now owned by Rockwell descendants Paul and William Wheeler.*]

The house owned by the Culvers [*Now number 3 Stillman Hill Road, owned and occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Snyder.*] belonged to Martin North. His widow lived there and Mrs. Seth Whiting, and her son Julius after they sold their farm. About 1870, Mrs. Kinney bought it. Afterward Mrs. Miles and her brother, Mr. Culver, who is the present owner. [*The house burned in 1895. The present structure dates from about the turn of the 20th century.*]

Up the hill lived Capt. Cook and his sister, Mrs. Eugene Barber. [*This building, on the east side near the top of the hill, was burned by the fire department many years ago.*] After, the Apleys, and then the Perkins.

On the top of the hill lived Deacon Osborne Stillman. After his death, George Carrington and wife lived there with Mrs. Stillman. The Coffil family bought it and lived there a good many years, then sold it to the present owner, Rev. Dr. Li—ton [?] of New York.

Going north from Wilber Mills', [*Here we proceed north along Colebrook Road starting from number 603.*] Hannah Howell and her niece Matilda lived in the Howell homestead. [*Today, number 645 Colebrook Road, owned by Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Small.*] Mrs. Matilda taught our school. [*Center School*] After them came Edward Simons, later Miss. Bilshaw fitted it up for a sanitarium and sold it in 1927 to N.Y. lawyer Allen Hubbard.

Nearly opposite [*Today, number 650 Colebrook Road.*] lived Samuel Austin, who had a blacksmith shop beyond his house on the opposite side. Edwin Thompson owned it, and his son, Wilbur, is present owner. [*His grandson, George, currently owns it.*]

Beyond the blacksmith shop stands the house occupied in my childhood by the Stanwoods; [*Today, number 657 Colebrook Road, Bob Seymour's Book Barn.*] John and Robert went to school with us. Next an Irishman named Ryan, later Hiram Northrup farmed it, and when he moved to the Center, Clayton Deming ran the farm for him. Mr. Fancher is the present owner.

The brick house [*Today number 661 Colebrook Road, the home of Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Crocker.*] was built by Alpha Sage. In his store opposite, my father worked as a clerk about 1822. John Wheeler bought it, and kept store for years. It is now owned by the Terry Family of Brooklyn, N.Y., who also own the two houses beyond next to the Rock Schoolhouse. [*Today numbers 666 and 667 Colebrook Road.*]

In the larger one, [667], Deacon Samuel Mills and his wife lived. Rev. Mr. Russell and his wife, niece of Mrs. Mills, lived with and inherited the property. Present occupant is a man named Lugg. [*John Lugg, who farmed for Miss. Terry, had tenure there for his lifetime.*]

The house in the valley [*Today number 23 Sandy Brook road.*] was the home of Hiram Sage and a large family. Present owner is Isidore Jasmin. [*The present owners, the Grays, are descendants of Isidore.*]

Hubert Hotchkiss built the house built the house now owned by Miss. Anderson. [*Today number 18 Beech Hill Road, owned by Mr. & Mrs. David Bishop.*]

Mrs. Belonged to the paper mill opposite [*Today 4 Campbell Road.*] A man named Wrinkle lived there in my youth. Later John Bliss and Parmalee. Mrs. Spaulding's mother built the bungalow now owned by Forest Spaulding. [*This today is 10 Campbell Road.*]

The Kennedy house [*Today number 40 Beech Hill road.*] was owned by Jonathan Stillman, then Mr. Henry Terrill, who married Emmiline Whiting.

Mr. Orren Oles, who lived to be 90, was next. [*Actually, he lived to be 96. He was the maker of the great spinning wheel at the historical society. This house is today number 70 Beech Hill Road. For some reason, Miss. Carrington omitted numbers 21 and 64 Beech Hill Road, although she can be excused for number 64, as it was only a shingle mill when she was alive.*]

There follows several more scattered locations, but with the exception of the following final selection, are not necessary for the purposes at hand.

The little house behind the Rockwell Store, built around 1800, [*Today number 4 Rockwell Road, commonly referred to as the Woodbine cottage.*] was the original store and P.O. It was usually occupied by Mr. Rockwell's hired man. I first remember a family named Ryan. Then a shoemaker named Evarts. For many years a large family named Miles. Charley Thompson and his mother lived there 'til she died. Then Mrs. Hinchliff became possessor." [*If this was still the P.O. in the 1820s, then its name was Colebrook Meeting House Post Office, as the historical society has letters so addressed, although it is my understanding that Reuben conducted business at his home (561 Colebrook Road) at that time.*

Thus ends a rather remarkable first-hand account of Colebrook as seen through the eyes of one of her more noted residents, whose memory spanned from the Civil War era to the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century. Sarah Carrington gave us a most wonderful "reverse birthday gift" on her 80th birthday!

Bob Grigg