

WILMOT, NH, TOWN POUND THE WHY AND THE WHAT

Presented Sunday, November 6, 2011 – by Nola Aldrich

Source: “Glimpse of the Past” A History of Wilmot, NH, by Florence Langley, Page 53

Question: How did the Town Pound come to be, and why did Wilmot have a Town Pound?

1791 The New Hampshire General Court passed an Act requiring every town “to make and to maintain a good and sufficient Pound.”

Provisions:

Purpose of a Pound – Used for wandering swine, cattle, sheep, etc., liable to be impounded or restrained or as a place of safety or “shelter or boarding” for healthy, ownerless or abused animals. A pound could be someone’s barn. Pound also served as a source of revenue for the town – Pound keeper was an elected town official – primary job was to collect animals and sell unclaimed ones to the Town Farm for meat.

Hogreeves to be elected town officials and 4 hogreeves were elected at Wilmot’s first town meeting in 1808.

Hogreeve – def. – Hog refers to swine – bad reputation – foragers – not taxable – wandering nuisances – problem of keeping animals on own property. Reeve – def – steward or manager. Hogreeves were empowered to impound wandering swine after giving notice to farmers and posting notices in 2 adjacent towns.

1822 – 1st Town Pound – Town voted to build a pound 30 feet square. Located southwesterly of Bunker Hill Cemetery near the Meeting House. William Gay entered complaint that pound was not being built according to law. Won legal action. Pound of stone 5’ high built by town.

1834 – Voted that a 2nd Town Pound site be located and built because 1st one did not meet needs of the town. Likely located across from what is now the town hall and town library. Built by William Stinson – paid \$42.25. 1852 Benjamin Bunker was paid \$1.42 for pound repair and John R. Bates \$2.25 for a new pound gate.

1844— Stone Pound Road was discontinued in 1844. The road for stray animals, from Abbie Langley’s corner, went past the stone pound.

1860 – Town voted to purchase land for a new pound - #2 Pound deemed insufficient – not large enough – Edith Campbell stated that “the voters gave the selectmen power to settle the pound dispute” - \$10.00 for land where Third and Present Pound stands. Pound built by Samuel Waldron. Land bounded by that of Benjamin Bunker and by Merrill Cross. Present Pound in 2011 is located between the properties of Clara/Nancy Langley and Kenneth/Nola Aldrich on Bunker Hill Road. Pound is across from the Bunker Hill Cemetery.

Fun Facts:

Wilmot Historical Society was responsible for restoration of 3rd and LAST Pound.

Richard H. Webb, abutting landowner, gave town a 20' easement around pound for easier access.

Walter Walker – Made sign with Town Pound 1860 inscription

Pound dedicated as part of Old Home Day observance in 1977.

Walter Walker constructed a red oak, hand-hewed gate in 1981 (no longer there).