

## Nepaug Statistics

By - L. Alderman, Burlington Historian 2-2001

Total cost to MDC; \$2,500,000

Thoughts of looking for drinking water for Hartford started around 1909 by the Board of Water Commissioners. At that time the Pop. of Hartford was about 330,000.

They first looked to Granby and Salmon Brook, but after a study was rejected as not enough water for Hartford's needs.

Then the Board of Water Commissioners spotted the Nepaug Valley. It didn't take long for them to decide, this is it!

The Nepaug River ran through that valley, and went through a narrow natural opening before reaching the Farmington River above Collinsville. It would only require a short dam to close that river.

Then Clear Brook merged into Phelps Brook and they both flowed through another narrow gap to enter the Farmington River below Collinsville. That gap would only require a short earthen dam.

So by closing these two areas, a huge reservoir for Hartford could be built.

First the Board of Water Commissioners, later called the MDC had to get a Resolution passed in the State Legislation giving them the authority to purchase all the land in this area that "They thought Necessary".

The first try ended in failure for the companies down river refused to give up their water rights.

So the MDC returned with the offer to build still another dam upriver for water storage, that could be used to release water for these mills during drought in place of the water held back by the new reservoir. That is why that dam is called the Compensating Reservoir.

The new bill passed. Now the Nepaug Valley had been developing for many years. Who knows when the first settler appeared. During that length of time, roads were built and continually improved, along with bridges, guardrails etc. The village of Nepaug was eventually built, along with their church and school house.

These people also had a graveyard for their dead. It was named Old Canton Southwest Graveyard and had 198 bodies when the MDC moved it. The earliest burial I found was dated in 1830 indicating that the town of Nepaug was there for quite some time. The Catholic Church in Collinsville also developed a cemetery in that area called St. John's that had 174 bodies at the time of removal.

The MDC "wiped out Nepaug Village, their school, church, and moved the two cemeteries. About 36 parcels of land and 22 occupied farm houses.

There is one private cemetery on Ford Road. The Ford Cemetery has one high monument. It was erected by the Ford's in remembrance of their daughter Caroline who was only 18 when she died. Mrs. Ford faithfully planted double daffodils and many other flowers and kept the small graveyard well manicured until she died in 1901. She was buried along side her daughter and husband Omni.

When MDC took over, they no longer maintained this cemetery and soon brush and weeds took over. MDC removed the wrought iron fence that was once erected by the Ford's around the lone marker, up to the Caretakers House.

Biggest challenge in building Nepaug; Tunneling through Talcott Mountain, about 3000 feet of solid trap rock to lay down the 42 inch pipe. This pipe, eight miles long can carry 33,000,000 gallons of water a day to Reservoir 5 in West Hartford.

MDC now sells Burlington water as far away as Portland, on the other side of the CT river. It is claimed the MDC has an over abundance of fine drinking water at the present time.

These are the roads that MDC barricaded to the public but are still using. MILL DAM ROAD, PHELPS BROOK ROAD, VALENTINE ROAD, SMITH ROAD and DOUGLAS ROAD and a few unnamed roads. Because MDC closed these roads they agreed to build Clear Brook Road to replace all of them, and maintain this replacement forever.

(Newspaper clipping, 8-16-1923 about Clear Brook Road) "When the big Nepaug reservoir was constructed in northern Burlington part of the road from Burlington to Collinsville was flooded and the MDC had to build 1.29 miles of new roadway. It was far superior to anything else in Burlington with the exception of the state highway between Unionville and Collinsville.

This article continues, Now this summer, although the road was still in fair shape the Hartford people have started resurfacing it with good grace. This they are doing entirely of their own volition no request for such action having been made by the Selectmen and the work is all the more appreciated for that reason".

In recent years MDC contrary to their argment has failed to maintain and plow Clear Brook Road as agreed, a road that had been well maintained for over a half century. Now MDC has placed a barricade across a Burlington Public Highway to halt any travel on Clear Brook Road. This has turned this into a DEAD-END, with no cur du sac, illegal in the town of Burlington.

What Hartford gained from their two and a half million dollar investment. An inexhaustible supply of 33 million gallons of the "purest water that nature can give" every day, that flows to West Hartford by gravity, increasing water pressure throughout the city including pressure for fighting fires.

About half of all Burlington's acreage (20,160) is owned by these four:

State of CT, New Britain, Metropolitan and Bristol, nearly 10,000 acres

- State of Conn. 3,722
- New Britain 3,160
- Metropolitan District 2,431
- Bristol Water Company 670