

History of the Dover / Rollinsford Town Line

June 2015

Somersworth

1729 : The northeastern section of Dover petitions to become a separate Parish. The petition is granted for the Parish of Summersworth and the bounds of the Parish are described as follows

“The bounds of said Parish to be as follows (Viz^t) Beginning at the mouth of fresh Creek and to run as the Creek runs to the way that goes over Said Creek or at the head of the Creek where the way goes over and from thence as the way now goes to the Southerly Side of Varnys Hill to Ebenezer Varnys Land and then to an oak tree over the End of the Said Hill Which is a white oak tree marked Standing about two or three rods from a Spring, And thence on a North west & by North point of the Compass to the head of Dover bounds”

1754 : The Parish of Summersworth petitions to become a separate Town. The petition is granted with the same description as the Parish bounds. A clerical error creates the Town of Somersworth.

Perambulations

1756 : The first perambulation of the Dover / Somersworth line completely omits the section from Garrison Hill (then called Varney's Hill) to the Cochecho River. No explanation is given. The perambulation begins at a white oak tree which is an angle point in the line on the northerly side of Garrison Hill and proceeds northwest by north to Rochester.

1793 : Perambulation was similar to 1756 (names had changed). No mention of line from the Hill to the River.

1804 : This perambulation begins with uncommon wording. “Perambulate View run and **Settle the line** Between The Town of Dover & the Town of Somersworth”.

“Viz: Beginning at the North side of Dover River at the Mouth of Fresh Creek (so called) Then Running by the Channel of said Creek to the head of F. Creek Where the Road leading from Miles's Cove to Dover passes over,

Then by the Centre of said Road to the southerly side Varneys Hill (so called) to land formerly owned by Ebenezer Varney at the southeasterly corner of D(-?-) Wentworths house

– Thence Running North Twenty one & a half degrees West Eighty six Rods. Over said hill to a Stump about two Rods Southwesterly from a Rock in Michaya(?) Purington's Pasture Marked .D.S.

Then Running North Thirty five and three fouths Degrees West to the Road leading from Quamphegan to Dover – fourteen rods. “

Note that the Town line is the “*Center of the Road*”

The final paragraph seems to indicate that some of the issues with this line were regarding road maintenance.

"It is Likewise Agreed by the Subscribers that if the Town Should Accept the forgoing Return then Somersworth is to keep in Repair the Easterly & Dover the Westerly Ends of the Road Leading from Fresh Creek to Varney's Hill Agreeably to a Division this day Made and Rocks Marked on Each side of the Road, On the hill Westerly of Job Clements."

1822 & 1836 : Both perambulations call for the center of the road and reference the 1804 maintenance agreement.

Rollinsford

1849 : The southerly section of Somersworth becomes the separate Town of Rollinsford. The documents only describe the Rollinsford / Somersworth Line.

Perambulations

1850 : This is the first perambulation between Dover and Rollinsford. All bounds referenced in this perambulation are marked D-R . It would seem that the previous bounds (marked D-S) had been replaced and some new bounds had been added.

The perambulation begins at the Dover/Somersworth/Rollinsford corner (at the current Weeks Crossing) and proceeds southeasterly to " a stone monument in the northerly side of the road to Fresh Creek, so-called, marked D R; Thence following the course of said Fresh Creek Road as follows vis:" There follows a series of Bearings & Distances to "a stone monument in the Southerly side of the road marked D R" The bearings & distances then continue to Fresh Creek.

The final paragraph reads: "And it is agreed between the subscribers hereto that the Town of Rollinsford is to maintain and keep in repair the Easterly end of said Fresh Creek Road; from the Fresh Creek westerly 233 rods to the stone monument marked D R and which is the division monument, - and that the Town of Dover is to maintain and keep in repair the Westerly end of said Fresh Creek road from the monument last mentioned Westerly 256 rods to the stone monument on the Northerly side of said road at the foot of Varneys Hill, so-called."

The bound on Fresh Creek Road is referred to as the "division monument" .

1856 : This perambulation similar to 1850 except that the bearings & distances used are very different. There is no reference made to road maintenance.

1892 : This perambulation uses the same bearings & distances along Fresh Creek Road as the 1856 perambulation. No reference to road maintenance.

1899 : This perambulation uses the same descriptions along fresh creek road as the 1856 perambulation except that all of the bearings were changed by one degree. All of the bounds were marked with a prominent "1899".

1948 : There were several perambulations between 1899 & 1948 but this appears to be the description that was used in 1967 Davis survey and also shows the accumulation of errors over the years. Although it appears that the intention was to retype the 1899 bearings & distances there were typographical errors along the way which significantly altered the lines.

Several bearings were to $\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ but that was dropped and all bearings now to nearest degree.

On the second and third courses from the Oak Street bound the distances were transposed which places the angle points in significantly different locations.

Davis Survey

1967 : Grant Davis surveys the Town Line between the Oak Street bound and the Fresh Creek Road bound. He performed a field survey to find the overall distance between bounds and then prorated the 1948 perambulation to match. The resulting line, as shown on the Davis plan, lies outside the road R.O.W. in several areas both on the Dover and the Rollinsford side. This does not appear to match the original description of "as the way now goes", the 1804-1836 descriptions of "the center of the road", or the 1850-1966 description of "following the course" of the road.