

# A familiar tale retold

by Daisy Dopp

*Daisy Dopp lived most of her life on the Glover farm that is now home to the Bread and Puppet Theater. When her husband, Jim, died in 1970, Daisy Dopp moved to a home in the village, and spent some of her time writing articles recalling life on the farm. Most were published first in the Newport Daily Express. Elka Schumann befriended Daisy Dopp and, in cooperation with the Old Stone House Museum, collected and edited a collection of her columns. This is the fourth of a series of these columns, with illustrations by Peter Schumann and photographs provided by the Glover Historical Society, the Chronicle will publish from time to time.*

It was the year of 1810 in Glover, Vermont, the Green Mountain State. The date was June 6, and it was Militia Day when the men met and did military drill. Residents who had gone to New Hampshire usually came back to parade with the others at home.

The town was a tract of wilderness. There was a mill or two along the river which was the outlet of what is now Shadow Lake. One of these was a grist mill owned by Aaron Willson. It was the only mill for miles around where the settlers could take their grists and get them ground into wheat flour with which to make their bread.



Where Route 16 now runs was then a great cedar forest and swamp. There was a tiny spot of water known then as Mud Pond, where lovely Tildy's Pond is now. It was born when Long Pond ran away.

Just above this toward the south was a deep beautiful body of water that lay almost entirely on the crest of the land. It was known as Long Pond and flowed south, helping to form the headwaters of the Lamoille River which flows into Lake Champlain. In the spring when the early freshets came, it overflowed somewhat in both directions, the bed where it lay was so very level. All around was virgin woodland.

It had been a very dry spring. The mill was short of water and the situation was becoming serious. Everywhere men met, the discussion soon turned to the dangers of this continued drought. Mr. Willson was anxious to get more water so he could keep grinding to protect the settlers from a food shortage. All eyes looked longingly at the big lake south of Mud Pond. The men began to talk about how easy it would be to go to the back shore by the cliffs, and dig a little trench, which would let a trickle of water into Mud Pond just a few rods to the north. This would add a harvest to the outlet of the pond which turned the wheels of the Aaron Willson mill.

On Militia Day there was always plenty of cider to help the men drill and the spirits ran high. Soon the group was convinced that it would be a public service to do the job and Mr. Willson was well pleased. He left his wife grinding grist and went along with the group.

With them also there was another young man by the name of Spencer Chamberlain. He was part Indian, 22 years old, and better educated than most people at that time. He had learned to read by lighted pine tapers and the light of



campfires. He was a swift runner who carried messages between the settlers and Indians in those days.

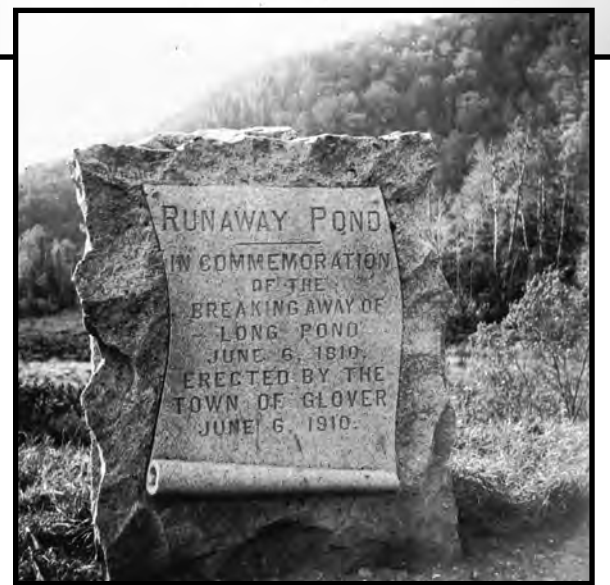
So, on that day, with several jugs of whiskey, and what shovels they could muster, they set out for Long Pond.

What they did made history from Glover to the boundary of Canada, by the way of Newport through Lake Memphremagog. As it swept through those towns it made agricultural changes for the future, for many cedars were buried deep, and the land made good farms years later. We recall many years ago the Sleepy Nine baseball team put a backstop on what was known as the George Hinton farm just beyond the Glover town line. It is a fine flat field, but after a few tries they found themselves unable to dig down to set the poles and could not understand why, but it was decided that many cedars which came to rest there from the Runaway Pond incident was the cause. There are many other cases that came to light during the years that are similar.



Somewhere in our scrapbooks there is a picture and writeup taken from the *Old Boston Post*, showing Runaway Pond as one of the 100 wonders of the world. One would guess it was written about 1910 when the celebration was held there and the marker erected. It is a pleasant place to visit, and dream of the past, and plan for the future. There is a fine road leading through the entire length of the empty lakebed. The picture changes with the season and the songs of the white throat and thrush can give one thrills of ecstasy as he listens to them at twilight.

In high spirits this group started to dig the small trench near the cliffs to obtain more water to add to the outlet of Stone Pond to keep the mill running. At first there were a few ripples and then the response was awful to behold. Underneath the water was a vein of quicksand.



With a roar the big body of water seemed to shudder and started to empty toward the north. The men ran for their lives and miller Aaron Willson cried out in despair as he thought of his wife grinding grist at the mill. The young runner answered the cry of, "Run Chamberlain, run!"

That young man raced to warn the settlers below of the "rushing" water which was close upon his heels. When he reached the Willson mill, he seized Mrs. Willson and carried her to safety up the hill, but a horse that was tied to the post was swept away along with the mill.

Harry Phillips, a long-time resident of Glover, wrote a fine poem about the Runaway Pond incident and also, the History of Glover. He was a descendant of Spencer Chamberlain, the young man who made that historic race ahead of the destructive waters when Runaway Pond ran away.

June 7, 1976

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