

**The Bethel Water Co.
1889-1968**

Bethel Maine History

The Bethel Journals

March 2011

The Bethel Water Company and Bethel Water District

Incorporated in 1889 the Bethel Water Company was acquired by the Bethel Water District a public entity in 1968.

September 26, 1890.

The Water Company let water into the village on Friday and attached a hose to one of their hydrants. It threw water 150 feet into the air and would cover any building for a long distance.

7-31-1888

Bethel Hill: W. E. Skillings (Steam Mill Company owner), Judge Enoch Foster (a Justice of the Maine Supreme Court), and Samuel D. Philbrook (cattle dealer and later President of the Bethel Savings Bank) accompanied by Albert Stanwood of Waterford have been investigating the general possibilities of supplying Bethel Hill with pure water and supply of water in case of fire. They have a natural basin in Chapman Brook about three miles from The Bethel House and one hundred fifty feet above the level of the Common on Bethel Hill. Mr. Stanwood was for many years connected with the water supply system of Boston. He thinks that the supply is sufficient and the intervening ground is suitable for digging and laying pipe. An early effort will be made to obtain a charter and enter in earnest upon the work. *Oxford County Democrat*

2/16/1889:

“The **Bethel Water Company** was chartered by the Legislature, February sixteenth, eighteen hundred and eighty-nine. A leading object was to enable the Village Corporation to carry out its purposes in relation to a fire department. The incorporators were William E. Skillings, Addison E. Herrick, Enoch Foster, Samuel D. Philbrook, Enoch W. Woodbury, Gideon A. Hastings, Gilman P. Bean and Ceylon Rowe. Its object as stated in the charter is to supply the village of Bethel Hill with pure wa-

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ter. By its charter the company was authorized to take, detain and use the water of Chapman brook and all streams tributary thereto or running therefrom in the towns of Bethel and Newry, subject to certain conditions, such as liability for damage on account of flowage, etc. The organization of the company was completed February eighteenth, eighteen hundred and ninety, by the election of the following officers



Judge Enoch Foster

President, Enoch Foster; Secretary, Addison E. Herrick; Directors, Ceylon Rowe, Gideon A. Hastings, Wm. E. Skillings, Enoch W. Wood-bury and Henry N. Bearce. The works were begun and completed in eighteen hundred and ninety, the water beginning to flow November first. No contract was made, but all labor and material were procured directly by the company. The enterprise is a complete success, and the people of the village wonder how they ever got along without

it. The water is abundant and of superior quality. The main pipe is four and one-half miles in length from Common, and the water comes from Chapman brook, away up the mountain side above all impurities, the reservoir being one hundred and eighty-five feet above the level of the Common. The analysis of the water by the Secretary of the State Board of Health shows it to be practically pure, and equal to any supply in the State.”

William B. Lapham, History of Bethel, page 414, 1891 and 1981

March: At the town meeting.. [Art. 25th. To see if the town will vote to permit the Bethel Water Company to lay its pipes across the Androscoggin River upon the Bethel Toll Bridge, so called, or to hang them upon or under said bridge, under the direction of the Selectmen.] This item was passed over. The town voted to take from the Bethel Water Company water to supply two public watering troughs to pay therefore a sum equal to the tax assessed on the Company’s works and franchise for a term of 20 years. Civil engineers were engaged last week in making levels for the Bethel Water Company. Village Corporation meeting March 10th RE: The contract for supplying the village with water for fire protection purposes which had previously been executed with the Bethel Water Company was read before the meeting and ratified by

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its vote. It will be remembered that the water company agree to furnish 25 hydrants at \$32 a piece for 20 years which aggregates \$800 a year payable semi annually. The water is to be brought from Chapman Brook five miles and the pipes are to be 8 inches in diameter and will cross the river attached to the bridge. The work is to be done and the water running by the first day of next September.

June: The Bethel Water Company employees are hard at work. They have surveyed and located the line of pipe also located the dam which gives a head of 200 feet above Bethel Common and 300 feet at the (Bethel) station. The superintendent, John J. Moore of Hingham, Mass., who has complete charge of construction of the works, is already here in the employ of the Water Company. The men will be sent for as soon as the pipe arrives. Teams have also been engaged to distribute the pipe along the whole length of the line, 4 and one-half miles. One vessel load of 200 tons of pipe has sailed from Philadelphia for Portland and is expected there daily. It will require 80 car loads of pipe (to move the shipload to Bethel). The plan of the location has been drafted by A.M. Carter and will be placed on file with the County Commissioners agreeable to the law. The hydrants have already been located. June 26, The Water Company has received 24 carloads of pipe that is being distributed all its line. Each piece of eight inch main weighs about 570 pounds. They will use 600 tons of iron. The Water Company has rented barracks near the bridge across the Androscoggin River to accommodate the workmen. They expect to employ one hundred men in ditching.

July: A.P. Jenness, Superintendent of the Fryeburg Water Company was in Bethel Thursday to consult on building the dam at the head waters of Chapman Brook. Benjamin R. Bryant (a former owner of the Thurston farm, now the River View Motel) will put in a stone dam for the company. There is a natural basin of solid rock so that the dam 60 feet long and 10 feet high will afford all the water requirements and it will be held in a natural stone basin. The Company has asked for a meeting with the Village Corporation to seek a thirty day extension for completing the hydrants because of a delay in receiving pipe. Twenty car loads were received last week (of June) and the balance is expected this week. Fifty men arrived in Bethel Wednesday employed by the Bethel Water Company in ditching and laying pipe. Work is progressing rapidly.

On Saturday, July 12, 1890, the Bethel Water Company paid \$1,500 to the Grand Trunk Railroad for pipe shipments. It was the largest freight bill ever paid at the Bethel Station, according to a news item in the Oxford Democrat of July 15, 1890.

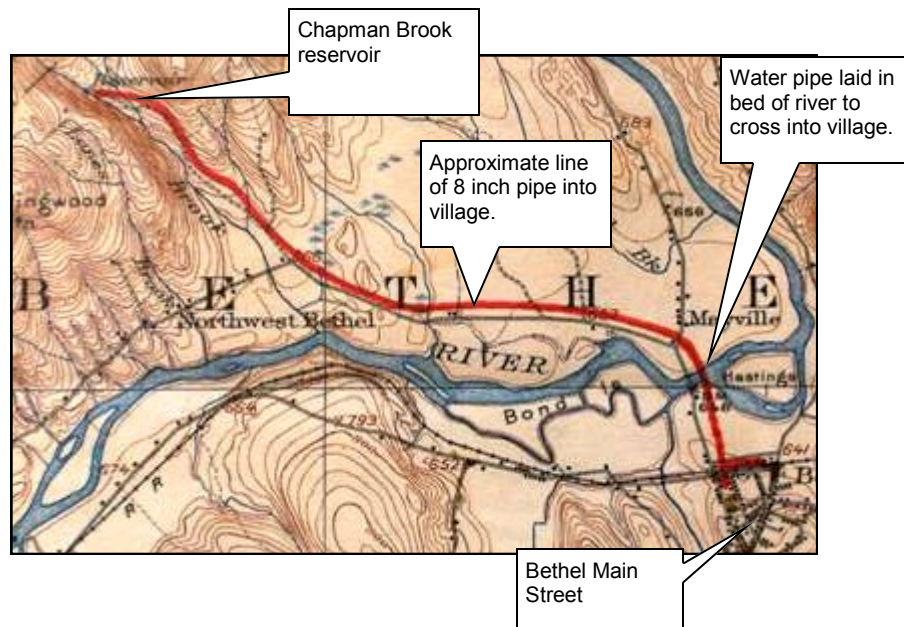
August: Friday the 13th, the Italians that work for the Bethel Water Company celebrated the anniversary of one of their patron saints. About night they became hilarious and some of them became pugnacious. Pistols and knives were frequently used with one man shot through the neck and another badly cut. Sheriff Wormell made several arrests.

September: The corn shop opened Wednesday and it is getting some fine corn. They (the new shop near the depot) are supplied with water by the Bethel Water Company. The Grand Trunk R.R. is laying its pipes from the Water Company's pipes to their stand pipe. The water company has their pipes laid on Main, High, Chapman and Broad Streets and it is ready to supply the Grand Trunk R. R. with water. The Water Company let the water into the village, on Friday, September 26th, and attached a hose to one of their hydrants. It threw water 150 feet into the air and would cover any building for a long distance.

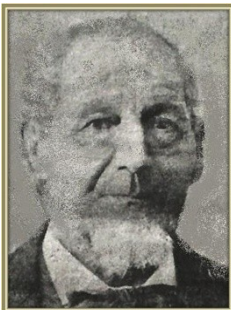
October: The Grand Trunk R.R. started taking water from the Bethel Water Company, Friday. A meeting of the village corporation is called for Saturday afternoon, to provide for horses, carriages and implements for fire purposes. The water company has the hydrants all in place and a few more days all of the mains will be completed. Grand Trunk officials visited the reservoir and examined the works. They pronounce the system the best they have ever seen and the water incomparable. The Bethel Water Company has practically completed their works and is installing service pipes to individual customers. They have 50 orders for new service on file and more orders arrive daily.

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November: The Water Company of Bethel has notified the village corporation that it is prepared to provide water for fire protection as per contract. They are busy putting in service pipes and many are rejoicing in having the luxury of having Chapman Brook water in their homes. Prof. G.A. Robertson has filed application with the Bethel Water Company for water service connections to his houses in Bethel. 11/18/1890: The Water Company is overrun with applications for laying service pipes. The demand for service pipe connections continued strongly on into 1891.



Map above displays the line of pipe and key features in the water system installed during the summer and fall of 1890.



Gideon Hastings in 1896. He was 72 when voted first superintendent

May 8, 1893: At the annual directors' meeting Enoch Foster was elected president and A.E. Herrick elected treasurer. Directors: Elias Thomas, E.W. Woodbury, Ceylon Rowe, G.A. Hastings and H. M. Bearce. At this meeting directors voted G.A. Hastings to act as superintendent for the ensuing year.

June 25, 1894 Stockholders and directors meeting:

Stockholders present representing a majority of the shares of capital stock: S.I. Millett, F.W. Sanborn, E. W. Woodbury, G. A. Hastings, Ceylon Rowe, W.W. Hastings, Elias Thomas, and A.E. Herrick

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Directors elected: Enoch Foster, Pres., A.E., Clerk and Treasurer. Directors: Elias Thomas, F.W. Sanborn, Ceylon Rowe, G.A. Hastings and E.W. Woodbury.

New director and stockholder: F.W. Sanborn's name appeared in the list of stockholders in the Bethel Water Company. Sanborn was the owner and editor of the *Oxford County (Norway) Advertiser*. He was a native of Meredith, New Hampshire.

Annual Meeting May 13, 1895

Stockholders: E.W. Woodbury, 105 shares, Elias Thomas, 180 shares, Ceylon Rowe 120 shares, F.W. Sanborn, 90 shares; Wm W. Hastings, 60 shares; G.A. Hastings, 60 shares and A.E. Herrick, 60 shares.

The same officers and directors were re-elected.

Annual Meeting, Jan 6, 1896

Same officers and directors were re-elected. By Laws amended to add provision for two auditors. Ceylon Rowe and F W Sanborn appointed as auditors.

Annual Meeting Jan 4, 1897

Stockholders present were Sanborn, Thomas, Wm Hastings, G.A. Hastings, Ceylon Rowe, E. W. Woodbury, A. E. Herrick, same shares of stock as previously.

Thomas was elected president pro tem.

Directors meeting – same officers re-elected and same directors appointed.

Annual Meeting Jan 3, 1898

Thomas, Woodbury, G.A. Hastings, Herrick, C Rowe, Sanborn (now 30 shares) present. Woodbury elected president pro tem.

Directors: Woodbury, Rowe, Thomas, Sanborn, G.A. Hastings, Herrick. Same officers re-elected.

Annual Meeting Jan 2, 1899

Stockholders: Rowe, 120; GA Hastings, 60; Herrick, 60; Woodbury, 105; Sanborn 30; S.I. Millett, 50; Enoch Foster by proxy, 120; Thomas, 160 shares. Woodbury elected Pres pro tem.

Directors: Same officers re-elected. Directors: Thomas, Rowe, G.A. Hastings, Woodbury, Sanborn

Annual Meeting Jan 1 1900

Stockholders present: Rowe, 120; W.W. Hastings, 60; Sanborn, **190**; Herrick, 60, Enoch Foster, 120 by proxy.

Directors: New slate of directors: Rowe, J.U. Purington, Wm W. Hastings, G.A. Hastings, and Sanborn

On Saturday, July 21, 1911, the grand Prospect Hotel on Broad Street was discovered on fire with flames coming through the roof about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Bethel firemen fought the blaze four or five hours.

On August 7, 1911 at the regular monthly meeting of Bethel Water Company directors, a committee consisting of Eben Kilborn, Fred W. Sanborn and Addison Her-

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rick was appointed to employ an engineer and investigate regarding a new reservoir and report.

Photo: The main building seen to the left in this picture was lost; the three story structure on the right was saved. The latter building was previously known as The Elms of The Bethel House. The main

hotel building was erected in 1861. Loss was estimated at \$20,000.

Opened adjourned meeting Aug 25, 1911 – voted to build a reservoir on Paradise Hill and connect it with 10 inch pipe down to near Hastings orchard and then 6 inch pipe to Broad Street. (P 97) Kilborn, Sanborn and Herrick committee to build reservoir, make connections and make necessary contracts. Take any needed land for construction and connection by purchase or condemnation under the charter. Committee to construct reservoir this fall 1911 but without cement lining – work to be done by company and man employed by the company and not by contract. Treasurer authorized to pay all orders drawn by committee. (P 98)

At the January 1914 Directors' meeting the Paradise Hill reservoir completion was again motioned and approved to include power to employ a competent engineer. This is the last entry in minutes concerning the Paradise reservoir.

At a July 10, 1922 director's meeting, H.H. Hastings and Superintendent Carey were appointed a committee to sell at public auction the Bethel Water Company property situated on the right side of the Paradise Hill road. (Location of first attempt to open a satisfactory reservoir.)

Elevation of Chapman Brook reservoir is 920 ft. Paradise Hill reservoir is 905 feet. Elevation of Bethel Inn is 740 feet.

Bethel Water Company Summary 1921 to 1926

Excerpts from meeting minutes

Meeting on July 10, 1922: Directors present were Ceylon Rowe, W.W. Hastings, D.G. Lovejoy, F.W. Sanborn, and E.S. Kilborn. W.E. Carey was elected Superintendent for the ensuing year. Voted to pay Treasurer \$300 for his services and pay Superintendent \$100. (Carey was Clerk, Treasurer and Superintendent.) It was voted to set aside \$650 or about 1% as a Reserve fund for Depreciation. Voted to cancel one bond. Voted to have committee of W.W. Hastings and W.E. Carey sell lot of land on right side of Paradise Road owned by Bethel Water Co., at public auction. Voted to pay \$3.00 per share dividend.

Meeting July 9, 1923: Bethel Water Co., directors met immediately after stockholders' meeting. Present were: H.E. Rowe, W.W. Hastings, F.W. Sanborn and D.G. Lovejoy. Voted to pay Treasurer \$300 and Superintendent \$100 for the last twelve months. Voted to set aside \$650 or about 1% for reserve for depreciation. Voted to install a hydrant near the home of W.W. Bryant as soon as pipe can be procured. On motion it was voted to leave the matter of extending the main into Mayville up to Mr. Carey. Voted to pay \$3.00 per share as dividend.

COMPANY TAKES STEPS TO ACQUIRE CHAPMAN BROOK WATERSHED COMMITTEE APPOINTED

WILLIAM BINGHAM BUYS WATERSHED LAND FROM PENLEY BROS.

Meeting July 14, 1924: Directors meeting immediately followed stockholders meeting. Present were H.E. Rowe, E.S. Kilborn, W.W. Hastings, D.G. Lovejoy and F.W. Sanborn. Voted to pay \$300 to Treasurer for his services. Elected W.E. Carey as Superintendent for ensuing year. On motion it was voted not to set aside a sum for reserve for depreciation as so large an amount had been expended on the new work, namely the new main and hydrant. Voted to pay \$2.00 per share on dividend. A discussion followed regarding building a mill and cutting the lumber from the watershed, thereby polluting the water. It was considered advisable to send someone to confer with the Public Utilities Commission regarding same. W.W. Hastings and W.E. Carey were authorized to represent the Water Co. On motion it was voted to extend the Main line from

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Spring Street to Mason Street using one inch pipe. It was voted to pay W.E. Carey \$100 for service as Superintendent for twelve months.

H.E. Rowe and W.W. Hastings were appointed a committee to confer with the owners of the watershed regarding the purchase of same.

NOTICE TO DIRECTORS – SPECIAL MEETING APRIL 8, 1925

Memo written to directors and stockholders of the Bethel Water Company as a notice to meet to vote on the land offer made by William Bingham, 2nd.

Minutes of the meeting held on April 8, 1925 reported the following:

There were present personally or by their Proxy the following named stockholders representing the amount of stock ret opposite their names.

F.W. Sanborn (Proxy)	170 shares
W.W. Hastings (Proxy)	115
H.E. Rowe	150
Ernest Bisbee	10
A.E. Herrick	65
Kilborn & Herrick (by A.E. Herrick)	100
E. E. Carey	10
W.E. Carey	5
H.H. Hastings	5

“More than a quorum were present. It was unani-
mously voted to accept the deed of land given the Be-
thel Water Company. No further business to come be-
fore the meeting, it was voted on motion to adjourn.”

A true record

Attest

Signed W.E. Carey

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Bingham deed described the bounded parcel as being the same parcel of Penley Bros. deeded to William Bingham 2nd dated October 24, 1924, Book 370, page 281, recorded in the Oxford County Registry of Deeds, said tract constitutes the water shed of Chapman Brook.

Abstract of Deed from William Bingham 2nd to Bethel Water Company

March 27, 1925

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Describes the boundaries of a certain tract or parcel of land in Newry which Bingham owns.

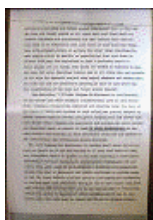
This tract constitutes the watershed of Chapman Brook from which the Bethel Water Company supplies water to Bethel Village and its inhabitants. States that it is Bingham's desire to insure a permanent and perpetually protected water supply for Bethel village.



[Click image to read enlargement](#)

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Continues that to this end the tree and forest growth shall be conserved and perpetuated so that nothing done in the watershed will endanger or pollute the water taken therefrom. The company or its successors shall not remove wood or timber except as further provided for.



[Click image to read enlargement](#)

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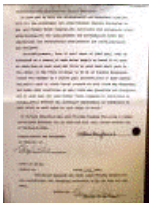
Provision is made to allow for cutting sufficient timber to pay for taxes. And the cutting is not necessarily restricted to just one year but no cutting shall be made in advance of assessments. The Assessors of the Bethel Village Corporation shall investigate any complaints. Successors to the water company may take over said tract but held in trust with aforementioned safeguards maintained.



[Click image to read enlargement](#)

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If said tract of land be abandoned for use as a watershed, ownership of this tract shall pass to the State of Maine. Tract shall be managed as a public park, game and bird preserve and or state forest.



[Click image to see enlargement](#)

A meeting notice was sent to directors for a meeting to be held June 10, 1925 for the purpose of considering the extension of the water main to Evergreen Cemetery.

The following officers were present at the meeting in H.H. Hastings office in Bethel:

H.H. Hastings, President; W.E. Carey, Treasurer and Clerk. Directors: W.W. Hastings, D.G. Lovejoy, H.E. Rowe. H.H. Hastings presided at the meeting and the purpose of said meeting discussed. On motion it was voted to allow Dr. Gehring to connect with the Bethel Water Co., main on the Songo Pond Road at the T.R. Taylor house extending same to Evergreen Cemetery. The Bethel Water

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Company to furnish water to the Cemetery. 2 inch pipe to be used. Pipe to be put under ground under the supervision of W.E. Carey.

Directors meeting July 13th, 1925. There were present: E.S. Kilborn, F.W. Sanborn, W.W. Hastings, H.E. Rowe and D.G. Lovejoy. It was voted to pay W.E. Carey \$300 for his services as Treasurer and Clerk. It was voted to pay the Superintendent \$300 for his services for the twelve month period. On motion it was voted to extend new main from hydrant at F.B. Taylor's house to the house of Roy Anderson by using 2 inch pipe. On motion it was voted to install a "loop" on Elm Street which has hitherto been a dead-end. On motion it was voted to confer with Assessors and place hydrant on Philbrook Street as such place as they think will be the best for protection for the new school house. On motion it was voted to authorize Treasurer to hire the money to pay the Newry tax. Voted to pay \$3.00 dividend per share.

The matter of screens and dam was left with the Superintendent to set a day and arrange for a meeting with the directors to spend the day at the dam and plan improvements of same. On motion it was voted to extend the line of 1 inch pipe from the house of Harry Inman to the new school house on Philbrook Street. Also to use 6 inch pipe for hydrant when installed for same street when application is made by the Assessors.

Special meeting of directors August 20, 1925:

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss with Mr. N.S. Stowell a larger main to the mill of N.S. Stowell.

At the meeting Mr. N.S. Stowell was present to meet with the directors. Purpose of Stowell's request was to enlarge his water main to 6 inches or more viz: automatic sprinkler system. A committee of E.S. Kilborn, H.E. Rowe and W.E. Carey was appointed to investigate the situation and estimate what it would cost. The meeting was adjourned until Monday, August 24, 1925.

At the resumed meeting the directors voted to put in the 6 inch main if Mr. Stowell would dig the trench. Mr. Stowell refused to do anything about it so the matter was closed.

Bethel Water Company Superintendent, 1931



Mr. William C. Garey was born in Norway, Maine, October 29, 1875, the son of John and Ellen Garey.

He received his education in the schools of Norway. On December 28, 1899, he married Elizabeth Norris of Lowell, Mass. About 1903, Mr. Garey opened a steam laundry in the Mason building on lower Main Street and for eleven years conducted a successful business there. In 1916 Mr. and Mrs. Garey purchased some land on the crest of the hill on Mason Street and built a modern home with a beautiful view of the mountains.

Mr. Garey is superintendent, secretary and treasurer of the Bethel Water Company and is manager of **Odeon Hall**. He is a member of the Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Eastern Star, Bethel Lodge F. & A.M., Norway Chapter, Strathglass Commandery and Kora Temple. His recreation is hunting, fishing and golfing. No social activity is complete without the Gareys and they are never too busy to help others.

Extracts from Bethel Water Company minutes

In September 1935 the directors met with Dr. Farnsworth at the Bethel Inn to ask for an appeal to Bingham about changing the reading of the deed to the Newry property due to the difficulties the water company was laboring under.

February 1942 meeting of the Bethel Water Co. the board discussed the matter of the Town of Bethel taking over the water company and no action was taken.

May 1942 a town committee asked the directors of the Bethel Water Co to name a price all the physical properties, real estate, plant and equipment. The directors decided on \$122,000 plus \$28,000 in outstanding bonds. This amount would be recommended to the Bethel Water Corp stockholders—stockholders to retain all money on hand and outstanding bills.

May 15, 1942 the directors of the water company met and voted to pass over the motion as to the sale price of the water company. The superintendent, Fred Douglass, was asked to contact the engineer of the Rumford Mexico Water District and ask him to appraise the Bethel system for its value.

At the April 14, 1943 meeting, the directors discussed Legislative

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Document #885—an act to incorporate the Bethel Water District—no action taken. It was discussed again at the annual meeting in July 1943 with no action taken.

In August 1943, the water co meeting discussed a notice of unsatisfactory water from the Bureau of Health and Welfare. Superintendent was instructed to make a thorough inspection of the source of supply, install a chain across the road of the entrance of water company land and post No Trespassing signs.

August 18, 1943, the PUC ordered the water company to notify its customers to boil their water. And the superintendent was to arrange for the temporary use of a chlorinator.

Sept 15, 1943, meeting was to discuss what action to take regarding the coming vote on forming the Bethel Water District. It was decided that as individuals they would explain the disadvantages of the proposed district to the town.

Bethel Citizen reported after the October 1, 1943 special town meeting that 107 voters attended and only 26 voted in favor of forming a water district.

October 14, 1943 directors met with Bureau of Health and Welfare and representatives from Meter and Chlorinator Companies re: a plan for installing a chlorinator.

Nov 28, 1943 directors agreed that some kind of permanent purification system should be installed.

April 22, 1944 directors voted to purchase a manually controlled water operated hypochlorination unit for \$409.00. Installation to be supervised by supplier's engineer.

A month or two later there was an incident that the superintendent was disregarding instructions for operating the chlorinator.

1968: Bethel Water Company transferred to Bethel Water District

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By the spring of 1968, the formation of a water district had been finalized. The Citizen reported that on Friday, March 29, 1968, the physical property of the Bethel Water Company was transferred to the Bethel Water District. An agreement had been signed the previous December to affect the transfer of plant, property, franchise rights and privileges of the company for \$141,250. The legislative act which organized the new district exempted the transfer of the company's cash assets and accounts receivable.

The three men who had signed the agreement for the water company were Henry H. Hastings, Herbert R. Rowe and Burton Newton. Bethel Water District trustees who signed for the property were Dan W. Manson, Dana Brooks and Albert Buck. Bethel voters had approved this act in June 1967 by a referendum vote of 160 to 76.



At the beginning and two Maine water utility officials inspect the reservoir built in the summer of 1890. In July 2007, a violent rainstorm destroyed this reservoir – see below.

In 2002 the Bethel Water District laid a new water main south along Route 26, Walkers Mill Road to Telstar High School. In 2010, three customers were connected to this line including SAD 44.

In November 2006, The Bethel Water District extended its water main in Mayville by approximately 1,026 feet. Cross Excavation laid a 12 inch main from a hydrant at 248 Mayville Road (US Route 2) to connect a new business known as Mayville Junction – developer Massachusetts contractor Domenic Pugliares of

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North Andover, Mass. Estimated cost of project before work started was main extension will be approximately 1,026 ft at an estimated cost of \$45,461.12. Other services and fire protection had an estimated cost of \$13,462.12 for a total of \$58,923.24. Cost for extending the water main was the responsibility of the developer. Building seen in the background was the object being supplied with water. It was a remodeled service garage formerly owned by Paul Carter of Bethel. There are four 1,500 square foot condominium units in the building.



Jack Cross Excavation Co. of Bethel was contracted by the Bethel Water District to extend the Mayville water main to the former Carter property then owned by Domenic Pugliares. Carter's garage building (in the background) had been converted to two residential and two commercial condos.

BETHEL WATER DISTRICT RESERVOIR DESTROYED AND WATERSHED WASHED OUT IN SEVERE STORM THAT STRUCK BARKER MOUNTAIN IN JULY 2007

City water district brings pipe, manpower to help town get municipal water supply going

Bethel Maine History—Bethel Water Company



By Terry Karkos , *Staff*
Writer

Saturday, July 14, 2007

BETHEL - Water District Superintendent Lucien Roberge expects to have the district's water system back online today, thanks to the Auburn Water District, local contractors and volunteers.

"Those guys were lifesavers today," Bethel Water District consulting engineer Al Hodsdon said on Friday of Auburn Water District Assistant Superintendent John Storer and crewmen Mark and Nick Bouyea, Rod Mercier, David Hamann, and Craig Millett.

"They really made a difference. They're a great bunch of guys," Roberge added.

"We were just glad to help," said Storer, who had to limit how many volunteers he brought to help Bethel. He had to keep the Auburn district running, too.

Running about 1,500 feet of 6-inch piping overground to another mountain stream water source, which local contractors had dammed earlier, and connecting it to the Bethel district's underground piping is only a temporary fix, Roberge said.

"It will give us some degree of supply, but it certainly won't replace what we need. But it will be a start," Selectman Don Bennett said at scene.

Bethel hasn't been able to provide its own water since late Wednesday night when a sudden downpour sent walls of mud, water, boulders and timber crashing through woods on the western side of Barker Mountain.

Storm debris also completely inundated the district's Chapman Brook Reser-

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voir, which was created in 1893, and destroyed the watershed in the process. Angevine Park was also wiped out.

Oxford County Emergency Management Agency Director Scott Parker said he thought the damage looked like a microburst or cloudburst hit the mountainside.

"They didn't get heavy rain over a few hours, they got between 4 and 5 inches of rain in about 30 minutes, but I can't validate the volume and time," Parker said to Oxford County District Conservationist Peter Marcinuk while standing beside North Road.

The incredible damage looked as if a volcanic blast detonated, but without the heat, fire and ash.



Wiped out reservoir. Having withstood all kinds of violent weather for 117 years, the flash storm of July 2007 washed out brook bed and reservoir headwall. The same storm severely damaged parts of the Barker Mt ski facilities located on the opposite side of the mountain.

In some places, large sections of mountainsides turned to quicksand-like mud, taking boulders and trees with root systems the size of small cars down the valley, destroying everything in its path.

"It was a freak of nature," Bethel Water District Assistant Superintendent Donald Katlin said on scene of the storm.

"It looks like God took his finger and went unh, unh, unh," Eben F. Joslyn said, carving a finger in a zigzag pattern through the air to illustrate the path of destruction down the valley.

Joslyn is a field services engineer with the Maine Drinking Water Program. He and Parker toured the devastation and offered their assistance to Roberge, shortly after Bethel selectmen unanimously declared a state of emergency due to extensive damage to the town's water supply.

"This was the quintessential mountain stream. It was probably one of the most beautiful places on the earth. It's too bad to see great natural resources like this being destroyed naturally," Joslyn said.

Joslyn also downplayed logging on Barker Mountain three to four years ago as possibly setting the stage for destruction.



View of damage created by a separate torrent of water that surged down Barker Mountain in a path roughly parallel to Chapman Brook.

"That's a misconception and bad journalism to blame logging. We brought the forest service and (Maine Department of Environmental Protection) up here then and they all walked out of here saying there was no cause for concern," Joslyn said.

"A lot of that logging was associated with removing damage from the ice storm," Katlin added.

By 5 p.m. Friday, the Auburn crew had finished the temporary piping fix. Water and air could be heard whooshing through the pipes, headed down to the Bethel district's chlorinator building

and into the system.

Late Friday evening, they were still flushing piping that was filled with sediment during the storm.

In addition to Poland Spring, the Rumford Water District and Splash Inc. of Turner are trucking water daily to Bethel, so that residents and businesses won't have to boil water, Roberge said. He's also fielded calls from other Maine water districts wanting to help out.

Despite the disaster, Roberge said water in customers' houses is perfectly safe to drink, but he continues to urge residents to practice extreme water conservation measures. Bethel's car wash and laundromat businesses closed voluntarily.

"We only want people to limit doing their laundry, reduce their time in the shower, no watering the flowers or washing cars and dogs. Just use common sense. The more they conserve, the less deliveries we'll have to take. And, we're going to flush our pipes all night and keep our fingers crossed that it will come online (today)," Roberge added.

New Water Supply and Treatment Building

During 2008 the Bethel Water District purchased a section of the Richard Douglass gravel pit between the North Road and the Androscoggin River opposite the point in West Bethel village where the Ferry Road meets the river.

After test wells were drilled, permanent wells were drilled and pipes laid to the new treatment plant adjacent to the North Road. The water main to Bethel village was extended from the main vicinity of the Angevine Park to the new

Bethel Maine History—Bethel Water Company

treatment plant. Some of the expense of opening and connecting to a new water supply was paid by a grant of Federal Emergency Management Agency funds. One of the benefits of having to extend the water main further along the North Road was more homeowners received better fire protection service as 10 new hydrants were installed along the new line.



One of the initial drilling operations in the Douglass pit to determine if the proposed site for a new water supply would be feasible.



October 2008 – New water district treatment plant located on the North Road across the Androscoggin River from West Bethel.

WEST BETHEL WATER UTILITY DISTRICT

Bethel Maine History—Bethel Water Company

In 1959 the water supply situation for West Bethel village residents had reached a critical point so that the Town of Bethel installed a separate water system independently of the Bethel Water Company. Bethel Water Company had never planned to service any town sections except Bethel Hill village, Mayville and Skillington. (Skillington never received public water supply.)

In 1959 Bethel purchased a 2000 gallon water tank and installed a small system in West Bethel village. As a water provider, the town had to form a Bethel Utility District, which was passed by the Maine Legislature.

After the Bethel Water Company transferred its assets and responsibilities to the new Bethel Water District in 1968. The Bethel Utility District continued to serve West Bethel. In 1971 arrangements were completed for the Town of Bethel to transfer West Bethel service to the Bethel Water District.

In the 1971 Town of Bethel Annual Report it was reported that the West Bethel Water account received \$ 275.79 from customers. Expenses were \$193.20. Liabilities of the West Bethel system on January 1, 1971 were \$14,092.43.

In the 1972 Annual Report the West Bethel Water account showed that the remaining liability of \$14,009.81 was paid by an appropriation from surplus.

In 2010, the Bethel Water District serviced 59 connections in the West Bethel section. West Bethel customers are located on six roads in the village: Barker Road, Flat Road, Liberty Lane, Mt. View Circle, West Bethel Road, and the Ferry Road.