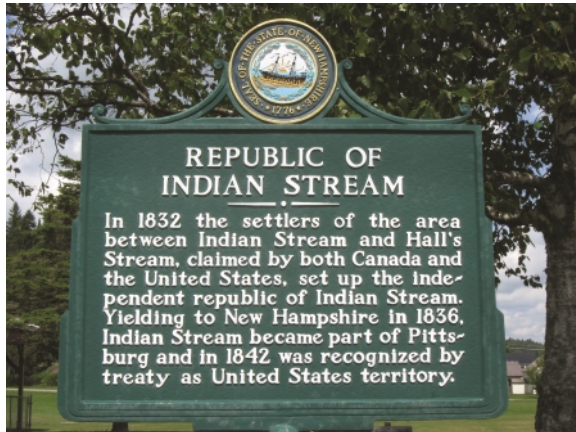


91 Republic of Indian Stream Historical Marker

Route 3, Pittsburg, New Hampshire



International border disputes, the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, and an unpaid hardware store bill would seem to have little in common, unless you are a descendant of the Republic of Indian Stream. Travel Route 3 through Pittsburg, New Hampshire to find the official historical marker, located in the park just after the local school, signifying the Republic of Indian Stream, a story worthy of inclusion in New England's intriguing and often rebellious heritage.

When the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, the border between the newly independent United States and Canada was defined as the "northwesternmost

head of the Connecticut River in New Hampshire," and there became the source for tension. The northwesternmost head of the Connecticut River actually encompassed several possibilities, including the starting points for Hall's, Indian and Perry Streams, and Third Lake, which is the origin of the Connecticut River itself.

In June of 1796, when settlers first arrived to the northern frontier of New Hampshire, Chief Philip, of the St. Francis tribe, sold a large piece of land to Nathaniel Wales and Colonel Moody Bedel of Grafton County, NH and David Gibbs of Quebec, Canada. These three original land owners established the Indian Stream Territory and soon resold most of their parcel to arriving settlers, growing the population to more than 285 by 1824.

The border dispute had not been resolved, despite surveys and commissions by both United States and British governments, and a failed attempt at an agreement in 1819. In 1827, the issue was brought to the King of the Netherlands for arbitration. His ruling awarded the land to Britain. This decision was ignored by New Hampshire, but it signaled a change of attitude by Canada, which had previously attempted no jurisdiction. In 1831 Britain announced a requirement for military service in Canada from the inhabitants of Indian Stream. Simultaneously, New Hampshire continued attempts at serving warrants to Indian Stream residents, and the United States government started taxing goods coming out of Indian Stream after recognizing the territory as independent from New Hampshire.

These conflicting events created the atmosphere in which Indian Stream residents decided to write their own constitution and create their own country. Records show that the constitution was written at the Town Meeting of July 9, 1832. The constitution solidified their efforts to be independent of both British-Canada and the United States, and created a much more formal government. The constitution preamble stated that until the dispute was settled between British-Canada and the United States, they would govern themselves. The constitution included a Bill of Rights, created a three branch system of government, and established adult, white male voters as their official representatives. The government was divided into the Executive branch, which was a Supreme Council of five elected officials; the Judicial branch, which was an elected Justice of the Peace; and, the Representative branch, which consisted of

all voters. There were taxes for municipal services and courts for collecting debts, as well as provisions for a 41-man militia.

This new constitution did not come without dispute from the United States, British-Canada, and New Hampshire. Many of the Indian Stream inhabitants wished to be a territory of the United States, but not as a part of New Hampshire. They brought a petition to the Attorney-General and the State of New Hampshire, who both denied the request, stating that if they were part of the United States, then it was because they were part of New Hampshire. Officials from Coos County, New Hampshire continued to serve warrants in Indian Stream, despite their efforts to govern and regulate themselves. And, meanwhile, arrests of Indian Stream inhabitants by Canadian officials and New Hampshire sheriffs continued until it came to a head. In 1835 a group of "Streamers" invaded Canada to liberate one of their own, who had been arrested by a British sheriff for an unpaid hardware store debt. Gunfire and bloodshed ensued, and as a result, the New Hampshire militia, which had been assembled in nearby Stewartstown, moved in to occupy Indian Stream.

By April of 1836, voters of Indian Stream were meeting with representatives of Clarksville and Stewartstown and had settled into the fact that Indian Stream would be under New Hampshire jurisdiction. The troops were removed, and in December 1840, the town of Pittsburg was incorporated into New Hampshire, including the territory of Indian Stream. In 1842, the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, specifically and purposely, defined the boundary between New Hampshire and Canada at the current location, along Hall's Stream south to the 45th parallel, where it would extend west to define the border between Vermont and Canada.

Sources:

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