

Beaver Dam Road: Road laid out at Fire Place, Town Records

The following is a slightly edited version of an email dated 5 Sep 2013, prepared by Richard Thomas of the Fire Place History Club, in answer to an enquiry he received from a Newsday reporter. It discusses some of the documented history of the road.

Here is the information that can be found in the *Records of the Town of Brookhaven*.

The road across Fireplace Neck was originally at the south end of the 15-acre lots allocated by the Town in 1665 shortly after the land was purchased from the Native Americans, but the owners of the lots asked the Town to move the road to the north end of their lots in March 1735. This original cross road was connected to the Town center at Setauket by another of the original Town roads, much of which still exists as Old Town road.

As the description of the relocated road is very general and depends on the layout of the lots, one can't know for certain whether the north end of the lots was where Beaver Dam Road is now located, but most local historians believe that to be the case.

See: "[1735 MoveRd Fireplace.pdf](#)."

[The old records used the "thorn" character for the two letters, "t" and "h". As the typesetter had no "thorn" character, a "y" was used instead. So one frequently sees "yt" (with the "t" as a superscript), as a shorthand for the word "that" and "ye" (with the "e" as a superscript) as shorthand for "the."]

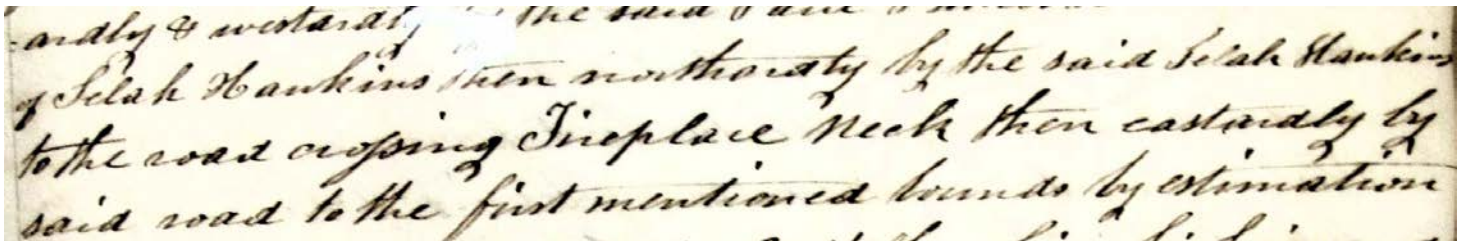
¶

Although the road was moved in 1735, the newly created road was not known by the name "Beaver Dam Road" until very much later.

In the early records, the road is referred to by description only ("the cross road which goes over Beaver Dam River, the lower going over", *Records of the Town of Brookhaven*, 30 April 1750), and not by any name.

It is called the road at the "lower going over" as there was also a "going over" of Beaver Dam Creek for the Country road to the north (South Country Road), the "upper going over."

Here is a part of a deed dated 09 Apr 1833 in which "Beaver Dam Road," having no common name, is still referred to by describing it; here as "the road cross Fireplace Neck."



...andly & westerly ... the said ...
of Selah Hankins then northerly by the said Selah Hankins
to the road crossing Fireplace Neck then easterly by
said road to the first mentioned bounds by estimation

Although apparently in existence since 1735, the east part of Beaver Dam Road, from Beaver Dam Creek to Squassux Landing at the Carmans River, wasn't officially laid out and surveyed until 20 July 1858. See: [1858 BvrDamRd CrkToSquassucks SoCntryRd SeamansToUpprCrossing.pdf](#).

At this time, Beaver Dam Road was called the "cross neck road" or sometimes the "Head of Neck" road as it went across Fireplace Neck.

(As the south shore of Long Island abounds in “necks” of land between the many streams that empty in the Great South Bay, there are potentially a very large number of “Head of Neck” roads.)

At its west end, the road only went as far west as the South Country Road. The part of what is now Beaver Dam Road that went west of South Country Road was called “the Fish Road,” and did not go all the way to Station Road, or if it did, was initially only a footpath at that end.

In a February 1854, the deeds still called it “the road crossing Fire Place Neck.” In June 1857, it called simply, “the road leading from Beaver dam River to Connecticut River.”

But that changes at some time between 1857 and 1872.

There is a deed dated 03 Apr 1872 for a parcel of land on the north side of the road, along the east side of Beaver Dam Creek, in which the road is called “Beaver Dam Road.” So it was certainly known by that name by that date.

At the east end, Beaver Dam Road wasn’t officially extended all the way to the Carman’s River until 20 Apr 1870. (It had stopped as an official road at Joseph Carman’s property at Squassux Landing.) See: [1870 BvrDamRd ExtensionTo Squassucks.pdf](#).

While I have copies of many deeds, they are not digitized, and I’ve filed them by location rather than by date, so it would be time-consuming for me to see whether I can find a deed earlier than 1872 that uses the name “Beaver Dam Road.”

So I can only say that the name wasn’t in use in June 1857, but was in use by April 1872. As it was in the 1872 deed, the name was clearly being used by local residents by that date.

However, the Brookhaven Town Commissioners of Highways were still calling it the Head of Neck or Cross Neck road in Apr 1870, so I think it likely the name wasn’t in wide use until around 1872.

Richard Thomas, member, Fire Place History Club
Brookhaven, NY