

## Then & Now 260 Brooks Station Rd.



*Jonas Brooks House circa 1860*

Brooks Station Road got its name from Brooks RRR Station being located at the railroad crossing west of Ball Hill Rd. The original buildings that became Brooks Station was a house built by Jonas

Brooks and then later lived in by his

son Deacon Jonas Brooks, who in 1871 turned the downstairs of his house into a station/store, when the railroad line was completed from Worcester through Princeton to Gardner.

This colonial era house was then used as a station house by the Boston & Maine railroad and others (Boston Barre & Gardner, and Fitchburg), which ran at its peak up to nine trains a day.



*House/Store/RxR Station of Methodist Church Deacon Jonas Brooks Jr.*

The station, during its active life, operated as both a passenger and freight station and had an additional track siding where freight and coal could be loaded and offloaded. With the onset of gasoline powered cars and trucks in the early twentieth century, the use of the station diminished. The station house, located just west of the current rail crossing, was consumed by fire in 1924 and was not replaced.

A small platform next to the track was the only thing that remained to serve as a station, until 1953 when passenger service was discontinued.

## Ice House

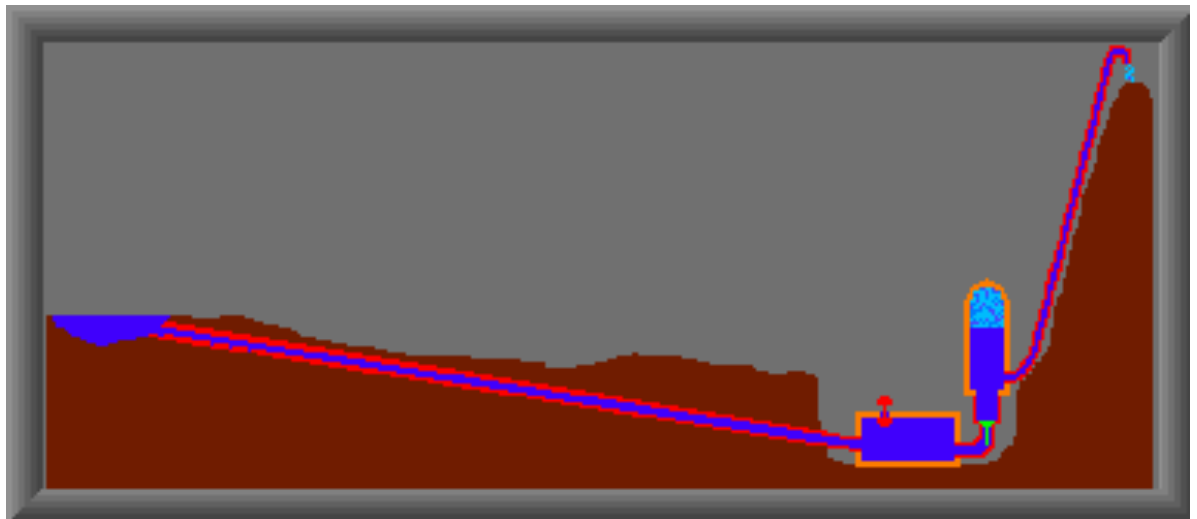


*Moved and Remodeled Barn into Ice House*

With the advent of railroads and before electrical refrigeration, where ever there were large ponds near railroad tracks, ice storage barns were often built. The existing barn, across from Brooks Station, was remolded and moved next to the pond and railroad track. During winter months ice was cut from the pond and stored in this barn. The ice was packed with sawdust for insulation and later shipped by rail to surrounding towns and cities. A flat area between the road and the pond where the barn once stood can still be seen.

## Water Tower

Early trains used steam power and consumed large amounts of water. Because Brooks Station had water nearby, it became a locomotive



*Ram Pump Diagram, Which Refilled the Water Tower*

fill point. A large wooden water tower was built beside the track that was fed by a ram pump located at the base of a dam built across the tracks from the pond. The dam created an elevated head of water. The force of the dropping water powered the pump, which gradually filled the water tower. The dam is still there but the water tower has long since been removed.

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