

# WHITE CEDARS OF RYE

BY Louise H. Tallman

White Cedars were being used by local folks even before there was a Parish or Town of Rye.

Hezekiah Jenness owned the cedar swamp near what is now Love Lane. To work with his trees, he hired a young shingle maker of Portsmouth, Samuel Langdon. Samuel married the daughter of Hezekiah. They had a daughter Ann. Unfortunately Samuel had an injury that led to his death from lock jaw [tetanus]. He died in 1725, their daughter died in 1727. Their gravestones are the oldest marked stones in Rye.

White Cedars grow in fresh water swamps near the coast from Maine to Georgia. The Cedars in Rye are near the northern limit of their range.

The Brown family built a dam in the brook to run a small mill. They could harvest ice to deliver to summer residents.

A few years ago the County Forester noted sizes of the large White Cedars near Brown's Mill Pond. These have proved to be larger than any others of New Hampshire or Massachusetts. University of New Hampshire has done a thorough inventory of these giant trees. The grove has been donated to the Nature Conservancy. For a distant view of these cedars, you can stand at the mill dam with binoculars. For an easy walk to examine these trees, pick a winter day with the strongest ice to walk across the pond. An expedition for this can be organized.