

Construction Details of Ayres Fort/Inn

Roof was thatched with locally available reeds, straw, etc. Exterior walls with daub & wattle. (See A below) Heavy vines & clay made up all inside & outside walls. Houses in remote frontier towns in the mid 1600's were approximately 18' square, without cellars. (See Note C)

Ayres was a double house. This inn was 18' x 36', with eaves to the road. A hewn wooden, post & beam frame was erected, set on stone pylons & smaller vertical posts were positioned around the outer perimeter walls. Vines & writhes were woven between these posts. (See sketch, left) Clay was plastered over the postes and writhes.

If labor was available, logs were split (rived) to provide crude boards for doors, shutters, & garden fences. (See B, below)

(A) Reasons for daub & wattle construction, in lieu of standard, rived roof & side wall shingles is,

1. lack of a sawmill within 30 miles.
2. Crude, unimproved roads that made oxcart loads of any size or weight absolutely impractical.
3. With, but only 14 families in town,

limited manpower was insufficient to produce lumber, by pit sawing, of any quantity. This being a very laborious occupation, it was not possible to sheath houses for 14 families by pit sawing. By Using hand sawing, it could barely produce sufficient lumber for door, shutters, floors, garrets, & garden fences.

(B) Garden fences were built of vertical posts, covered with overlapping horizontal boards to prevent animal intrusions or windborne weed seeds invasion.

John Pynchon's records do not support the sales of any large quantities of iron nail acquisitions to Quaboag, hence, no shingle or board siding for at least the first 8 houses build at Quaboag by 1668, including Ayres' Inn. Daniel Hovey moved to town in 1668. He bought from Pynchon a "whipsaw". (A wood framed saw.) This saw allowed him to produce boards from hewn logs with "pit" type sawing.

NOTES: No mention, while sifting the remains of the destroyed town of Brookfield of any pit saw blades. these large pieces of iron could not be practically used by the indians and most likely would have been noted by the settlers, if found in the ashes.

(C) Cellars. It is most unlikely that any cellars were constructed at Quaboag due to the water table is only 5' below surface of the ground. The Eastern section of town shared the same difficulty. Hovey Brook split that hamlet down its' middle.

Additional Comments: Captain Wheeler's summation of the attack on Ayres' Fortified house includes remarks that the settlers, while under siege, were hanging quilts and blankets over the window and door openings to prevent the prowling attackers from spying them through the cracks between individual boards in the doors and shutters.

It is unlikely that window glass would be present in brookfield in this period, as it had to be imported from abroad, was very costly, and glass sheets were far to fragile to travel

frontier paths (so called roads.) See reference section (lower left of map). In 1674 Capt. Wadsworth and his soldiers report difficulties in using the road from Marlboro. Without glass in the window openings, substitute materials, such as hides, mats, or heavy fabrics were utilized during colder or inclement weather.

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