**Windham's Seal**

The town of Windham has a very interesting seal. It features a bull frog. The new highway bridge crossing the Willimantic River in Windham features large statues of frogs. Just what is this local fascination with frogs? It all began over 240 years ago.

The following account of the events which led to the Frogs of Windham legend originally appeared in John Warner Barber's book, Connecticut Historic Collections, published in 1836. It was taken from earlier accounts.

"On a dark cloudy dismal night in the month of July, A. D. 1758, the inhabitants of Windham, a small town in the Eastern part of Connecticut, had retired to rest, and for several hours, all were wrapped in profound repose -- when suddenly, soon after midnight, the slumbers of the peaceful inhabitants were disturbed by a most terrific noise in the sky right over their heads, which to many seemed the yells and screeches of infuriated Indians.

There seemed no other way of accounting for the awful sounds which still kept increasing, but by supposing the day of judgement had certainly come. To their terrified imaginations the awful uproar in the air seemed the immediate precursor of the sound of the last trumpet. At intervals, many supposed they could distinguish the calling out of the names of Colonels Dyer and Elderkin, two eminent lawyers, and this increased the general terror.

But soon there was a rush from every house, the tumult in the air still increasing, old and young, male and female, poured forth into the streets, "in puris naturalibus," entirely forgetful in their hurry and consternation of their nakedness, and with eyes upturned tried to pierce the almost palpable darkness.

My venerable informant who well recollects the event, says that some daring spirits concluding there was nothing supernatural in the hubbub and uproar overhead, but rather that they heard the yells of Indians commencing a midnight attack, loaded their guns and sallied forth to meet the invading foes. These valiant heroes on ascending the hill that bounds the village on the East, perceived that the sounds came from that quarter, and not from the skies, as first believed, but their courage would not permit them to proceed to the daring extremity of advancing eastward, until they had discovered the real cause of alarm and distress which pervaded the whole village.

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[Toward morning the sounds in the air seemed to die away. In the morning the whole cause of alarm, which produced such distressing apprehensions among the good people of the town was apparent to all who took the trouble to go to a certain mill pond situated about three fourths of a mile Eastward of the village. This pond, hereafter, in the annals of fame, is forever to be called the Frog Pond. In consequence of a severe drought which had prevailed many weeks, the pond had become nearly dry, and the Bull Frogs, with which it was densely populated at the mill, fought a pitched battle on the sides of the ditch which ran through it, for possession and enjoyment of the fluid which remained.](http://threadcity.com/articles/TomBeardsley/townseal/index2.shtml)

[Long and obstinately was the contest, and many thousands of the combatants were found dead on both sides of the ditch the next morning.](http://threadcity.com/articles/TomBeardsley/townseal/index2.shtml)

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[It had been uncommonly still for several hours before the battle commenced, but suddenly as if by a preconcerted agreement every frog on one side of the ditch raised the war cry, Colonel Dyer, Colonel Dyer, and at the same instant from the opposite side resounded the adverse shout of Elderkin too, Elderkin too.](http://threadcity.com/articles/TomBeardsley/townseal/index2.shtml)

[Owing to some peculiar state of the atmosphere, the awful noises and cries appeared to the distressed Windhamites to be directly over their heads."](http://threadcity.com/articles/TomBeardsley/townseal/index2.shtml)

[It should be noted that at this time, in the summer of 1758, the people of eastern Connecticut were expecting an attack from French and Indian forces from Canada. Also, Colonels Dyer and Elderkin, two famous local lawyers, were at the center of controversy regarding the high fees they were charging their clients. Some locals believed that the noises came from vengeful spirits who had come to punish Elderkin and Dyer for their greed. The two men also had many political enemies.](http://threadcity.com/articles/TomBeardsley/townseal/index2.shtml)

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