

The History of Coventry, Connecticut

Bill Jobbagy, Coventry, Connecticut- September 2007



Main Street Looking East Near The Library ~ca 1900

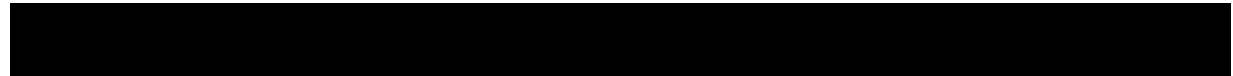
This book is dedicated to all the people who have, over time, contributed their efforts and resources to the betterment of the town. The physical, economic and social character of Coventry has developed to where it is today in large measure due to these people.

This book has been printed privately and all proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to community service organizations.

Cover Sketch by Marilyn Richardson

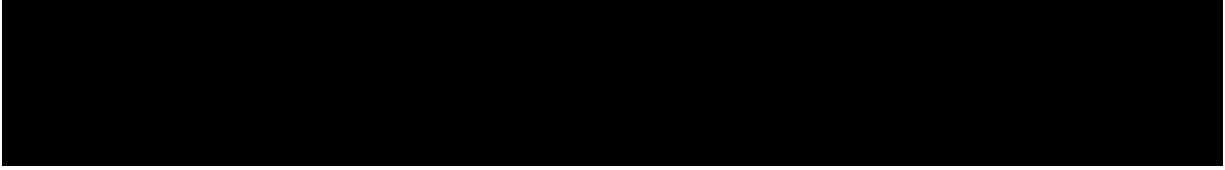
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Dedication





Dedication

This book is a compilation of material collected from many sources including local residents, town historians, the Coventry Historical Society, Willimantic and Hartford newspapers, the Booth & Dimock Memorial Library and the State and University of Connecticut libraries. Material from two other historical accounts of Coventry (1912 and 1962) is included. References are noted throughout this document. Intermingled among these accounts are broader national historic events that place Coventry occurrences in perspective and help explain some of the social and economic trends.

While the history of Coventry mirrors that of most other rural towns, there are distinctions that make Coventry unique. The Mill Brook, a regulated waterway that flows from Wangumbaug Lake to the Willimantic River, was particularly suited to modest water powered mills and, as such, contained the highest concentration of mills in any Connecticut town save those on the Hockanum River in East Hartford.

Coventry's two "Societies", organized around the two earliest churches, created a social division of sorts. The north, or second society residents, referred to themselves as the "woods" people. Their center of commerce and religion was the area around the Second Congregational Church and the Boston Turnpike. Their commerce, occupations and education (high school) were tied to Rockville and Manchester. The south, or first society residents, referred to themselves as the "village" people. Their center of activity was the First Congregational Church, the railroad depots, the lower Windham Turnpike, and the lake. Their commerce, occupations and education were tied to Willimantic.

Lake Wangumbaug, which served as the main attraction for early English settlers, was surrounded by about seven large farms well into the 1930's. It was not used for recreation until the early 1900's when a small area on Lake Street offered swimming and boat rentals for the public. With the advent of the trolley in 1909, the lakeside became a major regional recreational area

and attracted talented artists and performers from the larger cities who summered here. Rapid development of lake property in the 1940's occurred as the large farms were sold and broken up into literally thousands of parcels for sale as essentially "camp sites". Many homes and lots were owned by out-of-towners who came to Coventry for the summer only. This trend exists to some extent even today.

Coventry has seen its share of very interesting residents including fervent and very well educated ministers, a number of early Yale and Harvard graduates who made their mark here and elsewhere, a number of very benevolent men who gave us the Nathan Hale forest, land for schools and parks and endowments for libraries and churches, and some notable actors and performers. The town also had a large number of business entrepreneurs, both locally and from New York and Rhode Island, who built and operated thriving mills all over town. There were a fair number of patent holders who were able to develop their creations into viable businesses.

Farming in town was not particularly unique, but was quite varied. Normal foodstuffs and dairy products were common, but Coventry was filled with apple orchards (and cider mills) as well as mulberry tree orchards for silkworms. There was even a cranberry bog at one time on School Street and a broad leaf tobacco farm across from Miller-Richardson Park. Herb farming has also become very popular.

A remaining feature in town is one of the very few authentic mill villages in the country. With the exception of three small "strip mall" buildings erected in the 1950's and 60's, South Coventry Village is entirely original with a combination of particularly unique architectural, industrial, landscape, water, and stone elements.



Preface



Preface



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South Coventry, Conn.

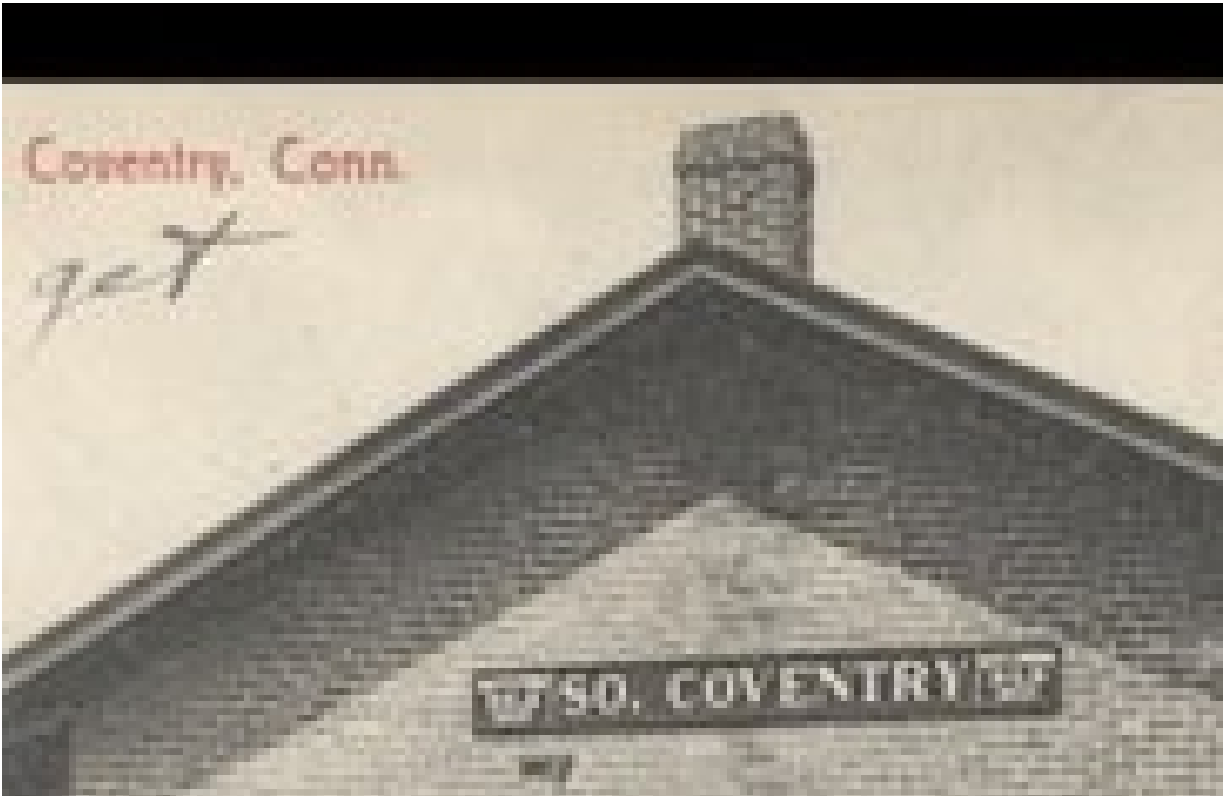
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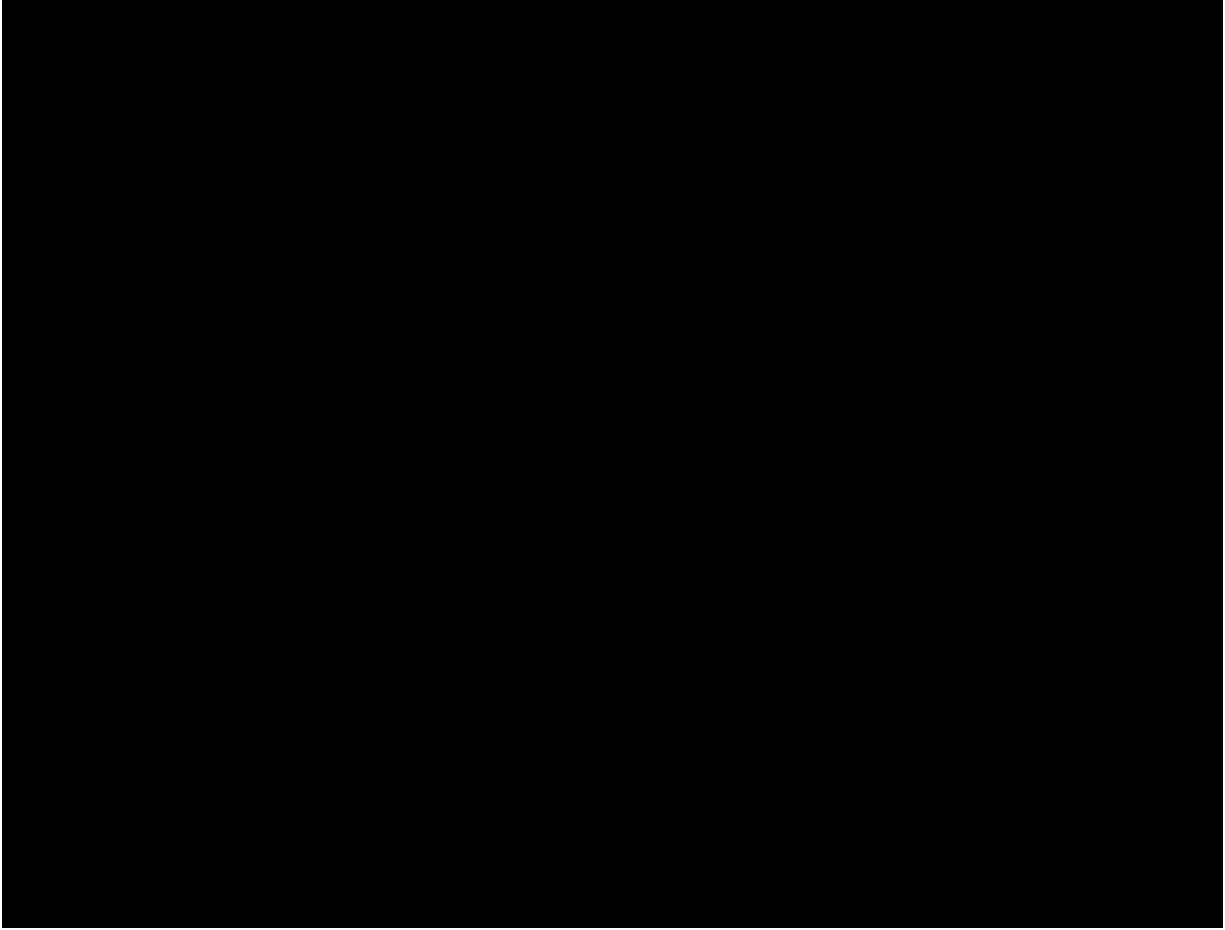


Chapter 1

Untitled







Chapter 1

The Beginnings

New England once was an ocean hundreds of miles wide. The bedrock here was molded by terrific continental forces that closed this early ocean, shoving Africa and Europe into North America, and later, reversing itself, opening the Atlantic Ocean. Since the birth of the Atlantic, 200 million years ago, streams have worn away much of the local bedrock developing the basic landscape we see today, though much more sharp in its contrast. There is a theory that the Skungamaug River may have flowed through a valley where Lake Wangumbaug is today in pre-glacial times. For thousands of years a miles- deep burden of ice gripped most of northern North America, including New England. A final effect was applied by the scouring of the glacier. Advancing from the north about 18,000 years ago the glacier's final retreat exposed Connecticut to the air. Between 12,000 and 30,000 years ago, possibly in two separate migrations, adventurous Asians from Siberia, over ice or by a land bridge, had been able to reach Alaska. In time the less frigid climate to the south encouraged them to migrate through North, Central and South America. (1)

Dating of archaeological remains shows that between nine and ten millennia ago man began his domicile in New England. He was drawn by the presence of large animals, caribou especially, which fed on the tundra as the glaciers retreated northward. Cultivation of the soil began though limited to a few crops. Dwellings were simple, government was solely tribal. Differences in geography, climate and tradition led to varied modes of life. The original settlers were living in the Hudson River Valley and likely parts of New England for at least a thousand years prior to the arrival of the French and English. (1)

In 1524 an Italian adventurer in the service of Francis I of France, Giovanni de Verrazano, explored the New England coast (likely north of Boston) and about 12 or 15 miles inland. He found open plains and very fertile soil. In 1602 explorers report eating "pease and beanes" with the natives and seeing gardens planted with vegetables, tobacco, strawberries and other fruits together with wild roses and groundnuts. Corn, squash, pumpkins and beans were being cultivated and the bounties of the sea were plentiful. The Indians trained hawks to watch over their corn fields, and their most

crowning achievement was the development and construction of the canoe.
(2)

Originally a part of the Pequot nation, the Mohegan came from the upper Hudson River Valley in New York near Lake Champlain. Sometime around 1500, both tribes left this area and moved to the Thames River Valley (The river's name was changed from Mohegan to Thames in 1658) in southeastern Connecticut and as far north as Willimantic and Coventry. Their chief village was on the site of the present village of Mohegan on the Thames River (just south of the casino on Route 32). The Mohegan called their homeland Moheganek and occupied the upper and western portions of the Thames Valley, while the Pequot lived closer to the coast. They all shared Algonquin blood and the Eastern Algonquin tongue, though with many different dialects. The Nipmucks were centered in southern Massachusetts and ventured into Connecticut occasionally with the Quinebaugs their closest neighbors to the north.

In their language, "Mohegan" means wolf, exactly the same as "Mahican" from the Mahican language, but these slightly different names refer to two very distinct Algonquin tribes in different locations. It is very common for the Mohegan of the Thames River in eastern Connecticut to be confused with the Mahican from the Hudson Valley in New York (a distance of about a hundred miles). Even James Fenimore Cooper got things confused when he wrote "Last of the Mohicans" in 1826. Since Cooper lived in Cooperstown New York and the location of his story was the upper Hudson Valley, it can be presumed he was writing about the Mahican of the Hudson River, but the spelling variation chosen (Mohican) has muddled things.

Culturally, the Mohegan were identical to the Pequot, the only difference being their political allegiance. The Mohegan were English allies for almost a century after 1633, while the Pequot fought the colonists and were nearly destroyed in a period of five years. From the perspective of the colonists and their descendants (who wrote the history of New England), Uncas and the Mohegan were the "good Indians," while Sassacus and the Pequot were "bad Indians". Most native Americans, however, would probably see this "good" and "bad" in reverse. It is interesting to note that, although the

Mohegan and Pequot tried to cope with the Europeans by very different means, their ultimate fate was the same, impoverishment, loss of their land, and near-extinction.

The Mohegan and Pequot together numbered about 6,000 in 1620. Internal divisions occurred after 1633, and Uncas with his followers separated from the main body to become the Mohegan. A smallpox epidemic during the winter of 1634-35 reduced both groups by about thirty percent. During the Pequot War, (the first war between natives and Europeans on the continent) further provocations triggered more retaliations until the terrible climax in 1637 when nearly 300 Pequot men, women and children were burned out of their village, hunted down, and massacred. The two groups were forcibly reunited when 1,500 Pequot and western Niantic were placed under the control of Uncas and the Mohegan creating a combined population of about 3,000. A second smallpox epidemic in 1639 lowered this to less than 2,500. The English moved the Pequot to separate reserves in 1655, and later population estimates sometimes included them as part of the Mohegan and sometimes not. Despite the incorporation of Mattabesic, Nipmuc, and Narragansett, the Mohegan population continued to drop - mainly from disease. Smallpox appeared at regular intervals (from 1649 to 1755) and combined with influenza, diphtheria, and measles to decimate Connecticut's native population. Although the Mohegan were considered an ally by the colonists, it is likely their close association accelerated the decline of the Mohegan by exposure to infection.

Uncas, son of Owaneco, was a Pequot chief or Sachem. His wife was the daughter of Sassacus. Uncas was exceedingly restless and ambitious. Five times, the Indians said, he rebelled against his superior, and each time was expelled from his possessions, and his followers subjected to the sway of the conqueror. Uncas then removed to the interior (near Hartford) and placed himself at the head of the Mohegan clans who occupied lands east of the Connecticut River, and west of the great Pequot River now known as the Thames. While Sassacus traded with the Dutch who settled the lower Connecticut River valley in the early 1600's, Uncas developed alliances with the English. The Pequot War broke out after the murder of John Oldham in 1636 and the punitive expedition by John Endicott. In May of

1637, Uncas with seventy Mohegan warriors joined ninety English-men under the command of Capt. John Mason in the famous expedition against the Pequots. They sailed down the Connecticut River to Saybrook, then to Narragansett Bay and attacked the Pequots from the east. In a series of bloody battles, Uncas and Mason brought the power of the great Pequot nation to an end. Sassacus and a party of thirty to forty men did manage to escape to the Mohawks, but their new hosts put them all to death, sending their scalps to the English.

After the destruction of the Pequot Nation, the Narragansetts became emboldened and thought to extend their borders into the previous domain of their neighbors. Led by their Sachem, Miantonomo, who had a strong dislike for Uncas, a force of five to six hundred warriors marched against the Mohegans. At the start of King Philip's war, (in 1675, and largely waged in what is now Rhode Island) Uncas was too old to take active part but his son, Owaneco, with several hundred Mohegans rendered valuable assistance to the colonists in their fight against the unfriendly Indians. Attawanhood (Joshua's Christian name), and another son, with a band of thirty Indians scoured the woods in the route of the retreating foe, and took an active part in the conflict. Major John Mason, one of the original founders of Norwich, refers to Uncas, "He was a great friend and did us much service". Uncas died in 1682/3, having been sachem of the Mohegans since the overthrow of the Pequots in 1637.

After the Pequot War, menacing attacks by the Indians decreased dramatically, and the English began acquiring huge tracts of land. Uncas, because of his relationship with the Pequots, claimed part of the former Pequot territory. He gave up any claim to the territory along the shore of Long Island Sound in a strip about twelve miles wide and was given control of what is now the northern part of New London County and the southern part of Tolland and Windham Counties. After Uncas' death the unity of the various tribes ended, and each lived independently and no warfare occurred either amongst themselves or with the English. It is thought that very few, if any, Indians had permanent habitation in the Coventry area, though there is much evidence that this area was part of their vast hunting grounds. Tradition has it that there was a small village of "savages" in the valley of

the Hop River near what is now Hop River Road. (Note: it is curious that the setting of the lake did not seem to be a habitation of the Indians, but their centers of population were on the larger rivers, though the lake may certainly have been a place to stop during hunting trips. Also remember that the lake was roughly 2/3 of its size today, and the brook that emerged from it probably held few fish due to its rocky bottom and fast flowing water.) Deer were likely very plentiful though, and as early as 1718 attempts were made to protect deer by law during the breeding season. The furrowing plow revealed traces of previous inhabitants even into the 20th century. About the Lake and the banks of the Willimantic River and other scattered places, the upturned Indian arrowheads are witnesses of the earlier presence of the Indians.

The fields, hills and valleys were annually burned over to give fresh feeding grounds to wild animals indicating this area was a prime hunting ground. The land was nearly bare of timber, though there were local stands of trees left untouched by the natives. The Indians did not have the tools to fell and split wood, as did the English settlers, so other than the small fires needed for cooking and heating their wigwams, wood was not a particularly well-used resource. Due to the clearing fires of the Indians, games of all kinds abounded, and one can muse a little and picture deer, rabbits and other creatures coming to the lake shores in the early morning for their first drink. Beaver, mink, muskrat, raccoon and fox were numerous. Wild fruit were in abundance including walnuts, butternuts, hazelnuts, chestnuts, acorns, wild cherries, plums and currants. The Indians grew a limited number of crops including beans, maize, and tobacco. This prior clearing of the land made settling and transportation much easier. The remaining groves of trees provided the material for the settlers' dwellings and fuel for heating and cooking.

Natives had a variety of reasons for managing forests with fire other than just keeping them passable. Burning the forest litter controlled mosquito and black fly populations. It also provided a clear field of fire for hunting arrows. The removal of litter also made it possible to stalk game quietly. Fire was used to increase and maintain berry-producing plants and fire-

tolerant, nut producing trees such as chestnut, white oak and shagbark hickory. (3)

Uncas, having possession of a large amount of land, was constantly deeding large tracts for little or no consideration. A copy of a deed dated September 28, 1640 signed by Uncas gives to the governor and magistrates of the English on the Connecticut River “all the land that doth belong, or ought of right to belong, to me, by what name so ever it be called... reserving only for my own use that ground which at present is planted and in that kind improved by us”. The English gave to Uncas five and a half yards of trucking cloth, with stockings and other things as a gratuity!

On February 27, 1675 there is a disposal of a large amount of land that had undoubtedly been previously disposed of in part. The disposal is directed by the will of Attawanhood whose Christian name was Joshua, third son of Uncas. It reads “I, Joshua, son of Uncas, sachem living near Eight Mile Island on the river of Connecticut and within the bounds of Lyme, being sick in body, but of good and perfect memory and not knowing how soon I may depart this life, do make this my last will and testament.” A summary of the will is paraphrased as: One piece of land about eight by eighteen miles east of the mountains in sight of Hartford, another piece bounded by the mountains in sight of Hartford and the Willimantic River (this includes Coventry), and another piece about eight miles square to the south of the northern part of what is now Hampton, and another piece to his sons which is north of Saybrook. Joshua apparently called the lake in Coventry “Shenpipie” which later received the name Wangumbaug. (1)

European settlers brought things not seen on the continent. Written language (books), iron implements (axes, saws, hammers, augers), wooden plows to turn the soil, domesticated animals, woven cloth (vs. furs and leathers), agriculture (cleared fields, rows of plants), animal shelters and fences, land ownership, more formal laws, individual property ownership with specific boundaries, deeds, bills of exchange, laws, diaries and letters, They also needed skilled craftsmen to support their living standard, food and clothes, as opposed to natives who could virtually self subsist. (2)

The rapid colonization brought dramatic changes to the landscape of Connecticut. First settlements were often in fields, first cleared by the Natives, or on abandoned beaver meadows. Men would prepare a homestead over a period of two to four summers and then be joined by their families. The men cleared the land by ax, dug cellar holes, built log cabins and prepared fencing for animals. Clearing of the land not only provided building material and prepared the land for agriculture, but also produced a crop of potash (wood ash) from burning the downed trees. Potash was then used to make soap and gunpowder. Today it is chiefly used for fertilizer. (3)

The economy was based on trade across the ocean. Virginia, Massachusetts and New York were started by companies (groups of investors who pooled their resources to finance a group of settlers), but New York was turned into a proprietary colony (belonging to one person who had his grant from the king when the English ousted the Dutch in 1664). New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Delaware and the Carolinas were also proprietary colonies and so was Maryland which was created to provide a haven for English Catholics. New Hampshire and Rhode Island were created in the 1600's by emigrants from Massachusetts who found religious intolerance a bit too much to bear. Georgia (the last colony) was founded by a company with the express intention of turning a profit for the investors by providing jobs for those who would have otherwise been imprisoned for debt.

Lacking the ability to manufacture tools and clothing, the colonists needed commodities to trade. By the early 1700's, trade was the backbone of the colonial economy. First trades were those items that needed the least labor to procure. Furs were easy to ship and in high demand. They traded furs for tools, beer, etc. Also traded were potash, pearl ash, (both used for soap and glass as well as dying and shrinking cloth) pitch, tar and resin. Wood was another commodity, logs, boards, shingles and staves. Most saw mills were built and operated by non-English as they had little experience. Colonists developed the felling ax, which was three times as effective as the very old European axe. By the end of the 1700's, northeastern forests were virtually obliterated which caused a loss of wildlife, more flooding and larger temperature changes. Other commodities were fish, tobacco and wheat (3)

Apple cider was to become a major commodity for Coventry and the surrounding area. Cider was, by far, the most popular drink of the 1700's. Coventry provided a huge amount of apple cider to the men fighting in the revolutionary war.

The word "apple" comes from the Old English word "aeppel." There are approximately 7,000 different varieties of apples grown in the United States. Apples are a member of the rose family, and the blossoms are much like wild-rose blossoms. Native Americans cultivated apples extensively. There are twenty-five to thirty kinds of wild apples grown throughout the world with seven kinds in the U.S., and most are crab apples with small, sour, hard fruit. The crab apple is the ancestor of many of the varieties of apples grown today.

Crab apple trees are the only native apples to the United States. European settlers arrived and brought with them their English customs and favorite fruits. In colonial time apples were called winter banana or melt-in-the-mouth.

Most historians fail to mention that those early orchards produced very few apples because there were no honey bees.! Historical information indicates that colonies of honey bees were shipped from England and landed in the Colony of Virginia early in 1622. Shipments were made to Massachusetts between 1630 and 1632 and others probably between 1633 and 1638. The Indians called the honeybees "English flies" or "white man's flies."

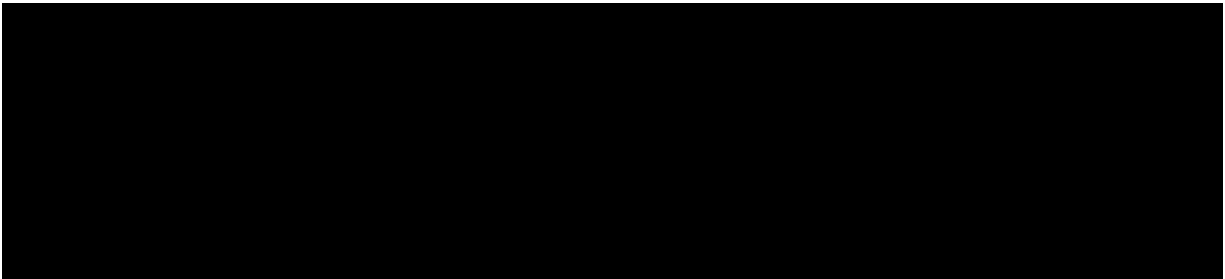
Among the articles "to provide to be sent to New England" by the Massachusetts Bay Company, in 1629, are the following: "Vine- planters, wheat, rye, barley, oats, beans, pease, stones of all sorts of fruits, such as peaches, plums, filberts, cherries, pear , apple, quince kernels, pomegranates, woad seed (a source of blue dye), saffron heads, liquorice seed, madder roots, potatoes, hop-roots, hemp seed, flax seed, currant plants, and madder seeds." The mode of cultivating and manuring the soil by means of fish was practiced at first at Plymouth. Due to the scarcity of certain kinds, such as cod and bass, it was forbidden in 1639 to use these for

that purpose. By the 1640's, orchards were well established. Nearly all landowners planted apple trees.

Robert Prince in 1737 established the first commercial apple tree nursery in America called the William Prince Nursery in Flushing, New York. Prince's Nursery gathered trees and plants from around the world for resale, and became renowned through the American colony for its exotic wares. The British who occupied Long Island during the Revolutionary War considered the William Prince Nursery so important that they put an armed guard around the nursery to protect it.



The Beginnings



The Beginnings



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Lake Wangumbaug, Coventry's three rivers and numerous brooks will play an important part in the development of the town. The Lake was certainly a major attraction for early settlers, and the first 84 homelots allocated were adjacent to its eastern borders. The waterways proved to be excellent sites for water powered mills to serve the local population and eventually for producing goods for export during the 1800's.

The Mill Brook flows, sometimes rushing, sometimes meandering, roughly two and one-half miles from its inception at a gate on Lake Wangumbaug to the Willimantic River. The lake, of nearly 400 acres (today) and up to forty feet deep is largely spring-fed. It is a natural pond raised by a dam. Prior to the first dam in 1745, the lake was less than 300 acres in size with no island.

The Mill Brook drops 265 feet along its course, from 515 feet to 250 feet above sea level. The upper third of the brook is the most active as it rushes through many feet of man-made stone watercourses and old raceways. The middle third is a little quieter now, but was the heart of industrial production in the late 1800's. Following downstream is a large tract of untouched wetlands, then a huge mill site, and finally the brook ends quietly and almost invisibly at the river. During wet seasons, the lower part of the brook actually reverses itself. There are five of the ten original dams left standing and four ponds now. (There were as many as nine ponds at one time). The elevation of the brook provided over 250 horsepower in total, and at one time in 1871 the courts were involved in disputes over water flow. The maximum draw from the lake is about 720 cubic feet per minute. The majority of the brook flows over bedrock. Mill owners built stone-lined channels along sections of the brook to direct the water to their wheels and to minimize erosion.

The Skungamaug River begins at a marsh in Tolland and flows south into Coventry adjacent to North River Road. It continues for over six miles, mostly southerly then westerly, until it crosses the Andover border and enters the Hop River. This last section in Andover was part of Coventry prior to Andover's incorporation in 1848. There are at least ten water powered mill sites on the river and its feeder brooks, and one is still

operable today (Wright's Mill). There are visible remains today of all of the mill sites. These remains range from a short section of a small dam and stone lined channel to one site (Hollister) that has extensive foundations from three buildings, a very obvious stone lined water course, and significant remains of one of the largest dams in Coventry.

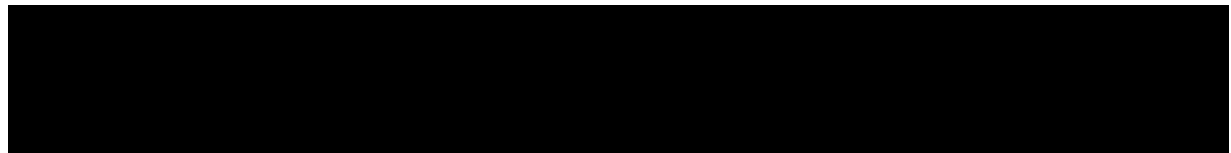
There is only one natural falls on the river, that being at Wright's Mill, now Bynes' Falls. The river course is generally flat and several dams were built to accommodate mills and shops. The river is located entirely in the Second Society (generally all of Coventry north of Talcott Hill Road), and many historic references have been found in records of the Society, which was created in 1740 when the townsfolk decided to establish a second meeting house/church closer to their residences. There are three significant brooks that empty into the Skungamaug.

The Hop River, which forms the border between Coventry and Columbia, is a modest sized watercourse originating at Bolton Lake (originally a cedar swamp before it was dammed) as the Hop Brook. It proceeds south into Andover where it is joined by the Skungamaug River, which provides most of its water flow, and continues south then east to join the Willimantic River in Mansfield. The name "Hop River" is sometimes said to be derived from the wild hop plant, but there are no native hops in the area. Some historians believe the original name of the river was Hope. The name "Hop River" most likely comes from the Old English where "Hop" (pronounced "hope") was the name for a narrow valley closed at the upper end. The words "hope" and "hop" both share the definition- "leaping in expectation". The river/border of Coventry and Columbia is four and one-half miles long. Water powered mills were located on this stretch of river, two in Coventry and two in Columbia. There are also three significant brooks in Coventry flowing north-to-south, that feed the Hop River, and each held a water-powered mill.

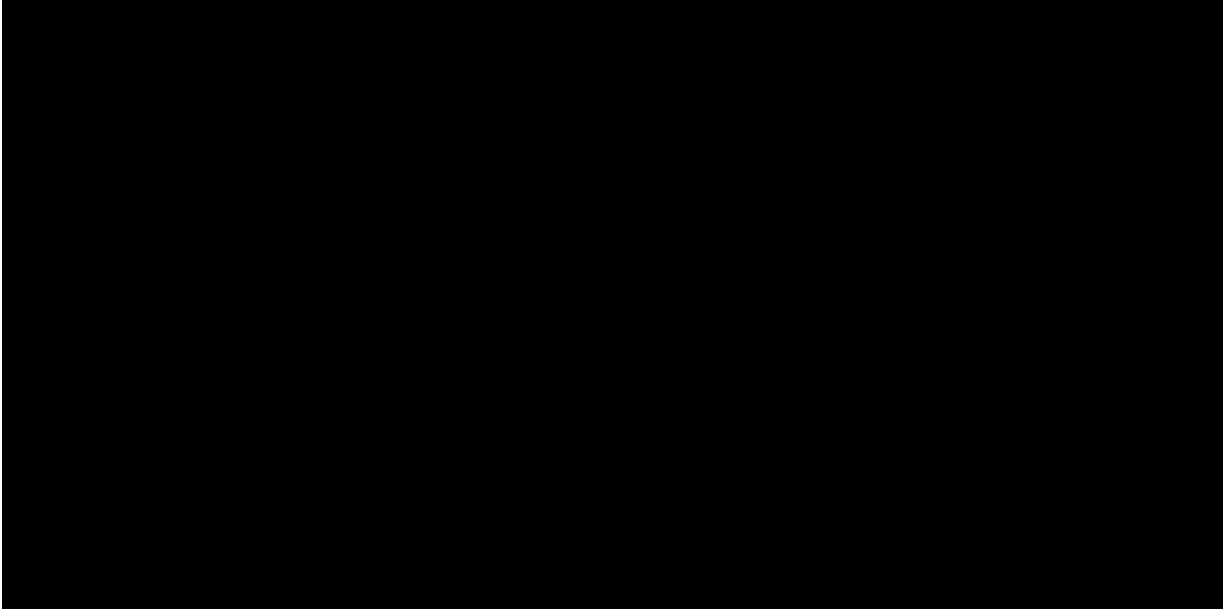
The Hop River experiences very large changes in water flow from season to season. The river rises rapidly after rains and falls away gradually. The ordinary freshet rise at the Hop River station (near Hop River Road) is about four feet although from this point down it receives the benefit of both

the Columbia and Bolton reservoirs. The 1882 Federal water power census mentions that the Willimantic Linen Company (later American Thread) owned the Columbia reservoir, constructed in 1865, of 282 acres and the dam that created a twenty-five foot water level above the natural stream. It also mentions the Bolton reservoir (built sometime after 1832) that was owned by three Willimantic companies and the Hop River Warp Company with an eight foot dam.

The Willimantic River, which forms the border between Coventry and Mansfield, is a fairly significant waterway originating above Stafford, Connecticut and flowing to Willimantic where it is joined by the Hop River. The river/border is nearly eight miles long and is generally wide and flat. Four water powered mills were located on this stretch of river, one in Coventry and three in Mansfield. The mill sites appear to have been chosen more for their access to roads and later the railway rather than for the river's topological features. There are also two significant brooks in Coventry that flow west-to- east and feed the Willimantic River. (12)



The Major Waterways of Coventry Provide the Power for Mills and Shops



The Major Waterways of Coventry Provide the Power for Mills and Shops



The Hop River was originally called Sagumumpsketuck from the Nipmuc or Mohegan, and literally means “river that runs through hard rock”. Its source was a large, boggy meadow. The name signifies “land at, or near a hard rock”, songk-ompsk-it-auke. The prefix, siogke, “hard” distinguishes the kinds of stone most used by the Indians for making axes, land heads, pestles, etc.

Skungamaug literally means “eel fishing here”. Also Skungemaug and Shonkamunk, possibly a corruption of Ousschankamaug (Mohegan) or Cheeschankamuck (Tunxis).

Wangumbaug Lake is interpreted as “bent or crooked pond” from the Nipmuc or Mohegan. It is possibly “overflowed pond” from the Mohegan. The name was extended over a considerable tract of land in eastern Coventry. It is also spelled Wangombaug, Wangumbog and Wongumbaug.

The Willimantic or “Waramanticut” River is likely Mohegan. It is also spelled Wallamanticuk or Wewemantick. The name did not originally belong to the river, but to some locality on or near its course. The first two syllables may stand for winni (or wirri, waure, willi) meaning “good, fine, pleasant”, or wovean (wewe, waenu) meaning “round about”, “winding”. The last two syllables may represent manatuck, “a look-out or place of observation”, “good cedar swamp”, or “where it winds about a bold hill”. Other sources say that Willimantic is an Algonquin name for “land of the swift running water”.



Origin of the Indian Names



Origin of the Indian Names



The land in Coventry is hilly and stony. Its highest point is Grant Hill at 934 feet above sea level, and its lowest point is the southern part of the Willimantic River at 240 feet. The southern part of town has many rocky outcroppings, facing east-south-east, that likely provided shelter for Indian hunting parties and served to provide material for many stone structures in the area. The soil is rich and excellent for grass and grazing. The hill above the northeast side of the lake (now Ripley Hill) provided a spectacular view of the lake as well as a vantage point in all directions for several miles. Early farmers did not have to clear old growth forests, and the open terrain allowed for the simple formation of paths and roads.

The early Indian paths followed the accessible terrain. The path along the Hop River followed a relatively flat course from the “Notch” to Willimantic. The east-west path essentially followed today’s Boston Turnpike. Coming west from the notch, it skirted the Cedar Swamp (to the north), then the swamp that is now behind the Highland Park Market and finally took a slightly southerly route past the outcroppings and wetlands near Barnsbee Lane and Richmond Road.

The original access to the Coventry settlement on the lake was generally by today’s

South Street, a relatively flat road with only one river crossing- at the Skungamaug. (The Hop River crossing at that time was essentially a small brook draining a swamp.)



Topography

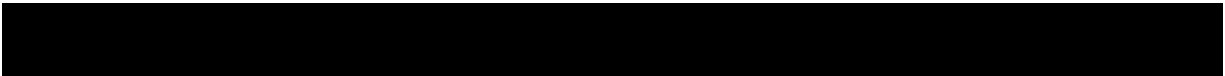


Topography





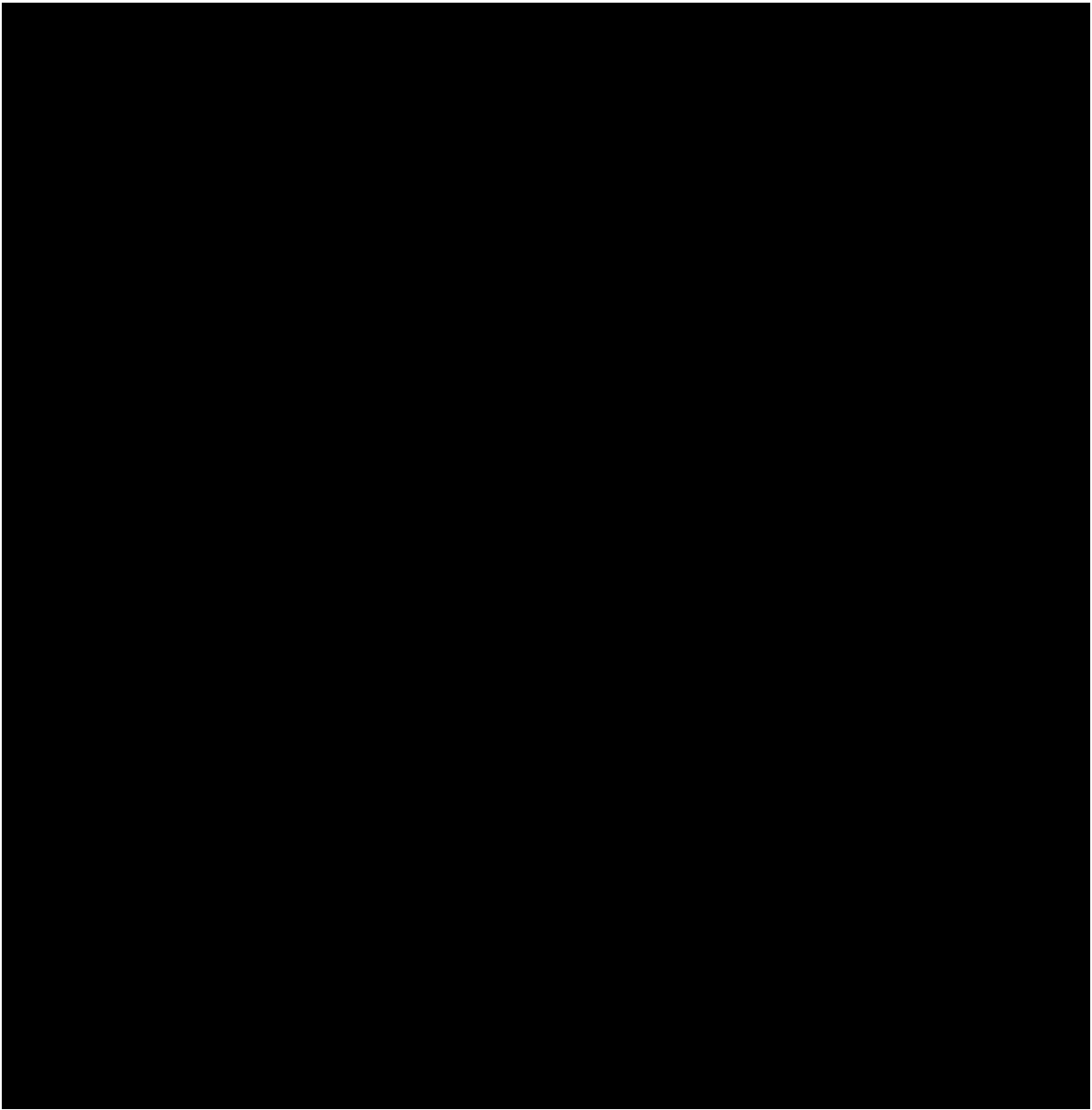
Several archeological surveys have been done by the State in various places in town. Most surveys are recorded in the Dodd Center at the University of Connecticut. Evidence of very early “civilization” has been found in several places. The area near the Depot Road bridge and the sewer treatment plant on the Willimantic River show signs of campsites in the period of 3,000 to 5,000 years ago. The locations were likely chosen, at the time, as they had easy access to a number of resources (fish, game, plants, water). One site holds “sharp edged waste left over from making stone tools” called debitage. Even earlier evidence from the period of 7,500 to 10,000 years ago, that being projectile points, has been found near both the Hop and Willimantic Rivers. The evidence suggests the land was used by small, mobile groups of hunter-gatherers who used the eastern highlands for hunting and had their homes more towards the Connecticut River Valley. (47)

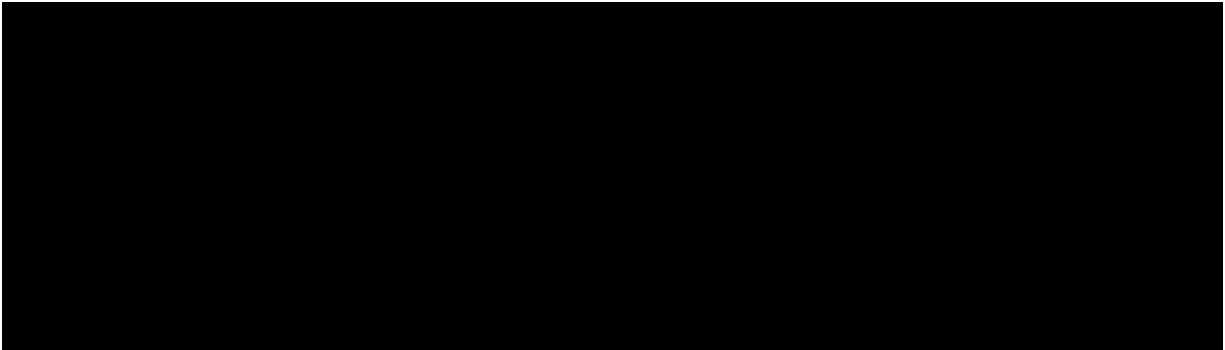
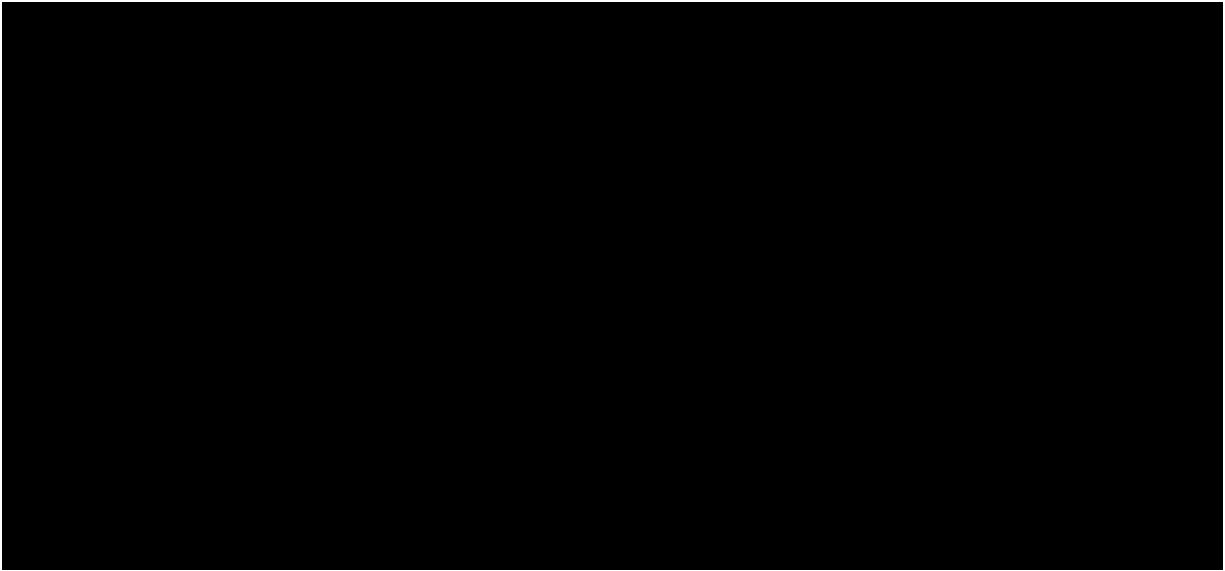


Archeological Surveys

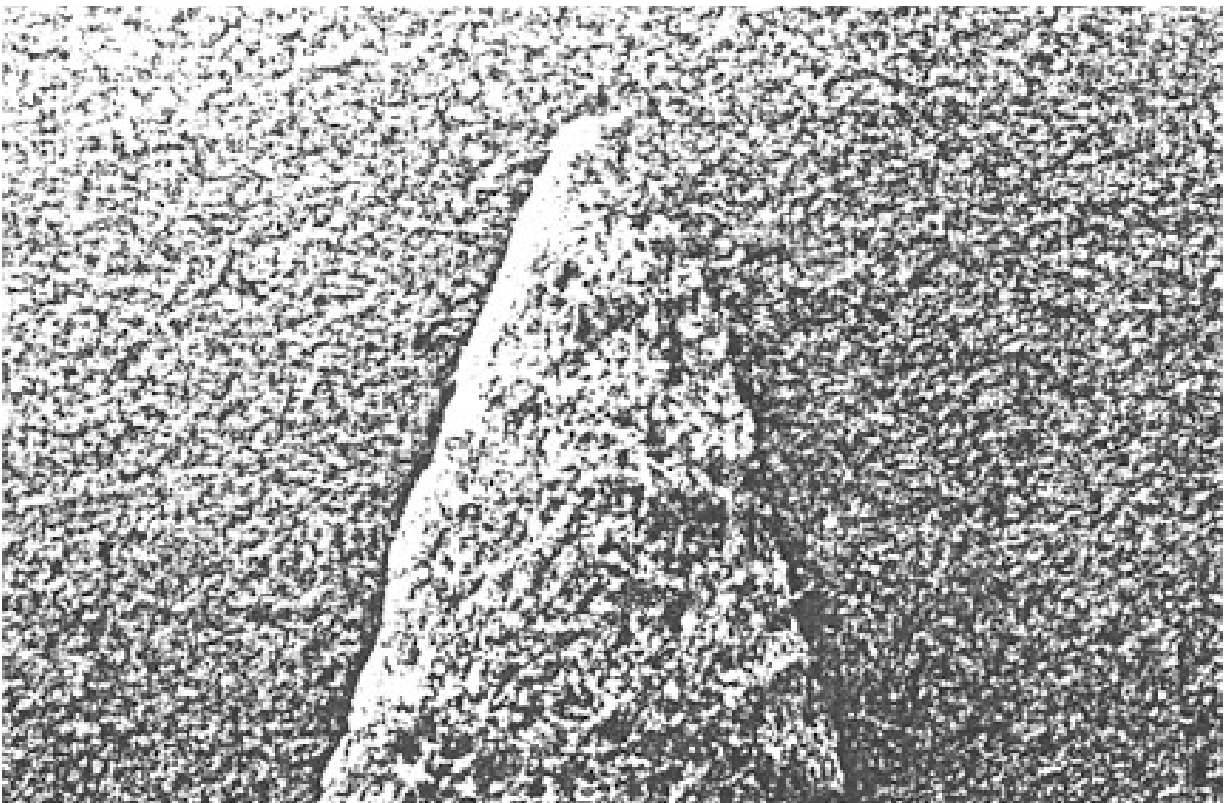


Archeological Surveys





A quartz notched projectile point (ca 2500 B.C.) discovered in 1984 on the Willimantic River below Depot Road

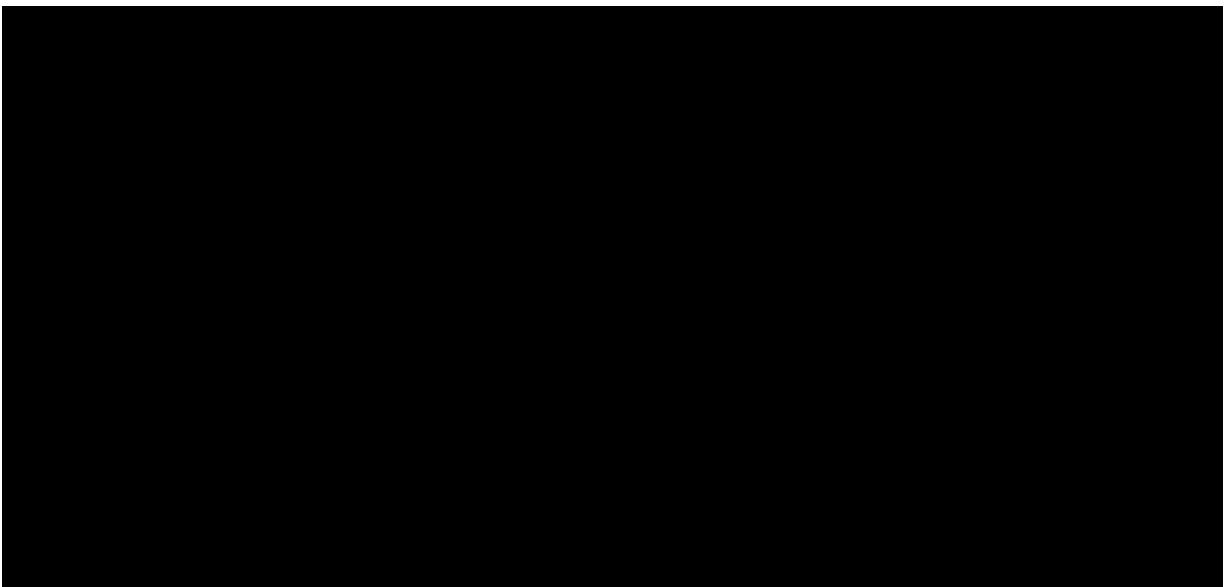




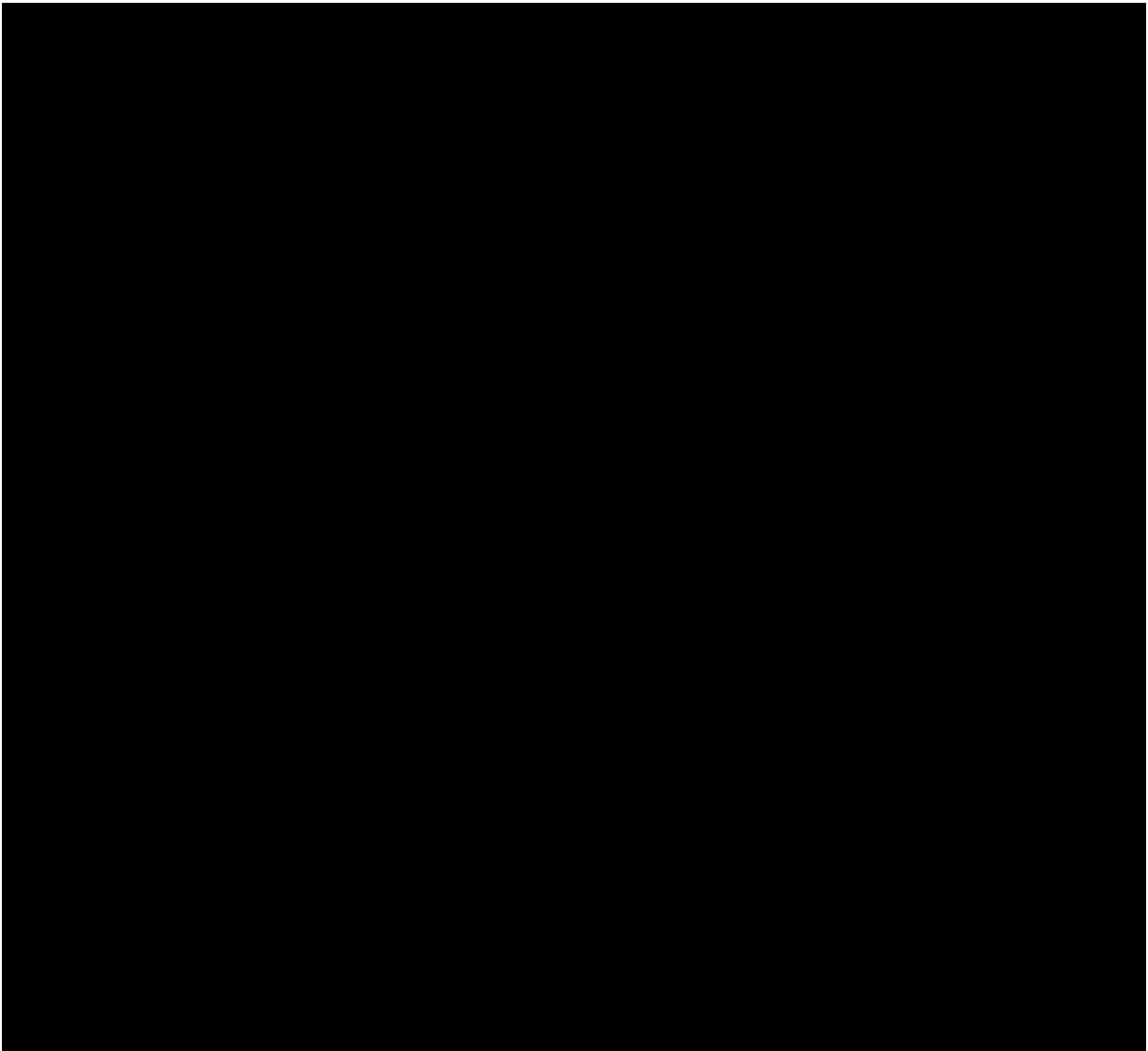
The high school complex is in the upper right section of the picture. The dam is located on the narrow inlet at the lower right section of the picture. The white outline is an approximation of the lake prior to the first dam.



Coventry Lake: Yesterday and Today (from a satellite image)



Coventry Lake: Yesterday and Today (from a satellite image)

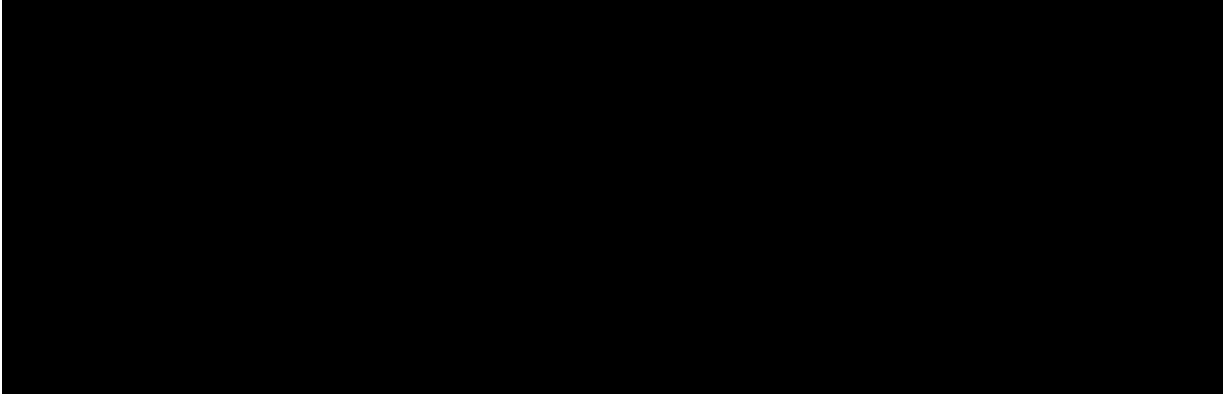






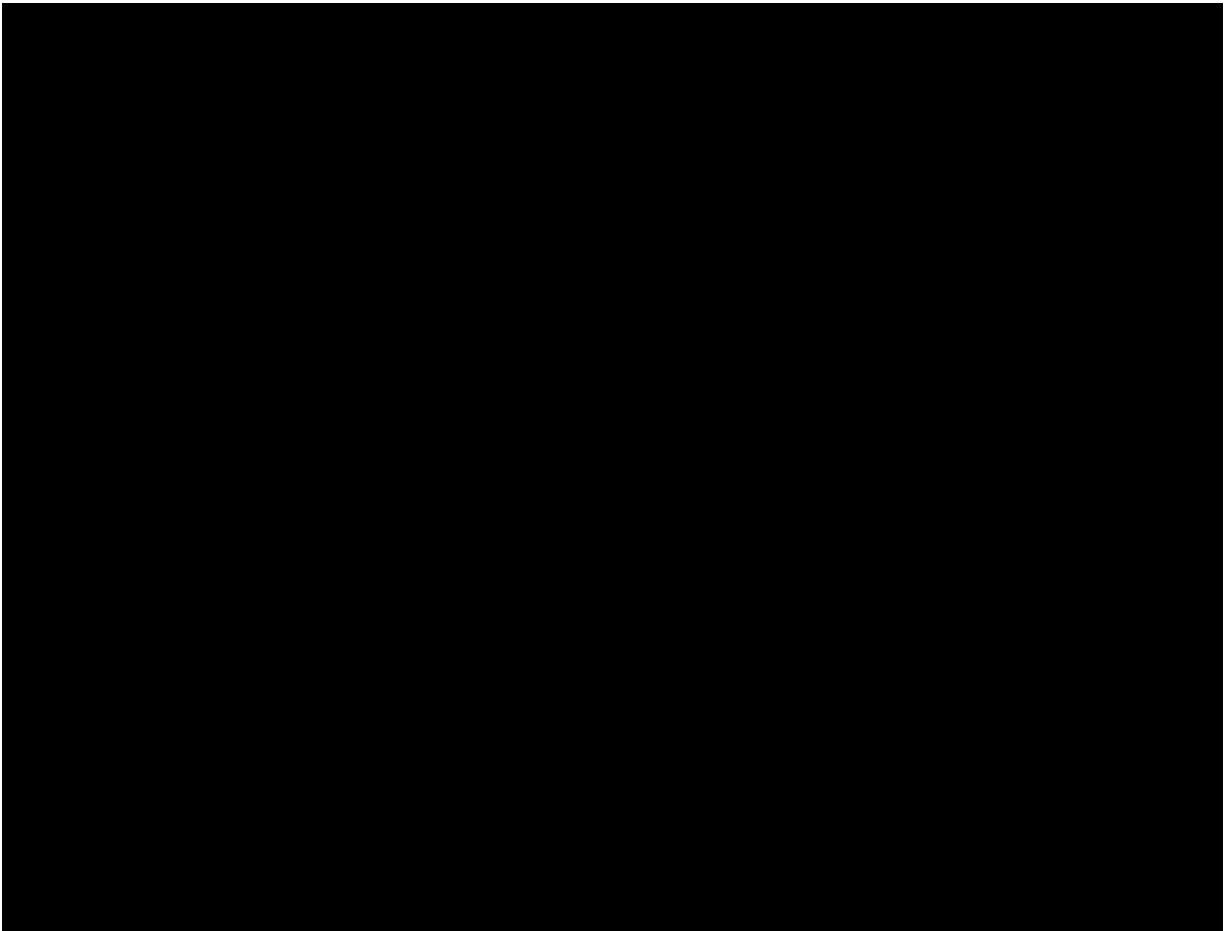
Coventry Lake, CT





Chapter 2

The Self Sufficient Farmer



Chapter 2

The Self Sufficient Farmer



From Major John Porter's accounts in 1864: "Major John Talcott's farm was 300 acres and its location is not precisely known, and 200 acres were sold to Capt. Thomas Bull (Buell). Aside from these two farms, I know of no English settler on this territory before 1686. It is supposed that these gentlemen had tenants and settled their farms in 1670. John Cates was the first settler of Windham in 1689." He died in 1697, and in his will he left a portion of land "near Lake Wangumbaug" to his wife. No further trace of this land has been found. (13)

Coventry was essentially a hunting ground for the Indians. The hills were burnt over every spring, so that when the town was settled there were not extensive forests and the land was ready for cultivation. Some trees were standing here and there. Tradition says that when the town was first settled, an ox cart could be driven over much of the young timber that had sprung up since the yearly fires of the Indians had ceased. There is no evidence of any tribal homes in Coventry, and the discovery of arrow heads in the plowed soil for many years, specifically near Bunker Hill and Grant Hill confirmed that hunting camps existed. (13)

The earliest white settlers of Coventry mentioned are Nathaniel Rust, Samuel Burchard (also spelled Birchard), Benjamin Howard and a family named Carpenter. Nathaniel Rust was the grandson of Henry who settled in Hingham Massachusetts in 1633-35, and he was the son of Israel of Northampton. Nathaniel served in King William's War (The War of Grand Alliance) from 1689 to 1697. On leaving Northampton he followed the Connecticut River south to Hartford. The birth of his first three children, Samuel, Mary, and Noah were recorded in Northampton between 1703 and 1708, so it is likely he did not move his family here until 1708 or after. There he gave a mortgage of two acres of land in Northampton to Richard Lord (a later property owner in Coventry). Nathaniel then directed his course eastward into the unsettled wilderness. He followed the course of the Olde Connecticut Path (generally Route 44), passed through the notch at Bolton and continued to the territory of Wangumbaug. When he found the lake his mind was made up, and he erected his first house here on the west side of the lake.

Another account states that he built his house on the lake, and Marvin Root, the historian of Coventry in the early 1800's, designated Rust as one of the founders. All of his children (ten) settled and raised families here. Nathaniel Rust kept a tavern for many years. He held town offices in 1715. In 1730 his sons Daniel, Nathaniel Jr., Noah, Samuel and Simeon are mentioned. (1)

A survey made in March of 1708 by Caleb Stanley shows land and road allocations near the Lake. (See figure above) Three reservation allotments

were set off for use of church and school. On this map is noted the house and lot of one Samuel Birchard on the southwest shore of the “Big Pond”. The value of the water power from the outlet of the lake for the location of a grist mill was then forecasted in the naming of the stream “Mill Brook”. Joshua’s legatees allotted the town lands to fifteen individuals, each having five lots of up to 300 acres each. Settlers for these allotments were then sought. The term “settlers” here means settlements by the white man who started the era of advanced civilization.

As mentioned in the “Ratification of Patent and Deed of Coventry in the year of April 12, 1716”, there is a tract of land of unknown acres bequeathed by Joshua third son of Uncas (living in Lyme, New London County) in 1675 to Samuel Willis, John Talcott and several others of Hartford, and Capt. John Fitch of Windsor. This bequeathed land was approved by the General Court assembled in Hartford, May 8, 1679. The Governor and Company of the colony of Connecticut on February 1, 1686 granted this land to the above-mentioned gentlemen. The General Court enacted on May 9, 1706 that a six square mile of land within the tract should be laid out for a town, and the General Assembly at New Haven on October 11, 1711 ordered and appointed William Pitkin, Joseph Talcott, William Whiting, Richard Lord and Nathaniel Rust, or any three of them, empowered to lay bounds for the town to be named Coventry. The town likely derived its name from Coventry, Warwickshire, England, a Benedictine priory founded in 1044 by the Lord of Mercia and his Lady Godiva.

A provision was also made for procuring and settling a minister of the gospel as soon as possible. A brand mark { |__| } was fixed as the distinguishing mark for Coventry horses. The town was officially incorporated on May 5, 1712 as part of Hartford County. Coventry held sixteen families at the time. The boundaries of the township were in dispute by the first settlement of Tolland in 1713. It was claimed that the southern border of Tolland was one mile further south that it was finally found to be. The dispute was settled in 1722 at the present border. In the original description of the six mile square area is the mention of the “Mile and a Quarter”, a narrow strip of land one and one-quarter miles long on the

southern border of Coventry to the middle of the Hop River. Coventry claimed this strip of land in October of 1723 and this completed the original land area of Coventry. This area is now part of Andover where it adjoins Coventry on the eastern side of town south of Skinner Hill Road.

Copies of documents in the Connecticut state library indicate that in August of 1714, Benjamin Howard who testified that he lived at "Wangumbaug" fourteen years ago, and it was settled by the proprietors of the land given by Joshua. He also says that Sam Birchard and his family lived there upon the same right as he. The year mentioned here would have been 1700 and it was not until 1706 that the committee was appointed to lay out the town. It is possible that Howard was mistaken in regard to the year he remembered, or he was a squatter prior to the allocation of town land. (4)

Also in 1714, John and Samuel Meakins say that about four or five years ago they were out in the wilderness looking for horses, took up their lodging at a house on the south side of a pond now called Coventry Pond, and the house went by the name of Birchard's house. They saw no other house around the pond. They also state that they had occasion to visit the pond two years ago and they saw, on both sides of the pond, houses built and land fenced and improved. A petition presented to the General Court in 1712 gives the number of families at about sixteen. The petition actually asked the General Assembly to "cause a tax to be laid" to pay for the minister and the "maintain the worship of God amongst us." (5) In the same year the wife of Richard Lord, one of the original allottees, following his death sent a petition to the Assembly to be allowed to sell his allotments and she was granted permission to do so. Cole (5) states that the first house was built near the 1888 residence of Chauncey Howard (relation to Benjamin not known). Cole also believed that the will of Joshua supposes that Major John Talcott and Capt. Peter Buell had tenants and settled their farms in 1670. (4)

Other accounts credit Samuel Birchard and Benjamin Howard as the first settlers. (There is a stone marker placed by George Dudley Seymour at the site of the first house, to his knowledge, erected by Samuel Birchard near 1726 South Street). "This region was part of the Ancient Kingdom of

Uncas, Great Sachem of the Mohegan. He gave it to his son Attawanhood (In Baptism Name "Joshua") who deeded it to a group of English friends among them was John Birchard of Norwich, son of Thomas Birchard who came from old England in 1635. In the true line Samuel Birchard, son of John, built the first house in Coventry about 1700 near this spot claiming Joshua's right". Birchard is shown as having Lot #1 on the first map of Coventry (1708). He may have claimed this spot by exercising the privilege of squatters' sovereignty. However in the Coventry land records, Volume 1, the distribution of the original rights to house lot #1 went to legatee Barth Barnard's heirs. The reason for the discrepancy is not known, but may have been due to a private business arrangement between the two men.

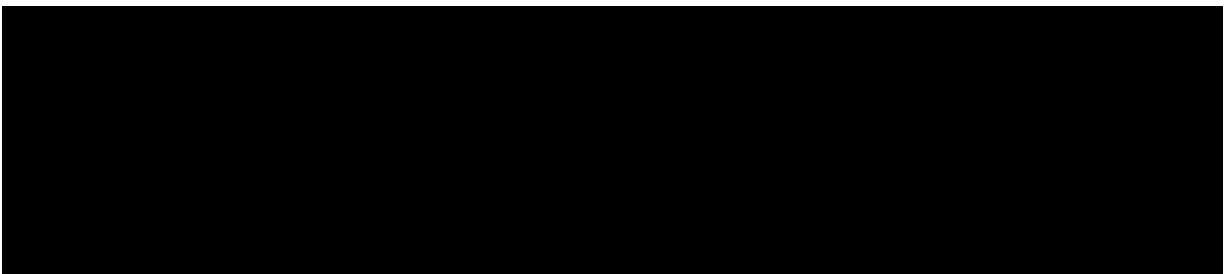
The first birth recorded in the town records shows a daughter, Hannah, born to Thomas Davis in 1706, and the first boy, Ebenezer, to Benjamin Carpenter in 1709. (8) In August of 1716, "Voted to give Samuel Allen Jr. ten shillings, part of his due for wolves which he killed some time since". (13) In December of 1716, "The town voted to give liberty to John Bissel to erect a shop on the highway in order to carry on his smiths trade." (13) Jabez Kingsbury stated that "This year (1717) is rendered memorable by the unusual quantity of snow which fell on the 20th and 24th of February. In these two storms, the earth was covered with snow from ten to fifteen feet deep. Many one story houses were covered, and in many places paths were dug from house to house under the snow." (13) A Mr. Coffin states "This year (1719) potatoes were introduced from Ireland. They were raised in the garden of Nathaniel Walker." Much later Rev. Thomas Smith stated "The introduction of potatoes was slow, and so late as 1750, a quantity of five bushels would have been an abundance." (13) A Dr. Holmes stated: "Tea began to see widespread use in New England in 1720. The first teakettles were small articles made of copper. When ladies went to visiting, each one carried her tea cup, saucer and spoon. The cups were of the best China and very small, containing as much as a common wine glass." (13)

There seems to be a difference of opinion as to the meaning of the Indian name for our lake "Wangumbaug" states Mrs. William Minor in her article "Coventry in Retrospect" written for the town's 250th celebration in 1962. Some sources translate it "Dew Water", other students of Indian lore

translate it as “Wongunk” (bend or crooked) “paug” (pond). The name actually may come from the Nipmuck who did not inhabit the land, but were known to visit here occasionally on hunting trips. (4)



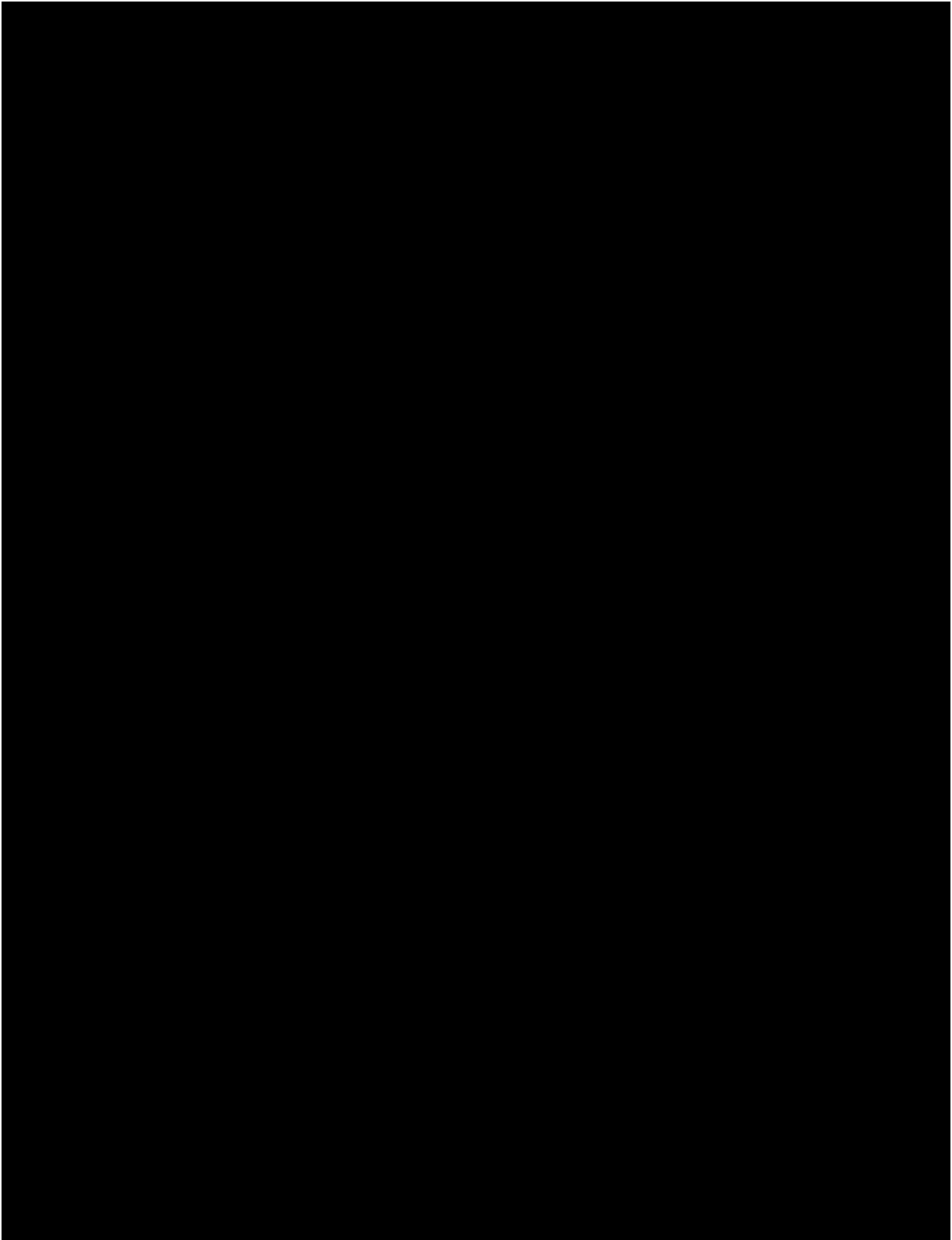
The Self Sufficient Farmer

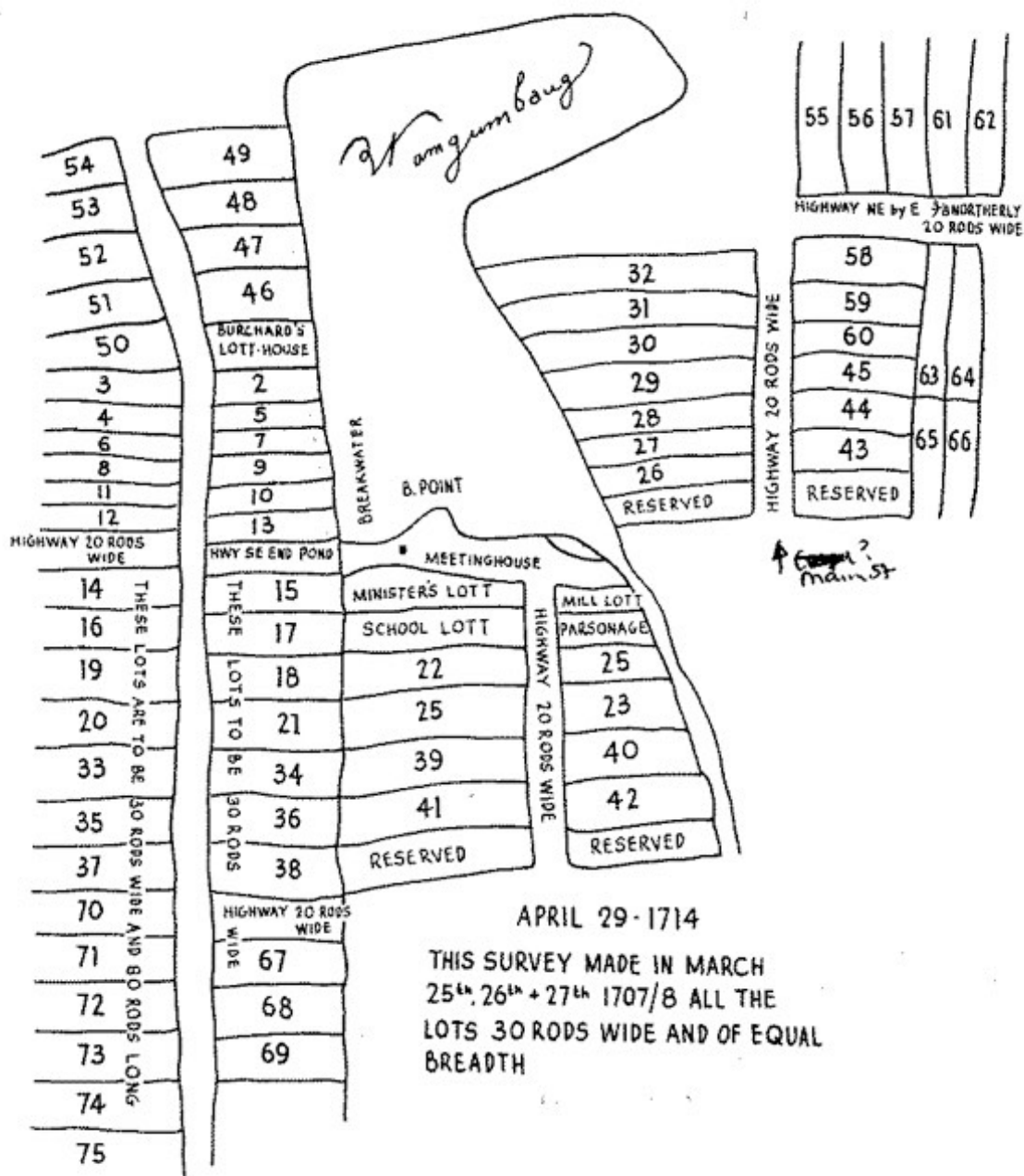


The Self Sufficient Farmer









Copy of a map of Coventry 1707-1708, drawn by Thomas Root, town clerk, in Volume 1, Coventry Town Book, on April 29, 1714. Diagram by Stan Papanos.



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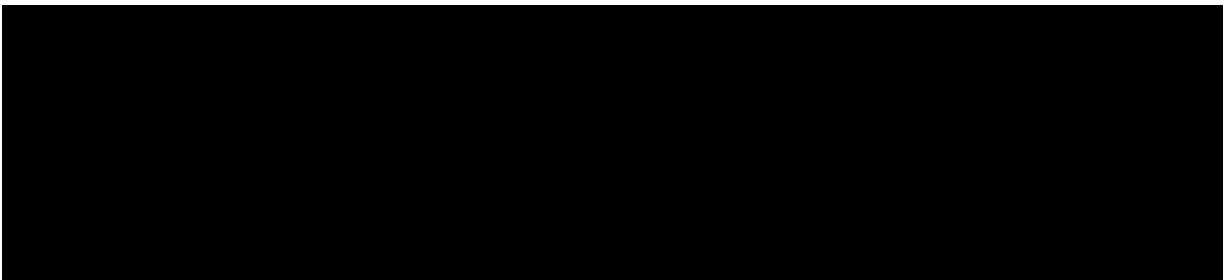


22

John Talcott the elder (1600-1660) was born in Braintree, England and died in Hartford, Connecticut. He came to this country with the Reverend Thomas Hooker's company on the "Lyon" which arrived in Boston, September 1632. His was the first real house erected in Hartford (1635). His son, John (1630-1688) was born and died in the same towns as his father. John's second son, Joseph (1669-1741) lived his life in Hartford. He was one of the men appointed to a committee to lay out the town of Coventry. He was governor of Connecticut from 1724 until his death and was the first native of Connecticut to hold this office. The Talcott family was very much involved in the early colony of Connecticut with the military as well as in the political formation of the state. Joseph was a Justice of the Peace, a member of the General Assembly, a major in the Army, a Hartford county judge and finally governor. He owned property in Middletown, Stafford, Bolton, Manchester and Coventry. His holdings in Coventry totaled over 800 acres, most in the "mile and a quarter", and were sold to various people between 1715 and 1741.

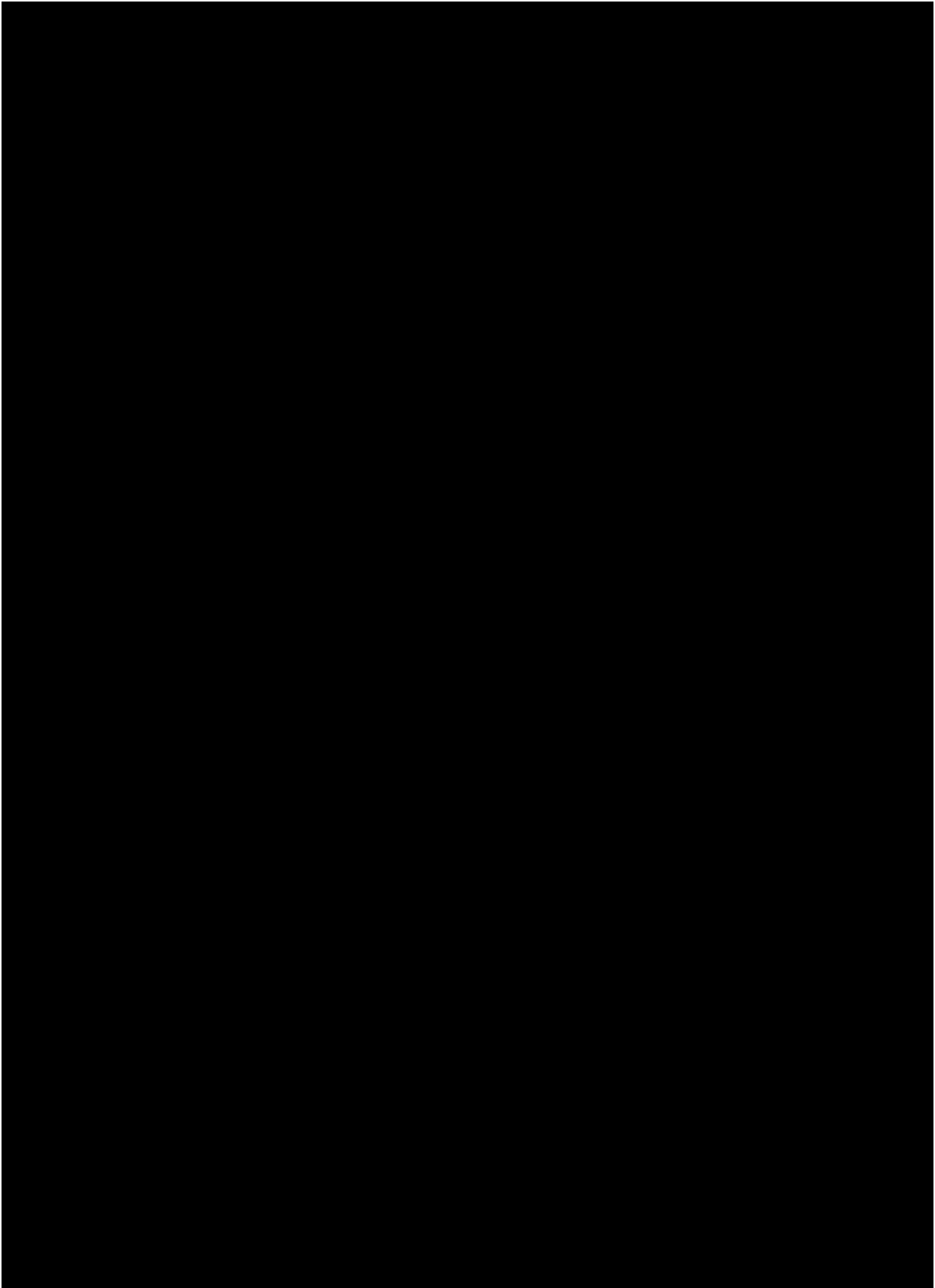


John and Joseph Talcott



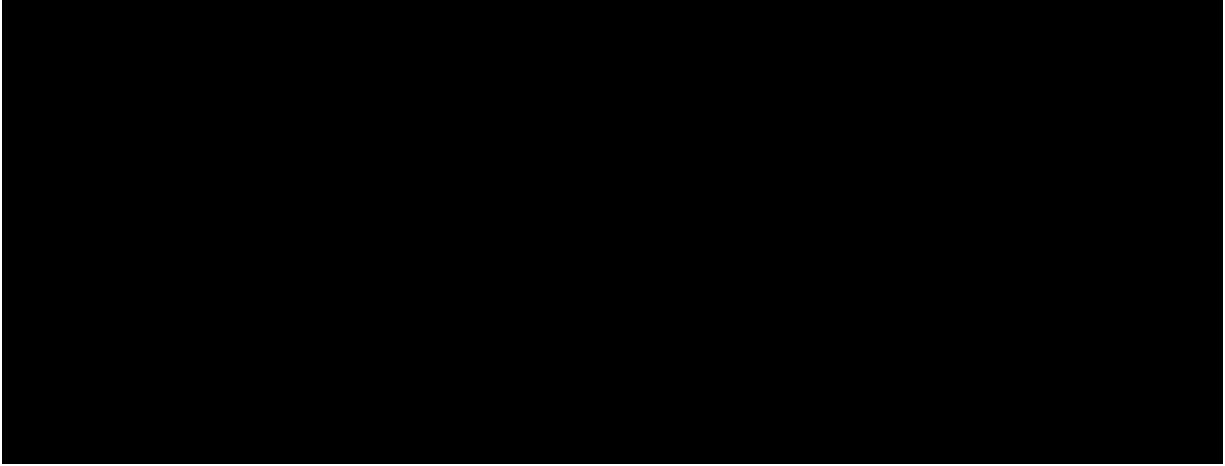
John and Joseph Talcott







G. Talcott



The Elder John Talcott

In all, a dozen Northampton men moved their families to Coventry in the spring of 1709. They were: Nathaniel Rust, Thomas Root, David Lee, Benjamin Carpenter, Samuel Gurley, Isaac Bridgeman, Benoni Barnard, Ebenezer Searl, Joseph Petty, Benjamin Janes, Ebenezer Alexander, and Samuel Allen. Many were bound by family ties. Glowing accounts of the area were provided to these folks by Nathaniel Rust who told them of the clear lake surrounded by grassy hills. The land was essentially ready to plow as the Indians had made a practice of burning off the brush each year to provide pasture to lure deer for their hunting. The first settled area (twenty-two lots of about twenty acres each) was located northeast of the “Great Pond” on the highest point of land nearby, Wicket Hill (later Ripley Hill). The area was chosen because it was on high ground, and at the time, the lack of trees allowed an unimpeded view of the lake. Others of the Strong family from Northampton soon followed. The southwest part along the Hop River and that part called Flanders were also beginning to be settled. There were no homesteads in the present Village along the brook. From the lake to the Willimantic River there were also a number of settlers. In 1715 the Legatees Committee completed the survey of the town “as near square as we can lay it”. (6)

Jeremiah Ripley was a commissary agent who lived on Wicket Hill. He conducted a general store across from the present Ripley house (on Ripley Hill Road). Jeremiah was the assistant commissary agent for the army in the Revolutionary War. Provisions and stores were kept in his store on Wicket Hill, which served as a military depot. Later, business began to grow up along South Street. Here Gilbert and Jones were the great merchants. They dealt in beef and pork and processed cheese which was transported to Norwich. (6)

The town was described as abutting on the 'Mile and A Quarter' and on Hebron six and three-quarter miles and 36 rods, then north six miles and 127 rods to a heap of stones, then east six miles, save eight rods, to a black oak tree on the Willimantic River, then south by the river to the first line. (6). By 1718 Wicket Hill was rife with eleven Roots, eleven Carpenters, six Lees, three Barnards and nine Strongs. Thomas Root was chosen the first town clerk and held the position for twelve years. Many of the original legatees to Joshua's will had died since the will was made so a committee was appointed to arrange for the division of the land into lots. Each of the original fifteen legatees or their heirs were granted 5/78ths of all the land in Coventry. Three lots were reserved near the lake for the minister, a school and the meeting house.

Seventy-five lots of fifteen to thirty acres were mapped out around the lake and assigned by lot. The remaining land in town (about 20,000 acres) was not assigned directly as yet.

The land owners were anxious to divide the remaining land in town to ease the burden of taxation by bringing in more families, but the committee delayed for a time. In 1718, 78 lots of one hundred acres each were mapped out, mostly in North Coventry which was essentially unsettled. The lots were clustered along the border with Tolland and with Bolton. The distribution proceeded rapidly after that with a fifty-acre division in 1724, a twenty-acre division in 1725, a ten-acre division in 1729 and a fifteen-acre division in 1731. To the south of Coventry was an area called the Mile and a Quarter or Abimileck's land. The line ran west through the part of Lebanon known as "the Crank" to Hebron. It was not part of the original Joshua's deed, but was reserved by Joshua for his sons and was conveyed by the will of his last surviving son Abimileck to two gentlemen of Saybrook. Litigation over titles and boundaries lasted until 1723 when they were resolved. (6)

Early Foods

The settlers in Colonial America continued to cook in tradition with their heritage, while incorporating new foods into their diet. Colonists had staple foods which they used in almost everything, but they also had seasonal foods. Most settlers had similar diets to the ones they had had in their old country, but when faced with an abundance of new, unfamiliar edibles, they couldn't help but try them. The main staple food of the settlers was actually a food native to America, corn. Every farmer grew corn as taught by the Native Americans who also showed them how to harvest, grind and preserve it throughout the year. Settlers made it into an oatmeal-like dish and this could be eaten for breakfast and even sometimes lunch. They were careful not to waste the rest of the corn either. The stalks were used as food for the cattle in the winter, the husks to stuff mattresses, and the cobs as jug stoppers, tool handles and the bowls of pipes. Chickens also enjoyed the kernels.

Native American Indians used pumpkin as a staple in their diets centuries before the pilgrims landed. When white settlers arrived, they were introduced to the pumpkin, and it soon became a staple in their diets. Just like today, early settlers used pumpkins in a wide variety of recipes, from desserts to stews and soups. In addition to cooking with pumpkins, they also dried the shells and cut strips to weave into mats.

Another staple food were hogs which were excellent foragers and able to live on what they found in the woods. These characteristics made them easy and “cheap” to take care of. Additionally, hogs provided a large amount of meat for the settlers. The meat from four fairly good sized hogs could last a family through the winter. A hog killing was quite an orderly project considering the fact that settlers used every part of the hog. An old colonial saying was “All of the hog is used except the squeal.” The blood was caught and used in blood pudding, the intestines for sausage skins and

chitterlings, and the fat portions for lard. The shoulders, hams, and bacon flanks were salted and cured to eat in the future.

The Native Americans tried to introduce the settlers to other new foods, but some did not catch on. For example, sweet potatoes were tried, but were quickly rejected. Settlers basically did not like vegetables and believed they were “food more meant for hogs and savage beasts to feed upon than mankind”. The only vegetables they really ate were ones brought from Europe: parsnips, turnips, onions, peas, carrots, and cabbage. Cabbage was a favorite of the Dutch and the German settlers. They introduced “knolls” (coleslaw) and sauerkraut into the culinary world.

Settlers also ate other game and produce. Venison, raccoon, chicken, goat, and beef were all part of a person’s diet as well as seafood and flying game. Some popular berries eaten by colonists were huckleberries, blackberries, blueberries, also called sky berries, and wild strawberries. As far as food preparation, settlers stuck mostly to the traditional cooking ways of their old countries, especially the English Puritans. Their meals are described as being “dull and tasteless”. Breakfast usually consisted of a hot cereal-like dish called amp, which was corn pounded into a powder and eaten hot or cold with milk and butter. Sometimes, if one was lucky, a little molasses was added. A similar meal was eaten for lunch, and then came dinner. Dinner usually consisted of a stew or “pottage” whose contents varied according to the season. Little spice was added to these leaving them pretty flavorless.

Early Dwellings

The magnificent forests that were here astounded newcomers to America. In Europe, the countryside had long since contributed the last of her virgin trees. Giant trees reached such heights that the lower branches received little of the light they needed. They fell off the trunk before fully developing, and the result was a tall straight, knot-free trunk. The most spectacular was the white pine that soared past 150 feet in height. Although a softer wood, the heartwood was far more hard and dense than their smaller relatives of today. The English Navy claimed any white pine two feet or more in diameter for masts and had the trunk blazed with the King's broad arrow. The colonists' independent spirit sometimes ignored these claims. Stone was readily available for foundations and chimneys, and an occasional brick yard appeared in town. Colonists used the simple trade ax until about 1725. It was essentially an iron strap curled around a round handle with a piece of steel welded to the blade end. America's forests demanded a more efficient tool and the colonists developed their own felling ax, which had a shorter, but heftier blade. It was so efficient, that it remains essentially the same today. (7)

The first dwellings, at least among the poorer class, were what were called "cellars." They were so named because they were constructed in exactly the same way as were the outdoor cellars used for the storage of vegetables. None of the well-to-do among the settlers made use of these cellars except for the first few weeks, or perhaps, months of their stay. The first

homes built were constructed of timber, probably split logs. The cracks were filled with clay. The earliest form of roofing material used by the Pilgrims was thatch. Reeds and rushes were gathered from nearby swamps, bound into bundles, and lashed to the roof. The thatch was piled layer upon layer until it was about one foot thick. These houses were of the simplest

design and the windows were filled with oiled linen in place of glass which was expensive and hard to obtain.

The simplest form of English cottage architecture was a one-room house with a fireplace at one end, sometimes referred to as an end-Chimney structure. To gain more space the owner often built an attic or sleeping loft under the steeply pitched roof. Homes of indentured servants brought to the Massachusetts Bay Colony from England were similar to this one. Capped by a steeply pitched roof, the interior encompassed only 500 square feet. One multi- purpose area served as the living room, dining room, kitchen, workroom, and adult bedroom. A ladder ascended to a children's sleeping loft. The fireplace was the family's sole source of heat and primary source of evening light. The two-story colonial was a simple offshoot of the cape style.

The Classic Post and Beam Construction

The most widely used expansion of the basic plan in 17th-century New England was the addition of a one-story lean-to at the back of the house. The “saltbox” architecture along with the Cape Cod cottage is probably the most widely adopted house plan in use today. The development of the saltbox was simple. For centuries English cottages were only one room deep. As prosperity increased, homeowners began to build an addition called a lean-to at the rear of the house. By the end of the sixteenth century, saltboxes were common in England. When the colonists came to the New World, they transplanted the cottage architecture they knew in their homeland. The central-chimney saltbox plan became standard and appeared with minor variations throughout New England.

By the 1750's, American architecture had come into its own. Adapting to the conditions at hand, the colonial homestead became a blend of ruggedness and simplicity. In New England, original designs included the Cape Cod, a compact dwelling under a high-pitched roof that resisted offshore winds. By adding a second floor, the two-story Colonial gave added room and a flow of warmth from the first floor fireplaces. As more space was needed, a back shed was added to make the Salt Box. The two-story front of the salt box collected the sun's warmth, and the long, sloping roof facing north pushed the winter wind up and over. (7)

Schools

Public schools were given scant notice in the early days. Being able to keep the place in reading, to spell (after one's own fashion, as old documents will bear out) and to write a little, were all that an early colonial American

needed to carry on his every day life and business in his primitive life style. In 1712 the selectmen of the town were empowered to employ two women, "one on each side of the pond", to keep school for three months of the year. Later that year, the ladies were remunerated four pence for every scholar "kept". (8)

The First Church

The establishment date of the first church/meeting house is uncertain, but it was likely around 1714. It was located on today's High Street just northeast of the Town Green. Church and Town were virtually one in early days. In fact only church members were allowed to vote at town elections. Sunday's were a day of rest and for gathering at the church for services and socializing. In 1715 the town voted twenty- five pounds toward the First Church's building. Shortly thereafter another forty-five pounds was appropriated. By 1717 the windows were glazed, a pulpit installed, and the walls were finished "until the supply of lime was exhausted". The first

pastor was the Reverend Joseph Meacham who served for forty years until his death in 1752. He is buried in Nathan Hale Cemetery.

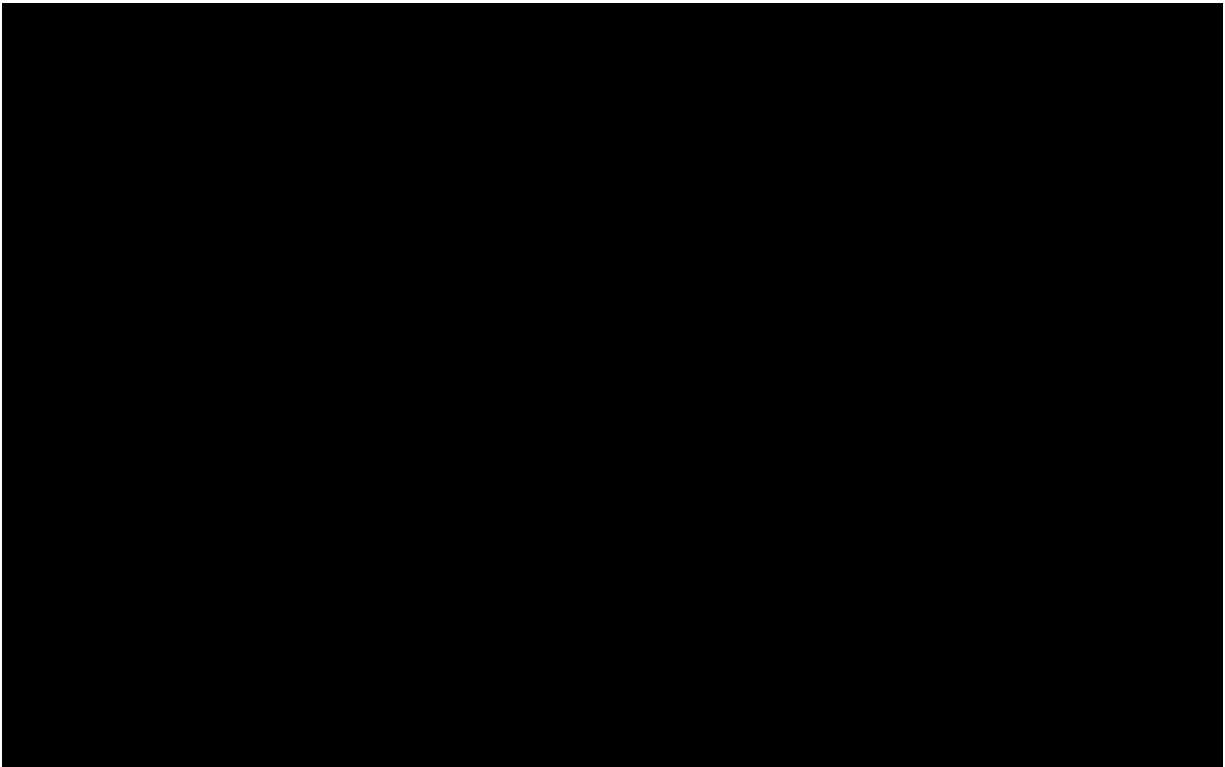
His wife, Esther Williams, had endured many hardships of pioneer life prior to her marriage. At age 13 in 1704, she was taken from her home in Deerfield, Massachusetts during an Indian raid. The Mohawks and the French took her to Canada where she was “indentured” for ten months. She was eventually ransomed and returned to her family.

Esther’s father was a very prominent minister and community leader in Deerfield, and her brother, Eleazer Williams, served as pastor of the Mansfield Church for a time. Esther and Joseph were grandparents of the Rev. Nathan Strong of Hartford and the Rev. Joseph Strong of Norwich. Church attendance was a must, and by 1736 the building proved too small. It was enlarged by a seven foot extension at each end. The galleries were completed in 1738. Between 1766 and 1768 a second meeting house was then erected, and local residents boasted of having the finest sanctuary in the adjacent regions of Connecticut. The cost was \$5,000 plus much donated materials and labor. (4)

The First Church/Meeting House ca 1888

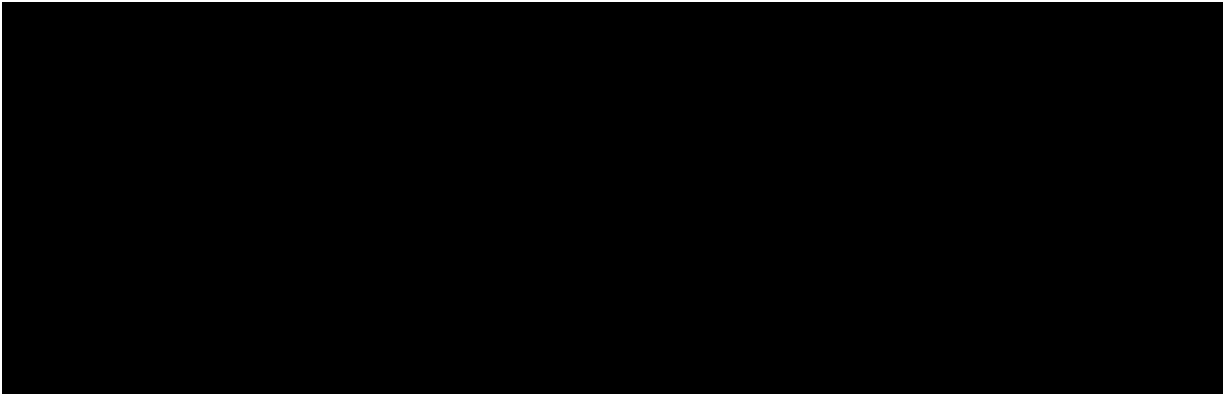
Within the memory of residents, horse sheds stood on either side of the old church, and the old Academy was nearby. There were two wide aisles crossing each other at the center. The pulpit was a lofty structure with a stairway winding up to it, and the minister was nearly out of sight in the recess. Over the pulpit was a canopy, called a sounding board, and on the top of this was a dove with an olive twig in its mouth. There were high box pews inside and galleries which extended around three sides. The pews were later replaced by more modern sittings. The gallery held the choir with a large number of singers and, in the 1800’s, instruments including bass viols, fiddles, flutes and clarinets. Parts of the old pews are still in existence used in rooms in houses on Ripley Hill Road. The bell in the church in Mansfield center is the old bell from this church. Town meetings were formerly held on the ground floor of the old church. It was destroyed by fire in 1897.

Occasionally we will take a “walkabout” around Coventry. It will give us a chance to see the neighborhoods and shops and meet the families. The walkabout will start on the Town Green, proceed past the Hale House and Wright’s mill on the Skungamaug, go north on Swamp Road to the Boston Turnpike, then east to the Second Congregational Church, turn north on Grant Hill Road, then east on Merrow, then south along the Willimantic River to the turnpike. We’ll follow the turnpike west, turn along Sam Green Road to Main Street, then south on Main through the Village, then along Plains Road to Flanders River Road ending at the Hop River. In the 1700’s, the route is along old Indian trails and through fields and woods. By 1800 the route follows existing roads such as they were.





Another Account of Early Coventry



Another Account of Early Coventry



24



25



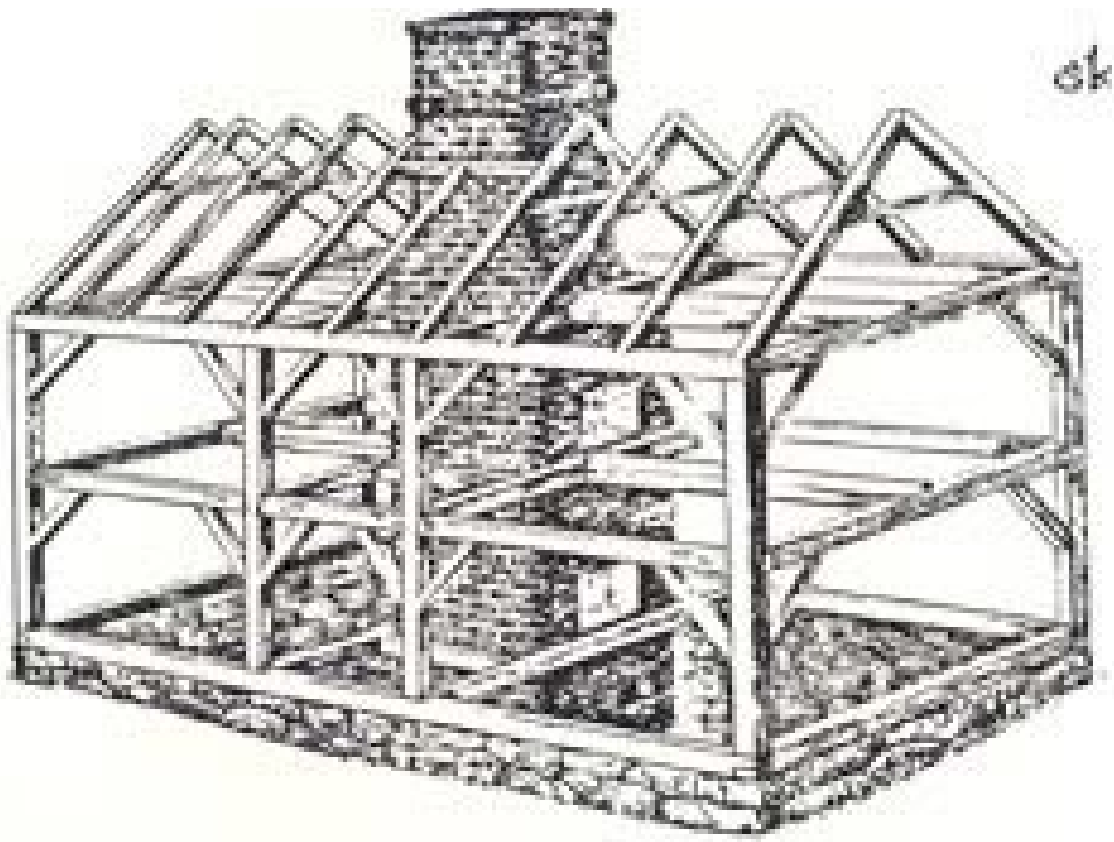
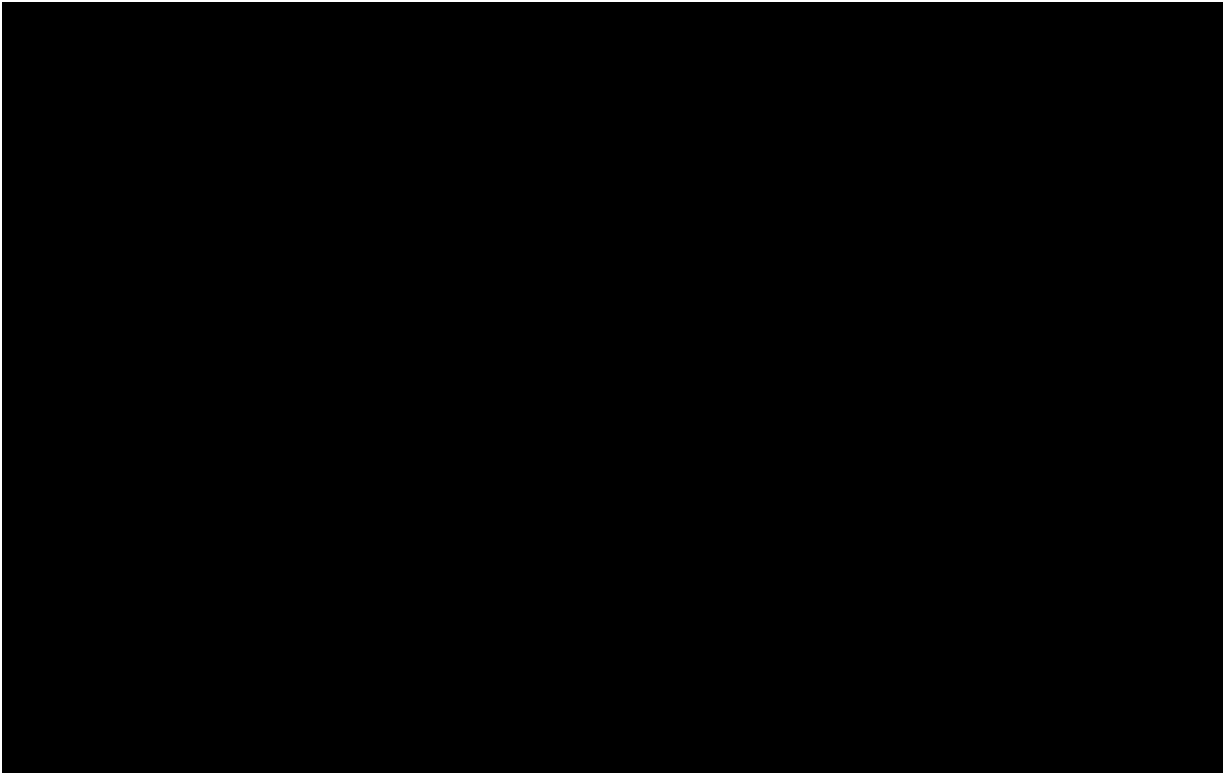
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We begin our journey at the meeting house whose exterior is complete and windows glazed, but the interior is nearly bare. Behind us at the head of the brook, Thomas Porter's grist mill is operating, and he is building a miller's house near the mill. We direct our horses along the original path that leads to Coventry from the Notch (Bolton Notch) and is now Cross and South Streets. We see several large farms emerging along the cleared land adjacent to the lake.

We ford the Skungamaug River just above the "great falls" and hear that Lazarus Manley, from Boston, is considering a grist and/or saw mill at this location. Further along is another path leading south to the Lebanon Path, (named about 1625 and now Route 6) where some families from eastern Massachusetts have acquired land and are establishing farms near the junction of the Skungamaug and a brook (the Hop Brook).

We turn north through the woods to the Connecticut path (now Route 44) and turn east. This area of town is wooded with some cleared land to the

north (Grant Hill), and several families are starting farms here. The north section of town was divided and allocated just two years ago and many of the original owners are selling their lots.

We see many wolves along our journey and expect that the town will put a bounty on their heads as soon as more farms become established.

We turn north (now Grant Hill Road) explore, and partially because the Connecticut Path to the east is rather wet. (As the Connecticut path becomes more traveled between today's Grant Hill and Lewis Hill Roads, it will change course at least two times as a more direct road is forged through the wet and hilly terrain.)

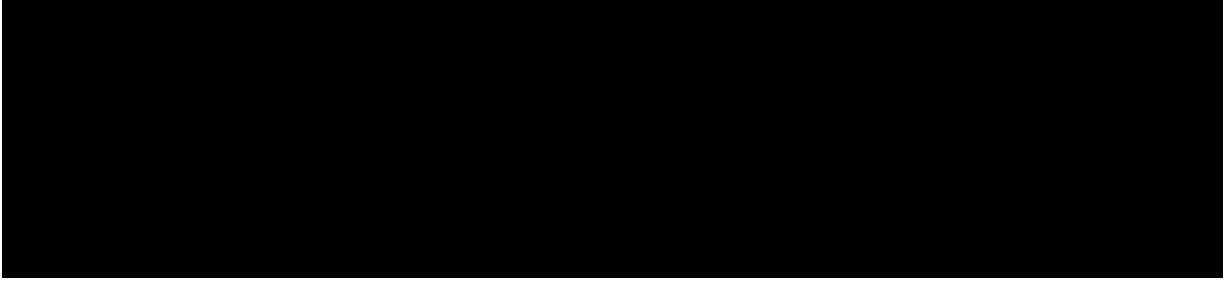
Proceeding east again toward the river, we meet Aaron Cady from Canterbury who has just purchased lots from Messrs. Root, Brown, and Long. He is planting a huge apple orchard (which will be fully productive by 1740). We hear that some men from Tolland and also Roxbury, Massachusetts are looking to purchase farms near here.

We continue west through the woods to the Willimantic River and follow it south to the Connecticut Path, then west to a very small horse-path leading southeast (now Main Street). This path is becoming more traveled as new farm owners from the north part of town must travel to the meeting house for church services and town meetings. Passing Wicket Hill (now Ripley Hill) we see about twenty-five homelots and Nathaniel Rust's tavern.

Down the hill and past the grist mill along the brook we see two or three large farms though little else along the brook. We cross the brook (near today's Depot Road) and turn through the woods to an area which will soon be called Flanders. The land is flat and wooded and we soon reach the Hop River near its juncture with the Willimantic River. Just northwest of here, Lazarus Manley has also acquired 120 acres of land and is constructing a grist and saw mill on the river.

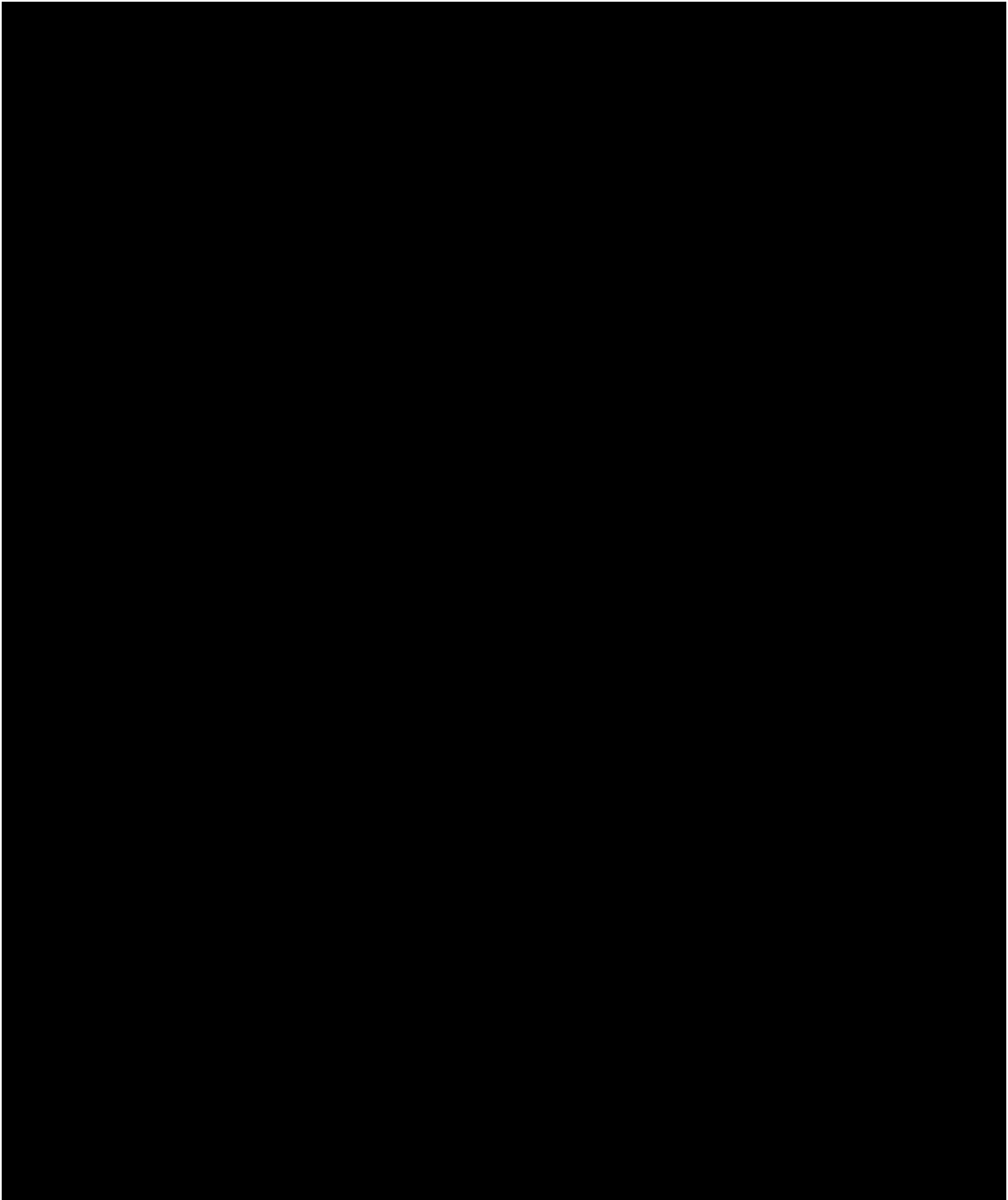


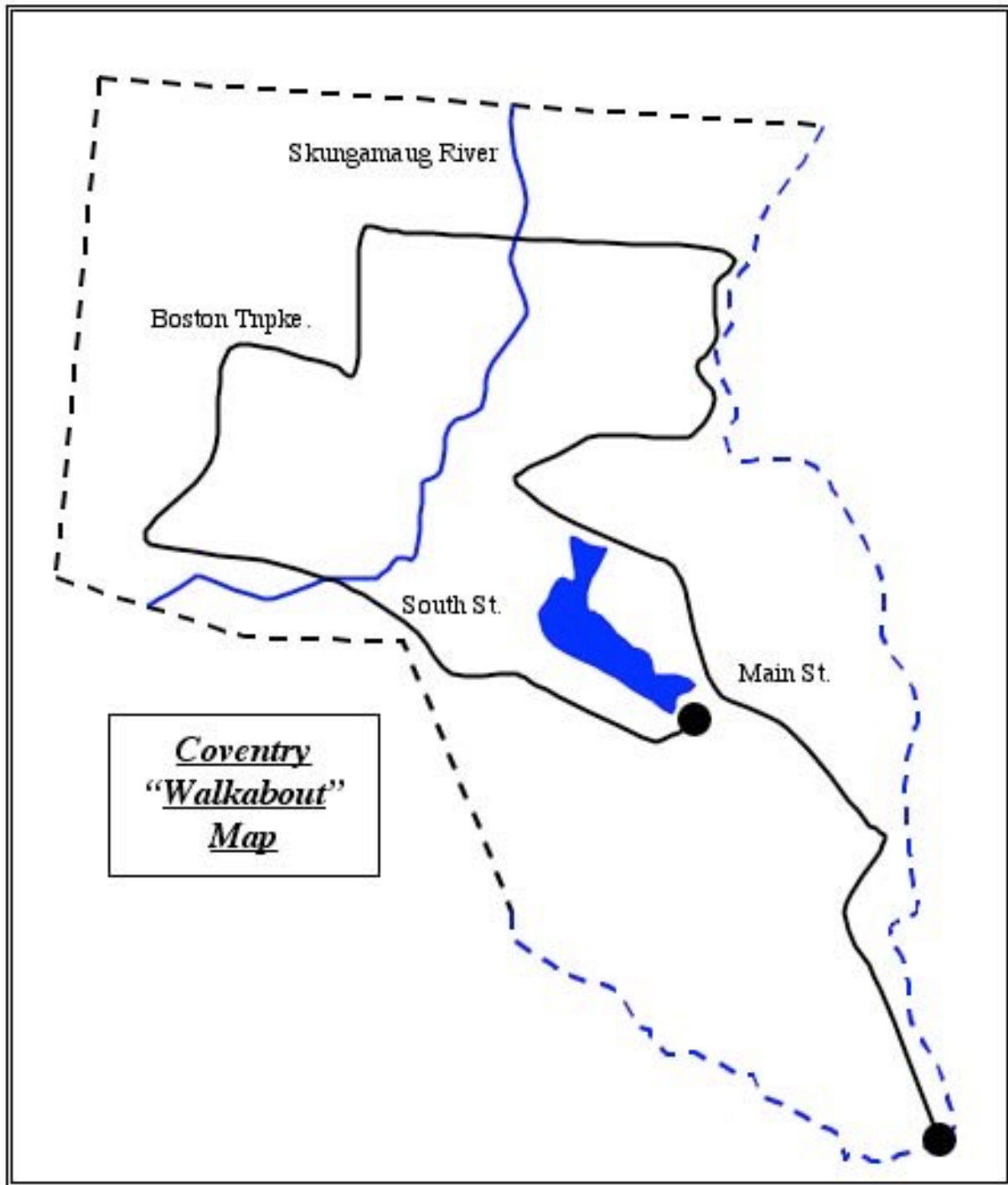
1720 Walkabout



1720 Walkabout









Water power in Coventry was used primarily to serve the local residents. The town's founding fathers commissioned a grist mill in 1716 for a grant of 60 acres in two plots of twenty-four and thirty-six acres, Jonathan Hartshorn built the mill near the head of the Mill Brook on what is now the Teleflex Company property. It is the oldest continuously operating mill site in town. On March 28, 1716 Jonathan Hartshorn of Norwalk sold, for 186 pounds "lawful money" to Thomas Porter of Coventry, a house, corn mill, and the water rights, and on December 20, 1736 Thomas Porter sold, for 1,200 pounds "lawful money" to his son Noah, forty acres including the original grist mill lot and house and a section between the dwelling and the pond.

Lazarus Manley was a millwright by trade and an early settler and mill owner. In 1701 he married at Charlestown, Massachusetts, Sarah Hartshorne (1678-1736), a relative of the above- named Jonathan. Lazarus came to Coventry about 1714. He died, 1749, in Mansfield.

In June of 1719 representatives of the town sold to Lazarus Manly (some sources spell it Manley) 120 acres north of the Hop River near today's Hop River Road. Lazarus was an early settler in Coventry. He was one of the first native-born millwrights. He built at least one grist and one saw mill just across the river in what was then Lebanon (now Columbia) and was offered the chance to build the first grist mill on the Wright's Mill site on the Skungamaug River in 1726. For some reason, he did not build that mill and exchanged that site for some land near the "Mile and a Quarter" in Coventry. Lazarus built a saw mill on the original (1719) site and sold half of it to his two sons, Lazarus and George, in 1733. The mill operated for an unknown time after 1733. Lazarus' descendents owned property here along the Hop River until they sold to the railroad in the mid 1800's.

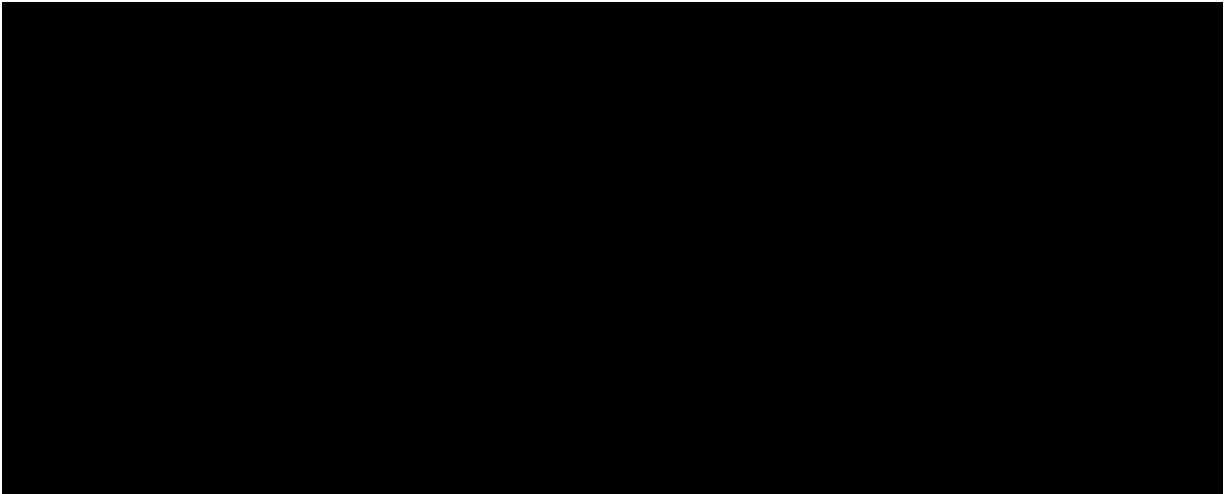
On March 28, 1726, Lazarus Manley was granted an indenture by the Town of Coventry. In exchange for thirty acres of land he agreed to "build a saw mill within one year on the great falls of the Scungamaug(sic) River and maintain it for ten years".

This site, on South Street, is now commonly called Wright's Mill. He also agreed to build a grist mill "when sixteen families are residing nearby and can be accommodated by the mill". Lazarus did not fulfill this obligation. In May of 1727 he sold his rights to Daniel Badger in consideration for Daniel building and maintaining a saw mill by March of 1728 and building a grist mill according to the requirements set forth before. Daniel Badger and his family were active in several mills in this area of town for a short time. The saw mill had a log-way adjacent to the dam such that trees could be cut and dropped into the river for transporting to the mill.

Soon after the town was incorporated in 1712, John Talcott (of Hartford) and a few associates acquired a huge tract of land in North Coventry. John and his millwright selected a mill site on The Skungamaug River just below today's Folly Lane. There is only one natural constriction of the topology on the Skungamaug River in the area, and the constriction provided a convenient and opportune location to build a dam and create an upstream pond. The flow of the water here is adequate, and the site is immediately adjacent to a road. A very rough estimate of the water flow and fall indicate the water could provide at least twenty horsepower which was more than enough for a modest mill or two. (Viable grist mills were located elsewhere with only fourteen available horsepower.) Sometime around 1741, Talcott built a grist, then a saw mill here. (12)



Coventry's First Water Powered Mills



Coventry's First Water Powered Mills



34



35

An experienced miller knew how to measure the condition of his millstone and the quality of the flour essentially by feel. Here is an account by Oliver Evans, a well-known, published mill wright from the 1800's.

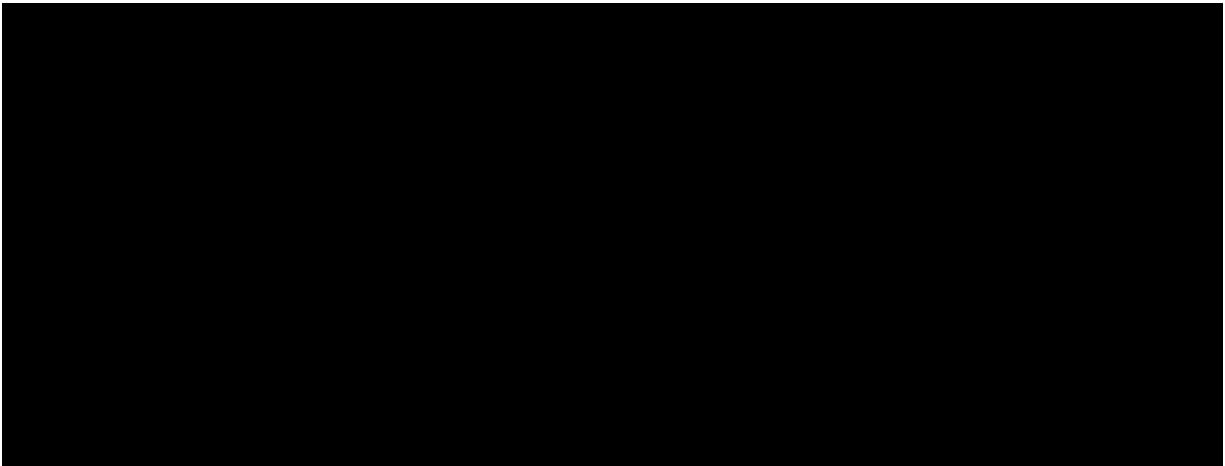
How To Judge Good Grinding:

Catch your hand full of meal as it falls from the stones, and feel it lightly between your fingers and thumb; and if it feels smooth and not oily or clammy, and will not stick much to the hand, it shows it to be fine enough, and the stones to be sharp. If there be no lumps to be felt larger than the rest but all of one fineness, it shows the stones to be well faced, and the furrows (of the stone) not to have too much draught as none has escaped unground. If the meal feels very smooth and oily, and sticks much to the hand, it shows it to be too low ground, hard pressed and the stones dull, but if it feels part oily and part coarse and lumpy and will stick much to the hand, it shows that the stones have too much feed; or, that they are dull, and badly faced, or have some furrows that have too much draught or are too deep, or perhaps too steep at the hack edge, as part has escaped unground, and part too much pressed and low.

Catch your hand full, and holding the palm up, shut it briskly; if the greatest quantity of the meal fly out and escape between your fingers, it shows it to be in a fine and lively state, the stones sharp, the bran thin and that it will bolt well. But the greater the quantity that stays in the band, the more faulty is the flour. Catch a handful of meal in a sieve, and sift the meal clean out of the bran; then feel it and if it feels soft and springing and elastic, and also feels thin, with but little sticking, to the inside of the bran, and no pieces found much thicker than the rest the stones are shown to be sharp, and the grinding well done, but if it is broad and stiff, and the inside white, it is a sure sign that the stones are dull or overfed. If you find some parts that are much thicker and harder than the rest such as half or quarter grains, it shows that there are some furrows that have too much draught, or are too deep or steep at the back edge; else that you are grinding with less feed than the depth of the furrows and velocity of the stone will bear.



Quality Control in the Grinding of Flour



Quality Control in the Grinding of Flour



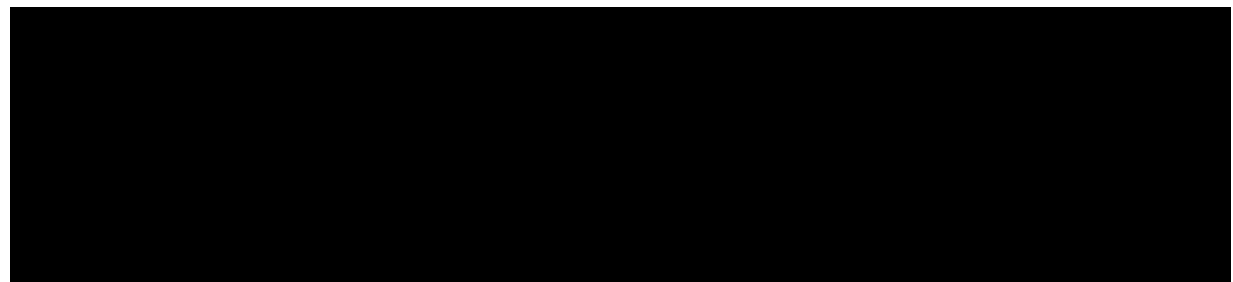
Willimantic was settled in 1686 and incorporated in 1692. Mansfield was settled in 1686 and incorporated in 1702 from a part of Willimantic. Bolton was incorporated in 1720 and Tolland in 1722. Columbia was incorporated in 1804 from a part of Lebanon, and Andover was settled in 1747, but not incorporated until 1848 from a part of Coventry, Hebron and Bolton.

The “Mile and a Quarter” is Annexed

The struggle for existence in this area continued as is indicated by a petition sent to the Governor and General Court in May of 1717. The petitioners “pray” that they be released from their present difficulties. Their charges to maintain the worship of God (which they must do by law) were “great and heavy” by reason of the smallness of their numbers and the fact that they were increasing very slowly. They ask that their neighbors that live between Coventry’s south line and the Hop River be joined to our town. By 1723 the territory spoken of and known as the “Mile and a Quarter” was annexed to Coventry.



Surrounding Towns



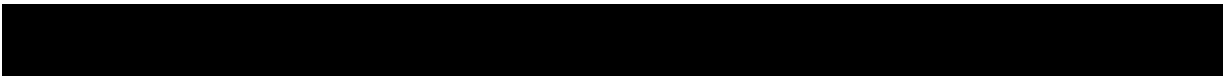
Surrounding Towns



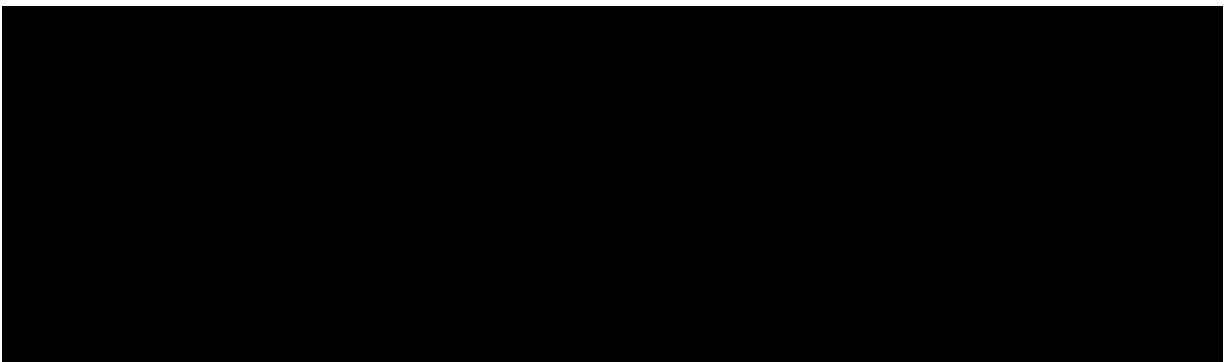
The establishment of two military companies occurred in 1728. The first was commanded by Samuel Parker, the second by John Bissell. The Green on High Street was used as a training ground. In 1722 the town voted to raise money for drums, colors, and halberds. Coventry had the only artillery company in the brigade and attracted much attention. The brass gun (now standing on the Green) was furnished by the state.

The First School

In the first survey of the town, a plot was labeled for the school lot, and in 1726 the town sought permission from the General Assembly to "dispose of it for ye use of ye school" In September of 1728 it was voted to build a school house within twenty rods of the meeting house, and the school shall be eighteen by twenty feet. Peter Buell, Samuel Parker and Thomas Porter were appointed to carry on the building of the school house. The salary for the school master was set at not more then eleven pounds for the winter quarter. The school was built northwest of the first meeting house and was about opposite of the present caretaker's house in Patriot's Park.



The First Military is Organized



The First Military is Organized



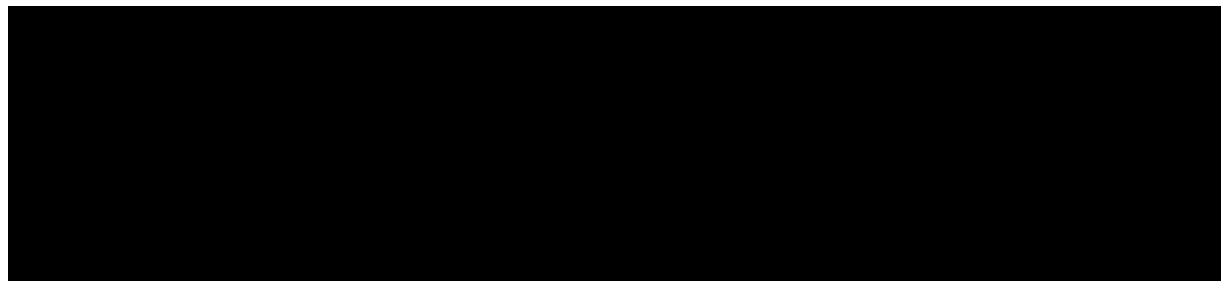
Early Connecticut General Court laws required that values for realty, estates, taxes and fines were to be based on the English Pound Sterling (£), a sixteen ounce bar of pure silver, and two coins, the shilling (s), largely silver, and pence (d), largely copper. Coins were extremely rare in the colonies, and barter was the prominent means of trade. In the early 1670's, the General Court devised a means of bridging the barter and money systems into what became known as "Country Money". At each annual session, the Court fixed the legal values on crops that could be used. For example in 1681 winter wheat was worth 45s, 6d a bushel, rye at 3s a bushel and Indian corne, 2s a bushel. It is interesting to note that the word "bushel" was written occasionally as "booshel", probably reflecting the local pronunciation. These grains could lawfully be used as money.

Other old records attest to the use of wampum, beads made from mollusk shells. Purchases of lands between Indians and settlers were conducted in wampum. For a time the value of three white plus one black or purple wampum was set at one pence. Sometimes wampum (also known as "peag") was measured in fathoms (six feet). The General Court gave Uncas

and his son “one coat and forty fathoms of peag” for their pledge to “take up Warr with the Naticks against the Mohawks”.



Country Money



Country Money



Small quantities of gold and silver Spanish American coins came to British America through trading in the Caribbean. The most common of these were silver eight-reales pieces. They were also known as Spanish dollars. The term dollar, of German origin, was applied to coins of any country that carried the intrinsic value of their weight in silver. Even before the Revolutionary War, some colonies issued paper money based on dollars rather than the British pound sterling.

Paper money first appeared in America in 1690, when the Massachusetts Bay Colony issued bills to pay soldiers engaged in campaigns against the French in Canada. This was an emergency measure, but it turned out to be a solution to the long-term problem of building an economy without large reserves of precious metals. Eventually, all of the other colonies issued their own bills.

This money never had a uniform value. A pound note from one colony might not be worth a pound in another colony. For that matter, it might not be worth a pound anywhere. Some colonies printed far more paper money than they could ever redeem. Further weakening the system was the circulation of counterfeit bills. Anyone with a printing press could make fair copies of most colonial money. Government printers tried to stay a step ahead by creating designs of greater and greater detail for the borders of the bills.

When the English colonists arrived in America they naturally continued to use the monetary units of Britain, namely the pound, shilling and pence for which £1 (pound) equaled 20s (Shillings) and 1s equaled 12d (Pence). This appeared to be a simple transplantation of economic units, but due to British colonial policy the situation became quite complex. Basically, British policy was guided by the supposition that its colonies would contribute revenue and stimulate industrial growth by providing both raw materials and markets for British mercantile expansion. In return the colonies would be protected by British arms and civilized by British rule. Toward this end parliament enacted laws prohibiting the export of British silver coinage, as it was felt the colonies should be providing Britain with precious metals

rather than draining them away. The result of this policy was that British silver coins were quite scarce in the North American colonies.

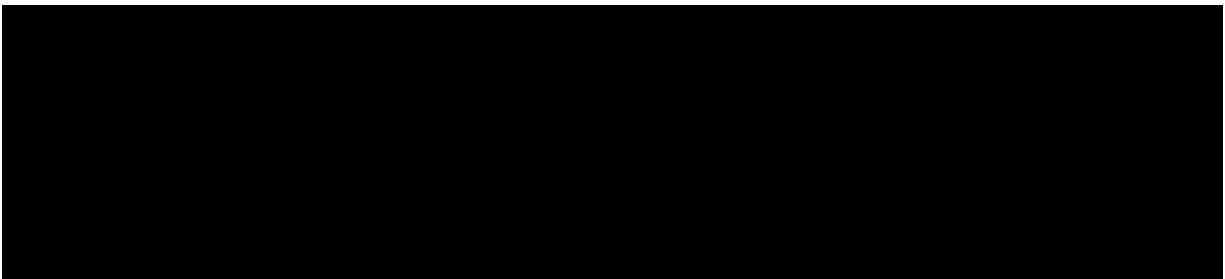
This problem was critical as it forced the colonists to turn to foreign coins, primarily Spanish American silver produced in Mexico and Peru. The most widely used coin in the colonies was the eight reales (piece of eight), primarily clipped, underweight examples that had made their way north from Mexico through the Bahamas.

As there were not enough of these coins in circulation to sustain commerce, the first colonists turned to barter transactions as well as the use of wampum and commodity monies like tobacco as mediums of exchange. However, these substitutes were not acceptable to British exporters providing colonial merchants with British goods. Colonial merchants needed to pay British exporters in silver, resulting in a severe drain on an already scarce commodity.

When the United States declared its independence from Great Britain the dollar became the basis of the monetary system. The Continental Congress issued Paper Continental Dollars (USC) to fund the war, as did most of the individual states. The Continental Congress also issued some coins. The Continental Dollar was originally worth about four and one-half British Shillings, but it depreciated during the war until it became virtually worthless. By the end of the war it took 1,000 Continental Dollars to get a silver Mexican Dollar.



Colonial Money



Colonial Money



40



41

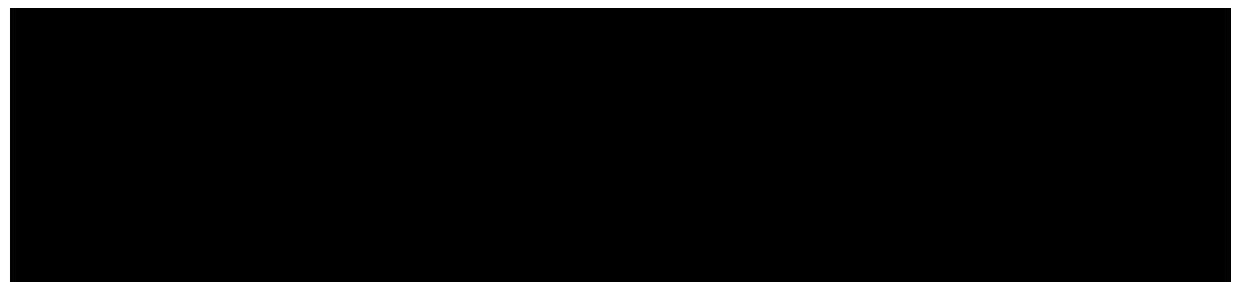
The Root family played an important part in Coventry's development from the early days through the mid 1800's. The family home stands on Main Street at the corner of Ripley Hill Road. Thomas Root Jr. and his son were some of the original inhabitants of "Wicket Hill". They were involved in establishing the first church, allocating land rights and many other civic activities. In the mid 1700's Ebenezer Root was actively involved in church affairs. Descendants of the original family were ministers, fought in the French & Indian and Revolutionary Wars, practiced law, and were heavily involved in opposing the overbearing British taxes and duties. Others were involved in the first turnpike companies, the Coventry Glass Factory, the Coventry Satinet Company, and the Washington Mills on the Mill Brook.

(6)

Coventry's progress through the 1700's mirrored the typical region's community. Farming was the major "occupation" both for self sufficiency and for export, primarily hogs and cider. In the 1700's Coventry produced a number of scholars whose influence was to be felt both in town and across the region. Among them were Jesse Root, Lorenzo Dow, Nathan Hale, Joseph and Samuel Huntington.



The Roots of Coventry



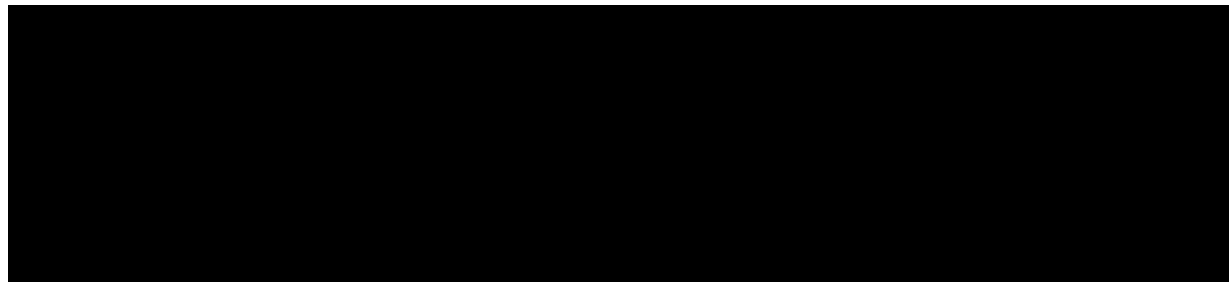
The Roots of Coventry



Jesse Root was born in Coventry on December 28, 1736. He graduated from Princeton in 1756. After three years as a minister here, he studied law and was admitted to the Hartford County bar in 1763. His nephew was Austin Dunham, a prominent businessman and mill owner. Jesse served as a lieutenant colonel in the Revolutionary War and was a member of the Continental Congress from 1778 to 1783. He was judge of the Supreme Court and Chief Justice of Connecticut. At the age of 82 he opened the Constitutional Convention (1818).

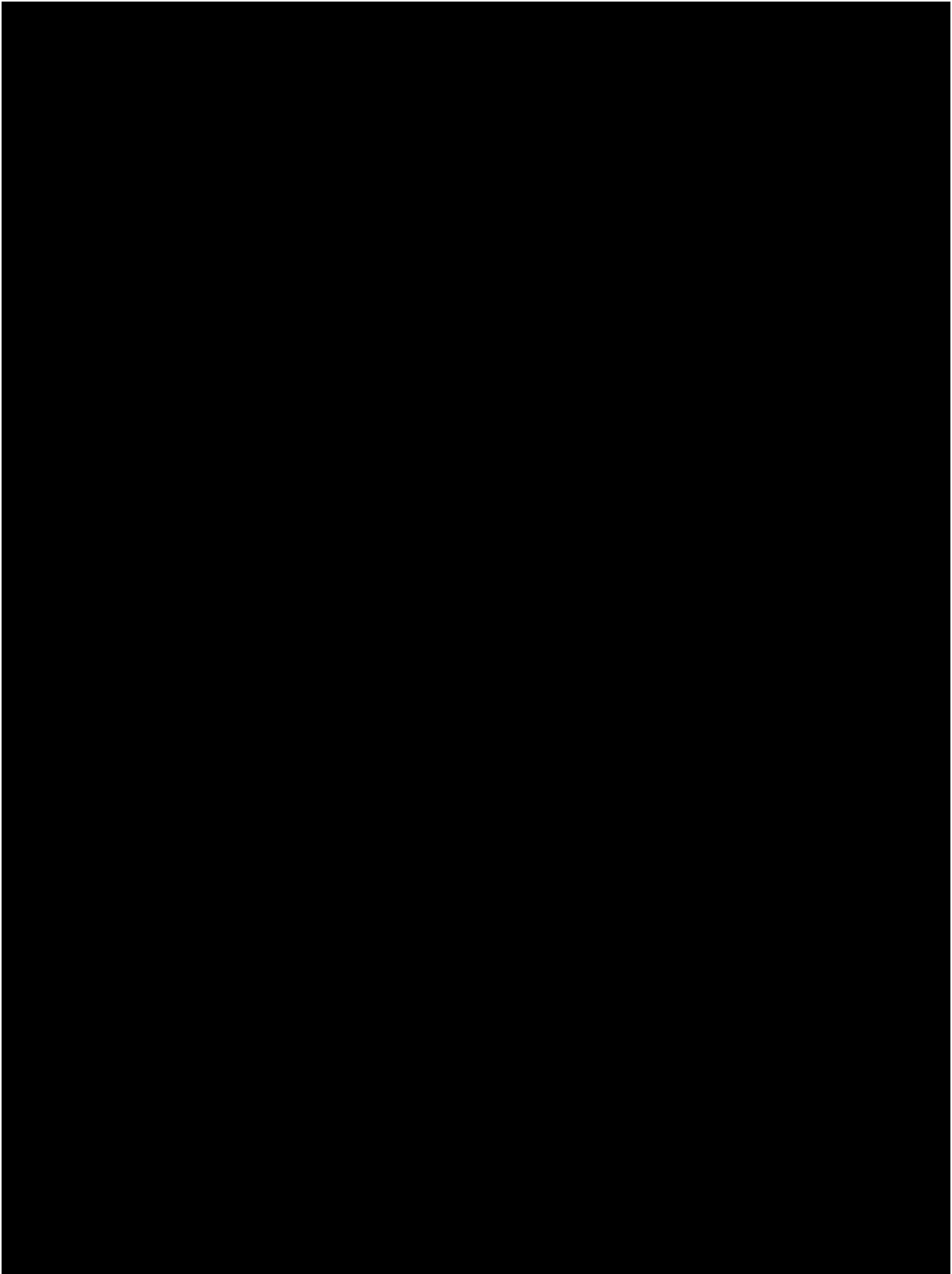


Jesse Root

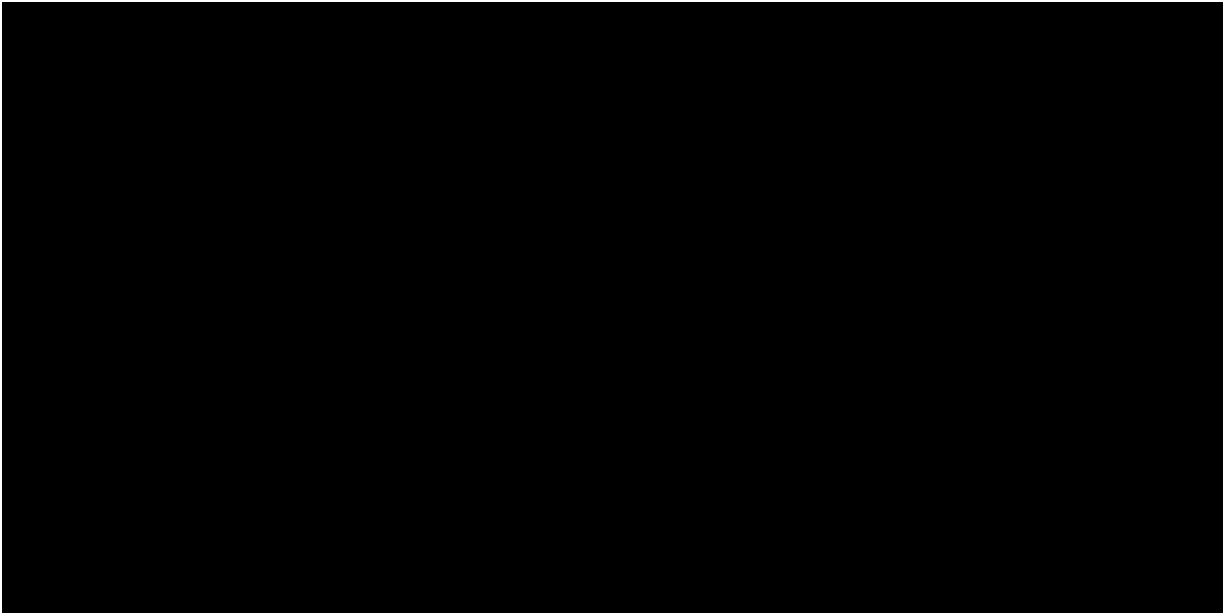


Jesse Root





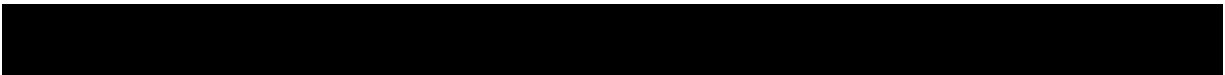




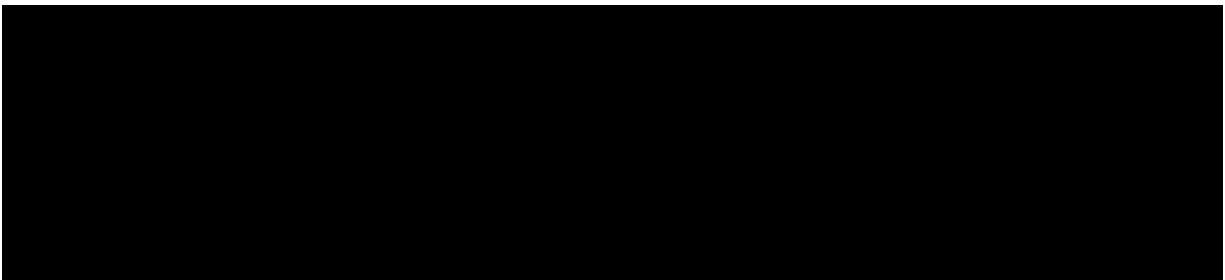
Jesse Root (1736-1822)

Bread was an early staple common to all households. Rye was the grain of choice, and it had to be harvested, threshed, winnowed, ground, and the bread dough made, kneaded and baked. Semi-annual cheese, soap and candle making were important events. Clothes were made from wool shearings which first required the care of sheep, then shearing, washing, and carding of the wool, then spinning the yarn, winding the skeins and dyeing. Many articles required fulling to tighten and soften the cloth prior to being worn.

Fulling was a labor intensive process, but a necessary one due to the fact that wool cloth was very rough. Families would “full” their garments by placing them on the floor and wetting them (preferably alternating with hot and cold water). Adding soap helped. The wet garments were stomped on for hours until the fabric lost its roughness due to the removal of a “scale” on the wool fibers. Socks, gloves and hats were knitted, and other articles of clothing were woven, cut and sewed by hand. Early specialists were the dressmaker, the tailoress, the cobbler and the bootmaker who went from home to home to help clothe and shoe the family, often numbering more than a dozen.

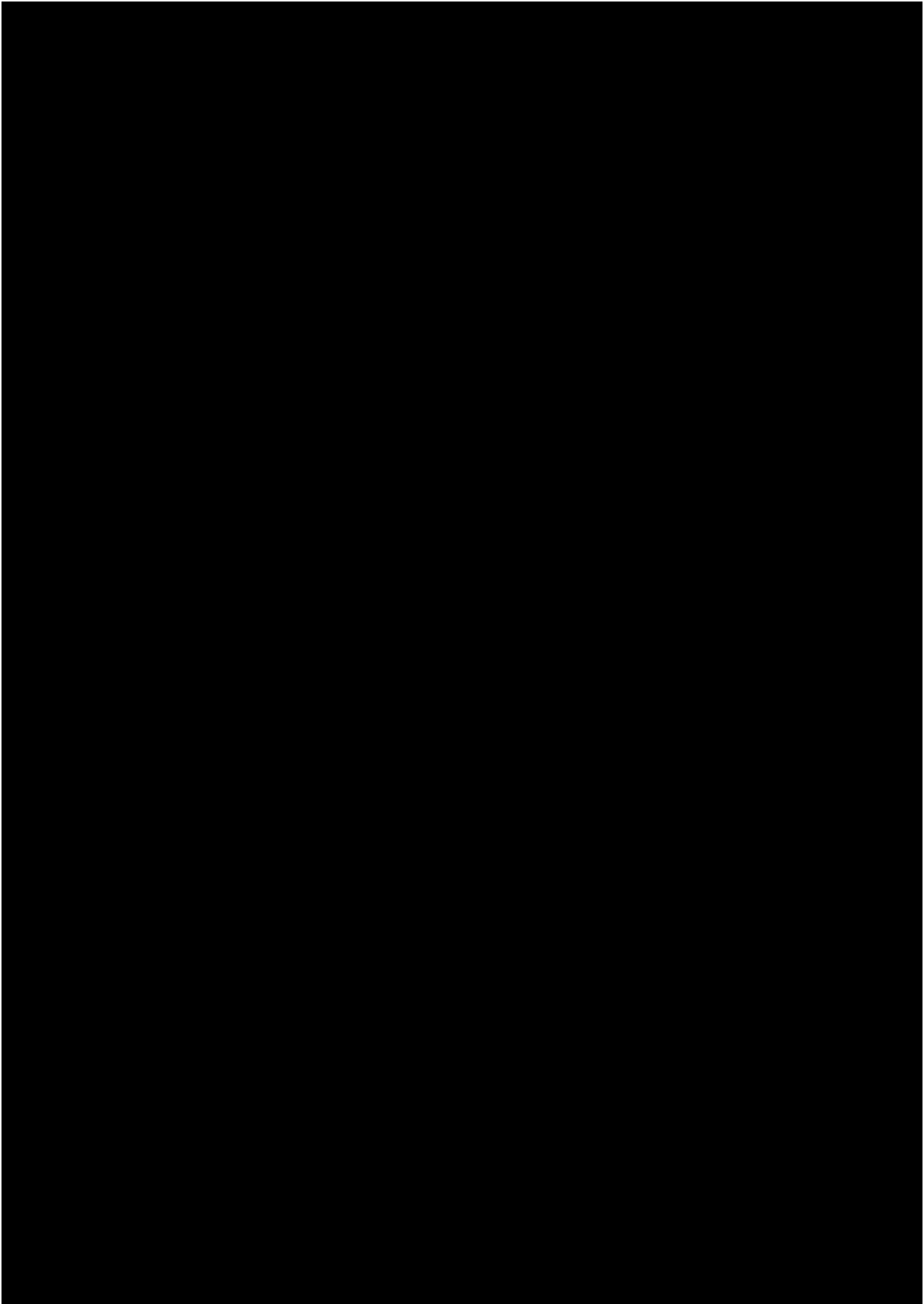


Early Family Life



Early Family Life







Access by horseback to Coventry was originally by two old Indian trails as well as just randomly through the wilderness. An old trail generally followed the path of today's Route 44 (the Boston Turnpike). The cut at Bolton Notch is thought to be the pass-through for all who traveled between Boston and Hartford. Another trail followed, generally, Route 6 to the Thames River and Norwich. The original roads laid out in 1712 included South Street, and another road starting near the lake and proceeding northwest along now Seagraves, Case and Wright's Mill Road to Main Street near the North Firehouse. Other original roads included Main Street from the Village north to Ripley Hill, Ripley Hill Road, Stonehouse Road and Cross Street. The roads were not named and were referred to as the "road to (say) Mr. Smith's house", or "the road to Mansfield". (Map available- Appendix I)

In the late 1700's, Norwich Landing was established as a general market for farm goods. Coventry, which was settled by men from the Connecticut River valley, curiously enough remained tied to Norwich until the turnpikes were created, though some commerce and travel was to Hartford. The railroads in the mid-1800's provided further ties to Norwich and some to Hartford. The trolley in the early 1900's allowed a significant connection for vacationers from Norwich, New London and New York, particularly to the Lake, and the automobile then allowed ties both west and south.

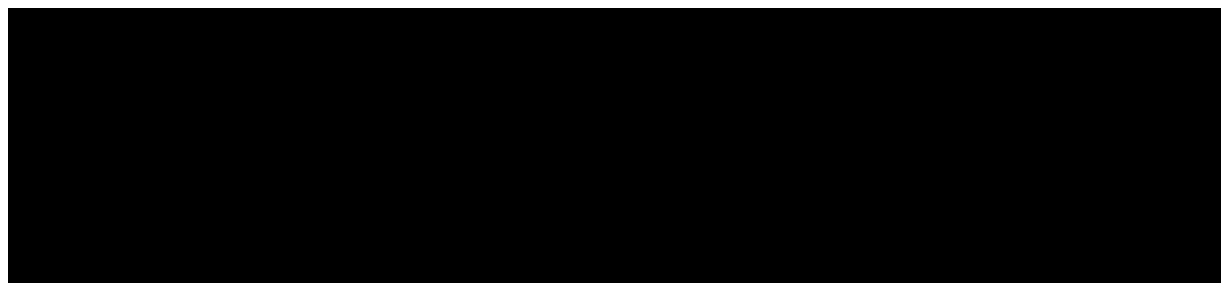
As the town grew in the 1700's, there were surplus farm goods such as beef and pork, butter and cheese, and trade was carried on with Norwich landing by ox cart. These ox carts and drags, which were used to move logs from the forest to homesites, effectively created the first "roads" in town. Topography and the avoidance of swamps and wide river crossings dictated the route of early roads. The evolution of the Boston Turnpike started with the "easy" route taken by the natives and gradually changed to a more direct route as swamps were drained and bridges were created on the toll road in the late 1700's.

In 1726, Windham County was formed from part of Hartford County and it included Coventry. In 1785 Tolland County was formed from a part of

Windham County and Coventry became part of the new Tolland County as it is today.



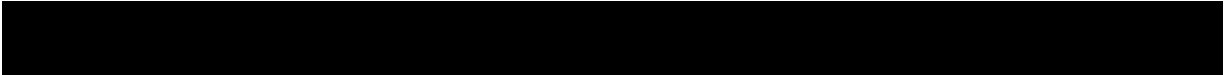
Early Roads



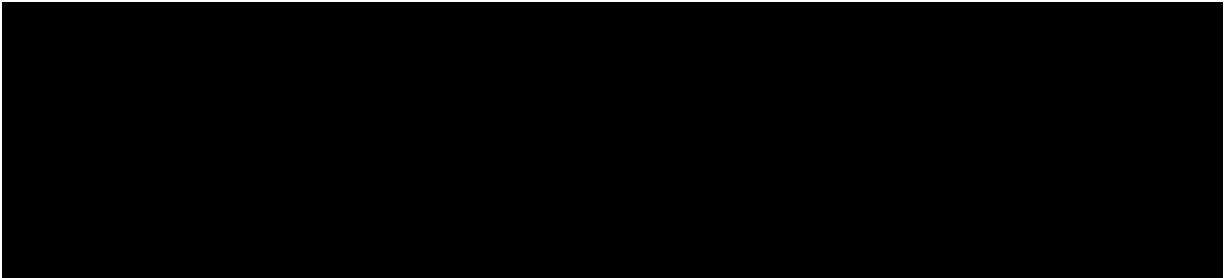
Early Roads



Deeds and historical records mention several orchards in the North Society. Ebenezer Stiles owned a farm of at least 100 acres on Broadway just west of the Skungamaug which was a thriving orchard in 1740. Nathaniel Root's (Boston Turnpike and North River Road) property contained an orchard in 1809. There were hundreds of acres of apple orchards in town in the 1700's and 1800's. Most all were cultivated by local farmers using seeds from Massachusetts and Rhode Island farms whose seeds originated in England in the 1600's. Apple cider provided the most prevalent source of liquid refreshment for more than 100 years.

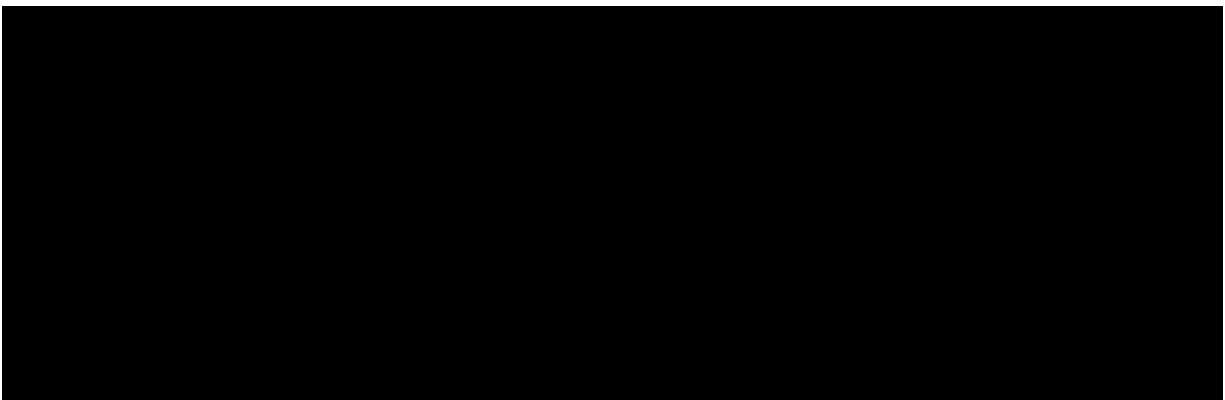


Orchards

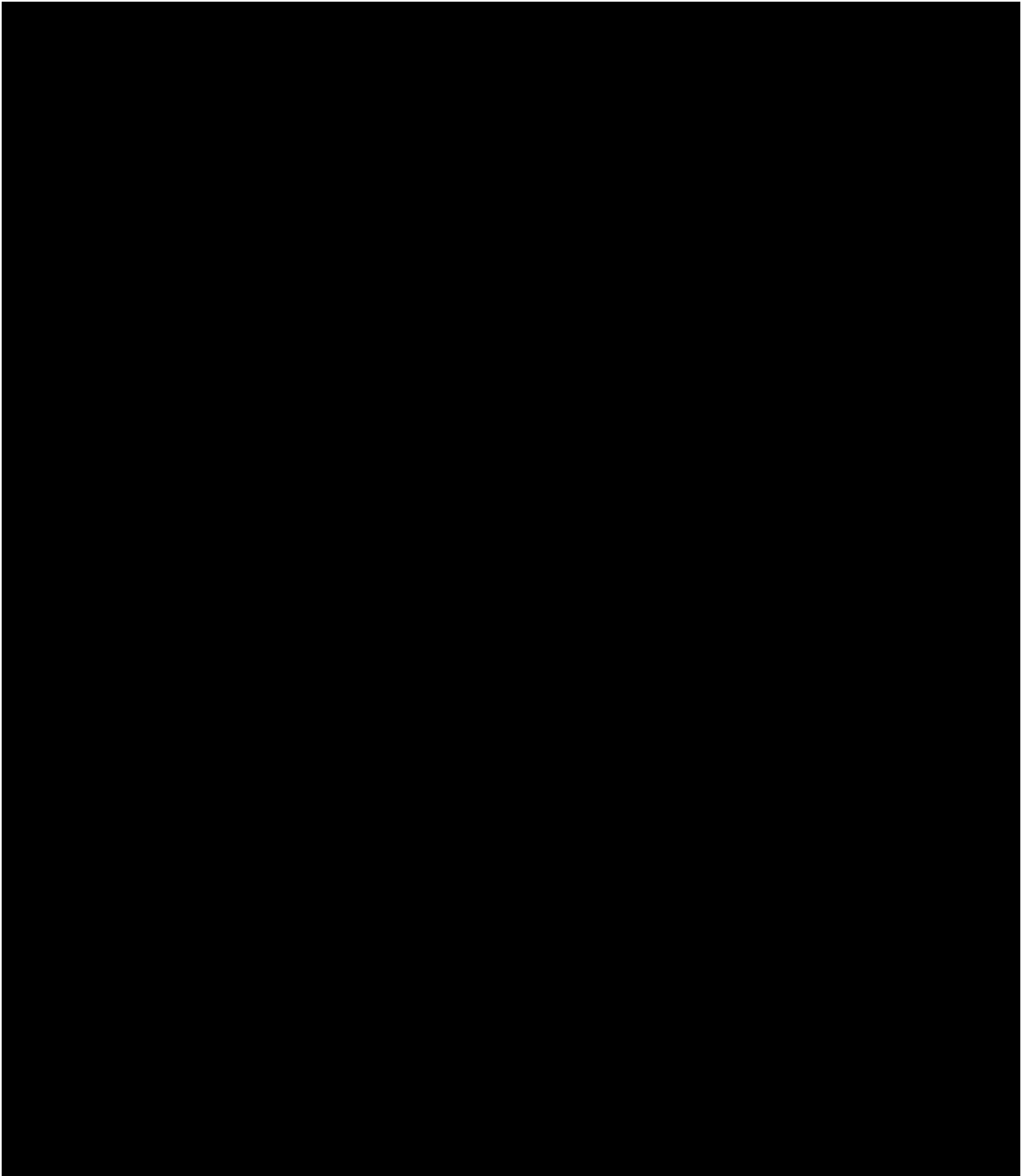


Orchards





Joseph Huntington



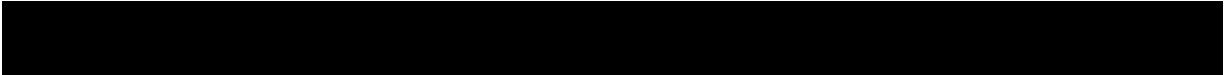
Joseph Huntington, born in Windham in 1735, was a brother of Samuel Huntington signer of the Declaration of Independence. Both were descendants of Simon Huntington who emigrated from England in 1633. Joseph's son Samuel graduated from Yale in 1785 at the age of twenty, practiced law until 1800 and eventually became the third governor of Ohio.

Joseph graduated from Yale in 1762 and was ordained pastor of the First Church in Coventry a year later. Under his tutelage, Nathan Hale was prepared for college in a building on the southwest corner of South and Cross Streets behind Huntington's house which still stands. Joseph was a friend of liberty and, by his counsel, encouraged men to enter their country's service during the Revolutionary War. One of his sermons compared the thirteen states to the thirteen tribes of Israel.

A number of gentlemen in North Coventry, who were termed 'Protestors', successfully petitioned the General Assembly to form a new Society. Their reasoning was that they had to travel far to the church/meeting house in South Coventry. Rev. Nathan Strong of Woodbury, Connecticut accepted the call to be their minister in 1745. He married Esther Meacham, daughter of his colleague in Coventry. He was a distant cousin of the Coventry Strongs. An early plan of the Second Society shows sixty- two homes in the Society which included all the land north of a line that includes Sam Green and Richmond Roads, Talcott Hill and South River Roads, and a line from the intersection of South River Road and South Street to the Andover Society. The homes were clustered along today's Cedar Swamp Road, Bread & Milk Street, Silver Street and Merrow Road/Broadway with a few on South Street, Main Street and Route 44 near the river.

The North Coventry Parish (Second Society) was incorporated in October 1740, and the Society held its first meeting the following December. In 1737 the town voted to raise one farthing on the pound for the expense of a minister there who was to preach in the dwelling of Noah Rust (north side of the Boston Turnpike between Silver Street and Swamp Road). In 1738 arrangements were made regarding a school and a burial ground. Mr.

Nathan Strong preached as a candidate in North Coventry in 1744 and was ordained in October of 1745. Two surveys were made to determine the center of the parish and a legislative committee was chosen to locate the site. The meeting house was built a few rods west of the present Second Church and was forty-five feet long and forty feet broad. It was ten years in construction and was never actually completed. (4,6)



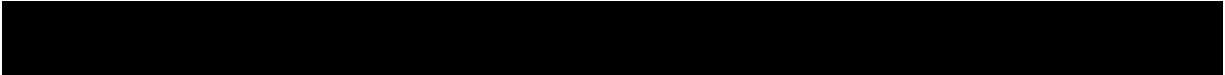
The Second Society



The Second Society



The Second Society established its first three schools about 1737. One is “two to three rods north of a lane from John Grover’s to the road”. This was called the Red School House. (before its demise it was located on today’s Cedar Swamp Road.) Next, “one-half way between Sam Porter’s and Ezekiel Herrick’s”, this being the Silver Street School. The third, “eight to ten rods east of Woodward’s”, is the Brick School House on today’s Merrow Road.

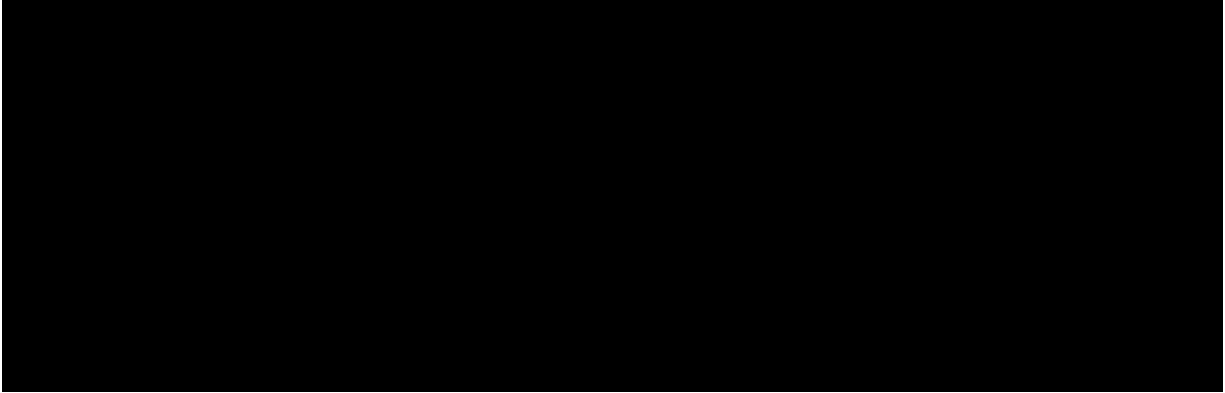


The Second Society Schools

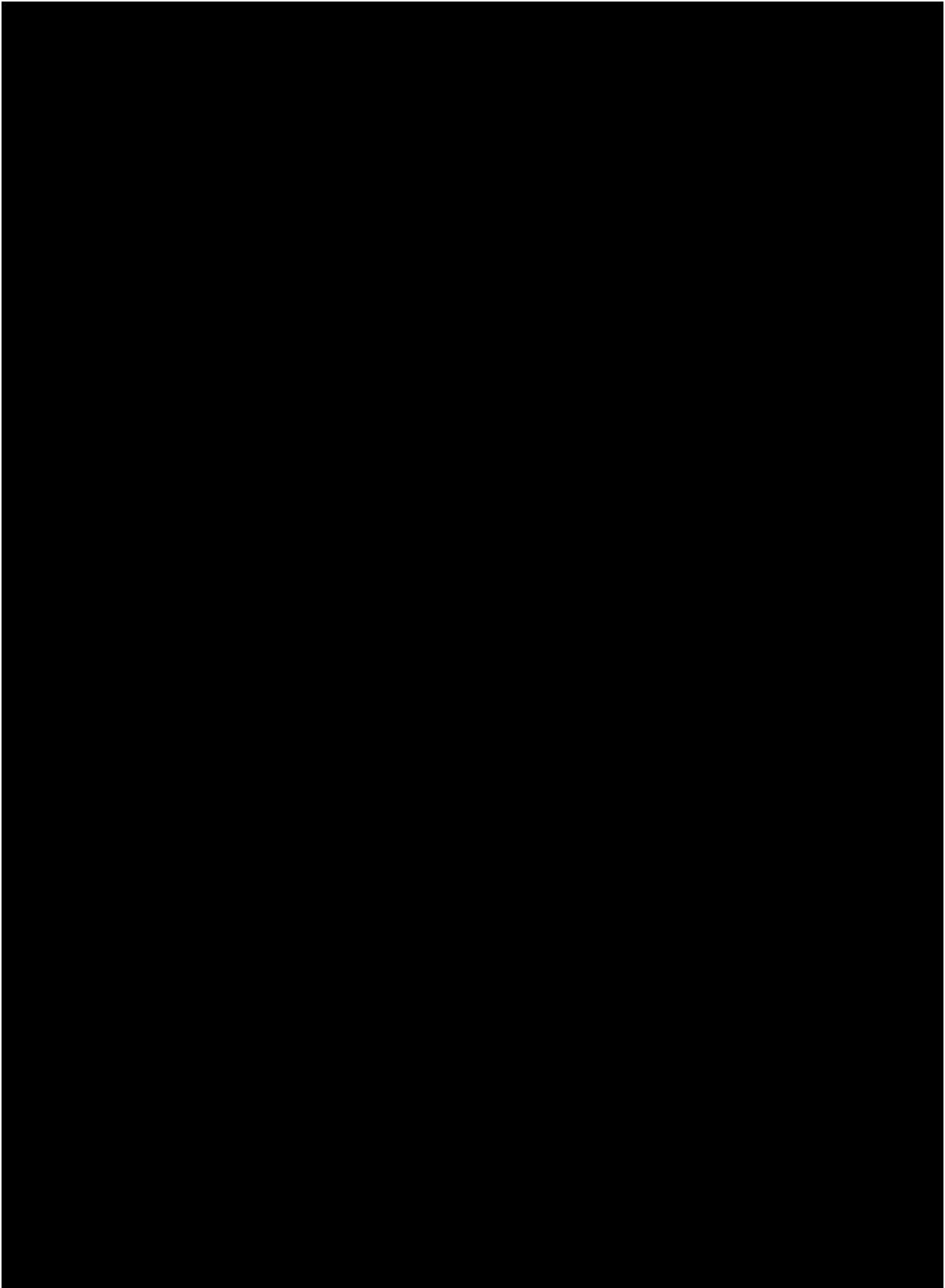


The Second Society Schools





The Andover Society



Dissension between the Village residents and those on the southwest outskirts arose in 1743. In April of that year a petition to the Honorable General Assembly to form an Ecclesiastical Society in what is now Andover was signed by fourteen persons from Coventry, eighteen from Hebron and fourteen from “Lebanon Crank” now Columbia. These signers lived at the outer fringes of their respective towns, and it was a hardship to get to town meetings and worship services especially in the mud and snow. This petition was rejected. Finally in 1747 the petition was granted for the Society, and the following year the parish was started. Reverend Samuel Lockwood was the first minister in 1748. It was not a town as its inhabitants were still legal residents of the three aforementioned towns and were under those town’s jurisdiction for civil and political matters, but they had their new Society for religious and educational matters. It included about 40 homesteads and was eventually incorporated as the town of Andover in 1848.

Elijah Hammond emigrated from Marblehead, Massachusetts, to Coventry in 1730. He settled in the Shepard (formerly Tarbox) place (South Street near Route 6) until 1752. John French occupied a tract of land just west of the brick house of George Gerard (Boston Turnpike east of the Skungamaug River). It is not known when he came to Coventry, but he married Mehitable, daughter of Thomas Root. His son Aaron lived in town and all those bearing the "French" name in the 1800's are his descendants. Nathaniel Ladd moved here from Norwich, lived near Addison Dimmick's place on the Boston Turnpike (near the Willimantic River) and had a son named Nathaniel.

Eliphat Carpenter, from Northampton, moved here around 1726 and settled on the farm owned in 1888 by his grandson Ralph. (Cedar Swamp Road on the Bolton line) Eliphat was the first clerk of the Second Society. John Hawkins came from Preston and settled on the farm owned in 1888 by Esquire Talcott. (Trowbridge Road) John Parker emigrated from Stonington and was one of three brothers who settled here. He built the house owned in 1888 by Flavel Case. (Case Road) Peter Scott was from Franklin and first occupied the farm of Jabez Kingsbury (Grant Hill Road) Amos Richardson moved from Stonington in 1717 and settled on the farm now owned by Andrew Brown. He had twelve children and all the towns Richardson's are descendants of Amos. (Goose Lane)

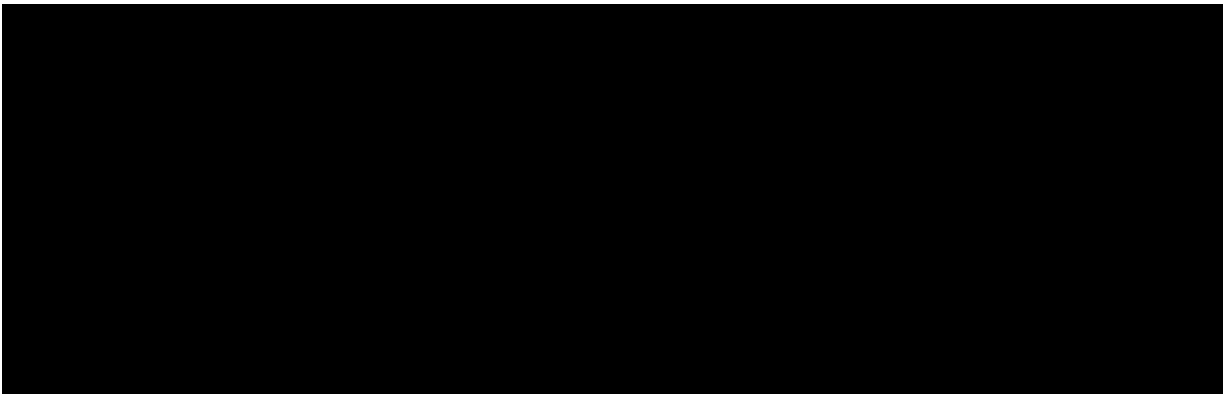
Samuel Lyman emigrated from Northampton to Lebanon then to Coventry. He was one of the first settlers northwest of the pond and settled on the farm now owned by Deacon Chester Talcott. (Windham Turnpike) Ebenezer Brown came from Rehoboth, Massachusetts, and settled on the place now held by Deacon Joseph Talcott. His house stood near the line of the two parishes and in the act of incorporation was set to the second Society. (Talcott Hill Road)

Nathaniel Woodward originated in Roxbury, Massachusetts. He lived a short time in Wethersfield than came to Coventry and settled near the junction of Merrow Road and Goose Lane. His descendants occupied the place to the 1880's. The bridge across the Skungamaug there was, for a long

time, called Woodward's bridge. Joseph Strong and his son Phineas came from Northampton in 1717. Phineas was a justice of the peace and had eleven children. (Silver Street) (13)



Early Settlers of the Second Society



Early Settlers of the Second Society



The Great Awakening was a religious movement during the 1730's and '40's in which itinerant ministers presented powerful messages of salvation and provided early settlers with a greater sense of nationality. In the 1700's, most settlers were scattered throughout the countryside. Traveling was difficult and mail was irregular. Communities were centered around churches, and ministers were much more than preachers. They were highly respected members of the community and even served as doctors and teachers.

However, the 1730's were troubled times to an extent. There were many families who did not attend church. There was a near epidemic of diphtheria which killed large numbers of New Englanders. Merchants were becoming worried about the affects of Britain's declaration of war on Spain in 1739. Religious leaders were having a hard time reaching the masses and were concerned about a breakdown in moral standards.

Itinerant ministers began to travel throughout the colonies, and they provided stories of hope for salvation that appeared far more attainable than that which the colonists had heard from ordained ministers. These sermons were also a diversion from the sheltered and boring rigors of daily life. These evangelists drew large crowds, and moved by these speeches, the colonists renewed their faith, organized new churches and "reawakened" their spiritual lives. This new spirit and energy was thought to be one of the contributing factors that led to the war of independence.



The Great Awakening

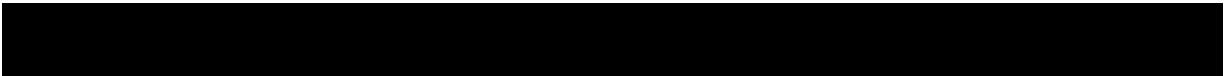


The Great Awakening

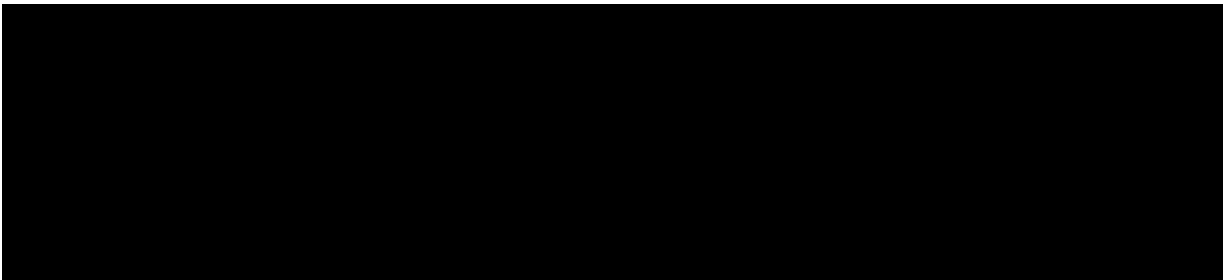


In 1745 the water in the lake is raised for the first time to facilitate the grist mill at the head of the Mill Brook, and it was found to over flow twenty acres of Simeon Rust's land. The lake then encompassed about 300 acres as compared to its 375 acres today. The town appointed a committee who decided that Simeon should be given an equivalent amount of land in compensation. Simeon died in 1760 leaving his wife Mary and nine live children. His third child Margaret died in September of 1712 at the age of fourteen and was the first recorded death in Coventry. Records show a residence of Nathaniel's descendants as late as 1792.

Wolves very prevalent and a fair nuisance until the 1740's when they had been hunted to a very small number. Many towns had bounties for wolf and rattlesnake heads.



Simeon Rust



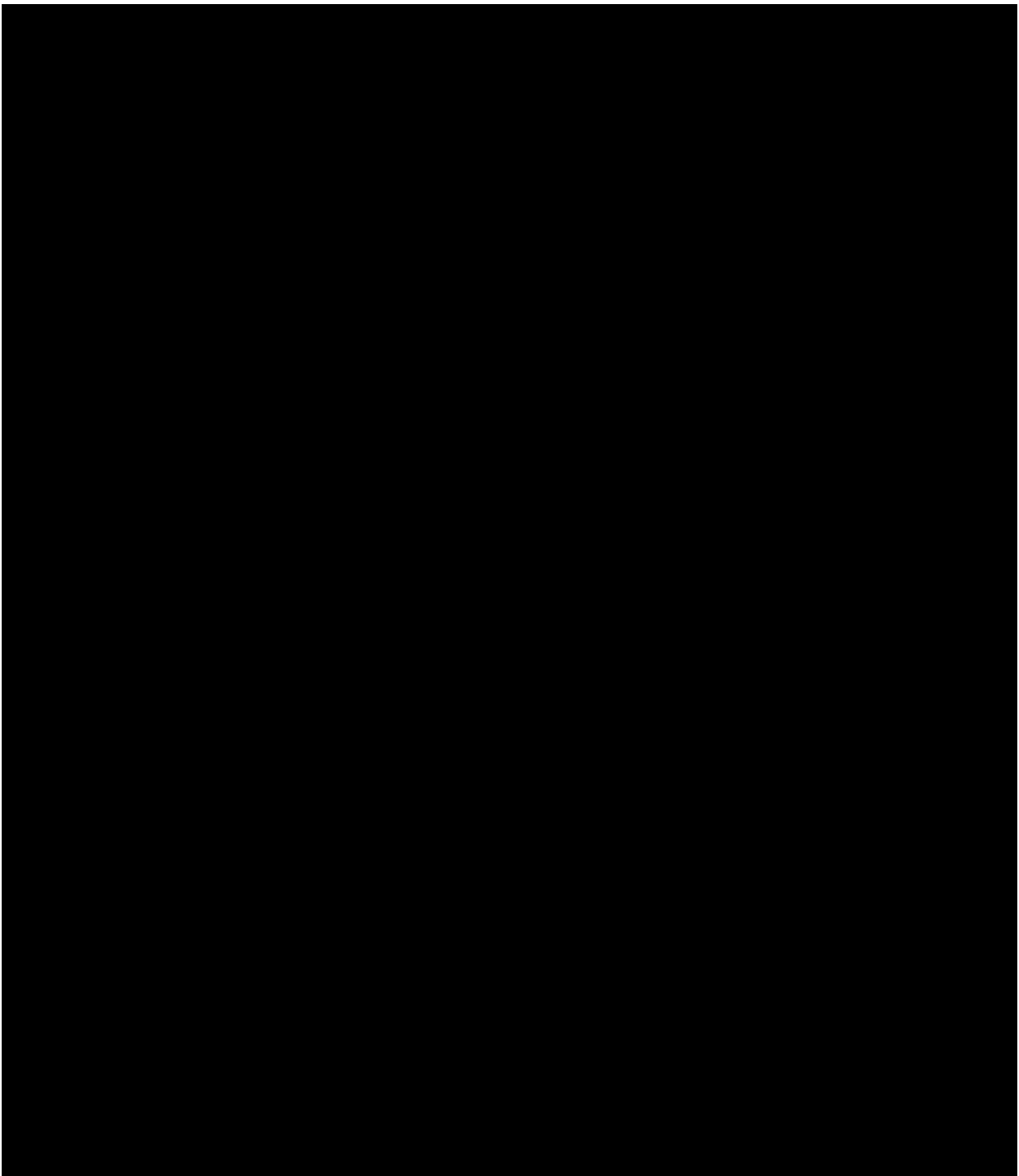
Simeon Rust



51



Nathan Strong



Nathan Strong, the clergyman, was born in Coventry, Connecticut, October 16, 1748 and died in Hartford, Connecticut, December 25, 1816. His father, of the same name, was pastor at Coventry, Connecticut. The son was graduated at Yale in 1769, and was tutor there in 1772-3. He had begun to study law, but abandoned it for divinity, and on January 5, 1774, was

ordained pastor of the First Church in Hartford. He acted as a chaplain in the Revolutionary army, and served the patriot cause well with tongue and pen. Princeton gave him the degree of D. D. in 1801. Dr. Strong was a man of wide erudition, and great natural powers. His sermons were clear and pithy, and he had great facility in extemporizing. In 1795 he invested part of the estate that his father had left in a mercantile establishment, where failure left him with monetary difficulties.

Like the Hale Homestead, the Strong- Porter house is really two houses built over a long period of time. The eastern half (toward Hale Homestead) was built by Aaron Strong about 1730, and he lived there until the 1750's when he moved out of town. About this time, Aaron's niece, Elizabeth Strong, married Richard Hale from Newburyport, Massachusetts, and the couple moved to South Street in Coventry. Though Elizabeth lived in another part of town with her parents, she probably was very familiar with the early part of this house. Her father, Joseph, was brother to Aaron.

In 1758 the Strongs sold the house to the Porter family. It was that large and growing family that built the rest of the house. By about 1777, the western half and the lean-to across the back (containing two kitchens), had been added. A census taken in 1790 indicated that nine Porters were living in the eastern half of the house and twelve Porters were living in the western half, making a total of twenty-one Porter family members living in the house.

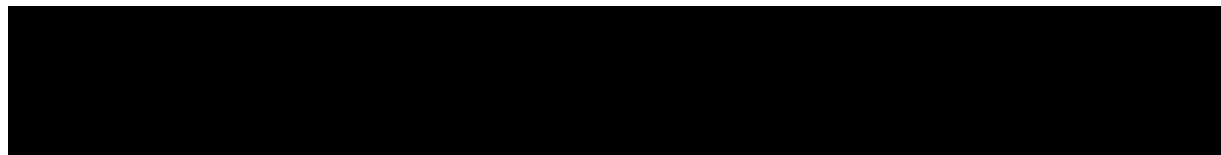
By the time of the Revolutionary War, this house had two chimneys and a Georgian floor plan- the very latest style! The Porters occupied the house for about 170 years and continued to live and farm at this site through the entire 19th century

The Strong-Porter house, like the Hale Homestead, was bought and restored by the well- known Connecticut antiquarian, George Dudley Seymour (1859-1945). Seymour thought that Nathan Hale's mother, Elizabeth Strong, had been born in this house. Seymour purchased the house from the Porters in 1930 and called it the "Northampton House" because so many early Coventry settlers came from Northampton, Massachusetts. He lived here while he was restoring the Hale Homestead.

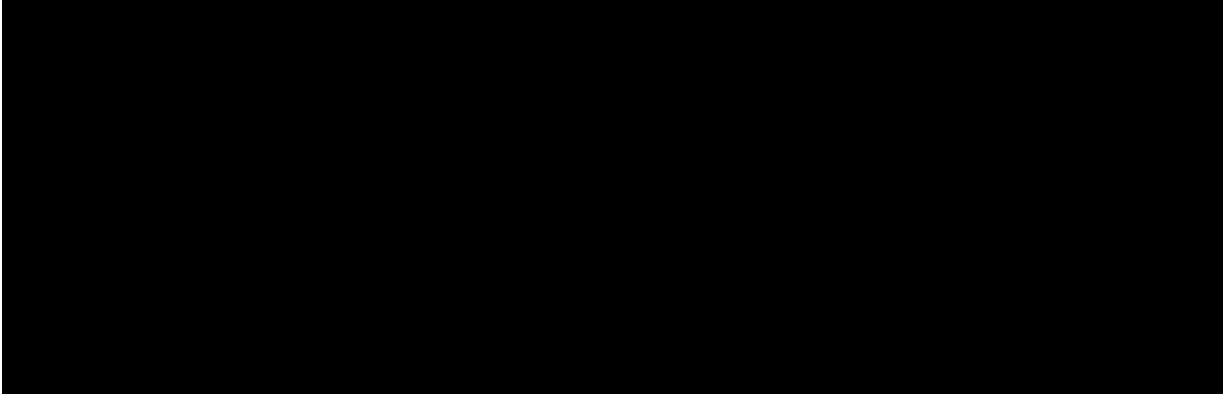
The Porter Farm House on South Street

Strong Porter House 2014

The Strong-Porter house, like the Hale Homestead, was bought and restored by the well-known Connecticut antiquarian, George Dudley Seymour (1859-1945). Seymour thought that Nathan Hale's mother, Elizabeth Strong, had been born in this house. Seymour purchased the house from the Porters in 1930 and called it the "Northampton House" because so many early Coventry settlers came from Northampton, Massachusetts. He lived here while he was restoring the Hale Homestead.

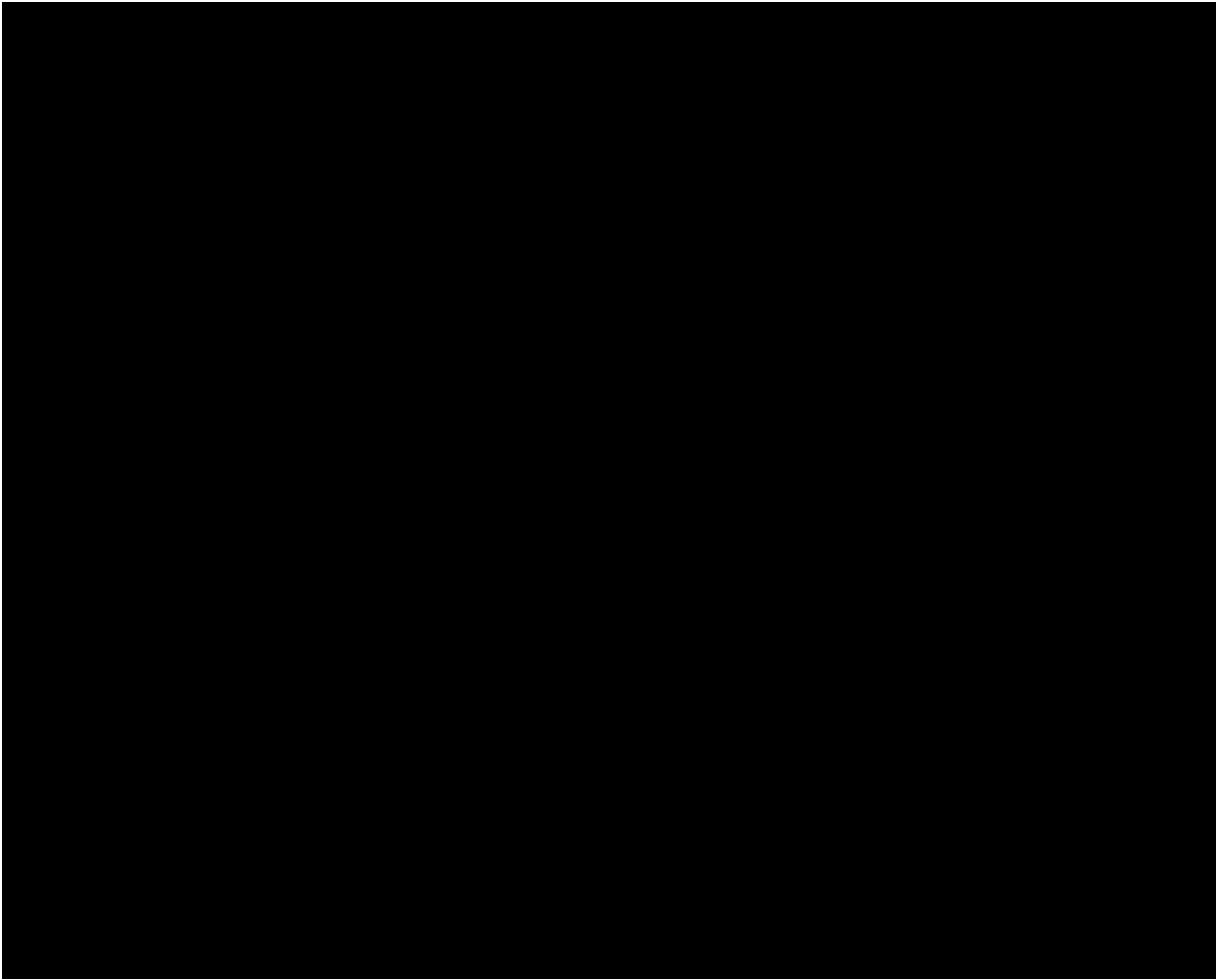


A Brief History of the Strong Porter House



A Brief History of the Strong Porter House





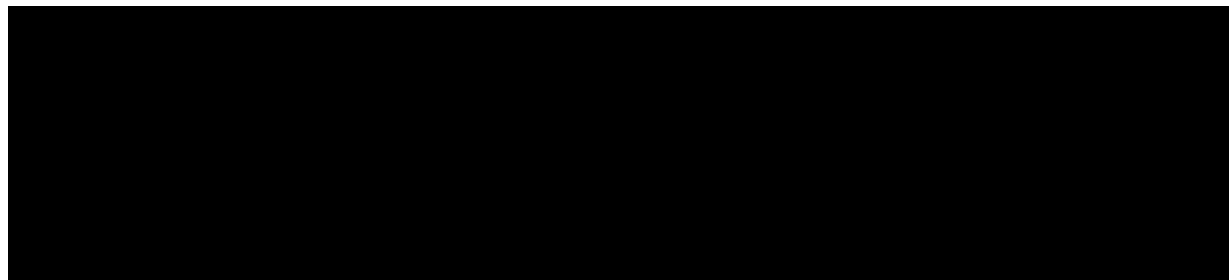




Thomas E. Porter was born in Coventry and received a first-rate education after which he taught successfully in Tolland and Hartford counties. He later moved to New York City where he worked for a commercial house in Western trade. The homestead farm which has been in the Porter family since 1835 is in his possession in 1888, and he seeks relaxation here during the summer months. He is a descendant of John Porter who was born in 1590 in Kenilworth, Warwickshire, England, the ancient seat of the family. John was descended in the twelfth generation from a Norman knight in the train of Duke William of Normandy at the conquest in 1066, who bore the name of William de la Porte.



Thomas E. Porter



Thomas E. Porter





In July of 1762, Elijah Wright Sr. acquired, for 330 pounds “lawful money”, the site on the Skungamaug falls with a grist mill thereon, and Jonathan Porter had the privilege of the saw mill and dam there. Elijah was a descendant of Deacon Samuel Wright of Springfield Massachusetts. He was one of many who moved from the Springfield-Northampton area to the “new” town of Coventry. The Wright family operated the mill for many years and gave the site its commonly known name today.

Elijah Wright leased an adjoining portion of land and built a fulling mill in addition to operating the grist mill. Woolen cloth woven at the time was relatively loose and coarse and did not provide comfort in cold weather. Families would “full” the cloth, which essentially cleaned the cloth and tightened (or felted) the fibers, by placing the cloth in a pan of soap and water and walking on it for a few weeks. To “full” means to increase the weight and bulk of (cloth) by shrinking and beating or pressing. Fulling mills mechanized the process. A water wheel with several cogs would raise one end of a pivoted “hammer” which would then fall and impact the cloth repeatedly. This was called felting- “felt” meaning to press or mat something together. It was a noisy process, but much faster than doing it by “foot”.

In October of 1761, Joseph Turner purchased a lease from a Mr. Noble for twenty- seven acres "near ye meeting house and going across ye Mill Brook". He and his brother built an iron works and a coal house and operated it until at least 1768. They used “bog” ore from the lake bed for raw material. The iron works was located somewhat downstream of the original grist mill site about where the open field is in today's Mill Brook Park.

John Reddington acquired land in 1791 on the lower Skungamaug River about one-half mile north of today’s border with Andover. He built a dam, and in 1793 acquired more land from Samuel Kingsbury and began building a grist mill. It is interesting to note that he built a grist mill about a mile downstream from the thriving grist mill at the Wright’s site, and his mill appears to have only limited success. In April of 1796 John sold his grist

mill for \$200 to Enoch Badger. The site is on the river and included over two acres east of the river with a dwelling in which Badger lives for a while.

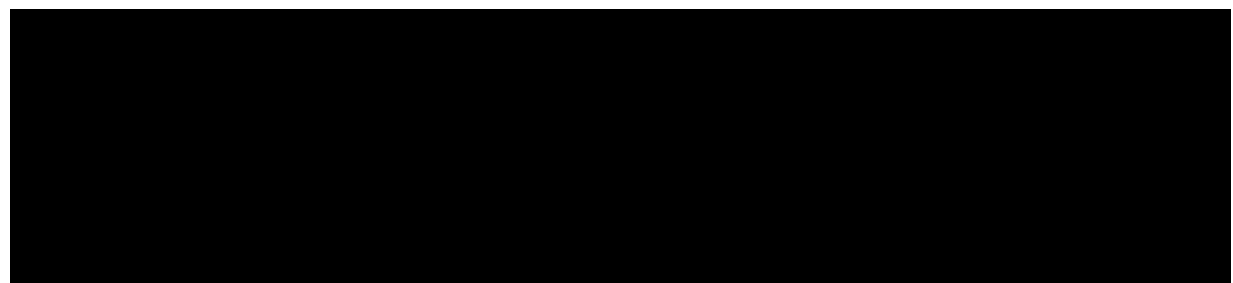
A 1792 map indicates a saw mill site at the foot of the Mill Brook where it crosses today's Depot Road. Its date of origination is not known, but it was owned by the Colman family who had large parcels of land in the area. Asa Colman sold this mill in 1809 to Ben Colman who then sold it to Samuel Guild in 1812. By September 1818, Guild added a fulling mill and sold it and the saw mill to John Boynton, his son- in-law.

On May 9, 1792 Noah Porter's estate split his original grist mill at the head of the Mill Brook, his home, and all of his adjacent property eleven ways to his nieces and nephews (he had no children), and for the next 64 years the mill shares are bought and sold by no less than twenty people. Resolving these deeds would be a nemesis for future owners.

Early in 1797 there are deed transfers for a paper mill owned by Elijah House, Ebenezer Bushnell, and Charles McLean on the west bank of the Skungamaug River just on today's border with Andover. The site is just less than one acre. It was built sometime before this, but the prior deeds are not detailed enough to pinpoint the date. Paper was made here by hand.



The Mills 1750-1800



The Mills 1750-1800



55



56



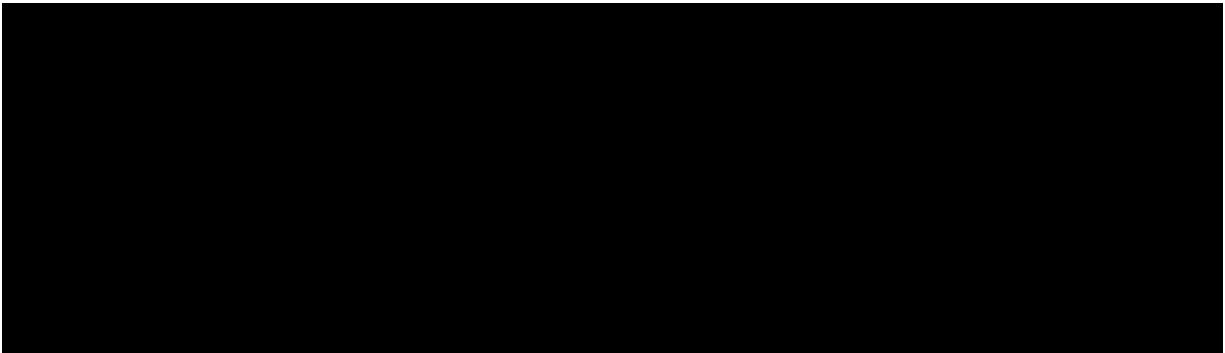
Papermaking is one of the oldest industries in the United States. Only nineteen years after the Pilgrims came to America, a printing press was set up in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At that time, paper was still being shipped from England and Europe. In 1690, William Rittenhouse built a paper mill near Germantown, Pennsylvania, the only one in the New World until 1710. By 1775, there were twenty paper mills in the colonies. Early on, papermakers needed to locate their mills near populated areas that could provide a reliable supply of old rags which were their main raw material. Cellulose can be added to thicken the paper mixture, and glazes can be applied to prevent the ink from blotting, but these innovations were not developed by chemists for a number of years.

Paper mills needed to be near a large supply of fresh water, both for turning the mill machinery and for washing the rag fibers. Paper making was a difficult process prior to 1804 primarily due to the skill required to produce the wire "mesh" upon which the rags were laid and dried to make paper. Nathan Sellers of Pennsylvania was a skilled wire drawer who applied his craft to the manufacture of paper molds. Between 1776 and 1820, he supplied the molds for hundreds of American papermakers. This ability was so rare that, when Sellers joined the American army in the fall of 1776, he was soon discharged by a special resolution of the Continental Congress, which sent him home to create the molds that were so desperately needed to make the paper used for powder wrappers and written orders during the Revolutionary War.

It was two prosperous London brothers, Henry and Sealy Fourdrinier, who developed the first practical version of a paper machine, in 1804, where paper was formed on a continuous sheet of wire cloth. Many modern paper machines are now referred to as "fourdrinier" machines. By 1810, there were 185 paper mills in the United States. As new mills began production, rags became scarce. American papermakers began experimenting with alternative raw materials, such as tree bark, sugar cane waste, straw, and cornstalks.



Papermaking in Early America



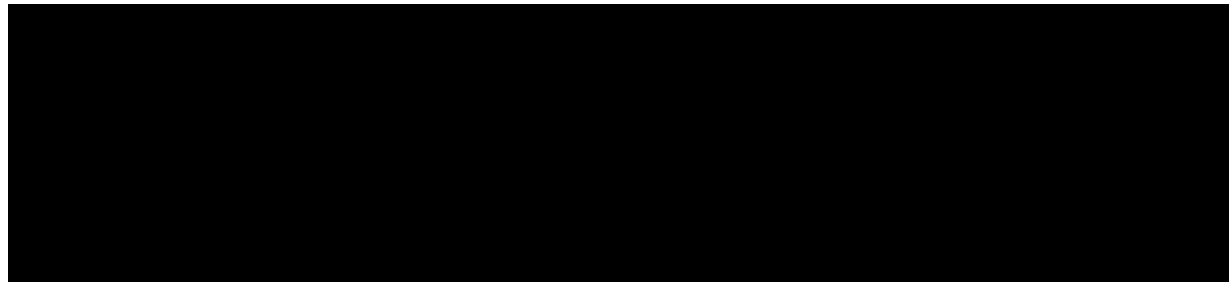
Papermaking in Early America



In February of 1753 it was voted that “there shall be a school eight or ten rods east of Nathaniel Woodward’s new dwelling” which was built in 1731. Woodward’s dwelling was at the corner of Merrow Road and Goose Lane. The original school house building was later a blacksmith shop, and in 1977 it was used as a workshop located directly behind the house on the curve of the road a short distance west of the school grounds. The original school was to be twelve by fourteen feet, thus we know that the present building was not the first on the site.



The Brick School House



The Brick School House





In the early part of the eighteenth century, the trans-Appalachian region of North America remained much as it had been for the preceding centuries. Some trappers and backwoodsmen, Frenchmen from Canada and Englishmen from the British colonies, traveled through its woods and rivers, but the principal occupants of the region were Native Americans and a great diversity of wildlife. As the British colonies became more populated and prosperous, their citizens began to look towards the rich lands across the Appalachian Mountains as providing new opportunities for settlement and economic growth.

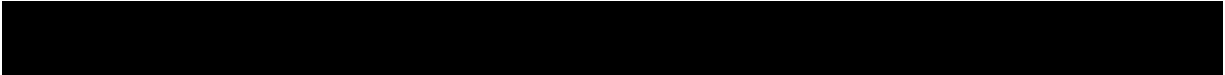
The French, who claimed the entire watersheds of the Mississippi and St. Lawrence River, which included the Great Lakes and the Ohio River valley, became worried about British encroachments into this region. They moved to set up a series of forts, including one at Crown Point on Lake Champlain, and on the Wabash, Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The British, meanwhile, built their own forts at Oswego and Halifax, the government granted lands in the Ohio Valley to the Ohio Company and adventurous traders set up bases in the region. Territorial disputes quickly arose.

Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, was granting land in the Ohio Valley to citizens of his colony, setting in motion the events which inevitably led to the French & Indian War. Dinwiddie, hearing of new French forts on the upper Allegheny River, sent out a young Virginia officer, George Washington, to deliver a letter demanding that the French leave the region. This mission was a failure.

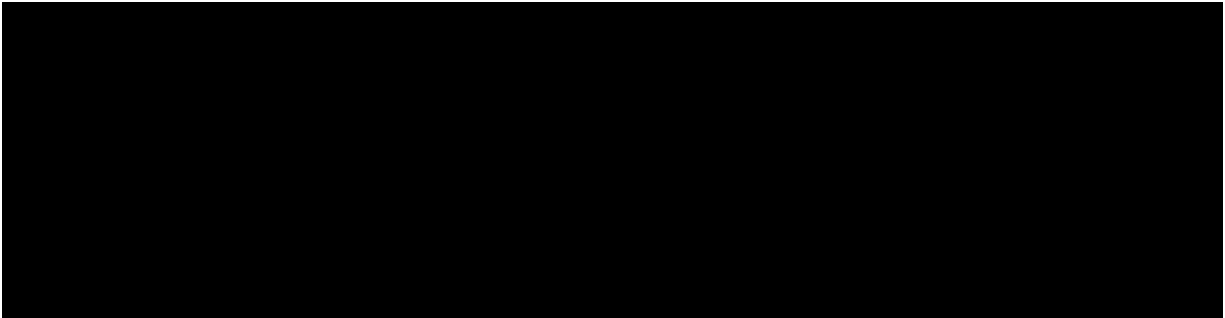
The first engagement of the yet undeclared French & Indian War was by George Washington who attacked a French encampment at Fort Duquesne (now Pittsburg). Though Washington won that engagement, he was soon defeated by a superior force sent out from Fort Duquesne, leaving the French in command of the entire region west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The war ended with the Treaty of Paris, February 10, 1763, which gave all of North America east of the Mississippi, other than New Orleans, to the British. The French also turned over their claims of New Orleans and the

lands west of the Mississippi to Spain, as compensation for Spain's surrendering Florida to the British. This peace, however, would last only a decade until a new war, the Revolution, began. A few Coventry men participated in the War in 1755. Henry Woodward, Simon Graves, Ebenezer Root and Solomon Grant died of sickness or were killed. Noah Grant also served. (4)



The French and Indian War



The French and Indian War

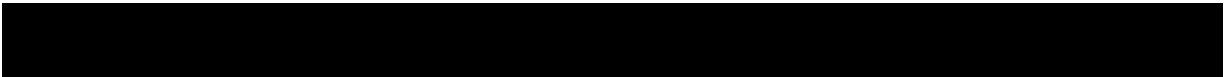


For several years now, a fine tall case clock has been displayed in the Rockville Bank office in Coventry. The Coventry Historical Society has owned this clock since 1966 thanks to prompt action by the Society executive council when it became available in that year. Robert Boyce was president of the Society in that year. He was also president of the old Manchester Savings and Loan Association, which donated the money to purchase the clock. Because the clock was seven feet- ten and one-half inches tall, it would not fit in any of the Society buildings. An alternate display location needed to be found, and for several years it was housed at the Coventry office of the Manchester Savings Institution.

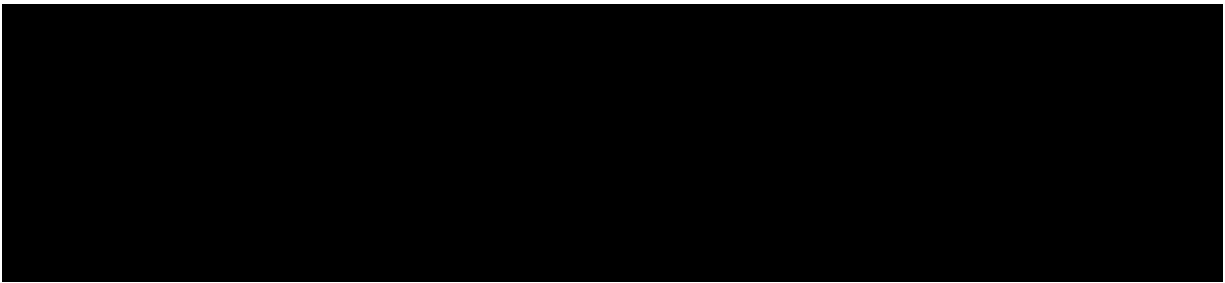
The tall case clock is of particular interest to the town because it was made here in Coventry. The beautifully engraved dial has the inscription: Burnap, D. Coventry. The clock was made by Daniel Burnap (1759-1838), a clock maker and silversmith. He was born in a section of Coventry that later became part of Andover. In 1772 he apprenticed to Thomas Harland of Norwich, then began work as a silversmith in Coventry in 1781. He moved his shop to East Windsor, Connecticut, and worked there as a silversmith from 1785 to 1796. He advertised in 1790 in East Windsor that at his shop, "clocks of various kinds may be had on short notice on most reasonable terms (warranted)", and " . . . takes this method to inform the public that although he works in many other branches common for those in the silversmith line as also surveyor's compasses, watch repairing etc., yet notwithstanding clock making is intended as the governing business of his shop". In 1797, Burnap began working as a silversmith in Coventry (specifically the Andover Society). He made gold beads, silver spoons and buckles, and repaired watches and jewelry. Known as an expert clock maker and engraver of clock dials, his clocks are recognized to be as fine as any made in New England at that time. Mr. Burnap also purchased a "saw mill" in 1799 in the area of today's Burnap brook near the Bolton town line.

Some interesting projects that Burnap worked on were tower clocks. P. R. Hoopes, in his book, "The Shop Records of Daniel Burnap", notes that Burnap is known to have made at least one tower clock, most likely for South Hadley, Massachusetts. George D. Seymour also wrote about this

type of work, and mentions in his writings of seeing, “the unbelievably big models for the hands of a steeple clock in Burnap's Andover attic work-room”. Mr. Seymour also quotes the Burnap Papers concerning the meeting house clock for South Hadley, and the steeple clock, of which Burnap wrote; “I think it is a matter of uncertainty whether I shall be able to finish it so as to get it to you before sleighing.” Another steeple clock attributed by some to Burnap is the clock that had graced the steeple of the Suffield Meeting House from about 1786 until 1836, when it was pulled down. The works and the weights are now said to be in the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford.



The Daniel Burnap Clock



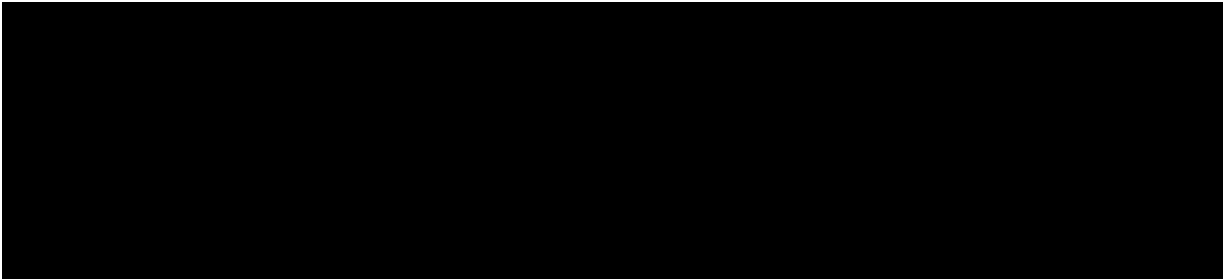
The Daniel Burnap Clock



In 1766, the Second Society wanted to build a new church, and a committee was appointed by the Windham County Court to investigate and decide on a location. The decision given was not favorably received by the Society for they sent another petition to the General Court asking that the location be changed up near the schoolhouse where the meeting house can stand more commodious and “elegant”. The petition was granted though it is not known if the church was built at that time. (4)



Second Society Church



Second Society Church



Families of the day were really a small scale community. While more children meant more mouths to feed, it also meant more hands to help. Also it was not uncommon for children to die young. There are instances of a child dying at age two or three and the next child born of the same sex would be given the same name as the deceased child. Boys gathered berries and nuts as well as helping to cultivate crops and slaughter animals. Crops from old England included peas, turnips, parsnips, and carrots, while the Indians provided the seed for corn, beans, pumpkins and squash. The stock was fed, watered and pastured, milking was done and wood boxes were kept filled.

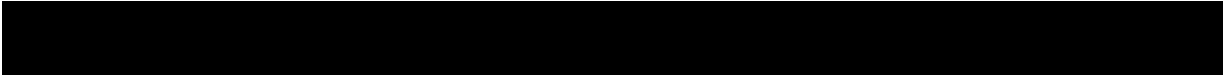
Among the many tree species in this central hardwood forest of Connecticut the settlers found pine, hemlock, cedar, oak, elm, hickory, birch, chestnut, ash, sassafras, witch hazel, maple, tulip, sycamore, tamarack, butternut, willow, beech, cherry, basswood, dogwood and hornbeam.

The wood of the Pitch pine tends to be soft, light in weight, course grained and durable. The tree has never been a prized timber source. During colonial times, when stands of larger trees were still available, Pitch pine was milled into coarse lumber, used primarily for sills and beams in log or post and beam construction. As the large diameter trees became rarer and milling more precise, the wood was adapted to use in many aspects of homebuilding, boat building and for general industrial uses. Colonial use of the Pitch pine went beyond lumbering, and included charcoal making and turpentine production. Oleoresin, exuded from the Pitch pine, was distilled or cooked into turpentine, rosin, pitch or tar, which then became waxes, solvents, preservatives or even axle grease. A very simple but interesting colonial use of Pitch pine was using the resinous knots of the wood for illumination. The knots would be split into thin pieces which were then bound into bundles to make torches, or used singly as a substitute candle.

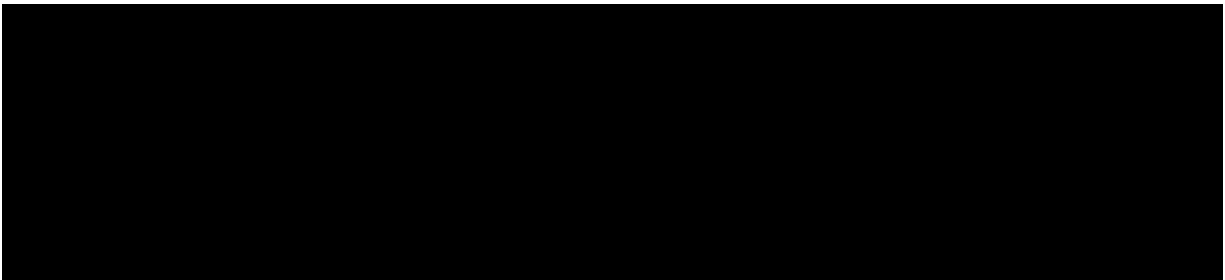
Girls were involved in food making, preserving, drying, baking, etc. They also made candles and soap. Wool was carded, spun and dyed. It was

knitted into socks, mufflers and mittens. Blankets and clothes were hand woven by both men and women for families of typically seven to twelve people.

The Sabbath was a day of prayer. Older folk and women went to meeting on horseback. Others by foot, and in summer carried their shoes and stockings in hand. The boys carried foot- stoves in winter with their live coals to help comfort their “soles” in the cold meeting house. Sermons lasted until late afternoon with an hour or so lunch break. At noon, the men relaxed and read the signposts erected near the church for their news.



Family Life of the 1760's



Family Life of the 1760's



Originally, candles were made from tallow, which was extracted from cattle and sheep, in the early Egyptian and Roman times. These early candles burned poorly and probably smelled even worse. The Roman Empire was the first to provide evidence of a candle that resembles the candle today. They melted the tallow until it was a liquid and poured it over fibers of flax, hemp, and/or cotton, which were used as a wick. These candles were used in religious ceremonies as well as lighting for their travel and homes. During the Middle Ages candles became more prevalent in worship. It was at this time that beeswax was used to make candles. These beeswax candles were made much like the Romans made their candles with tallow. Beeswax was a drastic improvement from the tallow. Only limited quantities were available which made it expensive, limiting it to clergy and the upper class.

In colonial America the early settlers discovered that they were able to obtain a very appealing wax by boiling the berries from the bayberry shrub. This wax created a very sweet smelling and good burning candle; however the process of making the bayberry wax was very tedious and tiresome. Wicks were made from hemp or milkweed silk.

In the 18th century the whaling industry thrived and as a result, whale oil was available in large quantities. Spermaceti wax was derived from the whale oil and was used as a replacement for tallow, beeswax, and bayberry wax. The spermaceti wax candle did emit a rather unpleasant smell but the wax was hard enough to hold shape in the hot summer months.

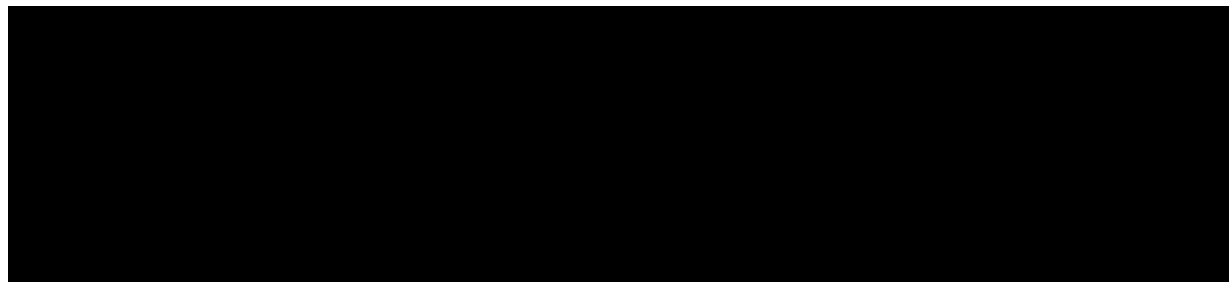
The 19th century was a defining time for the candles and candle making. The first patented candle making machines were introduced. This breakthrough allowed candles to reach the homes of all classes. It was also right around this same time that a chemist named Michael Eugene Chevreul identified for the first time that tallow or animal fat consisted of various fatty acids. One of the fatty acids he identified was stearine (stearic acid). In 1825, Chevreul and another chemist named Joseph Gay Lussac patented a process for candle making from crude stearic. This process drastically improved the quality of candles.

The braided wick was also invented in the 19th century. Wicks before this time were made simply of twisted strands of cotton, which burned very poorly and needed constant maintenance. The braided wick was tightly plaited and a portion of the wick curled over and enabled it to be completely consumed. Coventry had two wicking mills in the late 1800's.

It was in the middle of the 19th century that paraffin wax was first used in a candle in Battersea, UK. This led to the commercial production of paraffin, which is an oil distillate. Paraffin burned clean, bright and without an odor. The paraffin was also blended with stearic acid, which hardened the wax and created a superior and cheaper candle .



Candle Making



Candle Making



63



64

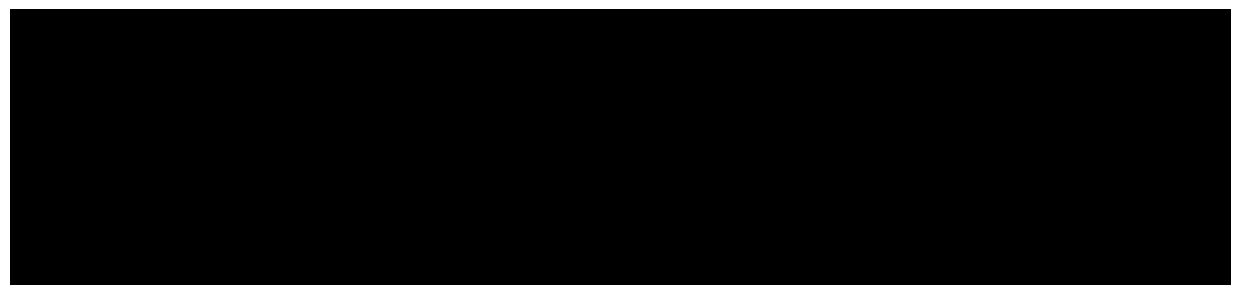


June 18, 1745 - Nathan's father, Deacon Richard Hale, purchased 240 acres "with appurtenances thereof" in Coventry, Windham County, Connecticut. His purchase encompassed contiguous parcels " One mile west of the Great Pond and SW of the country road." The parcels were purchased from John Talcott (Windsor), Daniel Lathrop and Jerusha Talbott (Hartford), at 750 pounds.

Richard Hale, originally from Newbury, Massachusetts, married Elizabeth Strong in 1746. She was born in Coventry, February 2, 1728. She was the daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth Strong of the fifth generation from Elder John Strong, one of the first settlers of Windsor. The Hale's first child, son Samuel, was born in 1747. Nathan Hale was born June 6, 1755. Nathan's mother died shortly after the birth of her twelfth child in 1767 leaving Nathan motherless at the age of twelve. Two years later Deacon Richard remarried a widow from Canterbury, Connecticut, Abigail Cobb Adams.



Hale Family Chronology



Hale Family Chronology



On a September morning in 1776 a twenty-one year old American captain faced the most trying moment of his young life. He was shortly to die, and to die the death of a criminal, of a traitor. He was to hang, convicted without benefit of a trial. We cannot know the thoughts of this soldier in the last moments of his young life, but his behavior and legendary last words catapulted him to the pantheon of American heroes. "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." Fourteen words and the life of Captain Nathan Hale ended, and his reputation as the Martyr-Spy of the American Revolution began.

Nathan Hale was born on June 6, 1755, in Coventry, Connecticut, to Richard Hale, a prosperous farmer, untiring patriot and church deacon, and his wife, Elizabeth Strong Hale. Nathan was the sixth child, one of nine sons and three daughters, ten of whom survived to adulthood. Little detail is known about Nathan's childhood but he certainly would have helped with the many farm and household chores and spent many happy hours hunting, fishing, and "bathing" in the nearby lake. His fowling piece hangs in the family home today. Sundays were spent in church, morning and afternoon. Another treasured item at the Homestead is Nathan's Bible, signed by him, with a few verses marked: "In my father's house are many mansions and I go to prepare a place for you," a famous passage.

Nathan and his brother Enoch were prepared for Yale by the well-known Congregational divine, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Huntington. School was held at the local minister's home, two miles away; the curriculum was Latin, Greek, Hebrew and penmanship, among other subjects. At age fourteen Nathan demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the classics in addition to New Testament Greek and set off with Enoch for Yale College in New Haven. The boys lodged in Connecticut Hall, the only Yale building now standing that Nathan knew; his statue stands in front of it today. Letters from Deacon Hale to his sons during their years at Yale are much the same as letters from parents are today: all relate to money, clothes and behavior.

Hale did not graduate first in his class but he was among the better scholars, graduating with thirty-five other young men on September 8, 1773. One of the day's highlights was a forensic debate in which Hale and others argued the then pertinent question, "Whether the education of daughters be not, without any just reason, more neglected than that of sons." Tradition has it that Nathan took the side of the girls and won. After graduation, Nathan journeyed to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to visit his uncle, Major Samuel Hale, a Harvard graduate, and headmaster of a well-known Latin School there, probably seeking career advice. That fall he embarked on a teaching career in East Haddam, Connecticut, in a schoolhouse that still stands today.

After five months in Haddam Landing, Nathan applied and was accepted as headmaster of the Latin School in New London. Nathan was a popular teacher among the students though controversial among some adults. For one thing Nathan believed in giving rewards and praise to students who had worked hard—not a universally accepted idea at the time. But even more radical, Nathan admitted girls to the secondary school. Of course the young women who wanted a higher education had to come to school at five in the morning before the boys arrived.

When the news from Lexington and Concord reached New London in 1775, Nathan decided to give up teaching and join the army. His speech in favor of rebellion at a town meeting inspired many to join the army. Nathan applied to the Connecticut General Assembly for a lieutenancy and received it. From August to September, Hale was stationed in New London. His company reached the American camp at Roxbury, Mass. at the end of September 1775. Duty outside Boston in 1775 turned out to be pretty boring for many of the young soldiers. They were engaged in a holding action, a stalemate, with the British occupying the city and the Americans surrounding them. Nathan's diary from this period indicates he spent a lot of time reading about how to be an effective officer. By the time Boston was evacuated in March of 1776, Nathan had been promoted to captain.

On August 29, 1776, all American troops had been evacuated to Manhattan following their defeat in the battle of Long Island. Soon afterwards, Hale

was detached for service with Knowlton's Rangers and in September he was sent on his spying mission, behind British lines on Long Island.

Knowlton's Rangers orders are unknown, but New York was a spy center at that time. "The Rebels have good intelligence of what we are doing....." wrote one British officer. For obvious reasons, records of covert actions were not kept, and the secret agents' names are mainly unknown even to this day. Nathan's expectations on Long Island are also unknown. General Washington was justifiably concerned with the British recruitment of American Loyalists at this time, a recruitment that was in high gear all along the coast of Long Island Sound in the spring and summer of 1776. Had the British done a better job mobilizing American sympathizers, the Patriots might well have lost the war.

Little is known about Nathan Hale's work as an undercover agent. His missions, his whereabouts, his experiences are only dimly understood. This uncertainty has made him a popular subject with writers of historical fiction, who thus feel free to add their own details. Contemporary newspaper accounts are contradictory. The memories of his colleagues, mostly recorded decades later, are of uncertain value. Hale compounded the problems because he stopped writing a detailed diary. Even the Army order books are vague.

According to the best evidence, Nathan left the American camp at Harlem Heights, New York, around September 10, 1776 for Norwalk, Connecticut, where he was ferried across the Sound to enemy-held Long Island taking with him his college diploma. Hale had performed reconnaissance on Long Island before it had fallen to the British, and he likely had established contacts in the heavily Loyalist towns there. On September 21st he was arrested as a spy, probably in the vicinity of present-day LaGuardia Airport and taken to British headquarters in Manhattan. He was ordered executed the next morning. At the gallows, in front of "Artillery Park" (present-day Third Avenue at 66th Street), Hale made a sensible and spirited speech," among others things making a perfectly apt reference to a famous play by Joseph Addison about giving up one's life for liberty. His body was left hanging for a period of days as a warning to the rebels and was thrown into

an unmarked grave. Two last letters written by him to his brother Enoch and his commanding officer, Lt. Col. Knowlton were lost or destroyed after his death along with his Yale diploma.

Of course, carrying his diploma would have been a useful credential in his “cover” as a schoolmaster among Long Island Loyalists. But there may have been more to it than that. To prove a person was a spy, it was usually necessary to show that he or she had been going under an assumed identity. Such, in any event, was the basis of cases against other accused spies at the time. Thus, Nathan Hale agreed to spy but not to lie, and this may have been his specific instruction. Further evidence supporting this theory is that when Nathan was caught, he made no attempt to lie about who he was or what he had been doing. Perhaps this was his own moral scruples at work, but it may also have been judged by his commanding officers to be the wisest course of action.

According to an early newspaper account, Nathan was betrayed to the British by his first cousin, a Loyalist from Newburyport, Massachusetts, Samuel Hale who was on Long Island at the time. Nathan’s boyhood friend and army orderly Asher Wright, in his 82nd year, dictated his story and talked of Nathan. Some say his cousin, Samuel Hale, a Tory, betrayed him. After the war, Samuel firmly denied any part in Nathan’s death.

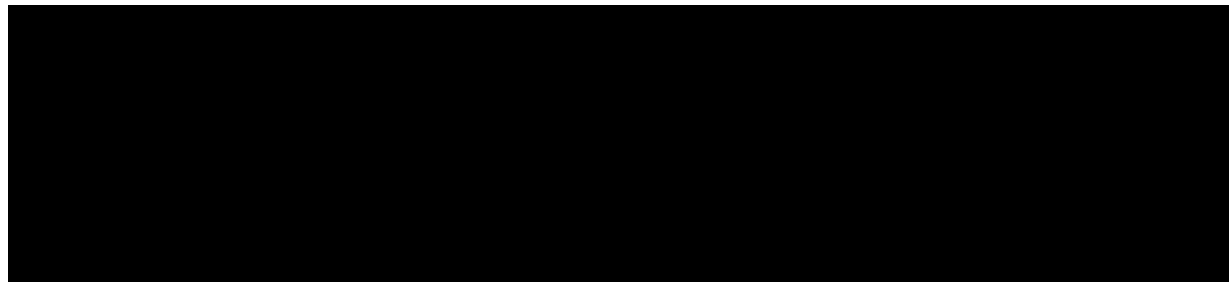
The circumstances of Nathan’s capture are uncertain. He was caught either on Long Island or in New York by an unknown person. British accounts are the most credible but the information is sketchy. One contemporary account mentions Hale as being caught on Long Island by Major Robert Rogers, hero of the French & Indian War, turned Loyalist recruiter on and off Long Island at the time. He was hanged without benefit of trial the morning after his capture, on September 22, 1776, in what is today mid-town Manhattan, a short distance from the American lines. As was the custom, he was left hanging for several days as a warning to the Americans and buried in an unmarked grave that has never been located. The fact that the event was noticed at all is remarkable considering other events: the burning of New York City and the Battle of Harlem Heights.

Soon after his death, rumors about Nathan must have circulated through the American camp, but no American letters or other documents written in New York at the time survive. The only contemporary accounts are very brief and were written by British soldiers. It wasn't until some time later that Nathan's brother Enoch came to New York to investigate the rumor that had reached Coventry concerning Nathan's execution.

In response to Nathan's death, an aide of Washington spoke of retribution, and early news accounts tried to fire up support for the American cause by blaming the loyalist cousin Samuel for the betrayal. Nathan's grief-stricken family erected a cenotaph in the Coventry cemetery with the inscription "He resigned his life –a sacrifice to his country's liberty at New York, Sept. 1776. Still, it was not until another officer was hanged for spying, this time a British officer named Major John Andre, who had helped Benedict Arnold turn traitor, that Hale's star began to ascend. (10)



Nathan Hale



Nathan Hale

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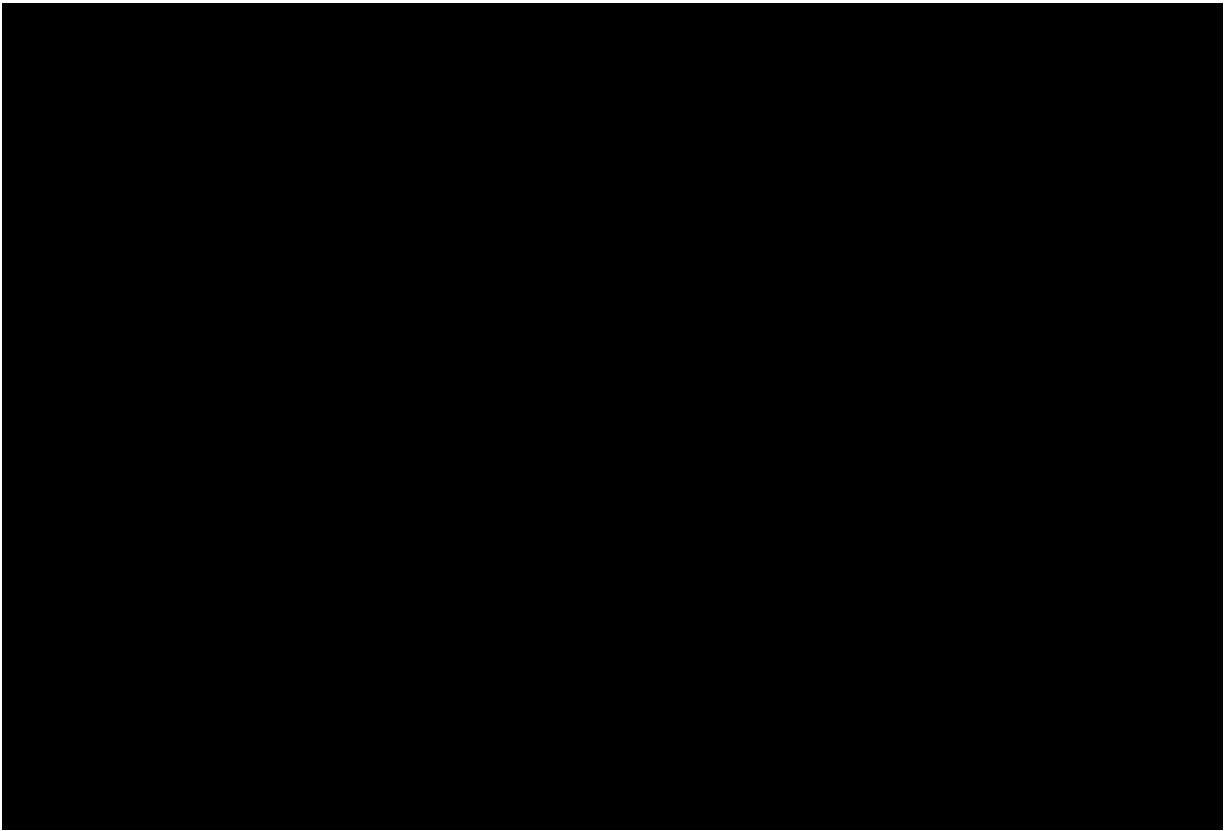
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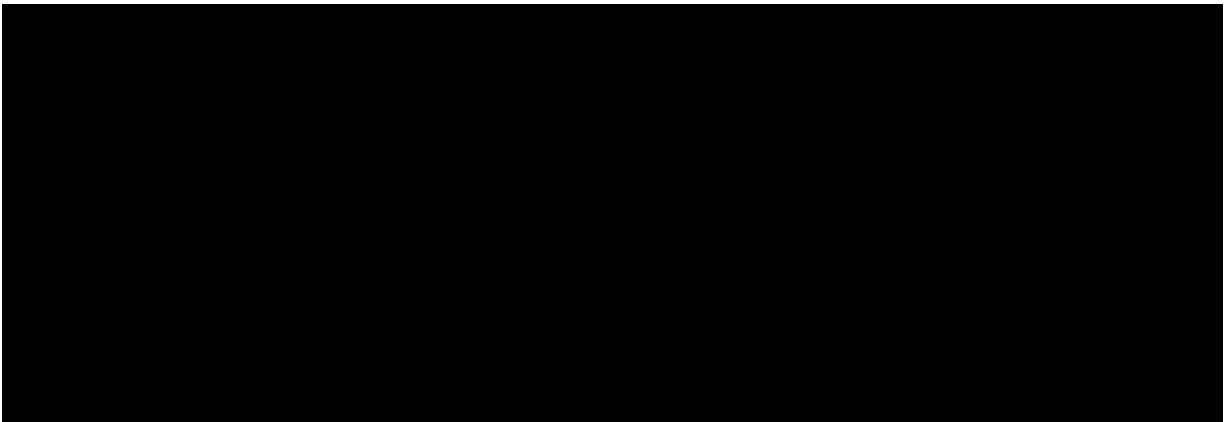
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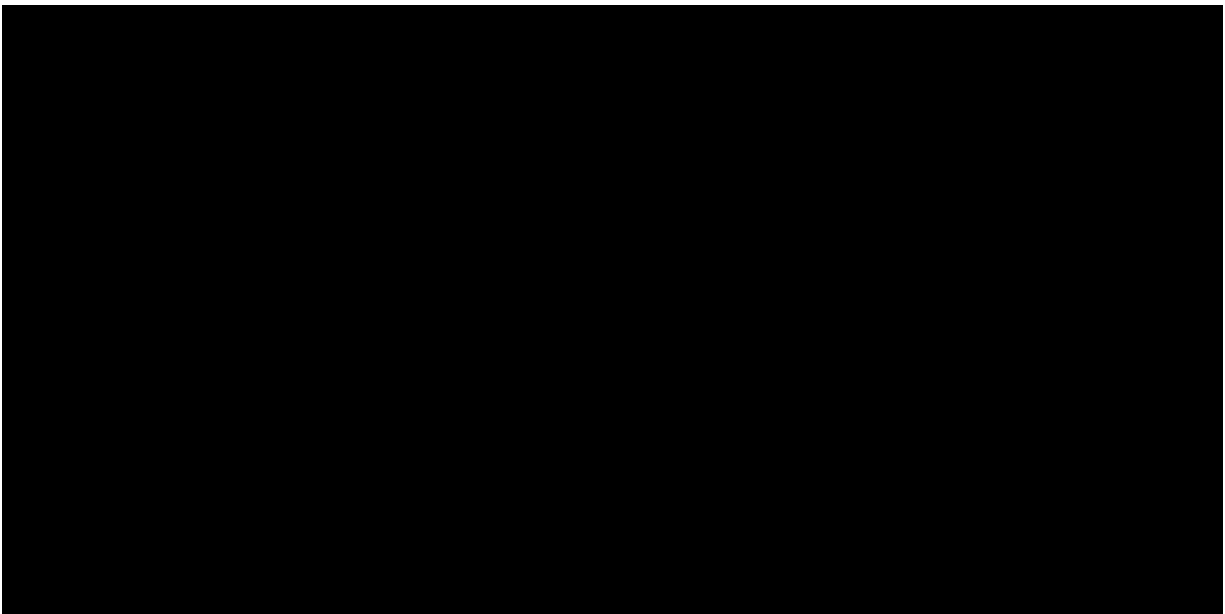
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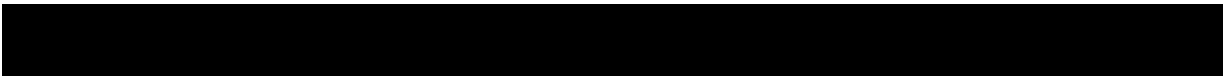


The Hale Homestead on South Street

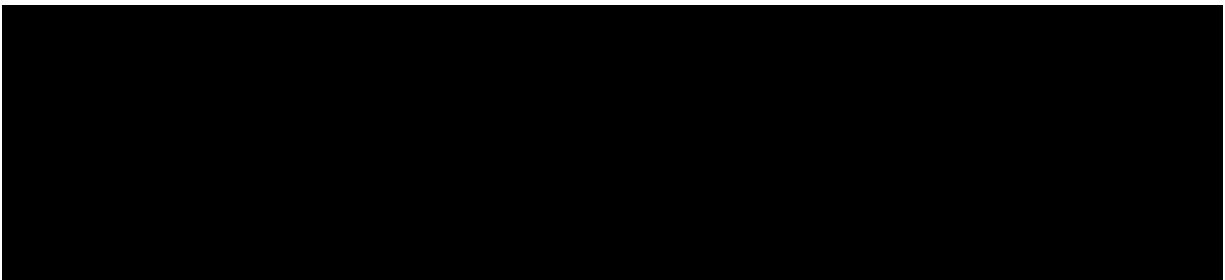


Nathan Hale Monument

The present structure was built about 1776 and reflected the newest ideas in refined country living. The 100-foot long ell projecting from the rear of the main building is believed to hold portions of the original farmhouse in which Nathan Hale grew up. The original home was just southeast of the present house. The Hale family owned the home until 1833, and then it passed through eight owners until 1881. Among those living there were Henry Watrous and Samuel Moredock, both wealthy owners of factories on the Mill Brook in the 1850's and 1860's. The property was acquired in 1881 by a financier named Loring Winchester who lived at the end of today's Woods Lane and made a living giving mortgages to local area residents. Loring sold to Wilson Peterson whose wife Emmeline sold a vacant and dilapidated property to George Dudley Seymour in 1914. (14) (See also George Dudley Seymour in Chapter Three.)



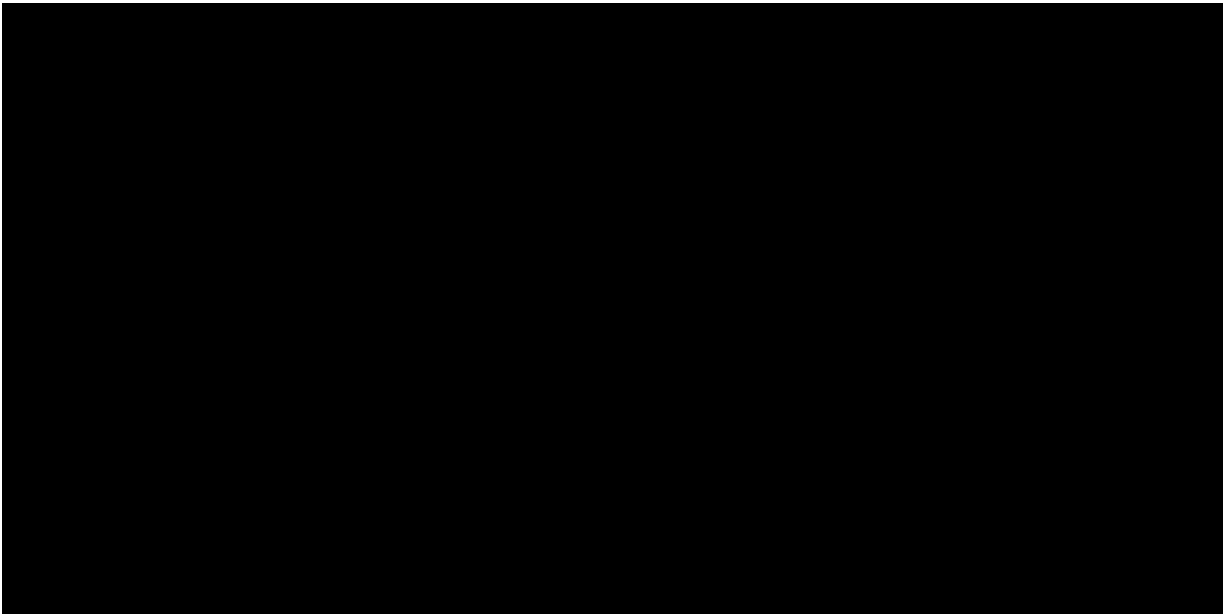
Hale Homestead



Hale Homestead



70





Honoring Nathan Hale

Presented by:

Miss Gillian Bullock & Miss Emily Kennedy

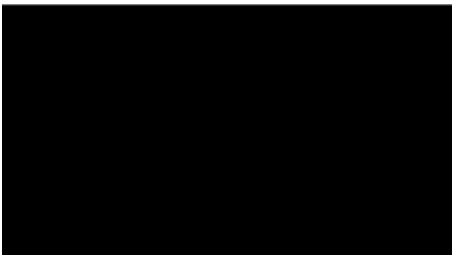




Honoring Nathan Hale

Presented by:

Miss Gillian Bullock & Miss Emily Kennedy



Life was comfortable in Coventry in the years before the Revolutionary War. Homelots had been consolidated into larger farms suitable for raising livestock or dairy production. An export trade in butter and cheese had developed with the south and the West Indies. In the early 1770's Elijah Ripley operated a store on land presently occupied by the high school. He carried broadcloth, gauze, silk, linens, spectacles, hats, etc. In addition plates, tea sets, tools, nails, books, paper and ink, silver teaspoons and some basic foodstuffs were for sale. His store also served as a collection point for goods to export. He acquired these goods in trade for his merchandise. They included cheese, tallow, soap, pork, and beef.

Coventry, and most of eastern Connecticut were becoming increasingly radical over each new attempt at taxation by the British. The onslaught of taxes, import duties, attempts to quarter British troops and other methods to force the colonials to pay the British government between 1762 and 1774 created much opposition and dissention. In September of 1774, Ephraim Root proposed at a town meeting, a bold statement that came close to Declaration of Independence from Britain.

The first shots of the Revolutionary War were fired in Concord Massachusetts in April 1775 and as the word spread quickly, one hundred and sixteen men from Coventry responded to the Lexington alarm. Many literally dropped their plows and joined the revolution. Coventry's citizens provided substantial amounts of clothing, beef and pork, and apple cider/whiskey to the war effort.



Revolutionary War (6)



Revolutionary War (6)





At the time of the Revolutionary War, Coventry ranked as a considerable town in the colonies with a grand list of 20,856 pounds sterling and a population of 2,056. In October of 1774 the Colonial Assembly of Connecticut required towns to provide a double quantity of powder, balls and flint. The following January the Assembly ordered the entire militia to muster and drill once a week. The town green bustled with military activity. The horse express carried the news from Lexington on April 19, 1775. Coventry responded with 116 men ranking well in numbers with any town in the colony. During the War not a soldier had to be drafted to fill the quota for the town. Fourteen Coventry men gave their lives in service of the Continental Army.

Clothing for the soldiers and care for their families was freely given. Richard Hale, father of Nathan, forbid his family from using wool from his farm so clothing could be made for the soldiers. The passing soldier was sure of food and shelter at his house. Coventry voted that the families of the soldiers should be provided with the necessities without additional cost. Richard Hale, Daniel Pomeroy and Jonathan Porter Jr. were selected as a committee to insure this happened. The town also voted twelve pounds of silver money to every one who would enlist for a period of one year and an additional six pounds for every year thereafter. A tax of three pence upon the pound was levied to defray these costs and was later raised to six pence (a rate of 2.5%). The assistant commissary for the State was Jeremiah Ripley who lived on Ripley Hill. In 1778 he was directed by the General Assembly to deliver, under guard, two tons of fine powder to Ezekiel Chevers at the armory in Springfield. Coventry supplied vast quantities of pork and cider and cider whiskey to the fighting men, and served as a way station for arms and ammunition delivered from Norwich landing.

The Continental Army encamped on the grounds of the Kingsbury farm next to what is now Times Farm (or the Channel 3 Kid's Camp). The men pitched tents on the lawn and were undoubtedly given refreshments from the Kingsbury kitchen.

Following Washington's inauguration in 1789, Coventry was honored by a visit from the President. His diary gives an account of a stop at Ashford, where he was obliged to delay for two days. Then on the morning of April 30th, the President arrived at the Gershom Brigham Tavern in Coventry where he was pleased with the accommodations. (The home is on the corner of the Boston Turnpike and Brigham Tavern Road.)

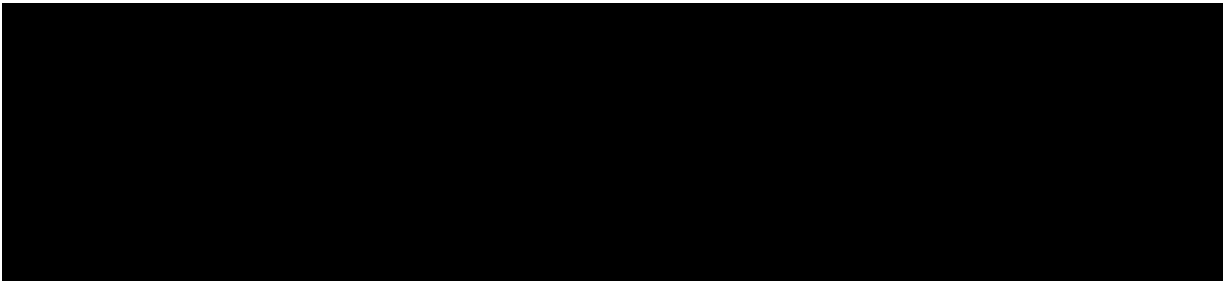
Note: Willimantic Herald: Sat. Feb. 21, 1795: To be Sold, A good Farm, containing one hundred and sixty acres, situated about a mile north of Gershom Brigham's tavern, in Coventry, on the main road from Boston to Hartford. Fifteen or twenty acres of land, with a house thereon, would be received as part pay. Any person inclining to purchase, may know the terms by applying to Evan Malbone, of Pomfret. February 11, 1795.

The tavern was also used by members of the Committee of Correspondence.

Committees of Correspondence: In an era before modern communications, news was generally disseminated in handwritten letters that were carried aboard ships or by couriers on horseback. Those means were employed by the critics of British imperial policy in America to spread their interpretations of current events. Special committees of correspondence were formed by the colonial assemblies and various lesser arms of local government. The committees were responsible for taking the sense of their parent body on a particular issue, committing it to a written form and then dispatching that view to other similar groups. Many correspondents were members of the colonial assemblies. The first formal committee of correspondence was established in Boston in 1764 and was charged with rallying opposition to the recently enacted Currency Act and the unpopular reforms imposed on the customs service. Perhaps the most important contribution provided by the committees of correspondence was the planning done for the First Continental Congress, which convened in the fall of 1774. The Second Continental Congress seized upon this successful idea and created its own correspondence committee to convey the American interpretation of events to foreign powers.



The Revolutionary War (4)



The Revolutionary War (4)





Coventry’s War Memorials

Presented by:

Mr. Alexander Bohr





Coventry's War Memorials

Presented by:

Mr. Alexander Bohr

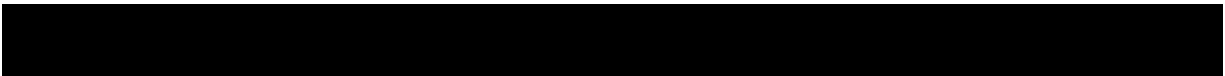


The old-time legal requirement for a tavern was a spare bed and stable room for two horses. Taverns not only provided a place to eat and sleep, but whatever general news reached the town by travelers was circulated by the nightly gatherings at the tavern.

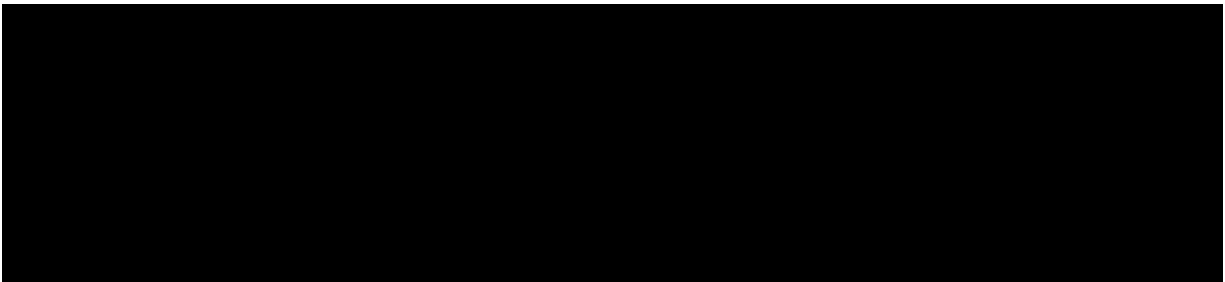
First Society- Soon after the settlement of the town, Nathaniel Rust was named as tavern keeper. His tavern was located on Wicket Hill. The tavern later became the house of William Gardiner. The place was occupied by Albert Baker in 1912 and is now part of the high school fields. The next oldest was at the end of South Street with Novatus Cushman as landlord. This was the main road from Hartford to Windham and Brooklyn at the time. The old tavern on the Boston turnpike near the Willimantic River was known as the Pollard place in 1912 and now as the Brigham Tavern.

The house west of the Jesse Root house on Main Street, occupied by George Freeman in 1912 was a tavern. A hotel was opened in town just below Mr. Kolb's harness shop on Main Street near today's Woods Lane. John Rose had a hotel in the old Rose place by the town green. Royal Manning succeeded him. The hotel was discontinued about 1844 upon Royal's death. Another was kept in the 1912 Thomas Wood place opposite the Hale Monument by Martin Lyman. Solomon Bidwell opened the Bidwell House in 1822 and was succeeded by his son and grandson. (5)

Second Society- There were five known taverns in this society in the late 1700's and early 1800's. One was located in the old Ezekiel Richardson house on the corner of today's Swamp Road and Route 44. Just across the turnpike and to the east was another in Josiah Brown's house. Three generations of the Pomeroy family operated a tavern in their home just to the west of the Second Congregational Church. Capt. Amos Richardson's house on the Windham turnpike between today's Wright's Mill Road and South River Road, and the Edgerton/Flint house on the east side of Grant Hill Road near Broadway were also taverns for a time. (13)



Taverns



Taverns

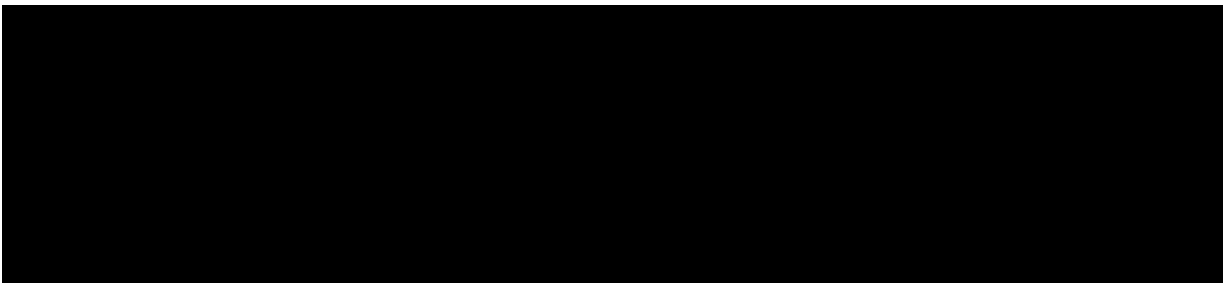




Lorenzo Dow, a Methodist minister was born in Coventry on October 16, 1777 to Humphrey and Tabitha (Parker) Dow. A sudden illness at age twelve caused him to give attention to religious matters. He visited Ireland and England preaching to huge crowds. He traveled extensively in the United States holding camp meetings in churches and all sorts of other places when churches were not available to him. His wife Peggy accompanied him during their marriage. He died on February 2, 1834 in Georgetown, D.C.



Lorenzo Dow



Lorenzo Dow



The Coventry Historical Society first learned of the existence of the old French Camp- site and cemetery when, as president of the Society in the 1960's, John Hetzel received a letter from the State Librarian asking if he would like the Library's second copy of "Coventry Headstones", a typescript compiled by the Works Writer's Project under the auspices of the F.E.R.A. and the W.P.A. during the Great Depression of the 1930's. Upon receiving the copy, it was noted that of the twelve known burial grounds listed, the twelfth was called the French Soldier Camp Site, on land owned by Frank Fenton and Judge Hinman. These two plots are now shown as four on the Town Tax Assessors Maps: lots 75, 76, 77 and 78. This pinpoints the location of the campsite quite closely. They are situated at the foot of Springdale Avenue, on the lake-shore side of the road running parallel with the shore, and are approximately opposite the southern tip of the very small island lying a few rods off shore.

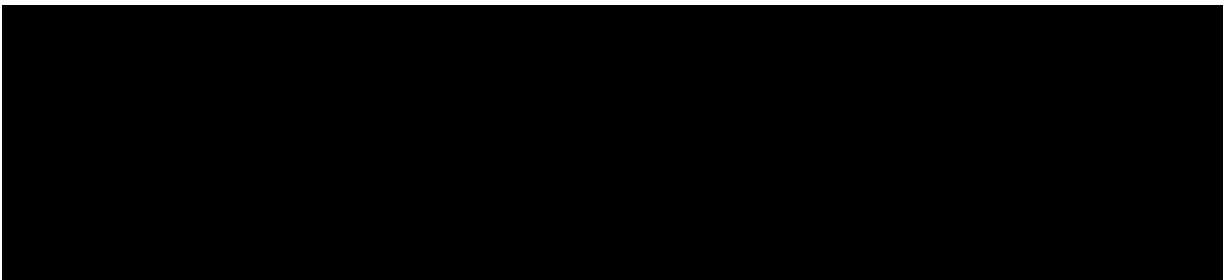
The State Librarian was asked whether the W.P.A. crews might not have deposited their notes at the Library following completion of the project. The story was contained in a yellowed news clipping which stated that "years ago, when surveyors were dispatched to the foot of Springdale Avenue to layout the road which now runs along the shore area, they were requested to look for any evidence or traces of the old 'Revolution Tree', around which, as a thrifty young sapling, a number of French soldiers were laid to rest, in graves marked only by flat stones laid out radially around the base of the tree". The tree, according to legend, had grown to great size, had been struck by lightning, and had eventually died and fallen. No trace of it nor the stones were found, and it may be presumed that the latter, unrecognized as grave markers, were taken up and used for other purposes, as for instance, stepping stones leading down to the lake.

Of course, the only reasonable assumption is that the graves were those of some of the soldiers of General Rochambeau's army (it is thought there were seven), which passed through Coventry, and camped in Bolton in June 1781, on their march to Yorktown, their 46th encampment. And it must have been here that an outbreak of smallpox occurred, when, as was customary in Revolutionary War days, the contingent of infected troops

would have been placed in the charge of some non-commissioned officer who had the affliction, and directed to find a place in the nearby village and "weather it through", be it for better or for worse. (It is far more probable that such an outbreak would have occurred on the return march from Yorktown, rather than on the southbound trip, as the regiments would have been camping on previously occupied and contaminated campsites of preceding north-bound units.) (11)



The French Cemetery



The French Cemetery



The second congregation planned an enlargement to their church in 1790, but Rev. Strong was of the opinion that a new edifice be erected. A new church was erected in 1792 and Rev. Strong remained as pastor until 1795.

Harvey Kingsbury was born in December 1794 in the Andover Society. His health was frail. He engaged in jewelry making and teaching. After his marriage to Polly, daughter of Roswell Wright in 1824, he removed to Coventry and became a successful farmer. He served as selectman and on several town committees. He was for many years a director of the Rockville Bank and was one of the incorporators of the Bank. He lived on today's

South Street at the Skungamaug River crossing and was part owner of the mills there for a time.

Another Coventry native, Joel Jones, born in 1795, left here at the age of fifteen to join his uncle's business in Hebron. He found that activity not to his liking and was admitted to Yale in 1813 and obtained a law degree. He was one of the founders of Lafayette College at Easton Pennsylvania. He was mayor of Philadelphia from 1849-1851. He was well published in the area of religion and died in Philadelphia in 1860. (8)

Hezekiah Senior was born in Norwich (1743), and died (1816) in Coventry. He was a Captain in the Revolutionary Army. Hezekiah Junior was born in Norwich (1769), and died (1843) in Coventry. Hezekiah III, born in Franklin (1791), died (1862) in Coventry, served in war of 1812, and was a machinist and a carpenter. He lived near the lake on what is now Patriot's Park, and had an interest in an early mill, making machinery, at the site now occupied by the Town Garage.

Other Edgerton's populated the Second Society in the early 1800's, including Elisha, Abel and Jabez who were to become wealthy farmers and landowners.



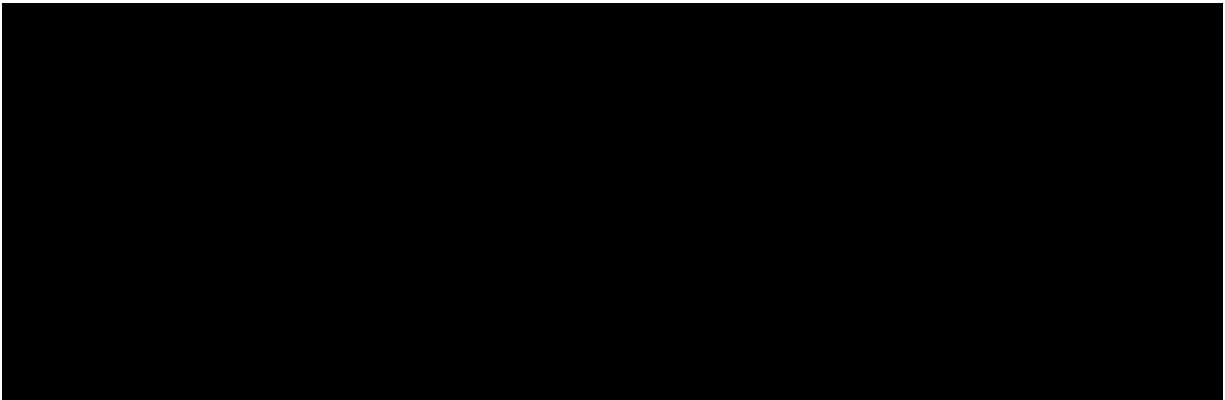
Second Church



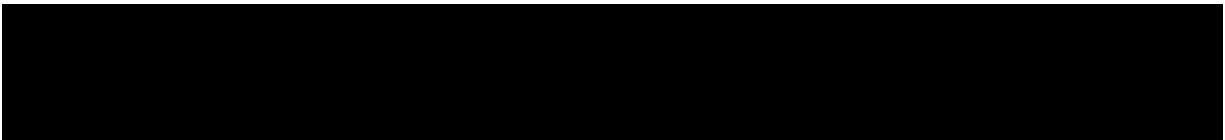
Second Church



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Harvey Kingsbury



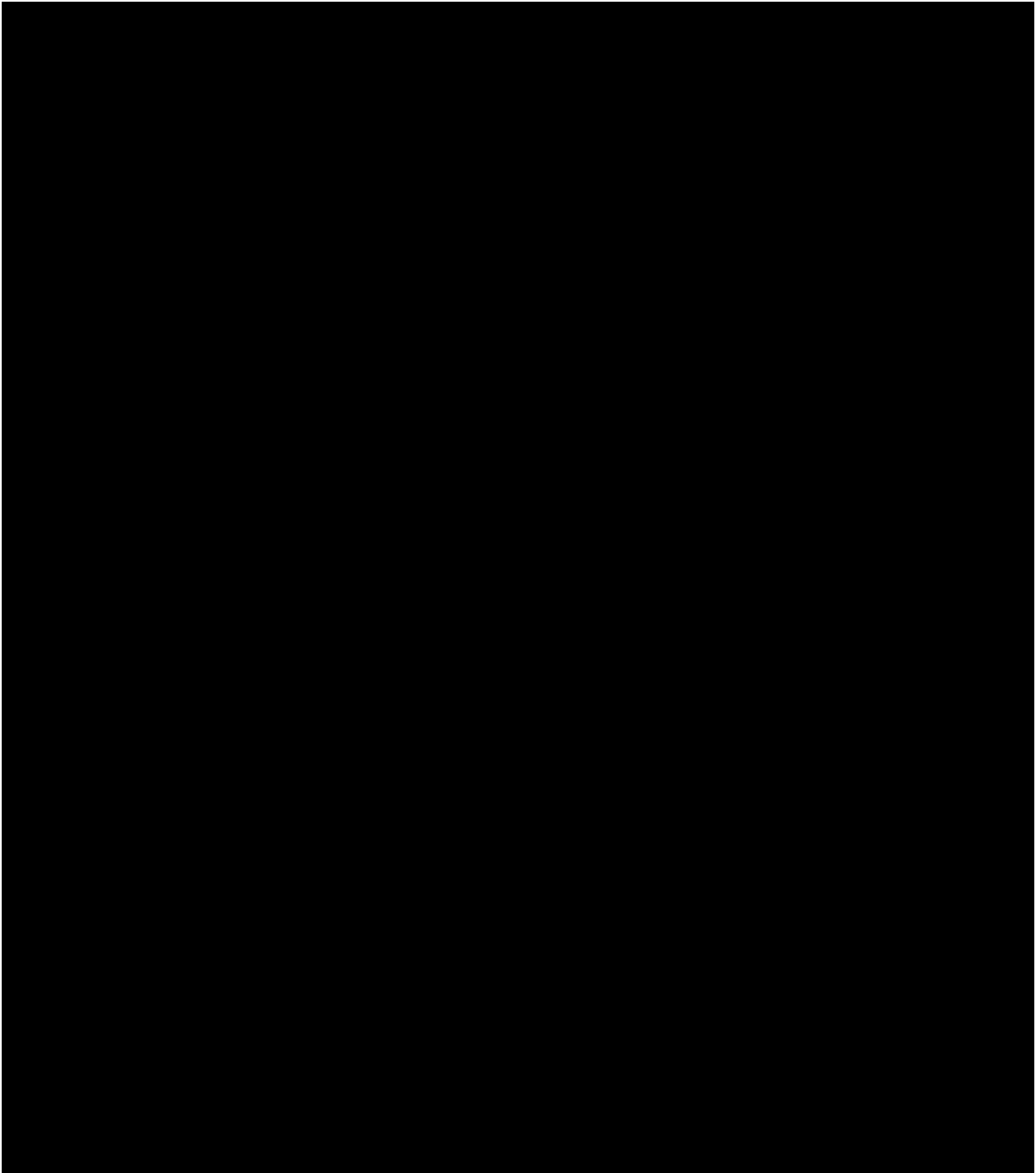
Joel Jones



78



Captain Hezekiah Edgerton



The Old Boston Turnpike crossed the Skungamaug south of the 'Deep Hole' and across the plain through the woods south of Mr. Spencer's shop in the direction of Otis Buckminster's or Mr. Gardiner's. Deep Hole is below Root's bridge (Root lived on the northeast side of the Boston turnpike and North River Road.) and the old Pitkin factory that was on the old turnpike (now Main Street) as it crossed the Skungamaug River. This route would take the Boston Turnpike from the Second Church eastward following today's Route 31 across the Skungamaug River, then further east to the vicinity of Sam Green Road, then northeast along Richmond Road, joining today's turnpike as it crosses Brigham Tavern Brook. This would seem to be logical, as the land where the turnpike runs today between Route 31 and Richmond Road was hilly and very wet in the small valleys, so the more southern route would have been over better ground. The second Boston Road was a great thoroughfare during the Revolution. (Maps from the late 1700's indicate this route followed today's Route 44 except just east of the Skungamaug River, the road swung northward along today's North River Road and east along Riley Mountain Road to the present turnpike.)

In 1769 a petition was sent to the General Assembly for permission to establish a route between Coventry and Hartford. Prior to that most trade between the two towns was by wagon to Norwich and by boat up the Connecticut River to Hartford. In 1797 the Boston Turnpike Company was incorporated to create and keep in repair a road from Hartford through the Bolton notch, to Thompson and then to the Massachusetts line, a distance of about 48 miles. Tolls ranged from one cent for each sheep or swine to twenty-five cents for a four wheeled pleasure carriage and horses. Tolls were collected at each gate and there were at least four along this road. There was no toll for travel to public worship, funerals, ordinary farming business, or for persons living within a mile and a half of a gate, persons going to a mill on horseback, persons attending a town meeting or performing military duty. The only place to obtain accommodations between Mansfield and Manchester was at Kimball's Tavern (on the Boston Turnpike near Silver Street) in Coventry. The turnpike to Hartford that exists as Route 44 today was begun in 1798. Stages were operated by Theodatus Woodbridge of Manchester in 1804 and later by Asher

Davenport son of Thomas Davenport who kept a tavern in Coventry in a house later owned by Dr. Eleazer Hunt. By 1810 Eleazer Pomeroy removed the stage shop to his tavern stand. Pomeroy's stage house was built for a tavern stand in 1801.

Before the trolley to South Coventry in 1909, a coach with two horses used to run between South Coventry village and the depot to meet the various trains that started to run in 1850. The Boston Turnpike was often locally called the "Middle Turnpike". The more northern route was through Worcester and the southern route along the shore. By 1879 all rights to collect tolls had ceased. (5,8)

The Hartford, New London, Windham and Tolland County turnpike received its charter in October of 1795. Its route was from the city of Hartford to the City of Norwich, court house to court house. Part of the road, of twenty-seven miles in length, was to have two tollgates between East Hartford and J. Hyde's house in Franklin. The following winter, the promoters modified their franchise to build only from White's Monument in Bolton to Hyde's in Franklin. This avoided a crossing of the Connecticut River and the centers of the two cities. The road passed six-tenths of a mile through Coventry essentially on today's Route 6. By 1835 this company had gone out of business, and the Hop River Turnpike Company was formed. The turnpike company existed until 1851 when it vanished so no process could be served on it. The Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad began in 1842 and paralleled the turnpike for its entire length. It also expanded the cut through Bolton Notch and filled in vast amounts of land to provide the gentle grade necessary for the trains. The route today is a well-used walking and biking trail from the Notch to Willimantic.



The Boston Turnpike c1780



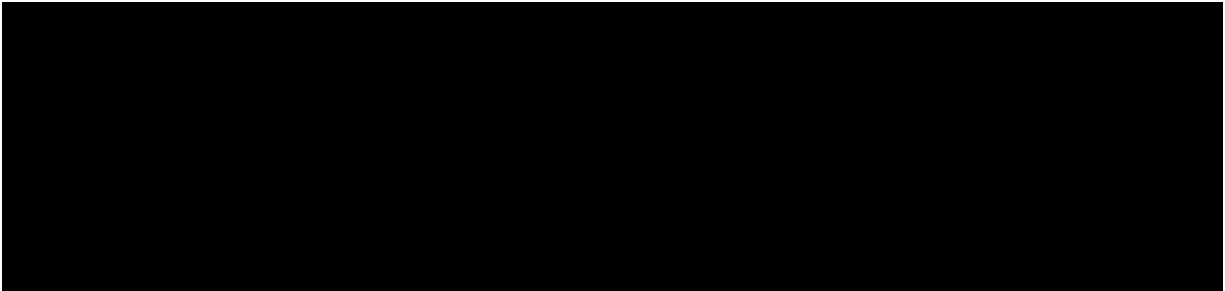
The Boston Turnpike c1780



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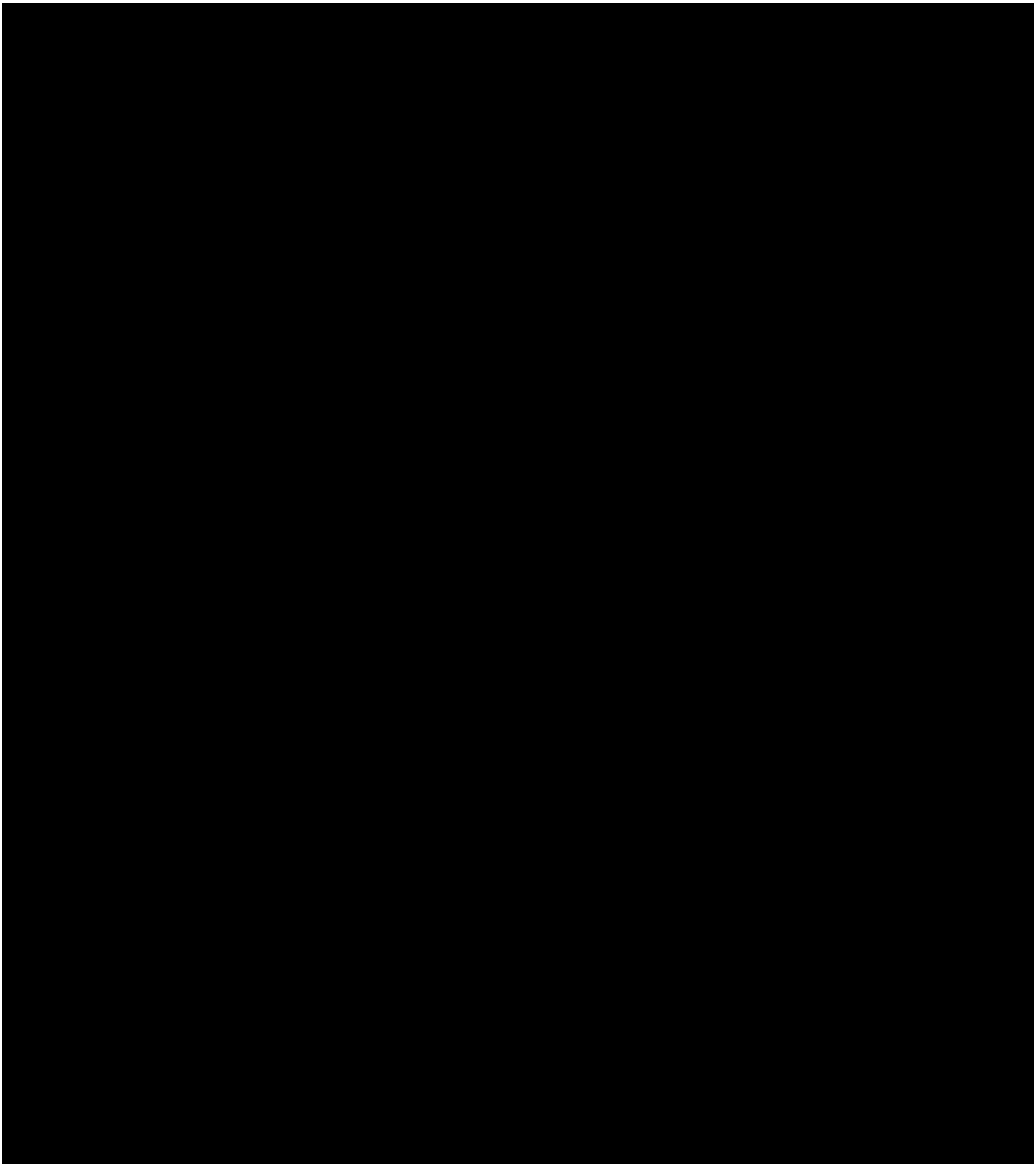


80



The Hartford To Norwich

Turnpike



An old Indian trail led from Mansfield through Canterbury to Greenwich on Narragansett Bay. The settlers developed it into a passable road. In 1699 Major Fitch cut a road from his home in Canterbury to Windham, producing the best route available from Windham to Providence and it became known as the "Great Road". The road was maintained by the citizens of the local towns. The flood of 1771 carried away the bridges over the Willimantic River and the citizens rebelled at having to re-build them. In May of 1799 the Windham Turnpike Company was incorporated to manage the "Great Road" with the additional privilege of extending the turnpike from Willimantic through South Coventry to the Boston Turnpike. In 1804 two additional toll gates were added. It is thought that one of them was located in the vicinity of the Sam Green Road intersection.

From the south the turnpike followed today's Route 32 from Windham north to Depot Road where it turned west to follow Depot Road to Main Street, then northwest along now Route 31 to Route 44. There was another toll gate somewhere in South Coventry. The turnpike corporation was dissolved in 1852. Depot Road was called Main Street until the late 1800's. It was the main route between the South Coventry Congregational Church and the Mansfield Center Congregational Church. One will find most early roads lead from church to church or meeting house to meeting house. The section of Route 31, which passes Miller-Richardson field, was certainly a path to the cemetery, but it is thought that it only became a main thoroughfare when the trolley was built in 1909 and another crossing of the Willimantic River was created. (1)



The Windham Turnpike



The Windham Turnpike

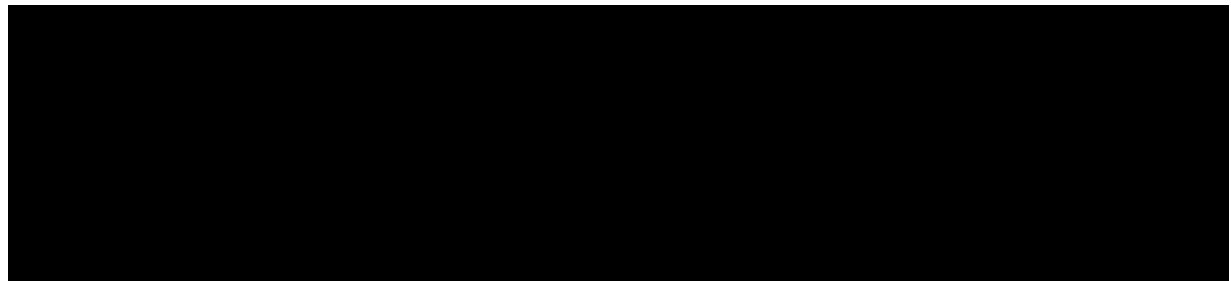


“Sat. May 5, 1792: Windham, On Tuesday last, a very melancholy accident occurred in Coventry, at the Potash works owned by Mr. Stanley, of that town. (on Potash Brook, Lake Street) The building had, by accidental means, taken fire on the roof; a Mr. Voris, who was employed in the Potash works, ascended to extinguish it; but while in the execution of his design, one of the rafters, which supported him, being much burnt, gave way, and he, being directly over one of the kettles, was immediately immersed in the boiling element which was contained in it; he was extricated as soon as possible, but was so scalded, as to survive only a few hours. A number of people having collected, the fire was soon extinguished in the building.”
(18)

Potash- Ash, birch, oak and other hard- woods were burned to ashes which were then boiled. The residue that remained was called “pottash.” Potash was used in the colonies for soap-making, glass making and bleaching. The farmer in clearing his land could make some money by selling the potash which was easier to transport than lumber. By 1766, New England was exporting 14,000 barrels of potash.



The Potash Works

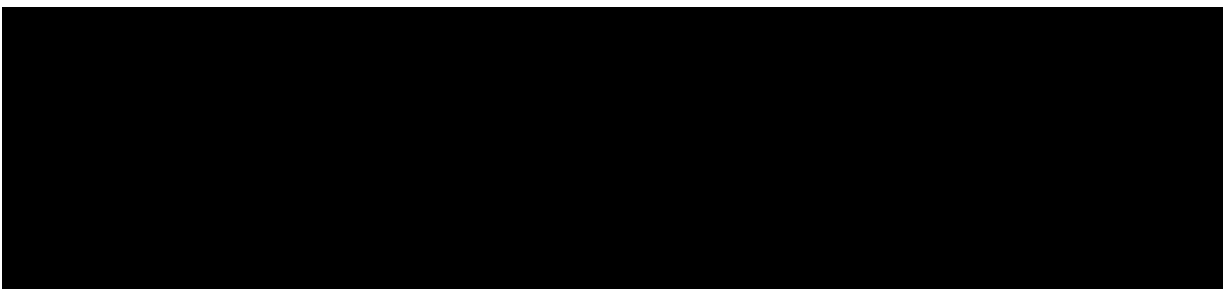


The Potash Works



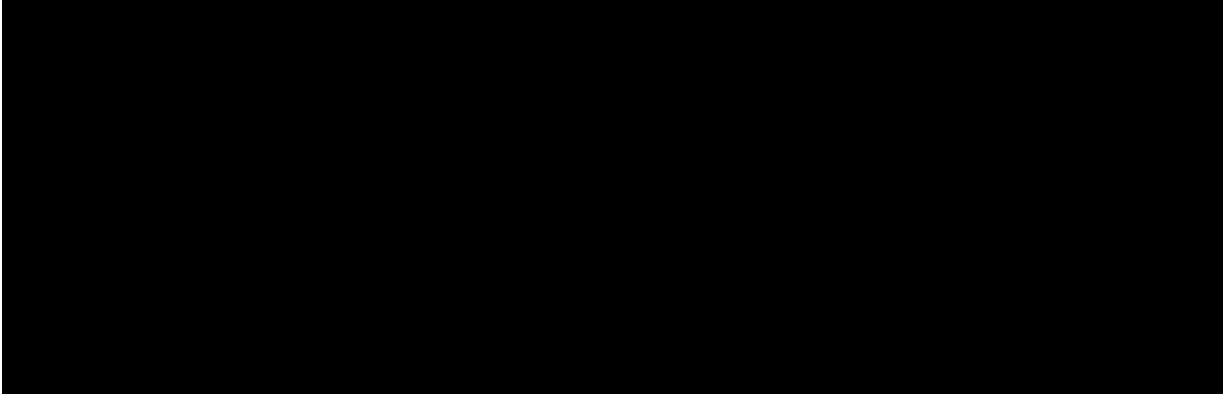
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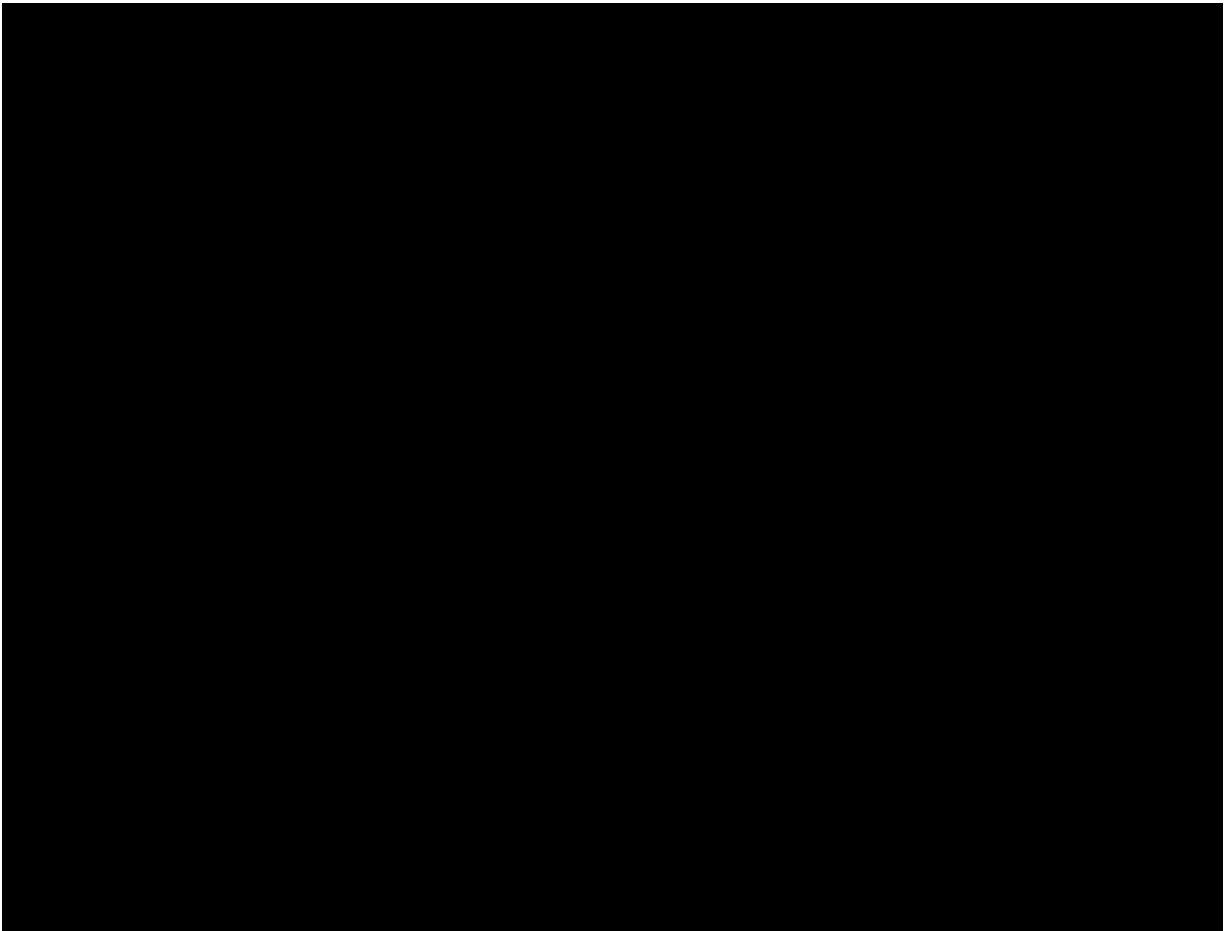
Coventry 1812

(Symbols along the waterways indicate mill sites)



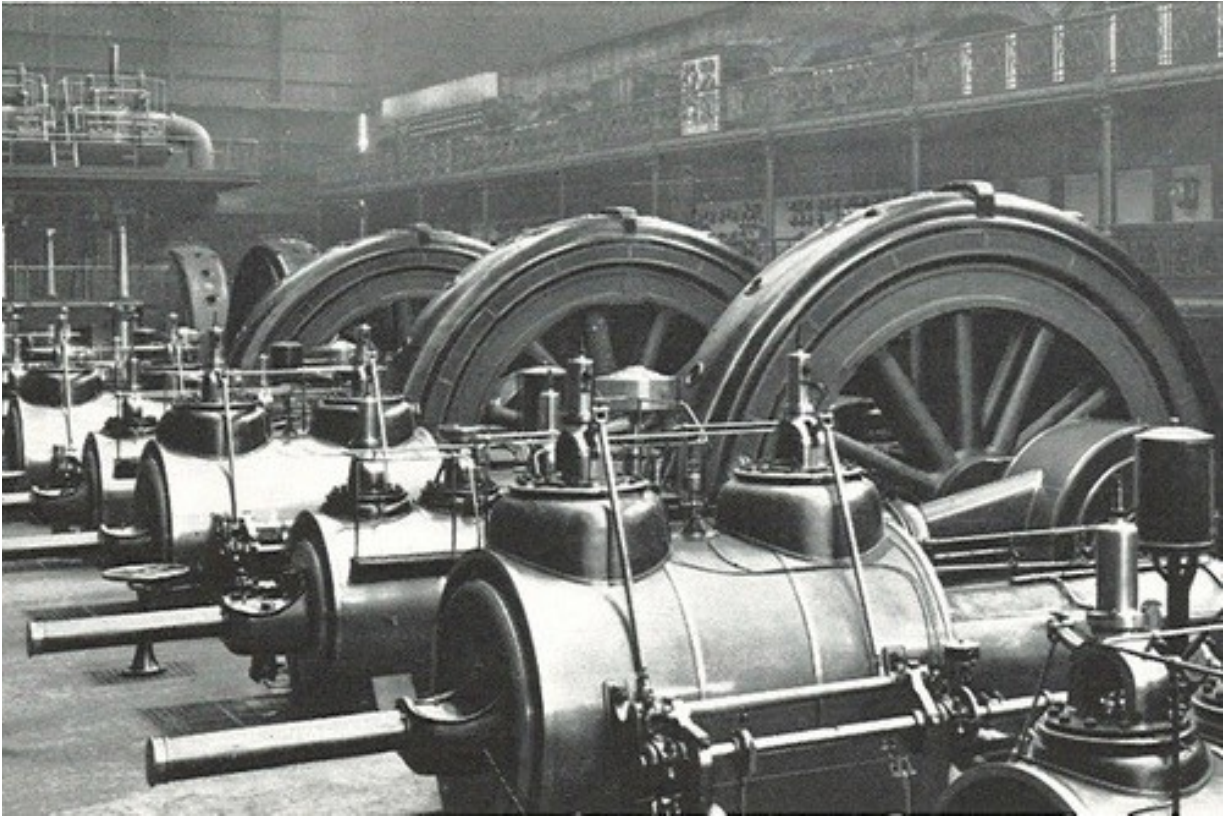
Chapter 3

Industrial Growth



Chapter 3

Industrial Growth



The early part of the 1800's was marked by two significant events. The embargo imposed by the government prior to the War of 1812 effectively shut off imports, especially textiles, from England and provided a spark to produce materials at home. This was followed by tariffs on cotton of six and one-quarter cents per yard in 1816, and then in 1824 and 1828 the tariffs were increased. The first cotton (yarn) mill in Coventry was opened in 1812 on Woods Lane followed by five more throughout the century. This mill preceded the thread mills in Willimantic and was about coincident with the emergence of the great cotton mills of Lowell, Massachusetts.

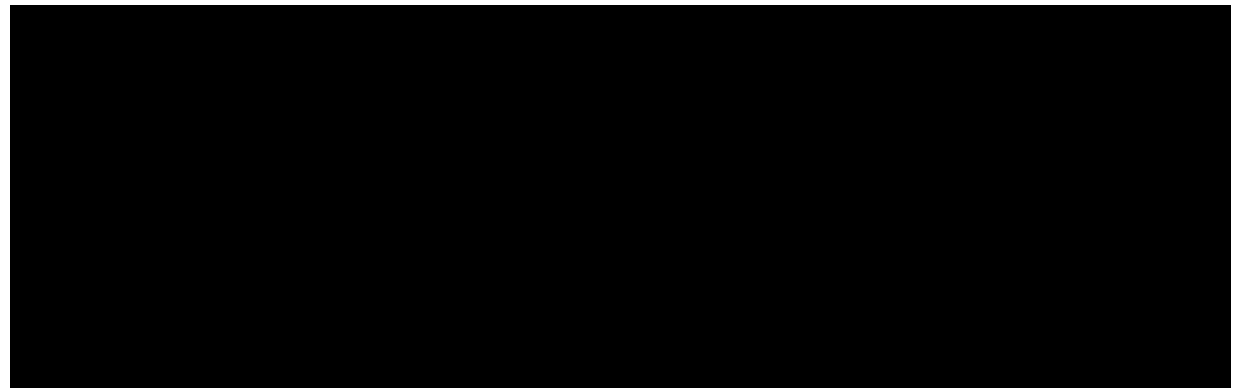
The other significant event was the arrival of John Boynton who was to become the major business and industry leader in Coventry until his demise in 1856. At one time he owned or had controlling interest in seven of the sixteen mill sites on the Mill Brook as well as large plots of land in the area. He was issued his first patent, for a textile machine, in 1811. The population of Coventry had grown to a little over 2,000 residents. (It was to stay near this level until just after World War II.)

While the Revolutionary War created the independent United States, it also created the need and opportunity for commerce and industry previously dominated by England. Early shops and mills in town were all owned by local residents. Some large farm owners decided to "branch out" to grist, fulling and saw mills. Others were officers in the Continental Army and brought their leadership skills from the militia to industrial endeavors. Some were inventors who had that unique skill of creativity coupled with a business sense. Their inventions were protected by the patent system created in 1790.

All of the millers, fullers and sawyers were men as were the blacksmiths and iron workers. The textile mills employed mostly women and children. Women had the manual dexterity needed for rapid, close work, and were being freed from the rigors of cloth making and food preparation that were becoming mechanized. Children were used because of their size and dexterity. Many textile machines required a person of small stature with quick reflexes to climb through the machinery, change spools and the like.

The work was moderately dangerous and paid less than the women. Men were employed for the heavy lifting and maintenance tasks as well as for shipping goods and raw material.

As the factories became larger and needed more financing, entrepreneurs and businessman from New London, Rhode Island and New York entered the picture and operated many of the factories along the Mill Brook in the late 1800's.



On April 10, 1790, President George Washington signed the bill that laid the foundation of the modern American patent system. This date marks the first time in American history that the law gave inventors rights to their creations.

The 1790 law gave the Patent Board members the power to grant a patent. Their authority was absolute and could not be appealed. The first board members included Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, who was considered the first administrator of the American patent system and the first patent examiner. Other members included Henry Knox, Secretary of War, and Edmund Randolph, Attorney General. The Department of State had the responsibility for administering the patent laws, and fees for a patent were between \$4 and \$5, with the board deciding on the duration of each patent, not to exceed fourteen years.

The Act of April 10, 1790 also defined the subject matter of a U.S. patent as "any useful art, manufacture, engine, machine, or device, or any improvement thereon not before known or used." Applicants were to provide a patent specification and drawing and, if possible, a model. After examining the application, the board members would issue a patent if they deemed "the invention or discovery sufficiently useful and important."

On July 31, 1790, Samuel Hopkins of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, received the first U.S. patent for an improvement in "the making of Pot ash and Pearl ash by a new Apparatus and Process." President George Washington signed the patent, as did Attorney General Edmund Randolph and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. The original document is still in existence in the collections of the Chicago Historical Society. In 1809, Mary Dixon Kies, a native of Killingly, Conn., is reported to have received the first U.S. patent awarded to a woman for a process of weaving straw with silk or thread. Unfortunately, all records of this patent were destroyed in the Patent Office fire of 1836.

The Industrial Revolution, which began in Great Britain in the mid 1700's, migrated to the United States after the war of independence. Two significant

events were the invention of the first reliable steam engine in 1775 by James Watt, who also coined the term “horsepower”, and the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793. The Industrial Revolution reached Coventry around 1810 which marked the beginning of the rapid growth of the mills here.



The Patent Sytem



The Patent Sytem



The mill industry in Coventry emerged due to a number of political, economic, social and geological factors. Many of these factors were shared by other southern New England towns, but Coventry can claim a certain uniqueness in its concentration and variety of mills and mill products. In the time period of 1716 to 1920 there were forty water powered mills (not necessarily all at the same time) in Coventry. By 1812 there were fifteen mills in town, most of them serving the local population, but there were two paper mills that sold goods to Hartford, Norwich, and Boston. Over time, businessmen developed thirty-four mill sites, some holding more than one mill, and those sites held over seventy major buildings that were associated with water power. These sites produced fifty-two different products.

While the first settlers arrived in the Connecticut valley in 1633, there was little migration into the eastern part of the state, partly due to the fact that it was populated by the Mohegan and Pequot Indians. At the time they were in conflict with each other. Numerous quarrels between the Pequots and the settlers led to the Pequot War of 1637 which began the period of control by the British. Skirmishes among the Indians continued until the 1680's when conflict ceased and the Indians were subject to the rule of the English. By the late 1600's, Eastern Connecticut became a "safe" place in which to settle and grow a business.

Early farms were independently owned and operated. Farm families became very self-sufficient and self-reliant for housing, agriculture, hunting and clothing. Families came together primarily for spiritual reasons. This self-reliant spirit gave rise to the Minutemen who were a very capable and independent fighting force, but also generated an individuality, creativity, and risk-taking spirit that some call Yankee Ingenuity. This ingenuity provided the impetus to use the natural environment to build mills and invent machines and processes to produce a wide variety of products for local use and eventually export.

After the Revolutionary War the population exploded due to the new sense of freedom. By 1800, one-third of Connecticut's population were children under the age of five and only one-sixth of the population was over the age

of 45. This population explosion created a cadre of young folk who were willing and capable of building and laboring in mills.

In 1797 the Boston Turnpike Company was incorporated. The Windham Turnpike Company was incorporated in 1799 adding an extension from Willimantic through South Coventry to the Boston Turnpike. In 1789 the Hartford, New London, Windham and Tolland County turnpike was chartered from Hartford to Norwich along what is now Route 6 (originally it is thought that turnpike went through Bolton Center, later the turnpike followed the road through the Notch). By 1800, the three major roads in Coventry were in place and provided a more convenient way to cart materials in and out of town. A stage coach ride from Hartford to North Coventry took four to four and one-half hours.

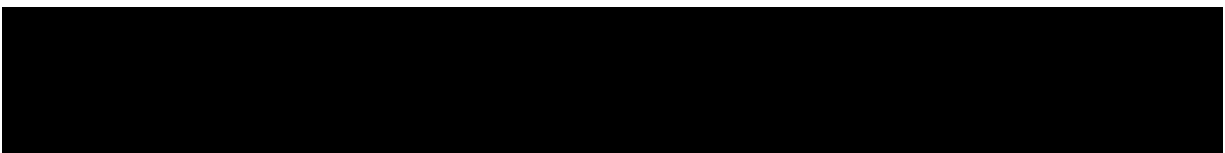
1819-1829 was a watershed decade for the decline of rural New England. The Market Panic of 1819 was caused by speculation and overextended credit and caused farm prices to decline by one-half. This occurred on the heels of the embargo of 1807 and the War of 1812 which created a demand for manufactured goods that were previously shipped from Europe or highly taxed if made locally. In addition, the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the expansion of the railroads westward in 1829 brought relatively inexpensive farm products from upper New York and the Great Lakes region. (The shipping costs for a ton of grain across New York State dropped from \$100 per ton to \$6 per ton with the opening of the canal.) Commercial farming in New England began to decline, though dairy, livestock and apples remained viable commodities in Coventry. Farmers were forced to change their “employment” and local mills started to emerge rapidly.

The discovery of gold in California in 1849 led to a rapid expansion in money that was coined by the U.S. government and accepted all over the world. The demand for shipping created by this boom led to the development of the great shipbuilding interests in New England for both ocean and coastal traffic. This improvement in transportation provided the opportunity for factories in New England to serve a more global market.

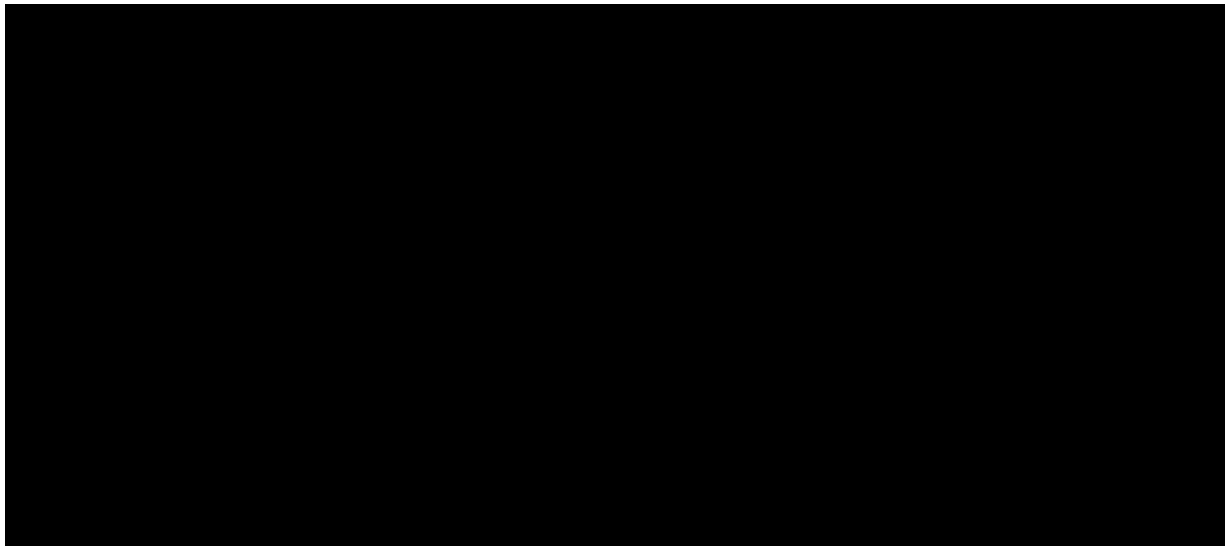
The stones which were used for foundations, water channels, retaining walls, buildings, and machine and water wheel supports were sometimes quarried locally, but mostly came from the natural surroundings. A huge number of stones were made available between 1775 and 1825 due to the fact that deforestation (for fuel, buildings and fencing) had stripped the land bare thereby exposing it to significantly greater frost heaving than that of a wooded environment. Glacial debris left behind began to become exposed in huge numbers which created the great stone wall building period, but also created the raw material for many of the structures needed to employ water power.

By the early 1800's we have the social, economic and political factors in line to create the mill industries along with the population to support it. The final and most significant factor to the rich and varied mill history of Coventry is its geological makeup. Coventry is blessed with three rivers, one major brook and several minor brooks. All were used to provide water power for mills. For the millwrights to harness the power of water to operate a mill, they had to consider several elements. The mill stream had to have a fairly dependable flow of water (season to season), and with sufficient fall to turn a water wheel without creating the necessity for erecting huge dams. The stream had to provide a natural dam site for the stability of the dam once built.

Broad valley floors provide poor sites for damming, whereas valleys with a natural constriction not only limit the necessary size of the dam but also provide more effective anchoring points for the structure. A good mill pond location immediately upstream of the mill dam must provide for the impoundment of enough water to operate the machinery even during periods of relative drought. An area above a natural constriction would be ideal to create a mill pond. Lower dams were better for construction and repair costs; besides the dam structure would have considerably less risk of undue water pressure, ice jams, and flooding problems. (12)



A Summary of the Factors that Created a Thriving Mill Industry in
Coventry



A Summary of the Factors that Created a Thriving Mill Industry in
Coventry



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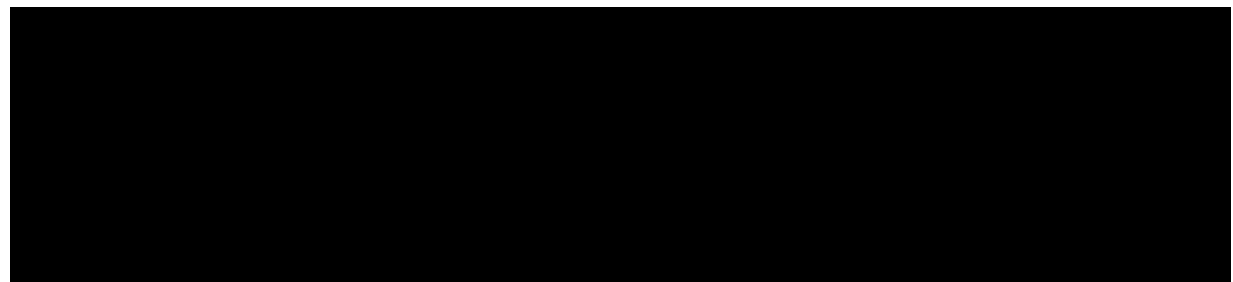
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Certain old books give evidence of a library previous to 1800 known as the Social Library. In 1803 Mrs. Sarah Hale left \$3,333.33 as a legacy for a library. Mrs. Hale was the wife of John Hale, brother of Nathan. By the terms of Sarah's will, the library was created especially for the use of ministers or those wishing to study for the ministry. A certain percentage of the money was to form a cumulative fund that amounted to over \$10,000 in 1912. The remainder was to purchase books and for the aid of students wishing to be ministers. The successor to this library (1912) is at the Congregational parsonage and is known as the Hale Donation Library. (4)

In 1811 the (first) church had only twenty-nine members with twenty-eight of them being women. Soon after, a series of revivals under the pastor Rev. Chauncey Booth added nearly 300 members to the church. (4)

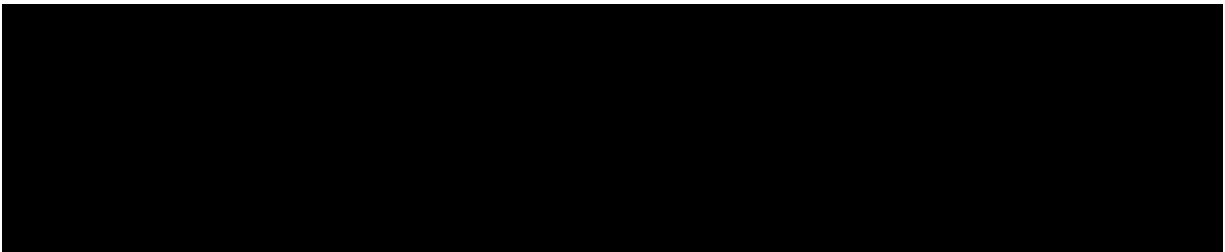


Early Libraries



Early Libraries

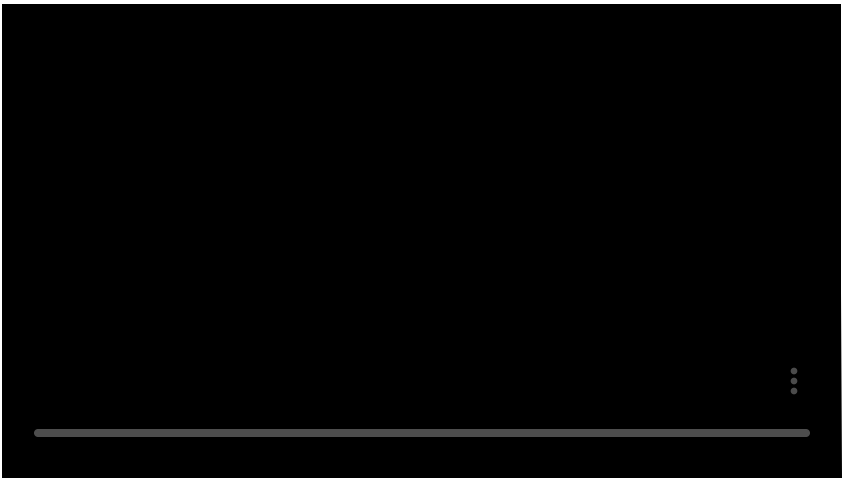




Coventry’s Libraries

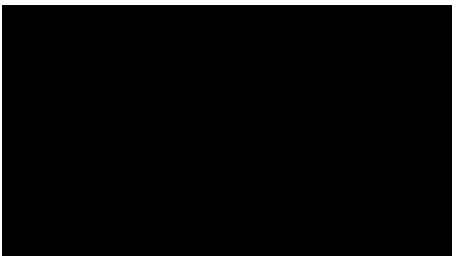
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Miss Madegan Morrison





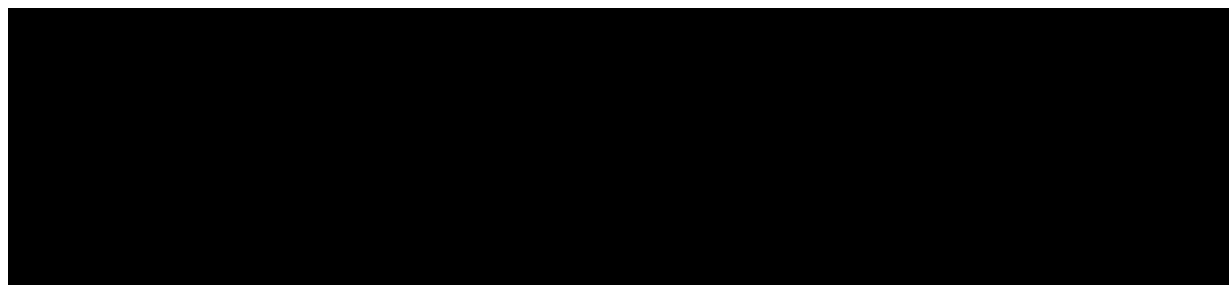
Coventry's Libraries
Presented by:
Miss Madegan Morrison



Dr. Timothy Dimock was born April 7, 1800 in Coventry, the second youngest child and only son of the eight children of Capt. Daniel Dimock. Daniel was a respected farmer and a descendant of Elder Thomas Dimock, an early emigrant to the American Colonies. Elder Thomas of Dorchester had, in 1639, a grant of land in Barnstable, and was admitted a freeman of the Colony in the same year. Timothy studied the higher branches of English, Greek, and Latin with Rev. Chauncy Booth, pastor of the First Congregational Church. He later graduated from Yale College in 1823. He was a practicing physician for 45 years, a few of them out of town. He returned to Coventry in 1827 where he lived until his death in 1874. He served in the State House and Senate (1838, 1846) His estate was located on today's Cross Street.



Timothy Dimock

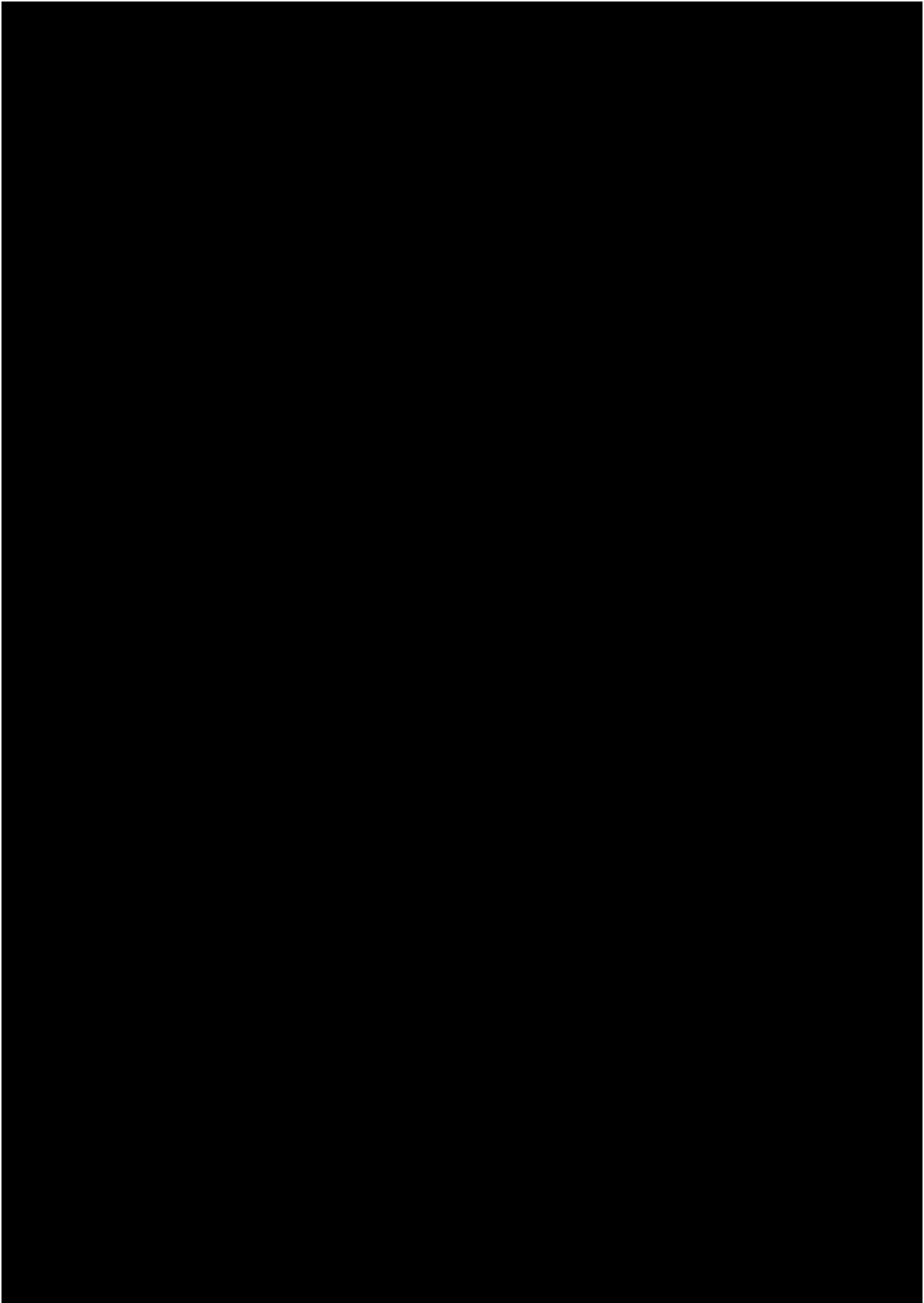


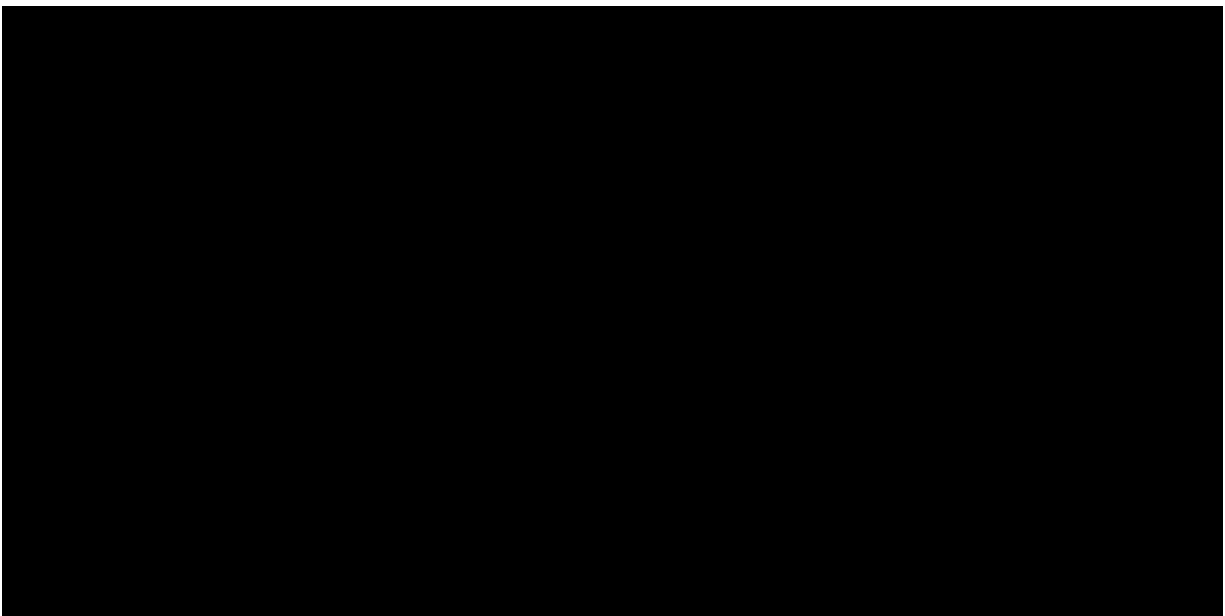
Timothy Dimock

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Dr. Timothy Dimock





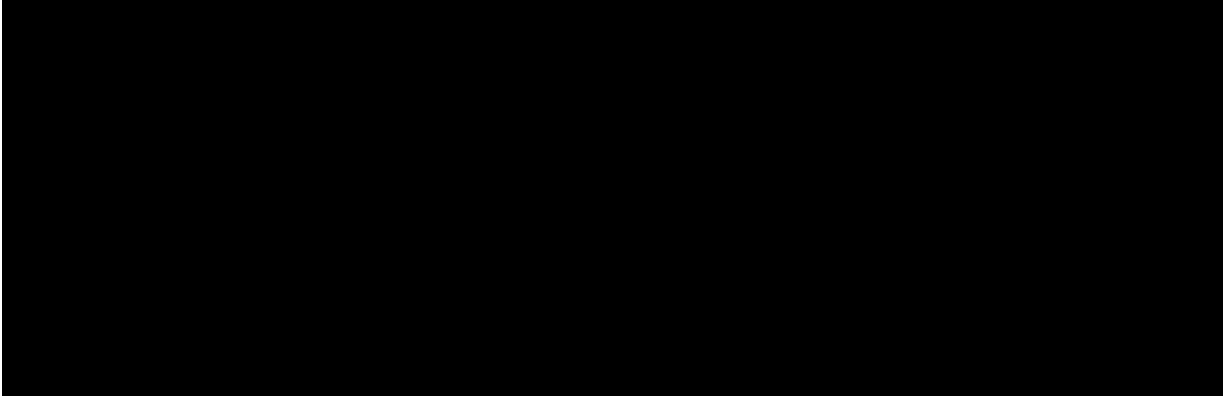
Following the War of 1812 the U.S. government imposed a tariff on English goods including woolens. A wool craze swept the region. The Portuguese aristocracy had bred a special kind of sheep called merino in the 1700's. It was highly regarded for its ample fleece which produced soft, high-quality wool. The government also placed an embargo on the export of this breed. However, in 1809 Napoleon defeated Portugal and opened the door for merino sheep export. In 1810 William Jarvis, the American consul to Portugal, imported 4,000 merino sheep to his farm in Vermont. Sheep population reached the millions in New England in about fourteen years. To support all of these sheep, the landscape changed dramatically. The countryside was virtually cleared of forest to create pasturage. No terrain was excluded from this process. Extensive stone fencing (made possible by the annual "crop" of stones found in the cleared land) was built to contain the sheep.

A typical stone wall was four and one half feet high with rails or brush on the top. It is estimated that the mass of stone in New England's walls exceeded that of the Great Pyramids of Egypt. The sheep "craze" lasted only about 40 or 50 years. The soils that underlay the pastures were susceptible to erosion with no trees (and roots) to prevent it. Farmers also over- stocked their fields with sheep to make more money. The erosion substantially reduced the grasses needed for the grazing sheep. The streams of the region also became overburdened by silt and some of the worst floods in New England's history took place in this era. The major effects were felt in central New England, though virtually every town was affected. (3)

In the different cemeteries of the north parish, seventeen soldiers from the War of 1812 are buried.



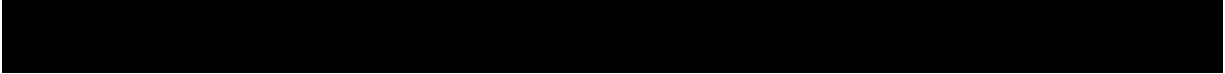
The Emergence of Sheep Farming



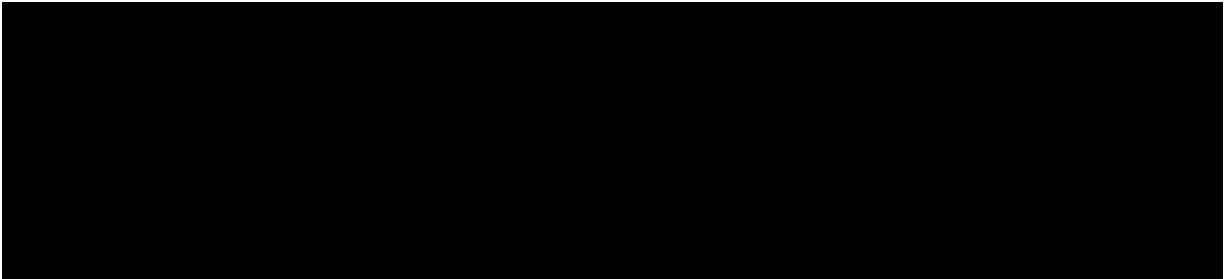
The Emergence of Sheep Farming



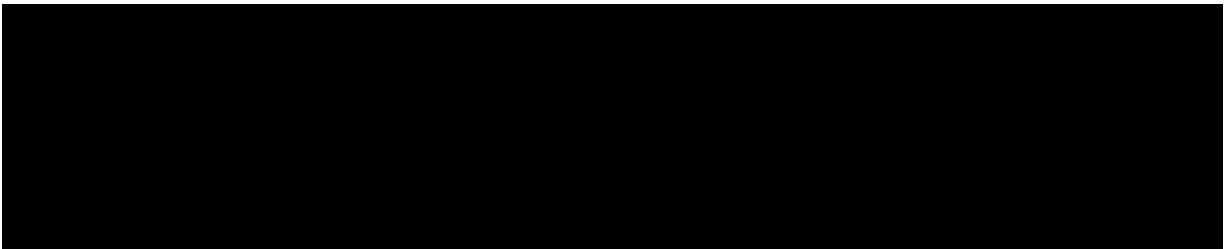
Chauncey Howard, born 1812 in Coventry, was the nephew of Nathan Hale's sister Joanna. He graduated Amherst College in 1835 and distinguished himself as a lawyer, clerk of the Superior Court and was in the state legislature as a representative from Coventry in 1877.

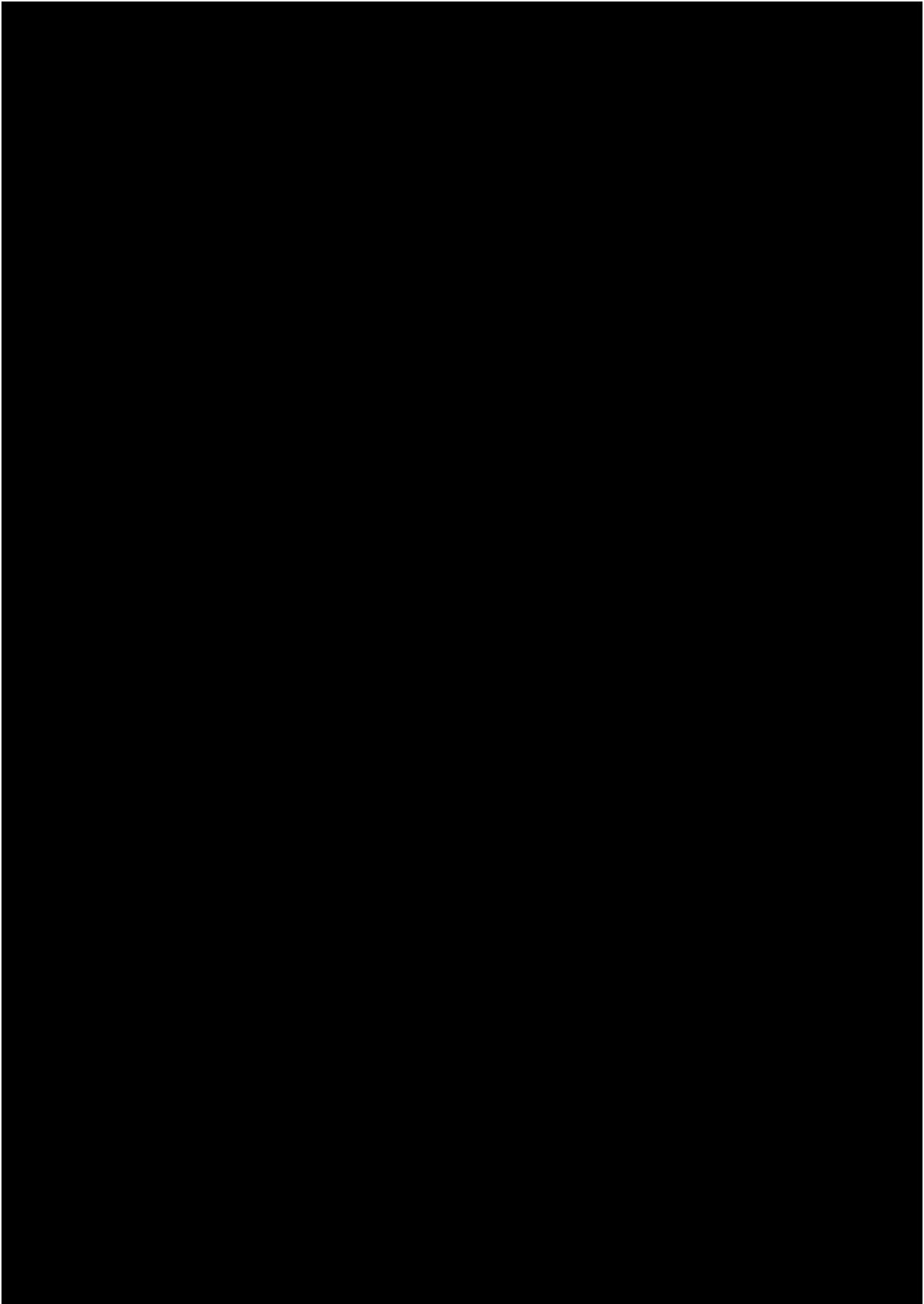


Chauncey Howard



Chauncey Howard







In April of 1812, Jeremiah Fitch, Charles McLean and Solomon Gilbert begin building a paper mill on a site five rods south of the grist mill on the Mill Brook. The purity of the water was noted for making writing paper and paper for account books. The mill operated for about eighteen years with ownership held at various times by Fitch, McLean, Gilbert, Bacon and finally to Calvin and Royal Manning. The 1820 Federal Census documents a paper mill owned by Royal Manning et al. It employed five men and five children. The mill produced writing, painting and wrapping paper (total of 1430 reams by hand) at a value of \$5,900. Mr. Bacon had a fulling mill on this site prior to the paper mill. In 1814, Solomon Gilbert had a carding house just east of the above site. The site included carding and picking machines and the water privilege twenty rods south of the grist mill.

In September of 1814, John Boynton purchased two one-acre plots of land north of the grist mill on the Mill Brook from Solomon Bidwell and Jeremiah Fitch. One of these plots was known as the "Still lot". In 1815 John (age 33) built a two and one-half story mill 27 x 70 feet in size. The upper floor carding engine served local women for their homespun at seven cents a pound, and on the lower floor he made carding machines of his own patent. His power was a breast-type water wheel. Farmers brought raw wool here to be carded into rolls.

Boynton's Mill

On August 5, 1814, Daniel Dimick sold to Calvin & Royal Manning, B. Bates, J. Parrish and E. Loomis, the owners of the Coventry

Cotton Manufacturing Company, five acres with the privilege of building a dam and a tail race, and a cotton yarn mill was built on the site adjacent to the Mill Brook, just east of today's Woods Lane. In June of 1815, the company leased the mill to Bates and Dimick to make yarn. The machinery includes 372 spindles in one mule of 182 throstles. The yarn was sold at two and one-quarter cents per yard and was bundled into five and ten pound lots to families to be woven into three-quarter shirting by hand looms for which thirty-three cents per yard was paid. The Coventry Manufacturing Company was officially incorporated in 1815. By 1820 the mill had converted to cotton cloth made on power looms. The 1820 census noted the Coventry Manufacturing Co.- S. Gilbert Agent. The mill employed five adults and eleven children, used mule "throstles" with a total of 696 spindles and made 27,000 lbs. of cotton yarn valued at \$9,450. Water looms are on site, but not yet in operation.

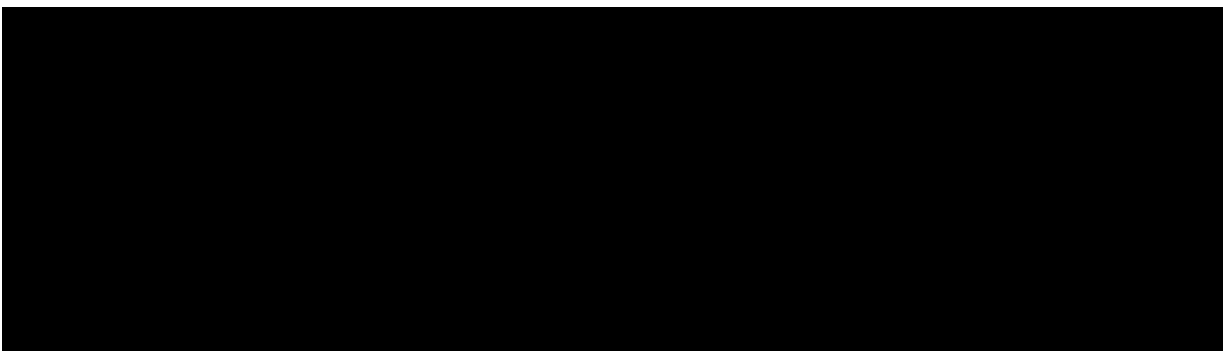
John Boynton was born in Coventry in March of 1793. John's great-grandfather was William, a settler from Yorkshire England in 1638. He served an apprenticeship at the Hop River textile mill of Samuel Guild and married Guild's daughter Lois, in 1807. He was issued his first patent for a textile (carding) machine in 1811, and commenced building his mill here in 1815. Boynton was elected Deacon of the First Church of Coventry in 1830 and of the Village Church in 1849. John lived in several houses near his mill, the most notable is the Lyman house across from the Hale cemetery. He built his own home, which still stands on the corner of Main and Lake Streets, about 1825 and lived there until leaving town. Several of his employees learned their skills in his shop and were to go on to their own notable careers. Among them were his three sons, John W., Leander, and Winslow. He also trained Ralph Crittenden, William Tibbals and Henry Mason who were to go on to build their own ammunition mills, of world renown, in Coventry. Another employee, George Kinnie went to work for the Colt manufactory in Hartford where he rose to superintendent of the machine shop. Mr. Boynton, at one time, owned many of the mill sites on the Mill Brook and held mortgages for many properties in South Coventry. He contributed to the Church and was a business czar of sorts though a very benevolent one. In 1852 he was forced to mortgage his mill and home

to Tolland Bank and could not meet the terms. The Bank foreclosed and owned his property for a number of years. John moved with his son John W.

to East Hartford where he died in 1863 at the age of 80.

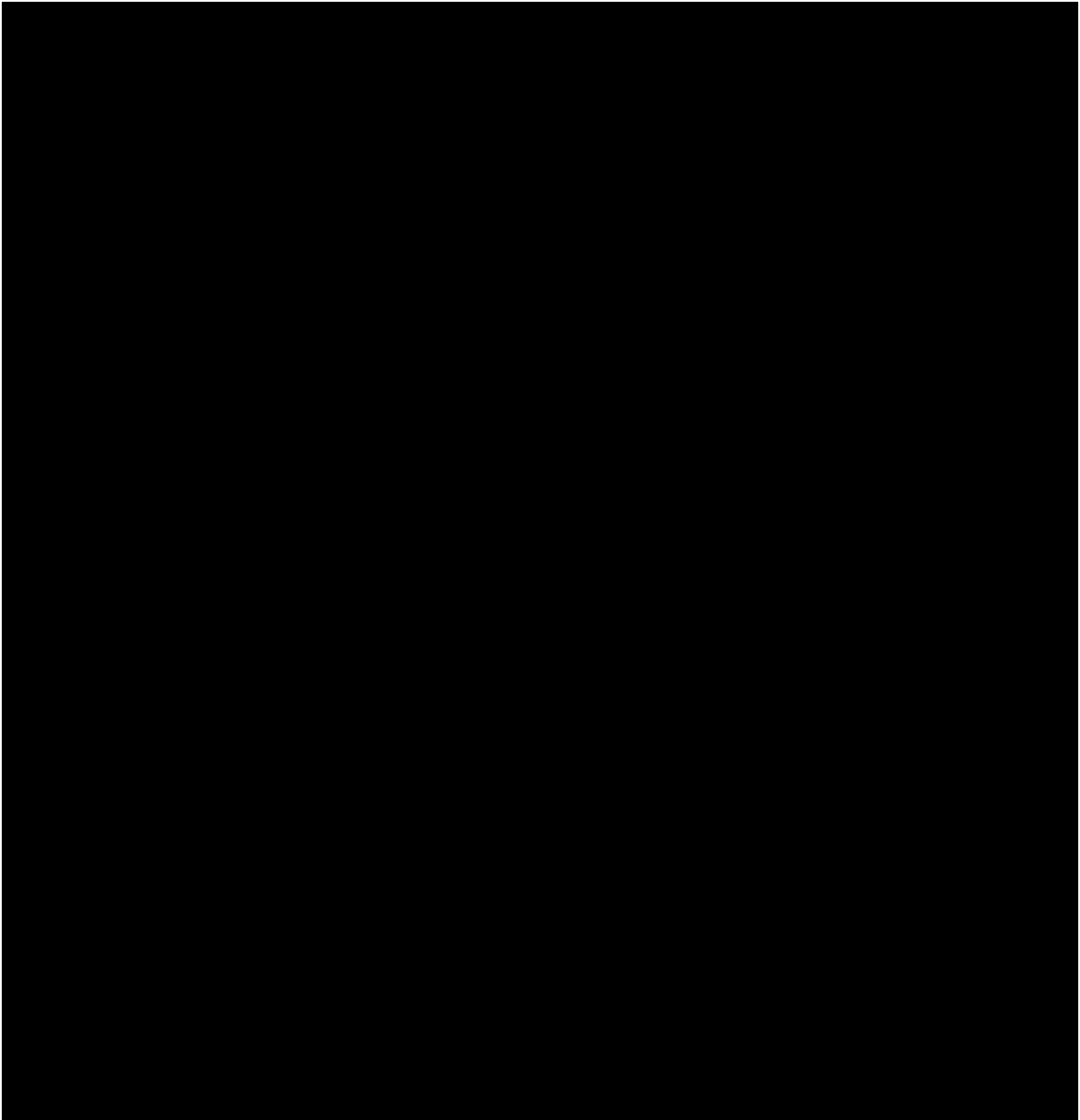


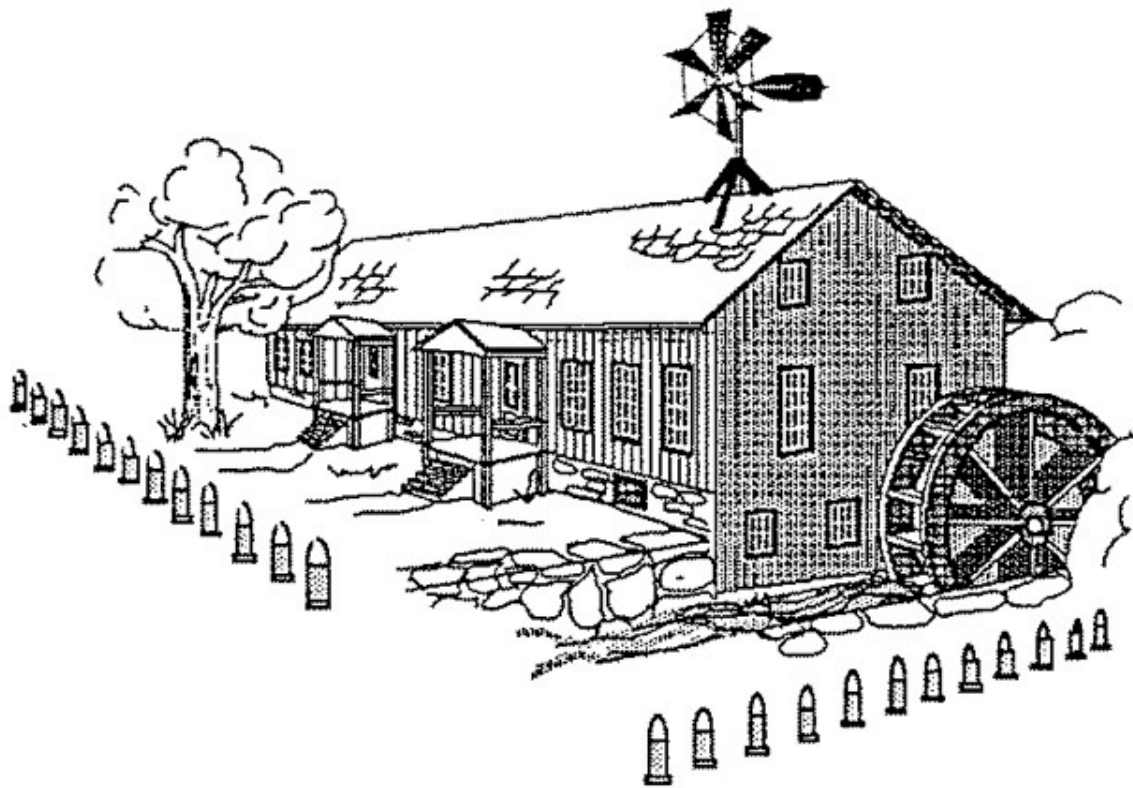
Three Early Mills on the Mill Brook

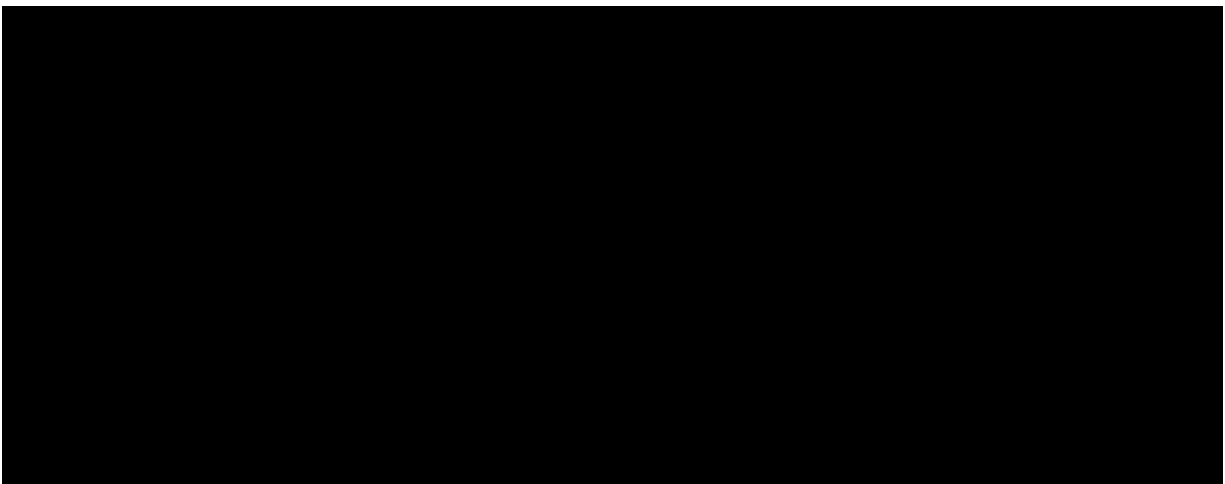


Three Early Mills on the Mill Brook









John Boynton

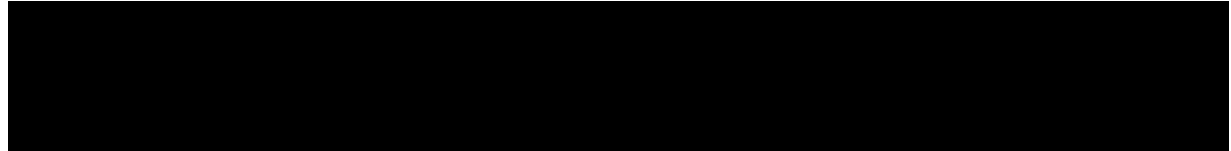
An 1812 map shows a fulling mill (also referred to as a “clothiers shop”) on the Skungamaug River just north of its Main Street crossing. It was built by Ephraim and Daniel Wight of Brimfield on land owned by Josiah Brown. The water privilege is shared with Nathaniel Root Jr., Gad Page and Eleazer Hatch. Mr. Page had financed and built the original dam. The mill was built prior to 1812, but the date is not certain. There was an old cider mill northwest of this site originally owned by Ruth and Levi Sweetland, then Eleazer Hatch.

The paper mill on the Skungamaug River adjacent to Andover was sold in December of 1813 to Gideon Hollister for \$2,800 (\$39,000 in today’s dollars). Gideon Hollister was born in Glastonbury in 1776 and settled in the Andover Society in the early 1800’s. His paper mill was a large complex and the road leading to it from the Hartford-to-Norwich turnpike (Route 6) was called the Paper Mill Road. Gideon and his wife Mary had five sons and two daughters. Charles, his fourth son, stayed the longest with his father and was part of their later insolvency. His fifth son, Nelson, worked as a paper maker with his father and brother for a while but moved to Hartford in 1838. He became a dealer in paper stock and obtained a degree of wealth. He and his wife were generous contributors to the Andover Church and Ladies Society. The 1820 Federal Census shows Hollister’s paper mill using cotton and linen rags (sixteen tons) as raw material, employing four men and four children, having one engine and one wet and one dry press Hollister had \$4,000 capital invested, paid \$1,400 in annual wages, and produced writing (400 reams), printing (600 reams), and wrapping (200 reams) paper for a total value of \$4,200.

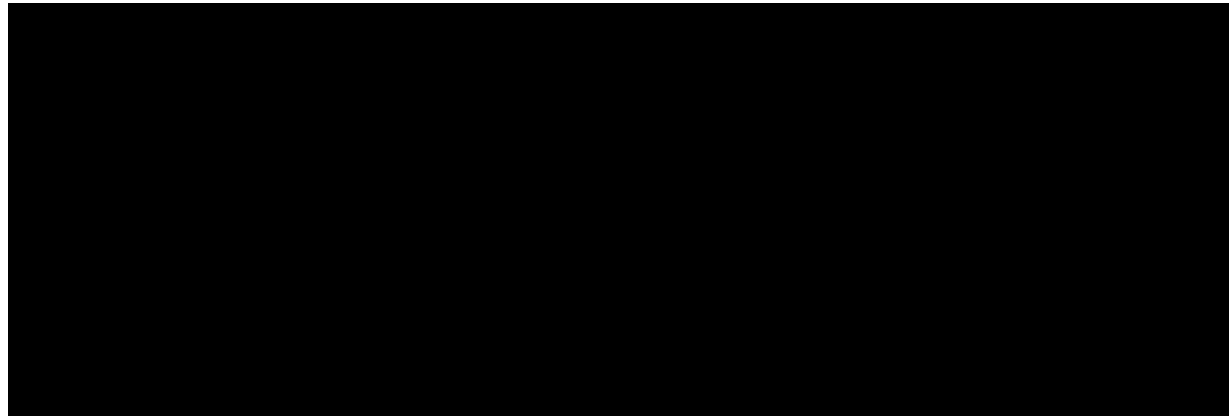
Hollister operated the mill until his bankruptcy in November of 1841. By 1840, machines had been invented to make paper and there was a national economic depression in 1837 that contributed to closing the existing paper mill on the Mill Brook in Coventry and certainly had an effect on Hollister’s business. At the time of Hollister’s bankruptcy the mill was operating, though Hollister & Sons were in debt to four or five people and apparently could not pay them as their mill was sold in a bankruptcy sale. Some of the machinery and material in the mill at the time of its sale were:

two paper presses, five engines to grind rags, one Fourdinure(sp) paper machine with a drier and a cutter, two calendar rolls for calendaring paper, and nine bales of rags in the steamboat house in Hartford.

A Gazetteer published in 1819 shows: Dairy constitutes the principal agricultural interest in Coventry. Population is 1,938 with 324 dwellings. Principal industries are: One Cotton Factory, Two Paper Mills, One Glass Factory, One Carding Machine Maker, Three Small distilleries, Five Tanneries, Three Grain Mills, Six Saw Mills and Seven Mercantile Stores.
(15)



Early Mills on the Skungamaug River



Early Mills on the Skungamaug River



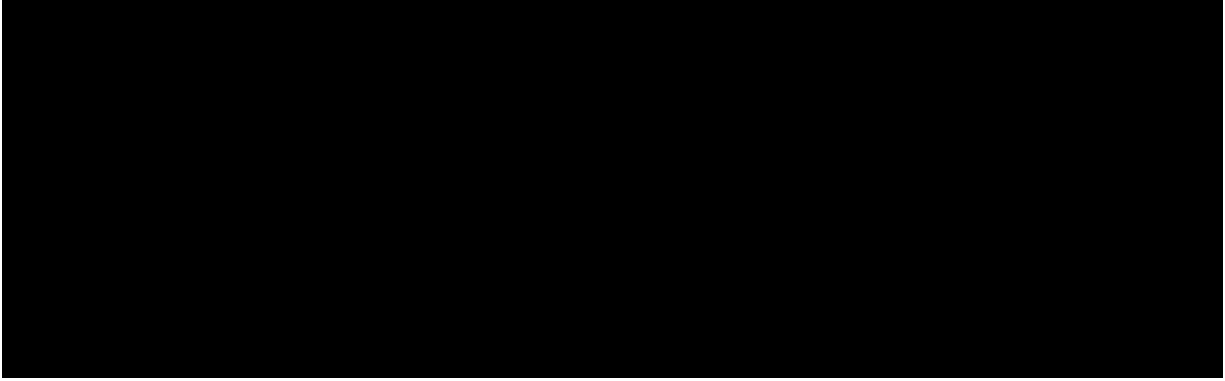
Connecticut and a few other of the original thirteen states had rights to land in the mid-west which attracted farmers as early as 1754 and still maintained its attraction in light of the 1819 crisis. In 1786, Connecticut, one of the seven landed states, ceded much of its claim within the Northwest Territory. However, a tract of nearly 3.7 million acres was held back (reserved) in the area west of Pennsylvania and south of Lake Erie. Connecticut officials hoped to enrich the state's treasury by selling these lands at some point in the future. These lands became known as the Connecticut Western Reserve, but little development occurred in the early years.

In the late 1700's, this area became attractive to local farmers. Ephraim Root (Jesse Root's eldest son) acquired, by lottery, the second township in the area and named it Rootstown. Besides Rootstown, he had an interest singly or in partnership in over one hundred thousand acres of the Western Reserve.

The Northwest Territory, or Old Northwest, refers to the area that became the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and a portion of Minnesota. The region comprised more than 260,000 square miles. Control of the area passed from Britain to the new United States in the Treaty of Paris of 1783. The treaty effectively ended the Revolutionary War and included the recognition of American independence.



Connecticut Western Reserve



Connecticut Western Reserve



John Turner built his two-story brick house in 1814 on today's North River Road and Route 44. Its bricks were made in Roderick Dimock's brickyard on Riley Mountain Road. John's parents were Coventry natives, and John was a merchant-trader who also invested in a number of Mansfield's early textile mills. He bought much of the Coventry Glass Factory stock from two of the original owners (Nathaniel Root and Eli Evans) in 1815. Turner was the salesman, mostly to Hartford traders, but also to New York and Boston. 1823 was a drastic year for businessmen and Turner pledged his stock and his home to cover the company's debt.

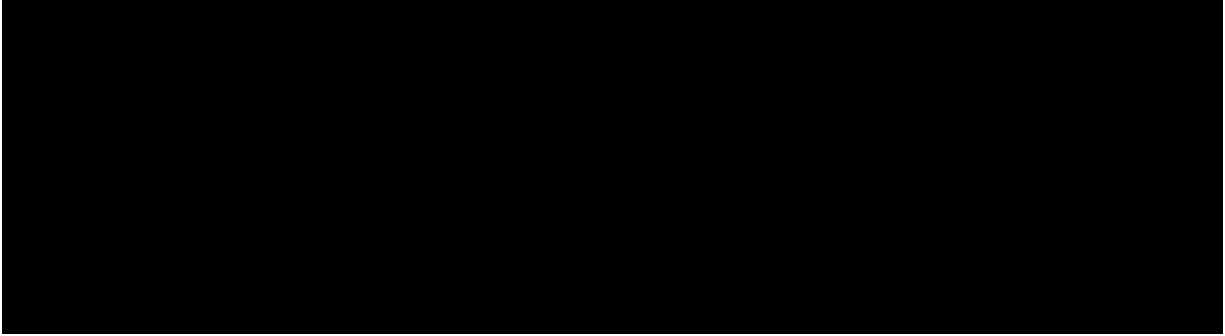
The Turner House- North River Road

The second occupant of the house was Thomas Stebbins Jr. He was a blacksmith, weaver and merchant from Willington and a shareholder of the Willington Glass Factory. Thomas took a mortgage from Turner against all of his holdings. Turner could not meet the obligation, and Stebbins foreclosed and obtained the house, store and business. In 1825, Stebbins joined Jasper Gilbert and Rufus Chamberlain (both of Coventry) and bought the remaining shares of the company from Nathaniel Root. In March of 1831 Stebbins moved to Rockville selling his properties and business to Gilbert. Rufus Chamberlain then moved into the Turner house where he lived until 1864. (16)

Born in Coventry 1799, the son of Calvin and Achsah (Bissell), Rufus Chamberlain married one of John Turner's daughters and moved to Willimantic in 1864. He was a principal in the early days of the Glass Works and owned a large farm north of the Glass Works (presumably also used for a wood lot). He was a founding member of State and Tolland Agricultural Society, President of Tolland Bank 1854-1866, President of the Halladay Windmill Company 1855-1863. He died in 1867. Daughter Mary married Olmstead B. Smith who took over the farm for a while and owned the Coventry Satinet Company for a time.

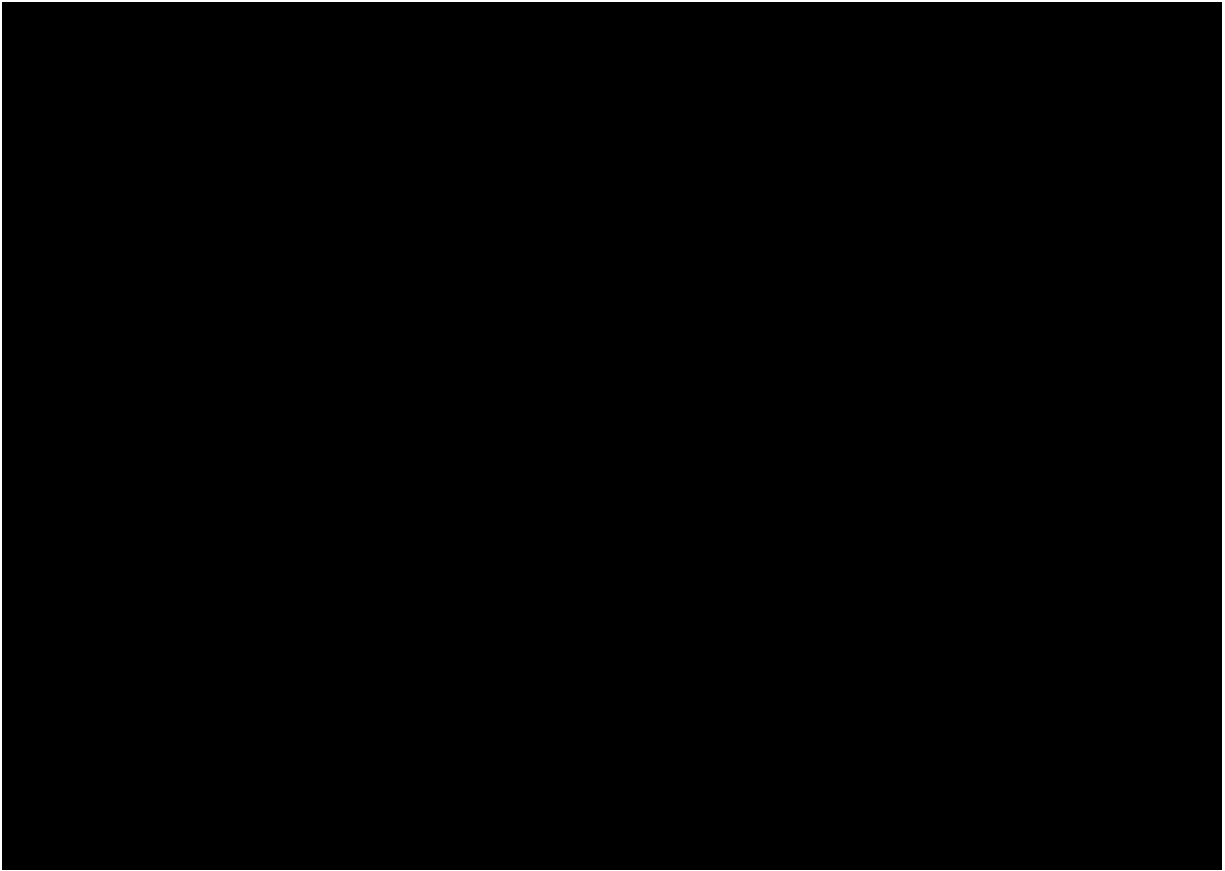


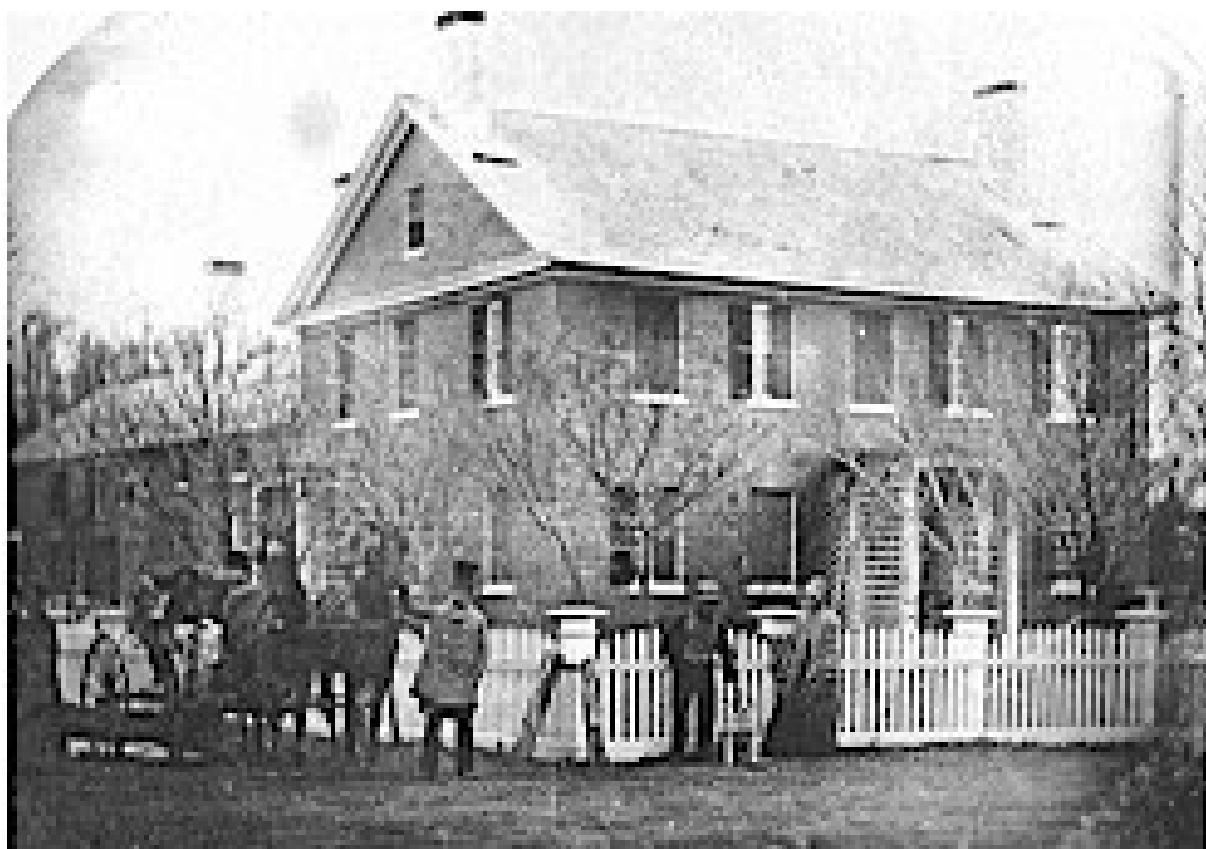
John Turner and Rufus Chamberlin

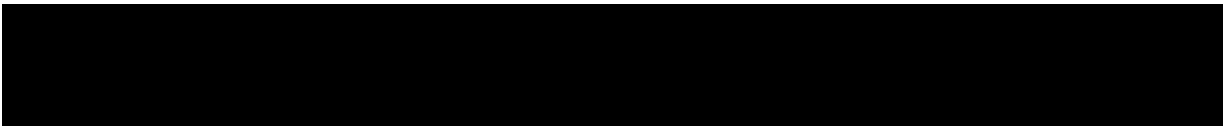


John Turner and Rufus Chamberlin









The Turner House 2014



In 1788 Connecticut granted the Pitkin Glass Works in Manchester a 25-year exclusive right to produce glass products in the State. They were also granted ten years of tax-free status if they could produce their first product within three years. This was not accomplished. The founders, William Pitkin, Elisha Pitkin, and Samuel Bishop were granted this privilege because of financial and material contributions made by the Pitkin family in the Revolutionary War. J.P. Foster, who was superintendent, took over the Pitkin Glass Works in 1810. In 1823, it was renamed the Manchester Glass Works. The early products included the Pitkin Flask, which was made by the German half post method. Although these are called Pitkin Flasks, they were also made at Keene, New Hampshire, as well as in Ohio. Several prized flasks including the Jared Spencer and the JPF Eagle-Cornucopia were made at the Pitkin Glass Works.

The first geometric flasks, those with sunburst and Masonic patterns, were blown in about 1815. The first historical flasks, those commemorating a historical person or event, were not blown until about 1824. Sunburst and Masonic flasks were blown at a number of glass houses during the approximate 1815-1830 period including two in Connecticut, the Pitkin Glass Works, East Hartford, and the Coventry Glass Works, Coventry. Historical flasks were also blown at these glass works.

The success at Manchester led to the formation of a new glass house at a small post, called Coventry, approximately eighteen miles east of Hartford. (at the corner of North River Road and the Boston Turnpike) This house, which was established in 1813, became one of the most important glass houses in American history. Because of the 25-year exclusive right to produce glass, which had been granted to the Pitkin, Glass Works, no other glass house could operate in Connecticut until 1813. The Coventry Glass Works was organized by a citizens group following the trade upheaval which resulted from the War of 1812. Little is known about its initial operation until Thomas Stebbins took possession of the business in 1820. He introduced the insufflated (blown-molded, three part mold) method of glass molding and his flasks are among the finest of American makers. The works were then operated for ten years by Thomas Stebbins and in 1830 by

Stebbins and Rufus Chamberlain. The last eighteen years of operation were under Gilbert, Turner & Company until it closed in 1848. The area became a farm. Nathaniel Root, who lived on the north side of the turnpike, acted as first agent for the works which specialized in snuff jars and ink wells. The sand used was a mixture of reddish and white silicas found in the area combined with wood-ash and salt.

The first American historical flasks, the Lafayette flasks to commemorate his visit to the United States, and the DeWitt Clinton flask honoring the Erie Canal, were blown at Coventry. Several Sunbursts as well as many other historical and geometric flasks have been attributed to the Coventry Glass Works including Railroads, Double Eagles, Washington-Jacksons, Masonics, and Cornucopia-Urns. Flasks have been attributed to the Coventry Glass Works by their embossing, historical research, and reports from digging the glass works site by Dr. Edwin Albee in the late 1800's and again in 1926 by Harry Hall White. The colors of the Connecticut flasks are primarily the natural occurring olive greens, olive ambers, and ambers, similar to those of the Keene-Marboro Street and other New England glass houses. The olive greens and ambers are the yellow or golden tones and range in density from medium to dark. The olive ambers result from chemistries in between the olive green and amber and have similar tones and densities.

There was a major rivalry between the Keene Glass Works and the Coventry Glass Works, which fostered competition for glass quality. The Coventry Glass Works took pride in consistently producing the best possible glass and its glass products are considered as having some of the finest designs and metal of all the early American flasks. The closure of the Connecticut as well as other New England houses was due to the lack of wood fuel for the furnaces. This generally occurred in the New England area in the late 1840's. The major glass businesses then moved to the Pittsburgh area where natural gas had been discovered and was being used for fuel. This change in fuel along with different raw materials and more advanced melting technology resulted in the more refined colors in these later glass products. This later glass is often referred to as "Pittsburgh Glass".

Coventry Glass Flask

The late Jesse Brainard recalled in an article written for the Coventry Historical Society that when he was a boy in the 1930's he did some exploring on Jesse Lee's farm on North River Road next to the Skungamaug River. Mr. Lee noted that there was plenty of glass through his fields. After the spring thaw, Mr. Brainard and some friends picked up many pieces of broken bottles and occasionally almost a whole inkwell. He eventually assembled a modest collection of Coventry and Willington glass. Today the glass factory site holds an agricultural research station along with two buildings, the John Turner house and a barn across the street. Part of the site is used for a very dynamic Farmer's Market in the warmer months, and the Museum of Connecticut Glass holds occasional shows here and is striving to improve the site and possibly attract a glass maker there as a permanent exhibit.



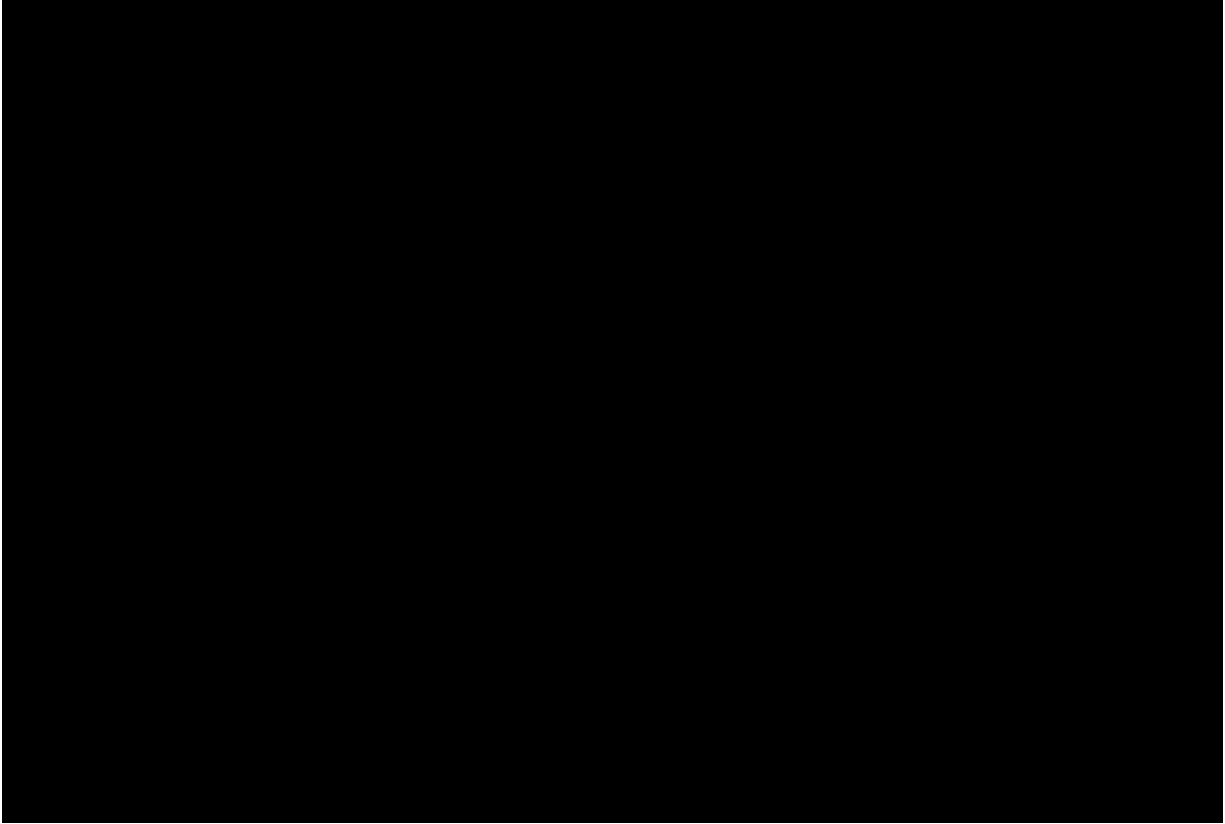
Coventry Glass Works (17)

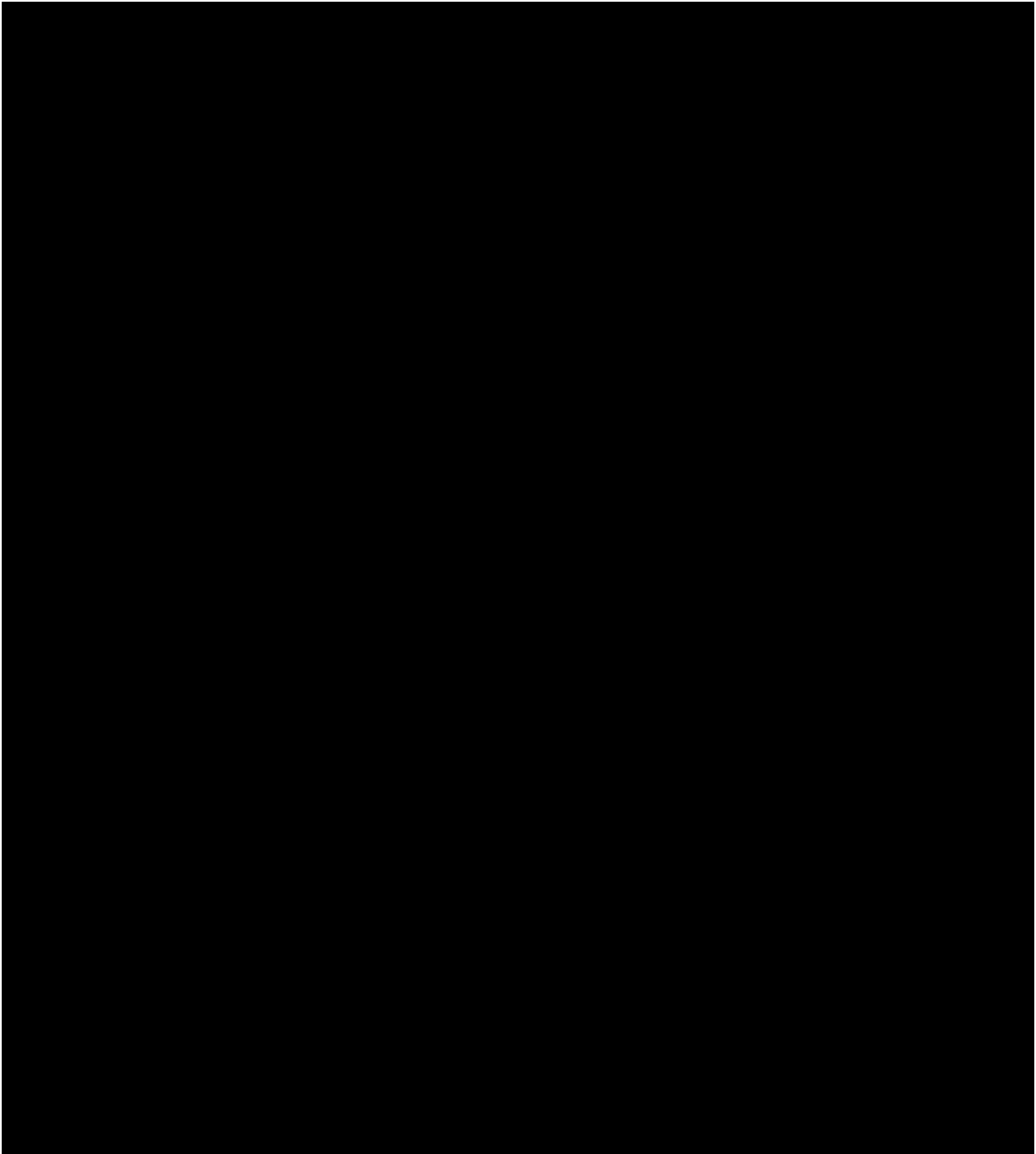


Coventry Glass Works (17)



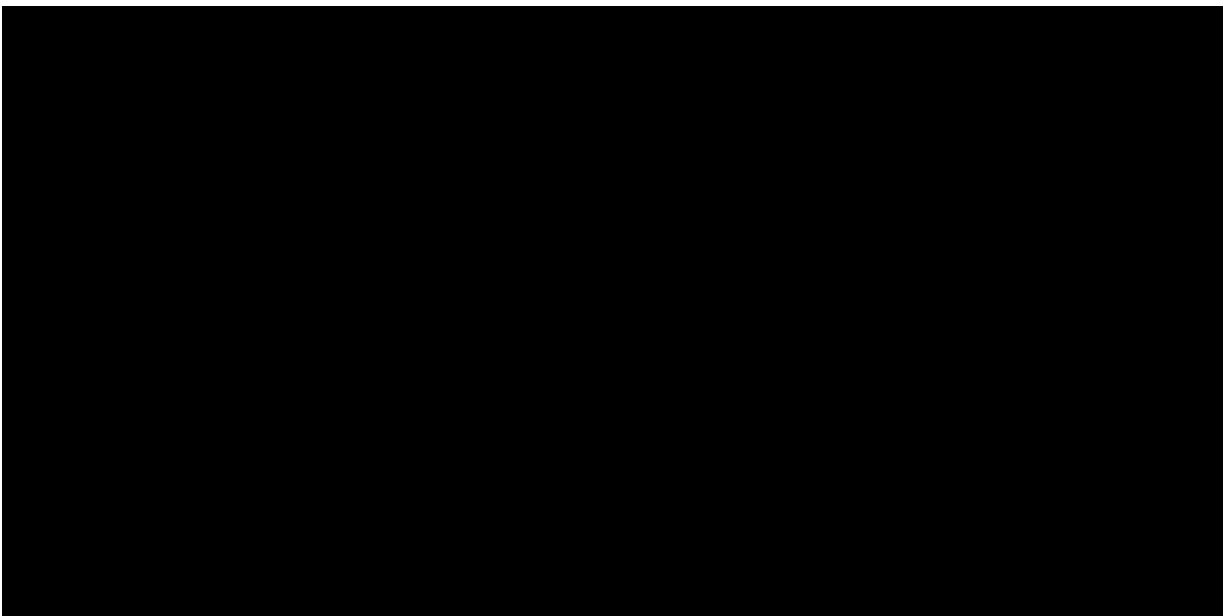
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Coventry Glass Factory

From a carefully prepared sketch, written by J. W. Boynton, we take the following facts relative to the early industries of the town. He says: "Then each farmer raised the wool and flax necessary for his use and manufactured it. The tailoress, the dressmaker and milliner, the shoemaker and cobbler went from family to family to cut and make dresses and bonnets, clothing for men and boys, to make and mend shoes for the family, and such was their custom."

"At a later date Norwich Landing was the general market for all surplus farm produce (beef, pork, butter and cheese), and all the supplies were carried there by ox teams. Shipping was carried on between Norwich and the West Indies. During the revolution large quantities of wine were sent by teams to Boston. Jeremiah Ripley was assistant commissary and resided on what has long been called Ripley Hill, earlier Wicket Hill. This place was then the center of business for the town. Subsequently the business center changed to South Street, and Gilbert and Jones were the great merchants of that date, and packers of beef and pork, and shippers of butter and cheese to Norwich by ox-teams."

"The Ripley homestead takes its name from Jeremiah Ripley, an officer in the revolutionary war and later a county judge. His son Chauncey was educated at Yale College. He graduated from the University of the City of New York as a law student in 1865. A short time later he opened his own office in the New York Times building until it was demolished in 1888 and moved next door to the Potter building."

"The introduction of the Italian mulberry, prior to 1810, was the first departure from the regular cultivation of the soil, and silk making became an important industry, and created a demand for labor which paid better than ordinary farm produce. The labor of females was 42 and 50 cents per week and board, and they could then buy an English print (calico) at 64 to 67 cents per yard or a dress of seven yards regulation pattern for four dollars-and-a-half. The trimmings did not then, as now, cost more than the dress pattern, and the dressmaker's bill more than both. Many girls gave a

season's labor picking leaves and feeding silk worms for the luxury of a new calico dress. They were then worn only to church and state occasions.”

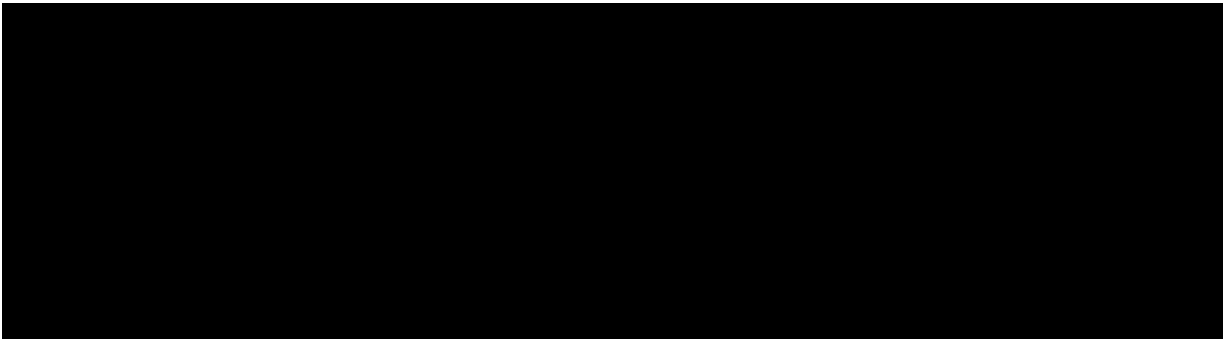
“The utilization of the water power soon gave a new impetus to industry, and labor was so much in demand that farmers could not afford to make silk at the advanced price of labor, and it was gradually abandoned. The same prices were paid girls for housework as paid for care of silkworms. The first development of water power was the building of a cotton spinning mill, a paper mill and a wool carding mill. One or two small but unimportant mills were built prior to these. These new mills gave to Coventry considerable notoriety as a manufacturing village and it was in advance of Willimantic, at that time called 'the States.' A cotton mill in 1816 was a very important addition to any town. No cloth was made, however, before 1820. The yarn was put up in bundles of five and ten pounds and sold or put out to families to be woven into three- quarter shirting by hand looms for which eight and one-third cents per yard was paid. The cloth sold for thirty-three cents per yard. The paper mill was at that date the only one nearer than East Hartford. The paper was all laid or hand made. Paper machines had not been introduced. The cotton mill and paper company soon failed and subsequently passed through several changes besides those caused by burning.”

“The wool carding mill of John Boynton, built in 1815, was patronized by farmers for fifteen miles around, who brought wool to be carded into rolls to be spun upon the hand wheel in families, and woven into the various fabrics necessary for the family. So great was this new development of domestic industry over the preparation of wool for hand spinning by the use of hand cards, that it soon stimulated families to a new employment, the knitting of socks and mittens by hand for the New York market, which for many years was a real source of income as well as one of enjoyment.” (5)

In 1818 Solomon Gilbert had a store selling sewing silk. Other sources mention he was the largest retailer in town and was located on South Street near the South Street schoolhouse. Other sources mention a store owned by Gilbert and Jones.



Life in Coventry- Early 1800's



Life in Coventry- Early 1800's



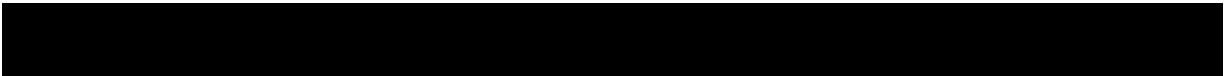
In early colonial times, correspondents depended on friends, merchants, and Native Americans to carry messages between the colonies. However, most correspondence ran between the colonists and England, their mother country. It was largely to handle this mail that, in 1639, the first official notice of a postal service in the colonies appeared. The General Court of Massachusetts designated Richard Fairbanks' tavern in Boston as the official repository of mail brought from or sent overseas, in line with the practice in England and other nations to use coffee houses and taverns as mail drops.

Local authorities operated post routes within the colonies. Then, in 1673, Governor Francis Lovelace of New York set up a monthly post between New York and Boston. The service was of short duration, but the post rider's trail became known as the Old Boston Post Road, part of today's U.S. Route 1. William Penn established Pennsylvania's first post office in 1683. In the South, private messengers, usually slaves, connected the huge plantations; a hogs head of tobacco was the penalty for failing to relay mail to the next plantation.

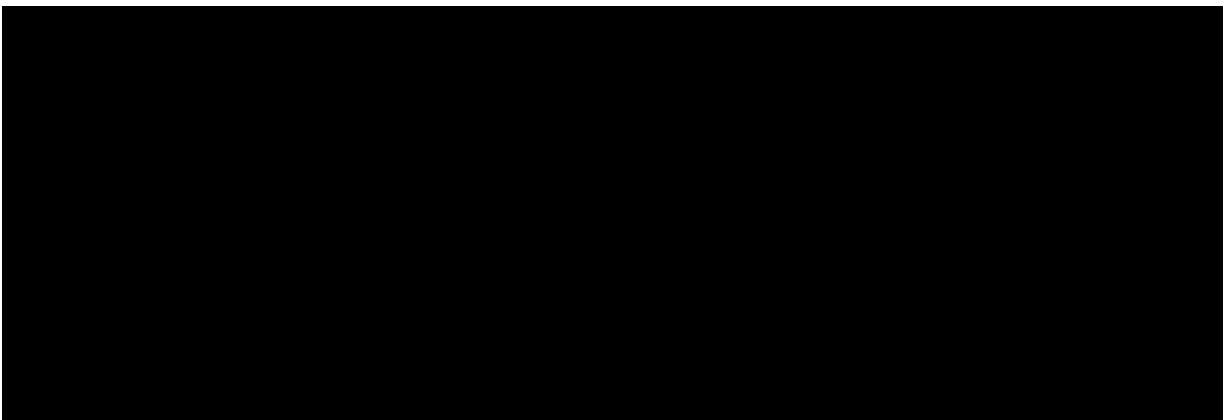
Central postal organization came to the colonies only after 1691 when Thomas Neale received a 21-year grant from the British Crown for a North American postal service. Neale never visited America. Instead, he appointed Governor Andrew Hamilton of New Jersey as his Deputy Postmaster General. Neale's franchise cost him only 80 cents a year but was no bargain; he died heavily in debt, in 1699, after assigning his interests in America to Andrew Hamilton and another Englishman, R. West. During his time as a Joint Postmaster General for the Crown, Benjamin Franklin effected many important and lasting improvements in the colonial posts. He immediately began to reorganize the service, setting out on a long tour to inspect post offices in the North and others as far south as Virginia. New surveys were made, milestones were placed on principal roads, and new, shorter routes were laid out. For the first time, post riders carried mail at night between Philadelphia and New York, with the travel time shortened by at least half.

In 1760, Franklin reported a surplus to the British Postmaster General, a first for the postal service in North America. When Franklin left office, post roads operated from Maine to Florida and from New York to Canada, and mail between the colonies and the mother country operated on a regular schedule, with posted times. In addition, to regulate post offices and audit accounts, the position of surveyor was created in 1772. This is considered the precursor of today's Postal Inspection Service.

By 1774, however, the colonists viewed the royal post office with suspicion. Franklin was dismissed by the Crown for actions sympathetic to the cause of the colonies. Shortly after, William Goddard, a printer and newspaper publisher (whose father had been postmaster of New London, Connecticut, under Franklin) set up a Constitutional Post for inter-colonial mail service. Colonies funded it by subscription, and net revenues were to be used to improve the postal service rather than to be paid back to the subscribers. By 1775, when the Continental Congress met at Philadelphia, Goddard's colonial post was flourishing, and 30 post offices operated between Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Williamsburg.



Mail Service in the Colonies (4)



Mail Service in the Colonies (4)



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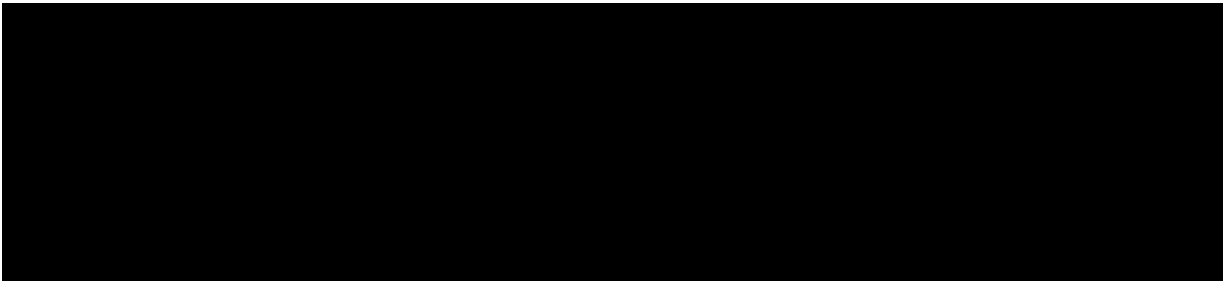
Mail service to Coventry by horseback started in the very early 1800's. A man named Bezaleel Hutchinson was one of the first carriers at a compensation of \$75 per year. Mail in 1820 averaged two letters a day. (By 1873 it was 150 per day). It took from four to six days for mail to reach New York. Mail was carried by stage between Hartford and Providence in 1826 and used the Hop River Turnpike. Mails were carried three times a week at first. The steam train transported mail when the railroad was built through South Coventry in 1850. The first Post Office is said to have been opened in 1802 at a house no longer standing in North Coventry at the top of the hill west of the Second Church. Silas Hubbard was the first postmaster. The first post office in South Coventry started in 1820 in the house opposite the Nathan Hale Monument with Jeremiah Parish as postmaster. Mr. Parish lived at the north end of Cooper Lane in a house occupied by Amos Richardson in 1888. In 1825 the office was moved across the street. Solomon Bidwell became postmaster in 1830, and the office was moved to his hotel in the center of town where he served as postmaster until 1849 followed by David Buell.

South Coventry Postmasters include: Frank Hull (1/1888 to 7/1889), George Phillips (6/1897–6/1901), John Champlin (1/1917 to 10/1921), Louis Phillips (6/1901 to 1/1917 and 10/1921 to 4/1934), George H. Robertson (4/1934 to 1946). The post office name was officially changed to "Coventry" in 1953.

A post office tended by Nathan Levee was located on the road to the depot near the corner of the Windham turnpike in 1868. In November of 1909, the North Coventry post office was discontinued. Mrs. Ralph Dresser was the last postmistress. The 1912 post office was in the drug store conducted by L.M. Phillips at the corner of Main and Mason Streets. The territory outside the Village was well covered by rural free delivery routes. (1912) The RFD routes include one from the South Coventry office, two from the office in Rockville, one from South Willington and one from Andover. Herman F. LeDoyt was postmaster from 1947 to the 1960's.

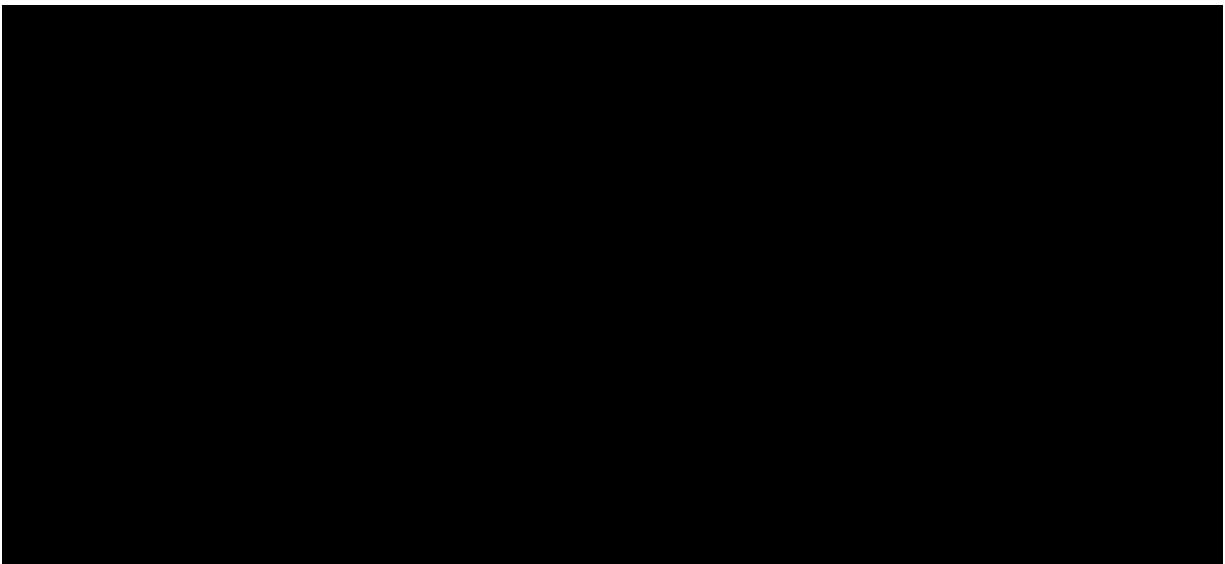


Mail Service in Coventry



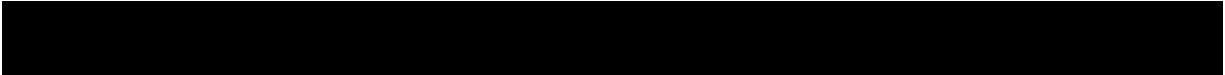
Mail Service in Coventry



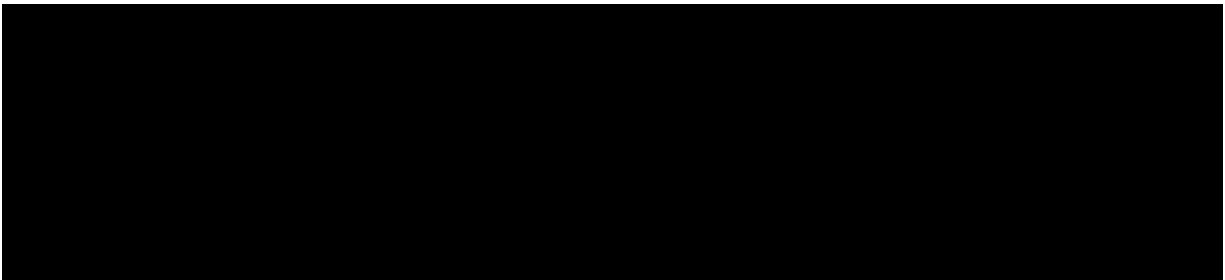


US Mail PO South Coventry CT

David Waring Huntington, a direct descendant of Simon Huntington who sailed from England in 1633, was born in January, 1822 in Montville. Two years after losing his father as a youth he came to Coventry and entered a cotton factory as an overseer. He studied civil engineering and opened the second silk mill in Coventry on the lower part of what is now Armstrong Road. He built a fine home which still stands on the corner of Armstrong and Snake Hill Road. His failing health compelled him to abandon the mill, and he turned his energies to his farm in South Coventry. He died at the age of 64.



D.W. Huntington



D.W. Huntington



A highly valued animal fiber, silk has long been used for the production of luxurious textiles of the finest quality. Silk is produced by silkworms. The silkworm is not really a worm at all; it is a caterpillar that spins a protective cocoon for use as a shelter while it changes from a caterpillar into a moth. This cocoon is the source of commercial silk.

Almost all commercial silk is made from cocoons spun by silkworms of the genus *Bombyx*. The finest quality raw silk and the highest fiber production come from the commonly domesticated silkworm, *Bombyx mori*, which feeds on the leaves of the mulberry tree (*morus* is the Latin word for "mulberry"). The whiteness and regularity of the fiber make it superior to the silk fibers produced by wild silkworms, though wild silk fibers are also used commercially. The silkworm digests mulberry leaves into a liquid silk, which it stores in a special gland. When the gland is full, the worm ejects the silk in two continuous strands which join together and harden on contact with the air. Nodding and bobbing, it wraps itself up in this delicate fiber forming a cocoon, inside of which it turns into a moth.

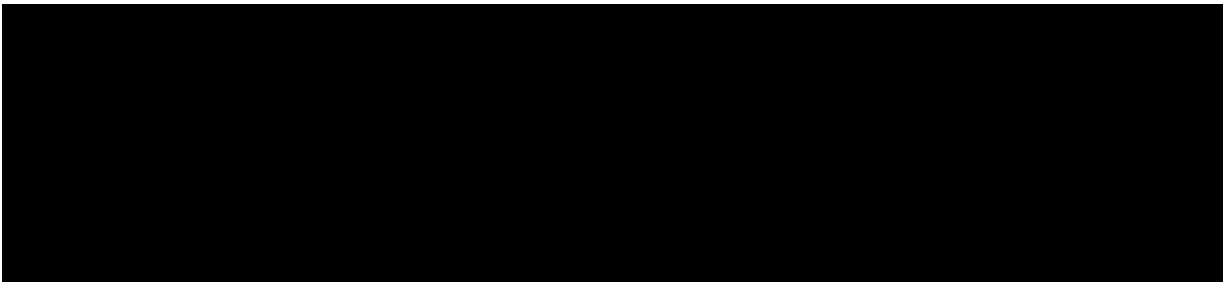
To make thread, the cocoon must be unwound before the moth cuts through it. The Chinese discovered 5,000 years ago that sericin, the gummy substance that binds the cocoons together, dissolves in hot water. The process of unwinding the cocoons is called reeling. Several cocoons are unwound together, because the individual filaments are too fine. The sericin remaining on the silk binds these strands into one. In the 1830's, New England farmers used various versions of the Piedmont reeler. (see figure).

Simple hand weaving was aided by hanging the warp fibers from a tree- a practice believed to have led to the development of the first vertical looms. The earliest looms date from the 5th millennium B.C. and consisted of bars or beams that formed a frame to hold a number of parallel threads in two sets. By raising one set of these threads, which together formed the warp, it was possible to run a weft thread between them. The block of wood that is used to carry the weft through the warp is called the shuttle.

Silk is stronger than other natural fibers. When dry, silk filaments are comparable in strength to such synthetic fibers as nylon and polyester; however, silk filaments lose some strength when they are wet. Garments made from silk are lightweight but warm and absorbent. Silk fabrics have excellent draping properties and a natural resistance to creasing and wrinkling. Silk fibers are highly receptive to dyeing, and dyed and printed silk fabrics have a richness and variety seldom found in other textiles.



Silk Making



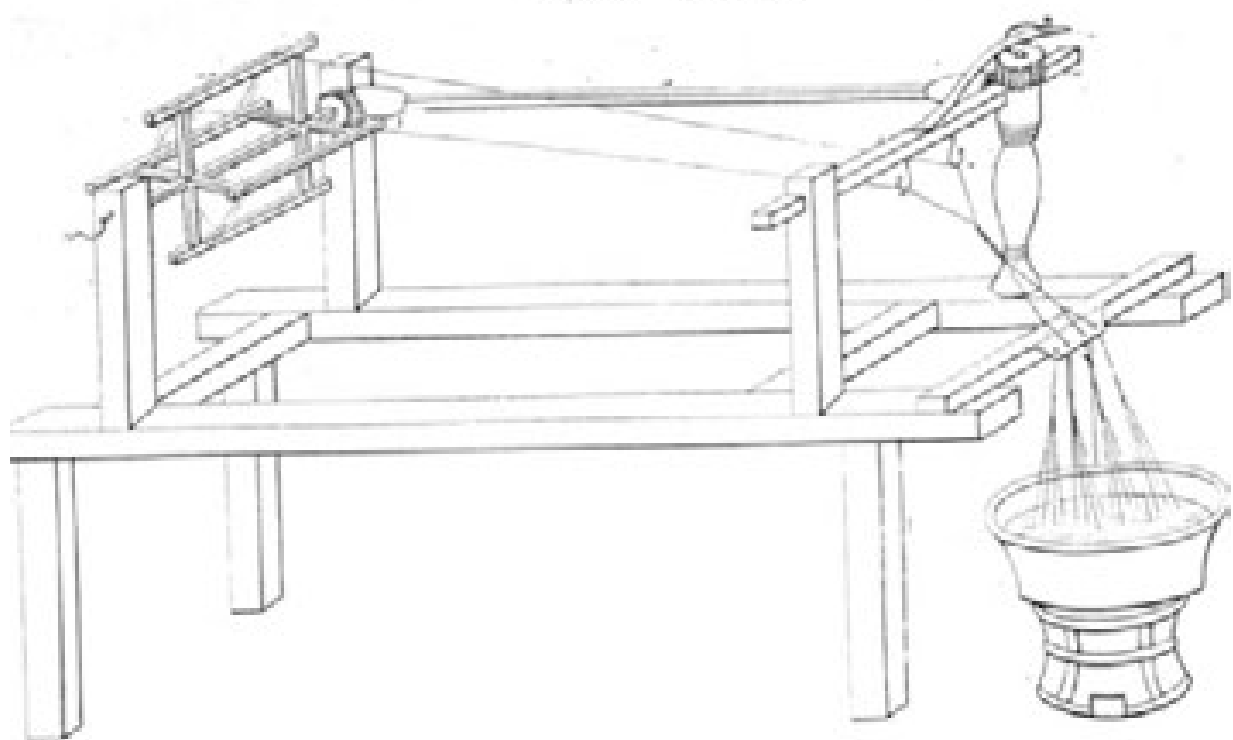
Silk Making



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Silk Reel.



Reeling: The unwinding of the fine silk filaments from the cocoon is called reeling, and the process is carried out in a building known as a filature. The cocoons are first put into hot water in order to soften the sericin. Although there may be as much as 13,000 feet of filament in one cocoon, only about one fifth can be reeled into the continuous filament known as net silk. Depending on the final thickness that is desired, between five and ten cocoons are usually reeled simultaneously. The resulting strand (called a hank) is then wound onto a reel and dried.

Throwing: The reeled silk strands are twisted together with other strands to form a thicker, stronger, multi-threaded yarn. Throwing produces a wide variety of yarns that differ according to the number of strands and the amount and direction of the twist imparted.

Degumming: Silk that contains sericin is called raw silk. The gummy substance affords protection during processing and so is usually retained until the yarn or fabric stage. It is then removed by boiling the silk in a mildly alkaline solution. This process leaves the silk soft and lustrous, but it can reduce the weight of the silk by as much as thirty percent.

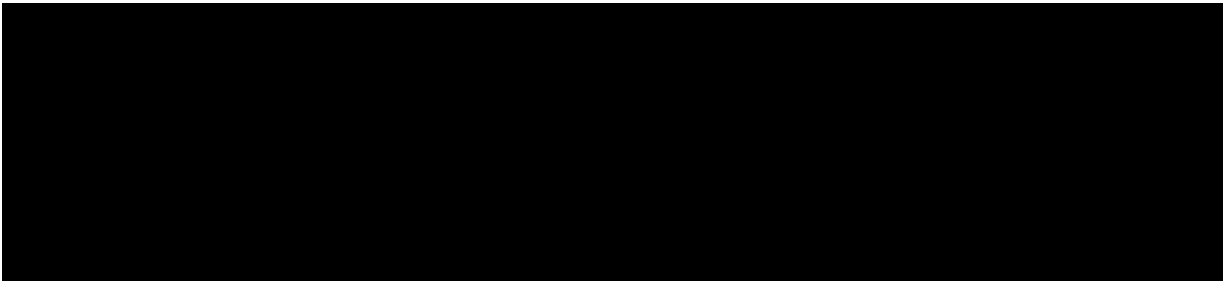
Spinning: Silk that is unsuitable for reeling is known as waste silk. Waste silk can be cleaned and degummed and then carded and combed to produce silk tops, or slivers. These are then spun to produce silk yarns.

Dyeing and Weaving: The dyeing of silk using natural dyestuffs was practiced by the Chinese as far back as 2,600 BC. Today, synthetic dyestuffs are used. Silk may be dyed as yarn before weaving or as woven fabrics. Silk weaving is similar to the weaving of other types of yarns: warp and weft threads are intertwined according to a pattern to produce a woven fabric. Sheer, soft fabrics like chiffon or lightweight crepe de chine; satin, taffeta, twill, damask, and brocades; even velvets are all woven from silk.

The first silk factory in the United States was built in Mansfield, Connecticut, in 1810.



Silk Processing



Silk Processing



In the winter of 1821-22, a school house was burned which had stood east of Nathaniel Woodward's house since 1753. The original school was voted at a town meeting to be built here. It was twelve by fourteen feet in size, made of wood. The present Brick School was built by Mr. Brigham of Mansfield between 1823 and 1825 on land previously owned by the French family. The clay for the bricks came from Riley Mountain. At first, there was one four-month session, later expanded to three sessions. Eight grades were included in the school. Clarissa Goodwin taught in the Brick School in 1830, for which she received one dollar per week. In 1835 Anna Elizabeth French taught for twenty weeks. She remembered that there were no desks, but heavy benches around the walls of the school. The boys sat on one side of the room and the girls in the other, facing the walls.

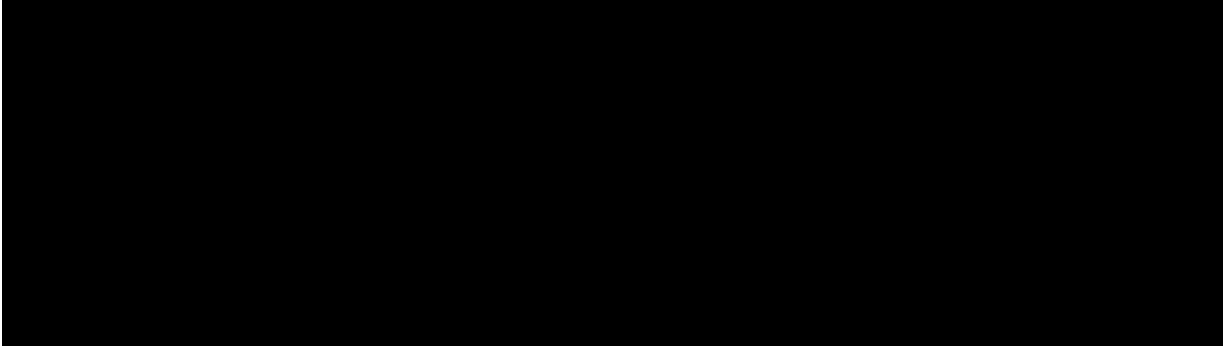
Each school district was administered by its own elected officials, and the district had to raise money to pay for its school's expenses. In 1845 the school was shingled, plastered and painted for a little over thirty-two dollars. In 1857 money was allocated for a library in the school for use by the district residences. One of the books was the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. In the same year there was a summer term as well as one in the winter. Prior to that the winter term lasted only four months starting after the fall work was done. (9)

The Brick School House on Merrow Road

From an October 1824 district school meeting: “For the next season, voted school to be held for five months from the first of November.” “Voted to furnish forty feet of wood for each scholar sent through the school, said wood to be cut two and one-half feet long and corded near the school by December first, or to pay the District Committee sixty-two and one-half cents in lieu of furnishing wood.” The school budget for that season (supplies and salary) was about seventy dollars.

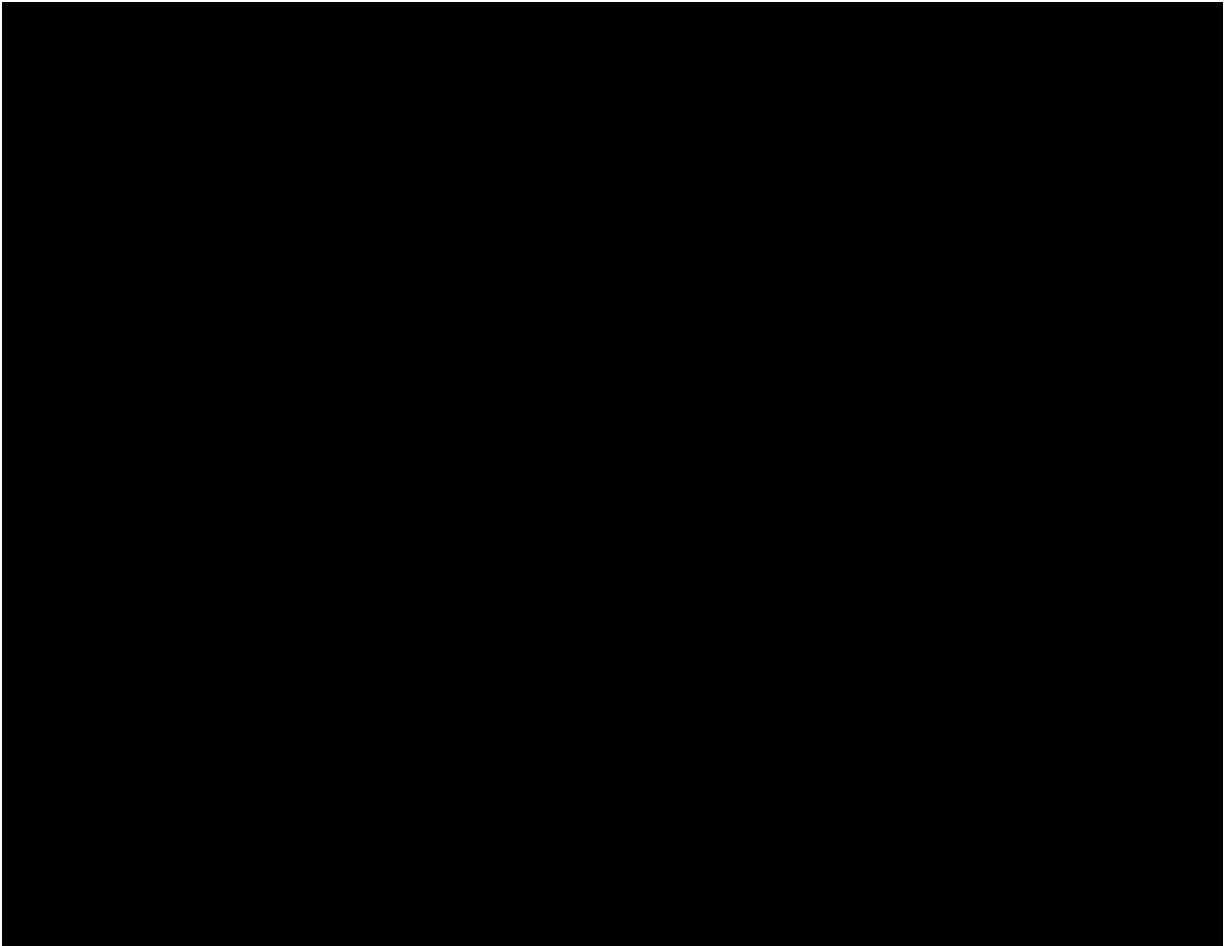


The Brick School House- Merrow Road

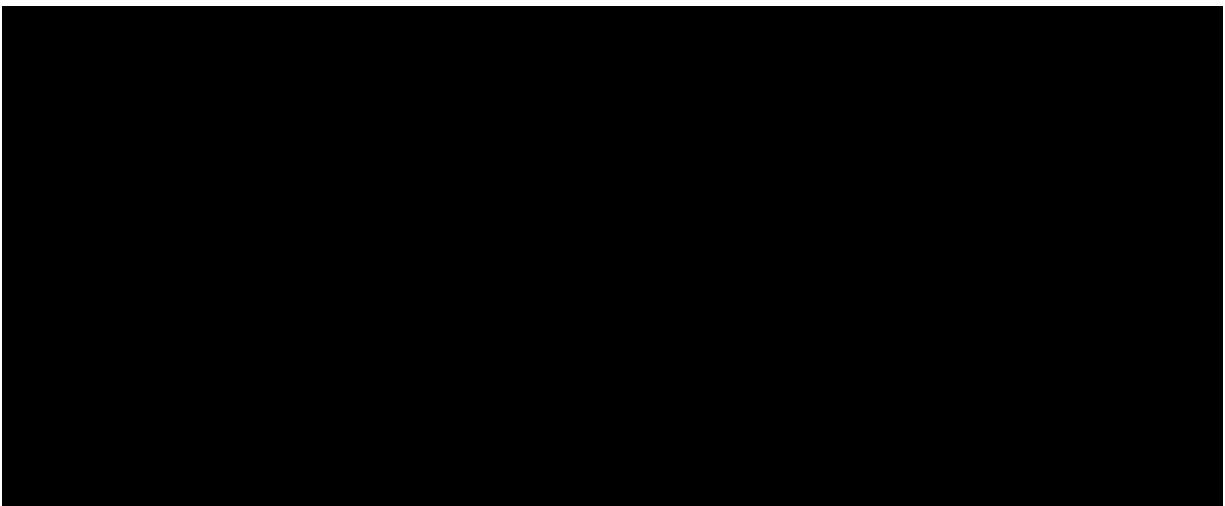


The Brick School House- Merrow Road









The Brick School House 2014

The Coventry Manufacturing Company's various activities spanned a few decades, and it was relatively successful in its stated objective to produce cotton. The company owned, over time, a thriving grist mill, a small saw mill and a small cotton yarn manufactory and tenements, as well as a minority interest in the Mansfield Manufacturing Company on the Willimantic River for a time. The company's directors engaged in many purchases and sales of property, some vacant land and some land with buildings, for no obvious purpose other than speculative investments.

In August of 1814 Daniel Dimmick sold, for \$2000, to Calvin and Royal Manning, Jeremiah Parrish and Eben Loomis (all of Coventry), and Benoni Bates of Kent County Rhode Island, under the firm of the Coventry Cotton Manufacturing Company (later called the Coventry Manufacturing Company) seven acres with a saw mill and five acres on the Mill Brook with a factory frame and the privilege to dig a tail race and raise the dam located there. The saw mill was located where the Clock & Whale Factory is today on Mason Street, and the factory being built will become the cotton mill and was located on the east side of today's Woods Lane on the brook. Mr. Bates would relinquish his shares in the company for \$2,500 a year later. In June of 1815, the Directors of the company leased the cotton factory to Mr. Bates and Ira Dimmick. The machines inside include two mules with 396 spindles. The lessees will make cotton yarn at 2-1/4 cents per skein and erect additional tenement houses. The yarn produced was roughly equivalent to a heavy tweed today. The company will provide the raw material and purchase the finished product. (A mule is one of the first mechanized versions of the hand driven spinning wheel. It duplicated the drawing and spinning motion and allowed many bobbins or spindles of yarn to be produced simultaneously.)

The Coventry Manufacturing Company was incorporated by an act of the State General Assembly in October of 1815 by Nathaniel Dunham of Mansfield, Solomon Gilbert of Coventry, and Daniel and Dudley Buck under the firm of Daniel Buck & Co. of Hartford. Mr. Dunham was a prominent businessman and landholder in Mansfield, also having an interest in the Mansfield Manufacturing Company. Daniel Buck owned a "merchant

tailor and clothing store” in Hartford, and a Hartford Courant ad in 1825 shows them selling “brown shirtings made by the Coventry Manufacturing Co”. The act of incorporation stated that the company’s objectives were to manufacture wool and cotton, that its land holdings were not to exceed 50 acres, and that it could issue capital stock at \$1,000 per share, not to exceed 100 shares. It is believed that about 25 to 30 shares were issued at \$500 per share, and that the share value of the company never exceeded \$30,000.

According to published reports, the lessees of the mill were relatively unsuccessful, and early in 1818 the Coventry Manufacturing Company sold the cotton mill and the saw mill to Mr. Dunham and Elias Howe (also of Mansfield) for \$5,000 (roughly equivalent to \$80,000 today). As a reference, the average homestead at the time was valued at \$700. Later that year, Mr. Howe relinquished his share back to the company. Capital was invested and the cotton mill continued to produce yarn and later cotton cloth on power looms. The 1820 Federal Census of Industry lists the company, Solomon Gilbert agent, consuming 30,000 pounds of cotton, producing yarn valued at \$9,450, and employing three men, two women and eleven children that year. The machinery included two mules with 396 spindles and three throstles with 288 spindles, cards (for combing and aligning the cotton fibers), and a drawing frame. (A throstle is a machine for spinning wool, cotton, etc., from the rove, and is more sophisticated than a “mule”, so called because it makes a singing noise like the bird of the same name.) Total annual wages were \$2,000. Total capital invested was \$7,000. According the census, the demand for yarn is good and the proceeds to the owners is “modest”. The company also owned three “dwelling houses” which were presumably used as tenements. Unfortunately there are no further records of the company other than a few notes in historical accounts and abutting deed records that make reference to the cotton mill.

Upon Mr. Dunham’s death in 1831, his probate records indicate his 1/4 share of the company was worth \$6,800 indicating the share value of the entire company was a little over \$27,000 (about \$400,000 in today’s value). It is likely the mill was producing cotton for the next two decades. Its ownership, which was generally held by Dunham, Gilbert and the Bucks, was consolidated by John Boynton in 1839 and sold to his son Leander. The

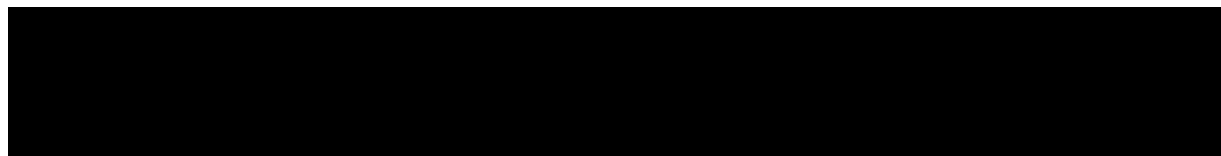
sale included the mill, a few tenements and the machines to produce cotton cloth. Leander later sold to Enoch Hovey who started a silk manufactory.

The previously mentioned saw mill, which was built in the very early 1800's was owned and operated by the Coventry Manufacturing Company through May of 1839 when it was acquired by John Boynton. Mr. Boynton owned the saw mill until the late 1850's when it was sold to Walter Loomis who operated a general store on the site now occupied by the Coventry Country Store and in 1861, Mr. Loomis sold the site to James Morgan who erected a silk manufactory there that operated, under various owners (Bottum then Dady) until 1927 when it was acquired by the National Silk Company.

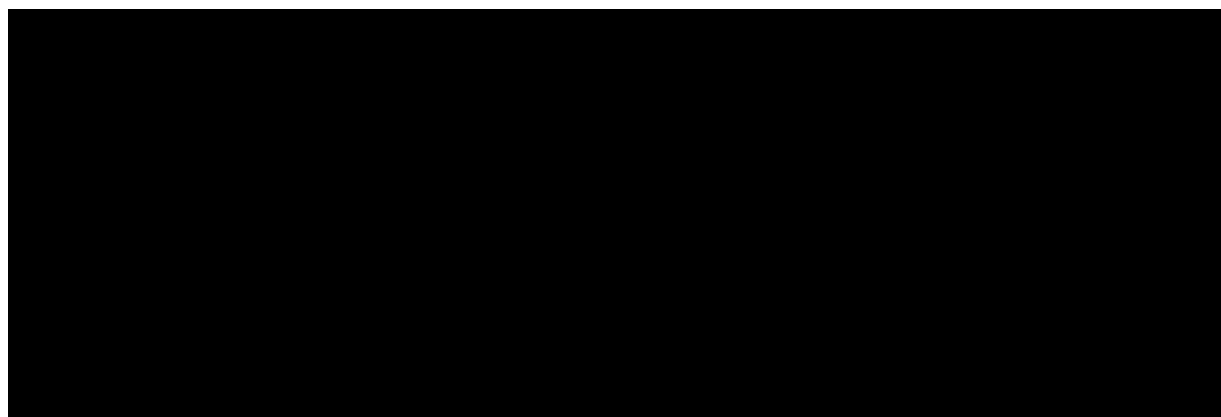
Part of the original land acquisition near the cotton mill was an eight-acre tract adjacent to the mill where the town garage is located today. The company leased, then sold one-half of this tract for \$1,000 to Hezekiah Edgerton and Frederick Strong in 1832, and they mutually agreed to build a shop to make textile machinery, sixty-four by thirty-six feet, three stories high, and the privilege to build four tenement houses. A fair amount of investment occurred here, as the site with a forge and machine shop was sold to John Boynton in 1835 for more than \$4,000. This site was later to hold the huge Washington Mill that made cotton then woolen flannels though the mid and later 1800's.

In 1821-1824 the company also acquired a 9/11 interest in the grist mill that was started in 1716 and occupied the site on the Mill Brook in Coventry Village now held by the Teleflex Company. The grist mill was acquired from Messrs Gilbert, Buck and Carpenter which was previously held by the heirs of Thomas, then the Noah Porter family. The Porter family owned the mill from its early beginnings in the 1700's. The grist mill produced corn flour or grit from 1716 to 1877 when it was converted to make bedquilts, then silk fish line, silk sutures, and now makes polymer sutures using some machines that are 112 years old. The company relinquished its share of the grist mill to John Boynton in 1834.

The Coventry Manufacturing Company also bought and sold several pieces of land and homes in South Coventry from 1824 to 1837. All of its remaining possessions were sold to John Boynton in 1839 and the company was dissolved around that time.



The Coventry Manufacturing Company (1815-1839)



The Coventry Manufacturing Company (1815-1839)





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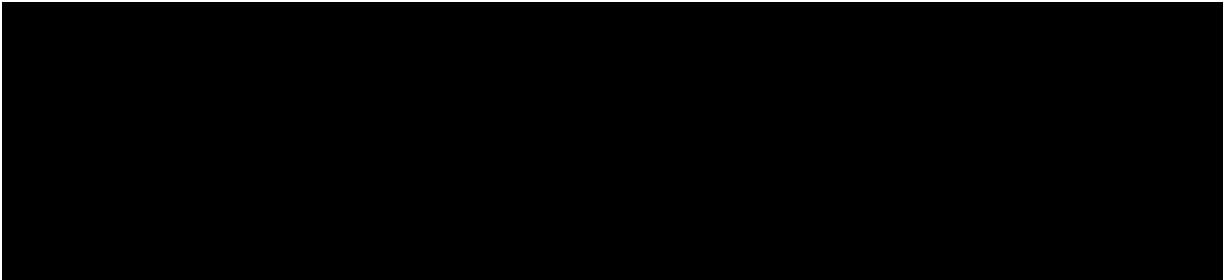


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From 1840 to 1850 Connecticut saw the emergence of the “Academy”. These seats of learning were usually established near prosperous villages and were conducted by young college graduates or retired ministers. They were supported by tuition fees and often contributions by the local towns. They fitted young men and women for college. Austin C. Dunham was sent to the Academy in North Coventry over which Parson Ely presided. He was allowed to live under the care of Dr. Eleazer Hunt (near the Academy) whose family was one of the most interesting and intelligent in town. (34)



The Academy



The Academy



In May of 1822 Mrs. Betty Bourn sold two and one-half acres of land near the Hop River bridge (on today's Flanders River Road) to Elijah Safford. Mr. Safford built a wool/satinet mill on the site. Satinet is a thin inferior satin or an imitation satin made of cotton warp and woolen filling chiefly used for trousers. It included two and one-half acres, a house and barn and the mill with one double and one single carding machine, one wool picker, a thirty- spindle jenny, a sixty-spindle jenny, two satinet power looms, and two shearing machines. James Hargreaves invented the Spinning Jenny circa 1764 in England. The new machine was capable of spinning eight threads of cotton yarn, instead of the spinning wheel's one.

There is an early reference that indicates one mill on the east side of the road and another mill on the west side. There is no physical evidence of the mill today likely due to development and construction in the mid 1900's. The site later contained a large poultry farm in the 1930's and 40's and the reconstruction of the road, the Hop River bridge, and the Route 6 by- pass obliterated any evidence of the mill site.

The 1850 Federal Census lists Safford as owning a satinet mill capitalized at \$4,000 with six employees and producing 12,000 yards of material valued at \$3,000 that year. He also operated a saw mill with \$1,000 capitalization, having one employee doing custom sawing valued at \$500 for the year. The mill site was eventually acquired by the large mills in Windham, though not used for production to any extent. The site was held primarily to protect their water rights and to prevent any competitor from using the power here.



Stafford's Mill on the Hop River



Stafford's Mill on the Hop River



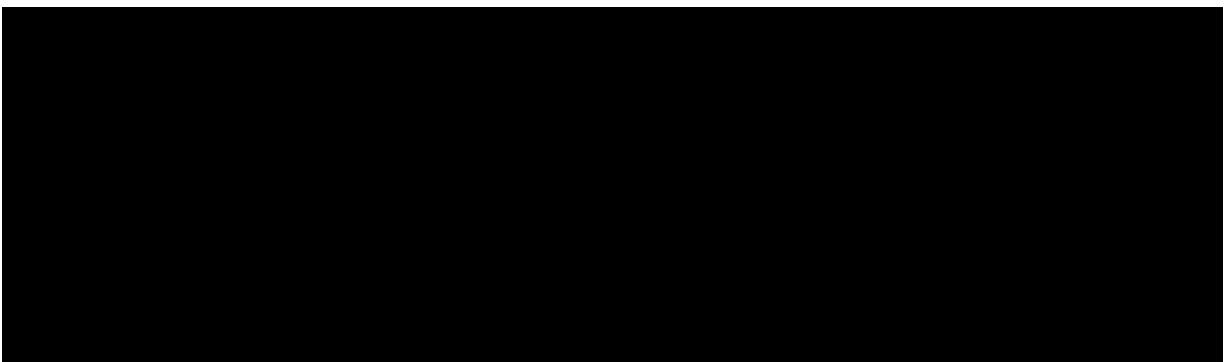
Although Coventry is the birthplace of Lorenzo Dow, one of the early ministers to spread the doctrine of Methodism, it was not until 1822 that the Methodist church in Coventry had a definite start. Mr. Gardiner, of East Hartford, at this time conducted meetings in the South Street schoolhouse. The new movement was met with opposition, and the use of the schoolhouse was denied them. The first class included John N. Dow, Cynthia Boynton, Admire Wilson and Dainty Loomis. Thirty converts were baptized, by immersion in the lake, in May of 1823. Interest waned, and in 1827 not even an organized class existed. Occasional meetings were held in the East school house. There was a fair degree of prejudice toward the Baptists and some men were threatened with discharge from their jobs if they attended Methodist meetings.

In 1839 it was again attempted to forbid them the use of the school, and an effort was made to raise money for a church. \$1,206.91 was collected and a chapel was built. An 1857 map shows the Methodist church on Lake Street just west of the green. The present building on Main Street was built during the pastorate of Rev. N. Goodrich in July 1867. (Other sources say it was during Rev. S.S. Cummings pastorate) The old church on Lake Street was used as a temporary church for the Catholics, then as a Methodist parsonage, then as a private dwelling. It was later torn down. In 1881 there were eighty-eight in full membership. An organ was purchased, and the parsonage was painted. Attendance waned in 1921, and by 1944 the Coventry Methodists depended on a ministerial service in Gurleyville and the building was sold and became the Nathan Hale Community House. The Coventry Methodists merged with the Bolton church in 1949. (4)

The First Methodist Church-early 1900's

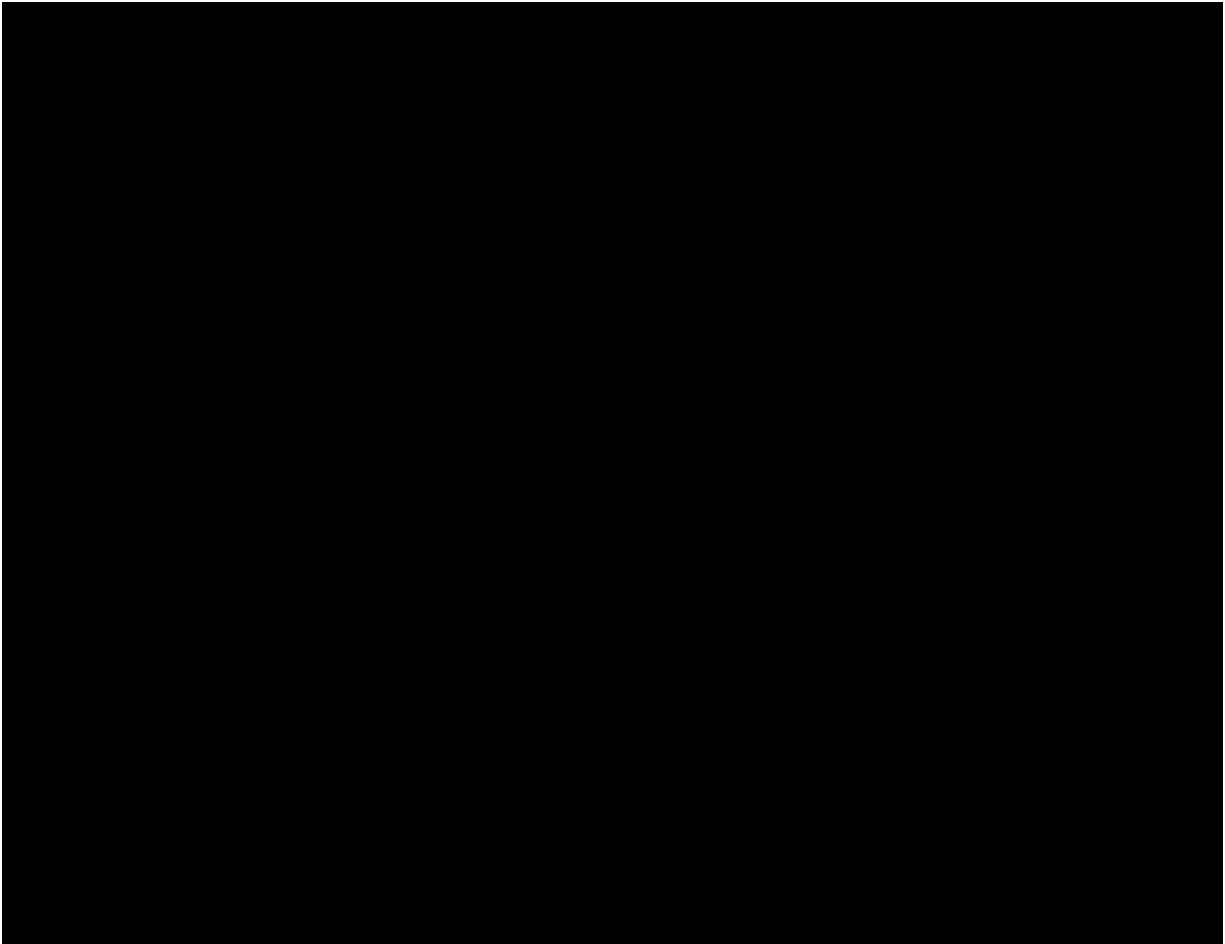


The First Methodist Church



The First Methodist Church







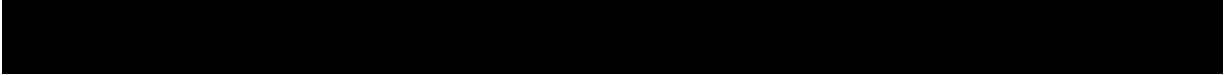
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 80 COVENTRY, CONN.

The hotel on Main Street was built in 1822 by Solomon Bidwell. Solomon operated a blacksmith's shop on the site from 1814 to 1824, which he later sold to Sherman Parker. He also had an interest in a shop near the town green (possibly a cooper's shop). Solomon owned quite a bit of land in the upper Village, most of which he eventually sold. He acquired the present hotel site from Martin Lyman and John Boynton.

The property descended to his son Lyman who died in 1877. (Note: the Coventry tax records for 1860 show Nathan Lyman Bidwell assessed for a building at \$1,500, 140 acres of land and some horses and cattle.) The property then descended to Lyman's son Charles who died at a young age (~26) in 1881. Charles' probate indicates the property was given to his wife Lydia as a dower in April of 1882. In the late 1800's the Bidwells sold adjacent property to Sylvester Tillinghast and to Sherman Parker (on the west) for a blacksmith shop.

Lydia (Charles' widow) owned the property until her death in 1918, and her estate found that there was some confusion over the ownership of the property. A court case ensued, and the judge found that the rightful owners of the property (of Charles Bidwell from 1882) were Jane Fitch (1/2) and Amelia Winchester (1/2). Amelia Winchester (who was deceased) was the wife of the late Loring Winchester who lived on the farm at the end of Woods Lane.

Amelia was Solomon Bidwell's daughter. From earlier, Jane had given the property to Diantha Fitch whose estate gave it to Charles Fitch who was the rightful owner of one-half of the property. Amelia's half, at her death, went to her only surviving child, daughter Mary Bidwell Clark of Windham who had married and divorced Dan Clark a laborer in the Smith & Winchester factory in Windham! In October of 1920 Edward Naven purchased the property from the estate of Charles Fitch and Mary Clark. The building ceased operation as a hotel in the 1930's. It was operated as a tavern for a time and then to its present use as apartments and a wine & spirits shop.

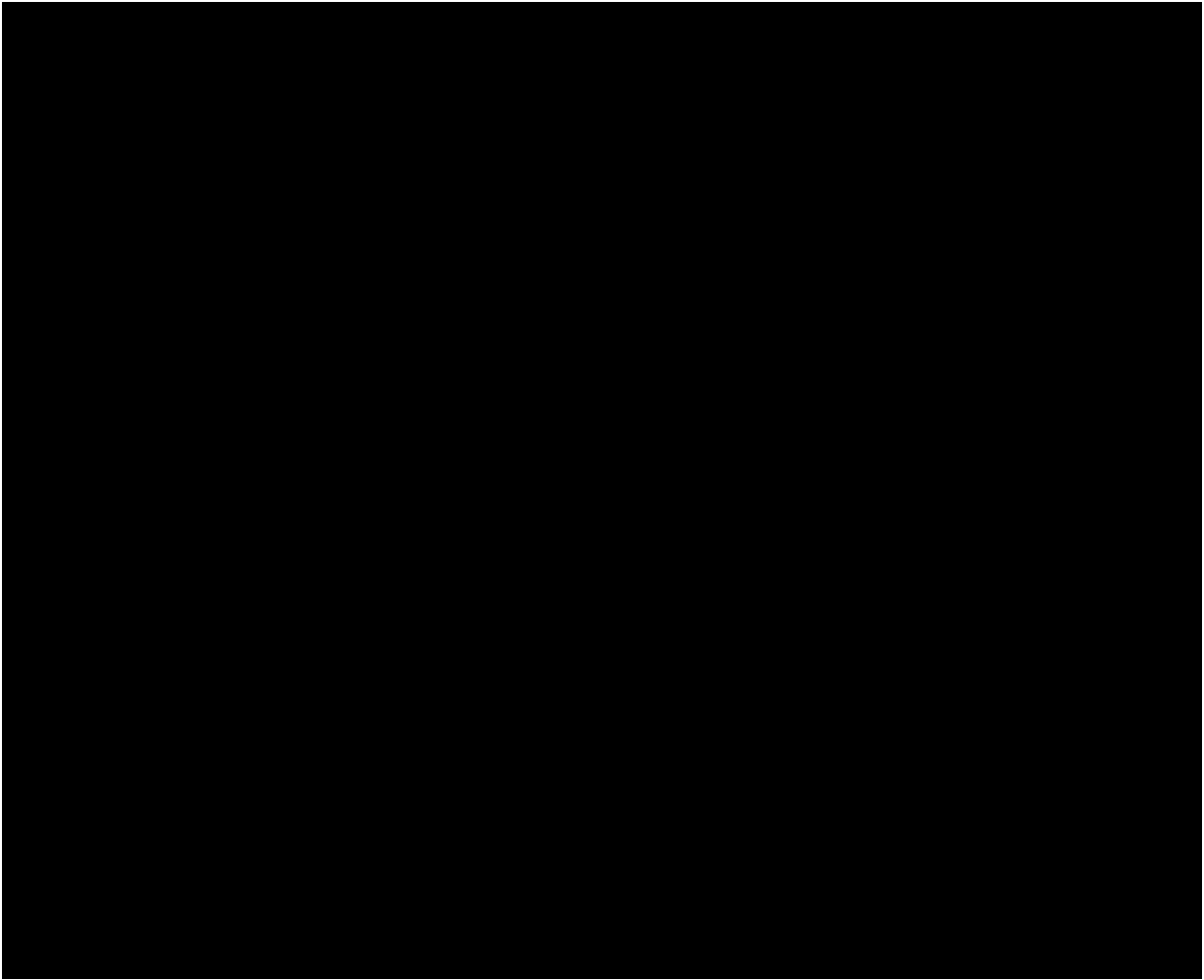


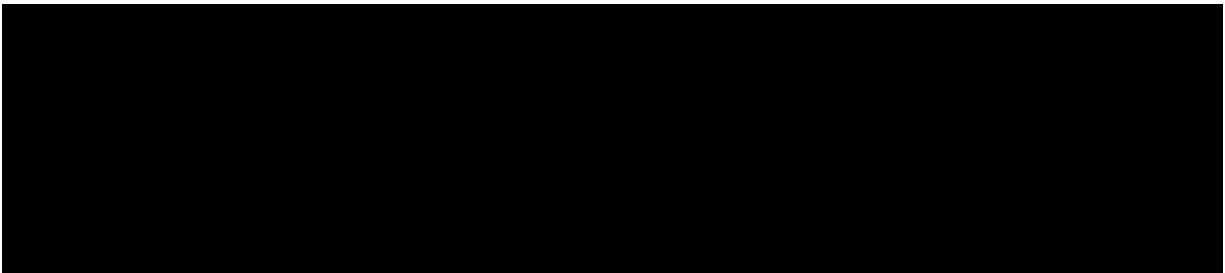
1822 The Bidwell Hotel



1822 The Bidwell Hotel



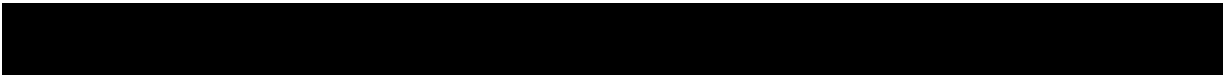




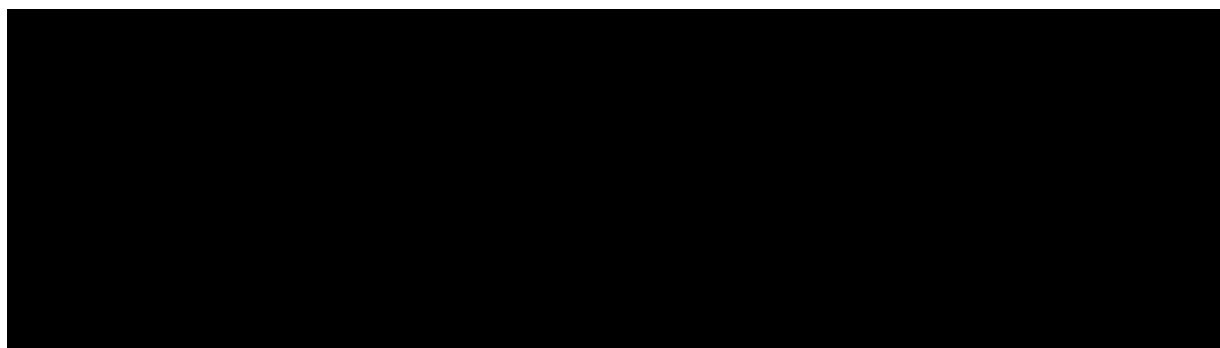
The Bidwell Hotel, looking east, early 1900's

In 1828 the Tolland and Mansfield Turnpike Company was formed which improved the road now named Route 195. A portion of this road went through Coventry. It did provide a route from Norwich to Springfield. Its charter was repealed in 1847. (1)

In January of 1824, Jeduthan and Jonathan Hubbard purchased seven acres of land from Lyman Talcott on both sides of the Skungamaug River just south of the Windham Turnpike. They built a tannery on the road now called South River Road, then called Hubbard's Road. They purchased an additional thirty-one acres of land adjacent to the first purchase and eventually built two dwelling houses. They made leather by hand at first, but eventually employed water power.



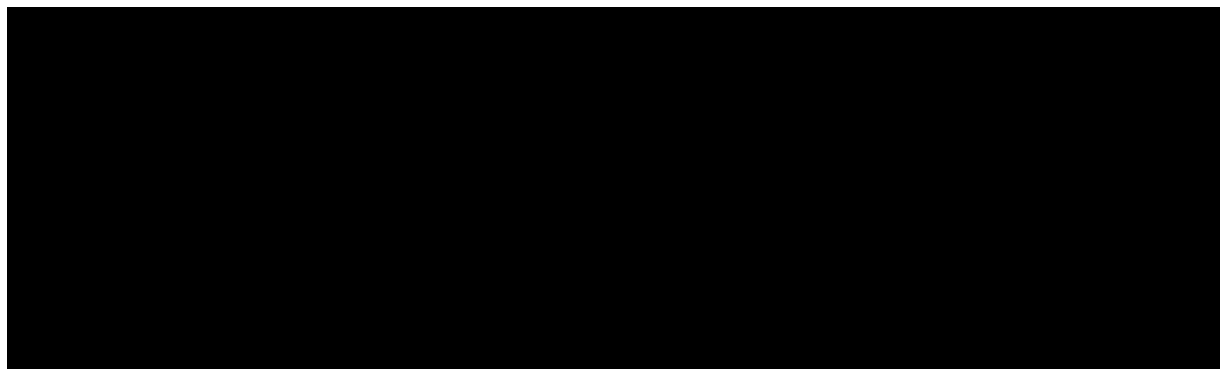
The Tolland & Mansfield Turnpike



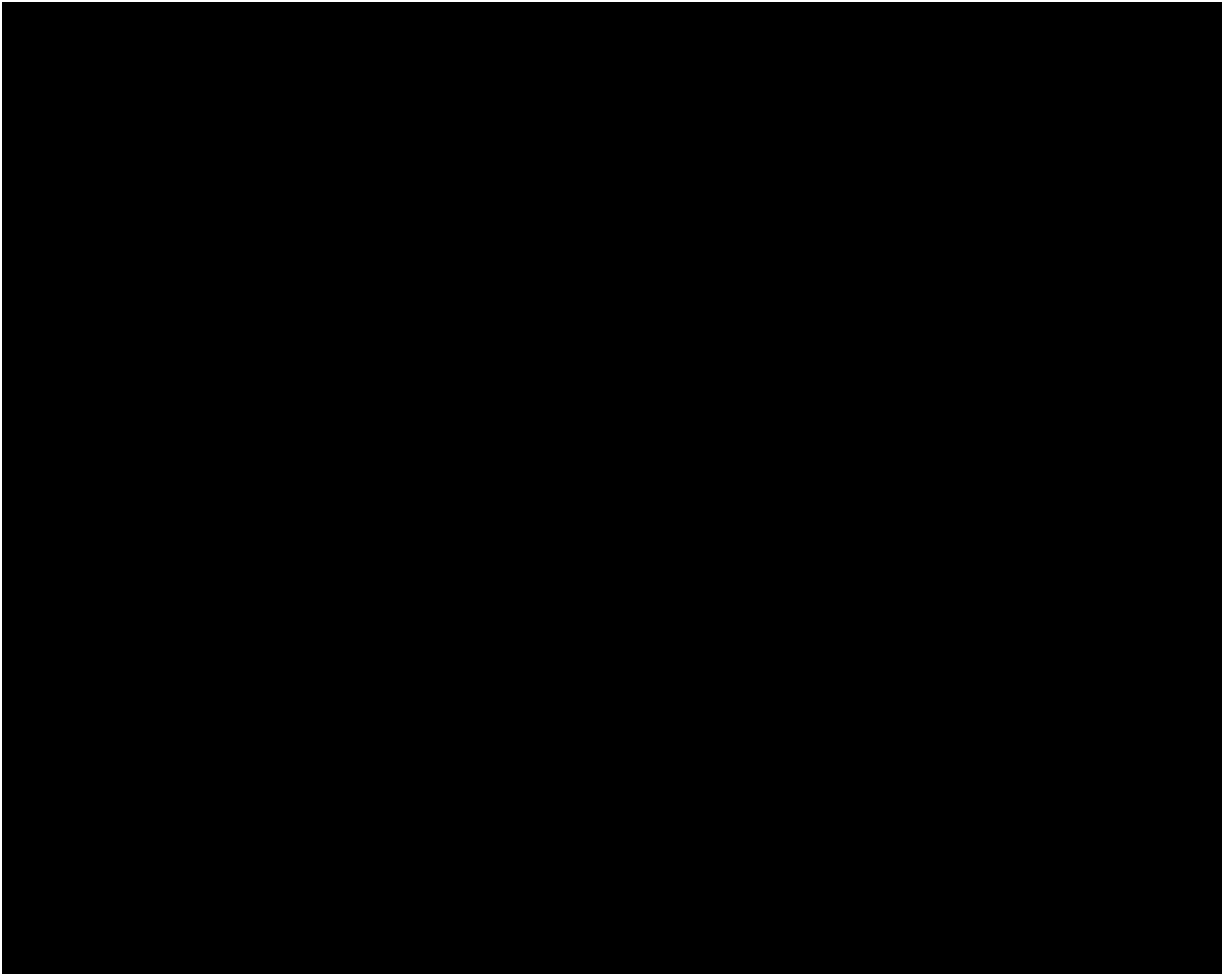
The Tolland & Mansfield Turnpike



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Hubbard's Tannery



In 1830 Thomas & James Dike and Jude Sabin (of Mansfield) purchased the paper mill on the Mill Brook. It was heavily mortgaged. By late 1831 or early 1832 the Dikes and Sabin also have a fulling mill just adjacent, and they converted the site, of three-quarters of an acre, to a cotton mill and made sheeting. The conversion is driven partially by the fact that machines superceded hand laid paper, and the paper mill failed. This site will be known as “Dikes Village” for many years to come. The depression of 1837 contributed to their financial failure and the site, which included a building on the north side of the turnpike (Main Street), was purchased for \$9,100 by J.W. Boynton (John’s oldest son). The machinery included twelve cards, fifteen looms, four throstles, a drawing frame and a picker and wiper.

In September of 1831, John Boynton sold his saw and fulling mill and the pond (on today’s Depot Road) for \$800 to himself, Thomas Stebbins, and Ebenezer Root who are shareholders in the Coventry Satinet Company which was incorporated on May 1, 1831. The dam was improved and boarding houses were built for the mill which began to make satinet. The factory grew to be one of the largest on the Mill Brook, employing up to 60 people on eighteen power looms. Over its life it made hundreds of thousands of yards of cassimere and satinet. Its owners were chiefly men from Rhode Island and New York (Fargo, Morse, Rawitzer, Olmstead), some who owned mills in other towns.

The Coventry Satinet Factory in 1857

The most striking physical features of the site are the dam and an underground spillway, both of which exist today. The mortarless stone dam was built in the 1830's along with a 600- foot underground, stone-arched water channel to direct the water to the Willimantic River. This waterway is a marvel unto itself. It was mapped by underground radar when the Depot Road bridge was re-built in 1996. The satinet factory burned in 1879, but was resurrected in 1911 as a fiberboard shop.

Old Depot Road Bridge Over the Mill Brook

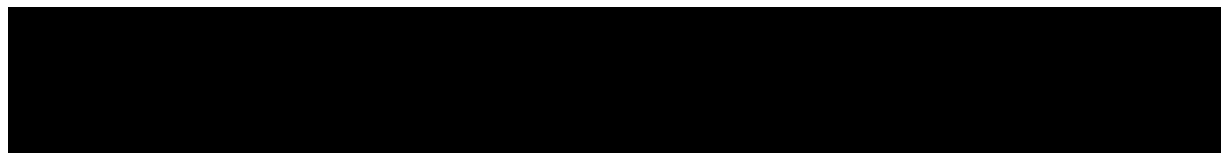
In February of 1835 Capt. Daniel Dimock sold an undeveloped site with a water privilege to Chauncey Griggs and very soon after Griggs sold the site to J. Newton Dow, Edward Mathewson, and, Frederick Augustus Strong (being the same who has recently sold his interest in the Washington Mill site). The site, which now holds the Kenyon Mill on Armstrong Road, included a mulberry tree orchard and a "silk house". There is no mention of any activity other than Coventry Connecticut than the fact that the water privilege exists. The first mill was erected here about 1836. The site is thirteen acres. Early in 1837, Dow and Mathewson operated a shop that made wool cards

on the first floor, and Strong operated a forge and trip hammer in the basement.

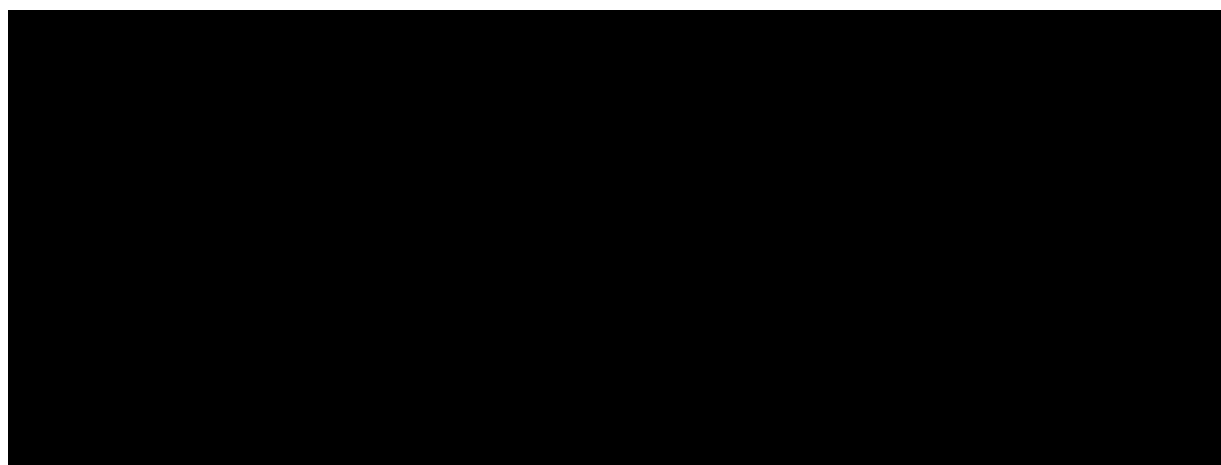
Marvin Root's manuscript of 1844 (13) mentions Zolvah Brown's saw mill on the west side of the Skungamaug River on land he owned since 1825 and received from his father. The manuscript quotes "West of Zolvah Brown's house on the west side of the river, near Mr. Brown's saw mill on the old road which led to Jerome Carpenter's (this is an east-west road that no longer exists) stood a house in which lived Nat Richardson, a shoemaker." This site is located on the Manchester Coon & Fox property about 600 yards southwest of the meeting hall. It is estimated that the mill operated from about 1830 to 1855.

In April of 1836, Edward Huntington purchased ten acres of land on a small brook that crosses today's Parker Bridge Road, and in April of 1846 Asa Parker (who lived nearby) leased to Mr. Huntington for 99 years the "privilege to erect a dam on the brook near the road between the dwelling of Asa and his brother Cyrel". The brook is called "Tan Fat" brook, an unusual name whose significance has been lost to history. Huntington had the right to "take water from the brook and carry it down twenty-five or thirty rods to a building which he is erecting for a mill manufactory" and for a "reservoir" for use by the mill. The lease is for \$75. The mill does wool carding and makes wool hats.

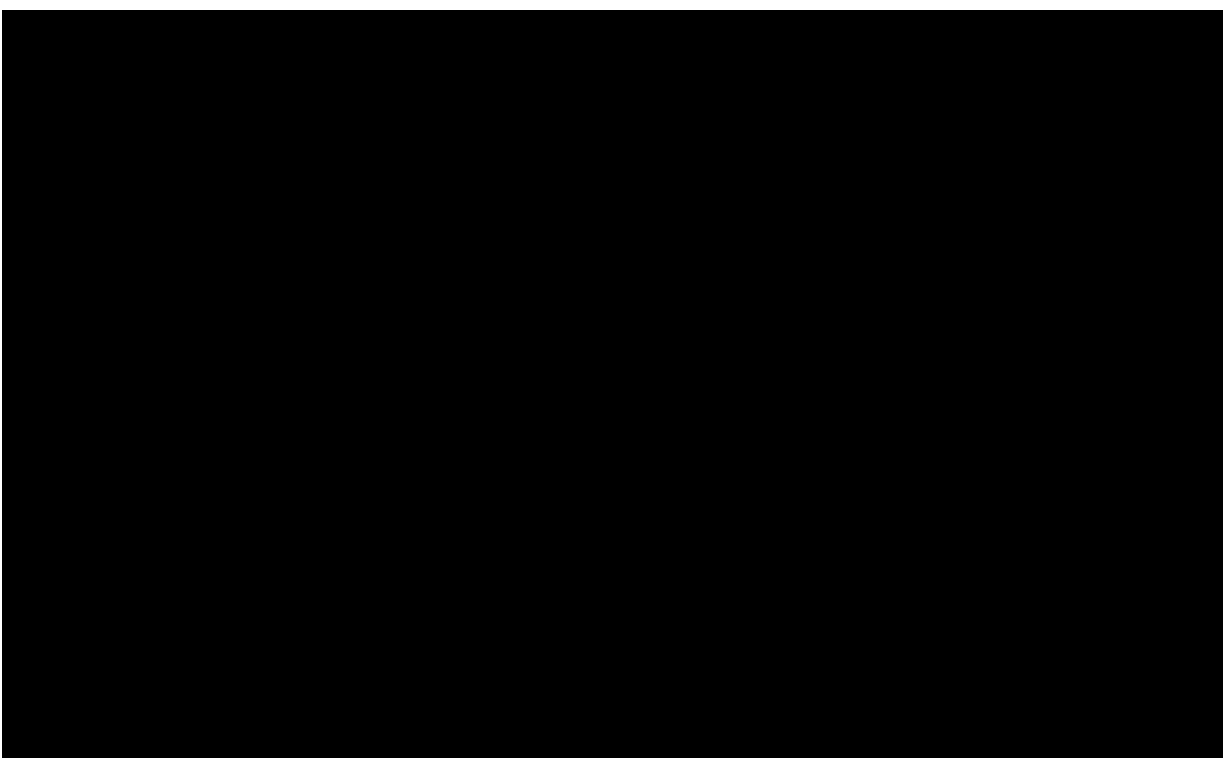
In 1833 Eleazer Loomis purchased fifty acres of land on the west bank of Ash Brook (on today's Brewster Street) with a house and a barn. Soon after, he built a modest saw mill and he is listed on the earliest available Coventry tax records (1855) as owning a mill assessed at \$100. The mill also shows on an 1857 Map of Tolland County. He continued to operate the mill as indicated by tax records and an 1869 map of Coventry to 1874 when he sold it to Arthur Loomis in September of that year for \$200.

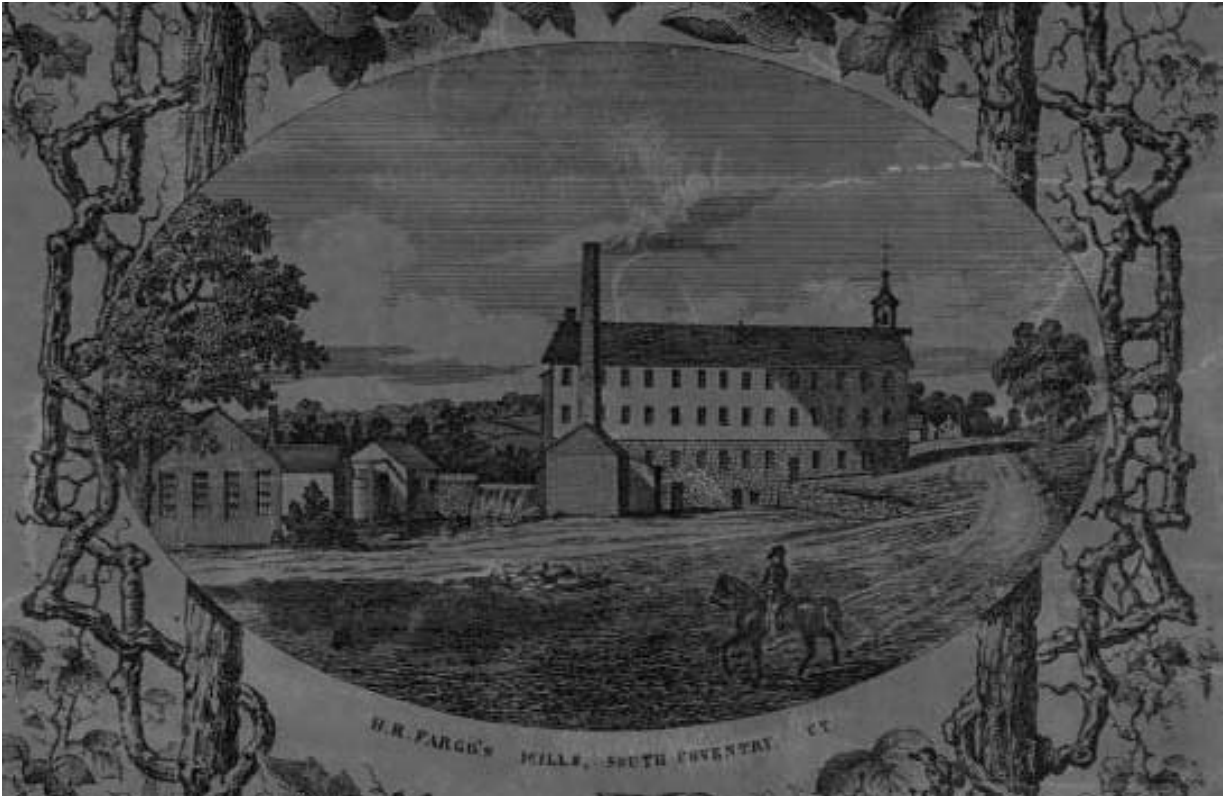


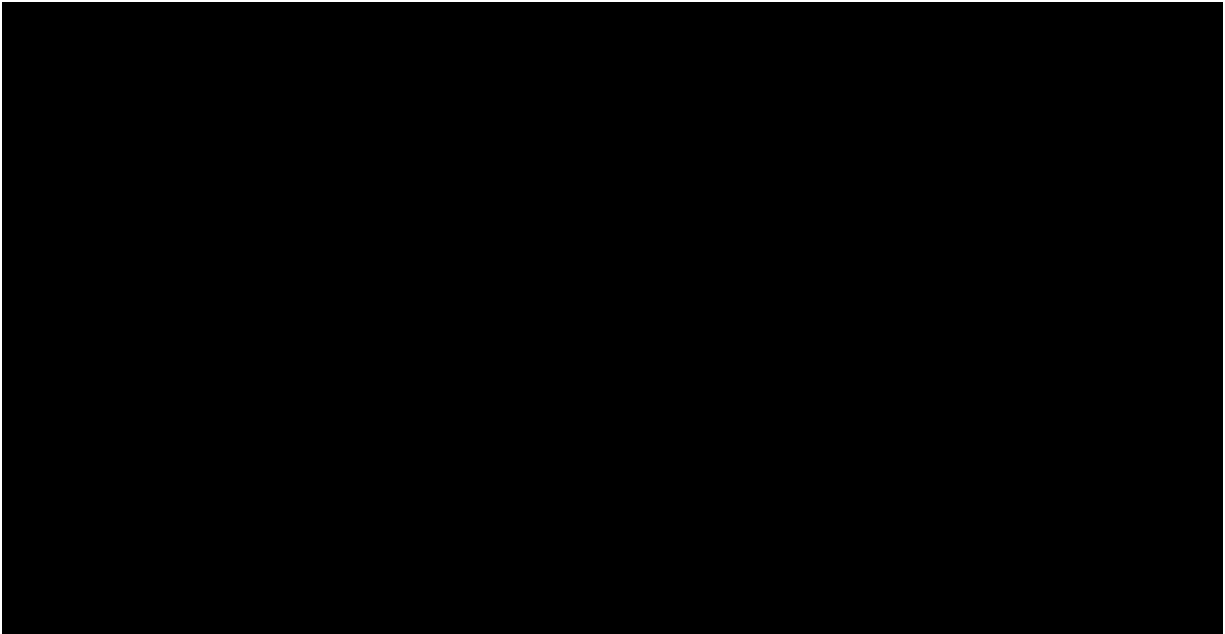
Three Mills on the Mill Brook and Two Other Early Mills



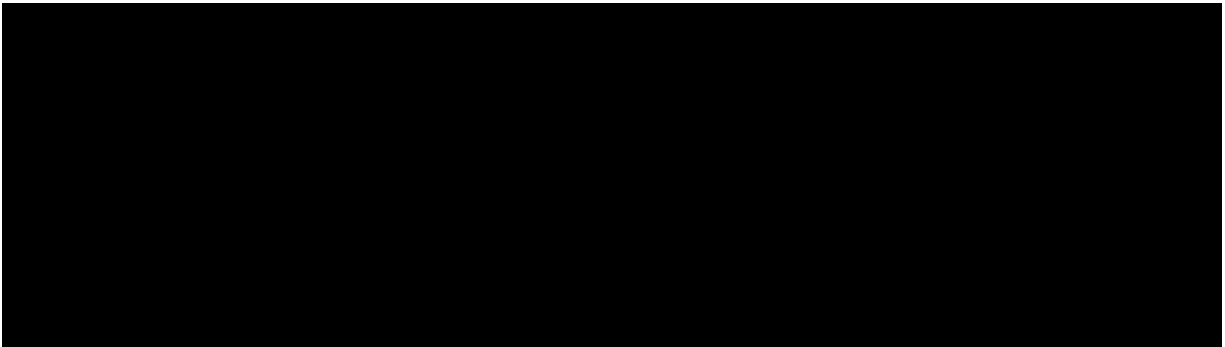
Three Mills on the Mill Brook and Two Other Early Mills







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Loomis' Mill on the Ash Brook

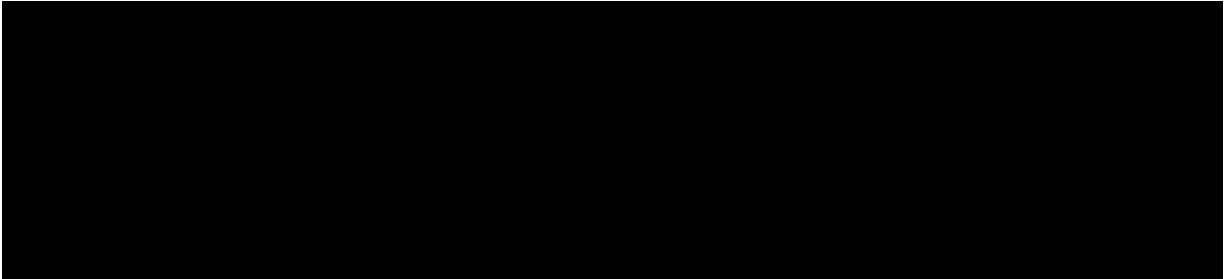
This mill site is located south of today's Broadway on a brook running west-to-east to the Skungamaug River at a spot where the brook begins a modestly steep fall. The mill produced small amounts of clover seed in the 1800's though the exact dates are not known. The homestead located north of the mill is called the Clover Mill Farm. The site was a large orchard in the 1700's presenting the possibility of an earlier cider mill. Matthew Bissel owned the site in the late 1700's and in 1802 sold it to his daughter Molly, wife of Gad Hunt.

In 1835 after Gad Hunt's death, the site was sold to Orrin Turner who operated the farm there producing potatoes, corn, rye, and clover. In 1846 Mr. Turner died, and shortly thereafter his wife Lydia sold the mill site and moved across the road. Rufus Chamberlain, part owner of the Coventry Glass Works later owned the site, and he appears on the 1860 Coventry tax list with a mill assessed at \$75 indicating a very modest or idle operation. It is thought that the mill did not operate after this time.

The first great depression of 1837 was caused by a rash and unfounded monetary decision by President Jackson that caused widespread bank failures. The price of cotton fell dramatically, and since cotton trade was a major component of the country's economy, there was further financial distress. By 1840, Congress passed a law establishing the Independent Treasury System, but the damage had been done. Messrs. Dikes' and Sabin's cotton business failed as a direct result of the depression and they were livid with Jackson. Other businesses suffered to a lesser extent for the next decade.



The Clover Mill



The Clover Mill



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The 1837 Depression

Mary B. Clark's father Loring Winchester married into a leading Coventry family in 1838, when he took Amelia Bidwell as his wife. She was the daughter of Solomon and Caroline (Lyman) Bidwell. Mary B. Clark's great-uncle on her mother's side, Nathan Lyman, was a famed architect who designed "Lyman" houses in Buffalo, New York. Solomon Bidwell built the Bidwell Tavern in Coventry in 1822, which became a famed stagecoach resting place and "watering hole" on the old Hartford to Providence turnpike. Loring and Amelia Winchester had four children, but only Mary Bidwell Winchester lived to adulthood. Loring Winchester was a Democrat and represented Coventry in the General Assembly. Although not trained in the law, he read law books profusely, and his legal advice was often sought.

The Commemorative Biographical Record of Tolland County (1903), stated that: "In financial matters it is said that his opinion carried great weight, perhaps more so than any other man of his time. Successful in his business enterprises, he accumulated a large property. He was speculative but careful in business, and weighed and measured all chances. A plain-going man of common sense, he had a profound contempt for the arrogant and haughty."

Mary Winchester was married relatively late in life, at twenty-four, to a young machinist employed in a Coventry manufactory. Daniel S. Clark Jr. was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, September 9, 1849. In 1863, aged fourteen, he had enlisted at Thompson, Connecticut, and joined the 1st Regiment, Company I of the Connecticut Volunteer Cavalry. He was mustered out at Washington D.C. in 1865. In 1869, the nineteen year old Clark married Mary Bidwell Winchester in Coventry, Connecticut. Little has been uncovered about their married life, but the 1880 census shows the couple living in South Windham. It can be assumed that shortly after their marriage, Daniel found work at the Smith & Winchester Company in South Windham, producers of paper-making machines, where his wife's paternal uncle, Harvey Winchester was founder and manager.

In 1888, Daniel and Mary formally agreed to abandon their individual rights to property held by them prior to 1877. It was later revealed that

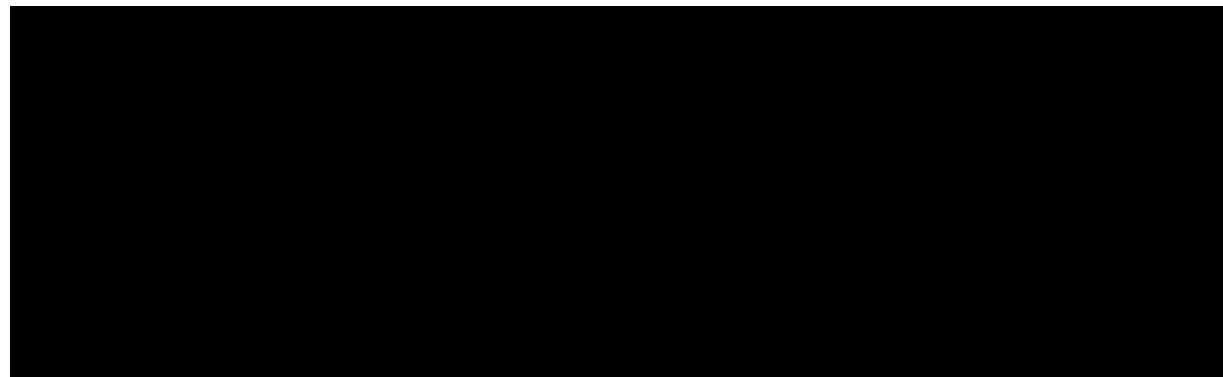
Mary B. Clark drew a pistol on her husband, and they divorced soon afterwards. Mary Bidwell Clark did not remarry. Daniel

Clark was remarried in Windham to Emma M. Smith of Willimantic. The couple lived on Windham Road, "opposite the campground." When Clark died, aged 68 in 1918, his obituary stated that he had worked as a machinist at Smith & Winchester for 35 years.

After Daniel and Mary divorced, the precise date and circumstances have yet to be established, Mary B. Clark became a woman of substance. She used her financial assets in real estate by purchasing property and granting mortgages. The 46-year-old divorcee purchased a house on 192 Jackson Street in Willimantic in February, 1890. She lived there and at 23 Union Street. In the 1900 Federal Census, Mrs. Clark's occupation is listed as "money investor."



Loring Winchester and Mary Clark (18)



Loring Winchester and Mary Clark (18)



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Henry Franklin Parker (1836-1918) was born in Willington, Connecticut, and at the age of six months was taken by his family to Coventry where he was reared to manhood. Until he reached the age of sixteen years he attended school, and at that time entered his father's blacksmith shop, being admitted to a partnership in 1856, a connection that was unbroken until the death of the father. The shop was located adjacent (north) to the Bidwell Hotel on Main Street. Mr. Parker continued the business until 1900. He cared for the property of other people, and for twenty-four years he managed the estate of Mr. Reynolds. He owned an extensive real estate business, and handled a number of tenements for different parties. Mr. Parker was a Republican. He served as constable, collector and grand juror; and for several years was the moderator of the town meetings.

Mr. Parker was married to Lizzie A. Bradbury, a daughter of David and Hannah Bradbury, July 19, 1858. Mr. Parker was married the second time Sept. 2, 1885, to Caroline H. Howard, who died May 6, 1895; she was born in New York, March 17, 1843, and had been for fourteen years before her marriage a teacher in the Hartford schools. Mr. Parker married for his third wife, Nov. 20, 1895, Elizabeth Risley. She was born May 23, 1864, was a daughter of Francis and Lois (Thayer) Risley. Mr. Parker was a Mason and belonged to Trinity Chapter, No. 9, at Willimantic. A charter member of Wangumbaug Grange, he was secretary of the Grange for several years, serving two years as Master of the local lodge.

Henry's father, Sherman Parker, was born in the Coventry, grew up in his native community, and at the age of eighteen years went to Manchester,

where he learned the blacksmith trade under Capt. William Wilson. After he had completed his apprenticeship he went to Canada, where he worked at his trade for a few years, and then returned to Connecticut to work for the Glass Factory Company at Willington. He started a shop in Coventry, and in 1845 removed to the Village, buying a shop in which he continued his trade as long as he lived. When his son, Henry F., was grown, he took him in as a partner. The elder Parker was strongly opposed to the Civil war, but he had a son who enlisted and died in Andersonville. Henry's mother was a member of the Congregational Church. Her name was Fanny Dow a descendant of Lorenzo Dow and was married to Henry August 23, 1832.

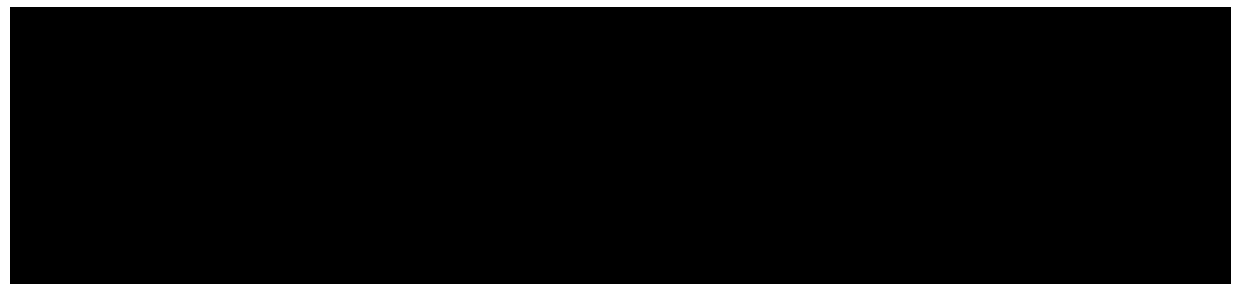
By the 1840's rural population and the sheep industry had peaked in New England. Farm abandonment and a mass migration to the Ohio River and parts west began. There was a short resurgence of sheep farming during the Civil War where the lack of cotton from the south forced textile makers to chiefly use wool for their thread and cloth.

At a town meeting in August of 1843 held in the North Society, it was voted to build a covered bridge over the Willimantic River near Roderick Dimock's Inn (Route 44 crossing).

In the late 1700's at the southeast corner of Coventry, there was a cluster of buildings comprising a school house, a blacksmith's shop and a number of dwelling houses that went by the name of Flanders. About 1840 one of the brightest scholars the town ever produced sat in its humble school house. His name was J.L. Babcock. He graduated second best from Yale College. He left college about the time that the movement was made to erect a monument to martyr Hale and used his influence to accomplish this objective. Farmers turned out with their ox teams and hauled the granite, gratis, from Norwich. Babcock contributed a pamphlet which included items about Hale, and the sale of the pamphlet contributed to the monument fund. (16)



Henry Parker



Henry Parker

H. F. PARKER,
HORSE AND OX SHOEING.
CARRIAGE IRONING AND
GENERAL JOBBING,
SOUTH COVENTRY, CONN.





1881 Advertisement- Willimantic Directory

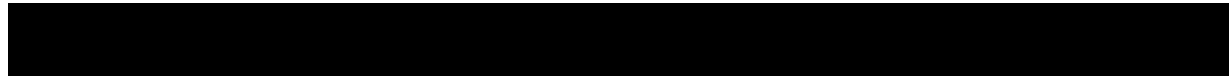


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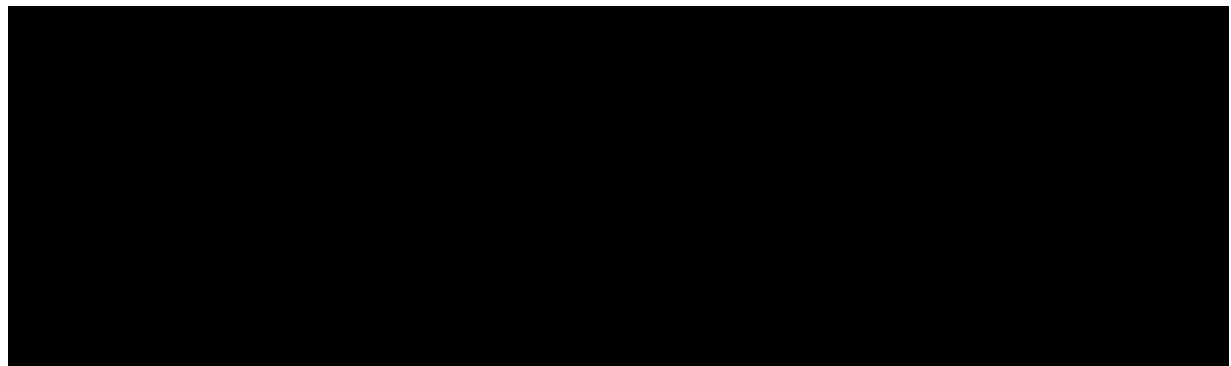


Flanders and J.L. Babcock

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Coventry exhibited an eclectic mix of social and economic factors. The north and southeast part of town was dominated by large farms, many of 100 acres or more. The Boston Turnpike necessitated a few taverns for travelers. About a half-dozen men received three or more patents for machinery and tools. Just over half of the water powered mills were family owned and modest in size. The remainder, mostly on the Mill Brook, were large (by comparison) “Rhode Island” style mills. Across town, twenty percent of the population (about 400 people) were mill employees and many lived in mill housing close to their work. The mills produced many different products. The Village was dominated by the mills and the shops needed to support the employees. A handful of mill owners were very profitable and most lived in newly constructed “mansions” close to their factories



Social Comment 1850-1900



Social Comment 1850-1900



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In 1841, John Boynton sold to H.A. Converse, Earl Smith and Alanson Washburn a one and one-half acre site (located just behind today's Visitors Center) with the privilege of building a dam across the brook at the northwest side of the lot so as to convey water down a separate head race near and parallel to the turnpike to a water wheel in the shop they will build with an eight foot fall and also a tail race from the furnace shop running perpendicular to the turnpike joining the brook downstream of the aforementioned dam. (The races existed until the 1920's when they were filled in to provide a site for a commercial building.) Smith & Washburn built a foundry and started making simple tools and household implements (stoves, plows, kettles, sinks, wagon bands, piping and gear blanks). In May of 1849 Ralph Crittenden & William Tibbals installed machines in Washburn's mill and did some general machining and repair (of cotton and woolen machinery), but soon begin making percussion caps, the first such operation in the village.

By 1850 the foundry had ten hands and processed 1,000 tons of iron per year, and Crittenden & Tibbals employed eleven hands, had five cap making machines, and made 45,000,000 percussion caps that year! There is an 1857 map that show Crittenden and Tibbals in a separate building on the turnpike just northwest of Washburn's foundry, however on the town tax list they show up as only owning machinery. Washburn may have had two buildings, one for his foundry and one rented to Crittenden & Tibbals. Both operations continued through the 1850's, but by 1860 output had dropped to 70 tons of castings and 8,000,000 percussion caps. In 1852, Mr. Smith turned ill and died, and his estate sold his half of the foundry to Mr. Washburn for \$2,250, and in the same year Henry Mason's father Abner, who was employed making percussion caps, was killed in an explosion of fulminating mercury in this shop.

In 1843 the Coventry Satinet Company, which was located on today's Depot Road, (Alvin Kingsbury agent) relinquished twelve acres of land and some small buildings to Tolland County Bank to pay a debt. By 1850 Coventry Satinet was the largest employer on the brook with 54 hands, and the mill produced 80,000 yards of cassimere. In February of 1851 they

mortgaged three more small parcels and their machinery (nine card sets, 1190 spindles, eighteen power looms, etc.) to the same bank. By April 1852 the site was sold for \$43,000 to John Boynton who then mortgaged \$30,000 to the bank. Boynton experienced his financial difficulties in the early 1850's, and in September 1855 the Savings Bank of Tolland, who had acquired the property through Boynton's bankruptcy, sold the site to Horace Fargo for \$17,000. In 1860 Fargo was the largest employer on the brook with fifty-seven hands, and he produced 300,000 yards of satinet that year using water power. An ice railroad existed south of the mill site leading from the pond to the road.

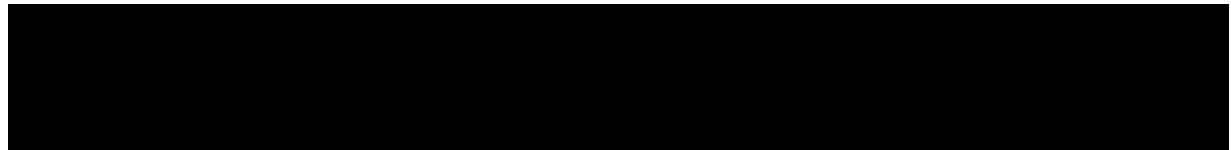
In September 1851 the John and J.W. Boynton cotton mill was sold for \$9,200 to Alvin Kingsbury who enlarged it and improved the privilege and sold the site in 1853 to Nelson Kingsbury who began making satinet. The factory was named the Washington Mill located on Washington Mill Lane (now the entrance to the Town Garage) had nine carding machines, eighteen looms, three jacks with 240 spindles each and other associated machinery. In 1854 an adjacent one-acre site, south of the brook, had a building that used to be a cotton picker house and it was sold to Christopher and Oliver Peckham who made wool hat bodies for three years until their debts caused them to sell everything to Nelson Kingsbury and Alanson Washburn.

The Washington Mill in 1857

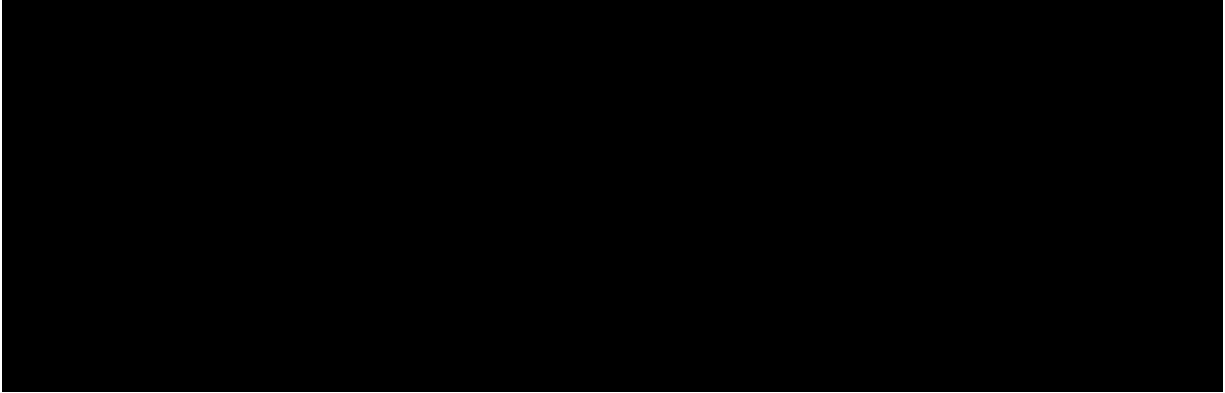
In 1857 there were two hat shops on this site run by Elijah Robertson and Charles A. Kingsbury. In 1858, the mill had nine carding machines, twenty-four looms, four fulling mills, a duster, winder, picker, shearer and a steam boiler to augment the water power, and there were two buildings, one on the turnpike and one a ways down Washington Mill Lane. In 1860 production was 233,000 yards of satinet. This site was the first to use steam to augment water power.

In April 1845 Elijah Robertson purchased a site on the Mill Brook (just below the Kenyon Mill) from J.N. Dow and built a dam and a building for making cotton batting. The dam was at the bottom of the tail race leading from Dow's shop at the Kenyon site. The race exists today. He rented a portion of the building for making wool hats. He leased the mill in 1849 to Dan Colman who employed two hands and made 40,000 cotton bats in 1850. Dan soon sold all his stock inside the mill (3,500 pounds of baled cotton) to J.N. Dow. Late in 1856 his mill was sold to Alan Washburn for \$1,200 then in September 1858 back to J. Newton Dow who enlarged the mill and began making wool cards. In 1860 Dow employed three hands and made five wool cards. Mr. Dow lived in a fine home on the north side of Main Street near Armstrong Road.

The Secretary of the State of Connecticut commissioned a business survey in 1845, and Coventry's data indicate there are twelve mills plus eighteen hat shops employing 215 people and producing goods valued at a total of \$146,000. (\$3.6 million in today's dollars) Hats were sold for use in the slave trade. A cassimere and woolen mill were the largest manufactories producing 97,000 yards of material that year.



Three Mills on the Mill Brook Change Hands



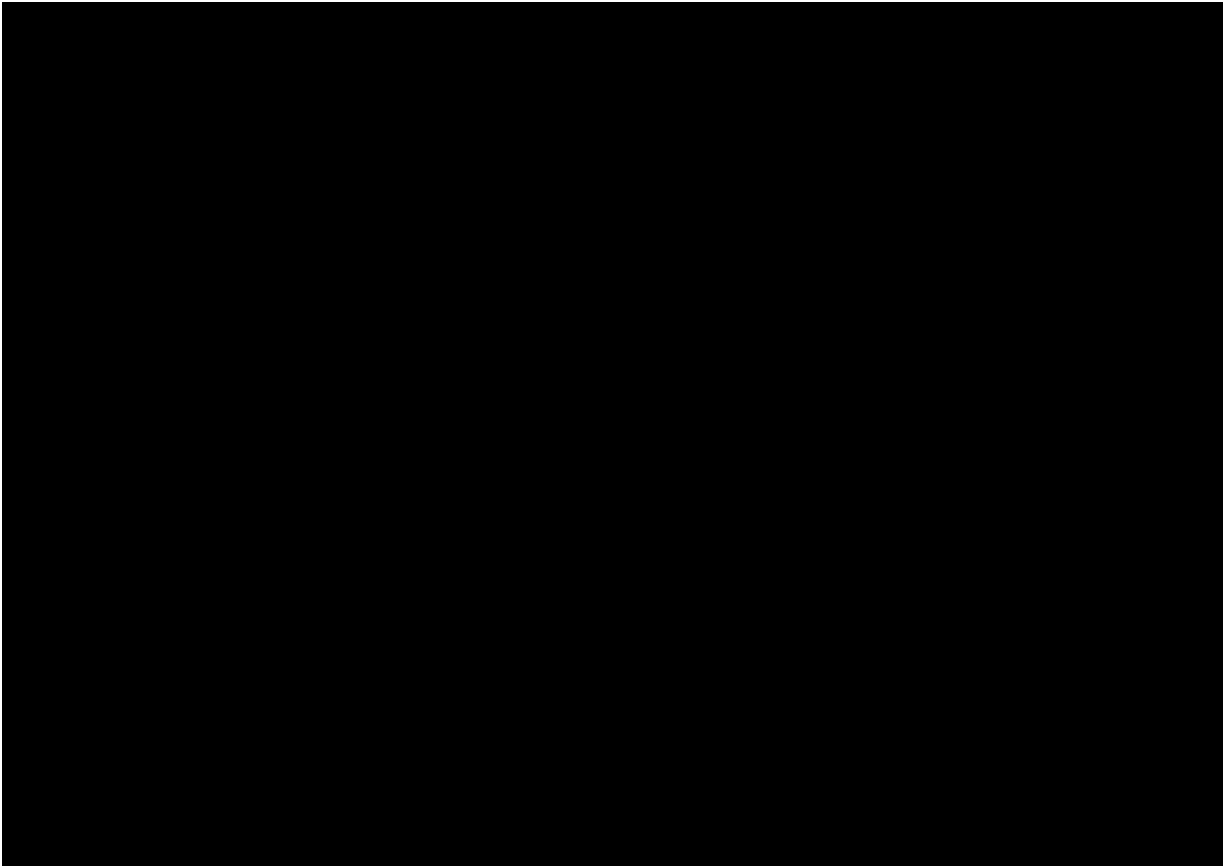
Three Mills on the Mill Brook Change Hands

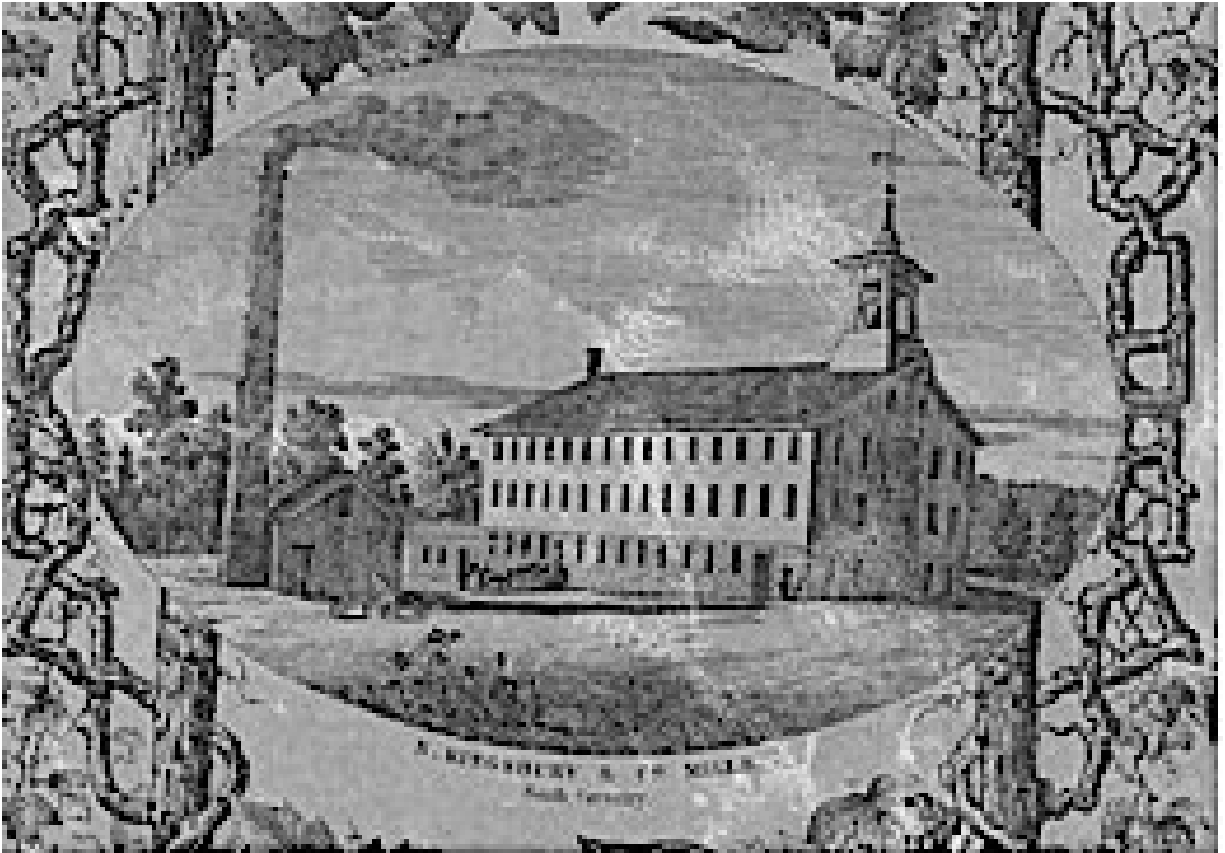


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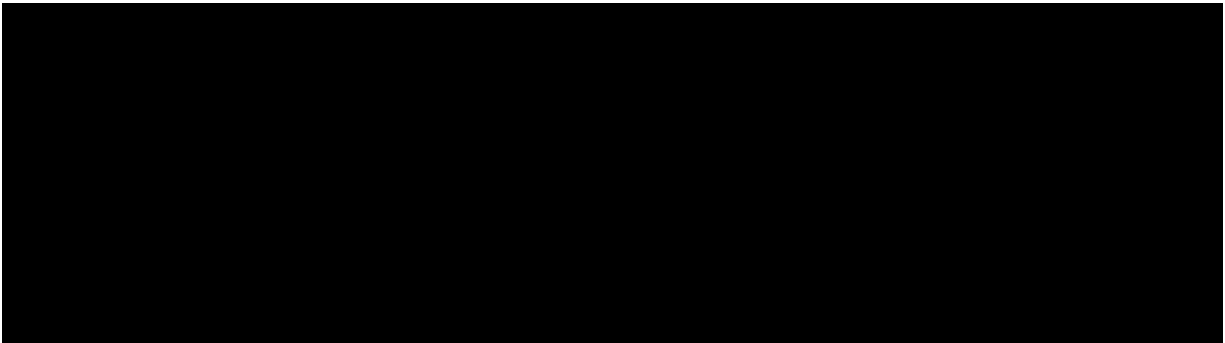
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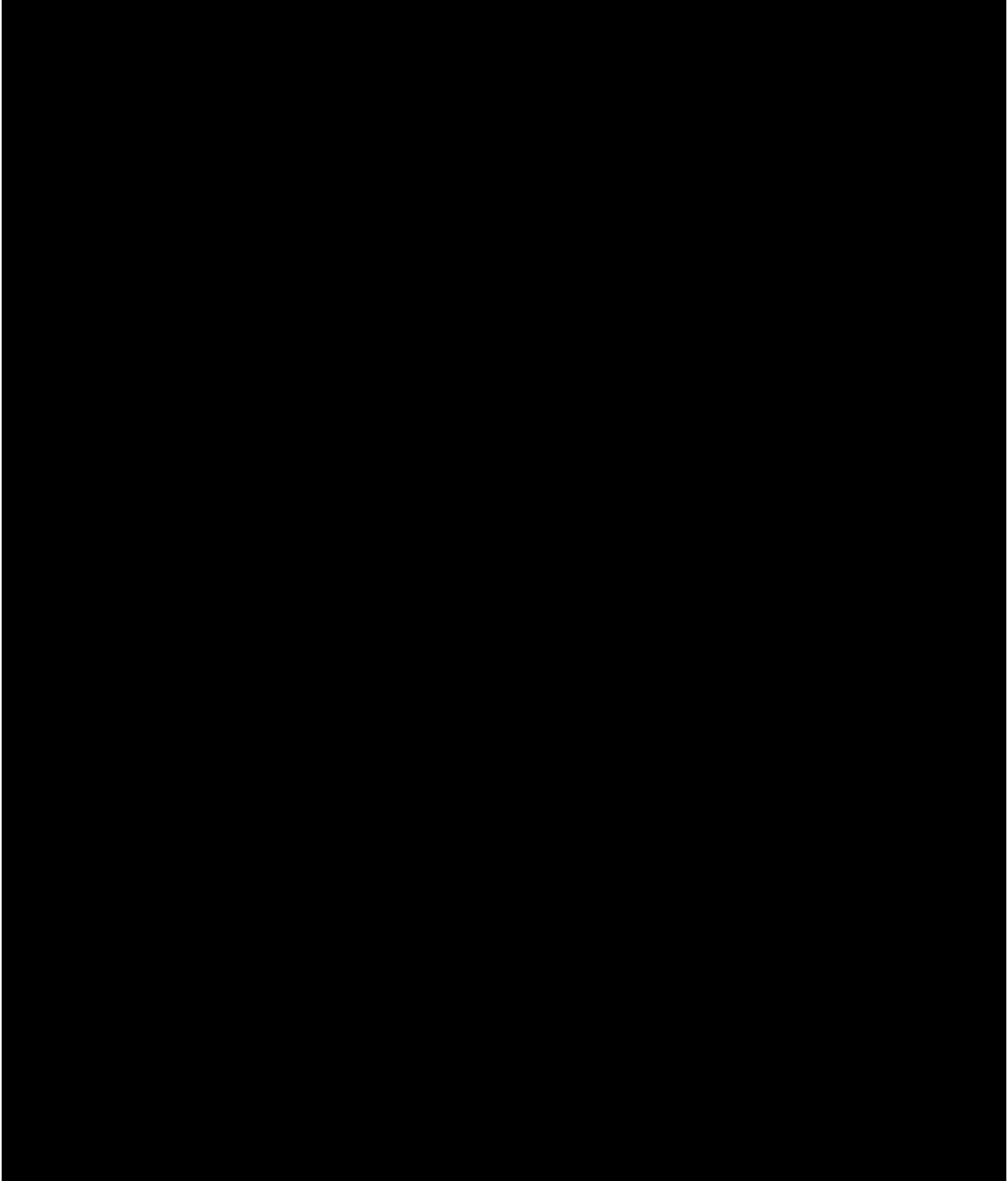


Two New Mills on the Mill Brook



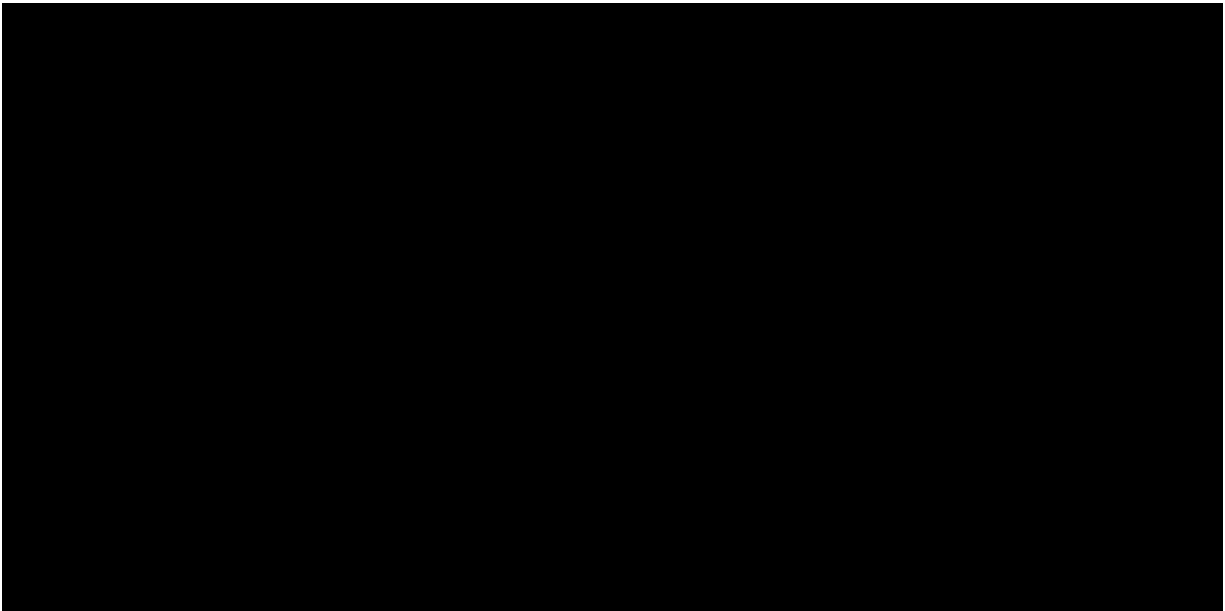
Two New Mills on the Mill Brook



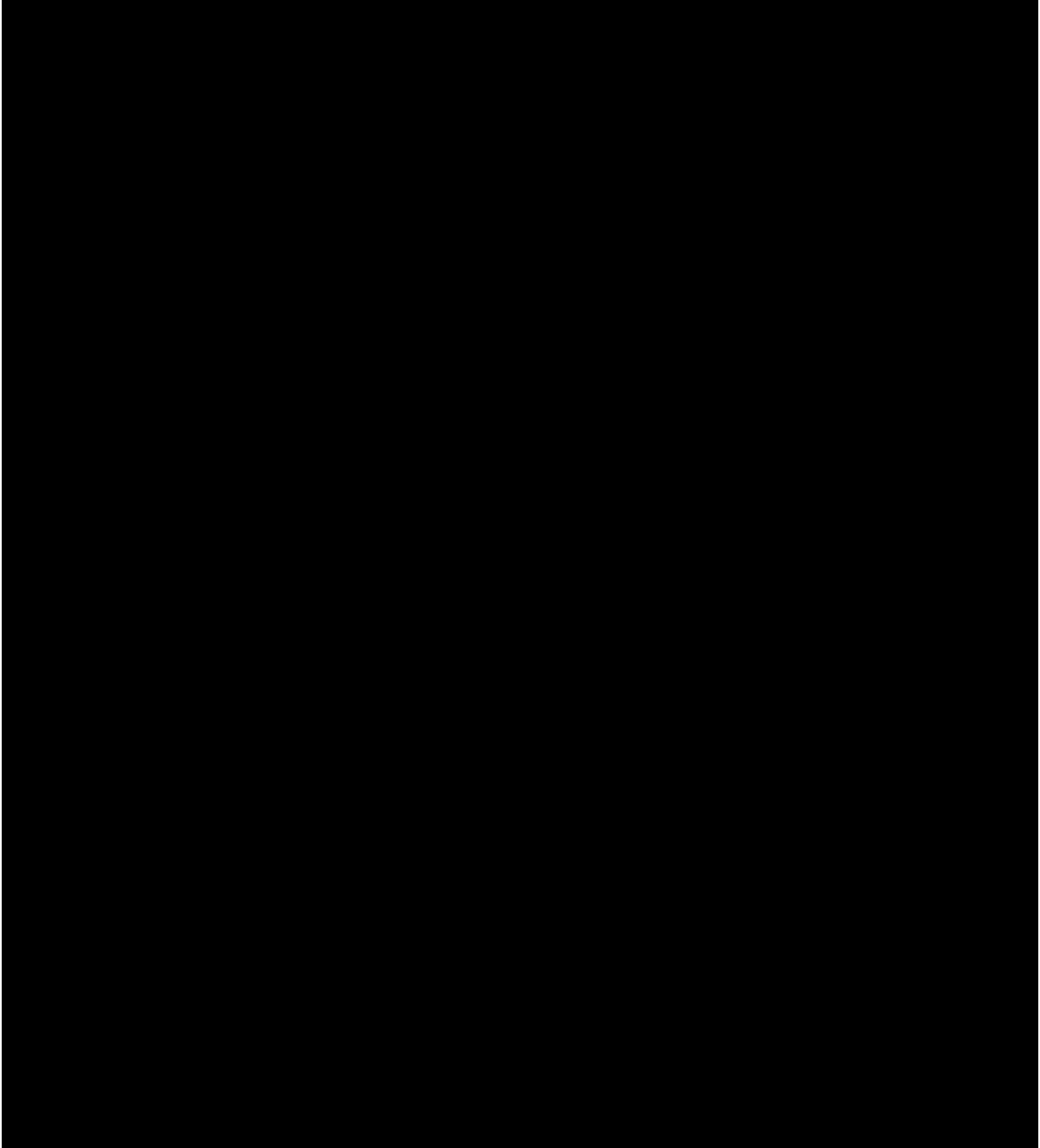


Elijah Robertson gave the rights south of his factory (on Armstrong Road) in 1846 to Nathan Colman to dig a ditch and dam the brook to divert the water and use all the fall below Elijah's factory. Nathan made cotton batting. Soon after acquiring the rights, Nathan sold one- half of his cotton batting mill to Argyle Douglas who began to make cotton wicking. The mill

was twenty-six by forty feet, two stories high with a water wheel and was forty rods east of Elijah's factory. It had a ten and one-half foot fall and canalled the water from the stream. In 1849, Argyle sold half his interest in the cotton mill to James Stanley. In 1850 Argyle employed five hands and made 15,000 inches of wicking, and James Stanley (who partnered with a Mr. Dabney) employed four hands and made some 8,000 hats and 2,000 inches of wicking. The Robinsons (Sybil and Edwin) also had a saw mill in this area in the 1850's and '60's. In the mid 1850's the site was sold to E.B. & C.A. Kingsbury who employed the privilege as a saw and shingle mill.



Clark's Mill



In 1846, the mill site most northerly on the Skungamaug River was owned by Lucius Clark and Theron Powell, and by April of 1847 the site was fully owned by Lucius Clark, though Powell retained ownership of some of the stock. A bridge had been built over the river on what is now Folly lane. The site was known as Clark's Mill until well into the 20th century. The site reached its peak of activity, then holding the grist mill and saw mill as well

as a shingle mill, a carpenter shop and a planing mill with a mortising machine and a “buzz” saw.

The Central Vermont Railroad operated under several names. Presently, it is the only railroad that runs into Coventry that also had an operating station. The railroad enters Coventry from Mansfield for a short distance before going back into Mansfield. The track of the Central Vermont Railroad starts at New London and extends north to Palmer, Massachusetts and beyond. Its main line is still intact.

New London was the third largest whaling port in the United States. It suffered a serious business depression due to the price drop for whaling products in the middle 1800's. Whales were becoming scarce, thus necessitating trips far and wide to hunt them. To counter the effects of the depression, New London searched for a way to get back on its feet. It concluded that it would best be served by a railroad. Failing to convince the Norwich & Worcester Railroad to build an extension south from Norwich to their own city, New London began to investigate the possibility of building its own railroad to Norwich and Willimantic then to Springfield, Massachusetts, with a rail connection to be made with the Western Railroad, which ran between Worcester and Albany. The city fathers of New London agreed that they must at all cost have a railroad. In May, 1847,

a charter was secured from the State of Connecticut for New London, Willimantic & Springfield Railroad.

The incorporators were empowered to locate, construct and finally complete a single, double or treble railroad in the City of New London, thence on the westerly side of the Thames River to the City of Norwich, and thence to Willimantic and then north to the state line towards Springfield, Massachusetts. The charter was adopted in December of 1847, and the corporation officially formed. In our local area the railroad was to pass through Willimantic, South Coventry, Mansfield, Merrow (each having a railroad station) and on to the Massachusetts state line. Few Springfield investors felt that the New London project was worthwhile and did not lend enough support. But fifteen miles east of Springfield the up-and-coming town of Palmer showed genuine enthusiasm for the New London road. It also was located on the Western Railroad, and Palmer eventually became the line's destination. The railroad became known as the New London, Willimantic & Palmer Railroad.

The timetable of the New London, Willimantic & Palmer Railroad in the 1850's showed passenger trains going north from New London at 7:15 AM and 1:50 PM respectively, arriving at South Coventry at 9:09 AM and 3:50 PM. Going south from Palmer, the trains left at 7:55 AM and 2:10 PM respectively, arriving at South Coventry at 9:31 AM and 3:50 PM.

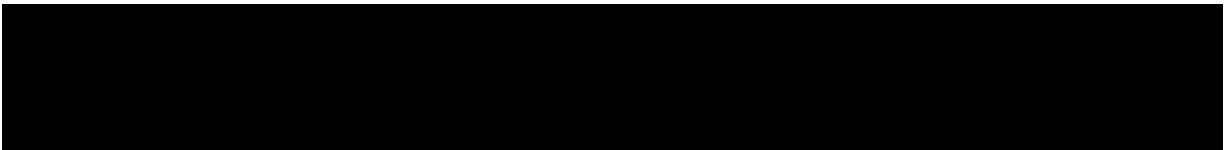
Groundbreaking occurred in Norwich in 1848 and it was calculated that the average cost of one mile of track to be \$7,889. Locomotives and passenger cars were supplied by companies in Massachusetts. Freight cars were ordered from the Norwich Car Manufactory. A passenger "saloon" car of fifty seats cost \$1,775; a baggage car sold for \$775; and freight cars ranged from \$500 to \$600. Trial conductors on passenger trains were hired at \$40 a month, and the first station agent at South Coventry received \$120 a year.

The line opened between New London and Norwich in October 1849, and by August of 1850, the tracks reached Palmer Massachusetts. The New London, Willimantic and Palmer Railroad had a great deal of trouble in paying bondholders their interest. The bondholders eventually foreclosed and the trustees took possession of the bankrupt road. The panic of 1857 which was brought on by a business depression did not help the situation. The road received legislative approval and, after restructuring its debt, the line was reorganized as the New London Northern Railroad. Operations by the new corporation began in 1861, and solvency was restored.

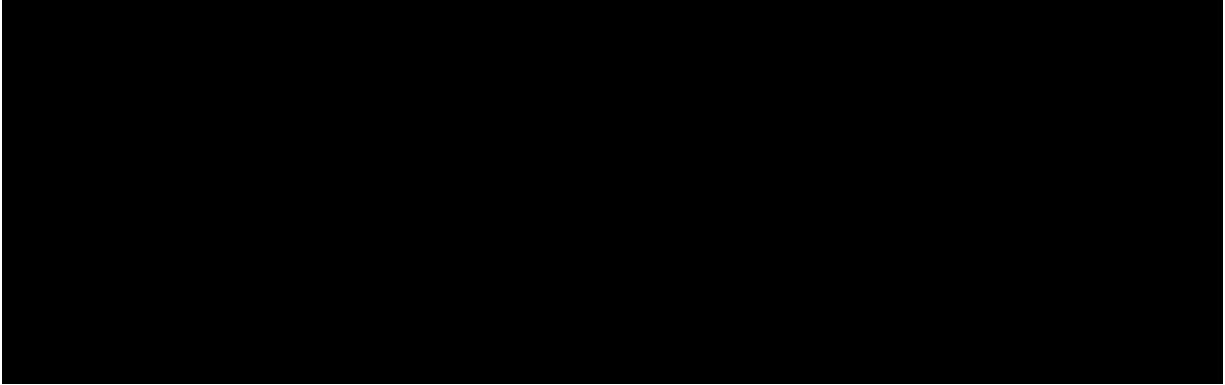
The South Coventry Depot ca 1900

The new road enlarged its operations to include its own line of steamboats between New London and New York City. The marine operation grew and was eventually succeeded by the Central Vermont Transportation Company in 1908 which ended its services in 1940. In 1871 the New London Northern directors leased their road to backers of the Vermont Central Railroad, which later became the Central Vermont Railroad.

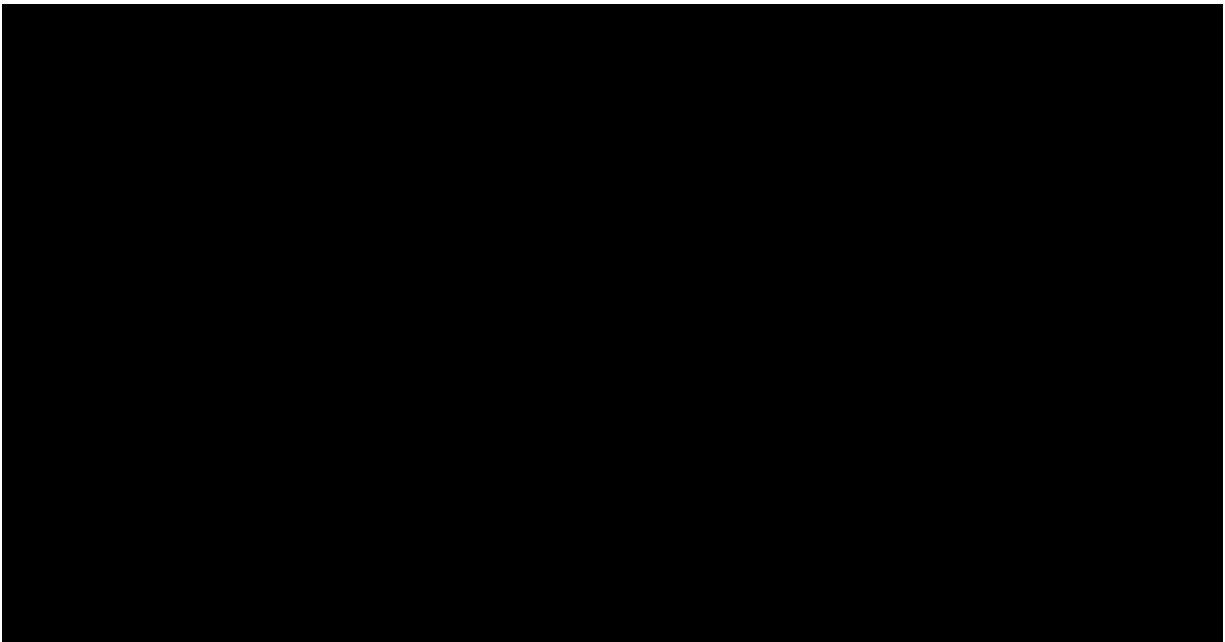
The Central Vermont carried freight and passengers until that service became a liability. Included in the freight were coal and grain that were shipped to Latimer's Grain Company situated near the depot at South Coventry in the early 1900's, as well as other commodities for farmers, mills, and other businesses and people. Also of interest was a horse-drawn coach that met the Central Vermont trains at the South Coventry depot. The coach ran between the depot and South Coventry.

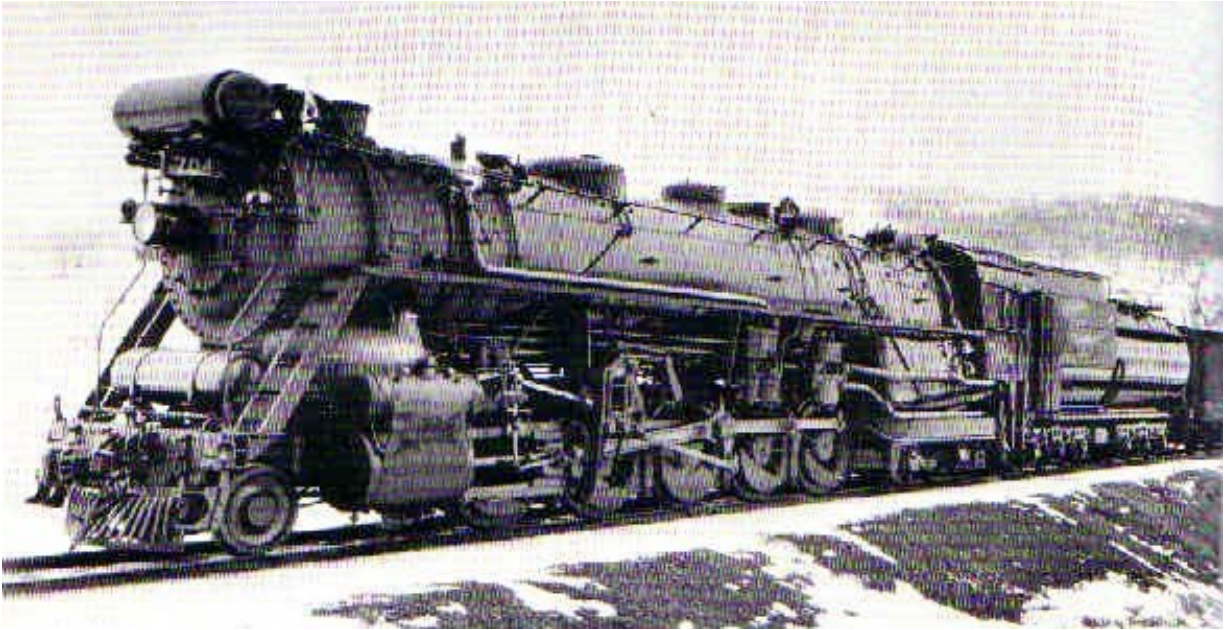


The Railroad along the Willimantic River



The Railroad along the Willimantic River





CENTRAL VERMONT RY.

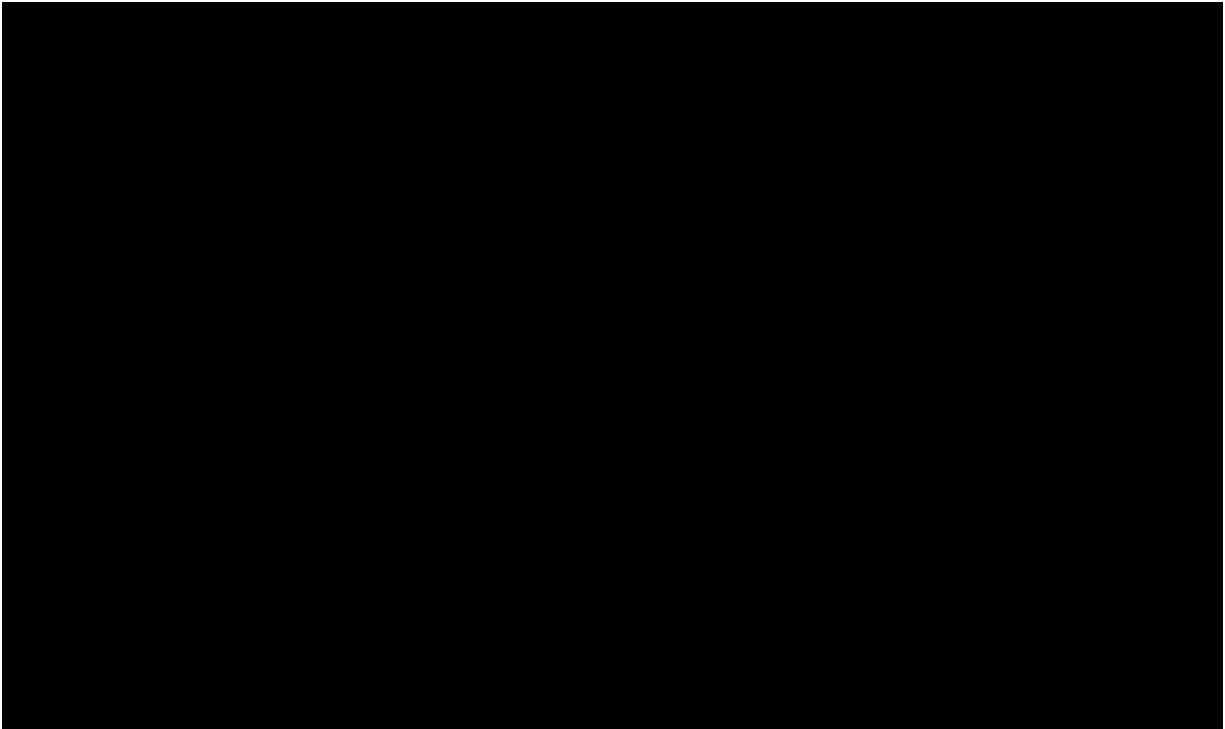
Liability for baggage limited to \$100 as per terms
printed on baggage check.

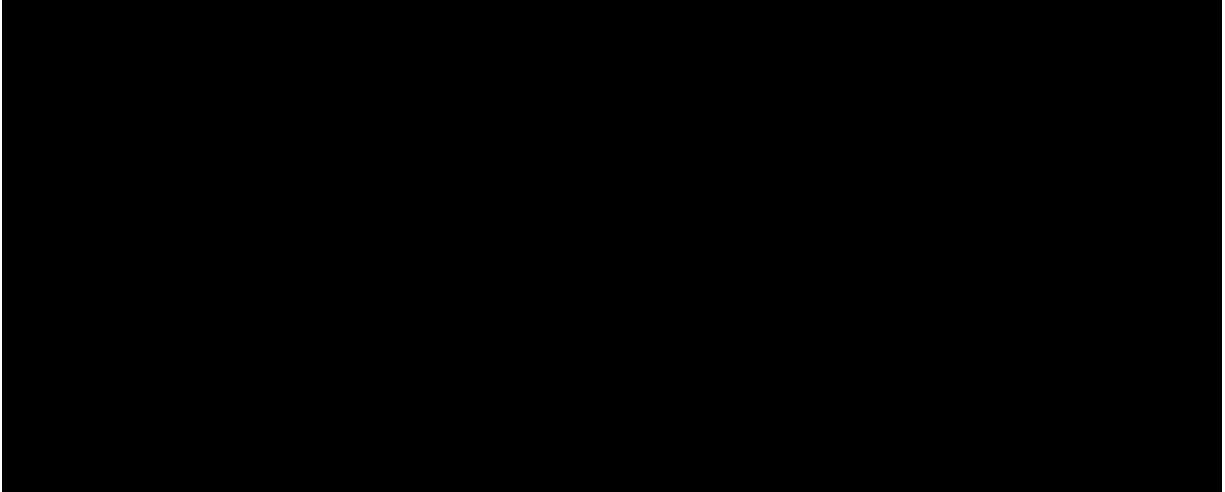
**WILLIMANTIC to
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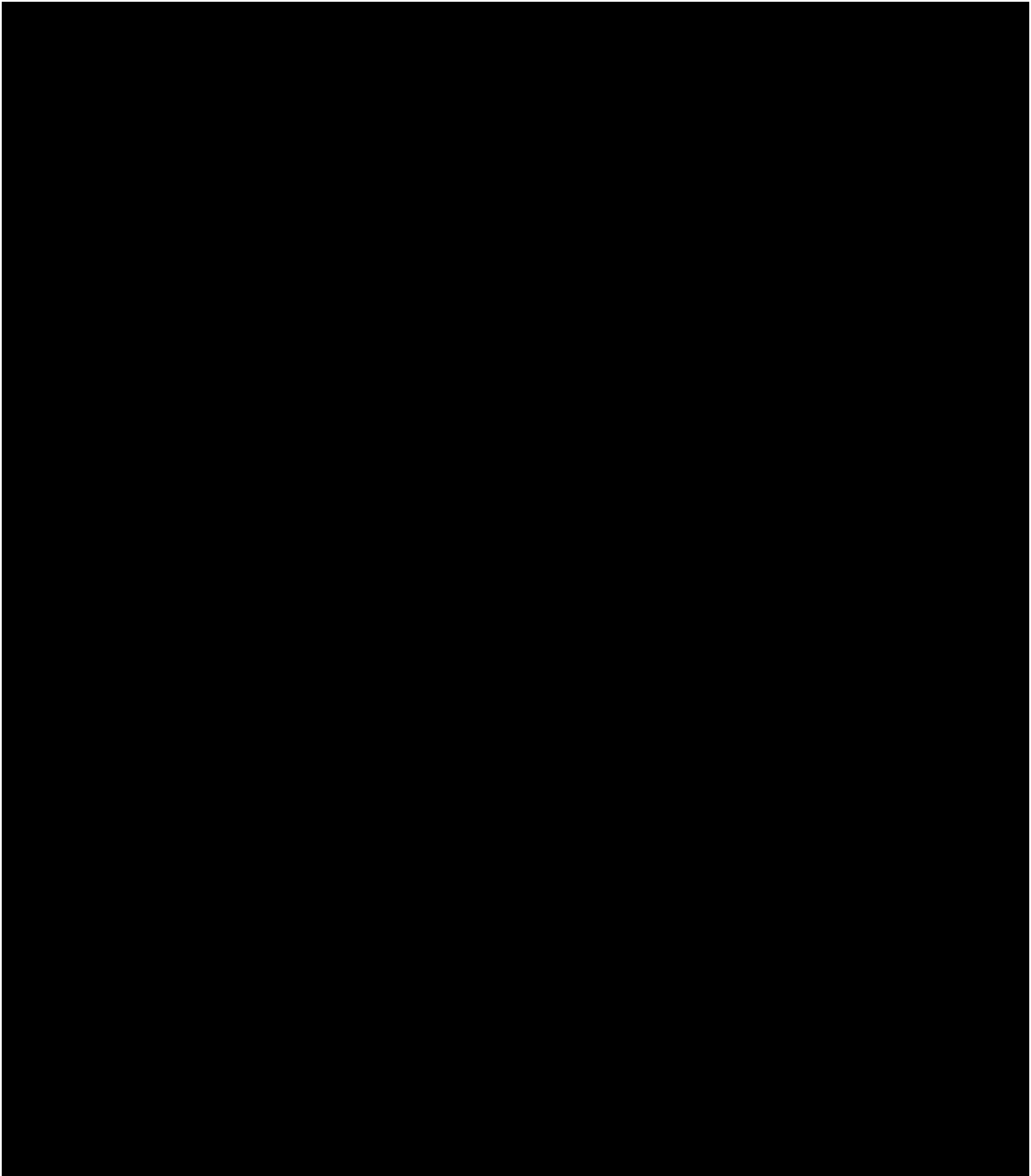
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The Hartford, Providence, and Fishkill Railroad Along the Hop River



In 1847, promoters obtained a charter for The Hartford & Providence Railroad. They intended to build a road from the river docks in Hartford, through Manchester to the quarries in Bolton, on through Andover, Willimantic, Baltic, and Moosup to the Rhode Island border. There they would connect with the Providence & Plainfield Railroad. Together the two

companies would provide a route from Hartford to Providence. This newly chartered firm was also given the privilege of uniting with any rail line west of Hartford that it should choose. In addition they were empowered to build a branch at Vernon to serve the Rockville area.

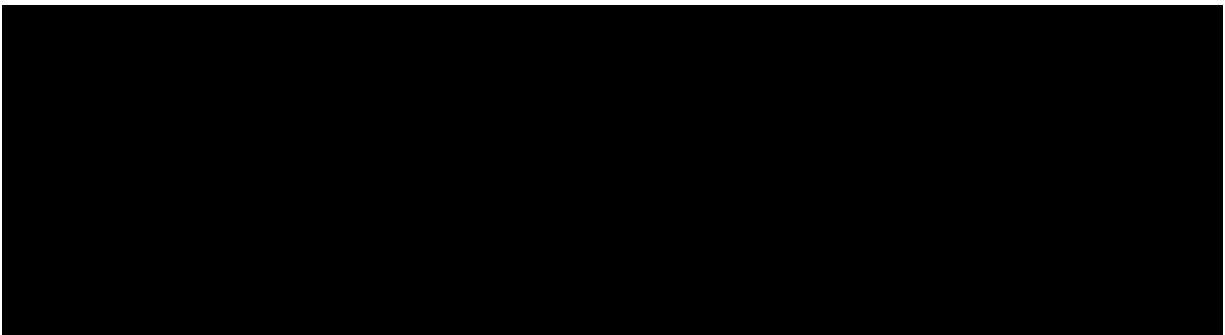
The Hartford & Providence group chose to connect with the New York & Hartford. The New York & Hartford was chartered in 1845 and was to construct a rail line beginning at Hartford and ending at Brewster, New York, where it would connect with the New York & Harlem Railroad. Upon hearing the news that a line was now chartered from Providence to Hartford, the New York & Hartford promoters sought to merge with the Hartford & Providence. The union took place in 1849 with the new firm becoming known as The Hartford, Providence & Fishkill Railroad Co. Fishkill-on-Hudson being the final western destination. The Hartford, Providence & Fishkill completed the Hartford to Willimantic (via Andover) track in 1849 and began regular train service to Willimantic.

By 1842, according to some records, the first church building (adjacent to the town green) was in need of major repairs. One group wanted to repair the old edifice, and another desired to erect a new building near the new center of town along the stream where the mills were developing. About \$2,600 was raised to repair the old building in 1848. The split between the two factions was still apparent because the second faction organized the Village Church of South Coventry. This group built the present building at a cost of nearly \$10,500. It is reported that Deacon John Boynton and his son contributed about one-half the cost. The building was dedicated on June 28, 1849. Two Congregational churches in South Coventry could not long succeed, and on January 6, 1869 the two groups merged and named the church "First Church of Coventry". In 1894 the Society voted the old meeting house to the town for \$160. The town refused and in 1897 the old building burned to the ground. An 1857 map has a church building on the original site east of the Green and the Congregational Church on Main Street. (8)

The First Congregational Church in 1908

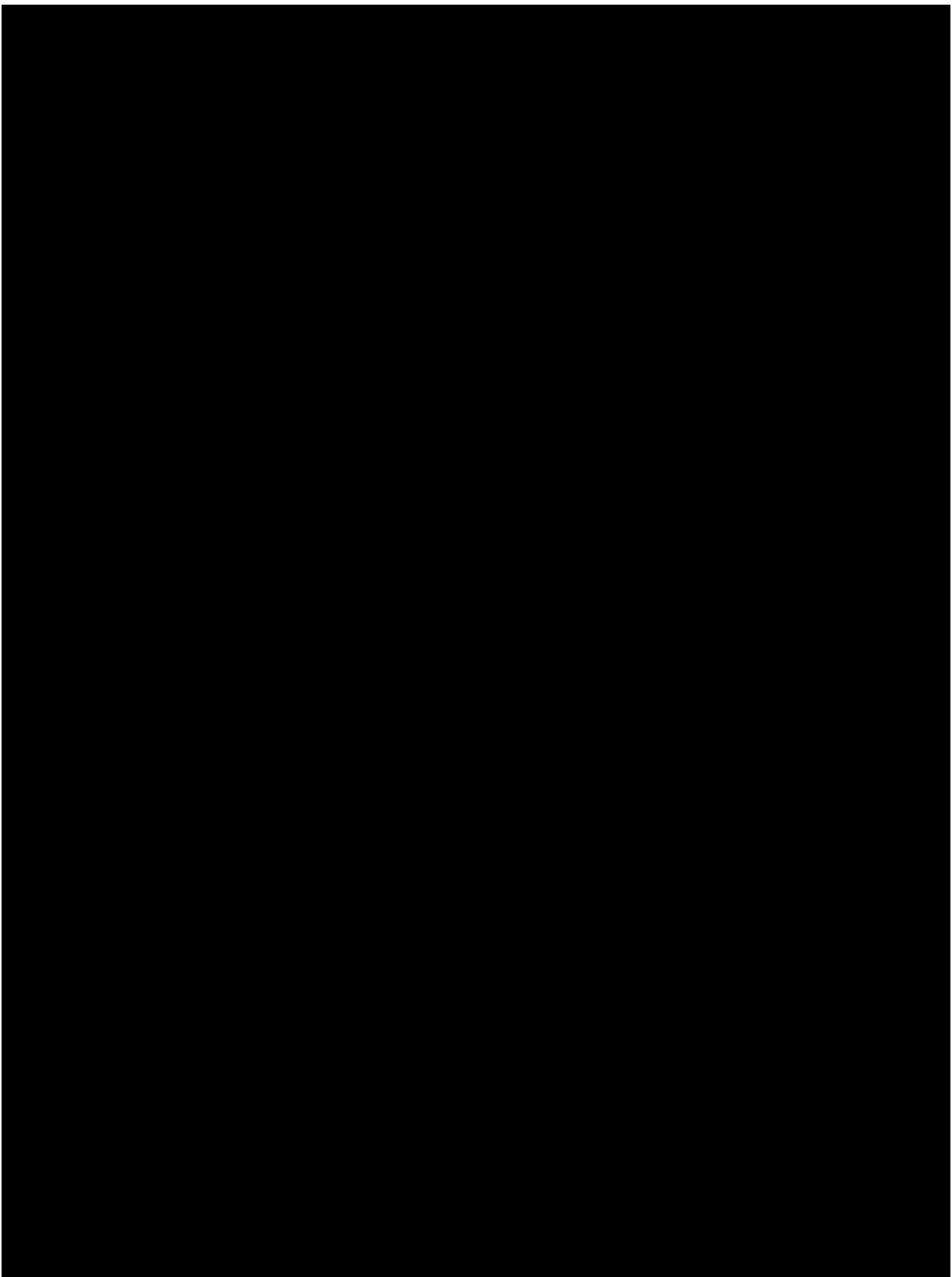


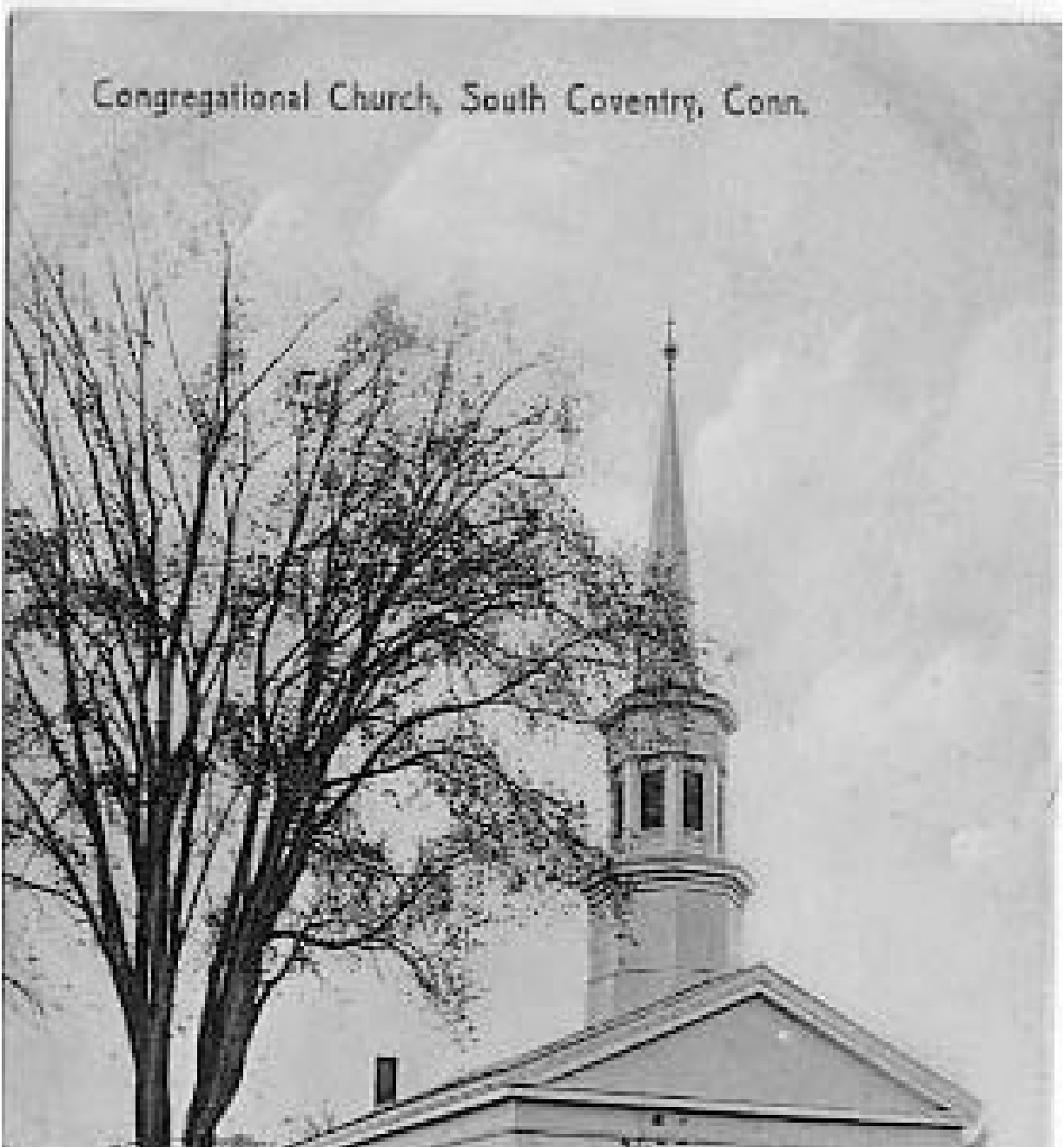
The First Church Moves to the Village



The First Church Moves to the Village









The second church records show that bills for the erection of the present church had been paid during the first part of 1848 so its likely the church was completed late in 1847. The cost was \$3,700 and Daniel Wright of Troy New York, a former Coventry resident, donated the bell that weighed 1,214 pounds. Records of the church show there have been four chapel buildings erected in the area where the present building stands.

In 1823 the “Conference House” was built, very plain and measuring thirty by twenty feet. It was located just east of the present building, and in 1847 it was sold for \$90 and removed from the site. In 1834 the society erected the building called the “academy” and it housed a select school to which many folks went for education. It was also used as a chapel and was sold to the Grange in 1889. It is still the “Grange Hall”. The second church was re-modeled in 1845 and again in 1882 when the wood stove was replaced by a furnace. (4, 8)

The Second Congregational Church

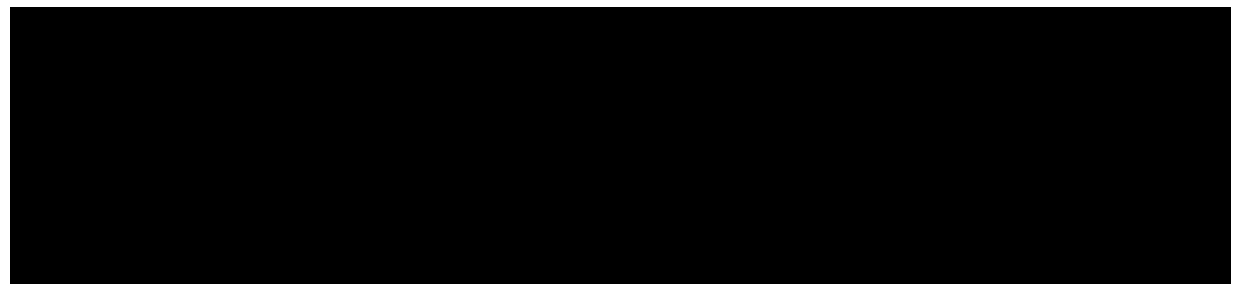
Reverend Hollis M. Bartlett was the pastor in 1912. The chapel hall, between the church and the Grange Hall, was built in 1889. It burned in the early 1930's due to a fire in the wood-fueled furnace apparatus. The present building was then built of brick. It is believed the brick came from one of the old mill buildings in the village (possibly Tracy's) that had been taken by the town for back taxes at the beginning of the Depression.

Looking west on the Boston Turnpike at the Academy

1848- Dr. G. C. Vaughn's "Vegetable Lithontriptic Mixture cured "dropsy, gravel, fever, piles, and purified the blood." Vaughn's magic medication was manufactured in Buffalo, New York and cost two dollars for a thirty ounce bottle, and one dollar for a twelve ounce bottle. It was stocked locally by pharmacists George Lathrop in Willimantic and D. M. Buell at South Coventry. (18)

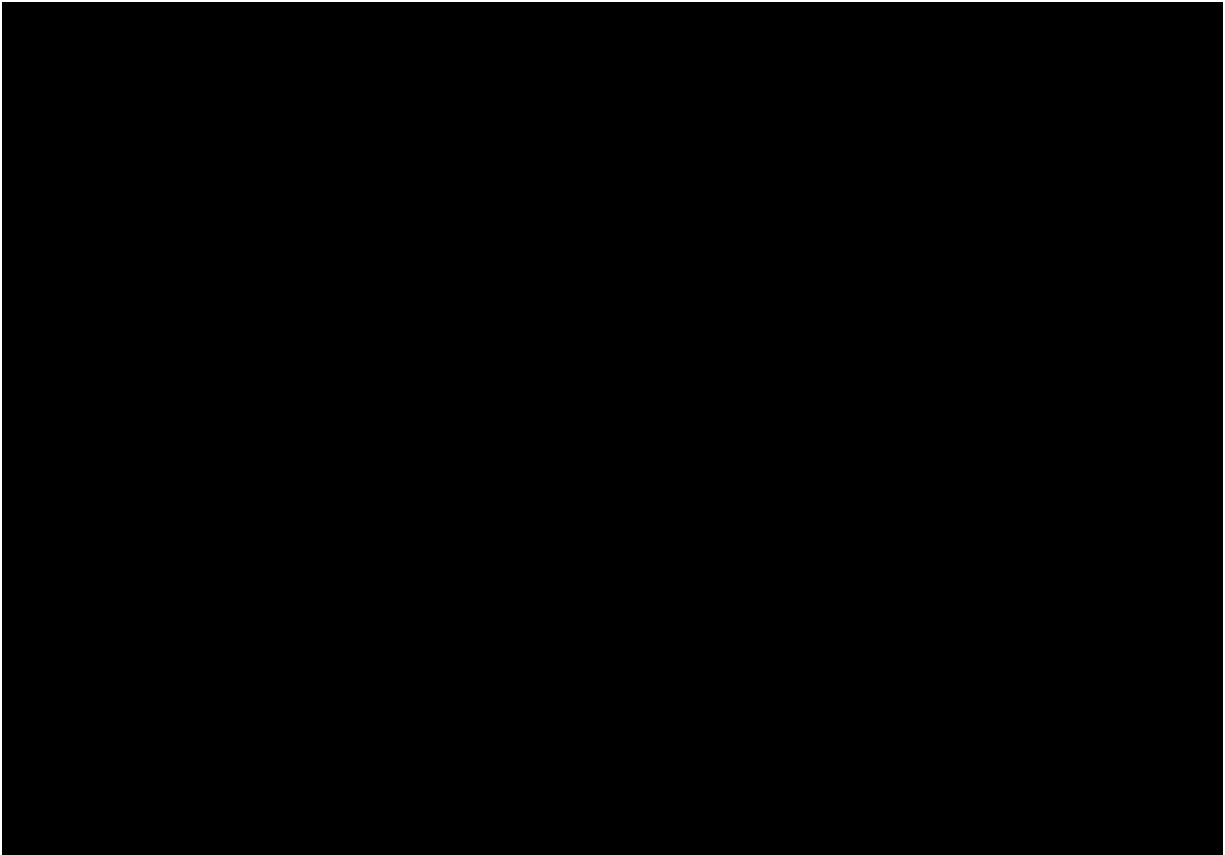


The Second Church is Built

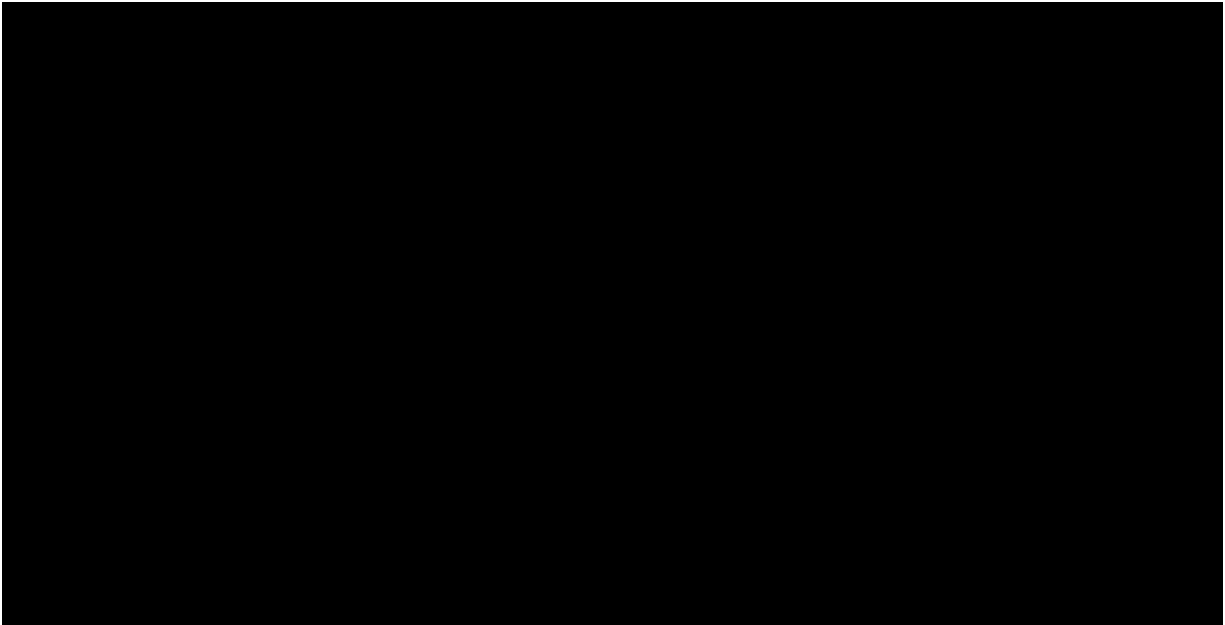


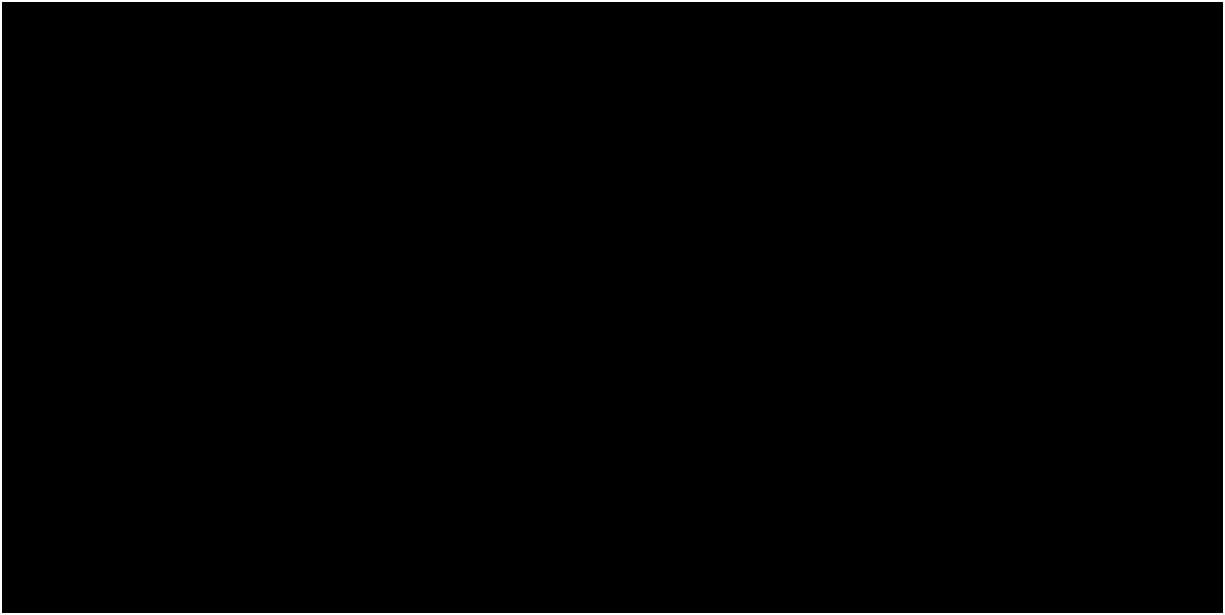
The Second Church is Built



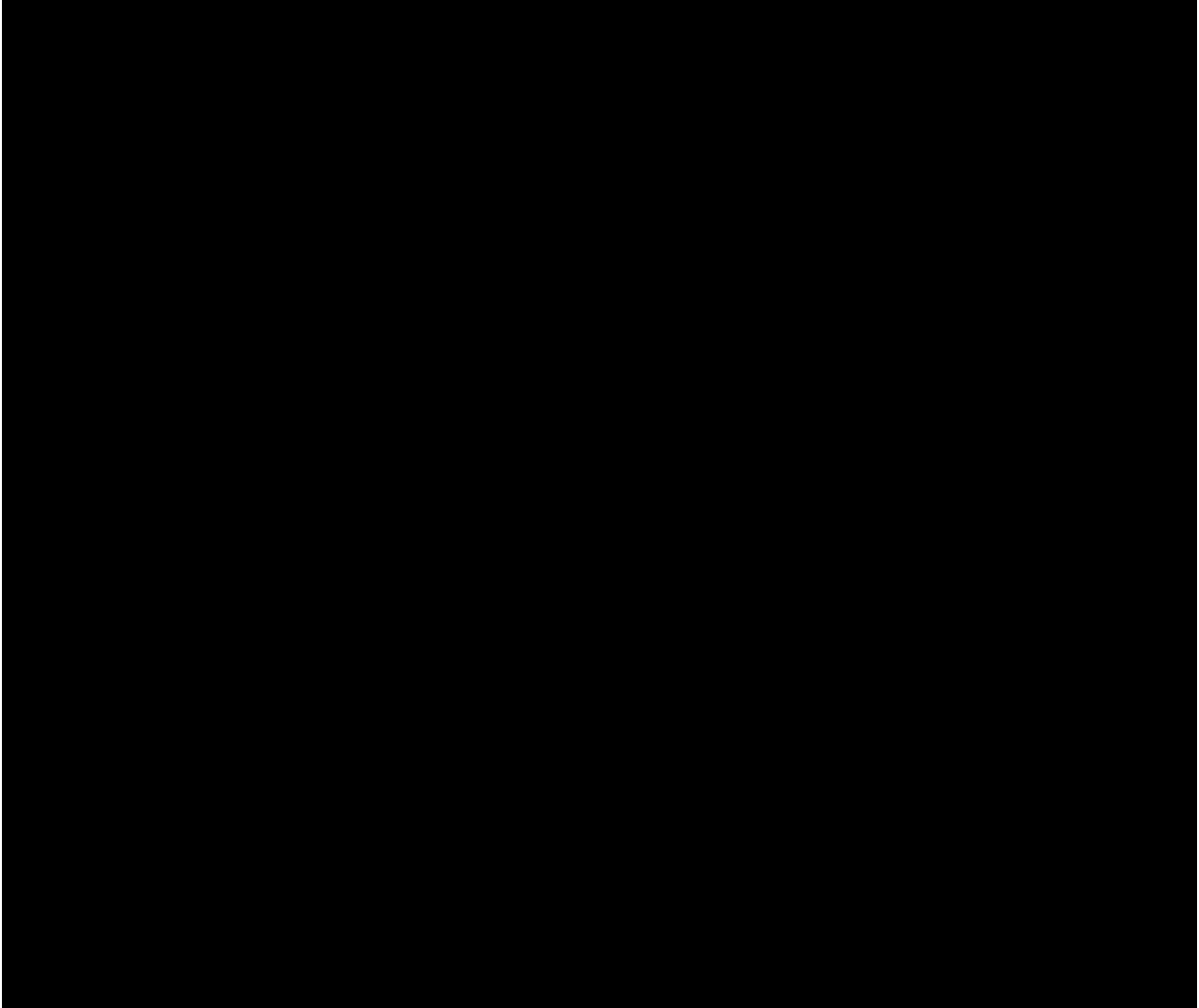








Occupations



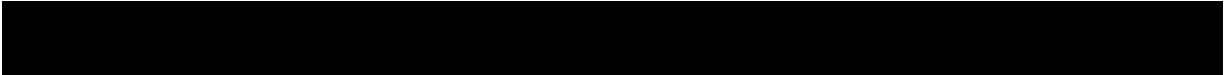
From an 1848 census, the following is a sample of the occupations held by Coventry residents: editor, hatter, farmer, shoe maker, iron founder, painter, machinist, glass blower, tanner, mason, teacher, physician, mechanic, carpenter, minister, lawyer, weaver, wheelwright, boarding house keeper, cooper, merchant, wagon maker, bookkeeper, teamster, wool spinner, mill laborer, carder, dyer, machine builder, tailor, miller, horse trader, stage driver, blacksmith, and butcher.

Ralph Crittenden (1820-1901) and William Tibbals (1823-1890) formed a business association in 1850 to build cotton and woolen machinery. They started as apprentices to John Boynton building cotton and woolen machinery and then entered the “unheaded” cartridge business. They soon added percussion cap manufacture to their line, and by the mid-1850s are known to have produced Sharps' primers and projectiles for Volcanic pistols. They were reported to be the leading cartridge maker in the United States in the 1850's. The metallic cartridge was a charged bullet, fired through a small hole in the base by an external pellet of fulminate. An R. G. Dun correspondent reported on September 1, 1857, that both Crittenden and Tibbals were married men and "ingenious mechanics, Crittendon a likely temperate man, Tibbals rather unsteady". During the next seven years Crittenden & Tibbals' business was watched closely by R. G. Dun & Company and was reported upon at least twice a year. April 5, 1858: “They are both good mechanics, and have now on hand two million percussion caps.”

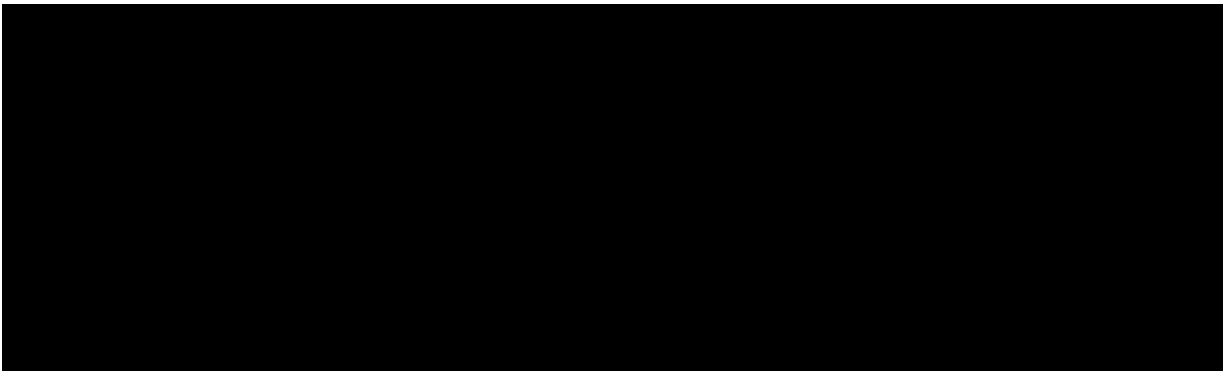
According to testimony in the case of "Union Metallic Cartridge Co. vs. United States Cartridge Co.," Crittenden & Tibbals had made Bridgeport “unheaded” cartridge cases for Smith & Wesson as early as 1857. Brigham Payne, a Crittenden & Tibbals employee, expressed that in the year 1859 they "Took hold of manufacturing cartridges. The first lot of cartridges that I remember to have made or assisted in making, were for the Bacon Manufacturing Company of Norwich, Conn." During the Civil War, they made cartridges for the Spencer Repeating Rifle and received seventeen orders from the Ordnance Department for rimfire cartridges. Their first offer to the government, in 1863, was for 1,000,000 .56 caliber cartridges at \$40 per thousand while the government was only willing to pay \$35 per thousand. An agreement was reached, and they were in production and making a profit in 1864.

After the sale of the operation to Schuyler, Hartley & Graham, both Crittenden, and Tibbals remained to run the business. However, the name of the entity was changed to the "Crittenden & Tibbals Manufacturing Company". A correspondent at South Coventry writes: "This is one of the

thriving, bustling towns of which Connecticut boasts so many. Here a large factory, run by a New York firm, turns out nearly 400,000 metallic cartridges weekly...." By late 1865 Crittenden & Tibbals' company was bought out by the Union Metallic Cartridge Company, a partnership of Schuyler, Hartley and Graham, and moved to Bridgeport.



Crittenden & Tibbals Make Ammunition

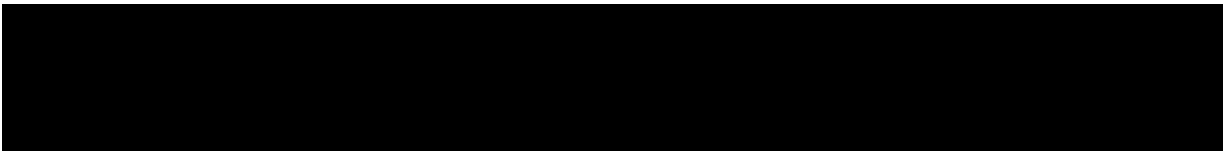


Crittenden & Tibbals Make Ammunition

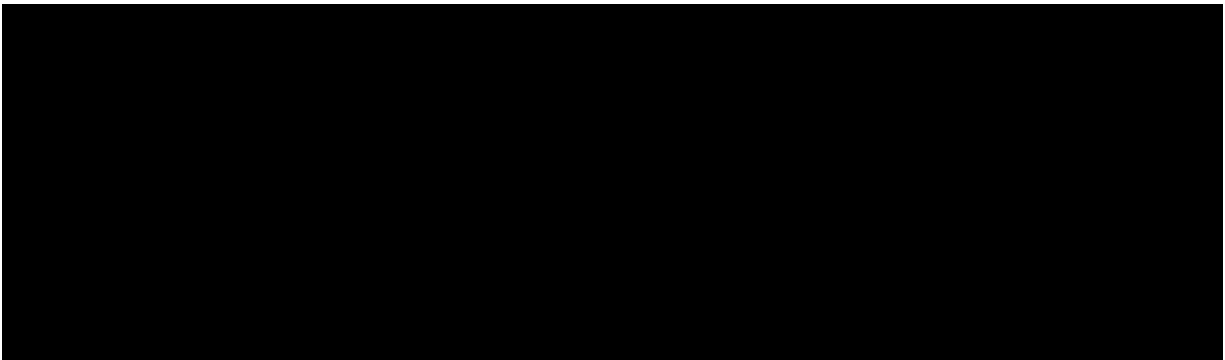


In 1850 Edward Huntington sold a mill on today's Parker Bridge Road to Samuel Huntington, and Samuel is included on the 1850 Federal Census as owning a wool hat and wool carding mill with two cards and one former. He had two employees, and made 2,500 hat bodies that year valued at \$800. The mill appears on the 1856 and 1857 tax records and is shown on an 1857 map. In September of 1858, the estate of Huntington sold the site for \$2,150 to Anna Hempstead. It included one acre with factory, machines and fixtures, one double wool carding machine, one single carding machine, and one hat former and hardener.

Prior to the Civil War, Coventry supported eighteen or nineteen hat shops ranging in size from a small cottage to this modest mill. Hats were shipped to Africa and used as partial payments for slaves. The hat business faded rapidly after the Civil War, though some shops continued to make more stylish hats for the retail trade.



A Mill near the Hop River Makes Wool Hats



A Mill near the Hop River Makes Wool Hats



The Winding Brook feeds the Willimantic River just below Merrow Road. A feeder to this brook held a saw mill just south of Merrow Road and northwest of Antrim Road. The dam existed until the 1940's or 50's. Today there is evidence of the dam which appeared to be fifty feet wide and eight feet high of earthen construction with a stone facing. The land here was owned by Nathan Levee of Mansfield in the early 1850's. His home was on the north side of the eastern end of Merrow Road. The date is uncertain when he erected and operated a saw mill. The 1860 Coventry Tax records show Levee assessed for a mill at \$300. In January of 1866 he sold the site to Catherine Fitch and the deed says "five acres with a building formerly occupied as a saw mill". Nathan operated a shop and Post Office in the lower Village on the northwest corner of Main Street and Depot Road, and lived in a home across Depot Road next to the pond from the 1860's into the 1870's.

Further down the Willimantic River is the Brigham Tavern Brook, which has its inception at a pond on a hillside just west of Old Tolland Turnpike. This brook crosses the Boston Turnpike near the intersection of Richmond Road, and on the north side of the turnpike stood a mill. It was built sometime prior to 1857 by Lewis Addison Dimock who resided nearby. An 1857 map shows a "shop", and the 1857 tax records list Mr. Edmond Goodenough owning a mill here. The site had two ditches (races), each about eighteen rods long, to convey water from the brook to the flume for his mill. Machines in the shop include two engine lathes, one chuck lathe, four vices, an upright drill, two knitting frames with bobbins, a winder, shafts, belts, reams, drills and hammers. The use of this shop may have been to make knitting machines. The 1860 Federal Census lists a shop called Brook Works Knitting with \$1,500 capitalization, having four employees and producing nine knitting machines valued at \$1,900 that year. There is no evidence of the old shop today



Two Small Mills in the North Society



Two Small Mills in the North Society

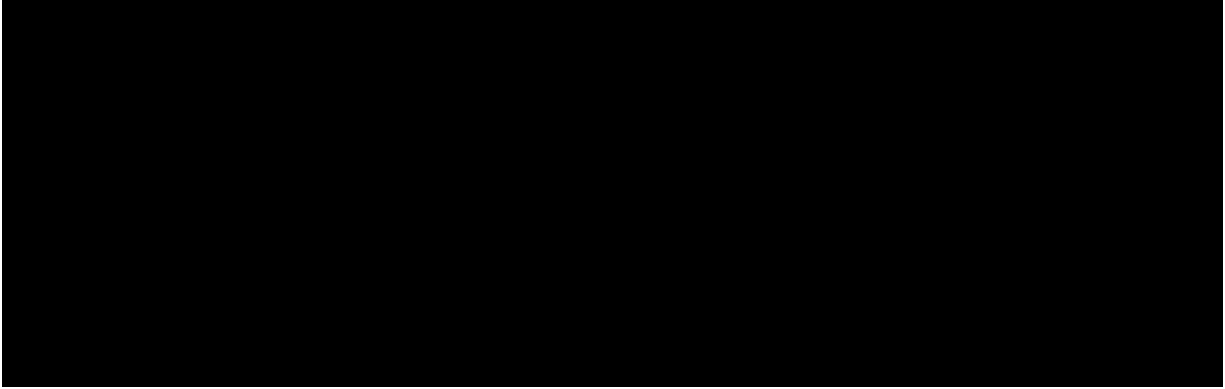


Forty-two mills and shops were surveyed in town with 240 employees producing goods worth \$8.4 million (today's dollars). The major products are cassimere, wool carding machines, cotton, yarn, castings, percussion caps, and throughout the whole town, 120,000 hats made in nineteen shops by forty-four employees. The largest dollar volume producer was Crittendon & Tibbals who made percussion caps valued at two million dollars (today). The Skungamaug and Hop River sites are very active but only produce about ten percent of the total town production including hats, wagons, spools and a tanner. About 1850 a gate was added to the head of the Mill Brook and the dam was raised slightly. The responsibility to operate and maintain the gate was jointly accepted by all the mill owners on the brook.

Two hundred and twelve farms were surveyed in town. 15,410 acres are being farmed, representing almost 70% of the total land area. Products were potatoes, corn, rye, oats, butter, cheese, buckwheat and clover. 23,600 bushels of grain were produced. The largest farms (170-200 acres) belong to Eleazer Pomeroy, J. Woodward, Fred. Manning, Richard Rose, S. Topliff, Henry Watrous, and Flavel Case. Five of them are in the Second Society.

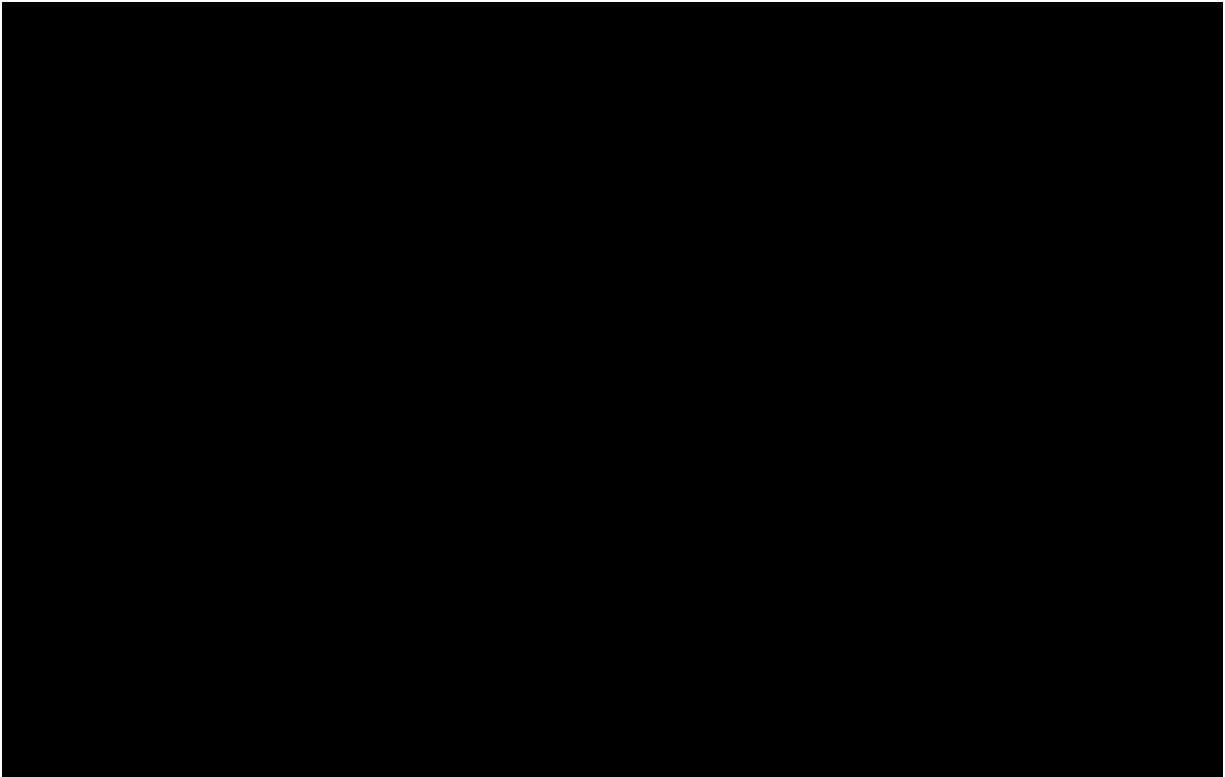


1850 Federal Census of Industry

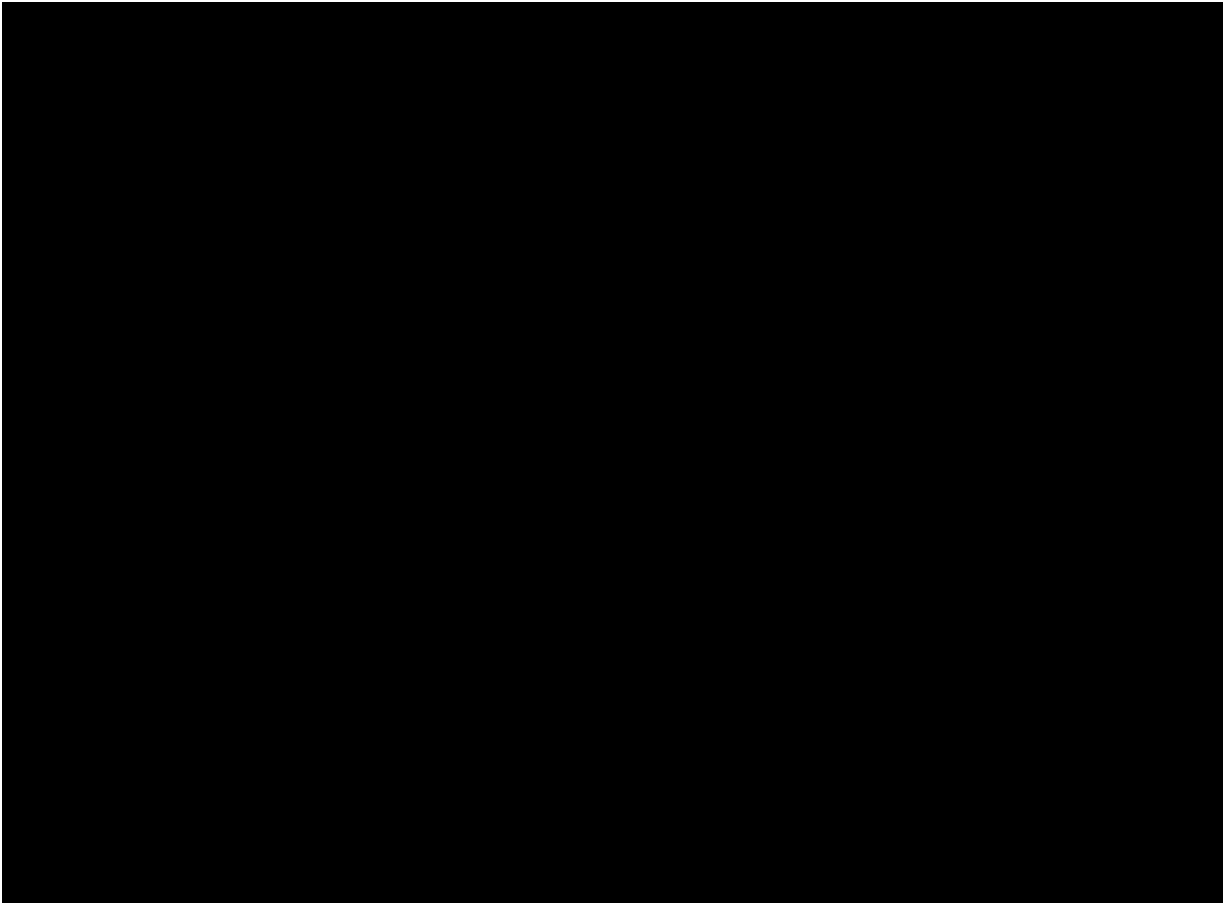


1850 Federal Census of Industry





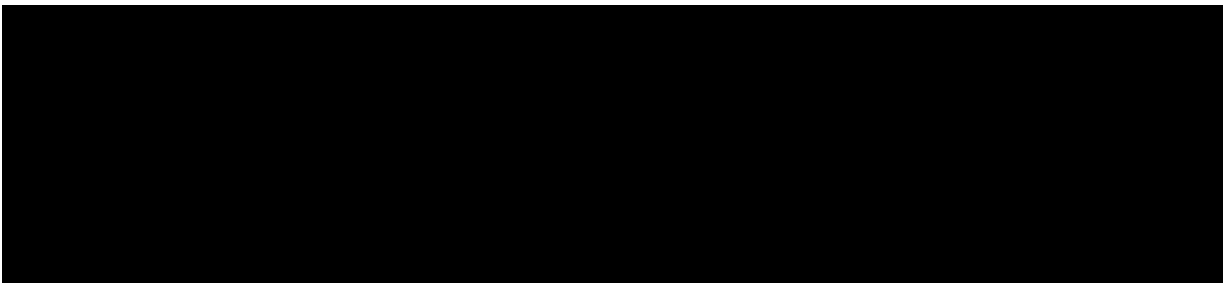
1850 Federal Census of Agriculture



From the records of town meetings in the mid 1800's, the following is a list of the elected or appointed town officials: assessor, board of relief, town clerk, town agent, treasurer, registrar, selectman, constables, grand jurors, school visitors (roughly a precursor to the Board of Education), tythingman, scaler of weights and measures, sextons, pound keeper, fence viewers (to administer fence laws and settle disputes arising from trespass of livestock escaped from enclosure), and hayward (in charge of capturing and putting stray animals in secure enclosures)

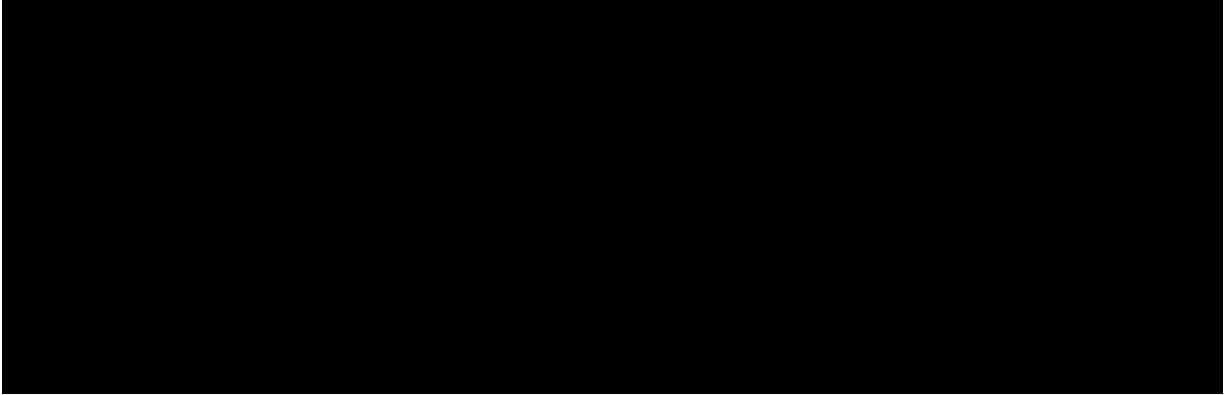


Town Officials



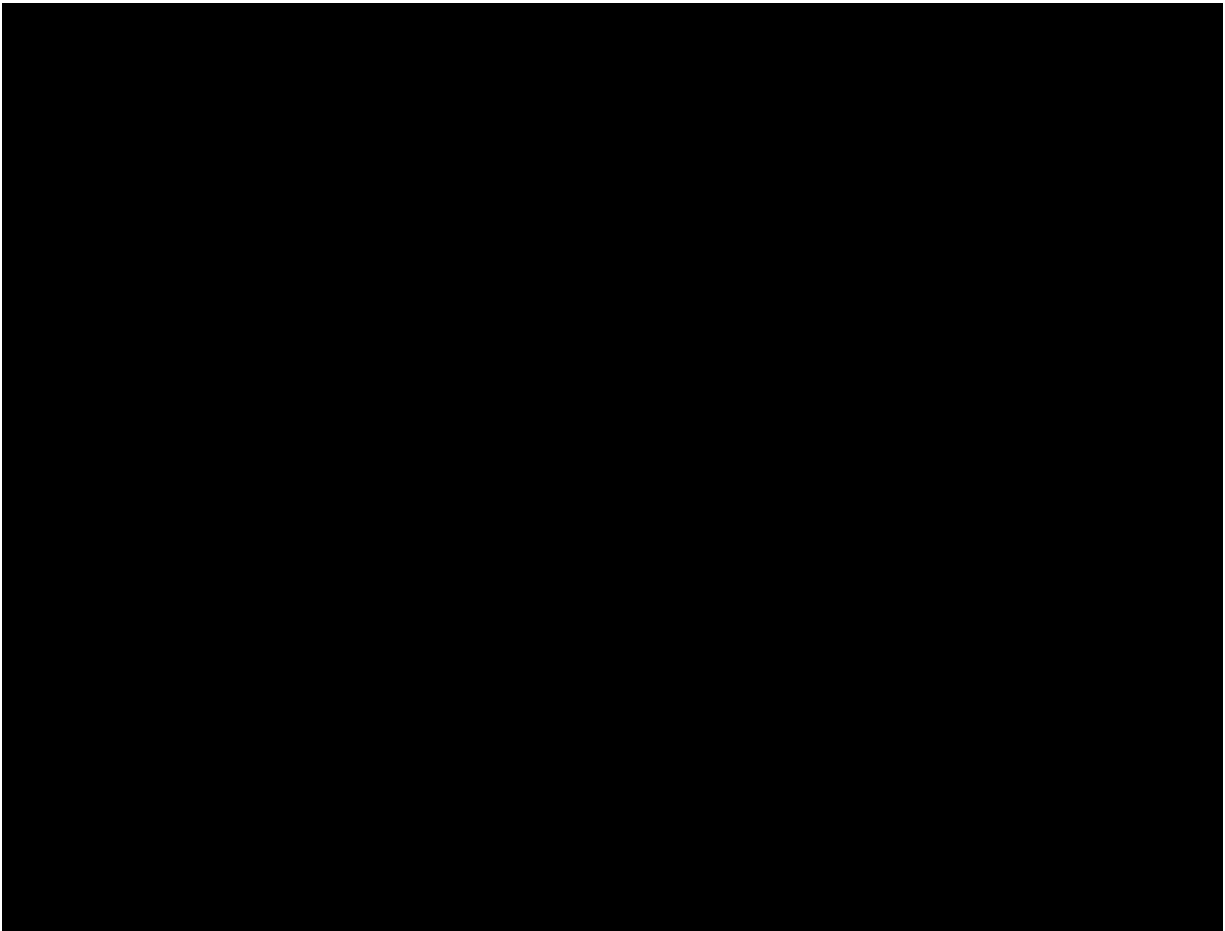
Town Officials





Chapter 4

A Thriving Village



Chapter 4

A Thriving Village



The second half of the 19th Century was the high point of industrial activity in Coventry. Of the thirty-five mill sites in town, thirty-one of them were active for much of this period. While the population of the town remained constant, at about 2,100, the number of mill workers reached a maximum of nearly 400. Commerce increased as the turnpikes were generally improved, and steam power was introduced to a number of factories. Two railroads were operating which greatly improved the mobility of residents and allowed material, coal and finished products to be shipped to and from Hartford and Norwich.

South Coventry Village was thriving with activity. Nearly all the mills were operating and several stores opened to serve the population. Mail service became more regular, several architecturally significant homes were built, primarily by mill owners, and the lakeside began to see some recreational use where it been primarily farm land before. The Civil War created a shortage of cotton and allowed the woolen industry to grow. Coventry was to supply cloth for uniforms and a significant amount of ammunition for the army. The Second Society was dominated by large farms and the Boston Turnpike had a tavern, post office, one or two stores, a carriage shop and a few other specialty shops. There were also cider mills in operation on Main Street and Grant Hill Road.



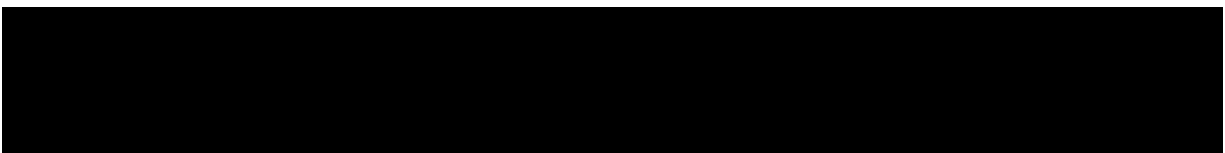


A Thriving Village

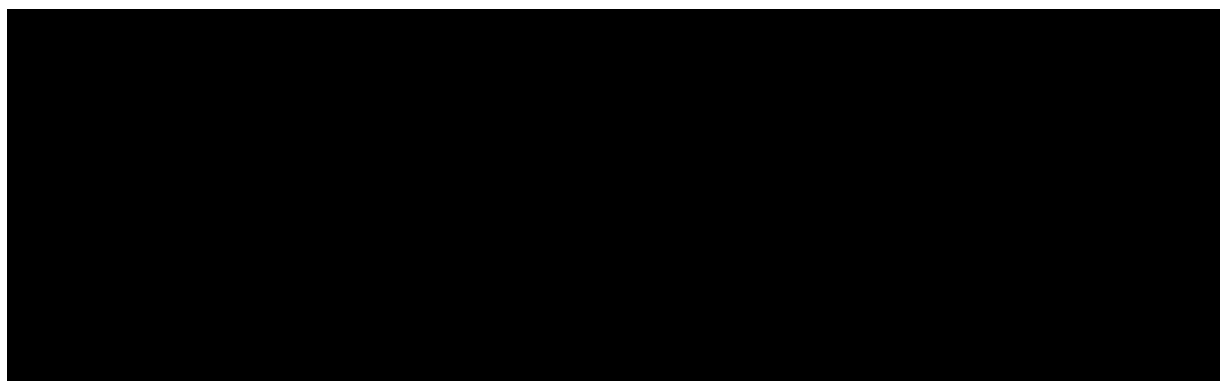
The 1850 Federal Industrial Census lists Richard Gelston's tannery (on the east side of today's South River Road) with a capitalization of \$6,000, four employees and making 1,000 sides of leather valued at \$500 that year. An 1857 map shows both the tannery and the dwellings adjacent to the road. By 1860 Gelston was employing water power, and is listed on the Federal census with \$1,800 capitalization, two employees, producing 200 hides and bridle leather valued at \$750 that year. Five years later, Gelston sold the site to Jason Corbit and Joseph Gould, and Gelston kept some of the articles in the tannery including an oil cloth, a joiners bench, two casks, a vat filled with lime and other metal and wooden objects. The tannery later closed, and Corbit, who was operating a cotton mill upstream, bought this property in conjunction with Gould to expand their enterprise.

By 1855 a site (on the Windham Turnpike) and adjacent dwelling were in the hands of Jason Corbit and Isaac Mason who acquired the sites from Betsey Mason. The earliest available Coventry Tax lists (1855) show Corbit and Mason assessed for a mill at \$600. The 1860 Federal Industrial Census lists Mason and Corbit with a cotton mill at \$1,500 capitalization, using water power, employing five people and making 44,000 inches of wicking valued at \$7,700 that year. The 1870 Federal Census lists John Pitkin operating a cotton mill here with water power, using twelve horsepower, employing nineteen hands and making 90,000 pounds of twine and wicking valued at \$32,000. They had eleven cards and two mules (textile machines). Later that year John's brother Alfred became involved in the mill and they are shown on the 1870 tax list with a \$3,800 assessment. This is likely the peak year of operation for this mill.

A small recreation field on the site of the Channel 3 Kid's Camp in Coventry holds the remains of a mill started in 1816 by Enoch Badger. It served as a carding mill until 1835 when Nathan Cook, and later Henry Watrous, made wooden spools for the textile industry until the 1860's.



Three Mills on the Skungamaug River



Three Mills on the Skungamaug River



Prior to the emergence of the mills, virtually all retail commerce in town consisted of several taverns and two or three stores that sold tools, implements and china, silverware and fancy clothes. The earliest store was on Wicket Hill. There was another on South Street. Other retail commerce was not really necessary because most families were self sufficient or relied on local tradesman for their needs such as blacksmithing and tanning. Very few buildings had “tenants” as such except for a few indigent who were cared for by the town or the church. The mills brought laborers and their families to town (many of them immigrants) and created a need for the venerable general store. There is evidence of only one “mill store” (on today’s Depot Road). Several “general” stores sprung up in the Village to meet the needs of food, clothing and implements of the populace. Tenements were built on today’s Depot Road, Woods Lane, Bradbury Lane, Armstrong Road, and several on Main Street. The oldest store in the Village was built by the Loomis family in the early 1800’s and exists today as one of the longest operating general stores in the country. (1140 Main Street) Other shop owners were Stanley’s (near the Congregational Church), Buell’s (next to the Bidwell Tavern), and Hovey’s (on the corner of Woods Lane).

The wealth created by the mill owners allowed them to build “mansions” for their families that rivaled the farm estates that had been here for over 100 years. Messrs. Fargo, Kenyon, Kingsbury, Tracy, Boynton, Wright, and Wood were some of the prominent names. These houses exist today and add to the architectural character of the town, particularly in the Village. These families also created the need for service workers, house and grounds keepers, chauffeurs and the like.



Local Retail Commerce



Local Retail Commerce



An account book belonging to James Stanley, a shop keeper in Coventry, gives an interesting perspective of commerce in 1849- 1856. Transactions in his store were done mostly by barter. About 80% of the entries are for goods and services, and the remaining were for cash. As an example, an account for Jared Clark (of South Street) in the fall of 1855 shows that Jared bought lime, flour, sugar, guano, candles, etc. for a total of about thirty-six dollars. Two dollars of that was paid in cash and the rest was paid by labor, bushels of rye, and cords of wood. Pricing for items in the store was: twenty-two yards of burlap- \$1.98, two bushels of onions- \$1.50, a horse and buggy ride to Willimantic- 62-1/2 cents, one bushel of corn- \$1.25, one pound of beef- seven and one-half cents, one ox hide (62 pounds)- \$3.10, a barrel of flour- \$6.50, one day's labor- \$1.00, one week's rent for a boarder- \$1.25, one pound of tea- 67 cents, one pound of coffee- 15 cents.

Today's Armstrong Road began as a path from the Windham Turnpike (or stage road) to Moredock's, then Dow's, then Kingsbury's then Huntington's mill on the brook in the early to mid 1800's. At an October 1858 town meeting, it was voted that the town lay out and accept a road here. The first mention of a name for the road was "Barber's Village Road" in the 1860's, after one of the mill owners established there.



James Stanley's Store



James Stanley's Store



150



Armstrong Road

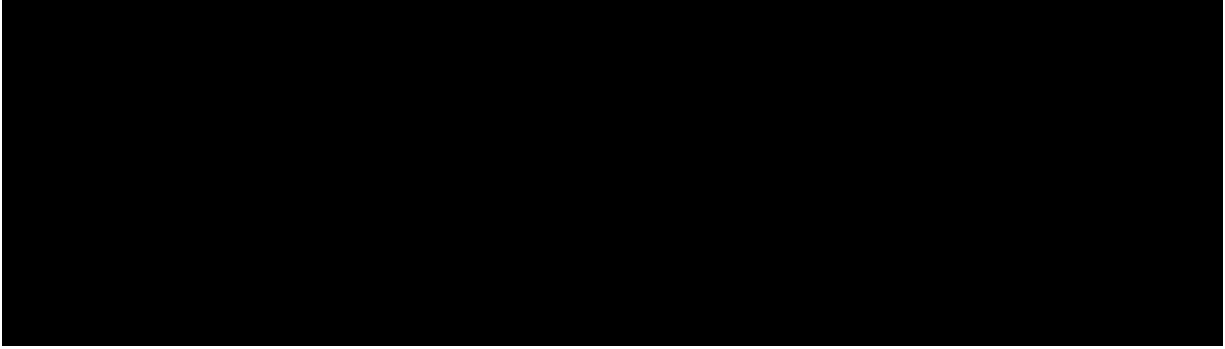
In 1852 John Boynton sold to his son Alamanzer, for \$2,300, seventeen acres including the saw mill and pond. This site eventually encompassed the Clock & Whale, Kingsbury and Mason Sites. In October 1853, Alamanzer sold to W.A. Loomis a one-quarter acre site with a six foot fall and the right to convey water from the natural stream to a water wheel on the site. This portion will eventually become the Mason site, but initially Loomis started a small hook & eye manufactory. By 1856, Henry Mason joined him making hooks and eyes and their small mill was assessed at \$600 with \$1,000 of machinery inside. By 1860 they had two employees and made 40,000 boxes of hooks and eyes that year.

Addison Kingsbury's First Box Shop~1868

There is some thought that the need for all these small boxes to hold hooks and eyes created a spark in Addison Kingsbury (who was working at his uncle Nelson's mill just downstream) and J.S. Morgan (who lived nearby and was reported to have made some boxes prior to Addison) to start the box industry in Coventry in the late 1860's.

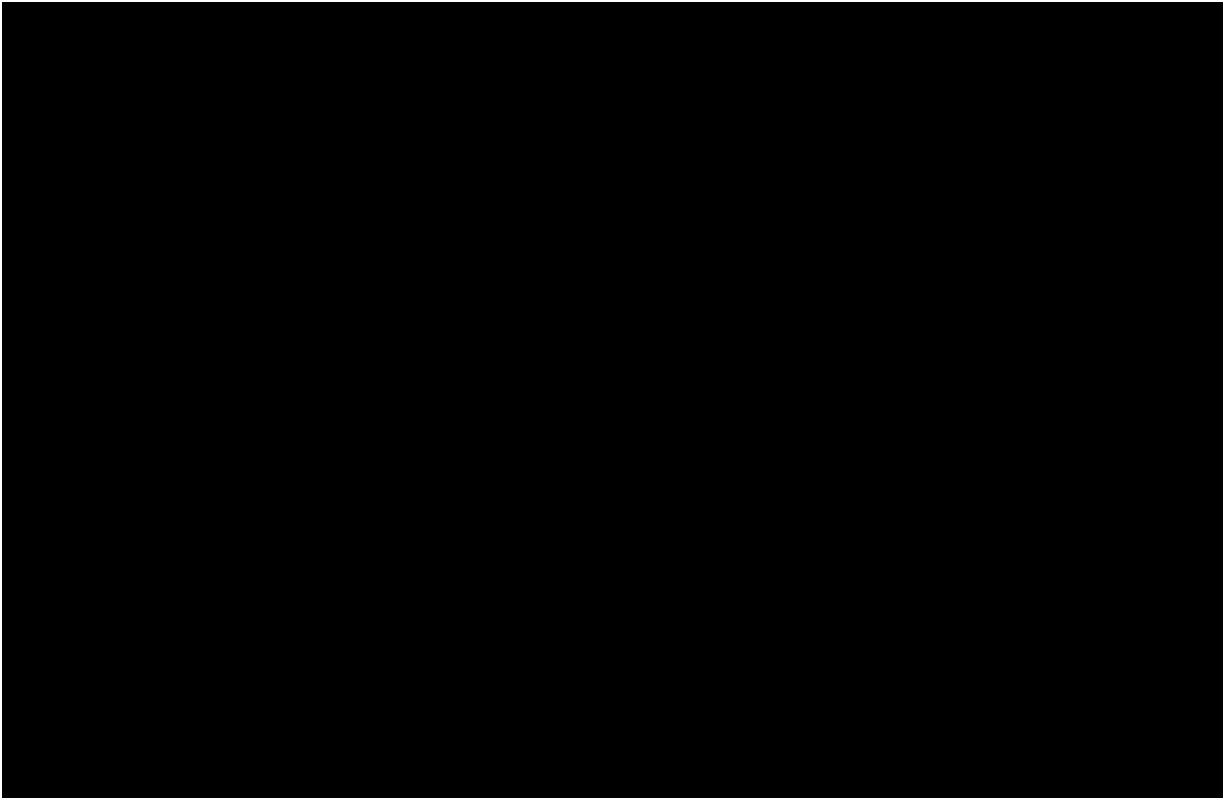


The Mason Street Mills Emerge

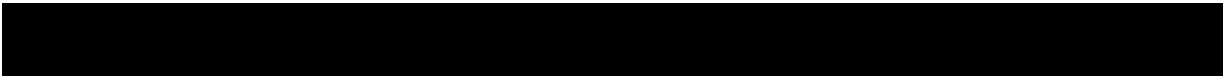


The Mason Street Mills Emerge

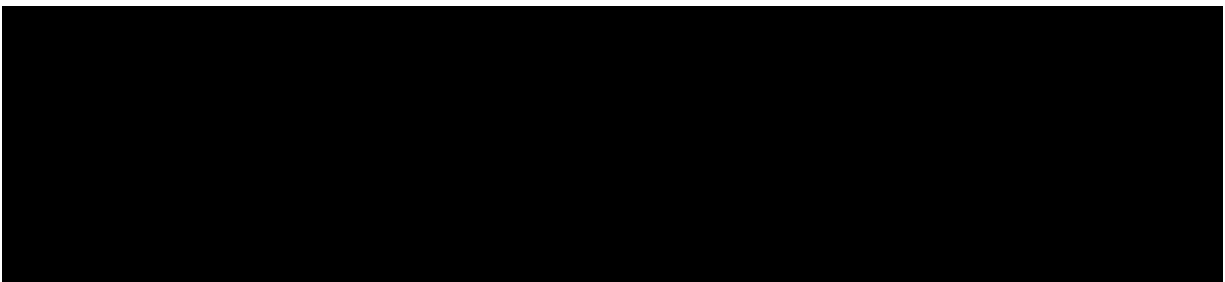




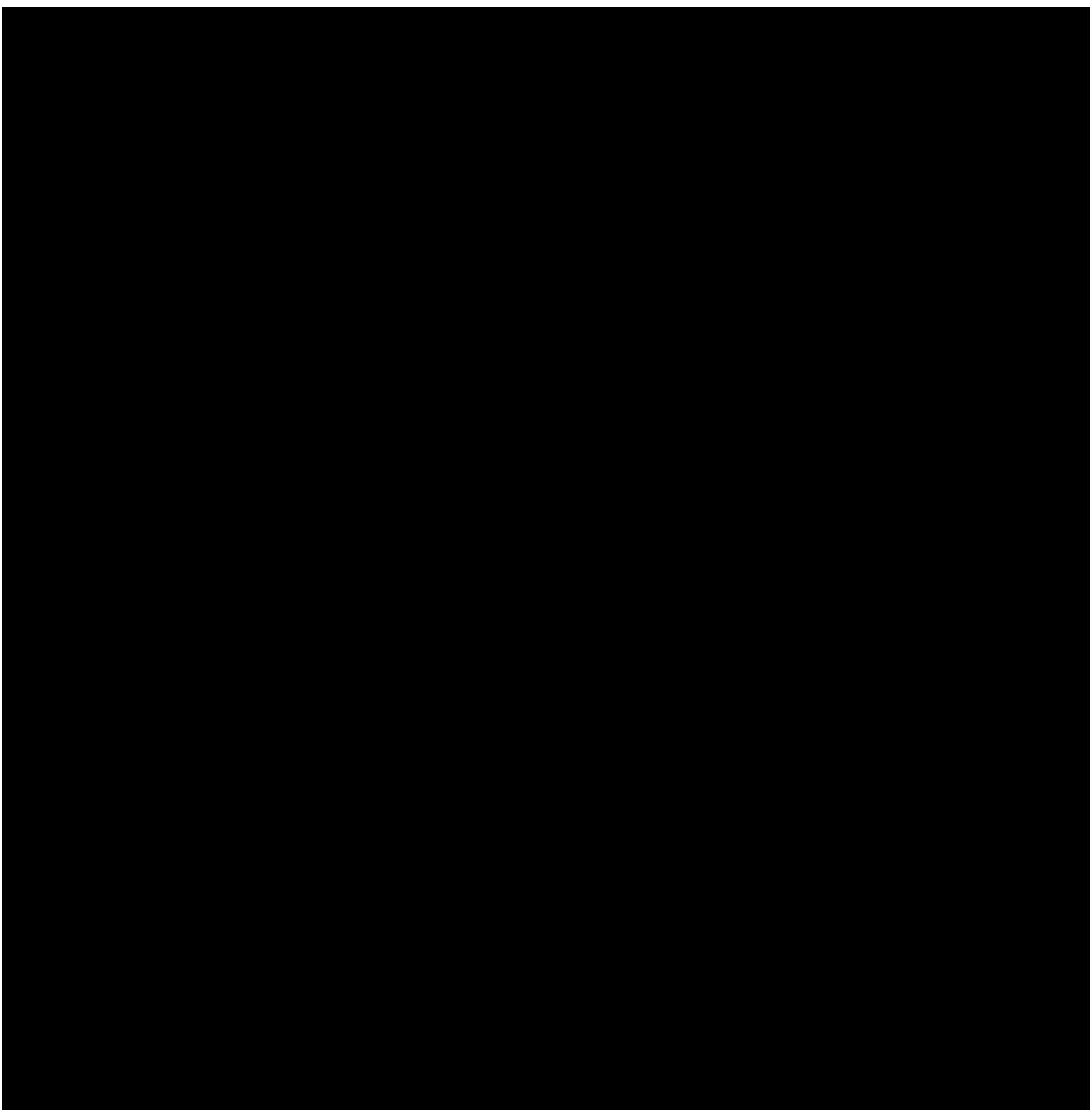
Addison Kingsbury was born in South Coventry in November of 1835, the son of Alvin and Emeline Kingsbury. He moved with his parents at age seventeen to Brooklyn, New York, but returned to Coventry at the age of twenty- one, and entered the employ of his uncle Nelson Kingsbury as a bookkeeper. He held the position for ten years and became familiar with the manufacture of woolen goods. In 1868 he embarked in the manufacture of paper boxes on Mason Street. The plant grew to four branches in Massachusetts and Connecticut. He took his son Arthur L. into the business in 1883 and named the company A. Kingsbury & Son. He helped unite the Village Congregational church. Addison died in 1914 and is buried in Nathan Hale Cemetery. Kingsbury is described as one of the most noted and successful paper box manufacturers in New England. He invented several machines for the production of paper boxes. Addison was married three times, to Charlotte Lillie then Sara Melissa Scott, who died during their marriage, then finally to Ida Warner. He had three children by his first wife, Lottie, Arthur, and Louis. While owner of the mill he lived in the lovely Victorian home on the corner of Wall and Mason Streets.

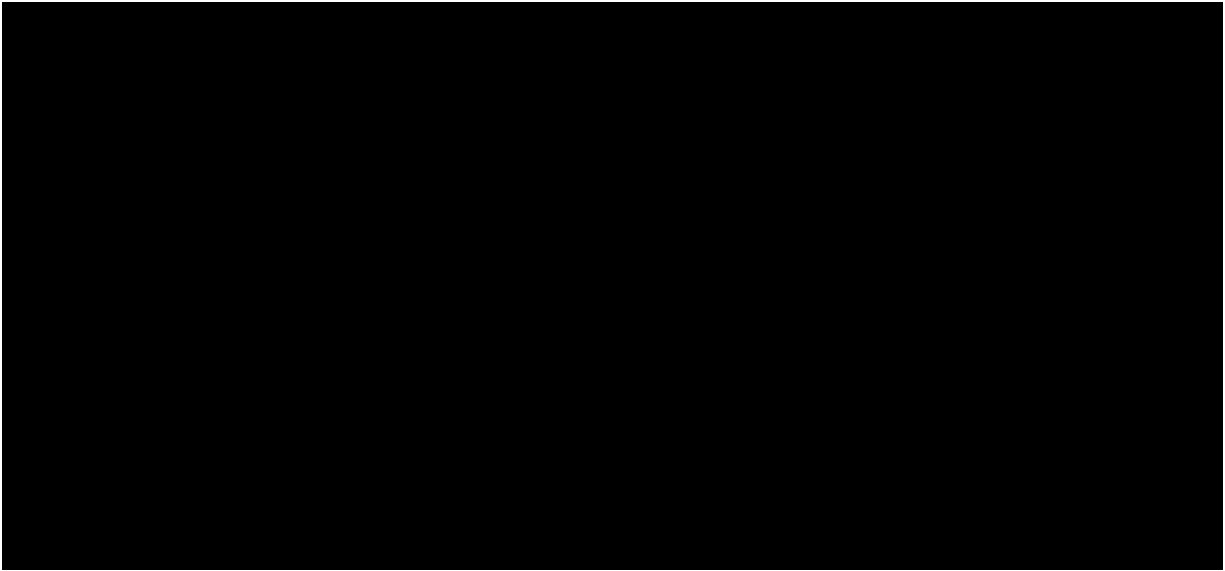


Addison Kingsbury

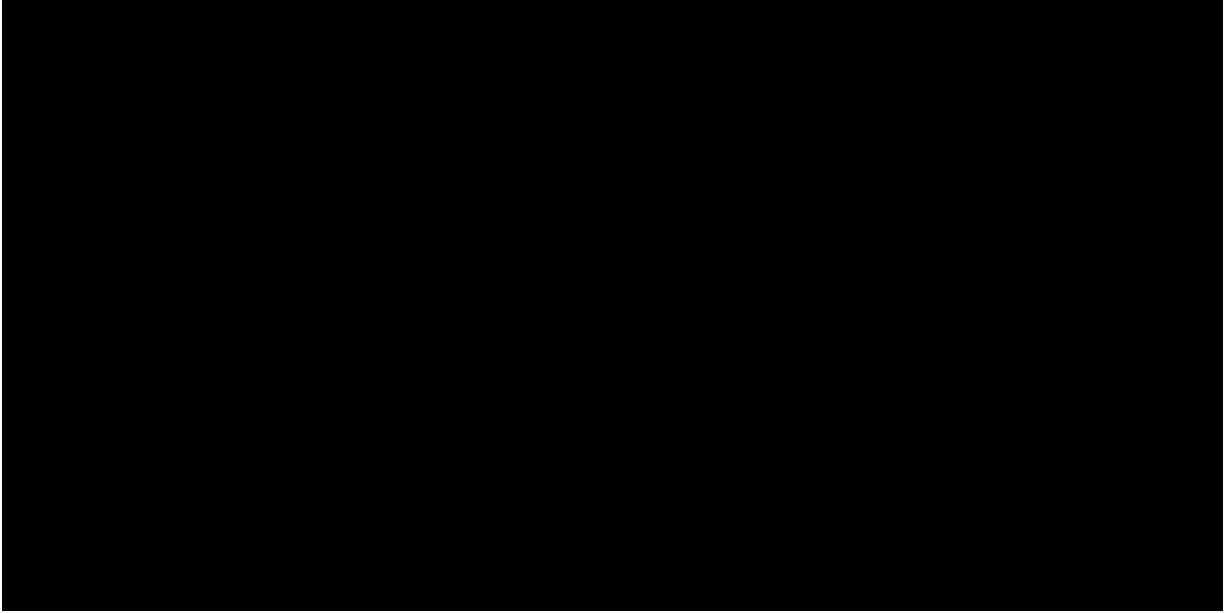


Addison Kingsbury





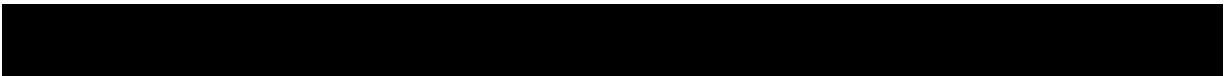




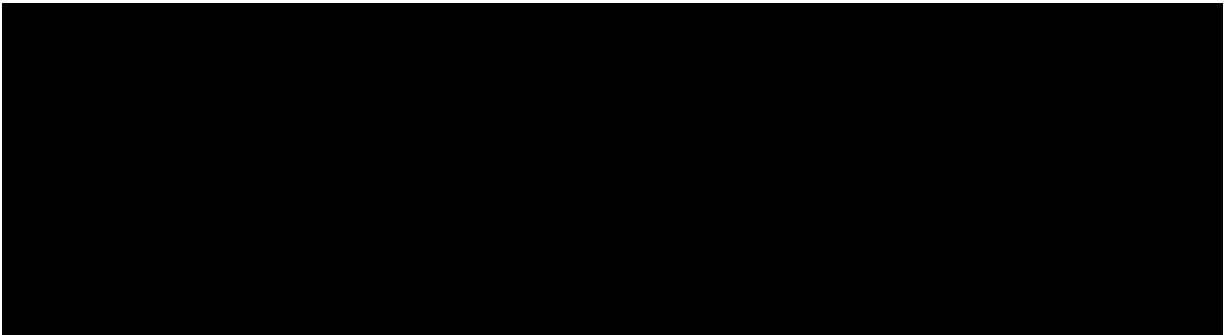
Addison Kingsbury

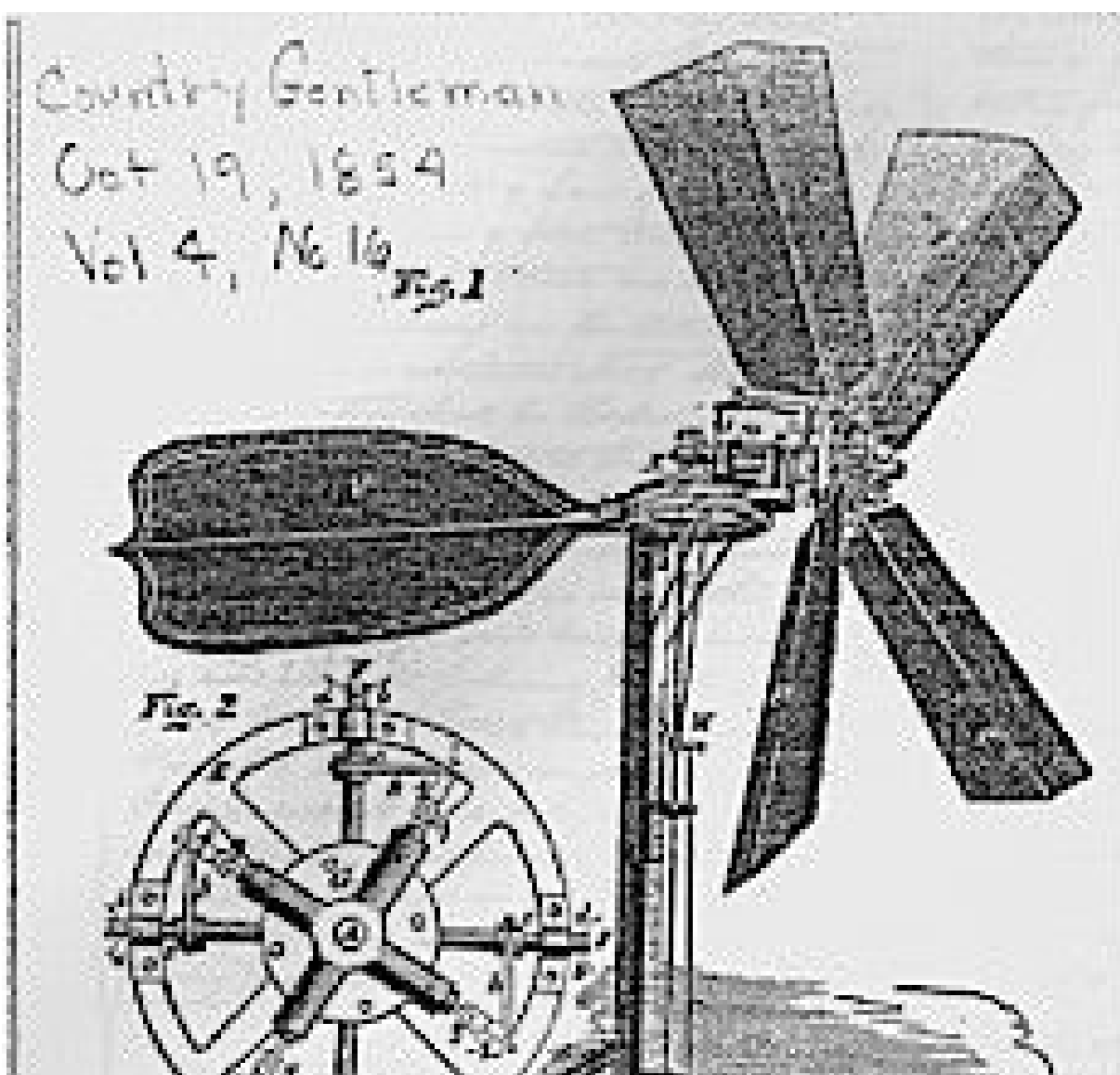
n 1854 Daniel Halladay is credited with building the first commercially successful windmill in the New World. His windmill was a self-governing design. This meant that it turned to face changing wind directions, and that it automatically controlled its own speed of operation. Halladay's initial wind machine had four wooden blades which swiveled to provide varying pitch in order to regulate operating speed. Later he devised wheels comprised of "sections" of thin wooden blades that could pivot in order to control the surface exposed to the wind and thus regulate wheel speed. Windmills of this design were called sectional wheel windmills. He initially offered four models of various sizes and numbers of blades. Prices ranged from \$130 to \$275. He also made four different pumps with bores of three to six inches at prices from \$45 to \$150.

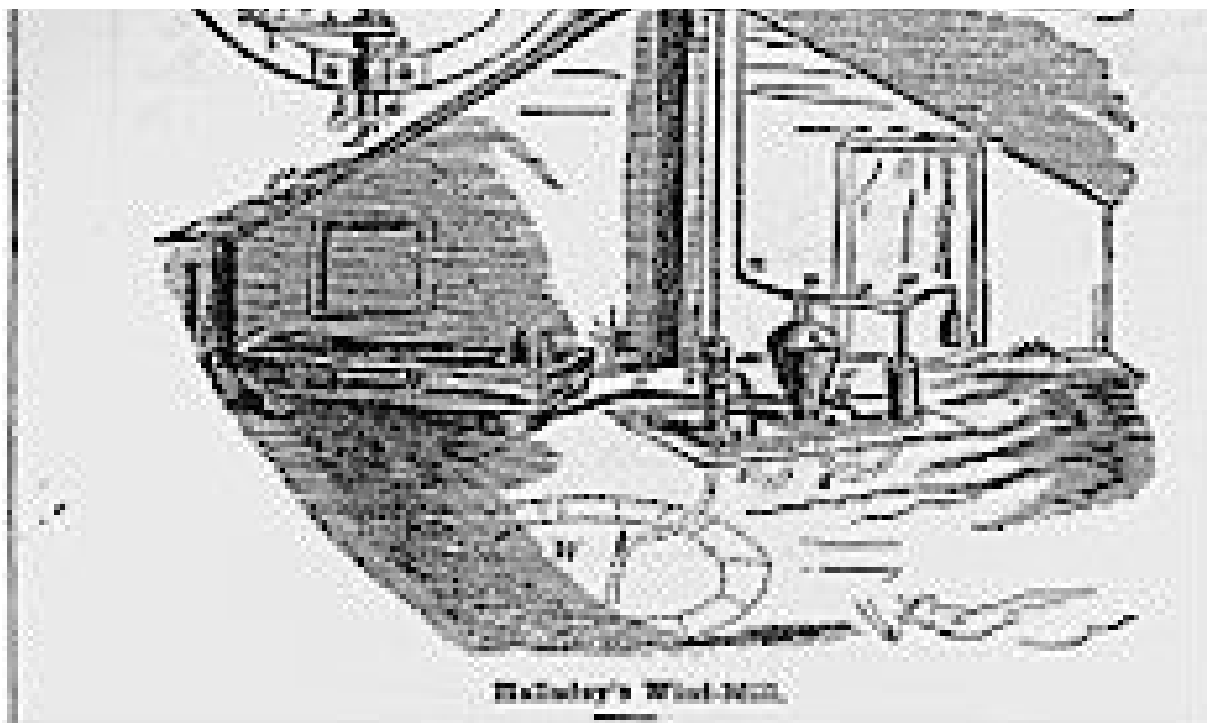
Halladay's shop was located at the Boynton Mill on Lake Street. Part of the building exists today. The site was originally rented from the Tolland County Bank who had ownership of the mill following John Boynton's bankruptcy. Halladay employed eighteen people. Over time, he found his customers were mainly in the far west and South America, for his windmills are very popular with the railroads in pumping water to their replenishing stations along the rail lines. In 1863, Halladay moved his manufactory to Batavia Illinois, and later sold to the U.S. Wind & Pump Company who continued to make his designs (by the thousands) for many years.



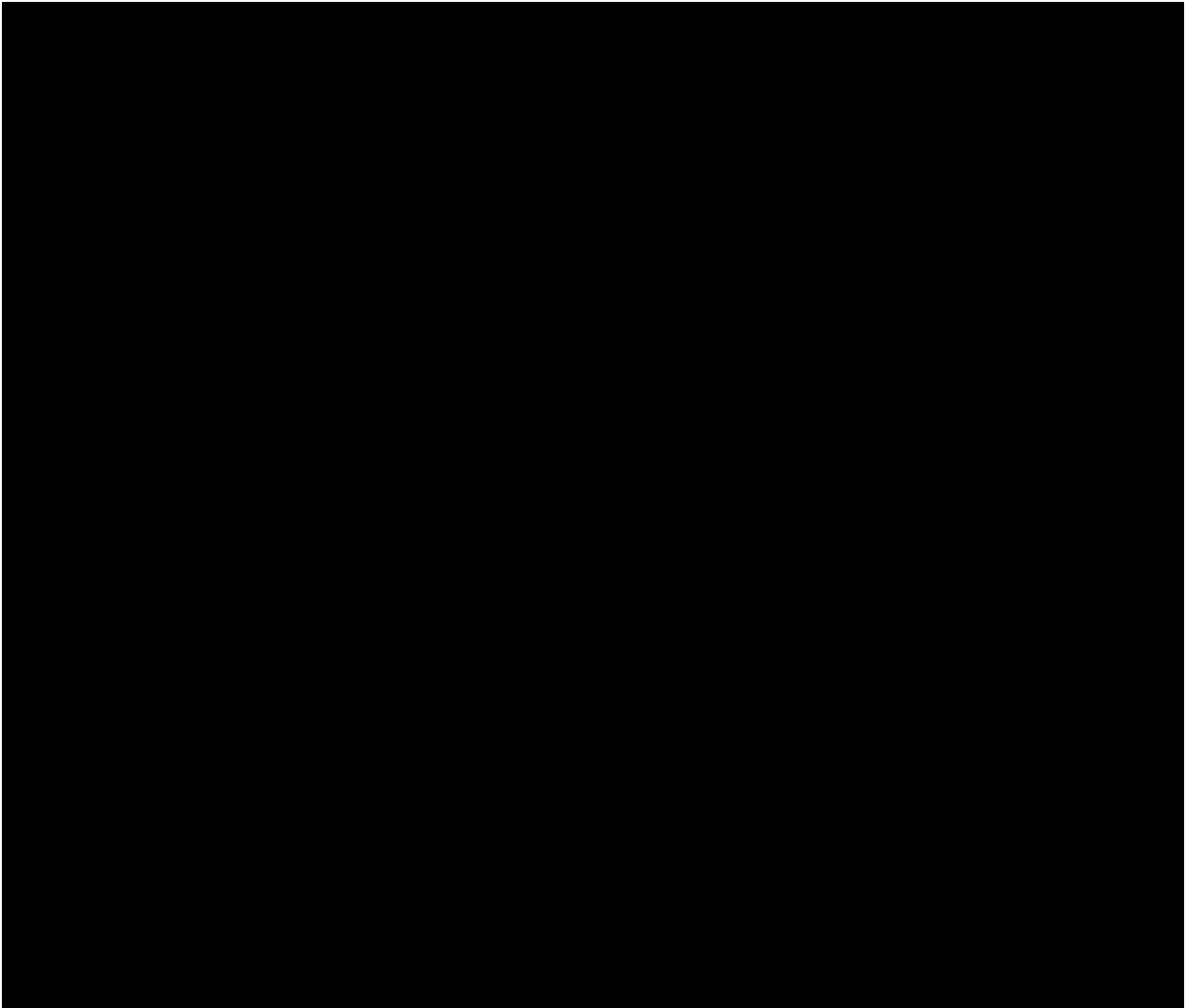
Daniel Halladay's Windmills





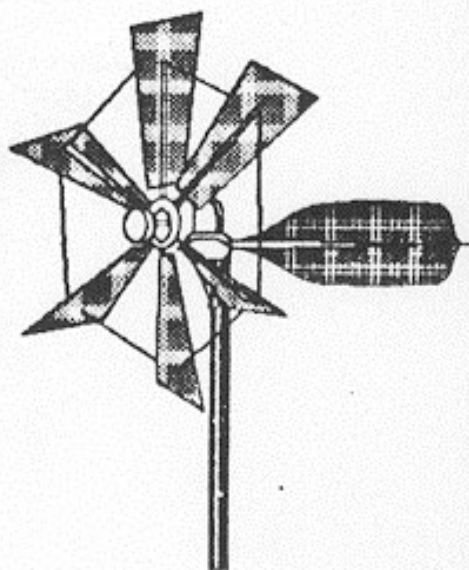


Halladay's Windmill Patent



Halliday
Windmill
Company

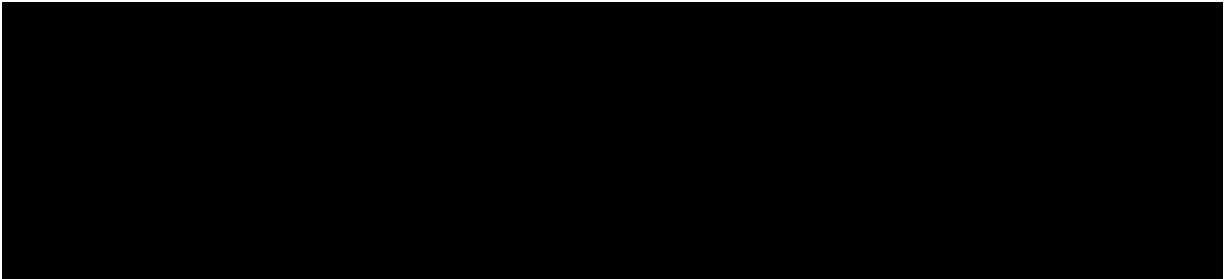
1855-1863



By 1854, Henry Watrous, whose family was doing a fair amount of business in the 2nd Society (North Coventry) making furniture and then toys, had purchased a site above the Kenyon Mill formerly owned by J.N. Dow, and he made wool hats there. He had a one acre site worth \$2,300 with carding machines, hat frames, scouring machines, lathes, pickers, kettles and a dyeing vat. He leased the water privilege. In 1859 he sold the hat mill to Horace Fargo for \$2,500.

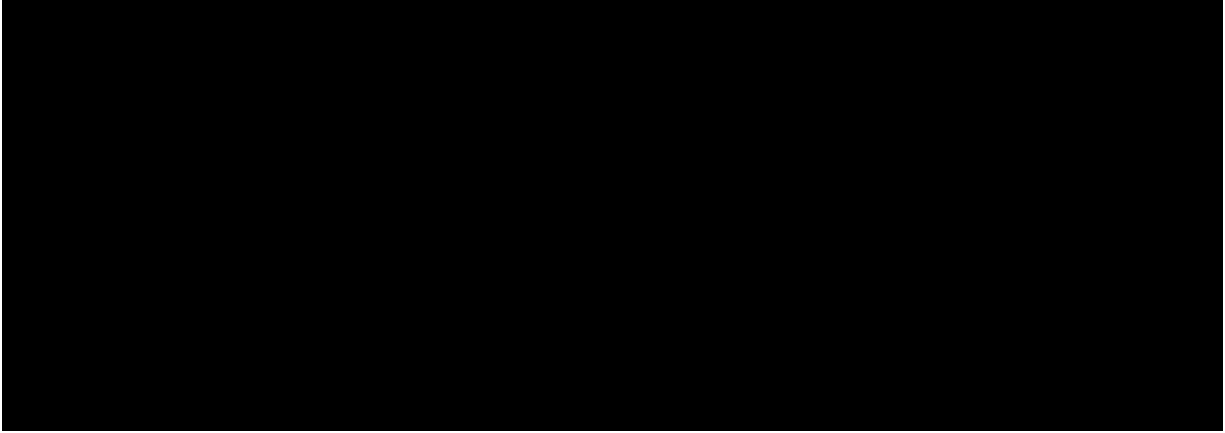


Henry Watrous' Shop

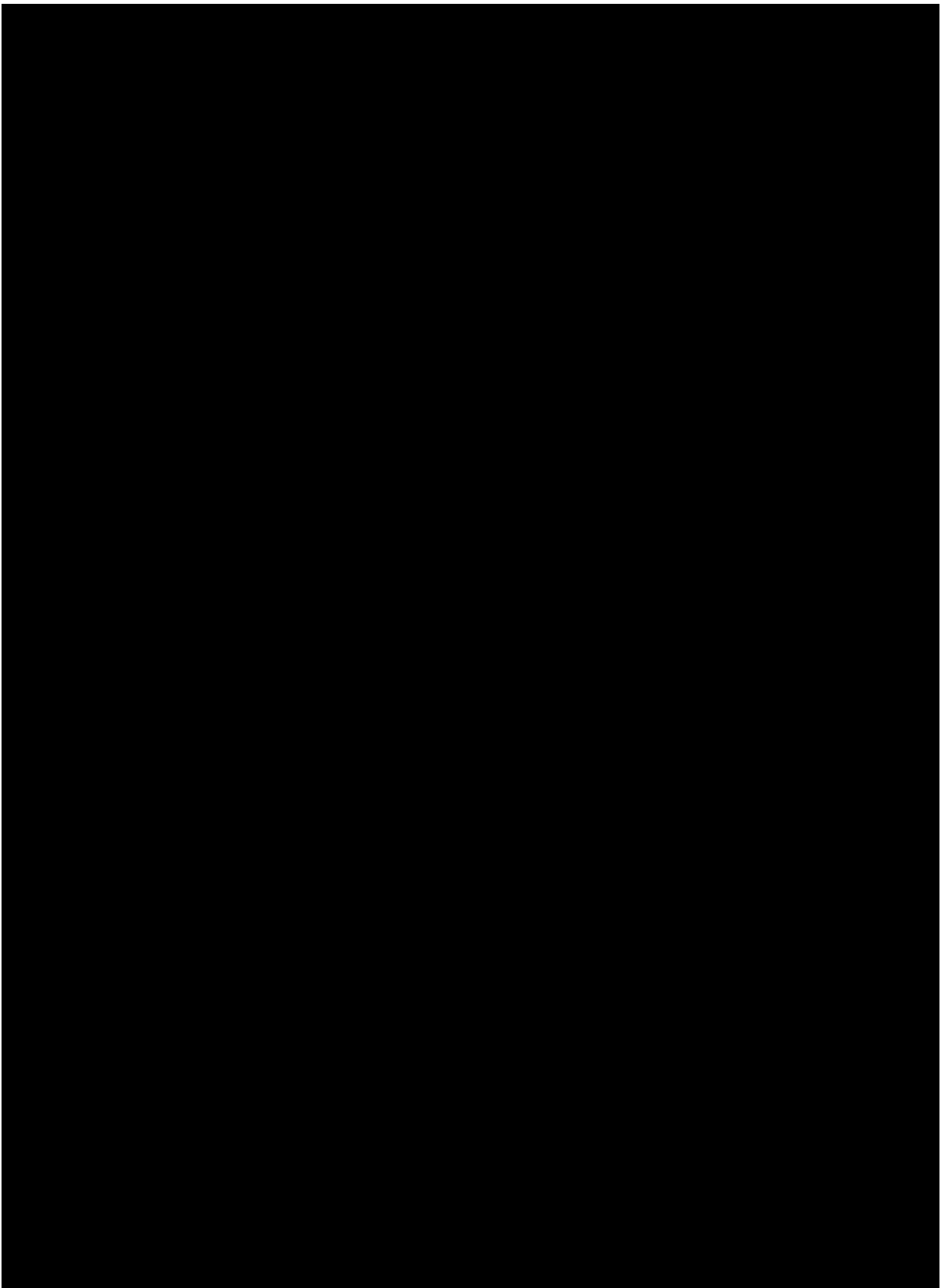


Henry Watrous' Shop





John Boynton's Demise



John Boynton's extensive holdings are heavily mortgaged in 1852 and 1853, and in November of 1856 he was visited by the Tolland County Sheriff who could not find any cash or property to cover Boynton's debts and seized all of his holdings which became the property of Tolland County Bank. Sadly in 1863, John Boynton, now eighty, died in East Hartford. This marked an end to a long career. Mr. Boynton was involved in the growth of over half of the industries on the brook. He also lent money to many business and land owners. His employees included several future Coventry businessmen namely his three sons, John W., Leander and Winslow as well as Ralph Crittendon, William Tibbals and Henry Mason. In his early years, he was a business czar of sorts. One citizen wrote, "If you go to Coventry and want to succeed, you must gain the Boyntons' good will and vote the Whig ticket." He was a Deacon of the church and donated land in 1849 on which the present First Congregational Church was built. The 1837 depression caused him much financial distress, but he kept on striving to keep industry and jobs in Coventry. He could have scaled back after the depression, but continued to invest. His demise maybe partially due to his deep concern for the Village and its people, and he was truly a dynamic and benevolent individual.

A lifelong Coventry resident, Morgan was born on December 2, 1818 and died on March 22, 1909. He was originator and owner of the Morgan Silk Mill on Mason Street from 1866 to 1883. In 1879 he partnered with Mr. Albert D. Bottum of Conantville who eventually owned the mill outright. Prior to that he worked in the Coventry Satinet factory, the Washburn foundry and the Washington Woolen Mills in town. He also served as town clerk and treasurer, and as a member of the Connecticut General assembly in 1875 and as a deacon (33 years) and choirmaster (69 years) of the First Congregational Church.

James Morgan

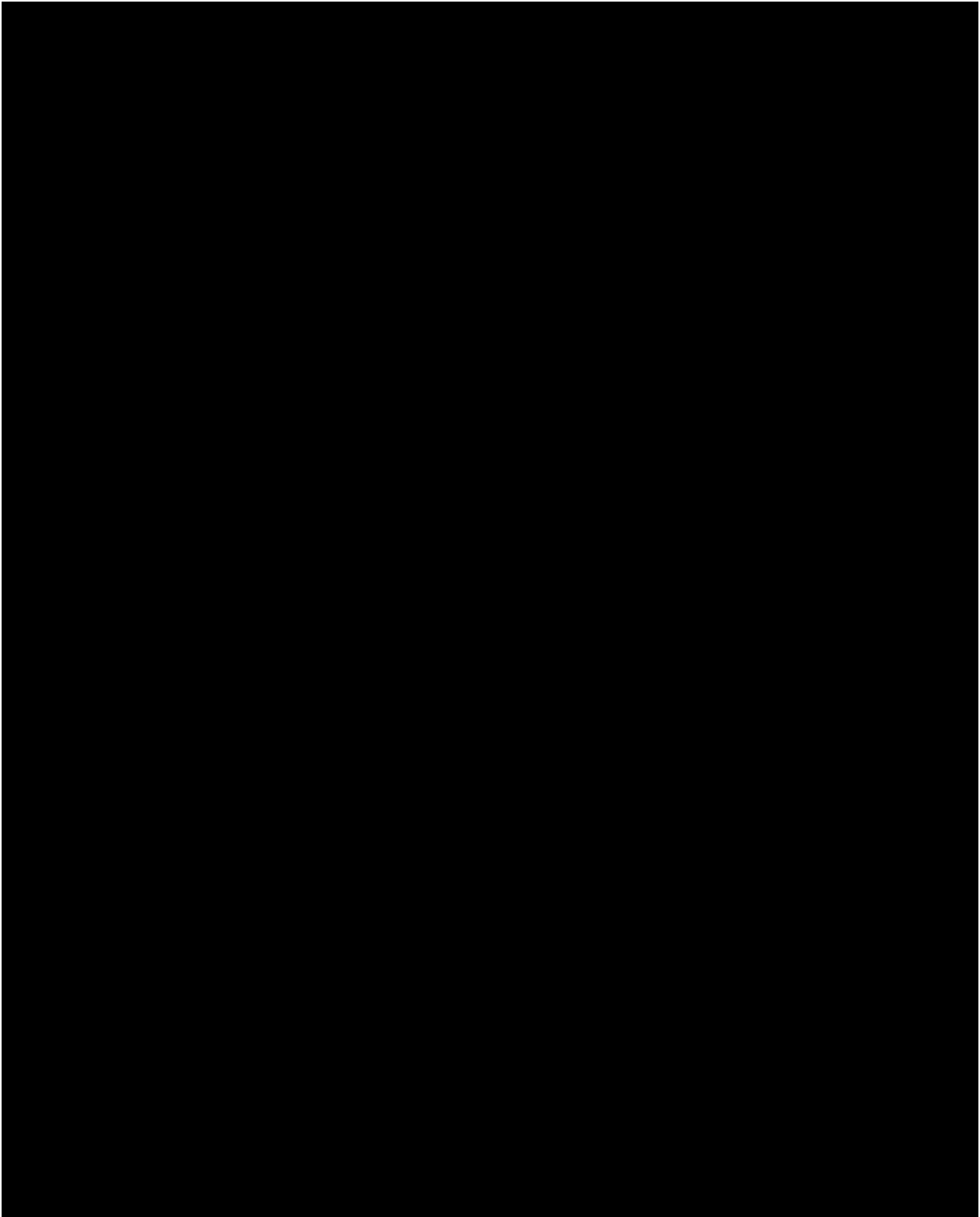


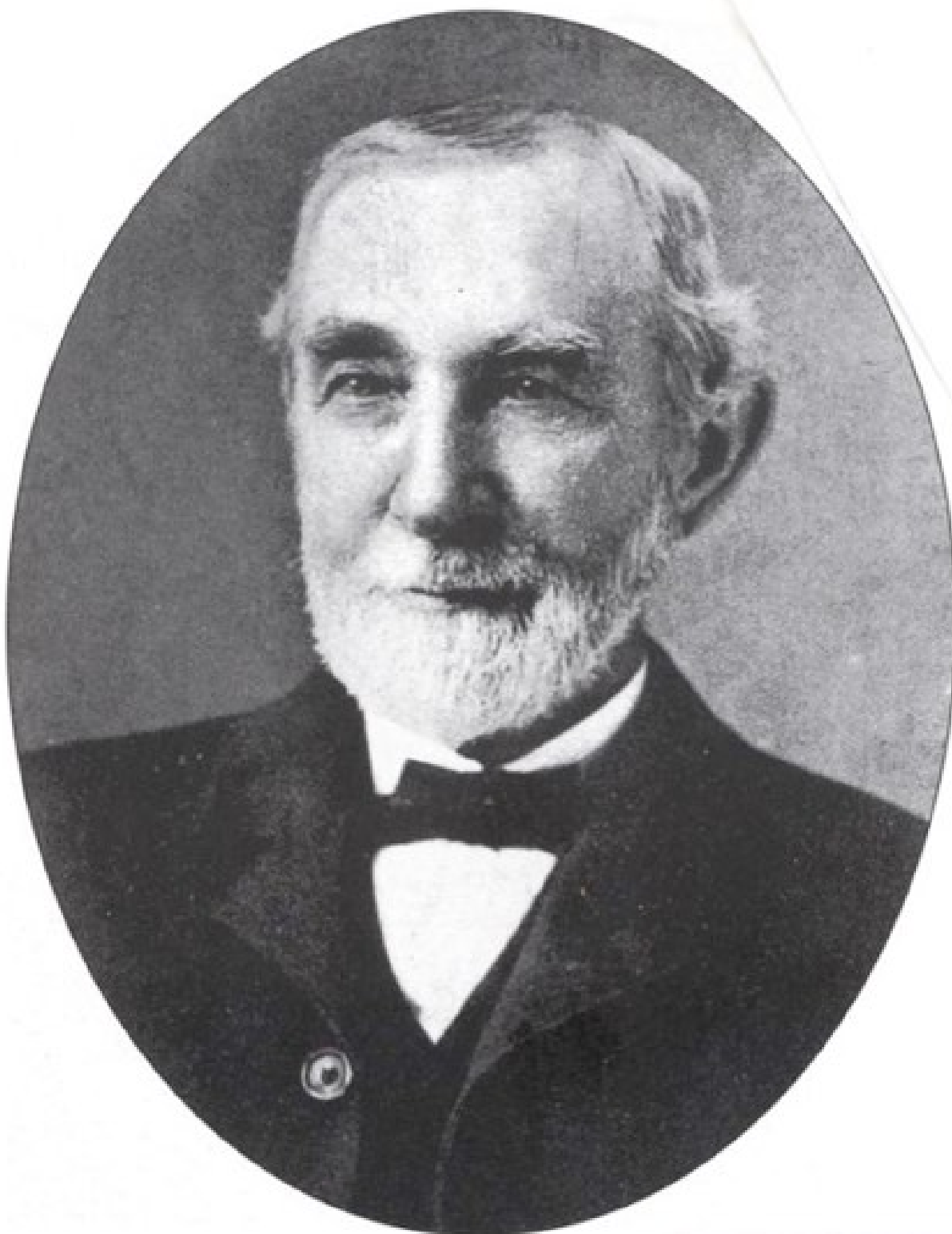
James Sanford Morgan



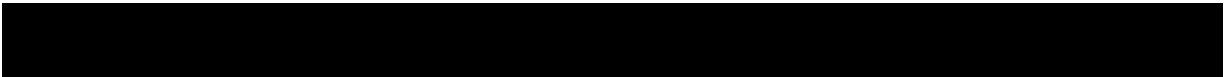
James Sanford Morgan



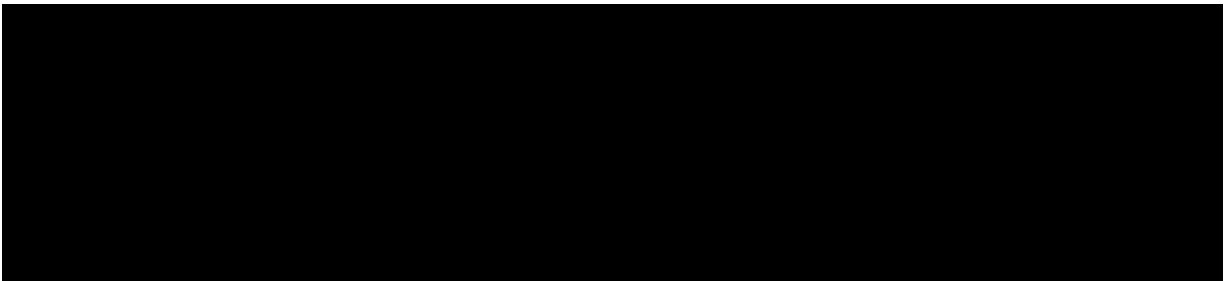




In 1857 David Huntington of Coventry and William Huntington of New York purchased a site on the Mill Brook on today's Armstrong Road near where it intersects with Snake Hill Road. They built a silk mill and a stately home across the street which still stands today. In the mill they made machine twist with seventeen employees and twenty-seven machines using ten horsepower of water power. The mill remained very active until its sale in 1876, but burned to the ground in 1885. David W. Huntington (1822-1885) held various political positions in the town and state. He remained a bachelor and lived with his sisters on the old farm. The home was occupied by the Huntington's single, elderly sisters Harriet and Mary until their deaths in the very early 1900's.



The Huntington Silk Mill



The Huntington Silk Mill



A thriving wool hat industry once existed in Coventry and a few surrounding towns prior to the Civil War. The hats were made in small shops, in family homes, and in a few, larger water powered mills. The industry was created by the slave trade. Hats were sent to the south and ultimately sold to slave owners and traders to be worn by the slaves. With the outbreak of the War and the ultimate freedom of the slaves, the industry disappeared rapidly. Wool for the hats was obtained from local sources. Hats were transported by wagon to Norwich Landing, and then by ship to southern ports. The industry thrived in town from about 1840 to 1864.

The 1850 Federal Census of Industry shows eighteen hat shops in Coventry. Most of them were small, family operations like Oscar Payne's located on the northeast corner of today's Route 31 (Windham Turnpike) and Depot Road. Other families making hats included the Curtisses, the Dexters, the Dows, and the Stanleys. Most operations were done entirely by hand. There were four larger establishments which used water power. They were the Huntingtons on Rufus Brook (Pucker Street) and the Boyntons (later the Peckhams) in a shop on the Mill Brook just east of today's Bradbury

Lane. Charles Kingsbury operated a shop on the Mill Brook adjacent to Armstrong Road, and Henry Watrous made his hats in the old Globe mill on the Mill Brook just east of Woods Lane. The census indicates that 75,500 hats were made in town in 1850 and the number tripled by 1860. The hats were sold at \$3.50 to \$4.00 per dozen.

The process to make wool hats was very labor intensive. It started with the carding of the wool stock. This is essentially a combing process, and as it left the carding machine, the wool was wound on a thin sheet around an egg-shaped form of about eighteen inches in diameter. At the center was a groove that allowed the material to be sheared off the form into two halves. The wool was about one-quarter inch thick at this stage and looked like the fools caps that clowns wear. It is likely that the wool carding for all the shops was done by water powered carding machines in Boynton's mill at the head of the Mill Brook and Dow's, Kingsbury's and Watrous' mills further down the brook in Coventry Village. Mr. Boynton had invented and

produced a wool carding machine in the early 1800's. The next step in the process was to full the cone-shaped form until it was reduced in thickness and achieved the required firmness. Fulling is essentially a compacting process. For this purpose a copper or lead kettle about two feet deep was filled with the fulling solution and set over a fire to heat it. Around the kettle was constructed a platform of triangular shaped tables. Adjacent to this platform the laborers (usually men) would stand for twelve to fourteen hours a day with a round stick. Using this stick, they would roll, pound and otherwise manipulate the wool cones until they were ready to turn over to the next operation called forming or blocking. The solution in the kettle smelled terrible as it contained fullers earth, potash or stale urine!

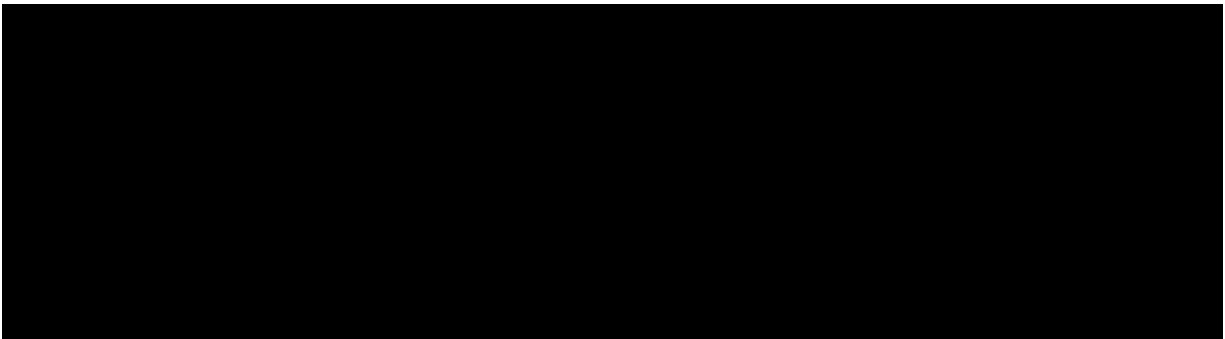
If the hats were to be finished in black, they were first dyed and filled with a stiffening preparation (glue). They were then softened by steam and passed on to be blocked. In a pliable state, they were stretched over hat-shaped blocks, the brims flattened and laid aside until the glue had again set. After removal from the block, the edges were trimmed, and the hats turned over to the remaining processes done mostly by women. This consisted of sewing in the sweat band, binding the edge of the brim and fastening the band around the crown. The pay was not large, a dollar or two a week. Many of the hatters started out in larger shops, and after learning the fulling and blocking process, they would start a family business in or near their house, though it was not a real joy for the family due to the odor of the fulling solutions.

A very unique "invention" to intensify the light from a candle was used by many women whose sight had begun to diminish with age. This was accomplished by taking a large, clear glass bottle, holding about two quarts, and filling it with clear water. A candle was set behind the bottle and the light would shine through the water. This would intensify the light many times and furnish a spot of bright light about the size of a silver dollar, thus enabling the work to be clearly seen.

It is not known what attracted this business to town, though through its twenty-plus year history it provided employment and income for many of out residents.



The Wool Hat Industry in Coventry



The Wool Hat Industry in Coventry



In the spring of 1860 there is some sadness in the Village as John Boynton, the “czar of industry” has gone bankrupt and moved to East Hartford. Several mills and seven or eight dwellings are now in the hands of the Tolland County Bank and are being offered for sale. The economy is good, though there is friction developing with the southern states.

We begin our journey on horseback at the Town Green. Several folks are out cleaning winter debris from the Methodist Church (on the lake side) and the Congregational Church (on the other side). There are now two congregations for this church as a new building has been erected on the turnpike in the Village. We continue towards South Street (not yet named) past Dr. Timothy Dimock’s to the corner where the old Huntington house is now occupied by Horace Lord. Turning north we see a few large farms along the lake. It is a beautiful uncomplicated sight.

We pass the Hale homestead which is now the residence of Henry Watrous who operates the Globe Mill on the Mill Brook and makes wool hats. As we approach the Skungamaug River we see two homes on the right owned by Harvey Kingsbury. He is Roswell Wright’s son-in-law, and operates the saw and grist mill on the river. Mr. Kingsbury is a fourth generation Kingsbury (from Nathaniel who was an original protester that started the Second Society). Part of the mill is still owned by Harvey Wright (Roswell’s son), but we understand he’ll not be here much longer. Roswell is the son of Elijah Wright from Columbia. As we move along toward the Hop River, we pass Paper Mill Road (now an abandoned section of Times Farm Road) and we can see Mahlon Watrous’ mill on the Skungamaug. He is making toy bureaus out of cherry wood, a very unique item for the time. We also see remnants of the old paper mill that burned in 1848 and hear that several financiers from Hartford wish to re-build the mill.

As we turn north (today’s Swamp Road) we see more than a dozen homes and more than half of them are occupied by the Loomis families. They have

their own neighborhood here. Eleazer Loomis is operating a saw mill on the Ash Brook just to the west. At the corner with the Boston Turnpike we see Norm Bartlett's house. He tells us about the Kingsburys (no relation to those previously mentioned) whose farms to the north are doing very well. He comments on the increased east-west traffic on the turnpike. The toll booth has been removed, and the road is fairly well maintained and drained by local farmers and business owners.

We also notice the wagon traffic on the turnpike as we proceed easterly. There are wagons of farm goods, bales of cotton and linen, and a number of travelers on horseback. We talk to one who has business in Woodstock, and another who is returning to his home in Worcester. We pass Pomeroy's tavern, the blacksmith, the Second Church and the Academy. Further up the turnpike the glass factory is out of business though there is a carriage shop near there run by Mr. Spencer. We turn north up the hill towards Francis West's home. As we get to the top of the hill, there are farms as far as we can see in all directions except to the south. Cows and hogs are prevalent as well as corn, barley, apples and clover fields. To our left are Zenas Loomis' and Marcus Lillie's farms.

Turning east toward the Skungamaug River is Isaac then Orin Turner's farms. Orin has a small water powered mill that husks clover seed. At the river we cross Woodward's bridge, and soon after we peek in the brick school house. Boys on the left and girls on the right, some reading and some doing sums on the blackboard. We continue to the Willimantic River past Mr. Starkweather's house. The train is going north on the other side of the river to the village and mills at Merrow. As we reach the Boston Turnpike we see Addison Dimock's house on the left which used to be a tavern and Mr. Goodenough's knitting machine shop on the right. Now we cut through on a path (that also is the border of the First and Second Societies) to Mr. Talcott's house on the corner of the path and the Windham turnpike. The turnpike is empty as we turn south toward the lake. Passing the Topliff's farm and Dr. Maine's, we go down Manning's hill to the Village where activity is bustling.

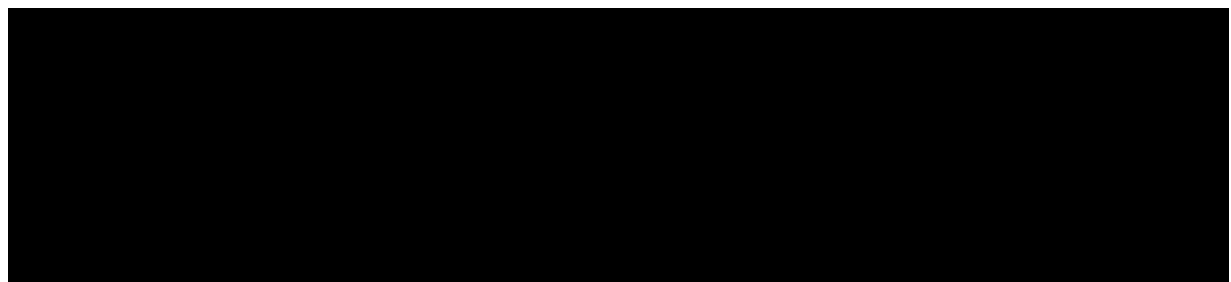
John Boynton's house (now the Welles agency) is for sale. Daniel Green's cotton mill is in operation and across the street, Buell's store and Parker's blacksmith shop are busy. The Bidwell hotel houses agents doing business with the mills. The Mill Brook is lined with factories. Nelson Kingsbury's cassimere shop, Enoch Hovey's silk mill, and William Partridge's tannery are operating. Wagon loads of material and several coaches are moving people and goods to the rail depot at the foot of the brook. Walter Loomis' and Hovey's stores have fresh meats, tools, and are now selling farm implements. Some coal is moving into town from the depot. We hear that there are more than a dozen hat shops in town making wool felt hats for the slave trade.

Before the turn to the depot, we pass Robinson's and Coleman's farm and the small district #3 school house that is now twenty-eight years old. The depot is bustling with activity from Horace Fargo's satinnet mill, store and tenements. Proceeding westerly towards Flanders we pass the Fitch, then Turner's farms and further south the Flanders school is in session. Past this is the road east to Perkin's corner.

We complete our journey at the Hop River on the Columbia line where Truman Safford's cotton mill is in operation. We see another train going south along the Hop River. It likely has just stopped at the Hop River station for passengers and textiles from Erastus Smith's warp mill on the river.



1860 Walkabout



1860 Walkabout



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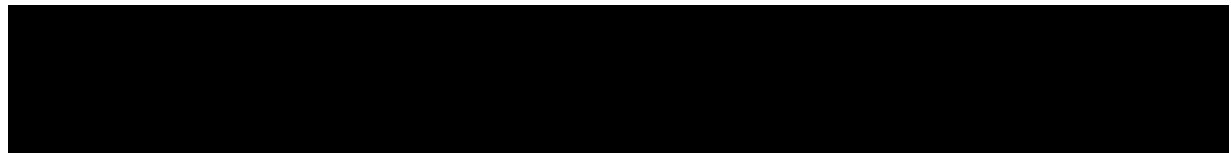
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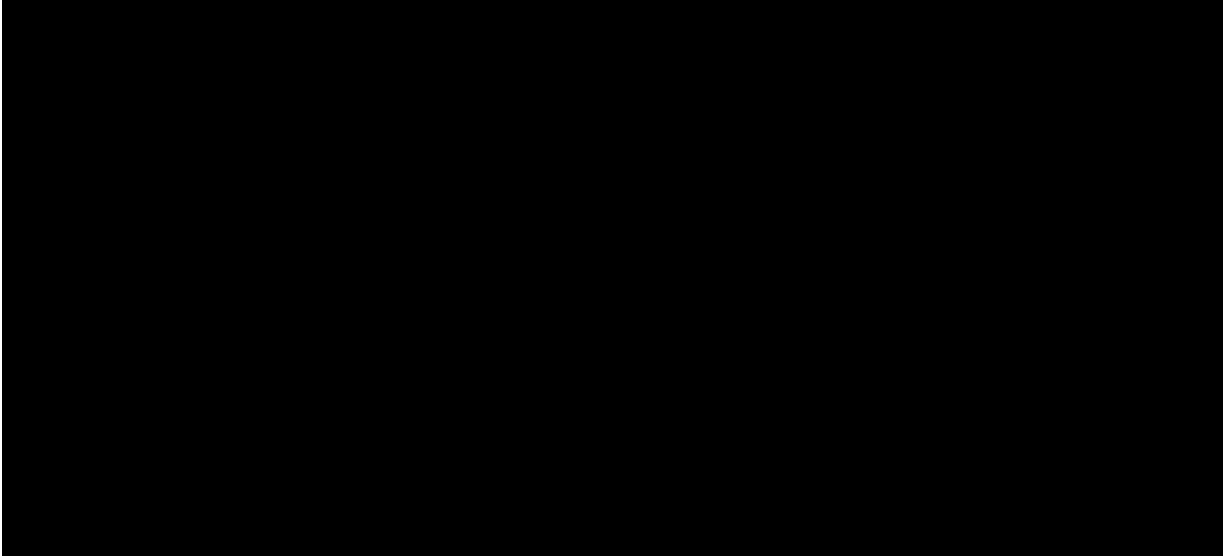
161

In April 1858, Alfred Partridge sold the mill to Samuel Moredock for \$6,000, and Samuel began making satinet. (An imitation satin made of cotton warp and woolen filling chiefly used for trousers.) By 1860 Samuel had three buildings and a factory with sixteen satinet looms, two jacks, six carding machines, two fulling mills, two shearing machines, etc. and a steam boiler. He employed twenty-four hands and made 140,000 yards of satinet that year.

In 1864, Charles H. Kenyon, from North Stonington, purchased the mill and began to make “Kentucky” jeans. His production rate is about 275,000 yards per year. He partnered with Solomon Barber in 1877, and they also purchased a fine home on the Windham Turnpike from J. Newton Dow. They added to the mill in 1882 and were making ladies dress flannels in 1884. Kenyon died in 1891, and the mill descended to his children. The mill is leased, in 1893, to the Washington Mill Company of Lawrence, Massachusetts who made cloakings for a few years. The mill was finally sold in 1902 to E.A. Tracy who incorporated it into his growing shoddy manufactory. The site is commonly referred to today as the Kenyon Mill. The pond was once named Barber pond, and the road on which the mill sits (Armstrong Road today) was named Barber Village Road for a time. The area near the mill contained five or six tenement houses, two of which are private residences today. (12,18)



The Kenyon Mill Site Begins It's Rapid Growth and Success



The Kenyon Mill Site Begins It's Rapid Growth and Success

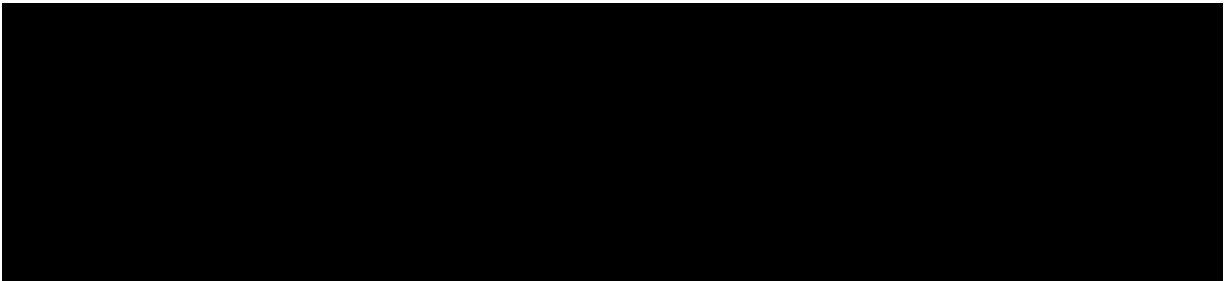


Charles H. Kenyon was born in Richmond, Rhode Island in 1824 to Lewis and Ann Kenyon. Lewis owned a mill on the Pawcatuck River that dressed and finished cloth. Charles' older brothers, Elijah and Abiel, carried on their father's business and expanded it to carding, spinning and weaving cloth. They also erected the Laurel Glenn Mill in North Stonington which Charles became involved with in his 20's and finally purchased in 1863. In 1864, Charles purchased the mill site in South Coventry. It is likely that he lived in Coventry only for a short time, if at all, and all mill business was conducted by agents. In 1881, he began to manage the Bozrahville Cotton Manufacturing Company in a most successful manner. His sudden death, on September 21, 1891 in Norwich, was due to a hemorrhage. He left his wife of thirty years Emeline, a son, Charles Henry Kenyon of Norwich, and a daughter, Carrie Slocum of Brookline Massachusetts. His holdings at his death were mostly the mill, tenements and houses in Coventry with a very wide assortment of woolen machinery including thirty seven looms and 3,200 spools. (51)

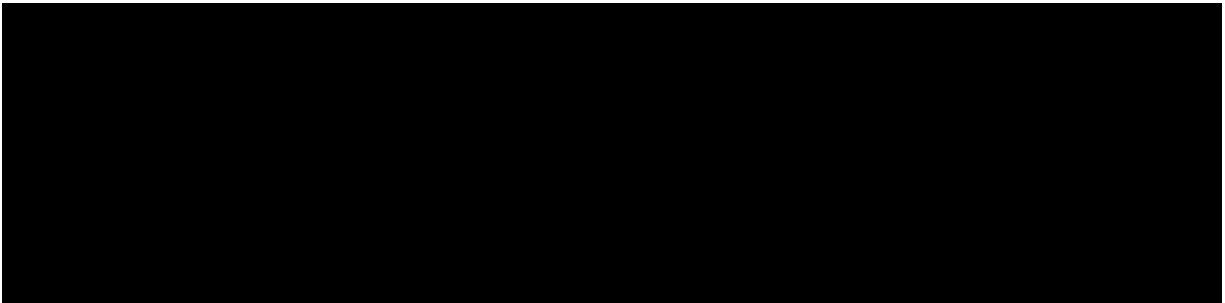
Thirty mills were surveyed in town. They employ 306 people and produce goods worth \$11.3 million in today's dollars. The largest was the Coventry Satinet Company which produced 300,000 yards of satinet valued at \$2.6 million in today's dollars, followed by Enoch Hovey's silk mill and Nelson Kingsbury's Washington woolen mill. Other products include percussion caps, windmills, shingles, cotton, wool cards, silk twist, hooks and eyes, a tannery, and wool hats. The first evidence of steam power is in the Washington Mill. The majority of the products made in town are produced on the Mill Brook.



Charles H. Kenyon



Charles H. Kenyon



“Feb 14, 1862: Messrs. Halladay & Co., of South Coventry are starting up the manufacturing of his patented wind mills, at the old stand. They have suspended operations for the year past, and the demand calls for renewed exertions as their value becomes known. They have been introduced into California, South America and on the lines of our great railroads, for pumping water.”

"Jan. 16, 1863- At Fargo's near the Depot, they are running full time on a common blue army cloth. This establishment we learn has been sold to Mr. Smith of Vernon."

"Jan. 16, 1863- The Washington Mill, now owned by Nelson Kingsbury esq., is running day and night on a fine article of all wool Navy flannel for the government. This establishment, in the hands of its enterprising proprietor and efficient agent, Mr. George Capen (actually Capron), is in a flourishing condition, and has recently been much improved."

"Jan. 16, 1863- Moredock is running full time on flannel.”

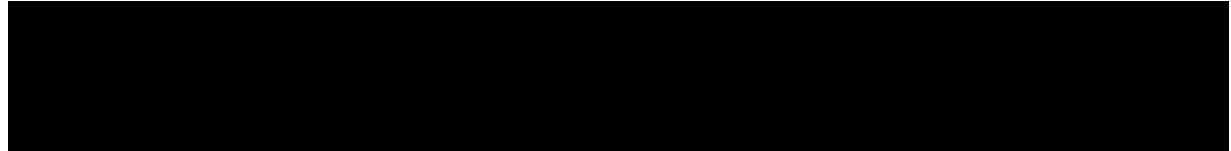
“Jul. 3, 1863: R.S. Murdock’s (sic) woolen mill, in South Coventry, was burnt Saturday morning together with a large share of stock. Loss quite heavy. The building was insured by the Hartford, Aetna and North American for \$9,000. The stock was insured for \$12,000, by the Phoenix, Charter Oak and Western Massachusetts. Cause of the fire is not known. This is the second time that Mr. Murdock has been burned out."

“Dec. 4, 1863: Mr. Samuel R. Moredock, (Murdock) of South Coventry, whose woolen mill was burned down for the second time a few months since has, with his characteristic energy, built a new factory in place of the old one, and will in the course of two or three weeks have a set of machinery ready to commence operations. We understand he intends to manufacture tweeds."

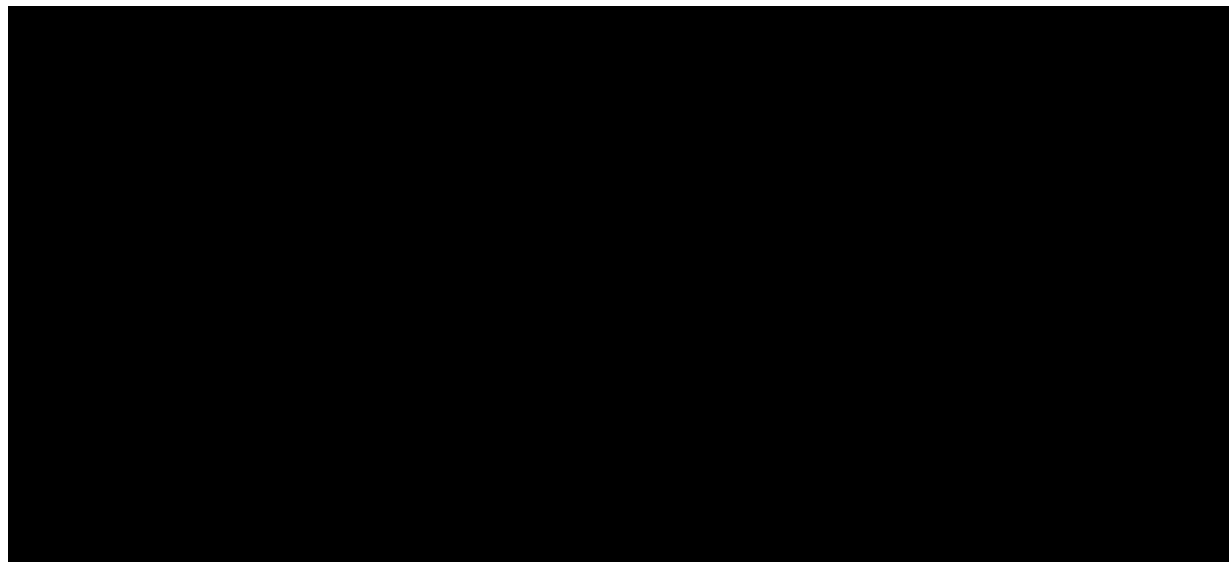
In March of 1865 William Bradbury leased to Moredock the “right and privilege of flowing and covering with water the land owned by Bradbury

upstream of Moredock's at the Globe Mill". This is the first mention of the named Globe mill.

August, 1866 - "A cartridge shop and hook & eye manufactory are on this privilege (Mason Street), also a shop making paper boxes. Mr. Loomis built an octagon factory. (The interior beams still exist in the Clock & Whale Factory on Mason Street.)



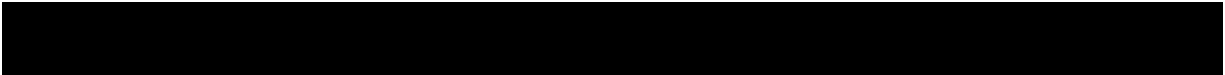
The Willimantic Chronicle Provides Glimpse of Mill Activity in the 1860's



The Willimantic Chronicle Provides Glimpse of Mill Activity in the 1860's



John M. Wood was born in Yorkshire England April 21, 1844. He was brother to Thomas H. of Coventry and William F. and Albert M. also of South Coventry. John emigrated with his father to Danvers Massachusetts, and came to South Coventry in 1865 where he was employed at the Washington Mills until 1870 having charge of the finishing department. In that year he started to manufacture woolen goods, mostly cassimeres, having two setts and employing twenty hands. Mr. Wood married Agnes Capron and had two children, Burton and Sarah.

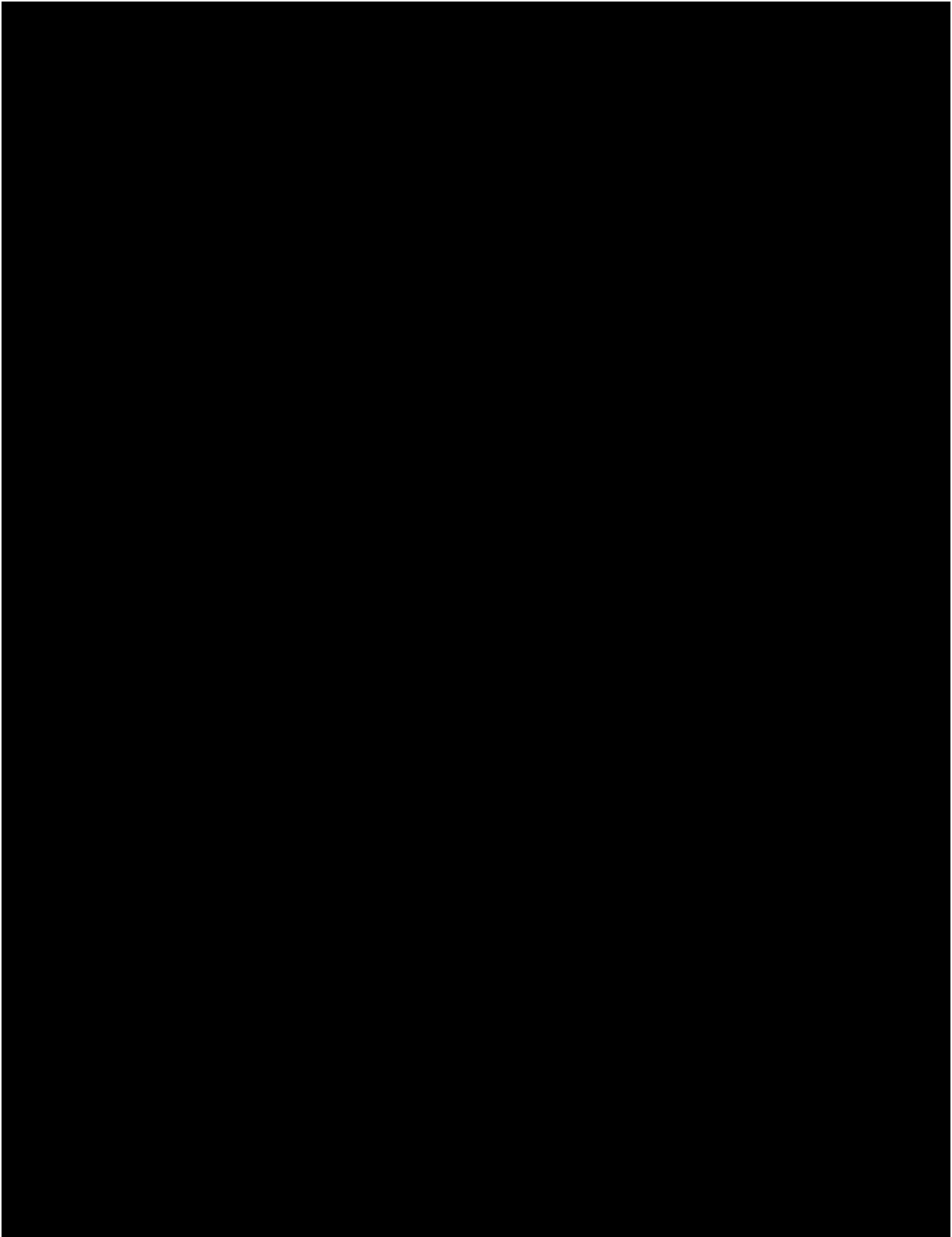


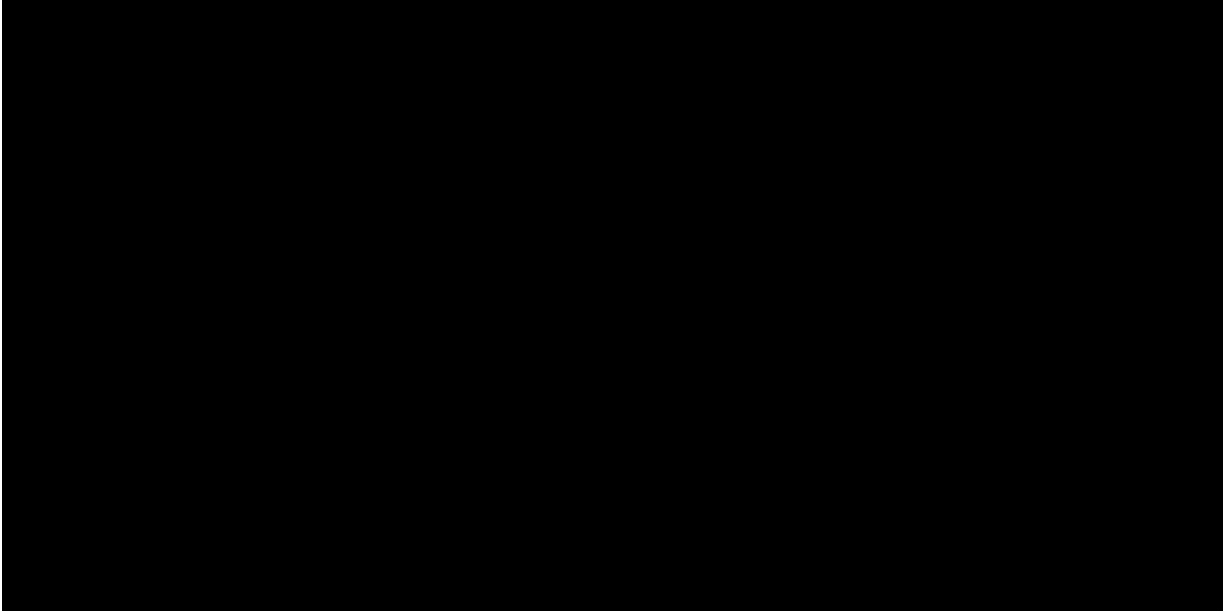
J.M. Wood



J.M. Wood







J.M. Wood



This early cotton mill on the Mill Brook continued in operation through the 1840's by the Boynton family. It was sold in 1854 to Enoch Hovey who enlarged the mill and made skeins and spools of silk- 16,000 pounds in 1860. The mill changed to making jeweler's cotton for a time under the ownership of William Bradbury who was a prominent Village resident. By 1870 Patrick Cullen and John Wood owned the mill and made cotton yarn, but changed to Stafford looms and made satinets and cassimere. They added steam power to augment their water power.

J.M.Wood's Mill, Woods Lane~1900

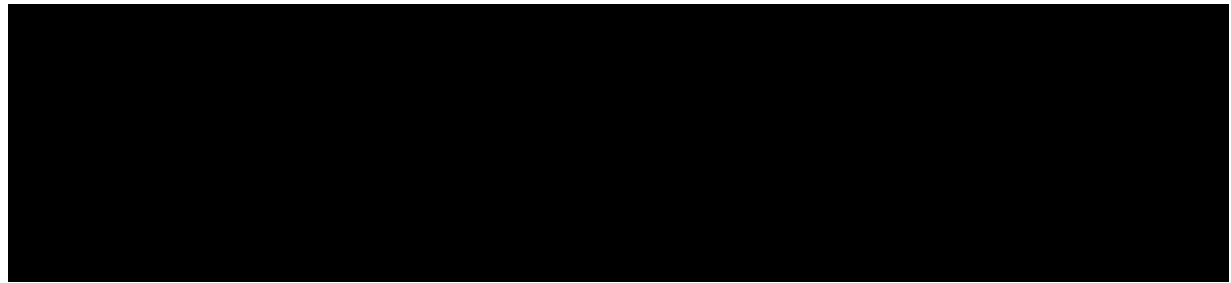
In 1895 Wood mortgaged his mill to E.A. Tracy and B.M. Ewing (of New York) and the deed included a revealing list of machinery: Sixteen 92", 25 harness Knowles looms, three setts of cards forty-four by forty-two feet, three machines per sett, four self feeders (Branwell), one card grinder, four-240 spindle, self operating jacks, one 60 spindle bobbin winder (Johnson & Bassett), one Wool mixing picker, one Wool drying machine with 30' fan (Sargeant), one Dressing wheel, ring twister (Cleveland), three Spooling machines 32x12" drum (Davis & Furber), a cloth press, cloth shear, steam brushing machine, cloth folding machine, one fulling mill, one cotton washer, one dyeing tub with two dye vats, one centrifugal hydro- extractor with 42" basket, one 75 HP Boiler (Stewart), one Harris-Carliss steam

engine, one Lathe with 10-foot bed, and one Horizontal water wheel with two 15-inch wheels.

In 1901, the J.M. Wood mill burned to the ground, a devastating loss to the community. Several small tenement houses remained, as did the penstock. The pond, spillway and rusted hoop ties from the penstock remain today.

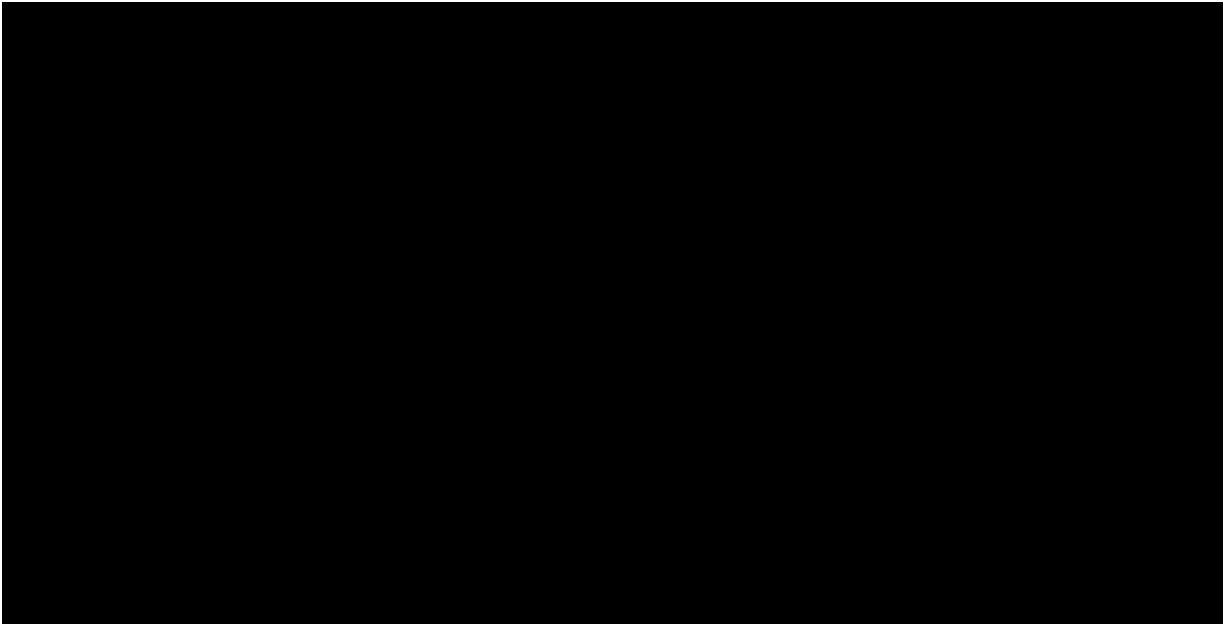


The J.M. Wood Cotton Mill



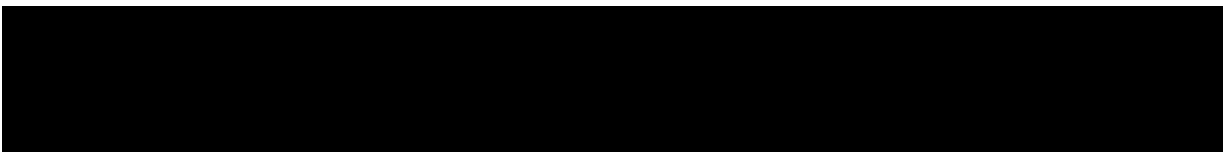
The J.M. Wood Cotton Mill



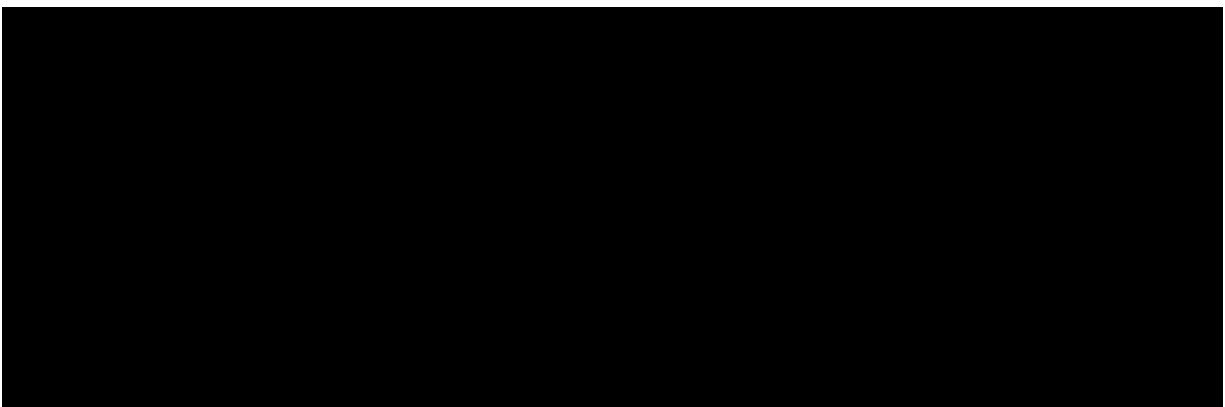


Mahlon Watrous, who's relative Henry Watrous operated a mill in the Village, purchased Orin Cook's woodworking shop on the Skungamaug River in 1850. The site is located on the grounds of today's Channel 3 Kid's Camp. Watrous made spools for the textile trade, but soon began to make an interesting toy. It is a bureau about eighteen inches wide made of cherry, and is referred to as a "Sunday" toy. It is made for wealthier clients who display the toy in their homes and allow their children to use it on Sundays. His shop had water-powered tools such as vernier and circular saws, drill and turning lathes, etc. He employed six hands and had a twelve horsepower water wheel. In 1860 he made 5,000 spools and 1,100 bureaus. His shop was active through the 1880's.

Watrous' Toy Bureau

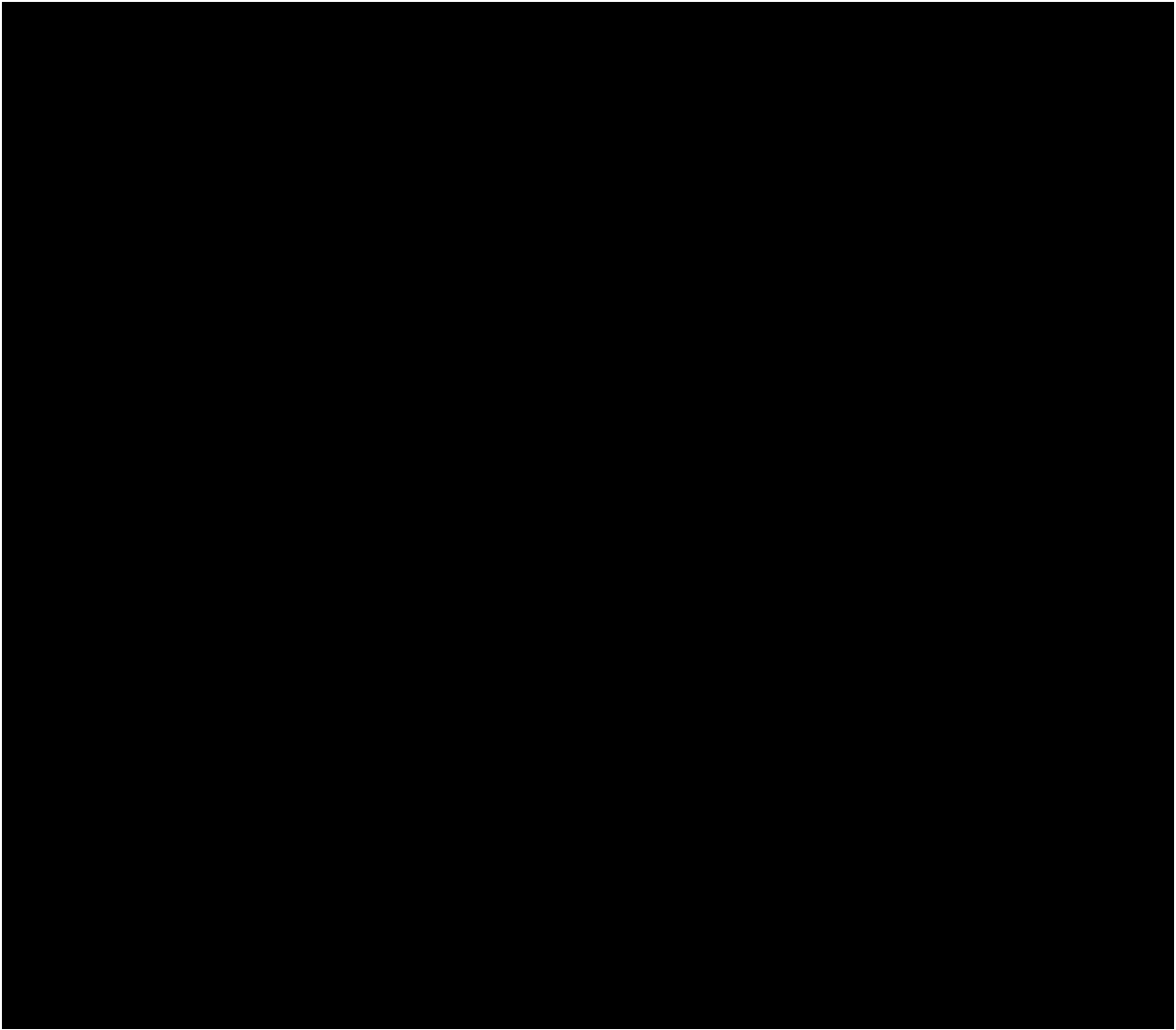


Watrous' Shop on the Skungamaug River



Watrous' Shop on the Skungamaug River





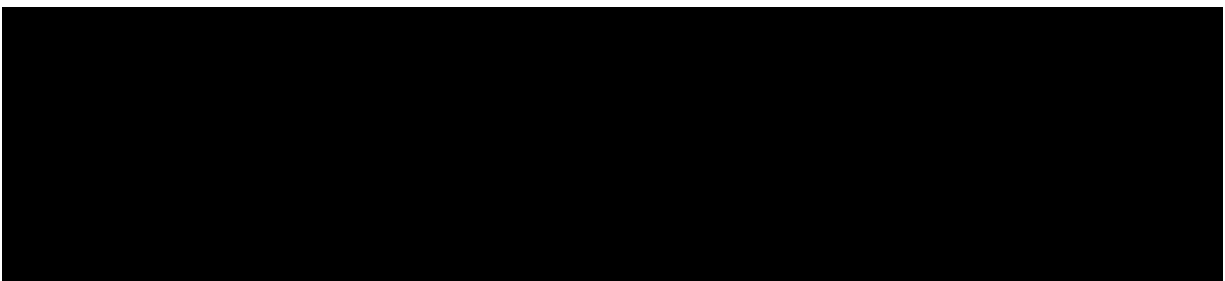


Henry W. Mason was born September 30, 1829 to Abner and Elizabeth Mason living on Main Street. Abner was killed at the Crittenden & Tibbal's mill on Main Street in 1852 by an explosion of fulminate mercury leaving Henry to care for his mother. Henry married Lydia Lillie in 1854 and moved to Hartford where he reportedly worked at the Colt factory. He soon returned to South Coventry where he joined Walter A. Loomis in a hook and eye manufactory on Mason Street. He built a fine home that still stands on Mason Street near the intersection of Wall Street. In 1868 he started his cartridge (paper cased) manufactory here and continued until his death in July of 1888. He held a number of patents for cartridges and cartridge making machinery .

Henry Mason (1829-1888)

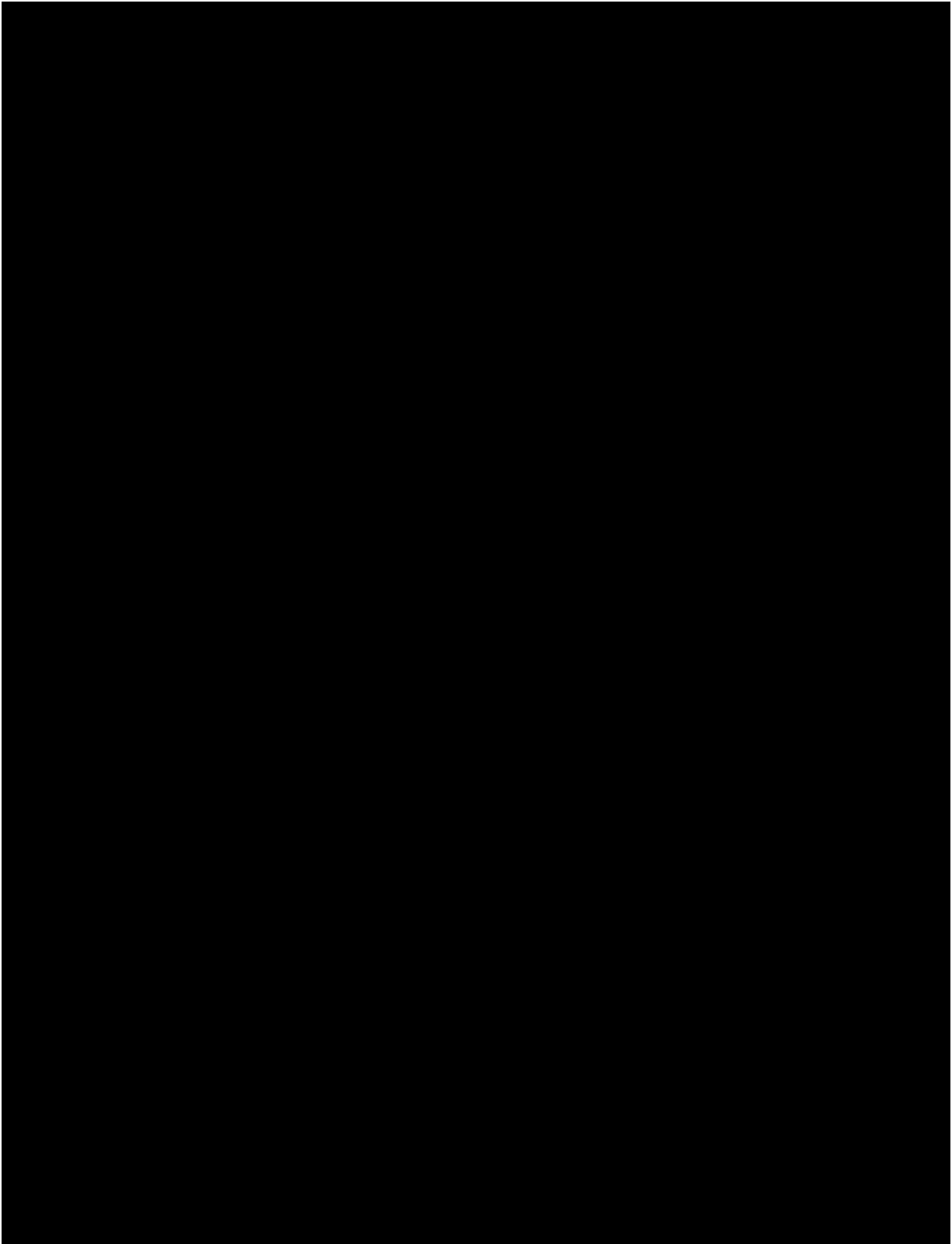


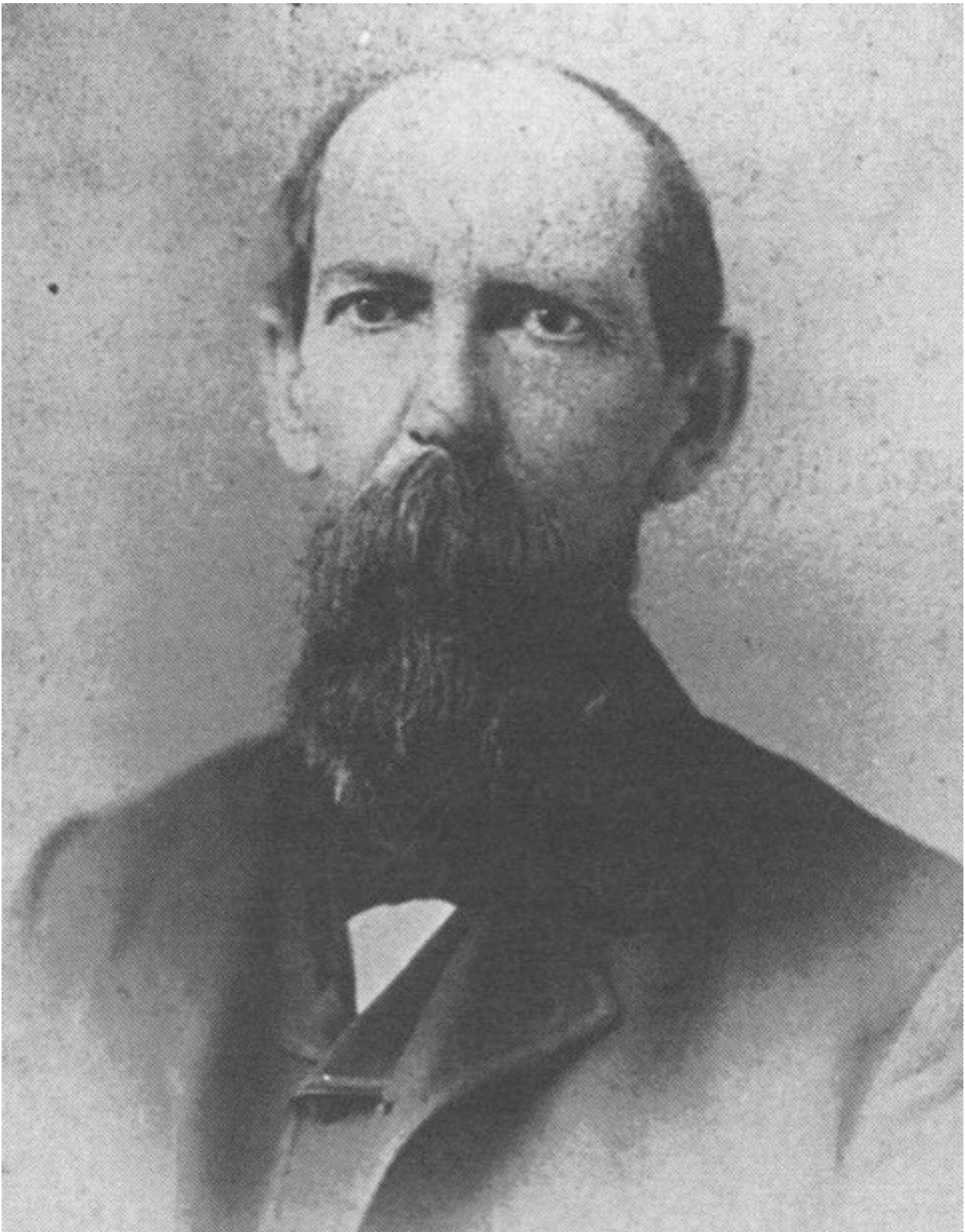
Henry Mason



Henry Mason





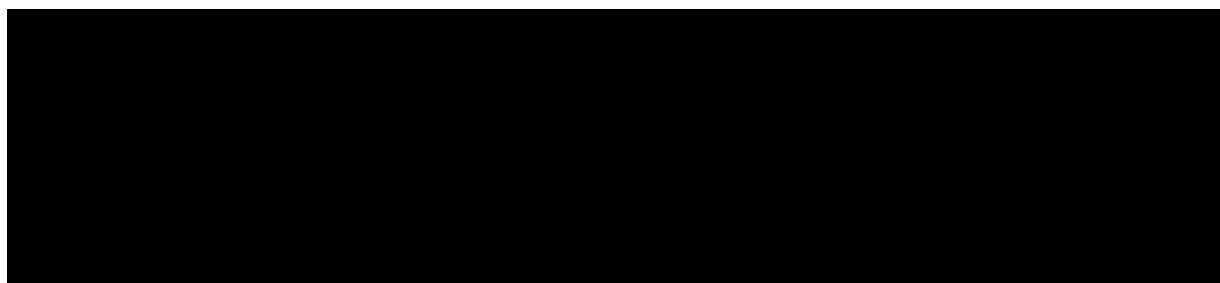


Mason's career was unique as it spanned three different types of cartridges, combustible, rimfire and centerfire. He manufactured paper cartridges from 1863 to 1872 and then started making copper rimfire cartridges. Sales were depressed after the War as the Army's Ordnance Department was dumping their inventory, and Mason developed the market he served so well, percussion firearms owners. He supplied ammunition for cheap firearms in the westward expansion beyond the Mississippi and the extension of the railroads. By 1872 he saw the paper cartridge use dwindling and interested M. & W. Hulbert to form the Phoenix Metallic Cartridge Company on Mason Street. The Hulberts were president and treasurer, and Mason the secretary. Mason patented several cartridge making machines. They made rimfire types and later center fire cartridges. Phoenix later became the American Cartridge Company and was acquired by Union Metallic Cartridge in 1890 after Mason's death. This ended the cartridge making business in Coventry. Between 1871 and 1883, he produced over seven million cartridges in .31, .36, .44, .52, and .58 calibers. Large amounts of powder were required and orders of 150-200 barrels were common. They were stored in a one story brick structure, located away from the main factory with an iron roof and a tin clad door south of the brook. He also had a separate building for casting bullets.

One of Mason's Patents for a cartridge making machine- 1882

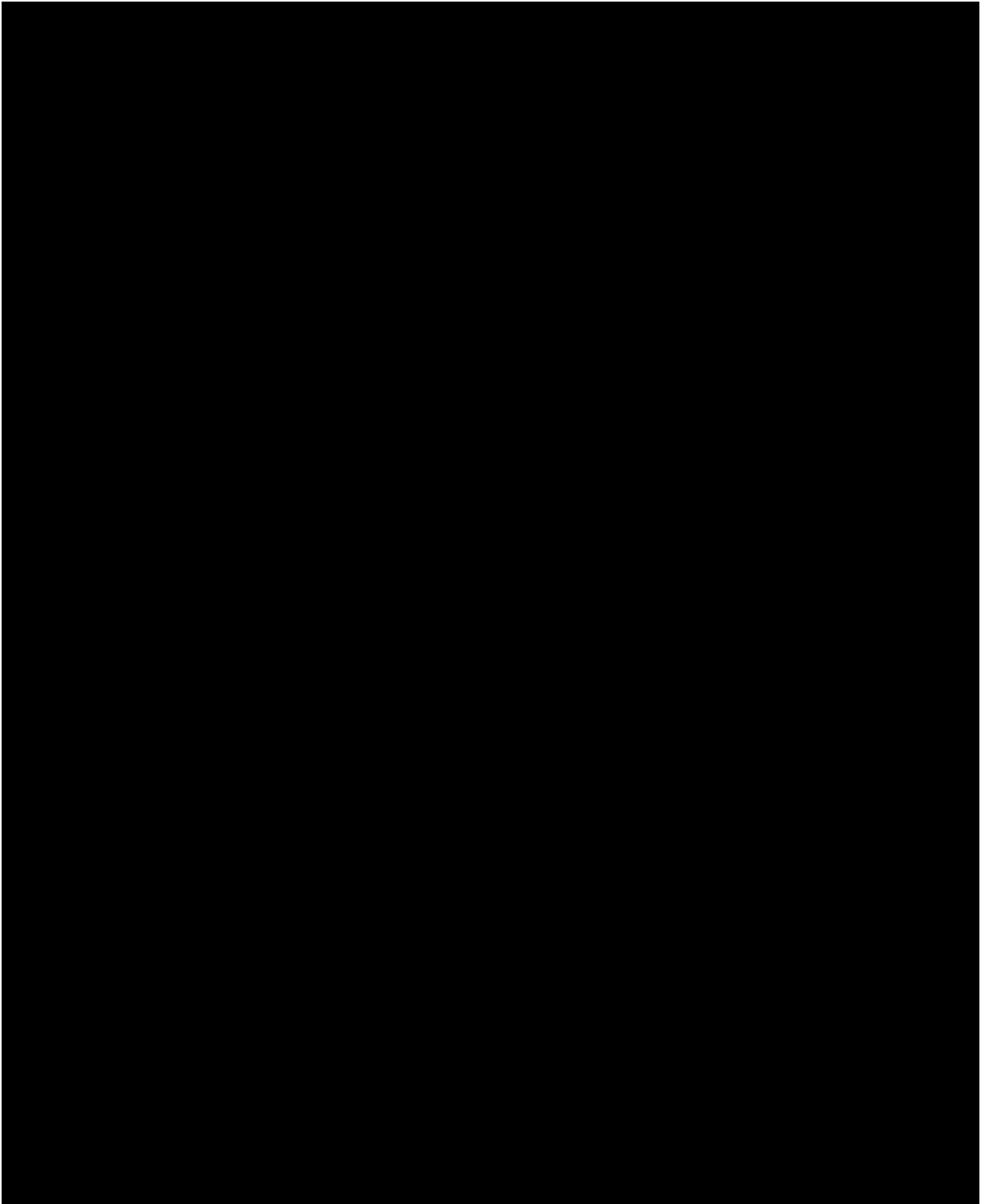


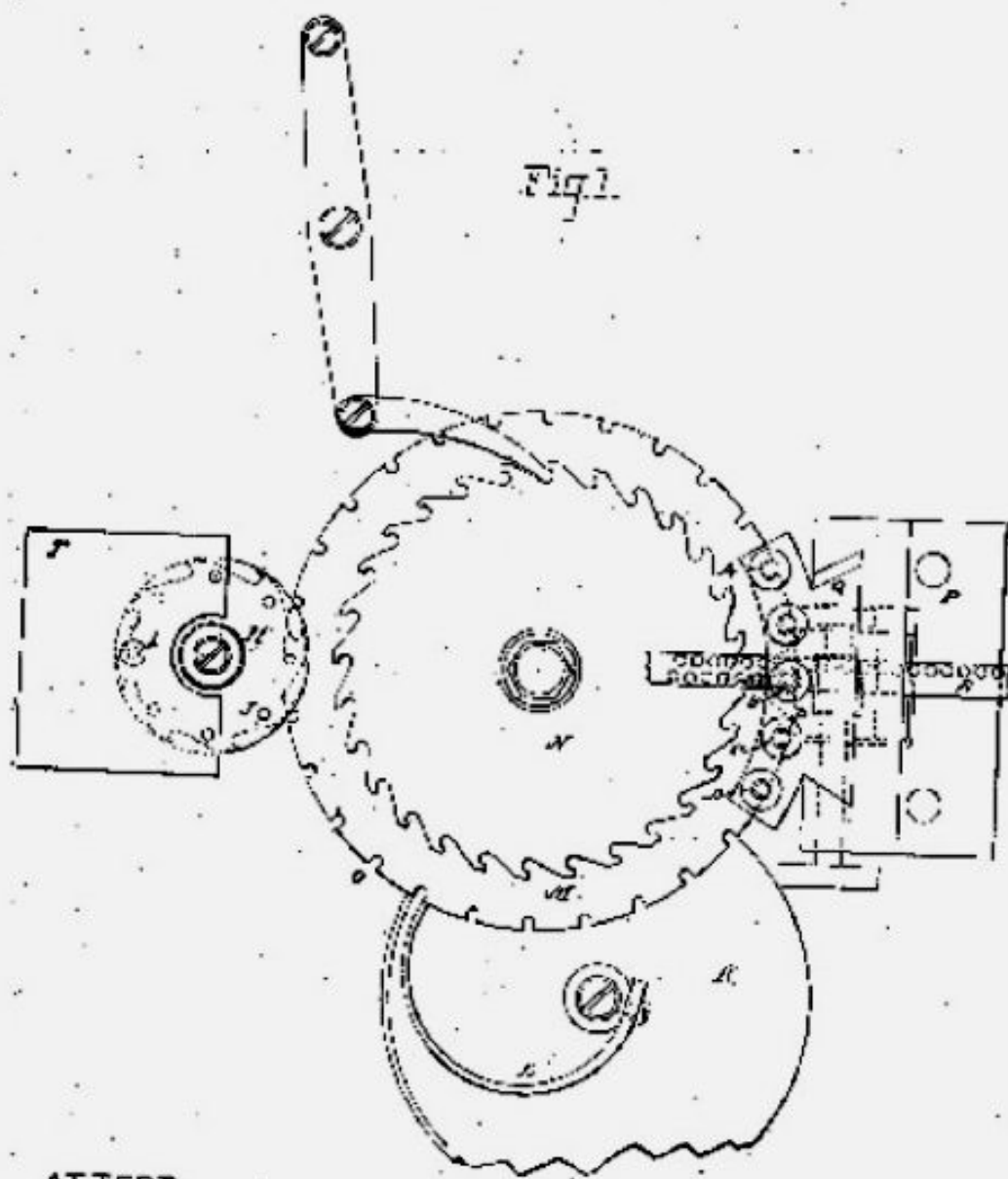
Mason's Cartridge Shop



Mason's Cartridge Shop







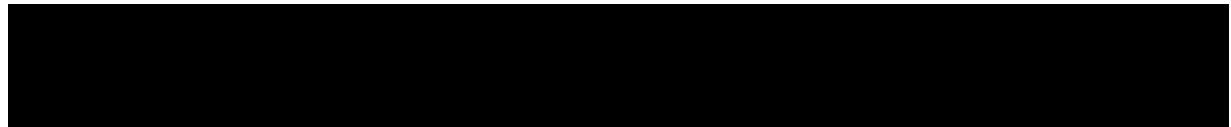
ATTEST.

Julian A. Kunkle
L. Baxter

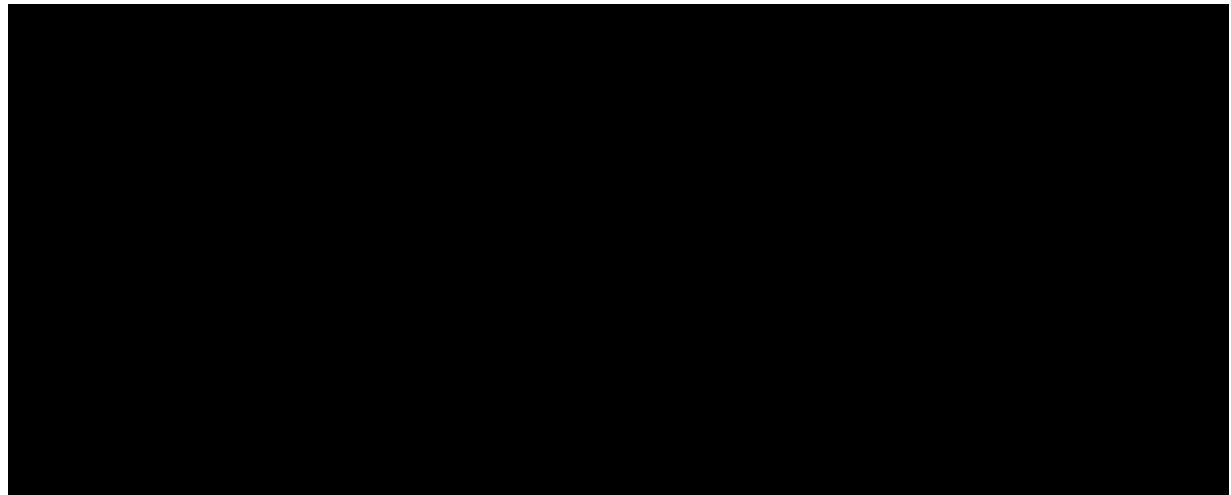
INVENTOR:

Henry W. Mason
By
Charles H. Jones

“August 1866- Nelson Kingsbury is the owner, and George Capron is the agent of the Mill Brook Woolen Company. The mill is enlarging and adding a new broad loom. It makes well-finished silk mixtures upon an indigo base and can turn out over 500 yards per day and expect to increase capacity to 800 yards. The water wheel is assisted by a forty horsepower steam engine. Soon after this report the boiler explodes causing \$15,000 damage and kills one.” In August 1868 the Mill Brook Woolen Company is formed to operate the site. It issued \$75,000 worth of stock to share holders W. Huntington (2400 shares) and A. Jilson, G. Capron and D. Lathrop with 200 shares each. The stated purpose of the company is to make cotton, woolen and silk goods. (12, 18)



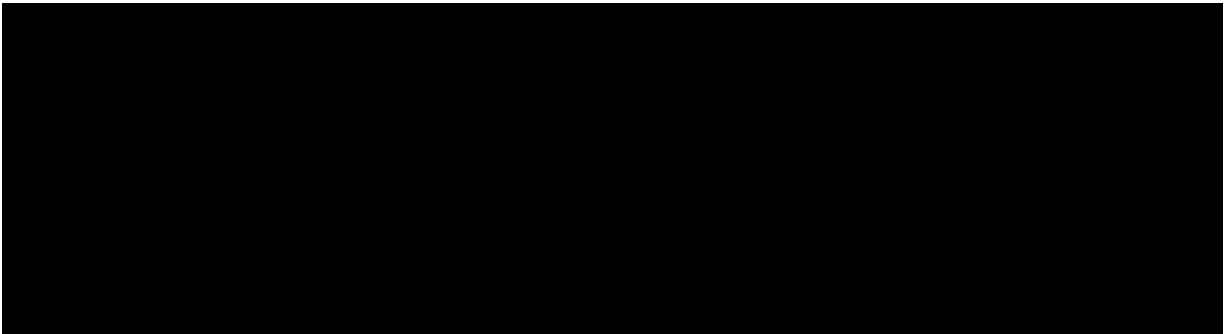
The Mill Brook Woolen Company (aka The Washington Mill)



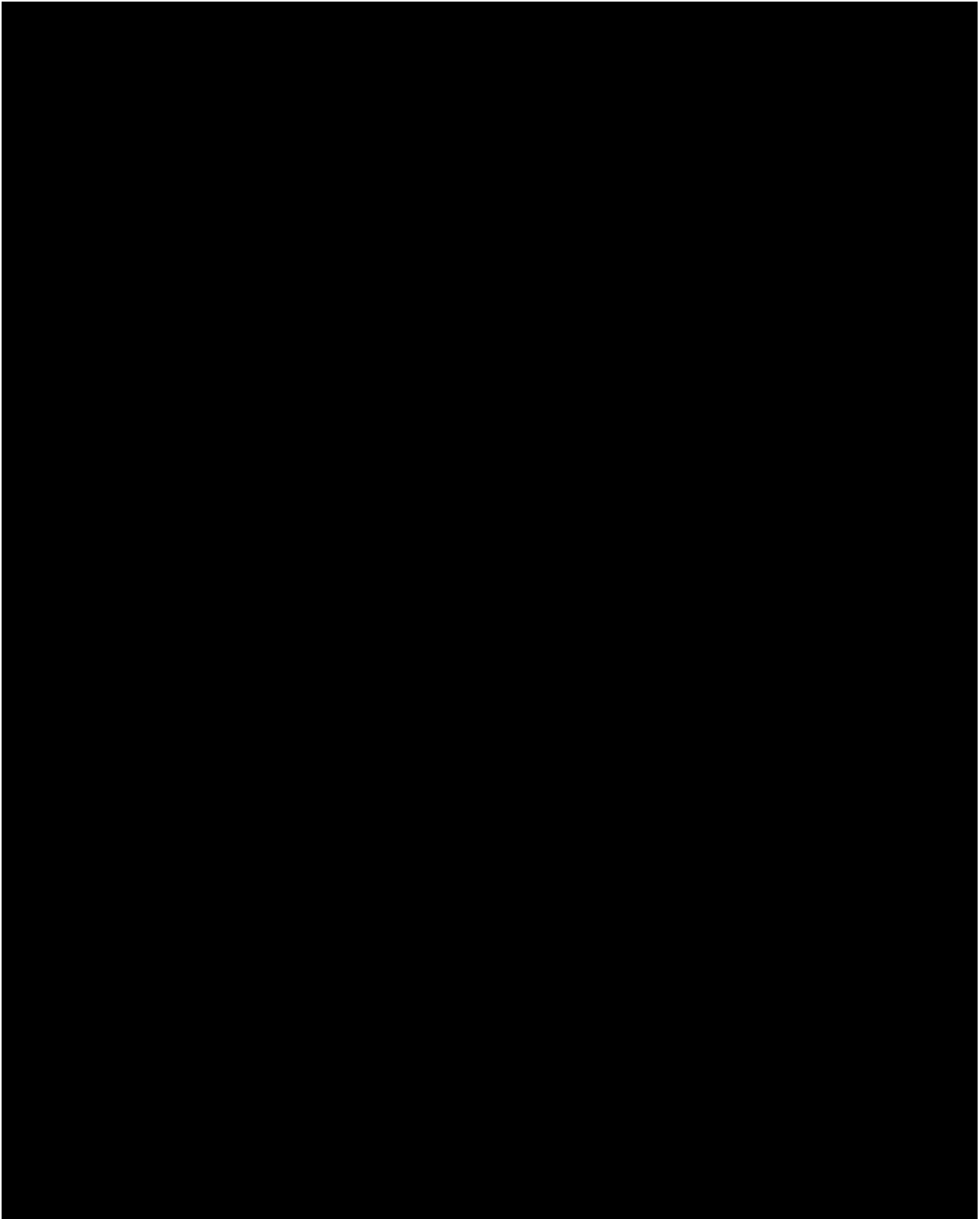
The Mill Brook Woolen Company (aka The Washington Mill)



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Farming Declines



Farming practices employed by the settlers overworked the land to the point of exhaustion. The practice of rotating crops, planting cover crops and idling the soil were not known or commonly employed until the 1900's. An

1850 Census noted 214 farms in town encompassing nearly 16,000 acres of useable land. (~70% of the total land in town). The farms held horses, cows, oxen, sheep, and swine and grew potatoes, corn, rye, oats, buckwheat and clover. By 1870 farm land was decreasing from its peak and not able to feed an increasing population. Farm families exited the state for northern New England and New York as many new mills were being developed. Immigrants from Europe and Canada filled the need for labor to work the mills.

In September 1862, the War Committee reported that “forty-four men have enlisted from Coventry making three more than enough to fill the quota”, and in January of 1864 a record is made of the successful efforts of the war committee in procuring men to enlist to fill the quota of the town under a proclamation by the president calling for 300,000 men so that a draft will not be necessary. The Civil War brought a tax on personal income for the first time, with rates ranging from three percent for net incomes of \$600 to \$10,000 to five percent thereafter. This was a historic step in the development of the American federal tax system, but it was phased out by 1872. From then until 1913 the major support of the government came from import duties and excise taxes. Collection of these taxes was entrusted to the Bureau of Internal Revenue, which had been established in 1862. The personal income tax in its present form was first levied by the federal government in 1913. The rate was one percent on taxable net income above \$3,000 (\$4,000 for married couples), less deductions and exemptions. It rose gently to a top rate of seven percent on incomes above \$500,000. The law was class legislation and deliberately so.

The Willimantic Journal reported in July of 1863 that Anson Grover of South Coventry (more particularly South Street near Judd Road), a member of the 12th Connecticut Volunteers, had come home on short furlough on account of the death of his wife. He traveled from the battle of Port Hudson, just north of Baton Rouge, Louisiana on the Mississippi River. Port Hudson was the site of the longest siege in American History (48 days) and resulted in the death of thousands of soldiers. Mr. Grover reported that no one from Willimantic or Coventry had been killed in that battle.



Coventry and the Civil War



Coventry and the Civil War



Connecticut was known as the Revolutionary War's Provision State; the same could be said for "The War of Rebellion." The firearms factory where Samuel Colt mass produced a weapon capable of firing without reloading, altering the course of history, as some historians have alleged was, after all, located in Hartford. Colt wasn't the only Connecticut Yankee producing firearms. Other manufactories included the Whitney and Winchester companies of New Haven and the Savage and Alsop factories of Middletown. Some even made their own firearms innovations, but none could match that of Samuel Colt.

Fueled by Union demands, factories throughout Connecticut were ever changing and developing new products. The Collins Company in Collinsville switched from axe production to swords and bayonets, carriages to army wagons, and ornamental bronzes to artillery accessories such as canteens, brass buttons, uniforms, and cartridge belts. The appropriately named Hazard Powder Company of Enfield produced tons of gunpowder to be used in Connecticut-made firearms. The Hotchkiss Company of Norwalk and Salisbury Iron Works were casting cannons and making gunpowder. Crittendon & Tibbals of Coventry made millions of percussion caps (primarily for grenades), and metallic cartridges.

The shipbuilders of Mystic were constructing troop and cargo transports, including the U.S.S. Galena, the first seagoing ironclad steamer in the U.S. Navy; in fact, more steam vessels were built at Mystic between 1861 and 1865 than at any other New England port. Connecticut had many established industries that aided in production for the Civil War: rubber for ponchos, blankets, and boots, machine tools, hardware, leather for saddles and harnesses, sewing machines, and textiles. Nelson Kingsbury's mill made all-wool Navy flannel.

In all, 54,882 Connecticut men participated in the war: 5,065 died, 6,281 deserted, and 4,361 were wounded. Connecticut soldiers fought at such notorious battles as Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, and Cold Harbor.

The effort on the home front was equally valiant. Connecticut women were instrumental in the organization of aid societies, the Connecticut Soldier's Relief Association, and in hospitals. Wartime social life in every Connecticut town revolved around the lives of soldiers. Women, children, and those unable to fight in the war rolled bandages, knitted mittens, packed food, and made regimental flags.

Connecticut was also home to some of the Civil War's most influential individuals. After the 1852 publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe became an immediate celebrity in the North. Stowe family lore tells of Harriet's meeting with President Lincoln in 1862 when he greeted her with, "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war!" Stowe's literary friend and Hartford neighbor, Samuel Clemens (aka Mark Twain), oddly enough served with the Confederates for a mere two weeks in 1862. Twain joined a volunteer company of young enthusiasts who were not quite sure which side they meant to choose and broke up as soon as the war took on professional aspects.

Connecticut's role in the Civil War had a transformative effect on the state. Gideon Welles commented that the state had lost its mantra as "the land of steady habits." In 1865, Frederick Sheldo surmised, "This brisk little democratic state has turned its brains upon its machinery. Not a snug valley with a few drops of water at the bottom of it, but rattles with the manufacture of notions, great and small."



The Civil War 1861-1865



The Civil War 1861-1865



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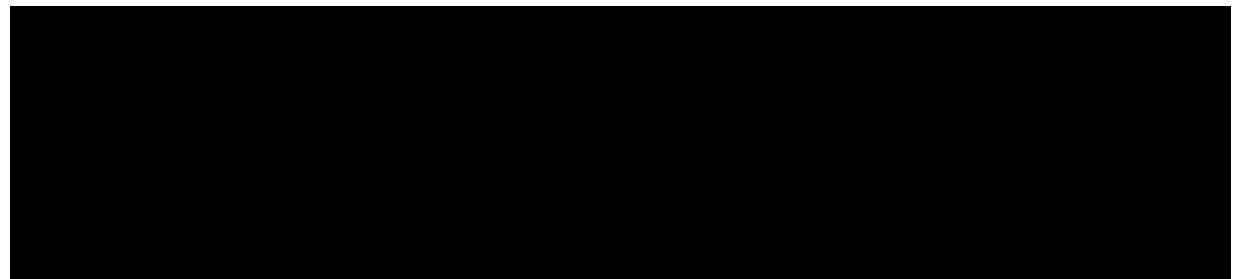


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In December of 1865 the owners of the mills on the Mill Brook concocted a scheme to provide more capacity to Lake Wangumbaug. They obtained the privileges to a pond (west of Old Tolland Turnpike) and planned to build a canal from this pond skirting the hill on which it sits toward Buena Vista Road and leading to the small brooklet that feeds the lake at what is now Lisicke Beach. This will come to be known as the Buena Vista canal which still can be seen in part today. It was first built, according to Ernie Wheeler, by Confederate prisoners at the direction of the mill owners on Mill Brook. Before they can draw water from the said pond, they obtained the rights of property owners on the Brigham Tavern Brook, one of which is Mr. Dimock, to use the pond water. Mr. Dimock and others agree (for a stipend) to let the Mill Brook mill owners dam this brook near its beginning and “turn the surplus water from the natural channel”. The surplus water is defined as water flowing during fall, winter and spring freshets. The channel will be left open to flow to the Willimantic River except during freshets. This arrangement apparently lasted to the early 1900’s when the mill activity on Mill Brook diminished significantly. Since 1970 the canal has been damaged three times by explosions, once by an individual who wished to divert water to his trout pond. It was repaired in 1982 by the Summer Youth Program, but is now in disrepair. (1, 12)



The Buena Vista Canal

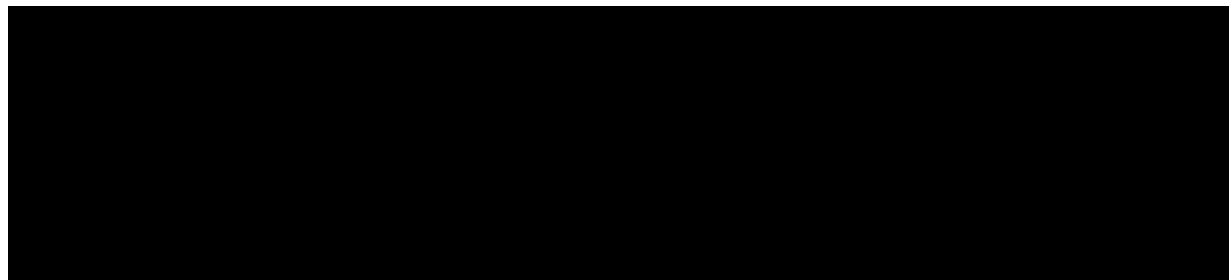


The Buena Vista Canal

In 1865 the town voted to pay the state \$351 for the education of soldiers children. In 1872 mention is found of "school visitors" in Coventry. Parents and guardians were notified that two or three schools were found "deficient in discipline, advance of studies..." and they were asked to cooperate with teachers in "securing regular attendance". The town reported considerable repairs on the schools in districts #5 and #10, and soon to be done on #7". Schools #1 and #3 were noted as "inadequate". Mention is also made of paying eighteen dollars to Tolland for "share in Tolland district school" and of the west district school being "united with Bolton for purposes summer".
(8)

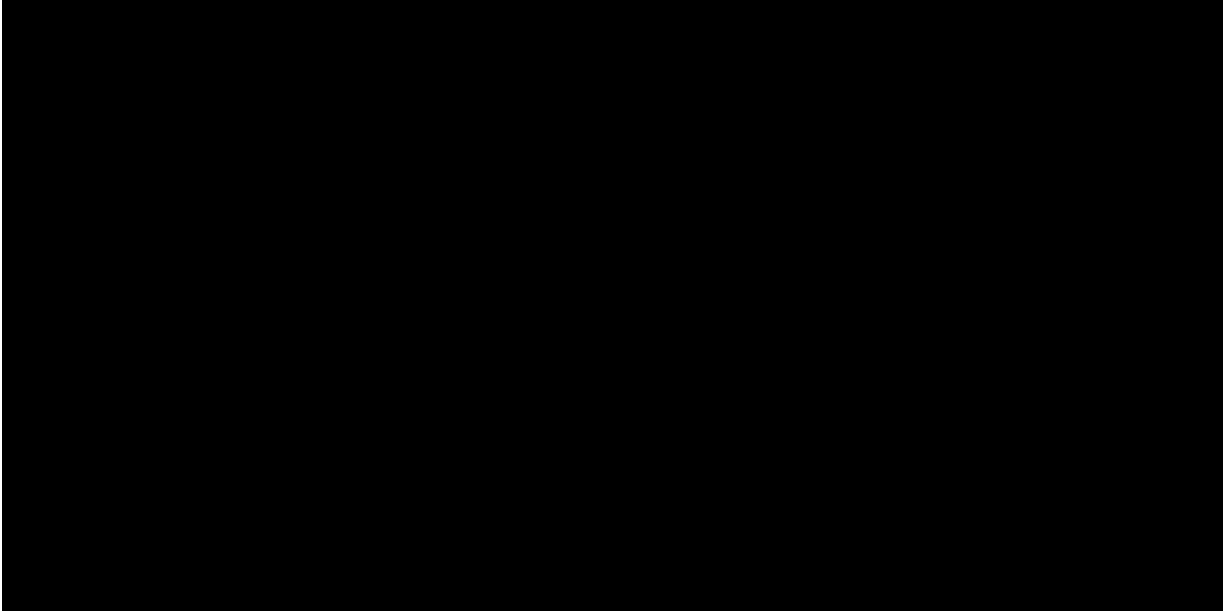


Schools (1865-1872)

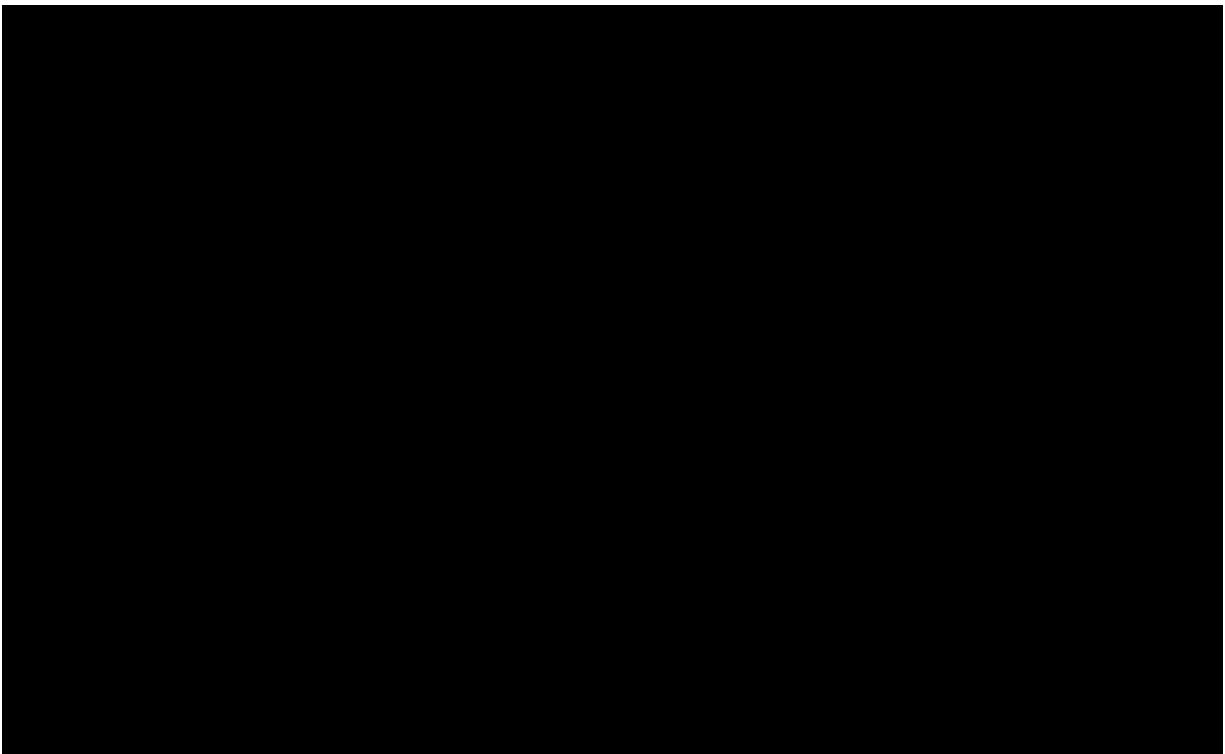


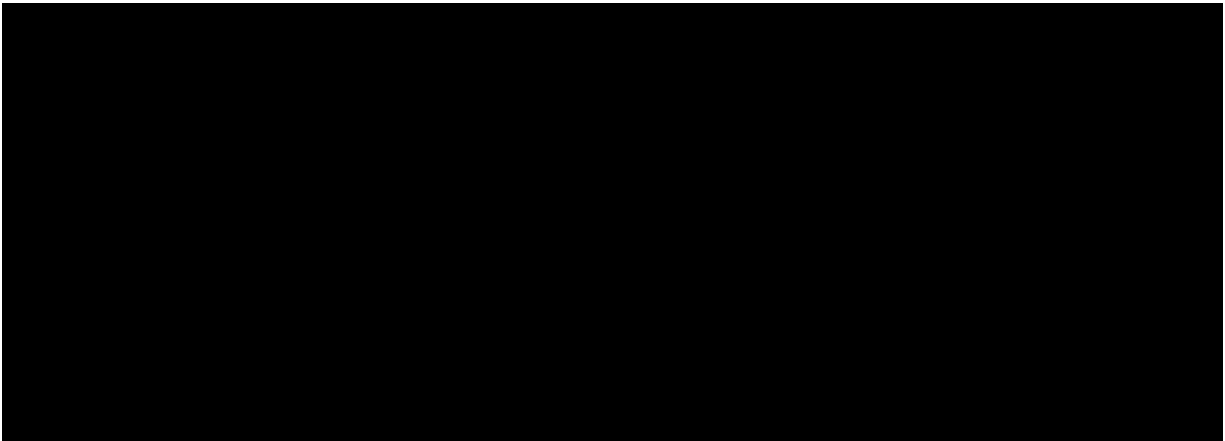
Schools (1865-1872)





The Grant Hill School- 1865





Coventry Public Schools

Presented by:

Miss Jenna Bohr, Miss Sydney Brierley,

&

Miss Madison Murphy



Coventry 300:

History of Coventry Schools



Coventry 300: History of Coventry Schools



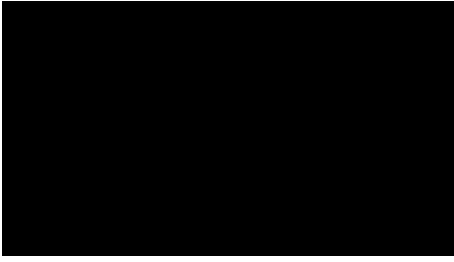
Coventry Public Schools

Presented by:

Miss Jenna Bohr, Miss Sydney Brierley,

&

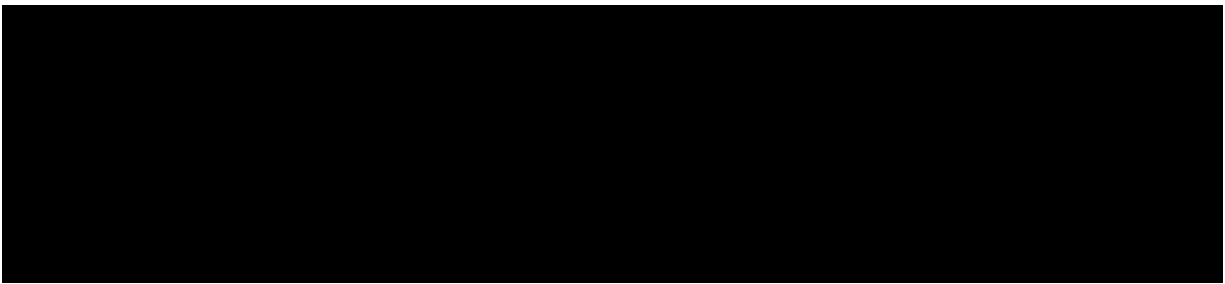
Miss Madison Murphy



In 1868 there were ten school districts in Coventry. I- The Center School on today's Monument Hill Road. II- The South Street School. III- District #3, Lower Main Street. IV- District #4 on today's Ripley Hill Road. V- The Flanders School on today's Flanders River Road. VI- The Pond Hill School on Main and North River Road. VII- The Silver Street School. VIII- The Brick School on today's Merrow Road. IX- The Grant Hill School on today's North School Street. X- The Red School on today's Cedar Swamp Road.

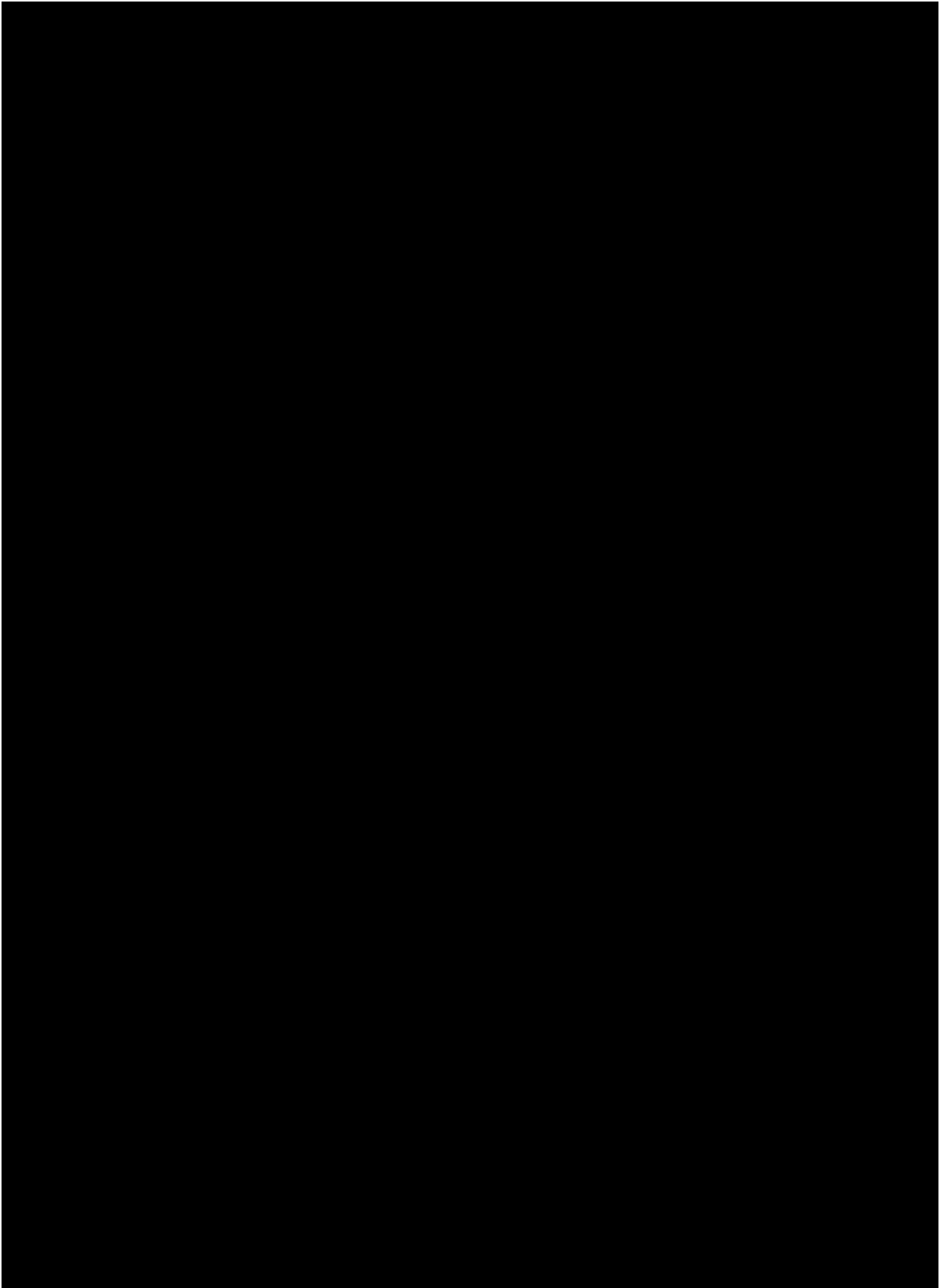


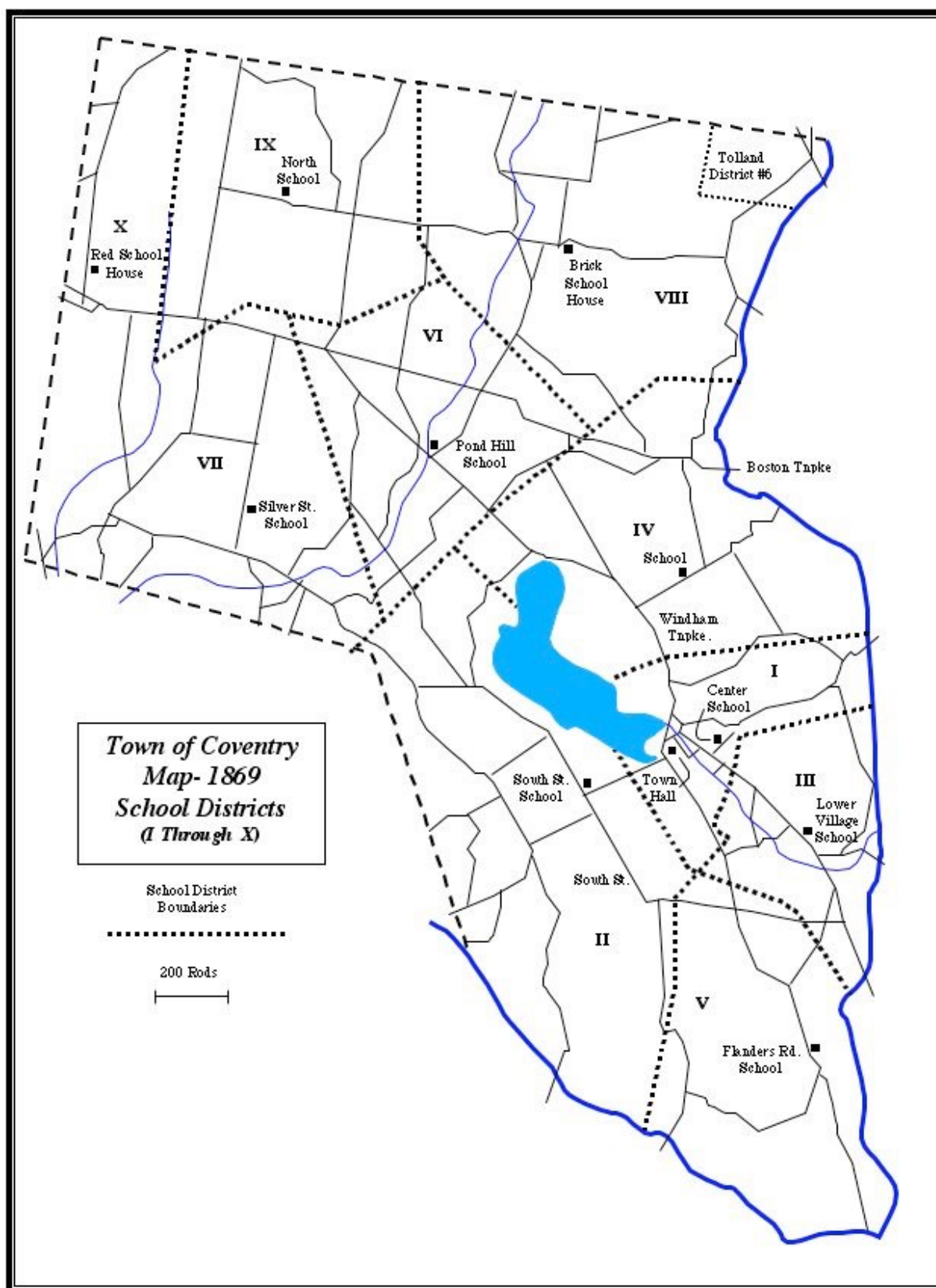
1868 School Districts



1868 School Districts

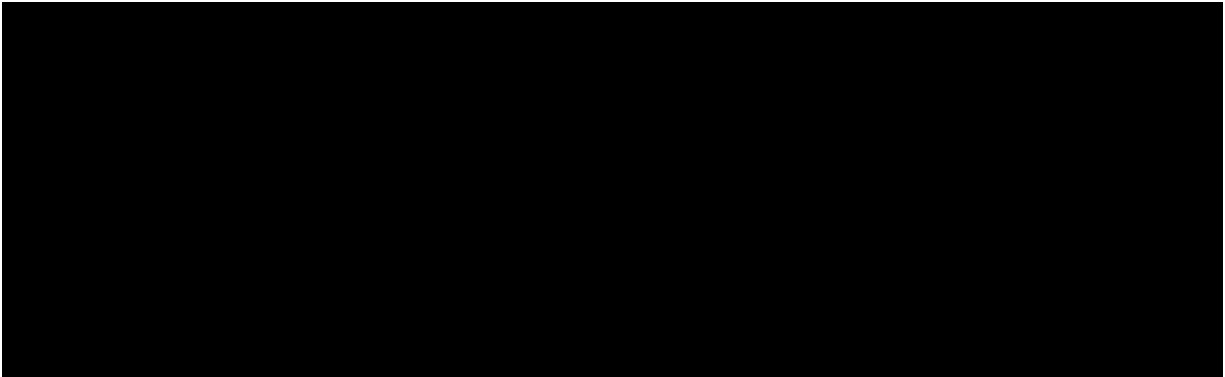






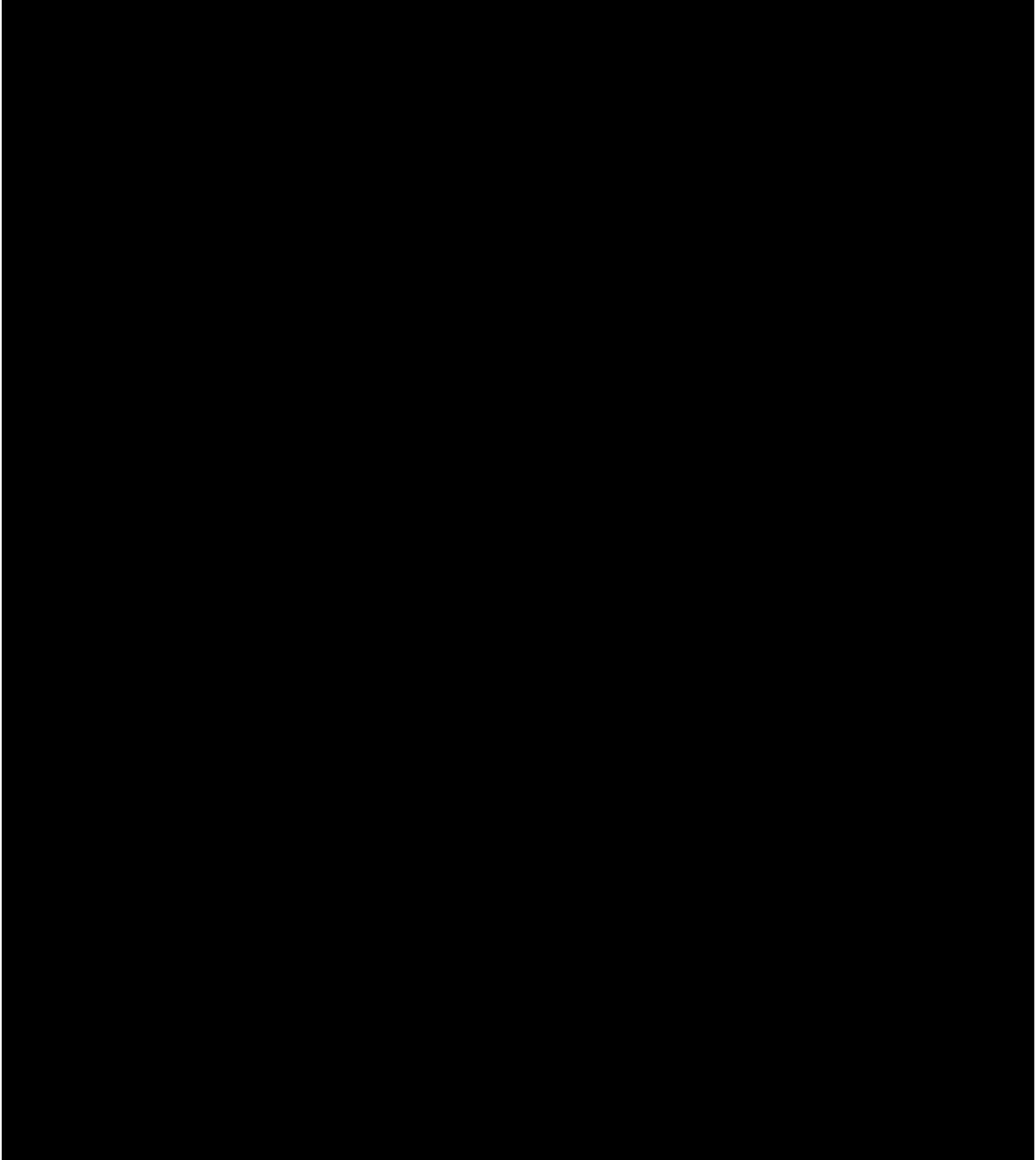


Ross' Mill on the Willimantic River



Ross' Mill on the Willimantic River





At the point where Stonehouse Road intersects the Willimantic River stood mills on both the Coventry and Mansfield side. On the Coventry side, in May of 1867, John L. Ross of Providence, Rhode Island leased, for 999 years from Nathan White, the privilege of erecting a dam for mills to be used for “sawing, planing, and grinding”. An 1869 map shows J.L. Ross’ saw mill here. The 1870 Federal Census lists J.L. Ross owning a saw mill

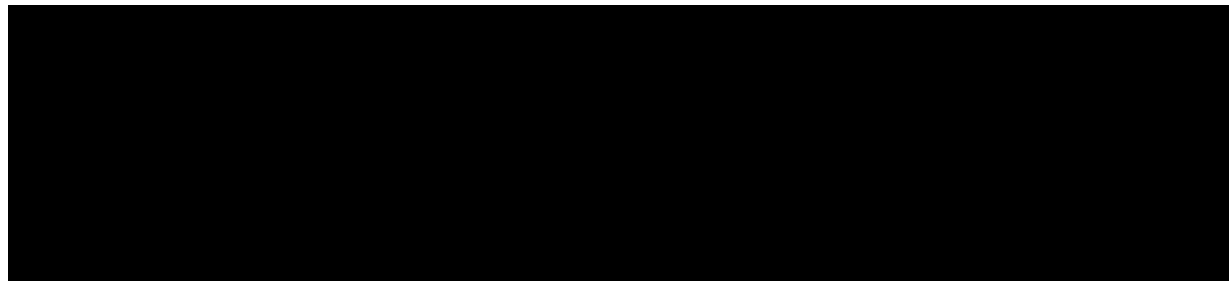
with \$1,500 capitalization, using thirty horsepower for a circular saw and shingle making and planing, having twelve employees and making 157,000 shingles and 80,000 feet of lumber. Also on the same water wheel of thirty horsepower, a grist mill is listed with \$300 capitalization processing 1,000 bushels of grain that year. Total value of the yearly output was \$9,400.

The Catholics gathered first in private houses for worship in 1859. Father McCabe said the first mass in Jeremiah Crowley's house near the railroad station. (In 1912 the house was occupied by Mr. Wright who carried mail between the post office and the trains.) The old Methodist church on Lake Street was purchased and used by the Catholics beginning in 1863 and continuing for about fourteen years. (Orra Parker Phelps in her book (21) says after the original Methodist church was abandoned, it stood unused for a while and then the Catholics bought it.)

On Good Friday, 1877 ground was broken for the foundations of St. Mary's Church on School Street. The cornerstone was laid on June 10, 1877, and the church was dedicated on November 29th of the same year. The first resident pastor was Rev. J. J. Quinn who began his career there in January of 1866. He resided in the old Methodist church building. At this time about 85 families were included. A parochial residence was built for Father Quinn. Land for a cemetery in the lower part of town was blessed in August of 1894. Mrs. Carr's grave was the first. The parish had two additional stations, one at Eagleville and one at Hop River. (4)



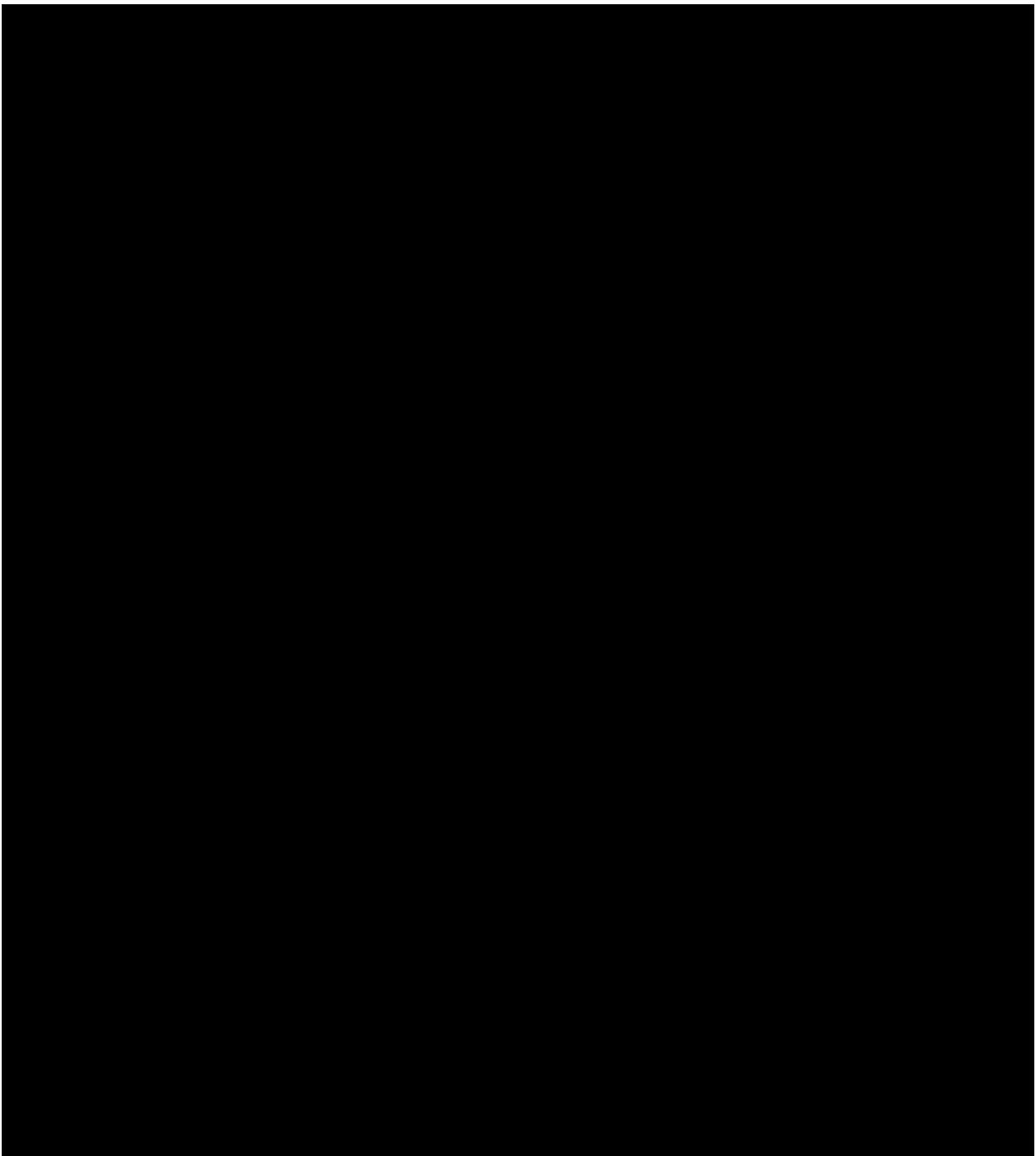
The Catholic Church

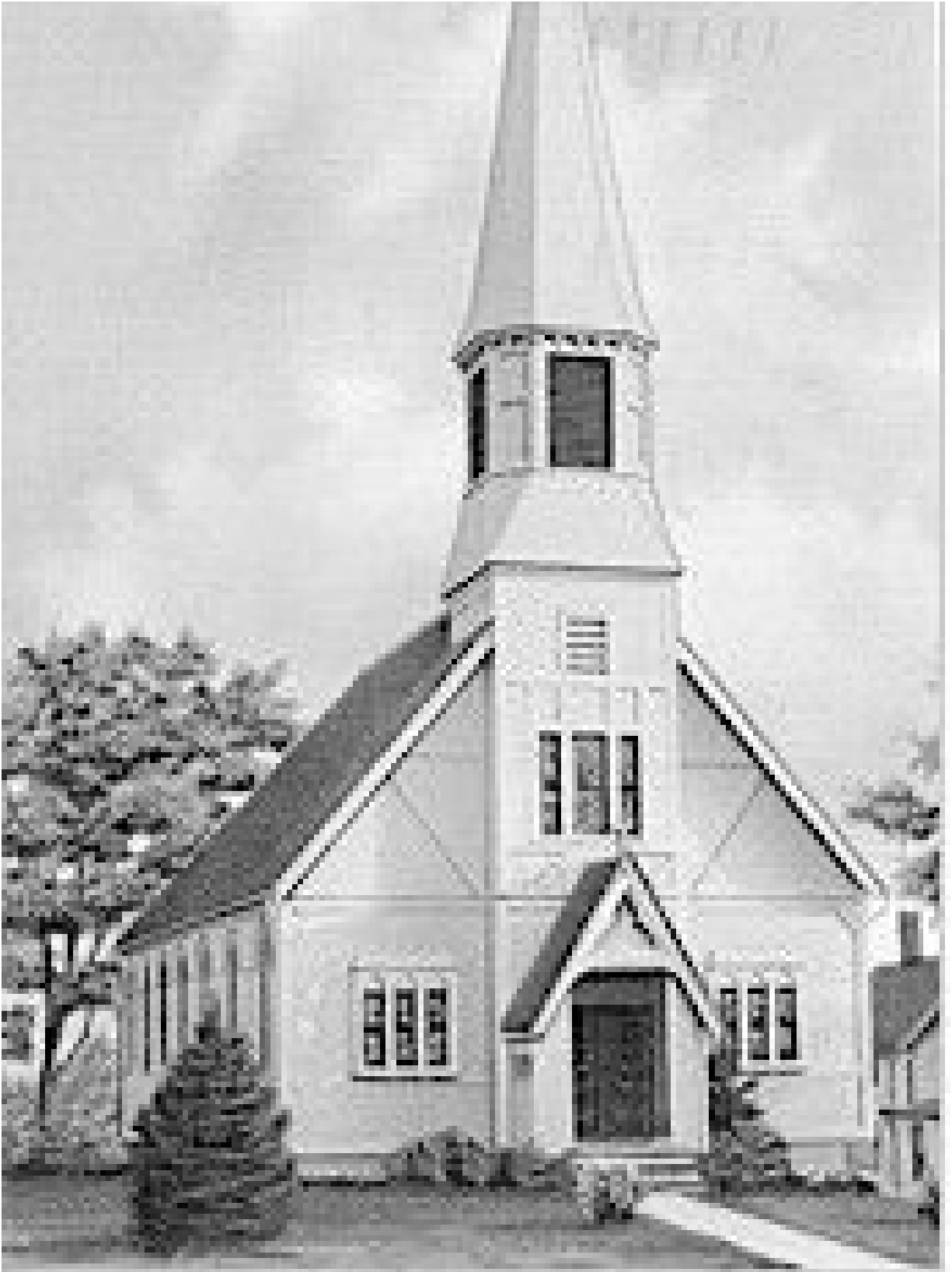


The Catholic Church

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St. Mary's Church -School Street





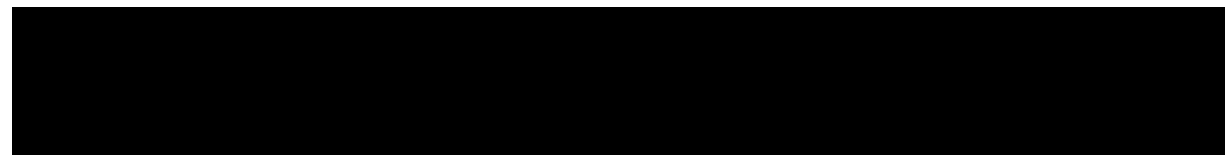
Mrs. Phelps account of living in Coventry in the 1860-70's provides a revealing glimpse of the times. One is struck by the effort required to sustain daily life. Nearly every waking hour was spent providing sustenance for the family. Some cloth was purchased, but woolen socks and mittens were made from the shearings of sheep. Nearly all the food consumed was grown and prepared on the farm. Mr. Turner came around in the spring and summer with his meat cart. Prices were six to twenty cents a cut. Tin utensils and iron tools were purchased. The traveling "tin man" provided utensils in exchange for rags. Horses and oxen were sometimes raised and sometimes bought. Horses were used for personal travel either on horseback or by carriage. Oxen pulled the heavier items like lumber and such. Most medicines were home-made, though "snake oil" salesmen were around. Excursions for the family consisted of weekly attendance at church or an occasional trip to Ripley Hill to visit a relative. She remembers a pond near Ripley Hill with a cranberry bog at one end. Yearly trips to the Tolland County Fair and a train ride to Philadelphia were events to remember. Despite the constant hard work, there is a joy to Ms. Phelps writing especially as a child where simple toys and the land provided most of the excitement.

Her little house in southeastern Coventry had no halls. The side door led directly to the kitchen/dining room. The front door led to the living room which was the gathering place especially on winter evenings where her father would read aloud or perhaps practice some simple arithmetic, and her mother would knit. The floor was covered with a woven and sewn carpet made from rags. Every worn garment was cut into strips and sewn together. Dyeing was done in large kettles using tea, copper and indigo to the right shade. A parlor separated the kitchen from the living room with an airtight stove. This family had an organ there. An alley from the living room to the kitchen was used as a pantry where, among other things hung huge slabs of beef were dried into home-cured dried beef. Breakfast consisted of homemade sausage, fried ham and potatoes. Sometimes creamed codfish with eggs. Oysters could be had in season for twenty-five cents a quart.

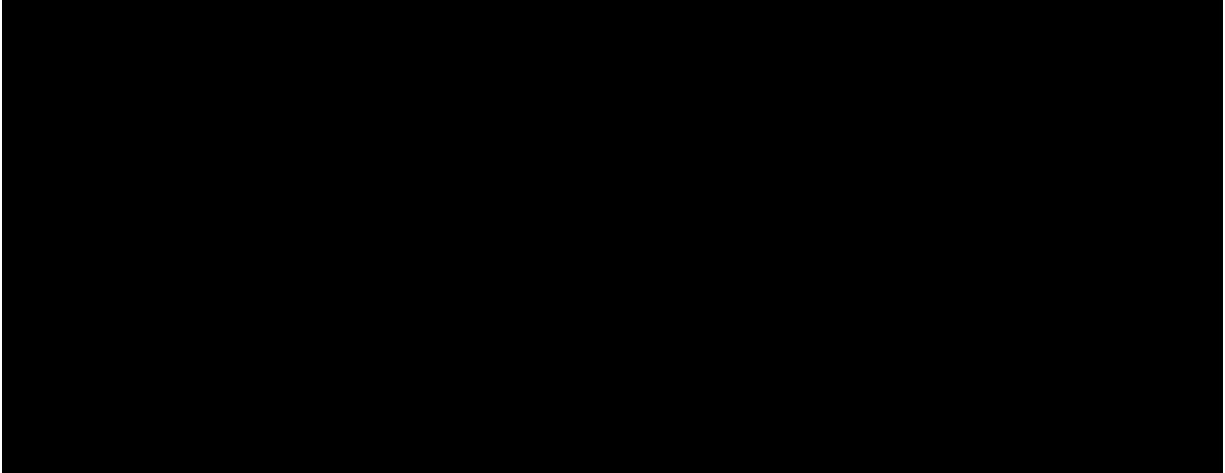
Coffee beans were purchased green and roasted and ground when needed. Buckwheat cakes were popular in the winter. In the cellar, which was very wet, were corned beef in barrels, five or six kinds of apples, potatoes, turnips, cabbage, cider, vinegar and past-bloom plants. The cellar was checked constantly in the winter for frost, and if noticed, lighted lanterns were left in the four corners.

Ms. Phelps attended school near the town green, and she describes the green as having half a dozen houses and the school. She also attended the Ripley Hill School and the Flanders school at times. The school buildings were very simple with a huge stove in the center able to take four-foot logs, a teachers desk near the door, and around three sides, a built-in bench with built in desks before them. She attended the Centennial festivities in Philadelphia. They drove to Willimantic, took a train to New London, then boarded a boat. They returned entirely by train. She fondly remembers Mr. Kingsbury's paper box shop because Mr. Kingsbury would let her rummage in the bin of waste paper and take all she wanted. She made numerous doll dresses and doll furniture from the scraps.

She recalled that her father had orders to get "underpinning" stones for some new building in the village. She says, "Up in Grandpa's Bear Swamp lot were big stones suitable for the job". Her father proceeded to "drill" holes in a line on the rock using a sledge hammer and drill. She held the drill and turned it slightly after each hammer blow. When the stones were cut, they were carted to the village by oxen. Her father also told her that he knew of a few Indians that were living in huts near Bunker Hill towards the Hop River when he was a boy. (21)



Family Life in 1869 (Orra Parker Phelps)



Family Life in 1869 (Orra Parker Phelps)



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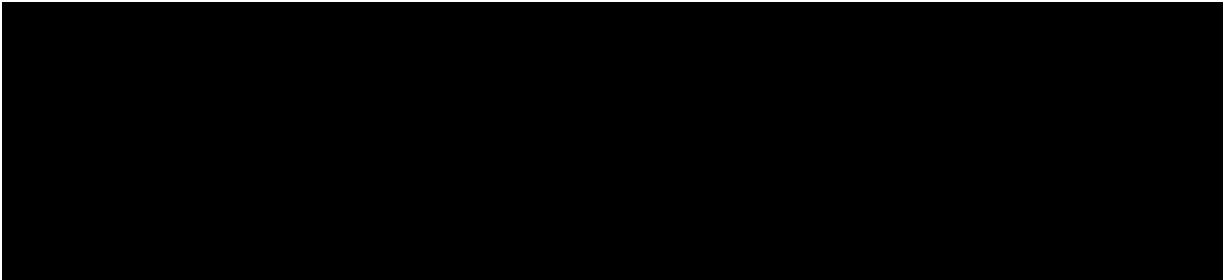
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A notable Connecticut person of the Civil War was Gideon Welles, born in Glastonbury and a popular public figure and editor of the Hartford Times. In 1826, he was elected to the Connecticut legislature. When the Democratic party began to support pro-slavery initiatives in the 1850s, Welles changed his affiliation to Republican and unsuccessfully campaigned for governor in 1856. That same year, he helped establish the Hartford Evening News to further the cause of the newly organized Republican party.

As a reward for his political contributions, Abraham Lincoln appointed Welles as Secretary of the Navy in 1861, where he served until 1869 under Lincoln and Johnson. He supported the Emancipation Proclamation as a war measure and ordered Navy commanders to give protection to runaway slaves. As the publisher of poignant articles and editorials, Welles has become an important resource for understanding the Civil War period and America's race relations. The Welles family, long time residents and business owners, of Coventry (Thomas Sr.- deceased & Thomas Jr.) are descendants of Gideon.

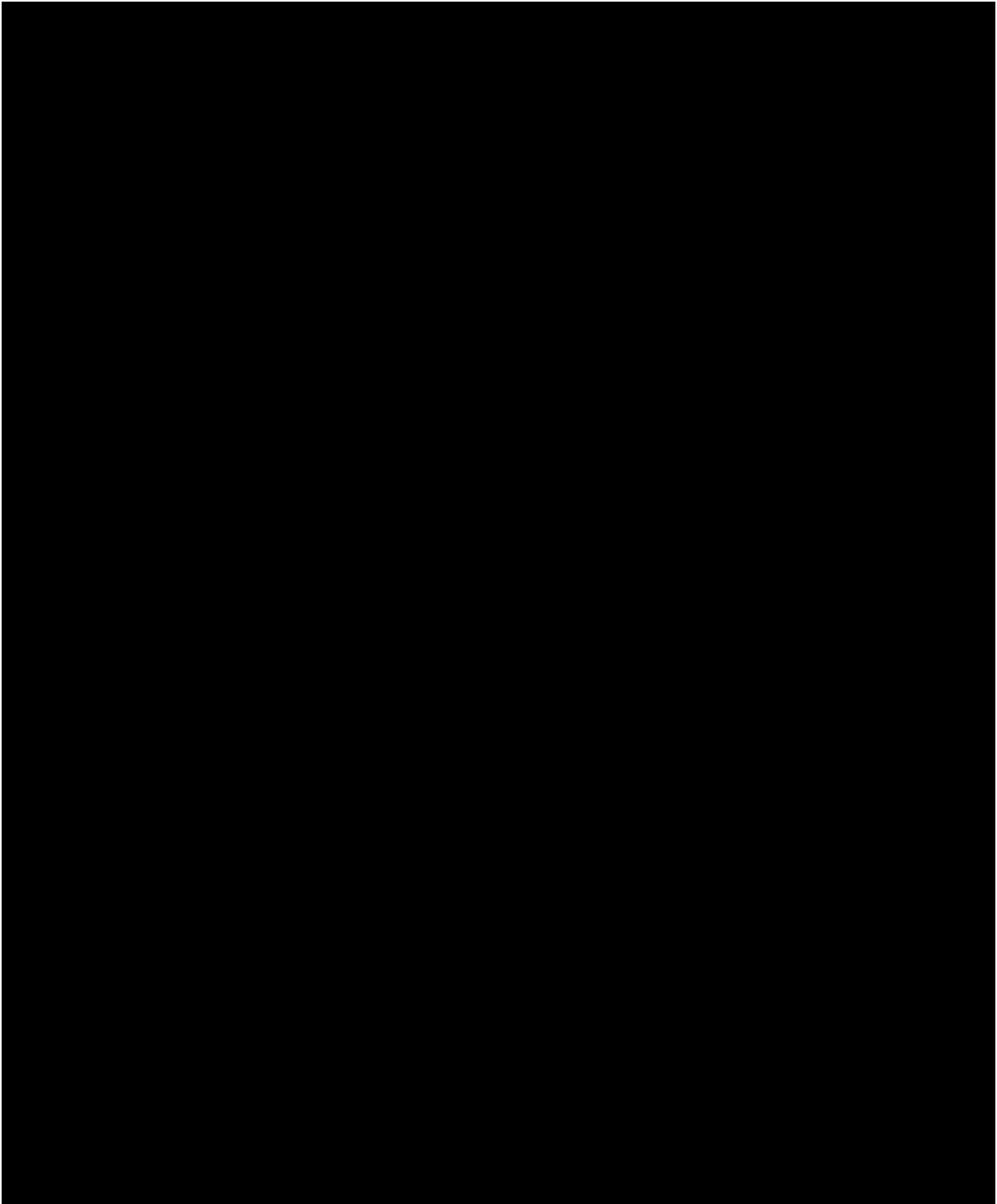


Gideon Welles (1802-1878)

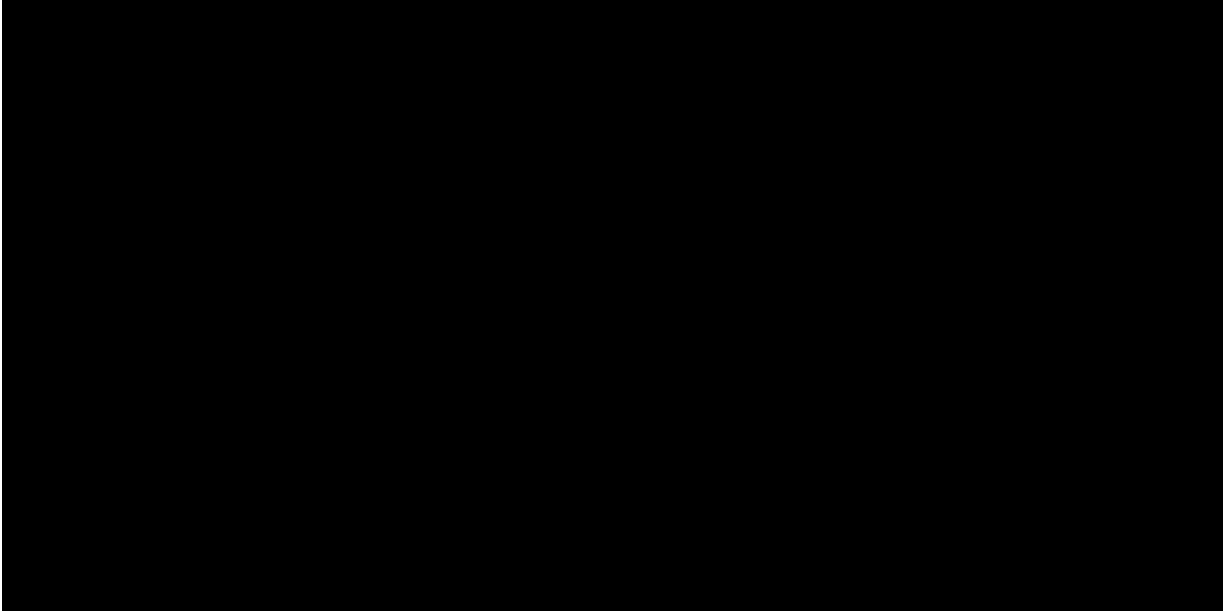


Gideon Welles (1802-1878)







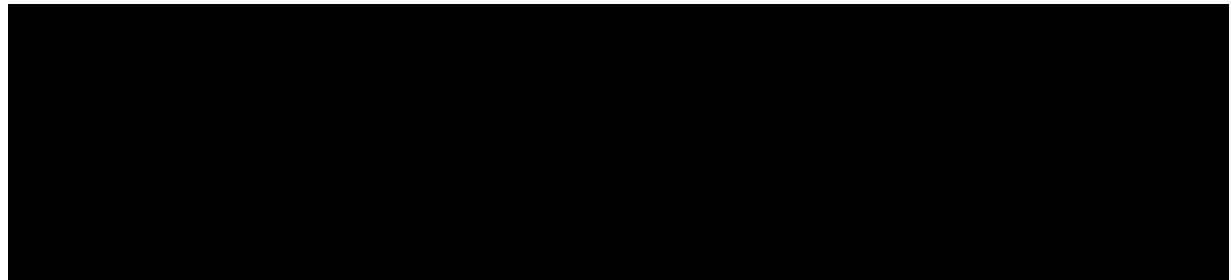


Gideon Welles

The 18th president, Ulysses Grant, was a direct descendant of Matthew Grant who came to Dorchester, Massachusetts from England in 1630 and settled in Windsor, Ct. Ulysses' great-great- grandfather, Noah Grant (1693-1727) was born in East Windsor and died in Tolland. His son Noah (1718-1756) was born in Tolland and served in the French and Indian War where, in 1756, he was declared missing in action and never accounted for. His widow and son Noah (1748-1819) moved to Coventry to live with relatives. This Noah (the 3rd) was a farmer and a cobbler and served in the Revolutionary War. His son, Jesse Root Grant (1794-1873), who moved to Pennsylvania and later to Ohio, was a tanner and a dealer in leather. And his son Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885) was born in Ohio and was president of the United States from 1869-1877.

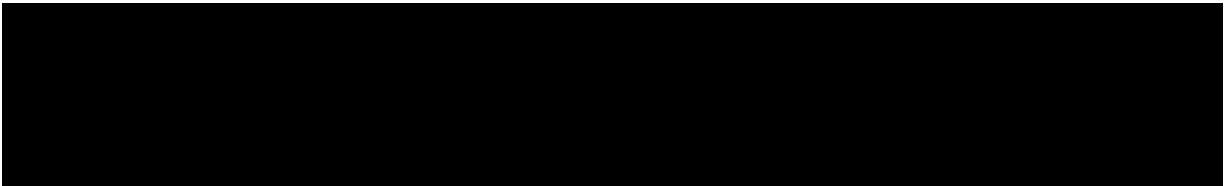


President Ulysses S. Grant

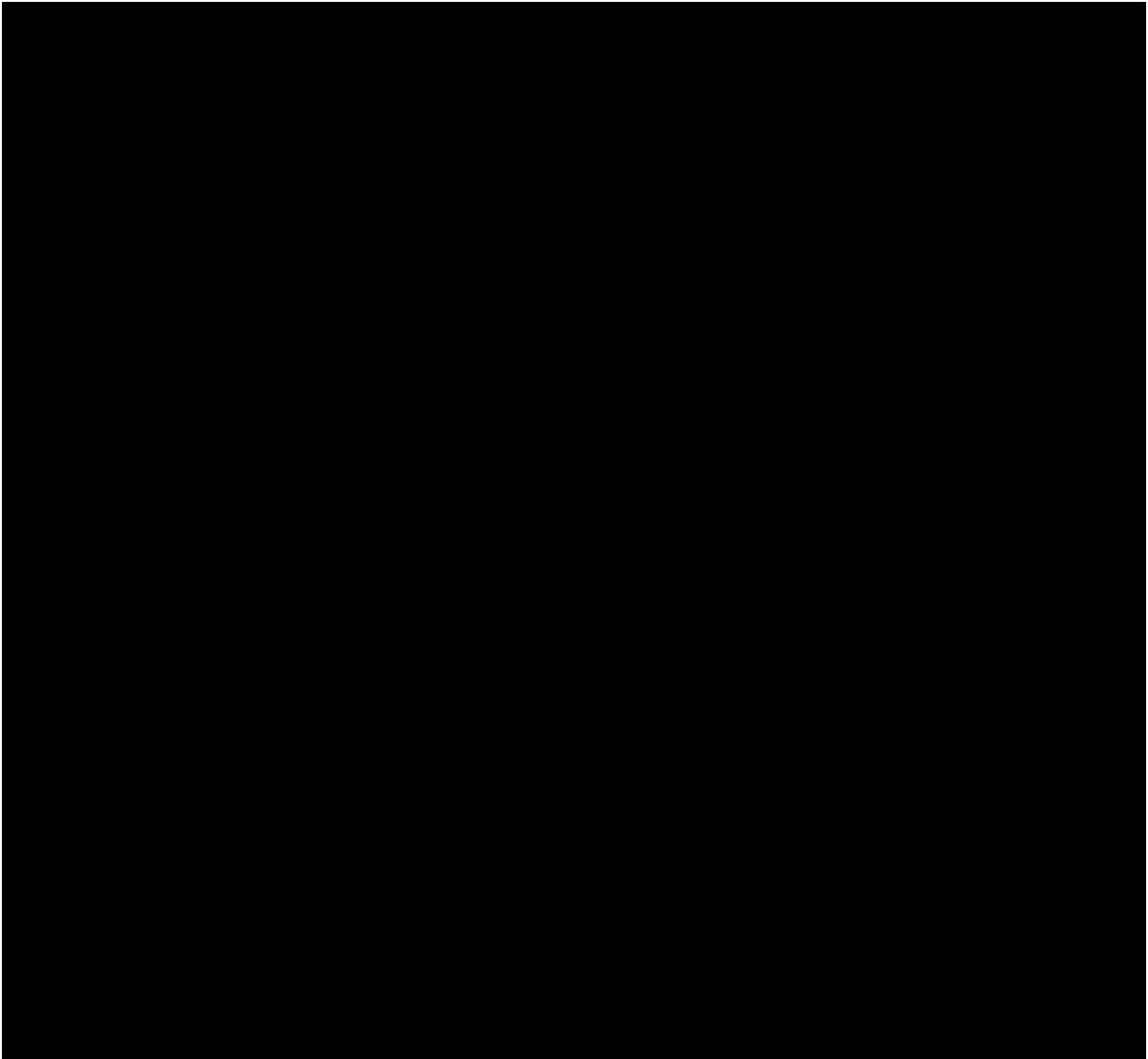


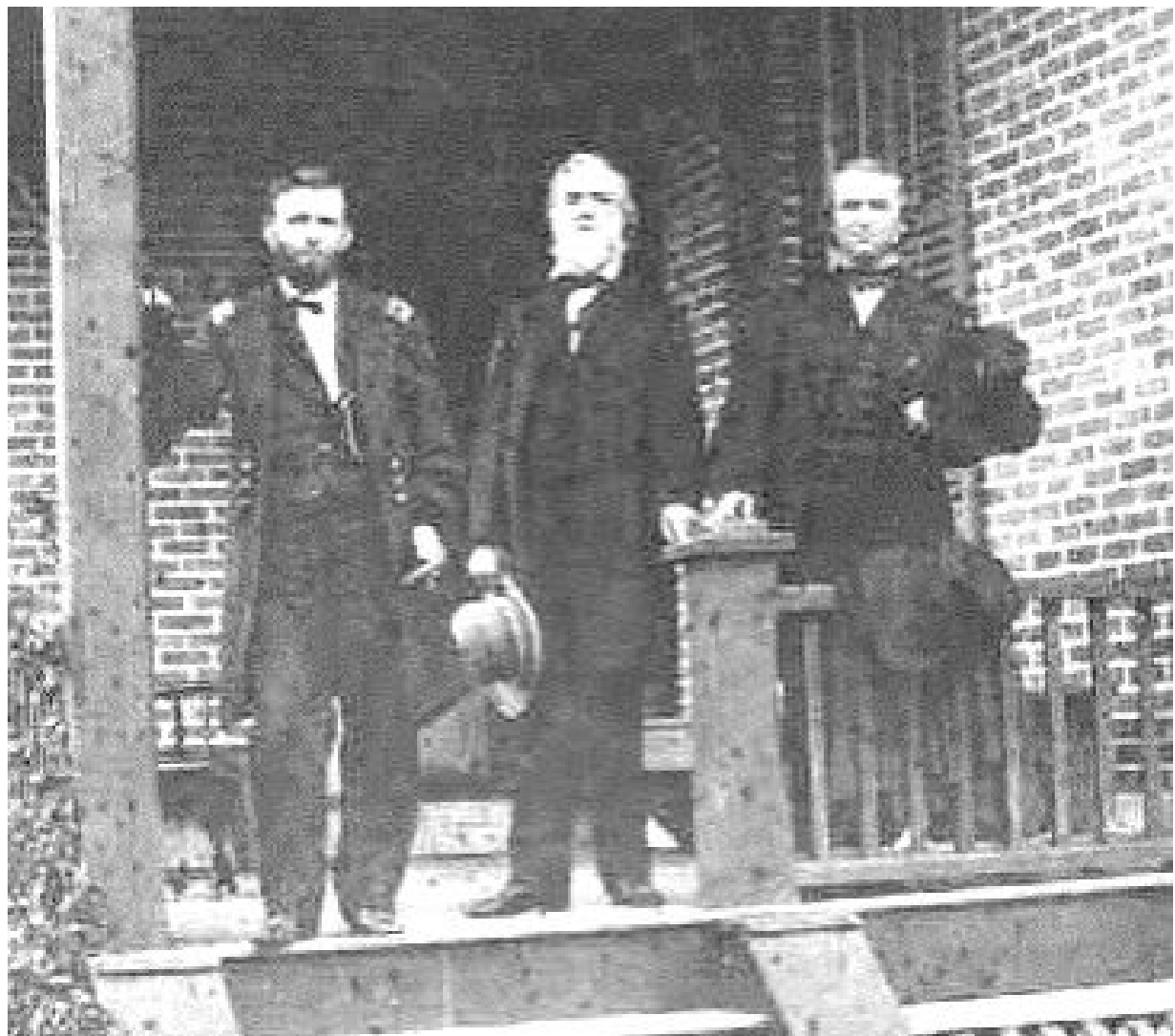
President Ulysses S. Grant

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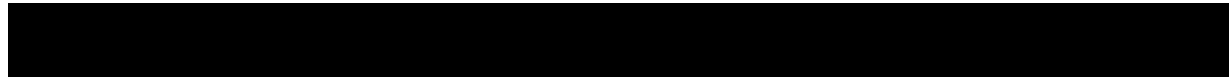
U.S Grant, Welles and President Andrew Johnson-August 1866



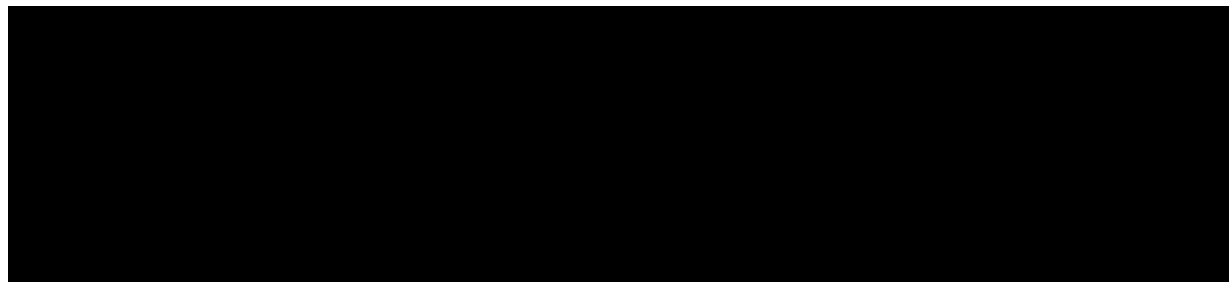


An 1869 map of Coventry shows a grist mill west of the Skungamaug River and a saw mill east of the river below the bridge on South Street. Harvey Wright's residence was west of the river, Harvey Kingsbury's residence was eastward on South Street, and the Loomis & Franklin residence was east of the river and north of the road. The 1870 Federal Census lists Loomis & Franklin making shoddy valued at \$49,000 and a saw mill producing \$12,000 worth of lumber both using forty-six horsepower and a grist mill using twenty horsepower. It is possible there were two water wheels here at this time as the census has two separate listings for the same site.

Harvey Kingsbury was a man of "frail health but a giant in mind, was born and reared in one of the oldest Coventry homes, now in the Andover confines, in 1794. He was well known through the state as teacher and soldier. As one of the incorporators of the Rockville Bank, he served for many years as a director of the institution. For forty years he served in the U. S. Army and, after his discharge, returned to his home town and conducted a prosperous farm.

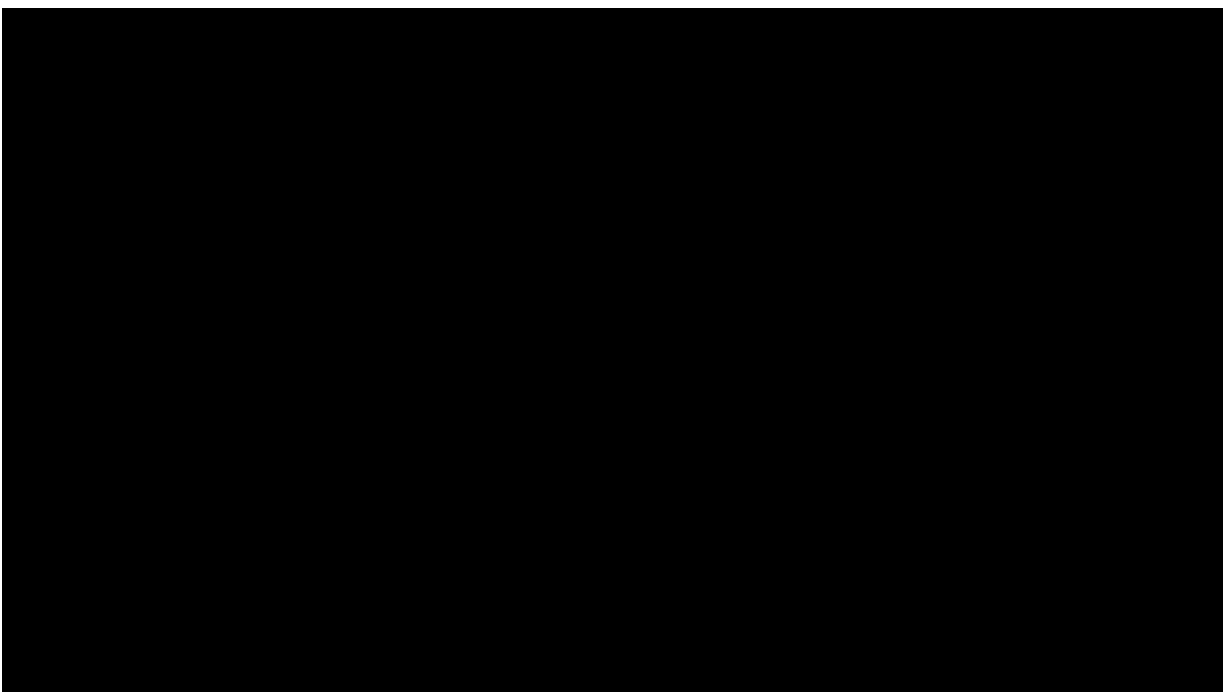


Wright's Mill

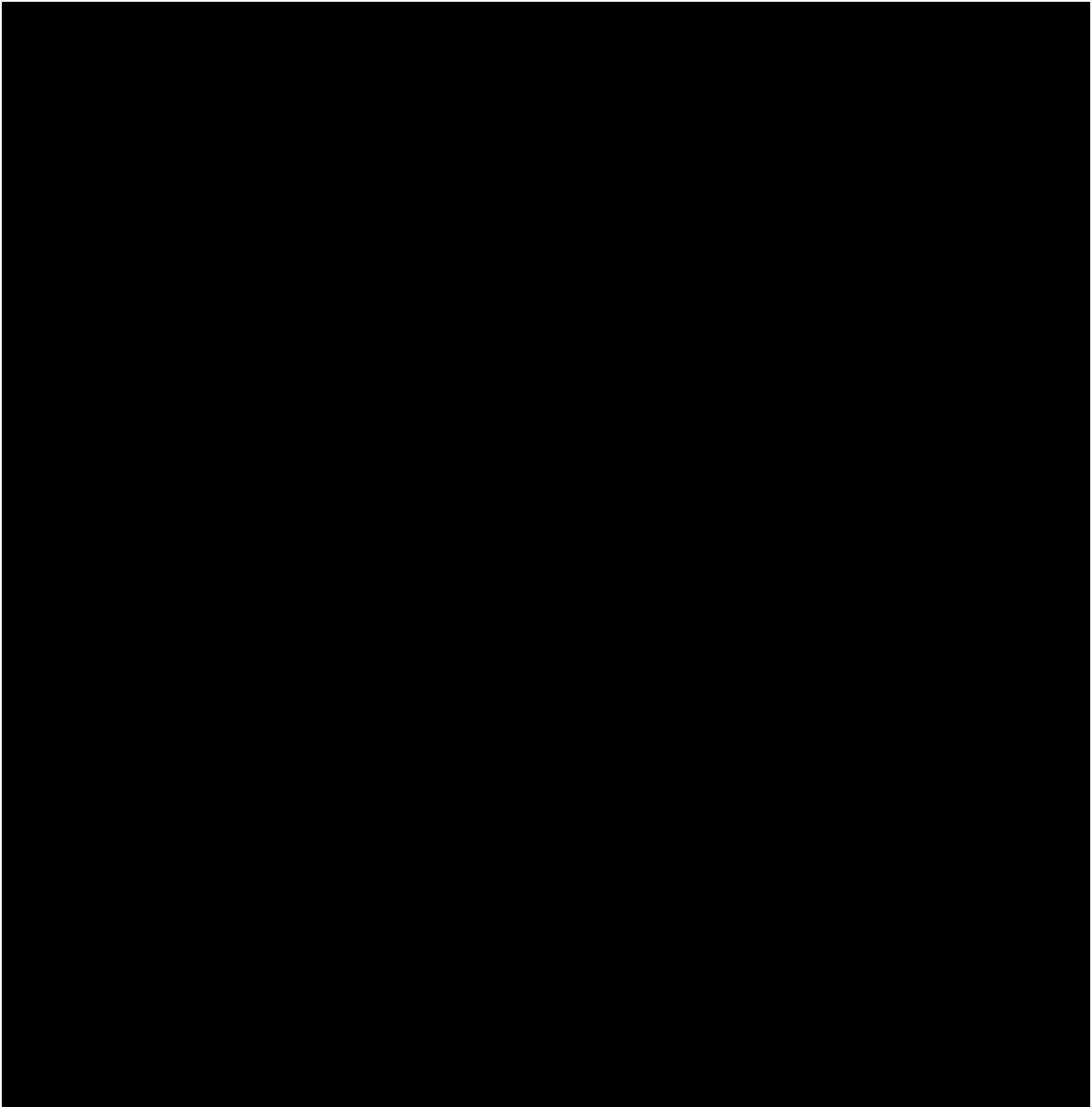


Wright's Mill

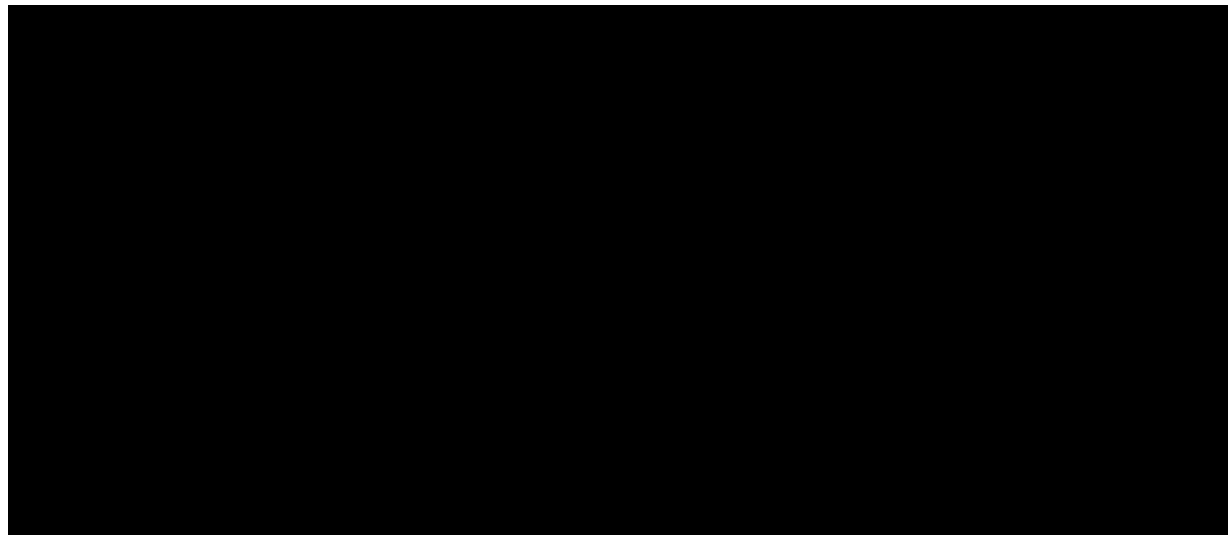
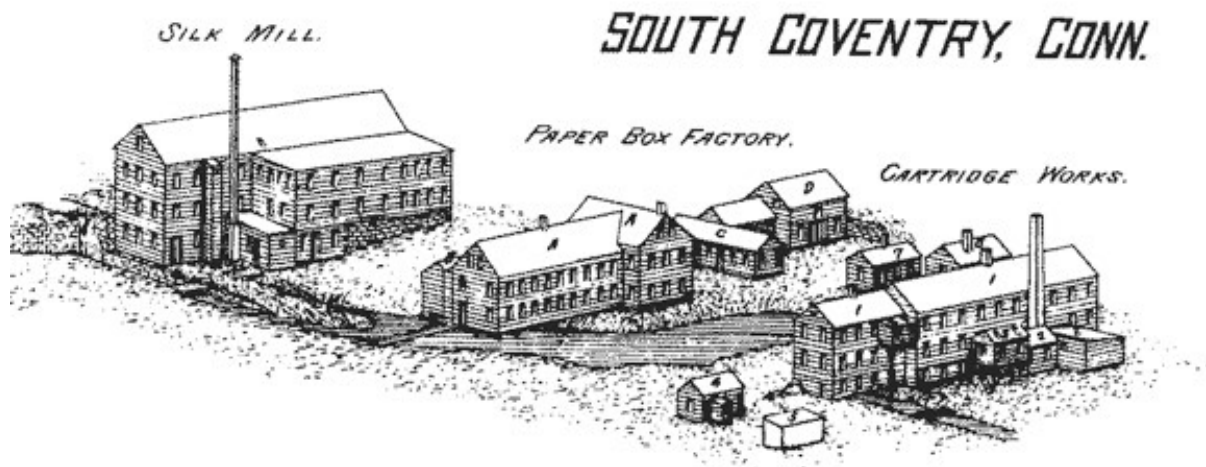
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Albert Bottum



Albert D. Bottum was born in Mansfield in 1848. He pursued agricultural activities until his twenty-third year when he entered the silk mills of C.L. Bottum and rose to superintendent. He came to Coventry and operated a silk mill on Mason Street from 1866 to 1889. He partnered with James Morgan. Mr. Morgan handled the finances while Mr. Bottum handled the mill and its products. Mr. Bottum eventually bought out Mr. Morgan. He married Sarah A. Macfarlane who succeeded him as mill owner after his death, becoming one of the first successful women mill owners in New England. The Bottums lived in a home on Wall Street adjacent to their mill.



The Mason Street Mills ca 1875

The Irish were Connecticut's largest immigrant contingent prior to the Civil War. They were discriminated against by the British and suffered six famines between 1800 and the great potato famine of 1845. Upon arriving in Connecticut, many farmed and many worked in the cities, particularly in Windham and Windham County. A number found their way to Coventry and settled in homesteads and worked in the mills on the Mill Brook. An inspection of the census for 1870 and 1890 showed few, if any, Irish names on the 1870 list, but a fair number on the 1890 census, particularly in South Coventry. Names like Flaherty, Kirkpatrick and O'Brien owned large farms and Mr. Thomas Flaherty was a partner in the Tracy mills for a time.

The underlying causes of French- Canadian emigration can be found in the unequal levels of industrial development, thus the standards of living, between Quebec and New England. Families living in hovels in Quebec were promised new mill housing in New England with decent jobs, and the first large scale migration happened between 1860 and 1890. The majority came to the northern four New England states, and by 1880, twenty-one percent of those states population was French-Canadian. In Connecticut, these folks did not gravitate to the big cities, but settled in much smaller towns such as Taftville and Plainfield. Taftville was home to the largest cotton mill in the country at one time, the Ponemah Mills, which built some 200 homes for their workers and charged \$1.00 per month rent in the late 1800's. Many immigrants settled in Windham, and a number lived and worked in Hop River Village and other places in Coventry



Irish and French-Canadian Immigration



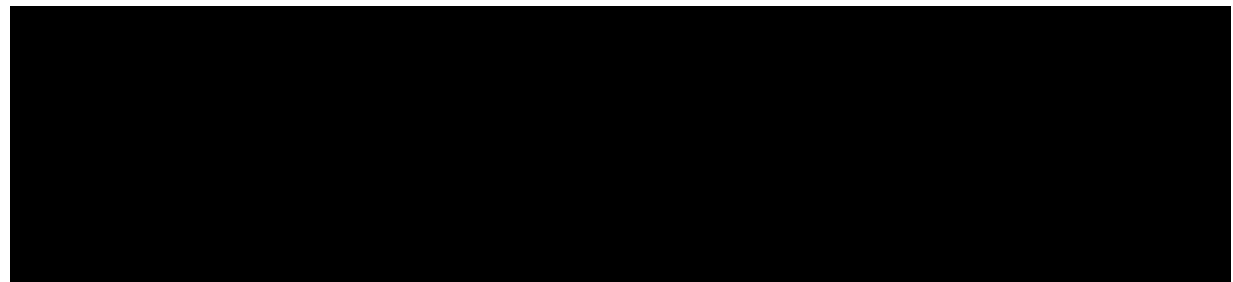
Irish and French-Canadian Immigration



About 1870, Samuel Hall, a carpenter and cabinet maker, bought the old original school house near the Green and moved it to the site adjacent to the Visitor's Center. He made a roomy stone cellar and secured the building to it. Sam built his cabinet making shop adjacent to the old school building also with a roomy cellar in 1893. Many of the fine Victorian style houses in the village were built by Mr. Hall. His own house at the top of Bradbury Lane and Prospect Street is a prime example. The old school house became the office of Dr. Henry Dean and then of Dr. Emory of South Street. Much later it became the insurance and real estate office of the Welles Agency, then a craft shop. (18, 22)

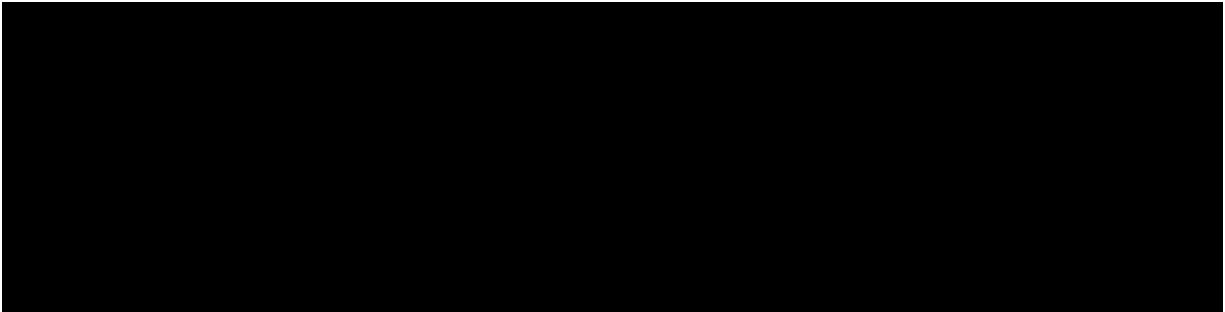


Samuel Hall- Carpenter

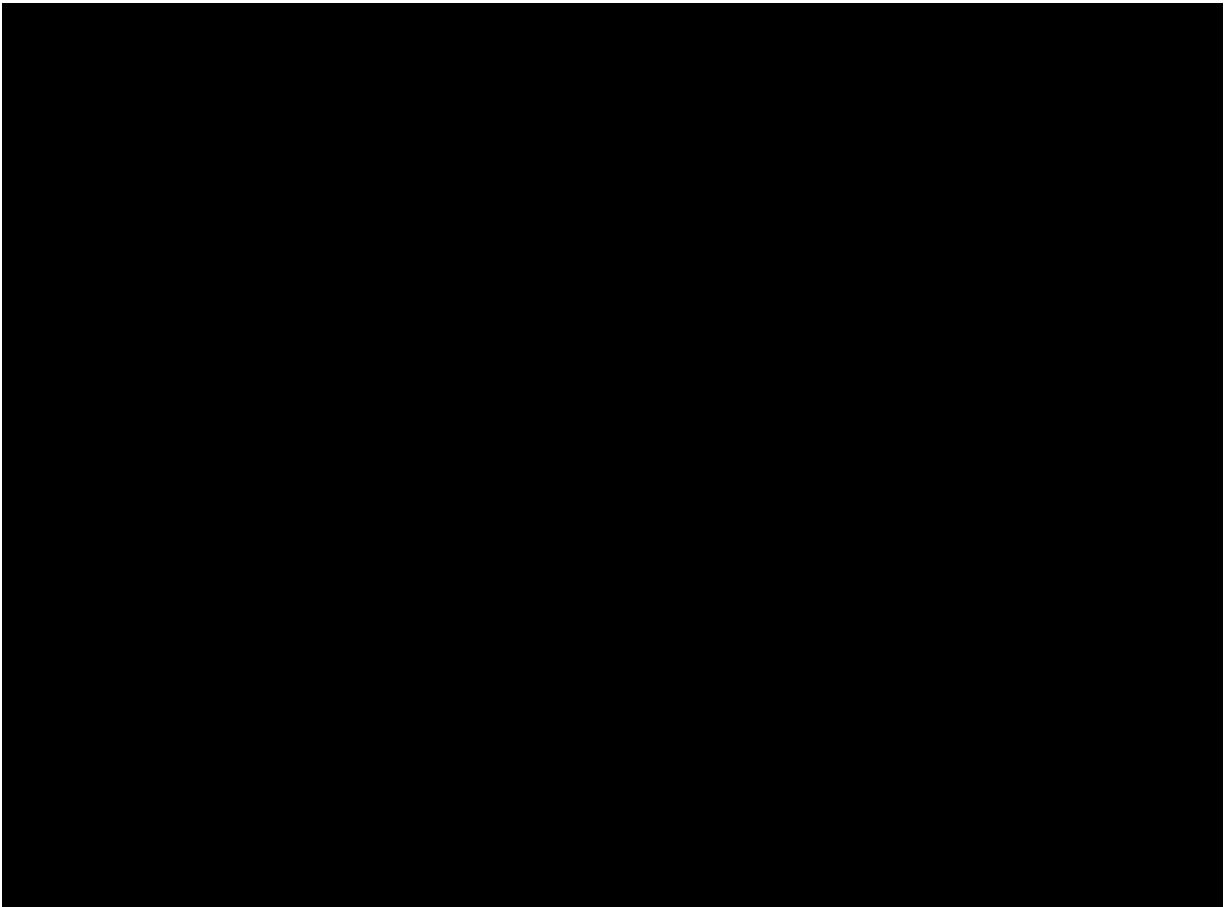


Samuel Hall- Carpenter





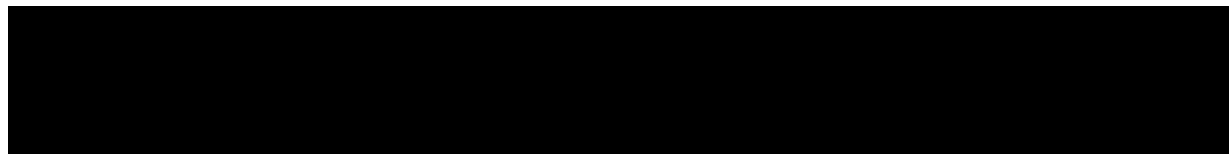
1870 Census of Industry



Twenty-nine mills are surveyed employing 393 people and producing goods worth \$19 million in today's dollars. The largest mill is Morse & Elder's Satinet factory producing 290,000 yards of material valued at \$5.3 million

(today's dollars). The major products are wool, silk, cotton and bullet cartridges.

Oct. 21, 1871- Tolland Superior Court. Plaintiffs: Mill Brook Woolen, C.H. Kenyon and Solomon Barber, J. Morse & S. Elder (Boston), D.W. Huntington, C. Kingsbury, H. Mason, J. Dow, James Morgan, Dan Green, P. Cullen & J.M. Wood. Defendant: Anderson Walker & Edward Taylor of Windham. Synopsis: All mills depend on the brook water, and defendants are owners or occupiers of upper mill on the stream on the outlet of the pond. More than twenty years ago the mill owners on the brook paid to improve the facilities for drawing water and increasing the capacity of the pond. They have managed the flow well by hiring a person to open the gates at 5AM and close them at 6:30PM and to conduct any repairs needed to the gates. About 1866 they also added controls on Schuyler Brook. (It enters the Lake at Lisicke Beach from a pond near Old Tolland Turnpike and a canal that was dug from there.) On Oct. 10, 1871 the gate was locked by the defendant, and they announced that they would control the gate at their leisure (meaning insufficient water for the mills). The mill owners claimed that the brook was essentially their entire livelihood, and this arbitrary control was not right. The court issued a cease and desist order which forbade the defendants from arbitrarily controlling the gates!



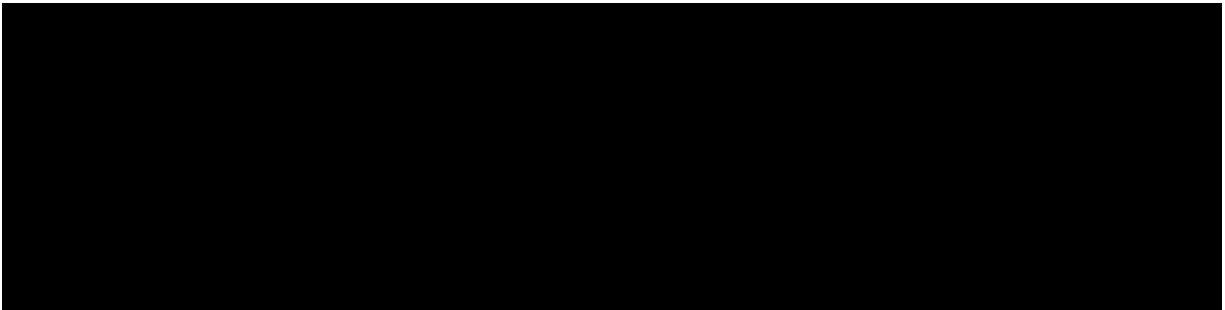
The Dispute Arises Over the Water Rights in the Mill Brook



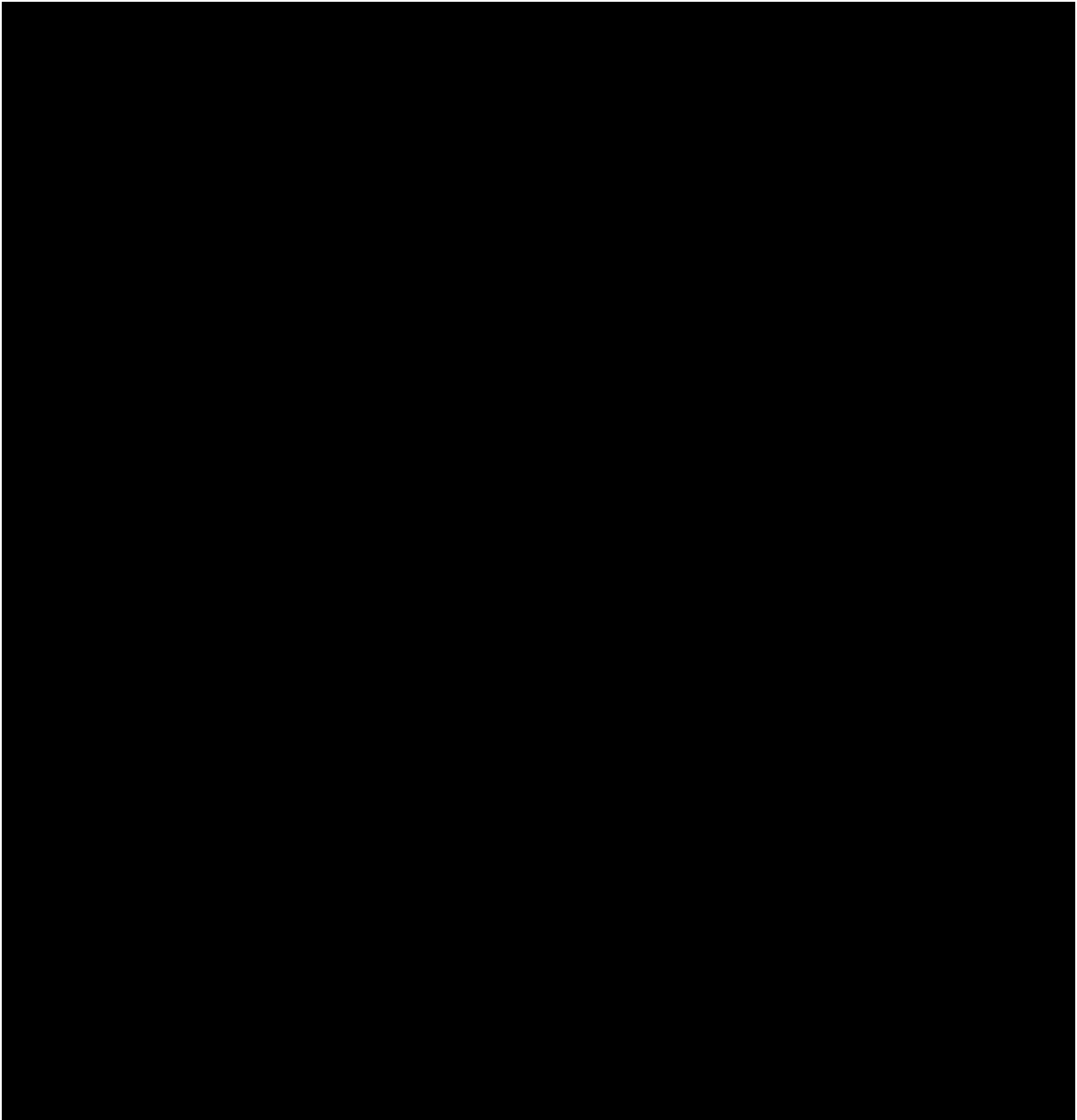
The Dispute Arises Over the Water Rights in the Mill Brook



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The Pitkin Brothers Mill



A mill is built at the junction of the Skungamaug River and the Windham Turnpike in 1819 by Ephraim and Daniel Wight. It is a “clothiers shop” or fulling mill. The mill changed hands in the 1820’s to some of the owners of the Coventry Glass Factory and made satinet for a time.

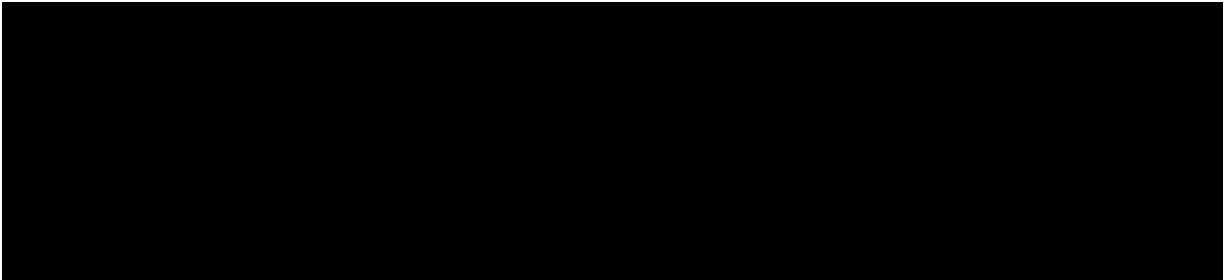
An 1872 Insurance map shows the mill site owned by the Pitkin brothers (Sidney & ??) making twine and wicking. It notes: “400 spindles, poor cotton stock, mill is twenty-two by sixty-five feet, two stories of frame

construction with a shingle roof. The first story has cards and throstle spinning, second story has the mules. The roof is box plastered, floors are single weight. There is a picker house of one story, stone and frame, shingle roof, lighting is kerosene. The heat is furnished by coal and woodstoves. Fire protection included a cask and buckets. The machinery is worn and in ordinary condition, buildings are plain and old, stores low, limited supply of water.” The 1874 and 1875 tax records lists assessments here of \$3,600 and \$2,400 respectively. By 1878 the mill is declining. It is assumed that the mill was becoming less productive and in need of repair. Other mills were stepping up to steam power, and it may have been too costly to do that here.

In 1873 the first major school building was erected on School Street. It was in District #1, and would be "furnished with patent seats and desks, abundant blackboards". There were four rooms, two on each floor. The second story could be "Thrown into one room when circumstances require". It cost \$6,900 for the ground and buildings. Furnishings cost \$3,500 and the town's residents were taxed one and one-half cents on the dollar to finance the new school. The board of visitors expressed their "decided opinion that those who shall, after the coming term, apply for the position of teacher in our schools, should be prepared to give instructions in rudiments of drawing". (8)

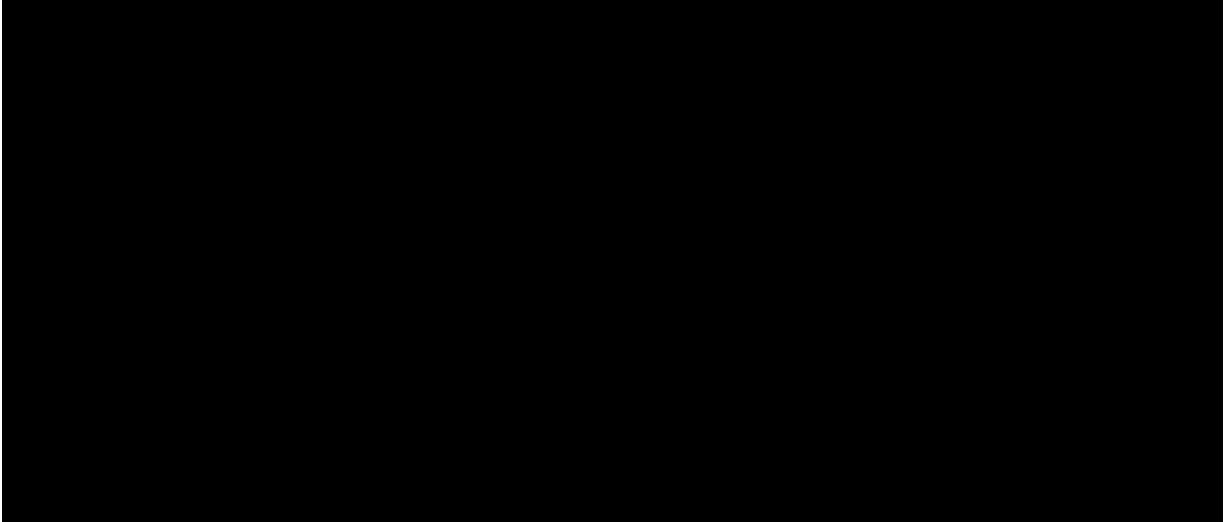


The Center School

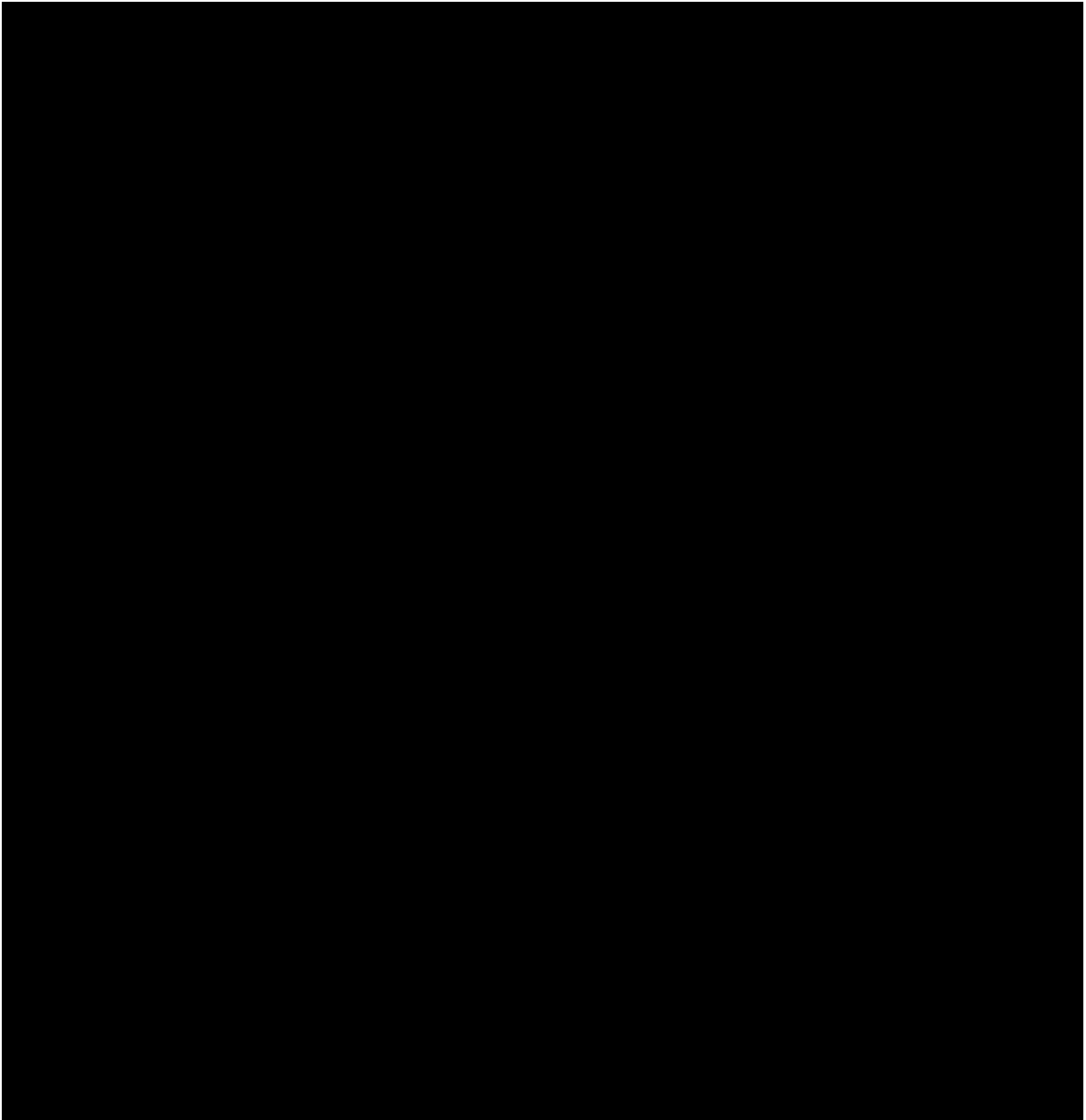


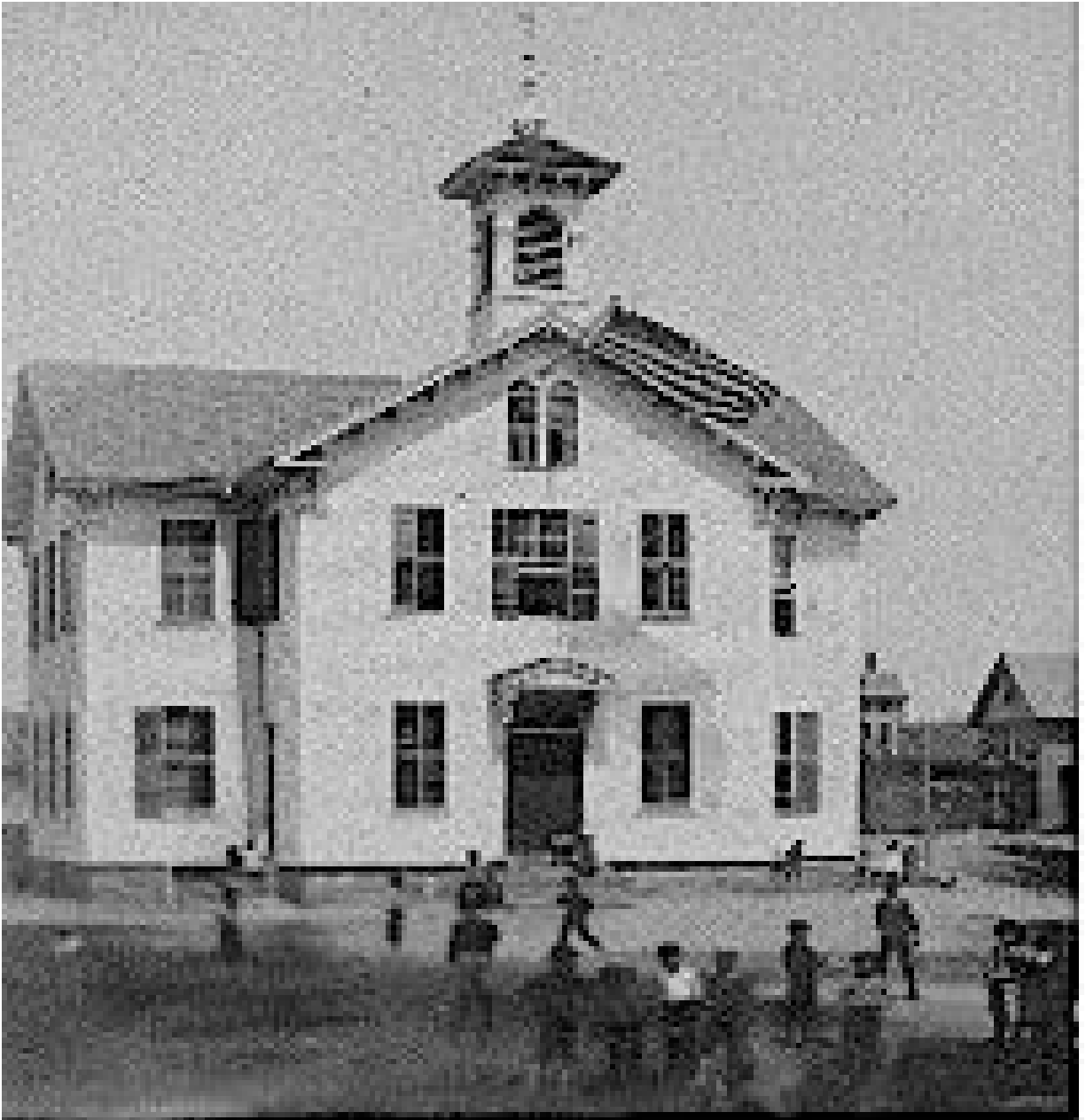
The Center School





The New Center School ca 1900





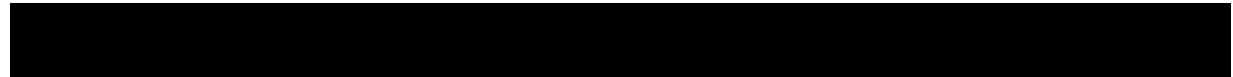
This building was ordered to be built by Town Meeting to provide space for Town officials and security for Town Records. It was to be finished and opened during the Nation's Centennial Year 1876, in recognition of that event. Norman Boynton was hired to do the work. His farm and brickyard lay on the west side of Flanders Road, about a half-mile southeasterly from the South Street junction. The bricks were made from his clay pit. Each was formed in a wooden mold, by hand, then carefully removed and placed on a slatted rack. When full, the rack would be put into a large dome-shaped kiln for firing.

Brick making was a family affair with Boynton, his wife, sons and little daughters, Alice and Rachel Estella molding the bricks. When the kiln was filled, it was sealed shut with clay plugs, and the fire was started in the pit lying underneath the kiln bottom. Boynton used coke for fuel, drawing it in his wagons from the freight cars in Willimantic. After several days at high heat, the furnace was cooled, the bricks removed and stacked in rows outdoors to season.

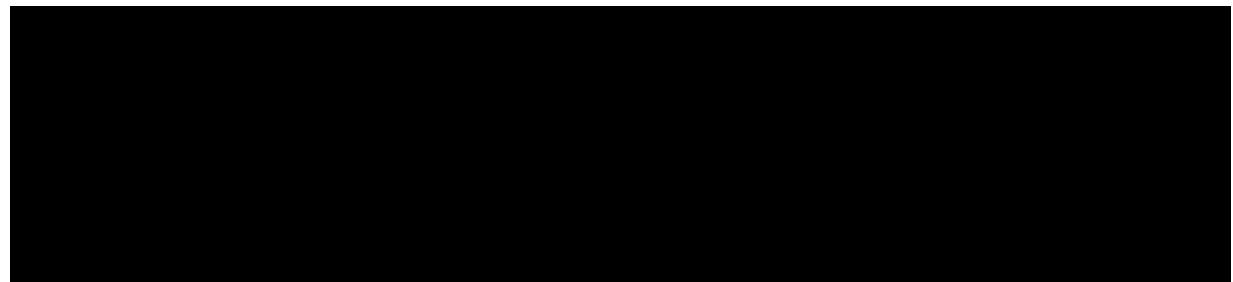
Boynton and his son Lyle, both expert brick masons, began work on the new Town Hall in the late winter of 1876. It was finished by fall. Here were located the Town Clerk, the Assessor and Tax Collector, the Probate Court and the then Justice Courts. Here met the Town Selectmen. A secure, fireproof vault protected with a combination lock in a heavy steel door contained all of the Town Records that, for the first time, were brought together. The building served its intended purpose until the panic year of 1929 that saw the Tracy-Elliott Mills fall bankrupt. In lieu of back taxes, the Town took over the mill properties, including its large office building on Main Street. This building was refurbished and offices were built for officials, and a large vault was built inside for Town Records.

Shortly, the 1876 Building was vacated and the Town Offices were moved into the new facility. In 1932, George Hersey Robertson was appointed Postmaster, and the Post Office was moved from the Phillip's Drug Store on the Mason Street corner. The 1876 Building was the Coventry Post Office through World War II. The Sebert Block was built shortly after in the lot

located next to the Congregational Church on Main Street, and the Post Office moved into that facility. The 1876 building was used, sporadically, afterwards by the Justice Court and by civic groups from time to time, but gradually fell into disrepair. Several attempts were made to sell the building so that the property could go back on the tax rolls. Town Meeting and Councils, however, did not respond. Town budgets contained meager funds to provide minimum maintenance on the property. With the coming of the Nation's Bicentennial in 1976, an Official Commission was formed and the 1876 Building was designated its headquarters. The building was restored and extensively used by the Commission and civic groups during and afterwards. Most recently (1989), at the request of the Town council, the Coventry Historical Society restored and assumed responsibility for staffing the 1876 Building. It is now a Visitors' Center, containing a changing series of interesting displays and items reflecting Coventry's history(20)

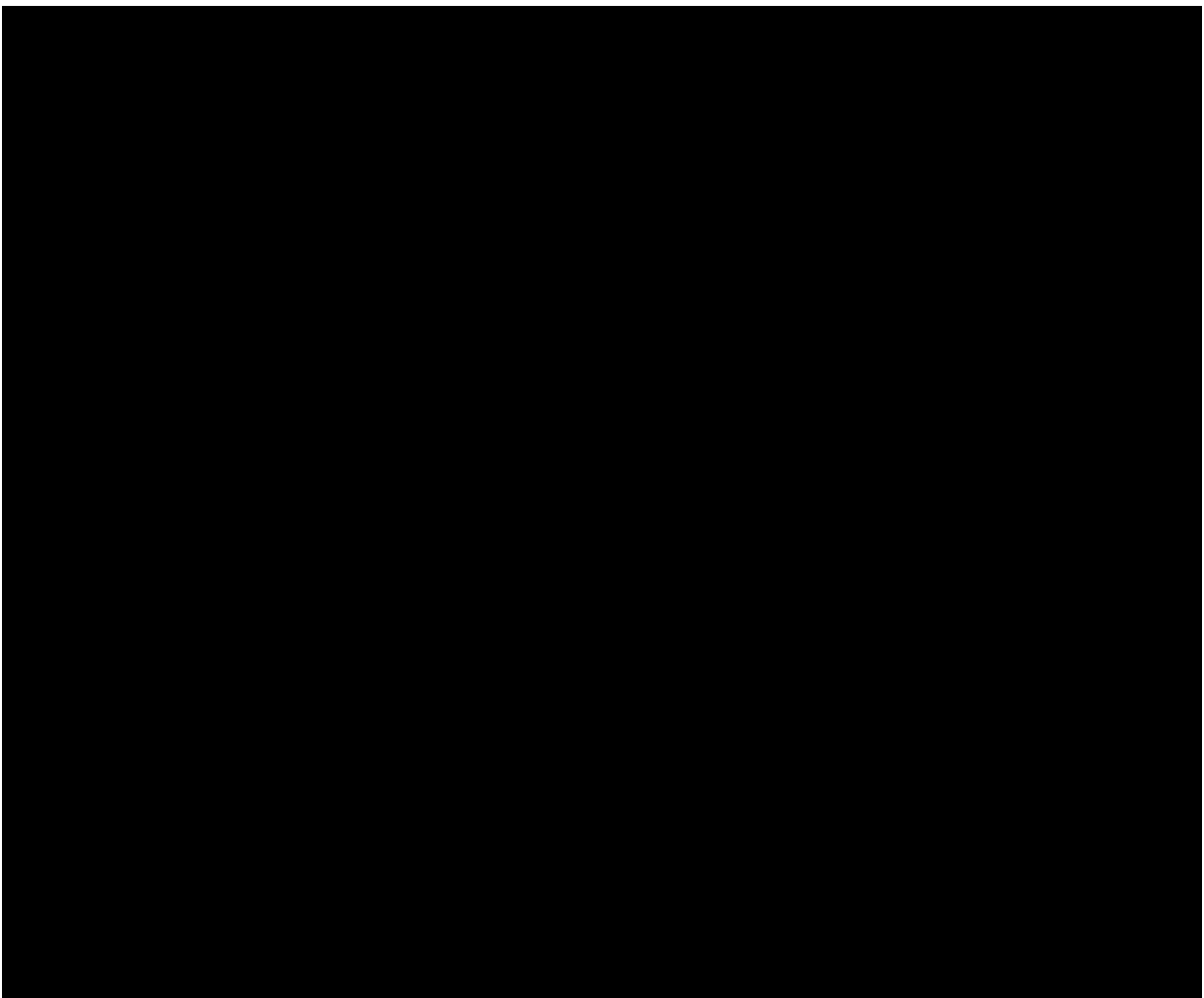


The 1876 Building



The 1876 Building





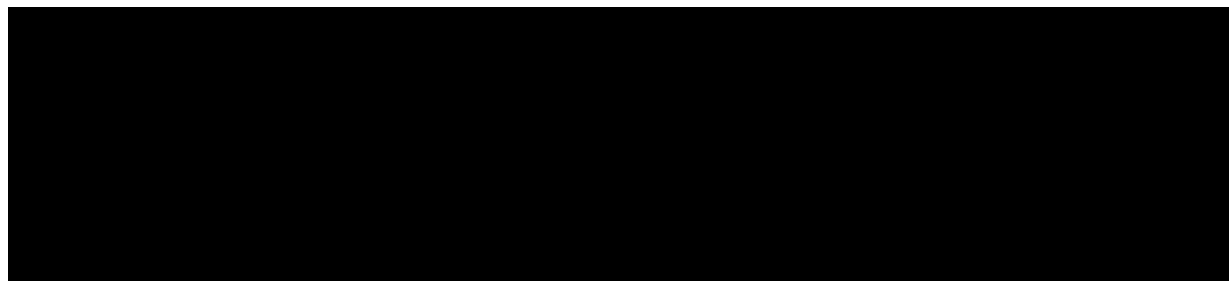


The 1876 Building- Main Street

William C. Latimer was born in Montville in 1850. He married and moved to Coventry in 1876. He was a teamster and a farmer and started a successful coal business. His farm was bounded northerly on St Mary's cemetery and ran east to the Willimantic River. He did not raise corn, hay or vegetables as other local farmers, but grew broadleaf tobacco until WWI. Subsequently he built a fine house on Wall Street, with a large tobacco barn that had hinged shutter-doors on the sides. They could be opened to allow the tobacco leaves to cure. Latimer sold his cured leaf chewing tobacco to merchants and storekeepers throughout the nearby counties. The farm was known as the Plains field. The Plains included not only the Saint Mary's cemetery, the old Latimer farm, and the Miller-Richardson field, but all the flat land southerly along the Willimantic River. The Miller-Richardson field was originally purchased by the town for a cemetery. A few burials happened there, but the caskets were later transferred to the Nathan Hale Cemetery. In the early 1900's the field was used for baseball. Oscar Miller was a treasurer of the baseball league, and Mr. Frank Richardson participated in the construction of the field.

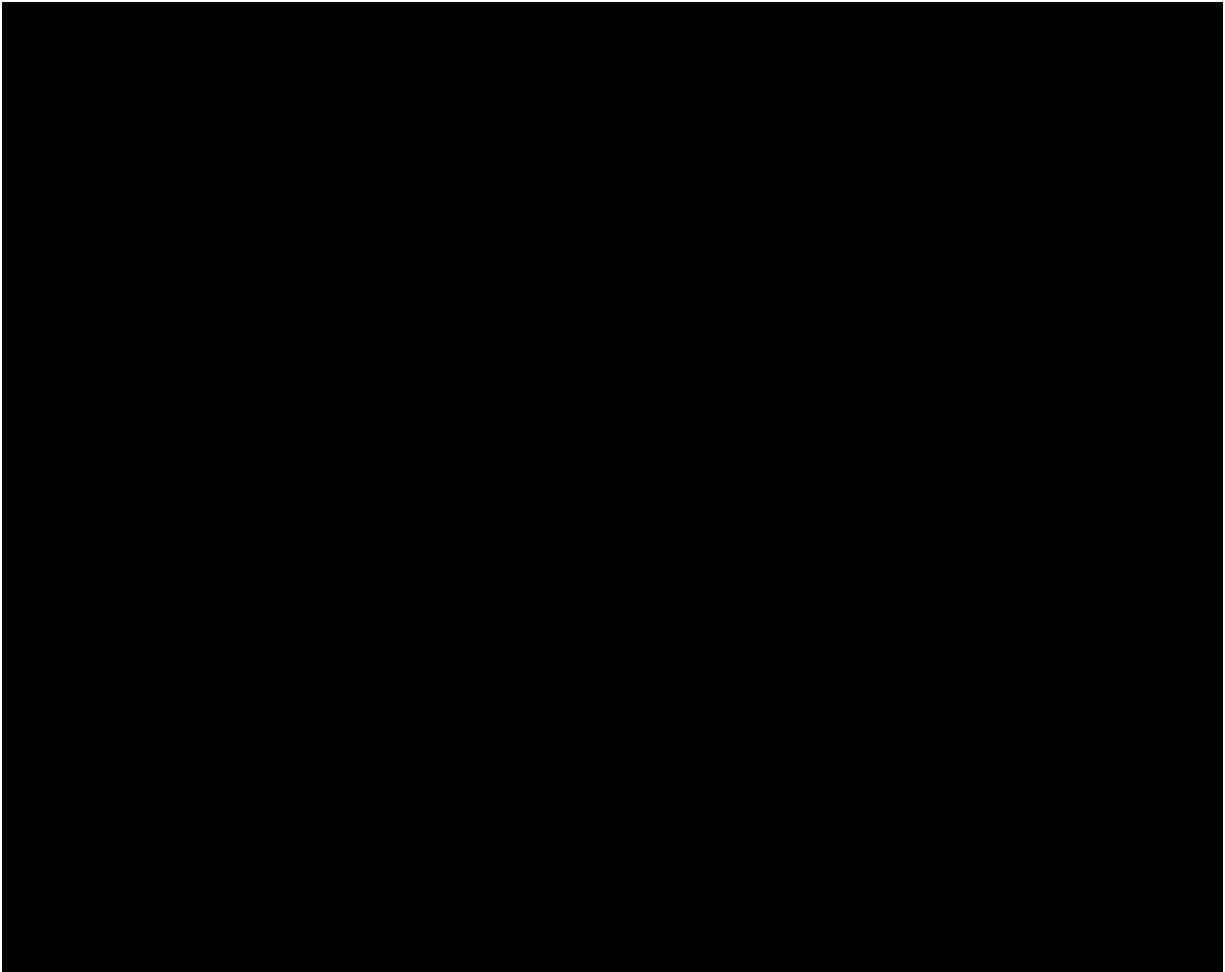


William Latimer



William Latimer

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In 1904, William Latimer built a large store and grain mill on the site of his old coal shed next to the railroad tracks on today's Depot Road. His son

Eugene and later his son Lawrence carried on and expanded the grain and coal business. (16)

"Sep. 13, 1877- A ball was given in the new dye- house of Mr. John Wood, last Friday night, which was well attended by the rising population of our place.

"Oct. 25, 1877- The Morgan Silk mills are not in operation having remained still for several months.

"Nov. 15, 1877- J.S. Morgan has very recently spread upon the roof of his silk mill a coat of new shingles."

"Feb. 22, 1877- M.B. Bessey & Co. have recently commenced the manufacture of bed- quilts at the factory formerly occupied by Mr. Green, and are turning out every description of quilts at the rate of 250 per day, employing a force of twenty hands."

"Feb. 23, 1877 The Phoenix Metallic Cartridge Co. are adding 45 ft to the length of their main building and erecting a new building of modest size adjunct to the larger one and constructing a new penstock."

"Oct. 18, 1877- Mr. H.W. Mason is installing a very large boiler into his cartridge factory in preparation of the cold weather. It will drive the belts and pulleys and provide heat. A dedication ball took place which was held in one of the factory rooms- Arcanum Hall. Sales have decreased to less than 200,000 cartridges."

"Oct. 25, 1877- The Kenyon and Barber mills are as usual in a flourishing condition. This mill is almost filled with competent help who work well and every month receive their pay. "

"Oct. 25, 1877- The Coventry mill which is the last one on the stream is owned by Messrs. Rawitser Bros. of New York. It is in successful operation and has been many months under the skillful management of Mr. Walter Fieldhouse as superintendent. Mr. Fieldhouse has recently vacated the position and the place has been filled by Mr. Hollingsworth."

"Oct. 25, 1877- The silk mill owned and operated by Messrs. Washburn is running and filled with good efficient help." (The 1880 census shows Washburn with five employees making machine twist with seven horsepower of water power.) "Feb. 26, 1878- Portions of machining in the Washington Mill has been started by Mr. Kimball the recent purchaser of the property. First class satinet goods are made, taken to Rhode Island and finished ready for market. It is said that cloth was being made here for the President's suits."

"Apr. 2, 1878- The Coventry Mills Co., Mr. Hollingsworth superintendent, are putting up a brick building fifty feet in length and twenty- three feet wide and two stories high to be used for a picker house. It is rumored that when the structure is completed a grand ball will be given there previous to the introduction of machinery." "Dec. 1, 1878- Mr. J.V. Lathrop for many months book-keeper in the counting room of the Millbrook Woolen Co., has commenced manufacturing bed quilts at the mill lately occupied by Maj. M. B. Bessey. Mr. Lathrop is young, energetic, and in possession of business talent. We wish him success in his new vocation."

"Jan. 28, 1879: Fire in Coventry. The Woolen Mill of Rawitzer & Brother near Coventry Depot took fire from the wool dryer in the basement about 5PM yesterday and was entirely consumed. The structure was of wood and was soaked with oil, so that the fire spread with great rapidity. The glare was plainly seen in Willimantic even before dark, and considerable excitement was manifested. Nothing could be done to stay the progress of the flames, and the mill was quickly burned to the ground. From 100 to 150 persons are thrown out of employment by the fire.

"Jan. 29, 1879- The cartridge manufacturing establishment which is owned by Mr. H.W. Mason and Co., is not now in operation. We learned that the gate will be closed for several days or until further orders, for be it known that this cartridge works has been idle but a very small portion of the time since it was first put in operation."

"Feb. 11, 1879- A large number of men employed by the Rawitzer Bros. are clearing debris of the recently burnt mill preparatory to the building of

another mill which will be of greater capacity.” (Two accounts written in 1905 indicate no activity on this site, so the mill was not re-built.)

“February 1879- Mr. George Capron who has been the superintendent for eighteen years and has built a fine home here, and having been widowed two years since, is leaving town for a position in Maine”.

"Jun. 3, 1879- Mr. J.V. Lathrop is a successful manufacturer of bed quilts. He employs thirteen hands, having in daily operation seven powerful machines. Two hundred first-class bed quilts are turned out at his mill each day, making a total of twelve hundred and fifty pounds of cotton used daily, and ten yards of prints are used for the lining and covering of each quilt, making in all twenty-five hundred yards of prints used in this establishment every ten hours between the sun's rising and setting. Mr. Lathrop has very recently erected a building just outside of his factory, in which he has put a machine called "duster" through which he runs a portion of the filling of quilts, thus freeing it entirely from dust, and leaving the material in a clean and white condition. The goods are sent to parties in New York, and from them they go to meet the demand of retail dealers in all parts of the country."

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“Jul. 15, 1879- The Washington Woolen Mill has been leased by Geo. K. Nason & Co. from R.I. who are repairing machinery and expect to operate soon."

“Oct. 28, 1879- Mr. James S. Morgan is laying a foundation for an addition to his silk mill. The company has changed its name to Morgan & Bottum as a partnership with Mr. Charles Bottum of Conantville who provided financing for the expansion. (Charles was the owner of a silk mill purchased in 1856 on the site partly occupied today by the East Brook Mall in Mansfield.) He was manufacturing a very profitable line of silk thread called “patent machine twist brand”. “Wed. Dec. 3, 1879: A.D. Bottum, formerly with C.L. Bottum, of Conantville, has entered into partnership with Mr. Morgan of So. Coventry for the manufacture of silk.”

"Wed. Dec. 10, 1879- Morgan and Bottum have just put an extensive addition to their silk mill and are now filling the same with new and the latest improved machinery, which when put into running condition, will give employment to a number of additional employees. None but first- class goods are manufactured in this mill."

"Wed. Dec. 10, 1879- Mr. Thomas H. Wood has just completed a new and substantial oaken flume for conveying the water to his mills, in place of the old one which was dilapidated, rickety and worthless. He has also added an extension to his factory and will soon add more machinery, thus enlarging his business to a considerable extent."

The Oak Flume (penstock) at Wood's Mill

"Wed. Dec. 10, 1879- Messrs. Kenyon & Barber have recently put a new turbine wheel into their mill, and made many other needed repairs. The time occupied in making the necessary improvements was one week."

"Wed. Dec. 10, 1879- The telegraph wires are now being stretched along from pole to pole through this village. Business on this work was suspended some weeks since and rumor had it that the company had failed and was unable to go forward and complete the work. The inhabitants here are pleased that the work is resumed on the line, and the prospect now is that

South Coventry will soon have telegraphic communication.” “Wed. Mar 17, 1880- C.H. Kenyon & Co., manufacturers of America and Deer Island doeskins, have a new ticket upon their goods which in itself is a beauty- a neat engraving typifies the march of civilization, and the progress and superiority of American industries, by an Indian chief holding a scalp of a white man upraised upon a war-hatchet, and an Indian maiden, and the figure representing America, stands in the foreground holding in her right hand a slender stalk of flax imperiously poised above the head of an infuriated buffalo. At the left is a thrifty stalk of maize originating in our country, and upon the back of the ticket beneath overhanging clusters of the fruit of the vineyard is the motto, "Encourage Home Industries."

“Aug 4, 1880- Quite extensive improvements are being made on the premises of Tracy & Wood. They have removed their old Stephenson water wheel and put in a new "Risdon" and are soon to add steam power.”

“Aug. 4, 1880- On account of the drought and increasing business, Morgan & Bottum, silk manufacturers, have been compelled to purchase a steam engine to obtain sufficient power.”

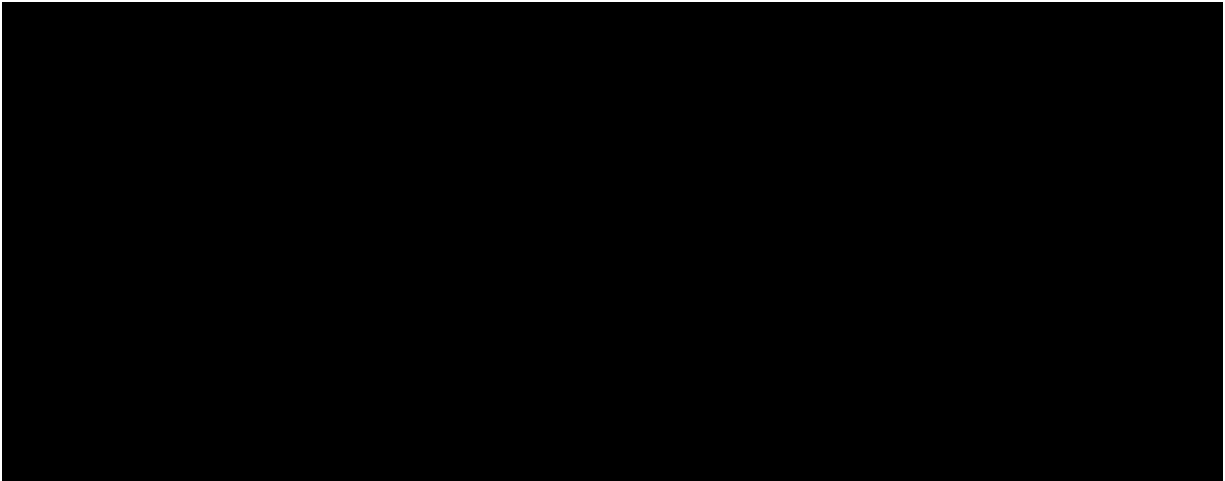
“Aug. 18, 1880- Steam power has been added to the woolen manufactory of J.M. Wood, and he is inquiring the merits of different water wheels, expectant to make a change in a few days.”

“Aug. 18, 1880- C.H. Kenyon & Co. have purchased a steam engine for the branch manufactory known as the "little mill." (The 1880 census has Kenyon making doeskin jeans with 96 hands and two falls of 30HP and 13HP with 40HP steam augmentation.)

“Sep. 15, 1880- The old building known as the Washburn Foundry, is being torn down, and its timber will be made use of by Mr. Lewis, who unfortunately lost his barn by a shaft of lightning during the recent cyclone”. (This news item suggests the foundry building has been idle for a number of years (since 1870?) and the silk manufactory is in a different building on the site.)



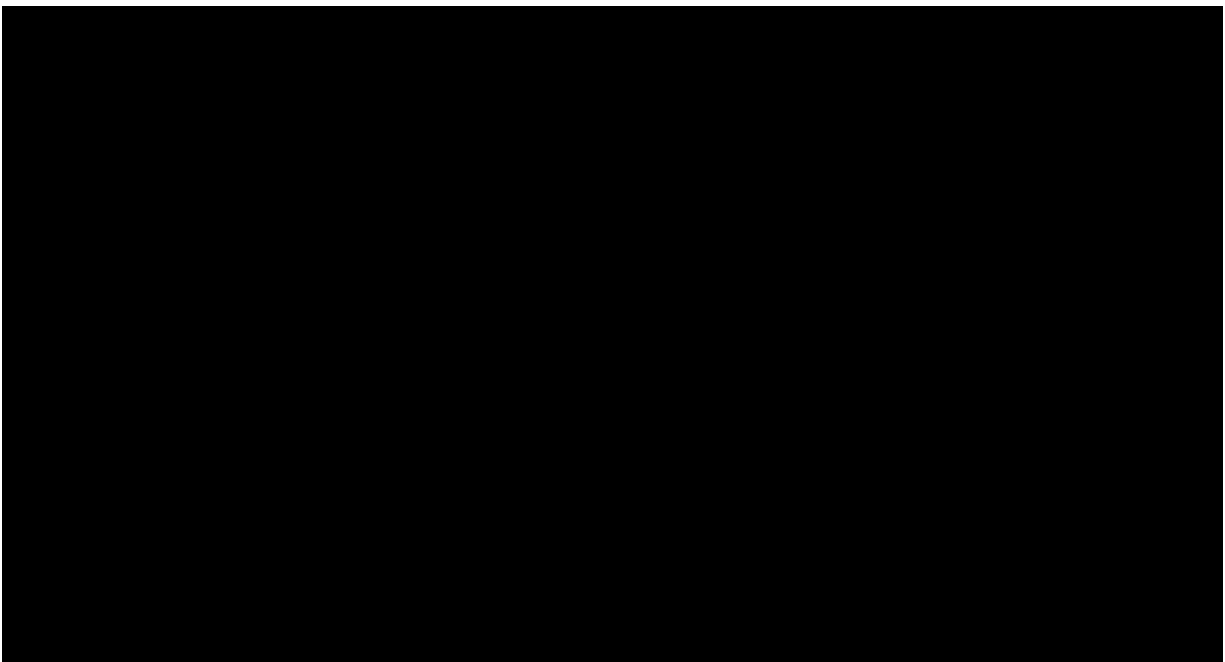
The Willimantic Chronicle Provides Further Articles about the Mills in the 1870's



The Willimantic Chronicle Provides Further Articles about the Mills in the 1870's







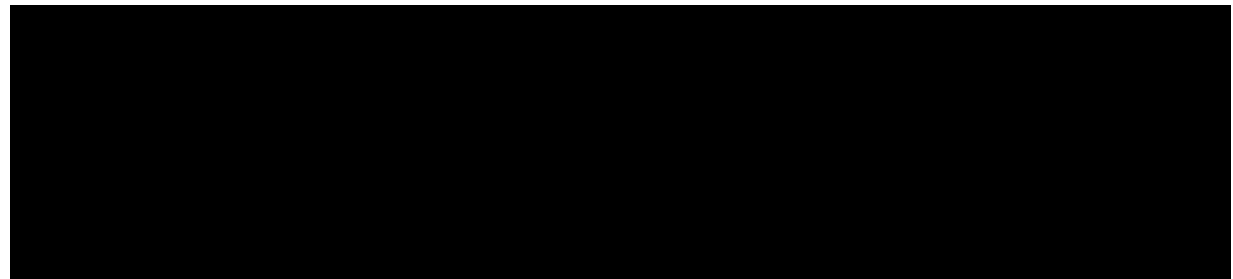


The public library in South Coventry was established by a gift from Dr. James Cogswell of \$500 in 1879. He wrote from California, where he had become a wealthy man, that he was cared for here as a boy by some kindly women. His gift stipulated that the local people raise a similar sum. Due to this stimulus the South Coventry Library Association was organized in 1880 and books were loaned on a small payment per year. The library held 322 bound volumes of fiction and twenty-two pamphlets. The building that was once used as a post office and sat on the west side of the current lot was purchased by the association in that year from John Isham. About 1910 the library was made free by the town giving \$100 annually with the State furnishing a similar amount, and it contained about 4,000 volumes in 1912. (4)

A newspaper account in February 1880 states, "We also expect soon to have a public library. The members of the public library association met at the vestry of the Congregational church Monday evening, Feb. 16, and the following officers were elected for the year ensuing: Nathan White, president; Martin Parker, secretary; R.W. Barber, treasurer. At the adjourned meeting Thursday eve, Feb. 19, committees on finance and selections were chosen. Several rooms were offered, in which to place the library, but after some consideration, the house of Mr. Dwight Webler was decided to be the place, and Mrs. Webler is appointed librarian." (18)



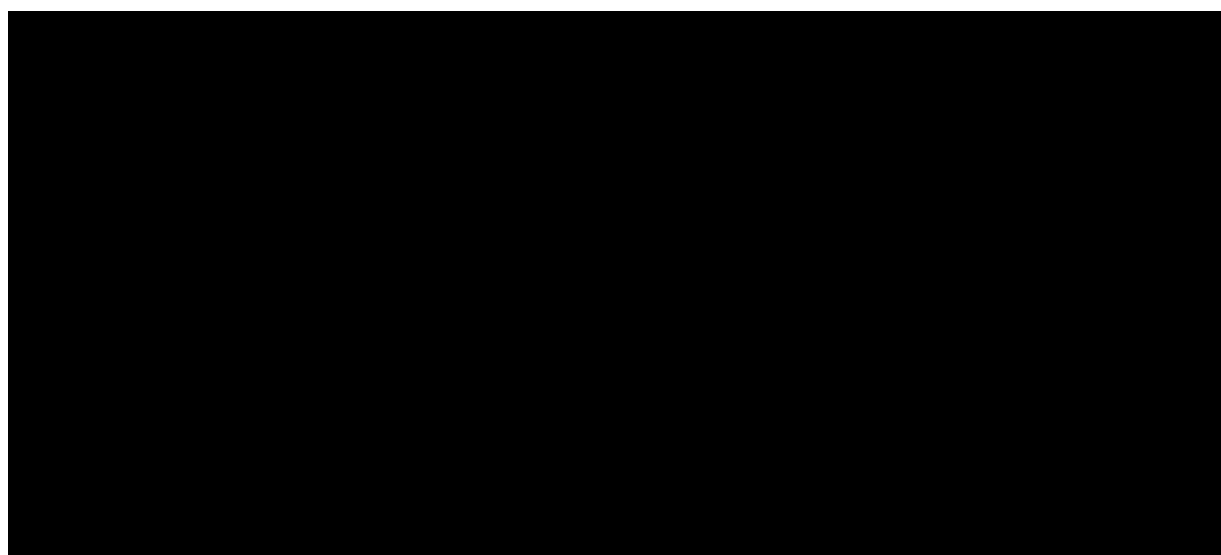
The Public Library



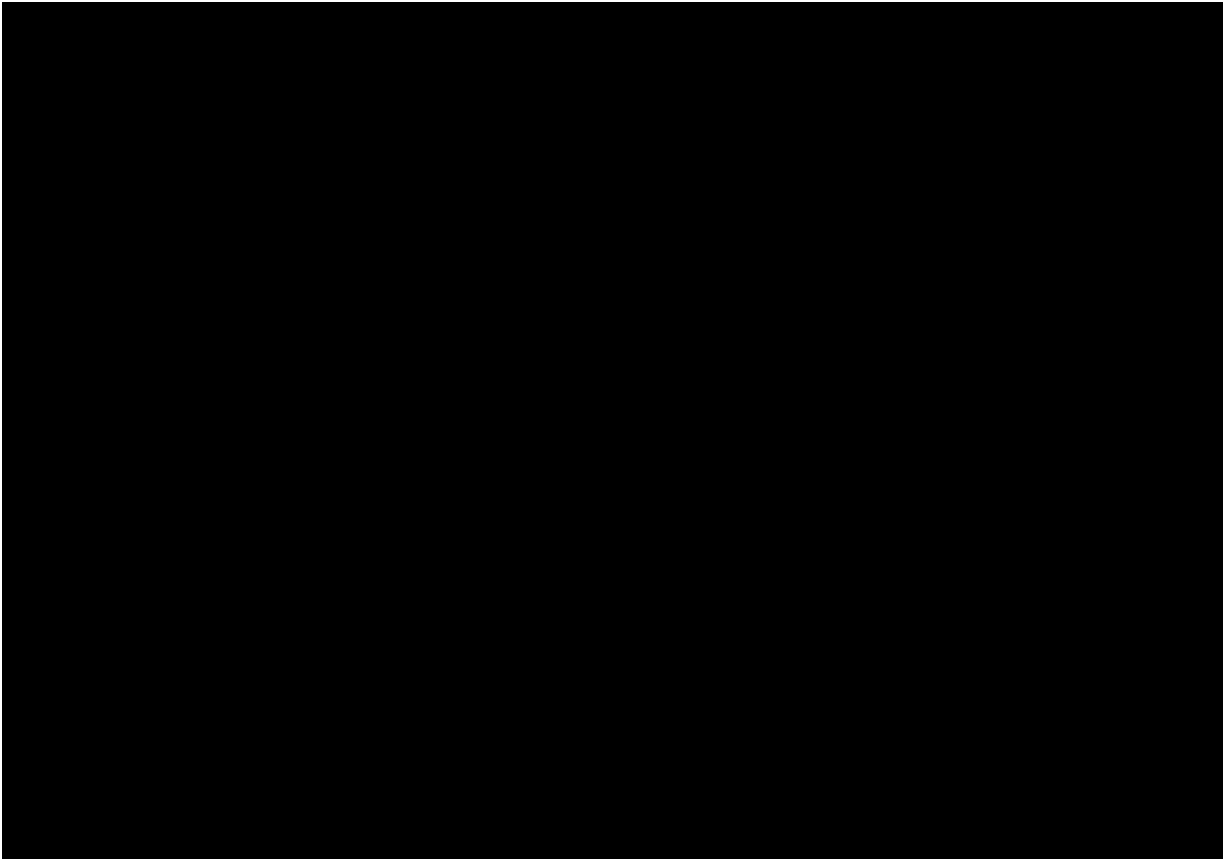
The Public Library

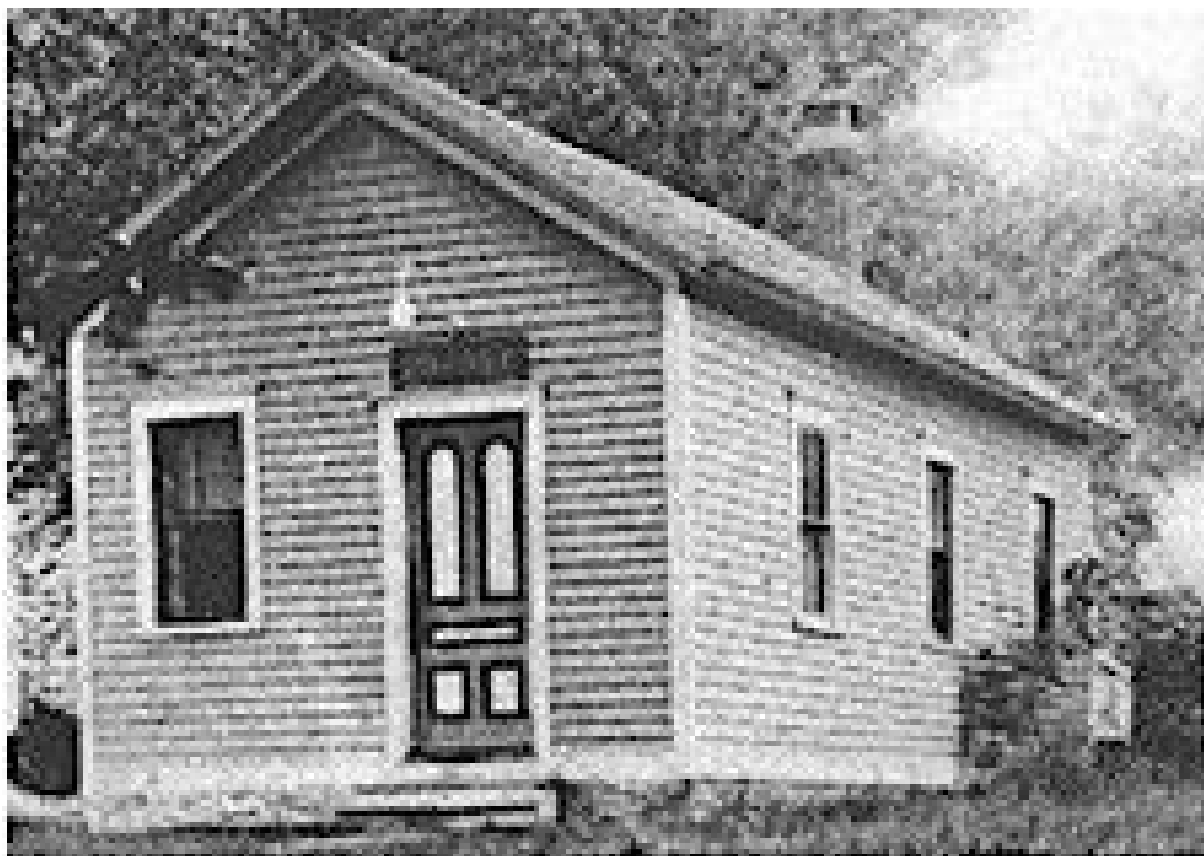


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The Library Building ca 1885





Twenty-six mills and shops are surveyed employing 375 hands and producing goods worth \$14 million in today's dollars. The three largest are the Kenyon Mill making doeskin jeans, the Washington Mill making cassimere, and the Phoenix cartridge shop. There are also silk, paper boxes, bed quilts, shoddy and flour mills to name a few. Water is still the prevalent source of power, but a few mills have augmented their works with steam power.

An Insurance map dated June 6, 1889 shows a Paper Box Factory which included a main building about ninety by thirty feet of two and one-half stories. It had two out-buildings toward Main Street, a stable and a storage shed. The stable was bounded on the north by a stone wall that is still there today. The A. Kingsbury Box Co. was incorporated on Dec. 1, 1893 (by Addison, Arthur and Louis Kingsbury). An 1897 fire insurance map shows one large and four small buildings on this site operated as the Kingsbury Box and Printing Co. Its power was derived only from steam. Their Willimantic shop on Valley Street was closed in 1897, and in 1899, the Rockville plant was closed, and the machinery moved to Coventry. (12,18)



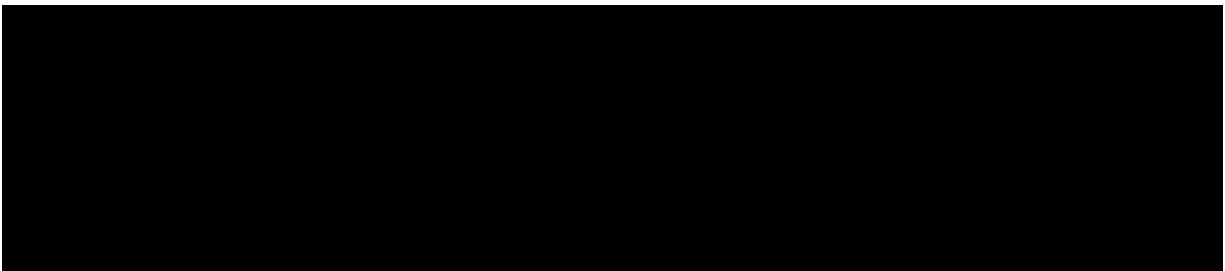
1880 Federal Census of Industry



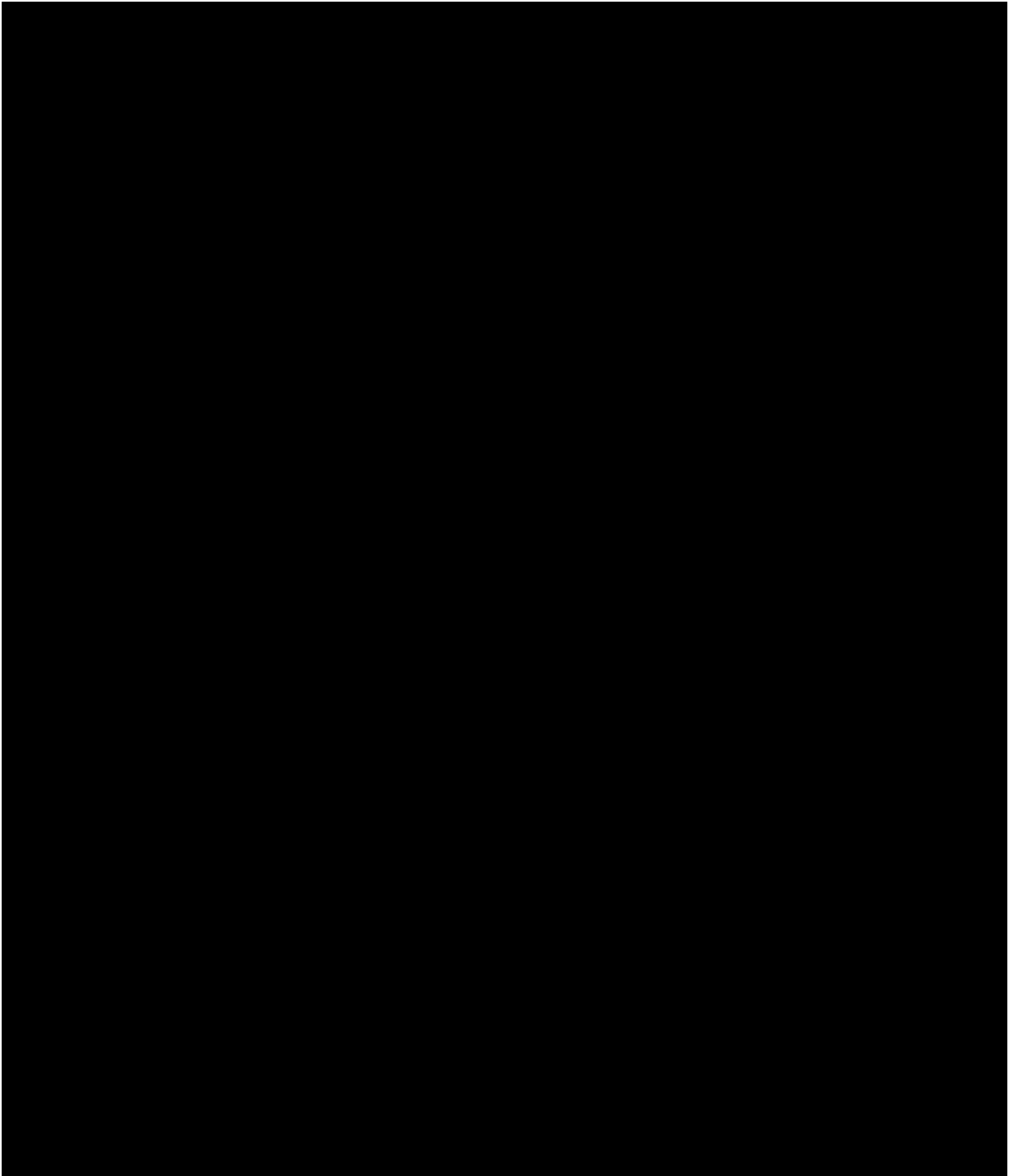
1880 Federal Census of Industry



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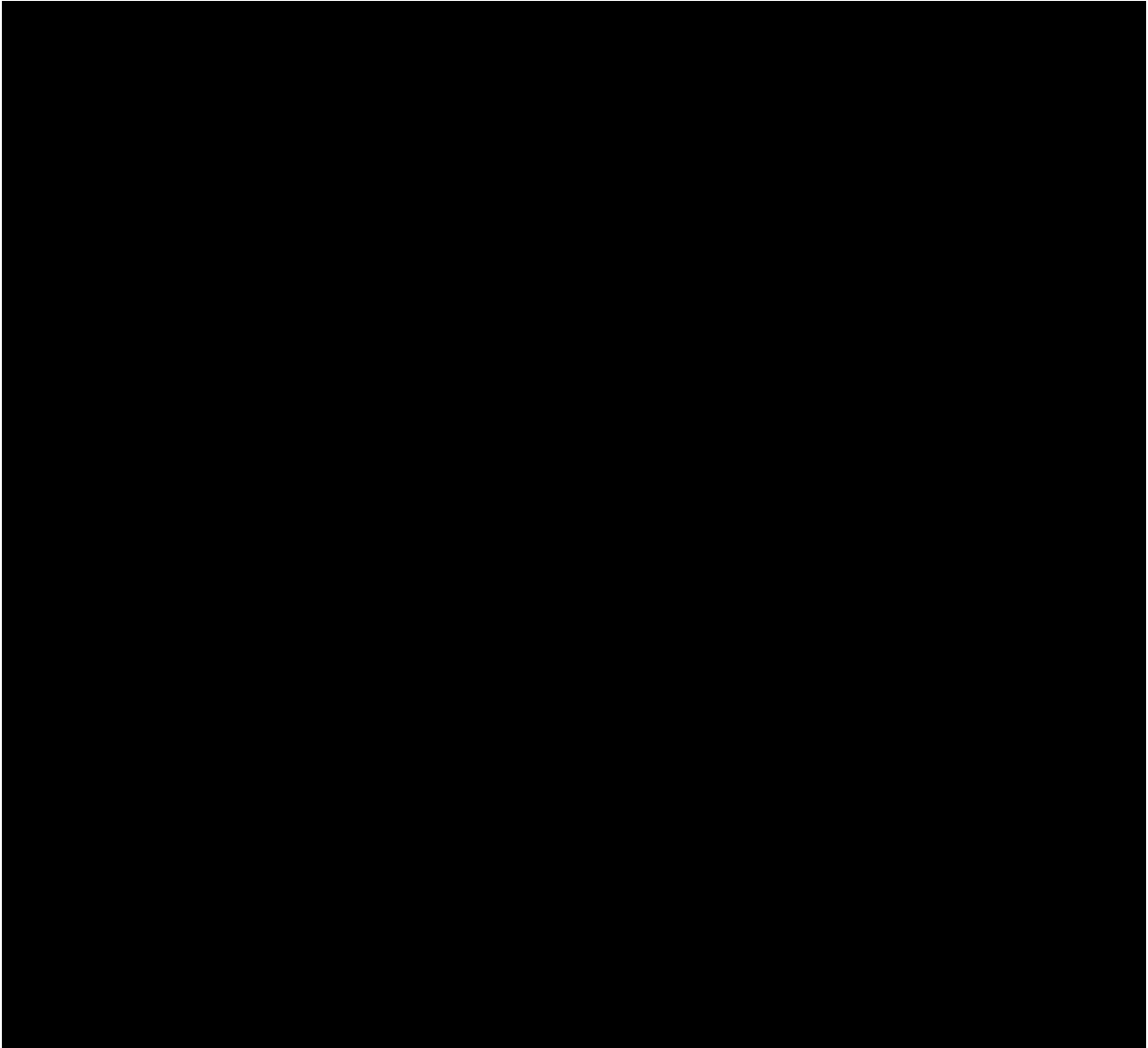


The Kingsbury Box Factory



On Oct. 18, 1882, Mr. Kingsbury installed the first phone in his office. In 1883 Arthur entered into partnership with his father Addison Kingsbury. In 1888 the Kingsbury Box Factory is substantially larger and most machinery is of their own patent. The mill employed thirty-five hands in Coventry and produced 30,000 boxes a day in five shops including Coventry, Rockville,

Willimantic, New London and Northampton Mass. The Coventry shop has a six horsepower engine, scoring machines, lathes, shears and printing presses.



A. KINGSBURY & SON,

MANUFACTURERS OF

PAPER BOXES

OF EVERY DESCRIPTION.

ALSO PRINTERS

AND MANUFACTURERS OF

Double and Single End Shipping Tags.

SHOPS AT

So. Coventry, Rockville, Willimantic, New London, Northampton,

CONN.

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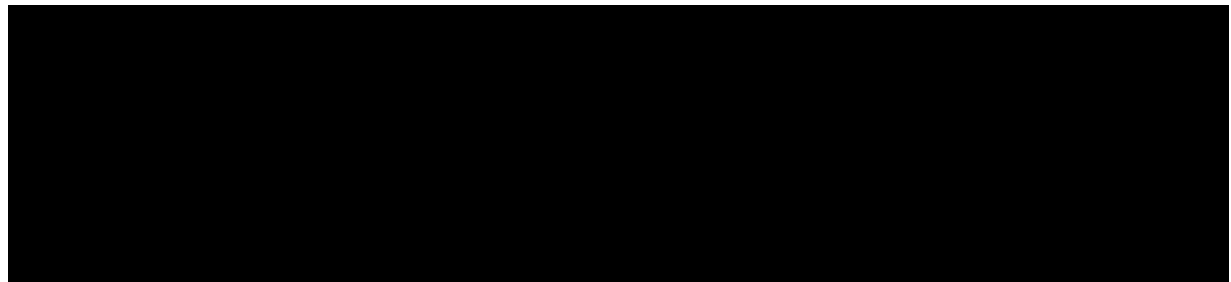
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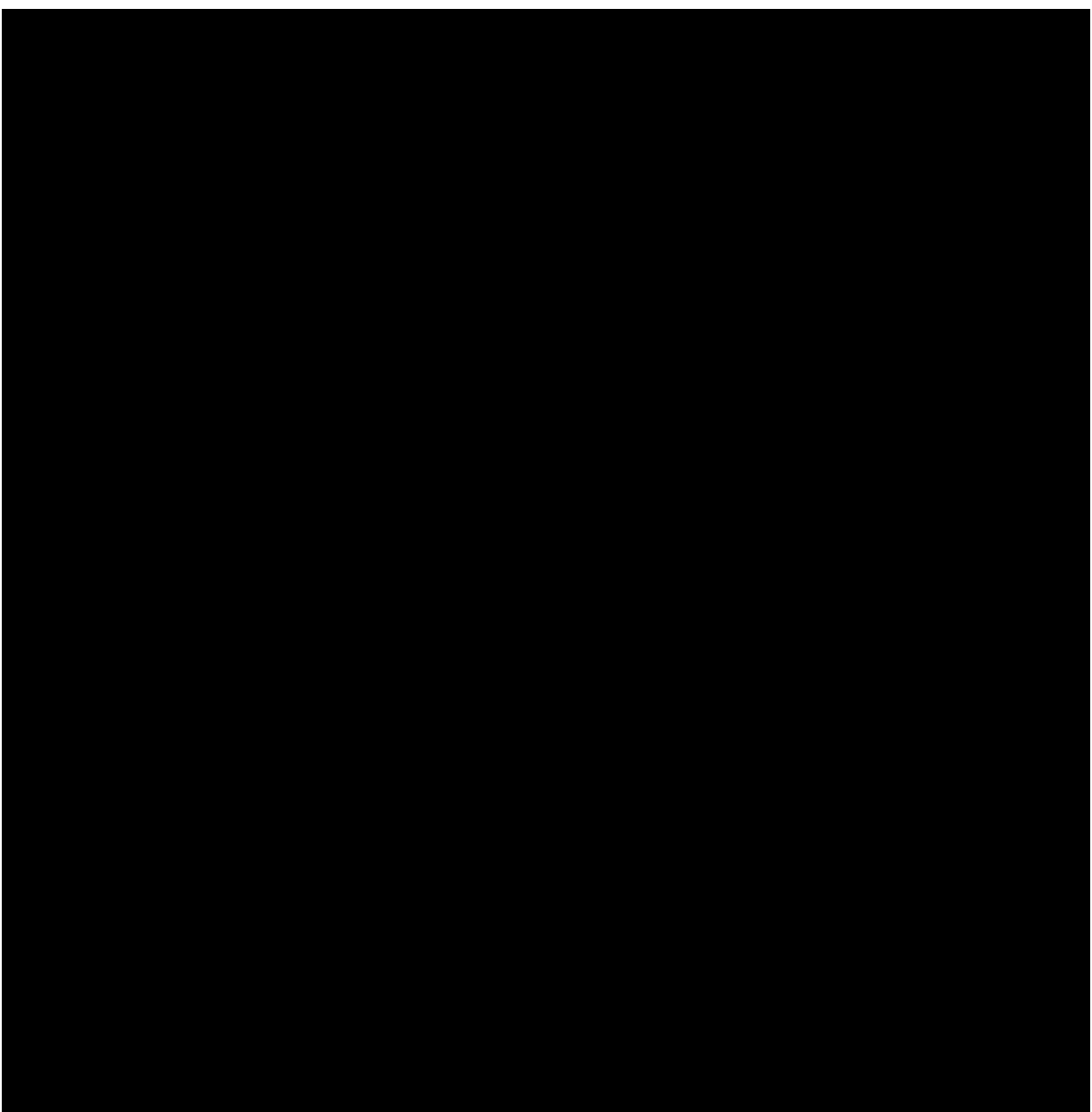
Mason's cartridge shop was completely converted to steam power by June 1882. The water wheel was disassembled and sold to Henry Powell of Columbia, Ct. for \$35. "Feb. 10, 1882: "Connecticut patents issued- Henry W. Mason, South Coventry, cartridge-machine." "Wed. Mar. 15, 1882: At about 8:30 AM Tuesday, a dull heavy report was heard through the village, and in a moment many were hurrying their way to the Phoenix Metallic Cartridge Co.'s works, as an explosion in their loading building had caused an alarm. The building is a small structure about twenty-five feet square one story high, and is used expressly for charging the cartridges with powder and ball. At the time of the explosion there were six persons at work in the building, and Mr. Eli Corey, was sitting near the stove, yet not one person was hurt which was truly miraculous. The damage done to the building will not exceed \$100, nor will the accident impede the filling of the many orders with which the company are pressed at present."



Henry Mason's Cartridge Shop



Henry Mason's Cartridge Shop





In 1883 sales had reduced to 99,500 cartridges. "Aug. 29, 1883- The Phoenix Manufacturing Co. have resumed business again much to the gratification of their employees who are all attached to its business manager, Henry W. Mason who wins their regard by his uniform kindness and courtesy." "Sep. 22, 1886- The H.W. Mason cartridge shop received a new coat of paint. A large order was recently received." "Jun. 8, 1887- The town put a new bridge in front of the cartridge shop last week." "Sep. 28, 1887- Mr. H.W. Mason is planning an addition to his cartridge shop". In 1888 Phoenix Metallic Cartridge had thirty hands and made various size cartridges for rifles and revolvers. Much of the machinery is of H.W. Mason's patent. It is likely that Mason's boxes and labels were made next door by Kingsbury.

An Insurance map dated June 6, 1889 shows the Cartridge Company which included a large building about 120 by thirty feet of three and one-half stories with the brook flowing underneath. There are also four out-buildings, two to the north across Mason Street about twenty by twenty-five feet for bullet "moulding" and loading, and two to the south on the same side of Mason Street, one for storage, the other for powder. H. W. Mason died in July 1888 and his wife Lydia took ownership of the site. He is buried in Nathan Hale Cemetery. In 1891 the American Metallic Cartridge Co was incorporated with \$15,000 capital. An 1897 fire insurance map shows one large and five smaller buildings on this site called the American

Metallic Cartridge Company. It was heated by steam and powered by water and had a night watchman. Lighting was by kerosene and oil.

“Feb. 1880- There is a rumor that our enterprising merchant, George L. Phillips will build a public hall suitable for business or dramatic purposes.”
(corner of Main and Mason Streets)

“Mar. 1880- Last Friday was quite an eventful day. About nine a.m. the villagers were startled by the cry of "fire!" which was discovered to be in a workshop lately replenished with tools and machines owned by Carpenter Tillinghast. This was a good field for fire, as the Washburn silk mill (near Sanborn's garage) and old buildings and timbers were in close proximity, and were barely saved by energetic efforts. The shop was destroyed. A few machines and a chest of tools were saved. Loss estimated at \$2,000. Insurance upon building and stock, \$1,500.”

“Dec 15, 1880- South Coventry. One pauper family are being removed from Arnold Warren's to their new quarters at Isaac Turner's in the North parish. Mr. Turner has erected a new building especially for their accommodations. The carriage shop lately occupied by Charley Coombs, (School Street) is being metamorphosed into a dwelling-house, and Charley now occupies a new and much larger shop close by the old one. Our genial friend, Albert Wood, has lately put in a stock of boots and shoes and rubbers of good quality, and at reasonable prices at his place in Kolb's building. (Main Street across from Bradbury Lane) Those wishing goods of this description will do well to call .”

“Mar. 1881- L.A. Hall has purchased the widow Brown place and will erect a building thirty-two by forty-four feet for a store which he expects to occupy about June 1st. Wm. F. Sweet, of the firm of Hammond & Sweet, has bought the W.A. Loomis store which Mr. Hall now occupies, and will remove to that, Mr. Hammond remaining where they now are. John Carmon is building an addition to his store making it twenty-five by thirty-five feet. There will be seven stores when Mr. Hall's is completed, and there are rumors of another to be. The Bradbury Brothers are intending to build a new meat market near their father's store, now occupied by Hammond & Sweet. It is rumored that there is to be another blacksmith shop, a building to be erected for the purpose in Barbers' village. We have three already. Main Street is being widened and straightened opposite John Carmon's store (near Route 31 curve), a needed and great improvement. Norman Boynton's carriage shop, occupied by Charles G. Coombs, has recently been painted. Measles are quite prevalent.”

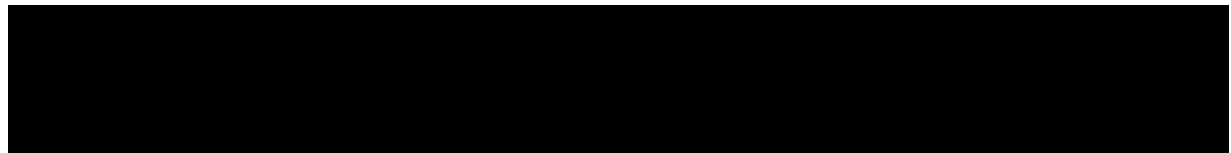
“Dec. 1881- Charles Kolb, our popular harness- man is putting up a large addition to his shop which will give him much needed additional room and facilities for increased business. Albert (Wood), a shoemaker, will retain a corner.”

“Dec. 1881- C.G. Coombs has increased facilities for performing work at his carriage shop. A blacksmith forge has been put in the now the iron work on repairs and new vehicles will be prepared without change of base. There was an attempt made one night recently to burglarize Chas. Kolb's harness shop. The putty was partially removed from a large pane of glass in one of the show windows and the prying out of the glass then attempted, breaking it slightly but without success. The tools used, a putty knife and chisel, were procured by the burglars entering S.W. More's paint shop. (next to the Visitors Center) As the millinery season is over the stock of goods placed last fall in the L. Wilson building has been removed. The new road via "Bradbury Lane" past Kemp's and McChristie's is completed and accepted.”

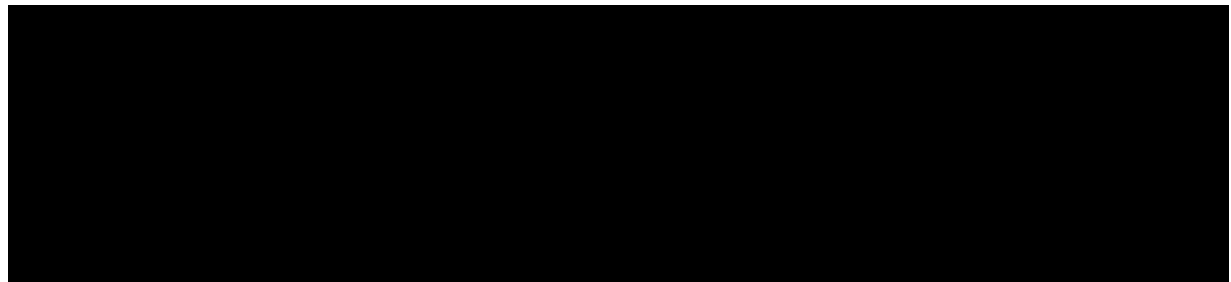
“Apr. 26, 1882- Upon the subject of village improvements an exchange remarks: “One hundred elms are to be set out in South Coventry, by way of village improvement, says an exchange, and in several of our county villages tree planting is to occur this spring.”

“Oct. 1882- The people have come to the conclusion that the telephone is quite an institution and instruments are in at the offices of the following named gentlemen. Dr. Flint, Bidwell Hotel, Addison Kingsbury, Geo. L. Phillips, W.F. Sweet and E.A. Tracy.”

“Jan. 1889- Four boys, aged about twelve and fourteen years, broke into the store of J.D. Ledoyt, Monday night the thirteenth and after quietly examining the interior of the building and the merchandise therein, found to their delight two packages of greenbacks, one containing one hundred dollars, the other one forty dollars, and in a moment the forty dollar roll was placed in the pocket of one of them and with no little dexterity made off with the money to Willimantic. They were pursued by Sheriff Phillips the following day, who succeeded in arresting them. He returned with the boys to Coventry, and placed them in the hands of Justice Kingsbury.” (18)



Newspaper Reports on The Village-1881-1882

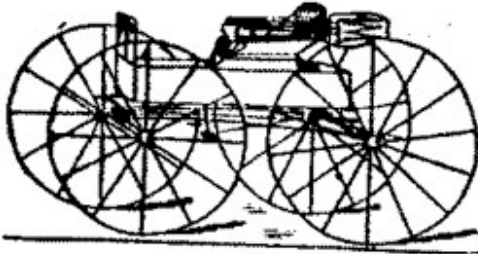


Newspaper Reports on The Village-1881-1882

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CHARLES C. COOMES,
CARRIAGE MAKER
AND REPAIRER,



South Coventry, . . . Conn.

Carriages and Wagons of all Descriptions Made and Repaired in Workmanlike manner, and at Reasonable Prices. Special attention paid to the Manufacture of Wheels & Light Buggies.

All work guaranteed to give perfect satisfaction.

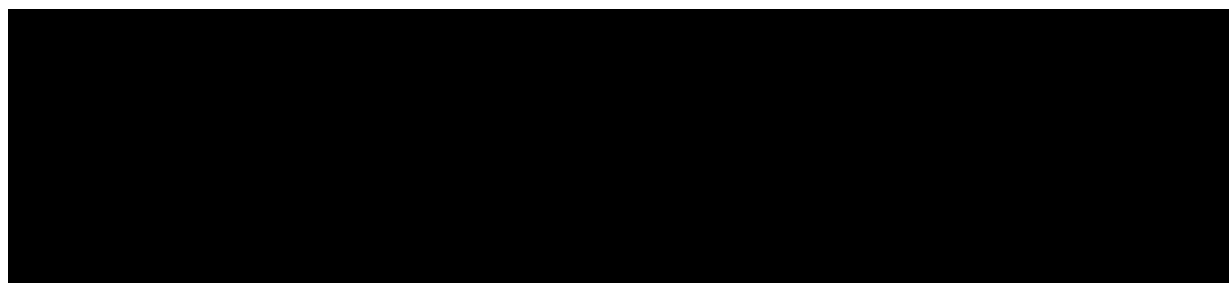
“Mar. 1881- Wm. F. Sweet of the firm of Hammond & Sweet of this village, has purchased the store belonging to Walter A. Loomis, and now occupied by Levi A. Hall, (Wellwood’s General Store) and will, it is said, remove his business there while Mr. Hall will occupy the store now held by Messrs. Hammond & Sweet, or open a store at some other location in the village.”



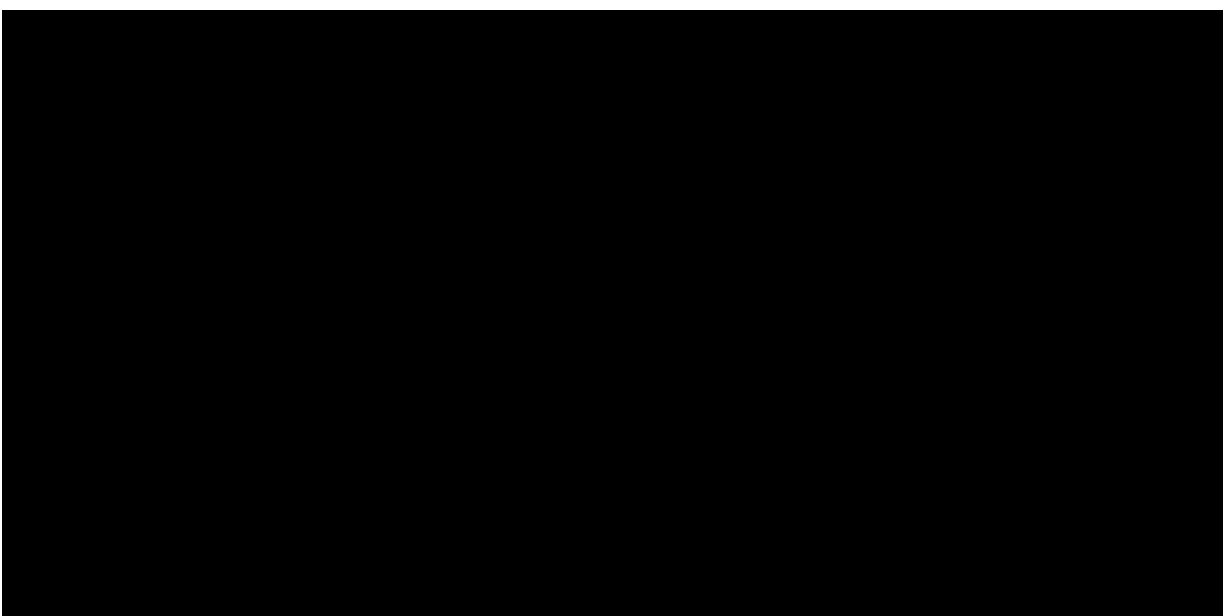
Charles G. Coombs was born in Woodstock, Connecticut in 1852 and later moved to Coventry. He was a descendent of John Coombs who came to Plymouth in 1630. Charles married Alice Boynton (daughter of Norman) in 1875 and they had two daughters, Hattie and Alice who remained unmarried. Charles worked for Albert Potter as a wheelwright in Potter's shop on School Street. A little before 1880, he purchased the carriage shop which was then owned by Norman Boynton. He operated the shop for a number of years and was an accomplished woodworker making cedar chests, sleds, etc. He also formed a cycling club. In the late 1800's, his passion turned to photography. He snapped hundreds of pictures, mostly in Coventry, on glass slides. His work remains today on numerous postcards and provides the most complete glimpse of life in town around the turn of the last century. Charles died in 1936.



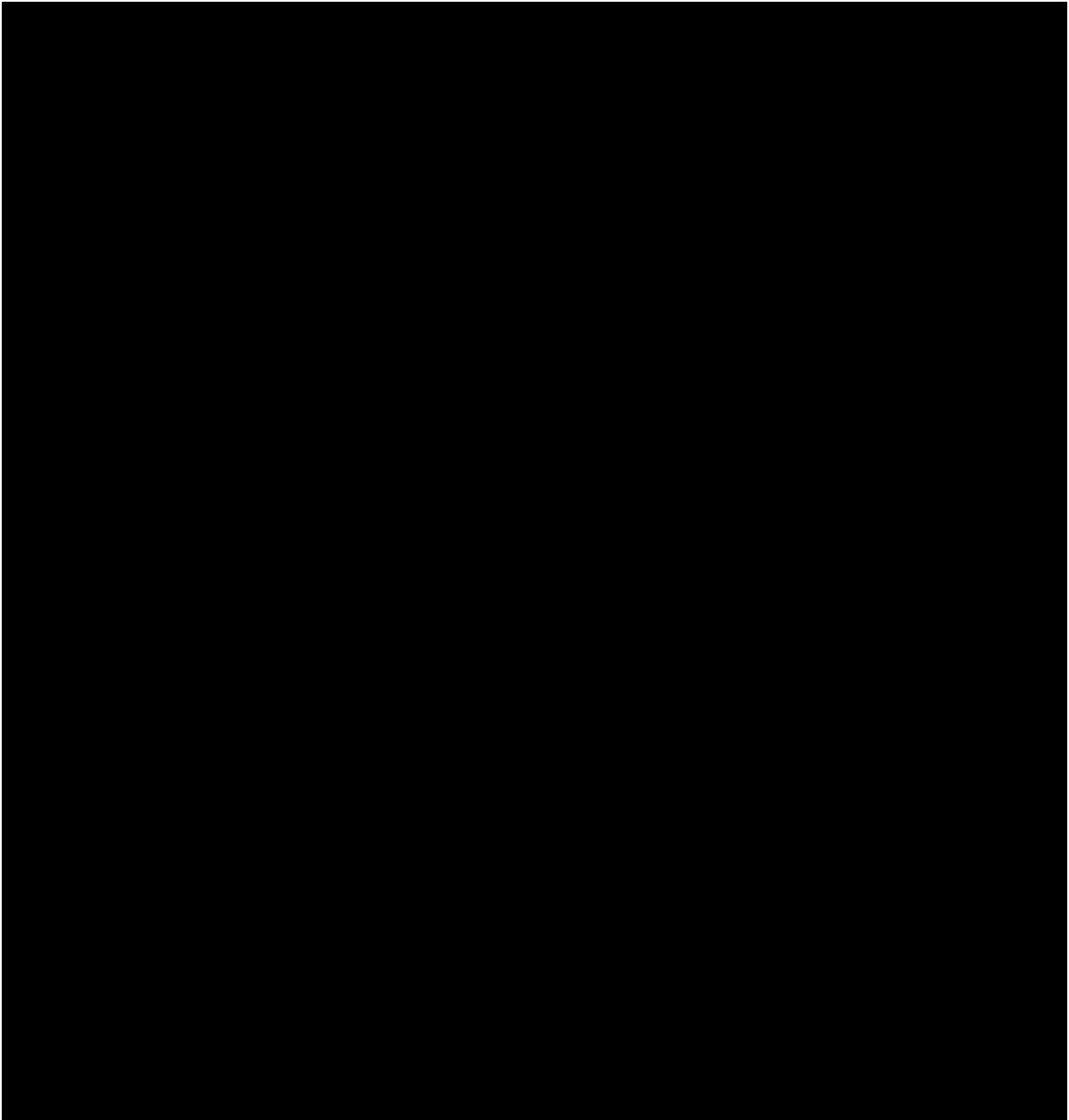
Charles Coombs (1852-1936)



Charles Coombs (1852-1936)



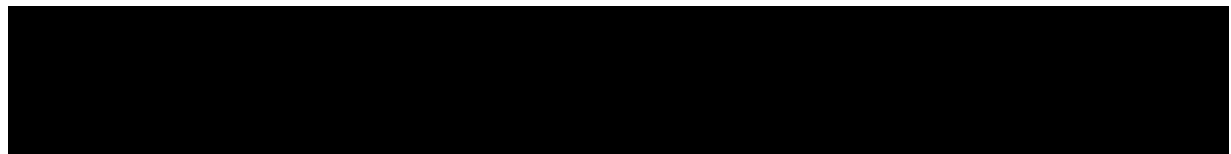
Charles Gustavus Coombs



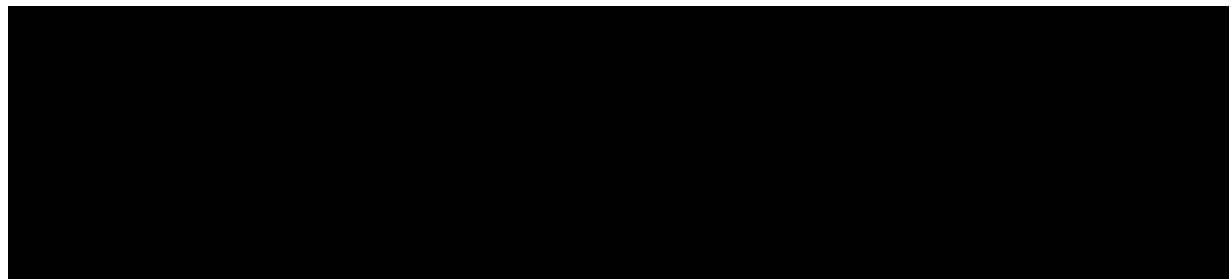


The Alanson Washburn family had an eighty year history of mill activity in Coventry. Their companies went by the name of Washburn, A. Washburn & Sons, Washburn Silk Company of New York, and Coventry Silk. Alanson began his industrial career in 1841 by purchasing a plot of undeveloped land on the Mill Brook behind today's Visitors Center. He dug a by-pass trench to divert the brook and built a small foundry which he operated until 1870 making kettles, plows and other iron implements. He also built a second building which was rented to Crittendon & Tibbals for their machine shop and early percussion cap business. In 1870 he made a major change to his mill and converted it to make silk. He employed between seven and sixteen people using seven horsepower of water power there until his family's bankruptcy in 1908. The building was sold in 1910 to Eugene Tracy who rented it to an auto mechanic named Jacquith. The building burned in 1917. Mr. Washburn built a beautiful home on what is now the municipal parking lot on Main Street that is occupied by his family until it is vacated and burned in the 1970's.

The Washburn family also acquired the Globe Mill in 1906. It was located on the Mill Brook, easterly from Woods Lane. Silk spinning and winding was done here. The mill was lost to E.A.



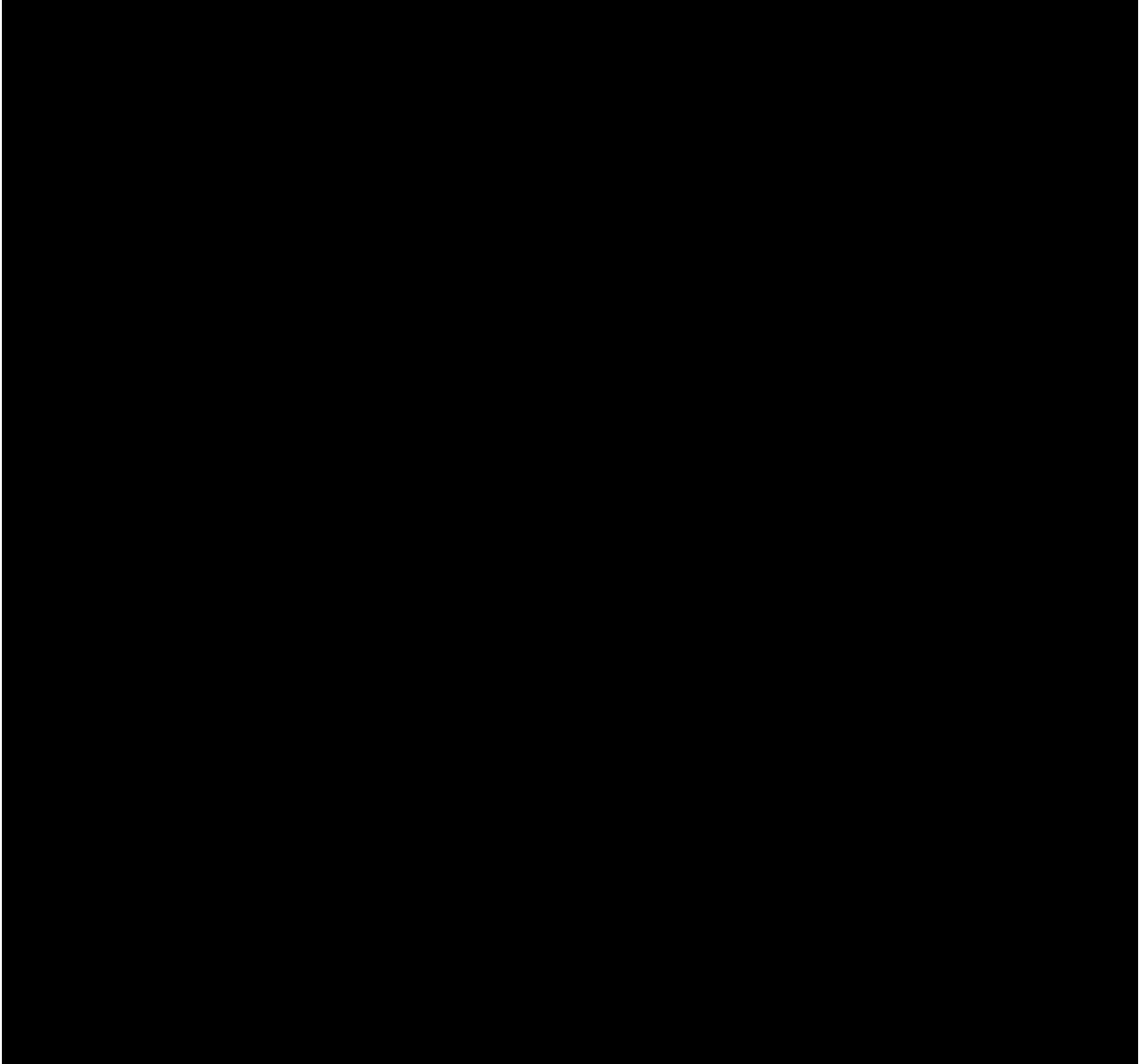
Alanson Washburn & Sons- Foundry and Silk Mills



Alanson Washburn & Sons- Foundry and Silk Mills



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Tracy in 1908 due to bankruptcy, but was returned to the Washburn family in 1921. It was transferred to the Aetna Silk Company of New York in 1929 as a failing silk business during the Depression. It was then sold to Louise Sonderegger in 1933 who resurrected the silk business. The mill was making parachute cords for the war effort when it burned in 1942.

In 1879 Eugene Tracy and Thomas Wood became active on the site of the town's original grist mill. They made "shoddy" which is a recycled wool material made from scraps of used wool clothing. Mr. Wood added an oaken flume to better direct the water from the dam to his mill, extended the factory and added machinery. He replaced the old water wheel with a newer one and prepared to add steam power. Mr. Eaton sold the mill to Mr. Wood in 1880. Thomas H. Wood, born in 1846, came to Coventry from Danvers, Massachusetts with his father and brother John. He was likely employed in one of the textile mills downstream. Mr. Wood operated the mill until his death in 1931, though the company he founded employed the site until 1961.

Thomas Wood began to make twisted silk fishing line in 1888 of a very high quality. Samples of the product exist today. He enlarged the mill in 1892. In 1903 the brook and the penstock were still separate, and the mill had machines for wringing, reeling and spinning. Some of those machines exist in the present building and are used to make medical sutures. Water power was still being used, though heating was done by coal-fired steam boilers. The T.H. Wood Company was incorporated in 1910. Its officers were Thomas, Homer, and Jennie Wood. Electricity was introduced to the mill by 1914, and another addition is made in 1925. The fish lines were named "Silver Streak Silk Fish Lines". The company also made thread for bead necklaces.

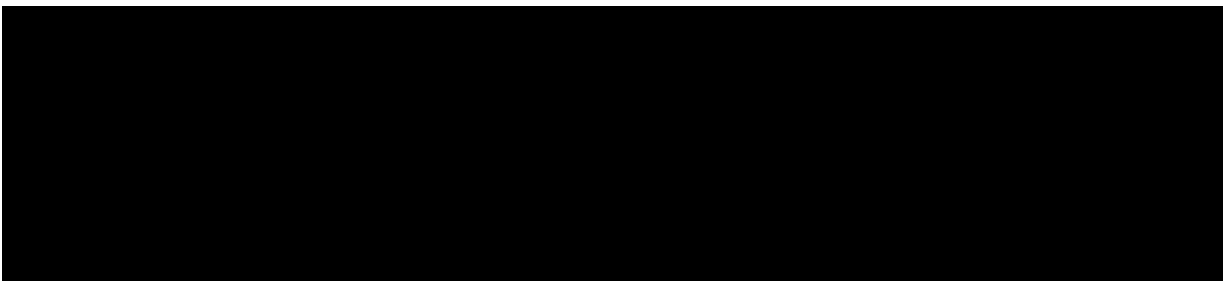
The mill was sold to the Sutures Company in 1961, and they began to make silk sutures for the medical community. That product continues to be made today although of a plastic material. The company changed its name to the Deknatel Company, and then is sold to the Genzyme Corporation and then to the present Telaflex Corporation. An original grist stone sits near the office entrance.

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The Thomas H. Wood Silk Mill



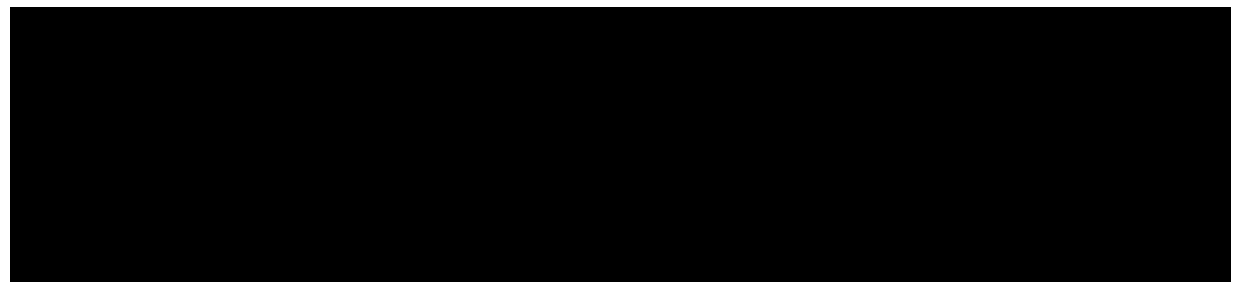
The Thomas H. Wood Silk Mill



Eugene Allen Tracy was born on September 15, 1850 in Smithfield, Rhode Island. He came to Coventry and entered the manufacturing business in the 1870's by first purchasing a blacksmith's shop, and then very soon afterwards, began building a very large complex of shoddy mills in town. He lived in a home on Wall Street visible from his mill site, commonly called the "Tracy Mansion". In 1900 he visited Pinehurst, North Carolina and became a member of a famous golfing organization called the Tin Whistles. He built a home there in 1915 where he spent his summers gardening and golfing. He contributed to many organizations and charities. Following his commercial demise in Coventry during the Great Depression, he retired to North Carolina where he lived until his death on May 11, 1934.



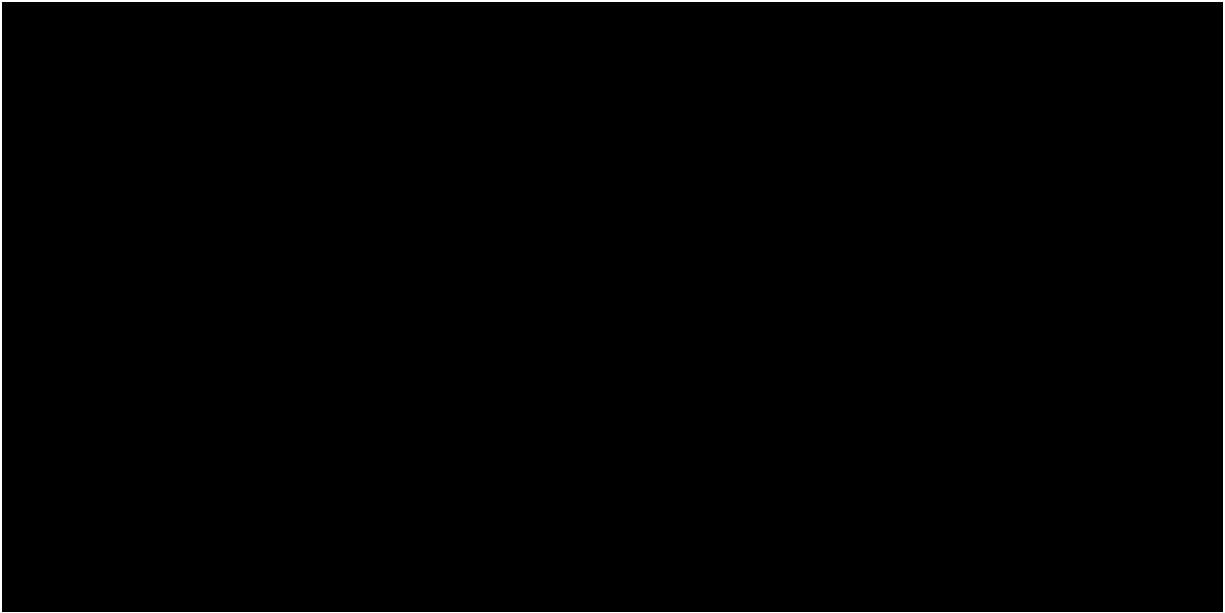
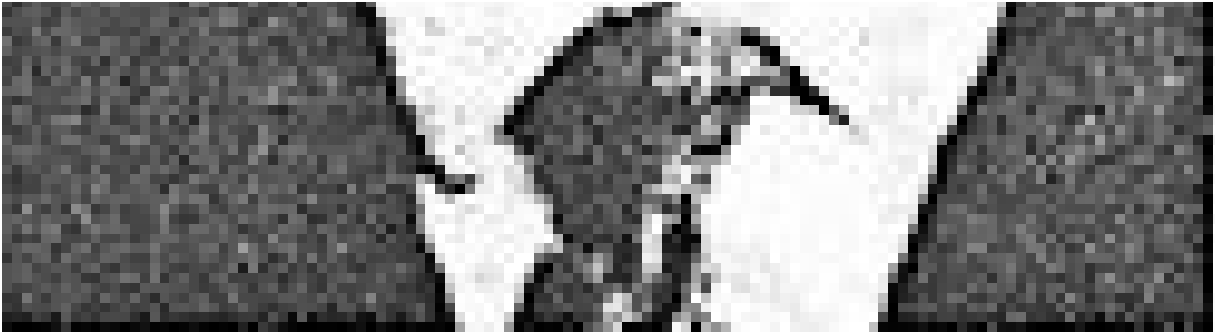
Eugene A. Tracy



Eugene A. Tracy





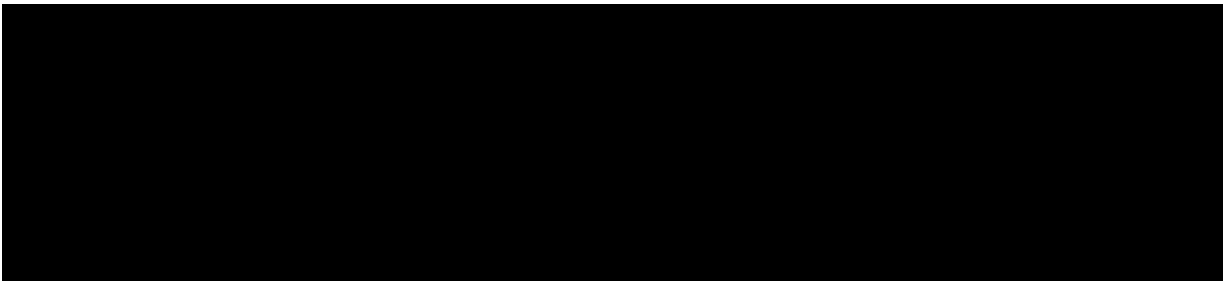


Eugene A. Tracy

As the price of woolen goods gradually rose after the Civil War, a market was created for re-cycled wool cloth called “shoddy”. Factories were built all over the northeast to produce this rough cloth. Mr. Tracy purchased the old Boynton cotton mill site on Main Street (just east of Monument Hill Road) in 1882 and began a forty-seven year stretch making shoddy. Tracy erected a brick building for his office and installed one of the town’s first telephones. This building is now the Bidwell Tavern. The mill expanded rapidly and by 1892 was the largest employer in town. The process of making shoddy was very tedious as it involved shredding the material which created large amounts of dust and bleaching the material with strong acids.



Tracy’s Shoddy Mill



Tracy’s Shoddy Mill



Austin Cornelius Dunham and his father, Austin (1809-1877), were direct descendants of the Honorable Jesse Root. Austin (Sr.) was raised in Coventry and moved to Prospect Street in Hartford in 1835. He was a prominent and successful businessman having interests in the Hop River Warp Company and the Dunham Manufacturing Company which he sold to the Willimantic Linen Company in 1877. As a young man he worked in Boynton's cotton mill on the Windham Turnpike in Coventry, and at his death owned the factory which was considerably smaller at the time. His estate sold the property to Eugene Tracy who built his shoddy mill there.

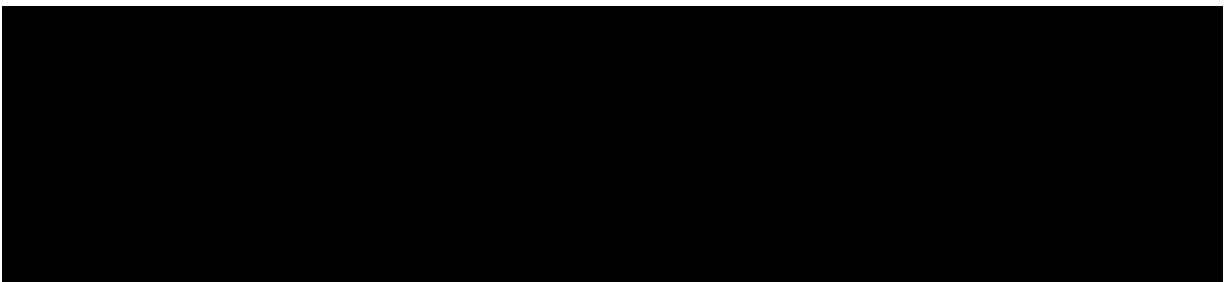
Austin Cornelius was born in Coventry in 1833. He was a successful businessman and engineer and a personal friend of Thomas Edison. In 1878 at a time when electricity was largely limited to the academic physics laboratory, a group of Hartford businessmen, including Dunham, who shared a keen interest in the rapidly developing science of electricity began to think about its use for industrial lighting. Late in 1878, Dunham had a simple six-lamp arc-light system installed in one of his Willimantic Linen Company buildings. So successful was this experiment that, two years later, in 1880, the company erected a new building that was described by a writer as "the model cotton mill of the world," especially for its extensive use of arc lighting throughout.

The plant was visited by engineers, college classes, and the general public. In 1879, the Willimantic Linen Company loaned its arc-light system to Hartford for one evening's use, the anniversary of the Civil War Battle of Antietam. Some 30,000 people in Bushnell Park witnessed the arc lights illuminating the Capitol dome. In 1896, Dunham had a 300-ton, 400-kilowatt lead- acid battery installed to store surplus electricity for minimizing service interruptions caused by machine breakdowns. Ever since the summer of 1883, when he had experimented with the installation of a storage battery at his Willimantic Company, Austin had envisioned the day when hydroelectric power could be produced around the clock and stored during the "off" hours for use during the "peak." Early in 1900, he purchased the Hartford Electric Light Company, and installed there the first

transmission plant in the United States. It was largely through his genius that electricity, at an affordable price, was developed.

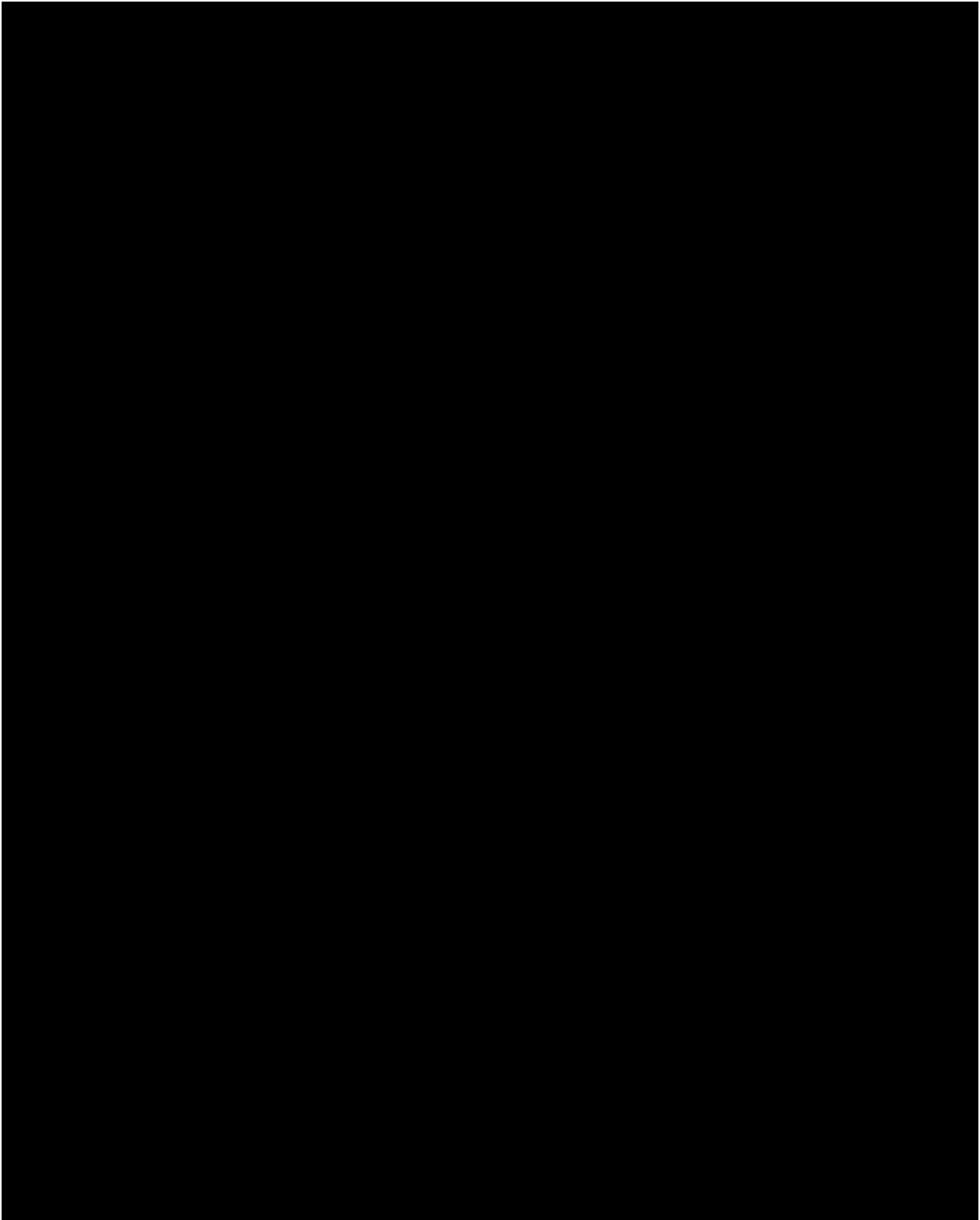


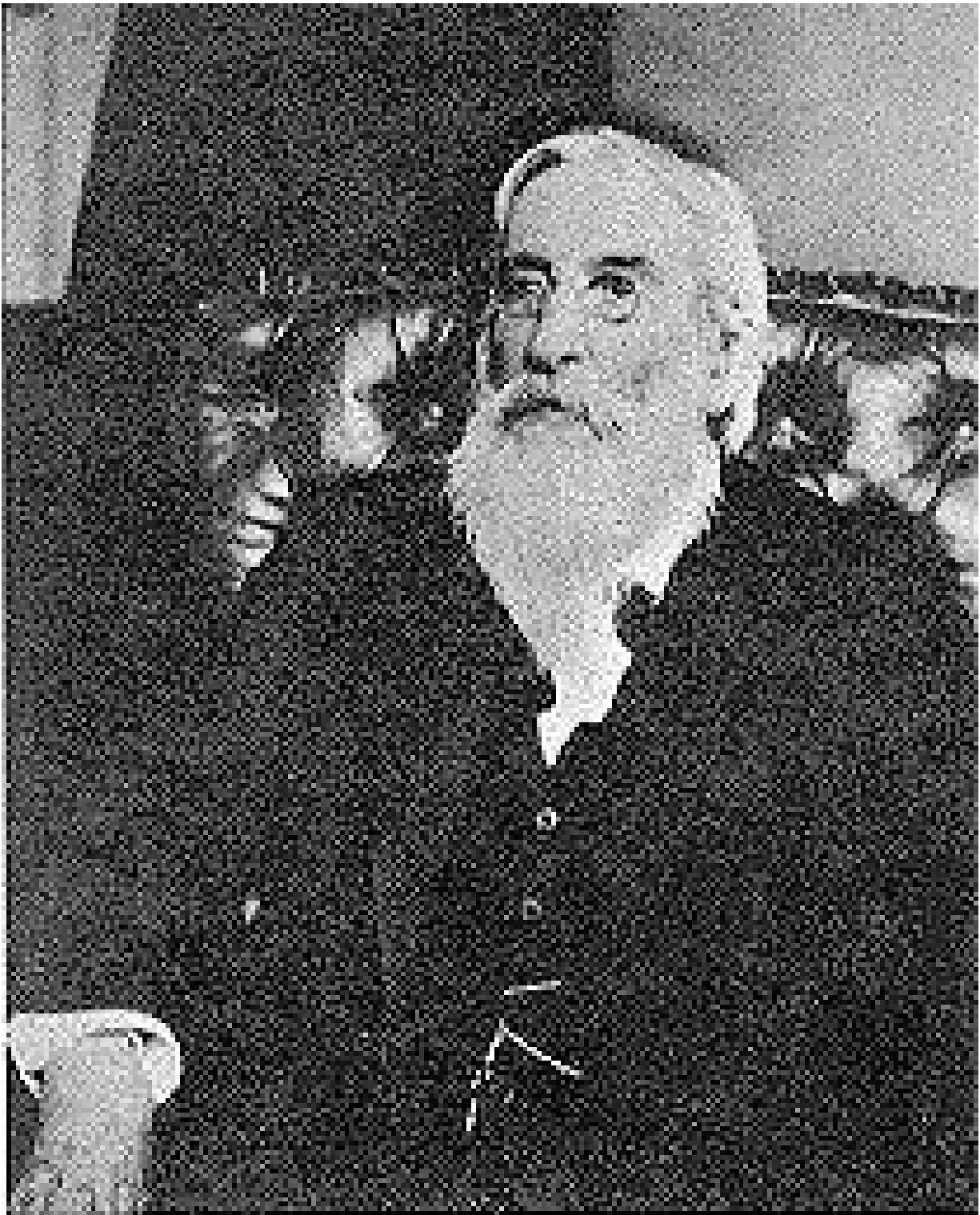
Austin Cornelius Dunham (1834-1918)



Austin Cornelius Dunham (1834-1918)







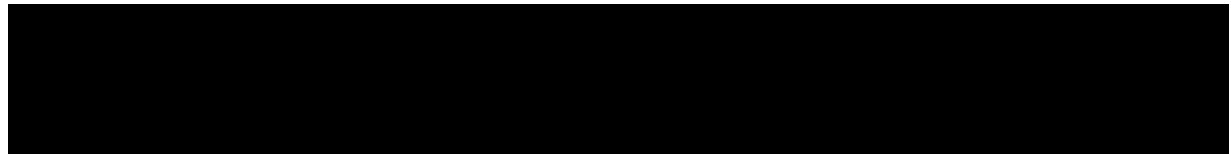


Austin C. Dunham

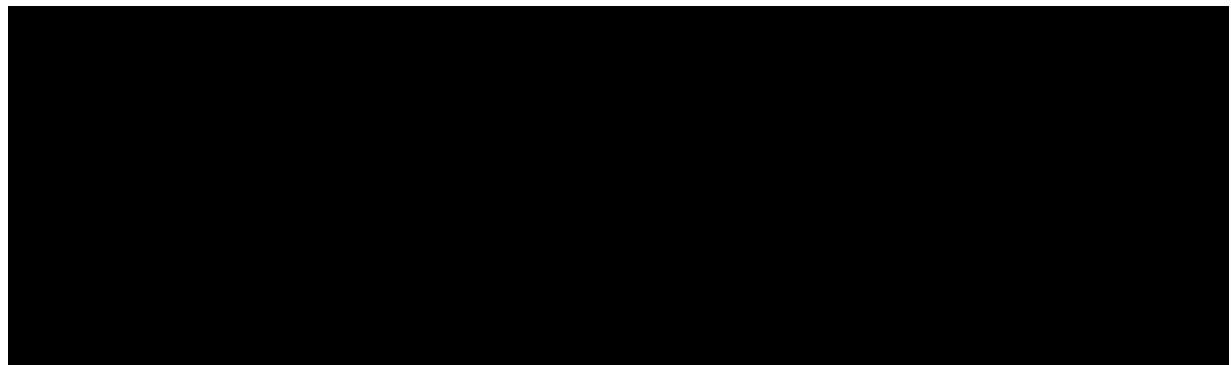


My grandfather, Judge Jesse Root died some years before I entered the world. He lived in a gambrel-roofed house built when recollections of the window tax were still in the minds of men, and placed on the side of a hill with one story and the windows set in the roof, and the south side with the whole expanse up two stories- the lower story being the abode of the farmer who succeeded the two old negro slaves and who occupied a long kitchen room in which there was an immense fireplace in a stone chimney which filled the whole center of the building.

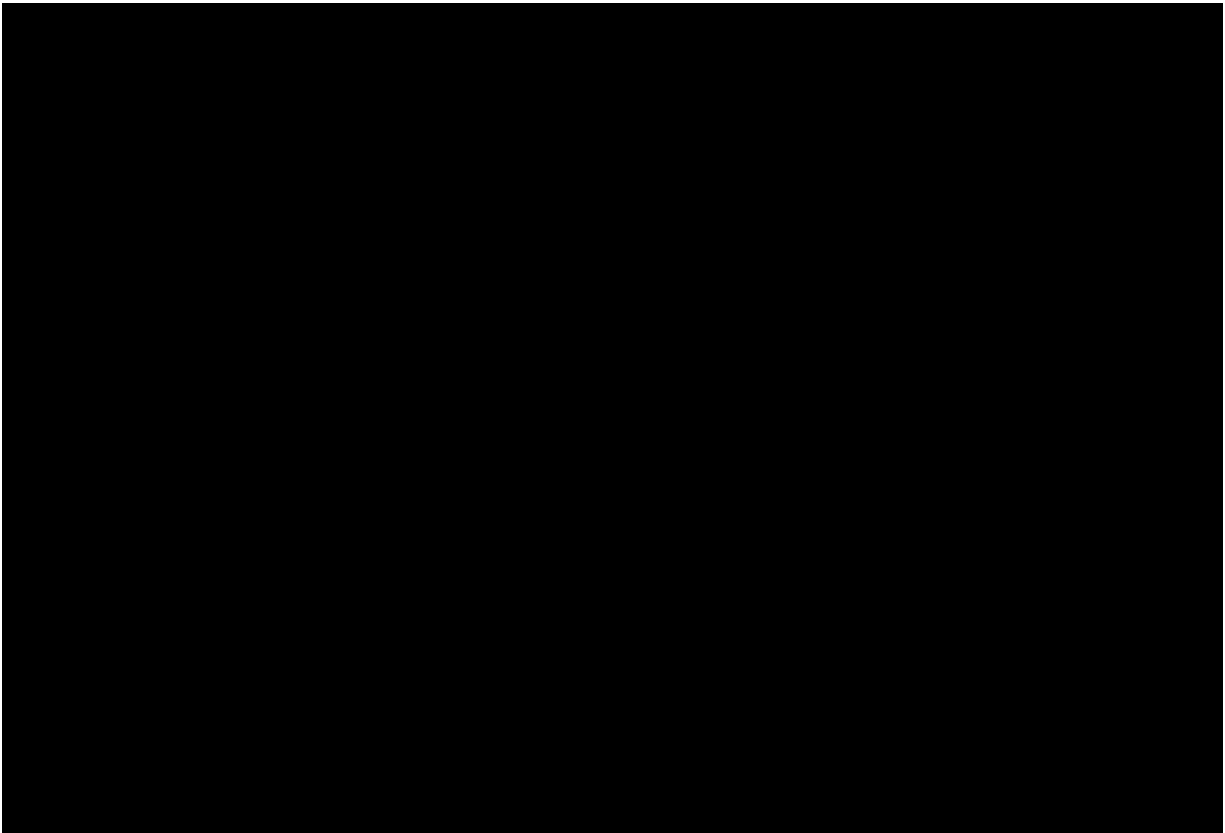
Here I listened to the tales of the farmer who had been a sailor in the War of 1812. I recall the indigo-blue dye tub in the corner of the room, in which was dyed wool used to make the yarn for blue socks- an important article for barter in the village store.

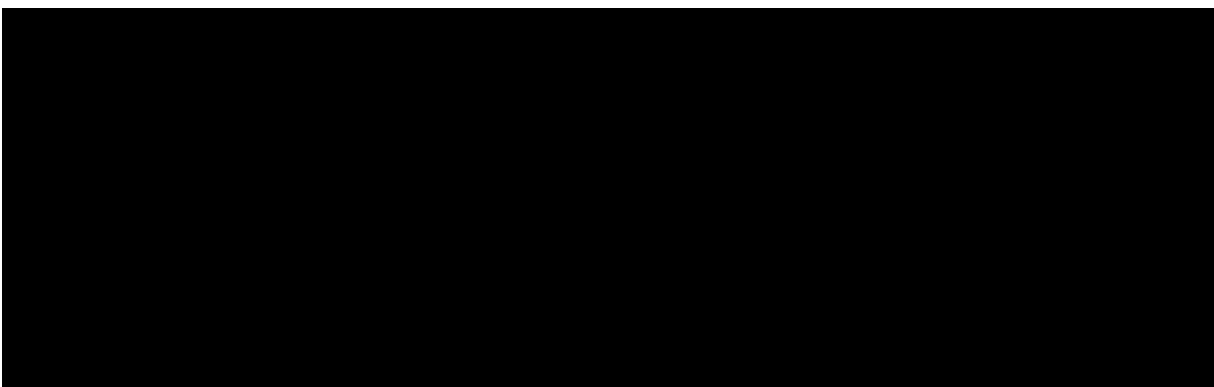


Austin Dunham Recalls His Childhood in Jesse Root's House



Austin Dunham Recalls His Childhood in Jesse Root's House





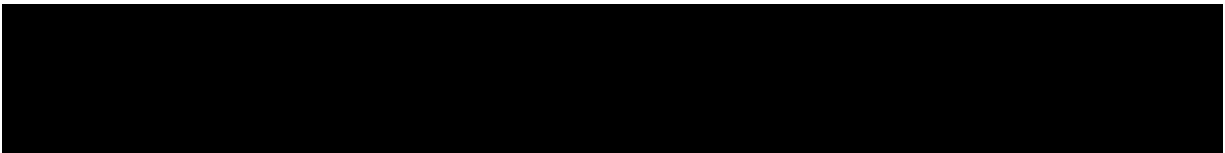
The Jesse Root House- Main Street ca 1912

“Dec. 28, 1881- The woolen mills of Barber & Kenyon have stopped for an indefinite period, and as a consequence the schools in district one, and three, have a greater number of scholars than usual.”

In 1881 eight establishments are using steam as auxiliary power (Tracy, Washburn, Morgan, Mason, Gilboa, Wood, and two at Kenyon). "Dec. 28, 1881- The blacksmith shop formerly occupied by D.F. Knight, has been rented and is now occupied by W.S. Woodworth.” (The Willimantic And South Coventry Business Directory lists “N. Stanley-Grist Mill’ in 1888.) "Apr. 12, 1882- Mr. A.A. Conant of this village, has leased the Huntington silk mill at South Coventry and will engage in the manufacture of machine twist."

"Mar. 21, 1883- A new firm is soon to commence business in the silk mill of D.W. Huntington."

“ Feb. 20, 1884- The American Rapid Telegraph Co. are pushing work through this place. They have a large force at work and nearly all the new poles are in position.” (In 1886 SNET began serving Coventry (nine lines) from its Willimantic Exchange. The wires traveled "roof top and tree" to one existing



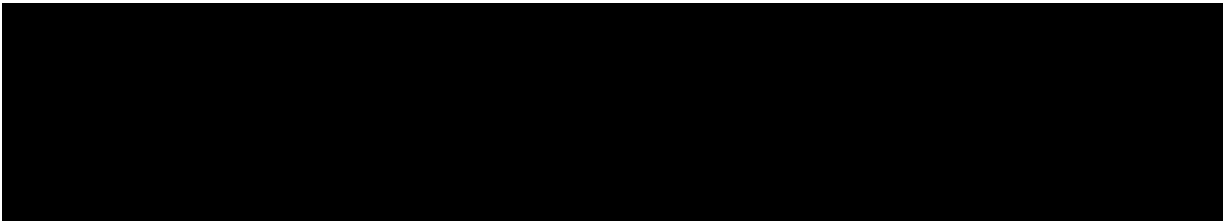
The Willimantic Chronicle Reports on Mills, Telegraph and Telephones



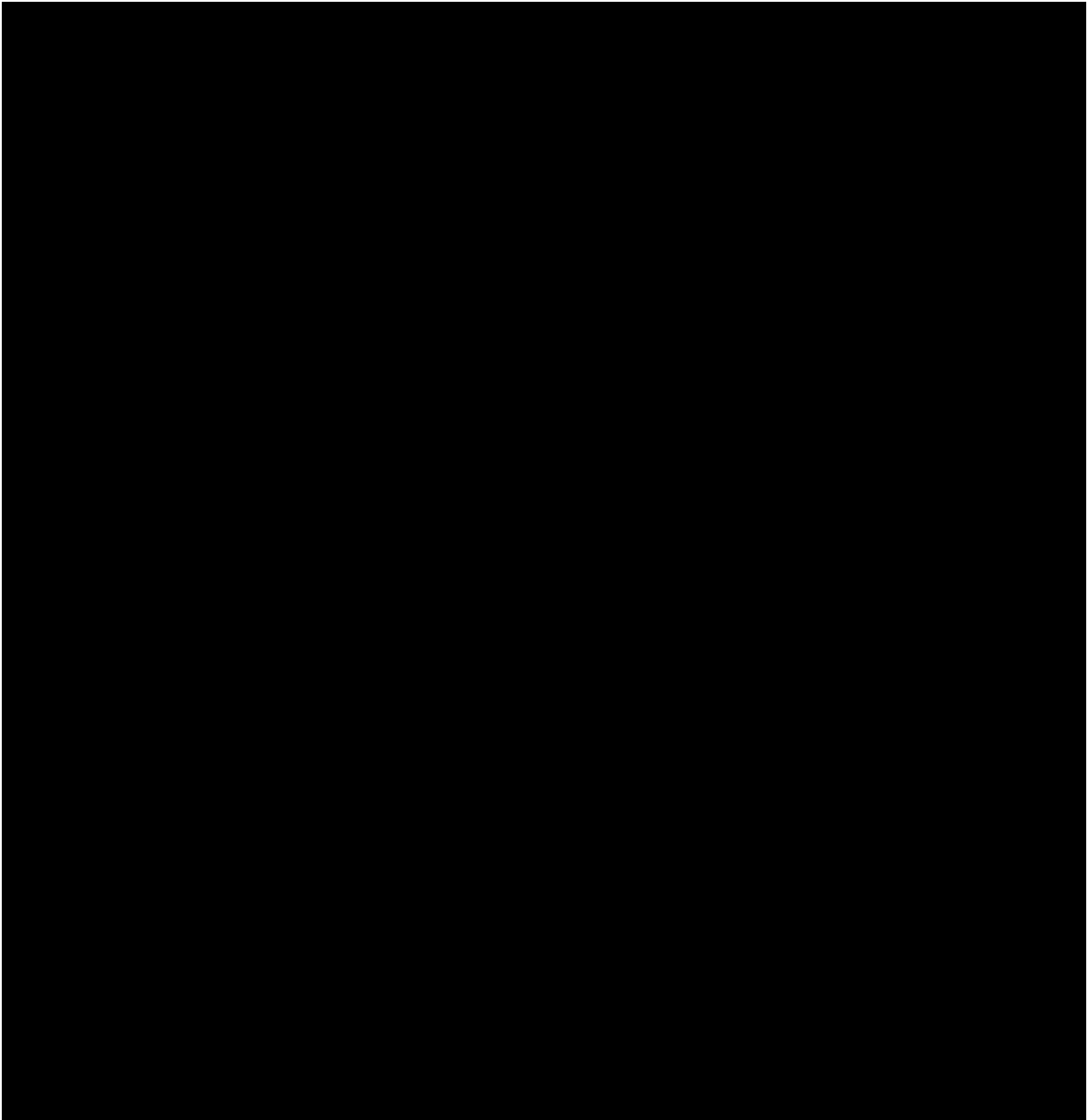
The Willimantic Chronicle Reports on Mills, Telegraph and Telephones



210



pole then to a crude switchboard maintained by H.E. Remington. In 1890
Coventry's population dropped below 2,000 for the first time since 1780 and
did not go above 2,000 until after WWII.)



"May 21, 1884- Sweet & Webber(sic) of South Coventry, manufacturers of sewing silk, machine and buttonhole twist, floss, embroidery silk, have lately added new spooling machinery to their works. When running full will run off 150 to 200 pounds raw silk stock a week." The Huntington mill burned about 1885. D.W. Huntington, the original silk mill owner, died in 1885.

“ October 24, 1892- Willimantic and surrounding districts suffered through a late summer and fall drought. Lake Wangumbaug at Coventry was some ten feet lower than its usual level.” In 1893 telephones in Coventry dropped to seven, calls were made by number to a new office at the Willimantic Savings Institute.

"Feb. 22, 1882- Kenyon & Barber's mill is soon to be running again, an addition thirty by eighty feet is to be built, new machinery to be put in and changes in the old to be made. A new class of goods are to be manufactured."

"Feb. 22, 1882- J.M. Wood's woolen mill is soon to stop for a few days and the old looms to be replaced by new Stafford looms capable of performing a greater variety of work."

"May 17, 1882- The new mill of Barber & Kenyon is nearly completed. It is to be connected to the old factory by covered passage ways."

"Oct. 18, 1882- Mr. Tracy has recently installed a telephone in his office."

"Apr. 11, 1883- A fire occurred in the shoddy mill of E.A. Tracy last Monday. It was seen in time, and the flames were extinguished before much damage was done."

"Apr. 23, 1884- The Washington Woolen Mill in South Coventry was burned last night with its contents. The mill was owned by H.A. Kimball of Pascoag, Rhode Island, and operated by Gilboa & Nason making ladies' dress goods, and was run night and day. The mill was formerly run by George K. Nason of this place. The loss is estimated as high as \$50,000. The mill was fitted with pipes and sprinklers and a powerful force pump, but for some reason the pump was not got to work. The light of the flames was distinctly seen by parties here. (Willimantic).

"May 21, 1884- C.H. Kenyon & Co., South Coventry, manufacturers of ladies' dress flannels, propose to enlarge their mill by building an addition to their finishing room thirty by forty feet making their building thirty by one hundred and twenty feet, three stories high instead of two, as now. They will also put in new machinery." "Oct. 22, 1884- Carsen & Gilboa, lessees of the Washington mill, recently destroyed by fire, have leased a mill near Woonsocket, Rhode Island and have already taken possession. The Washington Mill was owned by Horace Kimball of Providence, Rhode Island. The fire started in an overheated bearing of a dryer. Two buildings

were destroyed at a loss of \$100,000 and 150 employees were put out of work. Several families employed by them while here have followed and are now in their employ."

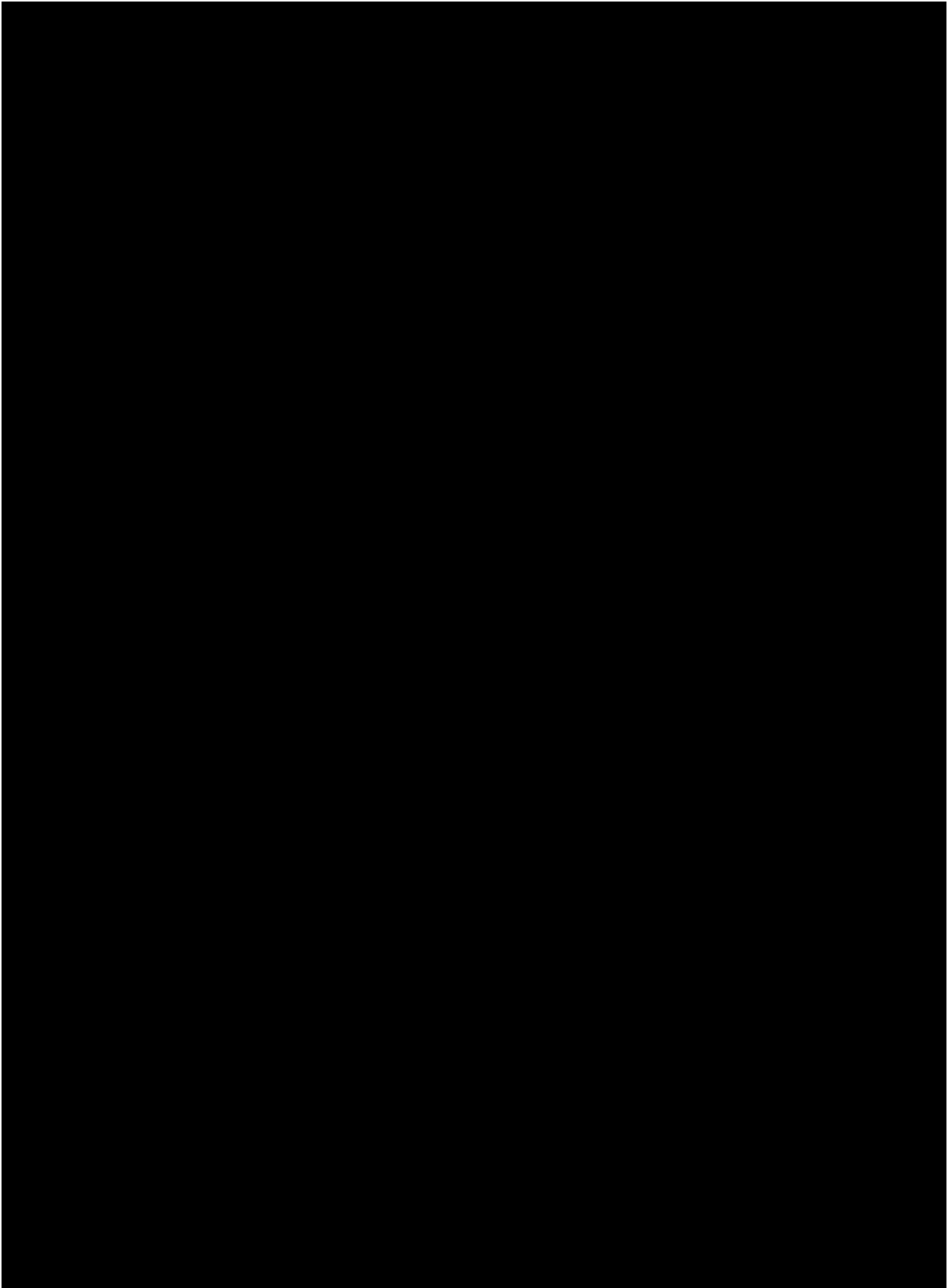
"Dec. 10, 1884- The firm of Kenyon & Barber, manufacturers of ladies' fine dress flannels, probably warned by the frequent fires in this village, have recently furnished their mill with a patent sprinkler. To do this it was necessary to place a large tank on the high ground near Main Street, to serve as a reservoir for water supply. This tank has been covered by a neat building supplied with heating conveniences.

"Jul. 6, 1887- Late Wednesday there was a fire in the E.A. Tracy mill, seventy-five men fought it for an hour before extinguishing it. Damage was \$500 - 600."

"Sep. 21, 1887- Mr. A.D. Bottum will build an addition to his silk mills. This will be the third addition. He started a few years ago with twenty employees and now has forty." In 1888 there are fifty hands at work and the old octagonal workshop (two stories and thirty feet across) has been increased in size on every side and only the pillars are left in a small space showing where the old building stood."

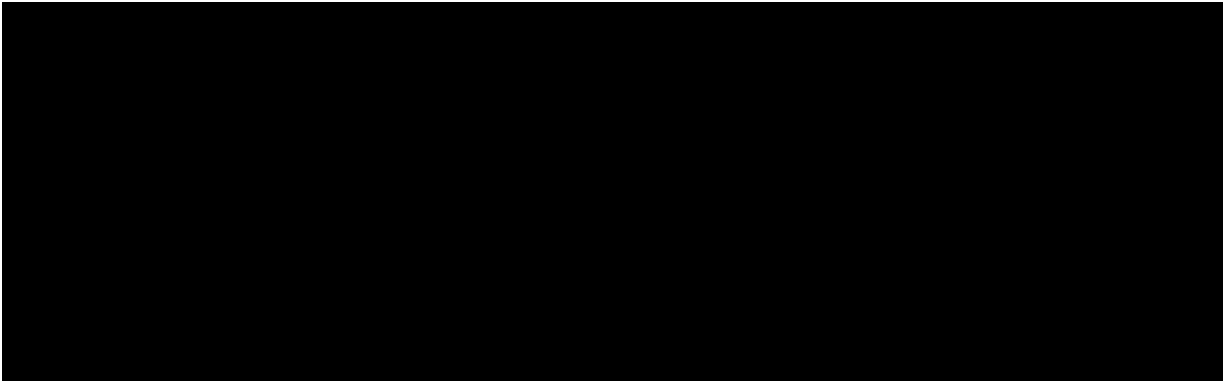
"May 2, 1892- Willimantic's leading building contractor, John O'Sullivan, had just completed a large storehouse for the Tracy Mill."

"May 2, 1892- South Coventry was a scene of springtime activity. The T.H. Wood silk mill was having a large addition built by local contractors."





The Willimantic Chronicles Reports Mill Activity in the 1880's



The Willimantic Chronicles Reports Mill Activity in the 1880's



On January 28, 1878, two years after Alexander Graham Bell was awarded a patent on his primitive telephone, the world's first commercial telephone exchange opened for business in New Haven, Connecticut. George W. Coy, Herrick P. Frost and Walter Lewis, with a great deal of courage, some makeshift equipment, and \$600 of borrowed money, put Mr. Bell's wonderful invention to work. Their enterprise was called the District Telephone Company of New Haven. Twenty-one citizens of New Haven became the world's first subscribers to telephone exchange service. For \$1.50 a month they could talk with each other, provided two other conversations weren't using the switchboard. The single handpiece was alternated between mouth and ear, and clear conversation was not the rule. A single, grounded wire was strung tree to tree.

The Southern New England Telephone Company, a direct corporate descendant of the District Telephone Company, began serving Coventry residents from its Willimantic exchange in 1886. The telephone lines of the first nine subscribers were connected to a crude switchboard maintained by H.E. Remington in the back of his clothing store in Willimantic. Within two years Coventry subscribers and the Willimantic exchange were being served from a new office at the Willimantic Savings Institute office in the United Bank Building. At that time subscribers placed their calls by numbers, whereas before they simply had to say the name of the person to be called to the operator.

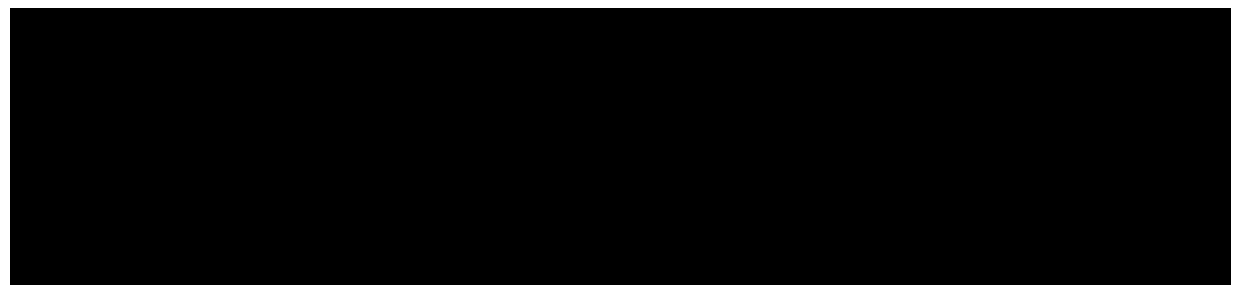
By 1893, Coventry subscribers had slipped to seven. In 1903 in an effort to offset competition and hasten subscribers in rural areas, SNET granted sub-licenses to neighborhood subscribers. One such group was the Bolton and Coventry Telephone Association. They maintained their own plant while SNET sub-let equipment and connected their lines through the toll lines to Manchester. By 1913, this neighborhood Association was defunct. SNET built a new telephone building on High Street in Willimantic and over 2,000 old hand-cranked phones were replaced with common battery instruments. In 1948 Coventry became a separate exchange, and a year later a dial office was built in town.

An 1894 Telephone Bill for Dr. Higgins

By 1950 there were 1,524 Coventry subscribers. The population that year was a little over four thousand. By 1960 subscribers nearly doubled. Direct Distance dialing was introduced in 1962. (The telephone in front of the Grange Hall was one of the first pay phones in town. It was on a trunk line serviced by a switchboard in Bolton. Legend has it that the news of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 was relayed from the radio station in Nova Scotia over this trunk line to New York.) (8)



Telephone



Telephone

Form 1. OFFICE OF THE SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND TELEPHONE COMPANY, 8-10-94.

Willimantic, Conn., Oct. 1, 1894.

Mr. Dr. Higgins

To THE SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND TELEPHONE COMPANY, Dr.

TO THE USE OF TELEPHONE AND TRANSMITTER, on the premises No. *58*
 from Oct. 1st, 1894, to Dec. 31st, 1894, at *75* per year,

Toll Line connections as per tickets attached		<i>14 50</i>
Long Distance " " " "		<i>17 50</i>
Local " " " "		
Messenger Service, " " " "		
Received Payment for the Company,		<i>14 50</i>

Date *Nov. 17* 1894. *E. M. Jordan*

(See other side.)

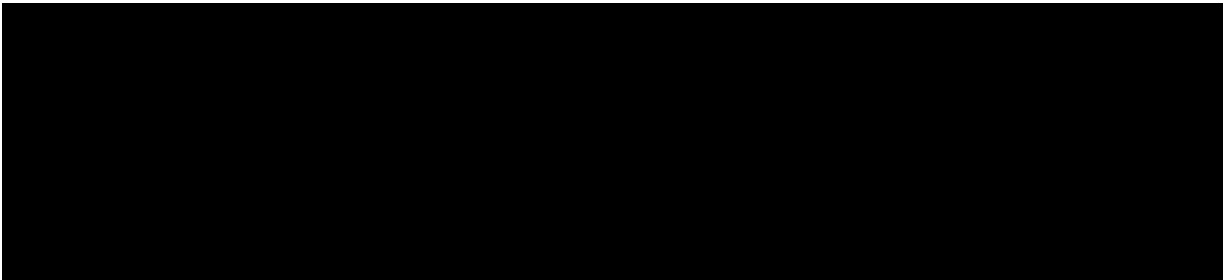


Henry Armstrong (1835-1909) came to this country from England in 1869 with his wife Jane (Pickering) Armstrong. They located in Middletown, then Hebron and came to Coventry in 1883 with their five children. Two of his sons, Edward P. and William H. grow to become very capable and inventive tool and saw makers. William eventually took over the shop on Armstrong Road at his father's death and Edward left for Michigan and eventually Oregon in 1887 and became a prominent tool maker for the emerging lumber industry in Portland Oregon. Henry Armstrong purchased Henry Parker's shop in 1887 with twenty-two machines including a wheel turner, borer, rounder, planer, several saws, sand papering machine, a mortiser, a spoke turning machine, etc. On Jun. 1, 1887, Parker sold two acres of land with building and water privilege to Henry Armstrong for \$500. "Apr. 6, 1887- Mr. Armstrong & Sons finished a new wagon for W.C. Latimer". In 1895 there is an advertisement in the Willimantic and South Coventry Directory for H. Armstrong & Sons saw and planing mill making wheels, wheel stock, wagons, carriages, etc. with a similar entry in 1900.

Mr. Armstrong built wagons of all varieties from simple freight wagons to very substantial carriers for wood and rock to semi- elegant thin wheel carriages for two people to use to visit neighbors on a Sunday afternoon. The Coventry Historical Society owns an Armstrong wagon built about 1896 to haul freight for the Kingsbury Box Company and a collection of photographs of various wagon types.

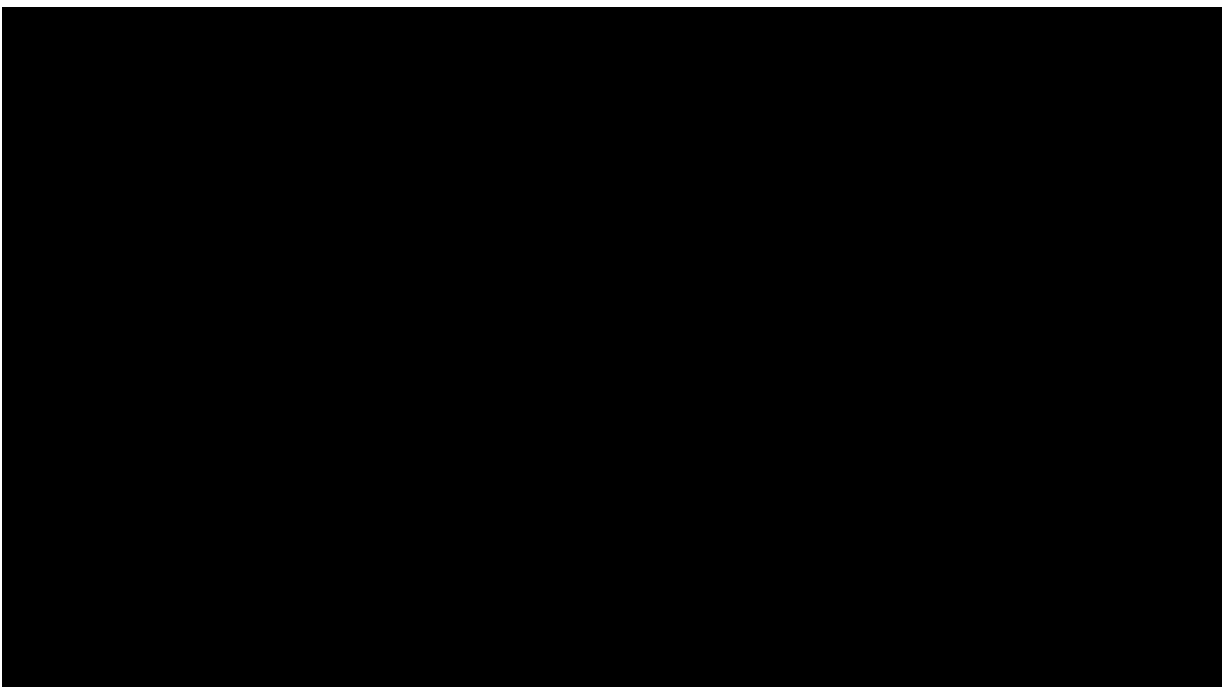


The Armstrong Wagon Shop



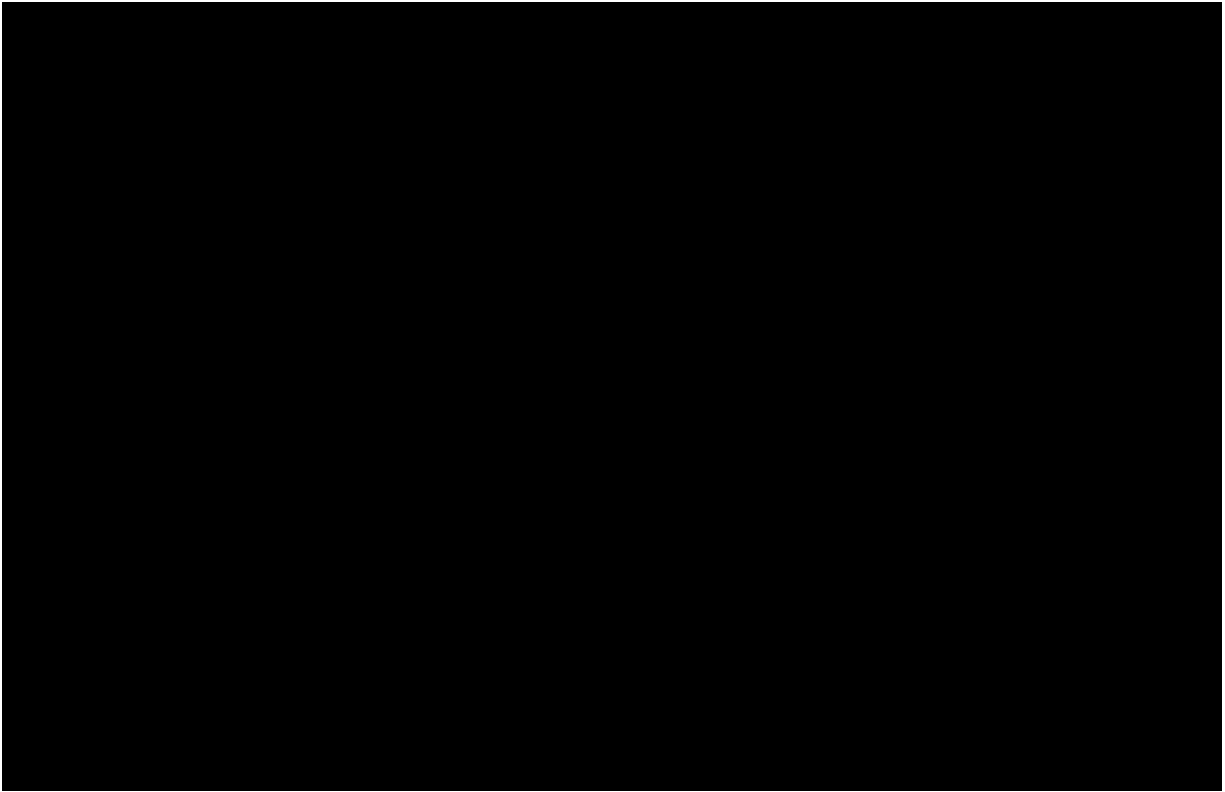
The Armstrong Wagon Shop

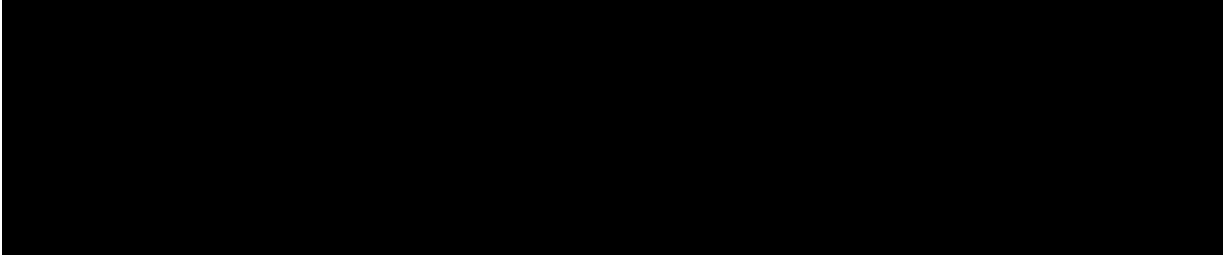




N. ARMSTRONG,
MANUFACTURER OF
WHEELS, WHEEL STOCK, WAGONS
AND CARRIAGES,
HANDLES, PICKER STICKS, ETC.

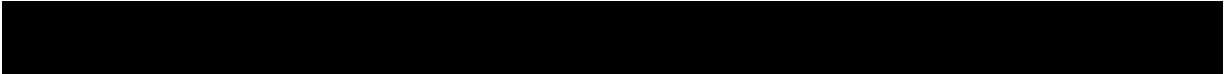
SAW & PLANING MILL,
SOUTH GOVENTRY, CONN.





Armstrong's Wagon Shop c1900

There are ten school districts in the town and, during the year of 1888, twenty-one teachers were employed. The joint board of school visitors and selectmen voted, July 2, 1887, \$3,170 for support of the public schools in the ensuing year. Teachers employed for the three terms of the past year are: District 1, Frank Young, Alice McChristie, Lucy Perkins; District 2, Carrie Johnson; District 3, Edwin Packer; District 4, Grace Stanley, H. Perkins Topliff, Rhoda Dexter; District 5, Mary Peckham, Martin Parker, Mary W. Peckham; District 6, Amelia Goodwin, Perkins Lathrop; District 7, Arad Manning, A. Lee Kelly; District 8, Augustus Camp, William Vail, Jennie Church; District 9, Everett Mason, Fannie West, District 10, Ida Lowell, John Sherman. (5)

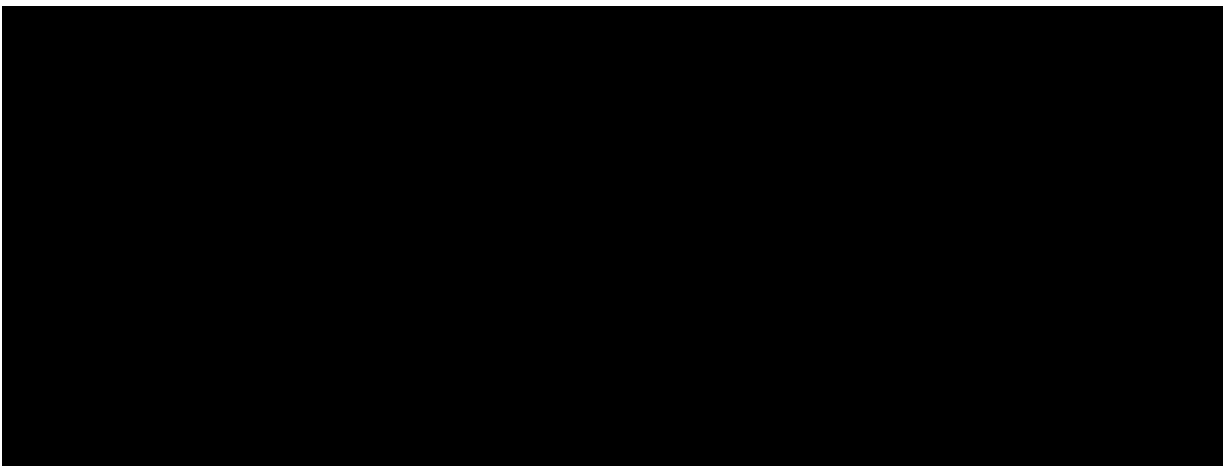


Schools-1888

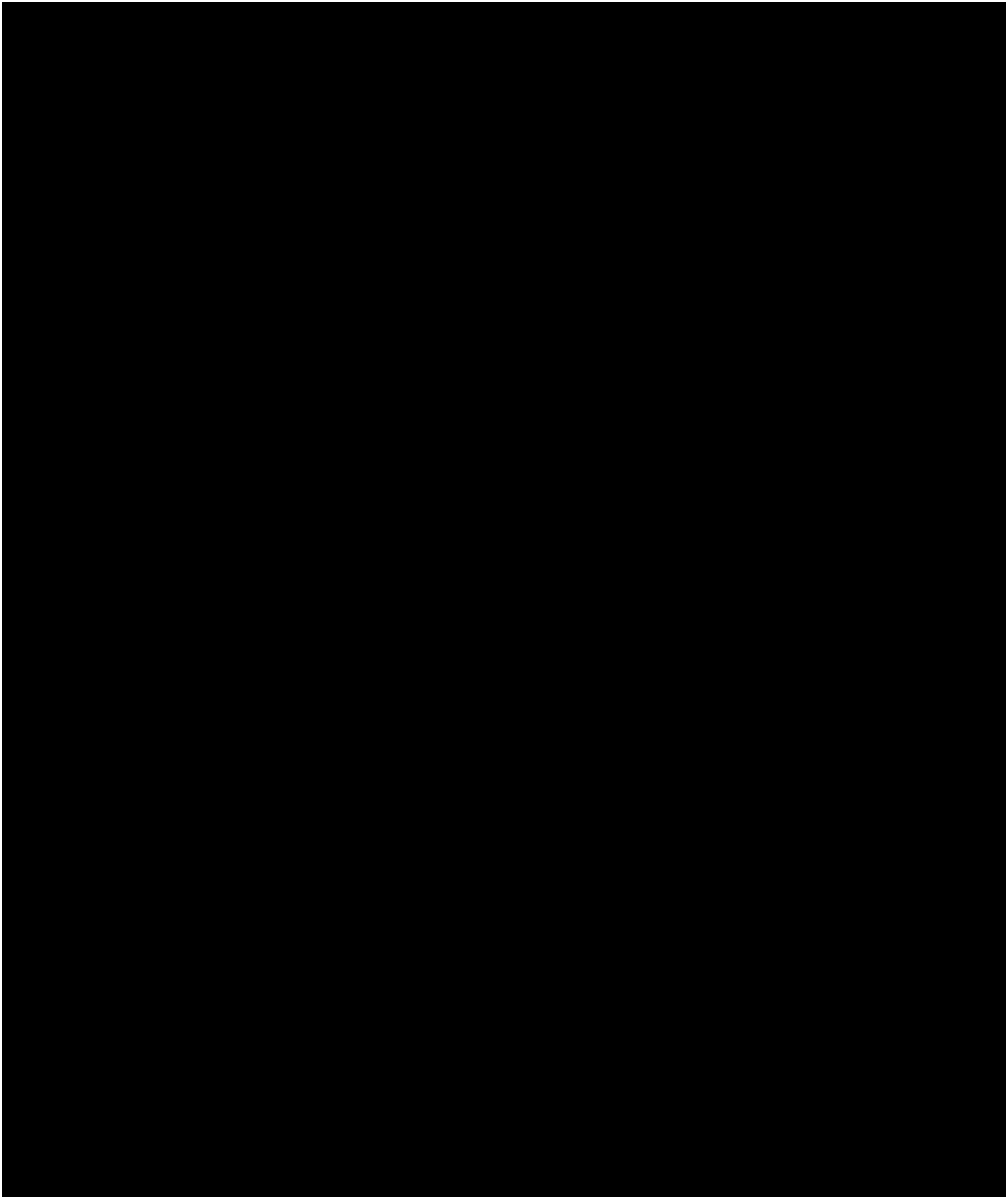


Schools-1888





Hotels-1888



Mr. J.W. Boynton speaks of hotels in Cole's book on the history of Tolland County. The first he mentioned was owned by of William Gardiner on Ripley Hill. The next in time was at the south end of South Street and was occupied by Buell Loomis in the 1880's. This hotel was on the main road

traveled from Hartford to Windham and Brooklyn until the turnpike was built through this village in 1808. Next a hotel was kept on the mail stage road from Hartford to Boston by R. Dimock, now (1888) the residence of Addison Dimock. A hotel was kept at the house just west from where Judge Jesse Root lived and died on Ripley Hill. The name of Roderick Rose was on the sign.

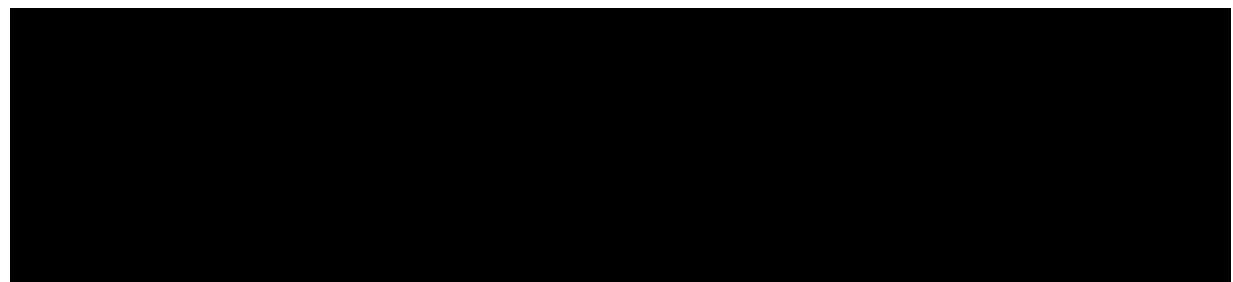
After the opening of the turnpike road, a hotel was kept at the house recently taken down by William Cummins. Later a hotel was at the house occupied by Richard H. Rose, John Rose landlord, and next the house opposite the Hale Monument, Martin Lyman, landlord. In 1822 the present hotel was opened by Solomon Bidwell. He was succeeded by his son, Lyman who made additions to the building, and grandson Charles until his death in 1881. Charles' widow conducted the hotel until 1887 when C.L. Potter took over and operated the hotel in 1888. It had three stories and about twenty rooms. The John Rose hotel was continued by Royal Manning and discontinued at his death, about 1844. (5)

This year there are three stores, one hotel, seven manufacturing firms and some minor shops, and three churches in South Coventry. Mr. Rose was one of the early traders. His store was near the monument. He was succeeded by his clerk D. M. Buell, who in turn was followed by W.A. Loomis, his clerk. The latter built the store now owned by Hall & Sweet. He was in business up to war times and traded for forty years. L. A. Hall built his store in 1881. He began business in Coventry in 1876. He first traded in the Hollow, but in 1879 moved to the village.

In 1876 G.L. Phillips began in the drug trade (at the corner of Mason Street) and, at that time, was carrying on that business with John B. Carman. Walter P. Loomis probably kept the first store in the village proper, and the shop exists today at 1140 Main Street. He was there a long time and was succeeded by D. M. Buell, and the following were his successors: Spaulding Brothers, Spaulding & Hodgson, Hodgson & Phillips, G. L. Phillips, L. A. Hall, Sweet Brothers, Hall & Sweet. Until 1879, when the Rawitser mills burned, the business at the depot was brisk. Mr. George B. Carpenter, James Ledoyt, and the Daily Brothers, his successors, who closed up in 1885, gives another line of storekeepers in the village. The grand list for the town in 1888 was \$635,323 and the tax rate was 1.7 percent. (5,18)



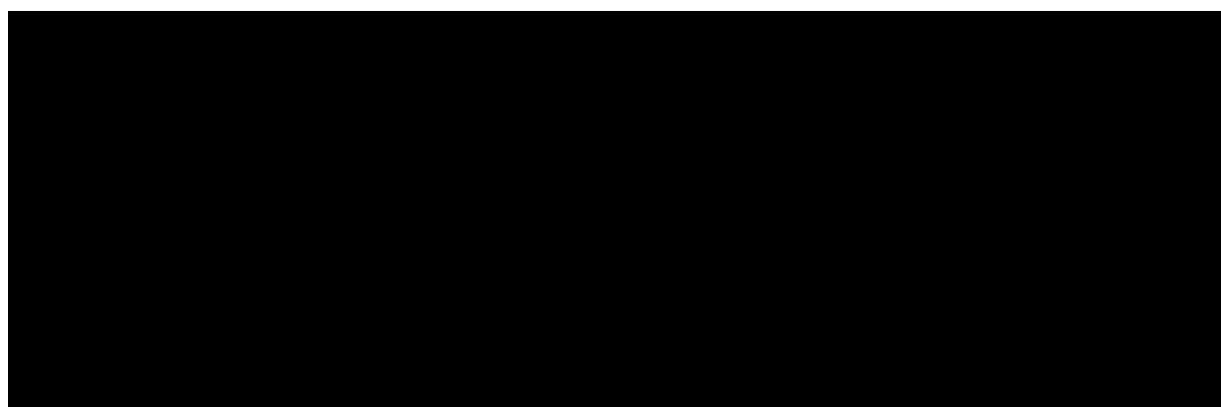
South Coventry- 1888



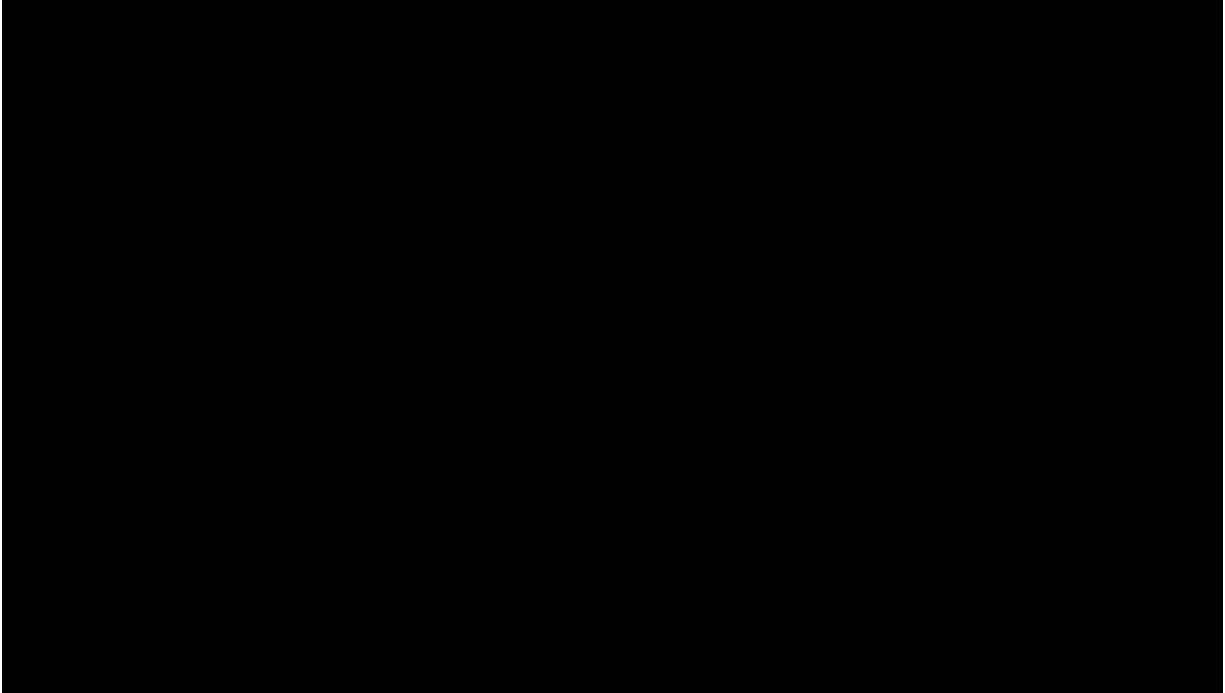
South Coventry- 1888



217



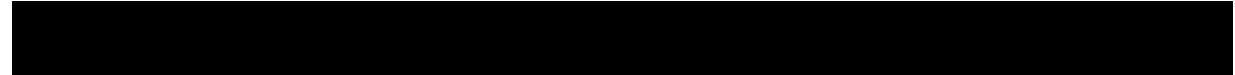
Coventry Grange



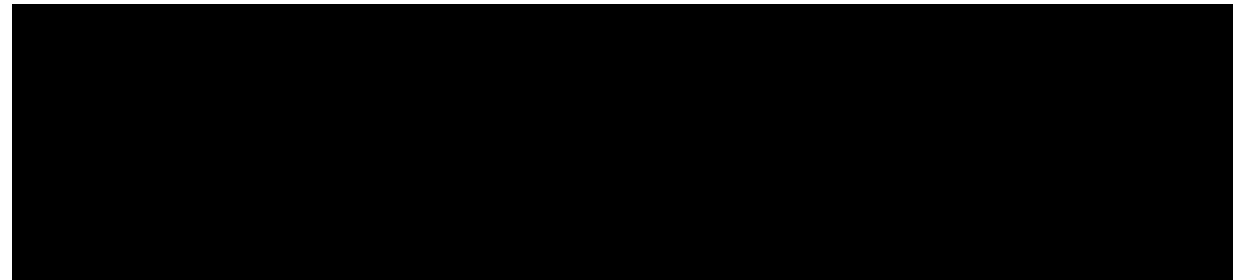
The Coventry Grange was established in 1888 in a building purchased from the Second Society near the church. Walter O. Haven was the first master and, there were twenty-four members.

Henry Spaulding Dean was born in Holland, Massachusetts, the son of David, a physician and a native of Killingly. Henry's early life was spent at farm work. He studied at

the Monson Academy and attended several medical colleges, graduating from Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia in 1852. That year he started his practice in South Coventry and served until his retirement in 1897. He married Charlotte Curtiss of South Coventry in 1854. He lived on Main Street next to where the Library is today and was active in county medical societies, the Congregational Church and served in the State Legislature in 1872-73. (18)

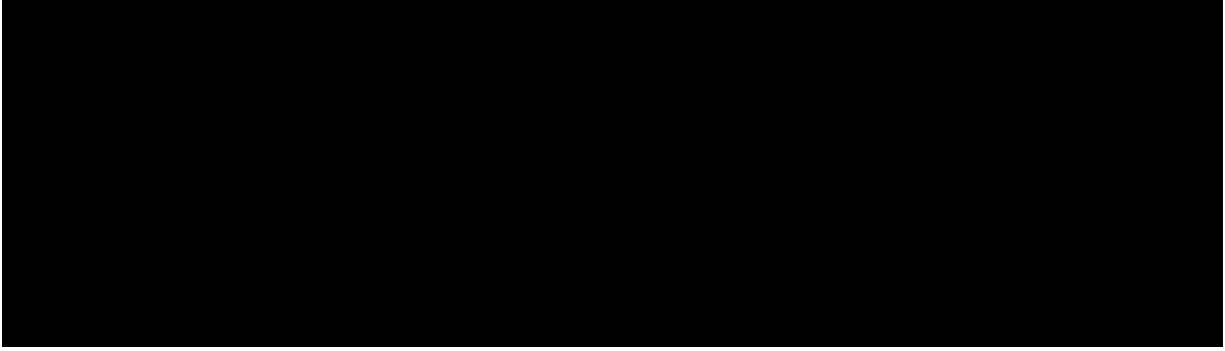


Dr. Henry S. Dean (1823-1898)

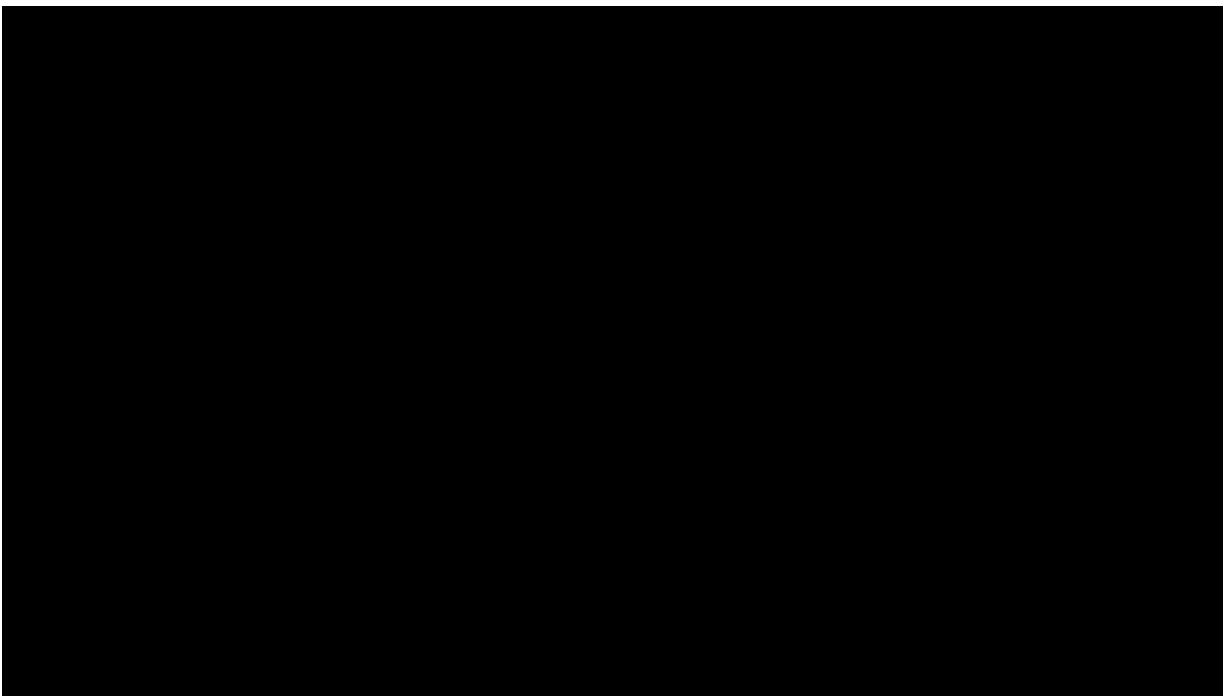


Dr. Henry S. Dean (1823-1898)





The Village Business Stagnates in the 1890's



The Hartford Courant reported in May of 1896 that Coventry Village, which has more than a dozen mills, is suffering acutely from the present business stagnation. Some of the largest mills have been wiped out by fire and the remaining are operating only minimally. The silk mills are idle, the cartridge shop has only a watchman, and the box shop and the woolen mill are filling occasional orders. The streets present a Sunday appearance and a long time resident was quoted as “praying for better times”. (18)

Elijah Robertson (1817-1905) was born in South Coventry in the area around today's Armstrong Road. In 1846 he built a small mill on the Mill Brook for the manufacture of cotton batting, and he leased it three years later. He then ventured to California in search of gold and was fairly successful. He was joined on his trip by three other residents, Austin and Norman Boynton and Sam Sprague. They called themselves the Cedar Street Pioneers. Elijah returned in 1855 and was married in 1861. The grammar school is named after his youngest child, George H. Robertson. Elijah was disabled by illness in 1888 and spent his last years reading and writing. His 1905 account of the South Coventry mills is most interesting. He died in 1905.

The Hartford Courant reported in May of 1892 that H.F. Dimock of New York and his family are now occupying their summer residence (on Cross Street). A sixteen acre plot is now being cultivated by Joseph Stewart who has charge of the farm. The crops are potatoes and corn. The farm also has thirty-two cattle and twelve horses. Two wind mills have been recently erected for pumping water. (18)



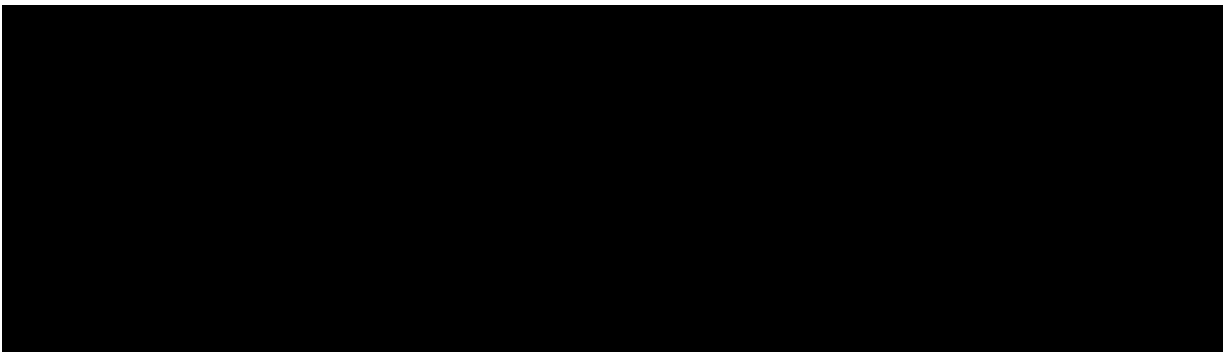
Elijah Robertson



Elijah Robertson



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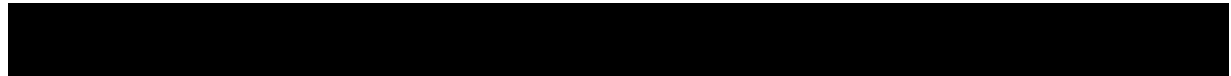


The Dimock Farm

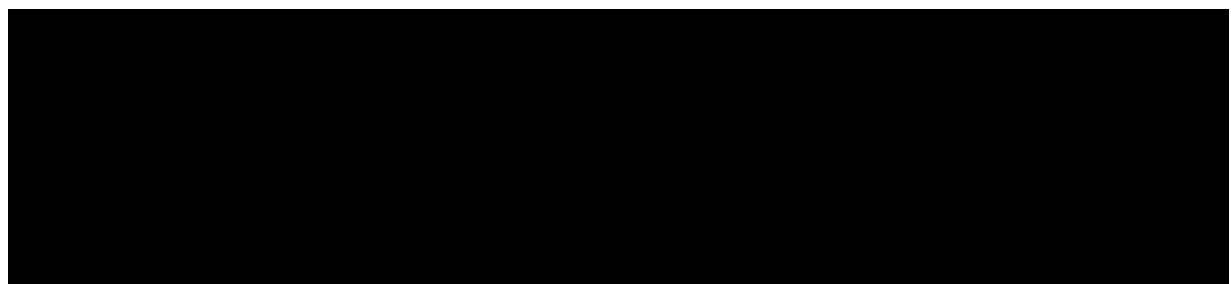
(1841 - 1934)

Rachel Wood (1861-1949) was the daughter of Norman and Rachel (Potter) Boynton. Norman owned a farm in Flanders, where he made bricks for a time, and a home on today's School Street where he raised his family and operated a carriage shop. Rachel was one of seven children. Her sister, Alice, married Charles Coombs who was to take over Norman's carriage shop and become a locally renowned photographer.

Rachel was a well-educated and an independent woman. She supported herself by working in several of the Village mills (the Cartridge Shop on Mason Street, J.M. Woods Cotton Mill on Woods Lane, and T.H. Wood's Silk Mill on Main Street) and held various domestic jobs when the mills were idle. She traveled a fair amount for a woman of the time. At age thirty-seven she married a long-time friend Albert Wood, a local shoe maker. They lived on Main Street, a bit east of the library. Following her father's death, Rachel also became a money lender and held a number of mortgages on local property. She was a very unique for her time, and we get an insight to her life by some excerpts from her diary.



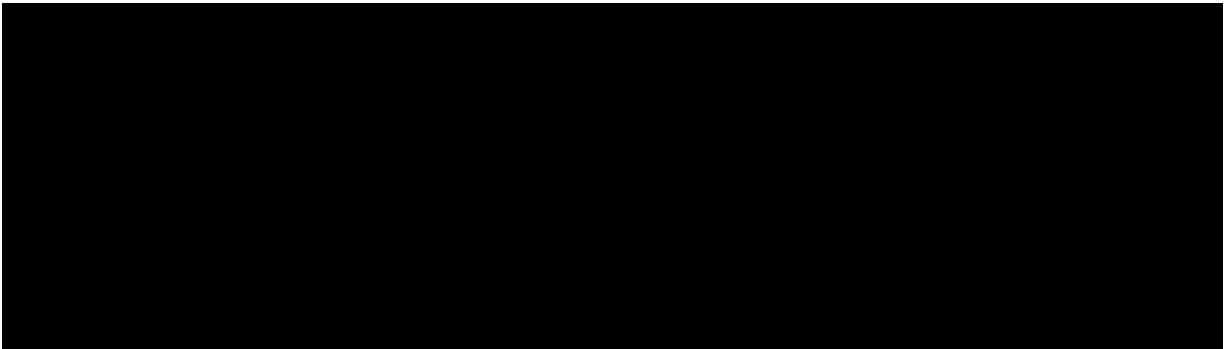
Rachel Estella Boynton Wood



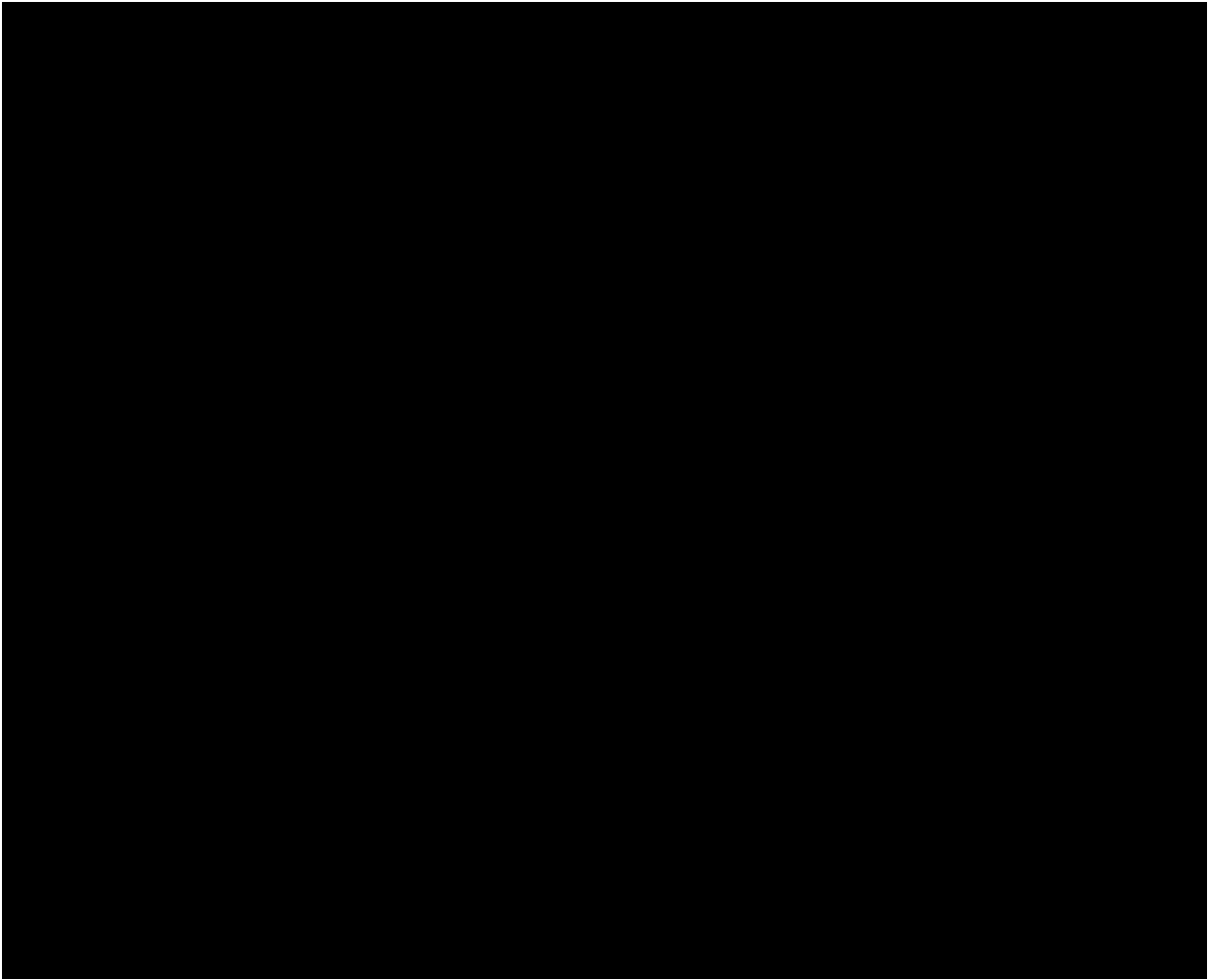
Rachel Estella Boynton Wood



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Nathan Potter's Farm



Nathan Potter owned a farm in southern Coventry in 1893 near the Willimantic River. It contained 140 acres of which 60 were tillable. His herd of Jersey cows numbered thirty, of which twenty-two were giving milk. Thirty pounds of butter were churned each day using an endless chain run by a 150-pound St. Bernard dog. 250 quarts of sweet creamery milk were also produced daily. The butter was sold for thirty cents a pound and the milk for 2-1/2 cents a quart. The products are well packaged and always contain a little more than the advertised weight. The daily revenue of \$15 provided a relatively prosperous living.

Jan. 2nd, 1890- It has been a very warm day. The New Year found me working on my "22" presses. The following is a list of the names of the girls working in the Shop (The American Cartridge factory on the east side of Mason Street formerly owned by Henry Mason): Martha Burnap, Mary Hunt, Grace Potter, Fanny McChristie, Fanny Lathrop, Lizzie Stewart, Annie Fuller, Eliza Hall, Sadie Hughes, Carrie Avery, Jessie Smith, Ella Lloyd, Della and Grace Bradbury, no one yet having been hired to take Ella Boynton's place filling tubes, the number is fifteen.

Jan. 8, 1890- There is a great deal of sickness all over the country. The Influenza or "The Grippe" starting in Russia has spread the world over causing many deaths. In the U.S. it is in a milder form but in many cases pneumonia sets in. As in the case of Mr. McDermott, depot master at Hop River, who died a few days ago. A good many are sick here in the Village.

Jan. 12, 1890- It is very warm again today, the snow and ice are almost gone. Only a little along the north side of buildings and walls. It has been pleasant all day.

Feb. 18, 1890- Warm and cloudy. Last evening the Grange gave a baked bean supper in School Hall. We made something over \$17. Admission five cents, supper fifteen cents. There were over ninety people there. All seemed to have a good time.

Apr. 6, 1890- A new girl came to work in the Shop the same day- Lillie Barley. The Shop stopped Fast day –Apr. 4th- and the following day to fix the water wheel. (So water power was being used here even now!) Friday I finished making over my green house dress. Saturday I went to Willimantic with Father and had a tooth extracted and some filled. It was windy riding.

June 12, 1890- Ed Ledoyt caught his sleeve and had the muscle of his right arm drawn into the gear on Eliza Hall's press. His arm was badly lacerated. Dr. Dean sewed it up.

June 23, 1890- About a dozen girls went out of Bottum's Mill on a fresh air strike. Mrs. B. having had the windows nailed down near the doublers to prevent the girls from putting their heads out of the window and annoying

the passersby. They can let the windows down at the top if they like. (Sarah Bottum's silk mill is now the Clock & Whale factory. Sarah took over the mill on the death of her husband in 1889.)

June 26, 1890- Sixteen more girls and some boys left the Mill this morning because Mrs. B. has hired one new girl for the doublers and has not complied with the demands of the strikers.

June 30, 1890- A few of the girls have asked Mrs. Bottom's pardon and been hired over again. Some of them she will not take back. A half dozen or so have come from Rockville to work in the Mill. (P.S. They left in a few days).

July 29, 1890- At Mansfield Depot today the bridge over the Willimantic River went down with a three-horse load of lumber and the driver, Clarence B. Dean and his little son. P.B. got the boy out. They were saved and were but little the worse for the mishap. The horses were badly injured.

Sept. 15, 1890- The village school opened with Miss Ida Brigham principal, Miss Grace Stanley, intermediate, Miss Lucy Perkins, primary.

Dec. 25, 1890- At home all day. They had a Christmas tree at the churches last evening. Alice and I and the children went to the Congregational Church. Both the children had an orange and a bag of candy. Jessie Flint put a handkerchief on the tree for Hattie and one for Hallie. I gave Hattie and Hallie a dollar apiece towards their winter hats. And I made a scrap book for each. I got a nice book of games for Hattie and made some dolls clothes for Hallie. Gave Alice half a dozen silver spoons and a gold pin. Gave Lucy tray cloth, gave one to Mrs. Wood also. Sent Cousin Esther a gingham apron worked in cross stitch. I got some cloth and made of the Pettibone girls a cap. Gave Father two pairs of all wool stockings. Gave to Albert a fur cap and watch charm. Knit a pair of wristers for Bertie and for Eugene R., also for John Collins. Gave Grace Woodworth a key rack and a key rack to Alice. Made a ball pin cushion for Hattie to give to her Sunday School teacher and made a key rack for Hallie to give to her teacher. Gave Fanny

Lathrop a small bottle of perfume. My presents were as follows. From Alice a pretty white apron, two

oranges and a little bag of candy. A pretty Christmas card from Hattie and one from Fred. From Albert a pretty Christmas booklet, box of candy and a dark red plush box containing mirror, brush, and comb.

July 4, 1891- Am sick today. The trouble is with my liver. I awoke about midnight with a dreadful pain in my insides. The Doctor came about 4:30 and injected morphine over my liver to ease the pain. He gave me an emetic and medicines. Am so sore that I can hardly bear the weight of my clothes.

Oct. 23, 1891- Everyone was surprised this morning to find it was snowing and every thing covered in snow. We did not have a frost here until the morning of the fifteenth. A squash vine growing near the wood pile had not been injured but the snow finished it. The trees in their bright foliage looked very pretty bowed down under their weight of snow.

Nov. 27, 1891- Went to Willimantic for the second time this year. Went with Father. Got a new winter hat- a togue trimmed with light ribbon and a feather band.

July 28, 1892- My thirty-first birthday. Albert gave me a garnet crescent brooch and Alice gave me a white linen embroidered handkerchief.

Nov. 16, 1892- Tom Flaherty and Annie Clark, daughter of Martin Clark, were married in the Catholic Church.

Jan. 21, 1893- This afternoon when Ernest Ledoyt and Annie Fuller were out sleigh-riding, they were thrown out by the overturning of the sleigh near Geo. Phillip's corner. The horse ran through John Wood's yard and Morgan's and Hoxie's smashing all the fences. Jumped off the banks in front of the Reynolds' Boarding house and broke his leg. Dr. Storrs was called and he said the horse must be shot.

April 4, 1893- Mrs. Roxanna Wilson is to put up a three tenement house. Work begun on the cellar this morning. The barn is to be a part of the new

house.

August 26, 1891- Went down to Willimantic and got \$75 out of the Bank. Am going to loan it to the First District School. I hunted up Mrs. Swanson and made her a call.

Nov. 9, 1893- Went with Walter, Nellie and Mr. and Mrs. Goddard, Went in Mr. Richards' stage to New Haven to an Entertainment given by A.O.U.W. at the Hyperion Theatre.

Dec. 25, 1893- A "green" Christmas. It has been thawing several days and is very muddy. Hallie and I went to the Christmas Tree in the evening, at the Congregational Church. Albert hung a box of paper on the tree for me. Albert gave me a nice pair of kid gloves and a box of candy. His mother gave me a bottle of perfume, handkerchief. Alice gave me 2 handkerchiefs and five photos.

May 20, 1894- I went over to Mrs. Tefft's yesterday afternoon, at her request, to clean and arrange her sitting room. I had a present of a pretty tall vase, a hardy rose, and Mrs. Tefft gave me a pink rose bowl like the one she gave me last Sunday and she also gave me a cake of nice soap. This is a very early Spring. Apple blossoms are everywhere gone. Mrs. Martin Parker brought sweet peas to Church today. There are a good many flowers in my garden today.

July 28, 1894- My 33rd birthday. I am feeling first rate now and weigh 125. Am working in Cartridge Shop on "22 shorts". This is the fourth Saturday afternoon that the Shop could not run for want of water. The lake is very low. Hattie and I went up there toward night to see it and then we called at Storrs Ford's. It has been a very hot day. The mercury was 96 here and even higher in some places. The ground is dreadfully dry. We have not had a good rain since May only two or three showers that mere laid the dust.

Feb. 18, 1895- My work has run so badly for a few days that Ed decided to anneal the caps. So I came home in the middle of the forenoon. After dinner went to Willimantic with Father. Went in a wagon. The ground is bare and muddy in spots and in some places the snow is higher than the wagon

wheels. Frank Post has been at work for nearly a week putting wooden cogs into the waterwheel gear. Finished it today.

July 4, 1895- A rainy day. There was to be a Union picnic on the "Green" but the rain spoiled all that. A few met in the vestry of the Church. We had fireworks in the evening.

Feb. 1, 1891- Came from Olin's to Alice's to stay over night and then go to Ed. Holman's in Rockville to take care Mrs. Holman who is sick. The roads are all blocked with snow. We have been having dreadful snow storms. I stayed in Rockville till May.

May 6, 1898- Hattie and I walked to Perkins' Corner and got some tartarian Honeysuckles, white lilacs and bouncing bets at Monroe Perkins. We then went up in the "ledges". We ate our lunch there. About one o'clock we went up to Mrs. Warren's to make a call but found her ready to go away so we came home. I got very tired. Oct. 3, 1898- Olin Boynton came to Alice's this afternoon to stay with them overnight. Is on his way to Stafford Fair He is agent for a washing machine. He came to see us the evening. The Hastings family from Woodstock are with Alice. Gordon Martin formerly of Willimantic now from the Wild and Wooley West is or has been at Alice's lately. The Methodists are holding what they call a home camp-meeting.

Nov. 27, 1898- Was an awful day. There were no meetings at either Church. The Congregational bell did not ring even. The snow is badly drifted and the roads are blocked. There was another snow storm Wednesday the 30th. No butcher came till Friday of this week. (35)



Excerpts from Rachel Wood's Diary



Excerpts from Rachel Wood’s Diary



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Connecticut, in 1895, had about 12,000 miles of roadway. Although there were some paved streets in the cities, the vast majority of these roads were still simple, unimproved dirt roads. Several bills for road improvement were submitted to the legislatures, and on July 3, 1895, with Governor Vincent O. Coffin signing into law the Good Roads Act, the State Highway Commission was born.

The new highways program had a budget of \$75,000, to be distributed to towns according to their relative wealth. County governments and towns were to receive matching funds on an equal basis. In order to receive any funds, the towns had to construct roads that met the state's new standards for construction. These standards required roads to be properly surveyed and engineered using qualified professionals, to be constructed of Telford or Macadam pavement, and to have travel lanes sixteen feet wide flanked by two shoulders two or three feet wide. Although construction was under control of the town, the highway commissioners were to periodically inspect the projects. It was clearly the aim of the Highway Commission to have as many improved pieces of road built in as many towns as possible.

The fact that the state had an abundant supply of native stone, both near the surface in ledge formations and in stone walls, prompted the requirement of the hard-surfaced Macadam or Telford road systems. These surfacing technologies had been developed in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Two Scotsmen, John McAdam and Thomas Telford, developed relatively economical methods for providing level, dry road surfaces.

Approximately half the towns in the state inquired about the new program established by the Good Roads Act. Fifty-four towns initially participated, and seventeen towns had entered into contracts by September 30, 1895. Another outcome of the program was a road census conducted by the state, which determined that there were 14,088 miles of road. Of these, 5,558 miles were classified as main roads. Of all roads, only 463 miles were stone or macadam, another 1,896 miles were gravel, and the preponderance, 11,729 miles, were still dirt roads. (28)

William Augustus Babcock (1843-1895) was born in the family homestead on South Street near Judd Road. His parents were William and Esther (Loomis) Babcock. Father William was a farmer with thirty acres of land growing primarily Indian corn. According to his account books, which remain today, he was engaged in the process of making wool “slave” hats in the 1830’s, ‘40’s, and ‘50’s. He was associated with Marvin Curtiss (South Street) and Samuel Huntington who operated a hat factory on Parker Bridge Road. William’s contribution was to “plank” the hats, which is to stir and rub them in a solution of hot water to stiffen and strengthen the wool, (The hand work was done on a “plank” adjacent to the tub), and to “form” the hats by steaming and forming them over a wooden blank.

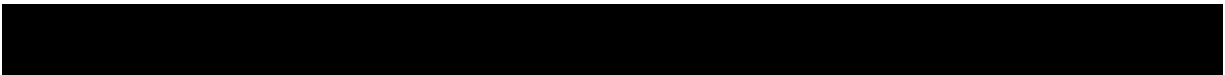
William Augustus received a common school education in Coventry, learned the machinists trade at Taunton, Massachusetts, worked for a time in Springfield, and was a traveling agent for the Morse Twist Drill Company of New Bedford started in 1864 by Stephen Morse. Mr. Morse holds many patents, some of which apply to elevator mechanisms. Recently an old electric elevator from about 1900 was found in the Kenyon Mill on

Armstrong Road. Some of the patents stamped on the machine are attributed to Mr. Morse.

William married, in 1876, Gertrude Bunker of Brooklyn, New York. Sometime around 1880, William became associated with the Bishop and Babcock Company of Cleveland Ohio. It is not certain if he was an originator of the company or if it was started by another Babcock. In any case he eventually became president and general manager of the firm. The company produced faucets, pumps and brass goods associated with beer dispensing. In the early 1880's William is credited with a number of patents. Among them were three hydraulic air compressors, a faucet, a valve and an aerator for the aquarium at the Chicago Exposition of 1893. He moved from Coventry to Cleveland in the early 1880's, but returned to the family homestead in Coventry during the summer. He enjoyed one of his favorite past times, fishing, with friends including C.V. Prince of New York (his brother-in-law) and business associates A. Bishop of Cleveland and J. Post. His wife, Gertrude, held lawn parties and raised money for the church.

In September of 1895, William and a friend left their homes in Cleveland for a tour in the northwest. They hunted in North Dakota and then joined a party of friends for a horseback tour through Yellowstone Park. Mr. Babcock was thrown from a horse and died on the spot. His body was taken to Cleveland for services and then, accompanied by his partner Mr. Bishop, to Coventry for burial. William and his father and mother are interred in Nathan Hale Cemetery.

Following his death, the family home in Coventry descended to his wife Gertrude and his sisters Mary Yeomans of Columbia and Ellen Prince of New York, then eventually solely to Ellen. Ellen's son, William, sold the home to the Churchills in 1941 who ran the Coventry Day School there until the late 1960's. The Bishop and Babcock Company was sold to Honeywell in 1937. (14,18)



Roads in Connecticut



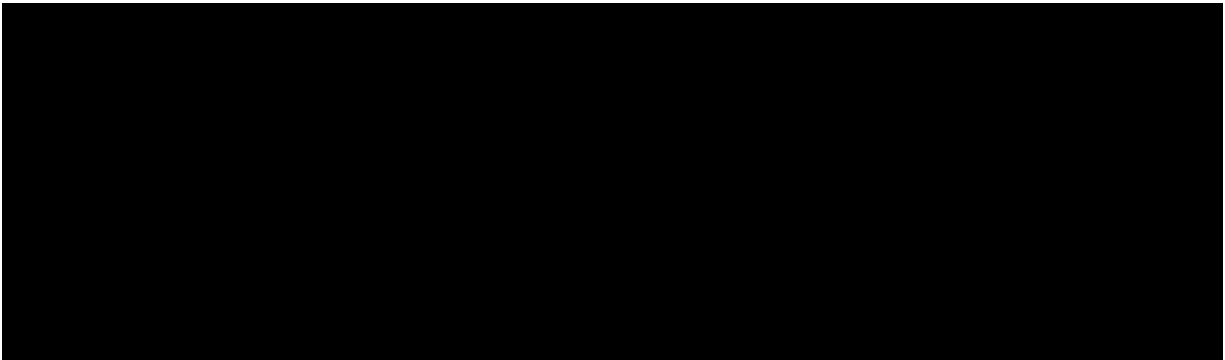
Roads in Connecticut



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William A. Babcock



Arnold, P. - 1818 Cotton yarn spinning Babcock, William - 1882 Air compressor 1883 Air compressor

1883 Faucet

1883 Air compressor 1889 Valve

Barber, Solomon - 1869 Carding Machine Bishop, William - 1845 Paper pulp strainer Boynton, John - 1828 Carding Machine

1829 Carding Wool

1829 Iron plow

1833 Wool carding machine 1838 Straw cutter

1843 Carding machine

Boynton, Leander- 1851 Wool cleaning machine 1851 Flocking machine

1854 Flocking machine

1854 Wool cleaning mach.

1854 Hat body maker Buffington, H. - 1819 Gun cap box

Halladay, Daniel - 1854 Windmill governor Huntington, David - 1874 Water meter Kingsbury, Addison - 1884 Pasting machine

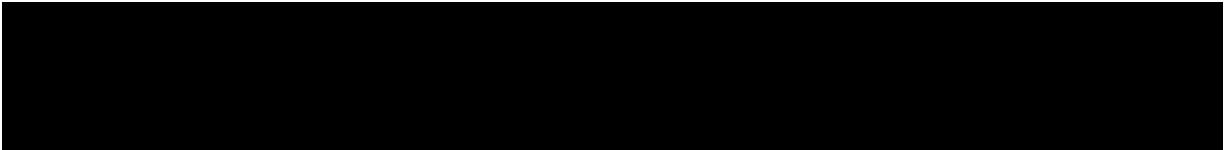
1886 Pasting machine

1886 Paper box cutter Lull, H. - 1854 Shutter hinge

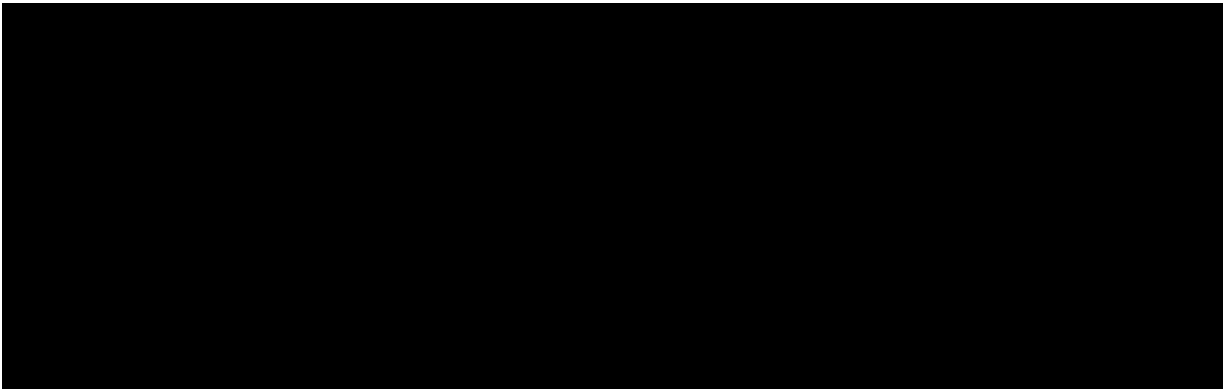
Payne, Brigham - 1865 Cartridge machine Tibbals, William - 1865 Firearm cartridge

1866 (2) Revolving Firearm 1868 Metallic cartridge 1869 (2) Revolving Firearm

Note: Daniel Halladay was living in Ellington at the time his patent was granted, but his factory was in Coventry.

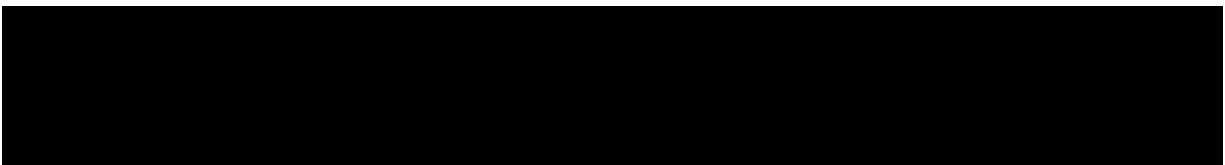


Patents Awarded to Coventry Residents in the 1800's

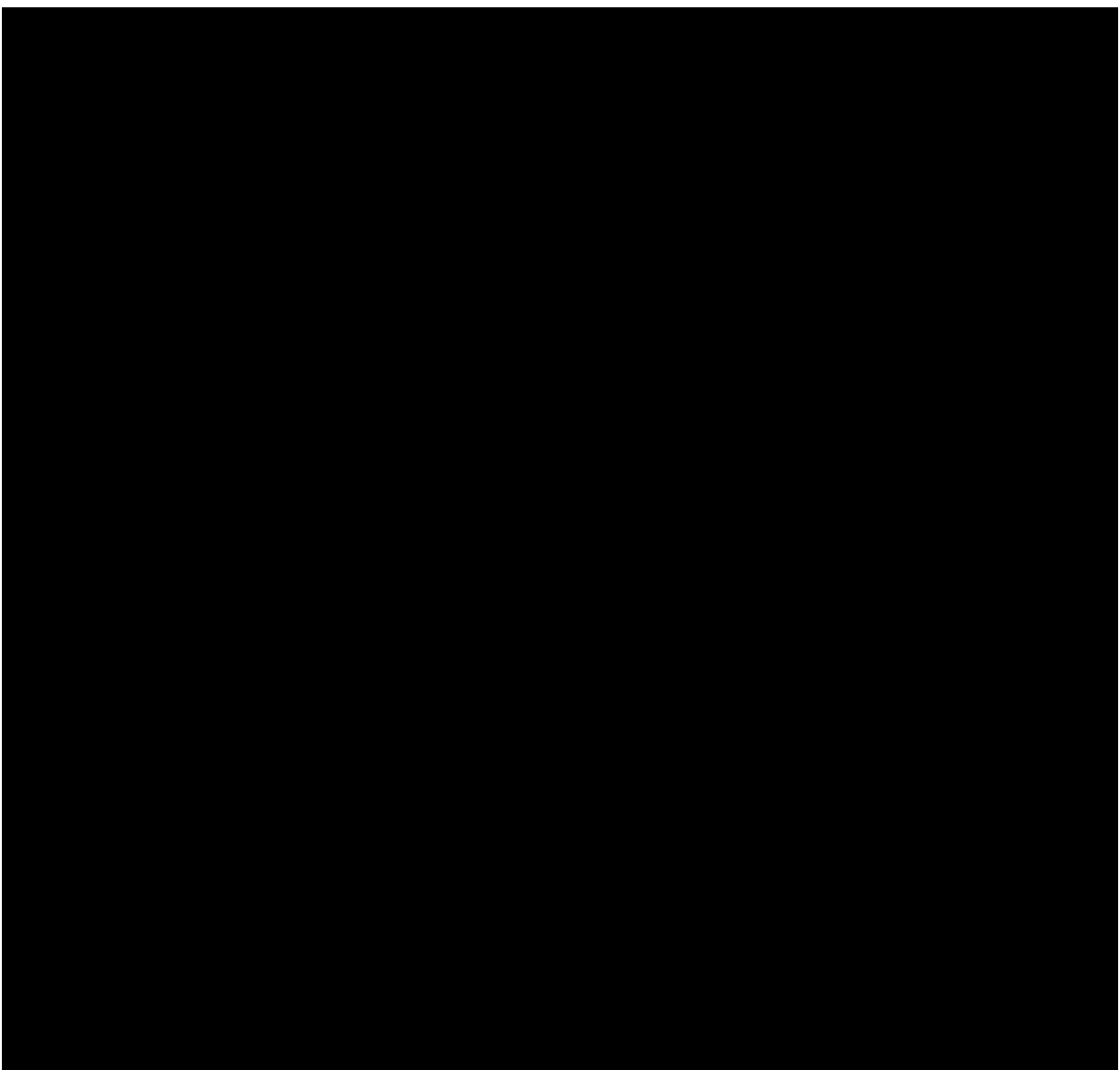


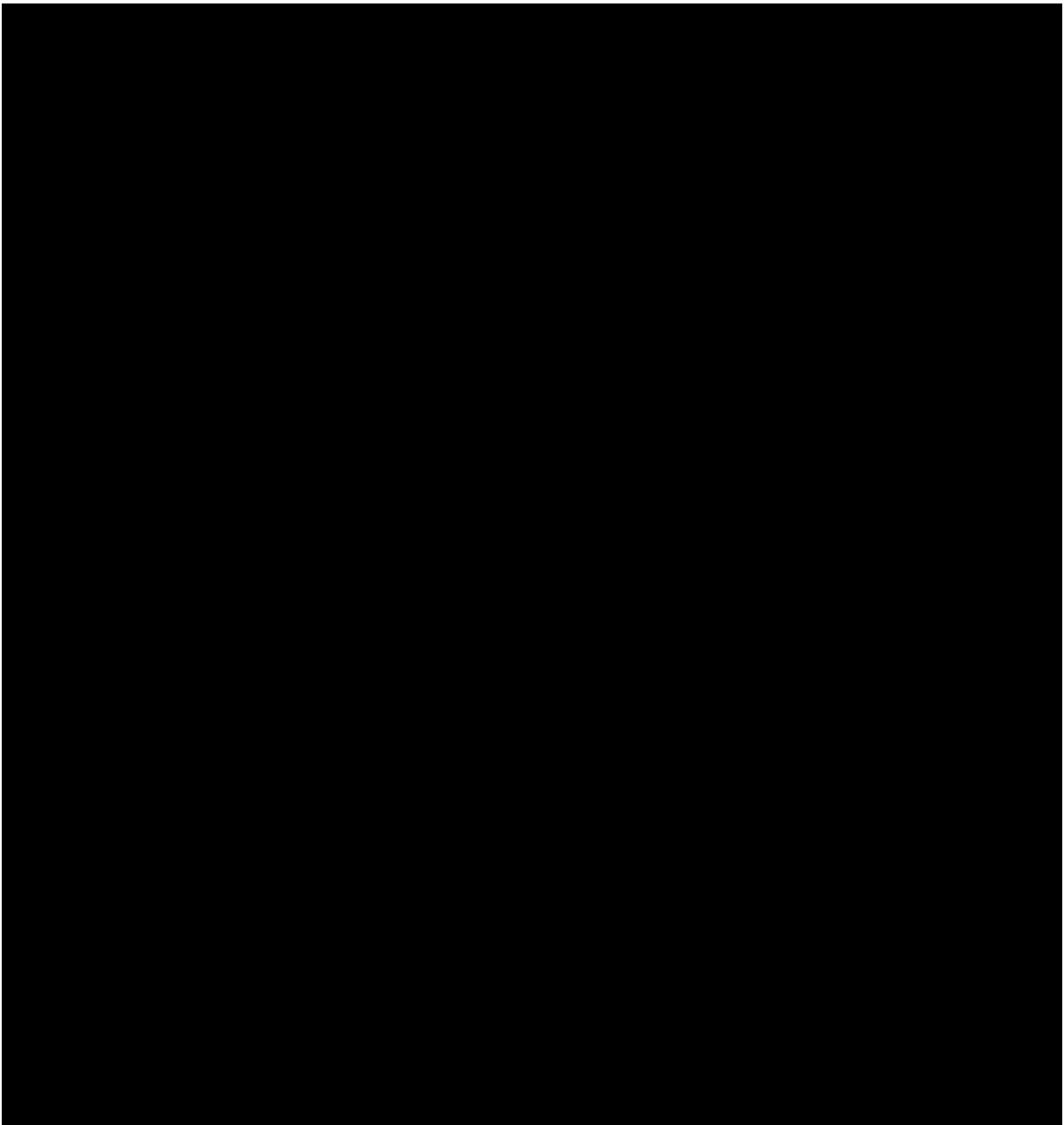
Patents Awarded to Coventry Residents in the 1800's





Babcock's Hydraulic Compressor

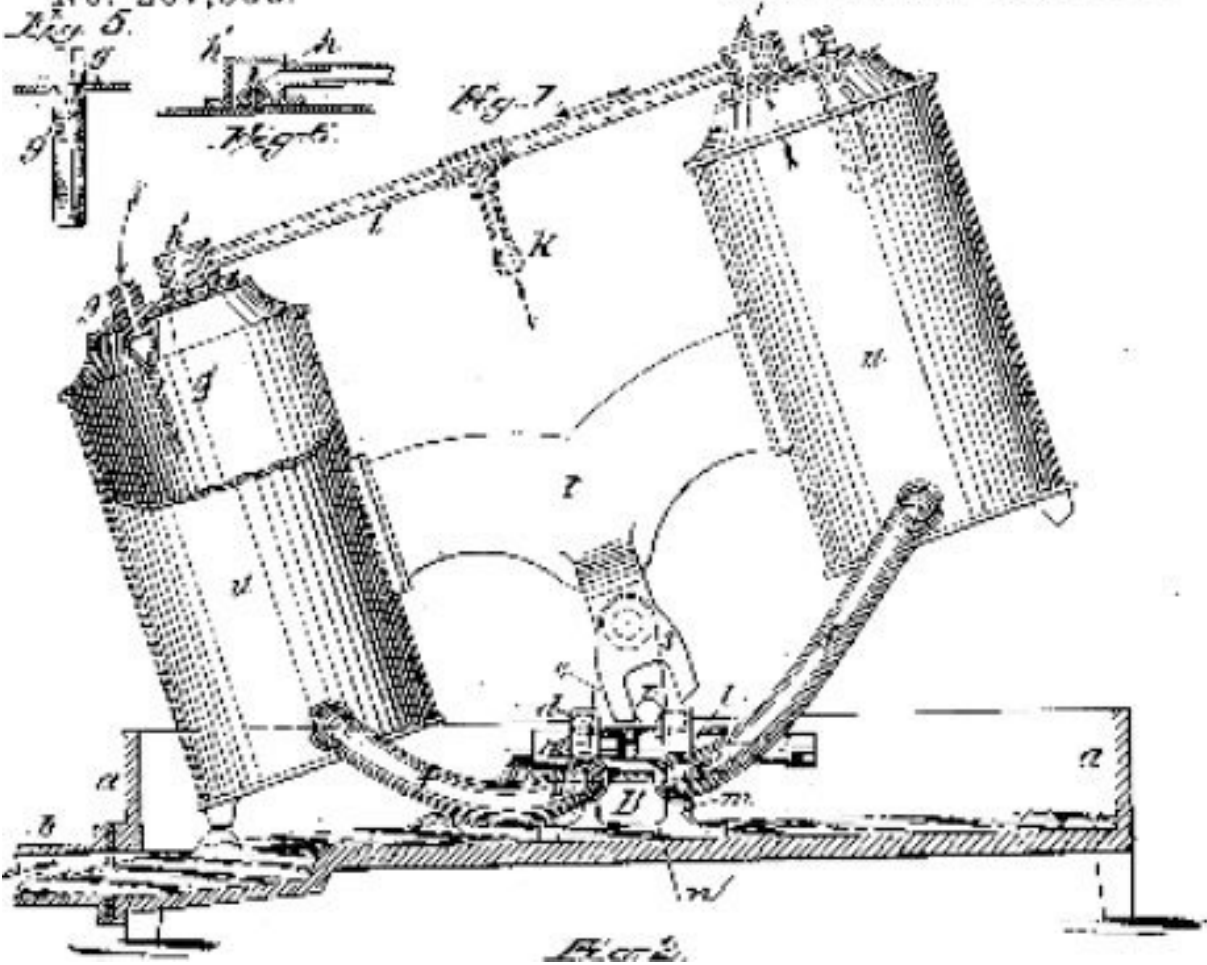


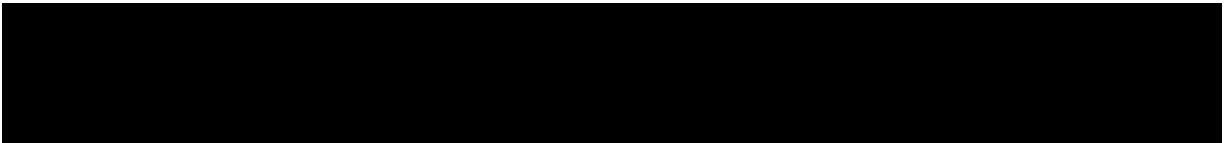
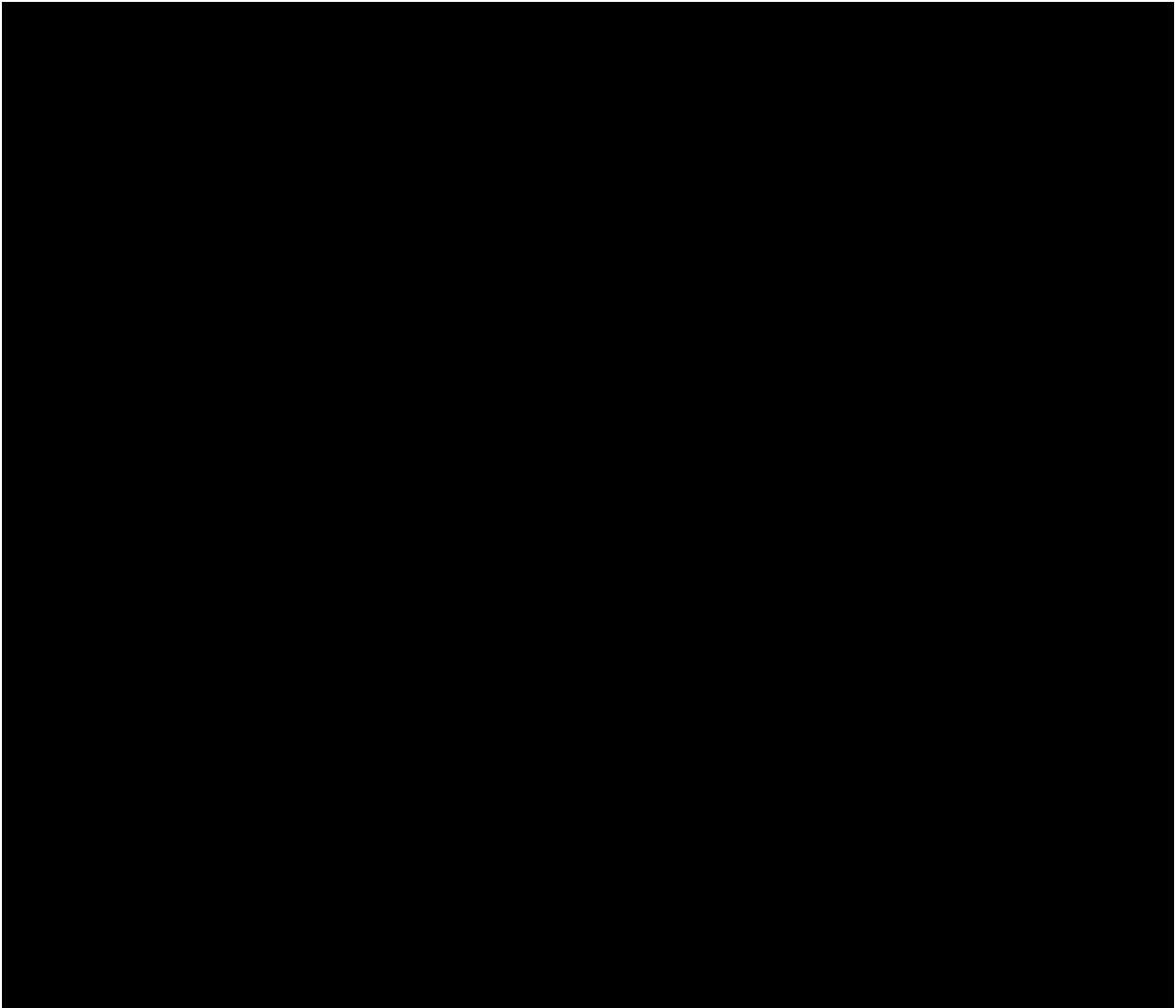


W. A. BABCOCK.
HYDRAULIC AIR COMPRESSOR.

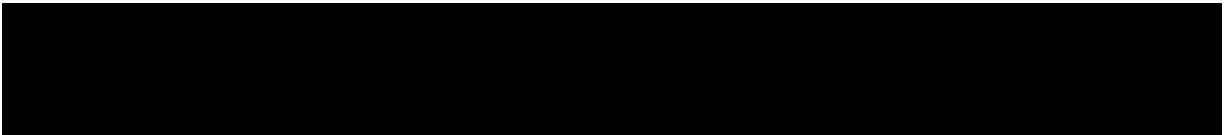
Patented Oct. 23, 1883.

No. 287,358.



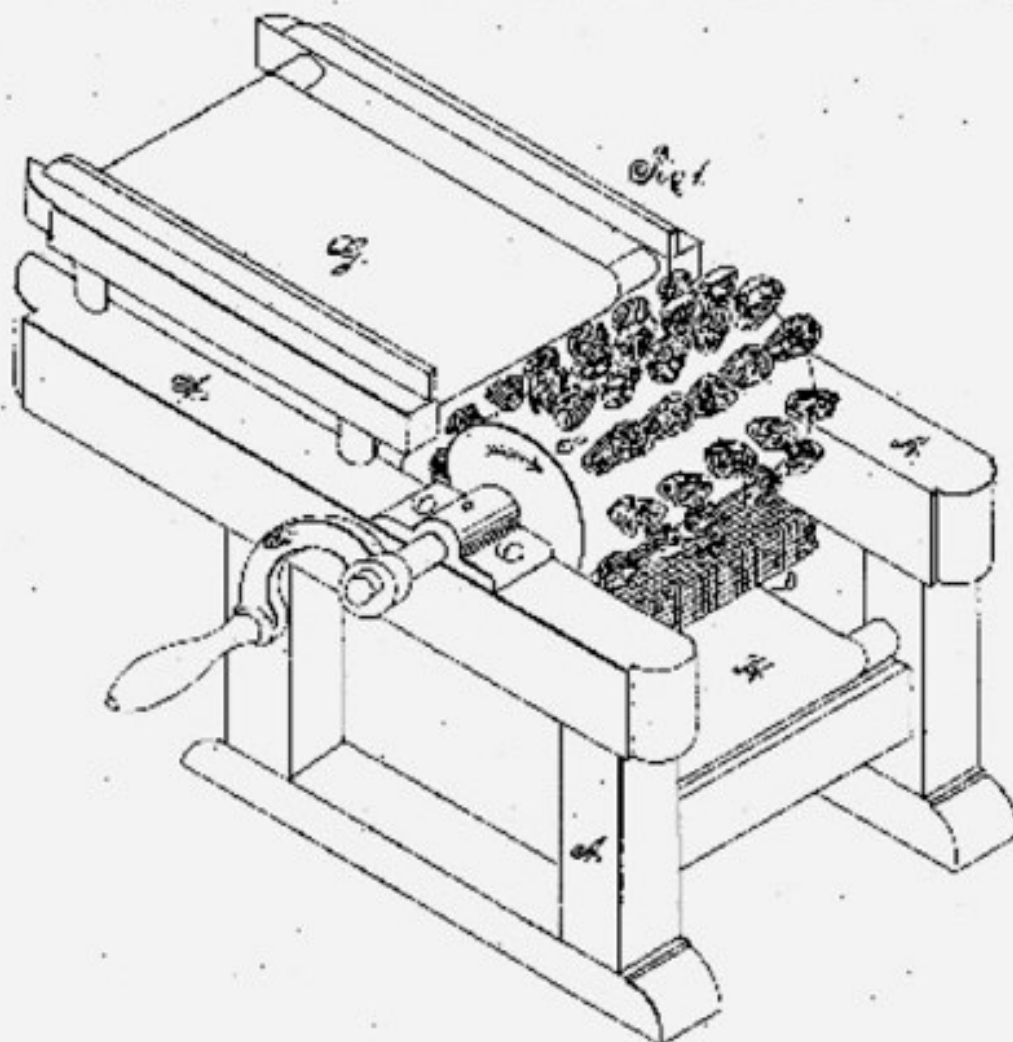


Leander Boynton's Flocking Machine



Kingsbury's Paper Box Cutting Machine

Flocking Mach.
N^o 11318. Patented Jul 18, 1854



(NO MODEL.)

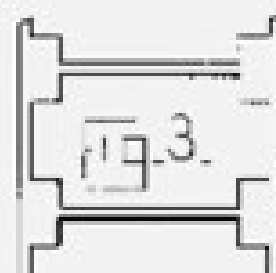
2 SHEETS--SHEET 1.

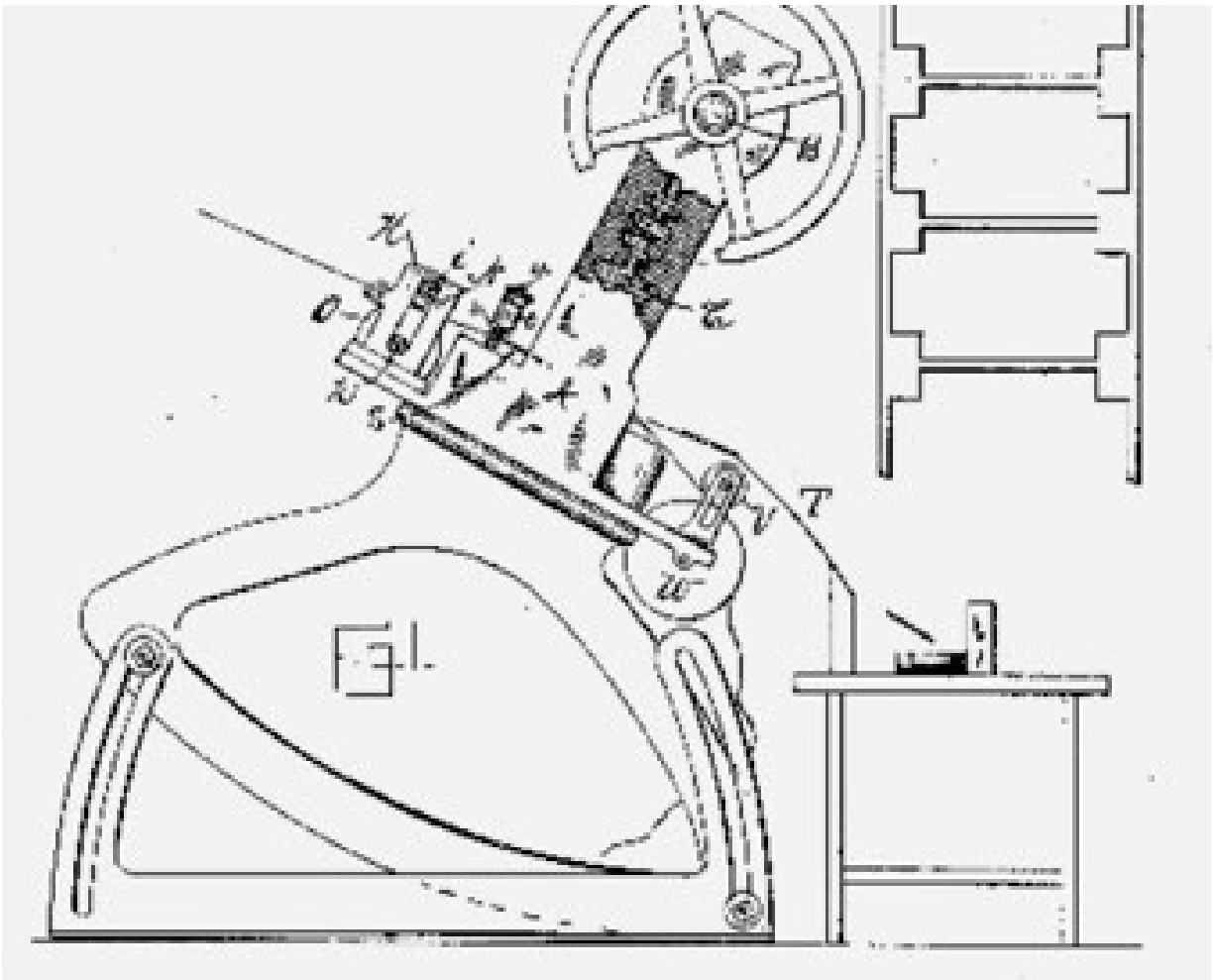
A. KINGSBURY.

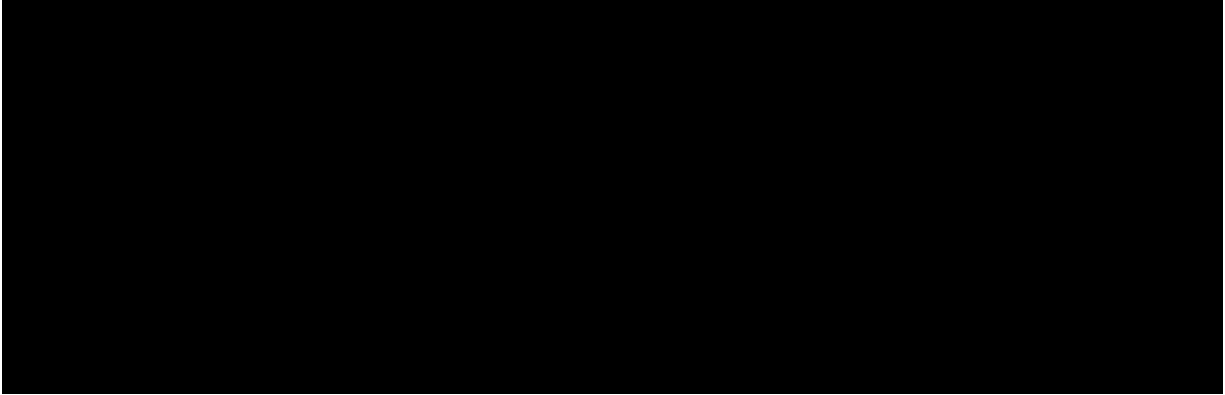
MACHINE FOR CUTTING PAPER BOX BLANKS.

No. 346,165.

Patented July 27, 1886.

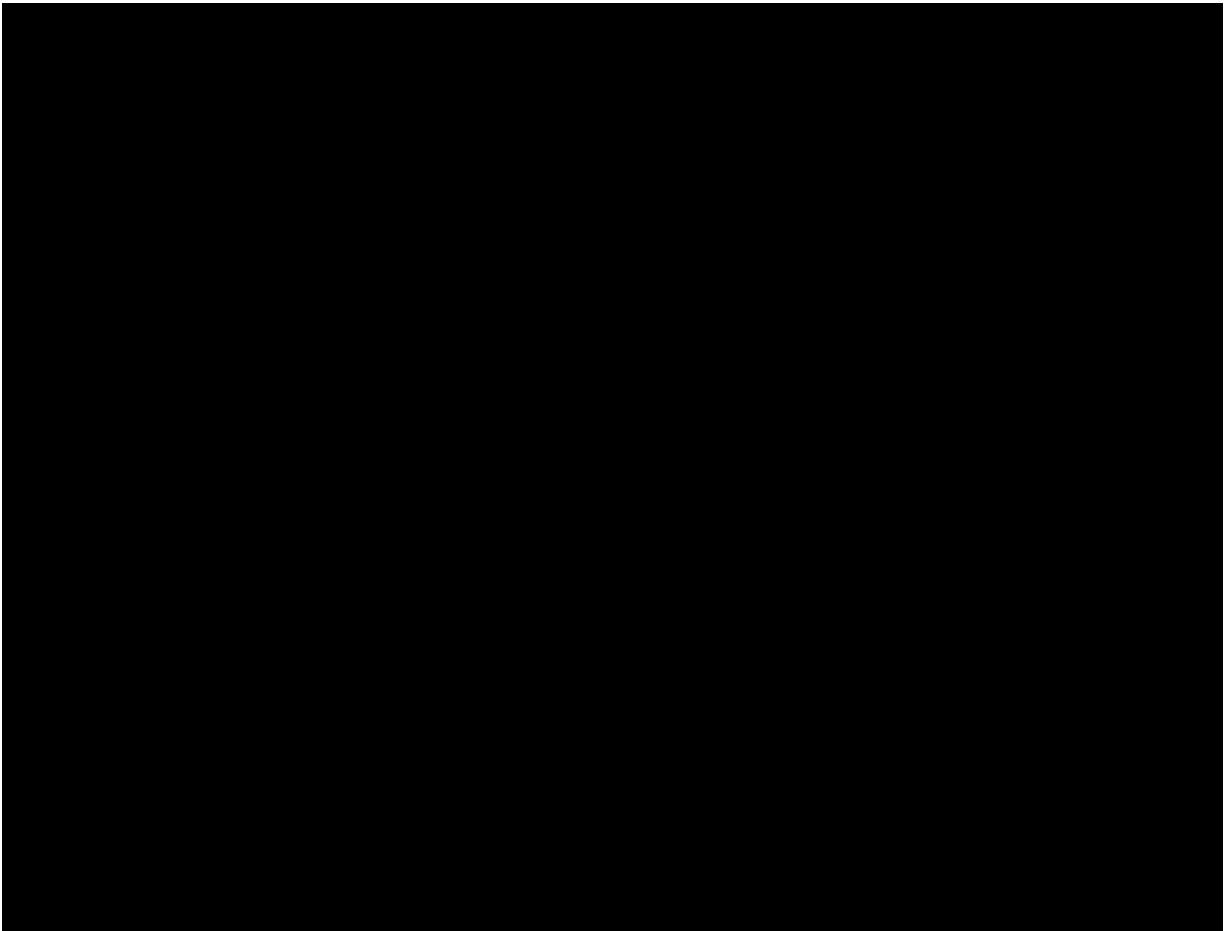






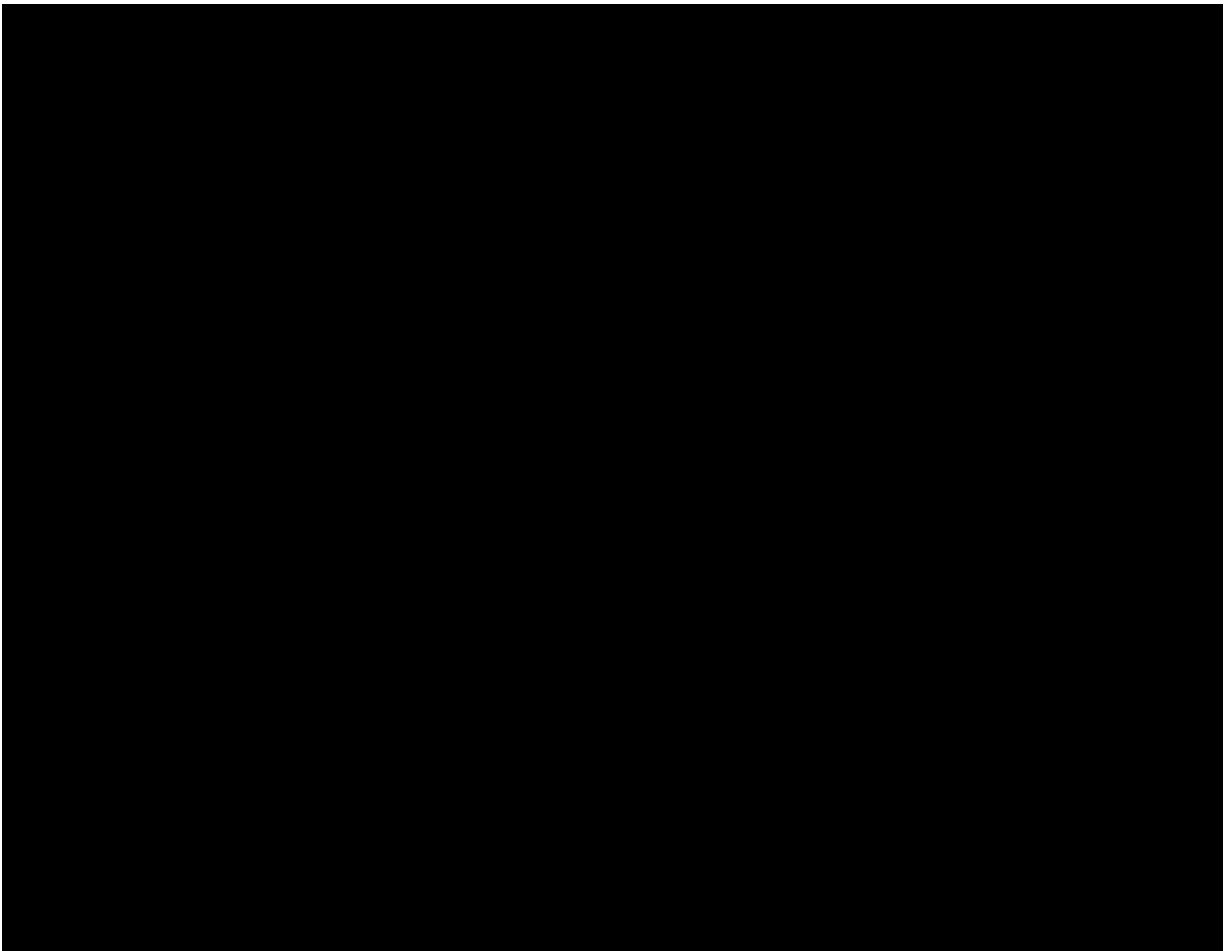
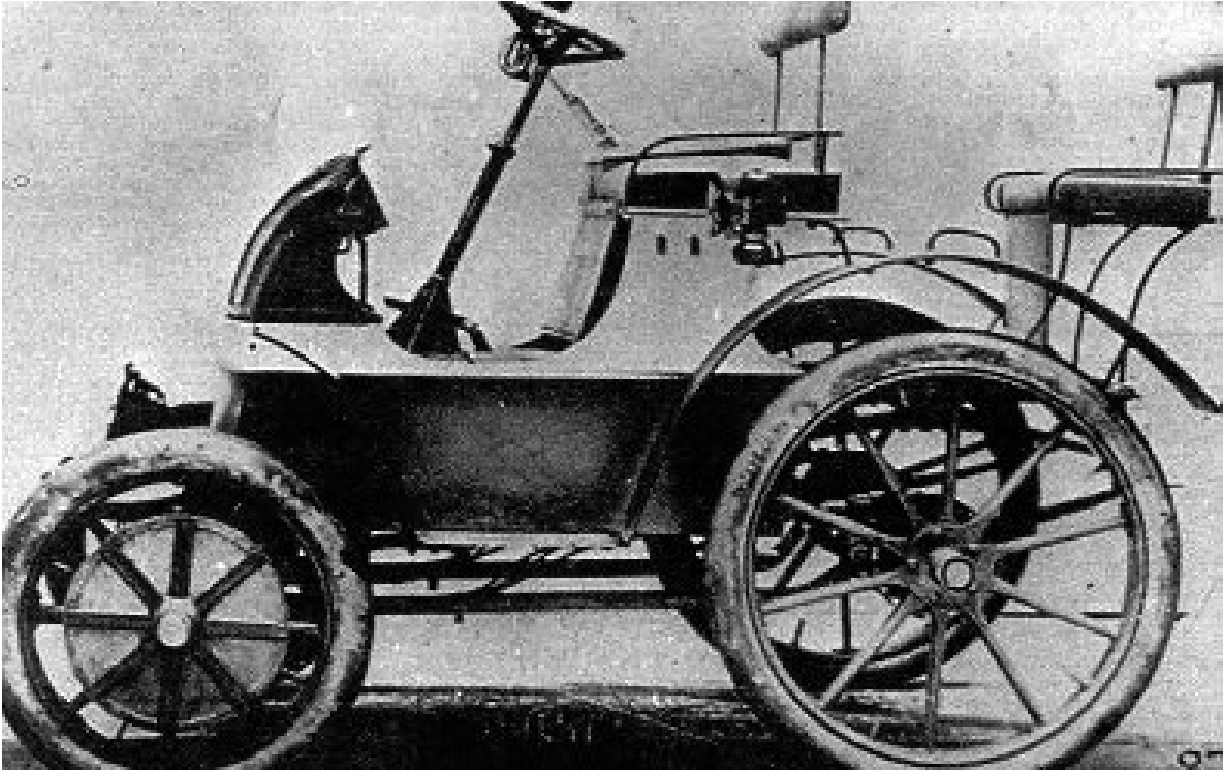
Chapter 5

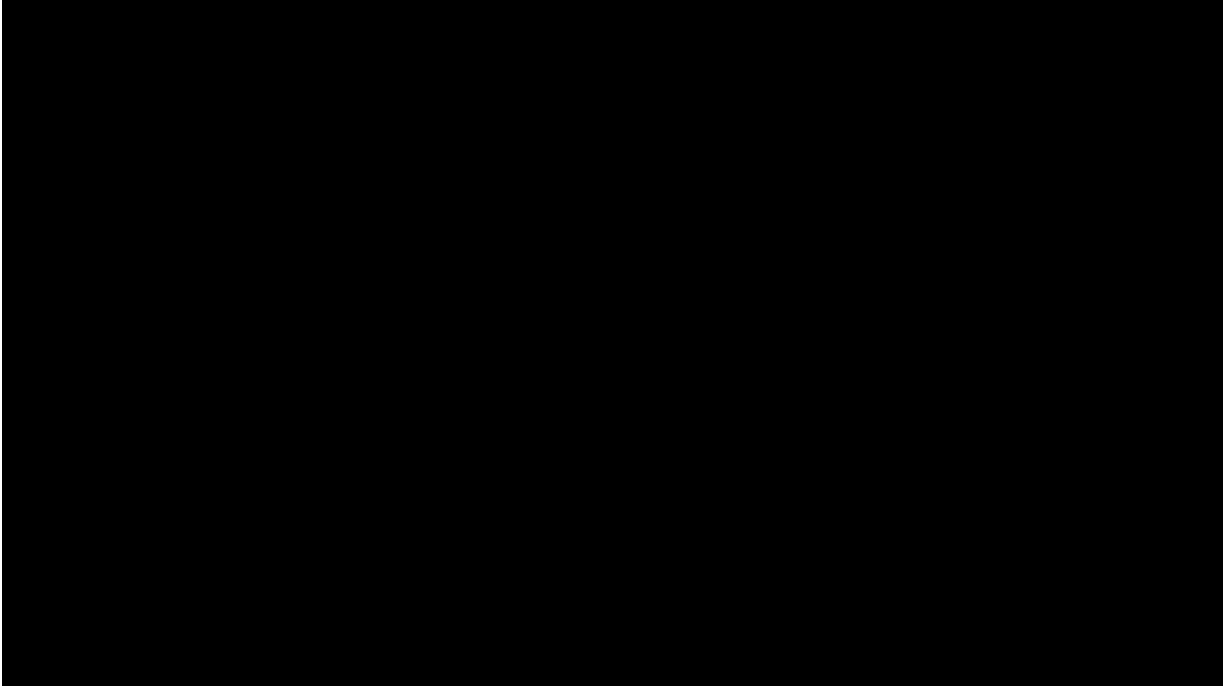
The Automobile and Suburbia



Chapter 5

The Automobile and Suburbia





The early part of the 20th century saw the emergence of several technologies that began to change the nature of the town and the nation. Telephone and electrical service became widely available. Automobiles were acquired by the wealthy at first, but soon became available to most people. The trolley attracted tourists and artists alike to the lake, as well as providing transportation to nearby jobs in Willimantic. Tradition has it that during Prohibition, several stills were located in the woods along the Skungamaug and Hop Rivers. The Great Depression dampened things a bit, but Coventry recovered well. Development around the lake accelerated in the 1930's, spurred by vaudevillians who summered there, acquired farm land and began to split it up into small lots for "campsites" which were consolidated to summer homes.

The first volunteer fire department was formed in 1936. Following World War II, housing development soared, and the population of the town doubled from 1940 to 1950 (~2,100 to ~4,000), and then doubled again by 1970. The first "centralized" grammar school was built in 1948 in the south part of town, and a second in 1955 in the north part of town. Family farms dominated the landscape throughout the first half of the century. The Tracy

Shoddy Mills, the T.H. Wood Silk factory and the National Silk Company provided significant employment, primarily for women.

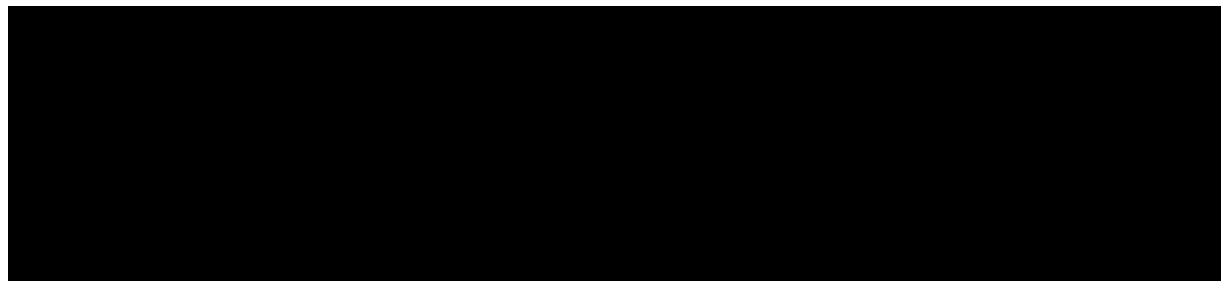
Coventry's first automobile, a Stanley Steamer, was purchased by William Reeves, the foreman at Dady's silk mill, in October of 1903. George Phillips, the druggist, purchased a Locomobile from the Bridgeport factory the same month. John Champlin bought a Cadillac in June of 1904, probably to celebrate the opening of his new ice cream parlor on Main Street in the Village. By 1912, automobiles were as numerous as carriages. In the late 1920's, the automobile brands owned in town included Buick, Cadillac, Chandler, Chevrolet, DeSoto, Dodge, Essex, Ford, Gardner, Graham-Paige, Graham, Jordan, Locomobile, Moon, Overland, Oldsmobile, Packard, Pontiac, Reo, Ruggle, and Studebaker. (23)

Stephen A. Morse was a well-known inventor and businessman of the late 1800's. He held a number of patents and started three companies between 1863 and 1893. The last company was called Morse, Williams & Company of Philadelphia, makers of various elevators. In 1904, Eugene Tracy installed one of Morse's early electric freight elevators in the main building of his mill on today's Armstrong Road. During refurbishment of the mill in

2004, the elevator mechanism was discovered in relatively good condition. It will be preserved as a memento of the older mill days.



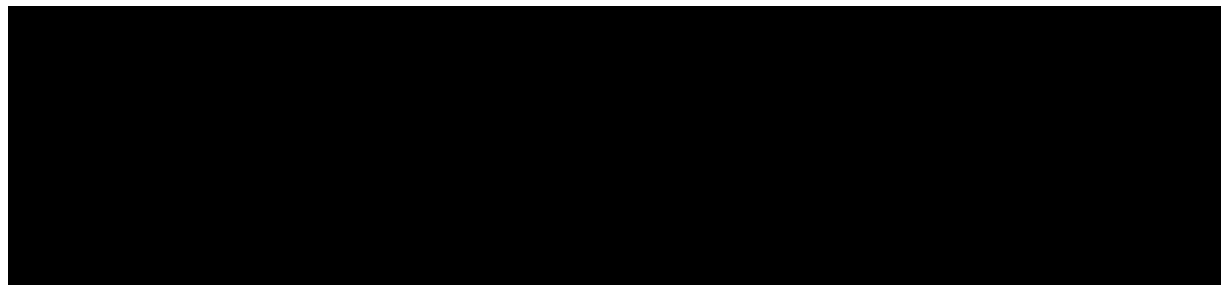
First Automobiles



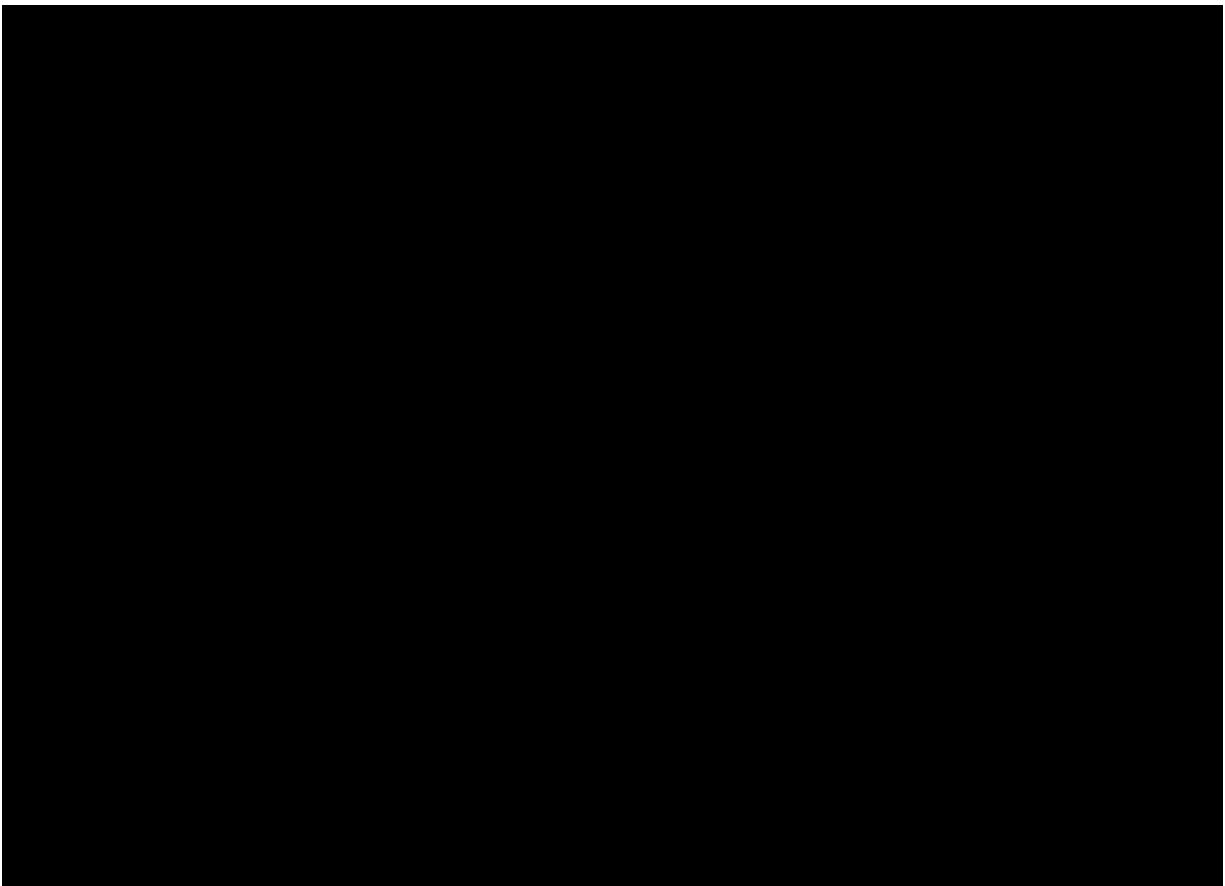
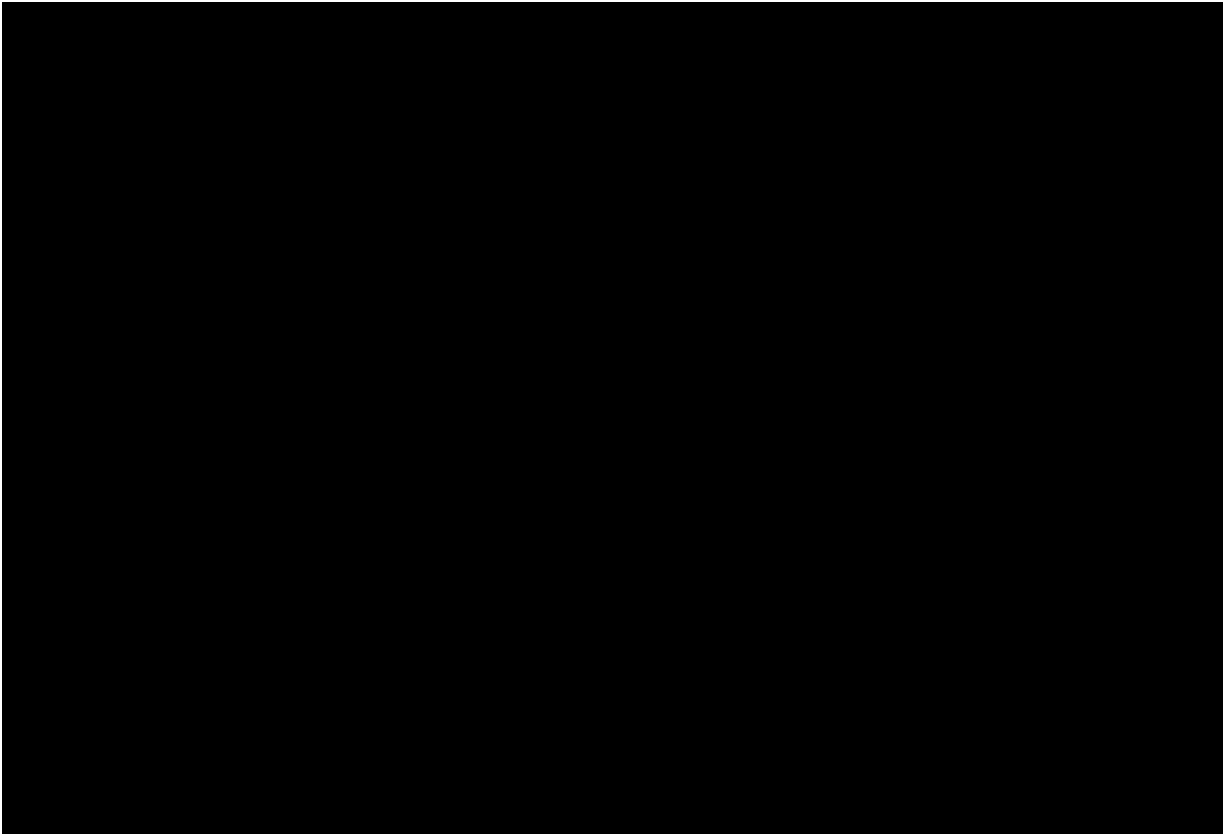
First Automobiles

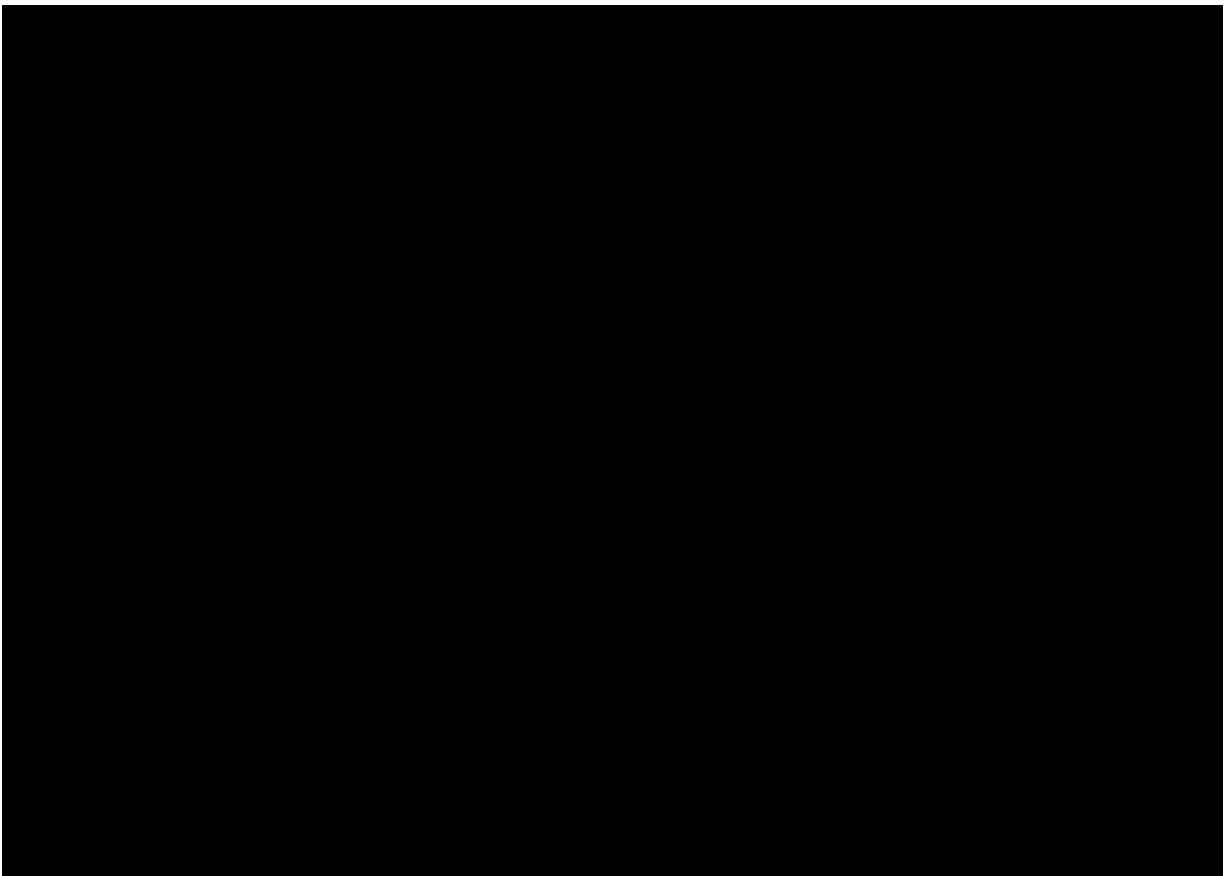


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The First Electric Elevator





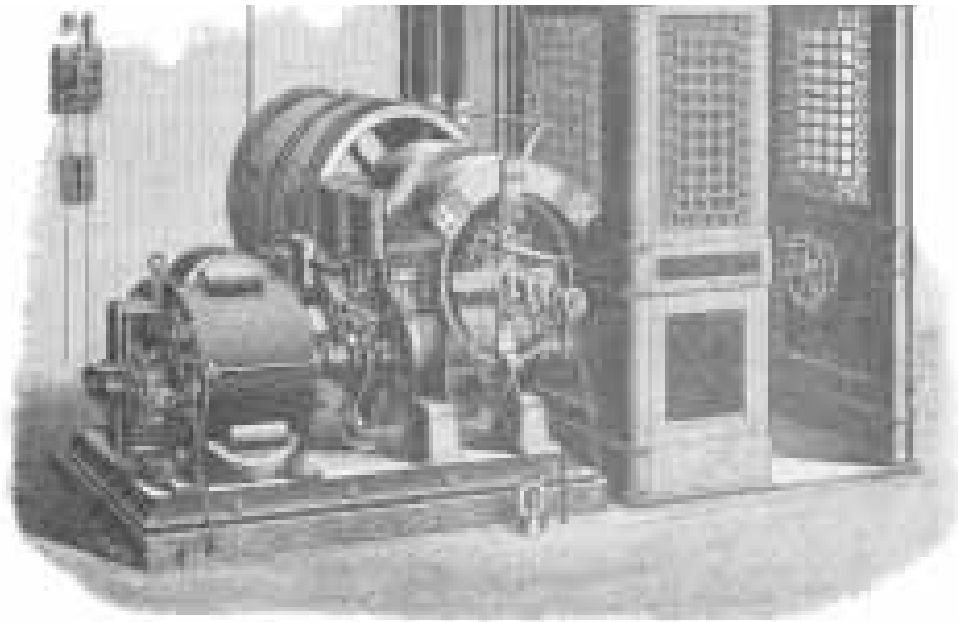
Morse, Williams & Co.,

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Building Exchange
425 Spruce Street

Marcus Aspinwall lived on South Street adjacent to the Skungamaug River and across from Wright's Mill from 1887 to 1907. His home is now owned by Don and JoAnn Aitken. They have Mr. Aspinwall's diary from 1905 and the following are a few excerpts from that diary. Mr. Aspinwall was 69 at the time. (49)

Jan. 5- A very fine cool day. Mother (his wife) and Earnest (his son) washed. Earnest carried old hens up to Browns for 50 cts each. I bought Rody's sleigh for \$5.00.

Jan. 16- A very fine day. We worked filling the ice house. Palmer, Taylor, Earnest and myself worked all day.

Jan. 26- A very fine cold day. I went up to Harley Palmers, got 2 chains mended and a brace on the sleigh. Earnest took a grist to the mill.

Feb. 7- Cold, Clear. Tip and I finished shoeing H. Browns sled, charged \$1.75 on account, then we worked on a privy for Mrs. Loomis in her wood shed.

Mar. 13- A very fine day. I traded cows with Mr. Standish for a dollar to boot. Charles, Earnest and I cut wood this afternoon.

Apr. 20- Cloudy. Ben Taylor, Earnest and I commenced to build a fence between Talbot and myself in the forenoon. In the afternoon we spread manure and plowed for Frank Wright. July 26- Clear day. Earnest worked for Brown in the afternoon haying. Earnest and I cultivated and hoed beans. I carried some meat up to Cases, he paid me 50 cts.

Oct. 2- Fair day. I went to vote with Holden Brown and walked home. Walked from Dimmocks in one hour. Got the creamery check, it is \$17.40. I paid Harley Palmer balance on wagon, \$10.00. I dug two rows(sic) of potatoes, got 3 bushel.

Dec. 7- A very fair day. I went to Merrows after grain, got 2 bags meal, 2 of bran, 1 bushel coarse salt, all cost \$4.80, and paid 5 dollars on account. Got

1/2 bbl flour, one dollars worth sugar for Mrs. Loomis, come to \$3.75.



Marcus Aspinwall



Marcus Aspinwall



With the exception of the small area surrounding Lake Street, Lake Wangumbaug was surrounded by large farms since the days of the early settlers. These farms were broken up into literally thousands of small parcels in the 1940's and 1950's and sold as "camp sites". However, the area around Lake Street has its own unique history. It was dominated by the Porter Family (Thomas then Noah, both Town Clerks in their time) with the construction of the first grist mill on the Mill Brook in 1716 to Noah's death in 1790. The Porter family owned forty acres encompassing the first 2,000 feet of the brook and the land between the brook and the lake where the Town Green and Patriot's Park is today. One acre was reserved for a burial ground. Noah built the large house across from the Hale Monument in the early 1770's, and it was owned successively by Calvin Manning, Jeremiah Fitch, Martin Lyman and three mill owners, John Boynton, William Tibbals and Daniel Clark. Mr. Lyman ran a tavern there in the early 1800's, and he was the postmaster in 1822.

The area where the brook leaves the lake was devoid of any development as it evolved over time from a simple outlet, to a dam that was raised several times, and then a gate house to control the water in the brook for the mills (1860's). The area to the south of the brook was sold to Eugene Tracy in 1892 and soon began to see some recreational use. Mr. Tracy leased the site which included a small pavilion and a boat launch. John Wadsworth operated a lake touring boat from the launch.

Wadsworth's Boat Launch c1908

The area to the north of the brook held several residences at the turn of the century, one of them being the old miller's house. As recreational use began to evolve and the prospect for the trolley line became real, a pavilion was built that served as a dance hall, casino and later a roller rink and was the center of leisure activity in town.

Patriots Park contained several homes at the time. The sites were purchased from Noah Porter about 1790. Residents included Daniel Edgerton, Ruel Loomis, Jeremiah Parish, and Matthew Deuty. The town established an animal pound on the lake in the late 1700's located about where the lodge is today. Jeremiah Parish had a small store and cooper shop on the east side of the cemetery. He was postmaster in 1805 prior to the post office moving to Lyman's across the street. In the late 1800's Frank Spaulding owned a portion of this area, and he erected a windmill to pump water to his farm on today's High Street. The area where the Park's gate house is today was originally leased to the Methodist church in 1827, but they did not erect their first chapel until 1839-40. The building was used as a Catholic Church in 1868. This area would eventually become a Salvation Army camp starting with an acquisition in 1929 and completed in 1958

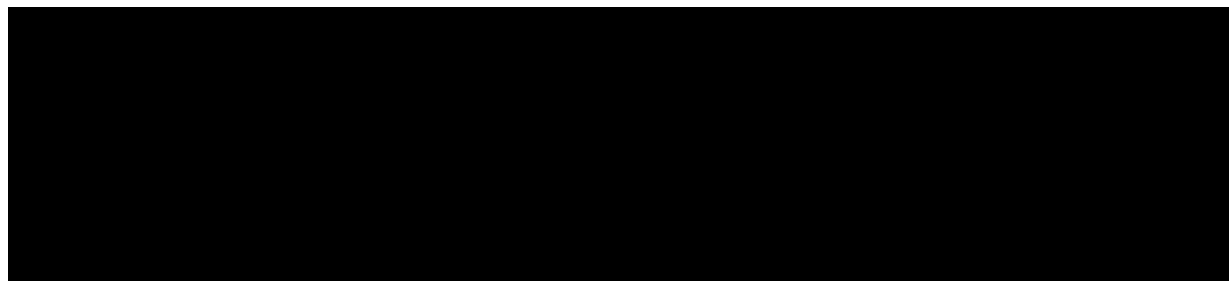
The Early Pavilion ca1908

The Town Green was established about the time the town was incorporated and was used for many years as a training ground for the town's militia. The first church/meeting house was built on the north side of the green, (a stone placard marks the spot), and was used as the town hall after the church vacated the premises in 1867. The building burned to the ground in 1897.

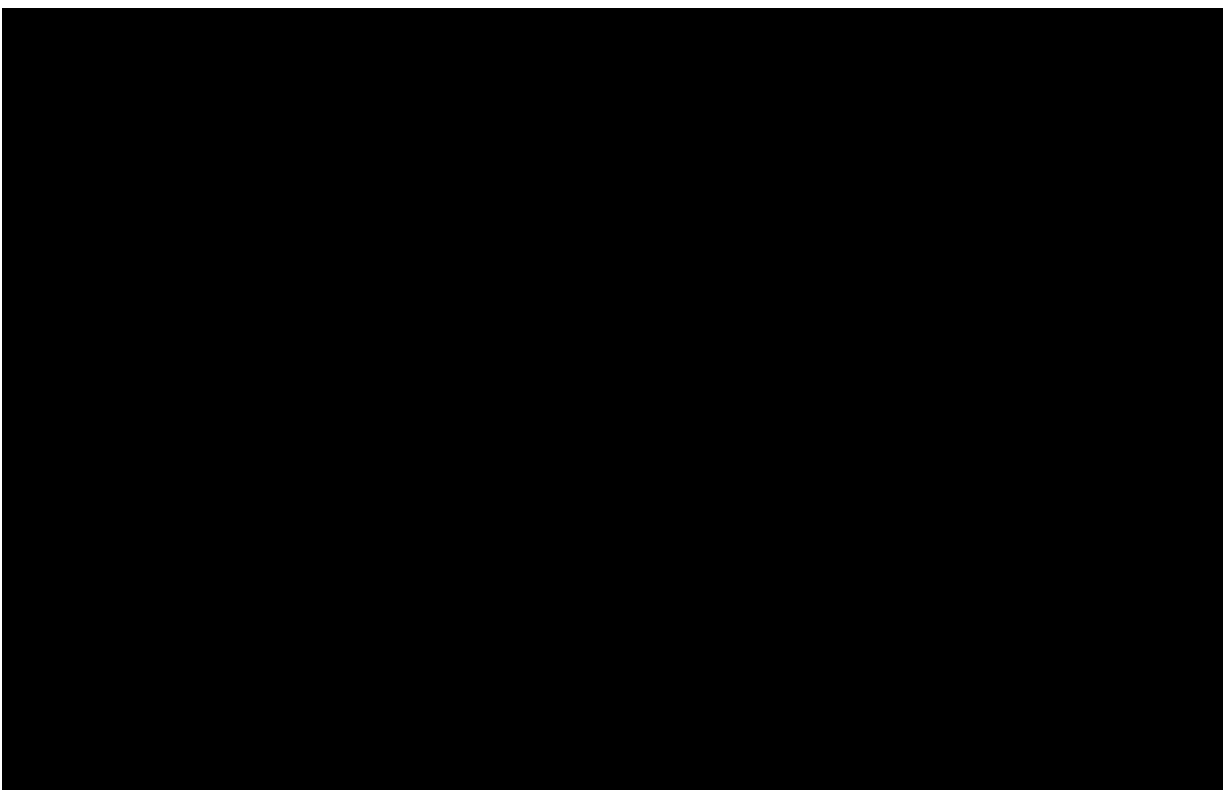
Further to the south (along today's Cross Street and South Street) was the Henry Dimock farm which stretched from the "Potash" Brook to South Street. The Dimock properties encompassed several hundred acres in the area of South Street from Pucker Street to Judd Road. The family acquired its first property in 1841 and retained an estate on the west side of Cross Street until 1936.

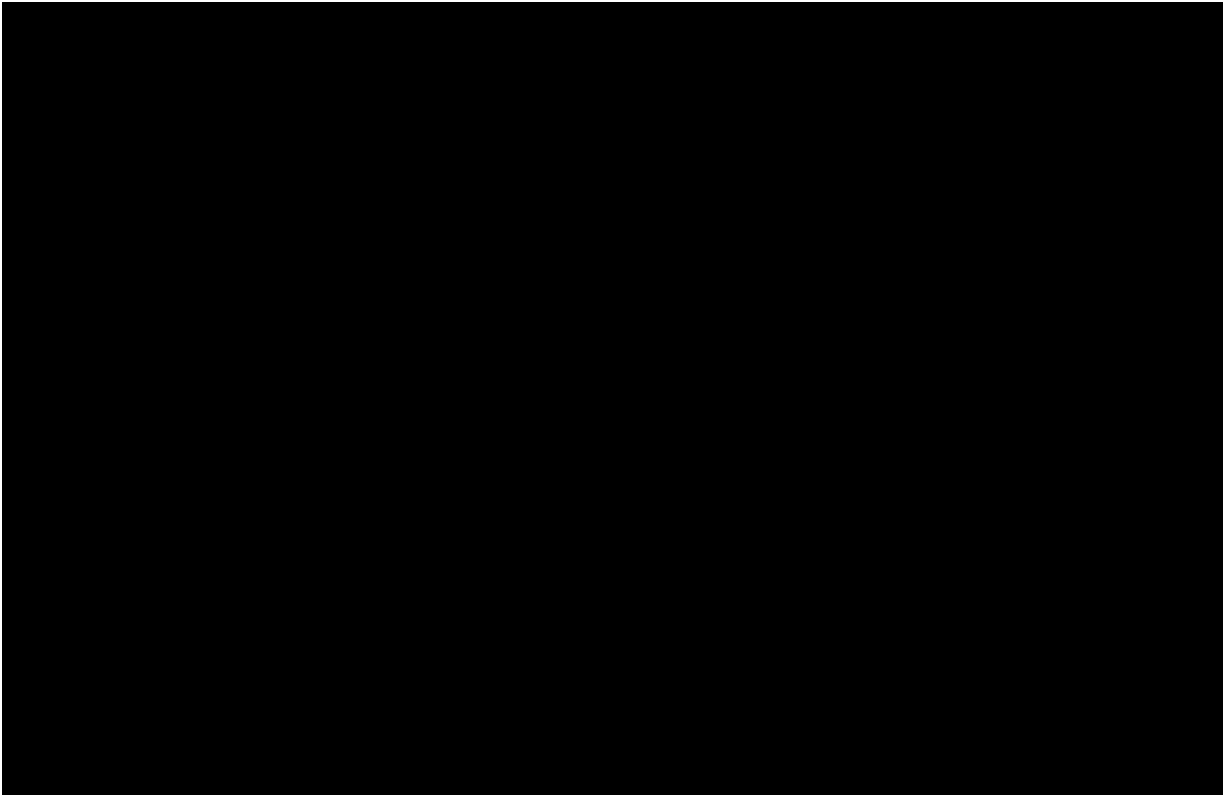


Lake Street Before the Trolley

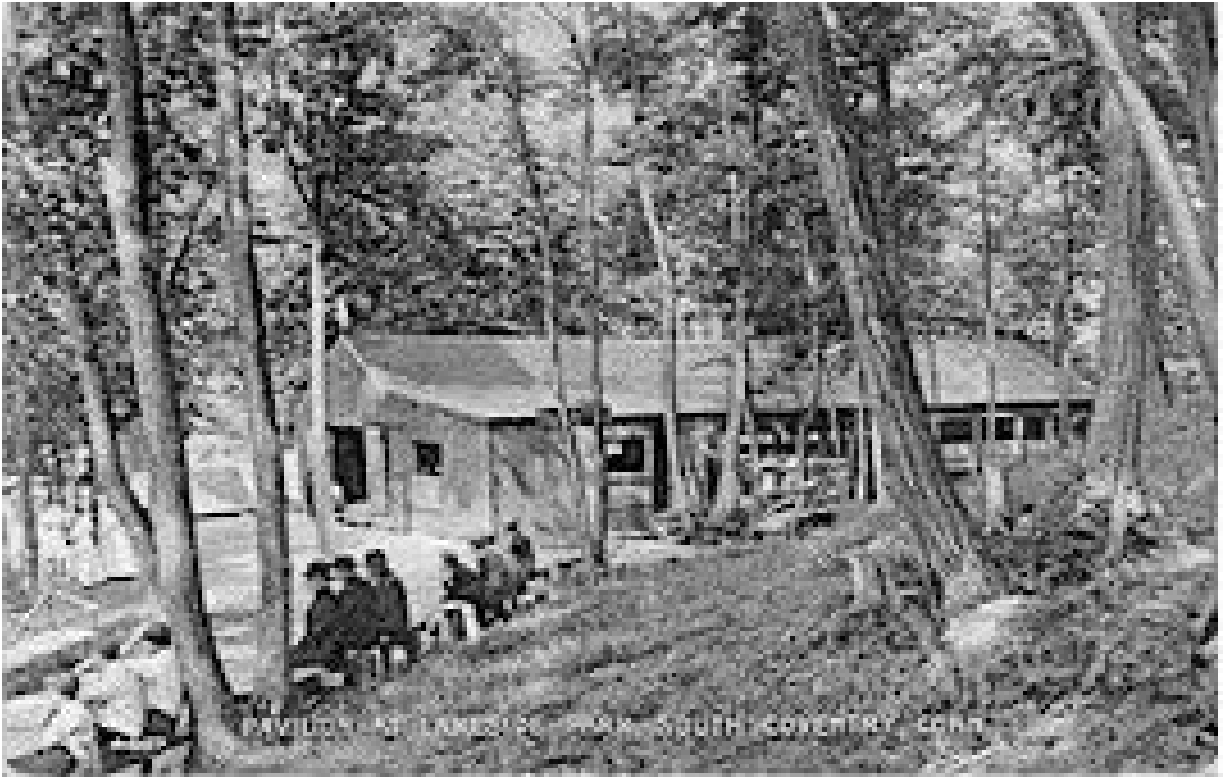


Lake Street Before the Trolley









PAVILION AT LAKESIDE - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

The Willimantic Traction Corporation was formed by a Special Act of the Connecticut General Assembly in 1901. Construction was started in Willimantic on July 11, 1902, and the initial operation began on August 16, 1903 from Willimantic to South Windham, a distance of about four miles. When completed from Willimantic to Baltic, the distance was 10.13 miles, and there was an isolated 1.08 mile stretch up Main Street to the Willimantic Cemetery. This trolley line, isolated from the rest of the system by railroad tracks, was serviced by a lone shuttle car. Passengers and crew were obliged to walk about 200 feet over steam railroad tracks from one car to the other to complete their trip. This break in the trolley line was caused by an 1895 state law that prohibited street railway crossings at grade.

The South Coventry Trolley Bridge

The Willimantic Traction Company was sold on December 1905 to the Consolidated Railway Company. The New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Company was then merged with the Consolidated Railway Company and kept its original name. Through several business maneuvers the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Company was changed to the Connecticut Company. On June 12, 1908, the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Company petitioned State Railroad Commissioners asking that they approve the layout of a railway line on private land, and its proposed method of construction in the City of Willimantic and the Towns of Mansfield and Coventry. The petition was heard on June 24, 1908 and

was granted on July 17th. The construction contract was awarded on October 5, 1908 to the firm of Lathrop and Shea of New Haven. On August 18, 1909 after examining the extension of the Connecticut Company's line from the cemetery in Willimantic through a portion of the towns of Mansfield and Coventry to the southeasterly end of Lake Wangumbaug, the Railroad Commissioners issued a certificate "to effect that same had been found in a suitable and safe condition for the transportation of passengers." Length of the line was 6.828 miles.

The Willimantic Daily Chronicle- August 18, 1909. "Bells Rung On Arrival Of Car In South Coventry." "Tour of Inspection Made by Connecticut Company Officials Followed by Dinner with Celebration Committee of the Board of Trade and Business Men's Association. With school and church bells ringing, flags waving and people cheering, South Coventry welcomed the official car which rolled into that village on the rails of the new trolley line between twelve and one o'clock this afternoon.

While men employed on the road have been over the new trolley line in a car several times, today's trip by a car bearing the road's officials and the State Railroad Commissioner was really the opening of the road for traffic and the opening for public travel will be tomorrow when a car will begin running at 6:15 in the morning. Today there was hardly a house from the Willimantic Cemetery to the end of the line at South Coventry where people were not out in the yard to watch the official car pass, and in most cases the people waved flags and where flags were not waving, the women flourished their handkerchiefs and cheered."

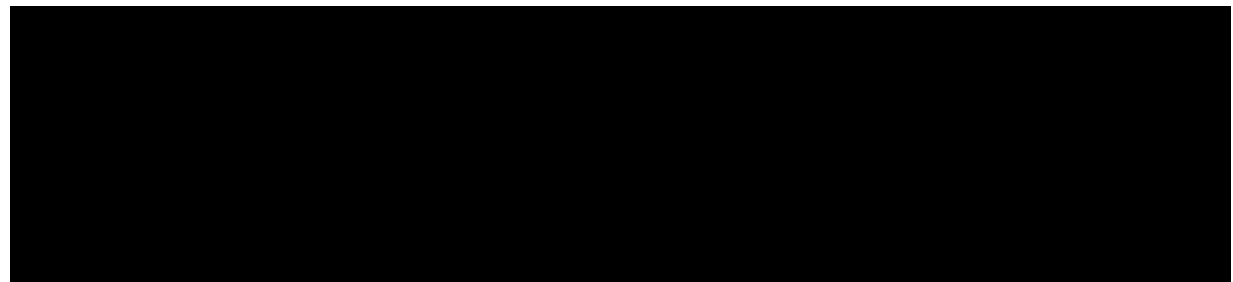
Even the weather took a turn for the better, as just before the official car left Willimantic the sun came out and shone for a time, expressive of the general joy that the trolley line to South Coventry was at last a reality. The first car will leave the car barn at 5:30 tomorrow morning and run to the railroad crossing to connect with the 6:15 AM car from South Windham, and it will then make hourly trips, connecting with the cars for Baltic and Norwich. The fare will be ten cents each way and only one car will be operated at present, unless the traffic demands more. Mr. Leary said that as

yet no arrangements had been made for handling freight or express, but it is expected this matter will be taken up in the near future.

Officials on the car said that the road was one of the best as far as construction goes that the Connecticut Company ever built, and one of the construction men stated that it was the best-built trolley line he had ever worked on. The roadbed is well built, the wire work is of the best, and there is plenty of power. This new trolley line, which makes charming South Coventry and the lake with the Indian name of easy access to the people of Willimantic and other cities, is six miles in length and it is a well constructed piece of road, having an excellent roadbed and steel and iron bridges, resting on concrete structures spanning the tracks of the Central Vermont Railway and the Willimantic River. The track is on or near the highway practically all the way and the cars will pass through a beautiful bit of country, with a lake that is already well known as an ideal vacation or day's outing spot just a few stops from the terminal. In South Coventry there is an unusually pretty street through which the trolley cars will pass. On both sides are huge elm trees that shade the many handsome residences and many more neat cottages, with their well-kept lawns and beds of bright flowers. (1, 18, 19)



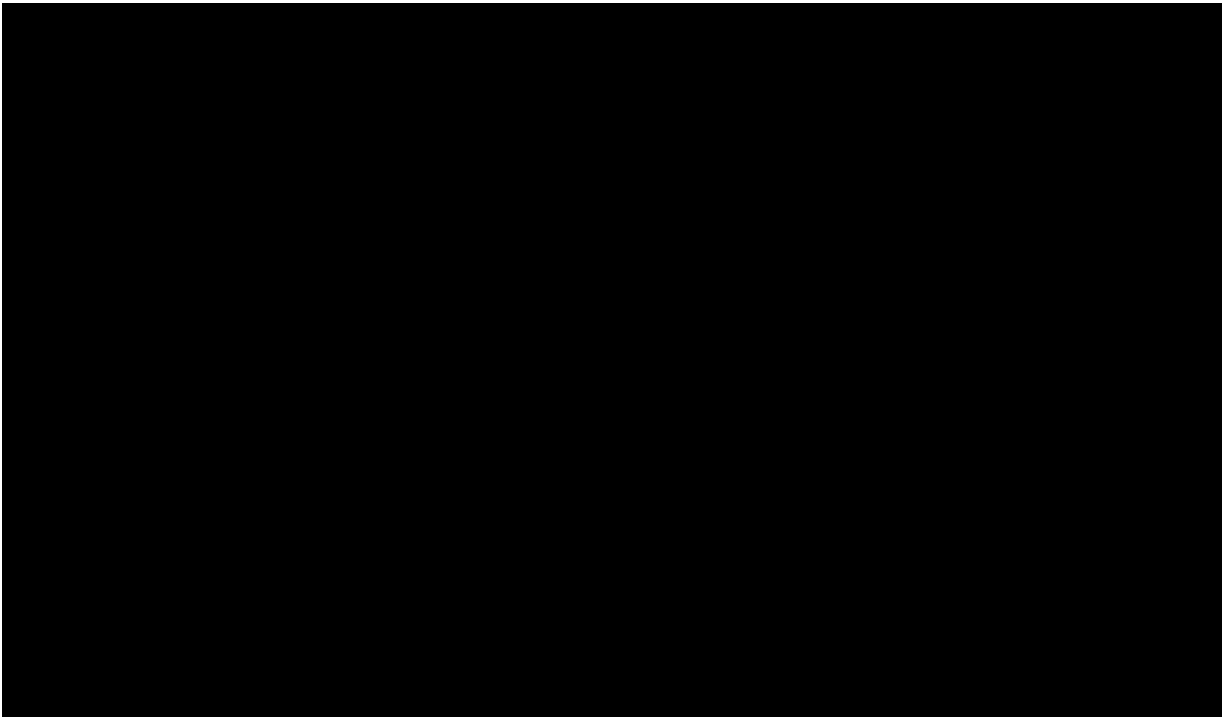
South Coventry Trolley Line

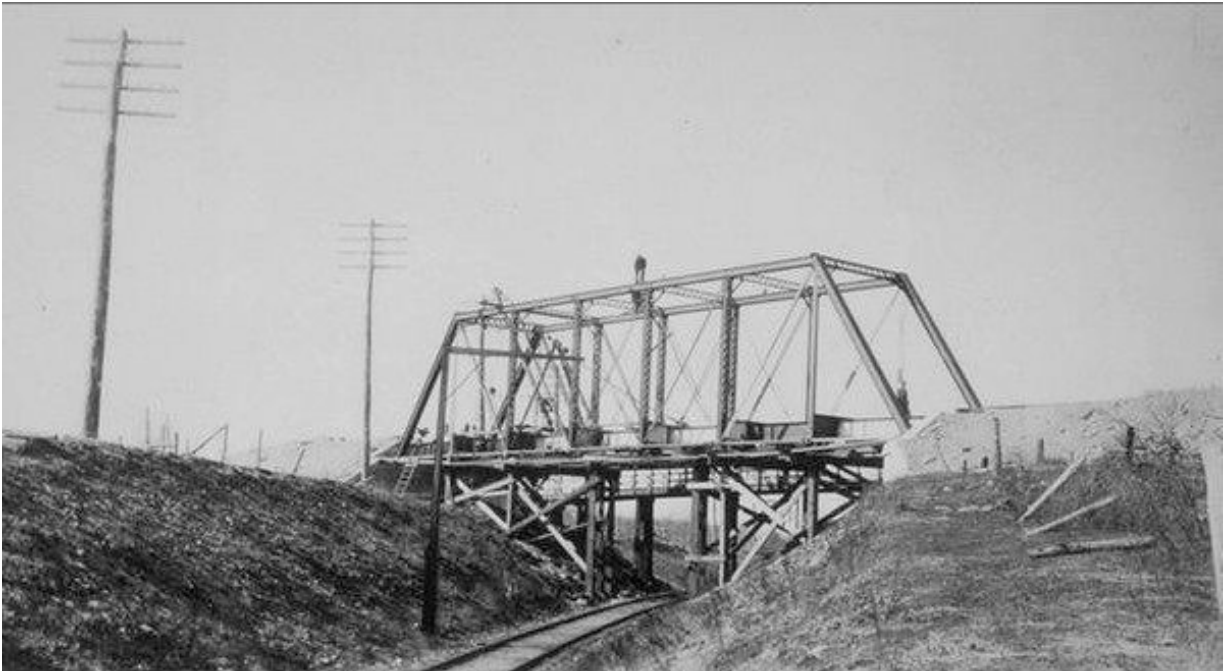


South Coventry Trolley Line



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August 19, 1909, The Willimantic Daily Chronicle- Many People Riding Between Willimantic and South Coventry on the Connecticut Company's Car. The Willimantic- South Coventry trolley line was opened to the public this morning and a good business was done all day. Willimantic people who had the spare time went to South Coventry while many South Coventry people came to the city for a ride over the new line. To all appearances the new line will be a popular and favorite one. No doubt the traffic will be heavy for some time at least. The day crew in charge of the car is Motorman Merrill Douglas and Conductor W. H. Carpenter. The night crew is McDougal and McDermett.

The Trolley at the Lakeside c1912

The car arrives at the Main Street railroad crossing here at fifteen minutes after the hour, and returning reaches South Coventry at fifteen minutes before the hour. There is a stop of several minutes at both ends of the route. In the "write-up" of the opening of the trolley line in yesterday's issue of the Chronicle it was stated that Joseph Wedge had charge of the wire work on the line. It should have been stated that Joseph Lyons was the one under whose supervision this part of the work was done. Visitors to Lake Wangumbaug find work going on there in preparation for the general public celebration of the opening of the trolley line to be held on Thursday of next week. A bandstand is being erected and other work done. A band concert is also to be given next Sunday afternoon and evening, the management of the

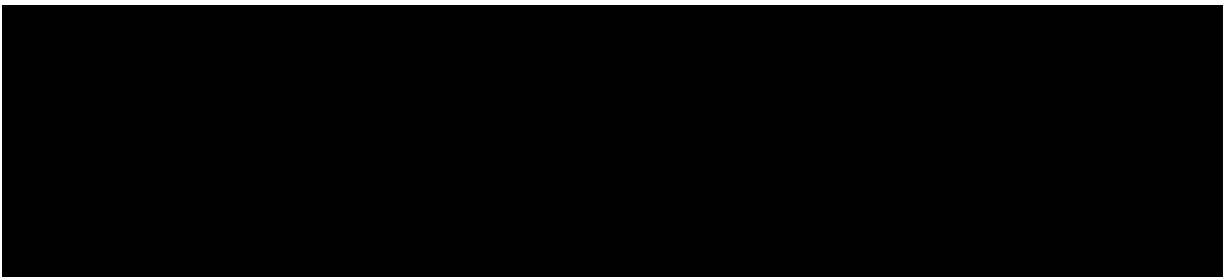
park having made arrangements yesterday with Wheeler's Band of this city. The trolley service between this city and South Coventry was much hampered this afternoon. There were more people who wanted to ride than the car could carry.

The trolley in Coventry was a very successful venture until about 1922-23 when the automobile started to become an affordable mode of travel. The road grading and bridges built for the trolley actually made it advantageous for the automobile, especially on short trips to Willimantic. By 1926, the trolley was a complete financial loss and was discontinued.

Trolley Line Construction- Main Street 1909



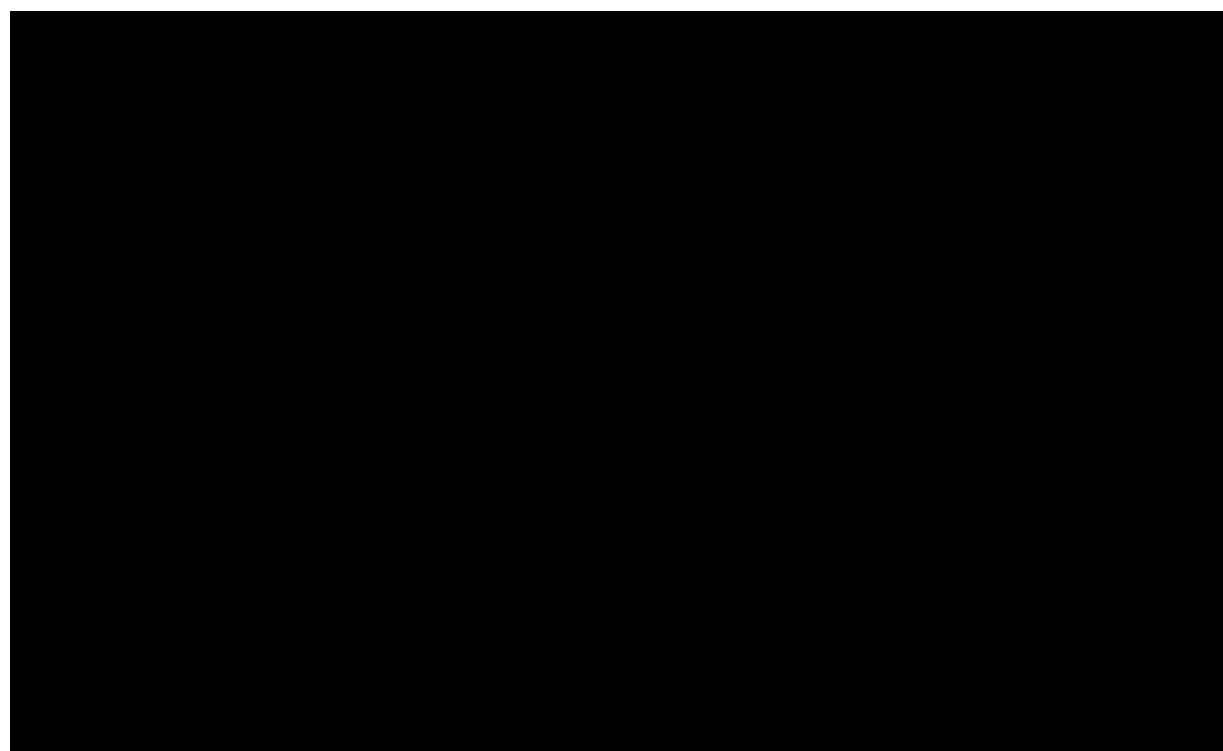
“New Trolley Line Well Patronized”

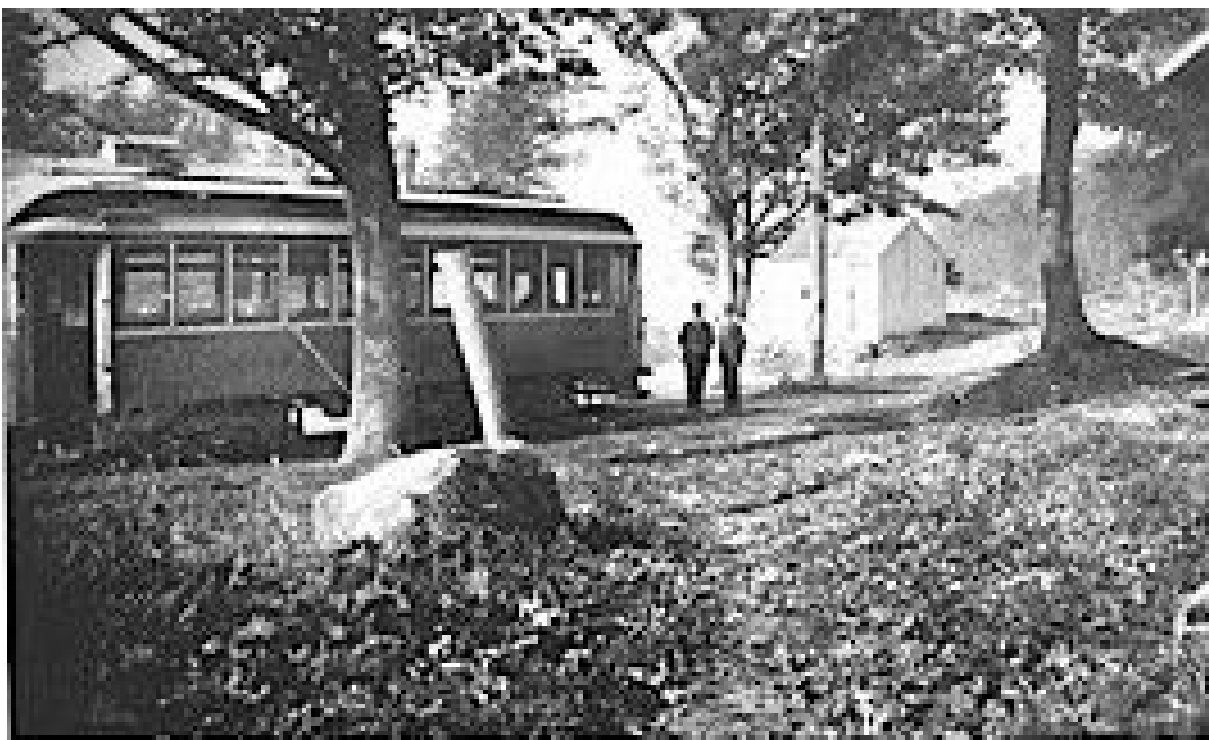


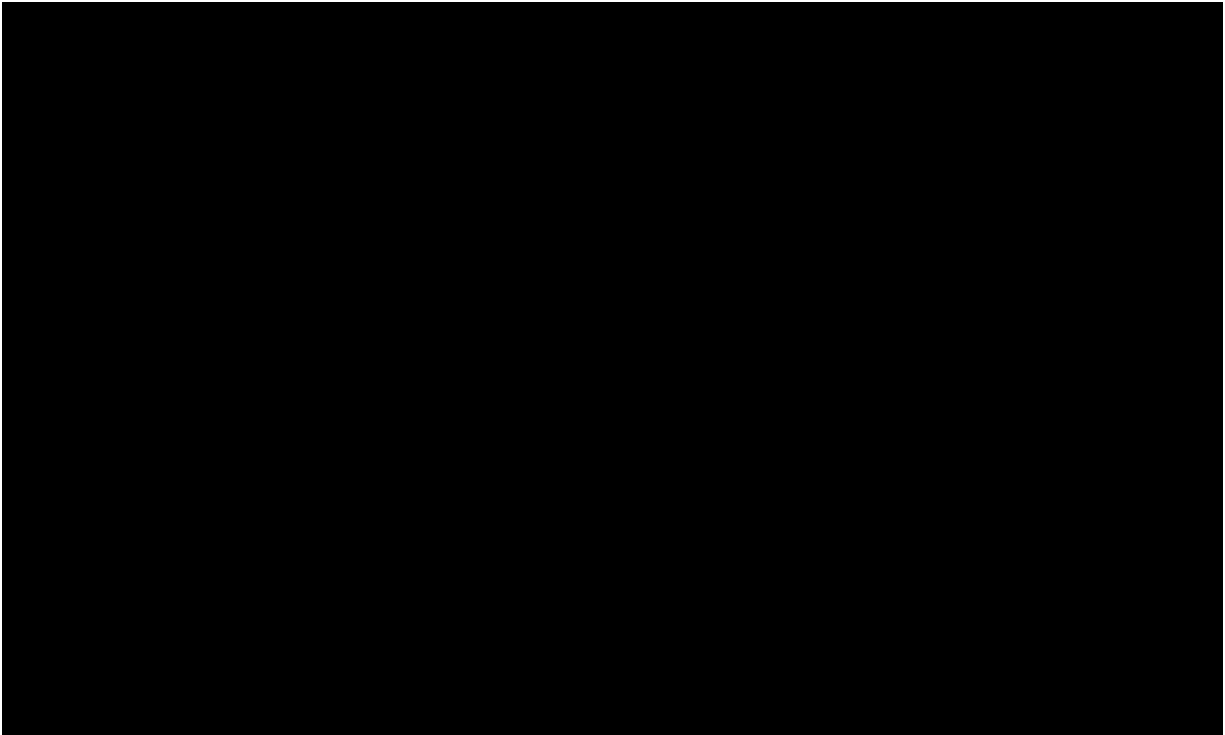
“New Trolley Line Well Patronized”



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As the nineteenth century came to a close, the advancing technology of the trolley car had a major impact on American life. Before 1895, street railways were confined almost entirely to densely populated areas of cities, because the low-voltage direct-current systems used at the time could not transmit electricity for very great distances. Intercity trolley systems became possible, and extremely popular, after the three-phase electrical distribution system came into use in 1894. Unlike the bicycle, the interurban electric car was convenient, affordable even to lower-paid workers, clean, relatively fast, and provided shelter under any kind of weather condition. Trolleys were used by everyone: families going out to the country for a picnic, rural residents entering the city to shop, fishermen heading to a nearby stream, salesmen making business calls, and resort-goers. For country and city folk alike, the trolley was an event, and allowed a previously unknown mobility for most Americans.

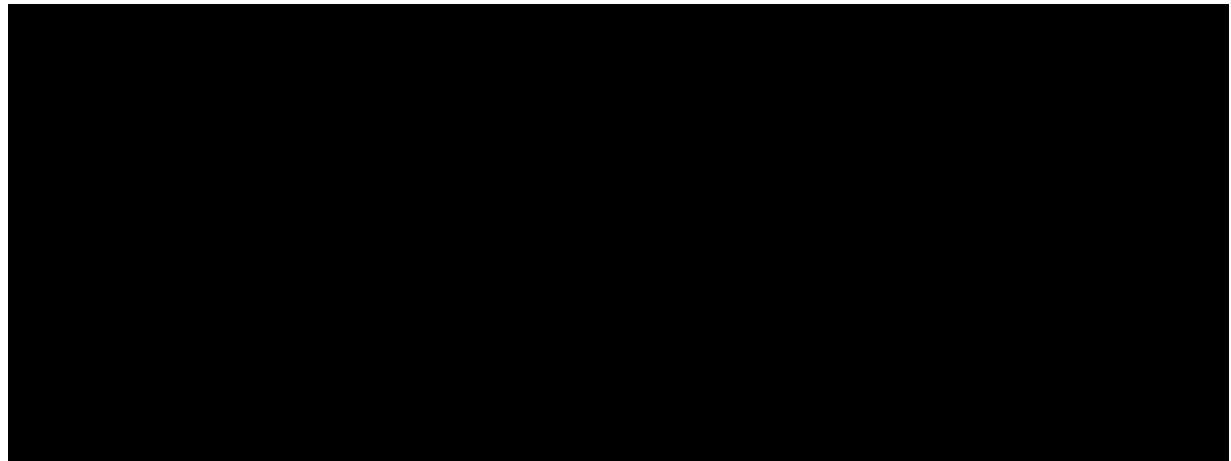
Expansion of trolleys proliferated around Connecticut and around the country. In 1902, there were 987 traction companies in the country with a capacity of 4.8 billion passengers. The trolley industry was big business, and the interurban lines began to seriously compete with the steam railroads, particularly the New Haven Railroad, for both passenger and commercial freight services. Prior to the advent of the trolley, the railroads, which were also converting to electrified lines, had a monopoly on intercity travel. Trolleys generally had lower fares than railroads, were often more comfortable, and were usually more convenient, especially for short trips. To beat the competition and capitalize on what some believed was still a growth industry, the New Haven Railroad decided to acquire all of the trolley properties in southern New England, investing about \$120 million from 1904 to 1907- a considerable sum and more than the company's own capitalization at the time.

The New Haven Railroad's trolley acquisition started first in Connecticut. The New Haven trolley lines were acquired from Fairhaven & Westfield Railroad in 1904, followed by Greenwich trolley lines bought from the Greenwich Tramway Company, and Hartford trolley lines acquired from the Hartford Street Railway Company, as well as lines operating in other towns,

including New London Norwich, and Montville. Within a year and a half, almost all traction properties Connecticut had been acquired, and were organized under a subsidiary corporation called the Connecticut Company. But trolley construction had already fizzled out in Connecticut by 1903, and financial difficulties associated with overbuilding were beginning.



Advance of Trolley in American Life

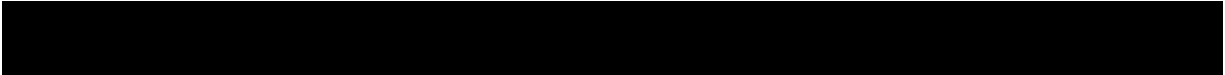


Advance of Trolley in American Life

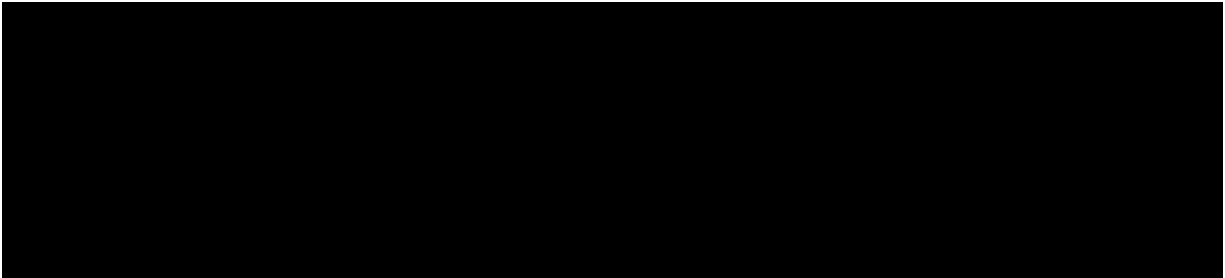


In the early 1900's with the advent of the trolley and the automobile, Lake Wangumbaug (and most others in the region) became an attractive vacation and recreation destination for a greater part of the population. Prior to this, Lake Wangumbaug and Pine Lake (on the Willimantic River) were surrounded by very large and very old farms. The major farms on the lake were Dimock (Cross Street), Avery then Fitzgerald (on the west side), Manning, Root, Ayers and Clark (on the east side). The first purchase of these farms for lakeside lots occurred in 1920. Enterprising individuals recognized this trend and acquired several large farms on the lake. The land was divided into small plots, virtually campsites, whose size typically was 100 by 150 feet. Between 1920 and 1950 or so, it is estimated that nearly 900 acres of land on or near the lake was divided into some 3,000 "lots" and sold individually or in groups to hundreds of vacationers and speculators. Some examples from the town deeds follow: In 1897 John Hutchins sold about 135 acres of farm land on the west side of the lake to George Avery. Avery split the land, and between 1900 and 1935 sold the lots to individuals and to the Water Front Realty Company. The Avery Shores Colony was born.

Between 1910 and 1945, Fred, then Lillian Ayer sold hundreds of lots on both the west and north sides of the lake. Between 1920 and 1936 James Fitzgerald sold hundreds of lots to individuals, many to George and Ida Hinkle (actors) and others to Bill and Mabel Loeser (retired vaudevillians). The Hinkles sold lots that created Gerald Park, the Actor's Colony and Waterfront Heights. The Loesers sold lots in Gerald Park, Lakeview Terrace and Pine Lake Shores. By the late 1940's and into the '50's most lots had been consolidated, and hundreds of summer cottages were in place.

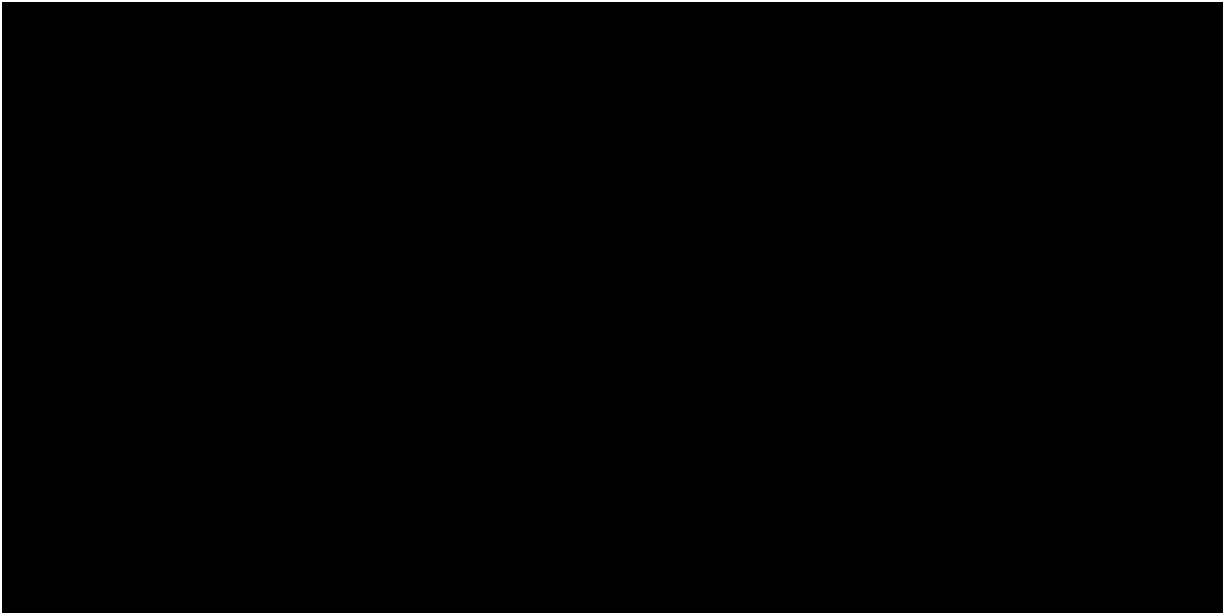


Lakeside Colonies

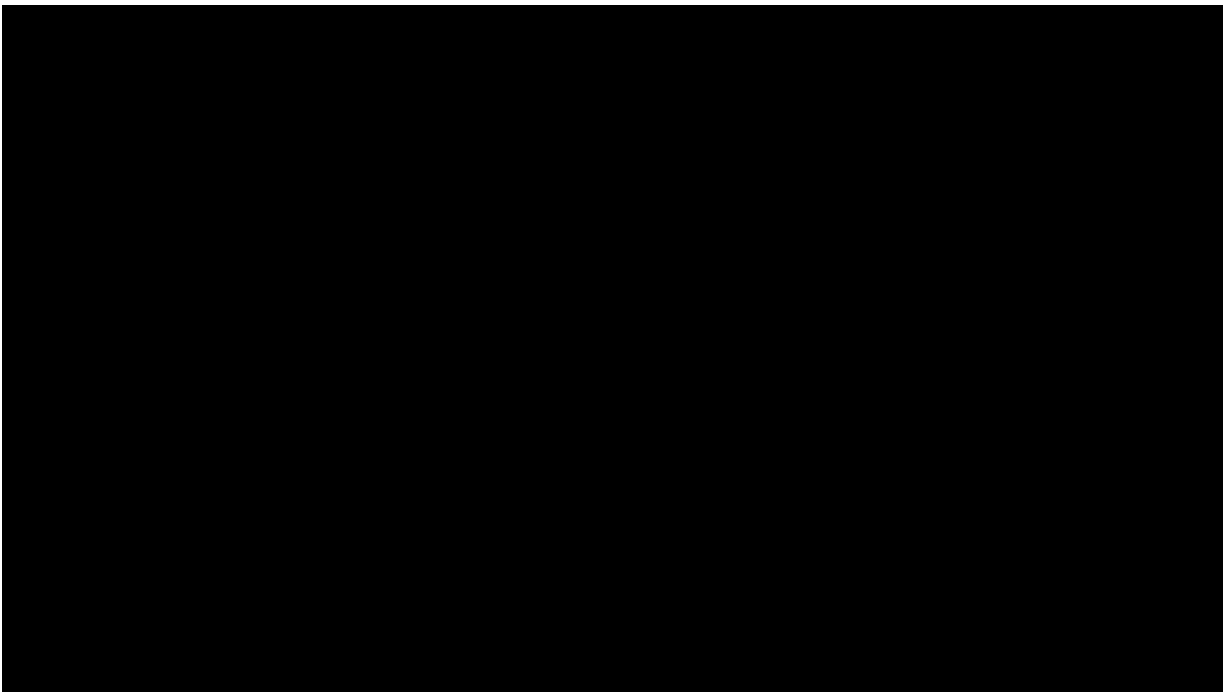


Lakeside Colonies





Loeser's Cottages ca 1930's





At 1100 Main Street sits one of the oldest standing General Store buildings in the nation. The first building at this location was a small home that is now part of the adjoining residence. Not much of the early history is known, but the Loomis family owned the store from about 1840 until 1881, though it was rented for many of those years. Several additions have occurred over time. The large Greek Revival portion of the structure was erected in the early 1800's, with the "grain room" and "butcher shop" addition (to the west) added in 1883. A stagecoach stopped here on its way to the railroad station on Depot Road from the 1850's to the 1890's. The trolley passed by the front porch from 1909 to 1926. Deliveries were made by carriage, then later, by open-sided delivery truck.

The store became the functional center of South Coventry Village with the library next door and the Post Office, as it was then, across the street. The building is also rumored to have been part of the underground railroad until the end of the Civil War. The building is historically known as the Wellwood Store as the Wellwood family (William, then Annie and Fred) owned and operated the store from 1905 to 1963 as the "Old Country Store". The store has been an antiques shop/general store to recent times.

Wellwood's Store ca1900



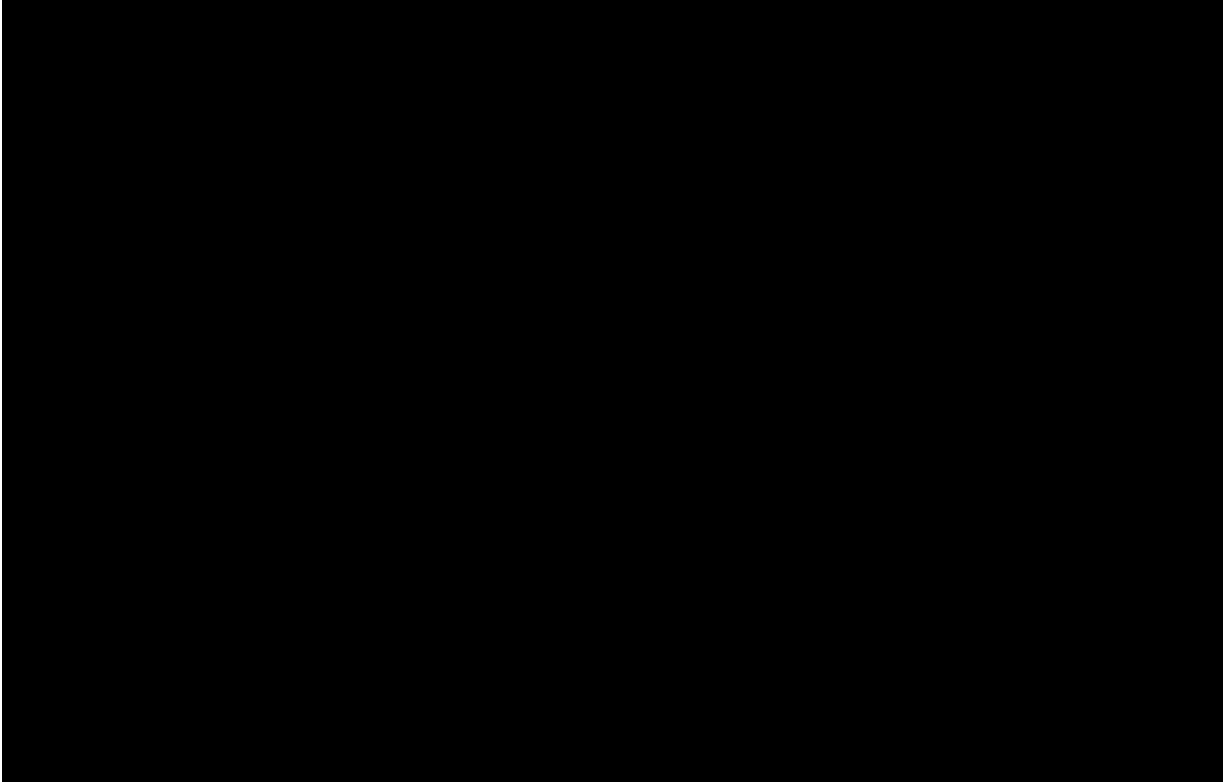
Wellwood's General Store



Wellwood's General Store



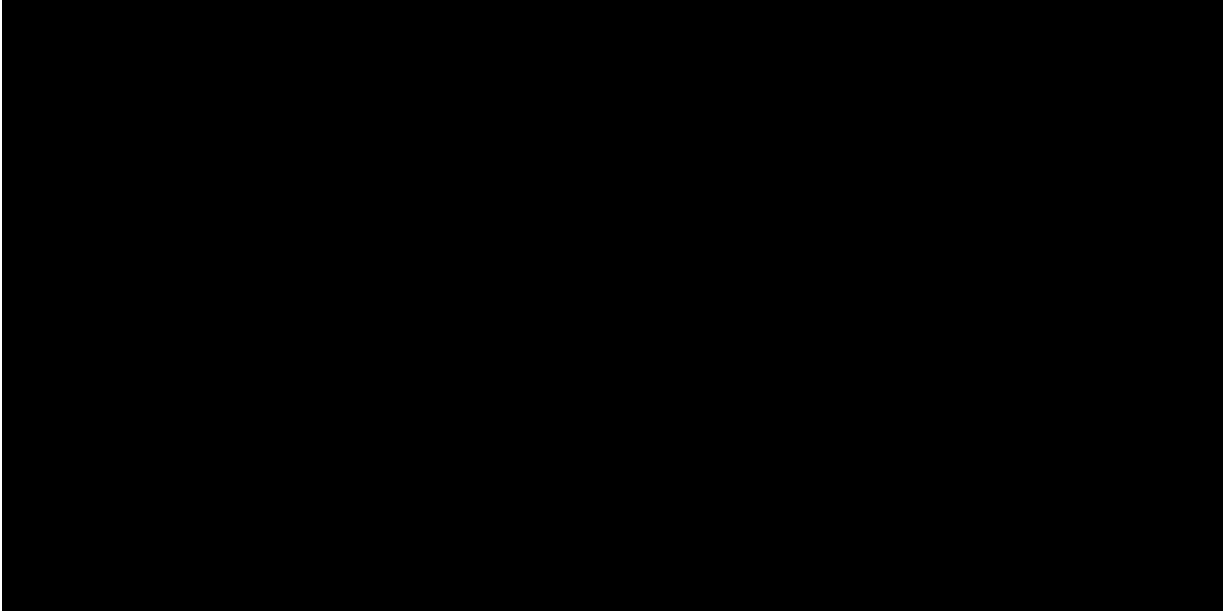
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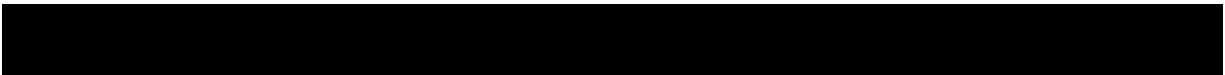


Wellwood's Store ca1900

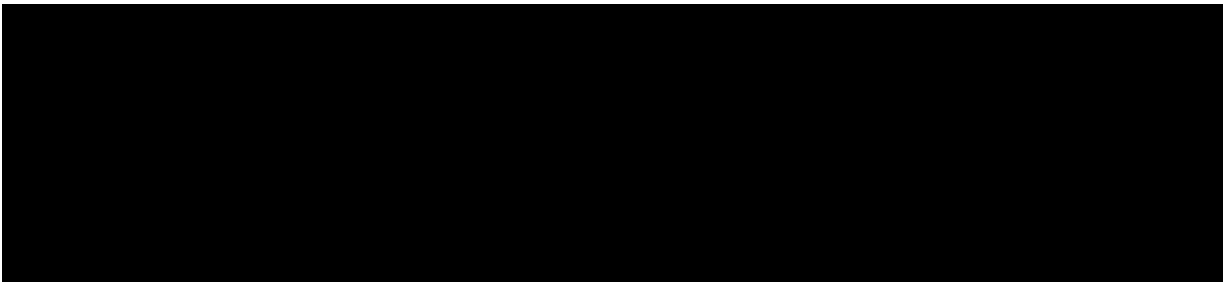
In 1910, the Harrison B. Freeman family began its tradition of providing a summer camping experience for city children. They collaborated with the Union for Home Work in Hartford to direct the camp at Almada Lodge, which was the Freeman's summer home. The Union later became known as the Hartford Neighborhood Centers. In 1920, the Hartford Times assumed full responsibility for the camp program. On March 30, 1931, Harrison B. Freeman, who owned several parcels of land and had inherited several more from Alma Freeman, sold seven contiguous sites totaling sixty acres to the Almada Lodge Times Farm Camp Corporation. On April 14, 1931 the Hartford Times deeds to the Almada Lodge Times Farm Camp Corporation "buildings, furnishings and equipment now on the premises". The site contained several buildings used for the camp and evidence of a rather thriving mill industry from the 1800's and earlier.

Times Farm Camp-1930's

Between 1750 and 1850, there were several thriving water powered mills on or near the site. After 1931, several more parcels were added to complete the approximately 350 acres, along the Skungamaug River, now operated by the Channel 3 Kid's Camp. The camp has been serving our children for nearly 100 years.

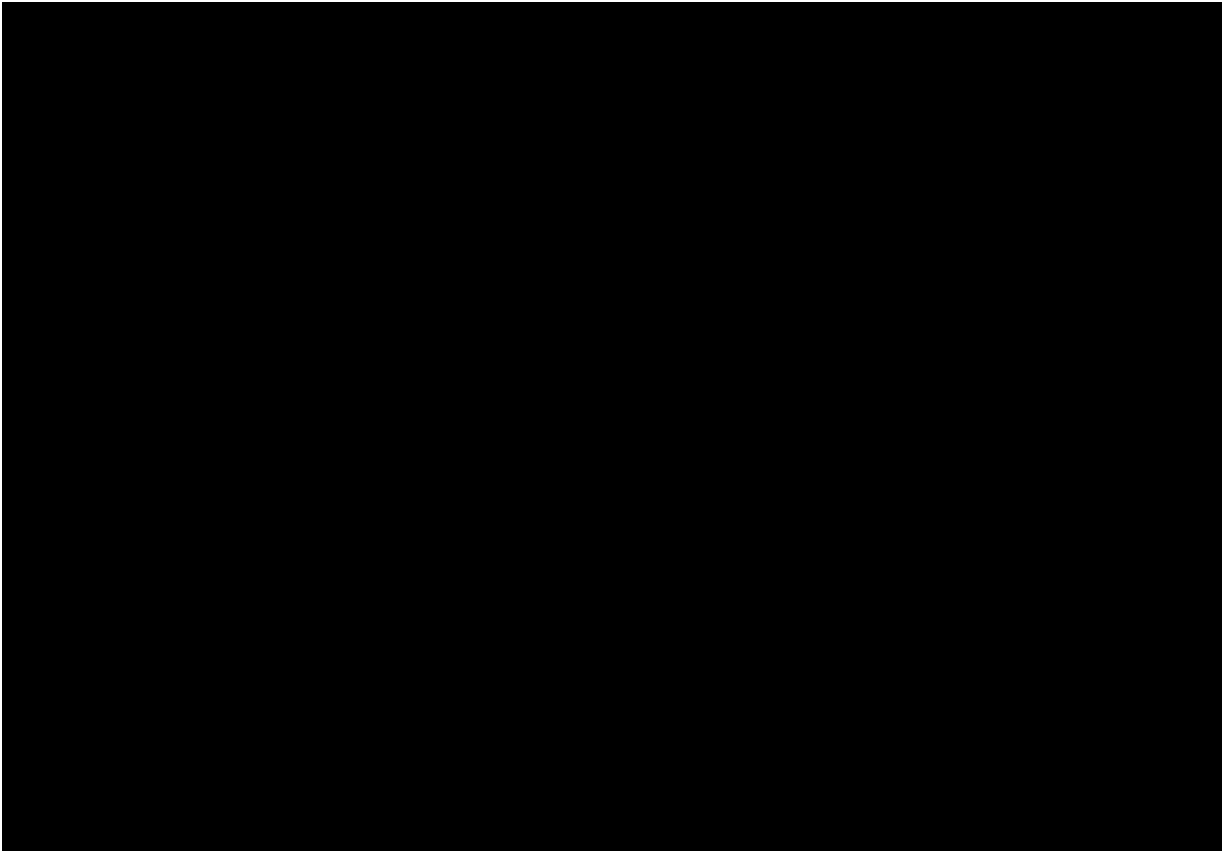


Channel 3 Kid's Camp



Channel 3 Kid's Camp







Sarah Bottum managed her husband's silk mill on Mason Street since his death in 1889. She was one of the first women mill owners in the state. She sold the mill to John Dady in 1901, and he did silk spinning on the first floor and winding on the second floor. He had a seventy- five horsepower steam engine and a five and one- third kilowatt dynamo producing electricity by water power.

Boynton's mill at the head of the Mill Brook was sold to Ernest Woodworth in 1905, and he operated a blacksmiths shop until the 1930's when he began to make his famous, high- quality cider vinegar. His coal shed had to be moved in 1909 to make way for the trolley.

Woodworth's Cider Bottle Label

Mr. William F. Wood rented the vacant American Metallic Cartridge factory on Mason Street in 1908. He made toric eyeglass lenses. He had a furnace to make the glass (in molds) and ground the lenses to various shapes. The Kingsbury Box Factory grew rapidly in this period. Louis and Arthur Kingsbury took over the factory after the death of their father Addison in 1914. They partnered with Horace Davis to form the Kingsbury-Davis Machine Company and began focusing on the production of the machines

to make paper boxes as well as the boxes and labels themselves. They switched to steam power and built their own firehouse on site.

The Globe mill above Kenyon (Barber) pond was sold in 1906 to the Washburn Silk Company . The machines included spinning frames, reels, quillers and a twist machine with fifty-six spindles, so it is likely they made machine twist silk. The mill was sold in 1933 to Louise Sonderegger and during the early part of Coventry Connecticut.

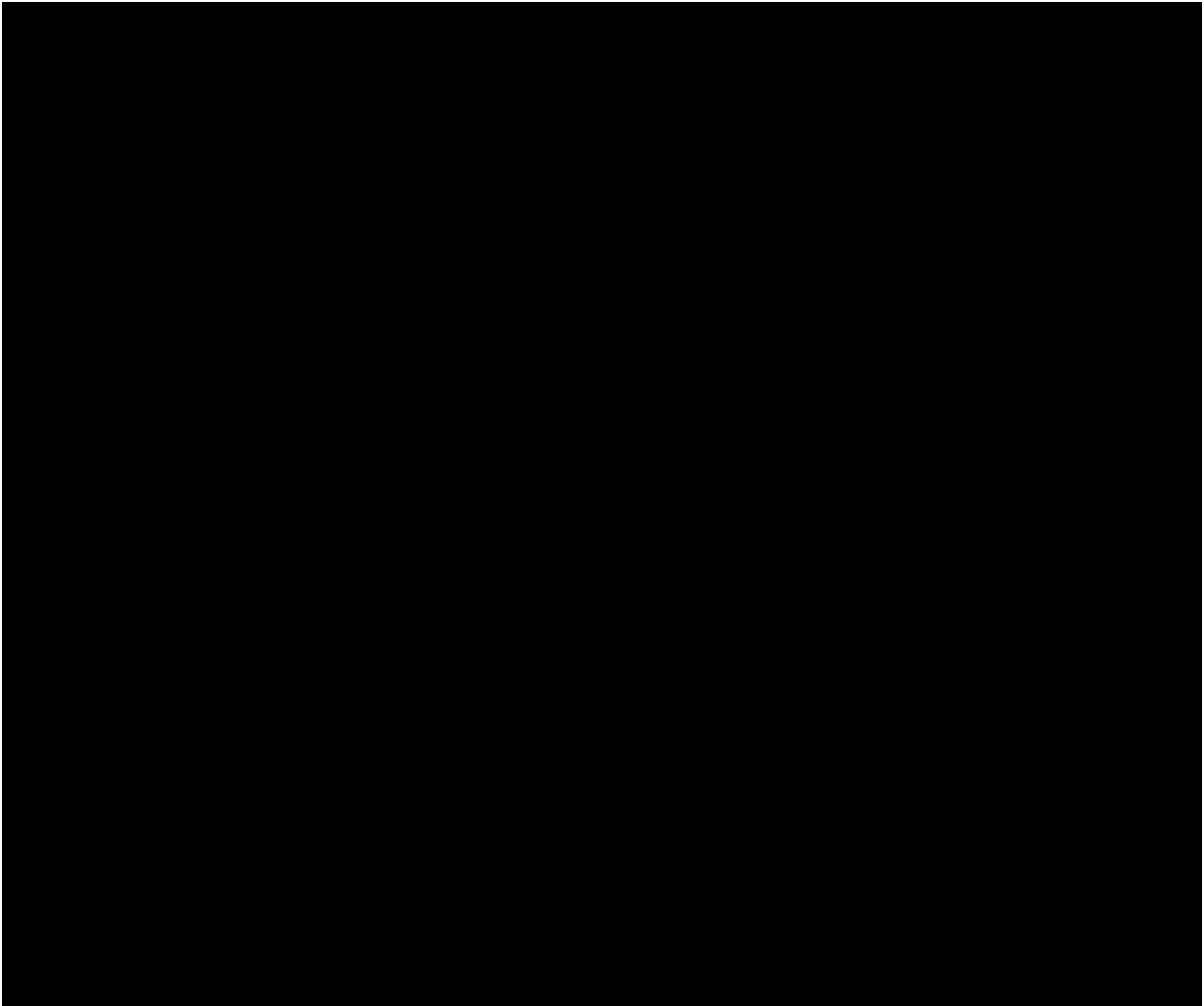
WWII was making parachute cords. A brush fire in the rear of the mill ignited the building which burned to the ground in 1942 and was not rebuilt. Henry Armstrong died in 1909 and his son William took over his wagon factory on Barber Village (Armstrong) Road. He employed a thirty-five horsepower steam boiler and a fifteen horsepower engine as well as a twenty-three foot Leffel water wheel, a very modern machine of the day. The shop was sold in 1918 and its use declined until it was sold to the town after the Great Depression.

On Coventry Road (now Depot Road), the Coventry Satinet tenements are standing but decayed. The mill site holds the dam and nothing else. Mr. James Nichols of Vernon bought the mill site and adjoining residence and started the Nichols Paper Company in 1907. It was sold to the South Coventry Paper Company (Alvin Kingsbury president) in 1911. The factory made fiberboard, a heavy, flexible laminated paper that was used as a leather substitute in shoe linings and suitcases. The company was sold to

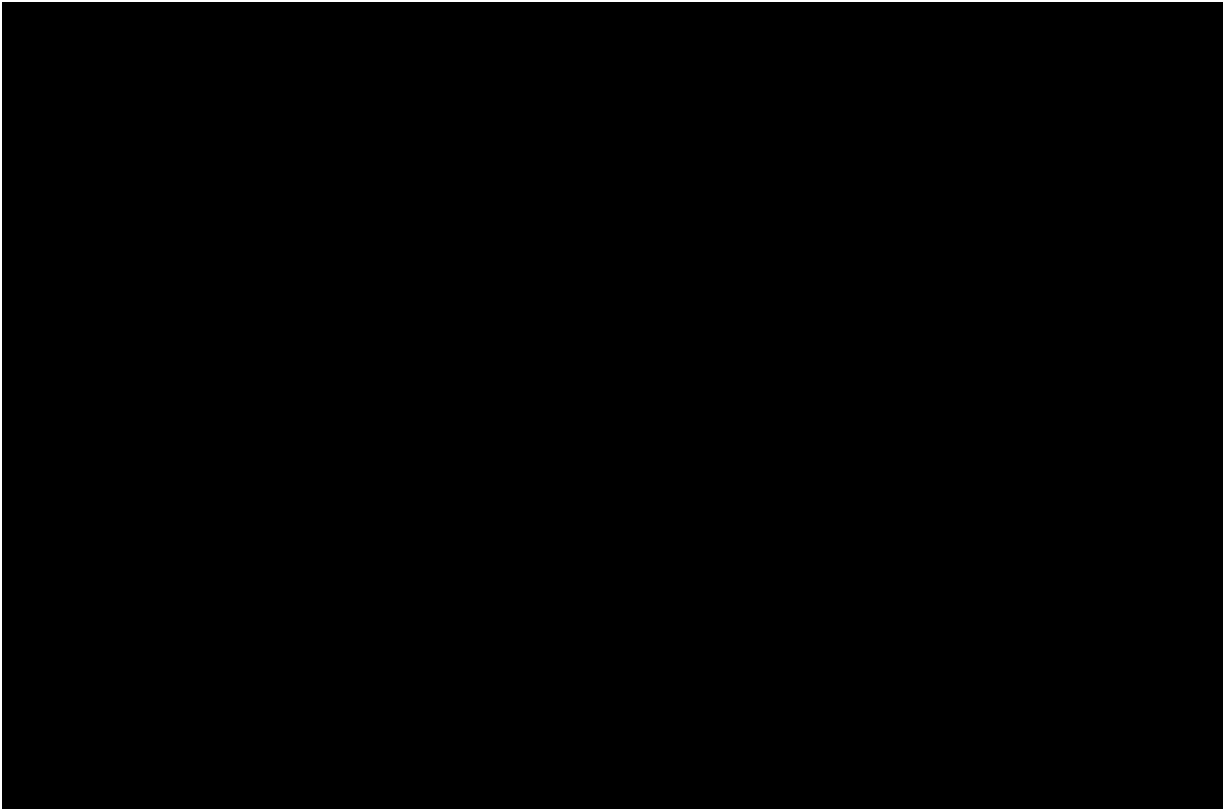
the Sterling Fibreboard Company in 1925. The company survived the depression, and by 1940 Judson DeCew was president. He owned a fine home across the street from the mill. The mill experienced a severe fire in the mid 1950's and was not re-built.

Village Mills in the Early 1900's

Village Mills in the Early 1900's







KINGSBURY & DAVIS MACHINE CO.

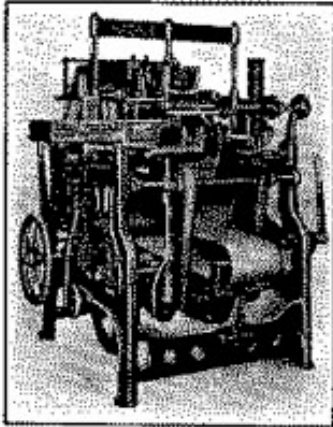
BUILDERS OF THE

"STANDARD" AUTOMATIC PAPER BOX MACHINERY

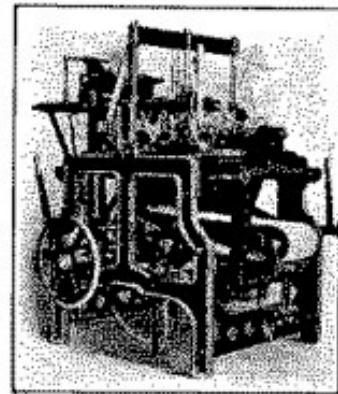


FACTORY
CONTOOCOOK, N. H.

OFFICE
SOUTH COVENTRY
CONN.



DOUBLE ENDER



QUADRUPLE STAYER

The need to create improved roads was magnified by the increasing numbers of automobiles in the state. By 1901, there were so many that Connecticut enacted the first automobile traffic law in the country, limiting speeds to fifteen miles per hour in the country and twelve miles per hour in the city. Not only was this for safety reasons, but increased speeds from cars with narrow, hard rubber tires destroyed the dust binder on macadamized roads, creating ruts and eventually ruining the roads. In 1903, the state began to require registration of automobiles, with owners initially required to make their own license plates. In the first year of this law, some 1,500 drivers registered 1,353 vehicles with the Secretary of State.

In 1905 legislation was passed requiring that motor vehicle number plates be provided by the Secretary of State. Registration fees were based on the horsepower of the car; the fee was three dollars for an automobile with less than twenty horsepower, five dollars for twenty-to- thirty horsepower, and fifty cents per horsepower for vehicles with over thirty horsepower. This was followed in 1907 by additional legislation requiring the licensing of drivers for a fee of two dollars. Funds obtained from automobile registrations, drivers' license fees, and traffic fines were to be used to fund maintenance activities. Although the legislature had authorized the Highway Department to take over road maintenance on state roads as early as 1899, this responsibility was confirmed in the 1907 legislation, which clearly placed the obligation for highway repairs and maintenance on the state. Towns were required to refund one quarter of the funds expended for repairs within their borders, an unpopular aspect of the law that was repealed in 1923. (28)



Auto Registration Begins



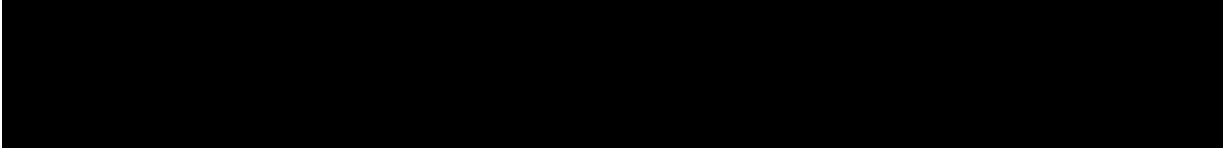
Auto Registration Begins



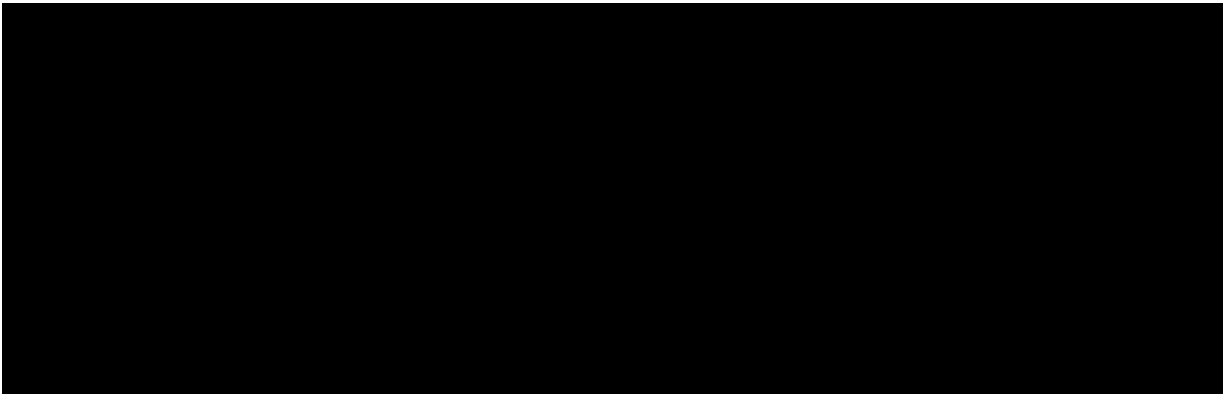
By 1903, this mill site included twenty buildings, three of which are on the north side of Main Street. The buildings were used for storage, bagging, washing, drying, picking and dusting. The process of making shoddy involves shredding, bleaching and washing the cloth as well as dyeing and drying it. The mill was powered by water and steam. The company also acquired the idle Kenyon mill on Barber Village (Armstrong) Road. This site more than doubled the production capacity of the company. Mr. Thomas P. Flaherty was also involved in the mill ownership. Power here included water and steam for a total of seventy-five horsepower. The company owned several tenements nearby. The site is referred to as the “Valley Mill”.

The E.A. Tracy Company was incorporated in 1908 with \$50,000 raised by the sale of 500 shares of stock. In 1923, Mr. Dexter Elliot of Thompson provided \$50,000 in cash and a mortgage loan, and the company was renamed the Tracy-Elliot Mills Inc. Power for the mill was mostly electric. The machines on site included an acid extractor and washer, dryers and blowers, dye kettles, etc. Dryers are powered by seven 50 horsepower motors made by Wagner and GE. The main engine room has a 350 horsepower Ridgeway motor.

About the time Mr. Elliot joined the company, they secured a mortgage for \$9,000 from a New York company called Michael Wool Clips. It was a six month note, but by 1927 the note was not paid, and a lawsuit was brought against Tracy’s company. The company was losing money rapidly likely due to declining business and overextended expansion. The mortgage was foreclosed in 1927, and the Great Depression hit in 1929 which effectively shut down the entire operation. The town acquired the sites for tax liens of less than \$2,000. The Main Street site remained essentially idle until 1936 when the South Coventry Volunteer Fire Department was formed and used a few of the buildings. The Barber Village Road site was sold to the National Silk Company in 1935.



Tracy’s Shoddy Mill Expands Further



Tracy’s Shoddy Mill Expands Further



The Center School in South Coventry was built in 1873 (It was destroyed i by fire in the early 1960's) It contained three departments. Schools were kept in eight other districts (1912) Coventry had no high school, but sent its pupils to nearby towns. The minister in town was accustomed to fit for college the few youths who aspired for a higher education (1912) In the fall of 1911 the School Board asked the State to grant the town a Superintendent of Schools. From 1910 to 1913 the brick school was closed for lack of children in district number eight. In 1913 it reopened with Mabel Hall as teacher at a salary of seven dollars per week.

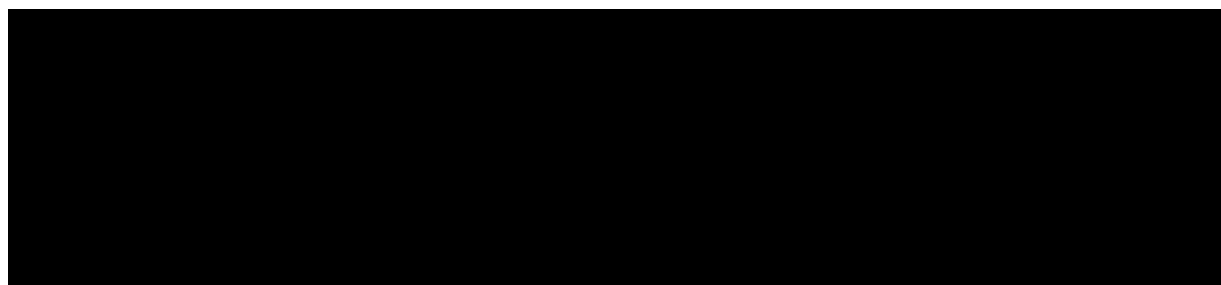
In 1914 and 1916 the board of visitors attempted to consolidate the schools with a central school, however the motion was defeated at town meeting. The reports of the school visitors appear down through the years, with numerous recommendations for better attendance. In 1935 the average attendance in the local schools, with nine districts, was 341, and in 1945, with the Flanders and Brick Schools closed, the average was 301. There were also about 100 students from Coventry attending high school out of town. As early as 1872 Coventry records note that the "town greatly needs a high school". The first district was suggested as a site and state aid was to be requested. For some reason this fell through, and it was not until 1961 that the Coventry High School was built.

In 1911 the state granted Coventry a supervisor of schools, and in 1912 George W. Emerson came to Coventry to serve in that capacity. He also supervised the schools in Columbia and Lebanon. Coventry continued under state supervision until 1955 when Dr. Worcester Warren became the first Coventry superintendent of schools. The town school system in 1962 included two elementary schools, the George Hersey Robertson School, built in 1948, and the Coventry Grammar School built in 1955. In 1961 the Coventry High School opened, and Royal O. Fisher was appointed superintendent of schools. Prior to that, Coventry elementary schools sent students to the Rockville, Manchester, and Willimantic secondary schools. (4,9)

The Nathan Hale Fife and Drum Corps was organized in the very early 1900's, and on March 11, 1914, Joseph Clark was president.



Schools - Early 1900's



Schools - Early 1900's



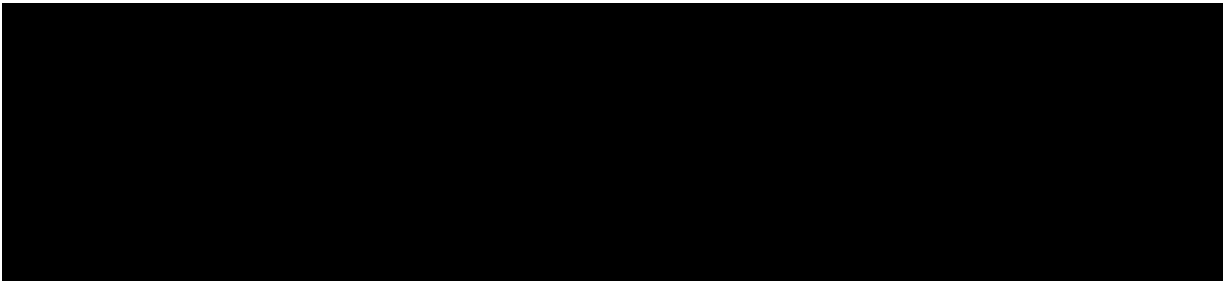
Mr. Seymour was born in Bristol, Connecticut, of distinguished ancestry. He graduated from Hartford High School in 1878, and then moved to Washington where he graduated from the Law School of George Washington University. For a time he served in the law office of his brother, Henry Seymour. He moved to New Haven in 1883. He became a prominent and successful lawyer, a member of the firm of Seymour and Earle, specializing in patent law. Mr. Seymour gained special distinction as a leader in civic affairs, an antiquarian, historian and author. He died in 1945 after suffering a second serious stroke. Though physically incapacitated by the seizure he retained his mental astuteness to the end. He was 84 years old and unmarried.

For many years Mr. Seymour had been interested in Nathan Hale as a symbol of American patriotism. In 1914 he acquired the Hale mansion in South Coventry, together with some 300 acres of field, pasture and forest originally owned by Deacon Richard Hale, father of Nathan. These tracts were purchased from Emmeline Field Cobb Peterson per the will of her husband Wilson. Mr. Peterson had acquired the Hale property from Loring Winchester in 1881. Later Seymour acquired additional land including the old Strong homestead where originally it was thought Nathan Hale's grandmother was born. He also acquired the Huntington house, close to the village of South Coventry, where Nathan Hale attended school. Mr. Seymour put these houses in order and equipped the Hale house with furniture and other articles of the period, including various items that had belonged to the Hale family.

This property constitutes a memorial of Nathan Hale of national significance. Mr. Seymour made numerous contributions to the literature of fields in which he was interested. Of special significance are his two books: "A Documentary Life of Nathan Hale" and "New Haven". Also of local interest would be his works entitled "Hale's Last Words Derived from Addison's Cato", "Hale's Alleged Betrayal," and the "Familiar Hale." Mr. Seymour's broad interest in history and the fine arts is indicated by his association in many antiquarian associations.



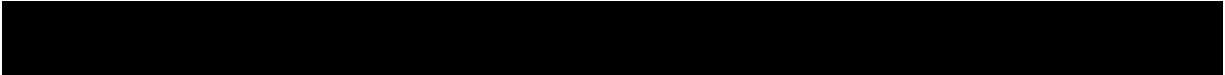
George Dudley Seymour



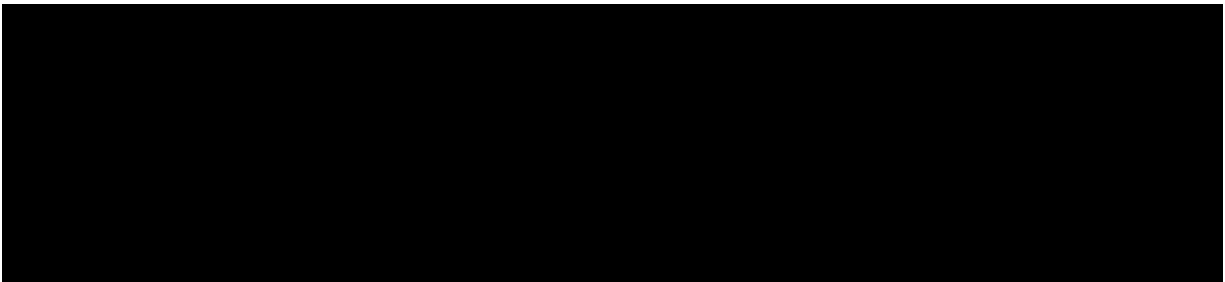
George Dudley Seymour



John Carman was one of South Coventry's leading businessmen having been in the grocery business for thirty-five years. His store was located on Main Street just west of today's Bidwell Tavern. Previous to his grocery business he was a contractor, using a stitching machine of his own design, to sew layers of quilts for the Palmer Brothers of Montville. He was also a harness maker. During the Civil War he was employed at the Springfield Armory. He was a selectman of the town, and at his death, was a director of the South Coventry Water Company. He married his neighbor Anna Lloyd in 1868. (18)



John Best Carman (1843-1910)



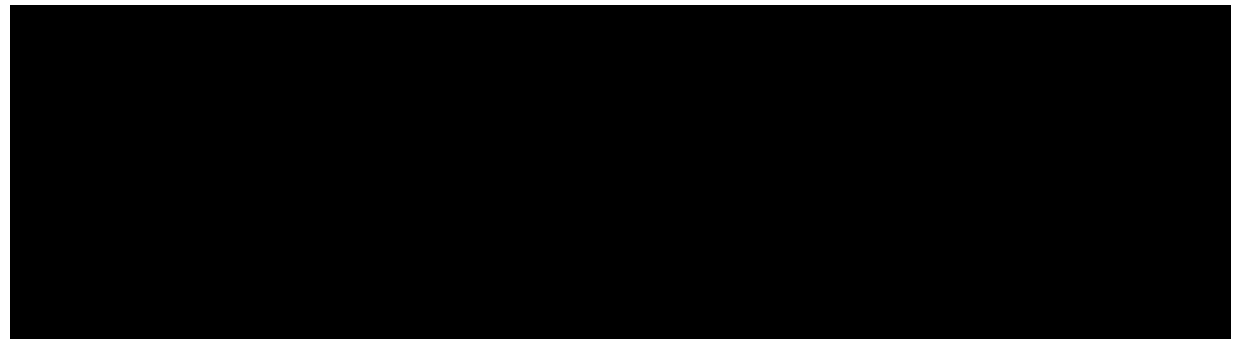
John Best Carman (1843-1910)



A strike on the railroad in August of 1910 significantly affected several local businesses. The Nichols paper mill near the depot closed for several weeks due to the lack of coal. Latimer's grain store also closed, as there were no shipments of grain. Some local freight was received, and the food supply was maintained by the trolley from Willimantic. (18)



Central Vermont Railroad Strike, 1910



Central Vermont Railroad Strike, 1910



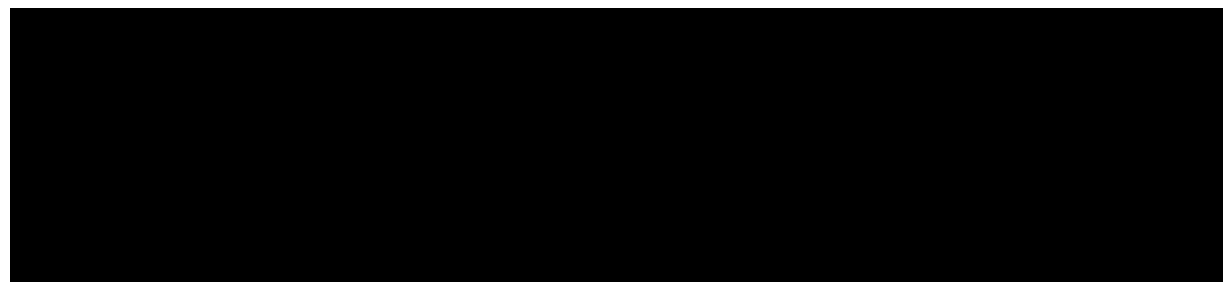
The Porter Library in North Coventry was started in 1886 by Thomas E. Porter and the widow of Dr. John Porter who each gave \$200. It was located in a reading room in the chapel of the North Coventry Congregational Church. This library and the one in South Coventry were both beneficiaries in the will of William B. Kingsbury to the extent of about \$1,200 apiece. In 1911 the late Henry F. Dimock left \$40,000 in perpetuation of the memory of his grandfather, Rev. Chauncey Booth (of the First Congregational Church) and his father Timothy Dimock M.D., to build and endow a library known as the Booth and Dimock Memorial Library in South Coventry.

The South Coventry Library Association, W .L. Higgins president, dissolved themselves on May 27, 1911 and reformed as the Booth and Dimock Memorial Library Association primarily to accept the gift of the late Henry Dimock. (1842-1911). The building was designed by James M.A. Darrach of New York and erected in 1912, by the firm of Cruikshank

and Fraser of New York. The library was dedicated Oct 24, 1913, a rainy night. Henry was living in New York City at the time of his death, but had been summering in Coventry (at his estate on Cross Street) for years. Henry graduated Yale in 1863 and became a prominent lawyer in New York City where he also held the position of Commissioner of Docks and was a Director of the Metropolitan Steamship Company. He maintained several farms in Coventry and a summer estate on Cross Street. His will was recorded in Coventry on January 29, 1909 and among the three witnesses was Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Hyde Park on Hudson! (1, 14, 45)



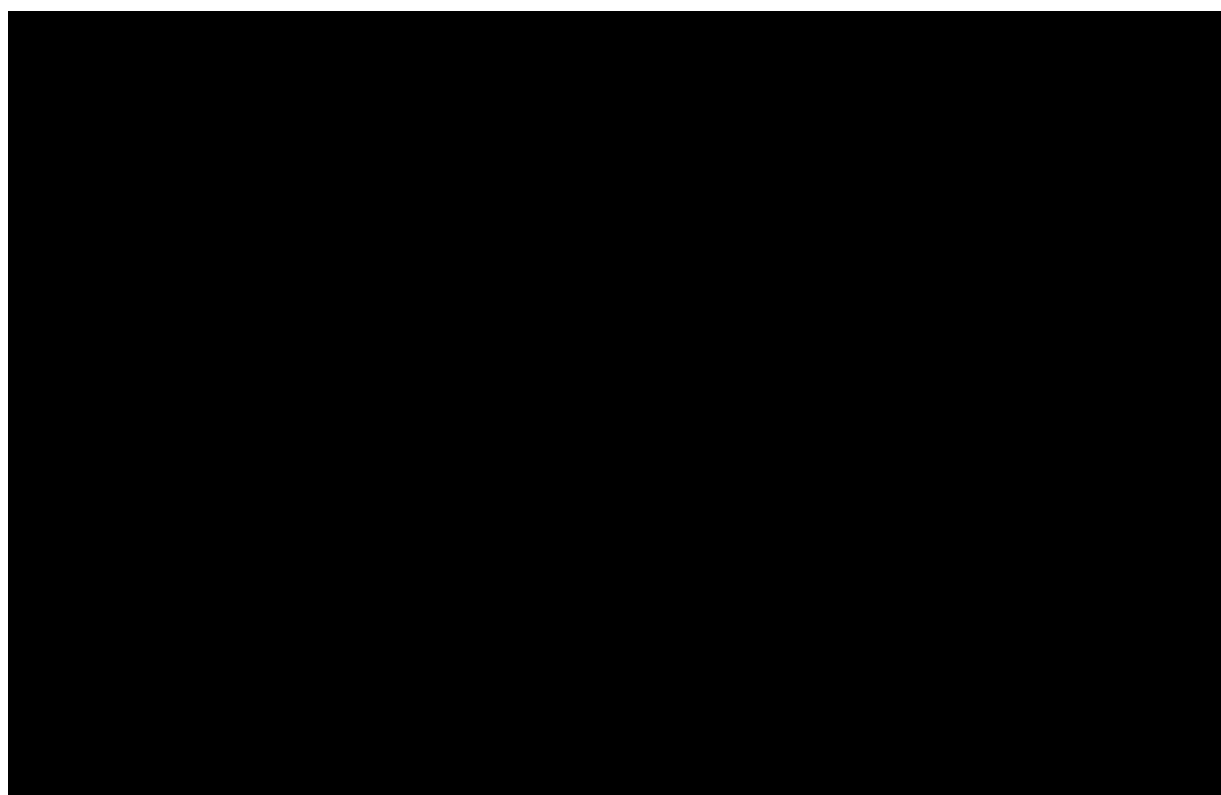
Libraries ca 1911

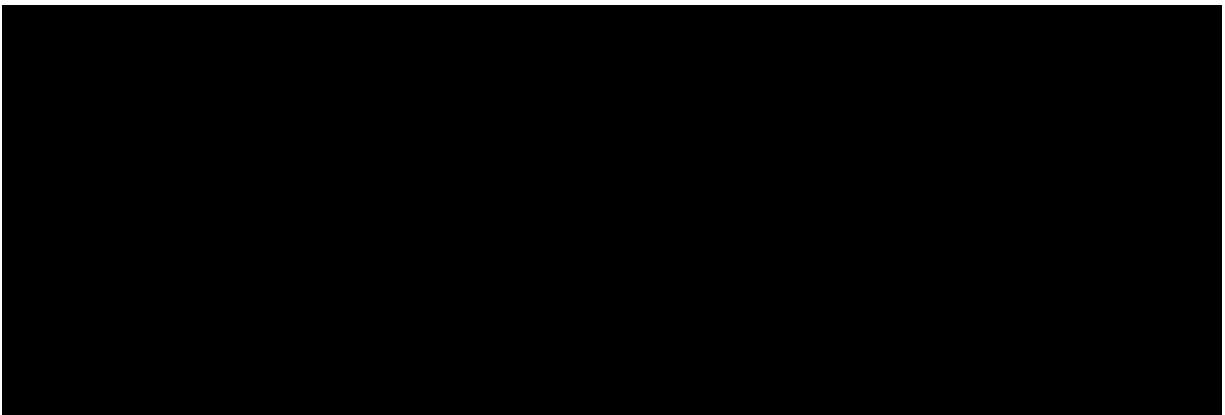


Libraries ca 1911



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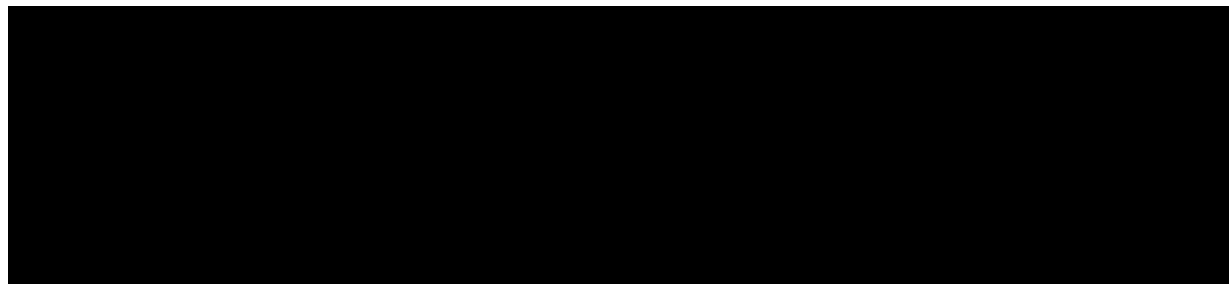
The Booth & Dimock Memorial Library



At the request of Selectman John Reynolds in December of 1911, the State renovated lower Main Street from the railroad bridge to the Methodist church with 500 tons of trap rock. This was the first major improvement of the road since the trolley company graded the dirt road in 1909. It also allowed an easier time for automobile traffic which eventually contributed to the demise of the trolley. (18)



Main Street Improved

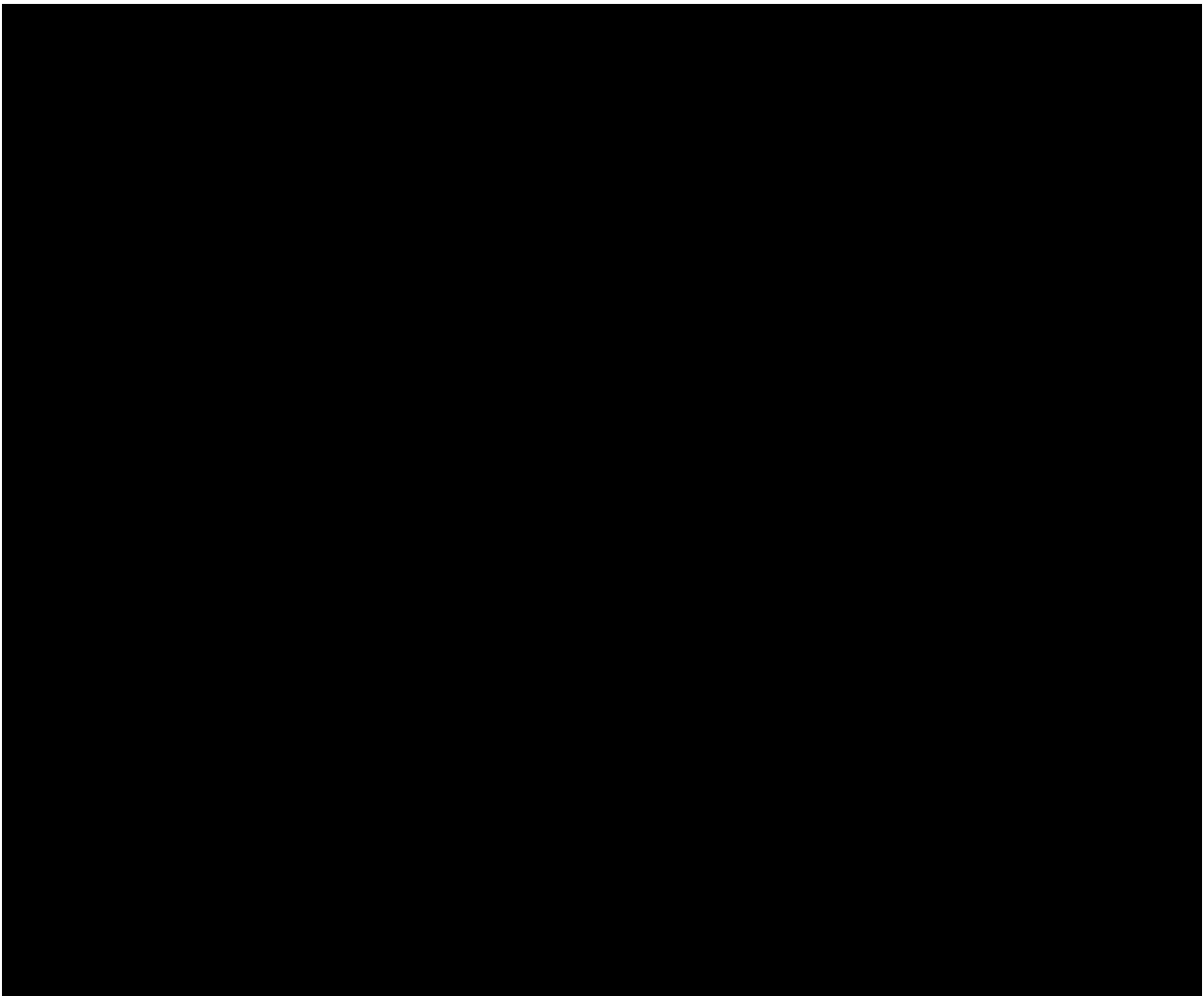


Main Street Improved





The 1912 Bi-Centennial



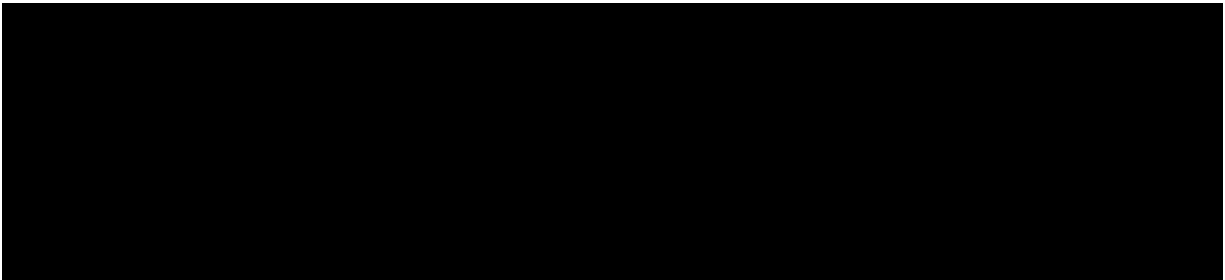
August 28, 1912 was the celebration of the town's bicentennial. The festivities started with martial music on the old training ground (now the town green) and continued with invocations and greeting from officials. It continued with a social hour, an address on the history of manufacturing in

town by Addison Kingsbury, then an evening performance at the Congregational Church. The next day saw a parade from South Coventry to the Plains where a fine baseball field was built especially for the occasion. Celebrations ended with a fireworks display. Organization was handled by Dr. Higgins, George H. Robertson, Curtis Dean and Ernest Woodworth.
(18)

Andrew Kingsbury was a prominent farmer of North Coventry. Son of Erastus and Hannah, Andrew was taught school for a time. He held many town offices and served in the General Assembly in 1905 and 1907. Mr. Kingsbury was educated in town had two bulls which he trained to work in a yoke like a pair of oxen and was viciously attacked by one of them resulting in his death.

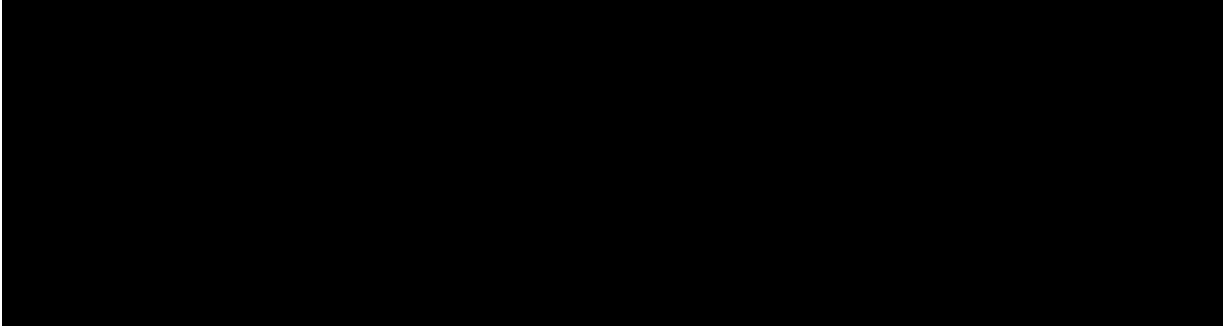


Andrew Kingsbury (1849-1911)

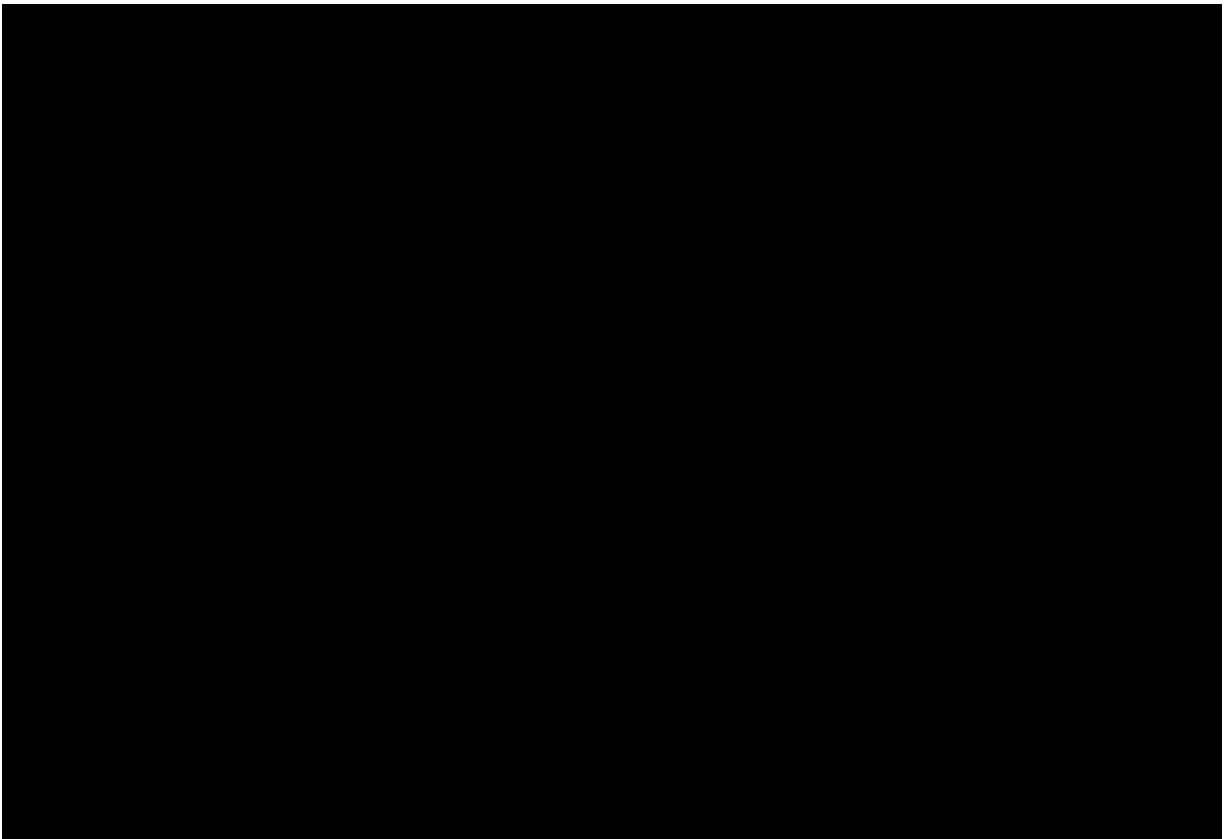


Andrew Kingsbury (1849-1911)





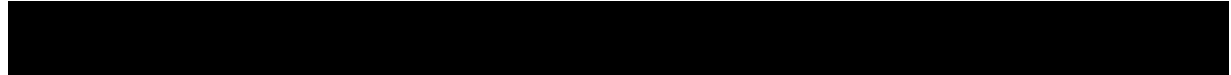
Sear's Meat Market



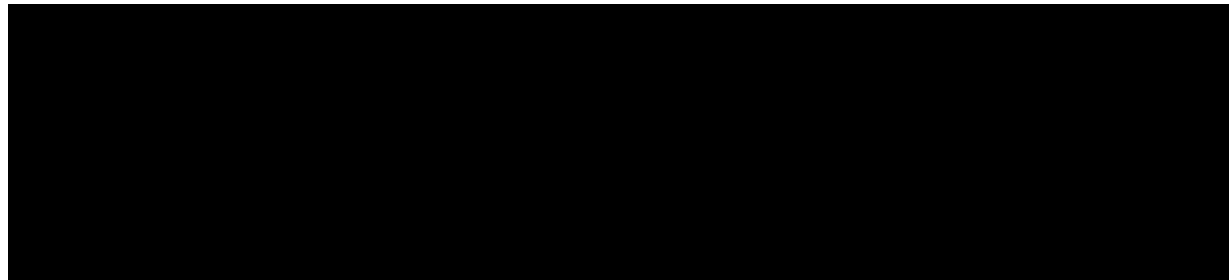
Frank Sears opened one of the first meat markets in town in 1913 in the lower level of Wellwood's general store. The business grew and, a few years later, he bought the building next door (to the west) known as the Allen block. The family lived upstairs, and the market was on the first floor with a large walk-in cooler. The store had fish on Fridays from the Noank docks, and sold other items such as soap and crackers. Mr. Sears had a horse-drawn wagon for deliveries to local homes, and switched to a Ford

truck for a time. He left the business in 1922 for a position with the meat packer, Armour & Company in New Haven and turned the business over to Mr. Wellwood. (29)

In 1917 or 1918 Mr. William Latimer started a business on a previously empty site north of Depot Road between the Mill Brook and the Willimantic River. He purchased the land from Addison, Louis and Arthur Kingsbury who were operating their box factory on Mason Street. It is thought that the Kingsburys had earlier purchased this land for expansion of the business in Coventry, but no substantial use was made of the property until the sale to Latimer. Latimer's business grew substantially and lasted until the 1950's selling coal, grain and cement, etc., and took advantage of its proximity to the railroad.

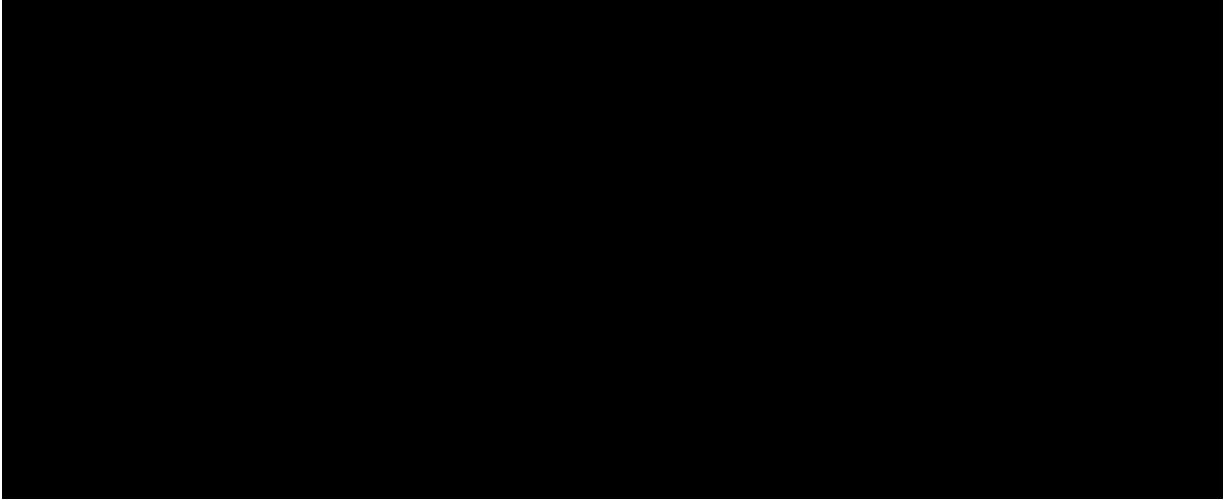


Latimer's Coal & Grain Store

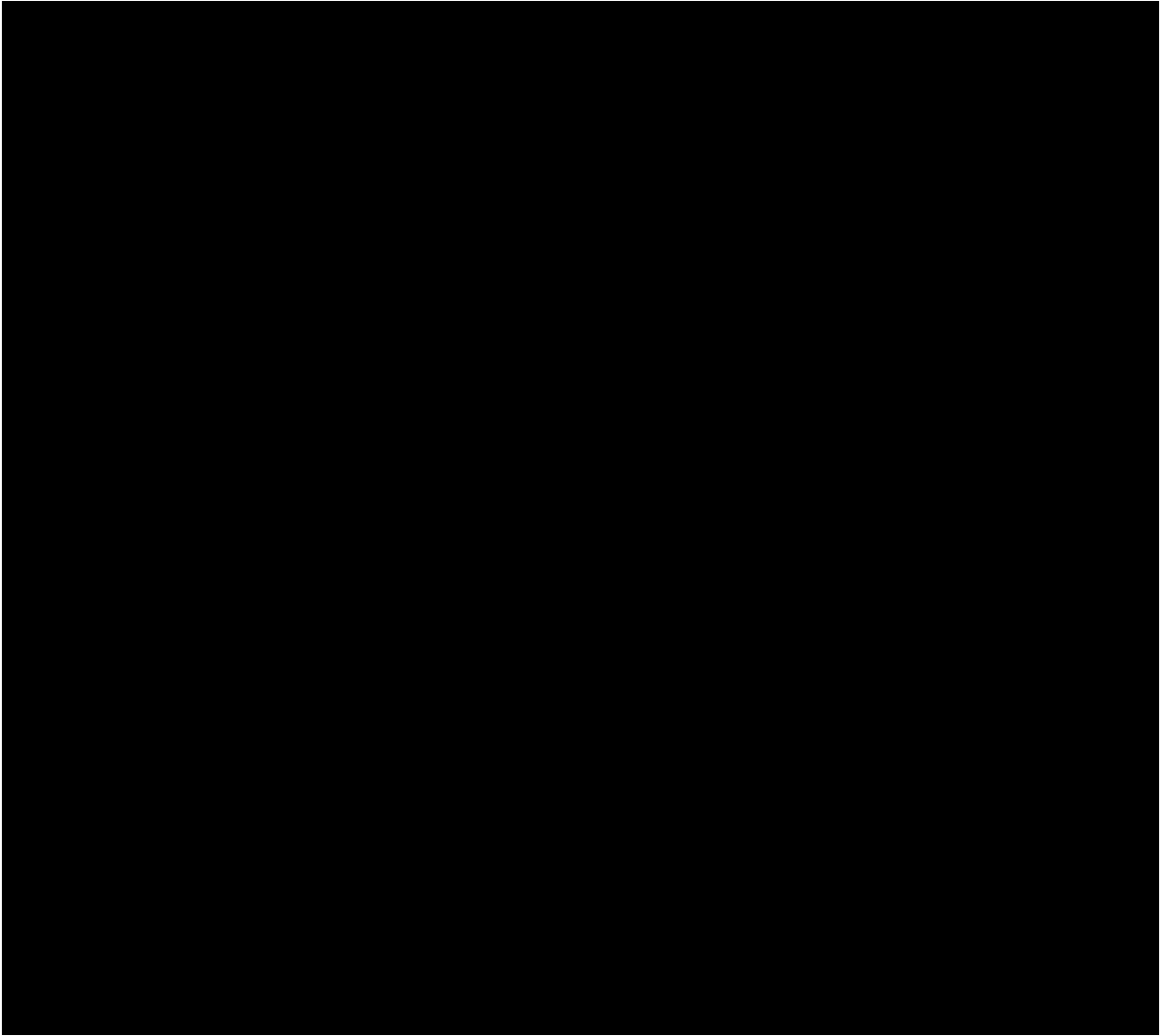


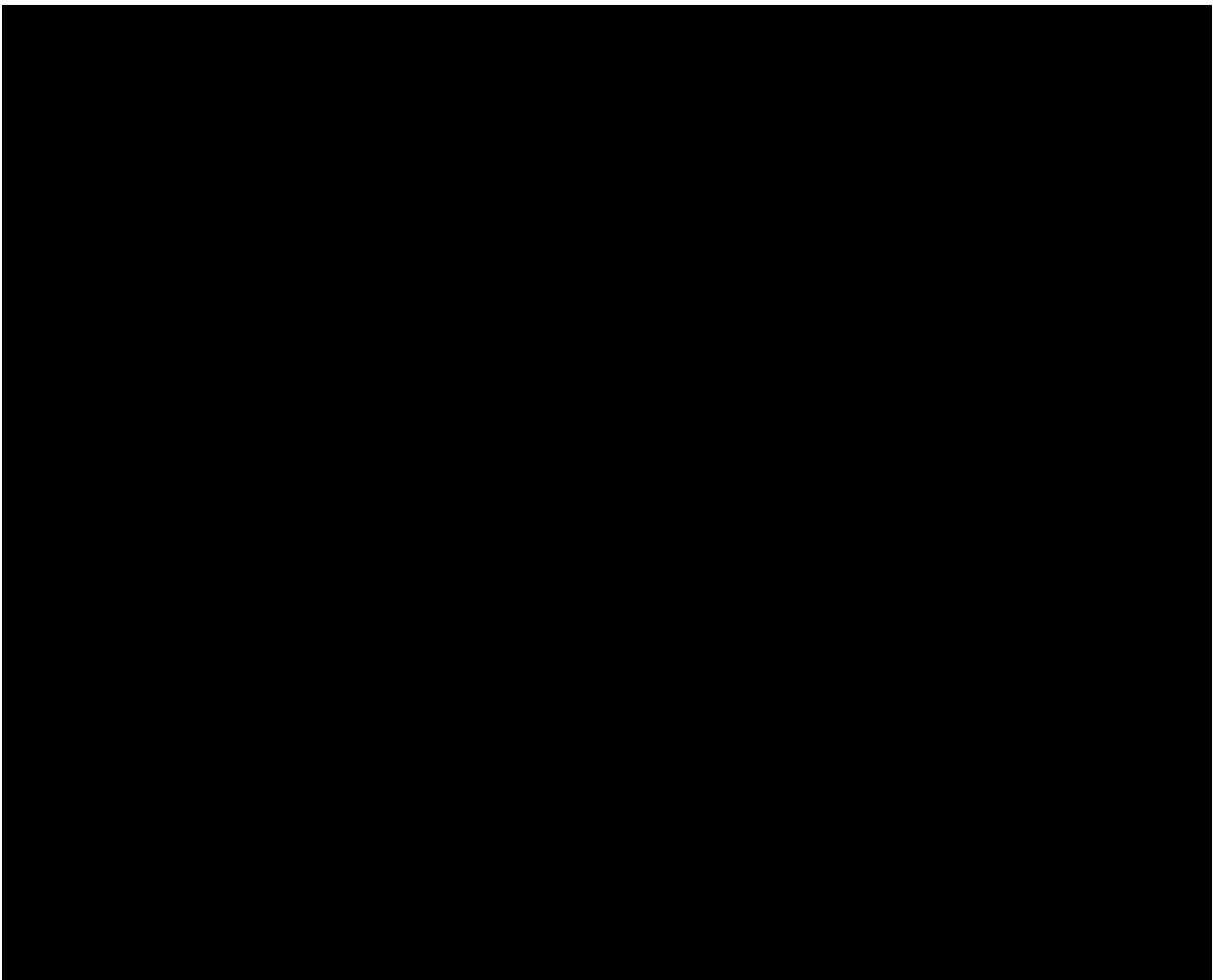
Latimer's Coal & Grain Store





Latimer's Advertisement-1946





E. W. LATIMER

DEALER IN

FEED - MEAL - CEMENT

FEED MEAL CEMENT

COAL - COKE

FERTILIZER - POULTRY SUPPLIES



ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

Refrigerators - Ranges - Radios

Washing Machines-Ironers-Water Heaters

Firestone Tires & Tubes

Telephone, Willimantic 1319

At Coventry R. R. Station

SOUTH COVENTRY CONNECTICUT

In the spring of 1917, the quiet darkness of the South Coventry night was disturbed by the sound of bugles and marching feet. The world was at war. On Friday nights at 8:00 PM the town hall was transformed into the temporary armory of the Nathan Hale Company of the Home Guard. The war in Europe threatened to engulf the United States, and extra security at sensitive facilities took on a greater importance. The National Guard was to be activated and a large force was needed for security. The patriotic men of Coventry rose to the occasion. One day

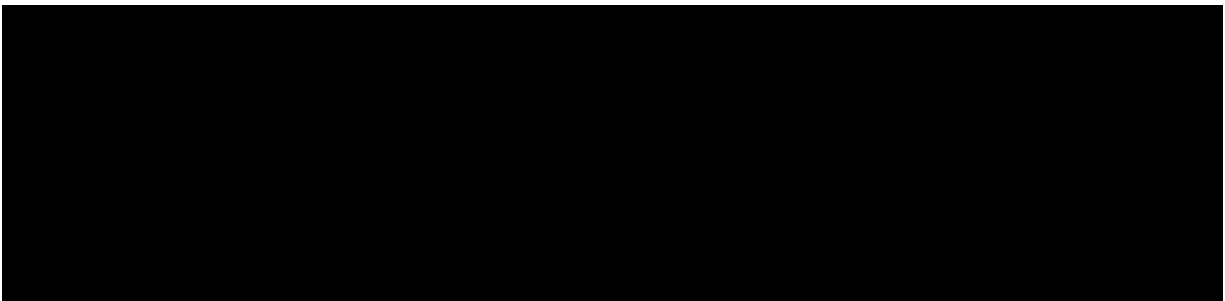
after the General Assembly called for a volunteer force, Coventry sent a petition expressing their desire to form a company in the Home Guard. Within a month the company was formed and swore in its officers. William Wolfe was its first captain. Dr. William Higgins was instrumental in recruitment and examination as the Company Surgeon. Service was voluntary and members were only paid if called to duty. Seventy-five men had volunteered. The company stored its equipment in an empty room at the old school house near the library. Drills were held regularly though were halted during the influenza outbreak. Some members procured uniforms and equipment at their own expense. Some were issued antiquated single-shot U.S. Army Model 1889 rifles. The War ended on November 11, 1918, and all members met in uniform for the final time in January of 1919. (26) Fifty men served in the armed forces during the war including Dr. William Higgins and Arthur Vinton. One man died during his service.



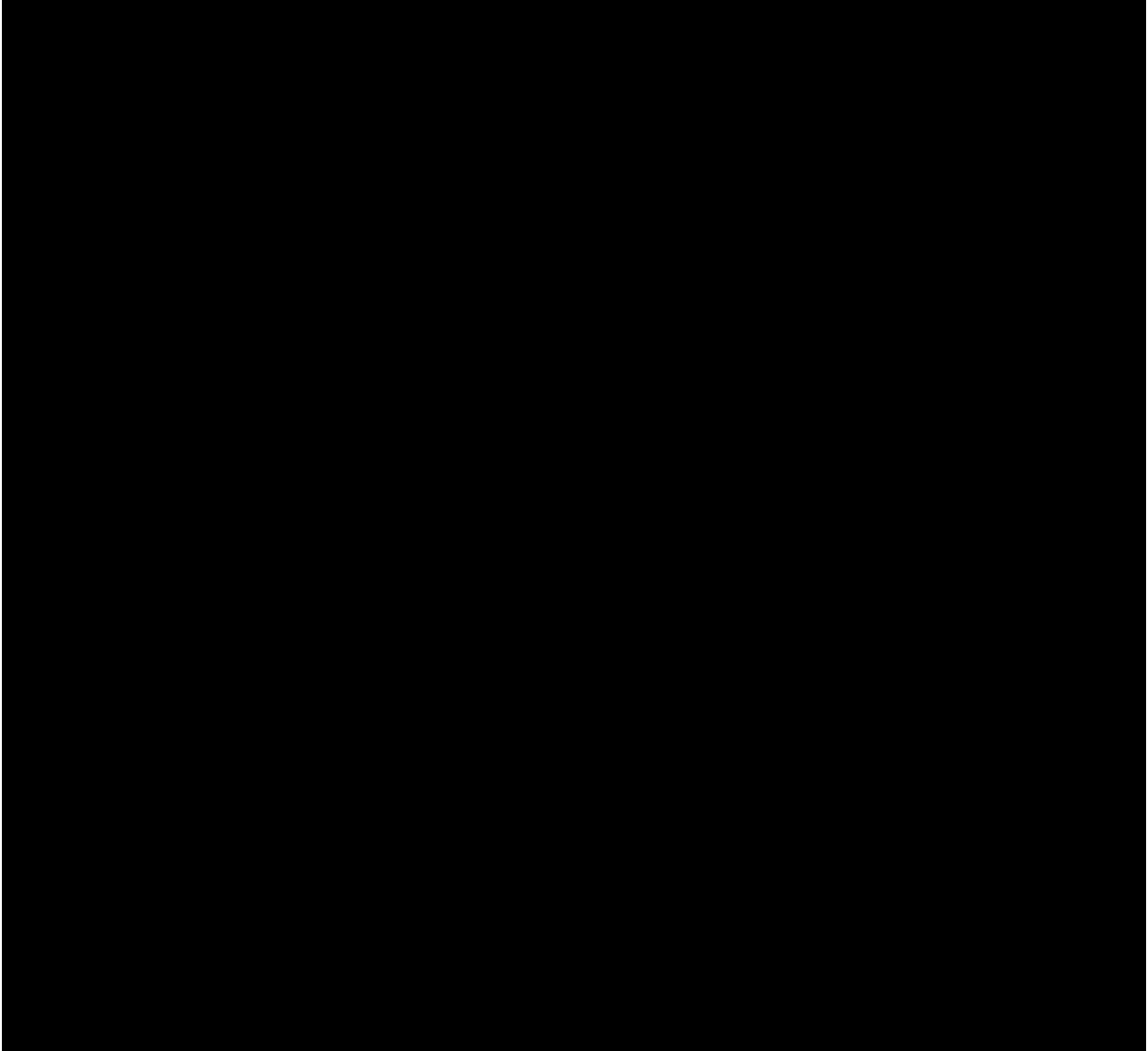
World War I



World War I



1918 Influenza Epidemic



The 1918 “Spanish Flu” epidemic started in Connecticut on September 21st at the navy base in Groton. It quickly spread throughout the state. Town records indicate that deaths in Coventry amounted to about thirty per year in the early 1900’s, though of the sixty-one deaths in 1918- 1919, fourteen were directly attributed to the flu.

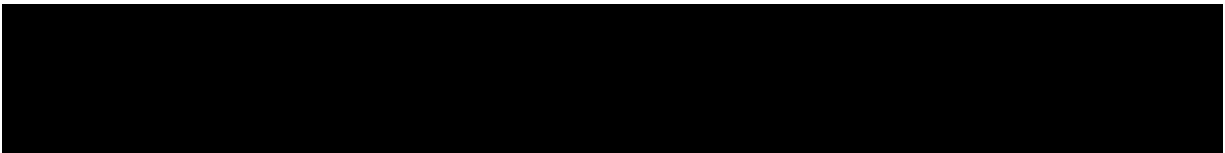
In the fall of 1918, a firm from Morris County New Jersey, called the American Auto Top Company, purchased the old Armstrong Wagon Works on Armstrong Road just below the Kenyon Mill site. The company's former business was making collapsible auto tops, but now engaged in producing an experimental trolley car powered by a gasoline engine. Virtually all trolleys in service at the time were powered by electric motors which required a considerable investment in overhead wires and poles. The Willimantic-to-South Coventry trolley, which traveled along today's routes 32 and 31 to Coventry Lake from 1909 to 1926, was electrically powered. Mr. John M. Johnson, superintendent of the shop, believed the gas-powered trolley would save 65 percent of the cost of building and operating a trolley line by eliminating the need for electrical service. Mr. Johnson's experience was with car building and electrical work on subway lines in New York.

The wagon works was owned by the Armstrong family, Henry and then his son William, from 1887 to 1918. Another son, Edward, ventured west and started the Armstrong Manufacturing Company in Oregon making band saw tools. The company is still a well-respected maker of saw blade equipment today. The American Auto Top Company came to Coventry because much of the material for making the car was in the old wagon works or in the immediate vicinity.

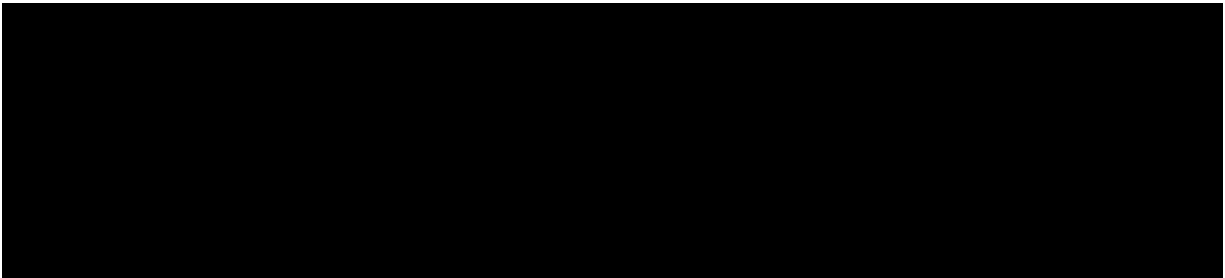
The "experimental" trolley car was only the second of its kind built in the country. It was constructed in of wood and steel, over the spring and summer of 1919. The car was thirty-one feet long, about ten feet high and eight feet wide. It seated thirty-six persons with a passenger entry door on the right side about one-quarter way from the front. The motor was a Westinghouse of 45 horsepower, and the gasoline supply tank held thirty gallons. The car was capable of making 35 miles per hour and weighed seven and one-half tons. Electric push buttons were installed in panels beside each seat for passengers to notify the motorman as to their desire to alight. No further cars would be built in Coventry.

Following its completion in early September of 1919, temporary tracks were installed up the hill on Armstrong Road to the existing trolley line on

Main Street. The car was hauled up the hill by a steam road roller. Some difficulties in placing the car on the main tracks caused the 3 o'clock run of the regular trolley to be cancelled. The new car ran only a short distance before experiencing difficulties with its clutch mechanism and had to be towed to the trolley barn on West Main Street in Willimantic for repairs. Following repairs, the car was run to Norwich and then on the Shore Line Company tracks to Old Saybrook for ten days of testing between that town and Guilford, a distance of seventeen miles. The car was then run to Morristown, New Jersey where it served on the Morristown and Erie feed line in that state. (18)



A Gasoline Powered Trolley Car is Built in Coventry



A Gasoline Powered Trolley Car is Built in Coventry



A trip to Lake Wangumbaug in 1921 was an adventure! My most dramatic visit was made in an open Chevrolet with my Mother and Father. As befitted ladies and gentlemen of the day, we were all dressed up in our Sunday best. I was wearing a purple organdy dress and white high button shoes. Many of the families still living on Woodland Road have had the property in the family for generations. Our next door neighbors, the Archambaults, have a cottage dating from 1912, when Grandpa and Grandma Lameroux settled there. The Marotte cottage, from 1910, has been replaced by the recent year-round house of the Vernon Sanborns. The Matthews cottage, at the lower end of Woodland Road, goes back to 1910 as well. The Crocker family still owns the house purchased in 1950 from the Fitzpatricks, built by the Potvins in 1930, as well as "The Island" (often a peninsula) which forms the East side of the Cove. Our own house began as a cottage built by my grandparents, the Hynecks, in 1921, then winterized and enlarged by my parents, the Friends, then further enlarged by my husband and myself, with another two generations of Norths making some contributions of labor and love along the way.

When these houses were built, they did not have such new fangled inventions as electricity and inside plumbing. Kerosene lamps and outhouses provided light and sanitary facilities, with fireplaces and wood stoves for heat and cooking. Transportation was also a bit more primitive. As you passed this area of the Lake coming from North Coventry by Lisicke Beach along what is now Route 31, you were driving along a narrow dirt road. This ended at the Landing, near the outflow stream from the Lake. The "Casino" was there, and provided about the only public amusement in the area. Remember, there was no TV either, and in fact, radio was fairly new. Dances were popular, and once a year the Actor's Colony would stage an "Entertainment". This was always exciting, as these people were professionals from New York's Vaudeville troupes and were very good. Dancers, Musicians, Comics, and Magicians were all part of the show. Wolfe's Ice House was across from the casino. They also served the new ice cream cones. Woodland Road began where Mr. Cleury's wall is now and went up the hill and all the way to the West end of the Cove. This road was maintained by the members of the North East Shore Association.

The Association also maintained the Spring and Spring House, keeping it clean (removing dead frogs, etc.), having the water tested regularly, and keeping the pump (hand operated of course) in good working order. The whole neighborhood used this for drinking water. Sometimes, when the water table was low, people would come from the other side of the lake for water.

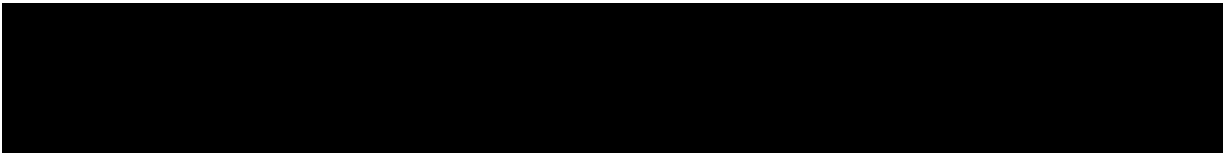
South Coventry was very much the same then as it is now. The Post Office was across the street from the Library. The Congregational Church was a major landmark. What is now the Antique Store was Wellwood's grocery store. Freddy Wellwood would come to our houses and take our orders on Tuesdays and deliver the orders on Thursdays. Dorothy Wolfe came with her father to deliver ice, and Nathan Jacobsen delivered milk for Mr. Boynton, who owned the farm from which most of our properties had come.

Another little problem faced by the early inhabitants of Woodland Road was that Mr. Cleury owned the property encompassing the area right across the road at the east end. He would put a chain across the road every year from Labor Day to Spring. Residents were given keys to the lock, but it was an inconvenience. Thanks to the efforts of Arthur Siebert and Mr. Boynton, the N. E. Shore Association was able to purchase enough land for a new road to be built from Route 31 over the hill and down to Woodland Road about one-half mile from the west end. This was convenient to the Spring. Although beginning as a dirt road across pasture land and through a stone wall in about 1934/1935, with much work by men of the Association and the professional efforts of Mr. Strede, it became a road worthy to be taken over by the town in about 1938. This is the present Springdale Avenue. With the opening of the new road, more land was sold on the upper levels of the hillside and other streets were built.

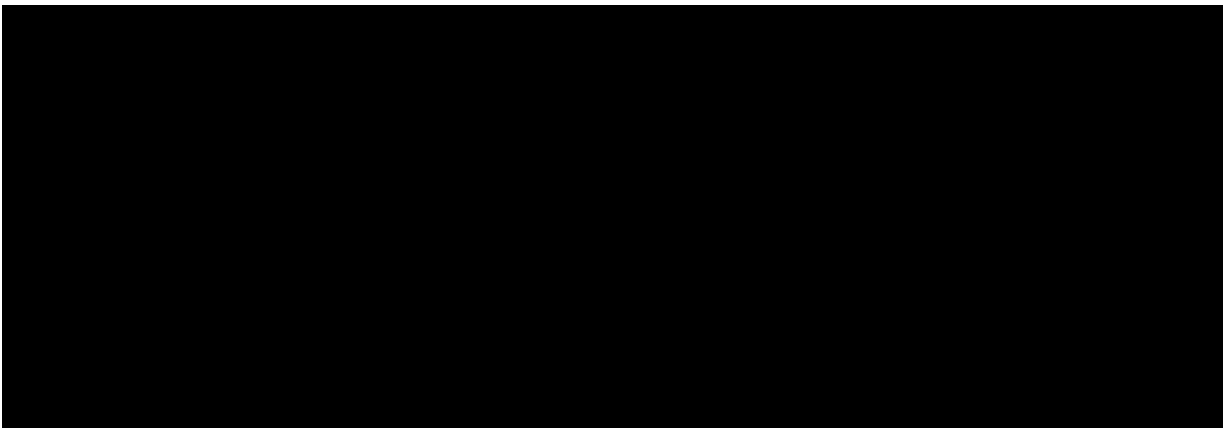
Although there are now many boats of all types on the Lake, in the early days there were very few power boats. One of the early ones was a large one with a canopy top that ran from the trolley stop at the South Coventry end of the Lake. Both it and the trolley stopped by the 30's. By then people were getting the new outboard motor boats for individual transportation and

recreation. Mr. Leslie had one of the first speedboats on the Lake, and an Aquaplane to go with it. My sister and I loved to go aquaplaning then as much as the kids today love to water ski and ride the kneeboards.

Times have changed, especially since World War II. The amazing inventions that have come along in just two generations have sometimes seemed hard to believe. For many years the pace of building around the lake made us wonder if it could survive. At one point it was decided to make it a reservoir, but this was not allowed because of the cemetery at the east end of the lake. Today we are in the process of dealing with installing sewers around the lake, over-abundant plant growth, water quality and so on. It is to be hoped that all these who are enjoying the fruits of the labor of the early settlers around the lake will work with that same spirit to preserve it. (36)



Life on the Lake- Betty North



Life on the Lake- Betty North



259



260

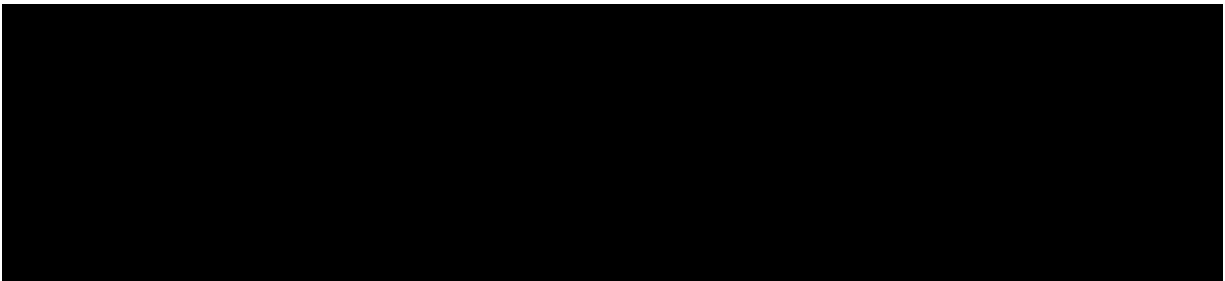
In the mid 1920's, radios began to appear in Coventry's households. Edith Maher, a bookkeeper for Louis Kingsbury, got one of the first radios. She lived in the house beside the Congregational Church. It was a crystal set with headphones, built by Jesse Brainard's father. It required a long aerial and stations were on only in the early evening hours. KDKA from Pittsburg was popular. Later the Moores and the Latimers bought a Midwest radio from "Popular Mechanics". It ran on batteries, a wet-cell six- volt car battery to heat the tube filaments and a larger forty-five volt battery for the amplifier, and lasted about five hours. Henry Frink, besides selling Ford cars, also had a line of Atwater-Kent radios. These sets had bellmouth speakers about the size of a dinner plate. Other popular stations were WGY (Schnectady), WBZ (Springfield), WLS (Chicago), WL W (Cincinnati), and WDRC and WTIC (Hartford). (23)

John Isham (born New London in 1832) ended a sixty-one and one-half year career as station agent for the Central Vermont Railroad at the South Coventry Depot on July 9, 1919. He was followed as agent by his daughter Marie who had been assisting him for nearly twenty-five years. Mr. Isham did not receive a pension. Mr. Isham lived for a time on the road from the depot to the Windham Turnpike and saw the emergence of the paper board mill, a small book binder and Latimer's grain store at the depot. He saw the trains evolve from wood burning to coal locomotives and early communications were by ticker tape. His responsibilities included ticket sales, telegraphic messaging, shipping and receiving and keeping the account books. He also handled track switching and coupling freight cars at

the depot. Mr. Isham fell ill soon after his retirement and died a few years later at a hospital in Norwich. (18)

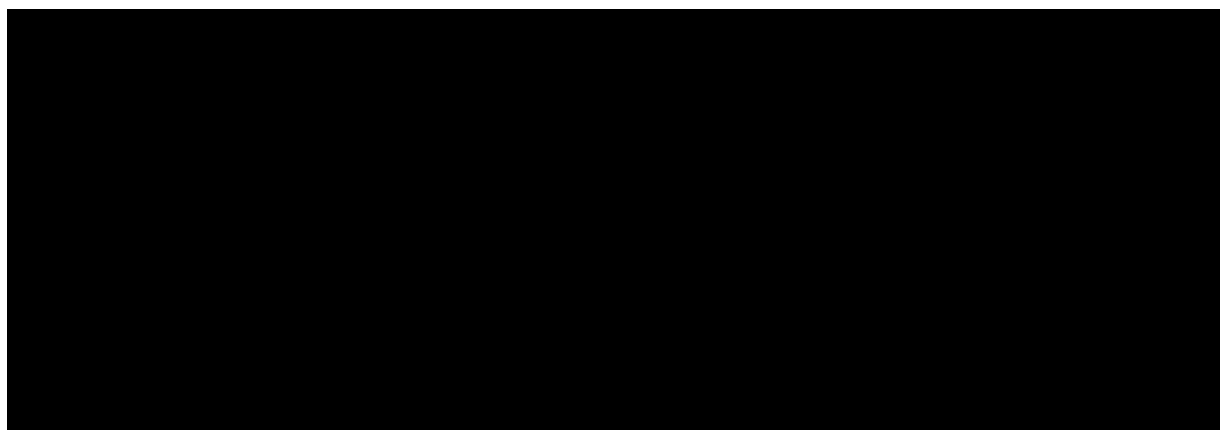


1920's Radios

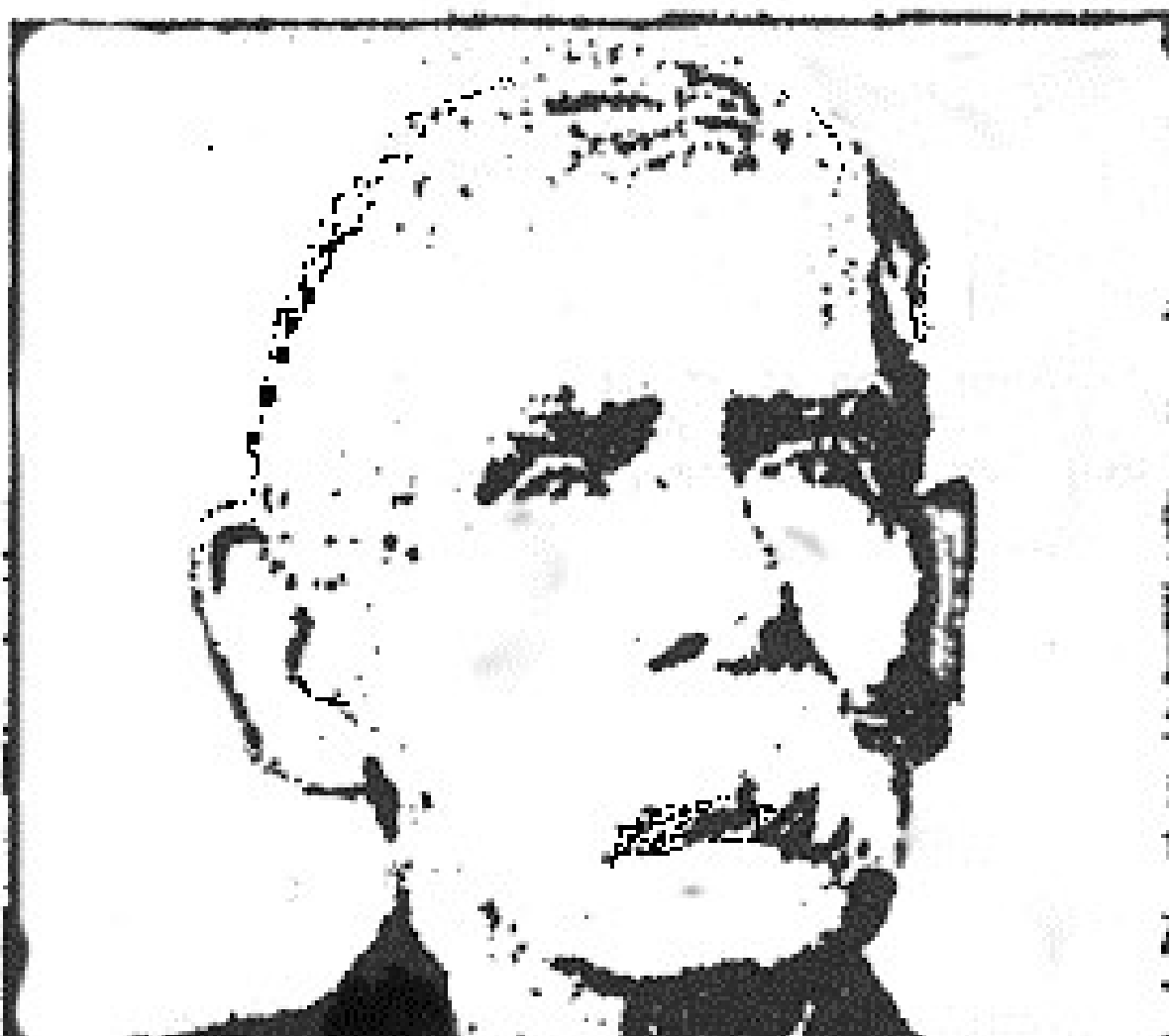


1920's Radios

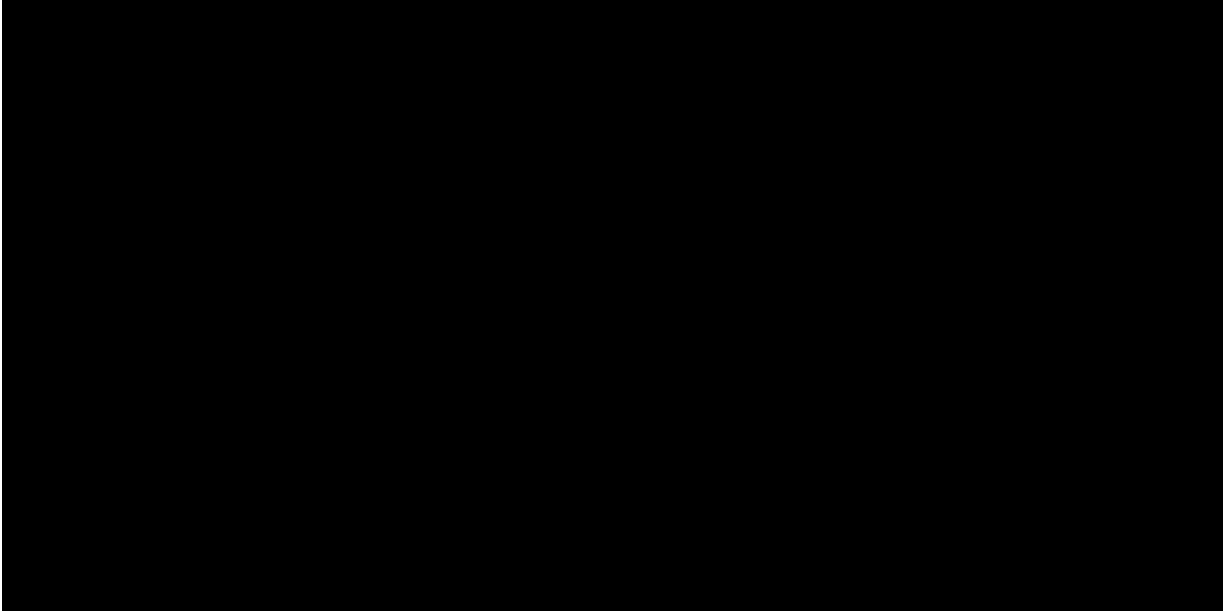




John Isham

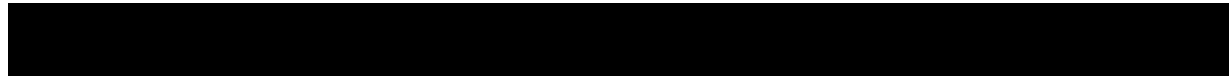




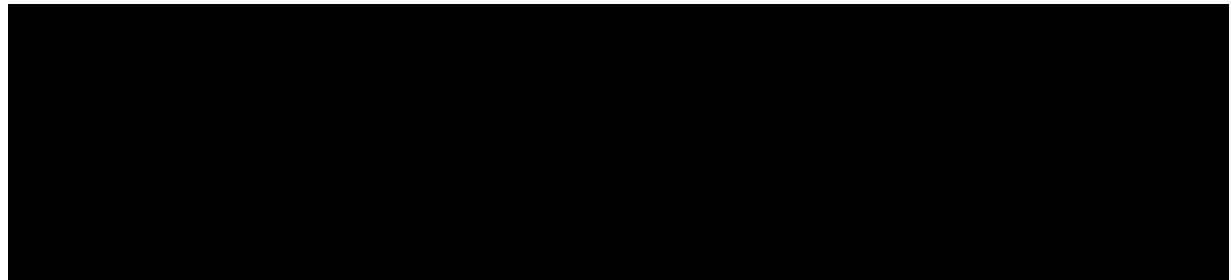


John Isham

July 17, 1921, Corodon and Caroline Beebe celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary at their farm on the south shore of Lake Wangumbaug. Mr. Beebe was 78 and his wife 76. They lived on their farm here since 1888. Mr. Beebe was a decorated Civil War veteran. About 160 friends and family attended the gathering. Many made use of Lew Daniels six- mile tour of the lake in his motor boats. Mr. Beebe is considered one of the best farmers in town. (18)



The Beebe Family

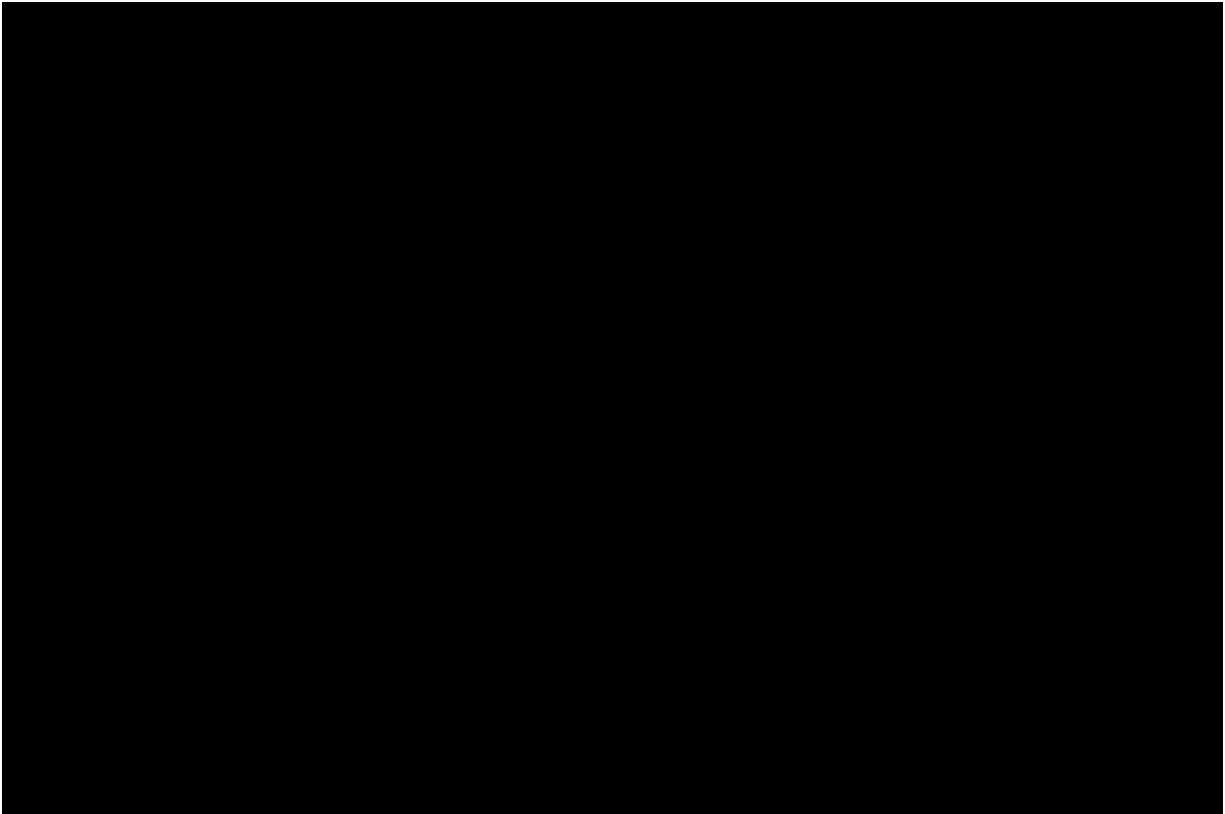


The Beebe Family





1924 Town Meeting

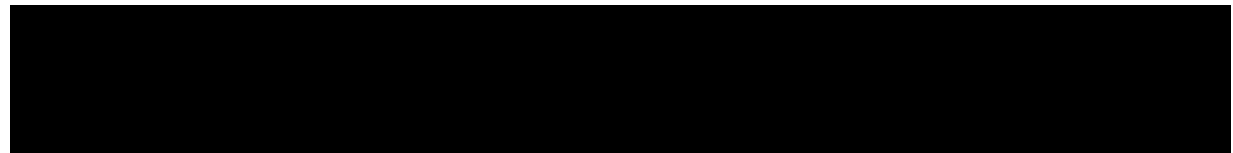


One hundred and fifty taxpayers attended a town meeting that was anticipated to be very contentious, but ended harmoniously. Selectman Higgins addressed the crowd on the financial condition of the town and about the recent revaluation. A tax rate of twenty mils was levied on the grand list of a little over 1.5 million dollars, The town budget was set at \$31,000 including \$12,000 for schools, \$10,000 for roads, \$2,000 for the

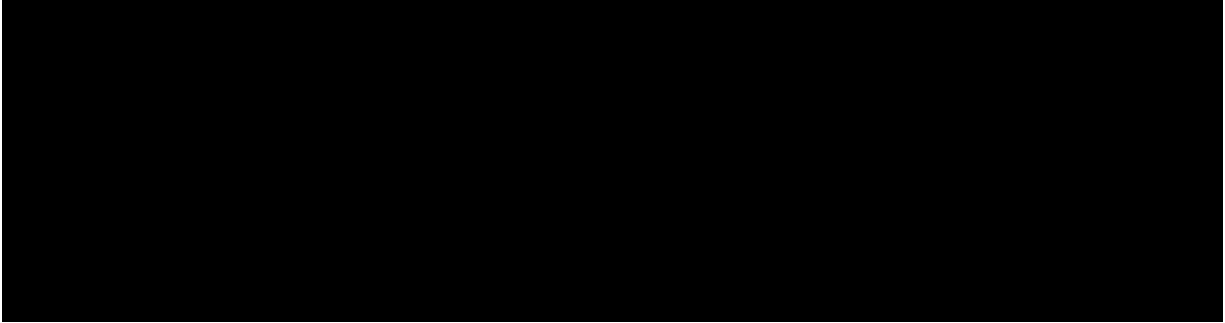
poor, and the remaining for interest, taxes, town officers, library, health and snow removal.

Eva Kingsbury, both a student and later a teacher in the Brick School House, recalls her school days: Children walked to school from all directions. Much later a school bus bought them to a corner nearby. The school was heated by a wood stove with one of the older boys in charge of building and maintaining the fire. School started promptly at nine o'clock with a prayer, a salute to the flag, a song and ten minutes of setting up exercises. Recess included games with the teacher and the children bought sleds in the winter for sliding. School children participated in many community events including the Grange Fair, Christmas programs at the church, and school picnics. School ended at 3:30.

Eva walked over two miles to school from her home on Broadway. She recalls passing Mr. Walker's stone house. He had a beautiful pond in which children could fish in the summer and ice skate in the winter. Mr. Walker also cut ice in the winter for summer use. She passed the Clover Mill farm occupied by Mrs. Foley who used to visit with the children each day after school and held parties after school on holidays. Her specialty was Irish stew. Further along they passed the Turner house and down the hill to the brook and then across the Skungamaug River on Woodward's bridge. It was an iron bridge with wooden planks that clattered when wagons were drawn over them. The noise told folks that someone was coming along the road. On hot days, children would stand under the bridge or paddle in the river. Further along up the hill she met the eight Hill children and went with them the final distance to the school. The Hill's were descendants of the Woodwards whose old home they lived in. The Woodwards were one of the first, and longest, settlers of the North Society. (39)



Going to School in the North Society ca 1925



Going to School in the North Society ca 1925



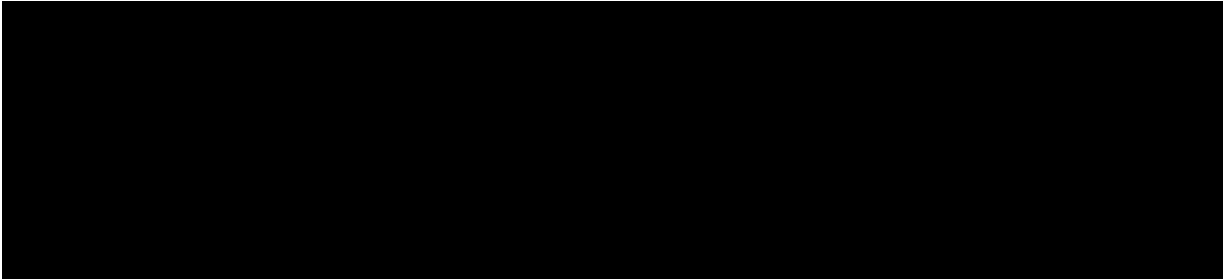
Obtaining a cannon for the Green was the idea of the late Royal Rose, the last family-owner of the Rose Tavern that is now the residence of Dr. Robert Bowen. Royal was very proud of the Green, and personally tended the grounds for many years. He was equally proud of his distinguished family, Captain Nathan Hale being amongst them, as well as many military men and physicians. He thought a cannon would be a fitting memorial to be placed there for, in years past, it was known as the Training Ground where the Militia met and drilled, and during World War I, it was an Army encampment for men awaiting assignment. Mr. Rose was a contemporary of Attorney Curtis Dean, Dr. William Higgins, George Robertson and other prominent Coventry people. Curtis was a classmate of Calvin Coolidge at Amherst, and it was he who requested the piece from Coolidge who was then President (1923-1929). Regulations required such gifts of ordnance to be made to a bona-fide veteran organization, hence the GAR Post in Willimantic was selected as the Coventry Post had dissolved. The Willimantic Post, with but a few aged members, was not able to manage the situation and turned the matter over to the Men's Social Club of South Coventry. George Robertson was president at the time. At one time, the Men's Social Club, very much like the Rotary, played a significant role in Coventry's public affairs.

In 1928 Royal selected the place for the cannon to be placed, poured the cement supports, and anchored the piece with a large chain. Shortly thereafter, he raised a tall flag pole on the easterly corner of the green, hand-fashioned by him from

two great trees he had cut from his woodland and seasoned. He put it on the spot where an ancient, dead tree stood that had been used as a target during Militia days, and was pockmarked with bullet holes - a relic that may still be remembered by older residents. The Men's Social Club used to meet in Carman's store, across from Suture's, that burned many years ago. (31)



The Cannon on the Green



The Cannon on the Green



The Willimantic Daily Chronicle, Saturday, November 20, 1926. "Monday Sees Passing Of South Coventry Trolley." The Public Utility Commission renders a decision allowing Connecticut Company to discontinue operation of branch. Bus service of New England Transportation Company will commence Monday morning with schedules corresponding to that of the electric line at an increase of five cents in regular fare. Work of removing tracks to start on West Main Street next week. For a time the line in possession of the Connecticut Company was a good paying proposition, but with the increase in the use of automobiles the business dwindled until night trips were abandoned. The festivities of the opening day were marred late in the evening when a section of the floor of a dancing pavilion on the shore of Lake Wangumbaug fell in while crowded with dancers. Sixteen persons were injured more or less seriously. At one time the trolley fare was but ten cents between Willimantic and South Coventry, but corresponding high prices during the World War period caused the trolley company as well as many other operating concerns to advance the rate. For the past three or four years the branch line has been continued at a financial loss.

The operation of the trolley during the early years of its history helped to boost the building of homes along the line. It is doubtful that the trolley line could have been saved even if the proposed plan to raise money to pay for placing the roadbed back in shape after the sewer was laid had gone through. The Connecticut Company saw no hopes for the future with nothing in prospect for increasing the patronage of the line. The passing of the line will be missed by the non-owners of automobiles and many others. Note: The line from South Windham to Norwich continued until December 1, 1936.

November 22, 1926- Some one hundred or more commuters from this city and Coventry experienced a change in the method of transportation that was a novelty to many of them. The announcement made a few days ago by the New Haven Railroad that accommodations for early morning commuters to Hartford would be restored to take effect this morning was correct, but not what was expected by the majority. Instead of the former passenger train #111, a "gas bus" was placed in commission this morning.

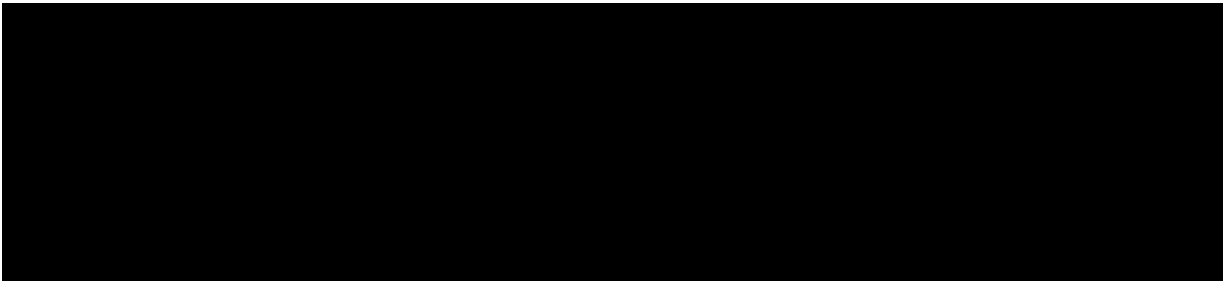
The vehicle, a combination affair, passenger and baggage, with a seating capacity of forty-five, was crowded. Henry St. John, conductor, and Al Belleveau, operator, made up the crew. The start was at 7:10 AM and the trip was made to Hartford in good time. The "gas bus" will leave this afternoon from Hartford at 5:15 o'clock for the return. "Finis" was written on the South Coventry trolley branch of the Connecticut Company last evening as far as passenger carrying is concerned. The two "one-man" cars are stored in the West Main Street barn of the company.

This morning, motor bus accommodations for commuters from South Coventry, Perkins Corner and "The Ridges" went into effect. Two busses were in commission on the first two trips. Thirty-seven passengers were carried on the 6:10 AM trip and thirty-nine on the 8:10 trip out of South Coventry and points between this city. For the most part the commuters on the second trip were school children and South Coventry people employed in local stores. There will be two busses in commission on the 5:30 PM trip today. Arrangements are being made to make a special trip to South Coventry and points between at 6:15 PM. Fares from Willimantic to Perkins Corner were fifteen cents, to South and North Coventry- twenty-five cents and to Bolton Notch- sixty cents. From the Bidwell Inn to the North Coventry church the fare is twenty cents, to Bolton- forty-five cents.

The only physical remnants of the trolley today are an abandoned rail bed and stone retaining wall across from the Telaflex parking lot on Main Street, a partial electric wire pole embedded in a stone wall across from Sanborn's garage, and a piece of the bridge foundation adjacent to the Willimantic River on Route 31. The passing of the line will be missed by the non-owners of automobiles and many others. Note: The line from South Windham to Norwich continued until December 1, 1936.



The Trolley Passes



The Trolley Passes



266



267

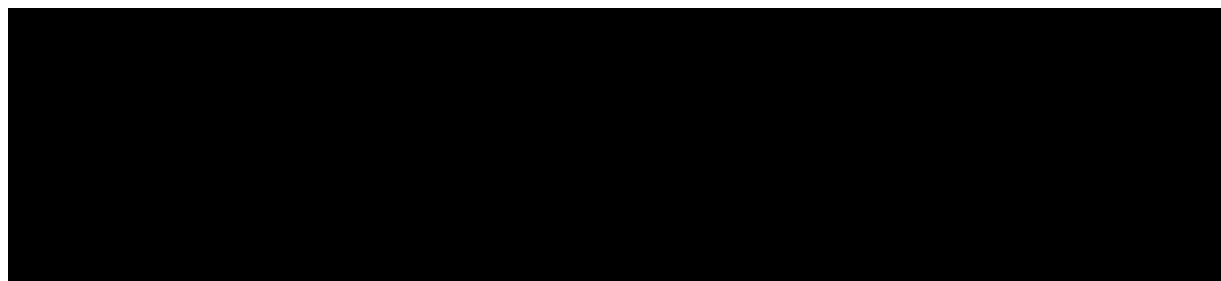
Mr. Dimock's estate was located just adjacent to the South Street school and across from today's Robertson school. Its caretaker from 1886 to 1930 was Thomas J. Sears. The estate had six buildings. It also had road to a private boat house on the lake, a large stable with several carriages, an ice house, an automobile barn and its own electric plant for a time. The main house had seven bathrooms. The Hoppers lived on Main Street across from the Center school. Kate was the only Registered Nurse in town and her sister, Mame, was employed at American Thread in Willimantic. She would board the trolley in front of her house for the seven-cent ride to work. Father Dooley, Kelly and Moran put on productions each summer at the Casino where actors as well as the Sammy Kaye and Jimmy Dorsey orchestras gave shows for the benefit of the church.

The Bidwell Hotel was operated by Ed Naven, his wife Ann and son Harry until Frank Parker opened a bar there upon repeal. On School Street lived the blacksmith Albert Potter. Mrs. Potter sold milk in quart bottles from their own herd of cows. Dr. Higgins lived across the street as well as Charles Coombs, the town photographer. John and Liz Champlin operated an ice cream parlor, barber shop, pool hall, candy store, gas station, post office and a Maxwell auto agency on Main Street (now the First Church parking lot). The Flaherty's were a well known family operating the mills (with Eugene Tracy) and lived on the hill opposite the 1876 building.

Theron Dunham lived on Lake Street near the Blue Lantern Inn. Henry Frink built his garage on the old Washburn mill site next to the 1876 building. William Wolfe had a confectionery and ice house on the lake. (29)

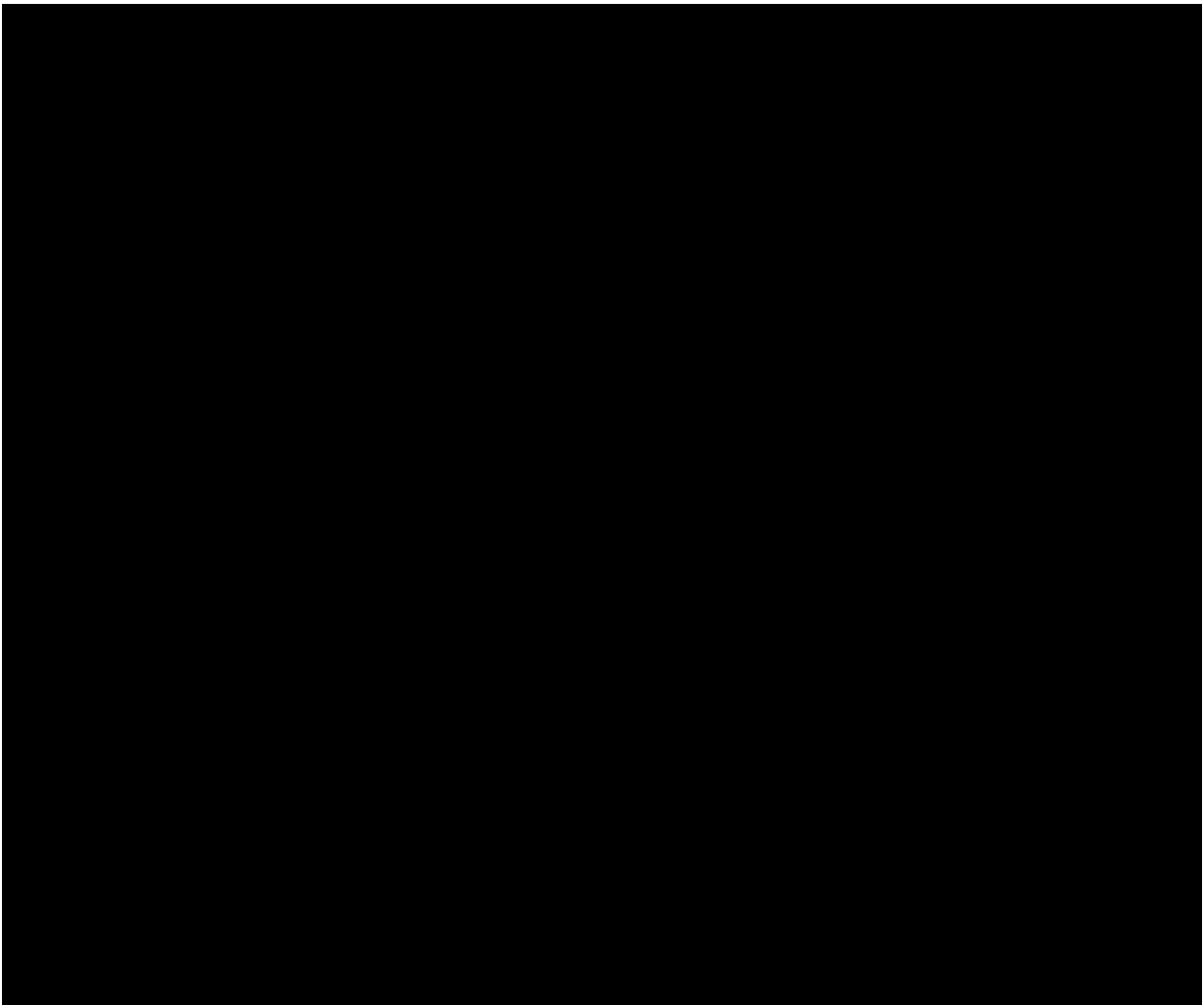


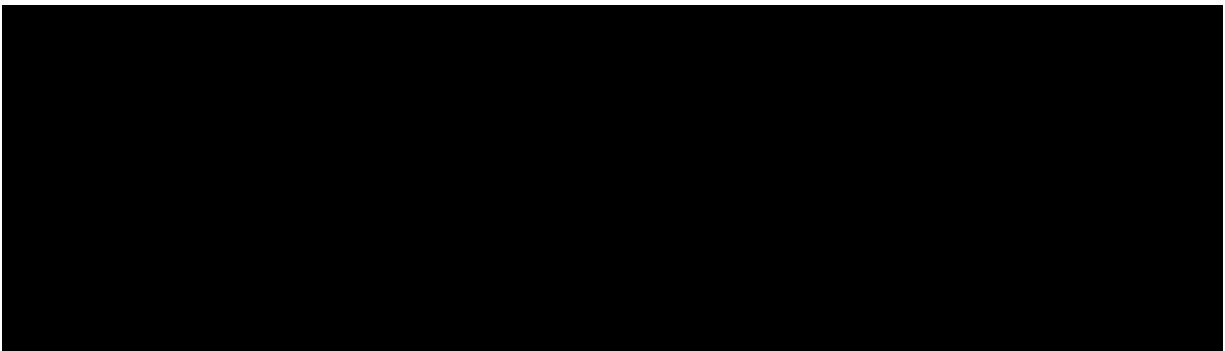
The Village in the 1920's and '30's



The Village in the 1920's and '30's





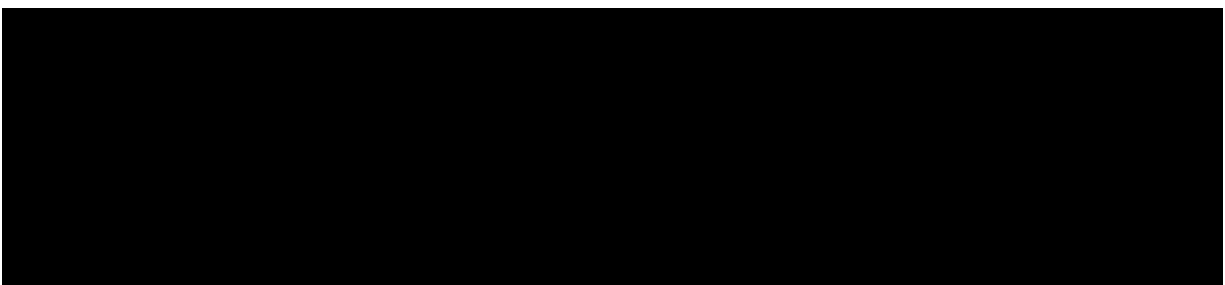


Champlin's Store on Main Street

Vinton's garage and store (Windham Turnpike) sold Gulf gasoline and Crosley radios. Frink's auto shop sold Amoco gasoline. Walter Haven owned the Pines Farm and raised chickens. (Southeast corner of Rt. 44 and Rt. 31S) The North Society high schoolers were bussed to Manchester, and the South Society children were bussed or took the train to Willimantic for school. The North Society farms were very self-sufficient. Ben Strack had a store and gas station on the corner of Swamp Road. The Pease farm (Rt. 44) was planned as an anti- aircraft gun site in WWII. Clarence Fiske operated a blacksmith shop just west of the Second Church. The Loomis farm was located where the Meadowbrook Plaza is today. The Second Church wooden school building (the Academy) burned in 1935 or 1936 and was re-built using bricks from an old mill in the Village (likely Tracy's). Folks were paid twenty-five cents an hour to clean the old bricks of which there were thousands. A teacher's salary in 1940 was \$900. Grant Hill Road got electric service in 1932 or 1933. (33)



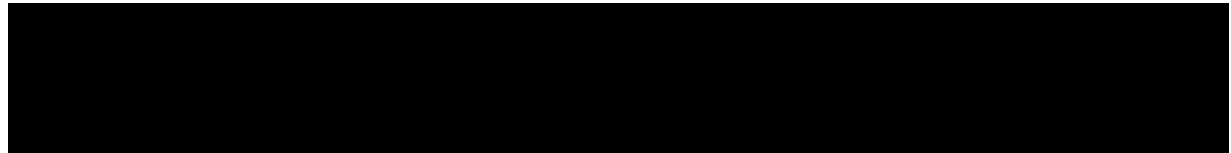
Memories from the 1930's and 1940's



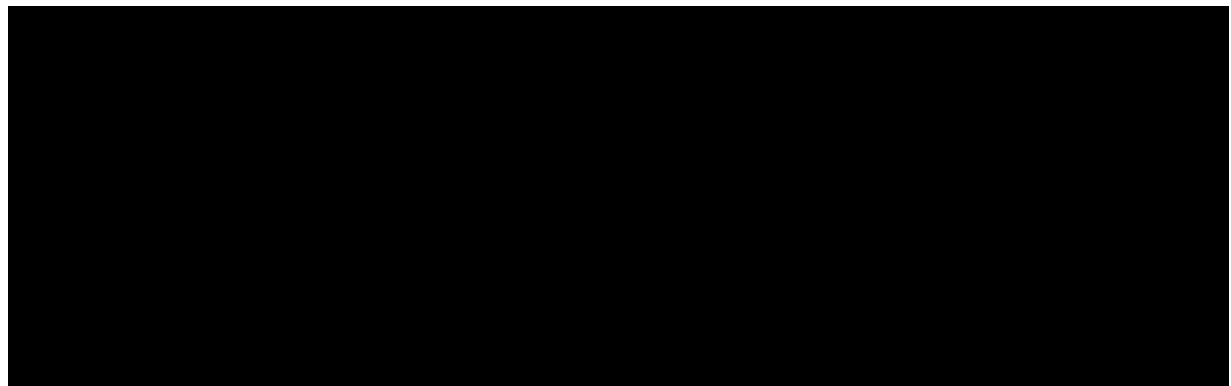
Memories from the 1930's and 1940's



In the early 1900's the Thomas H. Wood Silk Mill was running on water power and was heated by steam. Machines therein were capable of wringing, spinning and reeling the silk. The main product was fish line (Silver Streak was the brand name), though they also made silk thread for beaded necklaces. The T.H. Wood Company was incorporated in 1910. Mr. Wood died in 1931, and the company continued under his name until August of 1961 when it was sold to the Sutures Company who began to make surgical thread using some machines dating from 1894.



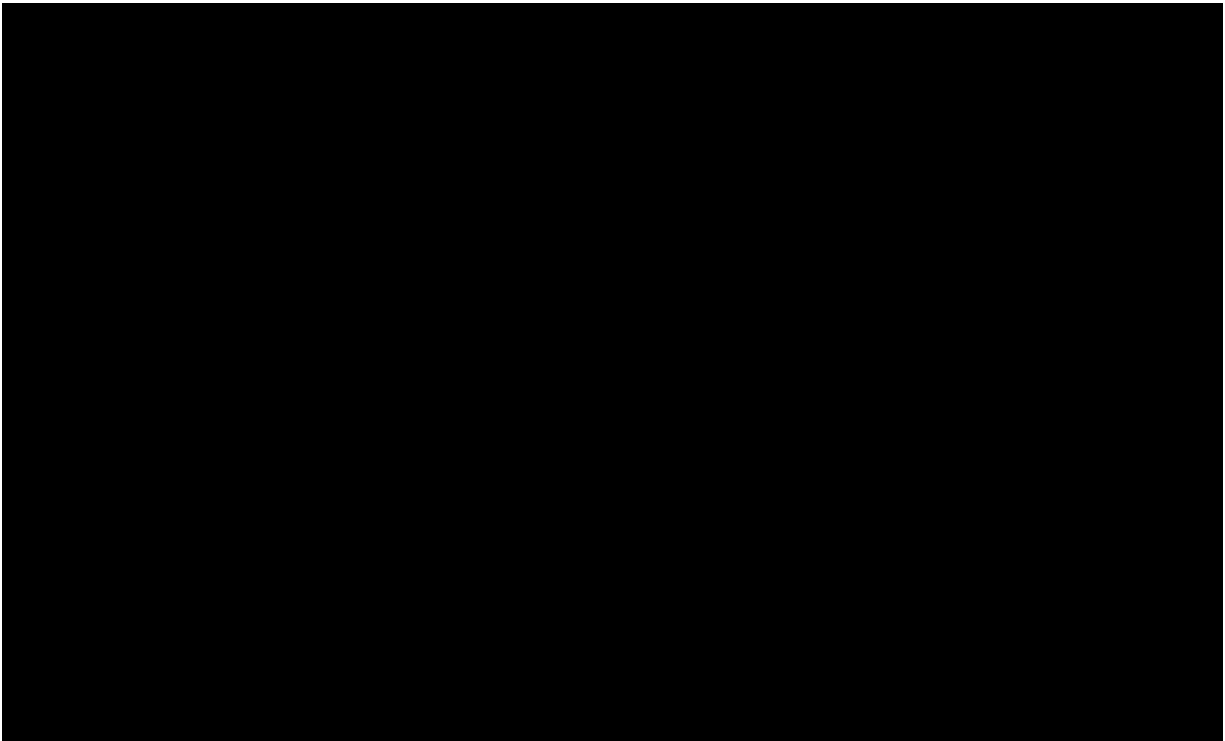
The T.H. Wood Silk Mill Continues its Success

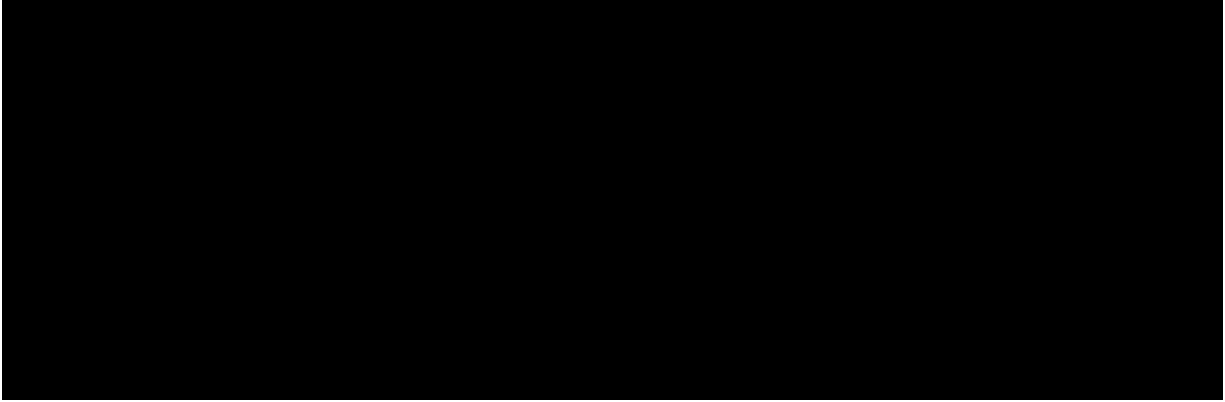


The T.H. Wood Silk Mill Continues its Success

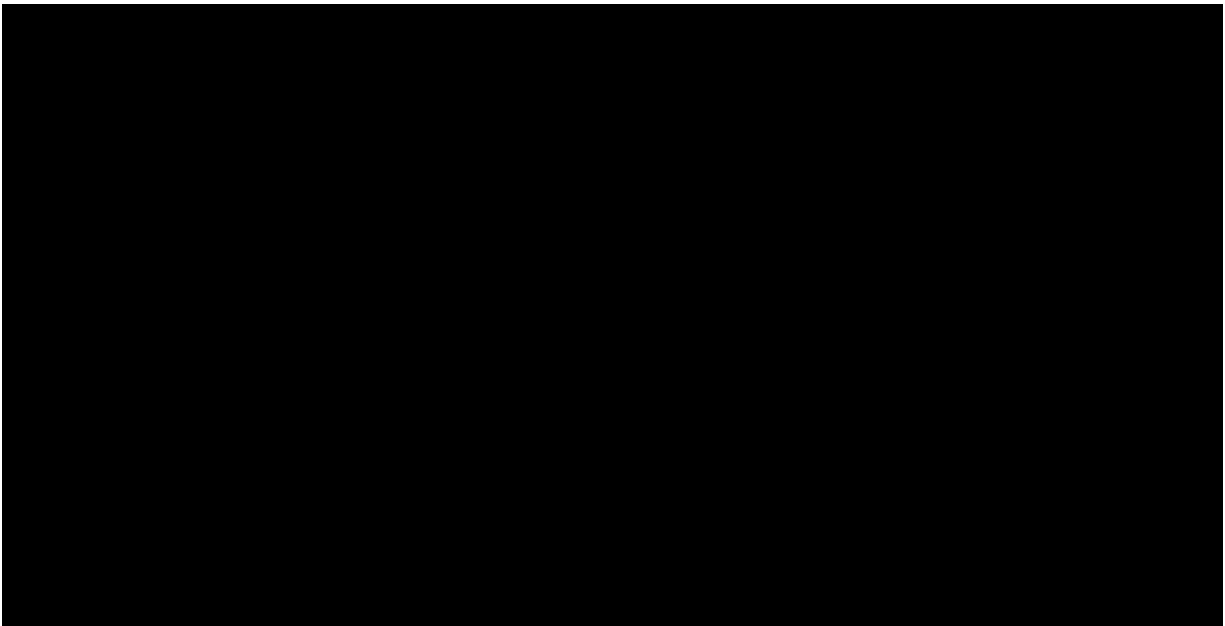
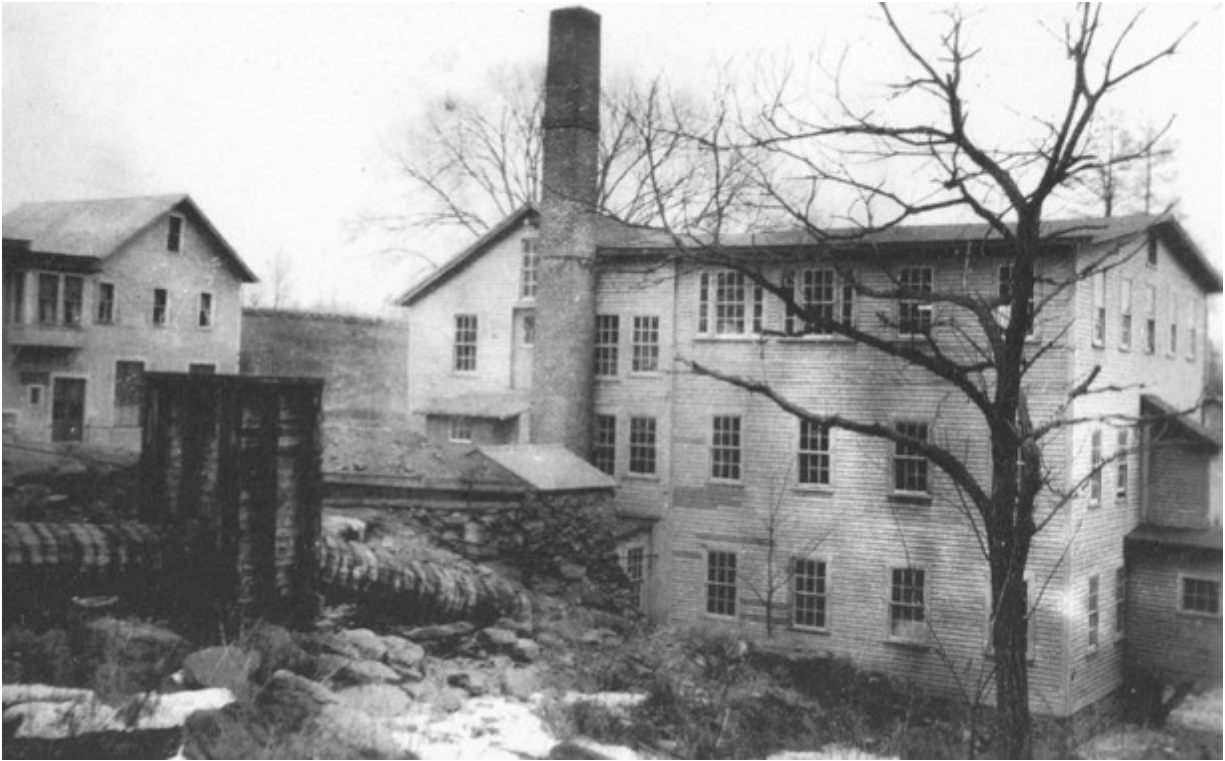


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The T.H. Wood Mill, early 1900's



The company changed its name in the 1970's to the Deknatel Corporation, and then was purchased by the Genzyme Corp. in 1996. In July of 2003, the company was purchased by the Teleflex Corporation who continue to make sutures, now of a plastic material using some machines that are brand new, others rebuilt on site, and some 112 years old. One of the original grist

stones from this site sits in front of the company office. This site is the longest continuously operating industrial site in the area.

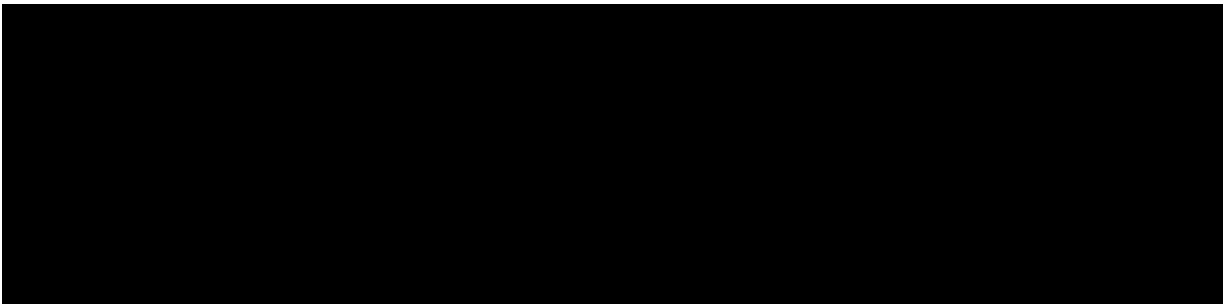
By 1895, the industrial use of this site on The Skungamaug River ended with the closing of Jared Loomis' saw and grist mill. This site was coveted at one time by both the Cheney brothers of Manchester and the Case Paper Company of Andover, but the owners at the time refused to sell. About 1911 the property was acquired by Henry Osborne of New Jersey who planned to open a dental factory on the site but was unable to acquire enough land for a larger dam and pond. In 1919, the mill site and house were purchased by Herman Lieberman of New York who planned to open a small shirtwaist factory there with potential employment of fifteen to twenty women. It is not clear whether this factory ever started.

By 1929 the property had a sprawling and dilapidated mill house near the bridge with a number of discarded millstones about. A small grist machine from this site is now in the possession of the Coventry Historical Society. Mr. E. Leroy Gardner purchased the site.

Mr. Gardner owned a power company in Chester, Massachusetts at the turn of the century that was taken over by a larger utility company. Upon his retirement he dismantled his stone house and moved it to the Wright's site. His family referred to the house as the "castle". Facing the river was a wide paved terrace. From this a short flight of stone steps led down to a larger circular terrace surrounded by a stone wall and with a fountain at the center. The terrace bordered a cliff with the river some forty feet below. The river teemed with speckled trout.

Mr. Gardner's interest in hydroelectric power led him to develop a turbine system using a Bradway turbine manufactured in Stafford Connecticut. He built a concrete dam across the river creating a new mill pond and installed a seventeen kilowatt D.C. generator used for light and heat. He bought A.C. power for his appliances. He intended to sell power to his neighbors, but the Connecticut Light and Power Company succeeded in getting a law passed making it illegal to string private power lines across state roads, and it is not clear if any of the power produced by Mr. Gardner was provided to anyone but himself. The turbine is no longer functional though it is housed in a concrete structure across (east side) the river. The installation and dam survived the 1938 hurricane which brought all sorts of debris including large trees and sheds over the dam. Bradway turbines were used as early as the 1870's for other mills in town, one being the Boynton Mill at the head of the Mill Brook. Today, there is a home in Eastford on an old mill site that provides all its electric power by a Bradway turbine run by water power. (12,18)

In December of 1949, Ralph and Winona McLeod acquired the site. Mr. McLeod restored the outside of the mill which was fairly dilapidated (likely a very early structure). He also built a stone generating plant and a twenty foot metal overshot water wheel. The water wheel was built in Hanover Pennsylvania specifically for this site. He installed a thirty kilowatt alternating current generator, a one hundred foot penstock and a twenty-four inch diameter pipe to serve the water wheel. The generating plants (McLeod's and Gardner's) broke down prior to 1970. In June of 1970, Jack and Roberta Bynes purchase the site, and Dr. Bynes established his current dental practice in the old mill house. In 1984 he installed a one hundred kilowatt turbine and ran it for ten years. The Bynes still occupy the site.

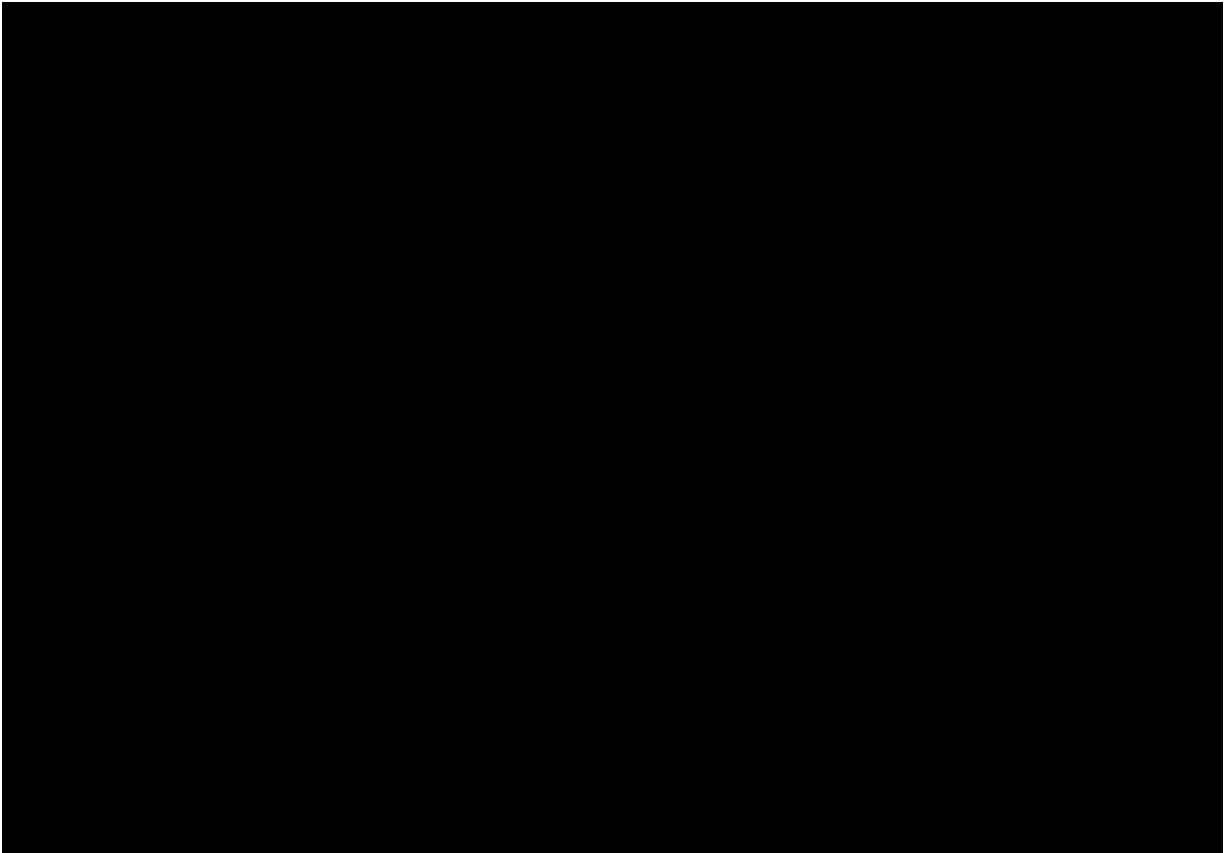


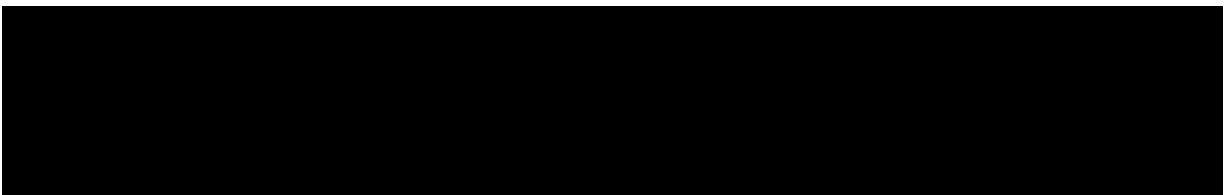
Wright's Mill



Wright's Mill





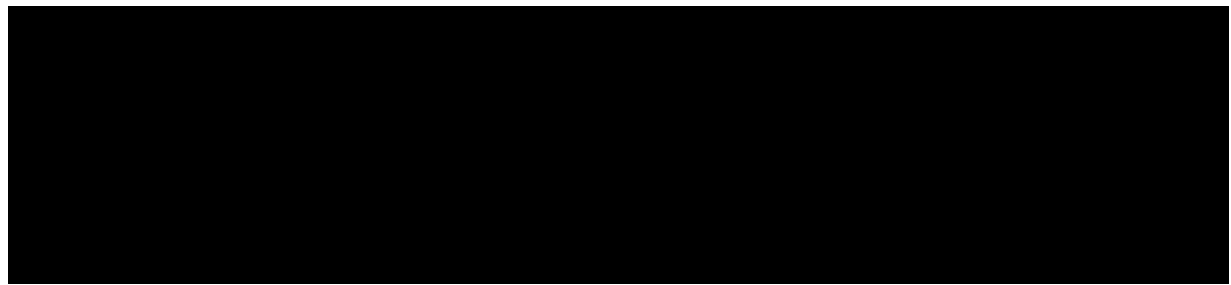


Bynes' Falls

Under the administration of Pastor G. Johnson in 1930, a sum of \$5,605.63 was raised to redecorate the First Church. This was a remarkable sum as these were the depression years. In September of that year a Rededication Service was held.

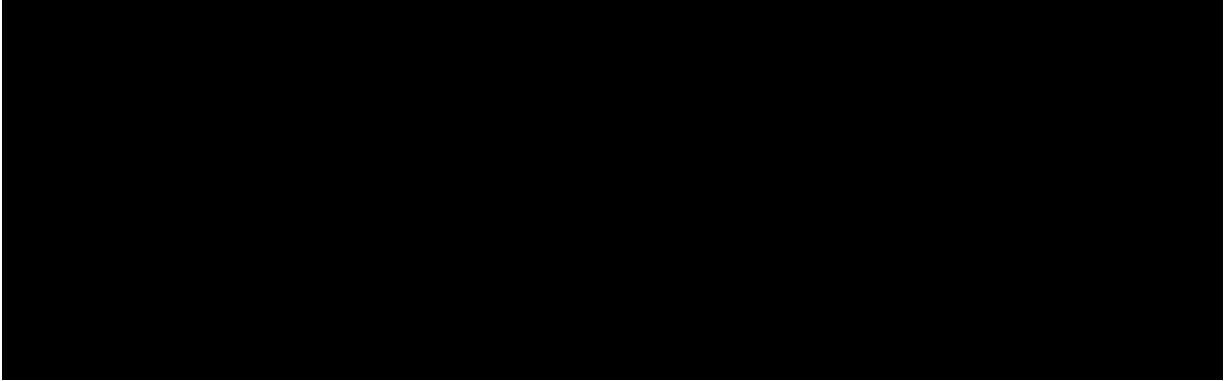


The First Church

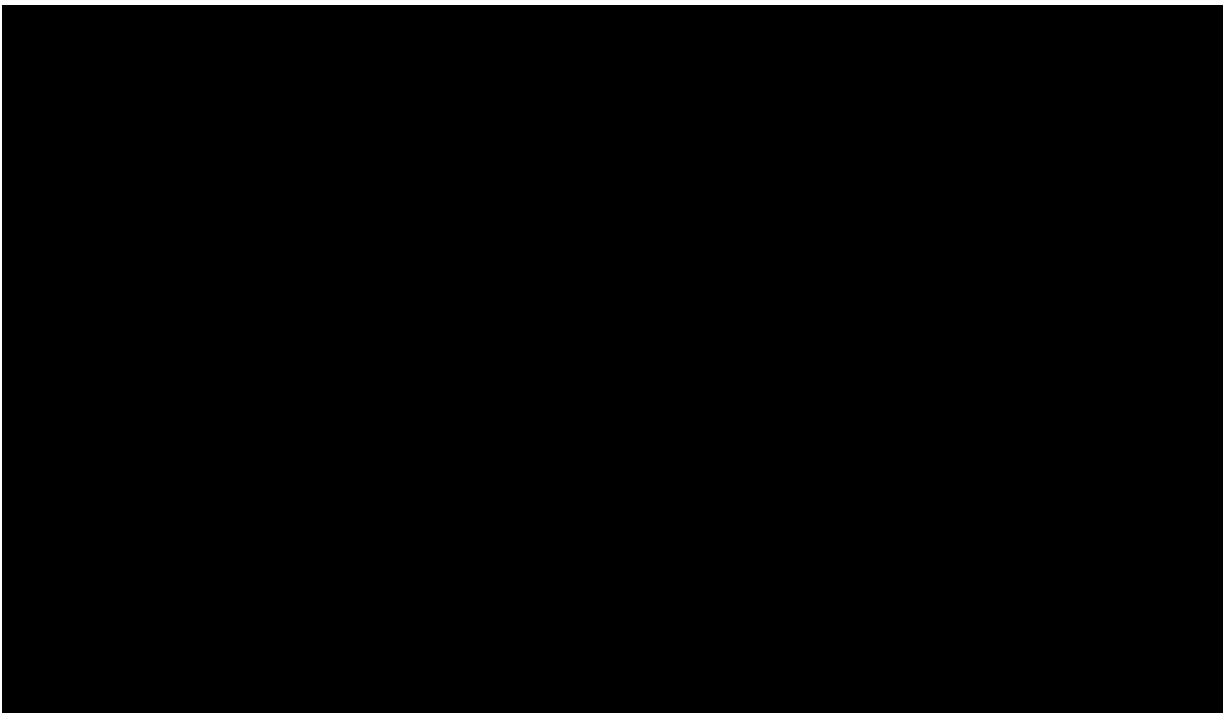


The First Church





Hop River Village



Located on Hop River Road, mostly on the Columbia side of the river, this village grew due to the mill sites and the railroad depot there. The Hop River Warp Company, started by Austin Dunham and the Jillson brothers made cotton thread and yarn from the mid 1800's to 1892. Between then and 1920 the mill had several owners and made shoe webbing, paper mache seats and fiberboard. There were several mill tenements as well as a post office (manned at one time by H.H. Boynton), and a small grocery store.

In 1929-1930 the Pine Lake Community Club and the Pine Lake Shores Company were formed, and over the next eighteen years sold approximately 350 lots in the area west of the lake on the Willimantic River to individuals. The original lots were twenty feet by ninety to two hundred feet and had restrictions on buildings trees, water and sewer uses. This association was one of many to emerge around the lake.



Pine Lake Shores



Pine Lake Shores





It was the year 1934. My family and I lived in Brooklyn, New York. The big city. We could not understand why my uncle, Joe Termini, a vaudeville performer for many years, would want to build a permanent home on a lake in such a rural town as Coventry, Connecticut. However, as a young boy of twelve I was very excited when Uncle Joe invited us to visit with him that summer. This was my introduction to Coventry, and the "Actor's Colony." Little did I realize that my family would be so impressed that this would lead to a permanent residence for us later on. During that first summer we had occasion to meet several working show people who had summer or permanent residences in the lake front area called "The Actor's Colony." Today it is called Gerald Park. This area at one time was farmland, owned by the Avery and Fitzgerald families.

As time went by, some of the land was purchased by Bill and Mabel Loeser who were retired vaudevillians. They had a spectacular electrical act when electricity was only used commonly for lighting. Being enterprising people the Loesers started selling lots and building summer cottages for rental purposes. They called in Frank Perett, a trap drummer who assisted in their act before retiring. Frank became the Loesers' "man Friday." Evidently the practice of one performer informing another about this secluded lakeside area started at this point and a few more were introduced to the Actor's Colony.

Along came Carl Ross another performer who settled here and opened a service station in Willimantic. Then it was Doris and Jack McLallen who had a very diversified act. They were involved in many local business ventures including ownership of a new Studebaker Automobile agency located across the street from where MacDonald's restaurant is now in Willimantic. Doris now resides in Hartford. A dancer named Charlie Knapp came next. He later became a plumber and was a partner in the Solomon and Knapp Plumbing Company in Willimantic. Ray and Margaret Brady, acrobats, were next to come. They lived on South Street. Word was still out and more came from the "show biz" ranks. Next on the scene was a dance team named Ruiz and Bonita. Actually it was Cesar Ruiz, his wife Grace, and his dancing partner Bonita. Cesar was a Latin who had a flare for high

living and the like. He had the only high powered motor boat on the lake for some time, a miniature Austin sports car, and a house that had half a boat for the front porch. He was always surrounded by young people - mostly girls! His house was next door to a grey fieldstone house with a long breezeway and two car garage. This house was later called the "Breezeway." In time Cesar Ruiz bought the Breezeway which was then owned by a theatrical agent named Joe Weston. Joe and his lovely young wife Jean moved out of town and the Ruizes moved in. Cesar lived there for several years, excepting for some periods when he would rent to friends and others. He had one tenant named Gomez who was the son of the dictator of Venezuela, South America.

Gomez became a topic of conversation in town because of his father who was a revolutionist, and because of his brief twenty- four hour marriage to a movie starlet of the day, Joyce Mathews. Joyce later married Billy Rose the well known Broadway and film producer. There was another short term rental to television star of the day called Dagmar. Some may remember her as the tall curvaceous blonde on several television shows in the 1940's and 1950's. Before the Ruizes, MacLallens, and the others who appeared on the scene, there was another performer who had purchased lots in the area for speculative purposes. His name was George "Pete" Hinkle Sr. George and his wife Kitty lived on South Street between Ross and Washburn Avenues. George had a deep bass voice and, along the way, was a radio performer. His voice was similar to another radio personality of the day, "Singing Sam the Barbasol (shaving cream) Man." Since George was sponsored by a food company, his title for the radio show was the "Singing Chef." He and Kitty later opened a small restaurant next door to his home which was a popular entertainment and eating place in the early 40's. It was eventually sold to Frank Bausola of Manchester.

It was George Hinkle that sold the land to my Uncle Joe Termini, and his wife Jean Hamilton Termini (a former performer herself). The large Bolton Stone house with the circular driveway was then built. Joe had been a headliner for the RKO Keiths vaudeville circuit and performed as a pantomime musical comedian in many countries. He had over forty engagements at the London Paladium, a record for American acts. He also appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show three times. The Sullivan Show was one of the early T. V. variety shows. Since his passing some years ago, my wife

Frances, daughter Claudia and I have lived there (in the stone house). Joe and Jean Termini had some very good show biz friends named Ann and Frank Kamplain. Although Ann was not a performer she assisted husband Frank and his partners. The "Musical Hall Boys presenting the Three Gay Blades." The act was a travesty of the Gay Nineties, featuring voice harmony that was second to none. Ann and Frank traveled the vaudeville circuits and the Gay Blades appeared quite often in England, having worked the Grovener House, and the Barclay and Ritz Hotels in London. They were in a show called "Let's Raise the Curtain at the "Old Vic", the Victoria Palace and appeared on the BBC television.

The last of the old vaudeville troupers that I recall as coming to the Actors Colony was the acrobatic team of John and Eva Kemmy who were friends of the Termini's and Kamplain's. John was a Hollander who started as an acrobat in the European Circus and eventually came to the USA and the vaudeville circuit. He had a wonderful outlook on life and a fantastic sense of humor. His wife Eva was a most delightful person. They built on Washburn Avenue and blended into Coventry well. Although they did not live in the "Actor's Colony", we cannot forget the Keenes. Mother Katie and husband Abner, as well as son Hank, were part of the group. They were show people back to the early days. I can remember Katie still doing cart wheels at the age of seventy. Son Hank followed in her foot-steps and eventually became one of the early Country Western performers in Connecticut as "Hank Keene and His Radio Gang."

A little more history now for the land that the Actors Colony became, or at least how it got the new name of Gerald Park. A man named Jim Fitzgerald, a former performer with an act named "The Musical Fitzgeralds", owned property in the area, which officially was called Avery Shores. The Avery Shores Association wanted to construct a road from the lake up to South Street. They asked Jim for an easement for the property where the road should go. Jim agreed to the easement with the condition that the Association change the name from Avery Shores to Gerald Park. Also that the new road would be called Fitzgerald Boulevard. It was agreed and this is the way it is today. Parts of my story may be out of context. Perhaps some of the dates are not exact. I hope this brief description of the grand old

days of the original "Actors Colony" has left a feeling that there is a little more history in Coventry than we may have realized, and that our town's natural beauty was observed and appreciated by some worldly persons looking for a permanent haven. (37, Joseph Grosso)



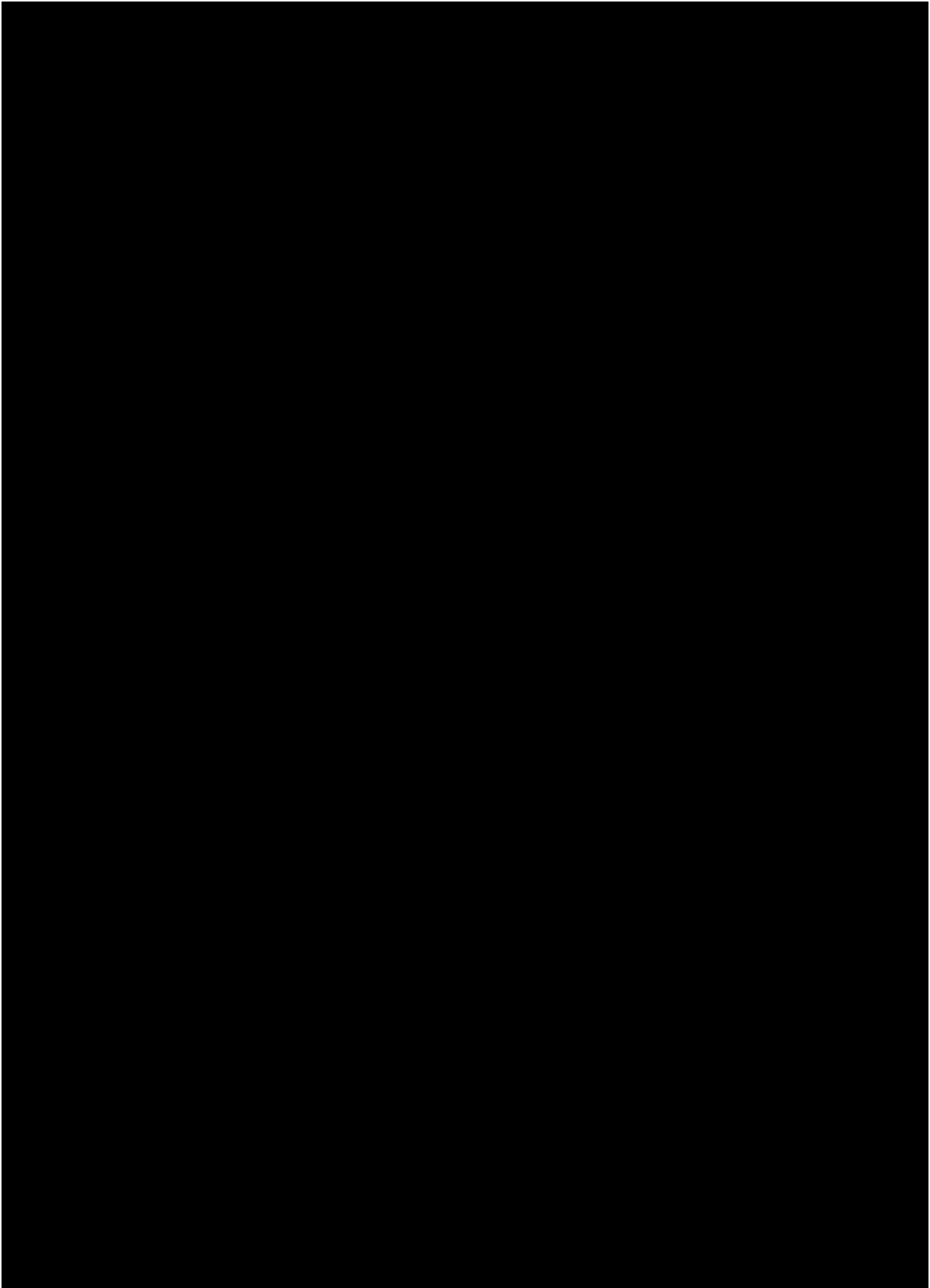
The Actor's Colony- A Personal Account

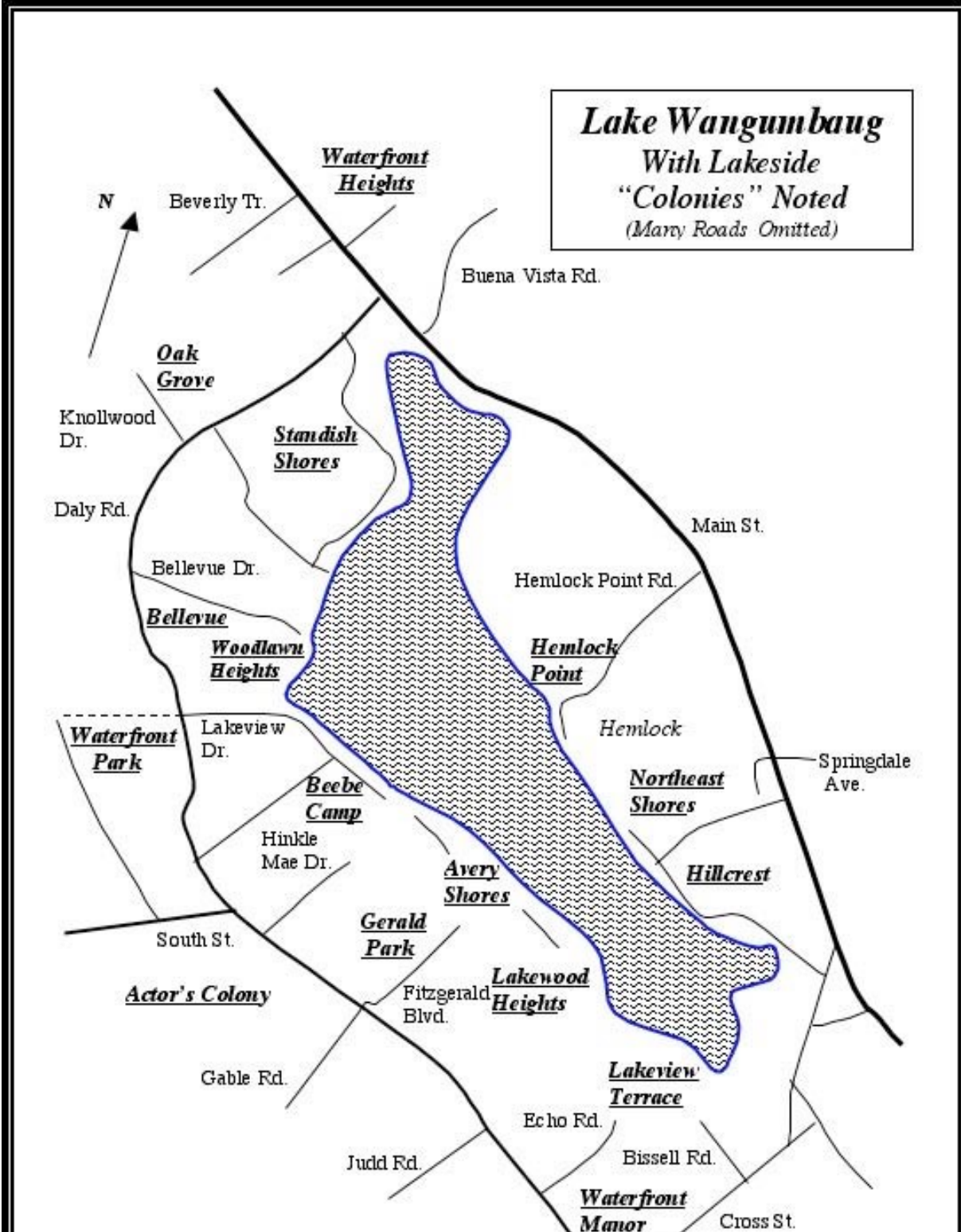


The Actor's Colony- A Personal Account









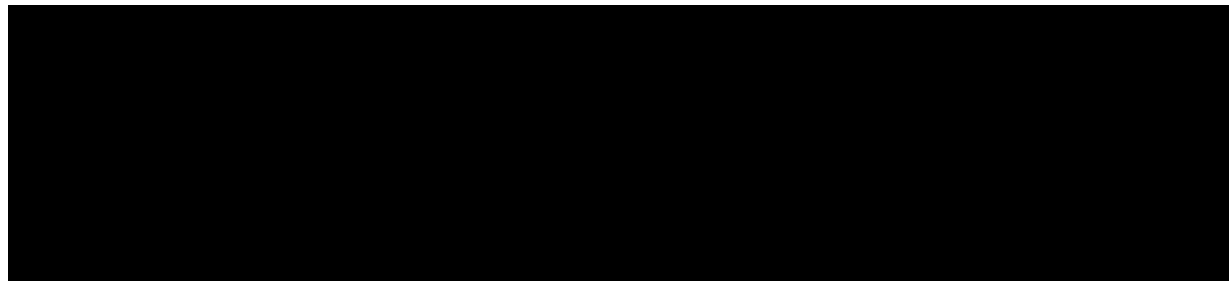


The North Society contained many farms. Strack's store (& gas station) was located at the corner of Swamp Road and Route 44. Vinton's store was on Main Street (now Dimitri's) with the Haven chicken farm adjacent. The Edmondson family, originally from England, moved to Coventry in 1932 and purchased their current farm on the Boston Turnpike. They raised cows and chickens, grew vegetables and were taught many of their farm skills by the McKinneys whose farm was north of the Boston Turnpike. The main roads were not generally plowed in the winter, and as the land around Route 44 was very open, drifting snow was a significant problem. Local folks shoveled the drifts to provide some passage. Farmers plowed their local roads and occasionally did some grading of the roads in the spring. (33)

In 1937 CL&P installed the first overhead transmission line through the eastern part of town from Willimantic to serve Rockville.



1930's North Society



1930's North Society



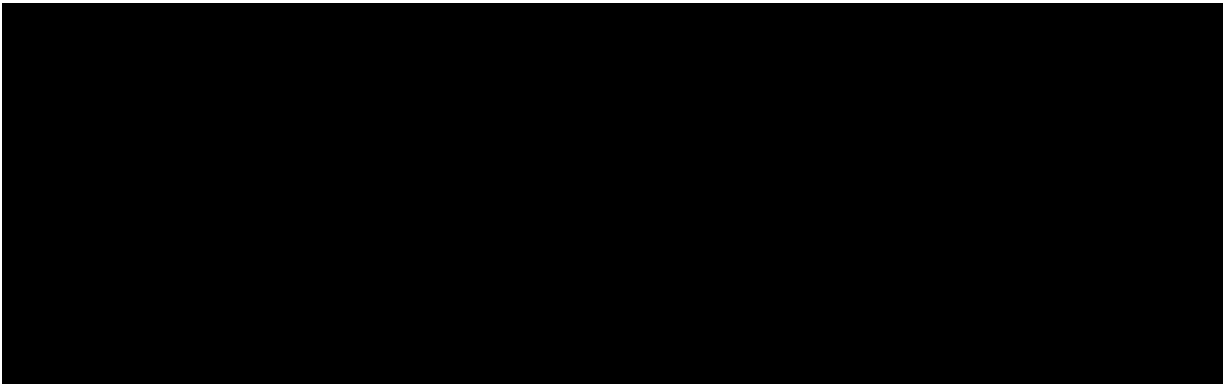
South Coventry VFD- 1962

The South Coventry Volunteer Fire Association was organized in 1936. Its first vehicle was a new Maxim 500 Gallon Pumper. An electric siren was installed on the National Silk Mill and a system of fire alarms worked out. Louis A. Kingsbury was its first president and Arthur Woodworth was the first chief. Prior to this year, fires were attended to by whomever was on or near the site and by whatever means were at hand.

The North Coventry Volunteer Fire Department was organized in 1947 with Arthur Vinton as its first chief. Mr. Vinton donated the land on which the present firehouse is located, and it was dedicated in 1950. Their first vehicle was also a pumper and due to the efforts of the Coventry Grange enough hose was purchased to provide the minimum equipment required by law. Additional bays were added in 1955 and the second floor in 1989. (8)



The South and North Coventry Volunteer Fire Department

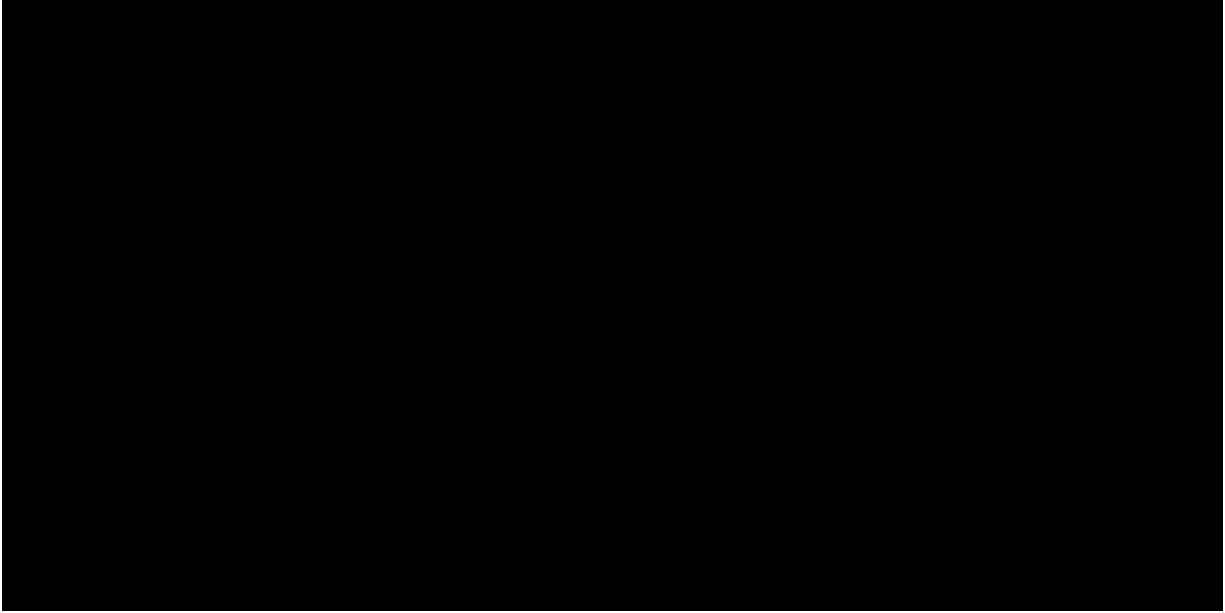


The South and North Coventry Volunteer Fire Department



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



North Coventry VFD- 1962



Arthur Vinton (1892-1974) was born in Coventry. He attended Rockville High School and Morse School of Business. He inherited twenty-one acres of land on the north side of the Windham Turnpike in 1926 from his mother. He soon opened a small, but very active general store and gas station (Amoco) that served the public for nearly fifty years. He carried all the essentials as well as grain and cement and also had a soda bar in the back. He and his wife Zoetje (Schell), whom he married in 1923, were very active in all manner of civic affairs.

One of our retired police lieutenants, Lyn Wilmot, tells two stories about Arthur. In the 50's Arthur and his wife were robbed, brutally beaten and left for dead by the notorious criminal Joseph (mad dog) Taborski and his partner. They eventually recovered. Taborski was executed in the electric chair in 1960, the last one executed in that manner in the state. On another, more pleasant note, Arthur used to keep his fireman's hat on a shelf behind his store counter. When the fire bell rang, he would grab his hat and run across the street to man the fire trucks. Customers were left to their own devices. Many just kept shopping and made their own change.

Sadly, Arthur was killed in 1974 while crossing the street from the fire house to his home. It was a dark night, and he was hit by a car. In 1976, Zoetje leased (and later sold) his now pizza shop to Dimitri Gitsis whose family has been operating a restaurant there ever since.

Vinton's Store- 1938

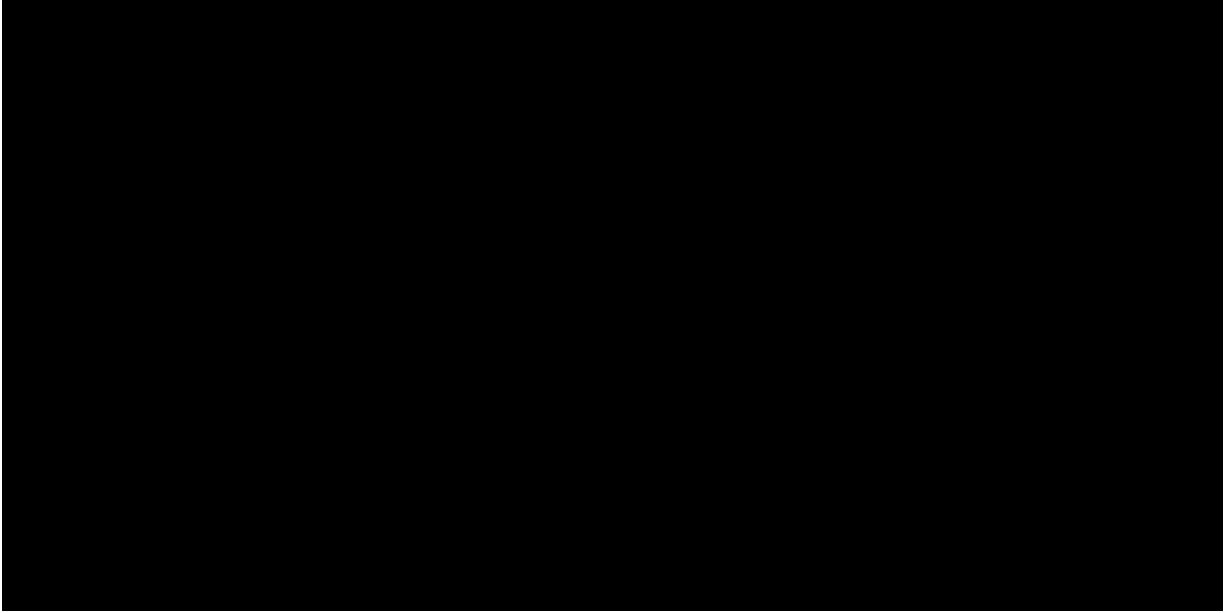


Arthur Vinton



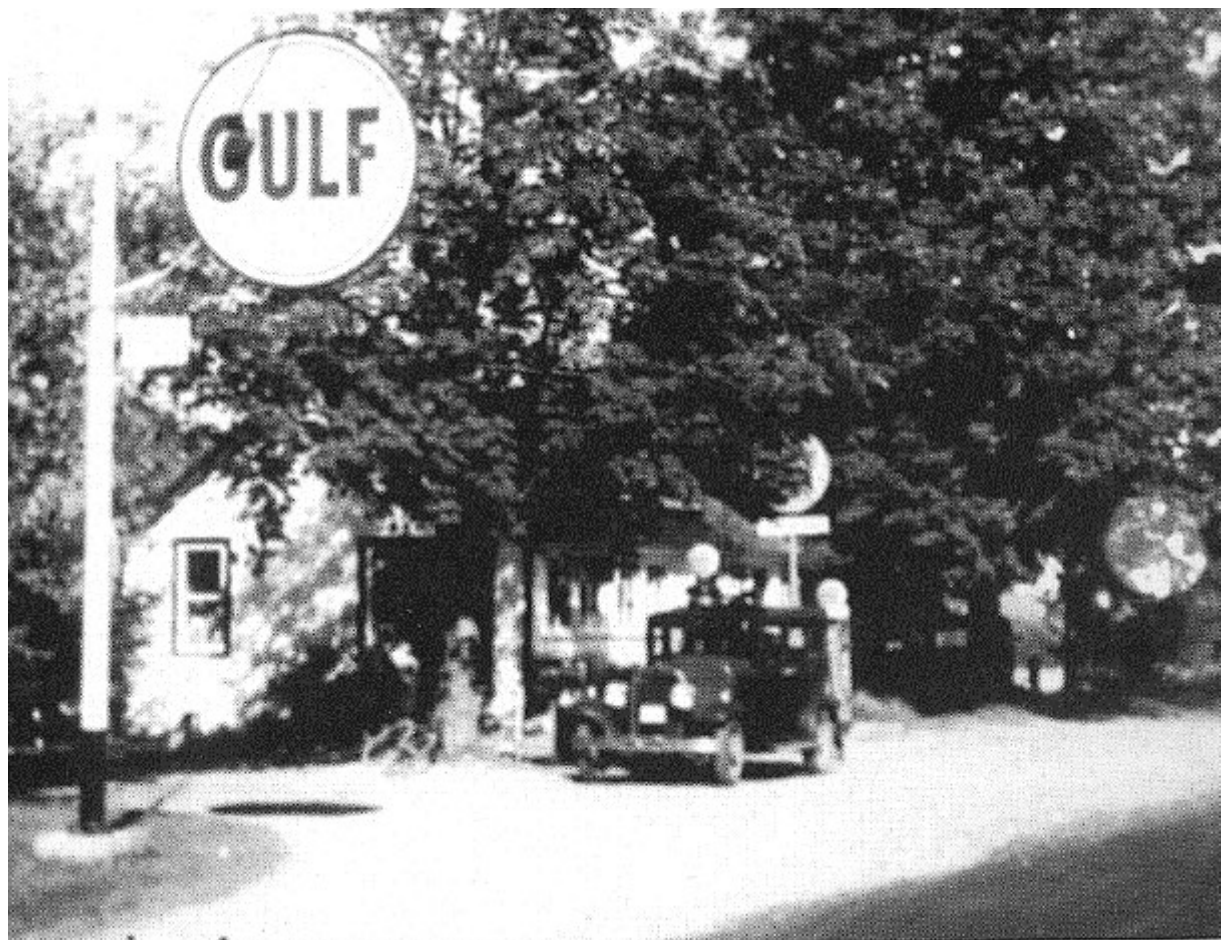
Arthur Vinton





Arthur Vinton





On that fateful day in September of 1938, firefighters Harmon Cochrane and Assistant Chief Jesse Brainard had reached the firehouse in South Coventry. The equipment was safe in the brick firehouse, but couldn't be moved due to flooding. Normally emergencies would be reported to the Willimantic phone operator. She would phone Schweyer's mill (on Mason Street), and the watchman there would sound the steam whistle in half-minute blasts. The first man to get to the firehouse would phone the mill, get the details and the whistle would be shut off.

This day, however, fallen trees, poles and branches made that impossible. The whistle did blow that day, steadily, with no interruptions. The two firemen at the station decided to find out why. There was a wall of driving rain. The Mill Brook had overflowed its culvert and created a rush of water in front of the fire house. The men crawled over trees and wires to Wiley's garage. Shingles were ripping off its roof. Suddenly a loud splitting sound was heard, and the old trolley pole across the street from the garage split like a match stick. It once supported the trolley's main electric wire. In fact, today if you look closely, you can see the lower half embedded in the stone retaining wall across from Sanborn's garage.

The men found their way to the relative safety of the foundation of the Congregational Church, and crawled south along a stone wall towards the mill. Objects of all sorts were blowing at them. All at once, the whistle stopped blowing, the only sound was the howling wind. The men re-traced their steps to the firehouse. Later it was revealed that a piece of corrugated roofing had jammed the whistle cord, causing it to blow. It stopped only when the mill's boiler ran out of steam. In addition to the Methodist church losing its spire, many of the fifty-six year old elms that lined Main Street from Champlin's store to Barber Village Road and provided a high, leafy canopy were gone forever. (23)

Reports of hurricane damage in Coventry include: Roofs of several houses were blown off, and most of the large trees in the village toppled over. Part of the belfry of the Methodist Church was blown down. Several barns were demolished. No lives were lost and no one was injured, but loss to livestock

was significant. Few of the lake people escaped without damage to their cottages. Lake Wangumbaug is the highest in its history (within a few inches of the top of the dam), and doubtless it would have gone over its banks if sandbags were not used. The village was without lights and telephones for more than three weeks. Other parts of town took longer to restore these services. The Bolton Lake dam burst and caused extensive damage along Route 6 including a gully more than thirty feet wide. Traffic from Willimantic to Hartford was diverted through East Hampton. The Willimantic River suffered extensive flooding which was exacerbated by the collapse of the Crystal Lake dam.

The Eagleville dam was significantly damaged on its west side, and boats belonging to Pine Lake Shores cottages were swept from their moorings. The Route 31 bridge over the Willimantic River was washed out on the Perkins Corner side rendering the dirt road unusable. The bridge was not repaired for several years. Traffic from South Coventry to Willimantic reverted to the old route along Depot Road to Route 32 where the bridge was inundated, but survived. The National Silk Company plant weathered the storm well with only the loss of some sections of the roof. Flood damage in the village was minor. The bridge and dam on the Skungamaug River at Wrights mills was slightly damaged, and debris as large as sheds were seen toppling over the dam. Part of the dam and a section of the bridge on Hop River Road at the Case Fibre Company was swept away. (18)



1938 Hurricane



1938 Hurricane

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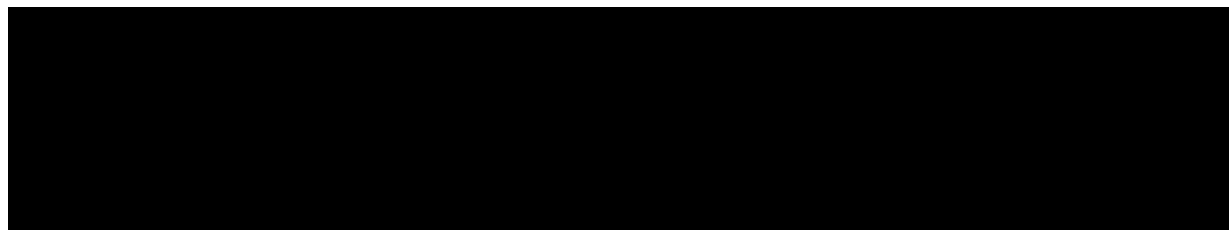
Jean Thibault Castagno who lived in town from 1939 to 1946 has written an account of her family life during that time. Her family was close knit, and her experiences in school dominate her narrative. She lived on today's Richmond Road at the time. In 1939 she attended Pond Hill School which had eleven pupils in six grades. The school had an outhouse and a well for water. The government provided some subsistence food such as butter (which puzzled Jean as her family had a cow) and also toothbrushes and Dr. Lyons tooth powder, Tooth brushing was taught at school. By 1941 she was attending the North Street School with just the seventh and eighth grade. The nearest General Store was at Mansfield Depot. Her family had a telephone which was rarely used. Her home had

an outhouse, but also an upstairs bathroom. They had a huge garden that was tended by the children. She learned how to swim in a small brook near the Depot. She frequently visited a family friend, Mrs. Hanson, and remembers bathing in the Lake. Her father worked at Fuller brush in Hartford before the war and remembers hearing about the impending war on the radio.

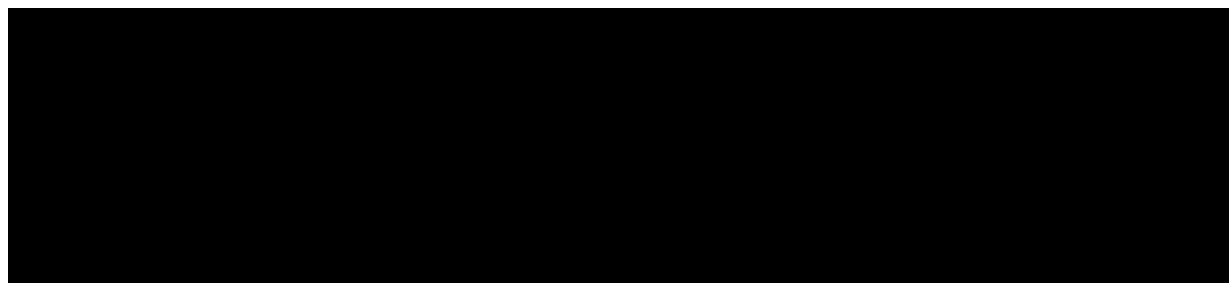
She remembers hearing about the attack on Pearl Harbor and was puzzled as to why the Japanese were "mad" at the U.S. The media did little to explain the reasons for the war, but were fervent patriots in their broadcasting. Life changed drastically after December 1941. Her father tried to join the Merchant Marine, but was refused because he had five children. Girls knitted wool scarves for the troops and boys collected foil from cigarette packages. Their farm grew to include another cow and some hens. Every fall they butchered their pigs and made sausage. In 1942 they had an electric refrigerator, but no freezer. They heated their house with a wood-fired furnace. Christmas 1942 was a joy for the children. The boys got Lionel trains and the girls got dolls. Their favorite games were Parcheesi and Hearts.

In 1943 she went off to high school in Manchester. She boarded the bus at the corner of Route 44 and North River Road. She took Algebra, English, French and Civics. At the time, her parents considered Manchester a

conservative place, while Willimantic was a “fast” place. By now her father was working at Pratt & Whitney in Hartford on a twelve-hour workday. Her road was not paved and her father occasionally helped plow and grade it with his horse. She remembers ice skating on a pond near the cemetery on Route 44. Every Saturday, she and the neighborhood children would walk the three miles to the Mansfield Training Center to see movies from the balcony. On the way home they had a nickel ice cream cone at the Depot General Store. There was an incident once that required a visit by the state trooper. Her name was Officer Heckler, and the fact that she was a woman amazed the children. Dr. Higgins visited the family when someone took sick. (38)



Coventry in 1939-1946 A Personal Account



Coventry in 1939-1946 A Personal Account



The McKinney family moved to their farm in 1921. The farm was located about a mile north of the Boston Turnpike near the Bolton town line. The road to the farm was sheer mud. Sometimes they would leave their car on the main road and walk to their home. There was an old barn and a chicken house next to the house. The house had been a grain room at one time, and had been expanded to five rooms with a dirt cellar. A cow, horse and some tools were purchased and a small garden was planted. A Ford tractor with steel wheels followed for plowing. Mr. McKinney started to deliver milk to a few friends and he expanded his herd and his route rapidly. About 1926 he sold the timber in the woods and had to cut the tops. He hired some men and paid them two dollars a cord to cut and pile the wood. Leonard Giglio was a rugged nineteen year-old and cut five cords in one day with his axe. McKinney's children went to the red school house on Cedar Swamp Road, it being the only building on the road save his farm. He assisted the grading of the road with stones he had picked up from his plowed fields. only the main streets, and walk the side streets to his customers.

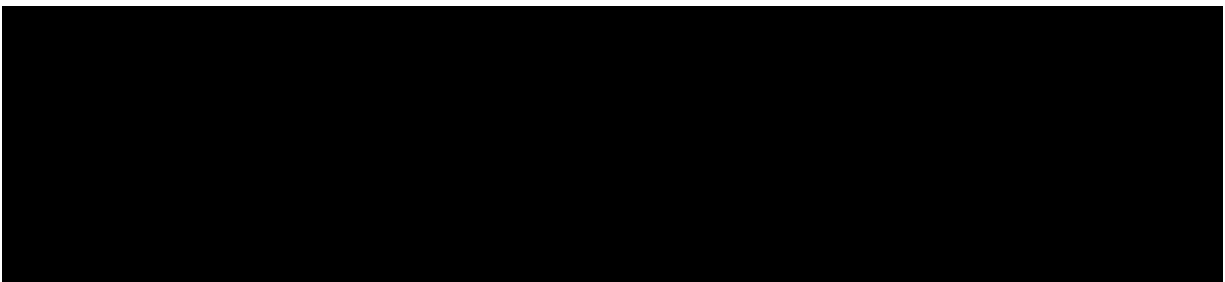
In the late 1920's Mr. McKinney negotiated to get electricity to his house. Some of the Bolton roads had electric service, but he was denied service from that side. He soon negotiated service from the Willimantic folks who were putting a line on the turnpike. The cost was \$10 per month. He had been cooling his milk with ice cut from Bolton Lake and ice purchased from Manchester (at \$20 per month), but with his new electric service, he purchased a cooler for the milk, a water pump and an electric stove. In 1933 he built a new house with the help of his uncle August. In the winter of 1934 the temperature fell to thirty degrees below. He needed to heat the differential in his delivery truck to get it going. During one bad snow storm, the truck could not negotiate the roads, so Mr. McKinney hired a horse and sled to deliver the milk. He would ride only the main streets, and walk the side streets to his customers.

McKinney lost his barn in 1949 due to a fire from a broken bulb in the hayloft. He neighbors and friends helped re-build the barn at no cost. They were just showing their gratitude for all the favors done them by Mr. McKinney. His herd was comprised of Ayershire cows with a significantly

higher cream content than other dealers. He also kept the most modern, automated and clean equipment. (25)



The McKinney Farm (1921-c1970)



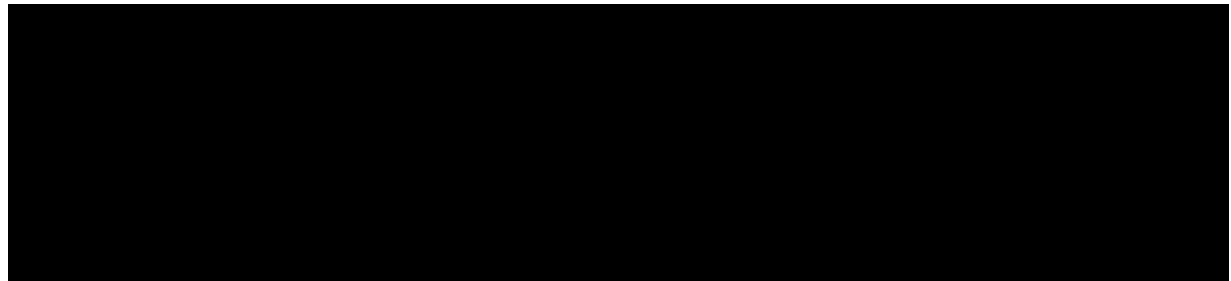
The McKinney Farm (1921-c1970)



On the corner of the Boston Turnpike and Silver Street is a farm of about seventy acres that was part of the original Nathan Strong estate in the 1700's and has a reserved parcel for a burial ground. Since the 1940's, it has been known as the Hytone or Peracchio Farm, with a modest herd of cows providing milk for area residents. Recently a large new barn has been added. The farm is one of the longest operating dairy farms in the area. It faces the pricing pressures of today's milk market, and the owners have established a consortium with other local farms to more efficient market their milk which is certified hormone free. The milk is sold under the name "The Farmers Cow" (introduced- October, 2005). The farm dominates the hillside on the turnpike with its rural character.



The Peracchio Farm



The Peracchio Farm

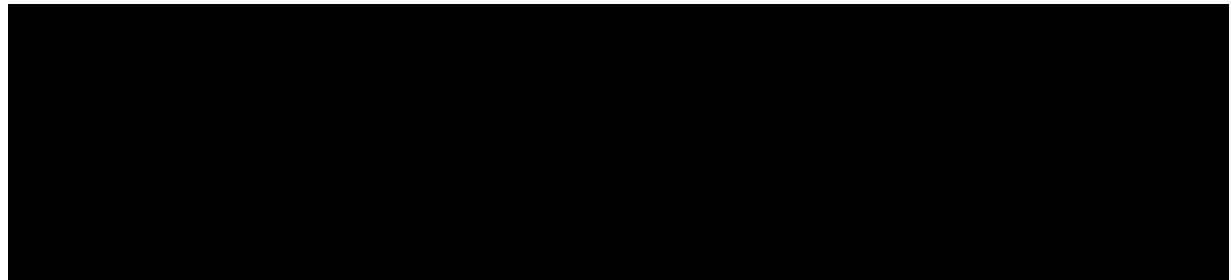




The Willimantic Chronicle: The town of Windham was very proud of its new airport and airmail service, so it was time for a celebration. The celebratory program opened at 11:45 am on May 19, 1938 with a luncheon at the Nathan Hale Hotel sponsored by the Rotary and Exchange clubs and the Willimantic Chamber of Commerce. A crowd well in excess of 3,000 gathered at the airport. Hank Keene, a well known vaudeville act from South Coventry, landed at the new airport in his airplane as a part of a publicity stunt. He then followed the airmail flight to Hartford, carrying his own mail. American Airline officials had contacted Postmaster Lee to tell him that they hoped that the Willimantic plane would carry the famed nude fan dancer, Sally Rand, as a passenger. She was currently performing in Hartford.



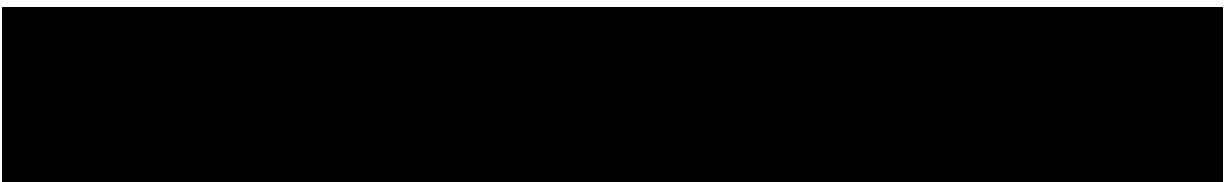
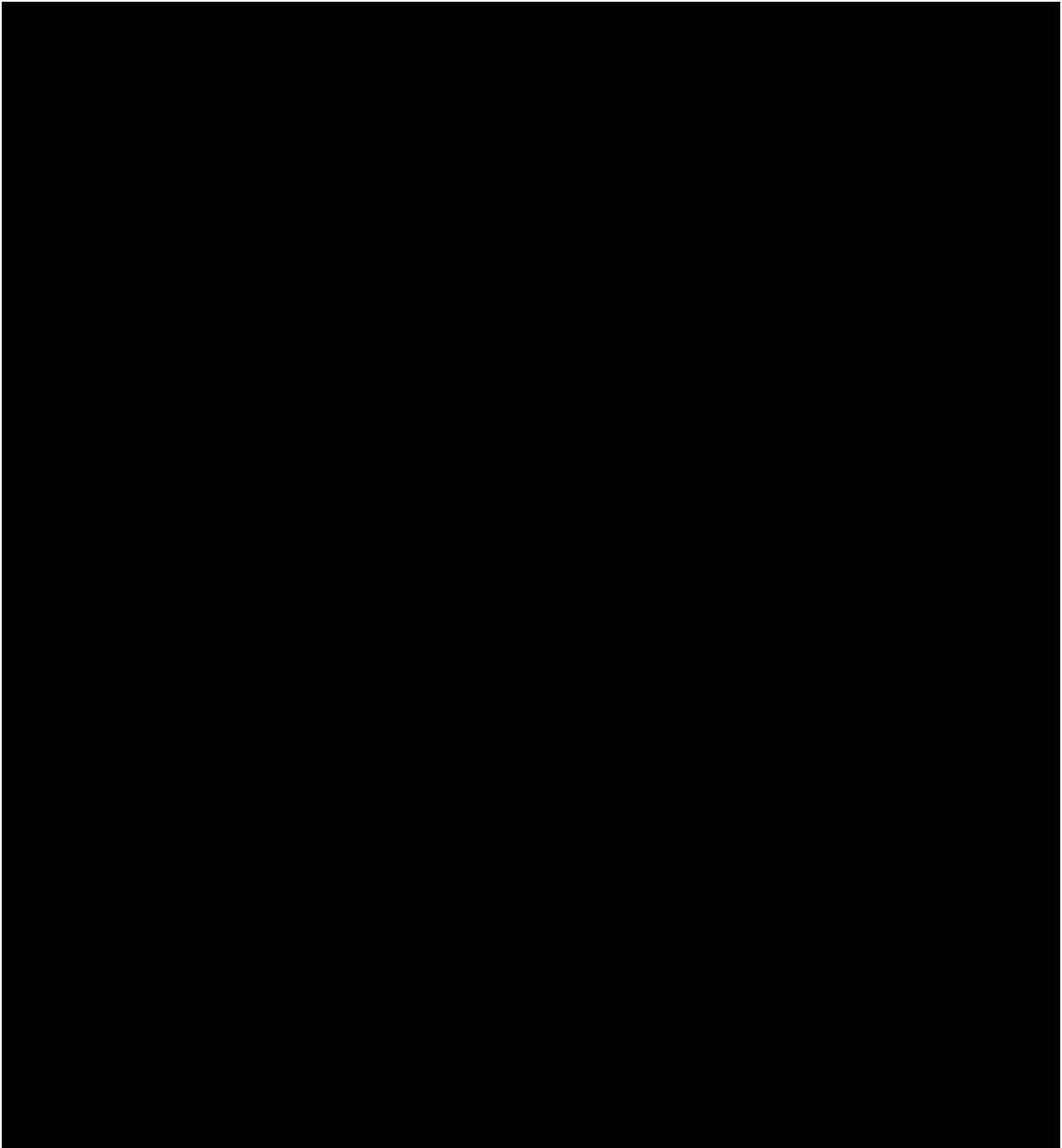
Hank Keene (Harry Newcome)

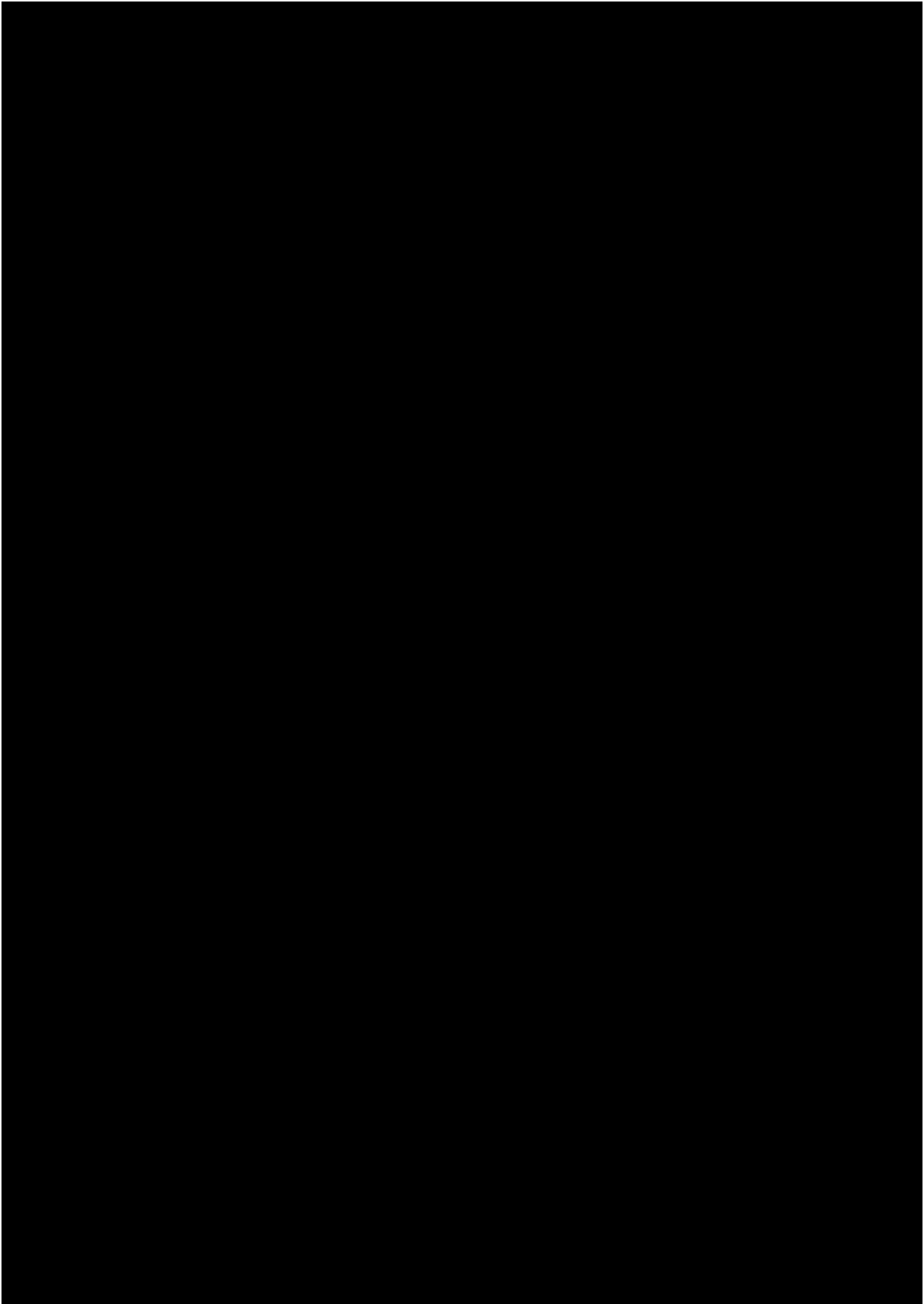


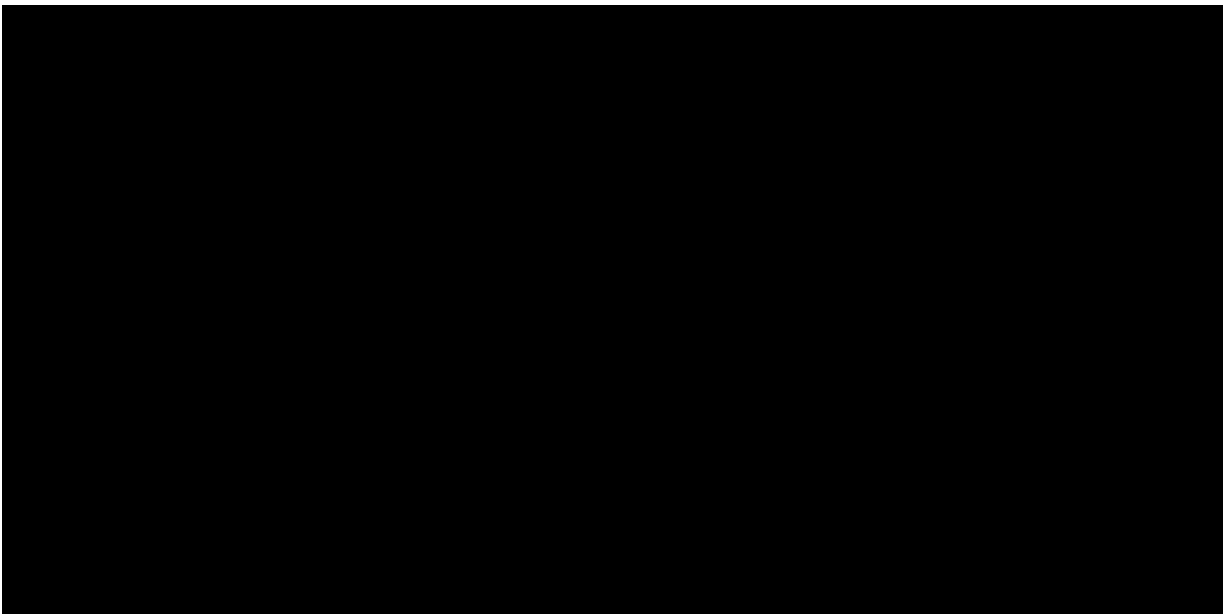
Hank Keene (Harry Newcome)

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Hank Keen Songbook 1940

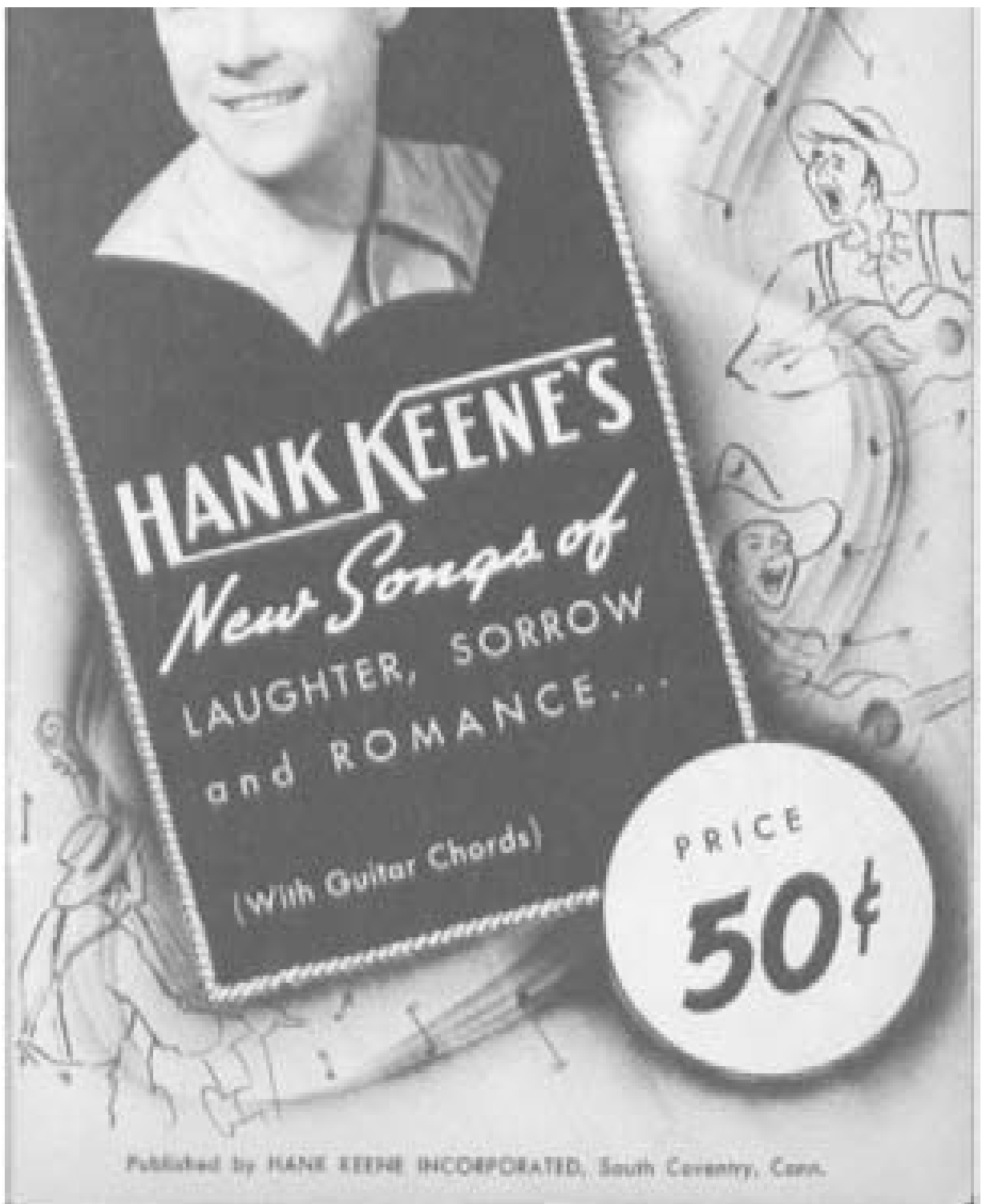






1939 Ad





Compliments of

Coventry Poultry Farm

North Coventry

FRED H. MILLER

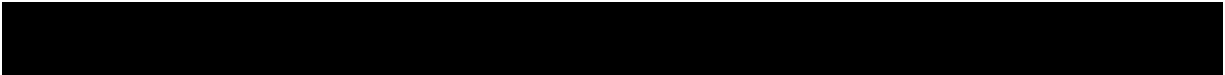
Breeders of
New Hampshires, R. I. Reds
Barred Rocks
White Leghorns
Crosses

Conn. Pullorum Clean

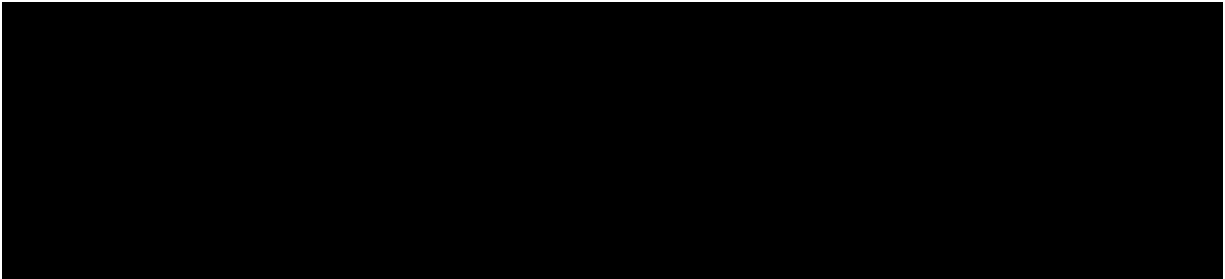
BABY CHICKS
STARTED CHICKS
PULLETS

Phone Manchester 8897

Located on Bread & Milk Street, the farm was started by Jabez Kingsbury in 1846. It was called the Autumn View Farm. In the 1930's the farm held 100 Jersey cows, 60 of them for milking. Deliveries were made to Manchester and Bolton, and to a few lake colonies in the summer. Between 500 and 1700 quarts of milk a day were produced. The farm had one of the first "flash pasteurizers" in the '30's. For a time chickens were raised and both chickens and eggs were sold at markets. Andrew Kingsbury (3rd generation) was a legislator, and in 1907 introduced the bill that made mountain laurel the state flower. (Rev. Jack Kingsbury)



The Kingsbury Farm

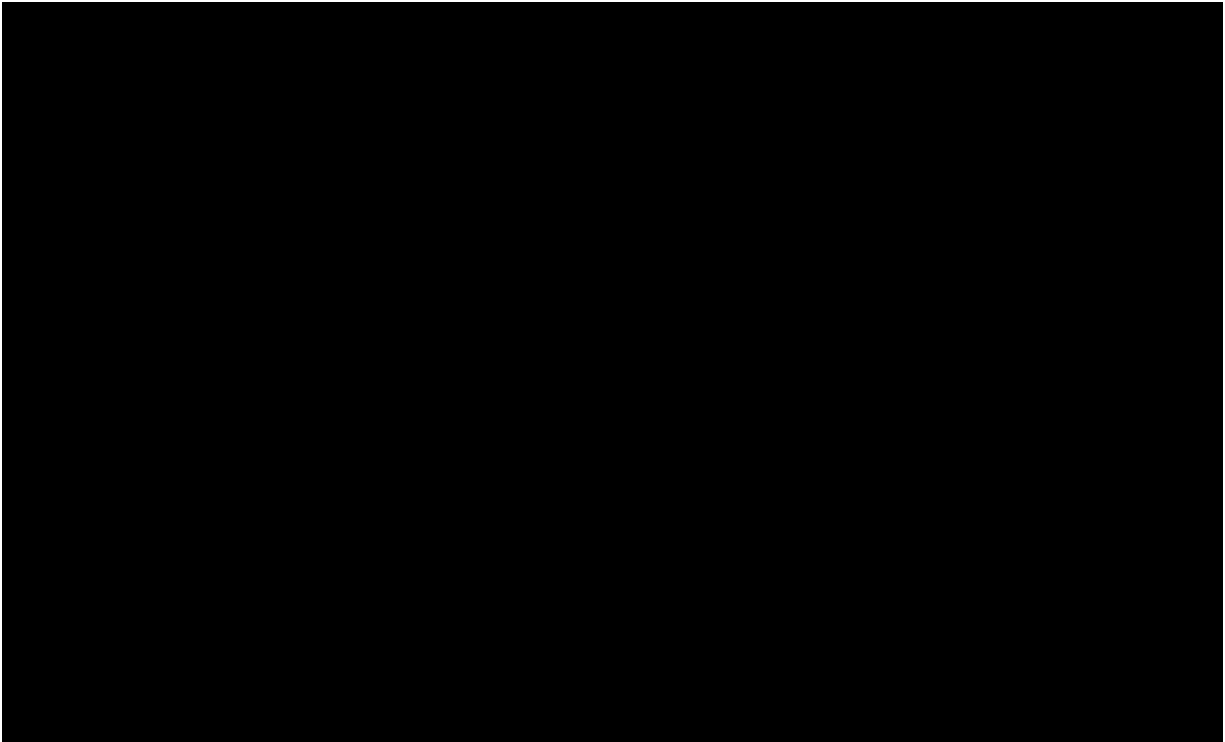


The Kingsbury Farm



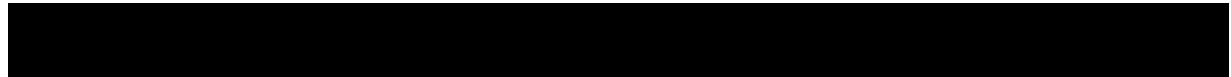


Poultry Farms in Coventry



While not on the scale of the larger farms in eastern Connecticut, Coventry had its share of poultry farms (mostly breeders) from the early 1900's through the 1950's. Among the more prominent were Havens at the corner of Route 44 and Route 31 (South), Popples on Flanders Road, Millers on Brewster Street, Storrs on Grant Hill Road, and Ganzler/Spector on Flanders River Road near the Hop River. Connecticut Bi- Products operated a poultry products factory on Hop River Road, but was closed by Dr. Bowen, the town health official, in the late '50's due to health concerns.

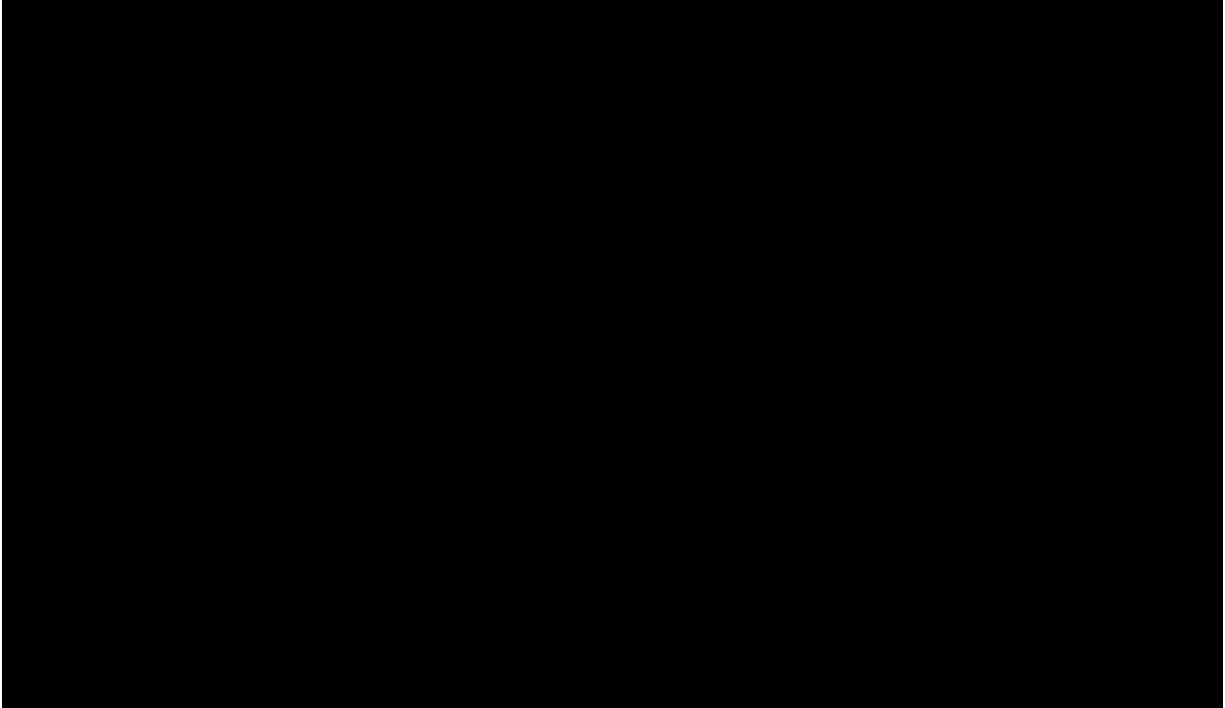
The Kingsbury Box Company and the Kingsbury-Davis Machine Company operated on Mason Street until 1943 although with declining activity. Louis Kingsbury was the last active family owner of this site. In 1948 the site was sold to Louis and Albert Harvey who opened The Old Mill Used Furniture with an extensive selection of used furniture, antiques and household goods and tools and continued this activity for many years.

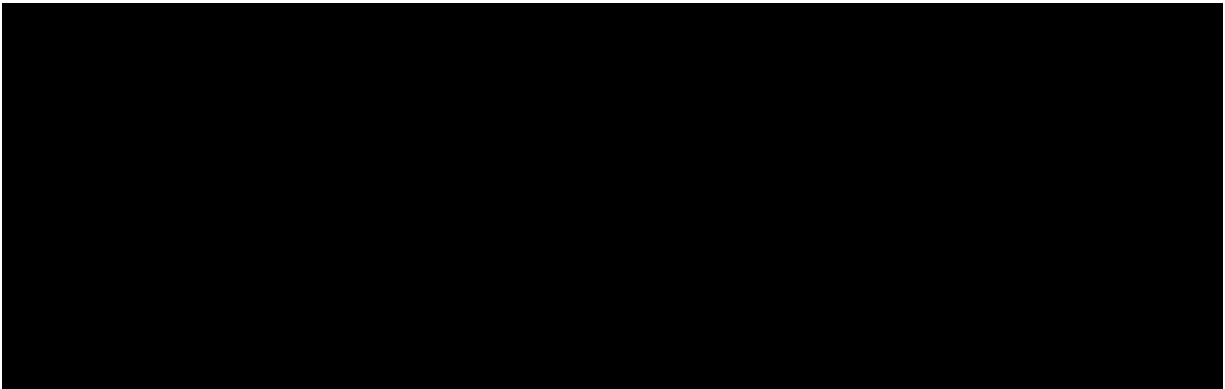


The Kingsbury Box Factory



The Kingsbury Box Factory



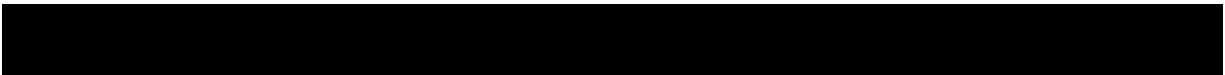


The Kingsbury Box Shop, Mason St- 1905

Following the attack of Pearl Harbor, the fear of attack by enemy aircraft was very real, and top priority was given to a nation-wide early warning network by the Army Air Corps. The job of watching the skies was left to thousands of citizens. Ralph Reynolds had an ideal location near his home on Babcock Hill and he offered it as a watch site. It had a clear view to the far horizon from the north to the southeast. A small building was erected containing a pot-bellied stove, a chair and a single electric bulb. A black telephone was installed with a direct line to the New England tracking center near Boston. Volunteers worked four hour shifts watching the skies. Upon seeing an aircraft, a report was made. Many Coventry citizens took this duty very seriously. (23)

Automobiles had the top half of their headlights painted black so that it would be difficult for enemy planes to navigate by following illuminated roads at night. Citizens practiced blackouts so that the town could be made invisible when the alarm was sounded. The town clerk was also the clerk of the rationing board. Just enough gas was allowed for people to go about their business. Scrap was collected and children saved their pennies to buy War Bonds. So many people had enlisted that everyone personally knew someone who was serving. 306 men and women from Coventry served in the war and fifteen were killed. There were stories of German submarines off Connecticut's shore, of rockets dropping on London, and of strange enemy jets and rocket planes. Most citizens were insulated from the day-to-day operations of the war simply because the media was limited to the newspaper and the radio, but they responded patriotically to virtually all requests and sacrifices asked of them.

Sometime in 1944, a Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk, while on a training mission, crashed just north of Route 44 on Charles Christenson's property between Grant Hill Road and Carpenter Road. The pilot parachuted to safety and landed in the Nathan Hale forest near Seagraves Road. The area was sealed off for a time to investigate the incident.



World War II



World War II



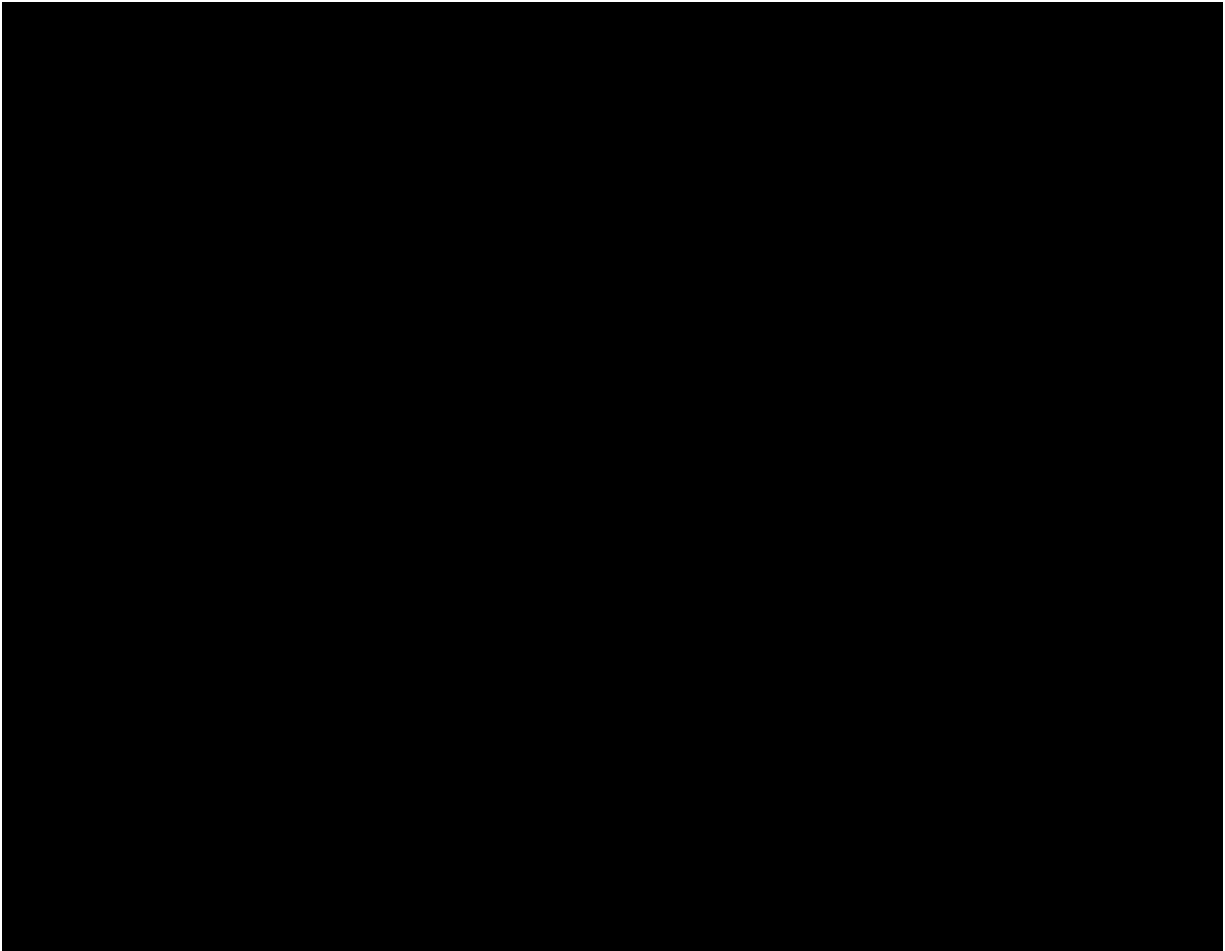
“The surrender of Japan is to be celebrated with a square dance at the Center (Community Center). A dance will be held this Thursday (August 23rd) at Sholes Lakeside Casino tickets at Wellwood’s, Vinton’s and the Post Office. Cards and bingo at the center this week. Basketball at the center this Monday. Set back game this week at Pine Lake Shores. Planning indoor carnival at the center, Mrs. Horne- country store, Ruth Welles- flower booth, Bissell and Love- publicity, Mr. Cour - run the wheel, etc. Boy Scouts this evening at the center.” (Rural Record Friday 8/17/1945)

1945 Family Life

1945 Family Life



School Enrollment- 1941



Enrollment by Schools, June, 1941
 (from the Annual Report of 1941)

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Grades</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
Alice A. Heckler	Brick	1-3, 5-6	17
Mary C. Tasca	Center	1-2	35
Eileen Galivan	Center	3-4	41
Margaret E. Jacobson	Center	5-6	40
Portia B. Fuller	Center	8	29
Catherine Lamb	Flanders	7	15
Joseph A. Tasca	North	7-8	23
Evelyn Rood	Pond Hill	1-5	25
Beatrice Roberts	Red No. 10	1-6	34
Mary J. Sochor	Silver Street	1-6	18
Ann Potemsky	South Street	1-5	47
			Total: 324

Average Attendance 291.5

William Higgins was born in Chesterfield, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, March 8, 1867 and moved to Coventry in 1891. He became a physician and member of Connecticut state house of representatives by 1905. He served as a General Practitioner, Health Officer and coroner for over fifty years. He organized the Village Improvement Society in 1897. He was a member of Connecticut state senate, 1909; secretary of state of Connecticut, 1929-33; U.S. Representative from Connecticut 2nd District, 1933-37; delegate to Republican National Convention from Connecticut, 1936 and a member of the Freemasons, Shriners, and Elks. He died November 19, 1951. He was the leading physician of his day (1890- c1940), Coventry town coroner and medical examiner, and the "Father of the Rural Road Bill".

Dr. Higgins' reports from 1895 to 1948 reveal some interesting items. 1895- Three cases each of typhoid fever and scarlet fever, about twenty cases of measles and fifteen cases of whooping cough. Quarantine and disinfection were carried out, and no secondary cases developed. Water closets connected with such public places as railroad stations and school houses have been carefully looked over.

1899- An epidemic of measles resulted in fifty cases, three cases of typhoid fever, all imported from other towns; wells in all school districts were tested and some need repair. The South Coventry Water Company is setting nearly five thousand feet of pipe for domestic water and fire suppression on Main and School Streets. 1919- Aside from the severe epidemic of the Influenza in late 1918 and early 1919, there has been the fewest number of contagious diseases known in many years. 1922- A widespread epidemic of measles occurred during the latter part of the year. 162 cases resulted. The original source of the disease was Willimantic. 1931- There is a deficit in the town fund caused by the depreciation of the Tracy-Elliott mills. We have curtailed road and bridge work. Some of the roads constructed last year are unsatisfactory due to their roughness. The town should consider erecting guard rails and fences in dangerous places. The annual allocation of \$17,500 by the state for gravel roads has been a considerable help, and in a few years we will all be out of the mud. It will be necessary to have our

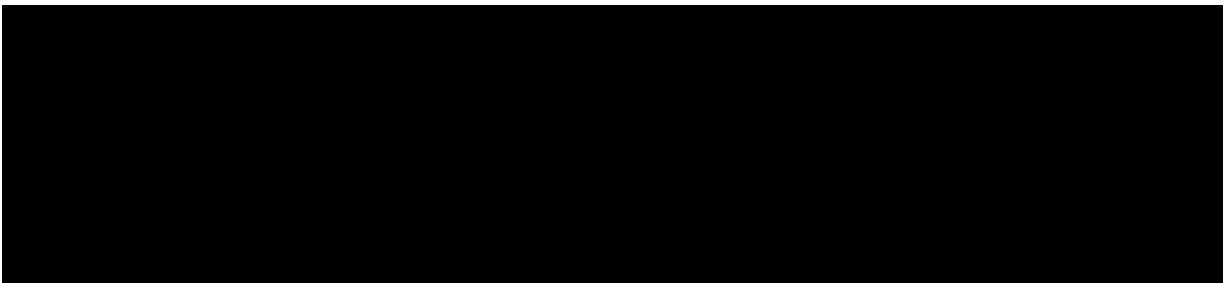
gravel roads oiled to make them satisfactory. In reference to our bridges: In 1917 we had fifty-two bridges that we had to maintain. Since then we have built two iron bridges with concrete flooring over the Willimantic River at Eagleville and at Jones Crossing. We have reconstructed the large iron bridge at the Hop River. All of these projects have been done in conjunction with the neighboring town. The following wooden bridges have been rebuilt: one near Albert Wright's farm, one at the foot of S.A. Hall's hill, one near the Armstrong shop and a few smaller ones. We have reinforced three iron bridges: One at Wright's Mills, the Webb Lee bridge and the Raisch bridge, also the Bass and Lieberman bridges. Thirteen others were rebuilt of concrete.

1934- Twelve cases of scarlet fever, some whooping cough and three cases of the measles. The disposal of garbage and refuse is still unsatisfactory, particularly around the lake. Thorough incineration or deep burial is needed. Small pox vaccinations went well and many school children took advantage of the community

X-ray program for the detection of pulmonary tuberculosis. 1937- Leaflets for the proper disposal of garbage were distributed to residents in the watershed of the lake. It is recommended to add \$1.00 to the tax bill of all watershed property owners and the appointment of a collector to improve the situation. The condition of the public dump on Stonehouse Road has become serious enough to warrant its closing. A new dump is being prepared near the gravel bank owned by the town about 400 yards from Day's corner. 1942- The general health of the community has been good even with the large increase in population. The Water Company has plans to insure a more satisfactory supply of drinking water. A new well recently driven did not yield a sufficient amount of water. A new chlorination system has been beneficial. 1948- Seven cases of measles, two of chicken pox, twenty-three of pneumonia, and one of meningitis. One case of poliomyelitis was reported, and it represents the youngest patient that has ever been reported in the country and makes the disease significant for infants.



William Lincoln Higgins (1867- 1951)



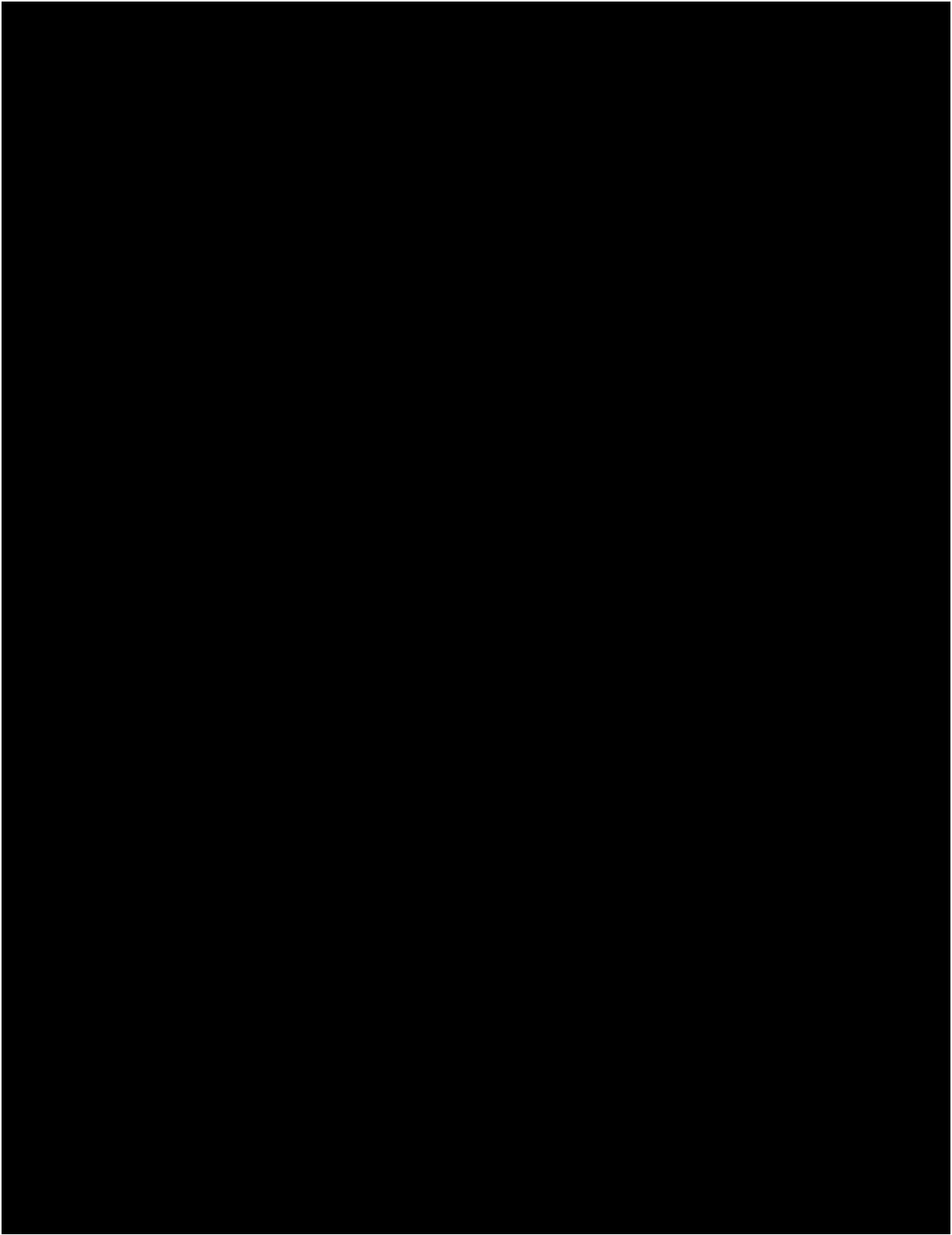
William Lincoln Higgins (1867- 1951)



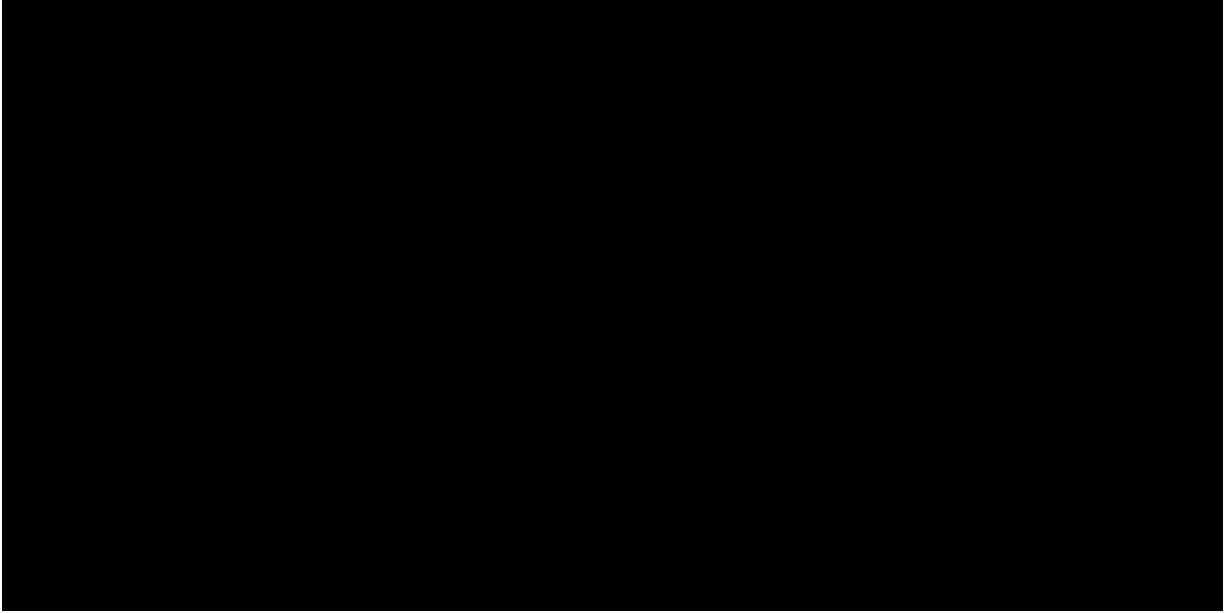
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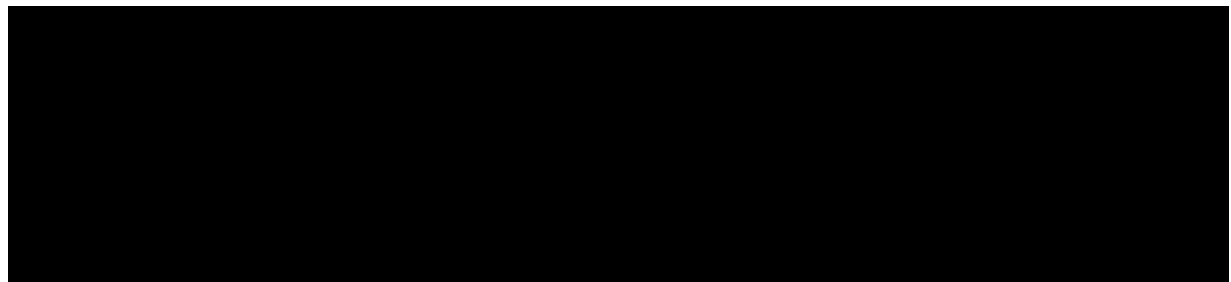


William Higgins

In 1913-14, George Dudley Seymour decided to purchase and restore Hale Homestead and he subsequently bought all surrounding acreage that had belonged originally to the farm. He also bought the Strong-Porter House, now the property of the Coventry Historical Society, and another house one and one-half miles distant on South Street, the Huntington House, now a private home. Upon Seymour's death, the Hale Homestead was given to the Connecticut Antiquarian & Landmarks Society, a statewide historic preservation organization. This non-profit organization administers historic sites throughout the state and have been operating the Hale Homestead as a museum since 1944.

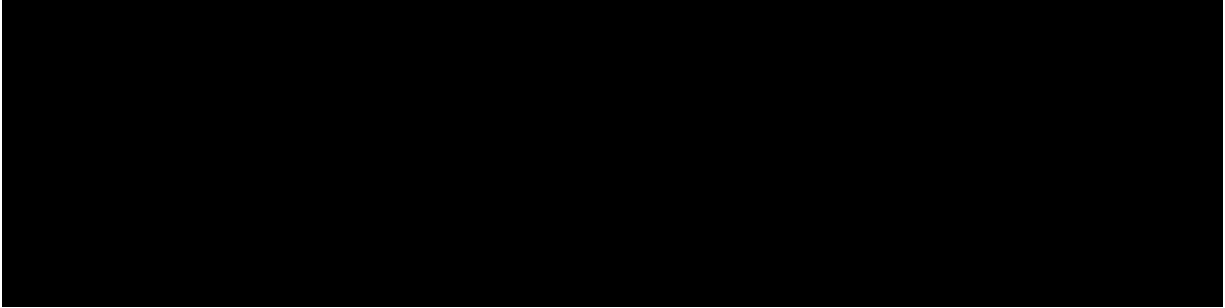


The Hale Homestead is Restored

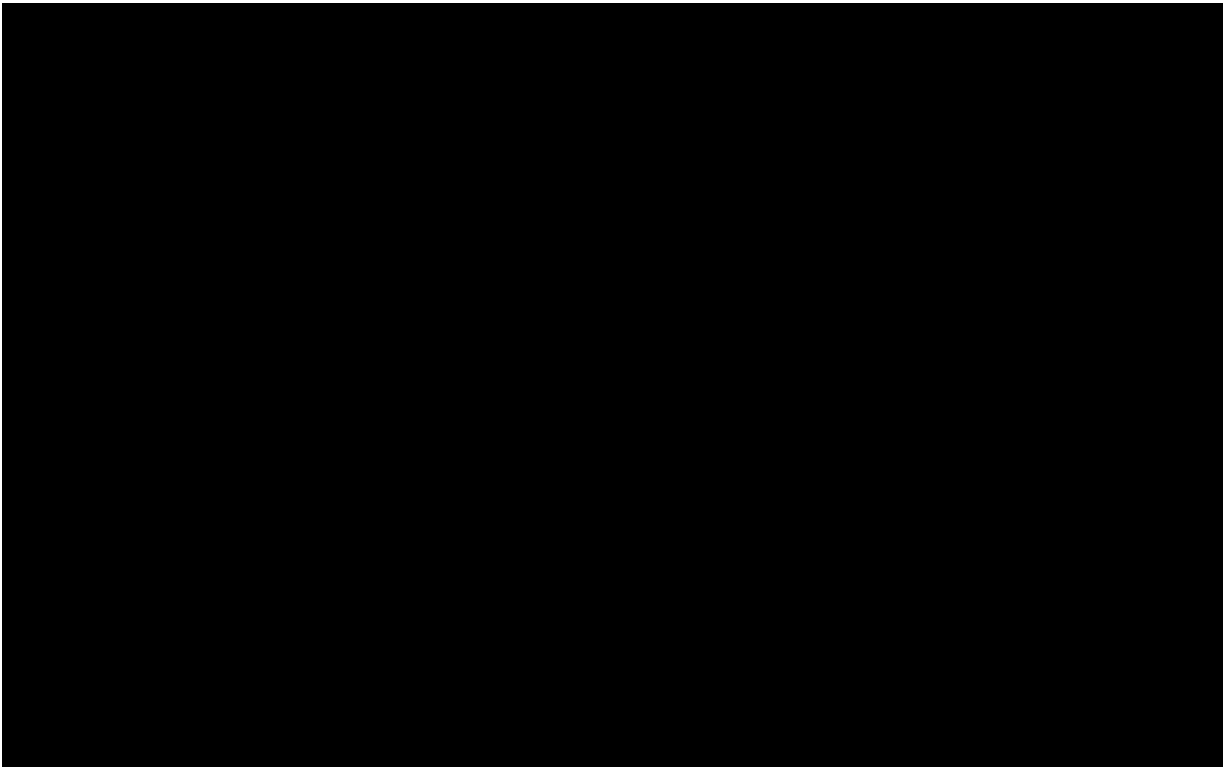


The Hale Homestead is Restored





The Coventry Players



Burton and Edith Moore came to Coventry in 1944 and purchased the old Huntington Mill boarding house on Snake Hill Road. Mrs. Moore was a teacher at the co-op school in the Nathan Hale Community Center for pre-schoolers. The Moores were part of “The Coventry Players” and used the property on Snake Hill Road, then called the Brookmoore barn, as their headquarters. It is thought that several residents of the actors colony on the lake were also members. They were active until the early 1960’s evidenced by a newspaper ad in January of 1960 looking for participants in a

production of “Arsenic and Old Lace” which played in several venues in the area.

The Hale State Forest was originally part of The Hale farm. The land was purchased by the father of Nathan in the 1740's. It remained in the family to the mid 19th century.

George D. Seymour worked with the department of forestry at Yale University in developing the surrounding forestlands. He had originally hoped to preserve the area as open farmland, since that is what it was at the time, but realized that this was impractical and, during the 1930's, changed to managing the forest for timber production and wildlife. Many of the stands of trees are those that Seymour planted in the 1920's and 1930's including arborvitae and hemlock. Seymour also assumed that by ensuring that the acreage surrounding Hale Homestead would remain undeveloped and undisturbed as "a sanctuary" for birds and animals, the environment around the historic Nathan Hale Homestead would likewise be safeguarded.

From the Last Will and Testament of George Dudley Seymour, dated 26 July 1943. "I give and bequeath all my real estate to the State of Connecticut, to be known as the Nathan Hale memorial Forest and bird and wild life sanctuary, to be managed as a state forest by the State Park and Forest Commission in accordance with the principles of scientific forestry, with special reference also to wild life conservation, including appropriate provisions for animal sanctuaries."

Many agricultural experiments have taken place in the forest including various preservatives for tobacco posts, seed orchards for white pines, chestnut restoration, climatological research, etc. It is one of the smaller state forests (~1,300 acres) but one of the most biodiverse.



The Nathan Hale State Forest



The Nathan Hale State Forest



The area between Main Street, Lake Street, the Lake and the Potash Brook was once part of a forty acre spread owned by Thomas Porter (and later his son Noah) who acquired the land with the original grist mill about 1716.

In the 1830's, John Boynton acquired most of the land with three mills at the head of the brook and built his house on Main and Lake Streets. (Welles Agency). He also built three small houses that sat in front of the now flea market. Those houses were primarily owned by the later mill owners (Boynton, Crittendon & Tibbals, Dan Clark, White & Stanley) until Eugene Tracy purchased them just before 1900.

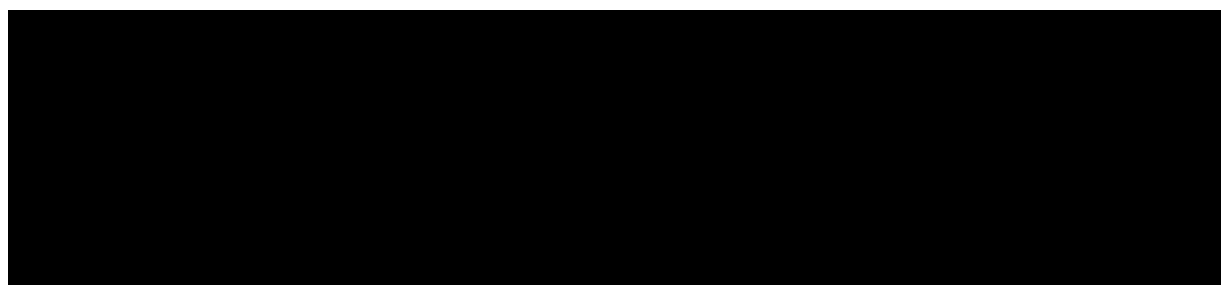
The Patriot's Park area began to change around 1900 when Theron Dunham acquired the house (south of the community center) and Frank Spaulding built his windmill on the lake to pump water to his farm on High St. The Salvation Army acquired part of this area in 1929 and the rest (Spaulding's) in 1944 and started their camp. The lower portion of the park (where the Methodist church was located) had a few dwellings and Overholtz's Blue Lantern Inn until the late 1930's. In the 1940's, this area had about ten cottages lining the (church) lane from Lake Street to the lake and was a popular summer recreation area. Many out-of-towners owned property here. From 1959 to 1962 the Salvation Army obtained this "lower" portion. In 1979, the Salvation Army sold all of what is now Patriot's Park and some land across Cross Street to the town. The boat launch was sold to the state in 1959.

The Lakeside area held a few residences and mill housing up until just before 1900. The gate for the brook was located here (as it is now), and that was controlled by the mill owners. It is thought that around 1900 or so that Eugene Tracy (who owned most of the land) saw an investment opportunity for recreational uses especially since he was employing lots of people in his shoddy mills. He rented a pavilion there to several folks who rented boats. Dan Killoury who built the first dance hall/casino was from a prominent family in Windham who ran a funeral home. They may have gotten together and convinced the trolley company that the lake was a great recreation opportunity and began the development of the lakeside and the dance hall.

William Wolfe opened his ice house around 1920. The lakeside as a recreational area essentially began in 1900 and expanded greatly in 1909 with the addition of the dance hall, small concessions and the trolley.



The Lakeside



The Lakeside

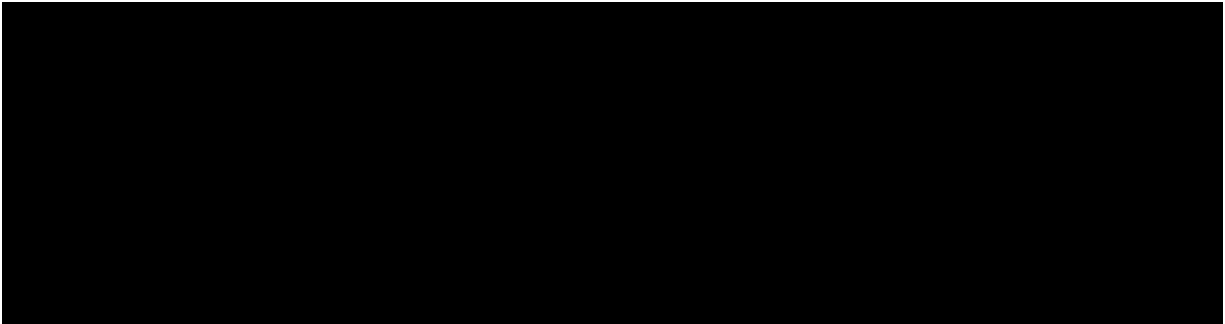




Methodism was revived in the 1880's, but by 1921 interest waned to its lowest point. The Coventry Methodists depended on services in Gurleyville and Eagleville. By 1944 they could not maintain the chapel. In 1949 the Coventry group merged with the United Methodist Church of Bolton. The Coventry chapel building was sold. It was later used as a temporary church by the Catholics, then as a Methodist parsonage, and in 1912 was used as a dwelling. The main spire was demolished in the 1938 hurricane and repairs were minimal. In 1962 it was the Nathan Hale Community House. (8)



Coventry Methodists Merge with Bolton



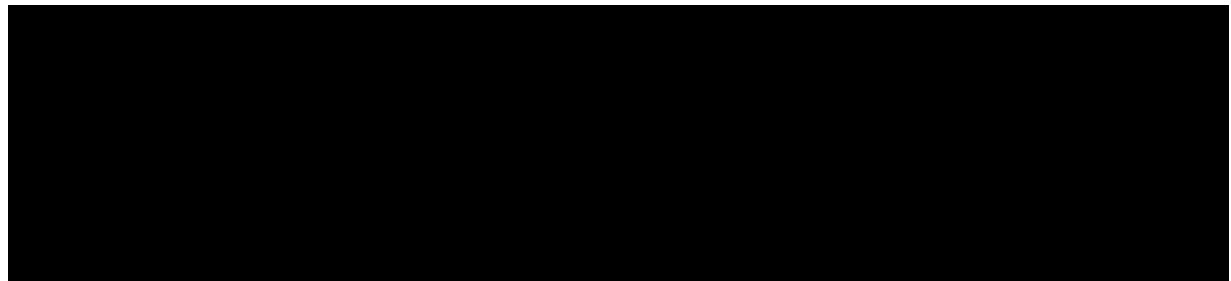
Coventry Methodists Merge with Bolton



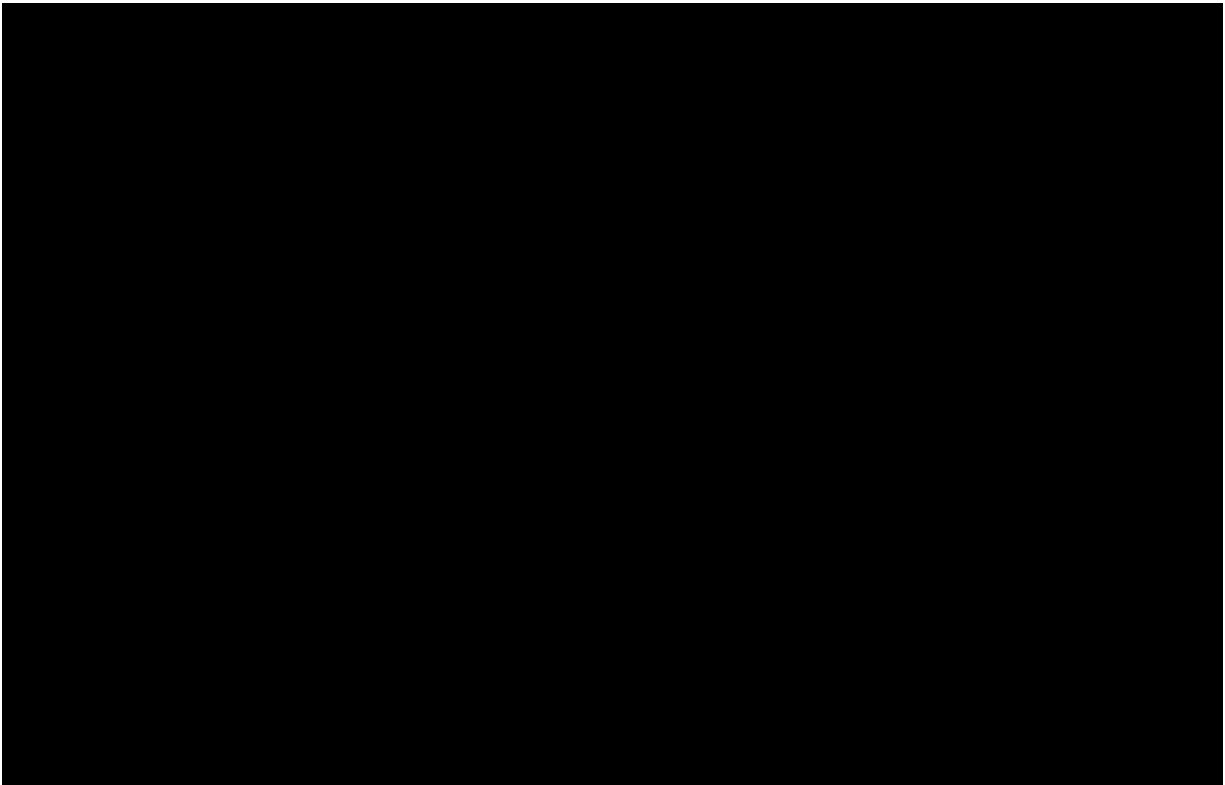
The Salvation Army began acquiring lakeside property in 1929 by purchasing the former Theron Dunham property adjacent to the Nathan Hale Cemetery. This began a fifty year history of providing a recreational area for children. More land was purchased adjacent to the first in 1944 from Frank Spaulding. Adjacent to this site was privately owned lakeside property that held the original Methodist church. In the 1930's it was owned by actor and dance teacher T. Clyde Overholtz who ran the Sunset Inn (later the Blue Lantern Inn) until about 1940. Following that the area was owned by several families for summer homes and small cottages. Between 1958 and 1970 these families (Helen Kiefer, Hill, Heustis, Larosa, E. Lynn & Helen Beerwort) sold their property to the Salvation Army who expanded their camp.

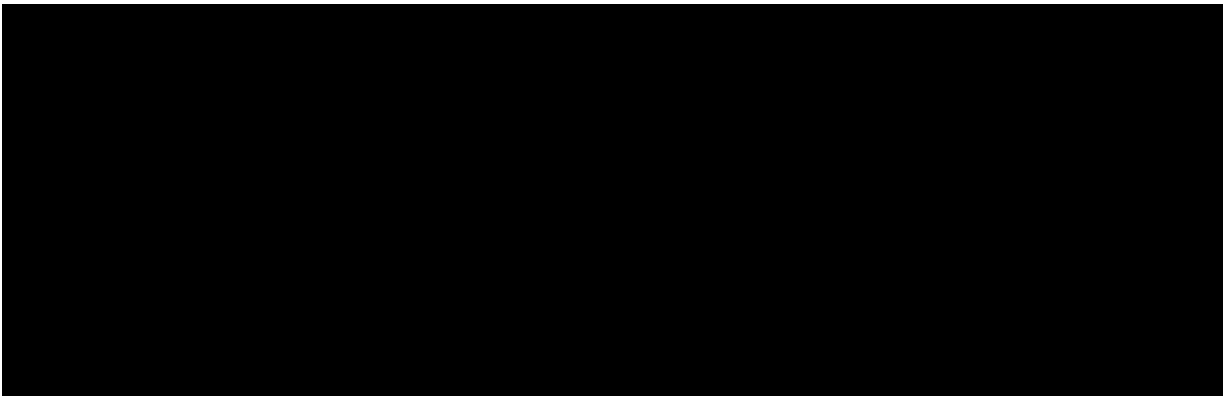


The Salvation Army Camp



The Salvation Army Camp



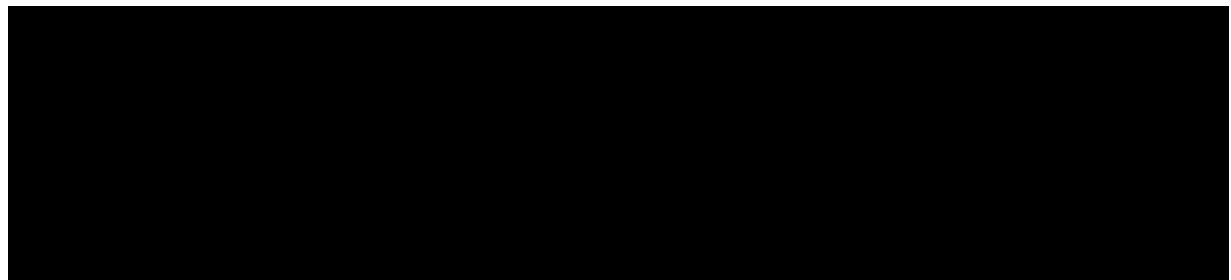


Swimmers at the Salvation Army Camp

Nelson (Chic) Bearce came to Coventry from Maine as a young man in 1946. He purchased the property where the town garage now stands on Bradbury Lane from Arthur Wood who had been making eye glass lenses there for a time. There was a small building and an outdoor furnace for making the glass. Mr. Bearce opened a machine shop that had a turbine water wheel for power with shafting and belts. He later added 110 volt and 220 volt service. He built the building that now houses the public works department and successfully expanded his shop to do welding, sheet metal and steel erection. The business was sold in 1976-77, and then the building was sold to the town in 1979.

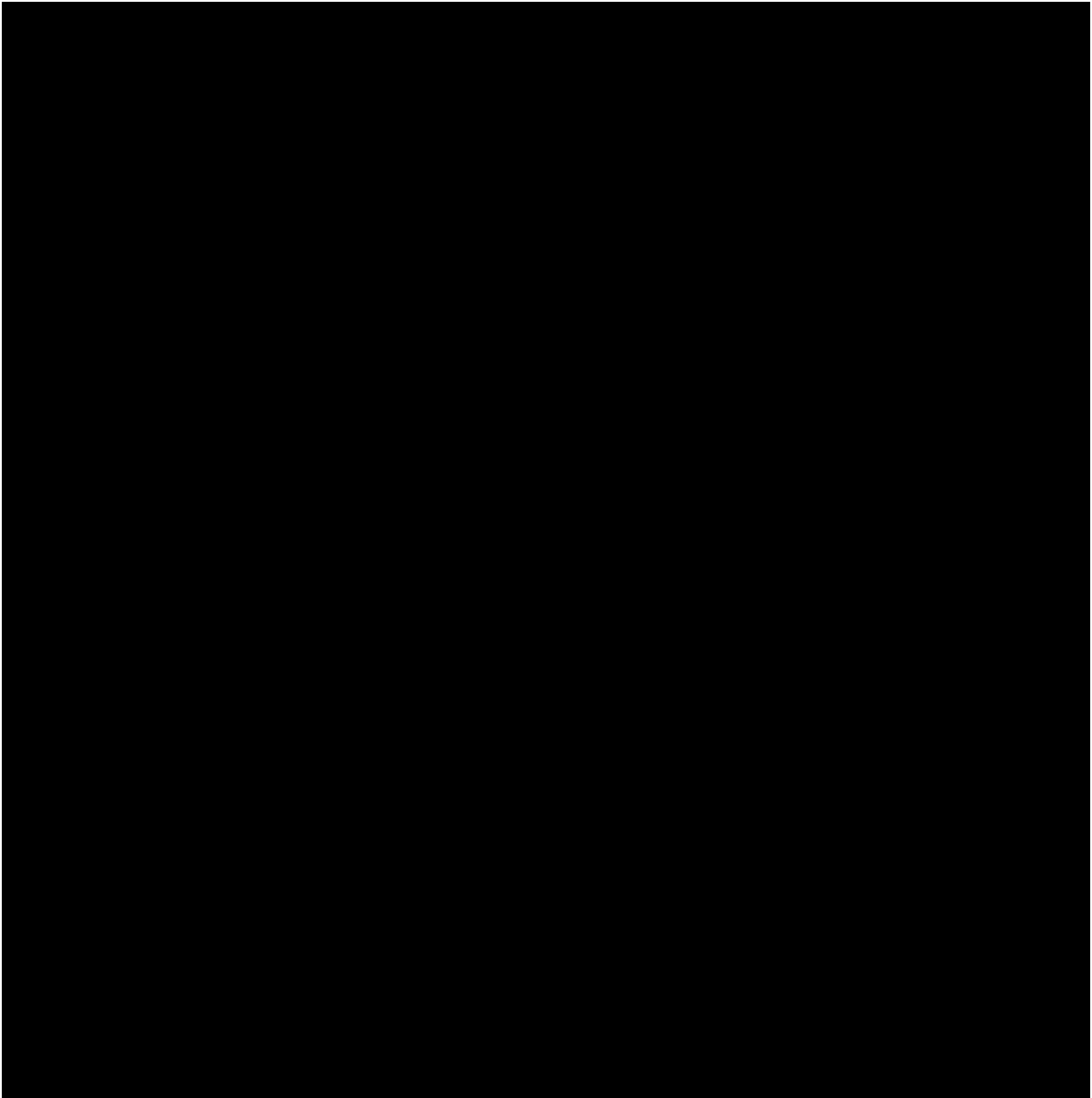


Nelson Bearce



Nelson Bearce





Mr. Bearce purchased the National Silk Company building on Mason Street (rear) in 1961 which had been office and storage space. He rented the building for various uses including a billiard room, toy car race track, fiberglass molding shop, the Lutheran Church, and a carpenter shop. He sold the building in 1979 to Ted Szeluga who started the Clock & Whale factory there. Mr. Bearce donated a one-acre tract of land on the west side of Mason Street to the town in 2002. This site held the famous Mason

Cartridge factory and others. For a time, folks used to find remnants of the old products including bullet casings, bullet shipping containers and eye glass lenses. The site is dedicated to open space, and a sign sits there now with historical information.

In 1936 there was a move to consolidate the many one-room schools in town. WPA funds were offered, but tradition has it that the town rejected the funds because they considered it “Roosevelt’s money”.

J. Leroy Schweyer, in 1927, saw the need for expanded schools in Coventry. He purchased twenty-odd acres on Cross Street and deeded it to the town for "future school use." The site was used to build the George Hersey Robertson school, which was completed on July 29, 1949 by the Peaslee Company (builders) and S.W. Haynes & Assoc (architects). (Six years later, the Coventry Grammar School was built.) Mr. Robertson gave his time to school affairs as a school board member from 1918 to 1945 and from 1928 as Chairman of the Board. He was related to the early mill owner Elijah Robertson.

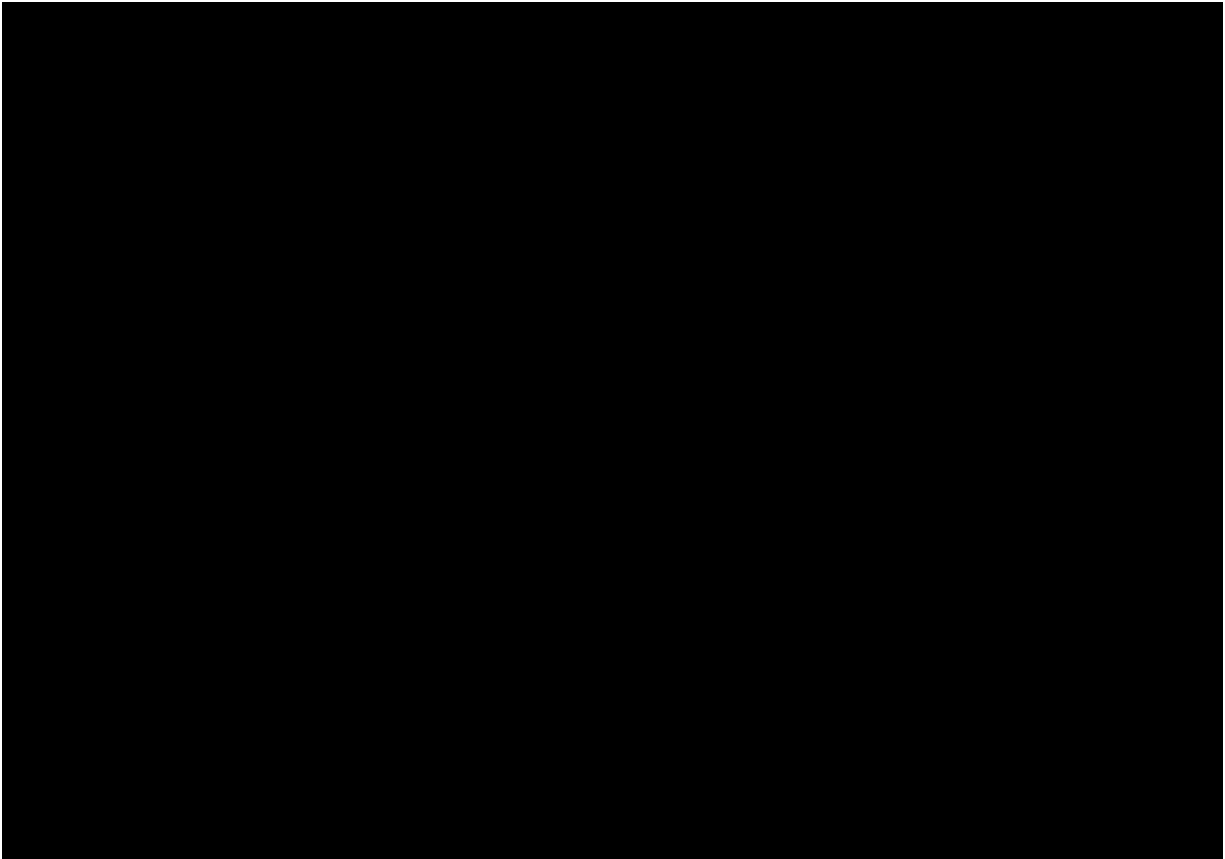


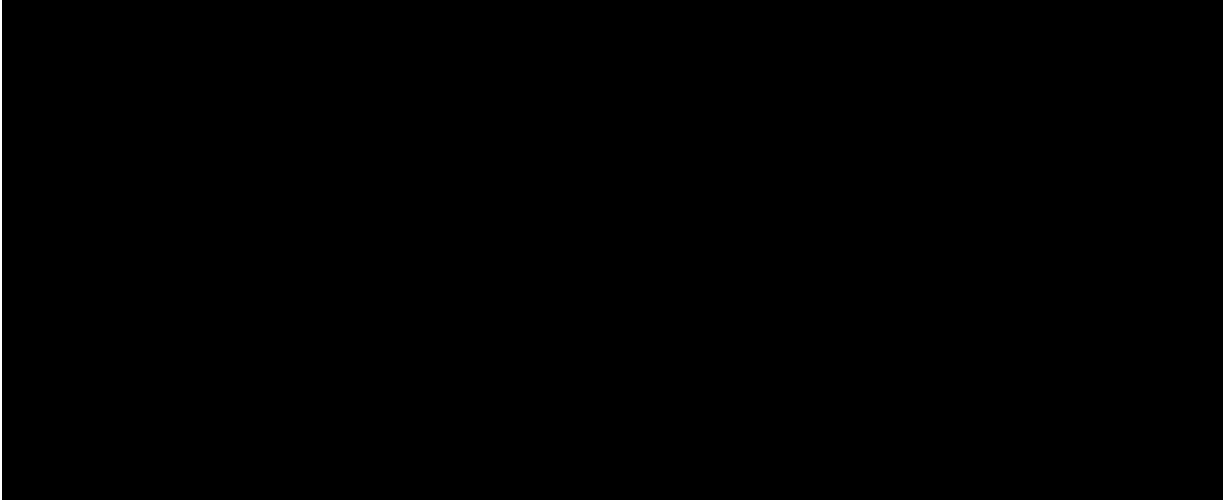
The George H. Robertson School



The George H. Robertson School





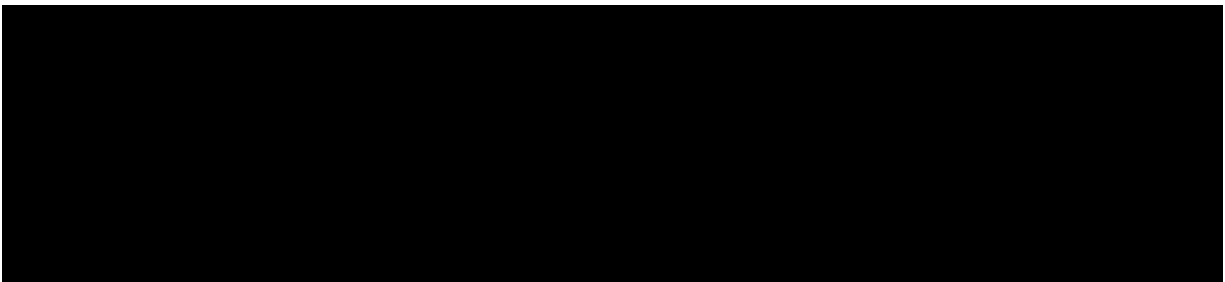


The George H. Robertson School

This road was one of the early pathways in Coventry. It was part of the route from the Coventry Church near the green to the Mansfield Church on the corner of today's Brown's Road and Storrs Road. It was common for early roads to be laid out between churches. The location of this road was most likely dictated by the fact that it was the easiest place to ford the Willimantic River. In the 1700's it was probably referred to as "the road to Mansfield", and later in the 1800's called Coventry Road and then Main Street. It was also the main thoroughfare to Willimantic (via today's Route 32) for a long time. This area was very active from the 1830's to the 1950's with the large mills on the south side, a mill store and post office on the north side, several fine homes generally built by mill owners, a coal and grain dealer near the station, the railway express agent, and even a small ice railroad on the southwest side of the pond.



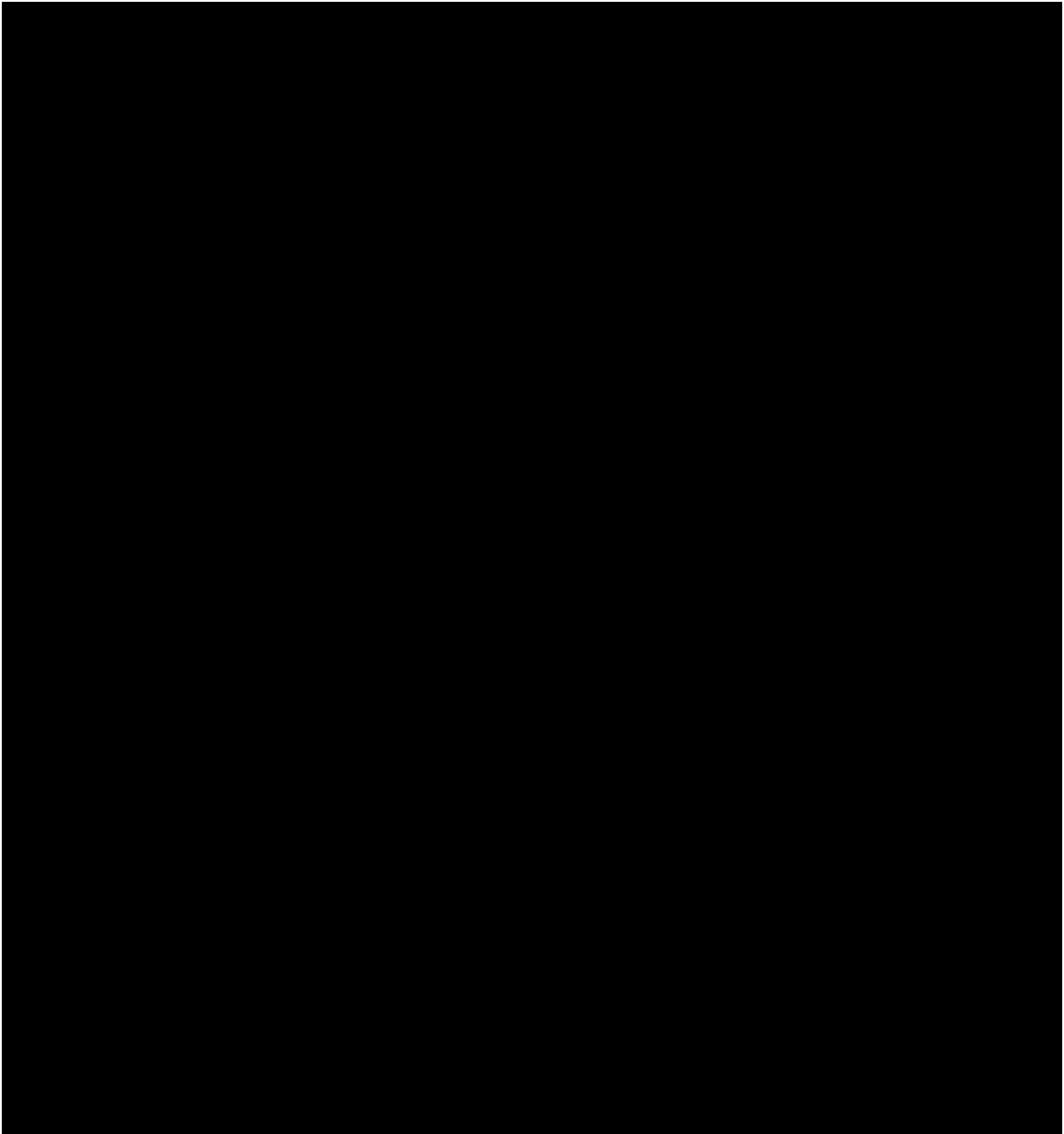
Depot Road



Depot Road



302



In 1926 when Route 6 was named through Coventry, it followed Depot Road. The State took over full responsibility for Main Street and this road in 1934. It was then also called Coventry Road. In the late 1930's or early 1940's when Route 31 (South) was named, it followed Main Street directly to Route 32 in Mansfield. Depot Road was then named Route 31A. Finally in 1948, the state "abandoned" this road and it was taken over by the town as Depot Road.

The railroad express was the preferred method of shipping any large items such as those from the Sears catalog. Refrigerators, farm implements, and the like were shipped by rail to the depot for local pick-up.

- Brigham's Tavern- 12 Boston Turnpike
- Capron-Phillips House- 1129 Main Street
- Captain Nathan Hale Monument- 120

Lake Street

- Coventry Glass Factory District- US

Route 44 and North River Road

- Elias Sprague House- 2187 South Street
- Loomis-Pomeroy House- 1747 Boston

Turnpike

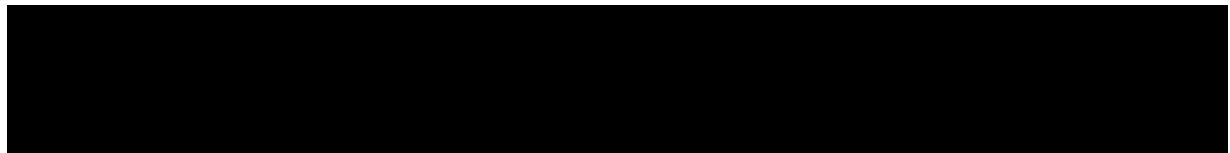
- Nathan Hale Homestead- 229 South

Street

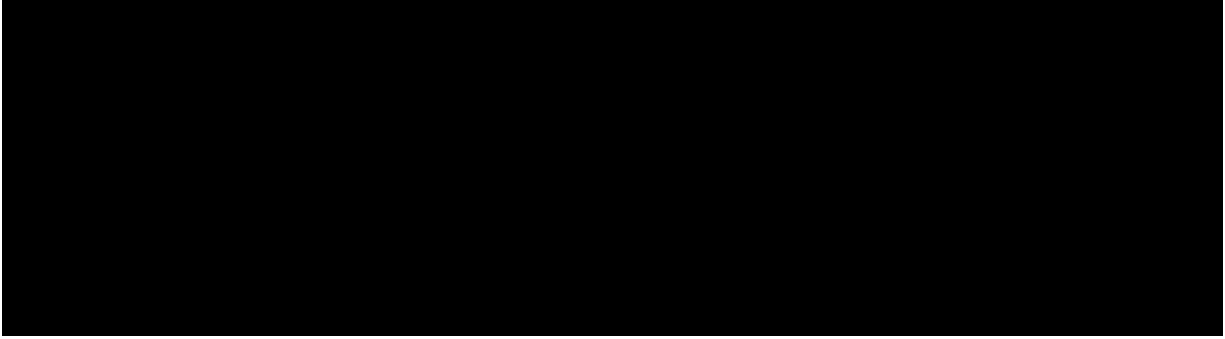
- Parker-Hutchinson Farm- Parker Bridge

Road

- South Coventry District- Main Street and adjacent streets from Lake Street to Armstrong Road, and Lake Street from Main Street to High Street (16)



National Register of Historic Places- Coventry



National Register of Historic Places- Coventry





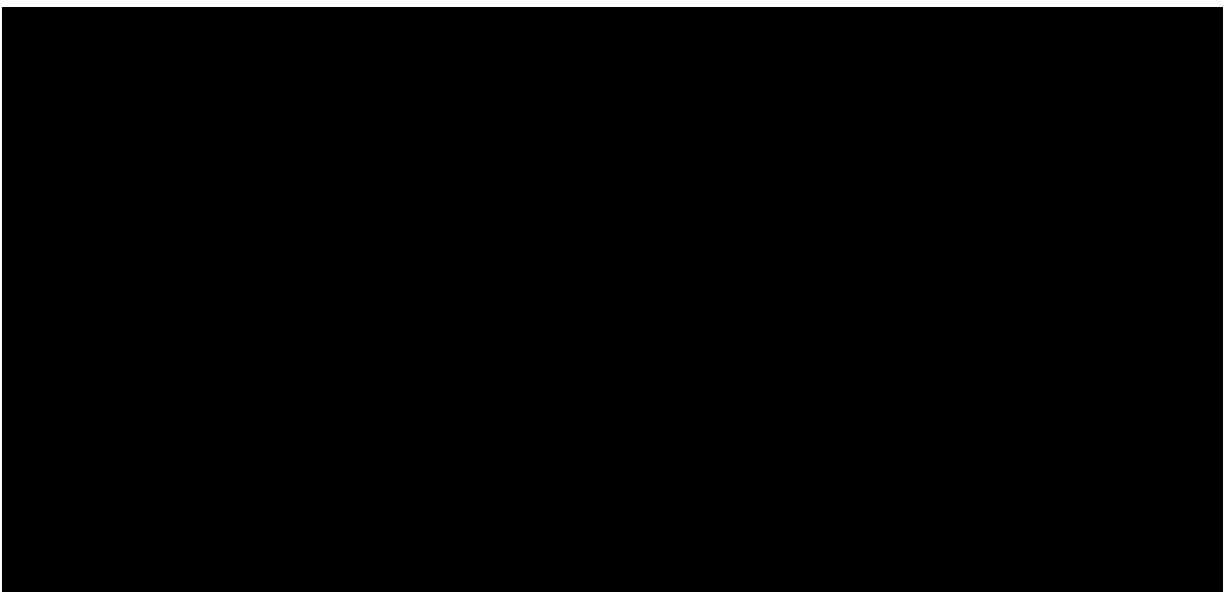
Chapter 6

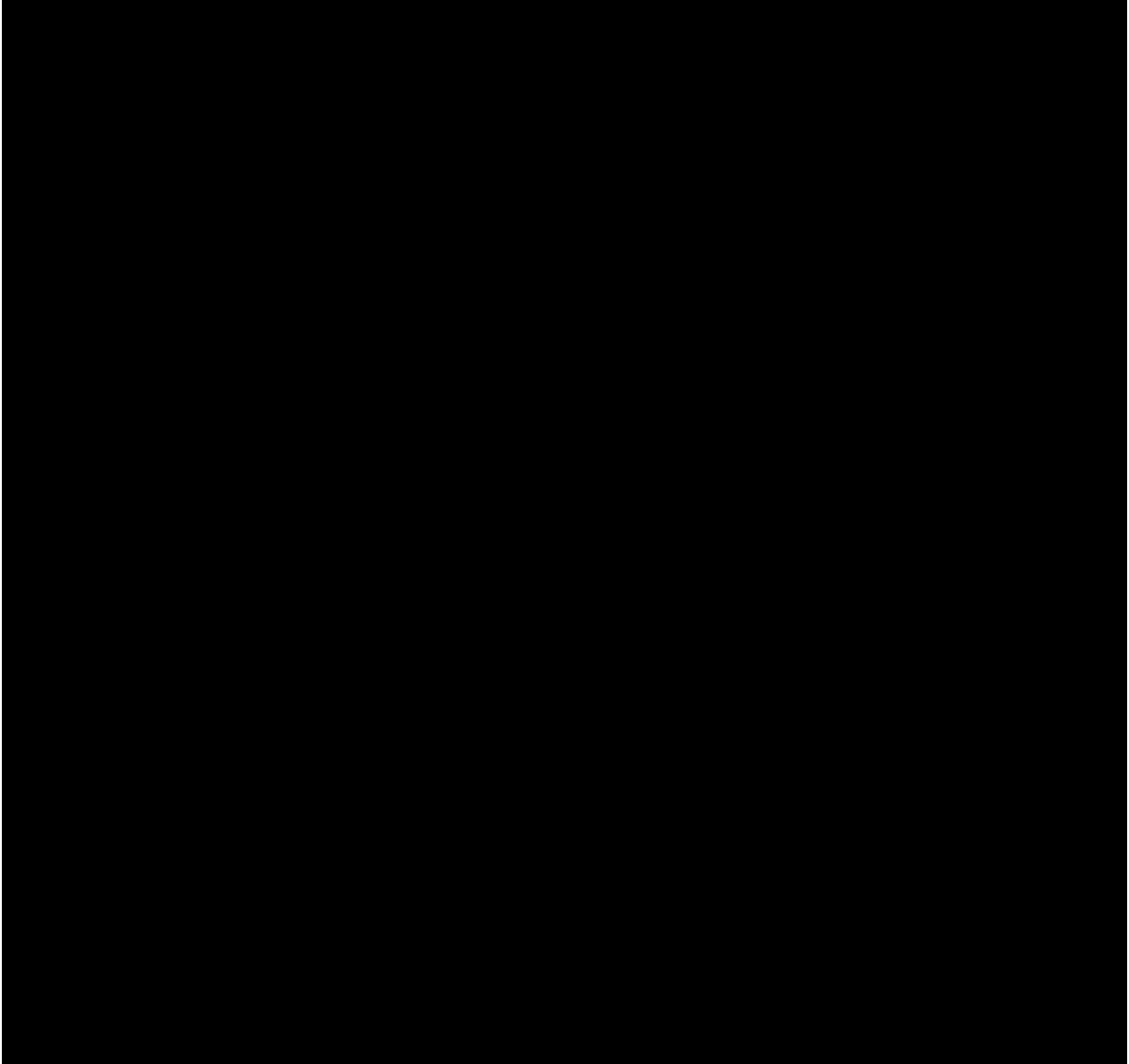
The Recent Past



Chapter 6

The Recent Past





Coventry has seen rather dramatic changes in the past 50 years. All the mills save one were closed by the late 1960's, and the loss of local employment has not been effectively recovered since then. As happened in many small rural towns, residential housing has eaten up farmland and other open spaces. As the small rural towns became more "bedroom" communities, local retail decreased with the emergence of two/three car families, large malls, and jobs requiring out of town commuting. Coventry faced challenges to its character from DEVCO, the Route 6 "expressway", the build- out of residential homes, and occasional political disagreements. The town responded with changes to its zoning regulations in the late

1970's and the 1990's and again in 2006 to more carefully regulate housing, open space, subdivisions, commercial space, farms, and the Village with the objective of balancing growth with the desire of most residents to maintain a rural character. A fair amount of municipal construction has taken place over the last few years including enlarged schools, new fire houses, a new police station, and several new parks.

Average Car: \$1,950

Gasoline: 29 cents/gal

House: \$17,500

Bread: 18 cents/loaf

Milk: 92 cents/gal

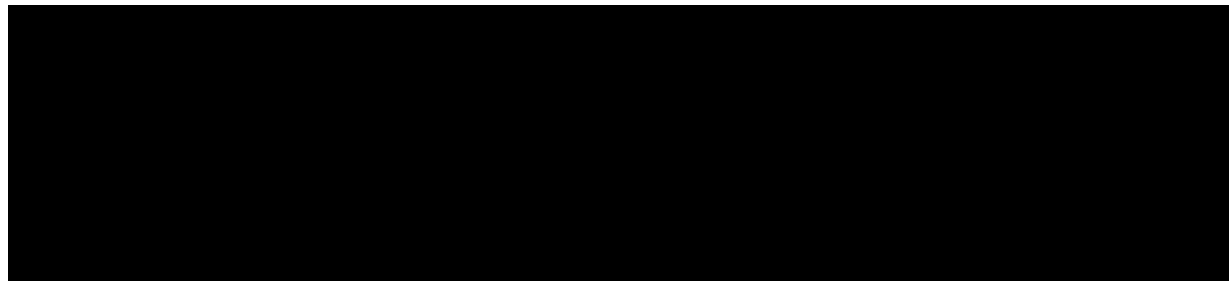
Postage Stamp: 3 cents

Stock Market: 488

Average Annual Salary: \$5,000 Minimum Wage: 75 cents per hour



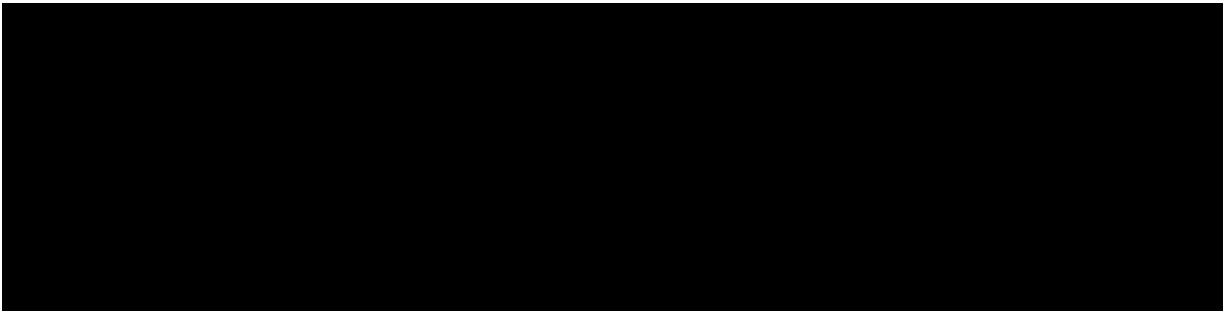
The “Cost of Living” in 1955



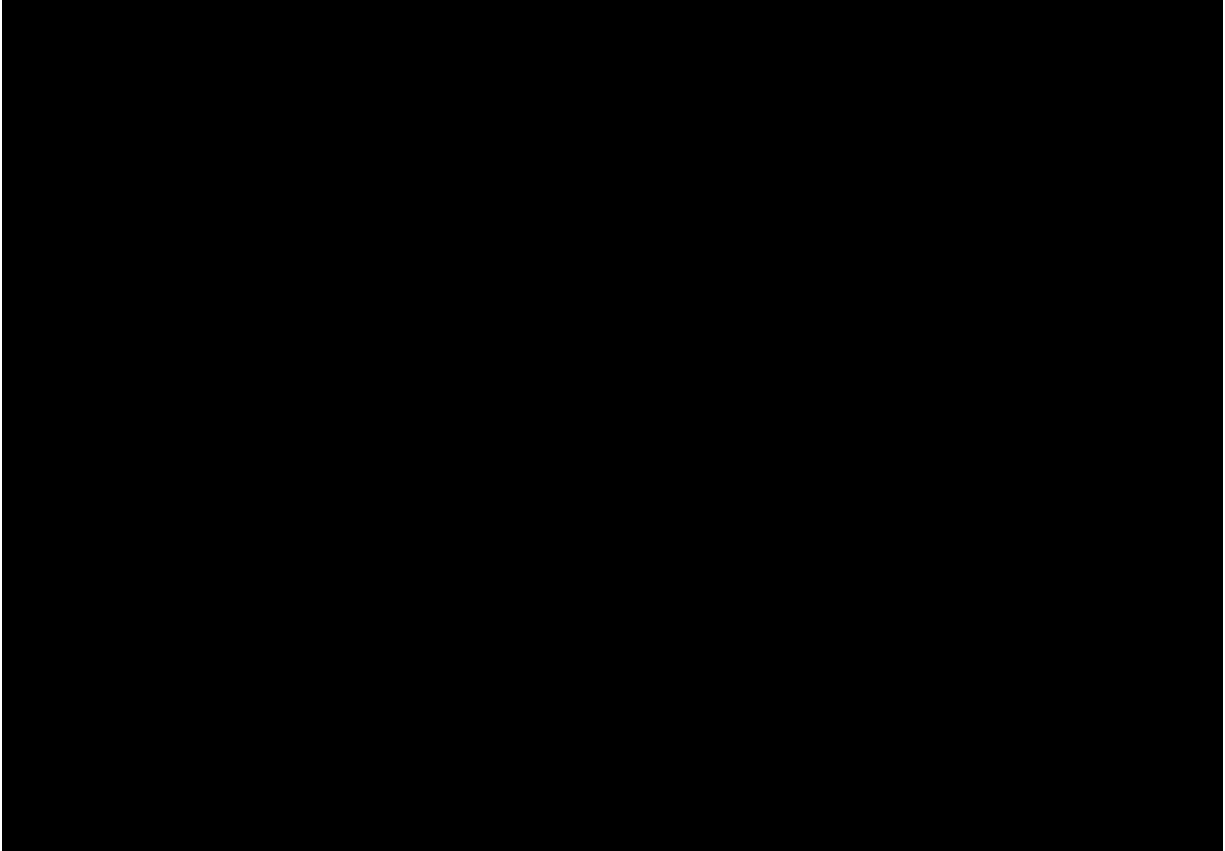
The “Cost of Living” in 1955



305



Bea's Country Kitchen

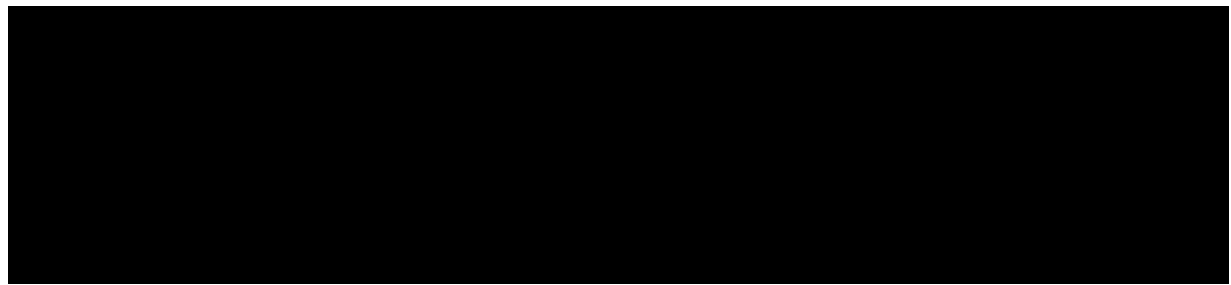


This building, on the corner of Main Street and Bradbury Lane, housed one of the earliest “grocery” stores in town. In the 1850’s it was owned by Enoch Hovey who sold grain and other items. It passed through a number of owners (E. Packer, Hammond & Sweet, W. Bradbury), and their wares included farm implements and foodstuffs. Dewitt Kingsbury operated a grocery store here from 1908 to the 1920’s. In the early 1940’s it was LeDoyt and Turner’s Universal Food Market, and later became a coffee shop. The Nathan Hale Soda Shop, run by a unique character named Clarence Crane, operated here in the 1970’s.

Following the fire that destroyed the Sterling Fibreboard factory on Depot Road in the 1950's, a brick shell and chimney remained. A story is told that a few men were hired to demolish the building for safety reasons. No heavy equipment or fancy explosives were used. After chipping away some of the brick structure, a few well placed blows with a sledge hammer brought the walls and chimney down exactly where planned.

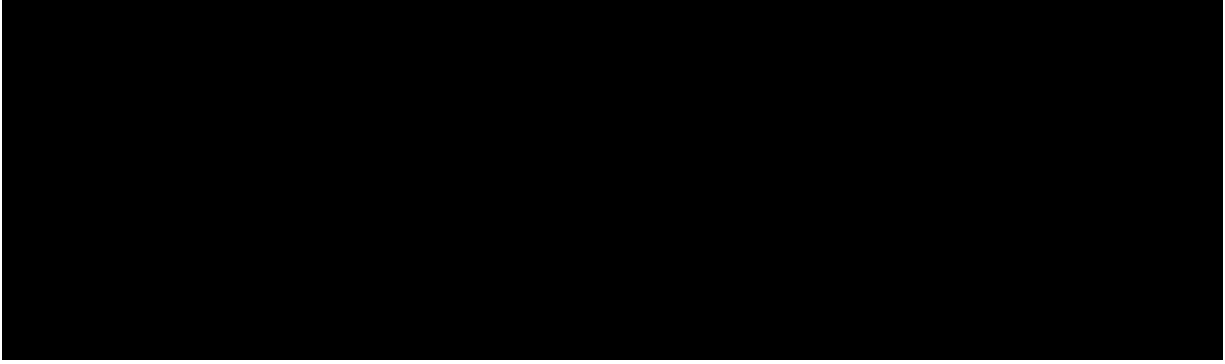


Sterling Fibreboard Factory Fire

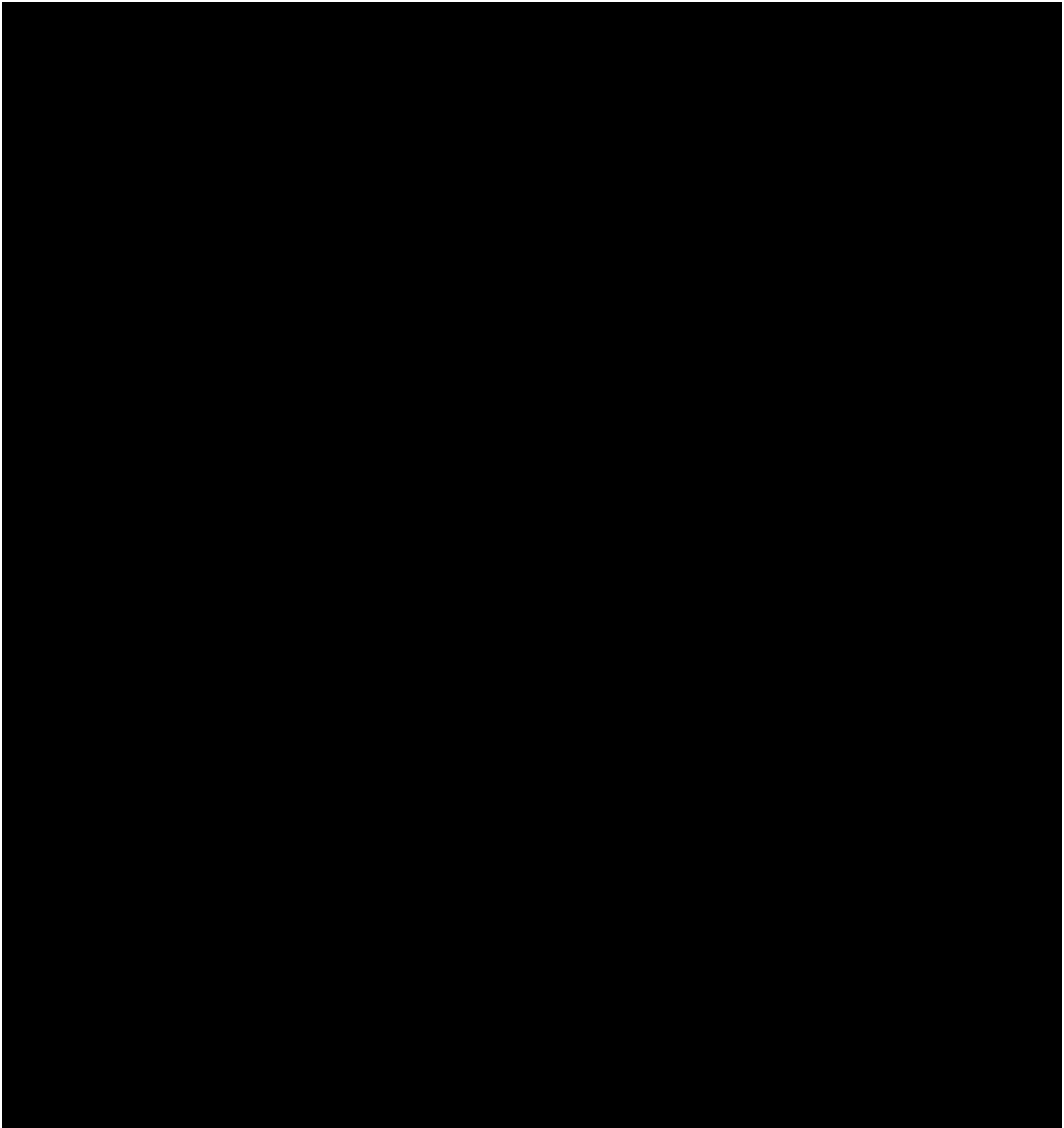


Sterling Fibreboard Factory Fire





The 1955 Hurricane



The late August hurricane of 1955 caused a fair amount of damage in town mostly from flooding. The Eagleville dam collapsed at 2:13 PM on August 19th. The bridge on Depot Road was washed away by the flood waters. Two families were evacuated from their damaged Quonset huts in the nearby meadow, and the railroad tracks were twisted “like licorice candy” but repairs began within two days of the flooding. There was a landslide in Bolton blocking the road to Hartford for a short time. A motorist was

injured after driving into a deep washout on Merrow Road. The bridge on Route 31 over the Willimantic River was partially washed out but was reopened within four days. Albert and Louis Harvey's Old Mill Furniture shop on Mason Street was partially flooded causing a few thousand dollars in damage. The flooding occurred partially from the Mill brook and partially from runoff from the adjacent hills. The town allocated more than \$100,000 for repairs and anticipated a refund from the federal government. The ham radio station, WIYUL, on Cross Street was manned continuously by Fred Fish, Albert Booth and Jesse Brainard. It acted as central headquarters for the area's ingoing and outgoing messages.

Retail trade in town followed the social and economic trends of the region. Within a few years following the establishment of Coventry, at least two “retail” stores were opened. One was on Wicket Hill and another on South Street. Since local farmers produced nearly all the tools and goods needed to exist, these shops carried some necessities imported from England as well as some niceties such as chinaware. Trade had developed between the West Indies and Norwich where livestock and farm goods from here were traded for rum and molasses. Grist and cider mills sprung up, the occasional blacksmith appeared, and several taverns were established on the main roads. In the late 1700’s there was also a tannery, an iron forge, a few saw mills and many cider mills, all serving the local population. An 1819 survey revealed seven “mercantile” stores in Coventry.

With the beginnings of industry and then the construction of the railroads, things changed rapidly. Families that were farm based began to work in the mills, and foreign immigration brought folks to town that needed more than just the basics of life. General stores that sold a myriad of items as well as foodstuffs sprang up to serve the mill worker living in rented spaces or mill tenements. Patent medicines emerged in

Guido's Market- 1973

Today, Coventry has a relatively small number of retail establishments (about seventy in early 2006), and has one of the lowest percentages of commercial property in the state. Several town commissions and community-based organizations believe Coventry needs and deserves a broader retail base. Our assets include a few dairy, herb and horse farms, and agri- business is a prime focus. The opportunity exists for unique retail shops and services and possibly some fine restaurants to supplement the food service business and retail shops in place now.

Coventry Village, which held sixteen mills in the past, has five old mill buildings in various conditions. Three are occupied by small rental businesses or used for storage. One is empty and another is just a shell of its former existence. They all lie on the Mill Brook and face challenges to their development due to designated flood plain issues even though the Mill Brook is a regulated waterway, controlled by a gate at its beginning on Lake Wangumbaug. They all present unique development opportunities as the buildings must be totally re- conditioned. One advantage is that they all lie on town water and sewer lines and can take advantage of this infrastructure.

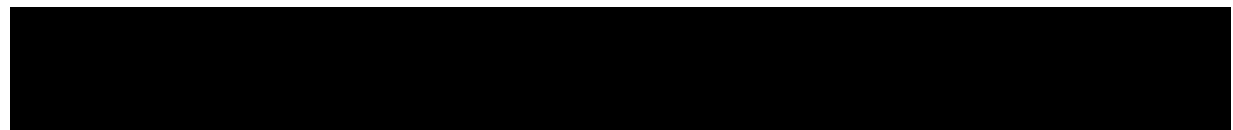
The Sebert Building ca 1955

The old Kenyon Mill on Armstrong Road is in the process of adaptive re-use, and the town received grant money to stabilize the building and provide for a complete environmental clean-up to DEP standards, both of which have been completed. The partial remains of a building used by the Tracy Shoddy Mill in the early part of the last century enjoys a central location near the Mill Brook Park and has the potential to be developed into a small incubator space, a retail store or possibly an artists collective. Two other mill buildings on Mason Street are in private hands for the moment and further development will depend on the owners' wishes.

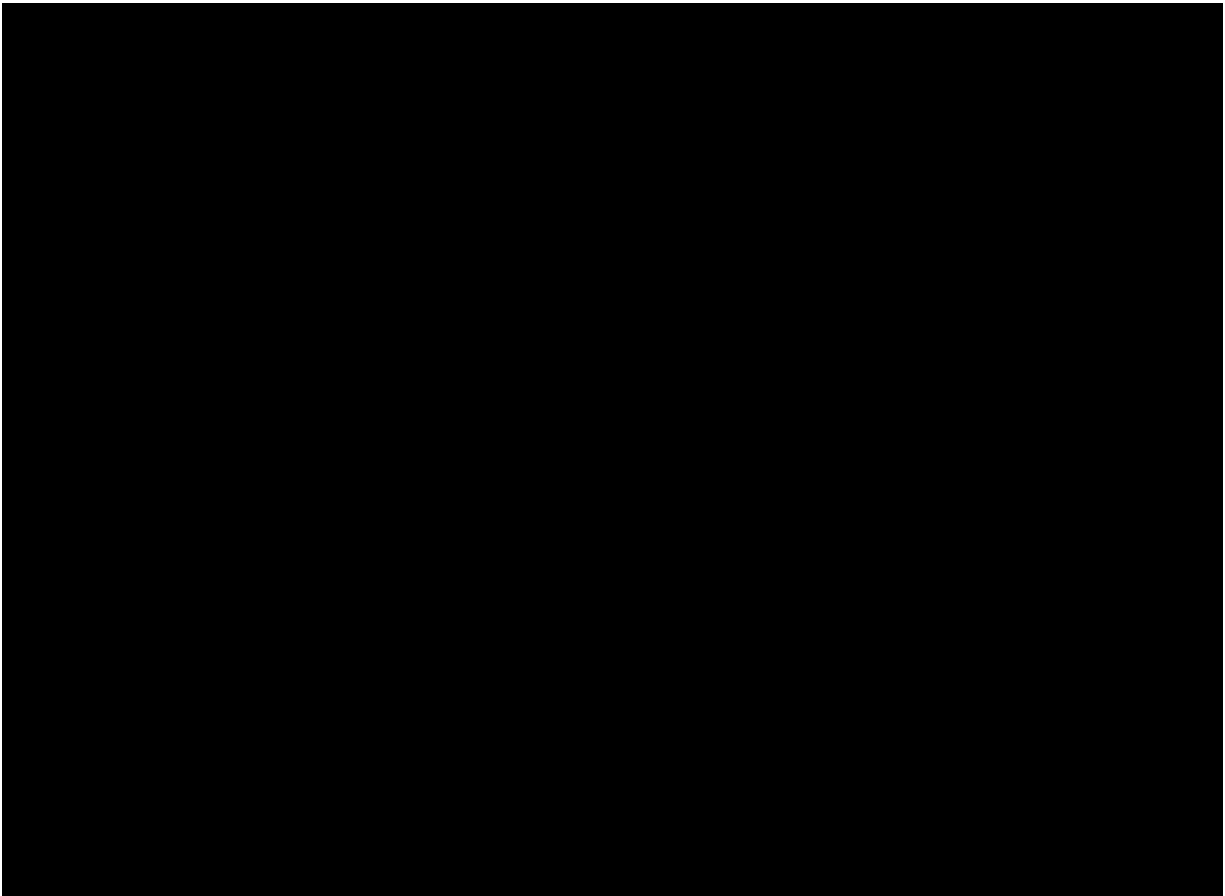
The 1959 town grand list totaled 12.1 million dollars with 3.6% being commercial assessments. The grand list has grown nearly seventy times to today with commercial assessments at two to three percent of the total.



Retail Commerce Over the Years

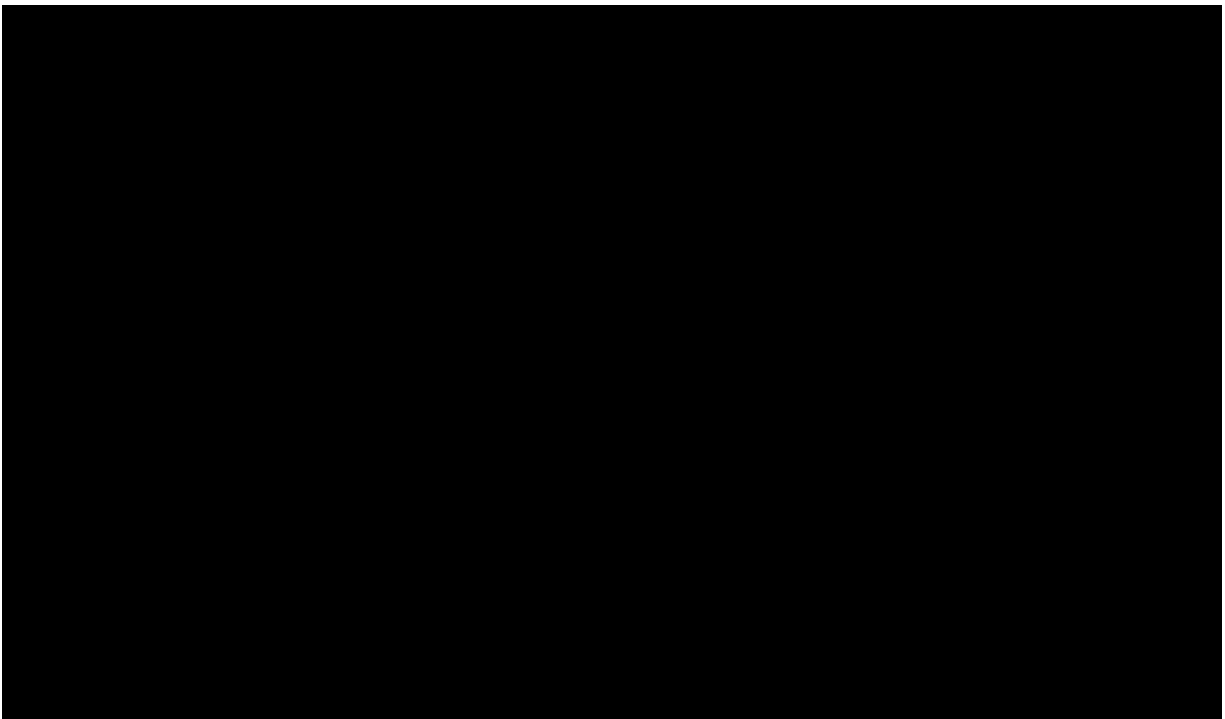


Retail Commerce Over the Years



The automobile gave rise to the gas station and auto service shops. Coventry had eight or nine by the early 1950's. Restaurants and luncheonettes appeared as people gained more wealth and mobility. With the closing of the last big mill in 1972 (National Silk), employment in Coventry began a sharp decline. Folks who moved into town usually worked out of town and the retail trade declined rapidly as people shopped

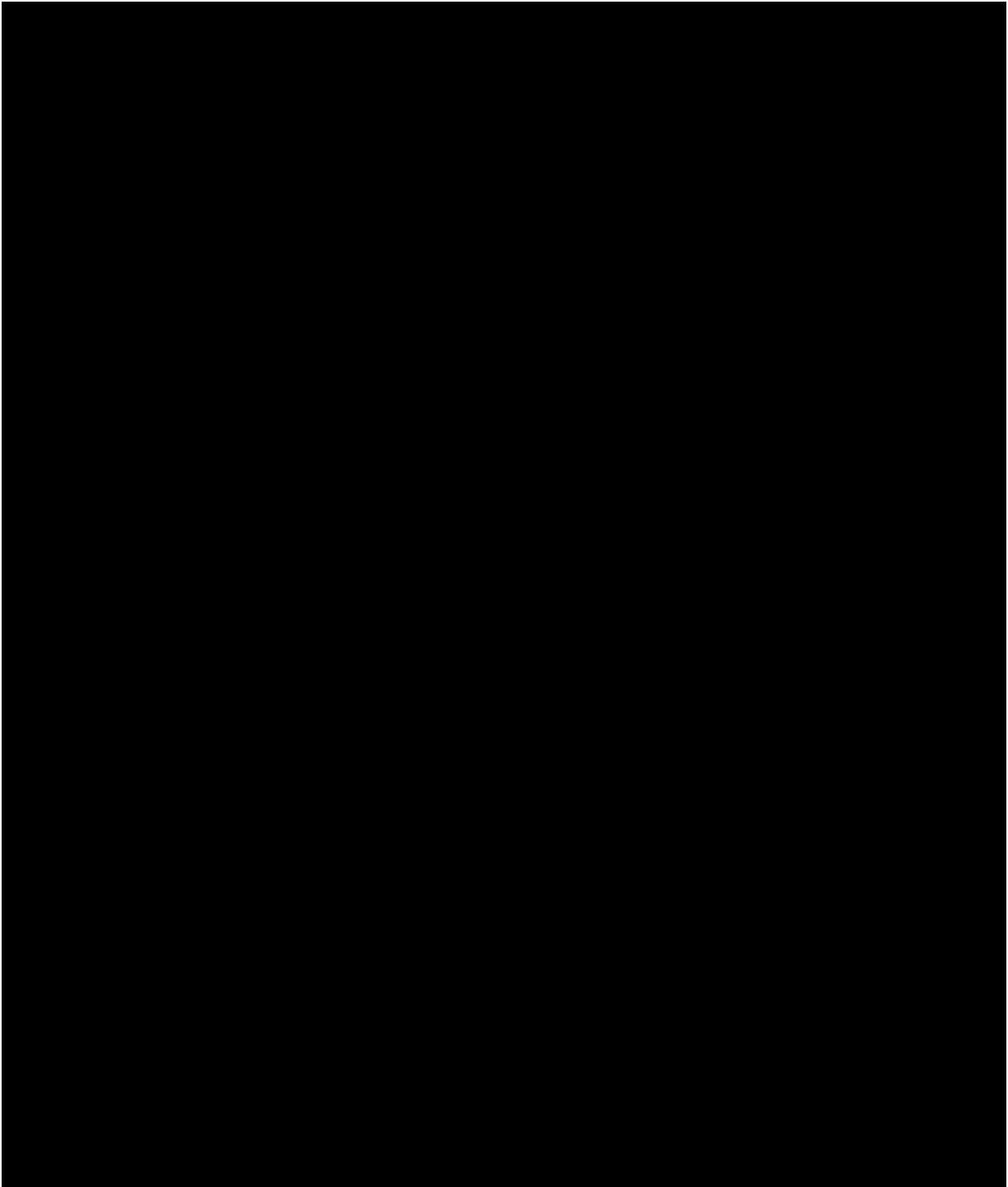
near their work. The malls began to appear in the suburban areas just outside of the cities. There was a surge of craft shops and antiques shops in the 1970's and 1980's, but they too fell by the wayside as Coventry became more of a bedroom community.

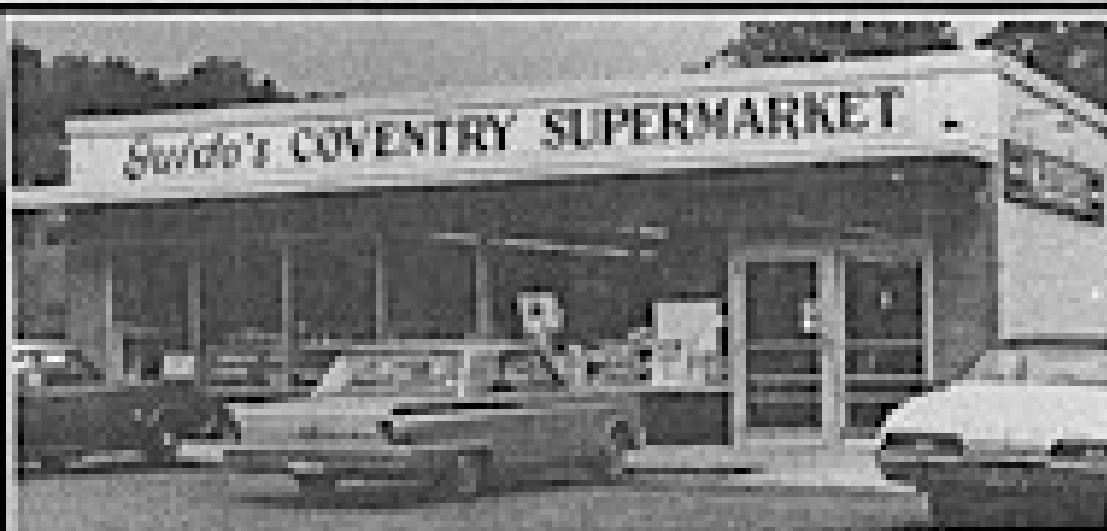


the late 1800's when the federal patent system recognized medicines as patentable which created the confectionery and pharmacy. As folks began to have more free time away from the home or the farm, shops that served prepared foods candy and toys came about. The railroad served as an easier way to bring in bulk goods such as coal and grain, but also retail products for the populace. By the late 1800's there were paint and carpenter shops, a barber, confectioner and apothecary, general stores and blacksmith, a grain and coal store, carriage shops, and the beginnings of an ice cream shop and a grocery store. Most were located in the Village and a few on the Boston Turnpike.



308





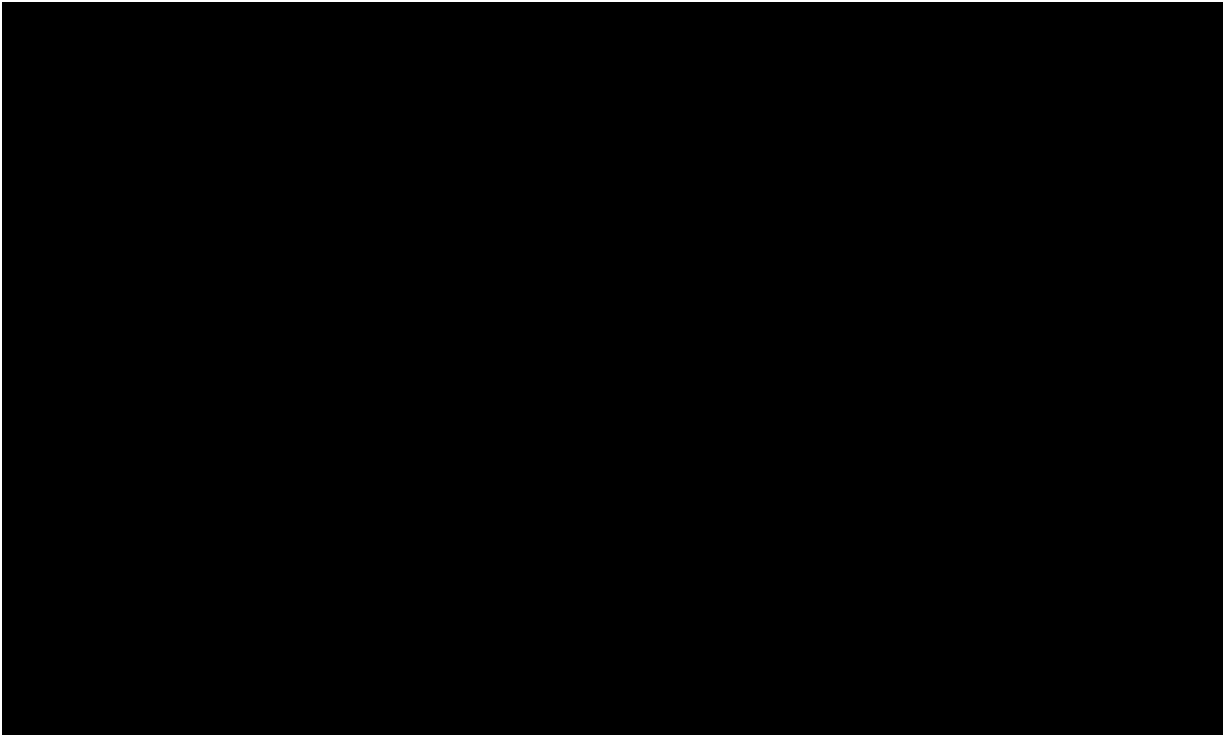
THINK MEATS

Go

Guido's

COVENTRY SUPERMARKET
Rte. 31, MAIN ST.
COVENTRY

MOST TALKED ABOUT MEATS
IN OUR FINE TOWN





We begin our walkabout at the town green on a bright day in early summer. The Salvation Army Camp on the lake is coming alive with children preparing for swimming lessons and beginning some craft classes. We wave to Dr. Bowen as he leaves his house to go to work. We proceed down Cross Street past the old Dimock estate, much of which has been sold to build small homes. The Bissels own the Dimock house and have a real estate office and several rental apartments now occupied by college students. At the end of the street is the home of Mrs. J.L. Schweyer. It has a fireplace in every room and original pine planking throughout. Mr. Schweyer owns the thriving National Silk Company in the Village.

Turning right down South Street, we pass the Coventry Superette and then Haddad's Service station. South Street is bustling with all the lake colony homes fully built out. Further along is the old Babcock/Prince house, then the spot where Hank Keene's house stood on the corner of Judd Road, then, near the entrance to Gerald Park, the Fireside Restaurant started by the Hinkles in the '30's and now run by Frank and Ellen Bousola who have just been denied, by the ZBA, a request to enlarge the building. After another mile, we see the Hale Homestead which has been operating as a museum by the Antiquarian and Landmark Society for about fifteen years now.

Just a few steps further is the Strong- Porter Farm. The Coventry Historical Society is preparing to refurbish the farm and make it the headquarters for the organization. Crossing the Skungamaug River at the old Wright's mill now owned by the McLeods, we hear the sound of the large water wheel which is producing electricity for the family. As we approach Swamp Road, we can hear the sound of more children enjoying their camp experience at the Almada Lodge Times Farm Camp just a little south along the old Times Farm Road. This camp has been serving underprivileged children for nearly 50 years.

We turn north on Swamp Road past the Miller farm and then on Brewster Street to the Boston Turnpike. A lot of housing development has occurred over the past ten to fifteen years with the Northfields and Twin Hills developments adding dozens of new homes.

To the left we can just see the Allen Food Market at Giglio's Plaza. Proceeding east on the turnpike, we pass Toothaker's Esso station, then down the hill to the old Pomeroy Tavern and stagecoach stop built in 1801 and now owned by the Kellers, then the Loomis and Haven farms just as we approach the corner of the old Windham turnpike. We wonder what will become of the Haven farm, as it is partially a swamp now. (Meadowbrook Plaza will be built here in 1971.) Off to the right we see the North Coventry Fire Station and Vinton's store and Gulf station.

Turning north along Grant Hill Road, we pass the Storrs farm, the old Francis West farm and the Christensen farm at the top of the hill. Now to the east again along Broadway and several large farms with little modern development. We pass the Clover Mill Farm now owned by the Schram's which had been a favorite spot of the school children in the 1930's. Down the hill and across the Skungamaug River reveals the Brick School House. Just to the northeast is the large Coventry Hills housing development. Also we hear that the Motycka's are thinking about a nine-hole golf course on the north side of Folly Lane. Further east we pass the very old Isaac Minor farm, then down the hill towards the Willimantic River we hear more children playing in the brook that used to hold Levee's saw mill in the 1850's. The dam is partially intact and the clear water makes a cool spot to enjoy the summer days. Turning south on Brigham Tavern Road we see a few older homes and a very quiet neighborhood. We approach the Boston Turnpike and see the old Brigham then Dimock tavern/inn now owned by Signe Avitable.

Up the turnpike a ways we turn left on the old turnpike road (now Richmond Road), which also has quite a few newer homes. Now left on Sam Green Road past some older Heckler houses, past the Old Tolland Turnpike (a dirt road which used to be the main road from South Coventry to Tolland), we pass the Krasnickas farm which is mainly overgrown. Now at Main Street, we look west and see the old Russian Samovar teahouse that was run for years by Elizabeth Stephenova Matzelevich, but is now closed. We turn east along Main Street towards Waterfront Heights and the lake. At Daly road we see the Cove restaurant and Zollo's market. They have just purchased ten new chrome shopping carts for their customers use. Further

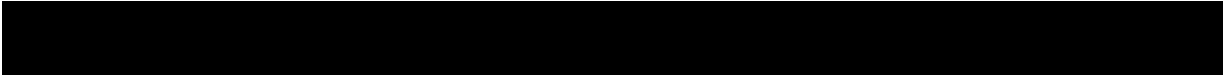
along is Moriarty's beach (which will be sold to the town in 1961), and across the street in the old Clark homestead is Dr. Louise Tobi's office. Further down at the bend we past the artist Walter Van Arsdale's house now occupied by the Messiers. Approaching Ripley Hill with the old Jesse Root house on the right, we see a bustle of activity on the old Skinner farm. The town is building the new junior-senior high school here.

We now go down Manning hill past the old Briggs place. The new strip mall building has just been built on White's Meadow and the Coventry Broadcaster and Goodin's Electronics store are leasing here. Next door is Tremblay's grocery store. The Lakeside Roller rink is visible to the north. Passing the Welles Agency in the old Boynton house and Uncle's gas station, we turn the corner and enter a thriving Village.

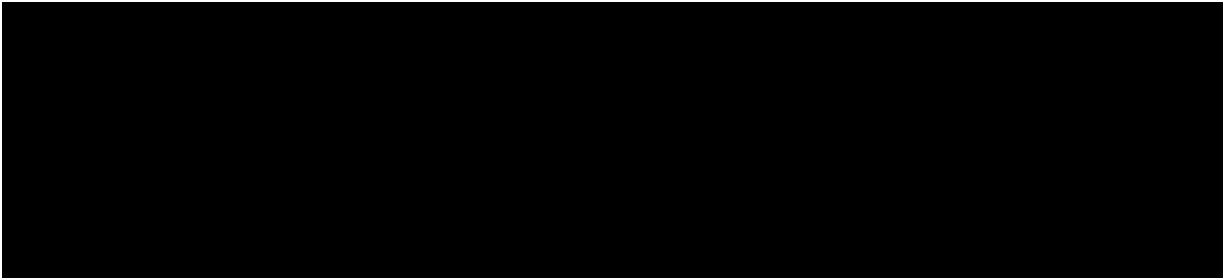
The T.H. Wood Company is still making their famous silk fishing line and next door, the South Coventry Firemen are cleaning their equipment by the brook. Across the street is Mama Rita's (Rita Bowers) restaurant, Helm's floor covering and the town hall. Next on the south side is the Bodreau building holding Clarence Crane's soda shop and Kuzdal's barber and dry cleaners. Next door is the Coventry Landromat, then the 1876 building, then Sanborn's service station. Across the street in the old Bidwell Hotel is Flaherty's tavern and package store. Further along is Burnham's Esso and the Congregational Church. Located in Sebert's building are the post office, Hill's Pharmacy, Williams Beauty Salon and Dr. Duboff's office. The post office is very busy with all the mail orders shipped to and from the Tioga Yarn shop just behind it on Mason Street. Next is Jim's hardware (Jim Ferrigno) and the old Washburn home with the beautiful, locally made wrought iron railings, now owned by the Haradon's. On the corner of Mason Street is the Nathan Hale Community Center in the old Methodist church, and the old Capron-Phillips house now used as a kindergarten and bookstore. Up Mason Street in the old Kingsbury Box Factory is Harvey's Old Mill and Used furniture store. Across Main Street we see Annie Wellwood at her Country Store. She is getting along in years but still gets around in her new '59 Ford. Near Bradbury Lane is Yeoman's coffee shop with Bearce's machine and sheet metal shop on the brook, and across the street is Smith's Mobil and Proulx's plumbing and appliances. Further down

is Szeluga's real estate office and behind them on Armstrong Road, the National Silk factory is still running two shifts.

Along lower Main Street, we pass the now quiet Depot Road. We hear that the Latimer's coal, grain and appliance complex is being foreclosed and may close soon. Then across the brook with the old factory pond on the left, we pass the Cummisk's, the Blue Bird Gardens florist, and the cemetery and turn south on Plains Road. Following Plains Road to Flanders Road, we see a few farms, some newer housing and the remnants of several poultry farms. We end our journey at the old Safford Bridge on the Hop River.

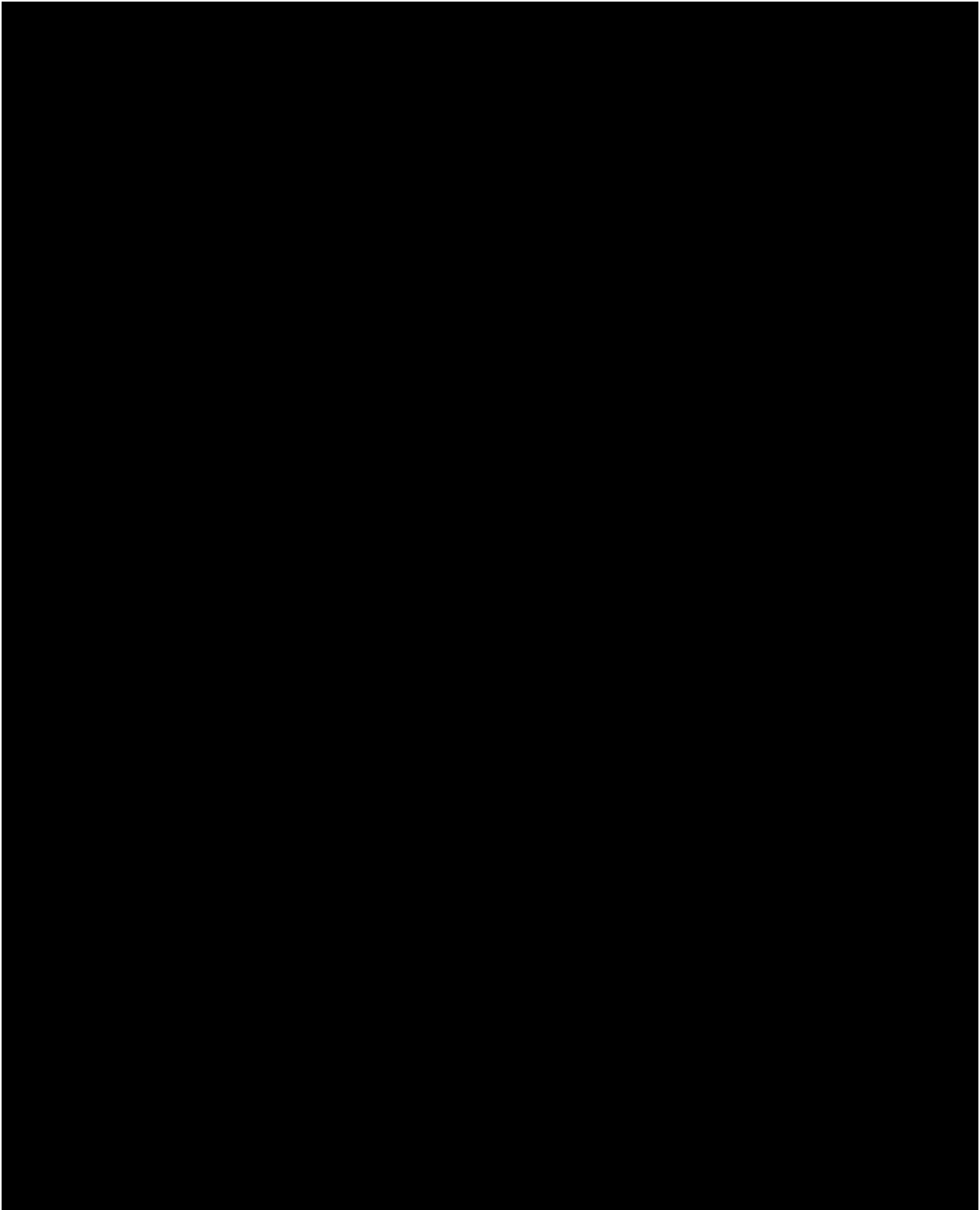


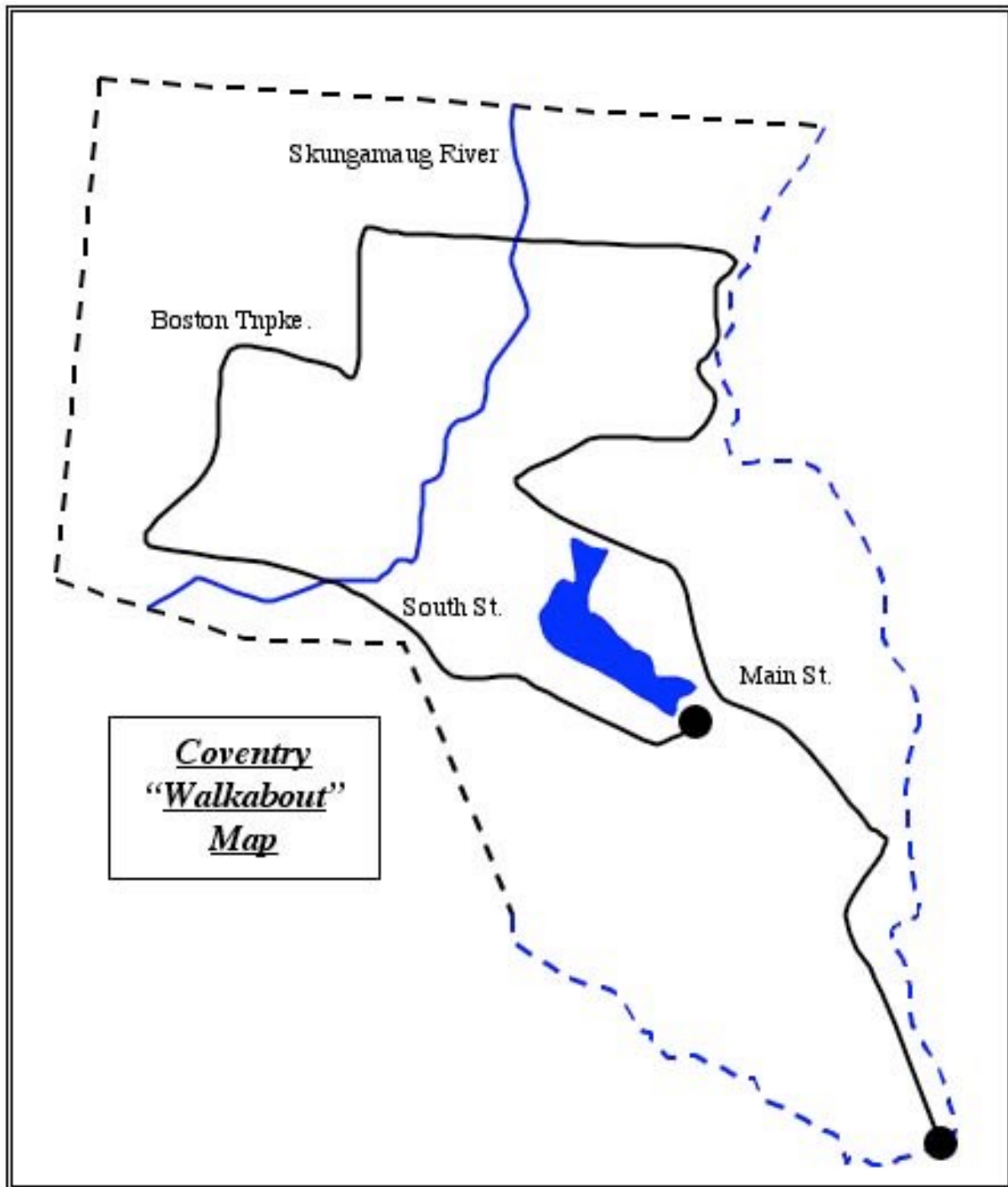
1960 Walkabout



1960 Walkabout









311



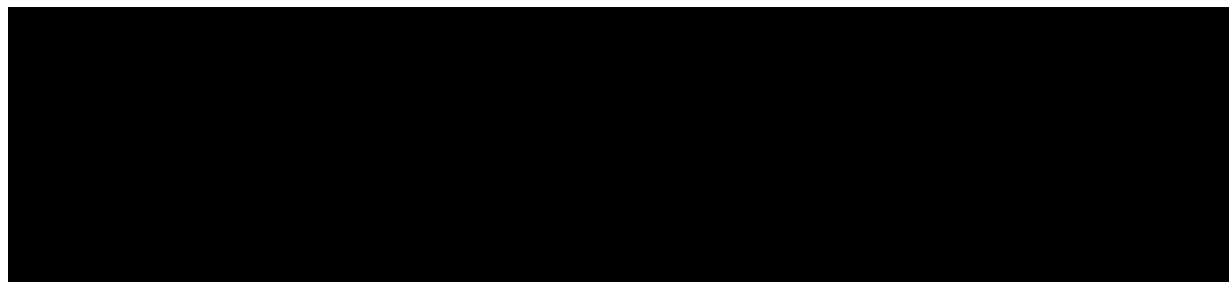
312

In 1960, there were four postal routes in town. Most rural patrons had been assigned a box number on one of the routes. Postmaster Herman F. LeDoyt stated that it is mandatory that each rural delivery box have the name of the resident clearly indicated on such.

The birth of Lutheranism occurred in 1961. It started with a group of thirty-four souls and grew in six months to 100. Rev. R.W. Heinz was their pastor. The church rented the Coventry Grammar school and in 1962 will start holding services in the Coventry Industrial Center on Mason Street through the courtesy of Nelson Bearce. (8)



The Lutheran Church



The Lutheran Church



5:30 5 Rin Tin Tin

12 Salty Brine's Shack

5:55 8 Clutch Cargo

6:00 5 Dateline Boston

8 Cannonball

6:25 3 Weather

6:30 3-10-12 News

5 Life of Riley

8 Sports

6:35 8-12 Sports

6:40 3 Sports

10-12 Weather

6:45 3-4-8-10-12 News

6:55 4-8 Weather

7:00 3 Dial 999

4 Death Valley Days

5 News

8 Lock Up

10 Johnny Midnight

12 Brave Stallion

7:15 5 Sports

7:25 5 Weather

7:30 3-12 Rawhide

4 People Are Funny

5 Mackensie's Raiders

8 Walt Disney

10 Hawaiian Eye

8:00 4 Troubleshooters

8:30 3-12 Hemingway Drama

4-10 TV Guide Award Show

5-8 Man From Blackhawk

9:00 5-8 77 Sunset Strip

9:30 4-10 Masquerade Party

10:00 3-12 Twilight Zone

4-10 Boxing

5-8 Detectives

10:30 3-12 Eyewitness to History

5-8 Black Saddle

10:45 4-10 Jackpot Bowling

11:00 3-4-5-10-12 News, Weather, Sports

11:15 3-4-8-10 Movie

5-12 Jack Paar

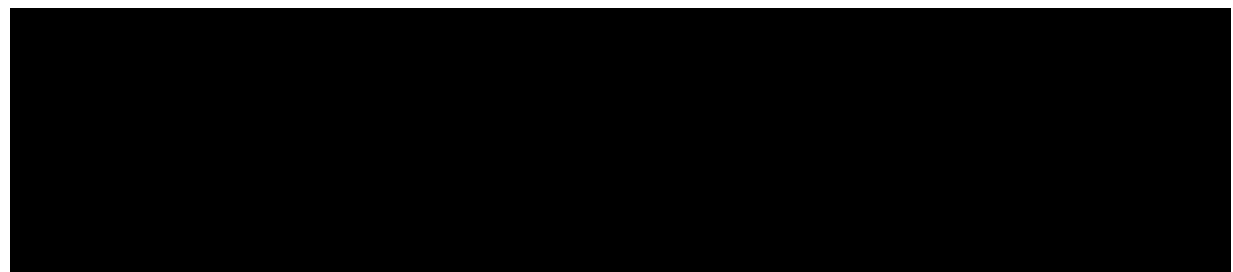
1:00 5 News

11 Mike Wallace

In 1962, the town had 63.6 miles of improved roads and 14.6 miles of unimproved roads. “Improved” at this time meant graveled or paved and “unimproved” meant dirt. Today there are 106 miles of improved roads. (8)



Friday Night TV, Local Stations - March 1960



Friday Night TV, Local Stations - March 1960



314



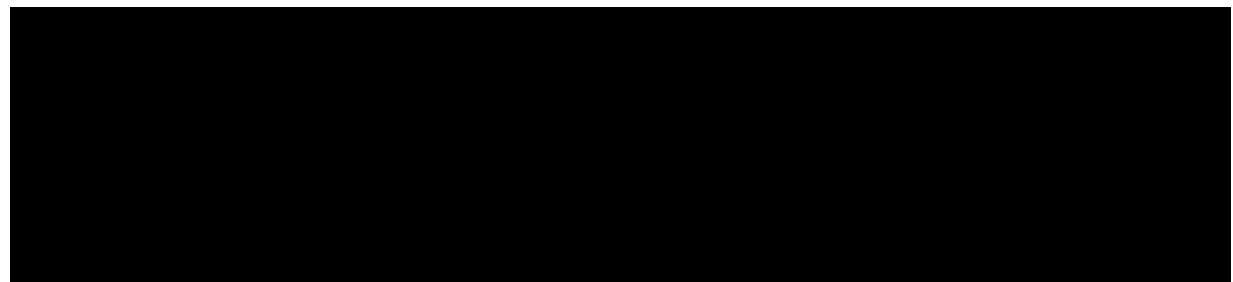
315

Located at the corner of Main Street and School Street, the Center School burned to the ground in November 1965. The school had not been used as a schoolhouse since June 1961 when the first graders who attended school there were transferred to the George Hersey Robertson School. The school was then used as headquarters for the Coventry Police Department and then sold as a business property for \$12,500. The building was being renovated at the time of the fire.

At a town meeting in December of 1959, a resolution was passed to purchase the 109 acre farm of John and Doris Skinner on Main Street and Ripley Hill Road for \$40,000. The resolution also stipulated that a new Junior-Senior High School was to be built on thirty-five acres of that land (with the remaining to be used for expansion and for a proposed new town office building). There was moderate resistance among some townsfolk as to the cost of the property in early 1960, but that was suppressed by March of 1960. The school was built for a cost of \$1.2 million, and in September of 1961 the new Coventry High School was opened. Royal O. Fisher was named superintendent of schools. Frank Perotti, who had been involved in the school system since 1951 and was recently principal of the Coventry Grammar School, was named the first principal of Coventry High School.



The Center School and The High School



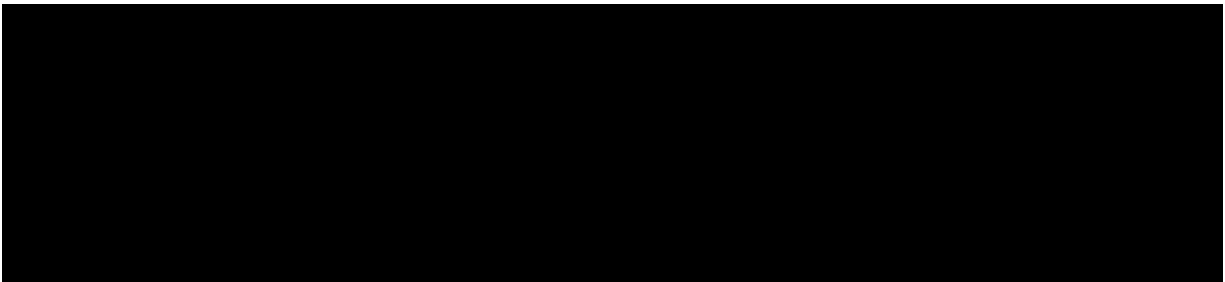
The Center School and The High School



Mr. Schweyer, president and treasurer of the National Silk Corporation, developed it to be the largest tax-paying corporation and the largest employer in Coventry. His home on South Street, the parsonage home of Dr. Joseph Huntington tutor to Coventry patriot Nathan Hale, was carefully restored and is one of the landmarks of the town. He became involved in many community activities including the Masonic Lodge, the Boy Scouts, the American Red Cross, and the Coventry Salvation Army. He purchased the old Methodist Episcopal Church in the Village and helped secure the Nathan Hale Community Center there in 1944 and was a member of the South Coventry Fire Department.

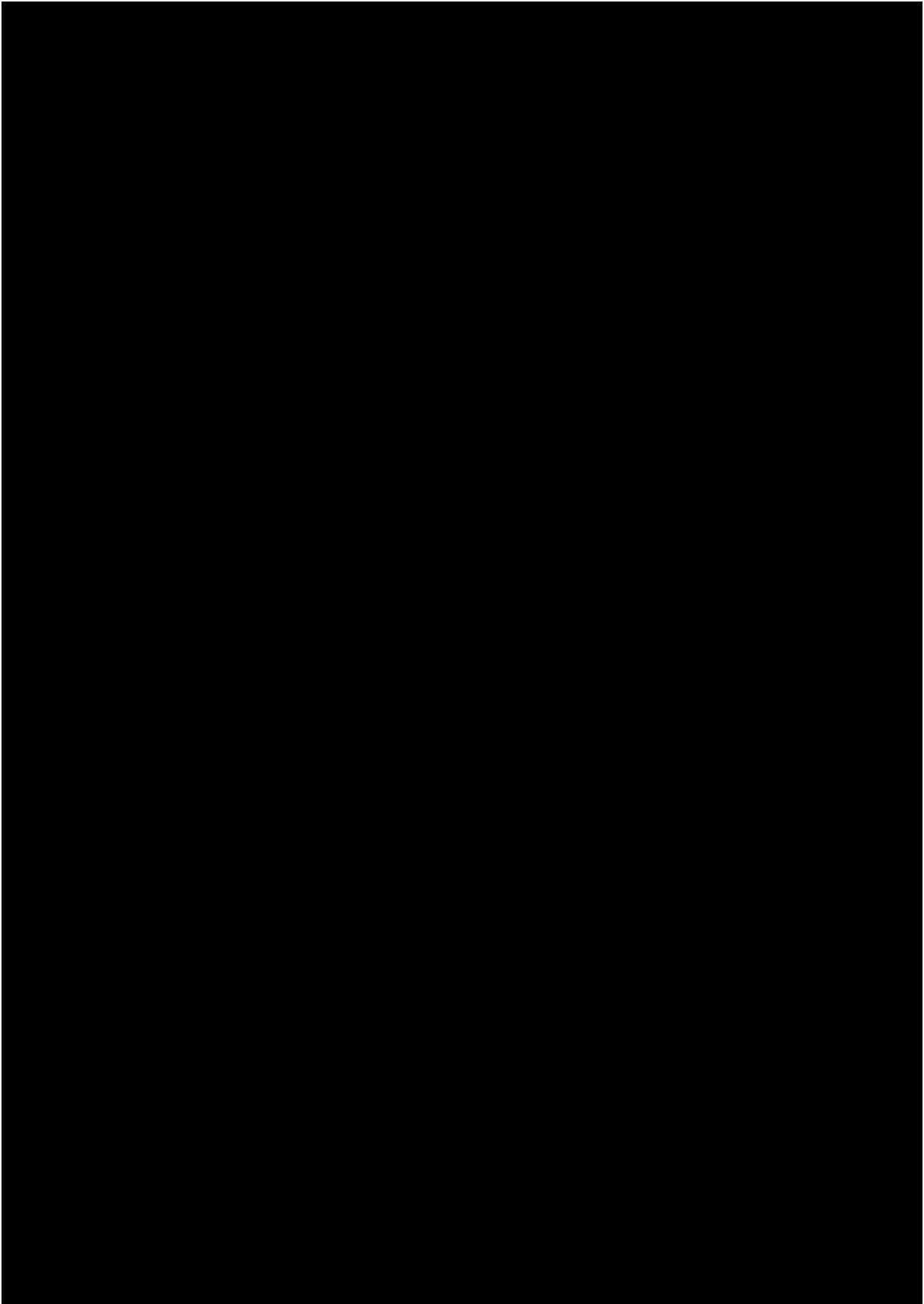


J. LeRoy Schweyer (1889- 1960)

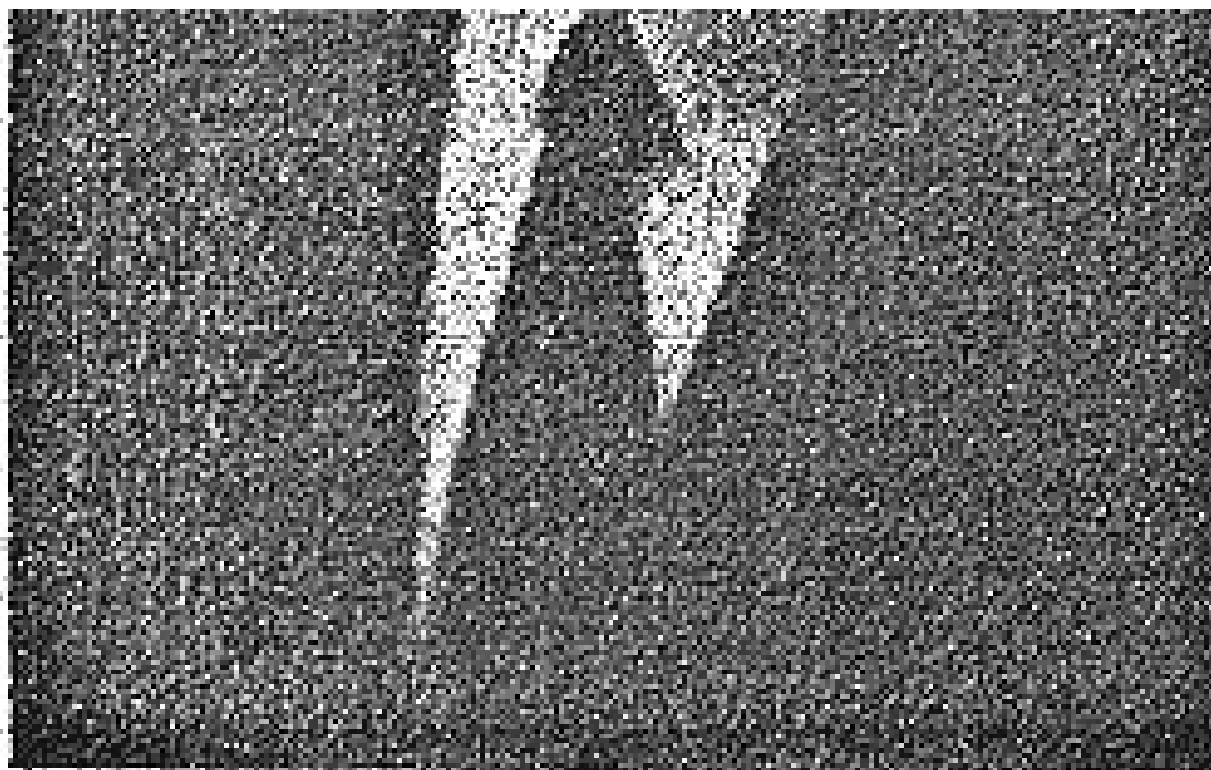


J. LeRoy Schweyer (1889- 1960)









J. LEROY SCHWEYER

In 1927 the National Silk Company (incorporated on May 16th) purchased the defunct and crumbling Morgan silk mill on Mason Street including all the machinery for making silk, and began a thirty-four year ownership of this site. Mr. J.L. Schweyer is a community minded individual, and he purchased and stored in the building the material for a 100 bed emergency hospital including cots and supplies. The stock was still there in the 1960's. The building was expanded westward and was changed from a purely production house to a storage and mail order center. There are large, cedar-lined rooms used for the storage of yarn.

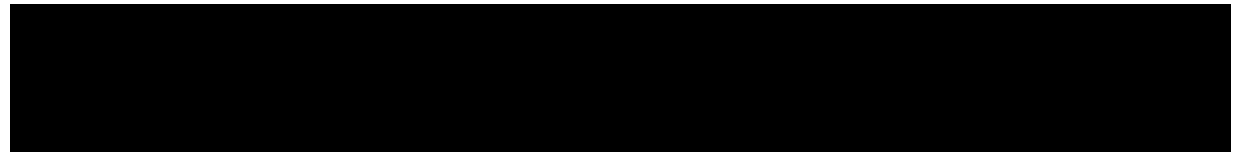
In 1928 National Silk doubled its capital stock to 1,000 shares sold at one hundred dollars per share. The town sold the old Kenyon Mill on Armstrong Road to the National Silk Company early in 1935, and they operated the site for the next thirty-seven years. By 1939 they are making the famous Tioga Yarn. During WWII their business declined a fair amount, but rose dramatically afterwards. They had an extensive operation that purchased all sorts of thread, then dyed and wound it into a huge variety of yarn. They had an extensive mail order business to women knitters across the country and advertised widely in newspapers and magazines.

In 1953 the average weekly wage of an employee was \$49.60. During the '50's and '60's National Silk made a wide array of yarns including a

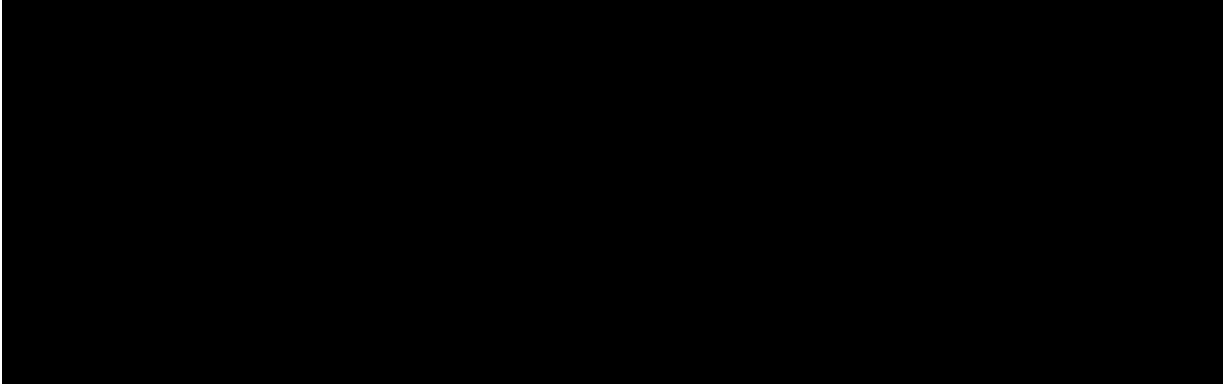
knitting worsted yarn four-ply, 100% wool, seventy cents per skein- 140 yards and a Tioga five-ply sports yarn, 100% wool, fifty cents per skein-110 yards. They operated two shifts using commercial electricity on the first shift, and during the second shift, opened the race gate and used their water turbine to supply electricity. It is likely the turbine was run only for one shift because the water flow in the brook and the capacity of the pond would only allow six to seven hours of flow before being exhausted. Their Country Store located on Mason Street offered discounts from five to thirty-three percent depending upon the amount of the order. Sales tax in 1956 was three percent. They would send out sample yarn kits by mail that included, as an example, tufts of yarn of 100% wool and various mixtures and colors of acetate, nylon, rayon, and Lurex. Their employees were nearly all women who were the best at the skills needed. Men handled the maintenance tasks. Their mail address was "The Coventry Yarn Mill" or "The Tioga Yarn Company", Coventry, Conn. No street address was needed. Tioga Yarn is a patented trademark. A late 1950's fire insurance map shows four large buildings and the pond. Two buildings are parallel to the dam and form an "L" adjacent to the brook. The building is labeled "The National Silk Co. Inc."

A Mail Order Form for Tioga Yarn- 1954

The Mason Street site was sold to Mr. Bearce in 1961 and all operations were transferred to the Armstrong Road site until it was sold in 1972. The buildings then looked much as they do today. For a few years there was a complex of shops on the old Kenyon site called “Yankee Ingenuity” including The Wangumbaug Jewelers (gold & silver), The Pot Knot Shop (pottery), J&D Fantasy in Glass (hand blown glass), The Suncrafter (art & craft), The Vermont Shop, The Nimble Thimble (custom made clothes) The Tienda Two (Quoddy Moccasins), The Greenery (plants & terrariums), The Brush Stroke (paintings), The Leather Den (hand crafted leather goods), The Lambs Wool (hand knitting), and Veraguth's Stained Glass. By 1976 these shops are in decline and eventually close. The mill is vacant today. The Town of Coventry has prepared the site for adaptive re-use. An old electric elevator hoist has been recovered made by the Morse, Williams & Co. of Philadelphia in 1904 from patents dated 1882 to 1887.

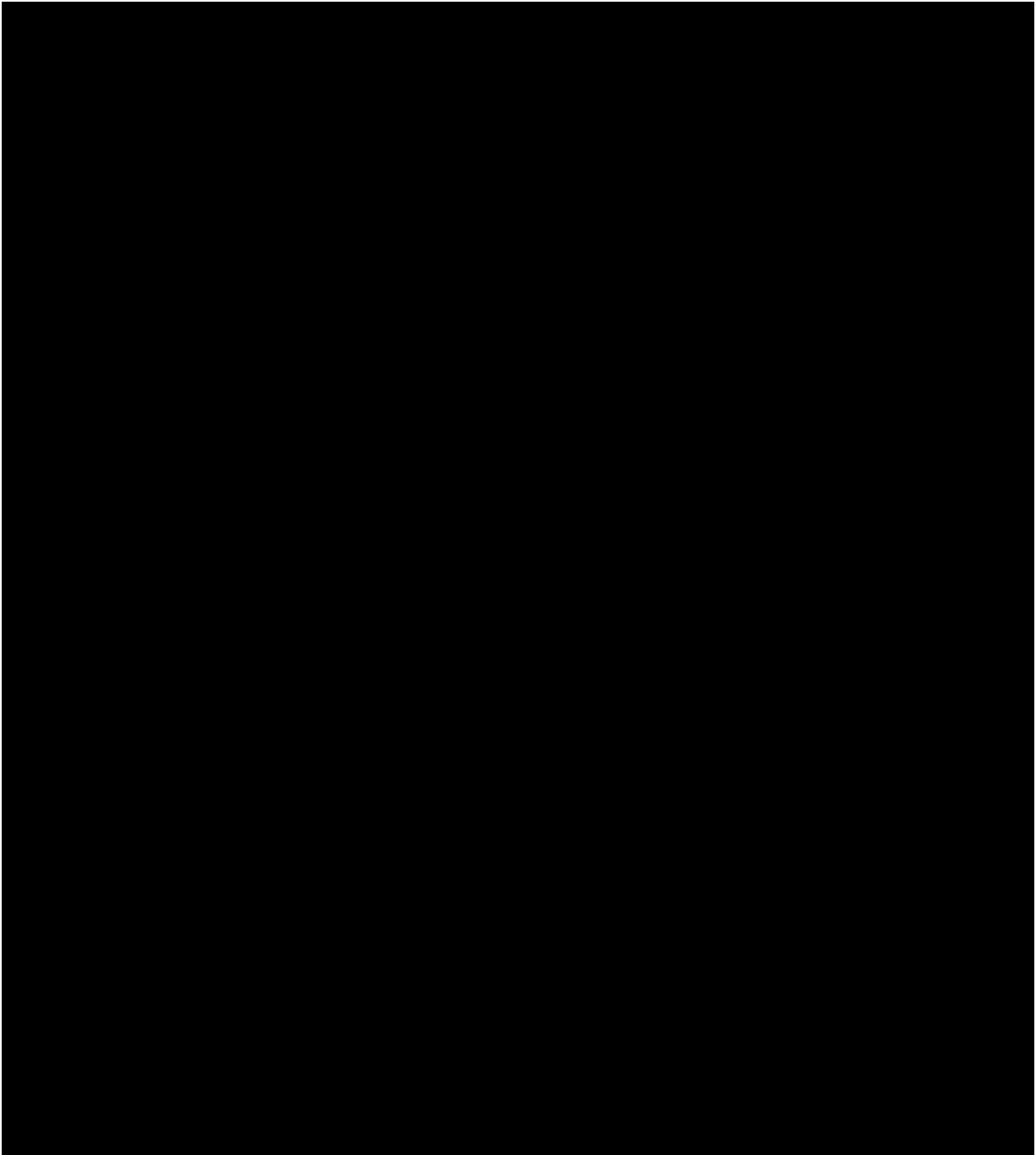


The National Silk Company (1927-1972) Producer of Tioga Yarn



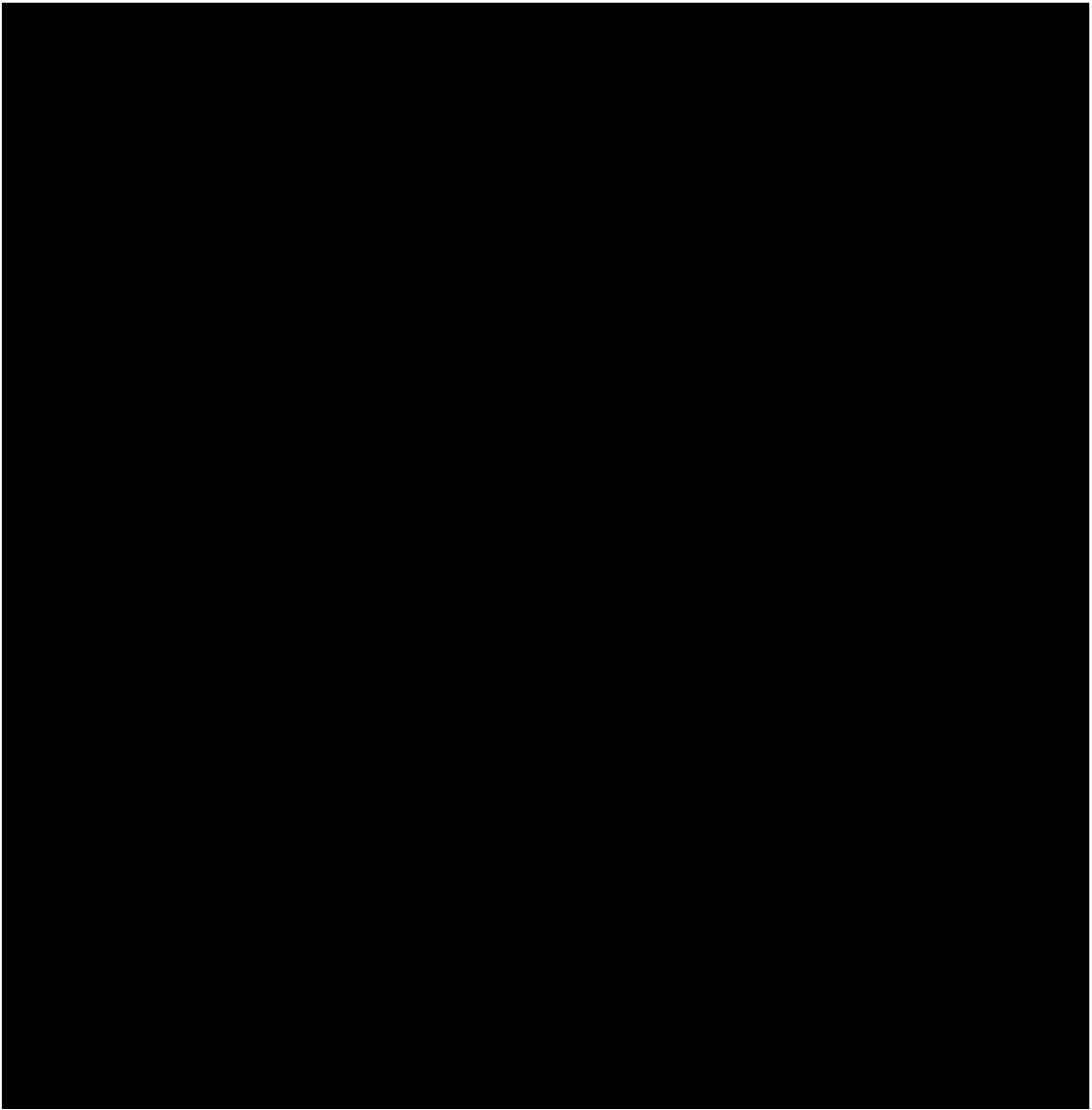
The National Silk Company (1927-1972) Producer of Tioga Yarn







REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.



ORDER BLANK

COVENTRY YARN MILLS

SOUTH COVENTRY, CONN.

Send to: _____

No. & Street or R.F.D. _____

City _____

MRS. HENRY P. SPAFARD
720 PROSPECT AVENUE
HARTFORD 5, CONNECTICUT

Enclosed
please find

Check ☒
Money Order ☐
or C.O.D. ☐

CHECK HERE

■ We will ship C.O.D. if
desired, you then pay
the extra C. O. D.
charges.

■ On orders under \$1.00
you can save C.O.D.
charges by sending
check or money order.

Amount 5.93
6.15
Postage .22
Total 6.15

PLEASE CHECK IN PROPER BOX

PLEASE RECOMMEND THIS ORDER FORM TO YOUR FRIENDS AND SEND US YOUR SAMPLE.

BUT SUFFICIENT TANK OF EACH COLOR TO COMPLETE CARGMENT AS IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE TO SUPPLY THE SAME DYE LOT NUMBER IN A REORDER.

PURCH ORDER No or Sample	QUANTITY	432 ✓ KIND OF TARE	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL AMOUNT
○	16	3 Ply Fingering	40	\$6.15
○				
○				
○		10% discount		
○		22c in Postage		
○		3.00 State Tax		
○				
○				
○				JUL 13 1954

$$\begin{array}{r} 6.40 \\ \times 1.75 \\ \hline 320 \\ 4480 \\ 6400 \\ \hline 11.2000 \end{array}$$

Coventry Yarn Mills
SOUTH COVENTRY, CONN.

TIOGA YARN COMPANY

will gladly mail postpaid a complete set of samples
of *Tioga Yarns* for all knitting purposes:

TIOGA FONCÉ (Wool & Crimped Nylon) for socks, baby garments
and sweaters.

TIOGA POMPADOUR (Wool & Rayon) for baby garments.
(Wool & Lurex) for stoles and fancy blouses.

TIOGA 3-PLY FINGERING YARN
(all Wool) for sweaters, socks, baby garments, dresses, etc.

TIOGA CREVENNA WOOL (Wool & Rayon) a smooth yarn for
dresses and fancy blouses.

TIOGA LAMBALÉ (Wool & Nylon) a nubby yarn for dresses, sweaters
and blouses.



WRITE DEPT. 52

TIOGA YARN COMPANY

SOUTH COVENTRY, CONN.

JAN 4 1955

52
Sent
1/4/56

The Coventry Historical Society is a non- profit group dedicated to discovering, collecting and preserving the history of the Town of Coventry and promoting historical research in all its aspects and making available to the members of the Society and to the public, the results of this research. The Society was revitalized in the early 1960's. It houses a vast array of historical material, conducts several annual events and now includes the following properties:

Strong-Porter Museum (South Street)

The Strong-Porter Museum is a small country museum that houses the Society's Archives. Visitors can see a country farmhouse that was once home to twenty-one people, several outbuildings, including a 19th century privy, and the foundation of The Great Barn. The original building was a small house with probably only two rooms. One the second floor can be seen the pegged joint where a second section of the house was joined to the original building.

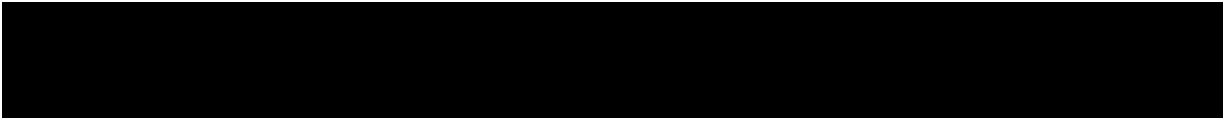
Brick School Museum (Marrow Road)

The Brick School Museum is an educational exhibit in one of Coventry's original district schoolhouses. The Society has chosen to focus on what school was like in the early 20th century. There are hundreds of photographs from all ten of the one-room district schoolhouses and many stories have been collected from people who once attended these schools. Students from the Coventry Schools visit the old Brick School to learn about what school was like when their grandparents and great-grandparents were children.

The Sprague House (South Street) is currently for sale.



The Coventry Historical Society



The Coventry Historical Society







Adelma Grenier Simmons might well be called "The First Lady of Herbs". She was a fervent and ardent spokeswoman for the joys of an herbal life even before she established the renowned Caprilands Herb Farm on Silver Street. She and her husband Albert Grenier purchased the 100 acre McKnight farm with its 1746 colonial house in 1929 or 1930. Simmons, then in her 20s, was working full-time as a buyer, designer and decorator the Albert Steiger Company, a collection of import/export shops. The farm became a virtual Mecca for hundreds of herb lovers. The farm was a frightening piece of land, neglected after failing as a dairy farm. Although several dairy farms in the same area were quite successful (three are still in existence), the land Simmons's parents acquired was very rocky and of poor quality. It took a lot of determination and effort, but finally, over the course of several decades, Simmons' dream gradually became a reality.

An herbalist and prolific author, Mrs. Simmons published dozens of books which address the culinary, design, medicinal, aromatic and historical aspects of herbs. Through her writings, she also shared her extensive knowledge of herb lore and myths, the planting and nurturing of herbs, and suggestions for festivals which revolve around herbs. Simmons was never one to conform to the status quo. She divorced from her first husband after a very brief marriage, and later married a younger man (but never took his name) after her second husband died. She lived much of her life as a woman of independent means, was well-versed and looked favorably on pagan folklore and traditions, and was known for standing her ground. In 1987, for instance, when the fire marshal threatened to close the farm because the 18th century farmhouse did not conform to state fire laws, Simmons, then in her 80s, made her son-in-law bar the fire marshal from the property and applied for waivers so she could maintain the farm's rustic look.

As the proprietress of Caprilands, Simmons was a gardening and herb innovator. Among some of her discoveries were the use of silver foliage plants (such as lamb's ears and heather) to accent the garden, using edible flowers in the kitchen and creating dried floral arrangements. She was one of the first to be interested in herbs and herbal lore. By the early 1950's she

held lectures and garden walks for the public as well as her unique luncheons which gave folks a chance to sample the freshest of herbs. Adelma died in 1997 and her family continues to sell herbs from the farm. The herb farming tradition is carried on today by South River Herbals and Topmost Herb Farm.

Adelma Grenier Simmons

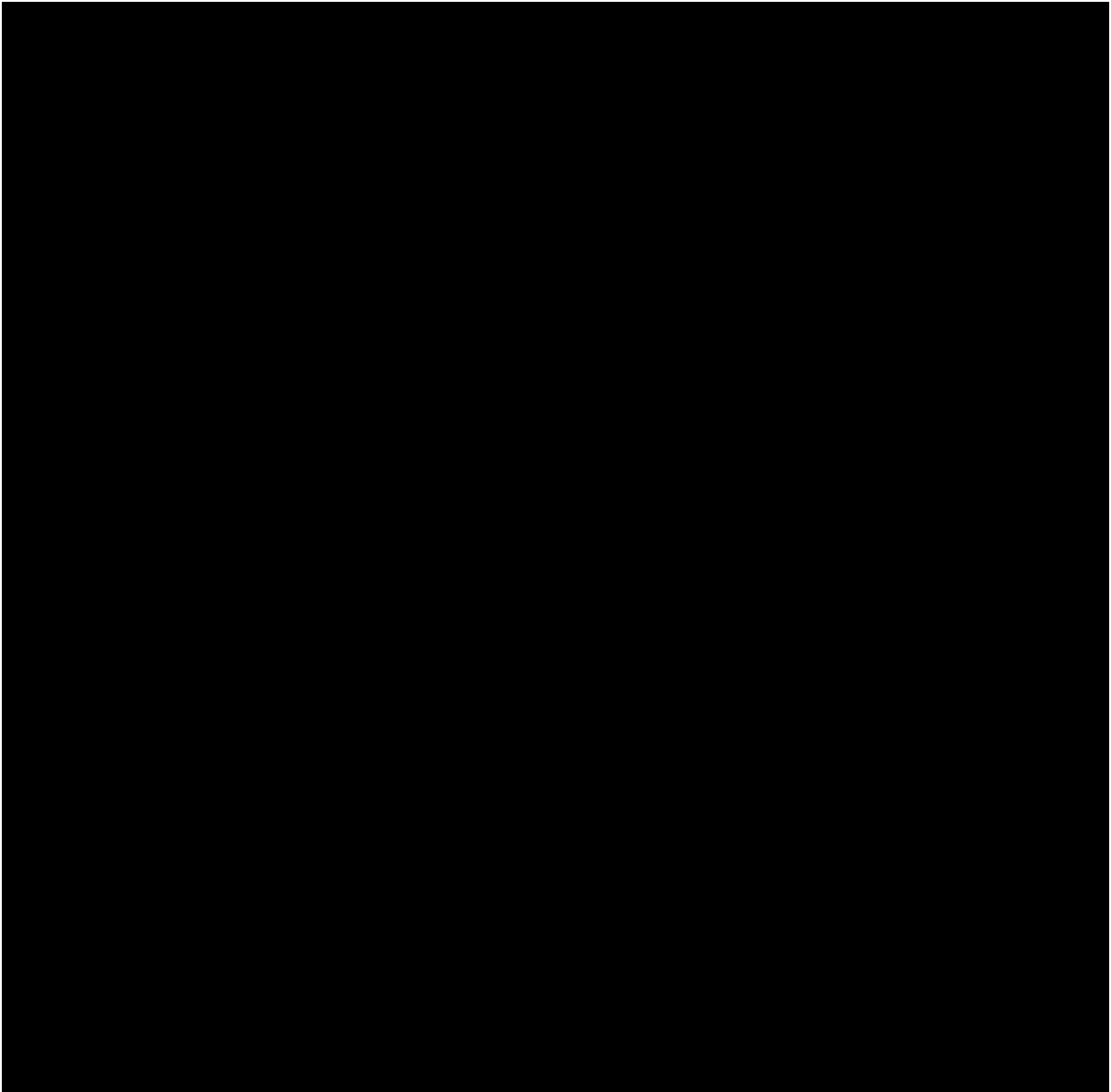


Caprilands



Caprilands







The area known as Lisicke Beach today was owned by the Beville's in the early part of the last century and used as a tourist camp and boat launch. They also ran a concession stand there. The site was developed to accommodate the arrival of the automobile and made it possible for more people to enjoy the lake. The Moriaritys owned the site for a time, but in 1961 it was purchased by the town for the benefit of its residents. The purchase was made possible by a provision in the will of Paul Lisicke (1868-1957) which granted a fair sum of money to the town to be used at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen and the Town Meeting, who voted to use the money to purchase the site.

The Beville Tourist Camp ca1915



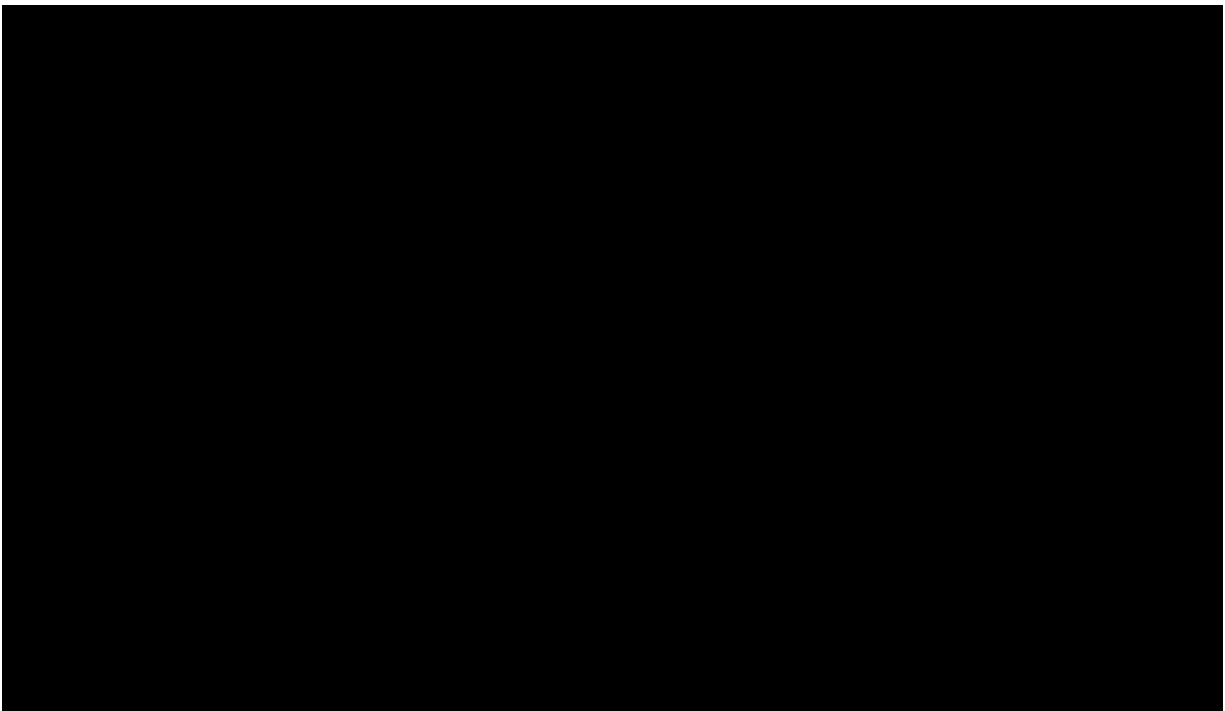
Lisicke Beach

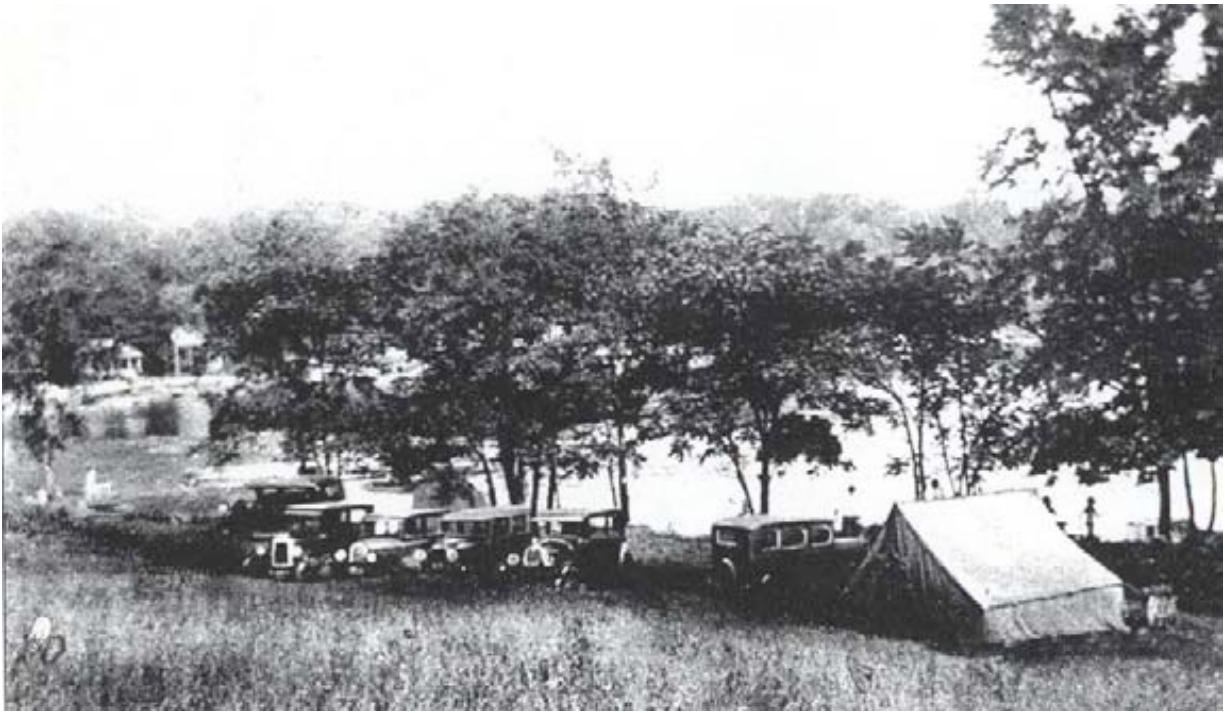


Lisicke Beach



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Most of the history of the First Church has, unfortunately, been lost from the years 1937 to 1965. During that time, Church Lane ran from Main Street along the south side of the present meeting house. There were two houses behind the meeting house, the Kenyon property and the Lang property. The Church bought the Kenyon property in 1969, which provided parking space. Also in 1969, the steeple was again struck by lightning and badly damaged. The Kenyon house, then called the Church Lane House, was used for church school and community services until it was torn down in 1985.

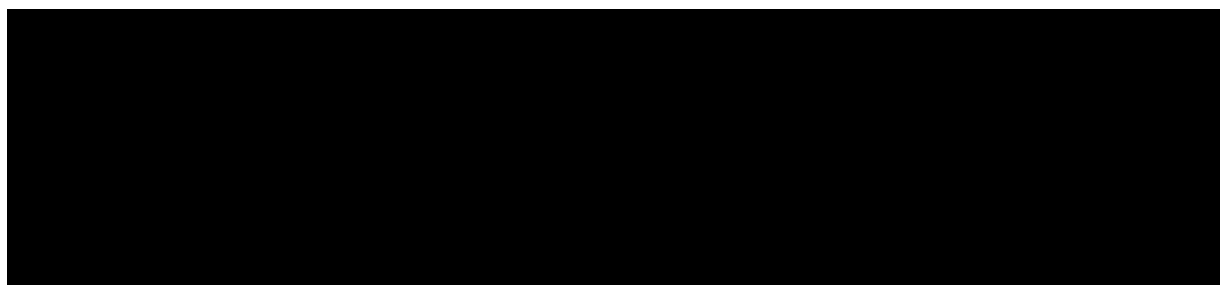
In 1972, the church bought the adjacent Burnham property on Main Street and tore it down. In 1973, the current minister, The Reverend Doctor Bruce J. Johnson was called by unanimous vote of the congregation. In 1975, a committee was formed to put on dinners once per month. The tradition continues today, the general fund benefiting from the proceeds from the dinners. In 1982, the church bought the Lang property, and converted it into rental apartments. In 1984, the church bought the Smith property and moved it next to the Lang house. It now provides more rental apartments and the headquarters for Human Growth Services.

From 1985 to 1987, a construction project was undertaken to build a new wing off of the meeting house, called the Center for Christian Education. It currently houses the Sunday school, Social Hall, Church Offices, and provides space for the Coventry Early Educational Development (CEED) Program as well as the Coventry Nursery School. The First Church of Coventry continues to thrive under the leadership of

The Reverend Bruce Johnson and the Church Boards and Committees. The First Church has a very active membership who work together to promote the day to day operations of its various ministries.



The First Congregational Church



The First Congregational Church



Prior to 1965, Coventry was served by a group of constables and a resident State trooper. Lud Kolodziej was the trooper in that year and became Coventry's first police chief. There were two or three officers with used patrol cars and they were housed in two small rooms in the new town hall. There was a chief's office and a cell block obtained from the women's prison in Wethersfield. The offices expanded slightly over the years, but remained in the town hall until their new station was completed in the spring of 2006. Lyn Wilmot joined the force in January of 1969. At the time the police had two cruisers, a '68 Chevy and a '69 Ford. The transmission in the Chevy was so bad it would not operate except in reverse until it was warmed up. The police offered a 24-hour operation and handled all calls for distress, information, etc.

In the 1960's and '70's, before UConn expanded its dormitories, Coventry had its share of student residents. The police handled calls to many parties to quiet the students. There was a house fire in the old Dimock place on Cross Street, full of students, that destroyed half the building. The old day school on Judd and South Street was a hippie commune. An older building located where the Dunkin Donuts is now was the subject of a massive drug raid where a large amount of drugs were confiscated. Lyn remembers the Zollo's grocery store fire (the building prior to today's Highland Park market) and the Guido's grocery store fire in the Village. He recounts an ice storm in the '70's where police cruisers had public works employees riding "shotgun" with chain saws. In some cases they had to cut their way to their destinations. (27)

One man from Coventry died in service to his country in the Korean War and four in the Vietnam Conflict.



1965 Coventry Police



1965 Coventry Police



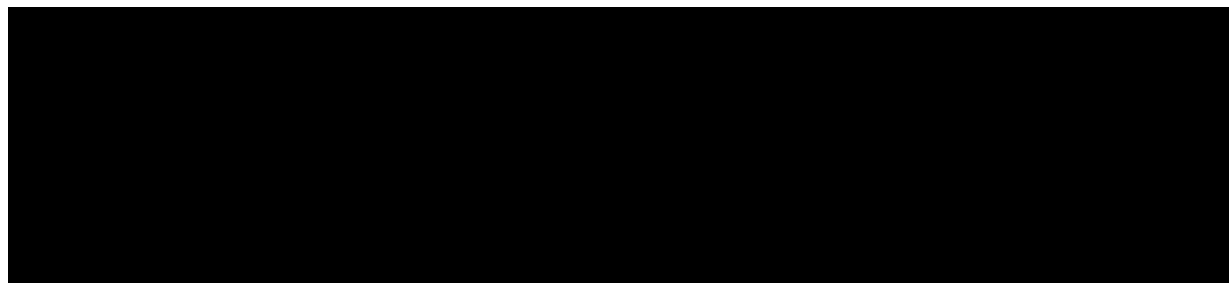
326

Alarmed by the possibility that the town might not preserve and maintain the building, Mabel Hall urged the town to deed the Brick School House to the Coventry Historical Society in February of 1967. The Citizens of Coventry New School Association and the town contributed money to repair and restore the school building in 1974 and a committee led by John Hetzel and Roger Pelkey directed this work. In July of 1976 the restored school was opened as a historical site.

The Citizens of Coventry New School Association- During W.W.II, the citizens of Coventry wanted consolidated schools. This organization was formed with Mrs. John Kingsbury as president and Mrs. Zoetje Vinton as treasurer. They started a fund for a new school. Mr. J. L. Schweyer, who owned the National Silk Mill, gave the organization a savings bond of \$1,000. This bond was accumulating interest until Mrs. Vinton, the last surviving member of the Association, was asked if the money could be used to restore the brick school. She agreed. (9)



The Brick School House



The Brick School House



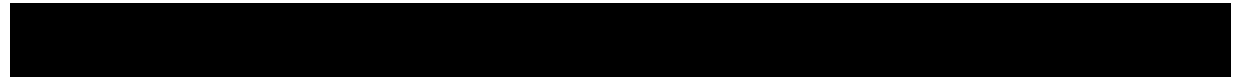
The South Coventry Water Company was formed in 1899 by Dr. William Higgins and served the Village area continuously until its recent sale. The original Directors were Higgins, James Morgan, J.B. Carman, Curtiss Dean and E.A. Tracy. In 1899 and 1900, the company took possession of an “aqueduct” (it is assumed this means an underground pipe) from James Morgan. The aqueduct began at the Mill Brook between the Wood and White/Stanley mills, then proceeded northeast to the Windham Turnpike (Main Street), then followed Main Street to the old Washington Mill privilege (now the town garage property on Bradbury Lane). This aqueduct was built in the early 1880’s by Horace Kimball who owned the Washington Mill and likely used the water for the mill and for fire suppression.

The water company also received rights to place piping from Coventry Pond to the Windham Turnpike, and the source of the water was changed from the Mill Brook to Coventry Pond proper. According to a 1903 map, a six inch water main traveled under Main Street to Bradbury Lane. It then was extended to the Kenyon house (925 Main) and also to a fire hydrant at the Valley Mill on Armstrong Road. The water supply was gravity fed, and originally supplied water to hydrants along Main Street, with an extension on Mason Street. Sometime later, residential homes began to be connected. The Company was formally incorporated in 1909.

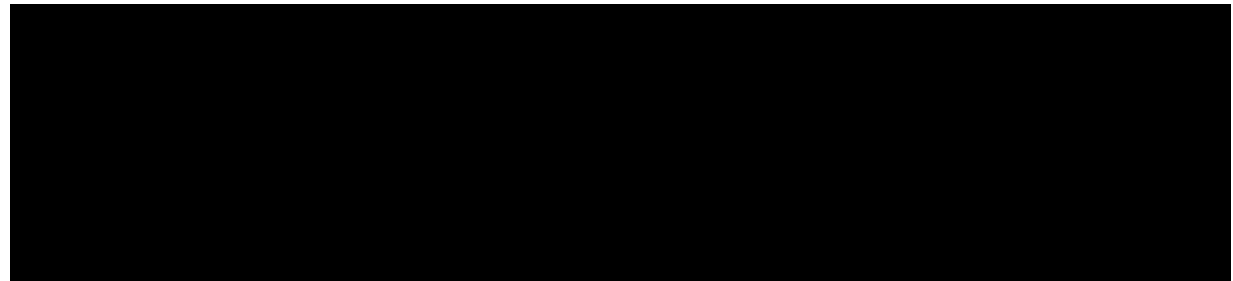
In August of 1923 an investigation was done to determine whether the cottage owners on Lake Wangumbaug could be prohibited from bathing at the lake and whether the water company had secured their charter legally. The challenge to the water company was that their water source was within a half mile of a cemetery (Nathan Hale) which was prohibited by state law in 1884. The cottage owners, numbering one hundred and twenty, felt their swimming rights were disturbed by the State Board of Health who was demanding the prohibition of swimming due to the fact that the water company’s supply was directly from the lake. The cottage owners, whose properties were valued at between five and ten thousand dollars, felt that a ban on swimming would greatly diminish their property values. Killourey’s bathing houses were also close to the water intake for the Company. The

water company also agreed to install a chlorinating plant at the intake pipe to their system. Early in 1924, the water company was ordered by the Tolland county court to shut off their system unless they could get an order from the superior court that their service is necessary to the public and not a risk due to its proximity to the cemetery. The matter was eventually resolved and the water company continued to draw water from the lake for several decades. The water was chlorinated.

In the November of 1972, the company drilled an additional well and ceased using water directly from the lake. The company was recently purchased by the Connecticut Water Company, and today serves South Coventry Village from three wells and a water storage tank on Lake Street.



The South Coventry Water Company



The South Coventry Water Company

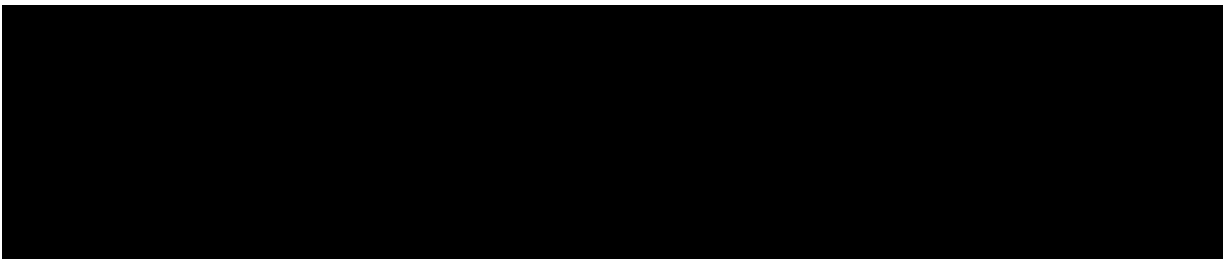




A recent report by local consultant Dr. Robert Kortmann indicates that the condition and quality of the lake today is very good. There remains a modest risk of turbidity due to storm water runoff and any new construction in the watershed. The recent addition of sewer lines has minimized the threat of sewage runoff. There is also a modest threat from excess plant growth fueled by phosphates in the soil, and residents in the watershed are urged to use phosphate-free chemicals on their lawns and gardens. A further threat, which must be monitored, is the emergence of invasive plant species (primarily fanwort) brought in on boat propellers that have been used in other waterways having these unwanted plants.

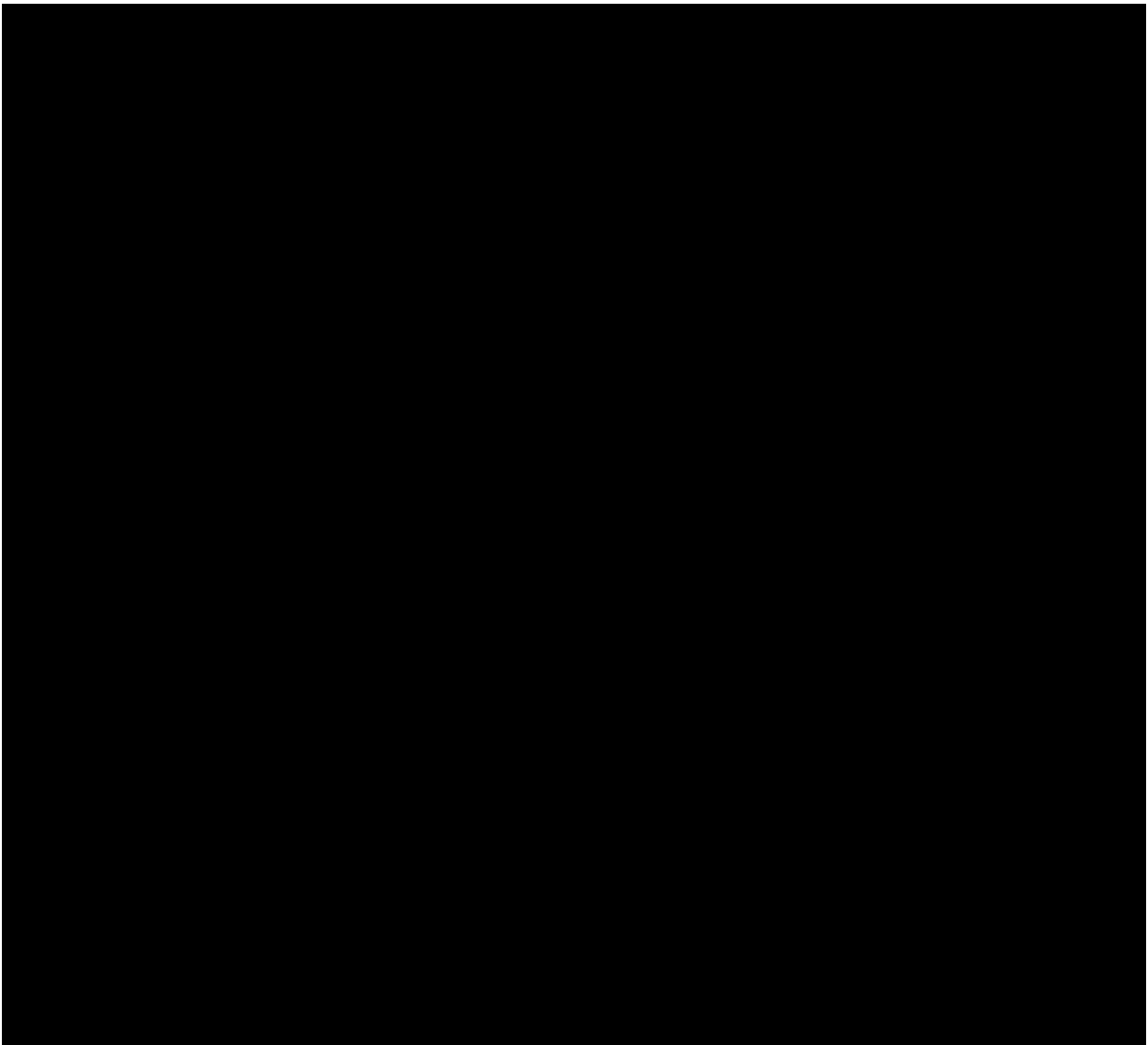


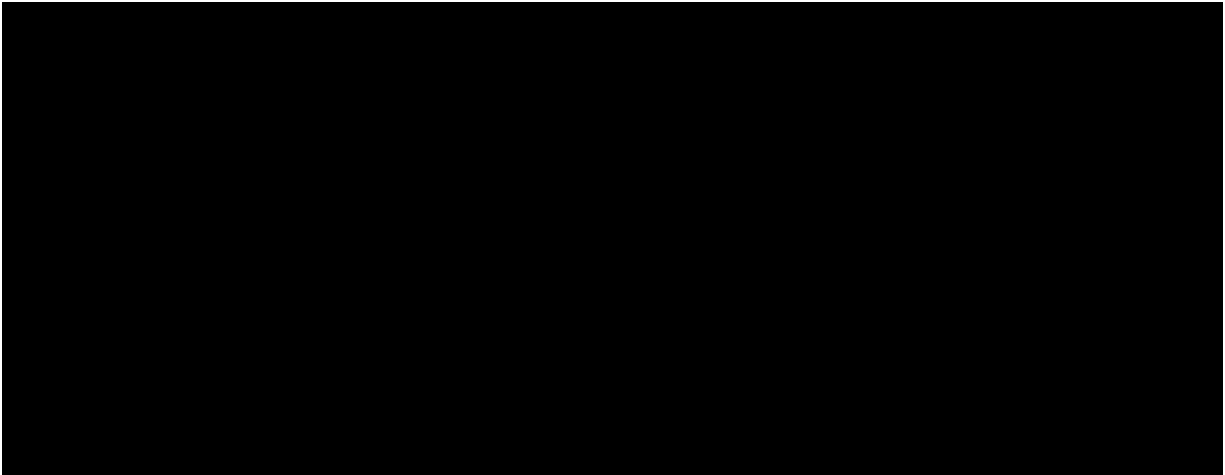
Coventry Lake (Lake Wangumbaug)



Coventry Lake (Lake Wangumbaug)







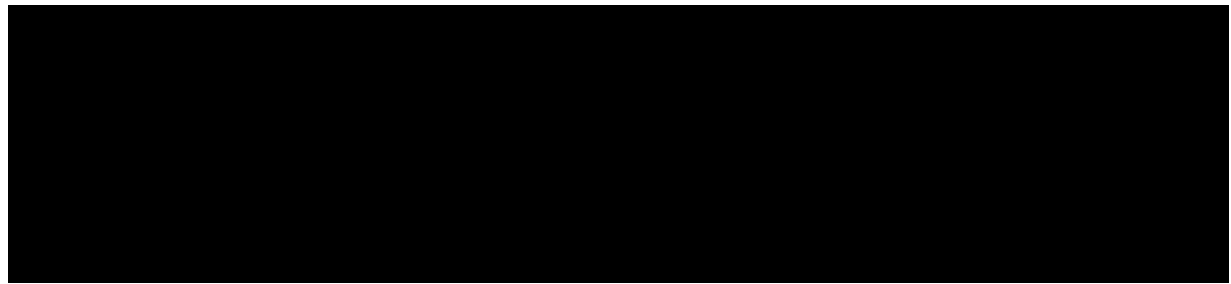
The lake is a major feature of Coventry. The use of the lake for recreation and for the Village water supply began at the turn of the century. The lake has a surface area of 370 acres with a maximum depth of forty feet. Fish in the lake are yellow perch, small mouth bass, blue gill and golden shiners. The lake watershed encompasses 2,125 acres and about sixty percent of the water feeding the lake comes from this watershed, the remaining forty percent from ground water (springs). The water quality in the lake began to suffer in the 1950's due to adjacent development, and during that time, the water company was directed not to draw water from the lake, forcing them to drill wells for their sources.

A newspaper report from May 1967 states: "Environmental problems plague Coventry residents. A large oil slick contaminated Lake Wangumbaug and its northeastern public beaches. Bathers suffered with itchy skin, and dead fish were everywhere. The villain was identified as a local oil company who had been blamed for oil pollution in the Lake two years earlier, but an attempt to solve the problem, by building earthen drainage dikes, had failed. Moves were afoot to remove the company's storage tanks from their beachside position. Blame was also apportioned to leaking septic tanks and gasoline from an estimate 300 motorboats which used the Lake each summer."

Meadowbrook Plaza was completed in 1971, built on somewhat swampy land that was part of the Loomis farm. It was the second “strip mall” on Route 44, the first being Giglio’s Plaza near the Bolton line. The early tenants in the Plaza were Zollo’s Grocery, Attorney Rappe, B&G Cleaners, Lee’s Beauty Nook, L&R Sales (candy & gifts), and the Connecticut Bank & Trust. Following a fire in 1975/76 that destroyed the Zollo’s end of the plaza, it was rebuilt, and in October of 1976, Highland Park Market opened and began serving area residents.

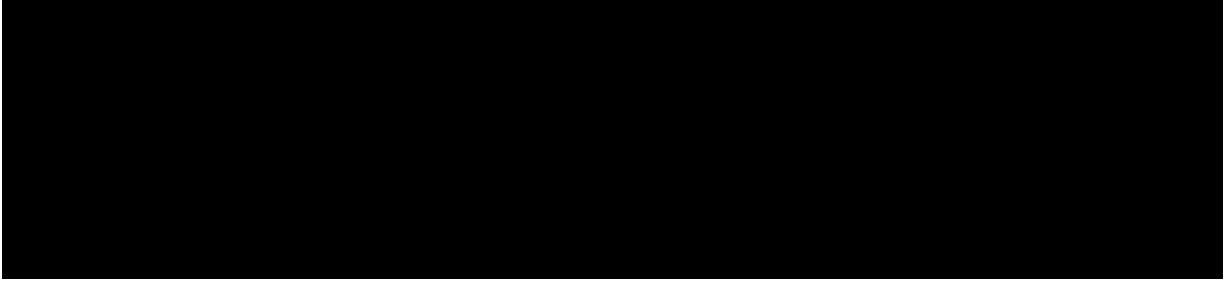


Meadowbrook Plaza

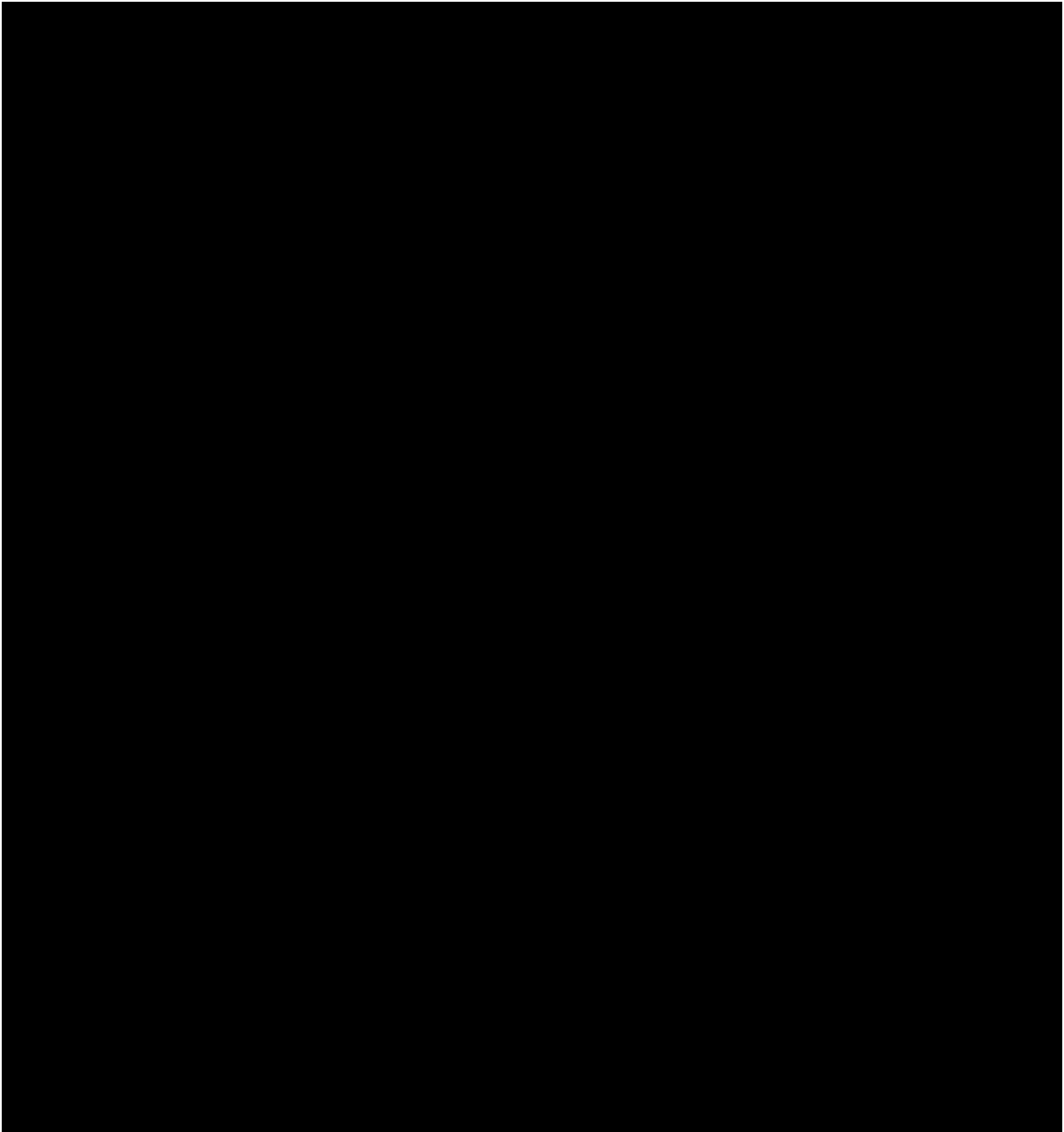


Meadowbrook Plaza





Routes 44 and 44A, 6 and 31



Route 44 through Coventry was commissioned as a state road in 1935. In the early 1950's, Route 44 was designated along the old parkway (Route 15) from Manchester to Willington where it then proceeded along today's Route 74 to the junction in Willington. The road through Bolton and Coventry was then designated Route 44A. In 1982, Route 44A reverted back to Route 44. The 5.8 mile stretch of the Route 6 connector highway in Columbia, Coventry and Windham was built in 1973 as part of an overall

plan for I-84 from Hartford to Providence including today's I-384 from East Hartford to Bolton which was completed in 1971.

Route 6 was commissioned in 1926. East of Hartford, Route 6 followed Burnside Avenue into Manchester, then present-day Route 44 and Route 31 through Coventry and into Willimantic. East of there, it went largely where it does now. The current Route 6 through Andover was then Route 6A.

Route 31 South (from Route 44 to Mansfield) was originally part of Route 6. It was named Route 31 in 1942. Route 31 North (from Route 44 to Rockville) was named in 1963.

In the early 1970's the Greater Hartford Process and its Greater Hartford Community Development Corporation, (DEVCO) prepared a plan for a new community in Coventry. It included nearly all the land north of Route 44A between the Bolton line and Grant Hill Road. It envisioned building 6,000 housing units for 20,000 people by 1990. The plans included provisions for open space, commercial use, schools, public transportation, shops and recreational services. On paper, it was an interesting though overwhelming proposal, the benefits of which were fiercely debated when the plan became public.

Jan. 17, 1973: Manchester Herald... "Large purchases of land continue in the Coventry area."

Dec. 19, 1974. Hartford Courant..."Coventry Plan Abandoned"

"For over two years these, and hundreds of other headlines, announcements, protests, charges, counter-charges, excitement, tension and fun the likes of which Coventry would not be apt to see any time soon. DEVCO secretly purchased development rights to farm land in Coventry. It then announced its plans to develop a city with a population of 20,000 in the north end of town. "No!"-the citizens shouted and the battle began. CPC (Committee for the Preservation of Coventry), CCTC (Concerned Citizens of Tolland county) and COWS (Coventry Opposed With Specialists) were pitted against DEVCO and the CCAC (Coventry Citizen Advisory Committee). The latter group of residents would be wooed, wine and dined by DEVCO. Some participated in an all-expense paid trip to Maryland and Virginia to visit other planned communities.

In spite of a March 1974 newspaper poll showing 92% of Coventry respondents against the planned community, DEVCO continued to fight with the millions of dollars at its disposal. From the Chase Manhattan Bank alone they received a 7.25 million dollar mortgage! The combined opposition committees raised several thousand dollars for legal representation by holding Hoe Downs, Farm Tours, a Beach Fling and raffles. They had an Unwelcome Party when the DEVCO headquarters

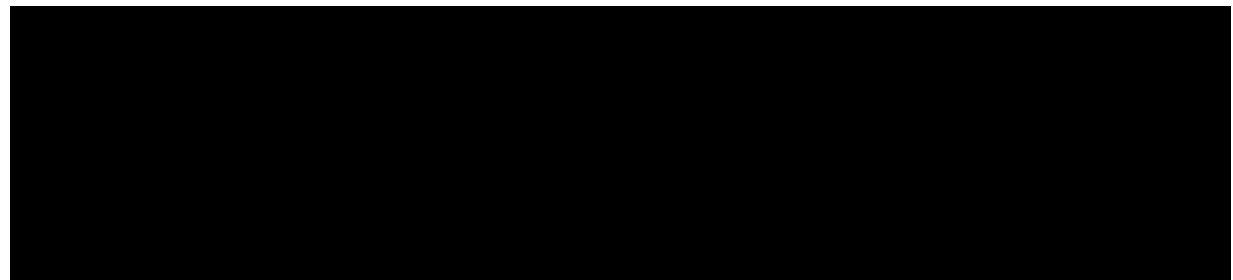
opened (at the Meadowbrook Plaza) and pickets greeted participants attending a free dinner sponsored by DEVCO.

No expense was spared by DEVCO to send all residents The Coventry New Community Newsletter each month, and print thousands of copies of a 147 page plan book and another motivational "wish book." Coventry was promised sewers, an Art & Cultural center, a Community Education center and a possible publishing company. The Director of Education of Resource and Development from The University of Connecticut was retained by DEVCO. All Coventry had to pay for was police, fire protection, roads, schools and all the other amenities of life that our taxes could provide. Because of this, both political parties in town united against the proposal. They relentlessly appeared at every DEVCO function and sang such songs such as Give My Regards to Process and Process Run on Out of Town! They also testified at the State Capitol, appeared on television and radio, spoke to schools and universities and wrote letters.

On Dec. 7, 1974 a fund raiser was held, advertised with a banner proclaiming: "Remember Pearl Harbor: Don't Let DEVCO Sink Coventry". "Keep The Cows in Coventry" black and white bumper stickers and shocking pink "STOP DEVCO" auto radio antenna flags were proudly displayed by many. Subsequently Hartford Process/DEVCO was disbanded when much of their financial support was withdrawn. (32)



DEVCO



DEVCO

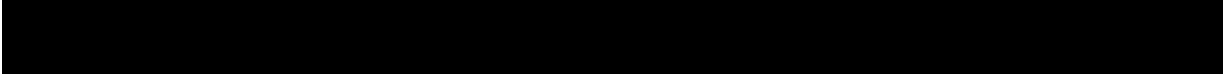


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The Coventry assessors list for 1973 shows 105 sites classified as “farmland” for a total of 4,100 acres and sixty-five sites classified as forest or open space for a total of 4,130 acres. The total represents 33% of acreage in town (excludes town owned land and Nathan Hale State Forest, ~1,300 acres)



Farms and Forests



Farms and Forests



When the first routes of what would become the Interstate Highway System were announced in 1944, Connecticut's allotment included Interstates 84, 91, and 95 as they are now. No route crossing east-central Connecticut to Providence was included. The state's 1953 long-range expressway plan, calling for US 6 to be upgraded from Manchester to the Rhode Island state line, was the first mention of a planned expressway in the area. Notably, all expressways in the plan were proposed as toll roads.

In late 1953, the state also started discussions with East Hartford and Manchester about relocating US 6 in those towns. In 1959, public hearings were held, and the expressway (I- 84, now I-384) from Silver Lane to Bolton Notch was eventually built in 1970. In 1963, the state announced plans for a 46-mile U.S. 6 expressway, from four to six lanes, passing through Manchester, Willimantic, and Killingly. In the 88th Congress (1963-64), Rep. Robert N. Giaimo submitted a bill entitled: Designation of Route 6 as part of the Interstate Highway System.

In 1968, the Federal Highway Administration approved a rerouting of I-84, to continue sixty-four miles east to Providence along US 6. The existing I-84 from Manchester to Sturbridge, Mass. was redesignated Interstate 86. What is known today as the Clean Water Act was passed in 1972. Section 404 of that act prohibits discharging dredged or fill material into U.S. waters without a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Later court activity defined U.S. waters to include wetlands.

As there are wetlands in the US 6 corridor, building an expressway required a Section 404 permit.

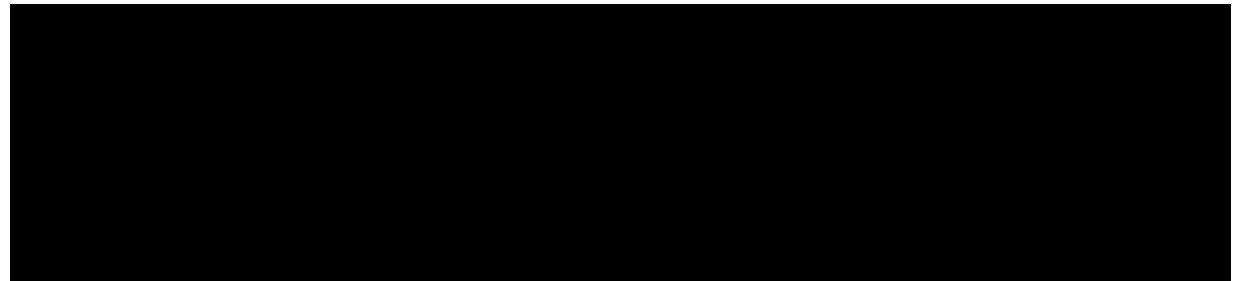
The state applied for a permit in 1979, and was notified in 1989 that the Corps would deny the permit. Earlier that year, the Federal Highway Administration had stated that upgrading existing US 6 would be an unsafe and unacceptable alternative to an expressway. The impasse remained for another decade. In 1989, a judge ruled that the Department of Transportation (DOT) could take away thirty homes for a highway it didn't have the environmental permits to build. The properties were taken and

some houses demolished. It was eminent domain - a bureaucratic nightmare to families who lost homes and neighborhoods for projects that never materialized.

In January 2000, the Army Corps of Engineers, more receptive to a freeway plan, asked the state DOT and Federal Highway Administration for environmental impact reports on the latest proposal, called 133A-Modified, and on several previously considered alternate routes. In December 2000, however, the EPA rejected the state's latest expressway proposal. One point of contention: the DOT preferred a routing north of present US 6, while the Environmental Protection Agency and the Corps of Engineers preferred a southern route. In January 2001, the Corps of Engineers issued a permit, Alternative 133 18/25 Modified, which ran south of the Hop River, rejecting Connecticut DOT's choice, Alternative 133B, which ran north. The Corps of Engineers proposal would condemn twice as many houses (53), but would be less damaging to the environment. No further meaningful action has been taken since.



The Route 6 Expressway



The Route 6 Expressway

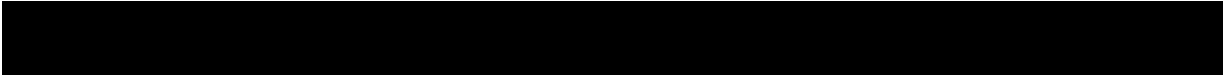
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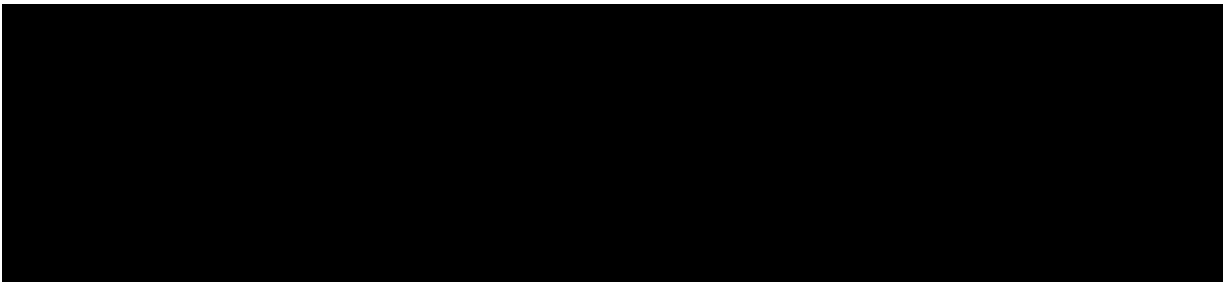
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Jesse and his wife Sue Welles descended from early New England settlers, and together devoted endless energy to their family, their town and its history. Mr. Brainard was employed as the Director of Training at Sikorsky Aircraft for 37 years and lived at the family home called Melody Farms on South Street. It was an active dairy farm for two generations. They also had a home in Florida. Jesse's activities in town included the church, the fire department, the Board of Education, the Town Council and many others. He was very active in the Coventry Historical Society and researched and wrote a number of articles for its publication, the "Signpost". (24)

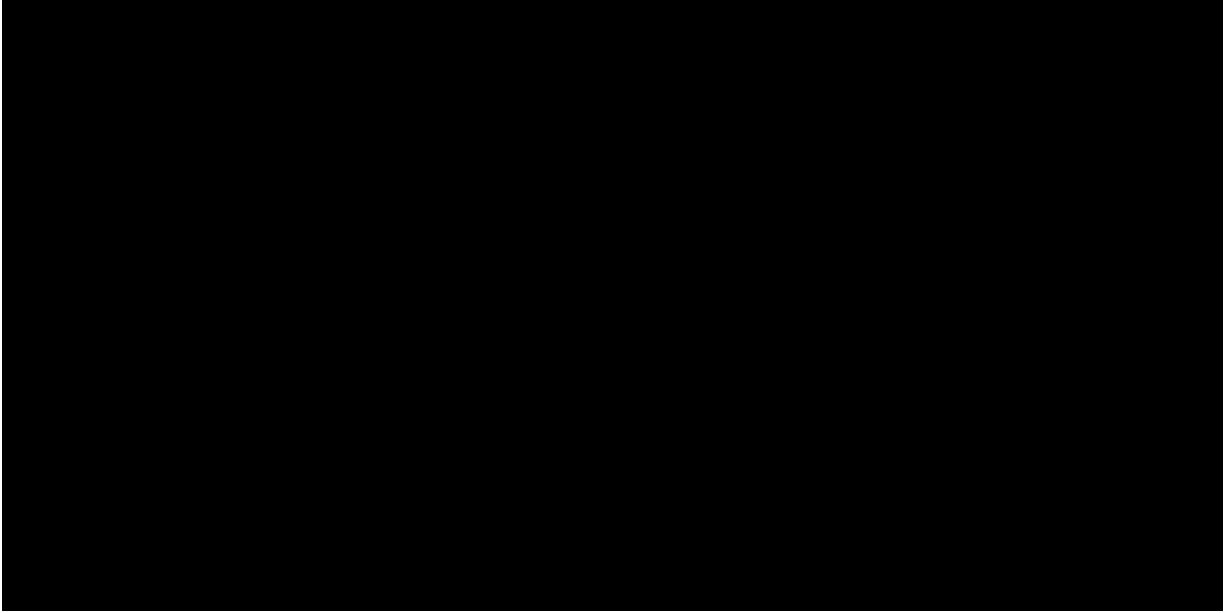


Jesse Brainard (1916-1994)

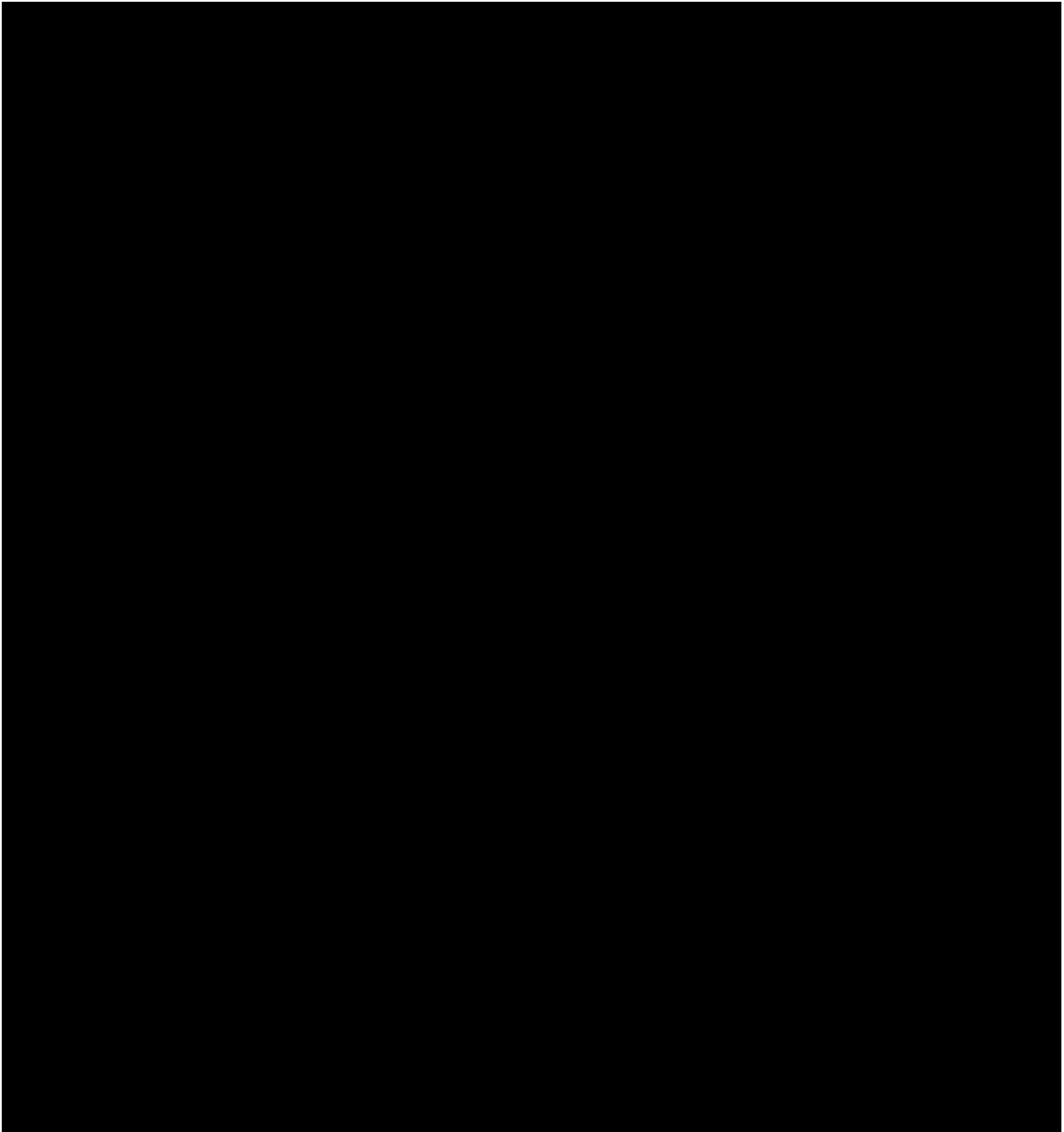


Jesse Brainard (1916-1994)





Jesse A. Brainard

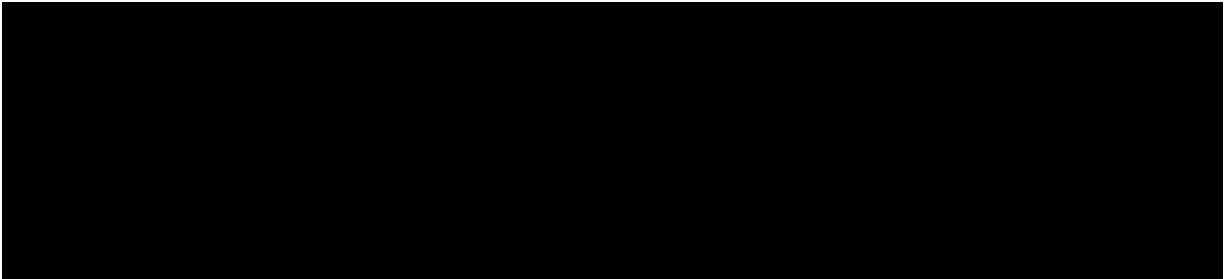




In 1978 the old National Silk building on Mason Street was sold to Thaddeus Szeluga who started the Clock & Whale Factory, a woodworking shop making clocks in the shape of whales from very unique pieces of wood. The whale motif was inspired by the designation of the sperm whale as the state animal by the General Assembly in 1975. The building today holds a few renters who are in the ecological consulting business and do woodworking.



The Clock & Whale Factory



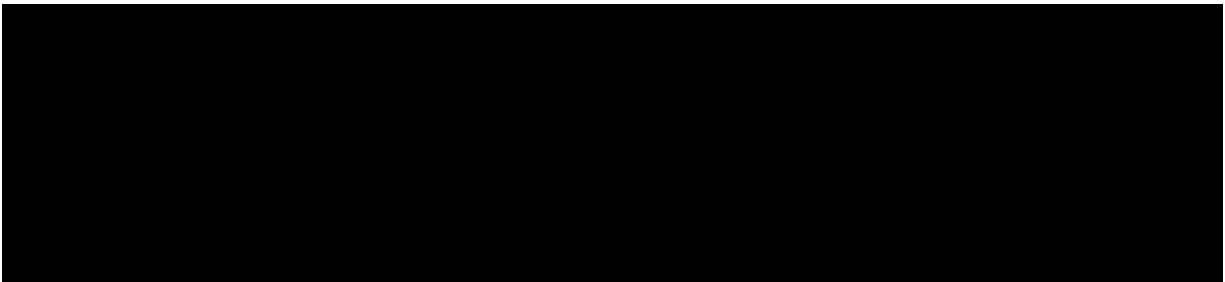
The Clock & Whale Factory



Coventry's only sewer treatment plant was built in 1987 along the banks of the Willimantic River in the southeastern part of town. Following three failed referendums, the DEP ordered the plant to be built. It was intended to serve the southwestern part of the lake and included parts of the Village with 26,000 feet of pipe. Fortunately it was built with excess capacity for, in the past few years, sewer lines have been installed in most of the direct watershed area of the lake. During construction, archeological digs were made and interesting Indian artifacts were found.



The Sewer Treatment Plant

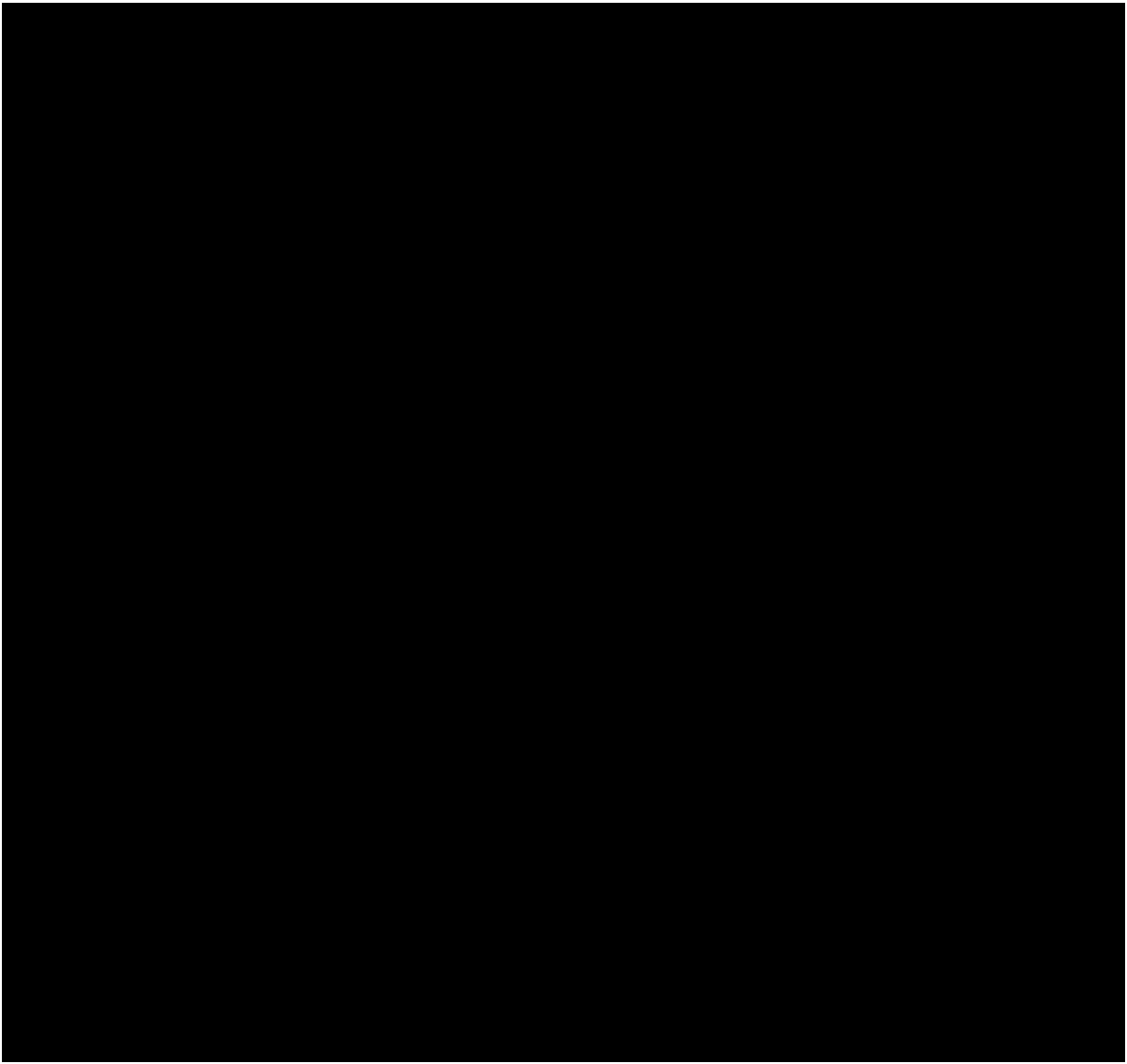


The Sewer Treatment Plant





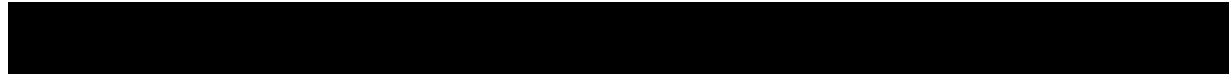
Significant Fires in Town



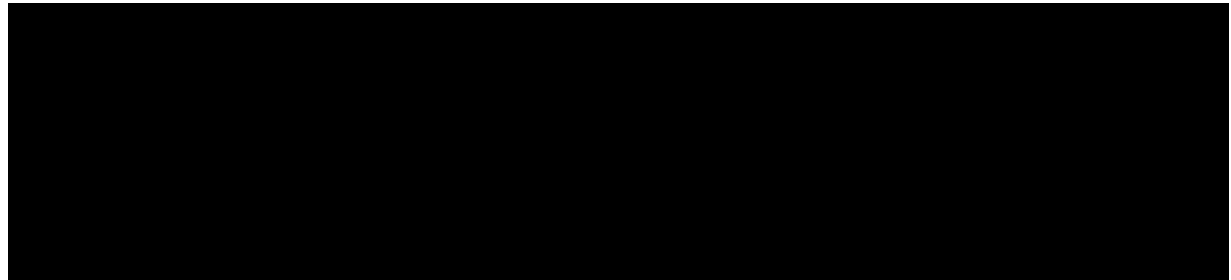
From newspaper accounts and recollections, the major fires in town over the last century include: J.M. Woods mill on Woods Lane- 1902, the

Washburn Silk Mill on Main Street- 1917, the Mason Cartridge factory on Mason Street- 1924, Carman's bar in the Village and the Second Church school house- 1935-36, the Globe mill on Woods Lane- 1942, the Sterling Fibreboard Factory on Depot Road and the Latimer grain/appliance complex on Depot Road- 1950's, The Fireside Inn on South Street and the Briggs/Beebe house on Manning hill- 1960's, Zollo's Market in Meadowbrook Plaza- 1970's and Guido's market on Main Street- 1990's.

John Hetzel, a forty-two year resident of Coventry, was very involved in the field of historic preservation and cultural history. He served on Coventry's 250th Celebration Committee in 1962 and shortly thereafter was instrumental in reviving the Coventry Historical Society and the Nathan Hale Ancient Fife and Drum Corps. Some of his writings are contained herein. He also revived an 1864 document of houses and homesites in the North Society.



John E. Hetzel (1907-1999)



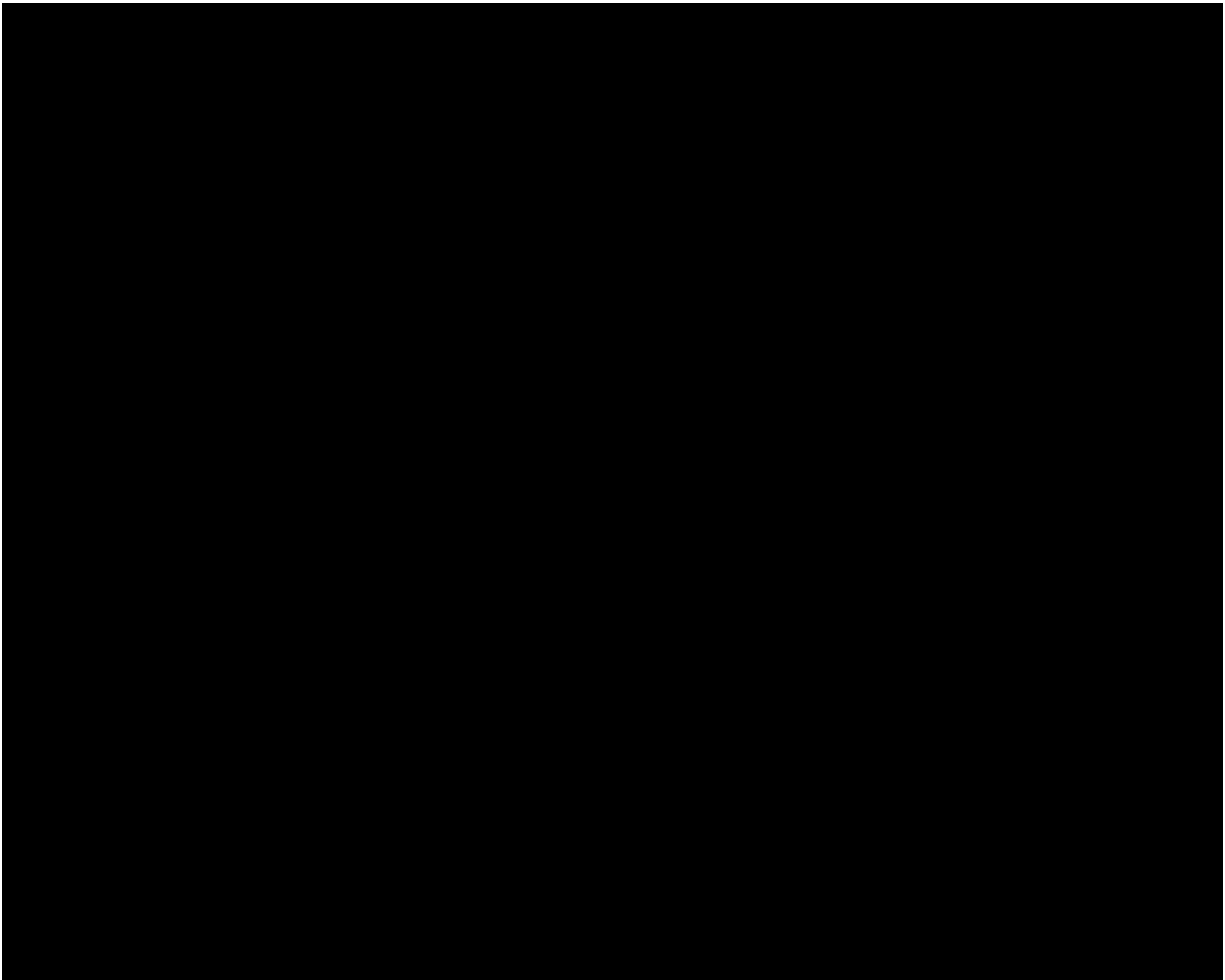
John E. Hetzel (1907-1999)

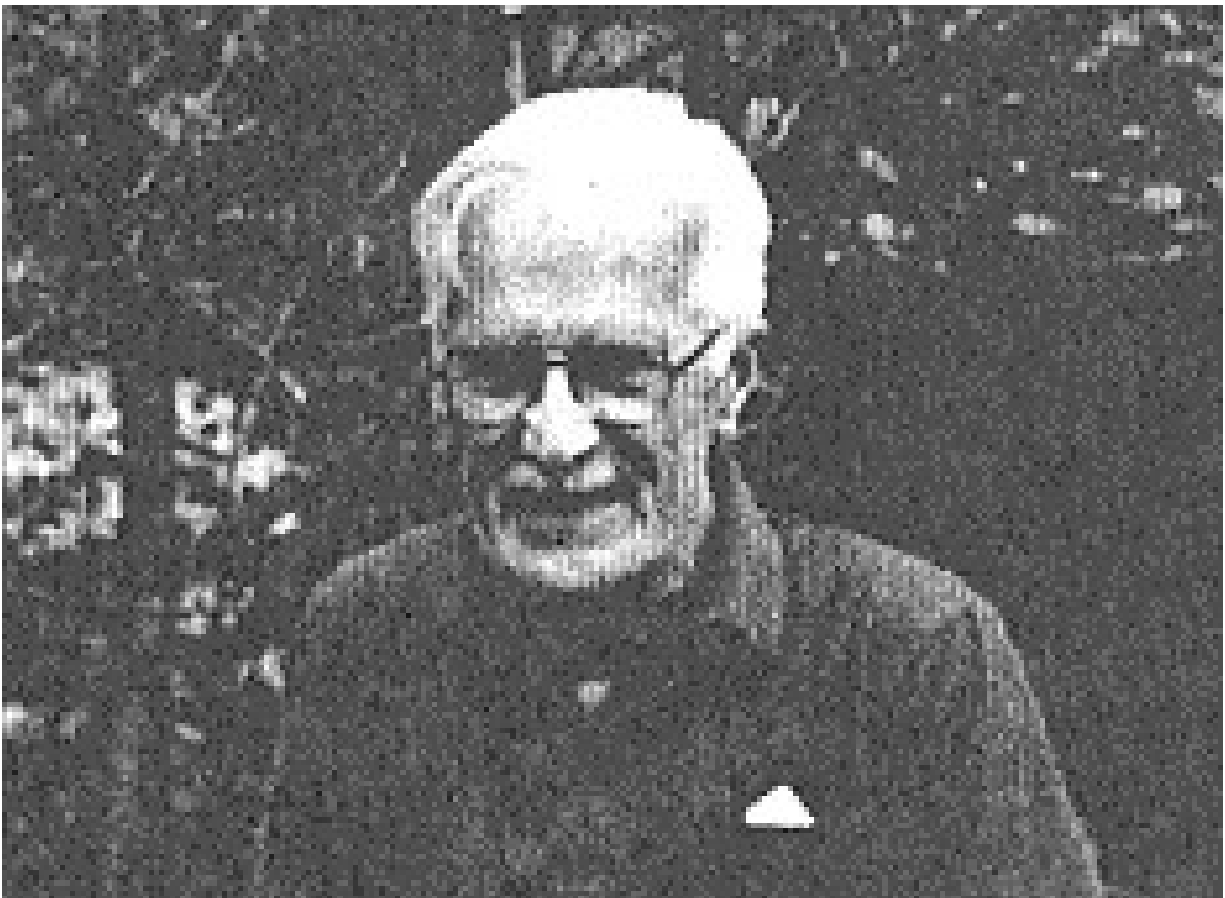
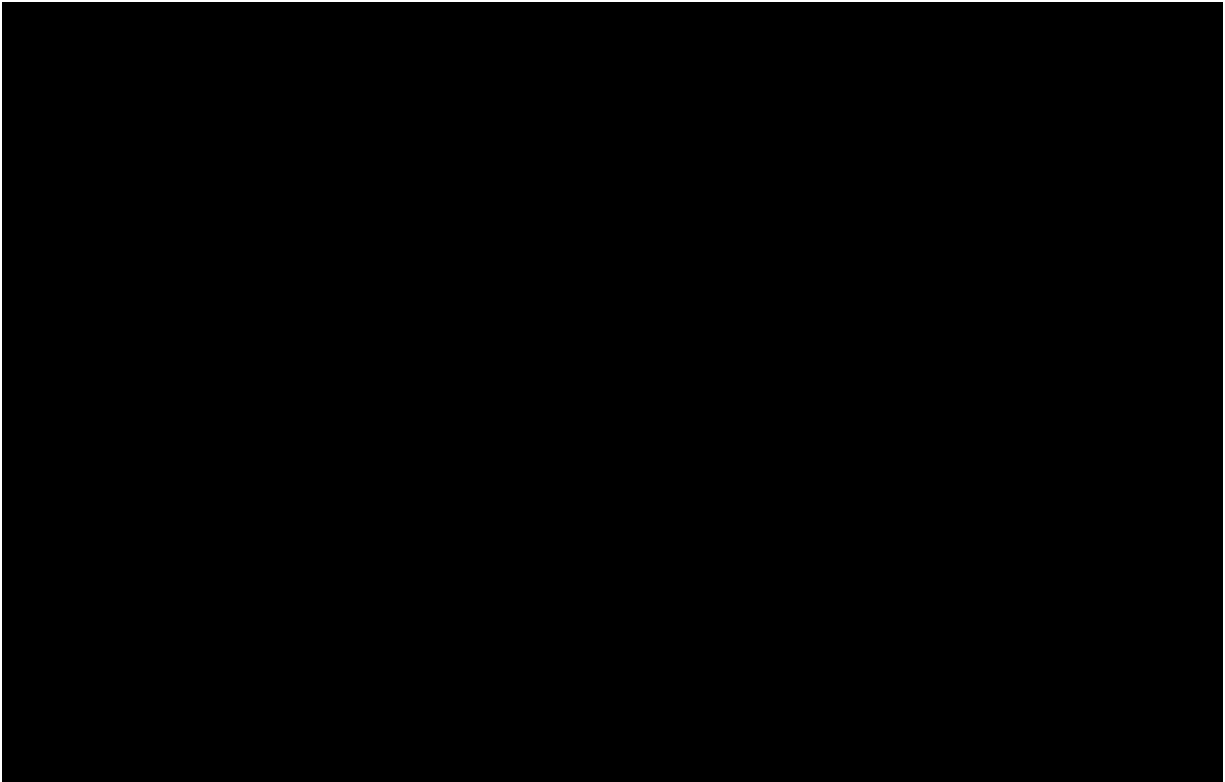


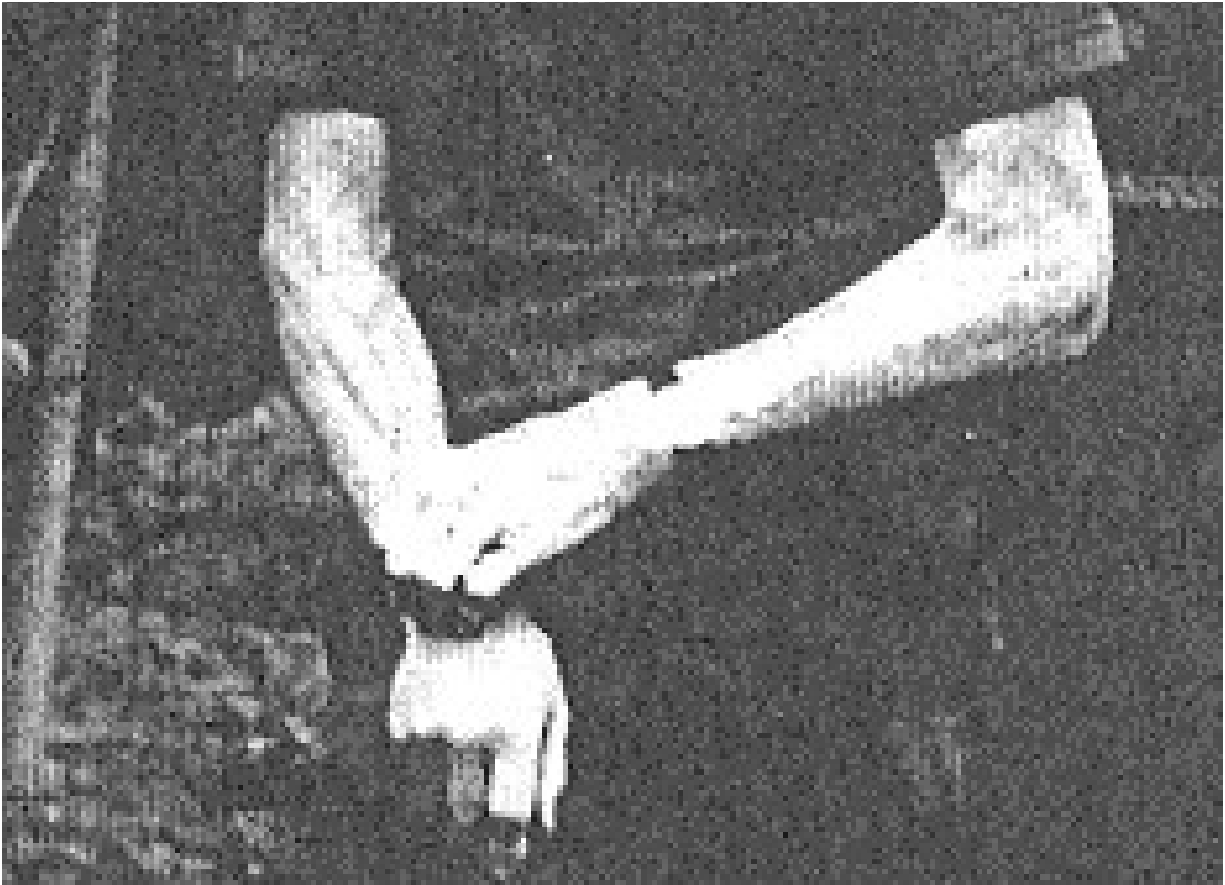
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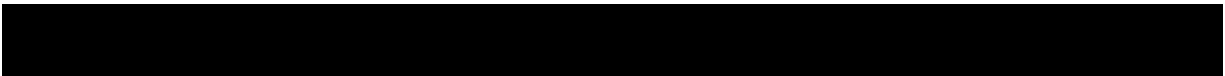
Jack Hetzel



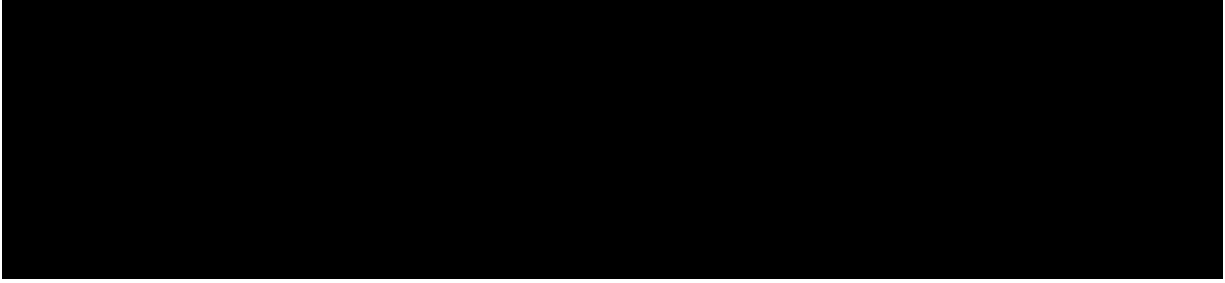




Since 1958, Coventry has been the home of a nationally renowned sculptor-David Hayes. His work is done in steel plate of various shapes and colors ranging in size from two feet to more than ten feet high. His work is found in many public and private collections in this country and in Europe. He has had over 300 exhibitions and is included in over 100 institutional collections including the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Mr. Hayes lives and works on an old farm in the southern part of Coventry.

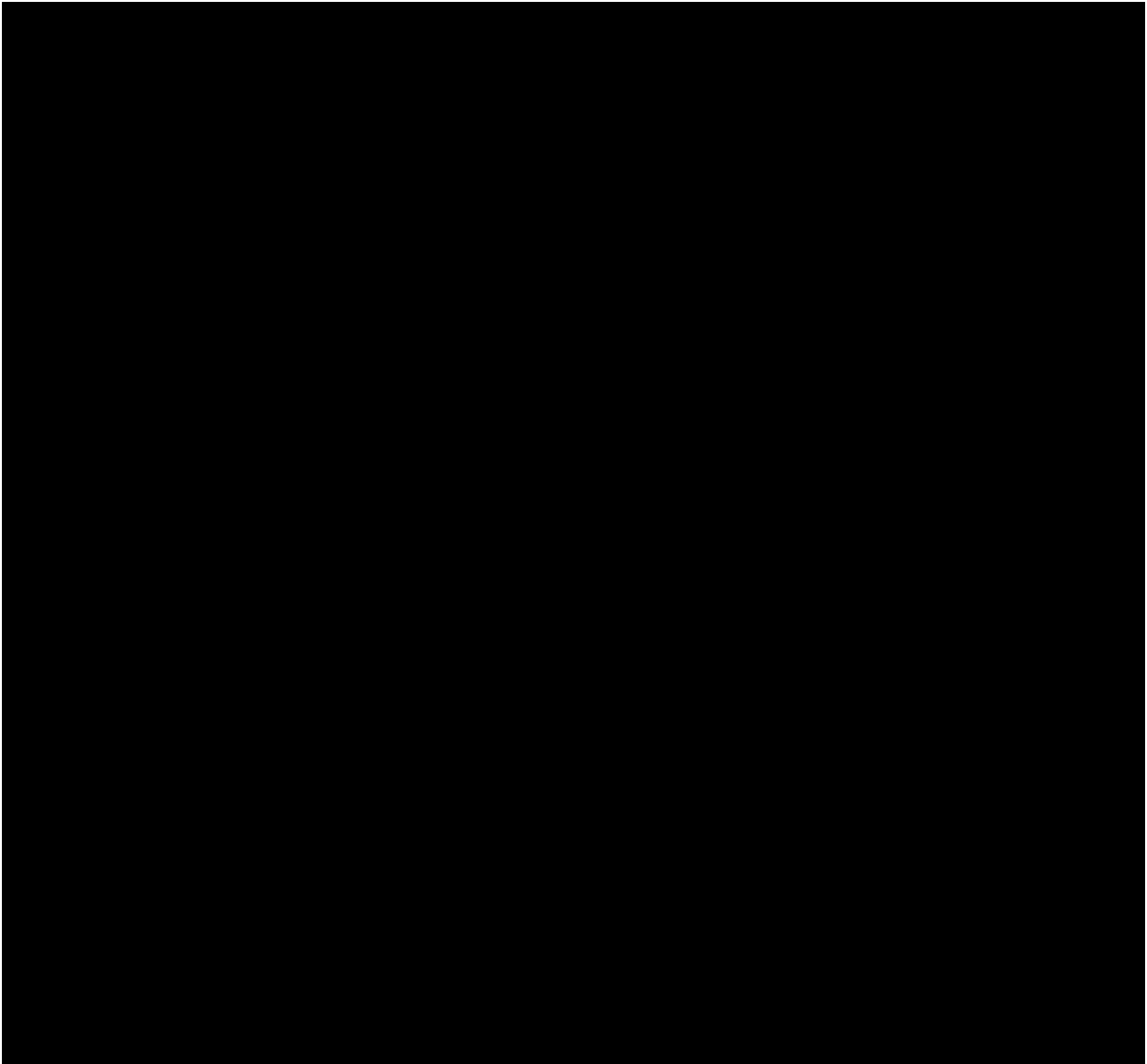


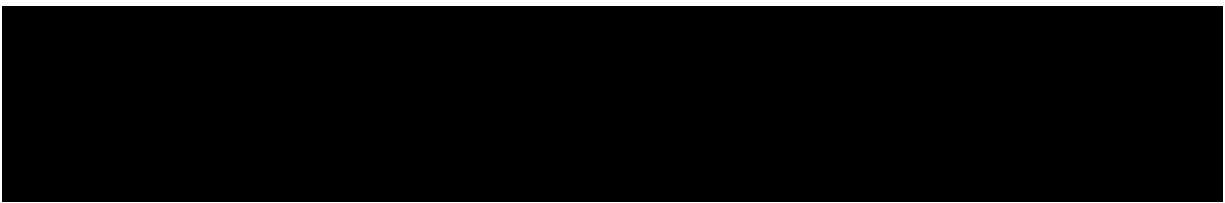
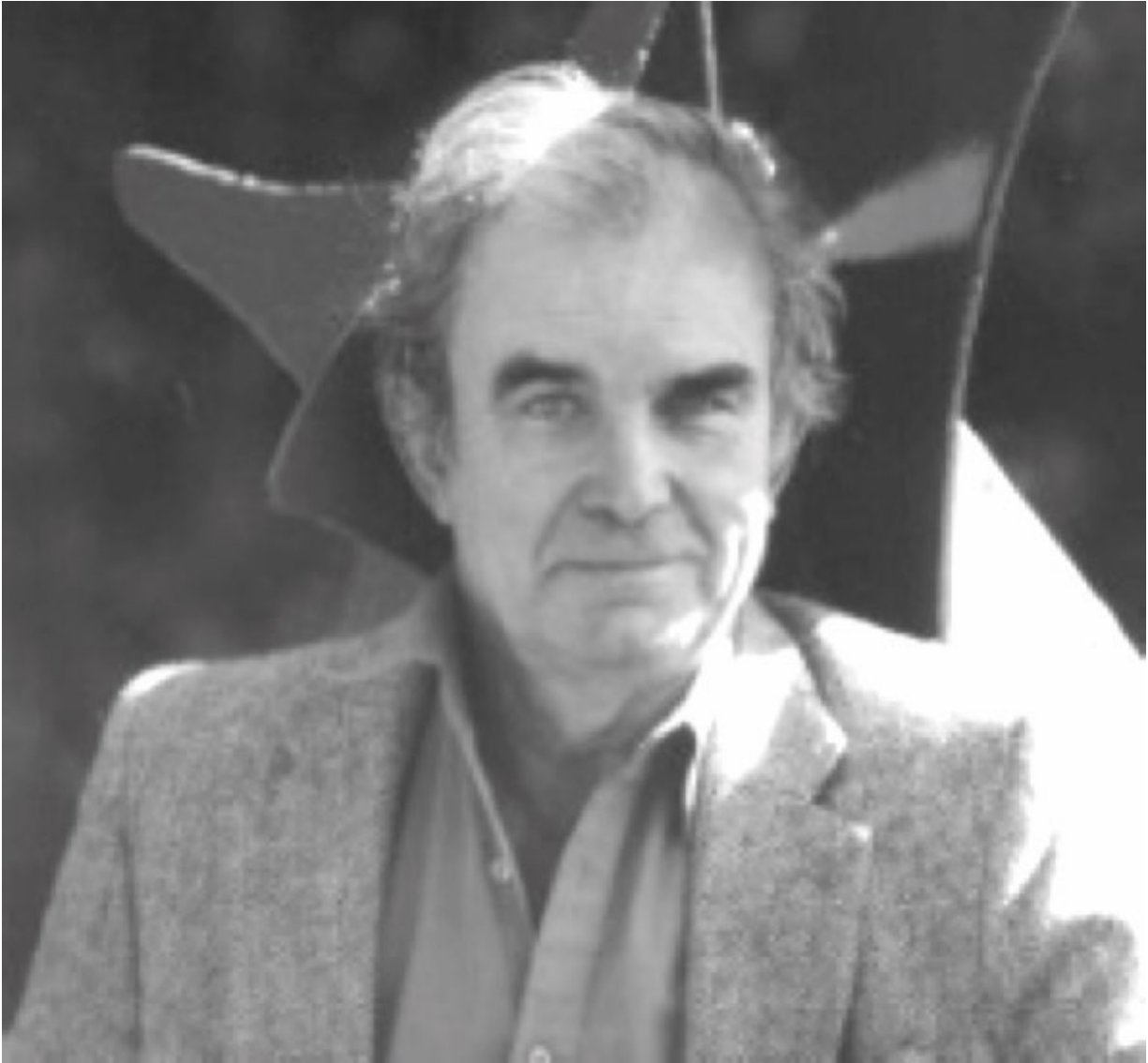
Sculptor David Hayes



Sculptor David Hayes



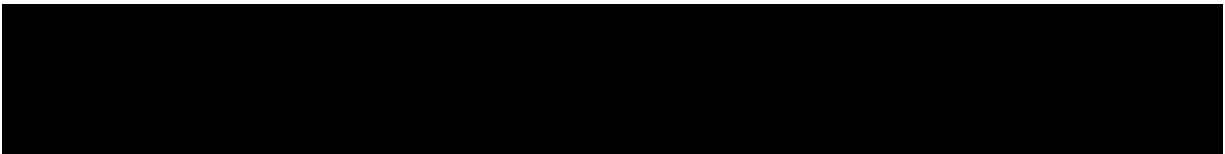




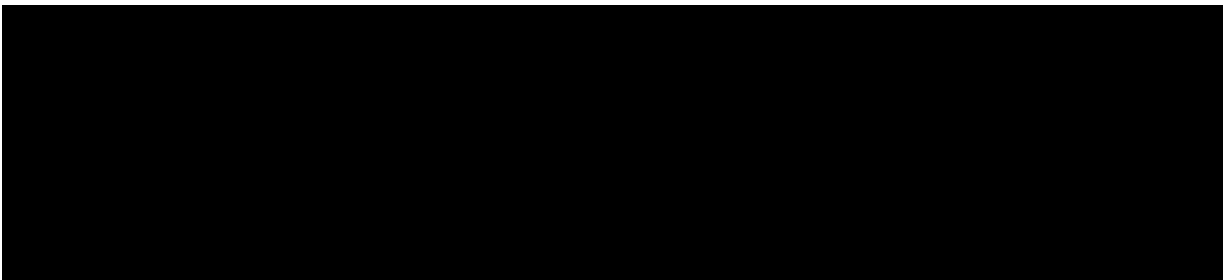
David Hayes

Ernest Woodworth and his wife, who made cider vinegar at the Boynton Mill at the head of the Mill Brook, died in 1945, and Anthony Tremont purchased the site. Mr. Tremont operated his appliance repair shop there until sometime before 1984, then gave up the operation due to his age. He lived at the mill until dying in 1984 when the mill was sold to the Gristmill Associates who own it today, rent apartments there and are dedicated to preserving the building and its heritage.

The old Tracy Shoddy Mill site on Main Street was occupied by the Coventry Volunteer Fire Department from 1936 to 2001, when it was purchased by Tim Ackert, a local electrician. He has refurbished the building for his business, a reception hall and a café. A dilapidated stone building also on the site was cleaned of its overgrowth by a community organization (The Village Improvement Society), and is now being considered for commercial space in the future. This building is adjacent to an entrance of the Mill Brook Park, and it is on the Mill Brook walkway.



Modern Uses of Two Mill Buildings in the Village



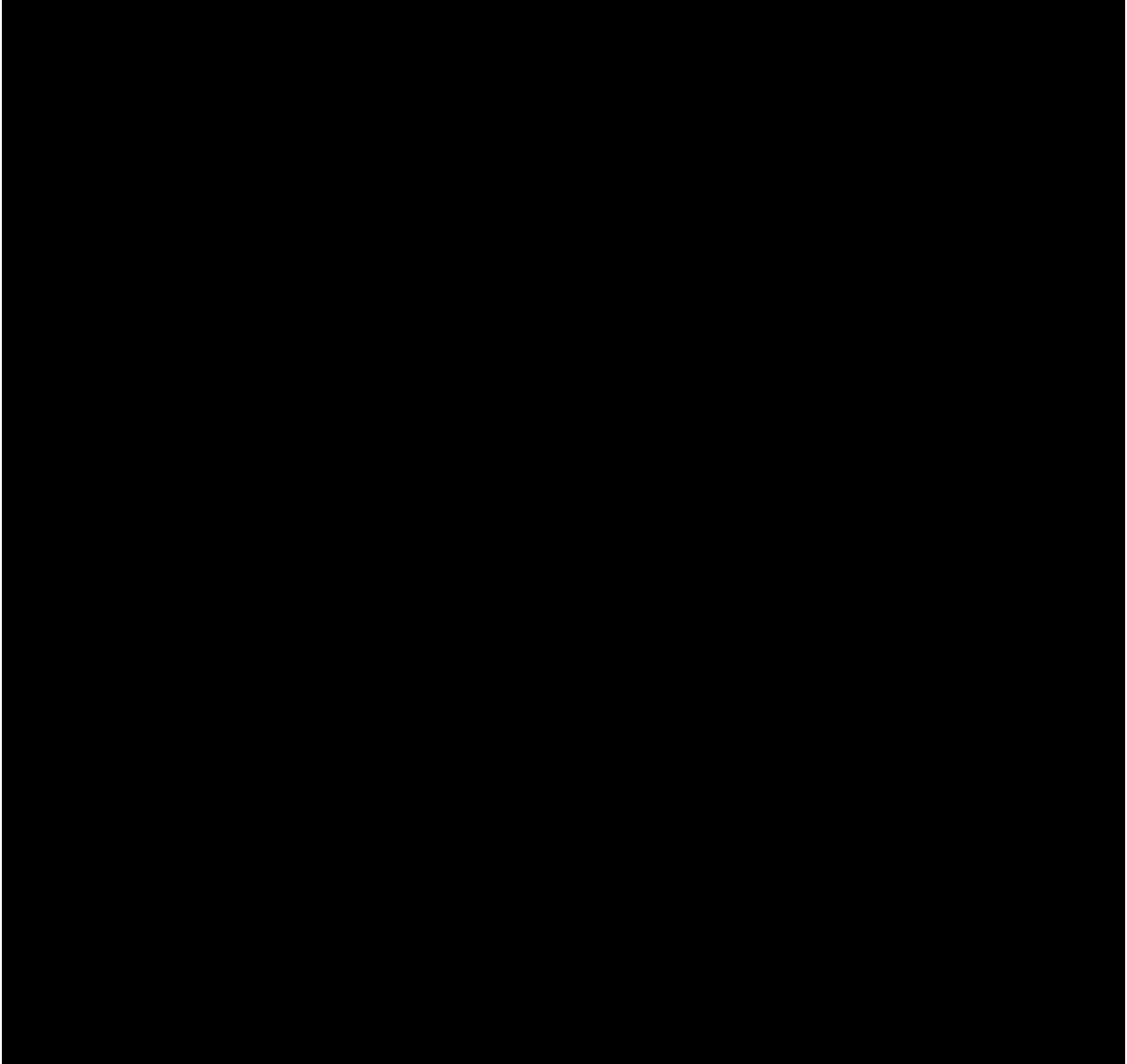
Modern Uses of Two Mill Buildings in the Village



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The 1980's and 1990's



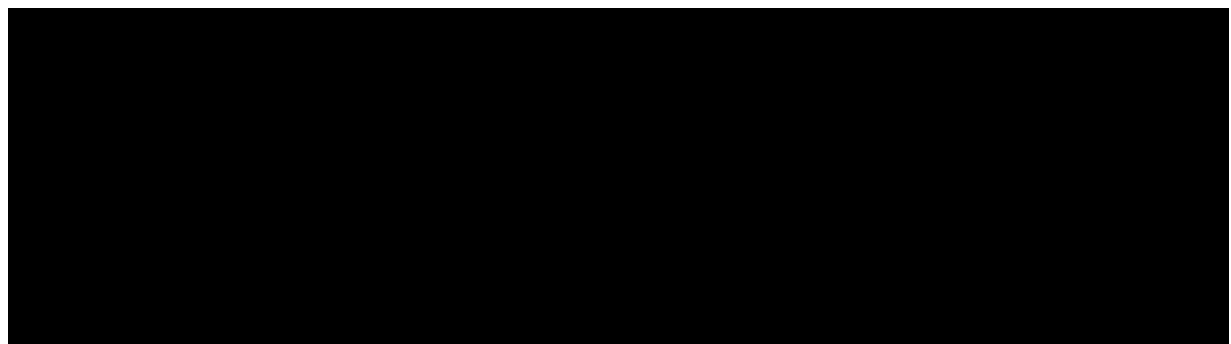
After almost a century of only modest growth and little change in overall land use patterns, the town of Coventry faced several forces of change. The town became a prime area for suburban expansion from Hartford and its adjacent eastern communities. Small scale farming declined and the open fields were prey to subdivision and development. The recently installed sewer system along lower Main Street raised some interesting questions about the impact of growth in the area. Following the closure of the last large mill in town (in the early 1970's), Coventry's base of local employment declined to a new low point. Commercial development stagnated and new homes were being built at a modest, but continuous pace

and the town transformed to a more prevalent bedroom community with a large percentage of residents now commuting to work. The town implemented new subdivision regulations in October 1979 which required careful planning and allowance for open spaces.

In the custody of the Coventry Police Department are two prison cells that survive from the Wethersfield State Prison. That facility opened in 1827 when eighty-one prisoners were transferred from the Newgate Prison in Granby. The Wethersfield prison was closed in 1963 and was demolished two years later. A concerned citizen arranged for the cells to be rescued and they have been in use by the Coventry Police since then. The dimensions of the cells are eight feet by five and one half feet. A thick sheet of metal pierced with rows of eight-pointed stars form the stationery part of the front wall. Amy Archer-Gilligan, a convicted serial killer, served time in one of the cells at Wethersfield in the early 1900's. She was believed to have poisoned (by arsenic) several residents of her Windsor old- age home. Her story reportedly inspired Joseph Kesselring's well-known play "Arsenic and Old Lace". The Coventry Police, upon moving to their new facility in the spring of 2006 are searching to find a suitable location to preserve these prison cells. (50)



Historic Prison Cells in Coventry



Historic Prison Cells in Coventry



Recognizing the historic and cultural value of Coventry Village and the fact that the area was in a period of decline, the town commissioned a far-ranging study in 1990 to identify the potential for the Village. The result was a very detailed “Plan of Preservation” for the Village. It identified the area as one of “impressive architectural and natural beauty, retaining, to a high degree, the significant cultural assets associated with its 18th and 19th century life as an industrial mill village”. (44) The plan detailed ideas and recommendations to protect the historic character, establish a framework for growth, protect natural assets and increase public awareness of the Village.

As a result of this study, and due to the foresight of town staff and Village advocacy groups, the following things have been done to meet the above-mentioned objectives:

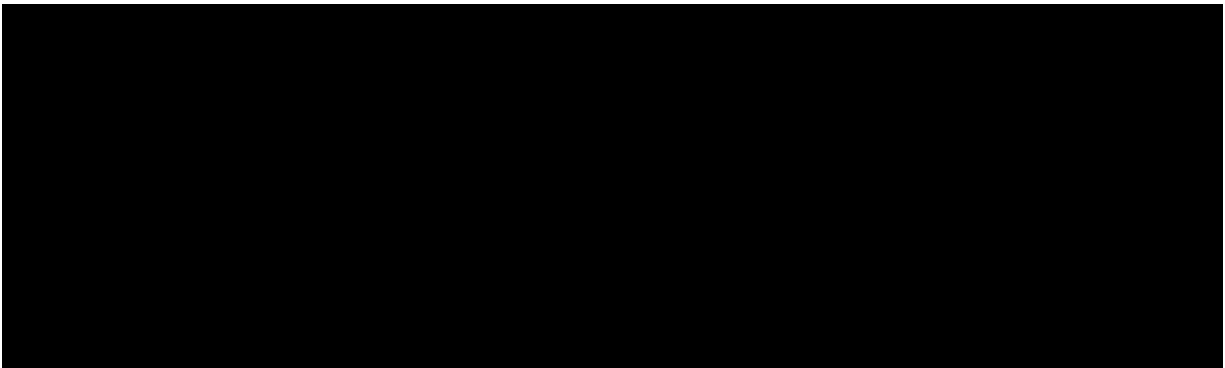
- Selectively promoted more intensive and appropriate uses in the Village.
- Revised the zoning regulations to allow more intense, mixed use development in the Village center while respecting the residential components.
- Purchased a seven and one-half acre tract with the cooperation of the Coutu family and designated it as public open space. Established a walking trail paralleling the Mill Brook in the park.
- Installed sidewalks from the lakeside to Monument Hill Road.
- Improved the services to residents and tourists at the Visitor’s Center.
- Acquired several state grants to stabilize the Kenyon Mill building and prepared a marketing plan and offer to developers.
- Acquired a state grant for local property owners to improve their building facades in a manner respectful of the Village.
- Worked with State DOT to put in place a Main Street road and access plan with better parking, sidewalks and roadside amenities.
- Developing the area’s tourist potential with the Hale homestead and the Quinebaug- Shetucket National Heritage Corridor.

Other items still in the discussion and planning stages are:

- Increase sidewalks along Main Street.
- A walking trail along the Mill Brook from Mason Street to Armstrong Road.
- Restore and reuse old mill pond(s)
- Revitalize the old mills on Mason Street for appropriate commercial growth.
- Attract more retail shopping and dining.



The Preservation Plan for Coventry Village



The Preservation Plan for Coventry Village



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Colonial (1750-1820)- Usually rectangular with the ridgepole parallel to the street, one or two stories sheathed in clapboard. One type has a central chimney and another with twin chimneys towards the ends. Examples include the Lyman House at 113 Lake Street and the Rose house at 54 High Street, also the LeDoyt house at 396 Main Street and the Dow house at 940 Main Street. Many others exist around town.

Federal (1780-1830)- Distinguished by decorative features including fanlights and intricate cornices. Examples include the Boynton house at the corner of Lake and Main Streets and the Swift house at 686 Main Street.

Greek Revival (1830-1860)- Distinguished by doorways framed by pilasters and entablatures, pilasters and dentils are common. Often oriented with gable ends facing the street. The Bidwell Hotel is an example of this style as is the Wellwood Store at 1140 Main Street, the First Congregational Church, and the Huntington house on Armstrong Road. Also the Marcey home at 4 Wall Street, the Beckwith home at 1090 Main Street, and the Kingsbury home at 86 Depot Road.

Gothic Revival (1840-1880)- Characterized by a steeply pitched roof with gables. The sole example is the Kenyon house at 925 Main Street.

Italianate (1850-1880)- Distinguished by round- arched windows, shallow roofs and overhanging eaves, bay windows and elaborate porches. A variation of this is the Henry Mason House on Mason Street and the Kingsbury house adjacent on Wall Street. Other examples are the Capron-

Phillips house at 1129 Main Street, and the Tillinghast house at 146 Wall Street. Mr. Tillinghast was a carpenter in the late 1800's.

Victorian Vernacular (1870-1910)- Having simple building plans with ornamental porch details and stained glass elements. Examples are the old parsonage at 160 Wall Street and the 1876 building (Visitors Center).

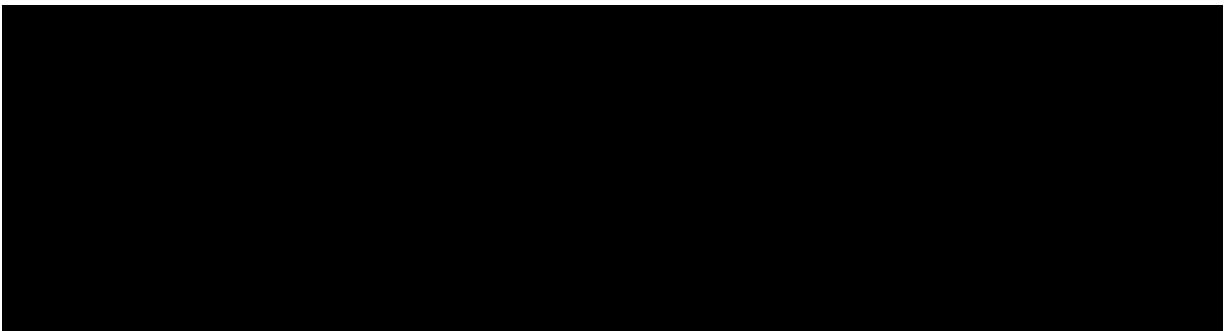
Queene Anne (1880-1910)- Having complex building plans and detailing. Roof lines may be a maze of cross gables. Towers are popular. Wood

shingles having several shapes are another design element. Examples include the houses at 46 and 56 Prospect Street as well as the American Legion Hall on Wall Street.

Bungalow or Craftsman (1910-1930)- Small buildings with a forward sloping roof covering an integral porch, textured siding and brackets along the roof. The lone example is the home at 84 Prospect Street.



Architecture of the Village (45)

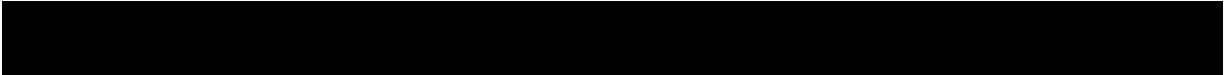


Architecture of the Village (45)



Arnold moved to Coventry from Hartford in 1950, though he had been summering here with his parents since 1939. Arnold was an engineer in Hartford until his retirement. He resided on the northwest side of the lake (Oak Grove) and also rented cottages. He has served on the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Village Improvement Society, and today is involved in the Coventry Glass Museum. For the past several decades, Arnold has been collecting historical material about Coventry, especially about the Village mills, and he has an extensive library of this material. He co-wrote a booklet about the history of Boynton's Mill in 1987.

His library and personal knowledge is a wealth of information about the town. He has been consulted by a wide range of individuals regarding Coventry history and has been quoted in several books written on the ammunition shops in town in the late 1800's. He has assisted virtually all historical and archeological surveys done about the town over the past several decades. Information and resources provided by Arnold are contained in many areas of this book.

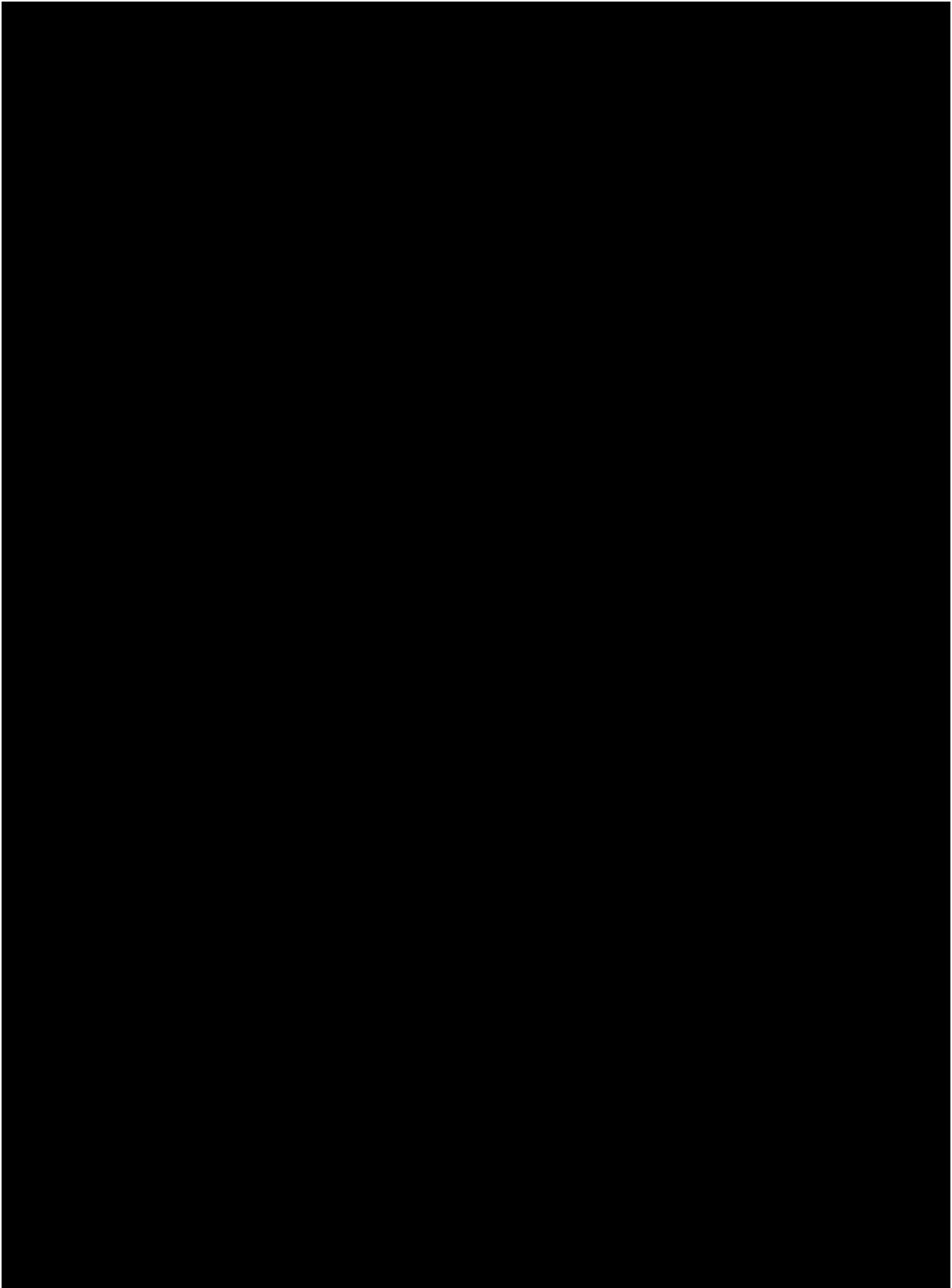


Arnold Carlson

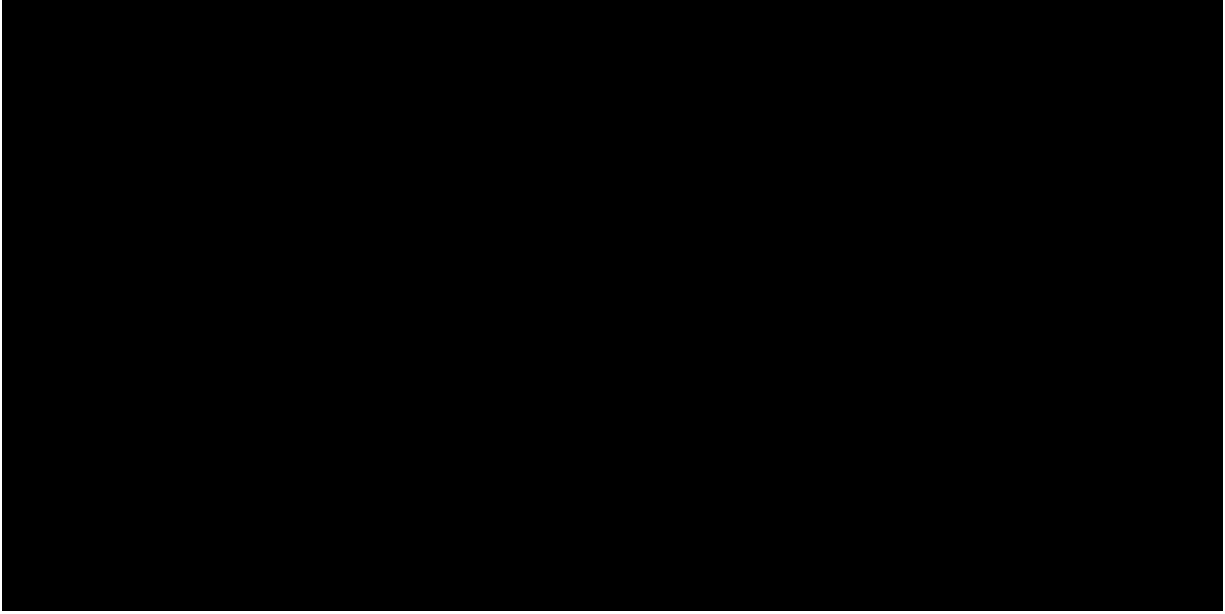


Arnold Carlson







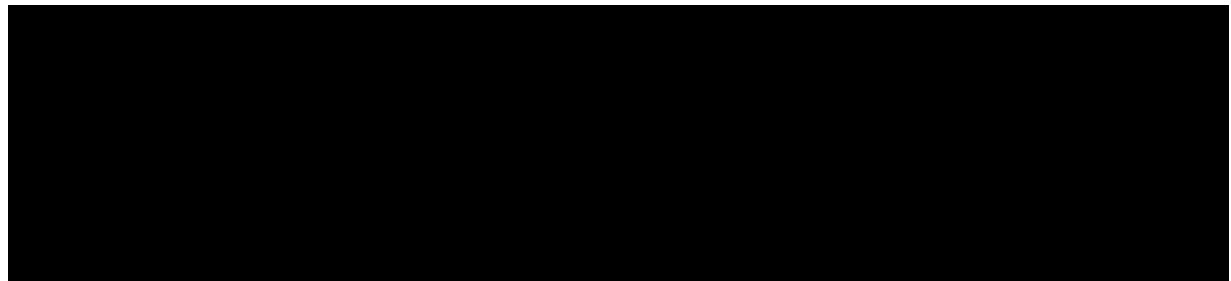


Arnold Carlson

In May of 2000, Captain Nathan Hale School Students researched veterans living in the town of Coventry from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Veterans shared stories with the students and a commemorative quilt was prepared with a panel for each veteran interviewed. The quilt now hangs next to the school auditorium. On Veterans Day 2000, the students gave the veterans a book containing their biographies and a video of the project. This effort spawned an even larger project which entailed creating a biographical sketch for each of the 612 service men from Connecticut that were killed during the Vietnam Conflict. To visually enhance the project, a large map was painted on a wall across from the auditorium with the names of each veteran.



The Wall That Heals - May 2002

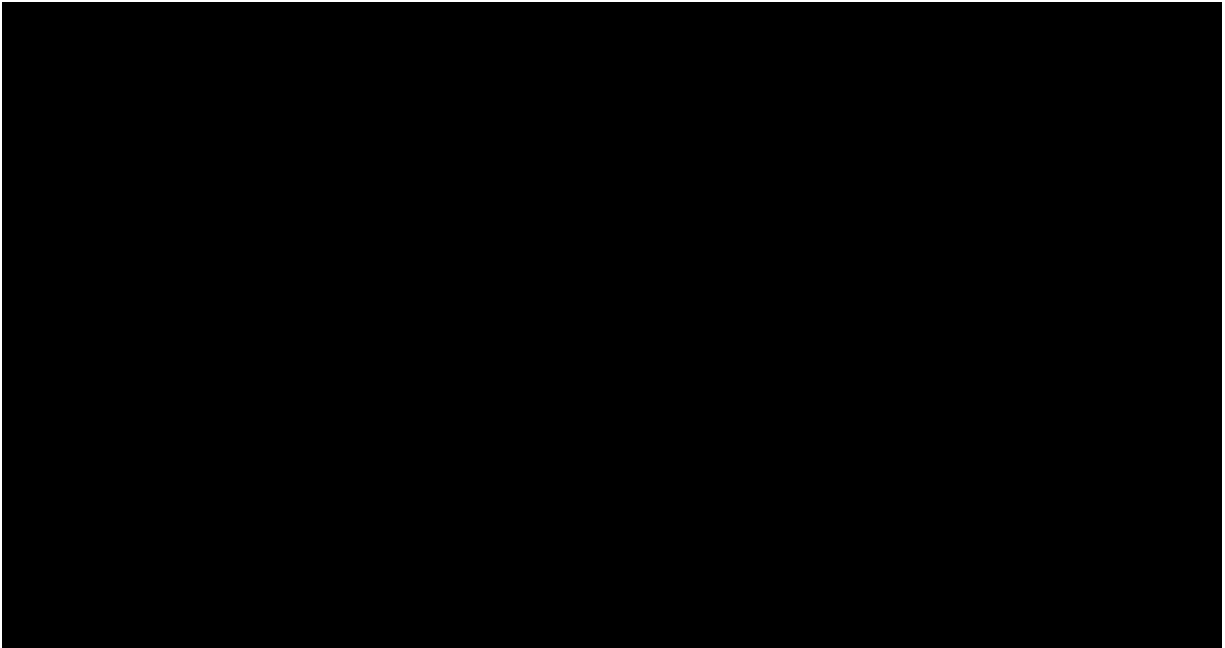


The Wall That Heals - May 2002





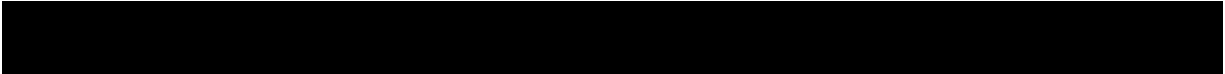
Special Thank You



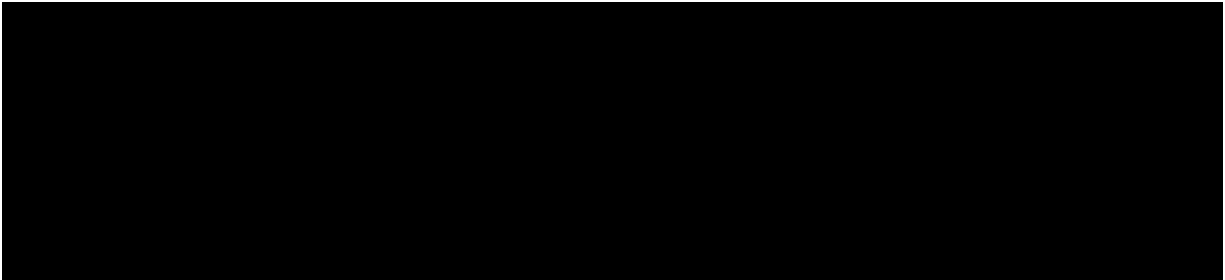
The Veteran's Map at the Middle School

This memorial is the only place in Connecticut where all 612 names of the men killed or missing in action are listed. Grant Funding was obtained to bring the Wall That Heals to Coventry. This wall is known as the Traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum Exhibit. A four day event in May of 2002 at the Middle School celebrated the memorial.

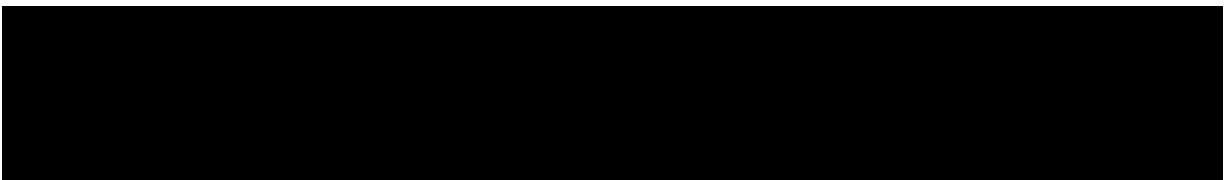
Joan is long time resident of Coventry and has contributed her time and effort in many ways for the betterment of the community. Joan was a member of the Board of Education for twelve years (chairman for five years), and a member of the Town Council for eighteen years (chairman for six years). She now represents Coventry in the State Legislature.



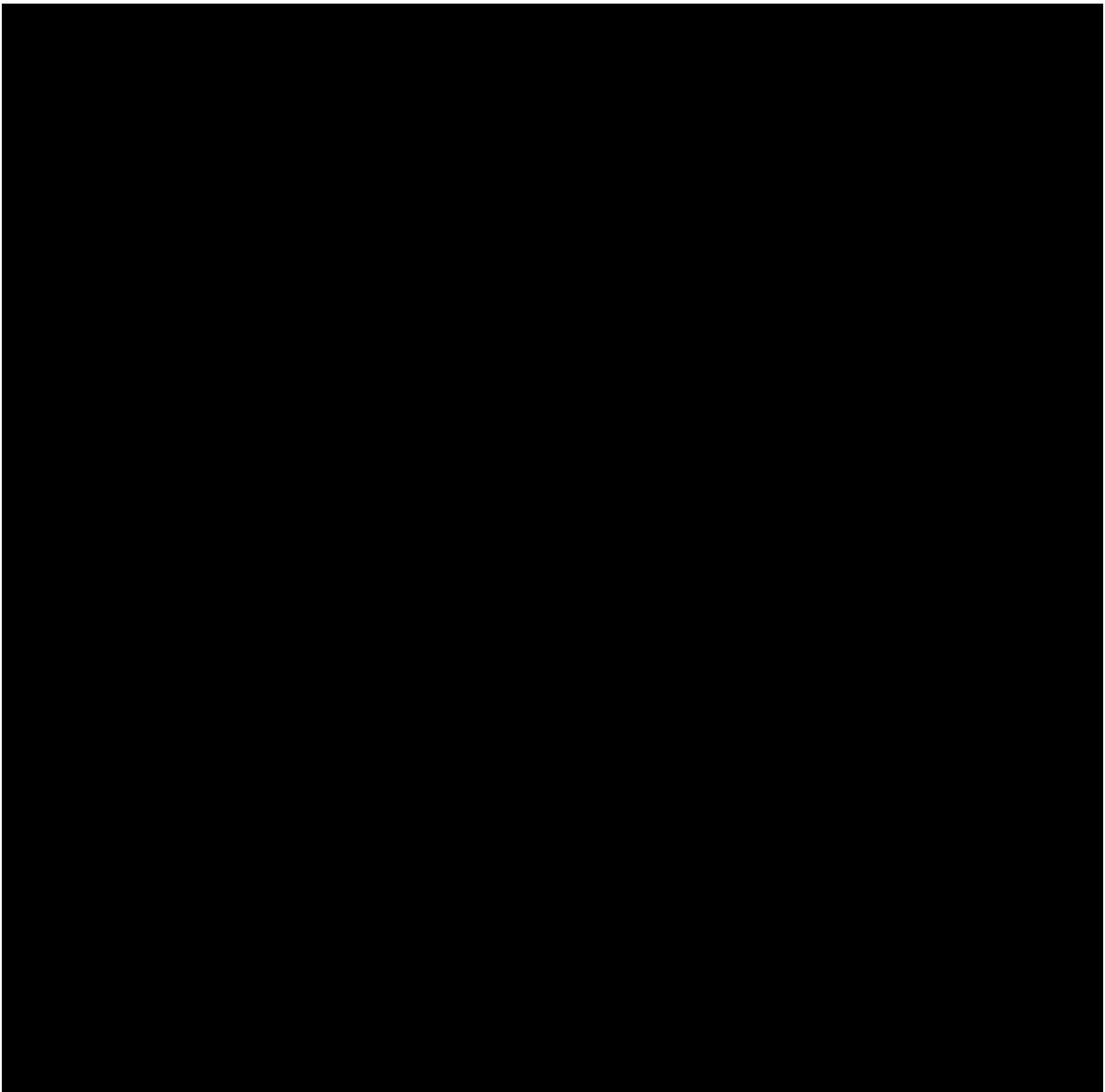
Joan Lewis



Joan Lewis



Joan Lewis

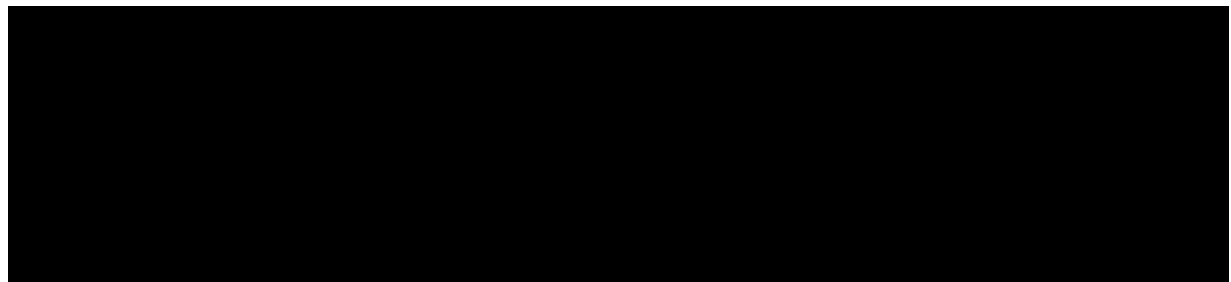




The Village Improvement Society was re-formed in 1993 by Pat Pelkey and has been serving the community well since then. It has distributed and planted several hundred thousand daffodils throughout town which grace us with their beauty in the spring. It sponsors a poetry reading for the third grade students associated with planting and cultivating the daffodils. The society has contributed to the purchase of Mill Brook Park and to the fifteen historic signs in the Village. It published a book called “Images of Coventry” which captures historic photographs of the town. The society continues to work for the betterment of the community and the enhancement of Coventry Village.



The Village Improvement Society

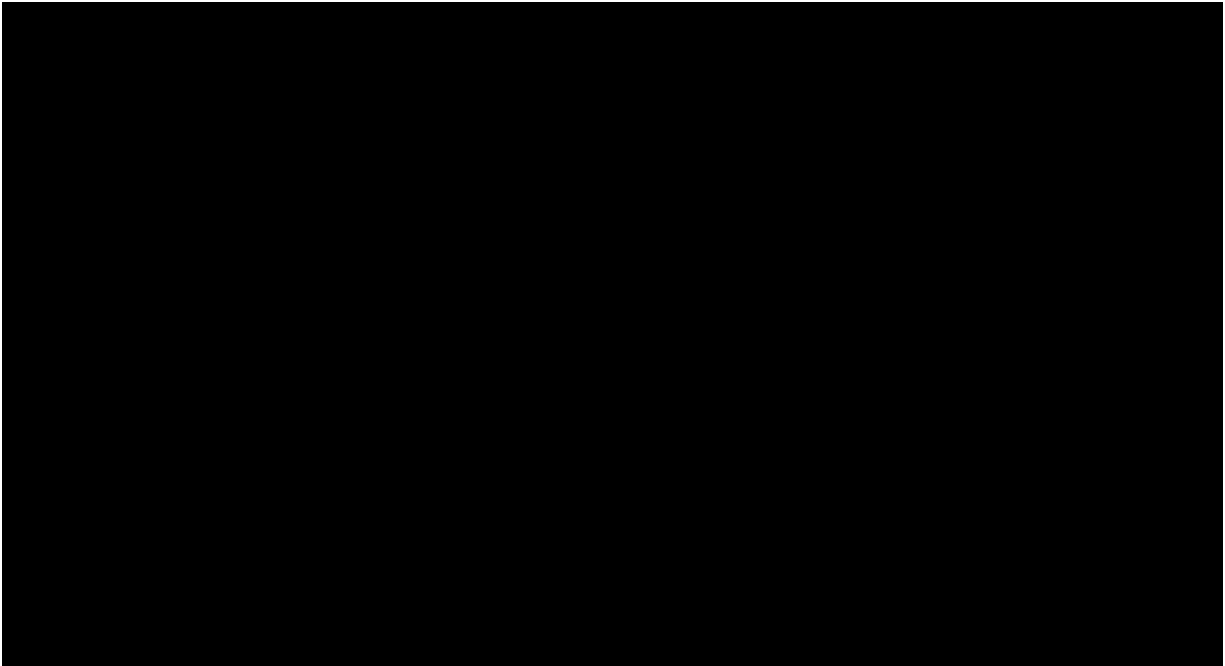


The Village Improvement Society





Coventry Farmers Market



At the corner of Route 44 and North River Road is located the Coventry Regional Farmers Market which is operated by volunteers associated with the Economic Development Commission. The Market is open Sundays from June to October and has become a very exciting and popular venue for local growers. Demonstrations associated with food products are held weekly.



Coventry today is considered an emerging bedroom community whose tax base is 97% residential. It retains an eclectic mix of individuals as it has for over 200 years. There are several thriving dairy farms. The herb farm started by Adelma Grenier Simmons is still in existence and two other herb farms/shops thrive. Horse farms are prevalent. One mill site, now owned by the Teleflex Corporation making sutures, has been in continuous industrial operation in one form or another since 1716. The Coventry Historical Society keeps three buildings and preserves much of our past. Community service organizations are thriving, and when coupled with the school system and volunteer town committees, it is estimated that some 400 residents give some of their time freely for the betterment of the community.

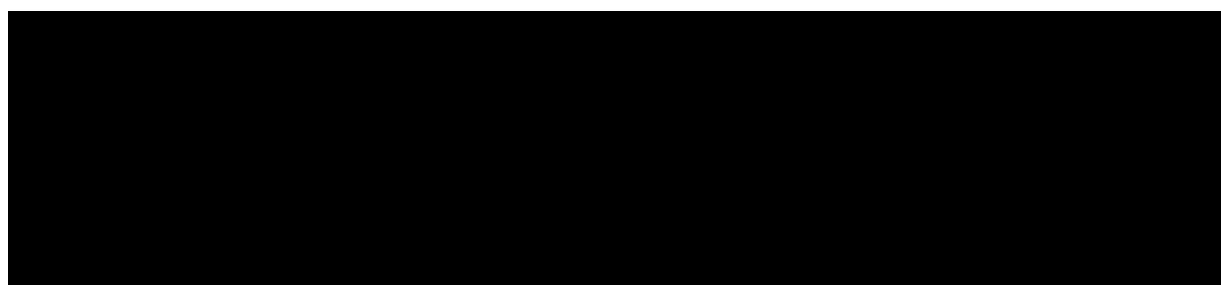
There is a very active community of exceptionally talented artisans that create beautiful items. Coventry has one of the oldest General Stores in the nation. Recent zoning regulations recognize the growth potential and risks and provide a good balance between the two. Coventry Village is experiencing a resurgence of retail and food service destinations centered around a volunteer-based Visitors Center. In the past few years, municipal improvements have included a greatly expanded middle/high school, a new firehouse, a new police station and significant sewer coverage for the lake area .

Coventry Fire Station #8 - Dedicated May 2000

Coventry Police Station - Dedicated June 2006

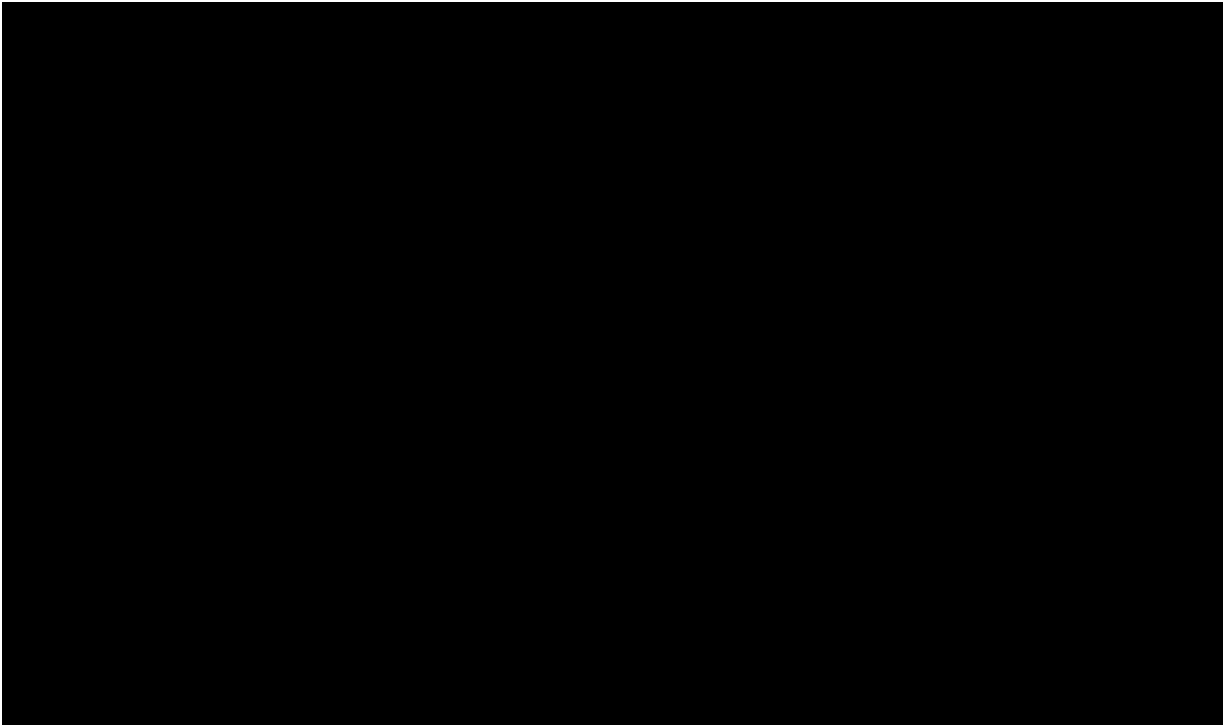


Social Comment - Today



Social Comment - Today





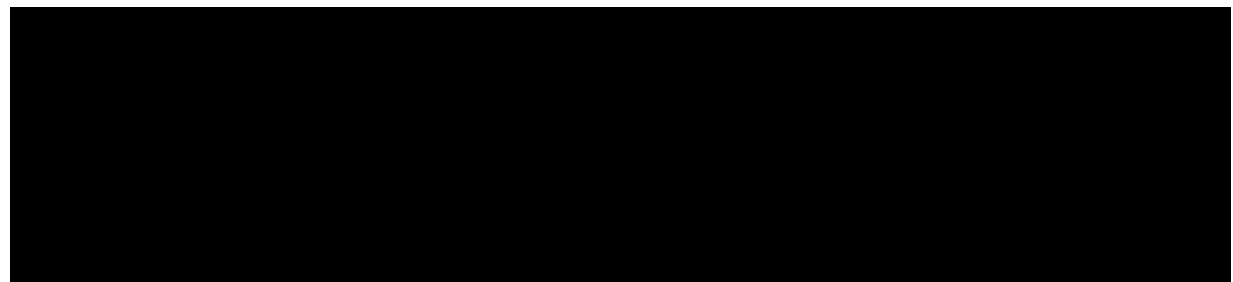


For walking and hiking, Coventry's residents have many options. The Riverview Trail at the corner of Merrow Road and Riverview Drive offers a short trip along the Willimantic River. Behind the High School is a woodland trail with access just off the athletic fields. On Merrow Road, Laidlaw Park offers a short walking trail. Both grammar schools have trails on their premises. The Mill Brook Greenway begins at the Patriot's Park boat launch, passing the Town Green and Hale Cemetery, then to Coventry Village, where it joins a historic walk of fifteen marked sites in the Village and the Mill Brook Park trail beginning behind Ackert Electric. Creaser Park on Case Road has over two miles of trail by the Skungamaug River. The Nathan Hale State

Forest has an unmaintained trail that begins across from the Strong-Porter Museum on South Street. The unpaved Rails-to-Trails course that follows the old rail line along the Hop River can be accessed from Flanders Road and Pucker Street. Coventry has two eighteen-hole golf courses that are very scenic and challenging. The Skungamaug River course (5,785 yards) is located on Folly Lane, and the Twin Hills course (6,275 yards) is located on Bread & Milk Street.



Coventry's Trails and Open Space



Coventry's Trails and Open Space



Today the brook flows from a town controlled gate at the foot of the lake through a narrow channel between two parking lots. It crosses Lake Street then down a narrow, stone wall lined channel, probably built by John Boynton, to the Boynton Mill which is now used for apartments, then underground through a stone-arched tunnel to a small pond upstream of the Telaflex factory which makes sutures by a similar process started by T.H. Wood in the late 1800's. The brook tumbles over a ten-to-twelve foot waterfall and down another stone lined channel under the Telaflex building and Monument Hill Road. It emerges at a fire pond in front of Tim Ackert's electrician's shop, one of two remaining buildings from the Tracy shoddy mill. It flows through a natural channel which used to be the Mill Pond and is now part of the Mill Brook Park.

The brook continues adjacent to the Clock & Whale factory, which once had a dam that created the Mill Pond, and contains an old water turbine then under the old Kingsbury Box Factory building on Mason Street. Downstream of Mason Street are the ruins of the Phoenix Cartridge factory and a tail race that served the site. Next the brook continues through a natural wide channel that used to be Kingsbury (Nelson) Pond serving the Washington Mill. The site now holds the Town Garage. The brook flows over rock ledge and through a stone wall lined channel into and under part of the town complex and emerges to run under Bradbury Lane to a small, partially filled pond on Woods Lane.

It then tumbles over a fifteen foot water fall that used to serve the penstock for the Wood's mills. After emerging under Woods Lane, the brook flows through two channels across the old Wood's site, one of which was a spillway and the other the route of the penstock which is gone, but about a dozen metal hoop ties that used to wrap the penstock are rusting in its bed. The two channels pass through a site that previously held the Globe mill then meet at Kenyon pond. The brook again tumbles over a fifteen foot water fall into a 200 foot long channel with beautiful high stone walls on either side. Parallel to this is the tail race for the old Kenyon Mill with one large three-story building built in the 1860's parallel to the dam and has a very substantial stone foundation and the remains of a water turbine.

The brook then flows through a natural channel past the remains of the stone foundations of three mills on Armstrong Road, two of which had their own dams and ponds. It then passes under Snake Hill Road to a large section of untouched wetlands. The brook emerges to flow under Main Street through twin stone arched passages, erected during the construction of the old trolley line. Following this, the brook flows into the four acre oblong shaped Factory Pond that served the satin and paper mills since the 1830's and whose dam, though in need of attention, remains today. Downstream of the dam are the remains of the stone foundation of the Sterling Fibreboard Company. The brook then flows under Depot Road and, for its last few hundred feet ambles quietly until it merges, unobtrusively, with the Willimantic River as it has for centuries.

The Mill Brook Upstream of the Kenyon Mill



The Mill Brook Today



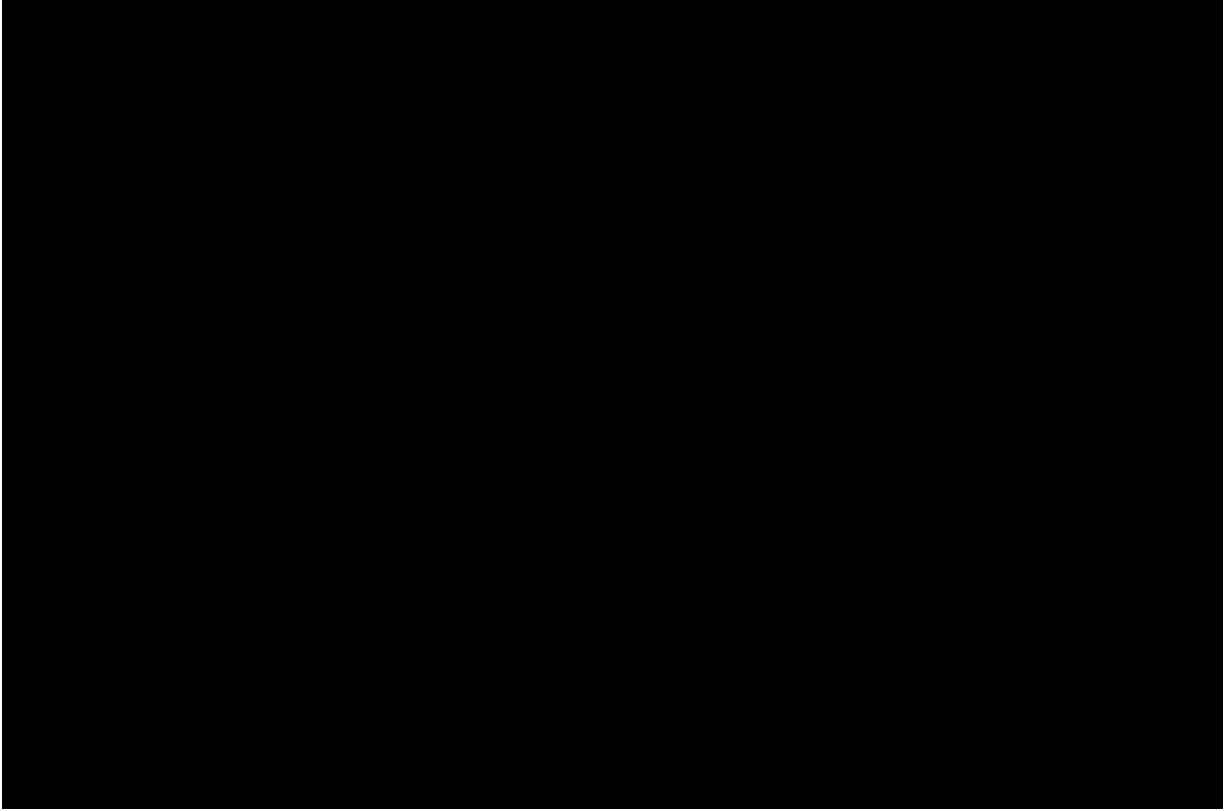
The Mill Brook Today



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No. 3, September 1985-June 1986. Also the Willimantic Daily Chronicle.

20. From the notes of Jesse A. Brainard June 8, 1989, Coventry Town Clerk's Office

21. "When I Was a Girl in The Martin Box", Orra Parker Phelps. Reprinted 2003

22. From the notes of Suzanne Brainard, courtesy of Arnold Carlson

23. "Looking Back" by Jesse Brainard, Coventry Historical Society "Signpost", November 1992, January

1993, October 1993, December 1994, January 1996.

24. Contributed by Arnold Carlson.

25. By William McKinney in the Coventry Historical Society "Signpost". April-September 2005

26. By Peter Hershonik in the Coventry Historical Society "Signpost". February-March 2005

27. From an interview with Lyn Wilmot, ex-Chief of Police.

28. Connecticut State Department of Transportation.

29. Contributed by John Sears, Malabar, Florida, 2005

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References



References



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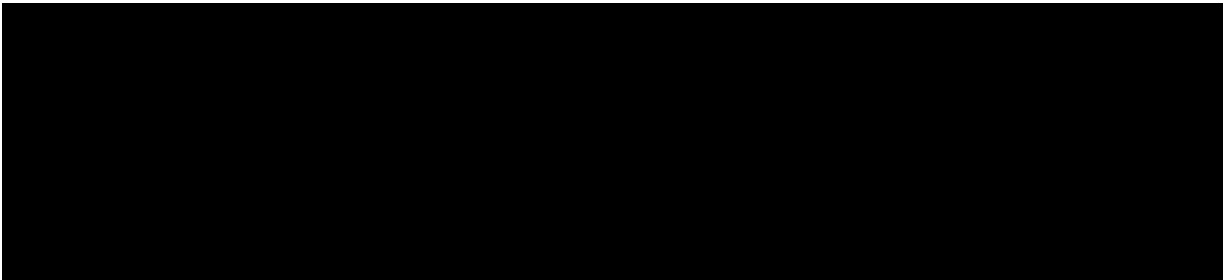


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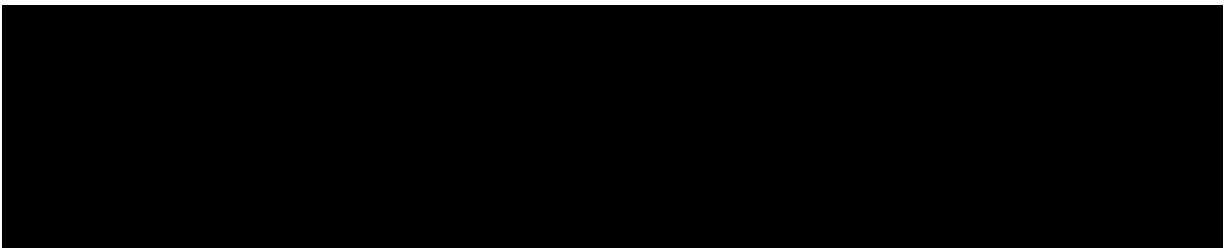


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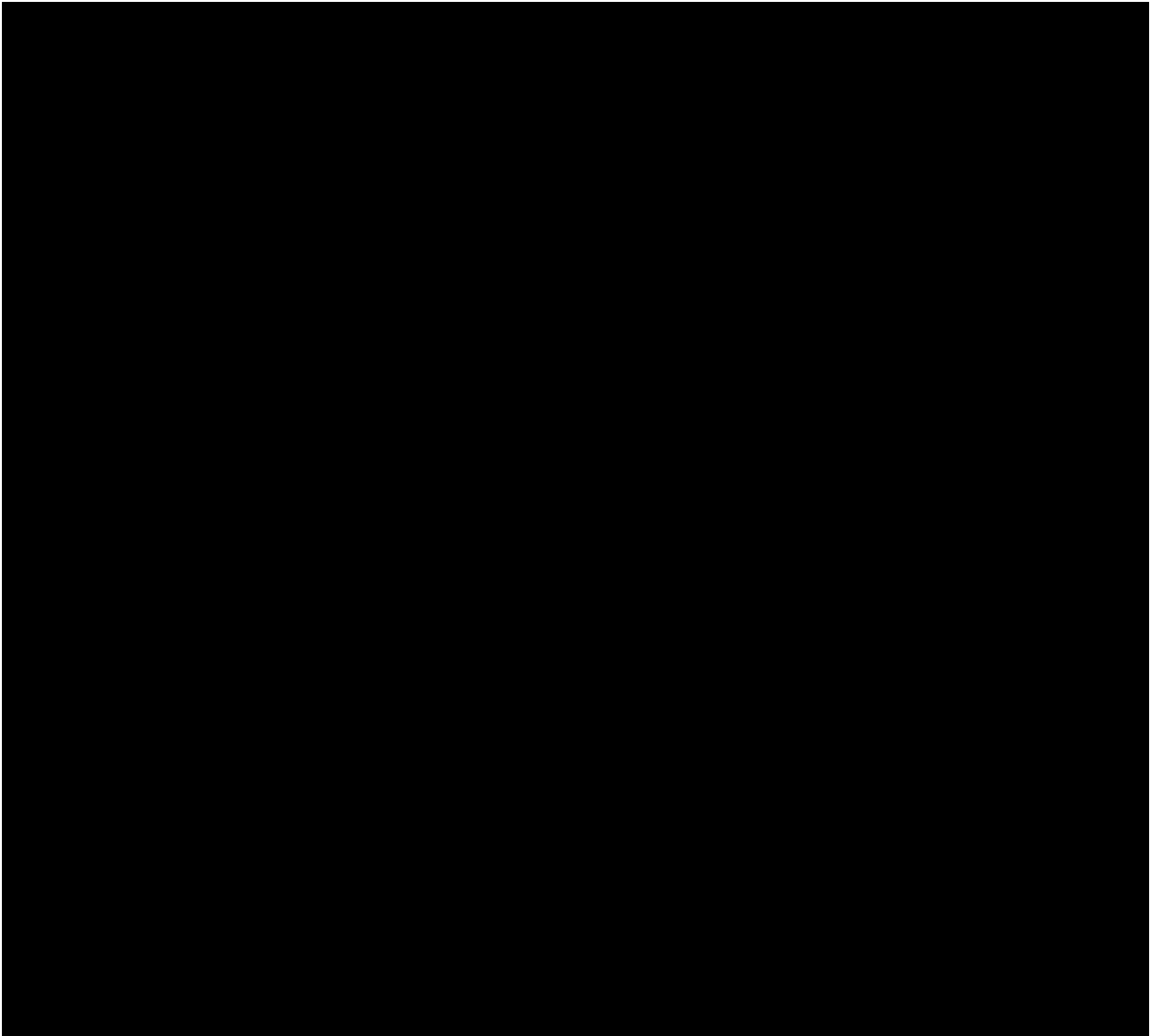
Bill Jobbagy is a resident of Coventry and is interested in all historical accounts of the town. His previous book, entitled “A History of the Water Powered Mills in Coventry, Connecticut” was published in January of 2005.



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Bill Jobbagy





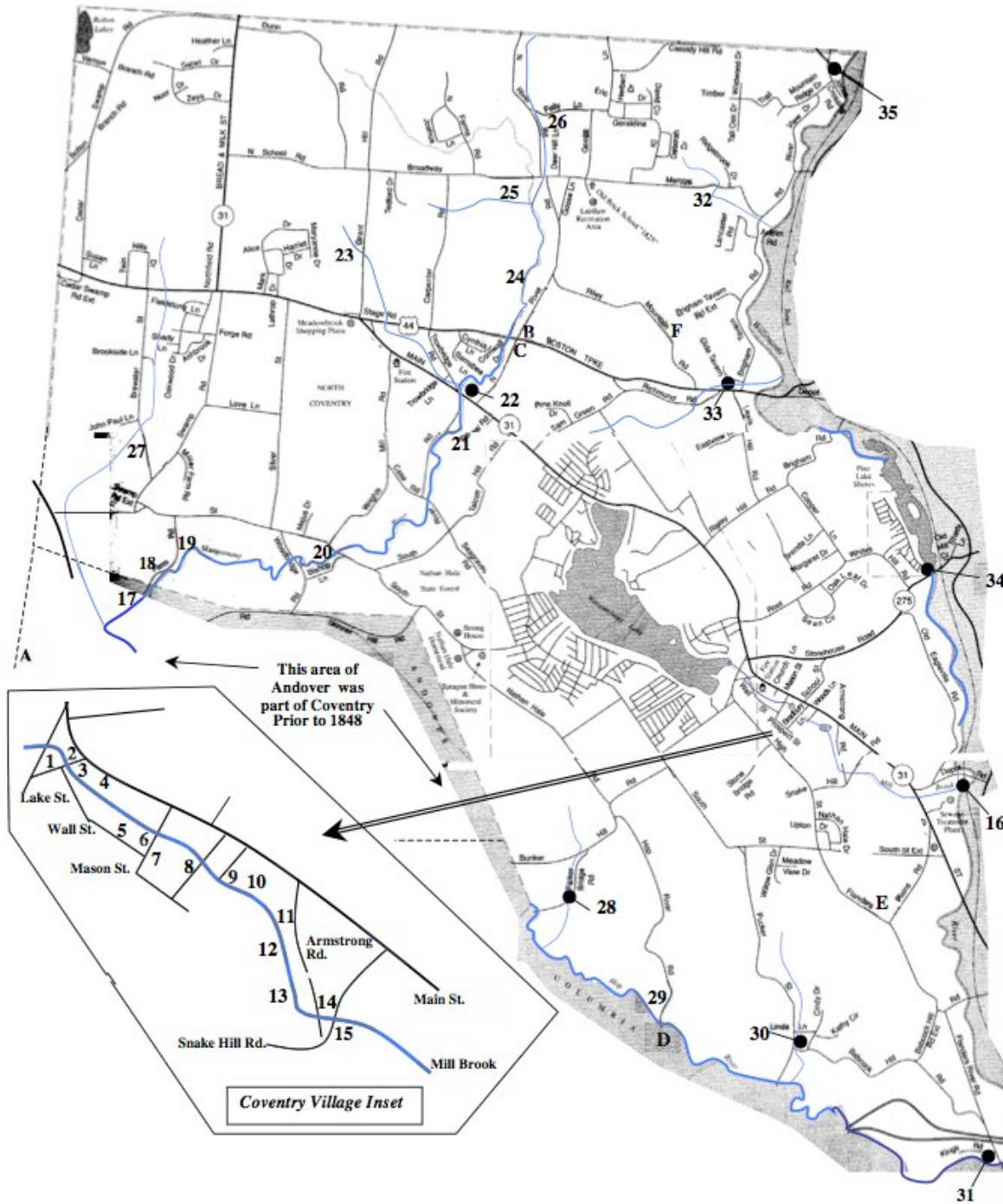
Appendices



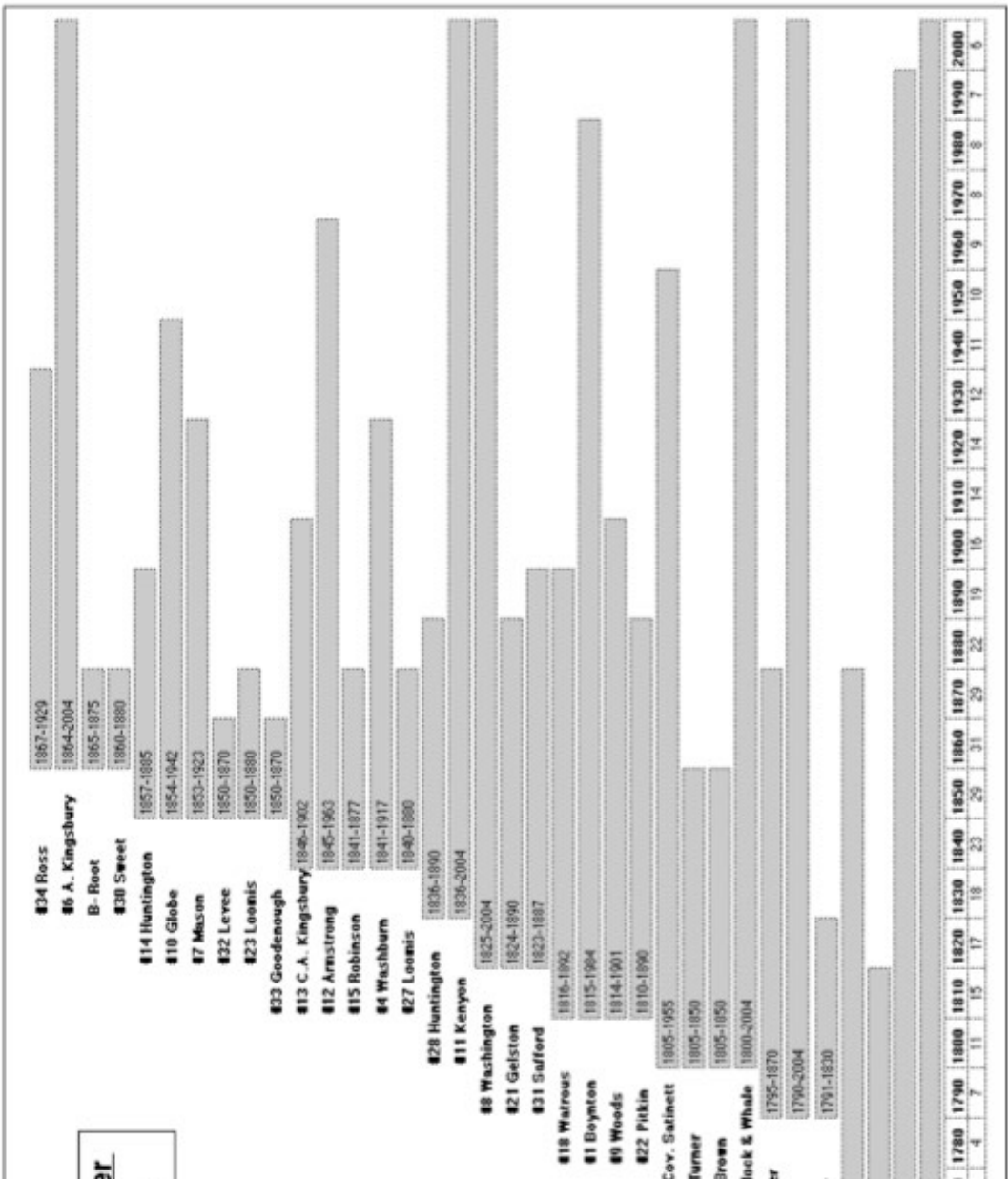
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Town of Coventry- Water Powered Mills



Town of Coventry- Water Powered Mills

(Bars Denote Period of Commercial Activity)

#16 Clark	1730-1870								
#29 Munley	1730-1820	[not continuous]							
#20 Wrights	1727-1994								
#2 Genevieve	1716-2004								
		1710	1720	1730	1740	1750	1760	1770	
Total		1	2	4	4	4	4	4	4



Chronological Listing of the Mills (see Map for Key numbers)

Key	Site Name	Year(s)	Owner(s)	Product(s)
1	Boynton	1815-1854	John Boynton	Wool carding for families and carding machine manufacture and a blacksmith's shop
		1855-1863	Daniel Halladay (lease)	Windmills and water pumps, also a brick kiln (other lease)
		1863-1866	Crittenden & Tibbals	Percussion caps, metallic cartridges
		1866-1875	D. Clark & E. Taylor	Cotton twine and wicking and cotton warp, brick kiln in a rented space
		1875-1881	N. White & C. Stanley, Webler (lease)	Grist mill, lower level rented for spokes and carriage wheels
		1881-1905	N. White & C. Stanley	Grist, Spokes and blacksmith shop
		1905-1920	E. Woodworth	Blacksmith
		1920-1945	E. Woodworth	Cider and vinegar
		1945-1984	A. Tremont	Appliance repair
		1984-2004	Gristmill Associates	Apartments
2	Genzyme	1716-1736	J. Hartshorn then T. Porter	Grist mill
		1736-1792	Noah Porter	Grist mill
		1792-1824	Bacon, Gilbert & Fitch	Grist mill
		1824-1834	Coventry Manufacturing Co.	Grist mill
		1834-1859	John Boynton	Grist mill
		1859-1875	D. Green	Grist mill, then cotton batting, cotton rope
		1876-1878	E. Eaton	M Bessey (lease) bed quilts
		1878-1879	J Lathrop (lease)	Bed quilts
		1879-1880	E. Tracy & T. Wood (lease)	Shoddy
		1880-1931	T Wood	Shoddy, then silk (thread) and fish line
		1931-1961	TH Wood Co.	Silk fish line, buttons
		1961- 2004	Sutures Co, then Deknatel, then Genzyme Co., then Telaflex Co.	Surgical thread- sutures
		1790-c1800	Caleb Stanley, Ripley, Colman	Fulling of cloth
		Pre- 1812	E. Bacon	
		1812-1830	Fitch, McLean, Gilbert, then C&R Manning, then lease to Alexander & Thompson	Paper- hand made
3	Tracy-Shoddy	1812-1818	Gilbert then J. Boynton	Carding shop- same site, different building
		1818-1830	E. Bacon, then J. Boynton	Fulling, coloring, scouring of cloth- same site, different building
		1830-1837	T&J. Dikes and J. Sabin	Fulling, then cotton sheeting
		1837-1857	J. Boynton then J.W. Boynton	Cotton sheeting
		1857-1859	Tolland County Bank	Idle
		1859-1862	W. Osborn (lease)	Cotton
		1862-1868	D. Crosby & N. Kingsbury	Cotton, possibly idle for a few years
		1868-1872	A. Dunham	Shoddy (M Bessey- lease, few years)
		1872-1882	J. Wood- lease	Shoddy, possibly idle for a while
		1882-1929	E. Tracy, then Tracy-Elliot	Shoddy
		1929-2001	Town of Coventry	Volunteer Fire Dept from 1936
		2001- 2004	T. Ackert	Electrician
		1841-1870	H. Converse, E. Smith, A. Washburn; Crittendon & Tibbals (lease)	Foundry and machine shop, and 1849-1863 Crittendon & Tibbals lease for percussion caps
		1870-1908	A. Washburn	Silk thread/yarn
		1908-1917	E. Tracy	Silk thread then shoddy
4	Washburn	1917	Major fire- mill not rebuilt	
		c1800-1866	J. Carpenter, then Fitch, then Dimick, then Coventry Cotton Co., then Dunham & Howe, then J. Boynton, then A. Boynton, then W.A. Loomis	Saw mill and cordwood lot with pond, also Turner's iron works in the late 1700's on the west side of the site.
		1866-1879	J. Morgan	Silk in the octagon factory
		1879-1883	J. Morgan & S. Bottum	Silk
		1883-1889	S. Bottum	Silk
		1889-1901	Sarah Bottum & B. Armstrong	Silk
		1901-1927	B. Armstrong & J. Dady	Silk
		1927-c1939	National Silk Co.	Silk
		c1939-1961	National Silk Co.	Yarn of all types (storage and mail order)
		1961-1978	N. Bearse	Auto body shop, storage, Lutheran Church, National Ribbon, Coventry Woodworking, pool hall, slot car racing, fiberglass molding.



Key	Site Name	Year(s)	Owner(s)	Product(s)
		1978-2004	T. Szeluga	Woodworking, then offices
6	Kingsbury Box	c1800-1864	J. Carpenter, then Fitch, then Dimick, then Coventry Cotton Co., then Dunham & Howe, then J. Boynton, then A. Boynton, then W.A. Loomis	Saw mill and cordwood lot & pond (see as #5)
		1864-1915	A. Kingsbury	Paper boxes, later printed labels
		1915-1948	L&A. Kingsbury and later H. Davis	Paper boxes and box manufacturing machines
		1948-2004	L&A. Harvey, then S. MacPherson, then B. Ogushevitz, then Eastman, Fusick, then Rogers	Used furniture sales, antiques, architectural salvage and storage.
7	Mason Cartridge	c1800-1853	J. Carpenter, then Fitch, then Dimick, then Coventry Cotton Co., then Dunham & Howe, then J. Boynton, then A. Boynton, then W.A. Loomis	Saw mill and cordwood lot & pond (see as #5)
		1853-1866	WA Loomis	Hook & eye manufactory, 1865 paper cartridges
		1866-1891	H. Mason (Phoenix Metallic Cartridge)	Cartridges (ammunition)
		1891-1899	American Metallic Cartridge Co.	Cartridges (ammunition)
		1903-1907	Hoxie to 1903 then vacant	Whip sockets
		1907-1923	WF Wood(lease from Lydia Mason)	Toric eyeglass lenses
		1923	Major fire, mill not re-built	
8	Washington Mill	1825-1835	H. Edgerton & F. Strong	Textile machinery and a forge
		1835-1851	J. Boynton	Satinet, fire in 1848, rebuilt, then cotton warp
		1851-1853	A. Kingsbury	Cotton warp
		1853-1868	N. Kingsbury, then Kingsbury Mills, then W. Huntington	Satinet
		1868-1878	Mill Brook Woolen	Wool & Silk
		1878-1884	HW Kimball	Satinet and cassimere
		1884-1890	HW Kimball	Major fire in 1884, mill not rebuilt
		1890-c1923	EA Tracy (lease)	Small stone building erected for shoddy
		1923-1927	EA Tracy	Vacant
		1927-1946	A. Wood	Toric eyeglass lenses
		1946-1983	N. Bearse	Machine and welding shop, structural steel
		1983-2004	Town of Coventry	Public Works garage
9	Woods	1814-1820	Coventry Cotton Manufacturing Co., then Bates & Dimick (lease), then Dunham & Howe	Cotton yarn
		1820-c1835	Gilbert & Dunham	Cotton cloth
		1835-1854	J. Boynton, then L. Boynton	Cotton (c1845 major fire, mill rebuilt)
		1854-1864	E. Hovey	Silk
		1864-1870	W. Bradbury	Wool shoddy, jeweler's cotton, grist mill in adjacent building
		1870-1901	P. Cullen & J. Wood, then Wood only	Cotton and cassimere, then doeskin jeans
		1901	J. Wood	Major fire- mill not rebuilt
10	Upper Kenyon (Globe)	c1854-1864	H. Watrous, then H. Fargo, then G. Hastings, then W. Converse, then S. Moredock	Wool hats
		1864-1869	S. Moredock	Jeans
		1869-1891	C.H. Kenyon & S. Barber	Doeskin jeans, 1882 ladies dress flannels
		1891-c1900	Kenyon, then J. Wood	Idle, then woolens
		c1900-1906	J. Wood	Woolens
		1906-1908	Washburn Silk Co.	Silk
		1908-1921	E.A. Tracy	Silk
		1921-1929	H&W Washburn, then A. Washburn, Sons	Silk
		1929-1933	Coventry Silk, then Aetna Silk Co.	Silk
		1933-1942	L. Sonderegger & F. Maas	Silk and parachute cords for WWII
		1942	Sonderegger & Maas	Major fire, mill not rebuilt
11	Kenyon	1836-1850	F. Strong, J. Dow, E. Mathewson	Wool cards and forge/trip hammer
		1850-1854	J. Boynton (one floor only)	Wool cards and forge/trip hammer
		1854-1856	I. Kinsman	Tannery
		1856-1858	A. Partridge	Idle due to foreclosure
		1858-1864	S. Moredock	Satinet (major fire in 1863, mill rebuilt)
		1864-1895	CH Kenyon, then Kenyon/Barber	Kentucky jeans, then ladies dress flannels
		1895-1901	Kenyon heirs	Partially Idle
		1902-1928	EA Tracy Co. (Valley Mill), then Tracy-Flaherty	Shoddy
		1929-1934	Town of Coventry	Idle



Key	Site Name	Year(s)	Owner(s)	Product(s)
		1934-1972	National Silk	Tioga yarn and other yarns
		1972-2004	R. Roman, then Do-Ray Inc.	Retail Shops, storage
12	Armstrong Pond	1845-1856	E. Robertson, D. Colman (lease)	Cotton batting, wool hats
		1856-1881	A. Washburn, then JN Dow	Wool cards
		1881-1918	H. Parker, then H. Armstrong (1886), then W. Armstrong	Wool cards, then wagons
		1919-1929	American Auto Top Co, then E. Queenard, then Witt	No record
		1929-1963	Town of Coventry	Idle
		1963-2004	M. Risley	Mill burned in the 1960's
13	Below Armstrong	1846-1855	N. Colman then 1/2 to A. Douglas, also S&E Robinson adjacent	Cotton batting and a saw mill
		1855-1896	CA Kingsbury	Saw and shingle mill
		1896-c1900	J. MacFarland	Shoddy
		c1902		Major fire, mill not rebuilt
14	Huntington	1857-1880	D&W Huntington, then L. Robinson (lease)	Silk (machine twist)
		1880-1884	L. Robinson (lease), then A. Conant (lease)	Silk
		1884-1885	Sweet & Webber(or Webler)	Silk twist, floss and embroidery
		1885		Major fire- mill not rebuilt
15	Robinson	1841-c1875	J. Robinson & J. Cummings, then E. Robinson	Saw mill
		1877	W. Simpson	Water privilege only, mill idle
16	Depot Road	pre-1809	A. Colman	Saw mill
		1809-1812	B. Colman	Saw mill
		1812-1818	S. Guild	Saw, fulling and carding mill(s)
		1818-1831	J. Boynton	Saw, fulling and carding mill(s)
		1831-1855	Coventry Satinet Co.	Satinet
		1855-1872	H. Fargo, then G. Hastings, then O. Smith, then J. Campbell, then F.B. Loomis, then Morse & Elder	Satinet
		1872-1879	Rawitser Bros. (lease then purchase)	Satinet
		1879	Rawitser	Major fire- site idle for years, tenements standing
		1907-1911	J. Nichols	Paper (fiberboard)
		1911-c1955	South Coventry Paper Co., then R. Brown (lease), then Leatherware Co., then Sterling Fibreboard Co. aka Sterlite Fibreboard.	Paper (fiberboard for shoe insoles)
		c1955	Sterlite Fibreboard	Major fire, mill not rebuilt
17	Hollister	pre 1797	Ebenezer Bushnell	Paper- hand made
		1797-1813	C. McLean, then E. House, then J. Rogers, then J. Clark, then G. Hollister	Paper- hand made
		1813-1842	Gideon Hollister	Paper- by hand then by machine in later years
		1842-c1865	Misc. financiers, then F. Cowles, then E. Buell	1842 bankruptcy, then paper c1855
		1865-c1870	E. Buell- C. Buell, then G. Webster	Cotton twine & batting
18	Watrous	1816-c1825	E. Badger, then S. Hibbard	Grist Mill
		c1825-1837	Z. Long & S. Hibbard	Carding Mill
18		1837-1854	Orin Cook, then E. Hutchinson	Woodworking, spools
		1854-1892	Mahlon Watrous	Spools, then toy furniture (wood), then shingles and possibly grist mill
		1892-1901	H. Dorrance, then F. Brown	Not known
19	Badger	1791-c1830	J Reddington, then E Badger, then J. Babcock	Grist mill, also carding mill for part of the time
20	Wright's	1727-1784	D. Badger, then T. Adams, then J. Sabins, then L. Terril, then J. Fowler, then J. Porter, then Elijah Wright	Saw and grist mill
		1784-1886	R. Wright & H. Kingsbury, then B. Potter, then F. Loomis & G. Franklin, then H. Potter, then JM Loomis	Saw, grist and fulling mill
		1886-c1919	JA Loomis, then E. Case, then H. Osborn	Saw and grist mill
		c1919-1929	H. Osborn, then H. Lieberman, then I. Gotthelf, then E. Pettersen	Idle
		1929-c1994	EL Gardiner, then R&W McLeod, then J&R Bynes	Electricity (DC then AC) by water power

Key	Site Name	Year(s)	Owner(s)	Product(s)
21	Gelston	1824-1865	the Hubbards, then Sellow, Gelston, and Corbit & Gould	Tanning
		1865-c1890	Corbit & Gould, then the Pitkins	Cotton Batting
22	Pitkin	c1810-c1890	Wight, then Smith, then Avery, then Root, then Blanchard, then Douglas, then Mason & Corbit, then the Pitkins	Fulling, then cotton then wicking
23	Loomis	Late 1800's	Zenas Loomis then Charles Pixley	Possible early clover mill, saw mill later
24	Brown	Early 1800's	Zolvah Brown	Saw Mill
25	Turner	Early to Mid 1800's	Gad Hunt, Orin Turner	Clover seed mill
26	Clark	1730's-1832	John Talcott, E. Heath, J. Delano, E. Jewett, S. Root, L. Terril, J. Hatch, T. Adams, S. Howard, J. Hawkins, M. Badger, J. Barnard	Grist and saw mill
		1833-1870's	Roswell Wright, E. Gilbert, L. Clark, T. Powell, J. Dunn	Two carpenter shops added, grist mill converted to a spool factory
27	Loomis	1840-c1880	Eleazer Loomis then Arthur Loomis	Saw mill on Ash Brook
28	Huntington	1836-c1890	Edward & Sam Huntington, then Hempstead then Parker	Wool hats early, later unknown
29	Manley	c1730 & c1812	Lazarus Manley then sons George and Lazarus	Early saw mill, then later grist mill
30	Sweet	c1860-1880	Stutely Sweet	Shingles and Excelsior
31	Safford	1823-1860	Elijah Safford then Truman Safford	Satinett mill and saw mill.
		1860-1875	Willimantic Linen Company	Cotton mill and saw mill
		1875-1887	Willimantic Linen Company	Saw mill
32	Levee	c1850-1870	Nathan Levee	Saw Mill
33	Goodenough	c 1850-1870	Lewis Dimock, then Edmond Goodenough, H. Starkweather, then Lewis Dimock	Brook Works Knitting Machines
34	Ross	1867-c1929	John Ross, then James Ross	Saw, planing and grist mill
35	Joslin	ca1860	M. Joslin (poss Tilden) on Clark Brook	Saw
A	Bishop	c1765-c1870	Samuel Bishop (several generations)	Saw and grist mill, then shoddy mill. (Bolton site, but included land in Coventry for the mill dam.)
B	Root	c1860's	Nathaniel Root	Sash and blind shop (limited water power)
C	Gilbert-Turner	1815-1850	Thomas Stebbins; Gilbert, Chamberlain & Turner, also Johnson & Preston	Coventry Glass Works (not water powered)
		Post 1850	Hyde, French	Paint shop, blacksmith and wagon shop (east)
D	Hop River Warp Company	1841-c1912	E. Smith, then R Moulton et al, then A. Dunham and A&W Jillson	Cotton thread and yarns to 1892, then shoe inserts, paper mache chair seats, then fiberboard. (Columbia site, but included some land in Coventry for the mill dam and pond.)
E	Brick Yard	c1869	Norm Boynton	Bricks (used to make Visitor's Center)
F	Brick Yard	c1800-1825	Roderick Dimock (loc. Not exact)	Bricks (for brick school & Turner house et al)

COVENTRY FREEMAN- 1738

(From the town records)

Badcock, Benjamin

Badcock, Daniel

Badcock, James

Badcock, Ebenezer

Badger, Daniel

Barnard, Benoni

Belding (Belden), Matthew

Bissell, Ser John

Boynton, Zachariah

Bridgeman, Isaac

Brown, Ebenezer

Brown, Ephraim

Buell, Jus Peter

Cady, Aaron

Carpenter, Amos

Carpenter, Benjamin

Carpenter, Ebenezer

Carpenter, Eliphat

Carpenter, Jedidiah

Carpenter, Jedidiah

Carpenter, Noah

Clark, Joseph

Clark, Seth

Colman , Ephriam

Colman, Judah

Crane, John

Damman, Samuel

Damman, Samuel Jun

Davenport, Humphrey

Davenport, William

Davis, Joseph

Dawes, Thomas

Edwards, Daniel

Edwards, Daniel Jun

Edwards, Ebenezer

Edwards, Joseph

Edwards, William

Lyman, John

Manley, Lazarus

Manly, George

Manly, Lazarus

Marsh, Mathias

Meacham, Joseph

Meraugh[?], Richard

Meraugh[?], Sardonis

Nichols, Nathaniel

Palmer, Benjamin

Parker, James

Parker, Samuel Jun

Parker, Cap Samuel

Porter, Thomas

Richardson, Amos

Roberson, John

Robeson, Daniel

Root, Dec Thomas

Root, Ebenezer

Root, Eliakim

Root, Samuel

Root, Thomas Jun

Rust, Daniel

Rust, Nathaniel Jr

Rust, Nathaniel Sr

Rust, Noah

Rust, Samuel

Scott, Benjamin

Scripture, John

Searles, Ebenezer

Smith, Ser James

Strong , Joseph Jun

Strong, Aaron

Strong, Jus Joseph

Strong, Moses

Strong, Noah

Strong, Phineas

Strong, Preserved

Fitch, Abner
Fitch, Jeremiah
Fitch,Cap Jeremiah
Fowler, Jonathan
Fuller, David
Garner, Samuel
Gilbert, Nathaniel
Grover, Joseph
Grover,Mattha
Hawkins, George
Hawkins, George
Hawkins, James
Herrick, Ezekiel
Herrick, Sar Samuel

Hutson[?], John
Jones, Benjamin
Kingsbury, John
Ladd, Nathaniel
Lee, David Jun
Lewis, Samuel
Long, Joseph Jun
Long, Silas
Long, William

West, Francis
White, James
Woodworth, Samuel

Total - 101



1790 CENSUS- Heads of families

(The first number after each name is "free white males over 16", the next is "free white males under 16", and the last is free white females". There are likely spelling errors due to transcription from the original)

Allin, Samuel	2	0	1
Allin, Samuel	2	0	1
Andrews, E	4	1	3
Atherton, Elijah	2	3	6
Avery, Amos	1	1	3
Avery, Amos	2	2	3
Avery, Jabez	1	1	3
Aynsworth, Ebenezer	3	0	2
Aynsworth, J	1	1	3
Babcock, David	1	3	3
Babcock, J	1	0	3
Babcock, Robert	1	0	2
Babcock, Robert	3	1	3
Babcock, Roger	1	2	3
Babcock, Wm	1	0	2
Babcock, Zebulon	2	4	4
Babcock, Daniel	1	3	2
Badcock	1	3	4
Badcock, Elihu	3	2	2
Badcock, Timothy	1	1	2
Badger, Moses	1	4	4
Badger, Daniel	1	0	3
Badger, Enoch	2	4	8
Baker, Asa	1	2	4
Baker, Blun.	1	1	5
Baker, Timothy	2	5	3
Barnaby, James	1	1	1
Barnard, Joseph	2	1	2
Baxter, Wm	1	1	5
Beinington, Oliver	2	5	3
Bissel, Mathew	1	1	5
Blackman, Aaron	1	3	2
Blackman, Benjamin	2	2	2
Blackman, Benjamin Jr	2	1	2
Blakeman, Elijah	1	0	1
Bourns, Wm	1	3	3
Brewster, Israel	1	1	3
Brewster, Jacob	2	1	5
Brewster, Peter	2	1	4
Brigham, Don	1	3	6
Brigham, Gersham	1	1	4
Brigham, Thomas	1	0	2
Brigham, Tiphath	1	0	3
Brown, Abraham	1	0	1
Brown, Ebenezer	1	1	2
Brown, Eleph.	2	1	4
Brown, Jos.	1	4	3
Brown, Nathaniel	1	2	2
Brown, Richard	1	4	3
Brown, Thomas	2	1	3
Bruster, Benjamin	1	3	1
Buel, Benjamin	2	1	7
Burnap, Abraham	3	0	4
Burnap, Christopher	1	2	5
Carpenter, Elijah	2	2	2

Carpenter, Eliphat	3	1	8
Carpenter, J	1	0	1
Carpenter, Joseph	2	3	5
Carpenter, Levi	3	0	3
Carpenter, Noah	3	3	4
Carpenter, Silas	2	2	1
Carpenter, Timothy	2	1	5
Carpenter, Wm	3	1	4
Case, Benjamin	2	3	2
Case, Tuball	1	2	1
Chamberlain (widow)	0	0	2
Chamberlain, Edman	1	3	1
Chappie, Noah	1	2	2
Chappie, Stephen	2	2	4
Cogswell, Amos	1	3	7
Cogswell, Benjamin	2	1	4
Coleman, Asa	2	1	7
Coleman, Ebenezer	2 nd	1	4
Coleman, Emmanuel	2	4	3
Coleman, Levy	1	0	2
Coleman, Nathaniel	1	1	4
Coleman, Samuel	3	3	5
Coleman, Timothy	1	0	4
Conlly(sp), Samuel	2	2	3
Cook, Jesse	2	1	2
Cook, Jesse	1	2	4
Cook, Nathaniel	1	2	3
Cook, Shubal	2	1	1
Cristee, J	1	2	1
Crocker (widow)	0	0	3
Crocker, James	1	1	2
Crosman, Eber.	1	2	4
Curtis, Blivad	1	2	1
Curtis, H	3	0	3
Cushman, Atherton	3	0	3
Cushman, E	1	4	4
Cushman, Minerva	1	0	6
Daggett, Isaiah	1	5	2
Daggett, Samuel	1	0	1
Dart, Levi	1	0	1
Davenport, Thomas	2	1	8
Dean, Wm	1	4	3
Denty, Mathew	1	2	4
Devenport, Benjamin	2	2	1
Devenport, Umphrey	1	3	2
Devensport, Richard	1	0	1
Devensport, Richard	1	0	5
Dimock, Daniel	1	0	1
Dimock, Timothy	3	1	3
Dimock, Timothy Jr	1	0	4
Dorman, Amos	3	1	4
Dorman, Dudley	2	1	4
Dorman, Daniel	1	0	4
Doubleday, Joseph	3	0	3
Dow, Calvin	1	0	0
Dow, E	1	4	1
Dow, E 2nd	1	3	3
Dow, Levy	1	4	2
Dow, Pelitiah	1	0	7
Dow, Umphus	2	2	5
Dunham, Elezer	2	2	2
Dunham, Stephen	1	1	2
Edgerton, Jabez	1	1	2

Edward, Wareham	1	0	2
Edwards, Adonijah	1	1	4
Edwards, Benajah	2	0	5
Edwards, James	1	0	2
Edwards, Joseph	1	2	2
Edwards, Warham	1	2	1
Ellis, J	2	3	5
Ellis, Nathaniel	1	4	3
Farmer, Nathaniel	2	4	1
Fich, P	1	1	3
Field, E	1	0	2
Fieldon, J	1	2	5
Fields, Benjamin	1	0	1
Fitch, Abner Jr	3	4	
Fitch, Henry	1	1	1
Fitch, J 1	3	4	
Fitch, J 1	1	3	
Fitch, Jephtha	1	2	3
Fitch, Joseph	1	2	3
Fowler, Israel	3	0	7
French, Abner	1	5	3
Fuller, Jonathan	2	2	3
Fuller, Joseph	1	3	3
Gears, Jedediah	1	3	5
Grant (widow)	0	0	2
Greenleaf, David	1	1	3
Grover, Benjamin	1	1	4
Grover, Isaac	1	1	4
Gurley, Phineas	1	2	5
Hale, David	5	1	8
Hale, Richard	1	1	4
Hamman, Zeph.	2	0	4
Handy, Kilpt	2	5	3
Hatch, Daniel	1	4	2
Hawkins (widow)	0	0	2
Hawkins, Joseph	2	3	4
Hawkins, Rodolphus	1	4	1
Hendy (widow)	0	0	2
Herrick, Joseph	2	0	1
Hibbard, David	2	0	2
Hibbert, Silas	2	0	1
Hilyard, Joseph	1	1	1
House, Benjamin	1	6	2
House, Jonathan	1	0	5
House, Sam	2	1	5
Howard, Nathaniel	2	2	2
Hows, Asa	1	3	2
Huchinson, E	1	1	4
Hunt, Eliphat	3	1	4
Hunt, Gad	2	3	3
Hunt, Simon	3	0	1
Huntington, Rev J1	3	3	5
Jewet, Ichabod	3	1	3
Jewet, Ichabod 2nd	1	1	3
Johns, Elihu	1	4	1
Johnse, Samuel	1	3	3
Jones (widow)	2	0	2
Jones, Benjamin	2	0	1
Jones, Elias	1	3	3
Jones, Noah	2	2	7
Jones, Silas	2	2	1
Jud, Thomas	3	0	4
King, Silas	4	0	7

1790 Census- Heads of families

(cont.)

Porter, Thomas	2	2	1
Porter, Elijah	1	0	2

Turner, Joseph	1	0	1
Turner, Robert	1	0	2

(CONT.)

Kingsbury, E	2	2	4	Porter, Ethan	1	0	2	Turner, Root	1	0	2
Kingsbury, Eber.	3	2	5	Reddington, J	2	0	3	Turner, Samuel	1	0	1
Kingsbury, Joseph	1	2	7	Richardson, Amos	2	1	5	Vislon(sp), Elijah	1	0	1
Kingsbury, Nathaniel	1	2	3	Richardson, E	1	1	4	Walbridge, J	1	1	2
Kingsbury, Samuel	3	1	3	Richardson, Jonathan	3	0	2	Walbridge, Jon.	2	3	3
Kingsbury, Wm	1	2	1	Richardson, Justus	1	4	3	Walbridge, Lemuel	1	2	1
Ladd, Elisha	1	2	2	Richardson, Stephen	2	1	3	Walbridge, Samuel	1	1	3
Ladd, J	2	0	2	Richardson, Hezekiah	1	2	7	Waldo (widow)	1	1	3
Ladd, Samuel	2	0	2	Ringe, Daniel	1	0	1	Waldo, Nathan	1	0	3
Lamb, Benjamin	2	0	3	Ringe, Wm	2	2	4	Warin, Martin	1	2	4
Langdon, Chancey	1	0	2	Ripley, J	1	1	4	Wheeler (widow)	0	2	4
Larnby (widow)	0	0	2	Ripley, Jabez	1	3	4	Wheldon, J	2	0	3
Lawrence, H	1	2	5	Robinson (widow)	0	1	5	Wheldon, J	2	1	4
Little, Sam	2	2	4	Robinson, Daniel	2	1	7	White, Adonis	1	5	2
Lockwood, Rev. S	2	0	2	Robinson, Daniel	1	4	6	White, Dan	2	2	6
Lomis, Dan	1	4	5	Robinson, E	1	1	3	White, J	1	1	1
Lomis, Daniel	4	2	5	Robinson, Hezekiah	1	2	2	White, Samuel	1	2	3
Lomis, Daniel Jr	1	1	2	Robinson, Isaac	1	2	2	Wilson, J	1	3	2
Lomis, Elisha	2	3	2	Robinson, J	2	2	6	Wilson, Rust	1	1	2
Lomis, Hen.	1	0	2	Robinson, J	1	0	2	Wilson, Wm	1	0	2
Lomis, Israel	1	5	2	Robinson, Ralph	1	0	1	Wintworth, Ebenezer	2	1	4
Lomis, J	3	2	6	Robinson, Samuel	3	1	2	Wintworth, Ezekiel	1	0	2
Lomis, Nathaniel	3	4	2	Robinson, Samuel	2	2	3	Woodward, Moses	1	4	3
Lomis, Zadock	3	1	7	Robinson, Wm	3	3	3	Woodward, Nathaniel	4	2	5
Long, Lemuel	2	1	1	Rockwell, Amorio	2	2	4	Woodworth, Joseph	1	2	5
Long, Lemuel 2nd	1	5	1	Root, E	3	1	6	Wright, Elijah	2	1	5
Lyman, Asa	1	3	4	Root, Ezra	1	2	4	Wright, Elijah 2 nd	2	1	1
Lyman, David	1	1	1	Root, Jesse	4	1	3	Wright, Nathaniel	2	1	4
Lyman, Elijah	1	0	4	Root, Jonathan	3	0	5				
Lyman, Joab	3	2	6	Root, Medad	1	1	5	336 Families			
Lyman, Silas	1	0	1	Root, Nathaniel	1	3	4	514 Free White Males age 16 and over			
Malbone, Chas	1	1	3	Root, Wm	1	3	3	508 Free White Males under age 16			
Manley, George	2	2	3	Rose, Frederick	1	1	4	1064 Free White Females			
Manning, Andrew	2	2	3	Rose, Jehiel	3	2	2	14 Other Free Persons			
Manning, Calvin	1	3	6	Rose, Samuel	2	3	4	4 Slaves			
McCoy, J	1	1	2	Rose, Timothy	3	6	3	2104 Total			
Meade, J	1	2	2	Rust, Nathan W	2	1	4				
Meade, J	1	1	3	Sanford, Elisha	1	2	4				
Miner, Isaac	1	2	4	Scripter, Simon	1	0	1				
Molbourn, Godfrey	1	0	1	Sherman, Jabez	2	0	5				
Murdoch, Jon.	2	2	7	Simon (widow)	1	1	2				
Page, Elias	1	2	3	Skinner, Daniel	1	1	2				
Page, Gad	1	0	2	Smith, Experience	1	0	1				
Parker (widow)	0	0	1	Sprague, Elisha	1	2	5				
Parker, Canda	3	0	2	Sprague, Perez	2	1	2				
Parker, Joseph	1	1	3	Sprague, Samuel	2	1	5				
Parker, Josiah	1	0	1	Sprague, Samuel Jr	1	0	5				
Parker, Nathan	1	3	2	Standley, Moses	2	1	2				
Parker, Solomon	2	2	5	Stanly, Caleb	1	3	3				
Parma, Gersham	2	2	10	Strong, Benajah	3	1	6				
Parmerly, J	1	0	2	Strong, Rev N	2	1	3				
Patten, David	3	0	2	Sweetland, Levi	2	0	4				
Pearce, Oliver	1	0	1	Taylor, J	2		1				
Peters (widow)	0	2	1	Thompson, Jonathan	1	0	2				
Pomroy, E	2	3	5	Thompson, Thomas	1	1	1				
Porter (widow)	1	0	3	Tiffany,	1	0	4				
Porter, Abel	2	1	5	Timons, Elijah	1	1	2				
Porter, Isaiah	1	1	1	Tolent, Joseph	2	3	4				
Porter, Jonas	2	1	1	Turner (widow)	2	0	2				
Porter, Noah	1	3	8	Turner, A	1	0	2				
				Turner, Caleb	1	1	4				
				Turner, Jethro	2	5	5				



**COVENTRY TAX LIST-
1860, Residents**

1st Society

Andrews, Nelson
Andrews, Edwin E
Andrews, Titus
Albro, John
Albro, Henry
Albro, Sarah
Austin, Jeremiah
Austin, Benoni H
Ayers, Wolcott
Adams, Arby
Abby, Luther
Boynton, George
Boynton, Norman
Boynton, Austin
Boynton A.W.
Babcock, Elijah
Badcock, Norman L.
Babcock, William
Brown, George W.
Brown, Henry
Brown, Christofer
Brown, Betsey
Boynton, Marcia
Bryant, Thomas
Bruce, John
Brainard, E.S.
Butts, George W.
Barto Gilbert
Beman
Brigham, Uriah E.
Branigan, Patrick
Bogue, J.C.
Bidwell, N.L.
Bencot, Sterry
Buell, D.M.
Brown, Cassander
Belknap, D.D.
Belknap, Roxand
Barows, Henry
Brigham, Carlos
Capron, George W.
Curtis, Marvin
Curtis, William
Curtis, Jesse
Curtis, L.
Clark, Thomas
Clark, Isaac
Clark, Augustus
Clark, Dwight
Clark, Maria
Clark, Sarah
Colman, George
Colman, E.
Colman, Joseph
Colman, Lathrop
Colman, William
Colman, William E.
Colman, Eletia
Cumings, W.M.

Cummings, Wealthy
Crittenden & Tibbals
Capwell, Stephen
Collins, Jacob
Calinan, Jeremiah
Capwell, Alonso
Carpenter, Charles
Cady, Henry
Crowley, Cornelius
Colburn, Amasa
Carman, Samuel jr
Carman, Samuel
Cramer
Coles, Ebenezer
Carpenter, James M.
Cuther, Joseph
Cogshall
Dimock, Timothy
Durphy, Lewis
Dunham, Stephen
Dow Joseph N.
Dresser, Abby
Dow, Edward H.
Dimock, Lewis A.
Dow, Hannah
Dow, Diantha
Dow, Silas, N.
Dow, Frederick
Dow, John N.
Dow, T.
Dean, Henry
Douglas, N.C.
Doan, Joseph
Dorman, William
Dimock, Daniel W.
Drake, Betsey
Edgerton, Hezekiel
Edgerton, Oliver
Edgerton, D.W.
Eells, Diantha
Freman, Frederick
Fuller, Austin
Fuller, George W.
Fuller, Warren
Fuller, George
Fitch, Sybel
Freeman, James
Fargo, Horace
Foster, Joseph
Ford, Stores
Flarity, Dennis
Green, Daniel
Gardener, W.O.
Graves, S. W.
Grover, Ashabel
Green, W.
Green, A. Palmer
Grady, Bat
Gardner, E. Hannak
Huntington, D.W.
Hutchinson, A.J.
Hutchinson, George
Hans, William

Harrington, Isaac
Hatch, J.W.
Hamond, Amos
Hebard, George
Hempsted, James A.
Howard, Nathan est
Hovey, Enoch
Howard, Lucy est
Halladay Windmill Co.
Halladay
Isham, John
Isham
Judd, William E.
Jacobs, Hannah
Jacobs, W. H.
Jacobs, William
Kingsbury, N. & Co.
Kingsbury, Ezra
Kingsbury, E.B.
Kingsbury, Addison
Kingsbury, Charles A.
Kinnee, Phoebe
Kenegan, Michael
Lord, Horace
Lord, Louisa
Lord, William
Loomis, W.A.
Loomis, Ruel
Loomis, Lucy
Loomis, Daniel
Lathrop, Helen
Lathrop, George
Lillie, Henry
Lee, Charles
LeDoyt, Dwight
LeDoyt, Samuel
Lyman, Martin, est
Lincoln, Horace
Lincoln, Erastus
Lockwood, Henry
Manning, Wright
Marcy, Thomas
Marcy, George
Morgan, Mason
Morgan, James
Morgan, Miles
Mason, Henry
Mory, Elisha
Matherson, Edward
Maning, S.
Metcalf, N.P.
Manning, Calvin
Moredock, Samuel
Marcy, Charles
McCan, Richard
O'Brian, Daniel
Porter, William
Payne, Brigham
Payne, Benjamin
Payne, John
Payne, Melvin
Payne, Summer
Potter, Lory

Parker, Philo, F.
Parkhurst, John
Parker, Sherman
Parker, Henry
Parker, George
Perkins, Austin
Post, Frank
Perkins, M.
Porter, Daniel
Quinn, Patrick
Rose, Richard
Root, Randal
Robinson, Sybel
Robertson, Caroline
Robertson, John
Roberston, Almira
Root, E. G. est
Rider, Watson
Ruggles, Barton
Richardson, Charles
Richardson, E.Y.
Ross, Amos W.
Roswell, Alfred
Stores, S.A.
Stanley, James
Sheldon, E.W.
Strong, Bohan
Smith, Annis
Spicer, Daniel
Spicer, Oscar
Sprague, Betsey
Spaulding, S.
Safford, Truman est
Smith, Leotis
Scott, Seymour
Sweet A. & S.
Sullivan, Daniel
Swift, B.P.
Swift, Samuel
Spaulding, Irving
Simpson, George
Seignior, James jr
Sweet, Burton
Topliff, Harle
Topliff, Daniel
Topliff, Caroline
Turner, Joseph
Turner, Diantha
Tracy, George
Topliff, Marcia
Thompson, Harlan
Thompson, John
Weston, Rufus
Woodworth, Albert
Wilson, Samuel
Washburn, Alanson
Wilson, John
Wilbur, George
Wilbur, Amariah
Woodworth, Jesse
Wallen, Benjamin
Wallen, William
Weiss, Jacob est

Coventry Tax List- 1860.
Residents (cont)

Watrous, H. R.
 Whiteside, William
 White, Montgomery
 White, James
 White, Lucia
 Warren, Ziba
 Woodworth, Harry
 Woodworth, James
 Whitman, Charles
 Winchester, Loren
 Woodworth, George
 Winchester & Bidwell
 Whitman, Norman
 Wait, James
 Young, Thomas
 Bank, Tolland County

2nd Society

Allen, Josiah
 Allen, Sarah
 Aborn, Hezakirk
 Brigham
 Bissel, John
 Brown, Josiah
 Bartlett, Noah
 Brown, Zolva
 Brown, Selah
 Brown, Charles
 Barber, Frederick
 Brewster, Salmon
 Brewster, S
 Brewster, Lester
 Brown, Andrew
 Baker, Chester
 Babcock, William
 Baxter, M.
 Baldwin, Daniel
 Corbit & Mason
 Clark, Lucius P.
 Clark, Lucius
 Case, Francis
 Calver, William
 Calhoun, George
 Cook, Thomas
 Corrin, Henry
 Carpenter, Ralph
 Carpenter, Jerome
 Chamberlain, Rufus
 Chamberlain, E.B.
 Carpenter, Hannah
 Corbit, George
 Corey, Jared
 Clark, Marvin
 Cook, Orrin

Daggett, Augustus
 Daggett, Chester
 Daggett, Cynthia
 Douglas, Arguile
 Dunn, Michael jun
 Dunn, John
 Dexter, Nathan
 Dresser, Josephus
 Edgerton, Gordon
 Flint, Leonard
 Ford, Hannah
 Ford, Jedediah
 Ford, Joseph
 French, Lucius
 Flint, Ralph
 French, Daniel
 French, John
 French, Eleazer
 Fenton, Caleb
 French, Oliver jun
 French, Oliver
 Gerard, George
 Gould, Joseph
 Gould, Joseph R.
 Gelston, Richard
 Goodwin, Henry
 Gager, Luther
 Gager, Simon
 Gilbert, H.
 Goodwin, Clarissa
 Gardner, George
 Harrington, Edwin
 Harrington, Joshua
 Hutchinson, Sophia
 Hall, Amos
 Hubbard, Nathaniel
 Hall, Theodore
 Hunt
 Hunt, Eleazer
 Higginbotham, D.
 Harris, Albert
 Hopkins, Samuel
 Hunt, Ebenezer
 Hall, Libni
 Hunt, A.
 Hunt, Eleazer H.
 Hibbard, Selah
 Hall, Theodore
 Haskins
 Hopkins
 Harris, Stephen heirs
 Hall, W.
 Joslin, Samuel
 Jones, Justin
 Jones, William
 Jewett, Orrin

Kingsbury, E, Guardian of the
 Pecks
 Kempton, Luther
 Kempton, Olive
 Kingsbury, Harvey
 Kingsbury, Henry
 Keeney, Nelson
 Kingsbury, Erastus
 Kingsbury, Jabez
 Keeney, Ezekiel
 Keeney, Nancy
 Kempton, Joseph
 Long, Arnold
 Loomis, William
 Loomis, Salmon
 Loomis, Charles
 Long, Ashel
 Long, Joseph
 Loomis, Edward
 Levee, Nathan
 Loomis, Erastus
 Loomis, Alanson
 Loomis, Eleazer
 Loomis, Albemarle
 Loomis, Joseph P.
 Loomis, Zenas
 Long, Zelotes
 Long, Zelotes C.
 Lee, Charles
 Lillie, Marcus
 Lillie, George
 Loomis, Samuel
 Loomis, Irena
 Main, Andrew
 Murdock, Archibald
 McCracken, William
 Metcalf, William
 McKenstry, John
 Porter, Francis
 Peck, John
 Palmer, Isaac
 Porter, Gurdon
 Price, John
 Pomroy, Eleazer
 Pomroy, Eleazer jun
 Pomroy, George
 Powell, Theron
 Polk, Pamela
 Prior, Harry
 Prior, Harriet
 Prior, Electa
 Risley, Lois
 Risley, Francis
 Royal, Ambrose
 Root, Elijah
 Root, Nathaniel jun
 Porter C.S. guardian

Root, Nathaniel
 Robertson, John
 Robertson, Charles
 Rounds, William
 Roswel, Leonard
 Spencer, David
 Shepard, Julius
 Stone, James
 Stone, Joel
 Simmons, Ambrose
 Starkweather, Lyman
 Spencer, Edwin
 Spencer, George
 Sanford, John
 Sears, William
 Talcott, Samuel
 Tracy, Calvin est
 Turner, Lydia
 Turner Isaac 2nd
 Tilden, Walter
 Tilden, Charles
 Tracy, Gurdon
 Thayr, Elisha
 Thayr, Franklin
 Thayr, Francis
 Talbot, James F.
 Talbot, Dexter
 Talbot, James
 Talcott, Matilda
 Talcott, Abigail
 Talcott, Chester
 Talcott, Joseph
 Talcott, Erastus
 Talcott, Lyman
 Talcott, Charles
 Turney, M
 Thompson, Horace
 Taylor, Benjamin
 Usher, Daniel
 Usher, Daniel jun
 Williams, Daniel
 Walker, Rufus
 Walker, Christopher
 Walker, James
 Wright, Harvey
 Wright, Francis
 Wright, John
 Wright, John trustee
 West, Fannie
 West, Henry
 Wheeler, Samuel
 Wright, John E.
 Wright, Henry
 Watrous, Mahlon
 Wilson, Milton



COVENTRY DIRECTORY 1919-1920

(Willimantic Library Reference Section)

Abbreviations: bds=boarder, clk=clerk, do=ditto,
emp=employee, far=farmer, h= householder, lab=laborer,
NoCov= North Coventry, rem=removed to, res=resident,
SoCov= South Coventry, wid=widow

ALBRO HATTIE h SoCov
Anderson Fred far h NoCov
Armstrong William H emp A E Potter SoCov h do
Augusten Anton far h NoCov
Austin Hudson far h NoCov
Avery George far h SoCov.
Ayer John C far h SoCov
-John C Jr bds SoCov
Ayers Frederick A far h SoCov
-Wolcott H far h NoCov -
-Wolcott H Mrs h SoCov

BARBER GEORGE W far bds SoCov
-William H far h SoCov
Beebe George lab h SoCov
-Gordon M far h SoCov
-H C pastor Congregational Church SoCov h do
Bennett Alvin L lab h SoCov
-Fannie wid Van Renselaer h SoCov
Berzold Joseph far h NoCov
Beville Julius h SoCov
Bidwell House Edward F Navin prop SoCov
Bohn Gustav D far h NoCov
Booth-Dimock Memorial Library SoCov
Bowers Oscar L far h SoCov
Boyer William sawyer h SoCov
Boynton Frank O far bds SoCov
-Millie wid Anton h SoCov
Bradbury George A h SoCov
-Mary A wid William h SoCov
Branigan John lab bds SoCov
Breault Philip carp h SoCov
Breen Patrick bds SoCov
Briggs Mary wid Walter h SoCov
Brigham Don C far bds SoCov
-Frederick N far h SoCov
Broderick Andrew W far bds SoCov
Brooke Frank emp T H Wood Co h So Cov
-Horace Jab hos SoCov
Brooks George h SoCov
-George mgr The Casino res Rockville
-Hobert book binder SoCov h do.
Brown Fred emp E A Tracy Inc h SoCov
Holden A far h NoCov
Burnap Addie h SoCov
CADY FREDERICK far h SoCov
Carman Anna E wid JohnB h SoCov
Carpenter Charles S far h SoCov
-G Burton condr h SoCov
-John J far h NoCov .
Casino The George Brooks mgr SoCov
Cavagnaro John lab h NoCov
Chadwick Elliott L h SoCov
Chamberlain Fred L mach h NoCov ..
Champlin James salesman h SoCov

COVENTRY DIRECTORY 1919-1920 (cont.)

Flaherty Thomas L supt E A Tracy Inc h SoCov
-Thomas B mgr E A Tracy Inc h SoCov

-John S postmaster and auto supplies SoCov h do
Chase Fred W far h NoCov .
Christensen John far h NoCov
Christie George Rev h SoCov
-Hugh com trav bds SoCov
Clark Herbert carpenter SoCov h do
-James P bds SoCov
-Jennie wid George H h SoCov
-Martin H supt John.A, Dady Co bds SoCov
-Samuel lab h NoCov
-William E overseer throwing dept WSCo h SoCov
Clock Edwin E far h SoCov
-Robert bds SoCov
Colburn E Gertrude bds SoCov
-Maria M wid Amasa h SoCov
-Sarah E wid Edgar H h SoCov
Coleman George far bds SoCov
-Marvin P far h SoCov
Collins Sarah wid Edward F h SoCov
Congregational Church SoCov
Connors John L far h SoCov
Coombs Charles G emp Railway Motor Car Co and
photographer SoCov h do
Cotter William far h SoCov
Cour Alfred C emp Kingsbury Box and Printing Co h SoCov
-George confectionery and billiards SoCov bds do
Crickmore Alfred far h SoCov
Cullen John W painter h South Coventy
Cumminsky John lab h SoCov
Curley John P clk bds SoCov

DAGGETT JOSEPH A far h NoCov
Daley John emp RR h SoCov
-William E bds SoCov
Daniels Louis W town clk SoCov h do
Davis Horace J pres Kingsbury & Davis Machine Co. res
Contoocook N H
Day Gertrude wid Frank h SoCov
-John P lab h SoCov
-Michael lab h SoCov
Dean Curtis lawyer h SoCov
Demmick Samuel bricklayer h SoCov
Dexter Rhoda h NoCov
Dimock Edward R Mrs h SoCov
Dooley John A Rev rem to Hartford
Dresser Ralph F far h NoCov
Dubuque Joseph far h SoCov
Dunham Theron E lab h SoCov
-Theron E Mrs dressmaker SoCov h do
Dunn Arthur W far h SoCov
Dynes Edgar W far h SoCov

EDGERTON EUGENE far bds SoCov
-Frank W lab h SoCov
-Grant far bds SoCov
Emmons Edward far h SoCov
-Ernest L bds SoCov

FISK FRANK W bds NoCov
-Isaac P physician NoCov h do
Fiske Mary wid David W h SoCov
- Fitch Mary wid Irvin D h SoCov

KELLY SARAH MRS h SoCov

-Thomas far SoCov
-Thomas C bds SoCov

Flint Burton clk h SoCov
 Foley James H Mrs h NoCov
 Fowler Alexander far h NoCov
 Franz Carl far h SoCov
 Frederickson Olaf h SoCov
 Freeman George F far h SoCov
 French Lucius far h NoCov
 -Walter A far bds NoCov
 -William H carp bds NoCov

 GARABARTNO STEVE lab h NoCov
 Gardner Emanuel R far h SoCov
 Green Joseph far h SoCov
 -Mary wid Benjamin A h SoCov
 -Samuel H far h NoCov
 -Williard S far h NoCov

 HADDAD ALEXANDER h SoCov
 -Richard emp E A Tracy Inc h SoCov
 Hale James far h SoCov
 Hall Charles T far h NoCov
 Hall Foster C bds NoCov
 -L Archie far h NoCov
 -Oliver C far h SoCov
 -Samuel A carpenter SoCov h do
 Hamilton Fred P h NoCov
 Harmon Albert E deputy sheriff h-SoCov
 Harriden Warren h SoCov
 Harris Jasper S far h SoCov
 Haven Lucy wid William C h NoCov
 -Walter S far bds NoCov
 Hawkins William J lab h NoCov
 Heether Fred far bds SoCov
 -George far h SoCov
 -Sexter far h SoCov
 Heft Philip carp h SoCov
 Higgins William L physician and selectman SoCov h do
 Hill Newell A far h NoCov
 -Oliver H far h NoCov
 Hoff Fred bds SoCov
 -Sara Mrs h SoCov
 -Walter bds SoCov
 Hopkins Henry painter h SoCov
 Hopper Kate nurse SoCov bds do
 -Mary wid Joseph h SoCov
 Horrigan Edward bartdr bds South CoV'entry
 -Fred rem to Columbia
 -Michael far h SoCov
 -Thomas far bds SoCov
 Huebner Curt far bds South Cov.entry
 -Emil far h SoCov
 -William far bds SoCov
 Huffer Adam far h SoCov
 -William emp Railway Motor Car Co bds SoCov

 ISHAM JOHN h SoCov
 -Lula station and express agt SoCov depot bds do
 JACKSON JOHN H far h South. Coventry
 Jacquith Dana emp Railway Motor Car Co h SoCov
 Johnson Frank mgr Railway Motor Car Co SoCov h do

Kingsbury Arthur L pres The Kingsbury Box and Printing Co
 SoCov and pres South Coventry Paper Co res
 Northampton Mass
 -Box and Printing Co The mfrs paper boxes and printers
 SoCov
 -DeWitt grocer SoCov h do
 -Harold P sec The Kingsbury Box and Printing Co res
 Northampton Mass
 -Ida M wid Addison rem to Springfield Mass
 -John E far h NoCov
 -Louis A treas The Kingsbury Box and Printing Co and
 sec and treas South Coventry Paper Co h SoCov
 -William far h SoCov
 -& Davis Machine Co L A Kingsbury mgr SoCov
 Kinney George W emp Railway Motor Car Co h SoCov
 Kirkpatrick James h SoCov
 Klespiere Edward far h NoCov
 Knight Charles R far h SoCov
 Knox William far h SoCov
 Koehler Emil J far h NoCov
 Kolb Louise wid Charles h SoCov
 Krombie Charles carp h SoCov

 LACY HENRY J bds SoCov
 Lamarsh David lab h SoCov
 Lathrop Everett P far h NoCov
 -Perkins L far h NoCov
 Latimer Eugene W judge of probate bds SoCov
 -William C teamster and grain and feed SoCov h do
 LeDoyt Burton J far bds SoCov
 -Dwight W carp bds SoCov
 -Edwin S h SoCov
 -Ernest H h SoCov
 -Laura L wid Samuel h SoCov.
 Lewis John G far h SoCov
 Littlefield Charles far h SoCov
 Lloyd Ella h SoCov
 Lohman John emp E A Tracy Inc h SoCov
 Long Daniel carp h NoCov
 Loomis S Noble h NoCov

 MACH VICTOR far h SoCov
 Maher Edith bkkpr Kingsbury Box and Printing Co bds
 SoCov
 Maskill George farh NoCov
 Mason Mary Mrs h SoCov
 Matthews Frank supt E A Tracy Inc h SoCov
 Maynard Clarence rem to Hartford
 -George rem to Hartford
 McFarland Joseph lab h SoCov
 McGinness James J Rev pastor St Mary's R C Church
 SoCov h do
 McNight Wallace far h NoCov
 Methodist Episcopal Church SoCov
 Mette Charles lab bds NoCov
 -Rudolph lab h NoCov
 Meyer Herman grocer SoCov h do
 Miller Anton far h NoCov
 Moore Frank C lab h SoCov
 -Fred lab h SoCov



COVENTRY DIRECTORY 1919-1920 (cont.)

NAVIN EDWARD F prop Bidwell House SoCov h do

Newell Albert F far h NoCov

-Edna A tchr bds SoCov .

-Mary A wid Horace N h SoCov

Newman Dan W far h NoCov

Noble Arthur mason bds SoCov

-Ernest L lab h SoCov

-Louis lab bds SoCov

Nye ArthurW emp E A Tracy Inc h SoCov

-Henry engineer h SoCov

-William emp W F Wood & Son h SoCov

O'BRIEN CORNELIUS J bds SoCov

-Daniel bds SoCov

-Eliza wid Dennis h SoCov

-John lab bds SoCov

-Joseph bds SoCov

-Mary bds SoCov

-William E clk bds SoCov

Ohman Fred far h SoCov

Olsen Annie wid Andres h NoCov

-Axel lab bds NoCov

O'Reilly Charles far h NoCov

-John far bds NoCov

PALMER ARCHIE far bds NoCov

-Arthur D lab bds NoCov

Parker Charles H lab h SoCov

-Mary wid Henry F h SoCov

Parks Mary Mrs housekpr Rev J J McGinness SoCov

Pearl Mary wid Edward h SoCov

Peckham George W far h NoCov

Pedro John far h Sonth Coventry

Perley Herbert A far h NoCov

Peterson Austin E h SoCov

Phillips Christian far h SoCov

-Ezekiel W h SoCov

-Garcilla wid George L h SoCov

-Louis M stationery SoCov bds do

-Mathilda wid John h SoCov

Pike Sarah wid Walter M h SoCov

Pipin Joseph rem to Willimantic

Pitkin Robert W far bds NoCov.

-William F far bds NoCov.

Pomeroy Alexander H far h NoCov

-Harry B far bds NoCov

Porter Arthur B far h NoCov

Potter Albert E blacksmith SoCov h do

-Fred N far bds SoCov

-John rem to Manchester

-Nathan D far h SoCov

Prince Jacob V B Mrs h SoCov

Proulx Alexander plumber h SoCov

RAILWAY MOTOR CAR CO Frank Johnson mgr SoCov

Reed Arthur L far h NoCov

Reische Adolph far h NoCov

-John far h NoCov

Reynolds John H far h SoCov

-John L far bds SoCov

Richardson Eugene far bds SoCov

Riley John J h SoCov

Robbins Winthrop P far h NoCov

Robertson Charles far h NoCov

-George H far bds SoCov

-Lacon W h SoCov

Robinson Charles A emp E A Tracy Inc h SoCov

Rose Royal M far h SoCov

-William P far h NoCov

SAFASZ WALENTY lab h SoCov

Schell Charles H far h NoCov

Seagraves Bezaleel Mrs h SoCov

Sears Frank meat market SoCov h do

-Thomas J coachman bds SoCov

Shanger Charles N far h NoCov

Shea Patrick lab h SoCov

Sheridan John h SoCov

Shirshac John farm hand bds SoCov

-Wasyl far h SoCov

Shurtlefs Dwight far h SoCov

Skilton Edward P far hds NoCov

-John E far h NoCov

-Joseph far bds NoCov

Smith William J far bds SoCov

Snow Jerome H h SoCov

Snyder Fred J far h SoCov

Sonderregger Albert lab h SoCov

South Coventry Paper Co SoCov

South Coventry Water Supply Co SoCov

Southward Joseph G painter NoCov h do

Spaulding Elizabeth wid Francis C h SoCov

Spellacy Daniel emp W F Wood & Son h SoCov

Squires Albert far bds SoCov

-Arthur bds SoCov

-Charles A emp E A Tracy Inc bds SoCov

-Frank teamster h SoCov .

-Henry far h SoCov

-James II far h SoCov

Stanley Fred W far bds SoCov

-James E foreman Kingsbury Box and Printing Co bds SoCov

-Norman W Mrs h SoCov

St Mary's R C Church SoCov

Sullivan Daniel h SoCov

-Timothy far h SoCov

TALCOTT ELVIRA h NoCov.

Taylor Benjamin A far and sexton h. NoCov

-Charles F far h NoCov

-George G clk bds SoCov

-Stephen lab h NoCov

-William C far h NoCov

Tetrault Adolphe far h SoCov

Theim Elizabeth wid Carl h SoCov

-Frank far h SoCov

-Fred lab bds SoCov

-Gustav far h SoCov

Thompson Gertrude wid Johnson D Jr h SoCov

Thornton James II far bds SoCov

-William lab h SoCov

Thuot David far bd s SoCov

Tillinghast David S far h SoCov

Tisdale Louis rem to Hartford

COVENTRY DIRECTORY 1919-1920 (cont.)

-Samuel foreman Kingsbury Box and Printing Co bds SoCov
 Tracy E A Inc wool extract mfrs SoCov
 -Eugene A pres and treas E A Tracy Inc SoCov h do
 -Florence wid William A h SoCov
 -Frank J sec E A Tracy Inc SoCov h do
 Tripp Charles H mech h SoCov
 -Wesley far h SoCov
 Turner Frank far h NoCov
 Turney Charles E far h NoCov
 Turney Chauncey bds NoCov
 -Eli B far h NoCov

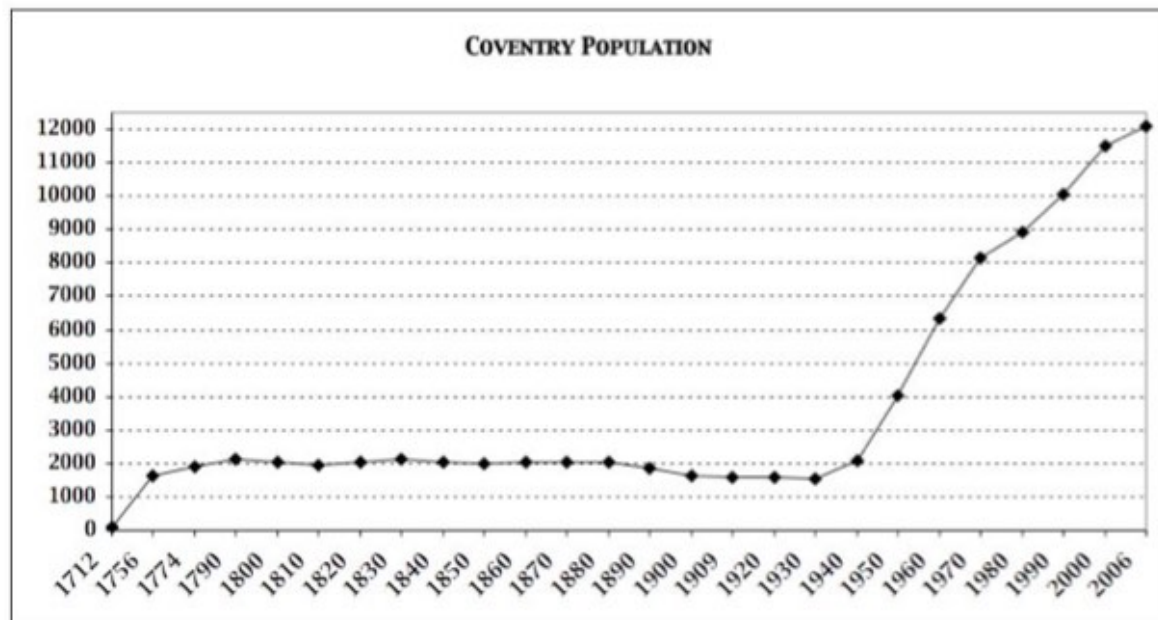
UNCLES JOHN R lab h SoCov
 Utley Hezekiah rem to North Windham

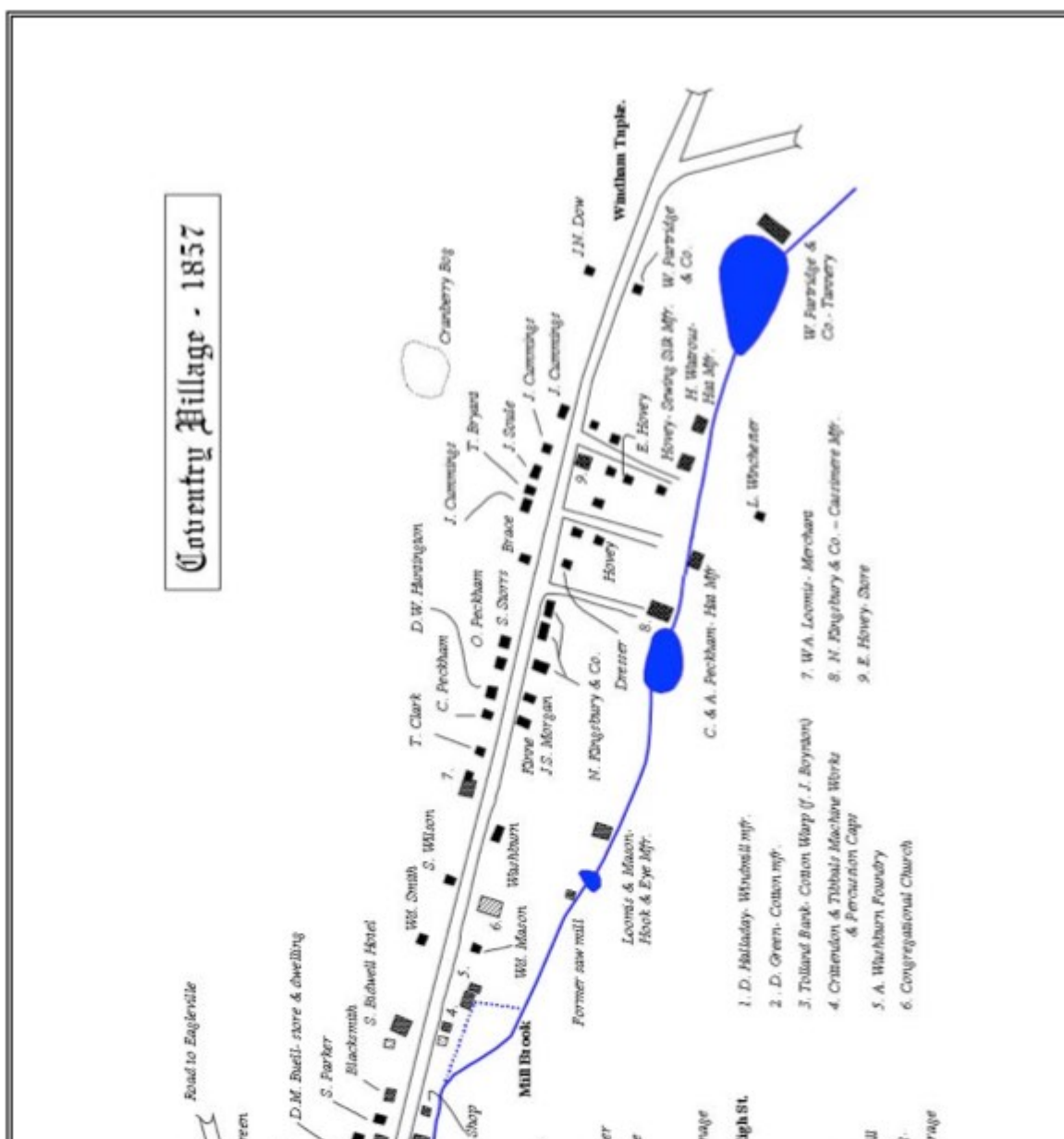
VINTON ARTHUR far bds NoCov
 -Robert W lab bds NoCov
 -Winfield S far h NoCov
 Vondeck Fred far h NoCov

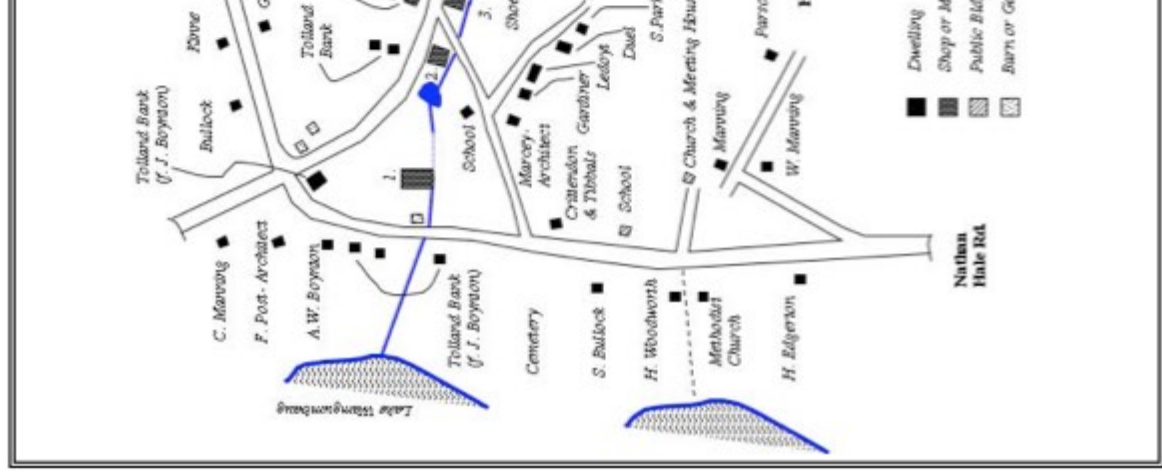
WALBRIDGE JOHN N far h NoCov
 Walker Henry C far h NoCov
 Warren Frederick agricult'l implement dealer SoCov h do
 Washburn Charles emp WSCo h SoCov
 -Henry K (H K & W A Washburn) SoCov h do
 -H K & W A (Henry K and Walter A Washburn) silk throwsters SoCov
 -Walter A (H K and W A Washburn) SoCov h do
 Wells Thomas far h SoCov
 Wellwood Joseph E bds SoCov
 -William L grocer SoCov h do
 White Frederick F bds SoCov
 -Robert H lab h SoCov
 -Sarah wid Nathan C h SoCov
 Whitman Charles E bds NoCov
 -James P far h NoCov

Williams Judson lab h NoCov
 Williamson James emp E A Tracy Inc bds SoCov
 Wolfe Frederick far h NoCov
 -George C far bds NoCov
 -George G far h NoCov
 -Sarah E Mrs h SoCov
 -William real estate h SoCov
 Wood Albert M shoemaker and real estate SoCov h do
 -Arthur N (William F Wood & Son) bds SoCov
 -Burton M carp bds SoCov
 -John M h SoCov
 -T H Co The silk mfrs SoCov
 -Thomas H pres and treas The T H Wood Co SoCov h do
 -William F (William F Wood & Son) h SoCov
 -William F & Son (William F and Arthur N Wood) toric cylinder lens mfrs SoCov
 Woodworth Albert P h SoCov
 -Ernest H blacksmith and vinegar mfr SoCov h do
 -Harland D teamster bds SoCov
 Woop William h SoCov
 Wright Albert far h SoCov
 -Anna wid Henry C h SoCov
 -John E lab h NoCov
 YOUNG ALFRED A bds NoCov
 -Daniel C bds SoCov
 -Jeremiah F h SoCov
 -John lab bds SoCov
 -John M far h SoCov
 -Thomas I far bds NoCov
 -Thomas R far h NoCov

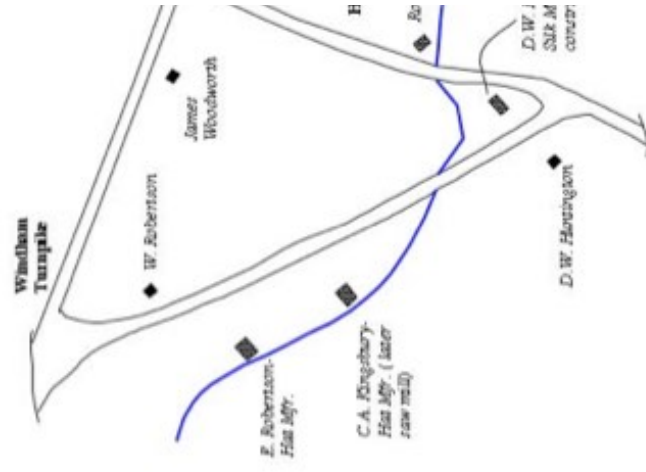
ZECHIEL FRED MRS h SoCov





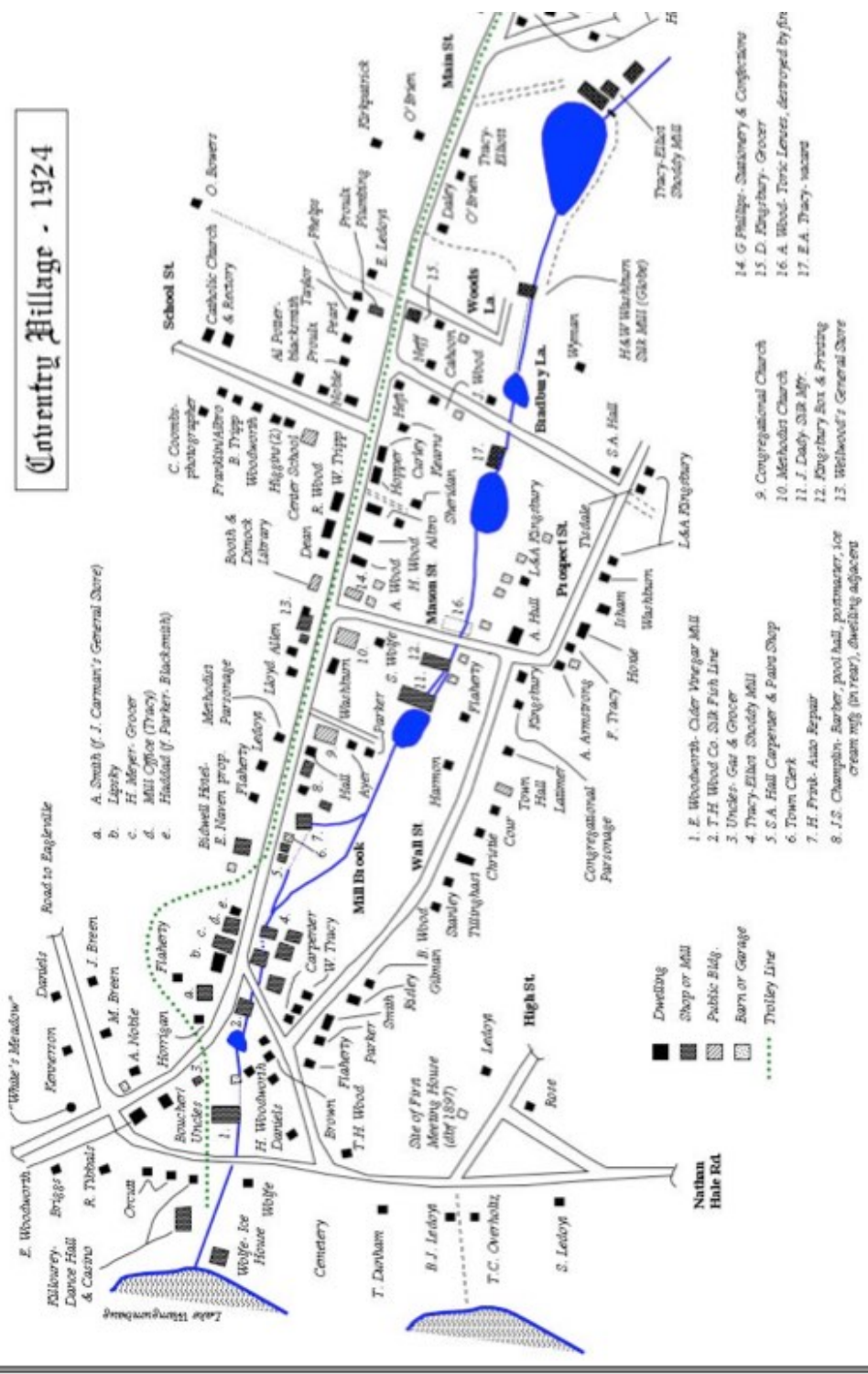


Tower Hill



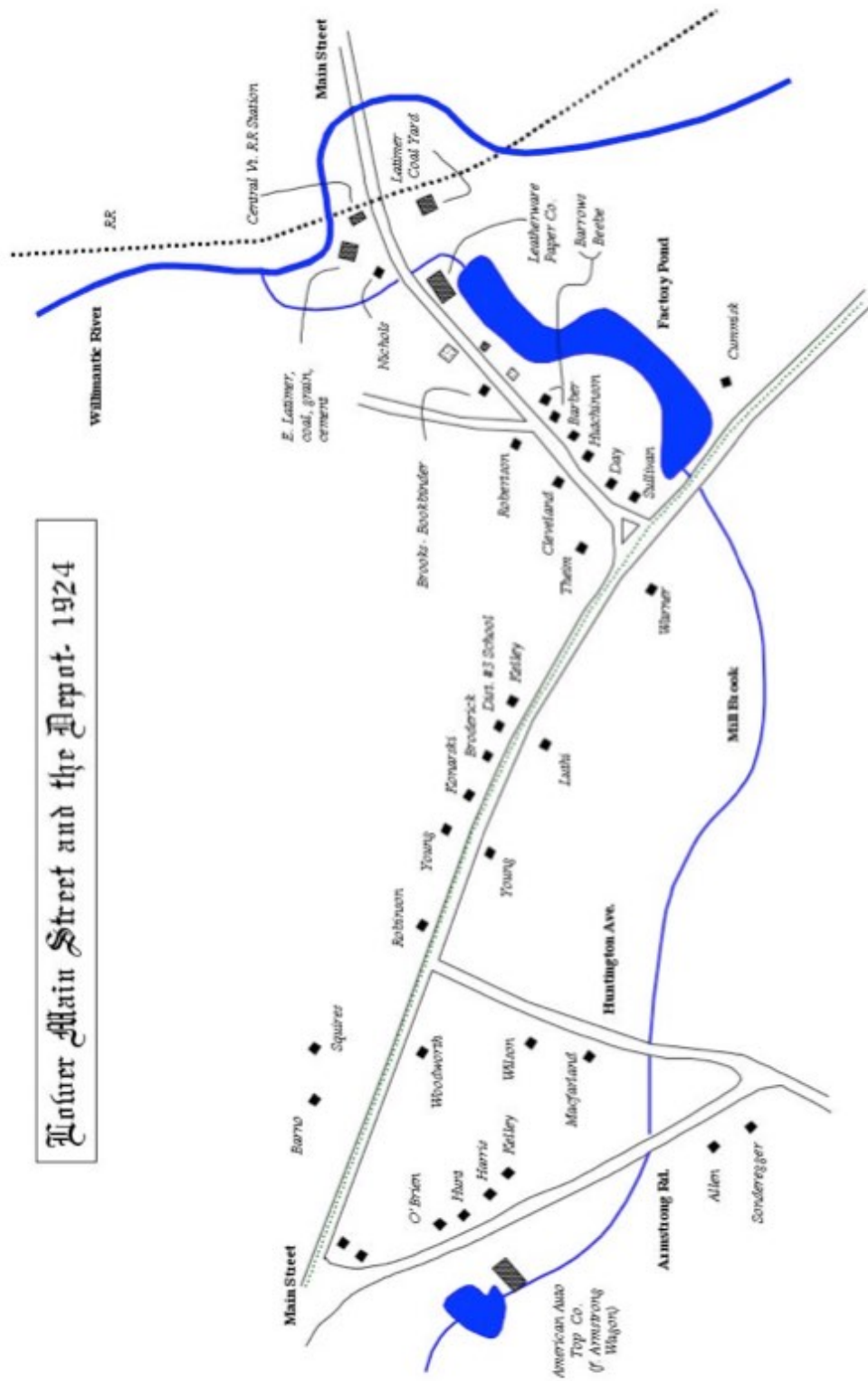


Coventry Village - 1924





Lower Main Street and the Depot- 1924



Covenury Village - 1962

The map shows a grid-like street pattern with several main roads: School St., Main St., Woods La., Cross St., Monument Hill Rd., High St., and Lake St. Various buildings are labeled with names or numbers, and some are highlighted with colored squares corresponding to the legend.

Legend:

- Dwelling (Black square)
- Shore or Mill (White square)
- Public Bldg (Gray square)
- Burn or Garage (Hatched square)
- Cottage (Dark gray square)

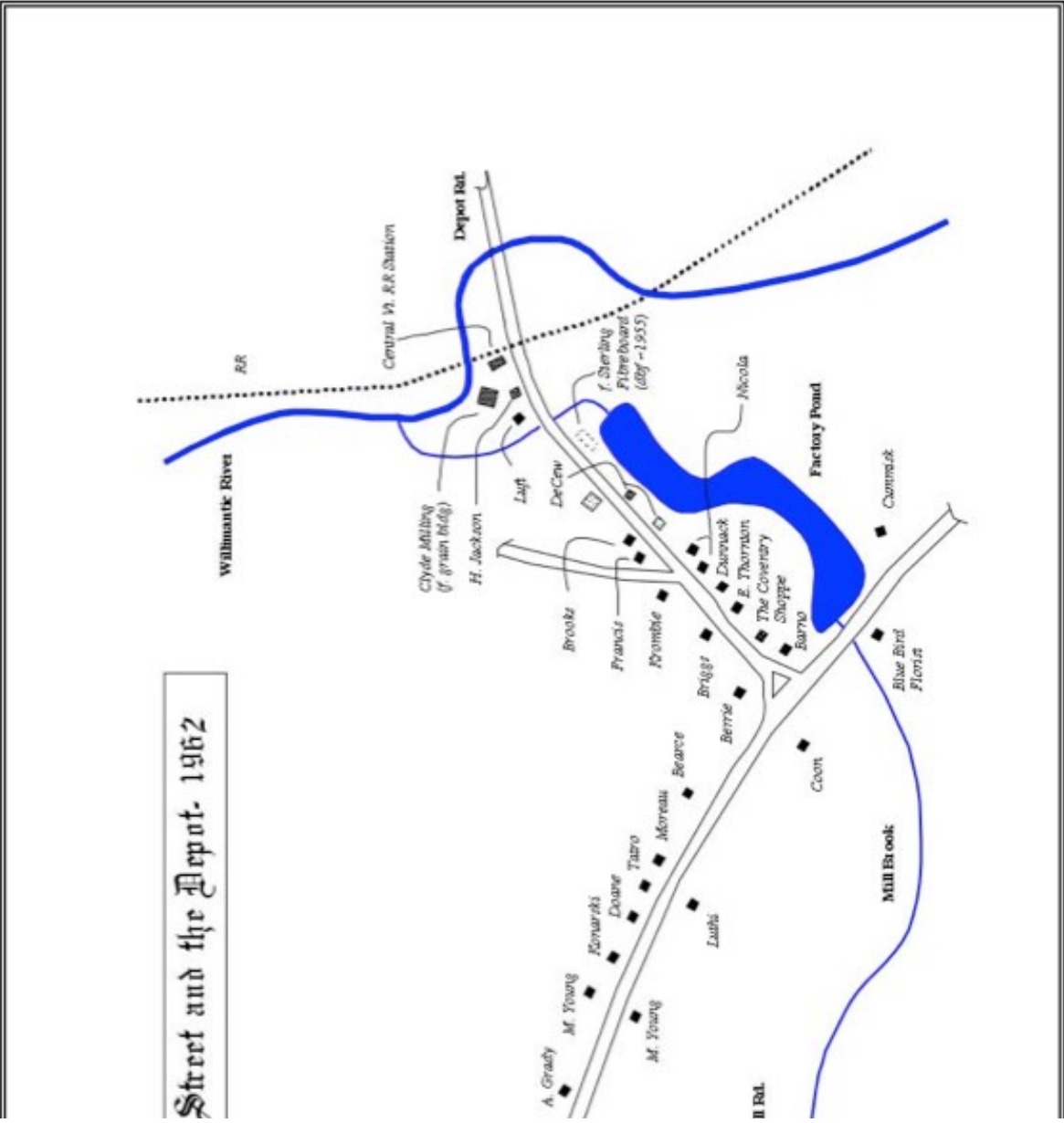
List 1 (Top Left):

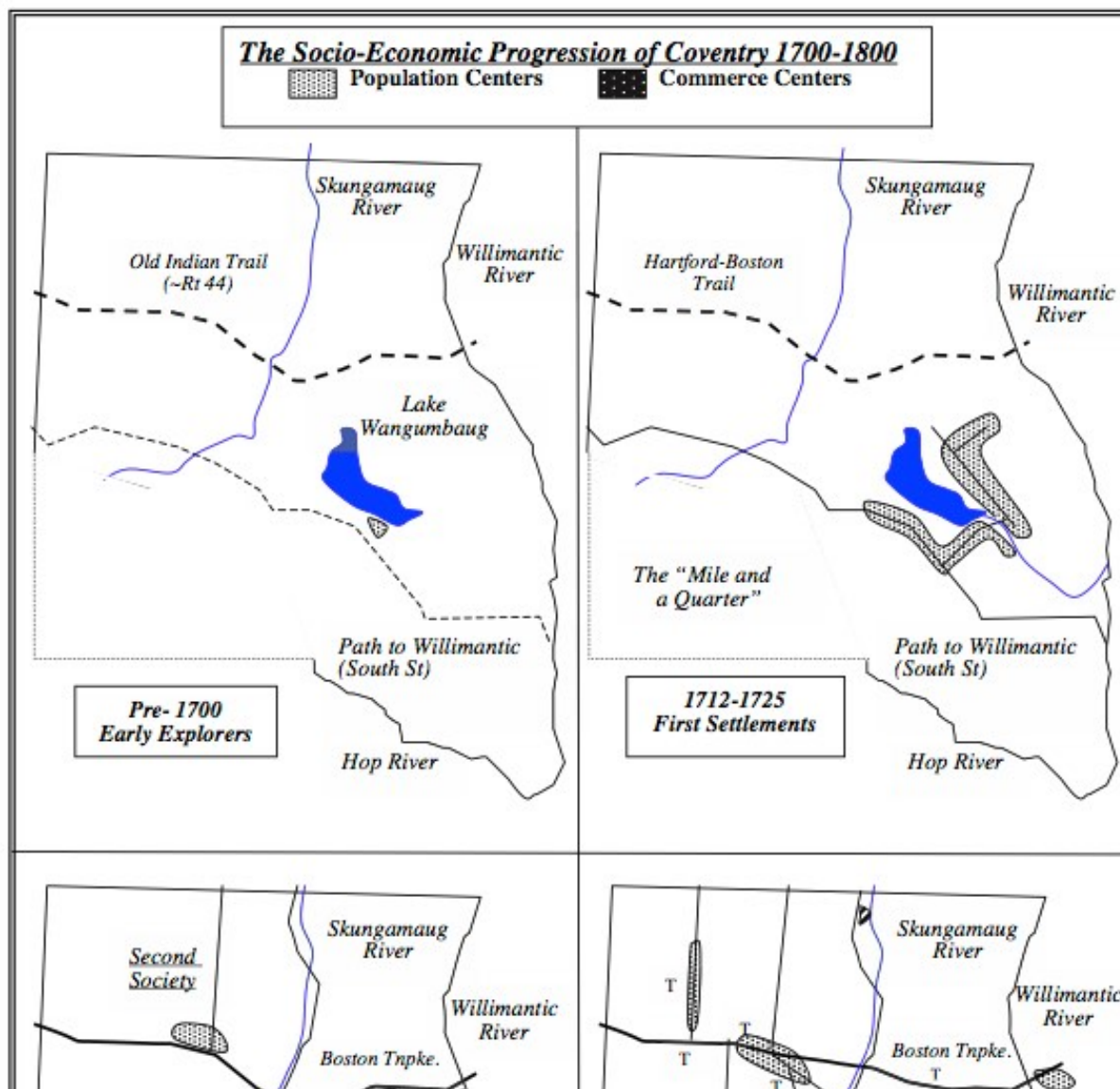
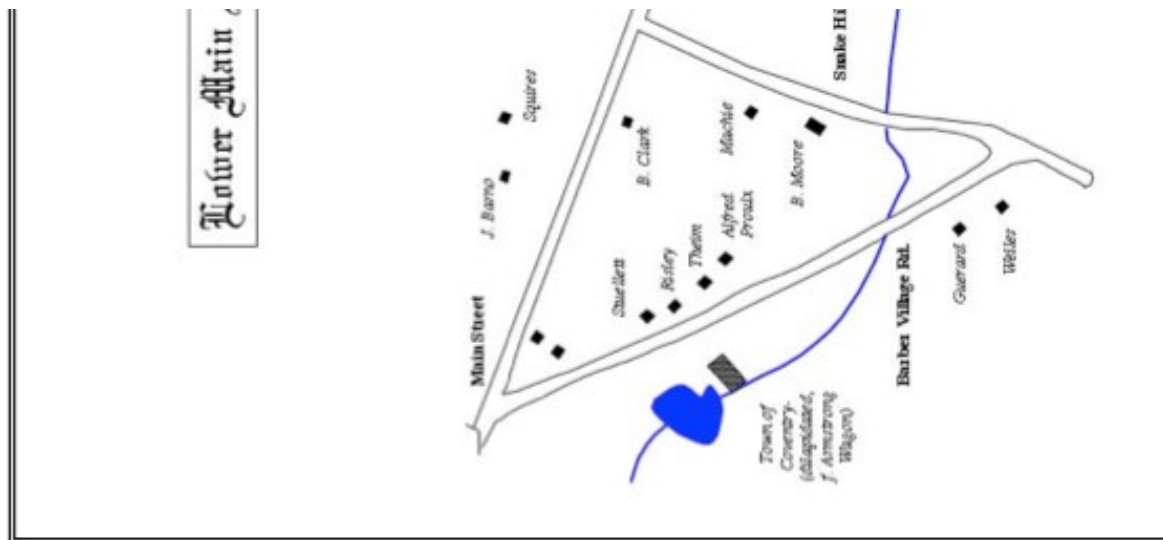
- a. Champagne Lapsky Bldg - Lyon's Barber Shop (if Mama Rosa's restaurant)
- b. Helms Covenury Floor Covering & PABA ofc.
- c. Town Hall
- d. Bidwell House (M. Sullivan) & Flaherty Tavern & Package Store
- e. F. Young Leaky
- f. G. Jacobson
- g. R. Smith
- h. E. Smith
- i. Coughlin
- j. Hoffman
- k. A. Moore
- l. E. Lyman
- m. Show
- n. Cleverdon

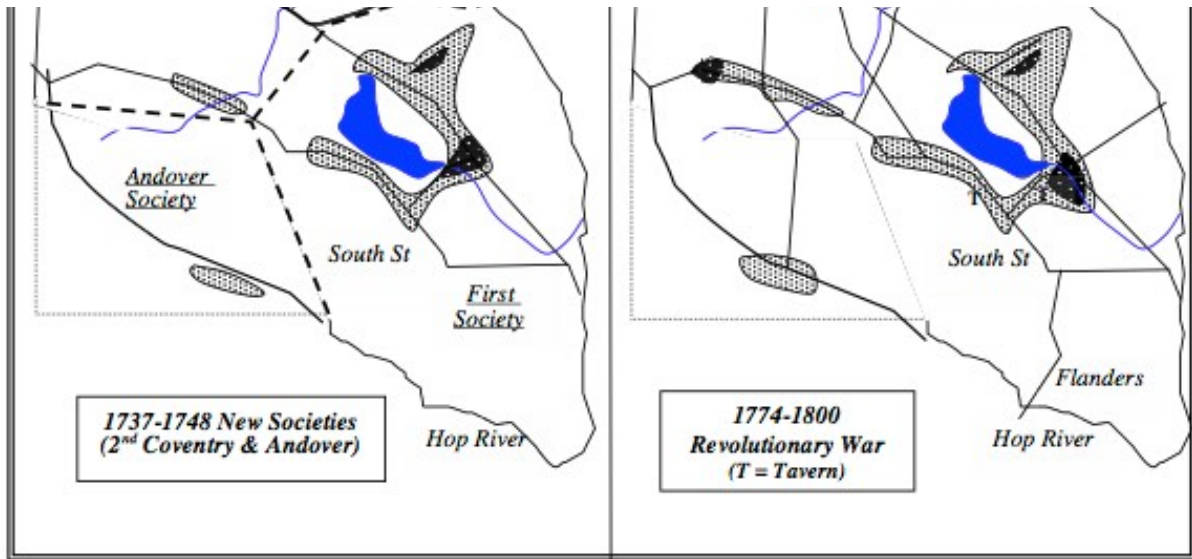
List 2 (Bottom Right):

1. Weller Agency, Champion's Barber Shop, Ben's Beauty Salon
2. Therman's Appliance Repair
3. Satures Inc.
4. Covenury Corners*, Post Office, Hill's Pharmacy, Manchester Savings & Loan, Goodwin's TV & Appliances, Covenury Broadcaster, Covenury Gift Shop
5. Tremblay's Grocer & General Store
6. VFD, Town Garage (rear)
7. Bodreau's Bldg - Covenury Cleaners, Nathan Hale Soda Shop, Covenury Variety Store
8. R. W. Smith - Retail Rental
9. Municipal Ofc
10. Callahan Old (Stable)
11. Burnham's Confectionery & Espresso
12. Congregational Church
13. Sebert's Bldg * Dentist (Dr. Duboff), Williams Beauty Shop, Post Office, Hill's Pharmacy
14. Jim's Supply (Ferrigno)
15. Community Center
16. Beane Bldg - Covenury Billiards, Covenury Woodworking, Covenury Minor Sales
17. Harvey - Old Mill Furniture
18. Wellwood's Old Country Store
19. Congregational Church, School
20. Beane Machine & Metal Shop
21. Teyman's Coffee Shop

* The Post Office and Hall's Pharmacy moved from the Sebert bldg. to Coventry Corners in the fall of 1962.









The Socio-Economic Progression of Coventry 1800-1980



Population Centers



Commerce Centers

