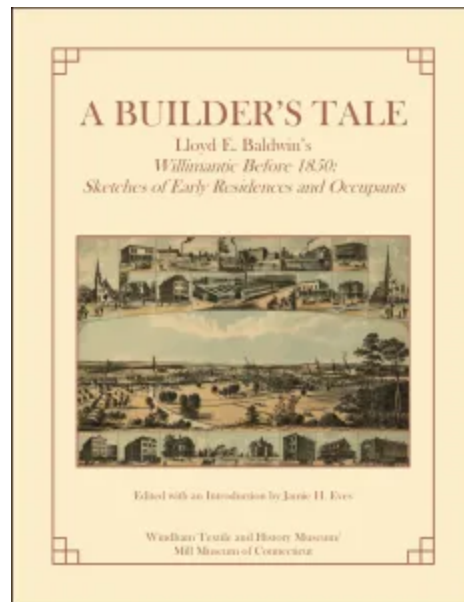


A BUILDER'S TALE:

LLOYD E. BALDWIN'S WILLIMANTIC BEFORE 1850: SKETCHES OF EARLY RESIDENCES AND OCCUPANTS — A PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENT



Introduction

Jamie Eves

In 1895, Lloyd E. Baldwin — an eighty-five-year-old retired carpenter, builder, and contractor; longtime community leader; former general in the Connecticut state militia; widower; boarder at the Windham Hotel; and for the past sixty-seven years an active resident of the bustling mill city of Willimantic in eastern Connecticut — published a series of twenty-two newspaper articles in the *Willimantic Journal* that described the city as it had been forty-five years earlier, in 1850, when it was just emerging as one of the Nutmeg State's industrial centers. [1] Collectively titled "Willimantic in 1850: Sketches of Early Residences and Occupants," the articles constitute a unique building-by-building, person-by-person tour of a typical New England mill city in the early days of the Industrial Revolution. Despite his profession as a builder, Baldwin was more interested in the men and women who had lived and worked in Willimantic's homes, shops, and mills than he was in the structures themselves. He proudly saw himself and his former neighbors as founders, a talented and resourceful people who, living at the cusp of a new age, had come together to build something innovative, vibrant, and worthy: a thriving New England mill community. It was this story he now sought to tell. Because Baldwin himself had played a major role in building Willimantic — he had either built or helped build four of the city's major cotton mills, and had constructed dozens of its houses, stores, and churches — his tale carries authority. It constitutes an important and instructive firsthand account of the early stages of industrialization in America, as well as a lively,

believable, and detailed description of life in an early mill community. Sensing the value of his writings for later generations, Baldwin pasted the clippings into a scrapbook, which he donated to the Willimantic Public Library sometime before his death the next year. It is fortunate that he did. The *Willimantic Journal* long ago ceased publication, and back issues are hard to find, but Baldwin's articles, carefully preserved by the Library, continue to serve local historians. This publication aims at giving them an even wider audience.

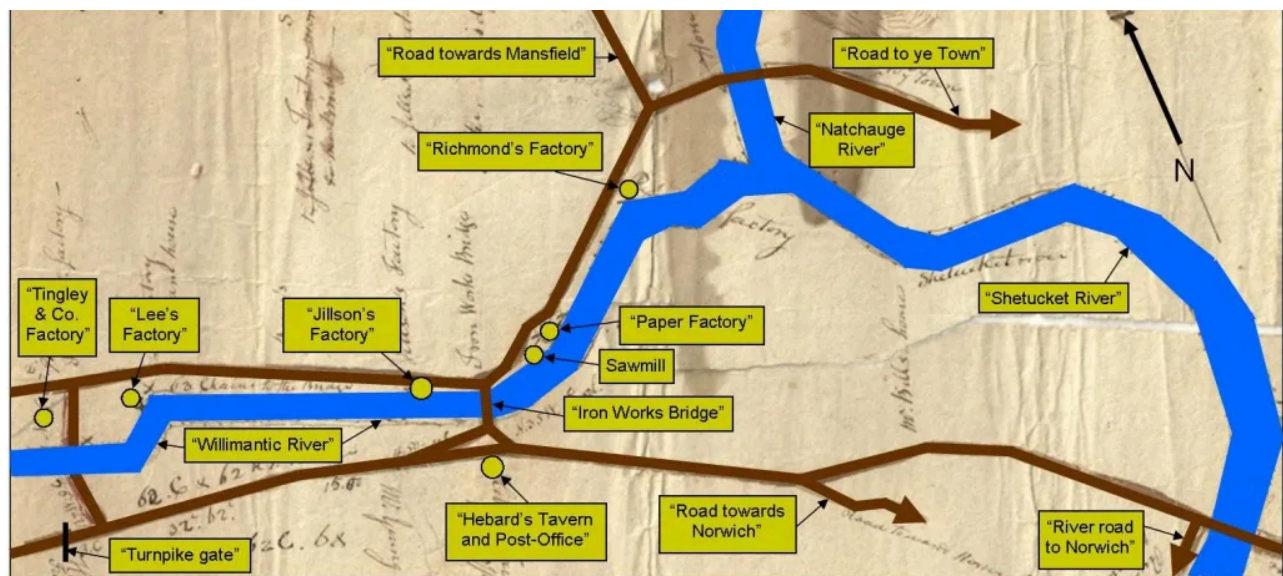
Baldwin was born in the rural community of Franklin, Connecticut, then part of Norwich, in 1810, at the beginning of America's Industrial Age. [2] Samuel Slater's woolen mill, the first textile factory in the United States, had commenced operations in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, only a few years earlier, in 1793. In the early 1800s, textile milling spread from Rhode Island into eastern Connecticut. In the first decade of the new century, water-powered carding mills for combing locally produced wool began operating in Griswold, Mansfield, and Windham. Advertised the *Windham Herald* in 1806: "Notice is hereby given that the machine for picking, oiling and carding wool, erected on the Falls of the Willimantic River in Windham, at the Mills of Messrs. Clark & Gray, is now ready to do business." That same year, entrepreneurs from Rhode Island built the first water-powered cotton mill in eastern Connecticut, in Pomfret. By the time Baldwin was growing up in the 1810s, approximately a half-dozen carding and spinning mills operated in eastern Connecticut, most of them along the Quinebaug and Shetucket rivers and their tributaries. [3]

In addition to an Industrial Revolution, the Connecticut of Baldwin's youth was also undergoing a parallel Market Revolution. Increasingly, Connecticut's farmers, artisans, and fishermen produced goods for distant markets, as opposed to the mostly household consumption and local exchange that had characterized colonial times. Busy market villages with shops and stores were springing up where before there had been only churchyard hamlets and isolated farms. Growing port towns like Norwich, at the confluence of the Quinebaug, Shetucket, and Thames rivers, were emerging as important centers for river- and sea-borne commerce, carrying Connecticut's beef, pork, fish, maize, and cloth to the rest of the United States, Europe, the West Indies, and even Asia. Urban life was becoming more pervasive. Transportation networks expanded and improved. The pace of modernization picked up. Capital expanded — capital which financed the construction of even more textile mills. [4] Together, these two parallel revolutions — the Industrial and the Market — would shape and define Baldwin's life.

As a young man, Baldwin left Norwich and came to Willimantic. In 1826, when he was sixteen, he became an apprentice carpenter; two years later he accompanied his employer to Willimantic, to help build the large stone Windham Cotton Manufacturing Company mill on the Willimantic River. [5] Baldwin grew up with the city. In 1826 Willimantic was little more than a gap between hills, a sparsely populated, narrow, rocky, gneiss gorge in the northwest corner of the old colonial town of Windham, where the swift-flowing Willimantic River dropped 90 feet in a little less than a mile before meeting the Natchaug to form the Shetucket. Although a few, small, preindustrial mills — a gristmill, a sawmill, a paper mill, and (during the Revolutionary War) a gunpowder mill — had been located there, in 1828 it was still a mostly

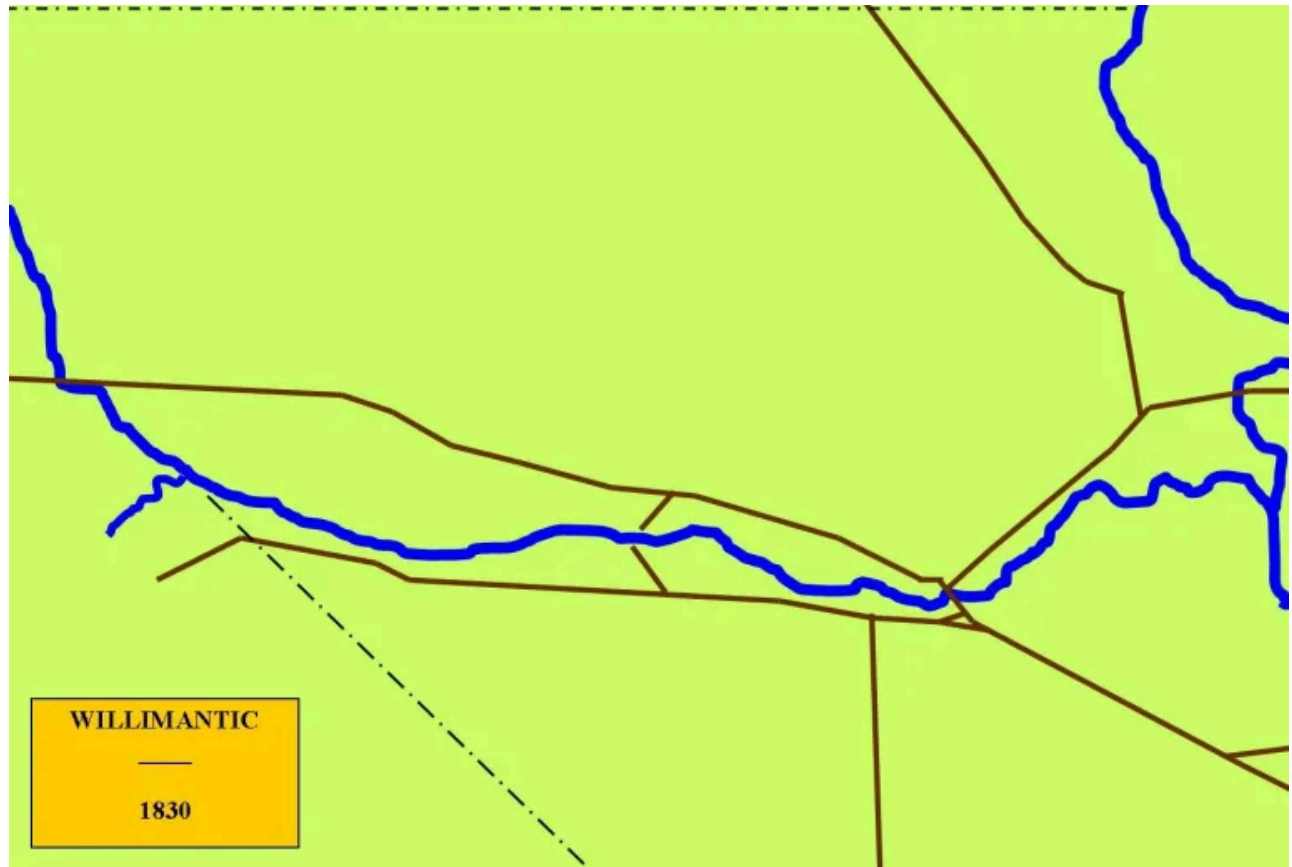
uninhabited, stone-strewn, oak forest. The gorge's first textile mill — owned by Perez Richmond, a Rhode Island entrepreneur — had opened only four years before, in 1822. In 1823 "Deacon" Charles Lee of Connecticut erected the second textile mill at the gorge. The three Jillson brothers — one (the capitalist) from Rhode Island and two (the mechanics) from Massachusetts — built the third mill in 1824-25. Mathew Watson and Nathan and Arunah Tingley opened the fourth, the Windham Cotton Manufacturing Company, in 1828. Other mills were built in the 1850s and 1860s. In the 1830s, what had begun as four small, distinct villages scattered along the gorge — Richmond Town, Leesburg, Jillson Mills, and Tingleyville — merged to form the bustling city of Willimantic, which in 1833 became an incorporated borough within the town of Windham. [6] In 1836, eight years after Baldwin had arrived and three years after it had become a borough, the geographer John Warner Barber described the little mill city:

The borough of Willimantic is a flourishing village, 26 miles east from Hartford, 3 west from Windham [by which Barber meant the village of Windham Center, then the seat of government for the town of Windham], 44 from Providence, 16 from Norwich city, and 16 from Brooklyn. It contains at this time nearly 2,000 inhabitants. The village is built principally on one street, on the northern side of the Willimantic [River], and extends from west to east nearly a mile, and contains three houses of worship, 1 Congregational, 1 Methodist, and 1 Baptist.... There are 6 cotton factories, in all of which upwards of 13,000 spindles are run. There is also a satinet factory and a paper mill. [7]



Willimantic c. 1830. From a hand-drawn map.

[Http://www.threadcity.com/gallery/thumbnails.php?album=55](http://www.threadcity.com/gallery/thumbnails.php?album=55). Appears to be a sketch preliminary to construction of the Bridge Street bridge over the Willimantic River. Enhanced for clarity.



Baldwin did much of the building. Finishing his apprenticeship, he became, in his own words, “Contractor Baldwin,” a self-confident, energetic, take-charge builder who supervised the construction or reconstruction of three more of the city’s cotton mills and built more than a score of its houses, churches, schools, and stores, including the Franklin Building, Willimantic’s first public stage and lecture hall.



By 1850 Willimantic was a small but growing city of approximately 3,000 inhabitants. Not a planned city like Lowell, Massachusetts, it sprawled haphazardly along both banks of the Willimantic River. A typical New England mill stream, the Willimantic dropped about 90 feet as it surged swiftly through the gorge, plunging over two falls, the Upper Falls at the west end and the larger Willimantic Falls (or Lower Falls) at the east. The principal streets were two turnpikes, Main Street on the north bank of the river and Pleasant Street on the south. Two bridges spanned the river in 1850, one at each of the falls, connecting the two main streets. By the 1850s there were also several short secondary streets with names typical for the era: Union Street, High Street, Jackson Street (named after a local resident, not the famous President), Bridge Street, South Street, Milk Street, Washington Street, Water Street, State Street, and West Street. Many of the street names changed over time. Baldwin normally (but not always) used the names that were in place in the 1890s, when he wrote the articles, rather than those used in 1850. I have retained his toponyms, but for clarity indicated in brackets both the 1850s street names and the names used today.



Baldwin begins his tour of Willimantic at the Upper Falls, at the west end of the city, along Pleasant Street, where his own residence was located. He heads eastward along the south bank of the river to the Willimantic Falls, then jumps back to the west end, to follow Main Street eastward along the north bank. He detours down each side street as he arrives at it. But Baldwin was interested in the residents more than the streets, houses, mills, shops, stores, churches, or schools, and his account focuses primarily on the people who inhabited the young mill city. We meet mill owners, newspaper publishers, workers, farmers, teachers, preachers, craftspeople, and merchants. We are privy to the excitement that occurs when a band of local

rowdies tries to break up an abolitionist meeting at the Methodist Church and the outraged Methodists fight back in a spirited rough-and-tumble that spills out into Main Street. When the authorities show up to stop the fight and fine the leaders on both sides, Orrin Robinson, a principled (and stubborn) Methodist elder refuses to pay his fine and insists on being arrested and jailed — an act of civil disobedience that predates Henry Thoreau’s more famous night in jail in Concord, Massachusetts. We learn that the first train to arrive in Willimantic was pulled into town by a horse. We meet a family of deaf artisans who communicate in sign language. For the most part, Baldwin likes and respects his neighbors, and speaks well of them. But occasionally he finds them troublesome — as with the saloon keeper who gets rich speculating in real estate and offers Baldwin’s Congregational Church its lot for free, but makes sure the lot is too small and makes a nice profit selling the Congregationalists additional land from a lot next door. Often Baldwin finds his neighbors amusing, like the newspaper publisher who frequently peppers his paper with wry witticisms. And we learn a lot about Baldwin himself: he is a general in the state militia, an Odd Fellow (his Odd Fellows ribbon is shown below), and a loyal Jeffersonian Democrat.



I have retained most of Baldwin’s language. However, I have made his spelling and capitalization consistent (he spelled “cozy” three different ways, none of them correct) and added some punctuation for clarity. I have also added some additional material in brackets, mostly for clarity and consistency; because Baldwin wrote his “sketches” for readers in Willimantic, who were of course already familiar with the local geography, such clarification is sometimes necessary. However, his language is authentic and reflects the way that most people wrote and talked in the 1800s, and I have tried to respect that. Illustrations are either my own or come from the collections of the Windham Textile and History Museum, also known as the Mill Museum, and were not part of the original text. Baldwin numbered his sketches but did not give them distinct “chapter names”; for clarity, I’ve supplied chapter names, in brackets, using today’s placenames.

Notes

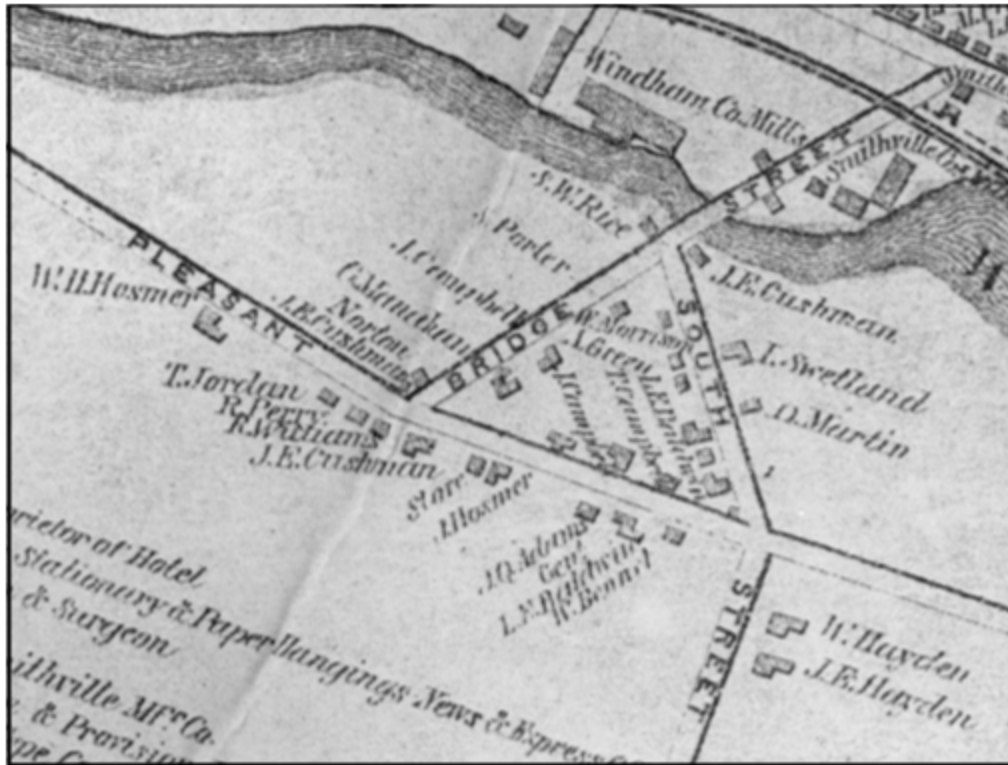
1. Thomas R. Beardsley, "The Franklin Hall Block at 796 Main Street," *Willimantic Chronicle*, 9 May 1998; *Willimantic Directory, 1895* (New Haven: Price and Lee, 1895), 13.
2. *New York Times*, Obituary Notes, 22 April 1896.
3. Not as much has been written about the Industrial Revolution in Connecticut as in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. For information about the mills in eastern Connecticut, see Ellen D. Larned, *History of Windham County, Connecticut* (Worcester, MA: Charles Hamilton, 1880), 2: 399-403, quote on p. 399. See also Ardis S. Abbott, *Building the Loom City: Rockville, Connecticut, 1821-1908* (Pittsburgh: Dorrance Co., 2003). For more on the industrial transition in southern New England generally, see Jonathan Prude, *The Coming of Industrial Order: Town and Factory Life in Rural Massachusetts, 1810-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), a study of Webster, MA, just across the border from eastern Connecticut.
4. As with the Industrial Revolution, not as much has been written about the Market Revolution in Connecticut as in Massachusetts. One very fine (although nonacademic) exception is Brenda Milkofsky, "Three Centuries of Connecticut River Shipping," *Sea History* (Summer, 1985), 13-16. For the Market Revolution in rural New England generally, see Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), passim; Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); and Joseph S. Wood, *The New England Village* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997)..
5. Beardsley, "Franklin Hall Block."
6. Thomas R. Beardsley, *Willimantic Industry and Community: The Rise and Decline of a Connecticut Textile City* (Willimantic, CT: Windham Textile and History Museum, 1993), 4-14.
7. John Warner Barber, *Connecticut Historical Collections, Containing a General Collection of Interesting Facts, Traditions, Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes, &c, Relating to the History and Antiquities of Every Town in Connecticut, with Geographical Description*, 2d ed. (New Haven: Durrie and Peck and J. W. Barber, 1836), 446-447.

Lloyd E. Baldwin's *Willimantic Before 1850: Sketches of Early Residences and Occupants*

Part One: The Earliest Buildings and Builders of the District "Over the River."

[Pleasant Street, Bridge Street]

It having been suggested by many of our older citizens that a brief history of the dwelling houses and their occupants within the limits of Willimantic prior to 1850 would be of much interest historically, the following sketches have been prepared by an old resident.



Commencing at the north [actually, west] end of Pleasant Street, the first house was built by **Stephen Hosmer**, Esq., in 1826. Hosmer came here from Columbia [the next town to the west], and owned a large tract of land on both sides of the road of more than one mile in length and also owned the Turnpike Road from Hebron [the town just west of Columbia; the Turnpike Road, a privately owned toll road that included Pleasant Street in Willimantic, passed through Columbia, connecting it to Hebron on one side and Windham on the other] to its intersection with [South] Main Street near the old Hebard tavern in Willimantic. Mr. Hosmer was a go-ahead, energetic man, furnishing a large amount of employment of labor on his farm and road. His family consisted of five sons and three daughters, all of whom are dead except Charles, the youngest son, who resides in Chicago.

The next house on the south side of the street easterly was built by **Thomas Jordan, Jr.**, brother of **Lyman Jordan**, and occupied by him for some years, upon land purchased from the Hosmer estate in 1848. Mr. Jordan is still living in Providence, R. I.

The next house was built and occupied by **Richard H. Perry**, in 1848. He long since passed away by that scourge of New England – consumption [tuberculosis]. Then came on the north side of the street the old red house, built early in the last century, and occupied by the toll

gatherer, as one of the turnpike gates was located at this point. This house was torn down and removed only a few years since. Upon the opposite side of the street **Ralph Williams**, in 1846, built and occupied for a number of years the house now standing. Mr. Williams was a carpenter by trade, and came here from Mystic [a maritime village in the town of Stonington, in southeastern Connecticut], a young man, in the early days of Willimantic. In connection with others he established the Methodist church and society in this place and lived here until his death, a few years since, at a ripe old age.

The next house on the south side of the street was built and occupied by **Edward T. Cook**, in 1846. Mr. Cook was a carpenter by trade and resided here for a number of years; he is still living in Norwich [a busy port city on the Thames River in southeastern Connecticut, not far from Willimantic].

We now come to Bridge Street, running from Pleasant Street northerly [across the Willimantic River] to [West] Main Street. It was the first new street opened and worked in Willimantic in the early part of this century, and was due in a great measure to the energy and perseverance of **Stephen Hosmer**, Esq. [Here Baldwin distinguishes newer streets like Bridge Street, which had been built during his own lifetime, from older streets like Pleasant Street and Main Street, which had come into being as rural roads in the eighteenth century, before he had been born and before the mill city of Willimantic had come into existence.] The Superior Court of Windham County [Windham County occupied the northeastern corner of Connecticut, with the towns of Windham — of which Willimantic was a part — and Brooklyn as county seats] appointed commissioners, of which the Hon. **Maron [sic] Cleveland** of Hampton [a town a few miles east of Willimantic] was chairman, who laid out the road between the points named, in 1827, with a bridge across the Willimantic River. The road and bridge were built and opened for travel in 1828 [the year Baldwin moved to Willimantic]. [The original bridge at Bridge Street was constructed of wood. Shortly after midcentury, it was replaced with a stone arch bridge, which is still there.] The first house north from Pleasant Street, now occupied by **C. W. Turner**, was built by **George W. Manahan**, in 1844. Mr. Manahan came here from Webster, Mass., and was a blacksmith and toolmaker by trade. After living here for some years he returned to Webster, and is still living there.



The next house has long been known as the eagle house, from a carved model of that bird placed in the front gable. It was built in 1834 by **Wm. Porter**, who came here from Columbia,

and was in the employ of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company [described in a later chapter, the Windham Cotton Manufacturing Company was one of two large cotton mills located at the Upper Falls near Bridge Street] for some years as an overseer; subsequently the property passed into the possession of **Thomas Campbell**, who was postmaster during President [Franklin] Pierce's administration [1853-57], and was noted for his many quaint sayings. [As a political appointee of the Pierce administration, Campbell, like Baldwin, would have been a Democrat.] After the death of Mr. Campbell the property was purchased by **Chester Tilden**. The carved eagle was the handiwork of **Joseph Brown** of Jewett City [a mill city in eastern Connecticut, somewhat smaller than Willimantic, in the town of Griswold], sixty years ago, and he is still living in comfortable health at the age of ninety years.

The next house northerly was built in 1834 by Mrs. **Sarah Porter**, who came here from Bozrah [a town near Norwich], with her five daughters, she being a widow at the time. By industry and economy she maintained her home and educated her children, a kind neighbor and much respected inhabitant, and after a long life she passed away much respected and lamented.

Article 2

[Pleasant Street, Mountain Street]

After the opening of Bridge Street, **Stephen Hosmer**, Esq., laid out what is now [1895] known as River Street, running [diagonally] from Bridge to Pleasant Street. [Called South Street in 1850 and River Street in 1895, this street is today the lower (northern) part of Mountain Street.] The first person to purchase land and build upon this street was **George Trim**, in 1834; for a long time Mr. Trim was the faithful night watchman in the mills of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company. Deacon **Joseph D. Fitch** next came into the possession of the property and resided there until his death, many years later. Deacon Fitch was a shoemaker by trade, and he was highly esteemed as an honest man and good citizen. The four houses on the southerly side of the street were built by **L. E. Baldwin** [here, as elsewhere, Baldwin refers to himself in the third person] between the years 1841 and 1846. This street, running from Bridge to Pleasant Street, was laid out by commissioners of the superior court in connection with Mountain Street, running [south from Pleasant Street] to [the] Lebanon town line, after a vigorous contest in which local interest was strongly aroused. [The town of Lebanon abutted Willimantic to the south.]



We now come back to Pleasant Street; the first house east of the Cook house was built by **James D. Hosmer**, son of Stephen, in 1832, and it is still standing, and retains much of its original form and appearance. Mr. Hosmer resided in this house to the end of a long life, dying in 1891, aged 93 years. His family consisted of two sons and one daughter, the latter the only one of **Stephen Hosmer**'s descendants now living in this vicinity. She owns the homestead of her father, and a small lot connected with the dwelling house; all the rest of the real estate once owned by Stephen Hosmer in Windham has passed out of the name into the hands of strangers.

The next house on the south side of the street was built by **Lloyd E. Baldwin** [again, Baldwin refers to himself in the third person] in 1833, and was occupied by him for thirty-five years; it is still standing in good condition. The next house was built by **William Morrison**, in 1834, and occupied by him for a number of years. Mr. Morrison was in the employ of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company for a long time.

All the land sold for building purposes heretofore described in these articles, was part of the **Stephen Hosmer** estate, and this estate was a part of the land which Abimeleck, Joshua's son, and grandson of Uncas, by letter dated December 3, 1702, to **Joshua Ripley**, a justice of the peace, granted to **Daniel Buckingham**. This land, including the Hosmer estate and considerable more, was laid out by said Ripley to said Buckingham as per request of Abimeleck, Joshua's son, March 22, 1704. [Uncas, Joshua, and Abimeleck had been leaders of the Mohegan tribe that once dominated much of eastern Connecticut. Here, as elsewhere, Baldwin seems to be using information that he obtained from old land records.]

Passing over [about a quarter-mile] easterly on the south side of Pleasant Street, we come to the old red house, now occupied by the descendants of **Alfred Young**, Esq., who occupied this house three generations prior to its present occupants. [This is obviously a different old red house from the one Baldwin mentioned earlier, in Article 1. Baldwin renders “Young” alternatively as “Young” or “Youngs”; I’ve followed the spelling found on an 1850s map of Willimantic.] Esquire Young, whom the writer well remembers, was a large landholder, with his brother Anson controlling a large part of the six hundred acres of land held by the original proprietor, **William Young**, and which was no doubt included in the layout of **Joshua Ripley** to **Daniel Buckingham** by request of the before-mentioned Indian – Abimeleck, son of Joshua, and grandson of Uncas, in 1704.

Alfred Young, Jr., was a prominent and substantial citizen of the town of Windham, holding important positions of trust and responsibility. The old red house, which is still standing, was his home to the end of his long and useful life. His family consisted of four sons, Eliphalet, Alfred, Jr., Zephaniah, and Oliver, and two daughters, Harriet and Clarissa. After the death of his father, Zephaniah continued to occupy the old homestead until his death in 1852. He was selectman and collector for many years, and was a representative in the Legislature in 1842. After the death of Zephaniah, his brother, Alfred, took possession of the house, and resided there until his death a few years since.

Nearly opposite the old red home on the Young estate, on the north side of the Turnpike Road [Pleasant Street], was located the school house for that district, but it was abandoned for educational purposes about the year 1826. It now forms a part of the dwelling house owned by **Dennis McCarthy**. Who the teachers were who labored in the old school house cannot be ascertained, but no doubt they were farmers’ sons, who, for the princely sum of ten or twelve dollars a month and “board around” among the families of the district, did their best to instill into the minds of their pupils the principles of Daboll’s arithmetic, Murray’s grammar, Morse’s geography, and the Westminster catechism.

We next come to the residence of **Asa Jillson** on land purchased from **Alfred Young**, Esq., in 1826. This house was a large two-story building not excelled by any house in the village at that time. It was the residence of Mr. Jillson until his death, in 1858, at the age of 64 years. Asa Jillson was one of three brothers who came here from Dorchester, Mass., in 1824, purchased the water privilege at Willimantic Falls, and built the largest cotton mill at that time in this section in 1825, of which more particulars hereafter. Asa Jillson had four sons and four daughters, William L., a prominent resident for years, John S., Arnold, and Asa W., a prominent insurance man, Sarah Ann, Harriet, Rebecca, and Camilla. All are dead but the last two named.

Article 3

[Pleasant Street, Windham Road]

On the south side of the Turnpike Road [Pleasant Street] east of the **Asa Jillson** lot, **Alfred Young** sold to **James C. Staniford**, in 1825, a lot of land containing about one and a quarter acres; Staniford sold this lot to **Martin Harris** in 1832, Harris sold it to **Charles Huntington** in 1833, and Huntington to **Josiah Dean, Jr.**, in 1835. Mr. Huntington was engaged for a number of years in teaming from Providence, Norwich, and Hartford, there being no railroads in this section in those days. In the early fifties Mr. Huntington with his family removed to Milwaukee, Wis., much to the regret of our citizens. In 1842 Josiah Dean, Jr., sold to **Joseph C. Bassett** the west part of this tract of land, on which he erected the house in which he now resides. Mr. Bassett came here from Hebron in 1836, and entered into partnership with **Joshua B. Lord** in the stove and tin business, also dry goods and groceries. He was one of the best mechanics in his line of work. He retired from business in 1887, after half a century spent in this place in active business life. Mr. Bassett is still living at his old homestead in his eighty-ninth year, somewhat broken down by his infirmities and the weight of years.

In 1847 Mr. Bassett sold his homestead to Col. **George Spafford**. Col. Spafford came here from South Windham [a village in the town of Windham, smaller than Willimantic, located just a few miles to the south], where he, in connection with **James Phelps** of Sutton, Mass., was engaged in the manufacture of paper machinery to a large extent, giving employment for a large amount of skilled labor. After Col. Spafford had taken up his residence in Willimantic he engaged in the manufacture of paper at the old paper mill located near the site of the Willimantic Linen Company's Mill No. 2. [Both Spafford's paper mill and the Willimantic Linen Company are described in more detail later.] Col. Spafford was a man extensively known and respected; he held the position of Colonel of the First Regiment of Artillery in 1828, a place of honor and responsibility, was a Representative from Windham to the Legislature in 1832, and Senator in 1849, at the age of 55 years. [Here, as elsewhere, when Baldwin mentions to military ranks and units, he refers to the state militia, not the federal army.]

The next house on the south side of the Turnpike Road was owned by **Josiah Dean, Jr.**, he having purchased it of **Charles Huntington** soon after it was built. Mr. Dean was quite extensively engaged in the livery business for a number of years; his death occurred in 1869 at the age of 56 years.

We now come to an old landmark in the early days of Willimantic – the Hebard Tavern. In 1822 **Guy Hebard** purchased of **Alfred Young** the lot of land on which he built the west part of his house and opened it as a public house for the entertainment of travelers and the public generally. Subsequently Mr. Hebard made a large addition, extending easterly, largely increasing his facilities for public accommodation. This tavern was noted for its substantial fare and was headquarters for local military parades, balls, Fourth of July celebrations, and social gatherings in the early days of Willimantic.



On the north side of Main Street [now called Windham Road; in 1850 Main Street ran along the north bank of the Willimantic River, veered south, crossed the Iron Works Bridge at Willimantic Falls, and continued south to South Windham village; however, in 1895 when Baldwin wrote these sketches, the part of old Main Street that ran from Willimantic Falls to South Windham had been renamed South Main Street, and Main Street had been continued east along the north bank of the river] opposite the old Hebard Tavern, Col. **William L. Jillson**, in 1832, built his house and moved into it in the spring of 1833. Extensive alterations were made by the original contractor, **L. E. Baldwin**, in 1856. Colonel Jillson resided here until his death, in 1861, at the age of 53 years. He was the oldest son of **Asa Jillson**, and was engaged for many years in making cotton machinery in connection with **John H. Capen**, and also in the manufacture of cotton goods.



In 1828 **Samuel Saville** bought of Smith & Byrnes a building lot on the north side of Main Street, east of the present residence of **Wm. C. Jillson**, and built a two story house for his residence. Mr. Saville came here from Dorchester, Mass., in connection with the Jillson Brothers, and was in their employ as a mechanic for a number of years. After Mr. Saville's residence there the house had various occupants, until a few years since it was sold and removed to what is now Bassett Park, and was soon afterwards destroyed by fire.

In 1837 Col. **Roswell Moulton** bought of Phelps and Spafford a building lot on the northerly side of Main Street, east of the Saville lot, and built the house which is now standing, retaining much of the original form of construction and condition. After completing his house Col. Moulton removed to Willimantic and was engaged in the grocery business for many years. He held many positions of responsibility and trust; was in command of the First Regiment

artillery, represented the town in the Legislature in 1835, and was postmaster at Willimantic for a number of years. His death occurred in 1858, at the age of 61 years.



Article 4

[Windham Road]

On the southerly side of Main Street easterly from the old Hebard Tavern, **Joseph C. Bassett** built the cozy cottage which later was the residence of Mrs. **J. R. Arnold** and family for some time. After Mr. Arnold's death the property was purchased by **Russell Utley**, Esq., who on Main Street adjoining the Col. Moulton property on the east, **Ulysses Young** built for his home the house now standing there. Mr. Young was a machinist and was a partner of **John H. Capen** for some time in the manufacture of cotton machinery. Mr. Young was the oldest son of **Anson Young**. After retiring from the machinery business he devoted his time principally to farming. Mr. Young was a man of strict integrity and commanded the respect of his friends and acquaintances. His death occurred in 1885 at the age of 73 years.

On the south side of Main Street a little east of the Col. Moulton residence, Contractor Baldwin built for **Seth Jillson**, in 1839, a large two story and ell mansion for his residence. At that time it was probably the best house in the borough of Willimantic. It is still standing in its pleasant location, and is the residence of **John Scott**, superintendent of the Willimantic Linen Company's mills. Mr. Jillson was the junior of the three brothers who came here from Dorchester, Mass., in 1824 and built up the cotton manufacturing interests of the Jillson Brothers in this place. Mr. Jillson continued his residence here until the Jillson property passed into other hands, when he removed to Norwich.

Pursuing our course easterly we come to an old landmark, the residence of **Anson Young**, on the northerly side of Main Street. Mr. Young was a farmer and spent his long life in cultivating the soil. He was a man of kindly feelings whose word could be relied upon, an honest man in all his dealings and respected by all who knew him. His death took place in 1847 at the age of 67 years.

On the southerly side of Main Street easterly from the **Anson Young** place stood the farm house of **Josiah Dean**, Senior. Mr. Dean was a farmer and a quiet, respectable citizen.

We next come to the residence of Deacon **Eleazar Bill**, who for many years was the principal mason located here in the early days of Willimantic. His work in preparing foundations, building chimneys, and plastering can still be found on many old residences in this vicinity. He was one of the early deacons of the Congregational church in this place, organized in 1829, and held that position for many years. He died in 1864 at the age of 80 years.

A brief notice of one old resident living outside the borough limits will close the story of the houses and occupants on the southerly side of the river. **Jesse Spafford**, father to Col. **George Spafford**, Mrs. **Guy Hebard**, Mrs. **Stephen Hosmer**, Junior, and Mrs. **John B. Hosmer** held what ultimately proved to be valuable real estate in the centre of the borough. It was the lot on which the [railroad] depot and many building blocks are now located and some 8 acres in extent. In conversation with the writer he stated that he appraised this property for the heirs at \$12 per acre and they complained that the appraisal was too high. To settle the matter he took the land at his appraisal. Mr. Spafford's death occurred 1858 at the age of 88 years.

This closes the history of the residences and occupants of the dwellings in Willimantic prior to 1850 on the south side of the Willimantic River, which in the main will be found correct, the writer having a personal knowledge of the events and persons herein named. The next number will take up West Main Street commencing near the line between Windham and Mansfield and will contain historical matter of interest to the descendants as well as others of those sturdy old citizens living in this part of Willimantic in its early history.

Part Two: The Earliest Buildings and Builders of Main Street

Article 5

[West Main Street]

Among the residents of West Main Street in Willimantic prior to 1850 none was more prominent in its early history as a manufacturing village than **Daniel Sessions**, who resided a few rods west of the line between Windham and Mansfield [the town abutting Willimantic to the north and northwest]. Mr. Sessions was a native of Hampton, and came here about 1813; his wife was Miss **Sarah Clark** of Chaplin [the town abutting Windham on the northeast]. Mr. Sessions was a large landholder, extensively engaged in farming, brickmaking, and lumbering, and he built a number of houses, and, as was common in those days, furnished timber and erected the frames of many others at a given price per lineal foot. He was a large stockholder in the Coventry and Windham Turnpike Company and engaged in cider brandy distilling to quite an extent; in fact he was just the man needed to bring up this young and growing community. His death took place in 1851, at 64 years of age.

Farnham but to esteem and respect him; he was quiet and unassuming in manner, and his death was a severe loss to the community.

Pursuing our course easterly we next come to an old landmark on the northerly side of the highway, the residence of **John Brown**. He was the owner of a large farm, much of it covered with heavy timber, some of which he utilized by working into frames for houses for Willimantic people. Mr. Brown was a substantial farmer and respected citizen. Out of his large family of seven sons and eight daughters, our venerable fellow citizen, **John Brown, [Jr.,]** is the only survivor. Mr. Brown's death took place in 1841, at the age of 71 years. **Elias P. Brown** remained at the old homestead and, some time after the death of his father, built a house for himself on the south side of the [Coventry and Windham] Turnpike Road [Main Street], a little east of the old home, residing there until his death, in 1890, at the age of 79 years. Elias Brown was a man of sterling integrity, holding many responsible positions, and was a member of the Legislature in 1849.

The next house east on the north side of the highway [Main Street] was built in the early twenties by **Ralph Williams** and occupied by him as a residence for some time.

Continuing east we come to the house built by **Wrightman Williams**, now occupied by **A. N. French**. Mr. Williams was a builder and came here from Groton in 1824, and did much in adding to the early growth of Willimantic. He is still living and probably the oldest man in town, being 94 years of age in June last. He is frequently seen on our streets more active than many man a score of years his junior.

We next come to the brick house built in the early days of Willimantic, owned and for many years occupied by **Edward Fitch**. Mr. Fitch was a farmer, of a quiet, accommodating disposition, and respected by the community.

We next come to an old house built in the early part of the last century, sold with the farm in 1835 by **Henry Brown** to **Heman Storrs**; the old house was torn down, and Contractor Baldwin built a two-story house for Mr. Storrs on the premises. The wife of Mr. Storrs was the daughter of Daniel Sessions. Mr. Storrs, after the death of his wife, disposed of the property and it had various occupants, among them **Wm. Barrows**, **Niles Potter**, and **George Phelps**; it was finally purchased by the town of Windham as an almshouse, and remains so to the present time, after being once destroyed by fire and rebuilt on a much larger scale, and is today under the able management of Mr. and Mrs. **John Palmer**, not excelled by any institution of its kind in this vicinity.



We next come to the residence of **Erastus Fitch**, an old landmark, now occupied by **Hardin H. Fitch**, the oldest son of Erastus. When it was built is not known. Mr. Fitch was a farmer, and a quiet, unassuming citizen. He represented the town in the Legislature and held other responsible positions. His death took place in 1857, at the age of 66 years. These sturdy old farmers of half a century ago were men of strong common sense, in whom the public had confidence and there was no occasion for bank receivers or trustees to satisfy the public of their honest dealings.

Article 6

[West Main Street, Winter Street]

As we travel east in search of more light we come to the residence of **Henry Fitch**, second son of Erastus, on the south side of the [Coventry and Windham] Turnpike Road [Main Street], where he built his house in 1845, and resided there for a number of years, engaged in farm work until 1867, when he removed to Illinois, where he remained until 1883, when he returned much broken down in health. His death occurred some two months later, at the age of 63 years. In 1835 **Apollus Perkins** sold to **Wm. Barrows** a tract of land on the south side of the highway, on which he built a house for his residence. It was later owned and occupied by **Lemuel Palmer**, who came here from Mansfield, and eventually by **Wm. Cranston**, his heirs still in ownership.

Wm. Barrows was an active businessman in the early days of Willimantic, being engaged in teaming from Norwich and other places for our manufacturers and merchants. He built High Street in 1838 for the town of Windham and Mountain Street later [these events are described in more detail later], and held many local offices in the town. His death occurred in 1879, at the age of 75 years.

The next house east, on the corner of Main and what is now Winter streets [Winter Street was called West Street in the 1850s], was built by that veteran builder, **Wrightman Williams**, and occupied by him as a residence for a number of years. It was subsequently purchased by **Harry Boss**, who for a number of years was employed by the Windham Cotton Manufacturing

Company, and later on by the Willimantic Linen Company, in charge of their mule-spinning department. He was the father of Gen. **E[ugene] S. Boss**, the present efficient agent of the company. Mr. Boss's wife was the sister of Gen. **L. E. Baldwin** of this place. Mr. Boss's death occurred in 1893, at the age of 77 years.

On the north side of the turnpike road, on the corner of Main Street and what is now Mansfield Avenue, in 1847 **Lewis Russ** purchased a building lot of **Erastus Fitch** and erected a two-story dwelling for his residence. After remaining here for a few years, he removed with his family to Illinois, and is still living in Chicago, hale and hearty. Mr. Russ's wife was the youngest daughter of Daniel Sessions, and makes occasional visits to her old home. This property was purchased by **Samuel Southworth** of Mansfield and his son-in-law, **Daniel F. Terry**. Mr. Terry is still in the occupancy of the premises, and it remains one of the landmarks of nearly half a century.

On the south side of the [Coventry and Windham] Turnpike Road [Main Street] **Apollus Perkins** built on the southeast corner of Main and Winter [West] streets, in 1832, a large two story dwelling for rental purposes. Mr. Perkins was a resident of Pleasant Valley, Mansfield. He was a live man in business and contributed quite largely in building up Willimantic in its earliest days. His death occurred in 1843. This property was later on owned by Col. **Charles Thompson**, who built a large barn for livery purposes, and subsequently by **Warren Tanner**, who came here from Rhode Island, and was one of the principal livery establishments in the borough. In 1834 Contractor Baldwin built on the east side of Winter Street [West Street], south of the Apollus Perkins lot, a dwelling house for **Joseph Perkins**, a brother of Apollus, for his residence. It is still standing, much in its original form. In 1835 **Wm. Barrows** sold to **George Arnold** a building lot on the west side of Winter Street [West Street] and Contractor Baldwin built for Mr. Arnold a dwelling house for his residence. Mr. Arnold was a mule-spinner in the employ of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company. **John C. Hooper** bought the property and resided there for a number of years.

On the north side of the highway [Main Street], opposite the **Apollus Perkins** house, **Erastus Fitch** sold to **Daniel Spicer**, in 1828, a building lot on which he erected a substantial one-story-and-basement dwelling, in workmanship superior to most of the houses built in the village at that time, Mr. Spicer being a joiner and a close workman. This lot was on an elevation, which, after coming into the possession of **Albert Barrows**, was leveled to the street, the house removed, and a story added. Mr. Spicer came here from Groton, and was in the employ of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company for many years. He was a man of decided opinions and a most respected citizen. He removed to Coventry and became a farmer. His death occurred at that place recently. In 1831 **Erastus Fitch** sold to that veteran builder, **Wrightman Williams**, the lot east of the Spicer place, on which he built a two-story dwelling, which he sold to **Amos Braley** in 1833, and Braley to **Harriet Baldwin** and **Asahel Tarbore**, her son-in-law, in 1836, and is still held by the heir of Mr. Tarbore. Mr. Tarbore was in the employ of our manufacturers as a mechanic for many years, a genial, substantial worthy citizen. He was a member of the Legislature in 1869. His death occurred in 1878, at the age of 74 years.

In 1827 **Erastus Fitch** sold to **Vine Hovey** a piece of land on the north side of the highway, on which he built the brick dwelling which is still standing in good condition and a two story frame building east of the house for a hatter's shop. Mr. Hovey was a hatter by trade, and did quite a business in that line. He was prominent in some of the fraternal organizations, held many town offices and was a member of the Legislature in 1855.



On the east of the Hovey lot, on the north side of the highway, in 1827, **Hannah White** bought of **Erastus Fitch** a building lot and built the brick house still standing. After residing there for a number of years with her brothers, Asa and Simon, she married Dr. Kittridge of Mansfield and removed to Mansfield, and the property passed to other parties. In 1831 **John Davis** bought a lot on the south side of the road, opposite the Hovey lot, of **Anna Fitch** of Lebanon, and built a comfortable home for himself, and resided there until his death. Mr. Davis was a native of Lynn, Mass., in the early part of this century. He removed to Mansfield and resided there, working at his trade as a shoemaker until his removal to Willimantic in 1827. Mr. Davis was the grandfather of **Clifton B. Davis**, chairman for many years of the Democratic State Central Committee of Connecticut.

Some time after the death of Mr. Davis the property passed into the hands of Warren Atwood, who added a story to the original structure and made other improvements. Mr. Atwood was a mason by trade, and contributed quite extensively to the building interests of Willimantic. He was a man of radical views on many moral questions, but his many kind acts for the benefit of others are a text [sic.] to his character. His death occurred in 1887, at the age of 74 years.

Article 7

[West Main Street, Bridge Street]

In the early part of this present century the making of cotton goods began to attract the attention of men of influence and capital in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The large amount of undeveloped water power in Connecticut and the Willimantic River with its large flow of water and about 79 feet of fall [actually, the fall is closer to 90 feet] in the distance of one and a quarter miles proved to be sufficient inducement for Rhode Island energy and capital to engage in the making of cotton goods in Willimantic. **Nathan Tingley**, **Matthew Watson**, **Arunah C. Tingley**, **Hartford Tingley**, and **Joshua Rathbun** composed the original Windham

Cotton Manufacturing Company of Willimantic. Nathan Tingley soon retired from the company and Mr. Rathbun was crushed to death between the steamboat and the wharf in New York. He was a pleasant gentleman and his death was deeply regretted.



November 4, 1825, **Elizabeth Fitch** conveyed by deed to **Nathan Tingley**, **Matthew Watson**, and **Arunah C. Tingley**, for the consideration of \$189, 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres of land with the water privilege, and on the above date **Anna Fitch** conveyed to the above-named parties for the consideration of \$34, 59 rods of land on the north bank of the river with privilege of flowage to her west line. On the same day, November 4, 1822 [sic.], **Thos. Gray**, **Samuel Byrnes** and **David Smith**, for the consideration of \$50, sold to the parties above named 59 rods of land on the south side of the river thus completing their privilege.

Work soon commenced and they completed the south half of their first factory, built their dam, put in their machinery, and commenced making cotton goods. They also built six two-tenement houses, known as the yellow row, and a store on the street corner. They also built a substantial residence on Main Street for their local agent **A. E. Tingley** [sic.]. In the spring of 1828, having purchased a large tract of land on the north side of the highway [Main Street] opposite the mill lot, they built what is known as the white row, a series of four tenement houses, for their help. They also built their east mill, one of the largest and best in this locality, and before the close of the year were spinning cotton in it. **Elias Rathbun** had charge of the stone work and **Joseph Sollace** and **Charles Atwood** of the woodwork. The writer of these sketches was an apprentice to these men at this time and had a rugged experience in the building line. The company also built a substantial stone dam across the river below the old dam, thus improving their facilities to a large extent.

Soon after the completion of the new mill, **Arunah C. Tingley** resigned his position as agent and engaged in other business. Later on he removed to Chicago and spent the remainder of his life in that city. **Hartford Tingley** became the local agent of the company and filled that position for some years, when he retired from the business and **John Tracy** became the local agent of the corporation. Mr. Tracy was a most valuable man to the company. He retained this position until his death in 1874. That **Matthew Watson** was the backbone of this corporation is unquestioned. As the financial agent of the company he lived to see a large and prosperous business built up by his indomitable energy and business capacity. His home was in Providence, but he made frequent visits of business to Willimantic. We all knew when Major Watson was in town, especially if matters were not moving about right. After the death of Major Watson, he was succeeded by his son Robert, and since the death of the son during the

past year by his grandson Matthew. Here is an instance almost without a parallel in business. First the father, then the son, then the grandson as the financial agents of one corporation for almost three quarters of a century. From present indications of thrift and good management under the local agent, **T. C. Chandler**, Esq., we may safely predict that the corporation will round out a full century of successful manufacturing business, creating no necessity for trustees or receivers.

Previous to 1850 all raw material supplies and manufactured goods were transported by teams, and the arrival of **Capt. Brainard** with his six-horse team after a four days' trip to Providence was looked upon as quite an event.

The first schoolhouse [at Tingleyville] was built on the north side of the highway, about where the fourth house in the white row is located; a one-room and one-story building. It was subsequently removed farther north and east, a room added, and two teachers employed. In 1847 Contractor Gen. Baldwin built for the district the centre-two-story building with three school rooms and recitation rooms. The early teachers were **Horace Hall, John G. Clark, Leonard R. Dunham, Saxton B. Little, Jabez Lathrop, Maria Witter, Martha Kimble, E. McCall Cushman**, and others.

Article 8

[Bridge Street, Main Street]

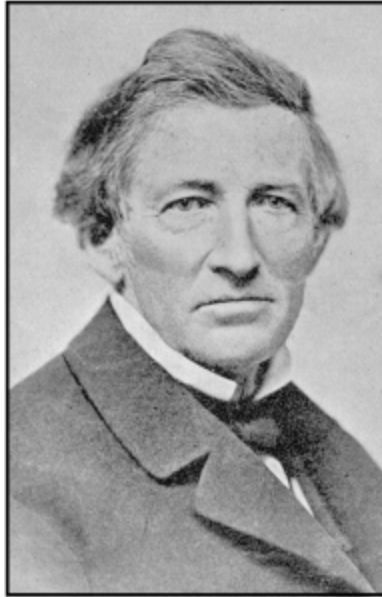
On May 14, 1822, **Elizabeth Fitch** sold to **Charles Lee** four acres of land, extending from the Willimantic River north to Main Street. Gray, Byrnes, & Smith also sold to Charles Lee land on the south side of the river, thus completing his mill privilege to the second falls. Deacon Lee during his residence in Willimantic was known in the community as Deacon Lee only. He was a man of more than ordinary intelligence and was universally respected. With commendable energy and perseverance he built the dam flume and wheel pit and erected a three-story-and-attic stone mill, with thirty-six looms and other machinery to operate the same. He also built two stone houses for two families each on the west side of the mill lot; also a three-tenement-and-basement house between the mill and Main Street and the third house now standing on Main Street, south side, east of the corner of Main and Bridge streets. There was no Bridge Street until 1828.

In 1827 **Deacon Lee** built a store on the corner of Bridge and Main streets and formed a partnership with **Royal Jennings** for the sale of dry goods and groceries, Mr. Jennings being the manager. He came here from Windham [Baldwin means the rural village of Windham Center, about three miles from Willimantic] and took up his residence in the fifth house now standing on the south side of the highway east of Bridge Street. He remained here in business until his removal in 1844 to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In connection with the store was a millinery and dressmaking department, conducted by Miss **Harriet Jennings** and Miss **Persis Hempsted**, it being the first establishment of its kind in Willimantic.

Deacon Lee, in connection with his other business, manufactured Lee's pills to quite an extent. They were invented by his brother, Dr. Lee of Windham [Center], and had quite a reputation. The stringency of the times shut down every cotton mill gate in Willimantic in 1829, with the exception of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company, which stood the shock, and continued to make cotton goods as usual. Deacon Lee was active in building the Congregational church in 1828. After remaining here a few years he removed to Norwich and became the head of the firm of Lee & Osgood, extensive dealers in drugs, medicines, paints and oils. After the removal of Deacon Lee to Norwich, [his] manufacturing interests in Willimantic passed into the control of Hill & Arnold, who operated it for the building of cotton machinery and spool cotton to some extent.

In the month of August, 1845, **Amos D. and James Y. Smith** of Providence, R. I., purchased the property and, with **Whiting Hayden** [photo below] as their local agent, made preparations for extensive additions to their plant. A contract was soon made with Contractor Gen. Baldwin to build three houses on Main Street for four families each. Two of them were completed ready for occupancy in the early spring, and the one on the corner of Main and Bridge streets soon after. The services of Contractor Baldwin were engaged to take charge of the building of a three-story-and basement stone mill and cotton storehouses, all of which were completed and ready for use in the fall of 1846. The original Deacon Lee mill was kept in operation during the building of the new mill and incorporated into it. The profits of that time, as I had it from one of the parties in interest, were from three to three and a half cents a yard on print cloths.





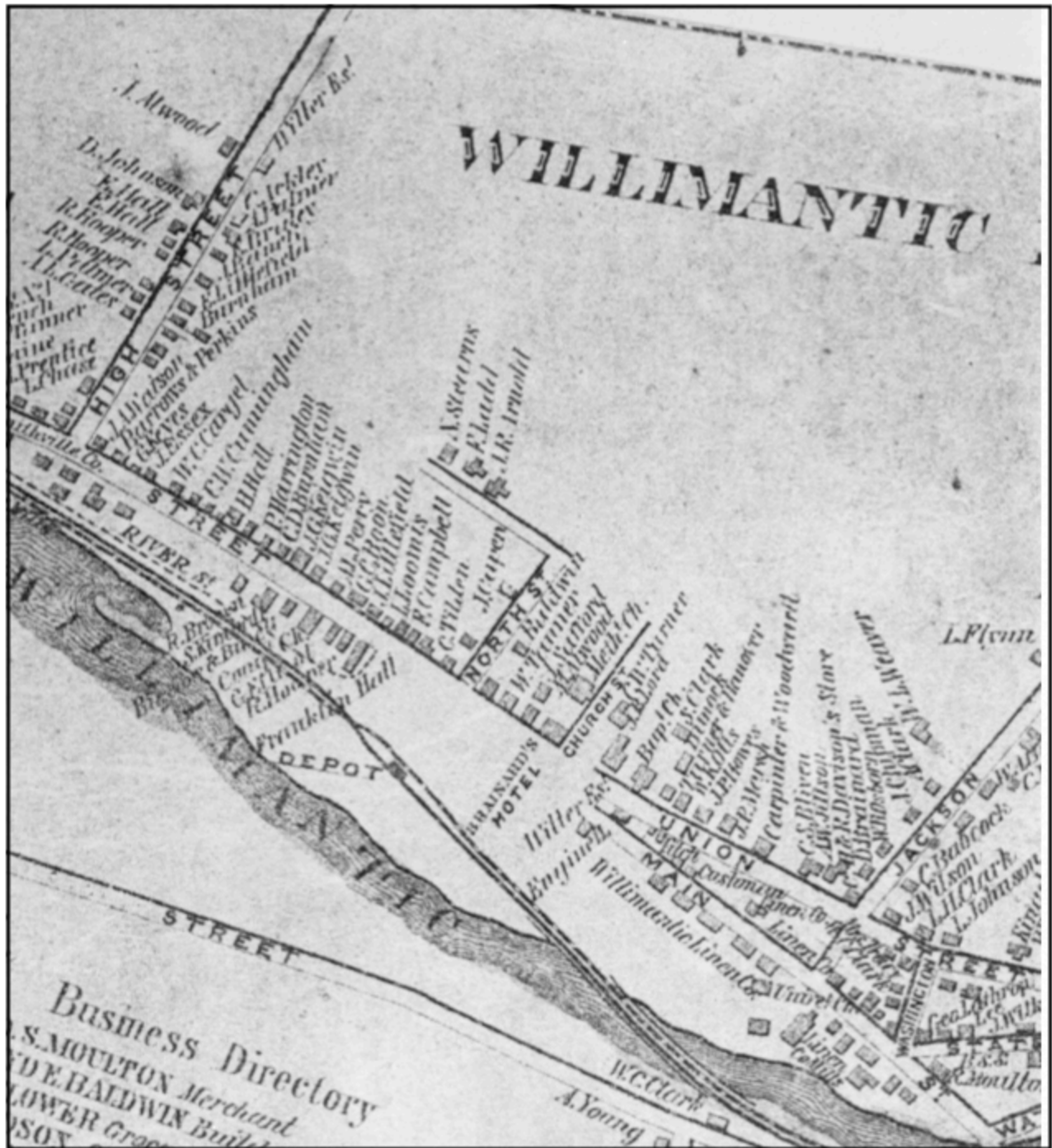
On what has been known as the Chase property, on the north side of the highway [Main Street], stood an old dwelling known as the **Azariah Balcom** place and occupied by him as a residence in the early days of Willimantic. It must have been built early in the last century. **Mrs. Chase** and Col. **Edwin S. Fitch** were the daughter and son of Mr. Balcom's second wife, and they came into the property by inheritance. It embraced the tract of land from the Windham [Cotton Manufacturing] Company's east line on the north side of the highway to the center of what is now High Street, extending north, including grounds now occupied by the [Willimantic] Normal School [today Eastern Connecticut State University] building and the present new town building [Windham Town Hall, below]. On the 16th of December, 1834, Edwin S. Fitch sold to **Calvin Robinson** a building lot on the north side of Main Street, on which was built a two-story dwelling by **Israel G. Robinson** and occupied by him as a residence, and is still standing in good condition. On May 17, 1831, **Leban Chase** and [his] wife sold to Miss **Lucy Rising** a building lot on Main Street east of the Robinson lot, on which Contractor Baldwin erected a convenient and substantial dwelling for her residence. Miss Rising was a weaver in the Deacon Lee mill for years and an early member of the Congregational church. She subsequently married **Cordial S. Crane** of Mansfield. [A story about this marriage appears later.] Her death occurred a few years later.



Article 9

[Main Street, High Street]

In 1825 **Jairus Littlefield** bought of Amanda Fitch a building lot on the north side of the highway [Main Street] six rods square, opposite the **Deacon Lee** purchase, on which he built a house and shop and resided there for some years. Subsequently the property was owned by **Silas Walden, Robert Prentice**, and others. Esquire Littlefield was a man of more than ordinary ability, always ready with an answer to any question proposed, especially of a personal character. His clergyman, **Rev. Mr. Plant**, was quizzing him about the color of his hog in his pen, which was black, and asked him how he came to have one of that color. His reply was that he knew of no other reason than that he was a black pig.



About 1836 **Laban Chase** built a substantial two-story house on the corner of what is now Main and High streets for his residence. The lot was a spacious one and has acquired quite a notoriety as the one over which a spirited contest has been carried on for the location of the new town hall. This location was selected and a building is being erected which would be a credit to any town in the state.

Mr. Chase about 1843 built the stone and tenement building on the southwest corner of this lot, and with the late **Zuria Hartshorn** did quite an extensive business in the manufacture of boots and shoes. Mr. Chase came here from Rhode Island in the earliest days of Willimantic, entering into the employ of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company as a dresser

tender, and remained in their employ for many years. He was a good, substantial citizen. He married Miss **Nancy Fitch** of this place, a sister of **Col. Edwin S. Fitch**. She was a most excellent woman. The town of Windham is indebted to **George S. Chase**, a son, for his generous gift of the iron fence around the Willimantic cemetery. Mr. Chase's death occurred in 1869, at the age of 68 years.

In 1825 **Philip Hopkins** bought of **Charles Lee** quite a tract of land, extending from the east side of High Street easterly and northerly, on which he built a one-story-and-basement house and blacksmith shop. Mr. Hopkins was a blacksmith by trade and one of the first to locate in Willimantic. In 1827 he sold this property to **Elias Rathbun**, who came here from Lisbon, Conn. Mr. Rathbun resided here until he built the house on the southeast corner of High Street in 1829, quite a spacious residence for Willimantic in those days. Mr. Rathbun was a mason by trade and had charge of the stone work on the Jillson mills and the east mill of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company. He removed to Hartford about 1834 and had charge of the building of the stone arch bridge on Main Street over Little River, a work at the time attracting much attention. The removal of Mr. Rathbun from our community was a source of much regret. This property passed into the hands of **Jefferson Campbell**, and from him to **Dr. Wm. Witter**, and is still held by some of his heirs.

High Street was laid out in 1838 by the town of Windham, running north to the town line. It was the first street leading northerly out of Willimantic between Pleasant Valley [a rural neighborhood in neighboring Mansfield] and lower Main Street, and was a great convenience to the public. **Robert Hooper** was the first to build on this street, in 1839, and still resides in the house built at that time, hale and hearty. Mr. Hooper came to Willimantic in 1831, engaged as an operative in our cotton mills for many years, subsequently engaged in the dry goods business with **George M. Alpaugh** as a partner and did extensive business. He replaced [the] Franklin building after the fire by a substantial brick building. He recently retired and is enjoying a green [sic] old age.

Now comes in that veteran builder, **Wrightman Williams**, who built the house south of Mr. Hooper's and resided there some time. He also built two houses opposite on the east side of the street now owned by **W. H. Strong**. In 1846 **Egbert Hall** purchased the lot on what is now the corner of Valley and High streets, west side, and built the house which he occupied until his death. Subsequently his twin brother, **Edwin H. Hall**, resided there until his death in 1884, at 63 years of age.

Samuel B. Ford built and occupied the two-story house on the east side of High Street in 1847. It was subsequently owned and occupied by **Courtland Babcock**, a longtime resident of this place and a most respectable and esteemed citizen, whose death occurred in 1883, at the age of 72 years.

In 1847 **Don F. Johnson** bought the lot north of the **Egbert Hall** lot on the west side of High Street, built a substantial residence for himself, and occupied it for some years. Later on he

built for himself a residence on Bellevue Street and resided there until his death. Mr. Johnson was a native of Vernon [a farm and mill town in east-central Connecticut], a builder by trade, and has left his mark on many structures in this city. He married a daughter of **Eleazer Bennett** of Mansfield. Few men were more respected in the community in which they resided than Don F. Johnson. He represented the town of Windham in the Legislature of 1873, and held many local offices. His death took place in 1884, at the age of 69 years. In 1849 **George P. Heap** bought the lot on the northeast corner of what is now Valley and High streets and Contractor Baldwin built for him a substantial residence, which is now the home of **Alderman Baker** of the First Ward of this city. Mr. Heap was a tailor by trade. After remaining here for a few years he removed to Pennsylvania, but subsequently returned and engaged in the merchant tailoring business for some years. He died in 1878, at the age of 67 years.

In 1847 **Theodore D. Clark** bought the lot next north of the Heap lot on the easterly side of High Street and built a story-and-a-half house and ell. Mr. Clark was a shoemaker by trade. His early death was deeply regretted in this community. Subsequently the property passed into the possession of **Dr. George B. Hamlin**, and from him to **Isaac Sanderson**, its present owner.

Article 10

[Main Street]

We now come back to Main Street, north side, where **Elias Rathbun**, after completing his new residence, sold to **Nathan Fish** the house bought of **Philip Hopkins** in 1827. Mr. Fish came here from Plainfield [a town in eastern Connecticut] in 1831 with a large family, including his wife, his two sisters, his children, and grandchildren, quite an acquisition to our community. The most of them resided here until their deaths, respected and esteemed.

The next house east of the Hopkins house on the north side of the highway [Main Street] was built by **James Essex** and occupied by him for a number of years. It was a two-story-and-basement house and was recently removed to the rear of the lot in good condition. Mr. Essex was a stone mason and was employed upon many of our buildings in the early days of Willimantic.

In 1828 **Nathan Hall** bought of **A. E. Tingley** the lot on the north side of the [Coventry and Windham] Turnpike Road [Main Street], east of the Essex lot, and built a two-story brick dwelling of quite large dimensions. It is still occupying its original location. Mr. Hall came here from Mansfield with his family of seven sons and three daughters. Hardly any branch of the making of cotton goods but what some member of this family was acquainted with. **Origen Hall** was for many years in the employ of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Co., in charge of the frame spinning department, Gardner, Egbert and Edwin in the mule spinning department, Eleazer in the dressing department and Philura and Lurancy in the weaving department. Gardner subsequently became superintendent of the Willimantic Linen Co., which position he held until his removal to Willington and became the founder of the Hall Thread

Co., a successful business concern. After his death **Gardner Hall, Jr.**, succeeded to the management. **Edwin H. Hall**, one of the brothers, was engaged in the manufacture of cotton yarn at North Windham for years until his death, in 1884, being succeeded by his son, **E. H. Hall, Jr.** Both **Gardner Hall, Jr.**, and E. H. Hall, Jr., were grandsons of Nathan Hall.

In 1825 **Philip Hopkins**, for the consideration of \$8, sold to **Thomas W. Cunningham** two rods square of land on what is now the northwest corner of Main and Walnut streets. On the lot Mr. Cunningham erected a small one-story building of two rooms, and probably had the honor of opening the first grog shop in Willimantic, where rum, gin, French brandy, cider brandy, Albany brandy, Madeira wine, and metheglen were dispensed from three to five cents a drink. One thing in his favor, his liquors were what they were called. From the profits of his rum shop he continued to purchase adjoining land until he reached what is now Summit Street. He gave the lot corner of Valley and Walnut streets, on which the Congregational church edifice now stands, but adjoining land to make it available was well paid for. He built the [commercial] block west of the old shop, which has become a thing of the past. Mr. Cunningham's death occurred in 1872, at the age of 74 years.

In 1830 **Mason Hartshorn** sold to **Dr. Wm. Witter** a building lot on the northerly side of the [Coventry and Windham] Turnpike Road east of the Cunningham lot, on which Contractor Baldwin, in 1831, erected a two-story dwelling for the Doctor's residence. It was the first contract taken by the builder, and retains in the main about all of its original form and construction, after sixty-five years of service as a dwelling. Doctor Witter came here from Lisbon [a town in eastern Connecticut], and was the second physician to locate in Willimantic. By his energy and perseverance he secured a large practice as a physician and acquired quite a reputation as a surgeon. About the right man for a young and growing community. He represented the town in the Legislature and the old 13th Senatorial district in the Senate in 1840. His death took place in 1857, at the age of 47 years.



In 1827 **Daniel Sessions** and **Charles Arnold** purchased a lot of **Charles Lee**, adjoining the Witter lot on the east, on which they erected a two-tenement house for rental purposes. Subsequently it was purchased by **Phebe [sic] Harrington**. After her death the property was sold, the house demolished and a three-story brick block takes its place.

In 1828 **Daniel Sessions**, **Joseph Sollace**, and **Charles Arnold** bought of **Charles Lee** a lot of land on the north side of the [Coventry and Windham] Turnpike Road, ten rods square, for the purpose of building the second public hotel for Willimantic. Work commenced upon it in the early spring of 1829 and was completed in the early fall. The writer of these sketches, then in the third year of his apprenticeship, is probably the only person living who had a hand in its construction. **James Robinson** was the first landlord. Subsequently **Arunah C. Tingley** purchased the property and was its landlord until 1840, when he sold out to **Niles Potter**, an old resident, who was its landlord until 1846. Many military parades, Fourth of July celebrations, and social gatherings were held here during the administration of Landlord Potter. During Mr. Potter's ownership a sad event occurred in the destruction of the hotel by fire, in 1843. **Nathan Benchley**, a most worthy citizen, was crushed to death by the falling bricks from one of the chimneys. Mr. Potter with his accustomed energy proceeded to erect a new building on the ruins of the old one, and in a few months was again in condition to accommodate the public.

In 1846 Mr. Potter sold the hotel property to **Henry Brainard**, purchased the farm now owned by the town of Windham and used for almshouse purposes, and resided there for a number of years. Subsequently he was steward at the Suffield Literary Institute for a period of six years. He returned to Willimantic in 1869, purchased the farm on South Street formerly owned by **Frederick Campbell**, and resided there until his death. Those who knew him best appreciated him most. He was married early in life to Miss **Amy Dorrance** of this place, who still survives him. His death occurred in November, 1887, at the age of 78 years.

One of the longtime residents of the house built for Dr. Witter was **Horace Hall**, Esq. He came here from Sterling, his native town, about 1825, taught the First District School one term and then went into the employ of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Co. for many years as an overseer and superintendent. Mr. Hall was one of our substantial citizens, respected in the community, holding many offices of honor and responsibility and representing the town in the Legislature. His death took place in 1882, at the age of 75 years.

Article 11

[Main Street]

In 1848 Hill & Arnold sold to **Stephen H. Kimbel** a building lot on the south side of the [Coventry and Windham] Turnpike Road [Main Street], opposite the hotel, on which he erected a residence and shop for the sale and making of boots and shoes, mainly of his own make. Mr. Kimbel was a prudent, economical, industrious citizen, taking quite an interest in public

affairs. His death occurred in 1880, at the age of 76 years. Since his death his daughter, Mrs. **Martha Kimbel Chapman**, for many years an honored school teacher in the First District, removed the old buildings and erected a three-story brick block, which is a credit to its locality.

In 1831 **Edward Huntington** came here from Windham [Center], bought of **Charles Lee** the lot on the south side of the Turnpike Road next east of the Kimbel lot and Contractor Baldwin built for him the store still standing upon the premises. Mr. Huntington occupied the whole floor for his store and office, keeping the general assortment usually found in country stores in those days. He sold out his business in a few years and went west, passing away a few years later.

We next come to the old Congregational church lot, east of the Huntington lot on the south side of the highway. In 1827 **Charles Lee, Seth Jillson, Arunah C. Tingley, Royal Jennings**, [and] **Erastus Fitch**, with some twenty others, formed themselves into an association as proprietors and bought a lot ten rods square of **Charles Lee** for the purpose of building a church of the Congregational order. The foundations for the basement and edifice were provided by the proprietors, and a contract made with **Benjamin E. Palmer** of Brooklyn, a noted church builder of those times, for the sum of \$2,100, to build a church 36 feet by 50 feet, with 50 slips, pulpit, a tall spire, and galleries on three sides, all of which was done, I believe, to the satisfaction of the parties interested, and the church was ready for dedication in the fall of 1828. On February 11, 1829, the Ecclesiastical Society of Willimantic Falls was formed, and on October 9, 1829, the Society voted to purchase the meeting house of the proprietary, which was done. Some claim existed against the lot, which was sold at auction and bid in by Mr. Tingley as a committee of the Society.

Mr. Tingley refusing to transfer to the Society his title, the Society instructed their agent, **Lloyd E. Baldwin**, to bring suit for title to the property, which was done in a suit in equity to the superior court of Windham County. Mr. Tingley was ordered by the court to deed to the Society his title to the property, which was done. In 1843 Contractor Baldwin added 20 feet to the length of the church, put in 20 additional slips, increasing the revenues of the Society to quite an extent. In 1869 the Society decided to build a new church at the corner of Walnut and Valley streets, which was done, the results showing the efficiency of theory over mechanical experience. The writer of these sketches has been for 60 years a member of the First Ecclesiastical Society of Willimantic Falls, and is somewhat familiar with its past history.

In 1840 the Society sold to **George E. Elliott** 50 feet on the east side of the meeting house lot, on which he built a two-story building for a residence and shop. Mr. Elliott was a merchant tailor, and a quiet, respectable citizen. The building was burned a few years later.

In 1847 Willimantic had no public hall, no place for concerts, lectures, or gatherings of a public character, the want of which was much regretted. **Gen. Baldwin** having brought his season's business to a close by building a church in Haddam [a town in central Connecticut], another

church in Westchester, and the school house for the First School District, decided to erect a building to meet the wants of the public. About the first of December, 1847, he bought of **Jesse Spafford**, on the south side of the highway [Main Street] east of the meeting house lot, 60 feet front on the street and about 9 rods rear; price paid \$500. On the 8th day of December he broke ground for the foundation and laid out to build 36 feet in width, 60 feet in length, three stories in height above the basement, one store in [the] basement, two stores on [the] first floor, six offices on [the] second floor, and a hall on [the] third floor, 36 feet wide and 55 feet long. It was all completed, tenants in occupancy, and the hall dedicated in the month of April, 1848. **Louis and Henry Feldman** occupied the east store for dry goods, the largest store at that time in Windham County for the sale of dry goods exclusively.

Wm. L. Weaver occupied the west store for books, stationery, periodicals and newspapers, and **Thomas Campbell** the basement as a grocery store. Mr. Campbell, when asked what he would have for a sign, thought he would have a horn and be coming out of the little end. **Jairus H. Carpenter** occupied the west front office for his law business, and **Joel R. Arnold** the east front office for the same purpose. At the raising of the building, **Asa Jillson**, Esq., who was present and assisted, was requested by the proprietor to give it a name, which he did, calling it [the] Franklin Building, which name it has been known by for almost half a century. The citizens of Willimantic, appreciating the public spirit of the proprietor, decided to give Franklin Hall a rousing dedication, and a committee of thirty-six citizens was chosen, who issued the following invitation:

DEDICATION BALL.

The pleasure of your company, with Ladies, is requested at Franklin hall, on Friday evening, April 28, 1848.

MANAGERS

E. Baldwin, John B. Lord, Wm. A. Bennett, M. D., John H. Capen, Whiting Hayden, Joel R. Arnold, Chas. Spafford, Wm. H. Hosmer, Daniel W. Hayden, Wm. H. Osborn, Edward Cheney, Chas. S. Bliven, Richard H. Perry, Edward L. Moulton, Nathaniel L. Bidwell, John Ainsworth, J. Howard Tennatt, Thos. N. Wilson, D. Whitmore Keyes, Nathan A. Fish, Warren Lyon, Geo. F. Tennatt, Lewis Feldman, Otis Dimock, John N. Bliven, Philo B. Hovey, Geo. Phillips, John H. Moulton, Geo. Hurlburt, Wm. H. Atwood, J. M. Kingsley, E. R. Franklin, Wm. H. Bliven, J. W. Brace, Geo. Brown, John Keigwin.

Music by the Norwich Cotillon [sic] Band.

Willimantic, April 12, 1848.

Willimantic citizens and others from adjoining localities honored the occasion with one of the largest social gatherings ever held here up to that period. **James Martin** was the janitor, and that is sufficient guarantee to those who knew him that everything was in good order. He was also sexton of the Willimantic cemetery for many years, and did much to ornament and improve it. He was of a kindly nature, and a most useful man in the community in which he resided. His death took place in 1881, at the age of 72 years.

In 1833 **Edwin Sherman** bought of **David Whitman**, for the sum of \$225, five rods front and ten rods rear, the lot on which the Hooker House [hotel] and a part of Bank Street now occupies, and built a two-story house and shop. Mr. Sherman and [his] brother, Albert, one a builder and the other a tailor, came here from Rhode Island. After remaining here for a few years the property passed into other hands and the parties went west. Nearly opposite of this lot, **Robert Hooper** erected two small buildings known as the “twins,” which were occupied for various purposes and one of them for post office.

Article 12

[Main Street]

No man was more thoroughly posted in the manufacturing of cotton goods located in Willimantic in its early history than **David Whitman**. He entered into the employ of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company as their superintendent, and for a number of years remained in that position. He came here from Rhode Island, and was just such a man as **Matthew Watson** would select to take charge of his interests. Modest and unassuming, he won hosts of friend, and his return to a larger field of operations in Rhode Island was deeply regretted by our citizens.

In 1820 **Charles Lee** sold to **Jairus Littlefield** the lot east of the Sherman lot, on the north side of the highway [Main Street], some five rods front, on which he built a two-story wood dwelling, in which he resided for some years. Subsequently, he built the one-story brick house on the east end of his lot and resided there until his death in 1861, at the age of 79 years. Esquire Littlefield was quite a character in this community, always ready with an answer on any occasion. He was a justice of the peace and trial justice of most of the cases, a member of the Legislature and holding other positions. He was a stone mason by trade. Being reprimanded by his employer for being late to work, his reply was that he would leave off early enough at night to make up the time lost in the morning. During the temperance excitement, a meeting was held in one of the churches and pledges circulated for signers. The old Squire, who enjoyed an occasional “nip,” being asked to sign the pledge, replied that his wife, who was present, had [already] signed the pledge, and that as they were both one, he thought that would answer. On another occasion being engaged with **Deacon Bill** in plastering, his employer remarked that he did not use as much plaster as the Deacon, “Well,” he said, “when the Deacon has worked as long as I have, he will learn to be more prudent.” These quaint old characters of the early days of Willimantic have all passed away. Peace to their memory.

In 1828 **Charles Lee** sold to **John F. Lambert** and **Darwin B. Mason**, for the sum of \$140, the lot east of the Littlefield lot, on which the United Bank building is now situated, on which they built a two-story dwelling and a store. The house was occupied by Mrs. Lambert, the mother, John F., the son, a bachelor, Dr. Mason, a son-in-law, and the wife, a daughter of Mrs. Lambert. Dr. Mason was the first physician to locate in Willimantic, a man of fair reputation as a physician. The son conducted the grocery business. After remaining here some three years the property was sold and they moved away.

On January 30, 1827, **Charles Lee** sold to **Wm. C. Boon** the lot east of the Lambert and Mason lot, and now owned by **Melancton Turner** and **Dr. D. C. Card**, on which he built the brick house still standing for his residence. Mr. Boon was a woodworking mechanic, and for some years was in the employ of the Jillsons as a pattern maker and the wood part of cotton machinery. Mr. Boon was a trustee of the Methodist Episcopal church on its organization, a man much esteemed in the community. Subsequently he built the building now occupied by Melancton Turner as a residence, for a store for his son, **Wm. C. Boon, Jr.**, who did quite a large business in dry goods and groceries.

In the second story of this building the first printing press was set up and the first newspaper ever printed in Willimantic was issued on the 5th day of December, 1832. It was called *The Windham Gazette*. **D. St. James Howard** was the editor and proprietor. Its motto was "Virtue, Liberty and Independence." The following declaration of terms and principles are copied from the paper: "The Windham Gazette, published weekly in Willimantic, at \$1.75 semi annually or \$1.50 in advance. A miscellaneous sheet containing the news of the day, foreign and domestic, proceedings of Congress and the state Legislature; a general review of the markets at home and broad [sic]; literature, religion, history, biography and state politics, and these arranged under distinct and appropriate heads." The paper was a four page sheet, five columns to a page, size of paper 14×21 inches, and it would be a creditable sheet at the present time so far as the mechanical construction and the topics of the day were discussed.

Our merchants advertised quite freely in its columns. The most noted were Hosmer & Co., whose place of business was at the stone store opposite of what is now the Willimantic Linen Company's spool shop. The firm was composed of **John B. Hosmer**, a son of Stephen, **John S. Jillson**, and **George W. Hebard**, who was the postmaster of Willimantic at the time and kept the office in the store.

Another merchant was **Henry Hall**, who occupied the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company's store at the other end of the village. Henry Hall was a native of Sterling [a town in eastern Connecticut], a brother of Horace. He came here in the early days of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company as their clerk and bookkeeper. He succeeded to the proprietorship of the store about 1832, and kept a large assortment of dry goods and groceries. Henry Hall was a genius, of a quaint character. He was a justice of the peace, the first postmaster of Willimantic, and the first captain of the Willimantic Rifle Company, organized in 1827.

The first issue of the *Gazette* was eagerly sought for, and the edition was exhausted to that extent that the proprietor had to advertise for a copy. **Henry Hall** advertises at his store a genuine assortment of European, East India, and American dry goods in exchange for all kinds of produce; potato tops, buckwheat straw, cat skins and butternuts excepted. Hosmer & Co. advertise for 10,000 pairs large size men's socks and stockings and 500 pairs of mittens with the wool all on. **Postmaster Hebard** advertises 35 persons having letters remaining in the office January 1, 1833, postage on these letters ranging from six and a quarter to twenty-five cents, which had to be paid before the letter was delivered. Some marriage notices, one in particular, performed by that quaint character, Henry Hall, Esq., the merchant, [were] published in the sixth number of the *Gazette*. Here is one: "Married, in this village, on Thursday morning last, by Henry Hall, Esq., Mr. **Cordial Crane**, aged 60, to Miss **Lucy Rising**, rising [sic] of 54." To this he appended the following lines:

"Who knows but Lucy will when the sign is in the reins, like Abraham's wife be fruitful still, and raise a brood of Cranes."

This notice was characteristic of the man, bubbling over with fun mixed with his business. He emigrated to Dexter, Michigan, in the latter part of the thirties, and spent the rest of his life in that place, passing away a few years since.

In 1827 **Rebecca Simpson** sold to **Chas. W. H. Warren** the lot east of the Boon lot on the north side of the highway [Main Street], for the consideration of \$100, five rods front, on which he erected a story and a half dwelling, which property Warren sold to **Rev. Charles Tilden**, in 1828, and was occupied by him most of the time as a residence until his death, in 1872. It is the lot now occupied by [the] Loomer Opera House and a part of North Street.

In December, 1827, **Rebecca and Laura Simpson** sold to **Samuel Barrows, Jr.**, for the consideration of \$120, the lot east of the Warren lot, on the north side of the turnpike road, eighty and one half feet of land fronting on the highway. In the spring of 1828 he built a two-story house on the premises for his residence, and in connection with Jesse Crane carried on the business of butchering and supplying our people in the line of meats and provisions. Deacon Barrows was an energetic, thoroughgoing business man; [he] took an active part in building the First Baptist church in this place. He was a deacon and leading member of it for years. He was a sturdy Baptist and a sturdy Jacksonian Democrat; no uncertain sound about the Deacon in his religion or his politics. We all knew where to find him on these subjects. It is stated of the Deacon that in his last sickness he called his sons around him, of whom he had five, and among other advice given them was to serve the Lord and vote the Democratic ticket. He passed away a few years since, esteemed and respected.

In the month of May, 1833, **Rebecca Simpson** sold to **Jaron Safford**, for the consideration of \$100, the lot next east of Samuel Barrows's lot, on the north side of the turnpike road [Main Street], on which he built a two-story building, the first story designed for a drugstore and the second for a residence, which he occupied for many years. Mr. Safford was a blacksmith by trade, but after a few years drifted into the drug and liquor business. The first occupants of the store were **Alfred Howes**, **John A. Perkins**, and **Newton Fitch**, Mr. Howes furnishing the most of the capital, the others being the practical men of the firm. This was the first regular drugstore set up in Willimantic. Subsequently, Mr. Safford assumed the proprietorship of the business, and conducted a profitable business for many years. Dr. Perkins located to Windham [Windham Center, a rural village in the town of Windham, three miles east of Willimantic] in the same business and Dr. Fitch in Amherst, Mass. The premises are now occupied for the same business by **Frank M. Wilson** & Co.

The next lot east of the Safford lot was sold to **Wm. C. Boon**, **Ralph Williams**, **Jonathan Fuller**, and others, trustees of the Methodist Episcopal church, by **Daniel Sessions**, December 17, 1836, price paid \$125, on which they built a place for worship, which was occupied by them for that purpose under the ministrations of such preachers as **Pardon T. Keeney**, **Daniel Dorchester**, **Andrew A. Robinson**, **Jonathan Cady**, and others. They built a much larger and more commodious stone edifice on Church street, in 1851, after twenty years occupancy of the old church.



In the abolition excitement in which many of the old Methodists were active participants, in the spring of 1837 a most notable outbreak occurred at the old church. An abolition lecturer by the name of Phelps appointed a meeting at the church to discuss the question of the abolition of slavery. Some of the young hotheads, encouraged no doubt by older ones who should have known better, determined to break up the meeting, and proceeded in a body to the church, where a rough and tumble scrimmage ensued, and the meeting was effectively broken up. The civil authorities were called upon and the riot act read by **Deputy Sherriff Webb**. The result

was the arrest of some fifteen or twenty of our citizens, quite a number of our staid old farmers among them. Some of the most active participants were fined, but most of them were discharged. Among the strong abolitionists was **Orrin Robinson**, who was arrested and fined. He refused to pay the fine, and **Constable Hosmer** started to take him to Brooklyn [a town in eastern Connecticut and the location of the Windham County jail]. Making an excuse that he had forgotten his papers, he left Robinson in the road, supposing that would end it, but Robinson kept on and the Constable overtook him and committed him to jail.

In the early days of Willimantic, **Rebecca and Laura Simpson** bought the lot on Main Street from what is now Church Street to and including the **Samuel Barrows** lot, on which their father, **Peter Simpson**, built a comfortable one-story house, and resided there with his daughters for some years. Mr. Simpson was a paper maker. About 1840 **Newton Fitch** bought the property and resided there until his death in 1843. He was a very ingenious mechanic, and his machines for making and setting the teeth for cotton cards [machines used in cotton mills to comb raw cotton in preparation for spinning] were of ingenious construction. He was a most worthy citizen, and his early death was deeply regretted. Mr. Fitch was the father of **Diantha Fitch**, recently deceased, regarding whose will some of our legal lights were not successful in establishing its validity. The **Rev. Andrew Sharp** was the next owner of this property, and resided there until 1849, when he resigned the pastorate of the Congregational church in this village and removed to Rockville [a mill village in the town of Vernon, in north-central Connecticut]. In July, 1850, the trustees of the Methodist Society, who had come into possession of the property, sold to **Sheffield Lewis** some 80 feet front on Main Street and 90 feet rear, on which he erected a three-story building for stores and [a] hotel. Subsequently, **Henry Brainard** bought the property and kept the leading hotel here for years under the name of the Brainard House.

Mr. Brainard came here from Marlborough [a farm town in east-central Connecticut] in the early days of Willimantic and was in the employ of the Windham [Cotton] Manufacturing Company. He was forty years in charge of their teaming before the days of railroads in this locality. The arrival and departure of Captain Brainard with his six-horse team to or from Providence or Norwich was quite an event with our people. Mr. Brainard retired from the teaming business soon after the railroads went into operation and bought Mr. Potter's hotel, the Tremont, now Young's Hotel, in 1846, remaining there until he bought out the Lewis property and opened the hotel under the name of the Brainard House, which he kept for a number of years until his retirement to his pleasant home on Maple Avenue. The old Brainard House has become a thing of the past, being recently removed and on its site a three-story brick block erected for the sale of dry goods, carpets, furniture, etc. No store in eastern Connecticut surpasses this one in its elegance and general adaptation for the business which its enterprising proprietor, **H. C. Murray**, is engaged in. Henry Brainard was a man much respected in this community, honest and reliable, and a kind friend and worthy citizen. His death took place in 1884, at the age of 89 years.

In 1842 Contractor Baldwin, after building the Methodist church in Danielsonville [a mill city, smaller than Willimantic, in the town of Killingly, in eastern Connecticut], in month of

October, contracted with **Joshua B. Lord** to build for him a residence on the lot west of the Baptist church, on the north side of Main Street, on ground now occupied in part by the Commercial Block, which was done and completed early in the spring, and was occupied by Mr. Lord for a number of years until his removal to Hartford. Subsequently this property was purchased by **Thomas Turner**, who to make room for [the] Commercial Block, removed the house to the upper part of Turner Street in good condition. Had it not been put together by a Jeffersonian Democrat it might not have stood the strain of removal. [Here we discover Baldwin's political affiliation.]

We next come to the Baptist church on the east of the Lord lot. The first church building for a house of worship for the Baptists was built on this lot by Reid, Hardin, and Fenton, a Mansfield firm of builders, in 1828, under the direction of **Deacon Samuel Barrows, Jr., Jesse Crane, Capt. Charles Thompson, Deacon Eliphalet Martin**, and others, and was dedicated in May, 1829. This church was occupied until 1857, when it was sold to the Catholics, and **Col. Edwin S. Fitch** of Mansfield built the present one. Col. Fitch had quite a tract of land in this borough, now occupied in part by the Normal and First District schools. He was a brother of Mr. **Laban Chase**, a thoroughgoing businessman, respected and esteemed in the community. His death, in 1875, was a source of much regret.

Article 14

[Jillson Square]

In the month of July, 1842, **James P. Howes** sold to **Joshua B. Lord** the lot on the northeast corner of what is now Temple Street, fronting on Union, on which was erected a three-story building, still standing, for a dry goods and grocery store and stove and tin shop, in company with **Joseph C. Bassett**, a practical worker on tin and sheet iron, and conducted a large business in the various branches in their line. For some time years [sic.] Mr. Lord was postmaster, a part of this period keeping the office in the store. In Know-Nothing times he represented the town in the Legislature. [This is a reference to the heyday of the American or Know-Nothing Party of the 1850s. Virulently anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic, the Know-Nothings were particularly strong in New England, winning control of several state legislatures in 1854. In using the party's pejorative nickname, hung on it by its Democratic and Whig critics, Baldwin — who was a Democrat — implicitly criticizes it.] After his retirement from business he removed to Hartford, and resided there until his death in 1875, at the age of 65 years. Mr. Bassett, one of the best mechanics in his line, continued his business in the borough with the respect and confidence of the community until 1887, when he retired, somewhat broken in health. His death occurred quite recently at the age of 88 years.

An event of some interest took place in this building in 1844. A number of our citizens, having decided to establish an Odd Fellows' Lodge, application was made to **Col. John L. Devotion**, of Norwich, Grand Master, and a dispensation was granted for a lodge to be known as Washington Lodge, No. 16, I. O. O. F. The hall in the upper story of this building having been fitted for the

purpose, Grand Master Devotion, with some eighty brothers from Norwich, New London [an important seaport in southeastern Connecticut], and East Haddam [a farm town on the Connecticut River in the central part of the state] instituted Washington Lodge, No. 16, I. O. O. F., December 4, 1844.

Lloyd E. Baldwin was elected and installed the first N. G. of the lodge, **Joshua B. Lord** V. G., and **Asa Jillson** secretary. The writer of these sketches does not know of but two persons present on that occasion who are now living, **Col. Charles A. Converse** of Norwich and himself. Subsequently this property passed to the possession of **George W. Hanover**, who made extensive alterations, and in connection with **Thomas Turner** did an extensive business in the dry goods line for a number of years.

In 1835 **Alfred Howes** sold to **Deacon Samuel Barrows** the lot in the rear of the Baptist church, on which the Deacon built the house which still occupies the premises, designing it for a parsonage for the residence of the clergymen of the Baptist church. Subsequently, the property passed into the possession of **Gardner Hall** and from Hall to **Silas F. Clark** and his mother in law, **Mrs. Woodworth**, and remains in the possession of the family at the present time. In 1848 **James P. Howes** sold to **Otis Dimmick** the lot on the east side of what is now Temple Street, opposite of the parsonage lot, on which he built a cozy cottage for his residence. Some years later it went into the possession of George W. Hanover, who removed it to an alleyway between Temple and Center streets, where it still remains.

In 1844 **Wm. A. Fitch** bought of **J. B. Lord** the lot east of the Lord & Bassett store and built the dwelling which was later removed to the rear of the store on what is now Temple Street. Mr. Fitch came here from Andover and was a shoemaker by trade. He built a shop on the lot now occupied by **Marshal Tilden**'s fine block and did quite an extensive business in the manufacture and sale of boots and shoes. It was the first store of the kind established in Willimantic exclusively for this business. Mr. Fitch returned to Andover a few years later which was his future home. **Dr. Wm. K. Otis** was the future occupant of this house until his death in 1880. He came here from Massachusetts in the early forties and grew into a large an extensive practice which he maintained for over thirty years. His death occurred in 1880 at 61 years of age.

On what is now Maple Avenue, **Davis Weaver** had in the early thirties some seven acres of land on which he built a dwelling for his residence. At that time there was no highway any nearer than Main Street, only a cart path through the swamp and bushes. Subsequently **Wm. L. Weaver** owned the property with the exception of the house and one acre of land purchased by **James French**. Mr. French was a mason by trade and an energetic man such as are needed in any young and growing community. His death occurred in 1843 by typhoid fever, which took off **Apollis Perkins** and **Newton Fitch** the same year.

Wm. L. Weaver was a man of more than ordinary ability. He taught several terms in our schools, and did quite an extensive business at one time in the book and stationery trade. His

manuscript history of [the town of] Windham has been and will be appreciated by the future historian of old Windham. He was a representative to the legislature from his town in 1850, and had the respect and esteem of his fellow citizens. From his boyhood he labored under a physical disability, which ended his life. His death took place in 1866, at the age of 51 years.



In 1850 **Thomas C. Brown** bought the lot at the junction of Main and Union streets, now occupied by the Cushman Block, and put up a building which he occupied as a grocery and beer shop. East of the Brown lot was an old residence occupied by **Eleazer D. Fitch**, built in the early part of the last century, and subsequently removed by Mr. Fitch and a two-story house built on the site of the old one, which is still standing in fair condition. Mr. Fitch was a brother of **Mrs. Chase** and **Col. Edwin S. Fitch**. His wife was a daughter of **Waldo Carey**, one of the largest land owners in this section in the early part of this century. In the month of December, 1830, E. D. Fitch and wife sold to **Sophia Cushman** the lot east of their residence between Main and Union streets, on which she had built a two-story house for a residence. Mrs. Cushman was the mother of **E. W. Call** and **J. E. Cushman**, long residents in this borough.

James P. Howes in the early '40s owned quite a tract of land on the north side of Union Street, inherited from his father **Alfred Howes**'s estate. The tariff of 1842 [a high, protective tariff passed by the Whigs in Congress, but repealed four years later when the Democrats regained control; protective tariffs had strong support in manufacturing communities like Willimantic, because they made European imports more expensive and promoted domestic industry] having put new life into the manufacture of cotton goods, the main dependence of Willimantic's prosperity, many lots were sold from this tract and houses erected thereon during this period. Mr. Howes built for himself on what is now the southwest corner of Union and Centre streets, a modest one-story-and-a-half cottage, in which he resided until he sold the balance of his real estate in connection with his homestead to **Allen Lincoln**, Esq., in 1863, a live man from the adjoining town of Chaplin, who had recently located here.

Mr. Lincoln made extensive improvements upon the property, opening Centre Street and erecting two more dwellings thereon and greatly improving the Howe cottage on Union Street and was extensively engaged in other real estate operations. He was town clerk of the town for seventeen years, active and energetic. His death, which took place in 1882 at the age of 64 years, was a source of great regret. **James P. Howes** was a son of **Alfred Howes** who was born and resided here during his life. His death occurred in 1864 at 43 years of age.

Article 15

[Jillson Square, Jackson Street]

In 1845 **James P. Howes** sold to **Frederick Marsh** a building lot on the north side of Union Street east of what is now Centre Street on which he, in connection with his partner **Mr. Bowdish**, erected a two-story house and shop, and under the firm name Marsh & Bowdish did quite a business in the cabinet making and repairing branches of that time. Mr. Marsh, his wife, and Mr. Bowdish were deaf mutes, but keen, bright and intelligent in every other respect. Mrs. Bowdish could do the talking for the family. They were educated in the sign language and communicated their ideas and wants in writing very freely. After remaining here a few years they emigrated to the West, much to the regret of our people.

The next lot east of the Marsh lot on the north side of Union Street was sold by **Alfred Howes** to **Capt. Roger Gurley**, February, 1835. On this lot Contractor Baldwin built a two-story house for Capt. Gurley and his son-in-law, **Joseph Woodard**, which is still standing in good condition. Capt. Gurley came here from Mansfield and Mr. Woodard from Coventry, and were a much to be desired acquisition to our community. Among papers left by Capt. Gurley is a warrant signed by **Lieutenant Colonel Lebeur Larrabee** of the 5th Regiment, dated at Windham, Sept. 18, 1797, constituting Roger Gurley 3d sergeant of the 6th company of the 5th Regiment Conn. Militia. The writer of these sketches held the same position of Lieut. Colonel in the 5th Regiment forty four years later.

Capt. Gurley also had a commission as Lieutenant of the 6th Company signed by **Jonathan Trumbull** as Captain General and **Samuel Wyllys** as Secretary of State in 1803. Capt. Gurley had a family of five sons and six daughters. Almira married **Joseph Woodard**; Sarah married **Ona Carpenter**, and they were parents of **Arthur B. Carpenter** a prominent businessman at this present time in this city; and Harriet married **Charles Lyon**, all of whom were for many years esteemed residents of this place. Capt. Gurley's death occurred in 1836 at the age of 70 years.

In the month of April 1848, **J. B. Lord** sold to **Fanny M. Bliven** the lot east of the Capt. Gurley lot on the north side of Union Street on which she had built a two-story dwelling as a residence for herself and [her] family.

Pardon Bliven the husband of Mrs. Fanny M. Bliven came here with his family from Westerly, R. I., about 1833, and was in the employ of the Jillson Manufacturing Company for some ten years until his death in 1844 at the age of 44 years, leaving his widow with a family of seven children. This property is now owned by **Charles S. Bliven**, the oldest son, who has greatly enlarged and improved it. Mrs. Bliven the mother, a most estimable woman, died in 1855 at 54 years of age.

In 1848 **J. B. Lord** sold to **Seymour Davenport** the lot east of the Bliven lot on the north side of Union Street on which he had built a spacious two-story building for a dry goods store and residence. Mr. Davenport was for some time quite extensively engaged in the sale of dry goods for that early period of Willimantic history. Subsequently the property passed into the hands of **A. W. Tilson**, and from him to **Merrick Johnson**, for a long time a respected and esteemed resident in this community and recently deceased.

In 1832 **Alfred Howes** sold to **Mary B. Thompson** the lot east of the Davenport lot on the north side of Union Street, on which she had built a two-story house for a home for her aged father and mother. Captain Thompson, the father, was a soldier of the American Revolution, an honored guest at our Fourth of July celebrations in the early days of Willimantic, when patriotism was not at a discount; and with his Revolutionary associates, Simons, Lincoln, Miller and others hugely enjoyed these occasions. Miss Thompson was a most estimable young lady, respected and esteemed in this community. She subsequently married **Philip Wilson**, a worthy young machinist of this place. After residing here for a few years he, with his brother James with their families, emigrated to the Western Reserve in the State of Ohio.

In 1847 **J. B. Lord** sold to **Sydney S. Brewster** the lot on the west side of Jackson Street about one hundred feet north of Union Street on which Contractor Baldwin built for him a one-story-and-a-half cottage for his residence. Mr. Brewster was a machinist by occupation. After remaining here a few years, he removed with his family to Mystic, Conn., and Willimantic lost a much esteemed and valuable resident. **Wm. H. Osborn** bought the property and resided there many years.

Mr. Osborn came here from Columbia in the early days of Willimantic. His business was that of an accountant and bookkeeper. The marks of his pen are on the day books and ledgers of many of the old businessmen and firms in this place. Mr. Osborn passed away in 1893 at 70 years of age.

On the northeast corner of what is now Jackson Place and Jackson Street, **Calvin Robinson** bought of **Jas. P. Howes** a building lot in 1842. On this lot he built a two-story dwelling for rental purposes. After holding this property for some time, he sold out and it passed into other ownership.

On the southeast corner of what is now Valley and Jackson streets, east side, in 1846 **Douglas Vaughn** bought of **James P. Howes** a lot on which he built a two-story house for his residence.

Mr. Vaughn was a builder by trade. After remaining here for some time he disposed of his property and it passed into other hands. In 1848 **Wm. H. Branch** bought of **Joshua B. Lord** the lot on the west side of Jackson Street opposite of the Vaughn lot, built for himself a cozy little one-and-a-half-story cottage, which is still standing, much in the original condition. Mr. Branch came here from the town of Lisbon [in eastern Connecticut], married a daughter of **Dan Atwood**, a sister of Warren Atwood. He was a stonemason by trade. After residing here for a few years he came to the conclusion that there was an easier life for him and emigrated to Salt Lake, taking his wife and family with him. He joined the Mormons, and with his brother-in-law **Millen Atwood**, became prominent elders of that fraternity.

Article 16

[Jackson Street]

In 1849 **James P. Howes** sold to **Warren Atwood** the lot on the east side of Jackson Street south of the lot on which the Catholic church [St. Joseph Church] is now located, on which he built two cottage houses, walls of stone, known since they were built as the twins. Being short of lime and other necessary materials, he obtained permission from **General James M. Palmer** to transport from Norwich over the New London, Willimantic, & Palmer Railroad, then in an unfinished condition, a carload of freight from Norwich. General Palmer was the chief engineer of the road. Mr. Atwood, having obtained this permission, a car was loaded at Norwich, with a strong horse as motive power, himself as conductor, and one of our present businessmen, then a boy of a dozen years of age, as engine driver, started for Willimantic. At the down grades the motive power was detached and applied again at the up grades, arriving safely at their destination. It was the first car load of freight delivered over this road from Norwich.



In 1844 **Elisha Williams** sold to **T. J. Weeks** the lot north of the Atwood lot, on the east side of Jackson Street. On this lot was erected a comfortable two-story residence. In 1845 Weeks sold his interest to Brown and McCracken. In 1846 they sold it to **Joel A. Clark**, and Clark in 1847 sold [it] to **George W. Fuller**. Mr. Fuller occupied the premises until his removal to Hartford in 1854, when he sold the property to **Captain Calvin H. Davison**, who occupied the premises until 1873, when he disposed of it to **Rev. Fl. DeBruycker**. [DeBruyker, a Roman Catholic priest from Belgium who was stationed in Willimantic and later appointed Bishop of Norwich, probably received the property for the Church, as it became the site of St. Joseph Church.]

In the month of May, 1850, **Elisha Williams** sold to **Henry Young** the lot on the west side of Jackson Street opposite the lot on which the second district schoolhouse is now located, on which he built a two-story-and-ell house for his own residence. Mr. Young was a son of **Anson Young**, who was a lifelong resident of this place. He resided in the home which he built until his death in 1877, at 64 years of age. The property has since passed into the possession of **John Hickey**, one of our substantial businessmen, who has made substantial improvements upon it.

In July, 1849, **Edwin Eaton** sold to **Wm. H. Godfrey** the lot on the east side of Jackson Street nearly opposite of the Young lot, on which he built a comfortable story-and-a-half house for his residence. Mr. Godfrey was a machinist by occupation. After a residence of some six years he removed to Norwich. **Silas Jagger** was the next owner. From him it went to **James P. Howes**, and from Howes to **James E. Murray**, who resided there until his death in 1893. Mr. Murray was a much-respected citizen, and his death was a source of great regret to his many friends and acquaintances.

On the west side of Jackson Street north of the Godfrey lot we come to the **Lyman Jackson** lot, so called, of about 30 acres and generally understood as belonging to him by purchase. This land, with other lands, was set out to **Freelove Carey** as dower from the estate of **Waldo Carey** her late husband. [Baldwin spells Carey variously as "Cary" and "Carey."] On March 4, 1845, **Samuel Hill** sold to **Edwin Eaton** 29 acres, the same land known generally as the Lyman Jackson land. On March 4, 1848, Edwin Eaton sold to **Eli Hewitt** this 29 acres of land. On March 4, 1845, Samuel L. Hill sold to Edwin Eaton the dower of Freelove Carey. [On] May 31, 1839, Samuel L. Hill mortgaged to Edwin Eaton the above land with other land about 108 acres. On March 4, 1848, Edwin Eaton quitclaimed to Eli Hewitt all his right and title unto about 30 acres, thus giving Mr. Hewitt a clear, undisputed, honest title to the land known as the Lyman Jackson property. These deeds are all a matter of record in the town clerk's office in Windham, and I make this statement that the town records of Windham do not show the name of Lyman Jackson as the owner of any of the above named real estate, nor does the tax lists from 1835 to 1858, the time of his death, show that he paid taxes in Windham on any real estate.



Mr. Jackson was for some years a resident on this property as a tenant of Deacon Samuel L. Hill. He was a respectable, quiet colored citizen, and with his family enjoyed the confidence and respect of the community in which they resided.

Previous to 1836 no public highway led out of Willimantic north except by way of lower Main Street and what is now Ash Street. On the 28th day of May, 1836, the borough of Willimantic voted to accept the report of the court of burgesses on the petition of **Hartford Tingley** and others on the layout of High Street to [the] Mansfield town line. This was the first road north of Willimantic under borough authority, but was not accepted by the town until 1838.

On June 13, 1836, **Waterman C. Clark** and others petitioned the court of burgesses for the layout of a highway from Main Street, near the store of the Jillson Manufacturing Company, north to intersect the Mansfield Road [today's Ash Street] near the residence of **Nathaniel Robinson**. This they proceeded quickly to do, and the court of burgesses voted to accept the layout on the 20th of June, 1836. That species of rivalry which has existed between the two ends of this city for the past year was not unknown in those days. At a borough meeting June 25,

1835 [sic.], the proceedings of the court of burgesses were ratified and the road built, and in honor of **Lyman Jackson** called Jackson street. This was the second road north out of Willimantic built by the borough.



Article 17

[Union Street, Milk Street]

On the north side of Union Street, east of the railroad, in 1831, **Alfred Howes** sold to **Edward Clark** of Windham two building lots, on which he had built two houses of two stories and four tenements to each house, for rental purposes. Subsequently, **Lucian H. Clark** purchased the west house for his residence, which he occupied for many years. Mr. Clark was a son of **John Clark**, a native of old Windham [Windham Center], where he spent his boyhood days and early manhood, being for some time a clerk in the store of his brother, **Waterman C. Clark**, who was the proprietor of the largest and most exclusive dry goods store in old Windham. Mr. Clark subsequently removed to Willimantic and opened a general dry goods store, which he conducted for many years. In early life he married Miss **Hanna Babcock**, a most excellent and amiable woman, whose death occurred during his residence in this place. Mr. Clark was later on engaged with the Willimantic Linen Company at their store. Sometime in the eighties he took up his residence in Hartford with his son, **Edward H. Clark**, the secretary of the Willimantic Linen Company, and remained with him until his death, in 1891, at 79 years of age. Lucian H. Clark was a most worthy citizen. His death was a source of much grief to his many friends and acquaintances. **Maxwell Clark** in later years came into the possession of the second house property, built extensive houses for the cultivation of plants and flowers, and the business was the first of its kind to be established in Willimantic.

In the month of July 1833 **Alfred Howes** sold to **Ahab Wilkinson** the lot on the north side of Union Street east of the Clark lot, on which that veteran builder, **Wrightman Williams**, built

for him a spacious two-story house for a residence for himself and his four maiden sisters. Mr. Wilkinson and his sisters came here from Rhode Island and were a much desired acquisition to our community. Mr. Wilkinson was engaged in the manufacturing of cotton goods and operated the lower stone mill of the Jillson Manufacturing Company, since removed. He married Miss **Eliza Jillson**, [the] only daughter of **Wm. Jillson**, one of the three brothers who established the Jillson manufacturing plant in this place in 1825. They had one son, **Ahab Wilkinson, Junior**, who has been engaged for many years in the patent office in Washington and makes occasional visits to the home of his birth. Mr. Wilkinson was an enterprising businessman, coming here about 1830. His early death was a sad loss to his family and the community at large.

Dr. Oliver Kingsley, Jr., married Miss **Martha Wilkinson**, one of the four sisters, and resided here until his death in 1847. Dr. Kingsley was a sterling man as a practicing physician, honest and incorruptible, a staunch friend of education and all that goes to elevate and build up the community in which he resided. He represented this town in the legislature in 1841 and held many other positions of honor and trust. His death occurred in 1847 at the age of 40 years.

In the month of February, 1832, **Stephen Dexter** sold to the **Rev. Alva Gregory** and **Samuel L. Hill** the lot on the north side of Union Street, east of the Wilkinson lot, on which they had built a large two-story house of two tenements for their occupation. The **Rev. Mr. Gregory** came here as the pastor of the Baptist church in this place and remained as such for some six years, when he removed to Norwalk in this state, much to the regret of our people in general. He was an acquisition much to be desired in any community which was so fortunate as to secure his residence among them.



Samuel Hill came here from Rhode Island in 1830 as bookkeeper with **Amory A. Walker**, as agent for and in the interest of Providence cotton manufacturers, to operate the Jillson plant. Mr. Hill became quite largely interested in real estate operations as well as in religious matters, became a member of the Baptist church in this place, and was one of its deacons; a kind-hearted, benevolent gentleman, just the man needed in our young and growing community to give tone to public sentiment in morals and all that constitutes good citizenship. After remaining here until about 1845, he removed to Northampton, Mass., and became the head of the Nonatuck Silk Co., which has become one of the largest silk manufacturing concerns in New England. The same spirit of charity and benevolence followed him to the end.

He passed away a few years since, amid the regrets of all of his many friends and acquaintances, honored and respected.

In the month of March, 1836, **Samuel L. Hill** sold to **Elisha Williams** the east half of the house built by him and the **Rev. Alva Gregory** in 1832 on the corner of Union and Milk streets. Mr. Williams came here in 1836 from Mansfield, and was for some years engaged quite extensively in real estate transactions. He was trial justice of many police and other cases in Justice courts and a member of the borough government for some time; a much-respected citizen. His death occurred in 1879.

In the month of April, 1831, **Peter Webb** of Windham sold to **Stephen Dexter** the land east of the Wilkinson lot on the north side of Union Street, with the house still standing on the east side of Milk street and other buildings on said lot. Mr. Dexter came here from Rhode Island, was a manufacturer of spools and bobbins, and in company with **Robert Prentice** carried on their business of making spools in a building belonging to the Jillson Manufacturing Company, between their mill and the dam. Mr. Dexter was also somewhat of a surveyor and engineer. He made a survey of Main and Union streets, locating the buildings on both streets on the map, the original being in the city clerk's office at the present time. This survey and map were made in 1833 by borough authority.

Willimantic borough was chartered by the legislature in 1833, **Stephen Hosmer** Esq., was a representative from this town and was authorized to call the first meeting of the voters for the election of the necessary officers. This meeting was held July 1, 1833, when **Lorin Carpenter** was elected warden, **Newton Fitch** clerk and treasurer, [and] **Wrightman Williams**, **Asa Jillson**, **Samuel Barrows, Jr.**, **Wm. C. Boon**, **Wm. Witter, M. D.**, and **Royal Jennings** were elected burgesses. **Stephen Dexter** was elected bailiff, and **Thomas W. Cunningham** collector of taxes. A tax of three cents on the dollar was voted to be laid on the polls and rateable estate in the borough. This rate of three percent might seem large, but a percentage was put on the property and on that the three percent tare [sic] was laid.

Elisha Williams came into the possession of the Dexter property, and in the month of April, 1837, sold it to **Charles Huntington**, who resided there until his removal to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, some years later.

In the month of March, 1845, Charles Huntington sold to **Warren Atwood** the lot on the east side of Milk Street north of his residence, on which he built a two-story, four-tenement house for rental purposes. It is still standing, in fair condition. North of the Atwood lot on Milk Street, Charles Huntington sold to **Charles Lyon**, in 1845, the lot on which was built a cozy dwelling and occupied by him for some years as a residence. Mr. Lyon came here from Lisbon, was a wood workman on machinery, and was in the employ of Jillson and Capen for some years. He married a daughter of **Captain Roger Gurley**, and was a respected and esteemed citizen.

Article 18

[Jillson Square, Main Street]

In the month of September, 1823, **Thomas Gray, Samuel Byrnes, and David Smith** sold to **William Jillson, Asa Jillson, and Seth Jillson** two pieces of land lying upon each side of the Willimantic River in the village of Willimantic. The first piece lies on the south side of the river, commencing at the west end of the Iron Works [Bridge], running westerly along the bank of the river about 44 rods. The second piece was situated on the north side of the river commencing at the west end of the Iron Works Bridge, thence along the southerly side of the [Coventry and Windham] Turnpike Road [Main Street] about 44 rods to land of **Jesse Spafford**. This tract of land embraced the best mill privilege on the Willimantic River. William Jillson came here from Cumberland, R. I., and was the businessman of the concern. He was at one time president of the Burrillville Bank. It is related of him that coming to Connecticut at one time he stopped at a hotel this side of the state line. On paying his bill, he put out an unsigned bill of his bank. On being reminded of the error, he attached his name as president and started out for his destination. Officers followed the supposed forger until they overtook him and learned their mistake. Asa and Seth Jillson came here from Dorchester, Mass., and were machinists by occupation. They soon commenced preparations for establishing their cotton plant on the privilege they had so recently acquired.

In 1824-25, the Jillson Brothers built the dam raceway, five two-story stone houses, of four tenements each, a three-story stone building for [a] store and storage rooms, a two-story wooden machine shop, a blacksmith shop of stone, and, for those days, the largest three-story-and-basement stone building for their factory in this part of Connecticut. A stone picker house east of the mill completed the plant. The main mill is still standing, in good condition, and is used by the Willimantic Linen Company for the manufacture of their millions of spools of various kinds. In their machine shop, the Jillsons made some portion of the machinery to operate their plant with and commenced the making of cotton goods early in 1826. Many of our young men of those days served an apprenticeship with the Jillsons, to learn to make cotton machinery – **Wm. J. Jillson, John H. Capen, Wm. H. Young, Henry Kelly**, and many others.



Subsequently **Wm. G. Jillson** and **John H. Capen** formed a partnership, under the firm name Jillson & Capen, and doing an extensive business in making cotton machinery at the Jillson plant for many years, Captain Capen being the manager. Soon after getting the mill in operation, the Jillson Brothers built their second mill of three stories, of stone a short distance below their first mill, which was operated by **Ahab Wilkinson**, at one time also by **A. D. and J. Y. Smith** of Providence, for making print cloths, and by **Col. Wm. L. Jillson** for the making of cotton duck. Few men would have accomplished as much in the line of business as did Colonel Jillson by his energy and perseverance, all the time battling against that fell disease, consumption [tuberculosis], to which he had finally to yield.



On the north side of Main Street, a short distance west of the factory, **Wm. Jillson** built in 1825 a fine two-story cut stone house for a residence for himself and [his] family, which he occupied for a few years.



About 1845 the Jillson plant and all their real estate, including the homesteads of the original Jillson Brothers, went into the possession of **Austin Dunham** and others of Hartford, who in connection with **Lawson C. Ives** and **Elisha Johnson** formed the Willimantic Linen Company, imported their machinery from England, and commenced the manufacture of linen goods in what is now the spool shop of the Linen Company, doing more or less in the making of linen goods until 1857, when the business was given up. The Willimantic Linen Company kept up their name and their organization, and in the fall and winter of 1856-7 decided to go into the manufacture of spool cotton on a large scale. The location selected commenced at the west end

of the Iron Works Bridge on the north side of the river extending west, including the dye house, three hundred feet in length, main building, and in width sixty-nine feet, three stories in height, with attic, [and] walls of dimension stone. Work on the building was pressed with vigor under the direction of Contractor Baldwin, and the building was ready for the machinery in the month of February following. **Charles S. Bliven** had charge of the shafting, hangers, pulleys, and setting of the machinery. **David Whitman** of Providence, was consulting advisor as to the kind of machinery necessary for this enterprise. This movement on the part of its projectors laid the foundation of the immense business since established and carried on in this place by the Willimantic Linen Company, and it is the backbone of all the manufacturing interests in this city, giving employment directly and indirectly to one quarter of the population of our city. The interests of the company and the public should harmonize for the benefit of all concerned.



In connection with the building of the Linen Company's mill, No. 1, the Town of Windham voted to construct a stone arch bridge over the Willimantic River in place of the old Iron Works wood structure. The contract was taken and the bridge built during the summer by **Lyman Jordan**, an old resident of this place. Mr. Jordan also built the stone arch bridge over the Willimantic river on Bridge Street a few years previous, making two substantial monuments to his memory.



In the month of December, 1830, **Edward Clark** sold to **George Byrnes** the lot next east of the stone store lot of the Jillsons on the north side of Main Street, and in the following spring Contractor Baldwin had built for Mr. Byrnes a two-story building for store and tenement, Mr. Byrnes occupying the tenement and keeping a general assortment of dry goods usually found in [the] country stores of those days. The building is still standing in fair condition, and owned by the Willimantic Linen Co.

In the month of June, 1844, **Asa Jillson** sold to the Universalist Society the lot next east of the Byrnes lot on the north side of Main Street, on which they had built a suitable building for church purposes. **Captain John H. Capen**, **Colonel Roswell Moulton**, **Captain Zephaniah Young**, **Whiting Hayden**, **Daniel Spicer** and **Lewis Fluker** [?] were the principal promoters of the enterprise. **Rev. Thomas Borden** of Fall River was their pastor for some years, followed by the **Rev. E. K. Brush**, with good old **Elder Brown** to occasionally drop a few "I dares," until 1857, when Spiritualism took the place of Universalism. The first trance speaker in the church was a **Mrs. Tuttle**, causing much excitement and discussion. Mrs. Tuttle was followed by other trance speakers in the church building, until the subject had had its day, the society organization [was] given up, and the property [was] disposed of. It is now owned by our worthy fellow citizen, **George W. Burnham**, who is somewhat inclined to a belief in this doctrine, and it would not be a strange thing if his contact with the old building and its associations accounted for his poetic effusions, with which the public have been favored.



Article 19

[Main Street, Clark Street]

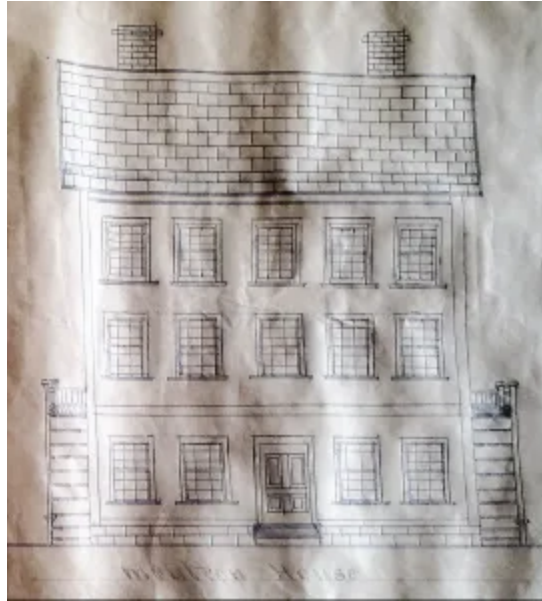
In 1839 **Edward Clark** sold to **Waterman C. Clark** the lot of land east of the Universalist church lot on the west corner of Main and Washington streets [Washington Street is now Clark Street], on which he erected various structures of buildings, [in] various styles of architecture, and wholly unknown to the modern builders and architects of the day. Waterman Clark was the oldest of four sons of **John Clark**, a merchant of old Windham [Windham Center]. Waterman early in life succeeded his father in business in Windham [Center], and his store became a noted place for trade for people from adjoining towns. After the silk raisers had fed their silk worms to maturity and wound the cocoons into raw silk, they were ready to visit the merchant for an exchange of products. The work of raising silk was in the main the work of females, and the results furnished the means of purchasing their calicos, dellins [?], and, once in a long time, a silk dress. Not many new bonnets for Easter in those days.



The raising of raw silk was carried on in the town of Mansfield to a larger extent in the fore part of this century than in any other town in this vicinity. The mulberry trees, the leaves of which the silk worms were fed on, were cultivated with care and grew to twenty and thirty feet in height, affording the girls of those days healthy exercise in picking the leaves, as well as a fair remuneration for their labour. Not much neuralgia or dyspepsia among the silk raisers. I have in mind a most worthy lady who has long been a resident of this city, now over 80 years of age, hale and hearty at this present time, whose girlhood days were spent in its season, to some extent, among the mulberry leaves in the tree tops, making melody, with her voice equaling the song of the birds.

General Clark continued his business in Windham [Center] until about 1840, when he removed to Willimantic, occupying the stone store of the Jillsons for some time. During this period he held military offices, from Major of the 5th Regiment Connecticut Militia to that of Major General of the 2d Division, and reviewed the 4th Brigade at New London, under the command of General Wilson, I think, in the fall of 1841, all of which positions were filled in a creditable manner. General Clark was never married, and spent some thirty years of his life in this place as a bachelor, with no one later on in life to particularly care for him. His death occurred in 1871 at the age of 74 years.

On the southeast corner of Main and Washington streets, **Edwin Eaton** sold to **Edward L. Moulton** in the month of September, 1848, the lot and the two-story house built by him. Mr. Moulton converted the lower story into an extensive drug and paint store and the second story as a residence, and remained in the business a few years.



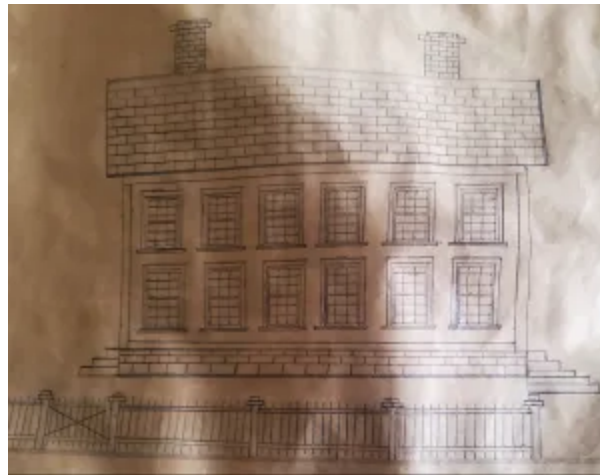
Edward L. Moulton was a genial, companionable man, respected and esteemed by his many friends and acquaintances. His early death in 1855 at the age of 31 years was deeply regretted.

In the month of September, 1841, **Samuel L. Hill** sold to **George Lathrop** the lot on the north side of Main Street, east of the Moulton lot, on which he erected a building for a general grocery store, in which he did an extensive business in that line. Subsequently, his increasing business requiring more room, an addition was added to the west end of the store, thus affording additional facilities for his large and flourishing business. No grocery store in this section had a better reputation for its first class goods and its fair dealings with its customers than this one at that time. Mr. Lathrop retired from the business in the latter part of the sixties and was succeeded by **Courtland Babcock**. Mr. Lathrop is still the owner of the property, and it has been for the past few years occupied by **Edward E. Casey** as an extensive upholstering and furniture establishment.



On the northeast corner of Washington and Union streets, **Edwin Eaton** built a two-story house of four tenements, for rental purposes. Subsequently, in 1850, he sold it to **George**

Lathrop, who still retains possession. The house next east of the Eaton house on the south side of Union Street was built by George Lathrop on land purchased of **Samuel L. Hill**, and is now owned and occupied by **Mrs. John Wheeler**.



In the month of May, 1845, **Joshua B. Lord** sold to **John Chipman** the lot next north of the Brewster lot, on which he built a substantial two-story-and-ell house for his residence. Mr. Chipman was a longtime resident of this place, and with his family was much respected. One of his daughters, Delia, married **Thomas Snell Weaver**, for some time editor of the [Willimantic] JOURNAL [one of Willimantic's two newspapers in the 1890s]. Mr. Chipman passed away a few years since and the property is now owned by Contractor **J. O'Sullivan**.

In the month of August, 1848, **Edwin Eaton** sold to **Joanna Wilkinson** the lot next east of the Lathrop lot on the north side of Main Street, on which she had built a two-story residence. Miss Wilkinson was one of the four maiden sisters who came here with her brother, **Ahab Wilkinson**, in 1830. The property is now owned by **George Lathrop**.

Article 20

[Thread Mill Square, Main Street]

In order to understand the location of the buildings to be next described, it will be necessary to understand the topography of the section they occupied in 1850, and which was not materially changed until 1864, when the Willimantic Linen Company built their No. 2 mill. The old [Coventry and Windham] Turnpike Road [Main Street] ran directly past No. 1 mill to the north end of the Iron Works Bridge. From this point a road ran along the northerly side of the river past Shakel Dam until it intersected Main Street near the old saw mill, Main Street occupying about the same position as it now does, thus enclosing quite a tract of land for building purposes.

In the month of April, 1837, Phelps & Spafford sold to **Col. Roswell Moulton** a building lot on the northwest corner at the junction of the two streets, on which he built a two-story building for a grocery store and post office, Col. Moulton being postmaster at that time. The office remained here until 1843, when public convenience seemed to demand a change of locality, and, **Gen. Baldwin** being appointed postmaster, it was removed to the Huntington store, next west of the Congregational church on Main Street.

On the southeast corner opposite the north end of the Iron Works Bridge, in the early twenties **Guy Hebard** erected a two-story building for a hatter's shop. This building was subsequently used for a grocery store, and the post office was kept here for some time. Directly below the north end of the Iron Works Bridge was a building known as the lighthouse, built and occupied by **Benjamin Hewitt** for a few years as a rum and beer shop. The next building below the Hebard building on the northerly side of the road was the stone schoolhouse. Willimantic was a one-school district up to 1825, and known as the seventh school district of the Windham School Society. In 1823 the district voted to build a new schoolhouse, to be located on the south side of the Turnpike Road, and the spot selected was near where the west end of the Willimantic Linen Company's No. 1 mill is now located, to be 34 feet in length, 18 feet in width, and 8 feet between joints, which was done, and the school kept there until 1830. The parents and guardians of each child were to furnish one-and-a-half foot of wood for each scholar, cut and split ready for use, and the teacher was directed by vote of the district to turn out of school all scholars whose parents did not comply with this vote.



In the month of October, 1830, the district voted to build a new schoolhouse, dimensions to be 50 feet in length, and 30 feet in width, to be built of stone and to be located on the lot purchased of Gray, Byrnes, & Smith, on the north side of the River Road opposite Shakel Dam. The price paid to Gray, Byrnes, & Smith for the lot was twenty-five dollars. In the month of May, 1826, a vote was passed to divide the district, the line being east of the Boon house, now owned by **Dr. Card**. In the month of June, 1831, a contact was made with **Elias Rathbun** and

Frederick Campbell, masons, to do the stone work on the new schoolhouse and with **Joseph Sollace** and **Charles Arnold** of Mansfield, carpenters and joiners, to do the woodwork, all of which was done during the summer and fall of 1831, and the building was ready for the winter term of school. The new schoolhouse furnished accommodations for the district for sixteen years, when they became cramped for more room for the increased number of scholars, and the district, by a vote passed in legal meeting, August, 1847, ordered an addition to be made to the main building. This answered the purpose until 1864, when the present house was built.



Among the early teachers in district no. 7 was **Asahel Kingsley**, who taught the school for five months and one week for the sum of sixty-four dollars and his board among the families of the district.

Another old-time teacher was **Dr. Eleazer Bentley**, who taught this school two or three terms. The writer of these sketches sat under Dr. Bentley's instruction in a district school in Franklin [a farm town in eastern Connecticut, located between Windham and Norwich] seventy-five years ago. **Robert W. Robinson**, **Gideon C. Segar**, **Ebenezer Gray**, a graduate of Yale College, **Wm. W. Kingsley**, **Robert Stewart**, **Wm. L. Weaver**, and **McCall Cushman** were teachers in this school.

Frederick F. Barrows was principal of school from 1842 to 1848, and left the impress of his genius as an educator upon the minds of the boys and girls of that period which will last a lifetime. Mr. Barrows went from here to Hartford, assumed the charge of the Brown School as principal, and retained that position for forty four years until his death in 1892. [The Brown School in Hartford was located on the city's East Side, its immigrant neighborhood. One of its pupils during Barrows's tenure as principal was Sophie Tucker, the famous singer.] Miss **Harriet Moulton**, daughter of **Capt. John Moulton**, was a valued assistant and teacher in this school for a long series of years, part of the time having charge of the school through some of its terms.

Porter B. Peck, a native of Mansfield and a resident of North Windham, for a long number of years was the successor of Mr. Barrows as principal. He had a happy faculty of imparting instruction to his pupils, and as a test of his popularity as a teacher, the fact remains that he taught the winter terms of the school in North Windham, his own district, for twenty-five consecutive years and no better school existed in the town of Windham at that time than the school in North Windham, establishing the fact that a prophet may have honor in his own country. He represented his town in the legislature and the old 13th senatorial district in the senate. His death occurred in 1884 at 68 years of age.

In the early part of this century, up to near the middle, our country school districts depended on the public money derived from the school fund to support their schools, boarding the teachers around with the families whose children attended school, and from one to two feet of wood to heat up the old box stove, with desks on three sides of the room, the large scholars facing the walls of the room, when at their study with plank benches, with no back, with Webster's speller, Murray's grammar, Daboll's arithmetic, Morse's Geography and American Preceptor, and the Westminster Catechism, the scholars were equipped to get an education.

In 1836 the 7th, 8th and 13th [Windham school] districts petitioned the legislature, at its session in New Haven, to become a [separate] school society. The legislature, by a resolution incorporated these three districts into the 3d school society of the town of Windham.

Zephaniah Young was appointed to call the first meeting, to choose the necessary officers. At this meeting, **Newton Fitch** was chosen clerk, Zephaniah Young, **Amory A. Walker**, and **Oliver Kingsley**, school society committee.

Article 21

[Main Street]

In the month of July, 1835, **Elias Rathbun** and **Amos Bailey** sold to **Addison Safford** the lot on the north side of Main Street, east of the **Joanna Wilkinson** lot, on which he erected a one-story-and-a-half house, [with an] ell and [a] basement, for his residence. Subsequently, **Col. Charles Thompson** purchased this property and was a resident for some time.

In the month of October, 1835, **Samuel L. Hill** sold to **Addison Safford** a building lot on the south side of Union Street, opposite Milk Street, on which he erected a substantial building, in which he resided for some years until his removal to Hartford. Mr. Safford came here from Canterbury [a farm town in eastern Connecticut], of which town he was a native. He was a blacksmith by trade, carrying on quite a business in the line of general blacksmith work, his shop occupying the ground [level] on the south side of Main Street, easterly of the Col. Moulton lot and north of the stone school house. [While Main Street ran along the base of Carey Hill, Union Street — which was parallel to Main — was part way up the hill. As a result, what was the basement level of a building fronting on Union Street was the ground level of the same building fronting on Main Street.] Mr. Safford resided here for some years. He married a

daughter of **Capt. Charles Thompson** of Mansfield, and his removal was regretted by his friends and acquaintances.

In 1832 **Samuel Gray** sold to **Orrin Robinson** the lot on the north side of Main Street east of the Safford lot, on which he built a comfortable residence. Orrin Robinson was a character in his way. He early espoused the cause of abolition of slavery and fought the battles of the abolition party physically and mentally, honest in his convictions without doubt.

Subsequently, **Martin Harris** came into the possession of this property and resided here for some years, being engaged in teaming for our manufacturers and merchants. He remained in occupancy of the premises for a number of years, a quiet, unassuming citizen, respected by the community.

The old Bingham house on Carey Hill was a relic of the last century. The white oak tree, the old well with its sweep pole and bucket, are associated with the pleasant memories of the past. All are gone and only remembered by the few who remain.

We are now come to an interesting point in Willimantic's history, the location of the old grist and sawmill, paper mill, and woolen mill, all located near the spot occupied by Willimantic Linen Company's No. 2 mill. [The area around] Willimantic [Falls] was known in the latter part of the last century and the forepart of the present one as "the State," as tradition has it that the State of Connecticut had, during the War of the Revolution, state works located here for the manufacture of [gun]powder. Nothing seems more likely [than] that such was the fact, with **Governor Trumbull** [a resident of Lebanon] on one side and **Col. Thomas Knowlton** on the other of this locality, [and] with a sturdy lot of old war veterans in this vicinity. With abundant waterpower, with much of the material necessary near at hand, it may be accepted as a fact without much question.





At one time iron works were established here, and from this fact the bridge across the Willimantic River, at the east end of the Linen Company's No. 1 mill, received its name of Iron Works Bridge. No dam was placed across the river as at present, but the stream was divided above Shakel Dam and water sufficient was turned into the pond to operate all of the mills as needed.

Clark & Gray of Windham [Center] were the owners of the paper mill property in the early part of this century. Their successors were **Thomas Gray**, **Samuel Byrnes**, and **David Smith**. Mr. Smith was the practical man of the concern and its manager. Paper in those days was what is called hand-made. Modern methods for the making of paper were unknown at that time. Thomas Gray was a lawyer and resided in Windham Centre. He was Town Clerk of Windham for years and was a clerk in the Treasury Department at Washington for some years. He was a man much esteemed and respected. Samuel Byrnes was a native of Windham [Center], but was a resident of "the State," as Willimantic was then called, for a number of years. David Smith removed to Greenville, [a mill village in the town of] Norwich, in the early thirties and became manager of the Chelsea Paper Company, a large and flourishing concern. Mr. Byrnes returned to Windham [Center], and the property passed into the possession of Phelps & Stafford. The removal of Messrs. Byrnes and Smith from Willimantic was a source of much regret, as just such men were needed in our young and growing community to give tone to public sentiment.

The woolen mill below the gristmill was operated at this time by **Captain Bildad Curtis**, for the manufacture of satinets, carding wool into rolls for the farmers' wives and daughters to make into cloth for domestic use. The woolen cloth of those days was what it purported to be, all wool; no shoddy in those times. Captain Curtis was a quaint character, given to making strong expressions occasionally; but a kinder or more sympathetic nature would be hard to find. He subsequently became proprietor of the brick hotel at Windham Centre, where on training days and other gatherings we enjoyed his quaint sayings as well as his good dinners.

That sturdy old abolitionist, **Orrin Robinson**, for many years had charge of the sawmill and gristmill to the satisfaction of his customers generally. There was not much change in the old paper mill property, except the removal of the old woolen mill, until 1864, when the Willimantic Linen Company came into possession of the property, built their No. 2 mill, dye house, and office, laid out new streets, and changed the lines of old ones to that extent that if

some of the old residents of the forties, who had passed away, had been permitted to visit the place of their birth, they would not have recognized its locality.

Nearly opposite the old gristmill on the north side of Main Street, was a two-story brown house built in the last century, owned and occupied by **Alfred Howes**. Mr. Howes was a blacksmith by occupation and for many years worked at general blacksmithing in the old shop at the junction of Main Street and the River Road opposite the old sawmill. It remained unoccupied for some time after Mr. Howes retired from business and was a resort of the boys of that period for games and other matters, as some of our older citizens can bear witness.

Mr. Howes was the owner of quite a large amount of real estate on the north side of Union Street. He held many offices of responsibility in town affairs and was a representative to the legislature in 1836. His death occurred in 1838, at the age of 58 years. On the north side of Main Street next east of the Howes house, were two dwelling houses belonging to the paper mill property and occupied by **David Smith** and **Samuel Byrnes**.

Article 22

[Main Street, Ash Street]

In the month of February, 1822, **Anson Young** sold to **Perez O. Richmond** of Providence, R. I., for the consideration of one dollar, land on the south side of the Willimantic River below the paper mill, for the purpose of erecting a dam and embankment for utilizing the waterpower for manufacturing purposes. In the month of September, 1822, **Waldo Carey** sold to Perez O. Richmond five acres of land on the north side of the Willimantic River for the consideration of one hundred dollars with the power connected therewith for the purpose of erecting a factory to manufacture cotton goods. Mr. Richmond built the dam, raceway, and wheel pit, erected a factory building and six small tenements, all connected, for his help, and commenced the manufacture of cotton goods, being the first to engage in this business in Willimantic.

He continued the business with more or less success until 1827, when **Joseph Hawes** of Providence became the proprietor. Extensive alterations and repairs were made to the factory, additions were made to the six tenements, a large two-story dwelling for a boarding house was erected, which is still standing on the premises, a store was built fronting on Main Street, very much improving the property, and a new era seemed to have dawned upon Sodom, a name by which it had become known.

This property passed through various ownerships for the next eighteen years, finally passing into the hands of a **Mr. Welles** of New York, the mill during that time having been destroyed by fire.

In 1845 **Austin Dunham**, of Hartford, **Col. Wm. Jillson**, and **Captain John H. Capen** of Willimantic, purchased the property of Mr. Welles, formed a new corporation under the name of the Welles Manufacturing Company, the place being known as Wellesville. The company thereafter made a contract with **Contractor Baldwin** to build them a large three-story mill of wood for the manufacture of warps, which was done and ready for the machinery early in the spring of 1846. This Welles Manufacturing Company was not a success, the property being sold a few years later and purchased by Austin Dunham, who subsequently sold it to the Willimantic Linen Company, and the building is now known as the Linen Company's mill No. 3.

In the month of January, 1832, **Ahab Wilkinson** sold to **Lorin Carpenter** a building lot on the north side of Main Street, in front of the factory, on which he built a substantial and cozy cottage for his residence. Mr. Carpenter came here from Rhode Island and was associated with Ahab Wilkinson in manufacturing interests in the early thirties. He was the first warden of the borough of Willimantic after Willimantic was organized into a borough in 1833. Lorin Carpenter was a man of sterling worth, esteemed and respected by this community. Subsequently he removed to Quincy, Illinois, and engaged in manufacturing operations in that city.

Captain John H. Capen came into the possession of the Carpenter cottage soon after its being vacated by its first occupant, and resided there for many years, until his decease. John H. Capen came here from Dorchester, Mass., in 1826, and commenced an apprenticeship with the Jillson Brothers, to learn the trade of a machinist. Subsequently **Col. William L. Jillson** and himself formed a partnership under the firm name of Jillson and Capen for the making of cotton machinery and did an extensive business in that line for years, Capt. Capen being the manager. He retired from business after years of arduous service. Capt. Capen was strong in his friendship, and had the respect of the community. His death occurred in 1890 at 82 years of age.

Next, east of the Carpenter lot on the north side of Main Street is an old landmark of the last century, being a one-story house, occupied the forepart of this century by **Andrew Baker** and family. Mrs. Baker was a sister of **Waldo Carey**, and this property was probably a part of the Carey estate. **Scott Smith**, a carpenter and joiner, and a fellow apprentice of the writer of these sketches, was later on an owner and occupant of these premises.

At the junction of Main and what is now Ash streets, **Samuel L. Hill** built what is now known as the Hawthorn; in the month of March, 1841, he sold the property to **Giddings W. Keyes** of Ashford, who occupied the premises for some years. Mr. Keyes was an accountant and book-keeper, and was in the employ of the Smithville Company in that capacity for some years. He was a man much respected, was a representative to the legislature from the town of Windham in 1851, and later on removed with his family to Wisconsin.

Joseph Rollinson succeeded Mr. Keyes in the ownership of this property. He was an active, energetic, and respected citizen, in for the right as he viewed it, at all times. His family are

noted for their musical talent, equaled by few.

The next house we come to north of the Keyes place, is the old **Waldo Carey** place, built in the last century. This house was his residence during his lifetime. Mr. Carey was a large landowner; at one time it is said something near eight hundred acres. He disposed of a portion of this territory during his life. His death occurred in the month of July, 1827. He left quite a large amount of real estate, which was distributed to his four daughters, Saphronia, Elizabeth, Lucretia, and Fidelia, and his two sons, E. Waldo and Dumont.

After Mr. Carey's death, **John S. Smith** was in possession of the old homestead and some portions of the real estate for many years. Mr. Smith was one of the early settlers in Willimantic, coming here from Mansfield about the year 1826 [and] remaining here the rest of his life. He held many local offices, was warden of the borough, and [was] a quiet substantial citizen. His death occurred in 1886, at the age of 80 years.

The next house north at the junction of Jackson and Ash streets is the stone house built in the early part of this century by **Nathaniel Robinson, Jr.**, and occupied by him during the remainder of his life. He was the oldest of four brothers, sons of Nathaniel Robinson, Senior.



The next house north of the stone house was a one-story farmhouse of fair dimensions and built the first part of this century by **Nathaniel Robinson, Sr.** He was the father of **Nathaniel, Jr., Luther, Orrin, and Calvin Robinson**. After his father's death, his son Calvin came into possession of the old homestead.

Calvin Robinson was a sterling man, acting up to his convictions of right and justice. A cripple from his youth, he labored under many disadvantages. He taught a number of terms in our district schools and was an active worker in the church and society. His death was a sad one. Driving up Main Street, his team was ran into and he was thrown out and taken up unconscious. His death occurred the night following, in April 1870 at 65 years of age.

Luther Robinson, son of Nathaniel, Sr., built a cozy residence north of the old homestead and resided there until his death some years later.

This number closes the series of sketches of the houses and their occupants in Willimantic before 1850. A large share of what has been written is from the memory of the writer. His threescore and ten years' acquaintance with Willimantic, and his residence here of sixty years with a personal acquaintance with a large majority of the people named in these sketches, gave him an advantage over any other old resident now living.

As literary productions, I claim no merit for these sketches, but as plain, historical statements of facts, I think they can be relied on.

The writer has received letters from former residents of Willimantic, one from Iowa and others from places nearer, expressing their gratification in perusing these sketches of early Willimantic and its people.

These sketches, twenty-two in number, have been pasted in a large scrapbook, together with some other articles of local historic interest, and eventually are to be deposited in the Willimantic public library for reference, but not for general circulation.

LLOYD E. BALDWIN.

Willimantic, April 1, 1896.