

Windsor Locks History: Volume IV

by
Melvin D. Montemerlo



The Ashmere Estate



The Burnap Mansion

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who helped me develop *Windsor Locks History: Volume IV*. This is my sixth book on Windsor Locks history. The same group of Windsor Locks historian who helped with my other books, helped with this one. They are: Mickey Danyluk, Bill Fournier, Bob Pearce, Frank Baron, and Chet Pohorylo. They know Windsor Locks history, and where to find information and documents which are hard to find.

As with the other books, I put a draft of each chapter on a number of Facebook Windsor Locks group pages to get feedback. As in the past, I received information, photographs and suggestions.

I want to thank the Windsor Locks Public Library for making my books available to townspeople. They have hard copies of Volumes I, II and III, and *Windsor Locks Musicians*, which are the books that I had printed. They also have those four books and *Understanding Windsor Locks History* on their website, so that anyone can download all of them easily and at no cost. You can also download my books for free from: Google Books, Google Play, Apple Books, and archive.org.

I started writing these six books began in early 2016. I thank my wife for her forbearance and support in this project.

Mel Montemerlo
Bel Air, MD
August, 2023

INTRODUCTION

This is my sixth book on Windsor Locks history. When I started researching and writing Windsor Locks history in 2016, it never entered my mind that a second volume would be necessary. Then again, I had never written town history before. When I got to chapter 38, I had written enough pages to fill an inch-thick book. As I scanned the table of contents of that first book, it was obvious that many important people, places and events had not been covered. So I kept going. As the process of working with my history colleagues in Windsor Locks, and of posting my draft chapters on Windsor Locks Facebook pages, more and more important topics and opportunities popped up. I found wonderful sets of old Windsor Locks photos on-line in the Library of Congress website. They played a large part in Volume III.

During that period, I found out that Windsor Locks had turned out a large number of professional musicians, so I wrote *Windsor Locks Musicians*. It was a nice change from town history topics, and the book was well accepted.

About that time, I was noticing that my thoughts about Windsor Locks history were evolving. While researching and writing the first three volumes, I wrote up each important person, place or event individually. However my interest was changing from the individual topics, to “chronological history” — that is, how the events fit together. I was interested in identifying the major changes that Windsor Locks went through as time progressed from the earliest settlers in 1663 to the present time (2023). I found four very distinct, but overlapping, phases in the town’s history. I presented those findings to the other town historians. I was gratified to find that they all agreed with the four “phases”. They helped me fill out that analysis.

In addition to my focus on chronological history, I wanted to see how different Windsor Locks historians compared in their writings. So I included writings by other town historians in my next book, which was titled *Understanding Windsor Locks History*.

While doing that, I still found more individual topics that needed to be written. They formed the contents of this book, which is similar in nature to my first four books. Thus, it is called: *Windsor Locks History: Volume IV*.

While doing this, I became interested in the task of identifying people who had made important accomplishments which improved Windsor Locks and Windsor Locks life. Writing a book on those people and their accomplishments is a challenging task. It is ongoing and will probably finish in the next year. It will probably be my last book on Windsor Locks History. New topics to write up have been harder and harder to find.

During the past few years, I have been thinking about my goals in this long-term project. There have been two. One of them has been to “take Windsor Locks history to the people of Windsor Locks”. I didn’t just want people

to find my books on-line or in libraries. I wanted to get them involved, so I put up weekly writings on three Windsor Locks Facebook group pages. The weekly feedback had been gratifying. I have been doing that since 2016. I believe that approach increased the number of people who are interested in town history.

The other driving force has been the desire to have Windsor Locks history information and photographs organized in one place, which is, and will be available to anyone who wants it. I want that information to be easy to get and to be cost-free. So I have put all of my books on-line on Apple Books, Google Books, Google Play, archive.org, and on the Windsor Locks Public Library website. The six books, taken as a set, are an “encyclopedia”. Since the books are “digital”, they can easily be searched on line, so you can find the exact topic that you are interested in.

Now you know my goals for this seven-year project, and the turns that the process has taken. I hope you find my work on Windsor Locks history to be both interesting and useful.

Reading history can be quite enjoyable. A big part of that is reliving favorite memories (recent history). Another big part of looking at town history is learning about important things that happened before we were born. Much of that is quite surprising. Much of it is inspiring. By reading about individuals who did big things, we widen our own horizons and goals.

I wish the people of Windsor Locks the best. I hope my writings will be of use to them now and in the future. Jabez Haskell Hayden published the first history of Windsor Locks in 1900. I did my best to update his findings from 1900 to about 2000. I hope that more individuals with a deep interest in history find my work useful in updating town history in the future.

Thank you very much.

Mel Montemerlo

Bel Air, MD

August, 2023

Chapter 1

The Three Movie Theaters of Windsor Locks

In Windsor Locks' three and a half century history (1663-2023), it has had three movie theaters.

- Burnap Block's Opera House (Central Theater)
- Princess Theater (Palace Theater)
- Rialto Theater

All three were quite different. Two of them had name changes. Their stories are fascinating.

1. Burnap Block's Opera House (Central Theater)

The downtown section of Windsor Locks' fifteen "Blocks", that is fifteen large, multi-purpose, commercial buildings. One of those buildings, on the northwest corner of Oak and Main Streets, was called "The Burnap Block". Later, it changed hands and was called "Central Hall". It was built in 1863 by Fred Abbe. In 1938, Central Hall was replaced by the A&P store. The original "Burnap Block" building was owned by Dr. Sidney Burnap his family from 1865 to 1918. He died in 1901. Dr. Burnap was one of most impressive people in the history of Windsor Locks. He was both a physician and a financier. He was quite wealthy. His house, which was on Maple Street, was known as "Maple Hill" and it still exists. When Dr. Burnap owned the house, it was on a 100 acre tract of land. That is a big yard for a house on the edge of downtown Windsor Locks. He had a brick path that led from his house to the Railroad Station. His family was "Windsor Locks aristocracy".

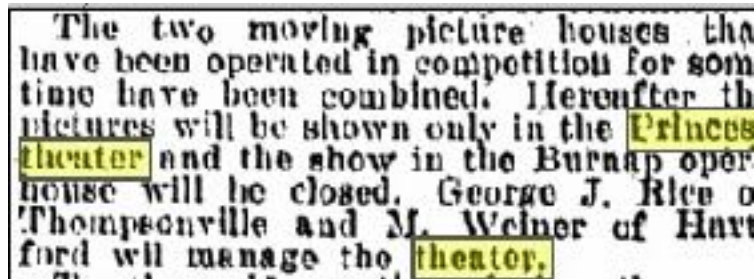


*Burnap's Block is red brick building with chimneys
to the left of Coly's Hotel, about 1920*

Dr. Burnap was a “larger than life” character. The top floor of his building was a massive, magnificent room called “The Opera House”. It had a stage for musicals, operas, big meetings, movies, boxing matches, school graduations, etc. This room was the center of cultural, social and political life of Windsor Locks for decades. The floor of the Opera House was built on springs to make dancing and basketball more fun.

The original movies were called “silent movies” because they didn’t have a built-in sound track. The theaters that showed them usually had a piano or other musical accompaniment for the movie. The silent movies also used some subtitles and printed text. The era of silent moves was from the 1890s to the 1920s, when “talking movies” appeared, which had a built-in sound track.

The Burnap “Opera House” was the first movie theater in Windsor Locks. No information could be found on when they began to show movies. However, we know when the Burnap Opera House stopped showing movies. The following article from the Springfield Republican on January, 5, 1914, showed that the Burnap Opera House and Princess Theater on Grove Street, near Main Street, had been in the movie business. The Opera House would cease showing movies, and the Princess Theater would continue showing movies. Mr. George Rice of Thompsonville and Mr. M. Weiner of Hartford would manage the Princess theater. So the Opera House ended its “silent movie theater” role in 1914.



The two moving picture houses that have been operated in competition for some time have been combined. Hereafter the pictures will be shown only in the Princess theater and the show in the Burnap opera house will be closed. George J. Rice of Thompsonville and M. Weiner of Hartford will manage the theater.

Jan. 5, 1914,

Springfield Republican

In 1918, the Burnap Block was sold to Charles Colli, and the building was renamed “Central Hall”. The Opera House, which was the top floor of the building changed its name to the “Central Theater”. It was the same large room with the same stage for plays, musical productions, meetings, school graduations, boxing matches, and a massive floor that was built on springs.

There were 11 references to the “Central Theater” in the Windsor Locks Journal. Some were notices for meetings of civic and political groups, dances, basketball games, plays, and movies. Some movie notices for the Central Theater said that the movie would be accompanied by an orchestra. Here are some of those notices.

1918, January 4 - the Clay Hill basketball team would play a Hartford team in the Central Theater.

1918, January 11 - announcement of a play "Uncle Tom's Cabin" that would be held in the Central Theater.

1918, April 19 - a World War I fundraising event was held which filled the Central Theater completely.

1918, September 20 - Italian Red Cross sponsored a dance at the Central Theater.

1919, April 11 - ad for different types of venues each night for a week. Here are two Windsor Locks Journal ads for the Central Theater.

CENTRAL THEATRE
The Home of Features

To-Night!
"The Fighting Trail"
Also
"The Wheel of the Law"

SUNDAY
Jules Verne's mighty production
"20,000 Leagues Under the Sea"
With the Orchestra.



And "Seven Pearls"
Admission, 10 and 15 Cents.

Special, Christmas Day
"War Brides"
10 Parts. Orchestra.
Admission, 10c and 15c.

WEDNESDAY
Triangle Pictures Present
"Princess of the Dark"
And lots of Fun. Three Comedies.

Capital Theater
ad for movies
Dec 17, 1917

CENTRAL THEATRE
The Home of Features

FRIDAY IS FOX DAY
Wm. Fox presents Virginia Pearson in
"Love Auction."
A Fox Picture in 5 parts.
Pathe News.
Mack Sennet Comedy.

SATURDAY—Dance Night,
Dancing from 8 till 12
Music Gatchell's Orchestra
Admission, 35 cents.

SUNDAY—Special Night.
Capt. Robert Warwick in
"The Accidental Honeymoon."
A Special Picture in 6 parts
Ford Weekly.
Mack Sennett Comedy.

MONDAY—Uncle Tom's Cabin Co.
Matinee and Evening.
Parade at 12 o'clock.

WEDNESDAY—Select Night.
Clara Kimball Young in
"The Marionettes."
A Select Picture in 5 parts.
12th Episode of
"Houdini, the Master Mystery."
Pathe News.

Central Theater
April 11, 1919

The Central Theater ad on the right was for different movies every night. One of them would be accompanied by a full orchestra. The Central Theater ad on left is for a different venue each night, including a dance, a movie, a play and another movie. The two ads show that the Central Theater presented both movies and other types of entertainment.

2) The Princess Theater (The Palace Theater)

Below is a photo of the Princess/Palace Theater, which later became Blanche's Bowling Alley, and which burned down in 1972. No earlier photos of the building could be found.



***Blanche Bianchi's Bowling Alley destroyed by fire.
Princess Theater (old) was on top floor.***

The Princess Theater became Windsor Locks' only movie theater in 1914. At that time, there were only "silent movies". At some unknown date, the name of the Princess Theater was changed to the Palace Theater. The building was on lower Grove Street, near Main Street. My father, Leo Montemerlo, told me that when he was a boy, he could see two movies at the Princess Theater for seven cents, and get a free lollipop.

Above, we saw that the Opera House agreed to stop showing movies so that the Princess Theater could take over that business. The Springfield Republican article of October 20, 1929, which is shown below, gave more information on what happened. The Princess Theater was on the top floor of the building on Grove Street. The building had been built in about 1919 by some Italian men who operated it as a movie theater. They sold it to Mr. Rice and Mr. Weiner in 1914. Unfortunately, they were not able to turn it into a profitable business either, so they sold it to the owners of the new Rialto Theater, Mr. Viola and Mr. Alfano, the owners of the Rialto Theater. They then sold the Palace theater to Harold and Blanche Lavigne of Thompsonville, who turned the building into a bowling alley, which became known as "Blanche's Bowling Alley".

[no headline]
Date: Sunday, October 20, 1929 Paper: Springfield Republican
This entire product and/or portions thereof are copyrighted by NewsBank

HIGHLIGHTS: ☒ Rialto; Windsor; Loc find

The Palace theater on Grove street, closed for a few years past, has been sold by the owners, Viola and Alfano, to Harold Lavigne of Thompsonville, who will open a bowling alley when alterations are made. This building was built about 10 years ago by a company of local Italian men who conducted it as a movie house a few years, but did not make any money out of it. Later it was tried a short time by people from out of town, without success. A few years ago the owners of the **Rialto** theater, Viola and Alfano, bought the Palace and closed it, ending competition that was making business unprofitable for both places for a while.

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PALACE THEATRE

GROVE STREET
The Home of the Popular Movies

FOR THE COMING WEEK.

SATURDAY.

A new Bluebird feature
"The Bugler of Algiers"
"When Sorrow Weeps"
Two-reel Perfection

SUNDAY

Douglas Fairbanks in
"Down to Earth"
An Aircraft Feature.
Sixteenth episode of
"The Fatal Ring"
Presentation of the Pathe News
Up-to-date Military Views, etc.

Christmas Afternoon and Evening.

"The Birth of Patriotism"
By the Universal Film Co.

LKO Comedy, a Universal production.
Other interesting features.

WEDNESDAY

Second episode of
"The Red Ace"
Five-reel Paramount feature
"The Race"
Featuring Victor Moore and Anita Ring
A new Perfection comedy
"Spliced and Iced"

FRIDAY

NEW FOX FEATURE
and LKO Comedy.

Windsor Locks Journal
Dec. 21, 1917

PALACE THEATRE

GROVE STREET
The Home of Popular Movies.

TO-NIGHT

Tom Meighan in
"The Civilian Clothes"
Two Reel Western Drama
Star Comedy

SATURDAY

Pauline Frederick in
"Mistress of Shenstone"
First Episode of "Avenging Arrow"
Pathe News

SUNDAY

Mary Robert in
"It's a Great Life"
Century Comedy
International News

WEDNESDAY

Shirley Mason in
"The Mother Heart"
Sunshine Comedy
Fox News

COMING—November 18, William S.
Hart in "The Cradle Courage."
Special Production.

Windsor Locks Journal
Nov. 21, 1921

3 The Rialto Theater



The Rialto Theater, Main St. Windsor Locks, Conn

The Rialto Theater opened on October 25, 1922. It was owned by Dominick Alfano and Leo Viola. According to the October 25, 1922 issue of the Springfield Daily News, they built a magnificent movie theater which held 625 people, a stage with an asbestos curtain, a fireproof projection room, concrete floors and stairways, and it was all built to the latest safety standards. It also had two stores to rent on the street level. There is one store on each side of the theater entrance.

The stage was used for putting on plays and musicals. It was often used for high school plays. Fraternal organizations used the stage for shows to raise money for charitable works. It was used as a place for politicians to give speeches, and for meetings of both the local Democrat and Republican parties. The stage was used for school graduations. In the World War II years, there were stars such as Kate Smith and Joan Fontaine, who came to the Rialto and led war bond rallies.

According to the Springfield Republican of June 10, 1939, a major renovation of the interior of the theater was done. They installed new spring cushion seats, the latest sound reproduction system, and extra thick carpeting in the lobby and aisles to reduce noise, a modern heating system, a complete lighting system, and the walls were modified to decrease unwanted sounds.

Dave Magliora managed the Rialto Theater for 25 years. He also owned the Brown Derby for eight years. He died on June 18, 1973. (Springfield Union, July 19, 1973).

The owners of the Rialto were:

- Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano - from 1922 until Leo Viola died in 1930.
- Mr. Natale Tambussi owned it from 1947 to 1960.
- After that, it was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford. Here are two ads for the Rialto Theater that were in the Windsor Locks Journal.

RIALTO
THEATRE
WINDSOR LOCKS, CONNECTICUT

Matinee Prices—10-20c Evening Prices—10-25c

MOVING OUT TONIGHT—
"THE CAT AND THE FIDDLE"
 With RAMON NOVAKO, JEANETTE MACDONALD, FRANK MORGAN, CHARLES BUTTERWORTH

SATURDAY—Three Shows: At 2, 6 and 8
 KATHERINE HEPBURN in
"SPITFIRE"
 With ROBERT YOUNG, RALPH BELLAMY and MARTHA SLEEPER

SUNDAY—Two Shows: At 4 and 8
"THE TRUMPET BLOWS"
 With GEORGE RAFT, ADOLPHE MENICU and FRANCES DRAKE

MONDAY—Matinee at 4; Evening at 8
"ZOO IN BUDAPEST"
 With LORETTA YOUNG and GENE RAYMOND
 Audiences Grace M. Church—No Advance in Prices

TUESDAY—One Night Only
"SING AND LIKE IT"
 With ZARUPEETS, PAUL KELTON, EDWARD EVERETT HORTON

WEDNESDAY—One Night Only—No Advance in Prices
"MAN'S CASTLE"
 With SPENCER TRACY and LORETTA YOUNG
 Audiences Windsor Locks Athletic Association

THURSDAY and FRIDAY—
"NANA"
 With ANNA STEN and PHILIP HOLMES

1934 Advertisement for the Rialto Theater

RIALTO Theatre
MOVIE GUIDE
 Phone: 229-2 Windsor Locks, Conn. Phone: 229-2

Sun. and Mon. Jan. 28 and 29
 SUNDAY 1 CONTINUOUS — MONDAY 4:15 CONTINUOUS
✠The Hunchback Loved Her!

—and out of that motivation grew one of the greatest novels ever written. For more than a century it has moved the world's millions. Now it comes to life on the screen in a mighty mobilization of every kind of thrill in the history of the theatre...

CHARLES LAUGHTON
 —VICTOR HUGO'S
HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

with
 SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE
 THOMAS MITCHELL
 MAUREEN O'HARA

MARCH OF TIME CURRENT EVENTS A DUCKING THEY DID GO

1940 Advertisement for the Rialto Theater

The Rialto was arguably the best-known Windsor Locks landmark during the history of the town. During the 1950s, the Saturday afternoon Matinee usually had something special for the youngsters. When a youngster bought a ticket, he/she was given a ticket with a number from 1 to 10. A short movie with some sort of comical race was shown, and the children with a ticket with the number of the winner of the race got a treat at the candy counter (popcorn or a cold drink).

The Rialto Theater was demolished in the early 1970s during the Main Street Redevelopment project. Below is a photo of the theater, after it had been shut down for a while, but before it was demolished, and a photo of the back of the theater during demolition



SOURCES:

The sources for the information in this article are listed within the chapter. The four photos without sources listed were sent to me by Windsor Locks citizens who had them. Some of the content of the article came from Chapters 14, 16 and 32 of the book *Windsor Locks History*, by Melvin D. Montemerlo, self published in 2017. Mickey Danyluk made a number of improvements to this chapter.

Chapter 2

Windsor Locks Passenger and Freight Stations: 18 Photos from 1905 to 2018

The railroad tracks through Windsor Locks were built in 1844. At first, there was small passenger station. In 1875, it was replaced by the passenger terminal that still exists (2023). Originally, it was painted yellow, but the paint was removed when the building was cleaned in 1940.

An early freight terminal, which existed before the current passenger terminal, was destroyed by a hurricane in 1938. It was replaced by a wooden freight terminal, which burned to the ground after being struck by lightning in 1978. Photos of both are included in this chapter.

The passenger terminal and the freight terminals were designed to be simple, functional buildings. They provided the means for getting people and freight onto and off of the trains. The passenger station served:

- the immigrants who arrived from the middle 1800s to the 1920s.
- the military personnel going to and returning from World Wars I and II.
- people going shopping in Hartford and Springfield,
- people going to and from work in other cities and towns.

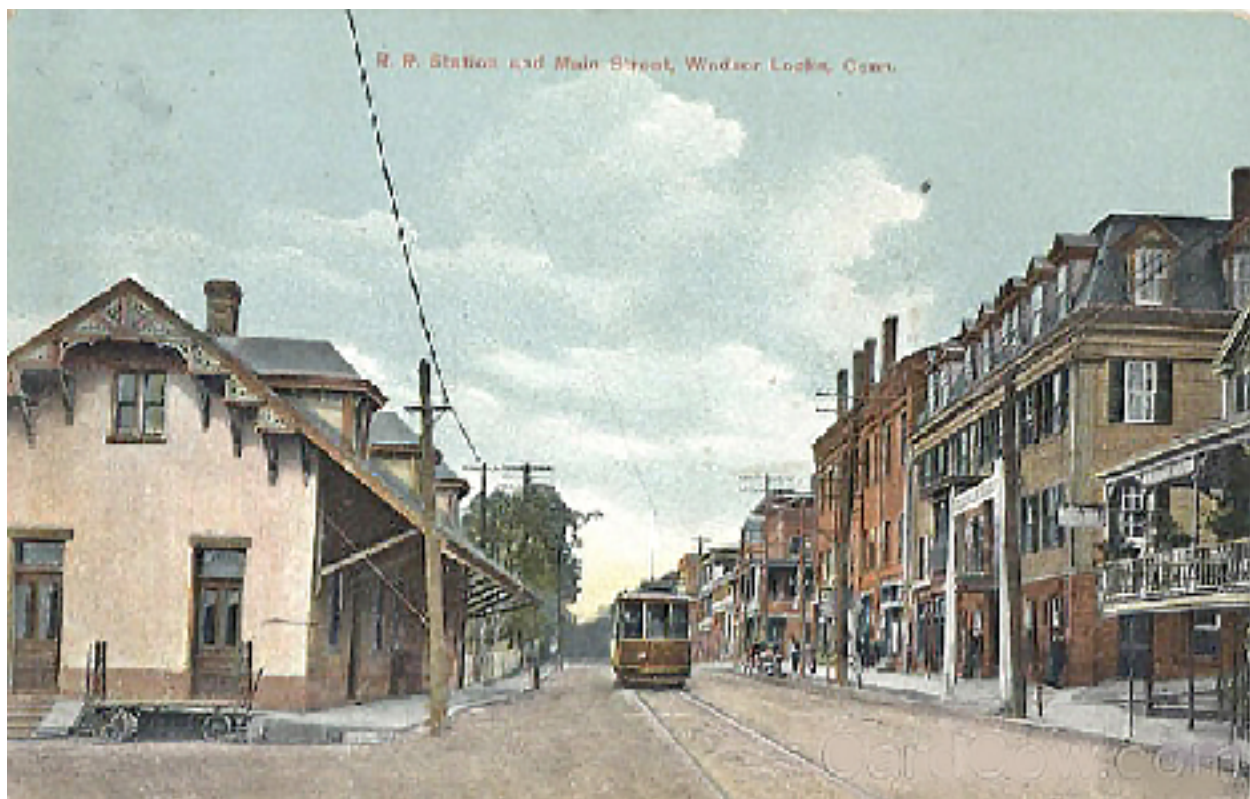
The freight terminal served the mills along the canal, bringing them raw materials and shipping out their finished goods.

The passenger station was taken out of service in 1971. At that time, Windsor Locks had a Main Street Redevelopment Plan , which was tearing down the old retail stores along Main Street. The passenger terminal was planned to be torn down as part of that effort. However, a group of citizens successfully made a plea to keep the passenger station from being torn down.

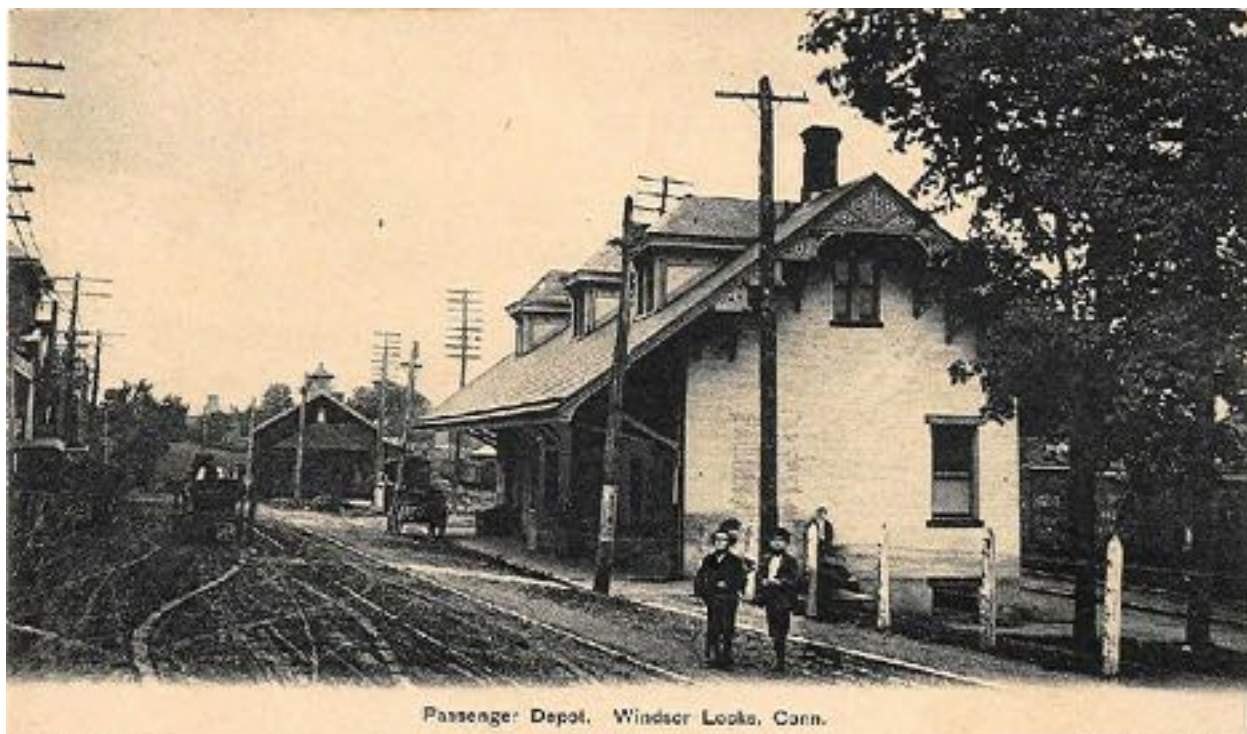
The passenger station, which was out of service, slowly went into a state of deep decay. A number of groups have made attempts to restore it. Restoration attempts have continued to the present time (2023), however there are no agreed-upon plans for future use of the passenger station at this time. The limited parking area for the building makes it very difficult to find a suitable use for the building.



Passenger Station - water tower on right



Main Street, Railroad Station & Trolley ~1905



Passenger Depot, Windsor Locks, Conn.

Windsor Locks Passenger Depot about 1908



Windsor Locks Passenger Station ~ 1912



**Windsor Locks Passenger Station ~ 1928
after Coly's hotel was rebuilt after 1927 fire**



Windsor Locks Passenger Station 1933



Old Water Tower ~1920s



Metal water-tower/spigot near passenger station 1930



Windsor Locks Railroad Station - 1961



**Windsor Locks Main Street, Canal, and
Train Station ~ mid 1960s**



Windsor Locks Railroad Station - 1967



Passenger Station in deep decay ~ 2005



Interior of Passenger Station



Interior of Passenger Station - Dec. 2004



Windsor Locks Railroad Station - 2018



**Windsor Locks Freight Terminal
Burnap Mansion in background**



Freight Station after 1938 Hurricane



Freight Station Fire - July 21, 1977

SOURCES

Historic Buildings of Connecticut.

<https://historicbuildingsct.com/windsor-locks-train-station-1875/>

[#:~:text=Built%20in%201875%2C%20the%20station,building's%20red%20brick%20exposed.](#)

The Connecticut Digital Archives

<https://ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora./search/%20windsor%20locks?>

[page=4&type=edismax](#)

My collection of old Windsor Locks photos which came out of six years of writing five books on Windsor Locks history. I got them from other historians, from town citizens and from digital archives, such as the [archive.org](#), Google Books, and the Connecticut Digital Archives.

Photo dates and article reviewed by Mickey Danyluk.

Chapter 3

Windsor Locks Middle School History Club and Heritage Day (2015-2019)



Windsor Locks Middle School History Club



Erick Knickerbocker

From 2015 to 2020, Windsor Locks Middle School had a History Club which held an annual Heritage Day on the first Saturday of June. It consisted of a contest for the 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in the History club, and all-day activities on the Middle School grounds. Each contestant in the history contest developed a project about a person, place or event in Windsor Locks' history, and made a presentation to a set of judges. Prizes were given. The sixth Graders' did projects on Windsor Locks places. The seventh graders did projects on Windsor Locks people. The eighth graders did projects on Windsor Locks events.

The annual History Club contest took place inside the building, while outdoor activities took place the grounds of the school. There was a live music show, games, sales by local vendors, and displays by the Fire Department, the Public Library History Group, the Windsor Locks Historical Society, the Middle School History Club and others.

The history projects were judged and prizes were given to the winners in each of the three grades. It is important to note that all of these activities were planned and prepared for by the History Club Students, not by adults. The History Club members planned the contest, recruited the vendors and got funding from local businesses to fund Heritage Day. They organized both the contest and the outdoor activities. Every year, the History Club members also raised money for the refurbishment of the old passenger train station.

All of this was done under the leadership of Mr. Erick Knickerbocker, an outstanding Middle School history teacher. He developed the idea for the events of Heritage Day, and motivated the students to do the work to make Heritage Day happen. Going to Heritage Day at the Middle School was “a town event”.

The Middle School and the grounds of the school were filled with townspeople.

In 2019, the History Club was able to take a three-day trip to Washington, DC. Below are photos of the club at the White House and at the Lincoln Memorial.



In 2018 Windsor Locks Middle School History Club won a “Red, White and Blue Award” from the Connecticut State Department of Education, for its outstanding performance in teaching History. The award was for:

- innovative approaches to teaching social studies,
- student involvement with the community in social study projects,
- student participation in the running of the program,
- extra curricular activity by the students in such programs.



\$10,000 Milestone
2016-2019 Total Donations
Windsor Locks History Club - Heritage Day

In the years from 2015 to 2019, the History Club collected and donated more than \$10,000 toward the improvement of the old train station!!!!



Here is what the Heritage Day festivities on the grounds of the Windsor Locks Middle School looked like in the years from 2015-2019. The History Club members planned the logistics of Heritage day including: parking, entertainment, food, etc. That was an impressive achievement for a group of 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Following are photos of Heritage Day from 2015 to 2019. 2015 was the first year of the event. 2019 was the final year.

Below is a display from the 2019 Heritage Day History contest.



Below is a display from the 2018 Heritage Day History contest.



The History Club invited visitors from the Windsor Locks Senior Center in 2017. The 7th graders interviewed them for their "Living History Project" See the photo below





CONCLUSION

The Windsor Locks Middle School History Club and its annual Heritage Day were important parts of Windsor Locks life from 2015 to 2019. The Middle School and the field behind it filled with town citizens on Heritage Day.. It is important to note that the whole event was planned by the members of the Middle School History Club. The History Club was not for all students. It drew students who wanted to take on a challenge that was above and beyond what is normally done in schools.

The driving force behind the History Club and Heritage Day was Mr. Erick Knickerbocker, who had been teaching History at Windsor Locks Middle School since 2010. He is one of those outstanding teachers who knows how to motivate students. He kept it fascinating and challenging. He instilled a sense of pride and capability in his students. He put them in charge of making things happen. The students had a sense of accomplishment in learning about Windsor Locks history, in making Heritage Day happen, and in collecting and donating more than \$10,000 toward refurbishing of the train station. They learned how to do history research, how to write it up, how to make a display, and how to

make a presentation to judges. They were proud of being awarded the Red, White and Blue Award from the State of Connecticut, and they enjoyed trips such as the one to Washington, DC.

Heritage Day was held annually from 2015 through 2019. The 2020 Heritage Day was planned and scheduled, but had to be cancelled because of COVID. At the end of the 2019-20 school year, Mr. Knickerbocker left Windsor Locks Middle School, to take a position as a history teacher at Rockville High School, and as the head coach of the Rockville High School football team. Before leaving Windsor Locks Middle School, Mr. Knickerbocker found another teacher who was willing to take over the Middle School History Club and Heritage Day. Unfortunately that did not work out. The History Club and Heritage Day ended with the 2020 school year.

The Windsor Locks History Club and Heritage Day will long be remembered. Hopefully, they will be reconstituted at some time in the future.

SOURCES

Windsor Locks Heritage Day, a Twitter website that the Windsor Locks Middle School History Club used to keep a record of the Heritage Day work that went on from 2015 to 2020

<https://twitter.com/wlheritageday?lang=en>

Telephone conversations and emails with Erick Knickerbocker

Heritage Day Shines Brightly in Year 3, Windsor Locks Journal, June 8, 2018.

Erick Knickerbocker, Linked-In page.

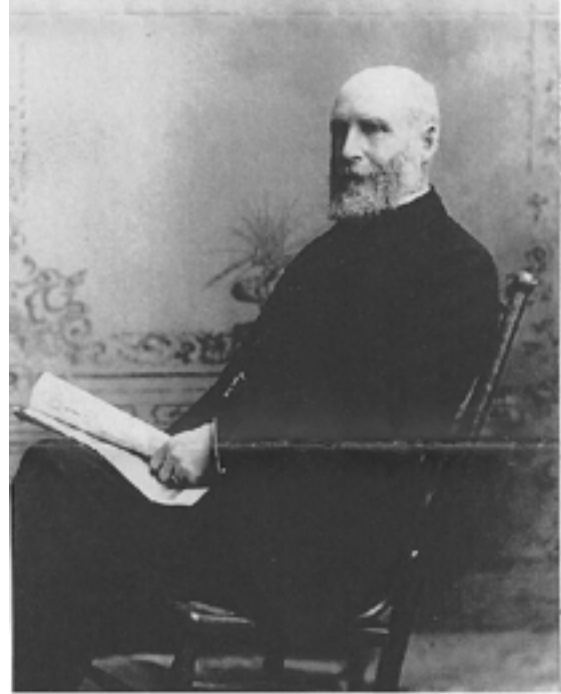
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/erick-knickerbocker-97203611>

Chapter 4

Dr. Sidney R. Burnap: Surgeon and Businessman

Dr. Sidney R. Burnap had a big effect on Windsor Locks history. He was a noted surgeon. He owned and operated the “Burnap Block”, which was a major business and social center of town, with its own Opera House. He built and owned the biggest house in Windsor Locks, called “Maple Hill”, which was on a lot of about 100 acres on the edge of downtown Windsor Locks. He had a son who was a world class athlete. His family was the leader in the highest level of the social set.

Dr. Rogers was born in Root, NY on Jan. 11, 1833. After college he went to medical school and became a surgeon. He came to Windsor Locks in 1862, and spent the rest of his life here. He married Clara A. Converse. They had three children, including Dr. Sidney R. Burnap Jr., who became a world-class runner while in Yale University. Dr. Burnap held several positions of responsibility in town affairs. (Windsor Locks Journal, Sept. 6, 1901)



Dr. Sidney Rogers Burnap (1833-1901)

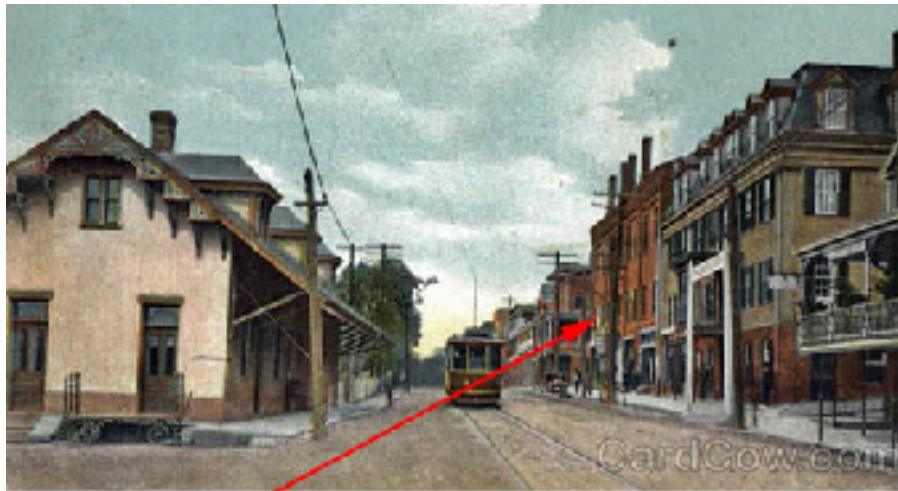
He did something surprising for a surgeon. In 1865, just a few years after he arrived in town, he bought a large building on the northwest corner of Main and Oak Streets, which became known as “The Burnap Block”. He owned that building for the rest of his life. His wife sold it to Charles Colli in 1918.

What made the Burnap Block so fascinating? The answer is that it was the center of Windsor Locks social life, sporting events, and business. It housed a large room whose floor was built over steel springs, which were installed to enhance the experience of dancing. It was known as one of the best dance halls in the area. That same room was also used for operas, movies, theatrical shows, musicals, large meetings, basketball games and boxing matches. It was called the Burnap Opera House. This room was a center of cultural, social, business and political life in Windsor Locks.

The Burnap block was a large building which housed large companies such as the Telephone Co. and the Telegraph Co., and also the Windsor Locks Journal. It also contained many small stores such as T. F. Carroll’s millenary

shop, W. A. Dwight's jewelry store, and James D. Outerson's mens furnishings shop. The Burnap block also had a Polish rooming house.

Below is a photo of the central part of Main St. The arrow points to the Burnap Block, which is the building with four chimneys on the roof. The building to the right of that, with the Mansard roof, is Coly's Hotel. The building on the left is the railroad passenger station. You can see the trolley on Main Street.



Burnap's Block is red brick building with chimneys to the left of Coly's Hotel, about 1920

Below is photo of the Dr. Burnap's home in Windsor Locks. It was taken in the late 1800s or early 1900s, when the Burnap Mansion was the center of Windsor Locks' high society.



The Burnap Mansion

Dr. Sidney R. Burnap's estate was called Maple Hill. It is an 8,800 square foot Victorian Italianate style structure which was built about 1863 by Mr. Lucius B. Chapman, who served as a First Selectman of Windsor Locks. When he died in 1876, the house and part of Mr. Chapman's land was auctioned off. Dr. Sidney R. Burnap purchased the house and the land. The area from Main Street to the house was known as "Burnap's Grove", and was the scene of many town socials and gatherings.

The mansion was built out of handmade bricks, and the walls are from 6" to 10" thick. It still has its original woodwork. The living room and the dining room have ornate plaster ceilings and medallions. The first two floors have 12' ceilings and the original ornate radiators. The first floor has floor-to-ceiling windows, many of which have the original glass. The main house has 27 rooms. Only 1.9 acres of the original 100 acres remain with the house. The rest has been subdivided.

There was a time in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when Windsor Locks had a small cadre of very wealthy business owners. The difference between their wealth and the wealth of the common citizen was massive. Since that time, Windsor Locks has lost its super-wealthy citizenry, and become a solidly middle class community. The other grand, Victorian mansion, the Ashmere, became an Inn for a while. It was torn down to make room for Dexter Plaza.

The Burnap mansion is the only vestige of very wealthy citizenry that remains in Windsor Locks. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the extravagant parties of the very rich were regularly chronicled in the society sections of Springfield newspapers, including the social lives of Dr. and Mrs Burnap.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Sidney R. Burnap is a towering figure in Windsor Lock's three and a half century history from the time of the early settlers in Windsor's Pine Meadow section in 1663 to the current writing in 2023. He was an exceptional surgeon and physician. He owned the biggest commercial building in town, which was not only the center of much business, but the social center of the town. He had a Opera House in that building, that showed not only opera but all types of music, and then showed movies. He can only be described as "Larger than Life". His obituary in the Windsor Locks Journal said that he was well respected as a physician, a businessman and a person. Being a surgeon is difficult enough. He also took on the responsibility of owning a large business building, and he did that with panache. His building housed some of the largest companies in town. It was the entertainment center in the center of town. He led a phenomenal life. He made Windsor Locks life more varied and exciting. He didn't follow any normal patterns. He shaped the town in a more upscale way.

Sources

http://articles.courant.com/2006-10-10/news/0610100725_1_candlelight-tour-mansion-carvings, Oct. 10, 2006 , “The Castle Has a Storied Past”

Photos of the Burnap Mansion in the 1900 timeframe were from the Windsor Locks Historical Society Website.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/windsor_locks_historical_society/albums/72157676398426754

<https://www.oldhouses.com/1105>

Montemerlo, Melvin D. “The 15 Blocks of Windsor Locks,” in Windsor Locks History: Volume I, Self published, Bel Air, MD, 2016

Montemerlo, Melvin D. “Burnap Block and Central Hall”, in Windsor Locks History: Volume I, Self published, Bel Air, MD, 2016.

Montemerlo, Melvin D. “Maple Hill - the Burnap Estate”, in Windsor Locks History: Volume II, Self published, Bel Air, MD, 2019.

Chapter 5

Dr. Sidney Burnap, Jr. World-class runner and Physician to the Stars

Sidney Burnap, Jr. was born in Windsor Locks, in 1833. He was born into wealth. His father, Sidney Burnap, Sr. , was the owner of the Burnap Block on Main Street, which housed a number of stores, companies, and the Burnap Opera House. He was also a surgeon. The family lived in the largest home in Windsor Locks, which was called Maple Hill, on Maple Ave. At the time, their estate was over 100 acres in “downtown Windsor Locks”.



Sidney Burnap, Jr., in front of his parents home

While at Yale University, Sidney Burnap Jr. became a world-class runner. In 1904, he was ranked 7th in the world in the 400 meter run. At the New York Athletic Club's invitational meet at Madison Square Garden in 1904, he was a member of the Yale relay team that broke the world's record for the indoor two-mile relay with a time of 8:09 and 3/5ths of a second. In 1909, Burnap was again part of a relay team that lowered the outdoor 2-mile relay world's record to 7:58 and 2/5ths of a second at the IAAAA championship meet in New York.

After graduation from Yale in 1905, he attended Columbia University, and became a surgeon, like his father. He remained in New York City for over 20 years, both as a surgeon, and on the faculty of the Colombia Medical School.

Then he moved to Los Angeles, where he became a “surgeon to the Hollywood “stars”. In 1933, he performed an appendectomy on actress Jean Harlow, who was one of the hottest stars in Hollywood at the time. . In a recent biography of the famous actress, Jean Harlow said that she had a had “worshipful confidence” in Dr. Burnap.



Family of Dr. Sidney Burnap, Jr.

Jean Harlow Stricken With Appendicitis

Hollywood Cal., Oct. 15 (UP)—Jean Harlow, platinum blonde screen star, was stricken suddenly with appendicitis today and underwent a successful operation.

Dr. Sidney Burnap, who performed the operation, reported tonight that Miss Harlow's condition was "excellent under the conditions."

SUNBURN PUTS HARLOW IN BED

By Associated Press.

HOLLYWOOD, Calif., Aug. 15.

—Jean Harlow's hypersensitivity to the sun confined her to bed today with second-degree burns, Dr. Sidney Burnap reported.

The blond actress, who suffered a similar experience last year, had been warned by her physician to forego beach lounging. When she went to Catalina island this week she forgot.

Dr. Sidney R. Burnap, Jr. was a Windsor Locks boy who became a world-class athlete, and had a storied career that might be impossible to match. Few have achieved the level of success that he had achieved, either in sports or in his career. It would not be surprising if someone turned his life story into a movie. He died in 1950 and is buried in Los Angeles.

SOURCES

Devlin, Philip, Sidney Burnap, Jr., Windsor Locks Sports Hall of Fame.

Montemerlo, Melvin D., The 15 Blocks of Windsor Locks, Chapter 32 of Windsor Locks History, Self published, Bel Air, MD, 2016.

Chapter 6

The Windsor Locks Polka

The piano sheet music for “The Windsor Locks Polka was found in the Music Division of the Library of Congress. It is online, and can be found at: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sm1873.15600.0/?sp=1&st=image>

It was written by Avery L. Conkey, and published in 1873 by Gordon & Son, S. T. in New York City.

The entire music set of music sheets is found in following pages. It includes a final page of advertisements by the publisher. No other information about the song could be found.

No other songs could be found with the words “Windsor Locks” either in the title or in the lyrics of the song. The Windsor Locks Polka has no lyrics. No explanation was given as to why it was named “The Windsor Locks Polka”.



*Dedicated to
Mr. E. N. Emmons.*

Windsor Locks

POLKA

Composed for

Piano
by

AVERY L. CONKEY.



NEW YORK

Published by S. T. GORDON & SON, 13 East 14th St

Copyright 1900 by S. T. Gordon & Son, 13 East 14th St, New York.
Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1900 by S. T. Gordon & Son in the Office of the Clerk of the District Court of the Southern District of New York.





5412 3

RC, al Fine.

SOURCE

Title

- Windsor Locks polka

Names

- Conkey, A. L.

Created / Published

- Gordon & Son, S. T., New York, 1873, monographic.

Repository

- Library of Congress. Music Division.

Rights & Access

The Library of Congress *Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music, ca. 1870 to 1885* collection is in the public domain and is free to use and reuse.

Chapter 7

Alfred Smith Created and Named Windsor Locks



Alfred Smith

Alfred Smith, President of
The Connecticut River Company
and
The Connecticut River Banking Co.

In the 1820s, Hartford, CT was an important manufacturing center. The manufacturers, however, were not satisfied. They wanted to increase their profits, by finding a way to ship their wares up the Connecticut River as far as Canada. See the map on the next page. However, there was a problem. At Enfield, there was a set of rapids in the river which prohibited boats from passing by Enfield. A system had been derived for getting goods over the rapids by means of boats called “scows” that could be “poled” over the rapids by a number of strong men. That is how goods were gotten from Hartford to Springfield. It was slow and costly. To get regular boats past Enfield would require that a canal be built which allowed the boats to bypass the rapids.

There was intense competition to get the contract to build the canal around the Enfield rapids. To accomplish that, the team needed to have an incredibly good leader. He had to be able to find, organize and lead a powerful group of businessmen who could raise the necessary funding, develop a winning plan, and handle the politics. He also had to attract a group of the best engineers to put together a sound proposal.

In modern times, the engineering technology for building a canal is well established, and there are many civil engineers with the skills to do it. However, in the early 1800s, that was not the case. There were only a few canals in the

United States, and there were few civil engineers who had the necessary experience. Those few civil engineers were in great demand.



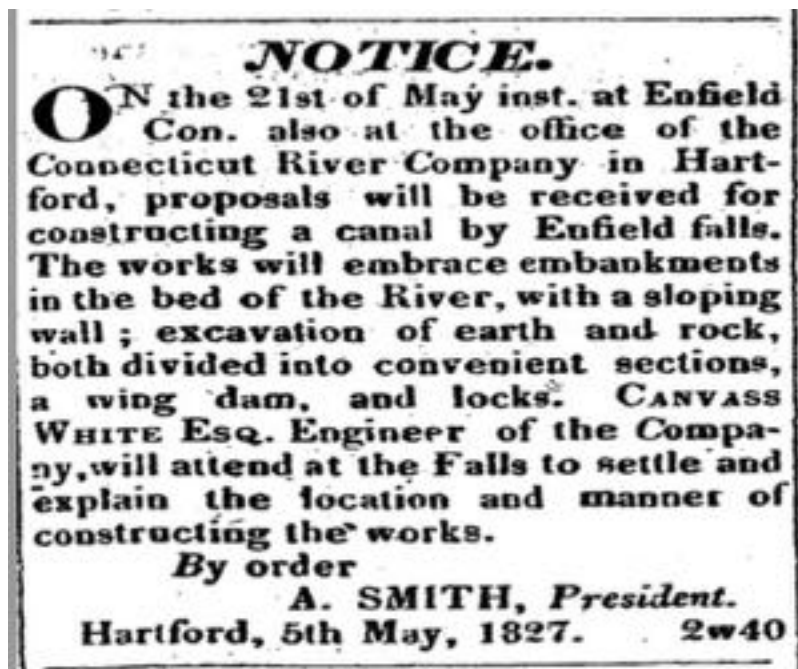
Map of Connecticut River, from Connecticut to Canada

One of the groups trying to get the contract to build the canal was called the “Connecticut River Company”. In 1823, Alfred Smith was elected President of the Connecticut River Company. The Members of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut River Company were among the wealthiest and most powerful merchants in Hartford. Mr. Smith was a prominent lawyer, and was involved with a number of enterprises. He was Judge of the County Court, and represented the City in the General Assembly.

The Connecticut River Company received a charter from the Connecticut General Assembly in May, 1824, for the purpose of “improving the boat navigation of the Connecticut River”. The proposal was to build a canal that bypassed the Enfield Rapids. Alfred Smith, the President of the Connecticut River Company reported that the cost of the Canal properties would be \$368,000 and the improvements would increase that cost to \$1,500,000. That high number caused the formation of the “Connecticut River Banking Company”. Alfred Smith was also named as President of the Connecticut River Banking Company.

Below is an 1827 Hartford Courant notice about the Connecticut River Company’s progress in building the Canal, which was signed by Mr. Alfred Smith.

Well before the construction of the canal started in 1827, Mr. Alfred Smith, had envisioned what the canal would result in. He said that a town would grow up near the “lower locks” of the canal, which would be in the area known as the Pine Meadow section of Windsor. He said that the town would be named “Windsor Locks”, because the “Locks” in the name would advertise their canal. Mr. Smith was the person who came up with the method of creating Windsor Locks, and he came up with the name.



Hartford Courant, May 14, 1827

The building of the canal started in 1827. It was completed in November of 1829. The town which grew up in the Pine Meadow section of Windsor was incorporated into a separate town in 1854. A Post Office was established in 1833, which was named “The Windsor Locks Post Office”. The existence of the town and its name was not an accident. It was planned.

The Connecticut River Company deserves the credit for its planning and the building of the canal. Its goal was to make money. It had three ways of doing that. One was to make a profit from tolls on the boats that used the canal. The second was to make a profit from selling the water power generated by the canal. The third was to make a profit from selling land associated with the canal. The Company bought land along the canal that they would sell to people who wanted to build mills to use the canal’s water power. The Company, which foresaw the building of a town, bought land along Main Street and on other streets connecting to Main Street which they subdivided into lots for stores, houses, apartments, hotels, etc. See the following ad from the March 26, 1847 Hartford Courant. The Connecticut River Company had 100 lots for sale.

MILLS, WATER POWER, &c.

THE CONNECTICUT RIVER COMPANY offer for
 lease on very favorable terms, any remaining portion of
 their extensive **WATER POWER** at Windsor Locks, Ct.
 Also, their Building and Water Power, which has for sev-
 eral years been occupied as a Wire Factory, and now suita-
 ble for some small mechanical business, rent low.
 Also, for sale or rent, their **NEW MILL**, now ready for ma-
 chinery, being 80 by 40 feet, four stories high, and expressly
 designed for the manufacture of Cotton goods. Several good
 building lots for dwellings, &c. may be had near the Mill.
 The Company also offer for sale, within the thriving village
 of Windsor Locks, and near their Water Power, the Rail-
 road and Canal, 100 **BUILDING LOTS**, well located for dwel-
 lings, hotels, store houses and mechanic shops. Also, a valu-
 able *clay bank* and land for a brick yard.
 Applications may be addressed to either of the undersigned
 committee of the Connecticut River Company.
 PHILLIP RIPLEY, }
 GEO. BEACH, } at Hartford.
 J. S. MORGAN, }
 A. B. WOODS, Windsor Locks.
 Hartford, January 19, 1847. 13wd \ w79

Any plan for investing a massive amount of money must have multiple methods of making money in order to have a chance of success in a complex, changing world. The Connecticut River Company, under the leadership of Alfred Smith put together an aggressive plan which had multiple approaches for making a profit. It is good that they did. Shortly after the Canal was built, the railroad through Windsor Locks. Trains provided a cheaper and easier method of shipping goods to the north from Hartford. When that happened, all profits from tolls on boats using the Canal ended.

In 1855, the profits from selling water power dropped precipitously. Mr. C.H. Dexter was President of the Connecticut River Company at that time. He was able to devise a way to restore those profits.

The Connecticut River Company did very well. They made a profit from selling water power to the manufacturing plants along the canal, and they sold the land they had acquired along the canal to companies needing land to build mills. They also sold their lots in Windsor Locks.

CONCLUSION:

The purpose of this chapter was to identify the person who caused the town of Windsor Locks to be created and named. The answer is: Mr. Alfred Smith, who led the effort of a group of Hartford entrepreneurs to get the Enfield Canal built. That required: 1) developing a proposal, 2) getting the proposal accepted by the State of Connecticut, 3) developing and implementing a plan to get the canal built, and 4) operating the Canal successfully. It was a massive undertaking.

Mr. Smith provided the leadership and vision to get the Canal built, which led to the development of Windsor Locks, which he had predicted.

The Connecticut River Company had developed a plan to make profits in three different ways: tolls from boats using the canal, the sales of water power developed by the canal to the manufacturing plants along the canal, and the sale of land along the Canal to companies wanting to have a plant there, and land in Windsor Locks for houses, stores, a hotel, etc.

Mr. Alfred Smith was the person responsible making that happen. He was the person responsible for creating the town of Windsor Locks and its name. He may well be the most important person in the history of Windsor Locks.

SOURCES:

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Erving, Henry W. *The Connecticut River Banking Company: 100 Years of Service 1825-1925*. Hartford, CT. 1925

Love, W. DeLoss, *The Navigation of the Connecticut River*, The Antiquarian Society, 1903

<https://www.americanantiquarian.org/proceedings/44806485.pdf>

This book is similar to Mr Henry W. Erving's book above. It also recounts, in great detail, the efforts in Hartford, Conn. to develop new means of transportation, and to improve existing transportation in the early 1800s. It covers the Connecticut River Company history, but it doesn't provide as much specific information on Mr. Alfred Smith and his role.

Chapter 8

Ruby Vines and Railroad Salvage



**Ruby Vine and his wife "Choo Choo"
in a Railroad Salvage commercial**

Ruby Vines changed the world. He devised a new way of shopping. He started a company called Railroad Salvage which had about ten stores. One of them was in East Windsor, next to the East Windsor Drive-In Theater. Folks from Windsor Locks flocked there to buy rugs, beds, outdoor furniture, CB radios, and lots more. Ruby's Railroad Salvage was one of the first chain-stores that sold merchandise which it bought from manufacturers and stores which were overstocked. Up to the 1960s, many stores were "Mom and Pop shops" which were locally run and locally managed. In the early 1950s, a few outdoor malls were seen. Windsor Locks had one of the first - Dexter Plaza. Then came places like Railroad Salvage, Odd Lots, Ocean State Job Lots and more. But Railroad Salvage was the first. You can see the East Windsor Drive In just behind Railroad Salvage in the photo on the right.

Ruby and his wife, Choo Choo, spent time in each of their stores. If you went to the East Windsor store a few times, you



Railroad Salvage, East Windsor

would get to know the husband and wife team. Following is a photo of the front of the East Windsor store.



Ruby Vines was a larger-than-life person who helped change the world. He began to learn his trade as a child, when he sold pots and pans on the street. He started his first business in 1951. Later, he had stores in: Groton, Bristol, West Haven, Waterbury, East Windsor, and Meriden, and in Turners Falls, MA.

He and his wife did folksy commercials on TV.



Below is one of the ubiquitous Railroad Salvage advertisements.



Ruby was a World War II prisoner of war, who was captured at the Battle of the Bulge. He started his Railroad Salvage business in 1951. He started the idea of selling merchandise that other companies had too much of. He started the idea of “close-out stores” or “salvage stores”. He didn’t stop with one. The close-out chains that followed him followed the pattern that he started. Those chains are still in full bloom (2023). Ruby’s wife was named Sharon, but was known to all as “Choo Choo”. They had two children. Ruby’s full name was Rueben W. Vines. He was well known and well liked in his home town of New Haven. He was a kind and generous man. He died in 2011 at the age of 86.

SOURCES

Journal Enquirer, Oct 26, 2011

https://www.journalinquirer.com/towns/east_windsor/owner-of-salvage-store-chain-ruby-w-vine-dies-at-86/article_68b90079-eb81-5fd4-a0e3-d7de346022f8.html

Connecticut Licenses and Credentials, [OPENGOVUS.COM](https://opengovus.com)

<https://opengovus.com/connecticut-license/140>

The Ruby Vines video

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Rueben Vines Obituary, *New Haven Register*, Oct 13, 2011

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/nhregister/name/rueben-vine-obituary?id=20039192>

Chapter 9

Joe Ambrosetti: Italian-American Success Story

Those who lived in Windsor Locks in the 1920s through the 1950s knew Mr. Joesph Ambrosetti, who was known as “Red”. The nickname came from the bright red hair of his youth. He was born in Italy in 1888. He emigrated to Windsor Locks in 1904. He got into the grocery and meat business at an early age. By 1923, he was a co-owner of the ABC Market, which was on Main Street, just north of Grove Street. His co-owners were Frank Barberi and John Colli. See the photo below



Joe “Red” Ambrosetti

As the caption on the photo says, the ABC



ABC Market

The market on Main Street was a partnership of 'Red' Ambrosetti, Frank Barberi, and John B. Colli. Mr. Ambrosetti was the grocer and Mr. Barberi and Mr. Colli were the butchers. This photo was taken in 1923. The business was a total loss after a 1925 fire. The site was rebuilt as the Brown Derby, which stood until redevelopment.

Market burned to the ground in 1925. It was replaced by the Brown Derby, which lasted until the Main Street Redevelopment Project demolished it in about 1975.

Red married Lena Portalupi, of Windsor Locks, on January 24, 1917, in St. Mary's Church. They had two children. Little information could be found about Red prior to his ownership of the ABC Market.

The Windsor Locks Journal had articles about Red from the 1920s through the 1940s. It often mentioned that he was quite a character. He was a "talker". He had an outgoing personality. He loved the Italian game of Bocce ball. He was an active member of Windsor Locks' Italian-American community, and a well-known merchant in the town.

After the ABC Market burned down, Red opened a grocery store which was adjacent to the Windsor Locks Journal building on Spring Street. You can see from the advertisement on the right that Red wasn't just selling meat and groceries. He was an entrepreneur.

The ad in the Journal of March 16, 1928 on the next page shows the cost of milk and cream.

Red sold his store on Spring street in 1929. He went to New Hampshire for a break, and remained there through the summer months. (WLJ, July 12, 1929).



TOYLAND

GIVE A CHILD A TOY, FOR A TOY TO A CHILD IS JOY.

To the imaginative child mind, with its beautiful faith and its simple trust, fairies are real and SANTA CLAUS comes down chimneys and leaves all the good things and toys in their stockings.

Of course you are going to give your own kiddies toys, and also the children of your relatives and friends; but there are others to whom a doll or a toy would bring tears of happiness. They will hang up ragged little stockings, hoping that SANTA will not forget them.

Toys are not expensive. For very little you can purchase happiness for every child.



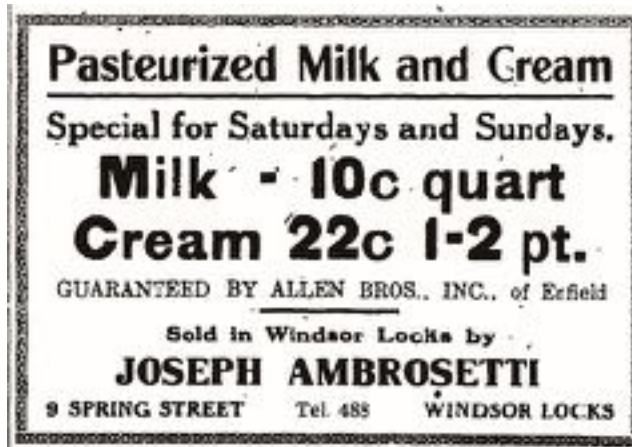
CHRISTMAS TREES WREATHS, HOLLY

**Order Early and Avoid
Disappointment**

We have Large Stocks and
Prices are Reasonable

GROCERIES FRUITS NUTS CANDIES

Joseph Ambrosetti, Spring Street,
Windsor Locks.
Windsor Locks Journal, Dec. 11, 1925



Windsor Locks Journal, Mar. 16, 1928

The Windsor Locks Journal of July 3, 1936 said that a vacant store on the street level was being prepared for occupancy by Michael Spinelli of Harford, who will open a grocery store and meat market there soon. Mr. Joseph Ambrosetti will be the store manager.

Vito Colapietro, Red Ambrosetti and Vito Colapietro were good friends. All three were from Italy, arrived in the US at about the same time, and all went into business. They all did well. Here is a photo of Red Ambrosetti, Dr. Carniglia's mother and wife, and Anna and Vito Colapietro in about 1955.



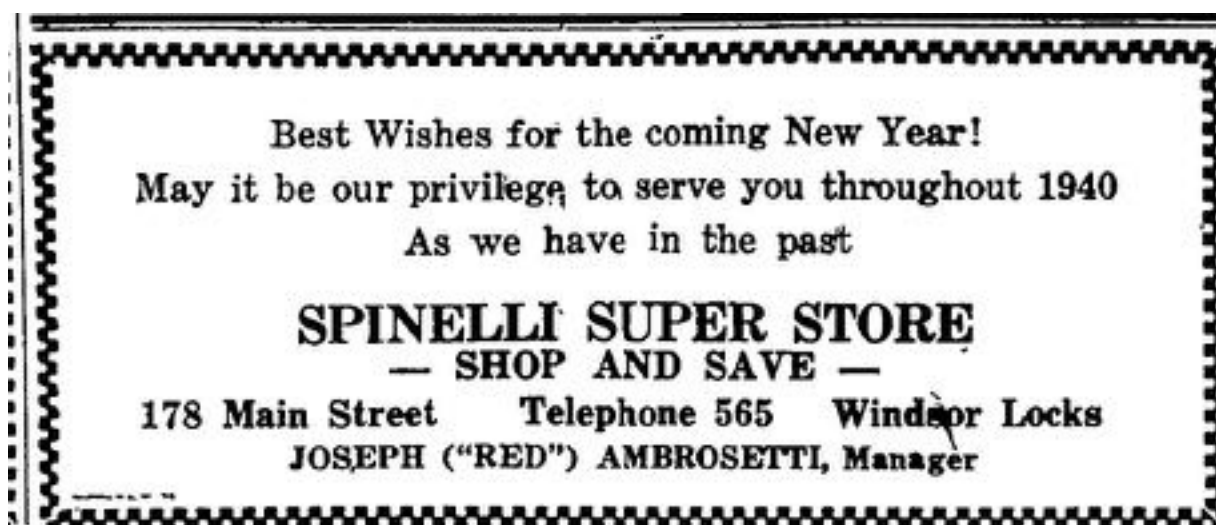
Next is a photo of Vito Colapietro and Michael Spinelli along with Vito's brother, Leo, is on the right. Mr. Mancini, the man who owned the Mancini cherry company is in the middle. Vito Colapietro and Michael Spinelli were businessmen who were also good friends.



*Leo Colapietro, Mr. Mancini, Vito Colapietro, Mr. Spinelli
at the Stanley Country Club, New Britain, Conn., about 1955
Mr. Mancini founded the famous Mancini Pepper company*

Mr. Spinelli opened his "Super Store" in one of the three stores on the street level of Coly's Hotel. Red was the Manager. He moved his family to Hartford to live, but he came to Windsor Locks every day to run the store.

Below is an ad for the store, which was in the Windsor Locks Journal of Dec 29, 1939. These ads ran in the Windsor Locks Journal from 1936 through the 1940s.



The March 24, 1949 Journal had the following story: "Warm weather is getting into the pitching arms of other than baseball players, for the bocce players at the two local clubs, north and south end, are inspecting the courts daily for signs of resumption of play. At the south-end court, Red Ambrosetti has been giving his arm and early exercise to take on any and all club members this coming summer."

Red Ambrosetti retired from the grocery business at the store in Vito Colapietro's hotel in 1958.

He left the grocery business, and went with road building contractors in New Hampshire and Vermont. When he retired from that work, he moved to Windsor with his wife. By this time, they had five grandchildren. He came to Windsor Locks often. Red passed away in December of 1969 after a short illness, at the age of 88.

Like all of the immigrants from European countries, Red came to Windsor Locks without money and not being able to speak English. He came from a country in which poverty was rampant and the chances for doing well were nonexistent. He wanted to make a good life in his new country. He had the drive and the intelligence to do it.

He learned the grocery business, and joined two of his Italian immigrants to start the ABC store. Then he got his own store on Spring Street. Then he met up with his friends Vito Colapietro and Michael Spinelli, and managed one of Mr. Spinelli's stores that was in Mr. Colapietro's hotel. He was an active member of the Italian-American community in Windsor Locks. No one would ever think that he came from a country other than Italy. He got others to play his favorite game - bocce ball. He didn't want to be just another person who worked in the

mills. He wanted to achieve success in business and in life. He did. He and his wife raised a family that did well. He became an American without losing his Italian heritage.

No one who ever met Red Ambrosetti will ever forget him. He was one of those “larger than life” personalities who made the world a better and more vibrant place.

SOURCES

The Windsor Locks Journal archives provided most of the information for this chapter. The exact issue of each source was provided next to the information that was used.

The photo of the ABC store came from Jenny Colli, daughter of the John B. Colli in the photograph.

The photos which included Vito Colapietro came from my family’s photo collection.

Chapter 10

Medlicott Factory Bell: Alarm Clock and Fire Alarm



The Medlicott Factory and its Bell Tower

The Medlicott Bell

Mr. W.G. Medlicott started a mill along the canal in the late 1850s. In 1863, Mr. William E. Chaffee bought the Medlicott business, and came up with a better way of making woolen garments. He bought new equipment and built a new factory in 1863. The bell tower of the Medlicott mill was a central feature of downtown Windsor Locks life for generations.

Above, on the right, is a photo of the bell that was in the Medlicott bell tower. It was installed in 1863, when the plant was built. It was the oldest bell in town. The church and school bells came later.

The Medlicott bell was used announce that a fire existed. Originally, fires were fought by “bucket brigades”. The Medlicott bell announced those fires. The Windsor Locks Fire Department was established in 1890. The Medlicott bell continued to be rung after 1890 when firetrucks were sent to the scene.

In his 1993 article, “Interesting facts about Windsor Locks, Howard White had the following to say about the uses that the bell was put to.

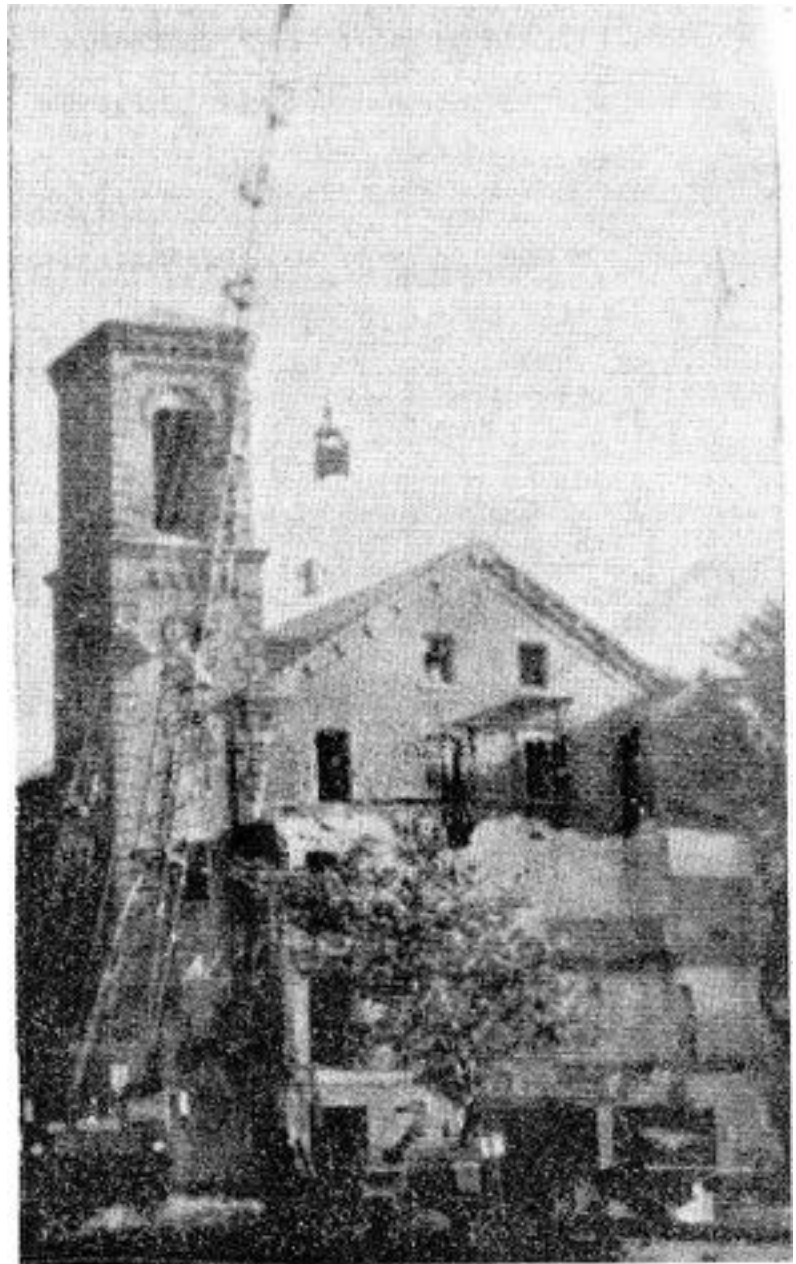
‘As I recall, the bell in the tower served as sort of an alarm clock for the community. The night watchman would toll the bell, striking the hour, starting at 8 p.m. and would continue each hour until 5 a.m. At 6 a.m. each morning he would ring the bell for several minutes, announcing the arrival of the workday. Then came the warning bell at 6:50 a.m., telling the people that they had 10 minutes o get to work on time. It rang again at 12 noon for the lunch hour, and then again at 12:50 p.m., calling the people back to work. The next time it rang during the day was at 5 p.m., announcing the end of another workday. “

On the right is a photo from the Windsor Locks Journal of October 4, 1973, showing the bell being lifted from the Medlicott building belfry.

The Medlicott building was demolished in 1973. In 1974, when the Fire Department building was on Oak Street, the bell was mounted on the platform that you see in the photo, and placed on the grounds of that facility. It was a memorial to to the town's volunteer firemen.

For a long while, that bell was "Main Street's alarm clock" for workers in mills along the canal. What Mr. White did not give was the time-period during which the bell was used as a factory worker's "alarm clock".

The Medlicott Company specialized in the manufacture of men's heavy underwear. Those were the full-sleeve, full-leg underwear with the a two-button flap on the back. It was successful in selling not only throughout the United States, but also internationally. In the 1840s, the company began making men's knitted sweaters, which sold well. That continued for a century. In the late 1940s, the knitting trade was having problems. The Medlicott Company was liquidated on Sept 30, 1948.



New home for the bell

The bell, dated 1863, and hanging in the tower of the former plant of the Medlicott Company was removed Saturday and taken to the fire department. Formerly it was used as a fire signal for the town and also rang at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. The Dexter Corp. which now owns the property and is razing the building, donated the bell to the fire department. Fire Chief William G. Reilly said that plans are being made to place the bell in the new safety complex now being planned for the fire department and police department. It is expected that it would be used there for special events such as memorial services.

WL Journal 10/4/73

The building was used for storage by several companies, including Dexter's, who purchased the property and used it as a warehouse. The building became unsafe, and the building was razed in September, 1973. The Medlicott Company, its leaders, its products and its bell should be remembered as important part of the town's history. It should be noted that Mr. Charles E. Chaffee built the Memorial Hall and donated it to the Windsor Locks veterans of the Civil War.

SOURCES:

'Interesting Facts about Windsor Locks: Highlights from the History of the Town with the Canal', by Howard J. White, Windsor Locks, CT, 1993

Windsor Locks Journal article, "A Landmark goes", Sept 20, 1973.

Windsor Locks Journal article, "Death of Mr. Chaffee", Nov. 11, 1907.

Windsor Locks Journal article, "Medlicott bell being removed", Oct. 4, 1973,

Chapter 11

Jack O'Hara: Brought Professional Baseball to Windsor Locks

Not everyone who made big things happen in Windsor Locks were from Windsor Locks. Jack O'Hara, a Springfield man, came up with a grand plan to get professional baseball teams to come and play a local team in Windsor Locks. He leased some land from Pietro Paganelli, who had a farm in the south end of Windsor Locks, on which he would build a baseball stadium. It was called "The South End Stadium."

You can see the location of that stadium on the modern map on the right. It was about where Route 159 goes over the railroad tracks. Mr. O'Hara was ready to put a considerable amount of money into the stadium.

Mr. O'Hara also put together a team of players from Holy Cross College, which had a very strong college baseball team. It was a time when professional baseball teams "barnstormed" towns and cities as a way of increasing the amount of money that the players could make. Mr. O'Hara had a plan for Sunday afternoon games. The first game played on the field was on June 19, 1921. Nearly 3000 people attended. It was between the Windsor Locks team and a team from Ware, MA.

On June 26, 1921, Over 5,000 people showed up for the game against the Philadelphia team of the American League. Philadelphia won by 3 to 0.

On July 21, the Windsor Locks team defeated the Pittsburgh National League team in front of 7,500 people.

On July 29, the Windsor Locks team lost to St. Louis Cardinals by 2 to 0.

On August 21, the Windsor Locks team beat the Pittsburgh Pirates.

John O'Hara enlarged and enhanced the stadium prior to the 1922 season. A second full season of baseball was played in 1922. However, there were no games in 1923 because of a legal suit against the professional teams for



**Location of Paganelli's
baseball field in 1920s**

such games. However the games were back in 1924. In the weeks leading up to June 29, 1924, the Windsor Locks Journal and the Springfield and Hartford newspapers had been posting articles about the upcoming game between the New York Yankees, starring Babe Ruth, and the Windsor Locks All Collegians for many weeks.

In the weeks leading up to June 29, 1924, the Windsor Locks Journal and the Springfield and Hartford newspapers had been posting articles about the upcoming game between the New York Yankees, starring Babe Ruth, and the Windsor Locks All Collegians for many weeks. New grand stand and bleachers erected on South End Park, and there was standing room available for many more. That gives information on the size of South End Park, and the fact that the grandstands were just built.

Finally the New York Yankees versus Windsor Locks game happened, and WINDSOR LOCKS WON by 3-2. The Windsor Locks team held Babe Ruth hitless in four at-bats. How 'big' was that game? It was big enough that the results showed up in the New York Times on the day after the game. Below is the New York Times writeup.

The June 29, 1924 game between the Windsor Locks All-Collegians and the New York Yankees may have been the last of the exhibition games played in Windsor Locks. No later articles about these games could be found in the Windsor Locks Journal after the June 29, 1924 game.

COLLEGIANS BEAT YANKS.

Ruth Robbed of Homer as Windsor
Locks Nine Wins, 3-2.

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn., June 29.—
The Windsor Locks Collegians today
defeated the New York Yankees in an
exhibition game here, 3 to 2. Babe
Ruth was robbed of a home run when
a local player made a leaping catch in
deep centre field.

The score by innings:

Collegians	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	—3	3	1
New York (A.)	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	—2	4	1

Batteries—Clemens and Cartwright; Pip-
gras and Hoffman, Bengough.

The New York Times

Published: June 30, 1924

Below are photos of Windsor Locks team and the Yankee team that they beat in 1924.



New York Yankees 1924

CONCLUSION

Looking back over Windsor Locks history from 1863 through the present day (2023), it is not possible to find anyone who had a bolder idea for making Windsor Locks a great place to live than John O'Hara's proposal to bring major league baseball to town. HE MADE IT HAPPEN. He built a massive stadium. Some games had over 7000 in attendance. While professional baseball at that stadium only lasted for a few years, Mr. O'Hara proved that you can do big things if you think big thoughts, and then find ways to make them happen. He was extremely creative in coming up with the idea of using good college baseball players on the local team, and for finding a way to get the stadium built.

The next big idea for bringing national level sports to Windsor Locks was the Professional Bowling league's decision to put Windsor Locks on its tournament schedule. That was from 1974 to 1999. It was Sonya and Ken West of Windsor Locks who made that happen. We need more people to think like John O'Hara and Sonya and Ken West.

SOURCES

Windsor Locks Journals of

1921 06 03	1921 07 21	1921 09 02	1924 06 27
1921 06 24	1921 07 29	1922 08 04	1924 07 04
1921 06 21	1921 08 12	1922 08 11	
1921 07 02	1921 08 19	1924 06 13	

New York Times of June 30, 1924

Chapter 12

Windsor Locks' A&P and its Manager, Jim Franklin



The A&P on Main Street - 1960s

In the 1940s, 50s and 60s, the A&P was a well-known fixture on Main Street. It was across the street from the railroad station. The Windsor Locks A&P was not always at that location. That was the last of its four locations in town. This chapter presents a brief history of the Windsor Locks' A&P, and its long-time manager, James J. Franklin.

In 1920, the A&P opened its first store in Windsor Locks. It was in the Zaccheo building, directly across from the Canal bridge. In 1923, the A&P moved to the "Coogan Block", a large building just south of the Zaccheo building. It was on the southwest corner of State St. and Main St. It occupied the entire first floor of that building.

In 1927, the A&P store moved to a new building that was just a little north of where they had been. In 1940, the A&P made its final move to the location in the photo at the beginning of this chapter, next to Coly's Hotel, and across from the train station.

One of the early employees of Windsor Locks' A&P was Aldo Satirana, who later owned the Oak Street Market. Below is a early photo of Aldo in the store. A note on the photo said: "Aldo Satirana, Produce Manager at the A&P at the corner of Church and Main Streets".



**Aldo Satirana, Produce Manager of the
A&P at the corner of Chuch and Main Streets**

Following are four photos of the early A&P stores that were near Church and Main Streets.





Below is a 1940s photo of the A&P next to Coly's Hotel and across from the Railroad passenger station. You can see Bill Amsted's "Bottle Shop" and "Bianchi's Shoe Store" on the street floor of the hotel. Note that at the left of the A&P, there was the AS&P Package Store.



Corner of Oak and Main. Don LaRussa's Appliance store, and the A&P. LaRussa originally had his Western Auto Store here. Previously the Central Hall Building occupied both spaces

On the corner of Main and Oak Streets was Don LaRussa's electronics store. He was a master salesman. People were gathered around his store, waiting for the parade, which included Santa Claus, who was flown into town in one of Charley Kaman's helicopters. When the parade reached the store, Mr. LaRussa had gifts for each of the kids.

Main Street went through the Redevelopment Project in the late 1960s and the first half of the 1970s. The town used Federal government money to buy up all of the stores. In the 1970s, the stores were all torn down.

James J. Franklin: Manager of the A&P

The story of Windsor Locks' A&P and the story of its long-time manager are intertwined. Mr. James J. Franklin was not only the A&P's manager, he was an outstanding Windsor Locks community leader.

James J. Franklin began his career with the A&P in 1915, when he took a training program. They paid him \$11 a week. \$10 of that was for rent, and \$1 was for him to spend as he wished. He became manager of the A&P in East Hampton in 1916. Then in 1920, he opened the first A&P store in Windsor Locks. It was in the Zaccheo building, directly across from the Canal bridge. He managed the three A&P stores which existed briefly, just south of the corner of Church and Main Streets.

Mr. Franklin was the grocery store manager until 1950, when health problems caused him to leave the store manager position, and become the manager of the A&P Package Store, which was next door. He held that position until he retired in 1963.

Because of his position at the A&P, he not only knew many of the citizens of Windsor Locks, he was heavily involved in town governmental and fraternal organizations throughout his entire career. The scope and depth of what he did in those groups is astonishing.

During World War II, he was the local director of several War Bond drives, and won the recognition of state officials for the success of his efforts. He led a drive for donations to "buy" a bomber aircraft for the Army Air Force at the start of WWII, and to raise the money to build a swimming pool in what we now call "Pesci Park". He was instrumental in bringing Kate Smith to the Rialto Theater as part of a War Bond drive. He raised money to buy a car for Dr. Carniglia.

He was a Grand Knight of the the Knights of Columbus, and a charter director of its Building Association. He had been a president of the Rotary Club, and a director of the Savings and Loan Association for 35 years. He was a director of St. Mary's Federal Credit Union, president of the Italian-American Club, and district chairman of the Boy Scouts Finance Committee. He was active in the Red Cross and a director of the Public Health Nursing Association.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Jim Franklin was a "Pillar of the Community". He died in 1976.



James J. Franklin ~ 1972

CONCLUSION

It is hard to overstate the importance of the existence of the A&P across from the Railroad Station in the years from 1920 until the Main Street Redevelopment Project. That was the time when people came from other towns to shop in Windsor Locks. In the 1940s and early 1950s, almost everyone in Windsor Locks lived between Main Street and West Street. Many walked down to the A&P and walked home with their groceries. The store was a place where people met their friends while shopping. The A&P was central to Windsor Locks life for more than a quarter of a century.

SOURCES:

Redmond, Jack, Jim Franklin, Civic Leader and Mr. A&P, *Windsor Locks Journal*, Oct.14, 1976

“James Franklin Retires from A&P”, *Windsor Locks Journal*, Sept 23, 1963

Mickey Danyluk provided information about Mr. Franklin and he reviewed the final draft of this chapter.

Chapter 13

Dominick F. “Don” LaRussa: The Man Who Created Dexter Plaza

Dexter Plaza was built on the grounds of the former Ashmere estate, which was owned by Dexter D. Coffin. It opened on April 19, 1961. It was one of the earliest outdoor shopping malls in New England. When Dexter Plaza opened, Main Street had a row of retail stores which was about a half-mile long. In the 1970s, Windsor Locks did a “Main Street Redevelopment Project”, which bought up and then razed all of those retail businesses, promising that new stores would come in and replace the old ones. The promise was never fulfilled. After those stores were gone, there was only one place to go shopping in Windsor Locks - Dexter Plaza. **The building of an outdoor shopping plaza on the Ashmere property was one of the most important events in Windsor Locks history.**

Who was the person who came up with the idea of replacing a five-acre plot of land on Main Street with the area’s first outdoor shopping mall? What was the story behind the development of this early shopping mall? This chapter presents that story.

We start with the Ashmere estate, and the approximately five acres on which it was situated. That plot of land was on Main Street, just south of Church Street. Below is a photo of the Ashmere estate. It was one of the most beautiful homes in Connecticut.



The Ashmere Estate

In 1950, Dexter D. Coffin and his wife were living in the Ashmere. He was about to retire and leave town. He wanted to do something good with the Ashmere, which he loved. He offered to give the Ashmere to the town, to serve as a library. The Windsor Locks Library Commission declined the offer. Their rationale for turning down the gift could not be found. The Ashmere had 22 rooms, including an organ room, which had one of the finest organs of the day. Below is a photo of the organ room.



Music Room at the Ashmere

The June 21, 1951 *Windsor Locks Journal* covered what happened after the town turned down Mr. Coffin's offer. Negotiations were being completed for the sale of the Ashmere house, the three story garage and the surrounding land of about five acres. The property was sold to Mrs. Mary Popielarczyk and her daughter, Mrs. Gloria Modarski of Hartford. They planned to turn it into a restaurant and an Inn, to be operated by Mr. Walter Popielarczyk, the husband of Mary Popielarczyk. The Inn and Restaurant would be called "The Ashmere Inn".

Baseball hero, Joe DiMaggio, paid a visit to his old friend, Walter Popielarczyk, the owner of the Ashmere Inn, and said that he believed that it would become one of the finest dining places in the area. The Ashmere Inn was expected to be open for business in a few weeks. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, August 8, 1951)

The ownership of the Ashmere Inn was taken over by a corporation comprising John L. Quagliaroli, James Castellini and Dominick F. LaRussa (who was usually called "Don LaRussa"). They bought it from the Popielarczyk family,

which had owned it for about three years. The new owners found someone to continue the operation of the Ashmere Inn and Restaurant. They also had plans to build a shopping area on the rest of the Ashmere estate land. The new owners had acquired the Ashmere house, its garage, and approximately 5 acres of land. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, May 13, 1954)

The Ashmere Inn operated for about seven years. It closed in November, 1957 because it was not profitable. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, Jan. 9, 1958)

In 1958, Don LaRussa built and opened a large modern store on Main Street, at the Northeast corner of the five acre Ashmere lot. His previous store was on southwest corner of Main and Oak Streets. He wanted to continue selling electronics, such as TVs, and to sell furniture and household appliances. He bought the land and build the store with financial help from James Castellini.

Below are three photos of Don LaRussa's new store.



Don LaRussa opens the first store in Dexter Plaza - Dec. 1958



Below is a photo of what would become the Dexter Plaza. You will see that the Ashmere Inn had not yet been razed, and that Mr. LaRussa's store is already in the lower right corner. Windsor Locks High School is in the back of the photo.



**Ashmere Inn, property for Dexter Plaza
and LaRussa's Store - 1958.
Windsor Locks High School in back.**

The March 5, 1959 *Windsor Locks Journal* said: "Plans for a million dollar Main Street shopping area on the former Ashmere Inn property, under discussion during the past year, have been brought to the construction stage, with space for twelve stores." The new buildings included an addition to the store of Mr. LaRussa, which was located at the northeast corner of the property. The deal called for the destruction of the Ashmere Inn. The Ashmere Inn was torn down on Dec. 31, 1959. See the photo below. It is said that Mr. Dexter D. Coffin, who offered the Ashmere to the town, watched from his office in the Dexter building, as his home was being demolished, and that he wept as he saw it happen.



The Ashmere being torn down

Plans were filed for the proposed Dexter Plaza Shopping Center. Construction was expected to start in a week. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, November 24, 1959)



The first businesses in the new Dexter Plaza were about to open. They were the offices in the building adjacent to the LaRussa store. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, November. 22, 1960)

The official opening of the Dexter Shopping Center's official occurred on April 19, 1961 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The *Windsor Locks Journal* of April 20, 1961 said: "The new Plaza is located on the site of the former Ashmere Inn, and it has been under construction the past year, under the direction of Abner Rosenberg, a New Haven developer." The new part of the plaza joined up seamlessly with the three recently-opened shops that Mr. LaRussa had leased and was renting to Mario's Barber Shop, Dr. Bachrach (the dentist), and the Connecticut Light and Power Company. Those three properties joined up with the D.F. LaRussa store, which has been open for two years, Below is a *Windsor Locks Journal* photo of Dexter Plaza, which was taken on the day it opened (April 19, 1961), and two other photos, which were taken later.



Dexter Plaza, 1965



Mr. LaRussa died in May 1964, at the age of 49. He was quite young, and yet he had been the driving force behind turning the Ashmere Estate into Dexter Plaza. He didn't have the money to make that happen, so he got a local entrepreneur, James Castellini, to partner with him in building his new store in a corner of what later became Dexter Plaza. Mr. Castellini, who once owned the Villa Rose, was often referred to as "Big Jim". Don LaRussa had gotten Mr. Castellini and Mr. Jack Quagliaroli to partner with him in buying the entire five acre plot, together with the Ashmere Inn that was on it. They kept the Ashmere Inn going until the business failed. Mr. LaRussa had already developed plans to turn the the five acres of land into a shopping center which would adjoin his existing store. Mr. LaRussa, Mr. Castellini and Mr. Quagliaroli found a developer to build Dexter Plaza. Don LaRussa had accomplished his dream. He developed the idea for Dexter Plaza and he found a way to get it built. Unfortunately he passed away just three years after Dexter Plaza opened.

The Sept. 3, 1964 *Windsor Locks Journal* said: "The mercantile building at the Dexter Plaza on Main Street, formerly occupied by the D.F. LaRussa store, was sold this week by the owners, Frank B. Castellini, and the Estate of D.F. LaRussa to Marvin Levine of Hamden, principal owner of the Plaza itself. The store has been unoccupied since the death of Mr. LaRussa." Below are two later photos of Dexter Plaza.

CONCLUSION

Don LaRussa was a visionary. He saw that the old "Mom and Pop" shops were going downhill. He knew he needed a bigger store for his business to survive. The trend, which was just beginning, was toward larger stores with larger inventories, and which could sell at lower prices. It was a time when the nation was in the very beginning of a movement from small, locally owned stores to outdoor shopping malls with big stores and lots of parking. While there were a

few of these malls in New England, there were none near Windsor Locks. Later Enfield Mall and Enfield Square came along. Don didn't have the financial resources to build one of these malls on his own, but he knew how to get things done. He knew two Windsor Locks businessmen who could provide the funding to get started. He successfully enlisted their help in his revolutionary new venture. Then he found an entrepreneur to fund his dream of business mall in Windsor Locks, and Dexter Plaza became a reality.

Mr. LaRussa achieved what he envisioned. He had his new store and the three stores that he leased and rented out. The Dexter Plaza plan that he had developed years ago was complete. Unfortunately, he died in 1964 at the young age of 49. Don LaRussa was a successful and visionary businessman, a civic-minded community leader in the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Knights of Columbus. He was generous to the children in the County Home in Warehouse Point. He left his mark on Windsor Locks. He was a man to be emulated. Don LaRussa was surely one of the most important people in the history of Windsor Locks.



Don LaRussa

SOURCES:

Windsor Locks Journal -The dates of the articles are shown in the chapter.

Don LaRussa's son, Ray LaRussa, provided background for this chapter.

Chapter 14

History of the Memorial Hall



Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall building is the most recognizable building in Windsor Locks. It is a three-story building made out of granite, and is located at the corner of Main and Elm Streets. This chapter presents the history of our Memorial Hall. The goal here is to describe the five stages that the Memorial Hall has gone through from the time it opened in 1891 to the present time (2023)

1) Memorial Hall owned by local chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic

After the Civil War, a group of Civil War veterans in Windsor Locks formed a “Post” of the “Grand Army of the Republic”, It was the “J. H. Converse Post 67” of the Grand Army of the Republic. It was named after a Windsor Locks citizen who died in the war. The group wanted to build a memorial to those who had served in the war. We shall refer to the Grand Army of the Republic as the GAR.

In 1889, Jabez Haskell Hayden, a mill owner and a Windsor Locks historian, sold the property that the Memorial Hall is now on, to GAR Post 67 for \$1,500. The deed specified that the building to be constructed on that property be used as a Soldiers’ Memorial forever. This deed created a “charitable trust”. Charles E, Chaffee, the owner of the Medlicott factory, donated the money for the building of Memorial Hall. He provided \$30,000 to the GAR Post, and was significantly involved in the design and construction of the building.

The Memorial Hall was dedicated on June 10, 1891. There was a big parade that started at the Railroad Station and went to the Memorial Hall. Below is a photo of that parade, which was taken from the second floor of a building on the corner of Oak and Main streets. You can see the railroad station in the upper left of the photo. The Civil War ended in 1865, so the Memorial Hall opened about a quarter of a century after the end of the war.

The Memorial Hall was used by the members of Post 67 of the GAR for social activities. It had a big hall for meetings and for social events. It had other meeting rooms and a library. Later, two related groups joined in with the G.A.R Post. The first was a group called "the Sons of Veterans". The second group was the "Women's Relief Corp, which was an auxiliary organization of the GAR. Cooking was done in the basement and brought up by a dumb waiter. The main hall, which was a large room of 45 ft by 50 ft. It was used by the GAR for meetings.

In 1891, the members voted to allow the general public to inspect the Memorial Hall every Saturday from 2 PM to 5 PM and from 7 to 9 PM. That was a very insightful move. It is always good for an organization to have the support of the people of the town.

In 1891, the members hired a Librarian and started a Library. The veterans shared their books with the people of Windsor Locks. A 'Memorial Hall Association' was formed, which eventually gave birth to the Windsor Locks Public Library. Windsor Locks has the GAR Post to thank for getting that started.



Parade for Dedication of Memorial Hall - June 10, 1891

The GAR Post was a social group. The building was their place to gather, enjoy each others company, and enjoy meetings, meals, reading and other activities. It worked well.

Mr. Chaffee, who originally had the Memorial Hall built, and his family were active in the Congregational Church. In 1930, Etta C. Chaffee, daughter of Charles E. Chaffee, gave \$12,000 to the Congregational Church to be used for the maintenance and repair of Memorial Hall. As time went on, more and more of the veterans of the Civil War passed away. As that happened, there was less and less need for a social hall for veterans. Then the following happened.

2) Control of Memorial Hall moved from the GAR to Congregational Church

In the late 1930s, before World War II, the last two members of the GAR turned Memorial Hall over to the Congregational Church, in accordance with the plan made by Jabez Haskell Hayden. The use of Memorial Hall changed. The Congregational Church used it for social activities for the people of the town of Windsor Locks, and for their own needs. That included: church suppers, high school dances, Boy Scout meetings, speaking contests, junior proms and senior balls. The Congregational Church used the Memorial Hall for their purposes and rented it out for anyone else in the town to use. The Memorial Hall was also used for town affairs. Then World War II came along.

3) Memorial Hall during WWII

During World War II, the Memorial Hall was used by “the Rationing Board”. There was a desire by the government of the town of Windsor Locks to turn the Memorial Hall into the Windsor Locks Town Hall. Architectural drawings for the revamping of the Memorial Hall were developed for that purpose

4) Control of Memorial Hall Goes to Windsor Locks War Veterans Trust Co.

In 1947, a group of veterans of later wars wanted the Memorial Hall to stop serving the citizens of Windsor Locks. They wanted to end the use of the building by the Congregational Church, by the town government, and by the people of Windsor Locks. On April 14, 1943, a legal suit was brought by the American Legion against the Congregational Church. It was based on the following:

- The deed, which was dated Sept 13, 1889, created a charitable trust in which the land and the buildings are to be dedicated and used perpetually for a soldiers memorial.
- The beneficiaries of the trust are all persons who have served or may hereafter serve in the armed forces of the United States.
- - The Congregational Church was considered to be the trustee for the purpose of carrying out the charitable purpose of the trust.

The court ruled for the group of veterans, and against the Congregational Church and the town of Windsor Locks.

In 1947, the trusteeship for the building was taken away from the Congregational Church and given to a new organization that was called the “Windsor Locks War Veterans Trust Co.” It was the new entity which owned the Memorial Hall. That group was required to insure that Memorial Hall be used as originally intended, that is, for veterans of the US military. This new company limited the use of the Memorial Hall to organizations representing military veterans. That included the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Disabled American Veterans. There are many references in the Windsor Locks Journal archives to the use of the Memorial Hall by those three groups.

Immediately after the Windsor Locks War Veterans Trust Co. took control of the Memorial Hall, more war memorials and monuments were erected on the grounds of the building, which focussed on the later wars (WW-1, WW-2, the Korean War, Vietnam, etc). In other words, Memorial Hall moved from a focus on Civil War veterans to veterans of all of the wars that the United States was involved in.

The local chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) did make some use of the Memorial Hall. However, they built their own building and used it both for their own meetings and as a tavern which was open to the public. That was a money-making opportunity, and they seized it. They couldn’t have done that at the Memorial Hall. The Windsor Locks Journal mentions a number of occasions in which the V.F.W. used the Memorial Hall in the years from 1949 to 1953.

There was another organization of military veterans which made use of the Memorial Hall after World War II. It was a group called the “Disabled American Veterans”. It was a national organization. Windsor Locks formed a chapter of that organization. It was an organization for veterans who were wounded or disabled in the Second World War. There were articles in the Windsor Locks Journal archives of the uses made of the Memorial Hall from 1949 to 1953.

5) The American Legion Becomes the Tenant of the Memorial Hall

The American Legion became a “tenant” in the Memorial Hall, which was owned by the “Windsor Locks War Veterans Trust Co.” They hold their meetings and their social events there. The Windsor Locks Journal archives, which only go up to 1970, have many references to the American Legion’s use of the Memorial Hall from 1947 to 1958. Many, if not most of those articles were about the American Legion Bingo nights which were held weekly for a long time.

The American Legion Gens-Viola Post remains the tenant of the Memorial Hall as of this writing (2023). They hold their meetings and social events there.

That concludes our review of the five main stages that the Memorial Hall has passed through in its life from 1891 to the date of this writing (2023)

There was a military jet aircraft on the grounds of the Memorial Hall. In the 1950s, it was removed and taken to the New England Air Museum at Bradley

Field, where it was where it was restored and put on display. Here are two photos of that aircraft on the grounds of the Memorial Hall. Facing the building from Main Street, the airplane was on the left of the building.



Memorial Hall: Top of airplane can be seen below bottom floor windows on left side of the building



Airplane on Grounds of Memorial Hall

CONCLUSION

We have described the five main stages that the Memorial Hall went through in from 1891 to the date of this writing (2023). The stages are primarily defined by who was in control of the fate of the Memorial Hall.

1. The Memorial Hall was started by the local chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic in 1891.
2. When the members of that chapter passed away, control was transferred to the Congregational Church. That was in the late 1930s, before World War II.
3. During WWII, the Memorial Hall was used by the Rationing Board. (1940-1946).
4. In 1947, a court case created a new company to take control of the Memorial Hall and return it to its original purpose of serving military veterans. There were three local veterans groups who could use it. All three did for a short while.
5. While all American veteran groups could use the Memorial Hall, eventually the American Legion became the tenant of the Memorial Hall. As of this writing (2023), that has not changed.

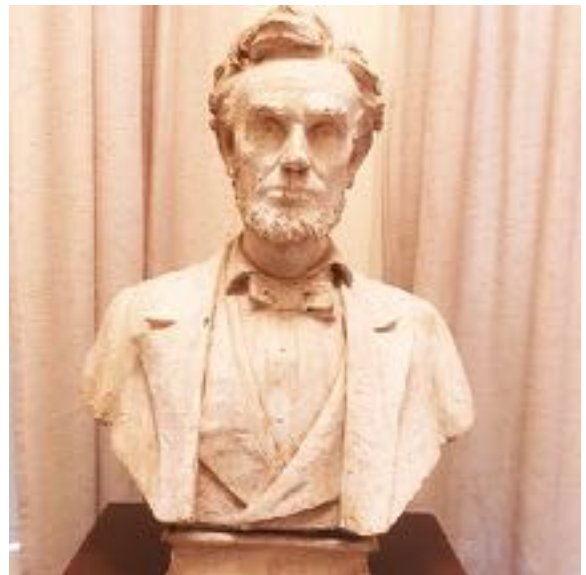
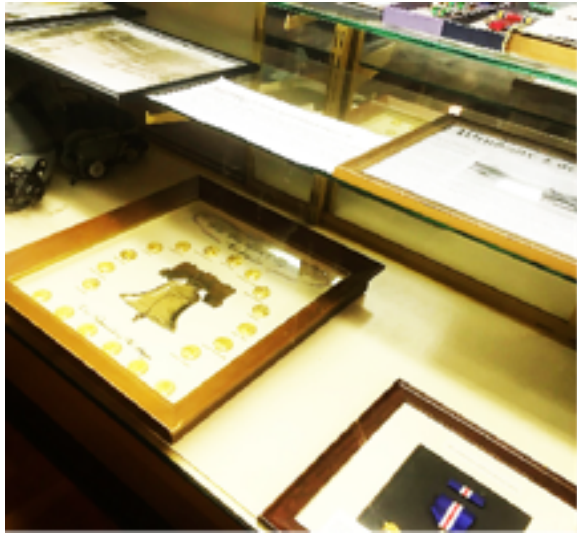
In reviewing the history of the Memorial Hall, we cannot forget that the Memorial Day parades, which Windsor Locks has held since at least the 1930s, have ended at the Memorial Hall. Those parades are a staple of Windsor Locks life. They are similar from year to year. They are an important town tradition.

There is the matter of the architectural style of the Memorial Hall. The Memorial Hall was designed in the “Richardsonian Romanesque” style of the late 1800s by Frederick Savage Newman, of Springfield, MA.

Finally, there is a man who has done outstanding work for the Memorial Hall in the past decades. His name is Edward V. Sabotka. He is 98 years old at this time (2023). He has kept detailed records of the Memorial Hall. His records served as a basis for most of this chapter.

Following are photographs of Memorial Hall.





SOURCES

Sabotka, Edward V. (Chairman, Board of Trustees), Memorial Hall, March 2000

Sabotka, Edward V.(Chairman, Board of Trustees), Chronologic History of the W.L. War Veteran's Memorial, Incorporation. August 10, 1997

Sabotka, Edward V., J.H.Converse Post No. 67 Minute Books Grand Army of the Republic, Notes compiled from the G.A.R. Minutes.

The above three documents were sent to me by mail by Edward V. Sabotka, July 6, 2023

Telephone call with Mickey Danyluk, July 8, 2023. He gave tours of the Memorial Hall for the American Legion in the 2010 timeframe.

Information on the Richardsonian Romanesque style is from:

<https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/buildings/historic-conservation-old/major-architectural-styles/richardsonian-romanesque-1880-to-1900/>

[#:~:text=Houses%20of%20this%20style%20are,heavily%20emphasized%20around%20Roman%20arch.](#)

Memorial Hall Museum, October, 2017

<https://www.ctmq.org/memorial-hall-museum/>

Chapter 15

Windsor Locks and Muscle Cars in the 1960s

Detroit invented a new breed of automobiles called “Muscle Cars” in the early 1960s. It attracted a group of aficionados in most towns and cities across the United States, Windsor Locks was fully involved. This movement came with a new vocabulary. It included words and phrases like: “dual quads” (two four-barrel carburetors), “deuces” (two-barrel carburetors), and “side-pipes” (visible exhaust pipes).

The muscle car aficionados developed a lifestyle that went with the movement.. They found each other, became friends, talked cars, worked on cars, raced cars, and went looking for others who shared their passion. . They were “the true believers”.

In Windsor Locks, you could often find them at Dexter Plaza in the evenings and on weekends. You certainly couldn’t miss them when they were driving their cars. You could spot them on Main Street, sometimes in front of the Marconi Brothers’ Luncheonette, which was commonly called “Wuzzy’s”.

Here is a photo of Dexter Plaza in 1965. That is where young men from Windsor, Enfield, Warehouse Point, and other towns, who were also into muscle cars, came to meet their Windsor Locks counterparts.

This group of muscle car enthusiasts consisted of Joe Kobos, Doug Fuller, Paul Aston, Ray LaRussa, Kenny Mokrycki, and Paul Shonty. Unfortunately few photos of these guys and their cars still exist. Those that do are presented here, along with photos of the type of cars that they had..



Dexter Plaza - 1965

Ray LaRussa, one of that group, was the person who provided much of the content of this chapter, which was reviewed by Joe Kobos. Ray said that the group became friends based on their mutual interest. Not all were in as deeply as others, but they bonded because of their common interest.

Their meeting place was always Dexter Plaza. Dexter Plaza had Dougherty's Drug Store, which had a food and ice cream counter and Friendly's, which always attracted girls. The parking lot was where the guys hung out with each other and with their cars.

As time went on, they upgraded or traded in their cars for faster, more powerful cars. Of course, the cars coming out of Detroit got faster every year, and the chase for the best was a never ending quest. Here is a description of the cars that the guys in this group had.

Joe Kobos had a black 1961 Impala. He traded it for a 1963 Impala Supersport, and he traded that for a 1964 Corvette Stingray. Here are photos of his 1964 Corvette Stingray, which is still in its original condition in 2023. He is driving it in the second photo.



Joe Kobos' 1964 Stingray in 2022



Joe Kobos in his 1964 Stingray in 2022

Paul Aston had a 1963 Corvette Stingray with a 340 HP (Horsepower) engine. It looked something like Joe Kobos's 1964 Corvette Stingray, so there is no need to put up another photo here.

Doug Fuller had a 1965 corvette with a 427 Horsepower and “side pipes”. The photo is not of Doug’s car, but of a Stingray with “side-pipes”.



Corvette Stingray with “sidepipes” (exhaust pipes on the side)

Ray LaRussa began with a 1960 Ford Falcon with a six-cylinder, 85 HP (Horse Power) engine. The first “muscle car” produced in the United States was the 1964 Pontiac GTO. Ray bought one that had a 389 cubic inch engine, a four speed transmission, and three deuces. A deuce is a two-barrel carburetor. Below is a photo of a 1964 Pontiac GTO.



1964 Pontiac GTO with 389 Cubic Inch engine

Kenny Mokrycki - Kenny had a 1964 Corvette Stingray, which was a convertible. It had a “rag top” that could be folded back, but not a “hard top” which could replace it. That was similar to the red Corvette which is pictured above.

Paul Shonty - Ray LaRussa remembers that Paul’s first muscle car was a Dodge Dart, which he loved to work on. In 1962, his father agreed to let him buy a 1962 Chevrolet Impala Supersport with a 327 cubic inch engine and an automatic transmission. It was beautiful car with a white exterior with red interior.

About six months after Paul bought that car, he found a mechanic in Hartford, named “Tiny”, who installed a 409 horsepower engine with dual-quads and a 4-speed transmission. A dual quad means that it had two four-barrel carburetors. This means that it was a very fast, powerful car, with a complex engine. Paul replaced the automatic transmission with a four-speed manual transmission. Ray LaRussa described the car as a “rocket ship”.



1962 Chevy Impala Supersport

Information on Windsor Locks Muscle Cars from Facebook

The above portion of this chapter was posted on four Windsor Locks Facebook web pages on Feb 10, 2023. Three responses added important information to that reported above. Those additions were added by Richard Barthel, Fred Miclon and Robert York. Here they are:

Richard Barthel said:

The focal point of the muscle car guys was Dexter Plaza and Friendly’s. He was a witness to it, but only a sophomore in High School with a 10 year old Ford

Convertible. Friendly's was a collection point for a lot of kids in the sixties. Marconi's was still there, but it was not a suitable car hang-out. The other spot for car guys back then was Bart's in Windsor.

The congregating in Dexter Plaza would often lead to race challenges that would take place on the RT 20 connector coming out of Bradley. Field. Back then, there was virtually no traffic there at night. Colchester also had the iconic Connecticut Drag Strip which closed many years before. You could legally race your cars there.

Fred Miclon said:

"After the opening of Hardee's and McDonald's in the early to mid 1970s, the car scene in Windsor Locks was centered on Route 75. A group of cars from Windsor Locks and Windsor would congregate at Hardee's on Friday and Saturday nights. They would often cruise between the two locations. Many of the 'gear heads' from Windsor Locks High School had some pretty hot cars back then. We spent plenty of time cruising the town, hanging out at the restaurants until management told us to move on or buy more food. We also went to Spectator Parking, which was located on the airport at the west end of Spring Street. In my junior and senior years of high school - 1974-1976, I had a 1970 Camaro Super Sport 350 and there were a host of other great cars that my classmates had, such as a 55 Chevy, a Plymouth 'Cuda, Chevelle's, early Mustangs, Camaro's, Vegas with powerful V8 engines installed, replacing the 4 cylinder factory engine, and much more - all worth a lot of money now. We'd race on RT 20 -aka 'The Connector' or Bradley Park Road, which someone had painted start and finish lines across. Gas was cheap, and times were good. WLHS Class of '76!"

Robert York said:

"The place that most guys used to go to get parts and to work on their cars was "Tinker's" up on RT. 75

I should mention Bradley Park Road in East Granby and Day Hill Road in Windsor. I remember on Route 20, we had a white line painted across the two lanes to stage the cars. One of the signs was exactly 1/4 mile away. We used to go behind Macaluso's market to put our slicks on. Dick Skowron used to be there with his cruiser to shine the side spotlight so we could see. Dick would sit on the Rt. 75 bridge and watch the race. If anything came over his radio about a race happening he would kick his strobes on for a few seconds!"

CONCLUSION

Windsor Locks participated in the 1960s introduction of Muscle Cars to America. A group of young men who became enamored with muscle cars

became good friends. They spent a great deal of time on their hobby. Part of that time was spent hanging out at Dexter Plaza.

The national enthusiasm with fast, beautiful cars has never gone away. As gas prices increased, the focus on cars moved to smaller, more efficient automobiles. However television shows such as the Mecum Auto Auction and the Barrett-Jackson Auto Auction show that the interest remains strong.

The 1960s experience with muscle cars in Windsor Locks was memorable.

SOURCES

Telephone Interviews with Ray LaRussa about the group of muscle car enthusiasts in Windsor Locks in the 1960. February 2023

Email from Joe Kobos with corrections to a draft, 02-07-2023

Photographs from Joe Kobos of his car.

Facebook conversation on “You know you’re from Windsor Locks when...” webpage about Shonty’s Restaurant, January 22, 2023. Note that there are two Facebook websites with the same name. This is the one with the photo of the storefront of Alto Satirana’s Oak Street Market
https://www.facebook.com/groups/146893592059501/posts/5891594784255991/?comment_id=5893644840717652&reply_comment_id=5901500066598796¬if_id=1675144512415751¬if_t=group_comment&ref=notif

Chapter 16

Windsor Locks Town Dump



Windsor Locks Town Dump, West Spring St. 1960

For a long time, Windsor Locks had a “town dump”. It was located where Reed Park is located (2020). You drove there by turning right off of Spring Street onto Hathaway Street, across from the Fish Hatchery. For decades, there was no garbage pickup in town. You drove your garbage to the dump. You had to watch where you parked. You didn’t want to park over anything that was burning. Finally, the end of the dump came, sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s. Homes were built near it, and Reed park was built.



Windsor Locks town dump - 1956



Windsor Locks town dump - 1956



Windsor Locks town dump - 1956

SOURCE

The four photographs were provided by Frank Baron.

Chapter 17

Frederick S. Bidwell's Company

Frederick S. Bidwell, Sr. was born in Hartford on June 24, 1948. He grew up in Stafford Springs. He went to work for his uncle, Theodore Pease, who owned the Pease & Sons company. In 1868, Mr. Pease bought the lumber business of H.C. Douglas & Co. in Windsor Locks. Frederick S. Bidwell, Sr. went to work for his uncle as manager of the Pease & Sons company. A few years later, Mr. Bidwell moved to Windsor Locks. In about 1877, he bought the business from his uncle and operated the business for himself.

Frederick S. Bidwell, Jr. was born in Enfield on November 12, 1878, to Frederick S. and Annie (Steele) Bidwell. Annie Bidwell died the day after giving birth. Below is an F. S. Bidwell receipt from 1897.

Sole Agency For
LONGMAN & MARTINEZ,
Paints.

770 WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. Nov 8 1897

M. P. S. Lippis

Bought of F. S. BIDWELL,
DEALER IN
Lumber and Building Materials.
Hardware, Painters' Supplies, Agricultural Implements, Fertilizer.
LONGMAN & MARTINEZ PAINT A SPECIALTY.

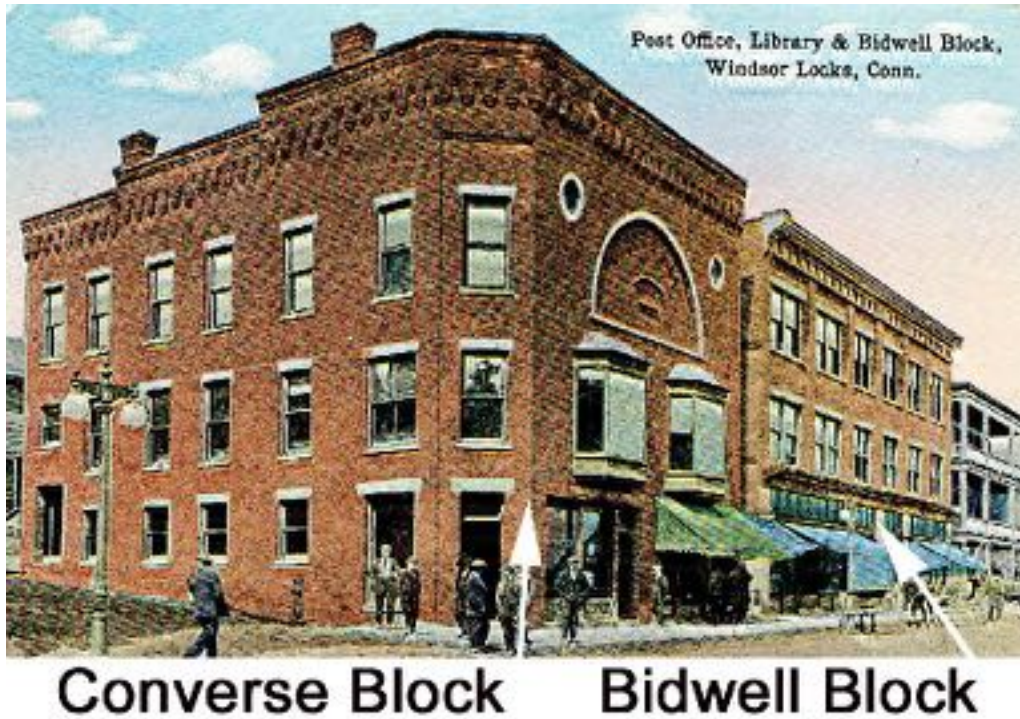
Actual cost less than
\$1.25 Per Gallon.

TERMS CASH.

Date	Description	Amount
Dec 7	To 5 gal. R. Oil	2.10
1897	" 1 5" Can	.75
Jan 22	" 1 Man Fork	.85
April 21	" 1 pr Blinds 7/12	.90
May 15	" 40 Lbs fl. 3 ft Netting	1.00
Oct 4	" 2 9' and 2 3' 26 - 96 WT.	4.50
"	" 2 Frames for same	3.80

In 1898, the F.S. Bidwell company moved into its new building on Main Street, near Chestnut Street. (Springfield Republican Jan 1, 1898)

In 1900, Mr. Bidwell took on Mr. J.D. Phelps as a partner in his lumber business. By 1900, Frederick Bidwell, Jr. was working as a bookkeeper for his father. In 1909, Frederick Bidwell, Jr. was made a partner, and in 1916, the business became incorporated as the F.S. Bidwell Company. (Springfield Republican, Apr 20, 1916)



In about 1900, Frederick Bidwell, Jr. married Mabel Prophet. Despite being a partner at the lumber company in Windsor Locks, he was living in Suffield with his wife, Mabel in 1910. In about 1912, Mabel gave birth to their son Frederick.

The Bidwell Block was built on Main Street in 1911 (Springfield Republican, Nov 18, 1911) See photo above. The Bidwell Block is the lighter-colored brick building to the right of the Converse Block, which is on the corner of Spring and Main Streets.

Frederick S. Bidwell Sr., a Windsor Locks resident for 50 years, died on January 6, 1928 at the age of 79. He had continued to manage his company until the summer of 1927. Mr. Frederick S. Bidwell, Sr. identified himself with the interests of the town. He served on the board of selectmen three terms, and was a member of the board of education for three years. He was active in the Congregational Church, and in 1880 he was a member of the Chamber of Commerce.

In 1930, Frederick Bidwell Jr. was the treasurer of the F. S. Bidwell Company, and James D. Phelps was the President of the company.

Frederick S. Bidwell Jr. became the president of F. S. Bidwell Company after James D. Phelps, who had been President, died in 1932. Frederick continued to serve as President of the F.S. Bidwell Company until his retirement in 1950. Like his father, he was active in town life during his career. He had been president of both the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club, and a Master of the Euclid Lodge of Masons. Frederick S, Bidwell, Jr. died on Feb. 9, 1965

The F.S. Bidwell Co hardware store at 136 Main Street closed in March of 1959. (Springfield Union March 6, 1959). Nearly all of the former members of the firm had died or retired, and company officers of the time decided to consolidate the business by transferring a part of the hardware section to the lumber division of the company at the building at the intersection of Main and Chestnut Streets. The company continued with the lumber business there.



Bidwell Lumber Co. (Main & Chestnut Sts.)

In 1961, The F.S. Bidwell Co sold its Main Street property, known as the Bidwell Block, to Henry Graziani. The sale included its business buildings on Oak and Spring Streets. The three story building on Main St was badly damaged by fire in September 1960. The two upper floors were not repaired.

The Bidwell Co had purchased the Main Street property from A.W. Converse in 1911. The old wooden building were replaced by a three-story building, which housed the hardware and farm implements departments for many years. Later, the hardware department was moved to the old lumber yard building on upper Main Street in 1959. The assets of the Bidwell Co. were liquidated in 1960 when the lumber and hardware business on upper Main Street was sold to a Springfield lumber company which continued to operate that business. (Springfield Union, Oct. 7, 1961)

The Bidwell Company endured two fires. The first was in 1858, and it did extensive damage to the lumber yard on Main and Chestnut Streets. The second fire was at its hardware store on Main Street between Oak and Spring Streets. Below are photos from both of the fires.



Bidwell Lumber Co. Fire, 1958



Fire at Bidwell's store, Sept. 10, 1960

SOURCES

Montemerlo, Melvin D. Chapter 32: The 15 Blocks of Windsor Locks. Windsor Locks History, Self-published, 2017. Bel Air, MD

Articles from the Springfield Union and Springfield Republican. The dates of each article are given in the body of the chapter, next to the usage of that data.

Amos, Laurie Colli, "55 Church Street - A Classic Windsor Locks Home", dated march 23, 2015. Found on the Windsor Locks Historical Society website. https://www.windsorlockshistoricalsociety.org/_files/ugd/3ea242_b4bc91fd49f245d0bc50b09096021ec5.pdf

Chapter 18

Moses Wing (1760-1804): Master Clockmaker, Goldsmith & Silversmith

Moses Wing is one of the most fascinating citizens in the history of Windsor Locks. Jabez Haskell Hayden, who wrote the early history of Windsor Locks, wrote about Moses Wing in his 1900 book, "Historical Sketches". He wrote that Moses Wing moved from Hayden Station to build a house and a shop on a large lot on West Street. He said that Mr. Wing was a "goldsmith", and that he made brass clocks in the late 1700s, some of which were still excellent timekeepers in 1900. Actually, those clocks still show up in antique clock shops now (2023). They are still excellent timekeepers and are very much in demand by antique collectors.

When Mr. Hayden was writing about Mr. Wing in the late 1800s, all he had to work with was his memory of what he had heard, and the few records were available in Windsor Locks.. He didn't have access to the internet, which now allows a historian to look up newspapers that were published in America when Mr. Wing was alive. Those newspapers and books on the internet provided the information and photos that are in this chapter.

Moses Wing was born in Rochester, MA, on April 25, 1760. He was the son of Samuel and Joannah (Haskell) Wing. The Wing family moved to the Pine Meadow section of Windsor, CT in about 1767.

Moses served in the Revolutionary War. In 1777, he enlisted as a private in the Connecticut militia. When he left the military, he had attained the rank of Major. That reveals much about Moses Wing.

Moses Wing built a house and a shop near his parents house on West Street. He made tall case (grandfather) clocks, silver teaspoons, "knee buckles", and shoe buckles and other items from precious metals in his shop.

No information could be found on where Moses Wing did his apprenticeship in becoming a clockmaker and jeweler. When thinking about making grandfather clocks in a "shop" on West Street in 1785, it is important to think about the difficulty in doing that. There were no nearby stores to buy woodworking and metalworking tools, brass plates, fine woods, etc. It would be extremely difficult for someone to make grandfather clocks in Windsor Locks in the present day (2023). Doing so in 1785 was only for the most studious, industrious, clever and hardworking persons. There were probably not more than a few dozen clockmakers in America at the time. Windsor Locks had one of them.

Between 1803 and 1805, Moses was in partnership with Mr. Geer Terry in Hartford, CT. They advertised in the *Hartford American Mercury* (Hartford CT), 3 Mar 1803 as "*Makers of all kinds of gold and silversmith work.*"

He moved to Worcester, MA, in 1805 and worked there until 1809. In Worcester, he had an apprentice named Martin Moses (about 1807).

Moses Wing Tall-Case Clock made in 1785

Moses Wing's tall-case clocks come up for sale on occasion. One example was found on the website of Delaney's Antique Clocks. It was made by Moses Wing in Pine Meadow in 1785

It is a rare cherry case tall clock with an engraved silvered brass dial made by Moses Wing of Windsor, Connecticut.

The dial was made from a sheet of brass. The dial is signed: "Moses Wing / Windsor," In the arch above the Maker's name an American Eagle with outstretched wings. The eagle holds a scroll in its beak, which is inscribed with our national motto. Here are photographs of the clock.

When you look at the photographs of the case, the face, and the clockworks, consider what it would have taken to make it in a small shop on West Street in Windsor Locks in 1785.





Another Moses Wing Tall Case Clock



CONNECTICUT FEDERAL CHERRY TALL CASE CLOCK, MOSES WING (1760-1809), WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT.

*The bonnet with arched punch-carved crest with urn-turned finials
above the astragal-glazed door flanked by sausage turned spindles
Bourgeault-Horan Antiquarians*

Mr. Wing was an outstanding craftsman. However, he was also an industrious businessman. It probably occurred to him soon after he made his first clocks in Windsor Locks, that the local customer base for such products was small. The only persons who would buy "tall case" clocks, and jewelry made of precious metals were the very wealthy. He had formed a business with a partner in Hartford. However he decided to move to Worcester, MA in 1805, where he set up a shop, and focussed on selling clocks, watches, and fine jewelry. He also did repairs. Here is an advertisement in a local Worcester, MA newspaper on Jan. 27, 1808.

The October 25, 1809 Worcester, MA newspaper announced that Mr. Moses Wing had passed away. It had the following statement: "In this town, on Monday morning last, Major Moses Wing died. In the death of Mr. Wing, society has been deprived of a valuable member.

CONCLUSION

Moses Wing lived in the Pine Meadow section of Windsor, which later became Windsor Locks. He enlisted in the military as a private and came out a few years later as a major. He learned the clockmaking trade and set up shop in on West Street in Windsor Locks. He was making tall-case clocks in that workshop in 1785. Some of those clocks still exist and still show up in the stores of antique clock merchants (2023). The photos in this chapter show his mastery of the art. He moved to Worcester, MA where he changed from clockmaking to

NEW JEWELLER'S SHOP.
—O—

MOSES WING

TAKES this method to inform his Friends and the Public, that he has opened a shop in his new brick Building, opposite Mr. *Daniel Waldo, Jun'r's* Store, where he offers for Sale an assortment of GOLD and SILVER-WARE, of the newest fashion, warranted good; among which are the following articles, (viz.)

- Gold Beads, finger Rings, Ear-hoops.
- Knob and Ear-rings, Stone Knobs.
- Neck Chains, Shirt Pins, Sleeve Buttons and Watch Keys.
- Silver plated Tea-pots; Candle Stocks.
- Cruit Stands; Table and Tea Spoons.
- Sugar Tongs; Swords, Epauletts, Cutlery, &c.
- Silver table and tea Spoons; Sugar Tongs.
- Salt Spoons; Thimbles; Cloak Rings; Watch Chains and Keys; Brass Candle Sticks; Gentlemens and Ladies Morocco Pocket and memorandum Books.
- Elegant gilt Seals, Chains and Keys.
- Ornamented and plain Combs.
- English and French WATCHES.

Together with a variety of Useful and Fancy articles, too numerous for an advertisement.—Gold and silver work done on short notice. Ladies and Gentlemen are invited to call—all favors will be gratefully acknowledged.

Cash paid for old GOLD and SILVER.

MOSES WING.

Worcester, January 27, 1808.

the selling of clocks, watches and fine jewelry. He opened a shop there. His business did well. He died in 1809.

Any list of important people in Windsor Locks history should include Moses Wing. He was a person to be admired. We can all learn from individuals who set high goals for themselves and achieve them.

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<https://worcesterhistory.pastperfectonline.com/archive/8D36BD77-7999-40B6-B98D-333307156511>

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Mickey Danyluk, Windsor Locks Journal, “This week in Windsor Locks History”, April 21, 2023
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Newspaper Notice, National_Aegis, Feb. 3, 1808

Chapter 19

Windsor Locks' First Bowling Alley



Windsor Locks' First Bowling Alley
Ben Boyer's Candlepin Bowling Alley
1909-1917 68 Center Street

INTRODUCTION:

Before we discuss Windsor Locks' first bowling alley, let's briefly review the three bowling alleys which came after it. Back in the 1950s, Windsor Locks had its choice of three types of bowling: ten-pin style at Bradley Bowl, duckpin style at the Villa Rose and at Blanche's Bowling Alley, and candlepin style in nearby Massachusetts.

The newest place to bowl in Windsor Locks now (2023) is "Sparetime Entertainment". It used to be "Bradley Bowl". Under new ownership, it became home to a variety of games: bowling, laser tag, arcade games and escape rooms.

Bradley Bowl opened in 1962 under the name "Bradley Lanes." It was a popular place. The weekly Windsor Locks Journal often had a full page of bowling league scores. In 1974, the Professional Bowlers League added the Bradley Bowl to its tour. It brought prestige. The tour kept coming until 1999.





Bradley Bowl in the daylight

The lower level of the Villa Rose was a duckpin bowling alley. It never reached the levels of sophistication of Bradley Lanes. However, it was well-used and well-liked. Below is a photo of the 1956 Dexter bowling team at the Villa Rose lanes.



Part of 1956 Dexter Bowling Team at Villa Rose lanes. Back row, Left to Right are: Chet Grabiec, Joe Tria, Gene Doe, Art Ciparelli, Charlie Pyznar & Jasper Maltese. Front row: Peno Piazza, Janet Grabiec, Helen Tenerowicz, Helen Hawley, Jo Walters, & Joe Piastka

There was a bowling alley on lower Grove Street, near Main Street. It was known as “Blanche’s Bowling Alley”. Blanche was Blanche Bianchi Lavigne. In the 1920s, that building changed from a theater to a “duckpin” bowling alley.

Blanche’s Bowling Alley was old-fashioned. It had “pin boys” to reset the pins. It had never been redecorated. It was inexpensive and fun. It shut down in 1960. In the photo below, you can see Blanche’s Bowling Alley building in the background on the left. In the following photo, you can see the fire that destroyed Blanche’s Bowling Alley in 1972.



***Ferrari family in front of Blanche's
Bowling Alley, Grove St. 1926***



***Blanche Bianchi's Bowling Alley destroyed by fire.
Princess Theater (old) was on top floor.***

WINDSOR LOCKS' FIRST BOWLING ALLEY

The story of Windsor Locks' first bowling alley has never before been written up by town historians. The only place to learn about it was from dozens of articles in the Windsor Locks Journal between 1909 and 1917. The dates of the issues are given below. The dates of the Windsor Locks Journals source material are listed below.

A new Boyer Bowling Alley appeared on Center Street. It contained two pairs of alleys. (Sept. 3, 1909) A new bowling league would start in the next week. It would have six teams of six members each. They would play on "Boyer's Alleys" on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights. (Sept. 17, 1909). The type of bowling was the "candlepin" style. (Nov. 12, 1909)

Mr. Boyer added another story to his bowling alley building, which became his apartment. (Feb. 2, 1911) This tells us that the original building was a one-story building, and that the bowling alley was on the first floor.

Mr. J. B. Dowling and Mr. L. S. Sheppard leased the bowling alley from Mr. Boyer. (March 3, 1912). Mr. Boyer took over management from Mr. Dowling and Mr. Sheppard. (Sept. 11, 1911)

From 1910 to 1917, the Journal printed the scores of all matches. Everything seemed to be going well. Then the August 12, 1912 issue printed an advertisement which said that Mr Boyer's bowling alley and tenement were for sale or rent. However the March 21, 1913 issue had, as usual, the bowling team and scores, which tells us that the league was back in action. The weekly results then kept showing up in the newspaper every week.

Mr. Boyer erected a shop across the street from the Bidwell Lumber yard on upper Main Street, as the headquarters of his woodworking and house-building business. (March 14, 1913) This tells us how Mr. Boyer made his living.

The scores of the matches kept showing up in the newspaper as the league went on through the 1914 and 1915 seasons Mr. Boyer kept putting up ads for the bowling alley (Dec. 18, 1912) See below on the left.

Starting in 1914, Mr. Boyer also put advertisements for his woodworking and general contracting business in the Windsor Locks Journal. See below.



The lot on Main Street which had had been Mr. Boyer's woodworking shop was bought by the F.S.Bidwell Co. (Feb. 16, 1916) However the bowling scores, the Bowling Alley ads, and the general contracting ads kept showing up in the Windsor Locks Journal. The candlepin league was going strong. (Jan. 1, 1917) The 1917 bowling league's season ended well. (Jan. 12, 1917) However, there were no more sets of bowling scores or of bowling alley ads after January 12, 1917.. **From this, we know that 1917 was the end of the Mr. Boyer's candlepin bowling alley and bowling league.**

The Windsor Locks Journal articles often said that the bowling alley was "on Center Street, at the end of Oak Street". They didn't say that it was on the corner of Center and James Streets, because James Street didn't exist yet. It was built years later, and Mr. Boyer built many of the houses on James Street. It should noted that the early Windsor Locks Journal articles did not provide the street number of the Bowling Alley. This is because the bowling alley was built in 1909, but Windsor Locks did not start using house numbers until 1915. That was done in order to deliver mail.

The Feb. 11, 1938 obituary for Mr. Boyer's wife provided important information. It said that Mrs. Emma Boyer, aged 74, widow of the late Belani (Ben) Boyer, died at her home on Center Street. It said that her husband was a well-known contractor and builder, who had erected most of the homes on the new street which he opened up in the mid 1930s. That was James Street. It said that Mr. Boyer had built many other houses in Windsor Locks and in nearby towns. It said that the funeral was held at Mr. and Mrs. Boyer's home, at 68 Center Street. That is how we learned the address of Boyer's Bowling Alley.

The first photo in this chapter shows a 2023 photo of the house at 68 Center Street. We know that it started off as a one story building, and that Mr. Boyer then built his own apartment in the floor above the bowling alley.

From previous research, we know that the building diagonally across the intersection of Center and James Streets housed the businesses of Mr. John E. Mooney, who had a number of businesses . He had a tinning business, a furniture business, a mortuary business and he rented out a large hall for meetings and dances. He had moved his business up from the corner of Grove and Main Streets in 1898. This tells us that the intersection of Center and James Street was an important business area in town during the first few decades of the 1900s. Most of the other businesses at the time were on Main Street.

Below is a photo of Mr. Mooney's building, which was across Center Street from the Mr. Boyer's Bowling Alley at 68 Center Street. It later became the Johnson Funeral Home and then the Kania Funeral home, and finally it became an apartment house.



J.E.Mooney's Block, Oak & Center Streets

SOURCES:

- (1) The section on Sparetime Entertainment is from Chapter 12 (Bradley Bowl) of Montemerlo, Melvin D., Windsor Locks History: Volume II, Self Published, Bel Air, MD, 2019.
- (2) The section on Villa Rose Bowling Alley is from Chapter 10 (Villa Rose) of Montemerlo, Melvin D., Windsor Locks History: Volume II, Self Published, Bel Air, MD, 2019.
- (3) The section on Blanche's Bowling Alley is from Chapter 18 of Montemerlo, Melvin D., Windsor Locks History, Self Published, Bel Air, MD, 2017.

All of the sources of the section on "Windsor Locks' newest Bowling Alley" are from issues of the Windsor Locks Journal Archives which are found in the following website

<https://windsorlocks.advantage-preservation.com/>

the specific issues for each source is listed in the body of the chapter.

The photo of the Mooney Building is from the 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks.

Chapter 20

Charles Colli - Immigrant, Entrepreneur and Civic Leader

Charles Colli was one of the most successful and fascinating immigrants that came to Windsor Locks. He was born in Italy in 1882. Charles arrived here in 1890, when he was 8 years old. He married Lena Massini. The 1910 U.S. Census said that he was 28 years old and his wife was 34. He was listed as a "Head of Household" in Windsor Locks. He and his wife had three children: Irene (8), Eva (7) and Charles E. (5). His occupation was "Merchant" and his business was "meat".

He was already a naturalized citizen. In 1910, at the age of 30, he owned his own home, free of mortgage. Below is a photo of Charles with his business wagon. Notice the sign on the house, which was on Oak Street, says: "C. Colli, Meat and Groceries".



*Charles Colli
Windsor Locks Fire Chief
1916 - 1922*



Charles Colli, Meat and Groceries Cart Store

Mr. Colli advertised his meat and grocery business in the Windsor Locks Journal and the Springfield Republican often, and his advertisements show that he had the very best machines for processing meat. See the Nov. 26, 1909 advertisement in the Windsor Locks Journal on the right side of the next page.

In 1911, Charles was already running for public office in Windsor Locks. His power base consisted of the Italian immigrant population of the town (Springfield Republican, 9-12-1911). His influence over this community came into play in 1912, one of the most difficult years in Windsor Locks History.

In 1912, it was found that The Windsor Locks Savings Bank had \$185,000 embezzled from it. The investigation went on for a long time before it was found that Alfred Wood Converse was the man who did it. In the meantime, there was a good deal of pain and suffering by the citizens who had lost much of their life savings. Mr. Colli was the person who translated the meetings and documents for the Italian immigrants of Windsor Locks, and who helped them understand what had happened. (Springfield Republican, 02-10-1912)

In 1912, Mr. Colli bought a tenement house to use as rentals. (Springfield Republican, Aug. 31, 1912)

In 1913, Mr. Colli bought another tenement house (Springfield Republican, 08-09-1913). He was in the business of owning rental properties. In 1913, he was listed as one of the largest taxpayers to the town of Windsor Locks (Springfield Republican, 01-19, 1913). He continued to be for many years.

In 1914, he was deeply involved in town government. Also in this year, he bought the Central Cafe Company on Main Street, and sold his meat, grain, and grocery business to one of his employees, George Inaharolf, (Springfield Republican, 05-10-1914). Also, he became an official in the Fire Department. He was deeply into community service.

Economy

Should be the watchword in every well-regulated family. Come to us and let us show you how to get the best and at the same time save money on the table expenses for meats.

New Improved Automatic Machines

Just added, which enable us to handle our goods with better results and more satisfaction to customers.

The American Automatic Slicing Machine cuts Dried Beef, Boiled Ham, Bacon or other meats any thickness desired and does it without any waste or fragments.

The Hobart Electric Meat Chopper and Bone Grinder will supply you with Sausage and Hamburger in a perfectly sanitary condition and will grind Bone for Poultry in fine shape.

Some of Our Prices.

Hamburger, 12c a pound up.
Ground Bone, 3c a pound.
Rib Roasts, 14 to 16c a pound,
Round Steak, 16c a pound.

CHARLES COLLI,

Oak St., Windsor Locks.
Tel. No. 211-3.

Windsor Locks Journal 11 26 1909

By 1916 he had become Chief of the Windsor Locks Fire Department (Springfield Republican, 07-01-1916).

In 1918, Mr. Colli bought the Burnap Block from the estate of Dr. Sidney Burnap. This was one of the largest “blocks” in Windsor Locks. It housed the Opera House, retail stores, a rooming house, and some major corporations, such as the telephone company. Under Mr. Colli’s ownership, it became known as “Central Hall”. The third floor was used for basketball games and boxing matches. That is where two of the Marconi brothers boxed. (Montemerlo, 2016, “Burnap Block and Central Hall”)

In 1918, he resigned as the Federal Explosives Agent for the town. He was just too busy to do that job too.

Charles Colli died in 1938, at the age of 56.

CONCLUSION

Charles Colli was superb entrepreneur, both in the grocery business, in rental housing units, and in owning the town’s largest commercial building, which held a movie theater, a dance hall, and a sports arena. He rented space to large companies in his Central Hall, which had been the Burnap Block. He was deep into community service with town posts and as Fire Chief, and he was a leader in the Italian American Community. He had an outstanding life and career.

SOURCES:

Most of the information for this article came from issues of the Springfield Republican newspaper and from the Windsor Locks Journal. Whenever information is shown from one of these issues, the date of issue is given in parentheses.

Chapter 21

“Aces High”

Windsor Locks / Suffield FIRST Robotics Team



2023 Windsor Locks - Suffield FIRST Robotics Team 176



Aces High (Team 176) 2023 robot

BACKGROUND - What is “FIRST Robotics”?

A brief description of the FIRST Robotics program is necessary to understand what the “Aces High” robotics team is.

The mission of the FIRST program is to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators, by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering, and technology skills, that inspire innovation, and that foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership.

That mission statement may sound like a lot of fancy words. However when you see the program in action, you realize that that is what they actually do. The FIRST organization has successfully carried out its mission for about 30 years as of this writing (2023). Since 1992, FIRST has grown to 3,225 teams, which have 80,000 student members and 25,000 mentors in 26 countries . In other words, FIRST is a highly, successful, worldwide organization with a fantastic record of success.

FIRST teaches high school students about robotics by giving them hands-on experience in designing and building robots with help from experienced engineers. There is no cost to the students. Individual teams are formed in towns and cities around the world. They get “mentors” and funding from local engineering companies. The goals and rules for each year’s competition are distributed to all teams. The funding provided by local organizations pays for the “robot kit” and to send the members of the local team to the Division competitions and possibly to the International Championship Competition. A description of a FIRST competition is as follows:

The FIRST Robotics Competition is a ten-week program in which high-school students build a 125-pound robot designed to compete in a game that changes each year. Students are given sets of parts to use, but they can also use off-the-shelf or custom-made parts. Teams compete in tournaments at a state and regional level. The winning teams from each of these tournaments join the global competition at the FIRST Championship.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FIRST_Championship#References

A **FIRST** Robotics team is a group of high school students who design and build an industrial-sized robot to play a difficult field game against like-minded competitors. The competition has strict rules and limited time. It is as close to real-world engineering that high school students can get. Key to the program is getting adult “mentors” who are professional engineers, and sponsors to pay for the parts, fees and travel expenses of the program. The

team of mentors includes engineers and other adults who are dedicated to help the team get the robot designed, built and taken to events in other cities.

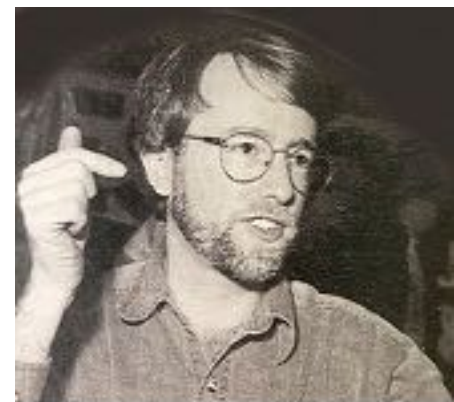
Now that we know how the FIRST organization works, let's look into the "Aces First" FIRST robotics team from Windsor Locks and Suffield.



This is half of the field of competition.
Six teams compete at the same time.

WINDSOR LOCKS' INITIAL "FIRST ROBOTICS TEAM"

In the spring of 1995, Dave Leenhouts attended an extra-curricular fair at Windsor Locks High School. He was an engineer who worked at Hamilton Standard. He had mentored a FIRST robotics team in a nearby town and wanted to start a team in Windsor Locks. He brought the robot that the other team had built. Mr. Leenhouts and the robot made a big impression. He volunteered to be the head mentor to a new FIRST team, if Windsor Locks High School would sponsor the team. Mrs. Marilyn Gragnolati and Sandra Ferrari, Windsor Locks High School teachers were also at that meeting, searching for a new project. They met with Mr. Leenhouts, and the three of them proposed that Windsor Locks High School sponsor a Windsor Locks FIRST robotics team. The proposal was accepted by the school. Hamilton Standard agreed to have Mr. Leenhouts be its mentor and to provide significant funding.



Dave Leenhouts

Hamilton Standard provided the funds for the team to buy the robotics kit from the FIRST organization each year. However the FIRST competitions were held in other towns and cities, which involved significant travel costs for the

students. The team found town businesses which served as team sponsors, and provide the necessary funding.

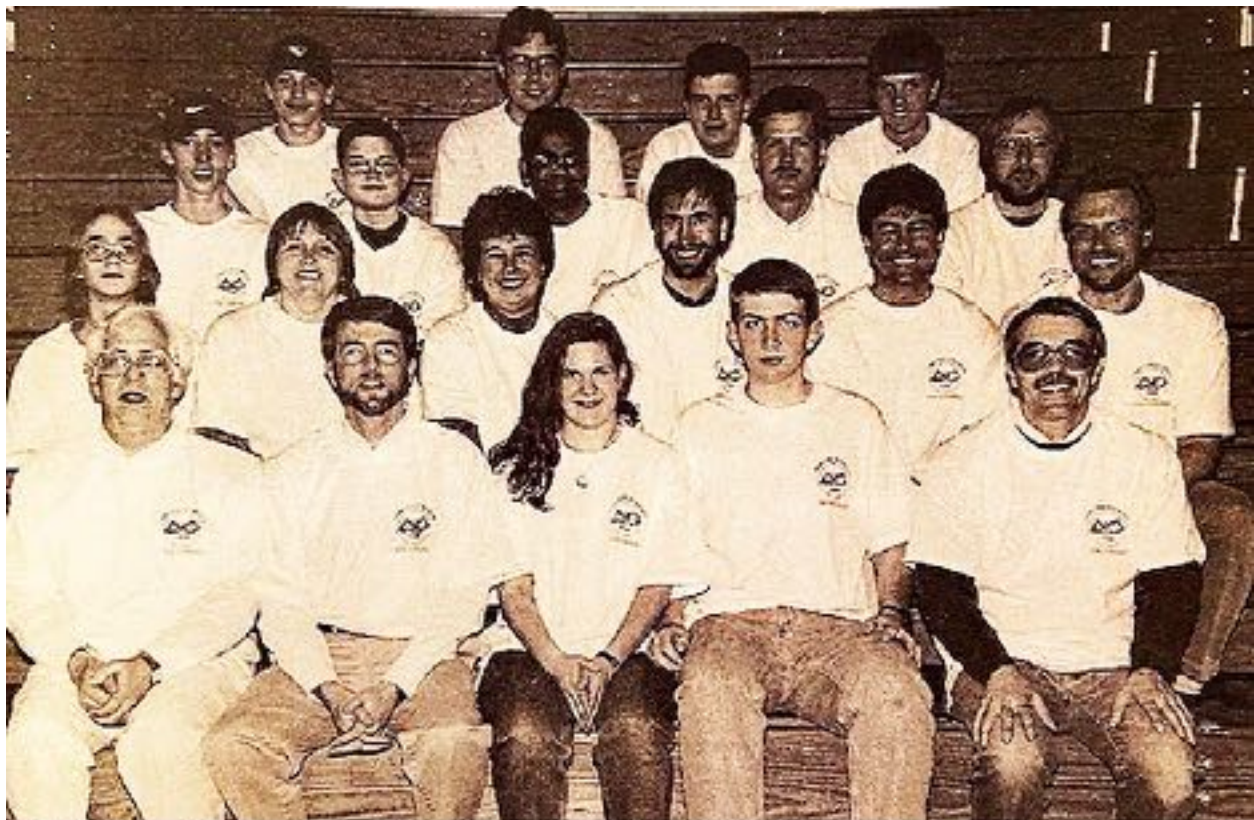
Each FIRST Team has an identification number. At first, teams were numbered in the order in which they joined the FIRST program. The Windsor Locks team was originally "Team 52". Later, the numbering system changed, and it became "Team 176."

FIRST started in 1989. The Windsor Locks team was formed in 1996. A total of 93 teams were involved in the 1996 FIRST Robotics Competition. Forty seven teams attended the New England Tournament, which was held at New Hampshire College in Manchester, NH during March, 1996. 74 Teams attended the National Championship, which was held on stage at Walt Disney World's EPCOT in Orlando, FL during April, 1996.

THE WINDSOR LOCKS AND SUFFIELD FIRST ROBOTICS TEAM

Below is a photo of the initial Windsor Locks High School FIRST team in 1996. The name of that team was "High Standards".

In 1999, Suffield High School joined with Windsor Locks High School to sponsor the team jointly. The team adopted the name "Aces High" which has remained the name of the team.



1996 Windsor Locks High School FIRST team.

In the FIRST competition, teams compete first in Division competitions. Winners of the Division competition compete in the International Championship.

In 1999, three years after the team was formed, and the year that the two high schools joined forces, the Aces High team won the Division Championship in Manchester, N.H, and was invited to the International Championship in Orlando, FL. **THEY WON THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP!!!!!!**

It is impossible to overstate the the importance and meaning of that championship. FIRST is a contest between groups of high school students who are highly intelligent and highly motivated. That championship brought honor and recognition to the towns of Windsor Locks and Suffield, CT.

The list of awards won by Aces High from 1996 to 2023 fills a number of pages. The awards won by the Aces High team for all years from 1996 to 2023 are on the following website. <https://www.thebluealliance.com/team/176/history>

In 2023, the Aces High team won its Division title, and went to the International Championship in Houston, TX. One member of the team, Ana-Lois Davis, won a major award. She was one of ten winners of the “Dean’s List Award – which celebrates outstanding student leaders whose passion for and effectiveness at attaining FIRST ideals is exemplary”.



Comraderie with other teams.
It's not like sports competitions.
We are all in this together.
Teams help one another.



Elation after a good performance.



Working on the robot



Diagnosing internal components

THE “FIRST” PHILOSOPHY

In any explanation of FIRST robotics, it is necessary to describe the FIRST way of thinking. It is much different than sports, for example, where the focus is on winning. Here is how the FIRST organization explains its approach.



Peter Davis

Founded in 1989, the guiding philosophy of FIRST is **Gracious Professionalism** which is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community. With Gracious Professionalism, fierce competition and mutual gain are not separate notions. Gracious professionals learn and compete like crazy, but treat one another with respect and kindness in the process. They avoid treating anyone like losers, no chest thumping tough talk, but no sticky sweet platitudes either. Knowledge, competition, and empathy are comfortably blended.
www.firstinspires.org.

The above philosophy of the FIRST organization is not just words. It is how the teams are judged. Many of the awards are for demonstrating the approach stated above. When you attend a FIRST competition, you can sense that this philosophy permeates everything which is going on.

THE “ACES HIGH” 2023 TEAM

The Aces High team has the following sub-teams:

The **Build/Design team** builds prototypes of each year’s robot as well as the actual robot, and builds full-scale practice fields

The **Drive team** drives the robot in competitions and make real-time adjustments to optimize robot performance between the rounds of each match.

The **Marketing/Media team** prints T-shirts, takes pictures, makes posters, manages the teams socials, and designs all promotional items for the team.

The **Programing team** helps design each year’s robot to take advantage of lessons learned in the past, and then programs the new robot.

The **Scouting team** - sits in the stands and observes the other robots, analyzing other teams performance, and determining which teams would be good to form alliances with.

THE 2023 “ACES HIGH” TEAM MENTORS

The adult mentors of the Aces High Team are:

HEAD COACH - Peter Davis is the Head Coach of the Aces High Robotics team. He has been on the team since 2013. He is the team leader, the person who teaches, inspires, leads, and helps.

Frank DiVita teaches wiring techniques to the students. He also handles logistics for traveling to competitions.

Bill Tice was a Systems and Controls Engineer with Collins Aerospace for 35 years. He helped form an earlier FIRST team, and he mentored two of his children when they were on FIRST teams. Now he mentors the Aces High team, and still enjoys it after 22 years with the team.

Tom Duclos mentors the team on programming. He is the mathematics specialist.

Ted Farver became a team mentor in 2004 when his son was on the team. He teaches wiring techniques to the students. He shows them how to make connectors, wire the robot, and solder.

Anthony DiVita was a student on the team until he graduated in 2014. In 2017, he joined the team as a mentor. His specialties are “the Build” and prototyping.

Nick Tseka is an Aces High alumnus. He graduated in 2014. He became a mentor in 2018. He is the lead on design/integration and is the drive team coach. He mentors the team on Computer Assisted Design.

He has a Masters degree in Mechanical Engineering.

Shahil Kantesaria is a Build Team mentor and works on design and prototyping. He is a team alumnus. He graduated in 2008, and became a mentor in 2013.

Kyle Zelienski is the programming mentor for Aces High. He is a team alumnus and graduated in 2015. He became a mentor in 2016. He is a Development and Operations Engineer.

Sam Stanley is a Aces High alumnus. He graduated in 2019. He became a mentor in 2020. He mentors in marketing, media and scouting, and he works with the design and build teams.

Melissa Pascarelli is a para-educator at Windsor Locks High School. She was a team volunteer from 2013 to 2015, and became a mentor in 2020.

Jim Pascarelli, is a firefighter by day and robotics mentor by night. He has experience in carpentry, construction, cement, electrical, and general contracting.

CONCLUSION

A FIRST robotics team is one of the most important extra curricular activities that a high school student could take. A good high school must have activities which challenge their most intelligent and motivated students. Math clubs and Science Fairs are excellent. However, nothing compares with the opportunity to work with experienced engineers in learning how to design and build competitive robots. The mentors from local engineering firms provide real expertise on the skills underlying the design, building, programming and operation of robots.

FIRST robotics is different from other competitive high school programs. Every year, the divisional and international FIRST competitions judge each group both on how well their robot did, and on how the team helped other teams.

Team “mentors” put a great deal of time and effort into each project. For ten weeks, the work is intense. A number of the mentors have been with the **Aces High** team for 10 to 20 years. School is in session during those weeks, so the team members learn to manage their time.

Windsor Locks and Suffield are fortunate to have a FIRST Robotics team.

SOURCES

1996 FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION TEAM LIST

http://team358.org/history/1992-1999/1996_teamlist_FIRSTsite.pdf

Emails and telephone conversations with Marilyn Gragnolati (May 2023) and emails from Melissa Pascarelli (May 2023).

Aces High Robotics: Who We Are. <https://www.aceshigh176.org/who-we-are/>

For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

[For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology](#)

FIRST Championship, Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FIRST_Championship#References

Team 176, Aces High, History

<https://www.thebluealliance.com/team/176/history>

FIRST Vision and Mission

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FIRST_Championship#References

Chapter 22

Attilio Barbieri - His Grocery Store & Home Style Bakery



The “A.B. Grocery Store” and the “Home Style Bakery” were businesses of Mr. Attilio Barbieri. This is their story.

In the above photo, we see Katie Scotto in front of the family store. Above the door, it says “Barbieri”. The Window says “A B Grocery.” The “A B” stands for “Attilio Barbieri” The Springfield Republican of Mar. 30, 1928 gave the address of Mr. Barbieri’s market as 218 Main Street. The first Main Street number on the north side of Grove Street was 214. So Mr. Barbieri’s shop was just two stores north of that. The Springfield Republican of Aug. 27, 1927 is the earliest reference to the existence of Mr. Barbieri’s market. No information could be found on when it was started. Below is an advertisement of Mr. Barbieri’s market that was in the the March 30, 1928 Springfield Republican. It was the last time the newspaper mentioned Mr. Barbieri’s market at 218 Main Street.

CANADIEN

MADE IN HOUBLON.

"Guaranteed to give Satisfaction."
Made from Canadian Barley.

This brand is sold throughout the
United States and at present is the
talk of the town.

Packed in 2¼ lb. cans,
No-Boil—Hop Flavored and Plain Malt with Hops.
Retail Price in U. S., \$1.00 Combination.

LOCAL AGENTS.

A. Barbieri - - - - 218 Main St
Italian Co-operative Soc'y, Inc., 130 Main St.

See the Famous Royal Capping Machine
on display.



Now we jump to the opening of the "Home Style Bakery". The Windsor Lock Journal of August 8, 1931 tells us that Mr. J.H. Spenkoch opened the Home Style Bakery at 34 Main Street. That was on the southern end of Main Street. Mr. Spenkoch had the reputation as one of the best bakers in the area. He had weekly advertisements in the Windsor Locks Journal from 1931 until May of 1938, when he passed away. The Home Style bakery ads continued to be placed in the Journal, but they under the name of his wife, "Mrs. J.H. Spenkoch. Here is a photo of Mr. Spenkoch.



J. Henry Spenkoch

The Windsor Locks Journal of June 12, 1941 tells us that Mr. Attilio Barbieri became the new proprietor of the Home Style Bakery at 34 Main Street. His name was on the weekly ads in the Windsor Locks Journal until December 19, 1946. After that, there was no name on the weekly Home Style Bakery ads, but the business remained in the family. No information could be found on when Mr. Barbieri died.

Below is photo of the Home Style Bakery when it was in the hands of the Barbieri family. It was run by Josephine (Barbieri) Draghi, her brother, Ted Barbieri, and Ted's wife, Jane.



**Barbieri Home Style Bakery, 34 Main St
Windsor Locks, CT. operated by
Josephine (Barbieri) Draghi, her brother
Ted Barbieri and Ted's wife Jane**

The Home Style Bakery was a staple of Windsor Locks life from the time it was founded by Mr. Spenkoch, through its management by Attilio Barbieri, and later through its management by his family. It existed until the town of Windsor Locks razed all of the retail stores along Main Street during the Main Street Redevelopment Project. The Home Style Bakery existed from 1936 through 1974. It was a well loved store.

Below is a photo from the Windsor Locks Journal of August 25, 1974, of the Home Style Bakery building when it was about to be demolished.



AUGUST 1 is deadline for evacuation of premises by Homestyle Bakery on Main Street, as final eviction papers were served on

Tuesday. Part of the downtown redevelopment, Windsor Locks's last bakery is due for demolition.

SOURCES

Issues of the Springfield Republican. Issue dates are provided in the text.

Issues of the Windsor Locks Journal. Issue dates are provided in the text.

Chapter 23

Shonty's Restaurant



Shonty's Restaurant is at right. Grove St. & Main St.

Shonty's Restaurant was a well known landmark at the corner of Grove Street and Main Street from the time it opened in 1953 until it burned down on November 11, 1967. It was a dark brown building, at 200 Main Street, next to Bianchi's Bar and Restaurant. Above the two restaurants were rental apartments. Sebastian Shonty operated the restaurant throughout its existence. The owner of the building was Benjamin Chmurra.

Sebastian Shonty was born in Hartford. He was an active musician, playing in several area bands, and was a member of the Musicians Protective Association. Mr. Shonty was a longtime member and leader of the Windsor Locks Lions Club. He was married Virginia Cowan. They lived on Woodland Street.

Mr. Shonty got his restaurant going in 1953. While nothing has been written about the restaurant, there is much we can learn about it from the advertisements that he put in the Windsor Locks Journal. Below are four ads that in the Windsor Locks Journal from its opening in 1953 to 1966, the year before the fire.

ANNOUNCING
SHONTY'S Depot Restaurant
 200 MAIN STREET, WINDSOR LOCKS

FEATURING
 SHONTY'S FAMOUS PIZZA
 SPAGHETTI and CHICKEN
 STEAKS and CHOPS
 HOT OVEN GRINDERS

Dancing Every Friday Night
 To The Music Of "THE TUNE TOPPERS"
 We Proudly Present For Your Dancing Pleasure
 SATURDAY NITE
 TUNE TOPPERS
 MODERN and POLKA
 SUNDAY
 OPEN 12 to 9 P. M.
 PIZZA ORDERS TO TAKE OUT
 Call WINDSOR LOCKS NA 3-7479

Windsor Locks Journal
 Nov. 25, 1953

ANNOUNCING
SHONTY'S RESTAURANT
 200 MAIN STREET, WINDSOR LOCKS

FEATURING
 SHONTY'S FAMOUS PIZZA
 SPAGHETTI and CHICKEN
 STEAKS and CHOPS
 HOT OVEN GRINDERS

Dancing Every Friday and Saturday Nights
 To The Music Of
 EDDIE WOODS and His
 POLISH-AMERICAN MUSIC
 MODERN and POLKA
 SUNDAY
 OPEN 12 to 9 P. M.
 PIZZA ORDERS TO TAKE OUT
 Call WINDSOR LOCKS NA 3-7479

Windsor Locks Journal
 Dec. 3, 1953

La PIZZA AT ITS BEST
Shonty's RESTAURANT
 AIR CONDITIONED

HOT OVEN GRINDERS
 Orders Put Up To Take Home
 STEAKS • CHOPS • CHICKEN
 AND SPAGHETTI
 Choice Liquors • Wines • Beers
 Catering To Parties & Banquets
 * Saturday Night Dancing *



Windsor Locks National 3-7479
 200 MAIN ST. WINDSOR LOCKS

1957 Yellow Pages Ad

DAILY LUNCHEON SPECIALS
 Call 623-5098 for Delicious
 PIZZA'S and GRINDERS
 Orders Put Up to Take Out
SHONTY'S RESTAURANT
 SERGIO, Chef
 200 MAIN ST. WINDSOR LOCKS

Windsor Locks Journal
 October 26, 1966

Notice the differences in the ads. The first one used the name "Shonty's Depot Restaurant, which was certainly a reference to the Railroad Depot across the street. The word "Depot" was not used in later ads. The next month's ad used the simpler "Shonty's Restaurant". The first two ads emphasized "Dancing". All of the Shonty's ads focussed on food, not drink. Also worth noticing is that

Shonty's was one of the first in town to announce that they were serving "Pizza" or "LaPizza". The "LaPizza" name was also used by others in the early years, but it lost out to the the simpler word "Pizza".

Over the years, Sebastian Shonty's name showed up often in the Windsor Locks Journal in articles about the Lion's Club. He was very active in leadership roles in the Lion's Club for a long time.

The big buildings along Main Street were mostly built in the late 1800s or the early 1900s. Most were wood framed buildings, and over the decades, they began to show their age. There were a number of fires in the Main Street buildings. The Bidwell Building was one of them. Shonty's had two fires. The first one as caught in time. The second one was not caught in time. It happened on Nov. 11, 1967,

The 1967 fire was devastating, although no one was injured or killed. The entire building, including the apartments above the street level. The fire was reported in newspapers from Hartford to Springfield, and many photos were taken. Below are some photos from that fire.



WINDSOR LOCKS—A two-story building at Main Street housing Shonty's Restaurant, Sy's Newsstand and 10 individuals living in apartments was ruined yesterday in a fire that broke out at 7 a.m. Although firefighters felt they had the blaze contained within 30 minutes after the alarm, Chief William G. Reilly said the fire was not under control until noon. Loss was estimated at \$25,000. Owner of the building is Benjamin Chmura. Cause of the fire has not been determined.

11-13-1967 article on Shonty's Fire in Springfield Daily News





The fire was the end of Shonty's Restaurant. After the fire, Sebastian Shonty became the permittee at the Smalley Brothers Post, Veterans of Foreign Wars until he retired in 1975.

Sebastian Shonty, formerly of Windsor Locks, died Thursday in East Hartford. He was 88 and a resident of Glastonbury. He was one of the business owners along Main Street during the Golden Era of Windsor Locks's downtown.

SOURCES:

Obituary of Sebastian Shonty, Hartford Courant, Feb 6, 1998,
<https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-xpm-1998-02-06-9802060505-story.html>

Montemerlo, Melvin D. *End of the Golden Era: Don McLeod's 1967 Downtown Photos*, Chapter 17 of Windsor Locks History: Volume III, by Melvin D. Montemerlo, Self published, Bel Air, MD, 2020.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/Windsor_Locks_History_Volume_III/OqWfEAAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0

Jerry Dougherty's History website. Photos of Shonty's fire.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gcdougherty/with/7834001506/>

Springfield Daily News, Nov 13, 1967

Chapter 24

What Did Windsor Locks Look Like in 1913?

What did Windsor Locks look like in 1913? That was the time when large numbers of European immigrants were coming into the town. It was the time when automobiles were beginning to replace horse-drawn vehicles. The full set of mills along the canal were built and operating. Windsor Locks had a canal, a railroad and a trolley. There was a growing line of businesses along the west side of Main Street. But what did the town look like in 1913?

There is an easy way to find out. Hughes and Bailey Publishers were developing town maps that were hand-drawn in color to look like the town was being seen from an airplane. You will see that most of the development is close to Main Street, and it thins out as you go toward the west side of town.

The 1913 “Aero View” map also has two other features. One is a set of drawings of the largest factories, buildings and churches. The other is a list of the most important businesses in town. All of that is all on a single page. That page is too large to put on a sheet of paper here, so we will focus on a portion of the big map which covers the main section of town, followed up by one that shows drawings of factories, stores, churches and other buildings.

The 1913 Aero View map can be purchased on-line at this time (2022). In the future, it will probably be available on-line as a “used” item, but may still be available new.

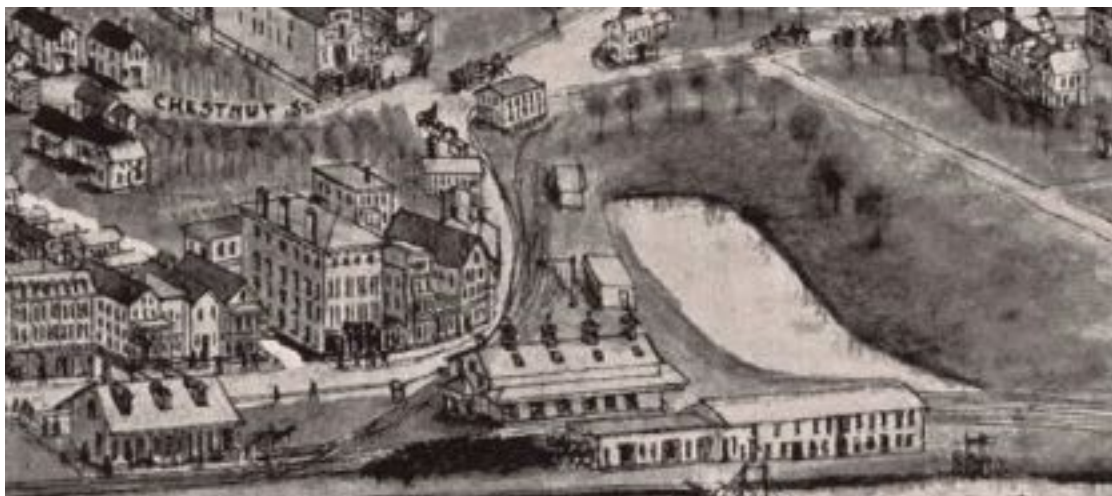
On the next page is the portion of that map which includes the most inhabited of town, which is the area along Main Street.



At the left (South side), you can see South Street vertically. At the right, we see the convergence of Suffield St and North Main Street, which heads north to Agawam/Springfield. As you look upward, you see that most everything is between Main St. and Center St. Then there are some buildings as far as West St, but not much after that.

In the next section of the map, notice the bottom-right section of Main Street. You can see a “pond” on the right side of the map, above the canal, but below the convergence of North Main St and Suffield St. Hayden (1886) said that Mr. Carleton and Mr. Niles built a sawmill by canal, near that pond, which is known as “Carleton’s Basin”. Mr. Carleton was in the lumber business. He used that basin as a holding pond for logs. That Basin was fully filled-in in 1917 .

The Railroad passenger station is at the bottom-left of the following drawing. To the right of that is a larger building which was the Railroad Freight Station, which is at the point where Main Street curves to the left, and ends where it splits into North Main St. and Suffield St. As you look farther to the right , past Carleton’s Basin, you see Dr. Burnap’s mansion, that was known as “Maple Hill“. Dr. Burnap owned about 100 acres that including the mansion. That 100 acre plot is the largest lot for a house in downtown Windsor Locks.

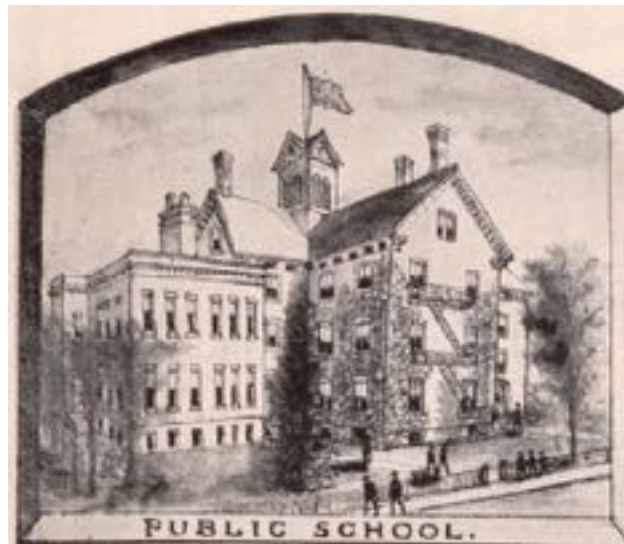


SOME LARGE BUSINESSES

The following are drawings of large buildings that were on the map.



CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS







CONCLUSION:

The 1913 “Aero Map of Windsor Locks” by Hughes and Bailey, is an excellent source of drawings which convey the look and feel of the Windsor Locks of 1913.

SOURCES:

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3784w.pm020260/?r=0.457,0.536,0.153,0.07,0>

1913 Aero View Map of Windsor Locks, Conn.
Hughes and Bailey Publishers

“Windsor Locks”, From “The Memorial History of Hartford County, CT”, by Jabez H Hayden, Esq. Edited by J Hammond Trumbull, LL.D, Published by Edward. L. Osgood, 1886.

Chapter 25

What and Where was “State Street”?

Many who lived in Windsor Locks prior to the demolition of all of the stores along Main Street don't remember “State Street”. Here is set of photos and a map to show what and where State Street was. State Street was a very short, dead-end street off of Main St. It went west (away from the canal). It was south of Church Street, and not far from where the Canal Bridge meets Main Street. If you were coming from Warehouse Point, you would take a left on Main Street, and State Street would be almost immediately on your right, just past Zaccheo's building, which was a big white building with gas pumps in the front. It was a Car Dealership which sold Pontiacs and a brand that you may never have heard of. The brand name was “Oakland”. That brand didn't last long.

Here is a series of photos that will help you understand what State St looked like before it was demolished during the Main Street Redevelopment Project in the mid 1970s.



Zaccheo's Pontiac Dealership - 1931



Tomasso Zaccheo's Pontiac Dealership
White building at left. Main St, south of Church St, across from bridge.

Fifteen Blocks of Windsor Locks

Center Street		Tate Block	☐	Main Street
		Beehive Block	☐	
	Grove St			
		Mooney Block	☐	
		Moran Block	☐	
		Cutler Hotel Block	☐	
		Burnap Block	☐	
	Oak St			
		Pease Block	☐	
		Rialto Block	☐	
		Bidwell Block	☐	
		Converse Block	☐	
	Spring St			
		Mather Block	☐	
		Outerson Block	☐	
	Church St			
		Barrett Block	☐	
		Coffin's Block	☐	
		☐		
		State St		
		Coogan's Block	☐	



**Canal Bridge to Main St.
State St. at Left, Church St. at right.
Zaccheo Block - Barrett Block - Bridgeview Restaraunt**



**Main Street northbound at State Street
which is on the left, just past the Esso sign**



**Main Street northbound at Route 140.
Canal bridge to the right. 1967**



**State St. (dead end) Looking west, away from Main St.
From corner of Main St. & State St, near Canal Bridge,
which was between Esso Station and Church Street.
This was before "1970s Main Street Redevelopment".**



State St. looking east to Main St. & Canal Bridge 1970s

SOURCES

The photo of the Zacccheo building was provided by Dr. Thomas Zacccheo, Jr, whose father owned the building. The other five photos were provided by Jim Roche.

Chapter 26

Rocco Bellini:

His Businesses and the St. Oronzo Society

In January 2022, a magazine from Turi, Italy wrote about the citizens of Turi who emigrated to Windsor Locks. The author, Raffaele Valentini, said:

“The Saint Oronzo Society of Windsor Locks was founded in 1919. From a newspaper article of 1961, we learn that Mr. Rocco Bellini, who was president of the Society for 22 years, received an acknowledgment from Pope John XXIII for the successful work of the Saint Oronzo Society. Mr. Bellini was born in Turi and came to America in 1909. He came from Turi and began his new life in Windsor Locks. He ran a paint and wallpaper shop on Spring Street.”

This is the story of Rocco Bellini and his achievements in Windsor Locks. He ran three different businesses during his life, besides being the leader of the St. Oronzo Society. The Windsor Locks Journal of Nov. 3, 1939 told part of the story of Rocco Bellini. He started in business in 1933 on Spring St. He moved to a larger store in the McGuinn building at 230 Main Street. That was on the West side of Main Street, across from the freight station. It was later the site of the Brown Derby restaurant.

In 1939, Rocco built a new, larger building on Main Street, north of the freight station. The opening of the store was a big production. Entertainment included dancing, music, fireworks and refreshments. That sounds like a great way to open up your new place of business. The name of his business was “The Windsor Locks Grain Company”.

Rocco’s first ad in the Windsor Locks Journal was on May 18, 1934, when his business was located on 9 Spring Street. He was selling “all kinds of baby chicks”. The cost was \$8 per hundred chicks. He also sold egg boxes for \$6.50 per thousand.

By October, 1938, he had moved his store to 230 Main St. His advertisements in the Windsor Locks Journal were not typical. They were long, creative, and they really emphasized the benefits of what he was selling. By this time, he was selling Purina’s new “Layena Eggs” which were being advertised nationally on radio. He was also selling everything you need to raise chickens on your farm or in your back yard.

In his 1939 ads, he was promoting cow food, books about farming, roofing materials, paint, fertilizer, wire, and all types of farm animal food. He had parties

at his store and invited the public to come in and join the fun. He advertising style was personal and fun. It was unlike any other advertising campaigns in the Windsor Locks Journal.

In the 1940s, Rocco Bellini was expanding into newer high-tech farm products, such as “electric brooders”. He added products for taking care of your farm buildings and your home. He had expanded his products to the area of home, lawn, landscape and garden care.

The March 13, 1947 Windsor Locks Journal said that Rocco Bellini had sold the Windsor Locks Grain Company to Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Swanson of New Haven. The name of the store did not change. The new owners kept putting ads in the Windsor Locks Journal. They were selling the same items that Mr. Bellini did.

Unfortunately, the new owners had a fire in their building. Office fixtures and supplies were damaged. The total damage was estimated to be about \$2,000. The April 3, 1952 Windsor Locks Journal said that the Windsor Locks Grain Company was moving to Warehouse Point.



Fire at Windsor Locks Grain Co. June 1947

From 1947 to 1952, Rocco Bellini had a real estate business. There were weekly ads in the Windsor Locks Journal in which he sold houses, land, restaurants, and other businesses. It is obvious from the number and size of the ads that Mr. Bellini was very active in the real estate business during those years.

In July of 1954, Rocco Bellini opened up a new retail paint and wallpaper store on West Spring Street. The new store was set up to sell the latest nationally-advertised paints and wall papers. His first ad in the Windsor Locks Journal was on July 22, 1954. He was selling not only paint and wall paper, but also floor coverings. There were more ads in 1955 through 1959. They expanded their items for sale to Venetian blinds and aluminum doors and windows. There were no more ads after 1959. We can assume that his Rocco's Paint and Wallpaper store lasted from 1954 to at least 1959, but it may have lasted longer.

Here are two photos of the annual St. Oronzo celebration in Windsor Locks. Rocco Bellini was very active in the St. Oronzo Society. He was president of the Society for 22



St. Oronzo parade at corner of Main St. and Spring St.



*St. Oronzo celebration, St. Mary's Church, Windsor Locks, Conn.
Vito Colapietro, President of St. Oronzo Society standing in front of statue*

years. He advertised the annual festivals up until 1962. In 1962, he advertised that the Saint Oronzo Hall could be rented for parties, weddings, meetings, etc. Then the St. Oronzo property was put up for sale in 1962. The St Oronzo festival was held in 1962, but that was the last one.

In the June 6, 1963 Windsor Locks Journal, it was announced that Rocco and his wife were going on an ocean voyage back to Italy to visit his home country for the first time in 54 years. On August 15, 1963, the newspaper said that a message had been received that Mr. and Mrs. Bellini were about to return to Windsor Locks. No further information could be found about Mr. Rocco Bellini after that.

CONCLUSION

Rocco Bellini, like other immigrants from Europe arrived in Windsor Locks with nothing and he only spoke Italian. He overcame those limitations, and had his own farm supply business as early as 1934. He moved to increasingly larger stores, until he built the large store on Main Street, which he sold in 1947. He had a real estate business from 1947 to 1952. He opened a paint and wall paper store in 1954, which lasted at least through 1959.

We know that he was the head of the Saint Oronzo Society for 22 years and received acknowledgement for that from Pope John XXIII.

Windsor Locks enjoyed the St. Oronzo festivals from 1922 to 1962. Mr. Bellini was the major force behind the Society and the festivals. He is probably the only person from Windsor Locks to get a letter of thanks from the Pope. Mr. Bellini had a large and positive effect on Windsor Locks for a very long time.

SOURCES

Valentini, Raffaele, Turi-Windsor Locks: One-way., story written in Italian in the magazine "Il Paese", published in Turi, Italy, January/February issue, 2022.

Montemerlo, Melvin D. St. Oronzo of Turi and Windsor Locks, in Windsor Locks History, self published in 2017, Bel Air MD.

A number of references to the Windsor Locks Journal were used, and the exact references are given in the text of the chapter.

Chapter 27

The Italian Cooperative Society (ICS) and the Marconi Brothers: Their Overlapping Success

The histories of the Marconi Brothers and of the Italian Cooperative Society (ICS) overlap. This chapter tells their stories. They were two important retail businesses in the downtown Windsor Locks area between 1907 and 1975.

The ICS began in 1907 when a group of Italian immigrants living in Windsor Locks formed a corporation.

In 1915, the ICS bought Theodore Shottmuller's bakery on Grove Street. The sale included a double tenement on Grove Street. The Feb. 26, 1915 issue of the Windsor Locks Journal said that the ICS planned to run the bakery in addition to their grocery store on Main Street. Note that the ICS bought a building which they could profit from by renting the store and the rooms. More importantly, we learned that the ICS had a grocery on Main Street.

The March 3, 1920 Windsor Locks Journal said that the ICS sold their building on Main Street, which was across the street from the railroad station, to Moses Goldfarb. It also said that the ICS bought the Converse building on Main Street to replace the property that they had sold to Mr. Goldfarb, and that the ICS would move their grocery store from the Goldfarb building to the corner store in the Converse building. (See the Goldfarb building in the photo below.)



**Central
Hall
block**

Coly's Hotel

**Goldfarb
block, was
Moran block**

**Bee Hive
building with
Mansard roof,
3 chimneys**

The purchase of the Converse building was a major investment. It not only gave the ICS a place to run the grocery store that they were moving from the Goldfarb building, it also gave them another store to use or rent out on the street level, and two more floors of space that they could rent out to companies or clubs. The ICS was moving aggressively in Windsor Locks' business world. See the Converse building in the photo below.

The Dec 17, 1920 Windsor Locks Journal said that the ICS had moved their grocery store from the Goldfarb building to the corner store of the Converse



building, as planned. Then things settled down for three decades. In the 1920s, 30s and 40s, there were advertisements in the Windsor Locks Journal for the ICS grocery store on the corner of Spring and Main Streets, and the liquor store next to it. They had been successful for 43 years.

Then in 1949, the ICS liquidated itself. It went out of business! No reasons could be found as to why that happened. It had existed since 1907.

That brings us to the "overlap" between the histories of the ICS and of the Marconi brothers. The Converse building changed hands again. The June 2, 1949 Windsor Locks Journal tells us that Angelo, Lewis and John Marconi just bought the Converse building from the ICS. That was the building at the corner of Main and Spring Streets where the ICS had their grocery store and their liquor store.

An advertisement in the August 3, 1950 Windsor Locks Journal told "the rest of the story". **The grocery store and liquor store which were owned by the ICS, had been run by the Marconi brothers.** The June 2, 1949 Journal showed that the Marconi brothers, were not only running those two stores for the

ICS, but they also owned two other businesses on Main Street. Here is a list of the Marconi brothers' businesses in the years leading to 1950. They:

- 1) owned a luncheonette in the Rialto Theater Building
- 2) owned a "newsroom" near their their luncheonette, which was next to the Pease store in the building on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. The only hint as to what the "news room" did was an article which mention boys who delivered newspapers went there.
- 3) operated a grocery store in the Converse building for the ICS
- 4) operated a liquor store in the Converse building for the ICS.

When the ICS sold the Converse building to the Marconi brothers, the Marconi brothers replaced the ICS's grocery store with their own luncheonette from the Rialto building. They also also owned and ran the liquor store which was next door. They rented out the spaces in the upper two floors.

As an aside, it would be interesting to know when the Marconi brothers started their luncheonette in the Rialto theater and their "Newsroom"? No information could be found on the newsroom. However the Oct. 10, 1937 Windsor Locks Journal said that the Marconi brothers had just bought the confectionary store of Leo and Peter Viola, which was in the Rialto Theater building, and that the new owners would open it as a luncheonette. This tells us that the Marconi brothers were in business by 1937.

The Marconi brothers owned the Converse building, and operated their luncheonette from 1950 until the Main Street Redevelopment Project bought up and tore down all of the retail businesses along Main Street. The Marconi Luncheonette or "Wuzzy's", as it was often called, was in business from 1950 to 1975. It was a very popular place, both for teenagers and adults.



Marconi's Luncheonette on corner of Spring St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn., was usually called "Wuzzy's". A great Ice Cream Store and teenage hangout.

We have now seen the story of the Italian Cooperative Society and the Marconi Brothers. While photos of the Marconi brothers and their luncheonette were available, no photographs could be found of the ICS people or businesses.

CONCLUSION:

The ICS was a cornerstone of Windsor Locks retail business from 1907 to 1950. It was started by a group of Italian immigrants as a way to make money, and improve their lives. The Italian Co-operative Market was on Main Street from 1920 through 1950. The ICS made most of their money by owning properties on or near Main Street and renting the stores and rooms of their buildings to businesses and clubs.



John, Angelo and Louie Marconi

“Marconi’s Luncheonette” was very popular from 1950 to 1975. The three brothers had businesses on Main Street from 1937 to 1975. The Marconi brothers were savvy businessmen and popular with the customers. The Marconi brothers are also remembered for their long and strong fight against the Main Street Redevelopment Project. They argued that if new businesses came in and build new buildings, as the Redevelopment Project promised, local businesses wouldn’t be able to afford the rent. They were right, but they lost their “good fight”. They weren’t quitters. They moved their luncheonette to Suffield.

The ICS bolstered downtown Main Street and its Italian-American population with its businesses for 47 years. The Marconi brothers were a mainstay on Main Street for close to 40 years.

As an aside: Louise Marconi O’Boyle provided an answer to the question: “Which of the Marconi Brothers was the leader?” Her answer was: “There were three brothers: Wuzzy (Angelo), Louie, and Johnnie. My uncle

Wuzzy. Their father died in 1920 ... the boys ages were 10, 7, and 5. So, my nonna made Wuzzy the father image as he was the oldest. It most likely began that way. Marconi's Luncheonette was first named Wuzzy's ... then, changed afterwards. How the 3 of them actually made it all work ... well, it all boils down to FAMILY.” (June 7, 2023)

Another answer to “who was the leader of the Marconi Brothers?” came from Lenny Montemerlo, who worked at Wuzzy’s when he was a teenager. He said that none of them was in charge. They all worked every day, but at night two of them went home. They took turns. There was no leader. They just worked together naturally.

And that’s the story of two intersecting forces in the growth of Windsor Locks, the Marconi brothers and the ICS.

SOURCES

Montemerlo, Melvin D., Marconi Brothers Luncheonette (Wuzzy’s), Chapter 8 of Windsor Locks History, Self published, Bel Air, MD, 2017

Montemerlo, Melvin D., “The 15 Blocks of Windsor Locks”. Chapter 30 of Windsor Locks History, Self published, Bel Air, MD, 2017

Louise Marconi O’Boyle, Facebook post in “You know you’re from Windsor Locks when” June 23, 2023.

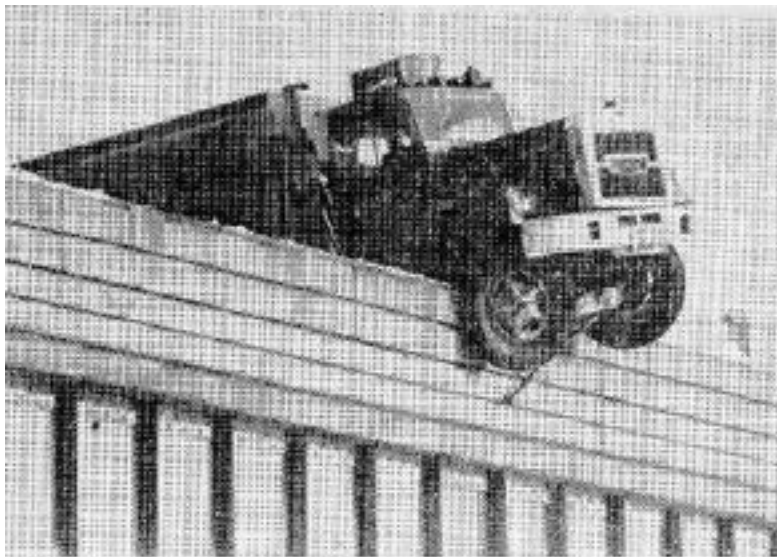
Lenny Montemerlo phone call on June 23, 2023.

A number of Windsor Locks Journal issues which are identified in the text. The Windsor Locks Journal issues can be found in their archive at:
<https://windsorlocks.advantage-preservation.com/>

Chapter 28

Man Knocked off of Dexter Coffin Bridge

At about 7:25 AM on January 29, 1976, an 18 year old Windsor man, David Nelson had a minor accident in his car on the ice-covered Dexter Coffin bridge. His was going northbound on the bridge, skidded and struck an abutment. He got out of the car to check the damage. While looking at the front end of his car, his car was struck in the rear by another car. His car hit him and pushed him over the abutment, and he fell 80 feet into the icy Connecticut River. Shortly after that, a tractor trailer jack-knifed, skidded, and the cab ended up on top of the abutment, hanging over the water. The truck driver was not injured. See photo below.



Truck over Dexter Coffin Bridge

Luckily a State Police car was driving over the bridge soon after the accidents and called Windsor Locks Fire Department to come to the rescue. They arrived quickly. They lowered one of their men, Dean Ribaud, over the side of the bridge to rescue Mr. Nelson. Mr. Ribaud found Mr. Nelson conscious. He remembered being knocked over the bridge abutment, but didn't remember the fall or hitting the river. Below is dual photo. On the left, you can see an arrow pointing to Mr. Nelson lying on the ice in the river. In the photo on the right, you see a photo of Mr. Nelson being lifted up from the water, and Mr. Ribaud is standing on the ice.

Thirty five firemen from Windsor Locks arrived at the scene quickly. Mr. Nelson was taken to the hospital and treated for fractures. He made it to the hospital about an hour after he fell from the bridge. The firemen and the police did a great job.

Mr. Nelson told Mr. Ribauda that he was surprised that he wasn't killed by that long fall onto the icy river. It turns out that Mr. Nelson and his friend Deborah Daulhinais, age 16, were driving to the Berkshires to do some skiing, when the accident occurred. She was not hurt.

There are lessons to be learned from this about driving in icy conditions.



**Left: arrow points to Mr. Nelson.
Right: Mr Ribauda standing while
Mr Nelson is being lifted.**

SOURCES

The photos shown above, and the news articles were found on Mr. Jack Daugherty's "flickr" website:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gcdougherty>

The information was from the January 29, 1976 Issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*.

There was another news article on that website but the name and date of the newspaper was not given. The content of that article and of the *Windsor Locks Journal* were quite similar. There was no disagreement among the two.

Chapter 29

Harry Brusie: Nationally Known Sulky Racer and Horse Trainer

Harry Brusie was born in Egremont, MA in 1873. He died in 1941, at the age of 68. When he died, his obituary was found in 253 newspapers in 23 states across the United States. He may well be the most widely-known person who ever lived in Windsor Locks. The Windsor Locks Journal had 17 articles about him from 1898 until his death in 1941. The Hartford Courant had 58 articles about him from 1901 to 1922.

The first newspaper article that mentioned his name was a 1898 article in the *Windsor Locks Journal* that gave the results in a horse race. Given that he was born in 1876, he was 22 when 1898 race was run. He won a sulky race in Suffield. It said he was from Hartford.

The second Windsor Locks Journal article to mention him was on October 15, 1915. It said that the largest and fastest group of sulky horses would be racing in Windsor, and the best drivers would be racing, including Harry Brusie.

The third mention of Harry Brusie in the Windsor Locks Journal was in the Dec. 8, 1916 issue. It said that Mr. John J. Byrnes, owner of the hotel on Main Street, leased his hotel to Mr. Harry Brusie, along with all of its furnishings and equipment, and the cafe connected with the hotel. Mr. Brusie changed the name of the hotel from the Hotel Byrnes to the Hotel Brusie. Below is an advertising card from the hotel at that time.



Mr. Brusie combined his lease of the hotel with his horse racing business. The January 26, 1917 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* had an article on a Road Drivers Club of Hartford, which was going to hold a dinner at the hotel for more than 100 people, many of whom were his horse racing friends and associates.

The *Windsor Locks Journal* of May 8, 1917, said that Mr. Byrnes sold the Hotel that he had been leasing to Mr. Brusie, to Mr. Vito Colapietro. Mr. Brusie continued to manage the hotel until 1924 when he turned his lease over to his brother, Fred E. Brusie. Harry was in the hotel business for about eight years.

The Windsor Locks Journal of June 9, 1918 said that Mr. Brusie was a popular driver of trotting horses throughout the East, and that he made a grand showing during the past weekend. He won eleven first-places, which gave him a total of 25 for the season. He didn't drive in all of the races, He had other drivers, including his son, Lymon.

The *Boston Herald* of August 22, 1921 said that Mr. Brusie had won \$8,369 on the Bay State Circuit that year. In 2023 dollars, that would be the equivalent of \$142,000. Those were not his total winnings for the year. They were only his winnings from a single racing circuit.

The *Boston Herald* of July 27, 1925 said that Brusie was the fourth leading money winner, with winnings of \$7,307, which in 2023 dollars is \$127,000 in 2023 dollars. Mr. Brusie was continuing to make a very good living.

The Nov. 24, 1922 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* showed that Mr. Brusie was selling racehorses, and was using the hotel address to do so. Mr. Brusie remained in Windsor Locks until 1926. He lived in town for nine years.

Harry got other members of his family into racing trotters. A 1933 photo of Harry and his son, Lymon, is shown above. They often competed in the same races. Harry's brother, Fred Brusie, was also into racing. Like Harry, he was also into the hotel business. He and his wife ran the Elm Tree Inn in his hometown of Egremont, MA. Fred was in racing with his brother, Harry, and nephew, Lymon. However, due to poor health, he returned home to Egremont, where he died on June 12, 1932. (Springfield Republican of June 12, 1932)



The *Windsor Locks Journal* issue of June 14, 1941 had the obituary for Harry Brusie. Harry died in Boston after a long illness. It described Harry's interest in the hotel on Main Street, and said that Harry was well-known throughout the country as a harness racing driver. It said that several years before, Harry switched to become a trainer of trotters when running tracks became popular in the East.

He was one of the most popular drivers at the old Charter Oak Park track in Hartford, and also at Sage Park in Windsor. The *Windsor Locks Journal* said that he was one of the finest drivers in the country, and that during the 1929 season, he won the country win/race record with fifty-one races to his stable's credit. The funeral was in East Hartford, and that is where he was buried.

The Harness Racing Hall of Fame elected him to the status of "Immortal" in 1978. The inscription reads: "He trained and raced around New England for forty years. He developed many good half-mile horses, including Minor Hal, Quite Sure and Sturdy. Brusie was much loved by sportsmen because of his native wit and personality. His son, Lyman joined him at the stable for some time but then resigned to go with the thoroughbreds."

<https://harnessmuseum.com/content/harry-brusie>

The book, *The History of Harness Racing in New England*, by Robert Temple, 2010, said the following: "For more than 40 years, Harry Brusie (1876-1941) who was born in Egremont, Mass, developed, trained and drove some of New England's finest horses both on the old Bay State Circuit and throughout New England. Amongst his best were Sturdy, who set a world record for two-year-old trotting colts (2.06 1/2), Quite Sure, Minor Hal, and Tippie Volo, a brown filly who gained national notoriety by winning 13 straight races."

Conclusion

Harry Brusie, was not a native of Windsor Locks. He moved to town with his family, and leased the Hotel Byrnes on Main Street, changing the hotel's name to "The Hotel Brusie". He and his family lived in town for about nine years. Long before he moved to Windsor Locks, he had become a top notch harness racer. He continued that while in Windsor Locks, and also got into the business of buying and selling horses there.

His 40 year career in racing lasted from about 1895 to about 1935. He moved from racing to training trotters in the last part of his career. One of his brothers and two of his sons joined him in his racing endeavors.

He was one of the most prolific and most successful sulky drivers of his time, and he was known nationwide. He was given the rank of "Immortal" by the Harness Racing Hall of Fame. He had a horse that won 13 straight races.

He was making the equivalent of \$119,000 (in 2023 dollars) during his career, and that didn't include what he was making from the hotel.

As of this writing (2019) the average length of a professional basketball player's career is about ten years, and for a professional football player. It is less than four years. Harry's was about 40 years. It would be difficult to find other athletes who have had an active professional career of 40 years. Interestingly, he also controlled his own career for those four decades. It is rare to find any professional athlete who controls his own career. Most are on teams that have coaches, and they can be fired or traded at any moment.

Sources

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Harness Racing Hall of Fame
<https://harnessmuseum.com/content/harry-brusie>

Numerous newspaper articles were referenced above, and the specific date of each article was given.

Chapter 30

Jenkins Shoe Store

Jenkins Shoe Store was a fixture at 222 Main Street in Windsor Locks for a long time. A September 21, 1972 Windsor Locks Journal article said that Alfred B. Jenkins retired 14 years early, which means that store closed in 1958. It also said that he was 81 years old when he died, which means that he was born in 1891. A Springfield Union article on Sept 18, 1972, indicated that the store opened in 1904. We know a bit more from the June 29, 1917 Windsor Locks Journal article, which said that Alfred B. Jenkins was married to Maud C. Steele of Clinton, MA on the previous Tuesday.

His store was on Main Street, just a few stores north of Red Leary's Appliance shop, and two stores before you got to the Brown Derby. The following photo has a black arrow pointing to what used to be Jenkins Shoe Store. He lived at 119 Elm Street at the time of his death.



Arrow points to 222 Main Street,
where Jenkins Shoe Store was

Jenkins Shoe Store was the only shoe store in town until Bianchi's Shoe Store opened up in Coly's hotel. Jenkins shoe store was at 222 Main St., next to Wenzel's Radio Service at 224 Main St, which was next to the Brown Derby.

A computer search on “Jenkins Shoe Store” turned up 96 entries in the Windsor Locks Journal between Feb 26, 1909 and 1956. Almost all of them were advertisements. Here are four of the advertisements from the earliest to the latest. Unfortunately the ad below is a bit cryptic. It says that “we are going to occupy the next store north, March 1, but it doesn’t way where it is.

Do You Know Where Jenkins' Shoe Store is ?

Well, we are going to occupy the
nex' store north, March 1. Come
and see us.

Windsor Locks Journal ad- Feb.26,1909

The ad to the right is from the March 9, 1934 Windsor Locks Journal, and is very interesting to read. It says that the sole of this shoe has a “toe stud” which makes the sole of the shoe much longer lasting.

The April 4, 1953 ad to the right says, at the bottom, that the address of the store is 222 Main Street.

A search of the archives of the Windsor Locks Journal on the name “Alfred B. Jenkins shows that there were 51 articles in the newspaper during the years 1917 and 1972 about him and his family. Many are about his son and two daughters. There is one which mentions Alfred B. Jenkins which is quite interesting. It is the October 5, 1940 issue, which is about the formation of Windsor Locks' Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Jenkins was a charter member of the Chamber of Commerce along with: Dexter D. Coffin, Don LaRussa, Dr. Ettore Carneglia, and a host of others. The cost for belonging to the Chamber of Commerce at that time was \$3 per year.

A telephone call with Maggie McIntyre Knowlton on October 24, 2022, revealed more about Mr. Jenkins. Mrs. Knowlton used to live near Mr. Jenkins when she was growing up in Windsor Locks. She said

Adds 25% MORE WEAR



Reg. U. S.
Pat. Office

When you buy
children's shoes,
be sure to look
for the famous
Herbst TOE
STUD. You'll find it only on genuine
Herbst TOM-BOY Shoes (for sale at
our store exclusively).

This TOE STUD is placed at the
vital spot on the bottom of each shoe.
It re-inforces the sole and saves wear
and tear at just the spot where children
raise havoc with shoes.

Come to our store and see our big
selection of school shoes, dress slippers
and play ensembles for boys and girls—
all with the *Herbst* TOE STUD—and
all at very POPULAR PRICES.

Jenkins Shoe Store

Main Street, Windsor Locks

that she got all of her shoes at Jenkins store when she was a child. She was fascinated with the smell of leather that permeated the store and surprised at the large number of different shoes that he had. She said that Mr. Jenkins was a very nice man. During the 1938 hurricane, the roof was blown off of the house that Mr. Jenkins lived in. She also said that he raised parakeets in his garage.

SOURCES

Windsor Locks Journals of 02-26-1909, 06-29-1917, 03-09-1934, 05-09 1934, 10-05-1949, 04-04 1953, 09-12-1972,

Springfield Union article on Sept 18, 1972

Telephone call with Maggie McIntyre Knowlton on October 24, 2022.

America's
most popular
WALK-OVER



available in
190 sizes

So greatly in demand, the Broadway is available in 190 sizes...4 to 15, AAAA to EEEE—a world's record for perfect fit.

Handsomely styled in choice calfskin. Custom toe. Hugs your ankle neatly. Come in and see how smart it looks on your feet. Polished black or Bridle tan.

Jenkins'
Shoe Store
222 Main Street
Windsor Locks

Chapter 31

James D. Outerson: Public Servant and Businessman Extraordinaire

INTRODUCTION

James D. Outerson is one of the most extraordinary individuals in the history of Windsor Locks. Of all of the important people in the history of our town, he is probably the least known. The goal of this chapter is to make known the incredible life and accomplishments of James D. Outerson. But first, it is important to give some background on the family he was born into.

His uncle, James Outerson, was born in Scotland. The Outerson family moved to Ireland, where James' younger brother, Andrew, was born. Andrew married Aileen Keller there. Andrew and James were in the paper making business in Ireland. Andrew, Aileen and James emigrated to the United States and settled in Windsor Locks.

James bought a sawmill by the canal, and turned it into a paper mill. His brother, Andrew, joined him in that effort. James sold his paper mill in 1855. He became the superintendent of the Persse and Brooks paper mill. Unfortunately he was killed in a train accident. His brother, Andrew, took over James' job as superintendent of the Persse and Brooks paper mill.

Although we do not know the date, Andrew became the owner of the Outerson Block on the corner of Church and Main Street. [A "Block" is an old term for a large commercial building.] This background tells us that the Outerson family of Windsor Locks was prominent, cultured, capable, and well to do.

JAMES D. OUTERSON

We now turn to the subject of this chapter, James D. Outerson, the son of Andrew and Aileen Outerson of Windsor Locks, Ct. Andrew and Aileen had eight children, two of which became physicians. James D. Outerson was born to Andrew and Aileen in 1872. According to the September 18, 1936 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*, Mr. Outerson was one of the best-known residents of the town. He was also well-known throughout the county and the state. He spent his life in Windsor Locks. After graduating from Windsor Locks public schools, he took a business course in a Hartford school. After graduation, he briefly took a job in a Hartford department store, and then in a commercial grocery business in Hartford.

Mr. Outerson was just 23 years old when he moved back to Windsor Locks. His career took off. In 1895, he was elected to THREE Windsor Locks town government positions: **town clerk, town treasurer** and **town registrar!!!!** He held all three of those jobs until he died forty years later in 1936. During those 40 years, he was endorsed by both the Democrat and Republican parties! That makes him unique.

The best place to learn about James D. Outerson is in the *Windsor Locks Journal* archive. His name was in that newspaper 552 times between 1895 and 1936.

In 1895, he bought a shoe store which was located in the Burnap Block (see photo below). The Burnap Block is the second building from the left. It has four chimneys on its roof. It was a large building which housed the offices of the telephone company, the telegraph company, the *Windsor Locks Journal*, and shops such as T. F. Carroll's millenary shop, W. A. Dwight's jewelry store, the Opera House, Mr. Outerson's store, and a Polish rooming house.



Pease Block Burnap Block Charter Oak Hotel Moran Block about 1925

The July 8, 1904 advertisement on the right shows that he moved his store from the Burnap Block to the Outerson Block on the corner of Church and Main Streets. The move enabled him to have a much larger store. By then, he had added the sale of men's and women's clothing to his shoe business.

Removal Notice.

On or about the middle of July I will move my business from the present location in the Burnap block to the more commodious store in the Outerson block, at the corner of Main and Church streets, where enlarged facilities will better accommodate the increasing trade and enable us to add desired lines to our stock of Shoes, Ladies' and Gents' Furnishings, etc. In the meantime prices will be reduced on everything in stock in order to save the trouble of moving it.

J. D. OUTERSON,
WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

AGENCY FOR FIRE INSURANCE.

While in the Burnap Block, Mr. Outerson kept all of his Windsor Locks files in his store, which also served as his office. When he moved to the Outerson Block, he had a separate office for his town duties. In the photo of the Outerson Block (below), you can see the sign for his government office on the windows.



Brick building on left is the Outerson Block. Notice the "Town Clerk" and "Tax Collector" signs on the windows. It is on the North corner of Church and Main Streets, facing Main St.

Mr. Outerson's obituary in the *Windsor Locks Journal* said: "He was ever interested in civic affairs, and took part in local public affairs of many kinds. With a keen sense of humor, Mr. Outerson could tell a good story and relate many interesting incidents in his official life."

We already know about Mr. Outerson's three jobs with the town government, and his ownership of a men's and women's clothing store. That was only part of his career. He was also:

- secretary of the Building and Loan Association,
 - owner of a local agency for accepting payment of gas, electric and water bills,
 - owner of an insurance and bonding agency,
 - member of the Chamber of Commerce.
 - member of the Riverside Council of the Knights of Columbus,
 - member of the Hartford Lodge of Elks, and
 - an accomplished pianist and director of the Outerson Orchestra.
- (information from the *Windsor Locks Journal* of Sept 18, 1936)

His death in 1936 took was a shock to the citizens of the town. He was taken to St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, where he stayed for a week. His condition was not known when he went to the hospital. He died of kidney failure. He passed away in his sleep.

Here is a photo of his gravestone in the Grove Cemetery in Windsor Locks, CT.



CONCLUSION

Mr. James D. Outerson came from a very accomplished family. They provided a family setting that encouraged their children to do well. The head of the household, Andrew, had a distinguished career in paper making both in Ireland and in Windsor Locks, and he owned the Outerson Block on Main Street. Two of James' brothers became medical doctors. James had an incredible career which included being the Windsor Locks town clerk, registrar and treasurer for 40 years with the backing of both political parties. He also had a clothing store, and a number of other businesses, and he was an accomplished musician. It is unfortunate that no photograph of Mr. Outerson could be found.

The life and career of James D. Outerson can only be described as incredible

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Locks Canal Heritage State Park. Prepared for the Bureau of Parks and
Forests, Conn Dept. of Environmental Protection. September 1991.
81 Dayton Road, P.O.Box 46, South Glastonbury, CT 06073.

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Outerson family. In 1995, he sent a copy of it to Mickey Danyluk of Windsor
Locks. It provided this chapter with information on James D. Outerson’s parents
and his uncle, James Outerson.

Windsor Locks Journal, multiple issues. The exact issues are listed in the text.

Springfield Republican, May 27, 1887 issue

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James D. Outerson (1872-1936), Windsor Locks, CT
<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Outerson-16>

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_phsrc=2c2-156144&_phstart=successSource&gsfn=James+D&gsln=Outerson&
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Chapter 32

Jabez Haskell Hayden: Windsor Locks' First Historian And Owner of a Silk Mill



Jabez Haskell Hayden

Jabez Haskell Hayden was born in Windsor, CT on December 20, 1811. From 1838 to 1881, he was a manufacturer of sewing silk in Windsor Locks where he resided until his death December 1, 1902. After his retirement from business he devoted himself to genealogical and historical research and writing and became Windsor's leading authority on local history. He contributed largely to Dr. Stiles' set of books "Ancient Windsor" and was the author of a volume of Historical Sketches and many occasional essays and papers. Mr. Hayden had a massive impact on Windsor Locks.

Jabez Haskell Hayden will always be remembered as the man who wrote the history of Windsor Locks from the days of its earliest settlers, when it was the Pine Meadow section of Windsor, to 1900. He also provided history material to Dr. Stiles, who lived in New York City, and depended on Mr. Hayden for information about Windsor Locks and surrounding towns for his books. If it wasn't for Jabez Haskell Hayden, we would not know much about the history of Windsor Locks from 1663 to 1900.

He not only wrote Windsor Locks history, he "made Windsor Locks history". He had the mind and the spirit of a businessman. Together with his business partner, Mr. H. Haskell, he set up a gin mill in 1811. He went to Hartford to work for the Connecticut Silk Manufacturing Company for three years. He studied the process thoroughly, and moved to Windsor Locks, where he and Mr. H. Haskell, turned the gin mill into a silk mill. The silk mill lasted for 43 years. At the age of 70, he retired in 1883, and they sold the silk mill to Mr. Arthur H. Bottum who continued its operation. Below is a photo of the Haskell and Hayden Silk Mill, on the banks of the canal.



Haskell and Hayden Silk Co.

He had made sufficient money to do what he loved in his retirement - to research and write the history of Windsor Locks. He produced many chapters for various books, and gave many talks on town history. He integrated those works into a single book, "Historical Sketches", which was published by the Windsor Locks Journal in 1900. Two years later, Jabez Haskell Hayden died on Dec 1, 1902. During his retirement years, he not only developed his own material, he also provided a great deal of information to Dr. Stiles for his set of books on the History of Windsor, CT and surrounding towns. Dr. Stiles wrote a three volume set of books on the history and genealogies of Windsor and surrounding towns. He published them in 1853, and then updated them and published them again in 1893. In 1893, he was going to write a chapter on Windsor Locks, but after seeing what Mr. Haden had done, he used one of Mr. Hayden's chapter's on Windsor Locks instead. He said that he couldn't do as well as his friend could.

Jabez Haskell Hayden had three big achievements in Windsor Locks. The biggest was writing its early history. The second was in starting and running a gin mill and then a silk mill. The third thing that he did is not well known. His grandfather had owned the parcel of land that the Memorial Hall is now on. It had passed in to his hands. When the local chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic was looking for land for the Memorial Hall that he wanted to have built, he sold them that plot of land for a very reasonable price.

Jabez Haskel Hayden is one of the few people that Windsor Locks couldn't have done without.

SOURCES:

Hayden, Jabez Haskell, "Historical Sketches", Published by the Windsor Locks Journal, Windsor Locks, Ct. 1900.

Holcombe Genealogy File; <https://www.holcombegenealogy.com/g0/p905.htm>

Chapter 33

Graziano Graziani: Biggest Private Investor in Windsor Locks

No Windsor Locks citizen has owned more of Windsor Locks than Graziano Graziani, a Italian immigrant who became a contractor and investor in Windsor Locks. He owned four of the largest commercial buildings on Main Street. He built and sold high quality houses, and he also built both houses and tenements as rentals. He paid more annual tax to Windsor Locks than any other individual for decades. The total value of his properties were close to the value of C.H.Dexter & Sons' properties.

He was born in Italy in 1890, and arrived in the United States in 1911. He quickly learned the skills necessary to become a contractor. The Windsor Locks Journal (WLJ) of Oct. 3, 1919 said that he had been paid for repairing a house. After that, his name showed up in the Windsor Locks Journal 179 times. Many of those were his advertisements. Many were about his investments on Main Street. Many were of his work on the Board of Directors of the Windsor Locks Savings Bank.

In the 1930s, his career took off, Besides building houses, he bought two of the 15 Blocks on Main Street within five weeks of each other. He bought the two big buildings (Blocks) on the north and south corners of Oak and Main Streets. They were the Pease Block on the southwest corner, and the Burnap Block, on the northwest corner. See the following photo.



**Pease Block is to the right of the trolley
It has a porch on the second floor;
Burnap Block has four chimneys.
Oak Street is between them.**

You can see both the Pease Block and the Burnap Block in the above photo. You can see the corner of the Pease block to the right of the trolley car. It has a porch on the middle floor. The Burnap Block is the next building to the right, with the four chimneys. Oak Street is between the two buildings. Allen Pease and his three sons had a large store in the Pease Block for 56 years. Their business was home heating and plumbing supplies and home furnishings. The property had been badly damaged by the September 1938 hurricane. Mr. Graziani turned the three-story Pease building into a two-story building, (WLJ Dec 2, 1938) First it was rented to Mr. Kamin. Then it became the home of Sid Portnoy's Modern Drug Store. See the photo below.



Allen Pease Co , founded in 1873 South corner of Oak and Main. Here the location has the "Modern Drug" sign. Mr. Graziani leased the building to Morris Kamin and it became Kamin's Department Store (1954)

Mr. Graziani completely razed the Burnap Block, and built a single-story building with three stores. The store on the "north" side, closest to the hotel, became the A&P Supermarket. That became the Windsor Locks primary grocery store for a long time. There were two smaller stores on the south side of the A&P. The one next to the A&P was the A&P Package Store. The store on the corner of Oak and Main was Don LaRussa's electronics store.



Graziani's Block. The three one-story stores replaced the Burnap Block (also called Central Hall)

The Windsor Locks Journal of Feb. 22, 1940 described Mr. Graziani's purchase of both the Burnap Block and the Pease block. It made an important statement about Mr. Graziani:

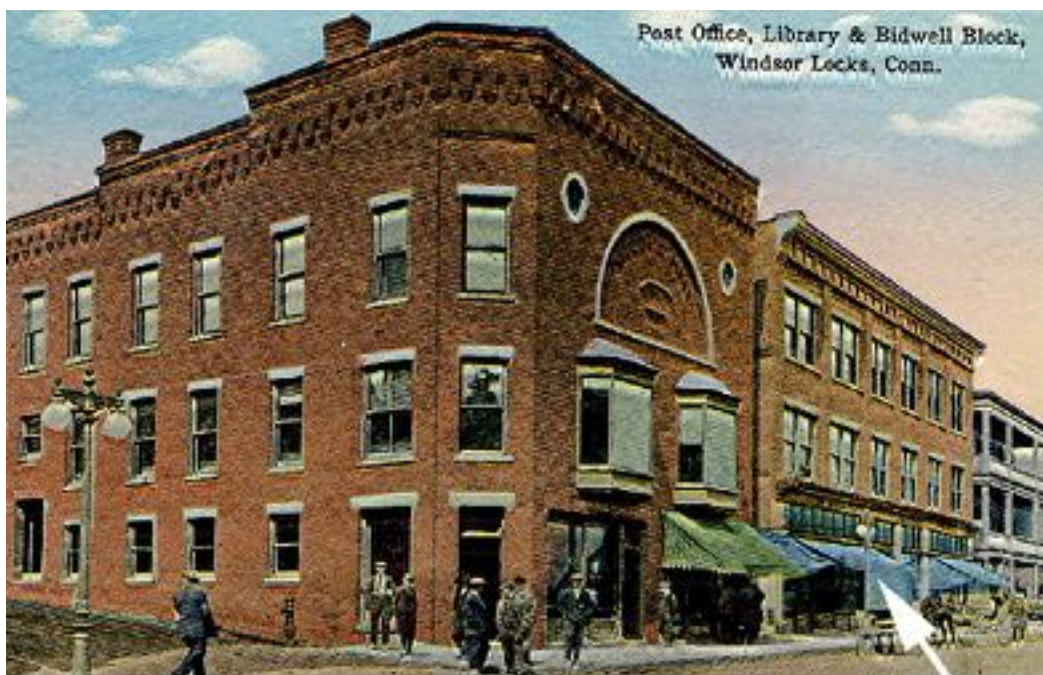
"Ownership of these two business sites, together with much other property in the town makes him the largest individual taxpayer, and shows that at least one builder-contractor has faith enough in Windsor Locks to own and remodel existing property within the town both for business and home ownership."

Mr. Graziani did not stop with those two Blocks. The December 3, 1942 WLJ tells us that he bought the Outerson Block, which is on the Northwest corner of Main and Church Streets. He had no plans to make changes to that block. That building housed the office of the Town Clerk, as well as a number of businesses. Below is a photo of that block in the 1950s. Mr. Graziani was then the owner of three of the 15 Blocks of Windsor Locks.



**Brick building on left is the former Outerson Block. (Late 1950s)
It is on the North corner of Church and Main Streets.**

Mr. Graziani didn't stop there. In 1961, he bought the Bidwell Block, which became his fourth Block on Main Street. The Bidwell Block had been in Bidwell family hands since it was built. See photo below.



**Bidwell Block, bought by Mr. Graziani
Is middle building. See Arrow.**

CONCLUSION

Graziano Graziani's effect on Windsor Locks was unique. Other leading businessmen owned a single one of the 15 Blocks on Main Street. Mr. Graziani owned four of them. He rebuilt the ones that needed rebuilding. He improved downtown Windsor Locks. The A&P re-shaped grocery shopping in Windsor Locks. Mr. Graziani's rebuilt Pease Blocks housed Sid Portnoy's Modern Drug Store. Sid's Modern Drug store was a unique shopping experience.

Mr. Graziani had FAITH in Windsor Locks. He believed that it had a big future, and that he could help it achieve its potential. He not only owned much of Main Street, he owned many houses and tenements in town which he rented out, and had had built and sold countless homes in town. He paid more town taxes than any other individual for a long time. He didn't just build things, he was a longtime member of the Board of Directors of the First National Bank.

When the Windsor Locks Government doing the Main Street Redevelopment Project, which tore down all of the commercial buildings on Main Street, it was saying that our Main Street didn't have a future. Mr. Graziani felt the opposite. He believed in the town and its Main Street. He had more invested more in Main Street than anyone else. He fought the demolition of Main Street, and lost.

Considering the history of Windsor Locks from 1663 to the present (2023), Graziano Graziani did more to develop the town than anyone else. He had the desire, the ability and the drive to make make the down grow. He had a positive view of the future. He worked hard to make it happen. Mr. Graziani wasn't one of the immigrants who went to work in the mills. He wanted to be a contractor. He wanted to build. He did build. Graziano Graziani is a man to be remembered. We can learn from Mr. Graziani.

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Other Windsor Locks Journal articles dated

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1925 05 15	1928 01 13	1938 11 25	1938 12 02
1940 02 23	1940 05 03	1940 08 02	1940 12 03
1961 10 05	1974 08 01	1974 10 31	

Chapter 34

Fred Marsh and His Motorcycle Company



Fred Marsh

The philosopher, Georg Hegel, said: “Nothing great has ever been accomplished without passion.”

For some, motorcycle riding is fun. For others, it is a profession. For Fred Marsh, it was a passion. As a young racer, he acquired the nickname “Demon”. He owned motorcycle dealerships for 77 years, from 1926 until he died in 2003. He raced during seven different decades. He was rode in hill-climbing events until he was 89 years old. There was a large celebration at his dealership on his 100th birthday in 2000. He even received a birthday present from the President and the First Lady (Bill and Hillary).

He was born in Italy in 1900. In the United States, his parents struggled to make a living. His mother died when he was 12. He went to work on a 100 acre farm. The farmer had a motorcycle, and let him ride it. He went to work as a streetcar conductor, and saved up his money to buy his first motorcycle. It was a Harley Davidson. He went to work for Harley Davidson.

In 1922, he built his own motorcycle to ride in 500 cc class races. In 1926, he quit his job at Harley Davidson, and started his own business selling Indian motorcycles. They were made in Springfield, MA. As a dealer, he was able to get Indian motorcycles for racing. Back then, motorcycles were not “hi-tech”. To slow down going into a turn, the rider would turn the motor off.

He had been racing on flat tracks and doing “hill-climbs”. He built his own hill-climbing motorcycles after Indian stopped producing motorcycles in 1953. He sold a variety of motorcycles. Below is a photo of Fred’s Norton Commando, which he used for hill climbing events (6).



**Fred Marsh's
Norton Commando
Hill Climbing Bike**

He opened his Marsh Motorcycle Co, in a small store on Bridge Street, near the bridge from Warehouse Point to Windsor Locks. For decades, starting in the 1950s, that store had a beautiful Indian Motorcycle in its front window.

Below is a photo of a 1950 Indian Chief, which was like those he had in the window of his store (8).

Later he started selling Moto Guzzi motorcycles, and opened a



larger shop in East Windsor.



Interior of Marsh Motorcycle Co.

He was inducted into the Motorcyclist Hall of Fame in 2002, when he was 102. He rode a small Harley every morning at his dealership until he died in 2003 at the age of 103. Right until the end, he rode 75 laps a day around his dealership, and did "figure eights", spirals and tight circles . During his racing career, he never bragged. He almost seemed shy when he was presented a medal or a trophy. Below is a photo of him next to a motorcycle on his 100th birthday (5).



**Fred Marsh on his
100th Birthday**

Below there is a photo of Fred in front of his dealership on his 100th birthday party and a photo of the interior of the dealership.



Fred Marsh at his dealership on 100th Birthday

Fred advertised in the Windsor Locks Journal. The ads show a side of Fred's business that hasn't been discussed so far. His shop sold bicycles. His first ads in the Windsor Locks Journal were in 1949, and only mentioned bicycles. See the Nov. 29, 1949 ad below (9).

In 1963, he had an ad which showed motorcycles. See the Oct. 3, 1963 on the right (9).

Bicycles

**Come in and see the famous
INDIAN LINE**

**Order now for Christmas
MARSH MOTORCYCLE CO.
Bridge St., Warehouse Point
Tel. Windsor Locks 1126
ALSO BIKE REPAIRING**

**Windsor Locks Journal ad
Nov. 29, 1949**



BRIDGESTONE 7
Sportster
\$ 325.00

- * Fan cooled, 50cc engine with 200 MPH performance.
- * Three speed rotary, foot shift for power when you need it.
- * Two piece, foam rubber seat, front and rear suspension—it rides smooth on any road.
- * Rugged, utilized box frame takes the toughest treatment.
- * Electric starter is optional, speedometer, twin mirrors—it is loaded with safety and convenience.

SEE IT TODAY

MARSH
Motorcycle Co.
47 Bridge Street
Warehouse Point
Tel. NA 3-7795

**WLJ ad
Oct. 3, 1963**

Marsh Motorcycle Co.

FOR YOUR RIDING PLEASURE
 Famous Names In Motorcycling
 Benelli Bridgestone Ducati
 Matchless Norton Parilla
 Accessories — Supplies

47 BRIDGE STREET WAREHOUSE POINT
 Telephone 623-7795

Windsor Locks Journal ad
 Sept. 8, 1966

100 mpg, Suggested Retail Price
\$279
 P.O.E. (Chicago Extra)



TORA

Popular mini-enduro styling and
 a boost-ported rotary valve 2-stroke with
 4-speed transmission. Ideal for the whole family.

Marsh Motorcycle Co.

25 NORTH ROAD — WAREHOUSE POINT
 623-7795

Windsor Locks Journal ad
 Feb 28, 1974

As can be seen below, the ads from 1966 to 1974 focussed on motorcycles. He sold a number of different brands (9).

CONCLUSION:

Fred Marsh was not an ordinary person. His passion for motorcycling was extraordinary. His accomplishments were extraordinary. He never married, and he lived in his motorcycle shop (7). Passion means that some things get far more attention than other things. This chapter started with the words of Georg Hegel: "Nothing great has ever been accomplished without passion." Passion can bring extraordinary accomplishments if the person with the passion was born with the abilities to work on that passion. If you are passionate about becoming an opera star but are tone deaf, passion leads to frustration. Fred Marsh's passion enabled him to do what most motorcycle aficionados can only dream of. Photo of Fred Marsh below (2)



Fred Marsh

SOURCES:

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<https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-xpm-2003-06-10-0306101573-story.html>

(2) ———, AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame. “Freddie Marsh Inducted 2002”,

<http://hof.motorcyclemuseum.org/halloffame/detail.aspx?RacerID=222>

(3) Marsh Motorcycle Co. Inc

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(4) ———, “Fred Marsh hill climb Norton”, Wildguzzi.com, June 20, 2018

<https://wildguzzi.com/forum/index.php?topic=96617.0>

(5) Vernali, Sebastian. “Fred Marsh’s First 100 Years”, Moto Guzzi National Owners Club.

https://www.mgnoc.com/article_fred_marsh's_first_100_years.html

(6) ———, “Ride on, Fred Marsh. American Motorcyclist, September 2003.

[https://books.google.com/books?](https://books.google.com/books?id=6foDAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA6&lpg=PA6&dq=Ride+On,+Fred+Marsh+He+was+blind+in+one+eye.+Conditioned+reflexes+had+long+ago+compensate&source=bl&ots=Tp2_5K9X3v&sig=ACfU3U35vyWqZuBPFTGywNrgfFDEQze-DQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiEvsWttrP9AhX0kYkEHbVhDjMQ6AF6BAgGEAM#v=onepage&q=Ride%20On%2C%20Fred%20Marsh%20He%20was%20blind%20in%20one%20eye.%20Conditioned%20reflexes%20had%20long%20ago%20compensate&f=false)

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(7) Telephone conversation with Lenny Montemerlo, Feb. 27, 2023 provided information that Fred Marsh never married and lived in his place of business.

(8) ———. Indian Chief (motorcycle). Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Chief_%28motorcycle%29

(9) Windsor Locks Journal, dates shown underneath each ad.

Chapter 35

Comparing Early and Later Photos of Windsor Locks

Some old photographs of Windsor Locks have come to light. It is fun and informative to compare those photos, and see what we learn. Let's start with two photos of the Main Street between Grove and Oak Streets that were taken in 1880 and in 1925.

These two photos were taken of the same area, but from opposite directions. The 1880 (bottom) photo was taken from the north (Springfield) side, and the 1925 photo was taken from the south (Hartford) side. You can see that they each show the same four buildings: the Pease Block, the Burnap Block, the Charter Oak Hotel, and the Moran Block.

In both photos, you can identify:

- the Pease block by the porch in front of it,
- the Burnap block by the four chimneys on it, and
- the Charter Oak Hotel by the single chimney on it.

The Moran Block is clear in the bottom photo, but hidden in the top photo.

There are only 45 years difference between the two photos, but we see that progress had been made:

- There is a motorized truck in the 1925 photograph.
- The road is paved and there are trolley tracks in the 1925 photo.
- There are poles with wires in the 1925 photo. By 1903, there was electricity. The trolleys would not have



Pease Block Burnap Block Charter Oak Hotel Moran Block about 1925



Pease Block Burnap Block Charter Oak Hotel Moran Block about 1880

been possible without electricity. The poles with lines could also be for telegraph and/or for electricity.

- It can't be seen but there were no sewers in the 1880 photo. They were installed just before the road was paved.

We can see that life got better between 1880 and 1925. Walking down the street in either of those times, you would have heard conversations in languages other than English. The Polish and Italian immigrants had been coming to Windsor Locks in droves to get jobs at the mills. Life was much nicer in Windsor Locks than back in their home countries.

What did those four "Blocks" offer to the local citizenry?

- The Pease store sold: furniture, hardware, carpets, oil cloths, furnaces, pumps, bedding, crockery, windows, lead pipe, sewer pipe and other items for the home..

- The Burnap Block was the center of Windsor Locks social life, sporting events, and business. It had the best dance hall in the area. The floor of the dance hall was on springs which made dancing more lively. The floor was also used for basketball. They also held boxing events there. The Opera Hall held operas, musicals, band events, plays, and served as a room for big group meetings.

- The Charter Oak Hotel had rooms to rent and restaurants. The rooms were mostly rented to men. Women didn't travel for work back then.

- The Moran Block had Mr. Moran's mortuary, a tinning shop and furniture for sale. It also rented space to milliners, dressmakers, and others.

All in all, the four "Blocks" provided a wide variety of services to a growing town.

Now we turn to a set of three photos of Main Street, which is on the following page. The bottom photo is the 1880 photo that we saw above, and there are also photos from 1965 and from 1997. The middle photo, from about 1965, does not show the exact same area of Main Street as the other two. It shows the block between Oak and Spring Streets, whereas the other two show the block from Grove to Oak Streets.

The middle photo was included to show the crowded, jubilant, exciting nature of Main Street in its heyday. The 1940s, 50s and early 60s were the "Golden Era of Downtown Windsor Locks". At that time, it was the shopping, cultural and economic center of the town. It is where the mills and the shops were.

In that era, folks came from other towns to shop in Windsor Locks. It was often difficult to find a parking space on Main Street. It is where people shopped for groceries, did their banking, shopped for clothes and other necessary items, and where people "hung out" (Wuzzy's and Dexter Plaza).

1880 photo has some notes on the bottom which tell us what those blocks turned into in the 1900s:

- The Pease Block became “Sid’s “Modern Drug Store”.
- The Burnap Block turned into “Central Hall”, which turned into the A&P store and Don LaRussa’s appliance store.
- The Charter Oak Hotel became “Coly’s Hotel”, which was run by Vito Colapietro.
- The Moran Block was purchased by Moses Goldfarb, who had a clothing store there when he started, and then had Bianchi’s Bar and Restaurant on the first floor. He had rental units on the second floor.

The top photo of the set of three is from about 1997. The old stores and “Blocks” and stores along Main Street were all gone by about 1980. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Windsor Locks had a “Main Street Redevelopment Project”, which forced all of the business owners to sell their businesses and their property to the town, which promised that new companies would come in and build new stores to replace the old ones. All of the stores were torn down, but only two new stores came in to replace them. Much of that area was planted with grass. Two stores did come in. One is a CVS Pharmacy and the other is a Dunkin Donut shop. They are hidden, but you can see their buildings in the top photo.



Main Street about 1997



Main Street about 1965



Pease Block	Burnap Block	Charter Oak Hotel	Moran Block	about 1880
Sid's Modern Drug	Later became A&P		Coly's Hotel	Goldfarb Block

Spring Street

Finally, let's look at a pair of photos of Spring Street. Both were taken from the corner of Spring and Oak Streets, looking down Spring Street toward the River.

The lower photo, from 1878, is beautiful. It was taken after a snowstorm. If you look closely, you can see a person walking on the left. You can also see the fronts of some homes on the left. You can also see St. Mary's Church steeple.

The second photo of the same area, was taken from the same spot, in 2022. It shows stoplights at the intersection, street light poles, and electric wires going from pole to pole. You can see the St. Mary's steeple. It is easy to think that the earlier photo is

more beautiful than the other because it doesn't have those items. While that might be true, not many people would rather live without traffic lights, electricity and street lights. Progress makes those changes necessary.

Historian Mickey Danyluk said that it is likely that the 1878 photo was taken by Silas Parmelee, a noted Windsor Locks photographer of the time.



Spring St., crossing Center St. facing the River. 2022



**Spring St., crossing Center St. facing the River, 1878
You can see St. Mary's Church Steeple.
Notice there are no telephone poles or Street lights..**

CONCLUSION

We examined three sets of Windsor Locks photos to see how the town had changed between the times of those photos. We identified some of the improvements made in the town during each of those periods. It gave us some insights as to how the town evolved from the 1880s to the late 1900s.

The first were the two photos of one block of Main Street taken from opposite directions in 1880 and 1925, we discussed:

- 1) a number of improvements (the trolley, electricity, communications)
- 2) what four “Blocks” offered (types of stores)
- 3) what those four blocks became in later years.

Three photos from 1880, 1965 and 1995 showed the differences in Main Street from

- 1) the time when immigrants were flowing into Windsor Locks to
- 2) the time when Main Street was in its “Golden Era” as the commercial and social center of town, to
- 3) 1995, when the Main Street’s old retail stores had been replaced by a CVS, a Dunkin Donut outlet and a long grassy area.

Two photos of Spring street from 1878 and 2022 showed how the addition of traffic lights, street lights and electric lines changed how the street looked. We reflected on how those changes affected residents.

Now (2023), Windsor Locks is still a small New England town. While people miss being able to shop downtown, no one would give up electricity, sewers and paved roads to get back to the old times. The world has changed. The economy of the United States has changed. Quality of life is much better now that we have sewers, paved roads, electricity, communications, traffic control lights, and more. While we can commiserate about some of the things we lost, Windsor Locks and the rest of the world is much better off now than it was in the late 1800s.

This small exercise in comparing photos from different times is a reminder that change is the one constant in the world. The world and Windsor Locks will communications, traffic control lights, and more. While we can commiserate about some of the things we lost, Windsor Locks and the rest of the world is much better off now than it was in the late 1800s.

This small exercise in comparing photos from different times is a reminder that change is the one constant in the world. The world and Windsor Locks will continue to change. Looking at history reminds us to keep an eye on coming changes, and be ready for them. The Main Street Redevelopment Project did not produce the changes that it promised. Keeping that in mind will help in the management of the town in future years. Sometimes it is necessary to have a second opinion on proposals for “improvement”.

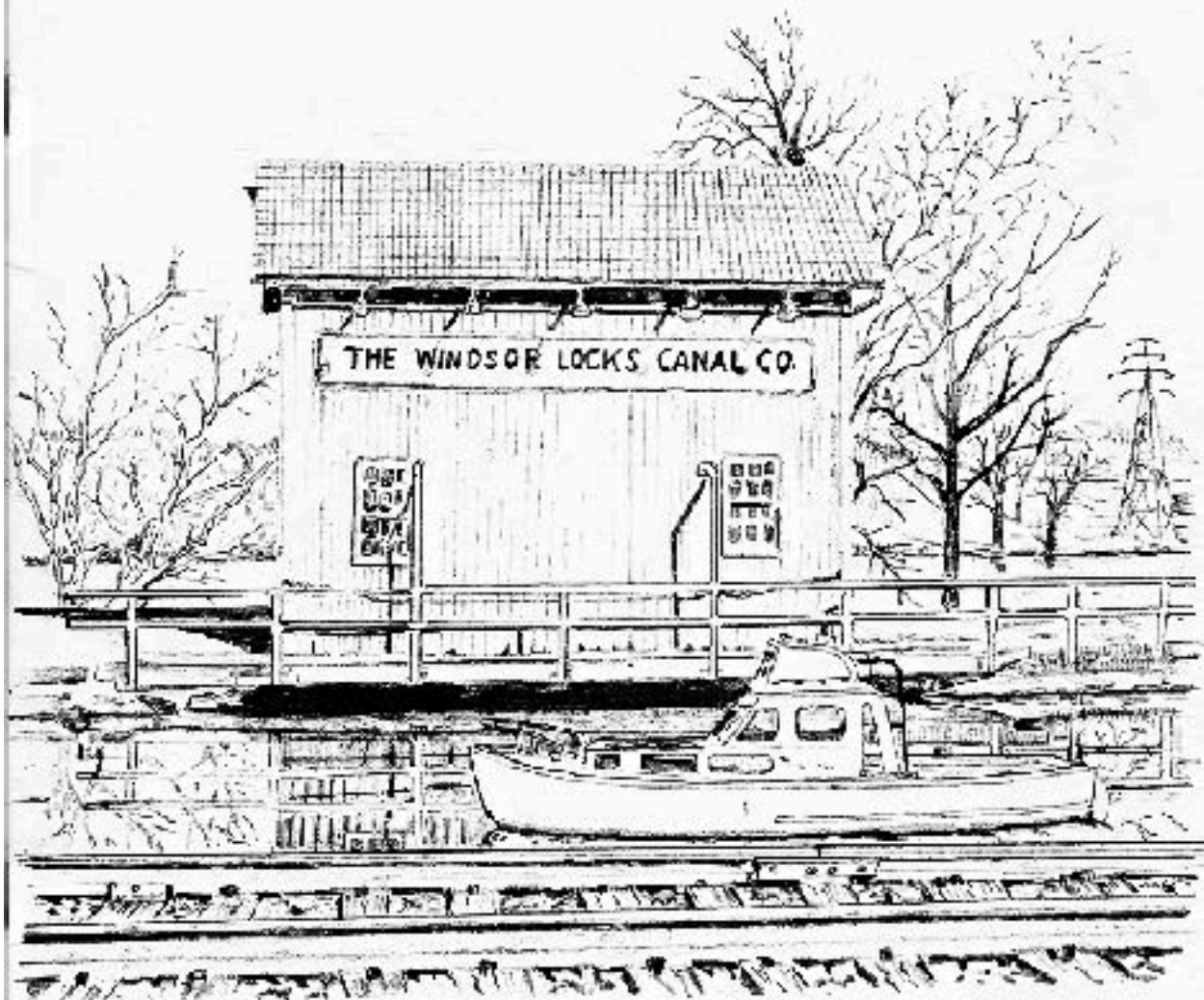
Looking at the past, we can count our blessings. Try to imagine what Windsor Locks would be like if we didn't get Bradley Field?

SOURCES:

The photos in this chapter were from the collection of the author.

Chapter 36

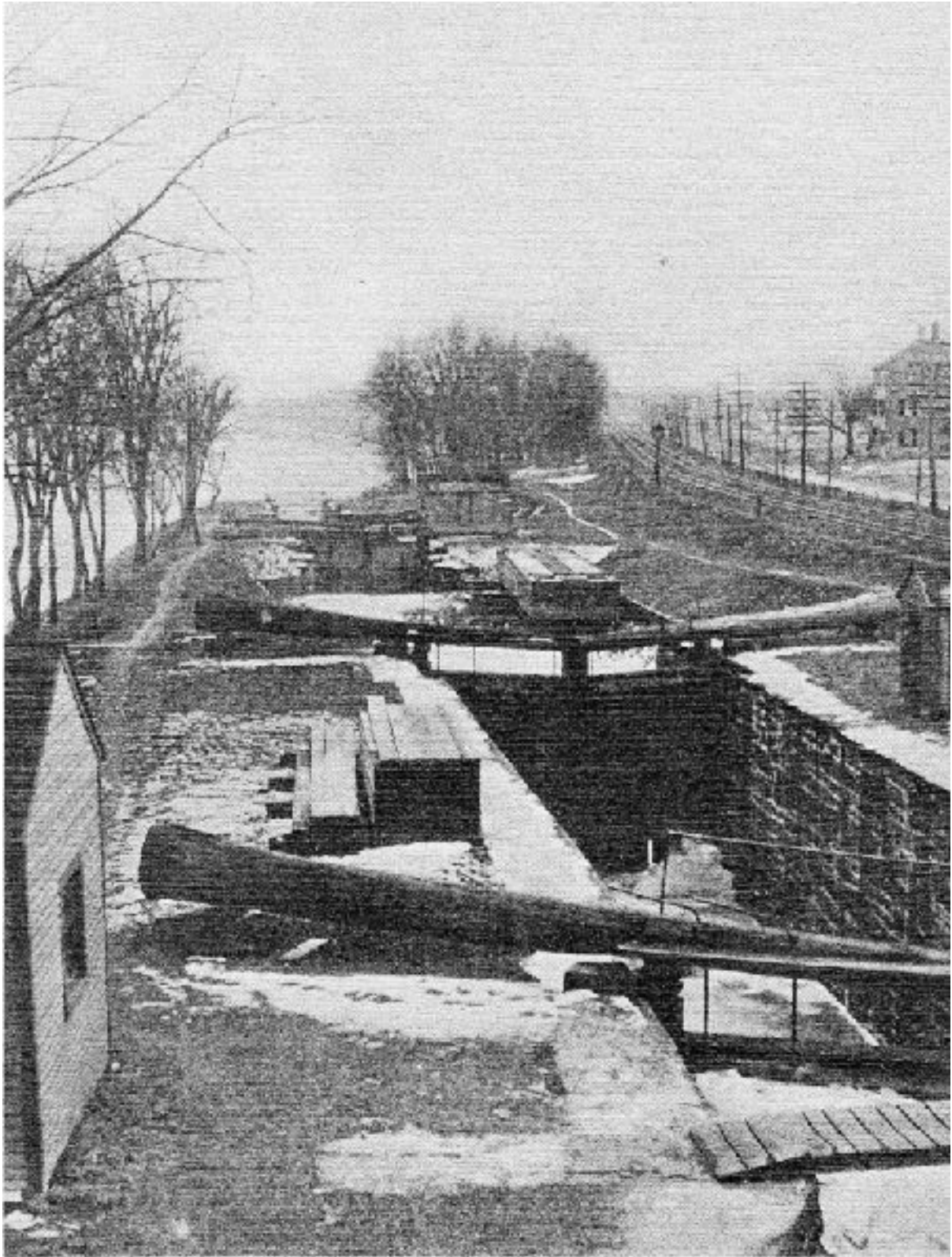
A Brief Account *of the* Windsor Locks Canal



Harry Anderson

Bicentennial Project
1776-1976

Edward E. Leland
Windsor Locks, Connecticut



System of Locks at lower end of Canal

Dedicated to the humble workmen, mostly from Ireland,
who by their toil carved a six mile canal from this wilderness
area, with very little except muscle power and stamina—
a message for to-day and to-morrow.

NANCY ANDERSON
Illustrator

JAMES ANDERSON
Photographer

AGNES LOSE
Typist



The Memorial Hall Bridge



The Canal north of the Memorial Hall bridge



Highway Bridge



The Canal north of Highway Bridge

The history of the Windsor Locks Canal begins with the discovery and exploration of the Connecticut River by a little known Dutch lawyer-sea captain, Adrian Block in the Spring of 1614, six years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.

His voyage on the small ship "Onrust" (or Restless) involved several noteworthy firsts. The vessel itself was the first "yacht" built in America, and probably the second craft of any sort. With eleven and one-half feet width, forty-four and one-half feet upper length, and a thirty-eight foot keel, the sixteen ton boat had a light enough draft to enable the company to explore the shallow shores of "Groote Bay", now known as Long Island Sound.

Another "first" was the map which resulted from Block's voyage. The "Figurative" map, commissioned by his enthusiastic merchant sponsors after hearing of the discoveries, was the first to show New Netherlands, the first to show Manhattan as a separate island, and the first to show the existence of the Connecticut River.

"Die Versche Riviere", or the "Fresh-water river" was his name for the Connecticut. The English who came in 1632 and 1633 later discarded this name in favor of the Indian "Connitecock" or "Quinnituck" meaning "Long Tidal River".

Block traveled close to eighty miles up the river to what is known as "Enfield Falls". On the way up he noted few natives until he got to Middletown, where he found numerous Indians of the Sequin nation. Here he traded furs and shared a salmon dinner.

North of Hartford, some sixty miles from the mouth of the river, Block reported the presence of the "Nawoos", a tribe located on the east bank between the Podunk and Sciatic Rivers. The Nawoos made a bread from maize, which they called "leganick". They lived in a fortified village where Block obtained more pelts.

The Captain then piloted the craft as far as Enfield Falls, where he was forced to turn back because of rapids. He noted, however, that farther upstream were to be found the "Harikens" tribe.

Turning back Block rode the river which, he reported, had a fresh downward current, so that "no assistance is derived from it but a favorable wind is necessary". When he reached the Sound he pointed his ship westward.

Within twenty-two years the English led by Thomas Hooker of the Plymouth settlement, would claim not only Connecticut but all of "New England". The Dutch claim, which was staked out by only a few Dutch families, was relinquished to the English without a fight.

Because of the New England terrain, rivers played an important part in the settlement of this area. Supplies

were needed and rivers were the "highways" used for transportation.

In 1633, Major William Pynchon, living in the settlement of Agawam, (now Springfield) began to engage in trade involving the Connecticut River. To facilitate matters, Pynchon established a warehouse on the east bank of the river just below the falls, the present Warehouse Point, the highest point his sloops could reach. His trade consisted mainly of furs and pelts which reached the storehouse on boats or rafts running the rapids. Goods designated for settlements above the river were unloaded at "the Point" and conveyed to Springfield in packs along the old trails, a distance of some fourteen miles.

Until the construction of the bridge at Hartford in 1809, Warehouse Point was the head of sloop navigation on the Connecticut River. It is related that as many as sixteen sloops have been anchored here at one time.

A flat boat, or scow, drawing little water was designed which could be poled along the river course and with great exertion could be pushed up over falls. Just when their boats were first utilized is not known, but in 1820 approximately sixty such boats were enjoyed in freighting between Hartford and the up-river towns.

The capacity of these boats was from twelve to eighteen tons and except when the south wind blew, they were slowly and laboriously poled up the river by polemen. These flat boats had a main sail in the middle of the craft to aid in propelling it when the wind was favorable, but the polemen provided the principal motive power. Stout ash poles from twelve to twenty feet long were used. A spike in the lower end held them firm against the river bed or aided in fending the craft from the shore. The upper end of the pole was braced against the man's shoulder, and he walked toward the stern pushing with all his might at the same time. Three men usually walked on each side of a flat boat, and the captain steered from the stern. These polemen, or rivermen as they were called, became famous for their exceptional strength and singing as they poled the boats up the river and sang as they floated down.

Following the war for independence, people became engaged in various schemes for bettering facilities for the improvement of navigation on the Connecticut River. Canals and locks were undertaken and the first being completed in 1795 at South Hadley, Massachusetts. Thus the Connecticut was the first river in America to be so improved, having already been navigated above tide water, more than any other stream in the country.

Rivalry stimulated by growing commercial competition between the towns of Massachusetts Bay and the river settlements at Springfield, Hartford, and Middletown led to the granting of the first river charter, in 1791, by the

General Assembly of Connecticut. This was for the purpose of making the river navigable between Enfield Falls and the City of Hartford. The plan in view was to cut a channel through the rapids.

Again in 1798, corporate privileges were granted to construct locks at the falls, and build a bridge at Enfield. The bridge was subsequently erected as stated, but nothing was done in the way of bettering the situation at the falls, nor was any other action taken to improve navigation by another company chartered in 1818.

The canal at Turner's Falls was opened in 1800, and the one at Bellow's Falls in 1802. Later two smaller canals farther north completed the upper Connecticut route, so that by 1810, it became possible to approach the town of Barnet, Vermont, two hundred and twenty miles above Hartford, with no great obstacle except the falls and rapids at Enfield.

River traffic increased during this period of time and Enfield Falls hindered this movement with its toilsome process. It is stated that the boats surmounting Enfield Falls required a man for every ton of freight conveyed, and thirty days were consumed in making the round trip from Hartford to Wells River. The desire to attract this trade from the great north territory and to divert the increasing volume of traffic from the upper river passing through Hartford, induced New Haven's interest to form a corporation that would construct an inland canal from that city northward to ultimately reach Northampton. This line was to be constructed by the "Farmington Canal Company" chartered in 1822.

This was a direct blow to the merchants and businessmen of Hartford, and a group of her most prominent and influential citizens met almost immediately and evolved a most comprehensive plan to promote the navigation of the Connecticut River from Hartford northward. These gentlemen proceeded to organize a corporation under the name of "The Connecticut River Company", and received a charter from the General Assembly in May of 1824, "for the purpose of improving the boat navigation of the Connecticut River".

"Said corporation, for the purpose of widening the channel of said river, and deepening the same, shall have power to dry, cleanse and remove obstruction from the channels and base of said river, from and above the bridge at Hartford to Springfield, and to erect and build wharves and piers and hedges in said river, or on the banks thereof, as they may judge necessary.

"And said corporation is empowered to lock the falls at Enfield on said river, and to make channels to aid them, and to construct a canal on either bank of said river, near said falls, and to construct a Dam or Dams for the purpose of entering or leaving the locks in still water, provided the extension and form thereof shall be such as shall not prevent the convenient passage of boats and lumber down the river, nor obstruct the passage of fish; and said corporation

shall have the right to procure and possess any steam boat or boats which they may judge necessary to increase commerce on said river."

A writer under the name of "Trumbull" published four articles in the *Connecticut Journal* purporting to discuss the question "What is the best mode of effecting and securing a permanent, safe, cheap and useful, navigation through the valley of the Connecticut, above sloop navigation?"

The following by Trumbull was published in the *Connecticut Journal* on September 18, 1826:

"Between Hartford and Enfield Falls, there may be two or three brush dams, or rather piers, like same below Hartford. These have been proven safe, and should one be injured or carried away, the navigation may be continued. At Enfield Falls, will be a long and heave artificial bank, with a natural slope on both sides, and protected toward the river by a stone wall ten inches thick. The work will be expensive, but the river is wide, and as the banks run in the direction of the stream, it will be much firmer than any natural bank, except it be of rock and should a break take place it will not stop navigation.

"Such are the artificial works exposed to uncontrolled waters, necessary to make an entire slack water and steam boat navigation from Northampton to Hartford."

On September 25, 1826, Trumbull wrote:

"The rock bed of the river at the head of Enfield Falls forms a natural dam. The result of careful levelling, in August 1825, proved the descent in the surface of the river to be but eleven inches in fourteen miles next above the falls. Yet neither 'heavy showers', 'earth', 'new shoals', etc., nor yet the violent Westfield, nor the larger Chicopee River, have, in the lowest water, reduced the channel depth to less than three feet, within thirty years, nor to less than three and one-half feet within sixteen years, in any part of more than three feet depth of water which is sufficient for a good steam boat navigation."

In 1825 several steam vessels were running regularly between Hartford and New York, and were giving satisfactory service. The power and speed attained by them were effective arguments in the discussion of competitive transportation. Because of the confidence expected when the appearance upon the upper river of a craft so absolutely new and strange, and as capable of transporting great quantities of merchandise independent of extensive aid, the Connecticut River Company in 1826:

"Resolved that a steamboat be forthwith procured or built, adapted to the navigation of the Connecticut River above Hartford and that the Directors carry the same into effect".

John Brainard wrote these prophetic lines when composing his ode "to the Connecticut River":

*"Yet as the unharmed swallow skims his way,
and lightly drops his pinions in thy spray,
So the swift sail shall seek thy inland seas,
and swell and whiten in thy purer breeze;
new paddles dip thy waters, and strange oars
Feather thy waves and touch thy noble shores."*

The Connecticut River Company authorized a New York Company to build a steamboat to navigate the Connecticut River above Hartford. On October 5, 1826, the directors voted: "That the steamboat now building in New York for the Connecticut River Company, be called 'Barnet'."



The Steam-Boat "Barnet" was launched at New York, and towed to Hartford reaching here in the middle of November. On the seventeenth of that month she started her maiden up-river trip. The following is a report by Jobey H. Hayden:

"When the news reached Hayden's that the steamship Barnet was on her way up from Hartford, a lad of my own age and myself took our guns and powder horns and hastened to the river to salute the first steamboat to come above Hartford. The boat was in sight a mile below, being saluted by musketry from both sides of the river, and the sound of the exhausted steam from her low pressure engine equalled the report of the musketry. When the boat reached us we opened fire, and the crowd of men and boys cheered themselves hoarse, and we loaded and fired until we had exhausted our stock of powder. One man walked some distance along the shore and said the boat went just as fast as he could walk. The Barnet reached Warehouse Point that night, the point where Pynchon's vessel was arrested by the falls nearly two hundred years before. And as the late J. Preston Abbe told me, she took on a number of 'fallsmen' the next morning and attempted to get over the falls, but only succeeded in getting a little above the present railroad bridge and returned to Hartford. A few days later on November 27th, a second trial was made with a scow boat lashed to its side and with thirty 'fallsmen' with their setting poles, and they succeeded in ascending the falls and reached Springfield the same day."

From the *Connecticut Courant*, December 11, 1826:

"The boat reached the foot of Enfield Falls on Monday; but it was not deemed expedient to attempt to pass them before Tuesday. On the morning of that day, it was, by the assistance of two scows and about thirty men, drawn over the Enfield rapids, and when this obstacle was once surmounted, the path was clear, and the boat moved on to Longmeadow and Springfield at a good rate and with entire success. At Springfield it was welcomed with enthusiasm. When

the intelligence arrived that the boat was within sight, every man rushed to the landing; the streets were left solitary. The Court of Common Pleas was then in session, and a lawyer at that moment arguing a case; but so intense was the interest excited, that none were left in the Court room but the judge, the jury, the speaker, and the adverse counsel. The boat was received at the landing with reiterated cheering; salutes were fired, the bells rung, and the satisfaction was general."

On December 25, 1826, the *Connecticut Courant* reported:

"For the first time a steamboat has ascended above the tide waters of the Connecticut. The Barnet gained an elevation two hundred feet higher than the tide. She traversed one hundred twenty-five miles of river where a steam boat had never before been. Excluding those rapids where she could not ascend by her own power, an imperfect steamboat has been able to navigate the Connecticut River, a greater distance, than the Hudson has yet been navigated with like power."

It must be remembered that the Barnet was an experiment and a challenge. The little steamboat was but seventy-five feet long, and fourteen and a half feet beam. Without a load she drew but twenty-two inches of water. She was the first steamboat that had ever appeared on the river above Hartford, and the first craft of its kind ever seen by most of the inhabitants.

Having been made confident by the results of the Barnet's experiment in the up-river navigation, work on the canal was begun in early 1827. In May notices to contractors appeared in the Hartford papers, inviting proposals for "Constructing a Canal by Enfield Falls," which would be received at Enfield, also at the office of the Connecticut River Company in Hartford.

An item in the *Courant* of May 14, 1827 states:

"Canvass White, Esq., Engineer of the Company, will attend at the falls to settle and explain the location and manner of constructing the works. By order of A. Smith, President."

Construction began about June 1, 1827 and on October 3, 1827 the *Springfield Republican* published as a news item, "There are now four hundred men at work on the canal at Enfield Falls. The Connecticut River Company has in contemplation the erection of a manufacturing establishment along the water front."

From Hayden's book we have the following:

"The digging of the canal was done by Irishmen who came here for that purpose. I remember having seen but one before. They dug and removed the earth with wheelbarrows on plank runs of the width of a single plank, and when near the bottom of the excavation it required a run of steep grade, and strong muscles to dump the barrow on the tow-path. When near the present railroad bridge, when the run was an even grade from the top of the bluff to the tow-path fifteen or twenty feet below, it took good nerves and a steady gait to wheel a load and dump it into the proper place. Temporary board houses

were erected and made tenable for the workmen, but with very few exceptions their men left when the canal was completed."

Soon after the canal was completed there was an application for a post office to be located at Charles H. Dexter's store near the grist mill. The canal officials wished some recognition of the credit due the canal for creating a village entitled to a post office. Its upper lock was in the town of Suffield, the lower locks in the town of Windsor. The village was destined to grow up around the latter and the name of the post office was Windsor Locks, which thenceforth became the accepted name of the village."

A description of the canal appeared in the *Connecticut Courant* dated November 17, 1829.

"The canal commences at the head of the Falls by a wing dam seven hundred feet long, which reaches to the middle of the river. From the lower end of the wing dam a pier extends down two hundred feet parallel to and one hundred feet from the west and is raised above the river so as to form a basin and safe entrance to the Guard Lock. At right angles to this pier, a breast wall of solid masonry strengthened by buttresses, extend seventy feet toward the bank, and is there united to the Guard Lock. This and the breast wall are sixteen feet higher than the surface of the water in the canal, presenting a firm defense against the highest flood. The breast wall covers sluices with sliding gates for the free admission of water for hydraulic purposes. The river banks are generally high and rocky for about three miles below the Guard Lock and the canal is flanked by an embankment of earth raised in the bed of the river, and protected on the outside by a stone wall. Two miles below the Guard Lock, Mill Brook crosses the line of the canal, and is passed by an aqueduct of ninety feet long and sixty feet wide, having six piers and abutments of substantial masonry. The height of the artificial embankment increases gradually, as it passes down the river, until it rises to a perpendicular elevation of twenty-five feet, when the high river bank retires to the west, and the canal is carried about two miles over land to its termination below the Falls. Here are three locks of masonry ten feet lift each. The locks are separated by pools fifty feet wide, in which ascending and descending boats may pass each other, and avoid the detention which is unavoidable when several locks are combined in a connected line. The dimension of the locks are ninety feet by twenty feet in the clear, and they are calculated to have four feet depth of water. The depth of the canal varies from four to twenty feet. The average width, at the surface of the water, is about seventy feet, and the total length five and a half miles."

Daily trips by steamboats were made between Hartford and Springfield. The boats usually shooting the falls, and returning through the canal, although occasionally they mounted the falls by their own power. This advertisement appeared in the *Springfield Republican* on June 16, 1830: "Passengers can be sure of arriving at Hartford and Springfield at the proper hours the steamboat Vermont having

the power to ascend the Falls at Enfield when the canal is out of order, in equally as quick time as when passing through the canal. The Vermont will therefore lose no time."



There were several lines of boats on the upper river after the canal opened in 1829. River traffic increased greatly and in the decade after 1830 was seen its greatest activity. John W. Barber in 1836, mentions that "eight steamboats including two passengers, ply daily between Hartford and Springfield. Six of these are employed in towing flat-bottom boats of fifteen to thirty tons berth, as far as Wells River, two hundred-twenty miles above the city." It is related that at any time of the day before 1850, a half dozen vessels might be seen passing between the two cities.

T. H. Hayden states, "There were a goodly number of up-river scow-boats which passed through the canal the first fifteen or twenty years, owned by Springfield and Northampton companies and companies from other towns above, before the introduction of railroads. When I began business in Windsor Locks in 1838, my next neighbor, O. M. Nelson kept horses with boys to ride them and made a business of towing boats through the canal until the railroad was opened in 1845. A stern wheel steamer ran daily between Springfield and Hartford, down over the falls and up through the canal."

At the completion of the canal, no dam had been built across the river at its head. A wing had been thrown out from the western bank which served to divert a portion of the stream into the canal, and in 1849 the company was allowed to run another wing from the eastern side, leaving a clear space of seventy feet in the center for the passage of boats and rafts. But by an amendment passed in March, 1881, permission was given to the company to unite the two wings, and to slightly raise the general level of the whole length of the dam.

The entire income of the Connecticut River Company was originally expected to be derived from tolls collected from vessels as they passed through the locks. Mr. A. B. Wood was finally appointed collector of tolls, and there is a record of a vote passed unanimously, "that the collector and Lock Tender of the company, shall not be required to pass boats

through the locks on the Sabbath Day." This was evidently at the Lock Tender's request, for it is further recorded, that "the vote was mailed to A. B. Wood, collector, with the suggestion that he probably would not object to pass boats before seven or eight o'clock in the morning, or whenever there appeared to be an urgent reason for departing from the rule of not passing boats through the Locks on the Sabbath."

Charles Dickens made the trip from Springfield to Hartford on a small steamboat on February 7, 1842. He states that the roads were so bad at that time of the year that the journey by land would have occupied ten or twelve hours. The novelty of this passage so impressed him, that in "American Notes", he writes of it at length.

The Hartford and Springfield Railroad Company was chartered in 1835, but did not begin to run till 1844. Shortly after, steamboat communication between the two cities became unprofitable, so far as passengers were concerned, and after a time ceased altogether.

While the great project for which The Connecticut River Company was organized and to assist in which the Connecticut River Banking Company was formed, had not demonstrated the large earnings power anticipated, it had vastly improved navigation facilities, and had proved of great advantage and benefit to traffic and commerce. Thus it had fulfilled the purposes and expectation of its founders.

At the time of the great flood in 1854, with the water in the river unprecedentedly high, all intercourse with Hartford from the north was interrupted. The railroad stopped running, and, with the bridge at Poquonock and Windsor swept away, the roads below Windsor Locks were impassable. On May 1, Mr. C. H. Dexter of Windsor Locks, founder of the paper mill bearing his name, had a note maturing at The Connecticut River Banking Company. It was unthinkable that an obligation of Mr. Dexter's should not be cared for at maturity, consequently he chartered the little steamboat G. P. Goodsell of Springfield, to carry him to Hartford. A number of persons in the vicinity joined him in the excursion, and as the bridge at Hartford was barely above the surface of the water, Captain John Abbe, commanding the vessel, steamed over the causeway east of the bridge, and sailing up State Street made a landing at Ball's Drug Store, which stood on the corner of Front Street. Mr. Dexter disembarked and met his note at the bank when due.

The little stern wheel vessel "Charles H. Dexter", was the last steamboat to run on the river above Hartford. She was built at a small yard on the river bank at Suffield, styled the "Douglas Fish Place,"—where at one time were shad fishermen,—by a company consisting of Barton H. Orville, and George Douglas. A line of boats owned by Barton Douglas and Company, at one time ran up the river as far

as it was navigable. The "Dexter" was built in 1856. She was eighty-two feet long, and of a little more than forty tons burthen, drew twenty-two inches of water, and had cabin accommodations. She was sold to the Hartford and New York Transportation Company in the seventies, and during the Centennial Exposition year was used as a transport to convey passengers to Philadelphia, later operating on the river as a towboat. Because of a serious accident to her machinery she was subsequently beached at Dutch Point, soon becoming a wreck. In 1881 when the land at the Point was filled in by the Hartford Electric Light Company, the hulk was gradually buried and now lies under the great structure of the Electric Light Company, a noble monument above a worthy grave.



As river transportation fell off, the Connecticut River Company turned its attention toward manufacturing. Mills were built on the canal banks, the land between the river and canal which was principally owned by the company. This land was leased and water purchased for a period of nine hundred and ninety-nine years. The water was measured by the square inch and the cost was one dollar and seventy-five cents per square inch. Thirty foot head requires ten square inches to produce a horse power, and this power was made available for use twenty-four hours every day, except Sunday.

The first paper mill was established in 1833 by Perse and Brooke. In 1835, in the basement of a grist mill Charles Haskell Dexter began the manufacture of writing paper. The J. R. Montgomery Company in 1896 was the first in the field in placing upon the market in this country an entirely new product. Mercerized cotton yarn. By 1909 there were twelve manufactory plants along the canal bank making all kinds of paper products, spool silk, woolen goods, chucks, hand trucks, casters, cutlery, cotton goods, electricity and many other items. The following article and pictures are taken from a booklet published by the *Windsor Locks Journal* in 1909.



THE J. R. MONTGOMERY COMPANY
Cotton Warps, Mercerized Yarns, Novelty Yarns

The firm of J. R. Montgomery & Co. was established in 1871 for the purpose of manufacturing Cotton Warps used in Satinets and Union Cassimeres. The firm was then composed of J. R. Montgomery as the active partner, with two others who constituted the partnership. A few years after, the outside interests were bought by J. R. Montgomery, who continued under the old name, until 1885 George M. Montgomery was taken into the business as an active partner, and the line of manufactures was enlarged, taking up the making of Novelty Yarns, which was new and unique line of manufacture. The firm stands as the pioneer in this branch of textile industry in this country, and this part of the business which is conducted in a separate factory, has grown steadily and rapidly, until its plant is of large proportions and is so evenly adjusted in all its parts as to furnish exceptional facilities. In 1891 the firm



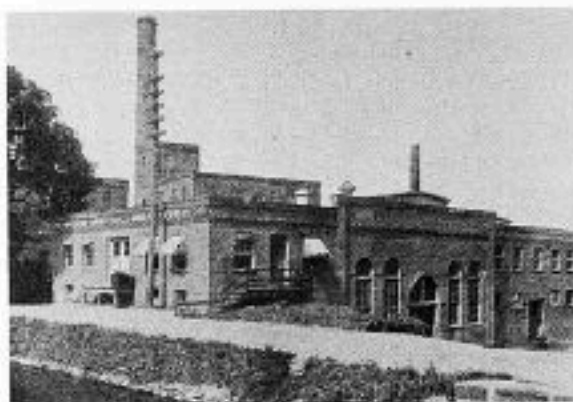
of J. R. Montgomery was merged into a corporation under the name of The J. R. Montgomery Co. of which the novelty yarn mill was built. The capital of \$550,000 was invested in enlarging the scope of its business.

In 1896 this Company was first in the field in placing upon the market in this country an entirely new product. Mercerized Cotton Yarn. It has within a few years become widely known and extensively used. The Company is possessed of facilities for producing large quantities of Cotton Warp, in both plain and fancy colors, as well as Double and Twist Yarns in carded combed Egyptian, Sea Island and Peeler stocks in all colors and printed effects. They manufacture at their Novelty Yarn mill all Yarns to produce novel effects in fabrics or trimmings, using all known fibres, as well as gold, silver and copper tinsel, chemical compounds, glass, etc.



THE MEDICOTT COMPANY

The manufacturing of Worsted and Woolen Underwear for men, women and children is the business of this Company and its goods are favorably known to the textile trade. The main mill was built and business started in 1863-1864 by W. G. Medicott and the present Company was formed in 1868. About 1880 the late C. E. Chaffee purchased controlling interest in the Company, and in the following years added largely to both the buildings and equipment.



NORTHERN CONNECTICUT LIGHT
& POWER COMPANY

This Company supplies Electricity and Gas for light, heat and power. The Company purchased and consolidated the local electric lighting companies of Windsor Locks and Enfield and built the fine new plant shown above at Windsor Locks in 1907-8. It is equipped with modern machinery for producing electricity. Gas is brought in mains from Hartford.



THE ANCHOR MILLS PAPER CO.

The mill occupied by this Company is one of the oldest in use on the bank and was built in 1833. It was built for a paper mill and conducted by Perse & Brooks, who had as one of their contracts the making of the paper for the *New York Herald*, which they continued up to the time of the Civil War. The building was later used as a wool scouring mill by Dwight Skinner and Company. It again became a paper mill in 1894 when alterations and additions were made and new and modern machinery was installed, and the present joint stock company was formed. The company manufactures Railroad, Yellow, Buff and White Copying Tissues, Impression Copying Books, Silver and Anti-Tarnish Tissues, and many Specialties.



C. H. DEXTER & SONS

A. D. COFFIN—H. R. COFFIN

Grist and Saw-Mill Established 1769

The oldest industry in town, and operated today by the fifth generation. Here in "ye olden time" was ground the Flour and Meal for the farmers of the surrounding country. Later the mill did wholesale grinding for the Springfield, Hartford and New Haven markets, which has been superseded in the march of events. Now an extensive Flour, Grain and Feed business is carried on.

It was in the basement of this old mill that C. H. Dexter began the manufacture of paper in 1835.



WINDSOR LOCKS MACHINE CO.

Paper Mill & Steam Laundry Machinery

This company was started in 1881 by E. E. Latham, Edwin Upton and George Glover. Mr. Latham was killed by an accident and the business was continued for many years by Messrs. Upton and Glover. They sold out their interest in 1901 to Orson T. Cone, A. F. Saxton and C. William Sadler. Messrs. Cone and Saxton retired and the business is now under the management of Mr. Sadler. It is a stock corporation. The building was partially destroyed by fire in 1903, but was rebuilt, and an addition was made in 1907 to accommodate the increasing business.



C. H. DEXTER & SONS

A. D. COFFIN—H. R. COFFIN

The original wooden mill on this site, built by Charles H. Dexter, was destroyed by fire in 1875.

Rebuilt in modern construction in 1876 under direction of Herbert R. Coffin, who was admitted to partnership in 1865 and succeeded in management and ownership of the concern until his death in 1901. The growing business demanded larger facilities and the mill has since been enlarged three times, in 1881, 1898 and 1908, besides the purchase of Mill No. 2 at Suffield in 1902.

Here are made the famous Princess and Unique Cover Papers, also the Star Manifold Linen and Onion Skin Papers and other Star Brand Specialties, Tissues, Bristols, Toilet, etc., which go the world over. "The sun never sets on the Star Mill products."



SUSPENSION BRIDGE

*Crossing the Connecticut River
between*

Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point

It was built in 1886 by a private corporation known as the Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point Bridge and Ferry Company. It superseded the old ferry, which had been in operation since 1783. While owned by the private corporation it was a toll bridge. It was purchased by the state under the provisions of the free bridge bill passed by the Legislature of 1907, and was made free June 19, 1908. It is now in charge of the County of Hartford, and during the latter part of 1908 was thoroughly repaired, repainted and a new floor laid. The state paid for the bridge \$95,300, and about \$10,000 was spent for repairs.

The freeing of the bridge was made an occasion of public rejoicing by the two adjoining towns, and a celebration, with band concerts, parade and fireworks was held July 18th, 1908. The securing of a free bridge was in a large measure due to the active efforts of Herbert R. Coffin, who represented the town of Windsor Locks in the Legislature.



STEEL MILL

Formerly conducted by Windsor & Farist. A flourishing business was done for many years in this mill, which produced some of the finest cutlery steel in the country.



THE GEORGE P. CLARK COMPANY

*Trucks, Casters, Ventilating and Exhaust Fans,
Drying Machinery*

The product of this Company consists of Hand, Platform and Special Trucks, Patent Rubber and Iron Wheel Casters, Drying, Ventilating and Exhaust Fans, Special Drying Machinery for Paper Manufacturers, etc. The Trucks are made in a large variety of styles, suitable for every purpose and for moving all kinds of material. The business was originated by George P. Clark, who in 1870 invented and patented a Rubber Roll for wool scouring, which he placed on the market. He secured other patents, one of which, a method of attaching rubber tires to iron truck wheels, became a valuable feature of the business. The main part of the present mill was built in 1893, and a large addition made a few years later. In 1901 an incorporated company was formed, and in 1902 an office was opened in New York. In 1907 an electric power plant was installed, new and modern machinery put in, and individual electric motors attached to the various machines.



WINDSOR SILK COMPANY

Spool Silk Manufacturers

The Silk business was begun in Windsor Locks by Haskell & Hayden, who in 1838 built the mill shown at the left of the Whittelsey Paper Mill. It was one of the pioneers in this industry in Connecticut, and the manufacture of silk has been continued to the present time in the same building, which is one of the oldest mills on the canal bank.



THE WINDSOR PAPER COMPANY

Division of The American Writing Paper Company

The original owners of this mill were Perse & Brooks, who were succeeded by the Seymour Paper Company. This Company conducted a large business for many years, and acquired a wide reputation for high grade Book and Cover Papers. Early in the year 1899 the mill was acquired by a company known as the Windsor Paper Company, and a few months later in the same year was purchased by the American Writing Paper Company, which has its main offices at Holyoke, Mass. The new owners at once began the work of remodelling, and extensive alterations and repairs were made and new modern machinery installed at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars. The remodelled plant resumed operations in April, 1901. The buildings of the plant extend 650 feet along the canal bank, and are 225 deep at the widest point. It is equipped throughout with modern machinery for the economical production of Paper. It has three paper machines, with a daily capacity of 80,000 pounds. Its product is High-Grade Rope Papers, Specialties, Boards for Box Makers, etc.



THE E. HORTON & SON CO.

Lathe Chucks

The industry was started in a small way by Eli Horton, who was the inventor of the Chuck which bears his name. The business was conducted until 1873 under the name of E. Horton & Son, at which time a stock company was formed and the present corporation succeeded to the business. Property adjoining on the north was purchased from A. W. Converse & Co., and an iron foundry was added to the regular business of making Chucks. In 1903 an addition was built which more than doubled the capacity of the plant. The Company's works are equipped throughout with the best tools and machinery that can be procured, and they have perfected many ingenious special machines for the economical production of their goods. The Horton Universal Chuck was placed on the market in 1855 and it has been acknowledged standard and all Universal Chucks operated by means of rack and screw are copies of Mr. Horton's original invention. The Company makes Chucks in sizes suitable for holding the smallest drill to the largest car wheel, in an endless variety of styles. Their goods go into all parts of the civilized world, and their exhibitions of Chucks in all the great expositions have been awarded the first prize.



The Medford Co. Mill

Interesting items pertaining to the canal that have appeared in print or have been told concerning this waterway are listed below:

The first Catholic Mass ever offered in this area took place in August 1827 on the river bank beneath a great tree near the head of the shad fisheries.

On January 26, 1846 a meeting was held in Hartford to draw up a tentative proposal to utilize, for the benefit of the city, a plan to obtain sufficient water for a canal, a design to furnish water and water power for Hartford. Attractive as this plan appeared, no evidence is found that the recommendations were ever adopted.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the 13th and 14th of July, 1897, twenty feet of the canal bank north of the Medicott Company bridge slid into the water.

Lockites would skate up the canal to the dam, cross to the river and skate to Springfield. Here they would participate in refreshment and then run to town.

According to family history, Joseph Parker was in charge of stonework on the locks. He was a mason by trade and was born August 1, 1798 in Sharon, Vermont. He and his wife Harriet Davis of Stafford lived in Warehouse Point from 1830 or until laid to rest in the Warehouse Point Cemetery. He also served in the War of 1812 and took part in the Battle of Lake Champlain. Other examples of his craftsmanship were the Phelps Woolen Mill and the John B. Chapman residence.

It has also been reported by her family that Arabella Moran Parmelee of Windsor Locks rode on the first boat that went through the canal.

During the Flood of 1936, water in the canal raised so that it began to spill over its banks. Manufacturers along the canal bank became alarmed because if the canal bank should give way in the area of the mills great damage would be done. It was decided to blow up the canal bank above the railroad bridge so that the water could be redirected back to the river. As workmen were preparing the charges, it was noticed that the bank was beginning to slide and move. A hasty retreat was made by the work party and moments later the bank gave way. After the flood the bank was repaired. It is also noted that the "canal floor" of the aqueduct was also damaged from the force of water running under it from Stoney Brook.

Power generators located in the Connecticut Light and Power Company power plant were jacked up in anticipation of the rising water. They were jacked up to about three feet above its height of the canal and yet even so water from the river completely filled the plant.

In anticipation of rising water during the flood of 1938 their generators were removed from the building and transported across the street near the Memorial Hall. As water began to seep in this area, they were transported to Enfield.

In June of 1898, a contract was let for the new iron bridge across the canal near the Medicott Mill. The dangerous curve would be abolished by placing the new bridge in line with the suspension bridge which was built in 1866.

It was noted in February 1904 ice on the canal between the lower locks and the railroad bridge was found to be from twenty inches to thirty-six inches thick.

One of many auto incidents on the canal bank occurred in April 8, 1920, when a three ton auto truck owned by Daniel Leach plunged into the canal near the Montgomery Mill. It was not moved until the eleventh when a lifting crane was used. Luther Arnold, driver of the truck, went down with it, but was rescued by men from the mill.

It has been reported that because of the thickness of the ice on the canal and river at this time, many Windsor a difficult feat due to the number of trees blocking the highways.

The above accounts of the two floods were told to me by Attilio Lanati, an employee of the Windsor Locks Canal Company at this time.

In the time of World War II the canal bank in the vicinity of the Railroad Bridge was "off limits" to all but authorized personnel. Military personnel stationed here to protect the Railroad from possible harm. Special passes were issued for "authorized personnel only" and quite a few "locals" were quite surprised at the reception that greeted them on unwanted visits.

Today, 1976, transportation through the Windsor Locks Canal consists principally of pleasure boats on their way to the Sound for summer and returning again in the fall. The operating hours are seven in the morning until six in the evening on week days only. The maximum speed being four miles per hour down stream and two miles per hour up stream.

Army engineers have surveyed and planned a dam upstream from Windsor Locks. Only one lock in the dam will take care of river transportation, thus eliminating the need of the canal for boating. This of course is only a proposal approximately one hundred thirty years from the first presentation.

In the past year the canal bank has been designated as a bike path by the State Department of Transportation due to the effort of Representative Cornelius O'Leary. It has also been proposed that it be named as a Historical Landmark.

Who can predict the future of the Windsor Locks Canal? With the interest generated by the Bicentennial boat rides, its bike path, and the possibility of its being named a Historical Landmark only time will tell. Who knows, maybe a new park will grace its banks, fishing areas constructed, or new types of buildings erected on its riverside. We have presented the canal of the past, added our work, and now pass it on to future generations for their consideration.



The Canal north of the Windsor Mill



Railroad Bridge.

New, double-track steel Bridge, of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad crossing the Canal and Connecticut River at Warehouse Point.



Connecticut River between King's Island and Railroad Bridge, at low water.



The Dam at Enfield

View from the Railroad, looking west



The Dam from the Gate House.



Gate House and Lock at head of Canal

CHAPTER 37

Dan Leach: Extraordinary Businessman and Citizen

The Windsor Locks Journal of 1880 to 1970 sometimes wrote an editorial about an extraordinary citizen of Windsor Locks. Rarely did any one individual get more than one such editorial. Dan Leach got ten of them. That might be the strongest positive statement ever made about a Windsor Locks citizen. It was not only his accomplishments that made him what he was, it was the way he lived his life.

In 1892, Dan went to work in the Montgomery cotton mill, and then in the Medlicott Co. In 1898, he went to work for Lock Barrett, in his horse stables on State St. Dan loved horses, and was very good with them. When Lock Barrett built the massive “Barrett Block” on the corner of Main and Church Streets, Dan was put in charge of the the livery stables, the horses and equipment. Dan was starting to move up in the world.

Lock Barrett owned a small shed in the old freight yards with scales, on the canal side of northern Main Street, about where Windsor Locks Commons shopping center is now (2023). Dan Leach was put in charge of compiling all orders for coal, and to see that they were delivered.

In July 1901, Dan Leach left Mr. Barrett and went to work for the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, where he was the “freight yardmaster”. He remained there until 1914, when Lock Barrett died. Dan Leach and James Barrett, son of Lock Barrett, took over Lock’s coal and trucking business. Two years later, in 1916, James Barrett sold his share of the business to Dan, and Dan was the sole owner of the coal and trucking business.

In 1919, Dan Leach leased land from the railroad for a real “coal yard”, on the site of the “Lower Basin”, which had been filled in. When he opened his new enlarged coal yard, he had one large coal shed with a barn attached, and seven horses for hauling the coal and for “trucking purposes”. By May of 1924, he sold the horses and was using motorized trucks. He was “modernizing” the coal business. By 1934, Dan had storage for 500 tons of coal, and bin and silo storage for another 1,000 tons. In addition, he had tanks with 25,000 gallon capacity for fuel oil. He not only increased the amount of coal that he could store, but he added the ability to sell the new heating product, “oil”.

Loading of coal had been done by shoveling it. This was back-breaking work. Dan installed a conveyor system to easily load trucks with coal. This made it both easier and faster to get coal to the homes that needed it. The trucks dumped the coal into the cellars of homes. Homes had windows near the ceiling of their cellar, through which the coal could be dumped down a “chute”.

This was all in place by 1939. He continued to modernize. There weren't any rules for doing this. He played it by ear.

Dan loved horses and horse racing. He also got into politics. He held the office of Windsor Locks town Registrar. According to the Windsor Locks Journal, he did a good job of it. By 1944, World War II was underway and there were shortages of coal and heating oil. Dan worked hard at getting enough coal to deliver to Windsor Locks homes. Dan was very good at finding and "snapping up" loads of oil and coal in that timeframe.

Times were changing in the coal/oil business. In the early days, the roads were "dirt roads". Getting the horse-drawn and later truck-drawn loads to Windsor Locks homes was difficult. By 1950, roads were macadam or concrete.

According to the Windsor Locks Journal, Dan took it personally when a homeowner called and said that they really needed coal or oil, and he went out of his way to fill those orders. It was "personal". The Windsor Locks Journal of August 3, 1950 said "One of the finer traits of this businessman is a willingness to put himself out to do favors for other people, a trait so sadly missing in the wild and wooly world of today. The Journal salutes Dan Leach as a star in the firmament of Windsor Locks business life.

The April 9, 1959 Windsor Locks Journal said: "Fitting testimony was accorded one of Windsor Locks' ablest citizens last night by the Chamber of Commerce. A gathering of over 100 friends of Daniel F. Leach, attended the testimonial which the chamber had arranged for the dean of the town's businessmen."

Dan Leach retired in 1964. Over the years, coal was replaced by oil. Dan's two large coal storage sheds were demolished. The Windsor Locks Journal of Dec. 11, 1969 mentioned that the the former Leach coal and oil supply yards have disappeared from the Windsor Locks business area, and the former office, which was a sort of social gathering center is no more - bringing back memories of days gone by, plus an amiable and friendly proprietor who was a hive of



Pres. E. T. LaJoie Presents Plaque To Daniel F. Leach
At Chamber of Commerce Dinner

information on all topics of the day.”

In 1965, Dan Leach died at the age of 87. He had a long career in Windsor Locks, rising up from a worker in the mills to run a livery business for Mr. Lock Barrett, to owning the coal business that Mr. Barrett started, to expanding it through times of changing methods of heating, of changing methods of storing and transporting coal and then oil, by working through the days of scarcity during World War II. As changes in the world happened, Dan Leach coped and made things work. There was no roadmap on how to do that. He figured things out. He made them work. His business wasn't just a business. He took the responsibility of getting town citizens the coal or oil they needed to stay warm. That approach to work and life made him beloved as well as admired.

SOURCES

The Windsor Locks Journals of:

1939 03 31
1943 02 18
1944 09 14
1950 08 03
1954 04 14
1959 04 09
1959 04 16
1963 06 13
1965 09 16
1969 12 11

CHAPTER 38

Natale Tambussi: Successful Entrepreneur and Community Leader

Natale Tambussi was born in Perletto, Italy, in 1898. Two of his brothers, James and Elisio, came to Windsor Locks with their parents in 1904. Natale emigrated to Windsor Locks in 1909 with his older sister, Claudina. He was six years old at the time.

Natale was the only one of the Tambussi children who got an education. He went to grammar school in Windsor Locks. James worked in Anchor Mill, and Elisio worked at Horton Chuck.

Natale stayed in school until he was 16. In 1914, he went to work at the Montgomery Mill, oiling pulleys for \$5 per day. He left and became an apprentice cigar maker. In Suffield and in New Haven, he was making \$35 a week. Using money that he had saved up, he opened a pool hall on Main Street, across from the train station. After that, he was always his own boss.

In 1920, he opened the Tambussi Bakery Shop on Spring Street, along with his brother, James. While they did bake some Italian bread, it was not an Italian bakery. It was more of an American bakery. A May 4, 1934 Windsor Locks Journal advertisement for the bakery is on the right.

On the next page is a photograph of the bakery on 7 Spring Street. The bakery is in the background, behind Leo Montemerlo.

Natale bought a house at 10 Olive St. He married Rose Ferretti when she was about 20 years old.



NATALE TAMBUSSI



Windsor Locks Journal ad, May 4, 1934



**Tambussi's Windsor Locks Bakery
7 Spring St. Leo Montemerlo ~1940**

In 1940, Natale and James sold the Bakery, and opened the T & T Tavern. Below is a 1940 notice in the Windsor Locks Journal, stating that Natale and James applied for a liquor license.

**LIQUOR PERMIT
NOTICE OF APPLICATION**

This is to give notice that I, James Tambussi of Olive Street, Windsor Locks have filed an application dated 8 October, 1940, with the Liquor Control Commission for a Tavern Permit for the sale of alcoholic liquor on the premises, 10 Oak street, Windsor Locks.

The business is owned by James Tambussi and Natale Tambussi of 10 Olive street, Windsor Locks and will be conducted by James Tambussi of Olive Street, Windsor Locks as permittee.

JAMES TAMBUSI.

Dated 8th October, 1940.

Windsor Locks Journal, Oct 8, 1940

Natale was active in the Windsor Locks Italian-American community. The October 8, 1940 Windsor Locks Journal, said that he was elected Vice President of the Italian Progressive Club. It was a very active club. They had an Italian-American grocery shop on Main Street. Mr. Tambussi was later elected President of the club.

Ten years later, in 1948, the brothers sold the tavern. James opened a machine shop. He was still active in the machine shop in 1954.

In 1947, Natale invested some of the proceeds from the sale of the bakery in a partnership with an Italian family from Suffield. They bought the Rialto Theater on Main Street in Windsor Locks.

James Tambussi, Natale's brother, had a daughter named Ella, who became governor of the state of Connecticut. As all Windsor Lockers know, she was the first woman to become a state governor on her own.

The Windsor Locks Journal of Feb. 1, 1951 said that a new firm by the name of "The Windsor Locks Machine Company, Inc. was taking over a building on South Main Street. The president of the company was Thomas Grasso, the son-in-law of Natale Tambussi. Natale Tambussi was the Vice President. The Secretary was James Tambussi.

In 1960, Natale Tambussi sold the Rialto theater, which he had owned since 1947, to Mr. Halperin of Hartford.

The Windsor Locks Journal of July 15, 1965 said that Natale Tambussi, the president of Windsor Locks Lumber Company, was made Chairman of the Board, and Richard L. Tambussi, the secretary and treasurer, had been named as the new President of the company. The company was founded in 1947 by Natale Tambussi, who was joined in that endeavor by his son, Richard, following his return from service. The Company was operating five Lumberjack Stores in Windsor Locks, Enfield, Suffield, Windsor and East Granby. Its distribution center was in Suffield and its main office was in Windsor Locks. The new president, Richard L. Tambussi, was a graduate of Suffield Academy and had attended Hillyer College in Hartford. He had also studied Business Administration at Cornell University and the University of Massachusetts. Natale Tambussi was making sure that his business interests were in good hands.

Natale Tambussi died in January of 1986 at the age of 77. His obituary was in the January 5, 1986 issue of the Springfield Union. It said:

"Natale V. Tambussi, 89 of 10 Olive St., operator of the Windsor Locks Lumber Company, died Saturday at home.

"Born in Perletto, Italy, he lived in Windsor Locks for 77 years and retired in 1960. His business career started with the Windsor Locks Bakery and later the T&T Tavern, which he operated with his brother. He operated the Rialto Theater, Windsor Locks Machine Co., and the lumber company from 1947 to 1960.

He was a charter member and president of the Italian Progressive Club, treasurer of the Soccorso Di Mutuo, and a member of the Senior Citizen club."

On the next page is a photo of the Tambussi family that was in the Hartford Courant of May 23, 1954



From 2 to 67: the Tambussi's gather at the home of Elisio, who immigrated with his two brothers in the early 1900s. Rear. Left to right. Rose and Natale; Mary, wife of Elisio, and Maria, wife of James. Second row: Erma (Tobie); her husband, Dick Tambussi, son of the Natale Tambussi's; Ella Tambussi Grasso, daughter of the James Tambussi's, and Elisio & James. The children are Linda Tambussi, daughter of Dick and Tobie; and Jimmy and Susane Grasso (Courant Photo by Marshall)

CONCLUSION

Natale Tambussi was an Italian immigrant who arrived at Windsor Locks with no money, and no ability to speak English. He had intelligence and the ambition to succeed. He had a big positive effect on Windsor Locks with his bakery, his tavern, the Windsor Locks Machine Company, his lumber company, and his ownership of the Rialto Theater. He was also an active and enthusiastic leader of the Italian-American population of Windsor Locks. He provided a model for future leaders of Windsor Locks.

SOURCES:

"The Tambussi Family - 50 Years of Success", an article in the Hartford Courant of May 23, 1954.

A number of articles from the Windsor Locks Journal and the Springfield Union were used as sources. The issue dates of each of those sources is listed in the text of this chapter.

CHAPTER 39

Connecticut Fire Academy, Windsor Locks, CT



The Connecticut Fire Academy is located at 34 Perimeter Road, Windsor Locks, CT. This can be seen on the map below.

The Connecticut Fire Academy trains upwards of 1000 people a year. They have a number of training classes, including:

- Engine Company Operations
- Standpipe Operations
- Ladder Company Operations
- and many others.

Following are photographs of the Academy, and of training being carried out.



Connecticut Fire Training Academy



**Memorial with Piece of
World Trade Center**



Training Building



Training at Fire Training Academy



Training at Fire Training Academy



Memorial at Connecticut Fire Academy

SOURCES

<https://portal.ct.gov/CFPC/Fire-Service-Organizations>

https://portal.ct.gov/CFPC/_old/General-Commission-Information/Facility-Information/CT-Fire-Academy-Directions--Lodging

<https://www.ctcustomfiretraining.com/courses>

CHAPTER 40

Early Neighborhood Markets of Windsor Locks: Our First Convenience Stores

From the early 1900s to the 1960s, Windsor Locks had a number of small meat/grocery stores. They were our first “convenience stores”. They served their local neighborhoods. Downtown Windsor Locks had larger markets such as the A&P , Popular Super Market, The Italian Co-Operative Market at 202 Main St (closed in 1949), the First National Store (Finast) and Geissler. The neighborhood stores could satisfy many families needs, so that a trip to one of the big stores wasn’t needed as often.

Here is a list of some of the later Windsor Locks’ neighborhood markets.

- Johnny Cappa’s Market, Chestnut St. (1947-1975)
- John Macaluso’s Market 178 Turnpike Rd, (1954-1997)
- Bert Nussbaum’s Market, North St., 1947-1972
- Joe Balboni’s Market on North Street (existed in 1940s)
 - it became Bert’s Market (existed in 1960s)
- Hagerty’s Market on School Street
 - it became Malec’s Market (1950s-60s)
- Maria Casinghino’s Store, Spring St. (existed in 1960s)
 - probably a continuation of P.Casinghino’s Spring St market

The following were early markets, but all were on Main St, or just off of Main Street, so they weren’t really neighborhood markets.

- Joe Borracci’s Market (1940s)
 - it became Aldo Satirana’s Oak Street Market* in about 1952.
- Bart Preli’s Market on Grove Street (1920s - 1950s)
- Spinelli’s Super Store, 178 Main St. Red Ambrosetti was manager, located on street floor of Coly’s Hotel. (1939-1958)
- Italian Co-operative Store at 202 Main St (closed 1949). Formed by Italian Progressive Club.
- Keever Brothers at 40 Main St.
- S. Fisher at 202 Main St.* (existed in 1931)
- P. Casinghino at 9 Spring St.* (existed in 1931)
- D. Garbarino at 176 Main St.* (existed in 1931)
- R.M.Montagna at 178 Main St.* (existed in 1931)
- P. Tenerowicz at 1 South St.* (was a small Polish Market underneath the Tenerowicz duplex (existed in 1931)
- Sisitzky’s Market at 112 Main Street.* (1915 to the 1960s)

- F. Barberi** (existed in 1924)
- A. Sfreddo** (existed in 1924)
- J.F. Wallace** (existed in 1924)
- Red Ambrosetti's Market neighboring Windsor Locks Journal building on Spring St. (late 1920s)
- The A.B.C. Company on Main Street (early 1920s)
- C. Colli's Meat Market (1909)

Those with a single * were in a list of markets in a Hite House Coffee advertisement in the Springfield Republican of Jan. 9, 1931.

Those with a double asterisk ** were in a list of markets in an Armour Co advertisement in the Springfield Republican of Oct. 11, 1924.

Following are photos of Windsor Locks' early neighborhood grocery stores.



Unidentified man, Aldo Salirana, Tony Campaninosi 1957



Prel's Grocery Store, 24 Grove Street, Windsor Locks, Connecticut 1920's



*Joe Borracci's Market on Oak St.,
Later became Aldo's Oak Street Market*



ABC Market

The market on Main Street was a partnership of 'Red' Ambrosetti, Frank Barberi, and John B. Colli. Mr. Ambrosetti was the grocer and Mr. Barberi and Mr. Colli were the butchers. This photo was taken in 1923. The business was a total loss after a 1925 fire. The site was rebuilt as the Brown Derby, which stood until redevelopment.

Photo courtesy of Jenny Colli, J. B. Colli's daughter.



Johnny Cappa's Market, Chestnut St, Windsor Locks, CT

SOURCES

Montemerlo, Melvin, Sisitzky's Market, Chapter 5 of Windsor Locks History, self published, Bel Air, MD, 2017.

Montemerlo, Melvin, Aldo's Market, Chapter 7 of Windsor Locks History, self published, Bel Air, MD, 2017.

Montemerlo, Melvin, Joe "Red" Ambrosetti - an Italian American Success Story, It is a chapter in this book.

Montemerlo, Melvin, Charles Colli: An Italian Immigrant's Success Story, It is a chapter in this book.

Hite House Coffee advertisement in the Springfield Republican of Jan. 9, 1931.

Armour Co advertisement in the Springfield Republican of Oct. 11, 1924.

CHAPTER 41

A Pictorial History of Bradley Field: The World War II Years 1940-1945

In the early years of World War II, the United States Army was planning to build an airfield at Brainard Field in Hartford, CT. Dexter D. Coffin, the President of C.H.Dexter & Sons, convinced the Army to build the airfield in Windsor Locks. The Army built its military airfield in Windsor Locks in 1941. Its functions included training pilots, aircraft mechanics, and other related specialties. It was also responsible for a group of German Prisoners of War. Forty percent of the civilian mechanics at Bradley Field at that time were women. The airfield was named after Lt. Eugene M. Bradley, the first trainee to die during training at the airfield. This presentation is a set of 61 photographs taken at Bradley Field from 1941 to 1945. It serves as an introduction to the history of Bradley field at this time. For deeper knowledge of the early history of the Army's airbase at Bradley Field, visit the North East Aviation Museum, which is located at Bradley Field, and read the book "Bradley Field: The first 25 Years", by Thomas C Palshaw.



Dexter Drake Coffin 1898-1966



Lt.Eugene M. Bradley, 1941



Bradley Field Entrance - Route 75 & Spring St



Bradley Field's Original Skunk Hollow Barracks, 1941



Bradley Field: Initial wooden Main Hangar & Control Tower



Curtiss P-40C fighter



Martin B-26 bombers by Hangar #3, Bradley Field



P-40 being prepared for flight 1941



B-17 aircraft at Bradley Field 1942-1945



Bradley Field Control Tower 1942-1945



Chinese pilot trainees at Bradley Field 1942



Decontamination training 1942 -1945



MP Squadron, Bradley Field, 1942



Parade at Bradley Field 1942 - 1945



Outing sponsored by Jewish League 1942



**Women's Air Corps Weather Class
Bradley Field 1943**



Unloading Equipment at Bradley Field 1943



Photo Technician, Bradley Field, 1943



Messages, Bradley Field 1942-45



398-14 G 121BU 7AUG45 GENERAL REDEPLOYMENT,
BRADLEY FIELD, CONN.

Women mechanics at Bradley Field 1942-45



**Civil Air Patrol examines P-47
Bradley Field 1942-1945**



Band in front of Bradley Field Barracks 1942-45



Cleaning Firearms, Bradley Field 1942



On bivouac at Bradley Field 1943



29AB-4GI18-2 BOXING BOUTS BRAD. FLD. CONN.

Boxing match, Bradley Field 1942 - 1945



Singing at Bradley Field Hospital 1942



Outdoor chapel, Bradley Field 1942-45



Post Exchange 1942-1945



Post Exchange, Bradley Field 1942



Library, Bradley Field 1942 - 1945



Recreation Hall, Bradley Field 1942-45



Recreation Hall, Bradley Field, 1942



Base Library, Bradley Field 1943



Blockbuster bomb, Bradley Field, 1943



**Kids write notes on bomb
Bradley Field 1943**



Inspection, Bradley Field 1943



Leaving for flight training 1943



Soldiers at Weatogue Range 1943



On Parade, Bradley Field 1944



"Open House" at Bradley Field 1942-1945



"Eating out" at Bradley Field 1943



**German POWs repairing auto
Bradley Field 1944**



**German POWs repairing fence
Bradley Field 1944**



Physical Exam 1944



**Patient receiving gifts at
Bradley Field Station Hospital 1943**



NCO Club, Bradley Field, 1944



Post Exchange, Bradley Field 1944



Demonstration of P-47 at Bradley Field 1944



Women's Air Corps Day, Bradley Field 1944



Aircraft Lined up at Bradley Field 1945



P-47 in hangar at Bradley Field 1944



121BU 5633-1(1-22-45)NURSE ACTIVITIES BRADLEY
FLD, CONN.

Photo by First AAF

BRADLEY FIELD, CONN., 25 January 1945-----
Army Nurses are good soldiers, but they are also women and enjoy feminine frills. Here Lt. Elizabeth Van Ormer, Folsom, Pa., arranges a new hair-do for Lt. Gunn in the Nurses' Quarters after duty hours.

Nurses in quarters 1945



Refueling aircraft at Bradley Field 1945



**Bradley Field 1945
Redeployment Center**



Redeployment, Bradley Field 1945



Wedding at Bradley Field Chapel 1945



Airmen returning from war 1945



World War II victory parade in Enfield 1945

SOURCES:

Palshaw, Thomas. *Bradley Field: The First 25 Years*. Published by the New England Air Museum, Bradley Field, CT. 1998.

Montemerlo, Melvin D. *Bradley Field: A Historical Overview*. Chapter 4 of *Windsor Locks History: Volume II*. Self Published, Bel Air, MD. 2019

Photos from Connecticut Digital Archive.

<https://ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/search/windsor%20locks?type=edismax>

On Dec. 22, 2022, I called the New England Aviation Museum (NEAM), and asked for permission to use some NEAM photos in this article. I explained that these articles are only for history and education and no money is involved. The man said that I have the permission to use them. I thank the NEAM very much for that.

About The Author



Mel, Mary Beth and our grandchildren, Christmas 2022

My name is Mel Montemerlo. I was raised in Windsor Locks from birth in 1943 until I went to college in 1960. I have returned for annual visits to family and friends ever since. I was brought up in the downtown section of Windsor Locks in the 1940s and 1950s, when Windsor Locks had a vibrant Main Street, filled with stores on one side of the street and a canal with mills on the other. Most adults in town worked in the mills. Virtually everyone in town lived between Main Street and West Street. It was before the buildup of the aviation industry in the Bradley Field area in the 1960s.

My grandfather introduced me to many of the shop owners on Main Street: the Bianchi brothers who owned the restaurant and a shoe store, Don LaRussa,, Sid Portnoy, who owned the Modern Drug Store, Mr. Moses Goldfarb, who owned the set of stores and apartments in the building just north of the hotel, and the list goes on. As I got a bit older, I got sent to Borracci's meat market on Oak Street to buy "Moon Bread", and to Johnny Cappa's for various things.

I loved growing up in Windsor Locks. I even enjoyed working on tobacco when I was 14 and 15 years old. I took swimming lessons at the Public Park, and did crafts in the park during the summers. I entered the frequent contests for crafts that we made there, and for "decorated bicycles". I went to St. Mary's School. I went to Cathedral High School in Springfield, but I went to lots of dances in the Windsor Locks High School. I played bugle in the St. Mary's Fife and Drum Corps, and later in the Golden Lancers Drum Corps, which practiced near the Southwest School. That's where I met people from the "other side" of Windsor Locks - the area that filled up with houses in the 1960s as a result of businesses in the Bradley Field area such as Hamilton Standard, Kaman Aircraft and Hi-G Inc.

My parents were the children of Italian immigrants who came to Windsor Locks and stayed. My parents were “solid Windsor Lockers”. My father, Leo Montemerlo, worked at three mills along the canal during his working years. Like most others, he walked to and from his job. My mother, Lena Montemerlo, taught history in the Windsor Locks Middle school for decades.

This tells you that I am a creature of the Windsor Locks of the 1940s, 50s and early 60s. After I went to college, I came back and worked for Hi-G for two summers. All of this affected me for the rest of my life. I have two brothers who have lived in Windsor Locks all of their lives, and dozens of cousins who have done the same.

After I went to Catholic University in Washington, DC to get an undergraduate degree in Mathematics, I went to the University of Connecticut for a Masters Degree in Mathematics. That gave me many more visits to Windsor Locks. Then I went to Penn State and got a PhD in Educational Psychology. I got married in my last year there. After that, I had a 40 year career in which we lived in New York, Florida (twice), Alabama, and Virginia (twice). I always got back home to Windsor Locks every year.

During my career as a Human Factors psychologist with the military for ten years, and then with NASA for 30 years, I was in the field of “technology”. I had to do research and to publish the results. It was “publish or perish” world that I lived in. Every research paper that I published had to have a section on the history of the technology that I did for that paper. I was lucky enough to have taken a “how to write history” course for a full year when I was a freshman in college. That turned out to be central to my career.

When I retired, my interest in history didn’t wane. Even though I didn’t live in Windsor Locks during my career or retirement, I started writing the history of Windsor Locks in 2016. This book is my sixth book on Windsor Locks History. I started out to write only one book, but I got hooked. I wanted to write the history of Windsor Locks from its earliest days in 1663, when it was part of Windsor, to about the year 2000.

I don’t know why I was bitten by the history bug, but I was. It may have been because of Jabez Haskell Hayden’s 1900 book on the History of Windsor Locks up to 1900. Jabez had been bitten by the same history bug. From the time he was young, he was interested in history, and it stayed with him throughout his life. He was fascinated with finding out what happened and why it happened. While there had been some short history pamphlets written about Windsor Locks after Jabez Haskell died, there has been nothing written about the rise of the mills along the canal, or about the fall of the manufacturing base of Windsor Locks, or about the end of the Main Street era or about the rise or fall of the Bradley Field area industrialization.

I wanted to get that all written down in a set of books that anyone could be put on the internet, found easily, and downloaded at no cost. I want to develop an “encyclopedia” of Windsor Locks history, which told the stories of the

important people, places and events of our town's history. I found a few thousand great photos of Windsor Locks, many of which date back to the early days of photography. I wanted them integrated to the appropriate chapters of town history.

This is my sixth such book. One focussed only on Windsor Locks musicians. Our town has a history of great musicians. The rest of the books are on town history. This one completes the books of chapters on important people, places and events. I have one more book in development which will focus on people with outstanding achievements which have affected our town.

I have enjoyed this process of writing Windsor Locks history for seven years. I enjoyed meeting a group of Windsor Locks folks who know and love the history of our town, and thank them for their help in putting this encyclopedia of town history together.

When I started this research, I started putting up drafts of each chapter on some Facebook Windsor Locks websites to get more information and to get feedback. It turned out to be a great way of getting information and photographs, and it was a great way to get town history out to citizens for their enjoyment. I have made a large number of friends in that process. Many of them, like myself are lovers of Windsor Locks who don't live in Windsor Locks anymore. Jobs, the military, education, marriages, retirement, and other things took us to other parts of the United States, but we have never lost our love for our hometown.

You can get all of my books at no cost from the website of the Windsor Locks Public Library, or on Google Books, Apple Books, and archive.org. Who knows what the future of the internet will be? I hope my books will be available to people in the near and distant future. I hope they will be useful to future Windsor Locks historians.

There are two main reasons to read town history. One is to enjoy favorite memories from our childhood. That is recent history. That is a good thing. However there is another important reason - to learn from history, and to put what we learn to use in planning the future of the town. That is difficult. That is politics. As Santayana said: "Those who are ignorant of history are bound to repeat it." In the daily life of a Windsor Locks town leader, there is a push to focus on the "necessary" things like fixing broken sewer pipes. However, current town policies, such as "lowest possible tax rates", have an effect on the future of the town. Some of those effects are fairly easy to see, if you look. They are easy to miss, if you don't. Town planning is a series of choices. Knowing history provides valuable information for making the best decisions possible.

Thank you very much, and good luck to you.

Mel Montemerlo

Bel Air, Maryland 2023

August, 2023



Parade for Dedication of Memorial Hall - June 10, 1891

Windsor Locks Shows The Way



Spirit of Windsor Locks

Bomber plane dedicated to Windsor Locks, Conn., for purchase of \$177,484 in War Stamps and Bonds, during a six weeks campaign. The only "small town" in the country to establish this enviable record.