

Chapter 31

The Dexter Dynasty

No family has had a more profoundly positive effect on the town of Windsor Locks than the Dexter family. They were here long before Windsor Locks was incorporated into a separate town. They were among the first builders of mills. They built the first school. They started the Dexter company and kept it going for more than two centuries, during which time, there were seven family members who led the company. The Dexter Corporation was one of the largest employers in Windsor Locks. It became a world-wide company which made a wide variety of different products over the decades. Dexter family members were business, town and civic leaders as well as generous philanthropists. They donated the land used for Windsor Locks High School which later became a Middle School, the land for a Windsor Locks Town Hall, and the land for the Windsor Locks Public Library. They also deeded the land on Main Street, on which the Congregational Church is situated, to the Church for \$1. They were responsible for the placement of the airfield that became Bradley Field in Windsor Locks rather than in another part of Connecticut.

A dynasty is a succession of people from the same family who play a prominent role in business, politics, or another field. This chapter is about a sequence of eleven members of the Dexter family over a period of ten generations (1660-2000), who accomplished outstanding achievements. The Dexter family really was a dynasty.

This article describes the seven individuals who ran the Dexter company throughout its 220 year life, and four of their ancestors. Seth Dexter II was the first Dexter to come to Pine Meadow, which later became Windsor Locks. This chapter covers Seth's father, grandfather, great-grandfather and finally his great-great-grandfather, Thomas Dexter, who founded the Dexter family. We shall see that the ancestors of the Dexters who moved to Pine Meadow were as accomplished as their descendants. It is nothing short of amazing to come across a family with ten generations of highly accomplished members. Thus the title of this article is "The Dexter Dynasty."

The Dexter Lineage prior to moving to Pine Meadow, Connecticut

Thomas Dexter (- 1677)

The information on Thomas Dexter comes from the Warden and Dexter (1905) book on the genealogy of the Dexter family. The family began with Mr. Thomas Dexter of Bristol England. He was a wealthy and educated man. According to Warden and Dexter: "He had received a good education, and wrote a beautiful hand, as papers now in existence will show, was a man of great energy of character, public-spirited, and ever ready to contribute to the support of any enterprise he thought to be of interest to the

colony; always independent, and fearless in the expression of his opinions.” In the prime of his life, he decided to come over to America in 1630, and settle in Massachusetts, along with three of his four children and some servants. There was no information about his wife.

Thomas Dexter settled on a farm of 800 acres in Lynn, Mass., where he had many servants. He was called “Farmer Dexter.” He was more than a farmer. He erected a bridge across the Saugus River, where he built the first iron works in that part of the country. The technology and much of the funding for that large project came from England, at the behest of Thomas Dexter. Iron ore was shipped in from the Cape. He moved to Sandwich, Mass., where he built the first grist mill there. In 1646, he and his family moved to Barnstable where he bought two farms. He bought more land from the Indian Chief, Pognanum, which he paid for with a suit of clothes. See the drawing below. Thomas Dexter did far more than farm in Lynn and in Barnstable. He built bridges, mills and roads, all of which contributed to his family’s good and to the public good. He gave one of his farms to his son, William. Thomas Dexter died in Boston in 1677.



**Thomas Dexter buying land from
Indian Chief Pognanum - about 1646**

We are tracing the lineage from Thomas Dexter to his great-great-grandson, Seth Dexter II, who moved to Connecticut in 1767. That lineage passes through Thomas’ son, William Dexter.

William Dexter (-1694)

William Dexter was born in England. He inherited one of his father's farms in Barnstable in 1650. He married Sarah Vincent in 1653. In 1657, he moved to Rochester, Mass. with a group of about 30 people. William and his wife, Sarah Vincent, had seven children, all born in Barnstable, Mass. By the time he died, he had amassed a considerable amount of land in both Barnstable and Rochester, which he gave to his children. He died in 1694.

Benjamin Dexter (1670-1732)

Benjamin Dexter was born in Barnstable, Mass. to William and Sara Vincent Dexter in 1670. Later, he moved to Rochester. He married Sarah Arnold in 1784. He was a successful farmer on the land he father had given him. He and his wife had eleven children, all born in Rochester. He died in 1732.

Seth Dexter I (1718-1793)

Seth Dexter I, was the seventh child of Benjamin and Sarah Dexter. He was born in 1718. He married a woman named Elizabeth. They had nine children. Seth was a successful clothier. He was also a community leader. In his community, he was a member of the town's Committee on Correspondence in 1772-3, a member of a committee to supply families of soldiers in the army, a church deacon, and the town clerk in 1750-1756. He lived in Rochester, MA, which is where he died in 1793.

Seth Dexter I passed his skills in the area of making cloth for clothes to his son, Seth Dexter II, who as we shall see, moved from Massachusetts to Connecticut in 1767. There are three persons in this lineage named Seth Dexter. For clarity, we will refer to them as Seth Dexter I, Seth Dexter II and Seth Dexter III. Some books and articles used the titles Sr. and Jr. to refer to the first and second Seth Thomases, and while others used those titles to refer to the second and third Seth Dexter. Roman numerals are use here to eliminate confusion.

As we have already seen, the father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather of Seth Thomas I were all highly successful farmers, frontiersmen, builders, and businessmen. Now we turn to the sequence of Dexters in Connecticut who formed and led the Dexter company.

The Dexter Lineage in Connecticut

Seth Dexter II (1743-1793)

Seth Dexter II was the first child of Seth Dexter I and his wife, Elizabeth. He was born in 1743 in Rochester, MA. He married Deborah Haskell who was also born in

Rochester, MA. They moved to the Pine Meadow section of Windsor, Connecticut in 1767. Pine Meadow later became Windsor Locks. Jabez Haskell, Seth's brother in law, moved to Pine Meadow with him. The two were life-long business partners, They operated a number of successful businesses ventures.

According to Jabez Haskell (Historical Sketches, p. 126), Ephraim Haskell and Seth Dexter, of Rochester, Mass., bought the land lying east of Center Street, and from School Street on the South to Grove Street on the North, and still further North on Center Street. They bought 160 acres for £340 (\$7.08 per acre), including the saw-mill and an old house. The purchase took place in 1769. This purchase by Haskell and Dexter was made for their sons, Seth Dexter II, whose wife, Deborah Haskell was Ephraim's daughter, and Jabez Haskell, who was Ephraim's son. The reader should note that this 160 acres later became "downtown Windsor Locks."

In 1770, Seth Dexter I deeded his land in Pine Meadow to his son Seth Dexter II, who was also a clothier, and who set up the first "clothier works" in this part of the country. (Henry R. Stiles, The History and Genealogies of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut, vol. 1)

The following four paragraphs are from "The Memorial History of Hartford County, Connecticut, 1633-1884, vol. 2," by Trumbull, 1886.

"The first school-house was built about 1776, largely if not entirely by Jabez Haskell and Seth Dexter. It stood on the southeast corner of Elm and Centre streets, on Mr. Dexter's land; and they were probably the parties responsible for the support of the school..."

"For many years, woolen cloths were subjected to no finishing process after being taken from the loom. The first mill for cloth-dressing in this part of the country was set up here. Mr. Seth Dexter brought the art with him from the eastern part of Massachusetts, and set up his mill in 1770. ... Dexter's clothier works were run here about sixty years..."

"Water-power was first used to run a saw-mill on Kettle Brook, which was being built, or rebuilt, by the Denslow family in 1742; at that date, half of it was sold to Daniel Hayden, and afterward the other half was sold to his brother Isaac Hayden. About twenty years later, Daniel Hayden had failed, and in 1769 it passed into the hands of Haskell & Dexter, whose families operated it jointly three quarters of a century, when the Dexter family became sole owners, and they still continue it in operation."

"In 1784 Haskell & Dexter built a grist-mill below their saw-mill..."

From the above, we see that Seth Dexter II set up the beginnings of the Dexter company, and that it was already thriving. Seth Dexter II and his wife Deborah, had nine children between 1770 and 1789. All were born in Windsor, Conn. Seth Dexter II died in Windsor, Conn in 1797.

Seth Dexter III (1776-1841)

Seth Dexter III was the son of Seth Dexter II and his wife, Deborah Haskell. He was born in 1776. He married Sylvia Gaylord, and they had two children, Harriet C. Dexter in 1809 and Charles Haskell Dexter in 1810.

Seth Dexter III continued to run the businesses that his father had built, such as the woolen mill which continued to operate until 1817, when they sold the property to Timothy Mather. In 1784, he built a grist mill below his saw mill.



Seth Dexter III 1776-1841

In 1811, Seth Dexter III built a gin distillery. This was operated about twenty years, until about 1830. (from Jabez Haskell, Historical Sketches 1900). Under Seth Dexter III, the family business expanded.

Charles Haskell Dexter (1810-1869)

Charles Haskell Dexter was the son of Seth Dexter III and his wife, Sylvia. He was born on 19 September, 1810. Charles H. Dexter married Lydia Pierson in 1838. They had three children, Julia Sergeant Dexter (1839), Annie P. Dexter (1842), and Edwin D. Dexter (1847).

Charles H. Dexter, began experimenting with specialty paper in the basement of the grist mill. That research did not pay off right away, but it provided a vision for the future of the company. The Story of Windsor Locks (1954) says: "In the basement of the old grist mill, Charles H. Dexter produced about 200 pounds of hand-made Manilla wrappers per day. Being hampered for room and power, he moved his paper-making equipment into a frame building which was erected across the canal from the grist mill and in this building, the present business was begun."

Later, Charles H. Dexter succeeded his father, Seth Dexter III, in running the business. With his brother in law, Edwin Douglas, he reorganized the business under

the new name "C. H. Dexter & Company" in 1847. Edwin Douglas was also the on-site engineer for the Windsor Locks canal. When Edwin Douglas left, C. H. Dexter operated the company on his own.

In 1867, C. H. Dexter brought his son, Edwin Dexter, his son-in-law, Herbert R. Coffin, Sr., and his two grandsons, Herbert R. Coffin, Jr., and Arthur Dexter Coffin, into the business. He renamed the company "C. H. Dexter and Sons." He made the company self-sustaining. He also helped to increase the use of water power, and to introduce different types of businesses in Windsor Locks.



Charles Haskell Dexter
~1833

Charles Haskell Dexter was also the town's first postmaster and he played a prominent role in the building and use of the canal in Windsor Locks. He was president of the Connecticut River Company, the association that promoted the canal construction. Charles Haskell Dexter died on Aug. 29, 1869.

Herbert Raymond Coffin Sr. (1840-1901)

Herbert Raymond Coffin Sr. was the husband of Julia S. Dexter, who was the daughter of Charles Haskell Dexter. In other words, he was C.H. Dexter's son-in-law. As we saw above, he was brought into the company by C.H. Dexter, along with C.H. Dexter's son, Edwin D. Dexter. When Edwin died, the full leadership of the company passed to Herbert R. Coffin, Sr.

The “Story of Windsor Locks 1663-1954” states: “Mr. Coffin greatly increased the size and capacity of the mills and began the manufacture of high grade tissues and various paper specialties.



Herbert Raymond Coffin Sr.
1840-1901



Edwin D. Dexter 1847-1886



Julia S. Dexter 1839-1914

Arthur D. Coffin (1868-1940) and Herbert R. Coffin, Jr. (1871-1938)

Arthur D. Coffin and Herbert R. Coffin Jr. , the sons of Herbert R. and Julia S. Dexter Coffin, continued the business after their father’s death in 1901. They maintained the old name.



Arthur Dexter Coffin
1868-1940



Herbert Raymond Coffin Jr.
1871-1938

According to the International Directory of Company Histories, Vol. 12: "After Herbert Coffin's death, his two sons, Arthur and Herbert Jr., operated the business as a partnership. Following incorporation in July of 1914, Arthur D. Coffin became president and Herbert Jr. became vice-president. In 1922, Arthur Coffin hired a young M.I.T. graduate, Fay Osborn, who played a principal part in the development of the porous long fiber tea bag paper which Dexter introduced in the 1930s. This same technology led to the development of the fibrous meat casing, as well as the stencil base tissue, and a general line of absorbent and filter paper that was still being produced in the late twentieth century."

Innovation and experimentation led Dexter to the forefront of new paper products. Dexter marketed the first toilet paper roll, which was sold with a wire loop so that it could be hung on a convenient hook or nail. The toilet paper came in two grades, but was discontinued in the early 1930s. The company also introduced the first catalogue cover paper, as well as the "electrolytic absorbent capacitor" paper, and patented a metal tarnish preventative tissue which sold extensively to the silverware manufacturers.

Dexter Drake Coffin (1898-1966)

Dexter Drake Coffin was the son of Arthur Dexter Coffin and his wife Cora. He married Elizabeth Dorr. They had two sons: Dexter Drake Coffin II and David Linwood Coffin.

In 1936, when Dexter Drake Coffin became president of the company, its main products were short fiber paper products, such as carbonizing tissue, lightweight air mail writing papers, and condenser tissues for the electrical industry. The company produced long fiber paper only on a limited basis. Under Dexter Coffin's administration, however, the company devoted 100 percent of its production to long fiber paper and webs for industrial uses.



Dexter Drake Coffin 1898-1966

Dexter Drake Coffin was an aviation enthusiast. When he heard that there was a plan to convert Brainard Field in Hartford into a military airport, he went into action to try to get the military airfield to be built in the tobacco fields of Windsor Locks. He was successful, and it eventually became Bradley Field. That story is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is too important not to mention here.

David Linwood Coffin I (1925-2012)

David Linwood Coffin was the son of Dexter Drake Coffin and his wife, Elizabeth. David Linwood Coffin's first wife was Barbara Van Gorder. His second wife was Marie Jeanne Cosnard de Closets. David L. Coffin started out as a salesman for the company in 1948.



David Linwood Coffin
1925-2012

According to the International Directory of Company Histories, Vol. 12: "David L. Coffin became Dexter's president in 1958. By then, the company had gained a reputation as being a stodgy old New England relic that was nearly stagnant. The company produced only paper products, opposed hiring from outside the Windsor Locks area, and prohibited borrowing from lending institutions. It lacked an organized sales force, and almost one-third of its personnel was 65 or older. To modernize the company's approach to business, David Coffin hired young professional managers and restructured the family controlled executive board to include outsiders. He instituted strong cost controls, and trained and organized a sales force."

He also established a plan for acquiring and divesting companies to achieve growth. Coffin's target for company growth was the field of specialty chemicals.

David Linwood Coffin wrote *The History of the Dexter Corporation 1767-1967*. He was the 7th and last in the family to run the Dexter Corp. since it began in 1767.

1988 - The last year in which a member of the Dexter family was president of the company.

In 1988, a corporate restructuring ended in a management shift which was unprecedented in the 220 year history of the company. It was the first time that the leadership of the company was not under the descendent of Thomas Dexter. K. Graham Walker was selected to succeed David L. Coffin as the Dexter Corporation's president and chief executive officer.

To avoid a hostile takeover in 2000, the company sold all of its holdings. The Windsor Locks portion of C.H.Dexter Corp., known as the Dexter Non-woven Materials Division, was sold to the Finnish Ahlstrom Paper Group. That was the end of the C.H. Dexter Corp.

Conclusion

The founder of the Dexter family, Thomas Dexter, was an extremely capable farmer and maker of mills. In today's parlance, he was a "go-getter." His son, William, and William's son, Benjamin, and Benjamin's son, Seth Dexter I, were also entrepreneurs. All three were successful farmers and businessmen. They were willing to move to new, undeveloped areas and seek their fortunes, and they did well. Seth Dexter I was a clothier, and he passed his skills and attitudes to his son, Seth Dexter II, who moved to Pine Meadow, Windsor, Connecticut with his brother-in-law, Jabez Haskell. Seth and Jabez were given a large tract of land with a mill on it, and they started building businesses and expanding them.

The Dexter company started to grow, and it continued growth under a succession six more men who were descendants of Thomas Dexter, or who were offspring of Herbert Raymond Coffin, Sr., who married into the Dexter family.

In total, we saw 10 generations of highly successful Dexter family members. The six generations (seven men) in Windsor Locks built a company that became an international powerhouse, and lasted 220 years. It became the longest running company on the New York Stock Market. Windsor Locks grew along with the Dexter company. The Dexter company leaders were also community and church leaders in the town of Windsor Locks. They gave a great deal to the town.

In conclusion, we have seen that the Dexter family was a long-lived, powerful family. They were a dynasty. Windsor Locks was lucky to have them.

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Chapter 32

The Fifteen “Blocks” of Windsor Locks (1860-1970)

Language changes over time. One often encounters the term “block” when reading old newspaper articles about Windsor Locks. The term does not refer to the area between one cross street and another, such as the area on Main Street between Oak Street and Spring Street. In those old newspapers, the term “block” was used to refer to a large, multi-purpose building, such as a building that had stores on the first floor and apartments on the upper floors.

For example, the building just south of Colapietro’s hotel on Main Street, was called the “Burnap block” after its owner, Dr. Sidney Burnap. It was a large multi-purpose building, with storefronts on the street level, an opera house, offices, the headquarters of the telephone company, a millinery store, a confectionary store, and a “Polish Rooming House.” This paper examines the fifteen blocks of downtown Windsor Locks, and the people who owned them. Such buildings no longer exist. Now the world has shopping malls, and business parks, but they are not the same thing. The people who built and owned these blocks are worth learning about. They were the “movers and shakers” of their day.

In the 1880 - 1920 time frame, when European immigrants were coming to Windsor Locks in large numbers, wealthy people and up-and-comers who believed that the future was bright, built such buildings, looking to enrich the downtown area while enriching themselves.

As we shall see, the blocks of Windsor Locks had similarities and differences. Some of the owners built residences for themselves and their families into the building, as well as space for their own family businesses. Others preferred to live elsewhere. Such was the case with Dr. Burnap, who lived in a magnificent house on Maple that was so large that it was called “The Castle.” It was situated on a 100 acre plot of land on Maple St. Others, like Dr. Coogan, who built his block at the southern end of Main St., built a living area for his family in his block, as well as his offices, and rooms for other businesses.

While many of these were actually called blocks, such as the Mather block, The Bidwell block and the Outerson block, others were not. Examples include the Rialto Theater building, Colapietro’s Hotel, the Beehive building and the Tate building. However, they were true multi-purpose buildings, which housed a number of businesses and stores.

The people who built these Blocks were dynamic people. They were entrepreneurs. They believed in themselves and in their town. Most of them were leaders in social clubs, churches and town government. They were creative people in a changing world, and they were open to change. One good example is Mr. John E. Mooney. Mr. Mooney was lauded in the newspapers for building his block on the corner of Oak and Center Streets rather than in the crowded Main St. area, where all of

the other blocks were built. His block contained a general purpose hall for dances, meetings and shows, along with his hardware store and his mortuary business. Another good example was Dr. Burnap, who had a large room in his block with a floor that was built on large steel springs to give it a springy feel for dancing.

There were fifteen of these blocks in downtown Windsor Locks. We could examine them alphabetically or chronologically, but neither of those approaches seems to add additional wisdom or insight. Rather, let's examine them in the order they were situated along Main Street, starting with the Coogan block which was on the southern end, and going down Main St. as far as the Tate block, which was on the northern end of Main Street. By doing this, we only miss one of them, the Mooney Block, which we shall consider last (but not least).

A final point to be made before discussing each of the blocks, is that they all had ownership changes over time. The Coffin block later became the Zaccheo block and still later became the Preli and Lunn building. The Burnap block became the Central Hall block, and later the Graziani block. Some, such as the Beehive Building, were demolished early, while many of the blocks were demolished in the "re-development" of Main St. which happened in 1970s. Reading about the vibrant and bustling blocks will give the reader a feel for the extraordinary energy, hope, and entrepreneurial spirit of the Windsor Locks of an earlier time.

When studying the blocks of Windsor Locks, one has to keep in mind that there were other types of entrepreneurship going on in the town at the same time. This was only one type. There was the long string of mills that were flourishing along the canal. These were the biggest employers in the area at the time. There were also men who invested in farms, while others who invested in single family houses and in multifamily houses in town. This was an exciting time. While the past had been bleak for the increasing number of immigrants flowing into Windsor Locks, the future looked very bright. These entrepreneurs were in full entrepreneurial mode.

On the following page, there is a map of downtown Windsor Locks which shows the location of each of the fifteen blocks. We shall follow that map from south to north and then examine the one remaining block, which was on the corner of Oak and Center Streets.

The Downtown Blocks of Windsor

| | | | | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Center St. | | Tate Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | Main St. |
| | | Beehive Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Grove St. | | | |
| | | Moran Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | | Colapietro Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Mooney Block | Burnap Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Oak St. | | | |
| | | Pease Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | | Rialto Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | | Bidwell Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | | Converse Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Spring St. | | | |
| | | Mather Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | | Outerson Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Church St. | | | |
| | Barrett Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | Coffin's Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| State St. | | | | |
| | Coogan's Block | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

The Coogan Block

The Coogan block was on the South corner of Main and State Streets. It was earlier known as "Brown's Hall." Here is an early photo of the Coogan block in which you can see the stores on the street level. Following that is a photo of Dr. Joseph A. Coogan.



The Coogan Block, corner of State St & Main St.



*Dr. Joseph A. Coogan
Dean of Physicians of
Hartford County, CT*

Dr. Joseph A. Coogan was an extraordinarily accomplished man. He had a wide background for a small town doctor. He went to college at Holy Cross and Fordham, and received medical training at Bellevue Medical College. He had travelled widely through Europe. Before settling in Windsor Locks, he had an office in Hartford for twelve years, and he had practiced medicine in Los Angeles.

According to the *Springfield Republican* newspaper of March 23, 1930, "Dr. Coogan is a picturesque survival of the old type of family physician. His offices in Windsor Locks are on the ground floor of the Coogan block, and the waiting room bears unmistakable evidence of once having served as a drug store. A counter lines either side, and on one of the shelves is still to be found a placard advertising a patent medicine. Other shelves hold the doctor's medicine bottles, rolls of bandages and other necessities. ... In spite of his years, he is an energetic practitioner, going daily about his calls, for his practice is still large, though he commandeers a chauffeur to drive him on his rounds. He is known for the accuracy and range of his memory. Although there are four other physicians in town, Dr. Coogan is the dean, and he is ranked highly as a consultant.... Dr. Coogan was born in Windsor Locks. His father and mother came from Ireland in 1844. He lives with his wife and daughter in rooms over his offices. He has practiced in Windsor Locks for the past 40 years, returning there after a severe attack of pneumonia during his practice in Los Angeles, California. For many years, he was the general chairman of the Democratic town committee and, with his five brothers, has represented his county in the Connecticut Legislature."

The *Springfield Republican* issue of June 8, 1938 had an article about the Coogan block being torn down. The building had two stores on the first floor, three tenements on the second floor, and three meeting halls on the third. At one time, the ground floor was occupied by a drug store conducted by Joseph A. Coogan, while on the North side was the grocery store of Roscoe W. Prentice. Dr. Coogan and his family occupied one of the tenements on the second floor, while his sister occupied the other. The halls on the top floor served as the meeting places of the Riverside council of the Knights of Columbus from 1855 until 1921. The Euclid lodge of Masons had their headquarters on the third floor before they moved to the Converse Block.

John Zaccheo, the oldest son of Tommasso Zaccheo, who later bought the block on the other side of State Street, said that Dr. Coogan and his wife were very nice to the neighborhood children. John said that Dr. Coogan's wife sometimes invited them in for cookies and lemonade.

Dr. Coogan died of pneumonia on Nov. 24, 1933, at the age of 84. The pneumonia, which followed an accident three weeks earlier, when he fell and broke his hip. His wife was Margaret E. Brady Coogan (1852-1939). They had a daughter, Mary Laurentia Coogan (1883-1939). Coogan's Block was later replaced by the Barberi Esso Station, which later was owned by Vinnie Musco.

The Coffin Block

Coogan's block was on the South corner of State and Main Streets. Coffin's block was on the North corner. It was a Greek-revival style building with a portico, and

was painted white. Over the decades, the facade changed. The photo below was taken long after Coffin had sold the building.



Coffin Block: white building on left. Photo taken later when owned by T. Zaccheo. Barrett Block on right.

The following photo of the Coffin block and the Barrett Block is much older. You can see the type of facade it once had. Unfortunately the photo only shows a small portion of the Coffin block. Notice in this photo that the Coffin block had three floors.



Coffin Block Barrett Block

Herbert Raymond Coffin bought the block shortly after he married his wife, Julia, in 1866. H. R. Coffin was a very important man. He was the sole proprietor of C.H. Dexter & Sons, President of the Connecticut River Co., and a Director of the

Connecticut Banking Co., the Medlicott Co., and the Windsor Locks Bridge Co. He and his wife, Julia, lived in the Ashmere estate, not far from the Coffin block. We will see the large role that the Lincoln Institute played in the Coffin Block. That was brought about by his wife, Julia, who was a member of the Congregational Church, which sponsored the Lincoln Institute. Below is a photo of Herbert Raymond Coffin.



Herbert R. Coffin 1840-1877

Mr. C. W. Watrous was a tenant of the Coffin block. The *Windsor Locks Journal* of June 19, 1888 said that a fire occurred in the furniture rooms of Mr. C. W. Watrous in the Coffin block. There are three more tenants of the Coffin block that we have information on: the Lincoln Institute, a harness shop and a baker. Let us look at each of them.

The biggest tenant of the Coffin Block was the Lincoln Institute, which leased most of the Coffin Block. They were a group formed by the Congregational Church of Windsor Locks to help the Italian immigrants assimilate into American culture and into life in Windsor Locks. The Lincoln Institute was well described in the Feb. 16, 1908 issue of the *Springfield Republican* newspaper. Here are some excerpts from that article: "The Lincoln Institute started with the idea that the Italians were infinitely more in need of instruction in the language, customs and institutions of this country than of religious instruction. ... It is realized that the first desire of the young Italian immigrant is to learn our language ... Therefore the Institute tries to get hold of young Italian boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 22 or 23 years as soon as possible. The Institute occupies two floors of a building on Main St. First comes a reading room and library with books and American and Italian newspapers, then a general classroom with blackboards, ... On the top floor are the rooms of the Lincoln club and the rooms of the superintendent."

The Lincoln Institute not only taught English to the Italian immigrants, but also taught music, and had an orchestra. They gave sewing lessons to the Italian girls. This was a large organization which occupied a large space in the Coffin Block. The June 1, 1913, issue of the *Springfield Union* had an article on the Lincoln Institute that showed the organization was still going strong seven years after the last article what we

looked at. It is quite interesting that the Congregational Church would seek to do this much for the Italians, who were all Roman Catholics, and to keep it up for so long. No more articles about the Lincoln Institute could be found after 1913.

The Lincoln Institute was not the only operation going on in the Coffin Block. The Coffin Block rented offices and stores to others. The April 26, 1902, issue of the *Springfield Republican* said that James E. Carroll was moving his harness shop to the Coffin Block. The building he was in formerly was being moved to make room for the new post office that was being erected by Mr. A. W. Converse.

The May 23, 1938, issue of the *Springfield Republican* had an obituary for J. Henry Spenkoch, and it described his life. It said that he was considered one of the best bakers in the area, having conducted business at the Barberi's Home Style Bakery on Main St for over ten years. Prior to that, he was the chief baker at the Beroth Bakery that was located in the Coffin block. According to Mickey Danyluk, there was another baker in the Coffin block, probably at an earlier time, whose name was Theodore Schottmuller (1865-1928).

There is an excellent biography of H.R. Coffin in "Men of Progress: Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Leaders in Business and Professional Life in the state of Connecticut," which was compiled by Richard Herndon, New England Magazine: Boston, 1898.

Tommaso Zaccheo arrived in Windsor Locks from Italy in 1916. His oldest son, John, told me in a telephone conversation that his father, Tommaso Zaccheo, bought the Coffin Block in about 1920, which is shortly after newspaper articles about the Coffin Block stopped showing up in newspapers. John said that the first business that his father started in the building was an "Armchair Restaurant." Armchair restaurants were popular at that time. They were inexpensive eateries which cut back on expenses by eliminating the need for waitresses. The customer picked up his food from the counter and brought it to a chair with one arm which was wide enough to serve as a table.

Later, Tommaso Zaccheo shut down the restaurant and opened the first Pontiac dealership in the area. After a while, he hired a man to open a garage (a car repair shop) on the site. He also had a gas station. Tommaso came up with the idea of putting an awning over the gas pumps to shelter customers from the sun and rain. While that is common now, Mr. Zaccheo claimed to have come up with the idea. Mr. Zaccheo sold the property in 1937, and moved to Westfield, MA, to become a "gentleman farmer." The next owners of the building were Mr. Preli and Mr. Lunn, who opened up a large Norge appliance dealership.

The Barrett Block

The Barrett block was built in 1913. It was the red brick building on the North side of the Coffin block, as can be seen in the following photo of the two buildings. The Coffin block and the Barrett block are marked in the caption. If you look on the right side of the photo, which is the northerly direction, you will see that there are two shorter, smaller buildings after the Barrett building. In later years, these became the Karges shoe store and the Bridgeview Restaurant. That building that housed the restaurant was on the corner of Church Street.



Coffin Block

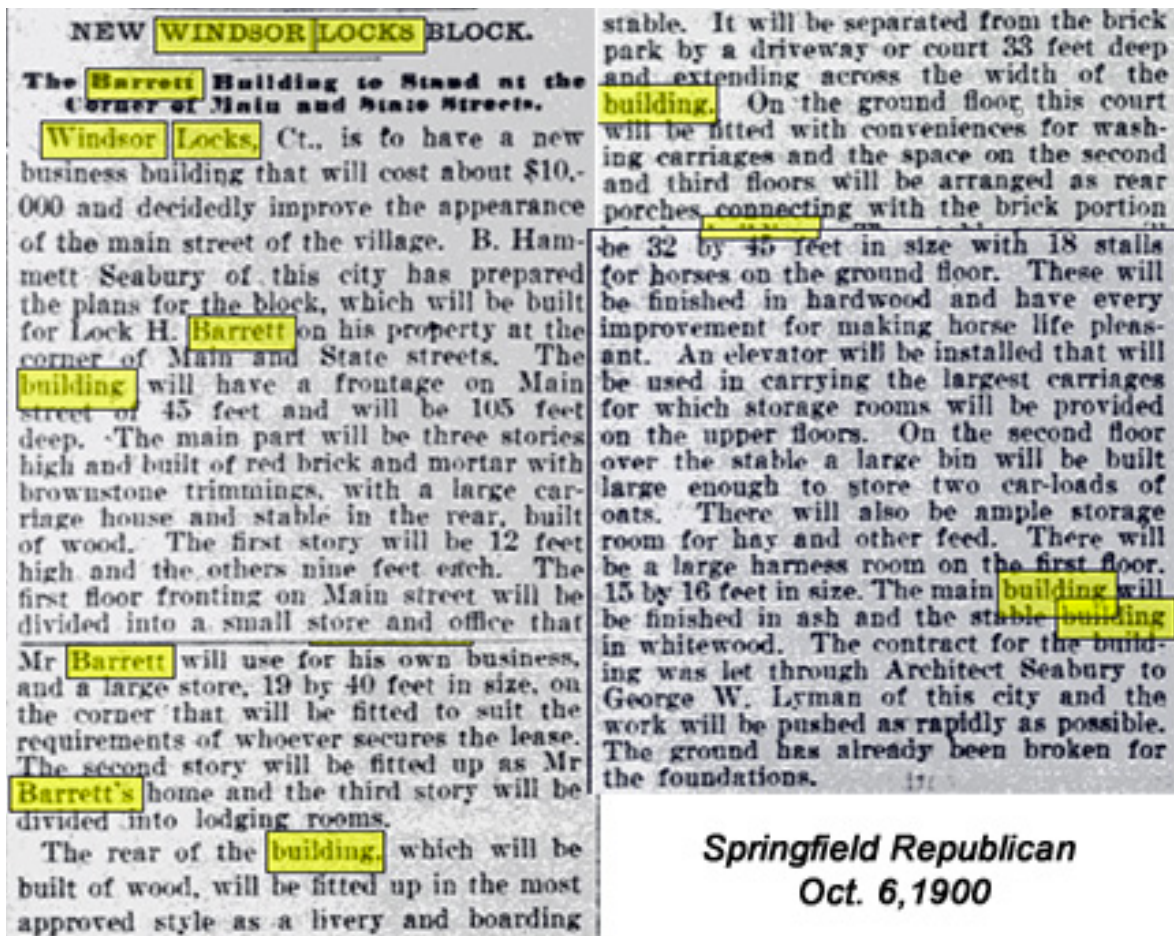
Barrett Block

Next is a closeup of the store on the near corner of the Barrett block. It was Dominick Alfano's market. As you can see, they sold bread, fruit, ice cream and sundries. Stores like this were referred to as confectionary stores. Later, Leo Viola took over this store, but it remained the same type of store. The 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks listed Leo Viola's store.



Dominick Alfano's store in the Barrett building

The Oct. 6, 1900 edition of the *Springfield Republican* had an excellent article stating that Mr. Lock Barrett was about to build the Barrett block, and it describes the contents and layout of the building. That article and a photo of the Barrett block follow.



That article describes the building very well. Like so many of the other block owners, Mr. Barrett was going to live there, and also rent out rooms. He would have a store to lease and he would have his own business office at the street level.

Below is a photo of the Barrett block with the sign "Barrett Block" showing near the top of the building. You can see Leo Viola's confectionary shop on the left, and Mr. Barrett's "Coal and Wood" office on the right side of the building. The Union Barber Shop was between the two.

Unfortunately, Mr. Barrett did not live very long. He died of a strange case of blood poisoning in 1913. The following article from the Aug. 6, 1913 issue of the *Springfield Union* gives the details. Lock Barrett's widow sold the coal and wood business to Dan Leach. Leach's coal and wood business was located where Windsor Locks Commons Plaza now (2016) stands.



Barrett Block at left, with Leo Viola's store on left corner. Mr. Barrett's office at right of Viola's

LOCK H. **BARRETT.**

Windsor Locks Business Man Dies of Blood Poisoning.

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn., Aug. 5.—Lock H. **Barrett**, 49 years old, one of the best-known liverymen and coal dealers in the state, and one of the leading business men of this place, died this morning of blood poisoning at his Main street home, after only a few days' illness. Last Thursday Mr. **Barrett** went to Savin Rock with his family on the **Windsor Locks** Business Men's association outing in his automobile. He scratched a pimple on his face and on the return trip that evening said that the pimple pained him. He rubbed it with his auto glove. It is thought by the physicians that the glove must have infected the pimple and caused blood poisoning. Mr. Barrett grew worse Sunday night and failed rapidly until the end.

Springfield Union, Aug. 6, 1913



Architect drawing for Barrett Building, 1900

Soon afterwards, the Barrett block was bought by the Colapietro brothers of Windsor Locks. Finding the following two articles came as a great surprise to me, since Vito Colapietro, the owner of Coly's Hotel on Main St, was my grandfather. I knew him well. Yet he never mentioned owning this property.

BIG REAL ESTATE DEAL.

The Ten Broeck, Capen & Terry real estate agency has sold for Mrs. Helen E. Barrett of Windsor Locks, Conn., the property consisting of a three-story business block, also two-story brick block and one-story brick block on Main street, and stable property on Church street, Windsor Locks, to Colapietro Bros., of the same town, who bought for investment. This sale is the largest in the real estate line that has taken in that town in several years. The same firm will sell for Mrs. Barrett the entire livery stock and business of the late L. H. Barrett at auction on the 9th.

Springfield Daily News, Apr. 1, 1914

Here is a second article which provides more detail about the sale. Much searching did not uncover any further information about the Colapietro brothers owning, operating or selling this property. It is possible that it was taken over by one of Vito's brothers, or that it was sold quickly, and Vito Colapietro used the proceeds to buy his hotel. Given that he had only been in this country since 1906, and he bought the hotel in 1916, he must have obtained a good deal of money in a short time, which gives some credence to the idea that the Barrett property was bought and sold quickly. Here is the second article on the subject.

Barrett Block Is Sold.

Another large real estate deal was consummated last night when the fine business block of the late Lock H. Barrett on Main street was sold by Mrs. Barrett to the Colapietro brothers. The property comprises the three-story brick block, occupied by Mrs. Barrett and family as their home on the upper floors and rented for stores and the livery office on the ground floor, and the livery stable, carriage shed and storage rooms in the rear, and also the brick building at the corner of Main and Church streets occupied by J. M. Carroll as a harness store on the lower floor and a tenement upstairs. The vacant lot at the rear of the corner store is also included in the deal. The price for the entire property was \$19,000. Pasquale Colapietro runs a fruit store in the Mather block now, and his brothers, Leo and Vito, conduct a similar store on High street in Holyoke. For the present there will be no changes in the tenants of the buildings, as most of them have leases for a few years more to run. The office

will be continued to be used by the L. H. Barrett company, which was organized last week to continue the coal and trucking business. Mrs. Barrett will reside upstairs until she secures another house elsewhere soon. There is a barber shop in one of the stores and a fruit store in the other. The disposal of the livery business is yet undecided, but it is thought that Jeremiah Gallagher may take hold of that part of the business on his own account, as he has had several years' experience with Mr. Barrett and is conversant with the conducting of that pretty well. Arrangements for the lease of the barns to him for that purpose will be taken up today by the new owners. The business block is of modern construction, as it is one of the best appearing structures on the Main street of the town, being located in the central part of the town, opposite the approach to the suspension bridge, and the sale is the biggest in the real estate line that has taken place in the town for several years.

Springfield Republican, March 31, 1914

No further articles were found in newspapers concerning the Barrett block after the above two articles.

The Outerson Block

If anyone ever writes a book about the 25 greatest people of Windsor Locks, James D. Outerson will surely be in it. The best brief description of his life was given in the Sept. 15, 1936 issue of the *Springfield Republican* newspaper. James D. Outerson was born in 1872 and died in 1936. He was known throughout the state of Connecticut for his long and distinguished work for the town of Windsor Locks. He held the triple position of town clerk, treasurer and registrar. While he was a staunch Democrat, he was usually nominated for those posts by both the Democrat and Republican Parties. He held those offices from 1895 until he died. However, that is not all. He was Secretary of the Building and Loan Association, a local collector for the gas and electric company, a member of the Knights of Columbus, and an official with the Chamber of Commerce. But that is not all. He was an accomplished musician. He led a local orchestra, and was the organist at St. Mary's Church. A search of local newspaper articles found 44 articles spanning his lifetime. The amazing thing they show is that very often, when there was a big problem, he was the man who was put in charge of fixing it. During the war, there were a number of fundraisers and other things that had to be done by the town. Mr. Outerson was always the person to head the project, or at least to be the treasurer of the project.

On top of all of this, Mr. Outerson was an active businessman. He had a mens furnishings business that thrived in Windsor Locks. He also ran an insurance and bonding agency.

He owned the Outerson block on the North corner of Church and Main Streets. While no records could be found on the exact date he bought or built it, the May 27, 1887 issue of the *Springfield Republican* newspaper said that the ground in front of the Outerson block was being covered with a layer of gravel. This is interesting because he would have only been 17 at that time. The April 12, 1900 issue of the same newspaper shows that Mr. Lee Roberts, a jeweler, had rented a part of the store of James D. Outerson.

The July 10, 1904 issue of the *Springfield Republican* said that Mr. James D. Outerson was moving his business from the Burnap block (north corner of Oak and Main Streets) to his new store, and that he was moving all of the books and papers, vaults and safes containing documents of the town of Windsor Locks to his new location. The new location was that which had just been vacated by Mr. M. J. King on Main Street. This article did not give the exact location of this building, but the location is made clear in other newspaper articles such as the Sept. 1, 1914 issue of the *Springfield Republican* which shows that Mr. John T. Kane was opening a new drug store in the Outerson block on the corner of Church and Main Streets. Over the years, a series of drug stores occupied that same store on the corner of the Outerson block. The Dec. 10, 1954 issue of the *Springfield Union* newspaper said that the LaPoll Pharmacy was moving in to the corner store in the former Outerson block.

Mr. James D. Outerson was one of the most outstanding and accomplished men that Windsor Locks ever produced. Below are two photos. The first is of a portion of

the Outerson block at the time it was owned by Mr. Outerson. The second is a later (1950s) photo of the same building.



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.



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

The Mather Block

Mr. William Mather was, as the owners of the other blocks were, a major player in the town of Windsor Locks. Like the others, he didn't watch things happen, he made things happen. The Nov. 12, 1914 issue of the *Springfield Republican* described his life in his obituary. They said that he was one of the town's most respected citizens. At the time he died, he was the president of the Windsor Locks Trust and Safe Deposit Company, which he was largely responsible for establishing. He was born in 1840. He started in business by getting into the grocery business and into the dry goods business with his father. He had a "fancy and dry goods" store in his Mather block, which he sold in 1905 to focus on the new banking business that he was organizing at the time.



Mather Block (tall brick building at left) ~1915

Mr. Mather was a director and President of the defunct "Windsor Locks Savings Bank," which went under because the bank's treasurer, Mr. Converse, stole about \$185,000 from it. Mr. Converse committed suicide. The Bank finally went into receivership and those who had money in the bank lost about three quarters of their savings. Mr. Mather resigned from his position with the Bank. That whole episode wore heavy on Mr. Mather for the rest of his life.

Mr. William Mather built the Mather block in 1870, together with his father. Together, they ran a dry goods business there. (Mickey Danyluk) There were newspaper articles about the Mather block from 1890 to 1928. Let's take a look at what those articles had to say about the Mather block. The *Springfield Republican* (Feb. 19, 1890) said that Mrs. C.A. Loomis had closed her millinery store in the

Connelly building, but reopened in the Mather Block. The *Springfield Republican* of May 19, 1904 said that Mr Ladell will take over the drug store of J. W. Roberts. The *Springfield Republican* of March 17, 1909 said that Theta Iota Phi rents rooms in the Mather block, and that they are forming a baseball team. It doesn't say what type of club this was, but they are big enough to have their own orchestra, which will be playing at a dance in Mooney Hall.

The *Springfield Republican* of March 31, 1914 tells us that Pasquale Colapietro, who goes by the Americanized name of Patsy Coly runs a fruit store in the Mather block, and that Pasquale and his brothers, Vito and Leo, just bought the Barrett block!

The *Springfield Republican* of Nov 12, 1914 has the obituary of William Mather, but it doesn't say what is going to happen to the Mather block. Mr. Mather was 65 years old and had been ill for fifteen months.

The *Springfield Republican* issues of Feb. 3 and of Feb. 7, 1915 provide more detailed information. The Mather block was then the property of Mary Mather, the widow of Fred L. Mather. The building was entirely occupied by her two sons for their businesses on the ground floor, and with their families on the upper floors. Obviously one of the newspaper articles is in error. If the Colapietro brothers bought the Mather block in 1914, it wouldn't have been owned by the widow, Mrs. Mather in 1915.

The *Springfield Republican* of June 21, 1915 tells us that Mrs. Cora Learmont bought the millinery business of Mrs. L. N. Martel which had been there for 15 years. The Feb. 3, 1917 issue of the same newspaper says that the novelty store owned by Mandel Kurzmack was sold to David Scherry. The Jan. 11, 1917 issue of the *Springfield Republican* described a meeting of the stockholders of the Windsor Locks Safe Deposit and Trust Company in which the entire set of directors were re-elected. The business of the bank was showing steady improvement.

On New Year's Day of 1924, a fire burned a good deal of the building. It started in the shop of the Windsor Locks Macaroni Company, which was owned by Leo Colapietro, the brother of Vito and Pasquale Colapietro. Police officers noticed the smoke and roused the people living in the upper floors, so that no one was hurt. The fire started in the basement of the Macaroni company where the electrical equipment was located, and spread to the floor of the bank and up to the second floor where the millinery store and the music studio of Fred C. Abbe was located, as well as storage rooms for the macaroni company. The flames got up to the apartment of Mrs Maggie Pease on the third floor. The Mather interests were covered by insurance, but those of the macaroni firm were only partially covered. The other tenants had no insurance.

The May 20, 1928 issue of the *Springfield Republican* said that the Windsor Locks library had once been housed in the Mather Block, but is now housed across the street in the Converse Block, which is also referred to as the Masonic block. Many will remember that as the building in which the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette was in.

Here is a photo of the Mather block as it appeared around 1950.



Mather Block (with Carlisle store and Bank) ~1950

According to the *Springfield Republican* of April 12, 1937, Mr. L. D. Cutler, a local department store owner, purchased the Mather block from Walter H. Perry, the state bank commissioner, and receiver for the closed Windsor Locks Trust and Safe Deposit Company. The article says that Mr Cutler is the oldest and most successful merchant in Windsor Locks, having started in the jewelry and optical business in the old Coogan block in 1905. In 1918, he bought out the shoe and furnishing company of Frank G. Burt and took over his store in the Converse (Masonic) block. Mr Cutler moved to the larger space in the Mather block in 1922 and now needs more space. He took over the entire first floor of his new building.

The *Springfield Republican* of July 20, 1945, shows the sale of the Mather block by Mr. Cutler to the People's Cooperative, which will use the space for a grocery and meat store.

The Converse Block (also called the Masonic Block)

Below is a photo of the Converse block which was on the Northern corner of Spring and Main Streets. At the top of the front of the building, it says: "Masonic Hall" in brick in a semi-circle on the top half of the building. This building was also referred to sometimes as the Masonic block.



***Converse Block was also called "Masonic Block"
It housed the Post Office and the Library.
Corner of Spring St. and Main St.
Lighter building on right was the Bidwell Block.***

This building was erected in 1902 and owned by Alfred Wood Converse, who was a very interesting character. He was born in 1835 to Hannibal A. Converse and his wife Julia. Mr. Converse's interests and works were numerous. He was the longest serving postmaster in Windsor Locks. He was appointed as postmaster by President Andrew Johnson in 1866 and held that post until his death in 1912, except for the two terms of President Cleveland. This was a political appointment. President Cleveland was a Democrat, while Mr. Converse was a staunch lifelong Republican. So he was a postmaster for a total of 36 years.

He fought in the Civil War, and was wounded in 1863. Shortly after that, he left the Army. For the rest of his life, Mr. Converse supported the military and veterans from Windsor Locks. His father, Hannibal Converse had built an iron foundry, which was later owned and run by Alfred Wood Converse, who was more commonly referred to as "A. W. Converse." (information of last two paragraphs is from the *Springfield Republican* of July 16, 1911)

The *Springfield Republican* of June 12, 1869 tells us that the Euclid Lodge of the Masons had just been established in Windsor Locks and that Mr. Converse was elected a "Steward" of the club. He was a strong supporter of this group for the rest of his life. In May, 1871, he and a group from Windsor Locks formed the "Windsor Locks Savings Bank." He started off as the secretary and treasurer of the Bank. The vice-president of the bank was Jabez H. Hayden. In addition to being Postmaster and running an Iron

Foundry, we see in the *Hartford Daily Courant* of Oct. 8, 1874, that he was again elected to the position of Town Clerk, a position that he had held for years. In many of the articles in which his name appears, the authors go out of their way to comment that he has been doing a very good job.

The *Springfield Republican* of July 21, 1875 said that Mr. James L. Price opened a harness shop in the Converse block. The May 27, 1888 issue of the same newspaper said that Mr. Converse, on behalf of the local Grand Army chapter, held a meeting to propose that a Memorial Hall be built to honor Windsor Locks citizens who were veterans or who had died. However only 12 people showed up for the meeting. So the group that he led proposed to privately fund the building of the Memorial Hall whether or not the Town contributed. The Grand Army of the Republic, for those who are not familiar with it, was a fraternal group of veterans of the Civil War who fought on the Union side.

The *Springfield Republican* of April 22, 1890 said that the Post Office just moved back to the Converse Block. Given that A. W. Converse is the Postmaster, and that he has his own building, this seems reasonable. The *Springfield Republican* issue of Oct. 5, 1902 said that the Post Office was coming back to the Converse block. That meant that it had moved away for a while.

The new Converse Block was ready for the Post Office and much more. The store next to the Post Office was leased to F. G. Bert who ran a shoe store. The front rooms on the second floor and rooms on the South side were leased to Brown and Co., who are milliners. There is also a large room in the rear of the millinery store which is leased to the Masons. The entire upper floor of the building has been leased to the Masons. Besides the large main hall, there is a large banquet hall, coat room, ante-room and closet. The photo of the Converse block that was shown above is the one which opened in 1902. No photos could be found of the original Converse block.

The article on the new Converse block also reviewed Mr. Converse's career in glowing terms. It is worth presenting here. He was first introduced to business by his father, who owned a foundry, known as H. A. Converse & Co. After the death of his father, the company was known as A. W. Converse & Co. and it was a prominent business in Windsor Locks for years. Finally Mr. Converse sold it to Horton & Sons, who kept the business going. Mr. Converse was appointed Postmaster in 1868. Also, he has been treasurer of the Savings Bank for many years, and for 15 years, he has been the Town Clerk. The latter is an elected position and Mr. Converse kept being winning the elections in spite of the fact that he has always been a Republican and Windsor Locks has always been a Democratic bastion. He also owns and operates an insurance agency. He has also been active in the Masons, the Grand Army of the Republic, and was instrumental in getting the Memorial Hall built and he built and runs the new Converse block. This is an impressive resume.

The last chapter in A. W. Converse that will be covered here is a sad one. In 1912, he shot himself in the chest with a pistol while in his own home. He claimed he was cleaning his pistol when it discharged. He called for help and was taken to his sister's house where he died on January 14, 1912. His sister was Dr. Sidney R. Burnap's widow. Two weeks after Mr. Converse's death, Windsor Locks Bank officials confirmed that \$185,000 had been stolen from the safe. The legal suit that resulted

from the missing money went on for two years. The Savings Bank went out of business. This was a long and painful chapter in Windsor Locks history.

The Converse block later became the property of the Italian Cooperative. Finally it housed the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette (Mickey Danyluk).



Alfred Wood Converse 1911



Alfred Wood Converse 1835-1912

While Mr. Converse's final act, stealing money from his bank was an abominable act, his accomplishments during his career were outstanding. Because of both of these things, he is a man worth studying.

The Bidwell Block

The photo in the previous section on the Converse block has a good close-up of the early days of the Bidwell block. Here is another photo which shows a wider view of Main St, and how the blocks are situated with regard to one another.



*Mather
block*

Spring St.

*Converse
(Masonic)
block*

*Bidwell
block*

*Rialto
block*

*Pease
block*

Oak St.

*Coty
block*

*Goldfarb
(Moran)
block*

Burnap (Central Hall, Graziani) block

Frederick S. Bidwell died at the age of 79 in Windsor Locks, where he had lived for 50 years. He had long been involved with the lumber business. In 1868, Mr. T. I. Pease bought out the lumber business of H. C. Douglas of Windsor Locks, and Mr. Bidwell came in as manager. In 1888, he bought the business from Mr. Pease and conducted it by himself for years. In 1909 he brought his son, Fred S. Bidwell into the business, under the name of F. S. Bidwell Co. It was one of the largest lumber companies in the Northeast. The elder Mr. Bidwell managed the business until 1927, when his son took over. Like so many of the other owners of Windsor Locks blocks that we have discussed, the elder Mr. Bidwell was active in town business, social and fraternal affairs. He has been on the board of selectmen and the board of education. He was a Mason, a Republican, a member of the Congregational church, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and a founder of the Thompsonville Press. (*Springfield Republican*, Jan. 6, 1928)

The Bidwell Co. purchased the Main St. property, which was owned by A. W. Converse, in 1911, and built the "Bidwell block" in 1913. Two wooden buildings on the site were torn down and a three-story structure was erected. The new building housed the hardware and farm implements departments of the Bidwell Co. until the hardware department was moved to the old lumber yard building on upper Main St in 1959. The farm machinery department was eliminated in 1959. The assets of the Bidwell Co. were liquidated in 1960, when the business on upper Main Street was sold to a Springfield lumber company which continued to operate it. (*Springfield Republican*, Oct. 7, 1961)

There was a very interesting short article in the Nov. 26, 1911 issue of the *Springfield Republican*, which talked about the concrete sidewalk that had been installed in front of the Bidwell block. It said: "Now that the season of mud, slush, snow and generally bad walking has returned, the need of sidewalks is forcibly brought to mind. Main Street, the business thoroughfare of Windsor Locks, is sadly lacking in this particular. The excellent concrete sidewalk which has recently been laid in front of the new Bidwell block forcibly brings to mind the desirability of moving from one end of the town to the other without accumulating an excess quantity of mud upon the shoes." That is a great article for reminding us that when reading history, we tend to think that things were then like they are now! Now, we take sidewalks for granted.

It is interesting that Mr. Bidwell bought the land for the Bidwell block from A. W. Converse. Then Mr. Converse's Savings Bank moved into the Bidwell block when it opened. The next year, Mr. Converse shot himself, and it was found that he had stolen \$185,000 from the Savings Bank. Many problems ensued. One of them was that the Savings Bank failed to pay its rent to Mr. Bidwell. Mr. Bidwell sued, and collected. Not all who were owed money by the failed Savings Bank fared as well.

There was a fire in the Bidwell block in 1960. This fire was reported by a telephone operator in the Telephone Company building on Spring St. at about 3AM. She said that she saw the building hit by a bolt of lightning. Two firemen were hurt while battling the blaze. The newspaper clipping describes the fire. The photo shows the aftermath of the fire in one of the upper rooms of the building.

In 1961, Mr. Henry Graziani bought the Bidwell block. Mr. Graziano Graziani later bought the Burnap block, which was then called "Central Hall," and turned it into an A&P. Graziano Graziani also bought the Pease block. The Graziani family and business became a major force in the town of Windsor Locks.



Bidwell Block fire, 1960

The Rialto (Viola-Alfano) Block

The Rialto Theater opened on October 25, 1922. It was the brainchild of Dominick Alfano and Leo Viola. We know from the 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks that Leo Viola had a confectionary store in the Barrett block in 1913. Dominick Alfano had a confectionary store in the same location prior to 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 it could rent out on the street level. There is one store on each side of the theater entrance. At one point, Swede's Jewelers was in one of the stores and the optometrist, Dr. Gottesman was in the other. So it was a true multi-purpose building. Below is a photo of the Rialto Theater.

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 and did war bond rallies at the Rialto.



The Rialto Theater, Main St. Windsor Locks, Conn

According to the October 20, 1929 issue of the *Springfield Republican*, there were two movie theaters in Windsor Locks. The other was the Palace theater on the North side of Grove St., near Main St. The owners of the Rialto, Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano, bought the Palace theater and closed it down. That was in 1927. The reason was that the competition was making it unprofitable for both theaters. They then sold the Palace theater to Harold Lavigne of Thompsonville, who made some changes to the building and turned it into a bowling alley.

In the December 16, 1930 edition of the *Springfield Republican*, it was reported that there was a hunting accident, and one of the owners, Leo Viola, was shot accidentally by his hunting partner, Joseph Gatti, who was also his nephew. Mr. Viola died quickly. The coroner was summoned, and he declared it an accidental shooting. Mr. Viola had immigrated here from Italy. He was unmarried. He had become a successful businessman.

In 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.

(*Springfield Republican*, June 10, 1939)

The *Springfield Union* of January 9, 1954, said that the Postmaster, John L. Quagliaroli, is having a new Post Office building built on his property on upper Main St., opposite Leach's coal yard, and it will be ready for occupancy in April. Mrs. Quagliaroli, the wife of the Postmaster, will lease the new building to the Post Office on a long term

lease. The Windsor Locks Post Office had been in the Rialto Theater from 1924 to 1954 (*Springfield Union*, Nov. 2, 1954).

The March 11, 1967 *Springfield Republican* said that the theater was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford. The theater shut down for a while to fix the cornice on top of the three story structure.

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)

Natale Tambussi died in January of 1986 at the age of 77. He started in business with the Windsor Locks Bakery, and later the T&T Tavern. He operated the Rialto Theater, the Windsor Locks Machine Co and the Windsor Locks Lumber Co, from 1947 to 1960.

The owners of the Rialto were:

- Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano - from 1922 until Leo Viola died in 1930.
- We can assume that Dominick Alfano owned at least part of it until it was sold to Mr. Tambussi in 1947.
- Natale Tambussi owned it from 1947 to 1960.
- After that, it was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford.

We know that all of the businesses on Main St. were demolished in the 1970s for the redevelopment. We know from advertisements in the *Springfield Union*, that the theater was still showing movies as late as March 11, 1967. Mickey Danyluk remembers going to movies at the Rialto as late as 1972 or 1973.

The Pease Block

The next block on our trip north on Main St. is the Pease block. It was on the South corner of Oak and Main Streets. Allen Pease was the son of Wells and Betsy Pease of Enfield. As a young man, he went to Poquonock, where he was a clerk in the Hathaway store. He came to Windsor Locks in 1878, and with his brother, Alvah, and started a tinning and hardware store. Later he added furniture. When his brother died, he took over the business. Still later, when his three sons came into the business, he incorporated as the Allen Pease company. (*Springfield Republican*, June 14, 1930)

The Pease block was built in 1873. The 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks listed the Allen Pease Co. as selling house furnishings, plumbing and hot water heating. Actually it sold far more than that. A look at some receipts from that store showed that they had a massive array of items for sale including: household furniture, carpets, oil cloths, beds, bedding, crockery, glass, windows, tin and silver plated wares, lamps, stoves, furnaces, pumps, lead pipe and sewer pipe. The September 19, 1893 issue of the *Springfield Republican* said that the carpenters just finished work on the Pease block, and Mr. Pease will have his stock of furniture in place quickly. The showroom is 40 feet by 90 feet and "is finished with natural woods and is lighted with 20 incandescent lights." This tells us the time when the Pease block was started, and what a modern furniture store looked like in 1893.

The following photo is the best picture of the early Pease block that was available. We know that the Rialto Theater is on the South side of the Pease block, which is on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. Starting at the left of the photo and moving to the right, there is the Pease block, Oak St, the Burnap Block, the Charter Oak Hotel, and Moran block, which later became the Goldfarb block which housed the Bianchi Restaurant and Shonty's Bar and Grill. The Pease block is the one at the far left with a porch sticking out on the second floor. You can see one chimney on the roof.

The second photo, which was taken in 1954, shows the Modern Drug store where the Pease block once stood.



*Main Street, Windsor Locks, between Oak & Grove Streets.
Connelly Stables - white overhead sign to right of hotel.
Charter Oak Hotel -center with Mansard roof & one chimney
Burnap Building - left of hotel with four chimneys
(Susan Cutler Quagliaroli Photo)*



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)

As were the other blocks, the Pease block was a multi-purpose building which rented out stores, offices and meeting rooms to other groups. One of the first to rent space in the Pease block was a bicycle club known as the "Wheel Club." According to the October 4, 1894 issue of the *Springfield Republican*, the Wheel Club was renting space in the Pease Block and they decided to stay there. A partition between the pool room and the card room will be torn down to make room for a billiard table.

Below is a receipt from the Allen Pease Co to Fred S. Bidwell.

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In 1894, the Military band gave a concert in their new bandstand, which was on the balcony, in front of the Wheel Club. (*Springfield Republican*, June 17, 1894) In 1901, a "dairy lunch room" was opened in the Pease block, (*Springfield Republican*, July 6, 1901.) In 1902, Hammett Seabury, an Architecture and Civil Engineering company was in the Pease block. (*Springfield Republican*, June 27, 1902)

Mr. Pease, at the age of 84, committed suicide by gas asphyxiation in 1930. He had given no indication of any trouble, and had gone down to the store in the morning as usual. Dr. Joseph A. Coogan, who was the owner of the first block we looked at, came to the house but it was too late to do anything.

The *Windsor Locks Journal* issue of April 1, 1928, said that the Allen Pease Co. observed its 56 years at the same location under the same management. The building was built by Allan Pease and his brother, but was later replaced by the three story building that was shown above. Surely his sons, Frank and Howard continued the store, but I could not find information as to how long they ran it or who they sold it to. An August 24, 1953 article in the *Springfield Union* that said that the block was owned by Graziano Graziani and that he had just rented a portion of it to a company called "A. Kamins Department Store." The January 30, 1961 issue of the *Springfield Union* said that Mr. Frank Spodick, the owner of A. Kamins Department Store had died at his home in West Hartford.

Later, that the street level of that site was occupied by Sid's Modern Drug Store.

The Burnap Block (later became the Central Hall Block)

A fascinating building existed at the North corner of Oak and Main Streets from 1863 to 1936. It extended from Oak Street to Coly's Hotel. The building went through two owners in that time. From 1865 to 1918, it was owned by Dr. Sidney R. Burnap, and was known as the "Burnap Block." From 1918 to 1938, it was owned by Charles Colli, and was known as the "Central Hall Block." Below is a photo of that three story brick building which had four storefronts on Main Street. The Burnap Block is the brick building with the chimneys on top.



*Main Street, Windsor Locks, between Oak & Grove Streets.
 Connelly Stables - white overhead sign to right of hotel.
 Charter Oak Hotel -center with Mansard roof & one chimney
 Burnap Building - left of hotel with four chimneys
 (Susan Cutler Quagliaroli Photo)*

What made that building 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. When this building was the Burnap Block, this room was called "The Burnap Opera House." When the building changed hands, that room became known as "Central Hall."

Here is a brief history of this building:

- Built in 1863 by Fred Abbe.
- Bought in about 1865 by Dr. Sidney R. Burnap of Windsor Locks, and known during his ownership as the Burnap Block.
- Bought by Charles Colli in 1918 and known as the Central Hall Block during his ownership.
- Bought by Graziano Graziani in 1938, and torn down to make a one story building which housed the A&P.
- The A&P shut down in the late 1960s, when the Windsor Locks government forcibly bought all of the shops on Main St for it's "re-development" program. Under that program, the building was demolished in the 1970s.

Dr. Sidney R. Burnap was born in 1833 and he died in 1901. He was married to Clara A. Converse Burnap (1842 - 1938). They had two daughters, Mary Converse Burnap (1869 - 1947), and Clara Annie Burnap. He was both a physician and a financier.

He and his family lived in a very large house on Maple Street, which was nicknamed "The Castle." When the Burnap family sold their estate, the land was subdivided and put up for auction. According to Mickey Danyluk, a fire in a barn at the Burnap estate was the impetus for Windsor Locks to form a Fire Department. One can assume that Dr. Burnap had a good deal of influence with the town government. Dr. Burnap died on Sept. 3, 1901, at the age of 68. Below is a portrait of Dr. Burnap. The information in this section of this article is taken from "Burnap Hall / Central Hall Block" (Chapter 17 of this book.)



Dr. Sidney Rogers Burnap (1833-1901)

The Burnap block was a large building which housed large companies such as the Telephone company and the Telegraph company, and also the *Windsor Locks Journal*. (*Springfield Republican*, Jan. 1, 1898) It also contained many small stores such as T. F. Carroll's millenary shop (*Springfield Republican*, March 3, 1887), W. A. Dwight's jewelry store (*Springfield Republican*, Dec. 4, 1876), and James D. Outerson's mens furnishings shop. (*Springfield Republican*, July 10, 1904) Outerson was the Windsor Locks Town Clerk, and he used his store as the Town Clerk's office. He kept all of the town's records in that shop. Later, when he built his own block, he moved the Town Clerk's office to that building, as we saw in an earlier section of this chapter. Interestingly enough, the Burnap block also had a Polish rooming house (*Springfield Republican*, August 21, 1913)

The most surprising and interesting feature of the Burnap block was the "Burnap Opera House." It was a large room on the top level which had a stage for plays,

musicals and operas. This room was a multi purpose room, and was used for large meetings. This room was a center of cultural, social, business and political life in Windsor Locks.

In the above section on the Rialto Theater, we saw that in 1929, there was another movie theater, the Palace Theater, which was on lower Grove St. It was in competition with the Rialto. To end the competition between the two theaters, the owners of the Rialto bought the building that the Palace Theater was in and shut down its movie business. They sold the building to another businessman who turned the building into a bowling alley.

This was not the first time that two movie theaters in Windsor Locks were in competition. According to the *Springfield Republican* of Jan. 14, 1914, a similar thing happened previously. It said that movie theater in the Burnap block was in competition with another theater called the Princess Theater. It turns out that the theater that was called the Palace Theater was previously called the Princess Theater. A deal was cut between the Burnap Opera House and the Princess Theater. The deal let the Princess Theater be the only place in town to show movies, and the Burnap Opera Houses stopped showing movies.

Dr. Sidney Burnap died in 1901. The building stayed in the estate of Dr. Burnap until it was sold to Charles Colli in 1918. Under his ownership, the building was known as the "Central Hall block."

After 1916, no more newspaper articles could be found which referred to the Burnap Block. From 1922 to 1934, the Springfield newspapers had 122 articles which referred to "Central Hall." Those 122 articles are highly repetitive. Most of the articles held basketball scores or the results of boxing matches. The main change in the use of this building after Mr. Colli bought it, was that the large hall that used to be known as "Burnap's Opera House" became known as Central Hall. It was still a multi-purpose room, used for plays, musicals, meetings, etc, but it became widely used for sports, especially basketball and boxing. Two of the Marconi brothers of Windsor Locks, Angelo and Johnny, often were in boxing matches in this hall. (*Springfield Republican*, Jan. 20, 1929)

In 1938, Charles Colli sold the Central Hall Block to Graziano Graziani, who razed the building and replaced it with a single story building which extended from Coly's Hotel to Oak Street. It had two storefronts. The largest store was the A&P supermarket. The smaller store, which was on the corner of Oak and Main Streets, was at one time, a Western Auto store which was owned by Don LaRussa, who later turned it into the original "D.F.LaRussa's" appliance store. That pair of storefronts didn't change much until the mid-1970s when all the stores along Main St were razed for the process called redevelopment. Below is a photo of The A&P and the corner store before redevelopment.



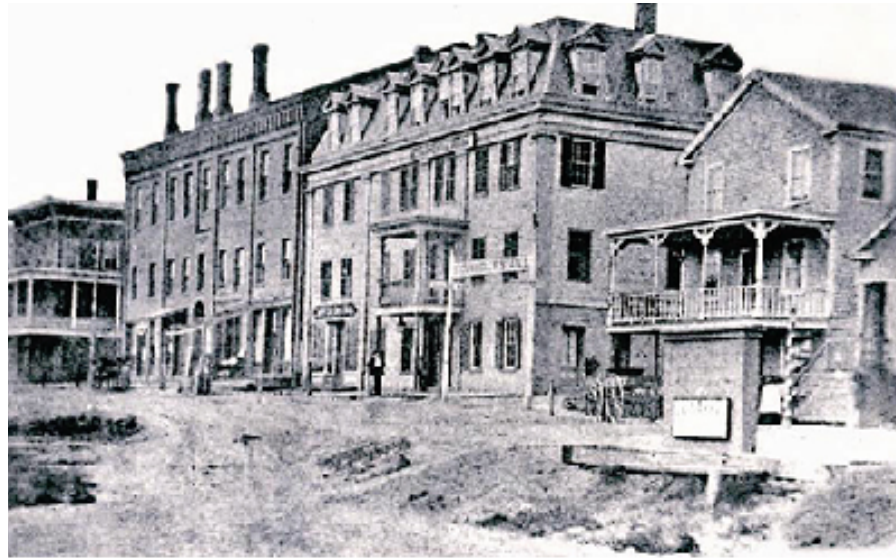
Corner of Oak and Main. Don La Russa's Appliance store, and the A&P. LaRussa originally had his Western Auto Store here. Previously the Central Hall Building occupied both spaces

The Colapietro Block

The information in this section of this chapter was taken from *Windsor Locks Hotel on Main St.* (Chapter 16). From 1861 to 1969, Windsor Locks had one hotel on Main St. It was right in the center of town, across the street from the Railroad Station. It was there for over a century. It was remodeled in 1913 and it was rebuilt after a fire in 1926. Actually, the Railroad Station was built in 1875, so the hotel preceded it by 14 years. Between 1861 and 1969, five men ran this hotel:

1. **Henry Cutler** - opened the **Charter Oak Hotel** in 1861. He operated and owned it until he died in 1900.
2. **Henry L. Cutler** - was the son of Henry Cutler. He took over ownership and management of the Charter Oak Hotel when his father died.
3. **John J. Byrnes** - bought the hotel from Henry L. Cutler in 1913. He changed the name to the **Byrnes Hotel**.
4. **Harry A. Brusie** - leased the hotel from John J. Byrnes in 1914, and changed the name to the **Brusie Hotel**.
5. **Vito Colapietro** - bought the hotel from John J. Byrnes in 1916, and changed the name to the **Windsor Locks Hotel**. It was referred to as "Coly's Hotel." "Coly" was an Americanization of the Italian name "Colapietro." The Windsor Locks Hotel burned in 1926, but was rebuilt immediately. It operated until 1969, when it was demolished for re-development.

Below is a photograph of the Charter Oak Hotel.



*Main Street, Windsor Locks, between Oak & Grove Streets.
 Connelly Stables - white overhead sign to right of hotel.
 Charter Oak Hotel - center with Mansard roof & one chimney
 Burnap Building - left of hotel with four chimneys
 (Susan Cutler Quagliaroli Photo)*

A good place to start the history of the Charter Oak Hotel is with a portion of a larger newspaper article from the *Springfield Republican* of May 11, 1913. See the article below. Henry Cutler saw that a hotel had just been built and leased it from the builder. He founded the Charter Oak Hotel. In 1963, he purchased the hotel from the builder.

The **Charter Oak hotel** stood for more than 50 years as one of the old historic hostelrys of the Connecticut valley. Rarely is there an instance of a **hotel** holding a continuous record for active service for such a long space of time, and many a traveling man has a warm spot in his heart for it. In 1861 Henry **Cutler**, the first hotel man of **Windsor Locks**, leased the property from the builder and started conducting a small **hotel** under the name of the **Charter Oak hotel**. For a little over a year the **hotel** was run under this lease, and then, in 1863, the property was bought outright and the proprietor entered into the **hotel** business in real earnest. In 1900 Mr **Cutler** died, and his son, Henry L. **Cutler**, succeeded him as proprietor and manager of the hotel. Mr

*Springfield Republican
 May 11, 1913*

In 1900, Henry Cutler, the owner and proprietor of the Charter Oak Hotel, died. Here is an obituary in an undated and unnamed newspaper that was provided by a member of the Cutler family. Other sources do confirm that he died in 1900. We see in it that he had already put his son Henry L. Cutler in charge of the hotel before he died.

RECENT DEATHS.

Henry Cutler.

Henry Cutler, aged 81 years, died at his home on Main street, Windsor Locks, Friday evening at 8:30. Mr. Cutler, who was born in Greenwich, Mass., had been a resident of Windsor Locks for many years, going there in 1868, and entering into the hotel business at the Charter Oak House, of which he continued to be proprietor until a few years ago, when it passed into the hands of his son, Henry. Mr. Cutler was a member of the Congregational Church, and was of a quiet and pleasant disposition, which won for him many friends. The body will be taken to Greenwich, Mass., where his wife is buried.

Henry L. Cutler died in Windsor Locks in 1936. He only ran the Charter Oak Hotel for a few years. Mr. Henry L. Cutler sold the hotel to Mr. John J. Byrnes in 1913. Mr. Byrnes did a massive redesign and renovation of the hotel right after he bought it. For example, he added three storefronts on the street level of the hotel. Shortly after he finished the renovation, he leased the hotel to Mr. Harry A. Brusie. However, in 1916, Mr. Byrnes sold the hotel to Vito Colapietro. Below is a photo of the hotel at about the time when Mr. Colapietro bought the store. You can see the storefronts at the street level.



MAIN STREET, WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.
***The Hotel on Main St. across from the Railroad Station
prior to the 1926 fire and re-building
but after 1913 remodelling which made three stores at street level.***

Mr. Colapietro ran the hotel and also had a confectionary store on the street level. In 1926, when he was doing a major renovation of the hotel, and there was a fire. A great deal of damage was done but it was not completely gutted. He completed the renovation, which increased the size of the hotel, and added in an apartment on the first floor for his family to live in. He replaced the Mansard roof and the facade was entirely done in stucco. He and his wife raised their five children there, and the hotel thrived, along with the businesses on the street floor. Mr. Colapietro always had one of the three stores. The other stores turned over a number of times. In the 1950s and 60s, one of the stores was Mr. Mondo Bianchi's shoe store, and the other was Bill Amstead's Package Store.

Below is a photo of the hotel after Mr. Colapietro's renovation. Mr. Colapietro owned and operated the hotel until the late 1960s when the Windsor Locks government decided to redevelop Main St, and bought up and razed all of buildings there, including the hotel.



***1927 advertising photo of Windsor Locks Hotel,
After the 1926 fire and the 1927 reconstruction***

The Moran Block

John Moran was born in Suffield in about 1821. He lived in Hartford, and in New York for a while. He returned to Windsor Locks in the days of stagecoaches. He leased the Yellow Tavern and ran it as a coach house. (*Springfield Republican*, May 1, 1898) In 1854, he was working for the American Hotel in Warehouse Point (*Hartford Times*, July 15, 1854) In that article, we see that he provided dinner for about 300 people from Windsor Locks in celebrating the Fourth of July. The May 1, 1898 article said that he worked for the Charter Oak Hotel in Windsor Locks for a while. It also said that after being with the Charter Oak Hotel, he had a general store and a saloon. Below is an early photo of the Moran block from about the turn of the century.



Pease block **Burnap block**

Charter Oak Hotel

Moran block

The *Springfield Republican* issue of April 17, 1874, said that Robert McConan bought John Moran's Main Street block for about \$15,000. The Dec. 3, 1874 issue of the *Springfield Republican* said that T. E. Carroll bought the John Moran block from Robert McGowan. NOTE: Obviously, there is a discrepancy between the two newspaper articles on the name of the man who owned the block before Mr. Carroll. In the first article, his name is "McConan." In the second, it is "McGowan." One of Mr. Carroll's daughters married a Robert McCowan. That might be a clue as to the correct spelling of that name.

There about a dozen newspaper references to Mr. T. F. Carroll between 1870 and 1886, but most of them were advertisements in which Mr. Carroll was looking for millinery and dress makers for his store in the Burnap block, or advertisements for space he had for rent.

Mr. Carroll died in 1886. The next newspaper reference to this block was in 1922, when it was owned by Mr. Moses Goldfarb. The first reference was that Mr. Goldfarb's clothing store was robbed in 1922 (*Springfield Republican*, May 31, 1922). On the upper floor of Mr. Goldfarb's block were apartments that he rented. In the early days, Mr. Goldfarb had a clothing business on the first floor. Later he rented space to Bianchi's Restaurant, and Shonty's Bar and Grill. There was once a Chinese laundry in the upper floor.

Below is a photo of the Goldfarb block taken in 1925, followed by a photo of Vito Colapietro and Moses Goldfarb taken in 1932, in which you can see both the hotel and Mr Goldfarb's block. Mr. Goldfarb's block is on the right.



Central Hall block **Coly's Hotel** **Goldfarb block, was Moran block** **Bee Hive building with Mansard roof, 3 chimneys**



Moses Golfarb, between Vito and Leo Colapietro. 1932. Rooming House has open window

The next photo shows both Coly's Hotel and Mr. Goldfarb's block after the town bought the properties for destruction in the late 1960s. Everything had been closed.



Windsor Locks Hotel, after being sold to the town for Main St. redevelopment. Shut down-1969. Torn down-1971, Replaced by a CVS & a Dunkin Donut

This was sad to see, especially for businessmen who had been there for half a century.

The Beehive Block (The Shea Block)

The "Beehive Building" was the nickname of a large apartment house at the North corner of Grove and Main Streets. The nickname did not refer to the looks of the building, but to the fact that it was made of many small apartments, with many people and much action in the hallways. In other words, it was always buzzing with action. It was owned by an Irishman named Patrick Shea. In the Springfield newspapers, there were four articles published between 1895 and 1907, which referred to the "Shea block." Further information on Mr. Shea can be found in Chapter 14. The Feb. 22, 1895 issue of the *Springfield Republican* says that Mr. George N. Kent opened a meat market

in January but it could not meet expenses, so he had to turn over the store's fixtures to Mr. H. L. Handy to settle his bill. The April 10, 1898 issue of the same newspaper described a knife fight between two Italians. One of the men was slightly injured. The other was taken away by the Police. The August 26, 1898 issue of that paper described a "free for all" fight that took place at an Italian christening party after midnight. Several people were severely pummeled. The August 18, 1907 issue of that newspaper said that a fire broke out in the meat market of Pauline Bottasso on the ground floor of the Shea Block.

Between 1895 and 1913, there were two more references in the *Springfield Republican* to Joseph Bottasso's meat market. All of the references to the Shea Block and to the Bottasso meat market mentioned Italians. That gives the idea that the inhabitants of the large apartment house were primarily of Italian descent. Mr. Bottasso died on Dec. 21, 1956. He had been a resident of Windsor Locks for 58 years. He was born in Italy on Dec. 27, 1876. He came to the US in 1898.

The building was knocked down in the 1930s or 40s. Later this location had Red Leary's store on it, as well as the Mayflower Restaurant, Mac's Package Store and Ray's Lunch. Over the years, those stores changed hands a number of times. When it was the Beehive building, it truly was a multi purpose building, with stores on the street floor, and apartments to rent on the upper floors. Below is a photo which includes the Beehive block.



Edwin P. Eagan

Coly's Hotel
before 1927 fire.
Central Cafe is
the store on the
left on street level.

Bee Hive Building was an apartment house
on north corner of Main & Grove Streets
with chimneys on roof with large overhang.
Was owned by Mr. Shea. Mr. Botasso
had a meat market on bottom floor

The Tate Block

Mr. Everett B. Tate was a professional photographer who owned the northern-most block on our list. In it, he had his photography studio, a paint store and a wall paper store as well as apartments for rent. Mr. Tate's family also lived in the building. According to the May 10, 1987 issue of the *Springfield Union*, Mr. Tate died at the age of 79. That would put the year of his birth at 1908. The structure burned in the 1920s and was restored with a new roof line and new windows. The structure which existed after the fire is shown in the photo below. Very little information could be found about Mr. Tate.



Larry Ferrari in front of Tate House. Main St.
Windsor Locks. Mr Tate was a photographer.

The Mooney Block

John E. Mooney was born in Suffield on January 17, 1854. He came to Windsor Locks with his parents when he was a child and he spent his life in this town. While still a boy, he went to work in the mills along the canal. Later, he learned the tinning trade from Mr. C. E. Chaffee in the shop owned by Allen Pease. While working in the Seymour paper mill in 1887, he went into business for himself. He opened a tin shop on Grove St. In 1898, he moved his business to his new block at the corner of Oak and Center streets.

In 1897, John E. Mooney decided to build the Mooney block on the corner of Oak and Center Streets. That was a big decision for a young man. The Nov. 14, 1897 issue of the *Springfield Republican*, which is shown below, is a wonderful description as to why the newspaper writer thought the move was a great idea. It has to do with problems of parking your horse and buggy on Main St., and it says that things will be even worse when the Street railway comes through. Mooney had been in his shop on the corner of Grove and Main Streets since 1898.

John E. Mooney has had the courage to abandon Main street as his place of business, and has broken ground for a store building at the corner of Center and Oak streets. It would be a good idea if more of the business men would follow his example, for Main street is altogether too crowded. It is a one-sided street, with the business houses on one side and the canal on the other. When the country people come in with their teams, which they hitch along the west side of the street, it makes altogether too much of a blockade. If the street railway ever gets through, it will be still worse, for some day some unsophisticated horse from the country, which has never seen any vehicle more modern than a plow, will take fright at the cars and tear down Main street, running into half the teams that are tied along the street, and ending up by taking a little swim in the canal to cool off.

Springfield Republican, Nov 14, 1897

According to Mickey Danyluk, the formal opening of Mooney's block was on May 4, 1898. A band concert was held in the afternoon and there was dancing in the evening. The building was a three story structure which was 35 feet by 80 feet, with a stock and tin room on the second floor and a hall on the third floor. The *Windsor Locks Journal* reported "...it is a credible addition to the town's business places." Below is a photo of the original Mooney block and his house, which is beside his block. While it is difficult to see, Mr. Mooney is standing on the front porch of his house in this photo.



Mooney block and John E. Mooney home 1920
Corner of Oak & Center Streets, Windsor Locks, CT

Below is a receipt from J. E. Mooney.

Windsor Locks, Conn., August 17, 1911. 19

Mr. George M. Wallace,

To J. E. Mooney, Dr.
 Furnishing Undertaker,

Office Door. 5-3. For Burial of Mildred Wallace. Home Door. 5-2.

| | | | |
|---|--|-----------|---------|
| 1 | P. K. Covered, Hinged Top, Silk Lined Casket | | |
| 4 | Casket Handles | | |
| 1 | Silver Plate Engraved | 30.00 | |
| 1 | Outside Case | 6.00 | |
| | Preserving | No Charge | |
| | Candles, Gloves & Chairs | 3.00 | |
| | Bearers | 7.00 | |
| | Flower Wagon | 5.00 | \$61.00 |

Shortly after moving into his new block, he added the furniture and the undertaking business. He was a staunch Democrat, a member of the board of education, a charter member of the Knights of Columbus, a member of the businessmen's association, and its successor, the Chamber of Commerce, and a trustee of St. Mary's Church. (*Springfield Republican*, October 31, 1935)

Mooney also ran a kind of a general store business in his block on Oak and Center Streets. The term “general store” is not meant to include food, but to include just about everything that Pease sold in his store, which is almost everything for the house. From 1879, when he opened his new block until his death in 1935, there were a number of newspaper articles describing things that happened at the Mooney block. In his block, he had a large hall that he rented out. The newspapers referred to it as “Mooney Hall.” It was used for dances, for socials, for large meetings, etc.

The 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks said: “Mooney, J. E. Stoves & Ranges, Plumbing & Heating, Funeral Director. Oak & Center Sts.”

Mooney’s block later became Johnson’s Funeral Parlor. The Springfield newspapers have many references to Johnson’s Funeral Home starting in 1936 and going until 1969. Then it became the Kania Funeral home and the newspaper articles refer it from 1970 to 1988. Sometime after that, it became a two story apartment house. Below is a photo of the apartment house.



Originally - Mooney block, Oak & Center Sts. Then Johnson Funeral Home. Later Kania Funeral Home Finally, it became an apartment house.

Conclusions

The term “block” is an archaic word that was used from the early 1900s to the 1950s to denote a large multipurpose business building. For example, a block is a large building which includes some combination of stores, offices, a large meeting room, and apartments for rent. The term was used in reference to fifteen buildings in downtown Windsor Locks, which existed sometime between 1850 and 1970. The term was not specific to Windsor Locks. It was in general usage in the United States in its time.

All fifteen blocks were on Main Street except for one which was two blocks away, at the corner of Center and Oak Streets. Some of the blocks had been built as early as 1860. Others were built as late as the early 1900s. All were owned by people who were important in the business community, and almost all who were actively involved in

political, and social aspects of town life. They were all entrepreneurs. The modern term is “movers and shakers.” Some already had “family money.” Some were immigrants who had not been in the country for more than ten years. The business of owning prime real estate and using it for business purposes was the way to build and increase a fortune. When these buildings were built, there was an air of growing prosperity in Windsor Locks. Mills were operating along the canal, and more mills were being built. The railroad brought increased business potential to the town. Immigrants were flowing into Windsor Locks. Windsor Locks was just beginning to grow, and the outlook was very, very good.

As we saw, there were differences among the fifteen blocks. Dr. Coogan had his office and home in his block as well as other apartments, stores and offices that he rented out. Dr. Burnap lived in a massive home on a hundred acres on Maple St. His Burnap block was probably the biggest block, and it housed large companies such as the telephone and telegraph companies, and the *Windsor Locks Journal*. It also had the Burnap Opera House, which was the center of high society in Windsor Locks. One of the blocks was a big movie theater with offices and stores for rent. One was the only hotel on Main St. Most of the blocks had multi purpose Halls. Many had rooms, offices and stores to rent or lease. One had mortuary as well as a hardware business. One housed the Town Clerk’s office.

Things were happening in the 1950s and 60s that had an effect on Main St. Almost all of the businesses on Main Street were locally owned and locally operated. That was the way it had been since the first stores were built on Main Street, long before the blocks were constructed. But in the 1950s, a change was occurring across the United States. “Mom and Pop” stores were being replaced by the stores of national chains of stores. It happened with grocery stores, pizza parlors, hotels, ice cream stores, hardware stores, and more. While few of these chain stores existed on Main St, they were appearing on Turnpike Road, near Bradley Field. Of course, downtown Windsor Locks had an A&P, which was part of a chain.

As decades passed, technology changed, which changed the business outlook in Windsor Locks. New ways of manufacturing and cheaper labor abroad caused the mills to slowly shut down. By 1970, only two of the mills remained, and one was on its last leg. The influx of immigrants slowed in the 1920s, and eventually stopped.

The other side of Main St. stayed healthy much longer than did the mills along the canal. The blocks and the businesses were still going strong in the 1950s. The downtown businesses did have their share of fires. Those buildings were mostly constructed of wood.

In this paper, we have studied the blocks, their functions, their changes, their differences, and their owners. We have reviewed some of the technological, sociological, and business changes that affected the blocks of Windsor Locks. In the 1960s and 70s, the town of Windsor Locks found the money and the political will to “re-develop” Main St. The downtown business area had deteriorated. The town of Windsor Locks received some Federal money to redevelop Main Street. In the 1960s, the town bought up all of the buildings in the business district of Main Street. That included all of the blocks except the one on the corner of Oak and Center Streets. In the 1970s, all of those structures were razed. The era of the blocks is gone and it will not return.

Chapter 33

The Rise and Fall of the Windsor Locks Canal and the Factories Along the Canal

Organization of this chapter:

- 1) Introduction**
- 2) The Earliest Mills Near the River**
- 3) Factors Leading to the Building of the Canal**
- 4) Factories Built Near the Canal from 1829 to 1844, before the railroad went through Windsor Locks**
- 5) The Railroad Comes to Windsor Locks in 1844**
- 6) The Complete List of Companies Along The Canal**
- 7) How the Number of Factories Changed Over Time**
- 8) Photos & Descriptions of the 12 Factories Operating in 1909**
- 9) Some Factories Converted to Tobacco Business in the 1900s**
- 10) Conclusions and Lessons Learned**
- 11) Sources for This Chapter**

1) Introduction

The rise and fall of the Windsor Locks canal and the factories along the canal is a fascinating story. This chapter covers:

- the history of the canal and the factories along it,
- the factors which caused their initiation,
- the factors which caused their rise and their fall,
- the resulting effects on the town of Windsor Locks.

While the official name of the canal is the Enfield Falls Canal, the people of Windsor Locks have always referred to it as the Windsor Locks Canal.

The history of the canal and the factories can be summarized as follows:
In the early 1700s, there were no factories or mills in the area now known as Windsor Locks. In the middle of the 1700s, mills began to appear along Kettle Brook, near the

river, which was part of the Pine Meadow section of Windsor, Conn. In 1829, the canal was built through Windsor Locks to provide for the transportation of goods and people, and to provide water power for factories. It worked. Factories and mills and factories grew up along the canal. In 1845, a railroad was built along the canal which changed how the canal was used. The Railroad took over the role of transporting goods and people. The factories and mills continue to thrive, because of water power from the canal. However, in the 1900s, and especially after 1950, the number of factories declined, as electricity replaced water power and as American manufacturing switched to services. By 1990, there was only one factory left, and the canal was no longer functional.

There is a larger context in which to view the history of the canal and its factories. There were two sides to Main Street. On the river side, there was the canal and the factories along it. On the other side of Main Street was a long strip of retail stores. Together, these two sides constituted the financial and social engine of the town for about a century, from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. While it might be difficult for the young people of Windsor Locks to visualize it now (2017), life in Windsor Locks centered on Main Street during that century. Then, Windsor Locks was hit by a double-whammy. By 1980, all but two of the factories were empty, and the entire strip of retail stores along Main Street disappeared in what was meant to be a “re-development” of Main Street. Unfortunately, the expected return of retail stores to replace the demolished ones never occurred. As a result, Main Street went, in a short period of time, from being the vibrant center of the town which provided jobs on one side of the street and shopping on the other, to a long quiet street with neither. The following two photos show the difference. This is mentioned here only to provide context for the topic at hand, which is the canal and the factories along it.

The twists and turns that nature and fate took with regard to the canal and the factories could never have been predicted. As we shall see, some of them are counter-intuitive. Now, let’s take a look at the history of the canal and the factories.



Main Street in the 1960s



Main Street in the 1980s

2) The Earliest Mills near the River

The mills along the canal were built after the canal was built. However there were mills very close to that area in 1741. There was a water-powered mill in that area in 1784. The canal wasn't built until 1829, and the first mill to make use of the canal was not built until 1931. These mills were in the Pine Meadow section of the town of Windsor. The best description of life in that area at that time was by Jabez Haskell Hayden (1886). Here is his description of those first mills. The information in the rest of this section is also taken from that article.

According to Jabez H. Hayden (1886):

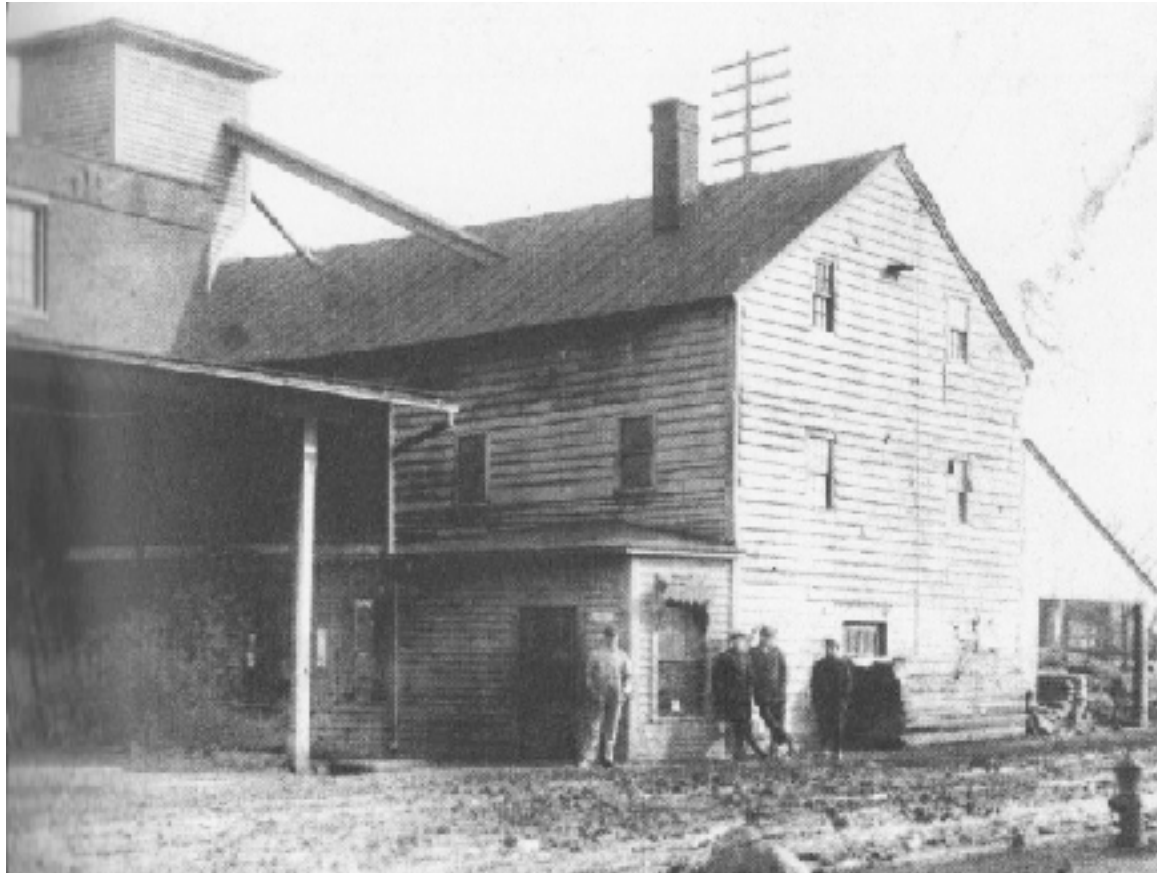
Water-power was first used to run a saw-mill on Kettle Brook, which was being built, or rebuilt, by the Denslow family in 1742; at that date, half of it was sold to Daniel Hayden, and afterward the other half was sold to his brother, Isaac Hayden. About twenty years later, Daniel Hayden had failed, and in 1769 it passed into the hands of Haskell & Dexter, whose families operated it jointly three quarters of a century, when the Dexter family became sole owners, and they still (1886) continue it in operation. As early as 1781 a small grist-mill was set up on Pine Meadow Brook, a mile and a half from the present village, by Ensign Eliakim Gaylord and Elijah Higley. It passed into the hands of Jacob Russell, who continued it about thirty years. The mill was afterward used for wool-carding, and later had several other transformations. The site is now (1886) occupied by William English's paper-mill.

In 1784 Haskell & Dexter built a grist-mill below their saw-mill, and it was kept in operation until the building of the canal destroyed the water-power. They also built, in 1819, the grist-mill which is still (in 1886) conducted by the Dexter family. In 1811 Herlehigh and Harris Haskell (who were born and spent their lives here) built a gin-distillery on the site of the present silk mill. The enterprise was hailed as a great boon to all the neighboring towns, because it made a market for their rye and corn. The business was successfully prosecuted until 1833.

In 1770, Mr. Seth Dexter built a mill for "cloth-dressing" of wool on the site of Mr. C. W. Holbrook's mill on Kettle Brook. He brought the technology to do this from Massachusetts. This mill, which was called "Dexter's Clothier Works" was in operation for about 60 years (1770-1830). Mr. Dexter trained a number of men to set up and run such mills.

Haskell and Dexter built a grist mill in 1784 (as discussed above). In 1819, they built a second grist mill near the old saw mill. That second grist mill is shown in a 1910 photo below. We shall see later in this chapter that it was in the basement of this building that Charles Dexter developed a method of manufacturing paper. The dirt road in front of the mill is Main Street. The grist mill was torn down in 1925, and paper

became the source of the Dexter family fortune. This mill was across from the Congregational church.



Haskell & Dexter grist mill, built in 1819. 1910 photo.

3) Factors Leading to the Building of the Canal

Now that we have seen that mills, including water-powered mills, existed near the river from around 1770 to when the canal was built in 1829, let's look at some things that were happening to cause the canal to be built.

We start with Mr. William Pynchon, who was one of New England's first settlers, and probably the best businessmen among the early settlers. He was looking for a strategic place to found a settlement along the Connecticut River. He wanted a place with good soil for farming and also a place which was strategically located for the transportation of commercial goods. He discovered such a location that hadn't yet been settled yet. It was the area we now know as Springfield. The land he found was just

north of the Connecticut River's first large falls - Enfield Falls. This was as far north as seagoing ships could go. By founding Springfield where he did, Connecticut River traffic would either begin at, end at, or have to cross his settlement. Mr. Pyncheon was a very savvy, forward thinking businessman. (*William Pyncheon, Wikipedia*)

In 1636, Mr. Pyncheon sent supplies from Boston, up the Connecticut River. However, his vessels could go no farther than the foot of the Enfield Falls. He then provided land transportation for the 14 mile trip to Springfield. He built a warehouse on the East side of the river at the highest practicable point his vessels could reach, to store his goods while awaiting transit. He called the landing-place "Warehouse Point". (Jabez Hayden, 1886)

In the 1820s, flat-bottomed boats on the Connecticut River could be taken over the falls by using local "fallsmen" who moved the boat forward by using long poles. One man was required for each ton of cargo. Not only did the added labor costs make this method of overtaking the falls expensive, but the cargo could not weigh more than ten tons. Any additional freight had to be offloaded at Warehouse Point and warehoused for later transport or carried around the falls by ox teams. (Enfield Falls Canal)

Mr. Pyncheon started shipping goods as far as Springfield, even though it was very difficult and costly. Businessmen wanted something to be done to make shipping past Enfield Falls much cheaper and easier.

In 1824, the Connecticut River Company was chartered with improving the navigability of the river by removing sandbars and building canals. It focussed on building the Enfield Falls Canal. It was found that the West side of the river was the best for making a canal. The people behind this were mostly businessmen from Hartford who wanted to increase their trade with towns that were "up-river," that is, toward Massachusetts. Though the improvement of navigation was the primary object, the backers of the work also considered waterpower to be important. (Jabez Hayden, 1886)

Construction of the canal began in 1827, and it was opened on November 11, 1829. The canal was 5 1/4 miles (8.4 km) long and had a vertical drop of 32 feet (9.8 m). The locks admitted craft up to 90 feet (27 m) long and 20 feet (6.1 m) wide. The businessmen who had the canal built, fully intended to profit from

- 1) the tolls charged on canal traffic,
 - 2) the sale of mill sites,
 - 3) the leasing of water rights to mill operators along the last mile of the canal bank.
- (Enfield Falls Canal)

The canal was finished in 1829. Around the locks of the canal, in Pine Meadow, a new settlement formed, and in 1854, it was incorporated as Windsor Locks. The new canal brought commerce and good fortune to Windsor Locks. Boat traffic, both for goods and for passengers increased immediately. The number of factories along the canal bank increased. When there is the potential for monetary gain, businessmen will come and invest. The canal provided the reason.

4) Factories built near the Canal from 1829 to 1844 Before the Railroad went through Windsor Locks

Jabez Haskel Hayden's 1886 article provides an excellent list of the factories built from the time the canal was completed until the railroad was built through Windsor Locks in 1844. The start and end dates for these factories are provided.

1831 - 1834 - **Jonathan Danforth's mill** built door butts (hinges),

1835 - 1837 - **Samuel Williams paper-mill.**

1836 **Carleton and Niles saw-mill**, which became a **paper mill**

About 1836 **Charles Haskell Dexter** began making wrapping-paper in a basement room of the grist-mill, his water-power being supplied by Kettle Brook.

1838 - **Haskel & Hayden silk mill**

1839 - 1957 - **Royal Prouty's wire drawing mill.**

1839 - 1842 - James H. and John F. **Wells paper mill**,

1844 - H. A. **Converse iron foundry**, went to his son, A. W. Converse, upon his death.

1844 - **Slate & Brown** built cotton machinery. During the Civil war their mill was used as an armory by Denslow & Chase, and many hands were employed making guns. That completes the list of factories listed by Jabez Haskel Hayden that were built between the time the canal was built in 1829 and the railroad was built through Windsor Locks in 1844.

5) The Railroad comes to Windsor Locks in 1844

As a small town between Springfield and Hartford, Windsor Locks has always needed transportation both for goods and for people. Before 1829, travel was by foot, by horse, or by horse and buggy. The streets were not paved. As we saw, a canal was built in 1829 to circumvent the Enfield Falls in the Connecticut River, and it was immediately successful in transporting people and goods between Hartford and Springfield. Factories were built along the canal to take advantage of both the ability to transport goods, and to use the water power made possible via the canal. In 1844, a railroad was built through Windsor Locks. It immediately replaced the canal for the transportation and both goods and people. However, the canal continued to sustain the economic growth of the town by providing water power for factories build along the canal. Rail traffic steadily increased, and in 1875 the present station was built to provide better service for travelers on the Hartford-Springfield line. Up until World

War II, the station served a steady flow of passengers. The railroad station ceased operation about 1971. Below is a photo of the Railroad Station that was built on Main Street in 1875. Above information from "Great American (Railroad) Stations: Windsor Locks, CT (WNL)"



6) The Complete List of Companies Along The Canal

Mark S. Raber and Patrick M. Malone (1991) wrote a detailed report which contains the most complete listing that could be found, of the businesses that owned and operated the mills and factories along the canal from 1929 to 1991. The following map, which is from the Raber and Malone report, shows the location of each of the 16 factory sites. It helps you visualize the information in the chronological list of companies at each site. After presenting the list, we will attempt to characterize the list by developing some summary statistics.

The Raber and Malone report had a large fold-out page which provided information on the 70 companies that operated the mills and factories on the 16 sites. They left out one factory, the Windsor Locks Paper Corp. For purposes of completeness, the list below contains all 17 sites. One has been added for the Windsor Locks Paper Corp. For each of the 17 sites, there is a list of the names of the companies that occupied that site in chronological order. For each company name, the dates they started and ended operation are given, along with the type of product they manufactured. Mergers of different companies are noted, as are moves of a company from one site to another. The letter "c" in front of a date means "circa" = "about." In some cases, information was added to this list which was not in the Raber and Malone report. In every case in which information was added, the name and date of the source is provided.

Figure 4. INDUSTRIAL SITES ON LANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER COMPANY (see Table 1)

**Factories along the canal, listed chronologically by site number.
See map for location of the site numbers.
This information taken from the Raber and Malone (1991) report.**

- Site #1. - A. P. Wilks & Co., sawmill, 1836 - 1840.
 - J. B. Chapman, sawmill, 1840 - 1847.
 - C. B. Huchins & Co., sawmill, 1847 - 1850.
 - James Outerson, paper mill, c1850 - 1855.
 - Converse, Burbank & Co. paper mill, c1856 - 1857.
 - Persse & Brooks, 1857, became part of Site #2.
- Site #2. - Persse & Brooks, Pacific paper mill, 1857 - 1862
 - Semour Paper Co. c1862 - 1898
 - American Writing Paper Co, 1898 - 1930. Operated under its
 Windsor Paper Co. Division. Later the building was demolished.
According to The *Springfield Union* of July 13, 1899, The American
Writing Paper Co bought the Windsor Paper Co.
 - American Writing Paper Co. sold off its Windsor Locks unit on
 Jan. 11, 1937. (Dec 27, 1936 issue of the Boston Herald)
- Site #3. - Glover & Son machine repairs, c1870 - 1880.
 - Windsor Locks Machine Co. manufactured paper making
 machines, c1881 - 1920.
 - Windsor Paper Co. (owned by American Writing Paper Co.),
 c1920, but made part of Site 2.
- Site #4 - H. A. Converse & Co., moved from Site 6b. 1867.
 - A. W. Converse & Co., c1882 - 1890
 - Plant taken over by Eli Horton & Son, c1890 as part of Site #5.
- Site #5 - Eli Horton, worked for Persse & Brooks, made chucks at Site #7,
 c1851 - 1864.
 - Incorporated in 1873.
 - Horton's son-in-law, Ezra Bailey, took over c1878 after he died.
 - Purchased Gabb Manufacturing Co, which made aviation products,
 1949.
 - Sold to Greenfield Tap and Die in 1956 by Conn. International.
 - Conn. International ran Crouse Hinds here until 1981.

Site #6 - Jonathan Danforth, built door-butts, c1835 - 1844 under various owners.

Site divided c1844 - 1864.

Site #6a - Slate & Brown, 1844 - 1850
- Denslow & Beach, machine shop, c1851 - 1855
- F. M. Brown, cotton machinery, c1851 - 1855
- A. G. West, sewing machine maker, c1855 - 1860
- Denslow & Chase, machine shop c1860 - 1864
- probable site of William Muir Army rifle contract 1863-1864
- Dwight, Skinner & Co. sold site to Montgomery Co in 1881, and purchased Seymour Paper Co plant at Site #7. Montgomery made novelty yarns, and used site until 1989. They expanded in 1891-1893, and again in 1904.

(see Site #16 for more info about Montgomery)

Site #6b - J. P. and H. A. Converse foundry, 1844 - 1860
- H. A. Converse foundry in 1851 - 1855 timeframe
- H. A. Converse built new plant at Site 4 in 1864.

Sites #6a and #6b were combined in 1864 under various wool scouring firms, H. R. Coffin & Co, being the earliest.

Site #7 - Samuel Williams & Whiting Hollister paper mill. (Many operator combinations) 1833 - 1844
- Persse & Brooks Anchor mill. 1844 - 1856. Anchor Mill burned in 1856, rebuilt in 1857 as part of Persse & Brooks Paper Works Co.

c1857 - 1862

- Semour Paper Co., lower mill. c1862 - 1882.
- Dwight, Skinner & Co., wool scourers, bought plant in 1882, moved from Site #6.
- Anchor Paper Mill Co. bought plant in 1894, made copying, silver, & anti-tarnishing tissue, impression copying books to c1920.
- Montgomery Co. bought and demolished site c1920, and built concrete factory; consolidated all operations at Site #6 and #16.
- Principal site of Montgomery Co. tinsel manufacturing for electric, telephone and radio cords; military braid; drawing and electroplating of tinsel wire after 1925: wire mesh products after c1938, metallic yarns after c1950. It ran until 1989.

Site #8 - James and John Wells Paper mill, c1839 - 1843. Operated by C. P. Hollister 1843-1847. Mill burned in 1847. Ruins bought by A. & G. Blake for cotton batting plant. Plant sold to L. B. Chapman in 1850. It was run as a stockinet factory by varied tenants of L. B. Chapman 1851-1863.

- A. C. Medlicott & others began later. Medlicott Co, c1863 - 1950. Made cut stockinet goods c1863 - 1867. Made full fashion knit underwear afterwards. Site rebuilt and enlarged c1863 - 1888.
- Plant expanded in 1881, 1885, 1888. All operations consolidated here c1888. Operations ended in 1950

Site #9 - C. H. Dexter manila paper plant began east of canal about 1840, probably with Kettle Brook water.

- C. H. Dexter and E. A. Douglass enlarged paper mill in 1847. Firm later became the Dexter Corp., with earlier Dexter grist and saw mill.
- Toilet paper products introduced in 1861-1862, and was made until 1936.
- Plant burned in 1873. Expanded in 1881.
- New products from 1886-1895 include: tissues, Bristols, pattern paper, manifold linen. Plant expanded in 1898.
- Made heavy cover papers from c1901 - 1920.
- Discontinued heavy cover papers in 1923.
- After 1920, specialized in lightweight papers for condensers, typewriting, medical preparations, favors.
- Plant expanded in 1924, 1927, 1930, 1954, 1959 and 1967.
- Concentration on long-fiber paper products after c1935, including teabag paper, hospital products, and other filters.
- Dexter sold out to Ahlstrom in 2000.

Site #10 - Royal Prouty wire drawing mill, c1839 - 1857.

- Site area used as part of Site no 11 by Medlicott Co. c1863 - 1888 (see Site #8)

Site #11 - Leander Hodgekiss edge tools and machine shop. 1847-1849.

- Converted to Carroll & Risley paper mill c1849 1857 under several operators.
- Site area used as Medlicott Co. subsidiary plant c1865 - 1878. See Site #8.
- Windsor Locks Electric Light Co. took over part of the site in 1893.

- Northern Conn. Light & Power bought Windsor Locks Electric Light c1907-1908. Generated power and distributed gas from Hartford.
- Plant sold to C.H. Dexter Corp in 1942.

Site #12 - George P. Clark built plant for industrial trucks, casters, etc on part of Site #11. 1893. The firm was incorporated as George P. Clark Co and added a power plant in 1906. They continued development of materials handling products.

- *Springfield Union* July 15, 1958 said that George P. Clark Co sold its land to C. H. Dexter.

Site #13 - H. Haskell and Jabez Hayden gin mill, 1811 - 1933 pre-dated the canal. Converted to silk thread mill in 1938. Mill burned and rebuilt in 1948. Ceased operations in 1913.

Dwight Allen took over the silk mill from 1881 - c1895.

- Gudbrod Brothers. Co. sewing silk plant, c1895 - 1900.
- Windsor Silk Co., c1900-1913. Sold to George P. Clark Co. (Site #12).
- Plant demolished c1919.

Site #14 - Josiah Rice plant made Wesson & Leavett rifles, c1845.

Undocumented others made cotton batting and twine c1845 - 49. Converted to thread and twine plant by Wilmarth Thread Co. Operated from c1849 - 1865.

- Used as Medlicott Co subsidiary plant c1865 - 1878. See Site #8.
- F. W. Whittlesey owned tissue paper plant c1878 until his death in 1908.
- new mgmt. group including Whittlesey's widow until August 1914 (*Springfield Republican* issue of August 11, 1914)
- *Springfield Republican* of Nov. 23, 1921, said that the **Windsor Locks Paper Mills** was taking over the old Whittlesley paper mill that they had been operating.
- According to the *Springfield Republican* issue of March 19, 1922, the **Windsor Locks Paper Mills**, which are the former Whittlesey paper Mill, are putting in concrete for new machines.
- According to the *Springfield Republican* issue of January 4, 1925, the **Windsor Locks Paper Mills**, which was the Whittlesey Paper Mill has been owned by J. N. Smythe of Philadelphia for the past five years. That means that he owned it from about 1921 to about 1925.

-According to the *Springfield Republican* issue of March 26, 1930, the property of the **Windsor Locks Paper Mills company** has been sold at auction. The auction announcement was in the Boston Herald issue of March 23, 1930

Site #15 - Philip & E. J. Ripley iron rolling mill. c1845 - 1850.
 - Ripley & Talcott c1850 - 1856.
 - Iron works leased to E. C. Woack c1856 - 1857.
 - Enlarged as steel works by Farist & Windsor/Anchor Locks Steel Co., made crucible steel for dies and tools and some steel products with purchased billets, c1860-1895.

Site #16 - Connecticut River Co. rental factory c1846, leased to Connecticut River Mills for printing cloth and umbrella goods. c1847 - 1856.
 - Austin Dunham & Co. bought mill c1856. Used by various textile operations c1856 - 1871.
 - J. R. & George Montgomery leased Dunham mill, 1871, and made specialty cotton yarns and warps beginning in 1867, metal and tinsel yarns in 1886. Montgomery Co. expanded yarn ops. at Site #6 in 1881.
 - Developed tinsel products for telephones, electric products, military braid, decorative fabrics and ribbons; Plant closed with 1920 expansion of Site #6.

Site #17 - Windsor Locks Paper Corp. c1946 - c1955
To provide some information about the Windsor Locks Paper Corp., a set of newspaper articles was found that span the years 1949 to 1959. The "Story of Windsor Locks" shows this company as being formed in 1946. It was owned by Leo Cohen of New York, but operated by Miss Ida Giacomassi of Windsor Locks. Mr. Leo Montemerlo was foreman of the "converting room." It employed 40 men, and operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The *Springfield Union* issue of October 30, 1949 had an ad by the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.** for an experienced machine operator.

According to the *Springfield Union* issue of July 21, 1953, a fire was put out at the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.**

According to the *Springfield Union* of February 25, 1953, the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.**, which suspended operations in December of 1952, will reopen on March 2.

According to the *Springfield union* issue of February 3, 1954, the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.** paid \$40,750 in taxes.

According to the *Springfield Union* of August 3, 1955 and the *Springfield Republican* of August 20, 1955, the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.** is cleaning up after a massive flood.

According to the *Springfield Union* of April 29, 1958, a car drove into the canal in front of the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.**, about 1000 feet north of the canal's locks. He was rescued by workers at the plant.

According to the *Springfield Union* of January 19, 1958, the **Windsor Locks Paper Co.** has shut down for an undefined period.

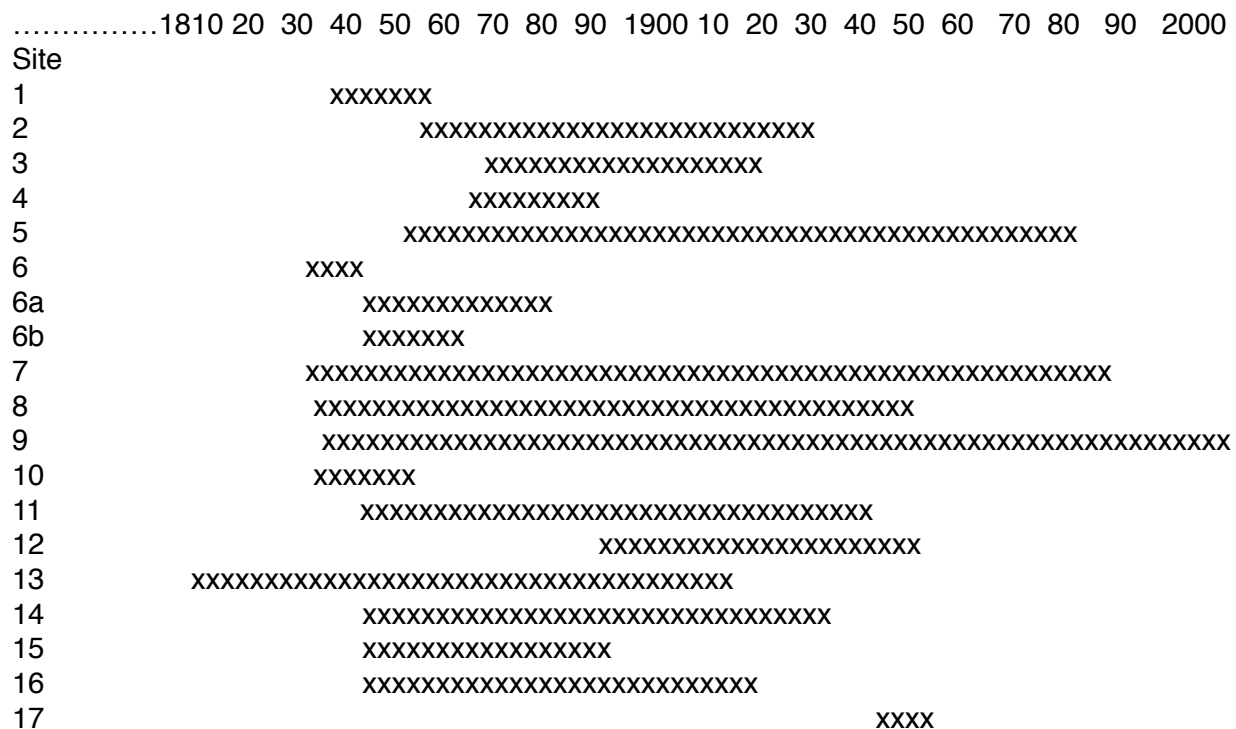
According to the *Springfield Union* of February 3, 1959, a fire occurred in a generator at the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.** It was quickly found and extinguished before much damage was done.

7) How the Number of Factories Changed Over Time

The above list of companies at each of the 17 factory sites was quite long and filled with details. It would be useful to know how many companies were operating in any given year. To determine this, we need to identify for each site, the date that a business first opened up, and the date that the last business closed. That information was gotten from the above list. It is presented below.

Site #1 - 1836 — — 1857 (became part of Site #2).
Site #2 - 1857 — — 1930 American Writing Paper ended in 1930.
Site #3 - 1870 — — — — 1920 when it became part of Site #2.
Site #4 - 1867 1890 when it became part of Site #5 (Horton).
Site #5 - 1851 — — 1981 had been Horton, but ended as Crouse-Hinds.
Site #6 - 1835 — 1844 when it divided into 6a and 6b.
Site #6a - 1844 — became part of Montgomery in 1881. Stopped in 1989
Site #6b - 1844 — ended as H. A. Converse in 1864 when it became part of Dexter.
Site #7 - 1833 — bought by Montgomery in 1920, ended operation in 1989.
Site #8 - 1839 — bought by Medlicott in 1863. Ended operation in 1950.
Site #9 - 1840 - Dexter sold out to Ahlstrom in 2000.
Site #10 - 1839 - 1857 sold to Medlicott, ended ops in 1950.
Site #11 - 1847 - Northern Conn Light and Power sold to Dexters in 1942.
Site #12 - 1893 - George P Clark Sold to Dexters in 1958.
Site #13 - 1811 - 1913 sold to George P. Clark, plant demolished in 1919.
Site #14 - 1845 - 1930 Windsor Locks Paper Mills closed.
Site #15 - 1845 - 1895 Farist & Windsor/Anchor Locks Steel Co.
Site #16 - 1846 - 1871 leased by Montgomery, plant closed in 1920.
Site #17 - 1947 - 1955 Windsor Locks Paper Corp.

Some companies owned businesses at multiple sites. In the above list, each company (eg Dexter) is only shown at a single site, so we can identify the number of businesses operating at any one time. Now that we have the start and end dates for each of the 17 sites, we can make a table to represent that data. The table is below:



By counting the number of occupied sites at 25 year increments, we get:

| YEAR | Number of Sites Occupied |
|------|--------------------------|
| 1850 | 12 |
| 1875 | 13 |
| 1900 | 11 |
| 1925 | 8 |
| 1950 | 6 |
| 1975 | 3 |
| 2000 | 1 |

Now we know the number of companies in operation every 25 years from 1850 to 2000. From that and from the other chart we made, we can see that:

- 1) the first company to operate a factory after the canal was built, started in 1833.
- 2) one factory still remained in existence in 2000, and is still in existence as of this writing in 2017.
- 3) there were never more than 13 factories operating at one time.
- 4) the number of companies operating at the same time remained at about 12 from 1859 to 1900, and then it slowly declined to 1.

Given the above chart, we are in a position to study the factors involved in the rise of the factories and in their demise. We shall do that in section 9 of this chapter. Before we do that, there is one thing left to do. The only things we know about the

companies so far are their names, their dates of operation, the products they made, and the site or sites they operated in. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to delve deeply into the history of each of the 70 companies, it would be useful to take a bit of a closer look at the companies operating these factories at a single time. We will do this for the year, 1909. The reason that year was picked is that the information is available for that year.

8) Photos & Descriptions of the 12 Factories Operating in 1909

In 1909, the *Windsor Locks Journal* published a booklet which had photos and descriptions of the 12 companies operating factories along the canal at that time. Edward Lanati used the photos and descriptions from that booklet in his 1976 article. He attributed them to the *Windsor Locks Journal* booklet, but did not say who the author was or what the title of the booklet was. Those photos and write-ups are used here. The writing style is dated, but fun to read. Much of the spelling and word usage are archaic. However reading the old 1909 writing style adds to the experience of learning about those old companies. That writeup could not be improved upon. It begins here and goes on to the end of section 8.



J. R. Montgomery Company (cotton warps, mercerized yarn novelty yarn)

The J. R. Montgomery Company - The firm of J. R. Montgomery was established in 1871 for the purpose of manufacturing Cotton Warps used in Satinets (*cotton fabric with feel of satin*) and Union Cassimeres (*thin, lightweight woolen fabric*). 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 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 \$350,000 was invested in enlarging the scope of the business.

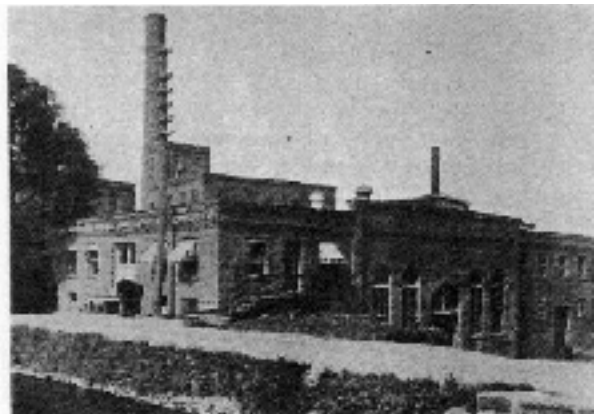
In 1896, this Company was first in the field in placing upon the market in this country an entirely new product. Mercerized Cotton Yarn. It has within a few years become widely known and extensively used. The Company is possessed of facilities for producing large quantities of Cotton Warp, in both plain 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 Yarns mill all Yarns to produce novel effects in fabrics or trimmings, used all known fibers, 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 1863-64 by W. G. Medicott and the present Company was formed in 1868. About 1880, the late C. D. Chaffee purchased controlling interest in the Company, and in following years added largely to both the buildings and the equipment.

Northern Connecticut Light and 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 from Hartford.



The Medicott Company

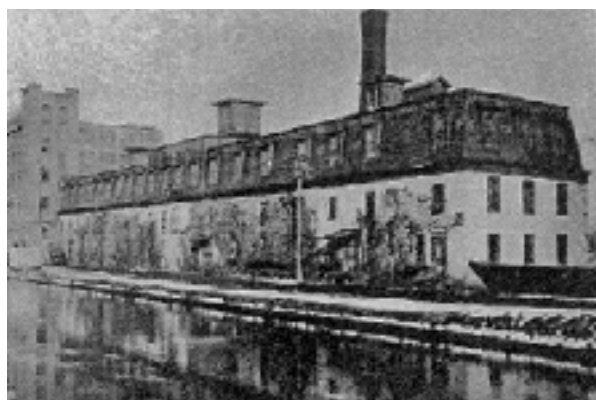


**Northern Connecticut Light
and Power Company**

The Anchor Mills Paper Company - 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 Persse & Brooks, who has 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 Copy and Tissues, Impressions Copying Books, Silver and Anti-Tarnish Tissues, and many Specialties.

Windsor Locks Machine Co. - 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 increasing business.



The Anchor Mills Paper Company



**Windsor Locks Machine Co
Paper Mill & Steam Laundry Machinery**

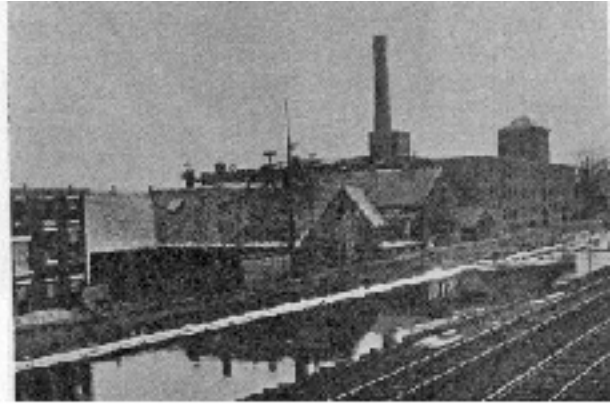
C. H. Dexter & Sons Grist & Saw Mill - The oldest industry in town, and operated today by the fifth generation. Here in "ye olden time" was ground the Flour and Meal for the farmers of the surrounding country. Later the mill did wholesale grinding for the Springfield, Hartford and New Haven Markets, which had 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.

C.H.Dexter & Sons Paper Mill - 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 company 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."



C. H. Dexter & Sons
Grist & Saw Mill established 1769

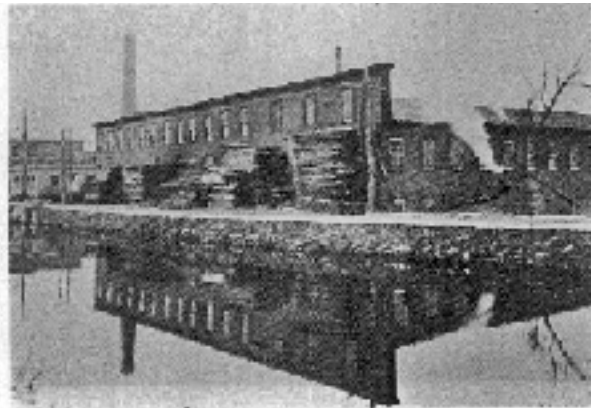


Paper Mill

George P. Clark Company - 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 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 electric power plant was installed, new and modern machinery put in, and individual electric motors attached to the various machines.



Suspension Bridge
Windsor Locks - Warehouse Pt.



George P. Clark Company
Trucks, Casters, Ventilating and Exhaust Fans, Drying Machinery

Windsor & Farist Steel Mill - Formerly conducted by Windsor and Farist. A flourishing business was done for many years in this mill, which produced some of the finest cutlery steel in the country.

Windsor Silk Company - The Silk business was begun in Windsor Locks by Haskell & Hayden, who in 1938 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.



Windsor & Farist Steel Mill



Windsor Silk Company

The Windsor Paper Company - The original owners of this mill were Persse and 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 had its main offices in Holyoke, Mass. The new owners at once began the work of remodeling, and extensive alterations and repairs were made and new modern machinery installed at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars. The remodeled plant resumed operations on April, 1901. The buildings of the plant extend 650 feet along the canal bank, and are 225 feet 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. - 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 double 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 ad 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 great expositions have been awarded the first prize.



**The Windsor Paper Company
Div. of American Writing Paper Co.**



**The E. Horton & Son Co.
Lathe Chucks**

This ends the section that was taken from Edward Lanati's 1976 article, which he took from the booklet published by the *Windsor Locks Journal*.

9) Some Factories Converted to Tobacco Business in the 1900s

The "Story of Windsor Locks Connecticut" pamphlet provides interesting information on what some companies did to make use of factories along the canal in the 1900s, when their traditional manufacturing businesses were in decline. Two of these companies were the Bloch Brothers Tobacco Co., the Fuller-Russell Tobacco Co. and the Winstead Co.

In 1923, Howard Russell, working for the Connecticut Valley Tobacco Growers Association, leased three floors of the Montgomery Company's concrete mill, to store cases of tobacco. The Growers Association dissolved in 1927, and Mr. Russell teamed with the Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company to lease that same space. They used it to make chewing tobacco. That operation ceased in 1933, and they went into the business of packing cigar leaf tobacco, and they also continued to store tobacco on those floors.

In 1937, Mr. Russell worked for the W. H. Winstead Company who was using space in the Horton Building for their tobacco business, but they needed more space, so they leased three floors of the Montgomery company's number 1 mill. At that time, Montgomery was cutting back on producing cotton goods.

In 1939, the Bloch Brothers installed modern curing rooms for the tobacco on the second floor of Montgomery's Building number 5, which was called their Dye House. Shortly thereafter, they bought the entire building from the Montgomery Company.

In 1941, the Winstead Company decided to get out of the cigar business and to stick with the cigarette business. A new company was formed, called the Fuller-Russell Tobacco Company. The Fuller-Russell Tobacco Company and the Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company were still operating when the "Story of Windsor Locks Connecticut" pamphlet was written in 1954.

This section of this chapter was added to provide more insight to what was happening to the mills and factories along the canal in the early to mid 1900s, when the manufacturing companies were faltering. We saw in Section 7 above, that the number of companies in the mills was going down during that time period. Now we see that some enterprising tobacco companies took advantage of that to use those mills, which were designed for other purposes, to store and process tobacco. The Fuller-Russell company closed in 1971. The fact that tobacco companies worked in the factories in the 1920-70 timeframe is not well known.

10) Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The goal of this chapter was to learn:

- the history of the canal and the factories along it,
- the factors which caused their initiation,
- the factors which caused their rise and their fall, and
- the resulting effects on the town of Windsor Locks.

(Background) Mills and factories, including those which were water-powered, existed in Pine Meadow, in the 1700s, long before the canal was built in 1829.

The history of the canal can be summarized as follows:

- A group of businessmen from Hartford planned for and funded the canal, to allow the passage of boats between Hartford and Springfield. Without a canal, boats could not go up-river past the Enfield Falls. There were special boats which could go over the falls, but they were difficult and expensive to operate.
- The canal was built to make money from both the transportation of people and goods, and the selling of water power to the future mills.
- The building of the canal did result in its use for the transportation of people and goods, and the result was immediate.
- The canal resulted in the town of Windsor Locks being incorporated in 1854.
- The boom in transporting people and goods by boat only lasted about 15 years (1829-1844).
- The train line connected Hartford and Springfield in 1844. When this happened, the railroad immediately took over the transport of both people and goods between Hartford and Springfield
- After 1844, the canal company had to rely on selling water power to make its money.

The factories along the canal were located on seventeen sites between the canal and the river. A chronological list of companies that occupied each of the seventeen lots during the period from 1830 to 2000 was shown. For each company, the list gave its primary products, the dates it started and ended operations, and the site it was on.

The next step was to develop a chart of how many companies were in operation in those factories in any given year between 1830 and 2000. The results were:

- The first mill along the canal started in 1833.
- There were never more than 13 mills operating along the canal at any one time.
- The number of mills operating along the canal was flat at about 12 from 1850 to 1900.
- The number of operating mills went steadily down, from 11 in 1900, to 8 in 1925 to 6 in 1950 to 3 in 1975 to one in 1990.

Of the more than 70 companies along the canal from 1733 to 1990, we saw that:

- Many of them didn't last very long.
- Many changed management often.
- There were a number of mergers.
- A few companies (Dexter, Horton, Montgomery) did last a long time.

It would be outside of the scope of this chapter to review all 70 of the companies that ever operated in the factories by the canal. We reviewed the 12 companies that were in operation in the factories along the canal in 1909. While not a review of all of the factories, this snapshot of the mills in 1909 was useful. The information was from the 1976 article by Lanati. Finally, we reviewed some tobacco companies which found ways to use the factories when the manufacturing companies no longer needed the space. The use by those small tobacco companies was not a major factor in Windsor Locks business, but it is an interesting twist to what was happening as the manufacturing companies going out of business.

What were some of the problems that companies along the canal faced? This topic was not covered in this paper. The Raber and Malone report covers the topic. The problems included:

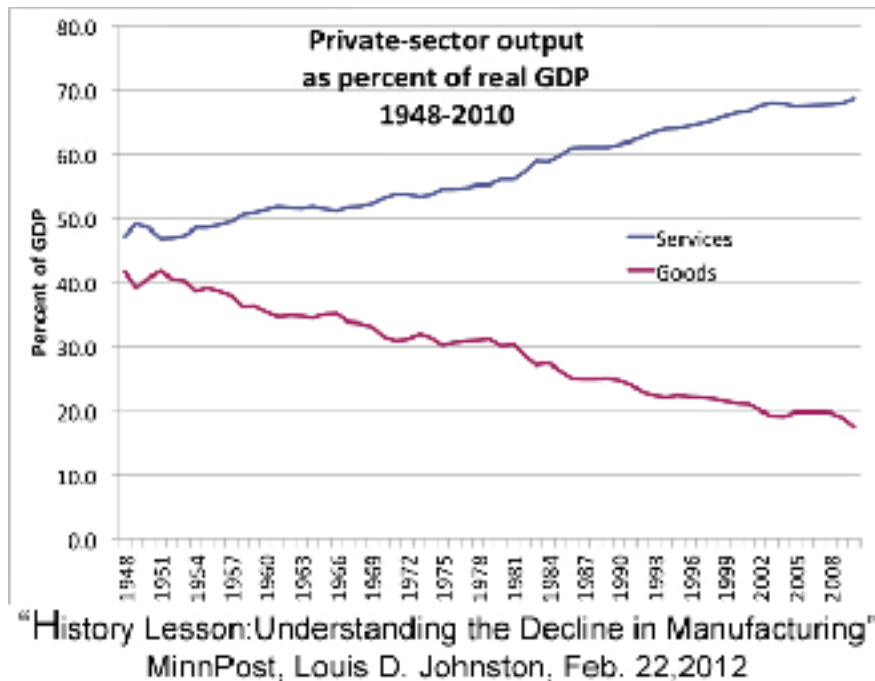
- The factories were often flooded, because they were in a flood zone of the Connecticut River.
- Fires could not be put out easily because fire trucks couldn't get to the factories.
- People who worked at the mills walked to work or went by bicycle. That limited the distance that workers could live from the factories.
- The factories had to keep re-tooling their manufacturing machinery because of continual changing public tastes.

What "outside forces" caused the growth and the demise of the companies? The following are some ideas from United States history which help in understanding what happened with the canal and the factories along it.

- The companies along the canal built up quickly in the 1830s and 40s, just before the Civil War started. The Civil War was from 1861-1865. Some of the factories provided guns and other supplies for the Army.
- The Second Industrial Revolution in the United States occurred between 1840 and 1870. New technologies became available for mass production and for efficient transportation of goods and people. The factories along the canal were an example of this.

- After 1950, the manufacturing industry of the United States went into a steep decline, as can be seen in the following chart.

The following chart shows that American businesses were switching from manufacturing goods to providing services, starting around 1950. Competition from low-cost manufacturing in other countries was one of the key factors. Large multi-national companies were taking over from single owner factories. This was similar to the “Mom and Pop” stores being replaced by the stores of large national chains. All of these factors played roles in the decline of factories across America, including those along the canal in Windsor Locks.



What effects did the demise of the factories along the canal have on Windsor Locks?

1. There was a large loss of jobs, especially for unskilled workers.
2. The town lost a great deal of tax revenue.
3. The downtown Windsor Locks lost its ability to attract outside entrepreneurs, investors and their money.
4. The loss of the business leaders meant there were fewer people in Windsor Locks who could act as role models for the next generation of potential businessmen.
5. The town lost a group of men who were not only good at business but who played key roles in Windsor Locks government. It is important for a town or city to have government leaders who are well versed in business.
6. For more than a century, Main Street had been the business center and the social hub of Windsor Locks. Windsor Locks lost its manufacturing industries at about the same time it lost the retail side of Main Street in the redevelopment project, which did not result in the return of retail businesses as expected. After losing both the factories and its retail outlet center, Windsor Locks became a quite different town.

7. Windsor Locks lost many of its major "benefactors," that is, rich and powerful men who made large donations to the town of Windsor Locks over the century in which the factories were strong.
8. The demise of the factories, followed by fires at some of the abandoned factories, left a string of abandoned structures which have fallen further into blighted condition. This has been going on for more than a half a century.

Towns across the entire United States saw manufacturing businesses rise in the industrial revolution of the 1800s, and die off during the switch from manufacturing to services in the late 1900s. This was not unique to Windsor Locks.

Are there lessons that can be learned from what happened?

Here are two possibilities.

- 1) Towns and cities, like individuals, are investors. Probably the most frequently given advice to investors is: Diversify. Don't put all of your investments in one area.
- 2) When the jobs in the mills went away, there were few alternatives for unskilled workers. The best hedge that a person can have against the loss of a job is having skills which are in demand, and which stay in demand. The best options are a college degree or a license in a skilled trade (electrician, plumber, heating and air conditioning).

The lasting impact of the canal being built was that Windsor Locks was born.

Doing research to determine what happened in the past is difficult. Learning how to avoid problems that arose in the past is much more difficult. However it is the most important reason to study history. Possible "lessons learned" need to be hypothesized, and then opened for discussion. Discussion insures that better ideas rise to the surface, and ideas that do not hold up under scrutiny are dismissed. The ideas written here are merely suggestions for further discussion and debate. The reader should develop his/her own ideas as to what lessons can and should be learned. I hope that the ideas expressed here are useful to you in doing that.

I thank Mickey Danyluck for providing me with copies of the Raber and Malone (1991) report and the Lanati (1976) article. Both are out of print, and are very difficult to obtain. Both turned out to be extremely valuable in the development of this chapter.

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Chapter 34

Jack Redmond: Windsor Locks Historian



Jack Redmond

Jack Redmond was a well-known and beloved member of the Windsor Locks community. He was born in New Haven on December 24, 1922. He played ice hockey in high school, and graduated from Commercial High in New Haven in 1941. He was in the US Army from 1943-1946 and served on Guam, where he was made First Sergeant, then returned to New Haven and married Rita Bethke in 1946. He graduated from the University of New Haven in 1955. The Redmonds then moved to California, Connecticut, and Indiana, before settling in Windsor Locks in 1964. Jack worked at Combustion Engineering for 21 years, and served on the Windsor Locks Fire Commission for 5 years. He also volunteered with his wife at Bradley Field for 24 years. Jack and Rita were married for 65. Jack and Rita had 2 daughters, Nancy and Patti, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. His wife, Rita, passed away in September, 2012. After the loss of his wife, Jack moved to Cape Cod. He passed away there on September 1, 2014. (<http://www.windsorlockslibrary.org/redmond.html>)

Jack and his wife, Rita, liked to travel, play golf, and spend time at the beach. They often could be seen at the Donut Kettle or attending summer concerts. Jack retired from Combustion Engineering in 1985. He lived in Windsor Locks for 48 years. He was such a passionate basketball fan, that he was made a member of the Windsor Locks Sports Hall of Fame. While Jack did a lot for the town, the thing that he will always be remembered for is his weekly column in the *Windsor Locks Journal*, named *Cabbages and Kings*, which ran for 24 years. (<http://www.windsorlocks-hof.com/jack-and-rita-redmond/>)

In his first column, on April 24, 1975 Jack laid out his vision for his series of columns beautifully, simply and with elegance. He said: "The time has come, the walrus said, to talk of many things: of shoes, and ships, and sealing wax, of cabbages and kings. And why the sea is boiling hot, and whether pigs have wings.'" (a quote from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass Darkly*).

He continued: "Move over, Earl Wilson, William Buckley, Bill Lee, Art Buchwald, Erma Bombeck, a novice is endeavoring to break into the big leagues. I do not, in my wildest dreams, ever hope to attain the writings of the above-mentioned writers of the fourth estate, however, a guy has to start somewhere, and what better place than Windsor Locks."

That was an elegant piece of thinking and writing. He had both high hopes and a self-effacing style. He was obviously well-acquainted with literature, and he was going to take high-style writing to a small town setting. What he said next showed a great deal of insight into the soul of Windsor Locks. He said: "But enough about the writer ... people want to hear and read about people - people who make up the news in Windsor Locks and Connecticut, people who have made their marks in our town by way of the political, civic, fraternal and coaching circles. Mr reasons are very simple.... people make the best stories."

Jack took a unique approach. He wanted to write about people because that is what people like to read about. He wasn't going to write about everyone. He was going to focus on "people who have made their marks." on leaders on people who stand out because of their accomplishments. Anyone who has read his columns knows that he achieved his goals admirably. He turned out to be a leader and a role model, but he didn't write about himself, so it is left to this chapter to pay him tribute.

Cabbages and Kings

- ran for 24 years.
- covered approximately 1,200 columns, and thus about 1,200 individuals.
- is organized into 28 volumes in the Windsor Locks Library.
- is available on-line via the Windsor Locks Public Library website.

<http://www.windsorlockshistory.org/cabbages-and-kings>

Jack Redmond's weekly series of columns on local individuals provides a unique history of the town from 1975 to 1999. It is not a history as would be found in a history book. It is a more personal view of recent Windsor Locks' happenings as seen through the eyes of the citizens being interviewed. He wrote about history as it was happening.

Jack's columns are more "person-centric" than "event-centric", so they help bring events to life in written form. All of Jack's columns in which people describe their own experiences are considered by historians to be "primary sources", which are the most valuable type of sources for historical information.

Jack's final column was as poignant and thought-provoking as his first. He wrote with charm, wit, insightfulness and wisdom. In that last column, he looked back over his 24 years of writing columns for the *Windsor Locks Journal* and said: "I have had the honor and sincere pleasure of meeting so many fine people in town ... the clergy, politicians, coaches, teachers and students and just regular folks that made up this fine town."

It is important to read Jack's last column closely and carefully. Jack did not want

to stop writing. He stated why he was ending his long series of columns when he said: "It's not my age. I have not lost the ability to write or to type, or meet people face to face for an interview,...Frankly, it is just too difficult to find new people to interview for their stories. At times, I had 10 or more intended interviewees, but the list is disappearing."

Jack left it to the people of Windsor Locks to figure out why he was having a hard time finding more people that he wanted to interview. Yet it would behoove anyone interested in the future of the town to try to figure out what he meant. That is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, chapters 36 and 37 of this book attempt to shed light on that question.

Jack didn't think of himself as a historian. Historians write about the past. Jack wrote about the people that he interviewed. Of course, many of those interviewees talked about their past, but Jack's focused on the people he was interviewing. Jack left the town with a treasure trove of information that historians can examine and interpret.

The French mathematician and philosopher, Henri Poincare, was asked, "What is the difference between an intelligent person and an average person?" Henri's answer was that when you present a difficult problem to a highly intelligent person and to a person of average intelligence, the most important aspects of the problem are quickly seen by the highly intelligent person. By that definition, Jack Redmond was a highly intelligent person. He realized that if you want the people of Windsor Locks to read what you write, you have to write about what they want to read. Jack said, in his opening column, that he was going to write about the leaders of the Windsor Locks community, because people are what people want to read about. He did just that, and it worked. There is a lesson there for current and future historians. Just writing about events of the past is not nearly as interesting as telling the stories of people that the townspeople know or have known, and can relate to.

Sources:

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<http://www.windsorlockslibrary.org/redmond.html>
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<http://www.windsorlockshistory.org/cabbages-and-kings>
Listing of the volumes of *Cabbages and Kings* columns on the Windsor Locks Public Library website

Chapter 35

Red Leary: Athlete, Entrepreneur, Community Leader

Elmer G. Leary was a well known citizen of Windsor Locks from the early 1900s to the 1960s. Everyone called him "Red." He was an athlete, an entrepreneur, and a prominent leader in the town's civic and fraternal organizations.

Red Leary's Sports Accomplishments

Red Leary was born on January 28, 1898. He was a member of the first graduating class of the Loomis Institute in Windsor in 1918. He blossomed as an athlete in high school.



Edgar G. "Red" Leary is second from right in middle row.

Red was elected to the Windsor Locks Athletic Hall of Fame. The writeup of his election to that group states:

During his tenure at Loomis, he was a star on their initial football team and played other varsity sports as well. Following his graduation from Loomis, several colleges pursued him to play football, but he enlisted in the United States Army.

After serving in the Army, Red returned to Windsor Locks and joined the local "Clay Hill" football team which went undefeated for two consecutive seasons in the early 1920s, winning all 14 games and two successive championships. This was during an era, before the advent of professional football, as we know it today, when the very best athletes competed only on local and regional teams. He also played two seasons with the West Side professional football

team in Hartford. During these years, Red also played basketball on various semi-pro teams in Connecticut.

The Clay Hill Football Team brought Windsor Locks to the attention of all of New England and beyond. Townspeople embraced the team and supported it by attending its games in large numbers. These were truly great days in a long and distinguished history of Windsor Locks athletics.

Red Leary's Service Station

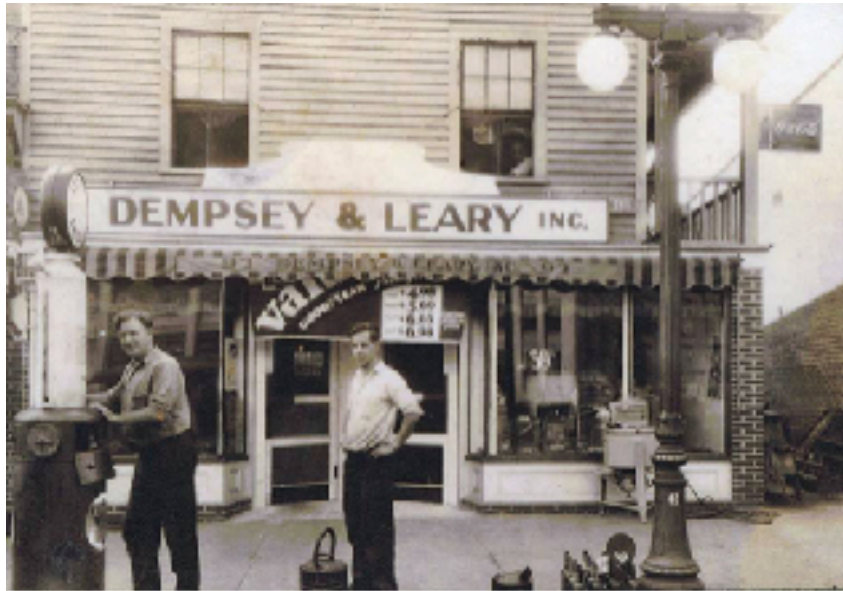
Red Leary was a Windsor Locks' businessman in the first half of the 1900s. He started in business as a partner of Thomas F. Dempsey in the ownership of a unique service station on Main St. In the photograph below, notice that the gas pumps were right on the curb of Main Street. A note on the back of this photo said that it was the last gas station in the state of Connecticut to have its pumps right on the street.



**Red Leary's Mobil Station
First National Supermarket**

The Dempsey and Leary gas station was started in 1923. Below is a photo of Tom and Red in front of their service station. Red and Tom owned that station jointly from 1923 to 1937, when Red bought Tom's share and became the sole owner. Their business was at 92 Main St, between Church and Spring Streets. According to the August 17, 1962 *Springfield Union*, their business included not only automotive servicing, but also radio sales and servicing.

The following photo shows the same gas pump as previous photo, but it was taken from the other direction.



Red Leary and Tom Dempsey outside their service station ~ mid 1920s

Below is a photo of Tom Dempsey and Red Leary in the parts department of their service station.



Thomas Dempsey and Elmer "Red" Leary in their service station at
92 Main St. Windsor Locks. ~ Mid 1920s.
Between Church & Spring Streets, south of the First National Supermarket

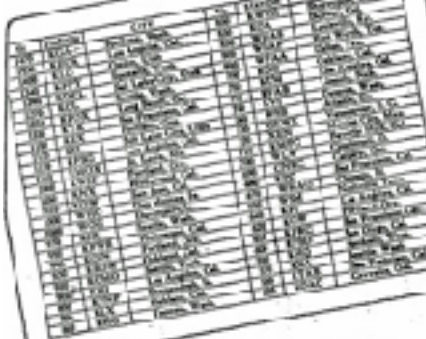
In the next photo, you can better visualize the location of the Dempsey and Leary service station by noting that it was across Main Street from the Montgomery building.



Leary and Dempsey Service Station, 92 Main St. Windsor Locks. Conn.

Dempsey and Leary's service station began to sell household appliances! Here is an ad that they placed in the *Springfield Republican* on December 4, 1930, which featured radios.

Local newspapers had many such advertisements by Dempsey and Leary from 1930 to 1933, which featured radios, refrigerators and other household appliances. Below is an April 17, 1932 ad for Majestic Refrigerators.



A Standard Model Westinghouse Radio in Fendleton, Ore., logged all of these 52 stations in an hour and three quarters. Can you do as well?


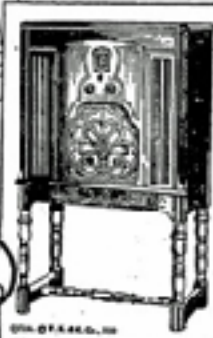
Here is proof in this single station's log that Westinghouse will make the most of your radio location. Westinghouse Radio still bring in your local and distant stations and with clarity, tone and volume.

Your Westinghouse Radio dealer has four Westinghouse models to show you. They range in price from \$44.95 to \$209.00 with remote control. Hear them... and begin to really enjoy radio. Small shows *appreciate* just as in your home.

MODEL W-12-B—bracket, open-front cabinet of heavy brass-plated steel. 10" x 12" x 12" 8-tube screen-grid super heterodyne 1500 MC. and more. Tone control optional at \$15.00 additional.

Now is the time for Westinghouse Radio broadcast over the R. B. G. network every Sunday morning.

Go to your nearest Westinghouse Radio Dealer for 1932 Radio Models for the \$10.00 Radio Day Contest.

THE PIONEER OF RADIO IN THE HOME

CAILLIE HARDWARE CO.
100 West 10th St.,
Y. F. CUNNING
100 West 10th St.,
SPRINGFIELD RADIO CO.
100 West 10th St.,
J. F. CUNNING

LEO DE BONTONT
100 West 10th St.,
ALFRED L. CHURCH, JR.
100 West 10th St.,
GEORGE W. WILCOX, INC.
100 West 10th St.,

M. J. KELLY BURN CO.
100 West 10th St.,
HERSCHER HAYES
100 West 10th St.,
CENTRAL MAIN, INC.
100 West 10th St.,

BROOKSHIRE RUBIN CO.
100 West 10th St.,
DENNEY & LEARY
100 West 10th St.,
LENN & BARTON
100 West 10th St.,
SPRINGFIELD RADIO CO.
100 West 10th St.,

WETMORE-SIVAGE
100 West 10th St.,
100 West 10th St.,
100 West 10th St.,
100 West 10th St.,
100 West 10th St.,

MAJESTIC HAS DONE IT!



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at the sensational price of**

Only \$99⁵⁰

Installed in Your Home for \$109.50

Perfect Refrigeration even at high noon in the tropics!

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THE RADIO SHOP
LYNN, MA
Carrigan & Lathrop
MILLIS, MA
Franklin Radio Store
MILFORD, MA
K. Walsh & Sons
(Middletown, Conn.)
NORFOLK
McClintock's Department Store
NORFOLK, VA
Mayne Store
THE RADIO SHOP
NORFOLK, VA
Evans Motor Sales
NORTH BERFIELD
Tosney Brothers
NORFOLK, VA
Sargent R. Dwyer & Co.
WILM
Andrews, Meigs
NORFOLK, VA
The Cycle & Auto Supply Co.
NORFOLK, VA
Richard Rappaport

CONNECTICUT
NORFOLK, VA
P. W. James Co.
NEW YORK
Sawyer & Sons
VERMONT
BARKER
T. A. Goodrich
Vermont Radio Co.
BARTON, MA
J. C. Johnson
BURLINGTON
W. C. Reynolds Co.
BARTON, MA
C. J. Cook
BURLINGTON, VT
E. J. Davis Hardware Co.
BARKER
George Leary
BARKER, MA
J. E. Poulos
ESPRESSO SHOP
100 N. Jolly
BARKER, MA
& H. Poulos
BARKER, MA
DORCHESTER, MA

In 1941, Red sold his service station, and opened a larger store in a new, building on the corner of Grove and Main Streets. His new store gave him more floor space to display the appliances.

His new store added more electrical appliances and home furnishings. This store was in operation from 1941 to 1962, when he leased it to Dominick Auto Parts.



Red Leary's store, Corner of Main & Grove Streets

Red sold his store's inventory and retired in 1962.

Red was married to Wilhemina Driscoll. They had three children, Sheila, Mary Ellen and William. All three were quite accomplished. William became a lawyer. Mary Ellen graduated "Cum Laude" from Boston College's School of Nursing. Sheila graduated from Emmanuel College and became an elementary school teacher in Windsor Locks. Sheila was also an excellent equestrienne.

Red was active in the community during and after his career. He was active in the Lions Club, the 4H Club, the Boy Scouts, and the American Legion. A search of local newspapers showed dozens of articles about his leadership in these organizations.

The November 14, 1943 issue of the *Springfield Republican* had an article about the first venture of the Lions Club which had been founded earlier that year. Red Leary led a campaign to buy an ambulance for the town of Windsor Locks. Red Leary, together with his committee, consisting of Thomas A. Grasso, Philip J. Kohler, Arthur F. Cannon and Fred J. Kervick organized a door to door solicitation to collect the necessary funds. They used the money to buy an eight cylinder Oldsmobile ambulance.

The May 22, 1953 *Springfield Union* had an article in which, Red Leary, President of the Lions Club, bought a 1953 Packard ambulance to replace the 1943 ambulance which they had bought for the town a decade earlier. That ambulance had been used 650 times in that decade.

Red was honored at the Old Timers Night celebration in the Fireman's hall of the "new" Fire and Police Building. (*Springfield Union*, Dec. 15, 1958)

Red Leary died at the age of 77, on May 1, 1975. He will be remembered as a star athlete, an army veteran, a successful local businessman, a community leader and family man.



Elmer G. "Red" Leary
1898-1975

Chapter 36

Socioeconomic Status: Comparing Windsor Locks with other Connecticut Towns in 1960, 1970 and 1980

Background

Socio-Economic status (SES) is a combined measure of persons or places based on income, education and occupation. Income, education and occupation are highly correlated. People with higher levels of education generally have higher incomes and more desirable jobs. Traveling through the towns and cities of Connecticut, one can quickly get a feel for which towns have a higher or lower socioeconomic status. The downtown buildings, the homes, the parks and the streets all give off signs of higher or lower socioeconomic status. That, in turn, has a large effect on the future of the town. Generally, individuals and families move into communities with as high an economic status as they can afford. The effects of socioeconomic status on physical and psychological health, family life, the education of children, political participation, and other variables have been studied.

The choices that a town makes in terms of taxation have an effect on the future socioeconomic status of the town. Low taxes mean less money for education, for avoiding blight, and for cultural events. Choices that a town makes in terms of zoning, the inclusion of subsidized housing, and the use of tools such as Architectural Control Boards, have an enormous effect on a town's socioeconomic status.

The purpose of this chapter is not politics (that is, affecting the future), but history (what happened in the past). Windsor Locks has had a rich history of changing environments which have evolved to its current state. The fact that the town is on the Connecticut River yielded for industry because the river provided opportunities for transportation and water power. A transportation problem on the river led to the building of the canal, which caused Windsor Locks to be incorporated as a separate town. The river and the existence of cities such as Hartford and Springfield near the river, led to the building of the train line through Windsor Locks. Factories built up along the canal, and in the early 1900, immigration from Europe provided the unskilled laborers needed by the factories. A vibrant and bustling town grew up along Main Street, which ran alongside the canal and the railroad track.

Until the 1950s, Windsor Locks consisted of the "downtown" section between Main and West Streets. Everything to the west of West Street was primarily farmland. Citizens of other towns came to Windsor Locks to shop. A great deal of wealth was created by a number of individuals and families in the downtown section of Windsor Locks. In the 1950s, Bradley Field and the area around it grew into a powerful aviation-

based community. Large aviation industries moved in, and began hiring. Windsor Locks expanded rapidly during the 1950s and 1960s. Population increased by 120% in the 1950s, and another 30% in the 1960s. To house that population, large numbers of tract homes were built in the area between West Street and Bradley Field. By 1980, there was little land left for development. Windsor Locks was "full."

In the 1960s, the town government began the process of redevelopment of Main Street's "downtown area." It bought up all of the retail stores along Main Street and the buildings behind them which were contained a large number of low-cost rental rooms and apartments. In the 1970s, all of those buildings were razed, to make room for new businesses to move in. Unfortunately the influx of new businesses never materialized. Some of the land was used to build housing. A few businesses, such as the CVS Pharmacy and a Dunkin Doughnut shop did appear.

Since the 1980s, no more major changes occurred Windsor Locks which affected the nature of the town. Fortunately, in 1980, researchers at the University of Connecticut did a study of the socioeconomic status of all of the cities and town of Connecticut. They used US Census data from the as far back as 1960, to come up with measures of each town's education, and the incomes and jobs of its residents. Then they combined those three measures into a single measure of Socioeconomic Status (SES) for each town.

This study by University of Connecticut researchers is virtually unknown in Windsor Locks. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the study and its results, and to make that information available to townspeople who are interested in learning how their town compared with other towns of Connecticut in 1960, 1970 and 1980.

The 1983 Study of the Socioeconomic Status of Connecticut Towns

On Nov. 1, 1983, William H. Groff and Robert W. Braden, of the University of Connecticut, published a research study called: "Socioeconomic Index Scores for Connecticut." The introduction to their study explains:

The relationship between the socioeconomic status of an individual or social group and various other social and economic phenomena has been clearly demonstrated in numerous sociological studies. Socioeconomic status has been shown to be closely related to such varied phenomena as childbearing attitudes, family stability, political behavior, physical and mental health, housing conditions, community participation and so forth. Thus, socioeconomic status is a valuable indicator of the characteristics of an individual or group which can be useful for policy formation and socioeconomic planning.

The importance of socioeconomic variables in determining life styles and life chances has been further emphasized by the fact that they are not limited to individuals or family groups, but are useful also in the analysis of larger geographical units. ,,,,,,,,,,

The socioeconomic status of an area may be used as an indicator of a number of trends such as:

- (1) the basic processes of population change (fertility, mortality and migration);
- (2) social service needs and facilities; and
- (3) various compositional features of the area's population such as labor force experience, household living arrangements, scholastic attainment, health care practices, resource development, etc. Socioeconomic index scores are a useful indicator since they can be correlated to other social and economic phenomena in the analysis of social change.

Using data from the 1980 US Census, Groff and Braden developed three metrics:

- **Occupation**: The percentage of employed persons 16 years of age and over who were working at blue-collar occupations (craftsmen, operators, or non-farm laborers).
- **Education**: The percentage of the population aged 25 years and over who had completed less than four years of high school.
- **Income**: The percentage of workers who earn below \$7,500 per year.

They then used a statistical techniques to modify the metrics so that higher scores mean better performance. From that, they developed another statistical technique to turn those metrics into "standardized scores." Finally, the three metrics were then integrated into a single metric of overall socioeconomic status, which would be applied to each town. A detailed explanation of these statistical techniques is beyond the scope of this chapter. It is fair to say that one would need an advanced degree in the field of statistics to understand them. To learn more about these statistical techniques, read Groff and Braden's report.

The list of scores that they developed for each of the 169 towns in the state of Connecticut is found below in Table 1.

The "non-technical" reader, however, should not just take the validity of such measures on faith. A good way to evaluate the goodness (validity) of the metric is to do some checks to see if the resulting scores have "face validity." In other words, do the scores that the various towns received seem reasonable. An informal way to do that is the to pick a set of about five Connecticut towns which the reader feels confident that he can list in order from the highest (best) to the lowest (worst). Then, note the score given for each in Table 1. If Groff and Braden's scores are in the order predicted, then the reader should have confidence in the metrics used. The reader can make more such lists and check to see if Groff and Braden's results match theirs.

Another method of judging the face validity of Groff and Braden's metric is to just study the rank-ordered list of Connecticut towns from 1 to 169, and see if the list looks "right."

Below is Groff and Braden's Table 1. The town names are listed on the left, starting with New Caanan, which got the highest SES score of all Connecticut towns and cities. Next you see the Occupation, Education and Income scores, which are

close to 100, which would be a perfect score. Then you see the SES Index score of 97.9, which is the highest composite SES score that was given. To the right of that, you see a 1, which is its 1980 rank. Then you see a 1970 SES score and then a 1960 SES score. You can see that New Caanan ranked 6th in 1960 and 1970 and jumped to number 1 in 1980.

As you go down the list, you see all the scores decrease. You will see that Windsor Locks ranked 111 out of 169 in 1980. In 1970, it ranked 81, and in 1960, it ranked 63. Windsor Locks suffered a massive downward slide. The scores for Occupation, Education and Income are only given for 1980. Since there are 169 towns and cities, the halfway point was about 85, and the three-quarter point was at 127. So, about three quarters of the towns and cities of Connecticut ranked above Windsor Locks in 1980. The lowest ranked city or town on this Socioeconomic Status scale was Hartford.

Table 1: Socioeconomic Index Scores for Connecticut Towns: 1980.

| TOWN | 1980 Modified Standardized Scores (100-Standardized Percentile Score) | | | Socioeconomic Index Scores | 1980 Rank | 1970 Rank | 1960 Rank |
|---------------|--|-----------|--------|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Occupation | Education | Income | | | | |
| New Canaan | 99.9 | 94.1 | 99.4 | 97.9 | 1 | 6 | 6 |
| Weston | 97.7 | 99.9 | 95.0 | 97.6 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| Wilton | 91.2 | 98.9 | 100.0 | 96.7 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Simsbury | 91.3 | 95.7 | 94.8 | 94.7 | 4 | 3 | 10 |
| Westport | 95.3 | 93.0 | 91.2 | 93.2 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Darien | 90.9 | 91.8 | 95.7 | 92.9 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| Redding | 87.2 | 92.4 | 98.2 | 92.7 | 7 | 7 | 15 |
| Woodbridge | 92.8 | 87.5 | 97.5 | 92.6 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| Avon | 91.0 | 91.3 | 91.3 | 91.2 | 9 | 17 | 18 |
| Hidgfield | 85.8 | 92.1 | 90.3 | 89.5 | 10 | 8 | 31 |
| Madison | 80.4 | 94.0 | 87.8 | 87.5 | 11 | 12 | 28 |
| Easton | 85.9 | 81.8 | 90.2 | 86.0 | 12 | 25 | 2 |
| Sherman | 72.6 | 89.7 | 92.5 | 85.0 | 13 | 33 | 69 |
| Orange | 80.7 | 80.1 | 93.9 | 85.0 | 14 | 10 | 13 |
| Greenwich | 87.1 | 75.0 | 90.7 | 84.3 | 15 | 20 | 14 |
| Glastonbury | 79.6 | 82.3 | 88.0 | 83.3 | 16 | 15 | 21 |
| Bridgewater | 71.1 | 79.9 | 98.0 | 83.0 | 17 | 28 | 92 |
| West Hartford | 87.5 | 74.3 | 86.2 | 82.7 | 18 | 11 | 5 |
| East Granby | 75.8 | 74.3 | 96.9 | 82.4 | 19 | 21 | 34 |
| Granby | 71.7 | 77.7 | 96.0 | 81.9 | 20 | 14 | 20 |
| Farmington | 75.4 | 76.5 | 93.5 | 81.9 | 21 | 27 | 24 |
| Woodbury | 65.7 | 82.6 | 97.1 | 81.8 | 22 | 39 | 38 |
| Cheshire | 74.4 | 78.8 | 92.0 | 81.8 | 23 | 16 | 12 |
| Brookfield | 70.8 | 83.1 | 91.0 | 81.7 | 24 | 19 | 11 |
| Canter | 69.6 | 81.9 | 89.3 | 80.3 | 25 | 30 | 41 |
| Guilford | 70.2 | 81.7 | 89.5 | 80.2 | 26 | 38 | 77 |
| Salisbury | 85.3 | 73.5 | 81.3 | 80.1 | 27 | 46 | 33 |
| Newtown | 69.5 | 76.6 | 92.1 | 79.5 | 28 | 41 | 42 |
| Burlington | 59.7 | 81.5 | 94.8 | 78.7 | 29 | 103 | 70 |
| Mansfield | 83.8 | 79.3 | 72.4 | 78.6 | 30 | 52 | 104 |
| Roxbury | 68.5 | 85.6 | 80.9 | 78.4 | 31 | 48 | 25 |
| Marlborough | 71.4 | 76.2 | 85.0 | 78.2 | 32 | 32 | 62 |
| South Windsor | 64.4 | 73.0 | 95.8 | 77.8 | 33 | 35 | 39 |

THIS TABLE CONTINUES ON THE NEXT TWO PAGES.

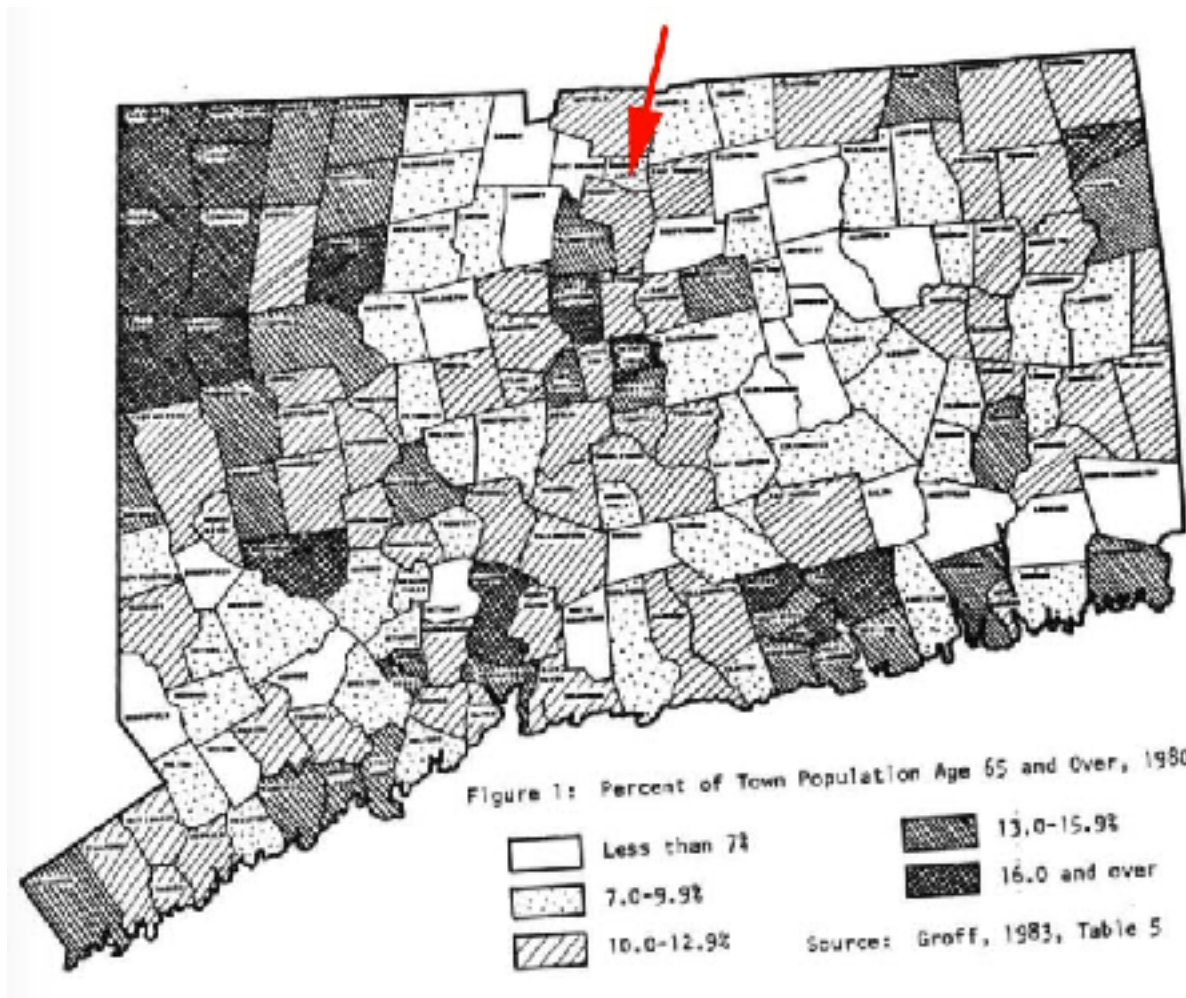
Table 1: Socioeconomic Index Scores for Connecticut Towns: 1980.

| TOWN | 1980 Modified Standardized Scores (100=Standardized Percentile Score) | | | Socioeconomic Index Scores | 1980 Rank | 1970 Rank | 1960 Rank |
|----------------|--|-----------|--------|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Occupation | Education | Income | | | | |
| Bethany | 65.6 | 78.8 | 87.7 | 77.4 | 34 | 13 | 19 |
| Tolland | 61.9 | 75.8 | 93.7 | 77.2 | 35 | 80 | 117 |
| Trumbull | 71.6 | 66.2 | 93.2 | 77.1 | 36 | 29 | 27 |
| Old Lyme | 61.2 | 81.4 | 87.5 | 76.7 | 37 | 53 | 93 |
| Ledyard | 61.0 | 83.7 | 85.2 | 76.7 | 38 | 31 | 74 |
| East Lyme | 64.5 | 75.8 | 88.3 | 76.2 | 39 | 65 | 65 |
| Bloomfield | 73.2 | 64.4 | 90.3 | 76.0 | 40 | 26 | 16 |
| Fairfield | 72.7 | 66.0 | 88.4 | 75.7 | 41 | 36 | 30 |
| Rocky Hill | 77.8 | 57.8 | 90.8 | 75.5 | 42 | 63 | 23 |
| Lyme | 62.7 | 82.2 | 80.0 | 75.0 | 43 | 49 | 79 |
| Bolton | 60.3 | 73.5 | 90.8 | 74.9 | 44 | 56 | 32 |
| Hebron | 59.3 | 75.6 | 89.6 | 74.9 | 45 | 55 | 122 |
| Monroe | 51.8 | 72.8 | 97.0 | 74.6 | 46 | 40 | 64 |
| Middlebury | 66.8 | 68.4 | 87.4 | 74.2 | 47 | 47 | 52 |
| Washington | 62.9 | 72.8 | 86.5 | 74.1 | 48 | 60 | 35 |
| Wethersfield | 75.5 | 57.2 | 86.3 | 73.0 | 49 | 18 | 9 |
| Andover | 49.1 | 71.1 | 96.5 | 72.3 | 50 | 23 | 50 |
| Columbia | 52.4 | 74.4 | 89.8 | 72.3 | 51 | 62 | 75 |
| Newington | 69.1 | 57.6 | 89.8 | 72.2 | 52 | 34 | 17 |
| New Fairfield | 65.2 | 69.0 | 82.0 | 72.2 | 53 | 74 | 46 |
| Warren | 53.2 | 75.2 | 85.6 | 71.4 | 54 | 79 | 140 |
| Windsor | 68.7 | 60.9 | 83.7 | 71.2 | 55 | 50 | 44 |
| Southbury | 64.8 | 56.8 | 91.7 | 71.1 | 56 | 147 | 163 |
| Ellington | 53.3 | 63.3 | 96.1 | 70.9 | 57 | 70 | 110 |
| Killingworth | 52.6 | 69.9 | 89.7 | 70.8 | 58 | 76 | 68 |
| Bethlehem | 61.1 | 73.6 | 76.9 | 70.6 | 59 | 67 | 53 |
| Bethel | 58.1 | 67.8 | 85.3 | 70.5 | 60 | 73 | 81 |
| Essex | 50.9 | 69.2 | 91.1 | 70.4 | 61 | 84 | 78 |
| Barkhamsted | 54.2 | 68.0 | 88.4 | 70.3 | 62 | 22 | 55 |
| Suffield | 56.7 | 66.2 | 87.4 | 70.2 | 63 | 42 | 98 |
| Durham | 54.3 | 69.2 | 86.4 | 70.0 | 64 | 51 | 49 |
| Hartland | 41.8 | 70.7 | 97.2 | 70.0 | 65 | 61 | 96 |
| Manchester | 63.8 | 56.6 | 87.0 | 69.2 | 66 | 64 | 39 |
| Cromwell | 62.9 | 62.5 | 80.1 | 68.5 | 67 | 96 | 84 |
| New Hartford | 51.9 | 64.6 | 88.7 | 68.4 | 68 | 97 | 139 |
| Kent | 63.6 | 67.5 | 74.1 | 68.4 | 69 | 43 | 58 |
| Coventry | 51.8 | 67.8 | 85.1 | 68.3 | 70 | 105 | 124 |
| Hampton | 57.9 | 62.4 | 84.2 | 68.2 | 71 | 68 | 166 |
| Pomfret | 65.5 | 58.3 | 80.4 | 68.1 | 72 | 94 | 107 |
| Willington | 64.3 | 59.1 | 80.7 | 68.1 | 73 | 111 | 76 |
| Hamden | 69.6 | 56.8 | 77.5 | 68.0 | 74 | 59 | 22 |
| Branford | 60.3 | 66.3 | 77.0 | 67.9 | 75 | 58 | 57 |
| North Haven | 57.9 | 54.3 | 89.9 | 67.4 | 76 | 44 | 26 |
| Somers | 62.0 | 61.7 | 78.0 | 67.3 | 77 | 37 | 103 |
| Clinton | 53.8 | 67.8 | 79.3 | 67.0 | 78 | 69 | 102 |
| Ashford | 60.3 | 65.1 | 72.8 | 66.1 | 79 | 122 | 135 |
| Eastford | 56.6 | 56.1 | 85.3 | 66.0 | 80 | 108 | 71 |
| East Hampton | 47.1 | 63.5 | 87.0 | 65.9 | 81 | 145 | 66 |
| Cornwall | 48.5 | 64.3 | 83.3 | 65.4 | 82 | 54 | 100 |
| Old Saybrook | 52.4 | 66.8 | 76.7 | 65.3 | 83 | 24 | 95 |
| Litchfield | 47.0 | 58.6 | 90.1 | 65.3 | 84 | 91 | 47 |
| New Milford | 46.2 | 63.0 | 85.0 | 64.8 | 85 | 89 | 82 |
| Stamford | 69.5 | 52.3 | 71.7 | 64.5 | 86 | 75 | 56 |
| Waterford | 53.9 | 57.2 | 80.9 | 64.1 | 87 | 85 | 45 |
| Woodstock | 56.5 | 56.7 | 77.8 | 63.7 | 88 | 106 | 106 |
| Berlin | 50.7 | 49.7 | 90.5 | 63.7 | 89 | 82 | 51 |
| Westbrook | 48.5 | 64.3 | 77.8 | 63.6 | 90 | 107 | 125 |
| Haddam | 45.3 | 61.8 | 82.9 | 63.4 | 91 | 71 | 99 |
| Portland | 55.9 | 56.7 | 77.3 | 63.4 | 92 | 88 | 73 |
| Milford | 47.0 | 56.3 | 86.2 | 63.2 | 93 | 72 | 43 |
| Croton | 52.5 | 67.7 | 69.0 | 63.1 | 94 | 138 | 59 |
| North Branford | 44.9 | 59.5 | 83.8 | 62.8 | 95 | 45 | 29 |
| Shelton | 46.0 | 54.3 | 85.3 | 61.9 | 96 | 112 | 129 |
| Colebrook | 36.5 | 65.1 | 79.6 | 60.4 | 97 | 87 | 165 |
| Oxford | 35.5 | 59.6 | 85.8 | 60.4 | 98 | 98 | 118 |
| Morris | 42.1 | 56.3 | 82.3 | 60.3 | 99 | 124 | 40 |
| Goshen | 47.6 | 60.1 | 71.1 | 59.7 | 100 | 133 | 54 |
| Sharon | 53.5 | 62.6 | 62.5 | 59.5 | 101 | 57 | 67 |
| Norwalk | 59.6 | 45.1 | 73.3 | 59.4 | 102 | 109 | 60 |
| Wallingford | 42.8 | 49.8 | 85.1 | 59.3 | 103 | 99 | 83 |
| Enfield | 44.2 | 49.4 | 83.8 | 59.2 | 104 | 86 | 87 |
| Vernon | 53.3 | 51.9 | 72.1 | 59.1 | 105 | 95 | 85 |

Table 1: Socioeconomic Index Scores for Connecticut Towns: 1980.

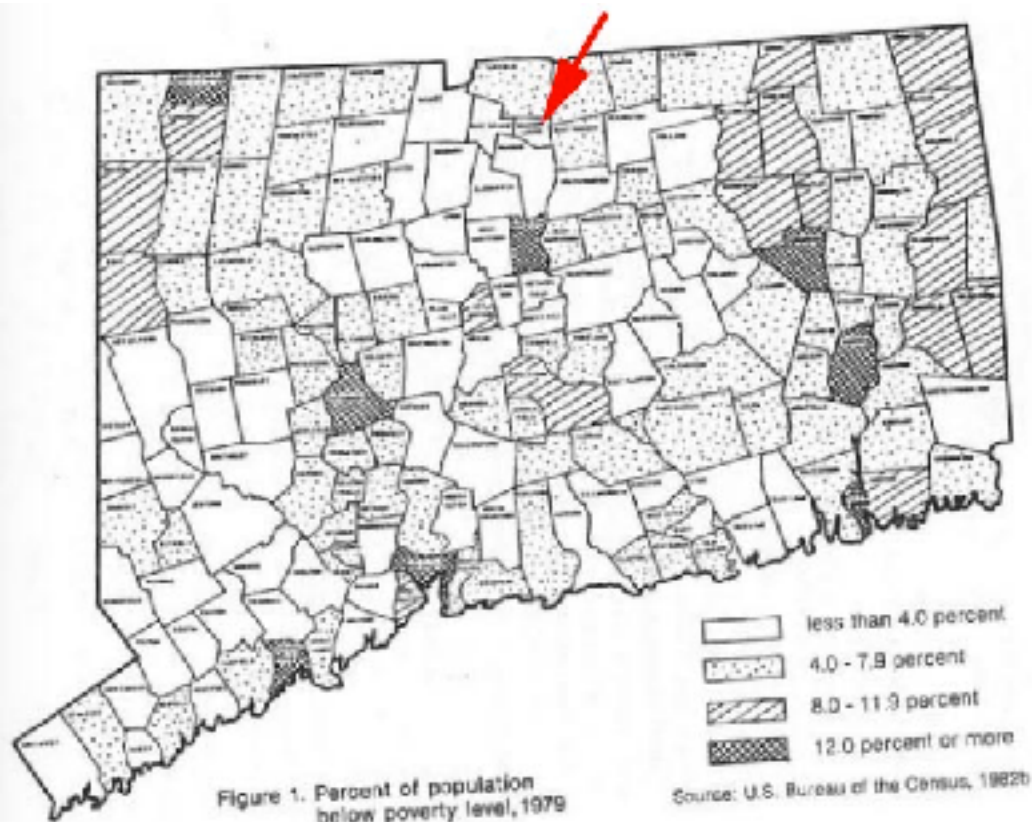
| TOWN | 1980 Modified Standardized Scores (100-Standardized Percentile Score) | | | Socioeconomic Index Scores | 1980 Rank | 1970 Rank | 1960 Rank |
|------------------|--|-----------|--------|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Occupation | Education | Income | | | | |
| Wethersfield | 47.8 | 62.1 | 66.0 | 58.7 | 107 | 114 | 152 |
| Middlefield | 41.9 | 46.8 | 84.5 | 58.5 | 109 | 102 | 48 |
| North Stonington | 34.7 | 58.4 | 81.3 | 58.2 | 109 | 92 | 91 |
| Colchester | 41.6 | 50.2 | 82.3 | 58.1 | 110 | 125 | 150 |
| Windsor Locks | 43.7 | 45.5 | 83.3 | 57.5 | 111 | 81 | 63 |
| Chester | 28.3 | 54.5 | 88.9 | 57.3 | 112 | 113 | 137 |
| Franklin | 49.8 | 61.1 | 60.8 | 57.3 | 113 | 78 | 90 |
| Watertown | 45.0 | 46.6 | 79.9 | 57.2 | 114 | 119 | 109 |
| Southington | 40.2 | 45.6 | 85.6 | 57.2 | 115 | 120 | 112 |
| Norfolk | 48.9 | 48.2 | 71.7 | 57.0 | 116 | 116 | 72 |
| East Haddam | 36.7 | 51.0 | 81.7 | 56.5 | 117 | 130 | 141 |
| Preston | 53.2 | 28.5 | 87.5 | 56.4 | 118 | 93 | 155 |
| Bozrah | 38.2 | 51.8 | 79.2 | 56.4 | 119 | 134 | 133 |
| Canaan | 47.2 | 52.1 | 69.8 | 56.4 | 120 | 66 | 127 |
| Harwinton | 32.4 | 53.8 | 81.8 | 56.0 | 121 | 100 | 94 |
| Stonington | 40.5 | 49.0 | 78.1 | 55.9 | 122 | 139 | 128 |
| Prospect | 43.4 | 46.1 | 77.8 | 55.8 | 123 | 77 | 88 |
| Stratford | 50.2 | 40.1 | 76.6 | 55.7 | 124 | 104 | 80 |
| Seymour | 35.8 | 49.9 | 76.4 | 54.1 | 125 | 126 | 136 |
| East Windsor | 38.4 | 42.9 | 78.8 | 53.4 | 126 | 117 | 121 |
| Beacon Falls | 33.6 | 43.2 | 81.8 | 52.9 | 127 | 143 | 131 |
| North Canaan | 39.7 | 59.1 | 59.6 | 52.9 | 128 | 90 | 147 |
| Danbury | 43.8 | 40.1 | 73.4 | 52.5 | 129 | 132 | 120 |
| East Hartford | 48.1 | 37.2 | 70.7 | 52.0 | 130 | 83 | 61 |
| Scotland | 36.4 | 51.2 | 65.2 | 51.0 | 131 | 121 | 89 |
| Plainville | 31.3 | 30.2 | 88.9 | 50.2 | 132 | 131 | 115 |
| Wolcott | 28.1 | 39.9 | 82.2 | 50.1 | 133 | 110 | 101 |
| Middletown | 48.5 | 31.9 | 69.4 | 50.0 | 134 | 128 | 114 |
| Montville | 32.6 | 45.3 | 71.7 | 49.9 | 135 | 101 | 132 |
| Canterbury | 20.9 | 44.2 | 81.5 | 48.9 | 136 | 152 | 169 |
| Lisbon | 33.9 | 35.7 | 73.3 | 47.7 | 137 | 153 | 113 |
| Union | 40.0 | 40.0 | 61.7 | 47.3 | 138 | 169 | 36 |
| Deep River | 24.0 | 45.4 | 71.5 | 47.0 | 139 | 127 | 116 |
| Chaplin | 34.7 | 41.2 | 63.0 | 46.3 | 140 | 136 | 126 |
| West Haven | 48.3 | 33.6 | 55.6 | 45.8 | 141 | 118 | 86 |
| Thomaston | 17.2 | 38.3 | 80.3 | 45.3 | 142 | 141 | 134 |
| East Haven | 35.8 | 25.5 | 72.9 | 44.9 | 143 | 123 | 97 |
| Bristol | 27.1 | 29.7 | 76.4 | 44.5 | 144 | 135 | 130 |
| Naugatuck | 25.7 | 31.8 | 72.0 | 43.2 | 145 | 137 | 123 |
| Meriden | 32.9 | 25.8 | 70.3 | 43.1 | 146 | 140 | 119 |
| Ansonia | 31.9 | 30.1 | 66.5 | 42.9 | 147 | 148 | 157 |
| Brooklyn | 30.6 | 34.8 | 61.8 | 42.5 | 148 | 160 | 162 |
| Voluntown | 25.5 | 26.9 | 68.7 | 40.4 | 149 | 156 | 188 |
| Stafford | 21.7 | 28.1 | 70.0 | 40.0 | 150 | 146 | 156 |
| Winchester | 20.6 | 25.7 | 73.4 | 40.0 | 151 | 129 | 161 |
| Plymouth | 12.3 | 25.6 | 81.9 | 39.9 | 152 | 151 | 151 |
| Barby | 31.5 | 21.7 | 65.7 | 39.7 | 153 | 150 | 145 |
| Torrington | 28.1 | 18.7 | 68.2 | 38.4 | 154 | 157 | 143 |
| Sprague | 28.1 | 26.1 | 59.1 | 37.8 | 155 | 168 | 160 |
| Norwich | 38.9 | 23.9 | 49.8 | 37.6 | 156 | 154 | 142 |
| New London | 51.3 | 27.8 | 31.0 | 36.8 | 157 | 144 | 111 |
| Windham | 46.7 | 15.9 | 47.3 | 36.7 | 158 | 149 | 148 |
| New Britain | 34.2 | 12.8 | 55.4 | 34.2 | 159 | 162 | 146 |
| Putnam | 24.8 | 5.1 | 60.5 | 30.2 | 160 | 167 | 154 |
| Thompson | 17.2 | 11.8 | 61.1 | 30.1 | 161 | 163 | 164 |
| New Haven | 53.4 | 24.8 | 8.5 | 29.0 | 162 | 159 | 144 |
| Waterbury | 28.1 | 11.0 | 42.9 | 27.7 | 163 | 155 | 153 |
| Killingly | 16.5 | 8.9 | 56.2 | 27.2 | 164 | 166 | 158 |
| Plainfield | 8.3 | 4.1 | 58.4 | 23.7 | 165 | 165 | 167 |
| Crisfield | 12.7 | 0.0 | 57.3 | 23.4 | 166 | 158 | 159 |
| Sterling | .0 | 3.3 | 53.3 | 18.9 | 167 | 142 | 168 |
| Bridgeport | 29.2 | 1.2 | 23.0 | 17.8 | 168 | 161 | 149 |
| Hartford | 50.6 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 17.3 | 169 | 164 | 138 |

The three aspects of socioeconomic status that we have looked at are: income, education and occupation. There is another aspect that deserves mention here, and that is the elderly. The elderly have a distinct effect on socioeconomic status. They have less income. They have less of a tendency to move since they are no longer chasing jobs. The percentage of elderly in a community has an effect on the “feel” of the community. The following chart is by Kenneth Haddon, who was a researcher at the University of Connecticut along with William Groff and Robert Braden. It is interesting to see the distribution of the elderly across Connecticut. You will see that Windsor Locks had one of the lowest percentages of elderly of Connecticut towns (between 7% and 10%). The arrow points to Windsor Locks.



The last chart we shall look at is the rates of poverty across Connecticut. It was in another study by Kenneth Haddon. Again, the arrow points to Windsor Locks. It is very interesting to see that the poverty rate in Windsor Locks was one of the lowest in Connecticut when the study was done in 1979.

Less than 4% of the population of Windsor Locks were listed as living in poverty, in a town that ranked 111 out of 169 in socioeconomic status. That is very low.



Windsor Locks has a very low percentage of older citizens, and it has a very low percentage of very poor people. Earlier in the chapter we saw that the rich business owners of the mills left town as the mills collapsed, and the tremendous expansion of the population in the 1950s was coped with by the building up of middle-class housing from West Street to Bradley Field. That leads to the conclusion that Windsor Locks has a “very” middle class population.

Conclusions

We began by describing the concept of Socioeconomic Status (SES), and its implications. Two researchers at the University of Connecticut, William Groff and Robert Braden (1983) wrote a paper which ranked all 169 towns and cities of Connecticut on the three components of Socioeconomic Status, Occupation, Education and Income. They also gave an overall SES rank to each city and town, not only for 1980, but also for 1970 and 1960. This set of statistics provides not only a ranking for each of the towns and cities, but also shows the direction in which each town is moving.

Windsor Locks underwent a massive change in the 1950s and 60s with a massive influx of people. It went through another massive change in the 1960s and 70s with the re-development of Main Street, which eliminated both the business district of Windsor Locks, and the large set of low-cost rental rooms and apartments in that area. Nearly 20% of the population of Windsor Locks left town in the 1970s. Given all of this

change, it seemed reasonable to try to get a handle on what the socioeconomic status of Windsor Locks was in the 1980s, and to see how it changed from the 1960s and 70s. The purpose of this chapter was to study the socioeconomic status of Windsor Locks in that timeframe. The Groff and Braden study provided an excellent statistical analysis of three US censuses to do this. Two other studies from the University of Connecticut provided supporting data on the percentages of elderly and of those living in poverty in Windsor Locks.

Windsor Locks ranked 111th in 1980 with an overall SES score of 57.5. While that sounds low, it is helpful to quickly scan all of the 1980 SES scores in the list, especially the ones which are in the middle of the list (scores of around 50). One will see that the scores in the middle of the list are tightly bunched. In statistical terms, the distribution is said to have a small "standard deviation." Groff and Braden were careful to say that not too much should be read into these rankings. Their words were: "the socioeconomic index scores and the resulting social rank areas should be viewed as indicators and not as definitive measures of socioeconomic status."

For Windsor Locks to score in the bottom half of Connecticut towns on socioeconomic measures should not be a surprise. Windsor Locks has always been a "blue collar town." When the large expansion of its population occurred in the 1950s and 60s, the houses that were built were modest homes, not mansions. Windsor Locks' low tax rate and modest houses were not geared to attracting wealthy people. Avon, which ranked number 9 in 1980, had implemented an Architectural Control Board, which is a costly and intrusive way of keeping existing structures in excellent shape, and of insuring that new structures meet the highest standards. While Avon's approach has worked, it took a long time to do it, and it came at a cost. Not all towns are willing or even interested in paying that price. It is not surprising that Avon would rank high on a socioeconomic scale. It is not unexpected that Hartford would rank low. It came in last. Overall, the placement of most of the towns seems to have good "face validity."

One can find other evidence to support the validity of the Groff and Braden SES rankings. The Groff and Braden study is now (2016) more than a quarter of a century old. There is a recent *Wikipedia* article which ranks the towns and cities of Connecticut by average annual income in 2013. The following chart shows the top 15 towns and cities, and it also shows where the top 15 towns on the 2013 *Wikipedia* list are on the 1983 Groff and Braden list. Overall, those 17 towns and cities show the rankings by both studies are reasonably close. In fact, they are surprisingly close, given that they were done 30 years apart and that they used different metrics. A look at the entire *Wikipedia* list of 2013 shows a good correlation with the Groff and Braden rankings.

| 2013 <i>Wikipedia</i> list | | 1983 Groff and Braden List |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | New Canaan | 1 |
| 2 | Darien | 6 |
| 3 | Greenwich | 15 |
| 4 | Weston | 2 |
| 5 | Westport | 5 |
| 6 | Wilton | 3 |
| 7 | Ridgefield | 10 |
| 8 | Glastonbury | 16 |

| | | |
|------|---------------|------|
| 9 | Redding | 7 |
| 10 | Roxbury | 31 |
| 11 | Lyme | 43 |
| 12 | Easton | 12 |
| 13 | Bridgewater | 17 |
| 14 | Essex | 61 |
| 15 | Avon | 9 |
| 136 | Windsor Locks | 111 |
| Last | Hartford | Last |

Given that the ranking of Windsor Locks in socioeconomic status has remained consistent between the Geoff and Braden study and the *Wikipedia* listing of 2013, the town does not seem to be moving up or down in the intervening years.

One could ask what could be done to lift the socioeconomic status of Windsor Locks. The simple answer is to increase the average income of its residents. This is not an easy task, and it would take a lot of time. The answer is also in the realm of politics, that is, in making changes for the future, which is not a part of this chapter or this book. This chapter and this book have taken a backward look, that is, a look at history. That provides as good a basis as possible for those who are interested in making change in the future.

The studies performed at the University of Connecticut are virtually unknown in Windsor Locks. One goal of this study was to make their work visible to more of people of Windsor Locks.

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Chapter 37

Why did the Population of Windsor Locks Drop by 20% in the 1970s?

Introduction

What could cause 20% of the population of Windsor Locks to leave town in a single decade (1970-1980)? Prior to the 1970s, Windsor Locks never had a decade in which its population decreased. On the right is a chart of the town's population by decade, as found in *Wikipedia*. It shows that the population decreased by 19.2% from 1970 to 1980. The Groff study at the University of Connecticut found that the population of Windsor Locks dropped by 3,314 persons in that decade. The purpose of this chapter is to try to understand why this happened.

The issue of the population decrease of the 1970s came up while researching the demise of Windsor Locks' old Main Street. Around 1900, there were about a dozen factories operating along the canal, which employed hundreds of workers. There was a long line of retail shops on the other side of Main Street which was the business center of the town. While the number of factories had been decreasing slowly from 1900 to 1980, the retail side of Main St was eliminated all at once, by a process known as the "Re-development of Main Street." All of the businesses were bought by the town in the 1960s, and they were demolished in the 1970s. The plan was that new businesses would come in and replace the old ones. That never happened. To someone researching the demise of both sides of Main St, which culminated in the late 1970s, it seemed possible that the loss of jobs, the loss of the low-cost rental housing units in the area, and the loss of the town's only shopping area, might have been the causes of a population decrease in the decade of the 1970s. That hypothesis resulted in this chapter.

| Historical population | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Census | Pop. | %± |
| 1860 | 1,587 | — |
| 1870 | 2,154 | 35.7% |
| 1880 | 2,332 | 8.3% |
| 1890 | 2,758 | 18.3% |
| 1900 | 3,062 | 11.0% |
| 1910 | 3,715 | 21.3% |
| 1920 | 3,554 | -4.3% |
| 1930 | 4,073 | 14.6% |
| 1940 | 4,347 | 6.7% |
| 1950 | 5,221 | 20.1% |
| 1960 | 11,411 | 118.6% |
| 1970 | 15,080 | 32.2% |
| 1980 | 12,190 | -19.2% |
| 1990 | 12,358 | 1.4% |
| 2000 | 12,043 | -2.5% |
| 2010 | 12,498 | 3.8% |
| Est. 2014 | 12,565 ^[3] | 0.5% |

U.S. Decennial Census^[4]

Hypothesizing possible causes for the population decrease of the 1970s

The first step in analyzing the population decrease of the 1970s was to ask citizens of Windsor Locks to come up with a list of possible causes. This was done by posting the question on two Windsor Locks Facebook pages. One is called: "You know you are from Windsor Locks when." The other website is the Windsor Locks History Society page on Facebook. Members of both groups hypothesized causes of the 20% population decrease. That discussion showed that there was little, if any, awareness that such a population drop had occurred. However, discussion on both websites was active, indicating that there was a good deal of interest in this topic. Following is a list of the hypothesized causes, in no particular order:

1. The cost of housing was higher in Windsor Locks than in nearby towns.
2. Baby-Boomers left in the 1970s either for college or for the war in Vietnam, and did not return.
3. Lower family values caused Baby Boomers from Windsor Locks to leave town and join counter-culture movements.
4. Aerospace companies near Bradley Field had large layoffs in the 1970s.
5. The re-development of Main Street destroyed many low-cost rental housing units to be eliminated.
6. The number of jobs in the factories along the canal was decreasing.
7. The loss of the vibrant shopping area along Main Street lessened the feeling of civic pride, which caused people to leave town.
8. Route 91 was built in that timeframe which allowed people to commute longer distances, and thus find lower cost housing at a longer distance from their workplace.

Eight possible causes of the reduction of the population of Windsor Locks in the 1970s have been developed. The first two hypothesized causes of the population decline in Windsor Locks in the 1970s involve the concept of the "The Baby Boomer Generation." Therefore we will briefly examine the Baby Boom phenomenon before examining the hypothesized causes of the population decline.

The Baby-Boomer Generation

Baby boomers were born in the post-World War II baby boom, between the years 1946 and 1964. The term "baby boomer" is also used in a cultural context. See the graph below, which is from the *Wikipedia* article on the Baby Boomers.

This graph shows the United States birth rate (births per 1000 people). The red segment from 1946 to 1964 is the postwar baby boom, with birth rates starting to drop around 1960.

The boomers experienced things like: the draft, the Vietnam war, the birth of Rock and Roll, the Beatniks, the Cold War, the Red Scare, the anti-war movement, the Hippie “Free Love” movement, Jane Fonda, Woodstock, and the deaths of Martin Luther King, President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy.



The counter-culture movements encompassed far more freedom and individualism than previous generations had known. One did not have to be in San Francisco, or on a college campus to see and feel this cultural change. The baby-boomers grew up watching it on television. There was daily exposure to anti-war protests, social experimentation, sexual freedom, drug experimentation, the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, women's movement, the protests and riots, and Woodstock. According to the *Wikipedia* article:

“In 1993, Time magazine reported on the religious affiliations of baby boomers. Citing Wade Clark Roof, a sociologist at the University of California at Santa Barbara, the articles stated that about 42% of baby boomers were dropouts from formal religion, 33% had never strayed from church, and 25% of boomers were returning to religious practice. The boomers returning to religion were “usually less tied to tradition and less

dependable as church members than the loyalists. They are also more liberal, which deepens rifts over issues like abortion and homosexuality.""

Boomers grew up at a time of dramatic social change. Many saw it as a time of decline of traditional family values and of traditional standards of morality. Not everyone was captured by this, but everyone experienced it. It left an indelible mark on the United States. When asked about the population decline of the 1970s, a number of people from Windsor Locks emphasized negative social aspects of the Baby-Boomer generation. Now we look at the eight hypotheses, and see if the boomers had an effect.

Analysis of the eight hypothesized causes of the 20% population reduction in Windsor Locks in the 1970s

1. The cost of housing was higher in Windsor Locks than in nearby towns.

In the Facebook discussion of the causes of the 1970s population drop, a number of individuals discussed their own experiences in having to leave Windsor Locks to find housing they could afford in nearby towns. Windsor Locks had massive increases in population in both the 1950s and the 1960s. The chart of page 1 of this chapter show that the 1950s increase was 120% and the 1960s increase was 32%. The only way for the town to cope with this influx of people was to build many housing developments. By the 1970s, so many houses had been built in Windsor Locks, that there was little room to build more houses. Prices were high because of the increased demand for houses and the low supply. The high cost of housing does seem to be a major cause of the 1970s population decline.

2. Baby-Boomers left for college or for the Vietnam War in the 1970s and did not return.

The Baby-Boomers were born in the midst of post World War prosperity. Businesses were growing. Jobs were plentiful. There was a feeling of prosperity. There was a feeling that if one worked hard, good things would happen. There was a focus on getting one's children educated. Many Windsor Locks Baby-Boomers were going off to college in the 1970s, and many of them did not return to Windsor Locks after graduating. In both the 1960s and 1970s, young men from Windsor Locks joined the military, but didn't return to live in Windsor Locks.

Lacking statistics on the number of people from Windsor Locks who went to college or to the military in the 1970s and didn't return, the best we can do is to develop a reasonable estimate. Windsor Locks High School's biggest graduation classes occurred in the 1970s, when they got up to about 300. Let's assume that in the 1970s, there were ten graduating classes of 300 each (probably a high estimate), for a total of 3000 graduates during that decade. For the sake of argument, let's say that half of them went either to college or to the military, but did not return to Windsor Locks to live there. That would be about 1500. That would account for a little less than half of the population drop of 3314 in that decade. That would make it a significant factor in the population drop of that decade.

It is important to note that some of these eight hypothesized causes of the population drop overlap one another. For example, the first factor was that people left because the cost of housing was higher than they could afford. That could be the same reason that some of the college students and military did not return to Windsor Locks.

3. Lower family values caused Baby Boomers from Windsor Locks to leave town and join a counter-culture movement.

This was brought up by some Windsor Locks residents in the Facebook discussion on possible causes for the population reduction in the 1970s. Each worded it slightly differently. One said young adults might have left town to become hippies and live the counterculture life. Another said that family values were decreasing in the 1970s. Another said that families began to let houses begin to deteriorate in Windsor Locks in the 1970s. No one could name a specific person who left town to join a counterculture movement. Therefore we can conclude that this was not a major contributor to the population decline of the 1970s. If any did leave Windsor Locks to become hippies during the 1970s, they probably couldn't afford to buy a house in Windsor Locks when they returned. Hippies didn't make a lot of money.

4. Aerospace companies near Bradley Field had large layoffs in the 1970s.

Anyone in the field of Aerospace in the 1970s knows that it was an exceptionally difficult decade for aerospace companies, especially those involved in defense contracts. I started my aerospace career in January of 1970, and worked for three companies which had layoffs in the 1970s. Those who worked for Hamilton Standard in Windsor Locks went through layoffs as well as hiring sprees in the 1970s. It is likely that some families that owned houses could not remain in Windsor Locks after being laid off, but no statistics on this could be found. We shall see more evidence on this later in this chapter.

5. The re-development of Main Street caused many low-cost rental-housing units to be eliminated.

The re-development of Main Street involved the town buying all of the retail businesses on Main Street and the buildings behind them in the 1960s, and the destruction of those buildings in the 1970s. Those buildings held two types of businesses: retail stores and rental housing. The side-by-side photos below show Main Street before and after re-development.

The re-development of Main Street involved the town buying all of the retail businesses on Main Street and the buildings behind them in the 1960s, and the destruction of those buildings in the 1970s. Those buildings held two types of businesses: retail stores and rental housing. The side-by-side photos below show Main Street before and after re-development.

Looking at these two photos, it is easy to notice that the retail businesses are gone. What is far less noticeable is the fact that a massive number of low-rent rooms and apartments that were also destroyed. Many were on Main Street, above the stores

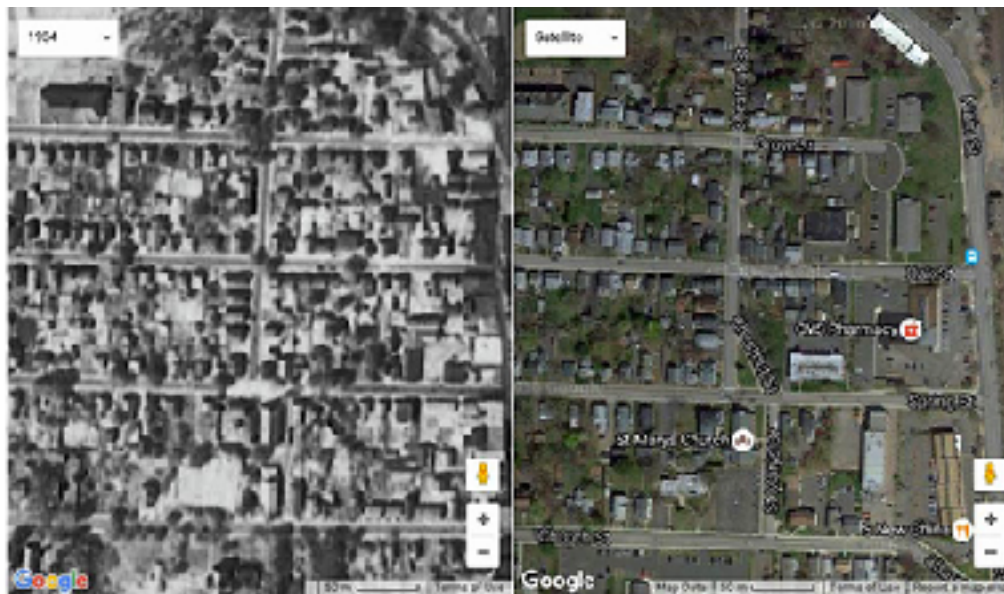


Main Street in the 1960s



Main Street in the 1980s

and restaurants. Examples are the apartments that were above Shonty's Bar and Grill and Bianchi's Restaurant. This entire block was owned by Moses Goldfarb, and included the rooming house on the driveway between Mr. Goldfarb's block and Vito Colapietro's hotel. As you continued up the driveway, there were two more four-plexes before you got the automotive repair garage at the top of the driveway. Behind Mr. Goldfarb's block, there was the building that once housed the Preli Italian market. That building also had rental housing, as did other buildings near it. The same was true all along Main Street, from Church Street as far north as far as Grove St. There were many buildings that were subdivided into apartments behind the row of retail stores along Main Street. There were still people living in Coly's Hotel. They were not transients. They resided at the hotel. The following photo pair shows the density of buildings in 1934 (before re-development) and 2016 (after re-development).



1934

Downtown Windsor Locks

2016

My brother, Lenny Montemerlo, who spent a good deal of his career as a developer, made me aware of this large number of rental housing units in downtown Windsor Locks that were destroyed along with the retail stores. I asked him to roughly estimate the number of people who were displaced by the re-development. He went through a block by block analysis, and came up with 500 people as a rough order of magnitude. Further, he said, that these were the lowest-priced rental units in Windsor Locks. Those who were displaced from these units would not have been able to find other places to live in town that they could afford. He estimated that virtually all of them had to leave town to find housing they could afford.

Interestingly enough, the loss of all of the retail businesses did not cause many to leave town. Swede's Jewelers moved to Warehouse Point, and the Marconi Brothers' Luncheonette moved to Suffield. The Donut Kettle and an insurance office moved to other locations in Windsor Locks. The rest of the stores went out of business. The number of stores that went out of business is not known, but we can estimate that it was about fifty. They were mostly family owned and operated. Even Coly's Hotel only had one person in charge (Vito Colapietro) and one employee (Vito's son, John Colapietro). One can estimate that the number of jobs lost might have been as high as 100. One could estimate that possibly half of those moved out of town. Thus we can reasonably estimate that the total number of people who moved out of Windsor Locks because of the re-development of Main Street in the 1970s was between 500 and 600. Since we know from the Census data that 3314 move out of town in the decade of the 1970s, it is reasonable to conclude that the re-development project was responsible for about a sixth of the out-migration. In other words, it was a significant cause of the population decline in that decade.

6. The number of jobs in the factories along the canal were decreasing.

In the last half of the 1800s, and the early 1900s, the factories along the canal were the largest source of non-agricultural jobs in Windsor Locks. However in the 1900s, the number of operating factories dropped slowly and steadily. By 1980, there were only two factories still in operation. The following chart is from Chapter 33, The Rise and Fall of the Canal and the Factories Along the Canal, by Mel Montemerlo.

This chart shows when factory at each site was operating. One can see that there were three operating in 1970 and there were still three operating in 1980. That means that there was no large drop in factory jobs in the decade of the 1970s. Therefore we can conclude that the drop in Windsor Locks population in that decade was not due to a loss of jobs in the factories by the canal.

```

.....1810 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 1900 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 2000
Site
1          xxxxxxx
2          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
3          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
4          xxxxxxxx
5          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
6          xxxx
6a         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
6b         xxxxxxx
7          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
8          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
9          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
10         xxxxxxx
11         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
12         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
13         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
14         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
15         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
16         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
17         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

```

7. The loss of the vibrant shopping area along Main Street lessened the feeling of civic pride, which caused townspeople to move elsewhere.

This hypothesized cause of the population drop in the 1970s is impervious to quantification. Based on the informal discussions that led to the writing of this chapter, no-one knew anyone who left town because they were that unhappy with the redevelopment of Main Street. That discussion and many others on the websites mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, show that there are many people who are unhappy with the destruction of their beloved Main St.

That was a different time. Those were the days when many people in Windsor Locks walked to the A&P to buy their groceries, or walked to one of about four ethnic markets to buy groceries. Those were the days when people from surrounding towns came to Windsor Locks to do their shopping. Those were the days when people hung out at Wuzzy's (Marconi Brothers Luncheonette), or had a leisurely breakfast at the Donut Kettle, where everyone knew your name. Those were the days when you bought your TV at LaRussa's, and got your hardware at Bidwell's.

Earlier in this Chapter, there is a photo of the Main Street, when it was in its heyday, and of the same place after re-development. The difference is obvious. However, that is not the whole story. It is true that many of those buildings on Main Street were not in good shape. There had been numerous fires. Sid's Modern Drug, Bidwell's, Blanche's Bowling Alley, and Shonty's burned down. Also, some of the businesses were not in good shape. While there are those who still have hard feelings about what happened, it is unlikely that anyone left Windsor Locks because re-

development did not go as planned, and their beloved “downtown” disappeared. So this hypothesized cause of the 1970s population drop was not a cause.

8. Route 91 was built in a timeframe which allowed people to commute longer distances, and thus find lower cost housing at a longer distance from Springfield and Hartford.

The building of route 91 made it easier for people to commute longer distances to cities such as Hartford and Springfield to go work. Since housing was in short supply and housing prices were high in Windsor Locks in the 1970s, the availability of Route 91 made it easier for someone living in Windsor Locks to move to a more distant town to find cheaper housing. It may have been that young adults who were living with their parents but who were ready to get married and set up their own households, used the opportunity provided by Route 91 to buy a house in a more distant town in which housing was cheaper. We shall get more information on this later in this chapter.

Conclusion from the Analysis of Nine Hypothesized Causes of the Large 1970s Population Decrease in Windsor Locks

Our analysis of the eight hypothesized causes of the large population decrease in Windsor Locks in the 1970s divided them into two groups.

Group A: Analysis shows that the following were not significant factors. They were:

- 3. Lower family values caused Baby Boomers from Windsor Locks to leave town and join a counter-culture movement.
- 6. The number of jobs in the factories along the canal was decreasing.
- 7. The loss of the vibrant shopping area along Main Street lessened the feeling of civic pride, which caused people to leave town.

Group B: Analysis indicates that these were actual causes, but that there is not enough data to estimate the size of the effect. These were:

- 1. Housing cost was higher in Windsor Locks than in nearby towns.
- 2. Baby boomers left for college or for the Vietnam War but never returned.
- 4. Aerospace companies near Bradley Field had large layoffs in the 1970s.
- 5. The redevelopment of Main Street eliminated many low-cost rental housing units.
- 8. Route 91 allowed people to commute longer distances, and thus find lower cost housing at a longer distance from their workplace.

We made a list of possible causes of the 20% population drop in the 1970s. Then we analyzed each to determine if they were credible. The five in Group B are credible. However we haven't found the statistical evidence needed to identify the size of their effect on the population drop.

We shall now look at an excellent study, which used US Census data from 1970 and 1980 to analyze the changing status of the populations of all Connecticut cities and towns during that decade. We shall examine that study to see if it can shed light on the five remaining hypothesized causes of Windsor Locks' population drop in the 1970s.

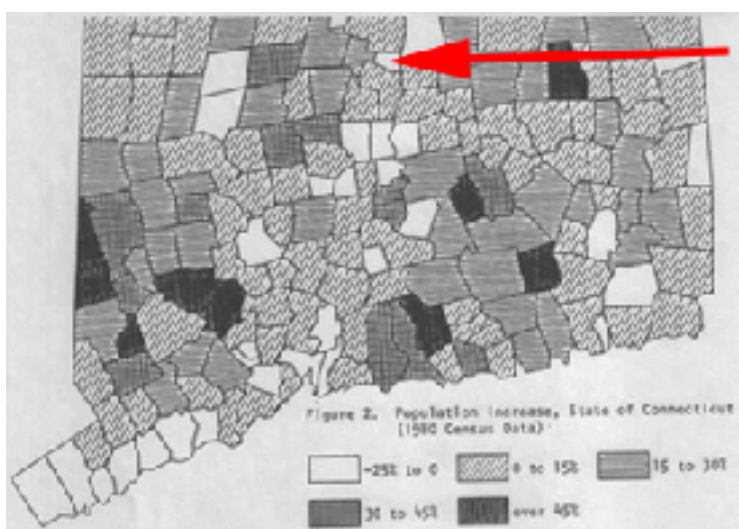
Data Analysis of Population Changes in Connecticut Towns and Cities in the 1970s

William H. Groff, of the University of Connecticut, wrote a report called "The Population of Connecticut: A Decade of Change, 1970 - 1980." The purpose of that report was to analyze the changes in population size and distribution during the 1970s.

Data from the 1970 and 1980 U. S. Censuses are provided for each town and city in Connecticut, which was then analyzed for trends. Here is the data that the study presents for the population change of Windsor Locks from 1970 to 1980.

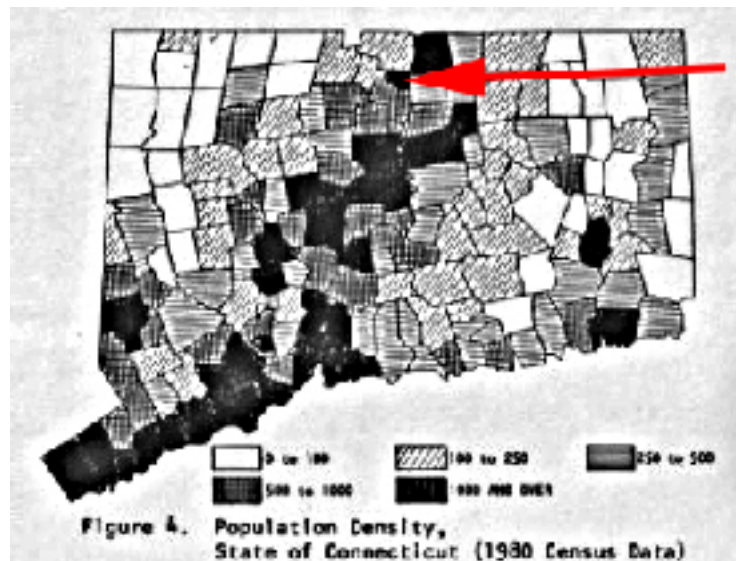
| | | |
|-------------------------|---------|---|
| Population in 1970 | 15,080 | |
| Population in 1980 | 12,190 | |
| 1970 to 1980 change | - 2,890 | |
| 1970 to 1980 % change | - 19.2% | |
| Natural Increase | 424 | means 424 more births than deaths. |
| Net Migration | - 3314 | means 3,314 more people left than came. |
| 1980 Migration Rate | - 219 | means 219 persons per 1000 left the town. |
| 1980 Population Density | 1369.7 | means 1936.7 persons per square mile. |

Two of Groff's charts are shown below. Figure 2 shows the population increases/decreases for the towns of Connecticut. The arrow points to the town of Windsor Locks. Notice that Windsor Locks is shaded in a white color. That means that Windsor Locks had a negative migration rate of between -25% and 0%. The darker each town is shaded, the greater its population increase. Notice that the towns whose populations decreased in that decade, which are shaded white, are in an arc from the lower left, which curves up the center of the state towards Windsor Locks.



Groff's Figure 2 - Population Increases/Decreases in Connecticut towns.

Connecticut has eight counties which are divided into 169 towns and cities. Look at Groff's Figure 4, which is below. The arrow points to Windsor Locks, which is shaded Black, indicating a density of more than 1000 persons per square mile. Only 36 of Connecticut's 169 towns had population densities of more than 1000 persons per square mile. In 1980, Windsor Locks had a population density of 1369.7 persons per square mile. Only 29 of the towns and cities listed for Connecticut had a higher population density than Windsor Locks in 1980. While the cities of Connecticut had higher densities than Windsor Locks, not many of the towns did. This supports our Hypothesized Cause #1, that people were moving out of Windsor Locks because of the high cost of housing in a town with high population density, to find affordable housing in towns with lower population densities.



Groff's Figure 4 - Population Density of Connecticut towns.

Groff said that towns with industries having defense contracts experienced population decreases, probably as a result of fewer defense contracts. That addresses Windsor Locks, with its aerospace companies near Bradley Field. It provides support for our Hypothesized Cause #4, that the aerospace industry layoffs were a cause of people leaving Windsor Locks.

Geoff said: "The movement of people toward less densely settled areas has continued through the 1970s and is facilitated by the availability of the automobile and the state's highway System." This supports our Hypothesized Cause #8, that the new availability of Route 91 allowed people to leave Windsor Locks to find lower cost housing which is farther from their work within reasonable commutes.

Groff concluded: "Many policy makers and demographers were surprised by the rather abrupt reversal of long-term trends in the 1970s. More Americans have been moving away from the more densely populated metropolitan centers to medium sized cities and rural areas, reversing the long term trend of growth in our larger cities."

Conclusions

We used a three step process to examine the causes of the 20% population decline that Windsor Locks had in the 1970s.

STEP 1: We began by hypothesizing eight possible causes of the 19.2% decline in Windsor Locks' population from 1970 to 1980.

STEP 2: By analyzing the nine hypothesized causes, we were able to determine that five of them probably had a significant role in the population drop of the 1970s, and that three of them could not have played a significant role in the population decline. However, we did not have data to determine the size of each's effect on the population decline.

STEP 3: We turned to the Groff study of the population changes in Connecticut towns and cites in the 1970s, which used United States Census data. Let's look at what Groff's study had to say about each of the four causes of population decline that our analysis supported.

1. Housing cost was higher in Windsor Locks than in nearby towns, which caused residents to find lower cost housing in other towns.

This was due to the high density of the population of Windsor Locks and the paucity of available housing at a reasonable cost. Groff found that all across Connecticut, people moved from towns with high population densities to those with low population densities.

2. Baby boomers left for college or for the Vietnam War but never returned.

Groff did not address the specifics of people who had gone to college or to the military and did not return to their home towns. He addressed the reasons that people did not stay in their town. The biggest reason, as we just saw, was that people were moving from high density towns to lower density towns to find housing that they could afford. It makes sense that if the people who went to college or to the military but didn't return, it is because they found employment elsewhere, or because they found more reasonably priced housing elsewhere. Thus, while Groff did not address this specifically, he provided indirect support for it.

4. Aerospace companies near Bradley Field had large layoffs in the 1970s, and those layoffs led people to move elsewhere to find work.

Groff found that towns with aerospace companies, especially those with military contracts had lost contracts in the 1970s which caused out-migration from those towns. Windsor Locks was such a town.

5. The re-development of Main Street destroyed many low-cost rental housing units, causing many to leave Windsor Locks.

While the closing of most of the stores didn't have a major effect on people leaving Windsor Locks in the 1970s, the loss of all of the room/apartment rental units with the lowest rental costs in town probably resulted in about 500 of the renters leaving town. Adding about 50 leaving because of the stores closing, the redevelopment project probably caused about a sixth of the net out-migration from Windsor Locks in the 1970s. Of course, this factor overlaps with the first factor - the higher cost of housing in Windsor Locks, which meant that the renters of the lowest-cost rooms and apartments could not find rentals in Windsor Locks that they could afford.

8. Route 91 was built in that timeframe and allowed people to commute longer distances, and thus they could find lower cost housing at a longer distance from Springfield and Hartford.

Groff found that the state's road system supported people who wanted to move out of higher cost areas to lower cost areas, because the Connecticut's road system, including the new I-95 permitted longer commutes.

Bottom Line: The data analysis of the Groff study provided the support needed for the five remaining hypothesized causes of Windsor Locks' 20% population decline in the 1970s which survived critical examination. The analysis of probable causes of the population decline has been successful.

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Chapter 38

Windsor Locks History Publications: An Annotated Bibliography

There are two books, two pamphlets and a photo book that address the history of Windsor Locks. Four of them are out of print, and two can only be found on the internet. These books are excellent resources for those who love Windsor Locks history. They have proven invaluable to me in writing 38 chapters on the history of the town. To help others find and use these books more efficiently, I have written this annotated bibliography, which consists of:

- a list of the books and pamphlets,
- information about what each contains, and
- information about the best way to obtain each of them.

With this background, one can make better decisions about which of these books to seek out. This annotated bibliography only covers books and pamphlets about the general history of Windsor Locks. It does not cover books which are specific to a given individual such as the biography of Dr. Carniglia, or a specific part of Windsor Locks, such as Bradley Field.

Each of those five history books and pamphlets will now be discussed.

***The History of Ancient Windsor* by Henry R. Stiles, MD**

This is an authoritative book on the history of Windsor, which once contained what is now Windsor Locks. Please note that it is not a history of Windsor Locks, but a history of old Windsor, which preceded Windsor Locks. It has a very long title:

The History of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut, including East Windsor, South Windsor, and Ellington, prior to 1768, the date of their separation from the old town, and Windsor, Bloomfield and Windsor Locks, to the present time, also the Genealogies and Genealogical Notes of those families which settled within the limits of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut, prior to 1800.

This was written by Henry R. Stiles, MD, of Brooklyn, NY, and it was published by Charles B. Norton in 1859. Reading the title of the book gives you an idea as to what the book contains.

This book was written by a medical doctor who was also an avid historian and genealogist. Some of his ancestors had lived in the town of Windsor, Conn, so he decided to write a highly detailed history of the early days of the town, including genealogies of many of its prominent residents. This is a very long book which is highly detailed. It contains three volumes, which have about 2,400 pages. This is not a book for the casual reader! Since Windsor Locks was incorporated in 1854, and the book was published in 1859, it does not cover much of the history of the town after it was

incorporated. It does have one chapter on Windsor Locks. This book, which is really about Windsor, does contain a “pre-history” of Windsor Locks.

Dr. Stiles was well acquainted with Windsor Locks historian, Jabez Haskell Hayden, who wrote the next book that is described in this chapter. There is a paragraph in Dr. Stiles’ book which is almost identical to a paragraph in Jabez Hayden Haskell’s book, which is described below. In neither book does this paragraph provide a reference to the other book as a source. Since Dr. Stiles’ book was written first, he must have been the author of that paragraph. In the introduction to his book, Dr. Stiles did say that he was a friend of Jabez Haskell Hayden, who he says was a serious historian, especially concerning the area of Windsor which later became Windsor Locks.

An electronic scan of the contents of Dr. Stiles’ book indicated that there are about twenty references to “Windsor Locks” in the book. Chapter 26 of the book is titled “Windsor Locks 1833-1859.” A search of the internet for this book shows that there were three volumes that made up the overall book: Volume 1, Volume 2 and the Supplement. These can be found at the following three web-pages:

<https://archive.org/details/historygenealogi01stil>

- is Volume 1 of the three volume set.
- Serial Number - 2190

<https://archive.org/details/historygenealogi02stil>

- is Volume 2 of the three volume set.
- Serial Number - 3293

<https://archive.org/details/historyofancient01stil>

- is the “Supplement” of the three volume set.
- Serial Number - 7112

These three volumes plus other editions of the book can be found on the following website, which gives the Serial Numbers of each of the volumes.

<https://archive.org/search.php?query=windsor%20locks%20history>

These three volumes can be read, searched and downloaded for free from this website. The ability to do word searches on long books such as this is invaluable. One can do a search in just a few seconds, while it would take weeks to read the 2,400 page, three volume set. Because of the detailed nature of its contents, and because it deals with the pre-history of Windsor Locks, these it is a very difficult book to read. Using the on-line book, one could find the 20 references to Windsor Locks in a matter of a few minutes. Having to read the three volumes to find the 20 references o Windsor Locks would literally take weeks.

Historical Sketches by Jabez Haskell Hayden

Historical Sketches, by Jabez Haskell Hayden, was published by the *Windsor Locks Journal* in Windsor Locks, CT, in 1900. It is the only existing book on the history of the town of Windsor Locks. It can be found, searched and downloaded for free at:

<https://archive.org/details/historicalsearch00hayd>

Historical Sketches is only about 130 pages, yet it covers a longer time period than Dr. Stiles' 2,400 page book. Both start off in the early 1600s, but Stiles' book was published in 1859, while Hayden's book was published in 1900.

What is the difference between the two books besides length? Dr. Stiles book includes many documents and references to documents, and it also includes genealogies of early Windsor families. It is a highly detailed book. Mr. Hayden's book is a set of "remembrances" by a man who loved Windsor Locks. He was a descendent of one of the earliest settlers in Pine Meadow. He wanted to write down what he learned from his father, his grandfather and other relatives. Such writings are often referred to as "oral history." This book has long been out of print. Mr. Hayden's book is much shorter than Mr. Stiles's book, and it is less "dense." Mr. Stiles book uses more of a scholastic approach, while Mr. Hayden's book has a more conversational tone. The density of detail and extreme length of Mr. Stiles' book renders it much more difficult to read than Mr. Hayden's book.

Windsor Locks historian, Mickey Danyluk, (telephone conversation, March 10, 2017) told me that parts of Mr. Hayden's book can be difficult for a modern reader to understand, because the physical layout of Windsor Locks in the 1700s and early 1800s was much different from the current layout. He said that to really understand "Historical Sketches," one needs to have knowledge of the Dexter family, the Haskell family, and the houses and other buildings that existed in the 1700s and early 1800s. In the preface to his book, My Hayden said:

These fugitive sketches, which have been written from time to time for the *Windsor Locks Journal*, or taken from papers read before some public gathering, have been deemed worthy of preservation for their historical value, and the publisher has ventured to offer them in book form to the public.

These sketches comprise reminiscences of my own long life, (89 years) the traditions of former generations of my ancestors, together with researches among the Windsor and other ancient records. I am of the seventh generation from William Hayden, who came out from England in 1630 with the church and people which came to Windsor, Conn. in 1635.

The chapters of *Historical Sketches* are:

- Settlement of Windsor
- Early River Navigation
- Early roadways in Windsor
- Historical Sketch - the "Plains"
- Historical Sketch - Early Mail Facilities
- Recollections of a long life
- Slavery in Connecticut
- Historical Sketch - The Old Fording Place
- An Old Time Sunday
- Historical Sketch - The old County Milestone

- Indian Graves
- Church History
- Revolutionary Soldiers
- Notes

Given that this excellent history of Windsor Locks can be read on-line or downloaded for free, it is very worthwhile for any Windsor Locks citizen to read it, even if some parts might not be fully understood. Mr. Hayden's book was the first history book on Windsor Locks. The book that you are currently reading is the second.

Two Centennial Pamphlets on the History of Windsor Locks

The history books by Dr. Stiles and by Mr. Hayden were written in 1859 and 1900 respectively. They covered the very early history of the area, including the time before Windsor Locks was incorporated. The first had about 2400 pages and the second had about 130. Both covered the time period from the early 1600s to the mid/late 1800s. The two pamphlets to be considered here were written much later. One was written in 1954, and the other in 1976. Each begins with a short article on the history of Windsor Locks. The article in the 1954 pamphlet is about 14 pages in length and the other is about 12 pages. Both are much shorter than the books by Dr. Stiles and Mr. Hayden, and yet they cover much longer periods of time. They cover from the early 1600s to 1954 and 1976 respectively. That is a lot of history to cover in a dozen pages.

The 1954 and 1976 pamphlets can be thought of as a pair, since they have a number of similarities. The first was written in 1954 to celebrate the Centennial of the incorporation of Windsor Locks in 1854. The second was written in 1976 to celebrate the Bicentennial of the United States, which was formed in 1776. Each was written by a "centennial committee." Neither lists an author. Neither use references to earlier histories. These were not meant to be "history books." They were informal documents which were produced as mementos of two centennial celebrations. The 1954 pamphlet has an excellent description of Windsor Locks in the year 1954, and the second contains an excellent description of the town in 1976. Both pamphlets are about 125 pages long, and each has a number of very nice photographs of the town.

1954 History Booklet Celebrates the Windsor Locks Centennial

The 1954 pamphlet was entitled *The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663 - 1954*. It was published in 1954, but it doesn't say who published it. It lists the 28 people who were on the Historical Subcommittee of the Windsor Locks Centennial Committee. Presumably, it was that committee which authored the document. Presumably, each person was responsible for a section of the document, but there is no way to know.

The first section is a thirteen page writeup of the history of Windsor Locks from 1663 to 1954, which is quite interesting. It takes us up to the time when the factories along the canal were doing relatively well, and when the retail stores on the other side of Main Street were at their best. 1954 was a good and a happy time in Windsor

Locks. WWII was over, the town was expanding, and business and social life were vibrant.

The 1954 pamphlet contains valuable information about the 1950s, and it shows a transition from the time of the immigrants arrived in the early 1900s, to the 1950s. The thirteen page writeup on early Windsor Locks history in this booklet is more likely to be read by Windsor Locks residents than the books by Stiles and Hayden. It is difficult to obtain a copy of the booklet, since it is out of print, and is not on the internet. The Stiles and Hayden books are on the Internet and can be downloaded for free. Since they are digital files, they can also be searched, which is a very powerful time-saver when looking up specific topics.

A list of the chapters of the 1954 pamphlet is as follows:

- Historical Sketch
- Church History
- Education
- Major Industries and Businesses
- Fraternal Civic and Service Organizations
- Old Homes and Buildings

Overall, this booklet leaves you with a good feel for life in Windsor Locks in the 1950s, and it provides a brief overview of the history of the town up to that date.

1976 History Pamphlet Celebrates the Bicentennial of the United States

In 1976, the town celebrated the Bicentennial of the United States. Part of the celebration included the writing and printing of a pamphlet entitled: *The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663 - 1976*. It was published in Windsor Locks in 1976, but it does not say who published it. While the 1954 book gave a list of 24 people who helped write the document, this one does not have a list of people who helped write the pamphlet. The Foreword says: "The combined effort of many people has produced this booklet which, it is hoped, will bring lasting enjoyment, and , at the same time, serve as a treasured memento of our Town - Windsor Locks, Connecticut in 1976."

The pamphlet begins with a few pages which list the various town officials and its boards and committees. The sections of the booklet are:

- Pictorial highlights
- Historical Sketch (about 12 pages including photos)
- Religious Life in Windsor Locks
- Education - Windsor Locks Public Schools
- The Canal and the Industries Along it
- Redevelopment in Windsor Locks (Main Street stores were being torn down)
- The Fire and Police Departments
- The Public Library
- Service and Other Organizations

This pamphlet uses a larger format than the 1954 booklet. It is closer to 8 1/2" x 11" which allows for larger photographs. It contains a good set of old photographs of

the town, and a set of photographs from the 1954 pamphlet. It has an overview of the history up to the point it was written, and it gives a good feel for Windsor Locks in the mid-1970s. One can easily see the major difference between Windsor Locks in the mid-1950s and in the mid-1970s. The factories along the canal were dwindling, and the Main Street was being torn down for "redevelopment." The town had lost its vibrant downtown atmosphere. However, the aerospace industry around Bradley Field was growing. Like the 1954 booklet, this one has long been out of print. Occasionally one can be purchased on Amazon.

If one is lucky enough to have copies of both books, it is very informative to read them in quick succession, and notice the changes in the town from 1954 to 1976.

Leslie Matthews Stansfield's Book of Old Windsor Locks Photographs

Images of America: Windsor Locks, by Leslie Matthews Stansfield, was published by Arcadia Publishers in 2003. This book contains a collection of old photographs of Windsor Locks. Each photograph has a caption. Some of the captions only contain a few words. Some contain a number of sentences. This book is not really a "written" book. It is a collection of about 200 old photographs, with descriptions of each photo. It took a good deal of work to find the people and companies in Windsor Locks who had old photographs, and were willing to let them be put into a book. The value of this book is the set of photos that it contains. It would be useful to anyone interested in the history of Windsor Locks. It is occasionally available for sale on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). The last time that I checked (October 9, 2017), there were five copies for sale, with prices ranging from \$50 to \$255. This was a commercially produced book.

Conclusions

The annotated bibliography described five publications about the history of Windsor Locks:

1. *The History of Ancient Windsor*, by Henry Reed Stiles (1859)
2. *Historical Sketches*, by Jabez Haskell Hayden (1900)
3. *The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663 - 1954* (1954)
4. *The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663 - 1976* (1976)
5. *Images of America: Windsor Locks*, by L. Stansfield (2003)

- All are out of print.
- The first two can be read, searched and downloaded from the internet for free.
- The first is a "dense" book which has three volumes and over 2400 pages.
- The second is the only real "history book" about Windsor Locks that was written prior to the book you are now reading. It was published in 1900. The book you are now reading was published 117 years later, in 2017.
- The second is conversational in tone.
- The third and fourth have brief write-ups on the history of Windsor Locks, and have excellent descriptions of the town in 1954 and in 1976 respectively. There was a big change in the town between 1954 and 1976.

- The third and fourth were written as mementos of the centennial celebrations. They are out of print, but are sometimes available on Amazon.
- The fifth is a book of old photographs of Windsor Locks, each having a caption. It is a photo album, not a history book. It is not available on-line but is sometimes available on amazon.com
- If you are interested in reading a brief history of Windsor Locks, your best alternative would be to go to the Windsor Locks Public Library, and make a xerox copy of the approximately 12 page history in either the 1954 or the 1976 books listed above (numbers 3 and 4).

This chapter only considered publications about the town of Windsor Locks. It did not consider books or articles about specific individuals of the town, or about specific places in the town, such as Bradley Field.

A source of information about Windsor Locks history is the set of documents and photographs which is housed at the Noden-Reed estate in Windsor Locks, which is now the office of the Windsor Locks Historical Association. Their website is:

<http://www.windsorlockshistoricalsociety.org/>

A great place to do research on Windsor Locks history is the Windsor Locks Public Library. Their website is:

<http://www.windsorlockslibrary.org/>

They have ample visiting hours and they have a well stocked and well organized set of documents on Windsor Locks history. They also have computers which allow you to access the Internet.

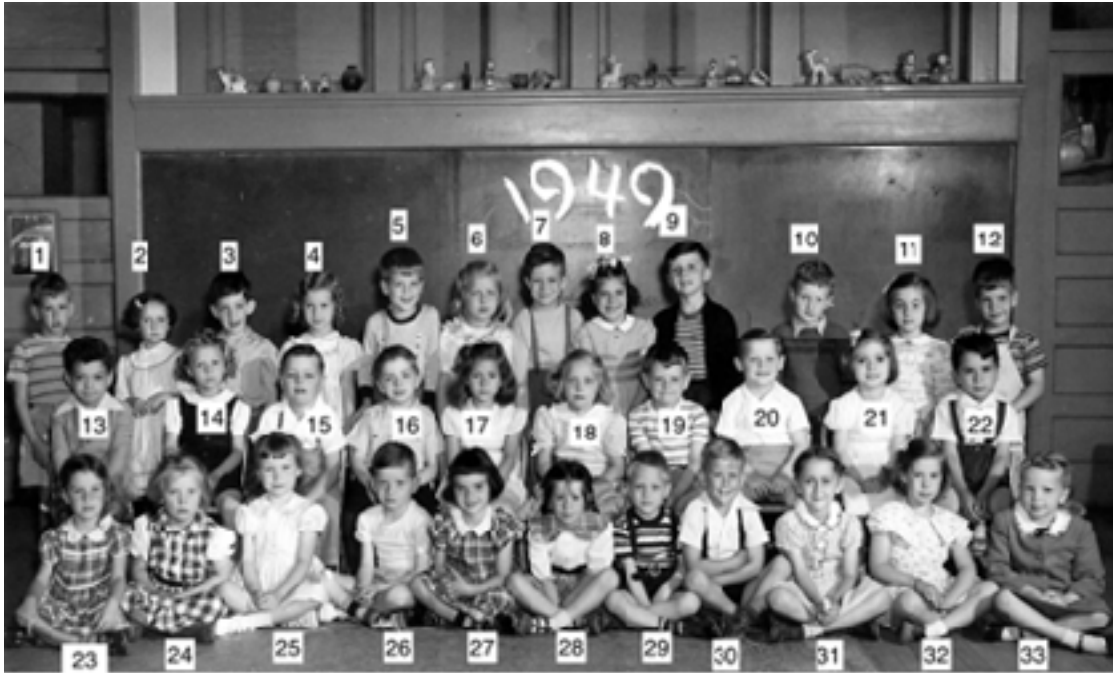
An excellent source of historical material about Windsor Locks is on the Internet. It is called the "Internet Archive." It describes itself as "a non-profit library of millions of free books, movies, software, music, websites, and more." All of the material that it has on-line can be searched on-line, and can be downloaded for free. It can be found at:

<https://archive.org/>

About the Author

My name is Mel Montemerlo. I lived in Windsor Locks from birth in 1943 until I left for college in 1960. My parents were Leo and Lena Montemerlo. We lived at 60 Grove St., across from St. Mary's School. I have two brothers, John and Lenny.

My first memories are from my early school years. I went to Miss Bruce's kindergarten class (1948-49) in the old Public School building on Church Street. Below is a photo of that kindergarten class.



Miss Bruce's Kindergarten Class in Windsor Locks Public School in 1949

The following is an attempt to name my classmates:

2 Barbara Turner, 3 Malcolm Berman, 4 Ann Marie Barbieri, 6 Clair Tomazek, 8 Julie ?, 9 Mark Barberi, 10 Bruce Winters (or his brother), 11 Noreen Baron, 12 Tom Kurharaski, 13 Mel Montemerlo, 15 Ron Pauluh, 16 Carl Richards, 17 Carol Kraft, 18 Jane Taravella, 20 Brian McKenna, 21 Leila Ferrari, 22 Joe Tria, 23 Eileen Courtney, 25 Gloria Babiarz, 26 Donald Pesci, 27 Donna Pesci, 28 Judy Price, 29 Skip Mayoros, 30 Joe Kobos or Jeff Lee, 31 Peggy Draghi, 32 Patty Kane, 33 Susan Root.

After kindergarten, I attended St. Mary's Elementary School from 1949 to 1956. Below is a photo of the First Grade class in 1950, followed by a list of my classmates in alphabetical order. There were two first-grade classes that year. The photo is of both classes.



First Grade, Saint Mary's School, Windsor Locks, Conn. 1950

Catherine Allen, Joe Avore, Helen Babiarz, Kenny Baldwin, George Balf, Ann Marie Barbieri, Noreen Baron, Malcolm Berman, Theresa Carroll, Freddy Colombo, Richard Cummings, Carol Desolt, Peggy Draghi, Alan Dzurich, Leila Ferrari, Tommy Gallagher, John Gokey, Robert Harvey, Patty Kane, Carol Kraft, Barbara Markowski, Brian McKenna, Jimmy McKenna, Mel Montemerlo, Marilyn Morin, Lorraine Norieka, Robert Norris, Sheila Leary, Elaine Ouellette, Donna Pesci, Donald Pesci, Anita Pinati, Chet Pohorylo, Ted Pohorylo, Barbara Quagg, Conrad Quagliaroli, Robert Quagliaroli, Jenny Rabbit, Susan Root, Linda Satonick, Joe Sartori, David Sheridan, Felix Szpanski, Jane Taravella, Wilson Taylor, Robert Tenerowicz, Claire Tomaszek and Joe Tria.

After graduating from St. Mary's, I went to Cathedral High School in Springfield, from which I graduated in 1960. While in high school, I was a member of Joe Avore's Boy Scout troop in Windsor Locks, and I was a member of the St. Mary's Fife and Drum Corps. Later I joined the Golden Lancer's Drum and Bugle Corps.

In 1960, I went to the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. I majored in Mathematics. Washington, DC was my introduction to the world outside of Windsor Locks. Catholic University, which was a very tame environment, made the transition away from home easy.

After Catholic U., I went to the University of Connecticut, to get a Masters Degree in Mathematics. It was inexpensive. At that time, in-state graduate school tuition was less than a \$100 a semester. I played drums in a rock and roll band, was a Resident Advisor in a dorm for a year, and I taught math for one year as a graduate assistant.

In my second year at UCONN, I knew that I wanted to go on and get a PhD, but I was out of money. A friend suggested that I see Dr. Ellis Page, the Chairman of the Educational Psychology department at UCONN, who had money to support PhD

students. I did so immediately. He asked about my educational background and my Graduate Record scores. He said that if I had come to him a week earlier, he would have given me a full fellowship. That was quite disappointing. Then he asked if I wanted to go to the University of Chicago, New York University, or Penn State. That question caught me off-guard, but I had the presence of mind to give him a clear, direct answer. I said: "Penn State." He immediately called his friend, Dr. Frank DiVesta at Penn State, and described my background to him. He asked Dr. DiVesta if he had any fellowships available. He handed me the phone and said that Dr. DiVesta wanted to talk to me. Dr. DiVesta asked me if the information that Dr Page gave him about me was correct. I told him that it was. Then, in point-blank fashion, he asked: "If I offer you a full fellowship for the Educational Psychology Doctoral program right now, will you accept it?" I enthusiastically responded: "Yes." He replied: "I am looking forward to seeing you here in September." That was one of the most unforgettable days in my life. I got my Masters Degree in Mathematics from UCONN in 1966, and went to Penn State that Fall.

I finished my PhD work at the end of 1969. That year, I married Mary Beth Russell, who was finishing her undergraduate degree at Penn State.

I needed to find a job. I found about 60 job openings across the United States, and I applied to all of them. I kept all 60 applications in a three-ring binder and waited to see which, if any, would respond. On a snowy day in December of 1969 at Penn State, I got a call from the Link Division of the Singer Corp. They were a leading maker of aircraft simulators for pilot training. I paged through my 60 applications and found the one that I made to Link/Singer. I had answered an ad that said: "Wanted: Aviation Psychologist with minimum of four years experience with simulators." The head of their Human Factors department was on the phone. He said that he was very impressed with my background. That surprised me since I had no background in aviation, and I had never even seen an aircraft simulator. He asked me if I could come to Binghamton, NY for an interview. Binghamton is not far from Penn State. I replied: "Certainly, what time do you close?" He laughed heartily, knowing that the entire area was in a heavy snowstorm. He said, "Next week would be fine. I like your attitude." I went up, had the interview, and got hired."

The next decade (1970-1980) was a difficult one for the aerospace industry. I went through four jobs in that decade, but I got a good background in Human Factors.

In 1979, I saw an opening for a "Program Executive" for NASA's Aeronautical Human Factors research and technology program at NASA Headquarters in Washington, DC. I was working for the Department of the Army at Ft. Eustis, Virginia. One of my neighbors worked at NASA's Langley Research Center, which was nearby. I told him about that opening. He said that he knew of the opening, and he knew the person that I would be working for. He invited me to his home that evening, and said that after he finished briefing me about the job, that I would be able to handle the interview easily. He briefed me. I went for the job interview, and got the job.

I got to work with the Federal Aviation Agency and the National Transportation Safety Board on designing and evaluating new displays and cockpit capabilities for commercial aircraft. This was exciting work, but things got even better. After two years, my supervisor's supervisor asked me if I would like to develop a Space Human

Factors program, and work with the astronauts. Of course, I would. He gave me the job, and I started NASA's first Space Human Factors Technology program. I moved from working on aviation technology to working on space technology.

I thought that things couldn't get better than that. They did. In 1985, NASA started a new program called "Artificial Intelligence and Robotics," and I was put in charge of it. My program developed new technologies for Space Shuttle Mission Control. One of the technologies that we developed enabled the Johnson Space Center to redesign and replace their Mission Control Center. It replaced its single central computer, with a distributed computer system. We also developed a method of doing planning for the group at Kennedy Space Center that refurbished the Space Shuttle orbiters after each mission. The new method saved over a million dollars a day in scheduling costs. We started a program in small space rovers which developed the technology for the first space rover that landed on Mars. It was called "Sojourner."

All good things must end someday. The Space Technology Development program was revamped and the jobs of the eight Program Executives who worked at NASA Headquarters, were sent to the NASA Centers. Only one job was left at NASA Headquarters. That was the Director of the entire technology program, including: artificial intelligence and robotics, materials and structures, propulsion, power, communications, sensors and human factors. I was given that job. That was an exciting challenge, to say the least. I did that job for a number of years, until the entire space technology program ended. I was getting older, and needed to find a new job at NASA.

My supervisor asked me to have a talk with him. He said that he was going to be the Assistant Director of the Astrophysics Program. I congratulated him. The Astrophysics program developed the satellites and telescopes which studied the stars and galaxies beyond our Solar System. He asked me if I'd like to work for him in the Astrophysics Division. My answer was: "Absolutely, yes!"

The last nine years of my NASA career were in Astrophysics. I was a program executive for a series of Astrophysics spacecraft, as they went through design, development and launch. Below is a photograph of me at Kennedy Space Center, at a Launch Control station for the Swift spacecraft.



Mel Montemerlo in the Launch Control Room, Kennedy Space Center for the launch of his first spacecraft, "Swift". Nov. 20, 2004

After an exciting and satisfying career at NASA, it was time to retire. My transition from work to retirement went smoothly. I had one grandchild when I retired, and six more came quickly.

Besides grandchildren, I have three hobbies: woodworking, antique clock restoration, and genealogy. While working and bringing up three children, time for these hobbies was not plentiful. After retirement, I dove into all three. In June of 2016, *Fine Woodworking Magazine* published a photo of one of my carvings. The mirror frame is about 2 1/2 feet tall. See the photo on the right.

On a trip to Hawaii, my wife and I saw a ukulele player who not only played Hawaiian music, but also jazz and rock. I was inspired by his playing, and took up the instrument. On the right is a photo of my granddaughter and I playing our ukuleles.

During my retired years, my wife and I continued our annual visits to my hometown, Windsor Locks, Conn. I have wonderful memories of the town in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, before the downtown section was demolished during the Main Street redevelopment project. I started researching the history of the town, and realized that the history of the town from 1900 to 1975 had never been written. I started writing articles about the town's history. Soon after that, I got the idea of turning those articles into a book on the history of Windsor Locks. Finally, the book is complete.

If I had to sum up my life in a single photo, it would be the following one of my family.



Christmas 2015 - My family