VT.
14-SIMO

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. VT-50

ROWELL'S INN

Location: On State Route 11, 6.9 miles west of Chester, Simonsville, Windsor County, Vermont.

Brief Statement of Significance: This building, which retains various original features, has an unusual, but regionally characteristic, three story porch. "In early automobile days, this inn was a stop-over on the 'Ideal Tour' between Manchester, Vermont, and the White Mountains of New Hampshire" (Federal Writer's Project, Vermont...).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original owner: This structure was built by the Simon who gave his name to the community. It served as an Inn and a store.

2. Date of erection: ~~1820.~~ 1826

3. References: Federal Writer's Project, Vermont, A Guide to the Green Mountain State (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937), p. 331.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Technical Description of Exterior:

Two-and-a-half stories, rectangular brick building. Common bond. Gable roof with gable end to the front. Five bay facade with entrance door centered. Two leaf entrance door apparently not original. Panelled, three-centered, arched head over entrance. 2 over 2 light, double hung windows on the first and second floors of the facade are apparently not original. 6 over 6 light double hung windows on third floor of the facade in gable end. Blind, three-centered, brick, relieving arches over windows.

A three story frame porch across the entire front appears to be a later addition. Each of the first two stories has four chamfered posts supporting the floor above and a balustrade with molded rail and turned balusters. The roof carries over the third story of the porch which is a three-centered, arched opening contained within the gable. The sides and top of the arched opening are sheathed with boards and the triangular faces of the pediment that are not cut into by the arched opening have flush board siding. The floor balustrade has square balusters.

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B. Technical Description of Interior

The interior "retains such features as the many fireplaces, Christian doors /i.e. six panel doors arranged two over two over two panels/ and the third-floor ballroom." (Federal Writer's Project, Vermont...).

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
October 1960

Windsor
cupola furnace
1820'-30's.
Claremont 7.5'

Ironmaking in Vermont: 1775-1890

by

Victor R. Rolando

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of The College of Saint Rose in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History and Political Science.

February, 1980

Albany, New York

Williston: One of the town's earliest settlers, General Jacob (Jonathan?) Spaford, operated a forge in the eastern part of the town while living on that was then called the old turnpike, and is today's Route 2.[237] The forge is indicated in Williston on Whitelaw's 1810 map (but not on the 1796 map),,and identified by the name Gen'l Spafford (figure 73). It was located on Allen Brook, more or less beneath I-89 where it crosses the brook. No further information can be found about this site.

Figure 73. The Spaf(f)ord Forge on Allen Brook in Williston, from Whitelaw's 1810 map.

Windsor: With the amount of firearms manufacturers along Mill Brook in the village of Windsor during the early 1800's, there is some belief that much iron ore was reduced and mixed with commercial bar iron to produce a custom quality of iron. Only bog ore imported from West Claremont (New Hampshire) can be found in the documentation.[238] Beers' 1869 map of the village indicates a furnace owned by F. Draper (who also owned the blast furnace at Dorset), but this was a cupola, or air furnace.[239]

Woodford: Bar iron and possibly cast iron were manufactured in Woodford

In Windsor Prison

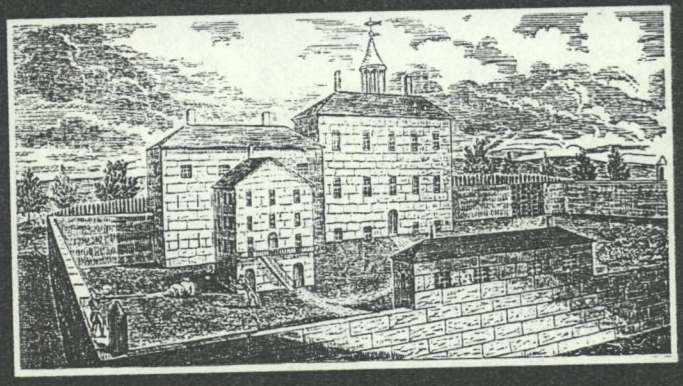
BY GENE SMITH

IT BEGAN AS America's most modern penal institution, and for generations the Vermont State Prison reflected the changing ways by which we thought we should punish our wrongdoers. Then a tormented era and a ghastly crime combined to end its old career—and give it a surprising new one.

THE OFFICIAL NAME FOR THE VARIOUS HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS was the Yellowjackets, and their home backers called them the Jacks. Not so fans attending away games. At any Vermont gym or field but their own the players were referred to as the Prisontowners.

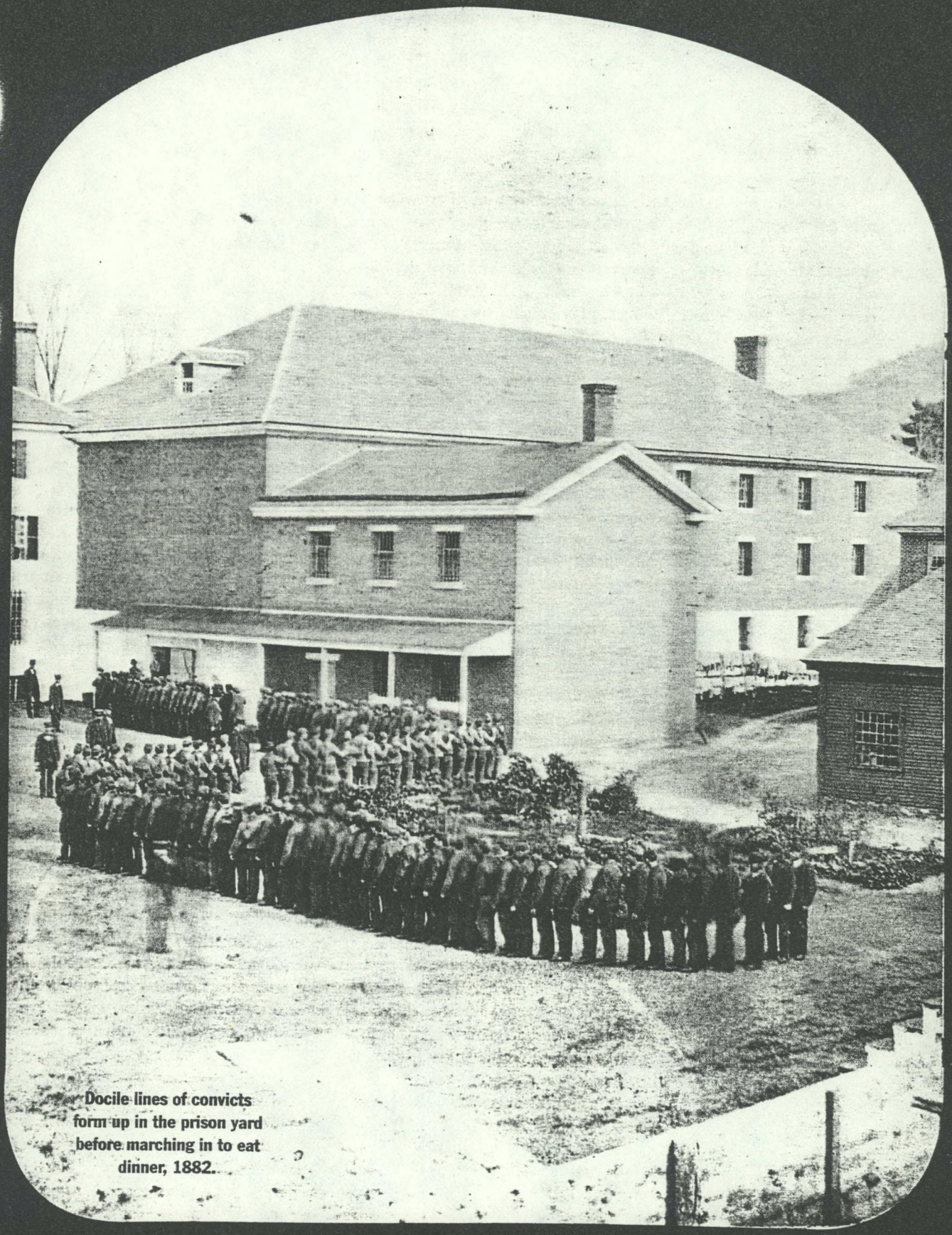
That defined Windsor despite the Goodyear plant and the big automatic machine-tools place and the town's historical background, which had seen early officials write the state constitution there. Montpelier was the state capital, Windsor the site of the state penitentiary. It was decided in 1807.

The citizens of the day were delighted when it was ruled that they could have the prison. In addition to paying along with other Vermonters the one-cent-per-acre special construction levy on all privately owned land, Windsor's people were happy to provide the raw materials for the projected prison. They quarried five thousand tons of granite from Mount Ascutney, some three miles from the village, and brought it by oxcart to the wooded area where the prison would be. In the spring of 1808 the cornerstone was drawn from the mountain's base and, records an early chronicler, was taken with "utmost splendor" to the construction site. A crowd of hundreds, if not to say thousands, followed



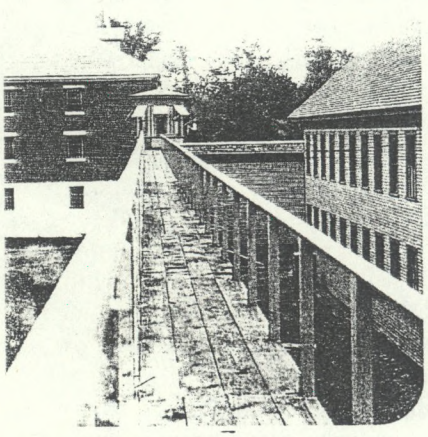
A seventeen-year-old guard kills an escaping prisoner with a single shot in a line cut from an 1834 book about life in Windsor Prison.

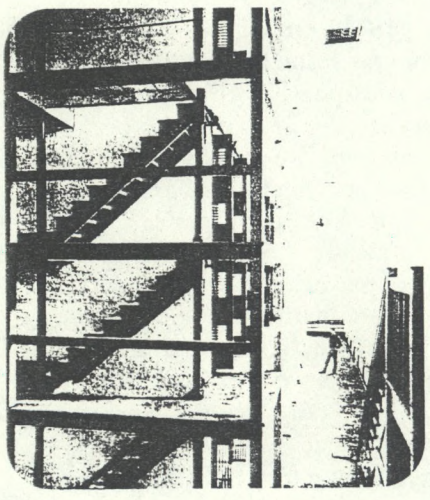
BOTH PAGES: SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT LIBRARY



Docile lines of convicts form up in the prison yard before marching in to eat dinner, 1882.

VISITING THE institution became a tourist attraction for Windsor; open to the public on Thursdays, the prison sometimes drew a thousand sightseers a week.





More views from 1882: at top, one of the catwalks where the guards patrolled, and, below, the stairs that connected the tiers of cells.

a procession attended by martial music. The cornerstone was laid to the crash of cannon.

In the following year, 1809, the prison opened for business. There were twenty-four inmates, whose crimes included manslaughter, theft, rape, horse stealing, and, in more than half the cases, counterfeiting. Their massive new stone residence—castlelike, eighty-five feet by thirty-six, three stories tall—included a yard surrounded by walls three feet thick and fourteen feet high, with foot-long iron spikes on top. "A view of the prison from the adjacent hills strikes the beholder with awe and carries the contemplative mind back to the rude and gothic ages of the world when barons bold surrounded with vassals waged war with each other," writes the early chronicler, who was John Russell, Jr., and whose *An Authentic History of the Vermont State Prison*, published in 1812, was written, he tells us in the introduction, so that he could raise enough money to go to college. The would-be undergraduate, unfortunately "without parental assistance and without any pecuniary aid," apparently saw the inmates as not entirely unlike his own future scholarly self, for they also were being educated. The prison, Russell writes, was "a school in which they have such lessons of industry, economy, and sober habits as will be of infinite service to them the remainder of their lives."

THIS VERY CONCEPT WAS SOMEthing decidedly novel, modern, and progressive in the early days of the nineteenth century. No such penological uplift theories had ever existed anywhere prior to 1790, when Philadelphia's Walnut Street prison opened. Before then there were no penitentiaries anywhere, as we understand the word. There were dungeons where people were held for trial, or convict hulks, decommissioned ships swinging at anchor, yes; but after trial and conviction a felon did not sit around eating at the cost of the taxpayer and having his or her character improved. The crime was taken out of his purse, if he had anything in that purse, or, far more likely, his skin. The whipping post, the sweatbox, the ducking stool, breaking on the rack, branding with irons heated over coals, slicing off ears, hanging, and burning at the stake were the recommended fashions of dealing with serious malefactors in all parts of the United States and elsewhere. Minor disturbances, such as bringing in hay on the Sabbath, meant standing a certain number of hours in the pillory. A 1779 law held that every Vermont town had to make and maintain a good pair of stocks.

In order to return prisoners to society as good citizens, the bylaws of the new prison decreed, it was necessary that they be treated humanely. The keeper was enjoined carefully to "guard himself against any impulse of personal resentment" and informed that even as "it cannot be necessary for him to strike his prisoners (unless in self defense), much less can it answer any good purpose to give his orders in a violent tone, or attended with oaths."

In addition to being protected against custodians' unpleasant language or behavior, inmates were generously fed. The prison maintained four or five milk cows, and the daily ration included three gills (quarter pints) of Indian or rye meal, one gill of molasses, three-quarters of a pound of beef and potatoes or six ounces of pork with half a pint of peas or beans, one ounce of bread, and coffee in the morning, "which requires it is to be properly seasoned with salt." Prisoners were shaved twice a week and got haircuts once a month. They changed their shirts once a week. Their pantaloons and spencers, "or what are more commonly called sailor jackets," were of red and green woolen cloth, and they wore leather caps.

But this wasn't some country club. Construction costs had risen above the legislatively allotted amount of $30,000 by $8,733.33; the taxpayers weren't additionally going to foot bills so that prisoners could sit around in lordly indolence. Supervised by guards carrying cutlasses at all times and forbidden ever to address their charges

save to give orders, the inmates hammered out tons of nails for sale by the state. They were also put to shoemaking. Both endeavors proved unprofitable. Many of the prisoners, an 1810 report noted, appeared "more anxious to injure than to benefit the institution" and deliberately ruined nails even as they manufactured unwearable shoes. A happy solution was found: The prison purchased a score of looms. That meant that the results of a destructive prisoner's malevolent deficiencies could easily be detected by the master weaver, and because the work was not too physically demanding, the aged and infirm could also perform while "otherwise they would do nothing but eat and sleep." However questionable their work ethic, the inmates soon were weaving thousands of yards of fine cloth annually, "from the most elegant diapers to the coarsest flannels." Shortly the Vermont State Prison at Windsor was paying its way entirely and turning over end-of-year profits of a few hundred dollars to the state.

COUNTERFEITING FELL OFF. Commitments for horse stealing increased dramatically, and many people were locked up for highway robbery. As in the cases of other new prisons springing up across the country, visiting the institution became an early-day tourist attraction for Windsor. (When Charles Dickens visited America, he said that the two things he most wished to see were Niagara Falls and Pennsylvania's Eastern State Penitentiary.) The Vermont State Prison opened its doors to the public on Thursdays, and sometimes, the would-be scholar Russell records, one thousand citizens came to see the inmates, whose uniforms shortly changed to the black-and-white-striped outfits seen in Warner Brothers movies of the 1930s. When the prisoners were moved about en masse, to dinner or out into the walled yard for fresh air, they went in lock step, each wedged close up to the man in front and with one hand on his shoulder, with all heads turned to the side, and with absolute silence enforced. Refractory men went about in chains, shackled one to another. There were lines painted down the center of the aisles in front of the five-foot-six-inch by seven-foot-six-inch cells, and coming or going, the shuffling prisoners had to stay on those lines. Anyone who really acted up got solitary confinement on bread and water for up to forty days, or streams from a fire hose pouring into his cell—the water treatment. There was recourse to the whip.

Prisoners—with names like Bildad Easton, Ebenezer Young, Ludowick Luce, Moses Woodbury, Hiram Bentorn, Levi Noble, Silas Themley, and Gideon Wheeler, old-fashioned names that seem to conjure up the image of New England in the first decades of the nineteenth century—died in confinement at Windsor by suicide, by being shot while attempting escape, by drowning in the well, of dysentery, and most often of typhoid. Their names for the most part were never on a marker or cross. If relatives claimed a body, they were free to come bear away and bury it where they wished. But prisoners usually didn't have well-off families able to take time off from work. Unclaimed inmates were interred in the prison yard without service or stone.

Some prisoners died at the end of a rope. In early days Vermont capital cases were dealt with throughout the state, but in 1839 the legislature ruled that all executions would take place in the Windsor prison yard. (The last nonyard hanging, of Archibald Bates in Bennington, was a gala affair. Some fifteen thousand spectators attended.) A temporary scaffold would be erected, the trap sprung, the dead man likely buried in the yard, and the scaffold put away until the next time.

Breach of promise, alienation of affection, murder, manslaughter, stealing a ride on a railroad train, lewd and lascivious conduct, keeping a house of ill fame, open and gross lewdness, and, by far the most common charge, being a tramp: The incarceration of felons was a growth industry. In 1830 the prison was enlarged. There would be several more enlargements, the last a century after the first.

BY THE TIME OF THE CIVIL WAR, American penological theory held that it wasn't enough merely to keep people at work and then return them to cells for twelve hours. There have always been prison-reform movements, along with periodic demands for emphasizing or doing away with capital punishment—it is a recurring matter and goes in cycles—and now public opinion called for libraries and chapels and classrooms for prisoners. That cost money, and so contract labor began, with private companies paying the state for the use of convicts. In the South that meant leasing out crews to plantation owners, who put them at clearing snake-ridden swamps, but in industry-minded New England the inmates were set to manufacturing. A big shoe factory went up at Windsor, the earlier failed attempts at the craft disregarded, and privately employed supervisors held sway over some 130 men producing footwear. Others under contract continued the weaving operation and constructed water pumps and rifle parts.

The prison was entering its eighth decade when there occurred a hanging that was to echo years later in the most celebrated event of its history. Lucy Emeline Meaker, of Burlington, put in charge of bringing up to maturity a nine-year-old girl upon payment of four hundred dollars in advance, decided to dispense with the bringing up. She gave the girl a dime's worth of strychnine in sweetened water. The child died in convulsions. Mrs. Meaker was tried and convicted.

From the very first the prison had a small complement of female inmates, but it was a matter of some moment to execute one. "It is indeed an awful thing to hang a woman," said the Burlington *Free Press*, "but still more awful is the spectacle of a woman devoid of the natural instincts and affections of her sex." The world, said the paper, would "breathe freer with the execution. Such a monster we hope the present generation will not be called upon

MARY Rogers asked the boarder and one of her employer's sons to help her kill her husband. Both thought she was joking. But another son agreed.

Mary Rogers, her baby, and the husband whose murder she would soon engineer.

to deal with again." But a member of the next generation, of the same gender as Mrs. Meaker, was to bring the Vermont State Prison at Windsor to national, even international, attention. Exactly three weeks before the child poisoner ascended the prison-yard scaffold, on March 9, 1883, Mary Callahan was born in Bennington as the product of what was termed a forced marriage.

Accounted very strange in childhood years, she had by the age of fifteen blossomed into a voluptuous and good-looking and much sought-after young woman with lustrous large dark eyes, jet black hair, and white and unblemished skin. She married Marcus Merritt Rogers, a decade older. He addressed her as "May." That was in 1898. Her first child died in infancy, and in 1901 she gave birth to a stillborn. By then she had what the newspapers would term "a well-known notorious character" that on "numerous occasions" rendered her "oblivious to her marriage vows."

At nineteen she left her husband and went to work as a maid for a family that had two sons of about her age. Soon she was observed in bed with each of the young men. The family took in a gentleman boarder, and she was seen in bed with him also. All the young men gave her little gifts. Before long she found herself in what the phraseology and newspapers of the day termed "an interesting condition." She went to a doctor and asked him to remedy the situation and when he refused flew into such a rage and emitted such threats against his life that he concluded she was deranged.

Her situation, in tone, in time, in the feel of it, is reminiscent of the upstate New York case on which Theodore Dreiser based *An American Tragedy*. She needed to be married, and soon, but not to Marcus Rogers, who would know the approaching child was not his, and whom she also found a "poor simp." But the poor simp had a life insurance policy with his May named as beneficiary. It was for five hundred dollars. With that she could, or so she hoped, elicit a wedding proposal from the gentleman boarder, for whom she seemed to have genuine feelings, set up housekeeping, and have the baby. She went about Bennington stores to price furnishings. She told the clerks she was soon to marry a notable young man of the town.

BUT FIRST CAME THE MATTER of her husband. She separately asked the gentleman boarder and one of her employer's sons if they would help her kill him. Both took her to be joking. She then turned to the second son, who said he'd do what she requested. She wrote a note to her husband asking him to meet her at Morgan's Grove, a picnic area on the banks of Bennington's Little Walloomsac River. It was August 12, 1902. "I'm awfully glad to see you again, May," Rogers said as she kissed him. The employer's son stood by.

They sat down on the ground. He'd heard she was seeing a lot of men, Rogers said, and she replied that she wished people would mind to their own business and stop telling stories. She told him to lie down and put his head in her lap, and he did so. Her girl friend, she remarked, had recently been to see Houdini perform at the Rutland Opera House, and he'd done some wonderful rope tricks. She would show him one. She tied his hands behind his back and, as he lay with his head in her lap, took from her bosom a vial filled with two ounces of chloroform, poured it onto a handkerchief, and pressed it to his face.

One sees Rogers in imagination, trying to struggle up as the employer's son springs forward, the hired horse and rig that brought him and May of a summer evening to Morgan's Grove tethered nearby, everybody in the long-dress-and-shirtwaist and buttoned-up-shoes-and-high-collar-tie fashion of the day. Rogers sustains a compound multiple depressed fracture of the skull, a severe contusion over one eye, a badly torn ear, and swollen wrists from the rope. When it is over, he is dragged to the river and put in, and she pins a note to a man's hat and ties the hat to a small elm tree nearby: *Blame no one as I have at last put an end to my miseberl life*

as my wife nows I have threatened it, everyone nows I have not eny thing or no body to live for, and so blame no one as my last request. Marcus Rogers. May, I ope you will be happy.

The year 1902 was a long while ago, and we in our modern medical-miracles fashion are inclined to smile at the era's knowledge and practices. But the most incompetent coroner of the day could not fail to find that this was no suicide. Even before an inquest was held, the young widow applied to the insurance company for payment of the five hundred dollars, but it was never given over. For when questioned by the authorities, the young man who assisted in the murder told all. He dictated and signed an eighteen-hundred-word description of what had occurred at Morgan's Grove.

Mary Callahan Rogers was tried and convicted of murder. She did not take the stand. To much of the world she seemed a cheap and promiscuous little small-town gold digger. But in the curious manner in which certain cases grip the imagination and interest and gain a wider audience than others, her situation became known far beyond Vermont's borders. The child she was carrying was stillborn, but it was not forgotten. A woman doctor in Fall River, Massachusetts, wrote President Theodore Roosevelt that the effect on Mary Rogers of being pregnant had been insufficiently emphasized. "If the mothers of the United States who have murderous impulses during these periods of peculiar stress," wrote the doctor, would simply stand up and declare themselves and admit it, saying "'I' and 'I' and 'I,' Mary Rogers would not hang."

ROOSEVELT REFUSED TO GET involved, and what was called "puerperal insanity" did not seem to Vermont's governor Charles Bell a reason to extend clemency to the murderess, though he received more than forty thousand appeals to spare her, from all parts of the country and abroad. "I wish I could save her," Governor Bell said after visiting her in her cell. Despite the wretched spelling and punctuation of the silly note meant to masquerade as her husband's last communication, Mary Rogers, to the governor and others, seemed an eminently presentable and well-spoken personage. Something about this obscure and sadly foolish creature of in-trouble impulse, so her pregnancy was described, her childhood marked by her mother's out-of-wedlock mating with her father, her youthful marriage, her eroticism certainly stemming from something other than willful flouting of Victorian morality, and, finally, perhaps, her striving for married respectability and motherhood—it gripped people. The high sheriff and his four Windsor County deputies appealed to Governor Bell not to force them to hang Mary Rogers, but the governor had his duty as he saw it and said that if she didn't hang, he would be unworthy to rest himself in Vermont ever again. As for the sheriff and his deputies: "If there are any who desire to retire from office they are at liberty to do so."

The United States has historically gone between enthusiastic endorsement of the death penalty and abhorrence of it, and the country was at the moment in the latter frame of mind. No one had been hanged in Vermont in fourteen years, and no woman since Mrs. Meaker. Nevertheless, on the afternoon of December 8, 1905, the murderess was brought down from her cell on the top story of the original building of the Vermont State Prison, from the sides of which stretched the newer extensions. She said she was pregnant again—by someone at the prison. At the railroad station telegraphers stood ready to send out the reporters' descriptions of what was to ensue. Every room in the local hotel, as well as some two dozen rooms in private homes, had been reserved weeks earlier.

The scaffold was waiting. Almost eight hundred people in Bennington had signed a petition for mercy, each saying he or she had originally been in favor of a death sentence. Thousands of letters for Mary Rogers had been delivered to the prison along with food, candy, delicacies from all over. The sheriff had decided not to use the rope that had previously served in eight hangings, and had prepared a new one.

She went up the scaffold steps, wearing pince-nez. "These are for my sister," she said. "Please see that she gets them." She took them off, and the hood and the rope were put on, and the trapdoor slammed down. Then, with what horror we can imagine, it was instantly seen that the new rope had not been tested for tension or spring and was too long. Mary Rogers shot down through the air, and the tips of her shoes touched the ground before she bounced up again. She came down, her toes reaching earth, and danced there.

UP ON THE SCAFFOLD PLATFORM the deputy sheriff, along with one of the two doctors on hand, snatched at the rope and yanked it up and awkwardly held on. For fourteen minutes Mary Rogers was swung back and forth like a pendulum, the next day's papers said.

Her accomplice spent the remaining years of Theodore Roosevelt's term, and those of Taft and Wilson, tacking on heels and soles in the Vermont State Prison shoe shop. By then the prison —the Big Joint on State Street—had been in Windsor for more than a century and was the subject of great myth. Folklore held that every second student seen in the grammar school 250 yards away, and in the high school 350 yards distant, was the offspring of an inmate, brought to Windsor by the inmate's wife so that she and the family could be near Father. This was never so. There was a cluster of inmate families, but the numbers were always small. What few there were stood out, and there were cases of children sitting in class with other children whose fathers told their fathers what to do, enforcing the order when necessary with a club or a blackjack, for the cutlasses were gone, and such children were likely to be subject to ridicule and taunting. But the legend of an encompassing inmate-family culture dominating Windsor—great masses of people whose entire attention and focus

JUST BEFORE GOING to the chair, Blair wrote his guard, "Hello Mr. Davis. . . . believe me, it has been nice knowing you. Because you have always treated me like a man."

Francis Blair, one of two prisoners charged with the murder of a town couple during an escape attempt, shows his leg shackle in 1952.

was the Joint, children growing up in the shadow of Daddy's place of imprisonment—was all bosh.

In fact the prison was simply there, part of the landscape. Cells with barred windows facing the street were highly prized, for they offered a view of the passing world as Windsor grew and houses and pedestrians and automobiles replaced the woods. But if the inmates gazed out, Windsor did not stare back. No one much noticed the prison, or the prison farm, some four miles away on land largely purchased from the family of William M. Evarts, Andrew Johnson's main defense attorney in his impeachment trial. Trusted inmates there cared for a herd of more than two hundred Holsteins and fourteen hundred chickens and a large hoggery supplying hospitals, homes for the retarded, and reform schools, whose inmates all too often, reform or no, would soon be at the Joint. There were large inmate-maintained gardens adjoining the prison, outside its walls, with greenhouses, canneries, and potato cellars. It all was simply part of the Windsor scene.

In those years the inmate magazine, *The Monitor*, was rather elegantly done up on glossy paper. It carried inspirational poetry, details on activities within the walls, and exchange items from other prisons' publications. The 1915 Memorial Day observances included a concert by the prison band in which "Tipperary," "America," and "a few other numbers" followed the opening piece, "a snappy march." Athletic events followed: the running broad jump, potato race, three-legged race, running high jump, and sack and barrel races. The prizes included tobacco contributed by Windsor citizens grateful for the inmates' work in town cleaning streets and installing plants and flowers along them, plus Christmas decorations. For two decades the annual minstrel show was a popular event open to the public and presented for three nights in the mess hall, with skits and the band, which usually had a first and second violin, a clarinet, a tuba, first, second, and third trumpets, a saxophone, drums, and a piano. Baseball was always big in the prison, with several teams competing in the inmate league. The size of the yard did not permit use of a regulation hardball—home runs would too easily be hit out into that other world of freedom, with the ball probably lost—so a soft one was used. The prison's all-star team played against the fire department and Goodyear and the Cone Automatic Machine Tools Company. There were no away games.

THE LAST HANGING WAS IN THE first month of 1914, for the murder by an Englishman of a young Essex Junction girl. He shot her nine times. After the execution a letter for him came in. The prison officials opened it. It was from his mother in Northampton: *Arthur, you told me something was to happen on January 2, but I don't understand what you meant.* Future executions would be by electric chair.

The last prison extensions went up in 1928, raising the capacity to 352 inmates, whose incarceration provided Windsor with more than a hundred jobs plus large in-town purchases of goods. In addition to shoes, inmates made highway guardrails, furniture, mattresses, and the traditional license plates. By then the prison had electricity, and each cell contained an eight-candlepower bulb and a flush toilet.

The Second World War came and went. Inmates gave to the blood drives of the period. A decade after Japan's surrender there was an escape that called forth the biggest manhunt in the history of New England. A large delivery truck had come in through the opened metal doors of the entranceway. The driver stepped out. He left the keys in the ignition.

Two inmates saw their chance. They gunned the truck at the closing metal doors, crashed through, then crashed through a second metal gate. The man in the guard tower had a rifle and a shotgun, but he could not be sure the prisoners didn't have another guard with them as hostage and so held his fire. The prisoners sped away, ditched the truck, and broke into the home of

a sleeping couple. The man got out of bed to see what the noise was and was hit with a three-foot length of iron pipe the escapees had picked up. He staggered out of his home. The two men stove in his wife's head with the pipe and a metal file.

A POSSE OF TWO HUNDRED POlice, prison employees, and volunteers searched the countryside, found the men hiding in some woods, and flushed them out with a fusillade of shots. One was a hulking brute serving a term for murder and always regarded as dangerous. The other, Francis Blair, was the product of a Dickensian childhood that saw him brought up in an orphanage after his mother had been consigned to a mental institution. He had been committed for grand larceny and nighttime breaking and entering. The men went on trial individually.

The court proceedings were held in Woodstock. The guard, or "custodial officer," as the official job description had it, who each day supervised Blair's trip to his trial and back, was Glen Davis. The salt of the earth is not uniformly utilized in the construction of prison guards, but Davis was notable for being upright, honest, and strong, a listener to and what is now called a role model for many of the men he normally oversaw in the license plate shop, among whom had been the man Davis escorted each day to the courtroom. During the lunch breaks he took Blair to a Woodstock restaurant. The prisoner wore heavy shackles and a special boot of tremendous weight.

The verdicts were "guilty." Four hours before he went to the electric chair Blair wrote:

Feb. 8, 1954

Hello Mr. Davis
Greetings,

I am happy to have the opportunity to write you this last letter before I leave the World.

And believe me, it has been nice knowing you. Because you have always treated me like a man.

And I appreciate it very much. Say, Mr. Davis, how about a Pork Chop Dinner. That always was my favorite dish which I am sure you know about. When you took me to Woodstock, that was my favorite meal.

Well, I want to wish you all the Happiness in the World. And all the success.

And may your family have much Happiness. I will end for now so keep your chin up.

Good Bye and Good Luck.

Your Friend,
Francis H. Blair

At Blair's request, Davis was present at the execution. "It was the hardest thing I have ever had to do," he said. Unclaimed prisoners were no longer being put in unmarked graves in the yard, so Francis Blair lies in the prison cemetery. He was thirty-one.

THOMAS MICHAEL COXON lived across the street from the Vermont State Prison for part of his youth. His father was deputy warden, the second-in-command. The family had milk and vegetables from the farm and gardens and an inmate houseman who cooked and cleaned. Mike's brother Matthew was baby-sat by convicts, and Mike played one-on-one basketball with them in his back yard and walked across the street to the prison for haircuts.

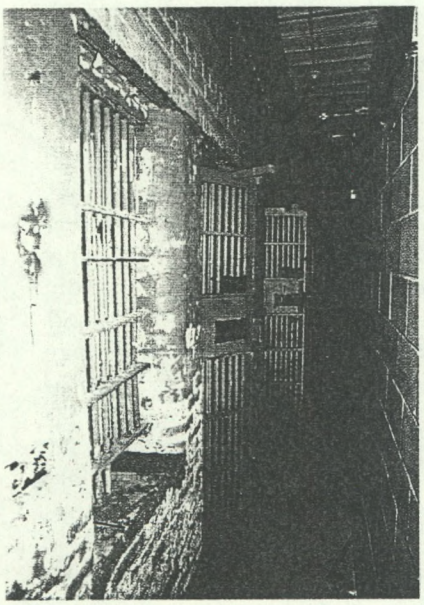
He went away to college, graduated, got a master's in psychology, worked on planning and administration in the state corrections department, and returned to Windsor to be director of treatment and training at the prison. It was the worst period in American penological history, New York's bloody Attica its symbol. All over the country the social turmoil of the late sixties and early seventies found expression in the prisons. There was tremendous unrest, with the establishment of prisoners' rights groups, constant lawsuits, rebellion unknown to previous generations, and with society's increased turn to violence on the outside mirrored behind prison walls in knives being held to hostages' throats. It was so everywhere. In Windsor college radicals came to parade the streets, chanting, "Put the pigs in the pokey and the people on the streets!"

Outfitted as pigs dragging fellow demonstrators attired as prisoners in stripes through Windsor's main thoroughfare, militants shouted, "Jail the rich! Free the poor!" From the prison came the sound of convicts banging on the bars, on one occasion for three days, off and on. There were constant riots in the cellblocks, stabbings, assaults, fires. A guard was killed. Hostages were seized. There were escapes. Hurrying to the prison in response to a screaming siren, Mike Coxon found himself listening to the shouts of convicts running in the opposite direction. He thought of his wife alone with the kids at home a stone's throw away, reassured himself that the fleeing inmates were undoubtedly going to get out of town as swiftly as possible, and went on. Lawsuits poured down: allegations of improper behavior by guards and officials, violation of prisoners' rights, declarations that life in the prison was intolerable. The employee turnover was awful.

And Windsor began to turn against the Big Joint on State Street. Legislative rumblings that this ancient and antiquated relic ought to be done away with were nothing new. But they had always been voiced in Montpelier, the capital. Now such sentiments began to be heard in Windsor, the prison's natural constituency, its home. The town is not large, some thirty-seven hundred people, and it was deeply affected by a fierce 1973 disturbance that saw the state police called in. More than fifty of them, with helmets, rifles, riot batons, shields, shotguns, and gas canisters, lined up in the streets around the prison, a couple of football fields' distance from where children on the way to school were usually found. Calling in the state police is an open admission of lost control. No one in Windsor failed to take note of that.

The signposts for what was coming can be clearly marked. Resolutions to look into modernizing the prison were made in the legislature, but every study showed that the expense would be as-

YET, THE prison had not been entirely desolate. For some it had been a sort of home. That was what the baseball scoreboard said along with "visitors": HOME.



Beneath the refurbished prison lie the old, abandoned cells. Condominium residents use them for storage space.

tronomical for a small state where taxpayer money has never been thrown around. There were more and more disturbances, violence, guard breakdowns and resignations, fires, students proclaiming their identification with the imprisoned—and there was the application for parole made for a particular prisoner.

To all who knew him the inmate in question seemed an intensely dangerous man. Most guards may not be formally educated in the psychology or pathology of violence, but it is their stock-in-trade to know about it. Here, they saw, was danger. One day in his cell in the oldest part of the prison, in the basement, the prisoner poured lighter fluid over himself and lit a match. A brave and determined guard rushed in and saved him. The matter came to the attention of a Windsor minister and his wife. It seemed to them that kindness might effect something here. They asked that the prisoner be paroled in their custody.

Every employee at the prison was utterly against the idea. But while to the public the parole board and the prison authorities seem two arms of a single body, they are in fact totally independent of each other. The parole board voted affirmatively. Mike Coxon called the area superior of the minister and begged him to tell his subordinate not to take in the prisoner. He told the bishop that the minister and his wife had neither the knowledge nor the experience to deal with such a person. The bishop would not be moved. Let the erring sinner be freed and helped. "We'll hear about this sooner rather than later," Coxon said when he saw it was no use going on.

The prisoner went to live with the minister and his wife, and in a little while he entered the home of a Windsor family whose nine-year-old son was being baby-sat by his seventeen-year-old aunt. He raped the teenager. He stabbed the child to death. Coxon was home in bed when Windsor's police chief called with the news. "That's the end of the prison," Coxon told himself when he hung up.

On August 7, 1975, Windsor Prison was officially closed. For months prisoners singly and in groups had been trucked away to half a dozen decentralized Vermont institutions, one of them the former prison farm turned into a minimum-security facility, where Coxon later was appointed superintendent. The most dangerous inmates were sent on contract to tough federal places. The traffic had gone the other way in the past, when prisoners from elsewhere had sometimes been hidden away in remote Windsor, their identities unknown to their new fellow prisoners along with their backgrounds: mob informers, former policemen who had committed crimes, men known to have revealed escape plans or drug smuggling in their former places. Gov. Thomas P. Salmon officiated at the closing ceremonies, and many in the crowd of four hundred wore T-shirts emblazoned with "Windsor State Prison, 1809–1975."

OF COURSE THE PRISON WAS completely antiquated, with cells far smaller than national standards allow, and there was truth in what legislative investigators said about it: that to enter it was "like stepping back into the 15th century," that it was "this monstrosity from the past" defying restoration. "The complex," said an expert from the state health department, is "ancient, decaying, depressing. . . . The overall atmosphere is one of gloom, frustration, isolation, and hopelessness." But on the day it officially shut there were those, Mike Coxon among them, who felt a certain sadness. What a world of pain and suffering these walls had enclosed, day in and day out and every day for long and terrible years. Who had come there? People who failed their schools, their families, their communities, themselves most of all. Many of them, Coxon knew, were the children of men his father had known in his days as deputy warden, the names of thirty years before coming back, some following not only father but grandfather.

And yet, he thought, walking the eerily empty and quiet halls from

BOTH PAGES PHOTOGRAPHS BY A. J. MARRO

which doors had been taken off their hinges and locks made inoperative, and plumbing, air ducts, and bulletproof glass sent off to other state institutions, the prison had not been entirely a desolate, degenerate place. For some of the inmates it had been a home of a sort. That was what the little baseball scoreboard said along with "visitors": HOME. Very often the guards and employees were the only people who cared anything, anything at all, for certain men; no one visited, no one sent gifts. Christmases were well done, with cookies and entertainment. Men learned, some of them, to do fine wood-carving. Some guards, as kindly as the job permitted, were the best people many of the prisoners had ever known. Anyway, it was all over now. One hundred and sixty-six years.

The prison in its present incarnation, as Olde Windsor Village, would have astonished the generations of convicts who lie beneath its well-kept lawns.

Entirely silent and deserted, the great building squatted in the center of Windsor. Had it been located in, say, the sixteenth arrondissement of Paris, or along New York's Park Avenue in the Sixties, demolition crews would have been on the job. But spend God knows how much to provide little Windsor with an empty space? No one in the world was going to do that. A New Jersey man suggested making the building into a restaurant-disco to be called The Cell Block, with waiters dressed in black and white stripes. Columbia Pictures was interested in dynamiting a portion for an escape scene in a movie. Neither plan worked out.

Rated as excess property of the state of Vermont, the place had by law to be advertised for sale. The official in charge of such matters announced that sealed bids would be accepted. He did not expect any. "Did you ever try to sell a house of three hundred rooms with bars on the windows?" he asked.

But the ad in *The New England Real Estate Journal* did attract the attention of one reader. He was sixteen years old, the office boy for a Boston lawyer interested in renovation projects. The young man directed his boss's attention to it. The boss got in touch with the president of the Peabody Construction Company and Peabody Properties, in Braintree, Massachusetts. "I'm doing something crazy," he said. "Would you like to be my partner?"

They had no idea of what to offer—there was little of precedence to guide them—but after complicated reasoning decided on $27,050, just $2,950 less than what the legislature had allocated for construction in 1807. They sent the office boy with a 10 percent–down check to file their bid. He submitted it, the offer was accepted, and the kid went home with the news wearing his new "Windsor State Prison 1809–1975" T-shirt.

"*The developers of Olde Windsor Village have fashioned, from an old Vermont prison, one of the loveliest, most convenient apartment communities in New England. The classic Federalist architecture of the original buildings has been carefully preserved. What was originally the prison yard is now a beautifully landscaped courtyard garden. The complex offers a wide selection of floor plans, both one- and two-bedroom, and a limited number of specially equipped handicapped units are available. Surrounded by the Green Mountains of Vermont, Olde Windsor Village is truly one of the most beautifully unique apartment communities in New England. Care-free kitchen with refrigerator and electric range. Plush pile carpeting. Laundry rooms. Shades and drapery rods included.*"

Everything inside the massive buildings above the basement was gutted, but some old cells from the 1870s are intact down in the depths, used now for storage, the barred doors still in place. An empty guard tower looks down on the entranceway through whose vanished metal doors Francis Blair and his fellow escapee crashed the truck more than forty years ago. The window of the room in which Mary Rogers spent her last night, ninety years gone now, can instantly be picked out from old photographs, and the location of the scaffold in the yard. Where she danced on the ground old people now stroll, for most of the tenants are retirees helped with their rent by a HUD subsidy. They can see the mountains, for a portion of the great wall was knocked down to open up the view. One wing of Olde Windsor Village is reserved for low-income families. Some of the oldsters like having kids around; some grumble at the noise they make playing ball or building snowmen as they run over the lawn where the bodies of the unclaimed convicts lie below. ★

Gene Smith is currently working on a biography of Gen. John J. Pershing.

HISTORICAL

Roads on either side of the Windsor Correctional facility were laid out in the late 17ØØs (1786 Hunt Road and 1794 County Road).

Town highway numbers 9, 1Ø and 12 served the numerous farms which the State bought up in the late 18ØØs through the early 19ØØs to form what is now the Windsor Correctional Facility. The farms purchased were listed by the Windsor Chronicles as belonging to the families Chase, Dana, Hunter, Russell, Spencer, and also three tracts of Evarts land and Parker pasture.

The first "prison farm" was started in 1916 when 18 inmates were brought up under the supervision of a husband and wife team.

The oldest existing facility was built in 1937 to 1941, a concrete block and brick veneer dormitory. An interesting footnote here is that the cement blocks were manufactured on location. The machine used is still stored in the equipment barn.

Town highway number 9 is currently listed as a class four town road to the dam. This road at one time went beyond the dam in a northwesterly direction crossing over into West Windsor.

Town highway number 12 beginning at the County Road going through the Windsor Correctional Facility and joining highway 1Ø near the junction of town highway 9 was discontinued July 9, 1982 at the request of the State of Vermont and is now maintained by the State.

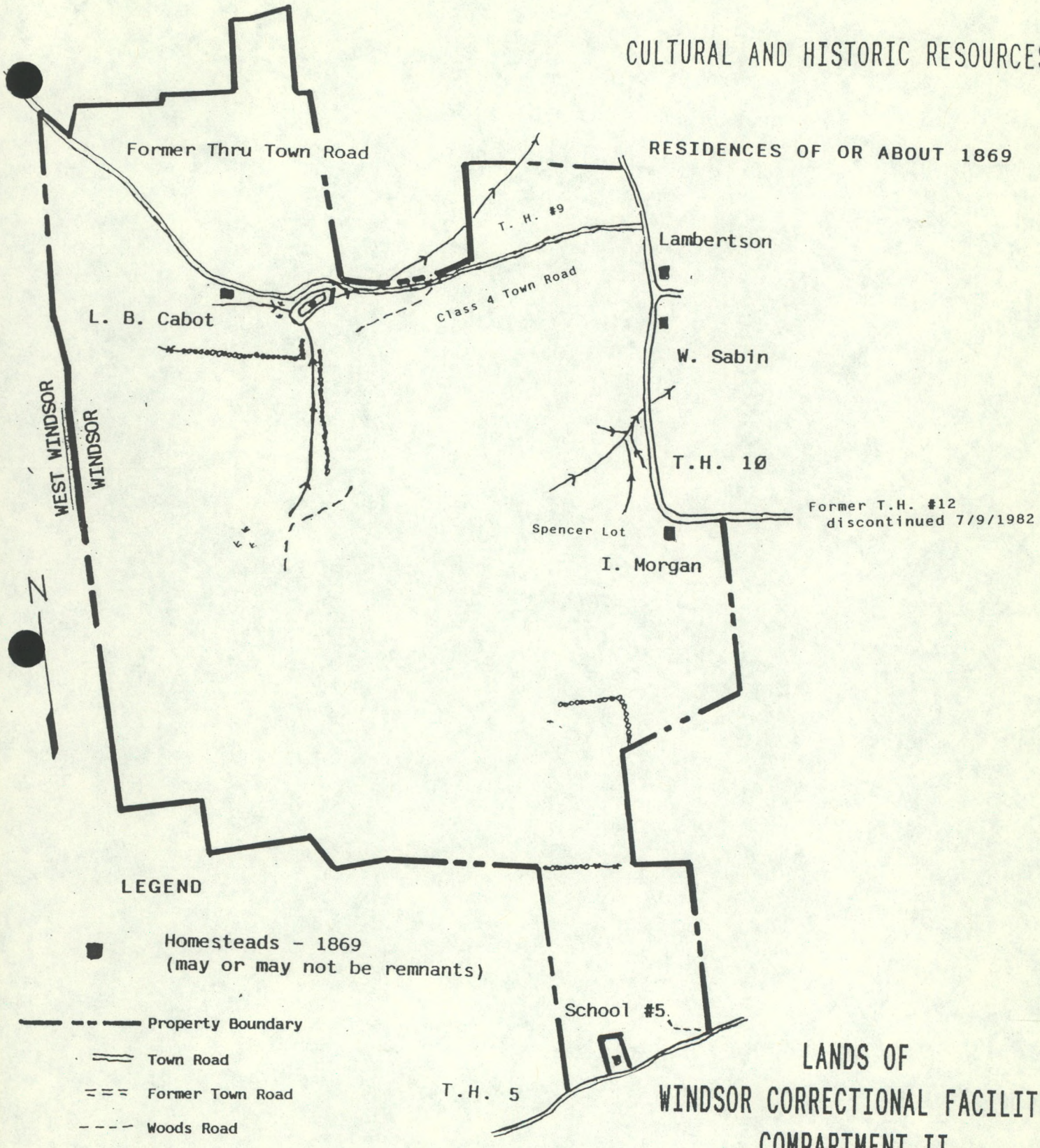
Town highway 1Ø (locally known as Marton Road) connected the Hunt Road with the County Road, passes through the property and now serves as the compartment boundary in this management plan. This road is a class three town highway.

The Beers Atlas published in 1869 displays six residences on the property. It would be the author's guess that three of these residences still existed as late as 1959. Those would be the Herdsmen's house and the two houses formerly occupied by Correctional staff either side of the junction of former town highway 12 and Marton Road. Neither of these latter two residences exist today. There appears to have been a residence at the entrance to the Spencer lot, one above the dam and one other near the former "Piggery".

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

All known cultural or historical artifacts, i.e. stone walls, cellar holes, stone foundations, which are known will be protected. Foundations, cellar holes, etc. which are located or ~~reorganized~~ recognized in the future will be located on the following map and offered such protection.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

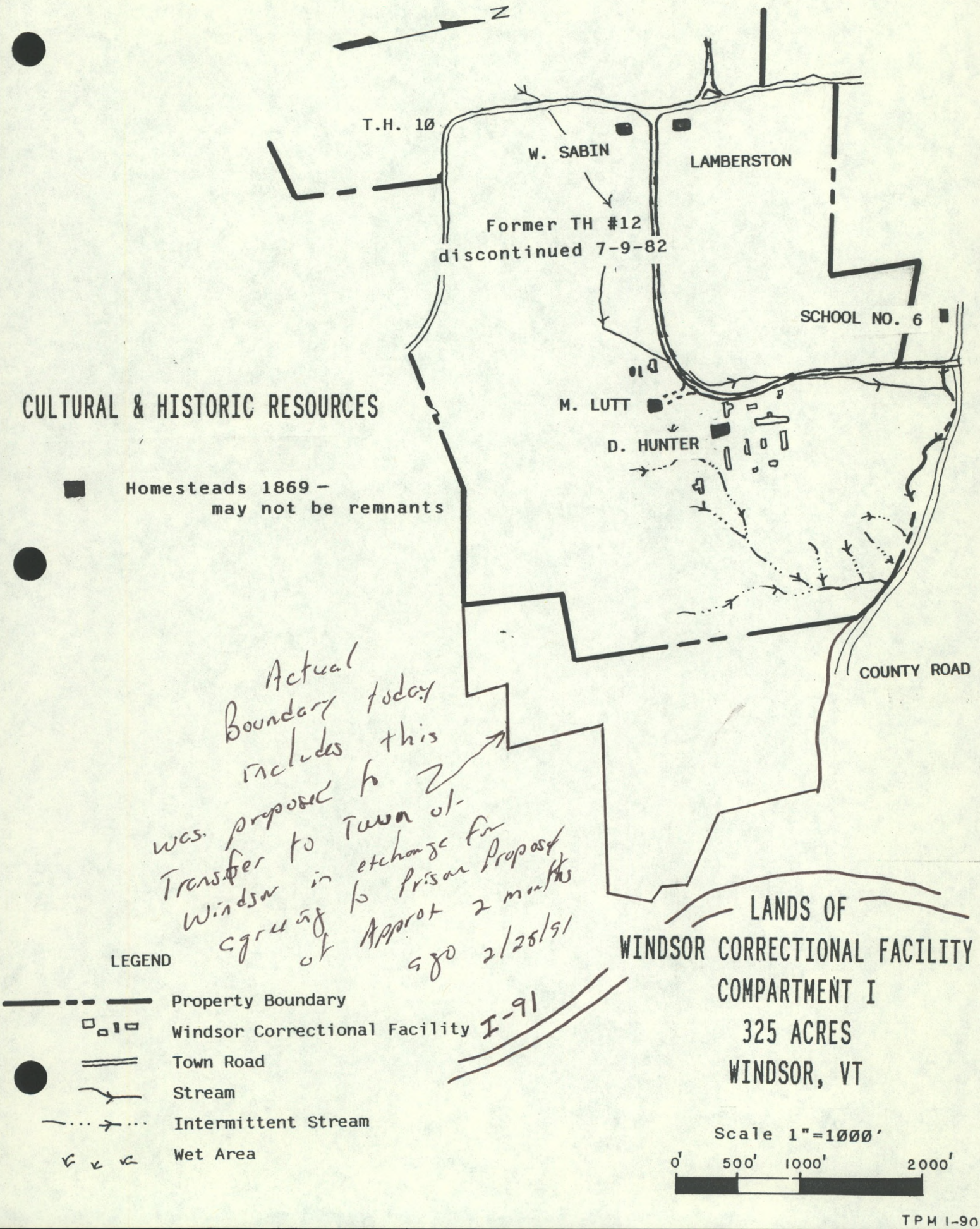


LANDS OF
WINDSOR CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
COMPARTMENT II
503 ACRES
WINDSOR, VT

SCALE 1" = 1000'

0 500' 1000' 2000'

TPM 1-90


N
T.H. 10
W. SABIN
LAMBERSTON
Former TH #12
discontinued 7-9-82
SCHOOL NO. 6
M. LUTT
D. HUNTER
COUNTY ROAD
CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES
Homesteads 1869 –
may not be remnants
Actual Boundary today includes this was proposed to Transfer to Town of Windsor in exchange for agreeing to Prison Proposal or Approx 2 months ago 2/25/91
LEGEND
Property Boundary
Windsor Correctional Facility
Town Road
Stream
Intermittent Stream
Wet Area
I-91
LANDS OF
WINDSOR CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
COMPARTMENT I
325 ACRES
WINDSOR, VT
Scale 1"=1000'
0'
500'
1000'
2000'

TPM 1-90

BEERS ATLAS

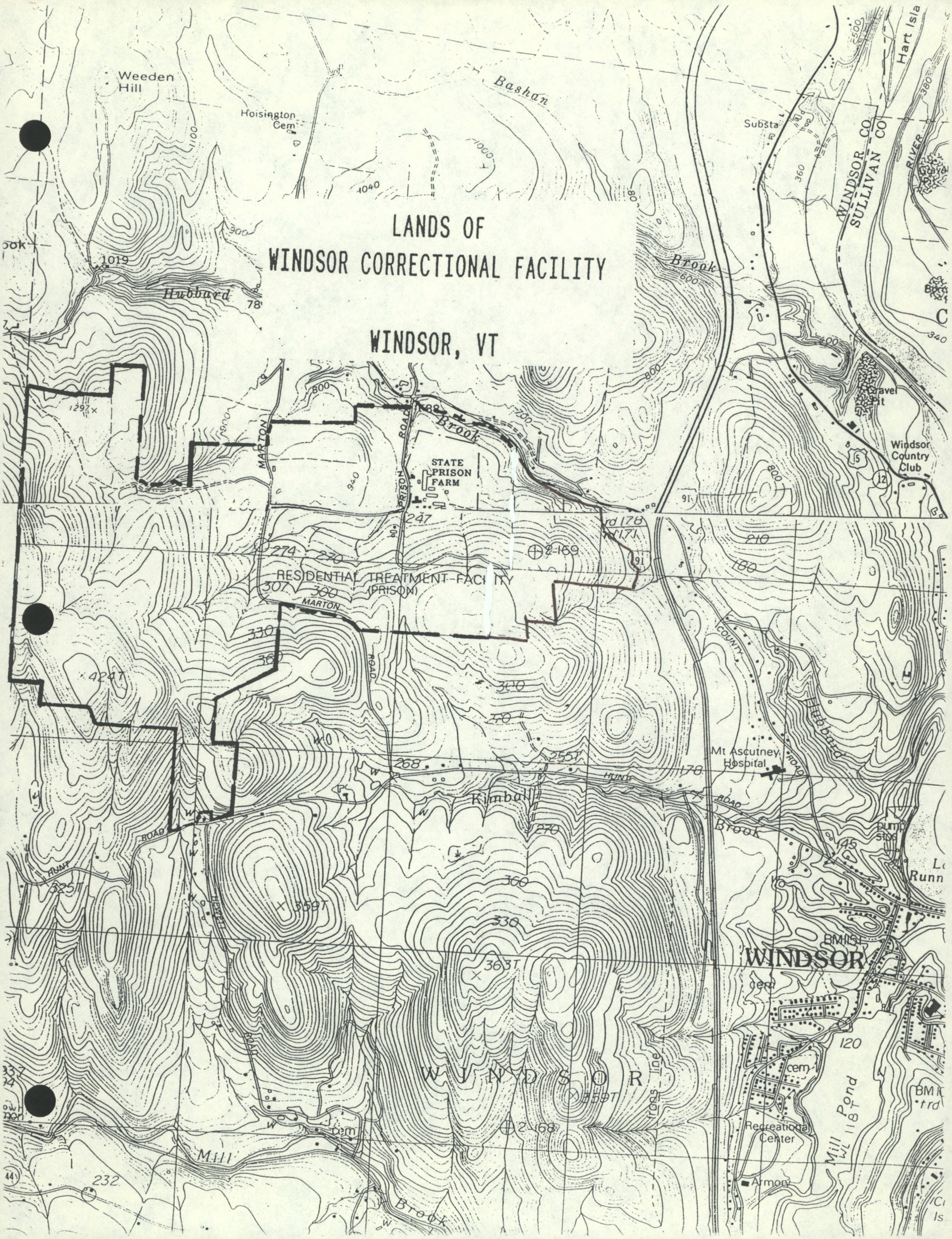
PUBLISHED 1869

WINDSOR

Scale 1½ Inches to the Mile

LANDS OF WINDSOR CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

WINDSOR, VT



ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH

On the 28th day of May, 1836, a group of thirty-seven men held a meeting in the village of Windsor, for the purpose of forming a definite religious association. This resulted in the First Unitarian Society. From the very first there was a strong movement for the erection of a Church building. Meanwhile, meetings were being held in the Court House.

The new Unitarian Meeting House was dedicated on December 9th, 1846. Rev Dr. A. A. Livermore of Keene, N. H., preached the dedication sermon. From the Vermont Journal of December 9th, 1846, the following is quoted:

> "The house is a beautiful one—situated on one of the pleasantest spots in the village. The interior is painted in Fresco, in the Gothic order, representing a dome thirty-five feet in diameter, raised slightly in the centre, surmounted with a circular ornamental design; at the sides of the ceiling are two series of Gothic panels extending across the house; the whole design resting on a Gothic cornice two feet, eight inches deep, running entirely around the house. The walls are colored plain. The recess behind the pulpit is a neat Gothic design of arches and sunken panels; at the right and left of the recess, in raised letters on shields about three by four feet, are the following selections of scripture: 'And this is the life eternal, to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself.', the former being on the right hand shield and the latter on the left. The whole painting, costing about three hundred dollars, being executed by Mr. Swain, of Saratoga Springs, N.Y. The furniture of the house is very neat and exhibits an excellent taste on the part of those who had the getting up of it."

The land on which the building stands was given by the Hubbard Brothers, who lived on either side of the site. A Mr. Olmstead of East Hartford, Conn., was

interested enough in the project to donate the bell.

It is of interest to note that other groups than the Unitarians have held meetings in this Church. The Baptists were granted the use of the building while their own was closed for repairs in 1860, and about 1873 the Methodist Society rented and occupied this Church.

In the late 1890's, the time had come when the building needed repairs. It was moved back twelve feet and raised several feet to make room for a vestry. It was at this time that the stained glass windows were installed and gas lights were added. These gas lights were replaced by electric lights in the early 1900's. The vestry was considered to have made possible a much greater use of the Church for social activities, which were becoming more and more a part of Church life. On Sept. 15th, 1899, the building was rededicated.

For some time the building had been painted a rather drab and nondescript color in an effort to combat the heavy smoke from the trains running so close to the rear of the Church. In 1939 this was replaced with the white paint which adds so much to the appearance of the Church today. Some other renovating was done at this time but no major changes were made. Quite recently new landscaping has added to the attractiveness of the building.

May this First Unitarian Church which has served the community so well for over a hundred years, continue its usefulness for many more. May it also always be considered a definite addition to the community in its appearance as well as in its service.

MARGARET G. FOSTER

RACHEL S. HARLOW METHODIST CHURCH

Although the Methodist Church edifice was not erected until 1895, Methodism has been a part of the religious life of Windsor since 1866. In that year the first Methodist service was held on Buena Vista, at the home of L. B. Hiland, with nine persons present; Mrs. Hiland was already a Methodist, and her husband was the first convert in Windsor. The first settled pastor was appointed to serve the Windsor Church two years later, in 1868.

Church services were held in the Unitarian Church and in Amsden Hall on Depot Avenue until the old Town Hall, later known as Carleton Hall, was purchased in the early 1890's and fitted for church services. During its use as a Methodist sanctuary it was known as "The Bethel."

In 1893 a clause in the will of Mrs. Rachel S. Harlow designated that "the sum of $10,000" be given "for the purpose of providing a lot and church building in said village of Windsor for the use and benefit as a house of religious worship of said Methodist Episcopal Church of Windsor, Vermont." Land on the corner of Main and Durkee Streets was purchased, the building was erected in 1895, and was dedicated with fitting ceremonies on Tuesday, February 4, 1896.

The attractive, well-proportioned brick building has two wooden porticoes at the front; the open belfry above the south entrance is topped by a tall slated spire, and a similar spire of lower height tops the north entrance. Between the two entrances is a series of four memorial windows, above which is a beautiful rose window. The north side of the church is lighted by seven memorial windows of Gothic design, and the south side by similar leaded stained glass windows.

The church auditorium seats approximately 250 people, with room for fifty more chairs in the vestibule at the rear. Over this large vestibule a gallery provides extra seating space, but is now used for Sunday School classes. In 1941, a bequest in the will of Mrs. Lucy Hammond made possible the purchase of an electric organ,

which was dedicated in 1946, during the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the dedication of the church.

In the basement the original plan housed two large wood or coal burning furnaces, plenty of storage space for fuel, a kitchen, dining-room and two smaller rooms. Since oil has come into use, the vestry has been twice remodelled—first to make a larger dining-room, and later to add a delightful modern Sunday School room for the kindergarten class.

In 1901 land north of the church was acquired and a parsonage built. This home for the pastor and his family contains eight rooms and bath, and has a garden-plot and garage at the rear.

Although the union of the three great branches of Methodism (the Methodist Episcopal Church; the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and the Methodist Protestant Church) has automatically changed the name of the Windsor Church to "Methodist," the granite marker above the rose window will remain "Rachel S. Harlow Methodist Episcopal Church" as long as the building stands. To its doors have come and through its doors have passed several generations of loyal, ardent Christians who have held positions of trust and responsibility in the church, in the town and in the world. These doors continue to swing open to welcome all the men, women and children who may desire to enter in the present and in the future.

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Like another church in the community and numerous ones throughout the state, The First Baptist Church was recently blessed with a fine new edifice but nevertheless possesses somewhat of an ancient beginning, having been organized on December 3, 1785. Time and space would not permit the printing of all that has transpired since that long ago day when the Baptist worshipped in their wood-structure church located near the Trafton Hoisington farm in the west part of town.

Broadly speaking the activities or progress of the church includes four different eras with as many places of worship. The first, the one above mentioned, goes back to March 1779, some six years before the actual organizing as a group or society. During this era the church continued in a small way but received considerable impetus in 1813 when one Gen. Abner Forbes left the membership of the Congregational Church and united with the Baptist. We are told that his wealth and influence added greatly to its progress.

The frame of the old church which stood near the Hoisington farm was later taken down and erected on Main Street in Windsor where the Dana Coy house now stands. Still later it was moved to the north side of Durkee Street where it stands today, known as the Murray house.

The second era with a duration of some sixty years (1813 - 1873) found the membership of the church worshipping in their new brick meetinghouse erected on a commanding site on the grounds which in later years became the properity of Hon. Wm. M. Evarts.

Era number three had its beginning in 1874 with the completion of a new church on the corner of Main and River Streets where the First National Store now stands. The old brick meeting-house had reached a stage which called for extensive repairs and the idea of building a new one seems to have originated by Rev. S. M. Whiting who became pastor in 1869. Three years of faithful effort to inspire his brethren with his views probably seemed futile for when he closed his labors in 1872 no action had been taken in regard to building.

His successor, Rev. A. H. Ball, who came the following year reaped the fruits of Rev. Mr. Whiting's labors, finding the members ready for action upon his arrival. The work was commenced in 1873 and completed the following year. A generous gift of Dr. Ripley Clark did much to make this enterprise a reality and encouraged the smaller offerings of many others. The old brick church was sold to Hon. Wm. M. Evarts for $5000, and later the bell was bought back for $200, and again put to use. Mr. Evarts, who has many well known descendants, is remembered from history and in political circles as a former Cabinet member and as the lawyer who successfully defended Pres. Andrew Johnson in 1868 during impeachment proceedings instituted in the radical House of Representatives.

This era seems to have reached a turning point with a new one in the making when the disastrous hurricane of September 1938 arrived at Windsor. The church steeple and roof were badly damaged and although partially repaired was not considered too safe for use and was very expensive to heat during the winter months and the membership slowly but earnestly began contemplating another building project.

For a time services were held at the State Street School and from time to time other churches in town offered their facilities to the members of the church. The Windsor Theatre also offered the use of the theatre for morning services and Sunday school.

The church sold its property to Gibson Motors and on April 30, 1942 purchased their present site from the Allen W. Evarts Estate. Work on the new brick church was rapidly under way with the pastor, Rev. Cecil Petrie, and many of the members doing much of the planning and labor. Rev. Mr. Petrie delivered his last sermon on August 1, 1943, having resigned to accept a commission as Chaplain in the U. S. Army. He was replaced on October 17, 1943, by Rev. Laurence J. Vincent who likewise took a most active part in the building program and continued to serve as pastor for two years after its completion.

Rev. Mr. Vincent resigned on August 15, 1947, to accept similar work in Illinois and was replaced on September 21, 1947, by Rev. Lewis S. Pratt who came with Mrs. Pratt and their daughter Elizabeth from Paris, Maine. Rev. and Mrs. Pratt,formerly on Missionary duty, and well experienced in this work have been most active in this field of endeavor since coming here.

After lengthly planning, a cornerstone laying service took place on October 14, 1951. An all day affair, the cornerstone was laid in place at the afternoon services by Rev. Homer Bryant, Executive Secretary of the Vermont Baptist State Convention and by the Trustees of the church. The church cleck prepared and placed in a glass container within the cornerstone numerous documents and items pertaining to the history of the church. Among these were a list of church members and officers as of that date, a list of members in 1802, a printed copy of the program of the entire activities of the day, a copy of the Deed of the land on which the new church is erected, the signatures of all persons attending the afternoon services and other items too numerous to make mention. A fine address was delivered by Dr. Frank T. Littorin, Professor of Pastoral Theology at Gordon Divinity School, Boston Mass.

We, as a church, feel grateful at this time, not only for the prosperity that has been our good fortune over the years but for the Lord's blessing which enables us to worship in a new and beautiful sanctuary made suitable for His service. We concede with humble gratitude this rich heritage that is ours and likewise feel its need in a present day world of wars and worries. We feel that today we are living in an hour of vital interest to every thoughtful person; one that is fraught with inviting opportunities but sobering responsibilities. Tremendous problems, universal in scope, engage the minds of men and nations view the trend of events with grave concern. It is indeed a momentous hour in the history of the world. We feel that in this world crisis the Christian church has an important God-given task to perform and her moral and spiritual leadership is needed to guide humanity out of the present bewildering confusion and suffering.

Herbert C. Daigneault, Sr.

Church Clerk

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A Protestant Episcopal parish was organized in Windsor on November 25, 1816. The following month, 30 persons were baptized. This was one of the first parishes of the Episcopal Church to be organized in Vermont and in fact was organized some years before the creation of a separate diocese of Vermont. For several years, the parish was ministered to by a lay reader except when occasionally the rector of some other parish visited Windsor.

In April 1819, the parish voted to build a church. Alexander Parris, a Boston architect, was employed and his plans presented to the vestry some time in 1820. On August 22, 1820, the cornerstone was laid and a little over two years later, on November 20, 1822, the Church was consecrated by Bishop Griswold, the first Bishop of the Eastern Diocese. The first rector of the parish, the Rev. George Leonard, was installed the following day. The land on which the church was built was given by Jonathan Hubbard and Erastus Torrey.

Since its founding, many gifts and memorials have been made to the Church. The stained glass window in the chancel was given in memory of two children of Isaac Redfield, for many years a resident of Windsor and later to become the most famous chief justice of the Supreme Court of Vermont. The window depicting King David is in memory of members of the Sabin family. The other windows of colored glass were given by William M. Evarts in 1862, while the altar and silver candlesticks and cross were given by his descendants in 1943 on the centennial of his marriage in St. Paul's to Helen M. Wardner of Windsor. The brass lectern is a memorial to Rev. Malcolm Douglas, rector from 1856 to 1869.

In 1948, it was found that the timbers of the belfry were rotting and it became necessary to reconstruct it. This was done at a cost in dollars of more than half the original cost of building the entire church.

In 1953, the interior was redecorated and a new lighting system installed.

The Church stands at the top of Common Hill, in the center of the Village. Its serene beauty has a dignity and strength that has given support and comfort to many of the generations that have come and gone since it was consecrated.

THE WINDSOR HOUSE

The original building was known as the Pettes Coffee House and was located on land owned by Stephen Conant and purchased from him by Capt. Joseph Pettes in 1800. Conant previously acquired the land from Caleb Tuttle who, it would appear, was a land agent or speculator. The old records show that Conant was approbated as tavern keeper in 1795 so it is possible that he might have first operated the coffee house and later leased it to Pettes. At any rate, the building was destroyed by fire sometime in 1800 as Pettes' deed reads — "land lately covered by the shop consumed by fire, the chamber of which was occupied by Conant and Mills as a saddler shop —." The lot contained one and one-quarter acres.

In 1801 Capt. Pettes' new coffeee house was completed and open to the public. It remained in his name until his death in 1811 when the property went to his heirs, John and Frederick Pettes. The Grand List of 1827 gives the assessment as $3,300 — a goodly sum at that time. According to old reports, it was on the balcony of the Pettes Coffee House that Marquis Lafayette was presented to Cornelius Van Ness, Governer of Vermont, and the assembled crowd, by Colonel Jesse Lull in 1825.

In the By Laws and Records of the Windsor Fire Company dated March 6, 1836 appears the following report

"Company met at a fire the burning of Pettes Coffee House, and performed hard service. Roll call omitted by order of the captain, and the absence of the clerk."

Frederick Pettes died in 1838 and the administrator of his estate, Jabez Sargeant, deeded in September, 1839, to Charles Hopkins, "three undivided fourth parts of the Tavern lot on which the Windsor House now stands . . ." This deed was to be held in trust for a group of men, namely John Skinner, John Pettes, Jabez Sargeant, William Trask and J. and R. Merrifield, who had organized a co-partnership for the purpose of the "erection and keeping of the said Tavern House." Whether the building was completely destroyed in the 1836 fire, it is difficult to say but it is during this period that the name "Windsor House" appears for the first time.

All the members of the co-partnership eventually quit-claimed their interest to Jehiel Simonds over a period of a few years. The hotel remained in the Simonds family until 1913. During those years it had been leased to various persons including Robert Coffey, A. P. Pollard, and F. H. Chester. The premises were sold in 1913 to George E. Grindley who, in turn, sold to the Windsor Machine Company in 1914.

In 1916 the Windsor Machine Company sold the hotel to the National Acme Company. The place was remodeled at this time and various changes made, and the hotel became the center for many social activities.

1925 the National Acme Company sold to the present owner, Mr. Lewis Springer. Mr. Springer, too, has made many changes over the years, modernizing the plumbing, heating and wiring of the building, and redecorating the rooms for the comfort of his guests of whom there have been many great and "near" great thru the years.

KATHERINE E. CONLIN, Town Clerk

A History of the Windsor Hospital Building

In 1830, Mr. Thomas Emerson arrived in Windsor with a wife and three children. He possessed considerable business acumen and drive and soon became a leader in Windsor's business and political circles. In 1833 when Windsor was first incorporated a village he became the first president. The Windsor Bank, one of the first to become incorporated in the state, in 1816, elected him president. There then ensued a meteroic rise in his fortunes. He bought up some Windsor property and then bought up property as far west as Detroit. He had a way with him and convinced many Windsor people to invest in holdings that he controlled.

In 1836 he built a home on North Main Street which became a showplace. For the foundation, he had granite blocks hauled by oxen from quarries in Northfield, Vermont. He imported black marble from Italy for the nine fire-places in the home. There was a lofty four-story tower. From its eminence he could survey the surrounding village and Mt. Ascutney in the distance. There was a bowling alley over the carriage shed and stable that adjoined the rear. A fine garden was laid out on the spacious south side. Many of the people in the village were impressed but doubtless some were envious and at least a few snickered and called the house "Emerson's Folly," a name that stuck with it for many a year.

But the next year, 1837, was the year of the panic. Along with many another bank throughout the state and the country, the Windsor Bank failed, and along with it Mr. Emerson's fortunes. The many Windsor people who had invested in his interests clamored for their money, but in vain. Mr. Emerson saw all the furnishings, horses, carriages, and wines in his cellar sold at a sheriff's sale and he was carted off to the Woodstock jail where he spent the last year of his life in disgrace.

In 1841 the house was bought by Mr. Edwin Stoughton, an eminent New York lawyer. Mr. Stoughton made lavish improvements on the property. He hired six gardeners to take care of the large garden to the south and west of the estate and this garden became a showplace for garden lovers from near and far. The Stoughtons entertained on a lavish scale. Jenny Lind sang in musicales held in the front drawing room, and even President Hayes was a guest. In 1877 President Hayes appointed Mr. Stoughton to the ambassadorship of Russia.

In 1885 Albert Weston, a farmer from the south of the village, bought the Stoughton home. Mr. Weston was noted for his skill in making vinegar. He had his own press and kept the vinegar in the celler. Dwight Tuxbury and Sons' store bought his vinegar by the barrel and boasted of its quality. The Westons were highly esteemed in the community and were pillars of the Unitarian Church. Although they were unable to keep up the property as had the Stoughtons, the home took on an air of gracious living and quiet dignity that pervaded it for thirty-five years. After his death in 1911, the house began to fall into disrepair and by the time of Mrs. Weston's death in 1920, the place was falling apart and the lawn to the south was now grown up into brush.

In 1927, the place was bought by a rising young business man in town, Mr. Harry Davis. He made sufficient improvements on the house and converted it into a rooming and boarding house and for three years it was known as the Tower Inn. The horse and buggy era had succumbed to the auto industry and Mr. Davis built a garage on the south lawn in the face of indignant protests of many who objected to the encroachment of industry in what had been a lovely residential section. Mr. Davis sold the house to Mr. Allen Evarts who had property adjoining on the north.

By 1931 were heard the first echoes of the new destiny to be fulfilled by the house. At this time Mr. and Mrs. Irving Warburton arrived in Windsor, leased the house to start a private community hospital. They set up twenty cots, installed some archaic equipment and announced that they were in business. It must be remembered that 1931 was the middle of the depression and a poor time to start any venture no matter how worthy. After two years they were disillusioned sufficiently to throw in the sponge and leave town.

In August 1933, was printed the 150th. Anniversary Edition of the Vermont Journal. Under an imposing caption regarding the hospital is stated, "About one hundred names appear on the articles for the incorporation of a community hospital as drawn up by Attorney Louis Perkins. A meeting was held Tuesday in the library of the Vermont State Prison and it was announced to the promoters of the new venture that Mr. Allen Evarts had deeded the house to the corporation as long as the house would be used as a hospital."

Thus the old building, conceived in arrogance, born in disgrace, brought up in opulent aristocracy, passing the autumn of its first century in Victorian gentility and finally rudely dismembered by the encroachment of industry, finally found its destiny in a house of refuge for the ill.

In 1937 the now ugly tower and the vine covered porch were razed, the former to improve the "lines" and the latter to let in more sunshine where sunshine was certainly needed. Thus 100 years after the tower and porch were appended, they were summarily dismembered.

The building has weathered the storms of ages. Perhaps the ghost of Thomas Emerson still stalks its curtained wards. Perhaps the agony of his visage has softened, his crime expiated, and his "Folly" vindicated. For "Emerson's Folly" is now the Windsor Hospital, Inc. and for twenty-nine years has sought to serve the medical needs of the community. Its beginnings have been humble, its task arduous, its friends loyal, and its benefactors many.

THE BIRTHPLACE OF VERMONT

A
HISTORY OF WINDSOR
TO 1781

BY
HENRY STEELE WARDNER

NEW YORK
PRIVATELY PRINTED BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1927

teen hundred and sixty two." The latter list is complete, while a portion of the former is missing. The two do not agree as to the house-lot numbers. Possibly the discrepancy is due to the Montpelier list having been made up after the adoption of a new parchment map of the town on November 3, 1767. In support of this theory we find a third fragmentary list of house lots and meadow lots among the Proprietors' records substantially agreeing, as far as it goes, with the Montpelier list and endorsed in Thomas Cooper's hand as having been turned in in 1767.

At this meeting of April 12, 1762, the committee was instructed to lay out the "Gleeb" and Church of England rights and the proprietors desired that Captain Zedekiah Stone and David Page "be added to the Committee for the Building of Mills Laying oute Roads [ ] and Pass accompts and for the Laying oute the Town."

As far as the proprietors' records show, there was no further progress in the affairs of the township for more than a year. On July 16, 1763, Doctor Frink posted a warning for a meeting to be held at Hilkiah Grout's on August 24, next ensuing. This warning specified as subjects for action the building of a mill, the building of roads, the laying out of the rest of the township, the raising of money for roads and lotting, and to act on any other articles that might be thought best "for the spedy Setelment of s^{d} Township."

Besides the choice of a moderator this meeting actually covered but one transaction, but that was an item of importance. It introduced into Windsor history the substantial name of Israel Curtis and voted him fifty acres of land in consideration of his giving a bond in the sum of one hundred pounds sterling to build a saw mill in Windsor by August 1, 1764, and a grist mill as soon as there should be twenty inhabitants to raise one acre of grain apiece in the township. The land so granted to Mr. Curtis was to abut the south side of house lot forty-two on the north and Mill Brook on the south, "leaving Ten acres between s^{d} Brook and house Lot No. forty-one for a meeting house place Training Feild and Buring Yard Reserving sutible Roads in s^{d} Land for the use of the Town six Rods wide."

Thereafter matters did not proceed with sufficient rapidity

were plainly farmers. Israel Curtis, a millwright and a man of business capacity, built a grist mill on the north side of Mill Brook east of the main road and probably settled there or close by. On the opposite side of the road was the saw-mill of Thomas Cooper, who was Doctor Thomas Frink's successor as Proprietors' Clerk and at whose house after the settlement of Windsor the Proprietors' meetings were usually held. Captain Zedekiah Stone, who appears to have been the town father, steady and respected, had a farm south of Mill Brook, including Buena Vista. Zedekiah's eldest son Nathan, who soon was known as Colonel Stone, was the chief political character and the man who was trusted to handle the transactions with the provincial government of New York. Although he had some of the qualities of leadership, he was unstable and bad-tempered. He seems to have been endowed with brains and ambition somewhat above his fellows. His was the most outstanding individuality among Windsor's first settlers. Next to Thomas Cooper, he was the best penman in town and was a fair speller. He is said to have lived near the northern boundary of the township and not far from the river. Perhaps his home was on top of Hourglass Hill. There were at least two farms between his place and the Hartland line. David Stone, another of Zedekiah's sons, lived on the river bank at the ferry. Possibly he was one of the ferrymen. Joseph Wait, Benjamin Wait, and Joab Hoisington were soldiers as well as farmers. Where the Waits had their first Windsor habitations is unknown, though there is some indication that they lived on the south or lower meadows. Hoisington, according to H. S. Dana's admirable *History of Woodstock*, made his home on the south side of Pulk Hole Brook, then called Hoisington's Brook, and on the west side of the main road. The present site of the Old Constitution House is not far from the spot.

Joseph Wait, Joab Hoisington, and Israel Curtis were officers in the Revolutionary army and gave their lives in that service. Benjamin Wait, also an officer, survived the war and attained a position in Vermont history more noted than any other Windsor settler. Samuel Stone, who was the first Windsor surveyor, and Joel Stone, who was the first Windsor con-

stable, may have made their homes in the beginning with their father, Captain Zedekiah, although in a few years Samuel had a house of his own. The first homes of Hezekiah Thomson and Elisha Hawley the writer cannot locate. Perhaps Thomson settled north of the present village. The *Vermont Journal* of June 16, 1883, mentions the rise of ground north of the Pulk Hole Brook and west of the highway, where stood for many years the Evarts farmhouse, as the spot where Deacon Thomson once lived, but the writer has no proof. Of Hawley little is known. He acquired some of his land in partnership with Thomas Cooper and as early as 1772 took title to the grist-mill property. Thomson was a deacon of the first church and an orderly, quiet character, somewhat of the type of Zedekiah Stone. Two other early settlers were Andrew Norton (or Naughton), who located in the western part of the township and proved himself an excellent farmer, and Joseph King, a carpenter, whose name appeared in the records for a few years only. The last was chosen by the settlers as the contractor to build the first bridge across Mill Brook—a work that he never accomplished.

Samuel Stone replaced Norton as "Dear Reef," Joab Hoisington and Elnathan Strong became "Fence Vuers" and David Getchell and Joseph King were made "Hog Cunsabls." Clerk David Stone recites that he was chosen "Cealer of Waits & meshurs." It was voted to shut up the swine from April 10 to November 1, and to build a "Scool Hous twenty four foot Squar on a Convenat Place on the Publick yard" under the supervision of a committee consisting of Zedekiah Stone, Hezekiah Thomson, and Israel Curtis. Obviously it was worth while at least to teach spelling in Windsor and the meeting authorized the school committee to raise twenty pounds to build the schoolhouse and appointed Elisha Hawley collector for the committee.[1] Each person was to give a day's labor towards clearing the public yard. It was also voted to raise the bridge between Mr. Cooper's sawmill and the cornmill at the discretion of the highway surveyors. One pound was voted to Captain Joseph Wait to obtain weights and measures and a "Town Book." The records of the proprietors show that they also met that year on the several days of the town meeting.

1770

It is likely enough that the disorder which became rampant in Windsor this year caused the interruptions in the town and proprietors' meetings of 1770. What the initial outbreak was or just when it started is unknown, but it is clear that it became an uprising of serious moment and was so regarded throughout the New Hampshire Grants. Even Ira Allen's *History of Vermont*, which is inclined to ignore those incidents in which no member of the Allen family was concerned, records that "Mr. Nathan Stone, of Windsor, raised a large party to oppose the overbearing power of the Governor and Council of New York, . . ."[2] Governor Hiland Hall also mentions the uprising briefly in his *Early History of Vermont*, but he inserts his notice of it apparently as an afterthought and not

[1] No record of the building of this schoolhouse has been found. The "public yard" referred to in the minutes of the meeting was the property which now includes the Old South graveyard and the green to the north and south sides of the church. Somewhere on these premises this first schoolhouse was built, if it was, in fact, erected. There was a schoolhouse on the Common—perhaps on the site of the present Windsor High School—as early as 1788.

[2] Allen's *History of Vermont*, p. 22.

Tuesday in May, 1773, set forth that the meeting would be held "at the Meeting house yard near the Mill." This is not only the first notice or warning that called for an open air meeting in Windsor, but it supplies the earliest reference to a meeting house in the town. An inference is fairly to be drawn that a yard had been set aside for a meeting house, but that the meeting house had not then been erected. The record of the meeting, however, leaves it unnecessary to rely solely on the notice since we find in the record of the meeting itself the following interesting items:

"Voted to build a Town-house twenty-four feet in width and thirty feet in Length—post to be twelve feet in Length.

"Voted to Raise twenty pound in order to build the above mentioned house."

In these votes were taken the initial steps to provide Windsor with its first "Town House" or "Meeting House" which was known by both names and which was used both for religious services and town meetings until 1798. The exact location of this poor but historically famous structure, described by Colonel John Andrew Graham as "a mean building and a disgrace to Windsor" [1] has not been exactly determined. The "meeting house yard" was "near the mill." The location of the "mill," or rather of the two mills, was on the Mill Brook by the main highway. The present "meeting house yard" is some three hundred yards away. While this might not to-day be called "near," it must be remembered that in a township containing thirty-six square miles and with perhaps only one building[2] then standing between the meeting-house yard and the mill it was natural enough to describe them as near each other. All the inhabitants of the town knew where the grist-mill and the saw-mill were. All may not have known where the spot selected for the meeting-house yard was. No meeting-house had been built: probably the yard had not fully been cleared of standing timber since it was not until five years later that the adjoining burying ground was "set out" to be fenced.

[1] J. A. Graham's *Hist. of Vt.*, 121.

[2] The shop of Reuben Dean, the silversmith.

men. To the west of the Mill Brook bridge and on the north bank of the stream, near the corner of Union and Main Streets, was Thomas Cooper's saw-mill. On the east side of the river road, as already stated, was the grist-mill of Elisha Hawley, whose property extended down the brook to the river and northward across the present Bridge Street and beyond. Besides being a miller, Elisha Hawley was a shoemaker. His wife was Azubah Russell. After her death he married Hannah, widow of another pioneer Windsor shoemaker, Duty Sayles. North of Hawley's was another tract belonging to Captain Parmelee, extending from the main thoroughfare to the river.

North of Parmelee's, on the east side of the road, was a lot belonging to Reuben Dean, who had learned the trade of silversmith and goldsmith. How he could have had patronage in Windsor is a puzzle. His title to fame rests on his having been employed by Ira Allen to make the first seal for the State of Vermont. North of Reuben Dean's the writer has not discovered the names of the early occupants or owners, until we strike several lots belonging to Watts Hubbard, Watts Hubbard, junior, and the estate of Israel Curtis. Then comes the lot just south of the road which now leads to the railroad station. On this lot stood the "Old Constitution House," which at that time, according to local tradition, was Elijah West's tavern.[1] Next north we strike a small lot belonging to Hannah West, and then the large farm of Jacob Hastings. Opposite Reuben Dean's, on the west side of the highway, was perhaps a piece of Parmelee's land, but just to the northward we meet the land occupied by the Meeting House and graveyard. We have been told that this Meeting House, or town house, stood to the south of the present Old South Church. Probably to the north of it, as has previously been suggested, was the schoolhouse. Bounded south by the graveyard, east by the river road, and north by the "road leading to the west part of the town" was the property of Gideon Cowles. This piece, as will be seen, was the land on which the Windsor Savings Bank, the Davis Block, the old Isaac Green and the

[1] See, however, *The Vermonter*, vol. 30, No. 11, p. 168. The Vermont Council in March, 1778, hired a room of one West (39 *Vt. State Papers*, MS., pp. 10–11).

widely separated parcels, one is often at a loss to determine on which of several premises the owner made his home. It is therefore not the intention of the writer to attempt to say where each of the Windsor citizens then had his home farm, but rather to indicate the localities with which some of the early families seem to have been identified. The writer regrets especially that he cannot locate the homes which young Zebina Curtis and young William Hunter occupied at that early date; for among all those men who might be called Windsor settlers none attained stations of higher consequence or respect in the community than the two last named. Except for the descendants of Watts Hubbard, Richard Wait, and Ebenezer Hoisington, perhaps none of the early Windsor settlers named in this chapter have left descendants in the direct male line who remain identified with the town.

Of the Windsor industries of 1777 none, other than husbandry, equaled the importance of the grist-mill and the saw-mill. The manufacture of pearlash and potash is spoken of somewhat vaguely in the histories of most of the towns. Before 1777 Enoch Judd had a small plant for one or both of these industries on the river meadow property which we have spoken of as Alexander Parmelee's. Another similar establishment was just to the west of the main highway and just north of the road which leads up the Common Hill. These were passing industries incident to new clearings. The grist-mill, however, and the saw-mill continued. To the former came patrons from as far as Woodstock in the early days.

Ebenezer Curtis was an early Windsor blacksmith. While his stand would naturally have been somewhere on the main thoroughfare rather than on one of his several farms, the writer has not found its location. Duty Sayles and Elisha Hawley, the early cordwainers or journeyman shoemakers, and John Amos (or Ames), an early journeyman weaver of wool, we have already mentioned.

Colonel Jonathan Chase, of Cornish, at an early date established a ferry across the Connecticut River. The *Cornish History* states that his house was the mansion nearly opposite the eastern end of the present railroad bridge. If this be so, we should suppose the ferry to have been there or a little to the

Chronicles of Windsor 1761-1975

By

Katherine E. Conlin,
Wilma Burnham Paronto, Stella Vitty Henry

Published for The Town of Windsor, Vermont
By
The Countryman Press, Taftsville, Vermont

Connecticut and built the first permanent residence in Windsor. The first settlers this same year were Solomon and Mary Emmons.

1767-1769

As soon as Windsor began to be settled, two dams, two hundred feet apart, of stone and logs, were built on what is now Mill Brook. One is in the area of the present dam by the Museum, and the other is located across the road at the little falls beside George Cummings' store.

By 1769 Israel Curtis and his son Zebina had built, and were operating, a saw mill at the upper dam and a grist mill at the lower one. They became the first manufacturers of Windsor.

It was around these two dams that much of the mechanical history of this country was to be made within the next two hundred years.

1769

The first meeting of the Freeholders was held at the home of Thomas Cooper, where the officials of the town were chosen. The names of these officials were subsequently found in all the affairs of the town.

Among the officers chosen were: tythingman, surveyors, hog constable and pound-keeper. The meeting voted to build a pound, a most important building in those days, and ordered every male inhabitant to give one day's work toward the building.

1770

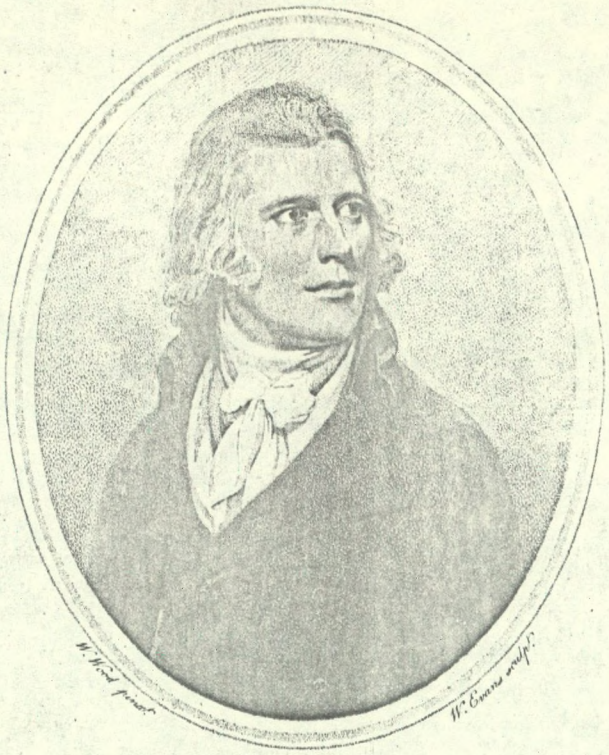
In the years following 1770, Benjamin Tyler built saw mills and grist mills in the area, and produced all the iron required. He had his own quarries on the southeastern slope of Mt. Ascutney where he quarried and shaped mill-stones from the biotite granite which was so well adapted to this purpose. During this period, he improved the crude saw mills and grist mills by the invention of a new type of water wheel.

This same year, a committee was chosen to build a school house twenty feet square at a cost of twenty pounds "lawful" money.

Captain Joseph Wait was to procure weights, measures and a town book. Population of the town: 203.

1773

The Freeholders Meeting voted to build a Town House, twenty-four feet wide by thirty feet long and to raise twenty pounds to build it.



John A. Graham Esq.r L.L.D.

late of the State of Vermont, in New England,

North America: now of

London.

Published according to Act of Parliament, 1 Jan.y 1797.

A

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCH

OF THE

PRESENT STATE

OF

ONE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

By J. A. GRAHAM, L.L.D.

LATE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL IN THE SERVICE OF THE ABOVE STATE.

London.

PRINTED AND SOLD, FOR THE AUTHOR, BY HENRY FRY,

AT THE CICERO OFFICE, FINSBURY PLACE.

1797.

Meſſrs. *Page* and *Morris* ſome time ſince obtained an Act of the General Aſſembly of *Vermont*, giving them the excluſive right of opening a Lock Navigation over theſe Falls, which they are now carrying into effect. When completed, *Connecticut River* will be navigable for boats, nearly three hundred miles above *Hartford*; and the inhabitants on the Eaſt ſide of it will be enabled to have for their exports and imports, a water communication with the River Thames—a glorious proſpect for both Countries, and a ſource of commerce and wealth, to draw ſtill cloſer between them the ties of amity.

Meſſrs. *Webb* and *Campbell* are leading characters in this place.

The religion of the people is divided into *Epiſcopacy* and *Presbyterianiſm*.

I have the Honour to be, &c. &c.

J. A. Graham.

WINDSOR COUNTY.

LETTER

XVIII.

MY LORD,

I HASTEN to give you a deſcription of the County of *Windſor*, which I ſhall do in as brief a manner as poſſible.

When you leave the *Falls* of *Rockingham*, you proceed up the river to *Springfield*, *Weathersfield*, *Windſor*, *Hartland*, *Hartford*, and ſo on to *Norwich*, which towns lie on *Connecticut* River. In the quality of the lands, there is not any material difference, except *Weathersfield*, which has a great ſhare of mountain attached to it, known by the name of *Aſſcutney*.

Windſor is built immediately upon the bank of the river, and is the capital of the County to which it gives its name,(although a half ſhire with *Woodſtock)*. The ſcite riſes ſufficiently to ſecure the houſes from any apprehenſions of being inundated: and more pictureſque, or more commodious ſituations for building upon, can ſcarcely be conceived, than thoſe formed by the curvetures of the waters, along this delightful ſhore. The houſes are of wood, ſome of them erected with great taſte and judgment. Meſſrs. *Green's*, *Jacob's*, *Leonard's*, *Conant's*, *Spooner's*, *Curtis's*, *Leveret's*, *Paine's*, and *Jones's*, are among the moſt elegant. Theſe Gentlemen are the principal people of the place.

At *Windſor* there is a good Court Houſe, and Goal. In the former, the ſeſſions of the General Aſſembly, the Federal Courts, and the Supreme and County Courts are held.

Added to the beauty of its ſituation, Nature has profuſely beſtowed vaſt local advantages on this charming ſpot. Lying on one of the firſt rivers in the world, contiguous to, and

maintaining a conſtant and unavoidable intercourſe with *New Hampſhire*, and the immenſe Country to the North: theſe circumſtances; the induſtry and enterpriſing ſpirit of its inhabitants; the great probability of its increaſing population, from the acceſſion of freſh numbers drawn thither from other countries, by the real and ſolid attractions it holds forth; its riſing manufactures; in ſhort, every thing unites to increaſe its conſequence, and to render *Windſor*, ſooner or later, a grand emporium of commerce and wealth.

In the laſt week of October 1796, was completed a bridge between *Carniſh*, (*New Hampſhire)*, and this town, which is five hundred and twenty one feet, from one abutment to the other, and thirty four feet wide. With a ſublime boldneſs its arms embrace the ſubjugated flood that rolls beneath; there are two arches, each one hundred and thirty four feet and four inches in length, with a pier in the centre forty ſix feet one way, by forty-one the other, with the addition of a heater, or triangular front, extending up the river about ſeventy feet at the

bottom, and gradually diminiſhing until it comes ſufficiently above high water mark, to break the force of the ice, and defend the ſtructure from danger. This bridge is univerſally allowed to be the beſt and moſt perfect in *America*; and it is the firſt of the kind thrown acroſs *Connecticut* River. I have mentioned the manufactories of this Town. As yet, it is true, they are in their infancy, but they are hourly expanding into ſtrength, and like the human body, they acquire force from every new exertion. Their youth, their manhood, their perfection are to come. Through what periods of Time are theſe to run? —Over what a portion of the globe to extend? On how many regions (yet unexplored, now the habitation of ſavage beaſts, and of man, in his almoſt ſavage ſtate) to pour forth their chearing influence, and to diffuſe comfort and plenty, with all the endearing train of ſocial duties? How is the mind elevated and enlarged by ſuch glorious proſpects? But to Omnipotence alone (of whoſe awful deſigns, we are but the weak inſtruments) does it belong to *foreſee* and to *diſpoſe*.

There is an excellent Printing-Office, and many large works and furnaces, for the making of pot and pearl aſhes at *Windſor*, both in the old method, and that pointed out by Mr. *Samuel Hopkins*, of *Philadelphia*. There is alſo a corn-mill here, the property of Mr. *Curtis*, ſaid to be one of the beſt in the *New-England* States, and capable of producing as great a quantity of flour.

Meſſrs. *Jacob* and *Paine*, were both bred to the Law, and are eminent in their profeſſion. Mr. *Shuttleworth* is the Miniſter of the place, and is moſt deſervedly venerated for his liberality, and exemplary deeds. The Church is a mean building, and a diſgrace to *Windſor*.

In *Springfield* lives Mr. *Morris*, who is deſcended from one of the moſt reſpectable families in the City of *New-York*. This Gentleman is Speaker of the Houſe of the General Aſſembly, and a Major-General of the Militia of the State.

Meſſrs. *Enos* and *Gallop*, are the leading cha-

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

file
cor

22 October 1970

Mr. Herbert R. Hands
Manager
Public Information Office
American Society of Civil Engineers
345 East 47th Street
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Hands:

Enclosed is the text which I have prepared for the dam and bridge dedications in Windsor, complete with the insertions which I mentioned as desirable in the script that is to be filed. These occur on pages 3 and 5.

Needless to say, I am very pleased to see these landmarks recognized. The interest shown by the two state highway departments in the occasion and in the bridge indicate very much the value of such recognition. The markers will carry this message over to their successors too. I suspect that drawings of the Windsor-Cornish Bridge may be available from the New Hampshire Highway Department.

Of course this paper is available for quote, or for publication if anyone is interested.

It was very pleasant meeting you and other officers of the A.S.C.E.

Sincerely,

Edwin A. Battison

Edwin A. Battison
Curator of Mechanical Engineering
Division of Mechanical
and Civil Engineering

Enclosure

the necessary investment. That the ferry was a much appreciated utility

The Windsor-Cornish covered bridge and the Ascutney Mill Dam

To the casual observer it may seem that a pair of rather prosaic utilities have been selected here as National Historic Civil Engineering Landmarks. The reason for the selection lies deeper than mere survival in each case. When both of these were new they represented the best of thinking and experience in their time and place. The obvious service which each has given for so long speaks eloquently of the technical competance of their designers and builders as well as of the good judgement of those who risked their own funds in the ventures.

Both were built by local and private initiative not only to pay their way and to return something on the investment. In a larger and very real sense their underlying purpose had to be to serve the community in a positively beneficial way.

From the beginning of settlement here just over 200 years ago there were close ties between the people on opposite sides of the Connecticut. The river seemed hardly any barrier at all since it was the natural highway to and from the outside world much as Interstate 91 serves the area today. The river was not, however, an all-weather road. As traffic grew and roads were made to serve the land away from the river casual crossing by private boat grew ever more inconvenient. Only when the river was solidly frozen did it disappear as a factor to surmount in some way, then only could a journey on horseback or with cart or sled be continuous from start to finish.

After the Revolution, as internal communications evolved with stage and freight services, more reliable means of crossing the river were needed. The first answer here at Windsor was a ferry, chartered by the New Hampshire legislature in 1784. This protected the proprietors by an exclusive right for several miles up and down the river in order to encourage and protect the necessary investment. That the ferry was a much appreciated utility

is beyond doubt, yet there were still interuptions to ideal service caused by high water, floating ice, possibly low water and ice too firm for a boat to go through yet not firm enough to safely carry traffic on top. After 11 years of this a new charter was obtained, this time for a bridge. Windsor continued to grow as a regional center and the desire to keep it growing formed part of the stimulous for the bridge. At the time, 1795, a bridge was being projected about 20 miles up the river between Norwich, Vt. and Hanover, N. H. The first bridge across the Connecticut had been built at Bellows Falls by Col. Enoch Hale in 1784-5 at the time the ferry was started at Windsor. With bridges both up and down stream Windsor could no longer overlook the need for a bridge too if it was to continue as the regional and trading center which it had been. Stage and freight routes would surely seek the faster and more reliable points of crossing and highway development would lean the same way.

Thus a bridge at Windsor became a necessity. Rufus Graves, who may have been the only suitable builder in the area to undertake a bridge was engaged to build the bridge between Norwich and Hanover. A few long wooden bridges that stood clear of the stream and did not obstruct it like a causeway had been built by Moody Spofford and his one-time apprentice Timothy Palmer of Newburyport, Mass. These bridges originally followed closely the designs of Andrea Palladio who published his designs in Renaissance Italy except that these American bridges were much longer. In 1795 Palmer completedone of his bridges across the Potomac at Georgetown, D. C. The same year such a bridge was completed here by Moody Spofford. It consisted of two wooden arches meeting on a central pier in the river as with the present bridge. The distance between the abutments was 521 feet and the width was 34 feet. The central pier measured 41 x 46 feet and since the roadway in each span followed the arch of the supports this great pier may have been partly to supply a level spot between the arches of the roadway. Although it was not a covered bridge with a conventional roof the arches and other supporting

members were enclosed for protection from the weather and the bridge remained in service until destroyed by high water in 1824. It's rival the Norwich-Hanover bridge, also built in 1796, had fallen of it's own weight in ~~1~~ 1804, probably due to weathering and deterioration in the joints.

Loss of this first Windsor bridge was replaced later/in 1824 by a bridge of 3 spans. This had two piers in the river and presumably a level floor. It remained until carried away by a flood in 1849 and was then replaced by a bridge just like the one now in service except that a few of the timbers were of slightly smaller cross-section. The design of the last 2 bridges is that of Ithiel Towne, patented in 1820. Most of Towne's bridges had trusses made from heavy planks instead of the heavy squared timbers used here. A minimum amount of iron was used in Towne's design, good selected wood being found to be more dependable than the iron of those days, particularly under severely cold conditions. All of the load bearing joints are fastened by wooden trre-nails or"trunnels" and all vertical stresses and strains are converted to horizontal ones so that the bridge merely rests on its supports without placing any thrust on them as an arched bridge does. Each joint bears only slight individual load and the length of truss can be very long yet remain rigid and free of sag.** The practicallity of long trusses is twofold, few piers, with consequent obstruction of the stream, ~~is~~ are necessary and the greater weight on piers and abutments adds much to their stability. As the succession of bridges have been built here they have been placed at increasingly higher levels as can be appreciated ~~as can be appreciated~~ by a glance at the street level. Contractors on the present bridge worked more by rule of-thumb than by rigid engineering standards. They were both natives of Cornish, N. H. at the east end of the bridge, Bela Fletcher and James Tasker. Fletcher was the elder and Tasker had probably been his pupil. Both had other large bridges as well as numerous minor ones in their experience. Both were limited to a local education, Tasker's formal schooling being so limited that he could only sign his name by tracing or copying, yet it is clear that he could

** The variation of Towne's basic design used in the Windsor-Cornish bridge the trusses are made of heavy square timbers interlocked with each other in a manner which is far stronger than Towne's original plank and treenail design.

put together on the meadow behind the houses on the north side of Bridge Street and later re-erected across the river where roadway, roof and siding were subsequently installed to complete the bridge. Only a few simple tools were needed, chiefly hammer, axe, saw and auger. These few elemental tools and the skill to use them well are responsible for this great monument which has stood for over a hundred years and bids fair to serve for untold years yet in prospect.

Some concept of what this bridge has been exposed to during its long service may be judged from the speakers own limited experience and recollections going back only about 45 years. Going into the bridge with another boy of nearly the same age sometime about 1925 we got about as far as the center of the western span when the bridge floor began to tremble strongly in keeping with the footfalls of a driving horse approching us in the other span. It seemed as though the bridge floor was heaving as wildly as the deck of a boat in choppy water but I am sure that the actual distance moved from normal was far less. We were however two instantly terrorized boys. I seemed rooted to the spot, perhaps too hypnotized by my fright to run. My companion it seems could think of nothing else but flight, without a word he turned and sprinted for terra firma at the Vermont portal. Before he reached that haven it was clear that the bridge was not collapsing but his feet were so busy with their own comotion that he didn't recieve the message. This was my only encounter with the sympathetic vibration once so destructive to the joints of bridges. This bridge, typical of all the others of any size, used to bear a sign at each portal reading "Walk Your Horses or Pay Two Dollars Fine" as a discouragement to reckless drivers who otherwise cared little for the durability of the bridge. Now that the horse is gone from our roads and bridges this danger is only a memory unless a parade should cross when the rule should be "break step". Modern motorized traffic induces practically no vibration. The old wind braces that used to project out into the roadway at the central point have been taken out however as a concession to modern speed and the need for more

clearance.

a weight limitation but with a new bridge only a few miles down stream this is not much of a hindrance.

The 1927 flood, which removed so many highway and railroad bridges, mostly of later origin, inevitably left its mark here. It came as the culmination of several days of hard rains in November, more than the ground could absorb. At its greatest height the water was well up inside the bridge. In my mind I can still see huge trees, their trunks nearly submerged, but with roots and branches riding high, come down against the bridge. Cushioned by the resiliance of roots and branches there was no noise or sharp impact. The pressure of the current just swung them around against the bridge where other floating objects, of which there were many, gradually pushed brances and roots under a bit at a time until finally the trunk would go under and pass out the other side. Less suspenseful to watch were the dog houses, chicken coops, ice boxes and building fragments. If these struck the bridge directly instead of one of the trees there was a dull thump usually accompanied by the crackling and tearing sounds of breaking up. One chicken house had a lighted lantern and chickens in it and appeared to have gotten away while the owner had gone away with a part of his flock. These are the sights that could be seen from the Vermont side, the other side was no different but what couldnt be seen had to be imagined. Visibility extended no more than half way across the river due to rain, fog and darkness. Sometimes a big object would strike the bridge out there in the unseen and would make itself known by the muffled sound of its impact rolling out of the mouth of the bridge. One may imagine how great a suspense this induced in the spectators who acted spellbound by the prospect that the bridge might turn over or float away before their eyes at any moment. As the water went down the bridge was seen to be little damaged from all its punishment. The resiliance of its wooden structure apparently allowed it to yield to the buffeting and spring back for more whereas a metal bridge would have bent a little here and there under the blows until perhaps it was so deformed that its power of resistance would be

They have been replaced by iron or steel rods and turnbuckles, located on the outside of the bridge. These tension members serve the same purpose as the wooden compression members formerly used inside the bridge. While these rods on the outside improve clearance and are safe from accidental displacement by traffic they have not altered the engineering characteristics of the bridge.

but in the spring when covered with large heavy thick cakes of ice. The water level came just right so that this ice battered off the bottom ends of the trusses, particularly on the up stream side of the east span. This had no effect on the sides or roof of the bridge but did cause the support for the floor to let the floor sag there. For months after, until the damaged truss members could be replaced the bridge was closed to all but foot trafic. In the winter of 1954-5 the bridge was closed again partly due to damage from overloading. The bridge recieved a thorough examination and overhaul at this time including a much thicker floor, new siding and a new roof. It has since been in such good condition and serves so well that it has a long prospective future. The high water and floating battering rams which used to be such a hazzard are now prevented by the flood controls up stream. The main enemy left is man; let us hope that this longest of the nations covered bridges will long remain as a monument to the engineers who gave it to us and to their profession.

As with the bridge, so too, Ascutney Mill Dam came into being in response to community need. When the Hudson River was connected to lakes Erie andChamplain by the Erie and the Champlain canals in the 1820's a large part of the business traffic which had passed through Windsor on the way to Boston markets was diverted to the western side of the state and the New York market. The other trade builder and potential source of local income which Windsor had was its mills located along Mill Brook. The two lower mill sites on opposite sides of Main Street near the intersection of Bridge Street had been occupied by saw and grist mills respectively as early as 1767, three years after the town was settled. The upper site where Ascutney Mill Dam was later to be built, was also occupied at an early date. A deed of 1795 refers to a grist mill, fulling mill, clothing mill and mill dam, all sold for 1600 pounds. From this high price it is clear that the site was well developed. Water power is not however a constant comodity and there were times when the mills were handicapped by

idle three months for want of water." Steamboat service or a railroad might have diverted some of the lost trade back to windsor but these were beyond the hope if not the interest of local leaders. Improving their waterpower was something that they could do independently of more far reaching planners and this they did by organizing the Ascutney Mill Dam Company ~~incorporated~~ in 1833. They had before them the examples of such places as Patterson, N. J., Lowell, Mass., and Manchester, N. H. Well they knew that they, with the short, small watershed of Mill Brook, would never rival these places on large streams but they were totally correct that they could attract larger industrial enterprise. This was bourne out within 10 years of the improvement of the water power by the establishment of the Robbins & Lawrence armory with its world-wide influence on Interchangeable manufactures. Their principle building, located on the "middle power" near where the first saw mill had been, is now the American Precision Museum devoted to the story of how improved tools and machinery are behind all of the material bounty which we have come to take so ~~fair~~ in granted. Their building is a registered National Historic Landmark under the Department of the Interior, National Parks program, making three landmarks in the history of American technology here within a mile of each other. The leading power owners banded together in forming the Mill Dam Company and other users sold out to them. The idea in building the "great dam" as they referred to it was two fold, to establish all the mill sites with clearly defined water rights and to creat storage which could be drawn upon to make the power reliable and predictable. Their greatest objective toward this goal was building the stone dam which we are recognizing today. Coupled with it was another project which they never started beyond taking concerned landowners into the corporation. That was to build a second storage reservoir in what is now the town of West Windsor that would flow the extensive meadows that begin about a mile west of this meeting place. The wooden dam where the great stone dam was to be built was demolished in the Spring of 1834. At the same time they advertised for a builder to contract for the new dam. In

directions General Simeon Cobb of Westmoreland was selected.

with him. Joseph B. Mason of Lebanon, N. H. was engaged to serve as inspector of the work. Further information about either of these men has not been discovered at this time. The dam was built of granite in an arched form to resist the pressure of the pond. The length was 360 feet between ledges and the heigth 42 feet. Width at the top has been variously stated at 10 and 12 feet and base width at 56 feet. This last figure appears to include the butress later built against the down stream face of the dam which has a base width of 20 feet leaving 36 feet as the base width of the dam as originally built. This makes it a gravity dam by a wide margin in addition to its arched form. Final details of the dam were decided at meetings of the board of directors as the building of the dam progressed making it clear that it was locally designed by committee, at least in part. These decisions included such details as the size of water outlets and the width of spillway which was finally established at 100 feet. Early in November 1834 there was discussion of whether or not to buy the bridge used in building the dam from Mr. Cobb, indicating that the building work was completed. The plans for first filling the pond are now unknown. Since the mills down stream could not work without stream flow it is probably safe to conclude that the gates were not entirely closed, possibly not closed at all until the spring run off of 1835. In the mean time there was a second call for a plan of mill sites and other property, the first call had come before the building of the dam and called for a profile and specifications of material but no evidence that such was prepared survives now. The next event of note appears in March 1835 when it appears that the pond was filled as the directors voted "to let off so much water forthwith from the Mill Dam as will safely pass through the culverts and flumes and so as to relieve the Dam from appparent danger." The nature of the danger is not stated, tradition or hearsay is that as great thick sheets of ice jutted out from the crest of the dam and went crashing down to the ledges 40 feet below they caused an alarming amount of noise and vibration. Naturally the directors were concerned and nervous about their investment here and and in the mills down

visualized disaster. One can easily imagine the excitement and pressure brought about by those who felt themselves threatened. On March 31st they directors voted "to cause the water of the Mill Pond to be discharged with all proper dispatch for the purpose of ascertaining the condition of the Mill Dam." No report on the condition of the dam is recorded, the absence of any action to repair the structure seems to indicate that the dam was found to be in perfect condition. Perhaps the directors preferred to err on the side of safety, perhaps they had little choice in the face of public opinion. At any rate in spite of nothing to show that the dam was in any way damaged they voted on April 9th "to remove the old mill building near the Stone Dam to some convenient place as soon as practicable" On April 20th the reason becomes clear with a vote "to make the necessary arrangements for erecting a stone butress below the Dam of Quarry Stone, about 150 feet long, 20 feet at the base and to batter back under the coping at top from 3 to 6 feet, the outside stones in the wall to be doweled with Franconia iron bolts of suitable size, said arrangements to include-------removing the old mill and clearing and preparing the foundation; [and] erecting a new flume from the West lower culvert to the old flume of the saw mill" On July 9th there was a vote "to settle the accounts of Mr. Isaac Bancroft for his services to date and to inform him that an engineer is appointed to supply his place." This is the first appearance of Mr. Bancroft's name, how long he had been employed and in what capacity is a matter for conjecture, perhaps the thought that he had advised on the butress would not be far from the mark. In early ~~in~~ October there is reference to "the stone abutment now being built" A month later five yoke of oxen are for sale. This surely seems to indicate completion of the butress. Thus the dam, substantially as it now stands was completed almost exactly 135 years ago. Long before anyone can now recall the original outlets or culverts were done away with and water for a turbine wheel taken from the bottom of the dam on the west side. Since power generation was abandoned

spillway has been widened to include all the east end of the dam. This more than offsets the water that used to be drawn off the bottom of the dam for power and provides that no flood that may be anticipated by past experience will rise to past heights when it was figured up in 1927 that the pond level might reach a level to overflow around the west end of the dam. Sandbagging had been resorted to as a precautionary measure in the high water of 1927 but it must be remembered that then, in addition to the narrow spillway, flashboards about 2 feet above the crest of the dam were in place. With only minor care to see that the facing on the upstream side of the dam remains intact and protects the mortar of the interior from erosion there is every reason to expect that Ascutney Mill Dam will continue to serve Windsor in complete safety and will remain a lasting monument to its designers and builders and to their profession of Civil Engineering.

Edwin A. Battison

By CAROL FELLOWS

WINDSOR — (Special) — The 135-year-old Ascutney Mill Dam and the 104-year-old Cornish-Windsor Covered Bridge Wednesday were designated national historic civil engineering landmarks.

Bronze plaques with the respective designations were seen under sunny skies here by approximately 50 people, some coming from as far as California, at informal gatherings at both sites before the group went up for ceremonies and dinner at the Ascutney Ski Lodge.

Thomas M. Niles of Oak Park, Ill., 101st president of the American Society of Civil Engineers, hailed the occasion as part of the society's on-going program to identify landmarks which represent significant contributions to American engineering.

The designations were recommended by the society's Vermont chapter headed by Carroll Lawes of Williston.

Local officials mingled with society members, and there were a number of covered-bridge enthusiasts at both sites.

L. Ivan Purvee, chairman of Windsor selectmen, veteran state Rep. Edward Conlin, of Windsor, and Town Manager William Blaisdell, were among the officials present.

Engineering society representatives included Michael Salgo, area vice president; Russell Stearns, who is president of the New Hampshire section; Nicholas Cricenti of the society's New England Council, and the executive director, William H. Wisely.

A Windsor native who is now curator of mechanical and civil engineering at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington and who has followed local historic projects with great interest, Edwin A. Battison, was one of several speakers for the occasion.

Battison remarked there had been three other wooden bridges at the site since 1795, and he noted that the bridges had been crossed by several U.S. Presidents.

The old covered bridge, the longest still standing in the nation, was a toll bridge until 1913; Battison said students were exempt from paying the toll.

A centennial observance for the bridge was held here in September, 1966, when Mrs. Herbert Foster, who had written its history, had been the one to say, "Let's keep it for another 100 years."

That observance was on an historic day here — Cone Automatic Machine Co. was celebrating its 50th anniversary, and the doors of the American Precision Museum were opened for the first time to the public. The latter is located at the old Robbins and Lawrence Armory.

There were some humorous reminiscences at the bridge Wednesday — one long-time resident recalled there was once a creamery on the New Hampshire side of the river. Farmers from Vermont, a dry state then, there went to visit New Hampshire's drinking spots near the creamery after they had delivered their dairy produce.

It was also recalled now it used to be necessary to "snow the bridge" in winter — bringing in snow the bridge's roof kept out — in order for sleighs to navigate.

Observations were also contemporary Wednesday — an oil slick could be readily seen on the river's surface. No one seemed to know its source.

But admiring phrases were still used to describe the view from the dam. Some noted it was fortunate the weather had cooperated. Just last Saturday, there had been a violent hail storm in the area in the late afternoon, the time of the ceremonies.

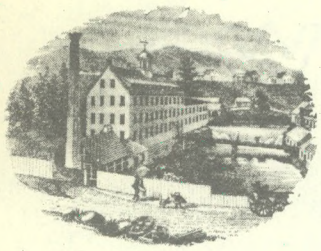
The Ascutney Mill Dam is said to be possibly the oldest masonry dam of significant size in the U.S. A forerunner of today's concrete gravity dams. It is made of granite and is 120 feet long. It's crest measures 42 feet above tailwater.

Other historic points of interest here in addition to the bridge, the dam, and the museum, are the Constitution House, which dates to 1777, and the St. Gaudens Memorial of 1860.

The Ascutney Mill Dam in Windsor, designated Wednesday a national historic civil engineering landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

from Edwin A. Battison
2833 SO. COLUMBUS ST.
Arlington, Va. 22206

REF



AMERICAN PRECISION MUSEUM
ASSOCIATION, INC.
WINDSOR, VERMONT 05089
(802) 674-5781

June 26, 1980

Ms. Jane Lendway
Division for Historic Preservation
The Pavilion
Montpelier, VT 05602

Dear Ms. Lendway:

Enclosed are four maps giving details of the extension that it seems desirable to propose for the National Historic Site here. The map showing the Gristmill Lot shows lands owned by C. V. P. S., who prepared this map, which came to us when we received our building. The name of the lot is misleading, the lot embraces the site of a mid-nineteenth century iron foundry where the castings for Robbins & Lawrence were made from c-1847. Also in the lot, the Dudley shop property, is the site of a woolen mill, the Essex Merino Association of c-1812, in which the well known introducer of Merino sheep, Consul Wm. Jarvis of Weathersfield, VT had an interest. Windsor's first gristmill of the 1760's was on the site of the gristmill indicated. Too bad the stone gristmill of 1816 was taken down in the 1950's.

Oliver Evans of Philadelphia, famous inventor of the automated gristmill, stopped at this mill in 1818 and discovered that it contained his patented machinery, but was not licensed under the patent.

When the mill was built in 1816 three of Benjamin Tyler's "Wry-Fly" water wheels were licensed for installation. These were a very early, so far as known the earliest, reaction type water wheels introduced. The invention is usually credited to Calvin Wing of Maine in 1830.

I am just about to publish my research on Tyler in our quarterly, Tools & Technology. All water wheels today use this reaction principle. Tyler's wheel was widely accepted, even used at Springfield Armory, so it was important, just got lost for want of sufficient historical research.

Enclosed is a copy of Evan's letter about the mill here from his biography by Bathe & Bathe. In support of the earliest mill history I also enclose copies from Wardner's Birthplace of Vermont, a carefully researched book, and material on the mills from Chronicles of Windsor, a more recent history.

Finally I enclose a copy of the license from Tyler on his water wheel for use on this proposed site extension. When it is published soon I will send a copy of Tools & Technology with the account of Tyler's wheel to be included in this file.

On the maps I have outlined my suggestion for bounds of the proposed site extension. For the southerly bound I used a projection of the south wall of the main museum building. The westerly bound should obviously join the existing site. Bridge Street seems a natural bound to the north, and by going as far as the railroad the new area will include a small store of 1860, the site of Windsor's first blacksmith's shop and the home of the blacksmith, still surviving.

The xerox photo shows the site sometime between 1898 and about 1918 with the wheel house, "Power House" on the Gristmill Lot map, on the left and the stone grismill of 1816 on the right. This is taken from the railroad bridge and shows several feet of high water backed up from the Connecticut River.

Both of the dams down at this part of the brook, originally serving the saw and gristmills respectively, became part of the Ascutney Mill Dam Co.'s project of water power here in Windsor Village.

Hope you find this material helpful and succeed in extending the site to include these further industrial areas.

Sincerely,

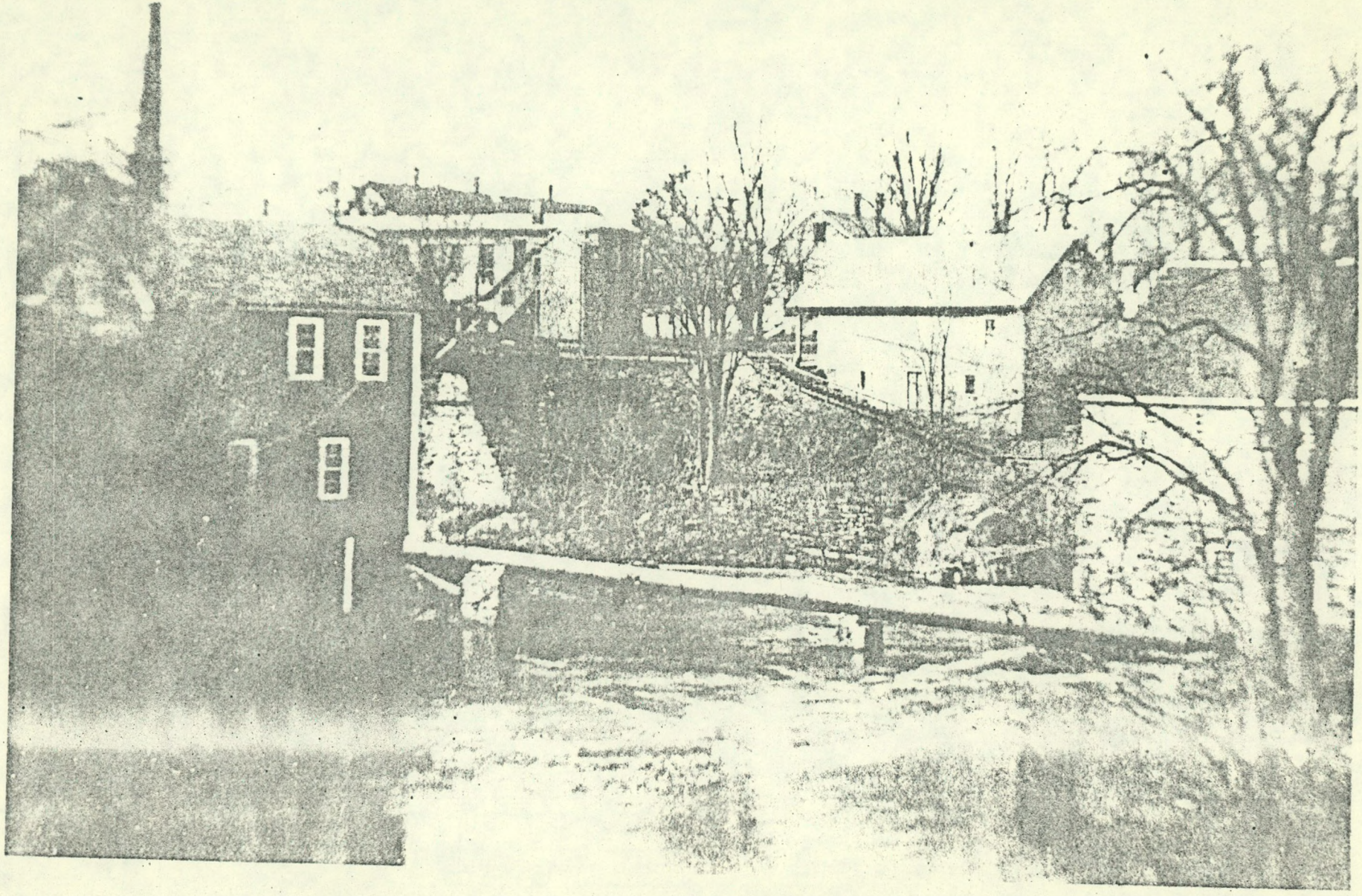
Edwin A. Battison

Edwin A. Battison
Director

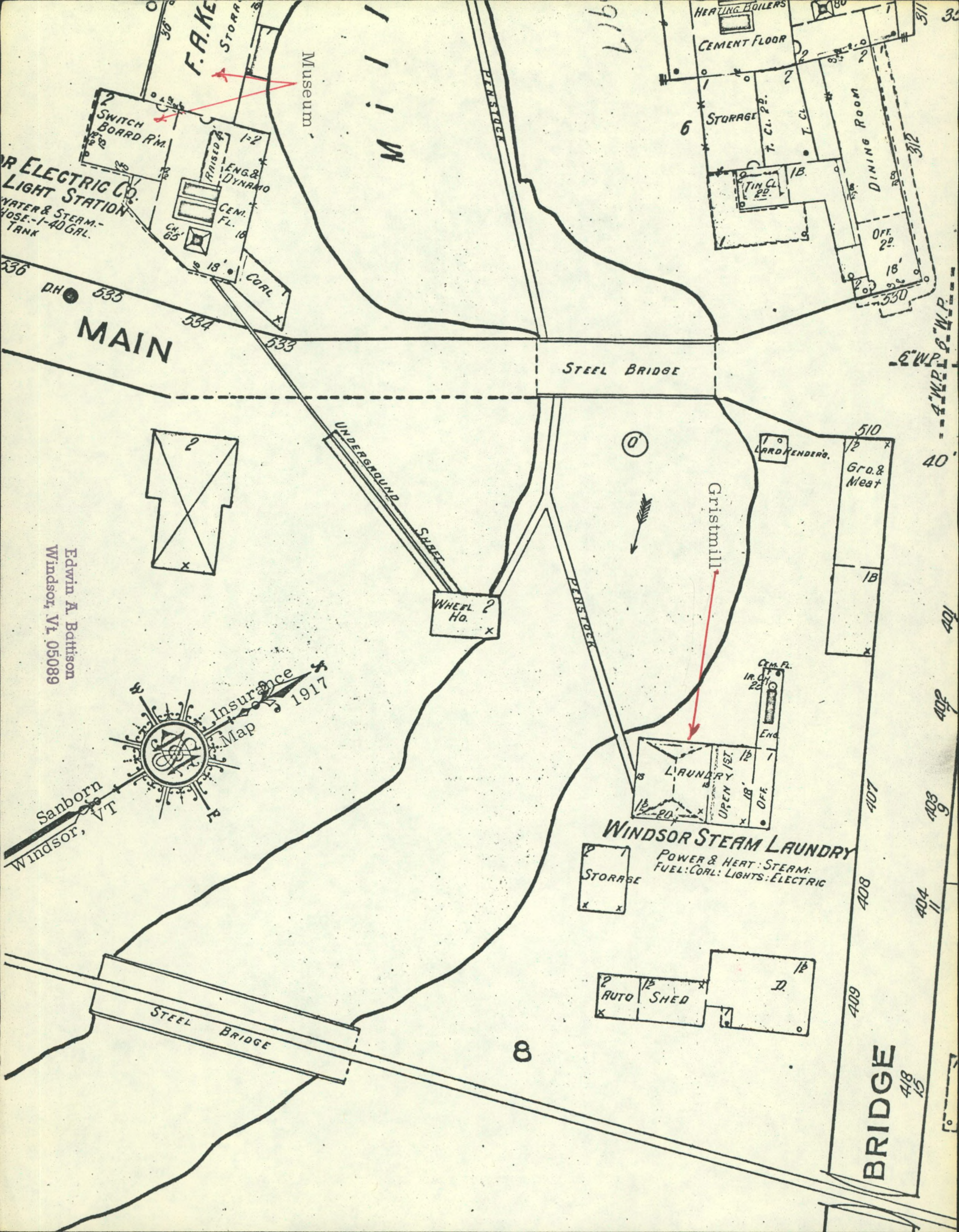
EAB/lc
Enclosures

P. S. Had unexpected good luck copying the 1886 panoramic view of Windsor, Published by L. R. Burleigh, Troy, NY, so enclose a detail showing the Robbins & Lawrence site andproposed extension to railroad.

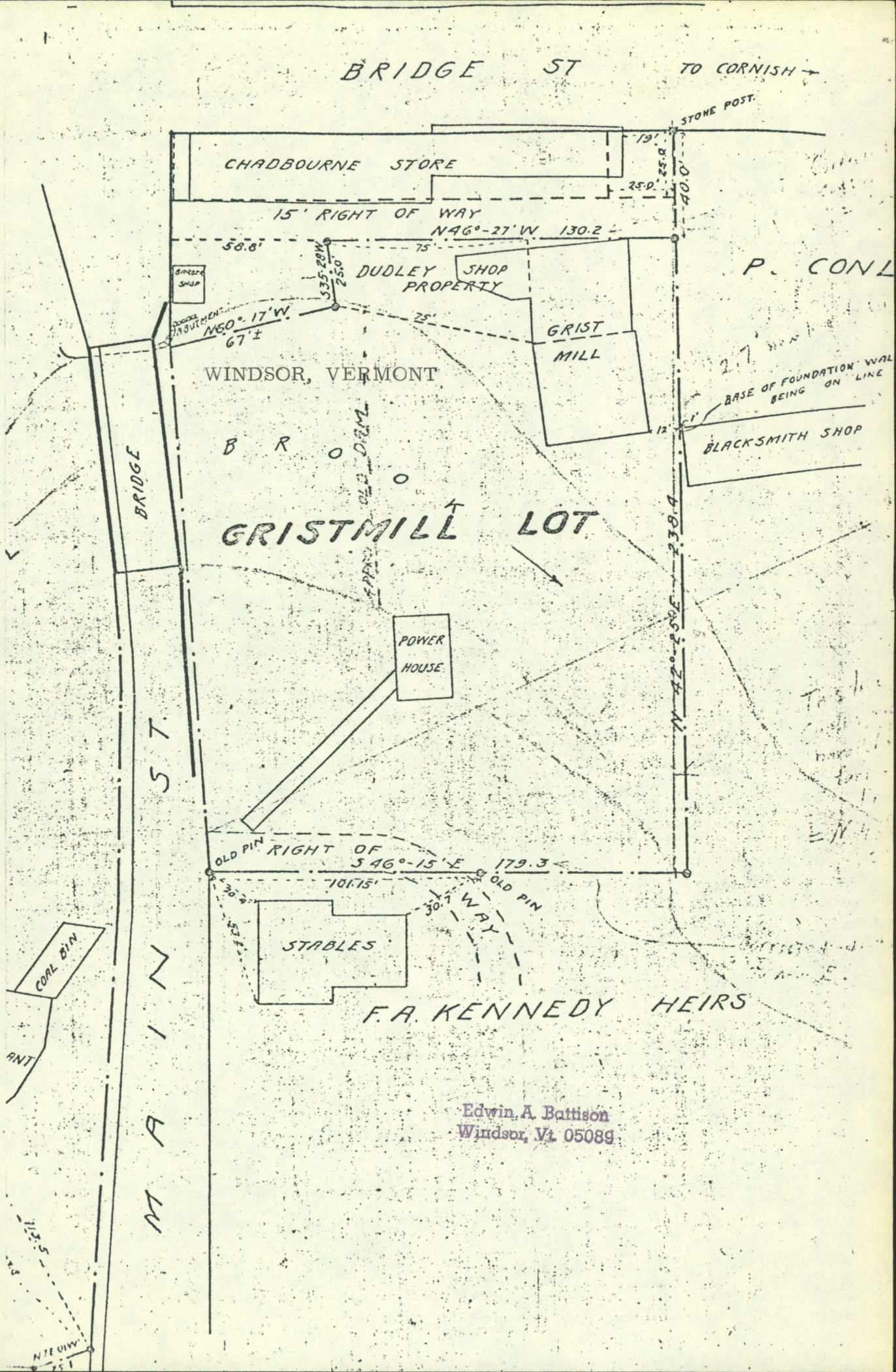
Lower Mill Brook with mills, Windsor, Vermont, N. W. from railroad bridge c-1898 - 1918, showing high water backed up from Connecticut River.



Edwin A. Battison
Windsor, Vt. 05089



Museum
F.A.KE
SWITCH BOARD RM.
ENG.& DYNAMO
RAISED
CEM. FL.
COAL
R ELECTRIC CO. LIGHT STATION
WATER & STEAM. HOSE. 1-40 GAL. TANK
MAIN
D.H.
536
535
534
533
PENSTOCK
STEEL BRIDGE
UNDERGROUND SHAFT
WHEEL HO.
HEATING BOILERS
CEMENT FLOOR
STORAGE
T. CL. 2D.
T. CL.
DINING ROOM
TIN CL. 2D.
OFF. 2D.
330
6"W.P.
4"W.P.
311
312
510
LARD RENDER'G.
Gro. & Meat
40'
Gristmill
401
402
CEM. FL.
ENG.
LAUNDRY
OPEN 1ST.
OFF.
WINDSOR STEAM LAUNDRY
POWER & HEAT: STEAM: FUEL: COAL: LIGHTS: ELECTRIC
STORAGE
407
403
408
404
AUTO SHED
409
418
8
BRIDGE
STEEL BRIDGE
Sanborn Insurance Map 1917
Windsor, VT
Edwin A. Battison
Windsor, Vt. 05089



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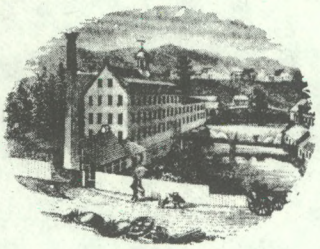
Windsor, Vt. 05089



AMERICAN PRECISION MUSEUM
ASSOCIATION, INC.
P.O. BOX 679
WINDSOR, VERMONT 05089
(802) 674-5781

August 5, 1988

Ms. Elsa Gilbertson
Division for Historic Preservation
Montpelier, VT 05602

Dear Ms. Gilbertson:

Enclosed is a copy of my letter to the National Park Service about the historic Drop Forge building that would be so useful to us and so worth saving as a part of our evolving engineering-industrial site. I am also sending a set of the enclosures that went with the letter.

Sincerely,

Ed Battison

Edwin A. Battison
Director

EAB/lch
Enclosures

AMERICAN PRECISION MUSEUM
ASSOCIATION, INC.
P.O. BOX 679
WINDSOR, VERMONT 05089
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August 3, 1988

Mr. William Bolger
Historian for National Historic Landmarks Program
Room 251, U.S. Customs House
Second and Chestnut Streets
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Mr. Bolger:

Following up on our phone conversation of yesterday, I am enclosing a copy of a file photo of the drop forge building of 1864 which we discussed. It was built to replace an earlier building which burned. Forgings for the guns made here for the Union Army were produced in this building. The main armory building is now our museum and in addition to being a National Historic Landmark, it is also the First International Mechanical Engineering Heritage Site, per the enclosed dedication brochure. You will note that they also dedicated our collection on a similar status at the same time. Significant additions have been made to the developing collection since then. The drop forge building adjoins, and was powered from the 1834 Ascutney Mill Dam, a National Civil Engineering Landmark that was dedicated in 1970. All the records of building this 40' high dam survive.

Our purposes for the building are to preserve it on site, which is only a 5 minute walk away, and to store that part of our collection which we will not have on display at any time, plus a small restoration facility and room enough to step back and photograph large objects. The Museum needs two levels of display or exhibit: one to instruct the casually interested visitor, and another for those with a deeper interest in engineering. It is this last need which the drop forge building would serve so admirably; where we can show our study and reserve collections in an orderly accessible form for educators, historians and students who come here on organized tours from educational institutions such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology. These visits are growing under stimulus of the report, A NATION PREPARED, of the Carnagie Forum on Education and the Economy, and AMERICAN MEMORY, a Report on the Humanities and the Nations Public Schools by the National Endowment for the Humanities. We will also have room for a hall in which to hold meetings with such groups.

Regrettably we have to compete with a developer who proposes to build 27 housing units in condominium form on the 1.3 acre site which will be the ruination not only of our hopes and needs, but of a well located and irreplaceable historic site bordered by a

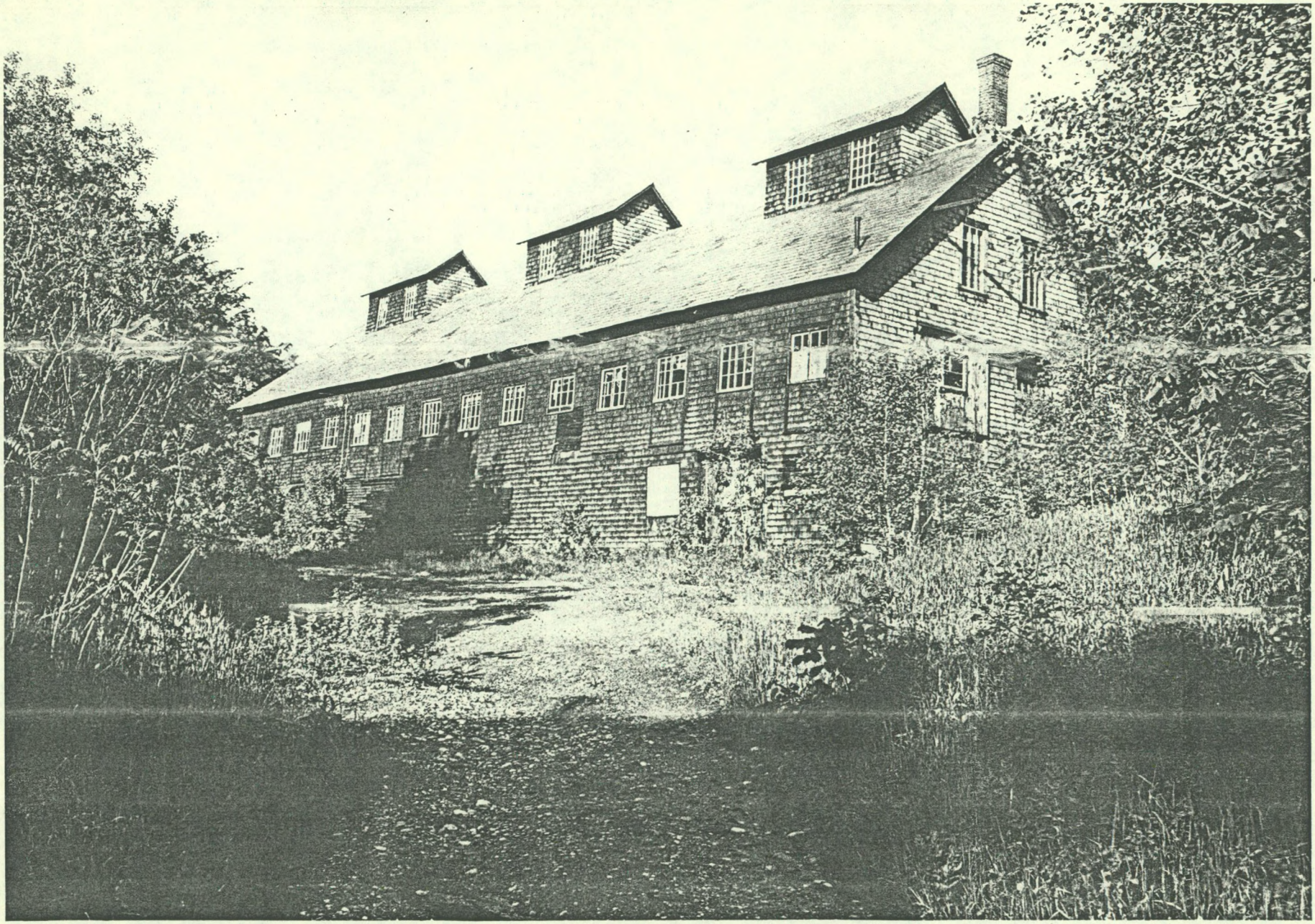
neighborhood of well kept old houses on spacious lots. Many of the houses, as well as the mills, are eligible for National Register listing and addition to our existing site. This project is already underway in the Vermont Division of Historic Sites. Any support or direction toward support that you can furnish to this museum or to the Vermont Division of Historic Sites, Montpelier, VT would be very constructive. Time is of the essence. We presently hold pledges totalling $50,000 toward the project.

There has been discussion here with both the St. Gaudens National Historic Site and the Springfield Armory Museum, another National Park property in Springfield, MA, of organizing a National Heritage Corridor here in the Connecticut Valley, along the lines of the one Illinois has between Chicago and Peru, Il. A leaflet and further information on this may be obtained by writing the Executive Director, I&M Canal NHC, 30 N. Bluff St., Joliet, IL 60435 if not readily available at your office. We have a wealth of museums between Springfield, MA and the Norwich, VT/Hanover, NH area, twenty miles north of us. There is also a wealth of nature sites and sites going back to native American occupation and warfare with the early settlers. One of the most important and unique sites is our historic industrial engineering corridor from the Connecticut River up Mill Brook through Windsor Village neatly bracketed by the two existing Civil Engineering Landmarks (*see enclosed copy of dedication and program of 1970, and illustrations and descriptions of both in the book LANDMARKS IN AMERICAN CIVIL ENGINEERING, by Daniel L. Schodek, MIT Press, 1971 (Massachusetts Institute of Technology).*

The most influential event ever to take place in Vermont, and one of the most important in U.S. history, is associated with our site. It is here that the second phase of the Industrial Revolution, Interchangeable Manufacture, was brought to such a state of perfection that in 1854 it was exported from our existing museum building to England, where the Industrial Revolution had begun only about 75 years earlier. This is the system which has made all modern industrial development possible by the ease with which complex mechanisms can be made and repaired. It made possible the assembly line. All use of it by developed nations can be traced back to here. All developing nations are still striving to adopt the system. This is the basis on which our dedication as a National Historic Landmark rests.

Sincerely,

Edwin A. Battison
Director



PROGRAM

Wednesday, October 7, 1970

4:00 p.m.
Meet at Vermont side of Cornish-Windsor Bridge to unveil Plaque

4:30 p.m.
Meet at Ascutney Mill Dam to unveil Plaque

5:00 p.m.
Social hour at the Ascutney Ski Area Base Lodge (5 miles west of Windsor on Route 44)

6:00 p.m.
Roast Beef Dinner at Ascutney Ski Area Base Lodge ($5.25 tax and tip included, collected at meal time)

7:00 p.m.
Welcome - Carroll Lawes, President, Vermont Section, ASCE

History of Bridge and Dam, Edwin Battison, Curator of Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Smithsonian Institution

American Society of Civil Engineering Landmark Award Program - William H. Wisely, Executive Director, ASCE

Presentation of Landmark Plaque Thomas M. Niles, Immediate Past President, American Society of Civil Engineers

Acceptance of Plaque, L. Ivan Purvee Chairman, Windsor Board of Selectmen

DESIGNATION

of the

C O R N I S H - W I N D S O R

C O V E R E D B R I D G E

and the

A S C U T N E Y M I L L D A M

as a

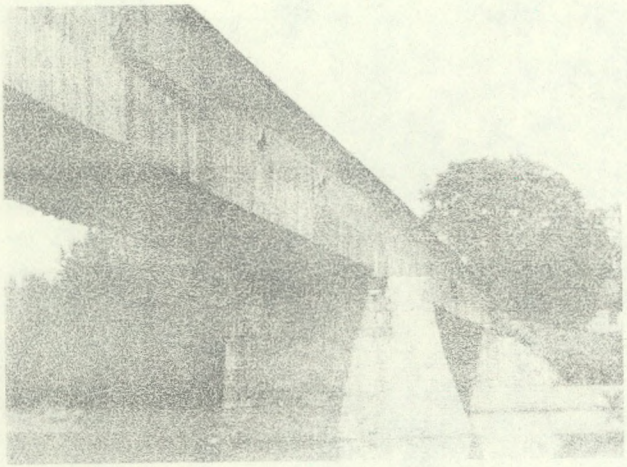
NATIONAL HISTORIC

CIVIL ENGINEERING LANDMARK

Wednesday

October 7, 1970

WINDSOR, VERMONT

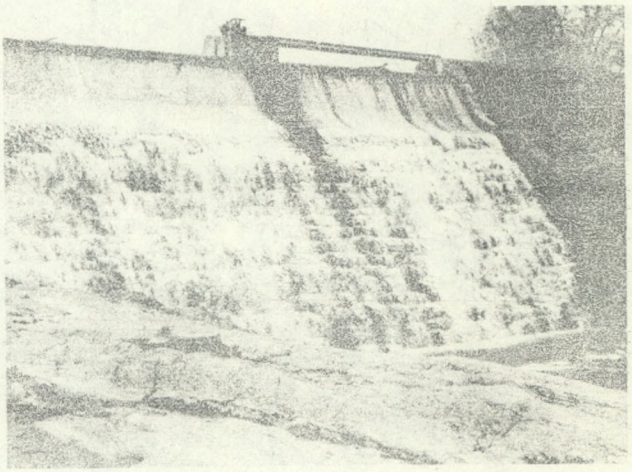


SIGNIFICANCE OF THE

CORNISH-WINDSOR COVERED BRIDGE

The two-span covered bridge, which crosses the Connecticut River between Cornish, New Hampshire and Windsor, Vermont, has an overall length of 460 feet. Besides being the longest covered wooden bridge, it is in excellent repair and is still in constant use.

The bridge was constructed in 1866 using a timber truss design patented by Ithiel Towne in 1820. It was the first widely accepted and demonstrably practical bridge design both from an engineering and commercial viewpoint. The bridge design epitomizes the economy, resilience, ease of repair, and long service life of the Towne Lattice and other early American timber-framed bridges which carried many of the young nation's highways in their day as well as some early railroad crossings.



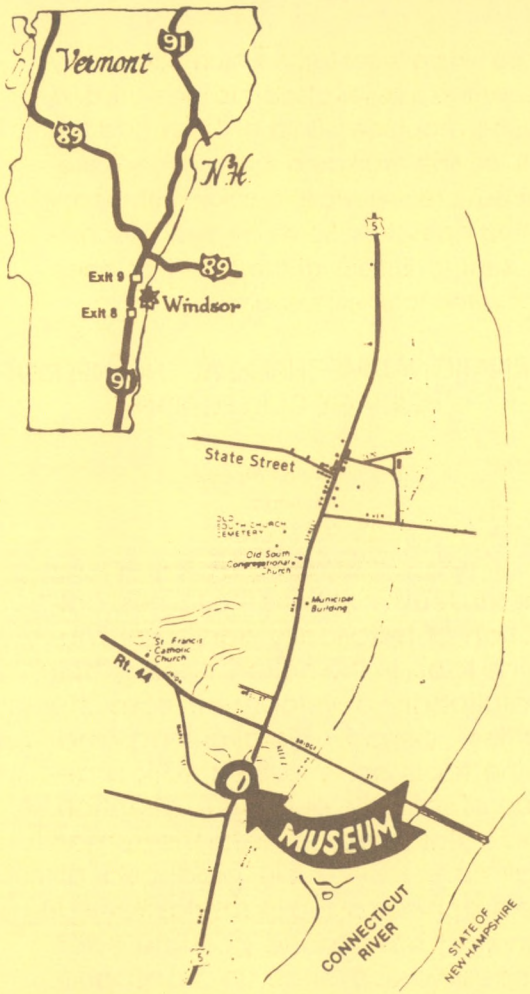
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE

ASCUTNEY MILL DAM

Constructed in 1834 and still in service, the dam is possibly the oldest masonry dam of significant size anywhere in the country. It is made of granite and is 120 feet long with its crest measuring 42 feet above tailwater. The dam was a pioneer in demonstrating the practicality and safety of such high permanent structures.

The water power at this fall and those below it on the stream were surveyed and laid out by Ithamar A. Beard, an engineer well known for his work in stream measurement.

Shortly after its construction, a stone ramp or buttress was built against the face of the dam. The reason for this was that during times of high water when ice in large thick sheets fell 40 feet to the foot of the dam, the resulting noise and vibration caused alarm to nearby residents.



Visit the American Precision Museum
196 Main Street, Windsor, Vermont
Open to the public from
mid-May to November 1
(802) 674-5781

ASME
History and Heritage of Technology

Through its History and Heritage Programs, ASME endeavors to educate the general public as well as engineers about the world's rich technological heritage. The oral history, heritage sites, heritage collections, and the landmarks programs provide an excellent panorama of these developments. Steam engines and iron works take us back to the nineteenth century, just as computers and automated production point out the relevance of mechanical engineering in our lives today.

The Mechanical Engineering Heritage Site designation serves to note that some event, machine, development, building, or complex of significance occurred or was once present at a particular locale.

The Mechanical Engineering Heritage Collection designation goes to major museum or other collections that include a number of objects of special significance to the historical development of mechanical engineering.

Landmarks, according to ASME's program, are existing artifacts that represent progressive steps in the evolution of mechanical engineering history, which have contributed to the development of humanity in general.

Like the landmarks program, the site and collection designations are defined by the scope of influence of the item. Regional designations are of significance to a particular geographical area within the United States. National designations represent an advance within their field of technology that is significant to the United States as a whole. International designations, found both in the United States and around the world, recognize contributions that have a broad influence in many countries.

Robbins & Lawrence Armory and Machine Shop

The American Precision Museum

The First
ASME International Mechanical Engineering Heritage Site
and
International Mechanical Engineering Heritage Collection

Windsor, Vermont
May 28, 1987

The American Society of Mechanical Engineers

INTERNATIONAL MECHANICAL
ENGINEERING HERITAGE SITE
Robbins & Lawremce Amory and
Machine Shop
1846
Windsor, Vermont
Where Interchangeable
Manufacturing Became a Practicality

In fulfilling a contract for 25,000 U.S.Army rifles (Model 1841) and a like quantity for the British government, Robbins & Lawrence were the first to achieve interchangeability of parts on a fully practical level, providing the basis for all subsequent mass production of machine products. This was nade possible by the systematic improvement and refinement of existing standard and special-purpose machine tools, enabling them to perform with the close-limit precision essential for "repeatability" and thus interchangeability. Simultaneously the firm introduced the milling machine and the turret lathe into routine commercial usage for production manufacturing. The social implications of this technological revolution have been universal.

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF
MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
1987

Text of a bronze plate presented at the dedication ceremony of May 28,1987.

The American System of Interchangeable Manufacturing

The greatest move made by Robbins & Lawrence, notes Edwin A. Battison, founder and director of the museum, "was to exhibit a few U.S. Model 1841 rifles of their manufacture at the worlds first great international industrial exhibit in London in 1851, commonly known as the "Crystal Palace Exhibit". This is where interchangeable manufacture, or the American System" as the English called it, first came to wide notice.

Samuel E. Robbins, Nicanor Kendall, and Richard S. Lawrence had been awarded contracts from the U.S. War Department at a time when production and delivery of guns was slow and unreliable. Kendall and Lawrence were experienced custom gunsmiths and Robbins was a wealthy financier retired from the lumber business. They built their armory in 1846 and completed their original contract in 1847, half the time allotted. A second contract was quickly given, then the Mexican War ended and there was no hope for more government contracts for the most complete and modern armory in the world.

Their exhibit in London led in 1854, the time of the Crimean War, to sending a committee to examine the machinery of the United States. This was done during a period of 5 1/2 months and they "were so struck with the beauty and efficiency of the machines" (of Robbins and Lawrence) that they ordered 152 machines for the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield, near London. Most notable among these was a turret lathe which accurately presented a series of tools to the work and milling machines. Both of these had the skill of fine workmen built in and produced precise work quickly with semi-skilled operators. Some original machinery sent to Enfield at the time has been recovered for the museum.

INTERNATIONAL MECHANICAL ENGINEERING HERITAGE COLLECTION

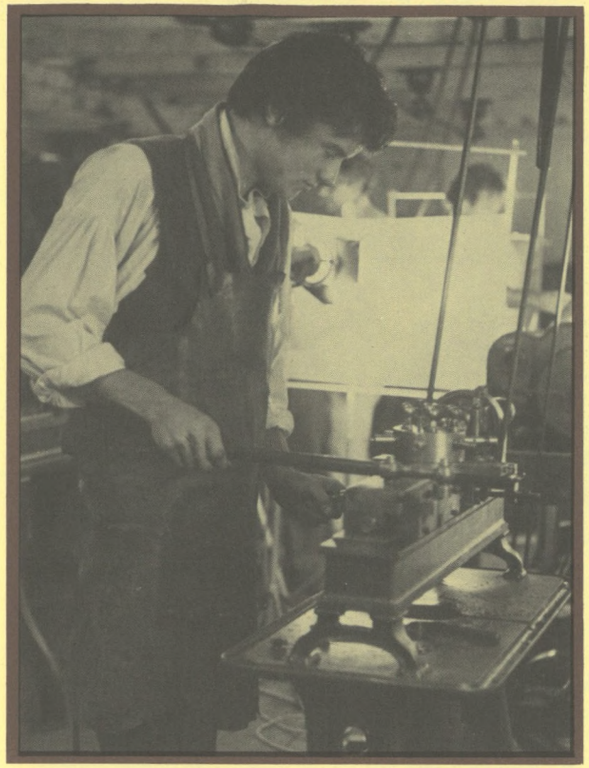
The American Precision
Museum
Windsor, Vermont

The Museum contains the largest collection of historically significant machine tools in the nation, tracing their evolutionary development from the earliest period. Metal-cutting machine tools bring to their work a degree of strength, guidance, attention, and stamina imposible for the human craftman. Tools have produced all the machines of the Industrial Revolution and have made possible each successive advance in transportation, communication, and literally every other aspect of civilization. The leisure for universal education can be traced directly to the productivity of machine tools.

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF
MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
1987

Text of a bronze plate presented at the dedication ceremony of May 28,1987.

Educational Outreach



Scene during the filming of "American Innovation," a documentary utilizing the American Precision Museum's resources.

The Museum has also been the scene of filming for the program "Building Things" in the 3-2-1 CONTACT series for Children's Television Workshop, for the 8-12 year age group. This was first shown late in 1983 and reached nearly fourteen million viewers in the United State. The program is also seen in 36 other countries. Filming was also completed here in 1984 by the British Broadcasting Corporation, Open University Division, for educational purposes.

The American Precision Museum publishes a quarterly, *"Tools & Technology,"* a forum for ideas and information about the history and impact of tools and machine tools. This publication is one of the benefits of membership.

The Museum also has other occasional publications, such as *"Muskets to Mass Production,"* which outlines the evolution from the slow world of craft manufacture to the modern Industrial Era.

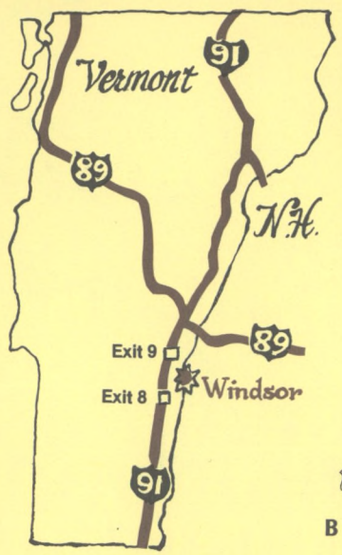
Admission

Adults	$2.00
Children 6-12	.75
Children under 6	free
Families	maximum of $6.00

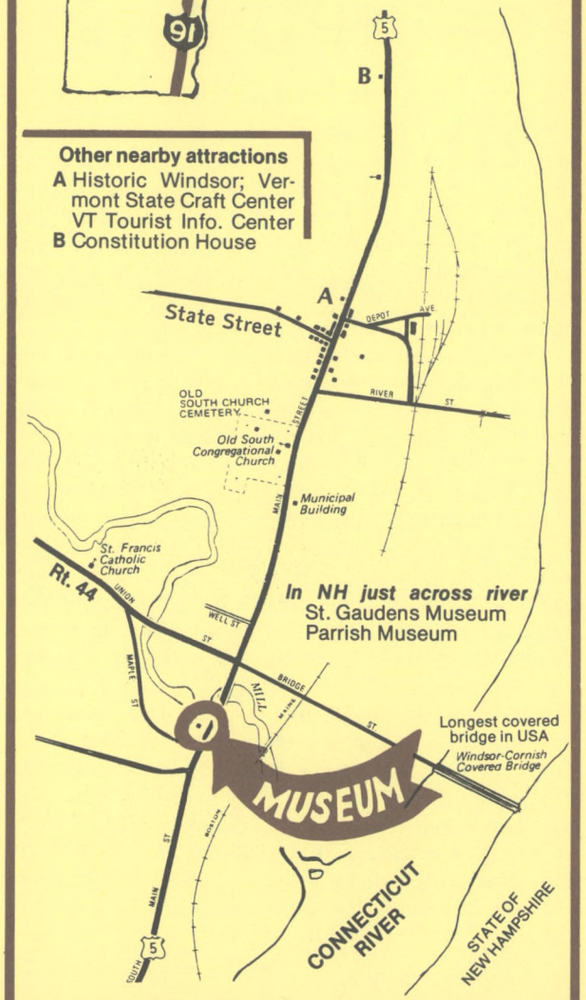
Special group rates available

Hours

May 30 to November 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. week days;
10 a.m. to 4 p.m weekends & holidays

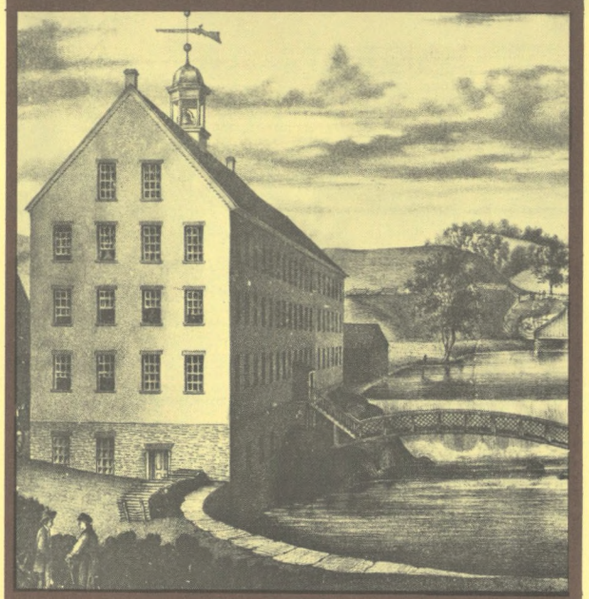


How to find us



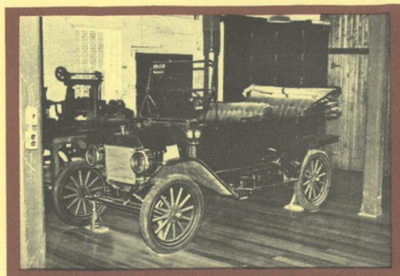
Printed in the USA

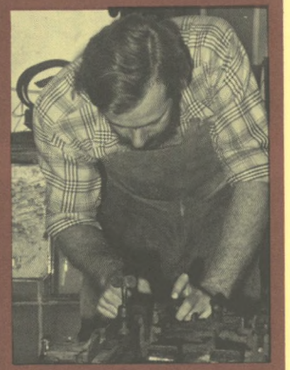
American Precision Museum

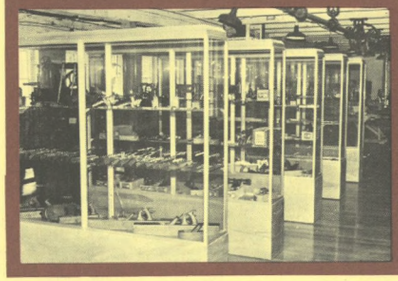


A national museum of tools and the "American System" of manufacturing in the original Robbins & Lawrence Armory

A National Historic Landmark







The Museum

The American Precision Museum has much to interest the visitor. The Museum houses a major and expanding collection of hand and machine tools together with their various products: measuring tools, typewriters, computers, engines and dynamos, to name only a few. In keeping with the site as the center from which the "American system" of manufacture was exported the Museum exhibits objects such as products of Henry Ford and tools of Thomas Edison. There is also a growing collection of objects from other countries which shows the adoption of American methods and ideas.

To supplement the objects preserved, the Museum also actively collects drawings, photographs, correspondence, catalogs, periodicals, biographical materials and related data for its reference files. The largest reference asset is the 800 volume set of Patent Digests describing the scientific and technical inventions of American and foreign patentees.

Incorporated in 1966, the American Precision Museum is a non-profit educational organization. Donations, memorial gifts and financial contributions to operating and endowment funds, help the Museum to grow and to continue its purpose of preservation and education.

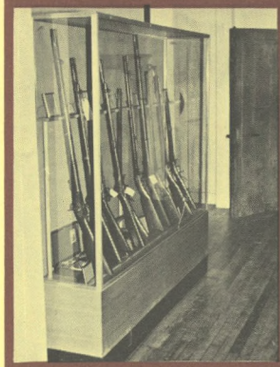
The American Precision Museum
South Main Street, Windsor, Vermont 05089
(802) 674-5781
Director: Edwin A. Battison

The Building

The graceful three-story structure with slate roof and walls of mellow, handmade brick stands on a massive foundation of natural ledge. It was built in 1846 by Robbins, Kendall & Lawrence as an armory and machine shop. When opened, it was the most modern armory in existence with all new machinery for making army rifles with complete interchangeability, a system just being achieved.

The firm Robbins & Lawrence became world famous in 1851 when its displays at the Crystal Palace Industrial Exhibition in London demonstrated to the world the system of interchangeable parts. Later, a parliamentary commission visited the United States to study details of this "American System." They placed orders for 150 special machines to be made at Windsor for the Enfield and Woolwich arsenals in England. An order was also placed here for the first 25,000 interchangeable Enfield rifles, to fill in until the American machinery could be made and delivered. Thus, from this building, the "American System" was exported.

Throughout the 1850's and during the Civil War, this building continued mainly to be used in the production and development of firearms. Between wars, production centered on machine tools and products for the civilian market such as sewing machines. The building became a cotton mill in 1872, and served as a hydroelectric power station from 1898 until it was given to the American Precision Museum Association in 1966. It has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior.



The Exhibits

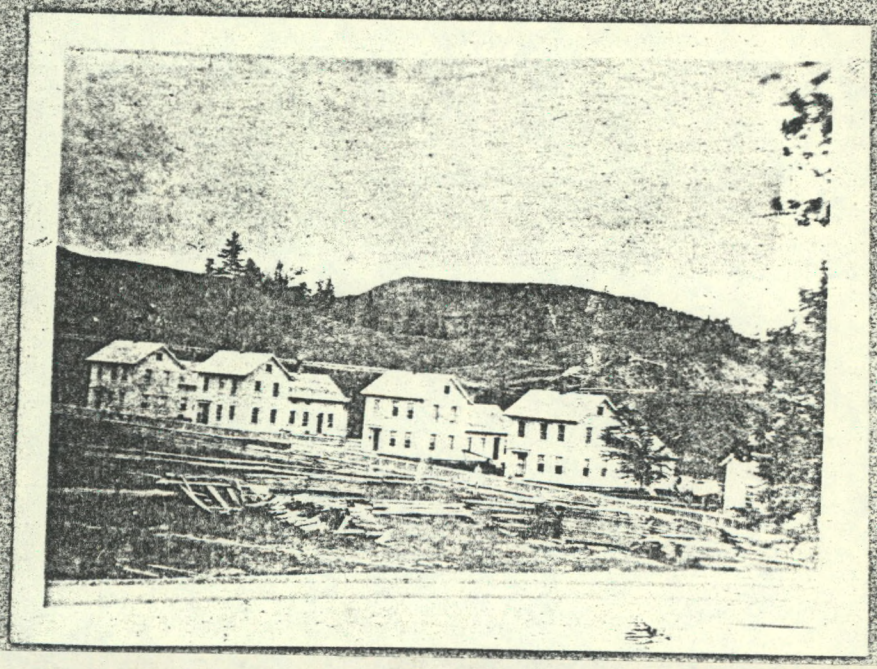
How many times in looking at a picture have we wished we could walk around to the other side? The ability to trace in three dimensions, the progression of ideas as they develop into the machines and tools of today, is an important part of a visit to this museum.

Although our primary purpose is to gather, preserve and show the importance of tools, this can best be done by exhibiting both tools and their products. Thus, dispersed throughout the museum, the visiter finds many familar objects — sewing machines, typewriters, steam engines, electrical generators, an automobile, and more.

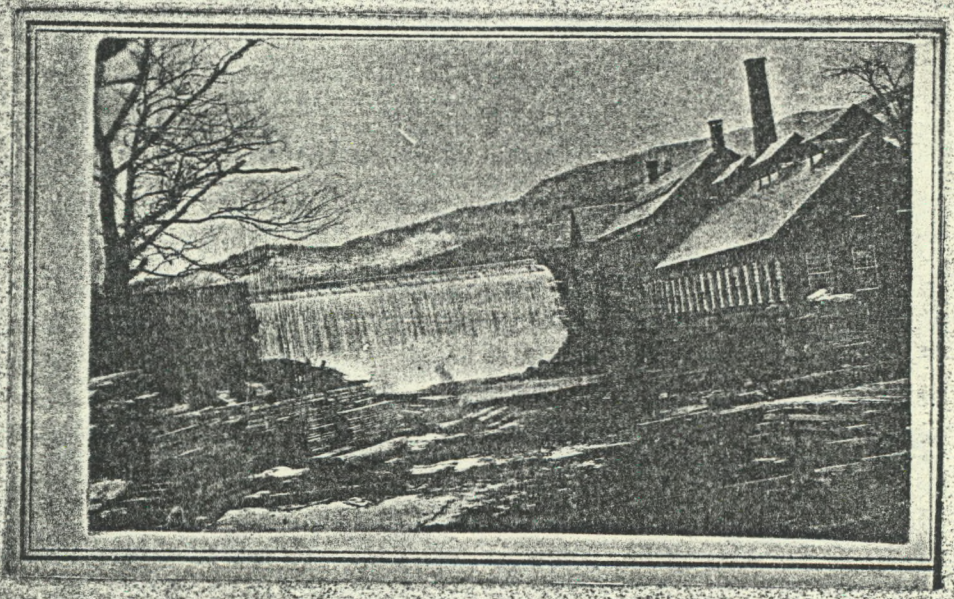
Creativity is not always starkly serious in the development of machines. Many light touches of both classical and folk art are coupled with rich wood and highly polished steel and brass surfaces. Many of the fundamental machines on display date from an era when it seemed natural to spend money making the workplace as attractive as the home. Thus, visitors can see machines embellished with paneling, carved sea shells in iron, a bird nesting in a vine, and colorfully and richly painted.

Collectors will find the museum an absorbing place where many items of interest have been gathered into easily-studied displays. Students will find the exhibits excellent reference material. Group tours and school tours are welcomed. Two weeks advance notice is necessary to receive special group rates.

Pages 1-3

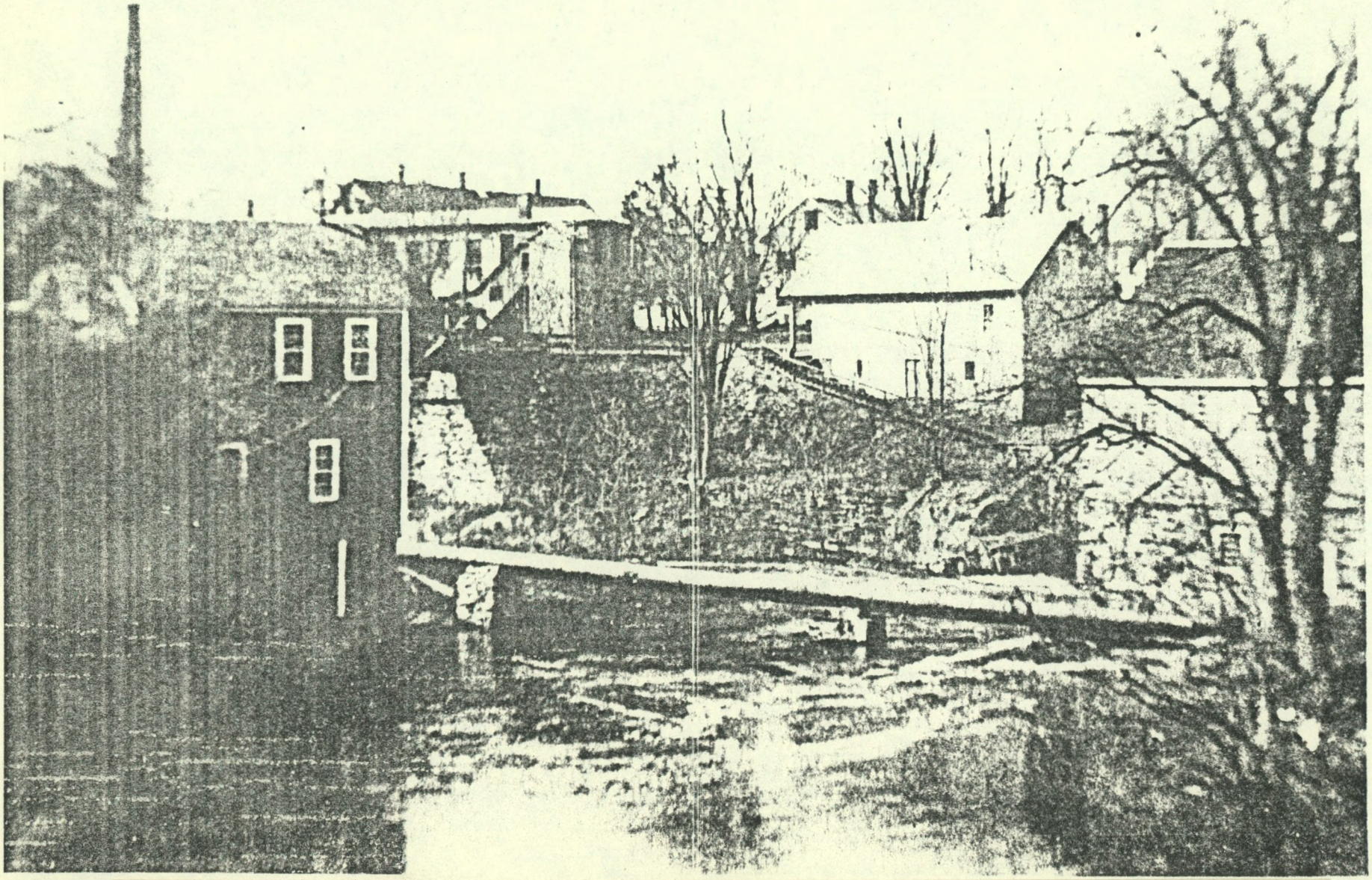


Row houses adjoining upper mills, under construction, 1864.

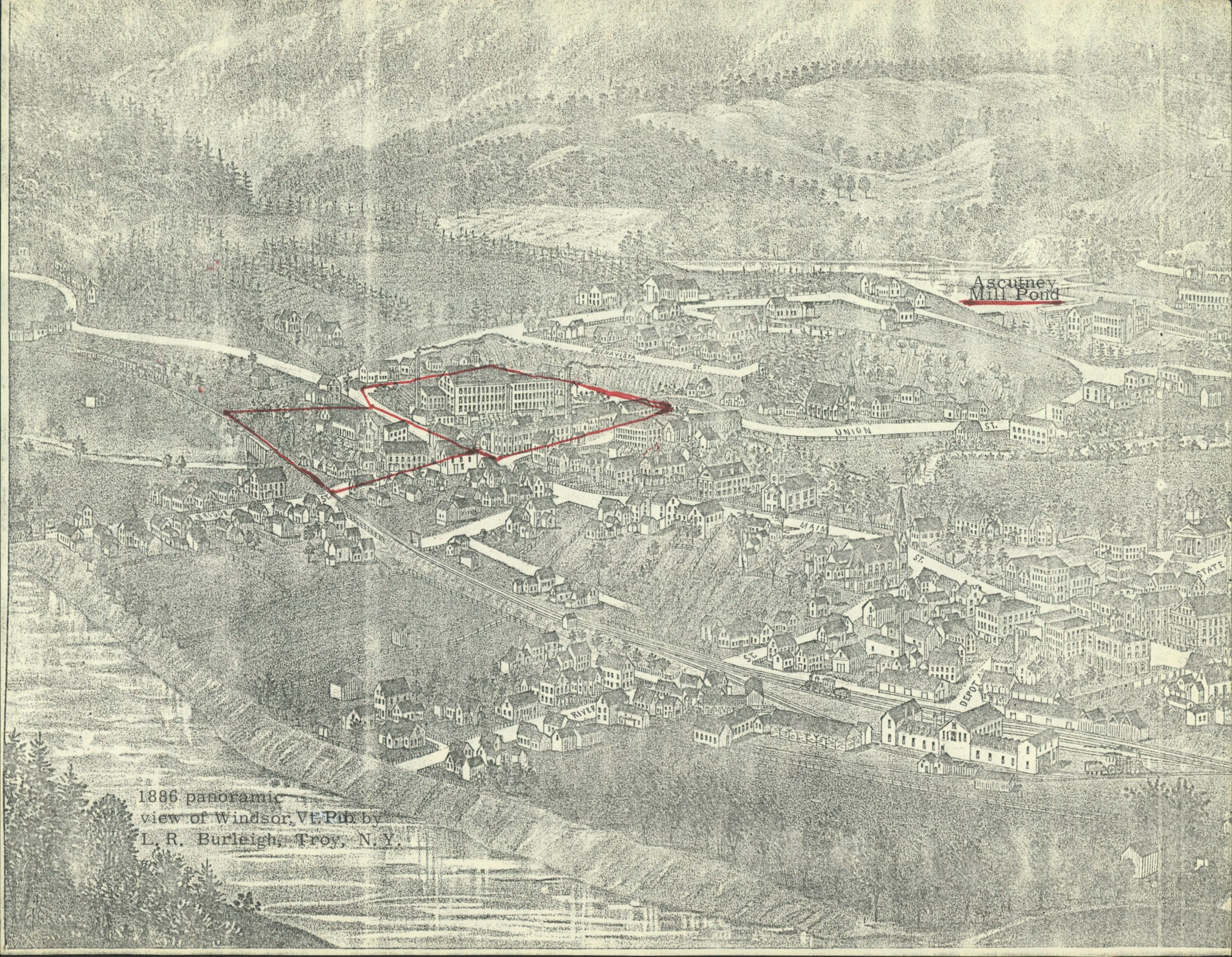


Ascutney Mill Dam and new mills just being finished, 1864.

NOTE: Negatives for copies of the originals of the pictures may be found. Time does not permit searching just now.



Grist mill, penstocks and other buildings sometime between about 1910 and before 1917.



1886 panoramic view of Windsor, Vt. Pub by L. R. Burleigh, Troy, N.Y.