

Chapter 15

Windsor Locks' Hotel on Main Street: 1861-1970



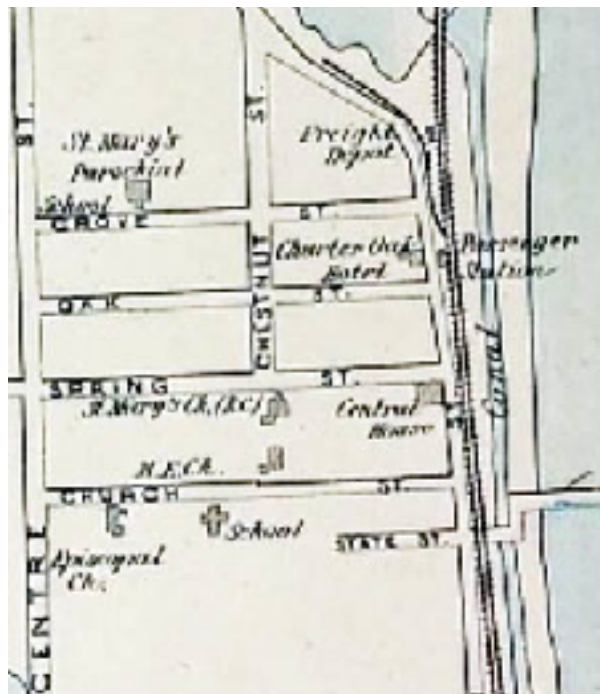
The Hotel across from the Railroad Station

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

1. **Henry Cutler** - opened the **Charter Oak Hotel** in 1861. He operated and owned it until he died in 1900.
2. **Henry L. Cutler** - was the son of Henry Cutler. He took over ownership and management of the Charter Oak Hotel when his father died.
3. **John J. Byrnes** - bought the hotel from Henry L. Cutler in 1913. He changed the name to the **Byrnes Hotel**.
4. **Harry A. Brusie** - leased the hotel from John J. Byrnes in 1914, and changed the name to the **Brusie Hotel**.
5. **Vito Colapietro** - bought the hotel from John J. Byrnes in 1916, and changed the name to the **Windsor Locks Hotel**. Informally, it was referred to as "Coly's Hotel." The term "Coly" was an Americanization of the Italian name "Colapietro." The Windsor Locks Hotel burned in 1926, but was rebuilt immediately. It operated until
6. 1969, when Windsor Locks bought the hotel for the redevelopment of Main St. The hotel was demolished in the 1970s. That was the end of the one hotel on Main St.

This paper traces the history of this hotel using newspaper articles and photographs. Try to imagine what things were like at the time they occurred. Today, it is difficult to put yourself in the place of a businessman who has to travel from New Haven to Windsor Locks back in 1860 or 1900. The timeframe of this article is from 1861 to 1970. In the late 1800s, travel was by train or by horse. Even in the early 1900s, small towns were not known for good restaurants and hotels. As a result, travelers often tried to finish their business early in the afternoon, and travel by train to the nearest city for a meal and a hotel room. Windsor Locks was between two cities, Hartford and Springfield, which served this purpose. The five men who ran the hotel on Main Street in Windsor Locks in the 1800s and in the early 1900s sought to change that, by providing a comfortable place to eat and sleep without going to a nearby city. Making a small-town hotel profitable in those times was not an easy task.

The Charter Oak Hotel appears on the 1893 map of Windsor Locks. On the map, it is on Main St., across from the "Passenger Station," and between Grove St. and Oak St.



1913 Map of Windsor Locks

We will now look at the hotel under the four names that it held as it evolved on Main Street, across from the Railroad Station.

- Charter Oak Hotel (1861 -1913)
- Byrnes Hotel (1913 - 1914)
- Hotel Brusie (1914 -1916)
- Windsor Locks Hotel, informally known as Coly's Hotel. (1917 - 1969)

Charter Oak Hotel (1861 - 1913)

A good place to start the history of the Charter Oak Hotel is with a portion of a newspaper article in the *Springfield Republican* of May 11, 1913. See below. Henry Cutler saw that a hotel had just been built and leased it from the builder. He founded the Charter Oak Hotel. In 1863, he purchased the hotel from the builder.

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

Springfield Republican
May 11, 1913

Below is a photo of the Charter Oak Hotel. We know that because the street level of the hotel does not yet have storefronts. Those were added by next owner. Notice also the street is not yet paved. One thing in photo's caption needs an explanation. The white overhead sign on two white posts says: "Connelly Stables" (difficult to see in this photo). To get to the stables, you go under that overhead sign, and up the narrow dirt road to the stable.



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

There are many activities that go on at a hotel, including meetings, sales of various commodities, banquets, and renovations. Now we will examine things that happened at the Charter Oak Hotel which were reported in the newspapers. We will take them in chronological order. The first newspaper article referencing the Charter Oak Hotel was on March 28, 1865. E. & W. Hudson, held an auction of furniture and carpets. Taking advantage of the proximity of the hotel to the Railroad station across the street, the company suggests that folks at a distance from Windsor Locks take the train to the auction.

(E. & W. HUDSON, Auctioneers.)
LARGE AUCTION SALE
 —OF—
Furniture, Carpets, &c.,
 AT **WINDSOR LOCKS.**
WEDNESDAY, March 29, at 10 o'clock
 we shall sell, at the **Charter Oak Hotel,**
 a very large lot of good Furniture, nearly
 20 Carpets, 20 best Feather Beds and
 Mattresses, Hair Seat Sofa and Chairs, Mirrors, &c.
 A great deal of nice Furniture in the order.
 People can attend this sale by taking
 the train, which arrives at the Locks in half
 an hour. The house is near the depot. 3d. mh 25
 Hartford Daily Courant, March 28, 1865

In the next article, we that the Charter Oak Hotel was repainted in April 1887.

The Charter Oak hotel is being newly painted.

Springfield Republican, April 7, 1887

The Rod and Gun Club met at the Charter Oak Hotel in April 1887.

The first regular meeting of the newly-organized rod and gun club was held at Charter Oak hotel Wednesday night. The club will have their field day shoot to-morrow.

Springfield Republican, April 29, 1887

In August of 1888, The Charter Oak Hotel had a large addition built on the back of the building.

lect to feed, and there they are speared.—A large addition, is being built on the rear of Charter Oak hotel which will give a number of new rooms.

Springfield Republican, Aug. 22, 1886

In October of 1897, a man who was registered at the hotel stole clothing and articles belonging to a number of other guests at the hotel.

A man registered at the Charter Oak house, Windsor Locks, Ct., as Frank Wilson at 2 o'clock and asked to be called at 7 p. m. When the proprietor went to call him he could not be found, and an investigation disclosed the fact that nearly all of the rooms on the two upper floors had been visited and a considerable amount of clothing and articles belonging to the boarders had been stolen. G. S. McAlpine lost a valuable gold-headed cane, a new dress coat and other articles. Henry Cutler, son of the proprietor, lost his two wedding overcoats, which were to be used next week. No estimate of the value of the goods taken can yet be made, as some of the boarders are away and their loss is not known. As soon as the theft was discovered Officer McCarty was notified, and sent an alarm to the police in surrounding cities. "Wilson" was about 22 years old, dressed in a brown suit, and slightly stooped at the shoulders.

Springfield Republican, Oct 19, 1897

In 1900, Henry Cutler, the owner and proprietor of the Charter Oak Hotel, died. Here is an obituary in an undated and unnamed newspaper that was provided to me by a member of the Cutler family. Other sources do confirm that he died in 1900. We see

in the article that he had already put his son Henry L. Cutler in charge of the hotel before he died.

RECENT DEATHS.

Henry Cutler.

Henry Cutler, aged 81 years, died at his home on Main street, Windsor Locks, Friday evening at 8:30. Mr. Cutler, who was born in Greenwich, Mass., had been a resident of Windsor Locks for many years, going there in 1866, and entering into the hotel business at the Charter Oak House, of which he continued to be proprietor until a few years ago, when it passed into the hands of his son, Henry. Mr. Cutler was a member of the Congregational Church, and was of a quiet and pleasant disposition, which won for him many friends. The body will be taken to Greenwich, Mass., where his wife is buried.

In May 1900, the Charter Oak Hotel hosted a meeting of stockholders of a company that is planning to build a new distillery in Warehouse Point.

NEW DISTILLERY AT WAREHOUSE POINT.
A meeting of the subscribers to the capital stock of the new distilling company which will be located near the Warehouse Point railroad station was held at the Charter Oak hotel yesterday afternoon.
Springfield Republican, May 11, 1900

In May 1905, Mr. Henry L. Cutler renovated the "sidewalk" in front of his hotel.

H. L. Cutler of the Charter Oak hotel has removed the stone and tar walk before his building and substituted brick. His was by no means the only walk on Main street which was in need of repair, and it is hoped that others will follow his example.

Springfield Republican, May 21, 1905

In 1912, Mr. Henry L. Cutler sold the hotel to Mr. John J. Byrnes. The Nov. 10, 1912 newspaper article below describes the hotel business in Windsor Locks in very bleak terms, in spite of the fact that a buyer has been found who is ready to renovate

the hotel and to try to make a success of it. The Cutler family had owned and run the Charter Oak Hotel for almost half a century.

Henry L. Cutler died in Windsor Locks in 1936. He only ran the Charter Oak Hotel for a few years. The following obituary provides a good deal of information about what he did after selling the hotel.

The town is facing the interesting experience of going through practically the first winter in its history with no hotel within its boundaries. The passing of the historic old Charter Oak hotel, which had existed for over half a century on its present location, and in the hands of the same family, is something that will be widely regretted. In the spring it may possibly be fixed up again. In fact, it will be if the intentions of the new owner are carried out, but there are many chances that they never will be, and even if they should there will be many important changes. The Charter Oak hotel was opened at the outbreak of the civil war by Henry Cutler, and it remained in his hands until some time ago, when his death caused it to pass to his son, Henry L. Cutler. As it then stood the hotel could not be put on a paying basis, and the dining-rooms have accordingly been closed. The hotel trade has fallen off considerably of late, and in September

Mr Cutler sold out to John J. Byrnes, who is planning extensive alterations, which will cause the closing of all parts of the hotel during the winter months. It is Mr Byrnes's intention to remove the dining-room to the second floor and turn the vacant space on the ground floor into store and office rooms. An extension will be built to the rear to allow for more room, and the hotel will probably be re-opened as soon as the work is completed, which will not be before spring at the earliest. For some time the hotel business has been a losing proposition in the small towns of New England, as traveling salesmen, who constitute a large part of the trade, prefer to clean up their work in the small town and then take the train to a nearby city to spend the night. Windsor Locks has been especially unfortunate in this respect, being directly on the road between Hartford and Springfield, both of which cities are accessible with only a few minutes' ride.

Springfield Republican, Nov. 10, 1912

Windsor Locks, July 29.—The funeral of Henry L. Cutler, Sr., who died at his home, 22 Suffolk street, Tuesday evening, will be held Friday afternoon at 2.30. The body is at the Johnson funeral parlors, Oak street, where it will remain until Friday. The services at the home will be conducted by Rev W. J. Maclean, pastor of the Congregational church, and the burial will be in Grove cemetery. Mr Cutler had been unwell the past four or five weeks, but the seriousness of his illness was unknown to his many friends, so that the announcement of his death was a surprise.

He was born in Windsor Locks, a son of the late Henry and Luthera (Towne) Cutler, and he had spent all of his life here. His parents conducted the Charter Oak hotel here

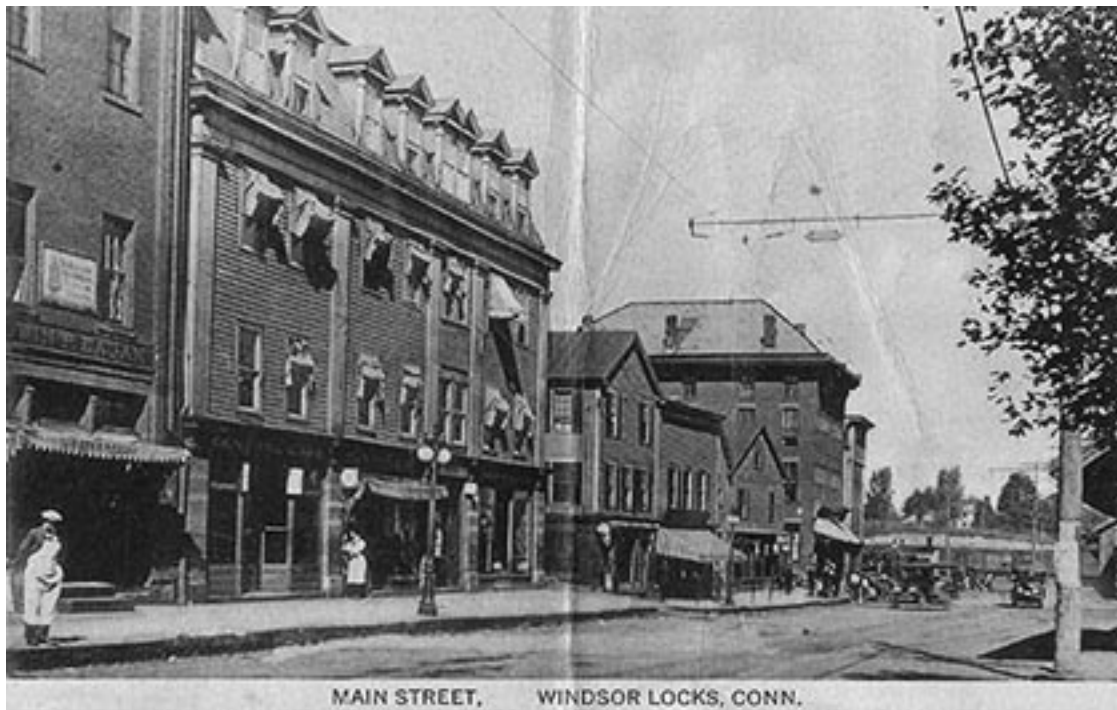
many years and after their death the son took over the management of the hostelry for a few years. He was employed as clerk in the Adams express office here for a while, later going into the automobile business and then becoming an insurance and real estate agent. He was a member of Euclid lodge of Masons in this town, being one of the oldest surviving members, and was also affiliated with the Shriners of Hartford. Besides his widow, Mrs Bernie (Chapp) Cutler, he leaves five sons, Henry L. Jr., and Ellsworth. Mr Cutler served the town as first selectman a few years and also had been a member of the board of education.

Springfield Republican
July 30, 1936

Byrnes Hotel (1913 - 1914)

The May 11, 1913 issue of the *Springfield Republican* had an article on the Byrnes Hotel. The renovations had not yet been completed, and the hotel was not officially open yet. However, a man from Worcester came to Windsor Locks, tired and hungry. He implored Mr. John J. Byrnes to let him into the hotel even though it wasn't officially open. Mr. Byrnes provided the man with a room.

Mr. Byrnes' renovation of the Charter Oak Hotel was a very large project. The Charter Oak Hotel had rooms on the street level. Mr. Byrnes converted the street level to three storefronts, and an entrance to the hotel upstairs. So the front of the hotel looked quite different than it did previously. The photograph of the hotel which was shown earlier in this chapter shows the Charter Oak Hotel which did not have storefronts on the ground floor. The following photo shows the Byrnes Hotel with the three storefronts.



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

In the previous section, we saw that Mr. Byrnes bought the Charter Oak Hotel in 1912, and was already working on improvements to the hotel. In the June 15, 1913 article which follows, we see that the improvements had been completed and that business has begun. The Windsor Locks Business Men's Association was having a supper and a social.

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn., June 14—The Windsor Locks hotel, which was completed only a few days ago, will be christened as Hotel Byrnes Monday evening, by the Windsor Locks Business Men's association at their first supper and social. The speaker will be James P. Woodruff of Litchfield, state building and loan commissioner.
Springfield Union, June 15, 1913

Given that John J. Byrnes only owned his hotel for three years, and that he leased it to Mr. Brusie for two of those years, there is not much to be said about the Byrnes hotel, except that Mr. Byrnes did an exceptional job renovating it. So we shall move on to Mr. Brusie. But first, the following article is Mr. Byrnes' obituary. It provides excellent information on the life of Mr. Byrnes, who was a very accomplished man.

Funeral Rites Tomorrow for John J. Byrnes

The funeral of John J. Byrnes, former hotel man and sportsman and owner of the Byrnes Tap & Grill, Dartmouth street, for the past 10 years, will be held tomorrow, at 8 A.M., at St. Cecilia's Church, Back Bay, with interment in St. Michael's cemetery, Springfield.

Mr. Byrnes, who died Friday night at the Hotel Lenox, where he lived several years, was born in Worcester and started his career in the construction business.

He was superintendent of construction in 1904 of the old street

railway that ran from Springfield to Hartford along both sides of the Connecticut river, and also supervised the construction of the Sage Park trotting track in Windsor, Ct.

As a result of this latter enterprise, he became interested in trotting horses, later becoming well-known in harness circles and owning horses at various times.

In 1913, he went into the hotel business, with the Byrnes Hotel in Windsor Locks, Ct. Three years later, he sold the hotel and entered the wholesale and retail liquor business in Hartford; and from 1923 to 1932 he owned the Bridgeway Hotel in Springfield, and the former Highland Court Hotel in Hartford.

He retired temporarily in 1932, maintaining homes in Stonington, Ct., and Key West, Fla., but returned to active business in 1939, establishing the Byrnes Tap & Grill.

He leaves his wife, Mrs. Katherine I. Byrnes; a brother, Dr. Harry F. Byrnes of Springfield; and four sisters; Mrs. Elizabeth T. Trainor of Boston, Mrs. William F. Donoghue and Mrs. John W. Donoghue, both of Brookline, and Mrs. John J. Ahearn of Springfield.

Boston Herald, Sunday, December 11, 1949

The Hotel Brusie

The December 11, 1949, article at the end of the last section said that Mr. Byrnes bought the hotel in 1913 and sold it in 1916. The man who bought it from Mr. Byrnes was Mr. Vito Colapietro. Given that Mr. Byrnes spent most of the first year of ownership in the massive refurbishment of his hotel, he probably spend less than a year actually managing it before leasing it for about two years to Mr. Harry A. Brusie.

There were only three newspaper articles which mention Mr. Brusie. One of them was his obituary, and the other two are about Vito Colapietro. As a result, this section is very short. Virtually nothing was written about the two years in which he managed the hotel that he leased. We will cover the articles in which he is mentioned in the next section, which is on Vito Colapietro's Windsor Locks Hotel.

Mr. Brusie's obituary shows that he was a very interesting and colorful man with wide interests. He got into the horse racing business, and was well known in harness racing. There is an error in his obituary. It says that he managed the hotel for ten years. Actually it was less than two years. Here is his obituary.

WINDSOR LOCKS
WELL KNOWN RACING
DRIVER DEAD

Harry A. Brusie Was Former
Owner of **Hotel Brusie** in
Windsor Locks

Windsor Locks, Ct., June 17—Harry A. Brusie, 68, former owner of **Hotel Brusie** in this town, and for many years a veteran harness racing driver in this section of the country, died yesterday morning in a Boston hospital where he had been undergoing treatment the past week.

Mr. Brusie was well known throughout the country as a harness racing driver for more than 50 years, but a few years ago when running tracks

began to become popular throughout the East, he became a trainer of runners. During the 1939 season, Mr. Brusie held the country win-race record with 51 races to his stable's credit. His sons, Lyman and Kenneth Brusie, are now at Suffolk Downs track in Massachusetts where Lyman trains and Kenneth assists.

For 10 years, Mr. Brusie operated the **Hotel Brusie** here, purchasing same from John J. Byrnes, local sportsman. He sold out his interests here about 16 years ago and took up his residence in Hartford. The **hotel** is now known as the **Windsor Locks hotel** and is operated by Vito Colapietro.

Mr. Brusie was born in North Egremont, Mass., and his wife died several years ago. He is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Helen Blanc of Unionville and Mrs. Floyd Huntington of East Hartford; two sons, Lyman and Kenneth Brusie of Boston; a sister, Mrs. Kate Robinson of Pittsfield, also seven grandchildren.

Springfield Republican, June 18, 1941

The Windsor Locks Hotel

We know that Vito Colapietro bought the hotel from John J. Byrnes in 1916, and we know that Mr. Byrnes had been leasing it to Mr. Harry A. Brusie. A. Brusie for about two years. See the following newspaper article. It says that Mr. Brusie had terminated the lease with Mr. Byrnes before Vito Colapietro purchased it. This article is about the fire that did significant damage to the hotel in 1926. The article has two errors. It mistakenly refers to Vito Colapietro as "Cino Colapietro," and it used the name "Fred C. Brusie," while we know that this name is Harry A. Brusie. The hotel was closed for renovations when the fire occurred. The fire was due to a stove that was being used for heat. The article also provides information as to how the three stores at the street level of the hotel were being used before it was shut down for renovation.

Hotel Brusie Guttled With Estimated Loss of \$15,000—Help Summoned From Warehouse Point

Windsor Locks, Ct., Nov. 24—The three upper floors of the Hotel Brusie, a wooden building, were badly gutted by fire here last night, with a loss estimated at \$15,000. The hotel was unoccupied at the time, as it was undergoing extensive repairs by the owner, Cino Colapietro. The former proprietor, Fred C. Brusie, terminated his lease some time ago. The fire is thought to have originated around a stove used to heat the building while the repairs were under way.

One woman was overcome by smoke and three others were slightly injured when a ladder broke.

The fire department fought the blaze for over four hours, but finally had it under control at 1:30 this morning. Assistance was given by the Warehouse Point fire department. Many thousands of gallons of water were poured into the building from six streams.

The ground floor of the hotel contained a shoe store conducted by the owner of the building, and also a men's furnishing store known as the Boston store, conducted by Paul Aronson. A third store on the ground floor had been conducted as a restaurant in connection with the hotel, but has not been in operation since the hotel was closed.

Springfield Republican, November 24, 1926

There is another source of information about Vito Colapietro's purchase of the hotel. It is an Italian language newspaper. The actual clipping which is shown below does not have a date on it, nor does it give the name of the newspaper. It shows a drawing of the Byrnes Hotel that Vito Colapietro bought, and provides the story in Italian. My translation of the article follows the clipping. This clipping was in Vito's personal belongings when he passed away. While the article does contain some errors, it is nevertheless useful. As you can easily tell, it was a newspaper which was written only for Italian immigrants, and it was very biased toward the activities of those immigrants.

L'Hotel Byrnes in Windsor Locks, Conn.



Connazionali che si fanno onore

L'Hotel Byrnes, già "Olmsted Oak Hotel", in Main Street, è venduto Martedì scorso dal proprietario John Byrnes, ora residente in Hartford, al nostro connazionale Vito Colapietro, che possiede lo splendido negozio di frutta situato nell'istesso fabbricato.

L'acquisto rappresenta uno dei più ingenti affari in fatto di proprietà in questo comune.

Il fabbricato si estende per una lunghezza di 82 piedi in Main St., di fronte alla stazione ferroviaria ed occupa uno dei punti più ricercati della città.

L'Hotel per sé stesso è una delle istituzioni più antiche della città essendo stato condotto per molti anni dal fu Henry Cutler e da sua moglie che si dedicarono con passione a perfezionare uno stabilimento che doveva rispondere alle esigenze moderne. Passato nelle mani del figlio, questi vendè l'Hotel 5 anni or sono a Mr. Byrnes il quale in questo periodo fece molti utili cambiamenti sia nell'interno che all'esterno della proprietà, ottenendo così

tre nuovi grandi vani nel pianterreno ed il completo rinnovamento dei tre piani superiori, dalla cima al fondo.



Vito Colapietro

Il nuovo proprietario del Hotel Byrnes

Nel dicembre ultimo Mr. Byrnes cedette il suo appartamento al fabbricato ad Harry A. Brusio di Hartford e gli dette anche in fido l'Hotel per un periodo di anni.

Ora Mr. Byrnes ha venduto la intera proprietà al signor Vito

Colapietro, ritirandosi definitivamente dagli affari.

Il signor Colapietro non farà alcun cambiamento nell' gestione dell' Hotel, che rimarrà ancora in affitto a Mr. Brusio, come indichiamo rimarrà Charles Coll nella gestione del suo Caffè Centrale nel medesimo fabbricato, e lo stabile rappresenterà per il nuovo proprietario un semplice investimento di capitali.

Vito Colapietro emigrò in America nel 1904, stabilendosi in Windsor Locks, Conn., ove fino ad oggi ha trascorso una vita laboriosa ed onesta.

Ammatricolato nel 1910 la sua casa è ora rallegrata dalla consorte Anna e dai due figliuoli Antonio ed Angelo, che formano la sua felicità.

Al nostro connazionale Vito Colapietro che tanto bene ha saputo trarre profitto dalle opportunità che offre questo Paese, vi diamo le nostre felicitazioni, con gli auguri del più sano e prospero avvenire.

*Article in Italian American Newspaper on
L'Hotel Byrnes in Windsor Locks, Conn.*

TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

The Hotel Byrnes, formerly known as the Charter Oak Hotel on Main Street, was sold last Tuesday by the owner, John Byrnes, today a resident of Hartford, to our countryman, Vito Colapietro, who possesses the splendid fruit store in the same building.

The acquisition represents one of the largest business transactions of ownership in this town.

The building extends the width of 82 feet on Main Street, across from the train station, and it occupies one of the most visited places in the town.

The Hotel is one of the oldest buildings in the town, having been run by the deceased Henry Cutler and his wife who were passionately dedicated to the perfection of an establishment which must respond to modern requirements. Having passed through the hands of a son, the hotel was sold five years ago to Mr. Byrnes. In this period, he made many useful changes, both internal and external to the property, resulting in four new large rooms on the ground floor and a complete renovation of the three upper floors, from the top to the bottom.

In December, Mr. Byrnes ceded the bar connected to the hotel to Harry A. Brusie of Hartford, and rented the Hotel to him for a period of years.

Today, Mr. Byrnes has sold the whole property to Mr. Vito Colapietro, retiring definitely from business affairs.

Mr. Colapietro will not make other management changes to the hotel, which will remain in rent to Mr. Brusie, and Charles Colli will remain undisturbed in the financial management of his "Caffe Centrale" in the same building, and this represents the stability of the new proprietor in a simple investment of capital.

Vito Colapietro emigrated to America in 1904, settling in Windsor Locks, CT, and has lived a life which is filled with labor and honesty.

He was married in 1910 and his house is now cheered up by his wife, Anna and by two little children, Antonio and Angelo, who constitute his happiness.

To our countryman, Vito Colapietro who has taken the opportunity for profit, which our Country offers, we give him our best wishes for prosperity.

While this newspaper article does not have the date on it, we have the information to estimate about when it was published. For example, the article says that Vito bought the hotel "last Tuesday," and the obituary of John J. Byrnes in the Boston Herald of Dec. 11, 1949, says that Mr. Byrnes sold the hotel in 1916. Therefore the article must have been written in 1916.

Vito Colapietro arrived in the United States in 1904. He came from Turi, Italy, a very small town south of Bari, in southern Italy. He worked for his brother, Pasquale Colapietro, who went by the Americanized name of "Patsy Coly." Patsy had confectionery store on Main Street which had one of Windsor Locks' early ice cream counters. Vito also worked on the Bridge to Warehouse Point. While working on the bridge, he fell off, and was rescued by a man in a boat. Later, when Vito owned his own store on the ground floor of his hotel, the man who rescued him sometimes stopped in. Vito never let the man pay for anything.

Vito returned to Turi, Italy in about 1909, and married Anna Lefemine. Vito and Anna returned to Windsor Locks in 1910. On his second arrival, Vito was 27 years old. Below are portraits of Anna and Vito Colapietro in 1913.



Anna (Lefemine) Colapietro, 1913



Vito Nicola Colapietro, 1913

Vito and Anna first lived in a white house on Oak St, near Center Street. Vito's hotel did well. However, a fire occurred in 1926, which happened while the hotel was shut down for some restoration. Undaunted, Vito got a loan to rebuild. After the fire, he redesigned the hotel, keeping the street level the same, with three stores and an entrance to the hotel, just as John J. Byrnes did. He also extended the rear of the hotel in order to add more rooms, and he built an apartment for his family on the first floor.

He also added a steel fire escape on the back of the hotel. Below is a photo of the hotel before the 1926 fire.



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

Below is a Jan. 2, 1917 article describing the rebuilding of the hotel, followed by a photo of the hotel after the redesign and reconstruction. Notice that the main differences in the facade of the building are that the Mansard roof is gone, and the wood exterior was replaced by more modern stucco walls.

The rebuilding of the burned hotel property is being rushed along and the remodelled building will be somewhat changed in its appearance on the upper stories. There will be three floors on top of the stores on the street level, part of which will be occupied by the owner, Vito Colapietro with his family, and the balance will be adapted for hotel purposes. The place on the ground floor that has been used as a restaurant will be occupied by the owner with his fruit and other business. Part of the second floor will be changed in the location of the rooms used as the dining hall and other purposes and the chambers on the upper floors will be laid out according to a better plan than formerly, with halls running lengthwise from the staircases and an iron fire escape staircase on the outside at the rear of the building.

Springfield Republican, January 2, 1927



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

Look closely at the above photo of the hotel. The room at the near corner of the first floor was the family's dining room. Going along the side (up the driveway) were their kitchen and three bedrooms. Going left from the front corner on the first floor was their dining room, parlor, and a very large room that they called "The Big Dining Room." After the reconstruction in 1927, that room was the hotel's dining room. Behind that room were two apartments. Below is a photo of the Colapietro family and friends celebrating Christmas in 1938 in the "Big Dining Room."



*Colapietro family's 1938 Christmas dinner
in their apartment's "Big Dining Room"*

Look back at the photo of the hotel on the previous page. There is a driveway on the right side of the building which leads to the parking lot behind the hotel. Vito's store, from which he ran the hotel, was at the near corner of the hotel on the Street level.

Directly behind that corner store was a room with a large, heavy door. The room housed a large wine press, which could be operated by two men. There were also a number of large wooden barrels which were used to store the wine. Vito made wine once a year, which was the family supply for the year. Outside of the family, few people knew of the existence of that room. Below is a photo of Leo Montemerlo and Tony Colapietro moving a wine barrel behind the hotel.



*Leo Montemerlo and Tony Colapietro
moving wine barrel behind hotel, 1940*

The place where Leo and Tony are rolling the wine barrel was directly behind the hotel, under a grape arbor. It was where Vito Colapietro's car was parked. Vito and his wife, Anna, never drove the car, but the rest of the family did. Below is a photo of Vito's first car.

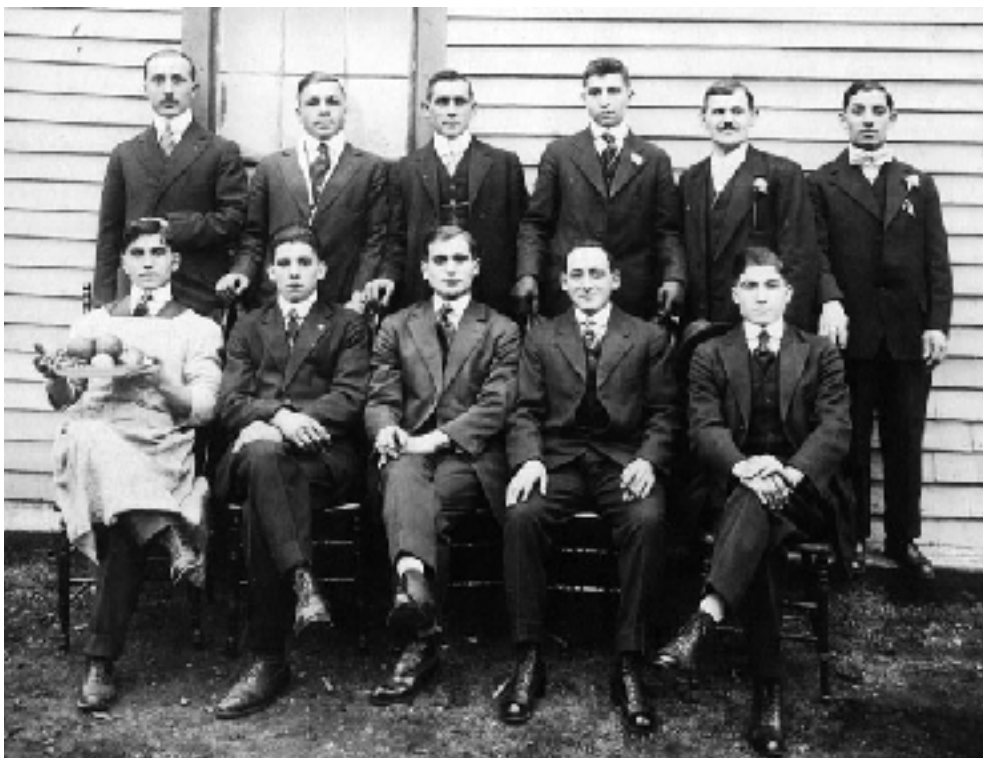


*Vito Colapietro's first car, "The Blue Eagle, a 1929 Hudson.
All of his license plates after that were "VC 29"*

The upper two floors of the hotel were all hotel rooms. During of the time that Vito Colapietro owned the hotel, it was for working men. Some stayed for weeks, others for months while they worked on local projects. Some lived there for decades. One of the “permanent guests” was Dave Magliora, who was the manager of the Rialto Theater. One of the families that lived in an apartment on the first floor was the Samulrich family. They had two children, Peter and Patricia. The two apartments on the first floor had their own facilities. During WWII, many of the hotel guests were military.

This was not a fancy or a modern hotel. It was an old-fashioned hotel. Today it would be an anachronism. Each room had a sink, but the showers and bathroom were in a single large room, which was for use by everyone living on that floor. The hotel was more like a dormitory. Back in those days, people who travelled for business, or who worked at a distance from home, were men, not women. Times have changed.

My grandmother, Anna Colapietro once said, “If we had a nickel for every dollar we gave to help other people, we’d be rich.” I asked her what she meant. Italian immigrants, at that time, helped their siblings in Italy come to the US. When they got here, they gave them jobs if they could. They helped family members and friends start businesses. These were not really loans, and were rarely repaid. Once your business was set up, you were expected to help others get started. Here is a photo of Vito Colapietro as a young man in Windsor Locks, with some of his friends who were trying to get started in Windsor Locks and in other nearby towns. They are all Italian.



*Back: Joe Natale, Biaggio Cozzolino, John Gasparro, Leo Lefemine, Vito Colapietro, Touino Bellini
Front: Giovanni Valentino, Raffaele Lefemine, Raffaele Iacovazzi, Nick Bellini, Nick DiVenere*

The whole time that Vito Colapietro owned the hotel, he also ran a store on the Main Street level of the hotel. That was where the guests of the hotel came to pay their bills. Vito's store changed many times between 1917 and 1969. Vito leased a store from John J. Byrnes for a while before he bought the building from Mr. Byrnes. Here is a photo of Vito in his store in 1917, the year that he bought the hotel. That store was a "confectionery store" (Ice cream, candy, cigarettes, and miscellaneous goods.)



Vito Colapietro's Candy Store 1917

By 1933, Vito had turned it into a beer tavern. He could not serve hard liquor.



Vito Colapietro's Beer Tavern 1933

By 1941, the store returned to being a confectionary shop. In the next photo, Leo Montemerlo is seen in front of the store. He had just married Vito Colapietro's daughter, Lena, and he worked in the store each evening, after working in a mill by canal during the day. Leo and Lena were living at the hotel at that time.



*Leo Montemerlo 1941
Soda Shop, Coly's Hotel, Windsor Locks, CT*

When World War II was over, Vito's son, Tony returned to Windsor Locks, and he worked in the store. He took over management of the store in 1950. It was called Tony's Soda Shoppe. Vito continued to work in the store every day. He continued to run his hotel's business from that store. Below are photos of Tony and of his father, Vito Colapietro at the grand opening of the store.



Tony Colapietro at opening of Tony's Soda Shop, around 1950



Vito Colapietro, Tony's Soda Shop, 1950

Vito Colapietro's Windsor Locks Hotel served him and his family well. Vito and Anna had five children. He put them all through college. Four of them went on marry and have families. One remained single and stayed to work in the hotel. Here is a photo of Vito and Anna, their children and grandchildren, at their 50th wedding anniversary.



*Pete, Leo, John, Anna Marie, John, Mary Anne, Mel, Angelo, Tony
Jean, Lena, Anna, Vito, Andrea, Lenny, Vito, Veronica, Milly
Jill, Jodie, Joe, Vincent, Anthony
50th Anniversary of Vito & Anna Colapietro, Oct. 3, 1960*

The story of the Hotel is not only a story of the building, but of the businesses it held, and the people who owned and operated the hotel. That is the reason for this brief look at the family of Vito Colapietro. Vito was a member of St. Mary's Church, a member of the Knights of Columbus, and he was President of the St. Oronzo Society. He was a family man. He delighted in his children and grandchildren. I was his oldest grandchild. While born in Italy, Vito Colapietro was a true American. He and his wife sent four sons serve in World War II. Below are photos of Vito and Anna's five children: (Angelo, Tony, John, Pete and Lena), and a photo of their four sons in World War II. This hotel was their home.



*Angelo, John, Pete, Tony
Lena, Vito & Anna Colapietro 1951*



John, Pete, Angelo & Tony Colapietro

All good things must come to an end. When the town of Windsor Locks decided to redevelop Main St, all of the stores, including the Windsor Locks Hotel had to be sold to the town so that they could be torn down. That process took a few years. During that time, Main Street was a sad sight. Below is a photo of Vito Colapietro's Windsor Locks hotel in 1970.



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

To summarize: Vito Colapietro came to the United States in 1906. He had no money and couldn't speak English. He worked two jobs, and in a few years went back to Italy and married Anna Lefemine. In 1910, he returned to Windsor Locks with his wife. In 1917, he bought the Byrnes Hotel. He made it successful. He and his wife raised a family of five. He was one of many immigrants from Europe who came to Windsor Locks and became entrepreneurs, started businesses, raised families, and set a good example for their children and grandchildren. He left his mark on Windsor Locks, and it was a good mark.

On June 17, 1972, Vito Colapietro passed away. He had successfully kept his hotel going as long as possible. He had run it successfully for a half a century, as did Henry Cutler, who was the first owner of the hotel on Main Street which was across from the railway station.

Conclusion

Back in the 1860s, the Civil War was starting, but Windsor Locks was in a growth mode. Factories were being built along the canal. In 1875, the Railroad Station was build on Main St. Henry Cutler saw the opportunity for growth in this community which

sat between Springfield and Hartford, and he started the Charter Oak Hotel in 1861. Someone else built the hotel. He leased it for a year, and then bought it outright.

With the mills, the canal traffic, and the railroad, business grew. The big influx of European immigrants to Windsor Locks from the 1880s through the 1920s made Windsor Locks a boom town. An entrepreneurial spirit imbued the town. These new immigrants started and built businesses along the Main St. Those who had already been there for a while, and had accumulated some wealth built large buildings called "Blocks" on Main St, such as the Burnap Block next to the Charter Oak Hotel. These "blocks" became centers of commerce and of social life.

Main Street was a bustling center of activity. The idea of a hotel in the middle of this bustling town turned out to be a good idea, and Henry Cutler's investment turned out to be a wise one. Henry died in 1900 and his son, Henry L. Cutler took over. However, a change was occurring. Businessmen coming to small towns like Windsor Locks were tending to finish their business early in the afternoon and go to cities like Hartford and Springfield to get a good meal at a restaurant, and to find a good hotel for the night. Hotel business fell off in small towns.

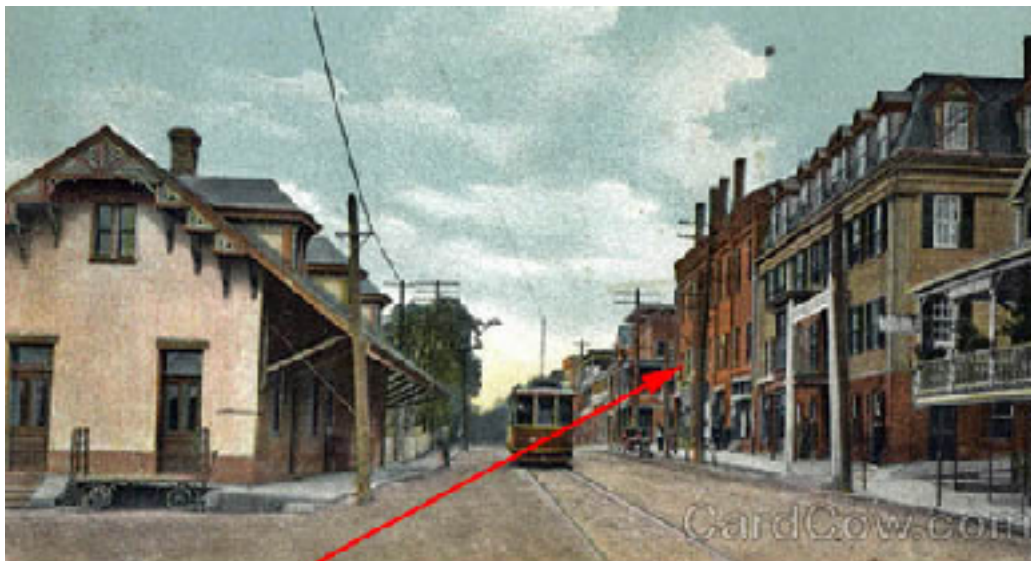
Henry L. Cutler sold the hotel that his father had started to John J. Byrnes, who refurbished the Charter Oak Hotel, and changed the name to the Byrnes Hotel. Soon he leased it to Harry A. Brusie, who called it the Hotel Brusie. In 1916, only three years after he bought the hotel, Mr. Byrnes sold his hotel to Vito Colapietro, an Italian immigrant who had arrived in Windsor Locks in 1906. When Vito bought the hotel, he had been leasing a confectionary store in the hotel.

In 1926, about a decade after he bought the hotel, Vito Colapietro decided to refurbish the hotel again. While the hotel was shut down for this work, a fire did massive damage to the hotel. Mr. Colapietro redesigned, expanded and rebuilt the hotel, which remained a mainstay of downtown Windsor Locks until the town decided to "re-develop" Main St. All of the businesses on Main St., including Vito Colapietro's Windsor Locks Hotel, had to be sold to the town so that they could be torn down. There were many trends in Windsor Locks which led to the decision to redevelop Main St. The fortunes of the mills along the canal declined over the years. Most shut their doors. The canal lost its influence in commerce. The railroad was losing its influence. The population of Windsor Locks was not growing as it had with the influx of immigrants. Business growth changed from mills along the river and small businesses along Main Street to the growth of large, high-technology aerospace firms near Bradley Field. The nature of Windsor Locks had changed from a mill town, fostered by the river, the railroad, and the canal, into town whose residents mostly worked elsewhere. The Hotel across from the Railroad Station was no longer needed in the new Windsor Locks. Hotels owned by hotel chains were built on Turnpike Road (Ella Grasso Turnpike), to take care of Bradley Field passenger business and of the needs of the aerospace companies in the Bradley Field area.

Chapter 16

Burnap Block and Central Hall

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



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

What made that building so fascinating? It was the center of Windsor Locks social life, sporting events, and business. It housed a large room whose floor was built over steel springs, which were installed to enhance the experience of dancing and of playing sports, such as basketball. It was known as one of the best dance halls in the area. That same room was also used for operas, movies, theatrical shows, musicals, large meetings, basketball games and boxing matches. When this building was the Burnap Block, this room was called "The Burnap Opera House." When the building changed hands, that room became known as "Central Hall."

This building contained many small businesses such as Garbarino's Market, Outerson's mens furnishings shop, Carroll's millenary shop, a Polish rooming house, and large businesses such as the telephone and telegraph companies, and the *Windsor Locks Journal*.

This chapter describes the history of this building throughout its life as the Burnap Block and later as Central Hall. This history is presented by means of photographs and 38 newspaper articles. All 38 articles are included here. The articles are short and easy to read. Including

them here gives the reader easy access to those sources. Reading those articles that were written in the 1800s and early 1900s is fun as well as rewarding.

Here is a brief history of Burnap Block / Central Hall building:

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

This Chapter is organized as follows:

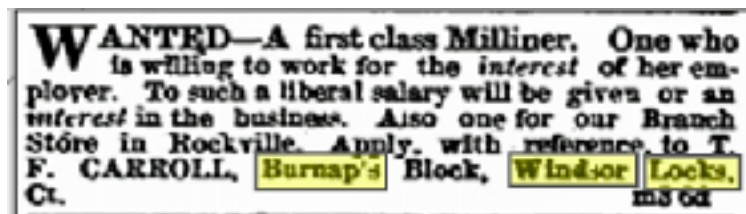
- Section 1 - the Burnap Block
- Section 2 - Central Hall Block
- Section 3 - A&P building
- Section 4 - Conclusions

Section 1 - The Burnap Block (1865 - 1918)

This section covers the period after Dr. Burnap bought the building from Fred Abbe in about 1865, to when his estate sold the building to Charles Colli in 1918. Let's look at what clippings from three Springfield newspapers (the *Republican*, the *Union*, and the *Daily News*) tell us about the Burnap Block during that time.

An April 30, 1955 article in the *Springfield Union* said that the *Windsor Locks Journal* moved to the second floor of the Burnap Building in 1886. In 1896, the Journal was sold to a new owner, and the printing operation was moved from the Burnap Building to the George P. Clark Co building on the banks of the canal.

The first newspaper references to the Burnap Building were in 1870. The first was an advertisement by T. F. Carroll's Millinery store, for a "first class Milliner."



Springfield Republican, March 3, 1870

On June 18, 1870, Mr. Carroll ran an ad saying he wanted to buy a second-hand, medium size, fireproof safe.

WANTED—A second-hand. medium size, fire-proof SAFE. Address, stating size, make and price. THOS F. CARROLL, **Burnap's** Block, **Windsor Locks,** Conn. Je16 3d

Springfield Republican, June 18, 1870

In 1873, the Windsor Locks news section of the newspaper included the following statement that the "Merry-ten social club" would hold a ball at Burnap's Block.

The "Merry-ten social club" give a ball at **Burnap's** hall on Friday evening.
A Mr Cooke has opened a dry goods and grocery store in Percy's Main street block.

Springfield Republican, Oct.22, 1873

On June 3, 1875, Mr. Thomas Carrol placed an ad for three more first class milliners.

WANTED—Immediately, three first-class Milliners, to whom liberal salary will be given. THOS. F. CARROLL, **Burnap's** Block, **Windsor Locks,** Ct. Je26

Springfield Republican, June 3, 1875

On Dec 4, 1876, a single line in the Windsor Locks news section says that Mr. W. A. Dwight is remodeling Dr. Burnap's old office to turn it into a jewelry store.

W. A. Dwight is remodeling Dr **Burnap's** old office on Main street for a jewelry store.
Springfield Republican, Dec 4, 1876

The next mention of the Burnap's Block was on Oct. 24, 1885, where there was a short news article saying a meeting of the Democrats had occurred in Burnap's Hall.

Windsor Locks.

THE DEMOCRATIC SENATORIAL CONVENTION.

The 3d senatorial district democrats met in Burnap's hall at Windsor Locks yesterday morning, with C. T. Inslee of East Windsor as chairman and H. C. Douglass of Windsor Locks secretary. H. S. Woodward of Enfield, C. E. Woodward of East Windsor and T. F. McCarthy of Windsor Locks were chosen a committee on credentials and resolutions. The informal ballot gave James T. Coogan of Windsor Locks 9 votes, J. P. Gray of Enfield 5, Judge M. H. Bancroft of East Windsor 5, and Thomas Loomis of Windsor 4. Mr Coogan was elected on the formal ballot. The convention chose T. W.

Springfield Republican, Oct 24, 1885

On May 27, 1887, the women of St. Paul's church will hold a strawberry and ice cream festival and fair in the Burnap Hall.

The women of St Paul's church will hold a strawberry and ice-cream festival and fair June 15 in Burnap's hall. The proceeds will be used for the women's fund of the church.

Springfield Republican May 27, 1887

On Nov. 24, 1888, a high society Ball was held at Burnap's Hall which had the most important people from Windsor Locks including E. R. Bailey, J.R. Montgomery and Alfred Woods Converse. This was "high society" in Windsor Locks.

The

ball in Burnap's hall last evening was a society event that drew out the "bon ton" of the Locks. There were many invited guests from Hartford and other towns while Representative McCarthy did the prompting from a full-dress suit. Among those present were E. R. Bailey, J. R. Montgomery, George M. Montgomery, A. W. Converse and ladies. There were 81 couples in all on the floor.

Springfield Republican, Nov. 25, 1888

On January 1, 1898, the New England telephone and telegraph company moved its office from the Pease Block to the Burnap Block. The Pease Block was on the South corner of Oak and Main Streets, while the Burnap Block was on the North corner.

The New England telephone and telegraph company is moving its office from Pease's block to the southeast room in the Burnap block, the increasing business demanding more room than was available in the old quarters.

Springfield Republican, Jan. 1, 1898

On January 14, 1904, an article was published saying the Burnap Opera House is in need of more exits in case of an emergency.

<p>POOR EXITS AT WINDSOR LOCKS. Need of Improvement in Burnap Opera House.</p> <p>The Burnap opera house at Windsor Locks, Ct., the principal amusement house in the town, is poorly equipped with exits, and if a fire broke out during a performance or affair where a large audience was present it is almost certain there would be a loss of life. The opera house is on the</p> <p>third floor in the Burnap block on Main street, and the main entrance is so constructed that a stranger going into the opera house would require a guide to find the way to the second flight of stairs, and would still need assistance to locate the entrance to the main floor of the opera house. The entrance on Main street leading to the first floor is amply large, and meets all requirements for a hasty exit, but at the top of the stairs the passage to the second floor leads through a long corridor, on both sides of which are office rooms. At the extreme end of the corridor a short stairway leads to the south, at the top of which is a small landing, then another short stairway leads to the north, and at the top a narrow hallway leads in a circular fashion to the entrance to the main floor of the opera house. At the end of the corridor, before reaching the second flight of steps to the opera house, there is an exit leading to a side street, which could be used to advantage if a person succeeded in getting as far as the corridor.</p>	<p>There is but one double door leading from the opera house floor, and with no fire escapes on the building what the consequences would be if a fire broke out or a panic ensued can only be conjectured. There are no adjoining buildings at the front or rear where it would be possible to make an escape in case of a fire, and if one broke out in the corridor or stairway the only plan of escape would be to jump to the ground about 25 or 30 feet below. With a little expenditure it seems as though the place could be made safer by the building of at least two fire escapes at the rear of the building. Memorial hall is provided with ample accommodations in case of fire, as it is a modern building and has broad stairs and passageways.</p>
--	--

*Springfield Republican,
Jan. 14, 1904*

On July 10, 1904, James D. Outerson, who was the town clerk, the town treasurer and registrar, as well as a businessman, moved out of the Burnap Block to a store on Main Street.

James D. Outerson is taking steps to remove his business from the Burnap block to the large store recently vacated by M. J. King on Main street, where he will have much more room for his largely increasing stock of goods. Mr Outerson, who holds the positions of town clerk, town treasurer and registrar, will transfer the records and other books of the town, together with the safe and vaults, from the present location to his new store, where he will attend to the duties of his several offices in connection with his other business. He expects to make the transfer the latter part of next week, and will have the new store fully equipped for business the 1st of August.

Springfield Republican, July 10, 1904

The previous article did not say what type of business that Mr. Outerson was in, and it did not say where he was moving. However, in the next article, both of those omissions are corrected. He is moving to a store on the corner of Main and Church Streets, and his business is men's furnishings.

The town clerk's office has been removed this week from the store in the Burnap block to the larger quarters in the building at the corner of Main and Church streets. Town Clerk James D. Outerson, who also conducts a men's furnishing goods store in connection with his duties as town clerk and treasurer, has also moved his stock to the new location.

Springfield Republican, July 23, 1904

The Egner Brothers have decided to refurbish the former quarters of Mr. Outerson, and turn them into a lunch room, as can be seen in the 1905 article.

school. Egner Bros have leased the store in the Burnap block formerly occupied by J. D. Outerson and are fitting it up as a lunch-room. The rear will be given up to a number of pool-tables.

Springfield Republican, June 25, 1905

Mr Martin F. Dumschot, a tailor who had opened a shop in the Burnap Block six months earlier, has been missing for six weeks.

There is considerable interest felt in the case of Martin F. Dumschot, who mysteriously disappeared from here about six weeks ago. He came here last fall and opened a tailor-shop in the **Burnap block**, where he conducted his business until the time of his disappearance. For some time no particular notice was taken of his absence, as it was thought that he had gone to visit relatives in other parts of the state. As the time went by and no news of the man came to his friends here, they became alarmed and started inquiries, which have so far been fruitless. His relatives were communicated with, but none of them knew anything of his whereabouts. He has a sister at South Windsor and brothers at Waterbury and Naugatuck, who fear that he has met with some misfortune.

Springfield Republican, Apr. 8, 1906

The next article is interesting because of how the newspaper wrote about African Americans in the early 1900s. The May 4, 1911 article is about a dance contest.

Windsor Locks, Conn., May 4.—Great rivalry exists in this town among the colored exponents of the terpsichorean art. Last Saturday evening, George Jackson, better known as "Shine," gave an exhibition in **Burnap's Opera House**. His performance aroused much jealousy among the colored brethren and he is out with a challenge to any colored man of this vicinity for a "wooden shoe" contest. He gives Albert Scott the preference for a contest to take place next Saturday night at **Burnap's** hall, for a side bet as large as Scott wishes to make it. The only requirements laid down by Jackson are that the money shall be posted before 6 p. m., May 6, and that M. T. Scannell shall referee.

Springfield Daily News

May 4, 1911

The March 12, 1912 article is about a large amount of money being missing from the bank. There were disagreements as to how to solve the problem. While it doesn't say so in the article, Dr. Burnap's brother in law, Mr. Alfred Woods Converse, had stolen

\$185,000 from the Windsor Locks savings bank. Many citizens were going to lose their savings. The problem of how to solve the problem was difficult and caused great controversy, as we can see in the March 12, 1912 article below.

WINDSOR LOCKS, Ct., Saturday, Mch. 16.
A sentiment in favor of having the **Windsor Locks** savings bank placed in the hands of a receiver has been growing among many depositors who are clamoring for a speedy settlement of the bank muddle. This sentiment is being largely fostered by members of the committee who were elected at a depositors' meeting many weeks ago to represent the interests of depositors. Posters were put up about the town to-day calling for a meeting of depositors to be held in **Burnap's opera** house Monday evening, the 25th. The plan of
The Springfield Republican, March 12, 1912

The telephone company's business was growing rapidly and they needed more room for more hardware to upgrade the previous telephones which were of older technology. The Oct. 27, 1912 article describes the situation.

The telephone company has had gangs of men at work inside and out preparing for the changes in the system from the bell ringing method to the common battery system. The new quarters in the **Burnap Block** are being remodeled to meet the requirements of the company. Partitions have been put in and new floors are being laid and metal ceilings are to be put on some of the new rooms. New switchboards and other appliances of modern character will be installed, but it will be a couple of months more before the changes will be all made and the new system put into use.
Springfield Union, Oct 27, 1912

The following is a long article which gives the details of the expansion of the Telephone Company's business in Windsor Locks. They were expanding to take up almost an entire floor of the Burnap Block on a ten year lease with an option for five

more years. For anyone interested in the nature of the Telephone Company's expansion, this is an excellent article. The first two sentences in the article are about the bank problem. Someone must have forgotten to edit the article before it went to press.

**Growth of Telephone Business Has
Made Necessary Larger Quarters
and Improved Service—More Sub-
scribers Than in Thompsonville.**

From Our Special Correspondent.

WINDSOR LOCKS, Ct., Saturday, Aug. 3.

Quietude, exceptional even for the summer season, reigned over Windsor Locks last week, unbroken except for a manifestation of the bitterness which is still rankling in many hearts over the bank issue. The chief incident in the progress of the town was the transfer of the telephone exchange headquarters to the Burnap block. The change is made necessary on account of the rapid growth of the business of the Windsor Locks branch of the company and is notable as a sign of the development of the town as a whole. Ten years ago the number of telephones installed in the town was very small, but to-day nearly every house has one and the operators are among the busiest people in the place. The transfer was made Wed-

nesday, when representatives of the Southern New England telephone company signed a lease with the owners of the Burnap block taking over the use of all but two rooms on the second floor of the building for 10 years with the privilege of renewing for five years more. It is planned to enlarge the present room for the operators by an extension of the switchboard. Lawyer Johnson's office has been turned over to the company and will be used as the office for Manager G. C. Rising, while the room adjoining that on the Main-street front is to be used as the stock room. Other rooms which have just been acquired are to be utilized as the wire chief's office, for testing apparatus and for the power plant and storage batteries. On the whole, the changes are sweeping ones and point to vastly increased facilities in conducting the company's business. It is proposed by the company to change the system for the exchange from the bell and magneto plan to the common battery, and this change will do away with the antiquated system of calling central in favor of the simpler method in use in all larger places. Previous to this it has been necessary to ring a bell before removing the receiver, but now merely taking down the receiver will call the operator. A special apparatus is to be affixed to the old instruments while the changes are being made, and when they are completed new instruments will be installed where they are required. The company hopes to have all the changes completed and the new system in good running order by the latter part of October, and is also talking of doing a certain amount of underground work, with a cable through Spring street. The Windsor Locks exchange now has a total of 332 subscribers and the Thompsonville exchange has 322, as compared with a total of about 200 in both sections 10 years ago.

Springfield Republican
Aug. 4, 1912

The May 6, 1913 article, which follows, shows that the telephone company's new technology and the expansion worked very well.

New Telephone System Works Well.

The changes in the system in the central telephone office have been made without causing any hindrance in the service and the new method of caring for the calls is done in good manner by the operators. Since the "cut-over" the outside men have been calling at the houses or offices of the many subscribers to remove the handles so that no more ringing will be done and later the present instruments will be replaced by the improved type for the common battery system. The central office in the **Burnap block** is well adapted to care for the company's business now, as much more space on the second floor in the **block** is utilized by having all the rooms on that floor except one connected for the telephone company's affairs and all are equipped with the most modern appliances for the business.

Springfield Republican, May 6, 1913

While the following article has a headline about an assault, the more interesting information in the article of Aug 21, 1913, was that the top floor of the Burnap Building had a Polish boarding house in it.

Sixty Days for Assault.

John Kowolski was arrested by Officer Gogarty this morning in Windsor Locks for assaulting a woman boarder at the Polish boarding house on the top floor of the **Burnap block** in Main street. In the mixup Kowolski was pushed out of a window in the rear of the building, taking the wire screening and casing from the window with him. He turned a somersault in the air, landing on his feet. He was brought before Justice Lashin this noon and fined \$5 and costs of court and given 60 days in jail. He was taken to the Hartford county jail this afternoon.

Springfield Republican, Aug 21, 1913

Sewers are an absolute necessity for a growing town. The June 22, 1913 article tells about a meeting at the Burnap Block to vote on apportionment of the cost.

THE WINDSOR LOCKS SEWER.

Special Meeting Will Determine Apportionment of Cost—Interest in Loan Association—School Graduations.

From Our Special Correspondent.

WINDSOR LOCKS, Ct., Saturday, June 21.

The last act of the sewer and sidewalk charter for the town will be enacted Wednesday evening at the special town-meeting in **Burnap's** opera house, and at which the voters will consider the acceptance of the two charters as passed by the General Assembly, and will vote upon such parts of the charters as require town action. That the charters will pass in the form they now stand seems to be unquestioned. A meeting of all the citizens of the town was held before the matter went to the Legislature, and at that time no objections were raised to either of the proposed charters as a whole. The only dis-

Springfield Republican, June 22, 1913

The Western Union Telegraph company, which was housed at the Train Depot, is being folded into the Telephone company. The details are covered in the July 26, 1913 article below.

TELEGRAPH CHANGES.

Suffield Business to Be Transmitted from Windsor Locks.

SUFFIELD, Conn., July 25—Beginning Aug. 1 the local office of the Western Union Telegraph company at the depot and also that at the Windsor Locks depot will be closed and these offices transferred to the local division of the Southern New England Telephone company in the **Burnap block** in Windsor Locks. The combined business will be conducted by George C. Irving, the present manager of the telephone company. Along with the consolidating of the offices here, the telegraph company will discontinue the office at Thompsonville and persons wishing to send telegrams from Thompsonville, Hazardville and Somersville may call the Windsor Locks office without

any toll line charge.

This service is extended only to telephone subscribers. Agencies will be established at O. C. Bugbee's store in West Suffield, McMullen's store in Somersville and Allen's store in Hazardville for receiving messages, from where they will be telephoned to the operator at the center office in Windsor Locks. The local telephone central office will be equipped with the needed facilities for handling messages. An operator will be on duty from 8 o'clock in the morning to 3 o'clock in the evening and after that hour messages will be telephoned to Hartford and from there transmitted to their destination.

Louis Molinari, the automobile owner, who came near figuring in an accident at Fuller's corner, wishes to correct a statement published in this morning's paper. Instead of driving the truck he was in a light runabout with his two children and in turning out to the right to avoid an accident at the turn he ran into the drain at William S. Fuller's house and broke a small connection to the steering apparatus of the machine.

Springfield Union
July 26, 1913

In the Jan 14, 1914 article, we see that there were two movie theaters operating in Windsor Locks. One was the Princess Theater, which was on top of Blanche's Bowling Alley on Grove St. The other was the Burnap Opera House, which also showed movies. In this article, we see that the Burnap Opera House agreed to stop showing movies, and the Princess Theatre will continue to operate as a movie theater.

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

Springfield Republican, Jan. 14, 1914

In the Nov. 9, 1916 article, an interesting event is described. A number of drum and bugle corps presents a series of dance programs in Burnap's Hall.

The drum and bugle corps will give the first of a series of novelty dances in **Burnap's** hall Saturday night. They will have as guests each night three different corps from other places in the state and previous to the dance they will give a street parade and afterward some of them will give drills in the hall.

Springfield Republican, Nov. 9, 1916

Columbus Day ball at Burnap's Hall, with music provided by an orchestra is described in the Oct. 8, 1916 article.

Plans for the celebration of Columbus day have been perfected by Italian societies of the town. The parade, headed by Colt's band of Hartford, will march through the principal streets Thursday afternoon. It will start at 2.30 o'clock. A dance in **Burnap's** hall has been arranged for the evening, for which Groves's orchestra will furnish the music. It is expected that stores will close at noon.

Springfield Republican
Oct. 8, 1916

Up until now, the telephone and telegraph companies had been integrating under the Telephone company at the Burnap Block. However, the Feb. 12, 1916 article shows a change. Now the telegraph company is moving out of the Burnap Block to the Carlisle Block, although business between the two companies will remain as it was.

The local office of the Western Union telegraph company will be moved next week from the telephone office in the **Burnap block** to another office by itself in the Bidwell **block**, where the business will be conducted in conjunction with the telephone company, as at present.

Springfield Republican, Feb 12, 1916

Here is some information about Dr. Burnap. Dr. Sidney R. Burnap was born in 1833 and he died in 1901. He was married to Clara A. Converse Burnap (1842 - 1938). They had two daughters, Mary Converse Burnap (1869 - 1947), and Clara Annie Burnap. He was a physician and a financier. That is an interesting combination.

He and his family lived in a very large house on Maple Street. It sat on about 100 acres of land. The house was called "The Castle" by some. The 26 room house was a popular place for town picnics and social gatherings. When the Burnap family sold their estate, the land was subdivided and put up for auction. According to Mickey Danyluk, a fire in a barn at the Burnap estate was the impetus for Windsor Locks to form a Fire Department. One can assume that Dr. Burnap had a good deal of influence in the town government. Dr. Burnap died on Sept. 3, 1901, at the age of 68. He is buried in Grove Cemetery in Windsor Locks. Below is a portrait of Dr. Burnap.



Dr. Sidney Rogers Burnap (1833-1901)

Burnap's brother-in-law, Alfred Woods Converse, a highly esteemed man who served as both the town's postmaster and manager of the Windsor Locks Bank, died in the Burnap mansion. He had shot himself in the chest with a pistol while in his own home. He claimed he was cleaning his pistol when it discharged. He called for help and was taken to his sister's house where he died on January 14, 1912. His sister was Dr. Burnap's widow. (information from Mickey Danyluk).

Two weeks after Mr. Converse's death, Windsor Locks Bank officials confirmed that \$185,000 had been stolen from the safe. Alfred Woods Converse was an important man in Windsor Locks. He was the Town Clerk, head of the GAR (Civil War veterans association), head of the Masons, Treasurer of the Windsor Locks Savings Bank, and Postmaster of Windsor Locks.

Below is an 1880 photo of the Burnap estate with his family in front.



Dr. Sidney R. Burnap family and estate 1880

This concludes the history of the Burnap Block while it was under the ownership of Dr. Sidney Burnap, who died in 1901. The building stayed in the estate of Dr. Burnap until it was sold to Charles Colli in 1918.

Section 2 - Central Hall (1918 - 1938)

After 1916, no more newspaper articles could be found which referred to the Burnap Block. From 1922 to 1934, the Springfield newspapers had 122 articles which referred to "Central Hall." Central Hall was the former Burnap Block. Those 122 articles are highly repetitive. This section presents ten of the 122 newspaper articles to give the reader a feel of what was going on at Central Hall. Most of the articles were about basketball scores or the results of boxing matches. This set of ten newspaper articles is representative of the full set of 122.

The floor of the dance hall of the Burnap Building which was built over springs remained in use in Central Hall. That was the big room now used primarily for boxing matches, basketball games, and meetings.

The first newspaper article mentioning Central Hall appeared on Jan. 27, 1921. It announced that the next night there would be a basketball game in Central Hall, followed by a dance.

The Churchills of Windsor Locks will play the Foster Five of Springfield to-night in Central hall, Windsor Locks. Dancing will follow. The Churchills would like to hear from teams 120 to 130. Address John Fitzpatrick, 17 Church street, Windsor Locks, Ct.

Springfield Daily News, Jan. 27, 1921

The next article (Feb, 23 1922) says that the Suffield Athletic Club basketball team will play the Windsor Locks "Churchills" in Central Hall.

The Suffield Athletic club basketball team will play with the Churchills in the **Central hall** Thursday evening.

Springfield Republican
Feb.23,1922

The Feb. 1, 1926 article says that the Chicopee Nonotucks will play the Windsor Locks "Advertisers."

The Nonotucks of Chicopee will play the **Windsor Lock Advertisers** tonight at **Central hall, Windsor Locks.** The Skiptown squad will make the trip by automobile and will leave Chicopee at 6.

Springfield Republican, Feb.1, 1926

In the Jan 25, 1927 article, the Windsor Locks "Advertisers" have beaten the Springfield team. Two games were played. The second was between two women's teams. Both the Windsor Locks and Springfield teams each had a mens and a women's team

Windsor Locks, Ct., Jan. 24—The Springfield A. A. collapsed completely before the powerful offensive of the **Windsor Locks Advertisers** in a five-minute overtime periods at **Central hall** here tonight and were beaten, 36 to 26. The score at the end of the regulation game stood at 22-all. Torrant featured for the Ads while Leyden starred for the Athletics. In a preliminary game the Advertiser Girls defeated the Diamond Match Maidens, 10 to 8. The scores:—

Windsor Locks			Springfield A. A.		
H.	F.	P.	H.	F.	P.
Potter, lf	2	2	6	0	1
Snelgrove, lf	0	0	0	1	3
Tarrant, rf	4	3	31	3	1
Midden, c	4	1	9	3	2
Lord, lg	1	1	3	2	3
Waterman, rg	2	1	5		
Conroy, rg	1	0	2		
14 3 35			9 8 26		

Referee, Johnson. Time, 20-minute halves and five minutes overtime.

Advertiser Girls			Diamond M. Girls		
H.	F.	P.	H.	F.	P.
Collis, lf	1	2	2	0	0
V.Shell'ion, rf	1	0	2	1	0
Cameron,	0	0	0	0	0
Russoway, lg	0	0	0	1	0
D.Shell'ion, rg	1	0	0	2	0
3 2 2			4 0 8		

Springfield Republican, Jan 25, 1927

The Jan. 21, 1928 article describes a High School basketball game between Windsor Locks High School and Bloomfield High School.

AT WINDSOR LOCKS
Windsor Locks, Ct., Jan. 20—Windsor **Locks** High defeated the Bloomfield High quintet here tonight in the **Central hall**, 30 to 17. Karges starred for the winners while Lynch scored for the losers. In a preliminary game the **Windsor Locks** Second team beat the Bloomfield seconds 20 to 7. The score:—

Windsor Locks				Bloomfield High			
	B.	F.	P.		B.	F.	P.
Huntley, lf	4	2	10	Grady, rg	1	2	4
Byrne, rf	0	1	1	Lynch, lg	1	2	4
Karges, cf	6	1	13	Bettors, c	1	1	3
McHugh, c	0	0	0	Douglas, rf	1	1	3
Dowd, lg	0	1	1	Tyrrell, lf	1	1	3
Marion, rg	1	3	5				
	11	8	30		5	7	17

Springfield Republican, Jan. 21, 1928

The Jan. 20, 1929 article is especially interesting for Windsor Locks residents who remember or remember hearing about Marconi's Luncheonette, which was run by three brothers: Louis, John and Angelo. This article mentions Louie Marconi and "Andy" Marconi. The latter must have been an error. Possibly they meant "Angie," which would have referred to Angelo.

WINDSOR LOCKS SCENE
OF AMATEUR FIGHTS
The New **Central** Boxing club of **Windsor Locks**, Ct., will put on its first amateur show Tuesday night at **Central hall** with an all-star show. The first bout is to get under way at 8 and Matchmaker Fitzpatrick expects to handle a large crowd.
Sailor Al of Thompsonville is scheduled to meet Walter Kress of Hartford in the star bout of the evening. Earnie Vance, **Windsor Locks** boy, meets Frank Pitlak of Chicopee in a grudge fight at 165 pounds. There are also several Springfield boys on the card, among them the O'Brien brothers. Billy meets Andy Marconi of **Windsor Locks** while Wally mixes it up with Jimmy Martin, also of **Windsor Locks**.
Frankie Columbo of **Windsor Locks** who put up such a good showing with Merino Pagnoul is to meet Tommy Flanagan of Springfield at 140 pounds. Other bouts are Jimmy Quagliaroli of **Windsor Locks** meeting Billy Krack of this city, Jimmy DiSanti of Springfield meeting Dominick Lonnotti of **Windsor Locks** and Joe Mandali of this city against Louie Marconi of **Windsor Locks**.

Springfield Republican, Jan. 20, 1929

The Jan. 23, 1929 article refers to the results of the boxing matches which were announced in the previous article. Louie Marconi beat his opponent, Joe Mandell, of Springfield, but "Andy" Marconi was defeated by Billy O'Brien of Springfield.

Pitlak Wins Main Bout On Windsor Locks Card

Windsor Locks, Ct., Jan. 22—Frank Pitlak of Chicopee won a three-round decision over Ernie Vance of Windsor Locks here tonight in the main bout of the amateur show held at the Central hall under the New Central boxing club. Over 500 fans turned out for this third card. In the semi-final Sallor Al of Thompsonville won on a foul from Walter Kress of Hartford in the third round.

Billy O'Brien of Springfield won the decision over Andy Marconi of Windsor Locks. Frankie Columbo of Windsor Locks knocked out Tommy Flannagan of Springfield in the first round. Louie Marconi of Windsor Locks defeated Joe Mandell of Springfield by a decision, while Jimmy Martin of Windsor Locks won the decision over Al Farricelli of Springfield, the latter subbing for Wally O'Brien of the same town.

Springfield Republican, Jan. 23, 1929

The Garbarino market in Central Hall Block was broken into, as we see in the Dec. 27, 1929 newspaper article. The interesting thing about this writeup is that it makes clear the entire building that used to be the Burnap Block was now known as the "Central Hall Block." The term "Central Hall" didn't just refer to the Hall that was used for boxing, basketball, meetings, etc.

The fruit store conducted by D. Garbarino in the Central hall block was broken into last night and about \$5 and some merchandise stolen. Entrance was gained by breaking the protecting shield on a rear window and lowering the top half. No arrests have been made.

Springfield Union, 12-27-1929

The Nov. 23, 1933 article gave the result of a meeting of the Athletic Association which decided to start a basketball team for the winter at Central Hall.

At the meeting of the Athletic Association Monday night it was decided to foster a basketball team for the winter to play weekly or oftener at home and to engage the Central hall for that purpose. Joseph Conroy will be manager.

Springfield Republican, Nov. 23, 1933

The newspaper article (March 15, 1934) says that the Windsor Locks Advertisers will play the Chicopee Promoting quintet at Central Hall. 1934 was the last year in which newspaper articles mentioned Central Hall.

Chicopee Pros Play Windsor Locks Tonight
 The Chicopee Promoting quintet travels to Windsor Locks, Ct., tonight where they are scheduled to meet the Windsor Locks Advertisers at Central Hall. Last week the Nutmeggers, with several local hoopsters in their lineup took the measure of the Pros at Chicopee. The following players will make the trip to Windsor Locks: Coach Bennie Banas, Manager Cyran, "Ski" Linehan, Pasterezyk, Stanek, Moynihan, Les Maynard, Frank Adamski and "Flee" Niemiec. The start will be made from the Chicopee Polish National home at 6.15.
Springfield Republican

Charles Colli, who owned Central Hall, was born in 1882 and died in 1938. He is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery. He was married to Lena A. Massino, who was born in 1876 and died in 1930. They had one son, Charles, who was born in 1905 and died in 1930. Here is a photo of Charles Colli with his first business in Windsor Locks, a grocery and meat cart, followed by a photo of him when he was the town's Fire Chief. The 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks lists a business owned by Charles Colli as: "Colli, Charles. Flour, Grain and Feed. Center St."



Charles Colli, Meat and Groceries Cart Store



Charles Colli
Windsor Locks Fire Chief
1916 - 1922

Section 3 - The A&P Building

In 1938, Charles Colli sold the Central Hall Block to Graziano Graziani, who razed the building and replaced it with a single story building which extended from Coly's Hotel to Oak Street. It had two storefronts. The largest store was the A&P. The smaller store, on the corner of Oak and Main Streets, had been a Western Auto store which was owned by Don LaRussa, who later turned it into "D. F. LaRussa's" appliance store. That pair of storefronts didn't change much until 1979 when all the stores along Main St were razed for the process called redevelopment. Below is a photo of The A&P and the corner store before re-development.



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

The following article from the *Springfield Republican* of Nov. 5, 1938, is an excellent brief summary of the entire history of the building, from when it was the Burnap Block to when it became Central Hall, to when Mr. Graziani bought the building.

GRAZIANI GRAZIANO

BUYS BURNAP BLOCK

Windsor Locks, Nov. 4.—Transfer papers have been recorded in the town clerk's office for the sale of the Burnap block, one of the oldest business blocks in this town. The property has been purchased by Graziani Graziano of Chestnut street, local contractor and builder, from the City bank of Norwalk.

The property is located on the corner of Main and Oak streets and is a three story brick structure with four stores on the ground floor. The block was erected in 1863 by the late Fred Abbe and a few years later was purchased by Dr Sidney R. Burnap. In 1918 the late Charles Colli of this town bought this property and in 1920 the City bank of Norwalk obtained possession and Charles D. Colton of this town has acted as their agent here.

For many years part of the second floor was used by the Southern New England Telephone company for the local telephone exchange and business office, and that section of the building has been vacant practically all the time since the telephone company moved to their new building on Spring street, several years ago.

When the building was erected, the third floor of the building was built with heavy arch springs under the floor, which adapted the hall especially for dancing and for many years this dance hall was known for miles around as having one of the best floor surfaces in this section for dancing. The hall was used for many years as a moving picture theater, and later became the home of the Central theater when owned by Mr Colli. For several years the hall has not been used, having been condemned by state inspectors on account of inadequate exits.

The new owner, Mr Graziano, expects to repair and remodel the block.

Springfield Republican, Nov. 5, 1938

Section 4 - Conclusions

This article has traced the history of the building on the corner of Main and Oak Streets in 1863. No information was available about the building between the time it was built and the time when it was bought by Dr. Sidney R. Burnap in about 1865. It became known as "Burnap's Block," and it soon became a social and business center of Windsor Locks. It contained a number of stores, some major businesses such as the *Windsor Locks Journal* and the telephone and telegraph companies. It also housed a large hall known as Burnap's Opera House which held operas and shows as well as movies, dances and meetings. We reviewed newspaper articles from 1870 to 1916.

Dr. Burnap died in 1901 and his estate sold the Burnap Block to Charles Colli in 1918. It became known as the Central Hall Block. There were 122 newspaper articles about the Central Hall block from 1918 to 1934. We reviewed some of them. While Central Hall continued to house businesses and stores, most of the news stories were about sporting events. The building became more focussed on sports, especially basketball and boxing. It was also used for meetings and for dances.

The building was razed after it was bought in 1935 by Graziano Graziani, and replaced with a one story building housing the A&P and a smaller store on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. Not much changed with the building until the redevelopment of Main St in 1979, when the building was torn down.

Chapter 17

History of the Ashmere Estate

The history of the Ashmere estate in Windsor Locks and the history of the Dexter/Coffin/Haskell family are tightly intertwined. This article presents a brief history of the Ashmere mansion, along with some happenings in the Dexter/Coffin/Haskell family, which provide a context for the history of the most elegant house ever built in Windsor Locks.



Ashmere

Seth Dexter and Jabez Haskell were early settlers in Pine Meadow, which later became Windsor Locks. Seth Dexter's daughter, Harriet Clark Dexter, married Edwin Douglas in 1834. Edwin Douglas was the "onsite engineer" during the construction of the Windsor Locks canal. Seth gave his daughter, Harriet, a five-acre tract of land on Main Street. Because of the beautiful Ash trees on the property, it was called "Ash Meadow." Edwin and Harriet had a magnificent mansion built on that property in about 1848. The mansion came to be known as "Ashmere." They lived in it until the canal was completed. Then they moved to Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania where Edwin worked on another canal.

In 1861, Julia Sergeant Dexter, a granddaughter of Seth Dexter, married Thomas R. Haskell, a grandson of Jabez Haskell. Thomas R. Haskell died shortly after fathering a daughter, who was named Thomasine. We shall re-visit her shortly. In 1866, Julia, who was then a widow, married Herbert Raymond Coffin, and they moved into Ashmere. Herbert and Julia Coffin had two sons, Arthur D. Coffin and Herbert Raymond Coffin, Jr.

In 1901, Herbert Raymond Coffin died at his Ashmere estate. He had started work at the Dexter paper mill as a clerk, and rose up to become a partner. He was also President of the Connecticut River Co, a Director of the Connecticut Banking Co, the Medlicott Co, and the Windsor Locks Bridge Co. Both of their sons followed their father into leadership roles in the

paper company. Arthur Dexter Coffin continued to live at Ashmere. Arthur Dexter Coffin later had a son, Dexter Drake Coffin, to whom we shall return shortly.

We now return to Thomasine. She was the reason for one of the most important social events ever held in Windsor Locks. In 1906, Thomasine Dexter Haskell was engaged to marry George Albert Conant. Thomasine's mother, Julia Dexter Haskell, lived in the Ashmere mansion. Julia offered to have her daughter's wedding at the Ashmere. Thomasine accepted. On December 11, 1906, three hundred people came from New Hampshire, New York and Connecticut to Windsor Locks by train and trolley. When they arrived at the Railroad Station, they were taken by carriage to the Ashmere estate. A great deal of work had been done on the estate to prepare for the wedding. A large porch had been enclosed and steam heat was added, along with additional electric lights. The ceremony took place in the Music Room. The mansion was decorated in a scheme of white and green for winter. The dinner was sumptuous. The orchestra was magnificent. The decorations were extravagant. The December 1906 event was truly extraordinary.



Music Room at Ashmere

1914 Mrs. Julia Dexter Haskell Coffin died in her Ashmere home. She was well known for her charity work among the immigrant community, and viewed her wealth as a trust for the less fortunate.

At the time of his death in 1940, Arthur Dexter Coffin was living in Ashmere. and his son Dexter Drake Coffin was living in the white brick colonial next door which later became the Bickford Convalescent Home. After Arthur Dexter Coffin's death, his son, Dexter Drake Coffin, and his family moved into Ashmere. His wife, Betty, never liked Ashmere. She felt it was too big and that it felt coldly institutional.

In 1949, Thomasine Haskell Conant died at her home in Hartford, Conn. Prior to her marriage to George Conant, she was active in church and civic affairs in Windsor Locks. She took great pride in her work with the public library. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Public Park, which later named Pesci Park. In 1940, she donated the Main Street property on which her parents' house had been located, to the Windsor Locks Public Library for its exclusive use as a library site.



Grounds of the Ashmere

In 1952, Dexter Drake Coffin and his wife, Betty were still living in Ashmere. Mr. Coffin, who sat on the Library Board, was ready to retire, and to move elsewhere. He offered the Ashmere and its five acres to the Library Board to serve as the Windsor Locks Public Library. The Library Board declined his offer. Interestingly enough, Ella Grasso was on the Library Board at that time. After his offer to the Library Board was refused, Mr. Coffin sold the Ashmere to local businessmen who turned it into an Inn. That business lasted for seven years. The Ashmere was then purchased by a New York company as the site for Dexter Plaza, and the building was demolished in 1960. It is said that Dexter Coffin wept as sat in the Board Room of C.H. Dexter mill, and watched the mansion being torn down.

When Dexter Drake Coffin left Windsor Locks in 1952, he also sold the Dexter house on Main Street to Rose and Ken Bickford, and donated land behind Ashmere to Center Street for a new high school. Later, that building, which was built in 1955, became the Middle School. The bridge portion of Interstate I-91 was named for Dexter Drake Coffin, who gave his time, talent and money to the local community, and was largely responsible for steering the decision to place an airport at the western end of Windsor Locks instead of in Hartford. That airport became Bradley Field. Dexter Drake Coffin died in 1966.

The final chapter of the Dexter family in Windsor Locks was written in the year 2000. The C.H. Dexter Corporation was the oldest corporation on the NY Stock Exchange. It was established by Seth Dexter in 1769, and it grew into a worldwide manufacturing conglomerate. In 2000, the final stockholder meeting was held on the floor of the mill. Dexter D. Coffin Jr, and his brother, David L. Coffin, sons of Dexter D. Coffin, were present.

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

Below is a photo of the Ashmere estate being torn down.



The Ashmere being torn down

Chapter 18

Blanche's Bowling Alley and the Princess/Palace Theater

Everybody who remembers the old Main Street “downtown” area, remembers Blanche's Bowling Alley. It was on the North Side of Grove Street, just up from Main Street. Not everyone knows that Blanche was Blanche (Bianchi) Lavigne, whose relatives owned Bianchi's Restaurant, Sy Bianchi's Newsstand, and Mondo Bianchi's Shoe Store. Far fewer knew what had been on the top floor of the bowling alley. The goal of this chapter is to tell the story.

Blanche's Bowling Alley was a small affair. It only had four lanes, and it used pin boys because the bowling alley predated the development of automated pin setters. It was a fun place to spend some time and some energy. Blanche's Bowling Alley was antique, even by the standards of the 1950s and 1960s. Windsor Locks had the “Bradley Bowl” near Bradley Field, which brought the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) Tour to our town. However, one didn't go to Blanche's for the same experience that one would go to the Bradley Bowl. One could walk to Blanche's, and one didn't need much money.

The only available photos of the bowling alley were ones taken of a person or a family, with the bowling alley in the background. See the photograph of Angie (Ferrari) Baron in front of the bowling alley. You can make out the word “BOWLING” on the sign.



**Angie (Ferrari) Baron in front of
Blanche's Bowling Alley**

Unfortunately, the bowling alley burned on February 6, 1972. The building had been owned by Blanche Lavigne, but the bowling alley had been shut down since 1960. See the photo of the fire. After the fire, the building remained closed.



*Blanche's Bowling Alley Burns. Grove St.
Princess Theater was on top floor.*

The top floor of the building used to be a theater which was originally called the Princess Theater, but was later known as the Palace Theater. Leo Montemerlo said that he could see two movies there and get a lollipop for seven cents.

The January 5, 1914 issue of the *Springfield Republican* had an article which read: "The two moving picture houses that have been operated in competition for some time, have been combined. Hereafter the pictures will be shown only in the Princes theater, and the show in the Burnap Opera House will be closed."

The October 20, 1929 issue of the *Springfield Republican* shed further light on the subject, saying: "The Palace Theater on Grove Street, closed for a few years, has been sold by the owners, Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano, to Harold Lavigne of Thompsonville, who will open a bowling alley when alterations are made. This building was built about ten years ago by a company of local Italian men who conducted it as a movie house for a few years, but did not make any money on it. Later it was tried a short time by people from out of town, without success. A few years ago, the owners of the Rialto Theater, Viola and Alfano, bought the Palace and closed it, ending competition that was making business unprofitable for both places for a while."

Now you know the history of the building that was an early movie theater and bowling alley in Windsor Locks.

Chapter 19

The Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Company

Leonardo Colapietro was one of four Colapietro brothers: Pasquale, Leonardo, Vito and, Giovanni. They came to Windsor Locks from Turi, a very small town southeastern Italy. Turi is just south of Bari, and is much smaller than Windsor Locks. Pasquale was the first to arrive in the US. He came to Windsor Locks and set up a confectionary store by 1906. His three brothers followed within a few years. Leonardo and Vito stayed in the US. After a while, Giovanni returned to his hometown in Italy. Here is a portrait of the four brothers, which was taken before 1910.



*The Colapietro Brothers
Vito, Giovanni, Leonardo and Pasquale*

After they were here for a few years, Vito and Leonardo went back to Italy briefly, to find wives. Both were successful. Below is a photo of the families of Vito, Leonardo and Pasquale taken in 1914, followed by a photo of Leonardo and Stella's growing family in about 1921. The brothers wasted no time in starting businesses and families.



Three Colapietro Families - about 1911

*Vito and Anna
Tony Angelo*

*Pasquale and Grazia
Tony Anna Esther*

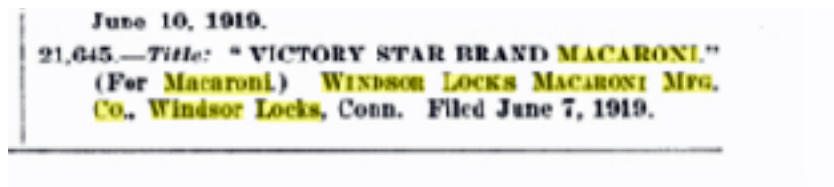
*Leonardo and Stella
Tony*



*Stella (Romito) and Leonardo Colapietro
with their children Esther, Armand and Tony, about 1921*

Pasquale's confectionary shop was in the Mather block. Vito bought the hotel across from the railroad station by 1917, and he had a confectionary store on the ground floor. Leonardo set up his own shop in the Mather block. He started a factory for manufacturing macaroni. It was called the **Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Company**. His factory also had a store, which sold not only macaroni, but also various other sundries. John Zaccheo, the oldest son of Tommasso Zaccheo, who had the Pontiac dealership across from the bridge, said that Leonardo's macaroni business was not a small-time operation. Leonardo used to have large amounts of high-gluten flour shipped in from Nebraska, Wisconsin and New York.

In 1919, Leonardo Colapietro filed for brand name for his macaroni. The application was filed with the Patent Department.



In 1993, Howard J. White, who at the time was the Municipal Historian of Windsor Locks, wrote an article entitled "Interesting Facts about Windsor Locks." Unfortunately that article did not say who published it or where more copies could be gotten. Since it contains an informative section on the Windsor Locks Macaroni Factory, that section is included here in its entirety.

"Macaroni Factory in Windsor Locks"

It is the absolute truth. There was a Macaroni Factory in Windsor Locks. It was owned and operated by Leon Colapietro and located in the First National Bank building on the Southwest corner of Spring and Main Streets. If one were walking along Main Street and the hatchway of the building was open, you could see the young boys making the boxes in which to ship the product. In later years Leon Colapietro and his family moved to Springfield. Another interesting note concerning the Colapietro family was that Leon had two brothers in town, who operated the same type stores, fresh fruit, candy, ice cream, tobacco, cigars, and they had a very good selection of fireworks for the Fourth of July celebrations. As I recall, along with the soda fountain, there was a little ice cream parlor in the rear of each of the stores. Here is an interesting little story about the Colapietro brothers. If you went into Patsy's store to purchase something and he did not have it, he would send you to Leon's store that was up Main St just a short distance, if Leon could not supply with what you were looking for, he would send you to Vito's store that was in the hotel building, across from the old railroad station. If you will excuse the phrase, the Colapietro brothers "had you either coming or going."

In 1924, there was a fire in the Mather building that started in Leonardo Colapietro's macaroni factory. The January 2, 1924 issue of the *Springfield Republican* had a long story on the fire. It said that a \$40,000 fire ran through the three story brick building belonging to the heirs of the late William Mather at the corner of Main and Spring Streets early in the morning. The rooms of the Windsor Locks Trust and Safe Deposit company were not damaged. The fire broke out either in the basement where the heaters and electrical motors were for the macaroni factory, or in Leonardo's store on the street level. The fire worked its way up through the walls and damaged the millinery shop and apartment of Mrs. Bearmont, and the music studio of Fred C. Abbe. The damage to some of the building was covered by insurance, but the massive damage to Leonardo's factory and store was only partially covered by insurance.

Soon after the fire, Leonardo Colapietro took what was left of his factory and store, and moved them to 878 Main St. in the Italian district of Springfield, Mass. He opened up the **Windsor Locks Supermarket**, and the **Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Co.** in that location. Why did he name both of his businesses after the town he just left? Because he loved Windsor Locks. I knew Leonardo Colapietro very well. He was my grandfather's brother. Our family went up to Springfield very often to visit his family. All of the children in our family called him "Zizi Leone," which is Italian for "Uncle Leo." He wasn't our uncle. We called his wife "Zia Stella" (Aunt Stella). These were terms of endearment.

"Zizi Leone" was always at his store, and always wore a big smile. He was a jovial man. Whenever I walked into his store, he would always say something like "Mel, Have a nice apple." or "Hey Mel, come and get some of these good plums." His store thrived in the Italian section of Springfield. The January 30, 1927 issue of the *Springfield Republican* said: "The Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Company plans to enlarge its quarters by occupying the vacant store immediately alongside its present store, and will install a glass partition so that the operation of the machinery can be observed from the front of the establishment. A new preliminary drying process was recently introduced, embodying an improved method of treating the product by the warm air circulating system, reducing the duration of the drying process by about 48 hours." The business reported a 33 percent increase in business over the previous year.

While Leonardo was living and running two businesses in Springfield, and his brother, Vito was doing the same thing in Windsor Locks, the two families and their friends often got together in both towns. Below is a photo of the families and friends of the family in the driveway of Leonardo and Stella's house on Wendell Place, Springfield, which was only short distance from his business. After that photo, there is a photo the Springfield Colapietros and the Windsor Locks Colapietros at the Beach. You can see Leonardo in the upper left.



*L to R: Mrs. Romito; Frank, Julia & Leo Lefemine; Anna & Angelo Colapietro, Maria Lefemine, Mrs. Ziti, Stella Colapietro, Vito Colapietro on tricycle, Domenichella Lefemine in front.
Wendell Place, Springfield, Mass., 1942*



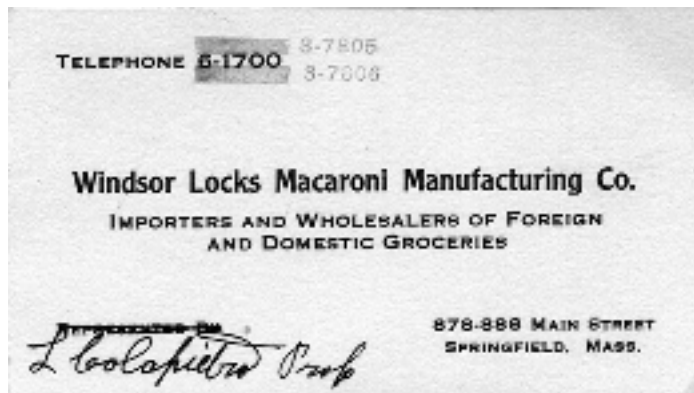
*At the beach at Misquamicut, Rhode Island, 1935
Leo Colapietro left back, John Colapietro, right back
Lena and Esther center, Lil Spinelli right front*

Vito Colapietro's wife, Anna, and Leonardo's wife, Stella, were best friends. When I think back to "Nonny" and "Zia Stella," the following photo illustrates the way I remember them. They were classy ladies.



*"Zia Stella and Nonny"
Stella and Anna Colapietro*

In 1958, Leonardo's Windsor Locks Super Market applied for and got a liquor license. His business continued to do well. Below is his business card.



Leonardo Colapietro lived a full and happy life. He died in January of 1961. The *Springfield Union* issue of Jan. 22, 1961 has his obituary. Remember that there were four Colapietro brothers. All four came to the US, but one of them, Giovanni, returned to his home city of Turi, Italy. Giovanni had two sons who became Catholic priests. One of them, Rev. Antonio Colapietro did move to the US. He presided over the funeral

mass for his Uncle Leonardo. The *Springfield Union* said: "Mr. Colapietro was born Sept 29, 1896, in Turi, Province of Bari, Italy, son of the late Antonio and Pasqua (Lerede) Colapietro. He came to this country 55 years ago and settled in Windsor Locks, CT, where he started his macaroni firm. This was the first business of its kind in the Connecticut Valley. Mr. Colapietro moved the plant to this city in 1924. He stopped the manufacture of macaroni at the outbreak of World War II. His company is still located at 878 Main St., and is operated by his two sons, Anthony and Armand, as the **Windsor Locks Super Market.**"

According to the *Springfield Union* of June 22, 1966, Anthony and Armand Colapietro transferred the license for the business to Mr Joseph Beaulieu.

The *Springfield Union* of April 25, 1969 had the following photo of a fire which destroyed the Windsor Locks Super Market.

At the time of the fire, Anthony Colapietro, Leonardo's son, was renting the store to Anthony D'Augustino. The fire was the second in the store within a week. The store had been condemned by the food inspector, and was closed at the time of the fire. That was the end of the Windsor Locks Super Market.



Supermarket Fire of Suspicious Origin

Fire fighters early Thursday morning battle a two-alarm blaze which destroyed the **Windsor Locks Supermarket** at 878 Main St. Owner Anthony D'Augustino of 5 Irene St. estimated loss at \$17,000. Fire officials said the blaze was of suspicious origin and is under investigation.

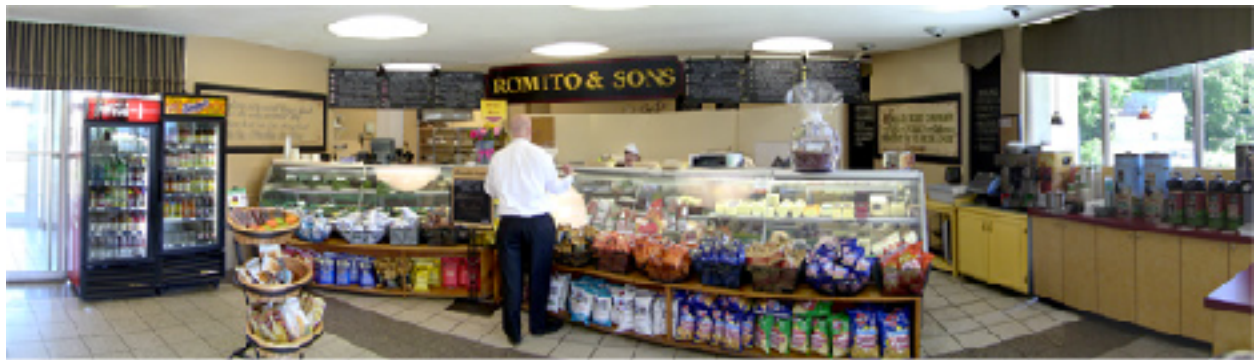
Springfield Union, April 25, 1969

Below is an early photo of Leonardo and his wife Stella, as they were starting off in Windsor Locks. They were a handsome couple. They were filled with hope and with a belief that they could forge a good life for themselves and their future family. They accomplished what they set out to do.



Stella (Romito) and Leonardo Colapietro

Their heritage lives on. Stella's maiden name was Romito. Her relatives have run an Italian Market since 1921, which was three years before Leonardo and Stella opened up the Windsor Locks Super Market in Springfield. Romito's market is still in business as of this writing in 2017. It used to be on Main Street in Springfield, not far from Leonardo Colapietro's store. The Romito family moved their store to 21 North Main St., East Longmeadow, MA. It is still a genuine Italian Market with the look and feel and smells that it is supposed to have.



Conclusion

Leonardo Colapietro came from a town in Italy that was smaller than Windsor Locks. He had no money and spoke no English. He had just finished being a teenager. The same was true of his three brothers. Three of them stayed in Windsor Locks and founded businesses. Leonardo also founded the first macaroni manufacturing company in Connecticut. He faced adversity when both of his businesses burned in 1924. He saw a chance to grow his businesses in Springfield and he moved them to that city. His businesses and his family flourished. All of his children were successful. This is the kind of businessman and family man that you would want to have in your town.

Chapter 20

St Oronzo of Turi, Italy and Windsor Locks

The feast of St. Oronzo has been celebrated in Windsor Locks since the early 1900s, when a number of people from Turi, Italy emigrated to Windsor Locks. These people included the four Colapietro brothers (Pasquale, Vito, Leonardo and Giovanni), Tommaso Zaccheo, Vito Lefemine, and their wives. Giovanni returned to Italy, but all of the other men became businessmen in Windsor Locks. Pasquale Colapietro had a confectionary store. Vito Colapietro had the hotel. Leonardo Colapietro had the Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Company. Vito Lefemine had a barber shop. All of these businesses were on Main Street.

These emigrants from Turi were devout members of St. Mary's Parish, and they quickly instituted the annual celebration of St. Oronzo Day. He was the patron saint of Turi. Turi is a town near Bari, Italy, which is in the Southeastern part of the Italian peninsula. They bought a large statue of St. Oronzo, which was carried in the annual parade for the festival of St. Oronzo. They formed the St. Oronzo Society, of which Vito Colapietro was a president for a while.

For a number of years, the festival of St. Oronzo also included a day of celebration in a park in Windsor Locks, at which there was Italian food, music, dancing and fireworks. That park is now the Bellarmine Center.

Below are two photos of the St. Oronzo celebration in Windsor Locks.



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



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

The following are photos of the St. Oronzo day celebration in Turi and in Lecce, Italy.



Festival of St. Oronzo in Turi, Italy



St. Oronzo celebration in Lecce, Italy

The legend of St. Oronzo is as follows. According to a twelfth-century manuscript, a man named Justus, who was a disciple of Saint Paul, was on his way to Rome when he was shipwrecked near the town of Salento. After the shipwreck, Justus converted a citizen named Oronzo, and his nephew, Fortunatus, in the nearby town of Lecce. Oronzo's father, Publius, had been treasurer to the emperor, and Oronzo had succeeded him to this office.

Oronzo and Fortunatus were denounced as Christians, and they refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods. They were whipped and kept in jail, but later went to Corinth, where Oronzo met Saint Paul, and was confirmed as the first bishop of Lecce. When they returned to Lecce, the authorities once again persecuted them. Antonius, a representative of Nero, imprisoned Oronzo and Fortunatus, and threatened to kill them if they did not reject their new religion. The two refused, but they managed to be released. They continued to preach in Salento and in Bari. They were finally arrested again by Antoninus and executed about two miles from Lecce.

Oronzo is venerated as the patron saint of Turi. Legend has it that he hid in a cave near there. The ending of a cholera outbreak in 1851 was attributed to him.

The citizens of Windsor Locks are fortunate to have had the festival of St. Oronzo emigrate here from the town of Turi. It adds flavor and a bit of Italian culture to our town. While almost everyone in Windsor Locks has heard of St. Oronzo, not many knew where the festival came from, who brought it to our town, or what the story of St. Oronzo was. Hopefully, this chapter has shed some light on this.

Chapter 21

One Ferry and Three Bridges

The current (2016) Windsor Locks bridge, known as "The Bridge Street Bridge," connects Windsor Locks with East Windsor. Most people would say that it connects Windsor Locks with Warehouse Point. The explanation is that East Windsor has five sections: Warehouse Point, Broad Brook, Scantic, Melrose, and Windsorville. The section of East Windsor that the bridge connects with is Warehouse Point. Warehouse Point has long been an important place to be connected with. It was first used by William Pynchon, the founder of Springfield, in the 1630s. (*East Windsor, Connecticut, Wikipedia*)

Mr. William Pynchon was one of New England's first settlers. He was an aggressive, forward-looking businessmen. He needed to ship goods and supplies to Springfield via the Connecticut River. Unfortunately river boats could not go any farther than the falls located in Enfield, so he needed a place to store goods until they could be transported by land or by special boats as far as Springfield. He built a warehouse at an appropriate spot, and called the place "Warehouse Point." (William Pynchon, *Wikipedia*) He began sending supplies from Boston, up the Connecticut River, and storing them in Warehouse Point, to await the 14 mile trip to Springfield. (Jabez Hayden, 1886)

To enhance the prospects of commerce in Windsor Locks, it was necessary to connect travel between Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point. The first method of crossing the river was by ferry.



**The old ferry between Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point
1783 - 1886**

The ferry was tied to a pier in the river to prevent it from being washed downstream. The photograph of the ferry is from about 1885. In it, the ferry is moored on the Warehouse Point side of the river. The buildings on the other side of the river are the mills in Windsor Locks. The ferry operated from 1783 until the suspension bridge was built in 1886. (Giannuzzi)

In October 1886, the ferry was replaced by an impressive suspension bridge, built by the Warehouse Point Bridge and Ferry Company. The bridge was made up of a 550-foot main span and two 300-foot side spans. The concept was to minimize the number of piers in the river and their effects on power wheels immediately upstream. That bridge charged a toll for all traffic until the state purchased it and made it free in July 1908. It was the first free bridge across the Connecticut River in the state. This was the first step in the state's plan to own and control all bridges over the river. (Connecticut Roads)

The suspension bridge was a one-lane toll bridge. The road was then called "State Aid Road No. 20." Later the name was changed to Route 140. The photograph of the bridge (see below) was taken in 1900 from the East bank of the river, looking toward Windsor Locks.



**Suspension bridge: Windsor Locks - Warehouse Point
1886 - 1921**

The main suspension cables were anchored below ground at each end. Each suspension cable was made up of bundles of twisted wire rope. That process was developed by John Roebling in the 1840s and was used on the Brooklyn Bridge. (Giannuzzi)

See the toll ticket (below) for one person to walk across the bridge. In 1907, it cost an individual driving a touring car 25 cents, and it cost twelve and a half cents for a horse, wagon and driver. For a person on foot, the cost was three cents.



Below is a dramatic photo of the suspension bridge in the winter of 1907, when the river was frozen.



Suspension bridge over frozen Connecticut River, 1907

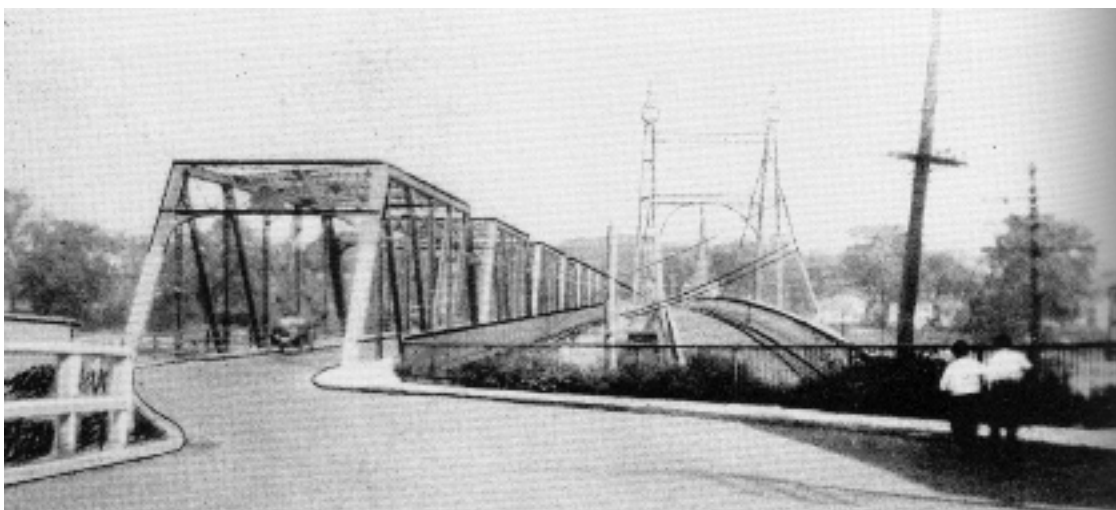
As motor traffic increased, especially truck traffic from the tobacco fields, the old bridge became unsafe and obsolete. Keeping it in good repair was increasingly expensive. In 1919, Hartford County received approval to build a \$350,000 iron truss bridge to replace it. This second bridge opened, at a final cost of about \$500,000, on Dec. 2, 1921. See photo below. The county hoped to sell the old bridge for scrap, but could not find a way to cover expenses of demolition. The state began tearing down the old bridge in 1924. (Connecticut Roads)



**Truss Bridge: Windsor Locks to Warehouse Point
1921 - 1992**

This second bridge was a 7-span truss structure, which was completed in 1921. Each span was approximately 152 feet long, consisting of six 25-foot panels for a total of approximately 1,064 feet between abutments, and a 23-foot curb-to-curb width. The total length of the truss bridge was 1,604 feet. The truss structure was built by the Berlin Construction Company, directly north of the previous bridge. (Bridge Street Bridge)

In the following photo, the Truss Bridge and the Suspension Bridge can be seen standing side by side. Shortly after this photo, the Suspension Bridge was demolished.



Truss and Suspension bridges standing side by side -- 1922

The next photo is of the Truss Bridge after the flood of 1936, when the flood waters went above the road level of the bridge. Try to imagine a flood so big that the level of the river rose above the road level on the road on the bridge. It happened.



Truss Bridge after 1936 flood water topped road level.

The original two-inch wooden planking of the bridge's sidewalk was cantilevered off of the South truss. The original two-inch wooden planks of the sidewalk were replaced by a concrete filled steel grid in 1938. In 1984, serious buckling of the sidewalk slabs required the construction of a temporary sidewalk across the full length of the bridge. The sidewalk was used by many fishermen during the spring shad fishing season. (Giannuzzi)

By the 1960s, the 1921 bridge was growing obsolete. In 1967, the state posted a maximum load of 15 tons, requiring heavier trucks to use the Dexter Coffin Bridge on I-91. In 1983, after the collapse of the Mianus River Bridge on I-95, the DOT initiated a statewide emergency bridge repair program. The decision for the Route 140 bridge was to replace it instead of repairing it. The new bridge opened in 1992. It is referred to as The Bridge Street Bridge. (Connecticut Roads)



**"Bridge St. Bridge" - Windsor Locks to Warehouse Point
Built in 1992**

CONCLUSION

We have seen that commerce was the reason that people needed to travel between Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point. The first method used was a ferry which lasted from 1783 to 1886. A suspension bridge, lasting from 1886 to 1921 was a major improvement over the ferry. It was replaced by a truss bridge which lasted from 1921 to 1992, at which the current modern bridge was built. Of course, each of the three bridges was “modern” when it was built.

A search of Connecticut and Massachusetts newspapers for articles about the bridge in Windsor Locks shows that the Windsor Locks bridge has been a popular topic for a long time. From 1800 to 2016, the search found 18,881 articles on that topic. There were 2600 articles about the ferry in Windsor Locks, Most were from before 1900.

Sources:

Bridge Street Bridge (Connecticut River), Wikipedia
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridge_Street_Bridge_\(Connecticut_River\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridge_Street_Bridge_(Connecticut_River))

East Windsor, Connecticut, Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Windsor,_Connecticut

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

Suspension Bridges of Connecticut
<http://www.bridgemeister.com/list.php?type=state&state=Connecticut>

Connecticut Roads, Nov. 24, 2012
<http://www.kurumi.com/roads/ct/ct140.html>

Windsor Locks Canal (Images of America) - by Maria Giannuzzi (Arcadia) 2007.

Chapter 22

Windsor Locks' First Ambulance

In 1943, the newly formed Lions Club decided to donate an ambulance to the town of Windsor Locks. The town had never had an ambulance. Red Leary organized a small group of members to raise the funds to procure the ambulance. The group consisted of Thomas A. Grasso, Philip J. Koehler, Arthur F. Cannon and Fred J. Kervick. (*Springfield Republican*, November 13, 1943)



Windsor Locks' First Ambulance

Dan Kervick contacted me after he read my article about Red Leary, which mentioned the Lions Club project. Dan said that Fred J. Kervick was his father. Dan sent me the information about the Lions Club ambulance project on which this chapter is based.

When the Lions Club committee began a house-to-house drive to raise the necessary funds, each committee member was given a specific area to cover. Fred J. Kervick was assigned the area of Main Street, including the retail businesses on one side of the road, and the manufacturing plants on other. The reason that Mr. Kervick was given that area was because he owned a trucking business, and most of those businesses were regular customers of his.

In the canvassing of the rest of the town, most of the donations made by individuals were in the amount of one or two dollars. There were very few five and ten dollar donations from individuals. However, the mills came through in a big way. Horton Chuck, Montgomery, Medlicott, Clark, Rushmore, and Dexter all gave generously.

One of Mr. Kervick's customers in Hartford was the A. C. Hine Company, a Pontiac-Oldsmobile dealership. He spoke with Mr. Hine, and asked if he could help

Mr. Hine agreed to sell an ambulance to the Lions Club at his cost, but there was one provision. The Lions Club would have to pick up the ambulance in Boston when it was ready. After several meetings with Mr. Hine, they agreed on the equipment to be installed in the ambulance and on the price. According to Leslie Matthews Stansfield (*Images of America: Windsor Locks*, Acadia Press, 2003), they got a 1936 Oldsmobile, which cost \$1,650.

You may ask why they bought a 1936 ambulance in 1943. Why didn't they get a 1943 ambulance? The answer was that all manufacturing of automobiles had stopped when World War II began. New designs didn't start to be manufactured again until 1948.

When the ambulance had been fully outfitted with the requested equipment, and the Windsor Locks name and logo had been painted on it, Red Leary, Tom Grasso, Phil Koehler, Fred Kervick and Art Cannon drove to Boston to get it. Red Leary and Tom Grasso drove the ambulance back to Windsor Locks. Mr. Kervick, Mr. Cannon and Mr. Koehler returned in the vehicle they all went to Boston in.

When they arrived back in Windsor Locks, they parked the ambulance at the Police Department. As the word got out, many townspeople came by to view their new ambulance. Getting its first ambulance is a major milestone for any town. The vision and work of the men who made it happen should not be forgotten.

The Lions club had raised \$2567.05 to buy an ambulance. (*Springfield Republican*, July 22, 1944) The ambulance only cost \$1650. Credit for that accomplishment goes to the team of Leary, Koehler, Cannon, and Kervick.

A decade later, the Lions club did it again. They bought a 1953 Packard ambulance to replace the 1943 ambulance which they had bought for the town in 1943. That ambulance had been used 650 times (*Springfield Union*, May 22, 1953)

Chapter 23

Drum Corps of Windsor Locks

Through most of the 1900s, Windsor Locks had a number of Drum Corps. There are two levels of Drum Corps: Senior and Junior. The former are made up of adults, and the latter are made up of youths. They both march in the same parades, but when it comes to competitions, they do not compete against one another.

Drum corps descended from military bugle and drum units returning from World War I and succeeding wars. Traditionally, drum corps served as signaling units as early as before the American Civil War. With the invention of the radio, bugle signaling units became obsolete and surplus equipment. As a result, drum and bugle corps of civilians and veterans, and the corps performed in community events and local celebrations. This, in turn, evolved to drum corps as community groups.

This chapter covers the drum corps of Windsor Locks, both of the Senior and Junior types.

THE SENIOR DRUM CORPS OF WINDSOR LOCKS

Senior Drum Corps are limited to adult members. Windsor Locks has had four of them:

1. The Windsor Locks Fife, Drum and Bugle Corps (1916 - 1924)
2. The "Old Timers Drum and Bugle Corps" (1919) which was mentioned in the *Springfield Republican* of Nov. 12, 1919. No other mention of the group was found.
3. The Windsor Locks Volunteer Fire Department Fife and Drum Corps (1965 - 1991)
4. The Old Engine No. 2 Fife and Drum Corps (1984 - 1991), which was an offshoot of the Fire Department's Fife and Drum Corps.

Windsor Locks' first drum corps was called the Windsor Locks Fife, Drum and Bugle Corps. The August 20, 1916 issue of the *Springfield Republican* states: "The Windsor Locks Fife, Drum and Bugle Corps, which has recently sprung into existence, is in Rockville, attending the state Drum Corps convention." There were a number of mentions of this drum corps in the newspapers in 1916, and they kept appearing until 1922. So we can assume that this group was in existence from about 1916 until about 1922. The following photograph of the Windsor Locks Fife, Drum and Bugle Corps, is the only known photograph of the group.



Windsor Locks Fife, Drum & Bugle Corps, 1916

Below is a photo of old uniforms from the 1916 drum corps, which are still on display in Windsor Locks at the Memorial Hall.



Uniforms of the Windsor Locks Fife, Drum & Bugle Corps, ~1920

The second senior Drum Corps from our town was the "Windsor Locks Volunteer Fire Department Fife and Drum Corps." It was organized in 1965, and its first appearance was at a celebration of the Windsor Locks Little League World

Championship in that year. The next photograph is of the Fire Department's Fife and Drum Corps.



Windsor Locks Volunteer Fire Department Fife & Drum Corps

This drum corps used fifes, snare drums and base drums, but no bugles. They practiced at the Union School. They used the “ancient” style of play which was based on a slow cadence of about 100 beats per minute. They marched in town parades, and participated in contests. They won many trophies which are now at the Fire Station.

Whenever the Fire Department's Drum Corps marched in a Fire Department Parade, they wore their Class A uniforms. Below is a rare photo of the one time that this that Fife and Drum Corps did not dress in their Class A uniforms. It was taken in 1991 in Deep River, CT on a day that was very hot, so they wore a lighter, more informal uniform. The Fire Department's Fife and Drum Corps was formed in 1965 and was active until about 1991. They did get together a few more times after that. One of those times was the 150th Anniversary of Windsor Locks in 2004.



Windsor Locks Firemans' Fife & Drum Corps, 1991

Members of the Fire Department's formed another Fife and Drum core in 1984. It was called the Old Engine No. 2 Fife and Drum Corps. It was formed to march in parades that the Fire Department didn't or couldn't make. The most important of those was the 1985 parade in New Haven for Connecticut's 350th Anniversary. They loaded the old fire truck on a flat bed truck, and marched in that parade. They also played at Little League parades in town and other non-fire department parades.



Old Engine No. 2 Fife and Drum Corps, 1985

Below is a photograph of this drum corps marching in the 350th Connecticut Anniversary in New London, Connecticut in 1956. The photos and information about two Fire Department drum corps were provided by John Donohue.



Old Engine No. 2 Drum Corps, Conn. 350th Anniversary. New Haven, 1956

THE JUNIOR DRUM CORPS OF WINDSOR LOCKS

Windsor Locks had four junior (youth) drum corps in the 1950s and 1960s. All marched in local parades, and competed in nearby competitions. The first was the St. Mary's Drum Corps and Brigade Team, which was formed in October 1949 by Reverend Edward B. Conlon. The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954 says: "The organization has been aided by a series of top-flight trainers and musicians over the past five years, and has won many laurels. The misses Jacqueline Daly and Jane Pastamerlo are the present Majorettes in the Corps, and Miss Marilyn Barbieri is Majorette of the Brigade Drill Team." Below is a 1955 photo of the St. Mary's Drum Corps in St. Mary's Park, which is now known as Pesci Park.



*Fife & Drum Corps competition at St. Mary's Park, Windsor Locks, Conn.
St. Mary's Drum and Bugle Corps forms living rosary, about 1955*

Next is a 1956 photograph of two of their members, Mel and John Montemerlo, in uniform. The West wall of St. Mary's School is in the background. The group used the school and its grounds for its practice sessions.



**Mel and John Montemerlo, about 1956
Members of St. Mary's Drum Corps**

St. Mary's Drum Corps included fifes, drums and bugles. It was very active in the early 1950s, but no mention of them exists in local newspapers after 1958.

The Golden Lancers Drum Corps was started in 1958 by a young couple named Al and Mary Weatherbee, who lived on Litchfield Drive, near Southwest School. The original funding to get the drum corps started was donated by Ray Roncari. It funded the purchase of instruments, uniforms and a small, used bus. The bus was big enough for the group. It was reliable, and it got the group to and from Drum Corps competitions in the nearby area. The group also marched in Windsor Locks parades. The next photo is of five members of the Golden Lancers.



**Golden Lancers members.
Paul O'Donnell, Teddy Mitchell, Chick Belisle
Unidentified, Sharon Weatherbee**

Next is a photo of the front section of the group in a Windsor Locks parade.



**Golden Lancers in Windsor Locks parade.
Sharon Weatherbee, Robin Kaye**

Al and Mary Weatherbee deserve a great deal of credit for forming and taking care of the Golden Lancers. The group's members will never forget the practices, the trips to competitions, an occasional stop at Friendly's for "Awful-Awfuls" and other ice cream treats. They even went on an excursion in the bus to the East Windsor Drive-in for a movie. Mr. and Mrs. Weatherbee were excellent leaders, teachers, and role models. Unfortunately the Golden Lancers Drum Corps only lasted from 1958 to 1961. Information about the Golden Lancers and photos were provided by Robin Kaye and Sharon Weatherbee. The author (Mel Montemerlo) was a member of the Golden Lancers.

The third junior Drum Corps in Windsor Locks existed from about 1960 to 1965. It was called the Cavaliers Junior Drum and Bugle Corps, and was sponsored by the Gensi-Viola Post of the American Legion. Frank E. Merrigan was its director. There were 14 articles about it in Springfield Newspapers which cover Windsor Locks news. They dated from 1960 to 1964. A 1960 article said that they were going to raise money to pay for the annual costs of the group. The 1964 article in the *Springfield Union* said that it was going to be replaced by a "Marching and Maneuvering" drum and bugle corps which would be named the "Majestic Guardsmen Drum and Bugle Corps." However further information on either the Cavaliers or the Majestic Guardsmen could not be found.

There was a fourth Junior Drum Corps in Windsor Locks, called the Conquistador Drum and Bugle Corps, but little information could be found. The following old advertisement for the Conquistadors was posted on Facebook on September 9, 2016. Three people posted comments, saying they remembered it, but there was no information as to when it existed or who sponsored it. An internet search turned up two websites which included a listing of the Conquistador Drum and Bugle Corps or Windsor Locks, but neither had a date on it.



CONCLUSION

While the popularity of drum corps in the United States waned in the last quarter of the Twentieth Century, it was strong in the Northeastern States for most of the century. The existence of four junior drum corps and the four senior drum corps in Windsor Locks is a reflection of that. Drum corps gave our youth and our adults a fun and productive outlet for their creative energies for most of the century. But as the saying goes, "All good things must end sometime." Those groups are now memories. Hopefully, this chapter will help those memories live on.

Chapter 24

Windsor Locks Catastrophes

Introduction

While it is interesting and informative to read the pleasant parts of history, it is useful to review some of the bad things that have occurred, such as tornados, hurricanes, floods and fires. Such reflection allows us to think about what happened, and to determine if we are better prepared to handle similar things in the future. For example, the US government is now (2017) studying its policies on federal flood insurance. They have found that in some flood zones, the same houses have been rebuilt many times at government expense. (New York Times, Aug. 31, 1917 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/31/opinion/flood-insurance-program-.html>). One alternative being considered is to reduce incentives to rebuild in flood plains.

Let us consider the disasters that have befallen Windsor Locks.

Natural Disasters

1979 Tornado

On October 3, 1979, a tornado struck the area around Turnpike Road, near Bradley Field. It caused three deaths and 500 injuries. It was the ninth most destructive tornado in American history. There were no tornado watches or warnings issued before it struck. An American Airlines flight with 114 passengers was about to land as the tornado was passing the airport but the pilot was able to abort the landing in time. The tornado then hit the section of the airport where the New England Air Museum is located. More than 20 vintage aircraft were completely destroyed and many others were seriously damaged. Damage totals from the tornado were around \$200M in 1979 dollars. 65 homes were destroyed and more than 75 more were damaged. The winds reached 87 mph. (*Wikipedia* - "Windsor Locks Tornado"). Below you will find the front page of the Oct. 4, 1979 Morning Union newspaper from Springfield, Mass. While the words on the front page article are not readable, the photos and headlines indicate how bad the tornado was. That is followed by a photo of mangled aircraft at the Air Museum and a photo of badly damaged homes.

Connecticut tornado kills 1, injures 400

By PHILIP D. MCKENNA
Times Staff



A U.S. Air Force plane with its engines ripped off lies crumpled like an wrecked shell at the Bradley Air Museum.

Museum turned into aircraft graveyard

By PHILIP D. MCKENNA
Times Staff

BRADLEY AIR MUSEUM—About 75 feet long and 40 feet wide, a graveyard of damaged airplanes, ripped over three inches wide, scattered over and around buildings at the Bradley Air Museum, turned into a graveyard of wreckage. The wreckage of a B-57 Canberra bomber, which crashed along the side of Route 7, about halfway between the airport and the center of the town, was the most recent addition to the graveyard. The wreckage of the plane, which was destroyed by a tornado, was the most recent addition to the graveyard. The wreckage of the plane, which was destroyed by a tornado, was the most recent addition to the graveyard.



A tornado touched its way through southern Connecticut Wednesday killing one person and injuring 400. Driven by 60 miles per hour winds, the weather wrecked portions of Bradley International Airport, destroyed homes and ripped down a highway and tractor trailer trucks.

By late Wednesday night at least 400 homes were damaged, many houses were leveled and many people injured and some lost their lives. The toll was still rising as the storm moved on. The toll was still rising as the storm moved on. The toll was still rising as the storm moved on.

Estimates of damage to aircraft at the airport were as high as \$20 million. Connecticut State Commissioner of Insurance said 40 people were killed and injured from lightning and emergency teams in the area and in other 100 were hospitalized, including 10 in critical condition.

In southern Connecticut the storm damaged two inches of rain within an hour, driven by the high winds. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property.

The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property.

The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property.

The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property.

The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property.

The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property.

The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property.

The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property.

The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property. The storm drove through the state, causing damage to homes and property.

Nature's fury

By PHILIP D. MCKENNA
Times Staff

Mark as night PAGE 10

Following path PAGE 10

From the air PAGE 10

Tornado took PAGE 10

overcome by surge PAGE 10

Air warning PAGE 10

Tornado in rubble PAGE 10

Tornado wrecked PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Western Mass. PAGE 10

Pope tells millions: No extra-marital sex

VATICAN CITY (UPI)—Pope John Paul II, drawing the largest audience of his U.S. tour, spoke and strongly condemned adultery and extra-marital sex, saying that such behavior is a sin and a violation of the teachings of the church.

The pope said his message applied to the whole world of marriage, not just to Catholics. He said that marriage is a sacrament and a sign of God's love for the world.

John Paul said that marriage is a sacrament and a sign of God's love for the world. He said that marriage is a sacrament and a sign of God's love for the world.

John Paul said that marriage is a sacrament and a sign of God's love for the world. He said that marriage is a sacrament and a sign of God's love for the world.



Bradley Air Museum aircraft after 1979 Tornado



1979 Tornado destroyed houses

2013 Tornado

On July 1, 2013, Windsor Locks was hit by a second tornado that came in from the direction of the town of Windsor, where it picked up a lot of tobacco netting and dropped it in Windsor Locks. An EF1-category twister tore through the area of Windsor Locks and East Windsor between 1:30 and 1:45 p.m. According to the National Weather Service, the tornado reached wind speeds of up to 86 mph, was up to 200 yards wide and traveled 2.5 miles. The EF1 tornado knocked down trees and power lines, scattering tobacco cloth, and removing siding from houses. Damage was concentrated in the areas of East Windsor, Windsor Locks and Fairfield County. Information from:

<http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Tornado-Warning-in-Effect-for-Fairfield-County-213843351.html>



Damage from July 1, 2013 Windsor Locks Tornado.

Flood of March 1936

The 1936 flood was devastating to communities along its banks. Spring came early and caused the frozen Connecticut River to break up in to huge chunks of ice which dammed the river. When the massive dam burst, the banks of the river flooded towns and farms. Businesses, bridges, homes and roads were destroyed. Thousands were left homeless. Windsor Locks was hit hard, as the following photos show. In the next photo, notice the height of the flood water on the Montgomery building and its outbuildings.



Montgomery building during 1936 flood

In the following photo, the water has gone over the roadway on the bridge. The photo after the flooded bridge shows the Windsor Locks fire truck on a flooded street.



Windsor Locks Bridge during 1936 flood



Windsor Locks Fire Truck during 1936 Flood

1938 Hurricane

The 1938 hurricane was a strong Category 3 with peak wind gusts of 186 mph. Over 600 people in New England were killed. This was the worst hurricane to strike New England in the last 200 years. The damage in Windsor Locks was enormous, as the following article from the *Springfield Republican* newspaper shows.

Windsor Locks Hard Hit
Windsor Locks, Ct., provided a vivid story of the struggle against floodwaters. There the canal overflowed its east bank, pouring into the basements of the Medlicott company, C. H. Dexter & Sons and others. As waters rose, the east bank of the canal was finally dynamited north of the American Writing Paper company to allow the water to flow into the river, saving dynamos and machinery at other plants. The south end of the town was flooded and residents forced to leave as waters rose within two feet of the 1936 record. Damage from hurricane was estimated at \$250,000, with tremendous and unestimated losses from the flood. Electricity was restored to the business section yesterday and the Hartford-Springfield road was cleared. Phone service was almost nonexistent.

Springfield Republican
 Sept. 24, 1938 on Flooding

Please note in this article that it was the canal that overflowed its east bank, pouring water into the Montgomery building. Thus, any future attempts to keep the river from overflowing will have to be augmented by methods of keeping the canal from overflowing its banks. In the following photograph, you can see the flooding up against the Montgomery building. The photograph after that clearly shows the flood waters above the roadway on the bridge to Warehouse Point.



Windsor Locks, Connecticut, after 1938 hurricane.



Bridge after 1938 hurricane. Windsor Locks, CT

The following photos show the damages caused by wind during the hurricane.



Freight Station after 1938 hurricane

Windsor Locks Flood of 1955

Hurricane Connie dropped five to ten inches of rain in portions of northwest Connecticut on August 12, 1955. Connie barely produced any wind in Connecticut as it moved to the West, but it dropped enough rain to saturate the soil and raise river levels above flood stage. Five days after Connie, Hurricane Diane dropped 10 to 20 inches of rain in Connecticut. When preceded by Connie's five to ten inches of rain, Diane's record 24 hour rainfall was enough to push rivers to levels that hadn't been seen in hundreds of years. In Windsor Locks, Hurricane Connie dropped 7.74 inches of rain, and then Hurricane Diane dropped 10.86 inches for a total of 18.42" in five days.

Information from: <http://www.ryanhanrahan.com/flood-of-august-1955/>

The greatest damage from these two hurricanes was in Connecticut, where floods affected about two-thirds of the state. It was the largest flood on record in the state's history. All major streams and valleys were flooded during the storm. The Connecticut River at Hartford reached the third-highest level on record at the time, cresting at 30.6 feet above flood stage. Although there was rural damage, the city of Hartford was spared from flooding due to previously constructed dykes.

Information from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Diane

Windsor Locks Flood of 1984

The New York Times, on May 31, 1984, said: "The hardest-hit area was Connecticut, where forecasters said the flooding could turn out to be the worst in 30 years. The Connecticut River was expected to hit 28 feet at Hartford, 12 feet above flood stage, and officials said it would probably keep rising. In 1955, in one of the worst floods on record, the Connecticut crested at 30.5 feet."

At the end of River Rd. in Windsor Locks, there is a pole on which the heights of previous flood levels are posted. It can be seen in the next photo that the four highest levels ever recorded were floods of 1936, 1938, 1984 and 1955. Those were in order of descending height. The following photo of the pole showing the heights of past floods in Windsor Locks shows that what the New York Times predicted, actually came to be. The height of the flood of 1984 was about the same height as the flood of 1955, which was the third highest on record in Windsor Locks. There is another shorter pole, closer to the river which also lists notable high water marks of: April 2005, April 1996, April 1993, June 1989, May 2001, and July 1973. It is worth noting that these tend to occur in Spring or in the beginning of Summer.



Flood height levels, River Rd. Windsor Locks

Fires

ABC Market - Fire in 1925

When the ABC market burned down, it was replaced by the Brown Derby. See the following photograph of the ABC Market, which was taken before the fire.



ABC Market

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

Photo courtesy of Jenny Colli, J. B. Colli's daughter.

Joe (Red) Ambrosetti's Market, Main St., Windsor Locks, CT 1923

Blanche's Bowling Alley and the Princess Theater

Blanch's Bowling Alley was a small place. It had four lanes, and no automatic pin setters. It was a good, cheap place to spend some time. It was located at the bottom of Grove Street hill. It was operated by Blanche (Bianchi) Lavigne. The top of that building had been unoccupied for a long time. There had been a movie theater there in the early 1900s, which had been called the Palace Theater for a while, and then it was called the Princess Theater. It ceased operation as a theater prior to 1929. (October 20, 1929 issue of *The Springfield Republican*).

The building caught fire on February 6, 1972. The fire gutted the inside of the building, which was never repaired. The building remained closed until it was demolished.

Below are three photos. The first is an early photo of the building before the fire. It is followed by a photo of the fire, and another of the building after the fire.



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





Blanche's Bowling Alley after the fire.

Bidwell's Lumber Yard Fire - 1958

Here are two photos of the fire at Bidwell Lumber Yard. The first was taken during the fire, and the second was taken after it.



Bidwell Lumber Fire - 1958



Bidwell Lumber Co. fire, 1958

Bidwell Block Fire 1960

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



Hartford Times, Sept. 20, 1960,



Bidwell Block fire, 1960

Shonty's Restaurant - 1967 Fire

The paragraph under the second photo tells the story. Following are three photos. They are of Shonty's before the fire, during the fire and after the fire. The entire block of buildings from Grove Street to the driveway next to Coly's Hotel was destroyed, including Sy's News Stand.



From right to left: Shonty's Restaurant, Bianchi's Restaurant, Coly's Hotel.
At right is corner of Grove St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn



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



Shonty's, after 1967 Fire

The Mather Block Fire in 1924

Below is a postcard of the Mather Block. It was at the South corner of the corner of Main and Spring Streets. According to a story in a 1924 *Windsor Locks Journal*, the Mather Block burned, but not completely. That included the bank, and the Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Co., which was owned by Leo Colapietro. No photos of the fire could be found.



Mather Block (see arrow), burned in 1924

Montgomery Co. Building Fire in July 2006

Below is a photo of the Montgomery building during the fire in July 2006. The important thing to notice is that the closest that the fire truck could get to the building was Main St. It had to shoot water over to the fire from Main St. Between the fire truck and the fire was the railroad tracks, the canal and a small road.



J.R. Montgomery factory fire, July 2006

Coly's Hotel Fire in 1926

Vito Colapietro bought a hotel from Mr. Byrnes in 1917. The hotel burned down as it was being refurbished in 1926. Below is a newspaper clipping about the fire. It contains an error. It says: "Hotel Brusi," but it was the "Hotel Byrnes." Vito Colapietro bought it from Mr. Byrnes in 1913. Notice in the next two photos how Coly Hotel went from a wooden exterior with a Mansard roof to a stucco building after the fire.

<p>Hotel Brusi Gutted With Estimated Loss of \$15,000—Help Summoned From Warehouse Point</p> <p>Windsor Looks, Ct., Nov. 24—The three upper floors of the Hotel Brusi, a wooden building, were badly gutted by fire here last night, with a loss estimated at \$15,000. The hotel was unoccupied at the time, as it was undergoing extensive repairs by the owner, Cino Colapietro. The former proprietor, Fred C. Brusi, terminated his lease some time ago. The fire is thought to have originated around a stove used to heat the building while the repairs were under way.</p>	<p>One fireman was overcome by smoke and three others were slightly injured when a ladder broke.</p> <p>The fire department fought the blaze for over four hours, but finally had it under control at 1:30 this morning. Assistance was given by the Warehouse Point fire department. Many thousands of gallons of water were poured into the building from six streams.</p> <p>The ground floor of the hotel contained a shoe store, conducted by the owner of the building, and also a men's furnishing store known as the Boston store, conducted by Paul Aronson. A third store on the ground floor had been conducted as a restaurant in connection with the hotel, but has not been in operation since the hotel was closed.</p>
---	--

Springfield Republican, November 24, 1926



Coly's Hotel (see arrow) prior to 1927 Fire, about 1922



Coly's Hotel (on left) after 1927 fire and reconstruction

Sid's Modern Drug Fire in May 1965

The first photo shows Sid's Modern Drug store before the fire. Next there is a *Hartford Courant* article about the fire, followed by a photo of firemen fighting the blaze.



Modern Drug (on right) prior to 1965 fire



DRUG STORE DAMAGED: Fire Sunday morning caused extensive damage to the interior of Modern Drugs, 158 Main St., Windsor Locks, and tied up church traffic for two hours. The alarm was turned in at 6:20 a.m. by Policeman Ted Fisher, who saw smoke coming from the store. The store's owner, Sidney Portnoy, estimates damage

to the store and the second floor stockroom at \$99,000. The fire was put out by the Windsor Locks Fire Department within an hour, but the clean-up job kept equipment on Main Street over four hours. Church traffic was re-routed by the Police Department (Ruggiero Photo).

Modern Drug Fire, Hartford Courant, May 31, 1965



Modern Drug fire, May 31, 1965

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the major catastrophes that have occurred in Windsor Locks over the past century. They included natural disasters (tornados, hurricanes, floods) and fires. Thirty photographs and newspaper clippings were presented. There were also two tornados.

All of the fires we looked at were in buildings built from about 1900 to 1940. They were built before the existence of strong building codes. One of the goals of the redevelopment of Main was to eliminate those old buildings which were considered to be "fire traps."

As for floods, Windsor Locks had four major floods in the last century. The portion of Windsor Locks near the river, which includes the Montgomery Building, is on a "100 year flood plain," which means that one flood per century can be expected. Windsor Locks got four in that time frame. Windsor Locks has always survived these floods. Only a very small portion of the town gets flooded. It is important to note that in the 1938 flood, the water that flowed into the Montgomery factory came from the overflowing banks of the canal, which moved down towards the river.

Very few lives have been lost in Windsor Locks through catastrophes. However, it is worthwhile to keep past disasters and our responses in mind. As the great philosopher, Santayana, said, "Those who are ignorant of history, are condemned to repeat it." If we have come up with solutions to past problems, it is also useful to revisit those solutions to see if they really worked as hoped, or if better solutions are available. The past is often the best predictor of the future.

Chapter 25

Leo Montemerlo's Map of Downtown Windsor Locks Businesses



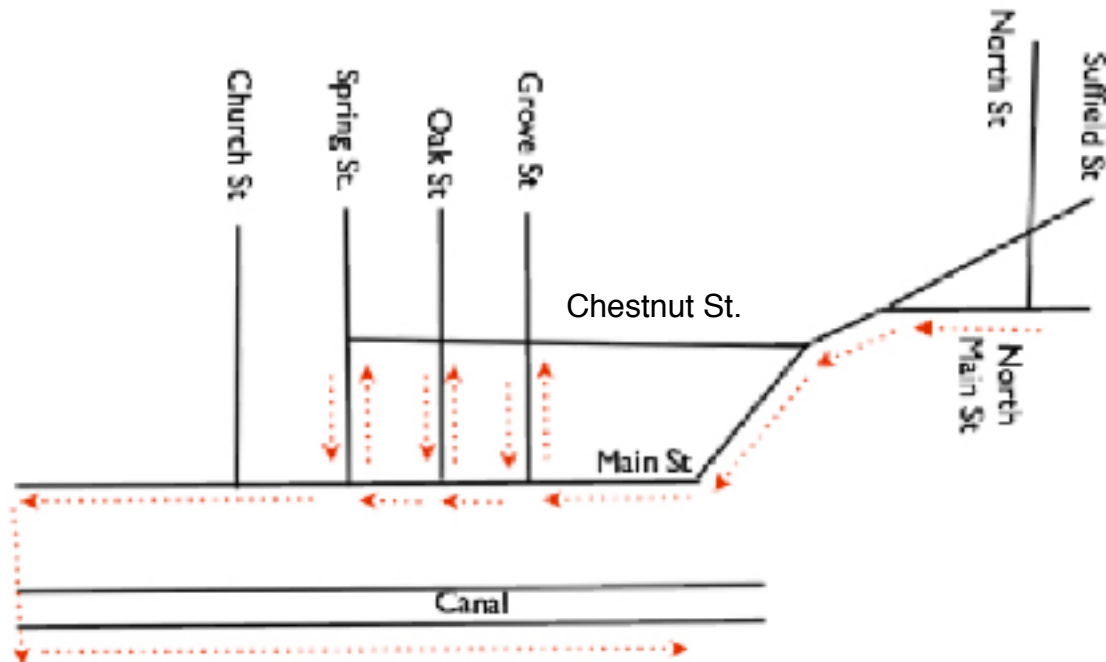
Leo Montemerlo (1915-2010)

In 2003, when he was 88 years old, Leo Montemerlo sat down on his couch and made a list of businesses in downtown Windsor Locks. The list was handwritten on eight pieces of paper. That list came to my attention in March of 2016. After studying the list, it was clear that these businesses did not all exist at the same time. The list was not in chronological order. Rather, it was in the order that you would see the businesses if you walked a certain path through downtown Windsor Locks. In his mind, Leo “took a walk” down Main Street from North Street to the Ashmere Inn, and then came back to his starting going by walking along the line of mills beside the canal. He took three little “side trips” as he walked down Main St. When he got to Grove Street, he took a right and went up the hill to Chestnut, and then came back to Main Street. He did the same thing when he got to Oak Street, and again when he got to Spring Street. As he took this “walk,” he wrote down the names of 77 businesses that he passed. In four cases, he listed businesses that occupied the same location at different times.

In other words, he made a map of the locations of 77 businesses in 73 locations, even though those businesses existed at different times in his life, from the early 1920s to the 1960s. This could be the only map anyone has ever made with regard to location, but without regard for time. His mind’s systematic traverse through the downtown business area was quite ingenious. He focussed on businesses that he worked at, or dealt with, or knew the owners of. This list/map turns out to be a useful and enjoyable historical document. Many of the business names that he listed were fascinating: the Princess Theater, Central Hall, the Beehive Building, Beltrandi’s, Garbarino’s Ice Cream Store, a Chinese Laundry, and Katz’s Junkyard.

This chapter is the result of research on the 77 businesses in Leo’s list. To present this information, we will retrace the mental “walk” that he took through

downtown Windsor Locks, and provide information and photographs on each of the

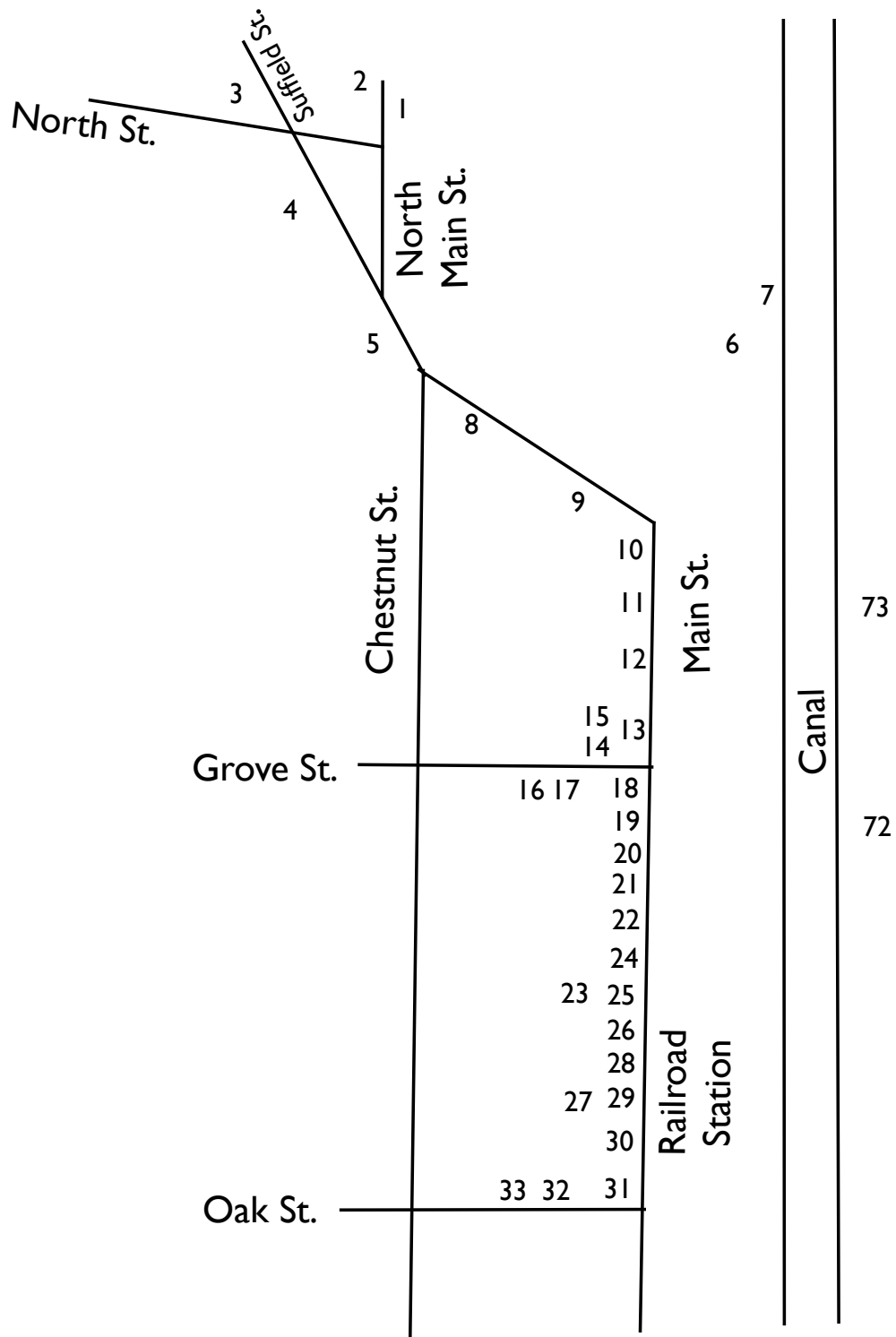


businesses. The dotted red arrows in the following map show the path he took.

Three things will bring Leo's list to life: The first is a two-page map which gives the location of the 77 businesses that he listed. This map is found on the next two pages. The second is a numbered list of the 77 businesses with descriptive information and photos. The third is the information and photographs that are presented for each so that it which can be easily referred while reading the chapter. It would be useful for the reader to make a copy of the two-page map so that it can be easily referred to while reading the chapter.

In four cases, Leo listed two businesses which occupied the same location at different times. The first example is of the ABC Market, which was destroyed by fire, and replaced by the The Brown Derby. The ABC Market is the 12th business in his list, so it was given the number "12," which appears on the map. The Brown Derby was given the number "12A." The map only shows the number 12. Both business 12 and 12A were in the same location.

The next two pages show the map, with the numbered locations of the businesses. The map provides the locations of the businesses in the list. This chapter contains 58 photos, images and diagrams of the Windsor Locks that existed from the early 1900s through about 1970.



The organization of this chapter will be to break the map into the following Sections:

- I. From the corner of North Main and North Streets, go south on Main St. to Grove St.
- II. Go up Grove St. hill to Chestnut St, and back down to Main St.
- III. Main St., go south from Grove St. to Oak St.
- IV. Go up Oak St. hill to Chestnut St, and back down to Main St.
- V. Main St., go south from Oak St. to Spring St.
- VI. Go up Spring St. hill to Chestnut St., and back down to Main St.
- VII. Main St., go south from Spring St., as far as the Ashmere Inn.
- VII. Go north along the canal, where the manufacturing plants are to the American Writing Paper Co.

I. From Corner of North Main & North Streets, go south on Main St. to Grove St.

1. Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia - From our starting point, we can see the office and home of Dr. Ettore Carniglia and his wife, Blanche, on North Main St.



Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia 1904 - 1970



2. Park Chevrolet was located at 6 North Main St. It was not far from Dr. Carniglia's house. Leo Montemerlo bought his beloved 1951 Chevy from Jack Quagliaroli's dealership. See the advertising "coin" to the right of the photo of Dr. Carniglia.

3. Windsor Locks Lumber Co - was located on North St., just west of Suffield St. In their time, the only two places to buy wood and building supplies in Windsor Locks were Windsor Locks Lumber and Bidwell Lumber.

4. Carroll's Pharmacy, 18 Suffield St. This was not only a pharmacy, but also an Ice Cream Shop. The cones didn't cost much, and they were good. Dr. Carniglia gave certificates to his young patients, which could be exchanged for an ice cream cone at Carroll's.



Charles Carroll between his grandfather, James P. Carroll Sr. (left) and his father, James P. Carroll, Jr (right), in Carroll's Pharmacy, Circa 1955

5. F. S. Bidwell Lumber Co. was located on the West side of Main St., just north of the brook between the corner of Chestnut St. and Main St. This was half of the Bidwell business enterprise in Windsor Locks. The other half was their hardware store on Main Street, just above the Carlisle store.



Bidwell Lumber Fire - 1958

6. **Dan Leach's Coal and Ice Yard** was where Windsor Locks Commons is in 2016.



Dan Leach's Coal and Ice Yard

7. **Old Graveyard** - This was not a business, but Leo had it on his list. There are still gravestones and fragments of gravestones there, dated from 1861 to 1876. The location is just behind Dan Leach's Coal and Ice Yard.

8. **The old Windsor Locks Post Office** was on the West side of Main St., just north of the second location that Syd's Modern Drug store was in.

9. **Mr. Tate, the Photographer.** The Tate house had a distinctive look. Mr. Tate was a photographer.



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

10. Beltrandi's - 252 Main St. This was a place where you could go to shoot pool or play cards.

11. Jenkins Shoe Store - was listed on the 1913 Map of Windsor Locks, which read: "Jenkins, Alfred. Boots, Shoes & Rubbers. Main St."

12. A B C Grocery Store - This store was a partnership of Joe "Red" Ambrosetti, Frank Barberi, and John B. Colli. Mr Ambrosetti was the grocer, and Mr. Barberi and Mr. Colli were the butchers. See the photo below. The store burned to the ground in a 1925 fire. It was rebuilt as the Brown Derby.



ABC Market

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

Photo courtesy of Jenny Colli, J. B. Colli's daughter.

Joe (Red) Ambrosetti's Market, Main St., Windsor Locks, CT 1923

12A. The Brown Derby - John Romanofsky (1914-1968) was the owner.

13. The Beehive Building - The "Beehive Building" was a nickname of a large apartment house at the north corner of Grove and Main Streets. The nickname did not refer to the looks of the building, but to the fact that it was made of a lot of very small apartments, and the building always had a lot of "action" going on - as does the interior of a beehive. It was owned by Mr. Shea. Mr. Botasso owned a meat market on the bottom floor. The building was knocked down in the 1930s or 40s. Later this piece of land had Red Leary's store on it. Over the years, it has changed hands a number of times. See the following photo.



Edwin P. Eagan

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

MAIN STREET, WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

Photo taken in 1925

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

13A. Red Leary's hardware and appliance store. Red Leary's first business was a gas station. Later he opened a hardware and appliance store on the corner of Grove and Main Streets in the building that replaced the Bee Hive Building. Later, this space housed a Western Auto store. Still later, the Western Auto store moved to the North corner of Main and Oak Streets, and was owned by Don LaRussa.



Elmer "Red" Leary's Hardware & Appliance Store, corner Grove & Main

II. Go Up the Grove St. hill to Chestnut St., and back down to Main St.

As you are walking south on Main St. and reach Grove St., take a right and walk up the hill. It is interesting to note that this Grove St. hill used to be known as "Cork Hill."

14. Blanche Bianchi's Bowling Alley -

This was an inexpensive way to spend an evening. It had real pin boys. The bowling alley was destroyed by fire. See the following photo.



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

15. Princess Theater Leo's notes stated that you could see two movies and get a lollipop for seven cents. The Princess Theater was upstairs from Blanche's Bowling Alley. See newspaper clipping above.

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

**Jan. 5, 1914,
Springfield Republican**

Now we go across Grove St. and start back down the hill toward Main St.

16. Preli's Italian Grocery Store - Bartholomew (Bart) Preli had great homemade salami and sausages and a wide supply of Italian food supplies. The 1913 map of Windsor listed: "Preli, B. Foreign & Domestic Groceries. Pure Italian Olive Oil, Fruits & Confectionery. Grove St." Preli's Market operated until about 1940. See photo below.



Prell's Grocery Store, 24 Grove Street, Windsor Locks, Connecticut 1920's

17. Chinese Laundry - was in the two story building that was above Shonty's Restaurant. The entrance to the apartments was on Grove St. That was verified by Noreen Baron, whose grandparents lived there. Noreen's mother told her about the Chinese laundry which had been there.



Umberto Pesci, Fidelio Giannuzzi, Eddie Cappa, Lee Montemerlo (age 12)
Windsor Locks, Connecticut 1927

III. Main St.- Go South from Grove St. to Oak St.

18. Shonty's Bar and Restaurant - Shonty's restaurant and bar was around for a long time. Unfortunately it burned down in 1967 in a fire that gutted the entire building, including the apartments on the second floor, and Sy Bianchi's News stand at the South end of the building in the previous photo.

19. Bianchi's Restaurant and Bar - Bianchi's was a good family restaurant in the downtown area. Their prices were reasonable. The food was good. See previous photo.

20. Moses Goldfarb Clothing store - Mr. Goldfarb opened his clothing store after 1913, but before 1922. There was an article in the May 31, 1922, issue of the *Springfield Republican* describing how police caught a man who had been taking clothes from store. See following newspaper article.

**GOLDFARB IDENTIFIES
PROPERTY AS HIS OWN**
**This Leads Police to Think
Kozryn May Have Been In-
volved in Break**
Windsor Locks, May 30—Recovery
of a considerable amount of the goods
stolen from the **Windsor Locks** de-
partment store a week ago is be-
lieved to be an outcome of the arrest
of Joseph Kozryn in Hartford. Sus-
pected of bootlegging last week, Koz-
ryn was taken into custody in Hart-

ford, but not until Sunday did the
officers succeed in locating his room-
ing place. There they found considera-
ble property that is believed to have
been stolen. When the officers made a
search of his room they found many
suits of clothes, several bags and suit
cases, some jewelry, trousers, shirts,
some other goods that later were
identified by **Moses Goldfarb**, propri-
etor of the store, as having been stol-
en in the break that was made there
last week.

Kozryn is being held by the Hart-
ford police pending further investi-

Moses Goldfarb store robbed, 1922

21. Moses Goldfarb's rooms for rent - Mr. Goldfarb had rooms or rent on the second floor of building, over Bianchi's restaurant and his clothing store. See photo below.



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

22. Sy Bianchi's News stand - Sy Bianchi had a newsstand on the South side of Bianchi's Restaurant. He was an avid New York Yankees Fan. Once, after the Yankees lost the World Series, his friends draped the storefront in black. Between Sy's store and Coly's Hotel was a driveway. The driveway was the way up to the rooms that Mr. Goldfarb rented, to the Mid-Town Motors garage, and to the back of Coly's hotel, where the hotel parking lot was.

23. Coly's Hotel - 182 Main St. Leo Montemerlo noted in his list that you could get a room at Coly's hotel for \$14 per week, but he didn't say when that was possible. Leo worked evenings in Vito Colapietro's store at the Main St. level after he married Vito's daughter, Lena. Vito bought the hotel from Mr. Byrnes in 1917. It burned down in 1927, but Vito rebuilt it immediately and it operated until the redevelopment of Main St. See photo on next page.

There were three stores under the hotel at Main St. level. Vito rented one of them from Mr. Byrnes before he bought the hotel. There was a lot of turnover in those three stores over the decades. The three that Leo put in his list were: Spinelli's Grocery Store, Bianchi's Shoe Store and Bill Amstead's Package store.



Central Hall Building (dark building on left) housed SNET Office, Garbarino's, A&P, boxing & basketball gym.
Coly's Hotel (light building on right) housed Spinelli Grocery, Bianchi Shoe Store, Amsted's Package Store.

24. Spinelli's Grocery Store - Mr. Spinelli had an old fashioned Italian Grocery store in the slot closest to Sy Bianchi's News Stand. Later this was Tony's Soda Shoppe. See photo above.

25. Mondo Bianchi Shoe Store was in the middle slot. The Bianchi family had four businesses in downtown Windsor Locks: Blanche's Bowling Alley, Sy's News Stand, Bianchi's Restaurant and Bar, and Armando Bianchi's shoe store. See Coly Hotel photo above.

26. Bill Amstead's Package Store had the slot closest to the A&P. We now call them "ABC stores," but back then, they were referred to as Package Stores. See Coly Hotel photo above.

27. Central Hall building - The building extended from Coly's hotel to Oak St. and had two floors. It was called "The Central Hall building." Upstairs was a large room that was used for basketball games and for boxing. Two of the Marconi brothers, Angelo and Louie were known to have boxed here. The floor of the boxing/basketball room had springs in the floor to make it bounce for dances and other events. Central Hall was previously called "the Burnap Block." At that time, it housed the Bernap Opera House. There was a movie theater in the building at one time, but it shut down in 1914. See the following photo of D. F. LaRussa's store and the A&P to see where Central Hall and the Bernap Opera House were located. After Central Hall was demolished, the two stores in the photo below were built.



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

28. SNET office in Central Hall Building. SNET was Southern New England Telephone. It was founded in 1878.

29. Garbarino's - 176 Main St. Garbarino's sold ice cream, fruit and groceries, as did the other ice cream stores on Main Street. It was located in the Central Hall Building. See the newspaper clipping:

WINDSOR LOCKS

Windsor Locks, Dec. 26—An automobile driven by George Klezos of Hazardville, who had Joseph Urbanowski of Suffield as a passenger, collided with one driven by John M. Clifford of Brooklyn, N. Y., on the overpass in the south part of town about 1 yesterday morning with slight damage to both cars. All three persons received cuts on the head and face from flying glass. Officer Caffrey ordered all three to appear in court Monday night.

The fruit store conducted by D. Garbarino in the Central hall block was broken into last night and about \$6 and some merchandise stolen. Entrance was gained by breaking the protecting shield on a rear window and lowering the top half. No arrests have been made.

Springfield Union, 12-27-1929

30. A&P Grocery - The A&P was the large, centrally located grocery store in Windsor Locks. Jack Redmond had an excellent column on the history of the A&P. The first location of the A&P was in the Zaccheo building opposite the bridge on Main St. It occupied the entire first floor of the building. Then it moved to another site on the Coogan Block, and finally moved to its well-known location across from the Railroad Station. See photo on previous page.

31. Western Auto Store - This store was owned by Don LaRussa, and it became the first D. F. LaRussa appliance store.

IV. Go up the Oak St. hill to Chestnut St, and back down to Main St

Turn right and head up the hill on Oak St. On the right is:

32. The Oak Street Market - This was more commonly referred to as "Aldo's," as it was owned and operated by Aldo Sartirana. See the following photo. Before Aldo had this store, it was a market owned by Joe Borracci, whose family lived above the store.



Oak St. Market. Aldo Sartirana & Tony Campinossi

33. The Old Fire Station - this building is now the site of the Senior Citizens Club. It was just up the hill from the Oak Street Market.

Now cross Oak St, and walk back down the hill to Main St.

V. Main St. - Go South from Oak St. to Spring St.

Having walked down Oak St. hill and arrived at Main St, take a right and walk south.

34. Allen Pease Co., 158 Main St. The Allen Pease Co. was listed in the 1913 Windsor Locks map as selling house furnishings, plumbing & hot water heating. The *Windsor Locks Journal* issue of April 1, 1928, says that the Allen Pease Co observed its 56 years at the same location on Main St under the same management. The business was started in 1873 by Allen Pease and a brother with a tinware shop. Later they constructed the 3-story Main St building. Mr Pease ran the company with his sons Howard and Frank.

See photo below. The Pease building was where Modern Drug is in that photo.

34A. Kamin's Department Store - See #34 on map. Kamin's was at the same location as #34. The Pease Building was on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. Later it became the Kamin Department Store. An article in the Tuesday, May 25, 1954 shows that Graziano Graziani gave a five year lease to Morris Kamin et al. for Kamin's Department Store at the corner of Main and Oak Streets. Later Syd's Modern Drug Co store was on the ground floor of that building. See photo below.



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

35. Wong Chinese Laundry

- The photo below shows a sign saying "Wong." It was taken during the parade for the Memorial Hall dedication on June 10, 1891. Looking at this photo, you can see the railroad station is just to the left, indicating that the photo was taken from the upper floor of a building on Main St., near the corner of Oak and Main. In other words, the photo was taken from the Pease Building. Now we know where Wong's Chinese Laundry was.



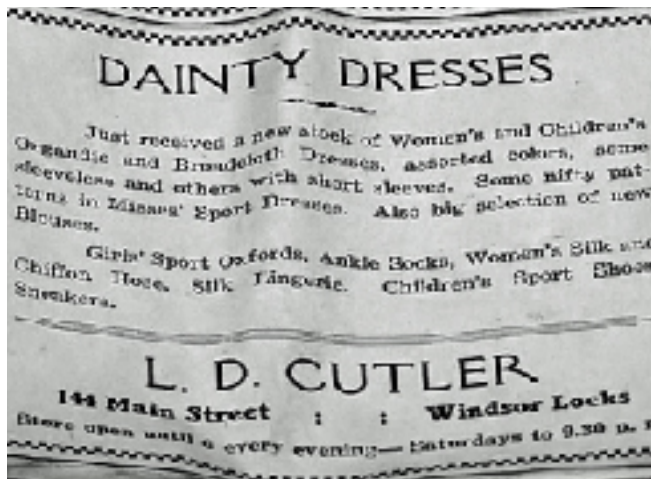
36. Rialto Theater - 154 Main St. - The Rialto Theater opened in 1922. It was owned by Leo Viola and Dominic Alfano. It was operated by Dave Magliora. See photo of the Rialto, Swede's Jewelers and Syd's Modern Drug on the previous page.

37. Donut Kettle - The Donut Kettle had many "regulars" for breakfast and for lunch. It was not open for dinner. See the following photo. The food was simple but good and the prices were right. John and Vic Sasali kept the restaurant going until the redevelopment of Main St., when they sold the store and its name. Shari Wadsworth was a waitress at the Donut Kettle. She bought the name and some of the equipment and opened a Donut Kettle at 482 Spring St. Later she sold the business to Angelo D'Aleo, who refurbished it, and re-opened it as the "Gathering Ground."



Between Spring & Oak Streets. Donut Kettle at right.

38. L. D. Cutler's - The 1913 Windsor Locks map had a listing which read: "Cutler, L. D. Jeweler and Optician. P. O. Block, Main St." See the two photos below. The L.D.Cutler advertisement in the May 4,1934 *Windsor Locks Journal* shows that Cutler's then sold women's and children's clothes, shoes and sneakers. Later, Swede's Jewelers occupied this spot.



Ad in May 4, 1934 Windsor Locks Journal



39. Marconi Brothers Luncheonette (also known as Wuzzy's) was at 130 Main St. Its phone number was NA3-7465. John, Louis and Angelo (Wuzzy) were the Marconi brothers. This was an iconic ice cream store that also sold sandwiches, soups, etc. It had booths in the back and was a popular teenage hangout. See the following photo.



Interior of "Wuzzy's"
Marconi Brothers Luncheonette

VI. Go up Spring St. hill to Chestnut St. and come back to Main St.

40. Umberto Pesci's Shoe Repair Shop - Leo Montemerlo's notes said: "Main St. , Umberto Pesci Shoe Shop, Old Library Upstairs." The shoe repair shop was on the lower level of the building on the north corner of Spring and Main Streets. The door to the shoe repair shop was the 2nd door to the building on Spring St. See photo below. The next photo is a 1927 photo of Mr. Pesci's shop. Leo Montemerlo, who worked there when he was 12 years old, got \$3 a week for 2 hours of work each day after school.



Corner of Spring and Main. Post Office on first floor.
Library upstairs. Umberto Pesci's Shoe Repair on first floor



Umberto Pesci, Fidelio Giannuzzi, Eddie Cappa, Leo Montemerlo (age 12)
Windsor Locks, Connecticut 1927

From 1920 to 1955, the Windsor Locks Public Library was on the second floor of the building on that corner. The entrance to the library was on Spring St. Marconi Brothers Luncheonette was on this corner at a later time.

41. Angelo Gatti, Tailor - was listed in 1913 map of Windsor Locks. It said: "Ladies' and Gents' Tailor. Spring St." See photo below.



Angelo Gatti, Tailor. Spring St.

42. Pastori's Cleaners - No information or photos could be found.

43. Windsor Locks Journal Office - The old Main St. was the heart of Windsor Locks. The *Windsor Locks Journal* was the soul of Windsor Locks. It only came out once a week, but was the record of our accomplishments - both big and small. It told us what happened last week and reminded us what happened in the past. See photo below.



Windsor Locks Journal Office, Spring St. Built 1907

44. Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop - In the days before Nike and Adidas athletic shoes, leather shoes were taken to Tony Basile's shop to get heels and soles replaced. It was across the street from St. Mary's Catholic church. There was a saying that Windsor Locks was the only town in the United States in which 99% of wedding snapshots had a shoe repair shop in the background. That would be Tony's shop.



*Interior of Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop.
At left is Tony Basile. At right is Tony Dipinto.*

At the top of the hill is Chestnut St. Johnny Cappa's Market is on your right

45. Johnny Cappa's Market - Kids who grew up in Windsor Locks' downtown area in the 1940s and 50s spent a lot of time at Johnny's but not much money. It was the place to go for penny candy. Parents sent their kids there for a loaf of bread or other things needed for lunch or dinner. There were always bicycles lying on the sidewalk in front of Johnny's. Johnny's was a Windsor Locks "institution" in the same sense that Wuzzy's was. It was unique and it was a favorite.



Johnny Cappa's Market, Chestnut St, Windsor Locks, CT



Windsor Locks Journal ad, May 4, 1934

Now cross Spring St, take a left, and head back towards Main St.

46. Windsor Locks Bakery Shop - The Tambussi brothers ran this shop which provided excellent bread, cakes, cookies and everything you could expect from a small town bakery. A 1934 ad for the bakery is on the previous page

47. Maria's Market - Maria and Pat Casinghino ran an Italian market across the street from the *Windsor Locks Journal* office. The fact that there were four Italian markets in such close proximity (Maria's, Aldo's, Johnny Cappa's and Bart Preli's), indicates that there was a large Italian community in the area.

48. Dipinto Barber Shop - Sandy DiPinto was a barber for over 30 years, after which he was a custodian at Windsor Locks High School for ten years.

49. Edward's Beauty Shop - Edward Topor was the owner/operator. After the "re-development" of Main Street, he moved his shop to his home on Circle Drive.

VII. Main St.- Go South from Spring St. to the Ashmere Inn.

When you reach Main St, take a right, and head south. The first thing you see will be:

50. The First National Bank - was one of the longest lasting and most well known institutions in the town. See photo below. The bank is to the right of Carlisle's.



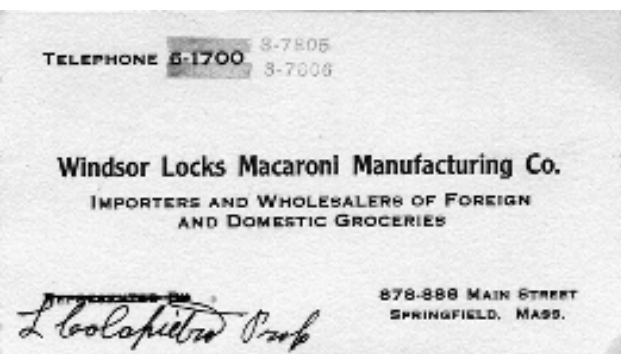
Carlisle Hardware, First National Bank, Spring & Main St

51. Carlisle's Hardware - Carlisle's was a centrally located place to go for hardware items for the home. After going to Home Depot or Lowe's in the modern era, one yearns for an old fashioned hardware store such as Carlisle's. See photo on previous page.

52. Patsy Colapietro's Ice Cream store - In 1906, Pasquale (Patsy) Colapietro had an early ice cream shop in Windsor Locks. A 1906 photo (below) shows Patsy, his wife, his child, his dog, and his two brothers, Vito and Leo. Patsy's business was listed in the 1913 Windsor Locks map: "Coly, Patsy. Fruits, Cigars, Tobacco & Groceries, Confectionery, Postal Cards and Toys. Imported Olive Oil a Specialty. Mather Block, Main St."



Pasquale Colapietro's store, about 1906.
Pasquale, Pasqualina, Vito, Grazia, Leo.



53. Windsor Locks Macaroni Mfg. Co. Leo Colapietro was the owner. It was in the Mather Block, along with Patsy Colapietro's Ice Cream store. Leo bought high-gluten flour from Wisconsin, Nebraska and New York State to make into pasta of all kinds and shapes. According to a *Windsor Locks Journal* article, the macaroni manufacturing company burned down, along with the rest of the "Mather Block" in 1924. Leo Colapietro moved to Springfield, Mass., where he opened the Windsor Locks Supermarket on Main Street. His macaroni business card is seen above.

54. First National Supermarket - The next photo is of the First National Supermarket, which was next to Carlisle's. It moved to Dexter Plaza in the early 1960s. Later it moved to Turnpike Road. The First National chain changed their name to the Finast Supermarkets.



Red Leary's Mobil Station
First National Supermarket



Vito Lefemine cuts Lenny Montemerlo's hair. 1962

55. Lefemine Barber Shop - Above is a 1962 photo below of Vito Lefemine cutting the hair of a very young Lenny Montemerlo, who wasn't sure he liked the haircut.

56. Sisitzky's Market - Mr. Sisitzky owned the building and operated his market until he sold it to Bill Buckley in about 1940. Bill sold it to Jim Price in about 1955. It closed in about 1961. See advertisement below.

Meats and Groceries
-- At --
Low Prices for Standard Goods

ORDINARY SPECIALS	MEAT SPECIALS
Pastrami 2 lbs for 30c	Legs of Lamb 1 lb for 25c
Smoked Sausage 1 lb for 20c	Lamb Steaks 1 lb for 25c
Roast Pork 1 lb for 20c	Swift Premium
2 cans for 25c	Joint of Chicken 2 lbs for 25c
Macaroni or Spaghetti 10c for 5c	Veal Steaks 1 lb for 25c
Large Tuna 2 lbs for 20c	Swift Premium Pork 1 lb for 25c
Old Dutch Cheese 5 cans for 25c	Swift Premium Bacon 1 lb for 25c
2 cans of Apples 10c for 5c	Green Weibel Frankfurters
Macaroni 1 lb for 10c	Green Weibel Hamburg 1 lb for 25c
Roast Pork 1 lb for 20c	Swift Premium Hamburg 1 lb for 25c
2 cans for 25c	Canned Beef, Sugar Cured
Not a Good Buy 1 lb for 20c	Armour Star Boiled Ham 1 lb for 25c
Not a Good Buy 1 lb for 20c	Pork Chops, Rib End 1 lb for 25c
Not a Good Buy 1 lb for 20c	Pork Chops, Rib End 1 lb for 25c
Not a Good Buy 1 lb for 20c	Pork Chops, Rib End 1 lb for 25c

Sisitzky's Market
"The Store of Quality and Service"
112 MAIN STREET WINDSOR LOCKS
Delivery Service Telephone 614

Windsor Locks Journal Ad, May 4, 1934



Red Leary's Gas Station. Red is on the right.

57. Red Leary's Gas Station - 92 Main St. A 1915 photo on the previous page shows the First National Supermarket to the right of Red Leary's Mobil gas station, which had pumps right on Main St. Above is a photo of the interior of the gas station.

58. Town Clerk's Office - was where town records were kept before Windsor Locks had a town hall. While this was not a business, Leo Montemerlo had it on his list.

59. Billy "Hoisty" Asselin's Newspaper stand was the 2nd store from the North corner of Church and Main. He retired in 1960. It became Charland's Drug Store.



Ray Charland

Church St & Main St. - 2nd store past corner was Hoisty Asselin's Paper Stand. Later it was Charland's Pharmacy

59A. Charland's Drug Store - Ray and Tilly Charland opened their pharmacy in 1957. Jack Redmond wrote an article on them on July 13, 1978. Ray got out of the business when redevelopment happened, and he went on to work for the state from 1972-78. While operating the pharmacy, they donated a percentage of their earnings to charity annually. Tilly sold Avon products for about 5 years. See the above photos of the pharmacy and of Ray.

Having arrived at the corner of Church and Main Streets, we cross Church St, and arrive at the South corner of the intersection. On our right is the Bridgeview Restaurant.

60. Bridgeview Restaurant - Philip Lombardi was the proprietor of this well-known and long-lived restaurant. See photo below of Phil Lombardi standing in front of his restaurant in 1945. Later photos show that a brick facade was added in 1955. The Bridgeview Restaurant was one of the first places in Windsor Locks to sell grinders.



Phil Lombardi in front of his Bridgeview Restaurant 1948

61. Bill Karges Shoe Store



Bill Karges Shoe Store, Main St., south of Church St.

62. Package Store - owned by Mr. Preli and Mr. Kennedy.

63. Tommaso Zaccheo's Pontiac Dealership and Garage, 114 Main St. This was the first Pontiac dealership in the area. It also had a gas station. See photo on next page. Tommaso came up with the idea of putting an awning over the gas pumps to shelter customers from the sun and rain.

Before Mr. Zaccheo started his Pontiac Dealership, he had a "Armchair Restaurant" in that building, which he owned. Armchair restaurants were not uncommon in the early 1900s. In such a restaurant, chairs had one arm that was very wide and was used as a table. After Tom sold his dealership, his family moved to

nearby Massachusetts and he became a "gentleman farmer." By the way, the A&P once occupied the first floor of Mr. Zaccheo's building.

Before Mr. Zaccheo bought the building, it was known as "Coffin Hall." After he sold the building, it became a Norge appliance dealership owned by Mr. Preli and Mr. Lunn.



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

64. Vinny Musco's Esso Station - Originally this gas station was owned by Mr. Barberi. See photo on next page. Vinny bought the gas station in 1957. The photo shows a man riding a stationary bicycle next to the gas pump. The photo was taken after the 1938 hurricane when there was no electricity, so they powered the pump by hooking it up to a bicycle. Jack Redmond wrote a *Cabbages and Kings* article on Vinny Musco, and said that the Main St. Esso station was the first in Connecticut to have a "pit" for servicing autos.

When it was evident that Main St was going to be "redeveloped," Vinny decided it was time to go. He sold his Main St. gas station and moved to Turnpike Rd, where he opened a Texaco station. Vinny's Main St. Esso station had an old Coca-Cola machine which was sold when he sold the station. It still exists. It is now in the hands of Chet Pohorylo of Windsor Locks (2016). See photo on next page.



Barberi Esso, later became Vinny Musco Esso.
1938 Photo, no electricity after hurricane.
Using bicycle to pump the gas.



Vinny Musco Esso coke machine.
Later bought by Chet Pohorylo

65. Barberi's Home Style Bakery - This was a well loved business which is fondly remembered by its customers. The bread, cakes, cookies and other treats were delicious. To understand where Barberi's bakery was located, see photo below. In the photo, Fusick's gas station is on the left, and Barberi's bakery is on the right.



Barberi's Home Style Bakery
seen from Mike Fusick's gas station

66. Ashmere Inn - Harriet Clark Dexter Harriet and her husband, Edwin Douglass, the onsite engineer for building the Windsor Locks canal, had the Ashmere estate built in the 1830s. The name "Ashmere" came from the beautiful Ash trees on the grounds. Dexter Drake Coffin later offered Ashmere to the town for use as a library in 1952, but was turned down. He sold it to a local businessman who turned it into an Inn. In 1957, it was sold and torn down, to make room for Dexter Plaza. Photo is below. This ends our southerly walk down Main St.

Now we cross the canal, reverse course, and head North, walking along the road between the canal and the mills.



Ashmere Inn

VII. Walk North along the canal, as far as the American Writing Paper Co.

---- GO ACROSS CANAL TO THE STRIP OF LAND WHERE THE MILLS ARE.

Now we take the last leg of Leo Montemerlo's walk through his memories of Windsor Locks businesses. We cross over the canal. We are on the road between the canal and the river, where the manufacturing plants are. During his career, Leo worked at three of those plants (Medlicott, Windsor Locks Paper Corp. and Dexters). The following gives an idea of how much money people made when they worked at those mills in the 1930s and 40s. When he was 15 in 1930, he went to work for the Medlicott Factory in the carding room, where he made 35 cents an hour. In 1938 he worked in the spinning room, where he made \$1.15 an hour. In 1937, he moved to the Windsor

Locks Paper Co. where he was a foreman. In 1945, at age 40, he moved to Dexter Corp, where he drove a lift truck and earned \$1.50 an hour.

67. Katz Junk yard - Leo's list included the name "Katz' Junk Yard." Charles Carroll provided a clue as to what that meant. Louis and Rebecca Katz lived on North St., just around the corner from where the Carroll family lived at 18 Suffield St. They were "rag dealers" and collected rags and junk by horse and wagon. They had a junkyard or storage area near the canal. No other information was available on "Katz's Junk Yard."

68. Windsor Locks Paper Co. - This was one of the smaller paper mills in Windsor Locks. Among its customers was the United States Army. They bought vast quantities of toilet paper from the Windsor Locks Paper Co. They regularly did quality control checks on the toilet paper. The cartons of toilet paper were stacked in large blocks. The inspector would tell Leo Montemerlo to get a particular carton in the middle of those blocks of cartons of toilet paper, and they would take a "random" roll out of that box and count the sheets on the roll. The mill building is no longer in existence. See newspaper clipping below.

Three Plants Close Down But Aviation Industries And Other Business Places Look for Upturn Before Year's End

Thompsonville, Jan. 18 -- Despite the current slowdown of some Northern Connecticut industries, many area manufacturers are expanding their facilities, confident of an upturn in production later in the year.

Good Expansion

Although three plants, the E. Horton Co., Windsor Locks, Stafford Worsted Co., and the Pacific Pearl Button Co., ceased operations during the past year and the Windsor Locks Paper Co. has closed down for an indefinite period, expansion has taken place in many instances.

Spfld. Union, Jan 15, 1958

69. C.H. Dexter - Dexters was the largest and most well known business in Windsor Locks for a long while, and it was one of the largest employers in the town. It never had unions, although attempts were made to form one. The employees always voted against the formation of a union. See photo below. It is not well known that the Coffin family was instrumental in the building of Bradley Field, and there was thought given to naming the airport after Dexter Coffin. However, it was felt that the name "Coffin



C.H. Dexter & Sons

Airport” was a bit too morbid, so it became Bradley Field. Dexters, once the oldest firm on the New York Stock Exchange, became Alstrom in the year 2000.

70. Medlicott Co The Medlicott Company produced woolen and knit goods. It was an outgrowth from a small business begun by William G. Medlicott, of Longmeadow, Mass in 1866. It was known for introducing the highest technology machines for making such products. It no longer exists. It was located on the South side of he bridge. See photo



The Medlicott Factory, just south of the bridge

below.

71. J. R. Montgomery Co - was located just north of the bridge to Warehouse Point. See photo below. First built in the 1871, the Montgomery Mill was originally made to manufacture “cotton warp” which formed the basis for carpets. Later it switched to decorative and electrical tinsel. It closed down in 1989. There was a fire In 2007.



J.R.Montgomery Building, just north of the bridge 1976

72. Horton Chuck - Eli Horton, of Stafford, was a skillful machinist, who had resided here for several years. He invented a lathe-chuck, which superseded all previous inventions in this line. The Horton Chuck company was quite successful. See photo below. Leo Montemerlo’s father, Silvio Montemerlo, worked at Horton Chuck.



**Eli Horton & Sons mill is to the left.
It was destroyed by fire in 2006**

73. - American Writing Paper Company - see the 1913 map. The American Writing Paper Company owned the Windsor Paper Co., which was on the bank of the canal.

CONCLUSION

Leo Montemerlo made a list of 77 businesses in downtown Windsor Locks. His list turned out to be a map. These businesses existed sometime between when he was born in 1915 and when he wrote the list in 2013. We saw that the businesses in the list were written in order of their location along a certain route through downtown. A small map in the first part of this chapter showed that path. We saw how all of these businesses are located on a two-page map of Windsor Locks. We saw 53 old photos, advertisements and newspaper clippings which helped us visualize the 77 businesses in Leo's list.

For historians and for citizens of Windsor Locks, Leo Montemerlo's list/map is an absolute delight. He wrote down names that most Windsor Locks citizens in 2016 have never heard of. They include: the Princess Theater, the Central Hall building, the Beehive Building, Beltrandi's, Garbarino's Ice Cream Store, Wong's Chinese Laundry Umberto Pesci's shoe repair shop, and Katz's Junkyard.

Leo's list provided the information on the location of businesses such as Umberto Pesci's shoe repair shop, and Patsy Colapietro's Ice Cream Shop. His map led to research on Zaccheo's Pontiac Dealership which uncovered the fact that before it was a car dealership, it was an "armchair restaurant," and for a while, the A&P was located on the first floor of Mr. Zaccheo's building. It led to finding out that before the A&P existed across from the Railroad Station, there was a building there in which boxing matches and basketball games were held. That was the Central Hall Building. We also learned that the Central Hall Building previously was the Burnap Block, which included an Opera House! Leo's map raised some questions than have not yet been answered here. We still don't know the where Katz's junkyard was.

Many people helped with the research on Leo Montemerlo's map. My brother, Lenny Montemerlo found Leo's list. Together, we figured out the route that our fits our father's sequence of business locations. Mickey Danyluk's knowledge of Windsor Locks history solved a number of issues that Leo's list of businesses brought up. Noreen Baron identified the location of the Chinese Laundry on Grove St. Jerry Dougherty's website provided a number of photographs. The Windsor Locks Library, in the persons of Gloria Malec and Eileen Pearce, provided needed photographs. The children of Tommasso Zaccheo, John, Anna and Tom, provided information about the Zaccheo dealership, and about the Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Co, and of Pasquale Colapietro's Ice Cream store.

Chapter 26

Ettore R. Carniglia: Windsor Locks' Most Beloved Son



Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia 1904 - 1970

INTRODUCTION

Windsor Lock has had a host of successful sons and daughters. It would be impossible to determine which one was “the most successful.” However, it is not difficult to know which one was “most beloved.” That would be Dr. Carniglia. His friends knew him as “Carney.” He was born Ettore Francis Carniglia on January 8, 1904, to Jennie and John Carniglia. Both Jennie and John were immigrants from northern Italy. His mother worked in the Medlicott factory, and his father worked for the Allen Pease Co.

While Dr. Carniglia is the most well-known figure in Windsor Locks history, his life story is not well-known. In 2014, Windsor Locks historian, Philip Devlin wrote an excellent biography of Dr. Carniglia, which is doing a lot to correct that. He thoroughly researched all possible sources from Windsor Locks, from the medical community and even from Italy. His work does justice to Dr. Carniglia. Mr. Devlin’s book can be found in the Windsor Locks Public Library, and in the Senior Center, which has been named after Dr. Carniglia.

SCHOOLING

Past research on highly successful citizens of Windsor Locks revealed that they excelled in their schooling. Such was the case with the young Ettore Carniglia. He was a precocious student at St. Mary’s Elementary School, where he even skipped a grade.

He contracted rheumatic fever as a child. While he recovered from it, his heart valves were left scarred, which affected him in later life.

After graduating from St. Mary's in 1917, he entered the Loomis Institute in Windsor. His parents never had a car, so he had to find other ways to get to and from school. If he couldn't get a ride any other way, the trolley from Windsor Locks to Windsor cost a nickel. There were other boys from Windsor Locks at Loomis at that time. Elmer "Red" Leary was an outstanding athlete who graduated at the end of Ettore's first year. Red was in the first class to graduate from Loomis. Alfred B. Taravella, who attended Loomis for three years along with Ettore, went on to become a banker in Windsor Locks.

Ettore went by the nicknames of "Carney," "Carnegie" and "Spaghetti." There was an election for the brightest member of his class. He got all the votes. A yearbook contains a quotation by British poet Oliver Goldsmith, which was directed at Ettore: "And still they gazed and still the wonder grew, that one small head could carry all he knew." He was voted as: Most Likely to Succeed, Most Energetic, and Biggest Grind. He was second in two categories: Most Conscientious and Most Literary.

Ettore won a college scholarship from the Loomis Institute. The award said that his college entrance scores were not only the highest achieved at Loomis, but were among the highest in the country.

In 1921, he went to Harvard with that small scholarship from Loomis. He acquired three more scholarships, which enabled him to get through his undergraduate years without having to find a job. He wore clothes that his mother made. He wasn't a typical Harvard undergraduate. As we shall see later in his life, clothes and fashion never mattered to him.

Ettore majored in medicine. His graduation class had 572 students. Fifteen students graduated *Summa Cum Laude*. Ettore and J. Robert Oppenheimer, who later invented the atomic bomb, were among those fifteen students. Despite being highly honored at graduation, he did not attend the ceremony. His father came to Boston for the event, but Ettore realized that the length and the intellectual nature of the ceremony would make his father uncomfortable, so he took his dad to a Boston Red Sox game.

After graduating from Harvard in 1925, he went to Harvard Medical School. He took extra courses, and had enough credits to graduate in three years. However, he stayed and took more courses in his fourth year. He graduated at the top of his class.

A very telling episode occurred while Dr. Carniglia was being evaluated for an internship at Hartford Hospital. When he interviewed for a possible internship there, two things were brought up about his background. He was Italian and Catholic. Although he wanted that internship, he told the committee in no uncertain terms that his religion and ethnicity should not be considered in evaluating his qualifications for an internship there. He said that no good doctor would consider these factors in evaluating a patient's problems. He angrily stormed out of the room.

Interestingly enough, the review committee asked him to return, and they offered him the position. He was the first Italian-American who was admitted to their program. At the time, Hartford Hospital was the Protestant hospital, and St. Francis Hospital was the Catholic hospital. Things have since changed at Hartford Hospital.

CAREER

After his internship, Dr. Carniglia went to Baltimore's Union Memorial Hospital to serve as a staff doctor. He was there for five months. He left because he felt that Baltimore had many doctors, while his hometown, Windsor Locks, was badly in need of a doctor. He returned to Windsor Locks, and set up a practice at 4 Oak Street. He had to get a car and a driver's license. He had never had either. He met Blanche Goodsell at Hartford Hospital, where she was the supervisor of the obstetrical ward. They were married on March 6, 1933, in a secret ceremony at the Wethersfield State Prison by the chaplain of the prison. The marriage had to be kept secret to protect Blanche's status as a nurse.

Windsor Locks' large Italian population immediately began to seek out Dr. Carniglia. He also opened an office in Hartford, which was open two evenings a week. His mother used to answer the office phone in Windsor Locks since she spoke both Italian and English. House calls began immediately. Then there were babies. The first baby that Dr. Carniglia delivered was John Basile, the son of Tony Basile, the shoemaker. Dr. Carniglia also became the doctor for the County Home in Warehouse Point, and the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford. He was appointed the Town Health Officer in 1933.

In 1933, he bought a large house from Fred Bidwell at 5 North Main Street that could serve as both his house and his office. In 1937, he and Blanche adopted a son and a daughter. They were biological brother and sister. Their names were Peter Michael and Margaret Elizabeth.

World War II came along. It brought with it a great increase in activity at Bradley Field, which was a military airfield. Dr. Carniglia was called to go there whenever an airplane crash occurred. The airfield was named for Lt. Eugene Bradley, who crashed his P-40 on August 21, 1941. Dr. Carniglia signed his death certificate. His was one of 220 aircraft accidents at Bradley Field from 1941 to 1945.

On July 6, 1944, the worst circus accident in American history occurred in Hartford. It was a fire in which at least 167 people died. There were over 35 people there from Windsor Locks. Blanche Carniglia had taken Peter, who was eight years old, and Margaret, who was seven years old, to the circus that day. A fire broke out just as the Flying Wallendas were about to perform, and it spread very fast. Panic broke out. Blanche and Margaret were able to escape, but in the confusion, they became separated from Peter. Dr. Carniglia rushed to Hartford and searched through the bodies to try and find Peter. They found him the next morning at the Hartford Police station. He was unharmed and sipping on a soda.

Dr. Carniglia maintained a presence at Hartford Hospital. He was famous for his ability as a diagnostician. A diagnostician has to have an immense amount of information in his head, along with the ability to spot things that others might ignore. Here is one example of his diagnostic capability which took place at Hartford Hospital. A young boy was feverish and lethargic, and he had a rash. Dr. Carniglia looked at the boy's hands, and then he pulled down the lower lid of one of his eyes. There were tiny hemorrhages in his fingernail beds and in his lower eyelid. Based on that, Dr. Carniglia correctly diagnosed the boy as having meningitis. The other doctors didn't think to look in those two places.

In 1948, Jimmy Franklin, the manager of the A&P, found out that Dr. Carniglia's car was having troubles. He did a fund-raising campaign and raised enough money to buy the doctor a new Cadillac for his 44th birthday.

When Dr. Carniglia was born in Windsor Locks in 1904, the population was about 3000. By 1960, it was almost 11,500. The growth in population was accompanied by the need for more medical care. In 1950, Dr. Carniglia brought in Dr. John Kennedy to join his practice. He actually lived with the Carniglias until he got married in 1953. During the 1950s, the two doctors made as many as 18 house calls a day, in addition to their office hours. Dr. Kennedy continued his practice in Windsor Locks until his death in 1995 at age 74.

If you visited Dr. Carniglia's office in the early 1960s, you would see a stack of several cases of Coca Cola. The waiting room would be filled with patients sitting on black wooden "Harvard" chairs. Oftentimes, the waiting room overflowed and the patients would sit on the steps outside. You would hear him yell: "Who's next?" When you walked into his office, you would smell the rubbing alcohol that he used to sterilize his instruments, and you would see a man in rumpled, loose-fitting clothes, with suspenders holding his pants up. There would be a cigarette hanging out of his mouth. He had a raspy voice, and was difficult to understand. When you walked in and said your name, he'd often have a nice comment about you or your family.

Dr. Carniglia worked 20 hour days, day after day, with no vacations. He held office hours and made house calls every day. He didn't exercise much, and he constantly had a cigarette in his mouth and a Coca Cola by his hand. It was a different world. Back then, most doctors smoked. He was not an exception. Dr. Carniglia was wearing himself out.

He continued to make house calls into the mid 1960s. In the early 1960s, he was hospitalized for sub-acute bacterial endocarditis, which was caused by having had rheumatic fever as a child. He recovered, and went back to work.

On June 22, 1966, he suffered a stroke. It resulted in slurred speech and paralysis on one side. After a few months, he returned to practicing medicine. After that, he worked about six hours a day, until he died.

On Saturday, October 23, 1971, at the age of 67, Dr. Carniglia suffered a massive stroke, and died.

Dr. Carniglia was a selfless man. For most of his career, he charged \$3 for an office visit, and \$50 for delivering a baby. He instructed his bookkeeper to send a bill out only once. If payment was not forthcoming, she was not to send out a second notice. He sometimes gave money to patients who couldn't afford a needed medicine.

After he passed away, his wife asked a friend to clean up his office and his desk. One of the desk drawers was jammed. The jam was caused by a large over-stuffed envelope. In the envelope were checks for deliveries of Windsor Locks babies. It turns out that he didn't cash the checks of those that he didn't think could afford to pay.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia was an extraordinary man. He had no use for the normal pleasures that most people treasure, such as nice clothes, a 40 hour work week, an annual vacation, and retirement.

His goal was to provide needed medical services in his hometown, regardless of whether people could afford them or not. There are few, if any, people who would have been willing to work the number of hours that he did. He didn't make excuses. There were times he was called to deliver a baby in a snowstorm, when his car couldn't get through, so he just trudged through the snow, on foot.

He was a "giver," not a "taker." He had a level of intelligence that few people have. He worked incredibly hard at his education and his job.

He broke all of the rules for getting ahead in this world. He did it his way.

What did it buy him? It bought him the undying love and respect of the people of Windsor Locks. No one who knew him will ever forget him.

SOURCE

Carney: the Remarkable Life of Ettore F. Carniglia, MD, by Philip R. Devlin, 2014, ISBN #: 978-0-615-86325-2. Self-published. Available at the Windsor Locks Public Library.

Chapter 27

Ella Grasso: Windsor Locks Woman Becomes Governor



Ella Grasso

INTRODUCTION

Ella Grasso remains Windsor Locks' best-known woman. Dr. Ettore Carniglia remains the town's best-known man. Fame is often accompanied by a bit of pompousness or aloofness. Neither Ella nor Ettore were the least bit pompous, pretentious or aloof. They were "down to Earth." Ella never rode in a limousine while she was governor. "Carney" made house calls in his family car, with his wife, Blanche, as driver. Both had excellent records in their schooling. Windsor Locks has many good role models for its young men. Ella Grasso is wonderful role model for the young women of Windsor Locks. She did extremely well in what was then a man's world. She had to break new ground to do what she did. We can all learn a great deal from the accomplishments of Ella Grasso.

EDUCATION

Ella was born on May 10, 1919, in Windsor Locks to Italian immigrant parents, James and Maria Oliva Tambussi. Her father owned and operated the Windsor Locks Bakery, and her mother was a mill worker.

Ella attended St. Mary's School in Windsor Locks, and then went to the Chaffee Institute in Windsor. After high school graduation in 1936, she entered Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. She graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in economics and sociology with minors in history and

political science. Her academic accomplishments were many, and she earned a Phi Beta Kappa key her junior year. Yet schoolwork was not enough to keep Ella busy. During her junior and senior years at Mount Holyoke, she held positions as a part-time assistant and teacher for the Department of Economics and Sociology. In 1942, Ella received a Masters of Arts degree in economics and sociology from Mount Holyoke. (http://www.italiansrus.com/biography/ella_tambussi_grasso.htm)

After graduating in 1942, Ella Tambussi married Thomas Grasso, a schoolteacher and principal. The couple raised two children, Susanne and James.

CAREER

In 1943, Ella's longtime life of public service began with a position at the Connecticut State Department of Labor. A year later, she became the Assistant Connecticut State Director of Research for the War Manpower Commission, where she served until 1946. In 1952, she was elected to the Connecticut House of Representatives, where she served until 1957. She became first woman to be elected "Floor Leader of the House" in 1955. In 1958 she was elected Secretary of the state of Connecticut, and she was re-elected in 1962 and 1966. She was the first woman to chair the Democratic State Platform Committee and served on that committee from 1956 to 1968. She served as a member of the Platform Drafting Committee for the 1960 Democratic National Convention. She was the co-chairman of the Resolutions Committee for the Democratic National Conventions of 1964 and 1968. In 1970 she was elected as a Democratic representative to the 92nd Congress of the United States. She won re-election in 1972.

(<http://www.windsorlockshistory.org/sites/default/files/Alphabetical%20Index.pdf>)

In 1974, Ella chose not to run for reelection to Congress. Instead, she opted to run for the position of Governor of Connecticut. In January 1974, she announced her gubernatorial candidacy, which ensured that by the following January she would retire from the House. Ella won the gubernatorial race against GOP House colleague, Representative Robert Steele. She became the first woman to be elected a US governor without succeeding a husband. Grasso's four-year term commenced in January 1975. The fiscal problems of Connecticut forced her to follow a far more conservative policy as governor than she had as a Member of Congress. Despite budget cuts, Ella maintained her popularity and won re-election in 1978 against another House GOP veteran, Ronald Sarasin. (<http://history.house.gov/People/Detail/14052>)

Ella Grasso was described as a symbolic rather than a doctrinaire feminist leader. She opposed legalized abortion, but did not actively support affirmative action. She supported the proposed Equal Rights Amendment, but did not campaign for it. She was a popular politician, who in 28 years as a public figure, never lost an election. (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ella-Grasso>)

Sadly, on December 31, 1980, Governor Grasso resigned her office due to illness. She passed away several weeks later on February 5, 1981, at the age of 61, from ovarian cancer. Her accomplishments however, remained intact. She is remembered for bringing the state of Connecticut out of debt, and for creating an open government, which gave ordinary citizens easier access to public records.

President Ronald Reagan posthumously awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and said: "Long before the women's movement had gained prominence, Ella Grasso had already begun the long, hard ascent to distinction as an elected public servant. A fond wife and mother, she proved that it is possible to reconcile a full family life with a long and eventful political career...[she] won the respect of fellow citizens of both parties. Tireless in the pursuit of duty and courageous in the face of illness, Ella Grasso has earned the admiration of all Americans as a legislator, a governor and a woman of outstanding character and achievement."

(http://www.italiansrus.com/biography/ella_tambussi_grasso.htm)

Ella developed the reputation of being a real leader. A good example of this was the blizzard of 1978, which dumped several feet of snow on Connecticut. She made a controversial decision to close the state down. She shut down the roads by proclamation in order to minimize accidents and make way for emergency vehicles. As a result, storm-related fatalities in Connecticut were much lower than in surrounding states and, ultimately, Grasso's decision was recognized as a wise one, and it set the basis for future emergency response situations.

(<http://www.nhregister.com/article/NH/20120324/NEWS/303249929>)

Ella Grasso understood that gender should not be an obstacle in her political career. In a speech given at Mount Holyoke College, she said that the time spent at her alma mater taught her that gender is not a "pressing issue in life." She opted not to take the radical feminist stance so common during the 1970s. She chose to win the female vote with her policies on education and health. Upon winning the Connecticut governorship in 1974, Newsweek magazine, inspired by her victory and political acumen, ran a series of articles on women politicians. (http://www.italiansrus.com/biography/ella_tambussi_grasso.htm)

CONCLUSIONS

Ella Grasso was special in many ways. One could see, back when she was in school, that she was bright and that she worked hard. One could see, when she got into the very difficult area of politics, that she was not only bright and hardworking, but that she also had the ability to look at difficult situations, and figure ways to turn them into a "win." Politics is not a field that makes things easy for those who enter it. There are always opponents. There are always people waiting for you to slip up, and there is always continued competition in elections. Ella never lost an election. She "thought outside the box" when necessary.

Ella handled the feminist movement of her time in an unconventional way. She just didn't think that gender was a pressing issue. She became a member of the US House of Representatives. However she realized that she would have less ability to make things happen there than she would have in Connecticut state government. As a result, she got back into state politics. She was an effective, yet unconventional politician, she never became pompous. She was not into high-fashion. She remained "Ella" throughout her life. She opened up new paths for young women, and was a role model who showed that one didn't always have to take the path that was well worn. She would rank high on anyone's list of Windsor Locks' most successful individuals.

It is interesting that three of the most successful citizens of Windsor Locks (Ella Grasso, Dr. Ettore Carneglia and Wilson Taylor), were all from the Clay Hill section of Windsor Locks! Ella often referred to Dr. Carneglia as "My hero." According to Jon Purmont's biography of Ella, she broke discrimination barriers, and she demonstrated that first generation immigrants could be successful in the land of opportunity.

Sources

italians.com, *Ella Tambussi Grasso: Political Pioneer*, by Leonardo Solimine.
http://www.italiansrus.com/biography/ella_tambussi_grasso.htm

The *New Haven Register News*, *Jon Purmont talks about his biography of Ella Grasso*. March 23, 2012, By Jordan Fenster.
<http://www.nhregister.com/article/NH/20120324/NEWS/303249929>

Ella Grasso: American Politician by The Editors of *Encyclopædia Britannica*, October 24, 2003
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ella-Grasso>

History, Art & Archives, United States House of Representatives, Office of History and Preservation, US House of Representatives, *GRASSO, Ella Tambussi*.
<http://history.house.gov/People/Detail/14052>

Grasso, Ella Tambussi (1919-1981)
<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=g000387>

Governor Ella T. Grasso, National Governor's Association,
https://www.nga.org/cms/home/governors/past-governors-bios/page_connecticut/col2-content/main-content-list/title_grasso_ella.default.html

Ella Grasso, *Wikipedia*,
<http://www.windsorlockshistory.org/sites/default/files/Alphabetical%20Index.pdf>

Ella Grasso: How one woman paved the way for women in politics,
<http://ellagrasso-nhd.weebly.com/contact.html>

Ella Grasso: Connecticut's Pioneering Governor, by Jon Purmont, published by Wesleyan University Press. 2012.

Ella: A Biography of Ella Grasso, by Susan Bysiewicz, Peregrine Publishers 1984.

Chapter 28

Hugh Montgomery: Extraordinary Windsor Locks Citizen



Hugh Montgomery, about 1945

Hugh Montgomery, who was born on Nov. 29, 1923, is one of the most extraordinary persons ever to come out of Windsor Locks. He was a member of the Montgomery family which owned the J. R. Montgomery Company. Hugh's father was John Robert Montgomery (1890-1967), who was the son of George M. Montgomery (1857-1947). George M. Montgomery was the brother of J. R. Montgomery, who originally founded the company in 1871 with two partners. J. R. Montgomery bought out his two former partners in 1865, and George M. Montgomery became a partner and an active manager in the firm at that time.

It should be pointed out that the J. R. Montgomery firm was not an ordinary company which produced ordinary things. Its owners were creative, risk-taking innovators who vastly increased the kinds and numbers of specialty yarns, and made advances in the use of metals both in combination with yarns and for use as electrical components. The Montgomery family, which founded and grew this company, consisted of highly motivated, highly intelligent, creative individuals.

Given that background, it would not be surprising to find that Hugh Montgomery turned out to be an exceptional person. According to the June 17, 1937 issue of the

Springfield Republican, Hugh was one of 48 students who were graduating from Windsor Locks public grammar school. Hugh went to high school at the Loomis academy in Windsor, Connecticut. He took the train back and forth from Windsor Locks to Windsor during high school. During the hurricane of 1938, he was walking home from the Loomis School along the railroad tracks, and the water was growing deeper. He was able to make it home.

After graduating from Loomis, he went to Harvard University for one semester. The July 10, 1943 *Springfield Republican* states that Hugh Montgomery, a member of the army reserve corps, was called to active duty, and was receiving initial training at Fort Bragg, NC. He became a member of the 82nd Airborne Division. On D-Day, he parachuted into Normandy.

Montgomery was wounded while serving as a paratrooper in World War II, and joined the Office of Strategic Services's counter-intelligence branch, known as X-2. His fluency in a number of languages, including German, would serve him well in the special counter-intelligence detachment of the Office of Special Services (OSS), the wartime spy organization. He was often called upon to go behind German lines to find and bring out Germans who could provide valuable information.

In April 1945, he was on a mission with five other OSS operatives to find a nuclear physicist in eastern Germany, when they happened upon a place which had a terrible smell. They had arrived at the Buchenwald concentration camp. When they arrived, the survivors had just taken over. Montgomery's team saw a group of German guards who were trying to surrender. One of the inmates asked Montgomery to leave the guards to them. Montgomery replied: "They're yours." Montgomery broke OSS secrecy protocol, and radioed to an Army contact about what was happening. Later he said that the experience at Buchenwald had given him nightmares.

During his OSS operations in WWII, he met the woman he eventually married. He was on a covert mission in Austria, when the German Army moved into that area. A young woman hid him in a barrel. A German officer checked the barrel by tapping it with his swagger stick, but did not open the barrel. Hugh later married Annamarie Janek, the Viennese girl who hid him in the barrel. This story was told in the December 16, 1962 issue of the *Boston Record American* newspaper.

After the war, Hugh Montgomery returned to finish his education at Harvard. He earned a BA in 1947, an MA in 1948, and a PhD in 1952. According to the *Springfield Union* of July 25, 1951, Hugh won a Woodrow Wilson Scholarship from Princeton University for a year's study in South America. His wife joined him in that year abroad.

After returning to Harvard to earn his Ph.D., he joined the newly formed CIA, where he led spying operations against the Soviets in Rome, Paris, Vienna, Athens and Moscow. He went to Berlin where he worked on a secret tunnel designed to tap Soviet communications. He learned to speak the language of each of those countries. He spoke eight languages fluently.

In the early 1960s, he was the Deputy Station Chief in Moscow. One day, he was to retrieve a message left by the agency's top Soviet informant in a high toilet tank during a dinner party at the American ambassador's residence in Moscow. He climbed up on a sink, and got one arm wet retrieving the piece of paper. Montgomery and his wife, Annemarie, left the party, arm in arm, with the piece of paper, and no-one was the

wiser. The Soviet informant was Col. Oleg Vladimirovich Penkovsky, who provided information that helped President Kennedy diffuse the Cuba Missile Crisis.

In 1962, the Russian government accused Hugh Montgomery and six others with espionage with regard to Col. Penkovsky. All got out of the country before the situation got worse.

Montgomery temporarily left the CIA in 1981 when President Ronald Reagan nominated him as Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the United States Department of State. He held that office from October 19, 1981 until January 6, 1985. From 1985-1989 he served as a deputy US ambassador to the United Nations. He returned to the CIA after this assignment and served with the Agency until he retired in 2014. In 2014, CIA director John Brennan, awarded him the Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal, and called him "one of the greatest American heroes of our time." See the photo of Hugh and his wife, Annemarie with President Bush in the mid-1980s.



Hugh & Annemarie Montgomery with President Bush

Hugh Montgomery's service to the CIA spanned the years from 1953 to 2014. That is an incredible 62 years. He retired at the age of 91. Leon Panetta said: "I'd call him one of the founding fathers of the CIA." Panetta consulted Montgomery occasionally when he was director of the spy agency. Hugh Montgomery's life and career were nothing short of astounding. Below is a photo of him at about the time of his retirement in 2014. He died on April 6, 2017, shortly after this chapter was written. In my last conversation with him, he told me that he read this chapter, and that he enjoyed it. He also verified its accuracy.



Hugh Montgomery, about 2014

References

Hugh Montgomery, paratrooper and CIA spy, reflects on his adventures in war and espionage, Ken Dilanian, Associated Press, November 25, 2015. This can be found at <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/11/25/hugh-montgomery-paratrooper-and-cia-spy-reflects-on-his-adventures-in-war-and.html>

Annemarie Janak Montgomery's Obituary, Published in the *Washington Post* on Feb. 8, 2015, and also found at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/washingtonpost/obituary.aspx?pid=174090567>

Wikipedia article on *Hugh Montgomery (diplomat)*, found at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Montgomery_\(diplomat\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Montgomery_(diplomat))

Chapter 29

Interview with Hugh Montgomery at Age 93



Hugh Montgomery, about 2014

The previous chapter, entitled “Hugh Montgomery: Extraordinary Windsor Locks Citizen” provides an overview of Dr. Hugh Montgomery’s life, including:

- his boyhood in Windsor Locks
- his high school years at the Loomis Institute in Windsor,
- his freshman year at Harvard,
- his service in the US Army in World War II, where he served as a spy,
- his return to Harvard to get a B.A, an MA and a Ph.D., and,
- his career with the Central Intelligence Agency.

The previous chapter provides good background information for this chapter, which is an interview with Hugh Montgomery. It took place in his home on February 20, 2017, at a time when he was 93 years old. Hugh lived in McLean, Virginia, not far from the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency, where he worked from 1953 until 2014, when he retired at the age of 91. That last sentence alone tells you that he is an extraordinary man. Sadly, he died on April 6, 2017, just two months after the interview.

Although I had been in telephone contact with Hugh a number of times, the interview was the first time I met him in person. Hugh sat down in his favorite chair. I gave him a copy of Phil Devlin’s book about Dr. Carniglia, and told him that it was a gift from the author. It was obvious from the expression on his face that Hugh was

delighted to get the book. With Hugh's permission, I turned on my electronic voice recorder, and the interview began.

Hugh: Carney was a totally unselfish man. He would come to our house any hour of the day or night. Blanche would drive him. He would be there with a cigarette hanging out of the corner of his mouth. He was unforgettable. Please tell Phil Devlin that I thank him for this book.

Mel: When did you first know Carney?

Hugh: I first met him when I was in my teens. He was our family physician. I went to grammar school in Windsor Locks, but then I went to Loomis, as Carney did. He went to Harvard, as did I. And he went to Harvard Medical School. But I left Loomis as a freshman to join the Army in 1942. I stayed in the Army for a while. They wouldn't let me go. They sent me to Berlin. I kept wanting to go back to Harvard and get an education. Finally I had enough points for accumulated service so that they couldn't lose my files anymore. (laughing), so finally I went back to Harvard. I started as a sophomore in about 1947. I had been in the Army for about five years. And I just stayed at Harvard until I finished my doctorate. Of course, I didn't know anybody when I went back to Harvard. My class was all gone. But it was great because classes were about 85% veterans. They were all on the GI Bill. I never would have made it through Harvard without the GI Bill. In fact, I had the Public Law 16, which was for the disabled veterans. It was marvelous. It paid for everything, all the way through graduate school. You had to go back to have the doctors look at you every once in a while. They had to make sure that you weren't malingering or anything like that (laughing). Then they would certify you, and you could keep on going. But that's the only reason that I was able to get all the way through my doctorate. They asked me to stay on and teach, which I did. I enjoyed it for a while, but I discovered fairly soon, that the number of veterans dropped way off after the big flood of veterans at the end of the war. I didn't get along with some of the students. I remember that one of the students drove up in his convertible Cadillac, He said, "My old man gave ten million dollars to Harvard. I'm here because he wants me to get a degree. He said, "Don't expect me to do any extra work." I said, "Go to somebody else's class. I don't want you in mine. I got in trouble with the Dean for that. (laughing) He said, "His old man is loaded. We don't want to offend him." I said: "Just put him in another class. I don't want him in mine."

Mel: What about languages? You are a language specialist. When did you start learning languages?

Hugh: My mother taught languages at Smith College.

Mel: so did you study languages in school too?

Hugh: I started at Loomis, absolutely. In my first year, I took Latin, Greek, French and German. I think there were two or three of us in the Greek class. That was great. I loved it. The teacher was a very fine young teacher. He was killed in the war, so he didn't come back.

Mel: What did you major in when you went to college and graduate school at Harvard?

Hugh: Romance & Slavic languages, and I taught French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian. I also studied Russian and Polish. I even got a guy to teach us Romanian. There were two of us in his class. It was great. He loved it. We loved it. In all that time, of course, I was in touch with the people in Washington with whom I had been in

the military. They kept saying: "Why don't you stop goofing off and living the life of Riley. Come on down and get an honest job." (laughing) They kept after me. A combination of that and the fact that the number of veterans in the classes had gone way down caused me to lose motivation. The real GI people worked really well. They really got good education. But then Harvard reverted somewhat. You know, it had the reputation of being a rich boy's school. It was enormously expensive.

Mel: So how long did you teach before you went to Washington?

Hugh: Well, I taught as I studied. They didn't pay you much, but it kept the wolf away from the door. And it provided a little income too. Then my friends in Washington kept saying: "Stop goofing off and come down and get a real job."

Mel: Did you go to Washington as soon as you got your doctorate?

Hugh: No, it was shortly thereafter. I stayed for a year afterwards, I think. It just wasn't the same anymore.

Mel: So you taught at Harvard for a year before you went to Washington?

Hugh: Actually, I think it was two years. Then there wasn't the motivation. The students were a different group entirely. The veterans were almost nonexistent by then. There was a great wave of them in 1945 and 1946, Very quickly, it leveled out.

Mel: What happened when you went to Washington?

Hugh: It was about time that I got a decent job.

Mel: Did you join the OSS at that time?

Hugh: The OSS was dissolved in 1945. By then it was CIA. It became CIA in 1948. I got there in 1951. The OSS completely dissolved after FDR died. OSS was the creature of two people - FDR and Gen. Bill Donovan. The only reason it existed was because the two of them were as unlike as any two people you can imagine. But the two of them just hit it off somehow. FDR used to refer to Donovan as "my good legs." He sent Donovan all over the world to see what was really going on since FDR couldn't do it himself. Everybody knew that FDR and Donovan were very close. It meant that Donovan could do just about anything he wanted. For example, the insignia that he picked for the OSS was a golden spear. The OSS was the point of the spear. He asked the Chief of Staff of the Army if that was OK, since there was no such thing as a Secretary of Defense at that time. The Chief of Staff of the Army said: "No, you can't do that." So Donovan went to Roosevelt, and Roosevelt said: "Go ahead, if that is what you want to do." So he appeared the next day with one of these things. The Chief of Staff of the Army said: "How come?", and Donovan replied, "Here is the authorization from the President." That took care of that. When Roosevelt died in 1945, Donovan sent a cable to all of his OSS people abroad. He said: "Batten down the hatches because this is the end of OSS." Truman had a very negative view of us, and it is just a question of time before they cut our funds. Roosevelt died in May. At any rate, it didn't take Truman very long before he just wrote an executive order abolishing it, and it just vanished. It broke Donovan's heart. He never recovered from it.

Mel: How do you prepare for an espionage job?

Hugh: I had no idea what I was getting into. They didn't tell you. So I got orders once to go to Washington and report to "2430 east." I said: "What's that?" They said: "Never mind. You'll find out." It was very, very secretive. You couldn't say what you were doing. You wore a uniform. If someone asked: "What are you doing?", you said:

"I'm in the Army." If they asked: "Well, where do you work?", you responded, "Well, up the street a ways." "What do you do?" You really didn't answer. And then they sent you for training out in the woods, out at the Washington Golf and Country Club. That's where we did a lot of the training. We went out, but we didn't know where we were, because they put us in a truck and pulled down the curtains, and away we went. None of us knew anything about Washington anyway. So you did your training there, and off you went. Next thing, you got on a boat, and you are in England, and go here, go there. Don't ask a lot of stupid questions. (laughing) That's the way things went.

Mel: What do you think made some people good at that job?

Hugh: I think being young and stupid was very helpful. It was all so new and different. They taught all of the kinds of things such as irregular warfare. It was all very intriguing and exciting and you got extra money for it. If you parachuted, you got an extra \$8 a month more. That was a lot. It paid for your laundry. You had to pay for your own laundry. (laughing) It was a bunch of young energetic people. It was a real challenge.

Mel: When in this timeline did you get married?

Hugh: It was long, long after this. I met my wife in a very remote hunting lodge in the mountains of Austria, where the Germans were running a clandestine radio station into the Balkans. I was told: "You go there with two other Americans, and you take over that station." You want to know what's going on. We got some Germans out of a prisoner of war camp. My job was to translate from English to German, and German to English. Then we had a Navy signal man who sat and watched the German man to make sure that he sent exactly what he was supposed to send. He controlled that very carefully. That lasted for about two and a half months, and then we got a message one day, saying that the President thinks that it isn't nice to spy on our Russian neighbors or Russian allies, so get out the hammers and destroy the entire installation. We turned the Germans back over to the prisoner of War camp. We were told to destroy everything, and to burn all equipment. It was actually an orphanage. The transmitting equipment was concealed in the second floor of an orphanage. It was great cover. So that was the end of that.

Mel: Is that when your wife-to-be hid you in a barrel while the Germans were searching the area?

Hugh: We lived somewhat dangerously. The war was still going on. She and I had to keep a pretty low profile. It was way up there in the mountains. They told us it was a Hungarian cavalry regiment, which was part of the German army. And they had apparently gone up, when things got bad. They would come up once in a while and we would get out of the way. We hoped that no one would ask too many questions. It didn't last too long, anyway.

Mel: About what year was that?

Hugh: It was April, May, June and July of 1945, roughly. And then of course, the war ended, and all kinds of things happened.

Mel: Did you go back to Washington after the war ended?

Hugh: No. Let's see. Where did I go from there? I went to the city of Kassel in Northern Germany. I thought that would be the end. Then we went to Berlin. We ended up in Berlin, with the Russians. That was a lot of fun. (laughing) Talk about wild men. Human life meant nothing to them. They shot people for little or no reason. A Russian jeep had a collision with an American jeep. The Russian officer pulled out his pistol and shot his driver. He shouted at the American officer that he should shoot his driver too. This was intolerable. The Russian officer dumped the body of his driver in the street and drove off. He just left him there. The big scandal, the big disaster was that Berlin was divided into American, Russian, British and French sectors. There was a brewery in the British sector. One night, in the Kommendatura, which was the governing body of Berlin after the war, there was a call from the military police saying that a bunch of drunken Russian soldiers had gotten into the brewery, and they had just gone wild, and they have weapons. We had a group of British Military Police, but the minute they checked into it, there was a blast from a machine gun. We had lost control completely. So the Russian representative in the Kommendatura said: "Not to worry. Not to worry." Next thing we knew, he called the Russian military police, and they went to this brewery and they tried to reason with their countrymen. They said: "OK boys, the fun is over." But it didn't do any good. They were all drunk. They did the same thing. The drunk Russian soldiers started shooting. So the Russian MP said: "OK, if that's the way you want it to be, OK, fine." So they stationed the Russian Military Police at the half-windows (the brewery was half underground) and the commander of the Russian MPS said: "When I give the signal, just throw grenades through the windows." So that's what they did. This group of MP just waited on his signal, and they lobbed grenades through all of the glass windows. So what did the Russians do then? They rounded up all the Germans they could find, and made them go in and get the bodies, and take them out and bury them. Those were wild and wooly times. And nobody said anything. Things were pretty scary sometimes. We never went out at night. We kept a very low profile. We always travelled in twos and threes. We stayed away from the Russian sector as much as we could. They were unpredictable. And they were drunk much of the time. The Russians were told by their commanders to do whatever they wanted to. Take your revenge. And they did. It was the Wild West. They were all heavily armed. They would shoot anybody at the drop of a hat.

Mel: This was before you got married, right?

Hugh: Oh yes, long before I got married. I went from Berlin back to the States. We stayed in touch through correspondence. Then she came over here. I was at graduate school at Harvard when we got married. She was multi-lingual, so she had a wonderful time. She became a cashier at a bank while I was getting my doctorate. She loved it. It was fascinating. I was getting pressure from my friends in Washington to "come down to DC and get a real job." So we did. Then we went to Berlin very quickly, and spent the next nine years in Berlin. Then we went all over, everywhere -- France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Moscow... I am missing a few.... Paris, Rome, ten years in Rome -- oh boy. Rome was heaven. I loved that. The first time I went to Italy, it was for five years, from 1965 to 1970, and then from 1975 to 1980. Roman traffic is really something. It defies description. They don't have brakes. They

have horns. (laughing) The only accidents that I ever had in Rome is when I was stopped at a stoplight. Bang. I was rear ended twice.

Mel: Did you get a chance to do any traveling over there?

Hugh: I went all over Italy, Sicily, the islands. When we went to Sicily, they had a huge earthquake. The hotel was shaking like a leaf. I went with a bunch of Italian Naval officers. I asked "Did you arrange this especially for me?" He said No, no, no, no.

Mel: Did you ever get to Amalfi?

Hugh: We went to the Amalfi Coast and Capri, and the Blue Grotto, and all of the other islands there. We used to go there regularly. My children loved it. They loved Italy.

At this point, Hugh picked up the book on Dr. Carneiglia, and said: "Let me tell you a story about Carney." I saw Carney frequently when I was a boy, mostly because of my mother, who had a number of illnesses. He would come any hour of the day or night. He come to see her quite often. We saw a great deal of him. Blanche was a great friend of my mother. She drove Carney everywhere. She drove any hour of the day or night. My favorite story about Blanche was that she loved to eat, as you probably know. Her favorite food was corn that had just been picked. At one point, we frequently spent a good deal of time as the Spencer homestead, out it Suffield, on top of the hill. It was a huge farm, with lots of tobacco, naturally, and plenty of corn too. Blanche heard about the fact that we had corn there. She said: "I want to be invited out when you have fresh corn. But don't you dare tell Carney how many ears of corn I ate." She would eat something like 12 ears of corn at one sitting.

At this point, I turned off the voice recorder, and thanked Hugh for a great interview. It had lasted about an hour. It was thoroughly enjoyable. I was in awe of this man, Hugh Montgomery, who has had a life that can only be described as incredible. He was relaxed, upbeat, friendly, and showed a great sense of humor. I had just had an hour with a man from Windsor Locks who got three degrees from Harvard, had an exciting time in the Army during World War II as a spy with the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), and followed that up with a career in the CIA which lasted from 1945 to 2014, when he retired at the age of 91. It would be an understatement to say that he led a full life. It was obvious during the interview was that he enjoyed his career thoroughly, and he is now enjoying retirement.

Chapter 30

Wilson H. Taylor: A Boy from Windsor Locks Becomes a Titan of Industry



Wilson H. Taylor

Wilson Henry Taylor is a true Windsor Locksian. He was born on November 17, 1943 to Dr. and Mrs. Wilson H. Taylor of North Main Street. Dr. Taylor was a chiropodist (a foot doctor). Wilson's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. James Hendsey also lived in town. He is a product of Windsor Locks schools. He went to St. Mary's Elementary School in 1949 and graduated in 1956. He got through eight grades in seven years by skipping the third grade. I was a classmate of his at St. Mary's. I remember him as the smartest kid in the class - every year. He was a nice, quiet, unassuming kid who just seemed to learn everything quickly and easily.

Bill, or Billy, as he was known back then, went on to Windsor Locks High School, where he had a career that any parents would be proud of. He made the honor roll every marking period. As a Junior at WLHS, he was a semifinalist in the National Merit Scholarship competition. (*Springfield Union*, Oct 9, 1959) When he took his college boards, he got a 1550. That's not bad, considering 1600 is perfect. In his senior year, he won a scholarship from the National Honor Society. He won it over 55,000 other members of the National Honor Society. (*Springfield Union*, May 19, 1960)

In High School, Bill was Secretary of the Literature Club, associate editor of the school yearbook, manager of the varsity baseball team, a member of the Language Club, and a member of the Mathematics Club. (*Springfield Union*, May 19, 1960) At

his graduation ceremony in June of 1960, he gave a talk at on "Initiative." He was the winner of the Rentschler Four-Year Mathematics Award, which is given to the graduating student receiving the highest scholastic rank in the four year college preparation program. (*Springfield Union*, June 25, 1960)

Bill's Windsor Locks High School career was nothing short of phenomenal. As we shall see, it was a glimpse of things to come. Let's look at his college life and his career.

Bill Taylor attended Trinity College in Hartford. He was on the Dean's list every semester. In the summer after his Junior year, he participated in a special summer work-study program. It was sponsored by Connecticut General Life Insurance Company in Bloomfield. Its purpose was to acquaint the students with the workings of a large life insurance company. (*Springfield Union*, Aug 15, 1963)

In his Senior year at Trinity, Bill won the Mary Louise Guertin Actuarial award. He was selected on the basis of personal qualities indicating potential leadership in the actuarial profession, and for demonstrated scholarship in mathematics, economics and English. Bill was also the valedictorian of his class, and he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in Mathematics. (*Springfield Union*, October 26, 1964) In addition, he was a member of Sigma Pi Sigma, the national physics honor society, and Pi Gamma Mu, the national social science honor society. (*Springfield Union*, June 17, 1964)

The last two paragraphs are actually quite startling. How often does one come across a college student who is academically outstanding in mathematics, physics, economics, English and Social Science?

After graduating from Trinity College in June, of 1964, Mr. Taylor went to work in the actuarial department of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Co. in Bloomfield. Having taken a summer internship with them in the previous year, turned out to be a prescient thing to do. (*Springfield Union*, October 26, 1964)

He started off as an actuarial trainee at Connecticut General, and finished the required series of actuarial exams in 1968. By doing this, he became a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries. After several brief assignments, he became the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Connecticut General's biggest business (Healthcare) in 1971. At that time, he was 27 years old. Three years later, in 1974, he became the CFO of the Property and Casualty Division, which was the company's biggest money loser. Mr. Taylor turned that Division around and made it the company's biggest money maker. (The New York Times, Oct 29, 1987, Daniel R. Cuff, "Business People: Successor to Chief is Names at Cigna")

In 1980, Bill became the CFO of Connecticut General. In 1982, eighteen years after he went to work at Connecticut General, the company merged with INA Corporation to form CIGNA. At that time, he was named Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of the new CIGNA Corporation.

Mr. Taylor was 43 years old in 1986, when he was named Vice Chairman, Chief Operating Officer and a member of the board of CIGNA.

In 1988, he was named President and Chief Executive Officer of CIGNA, becoming the youngest CEO of a major US insurance company at that time.

He retired in 2000.

How well did CIGNA do under Mr. Taylor's leadership?

Over the 13 years that he was CEO, the average annual return to shareholders was 23%. It is worthwhile to re-read the last sentence. His achievement was nothing short of astounding.

So what exactly is this CIGNA corporation that Bill Taylor headed up?

Cigna Corporation, through its subsidiaries, provides group life and health insurance, managed care, retirement products and services, and individual financial services worldwide. The Company also sells individual life and health insurance and annuity products in selected international locations.

How big is CIGNA?

- It has \$38 Billion in annual revenue
 - It is ranked number 90 on the Fortune 500.
 - It has about \$12 Billion in shareholder equity.
 - It has about 90 million customers
 - It has assets of \$57 Billion
 - It has more than 39,000 employees
- (<https://www.cigna.com/about-us/cigna-fact-sheet>)

To get an idea of how big CIGNA is, let's compare it with the state of Connecticut. Cigna takes in about \$38 Billion a year. Connecticut's annual budget is about \$8 Billion a year. While the comparison is far from perfect, we can see that Bill's company annually took in about five times as much as the state of Connecticut does. Bill Taylor managed CIGNA well for a long time. He is a person that Windsor Locks can well be proud of.

Interestingly enough, that is not all he did. He was also:

- a trustee of Philadelphia's Regional Performing Arts Center
- a trustee of the Philadelphia Orchestra.
- a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Enterprise Institute since 1989, and Board chairman from 1994 through 1998.

Of course, he was a husband and a father while doing all of this.

We would like all of our children to reach their full potential. In order to reach your full potential, you need to have some ideas as to what is possible. Good role models can make that happen. Windsor Locks has such role models. They include people who have made outstanding achievements in different fields. Three people that come to mind quickly are: Dr. Ettore Carneglia, Governor Ella Grasso and Wilson H. Taylor, in the fields of medicine, government and industry, respectively.

