

A Story of
Connecticut
Told in
100 Buildings

HOW THE
NUTMEG STATE
HAPPENED



CRUDEN BAY BOOKS

INTRODUCTION

If those walls could talk...this is what they would say. A story about Connecticut.

Brownstone... octagon houses... the "Iron Prince"... iron horses... summer stock theater... fire towers... windmills... brass... insurance... water power... the CCC... modern architectural icons... elephants... kit houses...the golden age of motoring... canals... hats... silk... Shakers... Buffalo soldiers... olive-hued glass... copper mines... Frank Lloyd Wright... drive-in movies... cider mills... Carnegie libraries... road racing... white clam pizza. This book will have you telling stories like a native in no time.

The photos and stories collected here are a fast and fun way to learn the explanations behind the quirks, the traditions and the secrets that make Connecticut uniquely Connecticut. What product was Connecticut's tallest building constructed to manufacture in 1909? Solved. What is America's oldest amusement park? A mystery no more. What golf course did Katharine Hepburn play growing up? Identified. What town was the cradle of Impressionism in the United States? Revealed.

Imagine a group of settlers arriving in an undeveloped location. First come shelters in which to live and then structures in which to work and shop. There are buildings for worship and education. As the community grows government buildings are required. With prosperity comes places in which to spend leisure time. And each step along the way builds a story only Connecticut can call its own. A story told in 100 buildings. Almost all of the selections within are open to the public, or at least visible from public spaces. So, if you haven't seen these landmarks in person, fire up your GPS and get out and see the story of the Nutmeg State standing in plain sight on Connecticut streets!

**A STORY OF CONNECTICUT TOLD IN 100 BUILDINGS
...HOW THE NUTMEG STATE HAPPENED**

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Henry Whitfield House

Guilford
1639



Henry Whitfield arrived with a small band of hopeful Puritans in the New Haven Colony in 1639 and acquired land from the Quinnipiac tribe either by sale (the English version) or by sharing as a goodwill gesture (the tribal version). Whitfield's was one of four stone buildings were erected and it did duty as housing, a

defensive fortification, and religious gathering spot. Today the Whitfield House is a Connecticut icon, the oldest stone house in New England and the oldest house of any kind in the Nutmeg State. It was put to work as the state's first museum in 1899 and has been accessible to the public ever since. Despite its idyllic setting and handsome renovation work Henry Whitfield's house is a reminder of the harsh conditions the early English settlers endured in America. Whitfield's fragile constitution was never up to a life in the wilderness and as soon as word arrived that the political winds had shifted back home he was on a ship sailing to England. He was reinstated in the Church of England and received a Winchester Cathedral burial when he died in 1657. The seven Whitfield children split on the matter, three returned to England and four remained to hackout a life in the New World. The next owner of the commodious house (the large rooms were a heating challenge unlike their models in England) was a London merchant whose family seldom occupied the house in over a century of stewardship. Tenant farmers did most of the living here.

Buttolph–Williams House

Wethersfield
c1711



John Oldham was one of the members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony more interested in the commercial possibilities of the New World than the religious freedom it offered. Accused of plotting a revolt, he was banished from the colony in 1624. As a trader Oldham sailed to Virginia and back to England. In 1634 he led a group

of men known as "The Ten Adventurers" up the Connecticut River to establish the first English settlement in the valley. Oldham did not put down roots here, however, and in 1636 he was murdered by Naragansett Indians on Block Island. Those who stayed in Wethersfield found land richly endowed with deep, fertile soil, a legacy from the glaciers and the annual flooding of the Connecticut River. The first bounty from this agricultural treasure was an onion with a dark red-hued skin that became world-renowned as the Wethersfield red onion. The evidence of these days lives on in the largest historic district in Connecticut, with more homes built before 1850 than any other town in the state. The timber frame Buttolph-Williams House is a National Historic Landmark, cited as a classic example of early colonial architecture. The steeply pitched roof and diamond-paned casement windows show an American population still clinging to the traditional architecture of the motherland. The historic house has been opened to the public since 1951.

Stanley-Whitman House

Farmington
1720



The town was incorporated as Farmington in 1645 by an act of the Connecticut General Assembly and it was an apt monicker as small farmers dominated the community for well over a hundred years. When George Washington visited he supposedly called Farmington a "village of pretty houses." One of those attractive residences that caught the Founding Father's eye likely belonged to Solomon Whitman who was a cobbler when he wasn't farming. This post-and-beam house was constructed sometime between 1709 and 1720 and is a rare surviving example of early New England architecture. The second floor extends beyond the first on the front façade creating an overhang the purpose of which is unknown but harkens back to the houses of the English countryside. The lean-to addition that extends across the width of the back of the house was added sometime in the mid-18th-century, giving the house its distinctive saltbox shape. Today the house is a National Historic Landmark and opened to the public as a museum.

Ebenezer Avery House

Groton
1750s



Late in August 1781, with General Washington marching to Virginia and the climax of the American Revolution, Benedict Arnold, now in the employ of the British crown, proposed a diversionary strike on New London, a major storage depot in his native state. Lt. General Henry Clinton placed 1,700 men under his command and the spiteful Arnold set sail

on September 6. Two forts protected New London at the mouth of the Thames River: the sparsely garrisoned Fort Trumbull on the west bank and Fort Griswold, with 140 militia under Lt. Colonel William Ledyard, occupying the stronger position east of the river. The British split their force, Arnold leading the western invasion and Lt. Colonel Edmund Eyre commanding the assault on Fort Griswold. Arnold easily displaced the two dozen men at Fort Trumbull who fired one volley, spiked their cannon and fled. Eyre did not have such easy going. He struck the fortress from three sides but met such heavy fire the British had to retreat, losing Eyre to a mortal wound. A second assault force was thrown back and finally the British stormed the walls in desperate fighting. After forty minutes of bloody work Ledyard ended the gallant defense by offering his sword to Lt. Colonel Abram Van Buskirk of the 3rd Battalion of New Jersey Tories. Van Buskirk accepted the sword and thrust it through Ledyard's body. The Americans reported more than 70 men being murdered after the offer to surrender. Arnold completed his raid by setting New London afire and destroying over 100 buildings. He had achieved no military objective in this, the last important battle in the North, and further discredited his once outstanding record. Portions of the earth and stone fortifications remain in a 17-acre park. Nearby, Ebenezer Avery's house, where wounded men were treated, still stands and remembers the Fort Griswold massacre.

Connecticut Hall

New Haven

1752



Elihu Yale was born in Boston in 1649 but shortly returned to London with his father. As a young man Yale set to sea for adventure and wound up as Governor of the English trading post, Fort St. Georges. In 1699 Yale returned to London with a considerable, if somewhat shady, fortune in tow. By 1710 a childless Yale sought a legal heir to his great estate. He summoned a cousin's son from America, 15-year old David

Yale from North Haven. At the same time the ten-year old Collegiate School was barely surviving when word came to the trustees that a local boy was sailing to England to inherit a fortune. What would it hurt to send along a letter of introduction with the boy to take to the great Governor? Nothing worked out for any of the parties. Undaunted, the school renewed its attack on the coffers of Governor Yale. The efforts yielded 30-40 books and finally three bales of goods the trustees sold for 562 pounds - the largest private donation the school would get for the next 100 years. Yale sent another 100 pounds before he died in 1721 at the age of 72. Representatives of the newly renamed Yale College tried to interest his three daughters in the school but nothing more came from the vast Yale estate. In 1724 David Yale was awarded an honorary degree for his part in the entire strange business. Completed in 1753, Connecticut Hall is the oldest building at Yale University and one of four National Historic Landmarks on campus.

Silas Deane House

Wethersfield

1764



Silas Deane was born in Groton in 1737, the son of a blacksmith. After graduating from Yale College and being admitted to the Connecticut bar in 1761, Deane came to Wethersfield to establish his law practice. Mehitabel Webb, widow of Joseph Webb, became a client and, soon enough, Deane's wife. After she died in 1767 Deane soon reeled in another rich

widow, the granddaughter of a former Connecticut governor, and he quickly found himself on the political fast track. Silas Deane designed this house himself in 1770 to serve as a power base for his personal ambitions. In 1774 he was sent to Philadelphia as one of Connecticut's delegates to the Continental Congress. By 1776 Deane was serving as America's first diplomat, negotiating in Paris with Benjamin Franklin to gain French recognition of the United States as an independent nation. His whirlwind career was derailed however by charges of misappropriation of funds. Although Deane was never found guilty of the accusations his life became twisted with intrigue and he died in England in 1789 - poisoned perhaps - as he was readying to sail back to his showcase home. He was buried in an unmarked grave.

First Church of Christ

Farmington

1772



At the time of the American Revolution Farmington was the 10th most populous town in the colonies. It was founded back in 1640 when a handful of English settlers from nearby towns bought territory from Sequasin, chief of the Tunxis Indians. Under an agreement, the settlers ploughed the land and the Indians cut wood for fuel and traded their corn and hides. Eventually the Tunxis Indians adopted the culture of the settlers, joining them

in the town's churches and schools. The town became an important stop along the Underground Railroad with at least eight safe houses operating in the first half of the 19th century. So fervent were Farmington's abolitionists that the town came to be known as "Grand Central Station." In 1839, after 53 Africans bound for slavery in Cuba took over the schooner *Amistad* and sailed into Connecticut many were brought to Farmington to await their fate, which was a return to Africa. The defendants attended the First Church of Christ, a hub for anti-slavery activity. Built by Captain Judah Woodruff it sports one of New England's most admired steeples, an open-belfry spire acknowledged as a masterpiece of Georgian-Colonial architecture.

Old New-Gate Prison

East Granby

1773



The United States is the world's fourth-largest producer of copper and it all began on Copper Hill in Simsbury in 1705. Soon there were mines up and down the Connecticut Valley. Most were just diggings but the Bristol Mine was tapping

a deposit of valued bornite ore. Thousands of tons were extracted but not a penny of profit due to mismanagement. By the time of the Revolution the copper was mostly exhausted and the mines closed. Around that time American ideas of criminal justice were evolving. Jails were some of the first public structures erected in Colonial America; by the 18th century every county had at least one. But justice was mostly administered with whips and branding irons rather than incarceration. With English workhouses as a model the Connecticut General Assembly began to consider ways to isolate prisoners and attempt to reform them. In an abandoned copper mine for instance. The lease on the abandoned Simsbury mine was acquired and an iron gate bolted in front of a 25-foot shaft that led to another 67-foot deep shaft. The first guest of the colony, 20-year old John Hinson, arrived on December 22, 1773 to begin a 10-year sentence for burglary. Eighteen days later, with the help of a rumored female accomplice who lowered a 100-foot rope down the unblocked shaft, Hinson made his departure without leaving a parting note. Prison officials began improvements that enabled New-Gate to handle over 100 prisoners. During the day the men worked in above-ground shops and at night clambered down ladders to sleeping quarters in the dank mine. The prison remained open until 1827 when criminal justice theory shifted again to incorporate individual cells. The mine/prison has tickled public imaginations ever since and tours began poking through the catacombs of the old mine, now a state historical site, in the 1800s.

Pitkin Glassworks

Manchester

1783



Glass was a rarity in Colonial America. Even wealthy households seldom boasted of a piece of glassware on the table. Most of what was available in Connecticut was imported from England. After the American Revolution money was scarce and one way the

Connecticut General Assembly balanced the books was to grant manufacturing monopolies. As a thank you to the Pitkin family for providing gunpowder to the Connecticut militia they were given an exclusive 25-year window to make and sell glass. Most Pitkin glass was olive green and typically used in bottles. Hartford merchants engaged in trade with the West Indies were big customers. Demijohns of Pitkin glass filled with apple brandy or cider would sail down the Connecticut River and return months later with rum or molasses. After the monopoly expired in 1808 the Pitkin Glassworks suffered with rising costs, primarily the price of fine sand that needed to be imported from New Jersey. The kilns were abandoned in 1830 and the Pitkin family moved on to other pursuits. By the time preservation interests were kindled only the stone walls of the glassworks remained, still seen in the center of town. Pitkin glass is a rare find for collectors and pieces can be seen in the Old Manchester Museum.

Litchfield Law School

Litchfield

1784



“America’s first law school.” The National Park Service believed it; they posted a sign outside the Tapping Reeve Law School. Folks down in Virginia begged to differ and insisted that the Marshall-Wythe School of Law was started at the Col-

lege of William and Mary in 1779, five years before Tapping Reeve built a one-room school next to his house to conduct lectures on the common law. Plagued by the prodding of the Virginians, the park service was finally forced to admit their mistake and the Nutmeg State relegated to the honor of possessing “the first law school in the United States not associated with a college or university.” William and Mary tried to appear magnanimous in accepting the apology, issuing the statement that the correction was “deeply appreciated and accurately reflects, for purposes of historical recognition, the status of the famed Tapping Reeve School, which was so influential in New England during the time it was in existence.” And indeed the school was influential, to the tune of two vice presidents, 101 United States congressmen, 28 United States senators, six cabinet members, three justices of the United States Supreme Court, 14 governors, and 13 chief justices of state supreme courts. Before Tapping Reeve lawyers in Colonial America were spawned from apprenticeships. His readings and lectures were absorbed by more than 1,000 students before the school closed in 1833, ten years after Reeve’s death. First, second, or whatever number historical authorities assign it, the school’s influence in the evolution of American law can not be extinguished. The Reeve house and Litchfield Law School are maintained today as a museum.

John Dodd Hat Shop

Danbury

1790



OK, cards on the table, John Dodd never sold hats. He was a lawyer. But he probably wore a hat. All American men did for hundreds of years until John Kennedy showed up at the White House hatless and killed an entire industry overnight. Most of those hats were made in Danbury. In 1780 Zadoc Benedict established the first

beaver-hat factory in America in town, employing three men in his shop and producing 18 hats a week. From those modest beginnings Danbury rapidly became Hat City, churning out more hats than any place in America. By the time Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809 there were 56 hat shops humming in downtown Danbury. At times one out of every four hats sold in the country was manufactured here. In the early 1900s it was said that 51 of the town's 70 mills were kept busy in the hat trade. But now, all gone. The Danbury Rough Hat Company on Delay Street, gone. The E. Sturdevant wool hat factory in Beaver Brook, gone. The Mallory Hat Company on Rose Hill Street, gone. The Lee Company, founded by Frank H. Lee in 1886 and one of Danville's largest employers with 1,500 workers when Kennedy was just a senator, gone. In fact, so much of the city's foundational industry has been wiped away that for the Danbury Historical Society to tell the story of hatmaking it had to buy Dodd's old law office in 1957, haul the building to its grounds and call it a hat shop.

Enfield Shakers

Enfield

1792



The Shakers, so named for their frenzied religious dancing, trace their beginnings to Manchester, England, in 1747. In 1758, 22-year old mill-worker Ann Lee joined the sect, which came to envelop her life. She reported visions that resulted in religious dogma and she was eventually jailed for two weeks for her beliefs. Free again, another vision told her to continue Christ's work in America. She convinced her husband, brother and six Shaker converts to follow her to New York City in 1774. After five years they leased land outside Albany to preach a life of simplicity and pacifism in the woods. Mother Ann's followers considered her the embodiment of the Lord in female form. The Shaker village sustained itself with farming and light manufacturing and began to attract recruits. Mother Ann made several successful preaching trips to New England but also met angry crowds that inflicted injuries that helped contribute to her death in 1784. She won many converts with a 1781 visit to Enfield but the local community consisting of five "families" did not come together until 1792. The Enfield Shakers eventually numbered around 200 members spreading across 3,000 acres. A prosperous seed business provided a foundation for manufacturing bonnets and the quality furniture that became synonymous with the Quakers. The village thrived until the late 1800s when foundational beliefs such as surrendering all worldly goods to the Shaker community began to crumble. The last of the Shakers relocated to communities in neighboring states in 1917 and village buildings transferred into private hands.

Grove Street Cemetery

New Haven
1796



New Haven's first common burial ground was the Green but it became overwhelmed during outbreaks of yellow fever in 1794 and 1795. The result was the creation of a new cemetery on the edge of town, the first chartered burial ground in the United States. The first burial, that of Martha Townsend, took place on November 9, 1797; the last burial on the Green occurred in 1812. Behind the Egyptian Revival gates completed in 1845 "the city of the dead" was groundbreaking for arranging lots for families as opposed to random burials which had been common in the past. It was the first time a cemetery operated as a private, nonprofit entity. The permanently owned plots led to the creation of ornamental plantings and memorials, paving the way for the 19th century cemetery as public pleasure ground in the days when parks were few and far between. Some of the notables interred in the National Historic Landmark are abolitionist Lyman Beecher, "Father of American Football" Walter Camp, vulcanized rubber inventor Charles Goodyear, founding father Roger Sherman, written word impresario Noah Webster, and cotton gin inventor Eli Whitney.

Old State House

Hartford
1796



Mentally remove the fronting balustrade and the topping cupola and you can see what is considered the first public building designed by celebrated architect Charles Bulfinch. Constructed of Portland brownstone below Flemish bond brick, the State House was completed in 1796 and is said to be the country's oldest. Considerable history occurred behind its walls before the government left in 1878 - the Hartford Convention, where the secession of New England from the United States was discussed, took place in 1814; P.T. Barnum served in the Connecticut legislature; and in 1839 the first *Amistad* slave rebellion trial took place here. Joseph Steward's Museum of Natural and Other Curiosities, one of America's first museums when it opened in 1797, was located on the second floor. Steward, a portrait painter, decided he needed a hook to draw more people to see his paintings. He collected a number of "natural and artificial curiosities," including an 18-foot Egyptian crocodile, the "horn of a unicorn" and a calf "with two complete heads," and added them to his gallery space in the original State House. Steward's museum was so popular that it outgrew its original space and had to move to a bigger building across the street.

New London Harbor Light

New London

1801



When a group of Puritan families under the the direction of John Winthrop, Jr. arrived here in 1646 they found one of the deepest harbors on the Atlantic coast, courtesy of an ancient flooded river valley. The prospects for the new location were so promising the village soon was named "New London" and that river was

called the "Thames." In 1760 the Connecticut legislature authorized a lottery to raise money to build the first lighthouse at the harbor entrance and only the fourth in the American colonies. By the end of the year a wooden lantern was hung in the 64-foot stone tower. In 1790 the New London Harbor Light, like all its colonial cousins, was turned over to the federal government which assumed responsibility for the nation's maritime navigation. In 1801 an 80-foot high replacement tower, built of granite and brownstone with walls lined with brick, was finished. Automated in 1912, it remains the Nutmeg State's oldest and highest of 14 lights and one of five that protect the shipping lanes into New London.

Brooklyn Fair

Brooklyn

1809



In 1809 members of the Pomfret United Agricultural Society got together to put on a little showcase for the encouragement of "agriculture and domestic manufactures." Prized livestock was paraded around the courthouse and quilts and needlework were displayed as exemplars of the "female industry." Little did they know the enthusiasts know they were launching the oldest agricultural fair in the

United States. The fair migrated among Pomfret, Brooklyn, and Woodstock in the early years before incorporating as the Windham County Agricultural Society in 1820 and settling in Brooklyn. Fifteen acres for a permanent fairgrounds were purchased in 1850. While subsequent fairs came to focus on amusement rides and carnivals Windham County never strayed far from its farming roots. Brooklyn was the last fair in Connecticut to feature harness racing, the centerpiece of 19th century county fairs, into the 2000s. There are rides and a Midway and entertainment stages but the draft horses on parade, pulling competitions, the dog show and pie-baking contests are still the stars of the show.

Colebrook Store

Colebrook

1812



Nothing was more central to small town Connecticut life in the 19th century than the general store. Often the emporiums were started by itinerant peddlers who earned enough to get off the road and set up shop at a dusty crossroads or pioneer settlement. Inventory would come from buying trips - often to New York City - that could last weeks. Some in these rural communities would be fortunate

to come in and browse for "store-bought goods" but everyone was a regular at the general store. The post office was usually in the back of the store and it was the place to come for provisions, local news, a game of checkers, or just to warm up by the ubiquitous pot belly stove. The coming of Rural Free Delivery by the U.S. Postal Service in 1896 marked the beginning of the end for country stores. Not only was it not necessary to come in for the mail but catalogs from the likes of Sears & Roebuck and Burpees - the merchants called them "town killers" - began to become commonplace. The Colebrook Store can trace its origins to 1803. Business was brisk enough for brothers Martin and Solomon Rockwell to build a new two-story emporium directly in front of their previous one-room, one-story store. Owners came and went - some two dozen of them - but the store claimed the title of oldest continually operated general store in Connecticut until it closed in 2007. The store is once again open and you may even be able to score a game of checkers.

Griswold Mansion

Old Lyme

1817



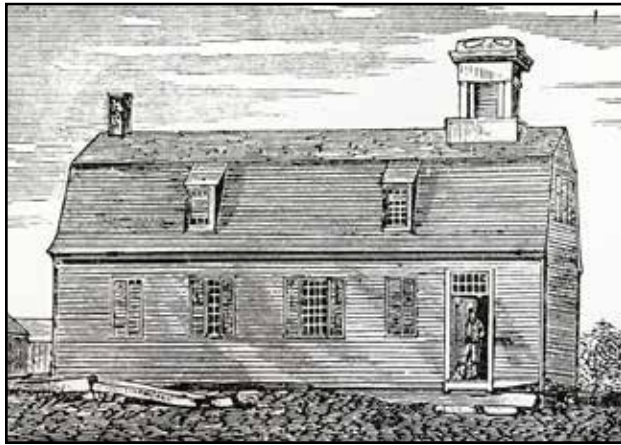
Old Lyme has always been shaped by the sea. Among the early industries were fishing, shipbuilding and the manufacture of salt, of which Old Lyme was the state's only supplier. At one time, it was said, every house in Old Lyme was occupied by a sea captain. This one was purchased by Captain Robert Griswold for his bride in 1841. Those industries are all gone, driven away by

steam-powered vessels from Old Lyme, which was separated from its fellow Lymes in 1855. The sea captains are all gone, too. In their place are artists and tourists. The artists first came when Miss Florence Griswold opened her mansion-turned boarding house doors to a group of artists in 1899. Word of Miss Griswold's "gracious hospitality" spread throughout the art world and soon there were easels set up in makeshift studios around the property. Others contented themselves with painting *en plein air* (in the open air) in the gardens. Henry Ward Ranger, creator of atmospheric landscapes that became known as Tonalism, took on the role of de facto leader for the Lyme Art Colony, which became the first American colony to embrace Impressionism. As a result many important Impressionist paintings depict scenes around Old Lyme. The colony flourished for three decades and the town remains an influential art enclave today. Miss Griswold's home is now a museum "celebrating art, history and nature."

Foreign Mission School

Cornwall

1817



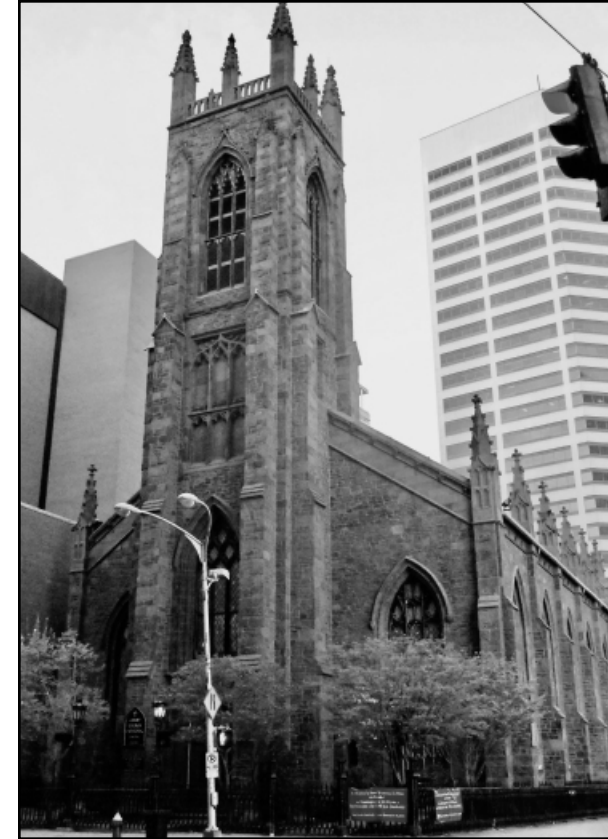
The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was formed in 1810 to spread the Protestant word around the globe. The first missionaries sailed to British India two years later. But funds were tight so the group hatched Plan B - bring native boys to Connecticut train them to become

missionaries and return them to their homeland. The trustees for the school laid out their thinking: "We feel confident that this thing is from God ... [and] will, among others, be a means of evangelizing the world." Surely such an altruistic endeavor would be a wonderful thing. Seven of the initial class of 12 were Hawaiians and one, Heneri Opukaha'ia, was said to have wanted a white man's education so dearly that he was found weeping on the steps of the Yale chapel. When his tears dried the eternally grateful young Opukaha'ia would get on with his studies in English, Latin, Greek, history, geometry and trigonometry, surveying, astronomy and theology. There was also practical training in blacksmithing and farming. There would be over 100 students in the next decade at the Foreign Mission School, speaking a collective 21 different languages from Cherokee to Chinese to Bengali. The seeds for success never sprouted. There were three "climate-related" deaths but the problems were greater with the students who embraced their New England surroundings. Not all the townsfolk were thrilled with the largely dark-skinned student body in their midst. After two students married local girls the maelstrom around Connecticut was so strong that the ABCFM was forced to shut down the campus, now a National Historic Landmark, in 1826.

Christ Church

Hartford

1820



Growing up in Connecticut after his birth in Thompson in 1784 Thiel Town saw few buildings of distinction. Showy mansions and public buildings were the purview of New York City and Boston in other places. After studying in Massachusetts Town returned to New Haven to become the Nutmeg State's first starchitect. Armed with an impressive collection of architectural history Town drew liberally on European style influences. The design for this brownstone church came from sketches the church rector had made from a trip to England.

These sketches included architectural details from many churches, among them Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral. It is one of the earliest Gothic-style churches built in the country. The bell tower rises 150 feet where the open parapet at the top is an exact replica of those at York Minster. By the time of Town's death in 1844 medieval churches with pointed arched windows were becoming a common sight on the American landscape. In 1912 the church was chosen to serve as a cathedral for the Connecticut diocese.

Terryville Waterwheel

Plymouth

1824



Energetic streams like the Pequabuck River powered American industry until the coming of reliable steam power in the mid-1800s. Connecticut is particularly blessed with quickstepping water courses and the state experienced one of America's fastest transitions from an agrarian society to one dependent on its manufacture of textiles, firearms, clocks and more. This waterwheel, the most intact wooden waterwheel of the three remaining in the Nutmeg State from the 19th century, powered Eli Terry's clock factory. It was churning machinery for the Lewis Lock Company, eventually to become the Eagle Lock Company when fire destroyed the factory in 1851. Everything was rebuilt and up and running again until the 1940s. Since the early 1800s Connecticut has been home to more than 40 lock companies and is widely regarded as the cradle of America's lock industry. Terryville claims the birthright to the cabinet and trunk-lock corner of the lock world. Over 500 million locks manufactured by the Eagle Lock company and its predecessors have borne the stamp "Terryville, Conn." The factories it once powered are long gone but the undershot waterwheel remains on display in its original location, protected by a shelter built to mimic the curvature of its paddles.

Farmington Canal

Northampton

1828



Early American roads were atrocious and private capital visionaries realized water routes would be the key to unlocking the interior of the new country. To accomplish that would mean bypassing waterfalls and rapids with navigable canals. George Washington was an early player, devoting much of the final 14 years of his life to the Patowmack Canal that would never take the Potomac River into the Ohio Valley. In Pennsylvania entrepreneurs schemed successfully to bring coal

from the mountains into Philadelphia with artificial waterways. The Canal Age in America was underway. Connecticut investors caught the fever and staged a patriotic groundbreaking on July 4, 1825 for the state's only canal, starting in New Haven and heading 84 miles north to Northampton, Massachusetts. By 1828 the first mules were pulling canal boats in the four feet of water along the towpath. There were 28 locks constructed to tame the elevation changes along the way. Odds were stacked against the Farmington Canal from the get-go. Water level was mostly dependent on rainfall which was never reliable and the railroad age was beginning to stir when the entire route was completed. It was an easy sell in 1847 when the rail companies came calling to buy rights-of way. Railroad traffic continued into the 1980s and this part of the original canal was converted into a state park multi-use recreational trail.

College Row

Middletown
1833



This attractive hillside collection of academic buildings trace their beginnings to 200 million years ago when sediment from ancient highlands began collecting in a wedge-shaped fault that came to be known as the Portland foundation. The sandstone that resulted was a quarter-mile thick and took on a rich,

deep brown color from the minerals in the rock. In the intervening millions of years the brownstone cracked conveniently into blocks for settlers in the Connecticut River valley to use as building material. The first stonecutters would simply gather what they needed before true quarrying began in the early 1700s. When the Methodist Church bought an abandoned campus in Middletown and created the first academic institution to be named after John Wesley, the Protestant theologian who was the founder of Methodism, all the early buildings were fashioned from Portland brownstone. About this time America was developing a taste for the easily carved brownstone. Entire rows of houses in Boston and New York and Philadelphia were just known as "brownstones." The Portland quarries were employing 1,500 men and maintaining a fleet of two dozen cargo ships just to satisfy the demand in the heady days of the late 1800s. Concrete pushed stone away from most construction sites in the early 1900s and the brownstone quarries faded slowly, and then all at once in the 1930s when the Connecticut River overflowed and filled the pits with water. The quarries have been preserved as a National Historic Resource and can be visited as a park.

U.S. Customs House

New London
1833



The first agency established by the United States Congress in 1789 was the U.S. Customs Service. Until the advent of air travel there was no more important building in a port city than the Custom House, and its architecture reflected such. Robert Mills, the first architect born and trained in the United States, designed four Greek Revival Custom Houses in New England in the 1830s, including this composition of ashlar stone blocks. Mills is probably best remembered as the architect of the Washington Monument. In 1983, after the Federal government designated the Custom House as "surplus" and planned to put it up for sale, a group of local concerned citizens formed New London Maritime Society, Inc. to ensure that the elegant waterfront presence remained in the public domain. It is currently a maritime museum.

Whale Oil Row

New London

1835

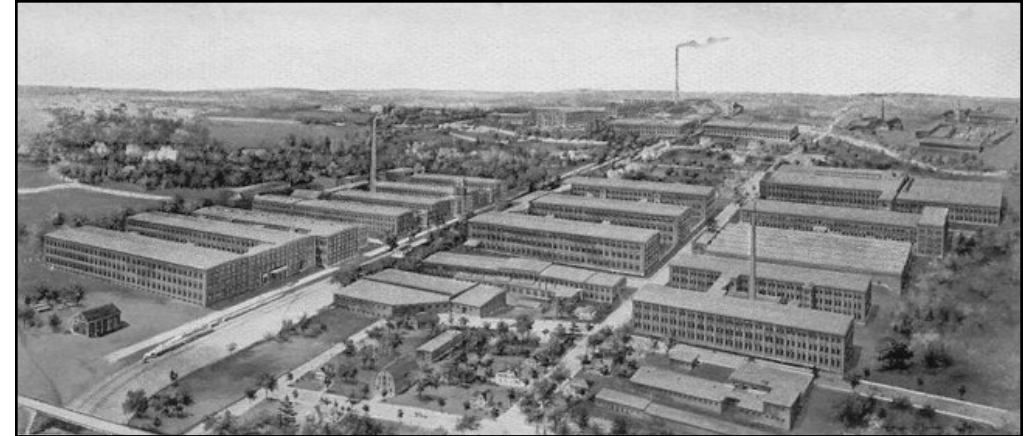


The whaling industry traces its beginnings to May 20, 1784 when the *Rising Sun* sailed for the fishing grounds off Brazil and returned the next year with more than 300 barrels of whale oil. For the next 125 years until the last whaling schooner, *Margaret*, left port in 1909, New London rivaled New Bedford, Massachusetts as the whaling capital of the world. By 1850, a million dollars a year worth of whale oil and bone was being recorded at New London customs. Whale Oil Row is a unique collection of similar Greek Revival mansions constructed for whaling captains in 1835. They each feature pilasters on the corners and a prominent Ionic portico supporting a triangular pediment. At one time there were plenty more mansions along Huntington Street but these warriors are the last survivors from an urban renewal purge in the 1960s.

Cheney Brothers Mill

South Manchester

1838

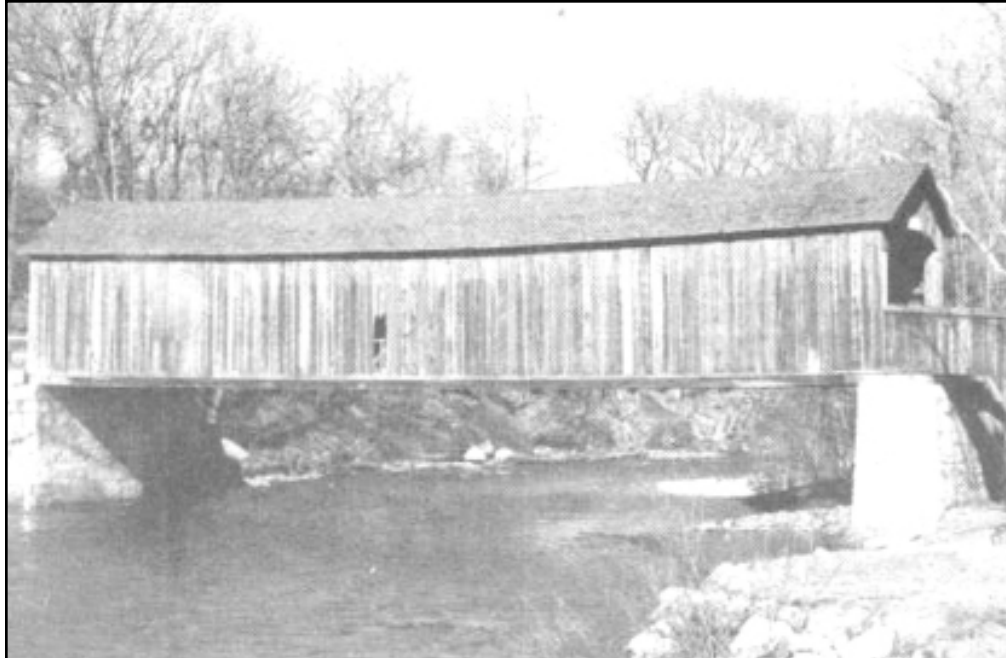


The only way to make silk is with silkworms and the only thing the critters will eat is mulberry tree leaves. The Cheney Brothers - Ward, Frank, and Rush - were just one group who saw cultivating mulberry trees as a way to wean 1830s America off of imported silk. One blight after another and the economic Panic of 1837 put an end to most silk dreams. The Cheney family sidestepped into processing and converted a grist mill into silk production in 1838. Frank Cheney outflanked the competition with a device to double-twist raw silk into sturdier threads and when the Cheney family figured out a way to create unblemished fabric from previously useless waste silk the company dominated the American silk market. In the 1920s Cheney Brothers was the world's largest silk mill, spread across 175 acres. The company built Manchester by attracting skilled immigrants; the payroll was 4,500 in a town of 18,000. The Cheney family built their own homes in a park-like setting in the silk works and owned 275 houses for their employees. They constructed churches, schools, and recreational facilities. The Cheney name spread Connecticut fame across the world like no other industry. The rise of synthetic fabrics forced the family to sell the silk mills in 1955 but the legacy of a company town remains in the Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District.

Comstock Bridge

East Hampton

1840



Covered bridges are the favorites of romantics everywhere. Wooden bridges were, however, the apogee of practicality - the roof protected the structural elements from the weather. It is estimated that over 14,000 covered transportation bridges have been constructed in the United States and fewer than 1,000 remain. Connecticut has scores of covered bridges but only three date to the 1800s and were built for vehicular traffic. Many covered foot bridges can be found in the state's parks. The Comstock Bridge across the Salmon River is the eldest of the historical trio although it no longer carries vehicular traffic and much is not original - a truck crashing through the floor in the 1920s did the structure no favors. The Howe truss that supports the bridge is the same as it ever was though and features one of the first uses of iron tie rods to support the crossed wooden diagonals. This marked a key step in the evolution towards making bridges stronger and long-lasting and became a standard in New England bridge-building.

Wadsworth Atheneum

Hartford

1842



Hartford art patron and avid sketcher of his world travels, Daniel Wadsworth founded one of America's first art museums in 1842 at a time when only the very wealthy purchased paintings or decorative arts, and then only for their own enjoyment. His father, Jeremiah, was one of the most wealthy men in Hartford and was involved in trade,

manufacturing, banking, and insurance. Wadsworth almost immediately expanded his plan for a fine arts gallery to include a Connecticut Historical Society and the Young Men's Institute, precursor of the Hartford Public Library. Today the collection of 50,000 works is particularly strong in the Hudson River School of landscape paintings, Old Master paintings, modernist masterpieces, Meissen and Sevres porcelains, early American furniture and decorative arts. Wadsworth admired the Gothic Revival style of Hartford's Christ Church, diagonally across the street. He commissioned architects Ithiel Town and Alexander Davis, its designers, to create a similarly romantic and imposing building to house his fine arts gallery. The "castle" portion of the Atheneum is the original structure. It was divided into three sections, separated by sturdy brick walls to reduce the risk of fire.

Stanley Works

New Britain

1843



New Britain's reputation as the "Hardware City" began about 1800 when James North and Joseph Shipman started the manufacture of sleigh bells. Thwarted by the town's location with no navigable rivers and inadequate water power, would-be manufacturers had to content themselves with smallish operations for the peddler trade - tools

and locks and other light metal articles. In 1831, 28-year old Frederick Trent Stanley teamed with his brother William to produce some of the earliest house trimmings and locks in America. This business sputtered along for a time until the Panic of 1837 crippled it fatally. Stanley next surfaced in New Britain in 1843 in a nondescript one-story wooden structure that had once stood as an armory during the War of 1812. Here Stanley would lay the foundations for the most famous toolworks in America. The Stanley Bolt Manufactory was one of hundreds of little manufactories struggling to make a go of it, the majority of which were one-man shops. The only thing setting Stanley apart was a single-cylinder, high pressure steam engine shipped up from New York and carted by oxen to the little wooden shop. Stanley's was now the only automated shop in the region. He peddled his bolts by horseback and wagon across the backcountry. His tiny business must have impressed his neighbors because in 1852 five friends pooled the staggering sum of \$30,000 to form the Stanley Works that has helped shape the town to this day, not in the least by attracting waves of European immigrant workers to New Britain.

Lake Compounce

Bristol

1846



The concept of leisure was not a part of most American lives until after the Civil War. Entrepreneurs were quick to jostle for that new spare time. Among the most popular diversions were trolley parks - picnic groves and pavilions sited at the ends of urban trolley lines. By the early 1900s there were an estimated 2,000 amusement parks in the United States. One was Lake Compounce, but it was not built at the end of a trolley line - the trolley line was built to the park that Gad Norton had started a half-century earlier and continues as the country's oldest continually operating amusement park. Visitors could picnic, swim and enjoy a few tame rides. The trolley transformed Lake Compounce; a carousel was added and the Green Dragon roller coaster installed. It was replaced by Herbert Schmeck of the Philadelphia Toboggan Company with the Wildcat in 1927. The Wildcat, one of Schmeck's 84 coasters, is one of the world's oldest wooden coasters still active and has been designated an American Coaster Enthusiasts landmark. Lake Compounce was setting attendance records in those days but the park struggled to match the excitement of Disneyland-styled attractions in the 1960s. Bankruptcy and discussions of closing were on the menu by the 1980s but new management and government loans rescued the park. In 2000 Boulder Dash, a thrill ride that roars through the side of a mountain for nearly one mile, opened and has repeatedly topped lists of the world's best wooden coasters ever since.

Beckley Furnace

North Canaan

1847



Beckley Furnace was fired later than most and remained in blast longer than most, not going cold until after World War I. It was also rescued for preservation faster than most. While most of its hundreds of iron-making cousins are little but stone rubble Beckley was taken over by the state in the 1940s and designated as Connecticut's only Industrial Monument. The Beckley of Beckley Furnace was John Adam Beckley who had iron coursing through his blood. His great grandfather was the "Iron Prince," Samuel Forbes. Forbes established a colonial

ironworks in East Canaan and with his son-in-law John Adam operated a prosperous iron rolling and slitting mill. Beckley built his imposing 32-foot high stack from locally quarried marble to produce pig iron. When the furnace was acquired by Barnum & Richardson Company a decade later it was raised another eight feet. The new owners were a national presence with eleven other blast furnaces, known for the quality of their iron railroad car wheels. It was that high quality that kept the Beckley Furnace in blast as long as it was before finally conceding the game to the steel industry. The beautifully preserved souvenir from one of America's foundational industries stands as a showcase in a state park.

Octagon House

Danbury

1853



Orson Squire Fowler was responsible for two wildly different fads in the middle of the 19th century. One was phrenology, the practice that mental acuity could be determined by the bumps on one's head. The other was eight-sided houses that he championed in a book called *The Octagon*

House, A Home for All. Neither are much in vogue these days but the octagon at least made sense - at least for barns. They offered a greater space-to-surface ratio and thus were cheaper to construct than rectangular barns. Octagonal barns were more popular in the 19th century than houses, whose lack of square corners could play havoc with interior designers. This is considered the best of the Nutmeg State's small coterie of surviving "octagonals." This was John and Deborah Earl's home, likely built by her brothers who lived next door. It is not known if they were influenced by Fowler but experts say the fealty to the instructions laid out in *A Home For All* is uncanny. By the end of his life in 1887, on a small farm on the New York-Connecticut border, Fowler's theories were completely discredited. This house fared somewhat better, being divided for use as apartments.

McLevy Hall

Bridgeport
1854



When it comes to selection of the county courthouse, in Fairfield County money talks and less money walks. Fairfield was the site of the first county seat and there, in 1720, the colonists erected the first courthouse -- a wooden structure that was burned by the British during the Revolutionary War. It was leisurely rebuilt in 1794. But by the mid-1800s, the burgeoning industrial and population growth of neighboring Bridgeport made it the obvious choice to host the replacement

for an overwhelmed Fairfield facility. Obvious, except to the folks in Norwalk. Bridgeport finally ponied up \$75,000 to build a courthouse and jail, ending the brouhaha. The sandstone temple was designed by esteemed Alexander Jackson Davis in the Greek Revival-style. The building had two main floors for court and county government and a large gathering space, Washington Hall, for public meetings. Today it is known as McLevy Hall, named for popular former 24-year Socialist mayor Jasper McLevy. It is remembered as the location where a little-known Republican Presidential candidate delivered a two-hour impassioned political speech against slavery on March 10, 1860. Abraham Lincoln, however, probably best remembered Bridgeport not for his talk but as the place where he enjoyed his first plate of New England fried oysters.

American Thread Company

Willimantic
1854



In 1849 the railroad arrived in Willimantic and five years later the iron horse brought a group of Hartford capitalists looking to manufacture linen, napkins and shoe threads using processes pioneered in Great Britain. At the same time, however, the Crimean War broke out and the new Willimantic Linen

Company was forced to develop new technologies for the making of fine threads. This they did well enough to earn the highest award at America's Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. In 1898 Willimantic Linen merged with the American Thread Company which was soon operating the largest manufactory in Connecticut. Willimantic had earned the moniker "Thread City." The American Thread Company bought these mills and eventually constructed six large gray fabric factories on the site. Mill Number 4 was the largest mill in the world and the first to have electricity. The largest factory of any kind in Connecticut, it employed 3,500 workers. The mills closed in 1985 and have since been converted to commercial use; two were torn down. The double-arched bridge was built in 1857, designed to stand up to the floods that had washed away previous wooden bridges. It carried vehicles until 2001 when it was supplanted by the "Frog Bridge." It is now a garden, which can be reached by climbing the stairs in the park.

Colt Armory

Hartford

1855



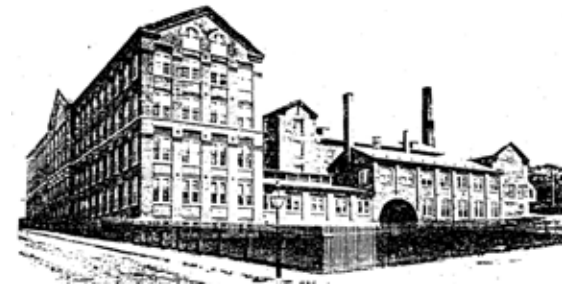
It was not unusual for boys in frontier America in the 19th century to be entranced with fire-arms; Samuel Colt happened to be more precocious than most. Born in Hartford in 1814, Colt was discovered at the age of seven dismantling and assembling

a gun. At 15 he was excused from Amherst Academy in Massachusetts when a demonstration of an underwater mine he built went awry. Colt talked his way onto a merchant ship, working as a hand, bound for India. By the time he returned home a year later young Colt had fashioned a white-pine model of a multi-barreled, repeating pistol - the dream of gunmakers for over 200 years. Colt raised money for his venture by giving demonstrations of nitrous oxide, calling himself "the celebrated Dr. S. Coult of London and Calcutta." The most famous six-shooter in history was financed by laughing gas. Colt fine-tuned his design and by 1836 had secured French, English and American patents. He was 22. Although he sold several hundred weapons over the next few years Colt was never able to land a contract with the U.S. Army and the Patent Arms Manufacturing Company went bankrupt in 1842. The Mexican War brought new orders and Colt eventually moved into his own sprawling factory on the banks of the Connecticut River. The brick armory was designed in the shape of an "H" and was topped by a stunning blue dome, encrusted with gold stars. Colt incorporated with 10,000 shares of stock with a par value of \$100 each. Colt owned 9,996 of the shares. He was typically up at five, checking on the farm and his brick works. After breakfast he was in the armory overseeing every aspect of his 1,500-man operation. When the Civil War began Colt was running the largest private armory in the world. He died suddenly of a massive stroke in January of 1862. He was only 48, and with a personal estate valued at \$15,000,000 Samuel Colt was one of the wealthiest men ever to live in the United States to that time.

Waterbury Clock Company

Waterbury

1857



England was early America's largest trading partner so when the War of 1812 erupted there were going to be shortages of just about everything. Aaron Benedict focused on uniform buttons that would be needed for America's fighting force. He bought every scrap of brass he could get his hands and got busy with the buttons.

Two decades later after Gordon Webster Burnham joined the business Benedict & Burnham Manufacturing was the largest brass company in the country. One of their best-selling products was movements for clocks, which they supplied to all the leading clockmakers. They were practically in the clockmaking business already so in 1857 the company split into a division for buttons (still in business today) and a division for clocks. By the 1880s the Waterbury Clock Company boasted more than 300 models in its catalog. But its bellwether product was the pocket watch, developed to be carried in an overcoat. Robert Ingersoll, a New York novelty dealer, was the first to see dollar signs in the new timepiece and placed an order for 80,000 in 1893. By the turn of the century he was selling a million Ingersoll "dollar" watches a year. Waterbury Clock sold 40 million by the beginning of the First World War as it became America's most recognizable timepiece. The war, however, struck a blow to the company's bottom line. Years of struggle followed and popular Mickey Mouse Wristwatches provided only a brief respite; Waterbury Clock was absorbed by what would become Timex Watch in the 1940s. The complex of red brick mill buildings - more than 30 in its heyday - has been redeveloped for commercial use. Of 23 manufacturing concerns from the 1800s in Waterbury only one other retains its original plan with buildings intact.

Plainville Campgrounds

Plainville

1865



Religious camp meetings, often led by Methodists, can find their roots in America as far back as 1799 but the movement really exploded after the success of the Martha's Vineyard Camp-meeting Association. The first summer religious camp on the island took place in 1835 with nine canvas tents provided for attendees. The Methodist Church purchased this land for similar revival meetings that could number 3,000 in their tent city. In 1902 a covered au-

ditorium arrived and permanent structures for families followed. These took the form of colorful Carpenter Gothic-styled cottages lined up in rows cheek to jowl. Non-religious organizations began to be attracted to the verdant Plainville campgrounds, most notably the Connecticut Chautauqua which began a long residency in 1900. In 1874 the Chautauqua Institution was founded in western New York to better train Sunday school teachers. The center's summer programs expanded to include lectures on the arts, culture and outdoor recreation. The Chautauqua ideal for adult education became a phenomenon with thousands of tent camps sprouting across rural America. The Chautauquas had their own magazine and rivaled vaudeville as an entertainment circuit for lecturers who were the live act rock stars of the day. Teddy Roosevelt opined that Chautauqua is "the most American thing in America." At the peak of the movement in the 1920s the total audience in Chautauqua camps was said to be 45 million. Over time the vacation vibe replaced the revivalist camp atmosphere and the church sold the land in the 1950s; 87 cottages remain in private hands and are occupied seasonally.

Lewis Mansion

Meriden

1868



It would not be until 1806 that Meriden would be incorporated, by which time the callow sprouts of industry had appeared in the form of pewter goods, especially buttons. One of those pewter shops was established in 1808 by 24-year old Ashbil Griswold. Under Griswold's leadership, Meriden soon became a leading center in

the production of Britannia ware, pewter, and silverware. Because of its more durable qualities, Britannia had replaced pewter in most American homes by the 1850s and in 1852 many of the small shops banded together to organize the Meriden Britannia Company. By the 1890s, Meriden Britannia had established branches in Canada and London and sales offices in Chicago, New York, and San Francisco. Assuming a leadership role, Meriden Britannia convinced other small independent silver shops in the Connecticut area that cooperation was more efficient than competition. The International Silver Company was the result and Meriden was the "Silver City" - churning out 70% of the silverware in America. When International Silver finally ceased production in 1981 its plant on State Street was demolished, leaving a hole in the Meriden streetscape. Over on Main Street the hybrid Second Empire/Gothic Revival home of Issac C. Lewis, the co-founder and first president of Meriden Britannia, still stands as a tenuous thread to the city's days as the center of silver-plate production in the nation.