



The Wintonbury Drummer

Newsletter of the Wintonbury Historical Society

Bloomfield, Connecticut

April 2021

STORIES FROM THE WADHAMS FARM: GROWING UP AND GROWING OLDER IN BLOOMFIELD

WITH WENDY WOLCOTT
TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 4:00 PM

“In early May, as the warm days appear, the dairy herd is freed from its winter confinement. Forgetting their matronly duties as milk producers, the cows revert to their youth and cavort joyously across the hillside, kicking up their heels and racing about with complete abandon. This is their one fling of the season. By milking time they march sedately back to the barn.” —Lydia Wadhams

Bloomfield is not so far removed from its agricultural past. Many older townspeople can remember fields of corn, tobacco and, especially, dairy cows. Even today, there are often a few cattle to be seen at the former Wadhams Farm on Duncaster Road. At this program, Wendy Wolcott, who grew up in the Wadhams family, will draw upon the words of her Aunt Lydia and other family members to share what it was like in those earlier days and what it has meant to be part of Bloomfield all her life.

► This is a ZOOM program. To attend, please register ahead of time at the Bloomfield Public Library website. Go to <https://bplct.org>, and click on Event Calendar. The library will send you the necessary link.



Wadhams Farmhouse
62 Duncaster Road
Photo courtesy of Wendy Wolcott

IN THIS ISSUE: **Page 2:** Board of Directors Highlights. **Pages 3-5:** Some Things Concerning Bloomfield, Connecticut, by Tudor Whiton. **Pages 6-7:** Aspects of Black History in Bloomfield: Precursors. **Page 8:** Bloomfield Families, 1800s / Roberts House: A Call to Action / Tree Removal: Preventive Maintenance

DIRECTORY**President**

William Weissenburger

Past President

Richard Pierce

Vice-presidents

Elizabeth Merrow

Ruthanne Marchetti

Treasurer

Judy Dahlgren-Dechand

Secretary

Marilyn Johnston

Curators

Ralph & Louise Schmall

Genealogists

Jean Perreault

Janis Langston

Prosser Liaison

Allison Wilkos

Board of Directors**2021**

John Cappadona

Homer Guilmartin

Richard Hughes

Mara Whitman

2022

Paula Baram

Mary Laiuppa

Aaron Romano

Wendy Wolcott

2023

Tobie Katz

Ron Marchetti

Nicholas Panke

vacancy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS HIGHLIGHTS

The Board of Directors met on March 10 by Zoom with twelve people present. President Bill Weissenburger reported that the tree which threatened the Old Farm School was taken down on February 25 at a cost of \$2,800.

Program Chair Ruthanne Marchetti announced upcoming programs by Wendy Wolcott (see page 1) and state historian Walt Woodard (June 9). Both of these will be by Zoom. Libbie Merrow reported that she has been approached by Lois Hager of the Library Building Committee with the question of how much space in the new library should be devoted to town history. Libbie favors a space large enough to store most of the paper records now at the Gabriel History Center, which is getting crowded.

The Roberts House, 717 Bloomfield Avenue, will be 200 years old in 2022. While the new owner, Paul Butler, has agreed to preserve its exterior, the Board has some concern that a more legally binding contract to that end is needed. Ron Marchetti pointed out that the town has no ordinance of any kind which would protect historic buildings from demolition. In the hope of bringing this issue to public awareness, Dick Pierce has written an article about the Roberts House to be submitted for publication in the *Bloomfield Messenger*. Janis Langston has been identifying houses older than 100 years and creating binders full of written information about each.

When the Board next meets on April 14, it will be discussing the schedule for reopening the history campus to the public.

ATTENTION!

The Wintonbury Drummer invites readers to contribute articles, personal reminiscences, book reviews, photographs, etc. Materials for publication in the June issue should be received by May 1, 2021. (Or better yet—do it now!) Send directly to the editor at 14 Julie Lane in Bloomfield or attach to an email. Thank you.

OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS*(renewals currently on hold)*

Bloomfield Garage, 986 Park Avenue
 Bloomfield Village Pizza, 34 Tunxis Avenue
 Geissler's Supermarket, 40 Tunxis Avenue
 Ginza Japanese Cuisine, 14 Wintonbury Mall
 Isaac's Bagel Café, 16-B Mountain Avenue
 Pasticceria Italia, 10 Wintonbury Mall
 Thai Palace, 18 Wintonbury Mall
 Sir Speedy Printing, 21 Old Windsor Road
 Wade's Farms, 498 Simsbury Road
 Many Rivers Community Acupuncture, 3 Barnard Lane
(And there's room for more!)

The Wintonbury Drummer

is published five times a year by
 Wintonbury Historical Society, Inc.
 151-153 School Street, P.O. Box 7454
 Bloomfield, CT 06002
 Tel. 860-243-1531
 Editor: Richard Pierce
 Email: wintonburyhistory@gmail.com
 Web: www.bloomfieldcthistory.org

SOME THINGS CONCERNING BLOOMFIELD, CONNECTICUT

By Tudor Whiton

Written in 1925 for his 90th birthday

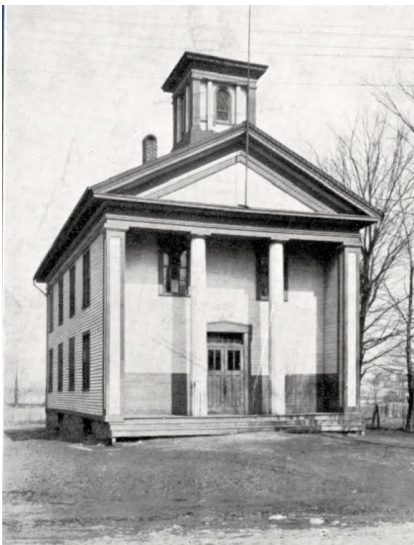


Tudor Whiton
July 29, 1929
Hartford Courant
photo

Bloomfield was incorporated as a town in 1835. This article will only tell of conditions as they were in 1843 and since. At that time there were four churches in the town: one Congregational that stood just in front of the present one, one Baptist at the present location¹, one Methodist located near the entrance to Mountain View Cemetery, and the other an Episcopal in Scotland (so called at that time), now North Bloomfield.

The town was divided into ten school districts; and the expense, which was small, was borne by each district. The teacher in the summer was a lady paid \$1.75 per week and board at the homes of pupils. In winter, a young man was employed at \$18 or less per month and boarded himself. The school districts were named Filley Street, Farms, Center, North Middle, South Middle, Duncaster, West Street, Scotland, North Scotland, and South. Some winters a school would be opened in a spare room in some house in the village and called a "select school" and attended mostly by those above school age. One such school was held in the house now owned by Rev. Harry Olcott.² Each school district, at a meeting held for the purpose once a year,

would elect a Committee of One and a Clerk to make records of the doings, etc. The Committee elected would hire the teachers, furnish fuel and supplies, enumerate the children of school age, to wit: between four and sixteen, this without any remuneration whatever; but it would be only for one year, when the duty would fall upon another person. The money for teachers' pay and other expenses was furnished by the State School Fund but could not be used for repairs or the building of school buildings. In naming the different school districts, one (or one half of one) was omitted: The Gravel Hill, partly in this town and partly in Hartford. The school building was only a short distance south of the town line, on Blue Hills Avenue.



The Academy
WHS archives photo

In the fall of 1849, if I remember the date correctly, Mr. William L. Hummason, living in the west part of the town, opened a private school in the room above the store now owned by L. R. Ladd,³ and the room was filled to capacity, some coming from Tariffville and Avon and boarding with relatives or friends from Monday to Friday night. There were two terms of eleven weeks, fall and winter, at a cost of \$3.50 per term for each pupil. Soon after this the question of a suitable building for use of a school of that kind was brought up. Favorable action was taken and money raised by sale of stock or shares at \$25 per share, all taken by people of the town; and a building was erected called an Academy. The school was opened by some young man who, I suppose, paid rent for the building and charged tuition for scholars. It was run for a few years in that way, but not proving to be a success, no school was opened for a while. But, as the small one- room school house on Whirlwind Hill was becoming too crowded, (continued—>)



861 Park Avenue
Home of Harry & Susie Olcott, 1920-1952
Next door: home of Floyd Pitt
Photo donated by Grace Pitt Collies

having sixty scholars one winter, and the Academy unoccupied and for sale, a meeting of the Center school district was called and a vote passed to purchase it at the price of \$1,500. I was clerk of the Center School district at that time and don't remember the exact date, but it was more than fifty years ago.

The town had two hotels in 1843, one at the Center, a two-story brick building located a little south of our town hall and library and kept by Elihu B. Phelps, the other in Scotland (so-called at that time but now North Bloomfield) and owned and run by Rockwell Hoskins, now the residence of Mr. Burrows. The hotel at the center was owned by Mr. N. F. Miller but was rented to Mr. Phelps, whose lease terminated in 1844, when Mr. Miller again took possession and made large additions and improvements to the original house by the addition of an upper story with verandas on the front of each story. The upper floor was a hall for dancing and other entertainments.

At the time first mentioned, there were two grocery stores, one in the same building now owned and used as a store and post office by L. R. Ladd. (see photo, next page) The firm was H. & L. D. Roberts. The other was owned and run by Joab Hubbard, Jr., and stood where the rear part of the Congregational Church now stands. The building was moved to its present location west of the Academy school house and used as a tenement for two families.

There were two stagecoach lines running through the town in the time I am telling about, one a daily line from Tariffville to Hartford, and every other day by the same company from Westfield, MA, to Hartford. The other ran from West Granville, MA, to Hartford twice a week, each carrying mail and passengers. The last-mentioned line passed through Simsbury.

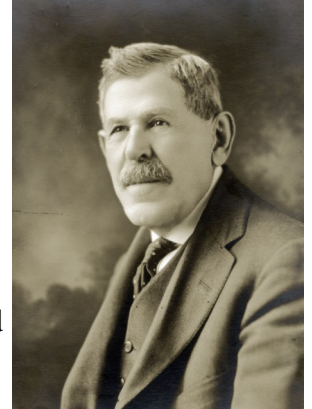
Of the manufactories in the town, there were two in the southwest part for the making of window sash and blinds, one run by Trumbull and George Humphrey, the other by a brother of theirs, Henry Humphrey by name. The two factories were run by waterpower. A year or two later, Case and Hamlin built just east of what is now the Allyn and Beebe residence quite a large size building, well equipped with the machinery of those days, with engine and boiler for the power needed for making the same articles as the aforementioned Humphreys Sash and Blinds. Window blinds were becoming quite fashionable at the time. The building was finally destroyed by fire and not rebuilt.



Brown and Griffin Hotel
Bloomfield Center
WHS archives photo

At the time my father, Augustus Whiton, and his family moved from Wapping to Bloomfield, 1843, there was no blacksmith shop at the center. Mr. Thomas Gabb had a small shop on what is now called Maple Avenue, on land now owned by William Cooley. At that time, a shop of that kind was used mainly for the shoeing of horses and oxen, for every farmer kept one pair or more and Mr. Miller six yoke of oxen and ten to fifteen horses, all at work. The Whiton shop, which was small at first, was ready for use in April, the building having been started in March or sooner. At that time neither of the shops had a combination of woodwork and iron work. Mr. Samuel D. Goodwin had a shop for making the woodwork for carts and wagons and no smith shop, but brought his work to Gabb or Whiton. A few years later, Mr. Whiton put up a shop for woodworking purposes, a short distance east of the smith shop; and as business grew additions were made until it now measures 125 by 40 feet. Mr. Augustus Whiton retired from business about forty-five years ago and died in 1885. The business was continued by Tudor Whiton until a few years ago and went by the name of Whiton Wagon Works and having the reputation of turning out good work.

In 1843 there were three military companies in the town: one of militia, one of cavalry, and one of artillery. For music, the militia had Fife and Drum, the cavalry Cornet (continued—>)



Nathan F. Miller, Jr.
1925 photo
WHS Archives

(at that time called Buglers). The artillery company had a cannon. At the time first mentioned in this article, 1843, the law of the State required all able-bodied male citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five to perform two days of military duty each year, the time being usually in May and September. Each company was drilled separately in the forenoon from nine to twelve o'clock and in the afternoon in battalion formation. They marched three or four miles around the outskirts of the village and were dismissed after firing the cannon a few times as practice. One pound of powder was used for each explosion.



Whiton Carriage Shop
WHS archives photo

In 1849 when the gold fever struck the country, a number of men in the town wanted to go to California but were without the money required for the purpose, which was \$300. They were assisted by others who could finance them and did so with the agreement that the profit derived from the enterprise be divided half and half. As it turned out, neither party made any money. Of those from this town, some returned, and some were never heard from afterwards. It took six months' time for a sailing vessel to go from New York to California in 1849.



Ladd's Store on the Green
Originally run by Hiram Roberts
WHS archives photo

When the Civil War broke out in 1861 and until its close, Bloomfield furnished its quota of men without drafting.⁴ Some enlisted in the first call for troops for three months' service. Some went in the 10th Connecticut. I think about fifteen enlisted from here among which was Imri A. Spencer, now in St. Petersburg, Florida, who was in Andersonville prison a long time, as was also Louis J. Filley of the 7th Connecticut, General Hawley's regiment. William R. Latimer of the 14th was in Libby Prison. In the summer of 1862, President Lincoln issued a call for three hundred thousand troops for nine months' service, and Bloomfield's quota was forty-seven men. A town meeting was called at

once, and a bounty of \$250 was voted each man if the quota was filled by volunteers. If not, it would be \$200. The quota was filled with men from Hartford, Windsor, Wethersfield, East Windsor, Enfield, Suffield, and West Hartford, with a few men from East Haddam and some other places. It was formed into a regiment and named or numbered the 22nd Regiment Connecticut Volunteers. The Regiment went into camp the first of September in a pasture which is now called Camp Field and has a monument commemorating the place.⁵ A number of regiments camped there before the 22nd. The 14th was one. The 25th was camping adjoining the 22nd at the time. It remained quite a while after the 22nd went to Virginia but was finally sent to New Orleans and met with more losses than did the 22nd. The 22nd Regiment was paid off and mustered out on July 7, 1863, the pay of privates and non-commissioned officers in the Civil War being \$13 per month including clothing and rations. Of the members of the 22nd Regiment from this town, only two are here at this time: Edward A. Latimer and myself.



1. The location mentioned was on the west side of Jerome Avenue, near the intersection with Park Avenue. Today's gas station at 27 Jerome Avenue is approximately where the Baptist meeting house stood.
2. Harry and Susie Olcott lived at 861 Park Avenue, abutting the Methodist Church property (where the town hall is today). Harry was pastor of the Bloomfield Baptist Church/Blue Hills Baptist Church from 1914-1921 and lived on Park Avenue until his death in January 1952. (Susie died in May 1971.) The property was in the name of Harry's brother, Arthur, from 1949; and Arthur sold it to the town in December 1959.
3. According to Lydia Wadhams, Ladd's store was "on the original Wintonbury Avenue on what is now the western edge of Wintonbury Mall." See the *Wintonbury Drummer*, November 2020, page 8.
4. See *Bloomfield and the Civil War*, by Frederick A. Hesketh, a WHS publication, 2009.
5. I think that the reference is to the Campfield Avenue area of Hartford, "mustering ground for new regiments in [the] Civil War" (*Connecticut Place Names* by Arthur H. Hughes and Morse S. Allen, page 236). A dedication to the Griffin A. Stedman monument was planned for October 4, 1900 and "All the regiments which were encamped on the field will march in the first division of the parade. These will include the Twenty-second, the Twenty fifth, the Fifth ..." (*Hartford Courant*, Sept. 11, 1900). There is a history of the regiment at the Connecticut State Library. — Diana Barnard

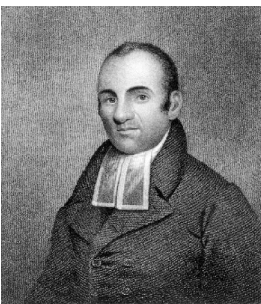
ASPECTS OF BLACK HISTORY IN BLOOMFIELD: PRECURSORS

Editor's Note: This article continues reprinting the writing of Fred Hesketh published in The Bloomfield Journal in January and February 2001. Part 1 of the reprint appeared in February 2021. Extensive editing has been applied to condense, reorganize, and supplement the original.

Americans of African ancestry have lived in Bloomfield since it was just a parish within Windsor. The first parish minister, the Reverend Hezekiah Bissell, employed at least two blacks, Jenny, baptized in 1759, and Caesar, baptized in 1772.¹ This is the first historical record of Blacks in Bloomfield, and they were obviously slaves or servants.

Slave owners felt a moral obligation to baptize their slaves, but many baptism records list only one name or the notation “owned by,” “bound to,” or “belonging to.” Roscoe Metzger, Congregational pastor from 1946 to 1977 and an active church member for the rest of his life, wrote in 1989, “It seems to be pretty generally agreed that there may have been as many as a dozen men and women, boys and girls, who were held as slaves in Wintonbury/Bloomfield during the eighteenth century.”

Metzger added, “They were expected to go to church, to be baptized, and to be instructed in the meanings of the Christian gospel. But there was a peculiar blindness in all this; when they went to church they sat ‘under the stairs’ (wherever that may have been); it was to be understood as ‘pie in the sky,’ not as human freedom here and now, in this world.”²



Lemuel Haynes
WHS archives

During those years, however, one young African American displayed such intellectual talent that he gained an unusual opportunity. Lemuel Haynes, born in Hartford in 1753, taught school in Wintonbury and studied Greek with the local pastor. In 1776 he wrote, “We may suppose that what is precious to one man, is precious to another, and what is irksome, or intolerable to one man, is so to another. Therefore, we may reasonably conclude that liberty is equally precious to a Black man, as it is to a white one, and bondage equally as intolerable to one as it is to the other.” In this way, some seventy years before slavery would be abolished in Connecticut, Haynes condemned it and pointed out the irony of slave owners fighting for their liberty while denying it to others. Haynes preached his first sermon in Wintonbury in 1780, was the first African American in New England to be ordained as a minister,³ and served as pastor in Connecticut, Vermont, and New York.⁴

Moving forward to the 19th Century, as reported by historian Roberta Kania, seven Blacks from Bloomfield were among the Negro soldiers who fought in the Civil War, three of whom, Robert A. Gipson, James Mickel, and Cornelius Reader, died in service. The other Bloomfield residents who served were identified as Henry Mingo, David Hyde, Abraham Landrine, and Cornelius Russell.⁵

The last half of the 19th century saw little change in Bloomfield’s population. It was, after all, a farming community. The successive population totals from 1860 to 1900 were 1,401, 1,473, 1,346, 1,308, and 1,513. Twenty Blacks were listed in 1870, including three families and several persons living alone. The year 1870 may also have been the time of Bloomfield’s first recorded interracial couple. Frank Dolan, a 25-year-old white man, and his black wife Mary Jane had two children, aged 1 and 2. Three Blacks were listed as domestic servants to prominent Bloomfield families—the Adams, Mills, and Pinney families .

Bloomfield may not have grown much in the 1900s, but its neighboring city did. Hartford grew by 40% in the ten years prior to 1840 and its population in that year reached 9,468. The direct ancestor of today’s Faith Congregational Church was founded in 1816,⁶ and a rising black middle class was evident by mid-century,⁷ By 1840 James W. C. Pennington was pastor of this church and publishing his first book.⁸ A precocious young woman named Ann Plato was teaching school and writing poetry.⁹ The city was bustling with life, life which would overflow into its northern suburbs when the time was ripe. (continued—>)



Phyllis Wheatley
Slave in Boston
Published poet 1773
Wikipedia photo

In the 1880 census, James Van Allen and his wife Assanette¹⁰ lived in Bloomfield with four children and two grandchildren. A man named Henry Cook was a servant to Dwight Thrall, and the total number of Blacks in Bloomfield was 16.

The 1900 census in Bloomfield showed five Black families: Armenia Mills as a single parent to two sons; James and Mary Johnson and their four children; Abraham and Nellie Hudson with their daughter and a stepdaughter; Dudley Diggs as a single parent to six children; and Hanford and Effie Anderson with their three daughters and two young Black female boarders. The thirty-five Blacks in the town represented 2.3% of the total population, identical to the percentage of Blacks in Hartford (1,887 of 79,850).



Trolley car in Bloomfield Center
WHS archives photo

By 1910 Blacks begin to show up in successive censuses. Mr. Diggs appeared in the 1910 listing as living with two of his sons, and Ms. Mills lived with her son Wilbur. Other Blacks included James and Mary Thompson and their eight children up to age 14, Hanford O. Anderson and his wife Effie and four children, and Sam and Bertha Brewster and their three children. A total of 36 Blacks appeared on the 1910 census. By this time, however, change was in the air.

Trolley Line Brings New Residents

The vast majority of Blacks listed in the census up to this time listed their occupation as “farm worker.” Trades persons were few among both black and white residents since the town remained predominantly agricultural until 1910 when the Blue Hills trolley line was extended to Bloomfield center. Bloomfield’s population, which increased less than 50% over the previous 65 years, began a period of sustained growth.

Everett Carll Ladd Jr., a social scientist, professor of political science at UConn and nationally renowned polling expert wrote *Ideology in America* in 1969 as Bloomfield was in the midst of its growth from small town to urban suburb.¹¹ While Ladd’s nomenclature is outdated, his observations are germane. He wrote at that time: “Bloomfield’s Negro families are concentrated in the town’s extreme southeastern section, bordering on North Hartford. This area’s contiguity to the large concentration of Negroes in the North End, together with the type of housing in the area—small, relatively low-priced homes, attracted Negroes escaping the ghetto. In addition, although the big influx of Negroes into the Blue Hills Area (southeastern Bloomfield) came after 1955, Blue Hills had a small group of long-time Negro residents. So Negroes able to move out of the North End in the 1950’s did not have to blaze a trail, to be among ‘the first Negroes to move in,’ if they chose Blue Hills.”



Farming couple

Photo by John Francis Ficara

From npr.org

Notes:



1. See *From Wintonbury to Bloomfield* (1983), page 42
2. See Roscoe Metzger, *Hezekiah’s Children: A History of the First Congregational Church in Bloomfield, Connecticut* (1989), page 55.
3. In 1772 in Williamsburg, Virginia, Gowan Pamphlet was ordained as a Baptist minister, the first known African American to be ordained. See www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/explore.
4. See *Africans in America/Part 2/Lemuel Haynes (pbs.org)* Carol Laun of the Salmon Brook Historical Society has written a fine sketch of Haynes’ life. See <https://granbydrummer.com/2020/08/lemuel-haynes-an-eloquent-man-of-god>. Google “Lemuel Haynes” for additional information. Laun says Haynes studied in Wintonbury with Rev. William Bradford. However, there is no William Bradford mentioned in Roscoe Metzger’s list of pastors of First Congregational Church (*Hezekiah’s Children*, Appendix III). Wintonbury’s pastor in 1780 was Hezekiah Bissell.
5. See Frederick A. Hesketh, *Bloomfield and the Civil War* (2009), pages 25-37
6. See Tamara Verrett, “Faith Congregational Church: 185 Years: Same People, Same Purpose, *Hog River Journal*, www.hogriver.org/issues/v03n03/congregational_church.htm
7. See Barbara J. Beeching, *Hopes and Expectations: the Origins of the Black Middle Class in Hartford* (2017). Dr. Beeching presented some of her research for this book in a WHS program on February 3, 2016.
8. Pennington’s first book was a treatise on the pre-historical and historical evolution of race and blackness. The manuscript was narrowly rescued from a massive Connecticut River flood in January, 1841. “The book was an important first attempt to tell Americans, black or white, something that needed to be said: that African Americans also had a history and one in which to take pride. [. . .] This little book of just under a hundred pages and fewer than 20,000 words created by itself a new field for historical study. ‘Black History,’ which now occupies a month in the calendar, begins here.” --Webber, 150
9. Richard Pierce presented a WHS program on Ann Plato on February 1, 2012. Slides available on request.
10. Probably a variant spelling of the biblical name Asenath, African wife of Joseph and mother of Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 41:45, 50-52).
11. *Ideology in America: Change and Response in a City, a Suburb, and a Small Town*, by Everett Carll Ladd (1986)

BLOOMFIELD FAMILIES, 1800s



Liljenquist Family Collection,
Library of Congress

The Diggs, Anderson, and Brewster families, among others, were living in Connecticut in the 1800s, long before the Great Migration of the 20th Century.

In 1880, **Dudley Diggs** was living at 140 Asylum Avenue in Hartford with his wife, Maggie, and three

sons: Willie, Fred, and Oscar. Diggs was born about 1840 in Virginia and is listed in the census as a farm laborer. By 1900 the Diggs family had moved to their own home in Bloomfield, but Maggie had died. There were now six children: William, age 23, Fred, 22, Oscar, 19, Grant, 13, Clara, 10, and Robert, 4. By 1910, if the census was correct, only Grant and Robert remained at home. One has to wonder about the census data, however, because in 1900 it indicates that Diggs could read but not write, whereas in 1910 it says he could not do either.

Hanford O. Anderson, age 62, was a stone mason living in Bloomfield in 1910 with his wife, Effie I. Anderson, age 39. Hanford was born about 1848 in Connecticut, and his parents, George and Hannah, were also born in Connecticut, about 1820. Hanford had five sisters (including a set of twins) and one brother. Hanford and Effie were married in 1893, owned their own home, and were able to read and write. Their children were Elizabeth, 15, Frances, 14, Georgianna, 12, and Theodore, 5.

Armenia Anderson Mills was born in Stamford, Connecticut in 1852 when her brother Hanford was four. She grew up and married William Mills, moved to Hartford, and then, by 1900, to Bloomfield, along with her two sons, Wilbur and Oscar (her husband seems to have died prior to this time, as the census lists her as a widow). An interesting item in the *Hartford Courant* for September 15, 1904, tells how a lightning bolt struck a tobacco shed belonging to Mrs. Armenia Mills. "Some shingles were torn off, posts splintered and a little tobacco which was hanging in the shed was damaged. The bolt descended into the ground without setting fire to the building." Armenia's son Wilbur M. Mills married Nannie H. Johnson in September 1910 and continued living in Bloomfield, caring for his mother as her health declined. Armenia died on April 3, 1930 and was buried in Mountain View Cemetery. She died at the Norwich State Hospital in Preston.

Samuel K. Brewster and his wife Bertha W. Brewster lived in the Center School District in 1910 Bloomfield. Born about 1870 in Connecticut, in 1910 they had three children, Samuel Jr., 10, Bertha W., 4, and George A., newborn. Brewster's parents were also born in Connecticut, which suggests they were here by the time of the Civil War. They rented their house, and Brewster's occupation was laborer. In 1910, they had been married for sixteen years.



Roberts/McCrann House. File photo.

A Call for Action

Construction of an apartment building has recently started next door to the Roberts/McCrann House at 717 Bloomfield Avenue. While the house itself is not threatened, the Historical Society is concerned about the future of this 1822 structure and has submitted an article for publication in *The Bloomfield Messenger*. "The Roberts House: A Public Trust" makes the point that the loss of historic buildings has an adverse impact on the quality of life for the whole community because they embody a town's history and are part of a broad public trust. The article calls for legal measures to prevent unilateral demolition of such buildings.

Preventive Maintenance

The history campus was busy in the early afternoon on February 25 when Grimshaw Tree Service arrived to remove a tree that threatened the Old Farm School (below). The process was completed smoothly and professionally.



Photo by Bill Weissenburger