

New Haven Colony Historical Society

VOLUME 18

SEPTEMBER, 1969

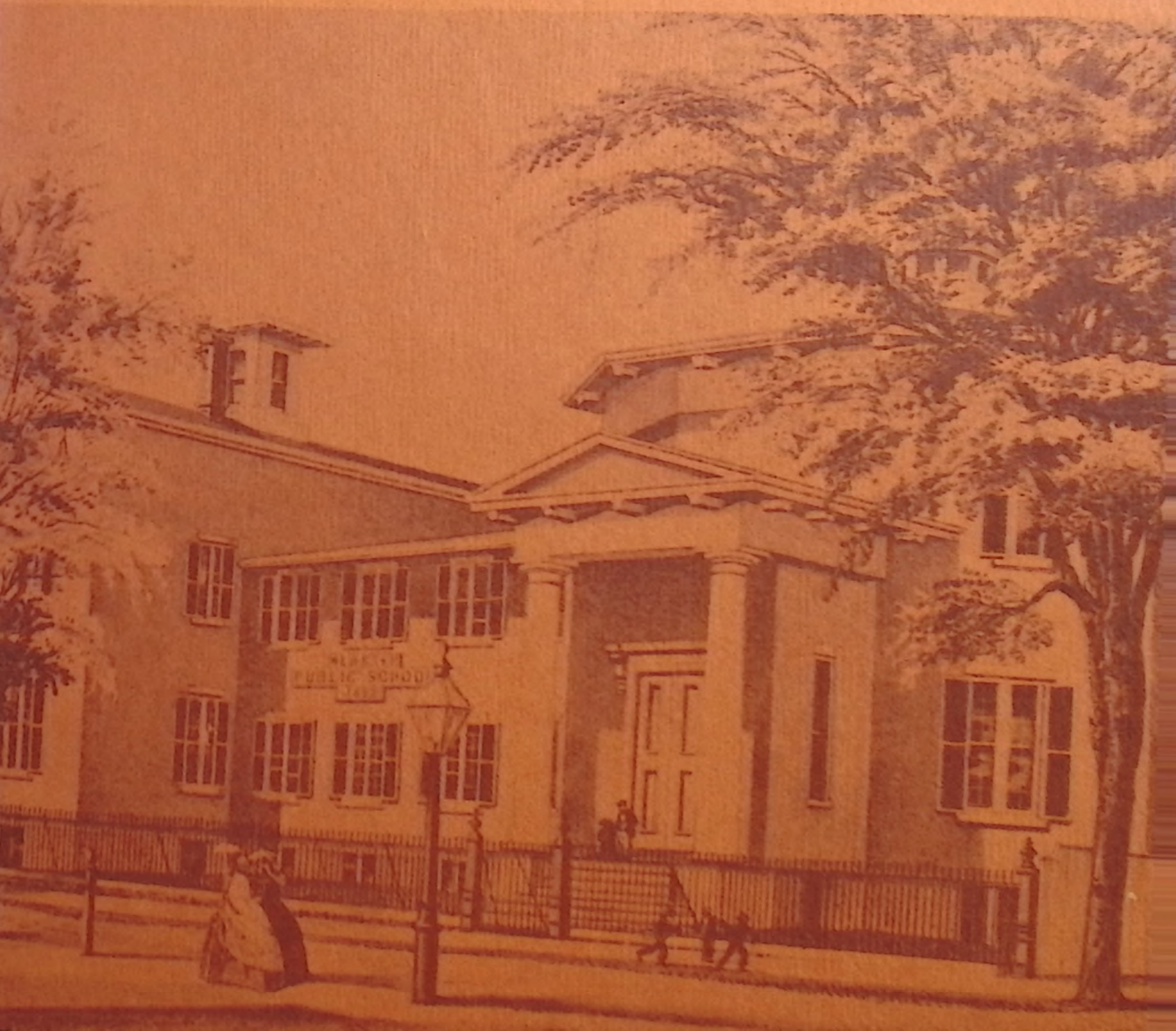
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IN MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER, DECEMBER
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THE NEW HAVEN COLONY HISTORICAL SOCIETY was founded in 1862 by a representative group of New Haven citizens. As stated in the Constitution adopted by the Society, revised in 1965:

"The object of the Society shall be the collection, preservation and publication of historical and genealogical matter relating to the early settlement and subsequent history, especially of New Haven and its vicinity, and incidentally of other portions of the United States."

The museum and library of the Society are open freely to the public, Tuesday through Friday from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. The museum only is open Saturday, Sunday, and holidays from 2 to 5 P.M.

In addition to the Whitney Avenue building the Society owns the Pardee-Morris House at Morris Cove, New Haven. Built originally in 1685 it was burned during the British invasion in 1779. Rebuilt at once it incorporates surviving portions of the older structure. Now restored carefully, and furnished appropriately, it is open freely to the public from May through October; week days, excepting Saturday, from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. and on Sunday from 2 to 5 P.M.

COVER ILLUSTRATION:

Webster School, at one time located on the northern corner at George and York Streets. Nineteenth century lithograph by W. H. Rease of Philadelphia.



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WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

The Women's Committee will sponsor its third annual auction for the benefit of the Society at 10 A.M. Saturday, October 18th at the Joseph Pari Auction Galleries, 3846 Whitney Avenue, Mount Carmel. A preview will be held the day before the auction from 10 A.M. until 8 P.M. at the same address. Admission to the preview is \$1.00.

Members of Auction '69 Committee:

Mrs. Ward Becker, Jr.
Mrs. Stuart H. Clement
Mrs. William A. Gamble

Mrs. Frank C. Hepler
Mrs. Rollin G. Osterweis
Mrs. Warren Pond

Mr. Joseph Pari, life member of the Society, will again volunteer his services as Auctioneer.

Last year's highly successful auction raised \$15,000, which has made possible the continuation of the restoration and preservation program of the Society's paintings and prints. A renovation program has been started in selected rooms and exhibit areas. The accessions fund has been added to enabling the Society to acquire important local historical items when they become available. Auctions funds now provide for an educational director to organize the tours which brought more than 4,600 children into the building during the 1968-1969 school year.

All of these programs need to be continued, and can be through the co-operation and generosity of members and friends of the Society. Auction '69 can be equally as successful as our past two if each member is responsible for the donation of just one or two choice items.

The auction donations are being collected at the Society. Please call any committee member or the office for any information you may need. Remember, all contributions are tax deductible.

VIRGINIA M. HEPLER, *Chairman*



Mr. James Marshall Osborn, a direct descendent of Thomas Osborn, one of New Haven's founders, is shown with Mrs. Frank C. Hepler, Chairman of the Women's Committee. The iron fountain is one of the many collectibles that Mr. Osborn has given to Auction '69.

THE TELEPHONE AUCTION COMMITTEE

headed by Mrs. Rollin. G. Osterweis

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Mrs. G. Harold Welch
Mrs. Reverdy Whitlock



Mrs. Ward Becker Jr., a member of the Auction '69 Committee, accepts a coin silver tablespoon from Mr. Perry W. Curtiss, Jr. Also shown are some of the many other antiques donated by Mr. Curtiss.

MEMBERSHIP, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLICITY

The Society's membership is growing slowly but surely. Our Committee notes that persons who join the Society through personal contact seem to be those particularly interested in and concerned with the Society. With this in mind we hope each present member will extend an invitation to some one in greater New Haven.

As of July 30, 1969 we had the following membership:

HONORARY	6
SUSTAINER	5
GUARANTOR	5
LIFE	66
CONTRIBUTING	80
INDIVIDUAL	510
FAMILY	228
CORPORATE	26

TOTAL 926

Respectfully submitted,
MARGARET B. CLEMENT, *Chairman*



Kolakowski Photo

Warham Williams House, Northford, c. 1752

WARHAM WILLIAMS: A COUNTRY PARSON AND HIS NORTHFORD HOME

by Elizabeth A. Livingston

Warham Williams was not yet twenty-five when he was called to Northford in 1750 as the first minister of the newly formed Third Society of Branford. He purchased two and a half acres of land in April 1751, and was married on November 30, 1752. Perhaps the house was completed for his nineteen-year old bride, Ann Hall, of Cheshire. This unusual house, which is the most noteworthy eighteenth century frame country house in the area that once comprised the New Haven Colony, stands on the Green in Northford, diagonally across from the site of the original meeting house.

Williams came from a well-known, prosperous, and indeed famous family, so much so that he was ranked second in his class of 1745 at Yale when ranking was done by social prestige, or, as Ezra Stiles, later President of Yale, put it, "according to family Dignity." His forebears had been connected with Harvard, but after his father married Abigail Davenport, the great-

great-granddaughter of John Davenport, one of the founders of New Haven, the Williamses seem to have turned south rather than east for their education.

Warham's grandfather was the Reverend John Williams, the first settled minister in Deerfield, Mass. Warham's father was Stephen, who at the age of eleven was carried off with the rest of his family by the French and Indians in the Deerfield Massacre in the depths of winter of 1704. John wrote the famous book *The Redeemed Captive*, and Stephen, who graduated from Harvard in 1713, wrote the preface for later editions.

The theme of the Indian captivity was of great romantic interest through the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly as it related to young Eunice, John's eight-year old sister who stayed in Canada and married an Indian. In the November 1968 *Antiques Magazine* there is mention of Chauncey B. Ives' statue "The Willing Captive" which possibly was derived from Eunice's story.

Digressing a bit further on Eunice, at one time there were tales of her having visited her nephew here in Northford, but that seems unlikely. However, it is documented by Stephen Williams' diary that she did visit her brother in Longmeadow, Mass., in 1740 when Warham was probably still at home; and on her visit there in 1761, Stephen noted "At night my son Warham came hither" So Warham certainly knew his famous and extraordinary aunt.

Unfortunately Warham never seems to have had his portrait painted, but there are two of his father showing a handsome face with regular features. Warham's only published material is a dissertation at Yale, which, being theological and in Latin, this author regrets she has not read. Warham's handwriting, as it appears in the original records of the Northford Church, is firm, direct and easy to read, without the embellishments so typical of much eighteenth century handwriting. He does not seem to have kept a diary, or if he did, it has disappeared. But if the old adage "like father, like son" is true, he must have been an interesting person.

His father enjoyed tramping the hills and hunting, and also served several tours in the army. Perhaps this army service seemed important because of his experiences with the Indians as a child. Like John, Stephen had slaves, but there is no record of Warham owning any. Stephen seems to have been conservative in his theology, yet pushed his congregation hard to permit singing the Psalms in Isaac Watts' version. He also was concerned about neighbors being "uneasy," as he put it, "because of my house being so stately"; and one wonders if this was also true of Warham. (Unfortunately the "mansion" in Longmeadow burned over a hundred years ago, destroying many family papers stored in the attic.) Sibley's *Harvard Graduates* says of Stephen that "He always emulated the good steward rather than the lily of the field, and invested his talents in land." And in his diary he admits his frugality when, one stormy Sunday, he "had prepared a new sermon but preached an old one because the assembly was small, and [he was] not able to write new sermons sometimes," adding "I hope I did not indulge sloth." He married twice and lived to be nearly ninety, much honored and respected.

Warham Williams graduated from Yale in 1745 when his father was off as Chaplain on the Louisburg Expedition. He stayed on at the College for a year after winning a Berkeley Scholarship, then served four years as Tutor. The faculty of the College was so small that the post of Tutor was one of

considerable honor, as well as responsibility. In 1748 he began to preach as a candidate in Northford, where there finally was hope of establishing a parish separate from the Branford Second Society, now North Branford.

In 1745, the General Assembly of Connecticut had empowered a group of men to form the Third Ecclesiastical Society of Branford, and the Assembly even set the boundaries for the Society. Specifically they were north by Wallingford, west by New Haven (North Haven not having been set off yet), south "by the north side of Hezekiah Rogers' land" (which is estimated to be the south line of the now town-owned "Augur Property"), east up Great Hill (Totoket Mountain) to the ridge and then north and irregularly east to the Guilford line. Presumably, with a few minor changes, these are still the legal boundaries for the Second District of the Town of North Branford.

In 1746, the Assembly approved a vote to build a Meeting House, and then stated that it should be built "about twenty rods [or 330 feet] northward of the house of Mr. Samuel Bartholomew, on the West side of the path in the highway, the sills of the said meeting-house to inclose a walnut staddle there standing with a heap of stones about it." (A staddle is a young tree left standing alone and was often cited in deeds as a corner marker.) Thus the building was probably just south of the present Meeting House; Clintonville Road did not exist then. The two houses on the west side of the Northford Green were Bartholomew houses, but neither is old enough to have been Samuel's. The General Assembly voted in May 1750 that the name of the new Society should be Northford.

So, apparently, there was a Meeting House already built when Warham Williams was ordained on June 13, 1750. The church of nineteen male members was "gathered" on that date, and someone has said that it is evidence of his ministerial prowess that not a year passed without some additions to his parish. But, no doubt, the population of Northford was increasing at an equal rate, and he had no competition until 1763 when the Episcopal Society was founded.

In 1769 Warham was elected to the Yale Corporation and served on it until his death in 1788. Among his various duties he helped persuade Ezra Stiles to take the Presidency of Yale in 1778.

Stiles, whose father was the minister in North Haven, had been in College with Williams and they remained friends through life. Ezra Stiles' diary gives many sidelights on Warham's activities, such as attending meetings, preaching at funerals of various noted divines in the area or at the College. When Warham preached at Yale, one of the Tutors came out to Northford for the day. And it was a day's preaching! All morning, and all afternoon. Stiles not infrequently spent the night in Northford and mentions one time he came here to preach while Warham went up to Durham to supply for Elizur Goodrich who was taking inoculations, presumably for smallpox.

Because of the fear of invasion during the Revolution, Yale dispersed, each class going to a different minister somewhere in Connecticut. The library also was sent inland; about two thousand volumes were either in Northford, Durham, or Watertown. Remaining at the College were some books and scientific equipment, including "Mr. Williams' Cometarium," apparently a contrivance for illustrating motion in an eccentric orbit. So

it would appear that Williams also had an interest in science. In 1782, Stiles noted that "the King's Picture by Kneller and Mr. Davenports and also the Human Skeleton commonly called the Anatomy and the residue of the Apparatus brot home from Mr. Williams's." With a houseful of children, even though some were grown, surely Mrs. Williams must have been happy to be rid of "the Anatomy."

Corporation meetings often went on for several days and the men would stay in town until adjournment. One January Warham made it through a blizzard to get there when others were more faint-hearted. Not only major affairs of appointments were to be dealt with, but also the quarterly bills for the students had to be made out, dining room stewards found, and the like.

Not all of Warham's meetings were at Yale; he also was active in the Consociation of local Congregational churches. Once he must have wished he had not gone to Squire Dayton's in North Haven for what was planned to be a session of several days. Sixteen of the Council and eight of the Dayton family were taken violently ill overnight, probably with food poisoning, and so the meeting abruptly adjourned for three weeks.

Whether Ezra Stiles ever interested Warham Williams in his silkworm-raising hobby he does not say, but Stiles does list Northford as one of the towns where the "Spirit for Raising Silk Worms was great."

Tragedy hit Warham several times. In 1768 he lost a baby only nine months old. However, in another eighteen months there was another baby girl, also named Abigail. In all, he had thirteen children born from 1753 to 1776. Considering death rates in the eighteenth century, the Williamses were remarkably lucky. When the youngest was only a few months old, Mrs. Williams died, "greatly lamented, after a painful and distressing sickness." Thus Warham was left with twelve children ranging from twenty-three to an infant (seven boys and five girls). The following year his fourth son, Jonathan Law, died at nineteen, shortly after graduating from Yale. He too apparently had a lengthy illness.

Some time after Ann Hall Williams' death, Warham married Mary Saltonstall Whiting of Branford and New Haven, the wealthy widow of Colonel Nathan Whiting. There were nine Whiting children, and the house must really have burst if all the Williamses and Whitings got together.

The years passed with children marrying and leaving home. Mr. Williams continued his active parish and other interests until he appeared to be quite sick the summer of 1787. Ezra Stiles, still President of Yale, noted that he seemed to be suffering from a "Calculus," or what now would be called bladder stones. Through that summer and the following winter, Stiles frequently came to Northford to preach for his ailing friend. It certainly must have been small comfort to Warham when, in January 1788, another supply minister had a fit, first Saturday night at the Williams house, and then again during the morning service (but he made it through the afternoon preaching).

Who took care of services in February and March, Stiles does not say, nor do the sparse church records, but on April 4th comes the sad notation of Warham's death between 12 and 1:00 P.M. "A worthy Man." Stiles' record of the funeral is interesting, as even now one can easily picture the scenes.

"I attended the Funeral of the Rev. Mr. Williams. There were eleven



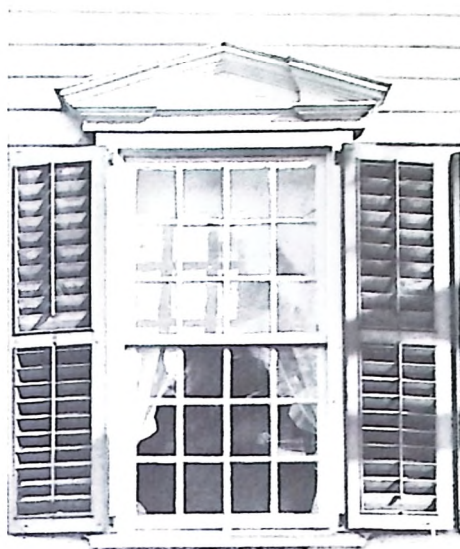
Ministers present. At about 2:30 P.M. the funeral Procession moved from the House of Mourning to the Meetinghouse. The Brethren of the Church preceded the Corps, the Ministers walking as Pall Bearers on each side of the Corps; which was followed by the Mourners, and the whole Congregation two and two." After the service the same procession walked to the cemetery about a half-mile away.

Stiles was not someone who would allow his emotions to overcome his scientific curiosity, and so the morning of Mr. Williams' funeral he attended an autopsy at the house, and doubtless the verdict in modern terms would be cancer. But the personal feelings of Stiles, who was almost the same age, are very clear in his saying "May I be quickened to live for Eternity."

While both the inscription on Warham Williams' tombstone (which by its style might have been written by Stiles) and the obituary in the *Connecticut Journal* give a good idea of his personality, the best summary is in the diary of his old friend and colleague, Stiles:

"He has faithfully labored in Word and Doctrine and was in the Ministry there 38 years. He was a good Classic Scholar, and well studied in Divinity, and was a solid judicious Divine; a great Friend to Order and Regularity in Church and State. A steady, upright firm man . . . He was naturally rather fixed and rigid, especially in the former part of Life. But Experience benefited him, and he became mild and condescending but always steady and uniform . . . I have met with a great Loss in his Death!"

Of the seven Williams sons, it is curious that only two went to Yale, and neither of them went into the ministry. The whole family soon scattered, except for Lucy who had married Elihu Foote and remained in Northford.



The "beloved parson" must have cared less about money and worldly things than his father, as his estate only totaled £729, with debts of £138. His land holdings were only the three and a quarter acre houselot, two acres called "Bogg Meadow" (about where the Shell gas station is now), twenty acres around the Howd (now Jakubiszyn) house on Old Post Road, and a piece on Great Hill. Of the £729, the real estate amounted to £357, and the personal to £372. For comparison, a Northford farmer, Jesse Street, was appraised in 1785 at £981, with £736 being real and £245 personal estate. Unfortunately the Williams inventory does not itemize the personal estate, and the only part specified in his will is his library, except for dividing the first Mrs. Williams' clothes among the girls.

Warham Williams' true legacy is his splendid house, and because of it his name is still remembered. Nicely sited on a slight knoll and angled to the Old Post Road rather than to the much later Middletown Turnpike, the house is very imposing. The magnificent doorway with its broken-scroll pediment is outstanding. This type of door frame is mostly associated with the Connecticut Valley from Glastonbury to Deerfield, and it also appears in Salem and Portsmouth on some of the more elaborate mansions. The style is derived immediately from English architecture and has been called "Wren Baroque." It calls to mind the bonnet-top highboys popular in the Queen Anne and Chippendale periods, which reflect the same desire to avoid a static horizontal and give life to the pattern of the facade. The scrolls terminate in rosettes, which also appear in simpler form above the fluted pilasters. These "Tudor Roses" were as popular in furniture and architecture as in embroidery of this period.

The doorway which this one most closely resembles has an interesting

connection to it. It is on the so-called Reverend John Williams House in Deerfield, Mass. That house has time and again been published as having been built for John upon his return from captivity. It was not his house, however; it is of too late a date, and was built in 1754 by his wealthy merchant son, Elijah Williams. It is an interesting conjecture that Warham and his uncle may have shared the same carpenter. Unfortunately for that theory, careful comparison of the fine details of the two doorways indicates that, though similar in basic design, they are far apart in execution and would not have been built by the same "joiner." According to Mrs. Russ A. Miller of Deerfield, who has made an extensive survey of these broken-scroll doorways, the Northford house does not fall into any grouping of them, either by construction or decorative detail, and is unique. There are no other houses of this style surviving in the New Haven area, and yet such a doorway must have been constructed by a highly skilled carpenter or cabinetmaker. It is indeed unfortunate that there are no account books or letters which might give a clue to the exact origin of Warham's design.

Over the years the house has had to be partially re-sided, so the original beaded clapboards, graduated in size, survive only on the front and north sides. Old photographs of the house show shutters on all the windows, but these have been removed, quite properly, as they would not have been used in the 1750's. Although the house has been painted white for many years, it was not so originally. Underneath at least seven layers of white paint is a rich pumpkin yellow, appearing on both clapboards and trim. White paint did not come into general use until after the Revolution.

Another striking feature of the design is the very steep pitch of the roof, and the unusual treatment of carrying the cornice across the gable ends. This cornice style was uncommon until after 1800, and then used with roofs of much lower pitch.

The gambrel-roofed ell at the rear was not built at the same time as the house, but probably was added shortly thereafter, as that type of roof was not in fashion long. Since the inventory taken after Warham Williams' death lists the "Dwelling house and wash room adjoining," it is possible that the ell was the "wash room," and that later on it was converted into a kitchen.

The two-leaf front door, with no window lights above it, leads into a small hallway with large square rooms to the right and left in the typical center-chimney house plan. The woodwork around the stairs is simple rectilinear paneling. The stairs are "closed-string" style, so the step-ends do not show. The balusters are delicately and elegantly turned with a rather attenuated profile. A half baluster is set against each side of the upper newel posts. The bottom newel is turned which is quite a rare treatment.

In the south parlor, as throughout the house, the corner posts, girts and summer beam are all exposed and cased. There is a compound crown molding making the transition from the girts to the plastered ceiling, again showing an interest in the interplay of light and shadow. The fireplace in this room is of later date, and probably was altered after the Reverend Matthew Noyes purchased the house in 1791, when, according to a petition to the General Assembly to permit the Executors to sell, the house was



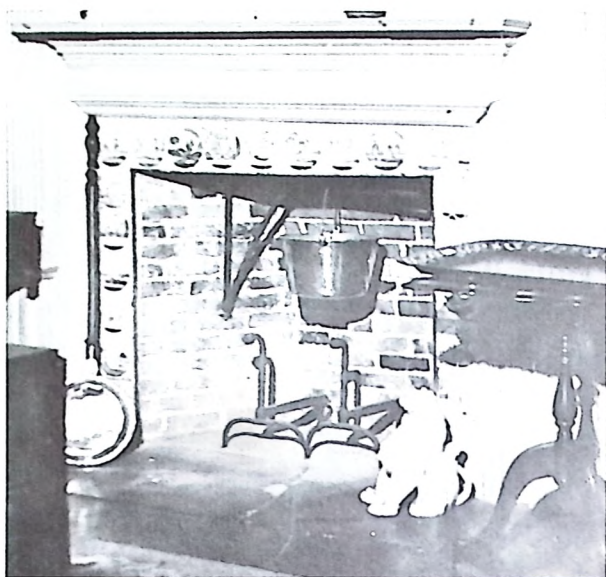
Delft Tile of the Annunciation

"fast going to Decay." The fireplace is surrounded with old blue Delft tiles, some being replacements.

The north parlor is the glory of the house. The bottom side (or soffit) of the summer beam is very unusual and gives an interesting effect as it is paneled. The whole chimney wall is paneled, with fluted pilasters going from floor to ceiling on either side of the fireplace. The mantel shelf is supported by compound moldings several inches deep, giving a great feeling of strength and complementing the bolelection molding around the opening. Above the mantel is a great fielded panel of one piece of wood, 21 by 53 inches, set off by finer moldings. Also in this room is a corner cupboard original to the house with a round-headed glazed door and nicely balanced paneling on the doors below.

Most interesting of all in this very handsome room, mulberry-colored Delft tiles illustrating Biblical scenes surround the fireplace. Since this room was the "Best Parlor," it may not have been Mr. Williams' study, but those tiles certainly could have given him many themes for sermons. There are twenty tiles and originally there probably were four more. The subjects range from the Judgment of Solomon, Zacchaeus up in his "Sycamore Tree," to St. Paul being dropped over ^{Jericho's} ~~Jericho's~~ walls in a basket. Most surprising is the unbelievable Annunciation with a bare-bosomed Madonna.

Behind this parlor are the rear stairs and a little room in the cold northeast corner which would have been a pantry or buttery. The old kitchen is across the center back of the house. Typical of many houses, the walls



North Parlor Fireplace

here are bevel-and-bead, or feather-edge, boarding. Plaster was much more expensive than wood and was saved for the best rooms. Over the fireplace is a nicely balanced arrangement of rectangular panels. The mantel shelf had been removed long ago, but the present owner had a great stroke of luck, of the kind that all old-house restorers hope for, and found it undamaged in the attic and put it back in place.

The partitions between this kitchen and the south parlor were removed, most likely when the house served as the Episcopal parish house. There originally would have been a small bedroom in the southeast corner. Back of this is the ell, of one large room with a fireplace on the east side and a small room beyond. A narrow flight of stairs leads to the attic where perhaps Matthew Noyes' slave lived.

In the main part of the house, the two large upstairs front rooms also have fine paneling on the chimney walls with even larger over-mantel boards than downstairs, and beautifully bold bolection moldings around the fireplaces. Rather surprisingly the hearths are raised above floor level. This usually indicated that originally the ceiling beneath was open-beamed and unplastered, but in a house of this date and style, the ceilings certainly would have been plastered.

Also upstairs is one of the most fascinating aspects of this house. It was known for a long time that inside a closet door was a list of people who had painted the house, with the earliest entry being 1792 and the most recent, 1900. However, it was not until Mr. and Mrs. Schaeffer started to restore the house in 1943 that the full importance of this list was realized.

In removing the layer upon layer of wallpaper in the "Parlor Chamber" (that is, the room over the "Best Parlor"), the Schaeffers discovered painting on the walls. It is free-hand painting, rather than the later stenciling. The background is a bright blue, over which is drawn a diamond design formed by a running vine of small feather-like leaves. Within each diamond is a flower spray in red, blue and mustard, with green leaves.

Because the blue of the wall matches best the blue paint of the signature of Jared Jessup in 1809, this room is ascribed to him, and forms the key document for at least eight other houses in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Much more is known now about Jessup than when the discovery of this room was published in the September 1945 *Antiques Magazine*. The late Elmer Keith wrote that this is "the finest painted wall yet discovered in New England." There are no other similar painted walls anywhere in this area, let alone in Northford, although the Harrison-Tyler house on Old Post Road, which unfortunately was torn down a few years ago, had some floral free-hand painting on the staircase wall. The combination of Jessup's painting and dated signature is of great importance.

There are many other fascinating facets of this house, and underscoring its recognized importance as an architectural gem, it was studied and recorded in 1916 in the *Old Houses of Connecticut*, compiled by the Colonial Dames for the Connecticut State Library, in 1937 in the *Historic American Buildings Survey* for the Library of Congress, as well as in the WPA Census of Old Buildings in Connecticut and numerous architectural guidebooks.

After Warham Williams' death the house was bought by William Noyes, Esq. of Lyme, for his son Matthew, who had been called to serve as parson in May 1790. Noyes made what was called an "advantageous offer," and paid £190 for the house, only £5 more than the appraised value (even though Noyes was reputed to be the wealthiest minister in Connecticut!) Noyes lived in the house until his death in 1839, and his widow remained there until 1851. A few years later it became the rectory of St. Andrew's Church, and thus has a history of nearly a century each of Congregational and Episcopal ownership.

Let us hope this superb example of eighteenth century architecture will be spared from any further encroachments by highways and commercial buildings to stand in its dignity beside the Northford Green.

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MORSE, SILLIMAN AND THE CAMERA OBSCURA

by

HESTER HALSTEAD PIER

Morse and Daguerre were the two greatest inventors of the mid-nineteenth century, and their inventions would change men's lives. The Frenchman was Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, co-inventor with Joseph Nicéphore Niepce, of the daguerreotype. The American was Samuel Finley Breese Morse, inventor of the electro-magnetic telegraph. They met in Paris on two succeeding days, in March 1839, each to see and wonder at the other's invention. Morse and Daguerre, both professional artists, had used the *camera obscura*, that "beautiful toy", as Root called it, and they, as others, had speculated on how to permanently fix its image. On March 9th, the day after the double visits of the two inventors, Morse wrote to his brothers: "... I don't know if you recollect some experiments of mine in New Haven many years ago, when I had my painting-room next to Professor Silliman's, — experiments to ascertain if it were possible to fix the image of the *camera obscura*. I was able to produce different degrees of shade on paper, dipped into a solution of nitrate of silver, by means of different degrees of light, but finding that light produced dark, and dark light, I presumed the production of a true image to be impracticable, and gave up the attempt." R. W. Habersham, of Augusta, Georgia, who roomed with Morse in Paris in 1831, wrote in retrospect: "... I was studying from my own face reflected in a glass, . . . when I remarked how grand it would be if we could invent a method of fixing the image on the mirror. Professor Morse replied that he had thought of it while a pupil at Yale, and that Professor Silliman (I think) and himself had tried it with a wash of nitrate of silver on a piece of paper, but that, unfortunately, it made the lights *dark* and the shadows *light*, but that if they could be reversed, we should have a facsimile like India-ink drawings . . ." Also written in retrospect was Morse's reply to Root, which was in answer to specific questions, the first of which was: "When did you commence your experiments?" Morse's reply refers to his meeting with Daguerre; his March 9th letter from Paris which was published in the New York Observer; and indicates that he immediately had a camera made for him when Daguerre's instructions arrived in this country. No mention is made of the Yale experiments with Silliman.

Professor Benjamin Silliman, however, was well qualified to experiment with Morse in this project. Silliman was Yale's first Professor of Chemistry and Natural History. Appointed on September 7th, 1802 at the age of twenty-three, he held a law degree, but since he knew next to nothing about chemistry, he immediately commenced his studies in that field. While studying at Philadelphia he met the celebrated English scientist Dr. Joseph Priestley, whose book *The History of Present State of Discoveries relating to Vision, Light and Colours*, London, 1772, includes not only references to the *camera obscura*, but an account of Schulze's 1727 discovery that nitrate of silver solution mixed with chalk, gives in sunshine copies of writing. Priestley, too, had contributed a chapter to the English translation of Scheele's *Observations*, published in 1780. Here Scheele revealed his photochemical investigations in which he found that the blackening of silver salts is due to light and not to heat and that the blackened silver chloride had become insoluble in ammonia.

Priestley belonged to the Lunar Society and knew James Watt, William Herschel, and Sir William Banks, all of whom Silliman contacted in 1805, although Herschel was not at home when he called. Josiah Wedgwood was a member, also, of this circle of prominent scientific men, all residents of Birmingham and environs, who met at each full moon. Wedgwood had purchased a *camera obscura* for his factory so that "views" could be quickly and exactly obtained for the decoration of china. His son, Tom, presented a paper on heat and light to the Royal Society in 1792. Later Tom became acquainted with Humphrey Davy, and, in 1802, at about the time that Davy became Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution in London, Wedgwood and Davy's photographic experiments utilizing silver nitrate were published in the June 1802 issue of the *Journal of the Royal Institution*. They had managed to produce an image on a plain surface, but were unable to fix it. Helmut Gernsheim says: "It is indeed surprising that Davy who quotes the results of Scheele in his footnote, fails to deduce . . . that ammonia could be used to dissolve the chloride of silver unaffected by light, i. e. to render the image permanent."

When Silliman was sent by Yale for his incredible year abroad (1805-6), he met Humphrey Davy in November 1805, and he spent that winter at the University of Edinburgh, where Tom Wedgwood had studied from 1786 to 1788. All this leads to the conclusion that Silliman had had ample opportunity to learn about Schulze's, Scheele's and Priestley's experiments. He had probably read of Wedgwood and Davy's photographic experiments in the June 1802 issue of the *Journal of the Royal Institution*, which would have arrived in New Haven or Philadelphia near the time that he received the Chair of Chemistry at Yale. Furthermore, we know that Dr. John Maclean, Professor of Chemistry at Princeton, had recommended to Silliman a book list which included Scheele's *Essays*.

Morse entered Yale in 1805, and graduated with the Class of 1810. While a student, his father had given him a *camera obscura*. Morse tells us that he and Silliman used silver nitrate (which had first been used photographically by Wedgwood and Davy), he does not definitely say that they could not fix the image, he only remarks on the reversed image. Had Silliman and Morse fixed the negative print with ammonia as Scheele indicated? We do not know. Certainly they attempted the experiment more than once, for Morse mentions that they experimented "with different degrees of light". This could mean that they had discovered that there was an exposure factor in relation to the speed of the paper and the quality of the light. It is evident, however, that they did not understand the results they had obtained, and were not content with a negative instead of a positive print. Could it be that Morse, known for a lack of steadfastness of purpose as a student, lost interest, and Silliman, more a teacher than an innovator, let the matter drop as an interesting but impracticable experiment? But it is tantalizing to think that if Morse and Silliman had persevered, photography could have been invented in New Haven about thirty years earlier than the daguerreotype!

One first that does belong to Morse, however, is that he took the first class picture when he attended the 1840 reunion of his own class — Yale 1810. It was taken on August 19th (the first anniversary of Daguerre's announcement) at eight in the morning in "the yard north of the President's house".

VOLUME EIGHTEEN, NUMBER THREE

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MUSEUM COLLECTIONS:

Accessions received since the last report include the following items:

Cashmere shawl; Mrs. Morris Tyler.

Clothing brushes, three, I. Kleiner & Son; Mrs. Simon B. Kleiner.

Half model, steam oyster dredge Rowe; Mrs. Jonathan S. C. Sweet.

Hat by Mansfield of New Haven; Mrs. Winthrop H. Towner.

Jewelry, six items belonging to Noah Webster family; Mr. Huntington D. Sheldon.

Oil on canvas, Charles Thompson oyster house; Mr. E. T. Ball.

Ship soldering iron, 19th century; Mrs. John O. C. McCrillis

Silver pieces, five, tablespoon by Phinehas Bradley, tablespoon by Ambrose Ward, teaspoon by Buel and Greenleaf, saltspoon by Timothy Bontecou, sugar tongs by Joseph Fairchild; Mr. Philip H. Hammerslough.

Silver teaspoon by Ufford & Burdick; Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Pari.

Silver teaspoons, pair, by S. Merriman; Mr. John D. Kernan.

Silver teaspoons, four, Miles Gorham, Eliakim Hitchcock, Marcus Merriman, S. Merriman; Women's Committee Accessions Fund.

Silver tray engraved with New Haven scenes, c. 1858; Mr. Clarence M. Manley.

Stoneware crock marked New Haven; Women's Committee Accessions Fund.

Sword Bayonet; Miss Ruth C. Lindwall.

Tea set by Rogers Smith & Co.; Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Pari.

Wood plane, 19th century; Dr. Frederick E. Mott.



John Warner Barber, 1798-1885

BOOK REVIEW

by

RICHARD HEGEL

BARBER, JOHN WARNER. *History and Antiquities of New Haven, (Conn.) from its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*. New Haven: J. W. Barber, 1831-32.

This 1831-1832 edition predates the majority of Barber's works and concentrates on the New Haven area. The author begins by telling us his object was to collect interesting and historic items dealing with New Haven but without giving much thought to classification nor with any attempt to produce a finished product. Barber also states that he has paid particular attention to many interesting subjects usually passed over by those who write the customary histories and who believed the matters trivial. He continues by informing us that no doubt considerable amounts of history have been lost by not preserving such miscellaneous fragments in written form. Barber tells us at the beginning of this work of his feeling that old newspapers are among the best sources for information dealing with earlier times.¹ He copes with changing historical perspective by pointing out that what appears to be unimportant to historians at one period could be considered significant at a later date.²

Early in this work we also become acquainted with the author's love of detail by what can best be described as an extensive description of the physical characteristics of New Haven harbor.³ This is followed closely by a depiction of the private residences of New Haven that again illustrates Barber's affinity for local particulars.

"The houses are generally two stories high, built of wood in a neat hand-

some but not expensive style. Many of those recently erected, are however, elegant and stately edifices of brick and stone."⁴

The fact that Barber might be considered to be more of a compiler than an author is brought to our attention by his presenting near the beginning of this book a lengthy quotation by Ithiel Town concerning the details of Trinity Church on the Green of which Town was the architect.⁵ Additional examples of lengthy space filling by the utilization of source material occur throughout the volume. This point is well illustrated by the author's quoting extensive details concerning June 4th, 1639, at which time the New Haven settlers proceeded to provide foundations for their civil and religious organizations.⁶ The continuing tendency to occupy space in such manner as well as Barber's extensive utilization of newspaper material is shown by voluminous quotations from New Haven periodicals.⁷ An unusually long single quotation gives the details of the British invasion of New Haven in July of 1779.⁸ In some instances entire sections of the book are devoted entirely to newspaper passages.⁹ These quotations in addition to providing us with general background material do give specific information as to the area's feelings pertaining to such matters as the proclaiming in New Haven of King George III's ascent to the throne. It was quite a community celebration.¹⁰ They also inform us as to the policies concerning the importation of Irish servants¹¹ as well as the details of a small British raid on West Haven in 1781.¹²

Barber is not generally noted for researching historical facts. This is shown by his reference to Elihu Yale, for whom Yale University is named, as having been born in New Haven.¹³ Actually he was born in Boston.¹⁴ With reference to this topic of inquiry it is interesting to note that in the early nineteenth century Barber would assume that perhaps the oldest copy of the *Connecticut Gazette* still in existence was a 1757 issue.¹⁵ This New Haven newspaper begun in 1755 was the earliest newspaper in Connecticut.¹⁶ Less than one hundred years after its founding it is difficult to believe that if Barber had directed any reasonable amount of time to searching he would not have discovered earlier editions. Pursuing this same topic concerning lack of detailed investigation we discover that Barber when reviewing the British invasion of New Haven in July, 1779, states that at such time Dr. Daggett was the Yale President.¹⁷ Actually Dr. Daggett had not discharged the duties of President at Yale since March of 1777.¹⁸ Once again and following this same vein of thought we find our author informing us that colonial painter, Ralph Earl, was part of Benedict Arnold's group which heeded the call to Lexington and Concord.¹⁹ Actually Ralph Earl was not a member of such group.²⁰ Later editions of *History and Antiquities of New Haven* contain no changes or corrections in these statements.

Barber's comments concerning Eli Whitney and his inventive genius give us an example of the general flattering tone the author uses when speaking of a prominent local personage.

"The machinery of this manufactory, is ingenious and peculiar, many parts of which were invented by Mr. Whitney. It is to this gentleman that the world is indebted for the introduction of a machine for cleaning upland cotton which annually saves millions of property to the United States."²¹

Our author displays a fundamental concept of community needs by stressing that early New Haven was not short of bread as other colonies had been.²² He shows an ability to give historic facts in a straightforward manner.

"All (i. e., New Haven) government was originally in the church, and the members of the church elected the governor, magistrates and all other officers."²³

Also included in this book is what might be considered the foremost example of understatement dealing with New Haven history of any time.

"In 1665, the Colonies of Connecticut and New Haven were united, but not without a long and warm opposition from the latter Colony."²⁴

Long and warm hardly describe New Haven's bitter resistance to the union.²⁵

Barber displays that he can certainly be a realist when he points out in the following instance that the conduct of some Connecticut residents was not of the highest order during the July, 1779, British invasion of New Haven.

"It is said, that some of the country people (i. e., who entered town after the British had left), were base enough to take advantage of the general confusion, and carried off goods to a large amount."²⁶

The work also contains a listing of names and professions of New Haven inhabitants in 1748.²⁷ This reproduction of an earlier compilation really amounts to a forerunner of our present series of city directories. Footnotes in this volume leave a great deal to be desired with reference to completeness but are certainly better than none at all.

The illustrations in this book compensate for any lack of order in the text's presentation or accuracy. While quite pictorial and literal they convey the feeling of the times in depicting the harbor, Green, and other local views. The most interesting scene from a general historical outlook being the re-engraving by Barber and Amos Doolittle in 1832 of Doolittle's famous Battle of Lexington originally engraved in 1775. This volume concludes with two poems both dealing with East Rock.²⁸ These were reprinted from other publications.

Due to lack of planned structure or any organized style of presentation Barber's book lacks sequential order but he certainly did preserve a great deal of early New Haven source material. In view of the several inaccuracies cited it is hoped he wrote with some degree of exactness. His reprinting of older documents often acts in place of footnotes.

It would seem that a contribution to New Haven historiography lies in Barber's pointing the way to important source materials. More significant is his preserving the tone and substance of the early nineteenth century New Haven area through illustrations. While they may be literal interpretations they have captured the spirit of his time. This book could also be considered as an early guide to the history of New Haven. It makes a notable contribution to New Haven's historiography.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Warner Barber, *History and Antiquities of New Haven, (Conn.) from its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (New Haven; J. W. Barber, 1831-1832), p. 3, preface.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5, preface.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-33.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-73.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-77.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-100.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
14. Hiram Bingham, *Elihu Yale* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1939), p. 7.
15. Barber, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
16. Albert E. Van Dusen, *Connecticut* (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 121.
17. Barber, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
18. Franklin Bowditch Dexter, *Sketch of the History of Yale University* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1887), p. 40.
19. Barber, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
20. Laurence B. Goodrich, *Ralph Earl: Recorder for an Era* (The State University of New York, 1967), p. 5.
21. Barber, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
25. Rollin G. Osterweis, *Three Centuries of New Haven* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), pp. 61-64.
26. Barber, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 118-120.

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OWNERS of Warham Williams House Property

- 1751 to the Rev. Warham Williams from Samuel Bartholomew
1791 to the Rev. Matthew Noyes' father from the Estate of Warham Williams
1852 to Reuben Augur from the Estate of Mrs. Matthew (Mary) Noyes to John Hall
1866 to the Rev. Sheldon Davis for St. Andrew's Church
1943 to Mr. and Mrs. Victor L. Schaeffer

The will and detailed inventory (1859) of Matthew Noyes' estate lists everything from a wheelbarrow at .25 to silver at \$70.00 and wearing apparel at \$135.00 and hay at \$200.00. He was reputed to be the wealthiest minister in Connecticut with his estate (including family land in Lyme) amounting to \$47,225.96. Like Warham Williams, Matthew Noyes was a graduate of Yale and a member of the Corporation. He, his wife, and only daughter (who died at 20 of tuberculosis) are all buried in the Northford Cemetery.

CHILDREN of WARHAM* (Jan. 7, 1726-Apr. 4, 1788)
and ANNE (HALL) WILLIAMS* (1733-Mar. 25, 1776)

	<u>Baptised</u>	<u>Died</u>	<u>Married</u>
Warham	Sept. 9, 1753	?	Ann Wilford
Stephen ¹	Jan. 12, 1755	?	Eunice Taintor of Northford
Samuel Hall*	Apr 1, 1756	1790 (suicide)	-
Jonathan Law ²	1757	Nov 1, 1777	-
Davenport ¹	Jan 1, 1759	?	Mary Atwater
Anna ²	Feb. 22, 1761	?	1) Jason Atwater 2) Lynde Huntington 3) Joseph Barker
William Augustus	Jan 15, 1763	1834	Betsy Chapin
Lucy*	Feb 17, 1765	Dec 21, 1839	Elihu Foote*
Abigail*	June 21, 1767	1768	-
Abigail	Jan 29, 1769	Dec 31, 1836	Col. Stephen Maltby
Eunice	March 1771	?	Kilbourne Cook of N. Guilford
Lemuel	Feb. 20, 1774	?	?
Sarah	Feb. 25, 1776	?	Dr. Pyncheon

* Buried in Northford Cemetery

- 1 Stephen and Davenport in 1799 were "recommended to the 1st Church of Christ in Whitestone" [no state mentioned].
- 2 Jason Atwater was the parson in Branford when he married Anna in 1784; in 1794 he died of consumption and Anna soon married his successor who died in 1804 of the same disease. The Rev. Joseph Barker was originally from Branford but served a parish in Massachusetts. Atwater's house built in 1792 still stands in Branford (next to the Catholic Church).

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