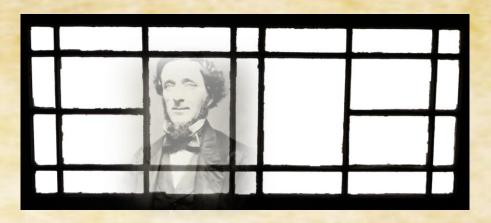
William E. Weld



1815-1902

Builder, Architect & Prominent Citizen
Of Guilford

Exhibit Catalog
John Plant
Guilford Keeping Society

William E. Weld (1815-1902)

Builder, Architect & Prominent Citizen of Guilford

William Weld is appropriately called a builder, architect and prominent citizen of Guilford.

His buildings represent lasting monuments to the community of Guilford and its well-being. He fortified the town with schools, stores, a hotel, a social hall, additions to churches and numerous home-sweet-homes.

The exhibit reflects the wide range of his achievements and features tools of his trade, reproductions of original architectural drawings, historic images from the GKS Library Collection accompanied by present-day photos of over 35 of his constructions.

The total number of houses build by Weld has yet to be tallied. Many still stand in Guilford. A dozen or more are in Madison and Branford. His building career spanned 35-years and started in the antebellum period before the Civil War, continued through the war and lasted until 1872.

Welcome to the exhibit.

William E. Weld

A Short Biography

By Joel E. Helander

William E. Weld was Guilford's foremost joiner/house-builder. He introduced novel architectural styles in housing during the period before and after the Civil War: Italianate, Greek Revival, and Gothic Revival.

Remarkably, the preservation of Mr. Weld's ledgers and little day books made it possible to identify over fifty (50) dwelling houses that he built in the towns of Guilford and Madison, from 1837 to 1872.

His Early Life, Marriage & Family

William E. Weld was born in North Guilford in 1815. At only five years of age his mother passed away, which made it necessary for the boy to support himself.

Until he was fifteen, he worked on a farm for his board and clothes. Then, his father moved the family to Sag Harbor, where William learned the trade of joiner. During this time, he made a whaling voyage to the South Atlantic, but did not care for seafaring life and returned to his native Guilford.



Portrait of William E. Weld in household of Stephen B. Dudley

William Weld married Myrta Holcomb (1838), the daughter of another self-made, successful joiner/house-builder, Medad Holcomb.

The couple raised two children in their new, fashionable home at 45 Boston Street in the village

center. The property became the lifelong family home and the center of business operations, including carpentry shops and a lumber yard.

The William Weld House projects the strength and beauty of the Greek Revival Style, inspired largely by Asher Benjamin's *The American Builder's Companion Or, A System of Architecture Particularly Adapted to the Present Style of Building* (Boston, 1820.)

His Work

From start to finish, William Weld could produce on average one dwelling house every 6–9 months, charging clients not more than \$2500 for the job, with exceptions for large scale jobs such as the Guilford Institute, which was billed out at \$4,424.

William Weld's brother, George, was also a joiner, and worked for William many years, as did other family members at various times: brother-in-law Medad Holcomb, Jr., Cousin Charles R. Whedon, and Cousin Jared Buell.

William Weld's professional services involved more than house-building. His ledger entries show that he was building barns, carriage houses, well curbs, and privies or back houses.



William E. Weld House
45 Boston St
Greek Revival • 1850



In 1857–1858, he built the Wildman Store (11 Boston Street) and Monroe Store (9 Boston Street), which are now combined as the popular Page Hardware Store complex, as well as Simpson's Blacksmith Shop, a brick records vault for the town clerk, an icehouse, and the Southeast Center District School House. He also remodeled and renovated many buildings.

The Carpentry Shops and Fire Department

The late Mildred F. Dudley reminisced about her Great Grandfather William Weld's main carpentry shop, which stood in the northeast corner of the yard at 45 Boston Street. Additional shops in the rear of the property housed equipment for turning posts and columns on lathes, plus other fine finish work. One of the woodworking machines was ingeniously powered by a horse that walked in circles.

There was great excitement in August 1902 when a fire broke out in one of Mr. Weld's carpentry shops, which housed one of the borough's hand-drawn fire engines.

Fortunately, the fire was doused. Mr. Weld was an early supporter of the Guilford Volunteer Fire Department and for a while was involved in the manufacture of fire engines

His Great Grandson (3x)

Stephen B. Dudley, who actively serves on the Guilford Keeping Society's Board of Directors, is a great grandson (3x) of the remarkable William E. Weld. Both Stephen's father (Shelton W. Dudley, Jr.) and grandfather (Shelton W. Dudley, Sr.) before him shared his passionate study of the extraordinary life of William E. Weld in Guilford history.



William Weld's Tool Chest
Donated by his great-grandson (3x),
Stephen B. Dudley, of Guilford (in photo)

Schools Built by Weld

School	Date	Address	Architectural Style	Pages
Guilford Institute	1854	120 North Fair St	Italian Villa	7-18
Southeast Center School District	1841	95 Boston St	Greek Revival, one-room schoolhouse (moved later)	
Southwest Center School District	1837	120 Whitfield St	Greek Revival, one-room schoolhouse (moved later). Weld built the schoolhouse when he was 22 years old. It is the earliest known building to be constructed by him.	

Construction of the Guilford Institute was William Weld's crowning achievement and his greatest contribution toward the education of Guilford's youth. Weld was

responsible for the woodwork only and not the masonry.

Originally, a private school of higher learning established by Mrs. Sarah Griffing, the Guilford Institute was the first in Connecticut to admit girls, as well as boys!

The building served as the Public High School from 1886 until the new school—now the Elisabeth Adams Middle School—was ready in 1936.

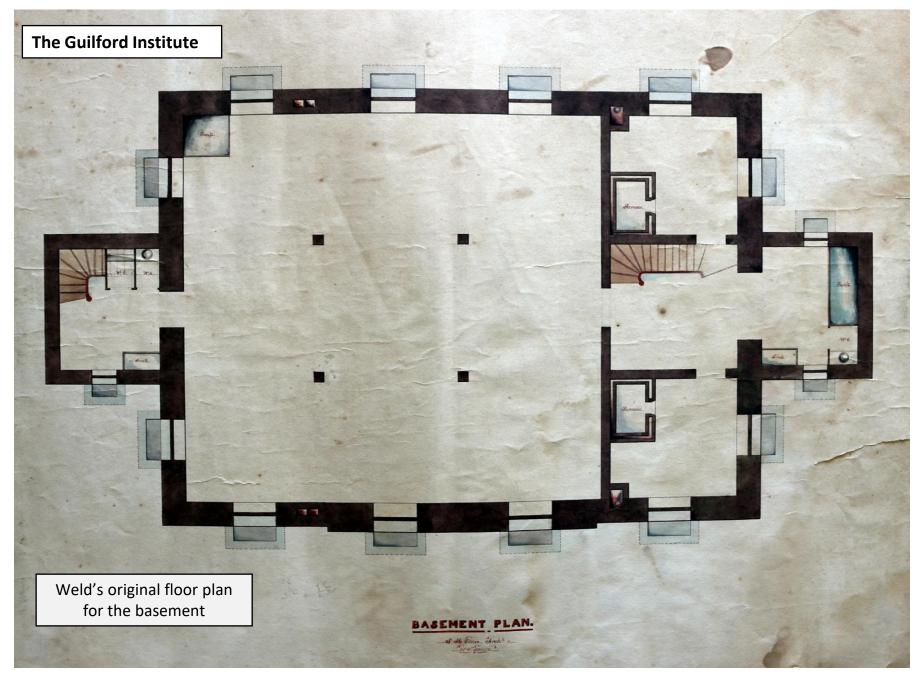
For years, it laid abandoned until the Shoreline Times Publishing Company assumed occupancy in 1952.

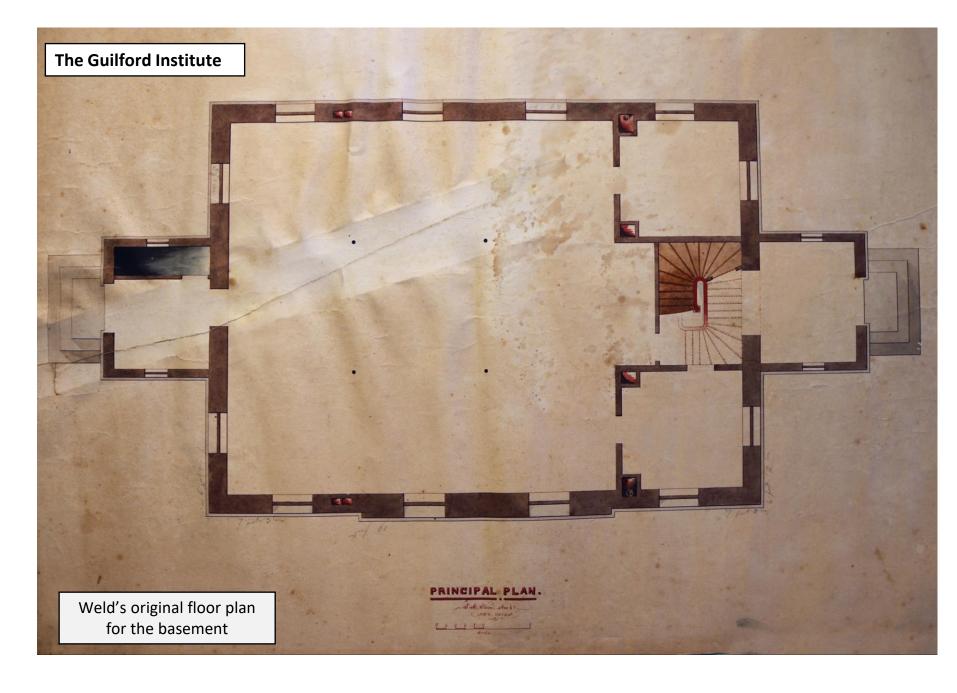
The Guilford Institute

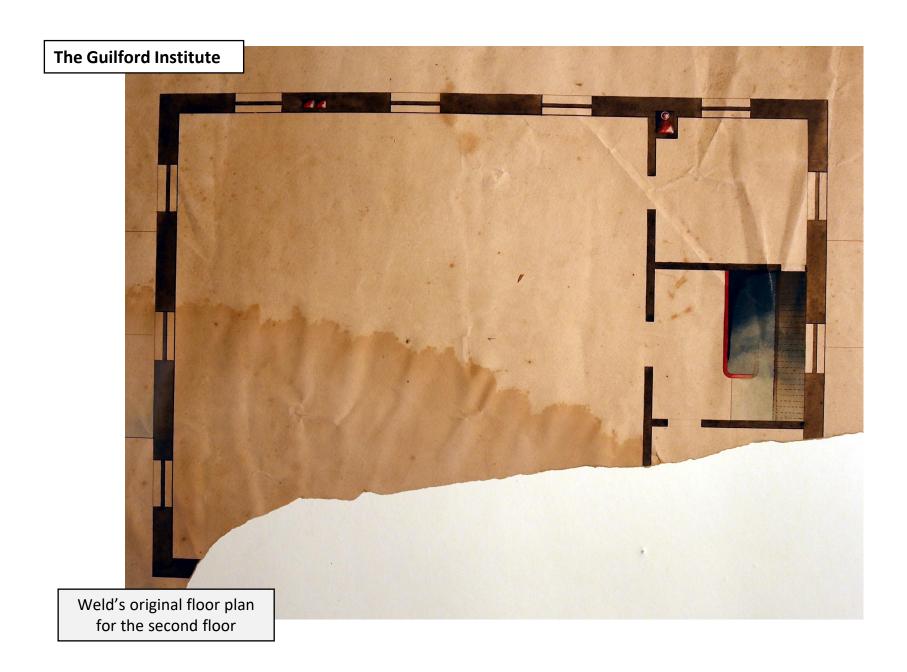
120 North Fair St Three-story Italian Villa • 1854









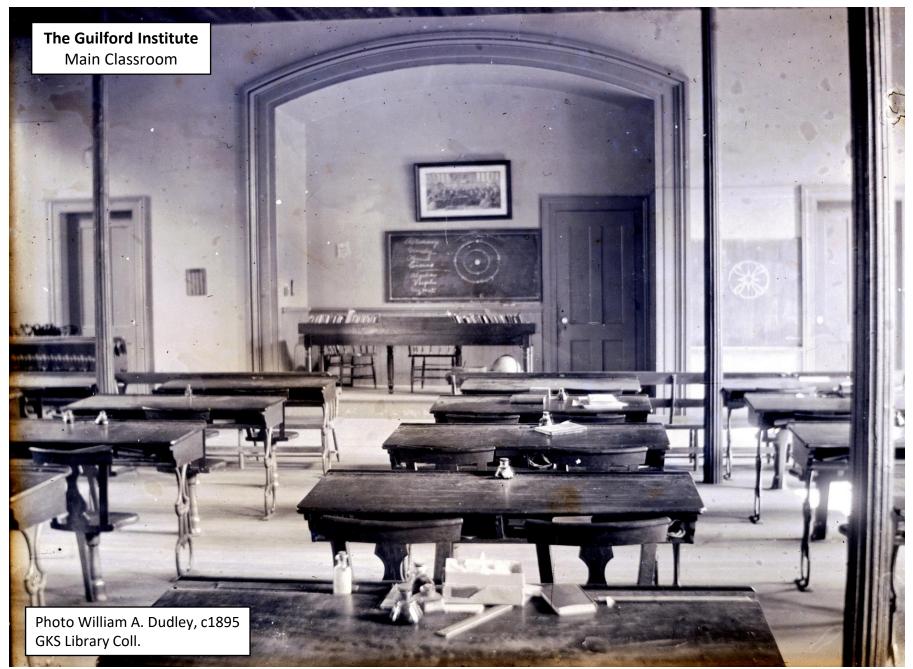


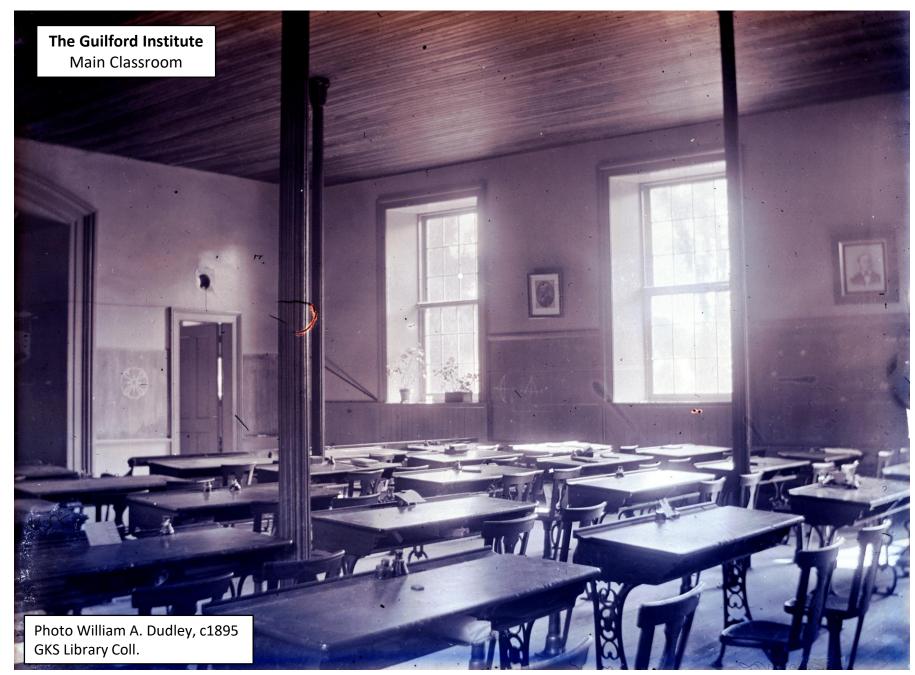


Weld's architectural drawing of the Guilford Institute (east side), colored ink

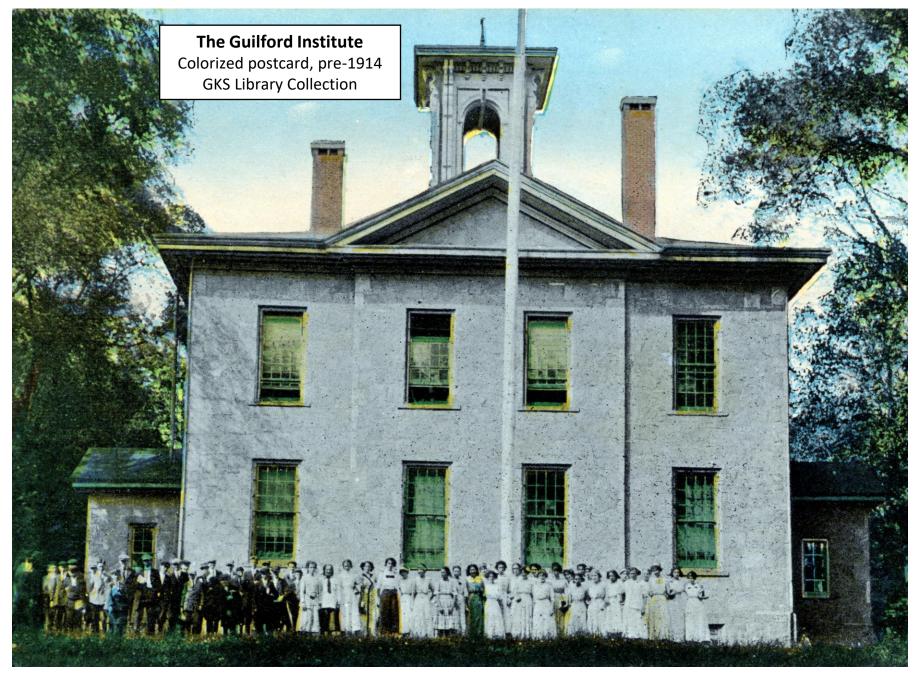
Present-day view from York Street

120 North Fair Street





120 North Fair Street









120 North Fair Street

Hotels, Stores & Social Buildings Built by Weld

Building	Original Owner	Architectural Style	Date	Address	Today	Page #
Store	James Monroe	Greek Revival/Italianate	1858	9 Boston St	Part of Page Hardware	21
Store	Albert B. Wildman	Greek Revival	1857	11 Boston St	Part of Page Hardware	23
Store	Hale & Munger Store	Greek Revival	1857	69–75 Whitfield St	Burned down in 1862	26
Store &	Simeon B. Chittenden	Renovation for "Music	1867	69–75 Whitfield St	Tracy clothing store,	27
Social Hall		Hall"			etc.	
Residential	Mrs. Rebecca Hopkins	Renovation	1867	81 Whitfield St	Breakwater Books, etc.	32
Hotel	Thomas Smith	Vernacular	1861	39 North St	Residential	35

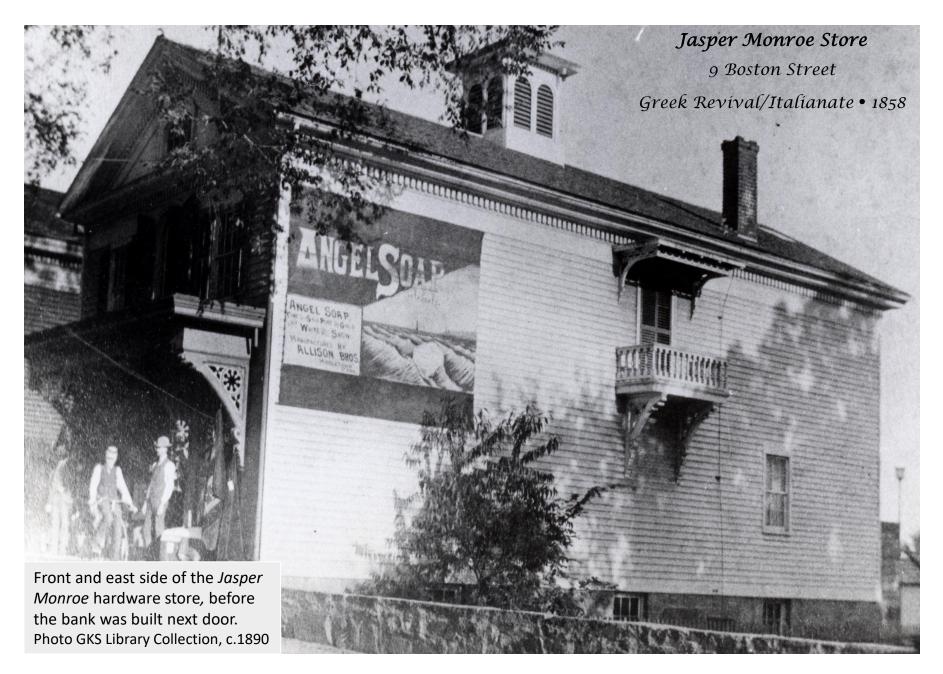




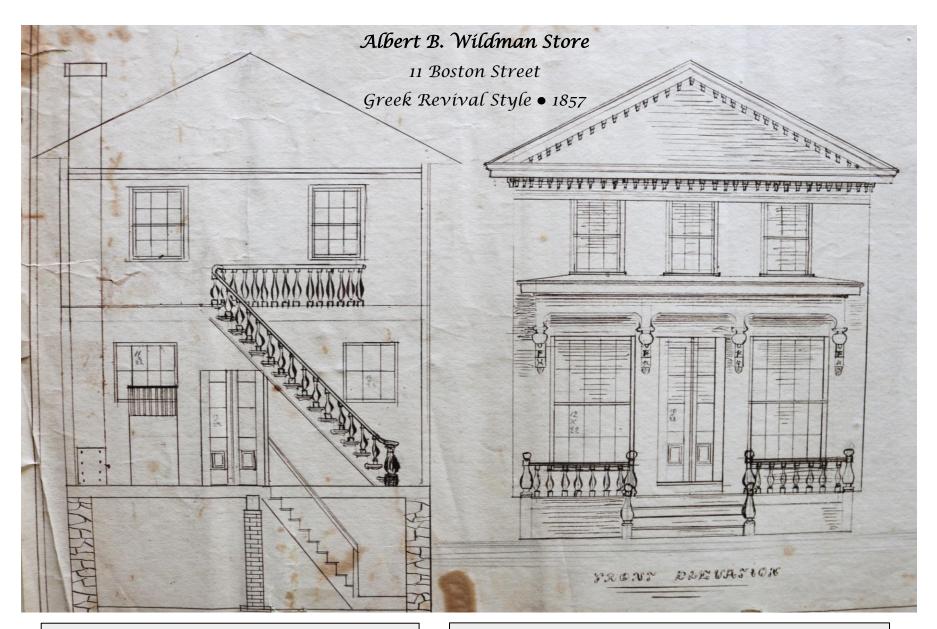
William Weld built two of the buildings which today comprise *Page's Hardware*, namely, 9 & 11 Boston Street



9 Boston St

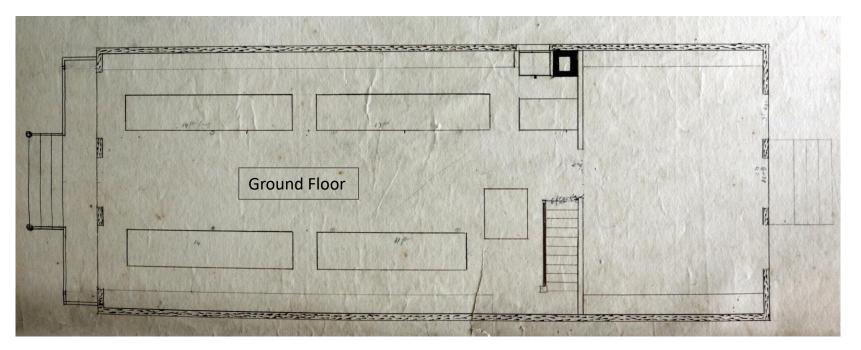


9 Boston St



Architectural drawing of the storefront and backside with an interior view of stairs, railings, chimney and basement.

The building had many occupancies, for example the infamous *Collin's Restaurant*. Nowadays it's part of *Pages Hardware*.



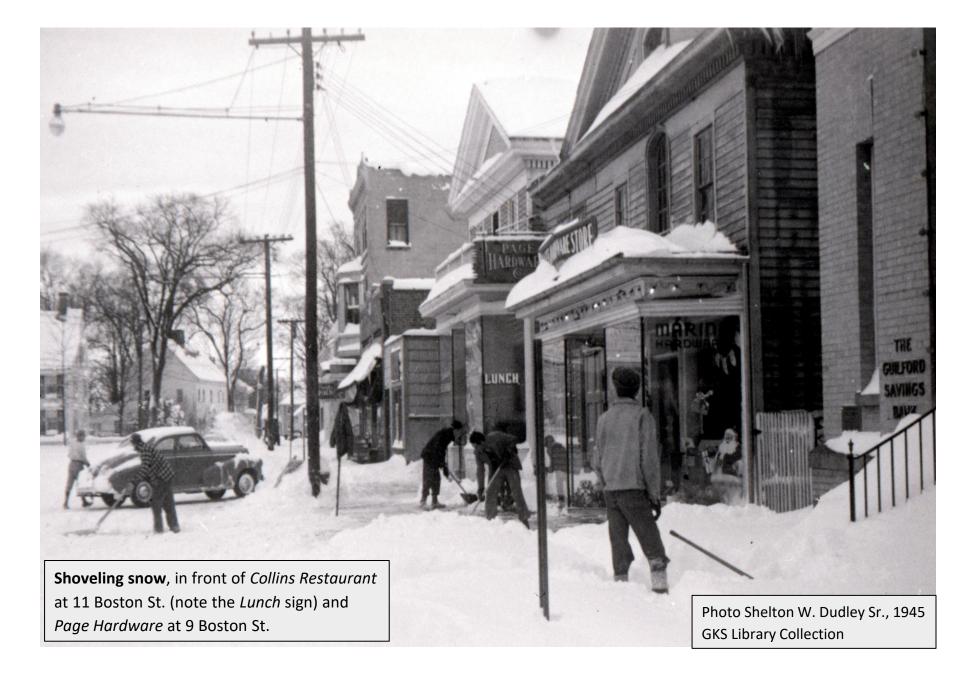
Chimney 2nd Floor Staircase & railing

Albert B. Wildman Store

11 Boston Street Greek Revival Style • 1857

Original Drawings of the first and second floors

11 Boston St



25 11 & 9 Boston St



Weld's original drawing in colored ink is the only existing image of the Hale & Munger store. The ground floor had two store entrances and a middle door leading upstairs.

Hale & Munger Store

73 Whitfield St. • 1857

Two Buildings on the Same Site

The first was built by Weld, and the second was renovated by Weld.

The first building – the Hale & Munger Store – Weld built in 1857 but was decimated by fire in 1862.

Then a previously existing building of the Guilford Manufacturing Company on Water Street was moved to the empty site by a long train of oxen in 1866.

Weld refashioned that building to accommodate businesses on the ground floor and upstairs a large public hall for meeting, dancing, basketball and all kinds of public entertainment.

Later it became well-known as the "Music Hall".



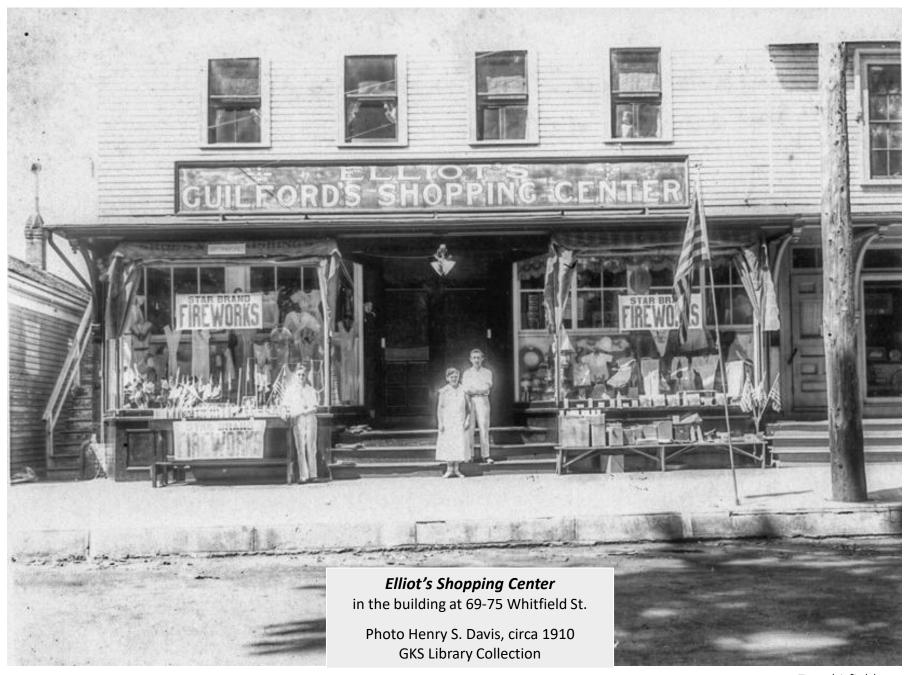


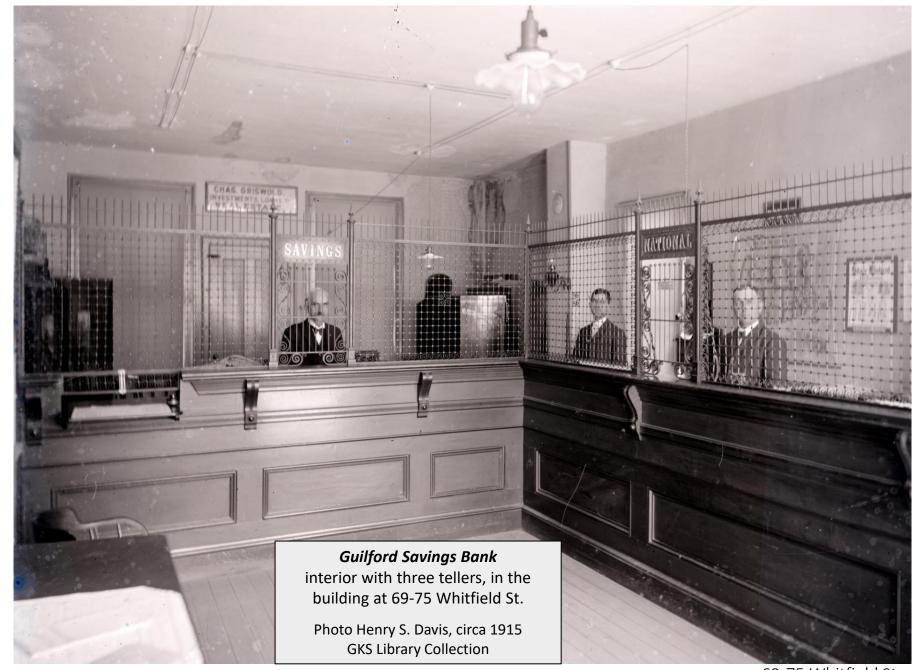
The 5 & 10 "Village Store"

at 69-75 Whitfield Street, circa 1956.

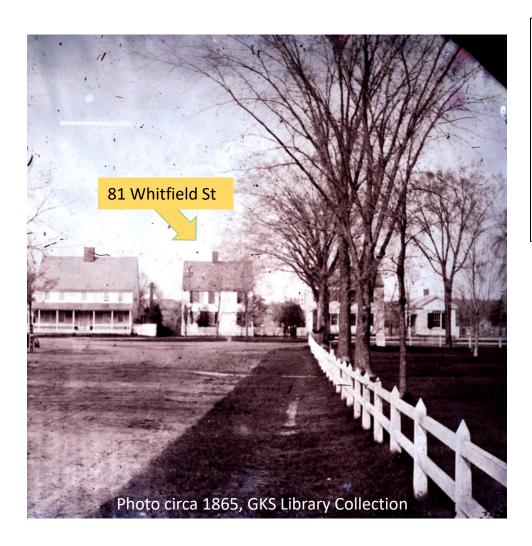
Photo GKS Library Collection







Robert Shelley House (=Sarah B. Shelley House)



This innocuous little house was built in 1749. It belonged to Sarah Bartlett and her husband Robert Shelly.

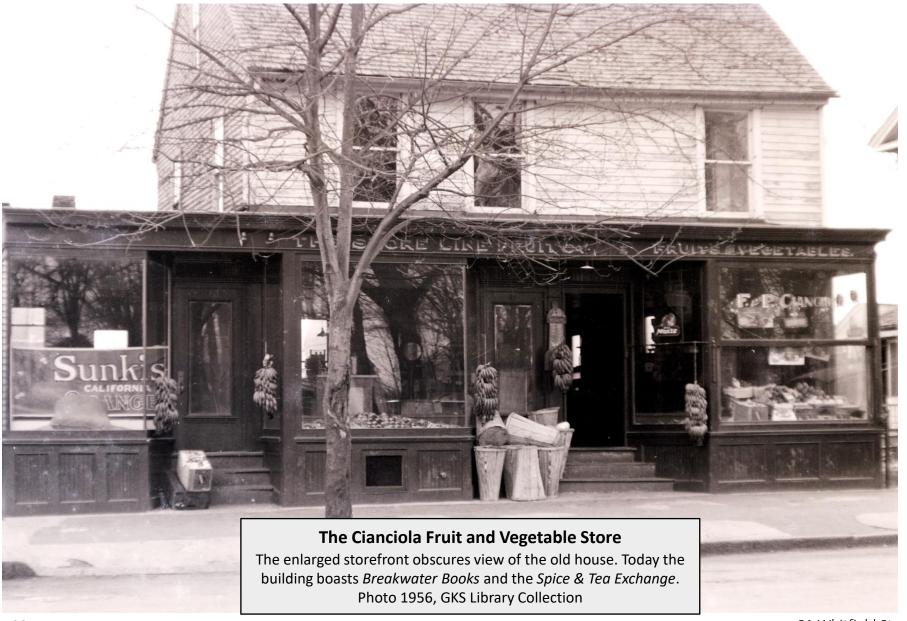
In 1865, at the time of the photo on the left, the building stood apart from its neighboring buildings, as opposed to today.

Weld undertook renovations on the house when it was still a residential home.



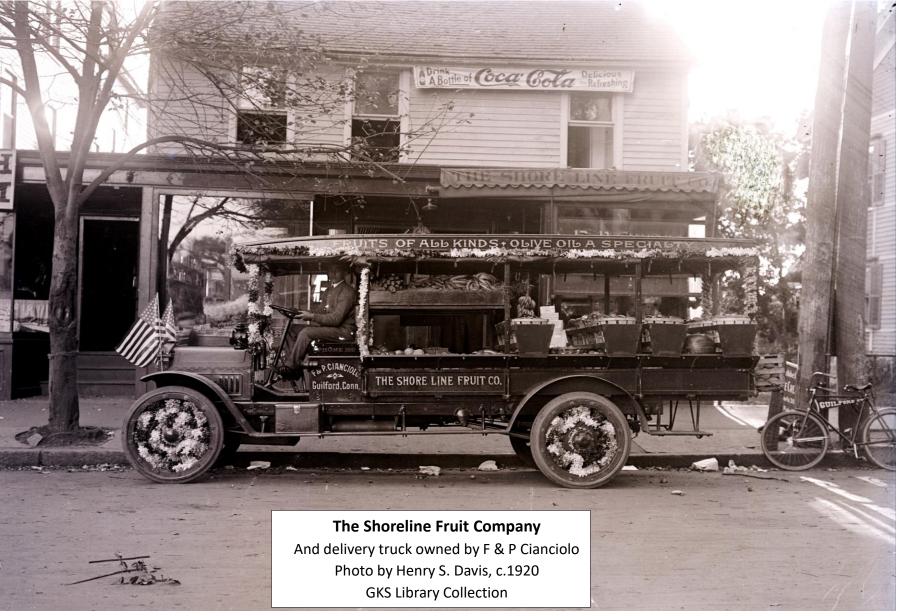
32 81 Whitfield St

Robert Shelley House (=Sarah B. Shelley House)



33 81 Whitfield St

Robert Shelley House (=Sarah B. Shelley House)



34 81 Whitfield St



39 North St

Religious Houses Built or Renovated by Weld

Church	Work	Date	Address	Page #
First Congregational Church	Parsonage, Italianate style (moved)	1856	28 Conway Dr	37
First Congregational Church Renovation of sanctuary		1861	110 Broad St	38
Christ Episcopal Church	Expansion of vestry,	1872	11 Park St	40
	addition of recessed chancel			
Identity of church unknown	Chancel and balcony pews	?	Not known	44

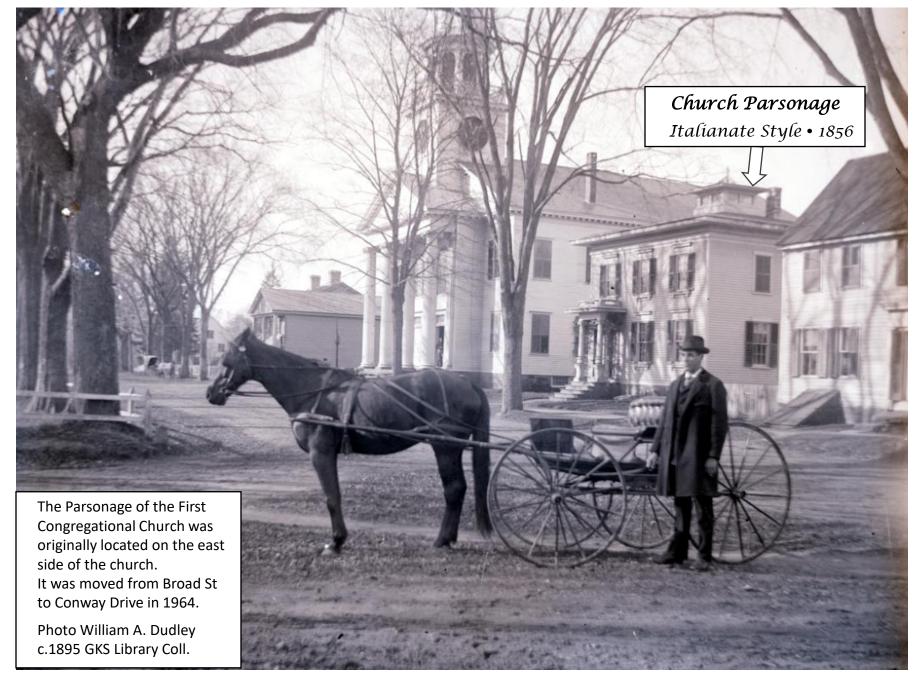


First Congregational Church
Weld renovated interior sections in 1861

Parsonage HouseBuilt by Weld in 1856.

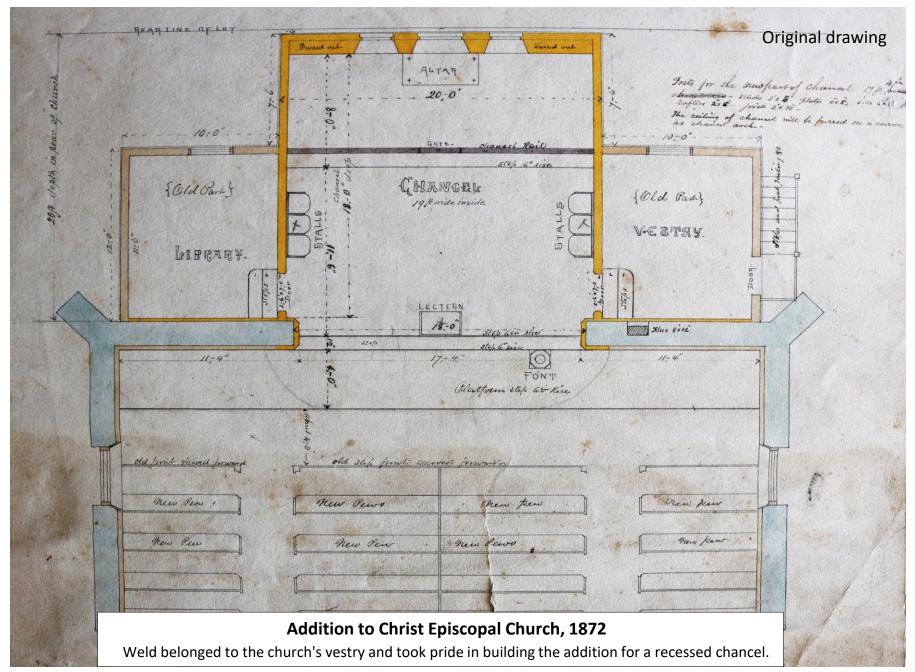
Photo c.1900 GKS Library Coll.

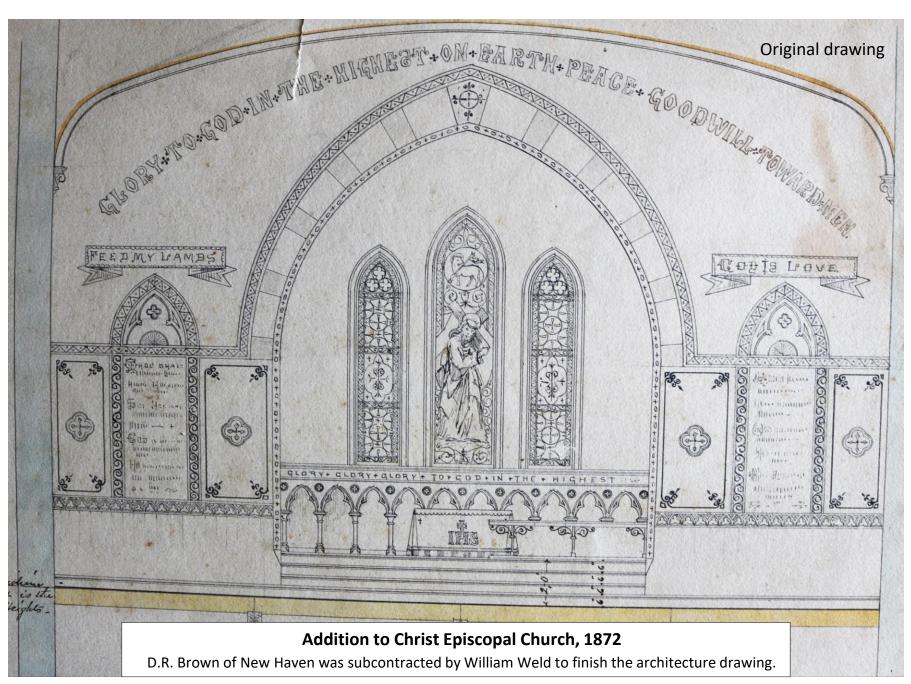
37 110 Broad St.

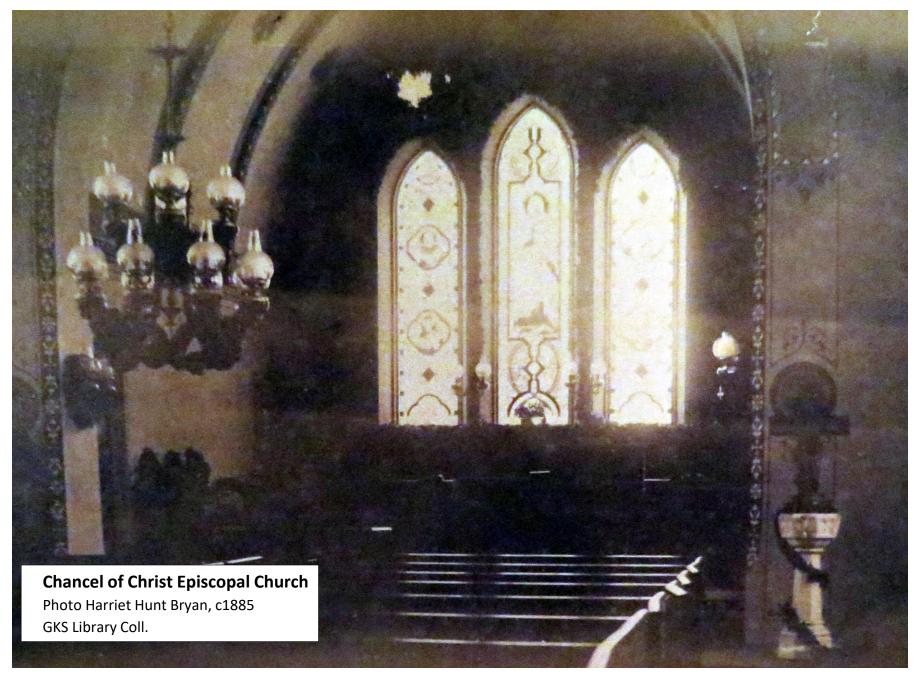




39 28 Conway Dr.







11 Park Street, Christ Episcopal Church





The plan shows the basement pillars, Greek Revival style

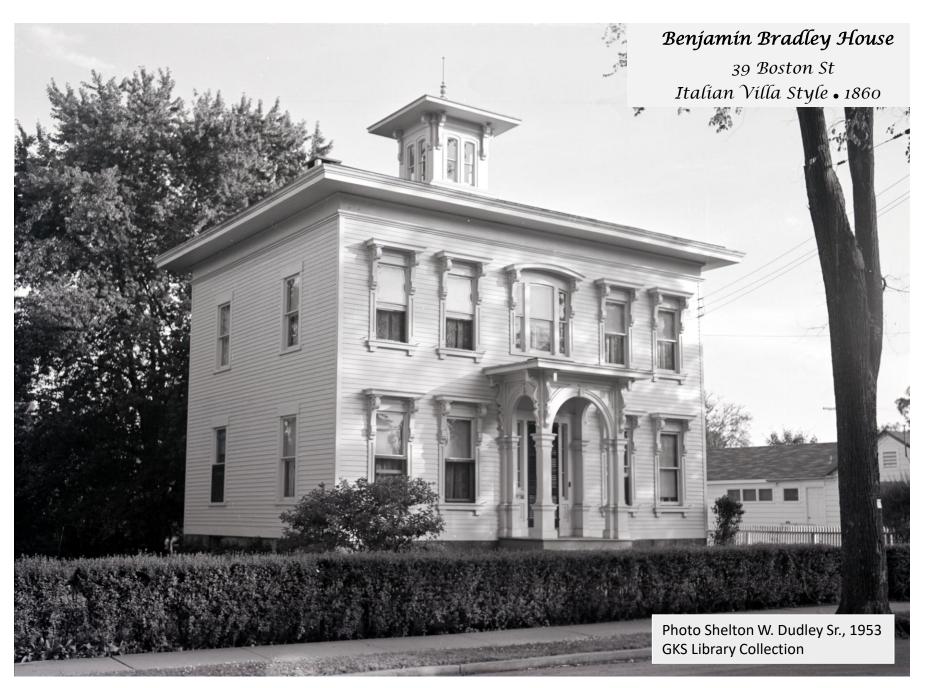
Address unknown

Houses Build or Renovated by Weld

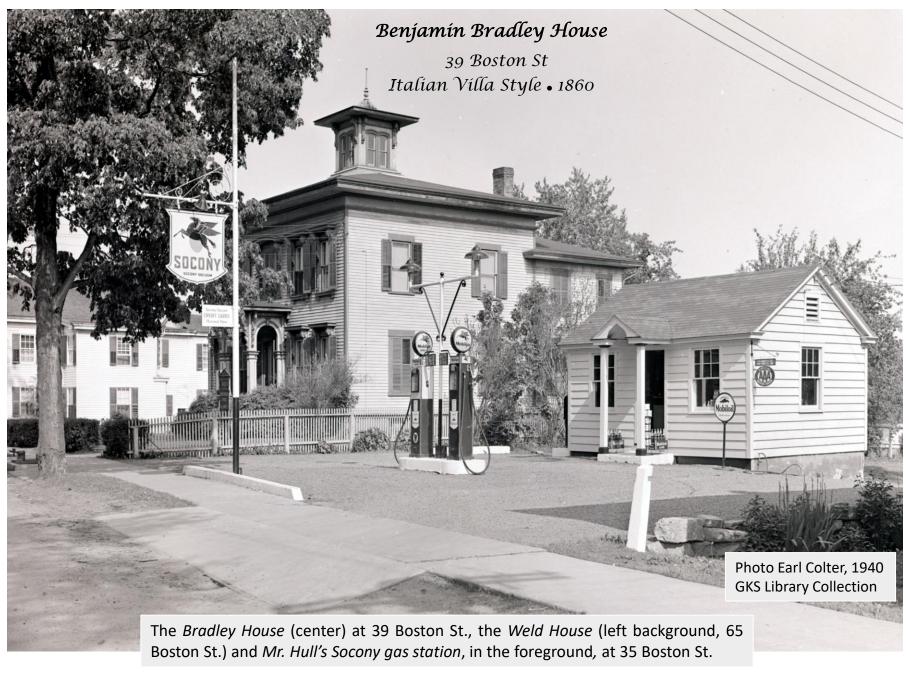
Date	Address	Architectural Style	Original Owner/Client	Page #
1847	32 Boston Post Rd	Greek Revival	Eber S. Hotchkiss	46
1860	39 Boston St	Italian Villa	Benjamin Bradley	47
1850	45 Boston St	Greek Revival	William E. Weld (his own house)	49
1851	65 Boston St	Italian Villa	Capt. Frederick Weld	50
1852	88 Boston St	Greek Revival/Queen Anne	Albert B. Wildman	52
1847	276 Boston St	Greek Revival	Nathaniel Fowler Jr.	53
1862	281 Boston St	Gothic Revival	Stephen Robinson	55
c1848	102 Church St	Greek Revival	George L. Weld	56
1863	308 Church St	<u>Italianate</u>	Egbert Eggleston	57
1849	58 East River Rd	Greek Revival	Capt. John Seward	58
1860	53 Fair St	Gothic Revival	James Monroe (= Griswold house)	61
1866	63 Fair St	Gothic Revival	James Monroe (= Beers house)	63
1850	17 Graves Ave	Greek Revival	John Graves / Sherman Graves	67
1842	925 Little Meadow Rd	Vernacular	Joel Davis	68
1842	942 Little Meadow Rd	Greek Revival	Samuel Davis	69
1838	1169 Long Hill Rd	Federal/Greek Revival	James S. Loper / Daniel Loper	71
1839	225 Moose Hill Rd	Greek Revival	Ambrose Leete	72
1842	91 North Madison Rd	Greek Revival	Daniel Loper Davis	75
1851	387 North River St	Greek Revival	Peter Chapman	78
1868	248 Old Whitfield St	Renovation of "Old Stone House"	Mrs. Henry W. Chittenden	79-82
1868	311 Old Whitfield St	Greek Revival	Julius E. Norton	83
1867	345 Old Whitfield St	Greek Revival	Daniel Sullivan	84
c1860	20 River St	Out-building (laundry house) moved	Simeon B. Chittenden	85
1865	115 State St	Vernacular	James M. Davis	86
1869	44 Summer St	Greek Revival	Peter M. O'Sullivan	87
1872	33 Whitfield St	Italian Villa	Julia Labadie	88-90
?	41 Whitfield St	Porch to the house	Thomas R. Pynchon	91
1866	138 Whitfield St	Greek Revival	Sarah Weld Matteson	92-94
1850	173 Whitfield St	Greek Revival	Capt. Eli Kimberly	95
1866	174 Whitfield St	Gothic Revival	James Monroe	96-100
1866	413 Whitfield St	Greek Revival	Eliza Jane Fowler / Horace Fowler	101
1868	456 Whitfield St	Greek Revival	William Davis Jr.	102



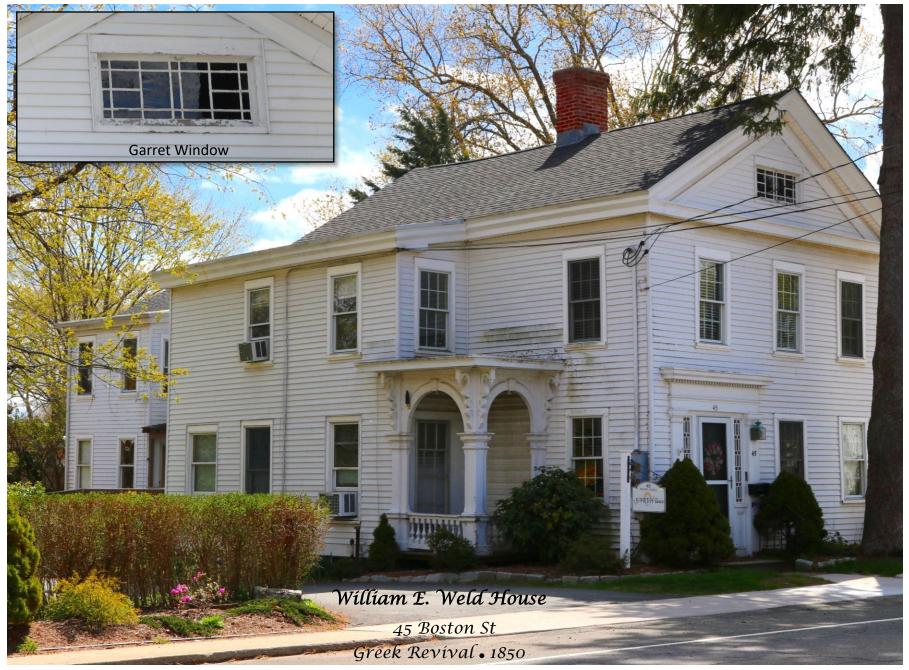
46 32 Boston Post Rd



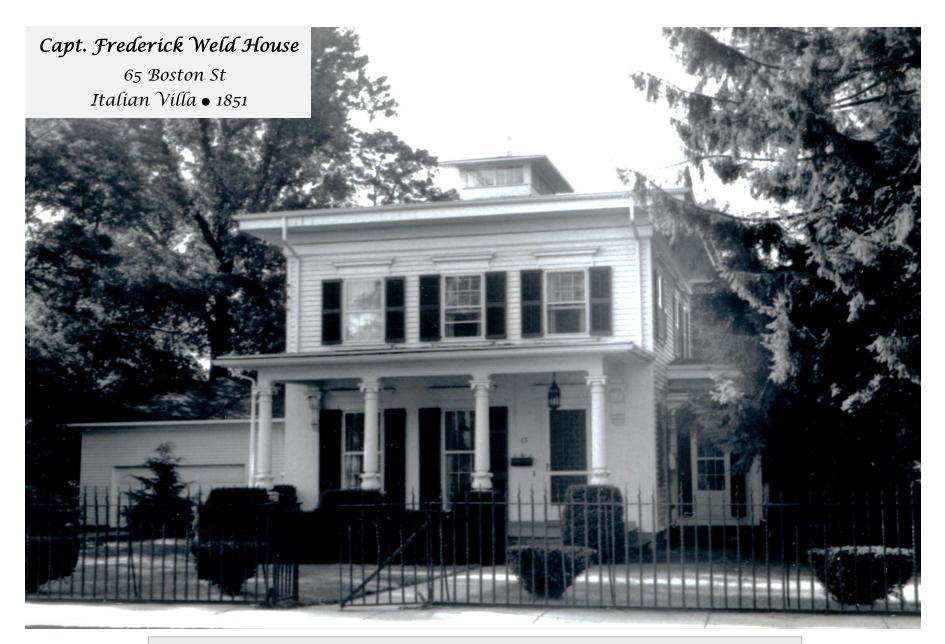
47 39 Boston St



48 39 Boston St



45 Boston St



Frederick Weld was the brother of William Weld, and one Guilford's last whaling captains.

Photo GKS Library Collection

50 65 Boston St



65 Boston St (=63 Boston St)



52 88 Boston St



53 276 Boston St



54 276 Boston St



55 281 Boston St



56 102 Church St



57 308 Church St



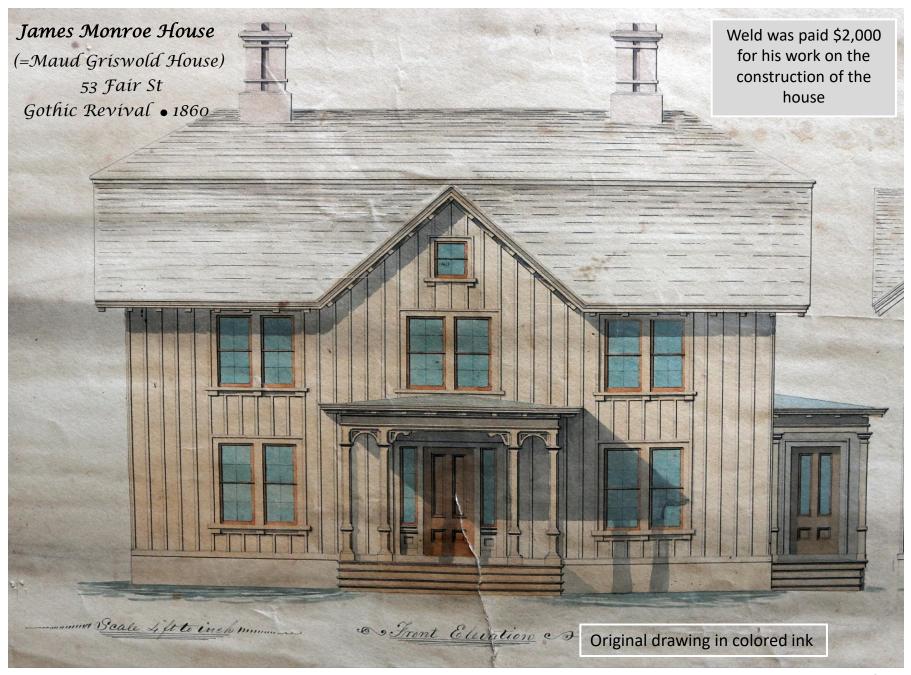
58 East River Rd



59 East River Rd



60 58 East River Rd



61 53 Fair St



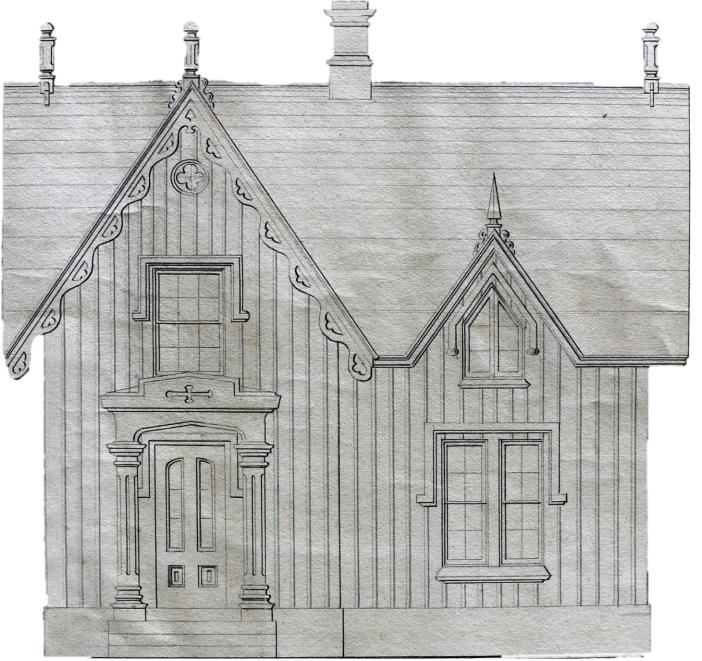
53 Fair St

James Monroe House

(=Beers House) 63 Fair St Gothic Revival ● 1866

Weld charged \$796.64 for his part in the construction of the house



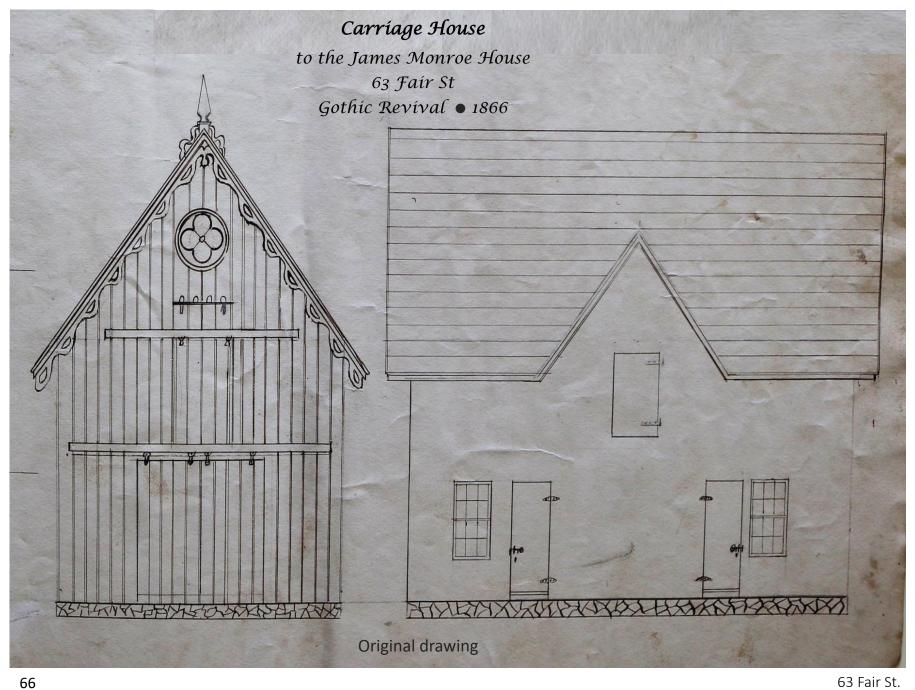


63 Fair St.





65



63 Fair St.



17 Graves Ave.



According to his ledger books, William Weld charged only \$138.31 for his share in erecting the house, which concerned the woodwork and design, but not the masonry (e.g. chimney, stone foundation).

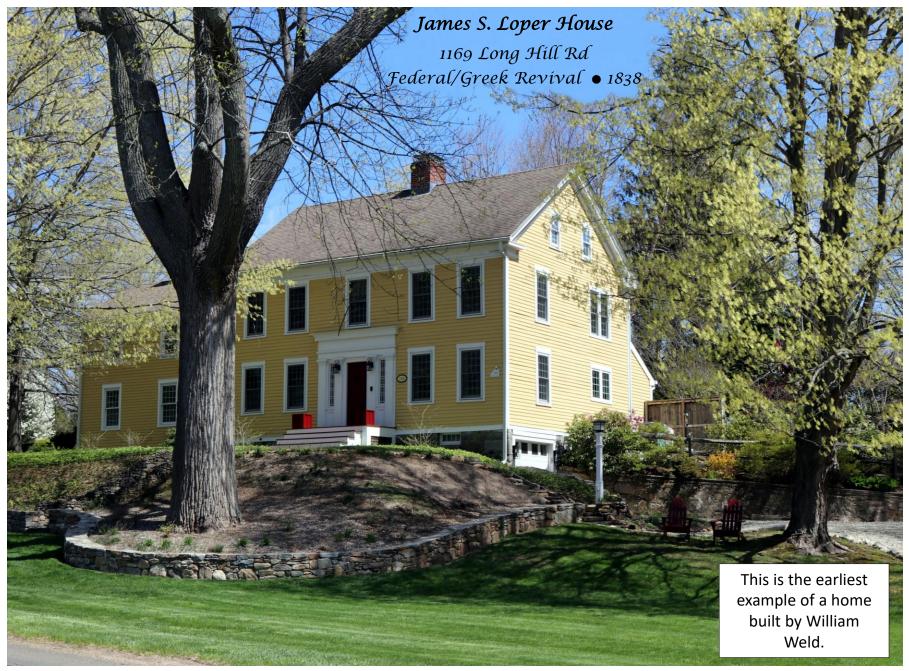
68 925 Little Meadow Rd



69 942 Little Meadow Rd



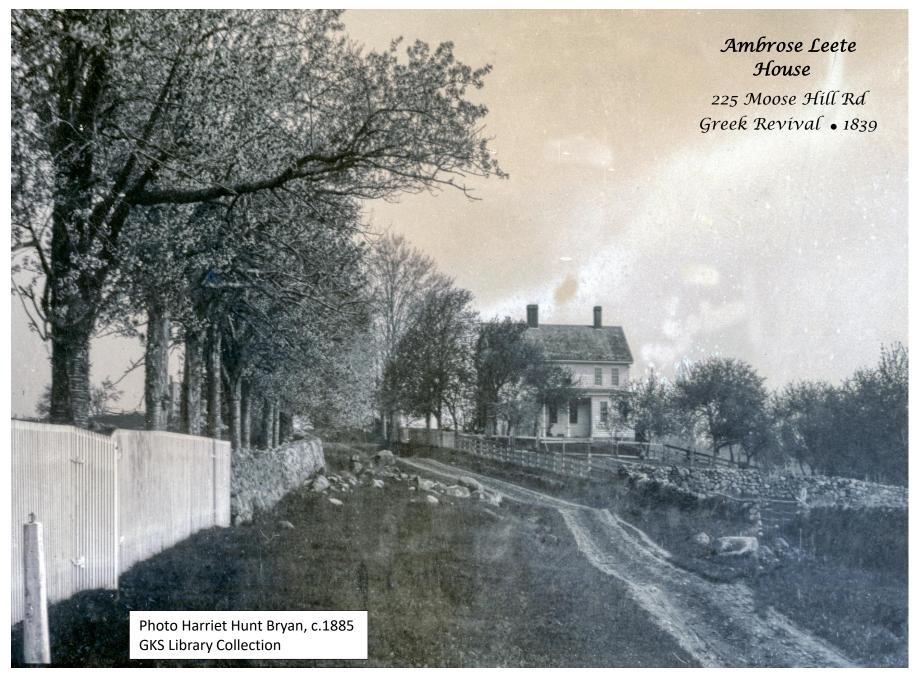
70 942 Little Meadow Rd



71 1169 Long Hill Rd



72 225 Moose Hill Rd



73 225 Moose Hill Rd



Ambrose Leete House

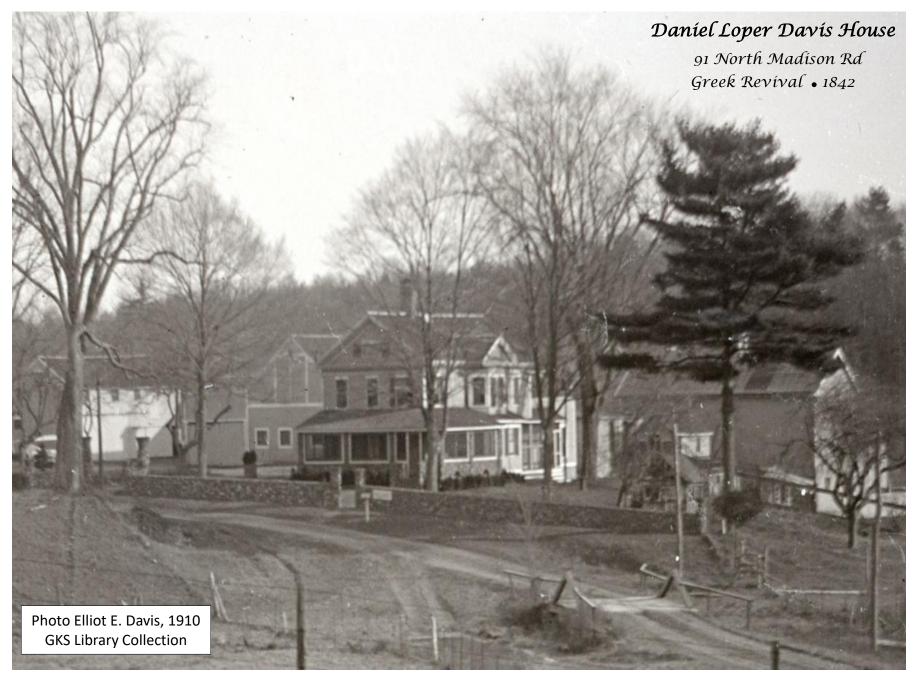
225 Moose Hill Rd Greek Revival • 1839

> William Weld constructed this house when he was only 24 years old.

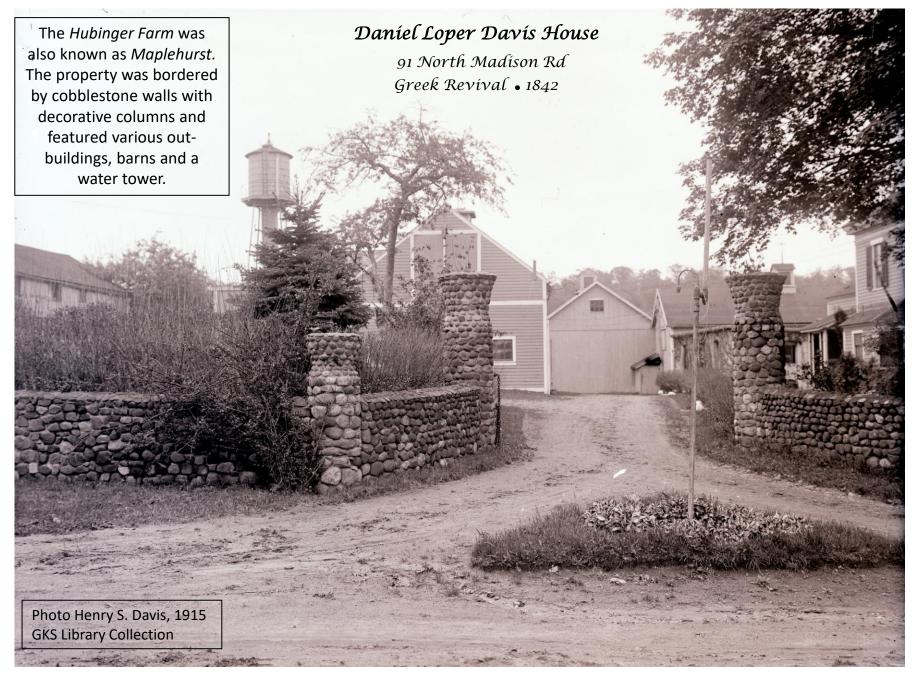
74 225 Moose Hill Rd



75 91 North Madison Rd



91 North Madison Rd



91 North Madison Rd



78 387 North River St

The "Old Stone House"

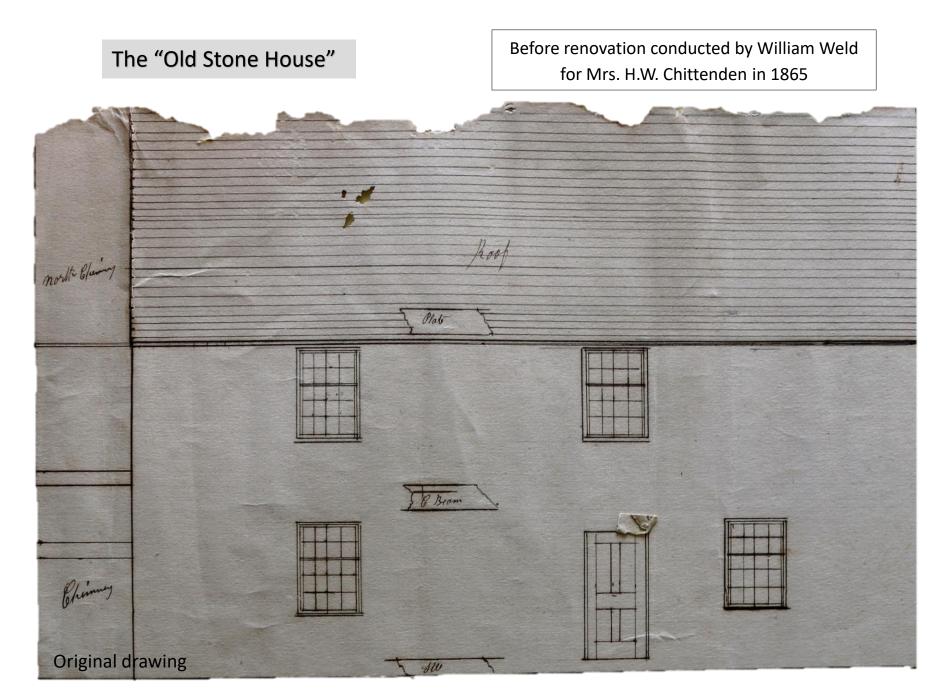
A Guilford icon that was once renovated by Weld

William Weld carried out extensive renovations on the "Old Stone House" (= the Henry Whitfield House) in 1868, that expanded its footprint.

At that time, the stone building was a residential home and would not be become a museum until 1899.

The Kelly renovation of 1937 removed Weld's work in a grand attempt to return the structure to its presumed original configuration.

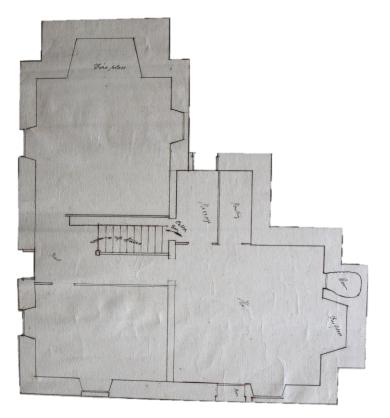




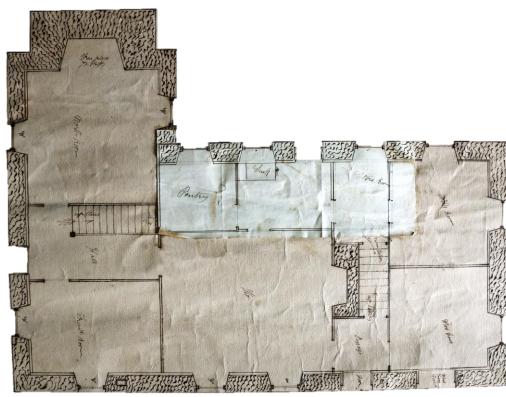
The "Old Stone House"

Original drawings, Ground Floor Plans

Before 1869 Renovation



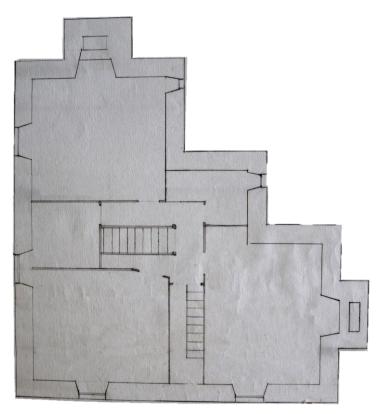
Planned Changes



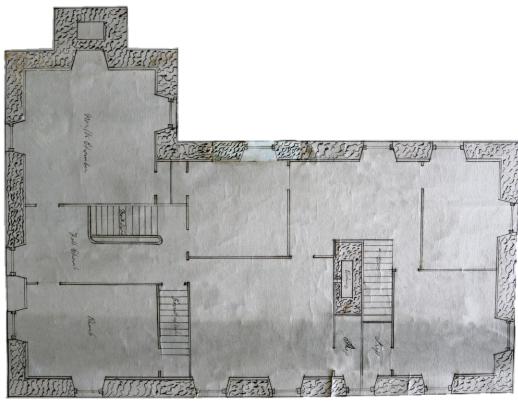
The "Old Stone House"

Original drawings, Second Story Floor Plans

Before 1869 Renovation



Planned Changes

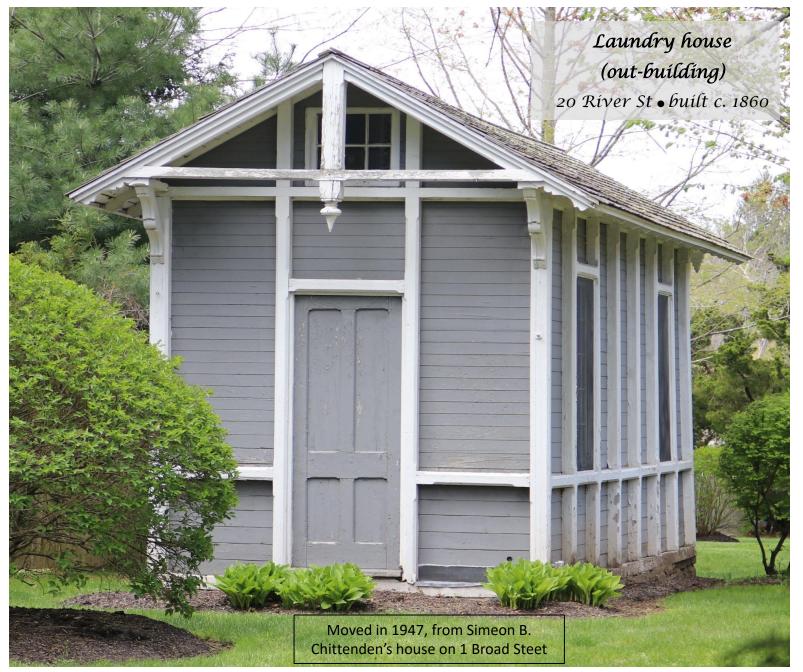




83 311 Old Whitfield Street



345 Old Whitfield Street



85 20 River St



James M. Davis House

115 State St

Vernacular Style • 1865

86 115 State St



87 44 Summer St

After the fire of 1872, Weld built this lovely house for Julia Labadie.

The cupola (the little tower on top) served to bring light in and help dissipate the hot summer air.

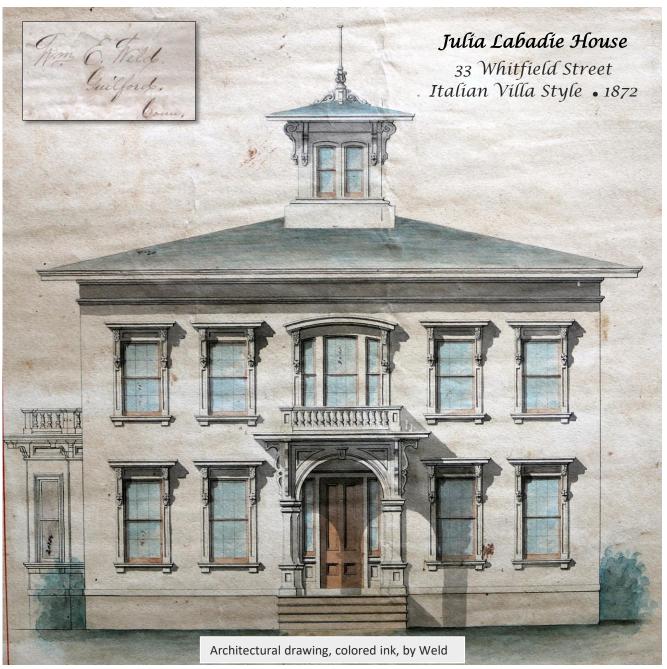
Weld charged \$3,888.96 for construction of the home.

Now the home accommodates the priests of the Saint George Parish Community.



Plans for bay window with railing, on left side of house.

Henry Austin, a New Haven architect, was subcontracted to finalize the drawing of the bay window.



88 33 Whitfield St



89 33 Whitfield St

One Design = Two Houses

Weld utilized the same general design for two houses, one at 39 Boston Street and twelve years later for 33 Whitfield Street.





Benjamín Bradley House

39 Boston St Italian Villa • 1860

Julia Labadie House

33 Whitfield St Italian Villa • 1872

90 39 & 33 Whitfield St

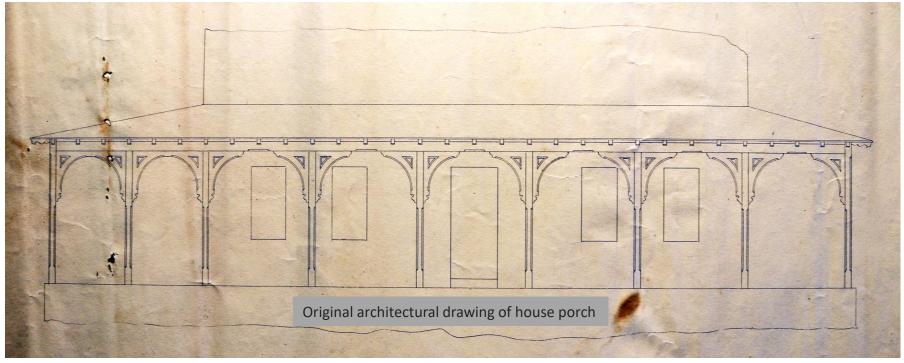


Photo Henry S. Davis, 1915, GKS Library Collection

Porch for the Thomas R. Pynchon House

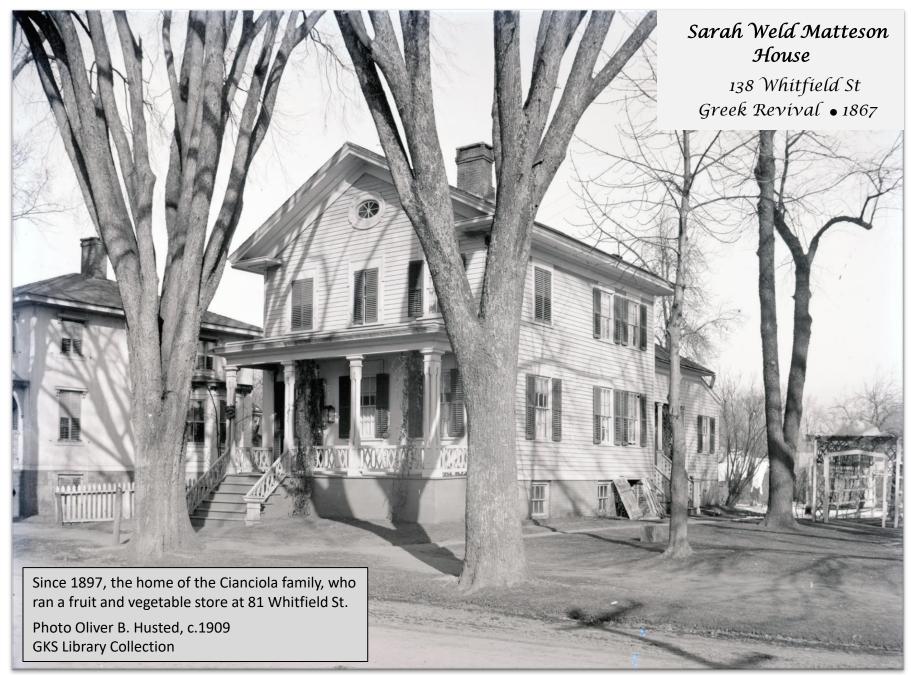
41 Whitfield St

William Weld designed and built the porch for the Thomas R. Pynchon \ H.B. Chittenden House. The entire house was torn down in 1962 so that the site would be available for construction of the new *St. George Roman Catholic Church*.





92 138 Whitfield St



93 138 Whitfield St



Sarah Weld Matteson House

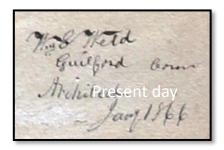
138 Whitfield St Greek Revival • 1867

94 138 Whitfield St

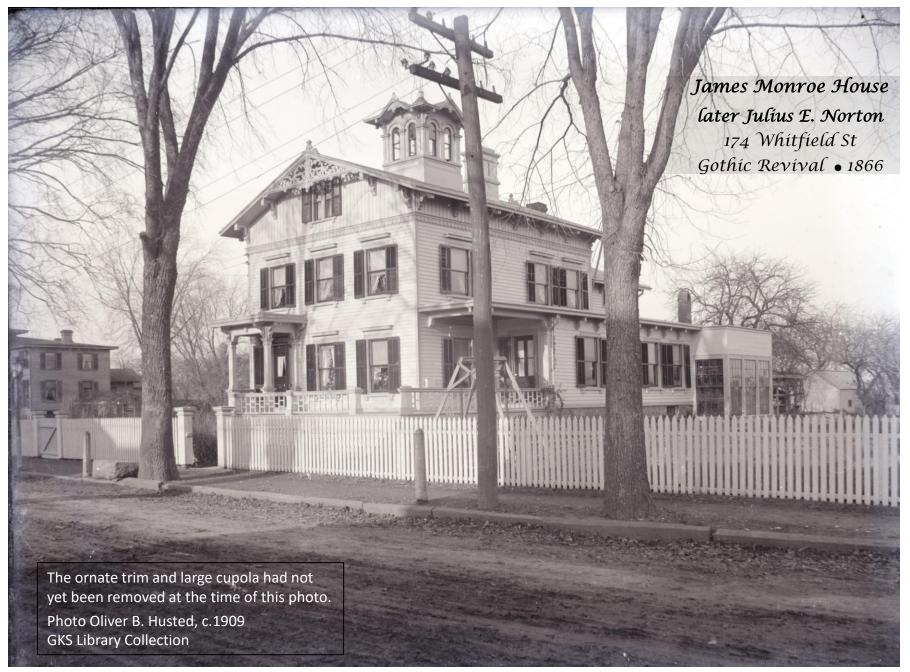


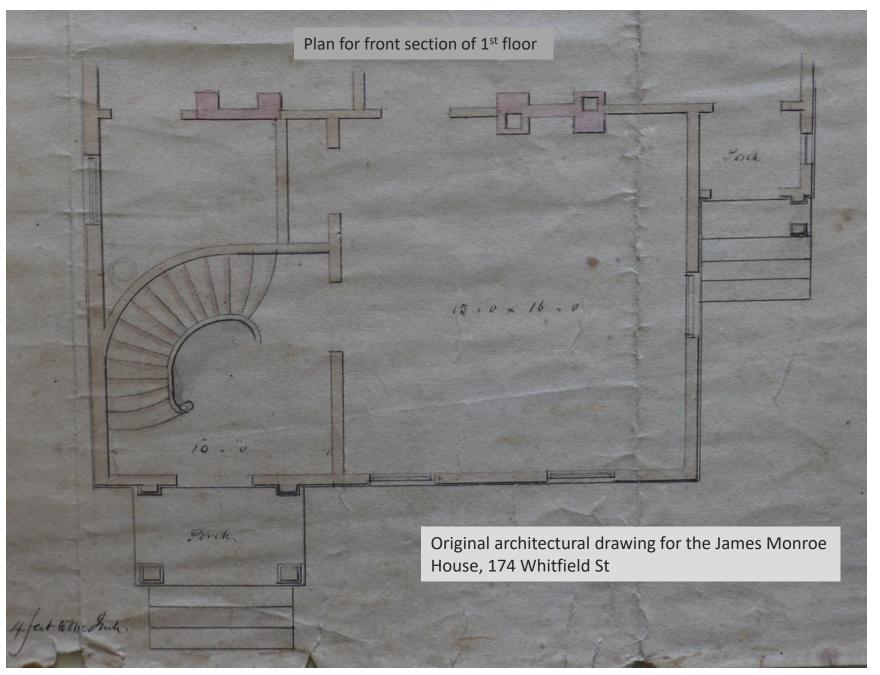


James Monroe House later Julius E. Norton 174 Whitfield St Gothic Revival • 1866

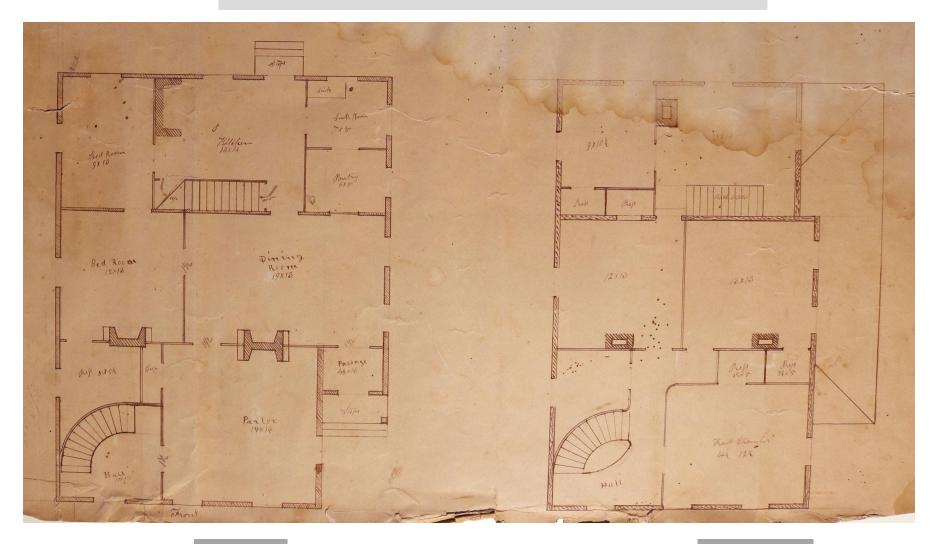


Signed by William E. Weld, Guilford, Conn. January 1866





Original architectural drawings for the James Monroe House 174 Whitfield St



First Floor Second Floor



James Monroe House later Julius E. Norton 174 Whitfield St Gothic Revival • 1866

The house number is sometimes given as 176

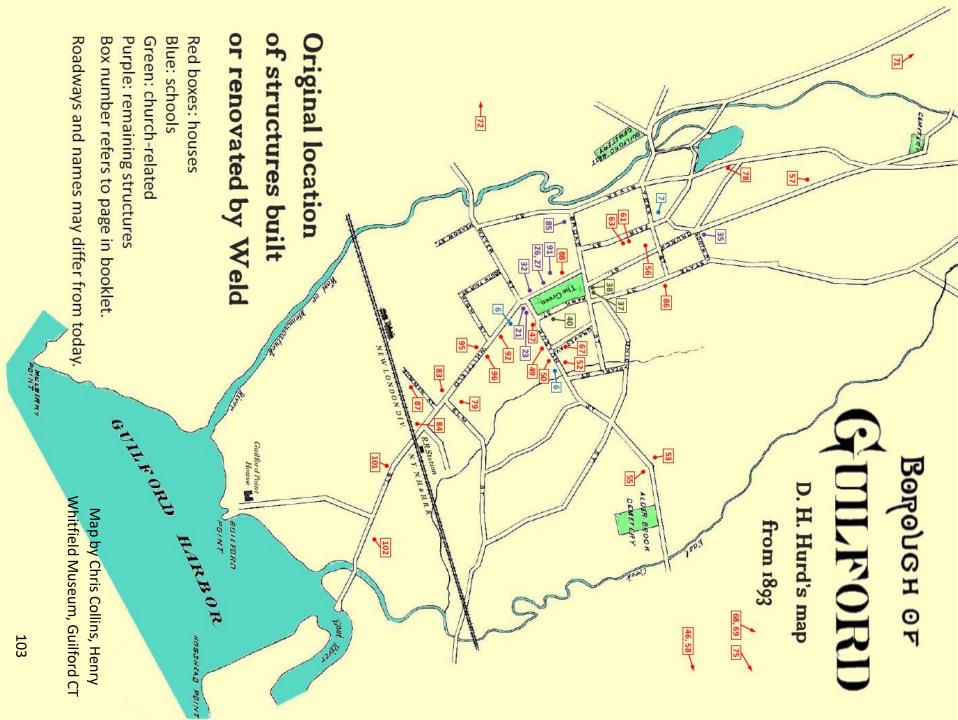


101 413 Whitfield St



William Davis Jr. House 456 Whitfield St. Greek Revival • 1868

102 456 Whitfield St



William E. Weld - The Exhibit

By John Plant



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