

"A guide for the tourist and you" (part VII)

By JUNE W. KENNEDY

United Methodist Church of Westford

As early as 1852 it was voted to have the schoolhouse in Graniteville opened for public worship. Intermittent preaching, mostly by Methodist ministers, continued until 1869 when Charles G. Sargent offered the present site and liberal contributions. Additional donations saw dreams come to fruition. On March 22, 1871, the \$8,900 church was dedicated. The building is of wood, in Gothic style. Horsesheds were located in the back of the churchyard. For many years the Masons held their meetings here. The setting of the church is one of quiet reflection and serenity as it faces the still waters of the mill pond.

Location: 5H-J Church Street
Mill Pond

The Graniteville mill pond was originally a brook (Stony) surrounded by apple orchards. It was dammed up and made into a pond to furnish power for the mills. The mills were powered by a water turbine which developed about 75 hp from a fall of 15 feet. After 1877, a steam engine of about 100 hp was also employed.

Location: 5H-J

cals, tobacco, textile and rubber industries. The drying process for Minute Rice, M&M's and the now famous Granola were researched in the lab here.

Location: Original Sargent Shop, North Main St. 5J--1877 Stone Shop, Broadway St., 5H--Present Sargent Shop, Bridge Street, adjacent to Foundry.

Charles G. Sargent Home

Overlooking the mill pond, his shop and his church, was the home of Charles G. Sargent. Its architecture was so typical of the Victorian period. Note the cupola on the roof.

Location: 5J--North Main Street
Abbot Worsted Mill--Graniteville

The mills began in 1855 with John W. Abbot as managing partner. The Company was one of the earliest worsted manufactories in the United States. At first fine worsted yarns for the making of braids and upholstery goods were manufactured. Only 20 hands were employed. Destroyed by fire three years later, and again in 1859, production was begun in one half of a large stone mill built by Mr. Sargent. This mill was about an eighth of a mile below the



Charles G. Sargent built his stately home across the mill pond overlooking his shop and community.

(A Smith photo from the WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS SERIES)

1930 the company's plants in Forge Village and Graniteville were the largest worsted manufactories in the world, about 800 people being employed at Forge Village and 300 at Graniteville. People traveled a great distance to purchase the Hanley knitting yarns which were manufactured at Abbot's and sold across the street at the old Prescott Tavern. The Abbot Worsted Co. closed in 1956.

Since 1958 the Murray Printing Co. has occupied the mill property. Employing between 750-800 people, Murray prints and binds both soft and hard covered books for major publishers -- good quality, educational material.

Location: 3G--Pleasant Street, Forge Village, beside RR tracks.

Forge Pond

Forge Pond is the headwaters of the Stony Brook. Before 1680 the land and rights at the outlet had been bought from Old Andrew the Indian for 20 shillings (known as Andrew's Weir). Here Jonas Prescott established mills for grinding corn and sawing boards. In 1845 a thriving picnic area called "Excelsior Grove" was located on these shores. An early description states that "it was a beautiful hickory grove suitable for Sabbath school and pleasure parties and offering such innocent amusements and exercises as water

excursions, singing and dancing." A large corporation was formed. A side wheeler was purchased which seated 20 or more; 2 men wound the handle to rotate the paddle wheels. The Captain sat in the rear to steer; cost was 4-6½¢ an hour.

From 1864-1931 the industry of ice harvesting was carried on here. Today, Forge Pond serves as the Town Beach.

Location: 3G--straddles Westford-Littleton line.

Red Brick School No. 3

This little brick school served Forge Village from 1851 to 1871. Olive Ann Prescott, great great great granddaughter of Col. John Robinson taught here. A handwoven, signed tablecloth made by her Mother, Olive Prescott, and an 1840 brown plaid handwoven woolen blanket are on display at the Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts. "She was the wife of Captain Prescott, who raised the flax and prepared it for her to sign and weave on their farm in Forge Village, Mass., near the Groton line. A homespun homeddyed single ply butterscotch and dark brown wool blanket were colored from a species of lichen, scraped from rocks in the woods and pastures near her home."

Location: 3G--Corner of Pleasant and Pine Streets.

To be continued.



The mill pond in the Graniteville section of town was originally a brook (Stony) surrounded by apple orchards. Water here supplied power for the mills.

(A Smith photo from the WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS SERIES)

C. G. Sargent and Sons Machine Shop

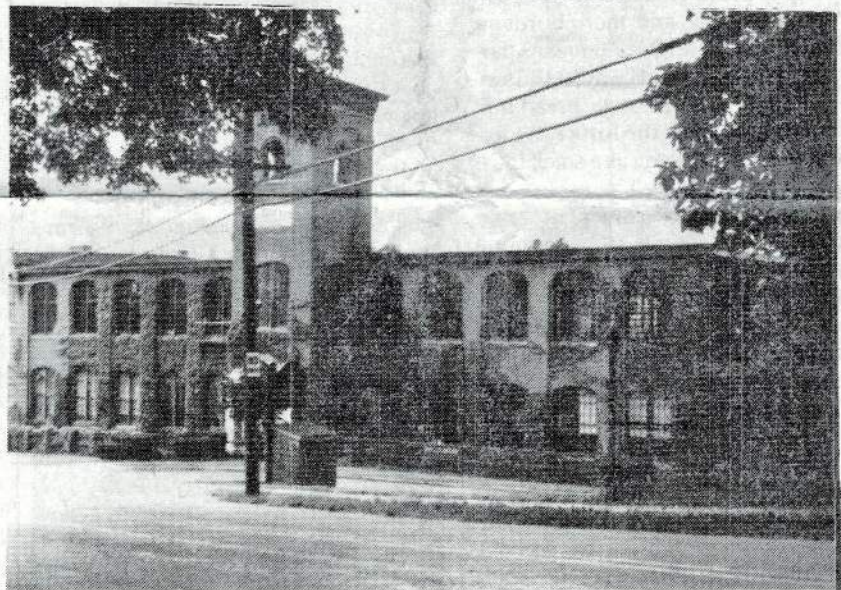
In 1854 Charles G. Sargent and Francis Calvert went into partnership, bought the saw and grist mill in Graniteville, and converted the buildings into shops for the manufacture of woolen and cotton machinery. This was only 6 years after the railroad passed through the village. There were only 3 or 4 houses here then. By 1880, about 60 buildings, including the church, a school and depot were added. The Village was known as Stone Quarry until about 1856 when it was changed to Graniteville at the suggestion of Mr. Sargent.

The old mills burned; two more were constructed. In 1862 Mr. Sargent bought his partner's interest in the machine shop and continued the business in his own name. His inventions included a wool washing machine, wool duster, burr picker, wool drying machine and a patent atomizer for oiling wool. In 1877 Mr. Sargent built a stone shop on the opposite side of the stream. This building still houses the main office of Charles G. Sargent and Sons, but is leased to several small industries. Charles G. Sargent Sons, Inc. continues its business on Bridge Street where they manufacture industrial drying machinery for food, chemi-

former site. At this time they began the manufacture of carded yarns used in the making of carpets. Business grew. Buildings and water power in Forge Village were then purchased for a second mill. Location: 5H--Original site of Abbot Mill, 1855 Marker, North Main St., 5J--Second Graniteville Abbot Mill, North Main Street.

Forges--Horse Nail Factory--Abbot Worsted Co.--Murray Printing

As early as 1710 Jonas Prescott erected forges for manufacturing iron from ore. This enterprise was the fourth or fifth of its kind in New England. The ore used was bog iron obtained from the bogs in Groton. There were 3-5 forges operating in town and thus the name Forge Village. In operation for about 150 years, the forges produced farm tools and even such items as andirons, candlesticks, mortar and pestles. The forges ceased when the Forge Village Horse Nail Factory was formed and took over the water power and buildings. The Horse Nail Company, making horse, mule and ox nails of all sizes, carried on successfully until 1877 when business started to decline. In 1879 Abbot Worsted Co. bought the site for its second mill. They manufactured worsted yarns for carpets, and pioneered the use of camel's hair in their yarn (1880). By



Since 1958 the Murray Printing Co. has occupied the mill site of the Abbot Worsted Co.

(From the book WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS 1729-1979 by June W. Kennedy on sale at the "Book-tique" or from the author)