

December 20

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## **74 Windham Street** *continued from last week*

**This is 74 Windham Street in 1930 when owned by James B. Fullerton of the local clothing firm Fullerton and Fournier.**



There may be a clue to Mrs. Clark's bizarre behavior. The inventory of the house carried out by the conservators in early 1906 revealed that her house had an extensive collection of liquor-enough to make a package store green with envy. It can be argued that the Victorian elite enjoyed entertaining visitors and guests, therefore their houses were full of alcohol. But Mrs. Clark had lived the life of a recluse for many years, and had few visitors. She had had lodgers in the house in the early years, but they left because of Mrs. Clark's strange behavior. The inventory revealed many quarts and pints of sherry, California wine, port, cherry rum, claret, Madeira rum, Holland gin, grape brandy, French brandy, St Croix rum, whisky, cider brandy, California brandy, bay rum and new England rum. Whether the bizarre behavior was caused by alcohol or not, we will never know. Suffice to say, her actions caused her to be institutionalized for almost a quarter of a century until her death in 1929. Such a situation could probably not happen today.

In 1907, Mr. and Mrs. James B. Fullerton purchased Mrs. Clark's house. James Fullerton was born in Waitesfield, Vermont in 1871. He worked in several clothing establishments in Willimantic, and was eventually married to Ella Davison, the daughter of Elisha Davison, the proprietor of the Davison and York clothing store, and went into partnership with his father-in-law in 1900. He had a distinguished military career in the Connecticut National Guard, and saw action as an officer in Mexico in 1916, and in France during World War One. The clothes store developed into Fullerton and Fournier, and known by a couple of generations of Willimantic residents. Fullerton was a well known and respected figure in town. He was the president of the committee responsible for

the building of the Nathan Hale Hotel in 1926, and was also the president of the Willimantic YMCA and the Willimantic Chamber of Commerce. Fullerton died on February 22, 1934. His wife, Ella, died the following August. She was born in Putnam in 1867.

The house was then purchased by Henry Desormeau (1889-1959), a well known grocer who lived and worked from his premises at 277 Ash Street. For many years he was the Superintendent of the Willimantic Water Department. He was also employed by the Bacon Funeral home, and was very active in French Canadian civic organizations. Seventy Four Windham Street had a number of occupants during the 60s and 70s, until the current owners, Leo and Terri Santucci purchased this interesting part of eastern Connecticut history. The interior decoration, and well built nature of the house reveals the hand of a master builder. Jeremiah O'Sullivan (1850-1915) can claim that title.

Jeremiah O'Sullivan built 74 Windham Street in 1894. He was born on St. Patrick's Day, 1850, in the village of Colaris, County Kerry, Ireland, the son of Otho and Mary (Shanhahan) O'Sullivan. His father Otho O'Sullivan, sailed with his family from Liverpool to New York in 1856. The family lived in New York, and Jewitt City, Connecticut. In 1864, the O'Sullivans moved to Willimantic. In the 1875 City Directory, Jeremiah Sullivan is listed as a carpenter living at "Jackson Street near Valley Street." He was originally employed by the Willimantic Linen Company, but entered a building apprenticeship with local builders, Chappell and Potter. In 1874, the firm of Casey and O'Sullivan was formed to do a general contract building. In 1877, O'Sullivan went into business himself, retiring in November, 1913.

O'Sullivan virtually built Willimantic. He built the Town Hall, the Bank Street and Jackson Street fire departments, St. Joseph's Parochial School, St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Joseph's Convent, the Gem Theater, the electric station of the Willimantic Gas and Electric Light company, the original Windham High School building (1897-1913), an addition to Willimantic Normal School and numerous factory buildings, and many of the finest residences in the city. He also built the Roman Catholic churches in East Hampton, Danielson and Plainfield, the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltic, St. Bernard's Parochial School, a public schools in Rockville, and the Congregational Church in South Windham.