

December 06, 1997

## 74 Windham Street. Part Two

**Mary B. Clark's final resting place in a Coventry cemetery. She is buried in the Winchester family plot and the stone records the life and death of her parents Loring and Amelia Winchester and their four children.**



Mary B. Clark's father Loring Winchester had married into a leading Coventry family in 1838, when he took Amelia Bidwell as his wife. She was the daughter of Solomon and Caroline (Lyman) Bidwell. Mary B. Clark's great uncle on her mother's side, Nathan Lyman, was a famed architect who designed "Lyman" houses in Buffalo, New York. Solomon Bidwell built the Bidwell Tavern in Coventry in 1822, which became a famed stagecoach resting place and "watering hole" on the old Hartford to Providence turnpike. Loring and Amelia Winchester had four children, but only Mary Bidwell Winchester lived to adulthood. Loring Winchester was a Democrat and represented Coventry in the General Assembly. Although not trained in the law, he read law books profusely, and his legal advice was often sought. *The*

*Commemorative Biographical Record of Tolland County* (1903), stated that:

"In financial matters it is said that his opinion carried great weight, perhaps more so than any other man of his time. Successful in his business enterprises, he accumulated a large property. He was speculative but careful in business, and weighed and measured all chances. A plain-going man of common sense, he had a profound contempt for the arrogant and haughty."

Mary Winchester was married relatively late in life, at 24, to a young machinist employed in a Coventry manufactory. Daniel S. Clark Jr. was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, September 9, 1849. In 1863, aged 14, he had enlisted at Thompson, Connecticut, and joined the 1st Regiment, Company I of the Connecticut Volunteer Cavalry. He was mustered out at Washington DC in 1865. In 1869, the 19 year old Clark married Mary Bidwell Winchester in Coventry, Connecticut. Little has been uncovered about their married life, but the 1880 census shows the couple living in South Windham. It can be assumed that shortly after their marriage, Daniel found work at the Smith & Winchester Company in South Windham, where his wife's paternal uncle, Harvey Winchester was founder and manager.

In 1888, Daniel and Mary formally agreed to abandon their individual rights to property held by them prior to 1877, in favor of rights under Connecticut General Statutes (Revised 1888) Sec. 623-2796/7, which gave more property rights to wives. It would seem that the couple were mismatched. Daniel was almost five years younger than his wife, and seemingly from a lower social class. It was later revealed that Mary B. Clark drew a pistol on her husband, and they divorced soon afterwards. Mary Bidwell Clark did not remarry. Daniel Clark was remarried in Windham on February 23, 1897 to 36 year old Emma M. Smith of Willimantic. The couple lived on Windham Road, "opposite the campground." When Clark died, aged 68 in 1918, his obituary stated that he had worked as a machinist at Smith & Winchester for 35 years.

After Daniel and Mary divorced, the precise date and circumstances have yet to be established, Mary B. Clark became a woman of substance. She used her financial assets in real estate by purchasing property and granting mortgages. The 46-year-old divorcee purchased a house, 192 Jackson Street, in Willimantic in February, 1890. She lived there and at 23 Union Street. In the 1900 Federal Census, Mrs. Clark's occupation is listed as "money investor."

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