

## History

# House at 175 Summit has a long history

Part one of three

Many of Willimantic's fine Hill District houses have had numerous owners and occupiers over the last 120 years or so.

The social history of a house can be more easily traced if it has had fewer owners, and the owners also have been occupiers.

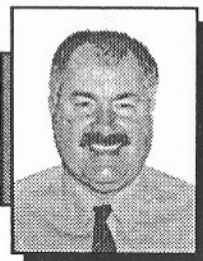
The house at 175 Summit St., which stands on the northeast corner of Summit and North streets, has a complicated history.

It was originally built as a rental home in the 1890s, but its current owners, Jim and Laurie St. Martin, are only the fifth owners of this outstanding example of Willimantic's 19th century Victorian architecture.

The Hill District was developed by Allen Lincoln (1817-1882) and his partner Edwin A. Buck (1832-1905).

They acquired a massive tract of land on Prospect Hill during the early 1860s.

Willimantic rapidly expanded after the Civil War, and its grow-



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ing business and professional classes needed good housing. The Willimantic Journal of Nov. 13, 1863, reported that: "Mr. Allen Lincoln, of Chaplin, has taken up his permanent residence in Willimantic.

He has for some years had a store here, and his recent purchase of real estate in the village, which we understand he intends to improve by opening streets through it, laying out lots, erecting buildings etc. renders his location here desirable. We welcome Mr. Lincoln as an active, useful businessman, who, we trust, will do much towards building up and improving Willimantic."

Edwin Buck was also a significant figure in eastern Connecticut history. He was born in Ashford, and represented the town in the General Assembly.

Buck had operated a glass manufacturing company in Ashford, and arrived in Willimantic in 1869 to go into partnership with Allen Lincoln in the grain business.

His daughter, Carrie Buck, married Allen Lincoln's son, Allen Bennett Lincoln. Allen Lincoln and Edwin Buck systematically purchased tracts of land on Prospect Hill, and sold plots at enormous profit as the borough of Willimantic grew.

Allen Lincoln died in 1882 and left his vast estate to his wife, Salinda Lincoln. She and Edwin Buck continued to sell housing lots on the hill as Willimantic expanded in the 1880s and 1890s. John A. McDonald purchased two lots from Salinda Lincoln and Buck.

In 1887 he purchased a lot on Church Street, and built a fine house there (209).



Allen Lincoln (1816-1882), developer responsible for building up Willimantic's Hill District after the Civil War.

McDonald made a second purchase from Salinda Lincoln and Buck on Oct. 7, 1891. He pur-

chased a 126 by 92.5-square-foot plot of land on the northeast corner of Summit Street and North Street, and built a fine Victorian house specifically as a rental, or guest property. It was completed in 1892 and numbered 175 Summit St.

John Anthony McDonald (1857-1904) was the editor and president of the Willimantic Chronicle Printing Co.

He was born in Brooklyn, Conn., the son of Horace A. McDonald, a direct descendant of Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. John A. McDonald was raised in Danielson, and after school and during vacations worked as a printer at the Windham County Transcript.

Continued next week

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