

— HISTORY —

The Hatheway House a star on the Victorian tour

Part one of four

The fourth annual Victorian Willimantic Home Tour takes place on June 1 and 2, and introduces a number of new houses to be perused by visitors, thanks to the co-operation and work of homeowners. We'll be examining the history of several of these houses over the next weeks, commencing with two fine buildings located on Prospect Street.

One of the central attractions of the tour will again be Eastern Connecticut State University's Grant House located on the northwestern corner of Prospect and High Streets. It was built in 1895 for William Denison Grant (1860-1943), a grain dealer.

Grant could trace his ancestry directly back to a Samuel Grant who was born in Dorchester, Mass. in 1631. The Grant family relocated to Stonington in the new colony of Connecticut at the end of the 17th century, and William Denison Grant was born in

Ashford in 1860.

He was educated privately and began teaching at a school in Pheonixville in 1878. Grant abandoned teaching in 1880, and

came to Willimantic to enter into partnership with Edwin Bugbee who conducted a flour and feed business at the corner of Jackson and Valley Streets.

Grant took over the business in 1888 when Bugbee retired, and built a new flour mill at the corner of Broad and Valley Streets. Grant's business prospered and in 1894-95 he built a fine Victorian mansion on Prospect Street. The house's stylish gothic tower was added in 1906.

Grant served as Willimantic's mayor, and was a director of the



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Windham National Bank. He was also a director of the Willimantic Traction Co. and secured the necessary capital to get the city's trolley car line built in 1901-02. He was also a prime mover in getting the trolley line extension built to South Coventry in 1908.

Another fine Victorian mansion in the Grant House style is also located on Prospect Street, and is included on the tour for the first time. It was built in 1889 by Amos Morris Hatheway and is better known to a generation growing up in the 1950s and '60s as the old Willimantic Children's Library. Hatheway was a senior executive of the Willimantic Linen Co. and built his Victorian mansion with a large round gothic tower, 10 large rooms, three bathrooms, a palatial hallway and broad impressive stairways.

Hatheway's daughter Fannie married Austin Dunham Boss who became the agent of the American Thread Co. in 1916,

and his son Edgar was the office manager in the 1920s.

During a visit to their old hometown in the 1950s, Amos Hatheway's other daughters, Kate and Marion, were horrified at the cramped conditions in the Willimantic Library in the Windham Town Hall, and that town officials were considering closing the library's children's room to provide more space.

The sisters subsequently deeded the house in which they had been raised to the city in 1957, with the provision that it would be converted into a children's library, to be known as the Taylor-Hatheway Memorial Library. The gift was made in the memory of Kate's late husband, Dr. Daniel Taylor and her late brother Edgar.

Taylor was a well-known local dentist, and a nationally known expert and writer on the construction of telescopes. Kate Hatheway Taylor and Marion Hatheway

Hunt presented the deed to Willimantic Mayor Florimond Bergeron in a ceremony at Hunt's Noank home.

Bergeron hailed the gift as one of the most generous individual donations the city had ever received. A new library was eventually built on Main Street in 1967, and the children's library relocated there after spending a decade in one of Willimantic's most attractive Victorian mansions.



The historic Hatheway House which became the children's library.

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whereabouts of Charley Ross. He

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Mass. was the speaker, his sub-