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— HISTORY —

The Larrabees of Windham have long history



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The Larrabees were one of Windham's leading 19th century families. Of French Huguenot descent, the Larrabees had settled in New London in the 1750s. During the Revolutionary War, merchant Frederic Larrabee abandoned his West Indies trading routes, and fitted and armed his sloops at Norwich and New London to harass and attack British supply ships in the Long Island Sound.

The continual raids by the rebel pirate ships infuriated the British, and they responded in 1781 by sending a force of 800 regulars, led by Norwich's Benedict

Arnold, to destroy New London and capture the fort at Groton Heights.

Capt. Frederic Larrabee survived the British raids, and a son, Adam Larrabee, was born at Allyn's Point in 1787. He graduated from West Point in 1811, and fought British and Canadian forces in the failed American invasion of Canada during the War of 1812.

Lt. Adam Larrabee's regiment was virtually wiped out, and he was seriously wounded. Colleagues carried Larrabee back to Norwich, where he recovered from a musket ball lodged in his chest. He left the U.S. Army, and farmed and traded in New London before purchasing an extensive farm in Windham in 1846, where he would die in 1869.

Adam Larrabee had six sons.



Frank Larrabee

Nathan served in the U.S. Navy, Charles and Henry farmed in Windham, and John, William and Frank settled in Iowa, where William became governor. Charles Larrabee became a respected figure in Windham and represented the town in the General Assembly in 1870. He died in Windham Center at 92 in 1912.

Charles' son, Frank, was born in Windham on March 18, 1857, and became one of Willimantic's leading civic figures during the late 19th and early 20th century.

Frank Larrabee attended the State Normal School in New

Britain and trained to be a teacher, but became engaged in Willimantic's grocery trade. In 1888, he moved his expanding Main Street business into the *Willimantic Chronicle's* new building at 20-24 Church St. Thanks to Willimantic's position on the railroad network, Larrabee was able to import the best and freshest fruits from California and Florida. He was also engaged in the sale of crockery and lamps, and supplied goods to smaller grocery shops across northeast Connecticut.

Larrabee employed four teams to deliver groceries to his customers.

Frank Larrabee was deeply involved in the civic and business affairs of Willimantic. In April 1901, along with a group of Willimantic businessmen led by Hugh C. Murray, Larrabee

became a director of the Windham Silk Co. The new company was located in the mills of the defunct Natchaug Silk Co. on North Street, built by J. Dwight Chaffee in 1888.

Larrabee became president of the Windham Silk Co., and in 1911, with business booming, the company built a new mill on Valley Street. Larrabee was the president of the Willimantic Savings Institute from 1915 until 1927, becoming the bank's second longest-serving president.

He was also a founding director of the Willimantic Building and Loan Association, a position he held for 35 years, and he also served as president of the Willimantic Chamber of Commerce. Larrabee died on Sept. 22, 1931, at 55 Prospect St. after a long illness. He was 74.