

June 24, 2004

## From bicycles to insurance, Elliot did it all



Elliot's mansion on Prospect Street in Willimantic, shortly after its completion in 1895.

### Part Two of Two

George E. Elliot (1806-67), his son George C. Elliot (1845-1903) and his son George S. Elliot (1867-1941) represent a century-long business dynasty that grew as Willimantic grew. They were involved in tailoring, shoe, bicycle and carriage retailing and insurance agencies. Many locals will still recall the youngest of this trio, George Storrs Elliot.

Elliot and Ernest Chesboro conducted both a wholesale and retail



Tom  
Beardsley

business in bicycles at the end of the 19th century and were New England agents for the Wilhelm Bicycle Co. of Hamburg, Pa., and the Packer Wheel Co. of Reading, Pa. In later years, the trade concentrated along other lines as the sale of bicycles decreased, such as carriages, wa-

cles required in the handling, care and dressing of a horse, in their store and manufactory at 1015 Main St.

In 1894 Elliot became involved in the borough's fire insurance business and took over the company formed by Silas F. Loomer, the builder of the city's opera house on Main Street. In 1918, he purchased the fire insurance agency of A.B. Adams & Co., and in total represented 25 of the nation's leading companies, such as Aetna Fire, Hartford Fire, Phoenix Fire and the Aetna Life Insurance Co. of Hartford.

In 1897, Elliot married into the Willington cotton dynasty and wed Clara A. Hall, the daughter of cotton thread manufacturer Gardiner Hall. The previous year, Elliot had commissioned the building of one of the finest Victorian mansions in Willimantic at 347 Prospect St., located on the northwest corner of Prospect and Windham streets. He moved there with his new wife and invited his aging father to live there with him in this fine structure. Tragedy followed though, as Clara died on Nov. 4, 1899, and his father, George Chauncey Elliot, died there in 1903. In 1906, Elliott married Christine Sayles, who died in 1916. Their daughter, Barbara, was born Nov. 15, 1910, and became a schoolteacher in Richmond, Va.

During the early years of the 20th century, Elliot concentrated on the coal trade and reorganized his company under the name of the Parker-Elliott Coal Co., with Elliott as vice president, and succeeded in increasing his coal sales from 2,000 to 7,000 tons annually.

Elliot was a staunch Republican and served on the city's board of aldermen in 1910 and 1911. He also was a member of the Knights of Pythias at Willimantic and a generous supporter of the First Congregational Church, where he was the treasurer from 1899 to 1918. He was also active in the Young Men's Christian Association, where he was vice president