

February 21, 1998

## The 1796 Hebard House and the Windham Cotton Manufacturing Company

85 Bricktop Road.



This imposing building standing on one of the highest points of Bricktop Road is probably one of the most unique houses in the area. On first sight, the building appears to be of Italianate design with a right and left ell. Closer inspection reveals an original cape-style building, dating back to 1796, which has been split, to allow for the central addition of a large Greek

Revival/Italianate house. This alteration took place around 1840, and that Italianate and Victorian details were added later at unspecified dates. The left hand ell appears to be the site of the original building. The split was made at the right hand side of the old front door. This door has full-length sidelights. The right hand ell is 20 feet long, and the left hand ell is 15 feet long. This cape section has two brick chimneys at each end, and there are 4, 6 x 6 double-hung sash windows. The front gabled central section is dominated by a large round window, large overhanging eaves with supporting dentils, a large bay window, and 18-inch wide decorative pilasters. The base of the right hand ell is fieldstone, the central section has a cut granite base, and the right hand ell has a brick base, suggesting that this is the section moved to the right when the split occurred.

85 Bricktop Road presents two faces of Windham's history. By the late 18th century, nearby Windham Center was one of the most prosperous townships in the state. Guy Hebard, the builder of the house, is better known for his taverns. He may have operated a tavern in Windham Center, but after that place's relative decline after the removal of its Court house, Windham historian Ellen Larned tells us that "...a very pretentious new hotel was built and opened by Guy Hebard," in Willimantic. The Hebard tavern, now apartment houses, still stands. It's the large brick structure at the junction of Pleasant Street and Windham Road. Hebard sold his house on the hill to Hartford Tingley in 1833. It is probably under Tingley's ownership that the house was expanded. Tingley was from Providence, Rhode Island, but his growing cotton mill in Willimantic, the Windham Company, demanded that he had a more convenient and local residence. Tingley's name is remembered in a well-known 19th century Willimantic rhyme, and a Willimantic street. The rhyme was chanted by schoolchildren to recall the four early 19th century manufacturing villages which eventually developed into Willimantic.

"Richmond Town, Jillson Hill, Leesburg, Tingleyville." And everyone knows Tingley Street in Willimantic. Tingley and his partner, Matthew Watson, also from Providence, organized the Windham Company in 1823. Tingley and Watson purchased 8 acres and Willimantic River water privileges on the west side of Bridge Street in November, 1822, from Anna Fitch for \$189. They built a stone cotton mill the following year. It survived until the 1950s, and was located in the Bridge Street Plaza area. Matthew Watson gave his name to Willimantic's Watson Street.