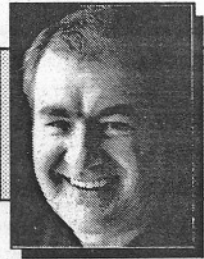


History

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275 Summit St. is a classic example of Stick design



Tom
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Just one week to go to the Victorian Willimantic Home Tour and Symposium. From 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. on May 15-16, 10 Willimantic hill district houses are opening their doors for visitors.

This week we'll look at the oldest house of the 10. The house at 275 Summit St. was built in 1874 by George L. Cunningham. It is a small, Victorian two-story house with six rooms, and was built with five fireplaces and two chimneys. It was purchased in 1881 by 46-year-old Maj. George Dimock, who came to Willimantic after being employed as chief engineer at the Holland Silk mills.

Dimock was born in Washington, Conn., on Sept. 8, 1835. His father, Ira, was related to the Dimocks that had introduced silk weaving to Hartford in the 1840s. The silk connection would eventually lead George Dimock to Willimantic.



George Dimock sits on the front porch railing of his house at 275 Summit St. in 1906. His wife is in the white blouse, but the identities of the lady with the pushchair and the three children are unknown.

He joined the Connecticut Fourth Infantry in New London in 1861 at the onset of the Civil War, and later transferred to the First Connecticut Heavy Artillery. He rose through the ranks, from private to sergeant, to lieutenant, to become Brevet Major in 1864. He was honorably discharged after being seriously injured by a shell fragment after a heavy rebel bombardment.

Dimock returned to New

London after the war and worked in that city's silk industries. He arrived in Willimantic in 1881 to take the post of chief engineer and mechanic with the Holland Silk Co., located on Valley and Church streets. He worked for the Hollands for almost 40 years until shortly before his death. Dimock was twice married, first to Mary Tuttle of Willimantic and then to Josephine Main of Mystic, who died in Willimantic in 1918.

Dimock was one of Willimantic's longest surviving Civil War veterans, and died in the house in 1922 at the age of 87. He was buried in the family cemetery in New London.

After Dimock's death, 275 Summit St. was purchased in 1925 by Walter S. Grant, son of the town's famous grain dealer William D. Grant. W.D. Grant built one of the other houses included on next week's tour in 1895, the fine residence located at the northwest corner of Prospect and High streets. Walter S. Grant lived at 275 Summit St. until 1950. In 1952 the house was purchased by Leo and Alice Finkelstein. Leo was a foreman at the Electro-Motive Co. In 1962, the property was bought by George and Patricia Williams, the proprietors of Hydes Magazine Shop at 856 Main St.

The current owner of the house, Virginia Darrow, has lived in the house for 33 years. She and her late husband, Harold, purchased the house in February, 1966. Virginia Darrow's length of occupancy of the house is second only to Dimock, who lived there for 38 years. Virginia explains that the house has undergone sev-

eral renovations. Between 1924 and 1950, the current front porch and roof extension was added, and the houses electrical and plumbing systems were modernized during the 1960s.

The house is of Stick and Victorian Gothic Revival design. Some Queen Anne detail can be seen in its bricked, decorated chimneys. The rear chimney was taken down in the mid-1980s when the roof was rebuilt. American Stick houses were based on medieval English building traditions, and became a highly common style in pattern books consulted by architects, carpenters and builders during the 1860s and 1870s.

The house at 275 Summit St. is a distinctive example of Stick with its decorative trusses in its roof dormers and gables and its bay window. Similar examples of the style can be seen in "Cottage Residences," Andrew Jackson Downing's well-known 1842 pattern book. The house's rich Victorian styling can be witnessed by stained glass windows and mahogany stair banisters. Its interior doors have large cast iron hinges and lead crystal doorknobs.