

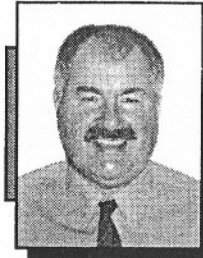
Willimantic's finest homes will be open for your pleasure

Commencing today and continuing Sunday, between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., the Victorian Willimantic Home Tour is once again showcasing 10 of Willimantic's finest Victorian houses.

Frank and Annie Cronin are opening one of the most impressive of the hill district's fine structures for the first time. It is located at 159 North St. A brief social history of this fine house explains its outstanding architectural details.

The land upon which 159 North is built was originally purchased in the early 1860s by Allen Lincoln specifically to be developed into housing lots. After Lincoln's death in 1882, his wife Salinda deeded the land to a relative, Henry Root Lincoln. He was born

in Stockbridge, Mass. and came to Willimantic in 1875 to work as an office boy at the Willimantic Linen Co. Lincoln was the



Tom Beardsley

nephew of Austin Dunham, the company's founder, and rapidly rose through the ranks and became the company's purchasing agent.

Lincoln did not develop the plot deeded to him by Salinda Lin-

coln, and on July 21, 1893, he sold it to George Kingsley Nason.

Nason was born in Wickford, R.I., on May 29, 1845, into a leading colonial family. In 1860 he was briefly employed in a cotton mill at Phenix, R.I. Shortly afterwards the Civil War broke out, Nason worked as a mechanic in a Providence factory where he assembled instruments to manufacture rifles and pistols, thus ensuring that he would not be drafted into the Union Army. In 1869 Nason was appointed as clerk to the Black River Woolen Co. at Cavendish, Vt., and in 1876 he went into partnership and opened a profitable woolen mill at Holden, Mass.,

Nason arrived in South Coventry in 1879 to operate the Millbrook Woolen Mill. In 1882 he relocated to nearby Willimantic and purchased Hyde Kingsley's lumber company, just as the borough was entering the most prosperous period in its history. Nason's lumberyard provided the building materials for the rapidly expanding borough of Willimantic.

George Nason was a staunch republican, and became a selectman and member of the board of relief. He was a prominent Mason and a member of the Knights of Pythias and the Odd Fellows. Nason was also a member of the local Board of Trade and Businessman's Association.

The land he subsequently purchased for his new home on North Street was probably utilized for agricultural purposes,

and contained two small barn structures. These were demolished and construction began in the summer of 1893, and the Nasons moved into their house in the fall of 1894.

Nason's lumber and coal yard, bounded by Valley, Church and Temple streets, had operated since 1861, and grew as Willimantic became a central distributing point on the New England railroad network. Hyde Kingsley and Silas Loomer operated the original lumberyard prior to Nason. The yard was sold to the Willimantic Lumber & Coal Co. in 1906, and it continued trading in Willimantic until 1999.

Nason was a passionate student of history, religion and philosophy. He was particularly interested in the comparative analysis of world religions, and had travelled extensively across the ancient world of the Mediterranean Ocean. Nason's library was stacked full of philosophical and religious books. Nason died on June 21, 1906, aged 61, following an operation to remove his appendix. His obituary, published in *the Chronicle* that day, stated that Nason "was one of the leading businessmen of Willimantic, and known by all in this city." Nason was buried with full Masonic ceremony on Saturday, June 23, 1906 in the Willimantic cemetery. His gravestone is located just to the east of the cemetery entry opposite Friendly's Restaurant.

Nason had married Adeline Mathewson, a member of one of

Rhode Island's most prominent families on May 10, 1868, in Providence, R.I. She was born in Gloucester, R.I. on Aug. 22, 1845. Adeline M. Nason continued living at 159 North St. until her death on Jan. 18, 1940, aged 94. Earl and Loise Saunders purchased the house from the Nason estate in April 1941. Earl Saunders was a prominent dentist in the city, operating from his premises at 715 Main St. The Saunders lived in the house for 10 years, and sold it to Anthony and Inez Ferrigno in 1951. The Saunders moved to Columbia, and Earl continued to practise as a dentist in Willimantic until 1963.

Anthony A. Ferrigno was born May 9, 1912 in Willimantic, and was a lifelong resident of the city. His father Antonio Ferrigno arrived in the city in 1911, and lived for many years in Monticello Street. He and his brother James ran the Ferrigno Brothers Market at 1171 Main St. Ferrigno died at 159 North on Oct. 12, 1997.

The outstanding architectural detail in the house is the result of Nason's involvement in the building trade. His company became a major supplier of materials for the majority of the fine Victorian homes on the Hill district.

When Nason decided to build, it is obvious that only the best materials and designs were considered. The house is not in a prominent position, but its interior and exterior décor and design is amongst the best on the "Hill."

WILI Birthday Club

- One person is selected from all entrants having a birthday that day. That winner will receive a certificate good for a meal* at McDonald's of Willimantic or Mansfield.
- On Saturday morning, a grand prize winner is selected from all entrants having birthdays that week (Sunday thru Saturday). The grand prize winner receives a certificate good for a meal for four at McDonald's.
- All winners and honorable mentions will be announced on the Wayne Norman show, Monday thru Saturday mornings from 6 to 10 and Sunday mornings at 9:50 am.
- Anyone can enter, regardless of age. Fill out this entry blank or 3x5 card and send it to: WILI, 720 Main Street, WILLIMANTIC, CT 06226, or drop it off during regular business hours. The entry must be received by the day before the entrant's birthday. Only written entries will be accepted. None will be taken by phone. Only one entry per person.
- Winners may pick up their certificates at WILI during regular business hours. Unclaimed certificates will be mailed to winners.
- WILI and McDonald's employees and their families are not eligible to win meals, but their names can still be announced.
- Complete details and menu items are listed on certificates.



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