

GLIMPSES INTO THE PAST

EDITOR: BETTY WHITE, TOWN HISTORIAN

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EDITOR'S NOTE: I am happy to announce that I am once again the Historian of the Town of Westport after a 4 year hiatus from this position. Many people have commented on the long absence of this newsletter featuring bits of history of our beautiful town. I hope the return of this publication is informational and inspires readers to do additional research on the featured topics. If my readers have questions and/or comments, or suggestions for future topics, please send them to me at bwhite@westelcom.com

THE TOWN'S GROCERY STORES

The places in town where groceries could be found have changed over the years. Presently there are two establishments at which you can shop for groceries. But neither is open full time, year round. At one time, there were at least 10 stores in the Town of Westport where you could purchase grocery items. Two could be found in Wadhams and eight or nine in the Village of Westport. Before everyone had a car, and shopped at bigger SuperMarkets, the "Mom and Pop" Stores were found scattered throughout neighborhoods, along with 3 of the bigger chain stores.

The owners of these "Mom and Pop" stores were pillars of their community and involved in school, church and business activities throughout their lives.

At the West end of Westport village there was a grocery store (which also sold gas) situated by the Depot. Once owned and operated by Bertha Smith and Bill Hodgins, and later by Jim Westover; on Pleasant Street, there was Charlie Gerow's at the corner of what is now Main and Eagle Streets; and there was Borden's just across from Hillside Cemetery. On the Northern end, just north of the Boat Launch site, stood Oscar Brown's Store (the building recently owned by Marshall Fish); and then next to the present Fire Department building (on Champlain Avenue) was another grocery store (which also sold gas), once owned and operated by Dave Erit and later by Gordon Lewis. Also on this end of the former Village was Walter Hill's Meat Market (now Ernie's) and the "old" Grand Union which was where the Chazy and Westport Telephone Company now stands. That store was replaced by the "new" Grand Union on Main Street (then Pleasant Street); now it is Everybody's Supermarket. Across the bridge in the now vacant building between the CATS office and the Bank was Howard Hill's Meat Market (later operated by Jim Stymiest and then Reggie Merrow); Also on Main Street was the A&P, (which burned in the 1936 fire), and later moved to the Masonic Building; and Pattison's Store in the space currently occupied by the Bessboro Shop. Even the Drug Store (now Bradamant) sold grocery items.

Wadhams residents were fortunate to have both Tom Sayre's Store and Jed Cilley's. Cilley's also sold gas, and in 1932 became an I.G.A. Store! And at one time, the Wadhams Post Office was located at the west end of Tom Sayre's store. How many do you remember? As one of Westport's natives, I have to confess that I am old enough to remember being in nearly all of these grocery stores except the A&P, and Smith and Richard's Drug Store. My first employment, as a teenager, was at Pattison's Store.

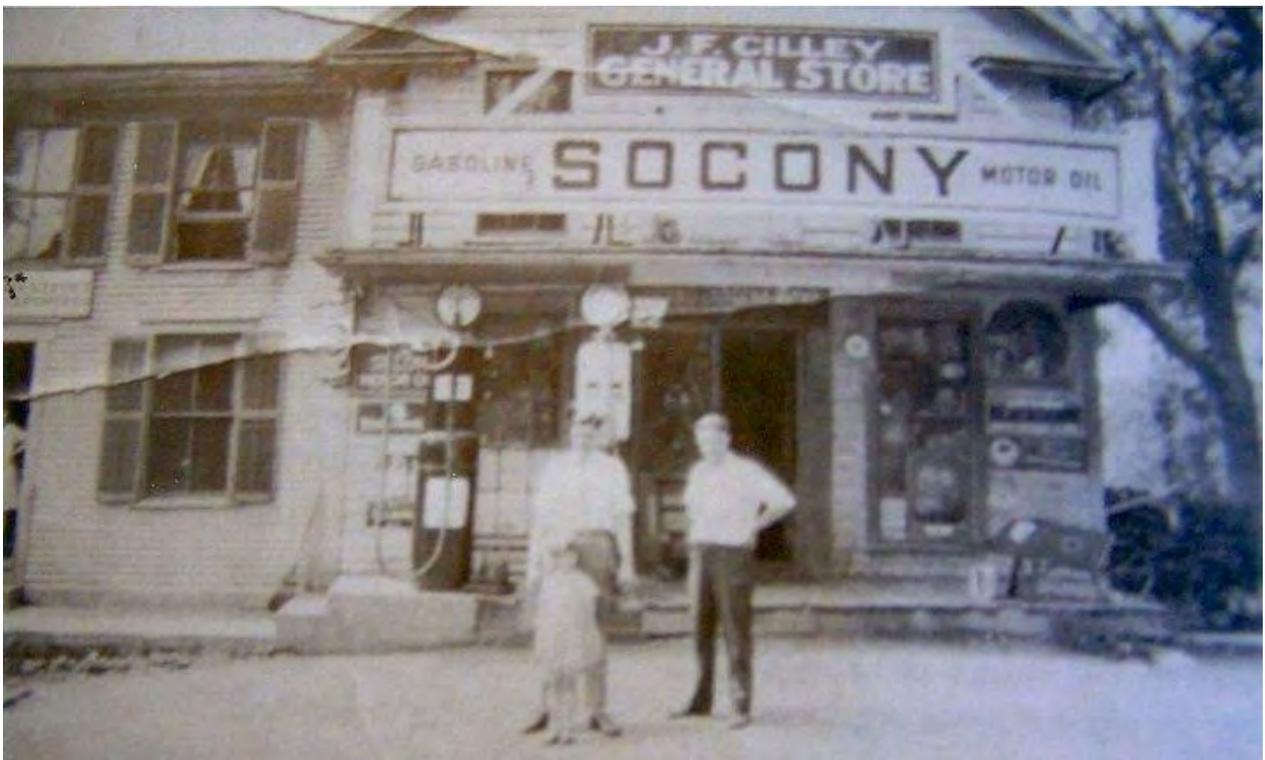
WADHAMS

This store, originally known as the "Union Store", was built about 1845-50 by William Wadhams. It was named the Union Store because it originally housed a farmers' cooperative. The building was purchased by Daniel Payne in 1864.

The following article can be found in the Sept. 2, 1854 edition of the Essex County Republican.

"The Union Store at Wadham's Mills is doing well and it will, so long as so likely a fellow as S. W. Cole has charge of it. .. "

And...*"In 1930, Earl Sherman became a clerk in this Store, when Fred Sayre resigned."*



Individuals pictured not known

The office of the Westport Power and Light Corporation was located in the J. F. Cilley store building during much of the first half of the 20th century.

1932: "Jud" Cilley Store-at Wadhams Joins I. G. A.....*News has reached the Record-Post to the effect that the "Jud" Cilley store in the village of Wadhams was being re-arranged preparatory to becoming a full -fledged I.G.A. store. Here's hoping that the move at Wadhams may result in benefit to all concerned. • THE RECORD-POST, AU SABLE FORKS, N. Y. THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1932.*

1944 : OBITUARY JARED FREDERIC CILLEY :*Jared Frederic Cilley, who was born in Jericho,, Vt., February 9, 1893, died suddenly at his home at Wadhams, Saturday, June 24, 1944. Mr. Cilley was a graduate of the Milton, Vt., High school, Vermont Business College and had taken business law and higher accountancy courses at La Salle Extension University. Having lived in Wadhams the past 25 years, among many offices he held, were the presidency of the Wadhams Power & Light, administrator of the estate of D.F. Payne, owner and operator of a general store, director of the Westport Chamber of Commerce. He patented the vacuum relief valve for penstocks. Mr. Cilley was a member of the-Congregational church and F. & A. M. Sisco Lodge. On August 27, 1916 he married Ruth F. Howe of Burlington, Vt., who survives, together with three children, Mrs. Carson Fuller of Oklahoma City, Alta, Seth and Jared F. Cilley II, of Wadhams; his mother, Mrs. F. S. Cilley, two brothers, Burney and Clayton of Colchester: and one sister, Mrs. L. C. Holcombe of Milton, Vt.*

Oscar Brown bought this store in 1953 and operated it for several years.

It has seen a few owners since then, but is currently vacant.

TOM SAYRE'S GENERAL STORE

(also once known as Hodgkins Store)

This building stood on the north west corner of County Route 8 and US 22, across the street from where the Dogwood Bakery now stands.

According to Ethel Kozma, in her book: *In the Beginning..Wadhams 1820-1970-1993*, this building was actually built in 1831 by Isaac Alden. He bought the lot from Luman Wadhams for \$500 in 1827. At that time it was called "The Tavern Lot," where Jesse Braman lived and operated a tavern. In 1843, Horace Braman

operated the business. It served as a hotel, general store and harness shop in the early nineteenth century. It was remodeled in 1879, when it was painted and large glass windows were installed. Other early owners were Angier, David H. Sayre, Joel F. Whitney, Eli Farnsworth, Almon Chappell, Isaac Hatch and D. F. Payne. In the twentieth century it was a store, post office and apartment dwelling. The store was closed in 1961. It was demolished in 1977.

In front of this store in the center of the road stood a "dummycock" with a flashing light to caution drivers as they made the turn onto the Wadhams Lewis Road (County Route 8).

This building once had a dance hall in the rear, which was moved in back of the Congregational Church and now serves as the Church Hall.



I remember going to this store many times as a child. It was truly the typical old fashioned general store. From the enormous glass cases that held all kinds of products; the huge cheese wheel on top; the barrels of flour and sugar, to the back corner of hardware items and paint; the middle section of house wares and items for sewing needs, to the little room in the back that held all sizes of boots and shoes. More than once, my parents took us there before school started in the fall for a new pair of shoes.

Ethel Kozma once said that you could buy anything in that store from a handkerchief to a fur coat!

VILLAGE OF WESTPORT



The "old" Grand Union about 1938

PICTURE COURTESY JEAN WHITE DICKERSON

This was located where the Chazy and Westport Telephone Company Building is today. To the North was "Irma's Diner", which later became Loretta's. (This lot now houses the addition that was built on the Telephone Co. building).

In his book, "Changes in Westport the Past 60 yrs. 1934- 1964." Gib White writes that he began working here in 1934.

Millie Abare, Helen Rumney, Helen Barber and Grace Smith were clerk/cashiers here in the 1950's. Bob Barber was Produce Manager. The building was a 2 story wood framed store-front with an apartment in the second story. There was an outside staircase to the apartment. Before the Grand Union opened here, the downstairs was occupied by Gardner's Tailor Shop, which moved upstairs when the Grocery store opened.

The store occupied the basement (using that for storage/warehouse) and the ground level for customers. This store operated here until 1961 when the business moved across the street to the old Eastman Block.



Grace Stevenson
Smith



Gib White at the "old" Grand Union

PICTURE COURTESY JEAN WHITE DICKERSON



Helen Rumney Brankman & Millie Girard Abare

THE "NEW" GRAND UNION

This was the old Eastman building that once housed a hardware store and a Buick Dealership. George Eastman also managed a plumbing and heating business from here.



Attached to the "new" Grand Union was this building which housed store fronts on the ground floor and apartments on the upper story as you can see in this picture taken about 1977. Doug Smith once had his Barber Shop here; the Montgomery Ward Catalog Store also once occupied one of these store-fronts. The Eastman family occupied the apartment when they operated the hardware store and Buick dealership (which later was sold to Harold Vrooman). The Vrooman family then lived in the upstairs. These apartments later became rentals. Phil and Bonnie (Huntley) Hood lived in one, Gary and Beverly (Kennah) Cole lived in one and Frank and Gloria Walker once lived there. This building is no longer standing.

EVERYBODY'S SUPERMARKET



The "new" Grand Union is now Everybody's Supermarket. Janice Hainer is the current proprietor of Everybody's. Janice and her husband, George, along with Ralph and Anna Quinn purchased this building and opened Everybody's in January 1978. In 1982, as the sole owners of the business, the Hainers remodeled the building to conserve energy . (Press Republican, April 01, 1982)

Today, this store is open during spring, summer and fall, but only at irregular hours during the winter.

GEROW'S GROCERY



Photo courtesy Jean White Dickerson

This store has been in existence since the early 1900's and has been in business under various owners. Some of them were: the Montville's, Moores, Arthur Marshall, George Turner, Aiken Torrance, Dewey Borden and Alfred Gerow in (1940). In 1946 Charles Gerow bought it from his brother, Alfred. He and his family lived upstairs until they built a home on Sisco Street across from the school. Later, Tom Tyler had a Barber shop here. It is now a residence.

BORDEN'S GROCERY

I couldn't find a picture of this little store when it was in operation. However, it is the white residence on Main Street, just across from the Hillside Cemetery and was recently occupied by Mr. Frost. Westport Central School students will always remember that Juanita Borden had a well stocked candy counter there. It was only a short walk "across the path" and down the street from the school. Dewey and Juanita had previously operated their store on the location noted above occupied by

Gerow's Grocery, but in 1946, they bought the Lasher homestead across from the cemetery and converted it into a store.

SMITH & RICHARDS DRUG STORE

as advertised in:

The Adirondack record-Elizabethtown post., April 17, 1930

SEEDS: Garden and Flower Both in Bulk and Papers Fertilizer and Sheep Manure, Ground Bone, Garden Fertilizer ' . Lawn Grass Seed, White Clover Seed Spray for Fruit and Shade Trees Weed Destroyer SMITH & RICHARDS DRUGS, PAINTS and GROCERIES WESTPORT, N. Y.

DEPOT STREET GROCERY



This building stood close to the road in what is now the lower parking lot of the Depot Theater. (in front of the site of the Tefoe's former house).

The Adirondack record-Elizabethtown post. (Au Sable Forks, N.Y.), December 30, 1937

Notice is hereby given that License Number EB6470 has been issued to the undersigned to sell beer at retail, under the provisions of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law, at Depot St., Westport, Essex County, N. Y., to be consumed upon said premises. WILLIAM HODGINS, BERTHA SMITH, Westport, N. Y.

Notice is hereby given that License Number IJ-214 has been issued to the undersigned to sell beer and eider at retail under the provisions of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law, at the place of business of the undersigned near the Delaware & Hudson Station in the Village of Westport. New York, to be consumed upon said premises.

WILLIAM HODGINS, Westport, N. Y.

Westover's Purchase the Depot Store:

THE RECORD-POST, AU SABLE FORKS. N. Y., THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 1954

Mr. and Mrs. James Westover have purchased the store known as the Depot Store near the D. & H. Railroad station from Earl Roger Thomas and will continue to operate the same.

This building burned in 1957.

THE RECORD-POST, AU SABLE FORKS, N. Y., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1957

WESTPORT CHIEF URGES CHECK OF RESERVOIR FOLLOWING BAD FIRE. Fire caused by an over-heated stovepipe Thursday caused damage estimated at \$25,000 in the Westover Store in Westport. Fire departments from Lewis and Port Henry responded to a county mutual aid call and helped in confining the flames to the store. The Tefoe home and the Dock and Coal Company's building across the road were threatened for a time. The firemen's efforts were hampered by a frozen hydrant near the store and hose had to be dragged to another hydrant many yards distant. The Westover store was covered by insurance but not the family's belongings in the apartment over the store. Mr. Westover's car was towed to a place of safety by the town truck. The store, said to be about 80 years old, was owned by Mrs. Joseph Thomas of Elizabethtown. As a result of the blaze, Chief Frank Spooner of the Westport fire Department has urged that a survey be made of Westport's water supply system. He said the supply was insufficient, that pressure was entirely inadequate when hoses were attached to hydrants. Lauding the efforts of the fire fighters, Chief Spooner said, "They did a good job in saving the Dock and Coal Company Building and the Tefoe house. I also want to thank the girls for serving coffee".

WESTPORT NEW MARKET AND HILL - TOP RESTAURANT

(originally the A.J. Blinn Store)



THE RECORD-POST November 22, 1928

A. B. Torrance is again running a meat cart into Mineville and Port Henry for Howard Hill, proprietor of the new Westport meat market.



Look at those prices!

This building can be seen standing in early pictures of Westport's Main Street. It has seen many occupants. The two upstairs apartments have been home to many families. In years past, Dr. Onslow Gordon's office was there. The downstairs has housed other enterprises since Howard Hill's "new" meat market in the 1920's. In the forties and fifties it was a grocery store owned

and operated by Jim Stymiest. Later, Reggie Merrow had a grocery store there. Bill and Carol Buchanan opened a Montgomery Ward catalog store there for several years. Pharmacist, Michael Morris (son of Michael, Sr. and Carol Lee Borden Morris) operated a drug store there for a while. It has been vacant now for some time.

C. A. PATTISON'S STORE

The building which is now the Bessboro Shop was previously Pattison's Store. I worked there in the late 1950's when it was owned and operated by Norma Volckmann. Art Carpenter was the "senior" clerk there at that time. It wasn't just a grocery store. Like Dave Erit's, and Tom Sayre's this was a "general" store. Many products other than groceries were sold there. Growing up, I remember that one of my Sisco Street neighbors, Alfred Gerow worked at Pattison's, and he made deliveries from the store with a wooden sided station wagon.

DAVE ERIT'S STORE



Notice the gas tanks in front of the store. Picture probably in 1950's judging by the car in the driveway.

This store was built by W.W.Davis & Son, Architect and Builders in 1878 for D. L. Allen. Allen's son, Frank later operated this store. About 1917 David Erit purchased it and sold dry goods and groceries for about thirty years. According to Ray Clark's book, Gordon Lewis rented the store for about 5 years and then bought it in 1952. He closed the store in 1971. Gordon and his family lived upstairs.

ERNIE'S MARKET (originally Braman's Store)

and also was **W. E. Hill's Meat Market & Grocery Store**

Ernie Girard purchased the Market from Walter Hill in 1949, and took over operations there on Dec 1, 1949. Walter Hill was a resident of Westport for over 40 years when he died in 1962. When Ernie purchased the Market, he and his family moved into the apartment above, and Mr. Hill and his wife, the former Elizabeth McMahan, moved into the Girard's home on Pleasant Street.

I remember before Ernie bought the store, there was a porch on this building. At that time, the cooler door was where the counter is now. At some point after that, the porch was torn off and the store was built out to the sidewalk.

Ernie Girard and his wife, Florence raised 3 children in the apartment above the store. Son Ernie, and daughters Sharon and Gail all graduated from Westport Central School.

Ernie and Florence also owned the nearby Liquor Store for a few years. Following is a newspaper ad from 1982:

ERNIE'S MARKET

33 NORTH MAIN ST. WESTPORT, NY.

Fresh Cut Beef

Groceries

Cold Beer

Fresh Subs



Ernie Girard....about 1970



2005 Photo above courtesy Ross Warren

Today, this store is owned and operated by Bruce and Carolyn Ware. They not only sell groceries and make pizzas and subs as Ernie did, but they also have fresh coffee and pastries and made to order sandwiches and michigans and a daily store-made soup. The store is closed for 2-3 months each winter while the Ware's take a much needed vacation.

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