

East Haven's Wagon and Brush Factory

The land on East Main Street at the foot of Lake Saltonstall that had been used for various business ventures from 1681 was sold by Mr. George Townsend to the Saltonstall Milling Company. The property was subsequently sold to Carrington and Fabrique. The building was changed inside and was used for a few years for manufacturing wagons, wheels, sleds and many other forms of wooden equipment. It is recalled immense logs, four and five feet in diameter were sawed into planks. It is reported that this saw-mill turned out planking for many wooden ships built in the ship-yards on the east bank of the Quinnipiac River in Fair Haven.

The power was obtained by the water from Lake Saltonstall passing down through a sluice-way and turning a mighty undershot water wheel in the basement of the mill building. The second floor was used in later years as a brush factory. The west-end of the third floor was given over to the paint shop and the remainder of the building was used as a planing mill and wagon shop. These various occupancies all existed at the time the property was owned by the Saltonstall Milling Company after the paper-mill was discontinued.

The brush factory was opened here in 1873 and it continued to manufacture all types and sizes of brushes so necessary to every community. However, all wheels ceased to run and operations in the entire plant were halted one night in March 1878 by fire. The grist-mill, saw-mill and brush-mill were totally destroyed. It was never proven who set the building on fire, but a certain family living in the vicinity was suspected of having knowledge of the origin of the fire.

It would seem only proper that these facts should be set before the townspeople before the passing of years erases all memories of such events forever.