

THE GURDON BRADLEY HOUSE
(The Est. of Mrs. S W F Andrews)

At 239 Main Street stands the Gurdon Bradley house which is now the property of the estate of Mrs. S. W. F. Andrews. This house was built about 1760 by Gurdon Bradley. It is interesting to note that Gurdon Bradley born in 1738 was a brother of Simeon Bradley who lived all his life nearly across the street at 214 Main Street. Their father was Samuel Bradley the builder of the house just mentioned. It is likely he aided his son Gurdon in the building of this house. On Jan. 30, 1766 Captain Gurdon Bradley married Mary Woodward and presumably this house may have been erected very near that date.

Following the erection of the Old Stone Church, town meetings were held in the church for a good many years. Afterwards town meetings were held in the unused bar-room of the old Gurdon Bradley tavern. At one time this house was a well-known tavern.

On November 16th 1821 Gurdon Bradley died at the age of 83 years. In the settlement of his estate, the house and twelve acres were sold on July 1, 1828 to Ruel Andrews. At that time Mr. Andrews was only twenty eight years old and it was thought unusual for so young a man to buy such a large piece of real estate in the very center of East Haven. According to the old deed now held by Mrs. Sherwin Haskell the land was bounded on the North: by land of Amos Bradley and Farm River; East: by Bela Farnham, James Thompson and Farm River; South: by the County Road or Main Street, Justin Bradley, Samuel Linsley, Bela Farnham and Levi Potter land; West: by the highway, Elijah Bradley and John H. B. Chidsey land.

Mr. Ruel Andrews, better known as Deacon Ruel, was the Post Master of East Haven from 1829 to 1830. The Post Office and bar was in the south west corner room on the street side, in a part of the house since removed. Deacon Ruel was the Town Clerk of East Haven for eighteen years and it was in the long kitchen in the back part of the house that the town meetings and town elections were held. The younger men of the town in 1842 declared they would not vote in the Aunt Molly Gurdon's kitchen any longer and agitated the building of a town hall. The first town hall was erected in that year and was used until destroyed by fire on June 1st 1892.

Deacon Ruel Andrews married on May 9, 1825, Miss Olive Foote, and they had only two sons, Francis Foote Andrews (father of the late Ruel Andrews) and S. Winchester F. Andrews (1844-1900). Deacon Andrews died on April 30, 1864 and the house was then occupied by his son S. W. F. Andrews who practiced law for some years in New Haven. From 1890 to 1900 S. W. F. Andrews kept a store in connection with the Post Office which had been once more located in this house (1892-1910). On the death of S. W. F. Andrews the house went to his wife Mrs. Florence Andrews. Mrs. Andrews continued to live in the house and was appointed Post Master of the Post Office which was in a small building attached to the west side of this house until 1908. At that time the entire house was moved back from the edge of the sidewalk to its present position and the little post office building was moved some little distance to the East.