

Frederic Phelps Bissell's Second Journal January 1870 to May 1887

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Frederic Phelps Bissell, or F.P. as he may have been known, was my great-great grandfather related to me through my maternal grandmother Helen Mansfield Bissell Carroll. She was the daughter of F.P.'s only son Frederic Clarence Bissell and his wife Sarah Gertrude Storrs. F.P. descends six generations from Captain John Bissell who emigrated from England to Windsor in the early 17th century. I illustrate the genealogy in more detail in the family tree attached and in my write-up of F.P.'s first journal. Frederic Bissell's ancestors migrated to the northeast section of Hebron, Connecticut in the early 18th century and in the early 19th century to a farm below Hebron center on Church Street.



In 1839, according to town records, Frederic Bissell's father Ira Bissell acquired 144.5 acres including a farmhouse, barns, and a sawmill at what is now the Church of the Holy Family Church Parish House at 185 Church Street. The structure to the right was built by F.P. in the 1880's to accommodate his son's family.

My great-great grandfather Frederic P. Bissell's second journal is full of surprises. He recounts earthquakes, wind and fire; floods, sickness and untimely death – and reveals some interesting facts about family history. By 1870 he was a well-established pillar of the church and Hebron community. Approaching his 48th birthday, F.P. Bissell was still fully engaged in his farm life but enjoying himself more by partaking in leisurely activities with family, friends and traveling to new places. His son Clarence and adopted daughter Carrie each would marry during this time and leave the house, which meant that there were fewer hands to help on the farm and around the house. He was getting sick more frequently and for longer periods and he would see relatives and friends who had helped him on the farm become ill and die, no doubt unsettling him. While he hired more farmhands to help him than in years past, he was still doing a lot himself, even through his 65th year - butchering pigs, plowing and planting fields, building roads, walls, ditches,

bridges, barns and additions, drawing logs from his wood lot and the nearby Wells Woods lot...and beating manure, just as he always had!

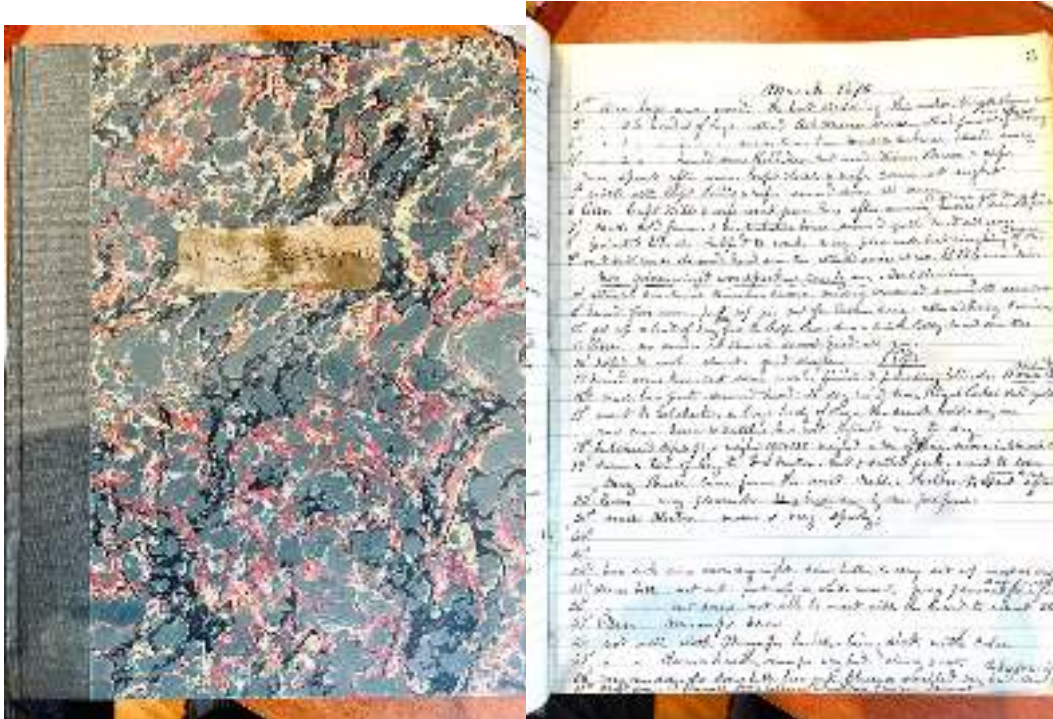
Two children would be born to Clarence and his wife Sarah Gertrude Storrs of Mansfield, Alice and Helen who was my grandmother. This meant frequent visits to and from the in-laws and taking care of the grandkids both often spoken of in F.P.'s entries. Adopted daughter Carrie Adelaide would marry George F. Talcott of Rockville after a yearlong courtship and subsequent move there.

F.P. was evermore involved with St. Peter's Church as its treasurer and warden. He continued his annual ritual of trimming the church each December and taking down the evergreens in February as spring approached. As he would put it, he "chored" around the church and parsonage putting in new glass windows and a furnace, regularly painting the church inside and out, repairing the gallery and pews, and tending to the cemetery and its monuments. I am sure he was not alone in these endeavors but he rarely mentions anyone else.

In 1871, he served one more year in the state Senate as a Senator traveling frequently to Hartford. He continued as the Probate Judge of the area primarily settling estates that included assessing the value of property and in some cases the distribution thereof. Several references to settling claims after fires tell me he remained an agent of a fire insurance company, probably in Hartford. F.P. traveled more frequently to Turnerville in this period where a railroad "Depot" and associated warehouses and additional mills had been built. The railroad began operating between major cities and towns in the area and served his personal and commercial interests. He also began working for a Turner silk mill according to a Hartford Courant article. (See the article and photographs of Turnerville in the attachments.)

He "put-up" many more birds and animals for friends and acquaintances – several some months, no doubt having developed a reputation far and wide as a taxidermist.

His second journal is even more packed with insights into daily life in the post-Civil War period when commerce and industry really took off in Connecticut. It reveals a more prosperous man, entrenched in the community, with diverse interests. The "comings and goings" of his children and grandchildren were often the subject of his daily entries showing that he was enjoying being with them and following their lives. He reported as many tragedies and dramatic events in the period as he had in the first journal, which are always the most interesting to research and speculate about.



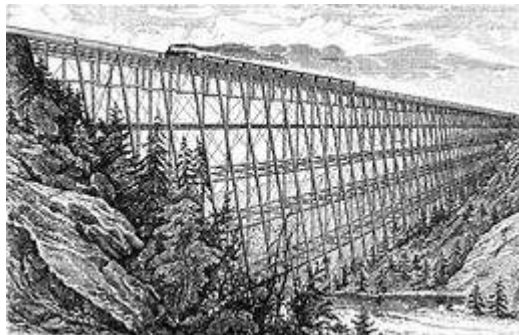
Hebron

Hebron wasn't growing much during this period as evidenced by the steady census counts of around 2000 people, but it was changing. The population influx of Irish and Germans in the 1840's, 50's and 60's, gave way to Scandinavian and Eastern European immigration filling the need for more industrial employment. It also meant that there was cheaper farm and mill labor available to Hebron and environs. Railroads helped fuel industrial and commercial expansion. They exploded across the country creating the first fortunes of Vanderbilt, Carnegie, Rockefeller and Morgan. By 1880 there were 160,000 miles of track across the country.

The prospective Air Line railroad mentioned in F.P.s first journal would be built in stages during his writing of the second journal, forming a rail line from Boston to New York through Middletown. A depot would be built in Turnerville just south of the Bissell residence. (See pictures of a Turnerville Depot from 1894 in the attachment - the original burned in 1885.) As F.P. notes, local communities including Hebron bought or guaranteed bonds to finance the building of the railroad. F.P. supplied many of the railroad ties from his wood lot and labor. He also writes about the laying of the track in March of 1873. The new line meant that F.P. could sell and get goods from points far and wide. Middletown and Willimantic became new viable trading towns for him as evidenced in his second journal. He went to Philadelphia in August of 1876 for eight days and son Clarence would go to Boston and New York City. F.P. would continue to use the Andover station for trips to Hartford and west.

Roads were more reliable byways, covered with stone that F.P. reported he would put down in well-traveled places. Small bridges may have been more secure buttressed by steel, and by granite from area mines including Niantic. He mentions one of his workers going to Niantic for stone once. (Niantic was known for its pink Granite from a site alongside the upper western reaches of the Niantic River. Some of the granite was used for the building of the Brooklyn Bridge in the 1870's and 80's.)

Several entries in F.P.'s journal illustrate that the railroad was both a boon to the community as well as a source of curious pride. On September 2, 1871, F.P. says, "my wife, M.J. Post and myself went down to the iron bridge this afternoon", probably while it was being built. An entry August 10, 1872 would reveal it to be the "Lyman Viaduct", a 1,112-foot long railroad trestle rising 137 feet above a small valley in Colchester south of East Haddam. Phoenix Iron Works completed it in 1873 for the Air Line Railroad serving customers going to Middletown, New York and Boston. Subsequent entries record attending family and church picnics at the trestle in the summer. The viaduct was later buried in sand because the maintenance proved too costly and perhaps the sand added stability for the larger engines. Today its bed serves as a hiking and biking trail. Who knew such a structure used to be there and still is?



The "Lyman Viaduct" Air Line Railroad trestle, southwest of Hebron, was a favorite picnic spot of the Bissell family.

Concurrent with the great expansion of the railroads in the second half of the 19th century was the use of the telegraph. It was practical to string telegraph wires alongside of the rails. There was a five-fold increase in messaging between 1870 and 1890 according to one source. It must have made it so much easier for F.P. to communicate with family and business partners. His first mention of the telegraph came in February of 1885, when he wrote of Clarence being "called" by the pastor of St. Peter's Church with unfortunate news, "Mr. Ellsworth just telegraphed Clarence from New Milford that his wife died this noon."

Family Life

F.P. Bissell and Almira's children, Clarence and Carrie Adelaide, became adults during his second journal and quite naturally sought out spouses in Hebron and surrounding communities. It's difficult to know how they did so but probably it was through family members, acquaintances and church connections, perhaps the Methodist "Camp Meetings" they attended every year at the end of August.

Clarence visited a church (probably the historic First Church of Christ - Congregational) in Mansfield October 19, 1871 and would make occasional visits over the next several years but especially in 1874. Someone must have caught his eye! Then, with a cryptic entry on January 21, 1875, F.P. announced the wedding of his son Clarence: "went to Mansfield to Clarence's wedding". He had been courting Sarah Gertrude Storrs daughter of Dan Paddock Storrs and Lucinda Gilbert, both from longtime Mansfield families. The union of these old Connecticut families produced those of us who descend from Helen Mansfield Bissell Carroll.



Circa 1874 photograph of Sarah ("Gertie") Gertrude Storrs from family archives.



Sarah Gertrude Storrs Bissell grew-up in her father Dan Paddock Storrs's house at 957 Storrs Road in Mansfield. The photograph is taken from the Spring Hill Inn website with their permission.

Dan and Lucinda's House sits atop Spring Hill on Storrs Road between Mansfield Center and Storrs villages across from the Mansfield Historical Society, in Mansfield CT. It is presently the Spring Hill Inn. Dan Paddock Storrs's grandfather Dan Storrs purchased the house in 1794. (See the attached land transfer document.) He died in 1831. Some years thereafter, Dan Paddock Storrs inherited the house from his father Zalmon who died in 1867 after a long career as a silk manufacturer, judge, Postmaster and state legislator.

In April of 1875 Dan Paddock, Lucinda and their other daughter Ellen "Nellie" Gilbert Storrs visited. Clarence and Sarah moved into the "yellow house", on which he and F.P. had been working. It was possibly the former John Howey house on Kinney Road shown in an 1857 map purchased by Ira Bissell that year. A little more than two years later, October 22, 1877, F.P. wrote "a daughter born to Clarence." She would be great Aunt Alice Gertrude. A little less than four years later the family would be complete. On May 20, 1881. Almira wrote in F.P.'s journal, "Helen Mansfield born."

Throughout the next several years the families visited back and forth to Mansfield frequently. Sarah and the kids would go to visit there some summers while Clarence attended to business affairs, and helped with the house and farm. Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays were spent together in Hebron much of the time but occasionally apart. One Thanksgiving entry in 1883 showed how difficult it must have been to keep everyone together as time went on. F.P. laments that Mr. Storrs (Dan Paddock) and wife (Lucinda Gilbert), Mr. Goslee & wife at Clarence's. We were alone except Mr. Champlin."

Carrie Adelaide also found a partner in life: George Talcott. The Talcotts built and operated textile mills in a section of Vernon near Rockville called Talcottville. She visited Rockville often over the next two years beginning in February of 1876 probably at the urging of H.O. Carver's daughters who lived there. In March of 1879, a George first visited the Bissells. George, Carrie, Clarence and "wife" "went to Middletown this evening" perhaps to the theatre that F.C. and Sarah had been attending. George would visit several times over the next two months. Finally, F.P.

announces August 20, 1879, "Carrie married in church at 10AM, church full out, everything went off decently and in order, a great display of flowers." 10-days later he writes, "Carrie gone to Rockville to her new home." Carrie and George were 21 years old! They never had children. Carrie died of tuberculosis in 1900 and is buried at St. Peter's. George died in 1922 and is buried in Grove Hill Cemetery in Rockville. To my knowledge, George never married again.

F.P. writes on November 12, 1879, "Nellie Storrs married this evening" to William Crandall. Completing the family story from his second journal, on March 29, 1887, F.P. reported that Clarence's father-in-law, "Mr. Storrs very sick, Clarence & Gertie there." He must have rallied somewhat the next day with Clarence and Gertie returning to Hebron, "Mr. Storrs said to be better today." But the following day he entered, " Mr. Storrs died yesterday at noon."

Frederic Bissell's second journal has many friends who are "familiar faces". But new ones emerge such as Mr. Alverson, Mr. Raymond, Mr. Kimball, Mr. Bingham, and Lyman Cone - probably related to father Ira's first wife Mary Cone.

One old and probably best friend was Urbane Carver who was certainly a relative of Almira's but not a brother. Often mentioned in both journals, F.P. had been visiting Urbane often early in 1876. On May 23, 1876 he writes, "Urbane Carver died this morning at 8 o'clock." He writes nothing further about Urbane perhaps revealing the hurt he felt about the loss of his friend. Urbane was buried in the Gilead Cemetery.

F. P. was also friendly with brother-in-law H. O. Carver and his first wife Electa and second wife Chloe, often working with him on farm projects on their respective properties even when just visiting. H. O. had moved to Chicopee, Massachusetts in the 1850's near Granby where the other the Carvers had moved earlier in the century. Chloe was from Chicopee. He died in 1881 at 84 and is buried in St. Peter's Cemetery.

I solved the mystery of Mr. and Mrs. Champlin regularly visiting the Bissells! June 11, 1877 he writes, "Rebecca (Penhallow) Champlin visits." She can be traced to a gravesite in New London belonging to her and William Champlin. She was born in nearby Columbia to Ruth Skinner of Hebron, so there must have been some ancient connection. On November 10, 1886, F.P. writes that his good friend and Almira's Mrs. Champlin "died yesterday." Frequently F.P. mentions transporting the Champlins to Colchester to catch the stage to New London after a visit, and later to the Turnerville Depot.

Farm Life

Farm life did not change much for F.P. during this period. His entries tell of the now familiar rhythm of the life – the late winter early spring preparation of the fields and equipment, the planting of the grains, tubers and garden vegetables, the hoeing,

weeding and hilling, the early harvests and replanting of rye, the July “haying” and the late harvests of corn, buckwheat, oats, fruits and clover. Fall and cooler weather gave way to cider making, sorghum brewing, butchering of pigs, cattle, and chickens and the cleaning, painting, plastering and repair of house, equipment and barns well into winter.

F.P. continued to grow sorghum throughout this period “cooking” sweet syrup for personal and commercial use in his sorghum mill and using the cane for animal fodder. He had started growing what he called “sugar cane” before the Civil War but it took on greater importance during the War when sugar was not readily available from the South. But he gave up tobacco. Broadleaf tobacco had been grown in the region since the 17th century especially around Windsor and the know-how may have been imported from relatives living there. After spearing the tobacco stalks onto laths it was hung to dry in airy barns; when dry, finely cut for pipe tobacco or used whole for cigar wrappers. He grew it profitably for years, crating up boxes of it for sale throughout the region. On September 2, 1873, F.P. laments after a big thunderstorm, the “hail cut my tobacco bad.” Losing the whole production that year seemed to be the end of it. Below is a 20th century photo of broadleaf tobacco harvesting. Of course in the 19th century, a team or horses or oxen would have drawn the lath racks.



This photo is from a Spielman family website. I may have worked on this very farm when I was 14-years old!

By 1879 his new crop was mangol wurtzel, a beet-like plant used for animal fodder, which according to a source, farmers started using in the 70's and 80's. It may have been a short-lived experiment because his last mention of the “mangols” was in October 1881. F.P. continued growing sorghum through 1884.

In reading his entries, the extent of his farm became clearer to me. His often reference to the “Privateer” was likely one of his main corn and hayfields. The photographs below are labeled as examples of “19th Century Privateer farming”. The meaning is still obscure, but Ira Bissell refers to “my mowing lots known as the Privateer Lots” in a one-acre deed to John Howey in 1851, property near the corner of Kinney Road and Church Street. From the first journal I thought “privateer” was a piece of mechanical equipment associated with haying.



These photos are from websites about "privateer" farming.

He referenced other fields as the: barn lot, plain, new meadow, rowen* lot, front pasture, north end of pasture and square lot, or terms descriptive of their locations, shapes or other.

F.P. hired more workers to help him with the farm: Lafayette, C. Adelbert Porter, Mr. M. Camerera, David, Mr. Bingham, Louie, John Carpenter some of whom lived in a "tenant house" on the property but most off-property. They took over much of the plowing and harvesting and helped with chores around the farm. They were usually hired for the growing season of six or seven months but occasionally for the entire year. C.A. Porter was hired April 2, 1877 for "7 mos. work at \$17 per month." By 1880, C.A.P., as F.P. referred to him, was going regularly to South Manchester where he probably met his wife Elizabeth. He and his wife would become very good friends of the Bissells. Later they would move to South Manchester dying in the next century. They were interred in Manchester's East Cemetery.

On a tragic note, F.P. mentions on March 1, 1887 that the wife of one of his farmworkers "Mrs. Bingham died", then later March 26 "another sad day for Mr. Bingham, his house burned to the ground 4 o'clock pm."

With the found time F.P. "put up" more birds and small animals expanding his taxidermy business, and also became a poultry farmer attending the local Farmers Association, State Fairs, Poultry Shows and Society meetings and State Agricultural Association meetings. His specialty was raising Leghorn chickens, a white breed imported from Livorno Italy early in the century, said to be good foragers and "wonderful" egg producers, perfect for the farm life. He also raised brown Leghorns and Houdans.

F.P. wrote frequently about the very cold weather in this period of his life. He recorded frequent readings of below zero temperatures, some in the 10 degree below to 20 degree below range. For several years he recorded the 6 am and 9 pm temperatures from December through February. The mean temperatures for these months were in the 20's, a far cry from the 30's and 40's we enjoy today...or get anxious about! And then there was his entry on **May 29, 1884: "Frost – probably killed all the fruit, strawberries, grapes, etc."** June 2, "Went to Wells Woods (where he had a wood lot). The trees are badly killed by the frost." Of course he meant that the tree flower and leaf buds were damaged. Harsh!

Civic and Business Life

Following the Civil War, Republican Ulysses S. Grant became president and consolidated Republican gains, pushing through Reconstruction legislation that dealt with rebuilding the South politically and economically. Former slaves became both property and business owners and state and national legislators, reliable Republicans. But times were changing. Democrats would gain strength throughout the South as it rebelled against Reconstruction by intimidation. The Jim Crow laws of subsequent years would usher in a brutal crushing of democracy and freedoms for many citizens, an almost complete reversal of the Civil War outcome. The Republicans were weakened by internal conflict after General Grant's term ended, its own factions split over Reconstruction aims.

Just before the National Election of 1884 F.P. recounts that, "Boys in Blue' marched to Turnerville this evening, all the Republicans through the street illuminated." The "Boys" were a fraternal organization popular in Republican corners at the time. "Republican rally, torchlights and speeches." On November 4, "the largest Republican majority I ever knew, about 74." On the next day he allowed that Republican Blaine from Maine had probably won, but by the 7th he wrote, "Generally conceded that Cleveland is elected President." The election was very close. Democrat Grover Cleveland narrowly won his home state of New York, normally a reliable Republican stronghold.

The following year General Grant and Republican ideals would pass from the scene altogether. F.P. wrote on June 23, 1885 – "General Grant died this morning at 8:08, younger than myself by just four days." (63) Grant had been ill most of the last year with terminal throat cancer caused by his incessant cigar smoking. Through a series of swindles and business setbacks he was nearly broke, but still living in his Upper East Side apartment in Manhattan. To satisfy creditors and leave a financial legacy for his wife and children, he worked with publisher and editor Mark Twain to write his memoirs, which he finished just before his death. Grant was greatly admired by the anti-slavery faction of the Republican Party and veterans who believed he had won the Civil War. After Grant's funeral procession around the country for much of the summer, F.P. writes simply on August 8, "Grant's funeral." From his writings about Grant in his first and second journals, cryptic though they were, I get the impression F.P. admired Grant greatly.

As for F.P.'s political career, he seems to have remained in the thick of politics in Tolland County and Hebron as an Elector (male property owner) and Probate Judge. He recorded elections for state and national office in his journal, the town usually going Republican. March 8, 1871, he recorded "Republican Senatorial convention at Andover." (Almira pencils for her modest husband, "F.P. Bissell nominated.") April 1st he laments "callers" probably favor seekers, "hindering" his tobacco planting! "The ways of a politician are hard", he says!! On April 3, there was an Electors

Meeting – “town went Democratic except for Senator”, he writes. Next to the entry, Almira pencils “F.P. Bissell Senator”. Soon thereafter he was in Hartford for the legislative session May though June.

Following in his father’s political footsteps on November 9, 1880 – “Clarence (has a) reception at the Fuller Hotel” in Tolland. According to “The History of Tolland County”, the hotel operated for a short time in this period before being converted for other uses. This event followed the election meeting of November 2 where state officers and representatives were determined. Clarence was elected to the State Assembly as his father was two decades before. This photo is taken from the 1881 Connecticut State legislative archives.



Frederic Clarence Bissell at age 33 when he was a state assemblyman.

Little changed in F.P.’s business life during this period. His efforts were centered on his farming and the surplus he could generate for sale – apples for cider and consumption, barrels of sorghum syrup, tobacco and hay. For example in November 1885 he writes, “sold apples to the Insane Retreat Middletown”. According to historical accounts, the Middletown asylum was the first of its kind to house the mentally ill without restraints, humanely.

There may have been other crops he sold but it’s not apparent from his writing. He also continued as an insurance representative perhaps getting into life insurance. On April 18, 1878, went to a “Hartford Charter Oak Life Insurance” company meeting.”(Today a part of The Hartford Insurance Company) On April 11th, 1885, “Settled loss of the Gillett burned barn.”

F.P. did take on an exciting new opportunity related to his farm business. In early September 1875 F.P. “went to Niantic Monday” for what seemed to be a company-held event. On the 11th he writes, “Mr. W. A. Thompson here. (He) made me agent for the sale of Granet (sic) State Agricultural implements” – a manufacturers representative. He seemed excited about the new venture. On June 22 of the following year he went to Middletown for a meeting of the “Granite Agl. Agts.” Shortly after, things must have turned sour. On August 15, F.P. entered into a Joint Defense Agreement with two other agents in nearby towns “against any and all claims against” them “on account of alleged fraud perpetrated on” claimants by an agent of Granite Agricultural works of Lebanon, N.H.” There is scant information

about this alleged fraud, but it had to do with selling equipment to farmers with satisfaction, money back guarantees and then not taking back the equipment when it didn't work properly. (Scanned copy attached.) No further word from F. P. Bissell as to how this matter turned out!

He was also involved in the silk weaving business in Turnerville. It's not clear when he started because he had been going to Turnerville for other purposes for decades, but probably in the 1870's and 1880's. An undated Hartford Courant article titled "Turner's Silk Mills" gave an account of P. W. Turner's three mills. In the article it says, the "warping room and office" of one of those mills was "supervised by Judge Bissell." 100 "hands" were employed at the three Turner Mills. (The article is included in the attachments but some of it is unreadable.)

A prosperous Judge Bissell became more sophisticated with his investments than the Norwich Savings Bank days. On March 20, 1873 he records, "Clarence gone to Hartford to transfer bank stock to Geo. P. Bissell & Co." The company was a bond investment company advertising 8% returns.

Social and Church Life

F.P. and Almira's social life was still geared to visiting friends and family, on which such occasions F.P. records the "who and where". A few notations stood out to me:

- More leisurely activities such as local "Literary entertainment", or Gertie and Clarence going to the theatre in Middletown to see the "Belshazzar Drama".
- Reference to sports, "made a croquet ground" was popular at that time but soon eclipsed by lawn tennis.
- June 16th 1870 - "circus in Colchester
- August 3 -10 - "went with Capt. Hills last Wednesday to Rondout 10 ms above NY City" - actually in Ulster County 100 miles north of the City.
- October 21, 1870 - "went west September 22 returned today", visiting some relatives no doubt but who knows where? It could be the Bissells of Litchfield or perhaps Carver relatives in parts of western New York. One entry mentions a Carver relative going home to Minnesota!
- October 23, 1871 - "Governor Jewell went through town, had quite a reception, fired canon (sic) and marshall (sic) music. Colchester Cavalry met him here." Marshall Jewell was Ambassador to Russia and later the Postmaster General of the U.S.
- June 2, 1876, "went to Barnum's Show Willimantic." P.T. Barnum's show had been touring Massachusetts and Connecticut with a show nearly every day in a different town.
- "Attended Literary society, January 23, 1880



This is St. Peter's Church today on Church Street. The cemetery is immediately behind it. The stained glass window nearest the American flag has a pane inscribed F.P. Bissell. These photographs are taken from the St. Peter's website. F.P.'s old whitewash can still be noticed in spots on the outside of the church although nearly worn away!

As St. Peter's Church treasurer and warden, F.P. Bissell remained very active with church affairs. One could tell from his writing how much he cared for the church making repairs, mowing grass and bushes, painting the church inside and out, trimming the church at Christmastime and participating in special church events. He replaced a church steeple and installed stained glass as noted in his journal, possibly the ones shown in the pictures. Again a few records of his church activity stand out – with some historical notes:

- In January 1871 F.P. worked several days at the church painting and laying carpet. The St. Peter's website says the church was renovated around this time. F.P. says, "F. L. Bissell finished joiner work at the church." Later in January he writes, "(T)he Painters finished inside". Mid-February he makes two entries, "Put in 1 stained window" and "put in windows to tower". The reward was an, "Oyster supper in Eve."
- April 21, 1872 – "attended service at Calvary Church Colchester", formed in 1857 on Hayward Avenue, he had been attending services here since its formation as recorded in his journals and may have been a "mission" church that was "yoked" to St. Peter's. The church was later disbanded and the building razed in the early 1900's. Perhaps we will read about that in his fourth journal!
- Annually in late August or early September the family went to "Camp Meeting". These were religious retreats for faith renewal and recreation. In researching sites in the area, the meetings may have been at the Willimantic Camp Meeting Association site, Camp Wofowag near Moodus or in nearby Hope Valley all operated by the Methodists.
- November and December 1870 F.P. paints the church inside and out and installs a furnace. January – March put in stained glass windows and carpet. (His activities probably with many others were part of a major church renovation that is documented in the St. Peter's church history found on its web page.) March 29, 1872 "Put in J.S. Willis window in church."
- November 1874 - "went to Middletown to Consecration of Holy Trinity"
- Frequent Social Society gatherings and picnics such as August 29, 1877 where he notes "145 present".

- January 18, 1880 “Mr. Sullivan preached his farewell sermon at Congregational church. During February and March F.P. and probably others also searched for a new pastor for Hebron-Colchester (implying yoked congregations) to succeed Mr. Bryant. They visited the Bishop in Middletown. Finally they called Reverend Ellsworth who may have been from New Milford according to later entries. Mr. Bryant preached his last sermon April 25. Sadly, both Mr. and Mrs. Bryant would die in the summer. Mr. Ellsworth was ordained June 25, 1880, “a great day for St. Peter’s church.”
- On June 7, 1884, “Clarence and myself went to South Manchester for the consecration of St. Mary’s Church.” My Heard family attended St. Mary’s for many years. The last time I was there was for my mom’s funeral. We held the reception in the old church building, the same one F.P. and F. C. attended that day.
- June 29, 1884 – “St. Peter’s Parish celebrated their 150th anniversary, church packed full. Confirmation, 14 confirmed. Collection for liquidation Ch. Debt of \$180.00, \$230.00 raised, great day for St. P.” (F.P. as treasurer had gone to a Willimantic bank to obtain the loan a couple years prior.)
- Ladies Missionary Society met here this evening.” April 30, 1885.
- October 22, 1885, “attended Church congress in New Haven.”

According to a NY Times article it was a contentious meeting debating the pros and cons of the U.S. tariffs legislated against European products to protect U.S. industry. One might ask why a church convention would address such issues? From the reported dialog, it had to do with the virulent anti-Catholic sentiment and general anti-immigration lobby prevalent at the time. It is similar to the anti-Muslim and anti-immigration feelings today. The Times wrote, “Bishop Cox argued that all schemes for the unity of the Episcopal Church with other churches had always been faulty. No ultramontane Romanist can be a true American.” Then, Charles Hebec Clark of Philadelphia, “(The) tariff system is...(necessary as a) as a defense against the defect of a European society.”

Deaths, Disease and Tragedies

Even more so than the first journal it struck me that as robust and strong as F.P. Bissell was in his work life, he was often sick, as much as once or twice a month with headaches, toothaches and unspecified minor ailments. Perhaps that was the norm for people who little understood good sanitary precautions. Perhaps it had to do with more contact with people through business and personal travel. On several occasions during this period he was laid-up with serious illnesses some of which we can only speculate about.

One of those times was at Thanksgiving 1872 when he became deathly ill. From end of November until the end of February 1873 F.P. was immobile, describing at one point “Hemoraging (sic) of Lungs” and later incongruously “Rheumatism”. F.P. made but these two entries during this time. It was very probably pneumonia caused by a

virus or possibly some chemical exposure, but it may well have been tuberculosis. He is very lucky to have lived.

Another in April of 1882 he was sick for a month from an unknown cause. In June and July 1884 he suffered from a persistent sore on his leg that made him “quite lame” visiting a doctor in Colchester several times for treatment. In August of 1884 he wrote, “(T)aken down with Dysentery last Wednesday night, am able to get around today. Wife (Almira) taken down with Diarrhea yesterday; better today.”

Medical histories of the time point out that communicable diseases were still little understood and had no treatments for tuberculosis (consumption), small pox, typhoid, measles, scarlet fever, chicken pox, mumps, cholera, whooping cough or influenza – all prevalent and potentially lethal. Small pox was the only disease for which inoculations had been available since the 18th century.

To underline the fragility of life and the effect of communicable diseases among families, F.P. writes: March 6, 1870 – “Mrs. Bissell and Carrie got mumps.” From March 12 through March 28 Clarence and F.P. suffered with it and probably father Ira because on March 13 F.P. says, “Father dies this morn’ at 6 o’clock.” Ira Bissell was 82 joining Lavinia who had passed 17 years before.

Of course injury could be self-inflicted as evidenced by this astounding entry December 6, 1875: “Carrie shot a pistol ball into her leg.”

Judge Bissell recorded many tragic circumstances in his second journal. It’s fascinating reading about these events in the newspapers of the day. But some local accidents would not be recorded except in F.P.’s journals:

- February 9, 1871 – “Noa M. Wrisley buried today, was killed by a fire engine going over him.”
- “Mr. Chauncey Gott killed by the cars this noon.” June 22, 1883 (Train cars probably.)
- October 5, 1877, “William H. Horton killed yesterday morning with a threshing machine.”
- June 21, 1885 – “Lightening Struck J. J. Welles’ boys.”
- “George (Talcott) here, caught his toe in the carpet, fell, broke his hip.” October 4, 1885.
- On November 17, 1886, “Two men killed on RR at Blackledge (River) crossing.”
- June 1, 1886 “The Kingsley place burned yesterday morning and Kingsley burned too. (!!!)...Thought it had been struck by lightning.”
- June 11, 1886, “Mr. Loomis’s house burned this morning.”
- December 5, 1879 “poorhouse burned in Colchester this morning 5 AM.” As many as 64 almshouse farms were sprinkled throughout Connecticut to house and feed the indigent and mentally incapable.
- F.P. wrote September 25, 1885 that the “Depot and stores burned at Turnerville at 11:30 am.”

On November 10, 1872 he records, "Great Fire in Boston" – The fire was truly a catastrophe burning nearly 60% of the structures in town according to accounts at the time.

On May 22, 1874 he "went to Williamsburg, Mass to see the ruins of the Flood." On May 16, the Mill River dam burst killing 139 people and wiping out four towns. The dam had been built by amateurs to save money and had not been properly engineered or inspected. According to newspaper accounts, following several days of torrential rain, the dam keeper noticed part of the earthen dam giving way. When he realized what was going to happen, he rode downstream to raise the alarm probably saving countless lives.

Another dam overflowed following a "tremendous freshet" on March 21, 1876 that washed out the railroad again. March 27 he reports, "Many lives lost in the freshet yesterday, Taftville dam overflowed by lot! The dam location was the nearby Shetucket River flowing down to Norwich.

Heavy rains caused flooding throughout the region around February 22, 1878. According to one report there was "four feet of water in Providence." F.P. said, "the greatest freshet (I) ever knew." He had said the same thing at least twice before in his journals.

On April 17, 1882, F.P. documented the "great fire in Hebron" which destroyed much of the town center and church. He writes, "burned the house and store of George R. Burton, the Congregational church, house of S.G. Gilbert, house of Mrs. M. Loomis, the Bassett House, house and barn of A. F. Norton and school house (Center Schoolhouse), also damaging Town Hall, Cong'l. Parsonage, G.S. Burton's Store (a different Burton), Mrs. Buell's house and House of Captain Page." The following month both Captain J.G. and Mrs. Olive Hanks Page died within days of each other perhaps from injuries in the fire. Hebron town histories recall this event. F.P. recounts participating in the rebuilding of the schoolhouse and church and subsequent dedication May 1, 1883. In September 1882, he "put in the Page (memorial) windows at church". And in June the following year he put up the Page's grave monument in St. Peter's Cemetery.



The Congregational church in Hebron Center, which Frederic Bissell helped rebuild and dedicated in 1883.

According to news reports at the time, there was a 5.5 Mercalli-scale earthquake centered in Brooklyn known as the “Coney Island Earthquake” on August 10, 1884. F.P. writes, “Quite an Earthquake at 2;07 pm.”!! The next day he wrote, “quite severe through Massachusetts, Connecticut, N.Y., N.J., & Penn.” Can you imagine the surprise?

Two years later on August 31, 1886 he wrote, “Earthquake tonight about 9:30 pm in Charlestown, S.C.; it did great damage there; felt all over country east of the Mississippi.” According to accounts the 7.0+ Mercalli-scale quake was the largest ever and since in the eastern part of the U.S. It damaged over 2000 buildings in Charleston.

He entered January 11, 1887, a “large fire in Hartford”. From news reports at the time, the fire had engulfed the whole J. Merriam block on Ford Street burning the Plimpton Manufacturing Company and furniture maker Seidler & May.

Thoughts From the Second Journal

In many ways the second journal stands in contrast to the first. In the first, F.P.’s professional pursuits outside of farming were developing and he was finding his standing in the community. In the second it was clear that he had “arrived”. The older generation faded and his generation became the wizened leadership. At the same time the younger generation started their professional and personal journeys. It was also clear that commerce was growing all around them with better roads, the railroads and river steamers. They could get around better and they did, traveling further than they had and doing business in new places like Middletown. They prospered. No longer were they subsistence farmers. It will be interesting to learn how the family and business dynamics change for F.P. and relations in the next journals. I also know there are historic events that I am anxious to read about – the 1888 Blizzard for example!

*Terms

*“Paint on the house” – rather than “paint the house” meant to distinguish outside from painting in the house.

*Pondrett house – I believe this was a manure storage facility system.

*Rowen – Rowen is the second cutting of the same crop. It is a smaller stemmed, greener, sweeter, more nutritious, grass (hay) fed to young stock. F.P. refers to clover as such a crop. F.P. had a field called the “rowen” field.

Family Comings and Goings

With “local leadership”, I have discovered from the vital statistics records that many Bissells lived in Hebron, some of whom are listed below from F.P.’s journal entries:

- January 14, 1870 - Mrs. Laura Bissell died
- March 9, 1872 – funeral of Miss Elizabeth Bissell
- June 5, 1872 – Glastonbury funeral of Aunt Lucy
- L.B. Carver lived in East Haddam
- Uncle and Aunt Phelps and Angie visiting September 1872

- Spring of 1873 Clarence goes after Dr. Storrs to care for David Strong in Andover but by August both “Uncle David and Aunt Strong” had died. Aunt Strong (Clarissa) was Ira Bissell’s sister. Uncle David Bissell Strong was the son of Leah Bissell and David Strong. Leah was a sister of Levi Bissell and Lavinia Phelps. F.P. sold his sawmill to David B. Strong in 1856.

- Thanksgiving 1873 – Louise Bissell came
- July 7, 1874 – F. (Francis) L. Bissell dies age 65, interred in St. Peter’s

- June 1875 “Aunt Betsey (Phelps) Jones Billings died this morning.” According to the Hebron town records, she was a sister of three-G grandmother Lavinia Phelps; sister of Frederick Phelps, Jr.; and sister of Electa Carver first wife of Harry (H.O.) Carver. Their daughter was Ann Eliza (Carver) Fitch of Rockville. H.O. and Electa lived in Turnerville and were frequent visitors to F.P. and Almira the early years. Later Eliza was a visitor with Maggie Thompson daughter of H.O. and his second wife Chloe. They were probably the Rockville connection for Carrie Adelaide who married George Talcott.

- Lydia Bissell visited November 1878, probably namesake of Aunt Lydia Ira’s sister, who married Hubbard E. Bestor and lived in Columbus, New York. Both are buried in St. Peter’s.

- July 26, 1876 F.P. notes calling on “Cousin Phebe Buell” Her mother was Phebe Bissell, father Ira Bissell’s sister who died the same year as Cousin Phebe was born. A contemporary of F.P.’s born in 1820 whose spouse was Hiram Griswold Buell, daughter Rachel B. probably lived in Colchester where they are buried in the Ponemah Cemetery.

- “Abbie B. Bissell died at 5 pm.”, March 31, 1877 age 44. She was the wife of William Carver.

- “Timothy P. Bissell died” November 29, 1877. He and Lydia Tarbox were the parents of two young children, Abigail and Albert Bissell. Both died January 19, 1834 and are buried together in the Andover Road or “Old Hebron” Cemetery. Timothy Porter Bissell was the son of Adoniram and Sarah Bissell. Adoniram was the son of Hezekiah and Phebe Post Bissell, brother of F.P.’s grandfather Levi.

- R.S. Bissell died this morning at 2 o'clock. October 26, 1879. Ralph's wife died in March of 1881. These are the parents of four children who predeceased them as told in F.P.'s first journal.
- "Chored for Alfred Bissell" November 13, 1879
- October 18, 1883 "went to Depot after body of Henry Bissells child."
- June 13, 1885, "Went to East Hartford to funeral of Uncle Gordon Bliss."
- "Funeral of Rachel Jones', June 29, 1885. She was probably related to Mary (Molly) Jones wife of Frederick Phelps, F.P.'s namesake and grandfather.
- "Hezekiah Bissell died", June 13, 1887 and is buried at St. Peter's. He is the son of Adoniram Bissell and Sarah Phelps and grandson of Grandpa Ira's brother Hezekiah and Phebe Post.

(Levi and Abilena from previous page)

|

Ira⁶ and Lavinia Phelps⁷ Bissell m. June 27, 1821

b. January 19, 1788 d. April 13, 1870 b. January 19, 1788 d. November 13, 1853

|

Mary Adelaide b. April 19, 1832 d. "suddenly at 2 pm" December 20, 1850 age 18

Frederic Phelps and Almira Jane Carver Bissell⁸ m. May 2, 1847

b. April 23, 1822 d. September 22, 1905 b. October 11, 1826 d. October 10, 1907

|

Carrie Adelaide (Brown)⁹ b. 1857 d. December 10, 1900 married Geo F. Talcott

Frederic Clarence and Sarah Gertrude Storrs m. January 21, 1875 Mansfield, Ct

b. May 4, 1848 Hebron d. Dec. 19, 1931 Hartford b. June 6, 1850 Mansfield, Ct. d. Feb. 25, 1924 Hartford

|

Alice Gertrude Bissell b. Oct. 22, 1877 Hebron, d. Sept. 4, 1923 Hartford

Helen Mansfield Bissell and William James Carroll m. June 24, 1915

b. May 20, 1881 d. Oct. 5, 1961 Hartford | b. Whitehaven, England Nov. 18, 1873 d. May 9, 1952 Hartford

|

John (Jack) Bissell¹⁰

Helen Margaret¹¹

Alice Storrs

b. June 5, 1916

b. Aug. 31, 1918.

b. July 16, 1920

d. July 1, 2003 Fairbanks

d. Dec. 13, 2013 Manchester Ct

d. Circa 2015 Medford, Or

m. Mary E. Searle Sept. 6, 1941

m. Louis F. Heard Jan. 5, 1946

m. Rodney E. Stambaugh Mar. 18, 1944

c. Melissa Carroll Chapin

c. Gary Louis Heard.....

c. Helen Anne S. Williams

Continued below

Laurie Carroll H. Berg

Rodney Elliot Stambaugh

Peter Alan Heard

Elizabeth Alice S. Moore

Continued below

Continued below

Melissa born May 15, 1945 Hartford married Terry Chapin, had two children Mark and Keith

Gary born Oct. 5, 1948 Hartford married Sharon Sabol; had one child Beth Sabol Heard Provo;

Beth Provo married Kahlil Provo; had two children Rosalia and Mateo

Gary also married Sara Dzikiewicz; had one child Marjorie Grace

Laurie born August 24, 1951 married Robert Berg; had two children Jocelyn Stella and Robert Louis

Laurie died March 27, 2019; Jocelyn married Marissa Ferguson and had one child Rose Helen Ferguson-Berg

Peter born May 16, 1956 married Beth Harrison; had one child Matthew Harrison

Helen Anne married Claude Williams; had two children Jennifer and Jessica

Rodney (Bud) married Margaret Holst; had two children Sarah Cole, Andrew Elliot

Elizabeth (Betsy) Alice married Bernard Moore; had two children Margaret Elizabeth and Samuel Storrs

⁶ First wife was Acenith who died in 1820 age 32

⁷ Lavinia's Parents were Frederic Phelps born in Simsbury, Ct. in 1749 and died in Hebron in 1807, buried in Andover Cemetery as is great-great-great-great grandmother Mary Jones Phelps born in 1759 in Hebron, dying there in 1796 at 37. Joel Jones keeps popping up in F.P.'s writings and may be related to Mary, a great Aunt perhaps. An "Aunt Betsey" may be a Jones as she is mentioned in the same stroke as Joel.

⁸ Great-great-great grandfather Joseph Carver was known as Esq. Carver in F.P.s entries and wife Dicey as "Mother Carver". Her maiden name was Phelps. She was born in 1787 and died in 1860; he November 5, 1782 and died November 23, 1854. Joseph's parents were Aldric and Asseneth Tarbox Carver and grand parents David and Amy.

⁹ As noted earlier, Carrie was an orphan adopted by the Bissell's. But her surname Brown is one of others in the vicinity about whom F.P. writes.

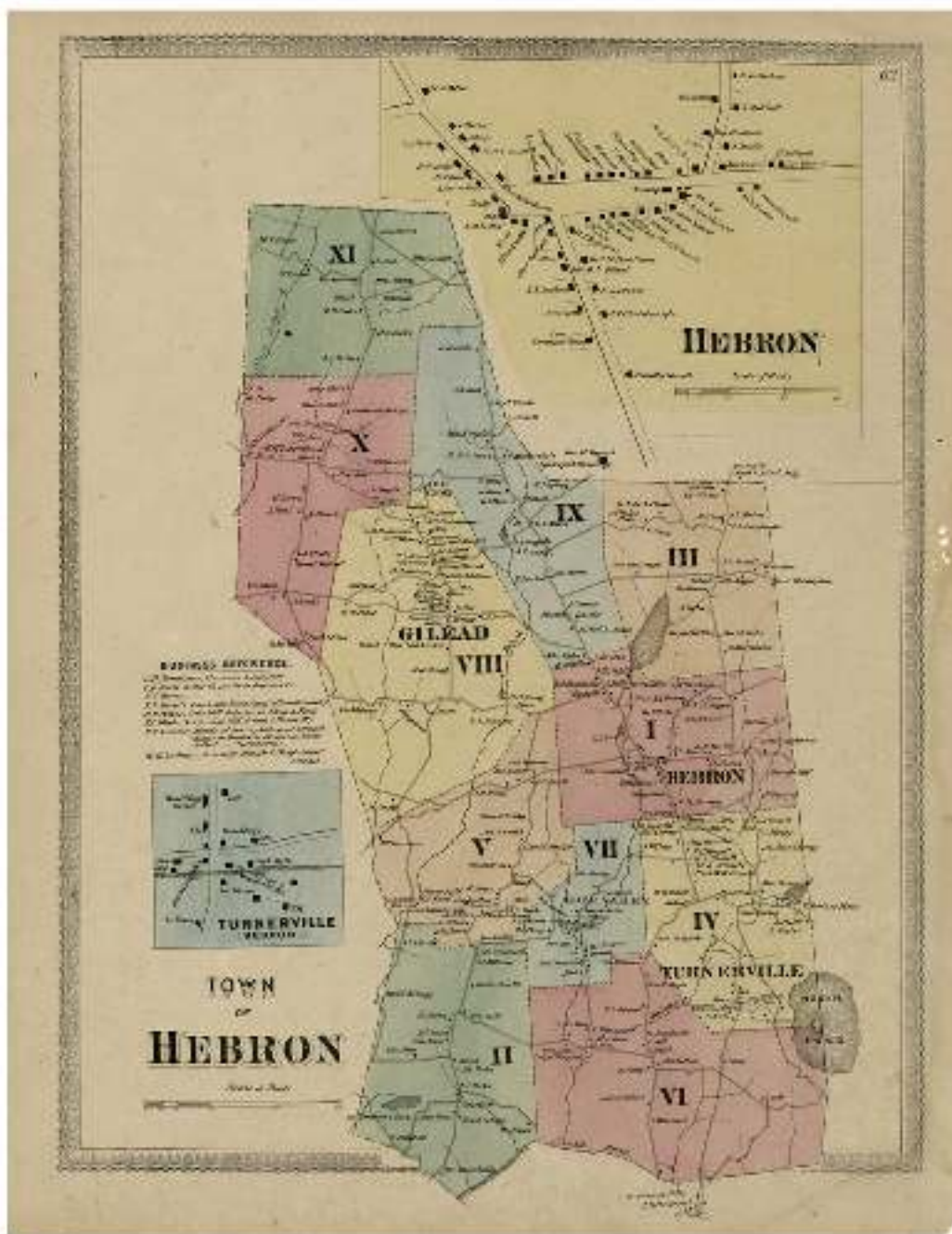
¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bissell_Carroll

¹¹ <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/helen-heard-wetherbee-obituary?pid=168650911>

An 1868 Map of Hebron and its numbered school districts found on the HHS website:

www.hebronthistoricalsociety.org

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/uconnlibrariesmagic/3404161509/sizes/o/in/photostream/>



By expanding the School District IV section on the 1868 map of Hebron, one can see many Bissells lining the east side Church Street: F.L. (Francis) & W.H. (Warren Henry) Bissell, H.A. Bissell (Hezekiah Asa), R.S. Bissell (Ralph), F.P. Bissell and his father Ira Bissell. F.P.'s journals mention all of them, but exact relation of Francis, Henry and Ralph to Ira and F.P. are unchecked. They are buried in St. Peter's. One can also see Turnerville Center at the bottom of the section at what is now Lake Road. Note F.P. in the "Business Reference"!

In 1860, Frederic P. bought Curtis Phelps's property to the south and sold it to Timothy P. Bissell in 1870. Town records show Adoniram sold property to Hezekiah and R.S. Bissell in the early 1850's. Further up on the detailed map of Hebron Center is Timothy P. Bissell.

A June 1884 page from Frederic Bissell's second journal is below. Note the dedication of St. Mary's Church Manchester and the St. Peter's celebration of their 150th anniversary. Note also that F.P. was quite "lame" that month with a "sore" on his shin troubling enough to see the doctor twice! Other interesting tidbits as well - May frost, chores around barn and house, visitors, injury, plowing!

174
 June 1884

1 Sun
 2 Chord. went to Hills brook with Thomas. The trees are badly killed by the frost
 3 painted on barn. Bingham picked stone on stock ground
 4 got a load of saw dust. Towed a sill to barn. painted. Bingham planted
 5 painted on barn.
 6 painted on barn. all through except two hours work. dry.
 7th wife, Clarence & myself went to St. Manchester to Consecration of St. Mary's Church. hot
 8 Sun
 9th helped to wash, draw stone & made fence. Pleasant but dry
 10 whitewashed & papered kitchen & sink room. Cool
 11 plowing for buck wheat. Cloudy & cool. Edgerton's brother got a leg sore by the way
 12 Chord all day. some wet. went to town
 13 had A. M. L. B. Carver & wife here
 14 wedding. Corn. Am not very well. Cool.
 15 Sun
 16 Bingham & I to barn wood. I went to Colchester
 17 had lower garden. hot. Bingham went to Hartford at noon
 18 Chord. no work. hot. Am lame & not very well. Buckingham day
 19 painted some outside. hot. a good shower at 4 P.M. the 1st for days.
 20 Chord. quite lame. had a sore on my shin for 2 weeks
 21 " " " plastered my potatoes. H. C. B. Barrow & Norton Masses died last night
 22 Sun
 23rd went to Colchester to see the Dr. quite lame & not well either
 24 staid in the house all day. lame. Mrs. N. P. Barnes died yesterday
 25 funeral of Mrs. N. P. Barnes. stormy at night. Mr. W. W. W. in town
 26 rained all night quite hard. Chas to night. not able to walk much
 27 went to Colchester to see the Dr. getting Corn. Mr. W. W. W. called
 28 Mr. & Mrs. Southwick & family here. also Mrs. Bryant. ple Bryant with
 Clarence to stay over Sunday
 29 Sun. St. Peter's Parish celebrated their 150th anniversary. Church packed full. Confirmation. 14 confirmed. Collection for liquidation the debt of Miss
 30 very lame. Company all gone to day / 1884 raised. great day for

A June 1884 page from Frederic Bissell's second journal.

**Excerpted from "THE JOURNAL SOUVENIR"
Published by the Willimantic Journal 1894**

P.W. Turner- Turnerville

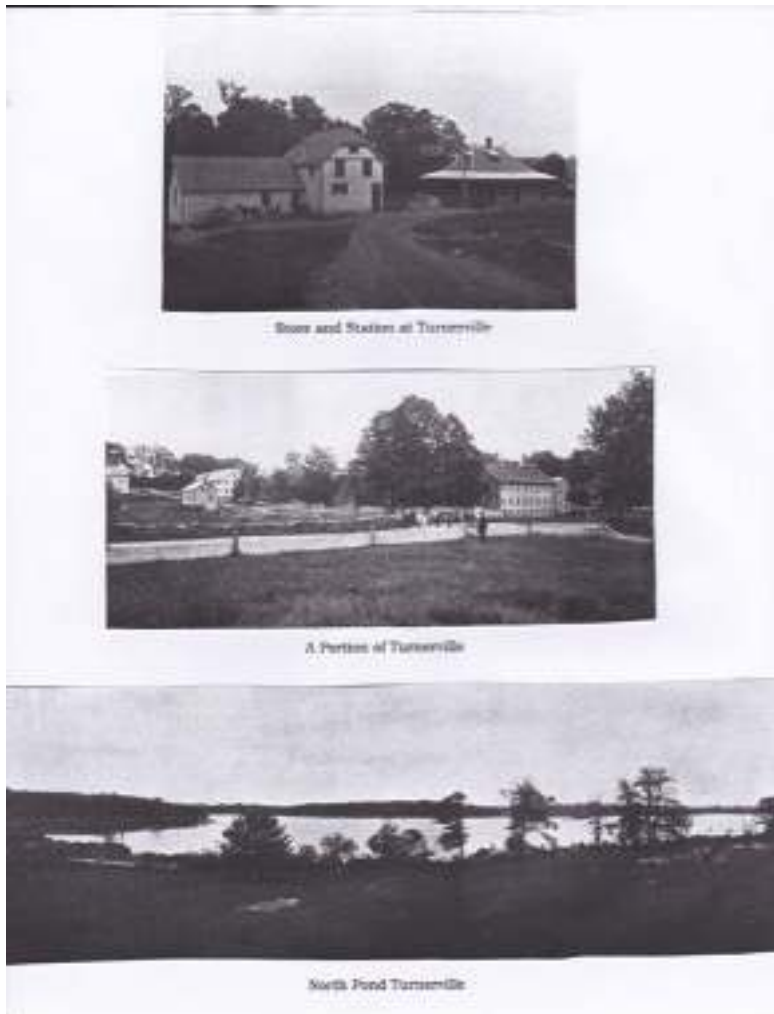
Ten miles from Willimantic, on the Air Line Railroad, is the station of Turnerville and the prosperous little community of the same name. It is a thrifty manufacturing village and owes its existence wholly to the development of its natural advantages through the energy and strong will of one individual—the man after whom the place is named, Mr. Phineas W. Turner. The natural advantages, in the main, come from the power furnished by the waters of North Pond, a splendid sheet of water having surface area of about 200 acres and in its deepest part a depth of some thirty feet. It is fed by springs which furnish a never-failing supply of pure water, and its shores, fringed on many sides by woodland, varied here and there by picturesque boulders, give to it great natural beauty. Added to this is over 150 feet above the level of the railroad, the elevated land near-by commanding broad and attractive views on many sides, and the air is delightfully pure and wholesome. How long the original pond had existed no living being knows, but in colonial days the right to drain it and use its bottom for grazing land was granted to one Caleb Chappell, one of the proprietors of the town. Though in comparatively short time nature was again allowed its way and the bed again filled, this grant figured interestingly in matters of recent history, and in a measure contributed in establishing Mr. Turner's claim to absolute ownership of the pond and its approaches. In the early 'fifties (1850s) the properties of the pond as a power-furnishing source were brought to the attention of Mr. Turner, and in 1853 he, by purchase acquired possession of the original mill site and control of the water power, and in 1865 of the land surrounding. The power had previously been used only to a limited extent, but he has developed it to its present magnitude. Phineas P. Turner was born in North Coventry seventy-five years ago, and the major portion of his life has been connected with the silk industry. He first was engaged in selling, having the thread spun and finished by others, but in 1848 he entered upon its manufacture. This was in Tolland, and later his industry was located at Mansfield Hollow, and from the latter it was moved to his present base of operations. At Turnerville his great tract of some 2,000 acres is a little world in itself and takes in parts of three townships—Hebron, Lebanon and Colchester. In addition to the mill buildings, it has comfortable dwellings and boarding houses for the operatives, store, schoolhouse, post office, cattle barns, etc., and, aside from that used in the mills, spring water for domestic use is carried by pipes to every building in the village. A portion of this tract is under cultivation, but much of it is required for the keeping of his livestock. From eight to ten horses are kept, and nearly one hundred head of cattle, among the latter being seventy-five fine Jersey milch (milk?) cows. There is a gradual rise from the village to the pond, and at three different levels are distinct mills—each complete in itself and supplied with an overshot wheel, and the water, forced by gravity through great flumes, is used three different times for power. One of these wheels, a mammoth one having a diameter of forty feet, with seven-foot face, is probably the largest overshot wheel in the State. From the pond to the

base of the incline there is a fall of about 150 feet, but a new dam just completed will enable the use of a turbine wheel and will increase the available power from the pond about 66 percent. This dam, a solid structure of stone masonry, 441 feet in length, is a noticeable feature, and forming, as it will, an additional reservoir, will enable the saving of much water, which hitherto has gone to waste. This, however is not all, as Mr. Turner recently secured, a mile or two west of the railroad, three more water powers and nearly 300 acres of land, the intention being to carry the power to Turnerville by electricity and to erect still another mill in addition to the ones already in operation. It will thus be seen that plans have been laid and initial steps taken for a large increase in the industry of the place, but the introduction of electricity may also mean much in the matter of its lighting, heating, etc. In former years, the products of the Turnerville mills were sewing silk and machine twist, but for fifteen years or more, though some throwing is done for others, the manufactures have been confined almost exclusively to silk ribbons. Raw silk is received as imported from Japan, China and Italy, the bleaching, dyeing, spinning and weaving is all done here, and on leaving the factory in the finished fabric is ready for the consumer. Here again the inexhaustible supply and purity of North Pond water comes into play, its properties greatly facilitating the process of dyeing. The ribbons are made in all widths and in an almost infinite variety of colors and shades, and are intended to meet the popular demand. They command a ready sale throughout the Union, and selling agencies have been established in New York City and Boston. In former years everything had to be teamed to or from Willimantic, then the nearest railroad station, but the Air Line Railroad now furnishes excellent facilities for receiving and forwarding shipments. Mr. Turner was one of the strongest promoters of the building of the railroad, and contributed largely toward the expense of putting it into operation.

Mr. Turner is well preserved. He is a man of strong individuality, keen perception and broad common sense, and seems absolutely free from affectation. He has an iron will, is immovable when he feels himself in the right, and yet is essentially just and is looked to as a parent by the people of Turnerville. The number of people employed by him, including farm hands, dairy men, skilled and unskilled manufacturing help, laborers, etc. make a small army in themselves. They are law-abiding and thrifty, free from temptations of the dram shop while in Turnerville, and the industry and community as a whole are one of the feeders to Willimantic's commercial prosperity. In early life, Mr. Turner was a Whig in politics, but he has been a Republican since the birth of that party, and though a prominent figure for many years and the heaviest taxpayer in Hebron he has never sought public office.

This account is courtesy of the Hebron Historical Society.

6/2/20



Undated photographs of the Turnerville area courtesy of the Hebron Historical society -1890's

Windham Probate Records Vol. 13, 293 May 23, 1793	Deborah Sargeant Parker heir to estate of Anne Sargeant	Deborah received the remaining portion of her mother's dower in the estate.
Mansfield Land Records 012 182 QCD Feb. 11, 1794s Feb. 13, 1794r	Dan Storrs purchases from Ephraim and Deborah Parker 28 lbs	
Mansfield Land Records 012 195 QCD April 5, 1794s&r	Dan Storrs purchases from Isaac Sargeant 365 lbs	" that Tract of Land where I now dwell, the same and the whole that I mortgage to said Storrs April 30, 1791..."
Mansfield Land Records 012 248-249 QCD Nov. 16, 1795 s&r	Azariah Freeman purchases from Dan Storrs 631 lbs 17 shillings	"89 acres and 90 rods, the late farm of Capt. Isaac Sargeant... with the buildings thereon..."
Windham Probate Records Vol. 19, 279-282 April 13, 1829	Enoch Freeman heir to estate of Azariah Freeman	"the home farm containing 89 acres 15 rods..."
Mansfield Probate Records Vol. 3, 356-357, 362-363 May 23, 1845; Feb. 14, 1856	Enoch H. Freeman heir to estate of Enoch Freeman	"with the exception of one third part (to Mary A. Freeman) of my real estate to use occupy & improve during her natural life."
Special Note: Azariah Freeman was taxed \$330. for his dwelling in 1798. As early as 1816 there was a cider mill, old potash and mulberry trees on the property.		

This page is courtesy of the Spring Hill Inn proprietor through the Mansfield Historical Society's town records.

COMBINATION.

At a meeting of the victims of the so-called "Granite Agricultural Works," of Lebanon, N. H., holden in Hartford, August 15, A. D. 1876, the following votes were unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS The undersigned have entered into certain obligations with a person representing himself to be the Agent or a company said to be called the Granite Agricultural Works of Lebanon, N. H., and have been induced, by various representations, to sign certain obligations, the contents of which to us are not clearly known, and it is rumored that we are to be sued, or prosecuted, for the payment of large sums of money, in consequence of signing said papers. And

WHEREAS We believe, and have reason to believe, that gross frauds have been committed upon us, respectively, by said Agent, and

WHEREAS We are desirous of protecting our legal rights in the most efficient manner, and propose to defend ourselves in a legal and proper manner against such fraud, and will morally bear the cost and expense of such defense.

Now, therefore, we do agree that John B. Kirkham, of Newington; George Bodwell, of Manchester; F. P. French, of Lebanon, shall be a committee, and shall be, and hereby are, empowered to employ counsel and take such measures as they shall deem necessary in defending our suit and all suits which shall be brought against any or either of the undersigned upon any of the papers claimed to have been signed as aforesaid, and it shall be their duty so to do, and to assess upon each of the undersigned his proportion of the cost of such defense, and collect and pay over the same for the purposes aforesaid. And we the undersigned, mutually promise and agree to and with each other, to pay to said committee, or either of them, the sums so assessed upon us, respectively, for the purposes aforesaid, always provided that said assessments shall not exceed the sum of one dollar for each person subscribing in each case, and providing that no assessment shall be valid against the executor or administrator of either of the undersigned, unless notice thereof be given to them, within six months after his decease.

Said committee shall have power to fill any vacancy in their number, and to call future meetings of the undersigned.

It was also voted that each member should pay 75, on signing the above articles of agreement, the sum of five dollars to start a fund for immediate use in case of necessity.

Done at Hartford, 15th day of August, 1876.

SIGNATURES.

RBT2, Frederick Bissell Mill – The Frederick Bissell Mill was also in the upper reaches of the Raymond Brook watershed on an unnamed brook on the south east corner of the junction of Kinney Road and Route 85.(413902Nand722134N).The mill site is listed in the Hebron Conservation and Development Plan as site #15. It is on the Hebron’s Historical Heritage Mills and Manufacturing Sites map as site #32.

Bissell Mill Site

Site containing rubble of an old mill site. Some faint evidence of a building foundation, race, and dam structure. Photo courtesy of Geoff Kirkham.

This was one of the most difficult sites to locate due to heavy undergrowth, various conflicting reports on site location, and a lack of obvious signs of a mill. Over 1,000 feet of the brook was evaluated from behind the church at 185 Church Street, the Church of the Holy Family of Hebron, to Kinney Road. Finally the site was located just southerly of Kinney Road by study team member, Geoff Kirkham. Old maps and a variety of maps showing geographic features were reviewed of this entire area.

The only other potential mill site evaluated was under an existing pond. In 1934, there was a small pond in the upper part of a larger existing pond currently used as a fire department water source. A mill at the base of the pond appeared possible and initially thought probable. The mill site, located after an extensive analysis, was just below the southeast corner of Kinney Road on the westerly side of the brook.



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The mill was a small two-story mill built circa 1861 when sugar from the south was unavailable. The Bissell Mill was used to extract syrup from sorghum stalks and operated a short period of time during the Civil War years. The 1869 map identifies a Sorghum Mill on Bissell family property in this location so it can be assumed the mill operated at

