

Question from **Rod Washburn**, Old Saybrook, June 13, 2015-
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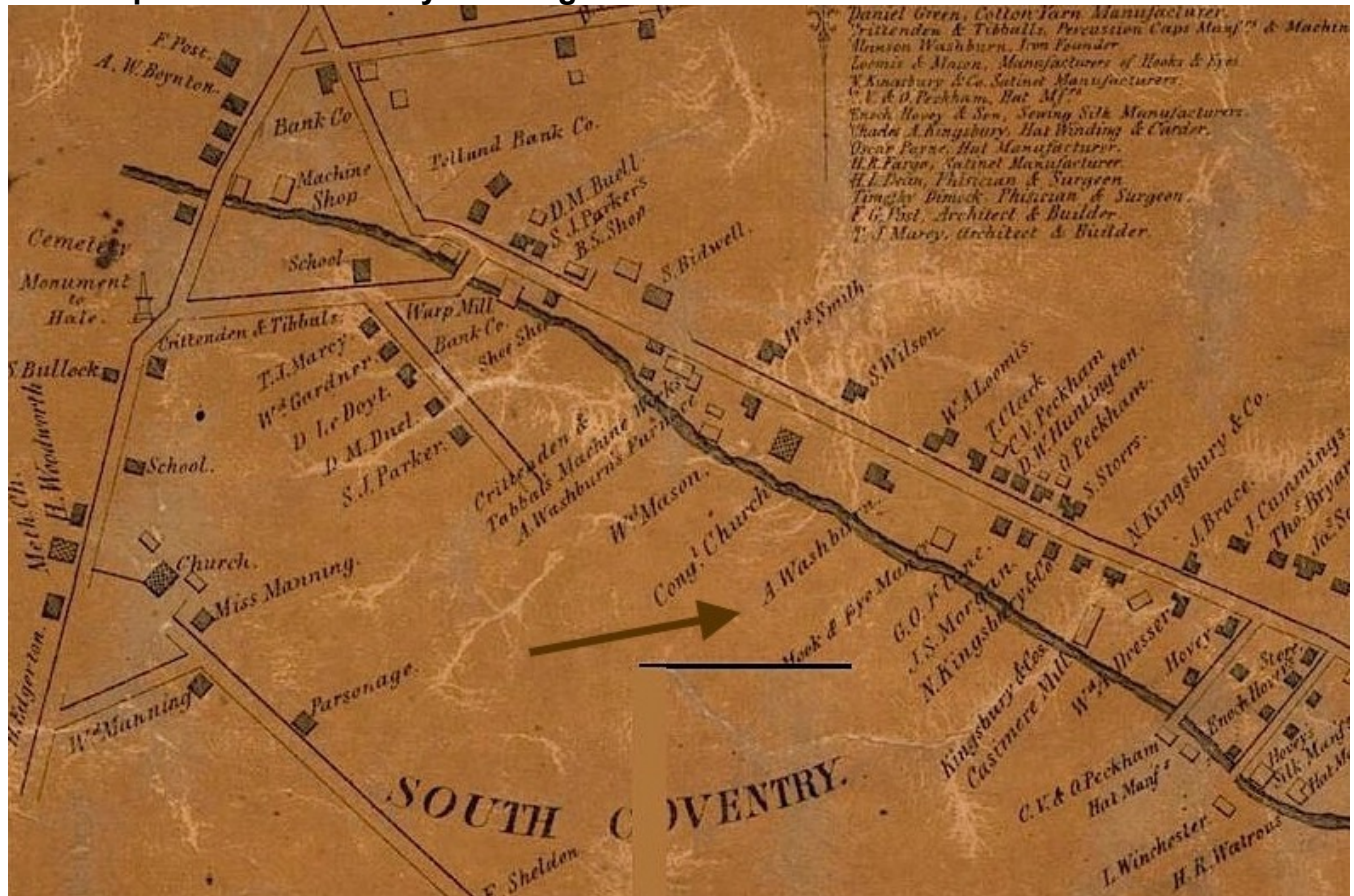
The “Washburn “ house stood at 1145 Main Street in Coventry. It is now a municipal parking lot. To the west is a brick building (#1153 Main) built in the 1950’s that is now a veterinarian’s office. To the east is the old Methodist Church (#1141 Main St.) that is now an antique shop.

The house was built about 1850 by John Boynton, a prominent citizen and mill owner in Coventry. Alan Washburn acquired the house in April of 1854. Alanson Washburn was born in Stafford 1811. He died 12/14/1894 and is buried in Nathan Hale Cemetery. Upon Alan’s death, the house descended to his son Henry, who died in 1926 and the house was left to his wife Julia who gave it to her daughters Grace Haradon and Alice Washburn in 1937. The Haradon’s sold in 1972 and the house was in bad condition at the time.

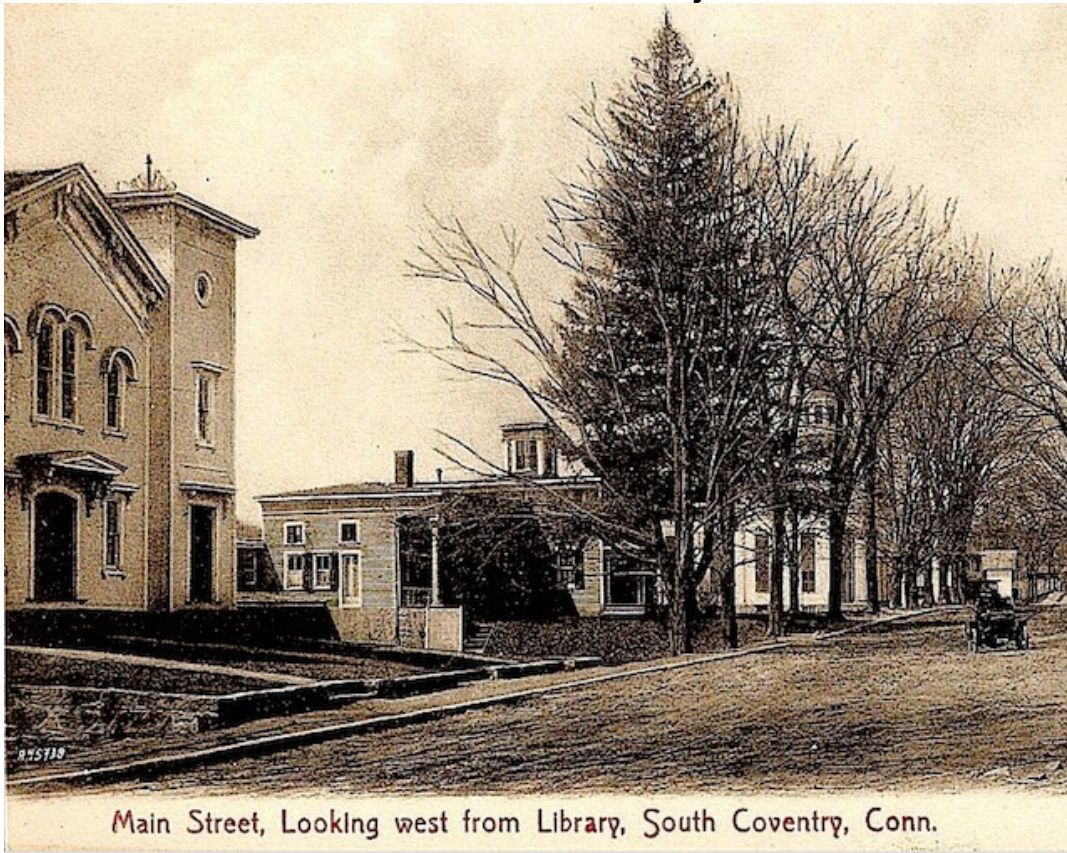
In 1841 Alanson built a foundry on Main Street with Earl Smith. Washburn converted the factory to a silk mill (sewing silk and twist) by 1870. After Alan’s death, his son Henry (1855-1926) took over the business. The mill was bankrupt by 1908 and was sold. The mill building burned down in 1917 while being used as an auto garage.

The columns and Victorian wrought-iron railings on the house were made in the Coventry foundry.

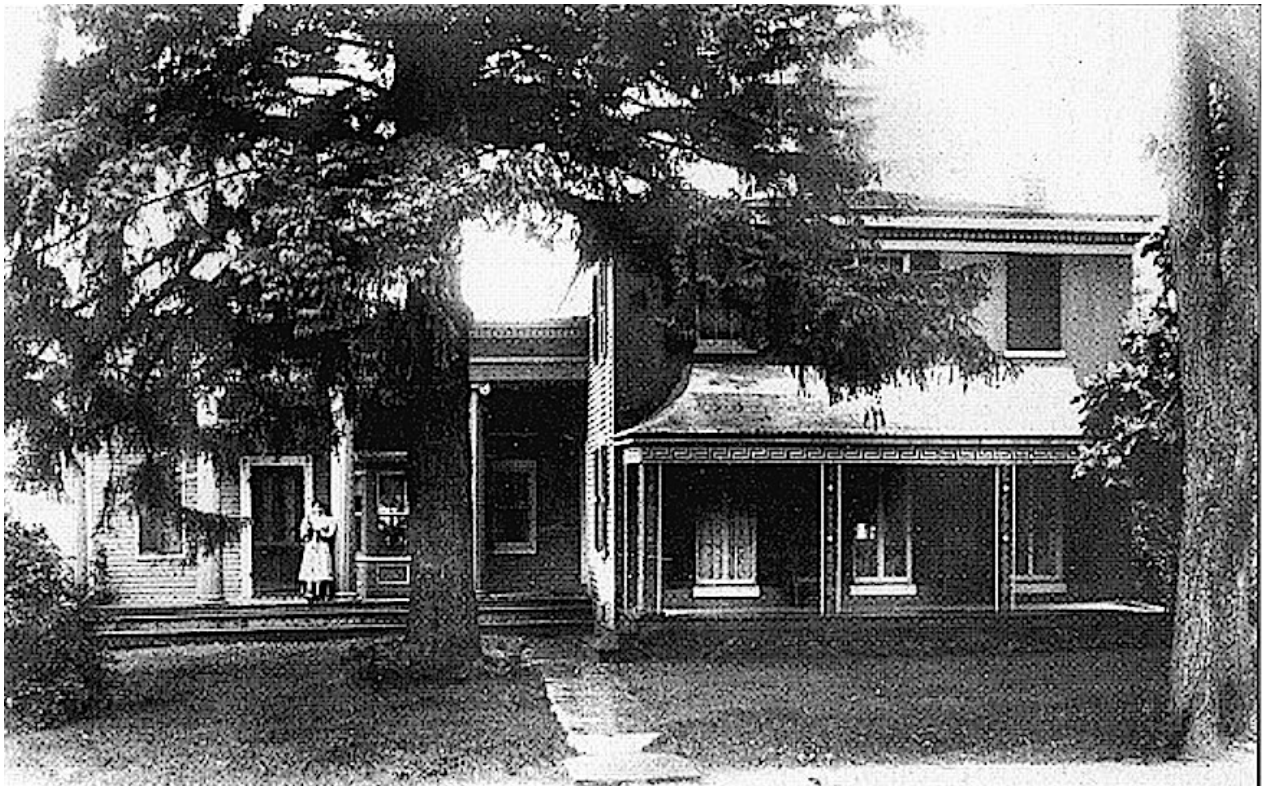
1857 Map of South Coventry showing the Washburn House



A view of Main Street ca1907 showing the old Methodist Church (left) and the Washburn House adjacent



The Washburn House ca 1920



Main Street ca1959 looking southwest, the Washburn House is on the left



Fire Drills To Destroy Old House

Young, Thora

The Hartford Courant (1923-1986); Aug 27, 1976;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant (1764-1986)

pg. 25B

Fire Drills To Destroy Old House

By THORA YOUNG

COVENTRY — The 18-century Washburn House, one of Main Street's landmarks, will be burned to the ground Sunday. Its spectacular demise will be a part of a day-long marathon for five area volunteer fire departments.

The house is nestled between the Pentecostal Church and Jim's Supply Co., a hardware store.

Part of a home tour during the town's 250th anniversary celebration in July 1962, the house was considered a highlight because of its authentic Victorian interior.

It was the only Coventry home among a dozen scenes on an 1857 map of Toiland County and was once eyed by the now defunct town Historic District Commission to be retained.

James Ferrigno, who owns Jim's Supply, bought the building in 1972. The house was "already gone" when he bought it, he said Thursday. The roof leaked for 20 years, he said, and the rain had buckled the floors, he said.

Ferrigno has allowed salvageable parts of the house, the panelling, circular staircase, six-over-six windows and Coventry-made iron-works, to be taken for other building restorations.

Ferrigno said he has no plans for the land, but might use it for a parking lot.

The house's last day will begin with a home tour of sorts, when firemen with air packs will rush into the smoke-filled home for drills.

There also will be a demonstration of home heat and smoke alarm systems by representatives of a Boston firm.

Actual burning will take place in the afternoon when the church and store traffic have left the area.

Water curtains will be used to protect these buildings.

South and North Coventry, Eagleville, Andover and Columbia volunteer fire departments will participate.

Hoses will be run down Main Street from the Coventry Firehouse Pond with tankers stationed at the firehouse as the main source of water, according to Fire Chief Roger Bellard. The Coventry Lake Dam will be opened to provide adequate water for the pond during the exercise, Bellard said. The state Department of Environmental Protection has granted a permit for the training, he said.

There will be some traffic tie-ups during part of the afternoon, Bellard said, but there should be at least one-way traffic most of the time, he said.