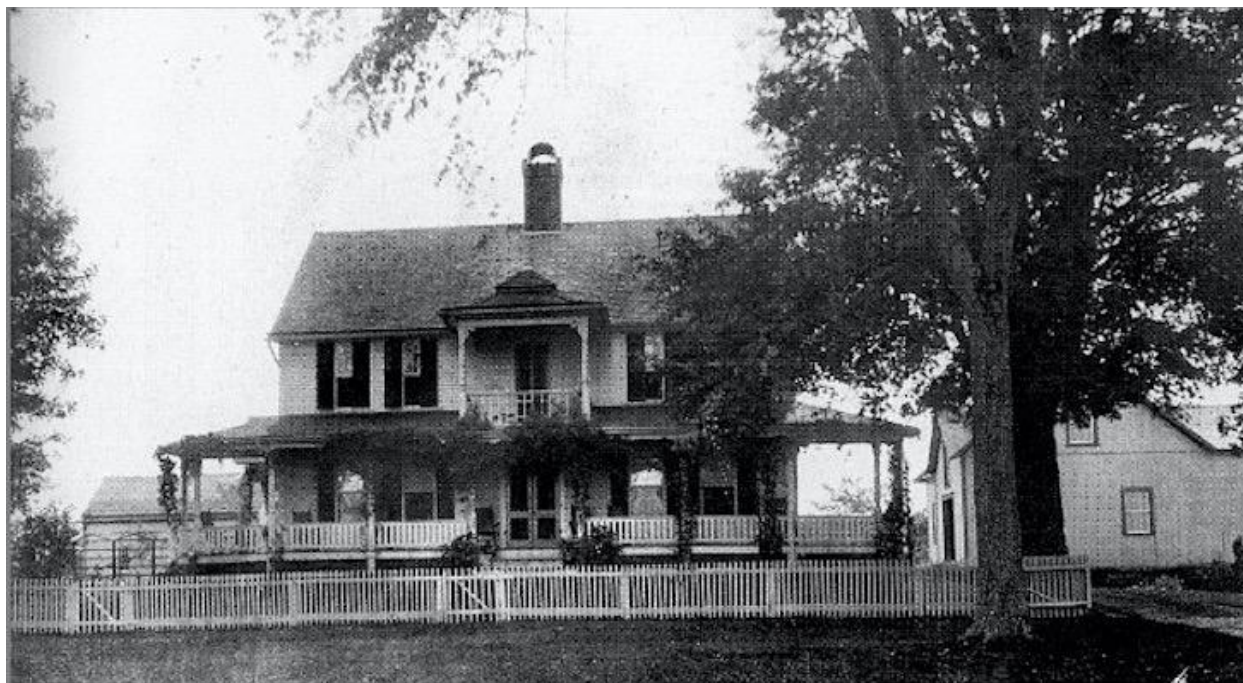




# Sign Post

August 2020  
Volume 28, Issue 3



THE COVENTRY DAY SCHOOL, c. THE LATE 1800s. This school was established in 1941 by Mr. and Mrs. Donald Churchill as a private coeducational elementary school. Located at the corner of Judd Road and South Street, the home was earlier called the Babcock House.

## The Coventry Day School by Sue Way

An interesting chapter in Coventry history unfolded on South Street at the Coventry Day School. Don and Edith Churchill bought what had been the house and main portion of the Prince Farm. Mrs. Prince had inherited the farm from her father, William Babcock, who had conducted the business of a hat manufacturer there before the Civil War. We have two of Mr. Babcock's account books in our collection. They were found somewhere in the house by Martha Williams, who was a teacher at the Day School and donated them to CHS. (Cont'd on page 2)

### **CORONAVIRUS UPDATE**

For the latest information about any meeting or program changes watch your email or our Facebook page [facebook.com/coventryhistory/](https://www.facebook.com/coventryhistory/).

## **ANNUAL PICNIC, ELECTION OF OFFICERS & ADOPT BUDGET Sunday Sept 20 4pm Strong Porter Museum**



To be extra safe this year we ask that everyone bring your own picnic supper while we practice social distancing.

### **Mark Your Calendars**

Aug 30	Strong Porter Museum & Brick School open
Aug 13	Executive Board Mtg, Strong Porter, 7pm
Sep 10	Executive Board Mtg, Strong Porter, 7pm
Sep 20	Annual Meeting, Strong Porter, 4 pm
Oct 1	Membership Renewal Due
Oct 8	Executive Board Mtg, Strong Porter, 7pm
Nov 12	Executive Board Mtg, Strong Porter, 7pm
Strong Porter Museum open Sundays 11-3	
Brick School open 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sundays 1-4	
Archives available Saturdays 10am - 1pm or by appointment (860-712-4278)	

(Coventry Day School, Cont'd.) William Babcock's daughter had married a successful merchant, Jacob V. B. Prince, and lived in Cleveland for most of the year but spent summers in Coventry. In this era we have found many Coventry natives who grew up, moved to larger cities and became quite successful, but inherited the family home and farm in Coventry and maintained it as a summer home. Mrs. Prince, Thomas Porter and Henry F. Dimock are among these. Collectively these have been called gentlemen farmers. Mr. Prince would have been thought of that way. A farm manager was employed by each to keep the farm running year round. Goodwin Jacobson and his family moved into the house next door and took on that responsibility at the Prince Farm. Goodwin's son, George Jacobson III, grew up there and helped with the farm chores. He tells us about the Prince Farm in his 2004 interview with Ginny Dilk. Mrs. Prince presided after the death of her husband, and George Jacobson and Suzanne Welles Brainard remembered having lunch there with Mrs. Prince's grandchildren. The table was set with silver and china, and manners were required. The most exciting part of the day was night time fishing off the Dimock boat house pier with the help of Jim Mrs. Prince's butler and chauffeur.

Don and Edith Churchill were among those who came to Coventry from the cities looking for room to spread out and cultivate their ideas or just enjoy the country living, much as Adelma Grenier Simmons and George Turcotte's grandparents had. It was difficult to earn a living on a small farm in eastern Connecticut in the 1930's, because it was difficult to compete with the growing Midwestern farms. Farmland was inexpensive in Coventry. Adelma said she could have bought most of Silver Street at a very reasonable price in 1929.

According to an article in The Hartford Courant dated January 6, 1952, Don and Edith both grew up  
(Cont'd on page 3)

## STRONG PORTER MUSEUM AND BRICK SCHOOL OPEN FOR VISITORS

### *Visit our Caprilands Display at Strong Porter*

Strong Porter Museum has a new Caprilands display devoted to the life and legend of Adelma Grenier Simmons and her famous herb farm. The Museum is open Sundays 11-3 and the Brick School open 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays 1-4 beginning August 30 until further notice by appointment only for groups of up to 4 in order to maintain social distancing. Tours on alternate days may be possible. Face masks required. Email [info@ctcoventryhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@ctcoventryhistoricalsociety.org) to schedule an appointment.



## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL



Attached please find your annual membership renewal form. Please take a few moments to renew your membership today and help us save time and the postage costs of a second reminder.

## REMEMBERING ARNOLD CARLSON

Are you one of the fortunate ones who received mailings from Arnold with notes and copies of all sorts of things that interested him? We are collecting these items and would love it if you would share anything you received from him. We can copy and return your originals if you wish. Mail to us at CHS, PO Box 534, Coventry, CT 06238.

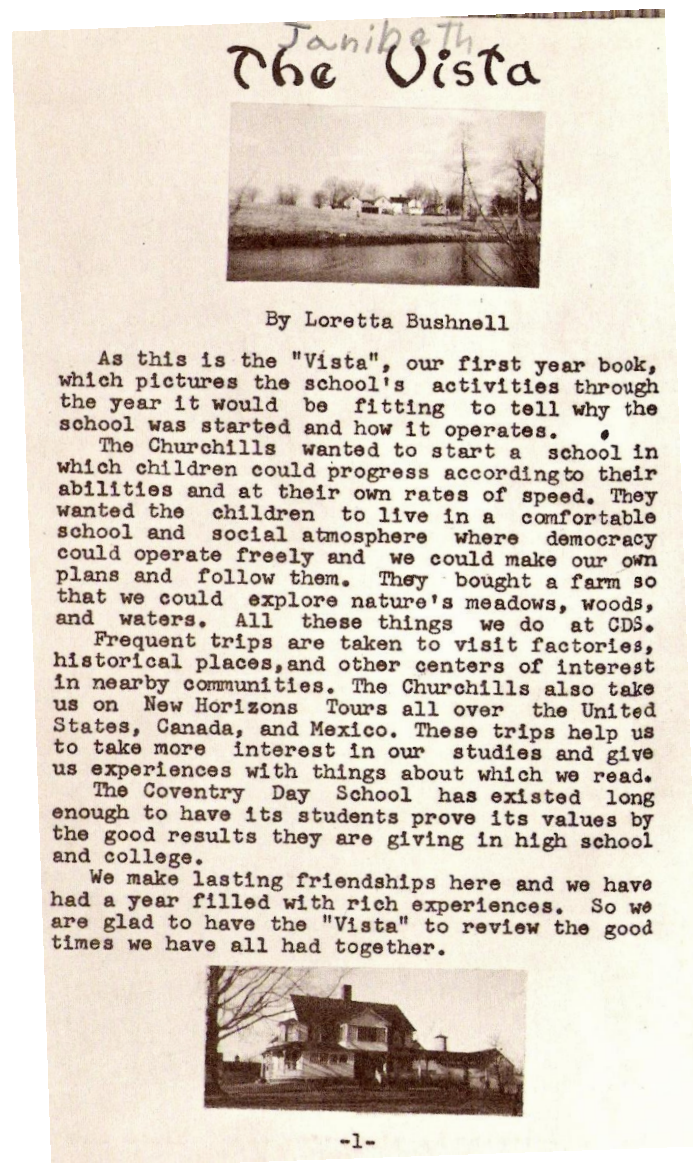


(Coventry Day School, Cont'd.) in the Midwest, and Don went to Chapman College in Los Angeles, California, where he studied education and sociology. Edith's family moved to California where her father was a preacher. They met and married there and moved to Connecticut. Don did some graduate work in sociology at Yale where one professor made a strong impression by taking his students on field trips to New York City. He says, "they went everywhere, including flophouses".

Don worked as a social worker in New Haven according to city directories. In about 1930 the family, which included 2 children, moved to Hartford, and Don worked as the Director of the Street Trades Boys Clubs where he "organized craft work, music and arts groups". They worked for quite a while to get the Hartford School Board to open up the schools in the evening for activities. He observed that the cities built fine school buildings and then locked them up tight in the afternoons "expecting the social agencies to take over and keep the children out of mischief and off the streets . . . He began to wonder why the schools and social agencies should not be related to form a social pattern rather than going in opposite directions" and he began looking for a place to put his educational ideas into practice. The Churchills purchased the farm in 1939 and began operations in 1939 and 1940 with a summer camp, and in 1941 a kindergarten – the first in Coventry.

In 1952 "there were 90 pupils in an eight-grade elementary school meeting curriculum and equipment requirements of the State Board of Education."

In 1953 the students produced their first Yearbook, and the introduction describes the Churchill's education philosophy very well.



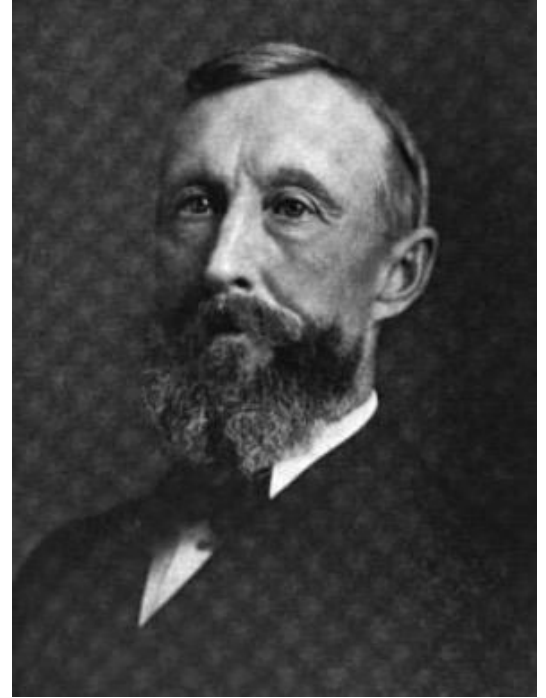
George Turcotte's parents turned their Coventry summer home into a year round home so that George and his cousin, Carol Martling, could attend the Coventry Day School beginning in 1944. Carole Miller remembers that Don Churchill was going door to door to recruit students the year she was 5 and ready to go to Kindergarten and her parents were sold on the idea.

## Andrew Kingsbury by Bill Jobbagy

Andrew Kingsbury was born in Rockville, CT, April 8, 1849, and moved to his paternal grandfather's dairy farm on Bread and Milk Street in Coventry four years later. He was the oldest of Erastus and Hannah Needham Kingsbury's four children. He remained a dairy farmer for the rest of his life. The Kingsbury farm, Autumn View, was one of the most progressive farms in town. It contained 105 acres. Once the cow was milked it was poured over ice water filled pipes to cool, thus bacteria count was kept to an absolute minimum. Autumn View marketed the pasteurized and raw milk from their Jersey breed cows and delicious orangeade that locals remember fondly.

He received his education through the common (public) and private schools in Coventry. At the age of 21 he began a teaching career that would last for 14 years. By 1884 he was a School Visitor and board secretary. Andrew married Mary Laura Hughes in May of 1880. He became a Deacon of 2<sup>nd</sup> Congregational Church in 1887 and served as superintendent of the Sunday School. Thereafter he was known as Deacon Andrew. In his "spare" time he became the President of Rockville Fair Association in 1889, a Charter member and master of Coventry Grange, President of Coventry Cemetery Association and the President of Village Improvement Society. As a trustee of the Hale Fund he administered financial assistance to students preparing to become ministers. (Note: The Hale Fund was established by Sarah Hale in 1802, sister-in-law of Nathan Hale, to provide financial aid to ministry students.) As a Republican he held nearly every town office. He served in the General Assembly in 1905 & 1907 and was the House Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture during the last session when he introduced the CT State Flower Bill. Andrew and Mary had three children: John Erastus born 1881, Howard Andrew born 1883 and Hannah Elizabeth born 1887.

Andrew Kingsbury, introduced a bill to the CT House of Representatives on March 26, 1907, designating the Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) as the state flower. A similar bill had been introduced in the state Senate a month earlier and laughingly defeated despite the fact that 32 states had already



adopted a state flower and a petition signed by 3,000 women urging the Mountain Laurel be adopted as the state flower. The bill was seconded and signed into law April 17, 1907. Ten years later the plant had become so popular that it was necessary to pass a law prohibiting the collection of Mountain Laurel, for commercial purposes, without the written consent of the landowner. The consent also had to be filed at the town clerk's office. All plants had to be tagged with the name of the landowner and the collector.

Andrew owned two bulls which he had trained to work in a yoke like a pair of oxen. He had put the yoke on one of the bulls when the other attacked him. A farmhand came to his rescue and dragged him out of the barnyard. Doctors Fiske and Flint were sent for and they sent him to Hartford. Mr. Kingsbury died in Hartford Hospital, on March 27, 1911. He was survived by his wife Mary and son John E. and daughter Hannah E.



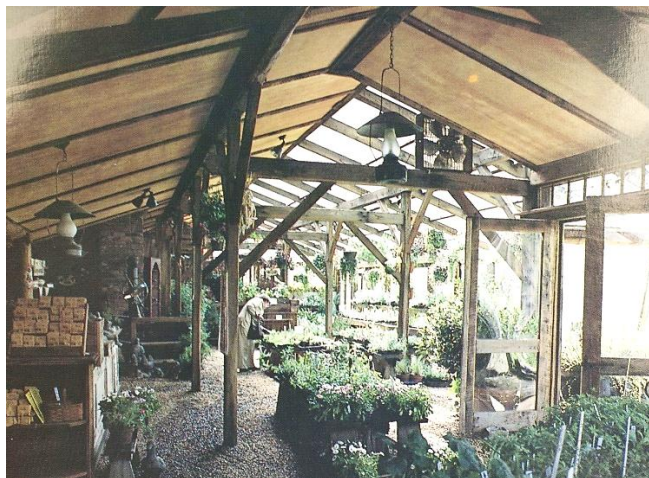
## Caprilands photos



Adelma's Chair....on loan to us



Caprilands main Dining room



Caprilands Greenhouse with Adelma watering



Adelma Grenier Simmons



Adelma the Writer



The fabulous Salad