

#32 Weston Road, cont.

Mary. In 1826 Mary and her husband Levi returned to Weston to take up her inheritance. Many years later Mary's son, Levi D. Coley would choose a part of his mother's inheritance known as the "great plain" as the site for the new home he would build for his bride Sarah Maria Nichols.

Traveling north out of Westport along Weston Road, shortly after crossing Burr's Bridges (now Twin Bridges) over the Saugatuck River, one will come to the store of Levi D. Coley. Built on land inherited by Mary H. Coley from her father in 1819, it is now operated by Levi possibly in partnership with his younger brothers Ebenezer and Frederick. If one should care to stop here, one could probably purchase such commodities as tea, coffee, molasses, salt and sugar, as well as surplus produce from local farms; perhaps even such locally manufactured items as boots, hats, shirts, buttons, chains, sieves, cloth, axes, soap or candles. More importantly, one could catch up on the local news.

When her husband died in 1859, Mary H. Coley wrote in her will to bequeath this store and 20 acres to her son, Levi D. Coley, the current proprietor. Her oldest son David L. Coley was already fully occupied with his grandfather's sawmill on River Road.

Traveling further on the Weston Road one would pass the Burying Hill and on through Weston. However, one might pause to consider the home of the merchant. Set on a small rise to the west of the highway, a genteel distance from the road stands the fine house that Levi D. Coley built for his bride, Sarah who must have felt quite at home for it shared several features of her father's house on Good Hill. Inside there was an impression of light and space provided by high ceilings as well as side-and-top-lighted entry. The granite foundation on which it stands contributes a feeling of solidity and security both physical and financial.

Lynne's history of this house continues throughout the many years it has stood on that small rise. Levi D. Coley's mother, who owned the land upon which his house was built, chose to advance to him a portion of her estate. That quit claim deed gave

Levi Coley a 50 acre tract. The appraised value of the land without the buildings was valued at \$2,500. The valuation of the land without the buildings being included said that the land was part of Levi's inheritance, not the house.

When Levi died seven years later, Mary wrote her will bequeathing to her second son several additional parcels of land. One was the 20 acre "river lot" with Levi D. Coley's store and another 70 acres of "the Plain land", adjacent and contiguous to Levi D. Coley Homestead lot. Thus by 1871, Levi was in possession of the entire 120 acre "Great Plain" land which had belonged to his grandfather David Coley, Jr. at his death in 1819.

Levi and his wife Sarah raised their family in the big house including their oldest son Frances; daughters Sarah, Carrie, Mary and Anna and younger son William F. Coley. Frances received his inheritance, the store lot, in advance. Sarah married Edward Godfrey and moved to Bridgeport. Carrie married Charles Porter in 1871 and died ten years later at the age of 30. Mary and her husband Cornelius Finch buried their two young daughters on the Baren Hill across the road before moving to James-town, New Jersey. The fate of Anna is unknown.

Levi D. Coley passed away on November 25, 1874 at the age of 56. Sarah remained in the house with Anna, then 19 and William, then 16. Sarah received from her husband's will life use of the house and other buildings with 25 acres of land as well as 1/3 of Levi D. Coley's personal estate. The remainder of the land to the south and west of the house was distributed among her daughters. Sarah's dower was to pass to young William at Sarah's death, on the condition that he remain with her "aiding and comforting her in sickness and in health and in all respects demeaning himself towards her as becomes a dutiful, obedient and affectionate son."

William apparently fulfilled these conditions and shortly after reaching his majority he purchased the adjacent land from his sisters. A short time later he married Harriet (Hattie) Hoyt and brought her home to his mother's house. Unfortunately, they buried two young children on the Hill, first infant son William F. Coley, Jr., then another son Henry I