

Hayden Station

by Grace Lucretia Clapp

Recorded by Kenneth Barber for the
Windsor Historical Society
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We are visiting this snowy, rainy, and freezing Saturday afternoon of February 2nd, 1962 at the home of Miss G. Lucretia Clapp at 1245 Palisado Avenue, Windsor, Connecticut. Miss Clapp, who will celebrate her 82nd birthday in about three weeks, was born in this house on February 25th, 1881. After graduation from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1905, graduate work at Smith College and the University of Chicago, Miss Clapp has had a very interesting and distinguished career in education. A short stay at Indianapolis High School, twenty years at Downer College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and a return to Smith College were the highlights of her teaching career. She has now retired to her home here in the Hayden Station section of Windsor. Miss Clapp, a direct descendant of the Hayden family after which this section of Windsor has been named, has prepared a history of Hayden Station for the Windsor Historical Society.

Hayden Station
by Grace Clapp

Hayden Station, Haydens, or Haydentown as a part of Windsor is the upper most area of the former 6th School District extending from the Windsor Locks town line close to Pine Meadow Brook to the milestone nearly across from the Parson House recently demolished (March 1962). Much of its history parallels that of Windsor. Whether it got its name from the large number of Haydens or their extensive property is uncertain.

The pioneer, William Hayden, built his house on two and a half acres of land in January 24, 1644, 1645, some few rods southeast of the present William Hayden memorial boulder, at the corner of Palisado Avenue and Hayden Station Road. By the 1770s his purchase of twenty five acres more and those added by his grandchildren comprised about two thirds of the area even to Clay Hill in Windsor Locks. Much of the land after clearing of forests was used for farming. However, there is a ridge west of and parallel with to the present New York, New Haven, Hartford Railroad, extending down a little way below Mack Town Road, known as Rocky Hill. At its north end was a quarry called the Stone Pit, owned by William Hayden, later his heirs. Brownstone or sandstone was taken as in common at first. Some was used for cellar foundations, lintels, doorsteps; some for wing dams – one near the ferry in the Connecticut River; much for grave stones – the best known of these latter that of the Rev. Ephraim Huit – 1644, found in the older part of Palisado Cemetery. Small amounts of sandstone were quarried even up to the early 1800s. The old Stone Pit has been filled and now covered over. No evidence of it remains but shaley outcrops can still be found along the ridge. In 1644, William Hayden's house of hand hewn wood was the farthest north and it was his duty to warn and to guard against Indian attacks; the palisade, far south, provided protection for many families near the Farmington River; two miles beyond William Hayden to the north lived Henry Denslow who likewise guarded his community of Pine Meadow.

Much of the plains largely planted at present (1962) to shade tent tobacco, was once forested and shared in common by the early settlers, and then later as appointed. Following the use for lumber and fuel came the cultivation of the sandy soil with rye, wheat, corn, plowed by oxen and carted by them.

Not long is it in any settlement before tradesmen and the products of craftsmen are needed. Broken brick in the low land below Mack Town, under the hill of the old Red House, in the pasture back of Hayden Station Chapel are remnants of location of former brickyards. Some were used for cellars, some sold. On Hayden Station Road, the shoemaker's shop of 1740, now a lovely house (1962), has brick made by Nathaniel Hayden in his brick yard. Mr. Willard Drake's brick house next, built by Capt. Nathaniel Hayden in 1763 perhaps had its brick from there. Jabez Hayden in his *Historical Sketches* of 1910 says that 200,000-300,000 bricks (price 50¢ per 1000) were shipped by his father (Levi Hayden) in the spring, by scow from Hayden's Landing (Nathaniel L. Hayden's) in the 1770s up to the early 1800s (1800-1840). It is almost irony that Hayden Station Chapel built in 1876 had foundation brick from Mack's brick yard hauled there by David Ellsworth (personal diary of 1876) when once Nathaniel's brick yard was just a few rods back. Three generations (all Nathaniel's) beginning with Deacon Nathaniel had a tan yard and house back of the chapel at the junction of the brooks. They employed apprentices. The tan house itself was torn down in 1823.

In 1757 on some twenty acres of land a grist mill was operated by Joseph and William Hayden, along a brook, possibly the one flowing past the chapel.

Soon after the Revolution Master John Hayden of Essex, Connecticut, established Hayden's shipyard on the Connecticut River at Haydens and built ships for twenty to thirty years. He also built the old Red House. He was succeeded by Mr. Winslow. The last vessel launched was in the early 1800s. Another John Hayden of Hayden Station ship carpenter was apprenticed under Master John the ship builder. Still another John, father of the ship carpenter (1750-1814), might be called a speculator or realtor. He owned a row of houses from South Center Street to the Connecticut River. In the Windsor Town records (page 45, volume 16) it is recorded that he sold to Phineas Pickett of Windsor,

"1/2 of my store on the river bank in Windsor built in 1785 by me so that Phineas Pickett is equal owner with me in said store and lumber yard and privilege of going from and to said store to the River and for which of going from and to said store 5 shillings yearly while said store shall be worth improving which I have his security for and do bind myself and heirs to defend said privilege while said store shall be."

*Witnesses: John Hayden
Oliver Hayden
Ebenezer Hayden Jr.
Recorded March 21, 1787*

It is said he built five houses, kept store, and lived in them one by one, his family living in the last one until about 1840. He died in 1814. His will is dated 1795. One clapboard house stands on Hayden Station Road east of South Center Street – built by John Hayden in 1770. The old Red House – last owned by Nathaniel Lyman Hayden used as a tenant house – later for tobacco was demolished sometime after 1910.

On Hayden Station Road between South Center Street and the "Pond" there were also houses, store, and blacksmith's shop. Pickett's Tavern was on the northwest corner. A store owned by

Matson just west until a few years ago stood behind the Levi Hayden Homestead but burned July 3, 1936 as did the Homestead. The old damp salt room – salt coming from Turk's Island – was easily distinguishable. The big Levi Hayden house, serving for a few early years as a tavern was built by Samuel Hayden in 1737. Stage coach use along the North Post Road to Boston by way of Windsor and Suffield must have welcomed Pickett's Tavern on crossing the sandy plains. Trainings were held at Pickett's Tavern following the Revolution and it was a halt for the bearers of the dead for burial in Palisado Cemetery. Coffins were carried resting on the shoulders of the foot weary men. It is said that the beams of the Pickett Tavern are a part of the supporting frame work of a house on South Center Street in Hayden Station -- the present home of Mrs. George Blodgett (1962). Also on Hayden Station Road just west of Sargeant Sam's Tavern (Levi Hayden house) stood a blacksmith's shop.

Bissell's stage house was also another tavern (present day 1962 it is the home of Paul Kazanowski at 1022 Palisado Avenue). Probably this house, sold by Ebenezer Hayden in 1751 to Capt. Ebenezer Fitch Bissell, was used as a tavern at least up to the 1830s. The beams from its barn are the pegged supporting beams of the barn of the former Nathaniel Lyman Hayden on Palisado Avenue.

Prior to 1812, the road from Hayden Station to Windsor Locks followed the hill with the old Red House and several other houses as indicated by old springs. Just below Pine Meadow Brook the road went somewhat north westerly to the present South Center Street. Right of way was retained through the present Dadabbo (1962) property across the railroad track (1943-44) and into the Gatley woods and meadows. One of the houses moved from the old hill is that of Mrs. Frank Smith to its present site on Hayden Station Road (1962). Others are gone.

In their early years religious life was expressed by all the pioneers in much the same way on Sunday – all day attendance when the foot stove and the lunch were factors to be considered during the long day even to the 1850s and later. Then each family had its own conveyance. In later years Miss Mary Ann Hayden contributed money for an omnibus to carry people to the First Congregational Church service on Sunday mornings. Mr. Alonzo Munsell drove this bus which seated twelve to sixteen people sitting visavis. During the meeting, the horses rested in the long shed north of the church. This bus service custom lasted as long as did the funds and to the beginning of the trolley system. Today (1962) only two families have horses.

Perhaps it was as early as the 1850s that prayer meetings during the week were held in private homes. David Ellsworth in his diary of 1876 mentioned such as being held at Mr. William Allen's, Mr. Jewell's, Mr. Samuel Hayden's, and Mr. Murray's. Again Miss Mary Ann Hayden's contributions helped build the Hayden Station Chapel of the First Church Congregational of Windsor. The first meeting there was held on Sunday evening June 18, 1876 and its dedication on Monday June 19, 1876. (David Ellsworth's Diary) It was well provided with chairs, speaker's desk with Bible on the raised platform, organ, kerosene wall lamps with good reflectors. For some years fairly regular meetings were conducted by some member of the church -- even its pastor or by some local person.

In the 1890s young people of the neighborhood carried on weekly meetings similar to the Christian Endeavor Society. Mrs. James Hayden supervised Sunday school classes. The Olive Branch of the King's Daughter's held some of their meetings in that chapel. The chapel (1962) known as the Hayden Station Branch of the Windsor Public Library has been carrying on its educational work for many years with some hours given over to storytelling to the children.

Seasonally for several years 1880s and early 1890s religious emotion and soul saving were expressed in camp meetings. Services for two to four weeks in late summer were conducted by local men usually accompanied by singers – negro singers. Only a platform with chairs were provided for the speaker and his singers. The meetings were held in a beautiful pine grove north not far from the local pond on Hayden Station Road in a grove north of it. The congregation sat on pine logs but some stayed in their parked buggies having come from long distances. Money for some good purpose was collected by passing the hat for voluntary contributions. For some, conversions were enduring ones. Many experienced renewed faith.

Mr. Sandy Archer, a sincere, earnest Christian, said to have been a slave in the early days lived in a house like a split modern house standing at the southeast corner of Pond Road and Hayden Station Road. He died July 9, 1914.

The Archer Memorial Church (1962), an A.M.E. Zion Church, is so named in recognition of him. This is the second church built near the road with its Negro pastor, non-resident. Earlier, farther back and nearer to the old camp meeting site the first church was built by Negroes and its pastor was a resident one. Through the efforts to rid the chimney of swarmed bees the first building caught fire and burned. Still farther back is a small cemetery where early families of Negroes are buried.

At the 50th anniversary of the Hayden Station one room red schoolhouse October 9, 1891, the Honorable Henry Barnard, Secretary of the State Board of Public School Education, said it was a model school house. Located on the knoll overlooking the Connecticut River and the pasture of the Hills' Brothers, who "loaned" the ground for it, it stood opposite the original Bissell Ferry Road across the Connecticut River. To this school children walked two miles or more following the irregular paths made by their own footsteps between rows of maple, apple, or cherry trees and the fences of their own homes. The model schoolhouse, set among trees, had a high board fence safeguarding the Hills' property at the north, and a Virginia rail fence to the south next to Ellsworth's pastures. The building was made of brick with front entry; boys hung caps and outer garments in the north half, girls the south; shelves for water pail, basins, were at the north side. Two separate doors led into one big room. There were graduated desks to suit the size of the children. At the rear left a noticeable big log burning stove had a high zinc sheet protecting the children nearby and also serving for drying wet garments. Blackboards ran along three sides of the room. The fourth side and front had a slightly raised platform for the teacher's desk and chair and a cupboard with school utensils. Another cupboard at the front near a long recitation bench held the world globe and other school supplies. At the left back of the stove was a rear door leading to a woodshed piled high with the short split logs. It had a south exit door. Two outhouses separated by a high board fence served boys and girls. This school burned in 1895 and after heated controversy was replaced in 1896 by a two room building with more modern

facilities. When the town discontinued its use Mr. Shoham took it over using it a mail order business (1953).

Today children are carried to their respective schools by bus now (1962). Before the trolley some children walked to the high school or academy or rode on the train to Windsor Center.

October 26, 1887 marks the beginning of the Hayden Station Social Club which used the Chapel for its first meetings. It took the place of the groups that often gathered at homes to sing, to play charades, and other familiar games. The older people of the club met early in the afternoon to sew often making bed quilts; later they set the tables for supper having brought their own specialties of foods. Others of the community often came for the supper at ten cents a person. Fairs were held, plays and musical entertainments were given with small admission price. Not until the club built its own hall opposite the crossing of the railroad were there square dances and card games.

The hall served as a community center for Red Cross work – First Aid classes during World War II with possible temporary hospital service with trained personnel and ambulance, and a CD [Civil Defense] center in time of flood. It burned April 4, 1943. All of the equipment generously donated was destroyed. However, through cooperative efforts of local residents and some of Windsor it was replaced by a similar building in use April 4, 1944. It has been a social center for Hayden Station and residents of surrounding areas for years.

Civic pride has shown community spirit also when neighbors shingled and painted the Hayden Station Chapel.

As a part of the Village Improvement Society of Windsor, Hayden Station was looked after in the same manner. Kerosene lamps for lighting the streets were cared for by public spirited citizens. They climbed their step ladders to fill, trim, and light the high up lamps. One was in front of Mr. Murray's (now Lawrence Clapp's 1962); one at the corner of Center Street and Hayden Station Road; one at Samuel Hayden's corner (where Mr. Willard Drake's home is 1962); another at Palisado Avenue and Hayden Station Road; and still another by Hills' Brothers driveway (Mr. Shoham's 1962). The lamps were still in use in 1910.

The "golden age" of local agriculture was in the 1880s. Home lots were attractively set apart by white picket fences and hitching posts were near the front gate. The clapboarded houses with green blinds were always kept well painted. Virginia rail fences or post rail fences separated the pastures and highways. Garden vegetables and fruits kept the household self-sustaining. Dairy products, eggs, hams prepared for winter use were also a part of the farm. Surpluses were bartered in Hartford or Windsor for articles not made at home. Wood lots still furnished largely the fuel for heating and woodsheds were well stocked. Farmers used horses and oxen for their hard work. Many had small acreages of tobacco. Even in the 1890s the bell of the yeast peddlers was most welcome. Two days a week one would look for the faithful Alonzo Munsell or Mr. William Allen in their covered carts – somewhat like panel trucks of today. Each had his route and ladled one cent or two cents' worth with his copper cup from the oaken barrel container. Sometimes one would go to their respective homes the next day for yeast. Left over liquid yeast was fed to the farm animals. Mr. Munsell went to Agawam gin mill for his yeast; peddling the

yeast all along the Suffield Windsor Locks line to his home in Haydens. Mr. Allen, to Barber's gin mill in Warehouse Point, peddling there and in Windsor and in Poquonock.

Cider making by Mr. Rhaum, who lived on South Center Street (the present 1960 home of Althens) provided vinegar and most people depended on him for cider and vinegar. His press was a delight to the children. It was only a short time before the layered apples and straw-colored liquid trickled down into the trough at the bottom. He was so genial and generous and understanding of children that every one of them was given clean straw to suck their fill of the sweet juice. Later the pomace was scattered over his sandy soil producing a small area of wild apples. At some earlier date the Haydens had a cider mill probably across from the chapel. Pomace from this also made an orchard with some good edible fruits.

Occupational opportunities in factories of Windsor, Windsor Locks, and Hartford began to bring changes in the 1880s. Railroad transportation was excellent and the fare to Windsor 5¢ and to Hartford 20¢. Railroad construction was underway in 1842 (completed runs Dec 1, 1844). Timetables stops scheduled from six a.m. to seven p.m. Seventeen or eighteen trains were available. In 1962 there is no railroad station and only freight sites. It is said that the first railroad station is a part of a house standing on Hayden Station Road (formerly Mr. Jewell's). In 1875 a very complete well-built depot and shed for horse and wagon were put up. It burned January 20, 1904. A less pretentious one with adequate facilities and telegraph was erected in September 21, 1904. Baggage checked with ticket took the luggage anywhere even to New York and Boston. Also letters could be put directly into the mail cars of the trains. Commuters, shoppers, and excursionists had the benefit of train travel. The railroad station was demolished in February, 1933. Side trackings for fertilizer, coal, and coke were seasonally used and remain.

Socially the railroads brought neighborhood changes. Members of the farm families were soon employed in the factories of the nearby towns. Soon city friends were welcome in country homes and marriages outside of the old families frequently took place and so began a new social era. In the early 1900s trolleys soon supplanted railroad travel and supplied excursionists with attractive parks at their terminal, a period from 1903-1940.

Of the most illustrious and well-known men of Hayden Station, Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth stands foremost (born April 29, 1745, died November 26, 1807). His public life and service to the United States in the struggling colonial days was most consequential. The stately mansion on Palisado Avenue built by him is a historic site cared for by the D.A.R. A large family of close Ellsworth relatives lived across the street in the house now owned by Mr. Ravelese (1962). It is interesting that the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad on September 23, 1843 notified all owners of land through which their route would pass to the Massachusetts line as sanctioned the Commissioners, to meet at the Railroad Depot of the company in Hartford the 29th of September 1843 to present objections to the road. David, Martin, Jemima, Phoebe, Mary and Leavitt from the Ellsworth house; Isaac, Olive, Nathaniel, Joseph of the Haydens; of the Pickett's Eliza and Mary, Margaret Roberts and James R. Pickett of Arlington, Vermont – attested by James Loomis II as “indifferent person”.

For many years the life-size painting of Oliver Ellsworth and his wife Abigail Wolcott sitting together by a window in the exquisite dress of their times graced the north side wall of the sitting

room of the mansion. It was painted by Earl and now hangs in the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, Connecticut. The Windsor Daughters of the American Revolution honor Oliver Ellsworth's wife in the name Abigail Wolcott Ellsworth Chapter.

The burial plot of the family is in the Palisado Cemetery.

A less heralded person of the Revolutionary days was Daniel Bissell (born 1754, died 1824). He was sent by George Washington to get information at the British camp concerning their plans for the City of New York and Long Island. One needs to read Stiles' *History of Windsor* (vol. I pages 336 to 343) of the hazardous undertaking, his suffering and even slander of desertion. After many years the Honorary Certificate and Military Badge of Merit were given him as a Sergeant by George Washington. He was born in a house standing only a little southeast of Mr. Shoham's home on Palisado Avenue. He died in 1824 in Richmond, New York. A marker placed near the highway by the S.A.R. gives honor to him.

Jabez Hayden, antiquarian, genealogist, historian, was born and raised in the old Levi Hayden house on Hayden Station road and later lived in Windsor Locks. Dr. Stiles quotes his words many times in the *History of Windsor*; and his genealogy is a valuable historic document; and his *Glimpses of Early Windsor Locks* include much that applies to Hayden Station. It was he who initiated the idea and carried to completion the memorial dedicated to William Hayden the pioneer in September 2, 1885. He died on December 1st, 1902, having been born December 20, 1811.

H. Sidney Hayden, brother of Jabez and Mary Ann, was also born in Haydens. Most of his life was spent in the large stone house in Windsor north of the Huntington House (1962). He was known as philanthropist, civic leader, and church worker. Much of Washington Park was his property. It is claimed that he started and extended Windsor's water supply and sewage disposal. He was born in 1816, died 1896.

Another Hayden of renown, Horace H. Hayden, was probably born in a house a few rods to the northeast from the William Hayden Memorial Park. He was an eminent teacher, founder of the Dental College of Baltimore and first dental surgeon of the United States. From the time of his birth, (October 13, 1769) until the time of his death (January 26, 1844), he was an unusual scholar, research student, and writer. In 1798 he was the first teacher of the First North School District of Hartford. A tablet to him was erected in 1941 in the William Hayden Memorial Park having been transferred from an earlier site on Stony Hill in Windsor.

Our senior senator, Carl Hayden, from Arizona (now 85 years old 1962) is well known in Washington and his native state of Arizona. He represents a William Hayden branch that pioneered in the historical, educational, and political life in the West. His father was born in Hayden Station on [April 4,] 1825 in a house built by John Hayden [the realtor].

Nine houses built or lived in by the Haydens could be found in the 1880s in Hayden Station. At the present there are no Haydens by name here but six houses do remain that were built by them. Descendants of the ninth generation of the pioneer William do live in Windsor known by the name of Hayden, grandchildren of the energetic Jabez.