



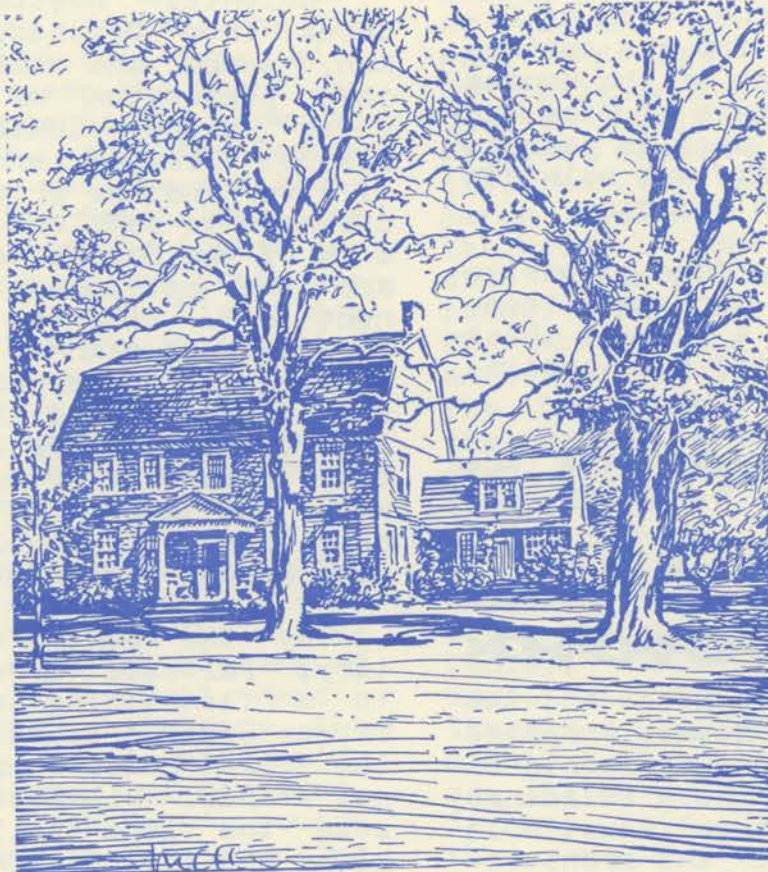
FYLER HOUSE

# Windsor Historical Society News

VOLUME IV, NO. 3

June 1986

## Dr. Hezekiah Chaffee House A Windsor Treasure



CHAFFEE HOUSE

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The Town of Windsor Historic Survey of 1981 describes this house as follows:

"The Hezekiah Chaffee House is one of the finest Georgian period dwellings in the town. The fact that it is constructed of masonry is even more significant. The gambrel roof, is common on these masonry dwellings. The Chaffee House sits on the east side of Palisado Green, at the center of the local historic district. This house along with Fyler House, Sill (Hooker)



CHAFFEE HOUSE

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Although we are now well into the summer season when some activities might be expected to decrease, we find that at least one committee formed by the Board of Directors is hard at work.

This is the committee responsible for providing the Board of Directors with a plan for the optimum short term management of the monies received from the Estate of Miss Marguerite Mills to be used in part to design, build, operate and maintain a new memorial museum building.

The committee has done extensive work in evaluating various alternatives and deserving a sincere thank-you for tackling a difficult assignment.

Members of this committee are Albert Young, Thomas E. Finley, Jr. and Alden H. Alford.

George L. M. Christopher



House, Thomas Hayden House and the Rev. William Russell House, comprise the 17th and 18th century fabric of the Palisado Green. These buildings and their surroundings thus hold outstanding historic and architectural significance to the Town and to the State.

The Chaffee House was built by Dr. Hezekiah Chaffee. Born in Rehoboth, Massachusetts in 1731, he married Lydia Griswold Phelps of Windsor. The house was built in 1765 and served as the office for a medical practice. His son Dr. Hezekiah (b. 21 March 1762), had a daughter Abigail Sherwood Chaffee who was born in this house, 8 July 1787. She married James Loomis and their children James, Hezekiah, Osbert, John Mason and Abby, were the founders of the Loomis Institute.

The Chaffee School, established in 1926 was named for Abigail Sherwood Chaffee and was headquartered in this historic house for over 40 years."

The following article was written for 'Chaffee Notes', Spring, 1964 by Mildred Finley.

Colonial history for Chaffee dates from October, 1635, when 60 men, women and children arrived to take possession of Sandy Bank, the ridge where Chaffee School now stands. Cleared land by the friendly River Indians proved a strong inducement to settlers. The next year, more of the Dorchester group arrived and the settlement became a permanent one. Like the company itself, it was well-planned with a green as the center, the church in the middle, and houses around the edge stretching along the ridge. This area became known later as Palisado Green when the attack of the Pequots necessitated the building of a palisade around the original settlement.

By the middle of the 18th century, Palisado Green had grown into a flourishing town. A Sergeant Thomas Squires is said to have built the first house where Chaffee House now stands. His descendants finally sold the land in 1755 to Dr. Hezekiah Chaffee with whom the history of the Chaffee family in Windsor begins.

Dr. Hezekiah Chaffee had come as a young man from Rehoboth, Mass., to be a druggist in Hartford, but he soon moved to Windsor to practice medicine, and to build the elegant house that befitted his place in the community as a doctor of means. As is often true of older houses, historians disagree as to the exact date of Chaffee House, but it evidently was built sometime between the purchase of the land and 1763. The fact that it is a central chimney type house, when his neighbor,



CHAFFEE HOUSE

Oliver Ellsworth to the north, had already built one with the new central hall, shows Dr. Chaffee to have been a man of conservative tastes, but its brick construction and fine detailed paneling also show him to have been a man of cultured discrimination. When at the end of the century, he built a house next door for his daughter Mary and her husband, Capt. James Hooker, he did choose the central-hall type, with large chimneys between the front and back rooms. (This house, known as the Hooker House, then the Deacon Woodward House, was re-christened Sill House by Mr. Batchelder, the first headmaster of The Loomis Institute, in honor of the poet, Edward Rowland Sill, whose birthplace it became when his family occupied it briefly during the 19th century.) It is pleasant to think that Dr. Chaffee, a vigorous, energetic man, lived to enjoy his houses on Palisado Green for over sixty years.

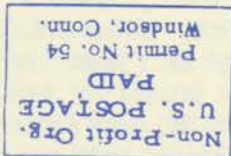
The family that occupied Chaffee House is as interesting as the house in which they lived, and their history is tied up with the history of the two schools. The eldest, Hepzibah, never married, while Mary, the second daughter, as I have said, married James Hooker of Hartford, who was a partner with Mary's younger brother, John, in the importing firm of Hooker and Chaffee. Windsor was a port-of-entry at that time.

Dr. Hezekiah's oldest son, Dr. Hezekiah, Junior, is of interest to us because he is the grandfather of the founders. He married Charlotte Bradley and became the father of Abigail Sherwood Chaffee, who later married Colonel James Loomis. Their famous children of four boys and one girl are too well known for me to need to dwell on them further (founders of Loomis Institute). Another daughter, Esther, married a Capt. McLean, who died on one of the voyages to the West Indies.

It is John Chaffee, however, the youngest of the elder Hezekiah's children, with whom we are most concerned here, as his history is tied closely with that of Chaffee House. He married Mary Rowland, the daughter of a distinguished Windsor family, whose father, Rev. David Rowland, and brother, Rev. Augustus Rowland, served in turn for over ninety years as pastors of the First Church. Mary and John lived for a time in Springfield, but returned to live in Chaffee House when the elder Dr. Chaffee died. Although they had no children they adopted Mary's niece, Sarah Rowland, to whom they willed the house in 1844. I am not certain that Sarah continued to live in the house. She was young and in 1852, she married the Rev. Martin Dudley, and went to live in Massachusetts. The house seems to have been rented the greater part of the 19th century, even as a two-family house at one time.

Sarah Rowland Dudley had three children, two boys who lived in the west and one daughter, Mary Chaffee Dudley, named after Sarah's beloved aunt. It was the daughter Mary who inherited Chaffee House from her mother. She married a minister also, the Rev. Charles H. Willcox, and it may have been as Mrs. Willcox that some of you knew her. She used to come to Chaffee in the early thirties to talk about her mother and her great uncle and aunt, John and Mary. She brought with her a leather strong box, which had belonged to John Chaffee, to show us its treasures --- John's wedding shirt and vest, his wallet, Mary's wedding slippers, combs, pins, old letters. Later, when she went to California to live, she left this strong box with Chaffee. It is one of our proud possessions. Mrs. Willcox loved Chaffee House, and when her husband retired from Lawrenceville School in the 1920's, they returned to restore it to its former beauty.

Mrs Samuel T Hinckley  
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Windsor CT 06095



The Windsor Historical Society, Inc.  
96 Palisado Ave.  
Windsor, Conn. 06095


## NEW MEMBERS

Joan L. DeMarco  
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Mr. & Mrs. John Carmon  
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Allen Brownlee  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank E. Brown  
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Mr. & Mrs. Lon Pelton  
Mrs. Albert Bartlow  
Mr. & Mrs. Raye Klopfenstein, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Lyman Wiltshire

After 44 years at the Palisado Green site, Chaffee School merged with Loomis School in 1970 and today as Loomis Chaffee is located on the Loomis Campus.

Shortly after Chaffee School abandoned the Palisado site, the Chaffee Campus was sold in its entirety to the Town of Windsor. On July 31, 1972 Chaffee House was placed on The National Register Of Historic Places.

Today, the site is known as the Milo W. Peck Development Center and is the location of Discovery Center, Head Start, Family Counseling Center and Windsor Montessori School.



But it was too large a house for two older people and when she heard that The Loomis Institute was seeking a location for its recently reactivated girls school, already renamed the Chaffee School in honor of the founders' mother, she suggested that the trustees buy Chaffee House, showing them that Chaffee House, the Hooker-Sill House and Daniels House facing the old Palisado Green would make an ideal campus. And so it has!



### FYLER HOUSE AND WILSON MUSEUM

10 to 12 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m.

Tuesday through Saturday

April 1 through November 30

Genealogical Research in Library  
By Appointment

203-688-3813

President: George L. M. Christopher

Director: Robert T. Silliman

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