

Then & Now - "Methody Corner" - Pratt's Corner Corner of Hubbardston, Radford, and Allen Hill Roads

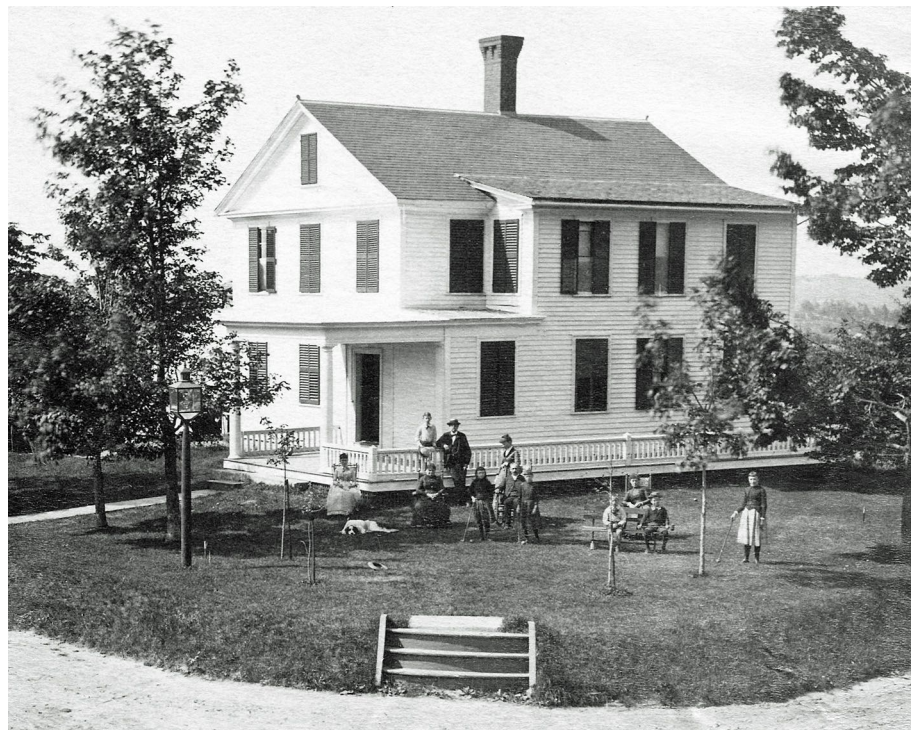


Sketch Created By Rosalind Sturges Allen

Today, unless you are familiar with our town's history, this area between the intersection of Radford, Hubbardston and Allen Hill Roads stretching back to almost Princeton Pizza does not have a name. But the names, West Village, Methody Corner and Pratt's Corner reflect a rich history of this once commercial and active village - just "west" of the town center.

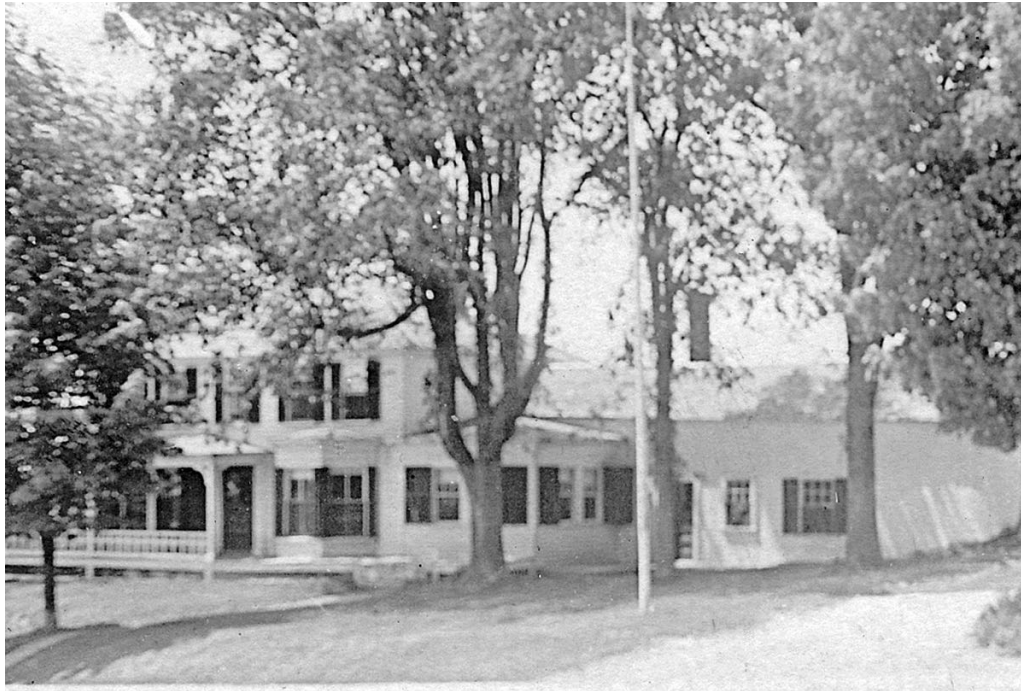
Pratt's Cottage & Annex:

On the west side of Radford Road, was the home of Dr. Alphonso Brooks who for a while served as postmaster. The house, for a short time, was even a shoe factory. But,



2 Radford Rd

with Princeton becoming a summer resort destination, the house was turned into a boarding house, with the distinction of being the only establishment, at the time, that was open to the public year round. Under the management of Mrs. Harriet Pratt and her daughters Lillian and Harriet, the “hotel made a reputation for square dealing and good service during a series of years dating back to 1876.”



Across Hubbardston Road, (still on the northwest side), a home was built in 1829 for Peter Thompson that was leased by the Pratt's and served as an overflow for Pratt's Cottage around the turn of the century. It also was the location for the Princeton Club, a social group, which in 1915 had 64 members.

52 Hubbardston Rd.

Allen Hill Road:

Originally didn't pass all the way through to Mountain Road, but in the late 1800's, the proprietors of the Mountain House Hotel, Samuel and Moses Hobbs, commissioned to have the road completed, so that their customers coming from the Depot railroad



48 Hubbardston Rd.

station by stage could travel directly to their hotel and avoid passing through Princeton Center where they might be tempted to get off and stay at one of those hotels.

48 Hubbardston Road:



At the intersection of Hubbardston Road and Allen Hill Road on the northeast corner is a home that was built circa 1789 for Dr. Ephraim Wilson. From 1853-1919, it was known as Grimes Tavern and operated as a tavern and boarding house. Elderly Mr. Grimes who operated the

tavern was known to have enjoyed sledding down the steep Allen Hill Rd. enjoying every minute of his adventure!

In 1919 the wife of Fitchburg's largest industrialist, Alvah Crocker rented for a couple of years this home, and she rented it for a summer or two to her former minister, Rev. James DeWolf Perry, originally the rector of Christ Church in Fitchburg. Mrs. Crocker was the godmother of Rev. Perry's little daughter, Beatrice, who died at the age of six. Mrs. Crocker had set aside monies for the little girl's education, so used that money to buy the house, and she then gave the property to Rev. Perry in 1923. Rev. Perry would later become the Bishop of Rhode Island and would serve a term as the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States. He and succeeding generations of Perry's would summer and live on the property until recently when the heirs sold the home.

46 Hubbardston Road:

Traveling along Hubbardston Road toward Princeton Center, Charles Harrington built a house around 1833 from which he operated a large wheelwright's shop. Bostonian Isaac Jackson



purchased the house and wheelwright shop around 1906 and turned the house 180 degrees and made the wheelwright's wing into part of his residence. Another eminent Episcopal clergyman, the Very Reverend P.F. Sturges, Dean of St. Paul's Church in Boston, was a later owner of this home, where he summered with his family between 1919 and his death in 1940. It is now a private home.

44 Hubbardston Road:



Closer to the Center, in 1813 Calvin Bullock from Royalston built the first house, tenement, factory, and store combination known as Bullock's Stand, where he and his wife lived, traded, and eventually died. The store quickly became a destination point for travelers through town. The next successor to Bullock's Stand was Peter Richardson who purchased Calvin Bullock's property in 1821. It included a potash works as well as the

house, store, and barn. He then sold it in 1829 to Edward Goodnow 2nd & E. Darwin Goodnow, the son, but it burned 1833. The Goodnow's quickly rebuilt the house. Its massive proportions of a twin ridge-chimney, double-pile house, may have partially resulted from trying to imitate the building it replaced. While the large two-story west wing that originally housed an early shoe factory was not rebuilt, the building was still one of the largest in the



Village. An early pair of gabled-dormers have been removed from the front roof slope, but the 2-story north rear wing remains from the part of the building that once housed the longtime store. The open hip-roofed screened porch on the west end of the building probably dates to the second quarter of the 20th century. By the early 1900's this property became a summer home and then a private year round dwelling.

Methodist Church (43 & 45 Hubbardston Rd.):



Perhaps the most surprising discovery for most visitors to this location is that in the field on the south side of Hubbardston Road a Methodist Church was built. In June 1839, the Methodist community in Princeton numbered 138 communicants, which encouraged the building of their own church edifice. It cost \$4500 "without the bell", which was an additional \$500. The church successfully operated and formed the focal point of the village from 1839 to 1892 until it was struck by lightning and burned. The Methodist house of worship was not re-built. Here is a contemporary news report of the fire:

"Lightening struck the Methodist Church Tuesday evening, June 14th, 1892, setting the steeple on fire and igniting and exploding a can of kerosene oil in the basement. The fire in the basement was soon extinguished, but the fire in the steeple could not be reached and soon all hope of saving the church was given up...There was no insurance." (Spy, Friday, June 17, 1892)

In 1903, a more traditional 2 ½-story side-gabled house was built, and it stands on a brick foundation on the former Methodist Church property. The house is clad in wood clapboard on the façade, and in wood shingle on the other elevations. The asymmetrical façade is four bays wide with the entry in the second bay from the left. In the easternmost bay of the façade is a shallow three-sided one-story bay window.



The main entry is a typically formal Colonial Revival type, with leaded half sidelights flanking a large 6-panel door and sheltered by a hip-roofed entry porch on turned posts. Alterations include the removal



of a large gabled dormer over the façade, the enclosing of a sunroom at the east end, and the c. 2000 addition of a rear deck and a two-car, gable-roofed garage at the west end. It has always been a private home,

Please feel free to write us, if you have any questions or information to offer at

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