

WHITNEYVILLE of Hamden WALKING TOUR

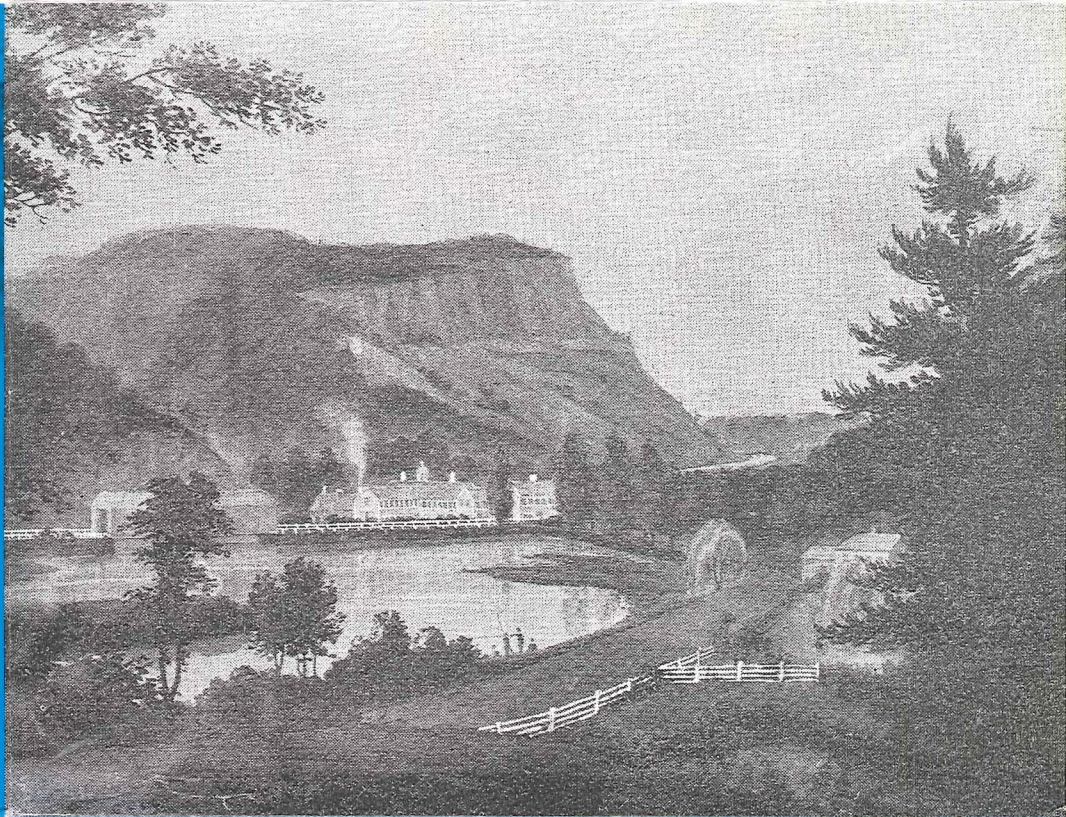


Presented by The Hamden Historic Properties Commission
Text by Eric D. Lehman, author of *Hamden*
Designed by Melissa Matos, SASD Design Service



Thank you
for visiting!

Eli Whitney



Your walk today will take you through
America's first factory town, along the
beautiful Mill River gorge that powered
hundreds of years of progress. Park at
the Eli Whitney Museum at 915 Whitney
Avenue, and prepare yourself for an
expedition into

history.

1 Today's educational museum is on the site of a series of industrial innovations, nestled below the cliffs of East Rock. Here in 1640 William Fowler constructed one of the Europe-an-style grist mills, which later harbored the Regicides Edward Whalley and William Goffe. It burned in 1662, was rebuilt, and remained in use until Eli Whitney bought it in 1798. He built his fabled Armory here, manufacturing generations of rifles for the United States military, and providing a model for other factories from Springfield to Harpers Ferry. Whitney combined interchangeable parts, division of labor, machine tools, and modern accounting techniques in a way no one in the world had done up to that time.

2 Walk behind the museum to the red covered bridge that says "32 Miles to Hartford." This is a replica of the truss bridge built in Hamden by architect Ithiel Town, the first available wood and did not need heavy piers, the design became universal throughout the country.



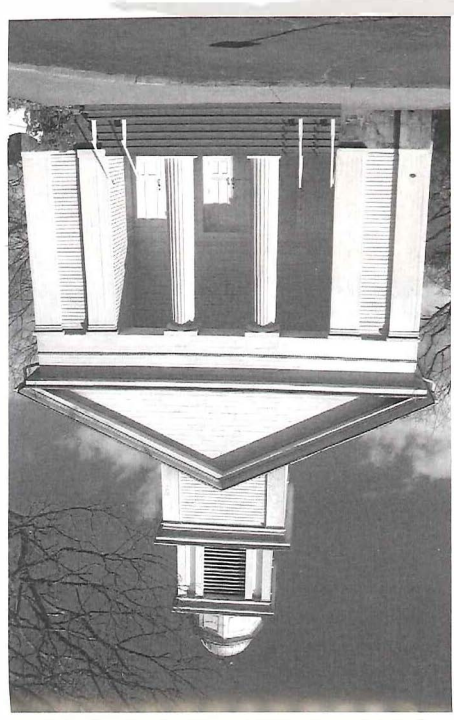
3 The path over the truss bridge leads to the trails of East Rock Park, but the tour leads the other way. Walk across the parking lot and up the metal staircase at the Water Center. Across the street is the huge red barn from the original Whitney complex, with doors at both ends, arcade decorations, and a gray slate roof. Its design was lauded by Presidents Andrew Jackson and James Monroe.

4 For a short side trip, cross at the stoplight onto Army Street. Once, a boardinghouse for single workers, smaller houses for married employees, and a schoolhouse for their children stood here. Fifty yards west up the road on the right is the Romanesque pumping station, built in 1869, with the brick section added in 1885.

5 Ahead, the beautiful 1920s neighborhood contains a gorgeous example High-style Colonial Revival by local architect Alice Washburn, which you can reach by taking the road to the right, and continuing to 105 Mill Rock. Washburn's genius is on full display in the central section of the main house & the garage wing.

6 The main walk continues north up the hill on the east side of Whitney Avenue. As you ascend you have a great view of the sparkling lake and historic dam to your right, built by Eli Whitney Jr. in 1860 on the site of the earlier 1640 and 1798 dams. The deeper lake submerged a paper mill, clock factory, and other buildings and bridges.

7 In another 100 yards, Hamden Hall Country Day School will appear on your left. Begun in 1912 as the 4th private day school in America, it is today located on the estate of musician and businessman, Morris Steinert. In 1927 the school was the first in New England to go co-ed. The top center of the strange-looking admissions building was once the 1848 Stephen Babcock house, on the other side of Whitney Avenue, overlooking the Mill River. It was relocated when the dam flooded the valley, and later incorporated ingeniously into Hamden Hall.



8 Soon you will see the green sign for Deepwood Drive on your left. This exclusive address was home to many prominent people, including celebrated author Thornton Wilder, in a fabulous 1929 house built by Alice Washburn. Do not cross Whitney Avenue and walk Deepwood, because it is narrow and dangerous, but drive up later if you like.

8 On your right is the triangle of Eli Whitney Park. Continue straight up Whitney Avenue here, crossing streets twice. Down the streets to your left is the historic Cedars district, the first planned suburb outside New Haven, full of Bungalow style homes. In a few minutes you will reach Putnam Avenue at the modern center of Whitneyville, where you could stop to get a bite or drink at one of the excellent restaurants or cafes. The electric trolley reached this intersection from New Haven at the turn of the 20th century.

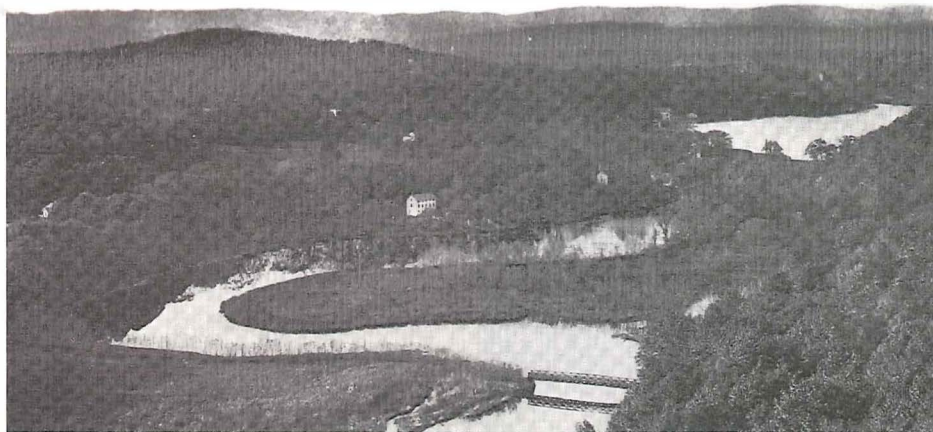
9 For another side trip, continue up the west side of Whitney. You will pass the 1834 Whitneyville Cemetery, with hitching posts still visible along Treadwell Street.

10 Across Mather Street and past the service station at 1322 Whitney Avenue is a house owned by Eli Whitney Jr. This 1845 Greek Revival was used as a boarding house for the Armory.

11 If you want a longer stroll, head up Mather to the corner of Servoss, where you'll find a glacial kettle pond, a geological reminder of Connecticut's ice age past, preserved by the Hamden Land Conservation Trust.

12 The main walk continues at the impressive Whitneyville Congregational Church. Eli Whitney Jr. donated the land to build this Greek Revival masterpiece in 1834.

13 After paying your respects, walk down the short Putnam Avenue extension to the Lake Road Scenic Overlook. You are looking at the second lake in what is actually a long series of lakes created by the Whitney Dam. In the late 1800s, ice skaters enjoyed this lake in winter and Yale regattas were held in the summer. Across the lake from you is the New Haven Country Club, once the Davis Farm.



14 Turn south on Lake Road, a barely used street that becomes a pedestrian thoroughfare for a very pleasant walk along the lake. On your right on the hill is "Lucerne," Hamden's only castle, built with crenellated towers, ornate chimneys, and other medieval features. It was built in 1906 by Frederick Grave, a prominent cigar manufacturer. Once you reach Davis Street, you will see the first lake spread out in front you. This area is the original site of the Ithiel Town covered bridge, at what was the beginning of the Hartford Turnpike, a nearly straight path between the two cities completed in 1799.

15 For another short side trip, go east on Davis across the bridge, until you reach the stoplight at the Hartford Turnpike. Across the street to your left is the Eli Dickerman house, built in 1821 on land bought from Eli Whitney. It is a perfect example of the Greek Revival architecture sweeping the country at the time. To your right is an exclusive neighborhood, where you can find another wonderful house by Alice Washburn at 29 Hartford Turnpike.

The main walk from Lake Road turns west on the south side of Davis Street, and continues back down Whitney Avenue the way you came. You have now walked the heart of Whitneyville, and seen many historic wonders. Eli Whitney and his son helped build both Hamden and America, and their legacy of innovation and hard work is one that continues to astonish and inspire us, even as we head into the 21st century.



This walking tour brochure has been financed in part by the Department of Economic and Community Development with federal funds from the Historic Preservation Fund of the National Park Service, US Dept. of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department or the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department or the Department of the Interior. This program receives Federal financial assistance through the Department for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, or handicap in its federally assisted programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility described above, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240.