

TOWN OF BRANFORD

# SATURDAY CHRONICLE



Twenty-fourth Volume.

NEW HAVEN, AUGUST 16, 1913.

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MR. A. E. PLANT.

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# SATURDAY CHRONICLE

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Volume Twenty-four,  
Number 2.

ENTERED AT THE NEW HAVEN  
POST OFFICE AS SECOND  
CLASS MATTER.

## TOWN OF BRANFORD

By W. F. WHIPPLE.

It was Totoket first, so called from the miniature mountain so conspicuous in the northward view. Its later christening as Branford was from Brentford, in England, the home of some of the colonists. Whether viewed from land or sea, from outlying hill-

that he should procure its settlement with a colony from England. He went to that country, but never returned; nor did his colony program materialize. The territory was next passed to a little group of people from Wethersfield led by William Owain. To these

adverse happenings the nucleus for growth was always there, and the natural advantages availed to finally make a prosperous town. A Captain Parish is authority for the statement that during the eighteenth century the town did more in navigation and in business than did New Haven. It even imported West India goods and transported them to that town. It had large storehouses at several places for receiving and shipping goods. Wheat, rye, corn, flax and juniper berries were shipped in large quantities. The soil in the north part of the town produced fine crops of wheat up to the revolutionary period. The town has an enviable record for the period covering the struggle of the colonies for independence. Most of the able-bodied men were in the army in some capacity.

Until 1725 the people of the entire town attended church services at the meeting-house on the green. In that year the town was divided into two parishes, the section known as North Farms being portioned off and set up as the town of North Branford. In 1874 the general assembly divided the present town of Branford into two voting districts, the village of Stony Creek becoming the second district. Although primarily a farming town Branford has been favored in a considerable degree with manufacturing enterprises. It is

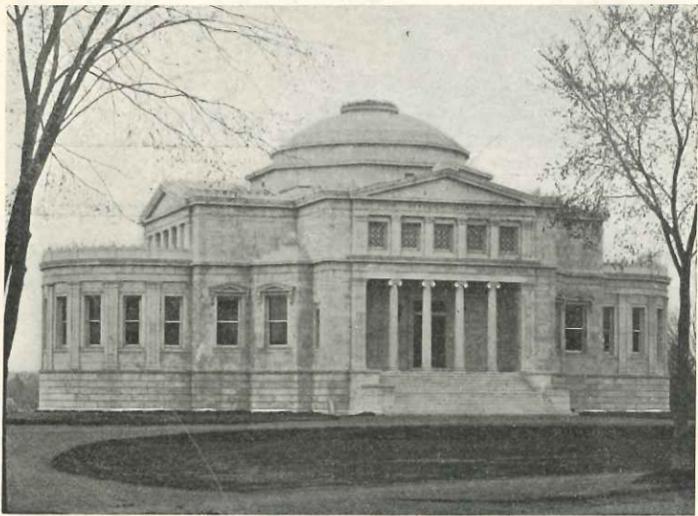
ground and which has enjoyed continuous growth and prosperity from its beginning.

What with its manufacturing, its tributary farming country, its excellent harbor, its position on a great railroad line connecting it with all the outer-world, its frequent trolley service to New Haven, its splendid library and schools, its city water, gas and electricity and its zealous civic association for village improvement, it is altogether favored and in line with the civic advancement that marks the present age.

\* \* \*

### Stony Creek.

If the name of this picturesque and interesting village lacks invitingness it serves an excellent purpose in the reaction which takes place in the mind, when the impression of uncouthness it has created is reversed by a sight of the village nestled in exquisite loveliness between huge rocky bluffs and the dancing waters of a splendid harbor. It is in this harbor the Thimble Islands, some twenty-five in number, repose in verdant loveliness. These are a constituent part of the village and, because of their far-reaching popularity for summer residence, play an important part in the business and social life of Stony Creek. There are upwards of fifty cottages upon the several islands, some of them quite expensive in style



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top or its central portions, it has that within itself which constitutes a quality of engagingness. Its long seven or eight miles of indented shore front, with the lacework of islets beyond, and the outward stretching sea, all enlist the admiration and kindle the imaginative faculties as memory traverses back more than two hundred years of its corporate existence and gets glimpses of the sturdy souls who first sought to redeem it from the wilderness. For its history has been rife with incident—some bordering upon the heroic or dramatic, but none, happily, upon the tragic.

They were of the strenuous type, they who took up its land and built their crude habitations with thatched roofs of sedge grass, and their meeting-house of logs and protected with palisades for defence from Indians. They were of the Puritan kind, hard grained and serious of purpose, with wills that bent to nothing but the mandate of heaven as interpreted by their devout theism.

The early beginnings of the town were attended by a transition that augured but poorly for its prosperous settlement. Time, however, and the native attractiveness becoming from its prolific shores and fertile interior wrought for its final good and growth.

The beginning was in 1640 when the officials of the New Haven colony, who had bought the territory from the Indians, shortly before, for a modest measure of exchange value, turned it over to Samuel Eaton, brother of Theophilus, the governor, with the understanding

were added a few people from New Haven, including Rev. John Sherman, a young clergyman of much ability and promise, who was for some time the minister for the little flock.

But many of these settlers, accustomed to the more liberal civic code of the Connecticut colony, became discontented with the New Haven plan of government and departed from the town thus making the second essay at settlement only perfunctory. Then came Rev. Abraham Pierson, who shared Rev. John Davenport's views of theocratic government, with his little flock of church people from Southampton, Long Island. All things now being harmonious and congenial the settlement prospered and grew apace until the year 1664, when conditions made advisable the union of the New Haven and Connecticut colonies. This action resulted in the substitution of the Connecticut for the New Haven polity in government, and so, deeply disappointed, Rev. Pierson gathered his flock again and migrated to Newark, N. J. There, the influences proceeding from his little colony became the warp in the fabric of Puritanism woven into the foundations of that state.

Thus we see that the beginnings of Branford were slow. There were a few squatters along the shore who were unaffected by this question of religion in politics. Among these was a Thomas Mulliner, for whom the section now Branford Point was called Mulliner's Neck. However, with all these



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now the seat of a few concerns which seem of the flourishing order. It has one establishment to which it is indebted for much of its prosperity. That is the Malleable Iron Fittings Co., whose works cover many acres of

and appointment. Traditions of the doings of the freebooter Kidd are associated with three of them. This furnishes a halo of romance which resists the obliterating of time and

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the erosion of incredulity. One of these is Pot Island, so called for the huge pot hole in its surface which is gravely alleged to have been Captain Kidd's soup kettle. This trusty tradition further asserts that when the soup was prepared the hardy crew assembled about the pot and consumed its contents in gleesome revelry. Money Island is supposed to have been the repository for much of the pirate's treasure. Industrious delving in its sur-

bulged the coffers of the pirate whose fabled doings invested its island shores with romance. Conditions there are so favorable to the best development of the bivalves that the Stony Creek oysters have been favorites in the market for many generations.

Another natural source of wealth is the granite quarries. The largest of these is Norcross quarry, where a capital of a quarter of a million dollars is employed. The quarry of most note, however, is that of the Red Granite Co.

cleven houses south of the railroad station. His present large store business was started some thirty years ago and has always kept a little in advance of the village in its growth. He has long been a member of the board of education and a trustee in the church.

\* \* \*

### Hotchkiss Grove.

All along the Connecticut shore, famed for its varying phases of beauty, there are inviting harbors, seductive coves, alluring bays, with jutting

cincts has drawn to it many people with refined taste, and the means for its gratification. It was here the late A. M. Young laid out unstinted wealth in the creation of a park-like estate, which has augmented the native charm of the locality. The contagion of his generous example in bending nature's lavishness to tasteful and orderly adornment has permeated the whole section and stimulated a civic pride which finds expression in the work wrought by a civic



ALONG THE SHORE, PINE ORCHARD, BRANFORD.

face, however, has failed to disclose this hidden treasure. High Island is supposed to have furnished a favorite harbor for Kidd's vessel, as the height was sufficient to obscure from view the masts of his vessel. This island is now the property of an association who call themselves the Buccaneer club.

Pot Island is now the property of Madison Avenue church of New York city and is given to laudable uses than those of its earlier estate. Many of the islands are now owned by people who have built summer residences upon them and converted them into beauty spots in the midst of the sea. One of them is the seat of a hotel which enjoys much popularity with summer

The beautiful color and susceptibility to polish of this stone has led to its use for columns in many notable buildings, among these is the capitol at Albany, N. Y.

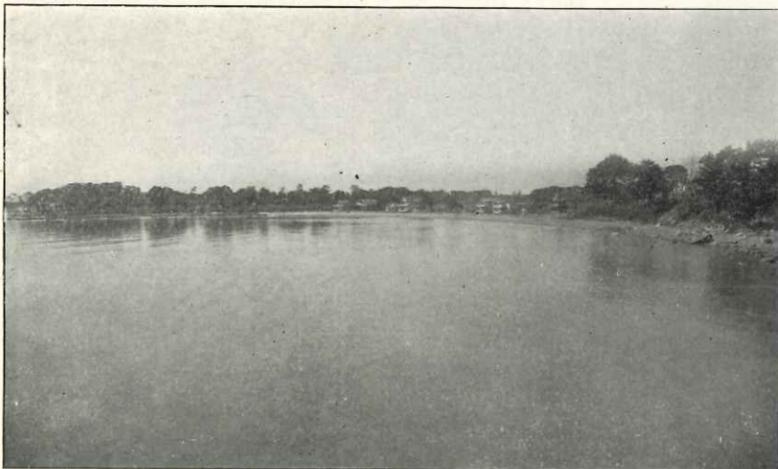
The village has an improvement association with its ladies' auxiliary. This society was invested with certain prerogatives by the legislature which enables it to do much for the advancement of the interests of the village. There is an equipment of fire apparatus which has never failed of efficiency in time of need. A fine school house with ample fire escapes and modern appliances for the best performance of school work is the pride of the village. A branch of the Blackstone library gives the people

headlands and wooded promontories, each the sea-front of some enticing stretch of landscape ordained of nature for a summer abiding-place for man. All—or nearly all—of these have been pre-empted and plotted and occupied, till now the larger knowledge of the wealth of new life and energy to be gathered from a sojourn by the sea has created demands for shore lots that must quickly outrun the supply.

So much of this coastline falls under the view of travelers between New York and New London, both by rail and steamer, the charm of its attractiveness has been heralded far and wide. But much as may be seen

association that guards well the hamlet from all that might detract from its wholesome invitingness.

But the cream of all the Pine orchard region—the section which would seem to have concentrated within its borders the pick and perfection of all that is beautiful and desirable in all the long reaches of the Connecticut coast—is the section known as Hotchkiss Grove. This tract, tilted upward from the water's edge just enough to command seaward views of illimitable breadth and reach, is incomparable in attractiveness, in its perfection as an ideal place for homes by the sea, in its freedom from the conditions which



THE CRESCENT.

tourists and sojourners. It is connected to the mainland by a ferry. There are three or four hotels in the village whose harvest-time is the summer, at which season the widely known attractiveness of the village draws a multitude of people to feast upon its hospitality and thrive upon its health promoting air. The water's edge is but three minutes' walk from the railroad station and trolley cars from New Haven skirt its shore at frequent intervals.

The harbor is a natural oyster bed and has yielded more wealth than ever

a share in the advantages enjoyed by their Branford neighbors.

The leading man in the village, the moving spirit in all enterprises that make for the good and gain of the place, is Mr. Frank E. Brainerd, whose big department store is the local distributing center for all the commodities that enter into the comforts and conveniences of life. Mr. Brainerd is a son of John W. Brainerd and was born in the town of Haddam, Connecticut, from where he came to Stony Creek in 1861. At that time there were but



THE OLD BLACKSTONE HOMESTEAD.

of it from car or steamer, the route of these is often too far away, owing to the sweeping curves and irregular line of the coast, for the complete unfolding to view of many places that hold all the charm the most fervid imagination could picture. Conspicuous among these is that section of Branford known as Pine Orchard. Nature would seem to have created this section with a design for its ultimate utilization for summer homes. The ideal quality pervading all its pre-

so often impair otherwise desirable locations, and in the irresistible enchantment ever brooding over its delightful reaches. It has character and interest all its own; romance and legend are woven into the story of its past, whilst tradition invests its early days with associations redolent of flavor to flood the fancy with transports of delight. An instance showing the tenacity of the legends which haunt this locality occurred when Mr.

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Hotchkiss was excavating for a cellar. A venerable native of the neighborhood stood by in anxious solicitude, watching each turn of the shovel in a blind faith that a pot of the hidden treasure of the redoubtable Captain Kidd would surely be disclosed. The crescent-shaped shore which partly encircles the bay—or cove—with the wooded promontories at either end, which appear as if thrown out from the mainland to make a perfect harbor, was a favorite haunt of the red men who made kitchen middens along its beach long before the white men came.

This tract was first spied out for settlement by Captain John Blackstone of Boston, who established himself there about 1700. Three years later he built the large farmhouse, now standing and in perfect preservation. His farm originally embraced most of the eastern portion of the section now called Pine Orchard. Tradition has it that he left Boston

And this view of the waters of Long Island Sound, by the way, has no equal from any point. Such pictures as are presented by the play of light and shadow upon these infinite stretches of water—pictures whose frame is the horizon, or sometimes the gilded morning sky, are only to be seen from this exquisitely moulded tract. Whilst groups of beautiful trees are scattered about the land, a splendid grove of hardwood trees adorns its western extremity and holds beckoning to all who traverse this region a perennial pleasure. At the shore is the clean sandy beach, with a gradual slope to the seaward—a beach whose waters are never contaminated by sewage, whilst farther out the water has a depth sufficient for vessels of deep draught. It is related that this was one of Captain Kidd's favorite harbors, and that he at one time found amusement in going ashore in the garb and mien of a gentleman of quality and participating in a village dance.

that comes up to mingle with the soft breezes brewed in the wooded uplands beyond retempers the nerves and kindles anew the forces that make for power and purpose. It is quite unparalleled singular and alone in this quality of holding within its borders such abundant measure of charm for those who would find health and comfort by the shore, and without its borders all things needful to confirm and augment this charm and lend potency to its invitingness. Such a combination of favoring conditions could scarcely be duplicated along the whole New England coast.

Although Mr. Hotchkiss has made little effort to promote the sale of these lots, many have been sold and several handsome villas have been erected. Much care has been exercised in the sales to ensure that only desirable neighbors might become dwellers here, and reasonable restrictions have been laid upon all transfers of the lots.

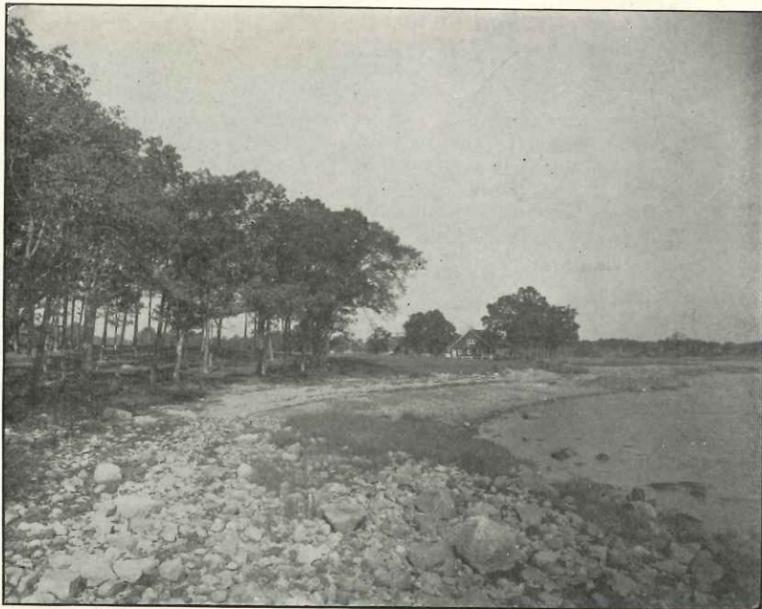
The location is between the A. M.

procure incomparable building sites is attractive to those who would build at the shore, then it should be equally inviting for investment and even more so, for the recent advances in the value of Pine Orchard property is sure to extend to this tract. The reasonable price and terms at which these lots are at present offered adds much to their temptingness. Interested parties should make haste to communicate with the owner, Mr. E. M. Hotchkiss, whose address is 1523 Chapel street, New Haven, Conn.

\* \* \*

A. E. Plant & Sons.

Withal that Branford has had so many and varied means for acquiring wealth—with all its manufacturing, the yield of its granite quarries, its prolific shores and its traffic over the seas, it is after all like the rest of the world, most indebted to that fundamental source of all wealth, the soil, for that growth and prosperity that

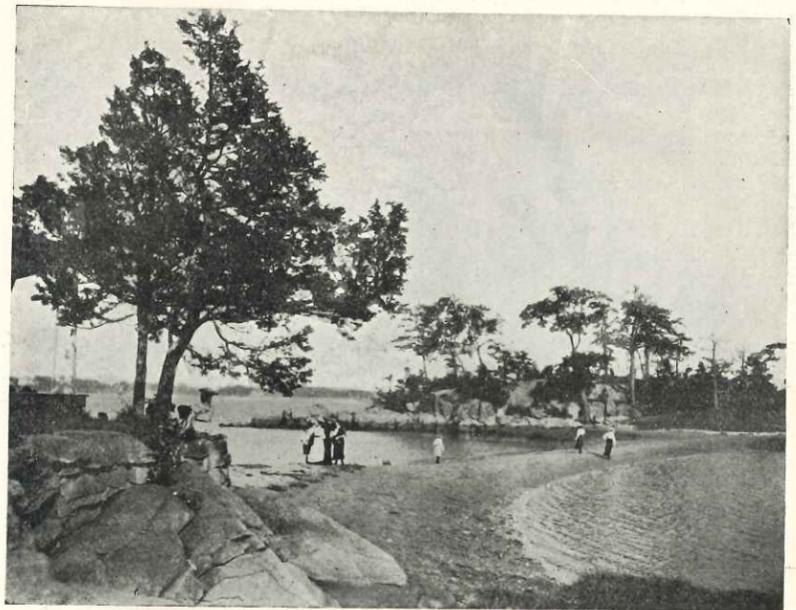


SHORE AT HOTCHKISS GROVE.

in high dudgeon; that manifest parental displeasure on both sides at his marital choice so roiled his equanimity that he was impelled to shake from his heels the dust of ancient Boston, for all that that entire bailiwick was the aforetime property of his great-grandfather. It is a more generally accepted supposition, however, that his calling as a mariner had made him familiar with the Connecticut coast, and that he was drawn to this location by its inviting harbor and matchless shore. Whatsoever may have been his motive for breaking away from Boston, certain it is he chose wisely and with forethought when he sailed into the alluring cove now bearing his name, and set up his habitation in the midst of this miracle of beauty and healthfulness.

This Hotchkiss Grove tract comprises some seventy-five acres, including the homestead portion of the old Blackstone farm. Its water front stretches along some twenty-five hundred feet, or nearly half a mile, and its northern border has about the same length. It has a gentle upward slope from the water, thus giving views of Long Island Sound from every building site upon its surface.

This land was purchased about thirty years ago by Mr. Hotchkiss with a view to eventually open it up for a summer colony. There was little to be done to add to its outward attractiveness, but much has been done along the line of making all the building sites advantageous and in opening and grading streets. Among the uncommon advantages pertaining here perhaps the most noteworthy is that supreme condition incident to the environment wherein there is no lowland meadows nor mosquito-breeding swamps to send forth dank and miasmatic vapors to annul the health-laden breezes which come up from the sea; another is the fertility of the soil, its richness making everywhere a fine sward; still another is the upward sloping grade, which ensures perfect natural drainage and the high, dry building sites so needful for wholesome sanitary conditions. Everywhere over its broad acres all conditions contribute to the health, contentment and delight of its dwellers. To spend a day in viewing its varied allurements is to gain new increment of health and vital energy, for restfulness and contentment are nurtured in its atmosphere, and the tang of the sea



DOUBLE BEACH, BRANFORD.

Young estate on the one hand, and Haycock Point on the other. Its picturesque beauty, from land or sea, its wholesome and agreeable surroundings, its faultless beach and boating, bathing and fishing features, all combine for a matchless whole quite beyond the conception of one who has never been within its delightful precincts. Its northern portion is crossed by the trolley line between New Haven and Stony Creek, which gives frequent and rapid service. What with this trolley line to the city, the station for trains to New York or Boston but a half a mile away, with telephone, gas, electric light, spring and city water and other urban conveniences within easy reach, with delightful drives over hardened roads and shaded lanes—what with all these and the joy of living by the shimmering sea, surely this Hotchkiss Grove holds big interest for those who would make the summer time a season of joyous health.

The increasing demand for shore property and the rapidly diminishing area now obtainable will doubtless speedily remove from the list these Hotchkiss Grove lots. If the character and quality of this opportunity to

has given it a place upon the map and made it conspicuous in the proud roll of Connecticut towns. During the eighteenth century it was without a rival in the yield of its agricultural products; indeed, so great was the volume of these a large shipping business was done in their transportation to markets.

To be sure, this bountiful yield was the product of virgin soil, but there are farms in the town that have been worked for many generations which are as fruitful of yield to-day as in the palmiest days of the past. One man who got last season one hundred and fifty bushels of shelled corn to the acre, when the average yield is fifty bushels, sees no reason for envying the good fortune of former generations. Nor does he who received from his Boston commission man thirty cents per quart for his strawberries this season. The application of the wisdom evolved from agricultural science—for profitable farming is now becoming a science—will bring back the qualities in the virgin soil, and even more, for it a little more than replaces the elements taken up by each crop.

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It is the knowledge of these things, and their practical application, that is the foundation of the large success attending the management of the great farming enterprise of A. E. Plant & Sons, and has given the Plant farm a fame broad as the state, even with people unaccustomed to giving notice to farm matters.

The senior Mr. Plant was born and reared upon this farm, and through all the years has given brains and toil for its successful working. How well he has wrought is evidenced by his property, and the abounding fruitfulness of the one hundred and fifty acres. Although some attention has been given to the profitable production of vegetables, the largest output of the farm is in fruits. If there is any specialty in this line it is in strawberries. Branford strawberries are favorites in the markets, even as far away as Boston. The skill of Mr. Plant in the production of this popular fruit is a primary cause for the public favor in which the Branford varieties have been held for a half century. He was a pioneer in shipping this and other garden products to the Boston markets. A popular variety of white onions are grown in large quantities for the New York and New Haven markets. There are twenty-five acres in apple orchard, a large area in pear trees, two acres in grapes, five acres in tomato growing. These items suggest the large lines upon which this farm is conducted. Along with these is a moderate dairy business. Mr. Plant's pioneering and initiative spirit was of early development, as indicated by the fact of his being the first man to take a load of cabbages to New Haven.

He was born upon this farm in 1841. His father was William and his mother Polly (Beach) Plant. Both these families figured prominently in the early days of Branford. Mr. Plant is a veteran of the Civil War, when he gave long and faithful service to the Union cause. A man of large and genial presence and engaging personality, he gives the impression of one born to triumph in all undertakings. Advancing years and the infirmities that are the legacy of all who bore the hardships of war time, have impelled him to retire from active participation in the farm management. The death of his wife through a railroad crossing accident three years ago has borne heavily upon him. She was Bessie Upson, a woman of much intellectual force and an invaluable helpmate.

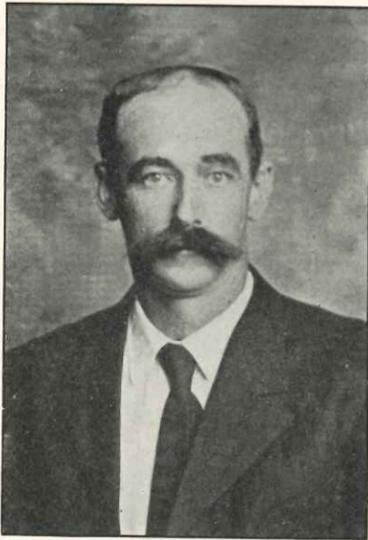
The business of conducting the farm now devolves upon the two sons, Albert B. and Ray U. Plant. These two young men are of the best New England type, stout of purpose, physical, moral and intellectual. Both are endowed with abounding measure of enterprise and mental alertness, and are in touch with all that is new in the rapidly advancing developments in agriculture, and accept their methods to these with closest attention to results. In line with this they are installing a system of irrigation, which is calculated to eliminate one of the chief hazards in farming. Their methods may be expected to augment the fame that has so long been the portion of this well-managed splendid farm.

## W. E. Talmadge.

An interesting example of what may be accomplished when there is a blending of willing hands and ample purpose is presented by the successful development of the coal and ice business of W. E. Talmadge at Short Beach. A man with large zeal and capacity for work, and fruitful of ideas for directing the work along profitable channels, he has enviable success from beginnings expressed by the zero mark.

The field of his business activities is not circumscribed by the narrow confines of Short Beach, but laps over into larger Branford and covers East Haven, when the dependable quality of his goods, his reasonable prices and accommodating methods have given him the call in the coal business.

His coal pockets and yards are located at the mouth of East Haven river, where the capacious wharf facilities furnish every advantage for handling large cargoes of coal. His experience



WILLIAM B. TALMADGE.

and excellent business judgement have pointed the way to utilizing these natural facilities to his great advantage and the gain of his customers, as well, in the saving of cost in the handling of coal.

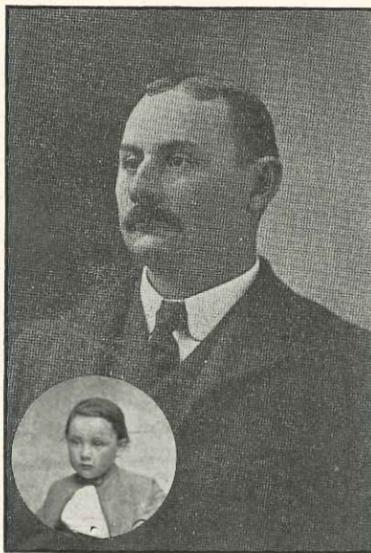
Mr. Talmadge is a son of Osro and Clarissa (Barnes) Talmadge, and was born at Fair Haven, Connecticut, in 1872. When he was about twelve years old his parents moved to East Haven, where he grew to manhood. Securing employment at the R. G. Davis flour and grain establishment in New Haven, he acquired a valuable business training. From that place he graduated to the employ of the Hygienic Ice Co., where he later became an assistant manager. He next moved to Short Beach where he married Miss Nellie Green. Here he bought out an ice business and opened up a coal yard. His coal business has taken on such growth and proportions that he is giving consideration to the subject of providing himself with power barges for transporting coal to his docks. With a pleasant home, a wife most helpful in native business skill, a bright, interesting boy and a business well grounded in prosperous growth, Mr. Talmadge should be entitled to have the word success written against his name.

## J. T. Sliney.

It is no idle task that falls to him upon whose shoulders is laid the burden of directing the public affairs of a

town like Branford. There is compensation, to be sure, in the honor which goes with the official position, and other compensation in the satisfaction which goes with a consciousness of having put the stamp of progress upon ways of the town; of having administered its affairs in a manner to give pride and satisfaction to the majority of its tax-payers and gain for it prestige in the outer world. These compensations bear small ratio, however, to the endless toil involved in the full performance of the executive functions. The one item of highways, for instance, for the conditions of which all credit or blame is directed at the first selectman, presents a task like that of old Sisyphus rolling the stone up the mountain. The perpetual grinding of the roadways by the automobile furnishes a problem for the town authorities deep enough to stall the mental machine of a Lenarde.

Branford is favored in having at the



MR. JOHN T. SLINEY.

head of its road department a man with skill and perseverance to match the requirements. A successful business man with large experience in public affairs. Mr. Sliney brings to his position as first selectman an equipment well calculated to advantage the best interests of the town.

John T. Sliney is a native of Branford where he was born in April 1864. His father was David and his mother Elizabeth (Dixon) Sliney. The senior Sliney was a veteran of the Civil war. The subject of this sketch began his business career in a modest way when but seventeen years old and by steady steps of progress has built for himself one of the leading business enterprises of the town. As a general contractor he handles many large enterprises in public works. Prominent among his large undertakings locally was the excavating for the big library building. He has made practically all the cement walks in the town. Along with the rest he carries on a farming business and a livery business for hacks, and stages for parties.

His personal popularity and public spiritedness has brought him very much into favor for official positions. In this line he has been for five terms a member of the board of selectmen, a member of the school board, member of the legislature in 1902-3, when he served upon the exposition committee, and a trustee of St. Mary's church. He

was a charter member of Battery A, C. N. G., and is a member of the Sons of Veterans.

## One Effect of Minimum Wage.

A curious example of reasoning is to be found in an ecstatic paragraph on the minimum wage for women that appears in a radical eastern newspaper. It appears that a missionary of the new economics called upon Mr. Doubleday of the New York publishing house of Doubleday & Page. Next day Mr. Doubleday called in the superintendent with the following result:

"Beginning to-day," he directed, "every woman in our employ must receive at least eight dollars a week."

"They're not worth it," said the superintendent.

"But pay it," said Mr. Doubleday.

"We can't afford it," said the superintendent.

"Then we'll lose it," said Mr. Doubleday. "But I do not want to be talked to again as that young woman talked to me. I couldn't think of anything else."

The eight-dollar-a-week minimum went into effect. To every one's surprise the efficiency of the force was improved. No one was discharged, but one by one the less efficient ones dropped out, and those that remained did the work. By and by it was cheaper to run the plant at a minimum of eight dollars a week than it was before there was no minimum.

Where did they drop? What was their ultimate destination? Or did they just cease to exist?

These are somewhat pertinent questions, for on their answer must ultimately depend the public verdict.

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