

NNHS NEWS LETTER

Northville Northampton Historical Society

Issue 150
March 2023
Editor
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ALLEN AND PALMER HARDWARE

In business for 153 years, so far

Last month's newsletter told the story of the Allen and Palmer families, when they moved to Northville/Parkville, and a little about who they were and where they came from and where they built their homes when they arrived. This newsletter is about their business adventures of building Allen and Palmer Hardware.

Edward Allen was born and grew up in Vermont. He was in the Civil War and served 3 days in the Battle of Gettysburg. He came to Northville after the war and with Andrew Palmer, a native of Northville, opened a hardware store. The store was located where the Oneida market used to be on the corner of North Main and Water Streets, and was built by Reuben Willard.

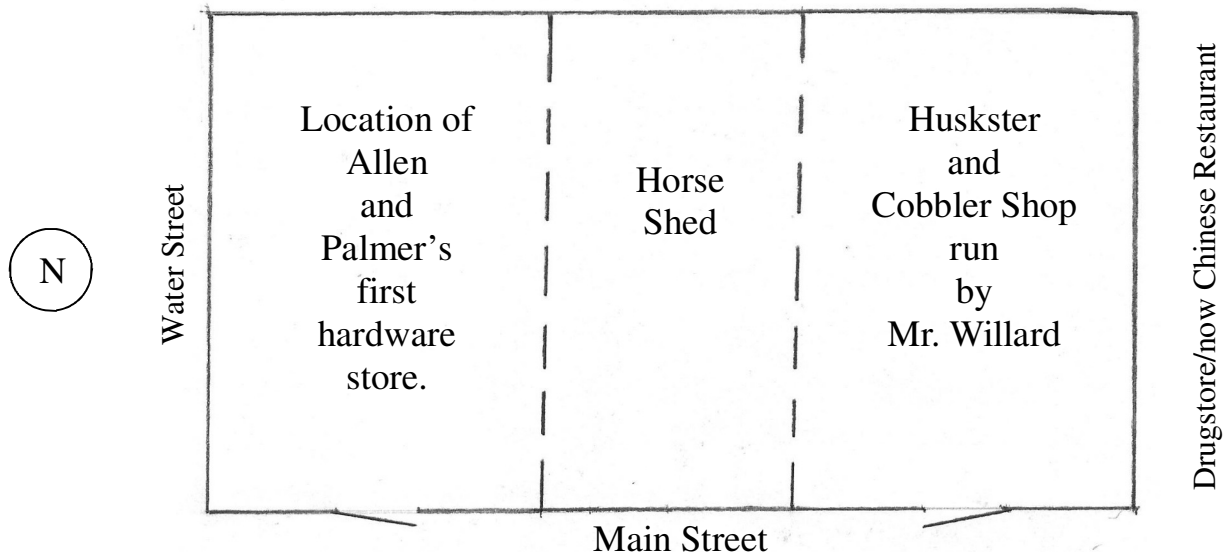
That first hardware store was on the north side of the Old/first Reuben Willard building. This building was a long low wooden building. The middle of the building was open for a horse shed, the south end was used as a huckster and cobbler shop by Mr. Willard. *"A Huckster is a person who sells small items, either door to door or from a stall or small store"*

In about 1875 they were asked to move, as the owner of the building needed the space that the hardware store occupied. They were given 4 months to secure a new location. They soon bought and moved into the Benton Hardware Store.

Samuel Benton owned a Hardware store on North Main Street from 1870 to 1875. Samuel dissolved his business and sold his hardware store to Allen and Palmer in 1875.

MUSEUM

The calendar says it's Spring. You could fool me, we still have too much snow for Spring. It won't be long now before it'll be time to prepare the museum to open in July and August. There will be cleaning and removing articles from totes that has kept our collections safe from possible destruction by varmints is always a big job. Display cases and windows will be scrubbed and some new donated articles put on display.



Sketch drawn from a description in old records of the first Allen and Palmer Hardware Store. Sketch drawn by L. Cramer



Former Samuel Benton hardware from 1870 to 1875.
Allen and Palmer's hardware from 1875 to 1960



In 1891 Edgar became a member of his father's hardware business, working for Edward Allen.

In 1911, DeForest Miller became a partner in the business after the death of Edward Allen.

Edgar Palmer
on the left
with a
salesman.
inside
where
the
J.F Farm Store
is
Today.

Edgar Palmer inherited and operated the hardware store after his father Andrew died. Edgar died in 1926. Edgar's wife Esther Cole Palmer ran the business after her husband died. Their son Grant started working in the store as soon as he was old enough. He eventually became a partner of the hardware store with his mother. He retired in 1960.

Edwin Allen gave his nephew, DeForest Miller, a job in the store after DeForest graduated from high school. DeForest was Edwin's nephew by marriage. Later DeForest hired his nephew William "Bill" Conover to help out. Bill bought out DeForest's share and Grant Palmer's share in 1958. In 1969, the hardware was moved to the Allen and Palmer building that had been built in 1885, where it remains today. Bill Conover retired in 1997. Shawn Darling, who had worked there since high school days, and Lee Robinson, as partners, purchased the hardware store from Bill in 1997. Bill continued to work in the store for a few years after he sold it. Shawn and Lee continued the business for 25 years. In 2022, Shawn and Lee sold the building and business to Christian Klueg and Dominic Cox.



I have researched the history of the Allen and Palmer Hardware Store from numerous sources. History isn't always perfectly recorded, but by comparing information, it can be determined to be correct or at least mostly correct. I consulted historical records that 3 former historians had recorded while interviewing local people, newspaper articles, and family records, and from ancestry.com.

Editor

Here is “the rest of the story”

If you are wondering about the Rueben Willard building that existed from 1893 to 1957.



The above building was built in 1883 after the first Rueben Willard building was disposed of (see sketch on first page). In 1888 Rueben’s son, James, re-faced this building with brick, which is the way the building looked until it burned in 1957. Those of us who remember the building, remember it as the Oneida Market.

