

Charlotte L. Evarts Memorial Archives, Inc.
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Number 3

A Monument, A Flagpole and a Red House



The Talcott Bradley House

To the west of the main green, across Copse Road and in front of the Madison Lutheran Church is a smaller, triangular green. At the westernmost tip of this green is a large boulder with a bronze plaque to remind us that a Madison boy born in 1730 became the first governor of the Vermont. Thomas Chittenden was born on the family farm on Neck Road. In 1774 he moved to Vermont where he became involved in the fight for Vermont independence becoming elected governor in 1777 and every year thereafter until his death in 1797. Not bad for a farm boy from East Guilford.

East from Thomas Chittenden's memorial is cedar flagpole. This is the third flagpole to stand on this spot. A generous member of the community placed it here several years ago when the previous flagpole fell in a storm.

Rev. James Gallup, the pastor of the First Congregation Church, erected the first flagpole here in 1891. After his death that flagpole was also blown down in a storm and his widow replaced it in 1911 with a white cedar pole from the Cedar Swamp in North Madison. That pole survived until the late 1990s when it was replaced by the present flagpole.

It has been long believed that Lee Academy once stood here on the westernmost portion of the green. There is no evidence to support this idea but every history of the academy mentions it, so it may be true. Recently discovered records kept by the shareholders of Lee's Academy note that they were considering moving the Academy to the main part of the green. The plan was to place it in front of first district schoolhouse near the church. The church referred to was the predecessor of the current First Congregational Church standing close to the Boston Post Road on the southeast corner of the green.

Easily visible from the western tip of the small green is a red cape cod style house located on the north side of the Boston Post Road. Talcott Bradley, who sold the first land to be purchased for the building of a summer house in 1867, once owned this lovely house. It was later owned by George Augustus Wilcox who rented it to a young couple active in summer theater in the early part of the 1900s. Alice and Bushnell Cheney were the founders of the Jitney Players; a traveling theatrical troupe that roamed the United States with their truck/stage named "Jezebel". They rehearsed their plays behind the red house and often presented performances for the townspeople.

Directions: The green is quite easy to find and it is equally easy to travel to its western end. If you are a visitor or someone very new to town you can ask almost anyone for directions.

Please Note: The house and grounds are privately owned and not open to the public.