

B E N N E T T - W A R D H O U S E (Site)
HISTORY SHEET
General Information

Name of Structure: Bennett-Ward House

Address: 4051 Ridge Rd (Williamson village)

Parcel ID: (544600) 65117-12-887532 (Digiulio Richard L)

Atlas: 1853: unmarked row of buildings; 1858: "Dr Sprague";
1874: "M.H. Bennett";
1904: "Dr & Mrs W. W. Ward Res"

When Built/Mason: 1838

When Razed: Extant (8/28/2022) but severely deteriorated

Why: Decades of abandonment, eroded away

Original Owner: Dr Josiah Bennett

Subsequent Owner: n/a

Original Uses: Residence and Doctor's Office

Subsequently Use: Texaco Service Station (1939), and other automotive

Photographs: Several

Description:

Design details:

The long side of the 1½ -story house faces the road. As originally built, it had a center entrance flanked by two windows each side. Five decorative grills were evenly spaced across the the cornice. Foundation was cut stone 4 blocks high requiring 4 risers to the entrance. There was one basement window on each side of the door in the foundation course each having a lintel of cut stones set vertically. The right (east) gable end had an attached wing (cannot tell if frame or cobblestone). The opposite gable end had a window toward the front of the side and a door toward the back. Each opening had a window centered above it. Between the windows in the gable was (is) a decorative oval ornament with a perimeter of tiny cobbles.

Masonry details:

Small red rounded lake stones 5/Q on façade, similar on west gable end, except multi-colored lake cobbles set on a left leaning bias; on back wall larger multicolored mix of lake and fieldstones set 3 or 4/Q in nearly as neat rows as on the other elevations. Horizontal joints are Vs, verticals pyramids. Light colored and fine textured mortar. Tooled limestone quoins, Wooden lintels and sills.

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Note: Dorothy Wells Pease (DWP), 1940 Inventory, p33, item 8:

"Dr Josiah Bennett house c1850 is now a gasoline station. Facade and sides are red lakestones 5/Q; quoins are limestone. Stones on the back are all colors and sizes. Fine grillwork covers the small under-eaves windows which are illuminated at night."

Also see Carl F Schmidt's (CFS) *Cobblestone Masonry*, © 1966, p 194-95.

Also see Verlyn Klahn's 1955 Hoffman Essay, *Cobblestone Structures of Wayne County*

O v e r v i e w

"Dr Sprague" is indicated on the 1858 atlas. He was married in 1849 to Mary Bennett, the daughter of Dr Josiah Bennett. Although there is no name associated with the cobblestone building on the 1853 map, it can safely be assumed that this was Josiah Bennett's residence.¹ 1874 map indicates "M H Bennett"—Myron H Bennett, son of Dr Josiah & Ruth Bennett. 1904 shows "Dr & Mrs W. W. Ward Res". Dr Westel Willoughby Ward "married Miss Mary Appolinia Bennett of Williamson and they resided in the Myron Bennett house on West Main street during their married life."²

In 1939 Charles Van Maldeghem and John J Fox opened the Cobblestone Service Station featuring Texaco products. It remained in use as a service station until it was abandoned several decades ago.

Ed Ver How adds a cobblestone peak to the roofline.

Rochester NY Democrat Chronicle 1948 - 1124.PDF (12/2/1948)

"A few years ago when an old cobblestone dwelling, formerly owned by Dr W. W. Ward of Williamson was remodeled into the present Cobblestone Gas Station on Williamson's W Main St, Ed Ver How was the mason who constructed the cobblestone peak which was incorporated

¹ It was built as the residence of Dr Josiah Bennett in 1838 (*Wayne County: The Aesthetic Heritage of Rural Area*, © 1979, by Stephen W. Jacobs, p 77).

Dr. Lathrop S. Sprague "was called to Williamson to counsel with Dr Josiah Bennett, a leading practitioner here at that time, and met his daughter, Miss Mary Bennett, to whom he was married shortly after in 1845" (Rochester NY Democrat Chronicle 1897 - 3363.PDF, 12/6/1897). Dr. Josiah Bennett died in 1850. Myron Bennett died in 1887. Dr. W.W. Ward died in 1928.

² Dr Ward's obit notice: http://sodus.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?i=f&d=01011870-12311928&e=w%20w%20ward&m=between&ord=e1&fn=record_usa_new_york_sodus_19281109_english_7&df=1&dt=10

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into the facade of the building. So skillfully were these cobblestones laid by Ver How that the whole blends perfectly and appears to have been constructed at one and the same time."

A n c e s t r y

Dr Josiah Bennett

<https://w-phs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/W-PHS-May-June-2017-Newsletter-1.pdf>

JOSIAH BENNETT

Josiah was born in Cheshire, England, 1788. When he was 6 years old, his parents chartered a ship to travel to Hudson, New York. He studied medicine in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. At 21, he set out on horse for western New York.

He was the second physician in town in 1815, Dr. Bigelow being the first. Josiah married Ruth Reeves. She was 17, thirteen years younger than he. Dr. Bennett participated in the establishment of the First Presbyterian Church in Williamson, and he and Ruth Reeves were the first couple to be married in the new church. They had four children: Myron, Charles, John Paul (who became a Wayne County Sheriff), and Mary.

Josiah was appointed Postmaster to Williamson in 1841. Josiah died in 1850, having lived his entire adult life in Williamson.

Findagrave for Pleasant View Cemetery in Williamson does not list Josiah or Ruth Bennett. However, it is listed in Wayne Country Genealogy and Family History website.

<https://wayne.nygenweb.net/cemeteries/pleasantview.html>

BENNETT

Josiah Oct. 20, 1850, 63y

Ruth wife Nov. 30, 1877, 76y

Myron H. Nov. 9, 1887, 67y 5m 13d /* son Josiah & Ruth */

Mary E. wife Apr. 2, 1885, 61y /* Myron's wife */

Dr Lathrop S Sprague

Rochester NY Democrat Chronicle 1897 - 3363.PDF (12/6/1897)

"Dr Lathrop S Sprague, a prominent physician of Williamson, died at his home in that village, Saturday, aged 78 years, after a long and painful illness. Deceased was born in Cato, his father being a physician of that place. He was educated in the public schools and the Oswego normal school, where he was graduated. He took a course in the Jefferson Medical College

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and practiced medicine in his native town for a time and then removed to Lyons, where he was associated with Dr Bottoms. While there he was called to Williamson to counsel with **Dr Josiah Bennett**, a leading practitioner here at that time, and met his daughter, **Miss Mary Bennett**, to whom he was married shortly after in 1849. The same year he took up his residence in Williamson, where he has since lived. They had three children. His wife died in 1878. A son, Dr J. A. Sprague died March 9, 1897 from which time his aged father commenced to rapidly decline in health. A daughter, Mrs Collier, and an adopted daughter, Miss Mamie Sprague, survive him. He was a prominent and active member of the Presbyterian Church."

Lathrop S and Mary Sprague are interred in Newark Cemetery. A nice obituary notice is posted on Dr L S Sprague's findagrave writeup.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/230006864/lathrop-s-sprague> (1821 - 1897)

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/230018206/mary-sprague> (1827 - 1877)

The "Sprague Project" is a detailed ancestry of the Sprague family:

<https://sprague.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I26485&tree=Sprague>

Myron H Bennett

Myron H Bennett, son of Josiah and Ruth Bennett. He died in 1887 outliving his wife, Mary E, and daughters Ellen M (d. 1858) and Julia (d.1863). They all rest in Pleasant View Cemetery (<https://wayne.nygenweb.net/census/1870williamsoncen11.html>). He was survived by his daughter Mary A Bennett Ward — wife of Dr. Willoughby W Ward.

Details of his will are documented:

https://books.google.com/books?id=OmpnpWNdLV8C&pg=RA18-PA12&lpg=RA18-PA12&dq=%22myron+h+bennett%22++%22mary+a%22+williamson+NY&source=bl&ots=tsxRNL8NXL&sig=ACfU3U3_nCjI22LqcPIpBQwHU-9a2VA2CA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj5mIGH3tP6AhVKAzQIHf9FCUsQ6AF6BAglEA#v=onepage&q=%22Myron%20H%20bennett%22&f=false

"... That Myron H. Bennett, the decedent above-named ... departed this life on the 9th day of November 1887, leaving him surviving Mary Appolonia Ward as his only heir-at-law and next of kin. ... I hereby will and bequeath unto my daughter Appolonia M Ward all of my balance and remainder of my estate ... I further direct that if any of my estate at the decease of my said daughter and she shall die without leaving living issue, then in that case I direct that one half thereof shall be paid to Willoughby W Ward, husband of my said daughter, and the other half thereof to be divided equally share and share alike between my nephews and nieces ..."

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Dr. Westel and Mary Appolonia Ward

http://sodus.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?i=f&d=01011870-12311928&e=w%20w%20ward&m=between&ord=e1&fn=record_usa_new_york_sodus_19281109_english_7&df=1&dt=10

Dr W W Ward Dies In Rochester Hospital

"The death of Dr W. W. Ward for forty years a practicing physician of this village occurred Saturday at the Strong Memorial hospital in Rochester, where he was taken about three weeks ago following a stroke of apoplexy. He suffered a second stroke from which he failed to rally.

Dr Ward married Miss Mary Appa Bennett of Williamson and they resided in the Myron Bennett house on West Main street during their married life. Mrs Ward survives her husband."

Similar obituary: <https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1928-11-22/ed-1/seq-1.pdf> with more about his medical training.

http://sodus.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?i=f&d=01011928-12312018&e=dr%20w%20ward&m=between&ord=e1&fn=record_usa_new_york_sodus_19360917_english_7&df=1&dt=3 The Sodus Record, 9/17/1936

"Mrs Mary A Ward, widow the late Dr W W Ward, passed away Thursday at her home on West Main street. A prayer service was held at the home at 2:30 o'clock Sunday with funeral services half an hour later from the Presbyterian church. Interment was made In the Sunnyside cemetery."

T h e C o b b l e s t o n e T e x a c o S t a t i o n

[Clyde NY Herald 1938-1943 - 0757.pdf](#) (11/12/1941)

"LIKE COBBLESTONE TEXACO STATION

Texaco products are top-ranking petroleum values and stocked in a 100 per cent line at Cobblestone Service Station, 32 West Main Street, Williamson. Firestone tires, Firestone batteries and other essential auto accessories are also carried. Headquarters in the section for expert lubricating, washing, polishing, simonizing, tire, battery and allied aids in car up-keep, the station caters to a large trade. It was established two and a half years ago by Charles F Van Maldeghe and John J Fox, business partners. The former has 8½ years' experience, while latter has 7½ years' experience. Their station is open 7 AM to 7 PM. Neat and tidy in its modern facilities the place pleases a host of motorists. Extra help is employed on Sundays and holidays."

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Epilogue: In 2022 it continues its slow erosion after decades of abandonment. The roof is long gone, most of the front and back walls have fallen in, and dangerously the floor is completely gone. The gable wall attached to the frame service shop is about ¼ gone. Surprisingly, the opposite gable end is intact and in remarkably good shape (8/28/2022) with no signs of cracks or other deterioration.