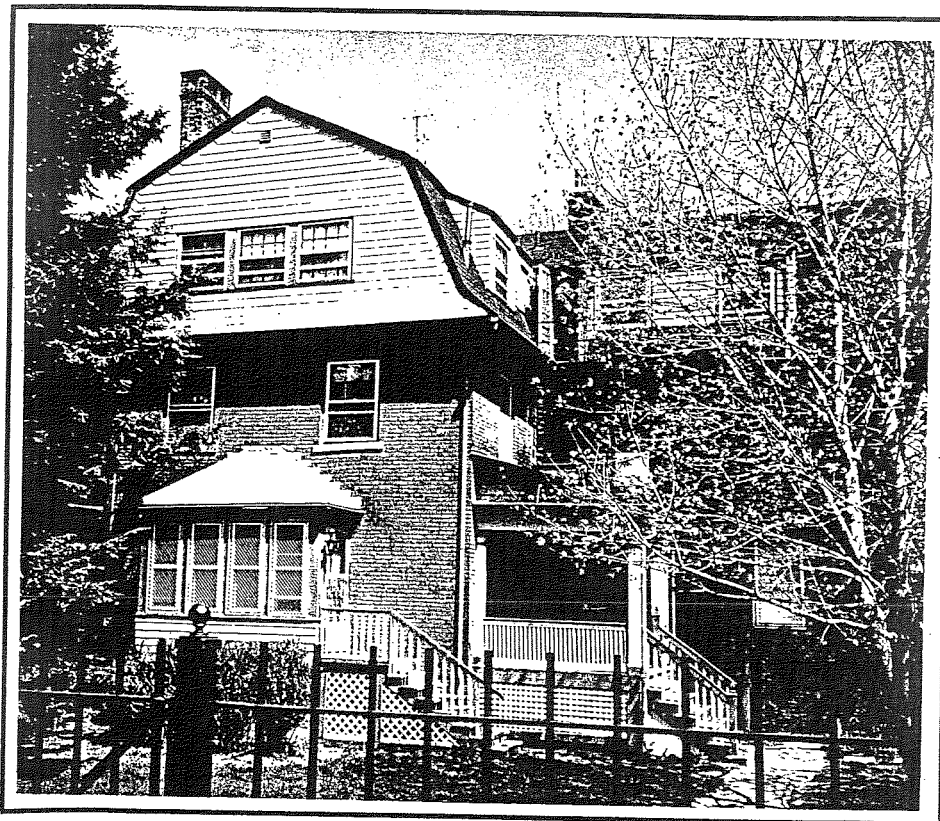
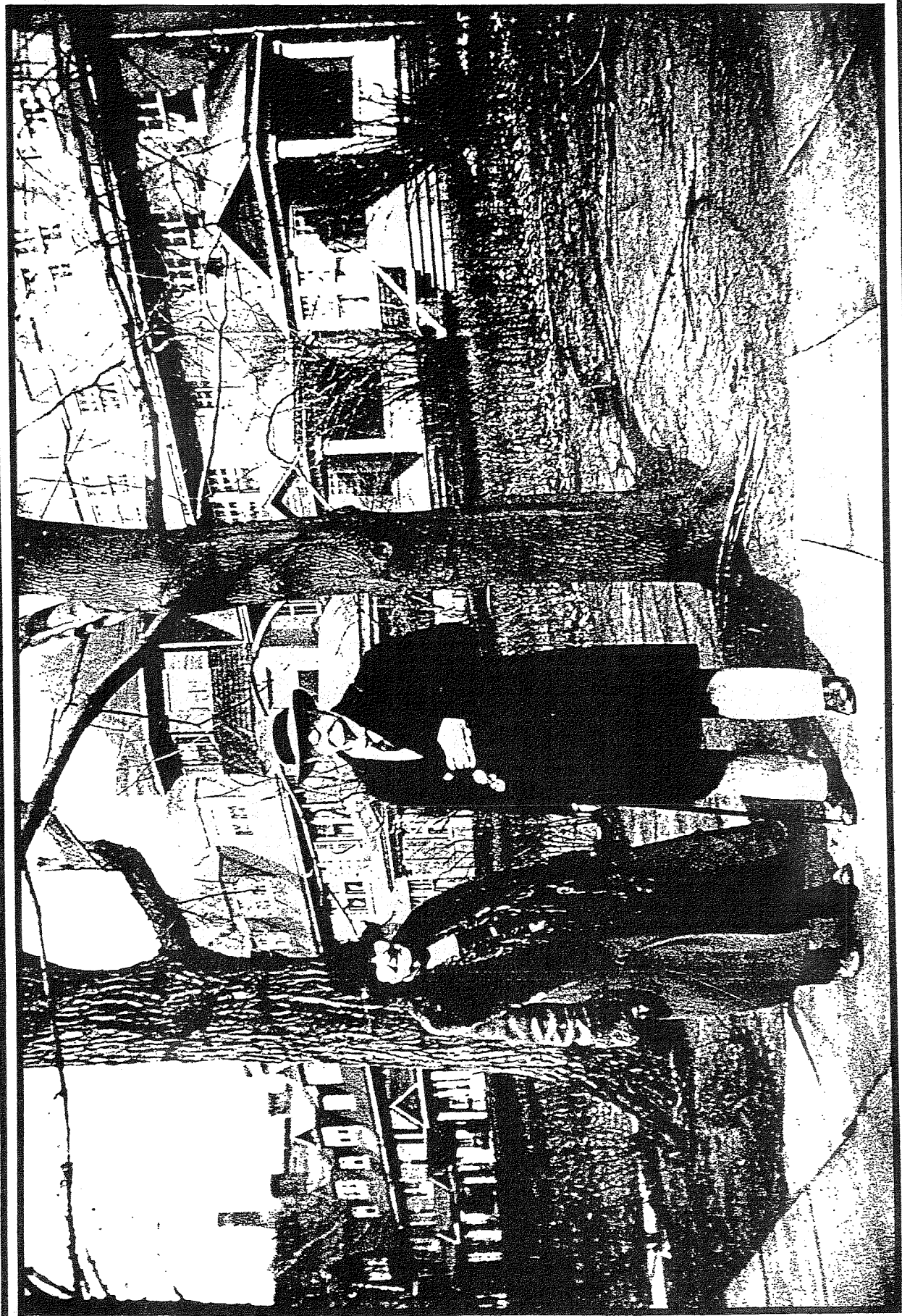


George Keller Historic District



George Keller Residence - 24 Park Terrace

Hartford, Connecticut



(Source : Ransom , D . ; " GEORGE KELLER " , Hartford , Connecticut , Stowe - Day Foundation , 1978 .)

MR. & MRS. GEORGE KELLER IN FRONT OF 2 - 24 PARK TERRACE.

GEORGE KELLER HISTORIC DISTRICT

PROPOSED BY THE LOCAL HISTORIC PROPERTIES COMMISSION

Michael J. Kerski
Barry Lubin
Nancy O'Neil
Carl W. Henry, Jr.
Dr. Eric Colon-Rodriguez
Jonathan E. Clark
Theodore J. Tucci

Chairman
Vice Chairman
Secretary
Member
Member
Alternate Member
Alternate Member

STAFF SUPPORT THE HARTFORD PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Margaret A. Johnson
Leslie P. Brodacki
Teledia Simmons
Carroll Violette
Crucita D. Soto
Hazel Richardson

Planning Director
Principal Planner
Senior Planner
Transportation Technician
Typing
Typing

July 21, 1994

GEORGE KELLER HISTORIC DISTRICT

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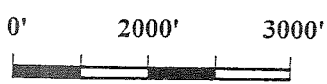
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GEORGE KELLER HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section 1
CITY OF HARTFORD DISTRICT LOCATION MAP

SCALE IN FEET



SECTION 2

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISTRICT

The proposed George Keller Historic District is an area containing Putnam Street, Columbia Street, one block of Park Terrace, and Pope Park North. All together, the properties form a rhomboid shape in plan that defines the District. In size, the area stretches one city block North and South and two short blocks East and West. It is flanked by Capitol Avenue on the North and Russ Street on the South. This small neighborhood is part of the 35 block Frog Hollow National Historic Register District.

Frog Hollow has a two-fold significance. Here, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, manufacturing processes and inventions emerged that were important to Hartford, the United State of America and the world. Also, today, with its building stock almost intact, the District is an example of how simultaneous growth of industrial, residential, and commercial facilities complemented each other as urbanization progressed.

At mid-century the area began to attract a procession of talented, creative industrialists, skilled craftsmen and visionaries. Many had been trained at Samuel Colt's armory. These men created a golden period in Hartford's history and made a significant contribution to industrial development in this country and abroad. On a short stretch of Capitol Avenue, on the Northern edge of the proposed District, the creative energy was particularly dynamic. It was the industrial age's Silicon Valley or Route 128 if compared to the manufacturing of today.

From the early days of English settlement, the area had been farmland and wilderness until the railroad came in 1838. The tracks traced the Northern edge of the Park River which was then the Northern boundary of Frog Hollow. (The railroad is still there, but the river has been put underground). In 1852, the Sharps Rifle Co. built a large complex of buildings on Capitol Avenue across from what would become the proposed Keller District.

From Sharps' arrival in 1852 to about 1930, this compact area produced rifles, sewing machines, bicycles, machine tools, industrial screw hardware, typewriters, electric and gasoline automobiles, motorcycles, electrical products, aircraft engines, and more. Adjacent to this nucleus were other factories producing boilers, metal tubing, forgings and castings, and rubber tires. In 1884, when the first of the District's houses were built, these factories employed about 2000 workers. And to house them, farm land quickly gave way to housing development.

To the neighborhood of the Keller District, the Weed Sewing Machine Co. came in 1866. At first, the owners contracted with Sharps to build their machines. They eventually bought the complex and changed the name. Pratt & Whitney came in 1867. In 1873, the Hartford Machine Screw Co. built a factory on the west side of the Weed Co. The American Writing Machine Co. came in 1884.

The Weed Co. which owned most of the land in the Keller District embarked on a residential development plan before 1880 with two buildings on Capitol Avenue directly across the street from the factory. Shortly thereafter, the bottom dropped out of the sewing machine market and the plan was temporarily shelved.

Searching for something to use his excess factory capacity, George Fairfield, Superintendent of the Weed Co. found Colonel Albert Pope in Boston, who was seeking a manufacturer who could build his Columbia bicycle. The bicycle had only recently been perfected in England and Pope saw a bright future for it in the U.S.

Hartford saw its first bicycle in 1878 when the Colonel came to meet with the Weed directors and to inspect the factory. He arrived at the train station and ceremoniously rode his high wheel 'ordinary' from the station to the factory. His route down Broad Street past the almost completed State Capitol Building, was lined with a surprised and curious crowd. Both parties were apparently satisfied with one another, for a contract was signed. Shortly afterward, full scale production began on the first self-propelled vehicles in the U.S. The Weed Co.'s fortunes began to improve and its residential plans were re-started.

In 1890, Pope bought out Weed, changed the name to Pope Manufacturing Co., stopped making sewing machines, sold off all of Weed's residential development, and devoted all his energy to the bicycle. Sales soared and jobs multiplied. At its peak, annual production reached 60,000 machines.

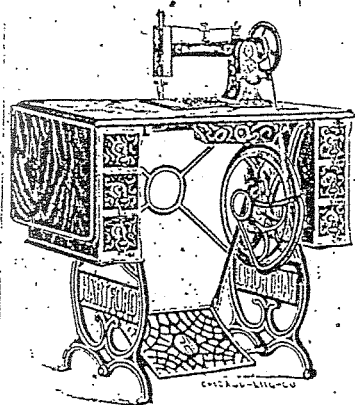
In 1895 Hiram Percy Maxim, Pope's inventor-engineer, drove Hartford's first internal combustion-powered automobile on Park Street near Laurel Street. The Pope-Hartford automobile, sharing space with the bicycle, soon afterwards began coming out of the factory on Capitol Avenue. And with characteristic zeal for a new project, Colonel Pope made Hartford a major center of auto production. In 1899 the editor of an English technical journal, concluded that "the town of Hartford, Connecticut, is the greatest center of activity in the automobile industry today." Historians agree that Maxim's experiments in 1895 marked the beginning of the automobile business in America. And had it not been for the legal battles over patent rights won by Henry Ford, Hartford may have become the 20th Century Detroit.

Loosing the patent battle, heavy legal costs and over extension brought Pope to bankruptcy in 1915.

Incorporated 1863.

Chartered 1885

Capital \$240,000.00.



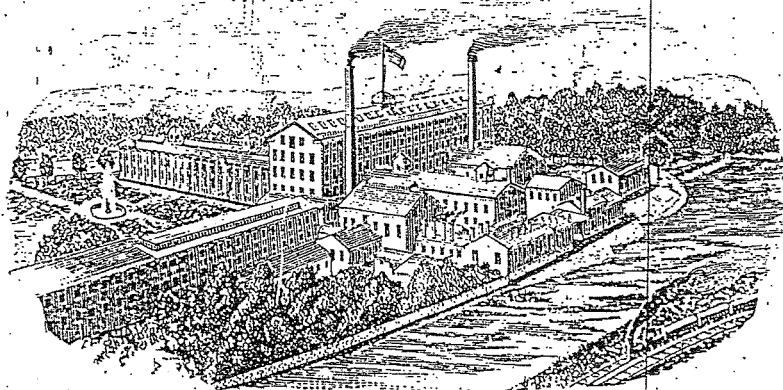
GEORGE H. DAY, Pres't and Treas.
 F. E. BELDEN, Secretary.
 JOHN KNOUS, Superintendent.

WEED SEWING MACHINE CO.,

OFFICE AND FACTORY.

436 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Conn.

SEWING MACHINES



Bicycles, Tricycles,

Drop Forgings.

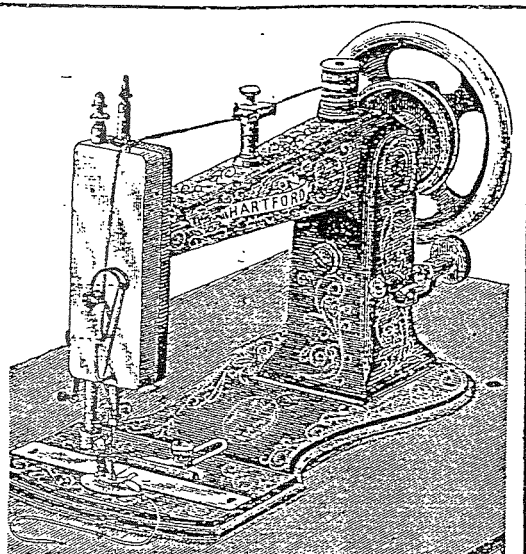
DIRECTORS.

GEORGE H. DAY
 HOMER BLANCHARD
 RICHARD W. H. JARVIS
 JOHN H. SAGE
 GEO. WATSON BEACH
 A. A. POPE
 LYMAN B. JEWELL

Annual meeting first Thursday in Feb.



For History Sketch, see page 582.



Above engraving represents

THE HARTFORD

when threaded up and ready for use. Its decoration is the finest ever applied to a sewing machine, the centerpiece being a copy of the seal of the City of Hartford, while the tracery of oak leaves and acorns is elaborate yet tasteful. Nickel plating is profusely applied.

For wholesale terms apply only to the

WEED SEWING MACHINE COMPANY.
HARTFORD, CONN.

or to traveling salesmen.

Dealers wanted in all cities and towns throughout the United States.

Although our experience leads us to prefer the positive take-up, and single feed, yet we will supply our customers with flipper take-up, and double feed, if desired.

Form 44.

THE HARTFORD



SEWING MACHINE

MADE BY THE

→ WEED SEWING MACHINE COMPANY, ←

HARTFORD, CONN.

The Largest. The Lightest and Quietest
The Latest Improvements.

FOR SALE BY

111-113

GEER'S BUSINESS DIRECTORY.

479

FACTORY OF
POPE MANUFACTURING COMPANY,

No. 436 CAPITOL AVENUE,

MAKERS OF

COLUMBIA * BICYCLES.

PAID-IN CAPITAL, \$1,000,000.



DIRECTORS.

ALBERT A. POPE, Boston, *President.*

GEORGE H. DAY, Hartford, *Vice President.*

EDWARD W. POPE, Boston, *Treasurer.*

ARTHUR E. PATTISON, Boston, *Secretary.*

HENRY D. HYDE, Boston, *Counsel.*

GEORGE H. DAY, Manager at Factory.

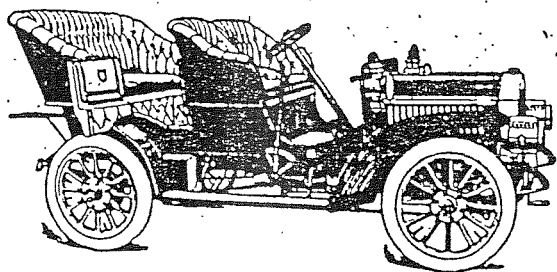
R. M. BECK, Superintendent.

PRINCIPAL OFFICES,

221 COLUMBUS AVE., Boston, Mass.

BRANCH HOUSES: 12 WARREN ST., NEW YORK. 291 WABASH AV., CHICAGO.
FACTORY, 436 CAPITOL AVENUE, HARTFORD, CONN.

POPE EVERYTHING IN MOTOR CARS AUTOMOBILES



POPE-HARTFORD MODEL G.

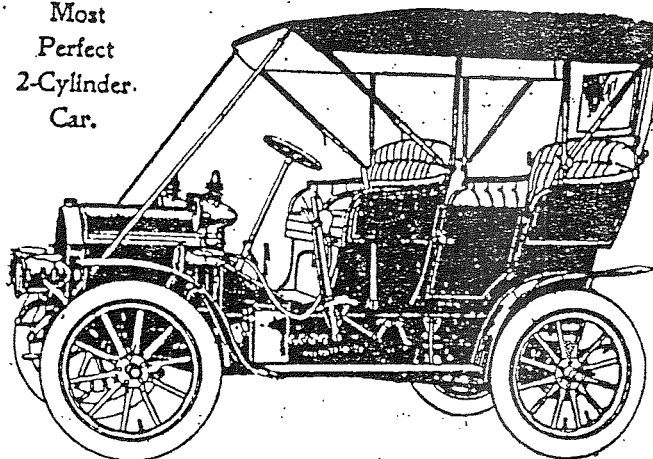
2-Cylinder Opposed, 18 H. P. Price \$1600.

2-cylinder opposed motor located under the hood. Sliding gear transmission, 3 speeds forward and reverse. Bevel gear drive. Powerful double acting brakes expanding in drums attached to rear wheel—double acting band brake on transmission shaft. Speed 35 miles an hour. Seating capacity, 5.

THE POPE-HARTFORD MODEL G 2-CYLINDER TOURING CAR perpetuates our successful 2-cylinder car of last season with important improvements suggested by a year's service which makes the car the peer of any 2-cylinder car in the world. Compare it point for point with any other 2-cylinder car on the market and let us prove these statements by a demonstration.

POPE MANUFACTURING COMPANY,
436 CAPITOL AVE.

Most
Perfect
2-Cylinder
Car.



Columbia Mark XLIV-2 Without Top, \$1,750.
With Top....\$1,875.

Electric Vehicle Company.

Factory and Repository Cor. Park and Laurel Sts. Demonstration by appointment.

GET A POPE-WAVERLEY, IF YOU WANT A RUNABOUT.

You will never regret it if you do.

It is the ideal car for all purposes for which runabouts are built, and it is exceedingly economical to run and maintain, if that is any recommendation for you.

It is fast enough. It is the safest car in the world.

It is the aristocrat of all the cars in its class, and an altogether delightful proposition. There isn't an out about it anywhere.

But don't wait. We have one for immediate delivery now, and will soon have more. But they are selling, and if you wait maybe you'll have to wait longer, just when you don't want to. Be up and doing about this business.

Let us demonstrate for you. Not the slightest obligation goes with the demonstration. It is simply showing goods.

WE HAVE A COMPLETE AUTOMOBILE LIVERY AT YOUR SERVICE AT ALL TIMES.

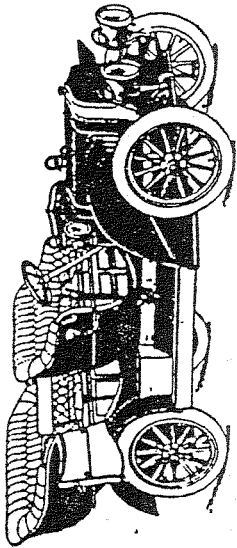
THE MINER GARAGE CO.,

Agents for the Pierce Arrow, Knox and Winton Cars, and the Pope-Waverley Electrics.

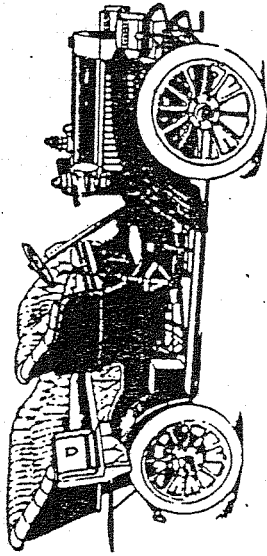
120-124 ALLYN STREET.

HARTFORD, CONN.

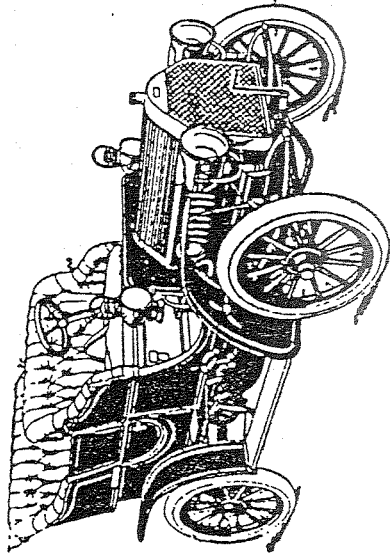
We Have a Pierce Arrow Car for June Delivery—Wintons Immediate Delivery.



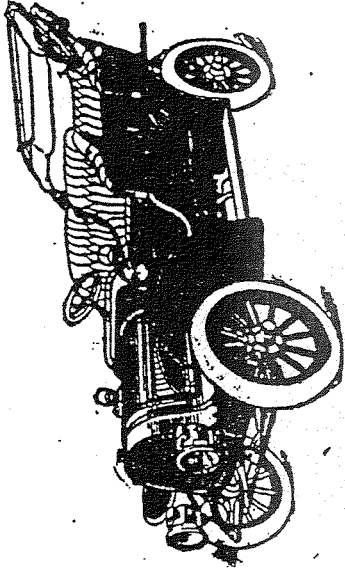
Pope-Toledo, Type XII. \$3,500.



Pope-Hartford, Model G, \$1,600.



Pope-Hartford, Model B, \$750.



Pope-Hartford, Model F, \$2,500.



Pope-Toledo, Type X, \$2,800.



Pope-Tribune, Model V, \$900.

OPE MANUFACTURING CO. - 436 CAPITOL AVENUE.

A. M.

Free Demonstration at Your Convenience.

HARTFORD CO. J. B. ANT 1906

Though he never moved his residence to Hartford, Pope became the city's premier industrialist in the late 19th Century. The empire he created in Frog Hollow rivaled that of Samuel Colt three decades earlier. The Columbia name, first used for his bicycle, was later employed for his electric cars and motorcycles. Additional use of the name for the street along with the park that he donated are memorials to his adopted City.

Arriving in the area in 1867 a year after the Weed Co. was established, Pratt & Whitney became a prominent and lasting presence in the neighborhood. The company supplied precision machine tools for industry world-wide as well as tools to make bicycles, rifles, sewing machines, typewriters, and automobiles for its neighbors and finally to manufacture aircraft engines. Christopher Spencer's invention of a machine to cut screws mechanically led to the establishment of the Hartford Machine Screw Company in 1876 on Capitol Avenue across the street from Park Terrace. Both companies still survive: Pratt & Whitney under the United Technologies umbrella, and Hartford Machine Screw as a division of the Stanadyne Corporation. Neither company became involved in residential development, but their success helped drive the area's building boom.

After Colonel Pope's bankruptcy, Pratt & Whitney, with the need to supply clients world wide, bought his factory buildings and expanded. And it was there at 450 Capitol Avenue, specifically - that Frederick Rentschler and George Mead along with a team of engineers, designed and built the highly successful Wasp aircraft engine in 1925. By 1928, needing more space, they began the move to East Hartford.

In 1930, the Underwood Typewriter Co., established in 1901, was thriving. So too, was the Hart & Hegeman Co., manufacturer of electrical equipment, at the corner of Capitol Avenue and Broad Street. But the bounce was gone from the old Sharps factory buildings where it all began.

Today, some of the old buildings have been adapted to new uses. On the old Sharps/Weed/Pope factory site, the Aetna has rehabilitated some of the buildings back into service and has replaced others with new structures. The site of the Hartford Machine Screw factory presently serves as an Aetna parking lot. The Hartford Office Supply Co. occupies the Pratt & Whitney building, and the State maintains offices in the Hart & Hegeman building. Park Place, the Xerox Tower, and piers supporting Interstate Highway 84 are on the site of Pratt & Cady, Johns-Pratt, Perkins Switch, and Underwood factories.

As manufacturing developed in Frog Hollow, demand for housing followed. Most of it was constructed as multi-family buildings with the "Perfect Six"--six flats of equal size in one building--as the most common pattern. The exceptions, however, within the District are the attached houses on Columbia Street and Park Terrace. Also, all of the factory inspired housing in Frog

Hollow was privately financed and built by small independent developers, except for the first five buildings on both sides of the North end of Putnam Street, all of Columbia Street and one block of Park Terrace. Thus, this area is a unique enclave in Frog Hollow.

The Weed Co. owned all of the land in the proposed district except for half of the Putnam Street block and the Pope Park land. And perhaps to attract managerial and supervisory staff to the neighborhood, in mid-decade, the Company developed a plan to build housing on that land. The first such buildings were the two extant structures on Capitol Avenue built some time before 1880. Around the corner on Putnam Street, the Weed Co. began developing its land around 1884. The builder was Patrick McKone, and the design was probably from a pattern book.

This second phase apparently met with success, and the project was continued but with a difference. For the Columbia Street development, George Keller was named architect and with him came the row house plan and a different design idiom. From his plans, houses on the East side of Columbia Street were built in 1888, followed by houses on the West side, the year after. The Park Terrace row was constructed in 1895.

Some of the Putnam Street and all of the Columbia Street housing projects were undertaken at the time--1889-90-- when the Weed Co. was becoming the Pope Manufacturing Company. As part of the corporate change, Weed's residential properties were sold to the Hartford Real Estate Improvement Co., whose president was James L. Howard, influential Hartford businessman and one time Lieutenant Governor. A Pope Co. representative retained membership on the Board of the real estate company.

The remaining five lots on Putnam Street not owned by the Weed Co. were developed individually by different small investors between 1885-1890. Builder/designers are not known.

Pope Park North is a 3.8-acre segment separated from the 73.2-acre park South of Park Street. The small North segment was City-owned property used by the Hartford Orphan Asylum at the time of the Weed Company's residential development. Colonel Pope wanted this parcel to be part of the park he was establishing for the City and made its acquisition a condition of his gift.*

* "The gift of Col. Albert A. Pope comprising over 78 acres of land in the southwestern section of the city on Capitol Avenue, Laurel and Park Streets for use by the citizens as a public park for all time without restriction. Conditioned that the city procure 18 acres adjoining this from the Watkinson Farm School and 6 acres from the Hartford Orphan Asylum." (The difference between 6 acres requested and 3.8 acres of the present Pope Park North was used for the Russ Street extension).

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SECTION 3

ARCHITECTURAL MERIT OF BUILDINGS - SURVEY OF STYLES IN THE DISTRICT

The George Keller Historic District is a compact area encompassing three city blocks. Four streets of the District from its perimeter, one street and a small park are enclosed. Fifty-four principal structures constitute its main building inventory; most were built between 1875 and 1895.

<u>STREET NUMBER</u>		
Putnam Street	222-224, 226, 228-230, 232-234 242-244, 246, 248, 250, 252, 254 251-253, 249, 245.	c. 1885
Putnam Street	247 - - - - -	c. 1895
Columbia Street		
East side	- - - - -	1888
West side	- - - - -	1889
Park Terrace	- - - - -	1895
Capitol Avenue	445, 447-453,	c. 1875-1879
Capitol Avenue	461, 489-491	after 1920

Though the buildings were built in a relatively short span of time--1875-1895--their varied architectural styles clearly identify popular design influences and the changing public taste of the latter half of the 19th Century. Victorian architecture of the time was varied, lively and picturesque. Inspiration came from forms and ornament of the historical past which were revived and adapted to new uses. Greek, Egyptian, Roman, Gothic, Moorish, Medieval, Renaissance, Colonial, and Tudor idioms were mixed in a loose confederation known as the Queen Anne Style. Beginning around the 1890's, the Colonial Revival Style Gradually became dominant.

From the post Civil War Period to the mid 1890's, Queen Anne was the Style widely practiced by architects and builders and preferred by buyers. The buildings are as varied as imagination and building materials would allow. In appearance, it was picturesque. Asymmetry was a common characteristic and its design composition usually included a variety of architectural forms, textures, materials and colors, turrets, towers, bay windows, projecting porches, textured wall surfaces, etcetera. Architecture, at the time, was expressing the same restless energy, enthusiasm, and optimism generated by the country's industrial development, and territorial expansion. In the Keller District, that energy was expressed on a modest scale. Though subdued here, the Queen Anne Style is clearly evident and her historical retinue can be identified.

Some of the stylistic retinue to be seen in the Keller District include:

Italianate: tends to be simple in form and in the use of materials. Roofs have a wide overhang, are low-hipped and look flat from the street. Decoration is usually concentrated at window crowns, cornices, and brackets, based on classical models. Buildings are usually symmetrical (242-244, 232-234 Putnam Street and 447-453 Capitol Avenue) No. 445 Capitol Avenue, Italianate with a ridge roof, is unusual within the District.

Classical Revival: roofs with wide overhang, are low-hipped and look flat from the street like the Italianate Style, but without brackets and often having a decorative frieze (ornamented band) under the roof overhang, and Roman and Greek ornamentation. (See 247 Putnam Street).

Gothic Revival, Medieval: characterized by high-pitched roofs, pointed arches in porch entries, polygonal and round towers and conical roofs. (See Columbia Street and Park Terrace).

Eastlake: a decorative style, named for an English designer. (See porch at 232-234 Putnam Street).

Stick Style: Derived from the decorative use of wood to suggest building structure (See gables at 250 and 254 Putnam Street).

Colonial Revival: 18th Century American styles revised, characterized by dentil bands and frieze decorations at roof overhangs, squared porch columns, shallow, pedimented porch roofs, Gambrel roofs (See Park Terrace and 247 Putnam Street).

Shingle Style: was a sub style of the Colonial Revival (See use of shingles on all Keller buildings).

In fourteen buildings that comprise the Putnam Street block, the Queen Anne Style can be found with Stick Style features, Italianate and Classical Revival forms, and some Eastlake decoration. Nine of the buildings were built to accommodate three and six families, five were built for two families. The six-family structures found throughout Frog Hollow are known as the "perfect six" type, usually a brick three-story plan that provided six tenements of equal size resulting in a symmetrical exterior shape. The three-family version, "half six" or "perfect three" provided three tenements of equal size, with a non-symmetrical exterior. The remaining five buildings were built by the Weed Co. as two-family houses.