

Hilliardville Talk & Tour

Rain or Shine

Meet at 642 Hilliard St.

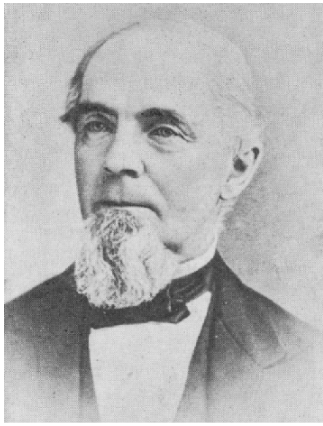
Sponsored by the Manchester Historical Society.

Notes and research by Susan Barlow

The mills here once made world-famous woolens, and have gone on to serve a variety of purposes, including a Pratt & Whitney factory, knitting mills, telephone manufacturing, furniture manufacturing, piano repair, and now office and business space. We will hear from the energetic young owners, who have worked to renovate the old mills. They will give us a tour of some areas of the mills, and describe their work.

E.E. Hilliard

From the 1923 *History of Manchester* by Spiess and Bidwell



Learn more at:

<http://www.hilliardmills.com/history.html> Web site with history of Hilliard Mills and a timeline of events.

www.manchesterhistory.org Web site of the Manchester Historical Society. See other side for phone number, membership information, etc.

Obituary, *Hartford Daily Courant*, February 4, 1881:

Elisha E. Hilliard of Manchester

The town of Manchester has lost one of its oldest and most prominent citizens in the death of Elisha E. Hilliard, Esq., which occurred at his residence yesterday. Mr. Hilliard was an admirable specimen of the solid and successful New England business men, who have won their fortunes by their own endeavors, and achieved a good reputation for integrity and Christian character.

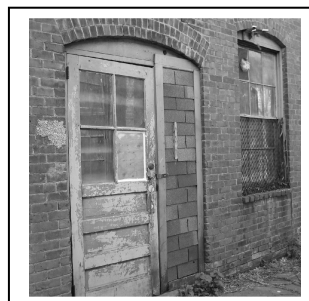
He was born in Mansfield, Conn., December 8, 1807. His parents died when he was four years of age, and being left without friends or a competency his youth was a struggle with adverse circumstances. He first came to Manchester in 1829, and soon became associated with Mr. Sidney Pitkin, in the firm of Pitkin & Hilliard, in the manufacture of woolen goods. He afterwards bought out Mr. Pitkin's interest, and taking Mr. Ralph G. Spencer as a partner, the firm was known as Hilliard & Spencer until 1870, when Mr. Spencer retired. Since that time the firm, consisting of himself and son, has gone under the name of E.E. Hilliard & Co. Mr. Hilliard had thus been engaged in woolen manufacturing nearly fifty-two years, and at the time of his death was supposed to have been the oldest manufacturer in that line in this state. When he first began he followed the habit of the times in doing "custom work," taking the wool brought to the mill by neighboring farmers, carding it by hand and making it up into cloth according to their order. At the time of his death his business included four mills in Manchester and surrounding towns, running eleven sets of cards.

Mr. Hilliard has been long and favorably known among the older businessmen of this community, and had investments in a large number of the financial enterprises of Hartford, especially in manufacturing stocks. His business character was above reproach.

Conservative, sagacious, scrupulously honest and exact in all his dealings, it would be difficult to find a single blemish in his long record of over half a century of business life. He was for many years a member of the Congregational church in North Manchester, and for twenty years was one of its deacons. Unostentatious in manner and retiring in disposition, he was nevertheless a man who created a most beneficial influence by his positive convictions and consistent Christian life.

Mr. Hilliard leaves a widow and five children. His only son has been associated with him in business for the past ten years; one daughter is the wife of the Rev. J.W. Cooper of New Britain, and another of Colonel H.H. White of North Manchester.

Hilliard Mills, from the 1923 *History of Manchester* by Spiess and Bidwell



Pre-renovation view of door at Hilliard mills, 2006.

Photo by Susan Barlow