

The Lyman Family of Hartford 1636 - 1925

By Susan R. Barney
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Saturday Morning Club

Introduction and Summary

On Feb. 6, 1925, a meeting took place in Mrs. Edward Dustin's apartment at 351 Farmington Avenue in Hartford. Mrs. Dustin was aware that the house she lived in, once home to literary icon Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) and his family, was on the market and under threat of demolition by a local developer. She and two other women, Mrs. Lewis Rose, (also a widow and resident of 351 Farmington Avenue), and Louise H. Fisher (Mrs. Herbert Field Fisher) called the meeting because of their desire to save the landmark designed by Edward Tuckerman Potter, and to establish the first private women's club with a clubhouse in Connecticut.¹

Also present were ten other women, among them Miss Annie Eliot Trumbull, Mrs. C. Morgan Aldrich, Mrs. John T. Robinson and Mrs. Philip Barton. Discussion centered on the feasibility of acquiring the \$100,000, 54-year-old structure as a clubhouse. Following a unanimous vote, Louise Fisher's husband, Herbert, a Realtor, drew up and secured an option to buy the house on behalf of the group.

Later that month, Mr. Fisher identified two additional properties, 22 and 61 Woodland Street, with clubhouse potential as an alternative to 351 Farmington Avenue. Just around the corner from the Mark Twain House, 22 Woodland Street had become available following Mrs. Lyman's death on February 17, 1925, eleven days after the committee first met. The former Lyman home, an 1895 Colonial Revival structure, was only 30 years old. It was newer and more adaptable for club use than the 1874 Mark Twain House, which showed signs of wear and tear after 51 years of use by multiple occupants.²

¹ The Clemens lived in the 19-room Picturesque-style mansion at 351 Farmington Avenue in Hartford from 1874 to 1891. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *The Prince and The Pauper* and three other major works were written in the house. Susy Clemens, their oldest child, died in the house of meningitis on Aug. 19, 1896. Following the death of his wife, Olivia, in 1903, Sam Clemens sold the Hartford house to the Richard Bissell's (of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company) and moved to New York. He came back to Connecticut in 1908 with daughters Clara and Jean and purchased an Italianate villa on 230 acres in Redding, CT. He died there in 1910.

² The house was used as classrooms for Kingswood School, as a branch of the Hartford Public Library, and as apartments after the Bissells sold it in 1919. The Bissells stopped living there and moved to Farmington in 1917, [per Marianne Curling, curator], two years before the house sold. Kingswood School was established at about that time, and was based for four years in the Mark Twain House. Kingswood moved to its West Hartford campus in 1922, and the house was converted into apartments.

Outstanding among the three possibilities was the Lyman house. Consensus to this effect was reached at a meeting of the organizers on April 15. After a vote to take an option on 22 Woodland Street the following week, a purchase for \$80,000 was authorized during the first meeting of the newly formed Club, held at the YWCA on May 14, 1925.

The Town and County Club was founded as an organized center for women's work, thought and action; [for] advancing the interests of women; [and for] promoting science, literature and art³ in an era of considerable debate concerning the rights of women. The controversial 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote had been ratified five years earlier, in 1920.

The Lymans were descended from an American immigrant family, arriving in Massachusetts from England in 1631. They migrated to Connecticut in 1636 as members of the Thomas Hooker entourage, purchasing land on which to settle in Hartford from the Saukiaug tribe of native Americans. A member of the eighth American generation of one branch of the family, Theodore Lyman, built the Colonial Revival structure at 22 Woodland Street as a home for himself, his wife and their four children in 1895.

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The Lyman Family of Hartford

Lyman Pioneers

Richard Lyman and his wife, Sarah, both born in High Ongar, England, embarked from Bristol, England, and sailed westward across the Atlantic Ocean to Massachusetts with their four children aboard the *Lion* in August 1631. They settled in Charlestown, just outside of Boston. Pressing farther westward five years later, they joined Thomas Hooker and others leaving the Massachusetts Bay Colony for Connecticut. The travelers set out from Newtown, Massachusetts, (now Cambridge) in 1636, following old Indian trails through forests and swamps to Chicopee, Massachusetts, and southward along the Connecticut River to Hartford.

Generations of Lymans helped build early Hartford, on land originally bought from the Saukiaug (Black Earth) tribe. In the seventh generation, C.C. Lyman moved from his home in downtown Hartford to a home on Myrtle Street just uphill and west of the Hartford train station. The Myrtle Street home would house the seventh, eighth and early years of the ninth generations of the Lyman family in America. Theodore Lyman, the only surviving child of the eighth generation of this particular line of Lymans, moved farther west to 22 Woodland Street, where he, his wife, Laura, and four children lived from 1895 until 1925.

³ The Town and County Club Articles of Association, 1925

Theodore engaged the services of Hartford architects Edward and Melvin Hapgood to design a Colonial Revival home on Woodland Street in the newly developing fashionable western end of Hartford. Architectural drawings by Hapgood & Hapgood, now in the archives of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center of Hartford, specified an exterior of buff limestone and an interior of the finest wood materials of the day, including mahogany, white mahogany, birds-eye maple, oak and pine. The Hapgood architects, who were cousins, designed this stately and elegant home for a wealthy man and his family in a neighborhood where ownership of real estate signaled material success. Today, as in 1895, the backyard (now the parking lot of the Town and County Club) looks directly south to the home of Samuel Clemens on the south side of Farmington Avenue.

The First Seven Generations of American Lymans

Richard Lyman, progenitor of the Woodland Street Lymans, was born October 30, 1580, in High Ongar, England. In 1602, the 22-year-old Richard married a woman from his hometown named Sarah Osborn, age 18. Four children and 29 years later, the family boarded the *Lion*, heading west to the New World.

They set sail from the port of Bristol, England, in August 1631. Richard was 51; Sarah was 46 and sons Richard and John were 13 and 8, respectively. Two daughters, Phyllis and Sarah, were of undetermined ages. The *Lion* was bound for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. By September, the Richard Lymans were settled in Charlestown, Massachusetts.

Five years later, the family set out from Newtown, Massachusetts, on another journey. In pursuit of political and religious freedom and heading ever westward, they joined forces with Thomas Hooker in early December 1636. The Lymans were among 100 or so individuals who bushwhacked through swamps and thickets following old Indian trails, driving cattle and swine ahead of them, working their way towards Hartford. They headed westward to Chicopee and turned south to continue along the Connecticut River. It is surmised in Geer's Hartford Directory that the travelers used a compass and lived chiefly on the milk of their cows. Their peregrinations, which included fording the Connecticut River, lasted almost two weeks and ended with the group's arrival in Hartford on December 22, 1636.

Thomas Hooker was a man of strong and magnetic personality, with a passion that ignited others to the cause of religious freedom. His political ideas differed from those sanctioned by the theocracy-based Massachusetts Bay Colony. Ellsworth Grant states in The Miracle of Connecticut that Hooker believed those who govern ought to be subject to legal as well as moral restraints. Grant draws on Hooker's assertions that 1) "...the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by God's own allowance," and 2) "...they who have the power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power also to set the bounds and limitations of the power and place unto which they call them."

On May 31, 1638, Hooker preached a now famous sermon before the General Court in Hartford, from which these powerful words were taken, later to be inscribed on a tablet

just below State House Square... “The Foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people.” Hooker voiced the distinct and radical American belief that the governed have the right not only to choose their rulers but to limit their powers as well.

By 1639 the Lymans lived near South Meadow in Hartford. According to the Lyman Genealogy, Richard’s house lot was on the south side of what is now Buckingham Street, between Main and Washington streets.

In August 1640, Richard Lyman died at age 60. Two years later his wife Sarah died at age 58 in January 1642. Richard Lyman’s last will and testament, dated April 22, 1640,⁴ implies turmoil in the family. We know little about the third son, Robert, mentioned below:

“The last Will and Testament of Richard Lyman, being in perfect memory, I give unto my wife all my housing and lands during her life, and one-third part of my lands to dispose at her death amongst my children as she pleased, and I give to her all my moveable goods, as cattle and household stuff, and all other implements or moveables. And the other two parts of my land I give to my elder son Richard, and to his heirs forever, and if he die without an heir, then I give it to my son Robert, and to his heirs forever. For my son Richard my mind is that the cattle I have formerly given him that he shall enjoy. To my daughter Sarah, besides the cattle I formerly have given her, my will is that my wife shall pay her twenty pounds two years after my death. To my son John Lyman, I give him thirty pounds, to be paid him by my wife, at two and twenty years of age, and the hogs that I formerly have given him, I give unto my wife, and if he contends with her and will not be content my wife should enjoy the hogs, then it is my will that she should not pay him the thirty pounds. To my son Robert, I give twenty four pounds, to be paid him at twenty two years of age, and to my daughter Phyllis, the wife of William Hills, I give ten shillings, and I make my wife sole executrix to this my will. (Dated April 1640).

John Lyman was 17 years old when his father died. What lay behind the threat to withdraw the offer of the hogs we can only guess. Nevertheless, it is the second son, John, whose line we follow through the generations and which brings us to the doorstep of 22 Woodland Street. Robert, born in 1629 according to the Lyman genealogy wheel hanging to the left of the porte cochère entrance door to 22 Woodland Street, would have been 11 years old when his father died. Mrs. Lyman requested that Robert live with his older brother, Richard, who was 23 at the time of his father’s death, until Robert reached age 22. Richard had been given two-thirds of his father’s land according to his father’s will; his mother arranged for her third to transfer to Robert when he turned 22. Perhaps Robert, being a baby of approximately two years of age when the family immigrated to America, was brought over on another ship when he was older.

According to the Lyman Genealogy, all three sons were taxed fifteen years after their father died “in a rate assessed to build a mill.” This suggests that the three were engaged in the mill business together. The genealogy states that both Richard and John married in

⁴ *Genealogy of the Lyman Family* by Lyman Coleman. Albany, NY. J. Munsell. 1972, P. 36.

1644 before moving to Northampton, Massachusetts, where Richard was chosen as a selectman. Richard sold his father's house in Hartford in 1660.

The Lyman genealogy wheel near the front door of the Town and County Club indicates that Richard was born in 1617 and died in 1662 in Northampton, at age 45. John was born in September 1623⁵ and died Aug. 20, 1690, also in Northampton at age 67. "Robert 1629" is all that is indicated for the third son.

Second-generation Richard married hometown girl Hepzibah Ford, also of High Ongar, England, in Windsor, Connecticut, at age 22 or 23, probably around the time his father died in 1640. We know Hepzibah had been baptized on May 15, 1625, so she was seven or eight years her spouse's junior or about 15 years old when she married young Richard.⁶

John, born in High Ongar in September, 1623, married Dorcas Plumb of Branford, Connecticut, in 1644. He was a lieutenant in command of other Northampton soldiers, and participated in the "famous Falls fight above Deerfield, May 18, 1676." (Lyman Genealogy, page 40).

There is no information about daughters for the next three generations and only birth and death dates for the sons. John's son named John, born 1660, died in 1740. His son, Elias, born 1710, died in 1790. His son, Elias II, born 1740 and who died in 1816, was the father of Gaius, born 1769, who died in 1845. Gaius had five brothers; he was third of the six. It is unknown how many daughters there were through the generations. Elias II's sons included Justin, born 1765, who died in 1834; Elias born 1768, who died 1830; Gaius, born 1769, who died 1845; Asabel born 1776, who died 1864; Simeon, born 1777, who died 1832; and Job, born 1781 and still alive in 1864 according to the genealogy wheel at the Town and County Club.

Among the Lyman Family Papers in the manuscript section of the Connecticut Historical Society is a carefully folded document with the words, "For Gaius Lyman from his friend Thomas Muckins" on the outside. This "Receipt to Make 32 Gallons of Good Strong Beer or Draft Porter" may have been very important to Gaius Lyman, third of the six sons of Elias II. Speculation about this is based on information from his grandson's obituary.

The earliest edition of Geer's Hartford Directory at the CHS, dated 1828, indicates Gaius Lyman's place of business was 12 Commerce Street in Hartford. His grandson Theodore's obituary tells us that Gaius dealt in lumber and "West India goods." Perhaps the recipe for cooking up 32 gallons of beer has some bearing on the nature of Gaius Lyman's business—he is listed as a lumber dealer. Did he make casks and barrels and the beer to fill them? Does "West India goods" include rum to be transported back from the West Indies in the barrels to New England?

⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

⁶ Notes from a chance encounter of SB with a descendant of Richard Lyman at the Connecticut Historical Society in July, 2001. This is not the line of descent to Theodore.

Gaius is not listed in the residential section of Geer's, so he either lived elsewhere, possibly Massachusetts, or it may be that 12 Commerce Street was his combined home and place of business. Someone in the three generations between John and Gaius made the move back to Hartford from Northampton.

An 1832 map of Hartford at CHS reveals an iron foundry and a machine shop at the southern end of Commerce Street. At the northernmost tip of Commerce Street, just south of the Morgan Street Bridge over the Connecticut River, sits "Lyman and Savage's Wharf." Just south of that is "Morgan's Wharf," and just south of that, "Lyman's Wharf." Commerce Street runs from Potter's Lane north to Morgan Street. Potter's Lane is located just off the east/west running Mill River, aka Park River, which is now buried westward of, and under, the Hartford Public Library—the same Park River with bend, or nook, of Nook Farm, where Twain's house was built in 1874.

The next Geer's Hartford Directory at CHS is dated 1843, a skip of sixteen years. By 1843, Gaius Lyman's place of business had moved from Commerce Street to 97 Front Street, Hartford's bustling commercial street for over 100 years. In 1843, it ran parallel to and between Prospect Street and what was Commerce Street from what was the Mill River, north to the Meadow. Today, Front Street is known as Columbus Boulevard. Front Street was a colorful, richly diverse, densely populated city street in the 1800s and through the first half of the 1900s. It was demolished in the 1960s and replaced by Constitution Plaza.

Gaius Lyman and his wife had three sons, the second of whom was Christopher Columbus Lyman. A one-year-older brother E. Winchester, was born 1799 and died in 1822 at age 22 when C.C. was 21, and his much younger (by fourteen years) brother, Theodore, was born in 1814 and died in 1836, by coincidence also at age 22, when C.C. was 36. C.C., born in 1800, outlived all three siblings to age 76.

The Eighth and Ninth Generations

C.C. Lyman married Cecilia Breckinridge in Bennington, Vermont, on September 6, 1830, and the union produced four children. Their second child and first son was Theodore, so named for C.C.'s younger brother still alive and 20 years old when his namesake nephew Theodore was born on January 4, 1834. Nephew Theodore had an older sister named Cecilia he never knew, born in 1831, the year after Cecilia and C.C.'s marriage. Baby Cecilia had died in 1832, age one year, two months. When young Theodore was 2, his uncle Theodore died, and a year later a second sister, also named Cecilia, was born. She died in 1842 at age 5, when Theodore was 8 years old. A sister Mary was born that same year, only to die two years later in 1844 when Theodore was 10. A year later, in 1845, his grandfather Gaius died. Theodore experienced multiple tragic losses of family in his first eleven years.

In 1843, the family lived at 28 Temple Street. Temple Street and environs defined the playground of Theodore's youth. Temple Street, then as now, runs between Main Street and what was Front Street, now Columbus Boulevard. The 1832 map shows City Hall

located at the corner of Temple and Market streets. Early Hartford politics and a short walk to the river provided distraction and entertainment for the small family.

By 1843, Theodore's father, Christopher Columbus Lyman, was a clerk at 16 State Street, location of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. A 1788 Hartford map indicates that State Street ended at Front Street, and an 1832 map reveals that State Street ran from 191 Main Street eastward to the Connecticut River. Theodore was 9 years old and his father C.C. was 43 in 1843. With a gap of 15 years between the Geer's Hartford directories, we gather some years later from Theodore's obituary that his father's occupation prior to 1843, like his father before him, was the lumber business.

Two years later in 1845, C.C.'s father, Theodore's grandfather Gaius Lyman, was dead at age 76. His address had been listed at 97 Front Street from 1843 to 1845, when the entry becomes "Lyman, Mrs., widow of Gaius, home 97 Front Street."

Lumber may well have been the trade for Lymans for generations before Theodore's father and grandfather. However, documentation reveals that C.C. made a career move into the newly emerging insurance industry, ending at least two generations of family tradition in the lumber trade, and that by 1843 he was employed as a clerk by the Hartford Fire Insurance Company at 16 State Street. Who better to grasp the economic impact of devastating loss by fire at a time when so many structures were built of wood than one whose family sustained at least two generations of experience in the lumber business? If they are available, the missing Geer's from 1828 to 1843 may have an explanation of exactly when C.C.'s career change occurred. These editions of Geer's Hartford Directory are not available at the Connecticut Historical Society (in 2002).

By 1846, C.C. Lyman had ascended the corporate ladder to the rank of Secretary of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. His mother, widow of Gaius, continued to live at 97 Front Street until 1847. From 1847 until 1849 the address 97 Front Street is listed as home to a Miss Julia Lyman. Possibly Gaius had a sister, or an aunt or cousin by that name. We know that by 1848 C.C. was a trustee of the Wadsworth Atheneum.

Myrtle Street appears in Geer's for the first time as a residential street in 1844. Today as in 1844, it is located along the hill from Spring Street up to Garden Street just downhill from the former Waterworks Reservoir, near the "deaf and dumb" (sic) asylum that once faced Asylum Street, and east-south-east of the former Hartford Alms House. In 1844 the city was pushing westward, up Asylum Hill. The 1849 Geer's indicates C.C. Lyman's residence had moved from Temple Street to Myrtle Street, with no street number until the 1856 Geer's Directory listing shows 11 Myrtle Street as the Lyman's address.

Geer's Hartford directories from this time include schedules for trains, dozens of steamboats, packets (vessels such as schooners with regular schedules), stages and post riders. Temple Street, with all the comings and goings of the river just downhill, may have been richly inspiring during Theodore's formative years. On the other hand, the hustle and bustle may have been distasteful to his sensibilities and perhaps he was

relieved to move westward to the more sedate Myrtle Street at age 15. Parts of Temple Street may have been prone to flooding by the Connecticut River, and the family embraced the move which placed them a safe distance from the high water mark, from all the noise, pollution and smells of the city, and from the home in which they had experienced intense personal loss.

Theodore Makes a Name for Himself and Settles Down

In 1851, two years after the family moved to 11 Myrtle Street, Theodore graduated at age 17 from Hartford High School. Four years later, in 1855, Theodore earned distinction as a 21-year-old Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Yale University. Later that year he commenced law studies in the Hartford law offices of Thomas C. and Charles E. Perkins.

The law firm of Thomas and Charles Perkins was located at 14 State Street, two street numbers down from Theodore's father C.C.'s employer, the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. Perhaps father and son enjoyed a bite of lunch together from time to time at Honiss's, the Marble Pillar, or their antecedents. Theodore may have lived with the Perkinses after Yale for several years because Geer's indicates he did not begin boarding back home at 11 Myrtle Street until 1859, at age 24. Little is known about his mother, Cecilia, except for all those children who died. One notes that Theodore did not rush into marriage.

The 1860 Geer's lists Theodore Lyman, attorney, 299 Main Street, boarding at 11 Myrtle Street. A year later, his office had moved to 333 Main Street, which remained his office for 37 more years until 1898. Theodore's mother died in Hartford in 1870, when Theodore was 36 years old. C.C. died thirteen years later on May 28, 1883, at age 82, when Theodore was 49. Thereafter, Theodore was no longer a boarder in, but owned title to, 11 Myrtle Street.

Father and son had lived at 11 Myrtle Street, just up the hill from the Hartford Train Station, since 1870 when Cecilia, wife and mother to the pair, died. That house is long gone today (2002), although a stately residence of the era still exists around the corner on Spring Street, for those driven by architectural curiosity. Clearly, this was an upscale part of town in an era when Hartford was the most prosperous city in the country.

In 1883, Theodore succeeded his recently deceased father as a director of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. Likewise, he was elected a trustee of the Wadsworth Atheneum in June 1885. Seven months later, on January 22, 1886, Theodore married Miss Laura Maria Sherman of Milford, Massachusetts. Theodore was a 52-year-old bridegroom, and according to the Hale Records at CHS, Laura Maria Sherman Lyman was twenty years his junior, born on December 16, 1854. Did he marry in a hurry in 1886 before he aged any further, now that he had money to pass along and to spend on a family? Or was this a lingering courtship bogged down by filial obligations on either side, preventing earlier nuptials? We can only guess.

There is an intriguing entry in Geer's Hartford Directory for 1886: a sudden move after 37 years at Myrtle Street to 34 Sumner, and then "after November 1, 11 Myrtle Street."

Theodore and Laura lived in temporary quarters on Sumner Street until the old homestead at 11 Myrtle Street was renovated after 37 years of occupation, and the couple moved back to 11 Myrtle Street by November 1, 1886. Thus, "after November 1, 11 Myrtle Street."

The first Lyman child, Helen, was born two years later on November 8, 1888, followed by Richard on January 29, 1891. The next two children are listed as "d. October 22, 1892" which must have been daughter Bertha, and "d. March 12, 1894" which must have been daughter Esther. So beginning at age 34 this woman gave birth four times in six years, calling it quits after the birth of Esther nine months before Laura's 40th birthday.

Pushing Farther West to Woodland Street

The Lyman home at 11 Myrtle Street housed three generations of Lymans from 1849 until 1895, a period of 46 years. There is a notation in the 1895 Geer's residential listings: "after October 1, 22 Woodland Street."

Kenneth R. Andrews on the growth of the Nook Farm area:

"...As the city pushed westward from the river, the owners were able to subdivide desirable land among congenial persons whom they wished to have as neighbors. From the first, the Hookers looked upon Nook Farm as a small society of their very own. They became noted in the city as proprietary dispensers of hospitality, as cultivated hosts. The first comers were largely relatives. Thomas C. Perkins, then a locally noted lawyer, was eminently eligible to pay a high price for a building lot. His wife, Mary, was Isabella's sister. Isabella had first met [John] Hooker, then a law student under Perkins, in the latter's downtown house."⁷

Could Theodore Lyman have studied under Perkins in the same downtown house at the same time as John Hooker? Were they friends or acquaintances, or bitter rivals? They were about the same age, so this warrants a further look.

The other Perkins in the law firm Perkins and Perkins, Charles E. Perkins, lived at 49 Woodland Street, site of the first meeting of the Saturday Morning Club in 1876.⁸

⁷ p. 6, Kenneth R. Andrews. Mark Twain's Hartford Circle. Harvard University Press. 1950:

⁸ Charles E. Perkins, (1832-1917), was "a prominent Hartford attorney," and one of his clients was Samuel Clemens. Howard, Kohn, Sprague & Fitzgerald, one of the two oldest law firms in the country, and the oldest continuously practicing law firm in the country, acquired this law firm in 1961. According to Mrs. Corbin Kohn in January 2002, statements from business conducted on behalf of Mr. Clemens were found and

Surely, Charles and his wife, together with Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Perkins of Nook Farm, influenced Theodore's decision to move his family to Hartford's western perimeter along the Park River, near the established homes of his former legal mentors.

At his death in 1883, Theodore's father, C.C. Lyman, was the largest individual stockholder and a director of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company, with Theodore his only heir. When Theodore was ready to build the 22 Woodland Street house, he engaged the services of one of the most sought-after Hartford architects of the day, the recently incorporated firm of Hapgood and Hapgood. The team of Mr. Lyman and the Hapgood cousins, Melvin and Edward, built the Colonial Revival home on the most exclusive residential street in 1895 Hartford—Woodland Street.

What was the neighborhood like when the Lymans first move westward to this part of Hartford? Helen Post Chapman refers to a covered bridge on Farmington Avenue just west of Woodland Street. The covered bridge crossed the Hog River, the Meandering Swine River, the Little River, the Little Mill River, the Park River at a place with no such charming feature as a covered bridge today. Mrs. Chapman mentions a horse car which provided transportation from Hartford out to Woodland Street, with a turntable at the corner of Woodland Street and Asylum Avenue. The turntable was outfitted with a spigot and pail for watering the horse.

Mrs. Chapman recounts, "I am sorry that everyone who reads this book could not have seen the Reverend Joseph Twichell teaching Mr. Clemens how to ride [a bicycle] having chosen the soft clay road that Woodland Street then was for these lessons... In the early years of living on Woodland Street, there was not a made road and there were often days when we could not drive out of the grounds because of the clay mud, in spots almost a quicksand. The vehicles would sink almost to the hubs of the wheels and many a rubber boot or pair of rubbers were ruthlessly drawn from our feet in trying to cross the street."

Nancy Mixer, one-time Town and County Club historian, wrote up her notes from a conversation on February 19, 1987, with member Miss Amy Ogden Welcher. Miss Welcher was one of two "Misses Welcher" for whom 61 Woodland Street (one of the three choices for a clubhouse at the time of the founding of the Town and County Club) was home during the early part of the 20th century. Amy Ogden Welcher remembers Woodland Street from a time closer to the founding of the Club, when ...[there were] "beautiful elm trees and homes—homes wide enough apart but near enough to know your neighbors. The trolley on Farmington Avenue [and] out Asylum had [a] pole connection from the roof to wires above and it came... from Main Street, stopped at Woodland Street, the motorman got out, took the pole to the other end, [and] changed his position to the back of the trolley, ready for the trip back downtown. He would sit five or ten minutes before it left again. It was the end of the line at Woodland where it turned around. Neighbors would get in and chat for five or ten minutes before it left again."

turned over to the Mark Twain House at that time. The firm was named Davis, Lee, Howard and Wright when that occurred.

Miss Welcher recounts "...on the corner of Asylum there was a little gray frame house and it came by 400 feet of my uncle's place at 61 Woodland Street. [There was a] [v]ery lovely lawn and lovely beech, elm, birch and tulip trees. Between our place and [the corner gray house] where Jimmy Lippincott Goodwin lived was a fence with rambler roses and every year the Hartford Courant announced that Colonel Skinner's rambler roses were in bloom and don't miss going to see them." There is a rose motif on the engaged pilasters in the entrance hall, and there are roses on the tops of the engaged columns in the library. Abstracting elements from nature and applying them as architectural detail was a prevailing decorative technique in late 19th century England and America.

The interior of 22 Woodland Street is fairly restrained with spacious rooms and ten-foot-high first-floor ceilings among its many attractive features. No expense was spared on materials; only the finest woods were used. White mahogany paneling and shutters are among the defining features of the front parlor, a carved birdseye maple fireplace highlights Mr. Lyman's office, and mahogany balusters and a grand staircase create a gracious and imposing presence in the entrance hall. The most stunning room in the house is the spectacular quarter-sawn oak-paneled library. All the folding window blinds throughout the house are mahogany or in the front parlor, white mahogany. With a father and grandfather in the lumber business, Theodore knew about fine woods and created a showcase home featuring five of the finest residential wood materials available in 1895.

A word about the architects. Melvin H. Hapgood was 35 when the Lyman home was built, and Edward Thomas Hapgood was 29. Edward was a native of Ossining, New York, and Melvin was from Minneapolis. Melvin, educated at MIT, was known as an "unusually sensitive and perceptive designer." Among other projects, he submitted a design for the Washington Monument in 1879. The Metropolitan Museum of Art 1986 exhibit entitled "The Americans and the Aesthetic Movement" contained two student designs from his two-volume scrapbook at the Stowe-Day Foundation. Several of the fireplaces (in the lounge, in the Membership Director's office, and in the portion of the Assembly Room, which was Mrs. Lyman's bedroom) have fresco designs or carved wood applied to the finish work around the fireplaces. There is a lovely mosaic tile fireplace in the Board Dining room (which matches the tile work on the original vestibule floor) surrounded by wood finish work similar to that in Mr. Lyman's bedroom and in the Presidents Room. According to an advertisement for the firm's work, interior work was Melvin's specialty. His stained glass and fresco work were highly regarded.

Edward, together with his third cousin Melvin, joined Cook, Hapgood Co. in 1893. The cousins withdrew from the firm to form Hapgood & Hapgood later that year. The Lyman house is a rare and remarkable example of their work. Hapgood & Hapgood provided architectural services in Hartford and surrounding communities until the death of Melvin in 1899, after which time Edward practiced alone. Among other projects, he designed the house across the street at 19 Woodland Street, the home of Charles and Mary Dudley Vail Talcott, and several other houses on Prospect, Kenyon and Gillette streets in Hartford.

From 1899 to 1915, Edward Hapgood was one of Hartford's most acclaimed architects. The Simsbury High School, now Simsbury Town Hall, is an Edward Hapgood design; the (now demolished) Rossia Insurance Company and the Gothic Revival chapel in Elm Grove Cemetery in Windsor are Hapgood designs as well. The Rossia was a Beaux-Arts structure on the corner of Broad Street and Farmington Avenue—its bronze bears are now at the Science Museum. The female iconic figure until recently adorned the Russian Lady Café on Ann Street. Edward designed several West End houses in a Georgian Revival style, including 229 Kenyon Street.

Kenneth R. Andrews, p. 102:

“One area in which the Nook Farm neighborhood opened into the larger community was the organized intellectual life...The zest with which cultural development was pursued reflects again the congeniality of the society...The most important of the three clubs that deserve examination was primarily for men, though women were tolerated at its meetings if they kept silent...”

“...Horace Bushnell, Calvin Stowe, and J. Hammond Trumbull—one theologian and two scholars—founded the Monday Evening Club in the 1860s to provide members of intellectual attainment and local or national celebrity with a forum for the exchange of ideas and the exercise of intellectual curiosity.” Charles Perkins was a member, so was Sam Clemens. “Meeting every two weeks from October to May in the homes of the twenty members in turn, the club listened to a short essay from the man assigned to perform. Discussion followed—ten minutes to a member. Refreshments were served, including a supper or beer and liquors.”

Charles Perkins was also a member of the Friday Evening Club, along with Sam Clemens. Was Theodore Lyman ever a member of either club?

Back to the Lymans and what we know about their family life, which is hardly anything. We have a few stories related by Town and County Club members, whose relatives grew up in the Woodland Street area. What we know in print is from The Hartford Diaries of Mary Dudley Vail Talcott From 1896-1919. We also know from the Geer directories of Hartford that the Lymans moved to Woodland Street in 1895 when Helen was 7, Richard 4, Bertha 3 and baby Esther 1 ½ .

There was interaction between the Lymans and their neighbors across the street at 19 Woodland Street, Mary Dudley Vail Talcott and her husband Charles (Alice Talcott Enders' parents). The following diary entries relate anecdotes about the Lymans:

1898, Sunday, December 18: “After a day of rushing, I was so tired that I did not go to Mrs. Lyman's tea. I wanted to see the house.” Several weeks later, Friday, Feb. 24, 1899. “I have decided to try and make 35 calls and let the other 100 or more go till next winter, so I begin today. I was shown all over the big Lyman house and beheld one little dwelling lying peacefully in the valley, across the street.” She speaks of the home she and Charles Talcott were building at #19.

Wednesday, December 13, 1899. "Mrs. Lyman opened her house for an entertainment for the Indian Association given by the Misses Leech, two southern girls who sing Darkey [sic] song. We heard Bispham (?) this evening. He was fine! He sang the Erlking, Danny Deever, a Song cycle from 'In Memoriam' and several choice ballads."

Tuesday, March 12, 1901. "Seth went to Kindergarten for the first time since February 21st. [He had been ill]. He went to a very elaborate birthday party at Esther Lyman's."

Saturday, April 13, 1901. "Seth Talcott is 5 years old. Seth's birthday cake with five pink candles and sweet peas in the center of it, was partaken of by Katharine Cook, Frances Williams and Esther Lyman."

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 1905. [Mary has a 3-week-old baby at this point.] "Mrs. Theodore Lyman has written me an eight-page letter, relative to the birth and babyhood of children and also containing a kind offer to do errands for me, which gave us much surprise."

Monday, Dec. 23, 1901. "Mrs. Theodore Lyman brought me some holly and mistletoe. She said she thought I would not have time for such things this year."

Sat., Feb. 13, 1904. "It was a great day for the boys who went around leaving Valentines at the Lymans, Hapgoods, Cooks, Marvins and Robinsons; and from time to time they found new ones in the vestibule which pleased them greatly."

Fri., January 29, 1905. "I fell on the sidewalk in front of the Lymans' and am very lame in my left arm from it. It is years since I have had such a shaking up. A butcher boy helped me up, but I feel the shock still."

Sun., January 28, 1906. "The agitation over choir matters in our church bids fair to come to naught, as very few people want a change...such people as Mr. Gross, the Collins, Lymans, etc., are satisfied with the music as it is."

Wed., March 27, 1906. "Our new car arrived, and great excitement prevailed. Even Theodore Lyman came across the street to see it. It is called Packard 30, and has red wheels and blue body with red welting."

Fri., Jan. 24, 1913. "T. Lyman, age 79, gave a large dance for his two debutante daughters." [In 1913 Helen is 25, Bertha is 21, and Esther 19, so it may have been a party for Bertha and Esther.]

Theodore Lyman, 1834-1920

Theodore Lyman was a successful real estate attorney, practicing from 1861 until 1898, a period of thirty-seven years, from age 27 until age 64. After his first year of practice at 299 Main Street, his law office operated out of 333 Main Street for 37 years until 1898

when he moved to 847 Main Street, first installed in Room 9, then in 1899 in Room 52. In 1904 he moved his office for the last time next door to Room 53, and maintained a law office there until 1919, the year before his death.

According to his obituary, Theodore Lyman practiced law for nearly 40 years. The above information based on the Geer's Hartford Directories is more specific in stating he practiced for 37 years. Whether he practiced law for 37 or 40 years, he attained a reputation as "an honorable and able exponent of the law of real property, and his relations at times included some of the largest corporations of the city." We know he succeeded his deceased father as a director of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. In addition, he became a vice president of Society for Savings, a director of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, a trustee of the Hartford-Connecticut Trust Company, and a member of the University Club.

Theodore and Laura's son, Richard, graduated from Hartford High School in 1909, the year after Henry Ford began mass production of the model T, and the year before Mark Twain's death. The backyard of 22 Woodland Street, now the parking lot, had a clear view of the Mark Twain House looking south, but no evidence suggests the neighbors were acquainted.

We know from the Mary Dudley Vail Talcott diaries that the Talcotts were en route to the Azores in 1909, aboard the *Romaine* on April 19. "The two older Lyman girls are here with two entertaining teachers from Dobbs Ferry." The daughters attended finishing school and then traveled, and the son graduated from high school and attended college.

We know Richard's year of high school graduation and of his entire educational and professional progression until his father's death, because it is elaborated on in Theodore's obituary. This document perfunctorily lists the three daughters while fully outlining the son's education and accomplishments, a standard practice for the time. Thus we know Richard "...was graduated from the high school [Hartford High School] in 1909 and from Yale in 1913. He studied at both Yale and Harvard medical schools, and served with the Red Cross in Serbia under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation for Research for five months in 1915."

Mr. Lyman died in his home on August 12, 1920, at the age of 86. The funeral was held the following Monday at 22 Woodland Street.

At Mr. Lyman's death, the 22 Woodland Street real estate was valued at \$85,000. A summer cottage and grounds at Laurel Way in Norfolk, Connecticut, were valued at \$25,000.⁹

⁹ An 1896 entry in Mary Talcott's diaries notes that Charles and Mary Talcott spent the day in Norfolk Tuesday, July 14, 1896, with their friends the Farnams "who have taken Theodore Lyman's house for the summer." Maybe this was the summer the Lyman family went on the Grand Tour of Europe, which the Lyman manuscript information at the Connecticut Historical Society Library suggests, and this was the piece of Norfolk real estate mentioned at the time of Mr. Lyman's death.

Household furniture and effects at 22 Woodland Street were valued in 1920 in the amount of \$8,759. In addition, there was a Steinway grand piano (value \$500) and an upright piano (value \$75), plus \$1,699 in books, \$1,800 in automobiles and a \$12 watch. The gross value of the estate was just under \$1 million.¹⁰

Laura Maria Sherman Lyman lived in the house for five more years and died February 17, 1925 in Hartford. She is buried with her husband at Cedar Hill Cemetery in the family plot. Two of the daughters and son Richard are buried alongside their parents.

Richard S. Lyman was last listed as a boarder at 22 Woodland Street in 1923; Helen was a boarder in 1925, and moved one street over to 9 Gillette Street along with her sister Bertha in 1926, which we know from the 1926 Geer's. Helen and Bertha were 38 and 34, respectively, that year. We know nothing of Esther after the 1923 indication that she was a boarder at 22 Woodland Street, and was 32 years old at the time.

Beginning in 1919 Bertha is listed in Geer's as a lab technician at 20 South Hudson Street, boarding at 22 Woodland Street along with her siblings. Helen must have been involved in the war relief effort in France after World War I, according to an article she wrote for the Hartford Daily Courant on Sunday, June 12, 1921, entitled "Cellars in Ruins of War Torn Villages Homes for Thousands in Devastated France." The subtitle is "Miss Helen Lyman of Hartford, Chairman for Connecticut of 'La Renaissance des Cites' Gives Graphic Picture of Conditions in Regions Where More Than 2,500 Towns Were Wholly or Partially Destroyed During Conflict—Tells How She Found Women and Children Living in Dreary Underground Places and of Urgent Need for Help From America in Rebuilding and Making Habitable Again These Shattered Communities." There are familiar Hartford names on her committee (Williams, Bulkeley, Hawley, Mather, Maxim and Schutz). Helen Lyman traveled again to France after her mother's death, which we know from a French identity paper in the Lyman manuscript box in the CHS library dated February 18, 1927.

Helen Lyman became one of the founding members of the Town and County Club eventually married, becoming Helen Pitt and moving to British Columbia. Bertha joined

¹⁰ \$979,394 to be exact (per the newspaper article at the time of Mr. Lyman's death). More than half, \$570,000, was in 1000 shares of stock of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. The balance of the estate came from shares of stock in various companies including the American Bank Note company, preferred and common stock; American Hardware Corporation; American Chain Company; Billings and Spencer Company; Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Company; Corn Exchange Bank of New York; Connecticut General Life Insurance Company; Collins Company; Eagle Lock Company; Hartford Automobile Club Garage Corporation; Hartford-Connecticut Trust Company; Hartford Electric Light Company; Johns-Pratt Company; S.N.E. Telephone Company; U.S. Envelope Company; and Underwood Typewriter Company.

the T & C in 1935, married and became Bertha Guptill, and died in 1976. Esther became Esther Dennis; we know nothing of her after 1923. Richard's whereabouts after 1925 are unknown except that he moved to Rochester, New York, had at least two children, and died in 1959.

After the Lymans

The Lyman family enjoyed 22 Woodland Street for 30 years, through the First World War and radical changes in business and family life during the first part of the 20th century. Since the Town and County Club opened November 3, 1925, members have enjoyed 77 years of parties celebrating all kinds of family occasions. Dialogue has been sparked at thousands of meetings and social, philanthropic and business activities of all kinds. Millions of meals have been served. For 77 years members have balanced budgets for the Club and made improvements to 22 Woodland Street, including the addition of a ballroom in 1930, an elevator in 1987, and air conditioning in 1999. Banquets, weddings, anniversaries, showers, business meetings, and community service functions are booked well into the first years of the 21st century.

Imagine Thomas Hooker and his group walking into Hartford when the Saukiaug (Black Earth) tribe inhabited the area. Black Earth is an apt description of the rich bottomlands of the Connecticut River valley, and an appropriate name for a tribe whose sustenance was derived from that earth.¹¹ How quickly the connection to the black earth of the Mesozoic rift basin, amply endowed with rich soil deposits, was destroyed by aggressive industrial growth brought by successive generations of European settlers.

It has been almost four centuries since the Richard Lymans walked westward to Chicopee, and then south along the flood plain of the Connecticut River to Hartford, which sits on top of some of the best farmland ever. Thomas Hooker and his entourage coaxed survival out of the soil, forests and river of 17th century Hartford. Land today in the downtown area may be more valuable than ever, but cows, hogs and black earth are no longer part of the mix.

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¹¹ Across the river, the Podunk tribe in East Hartford and Glastonbury had urged the Puritans from the Plymouth Colony to come west and help protect their tribe from the Pequots, a particularly warlike group of Mohawks to the northwest.

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Many thanks to Jean Klein for proofreading this paper in January, 2004.

[A distant Lyman relation named Richard Lyman, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a relative of Fannie Gabriel's of Bloomfield. Mrs. Newell, the Club Historian, and Susie Barney wrote to Mr. Lyman in December, 2001, asking for more information about the house, the family, and any family photographs while the family lived at 22 Woodland Street. This connection was made thanks to Mrs. Gabriel, whose husband, George, is cousin of the Richard Lyman of Grand Rapids. According to Fannie Gabriel, her

mother-in-law, Henrietta Evans Gabriel, was a member of the Town and County Club. Henrietta and young Richard Lyman's grandmother, Annie Evans Gabriel, played with the Clemens children. Annie and Henrietta were sisters. Fannie says all of the Clemens servants went to work at the Evans family when the Clemens closed the house in 1891 and moved to Europe. The Evans lived on Farmington Avenue west of 351 Farmington Avenue.]