



A. A. Wilbur's Store, Allenton, R.I.

Courtesy Thomas Peirce

Alvertus A. Wilbur, a Civil War veteran born in 1849, came to Allenton in the 1880s and went into business with his brother-in-law Fred R. Frissell. Wilbur and Frissell operated a general store here, succeeding John R. Nichols. An advertisement in the *Wickford Standard* in 1889 noted: "Wilbur & Frissell, Dealers In Fine Groceries, Dry Good, Boots, Shoes, Hats, Caps and General Family Supplies." F. R. Frissell died suddenly in March 1896 and A. A. Wilbur became the sole proprietor of their Allenton business. But in July 1896, Mr. Wilbur was dealt another serious blow to his business. In the early morning of July 26th, he was awakened to find the "old Allenton store" in flames. He made a valiant effort, with the help of neighbors, to subdue the flames, but the building was quickly consumed by the fire. The *Standard*, on July 31, 1896, noted: "Mr. Wilbur is naturally very downcast and says he has practically lost everything, his loss being estimated at \$12,000..." The paper also noted that the building destroyed was an old landmark, which was "erected over eighty-five years ago by Joseph C. Sanford."

A. A. Wilbur rebuilt this store on the same site. On August 13, 1897, the *Standard* noted: "A. A. Wilbur has opened the store which he built to take the place of the one burned a year ago. He now certainly has the finest store building in town. Plate glass windows show off his goods to great advantage, and his stock being new and complete, makes it an attractive place." Mr. Wilbur continued to operate the store until about 1915, when his son-in-law Walter B. Kingsley bought him out. After Mr. Kingsley's death, the store was run by his daughter and her husband, Ruth (Kingsley) and Peter Zarafonitis. It was renamed the New York Market, and later Peter's Market. In 1965, they turned the market into a billiard parlor. In 1973, the building was sold to Windmill Realty, and a Dutchland Farms convenience store was opened here.

SAUNDERSTOWN



Browning Hill Farm, Milk, Colin H. Brown

Courtesy Thomas Peirce

Originally named Willettsville after the region's first settler in 1680, Andrew Willett, the son of the first mayor of New York City, this area has a long history as a farming community, then later a fishing and shipbuilding center, and finally as a summer resort area. It received its present name in honor of the ship-building family of John Aldrich Saunders, who settled there in 1856, at the invitation of the Carpenter family, the direct descendants of the original Willett settlers, and Lafayette businessman Robert Rodman, and constructed a marine railway and shipyard. The Saunders family constructed ships there as well as maintained a summer hotel and a ferry service to Jamestown, Newport, Wickford, and Providence. It was during this remarkable timeframe that Saunderstown became renowned as a literary summer community attracting the likes of the Whartons, LaFarges, Lockwoods, Wisters, and Roosevelts. Over the last 50 years or so, the areas homes have largely been slowly converted to year-round residences.

— Tim Cranston

DAVISVILLE



Davisville Post Office – U.S. Mail, R.F.D. No. 1

Courtesy Thomas Peirce

A rising from a grist mill, fulling mill, and iron forge following Joshua Davis's arrival in 1694, "Davis's Mills" developed into a thriving community by the turn of the 20th century. About 1810, sons Ezra and Jeffrey Davis established an early wool carding mill on Hunt's River, adding looms in 1824 to replace cottage weavers. The village was renamed "Davisville" in 1851 when James Davis opened a post office. From the Hunt's River settlement, the village expanded just over a half-mile south after the arrival of the railroad and a new nearby 1890 steam mill. Joining the two woolen mills, mill boardinghouses and tenements, the company store and mill owner residences were a pants factory, several independent general stores, two blacksmith shops, a lumberyard, a harness shop, a tin shop, two grist mills, livery stables, the passenger and freight railroad station, a community hall, a library, a school, the first Grange hall in Rhode Island, and numerous houses, including the parsonage for the local church minister. Outside the village were farms, a number of large poultry establishments, and several portable sawmills. The village was greatly affected when the textile industry departed the village after the burning of the steam mill in 1924, with the village gradually absorbed by suburban housing developments. The 1913 postmark is on a pre-1910 postcard, when Ray Huling was proprietor.

— George Loxton

WICKFORD



The Square, Wickford, R.I.

Courtesy Joseph E. Coduri

The village of Wickford was originally the vision of Lodowick Updike, grandson of one of North Kingstown's first settlers Richard Smith, and heir to the vast Smith/Updike landholdings known as Cocumscussoc. Updike platted out his future seaport town in 1709. The village grew slowly at first, with as many as 20 homes constructed by the time of the Revolution, many of which still exist. Upon Updike's death the remainder of the unsold land in the village was left to his 5 daughters who in turn quickly resold it to members of the locally prominent Phillips and Fowler families. It was the Phillips and the Fowlers who completed the vision begun by Updike and who also realized the large profits that he envisioned.

The Village became a cultural, economic, social, religious, and civic center of not only North Kingstown, but much of southern Rhode Island as well. A number of churches, banks, meeting halls, and governmental buildings were established here. Additionally in 1800, the Washington Academy was founded here as a school to train young men as educators to satisfy the burgeoning demand for public education.

— Tim Cranston