

**Charlotte L. Evarts Memorial Archives, Inc.
8 Meetinghouse Lane
Madison, Connecticut 06443
203 245 5667**

Number 19

Visitor Center



Madison Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center

This curious little building really incorporates two buildings of different vintages. The first is invisible from the front. A short walk to the rear parking lot will reveal a smaller building with iron shutters that dates from 1875 when the Town built a building to house probate and town records. It contains two vaults - one four by five feet and one three by five feet - for storage of records.

In 1896 when Memorial Hall was constructed to the west of the town offices, the building was moved back to conform with the back line of the new building.

In the winter of 1914 -1915 the Town engaged Charles Willard, contractor and builder to construct a new town clerk's office which was to be added to the front of the original edifice.

In 1939 extensive renovations were carried out next door in Memorial Hall and on March 10, 1939 all town clerk and probate records were moved from the original town clerk's building to the remodeled Memorial Hall where town offices were housed until 1995.

In the mid-twentieth century the building served as the local court house where such offences as traffic violations and instances of disturbing the peace were tried by a local official. One of the original vaults was turned into a cell.

In recent years it has become fashionable to refer to this building as the "powder house". This quaint notion seems to stem from the fact that Philander P. Coe, a merchant and powder dealer, owned a store on the site of Memorial Hall next to the town clerk's office. It is suggested that Mr. Coe used the town clerk's office in which to store his powder. There is no evidence to support this and it is hoped the Town Clerk was averse to having gun powder mixed with his records.

Directions to the Visitor Center: Travel west on the Boston Post Road from Madison Center. At the traffic light at Island Avenue turn right onto Meeting House Lane. The Visitor Center is directly in front of you.