

History of Leominster MA:  
Samuel Kendall, et al.

[NOTE: The following was taken from a document found at the Leominster Historical Society, based on a talk given to the Society in 1958 by Arthur M. Hillery.]

The house located at 900 West Street, Leominster, is quite possibly one of the oldest houses in the city. Located at the foot of Monoosnoc Hill, the house was built before 1751, but the actual date has been lost through time.

The original owner was Samuel Kendall of Woburn. A carpenter by trade, Samuel built the house, consisting of the main house and several smaller buildings. Samuel Kendall's son, Jonas was deeded the house in 1751. Jonas Kendall lived in the house for 44 years, and during that time built the first oil mill in Leominster directly across the street on Monoosnoc Brook. Jonas then deeded the house to his son Abel on May 11, 1795. Abel lived there until 1830 when he sold the house. The house then passed through many hands during the period from 1830 to the present, with the current owner being Mr. Donald Anderson.

The area at the foot of Monoosnoc Hill was originally an old Indian pass. It was one of their main routes from Narragansett Bay to Vermont and New York State. When the first house was built there was only one street leading to the property and it was the last house on that street.

Since that time several more streets have been built in that area, including Hillery Road, and Harwood Terrace. Route 2 also comes quite close to the area.

Originally, the house resided in Fitchburg. Then in 1943, Leominster deeded the airport land to Fitchburg and in exchange Leominster was given all the land on this side of Route 2 as far as the filtration plant. The original boundary line ran 50 feet from the driveway.

According to Raymond J. Farquhar, who owned the house 1899 to 1925, the house contained five rooms. The rooms consisted of a kitchen, two bedrooms, an eating room, and a sitting room. The water supply, before running water, came from a springs on the hill directly to the back of the property. Pipes led from the springs into the kitchen where they were emptied into a large open barrel. The overflow emptied through the outside wall of the house and into a well.

On August 4, 1942 the property was bought by Mr. Herbert J Simmons. Mr. Simmons did intensive renovations on the house. The floor boards in the kitchen were replaced and the attic was changed into a bathroom and servant's quarters. A library was added to the back of the house and is paneled with hand planed pine boards. The original kitchen was converted into a living room with a large fireplace. The cellar, which previously had a dirt floor, was given a concrete one and a central heating system.

Many of the windows in the house have sliding paneled shutters which entirely shut out the light when closed. Each room contains its own fireplace, which was a necessity as well as a luxury when the house was built. Throughout the renovations many details were left untouched including the mantels above the fireplaces, the large brick oven in the living room, a large metal cauldron, also located in the living room, and the low ceilings, wide floor boards, wainscoting, hinges, and other necessities found throughout the house.

In 1945, the property was bought by Mr. Arthur Hillery. Mr. Hillery continued the restoration on the house by fixing the barn and garage, transforming the chicken coop into a dog house and putting in a lawn and driveway. An oil burner was also added. Eventually the Hillery's also moved out and the house was purchased by its current owners. Recently a large section of land adjacent to the house was sold, and new homes are being erected on that spot.

Although much building has been done recently in the area around 900 West Street, it will not be forgotten that this house was the first.



Photos compliments of Leominster Public Library Historic and Genealogical Collection.