

# THE FORMER REVEREND JOHN BATES BALLARD HOUSE

## *The Home of The Colchester Historical Society*

**I**n 1840, The Reverend John Bates Ballard purchased land on Linwood Avenue, then known as Middletown Turnpike, from the heirs of Cornelius and Mary Brown. This house that Ballard built is an example of mid-19th century construction combining elements from both the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. The simple lines typify the construction form popularized by pattern books and builders magazines during the second half of the 19th century. The house displays details typical of the regional characteristics of homes built along the northern side of Linwood Avenue during that period.

The “Ballard Homestead” remained in the family through the turn of the century. In 1901, E.S. Ballard and Frances A. Ballard of Davenport, Iowa transferred the property to Frances M. Ballard. In 1908, upon Frances Ballard’s death, the house and its furnishings were bequeathed to the Colchester Borough Baptist Church on South Main Street for use as a parsonage. For forty one years the Linwood Avenue home continued to serve the local Baptist congregation, until 1949, when the Baptist’s merged with the Federated Church. With only 12 remaining members, and after 119 years, the Baptist society was dissolved. At that time the house was sold to Gilbert and Florence Murray.



Frances M. Ballard



The original Ballard House on Linwood Avenue

This house changed hands several times and by the 1990’s fell into disrepair. The “turquoise house”, as it was familiarly known, became an eyesore in the center of town. In 2001, when the Town of Colchester voted to expand Cragin Memorial Library, the house and property, became a focal point as a solution to the enlargement of the library’s parking and access

road dilemma. The Town of Colchester was awarded a Small Cities Grant, and in a partnership with the Colchester Historical Society, the restoration of the “Parsonage” house began. State of Connecticut grant money and Historical Society funds have transformed what was an eyesore into an asset to the center of town. This house now serves as a public museum and offices for the Colchester Historical Society.



Current home of Colchester Historical Society, restored summer 2003