

The History of Wilmington

A Coloring Book



*Old Centre School (1839-1888), site of the Wilmington Public Library from 1890 until 1969
Wilmington's 4th of July Headquarters since 1983*

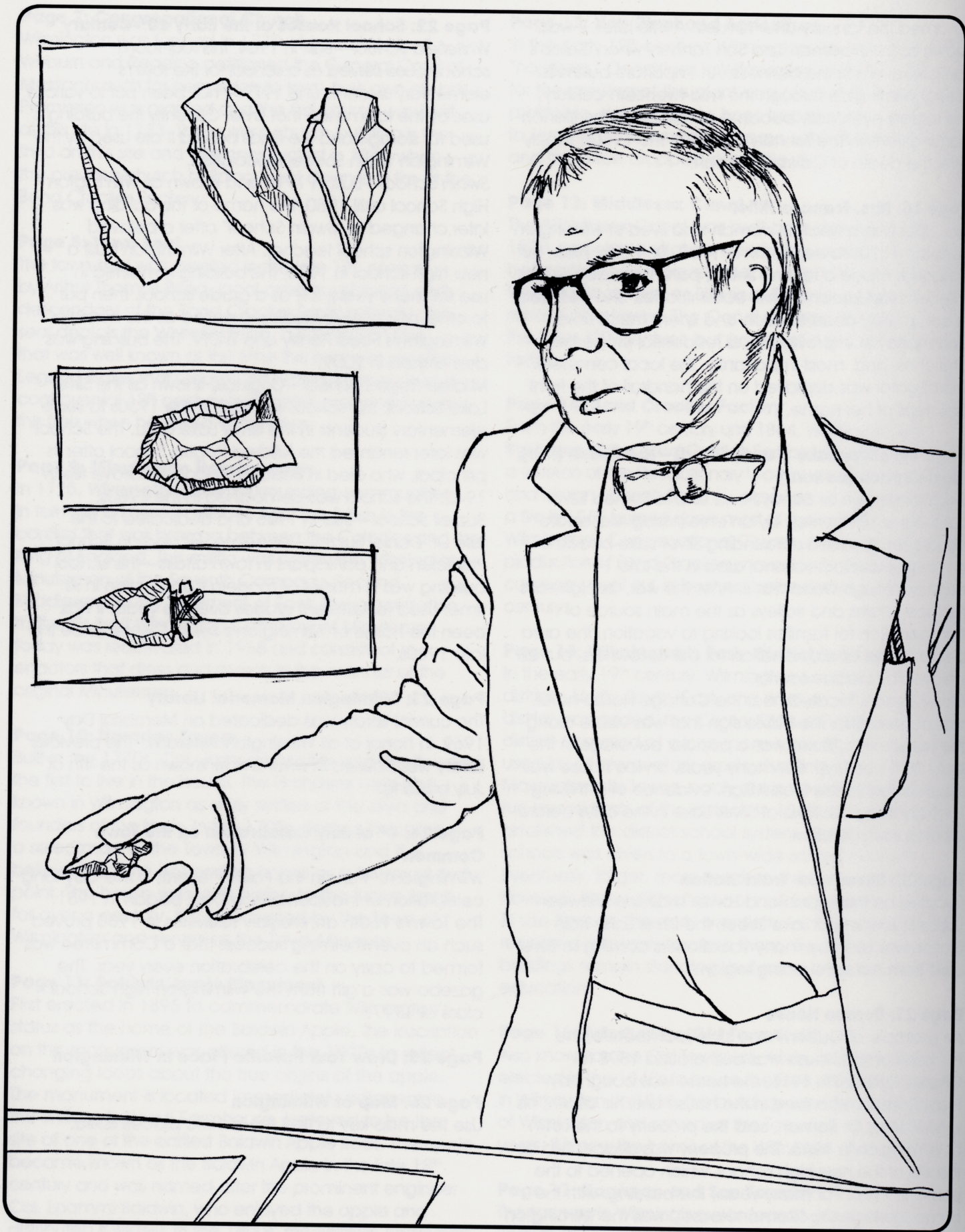
By the Friends of the Wilmington Memorial Library
With Text by Terry McDermott
Illustrated by Wilmington Memorial High School Students and Faculty

WILMINGTON'S ORIGINS

The Town of Wilmington was incorporated in 1730 when residents of the remotest areas of the towns of Woburn and Reading were finally successful in petitioning the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the state legislature) for permission to incorporate a new and separate town. These remote areas, known as the Land of Goshen and the Land of Nod, came together to form the new town of Wilmington. (Later in the 1730's, a few properties from Billerica were added.) This new town was deemed necessary by the local inhabitants because they wanted a meeting house that was more convenient to them than the ones in Woburn and Reading. Therefore, as part of the town's establishment, a condition was made that a church be built...and so it was.

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Native American Artifacts in Wilmington

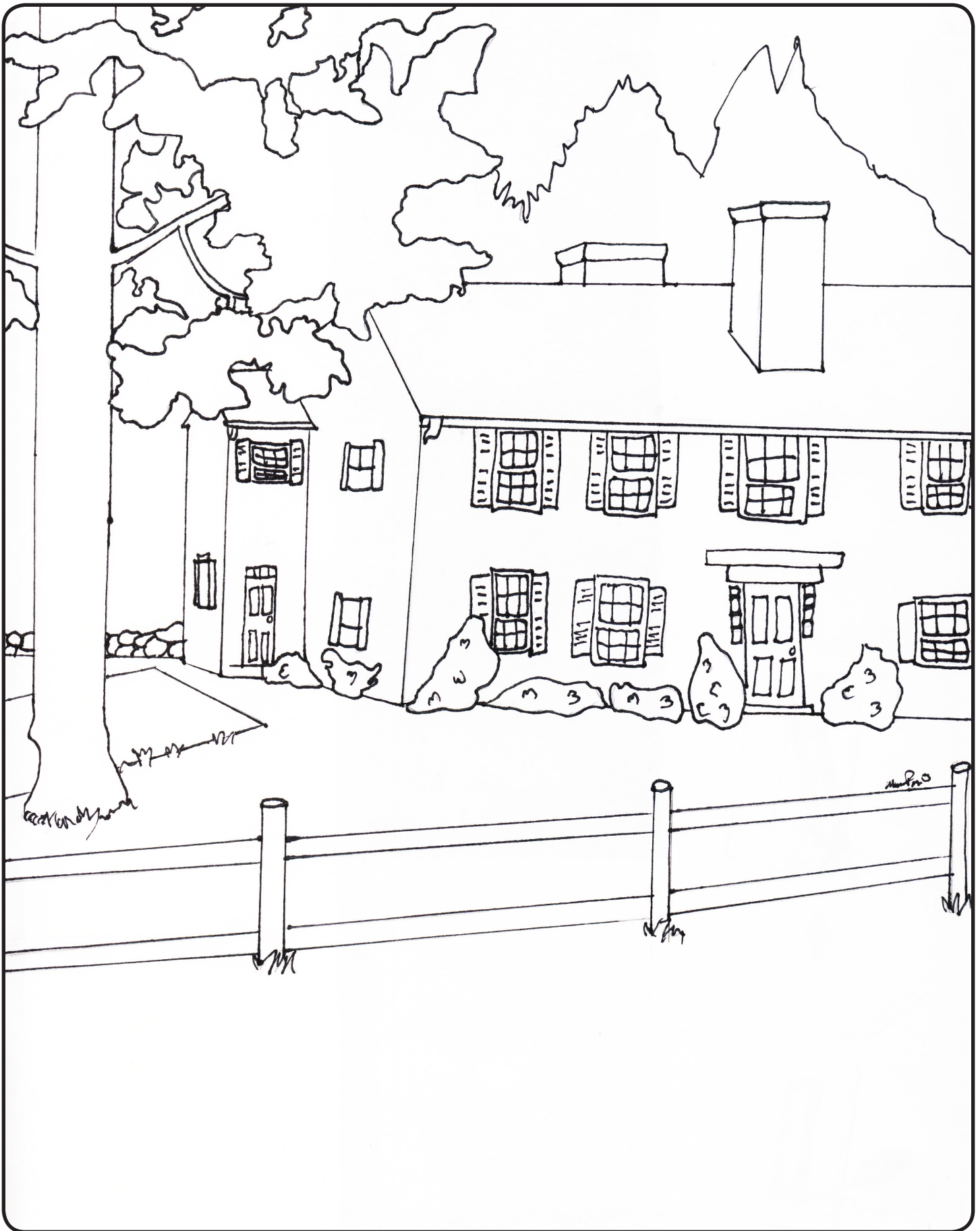


illustration by Maria Patrone

Early European Settlers — Buck House

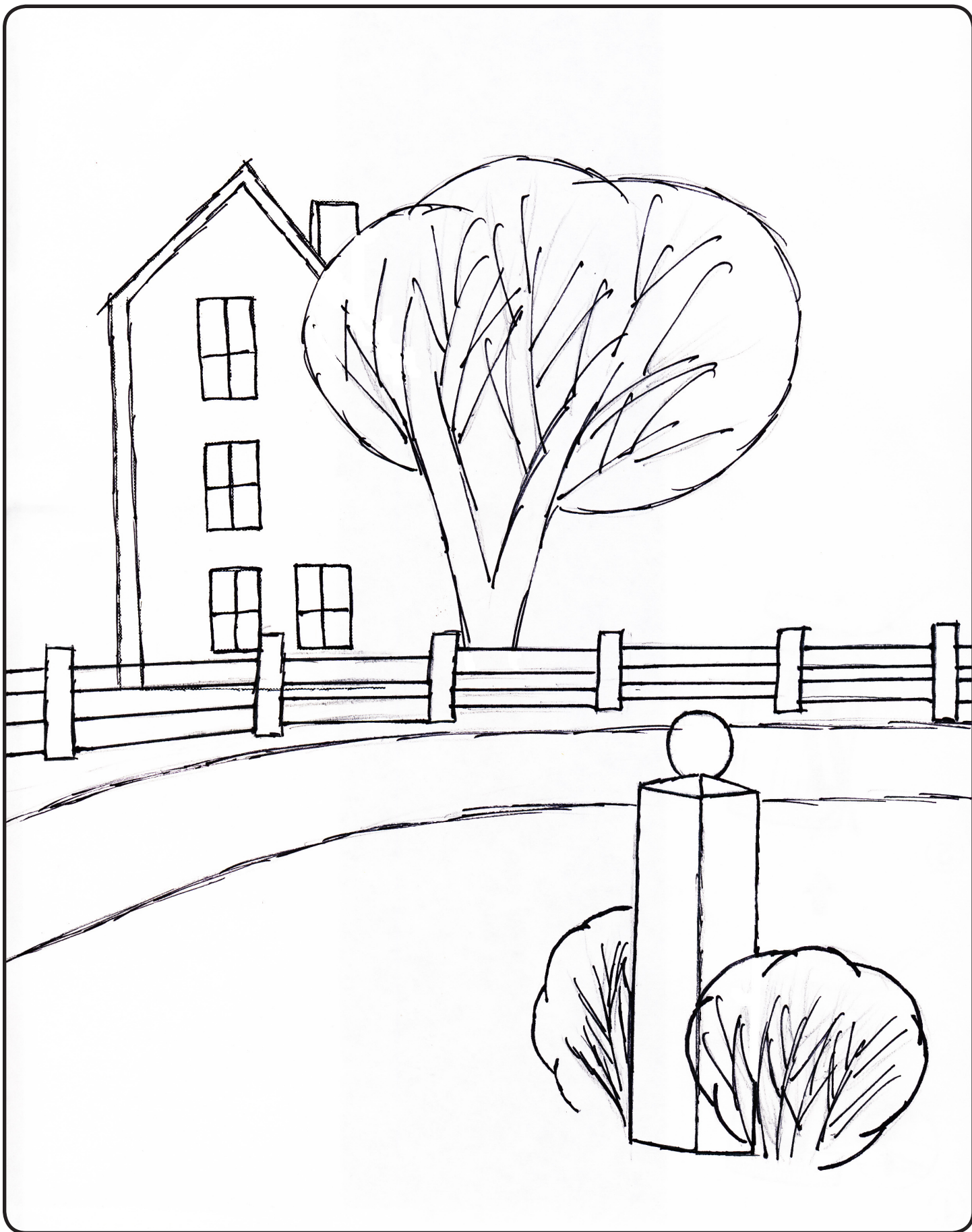


illustration by Eric Jaeschke

Early European Settlers — Butters House

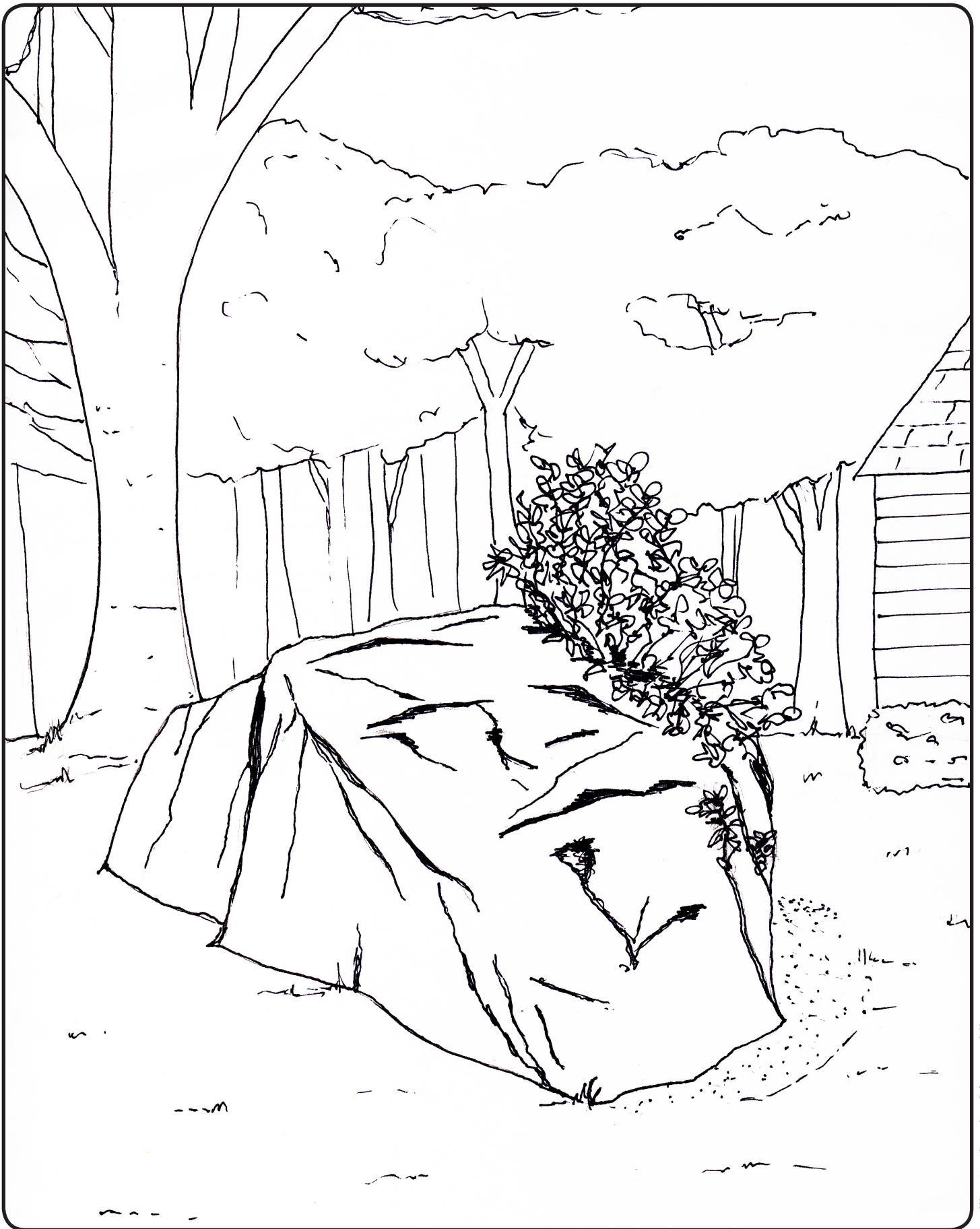
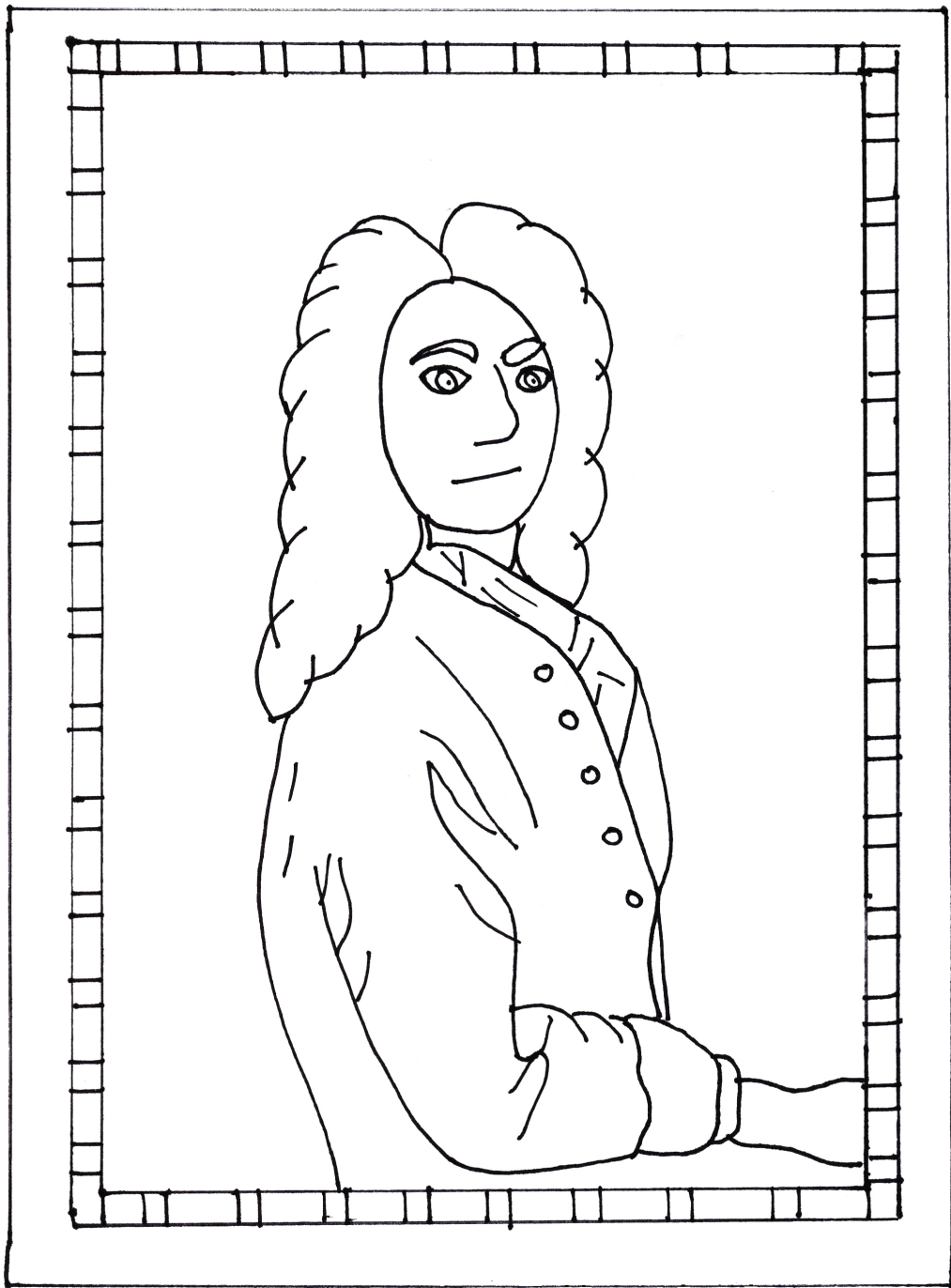


illustration by Megan Hinman

Early European Settlers — Harnden Massacre Rock



Map of Wilmington and Surrounding Towns



**Spencer Compton
1st Earl of Wilmington**

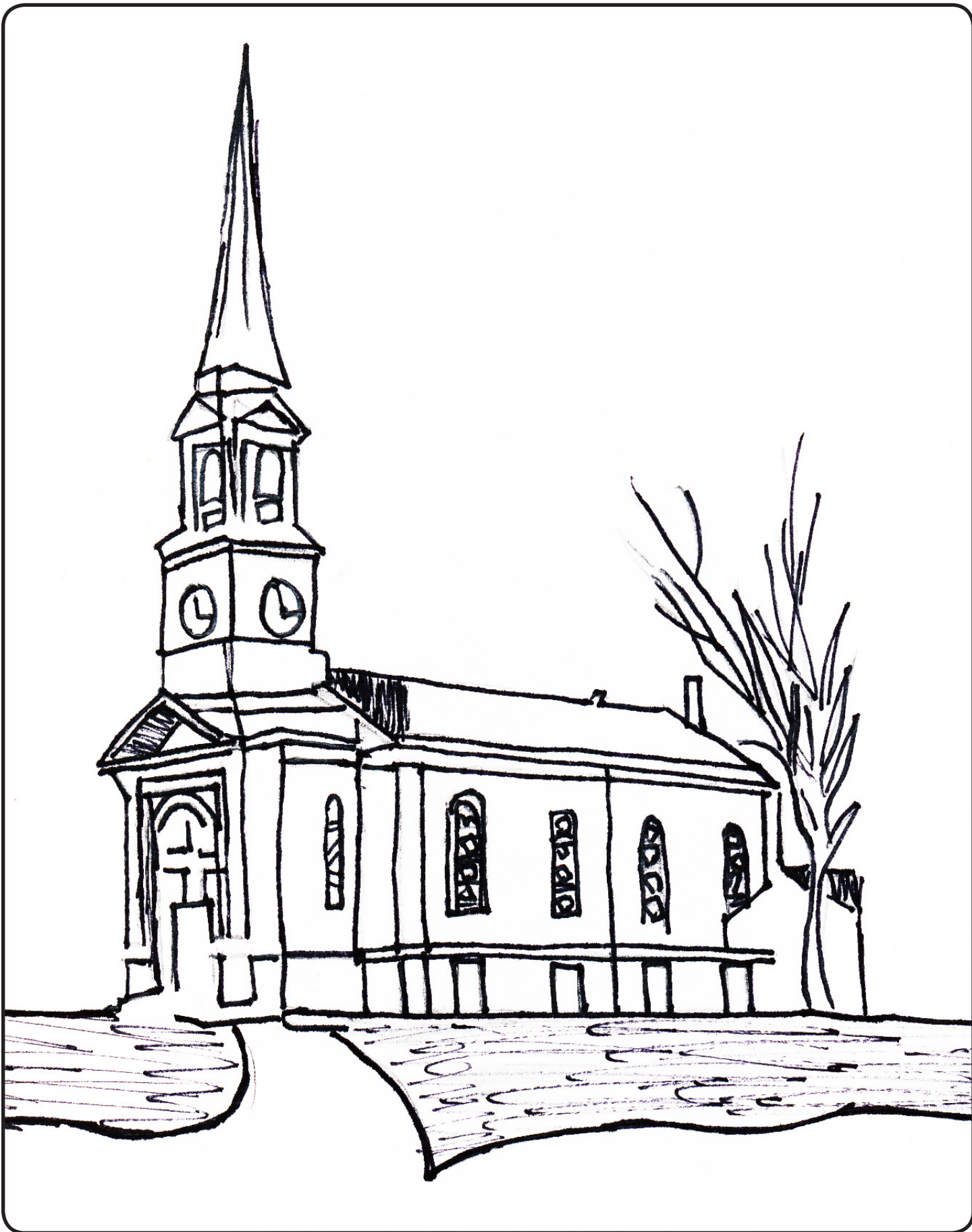


illustration by Caileigh Buckley

Congregational Church



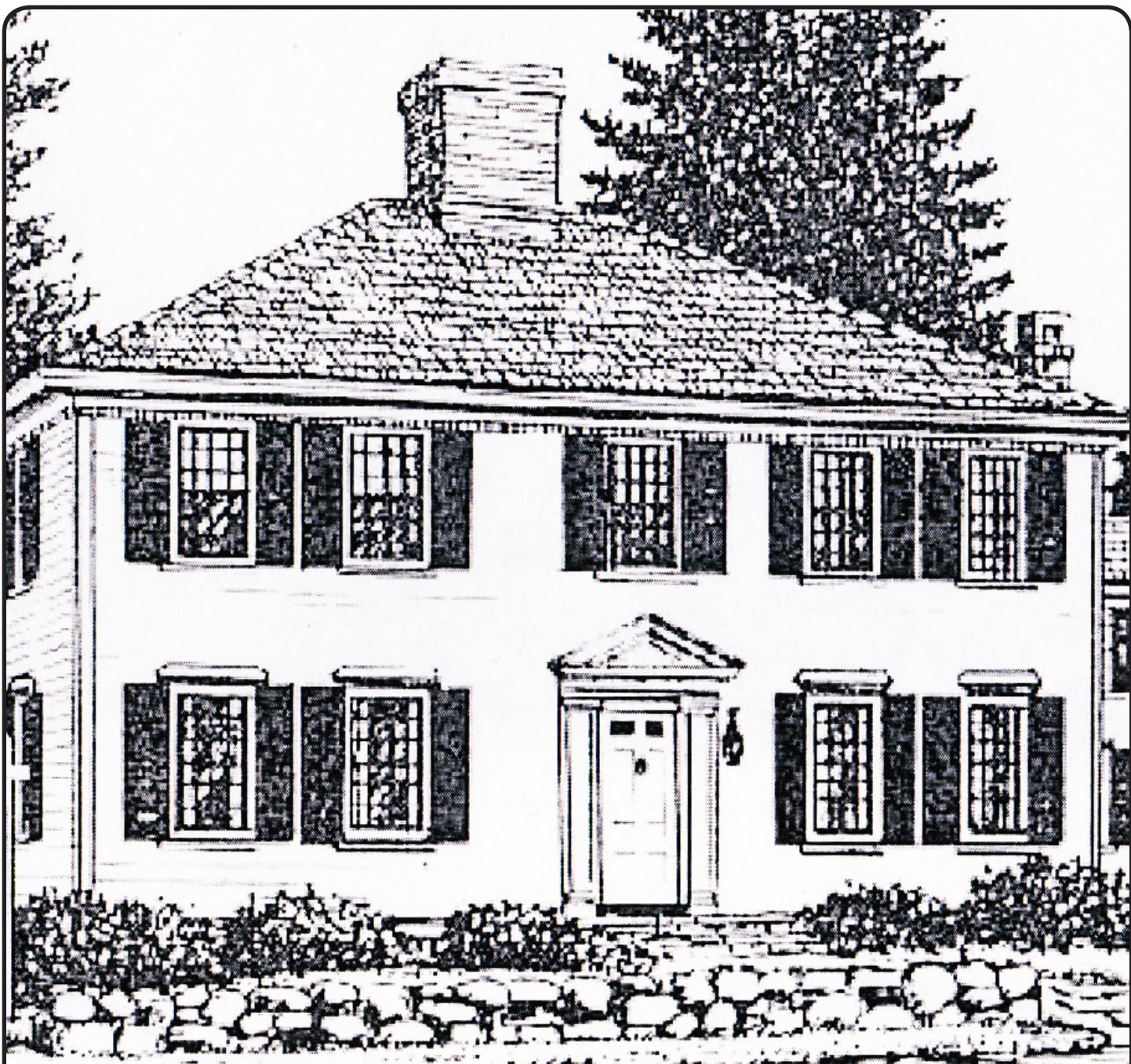
illustration by Megan Hinman

Town Seal



Illustration by Casey Cataldo

Minuteman Headquarters



Harnden Tavern

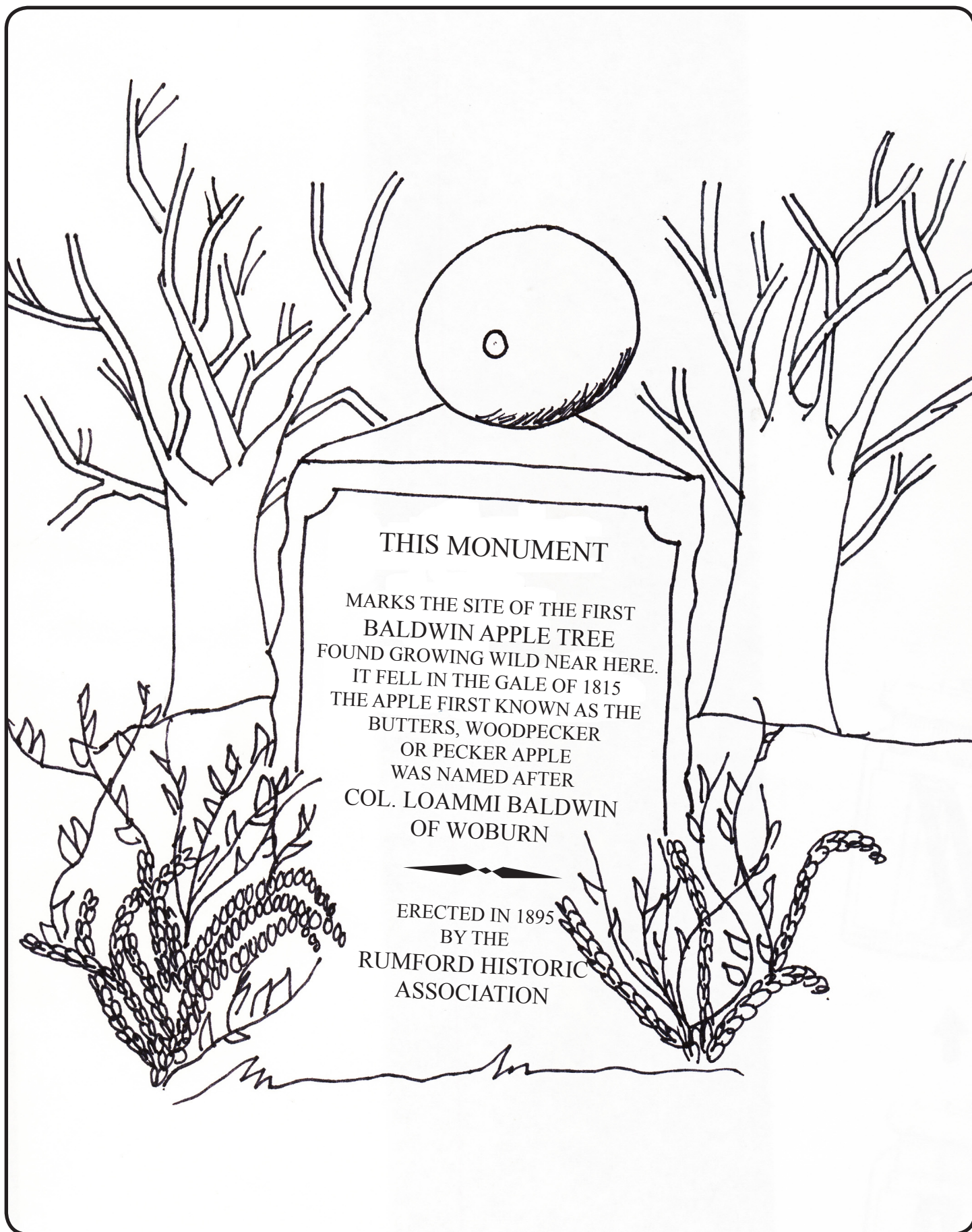


Illustration by Jane Farrell

Baldwin Apple Monument

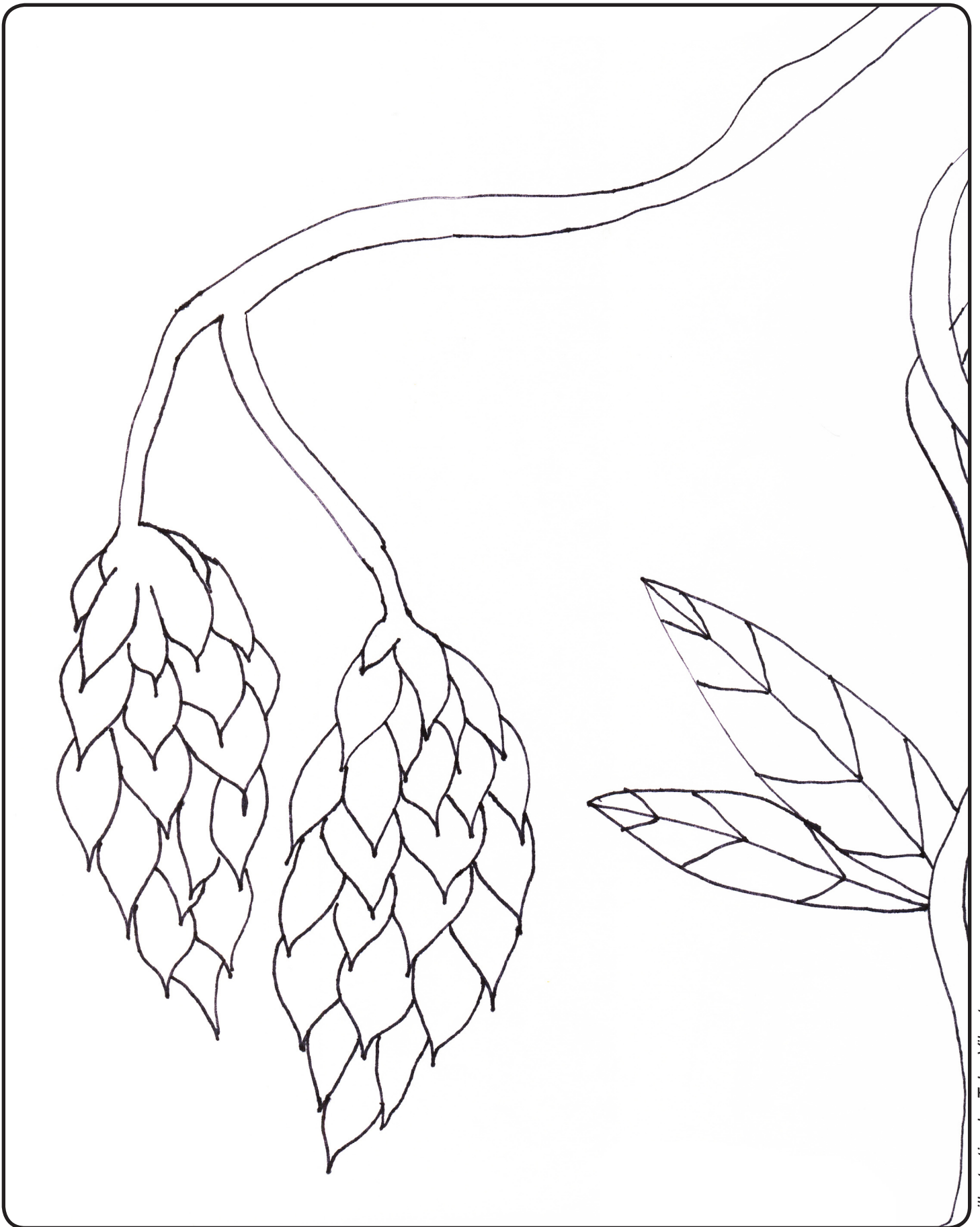


illustration by Tyler Vibert

Hop Plant and Agriculture

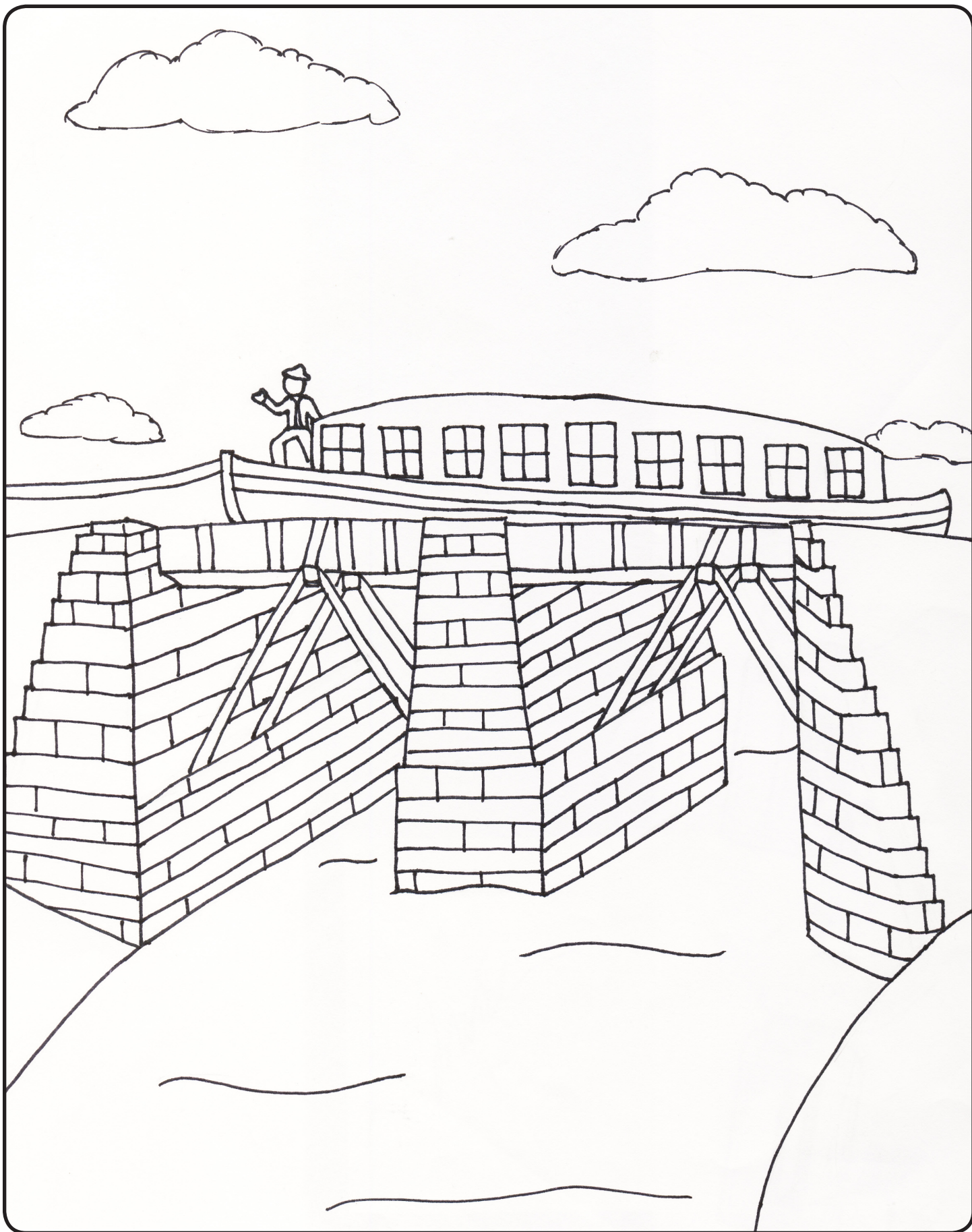


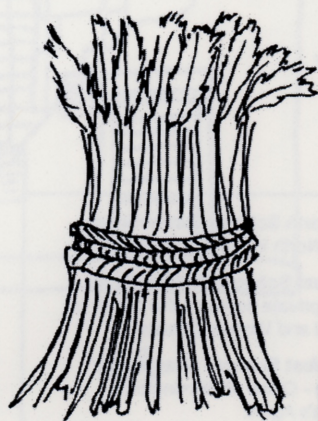
illustration by Rebecca Schultz

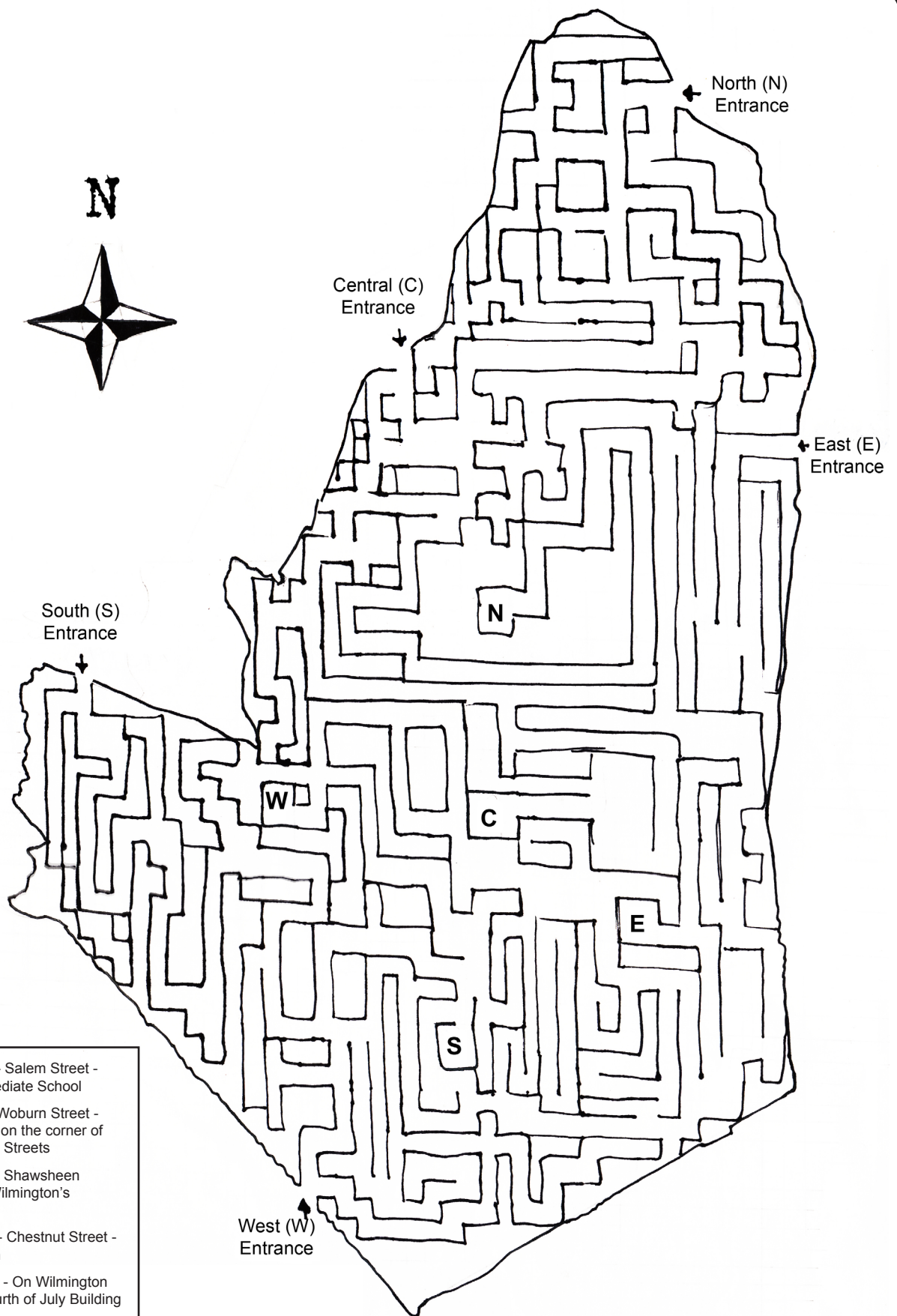
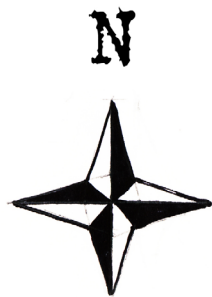
Middlesex Canal



JOSEPH BOND

BAKER.





- N — North School** - Salem Street -
Site of North Intermediate School
- E — East School** - Woburn Street -
Now a private home on the corner of
Federal and Woburn Streets
- W — West School** - Shawsheen
Avenue - Office of Wilmington's
Veteran's Agent
- S — South School** - Chestnut Street -
Food Pantry location
- C — Center School** - On Wilmington
Town Common - Fourth of July Building

Wilmington's Early District Schools Five District Schools

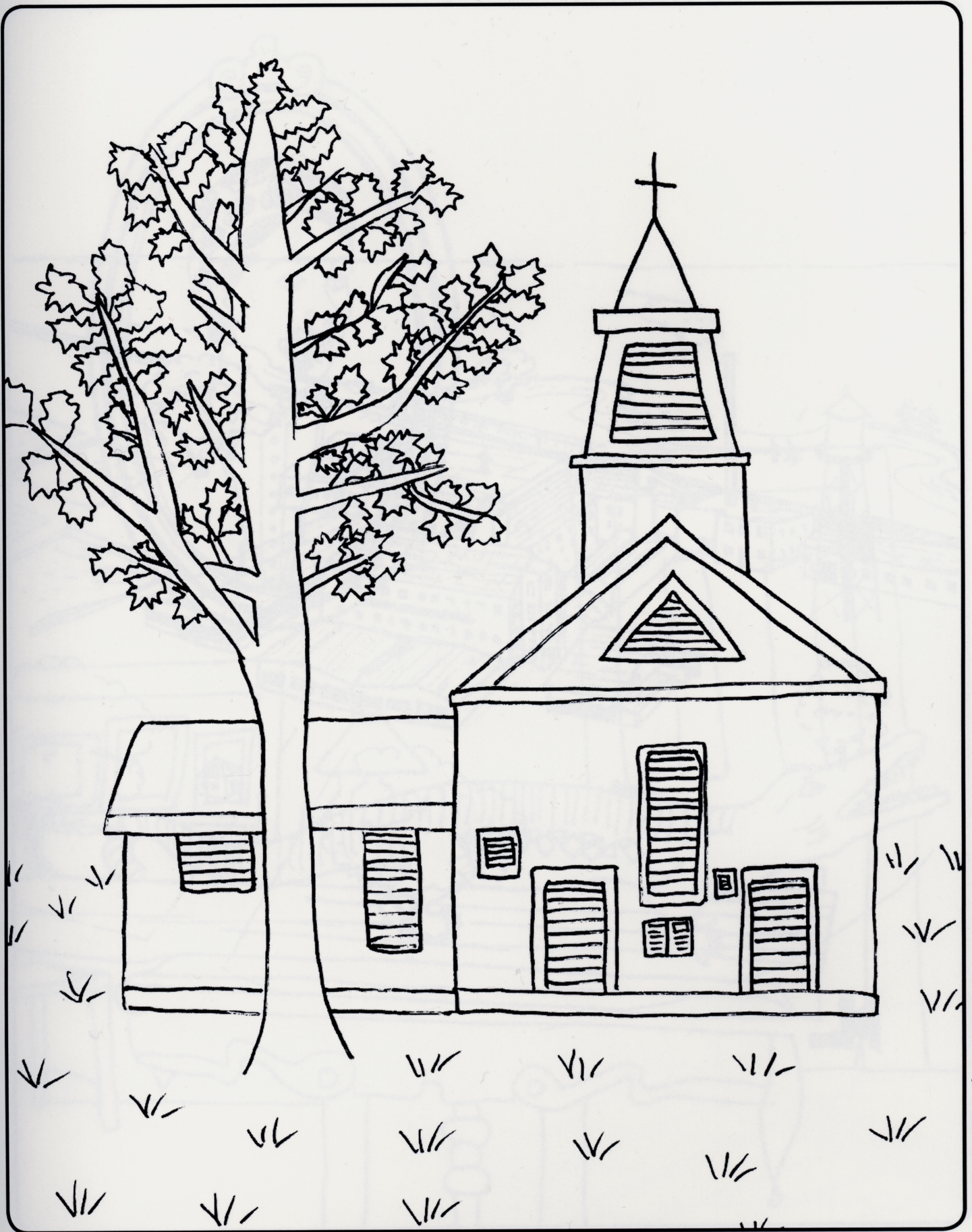
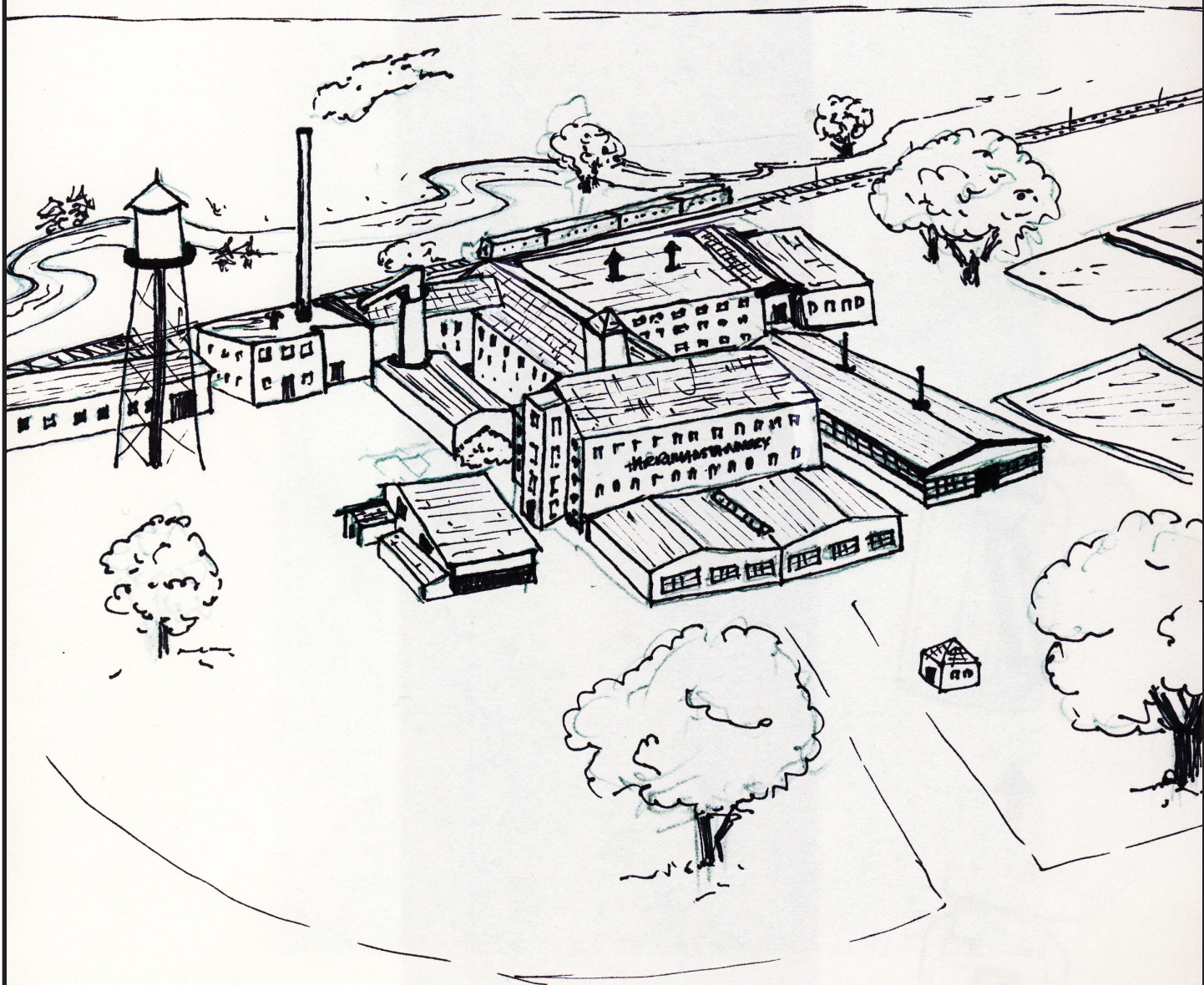
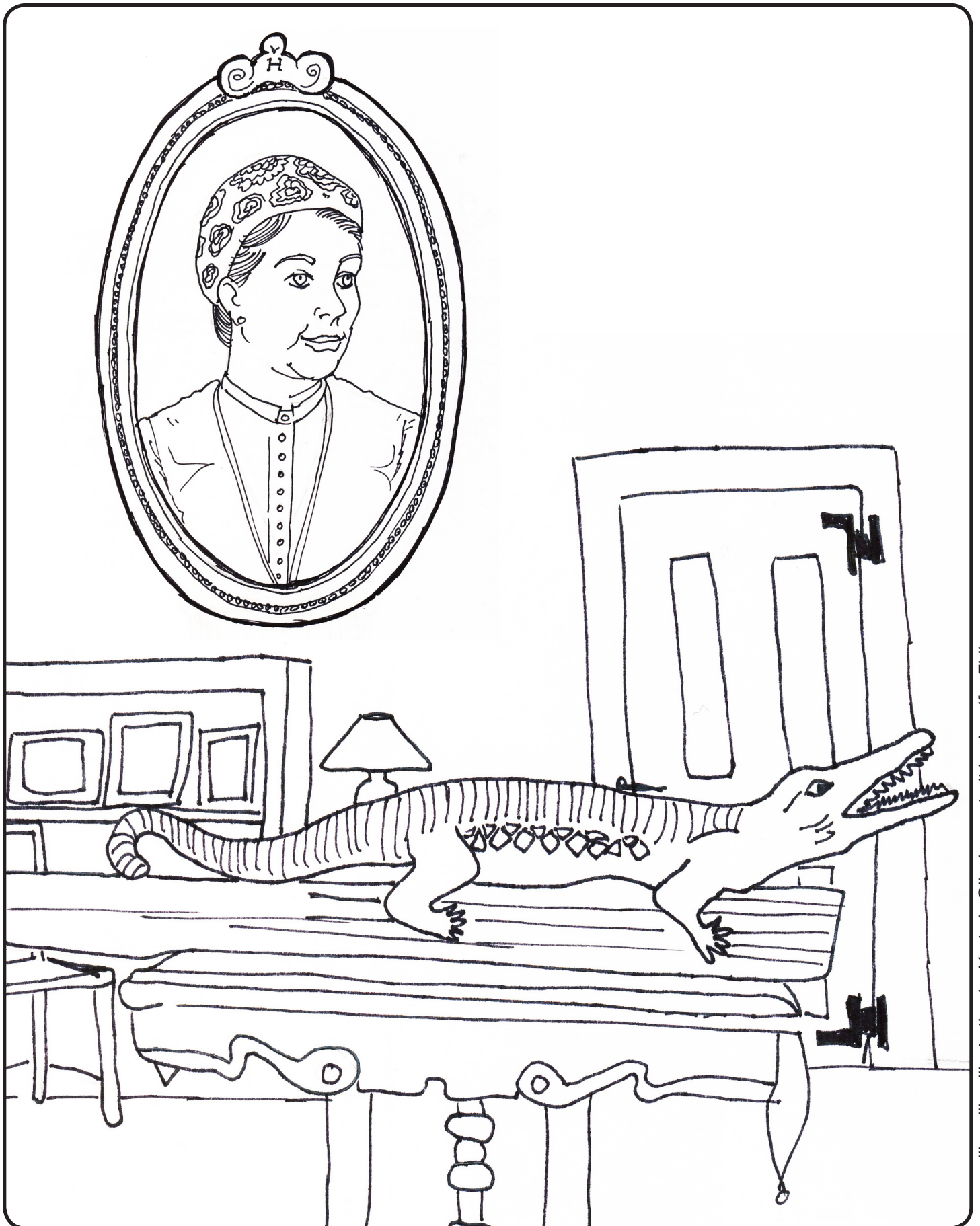


Illustration by Kaitlin Kinsella

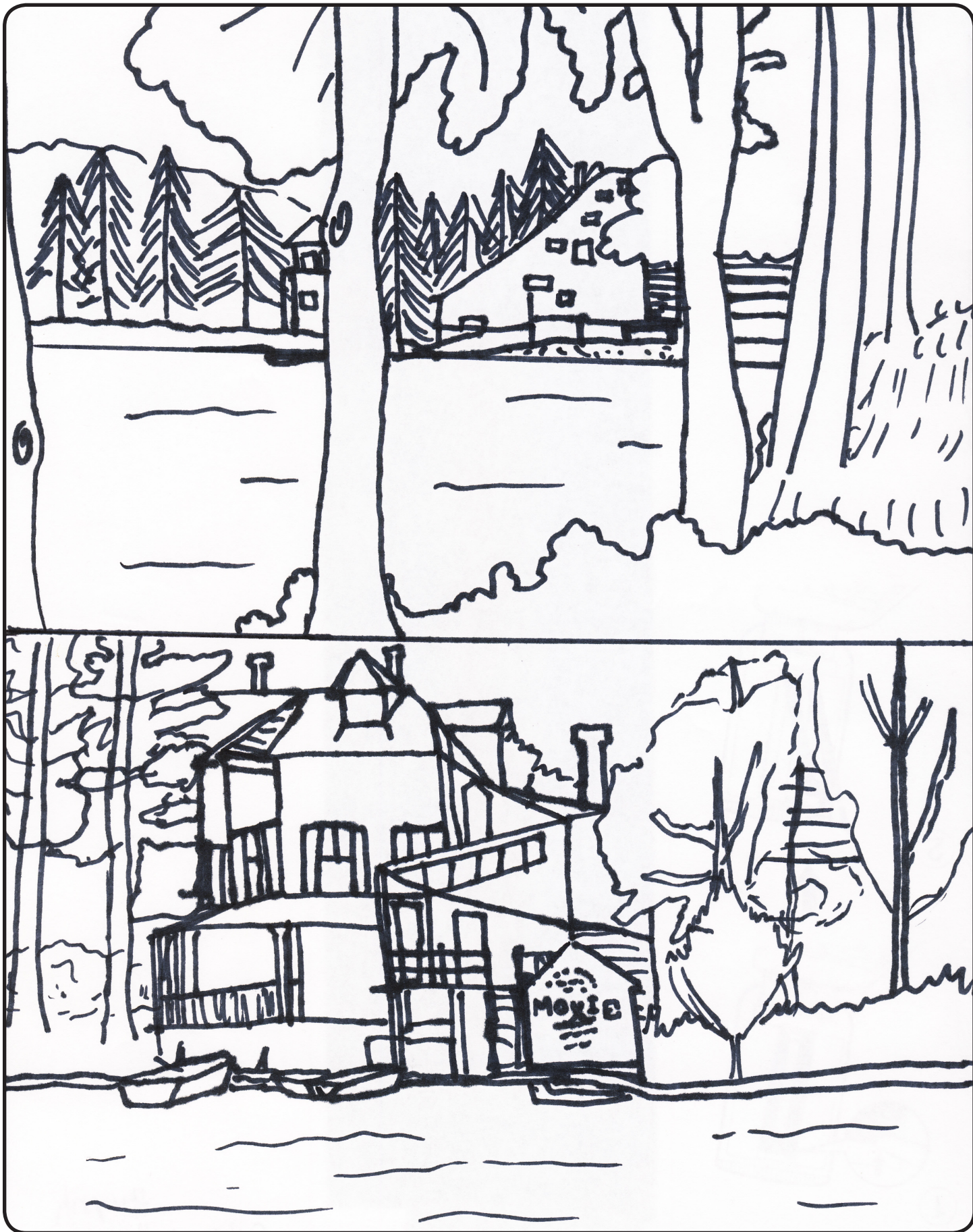
Arts Center (Old Town Hall)





crocodile railing illustration by Vyctoria Oliveira; portrait by Jennifer Fidler

Mrs. Francis Hiller



Ice House on Silver Lake

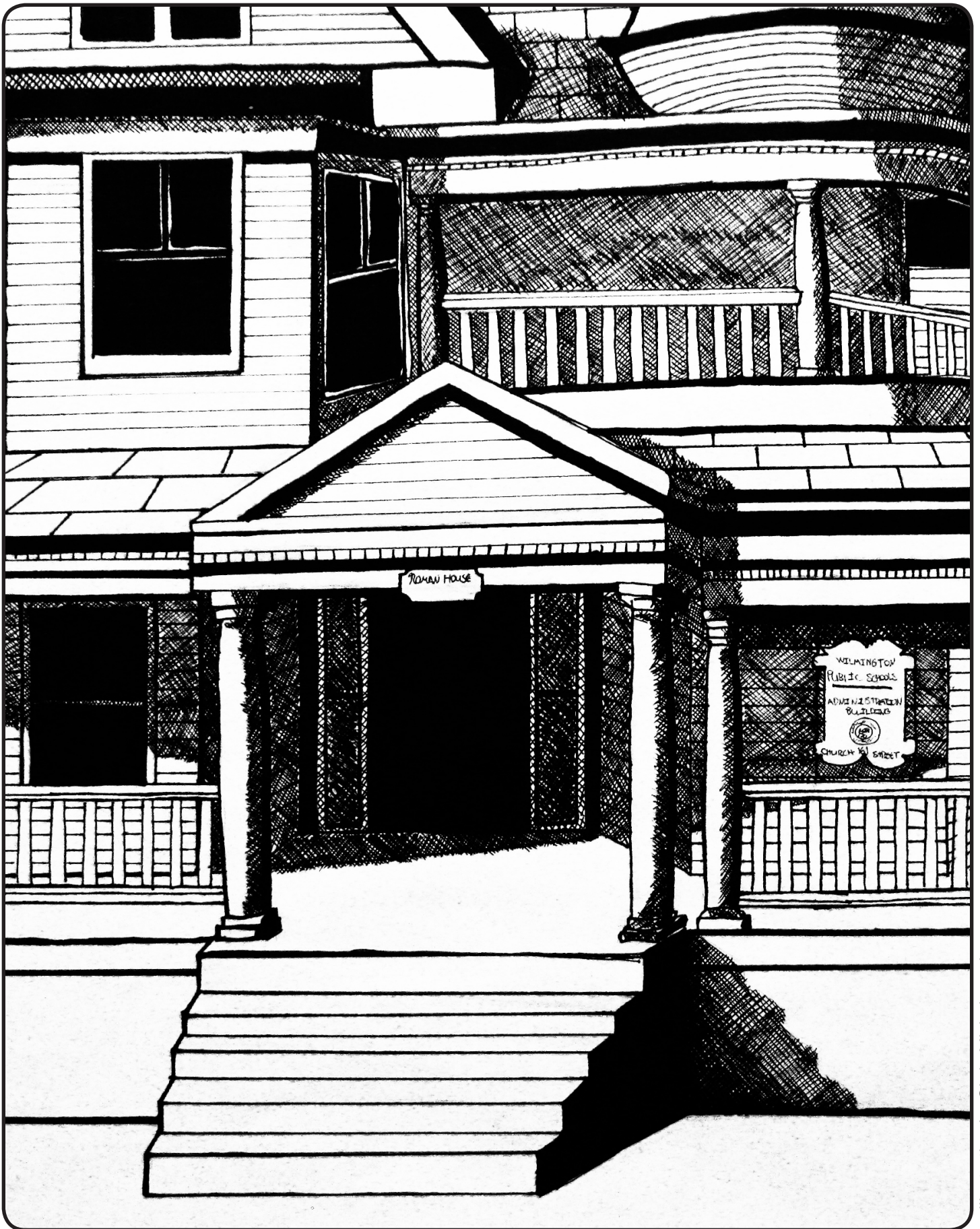


illustration by Chris Michelangelo

Roman House



School Houses of Early 20th Century



illustration by Sam Silva

Wilmington Memorial Library



Illustration by Angela Wang

4th of July Celebration on the Town Common

The History of WILMINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Native Americans in Wilmington — *Page 1*

Capt. Larz Neilson displays his artifacts. Before the Europeans settled New England, Native Americans had many settlements in the area. It is believed that some Native Americans lived at the site of Wilmington's Wildwood School. Capt. Larz Neilson, founder of Wilmington's Town Crier newspaper and local historian, collected arrowheads at the site of the Wildwood School when it was built in the 1950's.

Early European settlers – Buck House — *Page 2*

Ephraim Buck House - the oldest house in Wilmington.

The Buck family was among the earliest settlers in the area that became Wilmington. It is believed that Ephraim Buck built the earliest version of this house around 1671. It is located in an area that used to be called Bucks Corner because many houses in the area were built by the Buck family.

Early European settlers – Butters House — *Page 3*

The William Butters II Farmhouse, a/k/a the Butters-

Avery House. The Butters family was another early settler of the area that became Wilmington and this house was built shortly after the Buck House. William Butters II was one of Wilmington's first selectmen in 1730.

Early European settlers – Harnden Massacre Rock — *Page 4*

Harnden Massacre Rock. Harnden family legend states that members of the Harnden family hid behind this huge boulder around 1707 to escape Native Americans who had attacked the family in retaliation for an earlier attack of the Native Americans by Europeans

Map of Woburn and Reading — *Page 5*

Map of Wilmington. Wilmington was formed in 1730 when residents of portions of Reading and Woburn petitioned the Massachusetts Legislature for permission to create a new town in support of a local meeting house. A few years later a small portion of Billerica was added to form the map of Wilmington that we see today.

Spencer Compton — *Page 6*

Spencer Compton, 1st Earl of Wilmington. The Town of Wilmington, when formed in 1730, was named after this friend of the King of England.

Congregational Church — *Page 7*

Wilmington Congregational Church. Wilmington was formed in 1730 when residents of Woburn and Reading petitioned the General Court of Massachusetts for permission to form their own church. These residents wished to have a church, or meeting house, that was more local to them than the existing meeting houses in Woburn and Reading. Permission was granted and the first church was built at this site in 1733. The current church building is the third on this site and was constructed in 1865 when the previous church building burnt down in a fire at the Bond Cracker Factory.

Town Seal — *Page 8*

Wilmington Town Seal. Created in the late 19th century by Arthur Thomas Bond, local amateur historian and descendant of the Bond Cracker Factory family, the seal depicts the Whitefield Elm, a Wilmington tree that was well known at the time the seal was created. Legend stated that George Whitefield, a famous and controversial 18th century evangelist, preached under this tree when he visited Wilmington.

Minuteman Headquarters — *Page 9*

Wilmington Minutemen of the Seventh Company, Second Middlesex County Regiment of Foot. In 1775 Wilmington joined surrounding communities in forming a special militia to fight the British in the conflict that was brewing between the Colonies and the King of England. The organization that calls itself Wilmington Company of Minutemen today was reactivated in 1968 and consists of reenactors that dress and march in the manner of the original Minutemen

Harnden Tavern — *Page 10*

Col. Joshua Harnden Tavern. Built in the 1770's, Joshua Harnden and family were the first to live in the house. The Harndens were well known in Wilmington as early settlers of the area and founders of the town. In the 1790s Joshua became a selectman of the Town of Wilmington and it is believed that he opened his home as a Tavern at that point. The house was later home to the Brown family for over a century. It is now owned by the Town of Wilmington and serves as the Town Museum.

Baldwin Apple Monument — *Page 11*

Baldwin Apple Monument. First erected in 1895 to commemorate Wilmington's status as the home of the Baldwin Apple, the inscription on this monument was altered in the 1970's to reflect changing ideas about the true origins of the apple. The monument is located immediately adjacent to the William Butters II Farmhouse, believed to be the site of one of the earliest Baldwin Apple trees. The apple became known as the Baldwin Apple in the late 18th century and was named after the prominent engineer Col. Loammi Baldwin who enjoyed the apple and distributed it widely. In the 1800's the Baldwin Apple was widely celebrated as a superior apple.

Hop Plant & Agriculture — *Page 12*

Hop Plant. In the early 19th century Wilmington was known as "hoptown." Conditions in Wilmington were favorable for the growing of this plant and for a while it was very profitable to grow. Unfortunately, hops became so popular to grow that the market became saturated with them and the price dropped dramatically..

Middlesex Canal — *Page 13*

The Middlesex Canal. The Middlesex Canal was built between 1793 and 1803 and was a vitally important transportation route in the days before trains and paved roads. It ran 27 miles and ran through Wilmington as well

as Billerica, Burlington and other surrounding towns. The Canal ceased operating in the later 19th century, but traces of it still can be found today.

Bond Cracker Factory — Page 14

Bond Cracker Factory. From the early 19th century until 1864 Wilmington was home of the Bond Cracker Factory. Joseph Bond Senior, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, founded the factory and his son, Joseph Bond Jr., expanded it. Unfortunately, a fire in 1865 burned down most of the factory as well as Wilmington's Congregational Church. As a result of the fire, production of Bond Crackers moved to Boston and the company went out of business before the end of the 19th century.

Wilmington's Early District Schools — Page 15

Wilmington's Early District Schools. In the early nineteenth century Wilmington had four school districts: North, South, East and West. By 1839 a fifth district was added, the Center District. Facilities in each district consisted of a one room schoolhouse that was used by all elementary grade students. As in other Massachusetts towns, each district was independently run by residents of the district. In 1869 Massachusetts abolished the district school system and control of the schools was given to a town-wide school committee. Eventually larger, more modern schools were built. However, these district school buildings remained in use through the early twentieth century, despite repeated attempts to close them. Four of the five buildings remain standing, but none are now used for education.

Arts Center/Old Town Hall — Page 16

Wilmington Arts Center. Also known as the Old Town Hall. This building was first erected in the 1840's to house the Free Will Baptist Society in Wilmington. In 1865 the building was sold to the Town of Wilmington and served as the Town Hall for over 100 years. It is now the home of the Wilmington Arts Council.

Tannery — Page 17

Harriman and Son Tannery. The tannery in Wilmington was founded by Franklin Perry in 1871 and bore his name for many years. By the early 20th century the tannery was owned and run by Franklin Perry's stepson, Caleb Harriman and Caleb renamed the tannery after himself. A little later it was known as the Harriman and Son Tannery when Caleb's son joined him in the business. An important business in rural Wilmington through the mid-twentieth century, the factory eventually became notorious for the stench coming from it. The tannery closed in the 1950's shortly after the death of Caleb Harriman.

Mrs. Frances Hiller — Page 18

Mrs. Frances Hiller. Mrs. Hiller was a wealthy woman who lived in Wilmington from the 1870's to her death in 1900. Dr. Henry Hiller, her husband, made a fortune selling patent medicine. Mrs. Hiller was well known for her eccentricities. She believed in community beautification and spent much time and money in improving local residential properties, churches and, most importantly, the local cemetery. This alligator was displayed on the handrail of the front hall steps of her home.

Ice House on Silver Lake — Page 19

Silver Lake. Originally known as Sandy Pond, and renamed Silver Lake in the 19th century by an enterprising real estate

developer, the area surrounding Silver Lake became a very popular recreational area in the late 19th century through World War II. After the war, as highways replaced trains and trolleys as the main source of transportation for families looking to vacation, the area became less of a destination for out-of-towners, but still beloved by local residents.

Roman House — Page 20

Hudson Roman House. An example of Queen Ann style architecture, this house was built around 1898 for Charles Hudson. In 1916 the house was bought by Frank Roman, who lived in the house until his death; his widow, Marcy Roman, sold the property to the Town of Wilmington in 1943. The property was designated as the site of the new high school which opened to the public in 1950. For many years the building, with the name shortened to "Roman House" was the Wilmington School Department's district headquarters.

School Houses of Early 20th Century — Page 21

Whitefield School. Built in 1904, four room schoolhouse served as a school for the town's elementary students until 1979. It has been put to various uses by the town since that time. Currently the building is used for storage and the fields behind it are used by the Wilmington Youth Soccer Association.

Swain School. Built in 1914 and known as Wilmington High School until 1950, the name of this building was later changed to "Swain School" after a beloved Wilmington school teacher. After Wilmington built a new high school in 1950, this building remained in use for many years, first as a grade school, then put to other purposes including a period as the home of Wilmington's Food Pantry and WCTV. The building was demolished in 2009.

Mildred Rogers School. Originally known as the Silver Lake School, this school was built in the 1930's to serve elementary students in the Silver Lake area. The School was later renamed the Mildred Rogers School after its principal who died in Boston's Coconut Grove fire in 1942. The school was demolished in the 1980's.

Buzzell School. Built in 1935 and dedicated to the late Dr. Daniel Buzzell – long time Wilmington School Physician and participant in town affairs – this school building was a marvel of modern construction in its time. Used for different grades over the years, it has been the home of Wilmington's Senior Center since the late 1980's.

Wilmington Memorial Library — Page 22

Wilmington Memorial Library. Opened to the public in 1969, the building was the successor to Wilmington's previous library building, currently known as the Fourth of July Building.

4th of July Celebration and/or Town Common — Page 23

The Fourth of July Headquarters. Originally known as the Center Schoolhouse, and from the late 19th century through the mid-20th century as the Wilmington Public Library, this building is now well known throughout the town as the central location and headquarters of Wilmington's beloved Fourth of July celebration. It is also used as a meeting place for different civic organizations.

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