

Oddities we found along the way



- There is a genuine New Haven & Northampton Railroad built, cut-granite wall as a border to the former railroad right-of-way and on the Chestnut Street side as seen here. [CLICK HERE](#) to go to the story about how this came to be here.
- The house sits eight (8') feet away from where the railroad used to pass by.
- The house itself has 9 different roof-lines, reflecting add-ons over the years.
- Four different species of hardwood floors can be seen on the first floor, including a birds-eye maple kitchen floor.
- A small, 12 inch bump-out on the back wall of the garage was installed in the 1930s to accommodate longer cars.
- HGTV came to film a segment of one of their fixer-upper programs, about project here in Northampton. The image to the right is from that video.
- The original three front rooms on the first floor actually had canvas ceilings. These were installed by the railroad as a mitigation offer to prevent cracked ceilings caused by the passing steam trains. How they did this was interesting. First, they nailed up from below, lath strips against the original plaster ceiling to hold the original in place in case of cracks. Then, 3 inches below the original ceiling, they installed the canvas. They nailed in two directions (into the ceiling and the upper reaches of the wall) hundreds of small, broad-headed nails. The resulting ceiling is wrinkle-free, taut, and shows no outward appearance of being anything but a conventional plaster ceiling. These ceilings have held up amazingly well over the past 155+ years. When we came here, there were two canvas ceilings still here. Unfortunately, during the renovations that involved a stronger carrying beam for the second floor, we had to remove the canvas over the living room and install a conventional sheetrock ceiling. The dining room still has a canvas ceiling. You'll never notice it until I point it out. It is



We are the fourth owners of the house

During the Civil War, the Florence Sewing Machine Factory was booming with Army orders for sewing machines. And of course, the Army was recruiting soldiers in the area too. The factory told their department heads that if they stayed with the firm and didn't go off to war, the factory would build each of them a house on Chestnut St.

Nine houses were built—all one and a half stories tall farmhouse style houses. This home was built in 1865, and in 1868, the railroad was built eight feet from this house.

The first FSM employee living here was David Ranney, Superintendent of the Machine Department. Mr. Ranney lived here as a tenant for about 9 years, starting in 1865. Ranney bought the house in 1874 and lived here with his family until his estate sold the house to the Orcutt family in 1900.

The Orcutts were merchants with a hardware store on North Maple Street in Florence that now houses the Florence Hardware store. Two generations of the Orcutt family lived here until 1979, when the daughter of the family died. The image to the right shows the Florence Hardware store, but note above and faded, you'll see the old name, Orcutt & Hussey.



In 1979, 62 Chestnut was sold to the Bandourves family who lived here until 2001, when we bought it.