

Another Venerable Chelmsford Centre Landmark Goes



BLACKSMITH SHOP IN CENTRAL SQUARE,—CHELMSFORD CENTRE.

The purchase of the Dadmun property by George W. Day, recently, will result in still further changing the appearance of Central Square in Chelmsford Centre. A number of changes have taken place there during the past month and now the old blacksmith shop is to be taken down and will be replaced by Mr. Day with a modern business block of stores, which will set on the street line.

The old shop beside the brook has been a picturesque landmark and even those who are glad to see the modernizing of the village buildings, will be sorry to have it taken down.

There seems to be no record of the smith who first operated this shop. It was originally a barn and the old hay loft is still in place. About 1828 it was moved from its site behind the Unitarian church and placed in its present position. In 1840 a Mr. Butterfield owned the shop and in 1842 N. P. Dadmun, (the father of the late Girard P. Dadmun, for a long time Lowell's city clerk,) owned and operated it and the shop remained in the family until the death of Girard P. Dadmun, the present year. E. H. Marshall, father of Eben R. Marshall of South street, was in partnership with Mr. Dadmun, but later the partnership was dissolved and Mr. Marshall travelled, introducing a mechanical device he had patented for resurfacing millstones, a hard and tedious operation which was then done by hand. During Dadmun & Marshall's ownership the shop was enlarged and the story is told that "Grandsire" King Parkhurst, the father of the late "Ed. King" Parkhurst, sawed the shop in two front ridge pole to base without hitting a nail and the shop was made larger by building a new section between the two old ones.

The old forge with its big bellows, that many remember, was taken out several years ago and replaced with a modern small one. An "ox-sling" was also a part of the old equipment now discarded. This was an open stall arrangements with stanchion into which the ox was driven and securely fastened. A side of leather was put around the ox and it was swung off its feet, then as the shoeing was done each hoof was fastened to a side support with a chain. This method was necessary as the oxen, especially the young ones, made the work a dangerous task, by their kicking and thrashing about.

The village blacksmith shop here was a busy place in the early days. Chelmsford was on the stage coach route between New Hampshire and Boston and many a job was necessary for horse and vehicle that travelled the long miles over rough roads. In addition to the regular work of shoeing, the early blacksmith was really a metal worker, making all the tools, the plows, the spades, etc., as well as keeping them in repair as needed. Nails were also a part of his handiwork and so valuable were these hand made nails that they were often willed from father to son, and old buildings, past their usefulness, were often burned to recover the nails.

The first record of a blacksmith in Chelmsford is in 1698 when it was "Voted that Zacrah Richardson of woburn shold have three or four acers of land on condition he come and dwell in our town and follow the trade of a blacksmith" but the site of this shop is unknown.

Since the death of Blacksmith Dadmun the shop has been operated by John Wozencroft, Wilkins, David ley, Henry Hanson, George M. Wright and F. Willis Santamour, the present blacksmith.





