

## *Albion Hotel*

At the site of the G.A.R. Library, there once stood a stately 3-story Federal-style mansion, West Newbury's only structure to rival the grand homes on Newburyport's High Street. It was called many things, but is now best known as the Albion Hotel or Hotel Albion. At the same time the horse-drawn trolley from Haverhill first arrived in Town, stopping at an adjacent car barn/ turnaround, the building became a hotel, on the way to its (in)famous place in Town history.

On December 9, 1816, Daniel Bailey sold land at the corner of Bailey's Lane and Main Street to Joshua Brewster, who with his brother John began a large home, completing two ells to the rear. Just over a year later, Moses Bailey bought the property, the [Newburyport Daily News](#) story being that the Brewsters departed after one had been chased into Canada for past smuggling crimes during the War of 1812. The main block's "interior [was] unfinished and the window casings boarded up" when Captain Daniel Pillsbury acquired it in 1829. Pillsbury completed the house and farmed there until his death in 1841. Pillsbury's son-in-law Daniel Nichols inherited, using the property for farming and, with his son, carriage making until his [death in 1885](#).

In 1886, Nichols' estate sold part of the land to the Haverhill & Groveland Street Railway Co., and part to [Charles Clay](#), who remodeled and expanded the building, making it into a hotel. The [Daily News](#) said Clay ran a "first class hotel." But not for long. Clay sold the hotel to Thomas Short in 1892; within a year the [Daily News](#) reported a liquor raid at the Nichols House.

Liquor loomed large: "whether we will allow free rum to destroy our whole moral society" was posited as the pressing contemporary question in a March 1882 edition of the Amesbury [Weekly News](#). Continuing, the correspondent from Merrimacport claimed "a right to find fault with our neighbors in West Newbury, Amesbury and Salisbury, for we suffer from the influences and terrors of those vile dens within these borders."

The Albion Hotel lay not only at the end of the trolley line, but also in the cross hairs of a growing prohibitionist movement—whose motivating forces included women's advocacy, but now are attributed largely to [anti-immigrant sentiments](#). Attacking demon rum was a way to attack foreigners ([Catholics, Irish,](#)

[and Germans](#) holding different, European, sensibilities about alcohol) without calling them by name. West Newbury's stepping off place for thirsty out-of-towners—as well as locals, not least the [Myopia Hunt](#), midnight [sleigh ride parties](#), and [G.A.R. reunions](#)—was the Albion Hotel.

Harry E. Shute, a Bailey descendent whose Uncle Joseph and Aunt Harriet Shute were [respected townspeople](#), became the Albion's manager in the late 1890s. Shute had managed a restaurant in Haverhill, and enjoyed success as a [caterer](#), known for his [oyster suppers](#). After an arsonist [burned down the stables](#) in 1898, then-owner James Short sold out to Shute.

Removing Shute from the Albion, whether by means of incarceration (preferred), financial ruin, or forced contractual banishment, became a primary mission of West Newbury's police. After a [raid in 1902](#), Shute was fined \$100 each for "maintaining a liquor nuisance" (two bottles of lager beer) and "illegal keeping" (evidence as to late guests). Another [raid in 1908](#) "created much hard feeling among the citizens of the town one faction of which sided with Shute and the other with the authorities. A petition was signed by the selectmen and many prominent citizens and Shute was let off with a fine of \$200" plus [forfeiture of his slot machine](#). Thereupon "a special police officer of West Newbury ... brought suit for slander against Harry Shute, [placing] an attachment of \$10,000 upon the real estate of the latter." Another raid in 1910 resulted in a [judicial reprimand](#) admonishing the police (who were infuriated he had only been fined—not jailed) that they could not legally coerce Shute into signing an agreement to cease doing any business in Town.

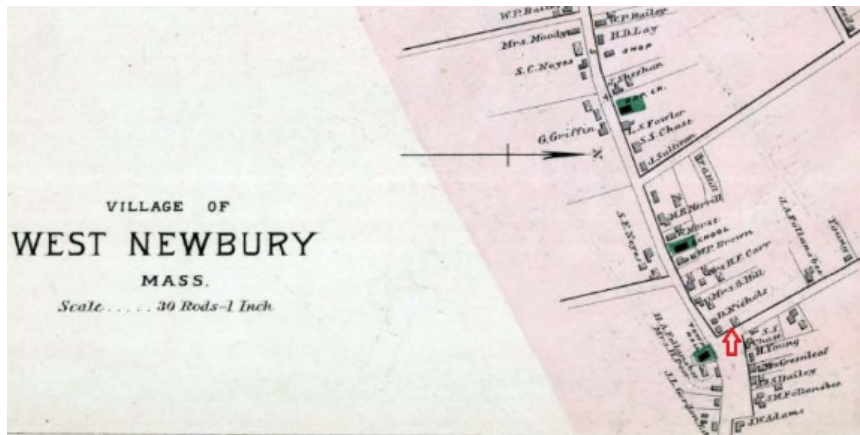
After Harry Shute [died unexpectedly](#) of blood poisoning in 1911, the hotel passed through several hands. It became the Rogers Inn when Charles Rogers purchased it in 1914. Liquor raids proceeded apace, now with full [support of the Town](#). Rogers fled after a [final raid](#) on March 29, 1915, in which attempts to destroy evidence were foiled as police deployed cans to catch beer pouring out the rainspout. [Just days before](#), the [Emery Sisters](#) had purchased the property. They demolished the hotel in February 1916, shortly after the Town [failed to accept](#) their gift of the land with a new library building. In 1937, the [Town agreed](#) to take their gift of a library (completed in 1939) at the site.

Albion Hotel

Source: [West Newbury website](#)



Hotel Albion



1884 Map—Nichols property at red arrow

## BEER TURNED DOWN THE WATER SPOUT

West Newbury Officers, in Raid on the Rogers Inn, Detected Attempt to Destroy the Evidence.

West Newbury, March 29.—Rogers, officer held his hands over the spout while others secured tin cans and a quantity of liquor secured in a very unique manner. The doors of the inn were locked and those inside refused to open them.

Just as the police were about to force an entrance a strong odor of liquor was detected and in going around the hotel the officers found the liquor running down the rain spout in the rear of the hotel. One

The proprietor, Charles S. Rogers, left with his wife Saturday morning and has not been located since. He has an appealed case as the result of a former raid which is to come up in April. This will make two cases within a few months.

[Newburyport Daily News 3/29/1915](#)

had to give it up.

## SUES FOR \$10,000.

Another Outcome of the West Newbury Liquor Trade.

Zennie Willis, a special police officer of West Newbury, has brought suit for slander against Harry Shute, the proprietor of the Hotel Albion of that town, and has placed an attachment of \$10,000 upon the real estate of the latter through his attorney, William J. McDonald of Haverhill. The case will be heard before the superior court at its sitting in Salem, which comes in on the first Monday in February.

The suit is the outcome of the raid, made by the police authorities of the suburban town upon the premises of Harry Shute a short time ago, when liquor was found and the proprietor placed under arrest and eventually tried in the court in this city. The raid created much hard feeling among the citizens of the town one faction of which sided with Shute and the other with the authorities. A petition was signed by the selectmen and many prominent citizens and Shute was let off with a fine of \$200.

The matter has been the chief topic of conversation and Willis, who took a prominent part in the raid, claims he was made an object of the scorn of the Shute faction. As a result of statements alleged to have been made by Shute during the progress of the trial, Willis now brings suit in the sum named for slander.

[Newburyport Daily News 1/21/1908](#)

## SHUTE WAS FINED \$100 FOR SELLING

West Newbury Hotel Case Heard in Court at Haverhill Yesterday.

Judge Winn Wouldn't Sanction Any Agreement Proposed By Constables.

Judge Winn announced in no uncertain terms from the bench of the district court in Haverhill yesterday morning that while he was sitting he would be the one to impose penalties, not allowing counsel to dictate them. He also told Attorney McDonald, representing the chief of police of West Newbury that he would not allow a defendant to sign any agreement to refrain from doing whatever business the law allowed him to do and ordered a clause to that effect stricken from an agreement entered into by Harry E. Shute, charged with illegal keeping of liquor, suing Shute \$100 on the complaint, however.

When the Shute case was called the

[Newburyport Daily News 12/31/1909](#)