

## Volunteers of the Month – Fred D. Berry

by Bernie Michel

This month's Volunteer to be appreciated is Fred D. Berry, an Asylum Hill resident for many years, and one whose efforts for Asylum Hill and all of Hartford spanned decades while being unknown to most everyone. If you're caught by his photo then you'll appreciate that Fred D. Berry did something none of us could do, he took photographs of buildings, homes, mansions and barns between 1880 and 1929, the year of his death.

It must be remembered that photography at that time was a rather expensive hobby, and that's what it was for Fred D. Berry. His day job was serving as Secretary of the Water Board, or before that as an employee of the Water Department. Most amazingly, if you search Fred D. Berry in the Hartford Courant in newspapers.com as I have, you will find his name mentioned more than 200 times, nearly every one in regard to his work with the Water board. The only clue that he did anything else is one photograph of his that was an interior portrait of The Camera Club of Hartford from 1880.

His obituary lists no family, only friends and fellow workers at the Water Board.

The reason we have these photos is because they were the property of Samuel Taylor, a well to do banker in Hartford. The article about the collection in the January 6<sup>th</sup> Hartford Courant speaks of the more than 200 glass plate negatives and prints that were the property of Samuel Taylor's two daughters Mary and Ada Louise. Mary got the negatives, and Ada got the prints, and in the end, The Connecticut State Library got the negatives and the Connecticut Historical Society got the prints.

There are still six prints of homes in Asylum Hill, however none are of his own home at 46 Willard St, which is now the site of the Regency Place Apartments.

It's also worth noting, that in the full-page article in the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1957 article about the discovery of these historic photos and negatives, his name is mentioned only once.

More information on this subject can be found at Newspapers.com and

<https://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org>

