

From Sarah Brown McCulloch's *Guilford: A Walking Guide* (2012):

**Abel Chittenden, 1 Broad Street, Federal, 1804, porch restored.**

This house stands on the homelot of William Chittenden, one of Guilford's founders and brother-in-law of Henry Whitfield's wife, Dorothy. Abel was the seventh generation to live here. Except for a twelve-year interval, Chittendens owned this land for 329 years, from 1639 to 1968. The house, a fine example of the Federal style, is thought to have been built by Abraham Coan, Guilford's first known builder-architect; its Palladian window was an elegant novelty at the time. After Abel's death in 1816, his widow, in financial straits, sold the house to Danforth Nettleton, who built the handsome and unusual fence. Notice that it seems to have no supporting posts; instead iron rods designed to look like pickets, set in periodically among the wooden ones, keep it upright. Soon after the sale, Abel's son Simeon moved to New York where in due course he made a fortune in the dry-goods trade and in 1851 bought back the ancestral homelot and later the property next door (No. 29). He named his house "Cranbrook" after the town in Kent his ancestors had come from, and over the years transformed both lots into an imposing summer estate with landscaped grounds, a fountain, and a deer park later given over to peacocks. Out back he built a granite water tower and windmill to supply water for the fountain, two fine barns (the small board-and-batten one in the 1850s the grander one next door in the 1880s — see No. 29), and a charming Gothic bowling alley barely visible from the road. He also put a Queen Anne porch across the front of the house (later removed: the present doorway may belong to the Colonial Revival period) and added a wing to the rear containing a ballroom. Guilford had never seen anything like it!

The water tower, known as Cranbrook Tower, is best seen from River Street where the stone gate still stands. A Romanesque doorway opens to an iron stair that winds up around a 4000-gallon, hand-riveted tank. The windmill was removed after the town established its own water system. During World War II and in 1955 the tower was again in use as an aircraft warning Station, manned day and night by volunteers. Now closed and unused, the high stone tower remains a Guilford landmark.