



"Wayside," built in Rockdale in 1827.

*Ashton Place* is located on what was once the home of Paul Whitin. Wayside

Manor was built in 1827 and was the very first of the great houses to be built in the Valley. For those of you who are not aware of the history of Northbridge the Whitin family brought the village of Northbridge into the industrialized revolutionary era. It was during this period that the

Whitin family established itself as the major force in Northbridge's economy. The family eventually owned and operated the two principal industries in town; textile manufacturing and the manufacture of textile machinery.

The Whitin brothers expanded their textile holdings in Northbridge and the surrounding towns by purchasing mills. The first was the financially troubled Northbridge Cotton Manufacturing Company mill, acquired in 1831. In 1845 they built the stone mill in Whitinsville, and in 1849 they purchased the Crown and Eagle mills in North Uxbridge and the water privilege at Linwood, where a mill was erected in 1865. The Whitin brothers acquired a mill at Riverdale and the burned-out mill and north at Rockdale in 1856, which they promptly rebuilt. The Rockdale Mills, initially erected in 1814 and 1830, burned in 1840 and 1846, but were rebuilt by Sylvanus Holbrook. Another fire in 1851 destroyed the mills and a number of dwellings, and the site remained unused until the Whitins built a stone mill in 1856.

By the middle of the 19th Century, the Rockdale Mills brought an increase in mill workers with their families, and the small Catholic Community started to grow. As the years passed on and the Whitins continued to add to the mills, more and more families moved into Rockdale Village. In 1901 the parish of St. Peter's got its first appointed full-time pastor.

Wayside Manor, until the construction of Beaumont, was home to the Whitins who lived in Rockdale. Beaumont, home of Paul Whitin IV, was built on a hill where the existing Whitin estate overlooked their mill below. In 1909 Beaumont construction began, having been designed by Paul Whitin IV for his upcoming marriage.

Wayside, which was located at the bottom of the hill, was taken down in the 1980's.