

# The Bemis Block



Postcard view of the Bemis Block, c. 1920. Carter's first mill is across the street.

This ornate Victorian business block was built in 1875. The lower floor was occupied by retail businesses, including a pharmacy, and a paper box company. The upper floors were used as meeting rooms for fraternal organizations, worship services, and a branch of the Library.

Around 1880, the Block was the target of an attempted arson. Local merchant Oliver Crisp went into the building one night around 8:00 pm to fetch dishes for a Sons of Temperance dinner. He found a burning candle, set atop a barrel full of kerosene-soaked rags and surrounded by matches and paper-box rubbish. Once the candle burned down, the matches would have fired and set the barrel and paper on fire, destroying the building. Crisp put out the candle and then called Selectman Mark Lee (also at the dinner) and the two men kept watch into the night. Several times during their watch, a muffled man in a buggy drove by. He was never identified. The building was later turned into apartments for Carter's workers. It was torn down in 1934, replaced by the current one-story space for retail – including the legendary (and much-missed) store, Calvert's.