

# Davis C. Mills House (1834)



A View of Central Avenue, painted by Timothy Newell Smith around 1860.  
The Davis Mills house and barn are at the right edge.

Like the Whitney House next door, the Davis Mills house was built in the early part of the 19th century, at a time when residential building in the town center was beginning to accelerate. This land was controlled by the Parish and had only recently made available for building. It was valued and prestigious – close by the Church and roads, in the center of town life.

Davis Mills was a butcher, and the large barn beside his house held his livestock and shop. His property included not only his home site fronting on Central Avenue, but probably considerable grazing acreage behind it on North Hill. He also served the town as Selectman and Assessor. He was one of three brothers; the other two – John Mills, and Matthias Mills – ran a profitable business making glue out of the remnants (bones, hides, hoofs) of brother Davis' slaughterhouse.

All three brothers built their houses in this neighborhood around 1834, when they married. Two of the houses are still standing – the Davis Mills House here, and the Matthias Mills House, which was moved to 1147 Central Avenue in 2005 as the Needham History Center & Museum. John Mills' house was demolished in 2020.