

Green Kendrick

1798 - 1873

"He was devoted to Waterbury business interests, its institutions, its public works, its churches, its library, yes and its streets and trees."

- Waterbury Republican

Green Kendrick, who would have widespread influence in the industrial and political areas of his adopted City of Waterbury, was born in Mecklenberg County, North Carolina on April 1, 1798. He received a common school education and although he never attended college, he vigorously pursued academics. Throughout his life, he was admired for his scholarship, his powerful intellect and as an acute thinker. At about age 22, Kendrick worked as a salesman in Charlotte where he met his future wife, Anna Leavenworth, the daughter of Mark Leavenworth, the famous clockmaker of Waterbury.

Kendrick moved to Waterbury in 1829 and joined Leavenworth in his business. Later, as Leavenworth & Kendrick, they were among the first to manufacture gilt buttons, an industry which laid the foundation for Waterbury's brass industry. He then organized the Waterville Mfg. Co. to produce pocket cutlery, the Oakville Pin Co, the American Suspender Co., and obtained controlling interest in Rogers & Brother. He promoted manufacturing and trade while being involved in many businesses. In 1837 he helped pass a law that gave a stimulus to all industries in the state by providing for easy organization of stock companies. Kendrick aided in establishing Waterbury's first bank and was in the vanguard pushing for the construction of the Naugatuck Railroad.

A member of the Whig party, he was elected to the State House of Representatives in 1845, 1848, 1854, and 1856. In 1851 he was elected Lieutenant Governor and in a vote by the legislature, came within one ballot of being chosen Governor. In 1854 and 1856 he was made Speaker of the House. He next joined the Democrats, serving in the State Senate in 1864 and in the House in 1872. At the end of his career he outgrew the bondage of party politics and worked for conciliation and cooperation.

He was a public spirited man concerned with the material and intellectual development of Waterbury. Kendrick, whose mansion still faces the Green on West Main Street, provided the impetus to transform that "bog" into a tree-lined park and, in 1853, he drew up the charter which launched Waterbury as a City. He raised money



for the construction of the First Congregational Church even though he was not a member. While considering himself a Christian, he could never reconcile his beliefs with the tenets of any organized religion. He helped found Riverside Cemetery, was Chairman of its Board and delivered the dedication address. Education was a chief concern of his and he promoted the idea of "education for the masses". He was also a member of the Library Board of Agents and the Board of Education.

Green Kendrick, whose son and grandson became mayors of Waterbury, died on August 28, 1873. The man after whom Kendrick Avenue is named was, as the Waterbury American stated, "...one of those noble pioneers who aided in laying the foundations of the future greatness and prosperity of our City, names which Waterbury cannot too much honor."