

“for one thousand pounds of powder previously manufactured by them.” Theirs was probably the first powder mill erected in the State, though Colonel Pitkin, of East Hartford, built one about the same time. On April 29th, 1776, permit was given to Adam Babcock, of New Haven, to purchase of Elderkin & Wales 200 pounds of powder for his privateer, then fitting out. The earliest order found on Col. Pitkin for powder was June 28th, 1776. Governor Trumbull, in a letter to Congress, states that the Willimantic and Hartford powder mills were both in full operation previous to June 4th, 1776, and that another one was nearly completed. The Willimantic mill continued to furnish large quantities of powder until December 13, 1777, when it blew up, killing Boswell Moulton, one of the workmen, a young man aged about 22 years. The works were pretty thoroughly destroyed and the mill was never rebuilt so far as is known. The powder made here greatly aided the colonies in their struggle, and the New London paper in announcing the destruction of the works, December 19, says: “Amongst other obstacles to impede our success, last Friday, the powder mill at Windham blew up.” The difficulties in the way of starting a new manufactory of the kind, at such short notice—of procuring machinery, material and skilled workmen—was very great indeed, and that they were so successfully overcome in such a short period of time we think is due in a great measure to the enterprise and energy of Col. Elderkin.” The purchase of the site for the powder mill included the grain and saw mill near by, which were owned by Colonel Elderkin at his death.

Colonel Elderkin is deserving honorable mention for his experiments in the manufacture of silk. It is a matter of regret that so little is known in regard to his efforts and success in this, then untried, branch of industry. But that he made a determined effort in this direction at an early day and achieved a measure of success is certain. It seems that in