

# Historic Salem incorporated

7 CAMBRIDGE STREET SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS 01970 / PHONE (508) 745-0799

5 Bott's Court

Built c. 1783 for James Bott, Sadler and Chaisemaker

The "Middle House" of the Bott Family

## History of the Property:

The house bearing the current address 5 Bott's Court sits on the border of the large seventeenth-century lot of John Croade, Salem merchant, and a small strip of land which Croade and his neighbor Robert Kitchen sold to Joseph Neale, joiner, in 1724 (Essex County Register of Deeds, Book 43, leaves 240 and 290; see inserted "Part of Salem in 1700" from The Essex Antiquarian, Vol. IV, 1900). In the early eighteenth century the Pickering family, whose "mansion house" was (and still is) located on nearby Broad Street (then referred to as the "highway") and lands extended to present-day Chestnut Street, began acquiring properties bordering the "high" or "main" street, later designated Essex Street. Captain William Pickering built a small house on the corner of the main street and the Neale lot, but most of the eighteenth-century deeds refer to the newly-acquired Pickering property between Essex and Chestnut streets as "marsh" land. Several nineteenth-century manuscripts in the Essex Institute's collection refer to the punt that was kept at "Bradshaw's Gutter", the previous

name of Bott's Court, so that residents of the neighborhood could easily cross the marsh that lay between Essex and Chestnut streets (Lee Mss. in Essex Institute; also see R.H. Wiswall, "Notes on the Building of Chestnut Street", Essex Institute Historical Collections 75 (1939): 203-33).

James Bott, sadler, "chaise-maker" and later merchant, acquired the Pickering property adjoining the passage that would later bear his name in 1781 and 1782 (E.C.R.D. Book 138, leaf 267; Book 139, leaf 147). William Pickering had bequeathed substantial Salem properties to his sons John and William Jr. in the former year, but as both sons lived out of state they sold off their inheritances. Bott had emigrated from Tudbury, England, in 1768 and established his business directly across Essex Street from Bradshaw's Gutter on the site of the former West Estate "at the sign of the Saddle". He quickly achieved a reputation for his fancy carriages, which he made in the latest English styles, and bought more land on the West Estate to expand his business. Bott married into the Hathorne family of Salem soon after his arrival in Salem, and his purchase of the Pickering properties across the street coincides with the expansion of both his business and his family. The existing Pickering house at the corner of Essex Street and Bradshaw's Gutter was purchased for the business, while 5 Bott's Court appears to have been built as a family residence c. 1783. It would have possessed little commercial utility as it was situated on the marsh rather than the "main street".

By 1800 the Botts had transformed Bradshaw's Gutter into a de

facto "Bott's Court" and a near-contemporary noted that "the two houses on either corner of Bott's Court [and Essex Street] belonged to some of the Bott family" (Oliver Thayer, "Early Recollections of the Upper Portion of Essex Street", Essex Institute Historical Collections 21 (1884): 211-224). Deeds to properties further along the Gutter/Court, the present-day 8 and 6 Bott's Court, assert that the respective premises "came to said heirs....by the will of James Bott" and "formerly belonged to James Bott" (E.C.R.D. Book 558, leaves 143-144; E.C.R.D. Book 749, leaf 113). When Chestnut Street was laid out at the turn of the nineteenth century, the Botts built the second house on the new street, then referred to as the "house on the marsh" but presently 18 Chestnut Street, and took up residence there.

5 Bott's Court remained the property of the extended Bott family for most of the nineteenth century, and various property and testamentary records begin to refer to it as the "middle house" from as early as 1807 (E.C.R.D. Book 184, leaf 87; E.C.R.D. Book 269, leaves 230-231; E.C.R.D. Book 276, leaf 178; E.C.R.D. Book 346, leaves 45-46). The present-day 7 Bott's Court, also a Bott property, was still situated on Essex Street so there was only one "middle house".

James Bott Sr. died in 1829 at the venerable age of 84, leaving his properties on and around Bott's Court to his many heirs. Both the "house on the marsh" and the "middle house" were bequeathed to his numerous grandchildren, most of which were minors at the time and the children of the deceased James Bott Jr. and Lynch Bott, who was then a successful Salem ship captain (E.C.R.D. Book 276, leaf 178; E.C.R.D.

Book 346, leaves 45-46). It was customary to bequeath "parts" or interests in properties rather than entire estates at the time, so it is unclear who owned the majority of the middle house for a brief period, but by 1834 Priscilla Bott, widow of James Jr. and mother and guardian of the heirs John Bott, Stacy Bott, and Francis Bott, took possession of the house (E.C.R.D. Book 276, leaf 178). Ten years later, John Bott, blacksmith, purchased a fifth part of the property from his Gloucester cousin, yet another James Bott (E.C.R.D. Book 346, leaves 45-46). The Salem Directories record John Bott as living, but not working, on Bott's Court up to 1850. After that year the middle house came into the possession of another Bott grandchild, heir, and part-owner, Thomas Ferguson, a cordwainer who also possessed some of the Bott properties across the Court (E.C.R.D. Book 269, leaves 230-231; E.C.R.D. Book 749, leaf 119). In 1861 Ferguson sold the property to Charles D. Mugford, merchant, who also owned the present-day 7 Bott's Court. (E.C.R.D. Book 619, leaf 140). The "middle house" returned to the extended Bott family in 1869 when Betsy Bott Mugford purchased it and other properties on Bott's Court and Essex Street from the heirs of Charles Mugford (E.C.R.D. Book 781, leaves 230-231).

At some point between 1869 and 1874, Betsy Bott Mugford died and bequeathed the "middle house" to her nephew John Safford, whose family would reside at 5 Bott's Court at separate intervals up to 1921. The Saffords were descendants of the patriarch James Bott, as was Frances Browne, the executrix of Betsy Mugford's will and owner of 18 Chestnut Street. In 1886 Mrs. Brown purchased 5 Bott's Court from John Safford, and she latter added 7 Bott's Court to her properties (E.C.R.D. Book

1191, pages 286-288; the inserted Maps of Salem in 1874 and 1897 indicate the transfers of property). Despite the 1886 sale, Mrs. Alice Safford continued to reside at 5 Bott's Court according to the Salem Directories for 1881-1891. From thenceforth, the house was leased to William C. Wheeler, driver for his father's "livery, hack, and boarding stable" on Sewall Street in Salem (1893-97), Mrs. Emma E. Ham and Miss Mary Wilson (1898-1902), Miss V.M. Manassa (1904-1911), and R.C. MacKintire, "collector" (1912-1914). Mrs. Alice Safford returned to 5 Bott's Court in late 1914, after a life interest in the property was bequeathed to her by Frances Brown, but she either died or leased it to J. Frank Dalton, a real estate and insurance agent with offices at 218 Essex Street, from 1915 to 1921 (Salem Directories; see the inserted 1914 "Plan of Land in Salem, belonging to Alice L. Safford et als.").

5 Bott's Court left the possession of the Bott descendants in late 1921 when John Safford, guardian of Sarah Browne Safford, to which the "middle house" was ultimately bequeathed by Frances Brown, sold it to Nathaniel and Mary Sanders of Haverhill. Additional property which now constitutes the courtyard in front of 5 Bott's Court was also transferred to the Sanders family at this time (E.C.R.D. Book 2505, pages 448-449). Nathaniel and Mary Sanders owned and lived in the house for only a year, after which it was sold to Francis T. and Hildred Parker (E.C.R.D. Book 2540, page 459). Mr. Parker was the Secretary of Parker Brothers, Inc. in Salem. The Parkers possessed 5 Bott's Court until Mrs. Parker's death in 1985, after which her executors, the Naumkeag Trust Company, sold the property to Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Bunting (E.C.R.D. Book 7793, page 114). The Buntings sold

5 Bott's Court to its present owners, James and Victoria MacMillan, in late 1989 (E.C.R.D. Book 10252, page 413).

**Documentation:**

**Essex County Register of Deeds Book 43, leaves 240 ,270, 290**

**Grantor:** John Croade

**Grantee:** Joseph Neale, Joiner

**Consideration:** paid

**Conveyance of:** land adjoining "Main Street", Croade's land, and estates of Robert Kitchen and John Pickering

**Dates recorded:** Sept. 14, 1724, Oct. 7 & 12, 1724

**E.C.R.D. Book 138, leaf 267**

**Grantor:** John Pickering, Yeoman, of Richmond, Vermont

**Grantee:** James Bott, Sadler

**Consideration:** £250 Lawful Money

**Conveyance of:** a certain messuage and an acre and a half of land on the "Main street", adjoining lands of Osborne, Pickering and Widow Adams.

**Date recorded:** October 29, 1781.

**E.C.R.D. Book 139, leaf 147**

**Grantor:** William Pickering, Yeoman, of New Hampshire

**Grantee:** James Bott, Sadler

**Consideration:** paid

**Conveyance of:** lands on "Main Street" left to him by his father William, bordering Pickering property to the south.

**Date recorded:** June 25, 1782

**E.C.R.D. Book 184, leaf 87**

Essex County Court of Common Pleas partitions lands of James Bott, "Sadler and now Merchant", of Salem. James Bott, Jr., "Sadler and Chaisemaker", Lynch Bott, "Marriner", Thomas, Samuel, and James Ferguson, Cordwainers, Margaret Saunders and Dolly Potter, among others are all given shares in 1807.

**E.C.R.D. Book 276, leaf 178**

**Grantor:** James Bott, Tanner

**Grantee:** Priscilla Bott, Guardian of John Bott, Stacy Bott, and Francis Bott, "minors and grandchildren of Mr. James Bott, late of Salem, Chaisemaker deceased"

**Consideration:** \$414.45

**Conveyance of:** "One undivided thirteenth part of the land and

buildings, situate(d) between Essex Street and Chestnut Street, called the Middle House, all which real estate was devised by the last will and testament of Mr. James Bott, late of Salem, Chaise-maker deceased, to and among his grandchildren, the children of James Bott Jr. deceased" [and additional properties]

Date recorded: July 29, 1834

**E.C.R.D. Book 346, leaves 45-46**

Grantor: James L. Bott of Gloucester, Sadler

Grantee: John Bott of Salem, Blacksmith

Consideration: \$80

Conveyance of: "One undivided fifth part of a dwelling house.... known as the Middle House"

Date recorded: June 14, 1844

**E.C.R.D. Book 619, leaf 140**

Grantor: Thomas Ferguson, Cordwainer

Grantee: Charles Mugford, Merchant

Consideration of: \$900

Conveyance of: property on Bott's Court

Date recorded: March 6, 1861



**E.C.R.D. Book 781, leaves 230-231**

**Grantors:** the heirs of Charles Mugford

**Grantee:** Betsy Bott Mugford

**Consideration:** \$1000

**Conveyance of:** properties on Essex Street and Bott's Court

**Date recorded:** September 12, 1869

**E.C.R.D. Book 1191, pages 286-288**

**Grantor:** John B. Safford of Somerville, MA

**Grantee:** Frances Brown of Salem

**Consideration:** \$300

**Conveyance of:** 5 Bott's Court

**Date recorded:** June 5, 1886

**E.C.R.D. Book 2505, pages 448-449**

**Grantor:** John H. Safford of Mamaroneck, NY, the guardian of Sarah Browne Safford, also of Mamaroneck

**Grantee:** Mary K. (and Nathaniel) Sanders of Haverhill, MA

**Consideration:** \$4100

**Conveyance of:** 5 Bott's Court, as indicated on attached "Plan of Land in Salem, belonging to Alice L. Safford et als.", as well as the Safford land in front of 5 Bott's Court

**Date recorded:** December 30, 1921

**E.C.R.D. Book 2540, page 459**

**Grantors:** Nathaniel and Mary Sanders

**Grantee:** Francis T. Parker

**Consideration:** paid

**Conveyance of:** 5 Bott's Court

**Date recorded:** January 22, 1923

**E.C.R.D. Book 7793, page 114**

**Grantor:** Naumkeag Trust Company

**Grantees:** Arthur and Jacqueline Bunting

**Consideration:** \$136,000

**Conveyance of:** 5 Bott's Court

**Date recorded:** June 15, 1985

**E.C.R.D. Book 10252, page 413**

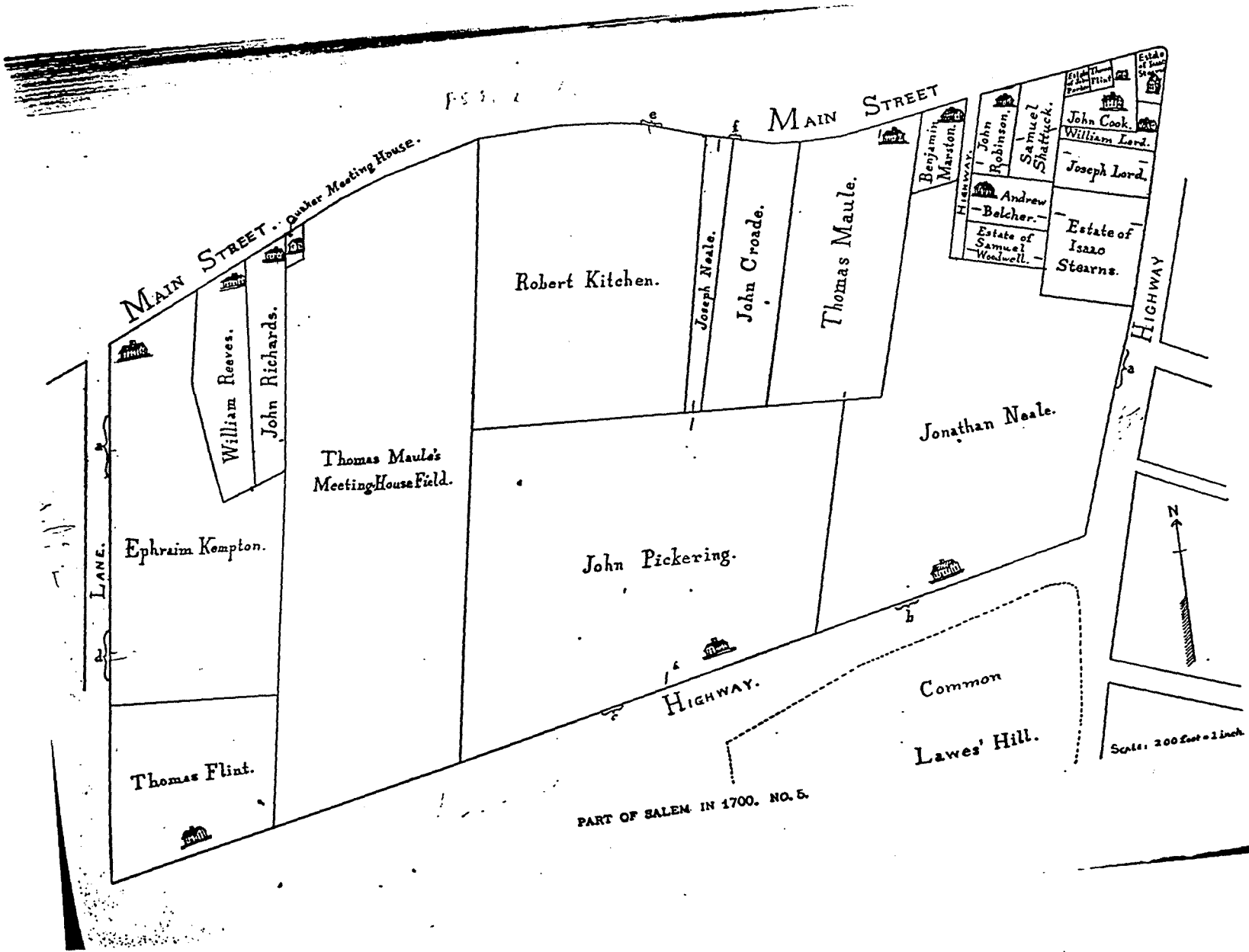
**Grantors:** Arthur and Jacqueline Bunting

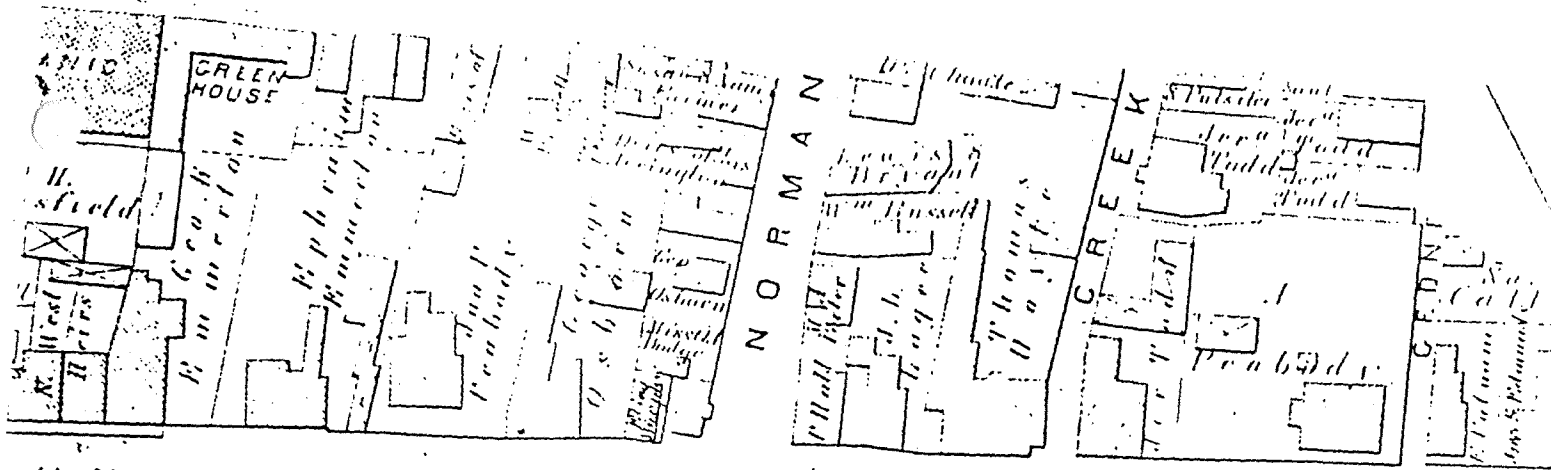
**Grantees:** James and Victoria MacMillan

**Consideration:** paid

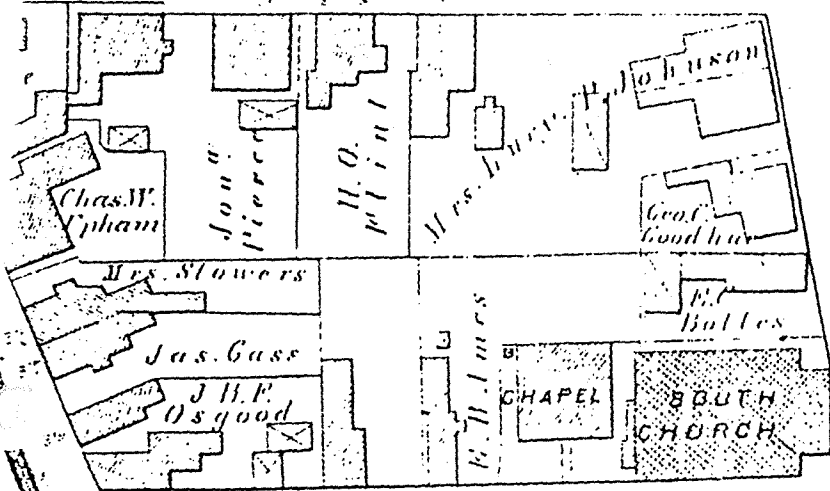
**Conveyance of:** 5 Bott's Court

**Date recorded:** November 28, 1989

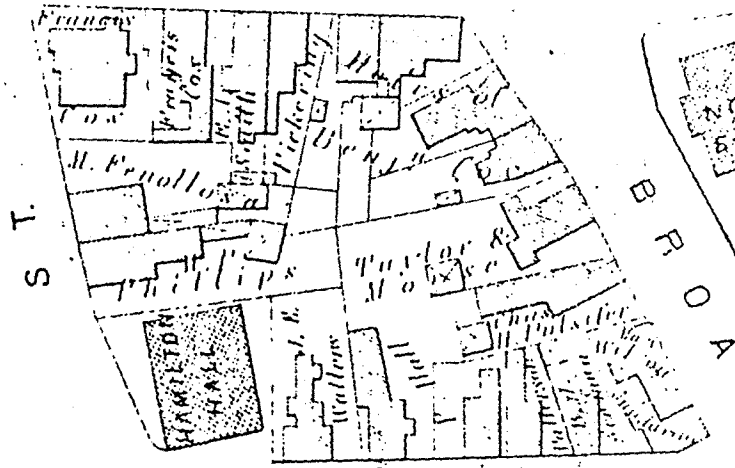




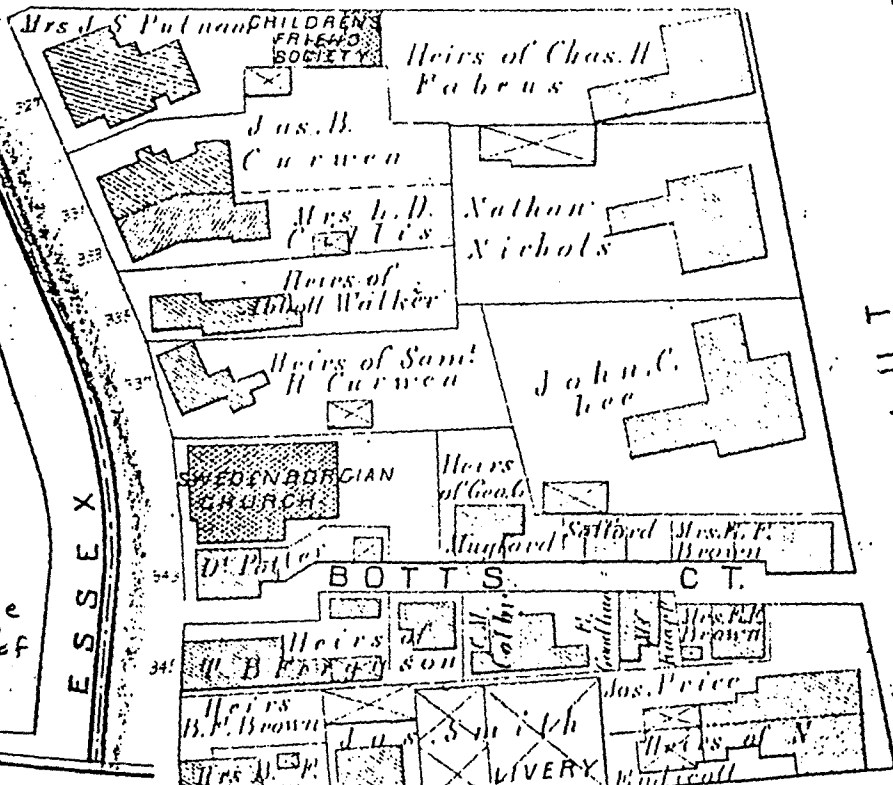
S U M M E R



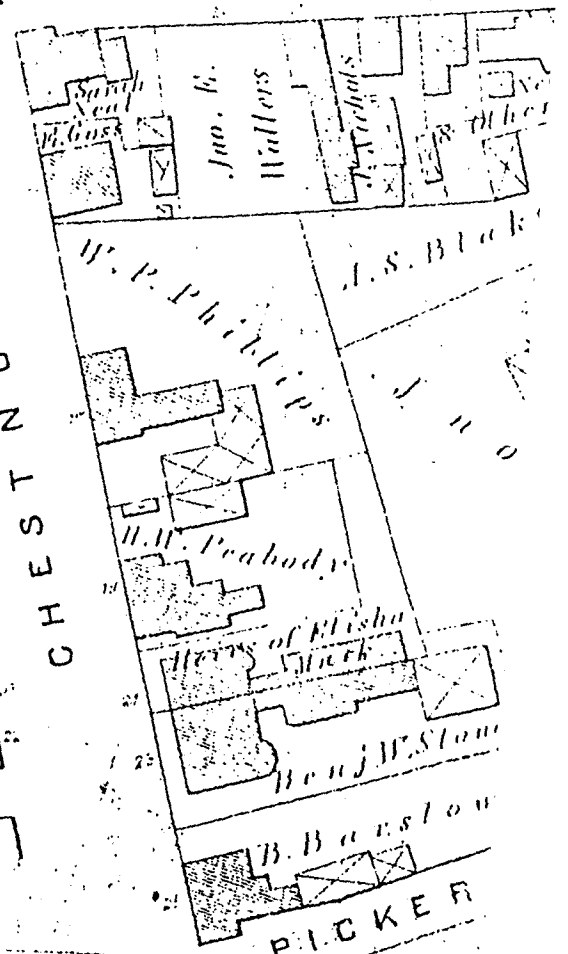
C A M B R I D G E



S T.



H A M I L T O N

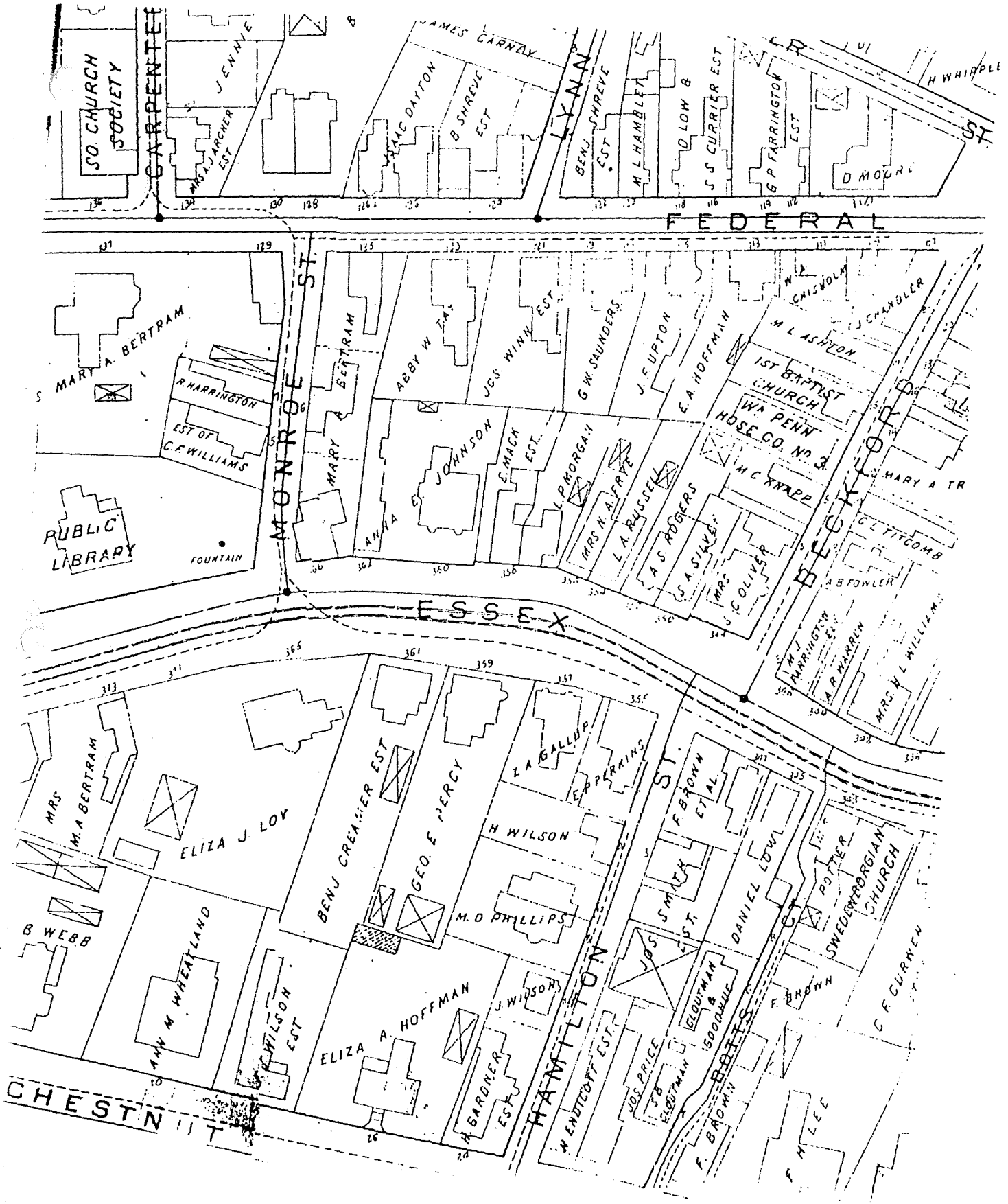


C H E S T N U T

P I C K E R

Note  
old house  
right on  
line of  
STREET

1874



NOTE:  
 new house  
 set back  
 from street

1897

Salem Athenaeum

Salem Athenaeum

Annie M. Safford et al

Dwelling

#7

56.10

fence 65.38

fence 42.58

28.49 fence

Francis H. Lee

BOTTS

COURT

24.11 fence

fence 67.0

Alice L. Safford et al  
Dwelling

#5

48.89

fence

25.52 fence

Francis H. Lee

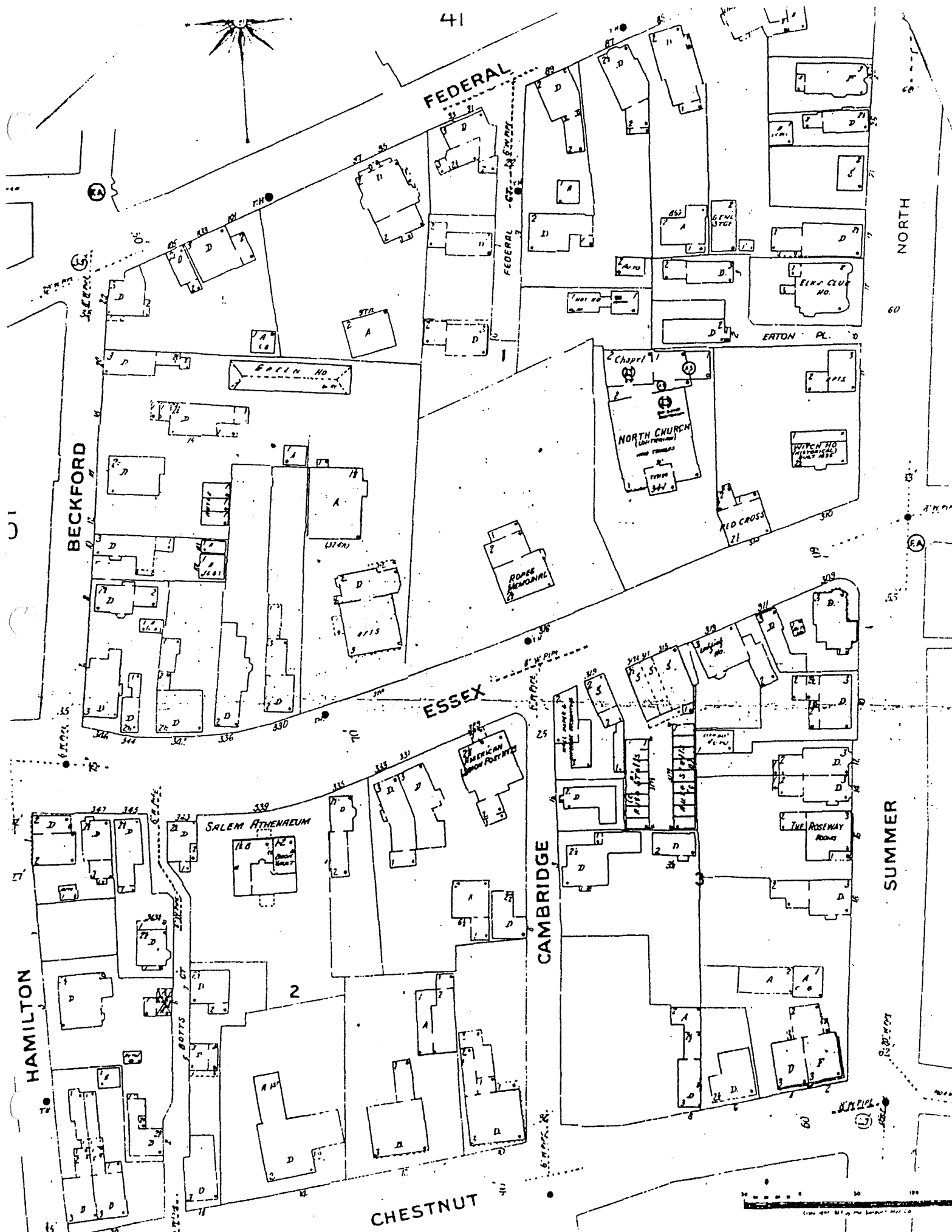
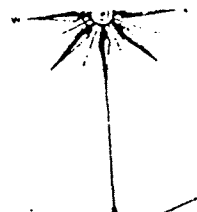
John H. Safford et al

Plan of Land in  
SALEM, MASS.  
Belonging to  
ALICE L. SAFFORD ET AL & ANNIE M. SAFFORD ET AL

Scale 10 feet to an inch

Chas. A. Metcalf, Surveyor  
May 1914





FEDERAL

BECKFORD

ESSEX

HAMILTON

CAMBRIDGE

CHESTNUT

NORTH

SUMMER

SALEM ATHENAEUM

NORTH CHURCH  
(UNION CHURCH)

THE ROSEWAY ARMS

ELKS CLUB NO.

RED CROSS

AMERICAN UNION POST OFFICE

GREEN NO.

ROOSEVELT

ERTON PL.

2

2