Salem Incorporated

POST OFFICE BOX 865

SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS 01970 / PHONE (617) 745-0799

131 Essex Street
Built for
MOSES LITTLE, physician
by 1811

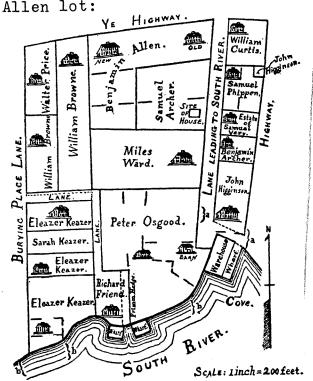
Research by, Joyce King Oct. 1982

"to preserve Historic Sites, Buildings and objects, and to work for the education of the community in the true value of the same."

131 Essex Street

"Essex street was one of the original highways of the town. It was called the street or common highway in 1658; ye highway, 1678; the main street, 1705; and Essex street in 1799. (Essex Antiquarian, vol. 11 pg. 12)

The land on which this house stands was a portion of the Benjamin



PART OF SALEM IN 1700. NO. 26.

Benjamin Allen Houses. That part of this lot lying north of the dashes early belonged to William Allen of Manchester, carpenter, and he conveyed it, with the house thereon, to John Bridgman of Salem 9: 4 mo: 1652. Mr. Bridgman died in 1655, leaving a will: "that his whole estate shal bee deliuered into me curwins hand and when hee hath satisfied him selfe to giu the rest to his daughter." George Corwin of Salem, merchant, for eighteen pounds, conveyed the house and that part of the lot to Thomas Barnes of

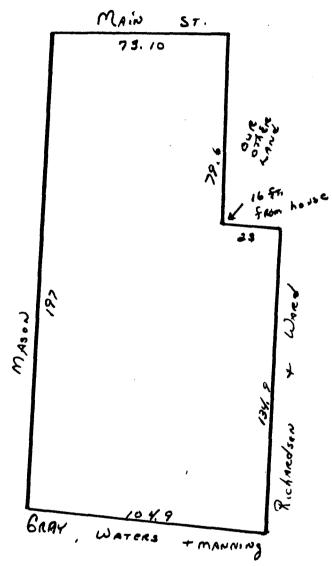
Salem, blacksmith, 25: 11: 1658.¶ The title passed from Thomas Barnes to Capt. Benjamin Allen in or before 1695. Mr. Barnes' blacksmith shop was conveyed with the land. Captain Allen died in 1703, possessed of the old dwelling house, in which Mr. Habakkuk Gardner then lived, and the smith's shop and land. Captain Allen died intestate, and his daughter, Rachel Allen of Salem, conveyed the house and that end of the lot to her brother-in-law Capt. John Richards of Salem, mariner, Oct. 28, 1709.* Captain Richards conveyed the house and that end of the lot to John Phippen of Salem July 23, 1711.† Mr. Phippen removed the house a few years later.

the old house a few years later.

Captain Allen probably erected the

house on the western end of this part of the lot soon after 1695. He died possessed of it in 1703; and the house and land, with the barn and woodhouse, came into the possession of Capt. John Richards, probably the inheritance of his wife Mary, daughter of Captain Allen. Captain Richards removed to Boston, where he was a mariner, and, with his wife Mary, for three hundred and seventy pounds, conveyed the house and land around it to Joseph Grafton of Salem, mariner, Nov. 30, 1727.‡ Captain Grafton died in the winter of 1766-7, having in his will devised this estate to his three daughters, Susanna, Mary and Anna, all unmarried. For four hundred and sixty pounds, they conveyed the house and land around it to Joseph Peabody of Salem Sept. 30, 1790.\$ Mr. Peabody became a merchant, and for fifty-four hundred dollars, conveyed the house, "wherein I now live," and the barn and land under and adjoining them to Dr. Moses Little of Salem March 7, 1799. Doctor Little probably removed the old house immediately after his purchase.

As mentioned, Joseph Peabody purchased the land which included a dwelling house from Susan, Mary and Anna Grafton on Sept. 30, 1790:



(book 152 page 91)

Tax records: Joseph Peabody

1790 - 65 tons shipping

1791 - homestead \$400, 40 tons of shipping

1792 - homestead \$500

1793 - homestead and warehouse \$700

1794 - homestead and 2/3 warehouse \$500

1795 - homestead and 2/3 warehouse \$2,200 (entire city increased)

1796 - homestead and warehouse \$2,200

1797 - homestead and warehouse \$3,000

1798 - homestead and warehouse \$3,500

1799 - homestead \$5,500, warehouse \$1,200

1799 March 7 - Joseph and Elizabeth Peabody sold the land and "dwelling house I now live" to Moses Little, physician. This included the yard, garden and buildings situated on Essex between Liberty and Elm streets.

1799 April 20 - Letter from Moses Little to his parents: "began to keep house on Wednesday last and I am situated quite agreeably to my wishes." (Essex Institute, Little manuscripts)

Moses Little was born at Newburyport July 3, 1766, graduated at Harvard College in 1787, came to Salem in 1791, and commenced the practice of medicine in which profession he acquired great celebrity and was ranked among the leading physicians in this vicinity. He married Elizabeth, a daughter of George and Lydia (Pickering) Williams, a wealthy merchant of this town. (Essex Lodge of Masons)

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Tax records: Moses Little
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1800 - \$3,000

1801 - "

1802 - " stock \$3,500; income \$1,000

1803 - "

1804 - "

1805 - "

1806 - "

1807 - "

1808 - " (this year Mrs. Elizabeth Little died)

1809 - \$3,000

1810 - "

1811 - Mr. William's house \$2,000; brick house \$1,500

(Since this is the first documented mention of a brick house, the term "by 1811" has been assigned to this house. It is possible that it was constructed prior to this date, but the documentation is lacking. Other facts taken into consideration were: 1. It does not appear on the list of brick houses built in Salem prior to 1806. 2. Benjamin Brown's recollections of Essex St. states that Dr. Little lived in a wooden house that was removed to make place for the brick one, in which he lived a short time.)

Moses Little died on Oct. 13, 1811. By will all his estate was bequeathed to his children: Elizabeth, Henry and Francis Little. Dr. Little's real estate was listed as:

House and land on Essex St. valued at \$10,500. (inventory appendix A)

1815 March 3 - The trustees, Timothy Williams and Samuel Putnam placed this ad in the Salem Gazette: FOR SALE - - -

"That elegant and commodious BRICK DWELLING HOUSE, situated on Essex Street - belonging to the estate of the late Dr. Moses Little and lately occupied by Col. William R. Lee.

For terms apply to Richard S. Rogers

1815 April 3 - Timothy Williams of Boston, and Samuel Putnam of Salem, trustees under the will of Moses Little sold the property to Simon Forrester for the sum of \$9,000. (book 205 page 248)

Simon Forrester was a native of Ireland, but came to Salem in early youth and became a very active and wealthy merchant. He lived at 188 Derby St. This house (131 Essex) was occupied by

Simon Forrester's daughter Nancy and her husband Gideon Barstow.

12. NANCY FORRESTER, born July 5, 1793, married March 29, 1812 (certificate), Gideon, born September 7, 1783, at Mattapoisett, Mass., son of Gideon and Anna (Mead) Barstow.

Dr. Barstow was a member of both branches of the Massachusetts Legislature and a Representative in Congress from 1821 to 1823. He was descended from William and George Barstow, probably Yorkshiremen who came in the *True Love*, John Gibbs, master, and settled in Dedham in 1636. Later generations built ships in Mattapoisett and Doctor Barstow practiced medicine in Salem, but gave up that in favor of mercantile life. He died March 26, 1852, in St. Augustine, Fla., whither he had gone for his health. His wife lived in Boston until 1879 and probably until her death in 1881.

Children, born in Salem (Barstow):
THOMAS HALEY FORRESTER, bap. 8 May, 1816, North Church.
GIDEON FORRESTER, bap. 8 May, 1816, North Church.
CHABLES FORRESTER, bap. 8 May, 1816, North Church.
ANNA MEAD, bap. 25 Jan. 1821, ac. 5 or 6 m., North Church.
SIMON FORRESTER, bap. 25 Jan. 1821, ac. about 3 yrs., North Church.
GEORGE FORRESTER.
DANIEL HATHORNE, bap. 29 July, 1821, North Church.
JOHN SABGENT, bap. 18 May, 1823, North Church; d. 'a child,' 8 Sept. 1825, ac. 14 mo.
CATHERINE ANDREW.
ELEANOR FORRESTER, probably married a Condit, and was living abroad in 1875, with several children.
MARY JANE, bap. 7 Nov. 1824, North Church.

A child, bap. 6 Oct. 1833, North Church.

1844 April 18 - Leverett Saltonstall and David Neal, trustees of Simon Forrester, sold for the benefit of his daughter Nancy the land and buildings on Essex St. to Thomas Trask. "The same conveyed to Simon by Timothy Williams and Samuel Putnam executors of the will of Dr. Moses Little." (book 343 page 108)

Thomas Trask was born to Job and Jane Trask of Marblehead, on May 25, 1792. He was a merchant and consul for the United States at Surinam. He was captain's clerk on the private schooner "Enterprise" in 1813.



Thomas Trask

1850 census:

Thomas Tra	ask .	age	58	merchant	born	Mass.
Eliza W.	11	11	30		11	11
Thomas	11	11	16	mariner	11	S. America
Benjamin	**	11	12		11	11
Eliza J.	11	11	6		11	Mass.
Ellen	11	11	4		11	11
Ann	11	11	4		11	
Catharine	O'Neil		26		11	Ireland
Catharine	Jennings		23		11	11

1860 census:

Thomas T	rask	age	68	merchant	borr	n Mass.
Eliza	11	11	40		11	11
Eliza	11	11	16		11	11
Ellen	11	**	15		11	11
Ann	11	11	15		11	11
Charles	11	11	2		11	tt
Benjamin	11	11	21	mariner	11	Surinam
Martha Ti	readwel	1	36		11	Mass.
Bridget	(illegi	ble	30	domestic	11	Ireland

Thomas Trask died on Dec. 19, 1863. His real estate was listed as: house and land on Essex \$t. \$8,500; lot of land in Lawrence

\$1,000; lot Harmony Grove Cemetery \$20. The personal estate was:
Household furniture \$957; 408 oz. of silverware \$500; gold watch
\$50; coach \$75; Pew in North Meeting House \$50; cash \$150; 103
shares Naumkeag Steam Co. \$9,785; 6 shares Thorndike Co. \$4,500;
5 shares Columbia Manufacturing Co. \$4,000; 5 shares Boston Duck
Co. \$2,500; 10 shares Essex R.R. ---; note of Thomas Florence \$150.

Probate case #55622 also mentions many house repairs:

1865 - B.R. White \$271.02; S.C. Clark \$250.37; E.H. Staten \$29.05; Burnsted & Co. \$31.08; G. Creamer \$72.04; M. T. Upton \$814.76; T. Frothingham \$395.28

1866 - T. Upton \$35.54; Bill for slating house \$326.50; gas fixtures \$27.

Tax records: 131 Essex Street

1866 - Mrs. Trask Mrs. J. D. Simes owned by Est. of T. Trask house val.\$4,000 land val. 4,000 barn 300

1867 May 2 - Charles Mansfield and Joseph B.F. Osgood, trustees of the will of Thomas Trask, sold to Robert Brookhouse, for the sum of \$14,000, the mansion lately occupied by Thomas Trask. (book 723 page 30)

Tax records: 131 Essex Street

1868 - Robert Brookhouse

house val. \$8,500 land val. 4,000 barn 500 Robert Brookhouse, Esq. was the son of Robert Brookhouse the distinguished Salem merchant. Mr. Brookhouse entered his father's counting room early in life, subsequently succeeding to the firm and to the trade with Africa, established by the elder Mr. Brookhouse. He was of quiet and retiring habits and generous impulses, and valued member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church. For several years he was Quartermaster of the Salem Cadets. He married a daughter of General William Sutton. (The Salem Gazette, Aug. 4, 1882)

1871 - valuation listing for Robert Brookhouse:

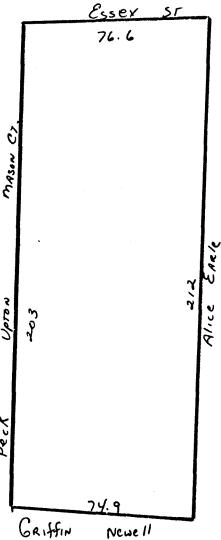
House 14 Becket St. value \$600; land value \$300

House 131 Essex St. value \$10,000; land value \$4,500; barn \$500

2 horses value \$400

carriage value \$400 furniture value \$2,000

1872 June 28 - Robert Brookhouse sold the land and building to Sarah E. LeMaster for the sum of \$20,000. (book 858 page 255)



1873 valuation of Sarah LeMaster: House 131 Essex St. and barn value \$13,000 House and store 163 and 169 Essex St. value \$14,000

1880 census:

	11
Edward R. Lee " 28 clothing store"	
Ella M. " 27 wife, housekeeper "	11
Sarah E. " " 4 "	11
Lydia " " 2 "	tt
Laura " 8 months "	tt
Sarah Beatty " 34 servant "	England

1881 Aug. 5 - Ad placed in the Salem Gazette:

"The fine estate #131 Essex Street is offered for sale, as will be seen. This is the "Brookhouse Estate" opposite Plummer Hall, lately owned and occupied by the late Lydia LeMaster. It is one of the best built houses in the city - a mansion of the comfortable style of a former day of prosperity."

1882 May 29 - Nathan R. Morse and William F. Gardner executors of the Will of Lydia LeMaster sold the land and building to Samuel Calley. (book 1083 page 163) The title was immediately transferred to Rebecca H. Morse wife of Nathan R. Morse. (book 1083 page 164)

Nathan Ransom Morse, A.M., M.D., was one of the most prominent physicians of Salem. He was born at Stoddard, N.H., Feb. 20, 1831.

He was the oldest of a family of eight children, three of the four sons devoted themselves to the study of the healing art. During his college years at Amherst he was interested largely in geological work. He studied for a time at the Harvard Medical school, but completed his professional preparation at the University of Vermont, from which he graduated in June, 1862. After practicing for three years in the town of Reading, Dr. Morse settled in Salem, His acquired reputation as a physician was an enviable one and his services were often called upon outside of his immediate practice. He was one of the founders of the medical department of Boston University, subscribing \$1,000 towards this object. In the Boston institution he was professor of the diseases of women and children from 1874 to 1879. Dr. Morse was secretary of the Massachusetts Homoe opathic Medical Society in 1878-9, edited volumes IV and V of the society's transactions and was its orator in 1874. He was secretary of the Essex County Homoeopathic Medical Society from 1872 to 1879, and later its president; was also president of the Massachusetts Surgical and Gynaecological Society, and senior member of the American Institute of Homoeopathy. In the latter organization, Dr. Morse made the motion to admit women to the membership, it being in consequence, the first medical society in which women were eligible. In 1866 he was made a Master Mason in Essex lodge of this city. A few years later he joined the Odd Fellows and was also a charter member of North Star lodge, K. of P. Dr. Morse was married in 1859 to Miss Lottie L. Barden of Marion. She died in 1862, leaving two sons, Frederick L. and William. In 1864 he married Miss Rebecca Brown of Bernardston, and by this marriage had three sons and one

daughter, the oldest son, Charles W. Morse, being a physician and surgeon of large practice in Salem, spending the winter of 1893-4 in Vienna for the purpose of study. (Salem and Environs)



LATE NATHAN R. MORSE, A. M., M. D.

1904 Aug. 13 - Rebecca H. Morse sold the land and building at 131
Essex St. to Catherine F. Tracy wife of Henry J. Tracy. (book 1751
page 276)

1921 May 7 - Catherine F. Tracy sold the land and building "the same conveyed by Rebecca H. Morse" to Mary L. Hurley. (book 2480 page 305)

1923 June 5 - Mary L. Hurley sold the same premises conveyed to her by Catherine F. Tracy to Bertha W. Adasko. Subject to a lease of Thomas J. Donovan for two years from May 7, 1923. (book 2554 page 552)

Notes: Reference to book and page are deed books at the Registry of Deeds. Probate numbers are cases at Probate Court. Both offices are located in the same building on Federal St. All maps in this report are not meant to be exact, just for illustration purposes.

amount brought forwa A:4,450 notes of hund, ant brote forward 333861 Patterson Bang. 15 may lett on Indust. 33 95 Bustin Sist. 5. Jon 1802 1 6 5 114 Rope Jour. Jame. 17. 4. W11 Such and the for to hay Eague thout Thely BII . D. Thayer, John G. S. July Will 20 Jucker Giden I some Hot 2700 = Cohilmore James - 5000. 1811 Well Johna 25 Den 1809 20 ... 6335 6312 clash .. Into unk Bills \$450. In Silver of old 200 650 Furniture I Carge Fale 2 Fin Bukes 3 1 Lite Board 1 Tara Stander. & white Paintes Chair, him Pair Andisons offered Itong 5 Valvers down backet \$3. 1 fire dereen 3. .6 30 I hooking Glass \$15. 1 Green bashed 314 \$ 15. 2 heart sugs \$1. one basses are 254 of Jouen 12 13. 2 Granbloths, to cover Takes 12 4 hlates candlettily \$10. 4 plane ats \$2. 30. Ten bygu At of China, 1279! 30 The Liverpoor leve disher ware, 165 p. \$300 2 1 Other # 1. 2 fruit Bather by Stands #1. 4.50 4 Tursens \$3. one tempot, 4 dichis to litte 150. 3,50 1 Flower Pot \$150 - 6 July Glaper Synfest \$2 24 Wine glapes \$5. 24 July Elagers \$4. 9 18 Elap Plates \$4. One Elap Stand \$2. 1 Picture \$1. I Let Bastons \$15. 16 2 Carpe du frale Talle Block 2 dox Knives & Forks, 2 Garrens of thele. I knife Trays \$1. One pair Smiffers trays 2 bout Rands \$3. Onlos an, But board 2 white 1 Oureau \$20. Scoulary \$15. 8 Chairs \$8. 49. I Small drifting that \$2. Iwark stand \$5. 7 2 Looking Elajas \$8. 9 Blanker \$ 16. 26 4 to quity \$6. Brain of that \$52. Go . 11 pains Pillow Cany \$H. Briages \$5. 16. / Wash Bow d/bu \$2. 180 \$15. Zellahogony BedKind, Cornith

160 Bear, Millow, 2 that, 1 Blanker, 1 cm 1 Back Drawns of Talle \$4 Jount 2. I Trundle bid bedtead, 5 courties 45. 19 mon Bid . 1 Green Chist Drawers \$ 8. 1 Do Bureau 4. 1 lot Fin warq Vellahogory Brook Bace 40. frank Can ps. Can cary vials fundrein be 4 motas thagreen case, Conty Cupping Intumers makogny do in Small inst 100 I Morocco do Dock full of sent 1 Sofa \$12. Horning Elap 15. 2 min 16 comma chair ine Taka XX Chairs of it with I borner I Borner with anderes have supporte with in south port in his brokery In ware, The Bellows 2 Canalisticks, 2 Chaping Diches, 4 flat iron 1 por 1 diskette de france Dry Tea keate, looking Glass, 1 greats 50 Chain Harry /s*. IN. Reigh runners IP. I riving taable Windle 2 1 thing Buy 2 / brighe 2. I hove , I have , 2 and I faw Brute 10. L2 wedges / lader \$150 - 1600 \$15. 1 th 4 Day 2 18 Fre 1.50 1012.50 : 13 m. 1. Tea Pot / Sug as Dish 28 Sprons, Sugar tongs of 23. Is dut 2. 16 / Pepper Bon 1 Kop Bowl 1 Water ant cartforward Douas 12,019.00

I Lot Panghat wow of . To winera Vital \$ 23,533 50 committee sere, St. Lalem, October 220, W11. Then Samuel tors presente the aprevritter, and made outh that it contained a true and herfeet inventory of the estate of Moses Little, late of Salem afores aid and that, if any thing further shall have after appear, he will be added. ysicians, deceased, testate, so far as has come to his hands or knowledge Juneritary of Estatouf Both daccased -Ostafor 22 1840

Mr. Samuel McIntire, Carver

Moses Little House

131 Essex Street

Built 1807

Principal owners: Little, Barstow, Brookhouse

(Figure 282)

The attribution rests entirely on the style, especially the resemblance to the Gideon Tucker house next door built at about the same time.

Moses Little bought the property from Joseph Peabody for \$5,400, March 7, 1799, who described it as "the dwelling house wherein I now live & land under consisting partly of a yard and garden and barn and other buildings." (Deeds 163:262.) Colonel Benjamin Pickman had described it in 1793 as Peabody's "which he purchased of the Grafton Family who owned it many years." It was of wood, like its neighbor at 129 Essex Street belonging to the same family, both having stood on the land as early as 1726. In the Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. IV, and in Felt's Annals of Salem are references to Little, who died in 1811. It is distinctly stated that he demolished the wooden house and built a new one, in which he lived but a short time. It was not built before 1806, for it does not appear in the list of brick houses in Salem in that year. In the tax lists Little first appears in 1807, with "I homestead \$3000," which continues until his death in 1811, when there is a valuation:

Mr. Williams' house \$2000 Brick house 1500

\$3500

The county tax book of 1807 assesses him for \$11.36, that of 1810 for \$10.14, the decrease being due doubtless to his sale of a lot from the easterly side to his neighbor Gideon Tucker in 1808 (185:57). It will have been the new brick house which first attracted to him the attention of the assessors, and we may thus suppose it to have been built or building in 1807.

The house was sold to Simon Forrester by Timothy Williams and Samuel Putnam, trustees, under Little's will, April 3, 1815 (205:248), and occupied by Forrester's daughter Nancy and her husband Gideon Barstow, being sold to Thomas Trask by the trustees under Forrester's will April 18, 1844 (343:108). It was later occupied by Robert Brookhouse. At some time before 1910 a wider addition was made in front, bringing the property out to the street line for commercial occupancy, and destroying the old porch. We have, unfortunately, no record of the interior.

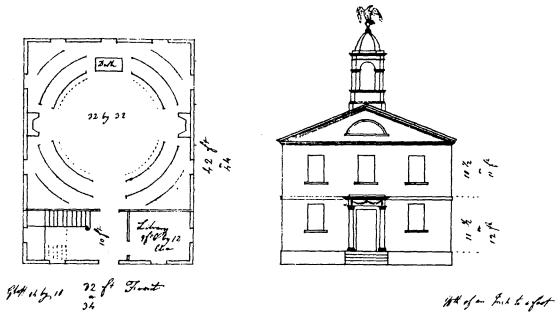


Figure 281. Study for a school.

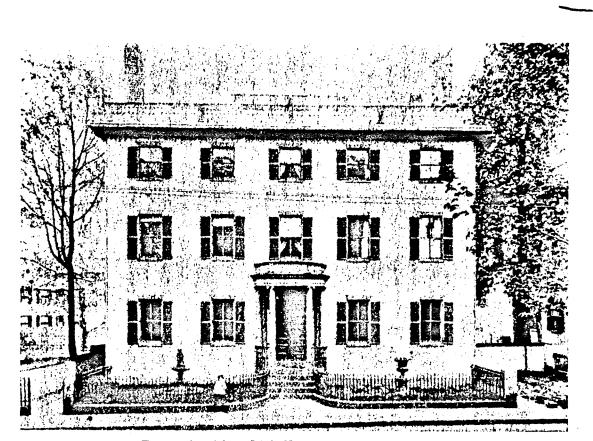


Figure 282. Moses Little House, 131 Essex Street, 1807.

FORM B - BUILDING



ORICAL COMMISSION State House, Boston

1

3

5

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5") Staple to left side of form Photo number

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.

originally fine 6×5 bay, 4 plate rederal

Mansion Now has

modern glass + aluninum

store front + enlarged

windows.

original windows that

remain are % sade

remain are % sade

wish ganite lindels.

Entablature +

balustrade.

SAM	In Area 110.	Form no.	
	35	228.	

	ing the state of
	Town SALEM
	Address 131-131 = Essex St.
	Name The Moses Little House
	Present use Commercial.
	and the second s
	Present owner
3.	Description:
	Date 1807
	Source Esslex Institule
	Style Federal.
	Architect Samuel McIntire.
	Exterior wall fabric brick + glass
	Outbuildings (describe)
	Other features
	All and Allege
	20 = century
	Altered store fort added Date 1910
	Moved Date
5.	Lot size: 15.718
	One acre or less Over one acre
	Approximate frontage 70'
	Approximate distance of building from street
6.	Recorded by Ance Van Ingen.
	Organization #. S. I
	Date 6/13/78.

(over)







