

OFFICES AT 15 SUMMER STREET

Historic Salem Incorporated

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136 Federal Street
Built for
JOSEPH G. SPRAGUE ESQ.
Cashier of the Naumkeag Bank
in the year 1832

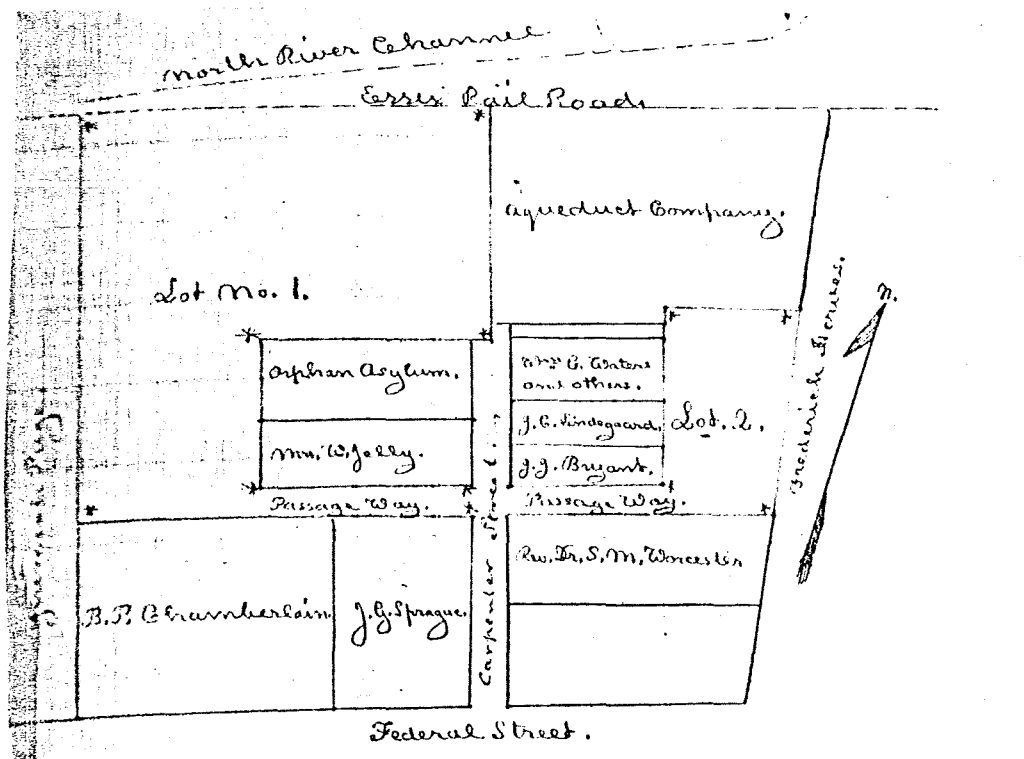
Research by,
Joyce King
March 1980

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

136 Federal Street

"This two-story plus pitch roof, wooden house is back from and gable end to the street. Two of its handsome features are the cast iron fence on Federal St. and the iron railing at the base of the full-length first floor Wyatt windows." (Salem Historic Commission District Study)

On July 7, 1832 Ebenezer and Samuel Shillaber sold to Joseph Sprague a lot of land which was a portion of the land their father Ebenezer purchased in 1798 (this land extended from Federal St. to the North River and included both sides of Carpenter St.). (book 270 page 301)



Mr. Sprague started to build this house immediately after purchasing the land. The tax records show the progression:

1832	Joseph G. Sprague	house Summer St.	\$1,900
1833	"	unfinished house Federal St.	\$1,500
1833	"	house	\$1,900
1834	"	unfinished house	\$1,500
1834	"	house	\$1,900
		house	\$3,500

Joseph G. Sprague seems to have been most active in social and civil affairs. He was born in Danvers, April 20, 1787. He was cashier at the Naumkeag Bank for twenty years. On November 13, 1823, when he was thirty-seven, he married Priscilla Gould of Bradford, Mass. He is accorded the rank of Colonel in an item concerning the "Active Fire Club," which was formed Feb. 20, 1806. It is said to have consisted of "men well known in our city, and men who have had a prominent part in public affairs." At one time it had as its moderator, Colonel Joseph G. Sprague.

His part in public affairs was principally as President of the Common Council. He served as its head from 1845 through 1847. But previous to that he was an alderman. It was when serving in this capacity that he was appointed to a committee, on April 15, 1839 "to consider what alterations, if any, shall be made in the ordinance to establish a City Seal."

He was appointed an honorary member of the Salem Glee Club in 1837. But his chief interest was Masonry. He rose to the position of High Priest of Washington Chapter, in which capacity he served in 1820. (Essex Institute Historic Collections)

The federal census of 1850 gives a closer look as to the occupants of 60 Federal St. (now 136 Federal St.) :

Joseph G. Sprague	age 63	cashier	prop. val. \$10,000	born Mass.
Priscilla	" 60	"	"	"
Lucretia	" 11	"	"	"
Caroline A.	" 22	"	"	"
Margaret Reed	18	"	"	Ire.

Mr. Sprague died on Nov. 30, 1852. In his will, written March 27, 1844, Mr. Sprague left all his estate to his wife for her support and the support of his daughter Caroline A. and adopted daughter Lucretia Thomson. The real estate is listed as:

House on Federal St.	\$7,500
House in Danvers	3,500
Land in Lawrence	1,500

(probate #53933) (inventory, see appendix A)

On July 6, 1854 the land and buildings "the same estate conveyed to Joseph G. Sprague by Ebenezer Shillaber" was sold to Benjamin Wheatland, gentleman, for the sum of \$6,700. (book 497 page 274)

Benjamin Wheatland, born May 27, 1801, was the son of Richard and Martha (Goodhue) Wheatland. He was a graduate of Harvard College in 1819, studied law with Hon. Leveret Saltonstall in Salem where he practised for a while. He was greatly interested in Free Masonry and served as Secretary of the Essex Lodge in 1825. Mr. Wheatland married on April 8, 1827 Mary E. Bemis of Watertown, born July 4, 1801, daughter of Luke and Hannah (Eddy) Bemis. Mr. and Mrs. Wheatland resided for a number of years in Newmarket, N.H. He returned to Salem in 1846 where he died Dec. 28, 1854.

The family home was at 374 Essex St. for several years after their return to Salem and later they removed to Federal St. where Mrs. Wheatland passed away June 23, 1864. The couple were the parents of two daughters, they both died unmarried. (Portraits at the Essex Institute)

As stated previously, Mr. Wheatland died on Dec. 28, 1854, just five months after purchasing the Federal St. property. In his will \$10,000 was left in trust for the support of his widown Mary. All the rest of the estate was left to Mary and daughter Martha. His estate was listed as:

House and land Essex St.	\$7,000
House and land Federal St.	8,000
1/3 house and land Boston St.	
Woodland in Lynn and Danvers	
Furniture in house on Federal St.	1,325
(probate #56847)	

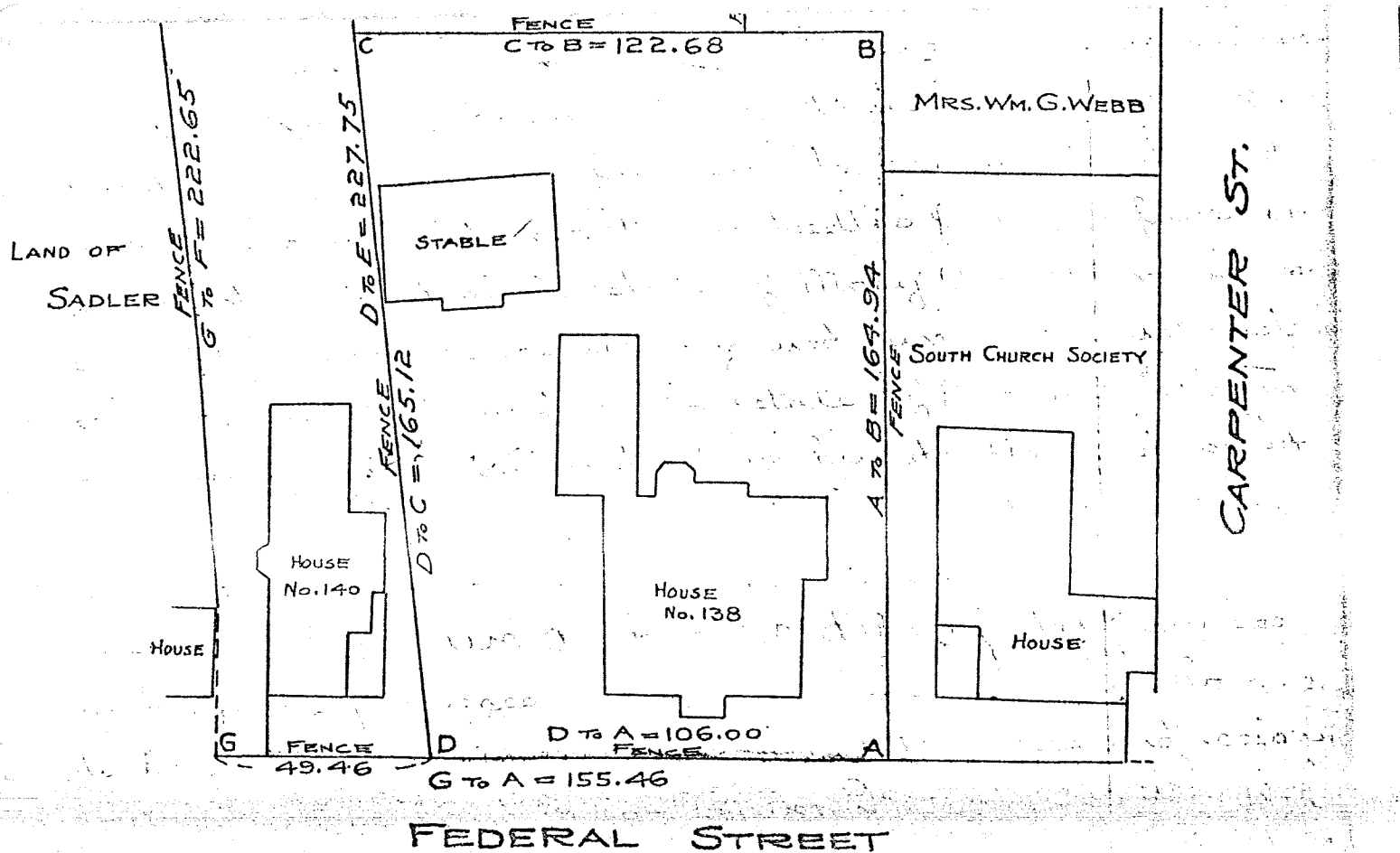
The federal census of 1860 shows as living at 136 Federal St.:

	age	<u>real estate val.</u>	born
Mary Wheatland	59	\$15,000	Mass.
Martha "	30		" "
Ann Sullivan	22		" Ire.
Julia Donavan	29		" Mass.

Martha G. Wheatland sold the property "the same conveyed to my late father Benjamin Wheatland" on July 15, 1870 to John Bertram, for the sum of \$9,550. (book 802 page 121) The property is listed as unoccupied in 1870.

Captain John Bertram, one of Salem's greatest benefactors, was born on the Isle of Jersey, Feb. 11, 1796. His family came to America in 1807 and settled in Salem. John was described as a poor boy who went around with a basket peddling apples, candies and turn-overs and later went to sea as a cabin boy, before the mast, as mate, captain and still later became the merchant prince and beloved benefactor of his fellow citizens. (for further reference see John Bertram, edited by Rosamond De Laittre)

Captain Bertram gave this house for a parsonage, to the South Church, on July 18, 1870. This transaction is recorded in book 801 page 229. "John Bertram, of Salem sold to Proprietors of the South Church for \$1."



The South Church (Congregational Trinitarian) was on the corner of Chestnut and Cambridge Sts. It was erected in 1804 and was dedicated on Jan. 1, 1805. Its architect was Samuel Mackintire. This church stood until it was consumed by fire on Dec. 19, 1903.

The first pastor to reside in the "South Church Parsonage" at 136 Federal St. was Rev. Edward S. Atwood. Rev. Atwood was born in Taunton, Mass., June 4, 1833, graduated at Brown University in 1852, and was installed in Salem October 13, 1864. He had been pastor of a church in Grantville (now Wellesley Hills) previous to his settlement in Salem.

The 1880 census gives a closer look into the life of the Atwood family:

Edward S. Atwood	age 46	clergyman	born Mass.
Elizabeth M.	" 46	wife	" "
Frank S.	" 22	student of medicine	" "
Lilla R.	" 18		" "
Alice C.	" 9		" "
Margaret Munroe	" 18	servant	" N.S.
Eliza Boyle	" 15	servant	" Mass.

Rev. Atwood died on May 13, 1888. His replacement was Rev. James F. Brodie who remained with the South Church until 1904 when he moved to Tennessee. The house is listed as vacant in the 1905 directory. 1906 shows Rev. A. A. Berle and 1907 the occupant is Rev. Harold C. Feast. (The Essex Institute has pictures and further information on the South Church and its pastors)

The year 1908 brings a substantial change when the house is listed as J. A. Sylvester - lodgers. The Salem Street books for the year 1910 which lists all males over the age of 21, has this entry:

136 Federal St. - owned by South Church - value \$6,300

Occupants:

John A. Sylvester	machinist	age 51	
Walter "	electrician	" 21	
Edward C. Clark		" 25	
Charles Brigham		" 23	
Edwin W. Joslyn		" 26	formerly of Vt.
Alwyn H. Jones		" 25	" " Me.
Michael Quinn		" 28	

On Jan. 15, 1912 the "Proprietors of the South Church" voted to sell the South Church Parsonage to Jennie M. Emmerton for the sum of \$8,160. On Jan. 24 the deed was drawn and the "Proprietors of the South Church conveyed to Jennie M. Emmerton the land and building the same conveyed by deed of John Bertram." (book 2127 page 497)

Mrs. Emmerton was the widow of George R. Emmerton and the daughter of Capt. John Bertram and Mary C. (Smith). On May 17, 1912 Jennie M. Emmerton, of Salem sold the property to Harrison M. Davis and his wife Mary A. Davis. (book 2147 page 307)

Mr. Davis was a lawyer with an office at 21 Court St., Boston and resided at 136 Federal St., Salem. On Oct. 17, 1929 Harrison M. and Mary A. Davis sold the land and building to Jessie S. Tolman wife of Henry Tolman Jr. (book 2825 page 262)

June 7, 1954 Jessie S. Tolman sold the land and building to Robert A. and Annie R. Henley, of Middleton. (book 4073 page 351)

June 30, 1959 Robert Henley Sr. and Annie R. Henley, husband and wife, sold the land and building to Oscar and Esther Kessler and Joseph L. Kessler, of Lynn. (book 4574 page 530)

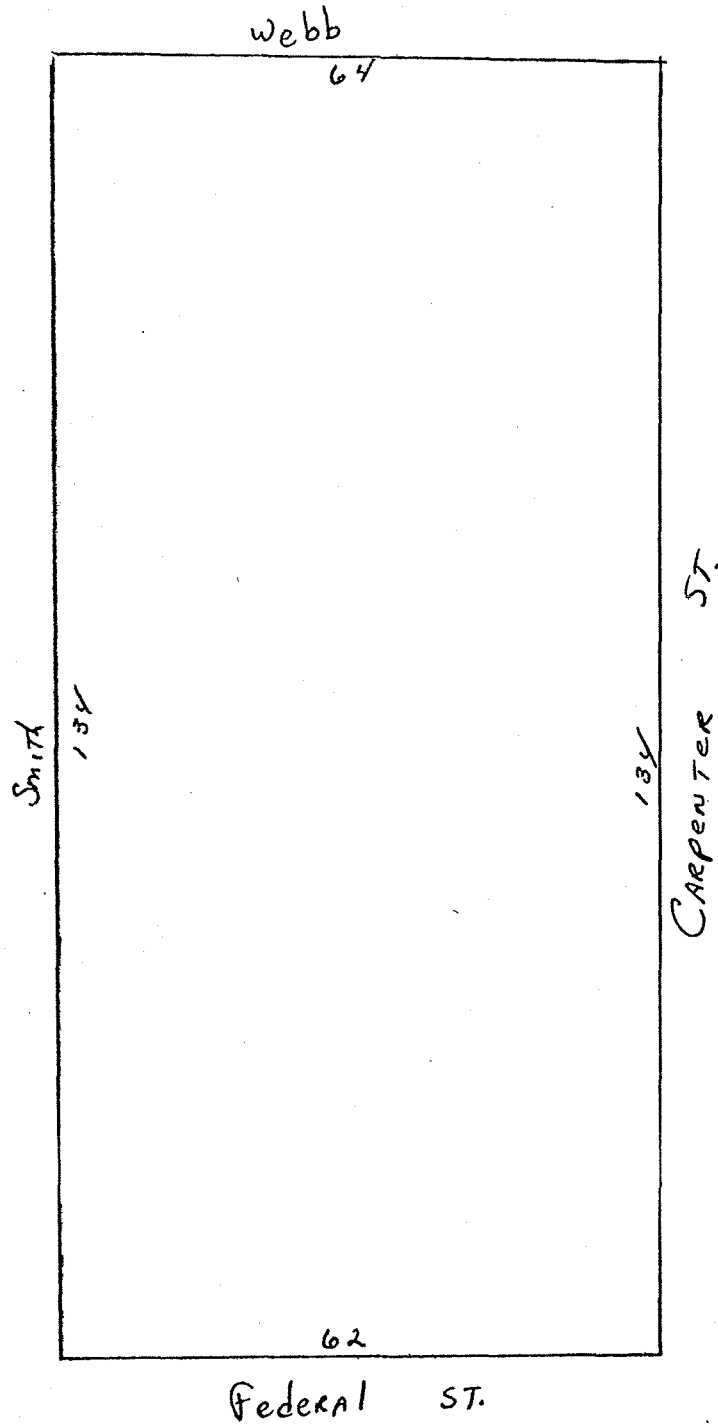
April 24, 1961 Joseph L. Kessler, of Marblehead and Oscar and Esther Kessler, husband and wife, sold the land and building to Henley Nursing Home Inc. (book 4763 page 350)

Henley Nursing Home sold to Nelson S. and Harriet Kessler, husband and wife, of Swampscott. (book 5546 page 355)

July 28, 1976 the Heritage Co Operative, holder of a mortgage from Nelson S. Kessler and Harriet, his wife to Salem Co Operative (now Heritage Co Operative) grant to Salem Co Operative the same as conveyed by Henley Nursing Home Inc. (book 6263 page 480)

August 8, 1978 Heritage Co Operative, 71 Washington St., Salem,
sold to Pace Properties Inc. (book 6503 page 449)

Feb. 22, 1980 Pace Properties Inc. of 131 Russell Ave., Watertown
sold to Clifford T. Hughes, Trustee of Chien Nominee Trust. (book
6680 page 300)



lections brought together there; of his great systematic work upon the Birds and Mammals of North America, and of the volumes which contain the results of his researches. We know, too, when the labors of administration became so vast that he could no longer give his time to personal research, how he placed with generous hand the means he had accumulated at the disposal of others, and of the impetus he gave to the study of natural history by providing for workers not only the material for research, but salaried positions that they might continue their studies. He thus fostered research in the broadest manner, and brought up a set of workers in Washington, which has resulted in making it the great centre of science in our country, where to-day, nearly five hundred men are professionally engaged in scientific work in all departments, and many of these departments were actually created by the foresight and labors of this hard-working, self-sacrificing man. We know also of his founding the United States Fish Commission, and the truly wonderful results it has attained, not only in a scientific way, but in adding immense wealth to the country by furnishing food for the people, restoring fish to exhausted streams and portions of the coast, and introducing species that have become important in our supply of food on both sides of the continent. Had this one work of Professor Baird been his only and life-long effort, he would ever be remembered as a great benefactor, but while this work will ever stand out in prominence, from the great economic results achieved, it is only one of the many far-reaching results which we owe to him.

Surely, Mr. President, we have lost from our little roll of Honorary Members, two men, whose equals in their respective lines of research and influence we cannot hope to see in our time.

REV. EDWARD SUMNER ATWOOD, minister of the South church, Salem, died at the parsonage on Federal street on Sunday morning May 13, 1888. His death was very sudden and unexpected to the community, though his failing health for the past year indicated that his life would thus terminate.

Mr. Atwood was the son of George B. and Eliza (Sumner) Atwood and was born at Taunton, Mass., June 4, 1833, graduated at Brown University, 1852, at Andover Theological Seminary in 1856; in 1883 his alma mater conferred upon him the honorary degree of D.D.; ordained pastor of the church in Grantville, Wellesley Hills, Oct. 23, 1856, where he continued until 1864. On the 13th of October, 1864, he was installed over the South church as colleague pastor with the late Rev. Dr. Brown Emerson, succeeding in that capacity Rev. I. E. Dwinell now of Oakland, Cal. Since Dr. Emerson's death, July 25, 1872, he had been the sole pastor.

As a pulpit orator, Dr. Atwood had few equals: a terse, forcible and effective speaker. Gifted with a wonderful command of language, and keeping abreast with all the progressive knowledge of the day, he clothed his thoughts with striking beauty and wealth of felicitous illustrations, and was equally ready on all occasions. As a citizen, he was foremost in every good word and work and especially in the cause of education and advanced culture. As a member of the prudential committee of the A. B. C. F. M., he was very devoted, and wherever his services were needed he was ever ready, willing and energetic.

Soon after coming to this city he connected himself with several of our local scientific, literary and educational institutions. He was elected a member of the school board and half of the years of his residence here he contributed by his labors to its educational interests. In this work

he was prominent in the advocacy of the best education, the freest education based upon public duty and the public good.

He was also enrolled as a member of the Essex Institute, and from that time to the close of his life he manifested a deep interest in its prosperity; he believed in its objects, he recognized the good it had done and its powers for accomplishing greater good in the future, and to this end he gave freely of his time and versatile talents. The records of the Institute bear abundant testimony to the value of his membership. From time to time he favored the Institute with addresses and lectures. Among the interesting contributions on these occasions was a learned paper "On the beginnings and growth of language." It is noteworthy that his first address was upon the Bible. He profoundly believed in the Bible, had no fear of true science, believing that all truth was of God. He recognized no antagonism between true science and true religion. This was at a field meeting held in Essex on Wednesday, July 1, 1868, an old Genevan Bible having been exhibited at the afternoon session, by Hon. David Choate. When called upon by the chair, he took for his theme this old volume,* giving some interesting facts respecting the history of the different editions and spoke of the clear and exquisite printing which these books reveal, many of them not being surpassed by the best printing of the present day. This edition was printed at Geneva for the use of the English exiles who took refuge there.

Soon after the death of Prof. Louis Agassiz, Dr. Atwood paid a beautiful tribute to the character and achievements of that distinguished scientist at a meeting held on Monday, Dec. 15, 1873. He was a member of the com-

*See Proceed. Essex Institute, VOL. VI, p. 31.

mittee that presented the resolutions complimentary to Prof. A. Graham Bell on the occasion of the first public exhibition of that wonderful invention, the telephone,* at a lecture of the Institute course delivered Monday, Feb. 12, 1877. He was one of the most active members of the committee of arrangements for the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Institute, Wednesday, March 5, 1873,† and on this occasion read a poem.

He was also an active and interested member of the committee on the commemoration by the Institute, Sept. 18, 1878, of the fifth half century of the landing of Governor Endicott in Salem,‡ and he prepared an eloquent address on this occasion.

For many years he was chairman of the publication committee of the Institute, a position of much responsibility and usefulness. One of the most important of Dr. Atwood's later services was the preparation of a noble tribute to the life and character of the late John Bertram.

Dr. Atwood will long be cherished in grateful memory by the members of the Essex Institute.

REV. JOSEPH BANVARD, D.D., a well known Baptist clergyman, died at Neponset on Wednesday, Sept. 28, 1887, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. He was born in the city of New York, May 9, 1810. His father, David Bonverd (the spelling of the name being changed to Banvard in the course of a business life), was the son of a Huguenot refugee who came from France about 1770 and settled in the city of New York; his mother was Elizabeth Mead, of Stamford, Conn. His health was delicate during his childhood and boyhood. He was a pupil at Joseph

* See Bulletin of Essex Institute, VOL. IX, pp. 21-31.

† See Bulletin of Essex Institute, VOL. V, p. 66.

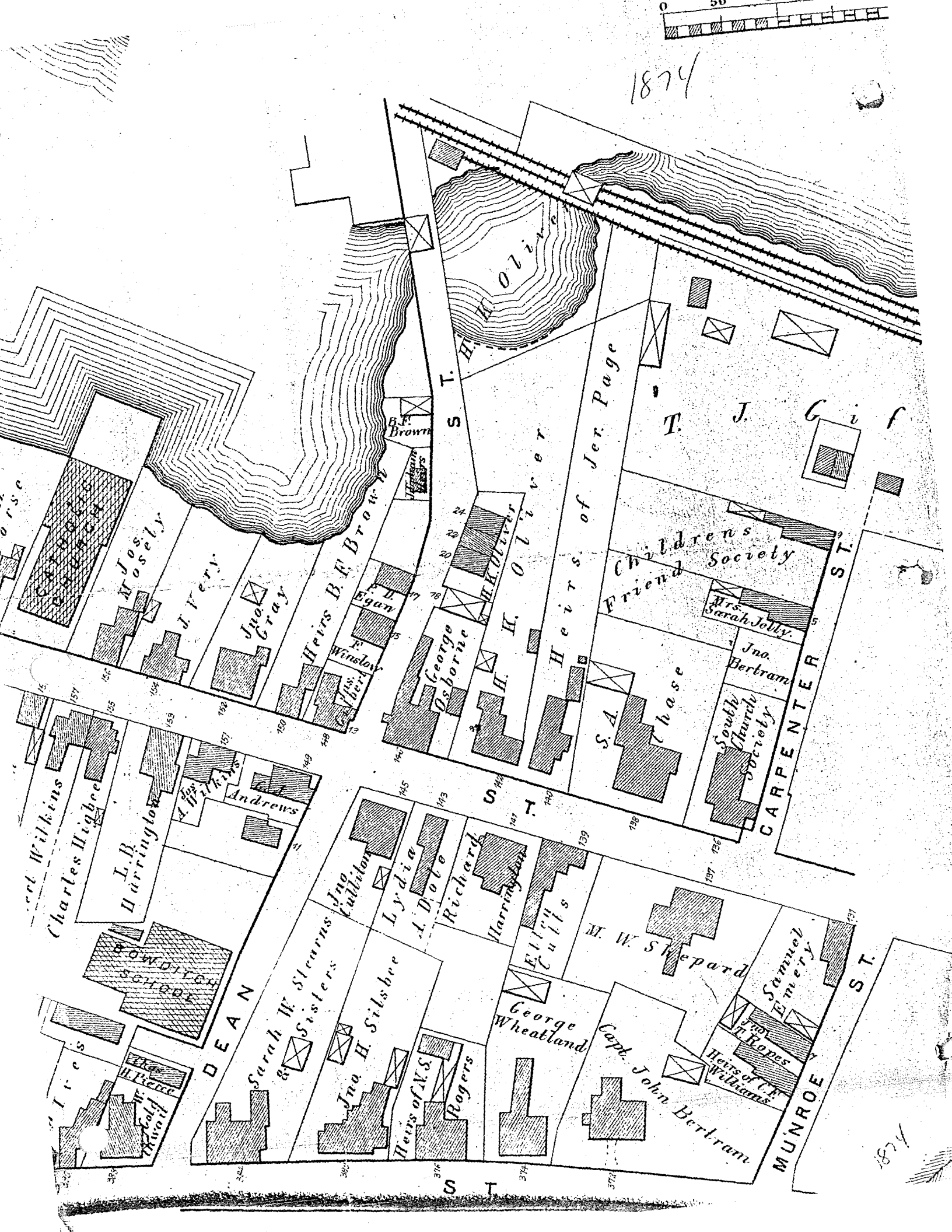
‡ See Bulletin of Essex Institute, VOL. X, p. 151; also Hist. Collections of Essex Institute, VOL. XV, pp. 101-332.

Note:

The Essex Institute has in its photo collection a view of Federal St. as a tree lined, dirt street. The date is given as 1884-5 and features horse and carriages. It is labeled as "former parsonage of South Church now (1921) res. of Harrison M. Davis."

Reference to book and page are deed books at the Registry of Deeds Probate numbers are cases at Probate Court, both located in the same building. Maps are not meant to be exact, just for illustration purposes.

1874



Charles Higbee

L. B. Harrington

DEAN

Sarah W. Stearns & Sisters

Jno. H. Silsbee

Heirs of N.S. Rogers

S.T.

Jno. Culliton

Lydia A. Dole

Richard Harrington

George Wheatland

M. W. Shepard

Capt. John Bertram

MUNROE ST.

S.T.

Heirs B.F. Brown

George Osborne

H. H. Oliver

Heirs of Jer. Page

Children's Friend Society

Mrs. Sarah Jolly

Jno. Bertram

South Church Society

CARPENTER ST.

T. J. Giff

1874

