

HISTORIC SALEM INC

13 ½ Meadow Street

Built for
Charles R. Banks,
machinist, and
Mary Mccusker, wife
1898

Research Provided by
Robert Booth, Public History Services Inc.

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Owners & Occupants
13½ Meadow Street, Salem

By Robert Booth, Public History Services Inc., January, 2020.

According to available evidence, this house was built in 1898 for machinist Charles R. Banks and wife Mary Mccusker.

In April, 1894, Mary Lavery granted to Mary, wife of Charles R. Banks, of Salem, a lot fronting 50' on Meadow Street, being formerly Lot 146 in the division of the E. H. Derby estate (ED 1407:295). Her husband James Lavery had acquired it in 1883 (ED 1115:152).

Charles Richard Banks (1864 .. 1925) was born in Annapolis, Nova Scotia, in 1864, the son of William Henry Banks and Phoebe J. Coombs. Charles was among the eldest of twelve children. Charles immigrated to the United States in 1888 and settled in Salem. He worked as a machinist and on April 27, 1893, married Mary J. Mccusker of Salem.

Mary was born in Ireland, the daughter of John and Sarah Mccusker, who came to Salem by 1870 with their family. John died in 1871, leaving Sarah with the care of Patrick, Mary, Margaret, and Ellen, aged 17 to 11. Mary worked as a dressmaker by 1880; her brother Patrick J. Mccusker became a lawyer; the McCuskers resided at 2 Laurel Street in 1880 (see 1880 census, h. 222). Later Patrick J. Mccusker would purchase the house at 15 Meadow Street.

In Salem, the McCuskers found a city (once an important seaport) that was a thriving manufacturing and transportation center. The largest textile factory was that of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company, at the foot of Harbor Street, on the Point; but the major employer was the leather industry, whose factories and tanneries lined Boston Street and Mason Street, near the Broadley house.

Salem was carried forward by manufacturing leather and shoes and textiles. The managers and capitalists tended to build their new, grand houses along Lafayette Street (these houses may still be seen, south of Holly Street; many are in the French Second Empire style, with mansard roofs).

In 1874 the city was visited by a tornado and shaken by a minor earthquake. In the U. S. centennial year, 1876, A. G. Bell of Salem announced that he had discovered a way to transmit voices over telegraph wires.

In this decade, large numbers of French-Canadian families came to work in Salem's mills and factories, and more houses and tenements were built. The better-off workers bought portions of older houses or built small homes for their families in the outlying sections of the city; and by 1879 the Naumkeag Steam Cotton mills would employ 1500 people (including hundreds of children) and produce annually nearly 15 million yards of cloth. Forty shoe factories were employing 600-plus operatives. Tanning, in both Salem and Peabody, remained a very important industry, and employed hundreds of breadwinners. On Boston Street in 1879, the Arnold tannery caught fire and burned down.

Salem kept building infrastructure; and new businesses arose, and established businesses expanded. Retail stores thrived; horse-drawn trolleys ran every which-way; and machinists, carpenters, millwrights, and other specialists all thrived. In 1880, Salem's manufactured goods were valued at about \$8.4 million, of which leather accounted for nearly half.

By the mid-1880s, Salem's cotton-cloth mills at the Point employed 1400 people who produced about 19 million yards annually, worth about \$1.5 million. The city's large shoe factories stood downtown behind the stone depot and on Dodge and Lafayette Streets, and off Jefferson Avenue near St. Anne's Church. A jute bagging company prospered with plants on Skerry Street and English Street; its products were sent south to be used in cottonbaling. Salem factories also produced lead, paint, and oil. At the Eastern Railroad yard on Bridge Street, cars were repaired and even built new.

In the summer of 1886, the Knights of Labor brought a strike against the manufacturers for a ten-hour day and other concessions; but the manufacturers imported labor from Maine and Canada, and kept going. The strikers held out, and there was violence in the streets, and even rioting; but the owners prevailed, and many of the defeated workers lost their jobs and suffered, with their families-through a bitter winter.

In 1887 the streets were first lit with electricity, replacing gas. The gas works, which had stood on Northey Street since 1850, was moved to a larger site on Bridge Street in 1888, opposite the Beverly Shore.

This was the point at which Charles R. Banks arrived from Nova Scotia.

More factories and more people required more space for buildings, more roads, and more storage areas. This space was created by filling in rivers, harbors, and ponds. The once-broad North River was filled from both shores, and became a canal along Bridge Street above the North Bridge. The large and beautiful Mill Pond, which occupied the whole area between the present

Jefferson Avenue, Canal Street, and Loring Avenue, finally vanished beneath streets, storage areas, junk-yards, rail-yards, and parking lots. The South River, too, with its epicenter at Central Street (the Custom House had opened there in 1805) disappeared under the pavement of Riley Plaza and New Derby Street, and some of its old wharves were joined together with much in-fill and turned into coal-yards and lumber-yards. Only a canal was left, running in from Derby and Central Wharves to Lafayette Street.

In 1894 the rest of the Banks family moved to Salem from Nova Scotia. Among them was Henry E. Banks (1867-1953), who soon found work as a foreman at the Forest River Lead Works. At that time Charles R. Banks was working as a machinist. Charles soon joined Henry as a foreman at the Lead Works, a complex that straddled the Forest River in Salem-Marblehead, at the head of Salem Harbor.

Charles and Mary would have two children: Sarah E., born in July, 1894, and James J., born in April, 1898. The family was Roman Catholic, the religion in which Mary had been raised. At first they resided at 13 Meadow Street, their home through 1897 (per Directory).

On the back of the lot, the Bankses had a new house built in _____ as their new residence (#13½). The house on the front of the lot (#13) was rented to tenants.

VALUATION

On Dec. 1, 1898, the Bankses took out a mortgage with the Salem Five for \$1000 (ED 1564:455).

In the 1899 Directory, we see Charles R. Banks, machinist, head of a household residing at "rear 13 Meadow." In the 1901 Directory he is again identified as a foreman at the Lead Works (as was brother Henry Banks, who lived in Marblehead). The rest of the Banks family then lived at 33 Hazel Street, except for the father William Henry Banks (1841-1916) who resided in Marblehead and worked as a laborer.

In the 1900 census (house 29, ward five), we find Charles R. Banks, 37, at "13 rear Meadow." He was working as a machinist. Mary J. was 41; Sarah was five and James two. Charles continued to work as a machinist and foreman at the Lead Works. His mother and most of his sisters moved to Lynn (1905). Charles prospered, and he and Mary acquired more property in Salem, including (in 1907) three lots on Hazel & Roslyn Streets.

In 1910 the family resided here (13½) per the census (h. 343, ward 5): Charles, 47, had become a painter, with his own art shop; Mary was 49, Sarah 15, and James 12. Charles' mother, Phoebe, 67, resided in Lynn with her daughters Nettie, Wealthy, Helen, Ruth, and Louise, all working in sales (census).

In 1910 and 1911 (per Directories) Charles was identified as working as a machinist; but he was also a painter. In 1911-12 the family moved to then-11 Roslyn Street (per Directories): in 1912 Charles was identified as a machinist, in 1913 a painter.

The family did not return to 13½ Meadow Street, which, in 1913, was rented to Elmer O. Stanchfield, who kept a grocery store at 17 Meadow (per 1913 Directory).

In September, 1913, Charles and Mary again mortgaged the premises at 13 and 13½ Meadow Street for \$2500 to the Salem Five bank (ED 2226:587).

In 1914 Mrs. Phoebe (Coombs) Banks would move to Somerville with two of her daughters; and in 1935 she would die there at the age of ninety-two.

Salem kept growing. The Canadians were followed in the early 20th century by large numbers of Polish and Ukrainian families, who settled primarily in the Derby Street neighborhood, and by Sicilians, in the High Street neighborhood. By the eve of World War One, the bustling, polyglot city supported large department stores and factories of every description. People from the surrounding towns, and Marblehead in particular, came to Salem to do their shopping; and its handsome government buildings, as befit the county seat, were busy with conveyances of land, lawsuits, and probate proceedings. The city's politics were lively, and its economy was strong.

On June 25, 1914, in the morning, in Blubber Hollow (Boston Street at Proctor), a fire started in small wooden shoe factory and soon raced out of control, for the west wind was high and the season had been dry. Out of Blubber Hollow the fire roared easterly, a monstrous front of flame and smoke, wiping out the houses of Boston Street, Essex Street, and upper Broad Street, and then sweeping through Hathorne, Winthrop, Endicott, and other residential streets. Men and machines could not stop it: the enormous fire crossed over into South Salem and destroyed the neighborhoods west of Lafayette Street, then devoured the mansions of Lafayette Street itself, and raged onward into the wooden homes of The Point. Despite the combined efforts of heroic fire crews from many towns and cities, the fire overwhelmed everything in its path: the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company factory complex exploded in an inferno. At Derby Street, just beyond Union,

factory complex exploded in an inferno. At Derby Street, just beyond Union, after a 13-hour rampage, the monster died, having consumed 250 acres, 1600 houses, and 41 factories, and leaving three dead and thousands homeless. Some people had insurance, some did not; all received much support and generous donations from all over the country and the world. It was one of the greatest urban disasters in the history of the United States. In short order, businesses were rebuilt and new houses and apartment buildings went up; and several urban-renewal projects (including Hawthorne Boulevard, which involved removing old houses and widening old streets) were put into effect.

By 1917 the Banks family had moved from Roslyn Street to then-67 Ocean Avenue (per Directory). The family of Edwin Dorrien (1868-1949) then moved in here. He was working as a driver, daughter Alice was a shoe worker, son Walter F. worked in Beverly at the United Shoe Machinery Corporation (per Directory). A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Edwin was the son of John Dorrien, born in Scotland, and Eliza Young, born in Ireland. In 1892, in Georgetown, Mass., he and Anne Victoria Gilroy {1869-1922) had wed; and they would have many children. In the 1890s they moved to Haverhill, then to Somerville and environs; and by 1904 they were in Salem. By 1910 Edwin was a driver (teamster) for a tonic company.

In 1920 (per census, ward 5, h. 118) the numerous Dorrien family lived here: Edwin, 50, worked as a buffer at a leather factory; the others were Annie V., 49, Leonard, 25, leather worker, Helen, 21, stenographer, Charles, 17, sorter in a leather factory, Grace, 15, and Louise, 12. Older offspring Edwin L. and Alice F. lived elsewhere. The Dorriens were residing here in 1922 when Mrs. Annie V. (Gilroy) Dorrien died on May 18. Edwin would survive her by many years; he died on June 24, 1949 .

In 1925, both Mary and Charles Banks died. Mary died on January ZZ=. Charles died on April 23rd. Both died at home, 67 Ocean Avenue.

In March, 1927, James J. Banks, 29, and his sister Sarah (Mrs. Harold Regan), 32, sold the premises at 13-13½ Meadow to Mrs. Marie Jeanne (Ouelette) Caron (ED 2716:495). Her husband was Leon Jean Caron {1898-1980) who was born in Salem. When Leon was a toddler (1900) his father, Arthur, worked as a machinist (per census) and the family resided at 35 Lawrence Street. Leon had a brother, Lionel, and sisters Odile and Marie. He would grow up in Salem and learn the trade of a house carpenter. In 1926, evidently, he and Marie Jeanne Ouelette were wed.

Mrs. Marie Jeanne Caron died in 1929, at thirty, leaving her husband, Leon, with the care of sons Thomas, two, and Alfred, a newborn. Leon's grief may

be imagined. He moved in with his parents (Arthur Caron and Alma Michaud of Lawrence Street).

The house at 13½ Meadow was rented out for several years. In 1935 the tenant was Louis Claise, a salesman at the Pelletier Shade Shop; he resided here with his wife Laura and perhaps children (per 1935 Directory).

Leon J. Caron remarried, and in 1939 his wife Yvonne A. Ouelette (1895- 1990) gave birth to a daughter, whom they named Catherine. The Carons were then residing here (13½); and in 1940 (per census): Leon J. Caron, 42, Yvonne, 45, Thomas, 13, Alfred, 11, and Catherine, one. Next door (#15) lived old Miss Margaret Mccusker, 80, the sister of Mrs. Mary Banks who had lived here many years before.

In September, 1941, the Carons sold a small slice of land on the west side of the lot to James Banks and Sarah (Banks) Regan, who evidently had inherited or acquired #15 (ED 3277:346, also 345-6).

In July, 1950, Leon J. Caron became the owner of the property here, which had technically been owned by his two sons as heirs of his deceased wife Marie Jeanne (ED 3754:165, also 3658:136,137,275-6, and 3754:164).

In February, 1955, Leon & Yvonne Caron sold the premises to Leo & Rita Turgeon (ED 4141:340).

The two houses and land were sold as follows:

1961 Turgeons to Pelletiers

1985 Pelletiers to Pelletiers

1986 Pelletiers to Romanovitz

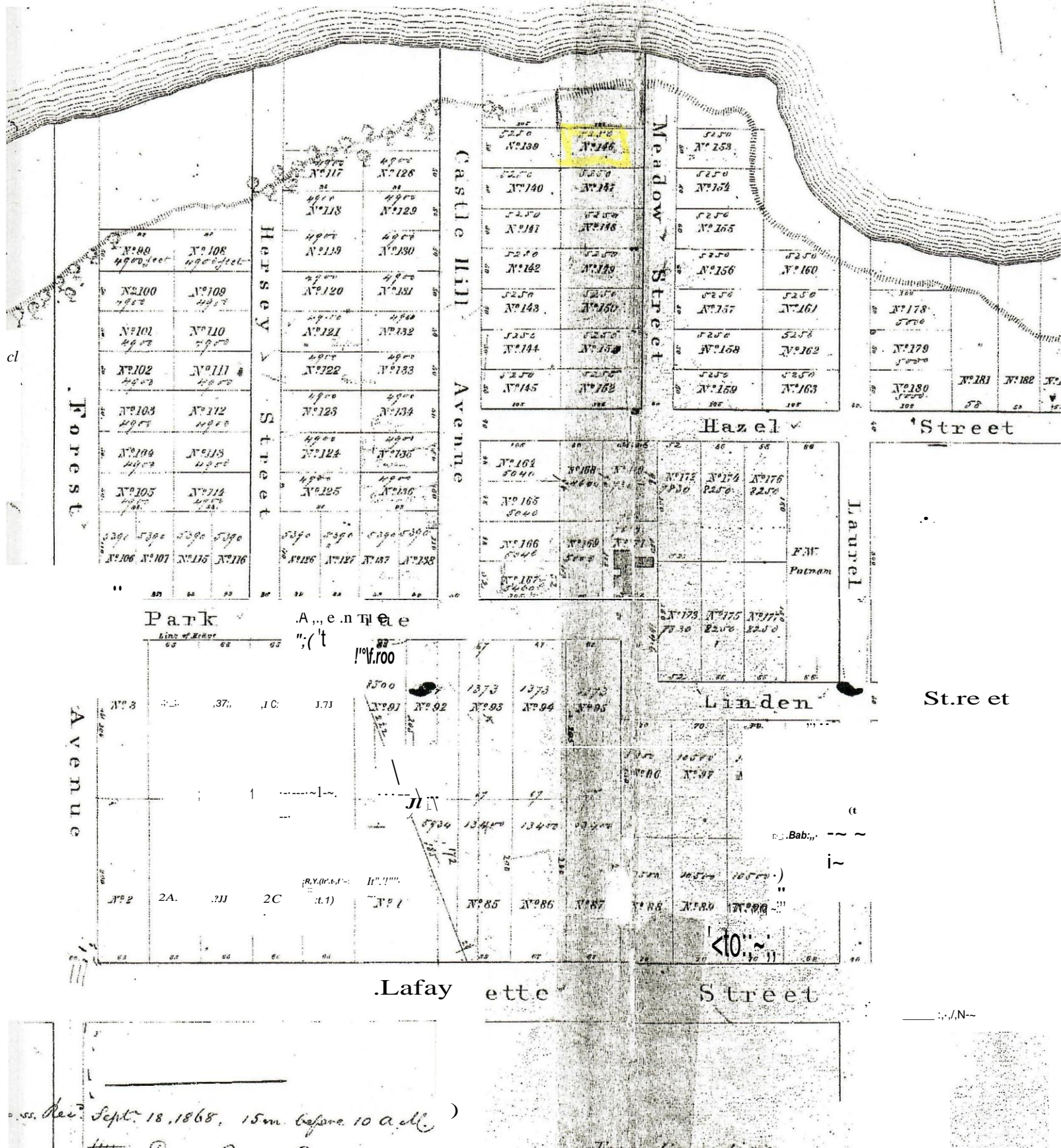
1994 Romanovitz to Simonson

2015 Simonson & Tulle to Salem Residential Rental Properties LLP.

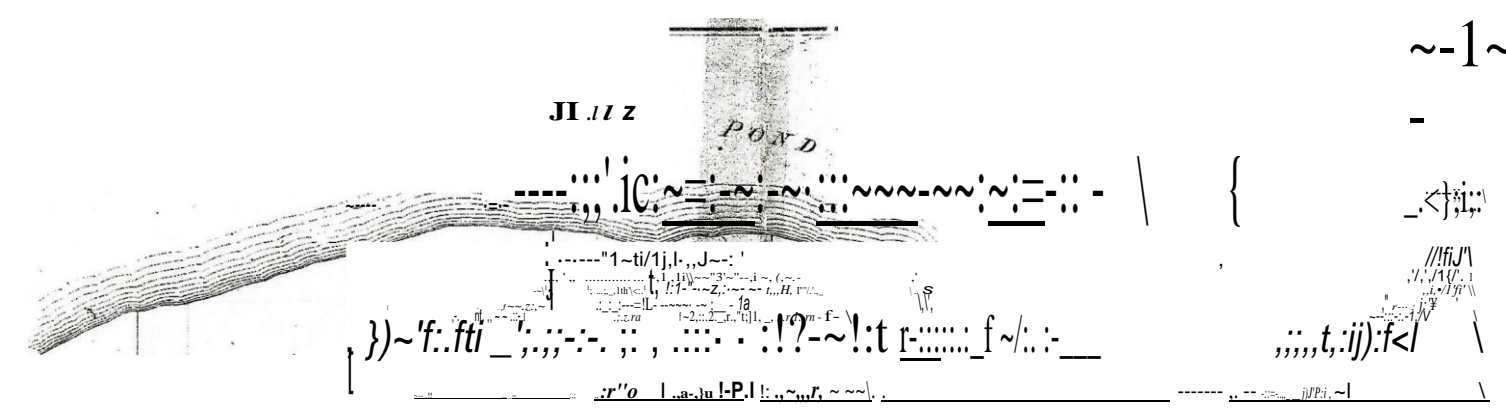
The latter sold the two houses separately as condominiums.

Jf. 12

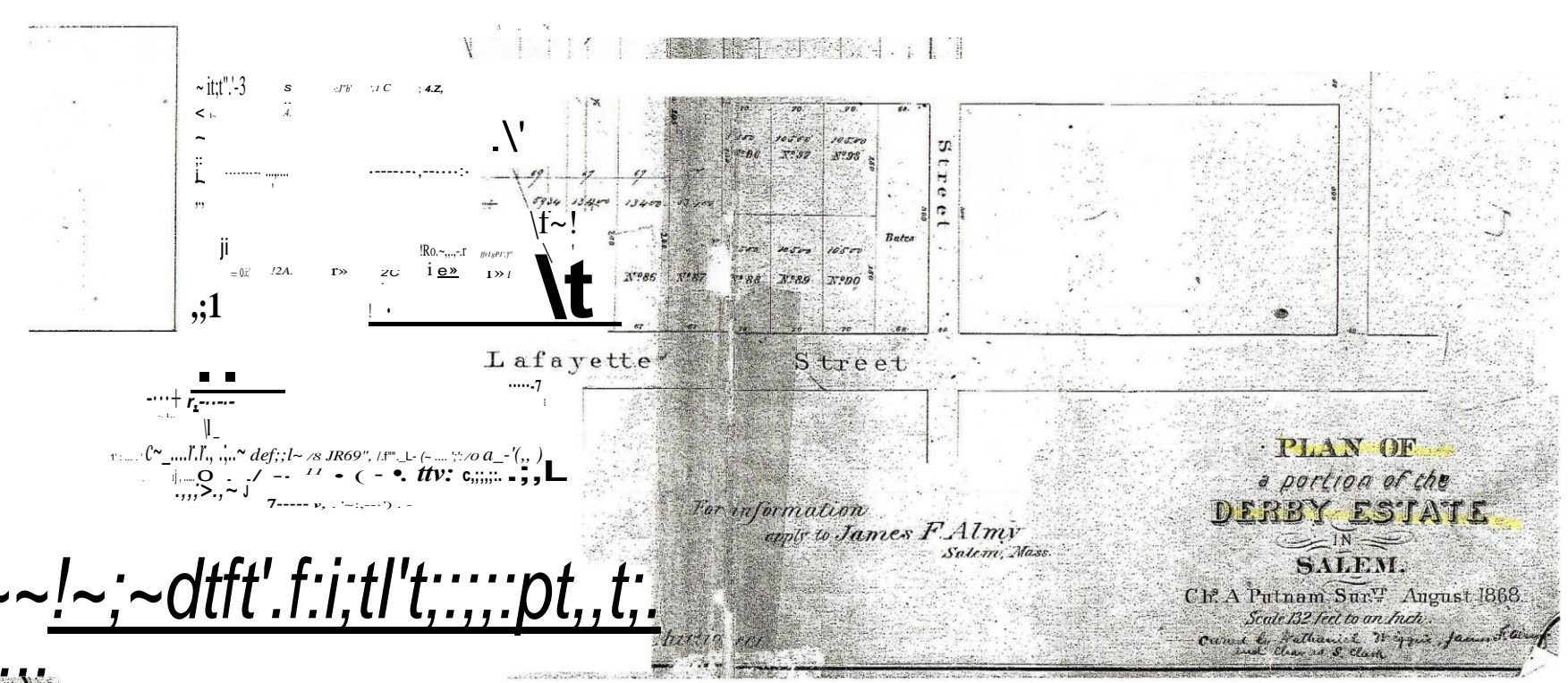
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Request Info



Glossary & Sources

A figure like (ED 123:45) refers to book 123, page 45, Essex South Registry of Deeds.

A figure like (#12345) refers to Essex Probate case 12345, on file at the Essex Probate Court, or on microfilm at Mass. Archives, Boston, or at the Peabody Essex Museum's Phillips Library, Rowley.

Salem Crew Lists (SCL) found on-line at Mystic Seaport site.

MSSRW refers to the multi-volume compendium, *Mass. Soldiers & Sailors in the Revolutionary War*₁ at the Salem Public Library among other places.

MSSCRW refers to the multi-volume compendium, *Mass. Soldiers, Sailors1 & Marines in the Civil War*₁ at the Salem Public Library among other places.

EIHC refers to the Essex Institute Historical Collections (discontinued), a multi-volume set (first volume published in 1859) of data and articles about **Essex** County. The indices of the EIHC have been consulted regarding many of the people associated with this house.

The six-volume published Salem Vital Records (marriages, births, and deaths through 1849) have been consulted, and the Salem Directory and later Naumkeag Directory, with data about residents and their addresses, etc.

Sidney Perley's three-volume *History of Salem, 1626-1716*₁ has been consulted, as has the four-volume *William Bentley's Diary*, J. Duncan Phillips' books, some newspapers, and other sources.

Salem real estate valuations, and, where applicable, Salem Street Books, have also been consulted, as have genealogies.

There is much more material available about Salem and its history; and the reader is encouraged to make his or her own discoveries.

--Public History Services