

Historic Salem Incorporated

P.O. Box 865

Salem, Massachusetts 01970

12 River Street

Built for

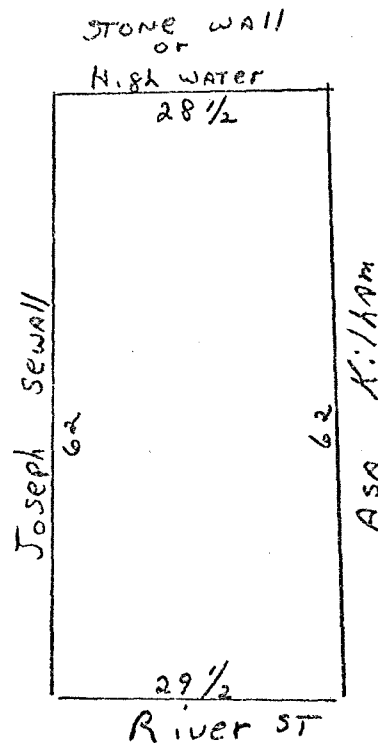
WILLIAM FARRINGTON, trader

by the year 1823

Research by,
Joyce King
March 1979

12 River St.

The lot on which this house stands was part of a large tract of land owned by the Beckford family for many years. When the Beckford heirs sold off this land most buyers bought one lot on the south side of the lane and one across on the north extending to the river. This was the case when on Sept. 27, 1782 John Beckford, yeoman, sold for 32 pounds 7 shillings to Joel Richards of Roxbury, housewright, two lots of land one on the south side of the lane and one on the north side (now 12 River St.) including all the flats adjoining.



(book 139 page 223)

On August 30, 1785 Joel Richards sold for 200 pounds to David Sweet, of Campbells Gore, Hillsbough, N.H., both lots of land. (Mr. Richards also conveyed a dwelling house which was on the first lot, the south side of River St.) (book 143 page 275)

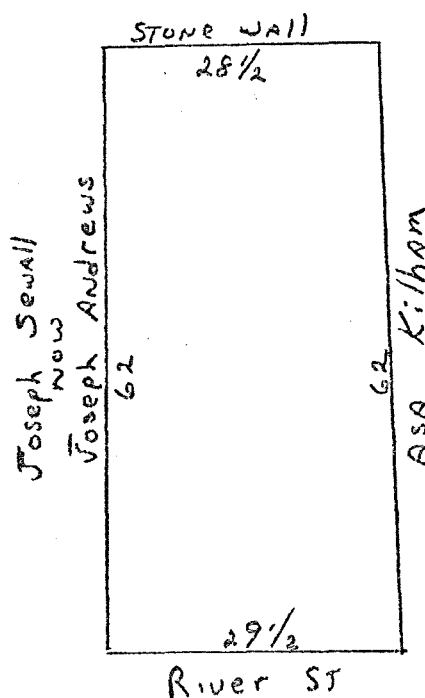
On Sept. 1, 1785 David Sweet sold the same property for 250 pounds to James Nichols, of Salem. (book 143 page 276)

When Mr. Nichols died in 1810 he left a great deal of property in Reading, Salem and Malden. His estate was divided by his heirs in 1811. The lot now 12 River St. was assigned to James Nichols Jr. as part of his share in the estate of his father James. (This estate was found at the Middlesex Probate in Cambridge #15935)

Later in 1811, because of James Nichols profligate mode of living, his idleness, drinking and debauchery, his estate was in danger. Daniel Gould of Stoneham was appointed guardian for James, non compos mentis. (Middlesex Probate #15991) On Feb. 10, 1819 the court ordered Daniel Gould to sell enough real estate to satisfy debts of \$998.88. Mr. Gould gave public notice of the sale in the Salem Gazette of Nov. 9, 1819:

Three story dwelling house and land North St. near the North Bridge also a house lot on River St. adjoining land belonging to the heirs of Asa Kilham. Said real estate belongs to James Nichols of South Reading. Sale to begin at the three story house. Daniel Gould guardian. Hero Nichols auctioneer.

On Nov. 29, 1819 Mr. Gould sold to William Farrington, trader, of Salem for the sum of \$67 which was the highest sum bid at the public sale. The real estate was part of the real estate assigned to James Nichols out of the estate of his honoured father James Nichols late of South Reading.



To James Nichols son of said deceased in
Salem, viz.

One half of a dwelling house & land in Salem
in the County of Essex on North Street bounded as
follows to wit: beginning at the Southeast corner thereof
on North Street & on land of Mrs. Watts thence the line
runs northerly on said street twenty three feet to the
passage way between the two houses thence westerly by said
passage way fifty three feet thence southerly to land of
said Watts thence Easterly by said Watts land to the bound
not mentioned. The westerly half of the cellar the
front room room the west chamber in the second
story the two South chambers in the third story the
westerly half of the garret with privilege of passing
ascending up & down the stairs from the cellar to the
garret & assigning to said James Nichols all the other
rights & privileges in said house & land that appertain
to said house reserving to the owners of the corner house privilege
of the passage way between the two houses. The land set

at the westerly front of the house is twenty three
feet from north to south & sixteen feet from east
to west as set off to said James Nichols by the
division of said house & land in a former report
of Commissioners appointed for that purpose.

J. S. Nichols

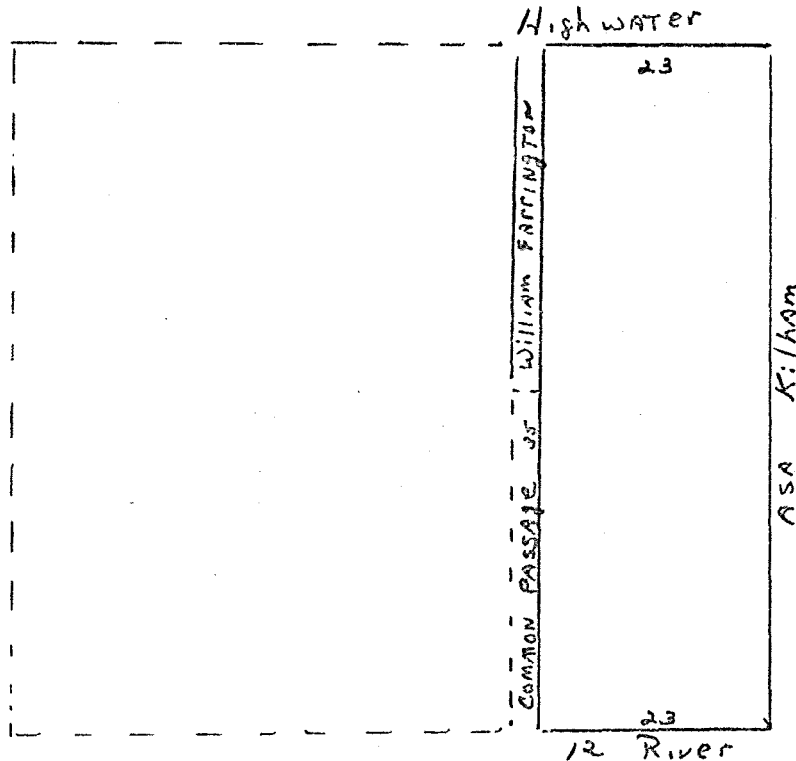
also one lot of land situated in said town
lying on River Street so called bounded as follows to wit
lying easterly on said street twenty nine feet & one half
Easterly on land of John William Smith two feet
westerly on a Stone wall or high water mark twenty
eight feet & one half westerly on land of Joseph Sewell
Sixty two feet to the lands first mentioned

One piece of tillage land situated in South Reading
(formerly Reading) the Pientie field so called about two
acres bounded as follows to wit. beginning at the Northwesterly
corner thereof by land of said deceased as set off for the widow
dower & on land of Seth Wain then the line runs Southwesterly
by said Wain's land to land of Benjamin Searin then
Easterly by said Searin's land to land of Joseph Searin
to land belonging to the heirs of Ebenezer James Searin
thence Northwesterly by said heirs land to the widow dower
aforesaid thence westerly by said dower to the land first
mentioned

One other piece of tillage land situated in
South Reading aforesaid containing about one acre
bounded as follows to wit. beginning at the Southeast
corner thereof at the road leading to Stoneham & on land
of Charles Gould thence the line runs Easterly by
said Gould's land to land of James Emerson thence
Northwesterly by said Emerson's land to land of James
Widol; thence westerly by said Widol's land to the
road aforesaid thence Southwesterly by said road to the
land first mentioned

One piece of mowing & pasture land situated
in South Reading aforesaid containing about five acres
bounded as follows to wit. beginning at a Stake & Stone
at the road leading to Stoneham & on land of James Widol

The first mention of a house on this land is when on Dec. 29, 1823, William Farrington sold to Peter Grover, cordwainer, the lot of land with a dwelling house and all other buildings "now standing". Also half part of land between the house and the house of William standing west of the premises for the express purpose and no other of being annexed to the other. Half of the land between said houses to remain open forever as a common passageway for equal benefit of the two estates, which passage so reserved is to extend north from River St. 35 feet and no more. The same premises I purchased from Daniel Gould guardian of James Nichols Nov. 29, 1819. The same day Peter Grover obtained a \$400 mortgage from William Farrington. (book 234 page 83)



(Mrs. Mary Farrington wife of William owned the land outlined in dashes. She purchased this land from Joseph Andrews in 1822.)

Mr. Grover signed his rights to the property to Abel Lawrence, bookseller, on April 27, 1824. Mr. Lawrence was also assigned the mortgage by William Farrington about the same time. On May 26, 1828 we find Able Lawrence of Salem, bookseller, selling to David Robbins of N.Y., N.Y. a bricklayer, for \$393, the lot of land on River St. with all the buildings thereon with a privilege in said passageway set in the mortgage deed of Peter Grover to William Farrington. (book 248 page 245)

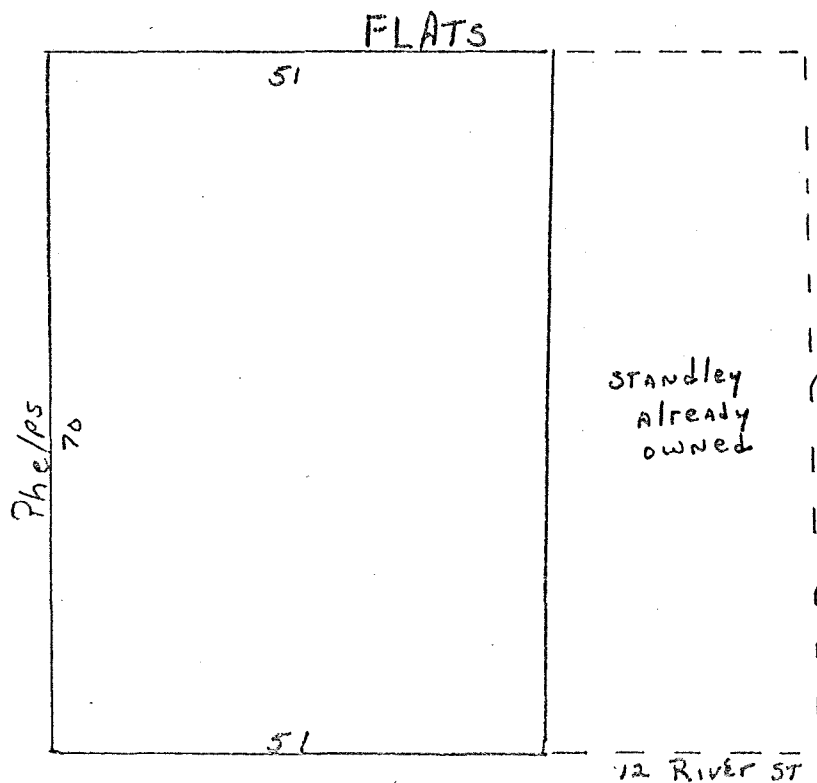
Dec. 24, 1833 David Robbins and wife Relief of N.Y., N.Y. sold to Samuel Standley of Salem, bricklayer, for \$525, the lot of land and dwelling house and other buildings, the same conveyed to me by Able Lawrence May 25, 1828. (book 274 page 297)

During these last ten years or so the history of this house is not very clear. Other than the information in the deeds, very little can be found about the owners and occupants. Mr. Farrington bought and sold a great deal of property during the early 1800's. This lot which he purchased in 1819 was situated on the bank of what was then a broad and beautiful river. Large vessels sailed up this river called by some the Blue Danube. When the tide was in, one could fish and swim in the backyard. At the time of William's death in 1832 the only property listed in his probate was a 5 foot lot on River St. extending to the river. (probate #9298)

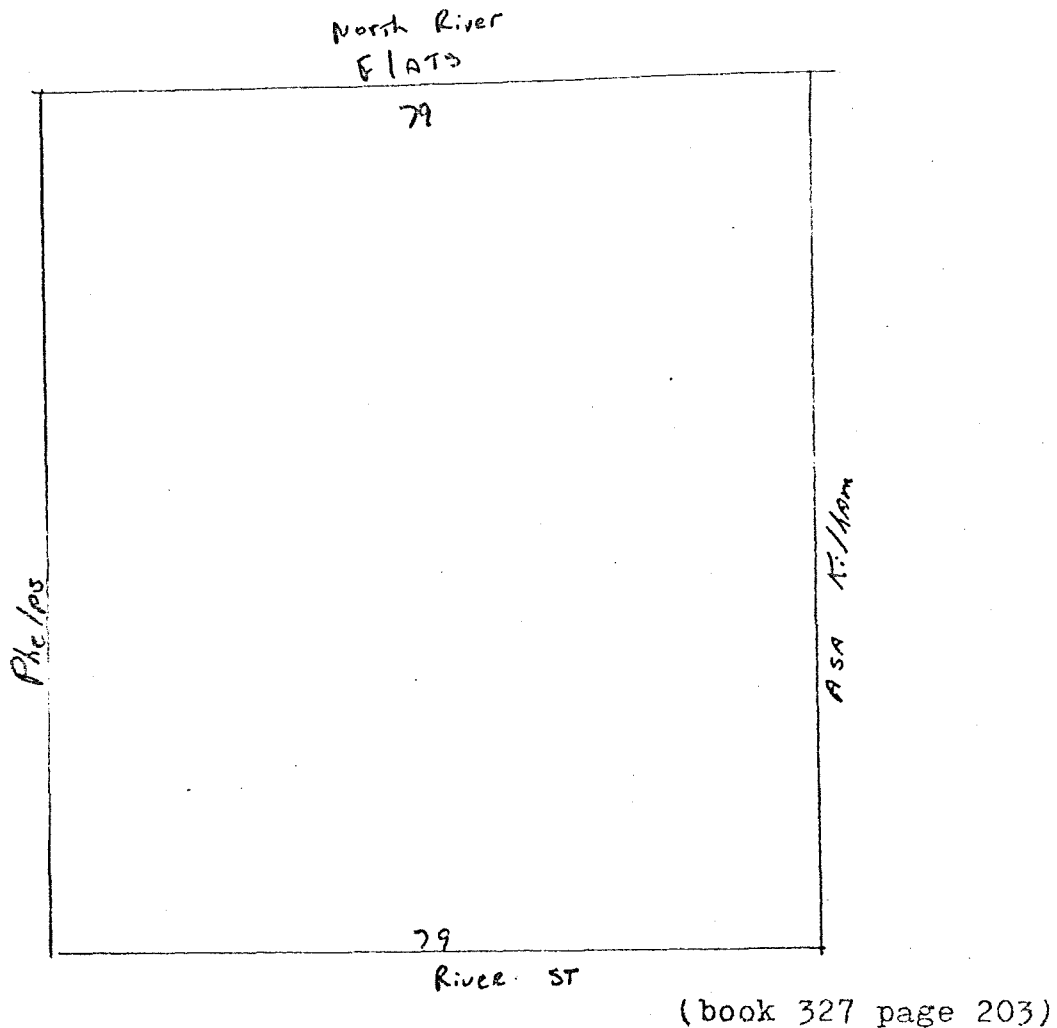
Peter Grover, cordwainer, was not taxed for the property in the 1820's. Very often during this period the tenant paid the taxes on property. Unless the name of the tenant is known the tax records are useless.

Samuel Standley is the first owner and occupant that can be documented by tax records and city directories. Mr. Standley, of Beverly, was born in 1810. He was a mason by trade and on August 11, 1832 married Mary Upham (b. July 6, 1809). Two children were born during the time the Standley's lived in the house; Charles (b. March 20, 1837) and Albert (b. April 8, 1840). A daughter Mary Ellen (b. 1842) and a son Samuel (b. 1844) were born after the couple moved from the house.

Mr. Standley purchased the lot of land next door on Oct. 23, 1835, for \$150, from Mary Farrington.



On Oct. 20, 1841, Samuel S. and Mary Standley sold for the sum of \$800 to Joshua Stone the message:



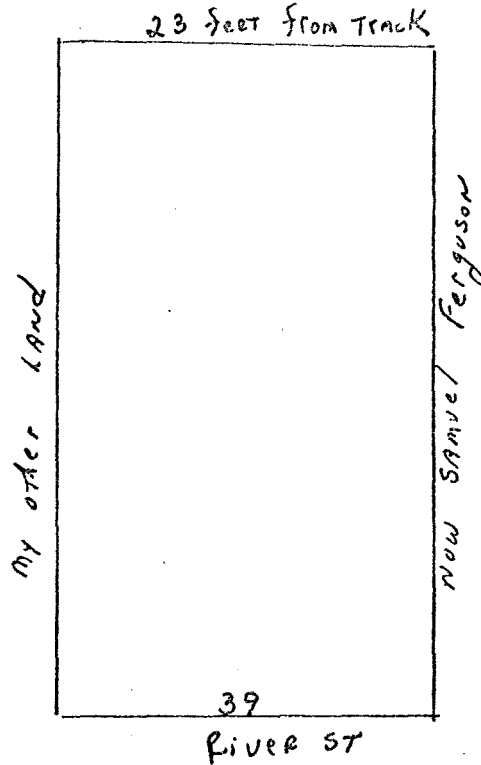
During Mr. Stone's ownership the tax books show as living at 12 River St.: Joshua Stone, carrier; James Tuttle and Isreal Pert. (only males were listed in these books)

On Oct. 2, 1845 Joshua B. and Mary Stone sold to Augustus Dickson, carpenter and Andrew E. Cressy, provision dealer, the message on River St. for \$1,000. The same land described in book 327 page 203. (book 359 page 123)

Andrew E. Cressy for \$550 released all his rights in the property to Augustus Dickson on Nov. 25, 1846.

Mr. Dickson rented out the property to J.C. Tuttle in 1846 and 1847.

On Oct. 14, 1847 Augustus Dickson and Elizabeth, his wife, sold for \$806.25 to Owen Shay, laborer, the messuage including all flats adjoining the premises lying south of a point 23 feet distant from the center of the track of the Essex R.R. This is a portion of the estate conveyed to Andrew Creesy and me by Joshua B. Stone in 1845.



(book 388 page 271)

The same day Mr. Shay mortgaged the property to Mr. Dickson for \$600. The mortgage was assigned first to Moses Wells (book 392 page 81) then assigned to Henry Creesy (book 398 page 70) and by Creesy assigned to Robert Currey (book 406 page 54) possession taken by Robert Currey (book 439 page 45).

Mr. Shea lived in this house for ten years. The tax records for the years 1848-1858 show Owen Shea, laborer, as the owner. A federal census taken in 1850 gives a clear picture of the Shea family:

Shea

Owen	age 40	occupation laborer	born in Ire.
Ellen	30		" "
Michael	10		" New Brunswick
Ellen	8		" " "
Timothy	7		" Maine
Cornelius	5		" Mass.
Newgin	3		" "
Mary	1		" "

This chain of birth places shows the path some of the Irish immigrants took to come to Massachusetts. Unable to pay the fare of regular passage to the United States, the poorer Irish would book passage on Canadian lumber ships, which would otherwise return from England empty. Once in Canada the Irish would save their money and work their way down the coast into the United States until they reached their final destination. This could be the route taken by the Shea family.

On Dec. 1, 1858 Robert Currey, of Beverly, sold for \$408.98 to William Mack, physician, all the estate Robert possessed by virtue of foreclosure and breach of mortgage originally given by Owen Shea to Augustus Dickson. Said estate consists of a messuage bound on River St and North River and land of Ferguson and of Dickson, together with flats upon the Essex R.R.

Dr. Mack rented the house to Michael Ryan as the tax records for 1859 show. In 1860 another federal census was taken, the Ryan family is listed as:

Ryan

Michael	age 40	laborer	born Ire.
Catherine	40		" "
Mary	15		" Mass.
Bridget	11		" "
Elizabeth	6		" "
Ellen	4		" "

The Salem tax record for 1862:

12 River St.

Michael Ryan

William Mack owner
land 39 x 100 value \$400
house " 100
contains 3900 feet

On March 1, 1864 William Mack, physician sells to Michael Ryan for \$450 all the estate he held and possessed by virtue of a warrantee deed from Robert Currey:

North - by the North River

East - by White

South - by River St.

West - by Mc Carthy

together with the flats adjoining upon the location of the present Essex R.R. Michael Ryan mortgaged the same to William Mack for \$450 which amount was paid off on Feb. 14, 1872.

The federal census 1870:

"Rine"

Michael	age 45	laborer	born Ire.	can not read or write
Catherine	" 50		" "	" " " "
Elizabeth	" 16	no occupation	" Mass.	
Ellen	" 13	at school	" "	

Federal census 1880 shows two families at 12 River St.:

Ryan

Michael	age 60	laborer	born Ire.
Catherine	" 60		" "

Maloney

James	age 34	tanner	born Ire.
Mary	" 32		" "
Mary	" 8		" Mass.
Edward	" 6		" "
Joanna	" 4		" Eng.
John	" 2		" "

The Salem tax record 1881:

Michael Ryan age 62 owner value \$700
John Kingsley age 19

In the early 1880's the city took the flats to "abate the nuisance of the North River." Ryan was one of the owners of these flats and received \$200 in 1885 when a deed releasing the rights was recorded.

On Oct. 25, 1885 Michael Ryan sold to Mary Mc Cormick the same estate conveyed by Dr. Mack. (book 1184 page 102)

Nov. 6, 1886 in book 1186 page 66 the deed is recorded anew because in the previous deed Catherine did not release her rights. Then Mary Mc Cormick of Hyde Park stated that Michael and Catherine were to hold the estate jointly for their natural lives.

The tax records for the next few years show Mary Mc Cormick as the owner. The tenants were:

1887 Michael Ryan laborer age 68 died in Dec.
Thomas Henry age 41 tanner

1888 Lawrence Flannagan, tanner age 40
James White, laborer age 71
Thomas Corrigan, age 27
Lawrence Corrigan age 22

Oct. 25, 1888 Mary L. Mc Cormick, widow, of Hyde Park sold for \$1 and other consideration to Humphrey E. Moynihan of Salem a certain estate:

North - Bridge St.
East - by White now Jones
South - River St.
West - by Mc Carthy

the same conveyed by William Mack to Michael Ryan in 1864. Mr. Moynihan mortgaged the property to Hervy J. Dugan for \$400, which debt was paid off Feb. 23, 1895.

Humphrey E. Moynihan died May 29, 1900 leaving as his heirs a widow, Maria and a son Frances Joseph Moynihan, a minor.

Salem News May 31, 1900: Humphrey Moynahan died at his residence 12 River St. Tuesday afternoon. He leaves a widow and a son. The funeral was held this afternoon in St. James and burial at St. Mary's.

Since this time the house at 12 River St. has been in the hands of the Moynihan family, until now in 1979 Pamela Burns will purchase it.

Reference to book and page are deed books at the Registry of Deeds and reference to probate numbers are found at Probate Court. Both offices located on Federal St., Salem.

All maps and diagrams are not meant to be exact, just as a form of illustration.

