

Historic Salem incorporated

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

248 Lafayette Street

Built in 1848
for
John Clifton, Merchant

Research by Donna Vinson
February, 1992

**248 Lafayette Street
The John Clifton House
Built in 1848 for John Clifton, Merchant**

History of the Property:

Lafayette Street, formerly the sole road to Marblehead and the extensive "Southfields" farm of Ezekiel Derby, received its present name in 1838. Prior to that date, it was known as Curtice's Lane (1694), the road or highway leading from Salem to Marblehead (1779), the country road (1810), and the road leading from the new South Bridge (built by Derby and other Southfields landowners) to Marblehead (1818). The great Salem Fire of 1914 destroyed much of the northern half of the street, from New Derby to Holly streets. 248 Lafayette Street lies just to the south of the area devastated by the fire, and to the north of the former site of the Derby estate, an area encompassed by the present Laurel Street and Forest Avenue. The estate was partitioned and sold at public auction in 1868, and thereafter the southern half of Lafayette Street was divided into residential lots and gradually came to assume its present form.

The Derby family began selling individual lots adjoining their estate before the 1868 partition, and in January of 1848 E. Hersy Derby, Esquire, sold a lot bordered by his own property, Lafayette Street, Linden Steet, "which said Street is to be opened the next season", and "the lot lately sold to Joseph Gomes". The deed further stipulated that "the fences are to be built by said Clifton, and his buildings erected on a line with those already built" (**Essex County Registry of Deeds Book 392, leaf 79**). Clifton proceeded to erect his house in the very same year, apparently in accordance with the provisions of the deed. The new house was then designated 92 Lafayette Street. The 1851 Map of Salem (inserted) clearly indicates the new house and its few neighboring dwellings, as well as the recently laid-out Holly, Leach, and Linden streets.

The Clifton family occupied 92/248 Lafayette Street only until 1854, after which it was sold to Ripley Ropes, a merchant and member of the famed Ropes family of Salem. In an indication of the new construction on the street, 92 Lafayette Street was redesignated number 106 in 1859. Ropes and his wife Elizabeth resided on Lafayette Street until 1864, when they moved to New York City after his Salem business, "R.W. Ropes and Company", failed (Salem Directories, 1855-1864). The house appears to have been vacant until 1874, when Charles Osgood, artist, took up residence (Salem Directory, 1874).

Ripley Ropes, then of Brooklyn, New York, actually sold the

property in two parcels to Charles and Robert Osgood, father and son, in 1872 (E.C.R.D. Book 855, leaves 93-94), and both took up residence. An artist who specialized in portraits of local notables, Charles Osgood had formerly resided at 14 Brown Street near Salem Common and would occupy 110 Lafayette Street (the address from 1874-1893) until his death on December 26, 1890 (Salem Directories, 1874-1893). From 1890 to 1916 various members of the Osgood family retained interests in the property, which was redesignated number 246 in 1883 and finally 248 Lafayette Street in 1897 (Salem Directories, 1883-1898).

In 1916 the children and heirs of Charles Osgood sold their interests in the property to Robert Osgood and thus he became sole owner of the estate (E.C.R.D. Book 2350, pages 216-220). Osgood resided at the house until his death in 1924, after which it was acquired by the neighboring Gove family, who were then in the process of acquiring several investment properties adjoining their residence at 254 Lafayette Street (See inserted "Plan of Land of Lydia P. Gove, Salem, MA, June 1942, E.C.R.D. Book 3308, page 193; Essex County Registry of Probate no. 223209). The house was never again a single-family dwelling. From 1936 to 1941 it was home to the "Pioneer Inn Tea Room", and during the war it became a rooming house called "the Fairfield" (Salem Directories, 1924-1944).

Lydia Grove, daughter of Salem lawyer William Henry Gove, granddaughter of the famous tonic entrepreneur Lydia Pinkham, and a resident of Marblehead in her later years, died in 1948 and the trustees of her estate sold 248 Lafayette Street to Irlene and Antionette Esancy of Salem, "being Lot #5 on a plan of land of Lydia P. Gove" (E.C.R.D. Book 3608, pages 187-193). The Esancys took up residence in the house, but also continued to operate "the Fairfield". 248 Lafayette remained a rooming house even while it passed into the possession of a succession of real estate trusts from the later 1970s (E.C.R.D. Book 6338, page 124; E.C.R.D. Book 7826, page 274; E.C.R.D. Book 8166, page 556; E.C.R.D. Book 10199, page 90; E.C.R.D. Book 10759, page 141.). In July of 1991, the property became the possession of George and Joan Heller of Beverly, its present owners (E.C.R.D. Book 10866, page 355).

Documentation:

Essex County Registry of Deeds Book 392. leaf 79

Grantor: E. Hersy Derby of Salem, Esquire

Grantee: John Clifton of Salem, Merchant

Consideration: \$800

Conveyance of: ".....a lot of land in South Salem, and bounded as follows, Easterly by Lafayette Street, beginning at the South East corner of the lot lately sold to Joseph Gomes, and measuring sixty feet on said Street; Southerly by land of E. Hersy Derby, the line to run at right angles with Lafayette Street, and to

extend about three hundred feet to Linden Street (which said Street is to be opened the next system); Westerly by said Linden Street sixty feet; and Northerly by land of Joseph Gomes. The fences are to be built by said Clifton, and his buildings erected on a line with those already built."

Date recorded: January 10, 1848

E.C.R.D. Book 855, leaves 93-94

Grantor: Ripley Ropes of Brooklyn, New York

Grantees: Robert Osgood and Charles Osgood, both of Salem

Consideration: \$3000 (paid by Robert Osgood) and \$8000 (paid by Charles Osgood)

Conveyance of: two parcels of land bounded by "other land of grantor", by Lafayette Street, and by "land of Ballard", "subject to the restrictions named in a deed from E.H. Derby to Henry B. Ward recorded in Essex Registry in Book 393, leaf 215."

Date recorded: May 24, 1872

E.C.R.D. Book 2350, pages 216-217

Grantors: Susan W. Osgood, Nathan C. Osgood, and Albert E. Osgood, all of Salem

Grantee: Robert Osgood of Salem

Consideration: \$1

Conveyance of: "...the following described lot of land in said Salem, with the buildings thereon bounded easterly by Lafayette Street 60 feet, southerly by land of said Robert Osgood 150 feet, westerly by land of Luscomb 60 feet, and northerly by land of Smith 150 feet, being the estate no. 248 Lafayette Street and subject to the restrictions named in a deed from E.H. Derby to John Clifton date June 4, 1848 and recorded in Essex Registry of Deeds, Book 392, leaf 79. Being the same estate conveyed to Charles Osgood by Ripley Ropes by deed dated May 14, 1872 and recorded with Essex Deeds, So. District, Book 855, leaf 94. The grantors and the grantee are children of said Charles Osgood, the only other child of said Charles Osgood being Charles S. Osgood now deceased."

Date recorded: December 12, 1916

E.C.R.D. Book 2350, pages 217-218

Grantor: Robert Osgood of Salem, "Trustee for the benefit of Albert E. Osgood"

Grantee: William F. Derby of Salem

Consideration: \$1600

Conveyance of: 248 Lafayette Street. "This estate is sold to said Derby to be held by him as a conduit, to be immediately conveyed to the grantor in his individual capacity."

Date recorded: December 12, 1916

E.C.R.D. Book 2350, pages 218-219

Grantor: Robert Osgood of Salem, "Trustee for the benefit of Elizabeth W. Osgood"

Grantee: William F. Derby of Salem

Consideration: \$1600

Conveyance of: 248 Lafayette Street. "This estate is sold to said Derby to be held by him as a conduit, to be immediately conveyed to the grantor in his individual capacity."

Date recorded: December 12, 1916

E.C.R.D. Book 2350, pages 219-220

Grantor: William F. Derby of Salem

Grantee: Robert Osgood of Salem

Consideration: \$3200

Conveyance of: 248 Lafayette Street

Date recorded: December 12, 1916

E.C.R.D. Book 2683, pages 134-138

Grantors: Edward H. Osgood and Walter H. Roberts, "Executors of and Trustees under the will of Robert Osgood, late of Salem"

Grantee: Aroline C. Gove

Consideration: \$16,000

Conveyance of: two parcels of land on Lafayette Street, "comprising estate numbered 248 Lafayette Street."

Date recorded: June 15, 1926

Essex County Registry of Probate No. 223209

Estate of Lydia P. Gove, including Title to 248 Lafayette Street

E.C.R.D. Book 3608, pages 187-193

Grantors: Caroline Doty, Rachel Renetian, and Mildred Wilder, "Trustees under the will of Lydia P. Gove, late of Marblehead"

Grantee: Irlene and Antoinette Esancy

Consideration: paid

Conveyance of: 248 Lafayette Street, "being Lot #5 on a plan of land of Lydia P. Gove, recorded with Essex South District Registry of Deeds, Book 3308, page 193."

Date recorded: June 14, 1948

E.C.R.D. Book 6338, page 124

Grantors: Irlene and Antoinette Esancy
Grantees: Rodney A. Maurice of Middleton and Robert H. Roy of Salem, "Trustees of P & D Realty Trust"
Consideration: \$115,000
Conveyance of: 248 Lafayette Street
Date recorded: April 11, 1977

E.C.R.D. Book 7826, page 274

Grantor: Robert H. Roy, "Trustee of P & D Realty Trust"
Grantee: George A. Belisle, "Trustee of P & D Realty Trust"
Consideration: \$325,000
Conveyance of: 248 Lafayette Street
Date recorded: July 11, 1985

E.C.R.D. Book 8166, page 556

Grantor: George A. Belisle, "Trustee of P & D Realty Trust"
Grantee: Frederick D. Small of Topsfield
Consideration: \$450,000
Conveyance of: 248 Lafayette Street
Date recorded: March 20, 1986

E.C.R.D. Book 10199, page 90

Grantor: Bank of New England, 28 State Street, Boston, holder of a mortgage from Frederick D. and Karen J. Small
Grantee: Small Frye Properties, Inc., 28 State Street, Boston
Consideration: \$230,000
Conveyance of: 248 Lafayette Street
Date recorded: September 1, 1989

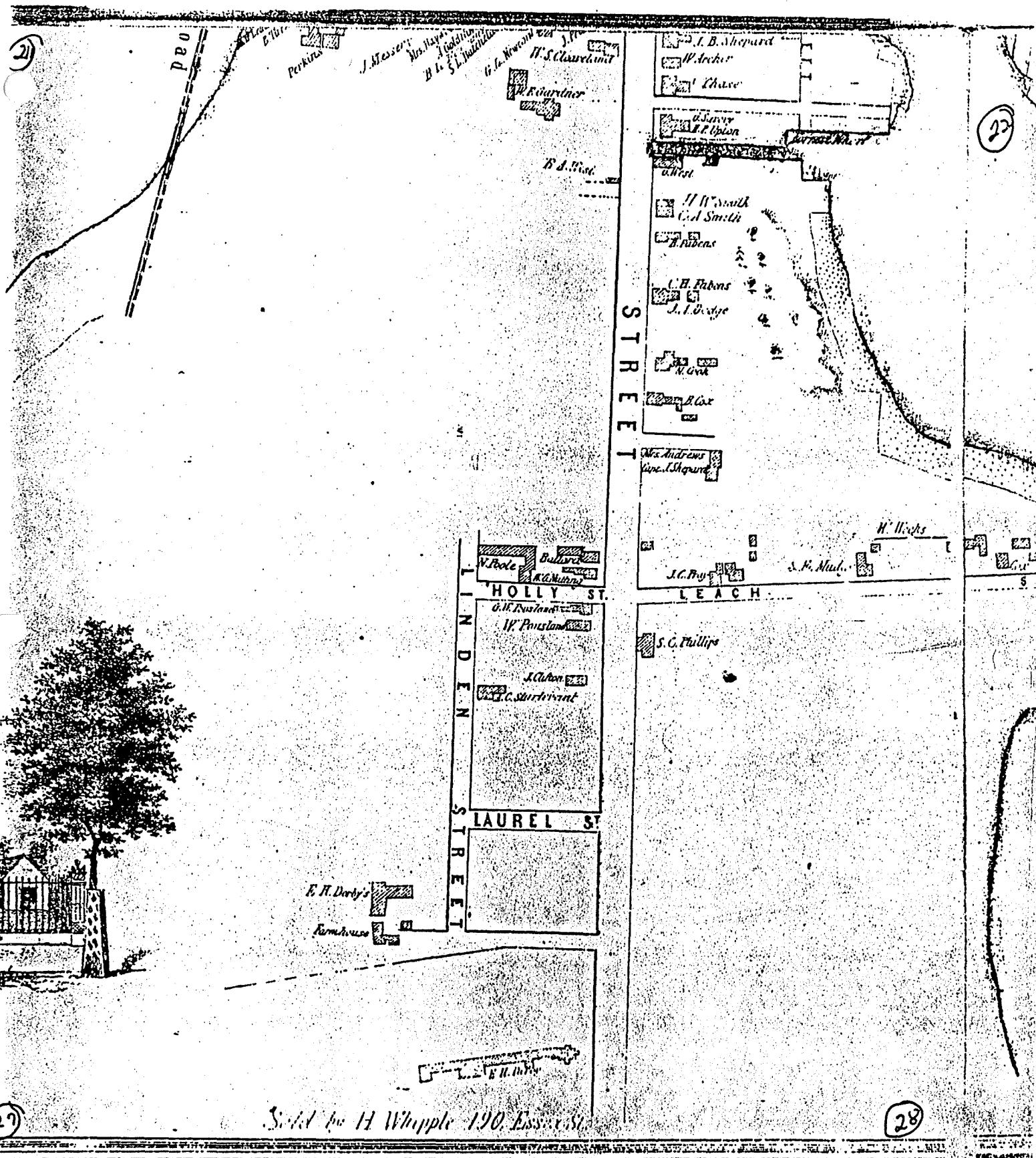
E.C.R.D. Book 10759, page 141

Grantor: Small Fry Properties, Inc., 28 State Street, Boston
Grantee: John Suldenski, "Trustee of the John Clifton House Realty Trust"
Consideration: \$152,000
Conveyance of: 248 Lafayette Street
Date recorded: April 6, 1991

E.C.R.D. Book 10866, page 355

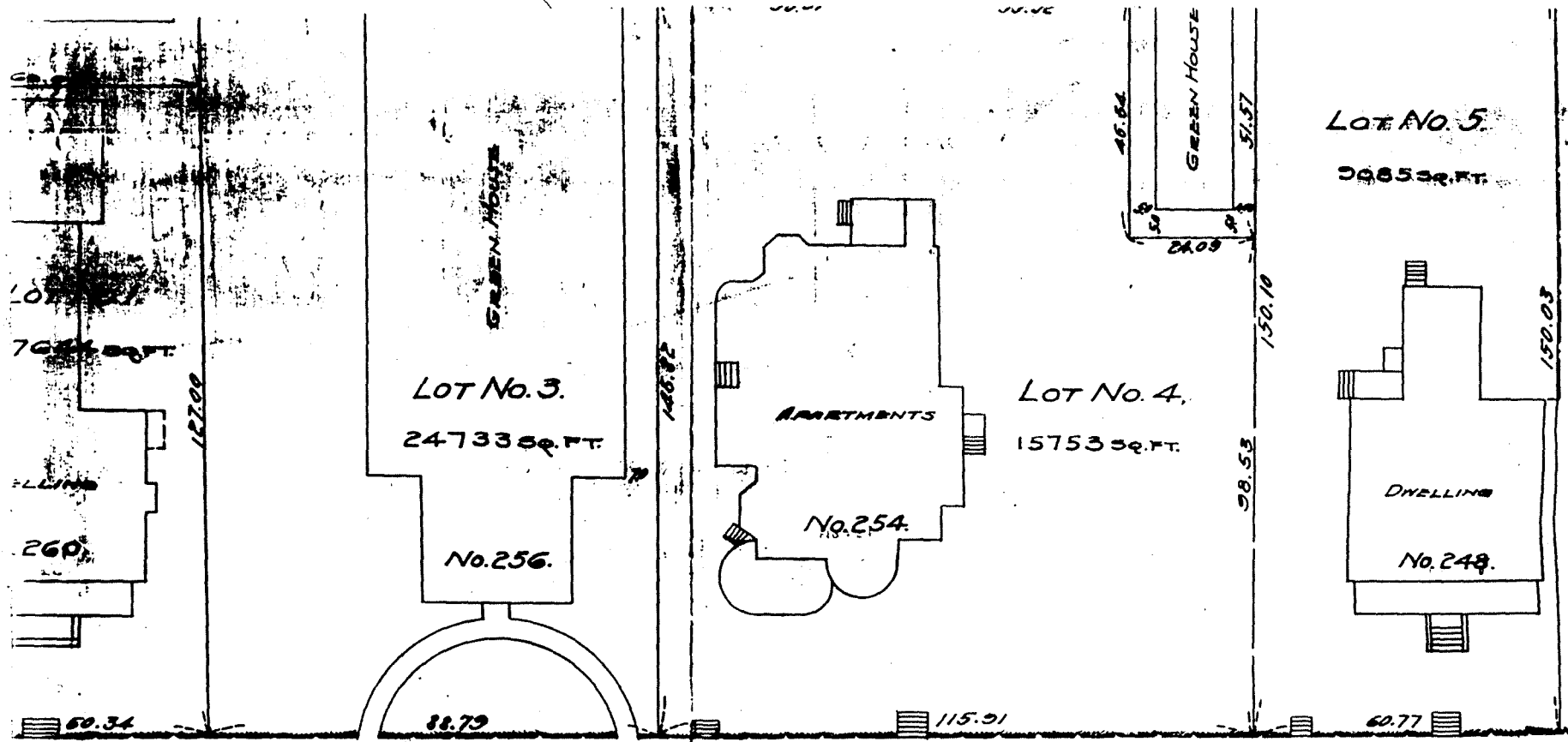
Grantor: John Suldenski, "Trustee of the John Clifton House Realty Trust"
Grantees: George and Joan Heller, 69 Dane St., Beverly
Consideration: \$160,000
Conveyance of: 248 Lafayette Street

Date recorded: July 11, 1991



Sold by H Whipple 190 Essex St

1851 Map of Salem



LAFAYETTE

ST.

LAND OF LYDIA P. GOVE
SALEM, MASS.

SCALE 1/4" = 20 FT.
JUNE, 1942.

Thomas R. Goff