

*12 Howard Street
Salem*

According to available evidence, this house was built for Henry W. Thurston, cabinet-maker, in 1850.

Henry Winchester Thurston was born in Bradford, Mass., on 8 December 1818, the youngest of the three children of Daniel Thurston and Mary Stacey, who had married in Bradford in 1805. His father, a house carpenter, moved the family to Salem, where the father died in 1820, aged 37 (see p. 150, **The Thurston Genealogies**, by Brown Thurston, 1892, 2d ed.). Henry was only two at the time, and Mrs. Mary Stacey Thurston was left to raise her three children in Salem without a husband and breadwinner. As a lad, Henry was apprenticed to learn the trade of a cabinet-maker, and this he did. By 1842, Mr. Thurston had mastered his trade and was a journeyman; and he and his widowed mother, Mary, were residing at 14 Lynde Street, where they remained into 1849.

Salem in the 1840s was making the transition from maritime commerce to manufacturing. Into the 1820s the town's shipping business had continued prosperous; but it fell off sharply in the late 1820s and drastically in 1830. The advent of railroads and canals in the 1830s diverted both capital and trade away from the coast. American goods were now being produced at a level where imports from overseas were not so much needed as in the past. Salem's merchants had to move quickly to shift their equity out of wharves and warehouses and ships and into manufacturing and transportation. Some did not, and were ruined; others moved to Boston, the hub of investment in the new economy. At the same time, the interior of the country was being opened for settlement, and people moved west, including some from Salem.

Despite problems and uncertainties, Salem was chartered as a city in 1836. City Hall was built 1837-8 and the city seal was adopted with an already-anachronistic Latin motto of "to the farthest port of the rich East"—a far cry from "Go West, young man!" The Panic of 1837, a brief, sharp, nationwide economic depression, caused even more Salem families to head west in search of fortune and a better future. Salem had not prepared for the industrial age, and had few natural advantages. The large-scale factory towns of Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill, had the powerful waters of the Merrimack to drive the machinery of their huge textile factories, but Salem had the smallish North River, which served mainly to

flush the waste from the many tanneries (23 by 1832) that had set up along its banks. Throughout the 1830s, the leaders of Salem scrambled to re-invent an economy for their fellow citizens, many of whom were still mariners, but without much sea-faring to do. Ingenuity, ambition, and hard work would have to carry the day.

One inspiration was the Salem Laboratory Company, Salem's first manufacturing enterprise, founded in 1819 to produce chemicals. At the plant in North Salem on the North River, the production of blue vitriol was a specialty; and it proved a very successful business. Salem's whale-fishery, active for many years in the early 1800s, led, in the 1830s, to the manufacturing of high-quality candles at Stage Point, along with machine oils. The candles proved very popular. Lead-manufacturing began in the 1820s, and grew large after 1830, when Wyman's gristmills on the Forest River were retooled for making high-quality white lead and sheet lead (the approach to Marblehead is still called Lead Mills Hill, although the empty mill buildings burned down in 1960s).

These businesses were followed by the expansion of the leather industry on Boston Street, and the introduction of industrial shoe production. Salem's lack of river-power was overcome by the invention of steam-driven turbines, and in 1847 the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company erected at Salem's Stage Point the largest factory building in the United States, 60' wide by 400' long. It was an immediate success, and hundreds of people found employment there, many of them living in industrial tenements built nearby. A second, larger, building would be added in 1859, and a third in 1865. By 1880 the mills would employ 1200 people and produce annually 14,700,000 yards of cloth. The symbol of Salem's new industrial economy was the large twin-towered granite train station (built 1848-9), which stood on filled-in land at the foot of Washington Street, where before had been the merchants' wharves extending into salt water.

In the face of all this change, some members of Salem's waning merchant class continued to pursue their sea-borne businesses; but even the conditions of shipping changed, and Salem was left on the ebb tide. In the late 1840s, giant clipper ships replaced the smaller vessels that Salem men had sailed around the world; and the clippers, with their deep drafts and large holds, were usually too large for Salem and its harbor. The town's shipping soon consisted of little more than Zanzibar-trade vessels and visits from Down East coasters with cargoes of fuel wood and building timber. By 1850 Salem was about finished as a working port; and its glory days were over. An excellent picture of Salem's waterfront, during its period of decline, is given by Hawthorne in his "introductory section"

(really a sketch of Salem) to **The Scarlet Letter**, which he began while working in the Custom House and completed at home on Mall Street.

To seafarers, Salem was dying; but to Henry Thurston, a young cabinet-maker, Salem must have seemed a bustling, exciting place in the 1840s. New businesses were opening, bridges and factories were being built, churches were thriving, shows and lectures were being held, and people were moving into the city. The demographics of Salem were changing, for the Salem capitalists filled their factories with Irish immigrant workers as well as the native-born. Catholic churches were built, and new housing was constructed in North Salem and the Gallows Hill areas to accommodate the workers. They all needed furniture.

On 5 April 1849, Henry Thurston, 30, married Margaret E. MacKenzie of Salem. The newlyweds resided on Lynde Street (#14 in 1849 numbering) in an apartment with Mrs. Mary Thurston, 62, and with George Putnam, 44, a bachelor druggist or apothecary. In February, 1850, was born the Thurstons' first child, a son whom they named William Henry. With this change, Mr. Thurston resolved to build a new residence for himself, his wife, and his mother. Mr. Putnam was interested in the project too; and Henry paid a call on his next-door neighbor, Andrew Haraden, to see about real estate.

In searching for a house-lot, the Thurstons liked Howard Street, a new thoroughfare. It had been laid out in 1843 by Andrew & Jonathan Haraden, who had operated a ropewalk on its site. A ropewalk was a long, low building in which cordage was manufactured; but cordage was made mainly for ships, and the ships were gone. The Haradens had removed the ropewalk and sold off the east side of the street as house-lots, overlooking the (expanded) graveyard opposite, and, in the distance, the North River. By 1850 all of the house-lots had been sold except three, located not far from Brown Street; and on the sold-off lots had been built two-family houses in the fashionable Greek Revival style.

Henry W. Thurston came to an agreement with the Haraden brothers; and on 20 April 1850 for \$482.50 they sold him a house-lot bounded 40' on Howard Street, northerly 48' 5", easterly 40', and southerly 48' 1" (ED 426:283). On this lot, Mr. Thurston had a house built. Unlike most of the other Howard Street houses, it fronted directly on the street rather than into a side yard. The house was probably built in 1850; and in the 1851 Salem Street Book it is listed as "#6 Howard Street, new house, value \$1700, occupants H.W. Thurston, 32, and George Putnam."

Henry W. Thurston (1818-1906), born 1818, Bradford, s/o Daniel Thurston and Mary Stacey, died Salem 6 July 1906, 88th year. He m. 5 April 1849 (Salem) **Margaret E. MacKenzie** (1827-1866), daughter of Roderick MacKenzie & Isabella Hutchinson; she died 14 Feb. 1866. He m/2 30 April 1868 **Elizabeth Pingree Smith**, b. 22 Jan. 1828, d/o Aaron Smith & Mehitable Pingree. Known issue:

1. William Henry, 3 Feb. 1850, died 29 March 1859.
2. Helen Stacey, 8 Aug. 1852
3. Mary Isabella, 2 Dec. 1857, m. Mr. Lyons.

It would appear that, from the start, the house (then numbered 6 Howard) was a two-family. The Thurstons resided in one unit: Henry, cabinet-maker, his wife Margaret, their two children, and Henry's mother Mary; and, in 1851, the other unit was occupied by George Putnam, whose drug store was at 275 Essex Street (per Salem Directory, 1851). Mr. Putnam did not live here long; he moved to Orne Street in North Salem by 1855.

Mrs. Margaret Ellen (MacKenzie) Thurston was born in Salem in 1827, the daughter of a Scottish couple, Roderick and Isabella. Roderick, a shipwright, had died in 1840, leaving his wife with four young children to raise: Margaret, Oliver, Frances, and Roderick. The son Roderick became a successful merchant tailor, and he too resided on Howard Street.

In July, 1851, Mr. Thurston served as the straw in the conveyance of a house and land on Rust Street (ED 448:168, 449:147). At this time he was building his furniture business, perhaps with the ambition of becoming a dealer rather than a producer. The furniture that he had been trained to make in the 1830s was no longer in style; and in the 1850s heavier forms that we call "Victorian" came into vogue. Many of these pieces were mass-produced. Mr. Thurston no doubt had a shop where he and his apprentices produced furniture, of a type and quantity that made him successful in business.

In 1855, the Thurstons occupied the house as a single-family, with their two children (Helen was born in 1852) and Mrs. Mary Stacey Thurston (see 1855 census, house 389, family 574). A third and last child, Mary was born in 1857. In March, 1859, the Thurstons' son, William, died at the age of nine. The impact on the family can only be imagined. Less than a year later, old Mrs. Mary Thurston died on 4 January 1860, aged 72. She had seen many changes in her

life, and seems to have been well cared-for by her son and his wife in her last years.

By the spring of 1860, the house was again used as a two-family. In one unit resided the Thurstons: Henry, 41, cabinet maker, with real estate worth \$2000, his wife Margaret E., 32, their two children, Helen S., 7, and Mary I., 2, and a domestic helper, Deborah Bowie, 23, born Maine (f. 2789). In the other unit resided Mrs. Catharine G. Townsend, 53, embroiderer, Miss Eunice Stevens, 55, seamstress, and Miss Martha G Townsend, 21, embroiderer (1860 census, house 1609, ward two). Mrs. Townsend had been operating a variety store and residing on Beckford Street in 1855 (see Salem Directory).

The Civil War began in April, 1861, and went on for four years, during which hundreds of Salem men served in the army and navy, and many were killed or died of disease or abusive treatment while imprisoned. Hundreds more suffered wounds, or broken health. The people of Salem contributed greatly to efforts to alleviate the suffering of the soldiers, sailors, and their families; and there was great celebration when the war finally ended in the spring of 1865. Nothing much changed in the domestic arrangements at the Thurston house during that time: by 1865 the Thurston's and Miss Bowie were still in place, and Miss Eunice Stevens, 73, occupied the other unit by herself (see 1865 census, house 423, ward two, Salem).

Through the 1860s, Salem continued to pursue a manufacturing course. The managers and capitalists tended to build their new, grand houses along Lafayette Street (these houses may still be seen, south of Roslyn Street). For the workers, they built more and more tenements near the Naumkeag Mills at Stage Point. More factories and more people required more space for buildings, more roads, more storage areas—and more furniture.

Between 1861 and 1864 Mr. Thurston left off his cabinet-making and became a furniture dealer. He mortgaged his homestead for \$1400 in 1862, perhaps to raise money for this new enterprise; the mortgage would be discharged in 1866 (ED 638:256). He formed a partnership with Thomas Henderson in the firm of Henderson & Thurston, furniture dealers, with a store at 38-40 Washington Street (see Salem Directory 1864). The store was a part of the Stearns Block, a building (now gone) that stood on the corner of Essex and Washington Streets. The furniture dealership occupied the part of the building closest to City Hall. The partnership lasted through the 1860s. In 1869 they advertised in the Salem Directory: at their “furniture ware-rooms,” one could purchase “cabinet

furniture,” along with “live geese and common feathers” for stuffing. The illustration showed a love-seat (see advertisement, appended).

In February, 1866, on the 14th, Mrs. Margaret MacKenzie Thurston died at the age of 37 years. She left daughters aged 13 and eight.

In 1867 for \$1600 Mr. Thurston and his neighbors Porter Lambert and Aaron Smith purchased a piece of land across the street, with the cellar under the Howard Street (Branch) Church, which then stood there (it had been designed by the architect Samuel McIntire before 1811) (ED 728:113, 114). In 1868, Mr. Thurston served as a straw in a conveyance of property for his brother-in-law, Roderick A. MacKenzie, and wife Sarah A. (ED 762:29). In April, 1868, he married, second, his neighbor Elizabeth P. Smith, forty. They would have no surviving children.

Beginning in 1870 or so, Mr. Thurston operated the business as his own: Thurston's Furniture & Upholstery. He mortgaged his homestead for \$3000 to his partner, Thomas Henderson, whom he was evidently buying out (ED 809:45; discharged 1878). He would conduct the business for most of the rest of his long life, at the same location (see photograph of the building, appended, showing signs for Thurston's store). In that year, this homestead was worth \$3000, and Mr. Thurston's personal estate was worth \$4100. The house was occupied by Mr. Thurston, 50, furniture retailer, wife Elizabeth P., 40, and daughters Helen (Nelly), 17, and Mary, 12 (house 374, ward two, 1870 census).

In 1870 Mr. Thurston and his neighbor and father-in-law, Aaron Smith, sold some of their joint property to the City of Salem, at the head of Howard Street, as the site of a school (ED 808:59).

In October, 1872, Mr. Thurston added to the size of the lot here. For \$142.50 he bought from William Kimball a strip of land bounded westerly 57' (40' on Mr. Thurston's land and 17' by Estes), northerly 5', easterly 57' on land of Kimball, and southerly 5' on the same (ED 865:122)

Salem kept building infrastructure, and new businesses, and expansions of established businesses. Retail stores prospered, and machinists, carpenters, millwrights, and other specialists all thrived. In the late 1800s, French-Canadian families began coming to town to work in Salem's mills and factories, and more houses and tenements filled in what had been open areas of the city.

The Thurstons continued to occupy this house through the 1880s (see 1880 census, ward two, ED 232, p.12). In 1883, the Thurstons sold some of the Howard Street land they had inherited from the late Aaron Smith (ED 1108:76). In October, 1888, Mr. Thurston conveyed his homestead to his daughters Mrs. Mary Lyon and Helen S. Thurston, both then of Waltham, subject to a life estate therein for his wife Mrs. Elizabeth P. Thurston (ED 1233:80,82). He may have done this in a spell of ill health. Eventually Mr. Thurston scaled back; and by 1890 he had moved his business to 17 Washington Street, where he was once again a "cabinet-maker and upholsterer." In that year, the Thurstons had a tenant, Miss Lucinda A. Church. Mr. Thurston was 72 years old. In October, 1890, he bought back the homestead from his daughters (ED 1295:443).

He continued in business through the 1890s, and by 1900 had retired altogether. His daughter Mary had married George Lyon, and had moved with him to Providence, R.I. Daughter Nellie (Helen) remained unmarried, and resided here with her father and step-mother.

Henry W. Thurston had owned this house for 56 years by the summer of 1906. He was fatally ill by the end of June. He survived for the Fourth of July, and died on July 6th, aged 88 years. He left his wife Elizabeth and daughter Helen, residents here, and daughter Mary I. Lyon of Providence. By his will, dated June, 1888, he left his real estate to "be divided as the law directs." To his daughter Helen he devised on chamber suit of furniture in his house, two mattresses, two pillows, a carpet, an upholstered patented rocker, a lady's easy chair, a table, and a sewing machine. To his two daughters he left "all the silver ware, glass, and china ware, and all other articles which formerly belonged to their grandmother, Mary S. Thurston," and all articles that formerly belonged to their mother, Margaret E. Thurston. All the other property went to his wife Elizabeth and the two daughters. Mr. Thurston's son-in-law, George Lyons, was named as executor.

On 30 July 1906 Mrs. Elizabeth Thurston and Miss Helen Thurston conveyed their interest in the homestead to Mrs. Mary I. (Thurston) Lyons, of Providence (ED 1837:185).

Mrs. Lyon rented out the house as a two-family. In 1910, it was occupied (one unit) by Mary P. Osborne and (another unit) by Sarah T., widow of Oliver Pettingill, and her daughter Nellie M., a clerk at the Registry of Deeds (see 1910 Salem Directory). Mrs. Osborne would remain here through 1917 at least, while in 1914 Ruth P. Knowles, widow of Frederick T. Knowles, was in the other unit

in 1914, followed in 1915-1917 (at least) by two Dix sisters, Annie and Ellen (a bookkeeper at the Willows) (see Directories).

At this time, large numbers of Polish and Ukrainian families were settling nearby in the Derby Street neighborhood. By the eve of World War One, Salem was a bustling, polyglot city that supported large department stores and large factories of every description. Its politics were lively, and its economy was strong.

On June 25, 1914, in the morning, in Blubber Hollow (Boston Street opposite Federal), a fire started in one of Salem's fire-prone wooden tanneries. This fire soon consumed the building and raced out of control, for the west wind was high and the season had been dry. The next building caught fire, and the next, and 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 tenement district. Despite the combined efforts of heroic fire crews from many towns and cities, the fire overwhelmed everything in its path: it smashed into the large factory buildings of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company (Congress Street), which exploded in an inferno; and it rolled down Lafayette Street and across the water to Derby Street. There, just beyond Union Street, 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, and the people of Salem would take years to recover from it. Eventually, they did, and many of the former houses and businesses were rebuilt; and several urban-renewal projects (including Hawthorne Boulevard, which involved removing old houses and widening old streets) were put into effect.

By the 1920s, Salem was once again a thriving city; and its tercentenary in 1926 was a time of great celebration. From that time forward, Salem boomed right through to the 1960s, but the arrival of suburban shopping malls and the relocation of manufacturing businesses took their toll, as they have with many other cities. More than most, Salem has navigated its way forward into the present with success, trading on its share of fame arising from the commercialization of the witchcraft delusion, but also from its great history as an

unrivalled seaport and as the home of McIntire, Bowditch, and Hawthorne. Most of all, it remains a city where the homes of the old-time merchants, mariners, cabinet-makers, and mill-operatives are all honored as a large part of what makes Salem different from any other place.

--21 July 2001, Robert Booth for Historic Salem Inc.

Robert Booth

Note: a figure like ED 123:45 refers to the Essex South Registry of Deeds, book 123, p. 45.

20 April 1850 Haraden bros. to H. W. Thurston

Know all men by these presents, That we Jonathan Haraden and Andrew Haraden, both of Salem, in the County of Essex and State of Massachusetts, in consideration of four hundred eighty two $\frac{50}{100}$ dollars to us paid by Henry W. Thurston of said Salem, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said Henry W. Thurston

J. Haraden
et al,
to
H. W. Thurston.

— The following described lot of land situate in said Salem viz, bounded westerly by Howard Street forty feet, northerly by land this day conveyed to George W. Estes forty eight feet and five inches, easterly by land of Samuel Johnson forty feet, southerly by other land of ours forty eight feet and one inch, containing nineteen hundred and thirty square feet of land, to have and to hold the above granted premises, with the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, to the said Thurston his heirs and assigns, to his & their use and behoof forever, and we the said grantors for ourselves and our heirs, executors and administrators, do covenant with the said Thurston

his heirs and assigns, that we are lawfully seized in fee of the aforegranted premises, that they are free from all incumbrances, that we have good right to sell and convey the same to the said Thurston as aforesaid; and that we will, and our heirs, executors, and administrators, shall warrant and defend the same to the said Thurston his heirs and assigns forever, against the lawful claims and demands of all persons, In witness whereof, we the said Jonathan and Andrew, and the undersigned our wives, who hereby severally relinquish their right of dower in the premises have hereunto set our hands and seals this twentieth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty.

Executed and delivered
in presence of us,
Jno. H. Nichols, witness to Andrew.

Lydia Anne H. Jones, Anna A. Haraden.

Jonathan Haraden. seal

Andrew Haraden. seal

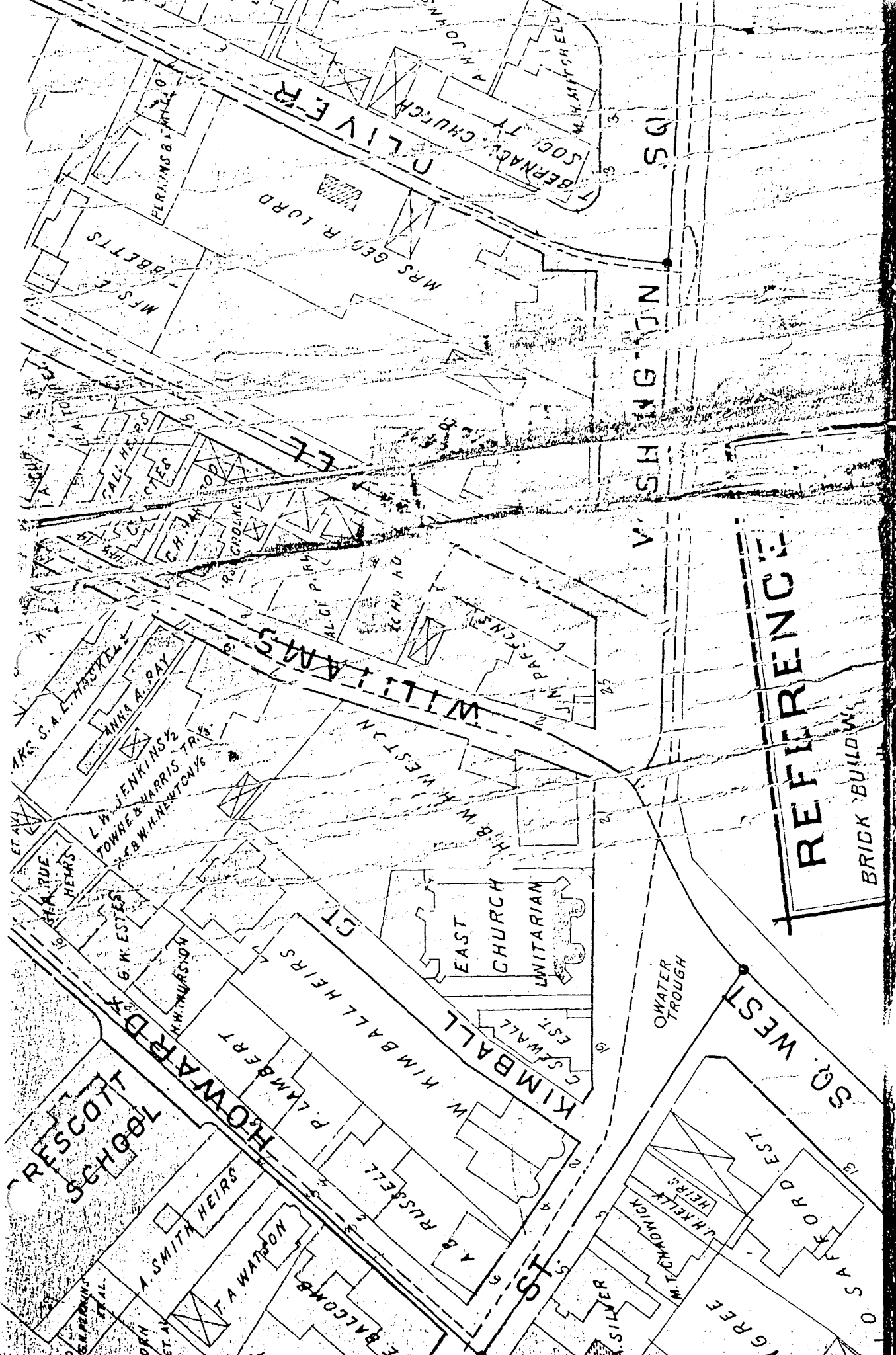
Sarah Haraden. seal

Augusta Haraden. seal

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Essex 25, April 20th 1850. Then personally appeared the above named Andrew Haraden and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his free act and deed,

before me Jno. H. Nichols, Justice of the peace.

Essex 25, A.D. April 22, 1850, 9 o'clock, A.M. Subscribed, signed, sealed by *W. H. Nichols*



1897 Salem Atlas

BOSSON & CLOVER,

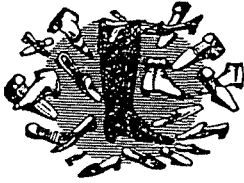
DEALERS IN

BOOTS, SHOES, AND RUBBERS,

Of every description,

No. 12 Lafayette Street,
SALEM, MASS.

Repairing promptly attended to, and all work is warranted to be finished in a thorough and workmanlike manner.

**THERON PALMER,**

DEALER IN

**BOOTS, SHOES, AND RUBBERS,**
No. 216 ESSEX STREET, SALEM.

ANDREW J. RICE Jr., & CO.,

Heel Makers,

Patentee and Manufacturers of

Rice's Leather Elliptic Shank,
JUST INVENTED.Cash paid for all kinds of Scrap Leather
Pieces.OLD ARTILLERY ARMORY,
CONANT STREET, SALEM, MASS.

SALEM BOOT AND SHOE CO.,

Manufacturers of

LADIES', MISSES',

AND CHILDRENS'

Boots and Shoes,

NO. 42 MILL STREET.

THOMAS BOTT,

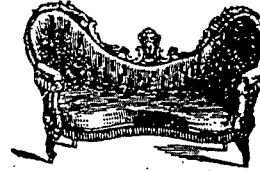
DEALER IN

BOOTS, SHOES,

AND

RUBBERS,

No. 46 DERBY STREET, SALEM.

**FURNITURE WARE-ROOMS.****HENDERSON & THURSTON,**

DEALERS IN

CABINET FURNITURE,

LIVE GEESE AND COMMON

F E A T H E R S,

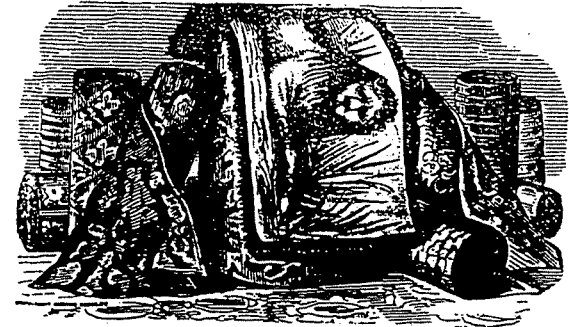
Corner of Essex and Washington Streets,

ENTRANCE 38 40 WASHINGTON STREET,

TERMS CASH.

EDWIN R. IDE,

DEALER IN

**Carpetings, Upholstery Goods,**
WINDOW SHADES, &c.,
NO. 229 ESSEX STREET,
SALEM, MASS.



City Hall

Salem: corner of Essex + Washington Sts, looking north on Washington St.
Note signs for Thurston's Furniture + Upholstery, 3rd floor, Essex St. - side.
Furniture store was 1th side of building next to City Hall.

neg. 6924
Peabody - Essex Museum

pre 1870

I Henry W. Thurston of Salem in the County of Essex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, being of sound and disposing mind and memory do make and declare this as and for my last will and testament hereby revoking all former wills by me heretofore made.

Item. After the payment of all my just debts and funeral charges I give and bequeath to my daughter Helen S. Thurston of Salem, one of the three chamber suits of furniture in my house, also one wire mattress, one hair mattress and two pillows; also one carpet, one upholstered patent rocker, one upholstered lady's easy chair and one table, — she to have the privilege of selecting the same; also one household sewing machine.

Item. I give and bequeath to my daughters Helen S. Thurston aforesaid and Mary J. Lyon wife of George C. Lyon of Waltham all the silver ware, glass and china ware, and all other articles which formerly belonged to their grandmother Mary S. Thurston, also all articles of said description formerly belonging to their mother Margaret E. Thurston, to be divided equally between them.

Item. All the rest and residue of my personal estate, I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Elizabeth P. Thurston and my two daughters aforesaid share and share alike, but my said wife Elizabeth P. Thurston is to have the privilege of selecting her third.

Item. The real estate I leave to be divided as the law directs.

Item. I hereby nominate and appoint George C. Lyon aforesaid to be the executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this second day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty eight. Henry W. Thurston

Signed, sealed and declared by the said testator to be his last will and testament in our presence, who at his request and in his presence and the presence of each other have hereunto signed our names as witnesses.

Frank C. Richardson
William T. Chapple.
Charles Sewall