155 Fort Avenue Salem

According to available evidence, this house was built as a restaurant in 1909 for William G. Cochrane, manufacturer.

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On this parcel, facing toward Fort Avenue, Mr. Cochrane in 1909 built a summer restaurant in which lunch was served. That building, clearly visible as a "footprint" in the 1912 atlas (copy attached to this report), is the one that is now numbered 155 Fort Avenue. It had other numbers in the early days, before the street was fully built out with buildings. The 1909 Directory lists "restaurant, Salem Willows, adjoining Mr. Cochrane's name, and "lunch" at Fort Avenue near the corner of "Harbor View Avenue" (now called Bay View Avenue).

At that time, Salem Willows was being developed with amusement rides and restaurants. Earlier, it had been a neighborhood of summer homes with a clubhouse but few or no commercial aspects. In the years preceding World War I, a merry-go-round, a casino, and many summer-only restaurants sprang up here, along with boarding-houses, and the Willows took on its amusement-park character, separate from the residential character of the Juniper Point neighborhood to the east.

The man for whom the restaurant was built, William G. Cochrane (1843-1919), was 66 in the year 1909. He was a native of Wisconsin and had come to Salem about 1880, evidently. He worked as a ship carpenter in 1882, and resided at 186 North Street; by 1890 he was running a boarding house at 132 Washington Street, which was also his residence (see Salem Naumkeag Directories). Later he resided at 15 Collins Street and was an

expert manufacturer of leather belts for machines. He had a belting shop at his homestead (see obituary, Salem Evening News, 14 August 1919). He and his wife Mary had four children.

In the early Directories, the building was usually reported as vacant, because it was not used year-round. In 1915, it was # 120 Fort Avenue; in 1917, #118; in 1919, #159.

Mr. Cochrane died on Thursday, 14 August 1919, aged 76 years, at his home. He was survive by his wife, Mary E. Cochrane, and by three of the four children, as well as by the son of his deceased son.

On 27 Sept. 1919 three of four Cochrane heirs mortgaged the property, fronting 101' on Fort Avenue, to John McMorrill (ED 2428:406). Soon after, they sold off the corner parcel, which left a remaining parcel fronting 41' on Fort Avenue, with the restaurant standing thereon. In September-October 1921 the Cochrane heirs sold this property to James D. Burns of Salem (ED 2494: 327-330).

The new owner, Mr. Burns, was a civil engineer who worked in Boston and resided at 3 Island Avenue at the Willows. He and his brother Thomas, a fireman, with whom he resided, operated the restaurant in the summer as "Burns Brothers Lunch."

With the Depression, the Willows was not so popular, and many of the rides and restaurants closed. At the end of 1933, the Salem Trust Company foreclosed on Mr. Burns's mortgage (ED 2973:10). That ended Burns Brothers Lunch.

The property was conveyed to Washington Street Realty Company on 14 December 1933 (ED 2973:10); and it was re-conveyed to Salem trust Company in March, 1934 (ED 2988:121).

In May, 1940, Salem Trust Co. sold the property to Mr. & Mrs. Frank J. & Frances A. Lovely, grocers, of Salem Willows (ED 3216:590). The Lovelys resided at 44 Columbus Avenue and operated their grocery business in this building at 155 Fort Avenue (per Directory). The Lovelys were deceased by the spring of 1944.

On 22 June 1944 Harlan R. Bruce of Stoneham purchased the property for \$2500 (ED 3375:349). He moved to Salem, resided here with his family upstairs, and ran the "Ship's Canteen Grocery" downstairs. The property was sold within the family in the 1940s (ED 3375:350, 3504:363, 3597:487). In 1950 it was known as the "Seaside Market," and the residents here were Mr. Harlan Bruce and wife Evelyn, and Mr. Fred E. Bruce and whatever family he may have had (per Salem Directory).

In 1955-1956, the building housed the Ida & Kay Novelty Co., Joe's Sandwich Bar, and was the residence of H.R. Bruce, now a foreman, & his wife Evelyn), as well as Gotfried Shorter and George F Sullivan (& wife Ann W.), a plasterer. By 1960 it was Salem Willows Marine Supplies, and the home of the families of H.R. Bruce & Harold Sherman (wife Florence). In May, 1970, having moved to Peabody, Harland and Evelyn Bruce sold the premises for \$20,000 to Edward and wife Louise Doran (ED 5686:573). By 1971 the store was vacant store, and the tenants were Leo Fournier, Joseph Levesque, and Mrs. Catherine Osgood.

On 1 March 1977 the Dorans sold the premises to the present owner, Donald W. Moore (ED 6327:389). The lot is bounded: n.w. Fort Ave. 41', n.e. 90' by Sheehan & by Bruce, s.e. 41' by Bruce s.w. 90' by unknown & by Karon.

⁻⁻Robert Booth for Historic Salem Inc, 18 Dec. 2000

Glossary

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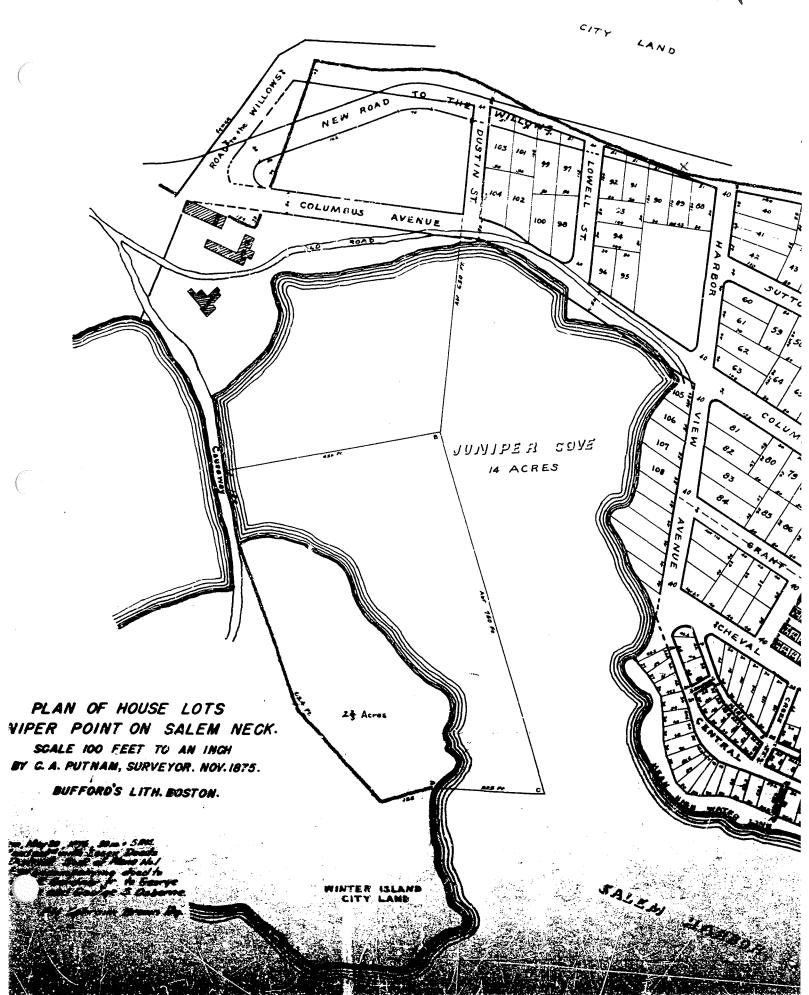
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William & Cochran

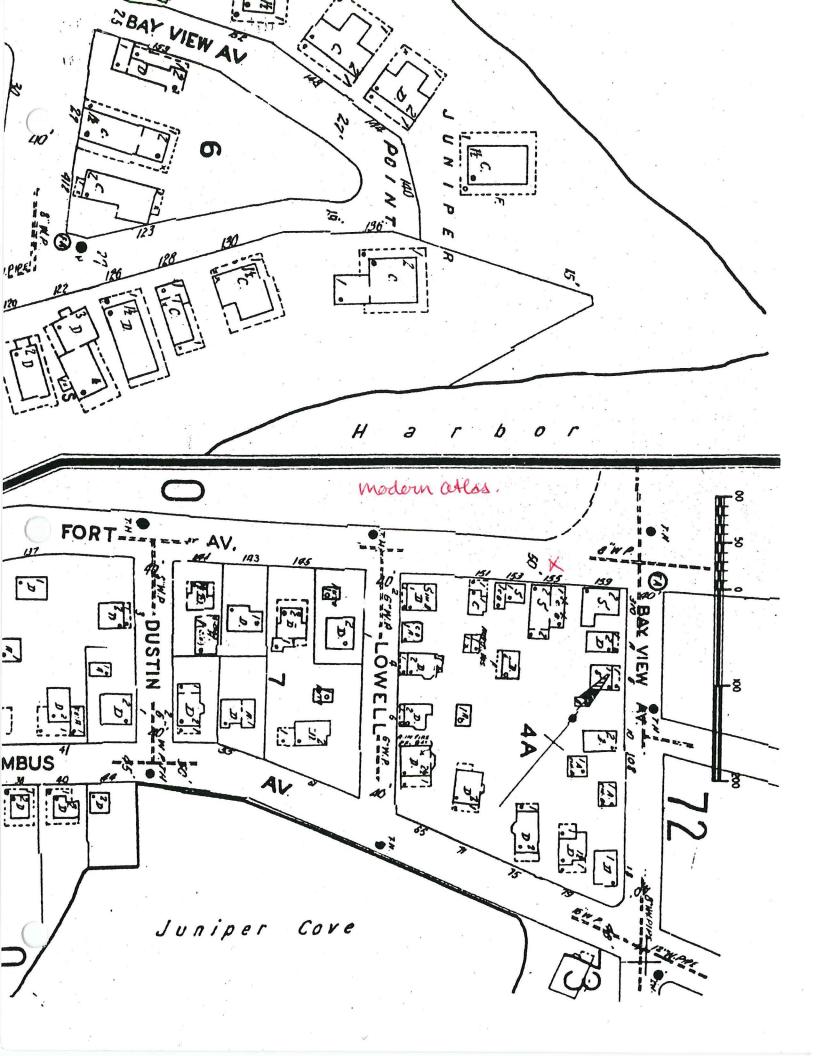
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