

built for  
LEMUEL HIGBEE  
leather manufacturer  
1858

387 Essex St  
Salem, Mass.

House at 387 Essex Street, Salem, Mass.

The house at 387 Essex Street was built in 1858 for Lemuel Higbee (1814-94) of Salem. In 1856 Higbee had bought the basic house-lot from Joseph Hodges; and in the spring of 1857 he exchanged land with his neighbors, giving the lot its present bounds. Lemuel's property assessment for 1857 was only \$16.80 as compared to the 1858 assessment of \$44.40, so it is a good bet that (since he did not buy any new land between 1857 & 1858, & since this lot was his only real estate) the present house was built sometime in 1858. By 1861 it is described in a deed as "a wooden dwelling house"--and so it remains.

1 Nov 1856: Joseph Hodges for \$2,000 sells Lemuel Higbee a lot bounded north 57' 7" on Essex Street; east 94' on Burrill; south 63' on sd Hodges to a pt 65' north of Chestnut Street; west 64' on land late of Henry King, dec'd, back to Essex Street. (So. Essex Deeds 542:23)

14 Mar 1857: Henry F King for \$1 quits claim to Lemuel Higbee, a small triangular piece of land. (551:99)

14 Mar 1857: Lemuel F (& wife Mary B) Higbee for \$1 sells to Henry F King a small triangular piece of land. (548:140)

9 Ap 1857: Josiah S (& wife Elizabeth S) Burrill for \$1 sells Lemuel Higbee a triangular strip of land. (551:98)

9 Ap 1857: Lemuel F & Mary B Higbee for \$1 sell Josiah S Burrill a triangular piece of land. (550:221)

10 May 1861: Lemuel Higbee of Salem, for \$5,000 sells to Benjamin G Boardman of Boston the Salem house & lot, with a \$1700 mortgage to Joseph Hodges thereon. (624:164)

6 July 1863: Benj. G Boardman, Boston merchant, for \$5,000 sells back to Lemuel Higbee of Salem, the above house & lot, with the same mortgage. (653:293)

13 May 1895: Edward F Higbee & Lizzie A Hill (ux Wm. A.) of Salem, for \$8,000 sell the house & land to Cynthia E Lovell, Salem widow. (1445:137)

6 May 1924: Henry M Batchelder, executor of Cynthia E (Lovell) Balcomb's will, sells premises to Ruth Follett Bean. (2587:549)

5 Oct 1941: Ruth F Bean (ux Harold C) sells the premises to Edward J & wife Eva J Belanger. (3289:263)

9 May 1945: Mr & Mrs Belanger sell the premises to Katherine C Kilroy of Salem (3402:415)

29 Oct 1945: Miss Kilroy sells the premises to Richard J & wife Ruth M Doyle of Peabody. (3428:430)

18 June 1971: Dr & Mrs Doyle sell to Stephen D Hayes, its occupant, the 387 Essex St estate, bounded

north 60' on Essex Street  
east 93.5' on now or late Burrill  
south 60' on now or late Curwen & Webb  
west 62.75' on now or late King.

(5775:674)

Robert Booth  
13 May 1976

Lemuel Higbee, 1814-94

Lemuel Higbee, for whom this house was built, was engaged in the manufacture of leather--Salem's leading industry during the Victorian era. The eldest son (b. 15 Dec 1814) of Lemuel\* & Elizabeth (Francis) Higbee, he was born & always lived in Salem. After graduating from the private Hacker School here, he started in as a currier to learn the leather manufacturing business, and at the age of 23 married Mary W Briggs.

For about 20 years they raised their family at 70 Boston Street, but in 1856 Higbee, having tanned his way to wealth, bought a house-lot on fashionable Essex Street, in 1857 exchanged land with neighbors to improve the lot, and in 1858 erected this house. One of the first dwellings of its type in Salem, the spacious hip-roofed Victorian structure was something of a monument to Lemuel Higbee's worldly success.

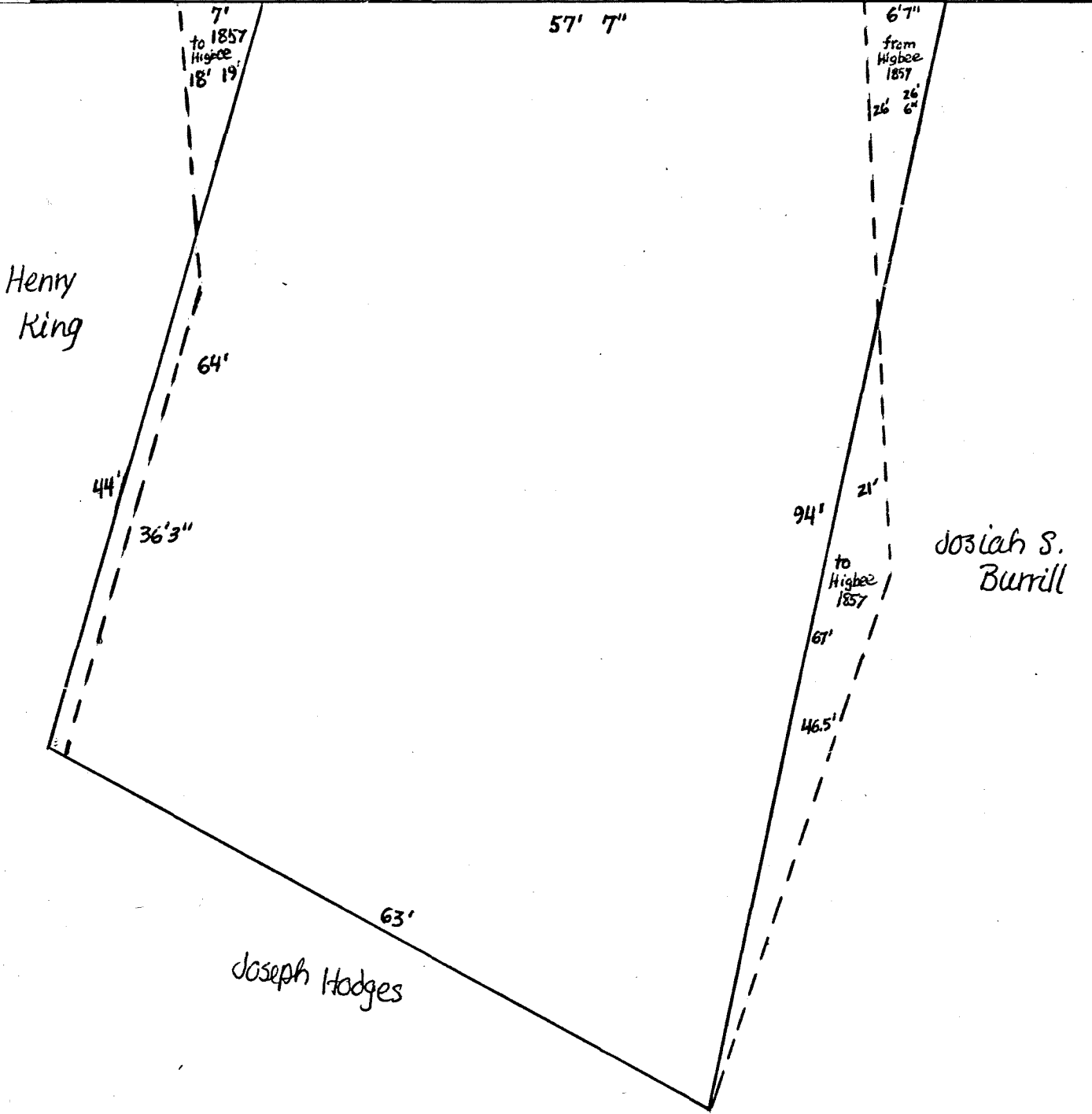
He opened an office in Boston, & during the Civil War manufactured great quantities of shoes; but, like many other tanners & manufacturers of his generation, he stayed in business too long, & lost much of his fortune. Retiring from business in his 70s, he continued to live in this house, rising every morning at 6 to tend the furnace, & generally staying very alert & active to the day of his death, 19 May 1894, aged 79 years.

Lemuel Higbee left a son Edward F Higbee & a daughter Lizzie A (Higbee) Hill (wife of Wm A Hill), as well as a brother Charles. He was buried at Harmony Grove cemetery in Salem.

(The information above was gleaned from the Salem Evening News obituary, 19 May 1894; the Salem Vital Records; the Salem Directory; and the So. Essex County deeds & Probate Records.)

\* Lemuel Higbee Sr. was a Salem sea captain. For more information about the Higbees, see Edward Higby & His Descendants, published at Erie, Pa. in 1927, a copy of which is in the Essex Institute Library.

Essex Street



— = boundaries of original lot,  
Joseph Hodges to Lemuel Higbee,  
1 Nov 1856 (542:23)

- - - = Land exchanges between  
Higbee + Burrill, 9 Apr 1857  
Higbee + King, 14 Mar 1857  
(Present lot)

boundaries  
of house lot at  
387 Essex Street  
Salem, Mass.

1cm = 5'