

OFFICE AT OLD TOWN HALL

Historic Salem Incorporated

POST OFFICE BOX 865 SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS 01970 / PHONE (617) 745-0799

8 Brown Street
Built for,
JOSEPH HOWARD, merchant
by 1809

Research by, Joyce King

August 1981

*"to preserve Historic Sites, Buildings and objects,
and to work for the education of the community
in the true value of the same."*

8 Brown Street

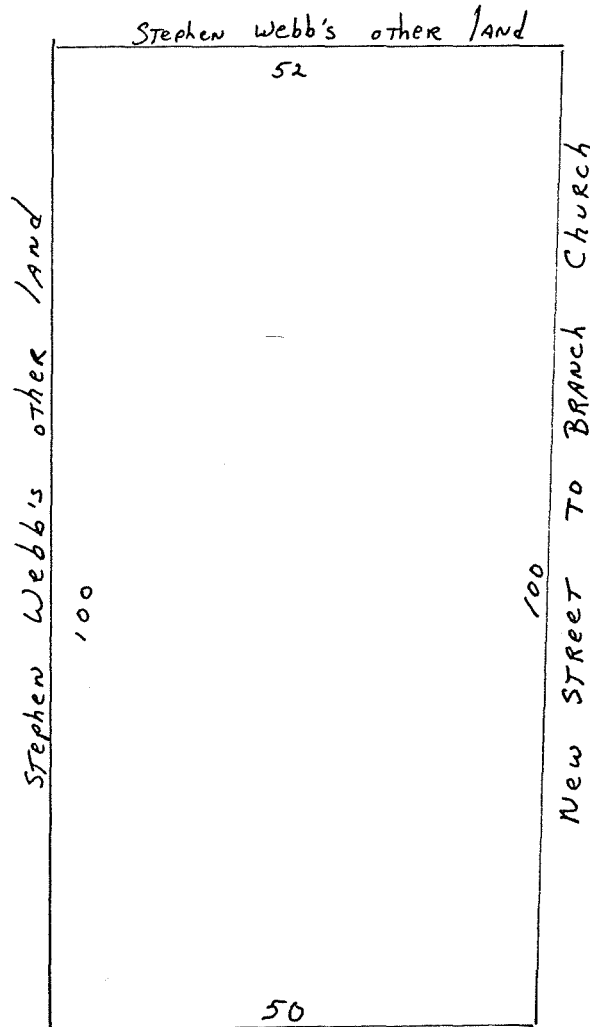
The house at 8 Brown Street is described by the Salem Historic Commission Report as:

"This house has Flemish bond brickwork and three stories plus a hip roof, both characteristics of the Federal period. The cornice is composed of molded bricks, and there are no lintels above the windows. The narrow end of the rectangular house faces the street with the doorway at one side of it. The lights and details around the recessed entrance are more characteristic of the Greek Revival style than of the Federal and may represent a later modification."

"Brown street was one of the early lanes. It was called a lane or highway that goes to the town pound in 1661; ye lane by ye pound, 1667; ye lane or street going into ye common, 1685; street or highway that leads into the training common, 1696; street against Nathaniel Beadle sr.'s, 1698; highway or lane leading to ye new church, 1733; ye back street leading to ye training field, 1734; highway or lane leading to St. Peter's church 1742; highway leading to ye church, 1746; the back lane, 1750; ye lane leading from Prison lane to the Training field, 1755; Church lane, 1783; and Brown street, 1800." (Essex Antiquarian, vol. 8 page 66)

The lot on which this house stands was part of the Esther Eastwick property in the 1677's (appendix A). Mrs. Eastwick probably inherited it from Capt. Benjamin Fermaies, whose widow died possessed of the whold lot with a house upon it before 1661. Mrs. Eastwick conveyed the strip included in the Roach lot to Mr. Roach in 1697 and died about 1700. The house and lot descended to Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Searle, and Elizabeth's brother Eastwick Bush. The old house was standing in 1702 and gone in 1715 (Essex Antiquarian, vol. 8 page 74).

It is known for certain that when Stephen and Sarah Webb sold the land to Joseph Howard, sailmaker, on June 12, 1806, it was a vacant lot:



Joseph Howard, the oldest son of John and Jemima (Ashby) Howard, was born in Salem, July 1, 1780. Mr. Howard was married on Nov. 2, 1806 to Anstiss Smith, daughter of Capt. George and Lydia (King) Smith of Salem. He became a shipping and commission merchant, having his office on Derby St. The embargo of 1806 to Feb. 1809 probably curtailed his building efforts. The tax records indicate that in 1808 Joseph Howard was part owner of his father's sail loft and also a house lot on Brown St. In 1809 he is taxed for a brick house valued at \$900; part of the sail loft, value \$1,200 and a house lot in South Fields. This house, in all probability, was one of the houses mentioned in the Diary of Rev. William Bentley, Sept. 12, 1809, "We have six brick buildings now finishing in the eastern part of the town beside others in other quarters."

Joseph and Anstiss Howard lived in this house with their children viz: Joseph (b. 1807), John (b. 1808), Anstiss (b. 1811), Lydia (b. 1812), Mary (b. 1814), George (b. 1816), Frances (b. 1817), Maria (b. 1819), also Samuel, Edward and William (the last three died in infancy between 1822 and 1826).

The genealogy of Abraham Howard and His Descendants tells more about the life of Joseph, "The commercial disturbances of 1819 and 1825 seriously affected business in Salem, and Mr. Howard determined to establish himself elsewhere. His son, John Tasker Howard, writing in April, 1827, to his brother Joseph, then a student at Amherst College, in reference to their father's purposed removal from the town, said, "With regard to business in this place, it is entirely out of the question. Although we might have our store filled with

4.

consignments, still we could not get purchasers." So, in October, 1827, Mr. Howard removed his business to New York and his family to Brooklyn, N.Y. At this time and later a number of young and middle-aged Salem men made their homes in Brooklyn, where they became prominent, some of them being numbered among the leading merchants of New York. Among these families were those of Seth Low (whose son, A. A. Low, was in Mr. Howard's Salem office), Isaac H. Frothingham, Arthur and Alfred Benson, Ripley and Reuben Ropes.

In New York, Mr. Howard, with his son, John Tasker Howard established the shipping and commission house of J. Howard & Son, with offices on South Street, and later at 34 Broadway. In 1835 their warehouse was swept away in the great fire which devastated lower New York; but their losses were more than covered by a fortunate, though accidental, investment of the junior partner, then abroad, such as was possible only in those days of slow transit without ocean telegraphs. Noticing that importations of Russian goods had been slight, he shipped home a large cargo of bristles, which reached New York the very day after the fire, and as every brush factory in the city had been destroyed, the profit was immediate and large.

In 1848, J. Howard & Son started the Empire City Line of steamers to Havana and New Orleans, transferring their boats, on the discovery of gold in California, to Chagres, to connect on the Pacific with their vessels from the Isthmus to San Francisco. They afterwards cooperated with others in establishing the Australian Steamship Company, of which they became the agents, and the first of their steamers that made the voyage from New York to Sydney, via Liverpool,

in 1853, and in 1854 showed the British the new route back through the Pacific, the "Golden Age", was commanded by David D. Porter, then a lieutenant of the U.S. Navy on leave. Admiral Porter's sword remains in the family as a souvenir of this connection.

Mr. Howard left an honored name in Salem, where he was known for many good works. He was an original member of the Charitable Mechanic Association, for which he designed the certificate of membership. In 1822 he was elected Representative to the General Court; and in 1825-6 he was Selectman. He was deeply interested in religious matters. He was a member of the Tabernacle Congregational Church, where his children were baptized. In this Church were consecrated, on Feb. 6, 1812, the first band of foreign missionaries sent from Salem to India by the A.B.C.F.M., and their farewell prayer-meeting was held at the house of Mr. Howard at the corner of Brown and Howard Streets (the latter street named for him and his father). These were the Revs. Samuel Newell, Adoniram Judson, Samuel Nott, Gordon Hall and Luther Rice. He took a fatherly interest in the theological students at Andover, and was accustomed to invite them to spend their vacations at his house, to save them the expense of travelling to their homes. Among those thus entertained were Gerard Hallock, afterwards editor of the N.Y. Journal of Commerce, and Dr. Leonard Bacon, of Yale.

On his removal to Brooklyn, Mr. Howard continued his good works. True to his ancestry of sea-going men, he took a deep interest in the sailor, and in 1828, on the reorganization of the American Seamen's Friend Society, he became one of its first Board of Directors.

In March, 1857, the year of his death, The Sailors' Magazine said of him, "He was a shipping merchant, engaged chiefly in the South American trade; had much intercourse with seamen; appreciated their character, influence and claims; and felt, as a practical man, that if we would christianize the heathen we must christianize the "men" who go freighted with blessings or curses to every foreign port." On the organization of the Brooklyn City Mission and Tract Society, July 22, 1829, Mr. Howard became its first treasurer. Towards the end of his life, the infirmities of age compelled him to transfer to his son and partner the responsibilities of business, and he died on Jan. 24, 1857, at his home on Concord street, where he and Seth Low had built similar houses next door to each other."

Prior to leaving for N.Y. on Oct. 15, 1827, Joseph Howard sold to Thomas Downing Jr., merchant, the messuage consisting of a brick dwelling house and land bounded east on a new street leading to the Branch Meeting House, "The same I purchased of Stephen Webb, on June 12, 1806."

The 1836 Salem Directory states that Thomas Downing was a dry goods dealer having his store at 211 Essex St., house 20 Brown St. (since renumbered 8 Brown St.). By 1850 Mr. Downing had moved his dry goods establishment to 173 Essex St. The federal census of 1850 gives a closer look at the Downing household:

Brown Street					
Thomas Downing	age	50	dry goods whole sale	born	Mass.
Nancy B.	"	50		"	"
Thomas W.	"	19	clerk	"	"
Nancy B.	"	21		"	"
John H.	"	17	mariner	"	"
Katy W.	"	13		"	"
Mary P.	"	9		"	"
Mary Hurley	"	22		"	Ire.
Elsey Fisk	"	50		"	Mass.

In 1858 Thomas Downing set out to build the brick block of stores at 175 Essex St. known as the Downing Block. With all appearances of a prosperous future, Mr. Downing, on Jan. 27, 1859, took his own life. This thorough account was printed in the Salem Register:

"Distressing Event. We have rarely known a greater sensation created in this community than was caused on Friday morning by the announcement of the death of Thomas Downing Esq., under peculiarly distressing circumstances. On Thursday evening, at tea-time, Mr. Downing's absence excited the apprehensions of his family and measures were taken to ascertain the cause. About 2 o'clock on Friday morning, Mr. Payne Morse, one of the watchmen residing in North Salem, had occasion to go home to obtain an overcoat, and then first learned from his wife, that she saw Mr. Downing entering the East Church soon after 4 o'clock on Thursday afternoon. Mr. Morse, and Mr. John Saul, of the watch, and some of Mr. Downing's friends were advised of the circumstances, then commenced an investigation in the church, and soon discovered the body suspended from the stairs leading to the Eastern tower, having been dead at least six hours. Coroner Walton was called, and held an inquest at 4 A.M. the jury returning that the deceased came to his death between 4 P.M. of the 27th and 3 A.M. of the 28th, while laboring under mental aberration induced by disease.

Mr. Downing has been well known to all the people in this region as an extensive and successful dry goods dealer for many years, in which business he accumulated an ample fortune, a portion of which he had recently invested in an elegant, and what promises to be a profitable, block of stores, adjoining his old stand, now nearly completed. For some time past he has been afflicted with dyspepsia

and other local and painful maladies, which occasioned a lowness of spirits and tendency to depression that finally impaired his mind to such a degree as to lead to his melancholy death. To no other cause than the effect of disease can his untimely end be attributed, as there was nothing in his pecuniary affairs, or social condition, or associations, to produce anything but contentment and happiness. Mr. Downing was beloved by all who knew him, and his circle of acquaintance was uncommonly large. Of an exceedingly amiable and excellent character from his youth up, of a genial disposition, without a stain upon his reputation, public spirited, but avoiding rather than seeking public honors, generous, and obliging to all, he was a universal favorite, and his loss will be felt by nearly the entire community as a most afflicting dispensation. As a citizen, he was among our most respected and useful; as a parishioner, indefatigable; as a friend and companion, true and unswerving; as a business man, the soul of courtesy and of honor; and, in all the relations of life, a model of excellence."

The probate of Thomas Downing (#37977) lists his real estate holdings as:

Brick block and land Pickman Place, Essex St.	\$40,000
Brick dwelling house and out buildings and land Brown Street	6,500
Wooden dwelling house and out buildings William Street	1,800

His personal estate was valued at \$57,119.54 (appendix B). Among other bequests the messuage on Brown Street was willed to his wife Nancy.

Widow Nancy Downing remained in the house as indicated in the 1860 census:

Nancy Downing	age 60		born Mass.
Thomas W. "	" 30	dry goods dealer	" "
John H. "	" 27	" " "	" "
Kate W. "	" 23		" "
Mary "	" 20		" "
Mary Flinn	" 23	domestic	" Ire.
Hannah Roach	" 24	"	" "

Mrs. Downing died on May 2, 1865. In her will (probate #37974) written on Nov. 15, 1859, she bequeathed the messuage on the corner of Brown and Howard streets to her sons Thomas and John, to hold in trust and to permit her daughters and their survivors to occupy and improved the same. Her children and only heirs were:

- Thomas W. Downing
- John H. Downing
- Nancy B. West, wife of Benjamin West
- Kate Dow, wife of Urieh Dow
- Mary P. Downing

The 1870 census shows that another generation of Downings were in residence:

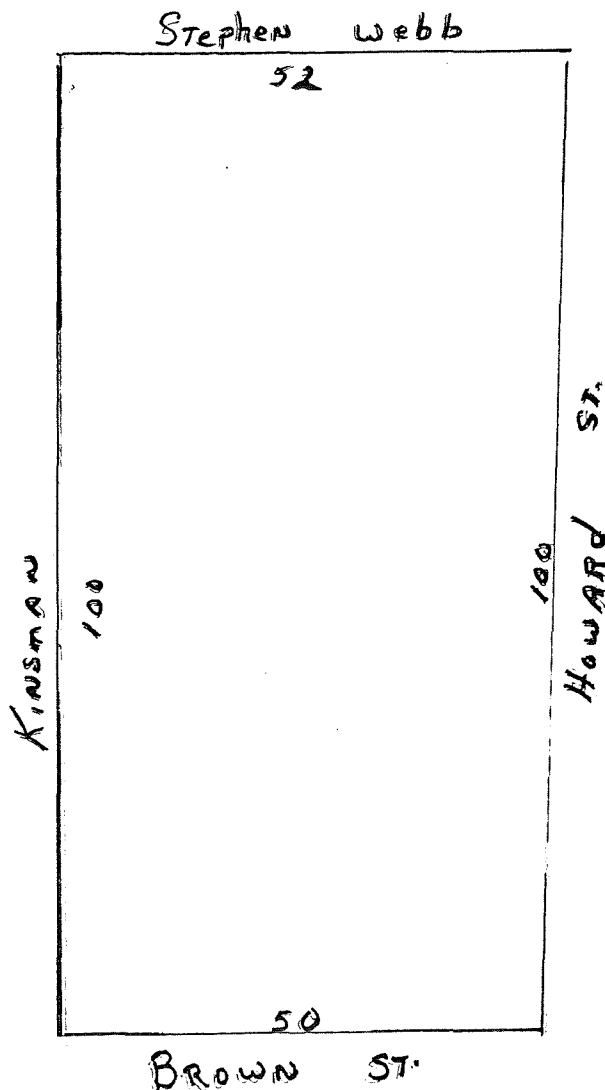
Thomas W. Downing	age 40	dry goods - retired	born Mass.
John H. "	" 38	" "	" "
Mary P. "	" 31	keeps house	" "
Kate P. "	" 5	at school	" "
George W. "	" 3	at home	" N.Y.
Mary Flynn	" 21	servant	" Ire.
Hannah Roche	" 18	"	" "

(note: The ages of the servants indicate a little Irish Blarney)

The 1880 census shows that the Downing family had vacated the house and it was rented out:

Nathaniel C. Robbins	age 70	coal dealer	born Mass.
Rosalie F.	"	" 32	second wife, keeps house "
Annie	"	" 37	daughter, at home "
Ellen Geary	"	21	servant born Ire.

On May 6, 1893 Thomas W. Downing, formerly of Salem now resident at Baker City, Oregon, as surviving trustee under the will of Nancy Downing late of Salem, sold to Joseph F. Smith, of Salem the messuage with the brick dwelling house and out buildings, the same conveyed by Joseph Howard to Thomas Downing Jr. Oct. 15, 1827:



On June 15, 1893 Joseph F. and Emily D. Smith sold to Sarah E. Balcomb wife of Henry W. Smith, the messuage brick dwelling house and out buildings and land under and adjoining, the same conveyed by Thomas Downing May 26, 1893 (book 1380 page 187).

The tax records for 1893 indicate that the house was vacant at that time. The owner being Sarah E. Balcomb, value of the house \$3,500, value of the land \$1,200 and a barn with a \$200 value.

The next year Sarah E. Balcomb had a new house erected at the rear of 8 Brown St. (now known as 1-3 Howard St.). Mrs. Balcomb never lived in the house but allowed Sarah F. Dore, widow of Frank, to conduct a lodging house. A summation of the life of Sarah Balcomb appeared in the Salem News on Jan. 2, 1923, the time of her death:

Mrs. Sarah Ellen Balcomb, widow of Henry Balcomb, and daughter of the late William H. and Sarah (Boardman) Honeycomb, died at her home, 7 Lemon street, last Saturday.

Mrs. Balcomb was born in Salem, Feb. 24, 1837, and in her younger days taught for some years at the Bentley school, being associated with Miss Cogswell, Miss Choate, Miss Brown and Miss Coleman. In addition to her school duties she was a musician of ability, having inherited her gift from both father and mother, one of whom played the bass viol in the Universalist church before the advent of the pipe organ, while the other was the leading soprano in the choir of the same church. Mrs. Balcomb was an industrious teacher of piano after school hours and an organist on Sunday, and served for years with the Tabernacle, the Central Baptist and Lafayette Street Methodist churches.

In early youth she united with the Central Baptist church but after

the Calvary church was built in her neighborhood she transferred her membership to that society. Mrs. Balcomb was deeply interested in church and missionary endeavor, also in the charitable work of her native city, and during her long period of invalidism was not content to wholly lose touch with these activities. Years ago she was interested in educating young men for the ministry and among those she assisted was Rev. Louis Eaton, who became a missionary to Siam.

Mrs. Balcomb had been confined to her bed for seven years, during which time she exhibited great patience and cheerfulness, and being mentally active until within a few months, she would pass away the hours by writing clever poems for various occasions, birthdays, anniversaries and greetings to old friends also a weekly message to be read at the prayer service of her church.

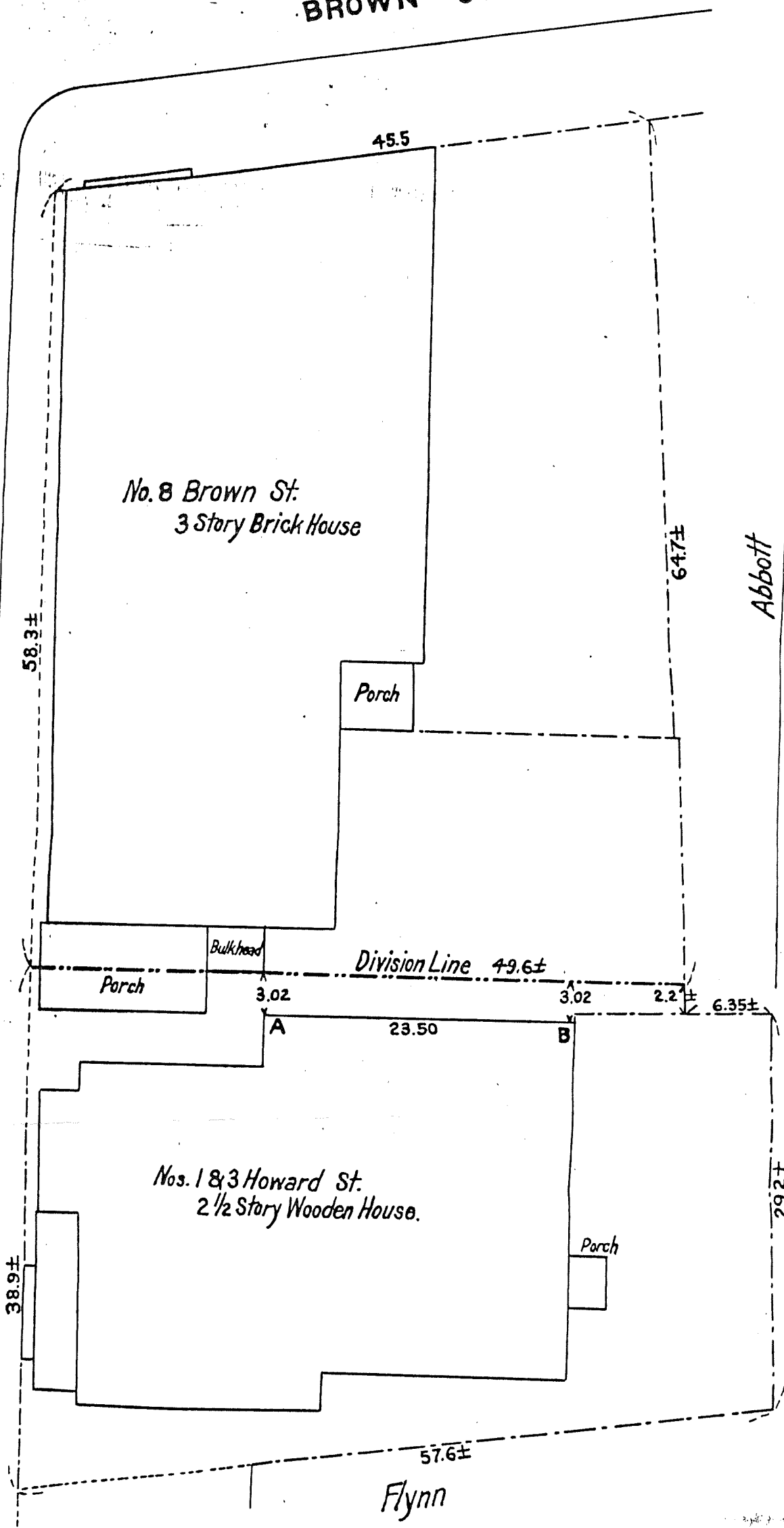
The deceased leaves a daughter, Mrs. Annie Wheeler, of Salem, two grandsons Henry Balcomb of Salem and Henry L. Wheeler of Natick, two great-grandchildren and several cousins, Mrs. George Pickering, Mrs. Sylvia Millett, Miss Anna Wright and Charles Guinn, all of this city."

Six years before her death Mrs. Balcomb, then called the widow of Henry W., sold to Annie A. Inman, widow of Charles T, the same being a portion of the estate deeded to her by Joseph F. Smith in 1893. The property had been divided by this date and the portion that was sold was 8 Brown Street (book 2361 page 173).

Plan of land owned by Sarah E. Balcomb
 showing division of estate.
 Land situated in Salem

BROWN ST.

HOWARD ST.

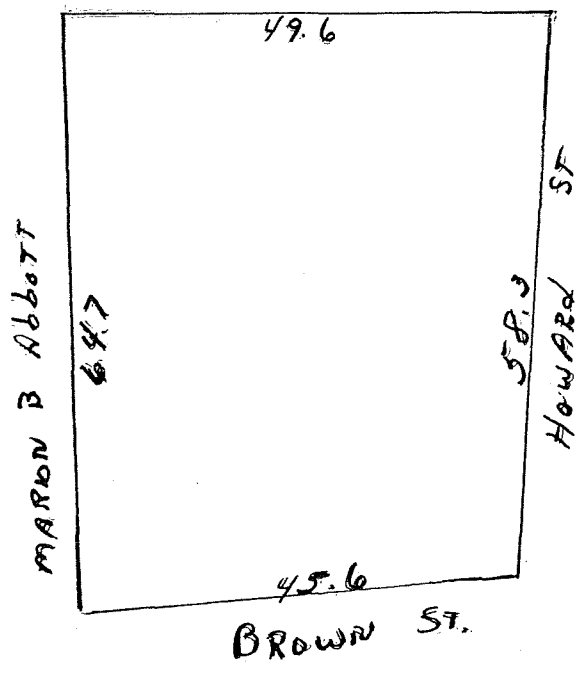


Salem, Sept. 24, 1914. Rec. + Em't in Essex Reg. Deeds (Sg. Dist.)
 Attest: Richard J. Wallace, Reg.

Yveson 250, 1914.

Annie A. Inman died in 1929 leaving as her only heir a son, Dr. William C. Inman, of Lynn. On June 19, 1929 William C. Inman administer of the estate of Annie A. Inman sold the same property described in the deed from Sarah E. Balcomb to Annie A. Inman in 1917 (book 2809 page 376).

John G. Alber died on June 9, 1950. His niece, Charlotte P. Richardson was appointed administer of the estate. On Oct. 9, 1950 Charlotte P. Richardson sold for the sum of \$8,000, to David E. and Honora M. Hayes, the same conveyed to John C. Alber by deed of William C. Inman in June of 1929:



(book 3775 page 548)

On Feb. 3, 1953 David E. and Honora M. Hayes, husband and wife, sold to Victor and Therese C. Corbin the same conveyed by Charlotte P. Richardson administer of the estate of John G. Alber (book 3957 page 239).

On July 29, 1969 Victor and Therese C. Corbin sold to James H. and Julie E. Lee the same conveyed by deed of David E. Hayes et ux in 1953 (book 5626 page 107).

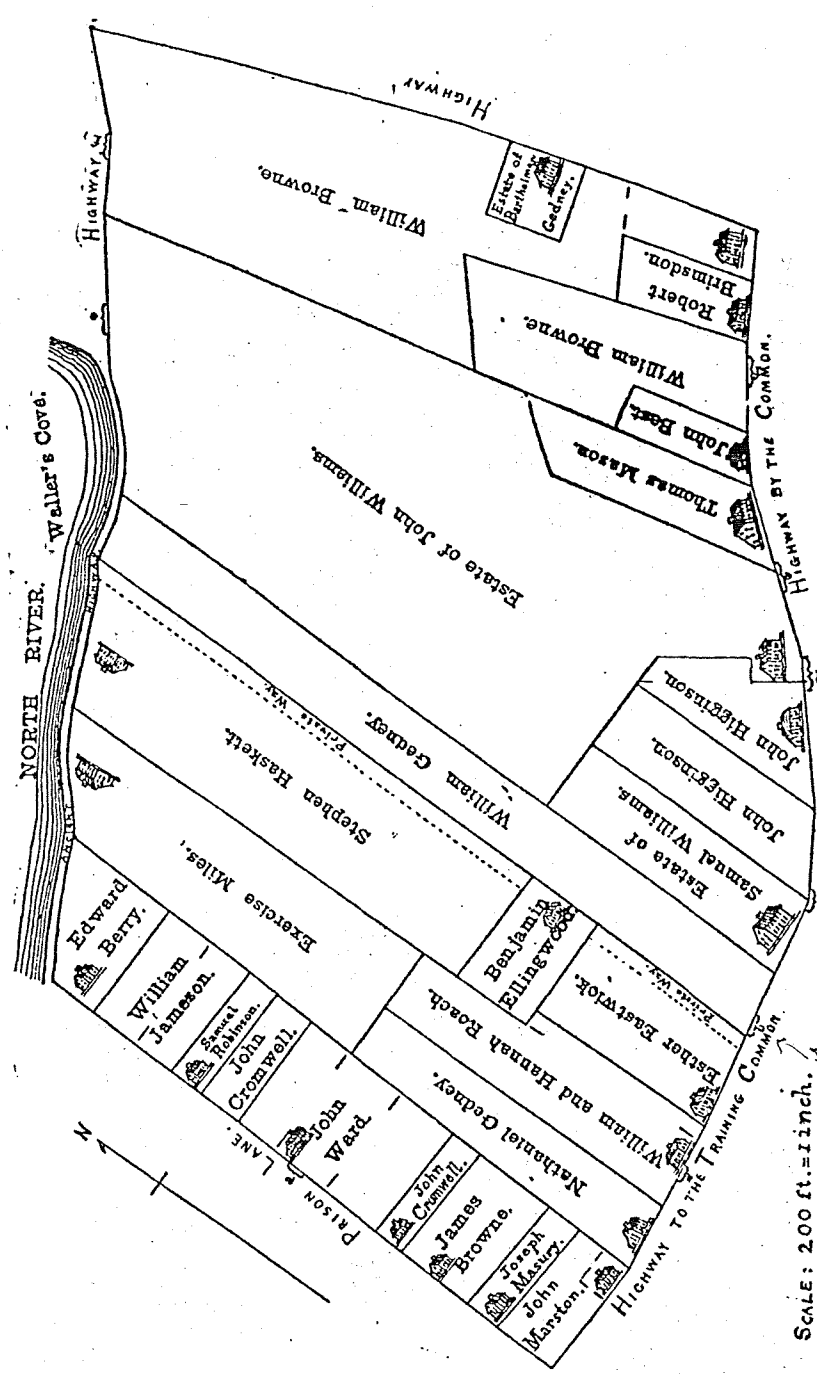
On Oct. 14, 1971 James H. Lee and Julie E. Lee sold to James H. Lee and Jay Alden Turner as trustees of Lee and Turner Realty Trust. "For title see deed of Victor A. Corbin et ux to James H. Lee July 29, 1969 (book 5860 page 26)."

On Oct. 31, 1972 James H. Lee and Jay Alden Turner trustees of Lee and Turner Realty Trust sold for \$46,000, to Robert Bramble trustee the same property conveyed by Lee in 1971 (book 5919 page 796).

On Sept. 25, 1973 Robert C. Bramble, trustee, sold for the sum of \$84,000, to James A. and Michele J. Bragan. "For title see James H. Lee et al trustee 1972 book 5919 page 796 (book 6016 page 266)."

James A. and Michele J. Bragan sold for \$91,000 to Peter B. and Joan M. Stien on Jan. 14, 1977. "For title see deed Robert C. Bramble 1973 book 6016 page 266 (book 6316 page 581)."

On March 11, 1980 the house and land 8 Brown St. was sold by Peter B. and Joan M. Stien for the sum of \$118,000 to Norman Marcus and Dawn Marie Driscoll, both of Marblehead, husband and wife (book 6685 page 315).



PART OF SALEM IN 1700. NO. 15.

SCALE: 200 ft. = 1 inch.

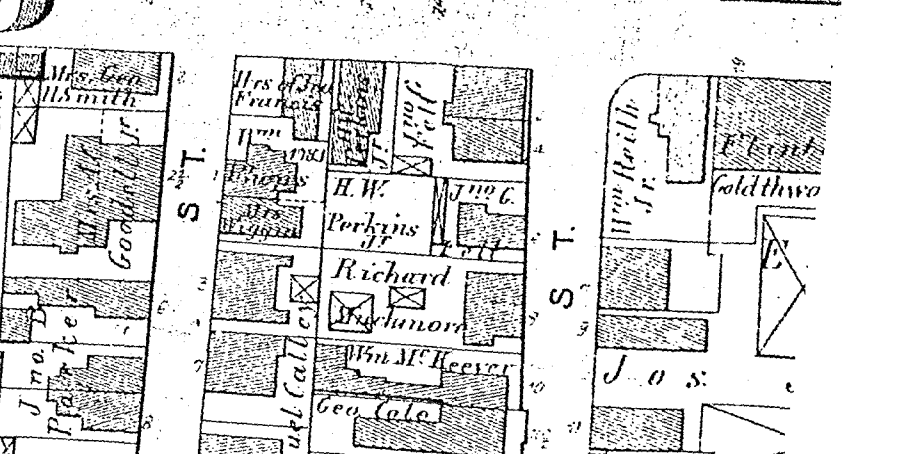
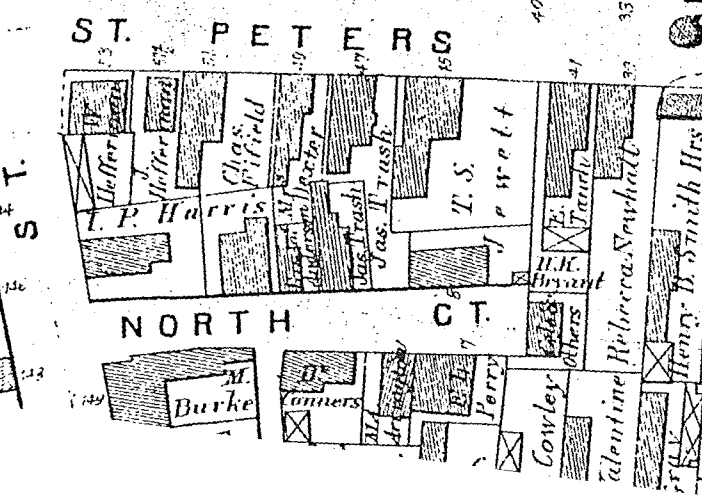
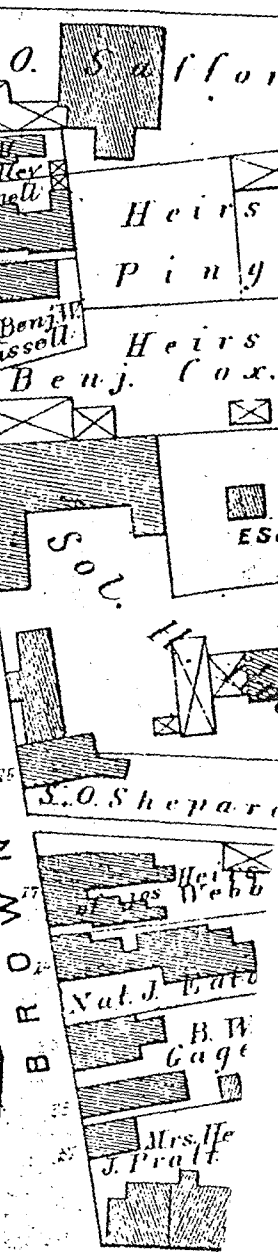
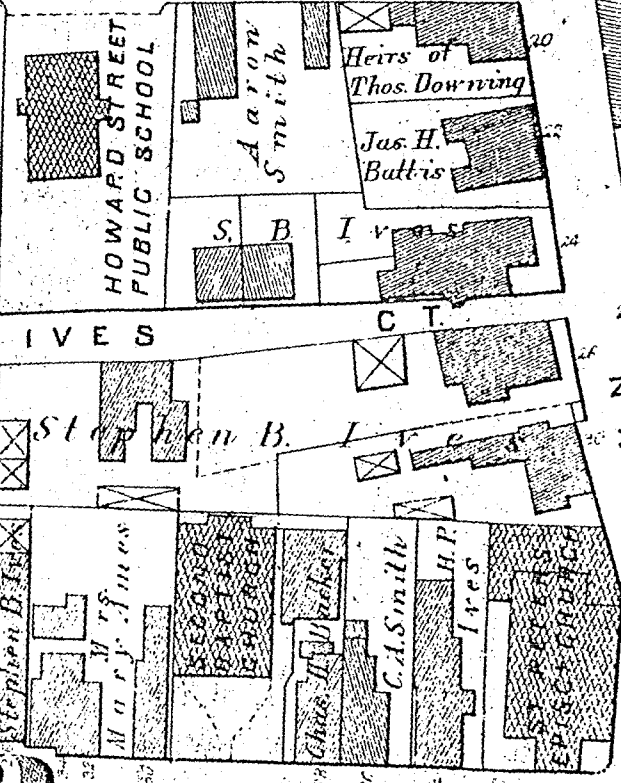
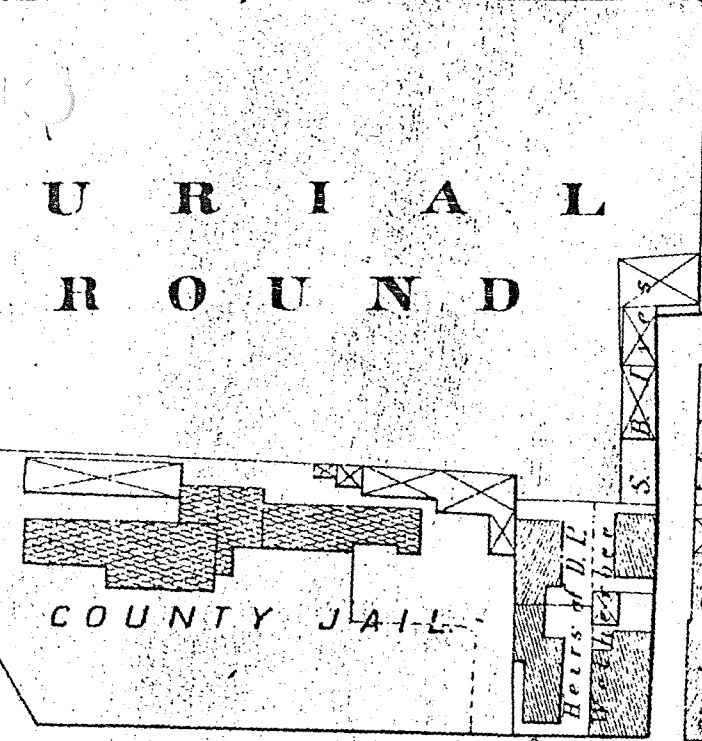
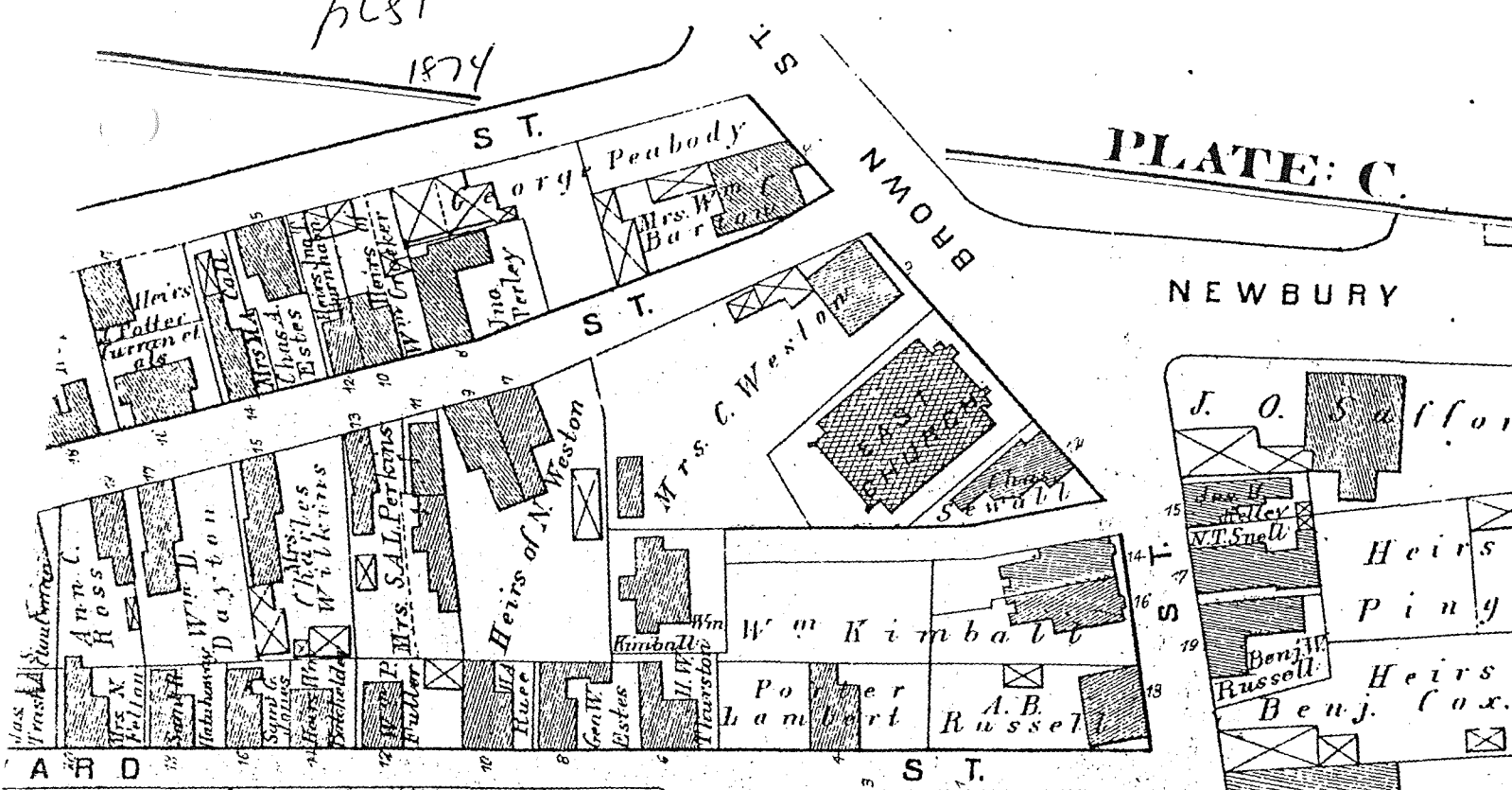
PLATE 9

A. J. Archer & Co. Gearing Note	\$ 15000.00	
Balance of acct. Oct. 10, 1858. to Feb. 28, 1859	245.00	15345.00
Archer, Gearing & Co. Note	6000.00	
" " Oct. 18, 1858. to Feb. 28, 1859	130.00	6130.00
" " " " " " " "	4700.86	
" " Feb. 9, 1858. to Feb. 28, 1859	296.88	4997.74
John G. Hammonds " " " " " "	1285.73	
" " Oct. 8, 1858. to Feb. 28, 1859	36.00	1315.73
Francis W. Tuttle's Balance of Note	300.00	
" " Oct. 14, 1858. to Feb. 28, 1859	67.00	306.70
James B. Ferguson's Mortgage Note	1000.00	
" " Feb. 26, 1858. to Feb. 28, 1859	60.33	1060.33
2 Shares Lowell Manuf. Co.		1100.00
1 " Amoskeag " " 920.00	Dividend due \$40.00	960.00
1 " Massachusetts " " 840.00	" " \$40.00	880.00
15 " Naumkeag " " "		1500.00
6 " Lyman " " "		375.00
4 " Bay State " " "		00.00
6 " Manchester Print Works		5700.00
1 " Salem Bank		68.00
15 " Webster " " "		1600.00
5 " Portland, Sac., & Portsmouth Rail Road		450.00
600.00 Easton C. C. Bonds, Payable April 1, 1862 Interest due \$18.00		618.00
500.00 Essex " " " " Sept. 15, 1861. " " \$15.00		315.00
5 " Salem Marine Insurance Co.		490.00
2 " East India Marine Hall Corp.		60.00
1 " East Boston Ferry Co.		15.00
10% Essex Insurance Co.		50.00
Invoice of goods, in hands of H. Williams, New York.		750.00
Debt against Nancy B. West		3551.66
" " Thomas W. Downing		867.86
Furniture, Plate & other articles in Dwelling House		1500.00
Horse, Carriage & Harness		250.00
2 Pews in East Church Nov. 4 th 69		20.00
John Parnell's life interest in Real Estate		800.00
Cash on hand { in Asiatic Bank 2318.52		6548.32
{ in First Natl. Bank 4226.00		

\$57119.54

1881
1874

PLATE C





SO. WEST ST
FORD ST
PINGREE ST
SILVER ST

KIMBALL ST
KIMBALL HEIRS
CHU EAST
CHU WEST

PRESCOTT SCHOOL
HOWARD ST
RUSSELL ST
WATSON ST

C E M E T E R Y
189

ARMORY
LIVERY STABLE
D. C. MANNING
S. O. SHEPARD

GADET ARMORY
S. HOLBROOK
MAG. S. & W. MON
J. BOWKER EST.

BROWN ST
G. H. PERKINS
G. E. BELL
J. C. ABBOTT

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH
J. KILBY
J. H. LEBRICK
ST. PETER'S HOUSE

ST. PETER'S CHURCH
J. CROCKER EST.
GEO. GOLD
W. MC KENNES

NORTH ST
D. T. JEMET
A. C. TRASK
L. J. HERRMAN

ASH ST
UNIVERSAL CHURCH
W. H. BAKER
S. W. N. EST.

ST. PETER'S
W. G. HEBB
W. R. ITH
M. J. ROBERTS

ST. PETER'S CHURCH
ST. PETER'S HOUSE
J. KILBY
J. H. LEBRICK

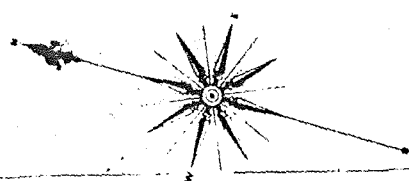
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UNIVERSAL CHURCH
W. H. BAKER
S. W. N. EST.

UNIVERSAL CHURCH
W. H. BAKER
S. W. N. EST.

7



OLIVER

0

WASHINGTON

MALL

WILLIAMS

THE 1ST CHURCH
(Unitarian)

KIMBALL CT.

HOWARD

C e m e t e r y .

BRIDGE

BROWN ST. CT.

SALEM YOUNG WOMEN'S ASSOC.

ESSEX COUNTY JAIL.

POLISH CATHOLIC CHURCH

ST. PETER

