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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

City Hall
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Newton, Massachusetts 02159
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1998 MAR 16 AM 11:05

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Michael Kruse, Director

CITY CLERK
NEWTON, MA. 02159

Historical Commission

RECORD OF ACTION

DATE: March 5, 1998

SUBJECT: 35 Webster Street - Landmark Designation

At a scheduled monthly meeting and public hearing on March 5, 1998 the Newton Historical Commission, by a vote of 5 to 0, passed the following motion:

RESOLVED that the Nathaniel Topliff Allen House at 35 Webster Street be designated a Newton Landmark Preservation Site in accordance with Newton's Landmark Preservation Ordinance, Sec. 22-93. The Nathaniel Topliff Allen House, built ca. 1844, is a fine example of a Greek Revival structure. The property's history as a school and residence for nearly one hundred years is important to the development of the property and the neighborhood. The property retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Located in West Newton the property is Assessor's Number 33-025-0001 and is recorded at the Middlesex Registry of Deeds in Book 13205, Page 441 of 1978 showing the sale of the property by Newton Historic Preservation Corporation to Allen House and School Preservation Corporation. The original deed with property description is in Book 674, Page 288. So far as is known to this Commission, the owner of the parcel that is affected by this landmark designation is the Allen School and House Preservation Corporation, c/o Helen Levy, at 61 Central Street, Newton, MA. 02166.

Members Voting in the Affirmative: John Rodman, Chairman; Lawrence Bauer, William Roesner, Donald Tellalian, Patricia Weslowski.

Patricia Weslowski, Acting Secretary

A True Copy
Attest
Edward J. English
City Clerk of Newton, Mass

MSD 05/13/98 02:44:48 888 10.00

TITLE REFERENCES
Book 13607, Page 253
Book 13205, Page 441
Book 674, Page 288

NEWTON LOCAL LANDMARKS PROGRAM

35 WEBSTER STREET

The Newton Historical Commission, with the assistance of preservation planner, Gretchen Schuler, prepared this landmark report, completed in June 1997.

The Newton Landmarks Program has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior, or the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

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Nathaniel Topliff Allen Homestead - 35 Webster Street

1. *Name of Property*

- a. *Historic Name:* Nathaniel Topliff Allen Homestead
- b. *Common Name:* Allen House

2. *Location*

- a. *Street Address:* 35 Webster Street
- b. *Zip Code:* West Newton, 02165
- c. *Assessor's #:* 33-025-0001

3. *Classification*

- a. *Ownership of Property:* private non-profit
- b. *Type of Property:* building
- c. *National Register Status:* NR IND, 1978

4. *Function or Use*

a. *Historic Functions:* The Nathaniel Topliff Allen Homestead was constructed as a residence and when Nathaniel Topliff Allen (1823-1903) purchased the property in 1854 it was used as a residence and as a school for nearly a century by Allen and his heirs. During Nathaniel Allen's leadership as a school the property also had a dormitory for the boys' school. All three spaces, the family residence, the dormitory, and the school were attached and remain so today.

b. *Current Functions:* Presently the Allen House has seven rental apartments, thus is a multi-family residence by special permit.

5. *Zoning*

The property is in a Multi-Family 1 Zoning District which allows single and two-family dwelling as of right and requires a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet (7,000 sf for a lot configured prior to 1953) and minimum frontage of eighty feet (seventy feet for a pre-1953 lot). Presently the property operates under a special permit issued in 1983 allowing seven residential units.

6. *Description*

a. *Neighborhood Description:* Located in West Newton, the property is one of the most prominent in West Newton Village in part due to the large corner lot with mature trees and in large part due to the monumental columned facade of the main house. The surrounding properties include late nineteenth century dwellings and early twentieth century commercial and civic buildings along Washington and Waltham Streets. This residential block is only one block from the commercial activity mentioned above.

b. *Architectural Description:* The structure consists of a templar gabled Greek Revival block, a large two-story rear and side ell, and a connected barn which was the school building.

(1) *Materials:*

Foundation: granite block and fieldstone

Walls: wood clapboard *Roof:* Slate

Windows: Wood frame 6/6 and 6/6/6

Ornamentation: Simplicity of design of Greek Revival Style, Monumental Ionic Columns, corner posts, templar gable ends.

Vegetation: Several mature large oak trees, scattered shrubbery, open space of lawn in front and on sides.

(2) *Verbal Description:*

Historical appearance: The property has had few changes so that the historical appearance is intact. The most prominent main block is four bays wide and three deep with a gabled roof. The main facade facing Webster Street has a full length open colonnaded porch with the eave overhang and entablature supported by four tapered fluted monumental Ionic columns, one with its volute missing. The two-story front wall, shielded by the open porch, has flush board siding and four bays, each with shutters, up and down. The first-story windows have triple hung sash with six-over-six-over-six lights and the second-story windows are six-over-six double hung, all set in simple slightly projecting wood frames. The gable ends of the main block each have a full wide band of trim forming the boxed molded cornice and two windows in each peak. The uniting feature of the main block is the wide entablature of molded cornice and three beaded boards and a trim piece making up the frieze. There are two tall interior chimneys centered on the front roof slope.

The east side of the main block is marked by a sidehall entrance that faces the driveway and has a shallow hipped roofed open porch supported by a fluted Ionic column on each outside corner and plain square pilasters. The entrance door and surround is remarkable in detail with a leaded fanlight and leaded half side lights and narrow reeded pilasters framing the side lights. The door is a six-panelled wide door.

Attached to the main block on the west side is a one-story flat roof porch supported by squared pilasters and a cluster of three columns at each corner. The cluster includes a square plain column with flanking rounded Ionic columns. Also a single Ionic column is placed in the center of this porch width. On top of the porch is a low solid paneled balustrade with square corner posts that recently has been rebuilt. Also attached to the west side is a two-story polygonal projecting bay that partially overlaps the joint between the main block and rear ell. Most likely this is a late nineteenth century addition.

Extending from the rear of the house is a tall two-story rear ell and a lower one and one-half / two-story rear ell. The sides of the first rear ell have been built out with flat roofed sections with exterior walls on the same plane as the main block side walls. On each side roof slope of the rear ell is a wide shed roof dormer with two windows in each. On the east side a one and one-half story gable roof side ell extends to connect with the barn. In front of this side ell (which connects with the barn) is a flat roofed late nineteenth century addition with a two-story projecting bay on the east wall. The west side of the rear ell has a recessed entrance which is on an angle within the recess and has an Italianate door with paired roundheaded lights on one angle and a window of the other.

The barn projects slightly in front of the side ell with its gable front facing the street. A dilapidated pergola of the early twentieth century extends parallel to this facade. Windows are casement with six-by-six sash with three up and five down. In the gable peak is a triangular shaped, slightly raised matchstick fan. The barn is six bays deep and displays an irregular fenestration pattern on the east side wall which is on a raised stone foundation. Most windows on the side of the barn are six-over-six double hung sash.

Current appearance: Little has changed from the historic appearance of the property with the exception of twentieth century replacement doors at less important entrances, a french door entrance to the side ell near the barn, and an iron circular fire stairs on the west side near the projecting bay. Missing fabric is evident in places such as the lack of a volute on the top of one of the colonnaded porch columns and the solid second-story balustrade on the west side porch which is being replaced as this report is written.

7. *History of Property*

a. *Deed History* Book 13205 Page 441 of 1978 shows the Newton Historic Preservation Association sale of the Allen Homestead to the Allen School and House Preservation Corporation. NHPA had purchased from the Estate of Ruby Keefer, Legatees: Trinity Church, Boston; Unitarian Church of West Newton; Radcliffe College; and Smith College. The original deed with property description is in Book 674, Page 288.

b. *Development History* According to map history this property was built after 1848 and before 1854 when Nathaniel T. Allen (1823-1903) purchased the property for his residence and a private school with progressive ideas. However, there is a Plan of Webster Place from 1844 showing the house, side ell, and barn on this lot which then extended north to River Street. This plan indicates that the house was built by 1844 although it does not appear on the 1848 map.

The significance of the place is associated with Allen who had worked with Horace Mann, first Secretary of the State Board of Education, to begin a model school, known as the Normal School. After launching the model school, which was moved to Framingham for additional space, Mann moved to Ohio to be president of Antioch College and convinced Allen to remain in Newton to establish a private school at the Normal School site which was on the corner of Washington and Highland Streets where the Unitarian Church is today. Allen agreed and in 1853, with his two brothers, George and James, opened the West Newton English and Classical School. In 1854 Allen purchased this property which is displayed on the 1855 map as the same configuration with the school wing marked as a barn. Although referred to as the Allen School the private co-educational school formally was Allen Brothers' West Newton English and Classical School. The main school building remained on Washington Street until 1903 at which time it was moved to Waltham Street just north of River Street.

The Nathaniel Topliff Allen Homestead served as the residence for Allen, his wife and three daughters, as a dormitory for the boys attending the West Newton English and Classical School and as school rooms for additional classes, including the first kindergarten in 1863 and a gymnasium with bowling alley in the converted barn part of the property. Allen was an innovative and creative leader in the educational world. The school had a co-educational student body from many countries including a number of students of color. Allen believed that the total program was important including physical education, caring for pets, and every day chores to promote responsibility.

Following Allen's death in 1903, the English and Classical School moved to Waltham Street and Allen's daughters continued a school at this property, the family homestead. It was known as The Misses Allen School and Nathaniel Topliff Allen's daughter Lucy Ellis Allen was the principal. By 1915 the school

was known as The Allen School for Girls and continued at this site until 1943. Ruby Keefer was a teacher here from 1919 until the school closed in 1943 and inherited the property. Her estate distributed the property to Trinity Church, Boston; Unitarian Church of West Newton; Radcliffe College; and Smith College. After much negotiation the property which was in disrepair was sold to Newton Historic Preservation Association in 1978.

8. *Significance of Property*

a. *Period of Significance* The period of significance for this property extends from its construction date in ca. 1844 to 1943 when the school closed. The most significant date is 1854 when Allen purchased this property for his residence and some school activities.

b. *Historical Significance* The history of the Nathaniel Topliff Allen Homestead and the Allen School is significant for the property's association with local education as well as national educational theory. Also Allen was known as a leader in the anti-slavery movement.

c. *Architectural Significance* The Nathaniel Topliff Allen Homestead is significant for its representation of the Greek Revival Style in West Newton. The bold interpretation indicates the importance of the property in the community and it is one of the best remaining examples.

d. *Landmark Designation Criteria* The Nathaniel Topliff Allen Homestead meets criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 22-93 of Newton's Ordinance T-288. The property is:

- individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places;
- importantly associated with the development of West Newton as a village within the City of Newton;
- historically and architecturally significant for its representation of the Greek Revival Style in a full blown fashion and representative of the adaptation of a residence to serve multiple purposes;
- at a location and setting which continues to be used and could be preserved;
- representative of the original design retaining most of its original fabric.

9. *Recommendations*

a. *Preservation Recommendations* The property was restored in the early 1980s and has had little maintenance since. At that time the project was undertaken with the assistance of a federal and state grant programs a preservation restriction was applied to the property for a period of fifteen years. That protection has expired.

b. *Important Features* Of greatest importance are the scale and massing of the building, the monumental columns, and the architectural detail of the trim of the main block.

10. *Standards for Design Review*

a. *General Standards* All projects affecting the property should be evaluated by considering the effect that proposed changes would have on the general design, arrangement, texture, and material of the features involved and the relationship of such features to the surrounding area. In the case of additions, the appropriateness of size, shape and location of the additions is of critical concern. The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation should provide a baseline for review of changes to a landmark property.

b. *Specific Standards* The context and setting on the lot of this building is critical to its overall design and integrity. Thus the Commission should consider setback and dimensional requirements that may be more restrictive than the zoning code for the south and west sides of the original block.

Specific design standards have been addressed in the late nineteenth century additions with regard to height, proportion of windows and doors, scale and architectural detail. The same principles should be applied in developing a design for changes and in reviewing proposed changes, such that the key features retain their prominence and continue to stand out as examples of fine craftsmanship. Thus the following specific design standards refer to the main block and the attached barn/school.

Exterior Walls

- No new openings should be allowed on the original part of the main block nor in the main facade of the barn.
- No existing openings should be filled so that the original opening is not recognizable. Thus a change in an existing opening must be done in such a fashion as to still read as an opening.
- Wood siding should be retained and replaced in kind.

Windows

- All windows of the main block particularly the triple hung sash should be preserved or replaced with wood sash having the same frame, mullion and light configuration and dimensions as existing.
- Original window design and arrangement of openings should be retained.
- Deteriorated and missing window elements and architectural features should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.

Entrances/Doors

- The original entrance design and arrangement of door openings should be retained.
- When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical and documentary evidence or on appropriateness of style with the period of architecture.
- The leaded side lights flanking the main entrance and the fanlights should be retained where possible.

Roof

- Roof elements and shape should be preserved. The use of architectural asphalt roof shingles could be considered to replace slate although preservation of the slate particularly on the main block would be the first choice.
- The additions of dormers on the main block particularly would be inappropriate. All replacement flashing and gutters should be copper or match the original materials.

Additions

- Additions have been made to the rear to retain the prominence of the main Greek Revival block. This should be the guiding principle of any future additions.
- Additions have been designed so that they are differentiated from the original building. New additions should follow the same principle.
- New additions should not be located near the main or front facade, nor extending from the sides of the original block.

Accessibility

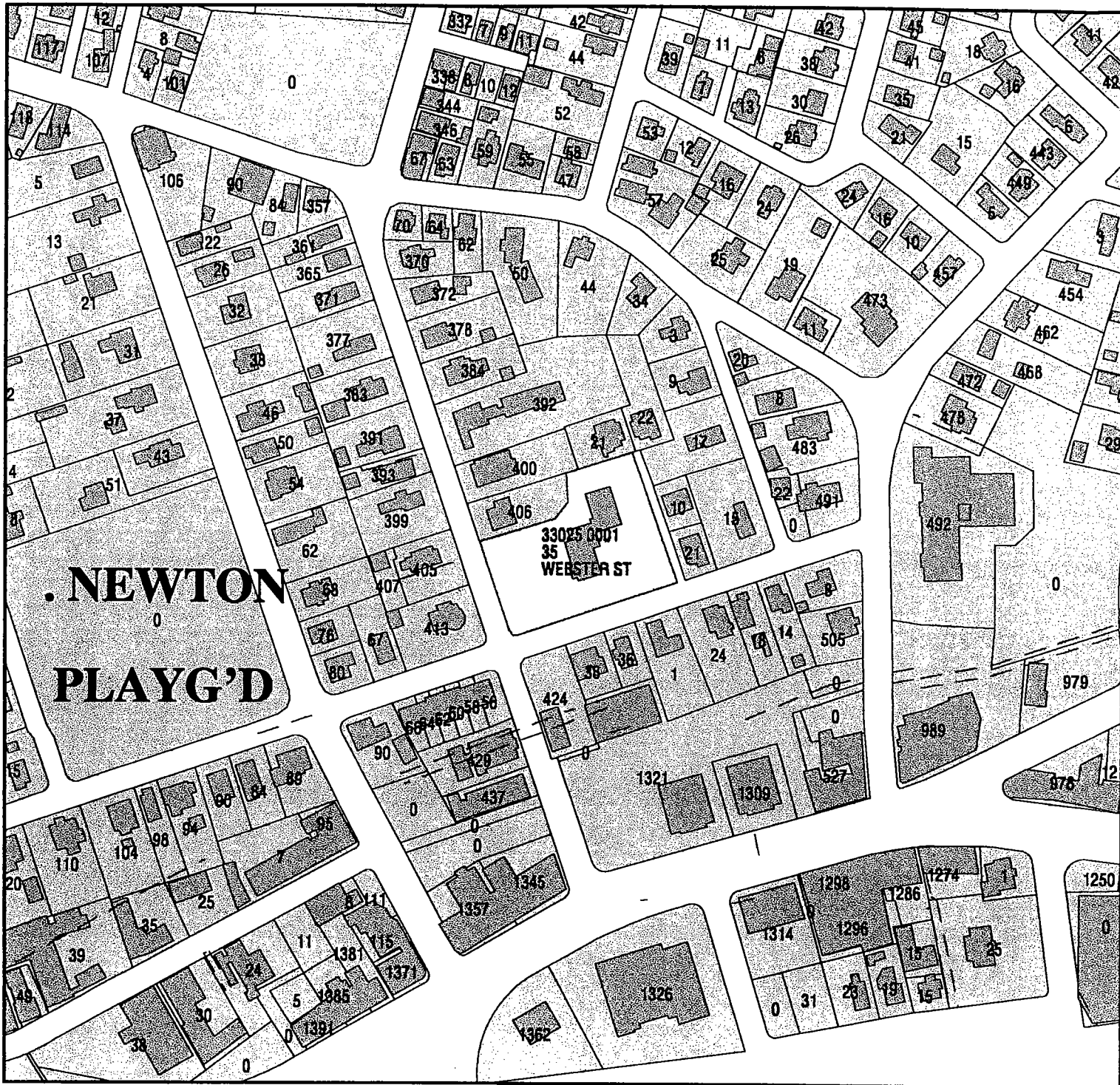
- If accessibility is considered it should be planned for entrance into the rear or side ell where there is minimal grade change at the entrances and where the historic fabric has been altered slightly.

11. *Notification*

<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>S/B/L</u>
400 Cherry St.	33/025/0002A
405 Cherry St.	33/024/0022
406 Cherry St.	33/025/0002
413 Cherry St.	33/024/0024
428-434 Cherry St.	33/011/0002
10-12 Columbus Place	33/025/0019
21-23 Columbus Place	33/025/0021
30 Webster St.	33/011/0005
36 Webster St.	33/011/0004
38-40 Webster St.	33/011/0003



Sbl-Id	Address	Draft Map, Not a Legal Document S-date	Sale-price	Map-Id	Zone	LU	Sq-ft
33025 0001	35 WEBSTER ST	0	0	028SE	MR1	111	53423



Assessor's Base Map

Map Produced on: July 10, 1997

Property boundaries from Newton Assessor's property maps
 Zoning or land use information from Assessor's CAMA database
 Map projection & coordinate system: Massachusetts State Plane - NAD83

CITY OF
NEWTON
 MASSACHUSETTS
 ASSESSING DEPARTMENT
 1000 COMMONWEALTH AVE.
 NEWTON CENTRE, MA 02159

Scale: 1" = 235 ft.



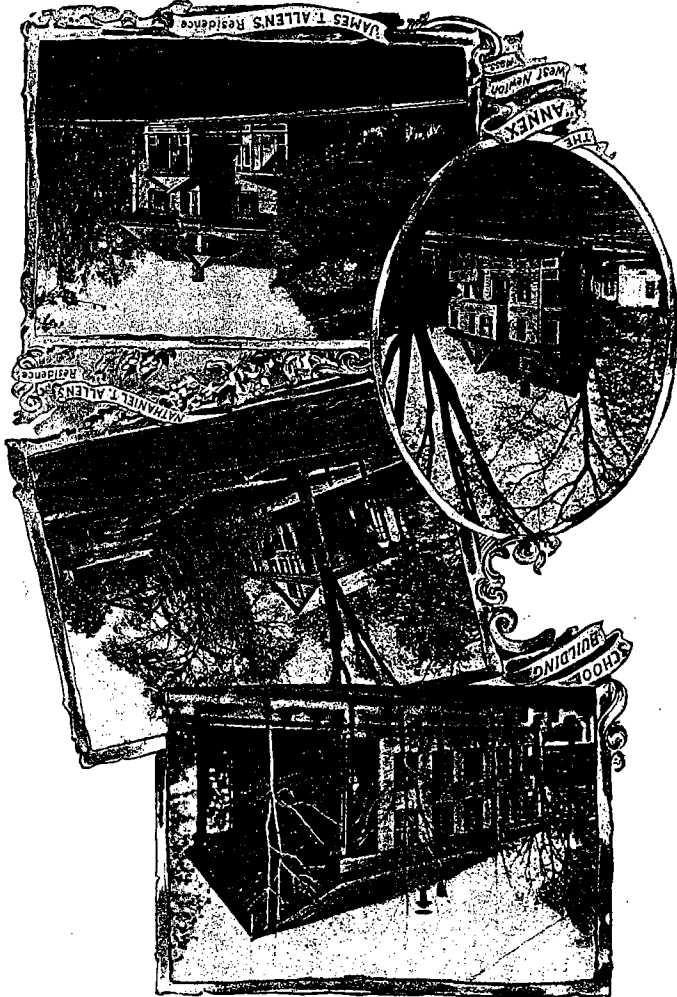
Parcels labeled with Lot Number

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

ALLEN BROTHERS'
West Newton
English & Classical School

Established 1855
Incorporated 1855

BOSTON
Geo. H. Ellis, Printer, 272 Congress Street
1899



WEBSTER PLACE,
in

NEWTON.

belonging to

Wm. F. Porter Esq.

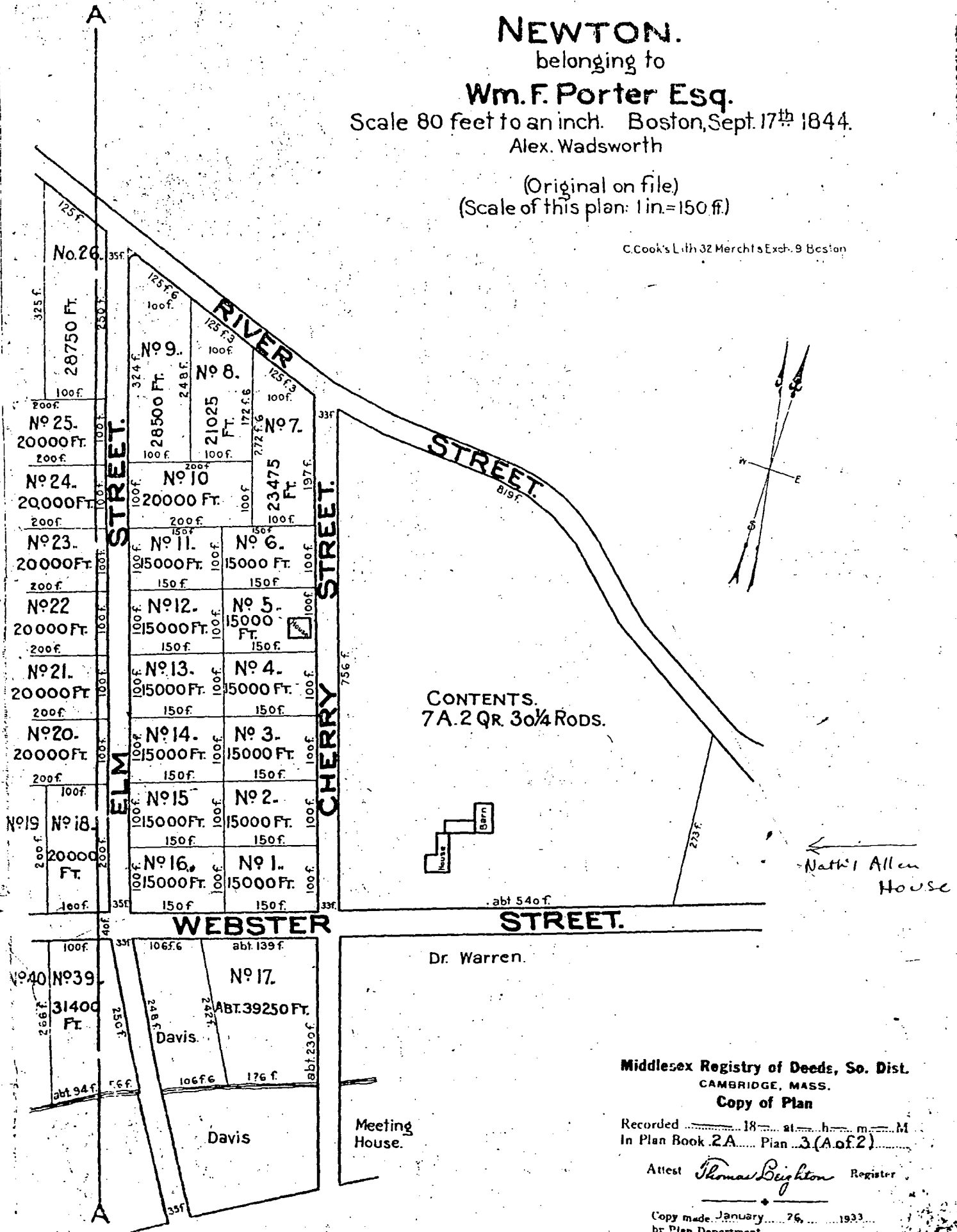
Scale 80 feet to an inch. Boston, Sept. 17th 1844.

Alex. Wadsworth

(Original on file)

(Scale of this plan: 1 in. = 150 ft.)

C. Cook's Lith 32 Merchants Exch. 9 Boston



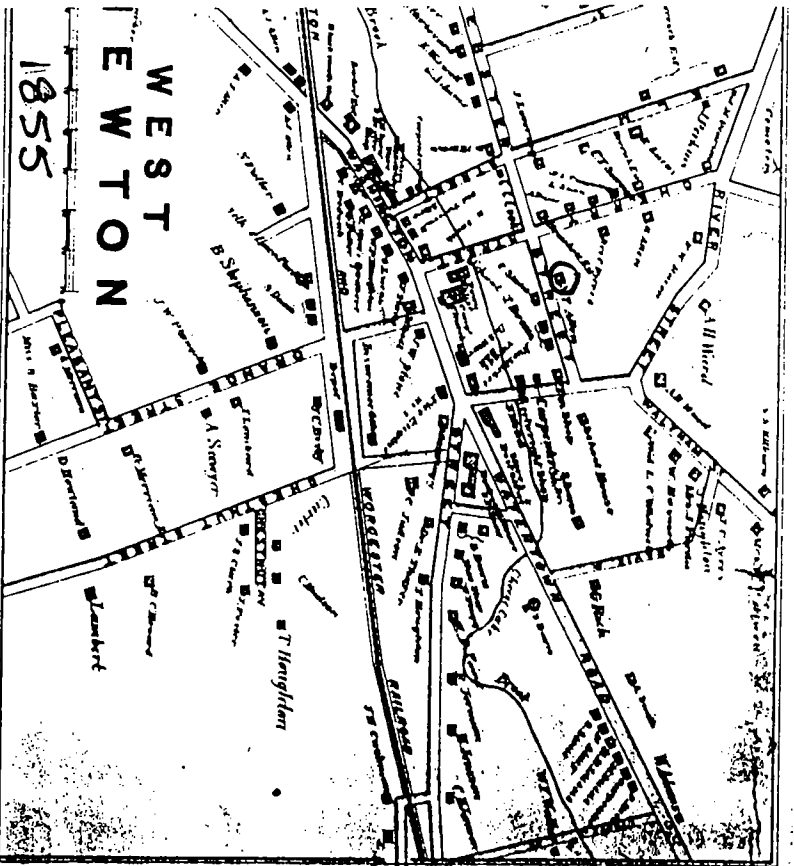
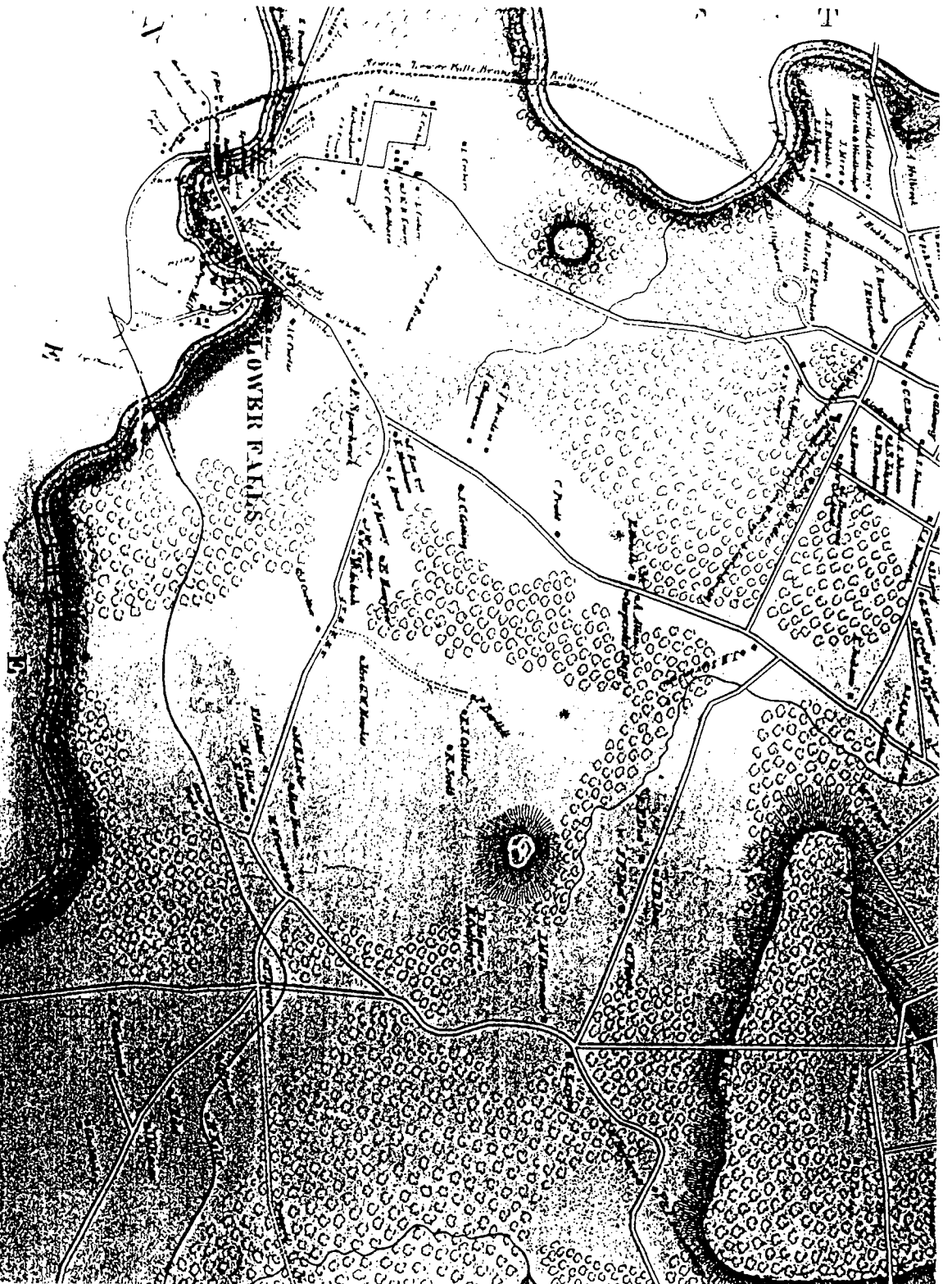
Middlesex Registry of Deeds, So. Dist.
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Copy of Plan

Recorded _____ 18__ at _____ h. _____ m. _____ M.
In Plan Book 2A. Plan 3 (A. of 2)

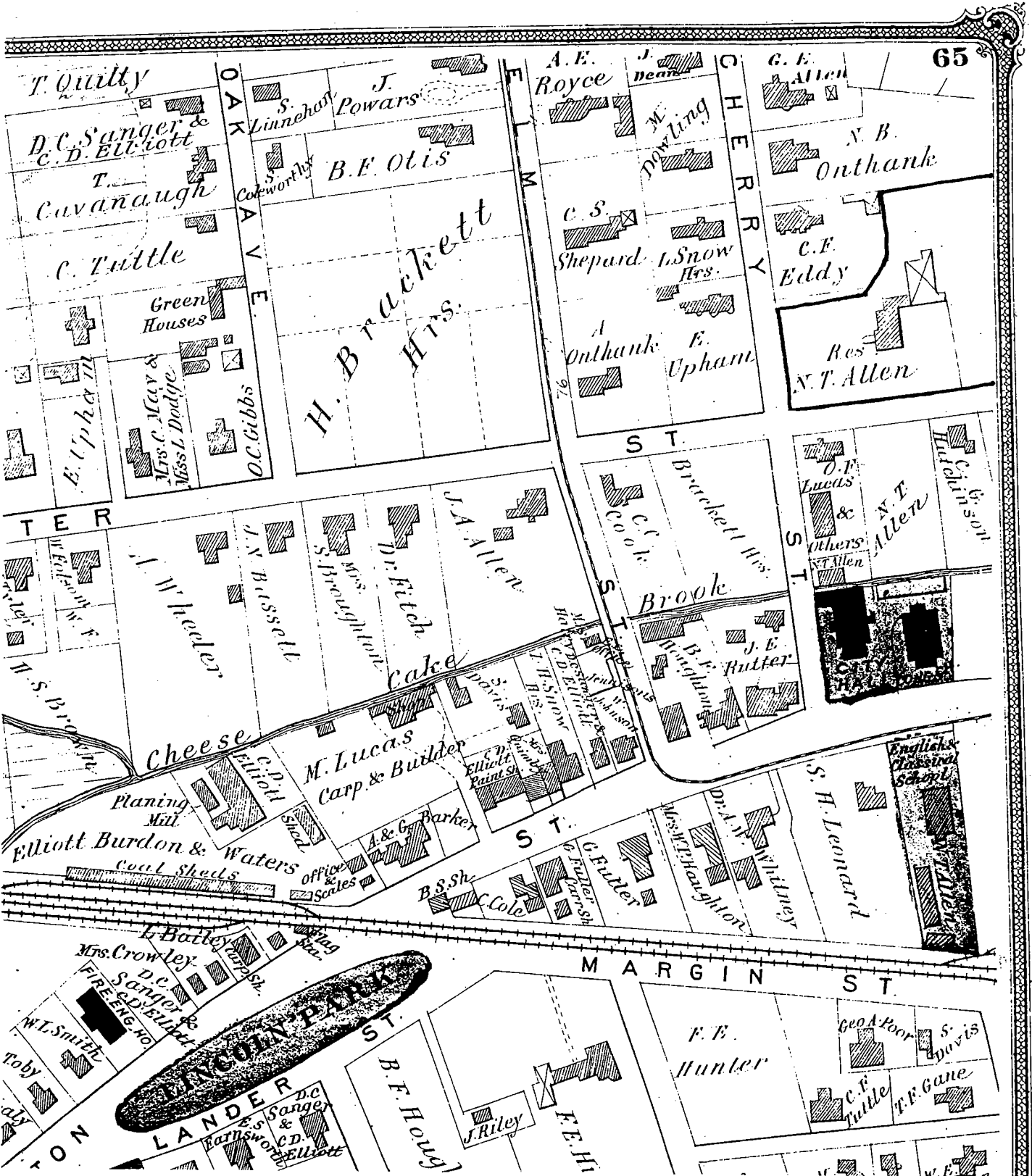
Attest *Thomas Bighton* Register

Copy made January _____ 76. _____ 1933
by Plan Department.



11

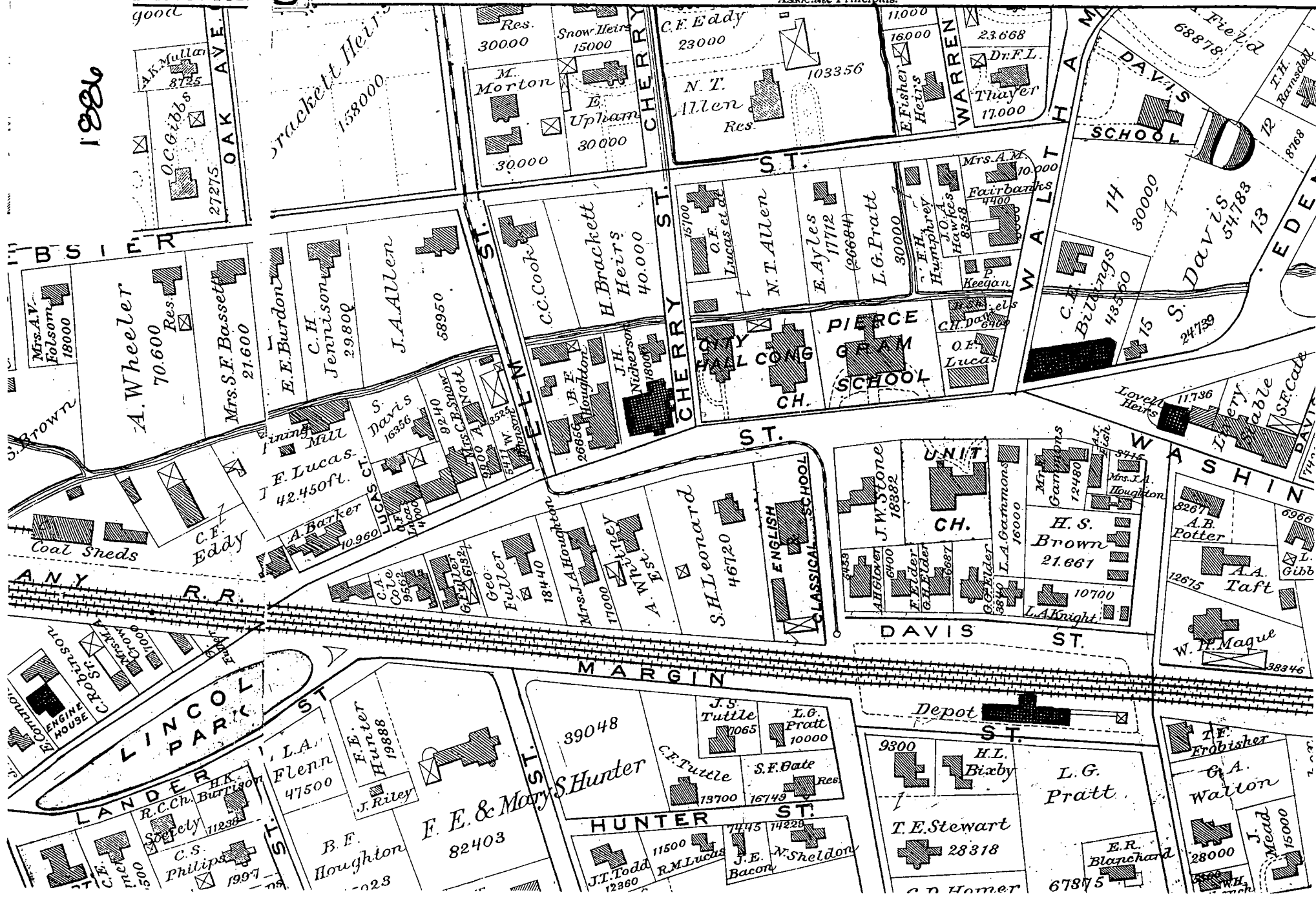
W.A.D.



SECTION

for ADJACENT MAP

ALLEN BROTHERS,
West Newton English and Classical School,
(Incorporated 1855.)
NATHANIEL T. ALLEN, Principal.
JAMES T. ALLEN and GEORGE E. ALLEN,
Associate Principals.



1886

good

Crickett Heirs
158,000

OAK AVE.
27275

70.600
21.600

42,450 ft.

10,960

47,500

1997

30,000
30,000

30,000

17,000

18,440

82,403

15,000

40,000

18,000

17,000

11,500

23,000

10,335.6

10,000

10,065

10,000

11,000

17,000

10,000

16,000

10,000

16,000

17,000

18,882

21,667

16,749

23,668

17,000

10,000

10,700

28,318

11,000

17,000

16,000

10,700

6,787.5

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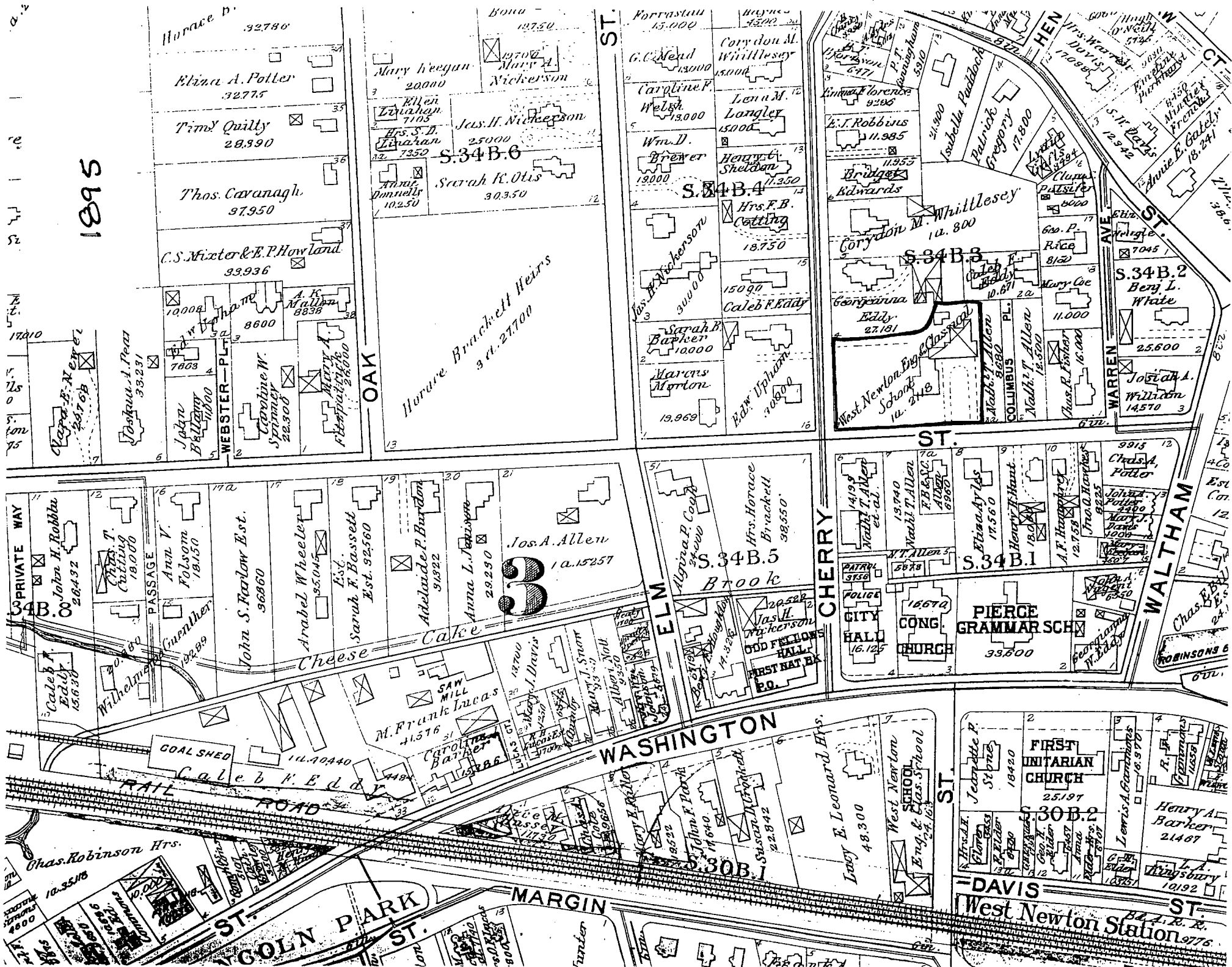
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1895



Horace B. 32,780
 Eliza A. Potter 32,775
 Tim QUILTY 28,990
 Thos. Cavanagh 37,950
 C.S. Mixer & E.P. Howland 33,936
 A.K. Mallon 8838
 John Bellamy 10,000
 Webster-Plt
 Caroline W. Sperry 22,300
 Mary A. Flanagan 26,000

Bona 18,750
 Mary Keegan 20,000
 Mrs. S.D. Duggan 7,350
 Mrs. H. Nickerson 25,000
 Sarah K. Otis 30,350
 S.34B.6
 Horace Brackett Heirs 30,27700

Fortastau 15,000
 G.C. Mead 13,000
 Carloline F. Welsh 13,000
 Wm. D. Brewer 19,000
 S.34B.4
 Mrs. H. Nickerson 30,000
 Sarah B. Barker 10,000
 Marcus Morton 19,969
 Eddy Upham 10,800
 Corydon M. Whittlesey 15,000
 Len M. Langley 15,000
 Henry C. Sheldon 11,350
 Mrs. F.B. Cutting 18,750
 Caleb K. Eddy 15,000

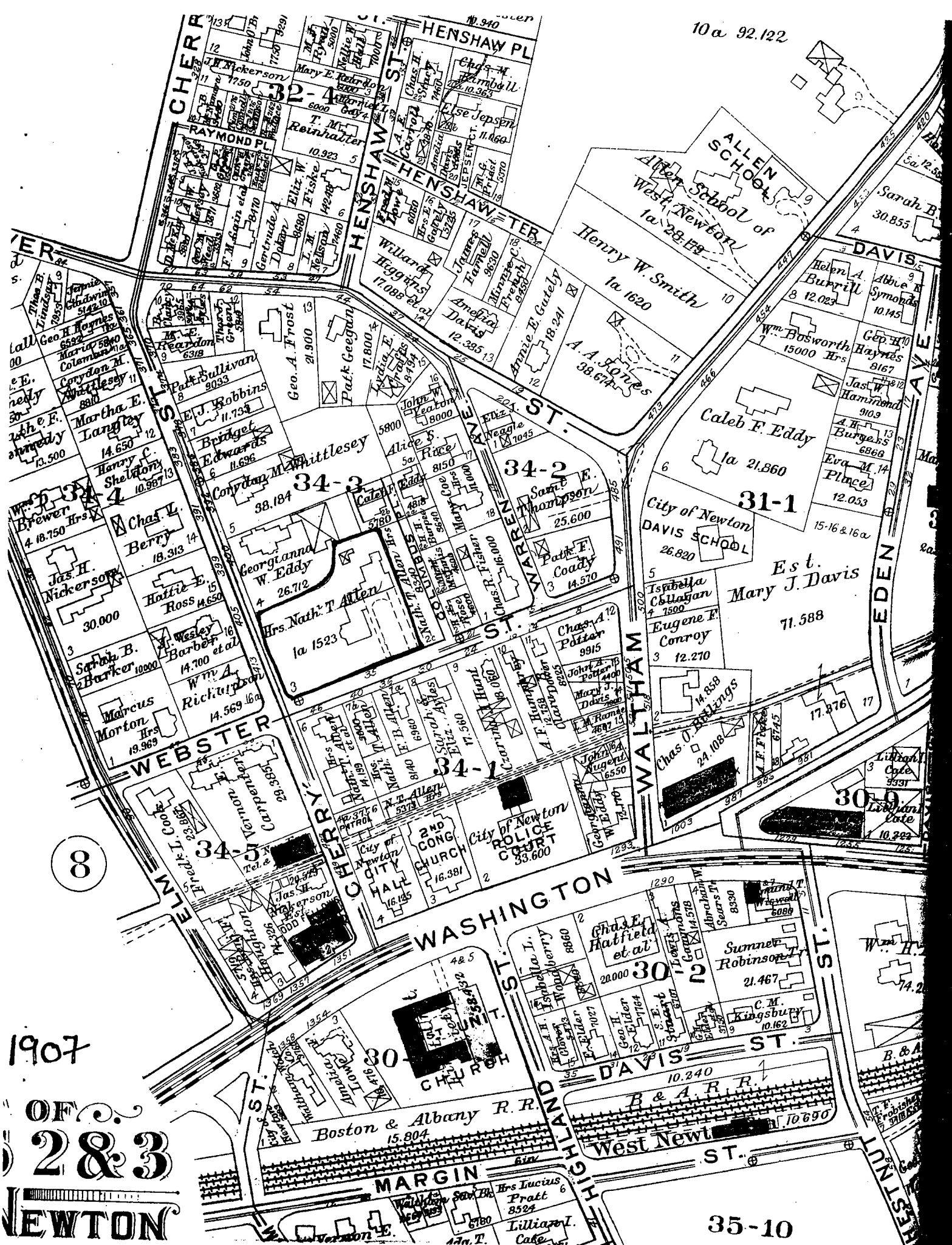
Limona Lorenza 9,200
 E.J. Robbins 11,985
 S.34B.3
 Corydon M. Whittlesey 14,800
 Georgeanna Eddy 27,101
 West Newton Eng. School 14,218
 Nathl. T. Allen 9,680
 Nathl. T. Allen 12,500
 Mrs. R. Foster 16,000
 Mrs. Warrist 17,000
 Mrs. Davis 17,000
 S.34B.2
 Benj. L. White 25,600
 Josiah A. Williams 14,570

PRIVATE WAY
 John H. Robb 26,432
 Chas. T. Cutting 19,000
 Ann V. Folsom 18,150
 John S. Farlow Est. 36,860
 Arabel Wheeler 35,045
 Sarah F. Bassett Est. 22,560
 Adelaide P. Burdum 31,922
 Anna L. Nickerson 28,290
 Jos. A. Allen 14,15257
 Cheese Cake
 M. Frank Lucas 11,576
 Caroline Barber 13,186
 Saw Mill
 Chas. Robinson Hrs. 10,3576

Almira P. Cook 24,000
 S.34B.5
 Brook
 Mrs. Horace Brackett 38,550
 Jas. H. Nickerson 22,528
 Odd Fellows Hall
 First Nat. Bk.

Cherry
 Nathl. T. Allen et al. 14,199
 Nathl. T. Allen 19,940
 F.B. C. Allen 14,000
 S.34B.1
 Etincayles 17,560
 Henry H. Hunt 18,000
 A.F. Huntington 12,755
 Chas. A. Potter 9,915
 John F. Potter 4,260
 Mary J. Potter 1,000
 Waltham
 Chas. E. B. Robinson 6
 First Unitarian Church 25,197
 S.30B.2
 Henry A. Barker 21,487
 West Newton School
 Davis
 West Newton Station 9776

10a 92.122



1907
 OF
 2 & 3
 NEWTON

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35-10