

WEST MEDFORD NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORIC PROPERTIES SURVEY

Medford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts

Overview of the Subdivision History of the Smith Estate in West Medford

The so-called Smith Estate, that is the residential neighborhood located between the railroad and the Mystic River in West Medford, was once part of the 400-acre farm Thomas Brooks (died 1667), the progenitor of the prominent Medford family, acquired in 1660 with his son-in-law, Timothy Wheeler, when the Craddock patent was divided. He did not reside there, but his son Caleb (1632-96) inhabited the “ancestral acreage” as did generations of the family after him. In 1779 the Brooks family sold to the Tufts family about one hundred acres of land bounded by High Street on the north and west and the Mystic River on the south and east. The relatively flat area was part of a 220-acre farm leased by Gilbert and Joseph Tufts to Noah Johnson in 1836.¹ Other accounts place a clay pit on the east side of the parcel.²

By 1841 Peter Chardon Brooks (1767-1849), the son of Reverend Edward Brooks and a highly successful marine insurance broker in Boston, had acquired this tract from Joseph F. and Nathan H. Tufts and restored it to the family holding.³ In that year he sold the parcel for \$10,000 to his son, Gorham Brooks (1795-1855), a Boston merchant.⁴ According to the deed, the premises had been recently surveyed by George A. Parker of Charlestown and a plan drawn by him. The high value placed on the property indicates it was destined for subdivision and residential development.

Gorham Brooks “disposed of this tract to land speculators, so called,” as one local historian put it, but not before having surveyor John F. Edwards map a subdivision plan containing 104 lots in 1850 (Fig.1; see Appendix for an image of the actual map).⁵ It likely was at this time that the area assumed the name Brooklands (the plat is titled “Plan of Land at West Medford, being part of the Brooks Estate”), although it was not known as such much thereafter.⁶ A few

¹ *New England Farmer, and Gardener's Journal*, Volume 15 Oct 1836.

² Moses W. Mann, “West Medford in 1870,” A paper read before the Medford Historical Society, 16 May 1904, *Medford Historical Society Papers*, Vol. 8, 86.
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2005.05.0008%3Achapter=22>.

³ Middlesex South Registry of Deed Book 406 Page 40 (hereafter cited as SMD x:x).

⁴ SMD 452:243, 11 April 1841.

⁵ Richard B. Coolidge, “The Brooks Estates in Medford from 1660 to 1927,” *Medford Historical Society Papers* 30 (1927), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2005.05.0030>. Gorham’s sale of the tract is stated to have occurred in 1853 in Coolidge, but other sources date the sale to 1850, a year after Peter Chardon Brooks died. On the Brooks family see also W. H. Whitmore, comp., *Register of Families Settled at the Town of Medford, Mass.* (Boston: John Wilson & Son, 1855), 10-12. The plan is recorded in Middlesex South Registry of Deeds Plan Book 5 Page 8 and also is depicted on the 1855 map of West Medford. The earlier Parker survey was not recorded.

⁶ The only recorded instance of the name “Brooklands” is cited by Moses W. Mann in a 1925 article as the name used by canal company agent in his report on the closing of the Middlesex Canal in 1852. Moses Whitcher Mann, “The Beginning of a New Village,” *Medford Historical Register* 28 (June 1925), 22.

pre-existing buildings were depicted on the Edwards plan. Two were located on adjoining unnumbered lots containing the sites of Thomas P. and Eliza W. Smith's house and Mystic Hall on High Street, suggesting that the Smiths were in residence in West Medford before the map was drafted. The footprint of dry goods merchant Henry T. Wood's Italian villa was delineated on Lot 18 at the corner of Harvard Avenue and Bower Street (since moved back on its lot to 9 Bower St.) and Horace A. Breed's house, now gone, was located on Lot 14 on Bower Street. Three dwellings on unnumbered lots were located near the Middlesex Canal and the Mystic River and probably were associated with the canal.

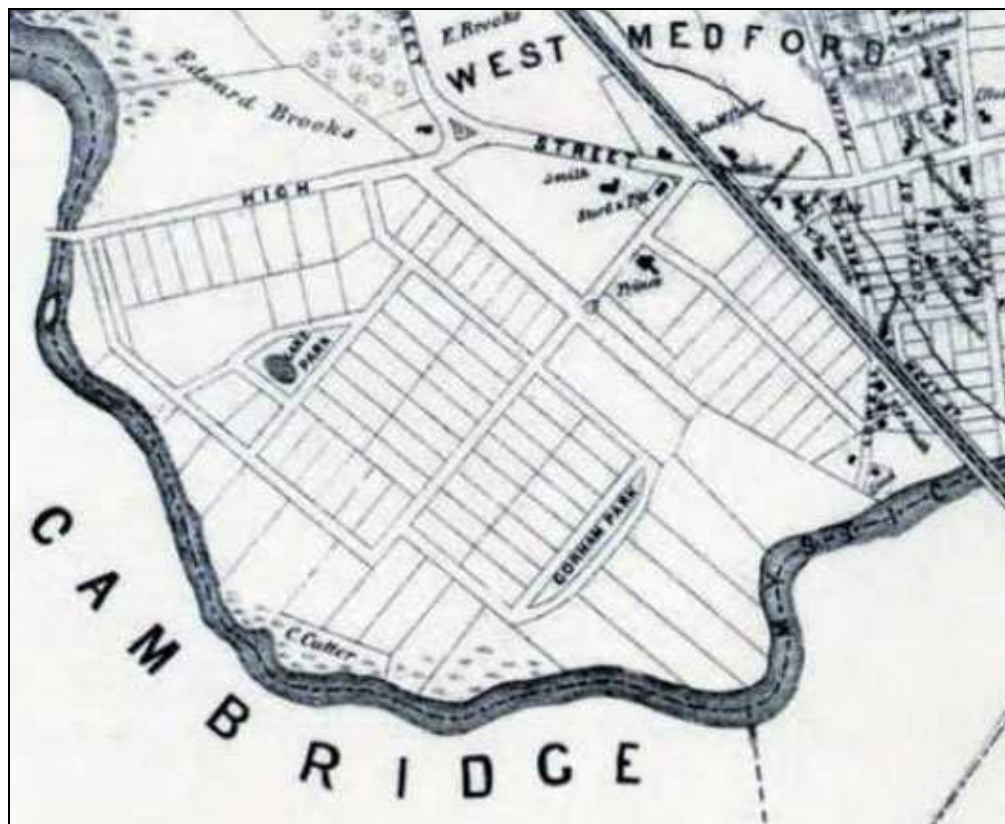


Fig.1: Detail of 1855 map of West Medford depicting the 1850 Brooks Estate lot plan. The plat is accurately represented with the Middlesex Canal and the principal streets of Bower, Monument, Harvard and Arlington (then Myrtle) unnamed. The Smith and Woods houses and Mystic Hall are depicted, although the Breed house on Bower Street is not. More than three buildings are indicated on Canal Street at the south end of Bower. (North at top.)

The speculators to whom Gorham Brooks disposed of the tract were Roxbury merchant Thomas P. Smith and his father-in-law, Ebenezer Smith, a wealthy Winchester merchant;

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2005.05.0028%3Achapter%3D6>. According to Mann, the area "was called by some of the hill dwellers the 'Flats'." Moses W. Mann, "West Medford in 1870," 89.

Brooks deeded the tract in two parcels to Thomas P. Smith in 1853.⁷ On the same day, Smith mortgaged the property to Boston merchant and West Cambridge (now Arlington) resident Abel G. Peck in consideration of \$18,500.⁸ The principal parcel contained about 98 acres bounded by High Street and the Mystic River but excluded land owned by the proprietors of the Middlesex Canal and 7.5 acres Gorham Brooks had already conveyed to Abel G. Peck. The second seven-acre parcel was the old almshouse lot that Gorham Brooks had purchased from the Town of Medford for \$2,500 in 1844. It occupied an area between the railroad and Cottage Street.

By 1850 Thomas P. Smith and his wife, Eliza W. Smith, had built a large house for themselves on High Street and erected Mystic Hall, which served as the lyceum for Eliza's girls' seminary, next door on a separate lot on the corner of Harvard Avenue. (The old almshouse, built in 1812, was renovated into a dormitory known as Mystic Mansion and the two buildings were linked by an alley.⁹) Evidently, they planned to settle permanently in the "new village" of West Medford, but Thomas P. Smith died unexpectedly in 1854, and Eliza Smith moved, with her seminary, to Washington, D.C. four years later. These events led to Eliza's father, Ebenezer Smith, taking over the disposition of the property as, it would appear, executor of the Smith Estate, the title of a new plan for the tract mapped by J.F. Fuller, a civil engineer and surveyor based in Boston, dated 20 October 1855, although it was not recorded until more than a year later.¹⁰ The plan contained 185 lots. Harvard Avenue and Monument and Bower streets already had been established and were preserved amid a new pattern of streets and smaller house lots with 100-ft. frontages (See Appendix for a copy of the actual map). The subdivision triggered little residential development, and in 1864 Ebenezer Smith died in Medford at the age of seventy-eight.

A lithographed plan of the Smith Estate was produced by J.F. Fuller in anticipation of an auction held on 29 October 1866. The only bidder was John Duane, Gorham Brooks's gardener. He purchased Lot No. 1 at the southeast corner of High Street and Harvard Avenue where he moved greenhouses he had obtained from the Brookses. Later, Duane would move his home and nursery to the west side of Harvard Avenue on the property where Thomas J. and Eliza W. Smith once lived.¹¹

⁷ SMD, 653:434, recorded 1 June 1853.

⁸ SMD 653:436, 1 June 1853. According to a recent account in the *Arlington Advocate*, Peck "was a travelling merchant who eventually had thirty wagons in his employ before settling into a store location in downtown Boston. He subsequently began a career in commercial finance and brokerage, establishing the firm A.G. Peck & Co.. In 1850 he settled in West Cambridge (Arlington) where he built 'one of the most beautiful and most conspicuous residences' on Pleasant Street." His daughter, Angeline, married John Q.A. Brackett, a governor of Massachusetts. Richard A. Duffy, "Peck and Lombard," *Wicked Local: Arlington*. Posted 14 August 2008. <http://www.wickedlocal.com/arlington/news/lifestyle/columnists/x1806341190/Peck-and-Lombard#axzz2781PrIP8>

⁹ Mann, "New Village," 21-22.

¹⁰ "Plan of Smith Estate in West Medford," 20 October 1855 (recorded 10 December 1856), SMP 8:1. The late filing explains why the 1855 map of West Medford still depicted the 1850 Brooks plan.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

When in March 1870 Dr. Abram B. Story of Manchester, New Hampshire, and Jerome B. Judkins and Samuel S. Holton of Winchester acquired this Smith Estate from its trustees, only a few lots had been sold and little construction had occurred during the intervening fifteen years. Abram B. Story was the grantee recorded on the deed; the sale price was \$50,000, five times of what Gorhan Brooks had paid in 1841 and more than twice the amount borrowed by Thomas P. Smith.¹² Evidently, real estate values were increasing rapidly for developable land. Story had graduated from the Berkshire Medical Institute in 1859 and began his practice in Weare, New Hampshire the following year. However, ten years later the census enumerated him in Manchester and listed his occupation as real estate agent. Jerome B. Judkins was a furniture and carpet dealer in Winchester; he had been born in New Hampshire. Samuel S. Holton was a boot and shoe dealer in Winchester. In an effort to stimulate development in the Smith Estate, the proprietors hired Holton's son-in-law, Moses Whitcher Mann, as on-site superintendent. Immediately following the transaction, Mann, a Vermont native, and his new wife, Elizabeth, moved from Winchester, where they had just settled in a new home, to West Medford.¹³

The view of the tract from the West Medford rail station south revealed "a broad open plain, level at first, and sloping gradually to the river's edge, with but here and there a tree, beyond the pear trees left on the Smith garden plot," Mann wrote in 1925. Near the river, Mann said, was "Markham's clay land," where clay pits had been excavated for the city's once-thriving brickmaking industry. "We found no such clay pits as those at South Medford and Glenwood," he stated, "but enormous quantities of bricks must have been made in those long-ago days from the deep excavation made from the river and between Myrtle street [later Jerome] and Boston avenue where was the high embankment of the canal." The stone walls of the Middlesex Canal lock were still standing, and there were six sycamore trees, several wild cherry trees, and a "big willow" on "a piece of springy ground on Jerome and Sherman streets," Mann wrote.¹⁴

According to Mann, only eighteen houses occupied by no more than forty-five people stood west of the railway corridor at that time.

Of these eighteen the mansion [Mystic Mansion, formerly the almshouse and more recently a dormitory for Eliza W. Smith's seminary] and farm houses, one house on Canal street, belonging to Edward Brooks, and two houses owned by the railway company, occupied by Rueben Willey the station agent, and Daniel Kelley, the flagman, formed a part. On Bower street were the residences of Horace A. Breed and Henry T. Wood, while near the centre of the plain was the dwelling of George Spaulding, which, with its cruciform shape and two-story cupola, was a noticeable object, and sometimes called the steamboat house. The home and two smaller houses of Gilbert Lincoln, and the newly built house

¹² SMD 1115:144 3 March 1870.

¹³ Ibid., 17.

¹⁴ Mann, "New Village," 22, 24.

of Florist Duane completed the number not included in the 'Smith estate.' This comprised the territory lying between High street, the railroad and the river, with a small portion across the track, adjoining Canal street.¹⁵

One significant impediment to development was overcome in 1870 when the city piped water to West Medford from Spot Pond and the county filled in the abandoned Middlesex Canal and constructed Boston Avenue over it. Mann and his assistants laid out streets previously only proposed and building operations commenced upon the long vacant Smith Estate. Numerous lithographic copies of a plan J.F. Fuller drafted in 1866 were printed and distributed at an auction sale of land on June 21, 1870. A special train was run out from Boston for the occasion, and tables were set up on the lot at the corner of Harvard Avenue and Bower Street where refreshments, including strawberries and ice cream, were served while the auction took place. The auctioneer attempted to interest prospective bidders in the natural beauty and advantages of building a home on what still was a vacant plain. The lots were mainly 100 × 140 feet and bids averaged around five cents per square foot, but there were few buyers.¹⁶

In an effort to encourage sales, the northwestern portion of the tract was surveyed and subdivided once again with new streets and smaller lots, this time by Josiah Hovey of Woburn, in anticipation of an auction to be held on 5 September 1870.¹⁷ The target area was bounded on the north by High Street, on the west by the Mystic River, on the south by Harvard Avenue, and on the east by Myrtle (now Jerome) Street between Harvard Avenue and Linden (now Fairfield) Street and Winthrop (now Sharon) Street between Linden and High streets. The plat contained 168 lots, most of them having only 50-ft. frontages. A second plan of lots were drawn by Hovey in May 1871 for the southern corner of the tract south of Harvard Avenue and west of Monument and Winthrop (Sharon) streets. It depicts 106 lots of similar size designated for auction on 16 June 1871.¹⁸ (See Appendix for images of both these maps.) Moses W. Mann described the scene.

Our first work on coming was to get the proposed streets outlined, and in a way sub-graded, and lot bounds staked. A surveyor had preceded us, and we found Riverside avenue [now Arlington Street] marked out with *two plough furrows* from Bower to River street (now Harvard avenue)... [We] began to build the first new house for a prospective purchaser on Myrtle street, which was a sort of cart track to the 'waterworks bridge' across the river to the pumping station. We will never forget how insignificant and lonely the frame of that house

¹⁵ Mann, "West Medford in 1870," 88-89.

¹⁶ Mann, "New Village," 23-24. This plan was not recorded, but existed in print form in Moses W. Mann's time.

¹⁷ SMP, 17:51.

¹⁸ "Plan of Building lots at West Medford to be Sold at Auction by N. A. Thompson & Co. on Friday June 16, 1871 at 3 O'clk P.M.," May 1871, SMP 20B:40. This plan too notes that rail cars would leave for the auction at 11:30, 12:15, 2:30, and 3:00 from the Boston and Lowell Railroad depot in Boston.

looked to us as we saw it from ‘Goat Acre’ just after its erection—a speck in that wide, open plain.¹⁹



Fig.2: House at 55 Jerome St., c. 1870.



Fig.3: House at 71 Jerome St., c. 1870.

The subdivision plans showed four houses on lots, two of which survive at 55 and 71 Jerome Street, built on speculation by Mann and his workers.²⁰ They represent two principal designs that were repeated throughout this southern section of the neighborhood. The story-and-a-half end house at 55 Jerome Street is a small dwelling designed in a Gothic Revival style (Fig.2).²¹ It is elevated on a half-story basement that is a common characteristic of houses in the neighborhood and probably was a response to the high water table along the Mystic River. The house was two rooms deep with a narrow two-bay façade offset on the 50-ft. frontage to create a small side yard. A one-story bay window distinguishes the front façade, and it would have been counterbalanced by a hood or porch at the adjoining entry. A gable dormer on the west side enhanced headroom and ventilation for rooms in the attic story. The larger house at 71 Jerome Street is two-stories in height with a mansard roof that created a full third story of living space (Fig.3). It also has a two-bay front façade that may have had a one-story bay window removed in later renovations. This house has a shallow two-story and mansard-roof pavilion protruding out about eight feet on the west side, which is another feature common with other houses in the neighborhood.

¹⁹ Mann, “New Village,” 24.

²⁰ George S. T. Fuller, “The History of the Royall House and Its Occupants,” Medford Historical Society Papers 29 (1926), Medford Historical Society website, states that shoemaker Artemas Poole bought the first house built in 1870 on the former Smith estate, at 136 Jerome Street, “and moving into it had a one-story structure built close beside the railroad. It had his shop in the rear end and a little store in front, with an array of gaily colored boxes on its shelves for about a year, when Joseph Leach came in with him and began to sell shoes.” No building is shown on the site on the May 1871 Hovey plan of the neighborhood east of Harvard Avenue, however.

²¹ Addresses are underlined for properties where an MHC Inventory Form has been completed.

Edward H. Bowman, a Boston police officer, bought Lot No. 138 on the southwest corner of Harvard and Riverside avenues (now Arlington St.) from Samuel S. Holton for \$231.47 on the day of the 5 September 1870 auction.²² His deed contained the following language.

The said premises are hereby conveyed subject to the restriction that no fence shall placed within five feet of Harvard avenue and also subject to the term of ten years to the restrictions that no building shall be placed thereon within 30 feet of said Harvard avenue or within 20 feet of said Riverside avenue and that only buildings for dwelling houses and those appurtenant thereto shall be erected thereon.

Other deeds carried these restrictions; setbacks varied from 30 feet on principal streets, such as Harvard and Boston avenues and Monument and Myrtle (Jerome) streets, to 20 feet on lesser streets, such as Riverside (Arlington) and Lincoln streets.

Another early sale was made on 17 September 1870, with Samuel S. Holton conveying Lots Nos. 103 and 105 on the northwest corner of Riverside (Arlington) and Linden (Fairfield) to Parker C. Burbank, a customs house official living in Boston.²³ It does not appear that Burbank ever moved to Medford, but the house now at 74 Arlington may have been built at this time. Two days later, William E. Cole was deeded Lots Nos. 134 and 136 on the south side of Riverside (Arlington).²⁴ Cole was a carpenter and the 1880 census locates him in the neighborhood; however the houses now occupying these addresses appear to have been built later. Boston housewright William Guptill purchased Lots Nos. 88-94 on Lincoln and Riverside (Arlington) on 24 September 1870.²⁵ A story-and-a-half end house at 45 Lincoln and a double house at 51-53 Lincoln could have been built by him. Edward L. Grueby, a jeweler living in East Boston bought four large lots on the east side of Linden (Fairfield) between Lincoln and Beach. It does not appear that he built on these lots; the Shiloh Baptist now is located on one of them on the corner of Fairfield and Lincoln.

Thirteen deeds were recorded with Samuel S. Holton as grantor in 1870; another 19 were recorded in 1871. Holton and his associates held mortgages on many of them. Boston real estate agent John K. Abbott and his wife, Isabella, bought eleven lots along Myrtle (Jerome) and adjoining streets on 14 September 1871.²⁶ Ten more deeds were recorded in 1872; Holton also was selling lots on a tract the partners owned on the Medford Hillside. Holton was involved in 32 transactions during 1873, one of them a mortgage Holton was granted by

²² SMD 1179:73; Bowman mortgaged the property for \$350.00 to Charles S. Seagrave of Brighton, evidently investing the additional amount in the construction of a house. There is no notation of the mortgage having been discharged in the margin of the deed book as is customary, and the present house on the parcel was built at a later time, so it appears that Bowman did not develop the property.

²³ SMD 1130:212.

²⁴ SMD 1130:407.

²⁵ SMD 1130:555.

²⁶ SMD 1178:242 & 244.

Abram B. Story on 68 lots in the 1870 subdivision.²⁷ In 1873 John K. Abbott acquired more than a dozen lots at the west end of Riverside (Arlington) and James H. Wight, a carpenter/builder based in Newton Center picked up nine lots on Riverside and Beach.²⁸ Among the 21 lots sold in 1874 was a large lot on the northwest corner of Boston and Holton conveyed to Samuel S. Holton, Jr. where he built a one-story cross-wing house with a mansard roof (82 Boston Ave.).²⁹ Gustavus Abbott, a Newton furniture and carpet dealer purchased all or part of eight lots on Boston and Monument in August 1874.³⁰ This area was platted a month earlier under the auspices of Henry B. Nottage, evidently his representative.³¹ (Nottage was the son of a Boston house carpenter who was working as a real estate agent in Somerville. He later moved to West Medford.) Thirty-three deeds were recorded in 1875.

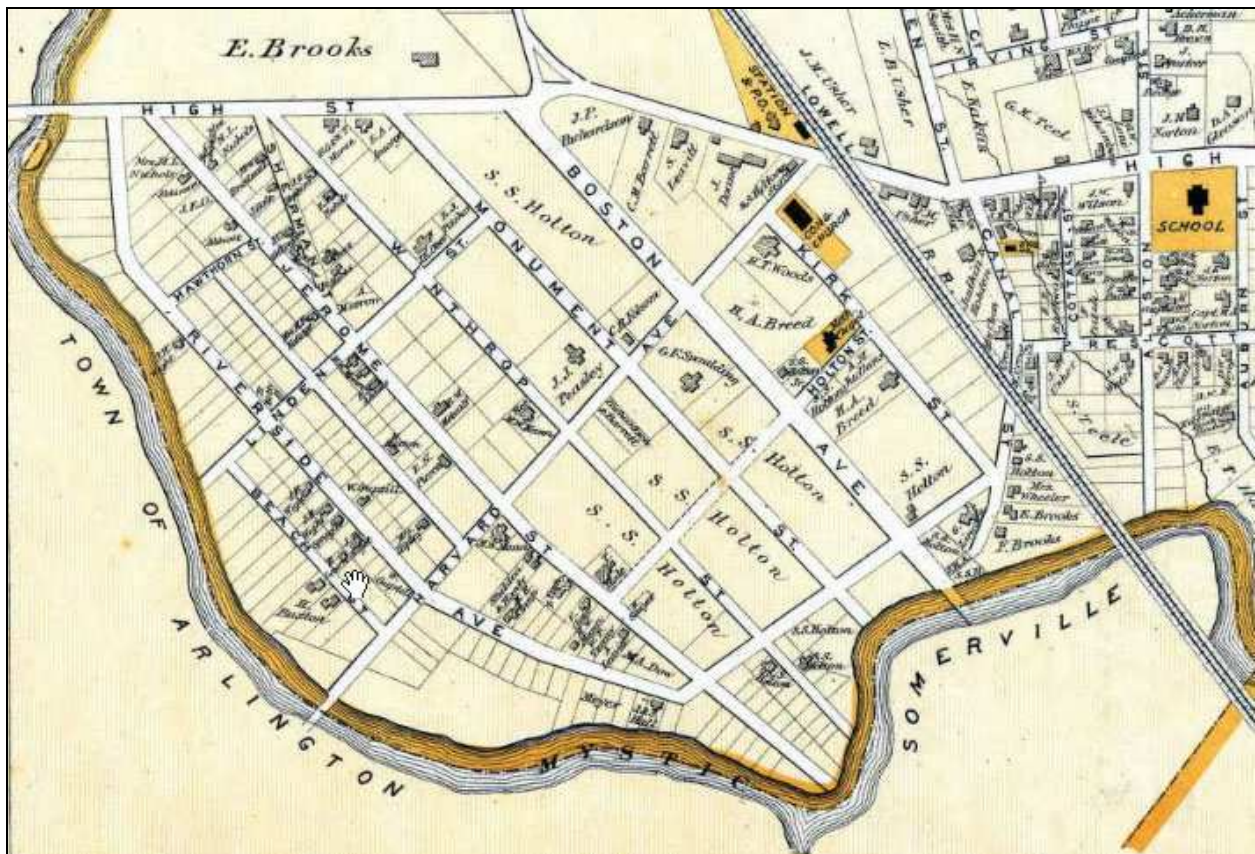


Fig.4: Detail of 1875 map of West Medford. (North at top.)

During the initial five years of development, the vast majority of sales were made in the 1870 and 1871 subdivisions at the westerly side of the tract. The easterly section of the subdivision above Winthrop (Sharon) Street had not been offered at auction and evidently had been slower to ready for sale. In this area lots continued to be referenced by the 1855 Fuller plan.

²⁷ SMD 1248:427.

²⁸ SMD 1276:101 & 1272:469.

²⁹ SMD 1292:654.

³⁰ SMD 1319:84.

³¹ SMP 26:21.

The map of West Medford in the 1875 Middlesex County atlas delineates forty buildings in the area from Winthrop (Sharon) south to the river (Fig.4). Of these Samuel S. Holton owned and leased two, while Moses W. Mann owned four houses and lived in one of them, on Winthrop (not extant) with his family until they moved to Boston Avenue in 1893.

By 1875 the name of Myrtle Street was changed to Jerome, after land company principal Jerome Judkins, because another Myrtle Street already existed in the city. Shortly after, Riverside was renamed Arlington Street when the former name was ascribed to Ship Street in Medford Center, and Winthrop became known as Sharon Street in reference to the hometown of the brothers Warren T. and Elijah G. Morse, box manufacturers who owned land at the northeast corner of Sharon and High Streets. Linden Street was renamed Fairfield Street “in honor of a worthy resident of that name.”³²

The 1875 map shows the Morse brothers’ house at 596-598 High Street and its neighbor at 590, which was owned by Alfred E. Ansorge, a cabinet and organ maker living in Cambridge. Joseph E. Ober, a grocer occupying the old Mystic Hall building at the corner of High and Harvard, built a house on the corner of Winthrop (Sharon) and Linden (Fairfield) where it exists today encased in an added brick veneer. John J. Peasley, a store salesman in Boston, occupied a large house on Harvard Avenue between Monument and Winthrop (Sharon), but was residing in Boston by 1880; the house no longer exists. Neither does publisher George F. Spaulding’s large house on the opposite side of the street. Gardener John Duane’s home and business was indicated on the site of Thomas P. Smith on High Street and Boston leather dealer Charles M. Barrett had built a large house west of it. The West Medford Congregational Church had erected an edifice on the corner of Harvard and Bowers in 1874 and the Moses W. Mann had designed and built a chapel for the Methodist Episcopal Church on the corner of Bowers and Holton in 1874 as well.

After 1875 development slowed in the western section as attention seems to have shifted to the larger lots on Monument Street and Boston Avenue. The poor quality of the land and the river may have had some influence. Municipal projects along the Mystic River—sanitary water supply and parkway planning—involving takings of properties along Beach and Arlington streets would have further discouraged land investment and house construction. Lots and existing houses appear to have lost value opening up the section to lower-class populations seeking homes outside of the city. It was at this time that West Medford emerged as a destination for African Americans who created a distinguishable community on Jerome, Lincoln and Arlington streets, moving into the tract’s earliest houses and building new ones.³³ Meanwhile, Samuel S. Holton and Moses W. Mann focused on developing lots closer to West Medford’s center.

³² Mann, “New Village,” 28-29.

³³ Kathryn Grover, “African Americans in West Medford: A Context Statement,” West Medford Neighborhood Historic Properties Survey, Medford Historical Commission, September 2012.

In 1884 a large parcel containing more than the western half the block bounded by Boston, High, Monument and Harvard was platted into house lots that nearly had been built out by the time the next West Medford map was published in 1889 (Fig.5).³⁴ It appears that Lewis H. Lovering was the owner. Frontages of 100 feet were maintained on Boston Avenue, while Monument-Street lots were only 50 feet wide. By this time, Boston Avenue had been designated as the principal cross axis of the neighborhood, and the Boston-Harvard intersection the geographic center of the plan. Consistent with the precedent set in 1870, the smaller houses built on Monument had a story-and-a-half, end house form, but by this time, a larger two-story variant had been introduced with plans having shallow cross-gable pavilions on one or both sides and full front porches that often wrapped around one side and terminating at the side appendage. Houses on Boston Avenue were larger still with wider facades and deeper plans extended by kitchen ells, but the front-gable form continued to predominate in their design.

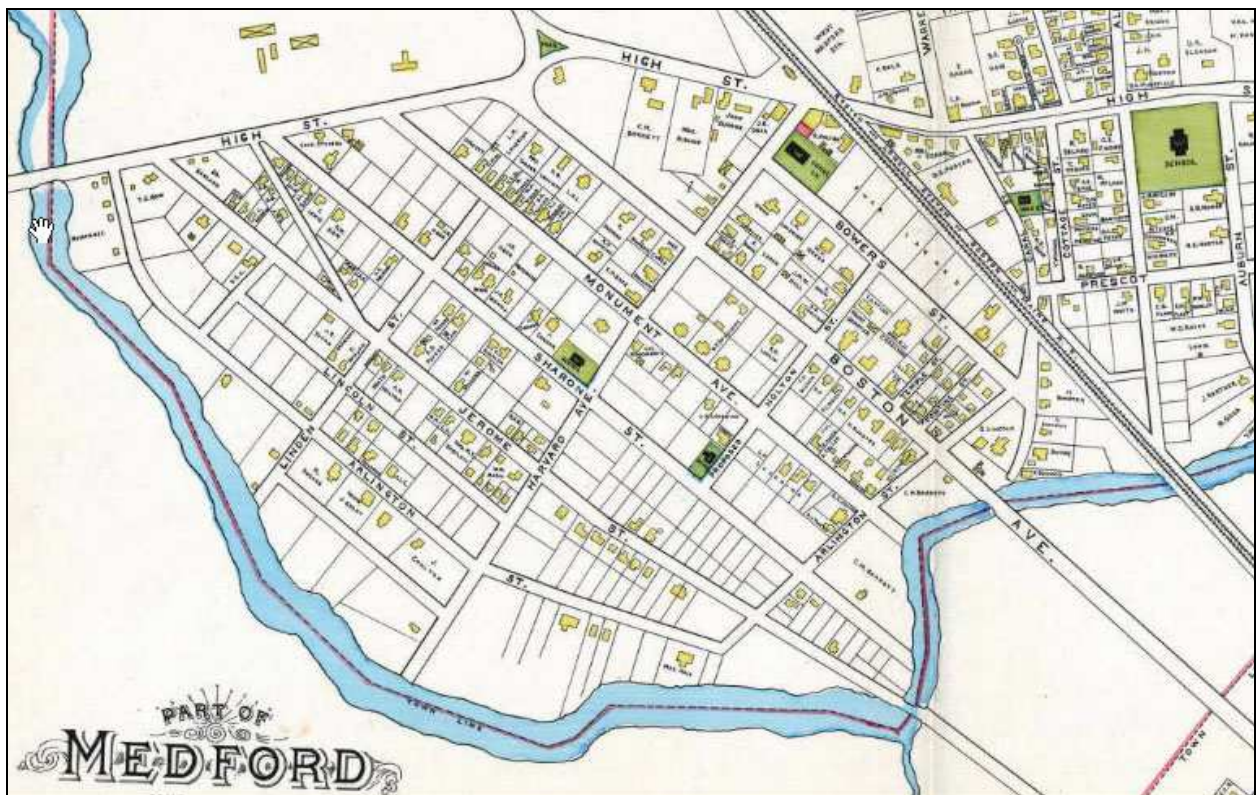


Fig.5: Detail of 1889 map of West Medford. (North at top)

Lewis H. Lovering, a native of Maine, had worked in the carpentry trade before moving to West Medford in the early 1870s and opened a grocery with his brother, Frank H. Lovering. He also worked as a general contractor on a number of houses built for Moses W. Mann, including one he built for his family at 115 Jerome Street.³⁵ As Lovering became more

³⁴ SMP 43:15.

³⁵ Frank W. Lovering to Mabary Kountze, 28 June 1957, cited in Kountze, *This Is Your Heritage*, 263.

successful as a builder, he sold his share in the grocery to his brother, and took on house-building full time and began to speculate in West Medford real estate. By one account, he built “hundreds of houses” in the Smith Estate and in Hastings Heights.³⁶ During those years, Lewis W. Lovering served Medford in a number of elected and appointed positions. He was a town commissioner in the early 1880s, assistant chief and chief engineer of the fire department over a period of 15 years, and chair of the town selectmen. He was elected the third mayor of City of Medford in 1897, serving in that capacity for four years. Afterwards Lovering sat on the City Hall Building Commission that planned the construction of Medford’s current city hall. He was president and director of the Medford Cooperative Bank, vice president and director of the Medford Trust Company, and a director of the Lawrence Memorial Hospital.³⁷ Both Lewis and Emma Lovering were active in the formation of the West Medford Baptist Church and its development thereafter. Clearly, Lewis W. Lovering’s dedication to the church, as well as his reputation as a local builder, led to his selection as the general contractor for the construction of the new Boston Avenue church in 1897.

Around this time, Charles M. Barrett subdivided lots on the south side of his High Street property that fronted on the north side of Boston and the west side of Harvard.³⁸ While technically not part of the Smith Estate bought by Holton and company, the subdivision rounded out the development of the west end of Boston Avenue. By 1889 two large two-story houses with mansard roofs had been erected on Harvard. On the opposite corner, William H. Breed, a dealer in paper hangings who was one of the first to build in the neighborhood, had subdivided house lots behind his Bower Street residence.³⁹ A distinctive front-gable house in the Italianate taste was built at 48 Harvard Street, evidently inspired by the nearby Woods house at the corner of Bower, along with other large, less picturesque two-story gable dwellings and end houses.

The lots Gustavus Abbott owned on south side of Boston flanking Holton Street had built out with large end houses along with parcels east of them developed by Henry Dunster, a traveling salesman turned real estate agent.⁴⁰ The 42 lots A.M. Judkins subdivided on the north side along Temple and Tontine had quickly filled with small houses of a variety of types, story-and-a-half houses with gable and front-gable roofs and one-story houses with mansards. In 1888 Lewis H. Lovering bought a string of lots along the south side of Monument from Riverside to Harvard, which built out slowly over time.⁴¹ Charles Larned bought a vacant block of lots along the railroad north of Bower Street that he subdivided in 1892 into two tiers of lots with 40-ft. frontages on Bower and a new street named Circuit. This pattern of sub-developments left large sections of the tract unassigned, particularly west of Harvard between Boston and Jerome, that likely remained under the aegis of the original land company superintended by Moses W. Mann.

³⁶ *Boston Daily Globe*, 26 Dec. 1924, 8A.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ SMP 43:15.

³⁹ SMP 29 of 1879.

⁴⁰ SMP 37:22.

⁴¹ SMP 57:20.

The West Medford plate in the 1889 county atlas shows ninety-eight buildings in the area from Sharon Street to the river, most of them not labeled with owners' names (Fig.5). By this time, according to both deeds and Medford historian Frank W. Lovering, who grew up at 118 Jerome Street, there were only two African American families living in the neighborhood in 1887.⁴² Both families represent the segment of West Medford's African American population that migrated from the South, but other black families found their way to the neighborhood from local urban centers, such as Boston and Cambridge, where they had been shut out of the market for single-family homes.⁴³

It seems likely that the slow development of the Smith Estate subdivision and the increasing interest in selling lots at any reasonable price may have been a stronger factor in the settlement of African Americans in the neighborhood. While there was some resistance on the part of some property owners and builders to selling to blacks, others appear to have been color-blind. According to Frank W. Lovering, local builder George Keene had constructed a house at 28 Monument Street but was unable to sell it for years; after he "threatened" to sell it to an African American family the property finally sold, but Keene was "railroaded out of town by public sentiment, never came back."⁴⁴ However, G. Edward Smith, a real estate and insurance broker and diamond dealer who had acquired lots along Arlington and Beach streets owned by Blackstone National Bank in 1884, conveyed many of them to African Americans.⁴⁵ Another white speculator who sold to African Americans was Murray Cheever, a watchmaker and watch factory executive from Waltham who was an active speculator in real estate in many parts of Medford in the 1890s and first decade of the 1900s.

By 1891 the densest area of African American settlement in West Medford was on Arlington Street. Poll tax records for that year indicate that eight of forty-nine Arlington Street heads of household were African American, while only one of forty-nine Jerome Street householders was African American and no Lincoln Street householders were African American. The 1896 poll tax records show the population of African Americans in this neighborhood had grown

⁴² The first was very likely William F. Overton who settled in Medford between 1886 and 1887. Lovering reported that the next African American family in this neighborhood was that of James Ross Young, who with his wife Amelia acquired two lots on Jerome Street, one with a dwelling on it, and an adjacent lot fronting on Lincoln in 1887 and 1888. Caroline W. Loring, widow, North Andover, to James R. Young, Boston, 19 September 1887, SMD 1817:67; Charles Larned, Boston, to Amelia Young, wife of James Young, Medford, 11 October 1890, SMD 2004:498. These tracts were 53, 54, and 55 (55 Jerome) on "Plan of Building Lots in W. Medford, Mass. (Being a Portion of the 'Smith Estate') to be Sold at Auction on Monday Sept 5th 1870," August 1870, SMP 17:51. Also see Grover, "African Americans in West Medford, Massachusetts."

⁴³ Elizabeth Hafkin Pleck, *Black Migration and Poverty: Boston, 1865-1900* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 33.

⁴⁴ Lovering quoted in Kountze, *This Is Your Heritage*, 264.

⁴⁵ Samuel S. Holton had defaulted on mortgages on more than forty lots and houses in the subdivision, and by 1878 Blackstone National Bank in Boston held title to all of them. At the time Smith also owned a great deal of the land in Falmouth Heights, then being developed as a summer resort. Candace Jenkins, "The Development of Falmouth as a Summer Resort, 1850-1900," 7-8, on www.woodsholemuseum.org/woodspages/.../v6n1-SummerRes.pdf, notes that Smith acquired most of the lots of the Falmouth Heights Land and Wharf Company in 1878 and sold them in 1888; the rest of the lots in the development were sold to George Tower, who was also involved with Smith in several West Medford properties.

substantially. Eight of fifty-four Arlington Street heads of household, one of three Linden Street householders, at least ten of seventy-five Jerome Street householders, and at least nine of twenty-nine Lincoln Street householders were African American.



Fig.6: Detail of 1900 map of West Medford. (North at top)

The 1900 map of West Medford shows the neighborhood fairly evenly developed 30 years after its inception, although with a significant number of lots still vacant (Fig.6). In the 1890s a number of larger houses designed in the Queen Anne and Shingle styles were built on Boston and Monument. Two notable church buildings, both designed in the Shingle Style, were erected for the West Medford Baptist Church (Boston & Harvard) and the West Medford M.E. Church (Bower & Holton) in 1896 and 1897, respectively. By this time, the conventional end house was commonly built with two stories, their long side walls broken up with cross-gable bays and pavilions. A few custom-designed houses with irregular plans, combinations of different exterior materials and picturesque ornament in the gables and on porches were built, but the norm was the standard builder's house with limited embellishment. The scale of

the better houses above of Jerome Street is visibly larger than those in the less-valued, older section closer to the river.

As lots continued to fill in during the early 20th century, a number of two-family houses were introduced, with their gable ends oriented to the street consistent with the convention of previous development. The greatest concentration of this house type is found on Circuit Street, reflecting its lower-status location along the railroad line. Smaller in scale but similar in appearance were two-story end houses. A few multiple-family dwellings, such as the terrace at 123 Harvard Avenue, were built, but the character of the neighborhood remained overwhelmingly single-family. The filling-in process continued through the Post-WWII era bringing occasional and isolated examples of Four-Square, Craftsman and Colonial house types before the war and Capes and Ranches after. Much of the post-war development has occurred close to the river where land evidently became available when plans for routing the Mystic valley Parkway in this location were abandoned. In more recent years, contextual multiple dwellings have been constructed on vacant lots or replacing older, presumably derelict, houses through various affordable-income housing initiatives. Although not insignificant, suburban development that occurred after 1920 has had little impact on the 19th-century ambiance of the neighborhood.

As in most neighborhoods of its period and status, its overall modest architecture has been altered by the addition of vinyl siding, asphalt shingle roofs, the enclosure and refabrication of front porches, and the replacement of wood sash windows. However, the scale, form and massing of the buildings have been maintained. Physical conditions are generally good, and houses have begun to change hands stimulating an influx of new homeowners and building improvements.

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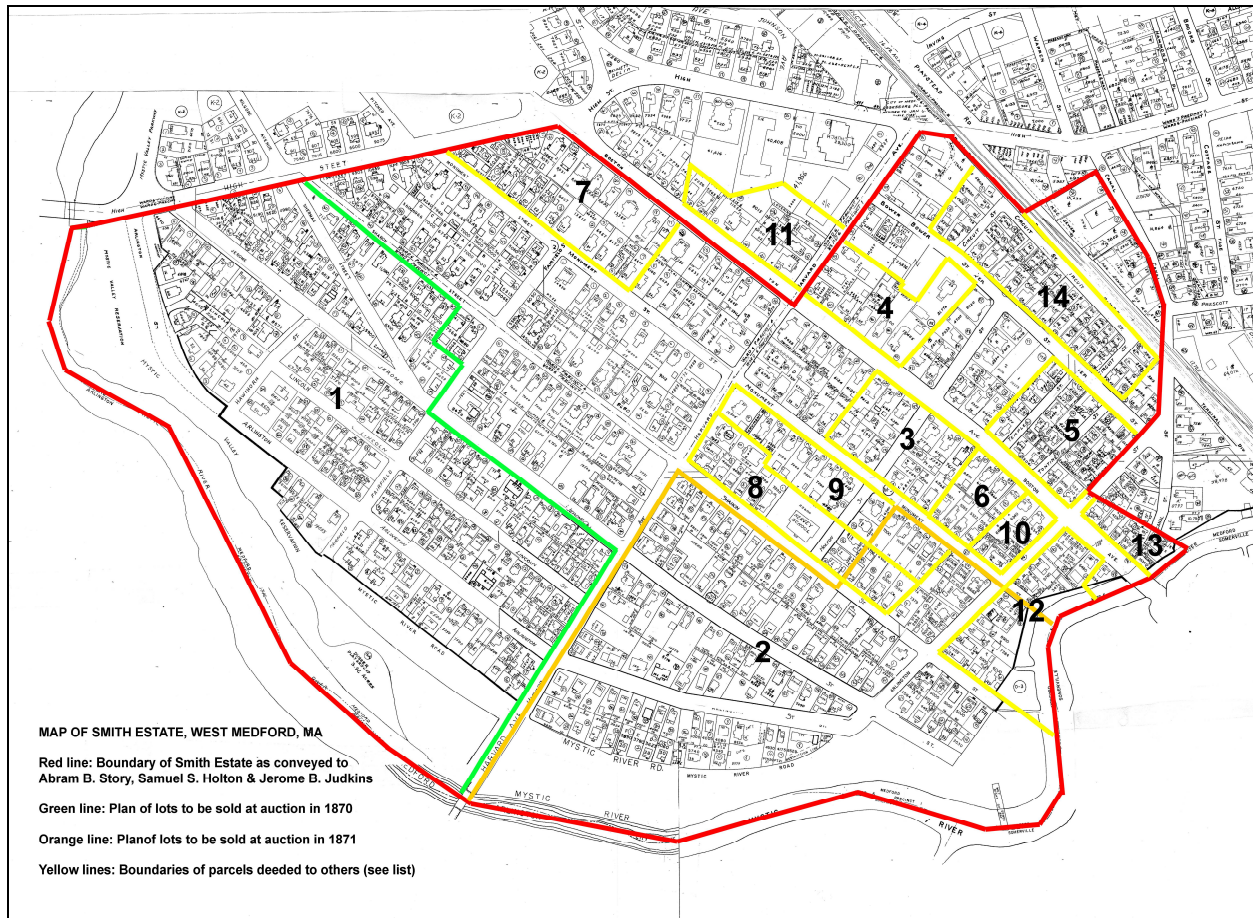
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This book provides background of an important historical feature in the city.

APPENDIX

- Map of Smith Estate as purchased by Abram B. Story, Samuel S. Holton & Jerome B. Judkins with later subdivisions outlined.
- Plan of Land at West Medford, being part of the Brooks Estate, 1850 (2 plates)
- Plan of the Smith Estate in West Medford, 1855 (6 of 7 plates, plate B missing)
- Plan of Building Lots in W. Medford, Mass. (Being a portion of the Smith Estate), 1870 (2 plates)
- Plan of Building Lots at West Medford, 1871 (2 plates)

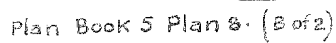


Smith Estate as purchased by Abram B. Story, Samuel S. Holton & Jerome B. Judkins

Parcels sold to others as indicated on map of subdivision

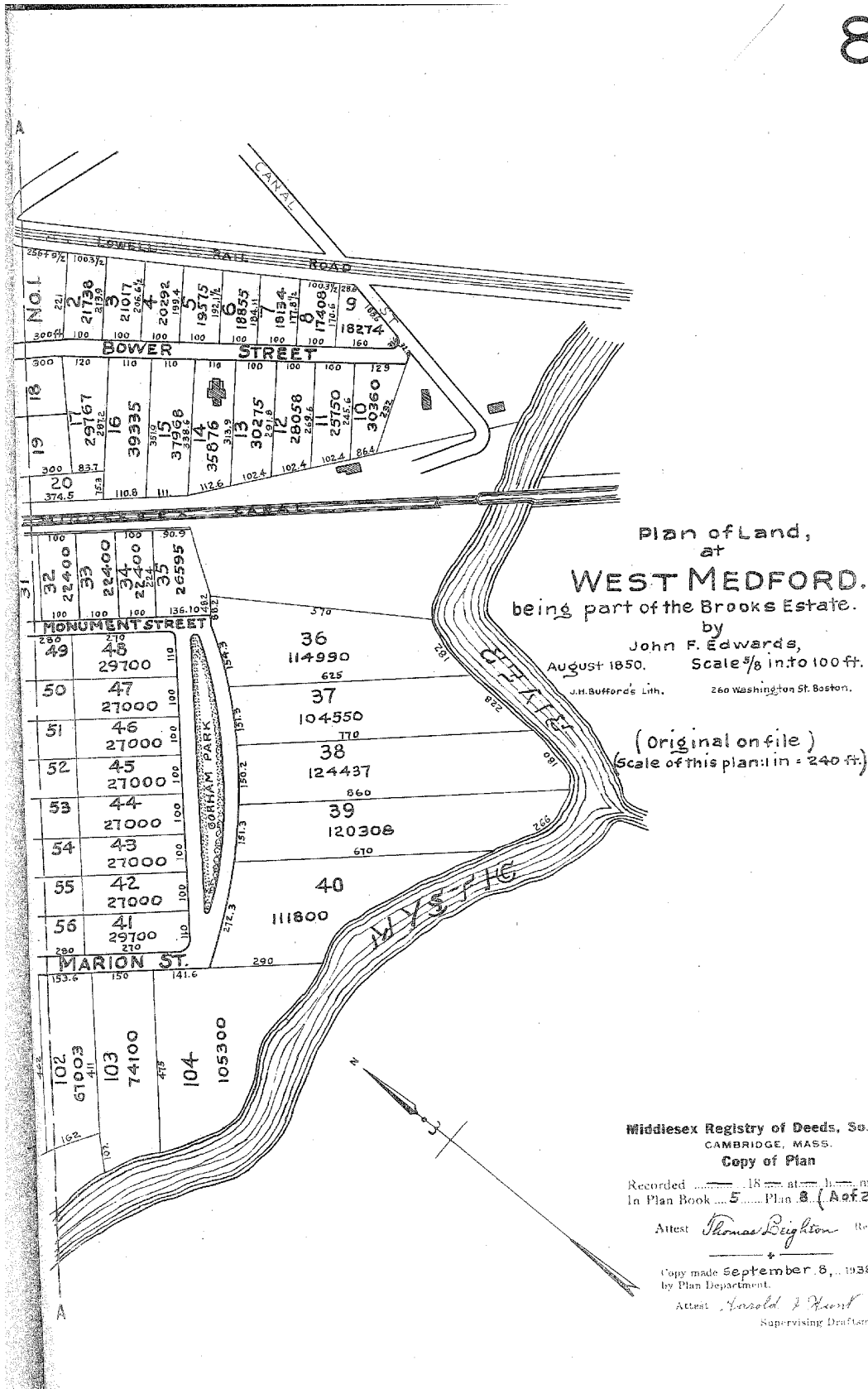
1. Building lots to be sold at auction 9/15/1870 (? :51)
2. Building lots to be sold at auction 6/16/1871 (20B:40)
3. Lots belonging to H.B. Nottage (Gustavus Abbott), 7/1874 (26:21)
4. Lots belonging to William H. Breed & Others, 4/1879 (29 of 1879)
5. Lots belonging to A.M. Judkins, 10/1881 (37:23)
6. Lots belonging to Henry Dunster, 10/25/1881 (37:22)
7. Lots mapped, no owner listed, 11/1884 (43:15)
8. Lots belonging to N.P. Hallowell, 6/2/1888 (55:12)
9. Lots belonging to Lewis H. Lovering, 6/2/1888 (55:12)
10. Lots belonging to Samuel S. Holton, Jr., 6/1888 (50 of 1888)
11. Lots belonging to Charles M. Barrett, 11/1890 (66:24)
12. Lots belonging to Charles H. Barrett, 11/1890 (71:20)
13. Lots belonging to M.W. & E.J.C. Mann, 8/1/1891 (70:10)
14. Lots belonging to Charles Larned, 7/1892 (79:20)

8.



Plan of Land at West Medford, being part of the Brooks Estate, 1850 (Plate 2 of 2)

8.



Plan of the Smith Estate in

WEST MEDFORD

Surveyed and drawn by
J. E. Fuller,

Civil Engineer & Surveyor.

13 Doane St. Boston.

Scale 100 ft. to an inch

Oct. 20th 1855.

(Original on file)
(Scale of this plan: 1 in. = 120 ft.)

MYSTIC RIVER

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

Copy of Plan

Recorded 18. at h. m. M.
In Plan Book 8. Plan 1. (A of 7)

Attest, *Thomas Reighton* Register

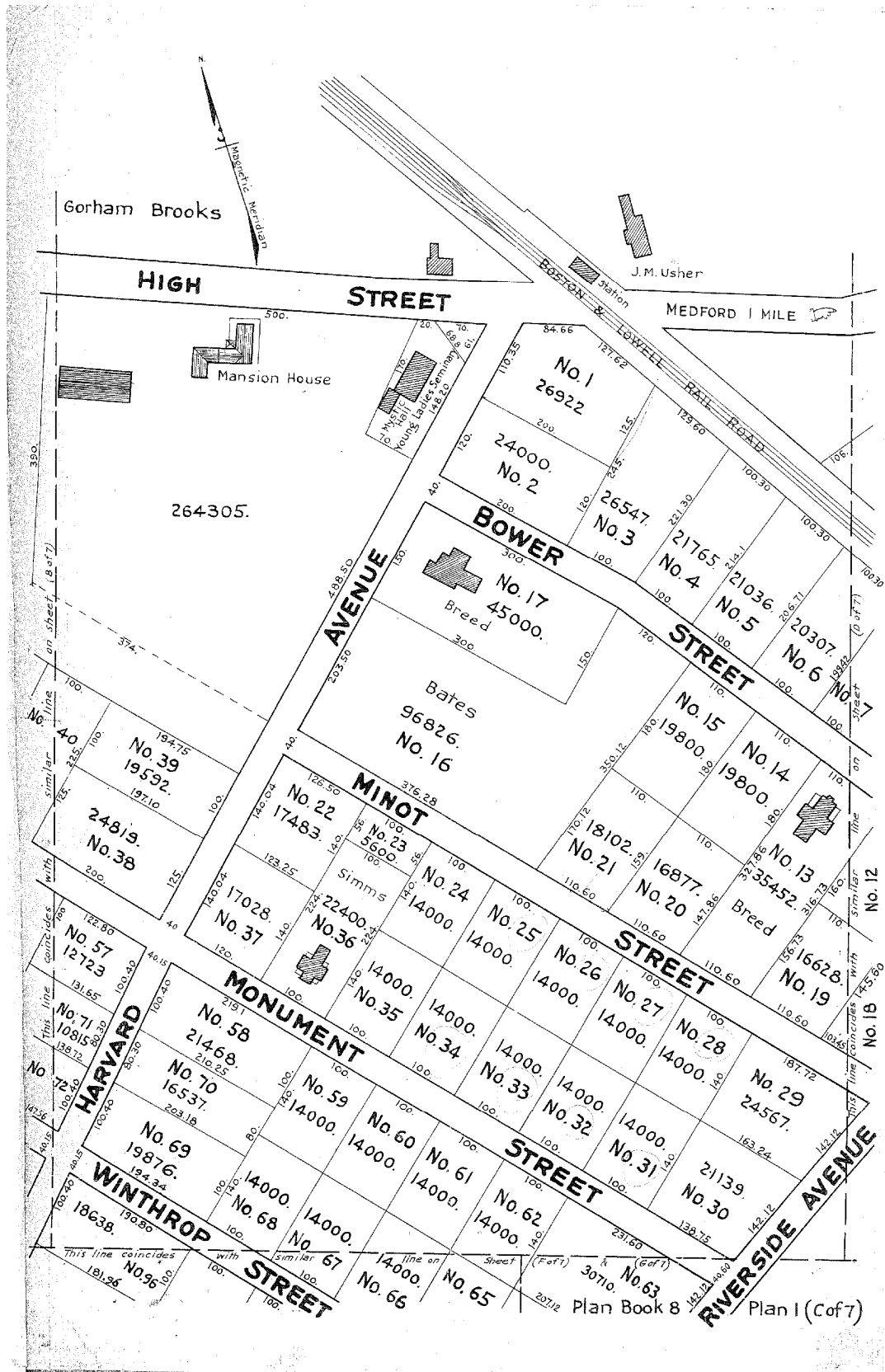
Copy made..... February 12, 1940
by Plan Department.

Attest *Harold J. Hunt*
Superior Draftsman

Recd. December 10, 1856.
Book of Plans-No. 8.

Plan Book 9

Plan of the Smith Estate in West Medford, 1855 (C of 7 plates)

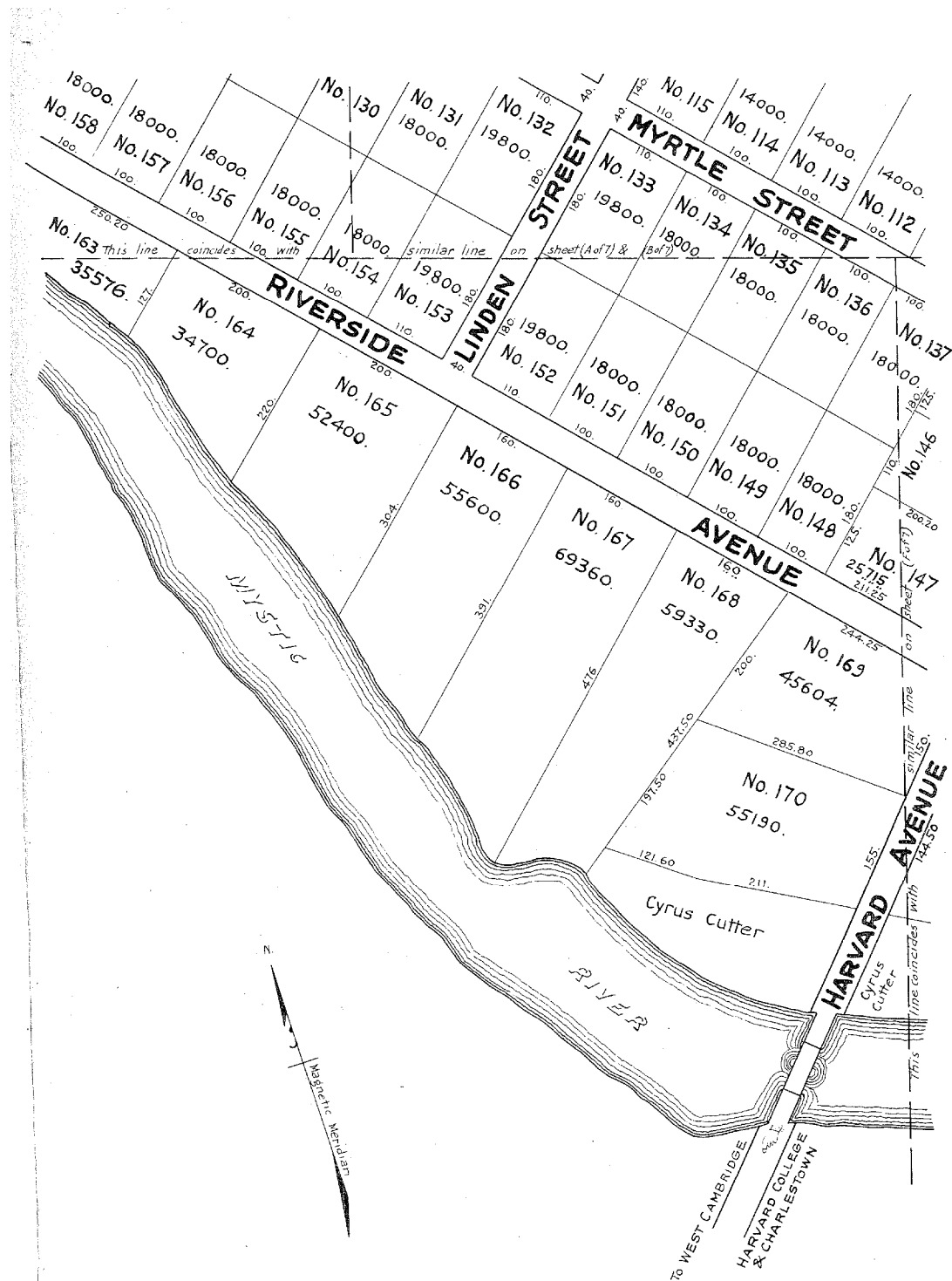


HIGH STREET
 MEDFORD 1 MILE
 CANAL STREET
 72971. SQ. FT.
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 PRESCOTT ST
 BOWER STREET
 RIVERSIDE
 AVENUE
 MYSTIC RIVER
 Teel
 Bath Houses
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 This line coincides with similar line on sheet (6 of 7).

No. 6 19577.
 No. 7 18848.
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 No. 10 18350.
 No. 11 18900.
 No. 12 17600.
 No. 13 15069.
 No. 14 15793.
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Plan Book 8 Plan I (D of 7)

Plan of the Smith Estate in West Medford, 1855 (E of 7 plates)



Plan Book 8 Plan 1 (E of 7)

This is a detailed plat map of a section of land in Mystic, Connecticut. The map shows a grid of lots, many of which are numbered and have their areas specified. The lots are arranged in blocks separated by streets. The streets shown are WINTHROP STREET, MYRTLE STREET, HARVARD STREET, MONUMENT STREET, and RIVERSIDE STREET. The Mystic River is shown flowing along the bottom and right side of the map. A magnetic meridian line is indicated at the bottom right. The map also includes various annotations such as "This line coincides with similar line on sheet (E of T)", "This line coincides with similar line on sheet (W of T)", and "This line coincides with similar line on sheet (S of T)".

Streets: WINTHROP STREET, MYRTLE STREET, HARVARD STREET, MONUMENT STREET, RIVERSIDE STREET.

Lots and Areas:

- No. 72: 147.56
- No. 70: 203.18
- No. 59: 14000.
- No. 60: 14000.
- No. 61: 14000.
- No. 62: 14000.
- No. 63: 14000.
- No. 64: 14000.
- No. 65: 14000.
- No. 66: 14000.
- No. 67: 14000.
- No. 68: 14000.
- No. 69: 19876.
- No. 70: 203.18
- No. 71: 210.25
- No. 72: 147.56
- No. 73: 100.40
- No. 74: 100.40
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Annotations:

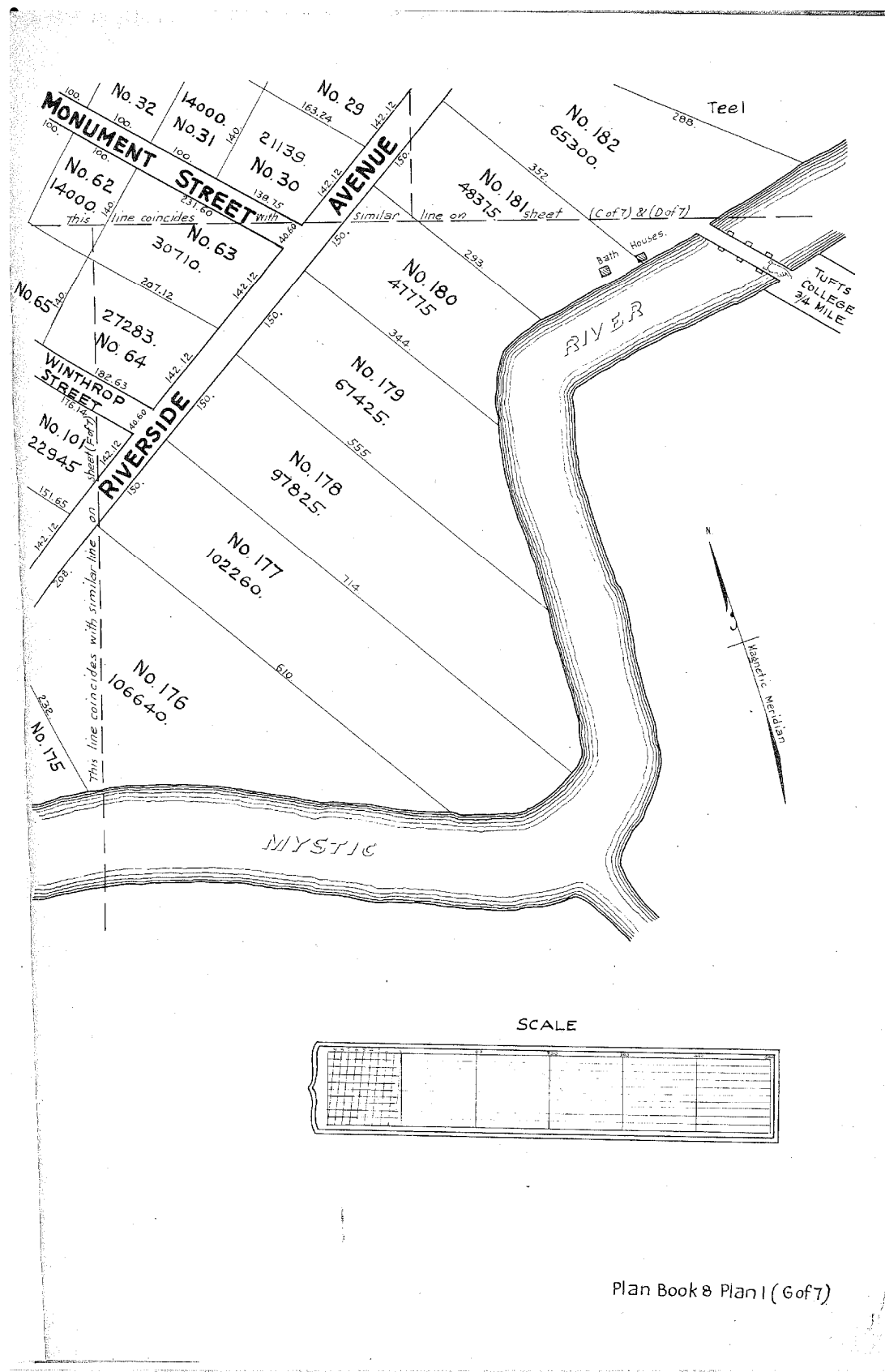
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Other Features:

- Mystic River
- Magnetic Meridian
- Cyrus Cutter

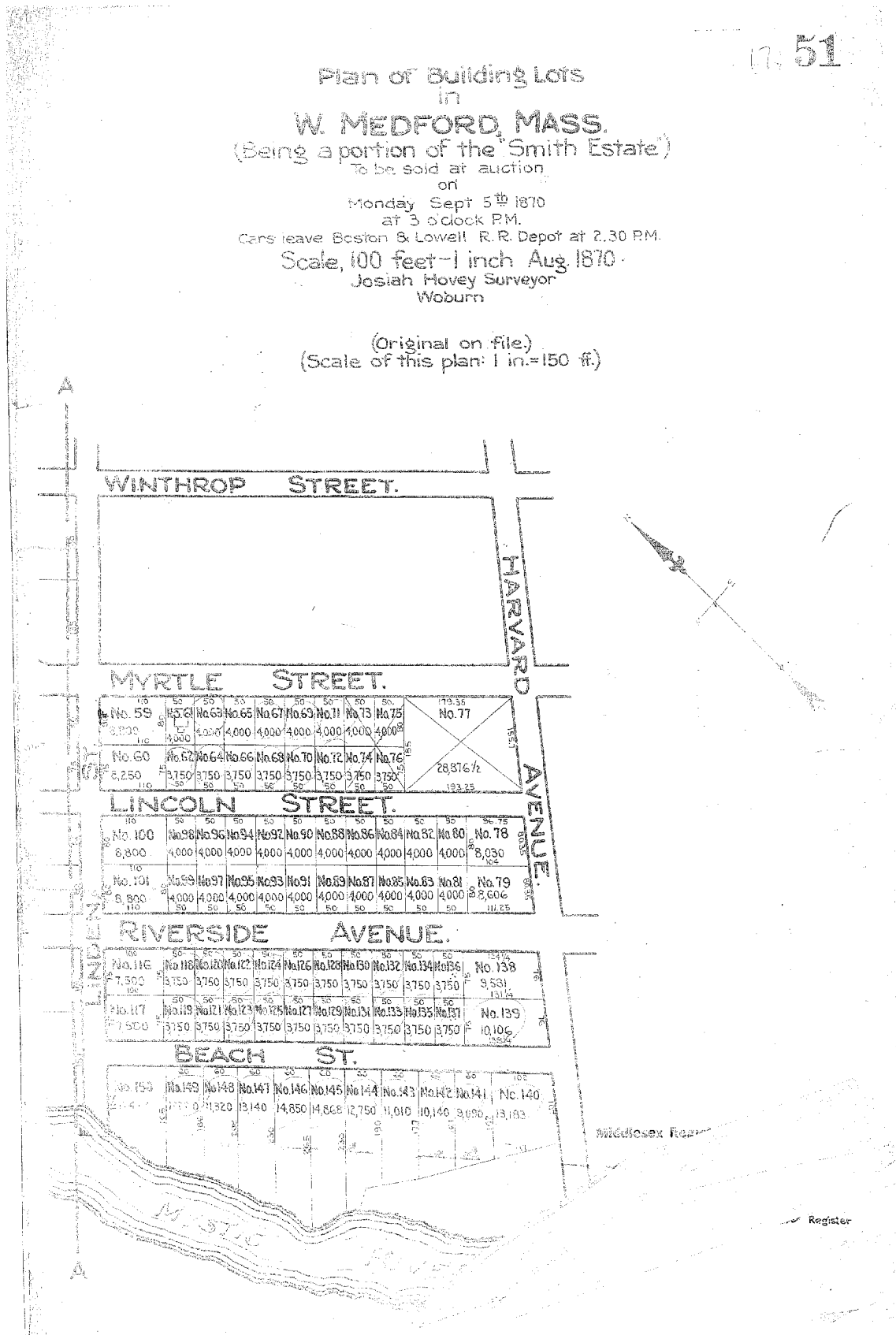
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Plan of the Smith Estate in West Medford, 1855 (G of 7 plates)



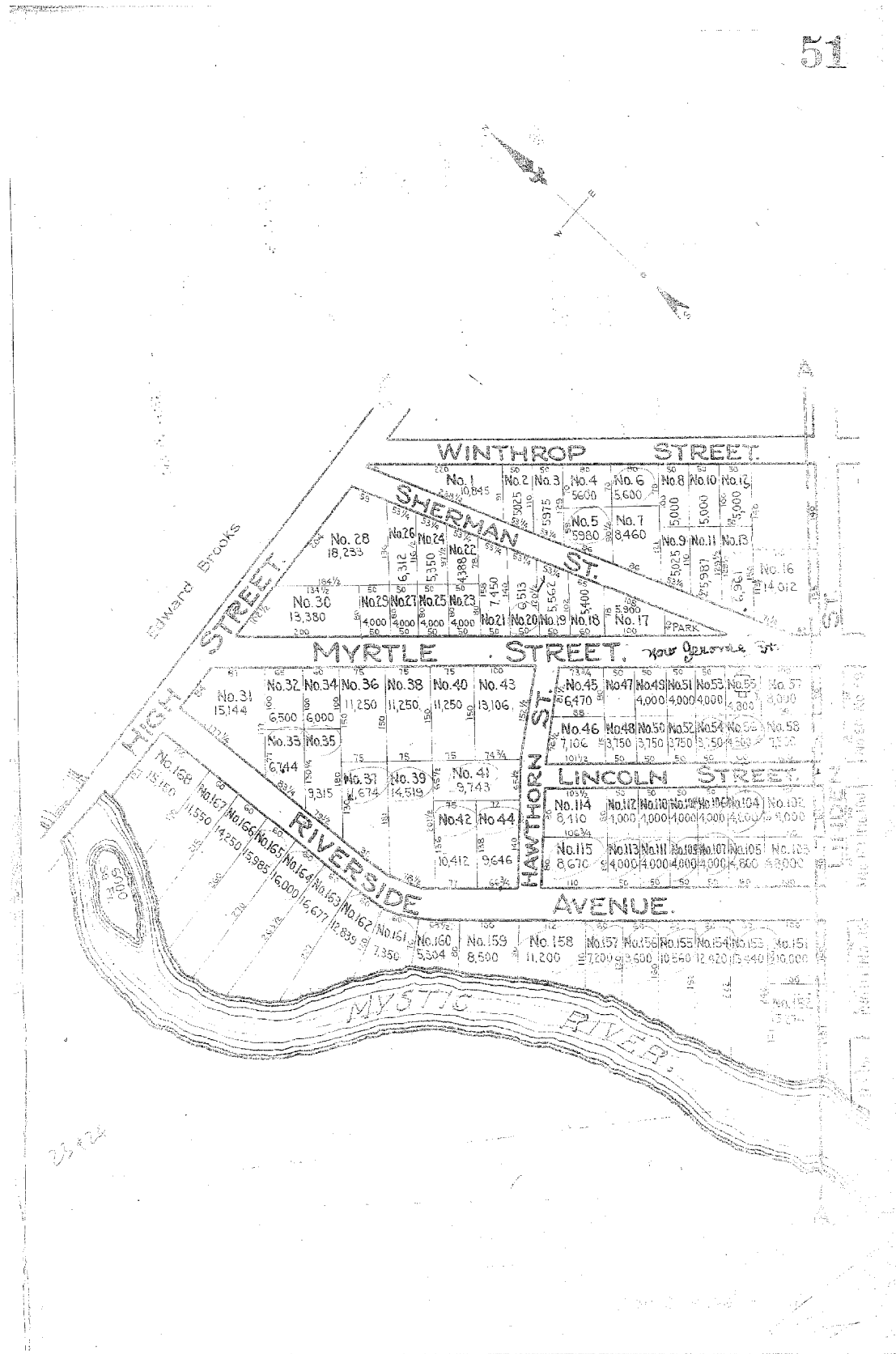
Plan Book 8 Plan I (G of 7)

Plan of Building Lots in W. Medford, Mass. (Being a portion of the Smith Estate), 1870 (plate 1 of 2)

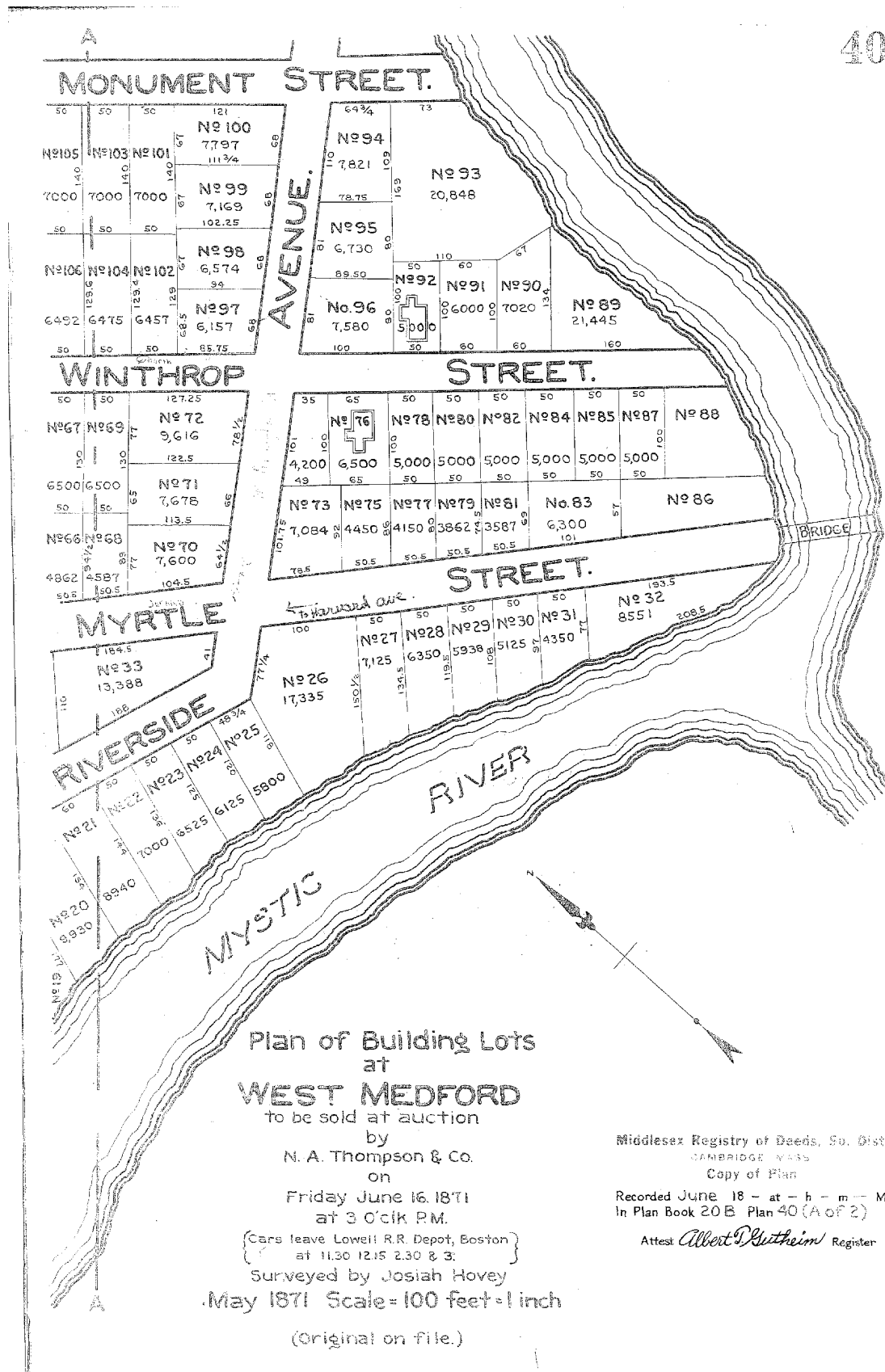


Plan of Building Lots in W. Medford, Mass. (Being a portion of the Smith Estate), 1870 (plate 2 of 2)

51



Plan of Building Lots at West Medford, 1871 (plate 1 of 2)



Plan of Building Lots at West Medford, 1871 (plate 2 of 2)

