



Photo Bing.com

# *History of* **Main Street**

*77 Main St. to Monument Street*

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Jack E. Hauck



77 & 79 Main. Photo Bing.com

# Main Street

## *77 Main St. to Monument Street*

Let's continue on our walk along Main Street, starting at the corner of the cemetery and the golf course. We will walk along the east side of the road, since it has a sidewalk.

Across from the street is a small shop. Martha and Howard Winrow have owned 77 Main St., since 1985. Originally built as a garage in 1940<sup>1</sup> it was somewhat larger. It was later remodeled to be a small shop.

In 1985, 77 Main St. it was Palmer Bromley's antique shop. Some people may recall when Palmer put brass beds on the parking lot in front of his shop. Later, needing much more space, he moved his business to the old fire station, at 148 Main St.

In 1986 and 87, the Winrows refurbished the building into what it is now.

Over the years that the Winrows have leased the building, it has been: a rare-books shop; a tack shop (*Essex County Saddlers*); two travel agencies; Lundy's Fence and Iron shop; an interior decorator/antique business; a landscape designer's shop; and an interior designer/landscape architect shop.

According to Martha Winrow, a wide range of businesses have inquired about renting the building. These included: a fish market; a baseball card collector; a poodle parlor; a candy and gift shop; lawn ornaments; a drive-through coffee shop; as well as a shop for carved duck decoys, acupuncture, lawyer, and music lessons.

Next to the small shop is 79 Main St. At first, this was the Porter-Fairfield House. Later, it was referred to as the Elbridge Porter Estate.

Today, the property is just 2.5 acres. Back in 1680, when the property was owned by Samuel Porter, and it was 48.5 acres.<sup>11</sup>

The first recorded house on the property was built in 1742. In 1754, Samuel Porter's son, Ebenezer, sold the property and house, to Nathaniel Brown<sup>8</sup>, who was a Wenham selectman from 1721 to 1744.

In 1748, Dea. William Porter bought the town's 3<sup>rd</sup> meetinghouse, and moved it and its weathervane to 79 Main St., to be a carriage shed. They were there, for 175 years, until the shed was taken down, by Jake Barnes, around 1922. He saved the timbers and weather vane. Ogee beams, from the old meetinghouse, were placed in Burnham Hall, at the museum. The weathervane also is at the museum.<sup>2</sup> (*It is in the Pickering Library at the museum.*)

1765, Dr. William Fairfield purchased the 25-acre property. A distinguished physician and surgeon, he died in the French and Indian Wars. His widow remarried and the house became a tavern and inn from 1773 to 1791. The large yard accommodated stages coaches.<sup>22</sup>

A story goes that, during the Revolution, British troops marched up Main Street. As they passed her house, Mrs. Sarah Fairfield, standing by the road, with a musket, told them that if they so much as moved anywhere towards her house she would shoot. They continued hurriedly on their way.<sup>2</sup> She was Wenham's own Deborah Sampson.\*

By 1856, William "Billy" Porter, who had a grocery store (*at what today is 152 Main Sr.*), owned the 25-acre Porter-Fairfield property.<sup>2</sup>

In 1910, Edward. A. Reynolds owned the property. A subsequent absentee owner was Burns of Salem.<sup>8</sup>

In 1978, the abandoned and greatly vandalized house was purchased by Paul Broderick and his fiancée, Paula Paglia. They completely refurbished the house. The wide pine floors came from an old church, in NH.<sup>8</sup>

Vandals had broken in and stolen all of the original doors. Paula, wanting to find some replacements, read a want ad for some antique doors.

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\* Deborah Sampson a woman who impersonated a man in order to serve in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. Served 17 months in the army, as Robert Shurtliff, was wounded in 1782 and honorably discharged in 1783



Current small shop originally was a garage. Photo J. Hauck 2010



Porter-Fairfield House built in 1742. Photo, J. Hauck, 2010



Porter-Fairfield House and garage in 1891. Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Grey's field, now Canaan Farm. Photo J. Hauck 2011

When she arranged to see them, the man was not at home, but his mother was happy to show her what they had. It turned out that these were the stolen doors. The police were called and the doors restored to the house.<sup>20</sup>

In 1985, the house was purchased by Howard and Martha Winrow.<sup>20</sup>

Alongside the Winrow property is a large corn field, which once was called Grey's field; it had been owned by Melville Grey.<sup>2</sup>

At the edge of Main Street there are two lone mail boxes, but no houses are easily seen. The houses, 87 and 89 Main St., are back behind the corn field. They were built in 1983.

We will now cross over Main and take a look at the golf course, as we begin to amble along the next section of Main Street.

The squawking you may hear is not from the crows over on Grey's field: it is coming from the Wenham Country Club. Golfers are always squawking about missing puts.

The course, which was opened in 1899, now covers sixty-five acres.<sup>3</sup>

Originally, there were no greens alongside Main Street. Thus, we need not worry about being hit by an errant shot. The closest green, 9<sup>th</sup>, was up by the starter's shack.

The greens were encircled by barbwire to keep the cows off them. There was a gate to allow the golfers to enter the green.<sup>20</sup>

The original Wenham Golf Course only had a starter's shack.<sup>3</sup> It was just a place to register to play a round. The 1<sup>st</sup> tee was behind the small club house, which was about where the current practice green is.

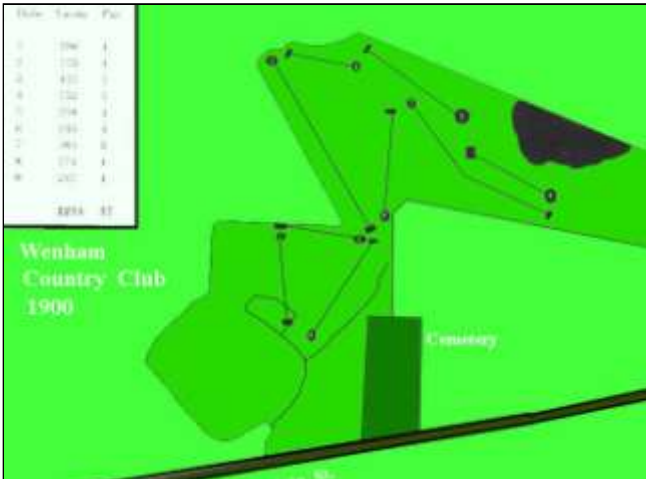
In 1924, the golf course was increased to 18 holes. The flow of the holes was changed from the original layout. The entrance was alongside the 17<sup>th</sup> green.

Today, this is the 2nd green. The current 1<sup>st</sup> green, on Main, was the 16<sup>th</sup>, in 1924.

There are some great stories about the golf course. All you could ever want to know about the Wenham Country Club is provided in a book published to commemorate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

As we walk back down the driveway, we come to a house alongside the 3<sup>rd</sup> fairway. This is 92 Main St. It was built in 1968, for Janice Tarr Kearsey. Previously, there were several large barns, on the site, which belonged to 98 Main St.<sup>8</sup>

In 1867, fire destroyed a very ancient house on the site.<sup>26</sup> The house was part of the Nathaniel Kimble estate, until about 1855. On the site, Henry Tarr, who was Ray Tarr's grandfather, built a new house.

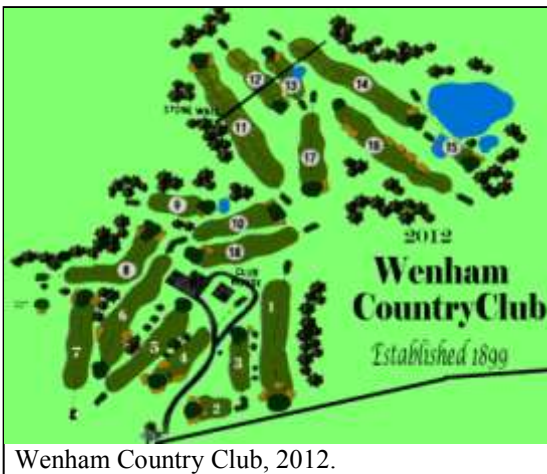
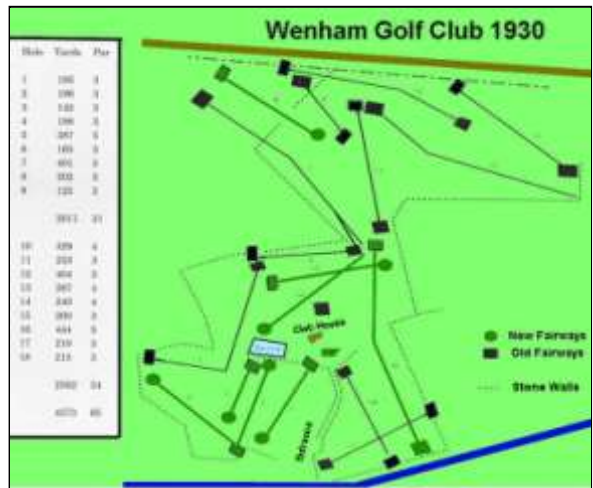


(Left) Wenham Golf Club, 1900

(Below) Wenham Golf Club was expanded to 18 holes in 1924.



Wenham Golf Club caddy shack, 1900.  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Wenham Country Club, 2012.



92 Main St., built in 1968 for Janice Tarr Kearsy.  
Photo J. Hauck 2010



In 1898, a large portion of the land was rented to the Wenham Golf Club. What had been farm land was developed, in 1899, into an eighteen-hole golf course, now called The Wenham Country Club.

Back out on Main Street, in the 1920s, we might hear cows mooing. No, those cows are not on the golf course. The cows are long gone from the fairways. The mooing comes from the other side of the road, 93 Main St. What today is a vegetable farm 70 years ago was a dairy farm.

It was a small part of a larger property, which stretched to Wenham Lake and was originally owned by Samuel Porter. Yes, the same Samuel Porter who owned the estate on the other side of Main Street.

In 1900, there was, behind the farm house, a large barn behind the house.

Around 1870, William Porter<sup>(2)</sup> lived at 93 Main St. His father, William Porter<sup>(1)</sup>, built the house. His brother, Eldridge Porter apparently inherited the house.<sup>8</sup>

On this site, from the late 1920s to the early 40s, Melville Grey ran a dairy farm, called Greycroft Farm. There also was a large apple orchard on the property.<sup>8</sup>

Melville Grey also owned the old Nancy Kimball Batchelder house, which was next to his store on Main Street. The house was used for his hired help. When Grey, being elderly could no longer run the dairy business, he sold the house and remaining property.<sup>2</sup>

In 1984, a fire destroyed the Porter house, which had just been purchased by George Belisle, of Salem, and was being renovated.<sup>5</sup>

Today, the house at 93 Main St. sits at the front of the Canaan Farms vegetable and plants complex, of store, greenhouses and farm field.

Grey sold about 9 acres of his property, to an abutter, from whom Paul Petronzio bought the front parcel of land. Paul A. "Bubba" Petronzio farmed the land, which he called Canaan Farm: his "promised land." Petronzio died, in 2008.<sup>6</sup>

In the fall, when we now walk by Canaan Farm, we do not hear the sound of cows, but more than likely, we will hear the crows and Canada geese. Unharvested corn makes a great meal, for these squawky creatures.

The Joseph and Nancy Batchelder house, 97 Main St., was built sometime before 1856. Joseph Batchelder, a wheelwright, at the time had houses on both sides of the street, the other 106 Main St. His shop was at 101 Main St.<sup>8</sup>

The house, called the "Greenwood House," was willed by Nathaniel Kimball to Joseph Batchelder's wife, Nancy, by 1872, and subsequently



Henry Tarr's house, 92 Main St., 1891.  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



92 Main St., 2010.  
Photo J. Hauck, 2010



Melville Grey's dairy farm, called Greycroft Farm.  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Nancy Kimball house built c1870.  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



93 Main St., built 1870.  
Photo J. Hauck, 2012



passed to her son, Frank Batchelder. (*The name Greenwood may have come from Elizabeth Greenwood, a former resident.*)<sup>8</sup>

A very antique house known as the old “Kimball house” once stood in the yard of the Frank Batchelder house. For many years it was such poor condition that no one could live there and was torn down.<sup>26</sup>

The house at 101 Main St. was built, in 1840, by Henry and Huldah Tarr. Some years later, the Tarrs moved across the road, to 98 Main St.<sup>8</sup>

Later, the house at 101 Main St. was sold to John I. Durgin, who also had a blacksmith shop. His son, Horace, was the blacksmith and carriage maker and, in the 1890s. He built a house at 105 Main St.<sup>8</sup>

John I. Durgin was a selectman (1879) and the overseer of the Gage Ice Plant by Wenham Lake, for over 30 years. The ice-plant workforce, at times was as many as ninety. Workers coming from a considerable distance were billeted, at the boarding house, on Pond Hill.<sup>8</sup>

103 Main St., in the 1800s, was the Joseph Lafayette Batchelder wheelwright shop. Many young men learned the wheelwright trade, at Batchelders. After his death, the shop was converted into a house.<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Edward Batchelder, the son of Frank Batchelder, was a left-handed relief pitcher in major league baseball. He played from 1923 through 1925, for the Boston Braves. He was the first person from Wenham to play in the major leagues. Born July 11, 1898, he died on May 5, 1989.

He had one start, a complete game, in which he gave up 13 earned runs, on 26 hits and four walks, while striking out six, in 20  $\frac{2}{3}$  innings of work.<sup>23</sup>

Across from 103 Main, there are two houses on the same driveway: 104 and 106 Main St. The driveway between the two houses originally was a path leading to the first meeting house, in Wenham. In the beginning, it was called Meeting House Lane and, later, Ice House Way.<sup>9</sup>

Just before coming to 106 Main St., there is a low knoll, beside the road. At the top of the knoll is where the meeting house reportedly stood. The meeting house, which also served as the town hall, was built, in 1642, and would be in use until 1663, when the land was sold and the building removed.<sup>12</sup>

That the church was in this general area, most researchers will agree. But, there are some who say that it was not on the knoll by Solart’s; rather, it was on the low rise, on which the Wenham Country Club house now sits.<sup>20</sup>

104 Main St. is at the back of the drive. It was built in 1860.<sup>1</sup> The house may have been an old school house, from Dodges Row, which was



Canaan Farms. Photo J. Hauck, 2009



Joseph Batchelder house, built before 1856. Photo J. Hauck, 2009.



Henry Tarr house built 1840. Photo J. Hauck, 2009



Durgin's blacksmith shop, 1900. Photo Courtesy Wenham Museum



103 Main St. Photo J. Hauck, 2009

moved to the site, after 1870, and was remodeled by Patrick H. Kavanaugh.<sup>8</sup>

Are you thirsty? Like to stop in for something to eat and perhaps a cold ale?

The house at the front of this property, 106 Main St., was at different times a tavern. Yes, once Wenham had quite a few taverns, but you must remember that Main Street was the main road for coaches traveling to Ipswich.

In the early 1600s, Esdran Reade, a relative of Rev. Hugh Peter<sup>8</sup>, was granted two acres of land, where 104 and 106 Main Street now stand. The property was next to land set aside for the first Wenham Meeting House, on December 4, 1643. This is why there was a path to the meeting house.

Circa 1670, 106 Main St. was owned by Thomas M. Burge. Later, during the Revolutionary War, it was a tavern, originally owned by Ebenezer Porter.<sup>10</sup>

In the late 1600s, John Solart, Sr., was Keeper of the Tavern. Little is known about him, but a daughter, Sarah Solart, born in 1653, married several times, including a third marriage to William Good. In 1692, Sarah Good was tried and executed, as a witch.<sup>10</sup>

John Solart's widow married Ezekiel Woodward, a housewright, and he was licensed to keep an "ordinary and to draw liquors". During the time that the Woodwards owned the ordinary, Selectmen meetings were held there: this was from 1693 to 1699.<sup>8</sup>

Other owners of note were: Nathaniel Brown (*a selectman from 1741 to 1744*), Dr. William Fairfield, and Nathaniel Kimball (*a selectman from 1815 to 1817*).<sup>8</sup>

Just a little way further along Main Street, on the Canaan Farm side, there once stood one of Wenham's many busy and noisy blacksmith shops. Today, it is 105 Main St.

This was the last blacksmith shop to operate in Wenham. Horace E. Durgin ran it for many years. He was a longtime town meeting moderator. After he died, the business was run by John Dodge.<sup>2</sup>

When the neighing horses, needing shoes, stopped coming by, the blacksmith shop became a stop for beeping automobiles, needing gasoline. It was a Texaco gas station, until the late 1970s. Next, in 1979, it became a veterinary clinic, for barking dogs and purring cats. Today, it is a quiet private residence.<sup>11</sup>

108 Main St. was built in 1859, by Samuel K. Evans. The land previously was part of the property owned by Thomas M. Burge. Evans also built the house at 61 Main St.<sup>8</sup>



Kavanagh house, 1972, was built in 1860. Photo Historic District Study



104 Main St., 2012.  
Photo J. Hauck



During 1600s and 1700s a tavern.  
Photo J. Hauck, 2012



106 Main St., 1972  
Photo Historic District Study



105 Main St. was a gas station up to 1977. Photo Historic District Study



105 Main St. a private residence.  
Photo J. Hauck, 2009

108 Main St. today, as seen from the street, essentially is similar to photos taken in 1891, 1912 and 1972.

Next to 108 Main St. is a large property which about 260 years ago was owned by John Friend, Jr.

In 1750, John Friend Jr. leased the house, on the property, to the Reverend Joseph Swain, pastor of Wenham's First Church. Pastor Swain lived in the house for 42 years.<sup>13</sup> The house also once was the home of Rev. John Smith and Rev. Ebenezer Sperry.<sup>26</sup>

In 1851, Edmund Kemble built, on the hill back from Main St., a 2-story, brick house, in the English Georgian style. Called by some, the Kemble mansion, it was located to the left of where the brick building now stands, at The Maples.<sup>13</sup> The address was 116 Main St.

In 1850, before building his mansion, Squire Kemble removed both sections of the 1742 house, where Reverend Swain had lived, and which were at the front of the property. The two sections were conveyed, by horse-drawn carts, to 20 Arbor St. Elmer Clarke purchased both of the houses. One section is still there. Fire destroyed the other section, sometime around 1870.<sup>13</sup>

Just inside the stone wall at the front of The Maples there is a large rectangular indentation which was the cellar of the 1742 house.

When the Squire died, 1873, the land was divided between his sons, Arthur and Edward. The property included land directly across Main Street, and extended to the corner of Cherry Street. This would be the area now occupied by Fairview Avenue and the house on the corner of Cherry and Main.<sup>8</sup>

Beginning in 1903, the subject of building a new schoolhouse near the center of Wenham was frequently discussed and voted on, at town meetings. The Kemble property was one of four sites considered. Twice, it received a majority of the votes, only to be reconsidered.

In 1921, the Kemble property was purchased by John Proctor. About 230 years earlier, in 1692, a Salem court convicted John Proctor's ancestor, John Proctor, of being a witch. Convicted as the first male witch, he was hung.

John Proctor had the old Kemble mansion torn down. Nearby, he built a 3-level, brick, in 1924, an English Georgian style home, which is now building one, at the front of The Maples.<sup>13</sup> 120 Main St. residences. It is now part of The Maples senior housing, consisting of eight buildings, a pool, garages, and a community center.<sup>13</sup>

In 1991, the Proctor house was remodeled into five individual  
*(For more information about The Maples, read Chapter 10.)*





Evans house built in 1859.  
Photo J. Hauck 2010



Kemble house built in 1851.  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Section of Swain house now at 20  
Arbor St. Photo J. Hauck, 2009.



Proctor house built in 1924.  
Photo Maples archives



Building 1 at The Maples senior housing coop.  
Photo J. Hauck, 2009.

Before leaving this site, we need to look at the huge copper beech tree, which is at the front. It is estimated that the tree was planted circa 1750, when the Swain house was nearby.

We are now going to cross over to the west side of Main Street, at the intersection with Cherry Street.

Be careful, as you go across Main Street. Traffic at this intersection is very heavy. The people at The Maples know this all too-well, especially when trying to get out onto Main Street, from Old Country Road. It is called a road, but officially Old Country is a private driveway.

Cherry Street is one of the original roads established in Wenham. Starting at the intersection, there is a sidewalk on Main Street. Town records are not clear when the walk was paved.

Also at the intersection, there now is a small island, on which there is a small island-planter. The island was much larger when it was first created back in 1893. WVIS created triangle islands at several intersections, in Wenham. The ladies wanted to increase the beauty of the town's roads, by planting shrubs on the islands. They cared for them until 1918, when the town took over their care and planting.<sup>24</sup>

On the southern corner of Cherry and Main streets is 1 Cherry Street.

Just two quick comments about this house, which was built around 1908.

First, on Main Street, there is the original driveway. This must have been a dangerous exit. Now, the driveway is on Cherry Street.

Second, this was the home for Joseph and Alene Harrington. He was for a long-time the highly-respected Wenham Town Moderator.

In 1925, there was a traffic signal at the corner of Main and Cherry streets. When the state highway department was going to remove it, the town considered buying it for \$265, but it was voted down at an Annual Town Meeting.<sup>25</sup> In 2012, interest once again developed for placing a traffic signal at this intersection, because of many car accidents.

Across from The Maples, before coming to Cherry Street there is Fairview Avenue. All the property in this area, over to Cherry Street, originally, was also owned by John Friend, Jr.

We are going to focus, at present, on the area between Cherry and Monument.

This section of land, in the late 1800s, was owned by George H. Tilton. He acquired the property through his wife Elizabeth, daughter of John Porter. Elizabeth W. Tilton died in 1896, and George died in 1905. The Tilton house, which was located about where 1 Monument St. now stands, burned on Oct. 31, 1903.<sup>4, 8</sup>



Cherry & Main Intersection

WVIS created triangle islands at several intersections, in Wenham.  
Photo J. Hauck



On Main Street, there is the original driveway for 1 Cherry St.  
Photo Bing.com



Herrick's House 1891

In mid 1700s, Herrick house was called Acadian house.  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum.



Smith house, built 1910, here in 2010.  
Photo J. Hauck



Bradbury house built in 1820.  
Photo J. Hauck 2010



Herrick's Blacksmith Shop 1891

Blacksmith shop likely was built around 1650.  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum.

At the corner of Main and Cherry, there was a small lot – just a quarter acre – on which there was a house built by Joshua Herrick. Not surprisingly, the property was called "Herrick's Corner."<sup>4</sup>

In the mid 1700s, the Herrick's house was also called the Acadian or the French house. Between 1755 and 1764, thousands of French Canadians from Acadia or Nova Scotia were deported by the British. In 1755, a family of four Acadians was billeted, at Herrick's. They stayed there until about 1763, when they went to live with Elizabeth Kimball, Wenham's first female teacher. Next, they were shifted to live with Dr. Amos Putnam, in Danvers.<sup>11</sup>

In her Main Street reminisces, Sarah B. Merrill recalled "The old red gambled-roof cottage on Cherry Street, formerly occupied the land in front of the old well upon the corner. With a huge chimney in the center, a basement store beneath it and entrance at the western end, it was quite a different looking house from the present (*house*)."<sup>26</sup>

The "penny-store" in the basement was run by a Mrs. Sweet and Samuel Ober. Maj. David Starrett was a clerk. Starrett was a veteran of the Revolutionary War, and in 1836 was the town's treasurer.

In 1854, Robert A. Herrick sold the house and property to Eunice A. Stone and Sarah A. Bradbury, who lived across the street, at 130 Main St.<sup>4, 8</sup>

In 1864, Daniel Bradbury, and his wife Sarah sold the small parcel of land and the Herrick house to John Porter. Daniel Herrick was a selectman in 1795.<sup>4,</sup>

The Herrick house was moved 2-3 rods (*about 45 ft.*) up Cherry St., in 1866, by Dr. John Porter. John, the son of W. Jonathan Porter, died that same year.<sup>4, 8</sup>

The property descended to the cousins of Elizabeth Porter Tilton, namely Elizabeth P. Gould, who died in 1906, and Susan C. Gould. Susan sold the property to Lester E. Libby, in 1909.<sup>4, 8</sup>

Libby subdivided the property into its present house lots, and built Monument Street - between 1909 and 1914.

In Wenham, Lester Libby was the Donald Trump, of the early 20th century. He bought properties, subdivided them and made a very good profit.

The house now at 123 Main St. was built by Robert Smith, in 1910 following the sub-division of the land by Libby. There is no record of what happened to the Herrick house. The Smith house was later in possession of Esther Stoddard (*former Esther Cushing*), for many years. Next, it became the residence and office of Dr. Daniel M. Rogers. The current house, at the corner of Cherry and Main, was built in 1904.<sup>4, 8</sup>

Next to what is now The Maples property, there was, up to 1896, another blacksmith's shop. It probably was built, around the end of the 1600s. Beside it was a brook, which ran from the old pond, on the commons.<sup>4</sup>

The first recorded owner was Daniel Herrick, who lived across the street. He sold the business, in 1796, to Uzziel Dodge, who was a brother of Pond John Dodge. Subsequent smithies, at 130 Main St., were: Franklin Hadley, Jabez Richards, and Daniel Bradbury, and Charles Dudley.<sup>2</sup>

Also, behind the smith's shop there was a wheelwright shop, run by Jason Clark. Together, the men made butcher wagons, considered the best in Essex County, and perhaps the best in Massachusetts.<sup>11</sup>

The buildings were close to the adjacent Claflin-Richards House. These buildings, no longer present, were still at the site, as late as 1907.

Today, the only building at this site is the attractive house that sits back from the street. 130 Main St. probably was built circa 1840, by Daniel Bradbury. He was a blacksmith.

The house passed to Sarah A. Currier, in 1885, and was thereafter known as the Currier Estate. Sarah A. Currier, wife of Stephen S. Currier, was presumably the daughter of Daniel A. Bradbury.<sup>8</sup>

In 1972, Gladys Brown lived at 130 Main St. Some years later, her son, Richard, and his family also lived there. Richard's wife, Nancy, was the town accountant for many for many years.<sup>8</sup>

In 2006, the Card family moved into 130 Main St.

Updated 12-30-12

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