

# A History of Main Street Its Sights & Sounds

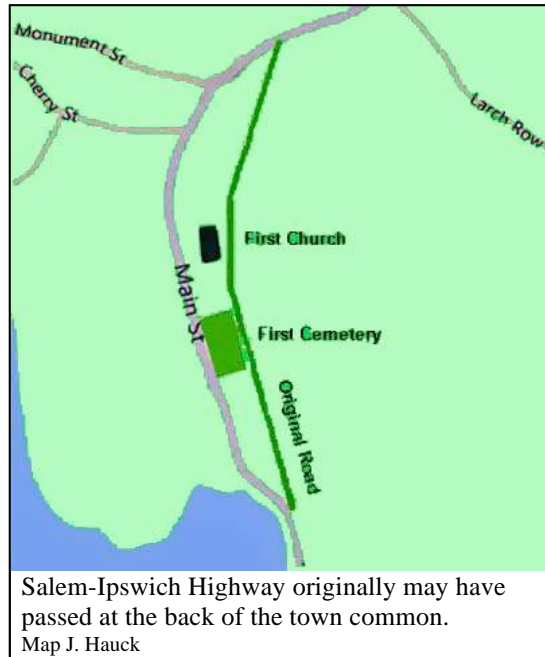
*Center*

**All rights reserved.**

No part of this material may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission, in writing, from the author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages, in a review.

Although the author has exhaustively researched all sources, to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in this book, he assumes no responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, omissions or any other inconsistency herein.

Jack E. Hauck



## MAIN STREET CENTER

We're just about to enter downtown Wenham.

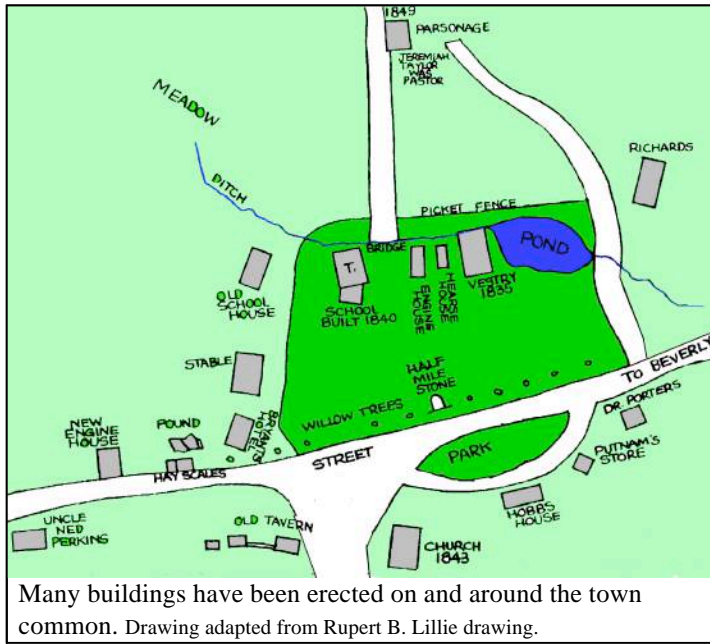
This area of Main Street is the most dramatically changed section in Wenham, from what the town looked like back in the early 1800s and before, as depicted by Rupert Lillie (see pg. 1).<sup>6</sup>

The first thing to understand about Main Street, as it passes through the center of the town, is that original path of the Salem to Ipswich highway (1638) may not have been where Main Street is now.

In 1969, Joseph Harrington, Jr., gave a talk, "Historical Outline First Church in Wenham, Congregational," in which he said, "*In the mid 1600s, the Salem to Ipswich highway ... ran past the Claflin-Richards house; and, then, along the area now behind the town hall and out to the current path of Main Street.*"<sup>15</sup>

The current path may have been established in 1644.<sup>16</sup>

Further, there were no intersecting streets: Arbor Street was created in 1836, Friend Court in 1860, and Monument Street in 1911.



The second thing to understand about the town center is that it has a lot of marshland. The early settlers would not have seen it as good farm land. However, merchants would have seen it as being a good location, being on the main travel route.

Thus, it is not surprising that merchants bought small lots to build their shops. In this section

of our walk along Main St. there have been: a couple of fire stations, two hotels, a merchant center, a tavern, street-car barns, a leather factory, an ice cream parlor, several apothecaries, a harness shop, a tea house, a boys club, a barber shop, a blacksmith, several cordwainers, a few grocery stores, a few post offices, and a dog pound.

There now are seven shops in this section of Main Street.

The road in front of the Hobbs house and the second church building originally was a right of way given to Austin Killam to provide access to his farm.<sup>17</sup> Killam Way wound in front of Judge Nathaniel Brown's house (*now the Hobbs house*), behind the north side of the second meeting house, and then turned out to the highway (*now Main Street*). It was extended to Arbor Street when the fifth meeting house was built in 1843.

Wenham erected its **2nd meetinghouse**, in 1663, on the parcel of land between the highway and Killam's right-of-way. The town traded another parcel for the land. It was removed when the third meeting house was built (1688) on the same site, as was fourth (1748).<sup>15</sup>

In 1652, the Massachusetts General Court required all towns to provide military training. Samuel Smith, of Wenham, in 1680, willed to the town 10 acres of land, for a training field. He stipulated that the land was not to be used for any other purpose and nothing was to be built on it. The **training field** was across the highway from the meetinghouse, on the site of the present town hall and later became known as the common.<sup>11</sup>

On the common, there was a brook-fed pond, from which ran a stream, called Pond Brook. The stream flowed toward what is now Monument Street.

In 1825, a **hearse house**, to garage a hearse, was built on the training field. In 1849, the hearse house was taken down.<sup>15</sup> A new hearse house was built on the town cemetery.

A **fire engine house**, next to the hearse house, to garage a new hand-pumper was built on the training field, in 1835. The pumper house also was taken down in 1849. The pumper was moved to a station house, Enon One, on Main Street.<sup>13</sup>

In June 1835, a **vestry** was built on the common.<sup>15</sup> For a time, while the vestry was near the pond, it was used as a school. When the town hall was built, in 1854, the vestry was moved a short distance west of its original location. In 1856, it was moved to its present location, on Arbor Street, just back of the church. In 1953, the vestry was remodeled and raised to be the second story of the church house.<sup>15</sup>

**Center school**, which at first was on the west side of the training field, was moved to the right side of the town hall. In 1911, William Trowt purchased the building. He moved it behind his grocery store to be a garage.<sup>26</sup>

In 1857, at the back of the common, on the slight rise, the church built a **parsonage**. It was on the other side of the brook and separated from the common by a picket fence. The fence ran around the entire common site, and out to the street, at both ends.<sup>15</sup> When the civil war monument was erected in 1871, the town built an iron rail fence identical to the one around the monument park around the front and sides of the common.

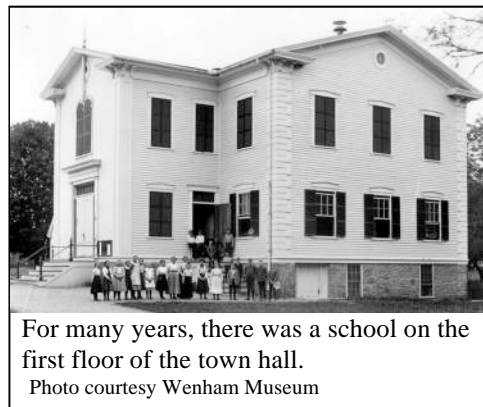
In 1924, the West End School was moved to the knoll behind the town hall and converted into a **garage** for town equipment.<sup>31</sup> The garage was removed in 1983 to make room for more parking spaces, in an upper parking area.<sup>32</sup>

Also in 1924, a **dump** behind the town hall was graded and a parking space created for 25 vehicles.<sup>31</sup>

Along the front of the common, there was a row of **willow trees**, and a mile marker. The trees were removed in 1868.<sup>2</sup>

It would not be until 1854, that Wenham would have a **town hall**, separate from the church meetinghouse. This was 21 years after the State mandated that town governments could not meet in church meeting houses.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to building the town hall, the pond was filled, as was the brook feeding it, and which drained from it.<sup>2</sup> These actions would come back as a problem, about a hundred years later, when the basement was expanded for use as a library.





From the front, on Main Street, the current town hall, at right, looks very much like it was before being refurbished in 2007. Photos J. Hauck

The town's second mile stone is located in front of the Town Hall. This is a **half-mile stone**. The inscription on this stone designates Newburyport 17-1/2 miles, Boston 20 1/2 miles, Ipswich 6 1/2 miles and Salem 9 1/2 miles.

In 1891, the Town voted to reset the stone, at the northeasterly corner of the ell of the Town House. It was also voted that a lamp-post be erected nearby the "old half-mile stone," as a protection, and that the lamp be kept lighted. In 1858, the school room became a library.<sup>2</sup>

In 1963, the town expanded the library by building a brick ell, at the back.

In the basement of the old town hall, there originally was a boarding room. It could accommodate 8 people. In 1905, the boarding room was a prisoner cell. In 1919, the boarding room became the police station. James L. Cole worked out of the small room.<sup>4</sup> In 1977, the prisoner cell became a library study room, built by Al Dodge and David Rideout.<sup>20</sup> In 2007, when the town hall was remodeled, the old jail cell was dismantled.

The flagpole, at the apex of the roof of the original town hall was removed.

The World War II Memorial has yet to be replaced.



Clafin-Richards house was built circa 1635. Photo J. Hauck, 2011

In 1854, the cost to build the town hall was \$5,908.77:<sup>2</sup> this would be about \$140,000, in today's dollars. In 2008, the refurbishing of this structure cost about \$3.5 million.<sup>21</sup>

We will now go next door and visit the **Clafin-Richards house**. The first mention of a house, on the present Clafin-Richards lot, 132 Main St., is in the 1672 town records. The house is named for the first known owner and

occupant, Robert Claflin (*originally MacClaflin*), and the last, Mary Ann Richards.

Over the years, the house has had many owners, whose names are prominent in Wenham history:

Reverend Joseph Gerrish, Captain Thomas Fiske, Jr., Jonathan Kimball and his heirs; Daniel Herrick; Uzziel Dodge; Dr. Samuel Dodge and heirs; Captain Edmund Kimball; Sarah and Stephen Currier; and Mary Ann Richards, and descendants.



Timothy Pickering research library is in the Claflin Richards house. Photo Unknown

In 1886, it was The Enon House, a hotel run by Stephen Currier.

Private ownership of the house ended when the Wenham Village Improvement Society purchased it, in 1921.<sup>19</sup>

Years later, Adeline Cole would say, in a WVIS presentation that, "The historical house was acquired to rescue it from being reduced to a second-class tenement house."<sup>3</sup>

The house has several distinctive design features: heavy frame construction; high pitched roof; overhanging second story; leaded diamond-shaped window panes, or "quarrels."<sup>19</sup>

One of the rooms in the house is the **Timothy Pickering Library**, which contains many historical books and papers. The Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture furnished the room. (*Pickering founded the Essex Agricultural Society for the Promotion and Improvement of Agriculture.*)

(*For more information about the Claflin-Richards house, see chap. 32.*)

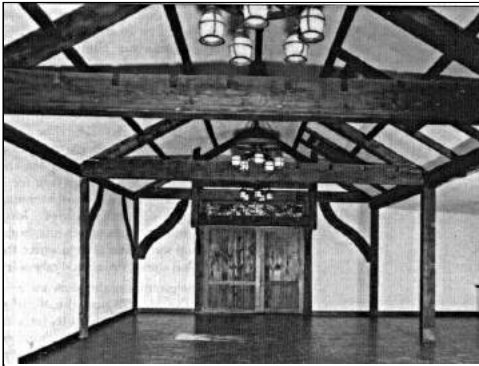
In 1951, the Wenham Village Improvement Society began construction of the **museum**. The following year, upon its completion, the WVIS transferred the museum to the Wenham Historical Association and Museum, Inc. The WVIS also turned over the Claflin-Richards House, and Burnham Hall.<sup>3</sup>

Elizabeth Richards Horton, who spent her childhood in the Claflin-Richards House, was the founder of the International Doll Collection. In 1922, she transferred the ownership of the collection to the Wenham Historical Committee of the WVIS.<sup>3</sup>

Tucked behind the Claflin-Richards House, there is a very small house. Originally, it was a cobbler's shop. The shops were called ten-footers, because they were often ten-feet square.



Ten-footer shoe shop, back of museum, has many shoe-making tools. Photo J. Hauck



Burnham Hall has timbers of old church, and timbers of other 17th century buildings. Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Highlighted section of museum formerly was the engine house for Enon One. Photo J. Hauck, 2010

By the mid-1700s, as the shoe business increased, more and more little shops were built. At one time, there were over fifty shops, just in Wenham.<sup>11</sup>

The museum once had two shoe shops. The Winslow Shop was where Sidney Winslow, later founder and president of the United Shoe Machinery Corp. had his start. It is no longer at the museum.<sup>11</sup>

However, the **Merrill Shoe Shop**, with all its furnishings, is still at the museum. It was moved, in 1930, to the museum, from its original location on Cherry St. The shop donated by Merrill's daughters, who bought the shop, with the house and buildings on Cherry St., from Israel Trask, shoemaker, in 1869.<sup>11</sup>

The barn at the back of the Wenham museum was built, in 1935, by Ray Knowlton, for the Historical Association. It incorporates timbers of the old church, and timbers of other 17th century buildings.<sup>3</sup>

In 1951, the barn was named **Burnham Hall** (named for *Helen C. Burnham, longest serving President of the WVIS, 1908-1945*). The barn, opened in 1952, houses tools and relics of the past, and serves as a meeting place for town organizations.<sup>3</sup>

rics of the past, and serves as a meeting place for town organizations.<sup>3</sup>

The **Enon building**, another significant part of the museum complex, is the former Enon fire station building. It is where the museum stores its valuable original documents, Benjamin Conant's huge collection of glass plate negatives and many other items requiring controlled temperature and humidity. Originally, the building was 150 Main St., before being moved to the museum site and reconfigured.

Something missing from the town common, today, is the boat yard. Well, it wasn't really a boat yard, but just an area where the sailing rig, **Chebacco Boat Lily** was built.

Between 1815 and 1816, brothers John Thorn and Billy Thorn Dodge built the Lily on the common. Then, they hauled it to Beverly, on wheels, by oxen,

and launched the Lily from Ober's wharf, near Essex Bridge (Salem/Beverly Bridge).<sup>2</sup>

OK, we're done seeing the common, let's go back over to the other side of Main St., to **Monument Park**.

The park has had many names: Central Park, Monument Park, and The Meeting House Green.

First, let's take a look at the back side of Monument Park. There is a short road here, which runs from the Monument and Main intersection to the Arbor and Main intersection. (See p. 3)

In 1879, the **Civil War Soldiers Monument** was built on the small parcel, between the meetinghouse and Main Street. The money to build the monument came from Edwin Mudge, of Danvers, who transferred his salary as Representative for Wenham, which was \$550; plus private subscriptions and a town appropriation of \$1,477.<sup>22</sup>

The First Church allowed the town to erect, on its land, a memorial monument, for the men of Wenham, who died during the Great Rebellion of 1861 to 1865. 131 Wenham men served in the war. Wenham was given right to the park, providing that the town would erect and forever maintain a suitable fence around the land.<sup>22</sup> (*For more information about the civil war monument, see chapter 24.*)

At the far left, of the church is the **Henry Hobbs House**. It was built around 1688. In 1747, Capt Samuel Kimball owned it. The next owner was Ebenezer Batchelder, who willed it to his son, Josiah Batchelder;

Nathaniel Brown was the next owner of the property. He expanded the house to eight-rooms, with two chimneys, and gambrel roof. Patty Lewis, afterward, owned the house and kept a little store there. In 1799, she kept an inn during the summer months. Next, Nathaniel Potter owned the property and lived in the house.

Henry Hobbs bought the house, in 1865, from Aaron Foster, Moses Foster's son.

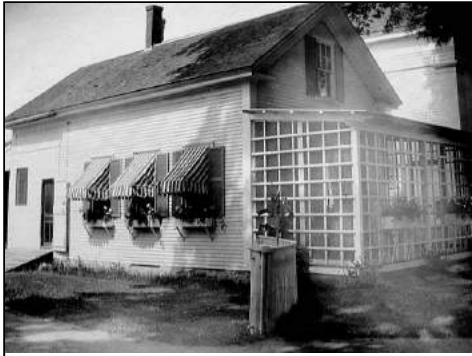


Hobbs house, left, Hobbs harness shop, right. 1893. Photo courtesy Wenham Museum

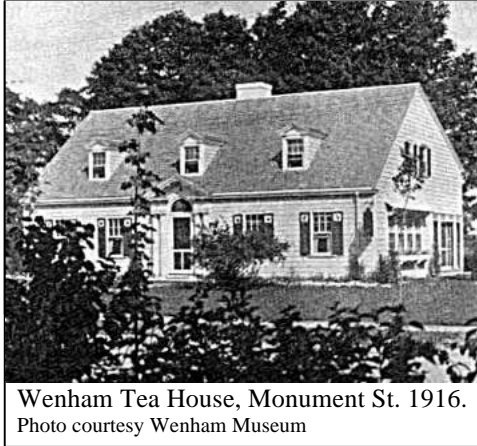


Hobbs house became Nazir's Jewelry in 2006. Photo J. Hauck, 2011.

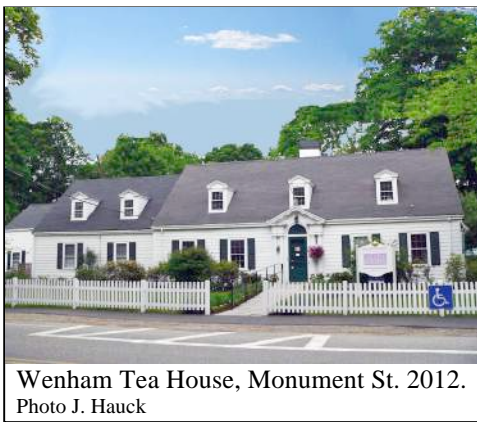




Wenham Tea House back of Monument Park. 1915. Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Wenham Tea House, Monument St. 1916. Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Wenham Tea House, Monument St. 2012. Photo J. Hauck

A year later, 1866, Hobbs built the **harness shop**, next to the house, in 1866, and was in the harness business for many years.

When Hobbs died, his daughter, Harriet, inherited the estate and lived there, until October 1944. <sup>2</sup> The Wenham Village Improvement Society purchased the property of Harriet Hobbs (*which included the harness shop*), in May of that year.

After extensive renovations, "Hobbs House," opened as an apparel shop, in May, 1948. In 2006, the Hobbs House became Nazir's Fine Jewelry.

The attractive tea house, which now is on Monument St., had its beginning next to the church, 135 Main St.

In 1910, the Henry Hobbs' harness shop was rented and refurbished, by the Wenham Village Improvement Society, as a tea room, and an exchange for selling handwork from the ladies' needles, and jams and jellies from their kitchens. The first tea was served on May 29, 1912. The tea room, according to a sign on Main St., was called "**Tabby's Tea Room.**" <sup>3</sup>

The success of the venture led the group, in 1915, to acquire the Monument Street property, and to build a picturesque cottage-type building, for a tea room. <sup>3</sup> It is believed to be the oldest continually-operating tea house in the country.

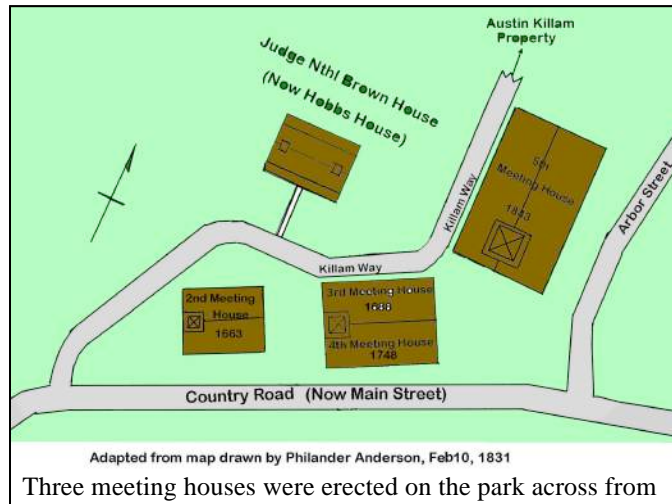
Before building the Tea House on Monument Street, there was the John and Benjamin C. Putnam store on the site, generally called the Tilton property. The store also was the post office (1854-1862). <sup>5</sup>

What happened to the first tea house?

In 1944, it was leased to the Boy's Club (*It was closed in 1945, due to*

“mischievous doings.”). Next, it was sold to an ex-GI, who needed a house. It was moved out of town, leaving the empty lot that we see now, beside the church.

There have been several church buildings ... meeting houses ... at the approximate location of today’s church building.



In 1663, the town built a **2nd meetinghouse** and sold the first building. This meetinghouse was in use until 1688. In 1687, the town built a **3rd meetinghouse**, a little east of the second meetinghouse. <sup>17</sup>

A belfry was added, and for the first time there was the melodious call to service heard across town. A weathervane was placed on top of the belfry. (*The weathervane is now on display, at the museum.*) <sup>8</sup>

In 1748, a **4th meetinghouse** was built. Deacon William Porter bought the 3rd meetinghouse, and moved it, with its weathervane, to his farm, across from the cemetery. For 175 years, it was as a carriage shed. Jake Barnes took it down around 1922. He saved the timbers and weathervane. Some of the timbers and braces were used, in 1935, to build the barn, which became Burnham Hall. <sup>2</sup> (See picture on pg. 7.)

In 1843, Wenham’s 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the **5th meetinghouse** was built. For the first time, the building would be called a “church,” not a meeting house.

The fourth meetinghouse was sold, for \$99, to Rev. Tatley, who sold it to Charles Lander, who moved it to Wenham Lake, where it became an ice-storage house, until it burned, in 1872. <sup>23</sup>



5<sup>th</sup> meeting house/church building 2010.  
Photo J. Hauck



Car-barn lot, Arbor Street at left. 2011  
Photo J. Hauck



Car and horse barns, Main and Arbor streets, 1894. Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Joint post office, at back, and library, at front, was considered for the car-barn lot in 1957. Photo courtesy Wenham Museum

Did you know that the town owns the **clock** in the church belfry?

After the end of the Civil War, a group of women, led by Dolly B. Clark, purchased a clock, and had it placed in the tower of the meeting house. The funds were gathered through fairs, tea parties, and similar entertainments. The clock, which began running in May 1867, was offered as a gift to the Town of Wenham, on March 2, 1869.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the ringing of the church bell, which had been rung at noon and 9:00 p.m., was discontinued. The clock made the bell ringing unnecessary

In 1930, the old clock finally ticked its life away. A new clock was installed, by the Town. Some components from the 1867 clock are stored at the Claflin-Richards House.

The keeper of the new clock was Elmer E. Clarke, grandfather of taker, Leroy F. Clarke, Jr., who took over from his grandfather, in 1948.<sup>2</sup>

Next, let's cross over Arbor St. We come to a quiet and empty lot, but it has not always been empty, or quiet: far from that.

On this lot, in 1643, Wenham had its first **public house**. William Fiske, brother of the town's first minister, John Fiske, was the Tavern Keeper.<sup>16</sup> Next door, Rev. John Fiske served the "good word," and William Fiske served the "good drink."

The tavern was kept by a succession of people. Being across the street from the town meeting house and church, there was many a time, when town meetings became rather heated. Voters would adjourn and go over to the tavern, and continue listening to the arguments, often lasting for hours.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the last Keeper of the Tavern, on Main and Arbor, was John Thorne Dodge (1764-1851). The place was called "Squire Thorne's Tavern"<sup>24</sup>

The low-ceiling tavern was a gathering place on winter evenings for the village gossips to take their nightly draught and discuss the doings of their neighbors, and the latest bit of outside news provided by travelers passing through.<sup>33</sup>

For many years, during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the old tavern building, at Main and Arbor, was the site of the town post office. This was not unusual. A Post table was a long-time custom, in taverns.

In 1885, Wenham began planning for a streetcar line. The **Naumkeag Street Railway Company**, of Salem, petitioned the Wenham Selectman for a franchise that would extend its streetcar tracks from the Beverly line to the Hamilton town line and have the tracks run alongside Main St.<sup>2</sup>

A site was needed for keeping horses and the street cars. The site selected was the corner of Main and Arbor, where the tavern stood. In 1885, a car barn and a horse stable were built. The two-story car barn was 100 ft long by 38 ft. wide. Next to it was a two-story stable, which was about the same size. The stable was large enough to lodge 40 horses. Next to the barn, there was a small office shed. At the back of the lot, there was a house for the manager and his family.<sup>2</sup>

At the start of the 20th century, streetcars were switched to electric power. This eliminated the need for a Wenham stable and car barn. In 1924, Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway considered selling the streetcar-barn property. Many possibilities were considered, including a poolroom, a gymnasium, and a gasoline station.<sup>11</sup>

There was quick reaction to the possibility of a gas station, in the center of the town. A group of public-spirited citizens, which included Dr. John Phillips, Lester Libby, and Frederick Ayer, donated enough money to buy the property. In 1925, they gave it to the town, as an open space for a park.<sup>11</sup> The site now is commonly called the car-barn lot.

The car-barn manager's house was moved to 21 Arbor St.

Following World War 2, occasionally cars were parked on the car-barn lot, during church services. In 1957, plans were prepared for building a joint library and post office, but the idea was defeated.

In 2011, plans were prepared for erecting a monument in memory of Wenham men and women who had served in the armed forces. The town approved this plan at a 2012 town meeting. No date was set for when the monument would be erected.



Former car-barn manager's house now is at 21 Arbor St. Photo J. Hauck, 2011



Putnam-Fowler house, 143 Main St., with town water pump in front. Photo, 1909, courtesy Wenham Museum.



Putnam-Fowler house, 143 Main St., 2011. Photo J. Hauck

**143 Main St.**, the Putnam-Fowler house was built by John A. Putnam, around 1850. It has the same architectural style, Grecian, as the Wenham town hall. The house is essentially the same as it looked when built.

Joseph Fowler later owned the house. The next owner was Benjamin Johnson, who owned the apothecary shop that once was at 151 Main, and later relocated to 145 Main.<sup>5</sup>

Directly in front of the house there was the **town water pump**, where as Allen Peabody wrote, “man and beast may drink who choose.”<sup>27</sup> It was removed in 1947, when water lines were installed along Main Street.

Also gone from this side of Main Street is the pay-telephone that was near the crosswalk. Cellular phones, introduced in the mid 1970s, eventually resulted in the removal of this public telephone.

Let’s now cross Main Street to the Friend Court corner. Today, there’s **traffic light**, which we can turn red, with the push of a button. The light was installed on Mar. 6, 1969, after several pedestrian accidents.<sup>29</sup> Even with the light, there still are accidents.

Also gone from this section of Main Street is a hay scale that once was near the front of Trowt’s store: it was removed in 1924.<sup>31</sup> (See *picture on pg. 14.*) It was moved there, in 1878, from behind the Civil War Monument Park. Hay was an important crop. The town maintained a hay scale to allow farmers to weigh their cargo. In 1855, Wenham farmers gathered 836 tons of hay, worth \$12,788. In 2012 dollars, that comes to nearly \$340,000.

A **dog pound** was behind the hay scale.<sup>5</sup> It was removed in 1885. In years following, efforts to reestablish a pound met with strong opposition by abutters.<sup>30</sup>

Friend Court, accepted as a town road in 1860, runs alongside of the town hall property. It dead-ends at the edge of the 8<sup>th</sup> fairway of the Wenham Country Club. Up until 2009, there was a town water-tank tower by the street. Friend Court was named after John P. Friend, whose house, #16, was built in 1856.<sup>9, 33</sup>

In 1851, William H. Bryant opened a tavern in the **Parvern Building**, at the corner of Main and Friend. Two years later, he took down the building. In its place, he built the two-story **Bryant Hotel**, also called the "Green House." There was a low story ell, on the end of the building.

On the street-level there was a dining room, and the upper level was a small hall. The Crystal Lake Lodge of International Organization of Good Templars held their lodge meetings at the hall.<sup>2</sup>

A large barn was behind the hotel, (*about where the police station now is*), as were a carriage house, and shed.

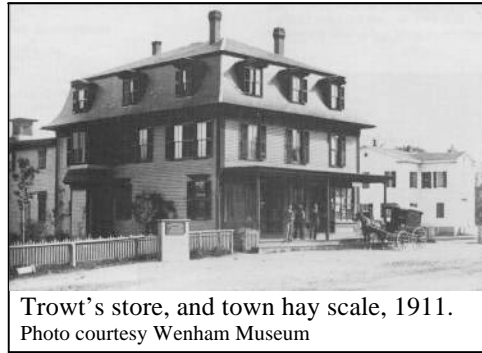
The Bryant Hotel and the old school house, which had been for several years used as a carriage house, burned in May, 1870.<sup>33</sup>

Before Friend Court was a town road, the original center school was behind the Bryant property.<sup>2</sup> (*See map on pg. 3.*)

In 1870, at the corner of Main and Friend, the **Union Block Building** was built by the Wenham Cooperative Union. This was an early version of we now call a shopping mall.<sup>2</sup> The Union Block, which had several shop stands, was started by Dr. J. L. Robinson, for "the purpose of cooperative trade, in carrying on the business of a country store." Anyone approved by the Board of Directors could become a Union member, by paying \$10, and signing a rental agreement.<sup>2</sup>

Groceries and medicines were available, at the Union Block. There also was a succession of apothecaries.

In 1873, George E. Morgan of Beverly opened an apothecary business, which he ran until 1875. He sold the business to Andrew Geyer of Ipswich. Soon afterwards, Geyer sold the business to Charles W. Batchelder, who moved the business to a refitted portion of his dry-goods store on Main Street. In 1877, Batchelder sold the apothecary business to William Benton, his clerk, who moved it back to the Union Block. In 1878, Benton sold the business to John C. Gray, who a year later, sold it to James H. Perkins, Jr. and Dr. Samuel E. Thayer. James H. Perkins, Jr., was a clerk at the store, as he had been for the previous owners. Dr. Thayer sold his share, after about a year, to James H. Perkins, Sr. In 1882, James H. Perkins, Jr. received his father's share of the business. In 1885, he moved the business back to the Charles W. Batchelder building.<sup>25</sup> From the late 1880s to about 1920, James Perkins, Jr., also ran the New England Telephone & Telegraph Co. office at 152 Main St.





Fire station built in 1964.  
Photo J. Hauck, 2011



Police station built in 2008.  
Photo J. Hauck, 2011.

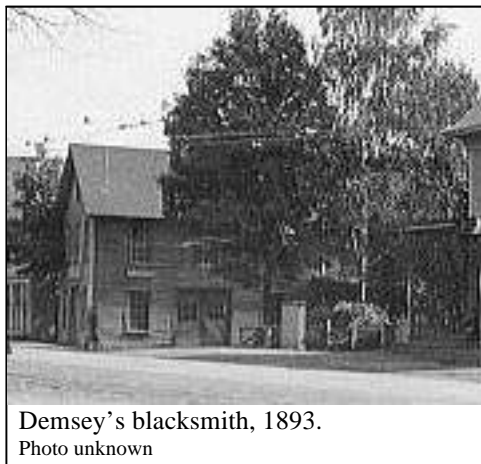
In 1880, at a public auctions, the Union Block, which no longer had any shops and vacant, was sold. It had been in business for less than nine years.<sup>2</sup> Andrew D. and William F. Trowt bought the property and opened **Trowt's grocery store**. In the early 1900s, the post office also was there. The grocery was run by the Trowt family, until 1943, when W. Arthur Trowt retired.

The Trowt building remained unoccupied, until 1955, when a developer acquired the property, and the building was razed. Also taken down was the former center school building Trowt had acquired and moved behind his store in 1911. However, the developer had some financial problems and was unable to build on the property. Four years later, 1959, the town purchased the land for \$35,200. The Village Improvement Society donated \$5,000.<sup>2</sup>

In 1964, a combination **police and fire station** was built at the corner of Friend and Main. The previous police station was 148 Main St.

In 2008, the police department obtained its own building, on Friend Court. It was built about where there was a large barn, up to 1869.

In 1959, the **police station** was at 144 Main. It remained there until 1961, when it was moved to the new fire station at the corner of Main Street and Friend Court.



Demsey's blacksmith, 1893.  
Photo unknown

Around 1844, at the site where the post office now stands, there was **Demsey's blacksmith shop**. It was on the Trowt lot, and faced Main Street. Henry H. Demsey was the smithy and post master.

From about 1860 to 1902 Wellington Pool had his undertaker business at Demsey's blacksmith shop.

In 1930. the blacksmith shop was taken down, and it was replaced by a small shoe shop, built for Charles Batchelder.

The Batchelder building, subsequently, was a drug store, run by James Perkins, Jr., until he moved to the shop at 152 Main St. <sup>2</sup> In 1937, the building was remodeled for use as the post office, apparently because Billy Porter's store and post office, located at 152 Main St., burned that year. A temporary post office was set up in the nearby legion hall. <sup>2</sup>

The **Wenham post office** has been kept in many buildings, during its more than two centuries of existence. The first was in the old tavern, the former residence of Rev. Joseph Gerrish, it stayed there until 1830, when it was moved to the tavern of Postmaster Lummus. In 1837, Postmaster John T. Dodge moved the post office to his wagon shop, where it continued, until 1846, when John A. Putnam moved it to his store.

When Henry Hobbs became the Postmaster, in 1870, for the first six months, the post office was kept in his harness shop; then, it was moved to Union block, where it remained for many years. In 1912, it was at Demsey's. As previously mentioned, it was for a short time, on Monument Street. <sup>16</sup>

The center section of Main Street was the first area to have crushed-stone sidewalks. The 1888 Annual Wenham Town Reports reported that, "Repairs made to side walk on Main and build sidewalk from H.H. Demsey shop to the brick house." (*Corner of Larch and Main.*)

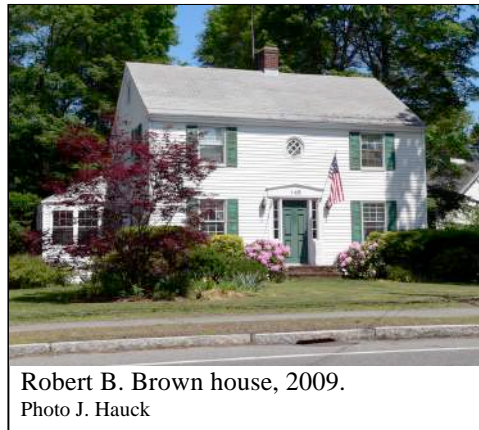
The 1897 Wenham Village Improvement Society records state that "the sidewalks in center of town have been improved. Most of work done by kindly abutters, but where there has been a great extent of sidewalk work has been done at the expense of the WVIS."



Post office, 1959, next to fire station.  
Photo Beverly Times.

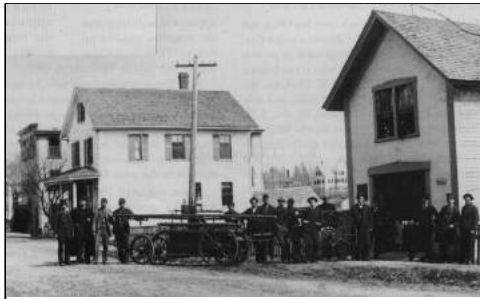


Post office building built in 1943.  
Photo J. Hauck



Robert B. Brown house, 2009.  
Photo J. Hauck





Enon One at fire station, 1895  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Fire House Antiques, 2009. Photo J. Hauck



148 Main St., 2011. Photo J. Hauck

**145 Main St.**, the Brown house, was built by Robert B. Brown, son of Jesse E. Brown, who lived at 143 Main St., in 1948. The house is on the site formerly occupied by the apothecary shop once located at the site of 151 Main St. and moved around 1875 to the site of 145 Main St.<sup>5</sup>

The small building was probably built in 1846 on the property of Henry Perkins, for Nathaniel Perkins, of Topsfield. He ran a grocery store from 1844 to 1846. By 1862, Calvin B. Dodge rented it for an apothecary shop, the first in Wenham, and sold in 1864 to Benjamin F. Johnson.<sup>16</sup>

The building was moved around 1873 to 149 Main St., where it remained until the 1930s. It was subsequently placed to the rear of Ralph Perkins' new house, at 149 Main St.<sup>8</sup>

Proctor Brown purchased the business in 1873. He operated it as an apothecary shop, until 1885. He had many competitors, the most successful being James H. Perkins Sr. (1879 - 1882) and his son James H. Perkins Jr. (1882 - mid-1900s), whose original establishment was across the street, in the Union Store and later in the building at 154 Main St., built by C.W. Batchelder.<sup>5</sup>

The building continued to be used for business, although not as an apothecary shop, for many years by

the Brown brothers.<sup>5</sup> The present house is in the colonial style.<sup>5</sup>

Next, to the post office, we come to **148 Main St.**, which in 2008, became Coast Home & Gift, which sells designer lamps, lighting, furniture and upholstery.

In 1901, the building was the Wenham Fire Company House, the town's third fire station. It was a 2-story structure, with two bays: One bay for Enon #1, and one for a new steam-powered pump. A water tank tower was erected, next to the building, to provide water for the steam engine.<sup>2</sup>

During the time that it was the Bromley antique shop, it still had the two large bay doors. When it became the lighting and furniture store, the door ways were changed to plate-glass windows.

Next door is **150 Main St.** Now an empty lot, it is where the Enon building stood, up to 1982.<sup>5</sup>

In 1849, Wenham built a fire station - the Enon Building - at 150 Main, to house its hand-operated, fire engine, Enon #1.<sup>2</sup>

After a new and larger fire station was erected next door, 148 Main, in 1849, the Enon Building had various tenants. From 1936 to 1945, the building was used as the Legion Hall. Later, it was successively used by the Wenham Veterans Association, the Ladies Auxiliary and the Wenham Water Department.<sup>5, 31</sup>

In 1982, the Wenham Historical Association and Museum acquired the Enon Building for \$1.00, on condition that it be moved from 150 Main, to the museum grounds.<sup>2</sup>

Originally, **Enon #1**, which the town bought in 1835, was stored on the common next to the Hearse House. When the Enon Building was moved, Enon #1 was stored at the rear of the fire station, in a special building designed for display purposes.<sup>2</sup> Town firemen built the exhibit shed, at no cost to the town. When Wenham built the police station in 2007, the Enon #1 shed was taken down. It was transferred to the American Society of Hand Fire Engine Museum, in Newbury, where it is temporarily being stored, until Wenham builds a new place to exhibit it.

Enon #1 is believed to be one of only three units, of its type, that still exist, and its condition is said to be unrivaled.<sup>28</sup>



Moving Enon 1 building, 1983.  
Photo Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle



Enon One storage shed, 1972.  
Photo 1972 Historic District Study



Stanton's store, 1897.  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Porter's store and post office, 1903.  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



152 Main St., 1972, remodeled to be a residence.. 1972 Historic District Study



152 Main St., dress shop and insurance agency, 2009. Photo J. Hauck

Let's next look at **152 Main St.** In 1897, Henry Batchelder, of Salem, built a grocery store for Fred P. Stanton, who lived on Friend Court. Stanton formerly had worked at the Trowt store and was a former Postmaster (1886). In addition Stanton was the clerk and treasurer for nearby the fire company (148 Main St.).

Later, William (*Billy*) Porter ran a small grocery store, on one side of the Stanton building. The post office, from 1912 to 1937, was on the other side.<sup>5</sup>

In 1937, the Stanton building burned, but was not totally destroyed. Porter rebuilt the store. In 1940, Porter's store was closed and the building was converted into a residence.<sup>5</sup> Prior to the fire, an apartment was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the building.

A small building next door, the fire house side, built in 1910, became the post office. Frank J. Lucey, who became the Postmaster in 1928, owned the building, which once was a shoe shop. It closed in 1959.

According to the 1972 Historic District Study, a 1952 photo, taken by Rev. John C. Mitchell, shows a gasoline pump at the front of the small building, next to the Stanton building.

In 1981, David S. Waters Insurance bought the Stanton property. The front was remodeled to look much like the original grocery store.

Waters had an office on one side, rented the shop on the other side, and there was a dwelling above.<sup>5</sup> For many years, up to 2009, when the business moved to Beverly, the Over the Rainbow dress and wed-

ding shop was next to the Waters Insurance office.

In 2010, Maria Lekkakos acquired the Stanton building and remodeled it. On the first floor is Grassy Roots, an organic café offering prepared meals and run by Jennifer Grammas. On the second floor is the Cake Creative Group, a marketing company, owned by Raneé Flynn.

Behind the Stanton building is 152r Main St. In 1998, the building was on Friend Court, just behind the town hall property. The town bought the property and sold the house, built about 1870, to David Waters, who moved it to its current location, and remodeled it.

Originally, Jerry Choate owned the Friend Court property, at 6 Friend Ct. At first, he used it his paint shop: he painted wagons and carriages. Later, he remodeled the shop to be his house.<sup>2</sup>

In 2009, Elissa (*Scott*) Della-Piana opened her Gallery Della-Piana, a studio for displaying fine art and illustrations of international artists, in the Choate building.

Charles W. Batchelder built **154 Main St.** about 1872 or later. There was a shop on the first floor and an apartment on the second floor. The appearance of the building at 154 Main St. is similar to 152 Main St. and 158 Main St.

Batchelder ran a dry goods, boots and shoes business, on the first floor. A few years later, he also had an apothecary section.

In 1877, he sold the business to his clerk, John Benton, who moved it to the Union Block. In 1879, Benton sold the business to John C. Gray, who that same year, sold it to James H. Perkins, Jr., a store clerk, and Dr. Samuel E. Thayer.<sup>16</sup> After a year, Dr. Thayer sold his share of the business to James



152r Main St., art studio, 2012  
Photo J. Hauck



154 Main St., 1972, Wenham Market.  
Photo 1972 Historic District Study



154 Main St., 2012, M. Lekkakos Salon,  
Spa & Boutique. Photo J. Hauck



Morocco leather factory, 1894.  
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum



Morocco building, 158 Main St. 1972.  
Photo 1972 Historic District Study



Morocco building, 158 Main St., 2012.  
Photo J. Hauck

H. Perkins, Sr. In 1882, James H. Perkins, Jr. took over the business. In 1885, he moved the business back to the Batchelder building. By this time, James' brother, Frank Perkins, owned the dry goods, boots and shoes business in the building.<sup>16, 25</sup>

In 1890, James Perkins, Jr. retired. Ever since, Wenham has not had an apothecary shop.

Something to keep in mind about apothecaries is that many of their medicinal offerings, cough medicine in particular, were heavily based on alcohol. A very important medicine in Wenham, which was a dry-town.

In the 1930s, the shop was owned by Andrew Schlechuber. He served ice cream, luncheons, teas, and candy. The ice cream came from his dairy on Maple Street. Andy built a porch, to the right hand side of the building, where customers could sit.

Between 1937 and 1938, the store was vacant, and except for a brief trial as a general grocery store by Alexander Begg, in 1940.

The store remained vacant, during World War 2, until John Chadder opened it as a market, Wenham Market, in 1945.<sup>4</sup> The market closed in 1983.

In 1999, there briefly was a Winfrey Candy store, at 154 Main. It moved to another part of town, the intersection of Cherry Street and Topsfield Road.

In 2007, the Maria Lekkakos Salon, Spa & Boutique opened at 154 Main. The owner is the former, 2004-5, Miss Massachusetts USA. There is an apartment on the second floor.

Sometime between 1884 and 1891, the Morocco factory, today **158 Main St.**, was built on land owned by Caroline Rogers, who lived at 168 Main St. It was a tanning factory, owned and run by Austin Patch and Amos Gould II.

The factory finished, colored and polished sheep skins, which were sent to Haverhill, for further manufacture. <sup>2</sup> (*Sheepskin Morocco was known as French Morocco, also saffian. It was used for luxury book binding.*)

Not only was there a lot of noise emanating from the factory, but also some strong odors from the solutions used in the tanning process.

The factory's construction was part of an effort to make Wenham an industrial town. Charles W. Batchelder, in 1884, inserted an article in the town warrant "to see what action the town will take to induce business to come here." Manufacturing businesses did not come, and Wenham has remained a residential town. <sup>2</sup>

At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Frank and James Perkins, Jr. acquired the building. The upper floor was removed, and the building became an apartment house. Ralph Perkins, son of Frank, and his wife, Emily, lived there, until 1939, when he built his house at 149 Main St.

In 2011, Maria Lekkakos bought 158 Main St. She had it refurbished for a business on the first floor and office space on the upper level. With this acquisition, Lekkakos owned 152, 154, and 158 Main St.

In late 2012, Mangia, a chain of pizza shops in Boston and south of Boston, opened at 158 Main St., offering pizzas, salads, sandwiches and pasta dishes for takeout or delivery.

Behind the Morocco building, there is an L-shaped, 2-story building, 162r Main Street, erected in 1970. There are apartments and businesses in the building. In 1994, it was acquired by Tom Ford and John Enos, and in 2012 by Sandra and David Cutler.

At one end of the building, in a single-story, brick section, there was for nearly a quarter of a century the Banbury Cross Children's Bookshop. It closed shop in 2012. The owner, Pat Purdy, made the decision after seeing customers buying habits increasingly shift to the Internet.

At the other end of the building is the Inside Out Health & Wellness Center. Various other businesses have occupied the building.



Back out on Main Street, there is a small building, which was erected in 1958. Not much to tell about **162 Main St.** Originally, it was a real estate office for Joseph Mazzaglia.

An 1886-7 Wenham Business Directory (see p. 24) showed there were about thirty-six businesses in the Center. They all now are gone, except for the post office. Since then, many shops and businesses opened in the center, only to close within several years.

However, with the coming of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the center has revived. Businesses now active include: dentist office, post office, cafe, art gallery, boutique, salon and spa, realty office, health business, accountant, lawyers, and nurses. Space is available for more shops.

Updated: 06-01-2014

## References

- 01 - Wenham Residential/Commercial Property Review, 2009
- 02 - "Wenham in Pictures & Prose," Wenham Historical Association & Museum, 1992
- 03- "Highlights of WVIS History," Wenham Village Improvement Society, Inc., 1975
- 04 - "Wenham Historic District Study, " 1972
- 05 - Rupert Lillie, notes about the history of Main St.
- 06 - "Pictorial Map of Wenham and Environs, 1776" Rupert B. Lillie, 1976
- 07 - Wenham Annual Town Records, 1800s
- 08 - Rupert B. Lillie, notes from his talks about the history of Main Street.
- 09 - Wenham Census, 1850
- 10 - "The History of Wenham Taverns," J.E. Hauck, 2007
- 11 - "Notes on Wenham History: 1643-1943," Cole, Adeline P., Wenham Historical Association. 1943.
- 12 - "Extracts from Wenham Town Records Referring to the Building and repairing of the Early Meeting Houses," Louis A. Dodge, Wenham Historical Association & Museum, 1959
- 13 - The History of Wenham, Civil and Ecclesiastical, from Its Settlement in 1639 to 18600, Myron O. Allen, M.D., Boston: Bazin & Chandler, 1860
- 14 - Reminiscences of this Main Street of Wenham, Sarah M. (Bradbury - Merrill ,c. 1900.
- 15 - Historical Outline First Church in Wenham, Congregational, Presented at the Annual Meeting, Feb. 11, 1969, Joseph Harrington, Jr.
- 16 - History of Salem, Chap XI, Wenham, by Sidney Perley, 1926.
- 17 - First Church in Wenham, 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Rupert B. Lillie, 1996.
- 18 - "The Old Jail," Joseph Harrington, Jr., 1972
- 19 - The Claflin-Richards House, Wenham, Massachusetts, Wenham Historical Association and Museum, Inc., 1979
- 20 - Personal contacts
- 21 - 2008 Wenham Annual Report
- 22 - "Records of the Soldiers' Monument Committee of the Town of Wenham, Massachusetts. 1878" Wellington Pool
- 23 - "Crystal Blocks of Yankee Coldness, The Development of the Massachusetts Ice Trade from Frederick Tudor to Wenham Lake, 1806-1886," Philip Chadwick Foster Smith
- 24 - Wenham, as it Used to Be. Dodge, Louis A., Wenham Historical Association & Museum, Wenham, MA, 1968.
- 25 - "History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with biographical sketches of many of its pioneers and prominent men (Volume 1", Duane Hamilton, edited by Hurd.
- 26 - 1911 Wenham Annual Town Report
- 27 - "The Two Taverns," Allen Peabody
- 28 - American Society of Hand Fire Engine Museum, Newbury, MA
- 29 - Massachusetts Dept. of Transportation
- 30 - 1973 Wenham Annual Town Report
- 31 - 1924 Wenham Annual Town Report
- 32 - 1983 Wenham Annual Town Report
- 33 - Reminiscences of this Main Street of Wenham, c. 1900. Sarah M. (Bradbury) Merrill (1845-1905)
- 34 - Pedestrian Traffic Light Installed, Salem Evening News, Mar. 3, 1969.
- 35 - Pedestrian traffic light installed, Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle, Mar. 12, 1969.

## Wenham Business Directory, 1886-7

### **Apothecary**

Perkins, James H. Jr., Main St., near Post Office

### **Blacksmiths**

Demsey, Henry H., Central Sq., opp. Post Office  
Dudley, Charles F., Central Sq.

### **Boarding House**

Patch, Mary G. (summer), Main St. corner of Larch

### **Boot and Shoe Dealer**

Perkins, James H. Jr., Main St., near Post Office

### **Boot and Shoe Peddler**

Merrill, Francis W., Main St., near Larch St.

### **Boot and Shoe Maker**

Webber, Edward M., Arbor St., near Porter St

### **Butchers**

Patch, Charles W., Main St., near Larch St.  
Perkins, Frank E., Main St., near Post Office  
Perkins, Frederick F., Main St., near Larch St.  
Perkins, James H., Main St., near Post Office¶

### **Carpenter**

Quimby, Ivory, Main St. near Perkins St.

### **Country Store**

Trowt, A.D. & W.F., Main St., corner of Friend Ct.

### **Dressmakers**

Moulton, Abbie J. Mrs., Friend Ct., near town hall  
Williams, Misses, Main St., corner of Perkins St.

### **Dry Goods**

Perkins, James H. Jr., Main St., near Post Office

### **Hairdresser**

Bernhardt, Heinrich, Main St., near Perkins St.

### **Harness Makers**

Hobbs, Henry, Central Sq.  
Young, Benjamin F., Central Sq.

### **Ice Dealer**

Kavanagh, Jeremiah, Main St., corner of Patch Ave.

### **Notes:**

The Post Office at the time was at Trowt store on the corner of Main St. and Friend Ct.  
At the time, there were 44 men who were shoemakers, most worked in Beverly

### **Insurance Agents**

Eaton, Henry L., Main St., near Perkins St.  
Trowt, William F., Central Sq.

### **Land Surveyor**

Eaton, Henry L., Main St., near Perkins St.

### **Market Gardeners**

Batchelder, Joseph L., Main St. near Wenham Lake  
Porter, Elbridge, Main St., near Cherry St.

### **Morocco Manufacturer**

Patch & Gould, Patch Ave., near Main St.

### **Nurses**

Trowt, A.D. & W.F., Central Sq.

### **Painter**

Dodge, Horace W., Friend Ct., near town hall

### **Physician**

Cowles, Frank A., Main St., near Larch St.

### **Post Office**

Main St., near Central Sq.

### **Teamster**

Kavanagh, Patrick H., Main St., near Perkins St.

### **Telephone Office**

New England Telephone & Telegraph Co.,  
Perkins, James H., Jr., Mgr, Main St., near Post  
Office

### **Undertaker**

Pool, Wellington, Main St., near Post Office

### **Variety Store**

Kavanagh, Kate M., Main St., at Post Office

### **Wheelwrights**

Clarke, Jason, Central Sq.  
Clarke, Samuel, Arbor St., near Central Sq.