

18 Neponset Avenue, Dorchester, MA 02122

Research and report by the Dorchester Historical Society
February 14, 2021



Questions

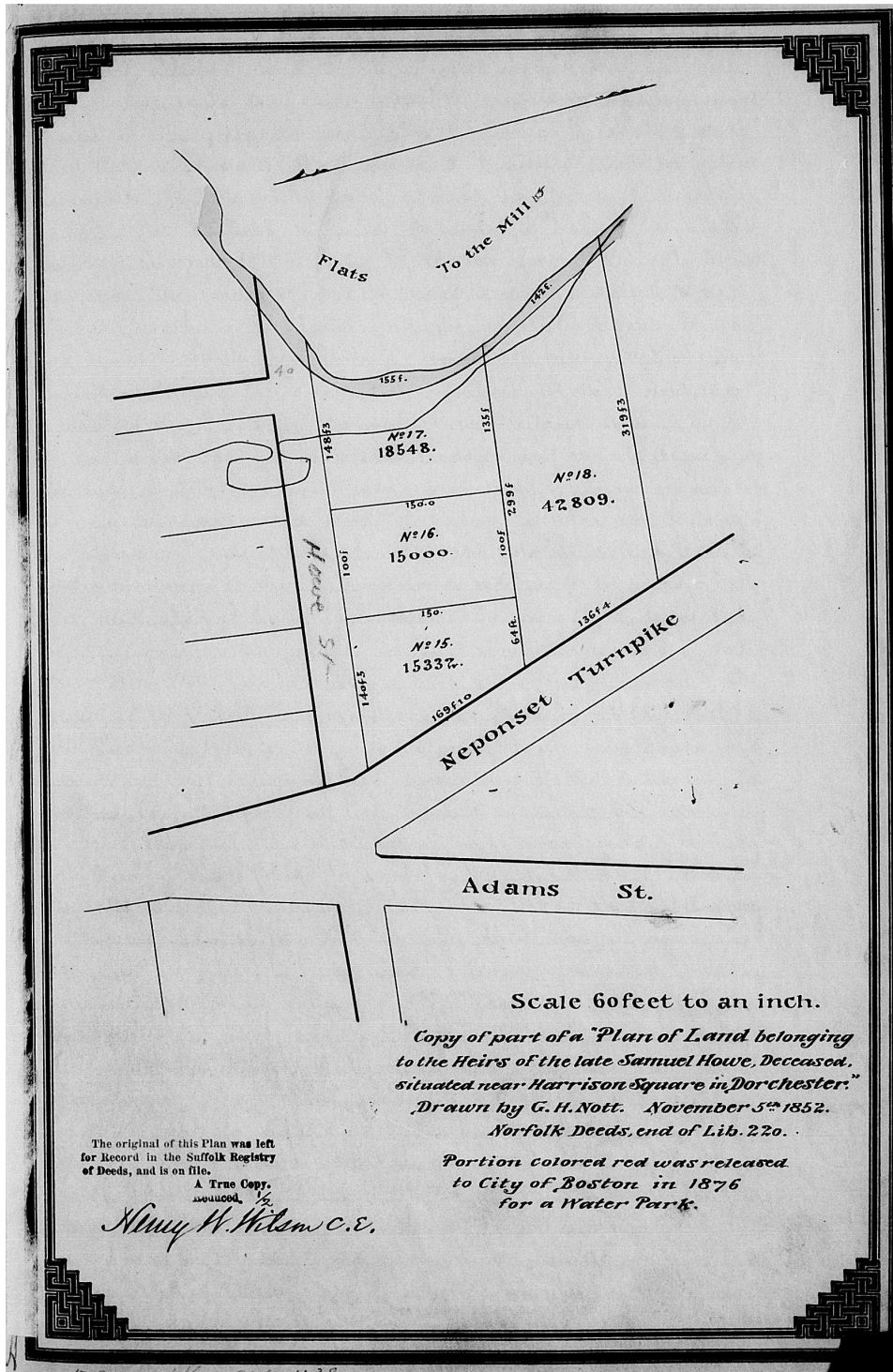
What is known about the original owner?

Did an architect design the house? If so, who was it and what is known about him/her?

Was the house part of a larger real estate development at the time it was built?

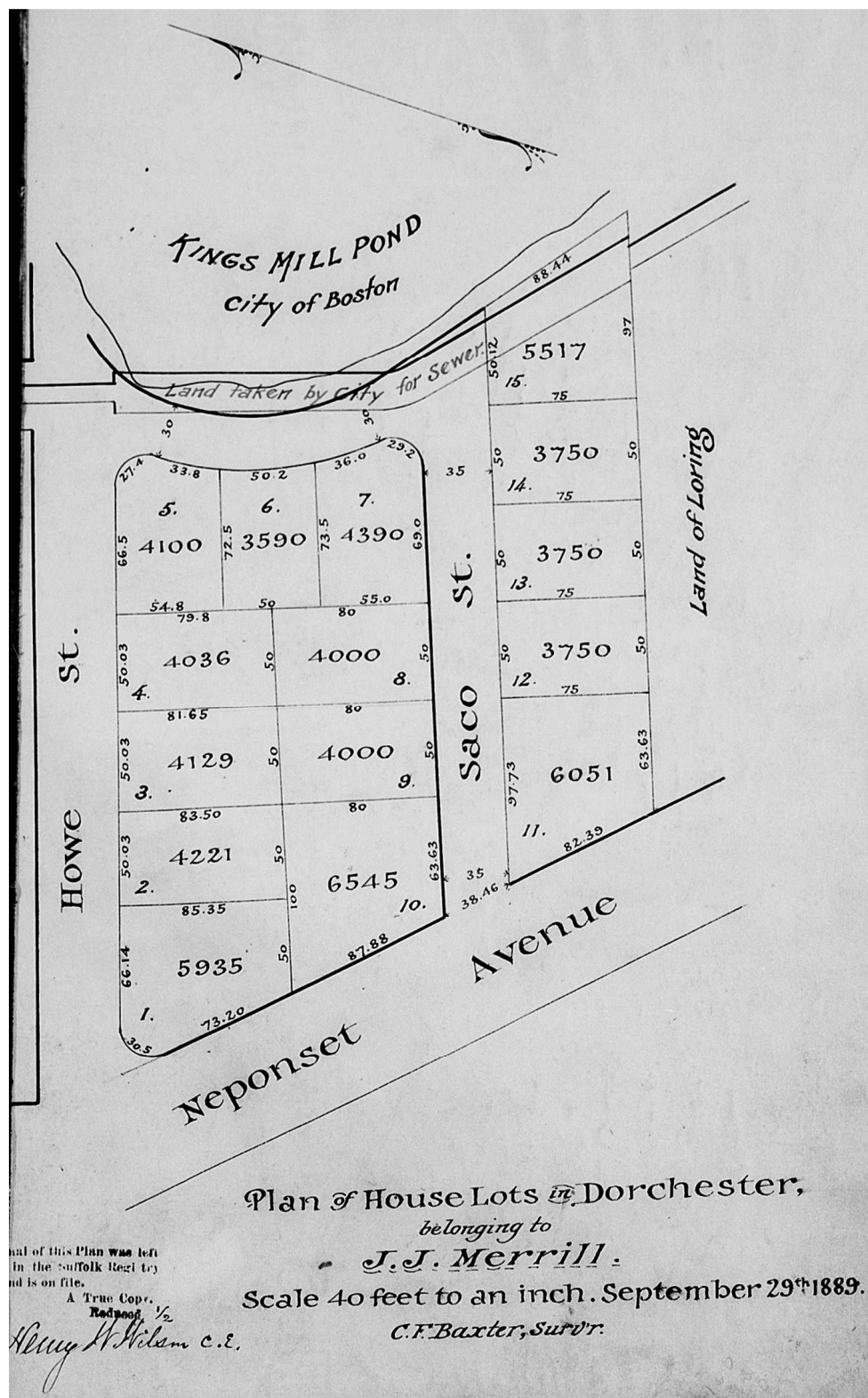
Who else has owned or lived in the house over the years and what is known about them?

Samuel Howe's estate was partitioned in 1853, and the real estate was passed on to his heirs based on a plan dated in 1852. Number 18 Neponset Avenue was later built on what was called lot 15.



Lot 15 is the lot facing Neponset Avenue on the corner of the side street (now Saco Street)

In 1888 Jonathan Howe sold lots 15, 16, 17 and 18 to John J. Merrill. Merrill sold lot 15 in May 1892 to William F. Worthen. By then, a new plan had been drawn, where the lot became number 11. The plan below was drawn September 29, 1889, showing the lots owned by Merrill.

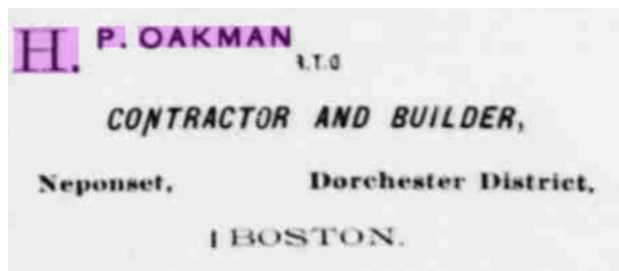


The deed included the following restriction. "No buildings but dwelling houses shall be erected on said lot worth not less than \$3,000 and shall be set back 17 feet from the line of Saco Street."

On June 4, 1896, William Worthen, as the owner, applied for a building permit to build a three-family house. The permit application named the architect: C. A. Russell and the builder: H. P. Oakman Sons, and provided the estimated cost to construct the house: \$5,000. The architect and the builder appear to have catered only to the local market. C. A. Russell was Cornelius A. Russell, who had an office Roxbury. There is more about him at the end of this report. We know that the builder lived on Oakman Street in Dorchester.

The entry for Oakman in the 1892 Boston Directory reads: Henry P. Oakman, carpenter, 1 Oakman, Nep. h. do. [ditto]

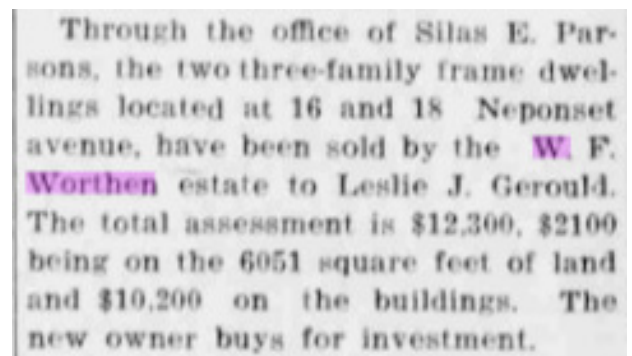
The Dorchester Beacon September 14, 1889



The Dorchester Beacon, July 20, 1901



The Dorchester Beacon July 26, 1919



Worthen built a second three-family building on the lot closer to the corner of Howe Street (now Saco Street) in 1901.

It appears that Worthen and his wife, Josie, never lived in the house. After William's death, the property was sold to Leslie J. Gerould, who also bought for investment according to an item in the Dorchester Beacon newspaper for July 26, 1919. Just prior to this sale, a new plan was drawn to divide the lot into two parcels. Number 18 Neponset Avenue became lot B on the new plan, while the three-family at the corner of Dorchester Avenue and Saco Street became lot A.



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From the 1933 atlas we have learned that the owner at that time was B. Connolly. Boston Resident Lists from various years show that it is likely that the house continued to be non-owner occupied, as B. Connolly does not appear as a resident at this property in those lists. From the research we have done, it appears that Charles and Edith were the first owners to live in the house. However, the Floods may have been only a conduit. On the same day they purchased the property from Gertrude Miller, they conveyed the property to John L. Porter and Estella Porter. Later deed transfers among the Porter and Flood families indicate the families were probably related.

On October 31, 1985, Charles W. Edith Flood a/k/a Edith M. Flood sold the property to Patrick Costello and Kathleen McDonough. Patrick continues to own the property

Selected years from the Boston Resident Lists

1930

Delia O'Brien, housewife, 42
Edward J. O'Brien, longshoreman, 43
Joseph A. Fitzgerald, engineer, 29
Mary Fitzgerald, housewife, 28
Harold E. Berrigan, steamfitter, 30

1933

Ellin [!] A. Alexander, housewife, 50
Henry Alexander, salesman, 31
Joseph J. Alexander, salesman, 50
Joseph A. Fitzgerald, engineer, 31
Mary C. Fitzgerald, housewife, 30
Edward J. O'Brien, laborer, 47
Mary H. O'Brien, housekeeper, 22
James F. Gorman, starter, 63
Lillian Gorman, housewife, 22
William T. Gorman, 24

1934

Ellen A. Alexander, housewife, 51
Henry Alexander, salesman, 32
Joseph J. Alexander, salesman, 51
Edward J. O'Brien, laborer, 48
Mary H. O'Brien, housekeeper, 23
Joseph A. Fitzgerald, engineer, 32
Mary C. Fitzgerald, housewife, 31

1940

Edward O'Brien, checker, 55
Mary O'Brien, waitress, 29

Joseph C. Fitzgerald, engineer, 38
Mary C. Fitzgerald, housewife, 38

1949

George M. Cribbie, retired, 76
George M. Cribbie, Jr., laborer, 44
Lilian Cribbie, housewife, 40
Mary Cribbie, housewife, 65
Eileen M. O'Brien, housewife, 26
John F. O'Brien, machinist 28
Mary O'Brien, waitress, 38
Catherine McCaffrey, housewife, 40
Edward P. McCaffrey, laborer, 45
John McCaffrey, clerk, 20

1950

Cribbie family, O'Brien family, McCaffrey family

1951

George W. Cribbie, machinist, 46
Lillian Cribbie, manager, 42
Charles W. Flood, lineman, 43, moved here in the past year from 16 Centre Street
Edith M. Flood, housewife, 36, moved here in the past year from 16 Centre Street
Catherine C. McCaffrey, housewife, 42
Edward P. McCaffrey, laborer, 49
John McCaffrey, clerk, 22
Patricia C. McCaffrey, clerk, 20

1958

the Flood family
the McCaffrey family
Estelle Porter

1960

Edith Marilyn Flood, housewife, b. 1914
James H. Flood, USAF, b. 1900
Joseph Flood, laborer, b. 1903
Catherine McCaffrey, housewife, b. 1908
Edward P. McCaffrey, laborer, b. 1903
John E. McCaffrey, clerk, b. 1928
Estelle M. Porter, clerk, b. 1993.

1970

Charles W. Flood, lineman, b. 1907

Edith Marilyn Flood, housewife, b. 1914
Ella L. Pitts, at home, b. 1891
Estelle Porter, clerk, b. 1898
Marie Thompson, clerk, b. 1907

Sources

Owners from atlases

1894 William F. Worthen owned a lot of 6,051 sf with no buildings on it
1898 William F. Worthen owned one house on the 6,051 sf lot, and that house is 18 Neponset Ave
1904 Wm F. Worthen owns two houses on a lot of 6,051 sf at the corner of Saco Street and Neponset Ave
1910 Wm F. Worthen owned two houses on a lot of 6,051 sf at the corner of Saco St and Neponset Ave
1918 Wm F. Worthen owned two houses on a lot of 6,051 sf at the corner of Saco St and Neponset Ave
1933 B. Connolly 2,315 sf lot with one house

Deeds

August 22, 1888 from Jonathan Howe to John J. Merrill 1836.438
lots numbered 15, 16, 17 and 18 on a plan of the Estate of Samuel Howe deceased drawn by G. H. Nott
Nov 5, 1852 Norfolk at the end of book 22
Partition of the estate at 220.19

May 24, 1892 from John J. Merrill to William F. Worthen 2061.468
lot 11 on Plan of House Lots in Dorchester, belonging to J. J. Merrill by C. F. Baxter, September 29, 1889
"No buildings but dwelling houses shall be erected on said lot worth not less than \$3,000 and shall be set back 17 feet from the line of Saco Street."

July 21, 1919 from Josie E. Worthen (heir to William Worthen's estate) to Leslie J. Gerould 4151.600

gap

June 10, 1949 from Gertrude C. Miller to Charles W. Flood and Edith M. Flood

June 10, 1949 from Charles W. Flood and Edith M. Flood to John L. Porter and Estella Porter 7109.420

June 2, 1977 from Estella Porter a/k/a Estelle Porter a/k/a to Estella Porter and Charles W. Flood 8958.334

January 24, 1979 from Charles W. Flood to Charles W. Flood and Edith Flood a/k/a Edith M. Flood
9414.429

October 31, 1985 from Charles W. Flood and Edith Flood a/k/a Edith M. Flood to Patrick Costello and
Kathleen McDonough 12021.71

October 22, 2014 from Patrick Costello and Kathleen McDonough to Patrick Costello 53616.235
Lot B on a plan by C. J. Wallace and R. A. Doane, July 21, 1919 4156.248

Building permit June 4, 1896

owner: Wm F. Worthen

architect C. A. Russell

builder: H. P. Oakman Sons

3-fam; 24 feet wide and 54 feet deep

estimated cost to build \$5,000

1917 repair work as a result of a fire in basement

1929 suite 2 Mrs. Ellen Perry was found in an unconscious condition in bathroom sitting on the toilet seat
with one end of a metal gas hose in her mouth and the other attached to a nearby bracket fixture with the
gas flowing from it. Dr. Ballou of Neponset Ave. was notified, also the Police who removed her to the
Psychopathic Hospital for observation. Note: another document specifically mentions that it was
illuminating gas.

Ancestry.com

US Census

living at 28 Quincy Street

1900 William F. Worthen, 52, real estate dealer

Josie E. Worthen, 50

Boston Directory

1892

William F. Worthen, h. 28 Quincy

1893

William F. Worthen, h. 28 Quincy, Roxbury

1892

Cornelius A. Russell, 46 1/2 Warren, Rox., bds 68 Dudley

Biography of Architect Cornelius A. Russell



Cornelius A. Russell Personal Data Cornelius A. Russell was born on October 20, 1855, in Nova Scotia. He married on July 10, 1894, in Chicago, to Alice Burgoyne (b. 1861-1863 in OH), daughter of Erastus McNeill Burgoyne and his wife, Sarah Cummins. Cornelius Russell died on September 15, 1927, in Boston, killed in an automobile accident.

Cornelius Russell came to the United States in the early 1870s and received his citizenship in October of 1887. When he first came to Boston, he was a carpenter. He may have worked as a piano maker in the early 1880s, but was again a carpenter by 1885, in partnership with Alexander B. Pinkham. He continued as a carpenter in 1889, but by 1890 had established himself as an architect with offices in Roxbury. By the mid 1890s, Fred Newton Russell, probably his nephew, had joined his office as a draftsman. In about 1903, they formed the firm of C. A. and F. N. Russell, architects and real estate developers. They remained partners until about 1918. Most of their work appears to have been residential buildings in the Roxbury area, where they offices were located. By 1919, he was a sole practitioner, working out of his home in Jamaica Plain