

24 Richview Street, Dorchester, MA 02124

Research and report by Kayla Skillin, Dorchester Historical Society
January 13, 2021

Questions to be answered:

- 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?
- Who else has owned or lived in the house over the years and what is known about them?
- What is the architectural style of the house?



The House

The house at 24 Richview Street was built in 1892; the application for a building permit was made in December of 1891 and the building inspector, Hartford Davenport, signed off on its completion on May 23, 1892. The inspector's report [attachment 1] indicates that the house was designed by well-known Boston architect, Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., and built by James Pope. James Pope built many other houses in the Cedar Grove/Lower Mills area and he made his own home at 1084 Adams Street (which he also built).

The architect, Edwin J. Lewis, Jr. (photograph below), made his own home at 597 Adams Street in Dorchester; he was practically a neighbor of the first owner of 24 Richview Street, J. Frank Howland. Lewis had graduated from M.I.T. in 1881 and began working for the



renowned Boston architectural firm, Peabody and Stearns, the same firm that designed the Dorchester Heights Monument and the Boston Custom House Tower. However, by the time 24 Richview Street was built in 1892, he had gone out on his own and was practicing out of his own office at 9 Park Street in Boston. Although Lewis is credited with the design of over forty churches in the United States, he also designed a number of residential properties in Dorchester. Most of his designs had a very identifiable style: Shingle Style; 24 Richview Street is no exception.

The Shingle Style was a popular architectural design in the late 19th century. Developed in New England, the Shingle Style is distinct but does show signs of influence from other styles, especially the Queen Anne style with its asymmetrical facades, porches, and wooden shingles, all elements that can be seen on 24 Richview Street. The sloping roof juxtaposed with the gable dormer of 24 Richview Street were purposefully contrasting elements that added to the complexity of the design. Because of their complex design elements, Shingle Style homes usually cost more to construct and therefore were not typically built for the average homeowner.

The Residents

The original owner of the land where 24 Richview Street was built was a man named J. [Joseph] Frank Howland. He owned a large area of land that includes all of present-day Richview Street. In fact, the area became known as “Howland Hill” in the later 1890s and early 1900s. In 1892, when 24 Richview Street was built, Richview Street was not a circular street as it is now; the south side of Richview Street was called “Englewood Street” [attachment 2]. The neighborhood was still being developed and there was a substantial amount of open land, presumably with a very rural feel to it, even though Dorchester had already been annexed by a bustling Boston in 1870.

Joseph Frank Howland, who went by J. Frank, was originally from New Bedford, Massachusetts. When he was a teenager, he moved with his family to California for his father’s business. After only a year, he moved back to Boston and began working at the Walter Baker Chocolate Factory in Dorchester’s Lower Mills. As the story goes, Howland was such a good worker that he caught the attention of the owner and manager of the company, Henry L. Pierce. Pierce was so impressed with Howland that over the years he made Howland his “confidential clerk” and often gave him the responsibility of running the company while he was abroad. When the Walter Baker Company was reorganized as a corporation in 1895, Howland became the president and manager of the company. Howland kept the job until 1903, when his ill health forced him into retirement.



J. FRANK HOWLAND,
Born, New Bedford, Mass., January 22, 1845.
President Walter Baker & Co.

Although J. Frank owned "Howland Hill," he never lived there. In fact, 24 Richview Street would not be owner-occupied for the first 25 years of its existence. Howland lived in a large mansion at 690 Adams Street, where the Adams Street Branch of the Boston Public Library is located today. As an interesting aside, the Howland Estate was later broken up into smaller lots with new houses, and one of those houses became the family home of Mayor John B. Hynes. In 1950, when the library trustees were searching for a location for a new branch, this was the reason that particular location was chosen.

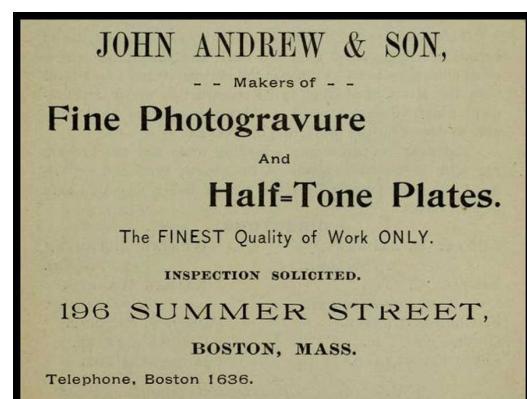


The first tenants of 24 Richview Street were the Barnes family. Although only men of voting age appeared in the tax records at the time, it is assumed that Charles and his whole family lived in the house: his wife, Celia, and children Clarence, Mary, Marion, and Edwin. Originally from Rhode Island, Charles H. Barnes was a Boston merchant. He was frequently found in the advertisement sections of the newspapers selling fine furniture, but what made him unique was that he was one of the first merchants to offer payment plans to his customers. However, Charles did not stay in Boston much longer after moving to 24 Richview Street; by 1895 he and his family were living in Los Angeles.

The house was listed as vacant in the 1894 tax records, but by 1895, it was occupied again, this time by the Miller family: George W. Miller, his wife Ellen, and six daughters: Isabella, Emma, Mary, Alice, Lizzie, and Bertha. George was listed as living at 24 Richview Street in the 1895 tax record; it indicates that he had moved from Port Allerton (in

Hull, MA) and his occupation was listed as "cordage," which most likely means he worked in the shipbuilding industry (cordage are cords or ropes, often referring to the rigging on a ship). The Millers stayed at Richview Street until at least 1899. In 1900, another tenant, William H. Henay moved in, but only for a year. Henay was a relatively well-known fresco painter; he decorated the interiors of many churches across the country. In 1902, the longest-term tenants moved in—the Bowker family.

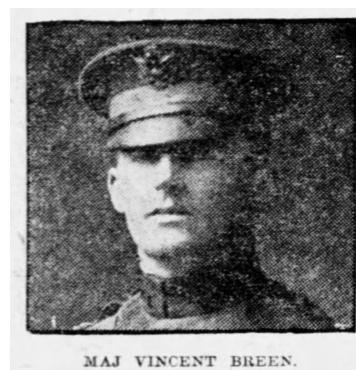
Walter H. Bowker (and presumably his two young children, Marion (9) and Harold (3)), moved to Richview Street from the Port Norfolk neighborhood in late 1900. Walter's life does not appear to have been easy before his move; his 5 year-old-son died of appendicitis in 1898, and 6 months later, his wife, Etta, died at only 34 years old from kidney disease. The newly widowed, 34-year-old Bowker was listed as a "wood engraver." By 1902, Walter had married again, to Ella F. Leavitt, who also lived in Dorchester. In the 1910 census, Walter, Ella, and his children Marion and Harold were listed at 24 Richview Street; they also had a 23-year-old



servant living with them, Louise Beck. Walter was listed as a "photo-engraver," but by 1915, the city directories started listing his occupation as "president and manager" of John Andrew & Son, a Boston engraving company. The Bowkers stayed at 24 Richview Street until at least 1917, during which time their daughter, Marion, would meet and marry the boy next door (technically the boy across the street, at 5 Richview). In June 1915, Marion married Charles F. Archer, whose father owned a drug store in Pierce Square in Dorchester; the Bowkers hosted the reception at 24 Richview Street. The Bowkers left Dorchester a few years later and perhaps they were forced to move because the Howland Estate was stuck in probate; J. Frank Howland had died in 1914 and his wife, Helen, in 1915. The devisees of the Howland estate had started to sell off the various Howland properties in Dorchester, and in 1917, William B. Brooks, another Richview Street resident and the administrator of the J. Frank Howland Estate, sold 24 Richview Street to Charles H. Gosse.

In June of 1917, Charles H. Gosse purchased the property at 24 Richview Street. Gosse was an investment buyer; he might have been referred to as a "developer" in today's language. He owned the property for only a year, and it is probable that during this time there was some work done on the house because by July of 1918, Gosse had sold the house and stated that the house had recently had "modern improvements" (although building permits do not exist to confirm this).

Francis M. Shea purchased 24 Richview Street in July 1918, and he and his wife, Alice (Hall), and their six children moved in right away; Francis listed 24 Richview Street as his residence on his World War I draft card in September 1918. Francis was a manager at an express (shipping) company and Alice was a housewife, their children were: Francis (1909), Paul (1911), Marion (1913), twins Lawrence and Gertrude (1916), and William (1918). By 1921, the Shea family was complete with the addition of another child, a daughter named Alice. The Sheas raised their children at 24 Richview Street and stayed there throughout the 1920s and 1930s. However, it appears as though the family came upon hard times during the Great Depression and in 1934, Francis defaulted on his mortgage. The property came under the ownership of the Trimount Co-operative Bank until they sold it to Peter (Vincent) and Mary Breen in November of 1936.



Major Peter Vincent Breen, who went by Vincent, and his wife, Mary (Rotch), purchased 24 Richview in 1936 and moved there with their seven children. Major Breen had served on the Mexican border in 1916 during the Mexican Revolution and then served in Europe during World War I as a captain in the 101st Infantry. He was made a major in the Organized Reserves (today's U.S. Army Reserve) in 1925. In 1927, Mechanic Arts High School (formerly on Belvidere Street in the Back Bay) was the last boys high school in Boston to begin military drill, and Major Vincent Breen was hired to take charge of that drill. By 1938, when he moved to 24 Richview Street, he was a Junior

Master in Military Drill for the Department of Physical Education in the Boston Public Schools; Mary was a housewife. The Breens stayed at 24 Richview Street for over 30 years. Vincent died in 1967, but Mary stayed until she sold the house to Raymond and Bernadette "Peachie" Fitzgerald.

Raymond "Ray" and Bernadette "Peachie" (Doherty)

Fitzgerald moved to 24 Richview Street in 1975 with their four sons: David, Steph, Peter, and Brian. Ray and Peachie had married in 1964; their wedding announcement appeared in the *Boston Globe* with Peachie's photo (right). Before moving to Richview Street, they had been living on Bowman Street in the Neponset section of Dorchester. Ray owned a bar in Jamaica Plain called the "Jamaica Pub," which he had bought from the previous owners in 1968. He owned the pub with another man, Peter Petro (see liquor license record card below). The last city directory for Boston that is available online is from 1981, and in that directory, Ray still owned the bar. However, Ray's obituary stated that he was a member of the "DC35 Local #391," which is an affiliate of the Painters and Allied Trades Union, and perhaps indicates he may have made a career change later in life. Ray and Peachie stayed at 24 Richview Street until Ray's death in 2005. In 2013, Peachie sold the house to its current owners, her son and daughter-in-law, Stephen and Therese Fitzgerald.



YEAR	NAME OF LICENSEES	HOME ADDRESSES	FILED	SENT TO POLICE	BACK FROM POLICE	GRANTED	REJECTED	RECONSIDER AND GRANTED
1968	Transferred from corp. to partnership Petro, Peter R. 10 Bradlee court, HP Fitzgerald, Raymond H. Jr. 18 Bowman st., Dor.	APPRVD ABC	8/21/68			9/5/68		
1969	Peter R. Petro Fitzgerald, Raymond H., Jr. 18 Bowman St., Dor. Pet. to enlarge premises-no addtl entrances	APPRVD ABC	12/10/68		tavall	12/23/68		
		APPROVED ABC	12/2/68			1/16/69		
	Transferred to: 144 South Street, Inc., Raymond H. Fitzgerald, Jr. mgr.	APPRVD ABC	3/7/69			3/26/69		
1970	144 South Street, Inc.	APPRVD ABC	11/17/69		tavall	12/8/69		
	Fitzgerald, Raymond H. Jr. mgr. 18 Bowman st., Dorc.							
1971	144 South Street, Inc. Fitzgerald, Raymond H., Jr., Mgr. 18 Bowman St., Dorl		11/18/70		tavall	12/15/70		

Title search:

Year	Book/ Page	
2013 November	52421 /56	Bernadette A. Fitzgerald to Stephen and Therese Fitzgerald
1975 November	8832/ 505	Mary Breen to Raymond H. Fitzgerald, Jr. and Bernadette A. Fitzgerald
1936 November	5630/ 175	Trimount Co-Operative Bank to Peter V. and Mary Breen
1934 July	5468/ 186	Francis M. Shea to Trimount Co-Operative Bank FORECLOSURE DEED
1918 July	4091/ 510	Charles H. Gosse to Francis M. Shea
1917 June	4044/ 221	William B. Brooks (administrator of will of Joseph Francis Howland) to Charles H. Gosse (Probate: 1914 #166192)
1886 March	1713/ 570	Pierce Trustees et al to J. Frank Howland

Plans:

- 1887: 3285/160
- 1892: 3932/316

Attachments:

1. City of Boston, Building Inspector's Report, 1892, volume 45, page 103
2. "Plan of House Lots in Dorchester, near Cedar Grove Station owned by J. Frank Howland"

References:

"About Town," *Swanton Courier*, November 29, 1889, p. 3.

"Advertisement for The Boston Furniture, Co.," *The Boston Globe*, May 28, 1892, p. 1.

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City of Boston Archives. Building Inspector reports. Collection 5410.016.

<https://archives.cityofboston.gov/repositories/2/resources/903>

City of Boston Archives. Tax records. Collection 2100.004.

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2576539?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

City of Boston. Election Department. Lists of residents: <https://guides.bpl.org/residentslists>

City of Boston. Inspectional Services Division. Permit images.

<https://scerisecm.boston.gov/ScerIS/CmPublic/#/Home>

"City to Build Library at Hynes' Homestead," *The Boston Globe*, April 4, 1950, p. 25.

"J. Frank Howland Dead," *The Fall River Daily Evening News*, July 23, 1914, p. 3.

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Men of Massachusetts: a collection of portraits of representative men in business and professional life in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. 1903. Boston: The Club. p. 288.

“Plan of House Lots in Dorchester, near Cedar Grove Station owned by J. Frank Howland,” April 1887, Suffolk County Registry of Deeds, book 3285, page 161.

“Raymond H. ‘Ray’ Fitzgerald, Jr.,” 2005,
<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/bostonglobe/obituary.aspx?n=raymond-h-fitzgerald-ray&pid=15453818>

Sammarco, Anthony Mitchell. 1995. *Dorchester*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub, p. 100.

Shingle Style (1880-1900). (2020, March 06).
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DEPARTMENT
FOR THE
INSPECTION OF BUILDINGS.

Boston, May 23rd 1892.

To the
INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS.

Sir: I herewith submit a final report on the Wooden building erected under

Permit No. 1927 of the year 1891.
 Location? Richview Green Hillsdale St
 Name of Owner? J. Frank Howland
 " " Architect? Edwin J. Lewis Jr
 " " Builder? James Pope
 Size of lot, feet front? 80 feet rear? 80 feet deep? 100 feet wide? 39 stories high? 2
 " " building, feet front? 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet rear? 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep? 42 feet high?
 Distance back from line of street? 30' Size of ell, feet long? Pitch Material of roofing? Shingles
 Style of roof, main Building? " " ell?
 Means of access to roof? None Foundation laid on rock, timber, earth, or piles? Earth Material of foundation? Limerick Gabble
 Thickness of foundation? 24" Length of piles? Laid with? Dry mortar
 No. rows of piles? Distances from centres to centres?
 Cellar bottom concreted or paved? Concreted Mudsill? Material of?
 Size of mudsill? Thickness of underpinning? 16" Material of Block Piles cut at grade?
 Piles capped with?

SPECIAL (WOODEN BUILDING IN LIMITS).

Material of external covering? Roofing?
 Height to highest point of roof? Conform to conditions of permit?

WALLS, Etc.

No. of brick walls? None Solid or vaulted? Thickness of walls?
 How laid? X Carried through roof? X Covered with?
 Headers every ninth course? Corbelled? Walls tied with? X

PIERS.

No. of piers? 6 How capped? Girders Size? 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ Distance apart? 6'

FRAME.

Size of sills? 6x8 Posts? 4x8 No. of posts? 9 Material of posts? Spruce
 Distance apart? 6' to 15' Size of girders? 8x10 How supported? Lulls & Pairs
 Floor timbers, framed into or rest on girts or girders, 1st floor Laid on ; 2d Laid on ; 3d Laid on ; 4th ; 5th ;
 First floor, how supported? Sill & Girders
 Size of girts? 4x8 Plates? 4x4 Somers or enterties? 7x10 Rafters? 2x8-20 apiece
 " " braces? 2x4 Wall studs? 2x4 Distance on centres? 16" Partition heads, size of? 3x4
 Partition heads, material of? Ladd Pine Partitions, head and foot? Yes Truss over door openings? Yes
 Floor timbers, size of, 1st story, 2x9 ; 2d 2x8 ; 3d 2x8 ; 4th ; 5th ;
 " " distance on centres, 1st story, 16" ; 2d 16" ; 3d 16" ; 4th ; 5th ;
 Headers and trimmers, size of, 1st story, 4x9 ; 2d 4x8 ; 3d 4x8 ; 4th ; 5th ;
 " " " bolted, hung with iron, or tenoned? Tenoned

GENERAL PARTICULARS.

No. of operatives, 1st story ; 2d ; 3d ; 4th ; 5th
 " " stairways? 2 Straight or winding? Landing - Stairway
 Material of stairways? Wood Enclosed in brick walls? No Thickness of same? X
 External means of egress? Door
 Are there any means of escape from roof to roof of adjoining buildings? No
 No. of hoistways or elevators? None How protected? X
 What are the facilities for extinguishment of fire on the premises? None

Chimneys plastered inside? Yes Outside? Yes Quality of bricks? Good
 Trusses in roof, how constructed? None How many support roof? X Length of chord? X
 Of what material are they built? X

Size of chord?	Built or solid?	Size of bolts?	Size of principals and heads?
Size of purlines?		Length of purlines?	
Foot of principals, how framed and secured to chord?			
Size of strut?	How framed?		
Size of foot pieces and material of same?		Diameter?	
Length of strain bolts?			
Floor or ceiling timbers framed into or rest on top of chord?			
No. of bay windows on 1st story	1	; 2d	; 3d
Walls over openings, how supported?	Girts		; 4th
			; 5th

STEAM BOILERS, ENGINES, Etc.

No. of engines?	Size of engines?	No. of horse power each?
" " boilers?	" " boilers?	" " "
Upright, horizontal, sectional, or tubular?		
Weight of engines, each?		Weight of boilers, each?
In what part of the building are they placed?		Purpose?
If they rest upon flooring, what is the construction of same?		
What is the air space above?		Flooring over boiler, how protected?
Material of boiler room?		Of doors and shutters to same?

FURNACES, Etc.

No. of furnaces?	One	Portable or brick?	Portable	Purpose?	Heating
Where placed?	Cellar	Rest on floorings?	No	Air space above?	1 7/8
How set?	On brick			Below?	X
Material of smoke-pipe?	Gal. iron 7"	How protected?	X		
Thickness of shell of chimney flue?	Lined	Thimbles properly set?	Yes		
Smoke-pipe, distance from ceiling?	13"	How carried?	Self-supporting		
Shield over furnace?	None	Hot-air pipes, single or double?	Double 7" to 10"		
Register boxes cased?	X	Space between collars and hot-air pipes on all sides?	1"		
Hot-air pipes passing through floors and partitions, how protected?	Tinned				
Steam	" " " " "				

RANGES, Etc.

Brick or portable?	Supported on trimmer arch?	Thickness of arch?
Brick or stone hearths?	Thickness of hearth-stone?	Grates properly set?
Fire-places properly built?	None	Recess around smoke-pipe, size of?

Ever complained of No Nature of complaint? X

Complaint removed when? X
 General condition? No. 1.
 Completed May 23rd 1892 Estimated cost of building (without land) \$ 4,700.

REMARKS.

*Application made Dec 28. 1891
 Permit granted Dec 30. 1891*

Hartford Davenport

Assistant Ins.

EDITOR OF BUILDING

SPECIMEN OF
PROOF

foot (normal)	10.6
feet (most)	2.5

is from line of descent?

6

and our rock, timber, parts,
mineralization)

Spotted or paved

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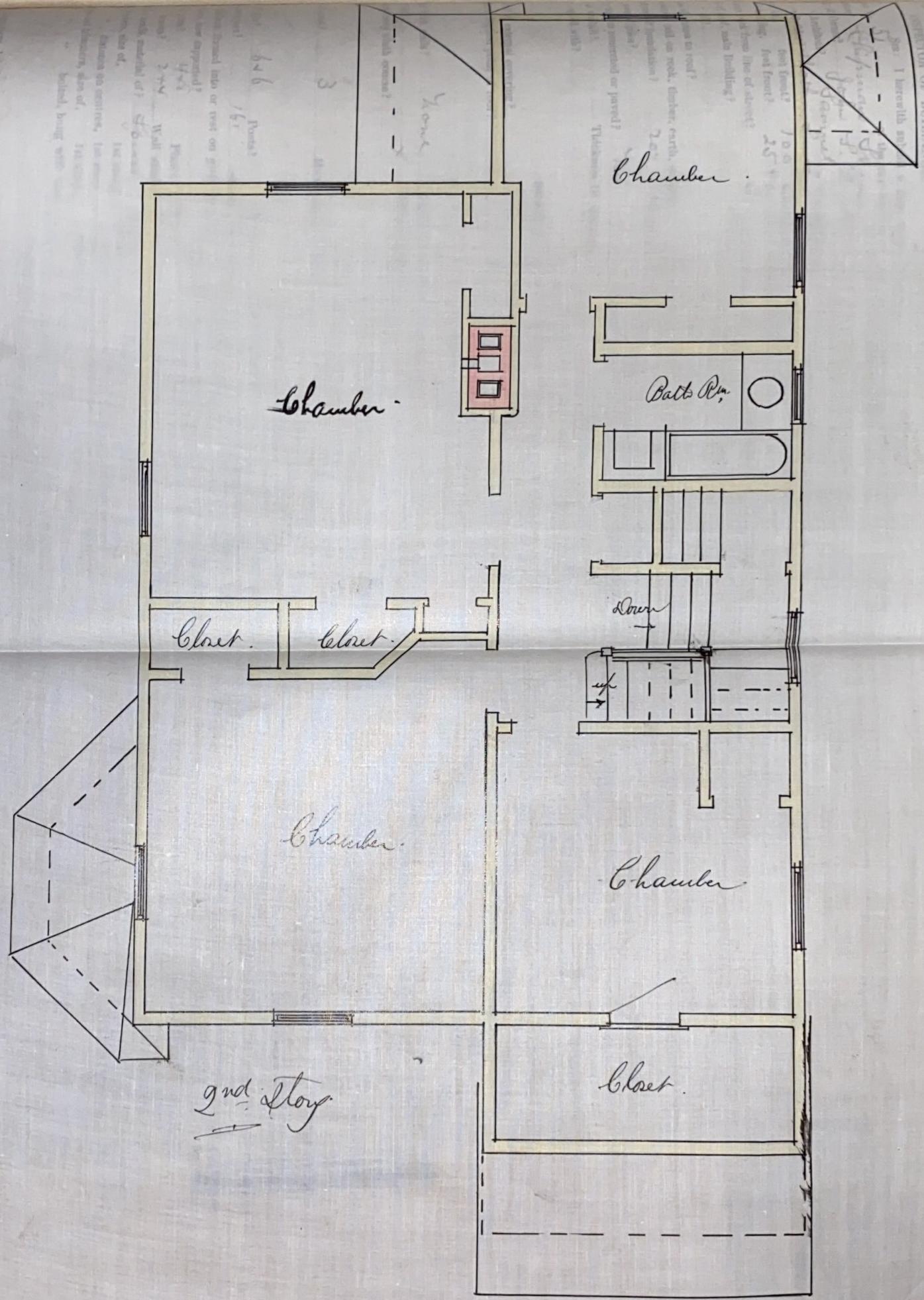
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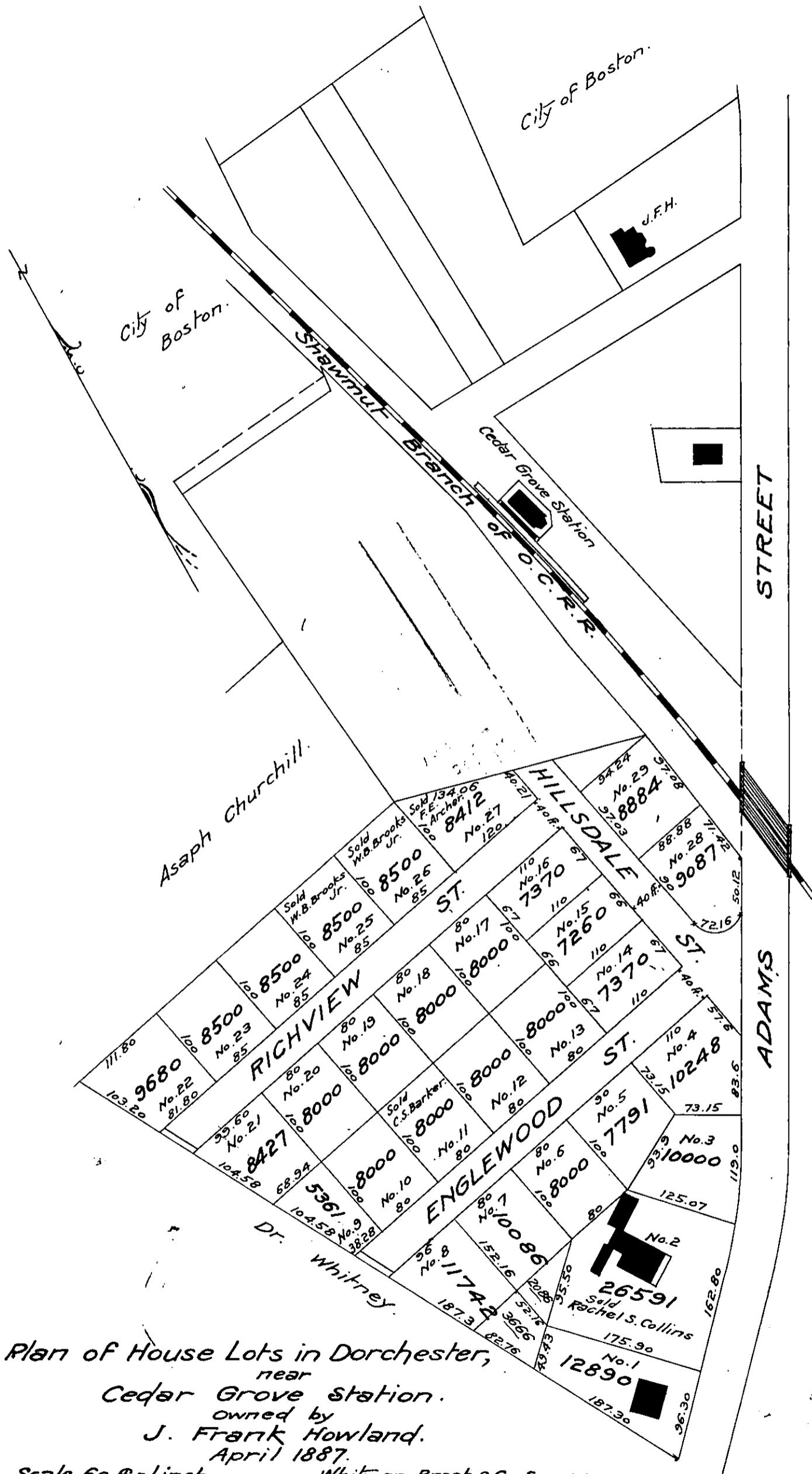
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Feb. 1. 1892. J. Frank Howland

Richview Dr. n Hillesdale





Plan of House Lots in Dorchester,
near
Cedar Grove station.

Cedar Grove Station.

owned by
J. Frank Howland.
April 1887.

Scale, 60 ft. = 1 inch.

*Whitman, Breck & Co., Surveyors,
Boston.*

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