

**THE**

**ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

**Quincy, Massachusetts**

ADAM 9

~~10179~~

AUTHOR

Wilhelmina S. Harris

TITLE Furnishings Report on the  
Old House

DATE

ISSUED TO

6/19/75

JAY BAKER

7/12/76

Henry Hornick


2/15/79

JAY BAKER

Property of  
The National Park Service

ADAM 9

~~Quincy, Mass.  
Nov 24, 1970~~



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THIS IS THE FURNISHINGS  
REPORT  
OF THE OLD HOUSE

THE ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE  
QUINCY, MASSACHUSETTS

VOLUME IX

PREPARED BY  
WILHELMINA S. HARRIS  
SUPERINTENDENT

THE ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

DATE: 1966 - 1968





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THE GROUNDS AT THE ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The history of the grounds at the Adams National Historic Site begins about 1634. So strong is the Adams association one can easily forget that the property was owned by several other individuals. This brief outline of the early years will recall several "figures of the past."

The first land grant from the Massachusetts Bay Colony was given to two prominent citizens, William Coddington and Edmund Quincy, in 1634 or 35. This was one of the largest grants -- consisting of 26 miles of shore-line property and extending inland as far as Stony Field. Soon after the boundaries of this property were established, Edmund Quincy died. His widow and William Coddington divided the large tract of land -- Coddington's share apparently included the National Site. According to the late Ezekial Sargent's research, William Coddington was forced to leave the Colony because of his radical religious views. Another wealthy and prominent Boston merchant William Tyng purchased a large part of the Coddington property in 1639 and 1641.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Tyng divided his newly purchased property into two farms. In 1647 he leased one section of 45 acres to John Gurney for 10 years -- the other section to Gregory Belcher. Our interest is in the Gurney section since the National Site was a part of it. William Tyng died in

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(1) Suffolk County Registry of Deeds, State House, Boston, Mass.



January, 1652-53 before Mr. Gurney's lease expired. The Tyng daughters who inherited their father's estate continued the lease and renewed it for another 10 years; however, Mr. Gurney, for reasons not clear, abandoned the farm and left Braintree before his second 10-year lease expired.

From 1662 to 1710 we have available no clear documented record of ownership. In 1710 the property was listed as being in the possession of Nathaniel Spear.<sup>2</sup> At this time there was no mention of buildings on the Spear property. However, in 1717 when N. Spear sold about 10 acres to Thomas Crosby, the deed included a dwelling house, a barn and corn house. This is important because it is the first documented evidence of any building on the property.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Crosby, the new owner, was an innkeeper who had an inn in the vicinity of the bend of Adams Street near what is now the Eventide Home. In 1719 Crosby purchased additional land from Nathaniel Spear.<sup>4</sup> In 1730 he sold  $11\frac{1}{2}$  acres to Leonard Vassall, a wealthy Boston gentleman who had extensive plantations in the West Indies.<sup>5</sup>

The Vassall land was divided by the country road -- the larger part of

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- (2) Suffolk County Registry, Libro 29, Folio 13.
  - (3) Ibid., Libro 44, Folio 128.
  - (4) Ibid., Libro 44, Folio 128 - 155.
  - (5) Ibid., Libro 44, Folio 131.



the tract of land (about 7 acres)<sup>6</sup> was on the north side of the country road. It was on the north side that Leonard Vassall built his house -- now the Adams National Historic Site. In those early years no owner seems to have held the property long enough to leave a great mark upon it. Leonard Vassall died in 1737, only 7 years after he purchased the land. He left his widow Phebe conditional life estate including the house, orchard and garden. The condition was that she remain an Episcopalian and unmarried. Phebe soon lost ownership for she married Thomas Graves of Charlestown within a year after Leonard Vassall's death.<sup>7</sup> By the terms of Vassall's will his youngest daughter Anna inherited the property upon her mother's remarriage. Upon Anna's marriage to John Borland they took up residence in Braintree. John Borland was elected constable in 1756-57.<sup>8</sup> Their taxable property in 1761 included this house and land. How many years after that they resided in Braintree is not clear.

After John Borland's death in 1775, Anna V. Borland and three children went to Bristol, England to live.<sup>9</sup> During these Revolutionary War years this absentee estate was rented to various people, none of whom made any

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(6) The Worthington Survey shows that there were 14 acres purchased from Leonard Vassall Borland on the north side of the country road instead of the seven usually quoted.

(7) Braintree Town Records, Marriages, p. 752 and 753.

(8) Braintree Town Records, p. 347, 354.

(9) James H. Stark, The Loyalists of Massachusetts and the Other Side of the American Revolution. Boston, 1910, p. 251.





special repairs or improvements to the property.

In 1779 Richard Cranch, John Adams' brother-in-law, was appointed agent for the estate. His first inventory listed the Braintree property as:

"A Dwelling house, Outhouses, Stables, Garden and Farm situated in Braintree containing 45 acres of Pasture, Tillage, Mow and Plowland."

The following year The Boston Independent Chronicle described the property as:

"A Very genteel Dwelling House Barn and Coach House with garden, planted with a great variety of Fruit trees, an orchard and about 40 acres of land lately belonging to John Borland, Esq. deceased."<sup>10</sup>

Anna Borland and the three children returned from England in 1783 at which time she and her children relinquished their rights to the Braintree property to her son Leonard Vassall Borland who offered it for sale.<sup>11</sup> It was on December 27, 1783 that Royall Tyler, a Boston lawyer, made an initial payment on the purchase of the Coddington - Quincy - Tyng - Spear - Crosby - Vassall - Borland property. It was in contemplation of his marriage to the young Abigail Adams. At the time of the Tyler purchase the garden was listed as "containing the best collection of fruit in town."<sup>12</sup> Pending a clear title, Tyler built a windmill

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(10) Boston Independent Chronicle, 20 April, 1780.

(11) Suffolk County Registry of Deeds, Libro 142, Folio 4, 53.

(12) Abigail Adams to John Adams, Braintree, 27 Dec. 1783, Adams Papers.







(its exact location unknown) and enlarged the farmhouse to include an office.<sup>13</sup> Complications overtook the dashing, young Tyler. He contracted for repairs and improvements to such an extent that Mary Cranch wrote Abigail Adams in England:

"You would be surprised to hear how much he owes to labourers in this Town -- above two hundred pounds I am told."<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Tyler was now the prospective owner of a house and a broken engagement with the lovely, young, accomplished Abigail Adams -- soon to be the wife of Colonel William Smith!! Tyler met this emergency by forfeiting his down payment, abandoning the whole deal and moving to New York. During the five months in New York he wrote a comedy and it was produced with much success. It was the first American comedy ever staged.<sup>15</sup> With the departure of Royall Tyler, Leonard Vassall Borland offered the property for sale for a second time. Mary Cranch and Cotton Tufts immediately notified John and Abigail Adams who purchased it in 1787 while they were still in England.<sup>16</sup> John Adams paid 600 pounds for the house and around 75 acres of land, most of it to the South of the house.

The east boundary today is completely changed from that of 1787. It is hard for us to visualize the property John Adams bought as extending as

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(13) Illustration 547, Malcom Drawing - 1797.

(14) Mary Cranch to Abigail Adams, September 28, 1785.

(15) Royall Tyler, Tansell, p. 23.

(16) Suffolk County Registry of Deeds, Libro 161, Folio 123.







ADAMS SEAT IN QUINCY ~ 1787



far to the East as the railroad bed and the Borland barn standing on what later became Newport Avenue. The south side has remained virtually the same. The west side extended wedge-shaped to approximately Douse Road beyond the Shell gasoline station (1970).<sup>17</sup> There was a large formal garden laid out in English style with four rectangular beds edged with English boxwood on the west side beside the house. The long walks between the hedges were graveled. There were fruit trees in the garden such as apple, pear, plum, peach, grape vines and grass plots intersperced with couslep, daffey and collombine. At the west side of the garden near the present stately old walnut tree was a summer house. John Adams must have torn it down for John Quincy Adams wrote from Berlin in 1798 in which he referred to the place "where the ruinous old Summer House used to stand." Sometime during the John Adams era beside the summer house a toolshed was built and was still being used when John Quincy Adams recorded on September 13, 1843 that he had "replaced a hinge" on the door since some tools had disappeared.

Directly behind the Old House -- about where the pump is now -- stood a farmhouse dating back prior to the John Adams era. It was 54' X 15½', divided into three parts. The section next to the garden, 22'7" X 15½', was used as a wash house; the center section was a woodshed and the east end section was an office room. There was a clothes yard near the wash

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(17) Illustration 548, Drawing of John Adams property.



house. Abigail Adams wrote to her sister saying: "I have 2 cloase lines both up. I wish when you see Mrs. Porter ask her to have one of them put up." (away).<sup>18</sup> The office section had been enlarged by Royall Tyler to serve as his office. From the Malcom drawing it can be noted that there was attic space for additional rooms.<sup>19</sup>

John Adams and Abigail Adams returned from England in 1787 coming straight to their new home. Abigail wept at the smallness of the house. John Adams did not appear discouraged that there were no buildings adequate for the agricultural pursuits he wanted after his long political career.

The first farm building he added was the corn crib. Built in 1793, it served three generations of Adams family.<sup>20</sup> From Abigail's letters the crib was described as made of wood and placed in line with the farmhouse on the east lawn. This crib contained a storage room which Abigail called her "granary chamber"<sup>21</sup> where in 1798 she stored bedsteads not in use.

Also on the east side of the Old House stood the Borland barn and coach house. It was near the country road which was disturbing to Mary Cranch.

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(18) The present clothes yard (1970) could be the original one spoken of by Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch on the 5 Oct., 1797. New Letters, p. 206.

(19) Malcom Drawing was shown on page 819.

(20) Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, 29 Dec. 1792, Adams Papers.

(21) Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 17 July 1798, New Letters, p. 206.



In a letter to Abigail Adams on September 30, 1787 she said:

"the barn Stands in a bad place -- you will I think move it back."

John Adams began discussion of a new barn in 1797, but plans were not executed until two years later. At that same time it was decided, against President Adams' better judgment, to separate the barn and stable. In a letter to Abigail Adams on December 25, 1798 John Adams cautioned, "The Barn must not be a monument of Floppery." The result was two buildings in the approximate same location as the Borland building. The barn stood at the far corner of Adams Street and what is now the railroad or M.B.T.A. property. On June 15, 1799 Abigail Adams wrote her son Thomas Boylston Adams:

"I have not any subject of consequence to communicate except ... the rising of our two buildings ... they look stately. B. Adams says if anybody should ask who owns the best house in Quincy ... he shall reply the President's horses."

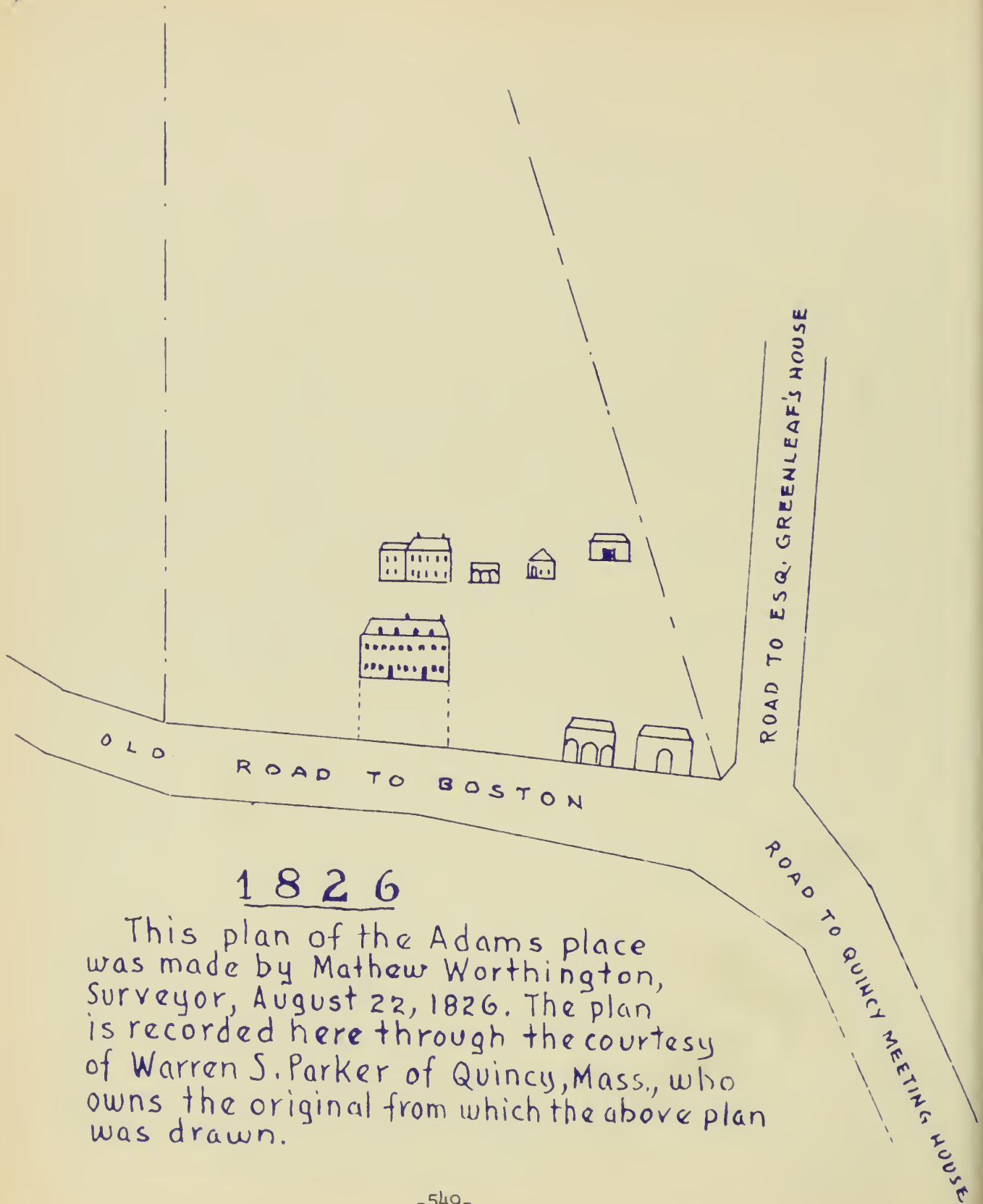
In April of 1798 Abigail Adams decided to enlarge the farmhouse. She changed the shape of the roof so that she had four "upright chambers" instead of two. To make it more conveniently serve other purposes, she built a separate woodshed building on the east side. The old wood house section became a farm kitchen and the three windows replaced the three doors. The farmhouse now had 23 windows and 552 squares of glass.<sup>22</sup>

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(22) "A Valuation of Houses and Lands belonging to the Hon. John Adams" Tax survey of 1798. Microfilm reel 607.







1826

This plan of the Adams place was made by Mathew Worthington, Surveyor, August 22, 1826. The plan is recorded here through the courtesy of Warren S. Parker of Quincy, Mass., who owns the original from which the above plan was drawn.



The new woodshed was placed in line with the farmhouse and corncrib.<sup>23</sup>  
 In this woodshed she used the same type three decorative arches as shown in the Malcom drawing of the farmhouse. Indeed, Abigail Adams could have used the old arches and doors since they were not used in the kitchen. Abigail Adams' woodshed of 1799 exists today on the east boundary beside the service gate.

Another building erected on the grounds during Abigail and John Adams' regime was the cider house. Just when it was built cannot be pinpointed. In John Adams' diary for September 8, 1796 he noted that his farm hands were preparing "the Cyder Mill, Press and Casks" and "piking apples and making Cyder." Since Abigail Adams wrote John Adams on October 24, 1799,

"...they expect to finish the cider house and Barn within the course of a week after -- except the clabarding..."

it is my opinion that this 1799 building replaced an older cider house just as the barn of 1799 replaced an older barn of the same type. Years later Mr. Eaton in making a survey of the property recorded the dimensions of the cider house as 56' X 20½'. The style of architecture varied within several drawings -- some show it L-shaped and others rectangular. One year there were approximately fifty barrels of cider made from the

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(23) Illustration 549 -- The Worthington drawing was made in 1826 showing all buildings erected by Abigail Adams and John Adams.



Adams' apple trees. Abigail Adams wrote Cotton Tufts on November 13, 1799:

"the President hopes you will not omit to have 8 or 9 Barrels of good late made cider, put up in the cellar for his own particular use..."

Some of the cider was sold, but several sturdy barrels were stored in the cellar of the house for John Adams' personal use. In the preparation of the cider the aroma from the cider press gave a pleasant character to the orchard. Apple trees were of special interest to him as evidenced by a note to Abigail to paint his apple trees with tar to discourage tent caterpillars. There has always been a variety of apples in the orchard -- bittersweet Winesap, Russet, golden Delicious, the fragrant Macintosh and the Gravenstein.

John Adams was a farmer at heart. He expressed such sentiments in much of his correspondence with Abigail. While Vice-President he wrote her from Philadelphia:

"I begin now to think all the time lost that is not employed in Farming. Innocent, healthy, gay elegant Amusement! enchanting Employment! How my Imagination roves over my rocky mountains and through my brushy meadows."<sup>24</sup>

Two years later on August 19 Vice-President John Adams had "Ten Yoke of Oxen and twelve hands ploughing in the meadow..." Again on September 8

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(24) John Adams to Abigail Adams, January 22, 1794.





Plan of Land in Quincy, Mass  
 President John Adams Homestead  
 Scale 150 feet to an inch  
 February 21, 1962  
 Ernest W Branch Inc, Civil Engineers  
 11 Adams Building, Quincy

NOTE: Part of Land purchased by Annabelle  
 John Adams from Leonard Vassall Building  
 and Sarah Barland, September 26, 1787,  
 and compiled from surveys made by  
 S.D. Eaton, Surveyor dated June 1849



that same year he had Sullivan hauling seaweed, Billings and Prince laying a wall, Briesler and James picking apples and making cider and Stetson widening the brook. So delighted with the peace and tranquility which the farm afforded him, he decided to name his country place "Peacefield" in commemoration of the Peace Treaty which he had negotiated and signed in 1783.

When in Quincy, John Adams rode his horse Cleopatria over the hills and fields he loved so much. He guided every phase of farming and enjoyed the peace of being a gentleman farmer.<sup>25</sup> Though plagued with illness from time to time, Abigail supervised the making of butter, cheese, jelly and jam. She enjoyed the fragrance of the spring buds in the garden. She had only a small yard in front but she planted lilac and sweet bay shrubs, tenderly cared for the white York rosebush she had brought from England and put out here and there such flowers as four o'clock, nasturtiums, larkspur and daffodils. Those duties with her letters to keep John Quincy Adams in touch with home had priority over other responsibilities. After Abigail Adams' death, John Adams made no further changes in the grounds.

As much as John Adams liked farming, he also enjoyed the bloom of the peach and cherry trees. On May 1, 1814 he wrote to his grandson-in-law

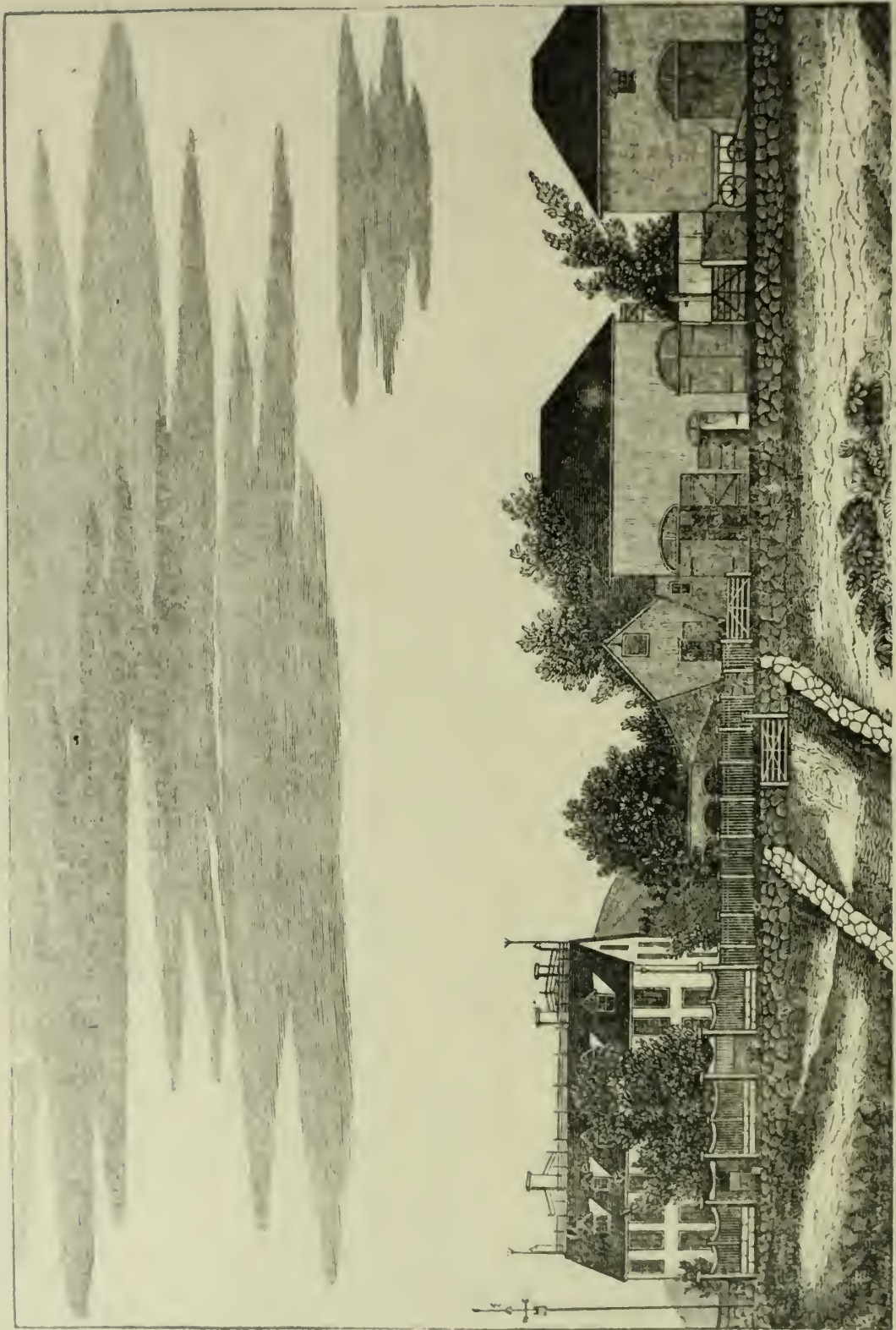
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(25) Illustration 550 -- Drawing of all the Vassall land.









THE ADAMS SEAT, IN QUINCY, MASSACHUSETTS. 1878

J. P. DeWindt:

"You would be pleased to see the pritty Figure your Peach Trees and Cherry Trees make in my Garden. Their buds are at least a fortnight more forward than any of our native Trees. I hope you will contrive to come and see them next fall..."

His granddaughter Caroline Smith DeWindt had sent the trees and a side of bacon to him after she and her husband had brought their baby daughter Elizabeth to visit the old President.

On July 4, 1826 when the old President died, the estate entered a new phase. The emphasis on agricultural pursuits was on the decline.

President John Quincy Adams was no farmer, but he had filial devotion to keep the place as his parents had done for thirty-eight years. Being President of the United States at the time and his finances very limited, the maintenance of the property presented a real problem. Charles Francis Adams assisted his father with the grounds and house<sup>26</sup> but was not officially responsible until February 27, 1832 when he received an appointment from his father to serve as Superintendent of all affairs in Quincy. John Quincy Adams paid his son 5 percent "upon all Receipts from that Quarter." This period of the Old House and grounds must be treated as a joint effort of President John Quincy Adams and his son Charles Francis.

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(26) Illustration 551 is the appearance of the house and grounds some two years after President John Quincy Adams inherited it upon the death of President John Adams.



President John Quincy Adams was absorbed in the scientific study of growing trees from acorns, nuts or seed. The year after the death of John Adams he established a pattern of scientific experimentation which was to occupy him each summer for the next twenty years. He had a nursery of sorts in the old summer house cellar, the foundations of which provided an enclosure for his little seedlings. There he planted shag-bark walnuts, oaks, horse chestnuts and fruit trees. The only change in the formal west garden was to fence a piece of it off up in the northwest corner to serve as a tree nursery. He wrote:

"I have laid off a small strip of land from the north west corner of the garden for a nursery of trees. It has been fenced off, and a gate has been opened into it from the garden. This afternoon I planted in it twenty rows of Acorns, of English, and of Black, White, and grey oaks -- Beech, Plum and Cherry Stones, Apple, and Pear Seeds, Whole Peaches and Apples, and Horse Chestnuts -- Also 10 Pennsylvania Walnuts..."<sup>27</sup>

Charles Francis Adams was no experimentalist in the orchard such as his father, but he carried on the tradition of tree planting and was constantly improving the property. As early as April 5, 1828 he wrote in his diary that he went to Quincy to plant "Spanish Chestnuts belonging to my Father. We put down between forty and fifty of them, ... and two cherries." Just ten days later Charles Francis Adams planted in "one

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(27) John Quincy Adams' Diary, October 3, 1827.



row (40) forty English Oaks, ...fifty-three Elms of the third year growth... in the inclosure next to the house called the clothes yard<sup>28</sup> sowed some shell-backs and pecan nuts as an experiment." Again two years later on September 22, 1830 he purchased fruit trees from the nursery of Mr. Warren.

John Quincy Adams' favorites were the oak trees, especially the white oak. To him the white oak indicated the sturdy growth of New England. He had a seal cut using the oak leaf and acorn as the design. He attached this seal (now in the Memorial Room of the Old House) to his watch and used it to seal most of his letters in later life. The motto (Alteri Seculo) on the seal is from Cicero. On August 14, 1830 John Quincy Adams wrote in his memoirs:

"'He plants trees,' says Statius in his Synephebi, 'for the benefit of another century; for what purpose, if the next century were not something to him? The diligent husbandman, then, shall plant trees upon which his own eyes shall never see a berry; and shall not a great man plant laws, institutions, a commonwealth? I have had my share in planting laws and institutions according to the measure of my ability and opportunities. I would willingly have had more. My leisure is not imposed upon me by the will of higher powers, to which I cheerfully submit, and I plant trees for the benefit of the next age, and of which my own eyes will never behold a berry. To raise forest-trees requires the concurrence of two generations; and even of my lately planted nuts, seeds, and Stones, I may never taste the fruit. Serit arbores quae alteri seculo prosint.'"

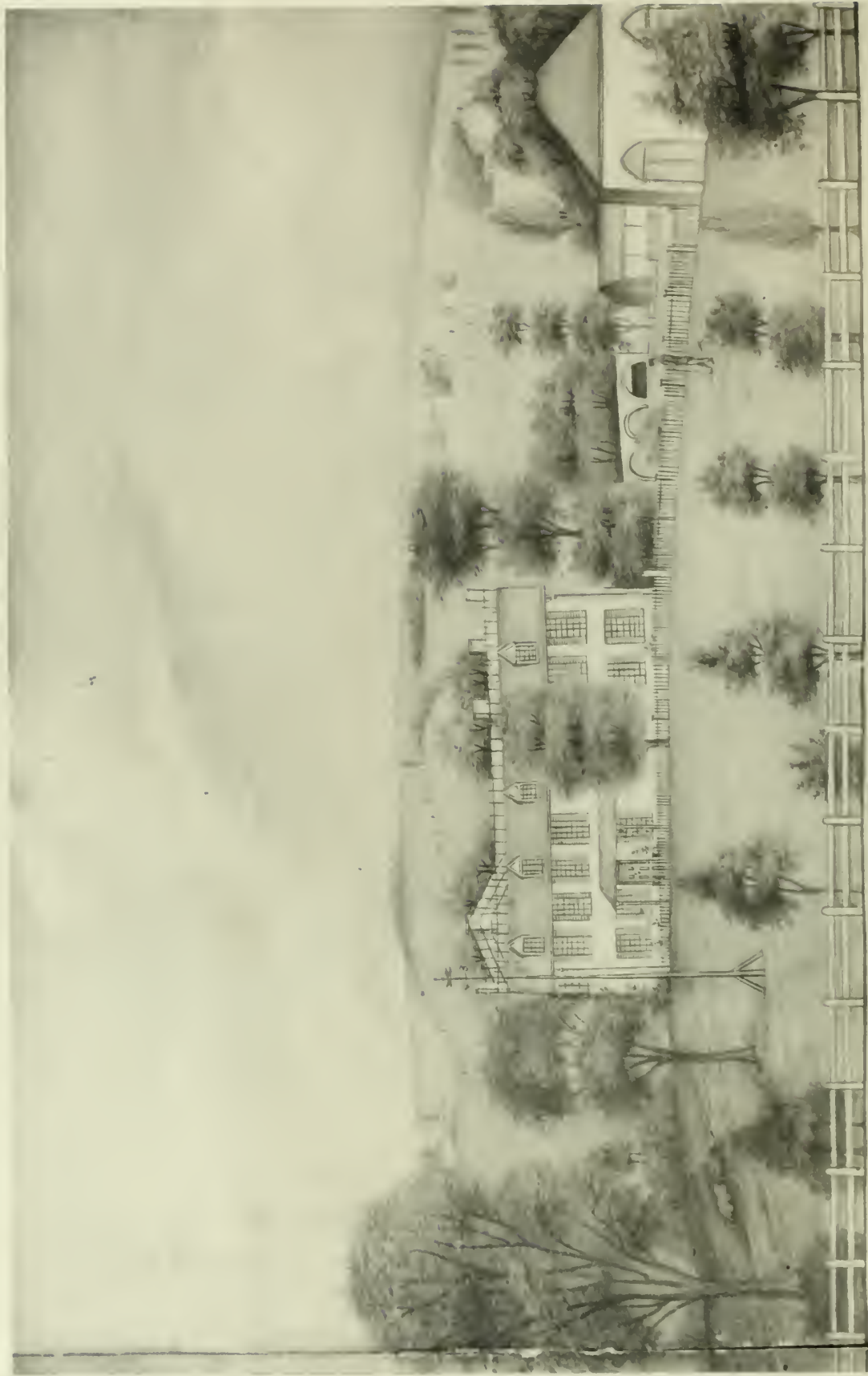
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(28) The clothes yard was first mentioned by Abigail Adams in a letter to Mary Cranch, 5 October, 1797.









View of the building at the Government House at Albany, N.Y.

Like his mother, Abigail, John Quincy Adams was especially fond of cherries and strawberries as evidenced by the following entries in his diary in 1835:

June 24, "I have six cherry trees well laden with fruit, of which the birds have already taken a large portion..."

June 25, "We had this day a tart from the cherries of our garden, and a dish of very good strawberries, the first ripe..."

No one grew strawberries to the extent Charles Francis Adams did. Besides having plenty for his family, he gave a strawberry party to which he invited his friends of Quincy. He recorded "The fruit was good and we got along on the whole amazingly well..."<sup>29</sup>

John Adams had been interested in hay fields, growing corn and vegetables such as cabbages, onions, potatoes, squash and apricots, but had few flowers. His son John Quincy Adams was not interested in hay fields and growing corn, but had an absorbing interest in horticulture. Of flowers he had this to say -- August 24, 1835:

"...I cannot bring myself to take much interest in flowers, because they pass off and perish leaving nothing behind -- but the trees now seemingly as evanescent as the petal of a rose, and which yet one hundred years hence will bear delicious fruit, or afford a shelter and shade of after ages of men; these yield me delight..."

Information about John Quincy Adams' interest in horticulture spread.

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(29) Illustration 552 is a drawing made in 1837 five years after Charles Francis Adams assumed the superintendency of the property.



Niles' National Register of 31 August 1839 carried an article entitled A Distinguished Horticulturist. In this article is the following quote:

"The public labors of ex-president Adams, give the public some idea of the variety of his pursuits and studies -- but a visit to his residence only, can show how the venerable ex-president spends his leisure. ... The orchard proper and garden, contain some descriptions of fruit no where else to be found in the country... New descriptions of apples, pears, etc. have been introduced by grafting..."

Although John Quincy Adams did not make changes in the farm buildings on the east side, he did lay out a "Seminary," as he called it, in this area. He wrote a description of this project on September 13, 1839. The "Seminary" consisted of eight rows each having eight rings which he started in 1834. The first row was next to the Adams Street fence and each year after that he added a row. The rings were four feet in diameter and three feet deep filled with manure and fresh earth. Peach and plum stones, acorns and walnuts were planted. John Quincy Adams spent an hour of morning twilight working in these rings. The property line at that time extended East to the railroad bed so there was more room there than can be easily imagined today.

John Quincy Adams was the first to record planting dwarf fruit trees -- that was July 29, 1834 and again September 7, 1844. Some of the replacements put in by the National Park Service are of the dwarf variety and were planted near the stumps of old trees no longer alive. The quince and plum are gone, but hopefully, will be replaced some day. There is



at least one old crabapple tree still waiting to provide the family table with jelly.

Abigail Adams and John Quincy Adams each mentioned the beauty of the fruit blossoms. John Quincy Adams tried hard to perfect the peach by planting the best fruit from the tree to sprout for better fruit in future years. His mother wrote Mrs. Johnson that the "Bloom of the pear, the apple, the plum and peach" awaken a "most pleasing sensation." The peach being a family favorite was mentioned with frequency in all family correspondence. Could it be because the peach activates the most of a person's senses. The sense of sight is gratified by the beautiful pink blossoms in the early spring. The soft fuzz of the skin is pleasant to the sense of touch. The delightful aroma of a fresh cut peach fills the air and satisfies the sense of smell. Last of all what can be more delicious than a ripe peach eaten beside the tree where it has grown. The sense of taste reaches its high point at this time. All of this is a part of an orchard experience. Though short-lived, the renewal of peach trees should be a special responsibility for living history!!

Charles Francis Adams knew a variety of nurserymen, attended meetings of the Horticulture Society and became a close friend of General Henry A. S. Dearborn, a nurseryman and first president of the Horticulture Society. The growing ambition to turn the Old House and farm into a





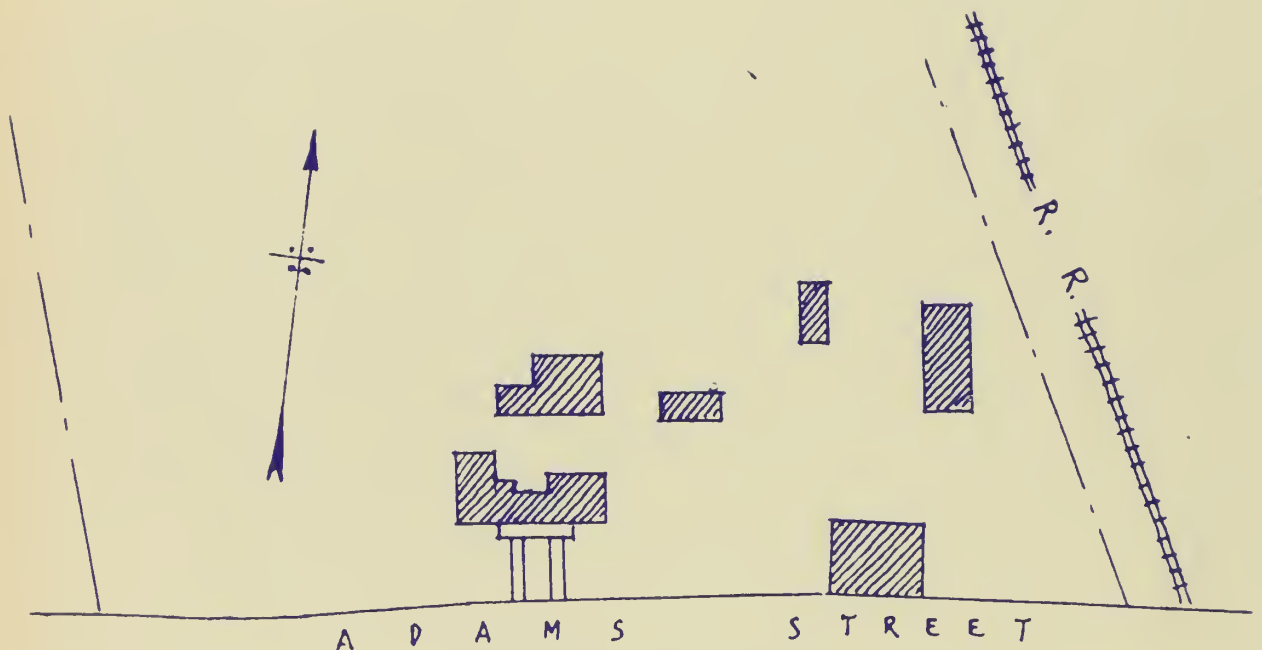
"gentleman's estate was probably encouraged by General Dearborn and another noted landscape architect and family connection, Andrew Jackson Downing. He visited the Adamses in 1841 and 1845. There must have been discussions of the beautification possibilities of country estates, in particular the Old House grounds. Mr. Downing had made the plans for several Hudson River estates. Most of these estates had a park-like area of large trees and shrubs surrounded by a rich green sward. Later the east lawn was similarly so designed by Charles Francis Adams. The matter of influence worked both ways, however, for Mr. Downing had been influenced and inspired by John Quincy Adams' horticultural experiments. In the Stone Library is a presentation volume entitled, A Treatise on the Theory and Practise of Landscape Gardening, by Andrew Jackson Downing published in 1841. The volume is dedicated to John Quincy Adams as follows:

TO  
 JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, LL.D.  
 EX-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:  
 THE LOVER OF RURAL PURSUITS,  
 AS WELL AS  
 THE DISTINGUISHED PATRIOT, STATESMAN,  
 AND SAGE:  
 THIS VOLUME,  
 BY PERMISSION,  
 IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY  
 DEDICATED,  
 BY HIS FRIEND,  
 THE AUTHOR.

About the time of Downing's visit, Charles Francis Adams decided to mark







1 8 4 9

This plan is a tracing of a portion of the survey made by S. D. Eaton, Surveyor, June 1849. Recorded through courtesy Henry Adams II. See also notes and plan of 1826, this sheet.

all the property boundaries with a stone wall. As his private home was up the hill at 79 Presidents Lane, he began building a stone wall on each side leading from the Old House up the hill. The granite wall on the east side of Presidents Lane almost to Glendale Road survived until the apartment house was built within present memory. The stone wall on the south side of Adams Street is the original one built by Charles Francis Adams.

From 1826 to 1848 during the John Quincy Adams residence there were only two changes made to the buildings on the grounds. John Quincy Adams moved a barn from across the street. In his diary of May 3, 1833 he described this event as follows:

"The Barn was removed from the Hill opposite to the House, and set up in the yard, near the two others."

So far the exact location is not known.

The drastic change to the east area was the land taking for the building of the Old Colony Railroad in 1844. The railroad took land for the road-bed for which the Adams Estate received \$6090.45 on December 4, 1844.

Two years later John Quincy Adams was disturbed lest the old barn only ten feet from the tracks should catch fire from a spark from the train.

The Old Colony agreed as to the danger and paid damages on April 7, 1846.

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(30) Illustration 553 is the 1849 drawing showing a plan of the property after the railroad had gone through and the 1799 barn built by John Adams had been removed.



A week later the old John Adams barn situated at the corner of Adams Street and the railroad line was sold at auction. The stable built by John Adams was saved. The east boundary change depressed Charles Francis Adams who wrote in his diary on September 26, 1845:

"...the railroad takes away all of the rural appearance which the place once had, and gives it the vulgar look of a mere place of passing traffic. A sort of Stage highway..."

He was to see greater changes when the building of Newport Avenue took 50 more feet of Adams land some 22 years later.

Following the death of John Quincy Adams on February 21, 1848 and of Peter C. Brooks, Mrs. Charles Francis Adams' father, on January 1, 1849, Charles Francis Adams' attitude toward the Quincy property became more relaxed. President John Quincy Adams' finances were so limited that his son, while acting as superintendent of the property, was always uneasy about the expenses involved in the maintenance. Upon the death of Mr. Brooks, Mrs. Adams inherited a handsome legacy from her father. From that time on there was sufficient funds to maintain both their Boston house and the Adams estate in Quincy. Even so, Charles Francis Adams moved cautiously but definitely in the direction of making it into a "gentleman's estate."

In former years the front entrance had frequently required attention. For example, in 1831 Charles Francis Adams had the four large 14' square granite posts installed in place of the wood which rotted very fast. Afterwards he added six hitching posts. He retained the low curbing of









field stone between the posts and the wall along the south side of the formal garden. He placed a rough picket-type fence on top of it until a later date when both were changed.<sup>31</sup>

In 1852 not only did Charles Francis Adams continue his stone wall project, but he built a piazza on the east side (removed by Brooks Adams about 1920). The piazza caused the loss of a row of flowers which John Quincy Adams planted beside the house foundation. He also added a barn in 1854, but it must have been a temporary one for it never appeared in a drawing. He repaired the ice house in 1854.<sup>32</sup> This leaves one to conclude that there had been an ice house during the John Quincy Adams era if it required repair six years after his death. Another interesting thing about the ice house was that it stood in the middle of what was later to become Newport Avenue.

A great deal of Charles Francis Adams' time was passed in the study of the English system of drainage. This knowledge he applied to the drainage of the meadow. This study was typical of Charles Francis Adams. He studied every problem before action. This approach was repeated years later when he took up reading and studying architecture in preparation

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(31) Illustration 554 shows the appearance of the Old House in 1849. Attention is called to the rough dry stone wall and the farmhouse hardly visible in the rear of the house. The six hitching posts are visible in this daguerreotype by Whipple.

(32) Financial Ledger of Charles Francis Adams, 1854.







for the building of the Stone Library. <sup>33</sup>

Charles Francis Adams was an active conservationist. So early did he develop an interest in tree planting that it became a way of life for him. Locally he purchased many types of trees, but one order to Scotland I wish to quote so that the reader can get an idea of the extent of his interest in a variety of trees.

"Messrs William Urquhart & Sons. Dundee, Scotland  
Boston, Massachusetts. U.S. America  
14 February 1859

Gentlemen

... I should like to have of your transplanted forest trees

one 1000 Scotch firs	at	4s
" Beech		8s
" Larch		12s
" Pinaster		10s
of the seedlings		
3000 Norway Spruce	at	2.6
2000 Austrian Pine		3.6
3000 Larch 2 yrs		2.6
of your seedling shrubs		
Pinus cembra 200	at	2.6
Cephalonia 100	at	12.6
Loinici 200	at	3.6

This will do for an experiment. If it succeeds tolerably as I am laying out an Estate, I may need a good many more, another season."

The order was delivered in May of 1859.

From 1859 to 1869 there were no great changes of the grounds for Mr. and

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(33) Illustration 555 -- The estate as it was painted by Frankenstein about 1851. The little girl is Mary Adams (Quincy) and the dog is Mancha.





Mrs. Adams were not in Quincy much of that time. They with their daughter Mary and young Brooks lived in Washington since Mr. Adams was serving as Representative from Massachusetts to the Congress of the United States. In 1861 he was appointed United States Minister to Great Britain. After seven years he returned to the United States. On Thursday, July 9, 1868, the date of his arrival in Quincy, Charles Francis Adams recorded that the "...old house looked much as it did. The trees all around have grown so that the whole aspect of the scene is more elegant and cultivated than ever before." The following day he recorded "examined all my belt of trees. Some of them have spread enormously... The continuous labors of forty years are now producing something like effects on the landscape." Life in Quincy was never quite the same for the Adams family.

Brooks Adams reminisced with such delight this period of change his father effected from 1869 to 1875. With great admiration for his mother Brooks Adams recalled that while abroad she had used her wealth as well as her husbands' to live in a manner appropriate for an United States representative to a great nation such as England. She enjoyed this way of life and Quincy seemed a great change. Her son recalled that even Abigail Adams had found the Old House small upon her return from abroad in 1788. He thought it was not surprising that Mrs. Charles Francis Adams found the house completely inadequate for her needs. Disquieted







over his wife's dissatisfaction with the Old House, Mr. Adams engaged the architect Edward Cabot of Boston to draw up plans for an addition to accommodate the servants. This necessitated the removal of the wash-house, farm kitchen and office building.

The addition of the servants' quarters was only a start in making the house adequate. The book room in the farmhouse was then gone and the library directed in John Quincy Adams' will was still not built but urgently needed. This added to Charles Francis Adams' problems to make his wife comfortable. Mr. Edward Cabot and Charles Francis Adams began the study of a fireproof building for President John Quincy Adams' books. The plans for the library were finally agreed upon and the building was under way in 1870. That same year the entire front entrance was rebuilt. Mr. Brooks Adams remembered when the latticed gates and fence were built in 1870 and when the stone wall with granite coping was built.

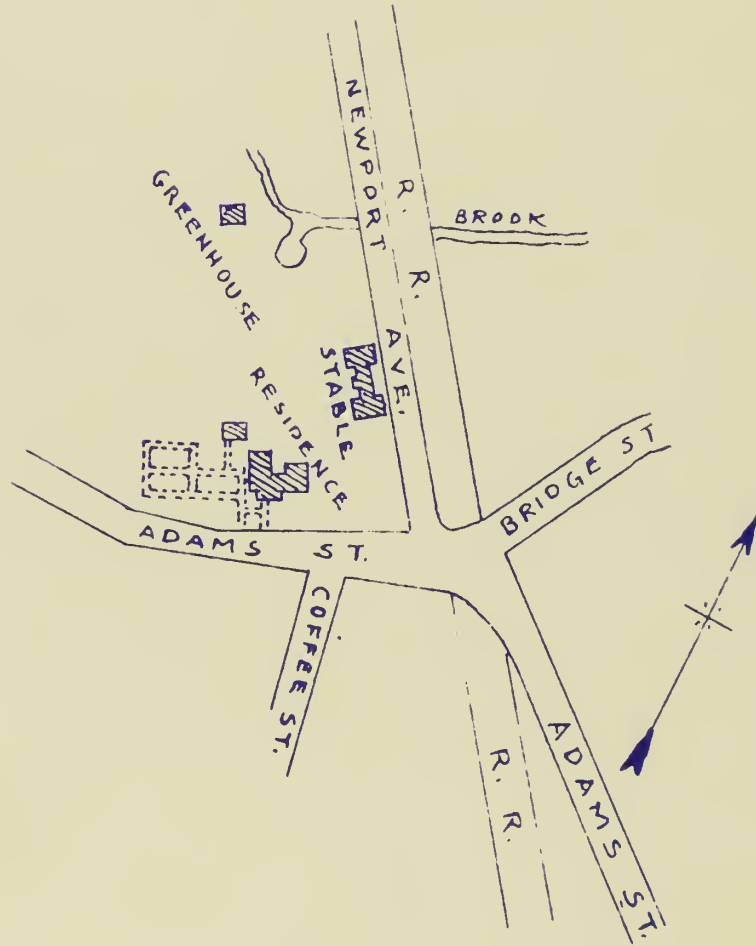
He remembered how vigorously his mother complained that the east side was too cluttered with rundown farm buildings. She wanted a service entrance with a road for deliveries up to the rear door of the Old House, she wanted a gate house or "Lodge" as she called it, a carriage house, a harness room, facilities for the horses and cows and a green house where

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(34) Illustration 556 -- The granite stone wall with coping is seen in this photograph. The four granite posts, latticed gates, fence and hitching posts were all a part of the historic scene. Date -- 1870.







1876

This plan traced from Norfolk County Atlas-1876. Outline of garden is shown.



little plants could be grown for her flower beds which she had added to the 18th century garden. Mr. Brooks Adams said that her interest in the flower beds and in a large carriage house and lodge diverted his mother's attention from the Old House and probably saved it from changes and additions which she could have afforded and which would have been unfortunate for the history of the Old House.

In the midst of all the change and improvements Charles Francis Adams was asked to go to Geneva to arbitrate the Alabama Claims. With his son Brooks he set sail for Europe in November, 1871. Before they left there was unrest over the possible land taking for building a street along the railroad. This would mean 50 additional feet of land taking from the Adams' estate. On December 18, 1871 John Quincy Adams 2d wrote his father that he was going to have the ice house filled since the County Commissioner had made no decision about when the new road would be built. Mr. Brooks Adams said that his father was disturbed and uneasy since the ice house and several buildings would have to be removed with the land taking and that his wife should not be annoyed with these details.<sup>35</sup>

By 1873 the Alabama Claims were settled and Charles Francis Adams was back in Quincy again. The new east boundary was established during his

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(35) Illustration 557 shows an 1876 drawing of the property including the green house. The drawing failed to include the old wood house and the service entrance but shows the establishment of Newport Avenue.







absence -- the 50 additional feet of Adams land had been taken. The new road had caused the removal of the ice house and the cider house. The wood shed was moved to its present location on the east boundary line. The new building was planned as Mrs. Adams had wanted, to provide space to consolidate all the smaller buildings. This left the east side a large open space for shade trees and shrubs. Against his frugal nature Charles Francis Adams agreed to the drawings for the large carriage house building submitted by the architects Cummings and Sears of Boston. This building was also placed on the east boundary. It was begun in 1873 and completed in January, 1874.

The large brick and stucco structure contained the "Lodge" (so desired by Mrs. Adams), the carriage room, two stalls for carriage horses, four stalls for work horses and a harness room on the first floor.<sup>36</sup> On the ground level on the north side were cow stalls and a pen for a couple of sheep. At this time the two remaining farm buildings, the barn and the stable, were removed. The greenhouse and service road were completed and the grounds took on a more genteel appearance.

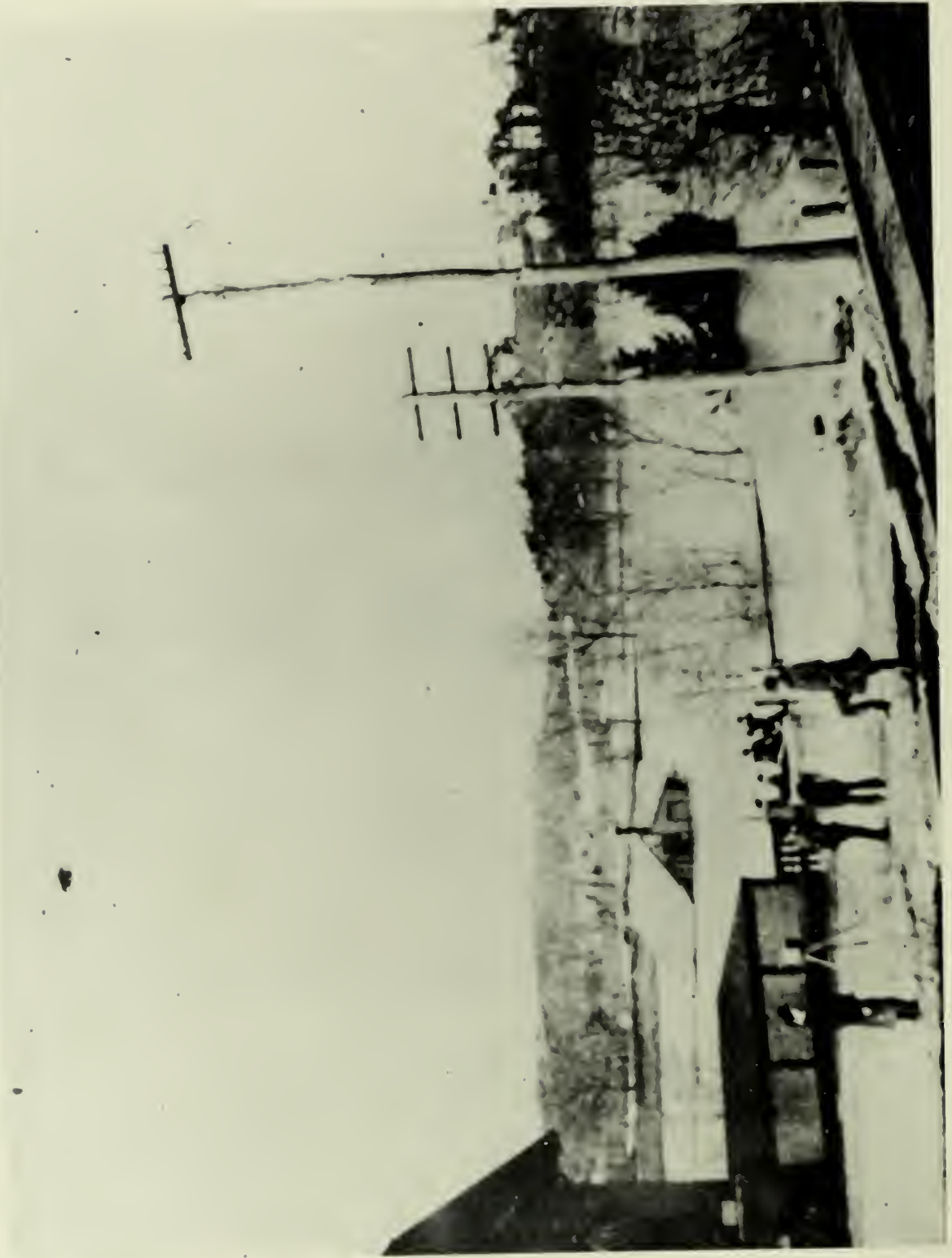
With the farm buildings removed Charles Francis Adams began to enjoy the symmetrical growth of the trees differing in color and type of foliage

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(36) Illustration 558 shows the large brick and stucco building which when completed was designed to replace all smaller farmhouses.









and in the ever changing shadows as the light passed through their branches. The massive stone wall protected the privacy of the family. Mr. Brooks Adams remembered the building of the east wall and later deplored the further land taking of 10' or 15' on Adams Street at the corner of Newport Avenue. "Creeping destruction" was his expression for such intrusions.

With the changes made in 1873-1874<sup>37</sup> Charles Francis Adams directed the greater portion of his interest and time to editing his father's diary. Tree planting continued, but his main responsibility was to complete his literary task too long delayed.

In 1886 Charles Francis Adams died and after two lonely years, Mrs. Charles Francis Adams died in 1889. Their son Brooks made it his summer home from 1891 to 1927 and conscientiously maintained the estate as his parents had left it. For example, Brooks Adams refrained from "organizing" the orchard, preferring to let it remain as his father had left it -- random planting. It was Mr. Brooks Adams' theory that the orchard, like the house, should not be of one period. If the space available would accommodate a large fruit tree, his father planted a cherry tree; or if variety would be best served by planting a quince

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(37) Illustration 559 -- View of the flood of 1886. Note the greenhouse all but submerged. Also note the covered and enclosed corral which existed until after 1927.







tree, then it was planted. This was Brooks Adams' criteria for the maintenance of the property for about thirty-seven years.<sup>38</sup>

The area where the Shell gasoline station is and beyond to Douse Road was fenced in for Beauty, his beautiful bay mare. She grazed and exercised at her leisure. She was the most photographed subject in town. She was lucky, too, for at his death Mr. Brooks Adams left a trust fund of \$20,000 for her benefit. She was cared for under the supervision of his niece, Miss Elizabeth Adams, of Lincoln.

Mr. Adams walked over the orchard and meadow each day. Every inch seemed sacred. There was no Furnace Brook Parkway then -- it was planned. There had been considerable land taking again involved in this Parkway. So disturbed was Mr. Adams that he investigated moving to the Northshore to get away from the "creeping destruction." After his financial adviser had found a house for him near Newburyport, Mr. Adams suddenly changed his mind saying he would remain in the Old House until the highways ran through the Paneled Room.

Mr. Adams admired the "belt of trees" so often referred to by his father. At the northeast corner there was the weeping willow. I realized the willow was admired and enjoyed by Mr. Brooks Adams, but recently I found

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(38) Illustration 560 shows the Old House just before Brooks Adams began his residence. Note the two round beds -- the last of John Quincy Adams' "seminary."



that on April 7, 1800 Abigail Adams wrote her sister of her enjoyment from the willow. "The verdure of the fields and the bursting of the Buds, with the beautiful foliage of the weeping willow, which you have often heard me admire and which is the first tree to vegetate in the spring, all remind me of Quincy, my building, my Garden..." Mr. Adams always enjoyed the lilacs, the young volunteer oaks and the dogwood. All are now found on the new property line along Furnace Brook.

On the west side there was also a belt of trees, but Mr. Adams considered them to be volunteers -- the exception being the huge elm and the catalpha. He enjoyed the leaves of the catalpha, heart-shaped in form, pale green in color and the pure white cluster blossoms hanging down like those of the horse chestnut. Later on in the season he used to pick the seed pods 10 or 12 inches in length. He scattered the seeds everywhere hoping for propagation. I like to think that the catalpha now in the orchard may be from one of the seeds he threw down on the soil since it has, in my memory, a smaller head than the traditional John Quincy Adams catalpha planted on August 31, 1830.

At the southwest corner of the orchard and actually in the northwest corner of the 18th century flower garden is an old walnut tree. During the Brooks Adams days he tended it carefully because he thought it was planted by his grandfather. This could be so for in August, 1834 John





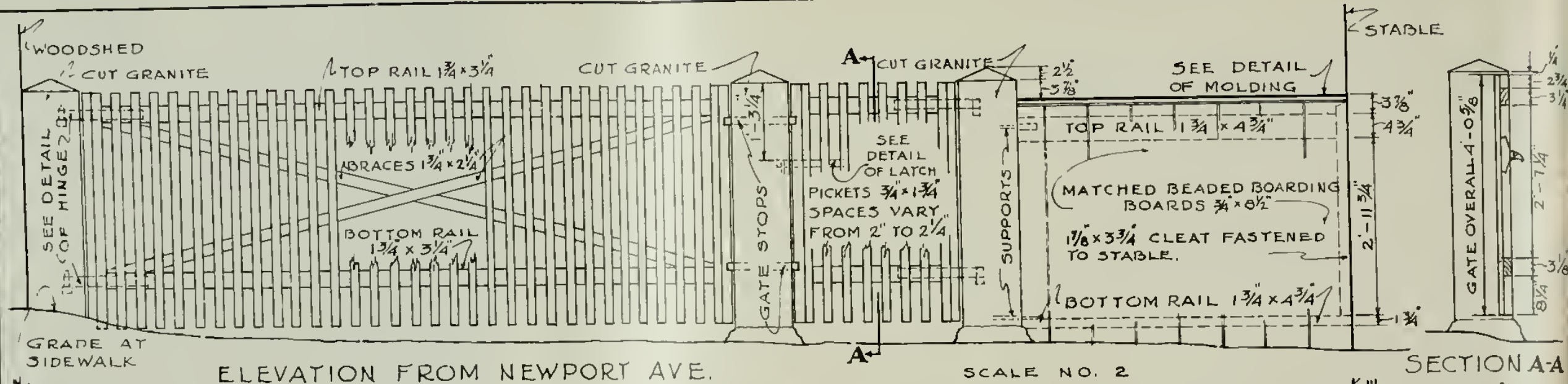
Quincy Adams noted:

"22 Saturday ... The walnut tree near the Summer House cellar in the garden, the nut of which I planted 8 October 1804, ..."

The belt of trees around the orchard was continued along the south side by elms, Norway maples at each corner of the Stone Library, the old hackberry beside the clothes drying yard, the American elm at the rear door of the Old House and finally the most impressive looking tree of the area, the European beech with its limbs forming an arch over the service road. Mr. Adams thought this was a tree his father had ordered from Scotland and which reached Quincy in May, 1859. There are twelve large trees on the south side of the orchard which Mr. Brooks Adams credited to his father. On the east boundary to complete the belt of trees around the orchard there is the horse chestnut tree which suggests great age because of its sturdy, rough, gray trunk and irregular twisted branches. In addition, there was and still is an English elm, wild rum cherries and two regular cherry trees.

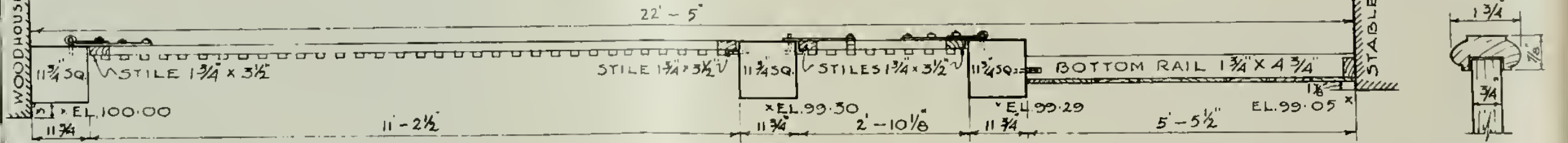
Across the service road is the east lawn little changed since 1874. The most obvious feature of the east lawn is the walled-in enclosure of large trees in sharp contrast to the modern concept of total exposure which appears too fantastic to other cultures such as the Japanese and English. It set aside a certain area from the outside world and provided the family a definite space to enjoy the privacy of their country estate. The



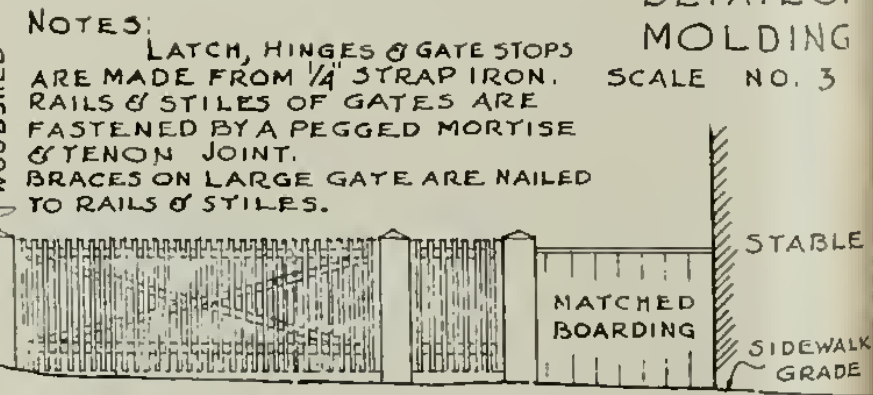
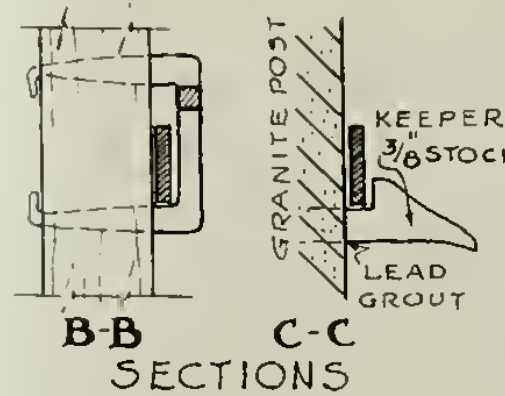
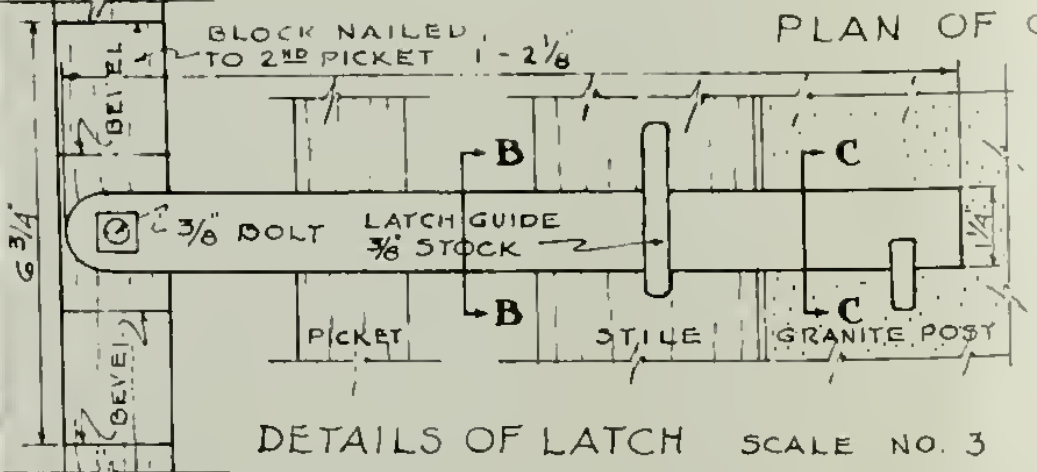


SCALE NO. 2

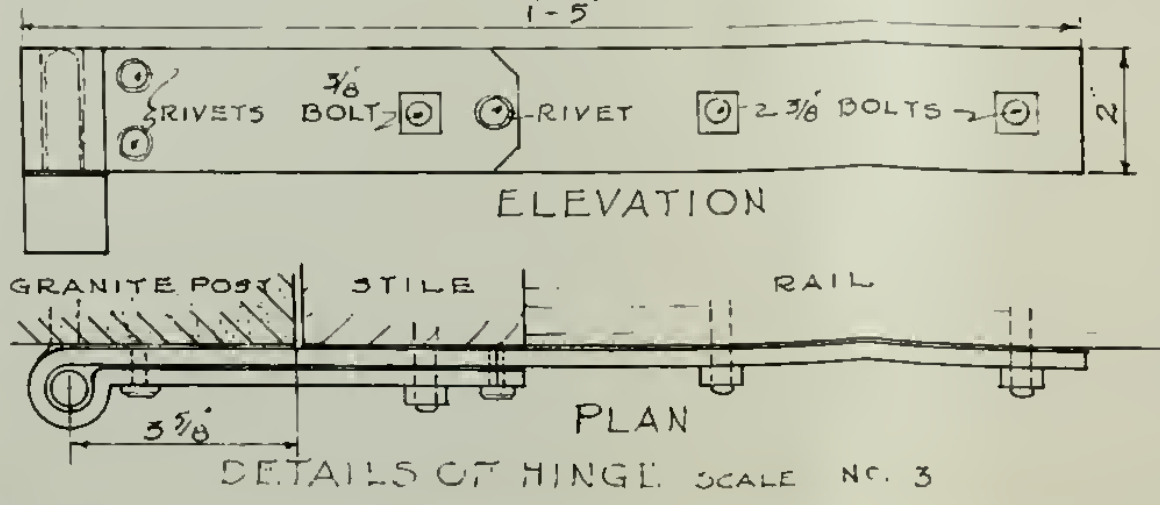
SECTION A-A



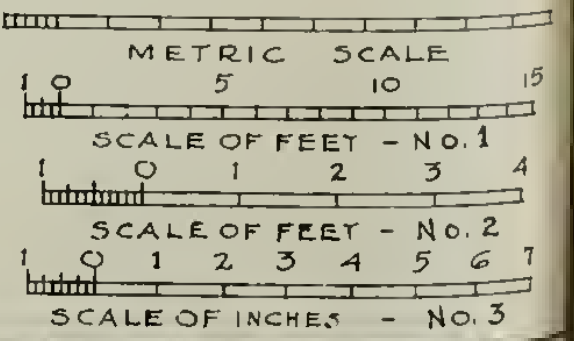
PLAN OF GATES SCALE NO. 2



ELEVATION FROM NEWPORT AVE. SCALE NO. 1



NOTES:-  
NEWPORT AVE. WAS LAID OUT IN 1873 AT WHICH TIME THE PRESENT STABLE WAS BUILT AND THE GRANITE WALL ERECTED (SEE SHEET 5)  
THE OLD WOOD HOUSE WAS MOVED AND RELOCATED IN ITS PRESENT POSITION, IN 1873 (SEE SHEET 1).

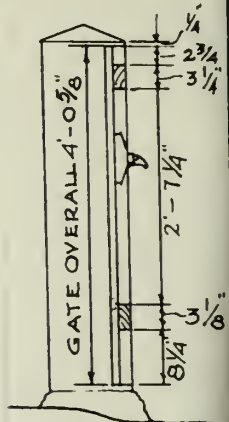


LOCATION PLAN SCALE NO. 1

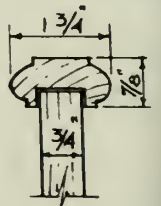
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICIAL PROJECT NO. 265-6907  
G. PARKER OVIATT DEL.

DETAILS OF GATES — NEWPORT AVE. ENCLOSURE  
HOUSE BUILT 1731 GARDEN LAID OUT 1731

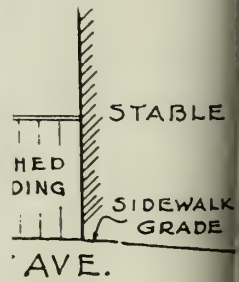
F



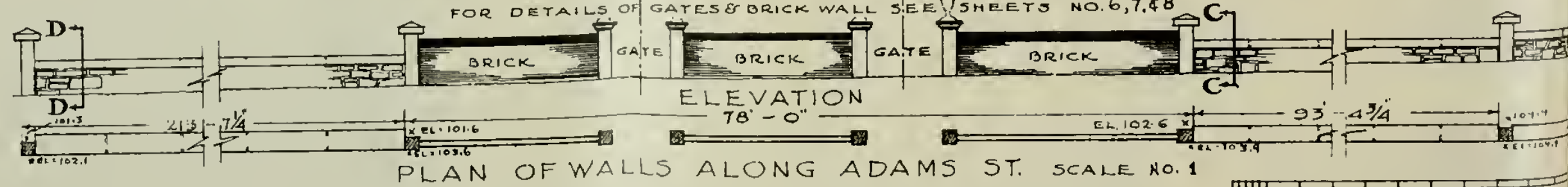
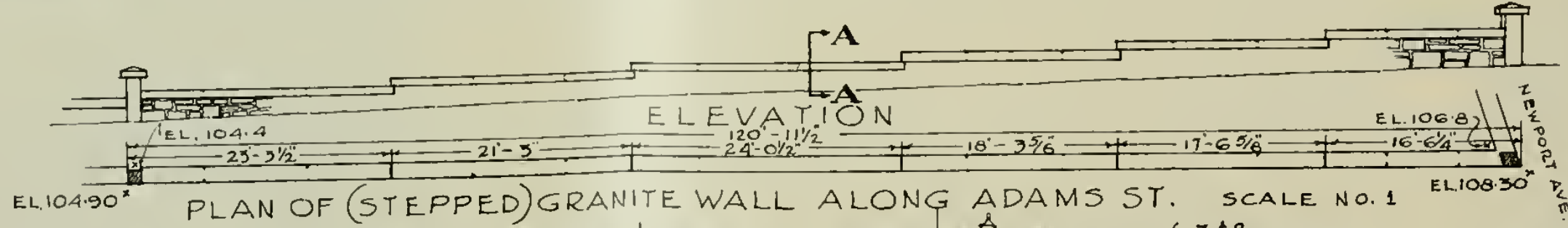
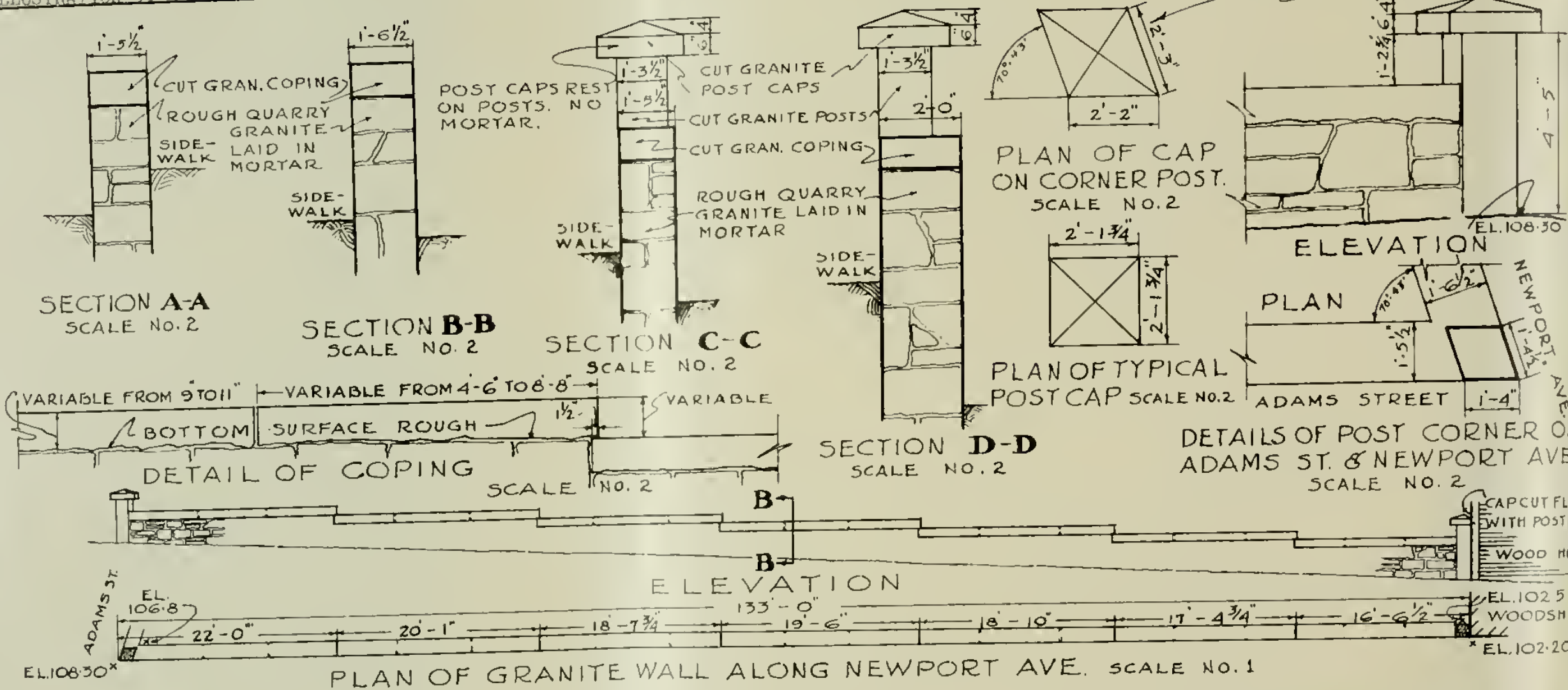
SECTION A-A



DETAIL OF MOLDING  
SCALE NO. 3



SCALE	10	15		
ST - No. 1	2	3	4	
ST - No. 2	4	5	6	7
ST - No. 3	5			



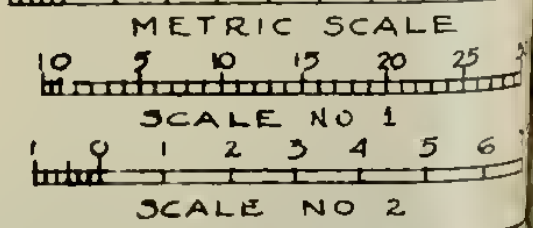
RECORDED 1936

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
 OFFICIAL PROJECT NO. 265-6907

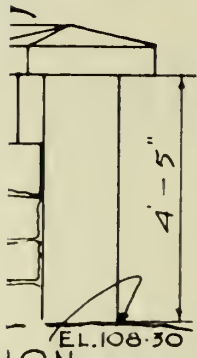
G. PARKER OVIATT DEL.

The granite wall shown here was erected in 1873, at which time Newport Avenue was laid out, and the level of Adams St. was raised. A new stable was also built and the wood house was moved to its present location. See sheet 1

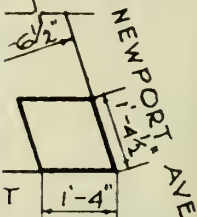
Sheet 1 shows the location of other early structures no longer in existence. See also sheet 12. Other Newport Avenue Enclosure details are shown on sheet 10.



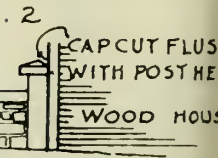
DETAILS OF ENCLOSURE



EL. 108.30

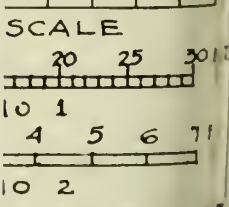


CORNER OF  
PORT AVE.



CAP CUT FLUSH  
WITH POST HERE  
WOOD HOUSE  
EL. 102.5  
WOODSHED  
\* EL. 102.20

NEWPORT AVE.



AMERICAN  
SURVEY  
OF 12 SHEETS

INDEX

wall varies in height -- the variations being made by "steps" at irregular intervals.<sup>39</sup>

In 1969 the wall serves to screen out the ever increasing intrusion of an industrial megalopolis. All in all, for a century it had been useful to suggest changes in taste of the generations of Adamses and now for a quarter of a century it has served as protection of our National Heritage.

The second most obvious feature of the east lawn is the carpet of grass. It makes an attractive, soft green sward to surround the trees. At the present time, the east lawn has elm, yellow-wood, sycamore, chestnut and beech trees.

Beginning with the southeast corner, there are two old chestnut trees as in 1920. Their blooming time is characterized by white clusters pointed like a candle flame with bees and wasps making music as they buzz about sucking the nectar from the blossoms. Then, a bit later the trees begin to drop their shiny, wax-covered leaf buds and the sidewalk is sticky to the shoe as one walks by. That is not all, for in the autumn the prickly husks which enclose the brown, shiny nuts, each with one white patch, begin to open and swarms of our young citizens -- perhaps

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(39) Illustration 561 is a drawing of the stone wall.





a future President -- appear. Mr. Brooks Adams always enjoyed the children with their baskets or bags looking for the "buckeyes" as he called the nuts. This had gone on for his lifetime and he predicted a continuation as long as the old trees stood.

Also in this corner is an American white beech. It has had a hard time crowded between the horse chestnut and sycamore trees. By nature a symmetrical tree supporting dense foliage, this beech has had no chance to show its beauty. Even so, the bark close, unfurrowed and gray though often with a blotch of almost silvery white is lovely to behold.

Tree experts say the sycamore (buttonwood) which is close by the beech is perhaps one of the oldest in the east lawn. Since 1927, I have observed the ancient tree dangling its seed-balls in the fall winds, its foliage gone and its reddish-brown or olive color bark peeled off in patches until it appeared forsaken and disorderly. The thought always comes to me that perhaps, even to this tree, life had been too long without the personal attention of the Adams family. It is a powerfully strong guardian of the east lawn.

One of the most beautiful trees in the east end of the lawn is the yellowwood. This tree never allows its admirers to be overconfident. It is quite temperamental in its blooming habits. Mr. Brooks Adams liked this characteristic. In early June it may have white flowers hanging in



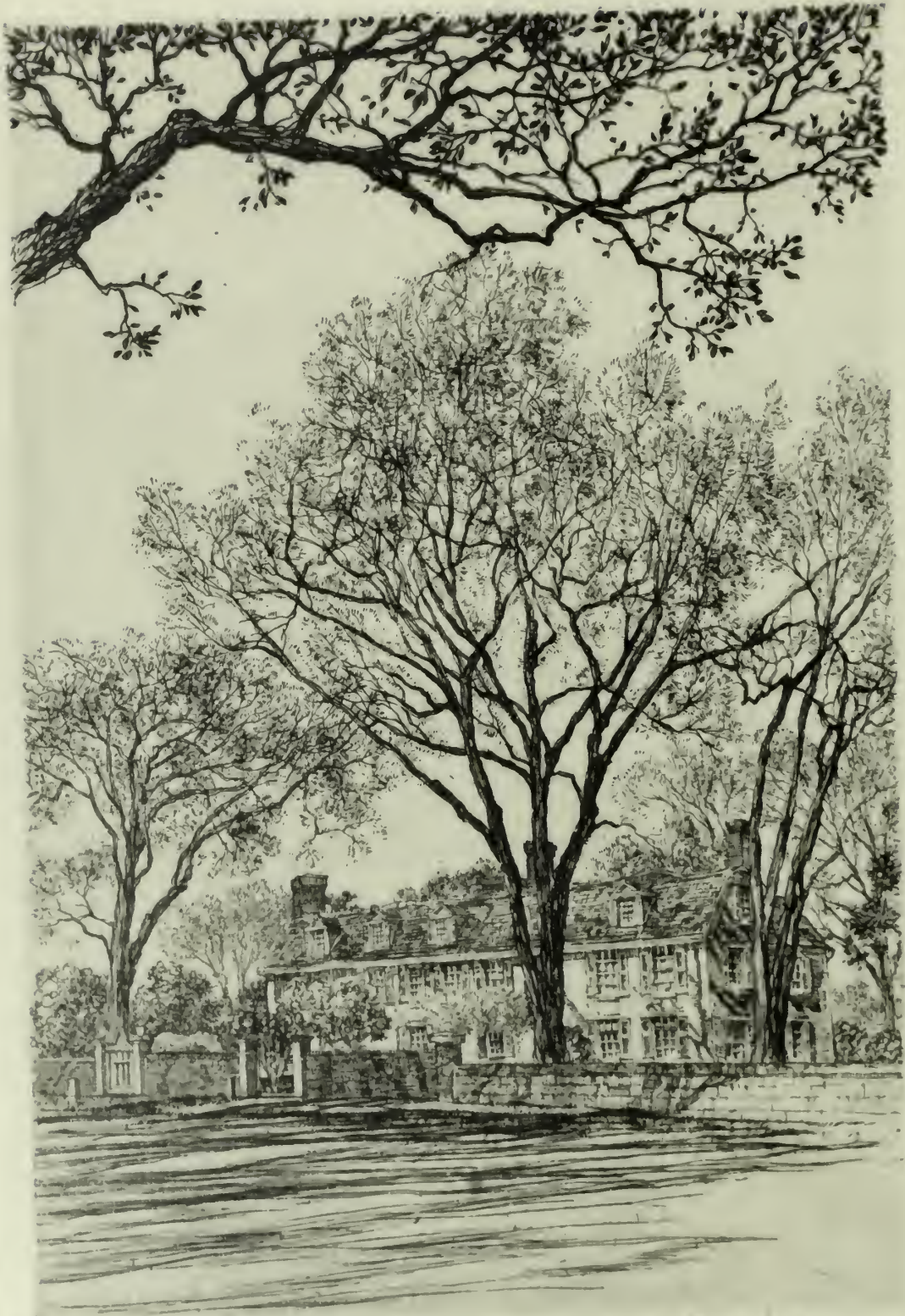
clusters a foot long, so delicate, so fragrant and appearing to literally drip from the twigs. The next June there may not be a single bloom, but do not despair for on the west side of the Old House is another yellow-wood which will take its turn that year to produce the gorgeous hanging clusters. The yellow-wood is a native of Tennessee and Kentucky. Its name came from the pioneers who soaked the chips and got clear yellow dye so prized for the permanent color it gave to the homespun cotton. The slick gray bark is well suited to the hanging blossoms. The tree itself does not grow tall enough to be valuable as timber, but as an ornamental tree it is superb.

The family tradition is that at the house in Washington on Meridian Hill, which President John Quincy Adams rented upon leaving the White House, there were yellow-wood trees. 'Tho admired by both President and Mrs. Adams, there is no record so far which explains why these yellow-wood were planted in Quincy or who planted them.

Standing about twenty feet to the West of the yellow-wood is an American white elm. In the spring before the leaves appear the elm has a purple-colored flower. Then comes the pleasing yellowish-green leaves, so light and airy in sharp contrast to the rough bark. When autumn comes and the leaves fall, the real beauty of its branches are visible. The form of the elm is magnificent. By day the drooping branches reflect the sun and by night they embosom the moonlight casting shadows on the







1846-1847

Samuel Chamberlain

snow-covered ground. The beauty of the elms just after a snowfall and before the sun has melted it from the branches is a majestic spectacle. In 1820 John Adams wrote Vander Kemp describing the trees after a snow-storm as:

"...millions and millions of diamonds ...too splendid for the eyes to contemplate."

The elms at Adams National Historic Site have such classical beauty that there can be little wonder John Quincy Adams, the classical scholar, should have planted so many in his nursery.

In 1970 there are seven new American elms, one pin oak and one black oak planted by the National Park Service as replacements. Also, there were three oaks and one American white beech planted by the Adams Memorial Society to replace the oak trees lost in the 1938 hurricane. The sycamore, chestnuts, the yellow-wood and four large elms on the east lawn are from the Brooks Adams era. <sup>40</sup> With the same type trees replanted, the general atmosphere of the east lawn has been preserved. Visitors are often seen just standing on the front walk enjoying the peace and quiet of this garden.

Much of the time during the last two summers which Mr. Brooks Adams passed at the Old House he was restricted to a wheelchair. It became

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(40) Illustration 562 is an etching by Samuel Chamberlain.









a pleasant diversion for him to sit on the front piazza. In retrospect those were interesting hours for his conversation always touched upon his rich memory of historical events and figures long passed from the scene -- John Adams receiving the West Point Cadets, General Lafayette greeting the Quincy gentlemen and his own mother reviewing her experiences in London to her grandchildren. He admired and enjoyed looking at the broad leaf fern which grew (and still does in 1970) around the edge of the piazza. Mrs. Adams had brought the ferns from the swamp-land of the Blue Hills Reservation. She had also planted them on each side of the easterly front gate at the time the gates, designed by her husband, were introduced into the historic scene. Though never fond of Quincy, she had helped him in many ways during that period when his thoughts turned to the establishment of a trust to care for the Old House after his death. The "candy grass," as Mr. Adams called the striped grass, was planted at the same time. These blades of grass brought back memories of stick candy which in his youth he enjoyed.<sup>41</sup> Formerly, tulips and nasturtiums were around the piazza, but the trees had all grown larger shutting out the sun so flowers no longer bloomed. He talked much of the French grape vines which he had been told John Adams set out, but which we now know predated the Old President by at least fifty years.

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(41) Illustration 563 shows the ferns and "candy grass" around the piazza.



At the southwest corner there was the Dutchman's pipe in 1926 so luxurious and uncontrollable that he wondered if the piazza roof could carry the weight of the French grape vine and the Dutchman's pipe. His mother, Mrs. Abigail Brooks Adams, had cared for the vines because of their association with both of the Presidents. The sandstone slabs forming the floor of the piazza in front of the 1731 door were as they are now when the house was constructed and when there was no roof over the entrance. Years later some Adams had covered the stones with a wooden floor. Brooks Adams had the wood floor removed and the stones raised to floor level. This was done at the time he designed the gates.

Attention was frequently called to six old lilac trees. They were a reminder of Abigail Adams. There had always been six of them, he said, along the 1731 entrance walk. He only contended that the roots were those Abigail had set out. In 1926 he doubted if the trunks were older than he was. "They have always been there," he would conclude. The snow blizzard of 1969 broke the old trunks, but there are still a few sections which at least one Adams touched.

Everywhere the eye turned the view was hallowed. Even the slight indentation in the grass directly in front of the house but a little nearer to the stone wall recalled the spreading horse chestnut tree living then in his memory and in the family historical references. There were the large American elms (1970 only one remains) which recalled John Quincy









Adams' planting of elm seeds and of his son Charles Francis Adams transplanting the seedlings as well as making purchases of additional trees from General Dearborn and other nurserymen. In those days the elms were pruned up high as is shown in the reproduction of the etching by Mr. Chamberlain. That was the Adams' taste.

From the piazza the entrance to the formal garden has always been by a walk to the right. This walk or garden path as it has been called has dwarf English boxwood on each side. The path is graveled and when Mr. Brooks Adams lived, it was raked daily. When he came out to pass his usual hour looking over the garden and discussing problems with Martin Hyland, his foot was the first to step upon the freshly raked gravel. Mr. Adams' habits in the garden were always predictable -- each day he repeated the way he looked at his "precious responsibility." He could be counted upon to pause daily for a few seconds when he reached the first long path. This was one of three parallel paths running North and South, each bordered with English boxwood. There he viewed the freshly raked gravel so tidy and perfectly in order. <sup>42</sup> With his walking cane he checked the growth of the hedge beyond the accepted nine inches. The top of the hedge must be slightly less wide than it was at the ground, otherwise, the sun would be shut out. There were no breaks

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(42) Illustration 564 shows the freshly raked garden path. Attention is called to the color of the house. It was white with dark green shutters.



in the hedge then as in 1970. Martin Hyland knew two things -- how easy the hedge would bruise and die and also he understood how upset Mr. Adams would be to see yellow spots in this historic hedge. Each day Mr. Adams could be counted upon to say "the English box ever pre-dates Abigail's rose for Leonard Vassall imported it for his country house in 1731." These parallel walks, East and West and North and South, each bordered with boxwood and with fine gravel walks between, gave this 18th century garden its form which is still so satisfying in the 20th century. It was at this pause Mr. Adams took into account colors in the garden. The white peonies in the spring, the bleeding heart, the yellow day lilacs and the deep red oriental poppies created an effect he found agreeable. He also liked the iris to be a combination of blue and white. The solid blue iris he found less interesting. Martin Hyland, too, could be counted upon for his routine reactions -- if it had rained, it had fallen too fast; the drops were too heavy and the garden ruined. If it had not rained, the garden was dead -- no lush green, no blossoms -- just bugs! Under this emergency, Mr. Adams became an optimist and thought things were not too bad. He would end by saying: "Martin, I know you will find a way to have another fine year."

Daily inspection was made of the York rose. The green leaves must not be sacrificed to rose bugs. Martin and Mr. Adams were in agreement on



that. Each day Martin could be found beside the York rose, a tin can in hand, knocking the bugs into the kerosine. While this was a daily routine, it could take place both morning and afternoon if necessary. Neither the open flower or the leaves were ever allowed to be eaten -- a spray could not be used for the leaves might show discoloration!!

A bit later in the season after the rhododendron had bloomed and every dead cluster removed and the Abigail rose had bloomed and the dried buds removed, Mr. Adams began to anticipate the coral bells, bachelor's buttons, veronica, delphinium and larkspur. Mrs. Adams enjoyed blue flowers tremendously. She never felt there were enough Chinese balloon flowers and salpiglossis. Mr. Adams shared her taste for these flowers, but he felt the garden was too blue unless the white phlox bloomed at the same time. This would give the garden the white he thought so necessary. Years when the phlox was late or the blue flowers early, Mr. Adams would emerge his thought in anticipation of the white asters, the white dahlias, the white and yellow hollyhocks, the red and yellow zinnias, the white and yellow snapdragon, the lemon yellow marigolds, the yellow chrysanthemum-type marigolds, and the red and blue salvia.

There were other flowers, of course, but they were used sparingly. Ageratum and nasturtiums and petunias were placed here and there, but not in the beds. They, along with the lilies of the valley might go on the south edge, at the library door or near the northwest corner of the house.







Myra V. V. V.

Myra V. V.



The tiger lilies, cleome and red and yellow cockscomb had always been in the flower beds but their exact position varied from year to year. One year, I remember, there was a massive bed of white petunias beside the 1800 front door. Between 1927 and 1946 it probably became easier to have the periwinkle for it was well established by the time the National Park Service was assigned the responsibility to maintain the property.

During the last two summers Mr. Adams passed at the Old House he would ask to be wheeled about the garden passing much time at the west end as well as near the library entrance. At the corner of the library is an old sweetshrub bush. He loved to pick the little purple clusters and smell them. His dressing gown pocket was frequently full of the crushed petals. Then he would want to go close to the Abigail Adams rose and the dwarf Japanese maple which he had planted (so far as I know it was his only tree planting experience). There was a reason for this Japanese tree. When he was doing research on the Far East in 1898-99, preparatory to a proposed trip there, he became interested in Japanese horticulture. This interest was a source of entertainment for him as long as he could walk around in museums or wherever Japanese gardens were to be seen.<sup>43</sup>

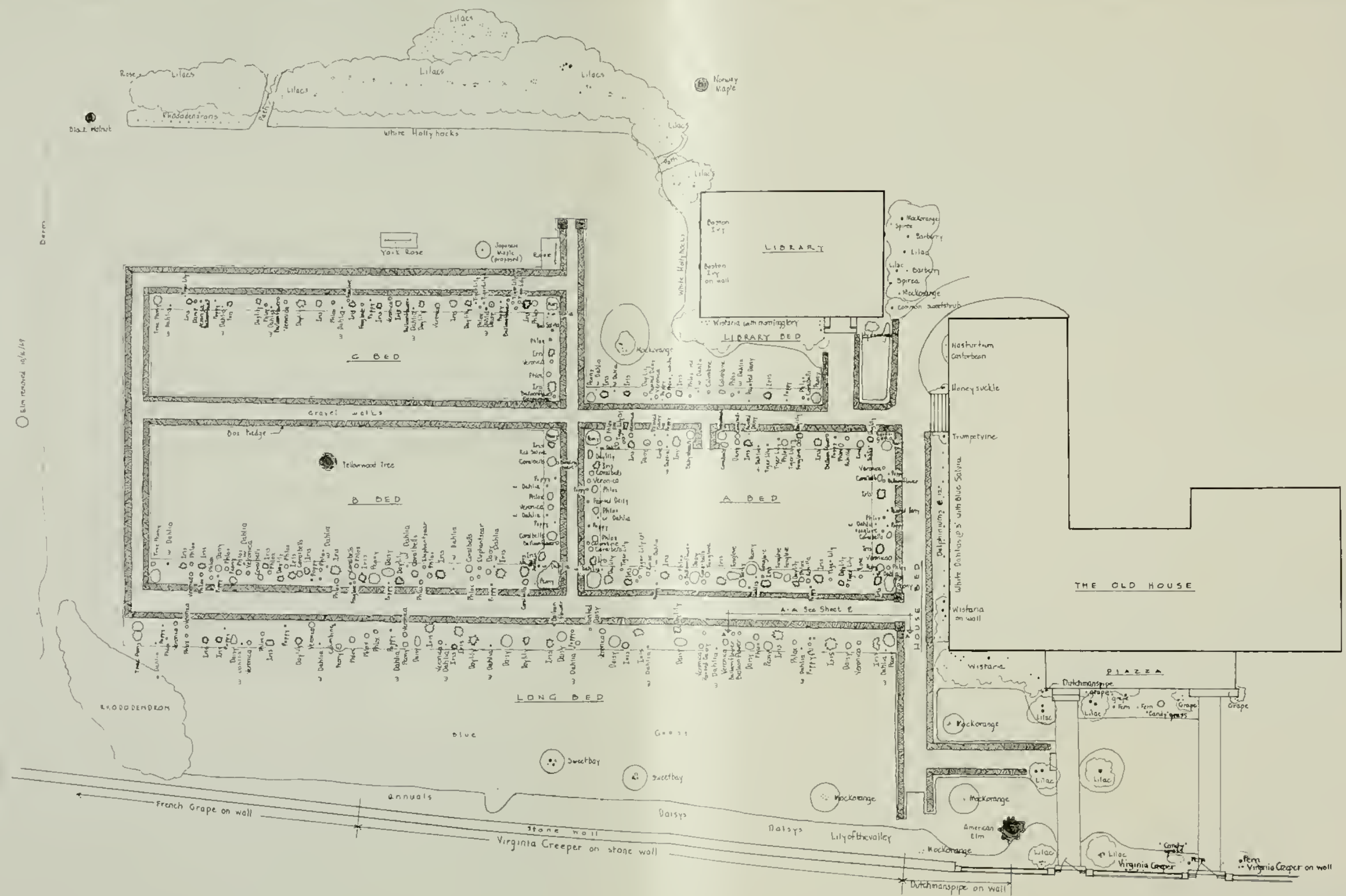
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(43) Illustration 565 -- The southwest corner of the house and the stone wall enclosing the "garden room."









○ Elm removed 10/6/69

SCALE 1" = 10'-0"

RECOMMENDED	DATE	MARK	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION
APPROVED			UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WASHINGTON SERVICE CENTER OFFICE OF HISTORY AND HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE HISTORIC FLOWER GARDEN WEST OF THE 'OLD HOUSE' ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE <small>PLANTING WITHIN 6.25'</small> <small>NAME OF PLANT</small>

BASIC DATA Location of plants are those found existing in October 1969

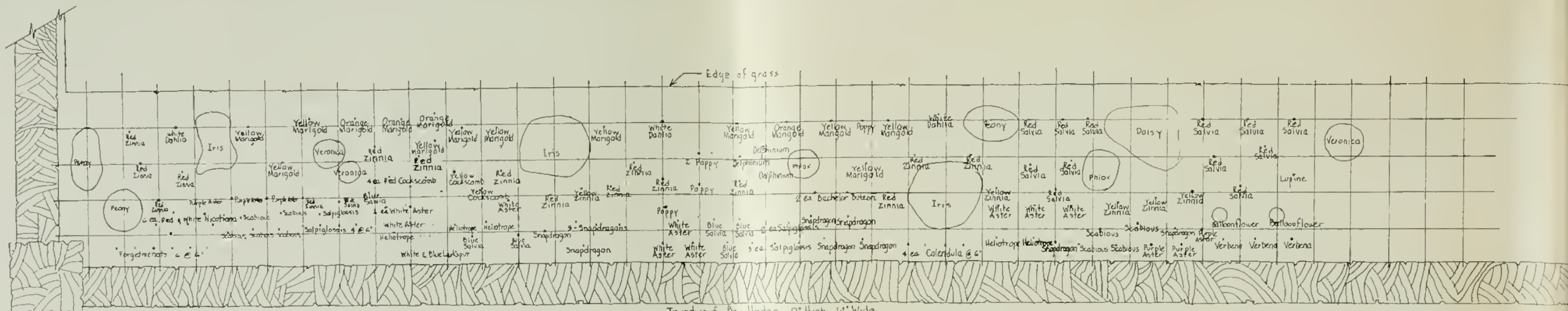
drawn: O. W. Carroll checked: Supt. Harris  
sheet 1 of 2



1969  
x 1969

ia

DESCRIPTION
NO
DATE
NO
NO



Box Post 24" Square 18" High

Truedwarf Box Hedge 9" High 14" Wide

Typical Planting Plan Laid out by John Jacovelli, October 1969  
Checked by Supt. Harris, October 1969  
Note No Red Salvia planted in A Bed

SECTION A-A (See Sheet 1)  
SCALE 3/4" = 1'-0"

## PLANT LIST

FOR HISTORIC FLOWER GARDEN WEST OF THE "OLD HOUSE"

PERENNIAL FLOWERS		BIENNIAL FLOWERS		BULBS		ANNUAL FLOWERS		SHRUBS		VINES	
common name	botanical name	common name	botanical name	common name	botanical name	common name	botanical name	common name	botanical name	common name	botanical name
Achillea, white	<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>	Campanulabells, white	<i>Campanula med. alba</i>	Dahlia, white pompon	<i>Dahlia</i>	Aster, white-blue	<i>Aster novaeangliae</i>	Barberry	<i>Berberis</i>	Boston Ivy	<i>Parthenocissus tricuspidata</i>
Babysbreath, white	<i>Gypsophila paniculata</i>	Delphinium	<i>Delphinium</i>	Elephantear	<i>Colocasia esculentum</i>	Calendula	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	Box, Truedwarf	<i>Buxus sempervirens suffruticosa</i>	Dutchmanspipe	<i>Aristolochia durior</i>
Balloonflower, white-blue	<i>Platycodon grandiflorum</i>	Forgetmenot, blue	<i>Myosotis alpestris</i> , R.B.			Centauria	<i>Centauria cyanus</i>	Hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea macrophylla Otaksa</i>	Grape	<i>Vitis</i>
Bleedingheart, pink-red	<i>Dicentra spectabilis</i>	Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>			Cornflower	<i>Ricinus macrophyllus</i>	Lilac, common	<i>Syringa vulgaris alba; coerulea</i>	Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera morrowi</i>
Candygrass		Hollyhock, white	<i>Althaea rosea</i>			Cornflower	<i>Ricinus macrophyllus</i>	Mockorange, sweet	<i>Philadelphus coronarius</i>	Trumpetvine, common	<i>Campsis radicans</i>
Columbine	<i>Anagallis</i>					Feather Cockscomb, red-yellow	<i>Celosia argentea</i>	Rhododendron, Catawba	<i>Rhododendron catawbiense</i>	Virginia Creeper	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>
Coralbells	<i>Heuchera sanguinea</i>					Heliotrope, blue	<i>Heliotropium (regalis)</i>	Spiraea	<i>Spiraea vanhouttei</i>	Wistaria,	<i>Wistaria sinensis</i>
Daisy, Michaelmas	<i>Aster, white</i>					Larkspur, white-blue	<i>Delphinium elatum</i>	Sweetshrub, common	<i>Calycanthus floridus</i>		
Daisy, Painted	<i>Pyrethrum chrysanthemum</i>					Lupine	<i>Lupinus (Russell's)</i>				
Daylily	<i>Hemerocallis flava; Julia</i>					Marigold, yellow-orange	<i>Tagetes erecta</i>				
Fern	<i>Blue Hills variety</i>					Nasturtium	<i>Ipomoea purpurea; alba</i>				
Iris	<i>Iris</i>					Salpiglossis, blue	<i>Salpiglossis gladioliflora</i>				
Lily of the valley	<i>Convallaria majalis</i>					Salvia, red-blue	<i>Salvia formicosa; splendens</i>				
Peony, red-pink-white	<i>Paeonia albiflora</i>					Scabiosa, white-blue	<i>Scabiosa sylvatica</i>				
Peony, Tree	<i>Paeonia suffruticosa</i>					Snapdragon, white-red	<i>Antirrhinum (intermediate)</i>				
Periwinkle	<i>Vinca minor</i>					Tobacco, white-red	<i>Nicotiana (affinis)</i>				
Phlox, white-red	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>					Verbena, red-blue	<i>Verbena</i>				
Poppy	<i>Papaver orientale</i>					Zinnia, red-yellow	<i>Zinnia</i>				
Rosa, York	<i>Rosa damascena, alba</i>										
Tiger Lily	<i>Lilium tigrinum</i>										
Veronica, blue	<i>Veronica longifolia</i>										

### TREES

common name	botanical name
Black walnut, Eastern	<i>Juglans nigra</i>
Elm, American	<i>Ulmus americana</i>
Maple, Japanese	<i>Acer palmatum</i>
Maple, Norway	<i>Acer platanoides</i>
Spicebush	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>
Yellowwood, American	<i>Cladrastis lutea</i>

BASIC DATA Brook's Garden Book for 1941 at ANHS; Master Plan No. NYS-ADA 3000-A, 19 Spts. See Sheet No. VHS-ADA 3000; One Sheet Drawings, NERC, Division of Maintenance, 1967 (No Drawing Number); Grounds Report by Superintendent Harris, 1969; Standardized Plant Names, 1942 EDITION.

PROJ. NO. 10000000  
SHEET 2 OF 2  
DRAWING NO. 407  
DATE 10/1/69



ORIENTATION

PREPARED  
BY  
DRAWN  
CHECKED

DATE

REVISION  
BY  
DATE

1 of 1  
SHEET NO.  
001  
MAY 1967



The history of gardens interested him and he talked much of garden concepts which were accepted and used in many old gardens. The Old House garden was a fine example of the garden room concept. This decorative formal garden was enclosed so as to actually be an outdoor living room. The front entrance was the doorway marked by two flowering shrubs -- always kept pruned the same height. While the Old House formed the eastern wall, the wisteria, the trumpet vine and honeysuckle vines united the garden and house until even the slate roof appeared to be incorporated.<sup>44</sup>

The rear hallway door of the 1869 addition extended into the second parallel garden path giving the effect of a long corridor. He said there was once an orchard entrance marked by an arch of honeysuckle vines across the corner of the house to the library. The north wall of the outdoor room was the library softened by wisteria vines and then continued by a row of lilac trees. The west wall was marked by John Quincy Adams' walnut tree, an old hackberry and several flowering shrubs. The massive rhododendron -- a beautiful picture on the wall was at the southwest corner. Then the south side was enclosed by the granite wall covered with Virginia creeper, grape, and Dutchman's pipe vines. Two sweet bay trees added to the decoration of the south wall

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(44) Illustration 566 shows the plan of the garden after flower beds were added and, as near as possible, the location of the plants.







and filled the air with their sweet perfume. The bright blue sky ceiling was made more interesting by the light shining through the graceful limbs of the yellow-wood. This was especially true when the soft, long clusters of white blossoms were swinging from the branches and reflecting the morning sun.

Mr. Adams said that the inspiration for the green linoleum in the house came from his observance of "green carpet" of the garden. Like the house, the furnishings of the outdoor living room were old. The "green carpet" was equally satisfying with the hedge, the wisteria, the tree peonies, the day lilies, the roses and all the various colored flowers. Mr. Adams often remarked that the Abigail Adams York rose presided over the outdoor living room in as stately a manner as Abigail did her drawing room in any foreign capitol.<sup>45</sup>

Mr. Adams loved the old garden, the east lawn with the horse chestnuts, the American elms, the oaks and spreading European beech trees, the orchard and the meadow. Like all Adamses before and since, he was a conservationist at heart. He shared the wants of his grandfather John Quincy Adams who wrote:

"I want a garden and a park  
 My dwelling to surround--  
 A thousand acres (bless the mark!)  
 With walls encompassed round,  
 Where flocks may range and herds may low,  
 And kids and lambkins play--  
 And flowers and fruits commingled grow,  
 All Eden to display."

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(45) Illustration 567 shows the Abigail Adams York rose.



THE ADAMS MEMORIAL SOCIETY

<u>Ill. No.</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Description</u>
568	858	The Adams National Historic Site during the regime of the Adams Memorial Society.
569	859	This is a drawing of the area during the Adams Memorial regime. Attention is called to the corral which was visible in Illustration 559 of the flood of 1886. Notice that the land taking for the Furnace Brook Parkway came up very near to the pond. This land taking was extremely depressing to Mr. Brooks Adams and it seems unfortunate that he never knew that the National Park Service would eventually get the return of this land.











ADAMS PLACE IN QUINCY ~ 1927



THE APPEARANCE OF THE ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE DURING  
THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

<u>Ill. No.</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Description</u>
570	865	Raymond H. Corry raising the American flag at the Old House for the first time on April 7, 1947.
571	866	The hay mound and the north boundary with its belt of trees in full foliage.
572	867	Standing near the pump and facing North is the orchard. The old pump has the original handle but the other parts are replacements. Attention is also called to the clothes yard. In the early spring the blooms on the fruit trees, the patches of scillas, narcissus and daffodils make a beautiful scene.
573	868	A view of the orchard from the carriage house facing toward the West. The soft green grass is always inviting for a stroll by visitors who can afford the extra time.
574	869	An old Gravenstein apple tree in the orchard at the Old House. It probably was set out by Charles Francis Adams as Brooks Adams did not add fruit trees.
575	870	One of the two peach trees is seen in the lower right corner of the photograph. Visible in the background is an ancient elm, next the catalpha and in the upper left corner is the old walnut tree. These trees form a part of the west boundary.
576	871	In the lower right corner is an ancient crabapple waiting for someone to make jelly for the family table. Beyond is a view of the west boundary with its belt of trees in full foliage.
577	872	A view of the catalpha, probably a volunteer from the original one set out by John Quincy Adams on August 31, 1830. To the right is another of the large elms planted by John Quincy Adams.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (CONTD.)

- 578        873    This view of the west boundary was taken in the winter. Note the large Beale house on the left. The two families were close friends.
- 579        874    The southern boundary of the orchard has two huge Norway maples. They stand at the northwest and northeast corners of the Stone Library. Tradition has always attributed these maples to Charles Francis Adams.
- 580        875    Standing on the edge of the orchard can be seen the hackberry tree at the right-hand corner of the clothes yard. Near the rear door of the Old House is the American elm. To the left are four other maples which in 1920 Mr. Brooks Adams attributed to his father. These trees continue the south boundary of the orchard.
- 581        876    This European beech completes the belt of trees which form the south boundary of the orchard.
- 582        877    The east boundary of the orchard. The winter scene shows the belt of trees quite clearly. The large tree in the center is an old chestnut. It probably dates back to mid 1800 or before.
- 583        878    On the eastern boundary there are wild rum cherry trees and two cultivated cherries which are replacements of the old trees no longer living.
- 584        879    This photograph is the southeast corner of the east lawn taken in winter. There is a four-lane highway on the east side which makes this a very busy corner. The rapid transit tracks and the apartment houses have encroached upon the setting which John Adams called "Peacefield." Attention is called to the stone wall erected at various times from 1850 to 1874.
- 585        880    This illustration is the same corner as the previous view. The green grass, the stone wall and the dense foliage restore the appearance of John Adams' "Peacefield."





NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (CONTD.)

- 586        881     The winter scene of the south and east boundary showing the long stretch of stone wall. For years this stone wall has been a "walking" experience for toddlers holding onto their parents hands and for the idle and tired individuals to sit and watch the activity of Adams Street.
- 587        882     This view of the south wall in summer includes two young elms planted by the National Park Service in 1958 and 1967 as replacements. They are American elms -- each of symmetrical vase shape, with slender limbs and drooping twigs. With plenty of room to grow the branches should spread upward and at a considerable height sweep out to form a broad head.
- 588        883     Beside the Long Room is a small elm in the foreground of this cluster of trees. It, too, is an American vase-shaped elm. The tree it replaced was one of the most well shaped on the east lawn. This one promises to be a worthy successor. Not clearly in view, but to the North and slightly to the right of the elm is an almost perfect shaped pin oak. It was planted in 1956 near the stump of an old tree.
- 589        884     This is a winter view of the long walk of the old garden showing the house at the western end. Attention is called to the hedge, 9 inches in height. In the early spring the hedge surrounding the four rectangular beds shows the beautiful form of the 18th century garden.
- 590        885     This is the same as the preceding view except that this view shows the garden in summer with the blossoms and the wisteria growing so luxuriously on the south side of the library.
- 591        886     This shows the only surviving American elm which Charles Francis Adams and his father planted in front of the house. Originally there were four elms. There are four now -- three are replacements. It is the hope when they are 150 years old that they will be as graceful and beautiful as the elm in this photograph.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (CONTD.)

- 592        887    In the middle of the rectangular bed near the western boundary is the yellow-wood tree. Notice how interestingly it was placed, not in the center of the bed, but slightly to the right side.
- 593        888    Standing near the Stone Library, the view to the southwest is always impressive. The garden walks are still covered with fine gravel and raked daily. The dwarf English box hedge lines the entrance into the library.
- 594        889    To the left on the trellis is the original Abigail Adams rose brought from England in 1788. This photograph was taken at the close of the day just before the flag was removed at sunset. Few visitors see the garden at this time of day. To those who know the garden, the late afternoon view is the most beautiful of all. It is an absolutely quiet spot in the middle of an industrial city!!
- 595        890    At the northwest corner of the garden is the walnut tree attributed to John Quincy Adams. It marks the spot of the old summer house which existed during the era of John Adams and which served as an enclosure for John Quincy Adams' young seedlings.
- 596        891    Near the south wall are the two sweet bay trees which Abigail Adams set out as shrubs in her garden. When in blossom they perfume the whole area.
- 597        892    A view of the library in the middle of August with the cleome in blossom.
- 598        893    A view of the long walk in August. The trees in the distance are on the western boundary.
- 599        894    This is a view of the garden in the middle of September when the daisies and red salvia are in such profusion.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (CONTD.)

- 600        895    This hand-carved sign was designed by a descendant, Mary Ogden Abbott, and was intended to be the area sign. Since it is such a work of art, it hangs in the back hall of the old house and is only put out when very special people like the First Lady visits or when some member of the family has a special event at the house. Miss Abbott is considered by authorities to be the best woman wood carver in the United States.
- 601        896    This photograph is the Old House as it appears in 1970.











































































































































ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

*John Adams. John Quincy Adams.*

*Charles Francis Adams.*

*Henry Adams. Beulah Adams.*

U.S. Dept. of the Interior National Park Service







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