



OLD DARTMOUTH HISTORICAL SKETCHES

No. 19

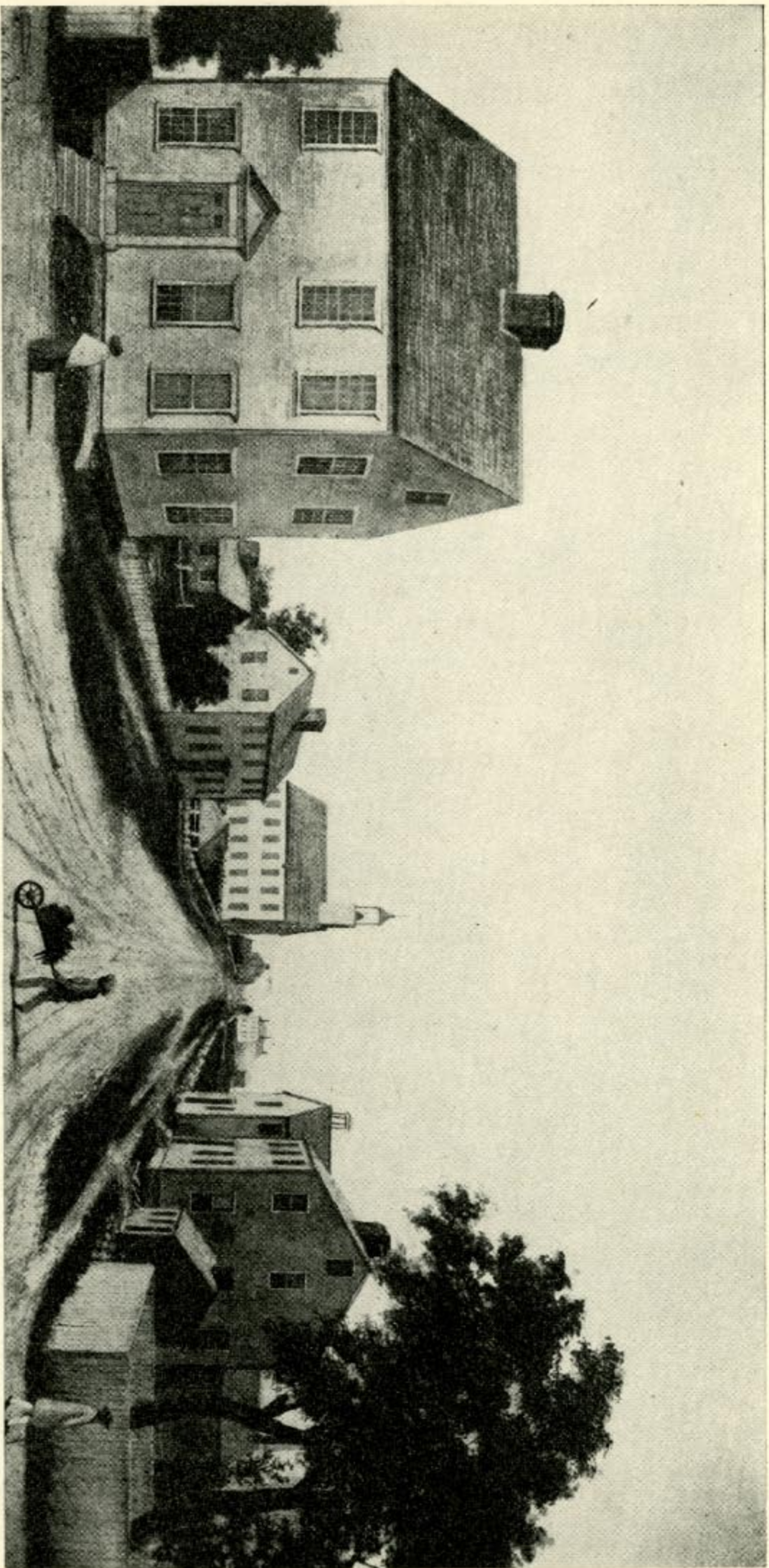
Being the proceedings of the eighteenth regular meeting of the
Old Dartmouth Historical Society, held in their building,
Water Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts, on January 14, 1908.

SOME OF THE STREETS OF THE TOWN OF NEW BEDFORD.

Elmore P. Haskins.

LIST OF STREETS ACCEPTED BY THE TOWN OF NEW BEDFORD BEFORE 1847.

[NOTE.—The "Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches" will be published by the society quarterly and may be purchased for ten cents each on application to the Secretary and also at Hutchinson's Book Store.]



PURCHASE STREET FROM UNION IN 1820 — BY WILLIAM A. WALL.

(Through the courtesy of the Mercury)

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Eighteenth Annual Meeting

OF THE

OLD DARTMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

IN THEIR BUILDING

WATER STREET, NEW BEDFORD

MASSACHUSETTS

JANUARY 14, 1908

The 18th regular meeting of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society was held at 8 o'clock January 14, 1908, in their building on Water street. There was a large attendance.

President Edmund Wood, who presided, announced the gift to the society of an oil portrait of William A. Wall, painted by the same gentleman.

He gave this graceful appreciation of the painter:

"Since the last meeting several valuable donations have been made. Members are beginning to appreciate the fact that old heirlooms scarcely treasured at home and seldom exhibited, are here objects of constant interest and intelligent study. It seems almost selfish to keep such things wrapped up and packed away in clos-

ets, when here is offered such an opportunity for their permanent exhibition and custody.

"One of these interesting gifts is an oil portrait of William A. Wall, painted by himself. This is presented to the society by his two daughters. Students of the early life of any community have found that often the most faithful historian of past times is the contemporary artist and portrait painter. The most that renowned historians have been able to do is to attempt to recreate the past—is to bring before us by their word-painting the men and women as they lived, and to portray houses and streets and river banks as they existed and appeared. Fortunate and rich is this community which possessed this re-

cording artist who jotted down year after year with devoted and enthusiastic labor scenes in and about Old Dartmouth and placed in permanent form on canvas the faces of the men and women who were working out the destinies of this township.

This is the service which our own William A. Wall so faithfully performed for this locality, and we shall welcome these historical pictures as they come to us one by one, and shall hang them among our treasures.

"Our walls are not the walls of an art museum. Our audiences are not criticising our pictures because they are pre-Raphaelite or modern or impressionistic, or debating whether the artist reflects the Munich or the Paris school. Their value to us is if they recreate with fidelity a bit of Old Dart-

mouth and bring to life among us the face and form of some nearly forgotten worthy.

"Many persons have written picturesque descriptions of the appearance of our streets and the life of our people one hundred years ago—but the greatest descriptive treasure of that kind that this society will ever possess is the picture of the Old Four Corners, by William A. Wall. It may be easy to point out an error in its perspective drawing, but to us it will remain as our best known artistic possession.

"Some of us remember William A. Wall, faithful to his lofty ideals and his own conceptions of art to the very end, and with honor we hang his own portrait among the makers of Old Dartmouth History.

Some of the Streets of the Town of New Bedford

By Elmore P. Haskins

When in 1652, John Cook, Samuel Hicks, George Soule, Samuel Cuthbert, Jonathan Delano, James Shaw, actual settlers and other purchasers, came from Plymouth to inspect their newly acquired possessions, they doubtless followed the old Indian trail from Plymouth to Newport. This trail, known as the "Old Rhode Island Way," or the "King's Highway" did not pass through what afterward became the industrial centre of the town of New Bedford. Leaving the head of the river, it followed the line of the Tarkiln Hill road to the present Acushnet station; thence through the Hathaway road to Smith's Mills, by the old road to Head of Westport; then through Tiverton to Dan Howland's Ferry (1685-1690) and thence to Newport.

To inspect this portion of their purchase, the new comers left the main trail at the head of the river and followed what is believed to have been a minor Indian trail, which ran beside the river bank, then up the slope near Weld street, and wound along the crest of the hill to Clark's Cove.

Though lacking the water power around which the early settlers gathered at Smith's and Russell's Mills, the level land and wooded slope on the west bank of the river, appealed to the new settlers as desirable for farming purposes.

The Plymouth proprietors and owners of this territory made a partial division of their lands in 1690, and about 1710, Benjamin Crane, surveyor, defined the boundary lines of the various farms through which ran the old trail or path.

Among the owners at this date we find the names Allen, Ward, Jenney, Pope, Willis, Kempton and Russell.

One of the first records of this path is found in the old layout of 1704--5. It reads:

"Laid out a drift way to go down through the lots on the West side of Cushenit river, to turn out of the Country road a little to the westward of the first brook on the west side of the bridge over Cushenit river where is now and so in the old path till it comes to a marked red oke bush and then to turn out on the west side of

the old way and so to go along in the new path above the new fenced land till it comes to the land of Stephen Peckum, and then over the bridge in his pasture and then south-westerly till it comes into the path and thence along the path till it comes into the way that comes from Clark's Cove."

We may not be able to follow the bed of the first brook west from the river, or to locate the "red oke bush," or the bridge in pasture of "Stephen Peckum;" but in the County street and Acushnet avenue of our day, straightened to be sure, to meet the demands of a later time, we are, in part, following the old paths used by the Indians and the Pilgrims.

In 1800, the town of New Bedford laid out the road from Clark's cove "to the way from the Head of the river to Tarkiln Hill." They laid it out four rods wide.

In 1830, the street was accepted fifty feet wide from South to Kempton and the name changes from County road to County street.

To properly describe County street, would be to rehearse a goodly portion of the history of the town and city of New Bedford, and add an important chapter to the records of the older town of Dartmouth.

For a hundred years it was the main thoroughfare of the town, and residential from its beginnings. Near it were the substantial form-houses of our earliest settlers, Joseph Russell, Ephraim Kempton and Col. Samuel Willis. In time, the heavy timbered, lean to or gambrel roofs gave place to more classical lines. Solidity was still the chief feature, but the style of architecture was borrowed from Greece.

These house, with frontages like Greek temples, dotted the old way and became the pride of the town's people.

In 1835, Charles Francis Adams after visiting us writes in his diary:—"We were taken to see the street which has risen like magic, and which presents more noble looking mansions than any other in the country." High walls, sheltered beautiful gardens, with quaint box-bordered beds where traditions flourished as did the peonies and the larkspur.

This old way could boast of one garden, one of the finest in America, the James Arnold garden, where the flowers thought it their business and duty to bloom for the public; for here, contrary to all custom the public were freely invited, a pioneer step toward the development of a park system, a system which does so much towards giving happiness and contentment to the people of a city.

At frequent intervals trees were planted along the minor Indian trail, and these have made portions of the street of our day, picturesque indeed with their over-arching leafy branches in summer and their "twig tracery" against the sky in winter.

The soldiers of five wars have marched upon County street.

Capt. Church, the famous Indian fighter, trudged through it with his little band on his way to the Russell garrison. (July 1676.)

Captain Kempton's minute men, capable of "stout deeds," tramped through it.

The Redcoats flushed with victory from a raid on defenceless store houses, marched bravely up King street to the Country road, and on to Acushnet to the work of destruction of more defenceless dwellings.

The soldiers of 1812 marched through it to certain victory.

The street has known the foot-step of every citizen soldier of the Civil War.

It welcomed those who faced the fever and the danger of our latest war with Spain.

It has felt the thrill of patriotism of each Independence Day since public celebrations first began.

The broad, well kept thoroughfare with its pleasant homes is now dotted with churches. Rich as it is in historical associations and beauty, it will ever remain our highest pride.

The cart path of Joseph Russell is the present Union street. Its surface was rough and stony when in 1760 the produce of his farm was hauled to the shore in fitting the early whaling schooners for their little voyages of a few weeks cruising on the Atlantic. The business prospered and additional road facilities became a necessity.

Joseph Russell had two fortunes within his grasp. One was in the sea, the other in his lands, and he seized them both. As early as 1764 he devised a plan whereby a prosperous village should be built upon the lower portion of his farm. This plan, in its development, was not only profitable to him, but was comprehensive and far reaching in its results, and laid the foundation of our whole street system.

It had Union street for its base and

included Spring, School, Walnut streets and eight cross streets, commencing at the river. He assumed that the squares would soon be occupied by home makers who were attracted by the increasing business at the river side, and his hopes were realized as the following will show.

The first land sold, on the line of future Union street, was on the south side of the open way extending from "the first street," now Water street, to the river. This was in 1761. In 1762, Elnathan Sampson purchased the land on the south west corner of "the first street" and the open way.

By the close of 1765, all the land on the north side of the way as far west as Acushnet avenue had been conveyed. Before the close of the year 1800, all the land with the exception of four lots, on both sides of the street, as far west as present Eighth street had been sold, and besides this, purchasers had been found for forty other parcels of land between Union and Walnut streets. By 1815, but six parcels remained unconveyed in the tract bounded by Union, Walnut, County streets and the river.

It is interesting to note that one, the parcel of land situated on the southwest corner of Union street and Acushnet avenue, was purchased by Daniel Ricketson, Sr., and still remains in the possession of his family. The building now standing on this site was partly timbered from the oak trees which grew upon this lot.

The Russell comprehensive plan was realized. Rows of houses were builded on the trodden paths constantly widening by time and use.

By 1800 First and Second streets had crossed the three parallel thoroughfares known in the early days as Queen, Spring and New streets.

This development was all but completely checked by the Revolution. During the war and in the three years following but two deeds were presented for record for Joseph Russell's land.

In considering the small number of recorded deeds in the decade following 1774, one reads between the lines the extent to which the war had absorbed the energy and business interests of the town north of Union street and developed the caution south of it.

In 1765 Joseph Rotch bought the famous ten acre lot extending from the river nearly to Pleasant street. Its northern boundary was the south side of neighbor Kempton's land, one hundred feet south from Elm street.

Joseph Russell was far too wise to sell land by the acre on what might become a popular residential and business thoroughfare. For the south

boundary of the ten acre lot he established a line about two hundred and sixty-six (266) feet north of Union street. He also disposed of nearly all the land between this tract and County street. These sales established a division three hundred and fifty (350) feet in width between two sections of the town, which remains in part to this day.

Joseph Rotch retained the entire tract during his lifetime, and nearly his entire purchase remained in the Rotch family for sixty (60) years and more.

So long and so perfectly was this section kept intact that Daniel Ricketson remembered well hay makers swinging their scythes where the Baptist church now stands.

It was not until 1796, when the Congregational society purchased for forty dollars the land where the Merchants' bank now stands, that any portion of the great tract was sold.

A year before this sale and thirty years after the purchase of this central tract, William street was presented to the town for acceptance from Water street to a point a little over two hundred (200) feet west of the new church site, and Purchase and Second streets crossed the dividing tract.

Early New Bedford spread over the portions of two farms, one owned by Joseph Russell, the other by the Kempton heirs.

The great farm of Ephraim Kempton, the first of the name to make Dartmouth his residence, extended from one hundred (100) feet south of Elm street nearly to Smith street on the north, and from the river to Rockdale avenue. On these farms grew two rival settlements.

While Joseph Russell was planning a future city, and Joseph Rotch was looking forward to the capture of the oil markets of the world, the Kempton farmers perhaps saw visions and dreamed dreams of great clipper ships being builded on their shores, or their pastures and their swamp lands being occupied by homes, work-shops and stores.

We cannot now state the time when the owners of the Kempton farm first opened the ways and streets upon which we travel today. Probably before the conveyances whereby we trace their lines—in 1772. Zadok Maxfield, cooper and surveyor, recorded the first sale of Kempton land on the corner of Maxfield and Second sts. As early as 1774, George Claghorn, builder of the Constitution, established a ship yard on what is now the junction of North and Second streets. The carting of the heavy logs for this yard may have opened a new path over the rocky hill. Its importance was so apparent

that in 1787, thirteen years after the location of the ship yard, it was accepted by the town as North street.

As we have already stated, there was a lack of cross streets between Union and this first street through the Kempton property. It will be interesting to note in part the differences developed on account of this separation.

South of the Kempton line lived the men who owned the whaling and merchant ships; north of it lived the builders of these vessels.

At the south the Friends' meeting maintained its long, deep silences; to the north of the barrier the Congregational meetings rang with hymns.

In those days the churches could not always be depended upon to sow seeds of unity, so if there were two churches, there must necessarily be two schools. The Friends, very early, established one on Bethel street, while the north proprietors established one on Purchase street. Rev. Dr. West seemed to have been the presiding genius of the latter, and no doubt the children of his parish formed the majority of the forty permitted to attend.

New dwellings, general traffic, church goers, school children developed a new path, and the street we call Purchase, crossed the barrier and was accepted from Union to Maxfield in 1795. For years streets developed north and south of the barrier, and ducats and decades were needed to unite them, nearly a century in fact to connect two of our great thoroughfares. Pleasant and Third streets. Though most of the cross streets are continuous, in name they still refuse to cross their original boundaries.

We have North and South Second streets; North and South Sixth streets; Fifth and Pleasant street; Fourth and Purchase streets. Only one of these old streets, Acushnet avenue, can boast of a new name. In joining Third and Ray streets, both names were abandoned, and it is now one of our most appropriately named thoroughfares, though it is to be regretted that the name of R-e-a is lost.

The rapid growth of the town made an increasing demand for new thoroughfares. In the year 1800 a great interest in street extension was developed. Spring, School, Second, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and High streets received attention. In the ten years following 1800 many new streets were added to the accepted list, Elm, High, Willis and Bush streets among the number. Roads leading to adjoining villages were also considered in the development of the town.

Even after Uriel Rea opened the first store on the corner of Prospect

and "the First street," the people of the little settlement patronized Elishib Smith, owner of the saw and grist mills, from whom Smith Mills village derives its name. Here also was the most important store in the whole community, the great department store of the Cummings. To reach this store the customer must choose one of two routes. One to Acushnet, then by the Hathaway road, which was the old Indian trail; or along the head of Clark's cove, past Bliss corner, then by way of the Slocum and Hathaway roads to the mills. To quote Abigail Dodge they were "twelve miles from a lemon."

In 1787 a street was opened from County street as far west as Noel Taber road—now Rockdale avenue, the west line of the Kempton farm.

This was the year of separation of the town of New Bedford from the town of Dartmouth.

The inhabitants of New Bedford were anxious for a more direct way to one of their sources of supplies. The citizens of the parent town declined to grant the way. Why should they waste their substance to save people of another town a few miles of travel? It was not until the year 1797, and only then by the order of the court, that the direct communication was made a possibility.

This new connecting link proved of such mutual benefit, however, that in 1819, the two towns joined in laying out another straight connecting thoroughfare from Allen street in New Bedford to Elm street in South Dartmouth. From New Bedford to the Dartmouth line it is named Dartmouth street; in Dartmouth to the New Bedford line, it is called Bedford street.

Benjamin Crane, surveyor, a sensible broad-minded man, spent the major portion of the years from 1710 to 1721 in dividing the town of Dartmouth into farms and laying out its roads. Each road was four rods in width. After his death, the "proprietors" passed an unwise vote in accordance with which all roads were laid out two rods wide. Fortunately County street followed the earlier measurement.

The first accepted streets of the town were short and of varying widths. Water street was thirty (30) feet wide; Union forty-six (46); Second forty (40); Fourth thirty-eight (38); and Fifth thirty-nine (39) feet in width.

The "red oke" or "crooked black oak" method of defining the lines of roads and streets caused endless trouble and confusion. In 1829, the town appointed a committee of prominent citizens to establish the lines

of the streets of the town as accurately as possible, and secure them by durable monuments."

The committee consisted of Samuel Rodman, Jr., Thomas Mandell, James Arnold, Abraham Gifford, Thomas A. Greene, Killey Eldridge and James Howland, 2d.

In their report they stated, that, while measures by course and compass might serve in an open country, in a compact town, a few inches is deemed of sufficient importance to involve men in serious disputes and difficulties. They found that fences, stone walls and buildings extended liberally into accepted thoroughfares. They discovered that Joshua Davis' shop projected about two feet, two inches into Second street; that Zenas Whittemore occupied three feet, eight inches of the same street for his soap and candle manufactory; that his neighbor, Charles Cannon, had built his house and shop two feet five inches over the proper line; that "the wood house and chaise house of Wm. Rotch, Jr., extended from five to nine inches beyond the south line of William street as now laid."

The committee recommended that these projecting buildings and fences be allowed to remain, unless the town for public purposes removed them at the town's expense. After stating that there still remained certain desirable changes that may be made the report closes as follows:

"If, therefore, the town shall think proper to continue the committee for the purpose of effecting this object in such way as they may deem most eligible, and calculated to fix boundaries which shall hereafter be legal and conclusive on all parties, and report hereafter. It will meet the views of your committee, as to what the public good may require."

They established accurate and permanent boundaries for nearly all the accepted streets of the town, and the results of their labors remain to this day. When we see our surveyors digging up the corners of the older streets, we may be sure they are searching for the monuments of 1830. "Cut," their report says, "of granite, with tops squared and a cross cut or drilled hole marking precisely the line of intersection of the streets described."

Forty feet was considered the most desirable width for the streets of the town. A singular exception was North street, which in 1787 was accepted forty-eight (48) feet wide. It was too liberal in width, however, and in 1823, east of Ray street, was reduced to the common measurement.

We wish that the fathers could have allowed us a few more feet of side

walk for trunks of our splendid elms, a few more feet of roadway for their spreading branches, and a few more feet for sunlight and a broader view. But utility was the watchword of that laborious, accumulating time.

It was many years before the prejudice against any change could be overcome, and the desirability of wider thoroughfares acknowledged by the citizens and their officials. The friction caused by the widening of Pleasant and Purchase streets is still fresh in our memories. The records of town meetings and meetings of successive boards of aldermen and city councils, and the board of public works, teem with the minutes of discussions on the widening of our public streets.

As late as 1884 an editorial in our leading daily reads in part:

"We advise the city council to stop wasting their time in senseless bickerings, lay them out forty feet wide, and repeal the ill-considered ordinance requiring all streets to be fifty feet wide."

The writer was in error as to the existence of such an ordinance, but it is interesting to note that the street under consideration was Coggeshall street.

In 1764, Joseph Russell made his plan, sold his lots, bounded on streets of his own plotting, and when they were built upon to the extent that his patrons demanded the service, the town alone could render, requested their acceptance. His friendly rivals at the north followed his thrifty example. The land owner of today goes one step further, and erects his buildings in the line of future streets, feeling certain that he will be paid liberally for the damage he has caused the patient public, the city becomes an accessory after the act.

"The majority of our early settlers were a people that cared little for outward and visible signs." To perpetuate their family names by names of streets did not appeal to the early owners of the land. They cared little for such memorials. Joseph Russell might have named his "open way" after himself, but like a good and loyal subject he named it King street.

The spirit that led New York citizens to pull down the statue of George III. and prompted good wives in the South to turn his portrait to the wall, led our people to change the names of streets—from King to Main; from Queen to School. The name "Main" suited the people better, after the English soldiery had burned ships, ware-houses and homes. Not the entire length was so called, for the splendid view from that portion east

of Water street, gave it the name of Prospect street (1818).

"Thirteen colonies—rivals of one another, envious of one another, jealous of one another, instinctively hostile, in the presence of a common peril, laid aside their jealousies and animosities, and formed a union of states—united by a triple bond, commercial, judicial and political." All of this history is commemorated in the name Union street.

With a wealth of local and colonial names at his command, Joseph Russell with the plain simplicity of his time, gave numerals to his eight cross streets. He called the street which ran beside the river "the First street." When in 1769 it was accepted by the town, its name was changed to Water street. His "the Second street" is the First street on later maps, and the others were renamed as they now appear.

Some local condition or circumstance supplied a name in those early times. The copious springs near its eastern end furnished the name Spring street, and a walnut grove doubtless gave the name to Walnut street. There were flowing springs south of School on Sixth street. There was such a generous supply of water that an aqueduct association was incorporated to carry it to the river, for local purposes, and for the supply of vessels. The company was dissolved before much actual work was done, but for a long time that part of Sixth street was called Fountain street.

It may be interesting to note the growth of the town through the development of a single street.

Third street, called by Joseph Russell (1764) "the Fourth street from the river," in 1796, ran from Main to Spring street; the following year it reached the "New street," now Walnut street. There was an obstruction in its path near Russell street, for William Rotch's rope walk barred the way. The difficulty was overcome according to the records of 1807 by a "proper arch made over the walk, for the rope makers work." The street was then accepted as far as South street. This portion being named Long Gate street. The town had grown so rapidly in the eleven years, that a thoroughfare, forty feet wide, had been accepted, extending from Union to South street.

It has had various names in its history. It has been called "the Fourth street," Third street, Long Gate street, South Third street and now Acushnet avenue.

North of Union this thoroughfare has been called by several names. From Kempton to Willis is bore the name of Rea, from Uriel Rea, one of

the land owners of the time; thence Race, R-a-y, later North Third, and now Acushnet avenue.

Middle street is one of the oldest thoroughfares dating back to 1788. Ephriham, son of William, not to be confounded with six other successive Ephrihams in the Kempton line, laid out this street through the middle of his farm, from whence it is believed to have taken its name. Its lower portion was once called Bridge street.

One of the Kempton name set up a grist mill on his farm (three hundred feet). east of the County road on Wind Mill Hill. The name of the street helps us to recall the ancient mill.

It is an axiom of history that names stick to the soil.

The names of many of the original owners of the farms we see today, i. e., Allen, Russell, Kempton, Willis.

Benjamin Allen in driving to his farm house through his lane, traversed the Allen street of today. It is unfortunate that the land east of County street was so conveyed that Allen street could not continue in a straight course to the river and bear one name, and so change the names of Wing and Howland streets, and give these families a more retentive thoroughfare.

There were several attempts at naming Russell street. The Russell street of today was first called Hallifax, from a little group of houses that bore that name. Gilbert Russell in releasing a portion of his land requested of the town authorities that the name be changed from Hallifax to the family name.

Near the close of the century when the simplicity of names was disappearing, we find family names rather than numerals.

Cornelius Grinnell, one of nature's noblemen, gave his name to Grinnell street; James Henry Howland, Alexander Campbell, Patrick Maxfield and other men prominent in our history have their names perpetuated in our records and in our streets. The homestead of Zacharia Hillman was on the corner of Second and the street which bears his name. The name Hillman, recalls the fine clipper ships that established the fame of New Bedford ship-yards.

There have been two Morgan streets, one on either side of the Morgan lot. The one at south was first named Jail, then Morgan, now Court street. Later Charles W. Morgan laid out the street at the north.

The old homestead of Gilbert Russell standing at the head of Walnut street, had a fine orchard at the rear, a portion of which was sacrificed for Orchard street.

When the icy blasts swept down the

river and across the unprotected town. North Second street bore the name of Cold street. Later it was called North Water street.

It was customary for the owners of the land to give sections for the streets, satisfied with the prosperity following their development. The opening of one of our principal business thoroughfares was a notable exception. Here the town authorities were forced to purchase land, so named the way Purchase street.

Marsh Lane has given up its geographical name and is now called Pine street.

Its neighbor, Leonard street, recalls the location of the oil refinery of Samuel Leonard, who in the height of his business career, was said to be the greatest oil manufacturer in the world.

The historical value of a Christian name is doubtful. Comparatively few of our citizens know that William street was named for William Rotch; or that Charles street was named for Charles Russell. The lower portion of the latter street was called High and when it was thought wise for the street to bear one name, the Christian name was discarded and its descriptive one retained.

Ezra Francis, one of the best masons of his time, was given the privilege by some town authorities of naming four streets. He was in all probability a lover of trees, for the names selected by him were Chestnut, Cypress, Spruce and Cedar. In the early deeds, Cypress is referred to as contemplated Apple street. Both tree names were subsequently set aside and it now bears the name of Cottage street.

Warren Ladd, for many years the railroad's local representative, named Merrimac street for the Merimac river, near which he lived as a boy.

Linden street was formerly called Jackson. State was Cushing street.

Griffin, formerly Butler street, was named for Griffin Barney, who owned a rope-walk on the south side of the street.

Coffin street was named for David Coffin, who built the brick house on the corner of Walnut and Sixth streets.

Clinton was first named Granite street.

William street, as previous stated was named for William Rotch, but was formerly called Market street. Daniel Ricketson says of William Rotch, one of our most illustrious citizens. "He was frank, generous, high-minded in its truest sense, a more perfect character it has never fallen to our lot to know. He was one of the great business men of his time."

After the Revolution he met the representatives of England and

France, in an attempt to alter the excessive duties on whale oil, existing at that time. William Pitt declined to reduce the tariff that crippled his business. The French government, however, favorably considered his overtures, and he established a branch of New Bedford's whaling industry in Dunkirk, France. He returned to New Bedford in 1795. It is a significant that three prominent streets, North Second, Purchase and William were accepted the year of his return.

An unusual feature was connected with the laying out of William street. From Second to Acushnet avenue it was eighty feet in width, the central square being planned for a great market place. By the abandonment of the project, a great opportunity was lost for a hundred years, as it would have illustrated the value of broad streets and open spaces.

When the street was narrowed to its later limit, forty feet, the town released the land on either side to William Rotch. He gave in exchange the lot on Purchase street "between the two Congregational meeting houses," now occupied by the central engine house.

Land speculators furnish names to some of our latest-unaccepted-streets. To call the attention of buyers to these outlying tracts, they named their little plot of farming land, "King Croft," their scrub oak lot, "Morris Park." They delight their customers with such high-sounding names as "Monmouth Place," "Stirling Street," "Longwood Avenue" and "Rochambeau." The efforts of the speculators seem a trifle bombastic, but these hint the wisdom of careful naming for the happiness of future home makers.

If one studies the map of New Bedford, he will discover that some of the streets have been carelessly named. Which one of us would not prefer to write County road for an address rather than Grit street? Well named streets, those named for worthy pioneers and citizens have many missions.

Names on signs and lanterns speak to the thousands who throng our streets, and help awaken an interest in the history of the city. May not the Dartmouth Historical society sometime manifest an interest in securing better recognition of the neglected names of the founders of the town.

Thomas Ward was the owner of more than four thousand acres of land within its limits. He owned a large section extending south from Tarkiln Hill road nearly to Belleville avenue. Its eastern line was the river, and it included Brooklawn Park. He also owned the land through which Thompson and Rivet streets now run, and on which the Howland Mills were built; it also included Winterville. He held the office of lieutenant governor of the state of Rhode Island, and was a man of influence in his day. The street, only a few rods in length, named Ward, runs through land which he never owned.

The society might suggest the giving back to Park place its old name of Ricketson, for this little street was the southern boundary of one of the tracts owned by Daniel Ricketson in 1788.

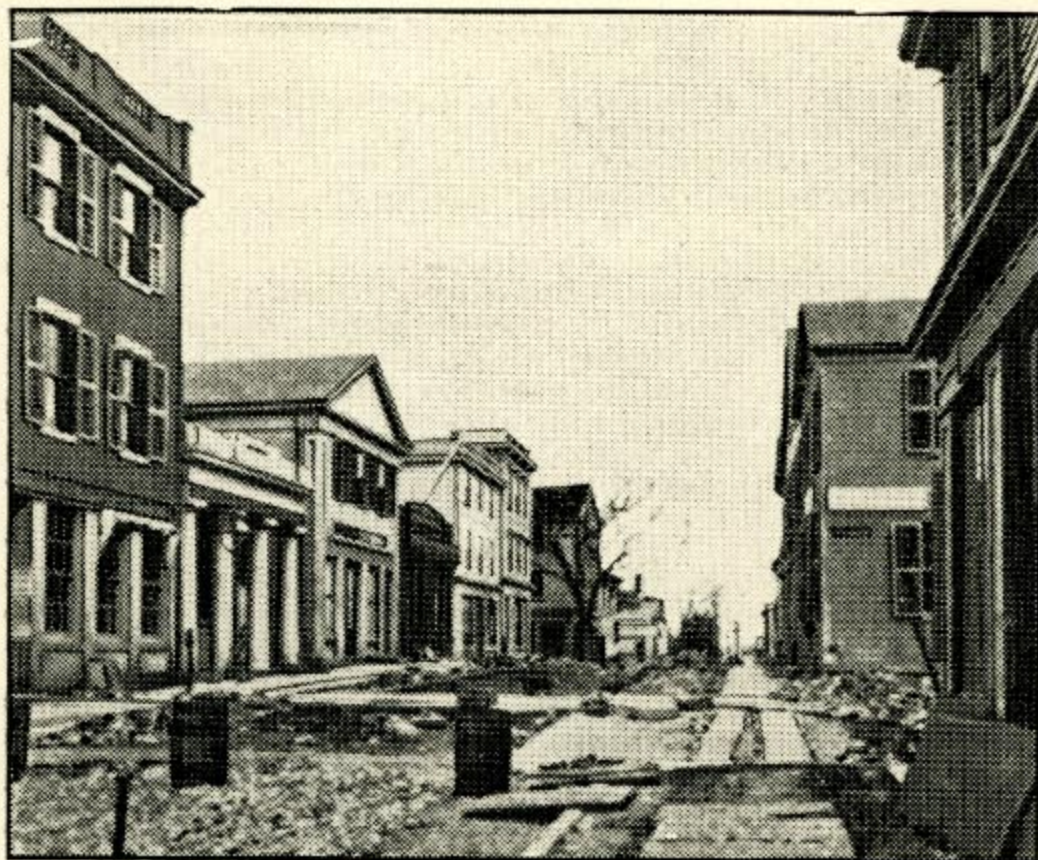
The recognition came late for some of the prominent names. It was fifty years after Joseph Russell laid out his eight cross streets, that the name of present Russell street appeared. It was nearly one hundred years after Joseph Rotch established the whaling industry, that his descendant in the sixth generation, then mayor of New Bedford, laid out a street bearing the family name.

Following the example of uniting Third and Ray streets, many of our famous men might find deserved recognition. Purchase and Fourth, Pleasant and Fifth, Foster and Sixth, might commemorate the names of Rotch, Rodman and Ricketson.

May not this society take an interest in suggesting for old and new streets, the names of citizens whom we delight to honor: "A witness to the generations as they pass."

PRESENT SITE OF OLD DARTMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

× Bedford Commercial Bank Building



WATER STREET, NEAR WILLIAM, PREVIOUS TO 1870

(By courtesy of The Standard)

Streets Accepted by the Town of New Bedford Before 1847.

ACUSHNET AVE.—Union to Spring, 1796, "Third st.;" Kempton to Willis, 1798, Rea st.; Bush to South, 1804, "Long Gate st.;" Willis to Pearl, 1838, Race and Ray.

ALLEN ST.—County to Dartmouth, 1819; it crossed the Allen farm.

ARNOLD ST.—Opened 1821, James Arnold.

BEDFORD ST.—County to Acushnet ave., 1833; to Ash st., 1842.

BELVILLE RD.—Wharf to Main st., 1846.

BROCK AVE.—An Indian Trail, laid out in 1717 as Clark's Neck rd.; north end changed, 1832 and 1792.

BUSH ST.—Water to Fourth sts., 1807; Seventh to County sts., 1835; Sixth to Seventh sts., 1841; Fourth to Sixth sts., 1842; renamed Madison st.

CAMPBELL ST.—Purchase to Pleasant st., 1838; to State st., 1844. Alexander Campbell owned land on this street. He married a daughter of Charles Russell.

CANNON ST.—Second st. to Acushnet ave., 1837; to Water st., 1845. Henry Cannon lived at corner of South Second st.

CEDAR ST.—Kempton to North st., 1846.

CENTER ST.—Front to Water st., 1838. Was on the line between land of Joseph Russell and Joseph Rotch.

CHARLES ST.—Renamed High st.

CHEAPSIDE.—Incorporated into Pleasant st.

COFFIN ST.—Second to Water st., 1844. David Coffin had an oil factory thereon.

COUNTY ST.—An ancient Indian Trail. Laid out 1717 and 1800, and laid out as County st., 1830.

COURT ST.—County to Cedar st., 1828. Court House Built in 1828. Jail and Morgan sts.

COVE RD.—County to Crapo st., 1800.

COVE ST.—County st. to Middle Point rd., 1832.

DARTMOUTH ST.—Allen st., 366 ft., to Brook, 1819; "The New Road to Dartmouth."

EIGHTH ST.—William to Spring st., 1835; to Elm st., 1842.

ELM ST.—Water to Second st., 1801; to Purchase st., 1819; to Pleasant st., 1808; to County st., 1831; west from County st., 1843.

FIFTH ST.—Union to Spring st., 1801; to School st., 1824; Walnut to Russell st., 1829; School to Walnut st., 1831.

FIRST ST.—Union to Spring st., 1796; to School st., 1839; to Walnut st., 1844; Walnut to Madison st., 1831; to Coffin st., 1844; Grinnell to South st., 1839.

FOSTER ST.—Middle to North st., 1837; to Hillman st., 1843; Hillman to Maxfield st., 1837. The wife of Patrick Foster was a Kempton, and owned land on this street.

FOURTH ST.—Union to Spring st., 1801; to Madison st., 1807; to Russell st., 1829; to Bedford st., 1842.

FRONT ST.—Named Orange st., at first.

GRIFFIN ST.—Water st. to Acushnet ave., 1834. Griffin Barney lived on south side, and was concerned in the Rope Walk between Howland and Griffin sts.

GRINNELL ST.—Acushnet ave. to Water st., 1838; to County st., 1844. Capt. Cornelius Grinnell owned land thereon.

HAWTHORN ST.—County to Cottage st., 1845.

HIGH ST.—Purchase to Second st., 1801; to River st., 1802; west of Purchase, as Charles st., 1821.

HILL ST.—Kempton to North st., 1840; to Hillman st., 1844. Capt. Benjamin Hill married one of the Kemptons who owned this land.

HILLMAN ST.—Purchase to Water st., 1808; to Summer st., 1835. Zacharian Hillman lived at the corner of North Second st.

HOWARD AVE.—Belleville rd. to River, 1804.

KEMPTON ST.—County to Noel Taber rd., now Rockdale ave., 1769; called "New Road to Smith's Mills"; to Foster st., 1835; to Purchase st., 1836; to Second st., 1842. It crossed the Kempton Homestead.

LINDEN ST.—Purchase to County st., 1818; Jackson and Hill sts.

MADISON ST.—Fourth to Water st., 1807; Seventh to County st., 1835; Sixth to Seventh st., 1841; to Sixth st., 1842.

MARKET ST.—Pleasant to Sixth st., 1839.

MAXFIELD ST.—Acushnet ave., to River, 1797; to Purchase st., 1808. Zadock Maxfield owned land on corner of Second st.

- MECHANICS LANE.**—Private way. Accepted Pleasant to Purchase st., 1906.
- MIDDLE ST.**—Water to Second st., 1788; Second to County st., 1798; to Summer st., 1837. Was on centre line of land of Manasseh Kempton at that date.
- MILL ST.**—Purchase to Foster st., 1806; to Hill st., 1835. The Kemptons had a mill east of County st., and north side thereof.
- MORGAN'S LANE.**—Where the William Rotch Rope Walk stood. Morgan's Row. Row of houses owned by Charles W. Morgan.
- MOUNT PLEASANT.**—Perry's Neck rd.
- NORTH ST.**—County st. to River, 1787. At that date northernmost street.
- NORTH SECOND ST.**—Union to Middle st., 1795; Middle to Kempton st., 1794; Kempton to North st., 1794; North to Maxfield st., 1797. North Water st., Cold st.
- NORTH SIXTH ST.**—Elm to Middle st., 1833; Union to William st., 1836; to Elm st., 1837.
- NORTH WATER ST.**—Union to William st., 1769; to Middle st., 1788; Middle to North st., 1840; to Hillman st., 1846.
- ORCHARD ST.**—Union to Court st., 1842; Bedford to Hawthorn, 1843. West of the orchard of Gilbert Russell, later William R. Rotch.
- PEARL ST.**—Purchase st to Acushnet ave., 1840.
- PLEASANT ST.**—High to North st., 1806; to Willis st., 1836; to Maxfield st., 1838; to Pearl st., 1845.
- PURCHASE ST.**—Union to Maxfield st., 1795; to Weld st., 1802. Part of the location was purchased by the town.
- ROCKDALE AVE.**—Kempton st. to line of Smith st., 1769; Noel Taber rd. He lived near head of Parker st. It led to the Stone Quarry on the Hathaway rd.
- RODMAN ST.**—Water to Front st., 1841. Samuel Rodman, Sr., owned land on both sides.
- ROSE ALLEY.**—Opened 1792. The Rose Garden of Benjamin Taber.
- RUSSELL ST.**—County to Sixth st., 1821; as Halifax; to Acushnet ave., 1833.
- SCHOOL ST.**—Water to Avenue. as Queen st., before the Revolution. Named School, 1801; Sixth to Acushnet ave., 1808. Penney Wing's School was on north side between Fifth and Sixth sts.
- SEAR'S CT.**—Private way. Willard Sear's tannery at side.
- SEVENTH ST.**—Union to Walnut st., 1807; to Madison st., 1838.
- SMITH ST.**—County st., westward, 1842.
- SOUTH ST.**—County st. to the Avenue, 1804; to Front st., 1846. Southernmost street at that date.
- SOUTH SECOND ST.**—Union to School st., 1801; Walnut to Cannon st., 1803; Grinnell to South st., 1845.
- SOUTH SIXTH ST.**—Union to Spring st., 1801; to Walnut st., 1806; to Bedford st., 1818; to Wing st., 1835.
- SOUTH WATER ST.**—Union to Madison st., 1769; to Griffin st., 1834; to Cove st., 1839.
- SPRING ST.**—Second st. to Sixth, 1801; County to Sixth, 1824.
- STATE ST.**—Campbell to Willis st., 1844; Cushing st.
- SUMMER ST.**—Elm to Middle st., 1846; to Kempton st., from Middle, 1837.
- THOMAS ST.**—Hillman to Maxfield st., 1841. Thomas Kempton owned land there.
- UNION ST.**—County to River, 1769; to Orchard st., 1842; east of Water st., Prospect, King, Main and Union sts. Before Revolution King.
- WALDEN ST.**—Hillman to Maxfield, 1834. John Walden lived corner of Hillman.
- WALNUT ST.**—County to Water st., 1796.
- WASHINGTON ST.**—County to Dartmouth st., 1846.
- WILLIAM ST.**—Water to Purchase st., 1795; to County st., 1830. First named Market st., named in 1830 for William Rotch.
- WILLIS ST.**—Purchase st to the Avenue, 1803; to County st., 1812. It crossed the farm of Col. Samuel Willis.
- WING ST.**—County st. to Acushnet ave., 1821. It crossed the land of Edward Wing.



WILLIAM STREET FROM PURCHASE
Before Acushnet Avenue was cut through in 1874

(By courtesy of The Standard)