

PUBLICATIONS

OF

The Colonial Society of Massachusetts

VOLUME XI

TRANSACTIONS

1906-1907

Printed at the Charge of the Edward Wheelwright Fund



Gc
973.206
C8m2p
v. XI

BOSTON

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

1910

Mr. HENRY H. EDES read the following paper, written by Mr. Michael J. Canavan, on—

MR. BLACKSTONE'S "EXCELLENT SPRING."

When Governor Winthrop's scurvy-stricken party of Puritans arrived at Charlestown from Salem towards the end of June, 1630, after a long voyage of eighteen weeks in cramped quarters, they set up booths and tents on the slope of Town Hill; and not knowing how to conduct a camp properly, in a short time "there was hardly a hut in which someone was not sick or dead." "And although people were generally very loving and pityful yet the sickness did so prevail that the whole were not able to tend the sick as they should be tended, upon which many died and were buried about Town Hill." "They notioned generally no water good for a town but running water," which they had not found in that locality.

Mr. Blackstone dwelling on the other side of Charles River at a place called Shawmutt, where he had a cottage not far from a place called Blackstone's Point, came and acquainted the governor of an excellent spring there, withal inviting and soliciting him thither. Whereupon after the death of Mr. Johnson and divers others the governor with Mr. Wilson and the greater part of the church removed thither, whither also the frame of the governor's house in preparation at this town was to the discontent of some carried when people began to build their houses against the winter, and the place was called Boston.

These quotations are made from the first part of the Charlestown Records,¹ which were not contemporaneous with the events described, but were written down in 1664, and contain some inaccuracies. They say that the Governor set up the frame of his first house in Charlestown and moved it to Boston in 1630. Yet it seems that Winthrop set up the frame of his house in Cambridge,

which is the form lodged in my memory. But "Joyce Junior" I never heard of till I read your monograph.

It is in such unexpected and unexplainable ways that difficult problems are often solved.

¹ See Frothingham, History of Charlestown, pp. 47 et seq.

and he records a quarrel between himself and Dudley in August, 1632, because he had removed the frame of his house from Cambridge to Boston.¹

The Charlestown Records state that Boston was settled after the death of Isaac Johnson, which was September 30, 1630. Yet on September 28, 1630, a rate was levied by the Assistants of £50, Charlestown was assessed £7, and Boston was assessed £11. Boston already had a greater population than Charlestown. Snow in his *History of Boston*² dates its foundation from September 7, when its name was changed from Trimountain to Boston. A church fast shows the settlement still earlier, for "Aug. 27 / 1630 the whole congregation belonging to Charlestown and Boston kept a fast."³ In 4 *Massachusetts Historical Collections*, III. 278, is a letter showing Johnson at Salem July 26, 1630, and that at Boston it was decided to receive in such by confession of faith as appear qualified.

Johnson died September 30, 1630. But Prince in his *Annals of New England*⁴ says Chief-Justice Sewall informed him that Johnson was the principal cause of the settlement at Boston and had removed thither, that he had chosen for his lot the great square between Tremont, Washington, Court, and School Streets, that on his death bed he had desired to be buried at the upper end of his lot and was buried there. An article⁵ has been written against this view, but Sewall had a large acquaintance with the original settlers, and seems the better authority.

While the early Charlestown Records convey information, it can be seen from what precedes that they are not infallible.⁶

By the end of December over two hundred of the immigrants had died. The winter was uncommonly severe, and "owing to the too great commendation of the country" they had neglected to bring a supply of food sufficient to maintain them till spring. They lived on clams, mussels and lobsters, and the Governor's last

¹ Winthrop, *History of New England* (1825), i. 83.

² Snow, *History of Boston*, p. 32. Felt in his *Ecclesiastical History of New England* agrees with Snow.

³ 2 *Massachusetts Historical Collections*, v. 185. The congregation of Boston and Charlestown kept a fast on August 27.

⁴ Hutchinson's *History of Massachusetts* (1764), i. 16; 2 *Massachusetts Historical Collections*, vii. 189.

⁵ 1 *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, xvii. 128.

⁶ For most of the above see Frothingham's *History of Charlestown*, p. 47 et seq.

batch of bread was in the oven when Master Pierce's ship entered the harbor bringing them food.

If they went to Boston on account of the excellent spring, where was it and did they settle by it?

Mr. Blackstone was living in his cottage on the south slope of Beacon Hill near Spruce Street. Close by, at what is now Louisburg Square, was one of the three peaks of Trimount, eighty feet above high water, and from the top of it flowed a copious spring with three outlets.¹ About 1830 this peak was dumped into the river. This could not have been the "excellent spring," for there were scarcely any dwellings in that vicinity for over a hundred and fifty years. And as Mr. Blackstone was no lover of Puritans he would hardly have invited them to his own spring, provided there were others that would answer the purpose as well. He would never join any of our churches, giving this reason for it: "I came from England because I did not like the Lord-Bishops; but I can't join with you because I would not be under the Lord-Brethren."² Hubbard wrote that all that Blackstone retained of his former profession was his canonical coat.³

There were several good springs at the West End. One⁴ was on Mr. Lynde's estate which covered Howard Street, reaching up the hill. Mr. Lynde built a spring-house there. But that region was pasture land for years after the settlement of Boston.

There was another great spring at Cotton Hill. About 1835 this summit was cut down, the earth was used to fill the mill-pond and Pemberton Square took its place. When Pemberton Building and Barristers Hall were erected a few years ago, the contractors were not troubled by water, but a large spring broke forth when they were digging the cellar for Henry W. Savage's real estate office. This appears to have been the old Cotton Spring. When the Hathaway building was started some twenty-seven years ago (the Hathaway Building preceded the new Suffolk Bank Building), a vein of quicksand was struck which gave great trouble. One would suppose it was the subterranean course of the Cotton

¹ See the "Gleaner" Articles, in Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, v; Shurtleff, Topographical and Historical Description of Boston, p. 392; W. W. Wheildon, Sentry, or Beacon Hill (1877), p. 19.

² Cotton Mather, Magnalia (1702), book iii. p. 7.

³ 2 Massachusetts Historical Collections, v. 113.

⁴ Mr. Wheildon wrote that this was still in use in 1877 (Sentry, or Beacon Hill, pp. 19, 84).

Spring and went under the Kimball Building, but really it turned and passed under the north corner of the Hemenway Building. There was in Scollay Square a writing school where the subway station now is. About 1700 a well was dug for this writing school, which was filled up a hundred years later. When the subway to East Boston was excavated the old pump was found to the west of the East Boston station in Scollay Square.¹ Possibly the water gave some surface indications.

It is not probable that this Cotton Spring was Mr. Blackstone's "excellent spring;" at least the colonists did not settle by it in the first days, for along the edge of the hill on what we call Tremont Street and Tremont Row were Bellingham, Daniel Maude, Edward Bendall, Robert Meeres; while back of them further up the hill were John Cotton and Henry Vane. According to Savage's Genealogical Dictionary, Bendall was the only one who came over with the first settlers, the rest arriving in 1634 or 1635.

The spring best known to us was in Spring Lane or "the Springgate" opposite the angle in the Winthrop Building. It was early called the "Governor's Spring," also "the Common Spring." A good deal has been written about it which is incorrect. Some three years ago an article appeared in a newspaper asserting that "beneath the surface of the lane a stream of pure sparkling water flows gushing from a natural spring;" it was suggested that a pump should be put there to replace the old town pump; and then followed a statement that when the Puritans came to Boston Governor Winthrop settled on one side of the spring, Isaac Johnson on the other, and the rest of the colony in close vicinity. Pretty pen pictures have described life around this spring in the first days after the town was founded.

These writers have been misled by Mr. Blackstone's invitation and from a lack of knowledge of the actual house-holdings as given in the town records and deeds. It was natural to suppose that this was the "excellent spring" when you find the Governor on one side of it and Mr. Johnson on the other. But the Mr. Johnson who lived there was not Isaac Johnson, and though Winthrop's house was near by, opposite the foot of School Street, the governor did not live there till after he was robbed by his steward Luxford, and gave up his first house to his creditors.

¹ See Publications of this Society, x. 257 note 2.

The Governor had two lots, his house-lot and the one known as "the Governor's Green," and in 1639, when the congregation desired to remove the First Church from its location at what is now 27 State Street, Winthrop offered his Green, south of the Spring-gate.

Those in favor of the Green in preference to Mr. Harding's place (now occupied by the Rogers Building) wrote:

The Greene . . . standeth open, ready to entertayne every coole breath of Aire in the summer, whereas the other place is so mussled, and overtopped with chimnyes on every side allmost, that it playnly confesseth its owne disadvantage.

To this the answer was in part:

Therefore omitting many things that might be alleadged against that place of Mr. Hardings, concerning the swamp on the backside, demolishing of a sufficient, and chargeable Ædifice, too much nearenesse to the prison, to the ordinary, to greater danger by fyre by much than in the other place.¹

It was decided to keep the church near the market-place lest moving so far off should divert the chief trade from thence.

Some years ago Mr. Frederick L. Gay² proved beyond dispute that Winthrop's first house was on the site of the present Exchange Building, between State Street and Exchange Place. It was about 1643 that Winthrop built on his Green.

Having called attention to the fact that the Governor's house was not first set up by this Spring, let us see whether there were many neighbors in the vicinity for several years after the founding of Boston; for if neither the Governor nor his neighbors lived here, it is clear that if people came over and settled around a great spring, this was not the one.

In the Town Records we find that on the "18th of the 12th Mo. February 1638" an entry was made from which it appears that there was trouble with the drainage from the houses on the west side of Washington Street between School and Court Streets, for the town ordered —

That Edward Hutchinson, Samuell Cole, Robte Turner, M^r. Robte Harding, M^r. Willyam Parker and Richard Brackett, shall make suffi-

¹ See Hill, History of the Old South Church, i. 136-138 notes.

² See Publications of this Society, iii. 86-90.

cient the cart-way against Mr. Hutchinson's house, under which they drayne their gardens.¹

Edward Hutchinson's garden lot was at the north corner of School and Washington Streets.² His house lot began ninety-seven feet from the corner, reaching north, and the house was immediately opposite Water Street, the cartway here referred to. It has been stated that Water Street was not cut through to Washington Street till Provincial times, but it would be difficult to prove this negative.

Anne Hutchinson had lived in this house a short time before, — an excellent, compassionate, helpful, charitable Christian woman, with too quick a wit and too nimble a tongue to suit the ministers, who called her "the American Jezebel."³ She was accused by them of being an Antinomian, a terrible heretic, guilty of gross errors. She held that "Sanctification did not evidence to us our Justification;" and not content with that, she maintained that "Peter leaned more to a covenant of works than Paul, and that Paul's doctrine was more for free grace than Peter's," thus "opposing and contrasting the doctrines of these two apostles who were guided by the same spirit," a thing little less than blasphemy. Worse than that she likened the clergy to the Pharisees "sighting God's faithful ministers and contemning and crying them down as nobodies."

Even the plutocrats of modern times do not have the power held by the New England clergy in those days, who controlled both church and state. She was tried for "her dangerous, fowle and damnable heresies," excommunicated and banished.

The Rev. John Wilson thus anathematized her:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the church I cast you out, and in the name of the Church I deliver you up to Satan.— And I do account you from this time forth to be a heathen and a publican

¹ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, ii. 38.

² Suffolk Deeds, iii. 121, 128, 476.

³ See C. F. Adams's Antinomianism in Massachusetts, p. 336; Survey of the Spiritual Antichrist opening the Secrets of Familism and Antinomianism by Samuel Rutherford, Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews, Scotland, Sold at the Green Dragon in St. Paul's Churehyard, 1648, p. 176, chap. xxi.: Of the first sewers of Antinomianism in New England. It starts off thus, "Mrs Hutchinson, the American Jezebel."

and so to be held by the brethren and sisters of this congregation, and of others, and I command you as a leper to withdraw yourself out of the congregation ;¹

and she departed in a proud, haughty manner.

Time works many changes, and our sympathies are with Anne Hutchinson, rather than with the Rev. John Wilson. This ordinance about drainage was passed the year after she was driven out to Rhode Island. The whole neighborhood was polluted by her Antinomian ideas, fairly reeked with heresy. Possibly this was the reason for the compulsory drainage.

North of the Hutchinson land was Samuel Cole, another Antinomian backslider, whose estate reached some sixty feet, or more, to the north of Williams Court, which even then existed in a rudimentary form as a court-yard to his tavern, the Ship Inn, and as a passageway to his brewery in the rear. Both the inn and brewery were immediately north of Williams Court.²

Between Cole and Hutchinson lived Robert Turner on a small lot cut out of the Cole estate. Later on, Turner exchanged land with Fairbanks across the way,³ and moved over and kept the Anchor Tavern on the site of the Globe Building. So did his son after him ; and his son's widow married George Monk and under him the Blue Anchor tavern became still more famous.

John Dunton, who came over at the end of the seventeenth century to sell a venture of books, wrote :

George Monk, a person so remarkable, that had I not been acquainted with him it wou'd be a difficult matter to make any New England man believe that I had been in Boston. For there was no one house in all the town more noted or where a man might meet with better accommodation. Besides he was a brisk, jolly man, whose conversation was coveted by all his guests, as being the life and spirit of the company, animating all with a certain vivacity and cheerfulness which cleared away all melancholy as the sun does clouds, so that it was almost impossible not to be merry in his company.⁴

¹ Adams's Antinomianism in Massachusetts, p. 336 ; Publications of this Society, x. 26.

² Lechford, Note-Book, p. 31 ; Suffolk Deeds, ii. 11, iii. 254, iv. 106, 116, vi. 340, x. 295, xi. 73. A portion was opposite the Globe Building (Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, xi. 119). See also an article by M. J. Canavan in the Boston Herald, June 4, 1901.

³ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, vol. ii. part ii. p. 102.

⁴ Letters from New England, p. 85.

Mr. Robert Harding, a merchant and sea-captain, owned the land occupied by the Rogers Building, and all three of these neighbors were followers of Mrs. Hutchinson, and were disciplined. Harding left the Colony for a while. In Cromwell's time he turned up in England asking for a grant of lands in Ireland and had apparently been living in that country.¹

Samuel Cole was fined several times, and at last sold his inn to Robert Sedgwick.² Soon after he conformed and was a church-member in good standing, ready to persecute the Baptists.³

Mr. William Parker owned the southern half of the Sears Building estate, and Richard Brackett the northern half at the corner of Court and Washington Streets. Brackett evidently owned the place later occupied by John Leverett.⁴

On the east side of Washington Street at that time was Robert Keayne, the first captain of the Honorable Artillery Company. He owned from State Street to the site of the Globe Building. A hard bargainer in life, at his death he left money to build a town house and a conduit, and to start the first public library in America.⁵

Next to Keayne comes what is now known as the Globe Building, but this land was then owned by Richard Fairbanks, who in the year 1639 became the first postmaster of the town; for letters were to be left at his house, and he was to see that they were delivered to the right people. In a few years he exchanged his house and land with Robert Turner.⁶

South of him was Elder Thomas Oliver, an old man, much loved, a surgeon of repute. He lived close to 258 Washington Street, and his land ran south to Spring Lane or "the Springgate."

In the heat of the Antinomian quarrel fifty-eight persons were required to deliver up their arms to Captain Keayne, and among them were Edward Hutchinson, Samuel Cole, Robert Harding, Mr. William Parker, Richard Fairbanks, and Mr. Thomas Oliver.⁷ Mrs. Hutchinson's neighbors evidently had a high opinion of her,

¹ He settled in Dublin in 1658 (Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, pp. 367, 466).

² See notes in Lechford's Note-Book.

³ 4 Massachusetts Historical Collections, ii. 57.

⁴ See Suffolk Deeds, viii. 360.

⁵ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, vol. ii. part ii. p. 102; 3 Massachusetts Historical Collections, vii. 48.

⁶ Suffolk Deeds, i. 193.

⁷ Drake, History of Boston, p. 229. List of those who gave up arms.

and took her side of the controversy. In fact, Winthrop admits that all the Boston congregation but four or five agreed with the opinions of Mrs. Hutchinson.¹

Beyond the Spring-gate was the unoccupied "Green" of Governor Winthrop reaching to Milk Street, and extending some ninety-five feet down Spring Lane. Further down the Lane on its south side was the land (now the Minot estate) then owned by Mr. William Hibbins, a magistrate.

At the south corner of School and Washington Streets was Mr. Atherton Hough. On the north side, the Hutchinson land both garden and house lot reached up School Street to the present City Hall land, which then belonged to the widow Thomasine Scottow, with two sons, Thomas and Joshua.²

These were the neighbors in 1639. If they did not live there immediately after the founding of Boston in 1630, then those antiquarians were probably wrong who represented this as Mr. Blackstone's "Excellent Spring" to which he invited the colonists, and around which they were supposed to have settled. At least it will rest with the originators of this story to show that these estates were occupied by somebody before the above-mentioned people held them.

The Hutchinsons came over in 1634 and were given land by the town. They also bought a lot of Mr. Coggeshall, who came over in 1632.³ Robert Turner was at first Edward Bendall's servant. Generally it took a servant some years to pay off his indebtedness, become his own master, and purchase land. Samuel Cole came over with Winthrop, but he owned land at the lower end of North Street and may have lived there. According to Winthrop he opened this Ship Inn in 1634. Robert Harding came over with Winthrop in 1630. Richard Brackett arrived in 1632; Robert Keyne in 1635; Richard Fairbanks in 1633 or 1634; Thomas Oliver in 1632; William Hibbins in 1634; Atherton Hough in 1634; Thomasina Scottow in 1634; and her son Thomas was given the right to build in 1637.⁴

These dates imply that prior to 1634 this locality was unoccupied, no governor and no neighbors.

¹ Winthrop, *History of New England*, i. 212.

² *Boston Record Commissioners' Reports*, vol. ii. part ii. p. 75.

³ Lechford, *Note-Book*, p. 102.

⁴ See *Savage's Genealogical Dictionary of New England*.

Winthrop and his companions settled by none of the springs already mentioned, although any of them would have answered the description of "a great spring" or "an excellent spring" as given in the old Charlestown Records.

In 1630 Shawmut was a rough peninsula, covered by clumps of barberry, blueberry, and rose bushes, an uncouth wilderness full of hills and hollows with wild animals and snakes, dangerous to man and his cattle. There were no roads, only a few Indian trails, and Mr. Blackstone's path to his hut on the south slope of Trimount. The new-comers were sick with scurvy and camp fever, thirsty, hungry, homesick, and so worn out that with all their good will they could not properly take care of their invalids. They were in no condition to take up their sick, and carry them over the rough ground to a spring remote from the shore. The sea was their highway and the storehouse from which they procured the mussels and lobsters on which they lived meagrely for months till Master Pierce's ship brought bread and grain from the "Old Country." This enfeebled band would ask for a spring near the water's edge, and would seek some convenient spot where their boats would be safe, where their goods could be easily landed, from which they could look out seaward in the long wait for the ship with food, where they could readily pick up the shell-fish, which for months were their breakfast, dinner, and supper.

Just such a spot existed. A "cove or creek" ran in where Dock Square now is. The Square gets its name from the fact that a dock was made at the head of "the cove or creek," and the buildings now in the middle of Dock Square mark the head of the Dock and Cove.

The first entry made in the Boston Town Records, "1634. Moneth 7th, daye 1," forbade anyone to lay "stones and logges near the bridge and landinge place." "No person shall leave any fish or garbage neare the said Bridge or common landing place betweene the 2 Creekes."¹

The "Cove or Creek" came to the head of Dock Square. It was sometimes named in deeds "the Cove," sometimes "the Creek" and again "the Cove or Creek." Attention should be called to the fact that often at the head of such a cove or creek is a watercourse, visible or hidden, which is really the cause of the indentation. The

¹ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, ii. 1.

bridge was either across a brook at the head of the cove or was some slight construction over Mill-Creek which gave way later to the drawbridge.

The shape of Boston was not of the present configuration. A shallow sheet of water covered the space between what is now North and South Margin Streets, reaching nearly to Hanover Street. A little creek, now filled up and called Blackstone Street, connected this "Centre Haven" or "the Mill-Pond" with the Cove. This little creek was artificially enlarged to form a mill-stream and was called Mill Creek.

As has been shown, the upper part of the cove at Dock Square was the other creek. The common landing-place, according to deeds and plans, was at the head of the dock opposite the second building to the west of Elm Street. A deposition of Scottow and others, 1682, proved that this was the common landing-place and that it belonged to the town.¹

In a new country it is customary to have the landing-place near a spring, and you would look for one in this case, when there had been such a demand for running water, and after Mr. Blackstone's invitation to the "excellent spring."

There was such a spring in this vicinity, in a pasture now occupied by the Quincy House and the region back of it. Probably the surface and subterranean water from this spring caused the cove.

Directly opposite the landing-place, back of the store, there was also a small spring, which was found sufficient to supply several of the neighbors, who put a pump in there; and toward the end of the century this well and pump are referred to in deeds of Habbakkuk Glover giving right of passage to it.²

You can be sure that these sickly people did not at first carry their goods far off from this sheltered spot where there was good water, nor did they live remote from the shore with the view of the ocean and its store of shell-fish.

The old deeds show that at a very early date Elm Street and the west side of Union Street were occupied by small houses. So was the upper part of Hanover Street near the pasture. Doughty Captain Underhill lived there. Coddington and Bellingham had houses at Adams Square. Coddington's was the first brick house in the

¹ New England Historical and Genealogical Register, xviii. 68.

² Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, ii. 141; Suffolk Deeds, viii. 322, ix. 120.

town.¹ But the people soon got over their scare about running water, and spread along the shore of the North End. What is now North Street was "the Way by the waters-edge," with houses on one side and wharves on the other. "The Broad Street leading from the Market-place to the Sea," now State Street, was laid out with magnificent width as the principal street, with the market-place at its head.

From Winthrop's Journal we learn that the Governor, though living in Boston, set up the frame of his house at Cambridge according to an agreement, and that in 1632 there was a quarrel between him and the Deputy-Governor because Mr. Winthrop had taken down the frame and removed it to Boston. We know that for some years prior to 1643 he lived on the site of the present Exchange Building, between State Street and Exchange Place. The church was at 27 State Street; and Mr. Wilson, the pastor, lived on the other side of the way. Elder Thomas Leverett lived immediately above Winthrop at the corner of Leverett's Lane (Congress Street); but he did not come over till 1633, when his old pastor John Cotton sailed to America.

At an early date if you had rapped at 60 State Street the door would have been opened by Mr. Aspinwall's maid, or by his barber, Francis Lisle, who in the Civil War was barber to the Earl of Manchester.²

Just above Aspinwall was the land of Captain William Pierce, the Puritan Palinurus. Change Avenue runs over the eastern edge of his land. Where Charles Head's office now stands lived cantankerous Thomas Venner,³ the Fifth Monarchy man, who was admitted to the church in 1638 and in 1650 petitioned and was allowed to put a pump "near the Shop of William Davis."⁴ Mr. Davis lived across the way at the lower corner of Kilby and State Streets.⁵ Venner stirred up a quarrel with the authorities about 1640 in regard to the emigration to Providence Island, and later, apparently disagreeing with the authorities in regard to religion, went back to England, where he held a position as cooper in the Tower of London, but being suspected of a scheme to blow it

¹ Memorial History of Boston, i. 174.

² Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, ii. 38; Suffolk Deeds, i. 100.

³ Suffolk Deeds, ii. 200, 202, 315.

⁴ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, ii. 101.

⁵ See Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, vol. ii. part ii. p. 100.

up was discharged. He became a violent Anabaptist and Fifth Monarchy man, plotting against the Protector, and, as soon as Charles II was crowned, leading fifty wild enthusiasts against the City of London and its train-bands. They thought themselves invulnerable and expected by the "Sword of Gideon" to overthrow the monarchy and establish the Kingdom of Christ. They put the city in a turmoil, killed a number of people, but were finally overpowered, and Venner was hanged in front of his conventicle.¹ "Diabollicall Venner . . . went out from vs, because he was not of vs," Norton wrote in the letter the General Court sent congratulating the King on his escape.²

Edward Tyng's wharf was one hundred and forty-eight feet along the shore from State Street; adjoining that was Venner's Wharf, and back of the wharf he had his "new house." Tyng practically owned the land covered by the India Building and Venner's old house was in State Street immediately west of Tyng.³

In digging the cellar of the Exchange Building a large spring was met with in the northwest corner. In the old Worthington Building there was a pump and well with an abundant flow of water a few years ago. When the cellar of the new building was being excavated, a workman gave a blow of the pick into the clay and a jet of water as big as one's arm spouted out and was with difficulty shut off. A dam made of planks driven side by side deep into the ground was used to keep the flow from the excavation of the new Brazer Building, 27 State Street, the site of the old mud-wall First Church, and pumps were used constantly. When the Easton Building was erected at the corner of State and Devonshire Streets, quicksand was found but no water. In 1655 Henry Webb had "a spring or well" on this land, or to the east of it in what is now Devonshire Street.⁴ In the early years of the nineteenth century there was a pump with good water at the east end of the Old State House.

In 1764 William Jackson asked leave to take up the town pump at the northwest corner of the Town House and he would look after it himself provided the Selectmen would assess the persons benefited.

¹ See E. Rogers, *Life and Opinions of a Fifth Monarchy Man* (1867); Masson's *Milton*; Thurloe's *State Papers*; Pepys's *Diary*.

² *Massachusetts Colony Records*, vol. iv. part i. p. 33.

³ *Suffolk Deeds*, ii. 177, 200, 202, 315.

⁴ *Ibid.* iii. 26.

Mr. Jackson did repair this pump and in 1765 the town assessed a number of persons to repay him his charge.¹ Shurtleff remembered this pump some thirty feet north of Court Street in Washington Street.² When the Devonshire Building was erected there was trouble from a flow of water, so that we may suppose the Rev. John Wilson who dwelt just below in State Street had an ample supply.

At Captain Keayne's lot on the south corner of State and Washington Streets was plenty of water. After the great fire of 1653 he provided by his will (1654) for a Town House and for a conduit between his land and the market-place on which the Town House was built after his death. But though there was water everywhere in that vicinity, a veritable watercourse from Washington Street down to Winthrop's house and beyond to Venner's pump, yet none could be obtained in Captain Keayne's conduit,³ and after considering piping the water from the Cotton Spring the town at last gave liberty to Nicholas Paige, Captain Keayne's son-in-law, to tear up the conduit as a failure.⁴

These State Street springs have been mentioned at length because we find here the governor, the pastor, the first meeting-house, one of the two lay elders of the church, and Master Pierce, the favorite navigator. They seemed to have had all the water necessary. They did not, by the way, use much in those days. Occasional baths satisfied them. If I remember correctly, Mr. Commissioner Pepys's wife took one about every third month, and she was a neat and fastidious person. They drank beer or metheglin. Some early settlers mention their surprise at finding how water agreed with them, when they had to depend on it for a drink.⁵

These early colonists did not settle in one place, but resolved to plant "dispersedly," and went to Cambridge, Watertown, Roxbury, Dorchester, Boston, and early deeds show them pretty well scattered in Boston. But in this paper we are looking for a water supply that will answer Mr. Blackstone's description of "an excellent spring."

While "the Broad Street leading to the Sea" was the court

¹ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, xx. 106, 142.

² Shurtleff, Topographical and Historical Description of Boston, p. 395.

³ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, vii. 20.

⁴ *Ibid.* vii. 66.

⁵ Francis Higginson in his *New Englands Plantation*.

end of town, the thickest settlement in early days seems to have been around the head of the cove and common landing-place, radiating off from it. That is where one would expect to find the first houses.

Mr. Coddington, who came over in 1630, returned to England in 1631, came back to Boston in 1633, and is said to have built the first brick house in town, where Adams Square is, close to the location of the furniture store at the corner of Dock Square and New Washington Street.¹ His large estate ran back to the lots on Court and Hanover Streets. He was an Antinomian and though only rebuked but not exiled, he shook the dust of Boston from his feet and went to Rhode Island, of which he was made Governor. He became a Baptist and later a Quaker. In his old age, writing to Governor Leverett of the persecution of the Quakers and of the earlier proceedings against the Antinomians by the New England Puritans, he compared their struggle in England for liberty of conscience with their demand for absolute conformity in America, and wrote:

Now were they like those that having suffered in the time of Queen Mary, in Queen Elizabeth's time became bishops. Now was the contention about Grace of God within us and without us. Now was the iron bed, like that of the tyrant, made use of, that cut off all according to it longer or shorter.²

Mr. William Tyng, one of the richest men in Boston, came over in the midst of the Antinomian troubles, and bought Mr. Coddington's estate on which was a big spring in the rear pasture land.

In 1649 Mr. Joshua Scottow had a house at the lower end of Salt Lane at the head of his branch of Mill Creek.³ He had bought out William Franklin's rights in the Mill Creek and dug this branch for his convenience. Small vessels came through the drawbridge of Mill Creek, and probably up this branch, for Corwin and Browne had a warehouse at the head of it, opposite Mr. Scottow's.⁴ From the ell of his house he had a private passageway to North Street, which was known as Scottow's (now Scott) Alley.

¹ Winthrop, *History of New England*; *Memorial History of Boston*, i. 741; Savage, *Genealogical Dictionary*.

² Besse, *Sufferings of the Quakers (1753)*, ii. 267.

³ *Boston Record Commissioners' Reports*, ii. 83.

⁴ *Suffolk Deeds*, viii. 387, v. 35.

The upper end of North Street was a marsh with salt or brackish water and Mr. Scottow and Mr. James Everill, who owned land in Union Street and near the head of North Street, with several neighbors obtained from Mr. William Tyng a right for thirteen householders "to dig out a spring or fountain in his pasture west of his dwelling and lay pipes to carry water" down to a convenient spot, where a cistern was made from which the water was distributed by pipes to their houses. Every family was to pay twelve pence per annum for the privilege.¹ The road which ran from the cove down along the waterside is now North Street, but after the introduction of these water-works, that portion of the street between the Dock and Mill Creek received, in conveyances, the name of Conduit Street from the cistern which stood on the east side of this way, three or four lots down the street and four feet from the upper corner of the land of George Nowell, a blacksmith.²

In June, 1652, the General Court granted an act of incorporation to the "inhabitants of Conduit Street in Boston" to provide a supply of fresh water for themselves and families and especially for use in case of fire. "If a scath-fire should happen, any person may take water and break open the cover of said conduit to get into it." Two wardens were to look after the water-works. "If any person be found guilty of corrupting, wasting or spoiling the water or waterworks or injuring the pipes, cistern or fountain, the wardens for the time, may prosecute the offender and if any person take water from the conduit without license the wardens may confiscate such vessels as they use to carry away the water." The wardens could allow poor persons to take water for a time without charge.³

In 1651 the town granted to the owners of the water-works "one of the bells which were given by Captain Crumwell for a clocke."⁴ Captain Cromwell was a privateer who had captured six bells from a Spanish ship in the West Indies and had presented them to the town. In 1657 a building was placed above the conduit built by Thomas Joy and Bart Bennett by agreement with Anthony Stoddard, Edward Hutchinson, and John Hull.⁵

¹ Suffolk Deeds, vi. 20.

² Ibid. iv. 256.

³ Massachusetts Colony Records, vol. iv. part i. p. 99 (June 1, 1652).

⁴ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, ii. 108.

⁵ The original agreement is in the Boston Public Library.

George Nowell, the blacksmith in Conduit Street, built a new house in 1667, and complaint was made that he blocked up the watercourse and he was ordered to "give such water its ancient way."¹

In 1675 an agreement was made by the Selectmen and several inhabitants near the conduit "to pave the street and make a water-course to carry off the surplus water from the conduit to the foot of the bridge [the drawbridge in Conduit Street over Mill Creek] and into Mill Creek."² Each person agreed to keep the channel clean before his land.

By this time conveyances are met with in Suffolk Deeds selling a fractional interest of a share in these water-works. The settlement had become dense in that locality, yet you still find the town providing for the overflow of water from the conduit. It over-supplied the shareholders.

In 1679 there was an incendiary fire³ which swept from the dock to Water Street, and this conduit was a great help.

Mr. William Tyng died in 1652, and by the settlement of his affairs there came into the possession of his son-in-law, Mr. Thomas Brattle, his Boston estate, his house and close, his great yard and little yard before the hall windows, and the pasture land in the rear; and with the house went a choice library containing such books as "Axe at the Roots," "Sibb's Saint's Cordial," "Dod and Cleaver on the Sacraments," and "Popish Idollatry."⁴

The house stood in Adams Square, south of the building at the corner of New Washington Street and Dock Square. But in those days there was no Cornhill here, no Brattle Street, no Dock Square, no Adams Square, much less any New Washington Street. The Roxbury road, which was probably an old Indian trail, skirted the edge of the hill and turned down to the landing-place at the head of the cove. The road and older trail followed Union Street and along the north edge of the Mill Pond to the nearest point to Charlestown which became the ferry. Near the landing-place was an outlet, a lane now called Elm Street.

¹ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, vii. 38, 44.

² Ibid. vii. 92.

³ Supposed to have been set by Peter Lorphelin, a Frenchman, who worked at the Castle Tavern: He was tried for arson and found guilty of having coiner's tools in his possession.

⁴ New England Historical and Genealogical Register, xxx. 432.

Cotton Mather in a letter to John Cotton of Plymouth, November, 1678, writes of needing "a pair of Goloshoos when travelling near the Dock Head."¹ Apparently this land was saturated with water. In 1685 the town dug a well in front of Mr. Brattle's house, which constantly overflowed and flooded the street,² turning the land above the dock into a mire, just as the conduit from the pasture, notwithstanding it was tapped by thirteen families in its earliest days and by more later, ran over into North Street and brought George Nowell, the blacksmith, into trouble. Surely the springs in this locality were "great and excellent," and answered Mr. Blackstone's description. Fractional parts of a share were sold and rights given by shareholders to others to take water "at the well."³

At a town meeting in March, 1685, Captain John Wing, who kept the Castle Tavern at the west corner of Elm Street, then called Wing's Lane, Mr. Thomas Stansbury, who built the old feather store called "the Cocked Hat" at the corner of North Street after the fire of 1679, and several neighbors, asked permission to lay pipes from the new well to the land between Wing's and Stansbury's houses, and to bring the surplus water from the well to a cistern they would erect there "for the use of themselves and associates and for the benefit of the town in general upon any extraordinary occasion as of any fire breaking out." They promised to build nothing over the cistern more than was sufficient to secure the water.⁴

The town at once accepted this proposal and the cistern was built between Elm Street and the head of North Street, and was a second conduit, entirely independent of the first, having a different location, other shareholders, and though from the same source, yet not from the same surface spring. In the local town histories much has been written of "the conduit," but confusedly. The writer has never run across a notice indicating a knowledge that there were two separate and distinct conduits in this locality.⁵

In fact it would appear that there was still another conduit, for on December 28, 1713, the Selectmen had a complaint before them that "the condit reputed to belong to Cap^t John Ballintine lying

¹ 4 Massachusetts Historical Collections, viii. 383.

² Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, vii. 172.

³ Suffolk Deeds, i. 165, ii. 258, v. 104, vi. 9, viii. 417, ix. 442.

⁴ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, vii. 172.

⁵ See Publications of this Society, i. 199-201.

next the High way nigh the Mill Bridg, doth lie open & dangerous" and he is required "to cover and keep covered S^d Conduit, or or other wise to place Battlements round y^e Same So as to prevent danger."¹ Probably the overflow of the old conduit supplied it.

Here there was an abundant supply of water; a first conduit always a nuisance from its overflow, a dangerous third conduit, and the second or Wing's Conduit was not only dangerous but sometimes fatal. Here is what Sewall wrote March 23, 1691-92:

About 5 P. M. Moses Bradford essaying to draw a youth out of the water at Capt. Wing's Conduit fell in himself and was drown'd, many people round about trying to save him. Boy was taken out alive.²

On January 16, 1702, at a town meeting it was voted to put a pump in "the conduit by the dock near Wing's Lane"³ (notice the distinction from the one in Conduit Street) at the town's charges for public use in case of fire. This conduit had a platform over it and a market was held there. It was in existence down to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Shurtleff in his Topographical and Historical Description of Boston has a chapter on "the Old Conduit." He wrote at a great disadvantage, for the records were not published, nor did the Registry of Deeds have its present excellent index. He was a pioneer and the trails were not blazed. He begins by referring to Captain Keayne's bequest for a library, and goes on to state that there was no library till two hundred years later, ignoring the fact that Keayne's library was founded, money contributed, and that the books were kept in the Town House, and that the library lasted till the Town House and its contents were burned in 1747. Then he confuses the conduits, and seems to think that the Scottow and Everill conduit was the one referred to in Keayne's will. It is, however, interesting to find in his chapter a statement that at the Breck Agricultural Warehouse there was, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, "a water convenience remembered by persons who lived in the neighborhood as the Conduit." That would be about the location of the Scottow and Everill conduit.

In 1780 the reservoir in Dock Square was being repaired,⁴ and in Shurtleff's time old people had some memory of it.

¹ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, xi. 197.

² 5 Massachusetts Historical Collections, v. 358.

³ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, viii. 26.

⁴ Ibid. xxv. 134.

There was still another conduit proposed which has not yet been mentioned here. The first great fire in Boston was in 1653. A letter from John Endicott at Salem to John Winthrop, Jr., of Connecticut, dated April 18, 1653, says that —

8 howses were consumed & three young children burnt, . . . Mr. Wilson's howse & goods, Mr. Sheath's house & goods . . . Mr. Shrimptons howse & goods, Mr. Sellick's howse & goods, Mr. Blackleech his house and goods. The others I haue forgotten their names. . . . The most dreadfull fire . . . by reason of the barrells of gunpowder which they had in their howses.¹

Mr. Wilson lived at the east corner of State and Devonshire Streets, which at that time was but a narrow alley from State Street to the Dock. Mr. Shrimpton was on State Street to the west of Exchange Street. Mr. Blackleech was east of Exchange Street and toward the Dock.² Mr. Sellick had bought the Aspinwall house at 60 State Street. Mr. Sheath I know nothing of.

Mr. William Franklin, who lived opposite the head of the Dock between Wilson's Lane and Exchange Street, and the "neighbors about his house" were granted by the town on March 14, 1652-53, — liberty to make a sistern of 12 feet or greater, if they see cause, at the pompe which standeth in the hieway near the Stats armes Tavern, for to howld watter for to be helpfull in Case of fier, unto the towne.³

Hugh Gunnison, who had been a servant or follower of Bellingham, had a cook-shop here prior to 1642. The shop became a tavern, the King's Arms, but when the royal head was cut off and the Protector ruled the country, down came the King's Arms from the sign-post in front of the house, and the States Arms were hung in their place. It was a fashion then to give names to the different rooms in houses. Judge Sewall had a name for each chamber in his new house. So had the Anchor Tavern; and the States Arms had chambers called "the Exchange," "the Star," "London," and a hall with a bar and stalls.

In a deed of 1651 Gunnison refers to the fact that in the yard is a pump and pipes to convey water to the brewery. Every tavern had its brewery.⁴

¹ 4 Massachusetts Historical Collections, vi. 155.

² Suffolk Deeds, iii. 144; *ibid.* iii. 26, showing that in 1655 Blackleech was living in Mr. Hudson's house south of the Town House.

³ See Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, ii. 115; Publications of this Society, viii. 118.

⁴ Suffolk Deeds, i. 135.

The States Arms Tavern was immediately east of Tyng's land, and was on the ground just west of the present building at the corner of New Washington Street.¹ What came of Franklin's project for a water supply does not appear.

We have seen that there was not only the common landing-place and a settlement here in the early days, but also a convenient and great spring in this locality, giving a superabundance of water, originally piped for thirteen families, and as the settlement grew, used by more. Then a well was dug, apparently tapping the same watercourse. It overflowed, and the surplus was carried to another conduit for other people. Dwellers on the south side of the Dock planned to get their water from an older well at the head of the Cove. Indeed, the very existence of the Cove was probably due to the flow of this watercourse above and below ground, washing the soil into the harbor.

As to the spring in Spring Lane, Governor Winthrop about 1643, after his steward Luxford had robbed him, moved to "the Green" and built a house opposite the foot of School Street, and this spring became known as "the Governor's Spring."

James Johnson, a tanner and glover, lost his first wife in 1643. Soon after he married Abigail, a daughter of Elder Thomas Oliver,² and we find them living at the south end of the Oliver estate, north of the spring.

In 1649 Johnson received from the town sixteen feet of ground from the north side of Spring Lane down along "to his garden payle post" in consideration of his agreement "to make and maintain forever a sufficient highway for foot and cart over the watercourse which runs from Mr. Hutchinson's house along by his house end."³ This watercourse was the one ordered by the town in 1638, and the lane gave access to Davis or Shelter Cove at the lower end of Water Street by Congress Street. It ran through the Oliver estate, and now that this cartway was devoted to the public use, Elder Oliver's son-in-law, Johnson, received a strip sixteen feet wide in the south side of his land from Spring Lane to replace the land taken by the town.

John Winthrop, before his death, had made over "the Green" to

¹ See plan of this estate in Mr. Edes's Memoir of Dr. Thomas Young, pp. 2-54, above.

² Savage, Genealogical Dictionary, ii. 554.

³ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, ii. 94.

his son Stephen, reserving a life interest.¹ Stephen went to England in 1645, and joined Colonel Thomas Harrison's regiment of horse, of which his brother-in-law, William Rainborow, was Major. Cromwell's son Henry and Stephen Winthrop were captains in this same regiment.² In a letter to John Winthrop, Jr., dated February, 19, 1652, Coddington stated that when in London he had met Stephen in a book-shop, but "did not know him, for he was in scarlett till he heard him called by name."³

The sixth day of the ninth month, 1651, Stephen Winthrop by his brother Adam, as attorney, conveyed to Richard Parker a house in the yard that belonged to his father's dwelling-house, "forty feet of ground fronting the spring." This was the Old South Chapel lot.⁴

The Minot estate to the east was owned by Mr. William Hibbins, a merchant and magistrate who lost his money through a friend and died in 1654. His wife was sister⁵ to Governor Bellingham, who was "an atrabilious" dyspeptic, given to fits of gloom with temporary spells of insanity, "too much overpowered with the humours of melancholy in his natural constitution the infirmities of which tinctures did now and then appear in his dispensing justice."⁶ His wife, Mrs. Hibbins, was keen-witted and bad-tempered, of a high-strung, nervous temperament. After the loss of their fortune she became much embittered and was excommunicated. Soon she was looked upon as a witch. Seeing two neighbors talking and glancing sideways she guessed they were discussing her and told them what they were saying. She was accused as a witch and a jury found against her; the case was appealed and the Assistants decided in her favor; then the case was taken before the General Court and she was condemned to be hanged as a witch and was executed in 1656. Bellingham has been blamed for not finding some

¹ Suffolk Deeds, i. 102.

² In the Dictionary of National Biography, under Thomas Rainborow, is a reference to his brother William. Thomas (died 1648) was the more celebrated of the two brothers. See also Firth, *Life of Thomas Harrison*, p. 8.

³ 4 Massachusetts Historical Collections, vii. 280.

⁴ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, vol. ii. part ii. p. 24.

⁵ Some say she was not a sister of Bellingham, but Winthrop, under date of 1639 (*History of New England*, i. 320), says that Hibbins was Bellingham's brother-in-law. In 1641 Bellingham married for his second wife, Penelope Pelham.

⁶ 2 Massachusetts Historical Collections, v. 610.

way of getting her acquitted. But what could he do? She had three trials and the Assistants were for her.¹ The Rev. John Norton used to say she was hanged "for having more wit than her neighbors."² Hubbard said that *vox populi* went sore against her and was the chiefest part of the evidence.³

After Mrs. Hibbins was condemned, she was allowed to sell her property. Matthew Coy bought the estate at the corner of Spring Lane and Devonshire Street.⁴ Then Antipas Boyce had it, and in 1667 his executors sold his mansion, woodlands and garden, land running ninety-three feet along the lane toward the spring, to John Winslow,⁵ a brother of Edward Winslow, Governor of Plymouth Colony. John Winslow was a merchant. He had married Mary Chilton, who came over in the Mayflower. Tradition has it she was the first to jump ashore at Plymouth. Both of them are buried in a tomb in King's Chapel burying-ground.

To the south of the Hibbins land was an estate reaching to Milk Street which was bought by Captain Thomas Cromwell, a privateer or freebooter. He had sailed from Boston a common sailor with Captain Hawkins in a frigate, the Queen of Bohemia,⁶ and in 1646 returned in command of three ships laden with treasure and money taken from the Spaniards. They were driven by a storm to Plymouth, which had then very few inhabitants and was on its last legs, and the money squandered by these freebooters gave the town a new lease of life.⁷ They swaggered through the streets drinking and fighting, and Captain Cromwell struck one of them a blow with the hilt of his sword from which he died.⁸ The Captain had an unsavory reputation.⁹ From the West Indies complaints were made in England about him, and after the ships arrived in Boston the Earl of Warwick put in a claim for the booty, asserting that Cromwell had sailed under Hawkins's letter of marque from him. Governor Winthrop had

¹ See Publications of this Society, x. 20, 21.

² Snow's History of Boston, pp. 140, 141.

³ 2 Massachusetts Historical Collections, v. 574.

⁴ Suffolk Deeds, ii. 281.

⁵ Ibid. vii. 228.

⁶ See Josselyn's Two Voyages to New England (1865), p. 25.

⁷ Winthrop, History of New England, ii. 263, 274; 2 Massachusetts Historical Collections, v. 527; 4 *ibid.* vi. 179.

⁸ See 4 Massachusetts Historical Collections, iii. 441, vi. 179.

⁹ Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, 1574-1660, pp. 326, 327; Aspinwall's Notarial Records, *passim*.

no love for the freebooter, and Hubbard referred to his fortune as *splendidum furtum*.¹ Just before the middle of the seventeenth century the whole block between Spring Lane and Milk Street was occupied by a governor, a pirate, and a woman who was hanged as a witch. On the Governor's death his land went to his son Stephen, a Cromwellian colonel, who would probably have succeeded Harrison, as Commander-in-Chief of the English Army,² had he not fallen sick, worn out by "the zeatica by much lying in the wet fields has caused me."³ Roger Williams wrote John Winthrop, Jr., from England that Stephen was for freedom of thought⁴ and Stephen Winthrop's own letters in the Winthrop Papers show his liberality. His regiment was full of levellers and Republicans. One was shot by Oliver Cromwell.

In 1655 Colonel Stephen Winthrop sold the land at the corner, twenty-two feet on the street to Roxbury and fifty-five on the lane, to his good friend Amos Richardson, a tailor, bounded north-east on "the Common Spring" and south by Colonel Winthrop's house and land.⁵

Stephen Winthrop died in 1658 and in 1659 his widow Judith Winthrop of Westminster sold the rest of "the Green" to the Rev. John Norton,⁶ and with him lived Colonel William Crowne, a partner of Sir Thomas Temple. With him was his son John Crowne before John went to Harvard College, and John records the respectful reception of the regicides at Norton's.⁷ "Little starch Johnny Crown" who wrote plays for the Court of Charles II, a friend and rival of Dryden, and although he was shy and noted "for the stiff, unutterable primness of his long cravat" he was of easy and amiable temperament, and liked to take his cup of metheglin with the other play-writers.⁸ Mr. Norton's widow gave this house and land to the South Church.

Governor Winthrop's son John, the Governor of Connecticut, had two sons. The elder John, or Fitz-John as he was called to distinguish him from his father, went to England and was a captain in the regiment of his mother's brother, Colonel Read,

¹ 2 Massachusetts Historical Collections, v. 527.

² 3 Ibid. x. 19.

³ 5 Ibid. viii. 214.

⁴ 3 Ibid. x. 1.

⁵ Suffolk Deeds, iii. 487, xi. 226.

⁶ Ibid. iii. 257.

⁷ See Calendar of State Papers, America and West Indies, 1661-1668, p. 54; Sibley, Harvard Graduates, i. 577.

⁸ Dictionary of National Biography, John Crowne.

with Monk's army in Scotland. After the death of Cromwell, there was a succession of eight governments in England in the year preceding the Restoration, and Monk marched down from Scotland with his army and put Charles II on the throne.

The younger brother was Wait Still Winthrop. There is a letter from this boy to his elder brother, written in 1659, which shows a justifiable anxiety, for Monk was marching against a hostile army in England:

From M^r Richardson's house. Sept 12 1659

I am now resident at ye Colledge. I must go to Cambridge. Just now M^r Hooper came with your black mare to water him at y^e Spring. I have not seen her before since you went. Adieu my sweet brother, with tears in mine eyes for you desiring y^e Almighty to keep and bless you.¹

The condition of the Governor's spring at this time was not satisfactory, for on February 25, 1661, the Selectmen gave liberty to — Capt. James Johnson and Amos Richardson . . . to sett a fence aboutt the spring for the better accomodation of the Towne in the use of the water, and preserving the said spring from anoyance by cattell, provided they make another convenient watering place for cattell; And in consideration of their charge herein, the Treasurer is ordered to allow them forty shillings.²

Captain Johnson in March, 1661, in pursuance of his duty as a soldier, led out a Quaker,³ one William Leddra, "a servant of the Lord to be murdered and hanged, compassing him about with Men of War, with Swords, guns and drums." And as they marched along they prevented Leddra's sympathizers from speaking to him, and one of the Quakers cried out, "Friends, will you show yourselves worse than Bonner's bloody brood? What, will you not let me come to my suffering friend before you kill him?"⁴

In 1669 Captain Johnson made two mortgages⁵ in which his estate was described as having a fence around it, Roxbury Street

¹ 5 Massachusetts Historical Collections, viii. 382.

² Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, ii. 159.

³ Besse's Sufferings of the Quakers, ii. 271. See also Mr. Noble's paper on William Leddra, Publications of this Society, x. 335-345.

⁴ Besse's Sufferings of the Quakers, ii. 218.

⁵ Suffolk Deeds, vi. 31, 126.

on the west, the lane that leadeth from the way going to Roxbury down to Mr. Bridgham's on the north. The house that Mr. Jolliffe bought of Matthew Coy, east, and on the south was the lane and spring, and Amos Richardson, Thomas Smith (this was the South Chapel lot which Stephen Winthrop had sold to Parker and he to Peter Oliver and Oliver to Thomas Smith), and the late Antipas Boyce house (Boyce was a merchant who owned the Hibbins place before Winslow bought it).

Captain Johnson died soon after making this deed, and the Quakers said:

the just hand of the Lord for his bloody acts hath fallen upon him, for he is become as a man unmanned and bereft of his wonted understanding and so sottish that his brethren, as it is said, have degraded him, and this is according to the word of the Lord spoken by his servants concerning him.¹

John Norton, who bought Winthrop's house and land in 1659, was very bitter against the Quakers, who prophesied God would chastise him for his dealings with the Friends. In 1663 he died in the Winthrop house opposite the foot of School Street, and the Quakers wrote:

John Norton, one of their chief priests, a principal exciter of the magistrates to persecute the innocent and put them to death, was cut off by a sudden and unexpected stroke, for having been at his worship in the fore part of the day and intending to go again in the afternoon, as he was walking in his own house he was observed to fetch a great groan and leaning his head against the chimney-piece was heard to say 'the hand or judgment of the Lord is upon me,' and so sank down and spoke no more, and had fallen into the fire had not an ancient man prevented it.²

The description in the mortgage made by Captain Johnson in 1669 shows that his house was near the highway to Roxbury, and that "lower down beyond the well by a stump" was his slaughter-house and barn. Captain Johnson then preferred a well by his slaughter-house to the water of the spring.

Captain Johnson owned land at Post Office Square and had a tannery there. In 1667 he sold this land to his brother-in-law,

¹ Besse's *Sufferings of the Quakers*, ii. 271.

² *Ibid.* ii. 270.

Peter Oliver,¹ and in 1668 gave to him the liberty of taking water from the spring arising or passing out of any of the lands of Captain James Johnson, with liberty of ingress, egress and regress between Captain Johnson's new dwelling and the dock commonly known as Shelter Dock, and liberty to open up Johnson's land to lay or take up or mend pipes for the conveyance of water from the cistern to be made to the house and lands of Peter Oliver and to the dock aforesaid.² Possibly this refers to the spring which was opened up when the Post Office was built.

In 1673 James Johnson, glover, sold to James Meeres, feltmaker, a mansion fronting thirty feet on Washington Street and land butting on lane leading down near the house of Anthony Stoddard to Peter Oliver's Dock one hundred and thirty-six feet.³

On March 25, 1674, the town granted liberty "to James Meeres to make out shops before the house y^t was lately Cap^t Johnsons, to front wth Amos Richardsons house."⁴ James Meeres or his son kept a cook-shop here, a first class restaurant for that day, for the Governor and Council were at times entertained there, and Judge Sewall in his Diary refers to this shop. One wet, inclement night, when he was out as captain of the watch, he went into Meeres's cook-shop, to find a warm nook quite like a modern watchman.

On August 31, 1702, the Selectmen granted to Joseph Bridgham liberty —

to Newmake and reparaire the Cestern at the Spring formerly called the Governours Spring nigh unto the House in w^{ch} M^r Amos Richardson formerly dwelt, and to carry the waste water through the Street in pipes underground into his own Tan yard [down by Bath Street] alwayes reserveing to the neighbourhood a Sufficiency of water for their use; and to that end the Said pipes are to be laid at least four feet above the bottom of the Said Cestern, Provided that [he, his heirs and successors shall] keep and maintaine the Said Cestern in good reparaire, with a Sufficent pump for the use and benefit of the neighbourhood, with a conveniency to baile water out of the Said Cestern in Case of breaking out of fire.⁵

Then in 1702 a pump was put in at Bridgham's expense and he was to maintain it.

In 1713 Samuel Greenleaf seems to have been the owner of the

¹ Suffolk Deeds, vii. 294.

² Ibid. vii. 301.

³ Ibid. viii. 288.

⁴ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, vii. 88.

⁵ Ibid. xi. 26.

land at the head of Spring Lane, for the Selectmen gave him the right to raise and have that side of Spring Lane next to his brick building and to lay a gutter down the middle of the lane.¹ All that part of Washington Street had been burned over by the great fire of 1711, and the region was now being rebuilt.

In the Selectmen's Records, March 21, 1713, liberty was granted "to Simion Stoddard to open y^e H. way a Cross Corn hill in to Water Street for y^e laying a Cellar drayn there Provided he Attend y^e directions in y^e Laws."²

In 1714 the Selectmen viewed Spring Lane and ordered —

That the Pavement be Laid Regularly from one end to the other without any breaking, the gutter at the upper end to The Other, wth out any Break, That the gutter at the uper end thereof be at eight foot, one & a halfe Inch^s from Greenliefes corner, and at the lower end of S^d House, nine foot & nine Inches from the Bricks of it, And from the fence of S^d Greenliefs, opposite to y^e Pump, the S^d Gutter to be Six foot eight Inches, and three foot from S^d pump, and So to Continue on a Straight line to the end of Dinelyes Land where it Terminates exactly in the midle between that and M: Oborns land.³

The lane was sixteen feet wide, the pump in the middle, and the gutter coming down the middle of the lane turned out, and went around it three feet off on the north.

Some have asserted, without offering proof, that Water Street was not cut through to Washington Street till Provincial times. This would raise a question whether the cartway of 1638 was not Spring Lane rather than Water Street. But the descriptions of the Johnson estate already given show this lane or cartway on the north and Spring Lane, south. We know that the Hutchinson house lot began ninety-six feet from School Street, the order for the drain in 1638 stated that the cartway was opposite the Hutchinson house, so does the grant of the sixteen foot strip of land to Johnson in 1649. The Town Records show that early in the eighteenth century there was already a common sewer in Water Street with a number of drains entering it.

The confusing thing is to find that in the beginning of the eighteenth century there was also a sewer in Spring Lane.

The house owned by the Hutchinsons was sold to a friend An-

¹ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, xi. 182. ² Ibid. xi. 181. ³ Ibid. xi. 209.

thony Stoddard,¹ and before 1713 it had come to his son, Simeon Stoddard, who in that year received permission from the selectmen to "open the highway in Cornhill [Washington Street] to Water Street for laying a drain there."² Water Street received its name in 1708.

In 1719 Simeon Stoddard by deed gave Jonathan Williams liberty to lay a drain through the cellar of his brick building in Cornhill "to pass into the Common Shoar in Spring Lane."³ They were rebuilding after the 1711 fire. In 1724 Simeon Stoddard conveyed to Jonathan Williams with others the right to lay a drain through his property "down to the common shoar in Spring Lane," each person to pay his proportionate share.⁴ In 1726 Stephen Boutineau grants Jonathan Williams the privilege "to lay drains through his land to the common shoar in Spring Lane."⁵

In 1719 liberty was given Jonas Clark to dig open the highway across Spring Lane for laying his cellar drain from his house, formerly Mrs. Winslow's, to run into a cistern standing in the town's land for the present conveniency of Mr. Bridgham, provided he lays the drains in brick or stone as the law directs.

In 1721 people about Spring Lane were much annoyed, and the way was made dangerous for the passing of horse and foot, by reason of some drains issuing out in the middle of the lane. Complaint was made and "Simeon Stoddard desires liberty of sinking a cistern for the waste water in the lane." The Selectmen reported "a cistern will not answer, and require the several drains be secured effectually by the owners or proprietors thereof in ten days from further damage or they shall be cut up."⁶

On September 25, 1786, the Selectmen allowed forty shillings toward repairing the pump in Spring Lane.⁷ In 1803 the drain or common sewer in Spring Lane was repaired at an expense of \$318, to be borne by forty persons whose estates enter into it.⁸ In 1804 —

A request was received from the Proprietors of the Wells & Pumps in Spring Lane that the Town would bear a proportion of the repairs now wanted on the Well as the Spring is of very general use in the Neighbour-

¹ Suffolk Deeds, iii. 118.

² Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, xi. 181.

³ Suffolk Deeds, xxxvii. 20. ⁴ Ibid. xxxvii. 204.

⁵ Ibid. xxxix. 203.

⁶ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, xiii. 88.

⁷ Ibid. xxv. 326.

⁸ Ibid. xxiii. 192.

hood . . . it was agreed that as the Town had never borne any part of such expence, it must still be considered at the charge of the proprietors.¹

The pump in Spring Lane remained there till the middle of the nineteenth century, just below the angle in the Winthrop Building. Within the last five years there was a mark on a curbstone put there by Mr. Edward Bangs of Bangs and Wells to show where the pump stood when he was a boy. The mark and the curbstone have both disappeared.

There was another old spring which came to light again when the excavations were made for the foundations of the Post Office building. It caused the contractors much trouble, but was finally controlled and the water was used in the boiler room of that building. This may have been the spring referred to in the deed from Captain Johnson to Peter Oliver. The spring under the Post Office died down some sixteen years ago to such an extent that its use was given up, and the water was turned into the sewer.²

Other springs and wells in the vicinity have disappeared, sometimes on account of deep excavations lower down the street. Jones, when putting in his foundations, may have struggled with water for days, trying to dam it out, having his men pump a steady stream. One morning on coming to the hole he finds it dry, and knows that Brown who is digging quite a distance off at a lower level, has tapped this vein of water and drained his cellar dry. Jones stops pumping and Brown begins.

Many of the old watercourses are gone, cut off by deep foundations or by the subways; and the paved surface of the streets gives the rain water little chance to sink into the ground. So, in many places where springs once existed, none are now found.

When the cellar of the Carter or the Winthrop Building, as it is now called, was dug, the contractors had little annoyance from water; but quicksand, the sign of an old watercourse, kept running into the cavity as fast as they threw it out. After this had gone on some time, a room in the basement of the City Hall caved in and its contents fell into the quicksand below, and some of the articles were never recovered. The City Hall officials declared that this was caused by the excavation of the Carter Building. The

¹ Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, xxxiii. 232.

² See Shurtleff, Topographical and Historical Description of Boston, pp. 390 et seq.

contractors scoffed at this. But what did undermine the City Hall? A great amount of fine quicksand was taken out at the Carter Building, and quicksand had gone from under the City Hall. Some contractors of experience say that, judging from the great amount of quicksand they have taken out of holes, it is certain it will run a long distance, and that it seems probable that the pumping of quicksand at the Carter Building undermined the City Hall, especially if one takes into consideration the fact that the buildings between were old and with shallow cellars. But other builders laugh at such an idea.

When the old buildings along the south side of Spring Lane were pulled down, and excavations were made for the new Old South Building, one could look down upon an expanse of fine sand. A little water was found, but it was a hundred feet from the lane.

In short, there is no "pellucid water" or "natural spring" in Spring Lane, and however "pellucid" it may have been originally, the defective drains beneath its surface and the cobblestone gutter above tended to make the water anything but excellent. And then consider the likelihood that the water passed under the burying-ground.

Where the water came from no one knows.

The well to supply the State House with water was carried to a depth of ninety-six feet, commencing as stated at a point thirty-five feet below the top of the hill. As the hill was one hundred and thirty eight feet six inches above the level of the sea, the bottom of the well was seven feet six inches above the same level. No spring was found in any of the strata, until the workmen entered on the last. After digging a foot or a foot and a half in the last stratum (the tenth) the bottom became so soft, and the water came in so fast, that the workmen were obliged to desist.¹

The Rev. John Lathrop took observations of the water in the well and wrote that it rose and fell with the tide.²

When the Congregational Building was erected a few years ago, a well was found in the back part of the lot, shored up with oak timber, and over seventy feet deep.

Toward the rear of 6 Beacon Street a well was found some sixty feet deep when the old buildings were torn down.

¹ Wheildon, Sentry, or Beacon Hill, pp. 85, 86.

² Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, iii. 57-63.

In digging the cellar of the Tremont Building a considerable flow of water was met with on the Beacon Street side.

Snow tells us that a well was dug for the accommodation of a house at the head of School Street opposite the Stone Chapel.¹ When the workmen had reached a depth of about sixty-five feet, a spring burst into the well several feet from the bottom and flowed with such rapidity as to fill it to the height of forty feet in twenty-five minutes. Next morning they undertook to draw out the water by means of a whip tackle. In the course of seven hours, during which several men with two horses raised at the rate of five barrels of water in two minutes, making in all more than a thousand barrels, they succeeded in exhausting the water, so far as to admit of laying the well. In a few days the water assumed the usual level of that in other wells.

In digging at the Albion Building at the corner of Beacon and Tremont Streets there was but little trouble from water. No water was met with in excavating for the Pavilion or the Carney Buildings, but both contractors said they were getting nervous, for the indications were that they were on the point of meeting water when they left off digging. No water was met with under the Kimball Building, but it was erected on the site of a large old building, the foundations were not deep, and it was below the subway.

All that side of Beacon Hill up to the Common is made up of a mixture of clay and gravel impervious to water, but the assertion is general that if you go down far enough, you will come to a stratum of quicksand and water.

Three or four years ago some one came forward with a scheme for sinking a pump in Spring Lane "where the old town pump stood" and tapping this "pellucid spring." All the old fiction was raked up and added to, of Winthrop's settling on one side of the spring at the founding of the town with Isaac Johnson on the other side, and a happy family of colonists around them. Isaac Johnson died September 30, 1630. If he ever lived for a week or two at Boston, it was not at the spring, and there is a dispute as to whether he was even buried here.

There was a spring in the lane, but it no longer exists. The Selectmen of a hundred years ago denied that there was ever a town pump there. Neither Winthrop nor the colonists settled

¹ History of Boston, p. 33.

there originally, but as the town grew, they moved to the South End of that day, and the spring was used as a watering-place.

There is a proposal to set up a tablet in the lane, where the "Governor's Spring" was, and it is well to commemorate old landmarks. There should be many such tablets, and doubtless the committee in charge know the history of the old spring. This paper is written to forestall and counteract the effects of effusions of such enthusiasts as have been quoted above.

What, in brief, is the truth about Mr. Blackstone's spring? It is clear that the colonists did not wait till after September 30, 1630, and then in a body move over to Shawmut, and settle around a spring pointed out by the reverend gentleman; they did not lie in misery on the slopes of Town Hill for three months wishing for running water, when there was plenty across the river. We know that they were planting dispersedly in towns, and that soon after they arrived at Charlestown some had already gone to Trimount. It is probable that Blackstone called their attention to a spring, and that to a greater or less extent they settled near it.

But while the big spring near Blackstone's house was "excellent," hardly a soul lived there till the middle of the eighteenth century; and the locality around Lynde's spring in Howard Street was pasture land for years after the settlement. The land near the Cotton spring was not taken up for two or three years after the people came over. The "Governor's spring" was at the South End of the town, and the neighbors came there about 1634. The first settlement was not made by any of these springs.

We must bear in mind the fact that this band of invalids could not carry their sick and their goods far from the shore.

The head of the cove was the most desirable spot for persons coming to Boston by water. It was easy of access by boats, and offered the best harbor and shelter. It was at the centre of the peninsula. Here they could get shell-fish, either in the cove, or near at hand in what they called Centre Haven or the Mill Pond; and they needed food as much as drink, and had to procure it daily from the sea. Here we find the common landing-place, and the thickest settlement in early days. Here also was the largest supply of fresh water; and since we have shown that no other big spring was Mr. Blackstone's "excellent Spring," we may reasonably suppose that it was the Tyng "Spring or fountain," which

we have seen was led down to the conduits and furnished abundance of water to those living at the head of the cove.

But if "running water" seemed to the colonists at first an absolute necessity, they soon found there was plenty of good water in Shawmut; and, scattered along the shore of the North End or "the Island," as they often called it, and to the south of the cove, they laid out their "Broad Street leading to the Sea," where the gentlemen of quality lived.

ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

19 NOVEMBER, 1907

AN ADJOURNED MEETING of the Council was held on Tuesday, 19 November, 1907, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Present, Messrs. Henry Winchester Cunningham, Henry Herbert Edes, Frederick Lewis Gay, George Lyman Kittredge, and Albert Matthews.

President **GEORGE LYMAN KITTREDGE** occupied the chair.

The following minute, offered by Mr. **EDES**, was adopted :

The Members of the Council of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts wish to place on their Records an expression of their appreciation of the services rendered to the Society during the past seven years by President **GEORGE LYMAN KITTREDGE**, who has declined a re-election. They would also record their regret at his decision, since it will deprive them of his delightful fellowship at this Board as well as of his wise counsel and of his ability as its presiding officer. In his retirement from office Mr. Kittredge will carry with him the affectionate regard of his associates, who will ever cherish the years spent with him in service to the Society as a delightful memory.