

EDWIN H. ARNOLD

OFFICE  
ITAL TRUST BLDG.  
PRVIDENCE 3, R. I.  
521-4381

July 30, 1963

RESIDENCE  
ROARING BROOK FARM  
GREENE, R. I.  
TEL: 397-3333

Mr. Kenneth Bean  
I.C.I. (Organics) Inc.  
55 Canal Street  
Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Ken:

I want to thank you very much for sending me a copy of the records of 55 Canal St. as prepared by the Providence Preservation Society.

There is quite a lot of information in the intervening years between 1859 and 1962, although much of this would not show in the office of the registrar of deeds. You can well imagine the situation on leased land (which was the case with us for many years) when we were dealing with about fifty heirs. Some of the interests were as small as 1/16 of 1/8 of 1/4 of 1/2 which would net the recipient the huge sum of 56 cents per quarter!

It took ten years to trace a majority of the owners of the land, and many of the checks were returned for lack of addresses or because the particular person was unknown and could not be located. We finally had to go to the Superior Court to get title to the land and because of the fact that some of the heirs might later show up, we formed the Canal Street Land Company and bought the property in its name. Naturally had we not done that, it would have been impossible to restore the building when we did in 1950.

Kindest personal regards to you and also to any I may still know at 55.

Most sincerely yours,



Edwin H. Arnold

cha/eml

By W<sup>m</sup> P Samuel Foster

Built 1849

PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Records of

Plat 12  
Lot 7

#55 CANAL STREET....Brick

(The ARNOLD-HOFFMAN Bldg)

Now (1963) Chemical Industries C — )  
Sold to RISD in 1967

- 1791 David Harris sells for 840 L Silver Lawful money to Seth Wheaton a certain house Lot with a Dwelling House and other buildings bounded: N by a gangway; S by Welcome Arnold; E by Main Street 40'; W by the Channel it being on the Main Street between the Baptist Meeting House and Great Bridge....DB 23.64
- 1827 WILL: Seth Wheaton...To my daughter Eliza..."ALSO a lot of land being the S/W part of the lot between N Main and North Water (Canal) Street which I purchased of David Harris"...To my daughter Ann"the rest and residue of my Harris Estate, being the N  $\frac{1}{2}$  part thereof "...Wells 13.406 \*
- 1847 INDENTURE of lease. Ann Wheaton DeFresange, wife of John Charles De Fresange leases to John W Lyman a certain lot of land formerly owned by Seth Wheaton being the N bound of said Wheaton's Lot..DB 105.343
- 1847 INDENTURE:of Lease: Tristram Burgess and Zachariah Allen lease to William Foster a certain Lot of land between N Main and Canal Streets being farm let for 12 years (to 1859) and may be renewed...the gangway to be kept open. Bounded W by Canal Street 40'; N by the heirs of Seth Wheaton 64'; E by the grantors 40'; S by a gangway..."and that he, the grantee as soon as reasonably may be done, cause to set up, builded and furnished on the said premises to be begun the next Spring as soon as season and weather will admit, a strong substantial and well built store in length and breadth covering the whole of the ground hereby devised and of as many stories high but not less than two, as the parties of the second part (W Foster) may choose. The cellars whereof shall be of good solid stone such as ordinarily are used in the construction of the foundation of three or four story buildings. The exterior walls and interior cross wall if any such are constructed, shall be of good well-burnt bricks or of other materials equally strong and durable, and the said walls shall be of sufficient thickness, cemented with good mortar, and built in a strong and faithful manner and supplied and supported by a frame built of the usual kind of such size and in so many pieces so as that said store when finished shall be of a sufficient strength at all times to sustain the weight of any kind of goods; which may at any time be deposited, laid up, and stored therein and in any part thereof." The building to be pledged as payment of rent...the grantee to keep the building in repair...DB 105.340
- 1848 John W Lyman and wife Eliza (Wheaton) Lyman farm let and devise to William Foster the TWO adjacent lots of land fronting W/ly on Canal Street. 1st LOT;..Belong to Ann DeFresange and John C DeFresange and leased to the said John W Lyman in 1848 (DB 105.343) Bounded...

more....

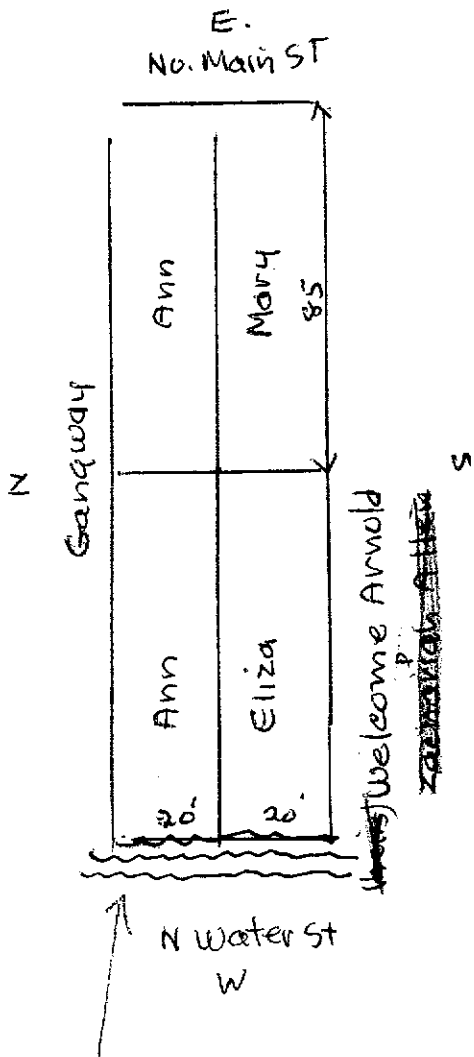
#55 CANAL STREET...continued

- W by Canal Street; N by a gangway; S by Eliza Lyman. The 2nd Lot belonging to Eliza Wheaton Lyman bounded: N by Ann DeFressange; S by Tristram Burgess and Zachariah Allen and leased to said Foster which said TWO Lots are 20' wide at right angles to said Canal St and extend E/ly therefrom to line parallel to North Main Street and 85' W/ly therefrom, and hold the width of 20' from front to rear, at rental of \$750 per year to be renewed in 15 years...the buildings to be pledged as payment of rent....DB 105.455
- 1849 POLICY RECORD: ~~The~~ Earl P Mason<sup>\*</sup>: Store on Canal Street in the City of Providence. Brick 40' x 80' dimensions...4 stories high in front and rear. Occupied for storing merchandise and transaction of business. It stands on leased land...Vol 40...Policy 17199..R I Hist Soc.
- 1849 POLICY RECORD: Samuel and William Foster; Brick and stone Store.. 40'x 75' ...4 stories high front and rear. Doors, windows, shutters of iron excepting front part..floors laid in mortar..roof slated... used for storing merchandise and transaction of business...on leased land...Volume 40...Policy #17117...R I Hist Society
- 1850 The Earl P Mason and Company, druggists, listed at #23 and #24 Canal Street (formerly on Broad Street)...Prov Directory
- 1852 Edward Arnold #37; W Chapin #33; S L Peck #37; B Jackson #24 ; and E Mason #23 Canal Street....Prov Directory
- 1859 Samuel and William Foster sell for \$1400 to Earl P Mason the N/ly part or portion of the Brick Building on the E/ly side of Canal Street commonly known as "FOSTER'S BUILDING" and which portion of building extends from the center of the dividing wall next S and adjoining the present stairway as far N as the S/ly line of Linard Street. Said building stands on leased Land leased to us by two leases one from John W and Eliza W Lyman, and the other from Ann W DeFressange s subject to conditions of said leases...privilege of using stairs (not to be moved) and furthermore that the iron safe which is now partly in and under division and partly under front stairs shall forever be permitted to remain in said location undisturbed without any change thereof...DB 152.350
- 1962 Canal Street Land Company sells to Hoffman & Company Inc..."That tract of land with with all buildings and improvements thereon standing bounded: W by Canal Street; E by Socony Oil Company; S by Amos Street; N by Waterman Street"...DB 1111.1197
- 1967 Properly sold to R.I. School of Design more...
- 1824\* Earle P. Mason Co - 27 Broad St
- 1890 " " " " Trustees

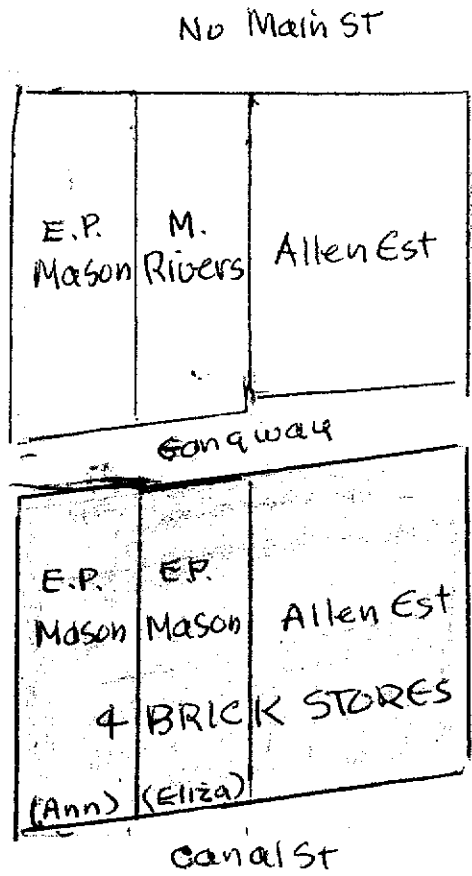
PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

3.

#55 CANAL STREET...continued



\* WILL: 13.406  
1827 of  
SETH WHEATON



1875  
Atlas

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*  
\*

HISTORY OF  
ARNOLD, HOFFMAN & CO. INCORPORATED  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*  
\*

55 Canal St.

NOVEMBER  
1947

ARNOLD, HOFFMAN & CO. INCORPORATED

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*

FOR ONE WHOLE CENTURY AND A THIRD OF ANOTHER, THE FIRM THAT IS NOW CALLED ARNOLD, HOFFMAN & CO. INCORPORATED, HAS BEEN ESSENTIAL TO AMERICAN INDUSTRY - PRIMARILY BECAUSE IT PROUDLY HOLDS THE LONGEST RECORD OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY, CERTAINLY IN NEW ENGLAND AND PROBABLY IN THE WHOLE UNITED STATES.

ARNOLD, HOFFMAN & CO. INCORPORATED IS THE RESULT OF A SUCCESSION OF PARTNERSHIPS STARTING IN 1815 IN A SMALL STORE ON BROWN STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND. THE FOUNDERS WERE BENJAMIN AND CHARLES DYER WHO ESTABLISHED BUSINESS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEALING IN WHOLESALE DRUGS, CHEMICALS AND DYESTUFFS USED IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

FROM THE BEGINNING THE FIRM SEEMED DESTINED TO PASS THROUGH MANY HANDS, AND THE NAME OF THE FIRM WAS CHANGED FREQUENTLY. A FEW YEARS AFTER ITS FOUNDING, THE NAME WAS CHANGED TO HENRY A. CONDE, AND STILL LATER TO DR. JOHN H. MASON. IN 1827, DR. MASON WAS JOINED BY EARL POTTER MASON AS PARTNER, AND THE NAME WAS THEN CHANGED TO JOHN H. MASON & CO. IN 1842 GEORGE L. CLAFLIN, GRANDFATHER OF THE PRESENT HEAD OF GEORGE L. CLAFLIN & CO., JOINED THE FIRM AS CLEARK AND SHORTLY AFTER THIS TIME, THE NAME WAS AGAIN CHANGED TO EARL P. MASON & CO. OTHERS IN THE FIRM UNDER THIS NAME WERE: BENJAMIN M. JACKSON, GEORGE W. WNOW, LEVI L. WEBSTER AND JOHN L. DRAPER. AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL AT THIS WRITING, IT WAS ABOUT THIS PERIOD THAT THE BUSINESS WAS MOVED TO ITS PRESENT LOCATION ON CANAL STREET, WHICH IT HAS OCCUPIED NOW FOR OVER A CENTURY.

ON MARCH 31, 1869, THE FIRM BECAME SNOW, CLAFLIN & CO. WITH GEORGE W. SNOW, GEORGE L. CLAFLIN, FRANK BUTTS, AS A NEW MEMBER OF THE FIRM; JOHN L. DRAPER, AND EARL POTTER MASON, THE LATTER AS SPECIAL PARTNER.

ON MARCH 30, 1872, THE NAME AGAIN CHANGED TO BUTTS & MASON, WITH FRANK BUTTS, EARL POTTER MASON AND E. PHILIP MASON, THE LATTER THE SON OF EARL POTTER MASON. ON FEBRUARY 28, 1874, THE NAME AGAIN CHANGED TO MASON, CHAPIN & CO., THE ONLY REMAINING PREVIOUS MEMBER OF THE FIRM BEING E. PHILIP MASON AND WITH ADDITIONS AT THIS TIME OF WILLIAM P. CHAPIN, THE NEW PARTNER, CHARLES S. BUSH AND SAMUEL L. PECK. DURING THIS PERIOD ALSO, THE FATHER OF THE PRESENT PRESIDENT, EDWARD E. ARNOLD JOINED THE FIRM, WITH MR. WILLIAM HOFFMAN, FATHER OF W. HAROLD HOFFMAN, ONE OF THE PRESENT MEMBERS OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS. DURING THESE YEARS, THE FIRM BECAME ONE OF THE LARGEST DEALERS IN NATURAL INDIGO, IMPORTING PROBABLY MOST OF IT FROM INDIA. THE FIRM HAD AGENTS AT ALL TIMES IN INDIA, BUYING FOR ITS ACCOUNT, AND THE PROVIDENCE OFFICE HAS AMONG ITS SEVERAL HISTORIC RELICS, A PICTURE TAKEN IN INDIA SHOWING THE GRADING AND WEIGHING OF THE INDIGO BY THE NATIVES. THIS INDIGO TRADING BECAME ALMOST EXTINCT AT THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR I.

IT WAS IN ABOUT 1892, THAT THE MANUFACTURING PLANT, KNOWN AS THE ANCHOR COLOR AND GUM WORKS WAS ACQUIRED. THE BUSINESS OF THE "COLOR WORKS" AT THAT TIME WAS LARGELY THAT OF MAKING COLORS GROUND IN OIL AND FILLERS FOR PAPER AND CLOTH. THE PLANT IN THOSE DAYS WAS SMALL - NOTHING MORE THAN A LITTLE OLD BRICK BUILDING AND A LARGER WOODEN ONE, WHERE THE MACHINERY AND PRODUCTION PLANT WERE. ONE OF THE ACQUISITIONS AT THIS TIME ALSO, WAS THAT OF A "PRIS GREEN" PLANT. THE PRODUCTION OF THIS WAS DANGEROUS, PARTICULARLY WITH THE CRUDE APPARATUS USED IN THOSE DAYS. NO ONE COULD BE PERSUADED TO WORK THERE AND IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE THIS PLANT WAS ABANDONED. DURING THIS PERIOD ALSO, THE MANUFACTURE OF STARCH AND SOFTENER PRODUCTS WAS STARTED.

ON JANUARY 1, 1897, MR. EDWARD E. ARNOLD AND SAMUEL L. PECK FORMED ARNOLD, PECK & Co., WITH MR. WILLIAM HOFFMAN ALSO INTERESTED. TWO YEARS LATER MR. ARNOLD AND MR. HOFFMAN FORMED THE PARTNERSHIP OF ARNOLD, HOFFMAN COMPANY AND AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY ON JANUARY 1, 1900, INCORPORATED AS ARNOLD, HOFFMAN & Co. INCORPORATED. MR. EDWARD E. ARNOLD SERVED AS PRESIDENT FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1925 AND MR. HOFFMAN AS VICE PRESIDENT AND TREASURER UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1916.

UPON THE DEATH OF MR. ARNOLD IN 1925, MR. WILLIAM H. HAYWARD, FORMERLY SECRETARY AND LATER TREASURER, BECAME PRESIDENT; MR. EDWARD E. JOHNSON, FORMER SECRETARY, BECAME TREASURER AND JOHN R. GLADDING BECAME SECRETARY UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1931, WHEN MR. JOHNSON WAS MADE SECRETARY-TREASURER.

IN JULY, 1936, UPON THE DEATH OF MR. EDWARD M. JOHNSON, THE SON OF EDWARD E. ARNOLD, MR. EDWIN H. ARNOLD BECAME TREASURER AND MR. W. HAROLD HOFFMAN, SON OF THE FORMER WILLIAM H. HOFFMAN, BECAME SECRETARY. ON JANUARY 1, 1937, UPON THE RETIREMENT OF WILLIAM H. HAYWARD, THE STOCKHOLDERS ELECTED EDWIN H. ARNOLD AS PRESIDENT AND TREASURER; CONTINUED MR. HOFFMAN AS SECRETARY, MR. JOSEPH A. BRYANT AS VICE PRESIDENT, WHICH POST HE HAD HELD SINCE 1926; ELECTED THOMAS H. ROBERTS, ANOTHER VICE PRESIDENT AND MR. CHARLES F. KIESS CONTINUED AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND ASSISTANT TREASURER.

FEELING THE NEED OF ADDED FACILITIES FOR RESEARCH, THE FIRM ORGANIZED A NEW RESEARCH LABORATORY IN 1937 AND SECURED AT THAT TIME THE SERVICES OF WILLIAM L. MORGAN AS RESEARCH DIRECTOR AND HIS ASSISTANT, EARLE D. MCLEOD, WHO HAS NOW SUCCEEDED MR. MORGAN AS HEAD OF THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT.

IN 1938, THE FIRM SUFFERED FROM THE HURRICANE AND FLOOD WHICH OCCURRED ON SEPTEMBER 13, WHEN ITS OFFICES IN PROVIDENCE WERE COMPLETELY INUNDATED. THE ONLY OTHER SUCH TIDAL WAVE AND FLOOD TO REACH THESE PROPORTIONS IN PROVIDENCE WAS THE GREAT BLOW WHICH OCCURRED IN 1815, THE YEAR OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CONCERN.

IN 1940 THE FIRM PURCHASED THE BUSINESS OF THE PROVIDENCE DRYBALTERS DIVISION OF THE HERCULES POWDER COMPANY TO FURTHER AUGMENT ITS FACILITIES.

ARNOLD, HOFFMAN & Co. INCORPORATED HAS EXPANDED RAPIDLY SINCE 1937. THE MAIN OFFICE IS LOCATED AT 55 CANAL STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND AND IT OPERATES BRANCH SALES OFFICES IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW YORK CITY, PHILADELPHIA, AND CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA AND HAS RESIDENT SALESMEN AT COLUMBUS, GEORGE AND GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA.

UP UNTIL MARCH, 1947, ALL MANUFACTURING WAS DONE AT ITS NORTHERN PLANT AT DIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS. HOWEVER, SHORTLY AFTER JANUARY 1, 1947, A NEW PLANT AT CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA WAS COMPLETED. THE FIRM WAS ABLE TO EXPEDITE DELIVERY OF ORDERS WHICH THE DIGHTON PLANT WAS UNABLE TO FILL AND TO BETTER SERVE THE INDUSTRY IN THE SOUTH. THE DIGHTON PLANT, FORMERLY OPERATED AS A 100% OWNED SUBSIDIARY, ON DECEMBER 28, 1946, WAS LIQUIDATED INTO THE PARENT COMPANY.

THE NATURE OF THE COMPANY'S BUSINESS TODAY IS THE MANUFACTURE AND SALES OF DYESTUFFS, CHEMICALS AND MERCHANDISE USED PRINCIPALLY IN THE TEXTILE, COSMETIC, PLASTIC, COATINGS, LEATHER, LUBRICANTS AND ALLIED TRADES. THE OPERATIONS OF THE COMPANY CAN BE DIVIDED INTO ITS EIGHT DEPARTMENTS:

THE DYE DEPARTMENT WHERE HIGHLY VALUABLE ALIZARINE TYPE DYES ARE MANUFACTURED FOR THE WOOLEN MILLS. SEVERAL VAT DYES ARE NOW IN PRODUCTION, HOWEVER, AS A RESULT OF WARTIME RESEARCH.

THE SYNTHETIC DEPARTMENT WHERE RESINS, SUBSTANTIVE SOFTENERS, WETTING AGENTS, PLASTICIZERS AND DETERGENTS ARE MANUFACTURED.

THE SIZE DEPARTMENT WHERE SIZING COMPOUNDS ARE PRODUCED FOR ALL TYPES OF FABRICS AND BLENDS OF FABRICS. THIS DEPARTMENT ALSO PRODUCES SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS OF PASTES AND LIQUID PRINTING GUMS FOR SCREEN AND ROLLER TEXTILE PRINTING PLANTS.

THE GUM OR STARCH DEPARTMENT WHERE TAPIOCA, POTATO, CORN, WHEAT, AND SAGO FLOURS ARE CONVERTED OR BLENDED TO PRODUCE DRY ADHESIVES, PRINTING GUMS AND FINISHING GUMS.

THE BROKERAGE DEPARTMENT WHERE ALL KINDS OF CHEMICALS ARE RESOLD. (THIS DEPARTMENT FORMERLY SOLD ENTIRE OUTPUT OF MATHIESON ALKALI Co. PRIOR TO THE DEATH OF EDWARD E. ARNOLD, WHO WAS THE BUILDER AND FOUNDER OF MATHIESON ALKALI Co.).

THE EXPORT DEPARTMENT WHICH HAS EXPANDED RAPIDLY SINCE THE CLOSE OF THE WAR AND THROUGH WHICH WE SERVE THE ENTIRE WORLD.

THE FIRE SPECIALTIES DEPARTMENT, WHERE OUR NATIONALLY KNOWN FIRE SPECIALTY AGENT - DRENCH - IS HANDLED AND MARKETED.

THE MACHINE TOOL DIVISION, OUR NEWEST VENTURE, WHERE COOLANTS FOR CUTTING, GRINDING AND OTHER MACHINE TOOL REQUIREMENTS ARE HANDLED.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS HISTORY, IN THE FALL OF 1947 ARNOLD, HOFFMAN & Co. INCORPORATED MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AN ISSUE OF ITS CAPITAL STOCK.

THE COMPANY IS NOW OPERATING AT ITS HIGHEST CAPACITY IN HISTORY - IT HAS EXPANSION PLANS FAR INTO THE FUTURE -- AND BECAUSE IT IS SO FULL OF PLANS FOR TOMORROW - IT HAS FORGOTTEN TO GROW OLD.

#### THE MANAGEMENT

EDWIN H. ARNOLD,  
PRESIDENT AND TREASURER

MASON B. MERCHANT  
SECRETARY

THOMAS H. ROBERTS  
VICE PRESIDENT AND TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

GEORGE A. RAWCLIFFE  
ASSISTANT TREASURER

JEFFREY B. HENRIQUES  
VICE PRESIDENT

EONA M. LINDBERG  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EDWIN H. ARNOLD  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

MASON B. MERCHANT  
SECRETARY

THOMAS HARRIS

MEREDITH E. JOHNSON

W. HAROLD HOFFMAN



NOTES ON THE PAST  
(PUT OUT BY ARNOLD HOFFMAN Co.)

55 Canal St

ONE OF THE OLDEST INHABITANTS OF MARKET PLACE, OUR MAIN OFFICE BUILDING, HAS BEEN WITNESS TO MANY A SCENE OF ROMANCE, ADVENTURE AND 19TH CENTURY HISTORY.

SLIGHTLY NORTH OF "WHERE THE GREATER BRIDGE NOW STANDETH THAT GOETH OVER THE RIVER TO WAYBOSSET" IS THE SITE WHERE SOMEONE CHOSE TO ERECT THE EDIFICE WHICH TODAY SHELTERS THE MAIN OFFICES AND LABORATORIES OF ARNOLD, HOFFMAN & Co. INCORPORATED. THE YEAR 1815 WAS THE START OF A PERIOD OF ACCELERATED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION ALONG WHAT IS NOW CANAL STREET -- AN ERA PROBABLY INITIATED AS A RESULT OF THE GREAT GALE OF SEPTEMBER OF THAT YEAR, WHEN MIGHTY SAILING SHIPS WERE BLOWN CLEAR UP THE STREAM, BEYOND 55 CANAL STREET, PROPELLED BY WINDS AND WAVES WHICH IN TWO HOURS' TIME TOOK A TOLL OF 500 BUILDINGS IN A TOWN WHICH HAD A POPULATION OF LESS THAN 12,000.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN THE EARLY 1800'S WAS CONCENTRATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE CANAL. OUR BACK DOOR OPENED ONTO "CHEAPSIDE", THE FASHIONABLE SHOPPING CENTER OF PROVIDENCE TOWN, WHERE LADIES STEPPED FROM THEIR CARRIAGES ONTO COBBLE SIDEWALKS TO VISIT SUCH SHOPS AS THE "BUNCH OF GRAPES" (NOW GLADDINGS, ACROSS THE RIVER). THE NAME "CHEAPSIDE" APPEARS TO THIS DAY IN THE FRONT MASONRY OF THE BUILDING DIRECTLY BEHIND THE BLUE CROSS BUILDING.

OUR TOWN AND THEIR INHABITANTS IN THOSE DAYS LEFT A RATHER MILD IMPRESSION ON THE MINDS OF VISITORS FROM LARGER CITIES, AS EVIDENCED BY THE FOLLOWING REPORT GIVEN BY A LADY WHO HAD COME TO SHOP AT CHEAPSIDE:

"THE CITIZENS OF PROVIDENCE ARE MILD, UNASSUMING, AFLESS, AND THE VERY MILK OF HUMAN KINDNESS. THEY ARE GENTEEL, BUT NOT SO REFINED AS THE PEOPLE OF BOSON. THEY ARE STOUT, FINE LOOKING MEN; THE LADIES, PARTICULARLY, ARE HANDSOME, AND MANY OF THEM HIGHLY ACCOMPLISHED. BOTH SEXES HAVE A VERY INDEPENDENT CARRIAGE."

A FEW DOORS SOUTH OF OUR BUILDING WAS THE FAMED COFFEE HOUSE, AN EXCHANGE FOR MERCHANTS, POLITICIANS, NEWSMONGERS, MALE GOSSIPS, AND SCANDAL BROKERS OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS. THERE THE MERCHANTS OF MARKET PLACE COULD SIP THEIR BRANDY WHILE THEY READ THE LATEST NEWS AND MARKET REPORTS, DINE IN SPACIOUS HALLS OR SEPARATE ROOMS ON THE SECOND FLOOR, OR PLAY CARDS OR BILLIARDS ON THE THIRD. BUT IN AN ERA OF PROGRESS THE OLD WOODEN COFFEE HOUSE SOON GAVE WAY TO MORE LUCRATIVE REAL ESTATE.

WE CANNOT ESTABLISH (ALTHOUGH WE'RE STILL TRYING) IN WHAT YEAR OUR BUILDING WAS ERECTED, BUT IT WAS PROBABLY ABOUT 25 YEARS AFTER THE GREAT GALE. BENJAMIN AND CHARLES DYER, OUR ORIGINAL FOUNDERS, STARTED AS PURVEYORS OF DRUGS AND MEDICINES. IN 1828 THEIR LITTLE SHOP WAS LEVELED TO MAKE WAY FOR THE ARCADE, AND IN 1842, UNDER THE NAME OF EARL P. MASON & Co., SPACE WAS RENTED AT 55 CANAL STREET TO HOUSE A GROWING ORGANIZATION. IN 20 YEARS WE GREW TO SUCH PROPORTIONS THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO OCCUPY ALL 5 FLOORS OF OUR SECTION OF THE BUILDING. OUR NEIGHBORS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE DIVIDING WALL, ABOUT WHERE THE FRONT STAIRWELL IS TODAY, WERE BOOKSELLERS, WOOL MERCHANTS, AND GROCERS.

NOTES ON THE PAST (CONTINUED)

55 Canal St

THE PHRASE "QUALITY AND INTEGRITY", IN RECENT YEARS PART OF OUR OFFICIAL SIGNATURE ON ADS AND SALES LITERATURE WOULD WELL HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED BY THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL, WRITTEN IN 1887.

"A CONCERN WHICH HAS LONG BEEN PROMINENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE MANUFACTURE AND DEALERSHIP OF DRUGS, DYE STUFFS, CHEMICALS, PAINTS, OILS, ETC., IS THAT OF MESSRS. MASON, CHAPIN & Co., THE WIDELY AND FAVORABLY KNOWN MANUFACTURERS AND DEALERS IN DRUGS, DYE STUFFS, CHEMICALS, PAINTS, OILS, VARNISHES, WINDOW GLASS, BRUSHES AND MANUFACTURERS', BLEACHERS', CALICO PRINTERS' AND JEWELERS' SUPPLIES. THIS IMPORTANT HOUSE WAS FOUNDED AS LONG AGO AS 1814, AND IS THEREFORE ONE OF THE OLDEST OF ITS KIND IN NEW ENGLAND. THE PRESENT COPARTNERS, MESSRS. EARL PHILIP MASON, WILLIAM P. CHAPIN, SAMUEL L. PECK AND EDWARD E. ARNOLD, ARE GENTLEMEN OF VAST PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE, WHO BRING TO BEAR AN INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WANTS OF THE TRADE AND HAVE THE FACILITIES AT HAND TO SUPPLY THE SAME. THEY ARE ALSO CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES OF THE CITY AND ARE PROMINENTLY CONNECTED WITH OTHER IMPORTANT ENTERPRISES. THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE FIRM IN THIS CITY ARE COMPRISED IN A BUILDING 60 X 100 FEET IN DIMENSIONS HAVING 6 FLOORS, THE WHOLE OF WHICH IS STORED WITH A LARGE AND VALUABLE STOCK. THE FIRM ARE PROPRIETORS OF THE ANCHOR COLOR WORKS OF DIGHTON, MASS. WHERE ARE MANUFACTURED PARIS GREEN COLORS IN OIL AND JAPANS; THEY ALSO MANUFACTURE DRUGS, DYE STUFFS AND CHEMICALS FOR MANUFACTURERS' USES AND ARE AS NEAR FIRST HANDS IN ALL THEIR LINES AS IT IS POSSIBLE FOR ANY CONCERN TO BE. THE FIRM HAS BRANCH ESTABLISHMENTS AT 58 PINE STREET, NEW YORK AND 141 MILK STREET, BOSTON AND THE TRADE WHICH IS EXCLUSIVELY WHOLESALE, EXTENDS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

"MESSRS. MASON, CHAPIN AND Co. ARE PROGRESSIVE, ENTERPRISING AND LIBERAL BUSINESS MEN, SKILLED MANUFACTURERS IN THEIR LINE, AND MAY BE JUSTLY RANKED AMONG THE MOST VALUED INDUSTRIAL FIRMS IN NEW ENGLAND."

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY WE BECAME ARNOLD, HOFFMAN & Co. INCORPORATED. THE BRICK PARTITION SEPARATING THE NORTH BUILDING FROM THE SOUTH CAME DOWN. THE CANAL WAS SPANNED BY THE WIDEST BRIDGE IN THE WORLD TO ENABLE EASIER ACCESS TO THE NEW SHOPPING CENTER ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE RIVER. W. E. BARRETT & Co., DEALER IN SEEDS AND OTHER AGRUCULTURAL SUPPLIES, VACATED THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF US ENABLING WATERMAN STREET TO COMPLETE ITS DOWNHILL JOURNEY RIGHT INTO MARKET PLACE. AHCO GREW IN SIZE AND SCOPE, ADDING PLANTS AND OFFICES IN THE SOUTH AND MIDWEST, AND IN 1951 WE BECAME A SUBSIDIARY OF IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED.

IN GOING THROUGH OLD RECORDS AND DIARIES WE WERE FREQUENTLY TEMPTED TO DWELL MORE ON ACCOUNTS OF INDIAN RAIDS, TEA-BURNING PARTIES, SLAVE AUCTIONS, DUELS, CONSPIRACIES, AND FREEDOM RALLIES, ALL OF THESE HAVE OCCURRED WITHIN A QUARTER-MILE RADIUS OF OUR FRONT DOOR. IT WAS EQUALLY INTERESTING TO NOTE WHAT VITAL ROLES ARNOLD, HOFFMAN'S EARLY FOUNDERS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS PLAYED IN THE CIVIC AS WELL AS INDUSTRIAL GROWTH OF PROVIDENCE.

PERHAPS, IN SUBSEQUENT ISSUES OF AHCO NEWS WE CAN RELATE SOME OF THESE STORIES.

as far as Steeple Street, but with the opening of the canal a street called North Water Street was laid out from Steeple Street to Smith Street. Along this street wharves were built for the Canal Street traffic and warehouses for goods being sent and received by the freight boats.

Here and there along its course the remains of the towpath can still be found.

The locks are probably hidden by underbrush, if they remain at all. Along its length, though, boys in this century ran up and down the towpath and learned to swim in the canal. Here and there you can see evidences of its existence but there is no street called North Water. For many years now it has been called something else--you guessed it--Canal Street!