

PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Records of

#32 Dexter Street.....wood

Built between 1860 and 1875

Plat 32
Lot 229

#16 Dexter in 1875 & 1882

#32 Dexter since 1895

Prior to 1875 the structure may have been designated by an odd number.

- 1814 Knight Dexter died devising his property, with the exception of a life estate left to his wife Phoebe, to his children Ebenezer Knight Dexter and Abigail Olney, wife of Christopher Columbus Olney. Among the property they shared was a farm on the west side of the river, bounding northerly on the road leading to Plainfield, and southerly on the road leading to Cranston, being all that tract of land lying on both sides of the road marked out from the Plainfield Road to the Johnston Road and as appearing on the plat made by Daniel Anthony in the Town Clerk's Office. With but 3 exceptions they divided the land, Ebenezer taking the eastern part and Abigail the western: Sophia Dexter, wife of Samuel Dexter and grand-daughter of Knight Dexter's sister Naoime recieved Lot #1 on the Daniel Anthony Plat; Christopher Columbus Olney, Knight Dexter's son-in-law recieved Lots #19 & 20; in addition the will directed the laying out of a road from the Plainfield Road to the Cranston Road across the farm with a Training Field of one acre to be laid out next to the road and a Meeting House 'Lot 100' square adjoining where any Society of Christians might erect a House for the worship of Almighty God. Provided that the town build a fence around the Training Field and some society build on the Meeting House Lot within two years, otherwise the property was to revert to Knight Dexter's heirs. (Probate Docket A4198, Will Book 11 pg.461).
- 1823 Nathaniel Rossiter and Abigail Rossiter his wife (formerly Abigail Olney) of Pompret Conn., for the sum of \$5,750.00, paid to them by Ebenezer Knight Dexter of Prov., convey "One certain lot of land lying and being in said Providence on the plain between said Providence and Olneyville, so called, containing about 17 acres more or less and bounded northerly on High Street, westerly on land belonging to Nathan and Rufus Waterman and others, southerly on the Cranston Road and easterly on Dexter Street and a Meeting House Lot, it being the same

land given to said Abigail by her honored father Knight Dexter, deceased, in his last will." This parcel was added to the adjoining parcel of some 22 acres that Dexter had inherited in his own right. (Deed Book 47:207).

1824 On August 10th, Ebenezer Knight Dexter died at the age of 58, a widower with no children. He disposed of his considerable estate by making bequests to his sister Abigail Rossiter, various nieces and nephews, servants and friends. The remainder of his estate he left to the City of Providence, including land for an asylum on the neck at what is now Brown' Aldrich-Dexter Field, the so called Dwight Lands on the south side of Doyle Ave., and the farm on the west side of the river. The will, recorded in Will Book 13 pg.186 stated, "I give, grant and devise to ...the Town of Providence...for the use of a training field and to be appropriated to no other use or purpose...my lot of land at the west end of town lying between Cranston St. and High St. and bounded westerly on land of Rufus Waterman and others and easterly on Dexter St., it being the same lot which heretofore belonged to my sister Abigail Rossiter...excepting thereout a strip at the north and another at the south end each to be 150' deep and which said strips are reserved for house lots....And my will furthur is that said town shall not permit any public execution of criminals on said training field.... And I do hereby give said town full power and authority to sell... the whole or any part of the real estate herein devised to them except the neck farm and the said lot devised for a training field and to invest the proceeds of the sales thereof in Bank or other stocks... to constitute a permanent fund for the benefit of the poor of said town." (Probate Docket A4860, Will Book 13 pg.186-199).

1828 Samuel W. Bridgham, Executor of the last will and testament of Ebenezer Knight Dexter, in consideration of a receipt given to him by John Howland, Town Treasurer of Providence, transferred the estate to the city as residuary legatee in the said will of Dexter for the Dexter Donation. (Deed Book 54:208).

- 1832 The Records of the Dexter Donation Town Meeting, No.1(pg.2). The record of the 8th Annual Report giving an inventory of the holdings of the Dexter Donation Commissioners includes the following description of the property: "sixteen and one half acres, called the training field, bounded east on Dexter Lane, north on High Street, south on the Cranston Road, that part of the land bounding on High St. and that part adjoining Cranston Road and extending 150' from the road, the town are authorized by the will of Mr. Dexter to sell, and the remainder is to be held and used as a training field and other common uses."
- 1845 The City of Prov., by its Agent, Stephen Tripp City Treasurer and directed by Thomas Burgess, Zachariah Allen, John H. Ormsbee, Moses Brown Ives and Thomas M. Burgess, Commissioners of the Dexter Donation, for the sum of \$850.00, convey to Charles H. Dabney, of Prov., "three certain lots or parcels of land lying in the westerly part of the City of Prov. being part of the Dexter Donation Land (so called) and are designated on a Plat of said land which is recorded in the City Clerk's Office of said City of Prov. in Book of Plats #2, pg.7, as Lots No. 20, 130 and 139." Lot #20 is bounded westerly by Dexter St. 50' and extends easterly 100' to a gangway on which it measures 50'. This deed was executed April 7, 1845. (Deed Book 90:133).
- 1845 The Records of the Dexter Donation Town Meeting, No.1(pg.67) The minutes of the 21st Annual Meeting, held June 28th, indicate the following lots, being part of the Dexter Farm, as still unsold: 12 lots on Cranston Street averaging 150' by 46' and 74 lots on Dexter, Bridgham and other streets of 100' by 50'. Notes on the land sold in the Dexter Farm were held by the Commission, payable in 10 years at 5% and were secured by the property itself. By the 22nd Annual Meeting (June 27, 1846, Records, No.1, pg.73) all the lots surrounding the Dexter Training Ground had been sold.
- 1857 A Walling Map of the City of Prov. for this date shows no structure on lot #20, however there are structures shown on both lots 19 and 21. (Map is to be found in the City Archives).

- 1850 The Providence Directory as compiled by John H. Cady, indicates residents for several addresses on Dexter, no.s, 7,9,25,29,39 &51, indicating that the street numbers were odd at that time, however none of the structures mentioned appears to be the existing house.
- 1865 Charles H. Dabney and his wife Ellen M. Dabney of New York City, for the sum of \$1750.00 paid to them by Ann Smith of Prov., wife of Gideon A. Smith, "all that certain lot or parcel of land lying in the westerly part of said Prov. being part of the Dexter Donation Land(so called) and designated on a plat of said land which is recorded in the City Clerk's Office in said Prov. in Book of Plats No.2 pg.7, as Lot No. 20, bounded westerly by Dexter St. 50' and extending eastwardly 100' to a gangway on which it measures 50', being so bounded and described in a deed from the City of Prov. to the Grantor..."(Deed Book 171:299).

The Family of Ann and Gideon Smith owned the property untill 1916. Gideon A. Smith was the son of Russel and Sophia, he died February 3,1880, at the age of 59 years. His widow, Ann, died September 6, 1906, at age 81. They had 2 daughters, Josephine W., born October 24,1858, and Harriet(Hattie) S., born July 2,1861. Josephine and John B. White were married November 17,1880. Hattie married Walter E. Hatch May 28,1884.

- 1875 The Providence Atlas, vol.2, plate J, shows the existing structure, but gives no owner. The street address is #16 Dexter.
- 1882 The Providence Atlas, plate 15, shows the structure, gives no owner, at a street address of #16.
- 1893-1894 The Providence Directory gives the first listing of residents at #16 Dexter Street, Herman Goldsmith (The Goldsmith Manuf. Co.).
- 1895 The Providence Atlas, plate 48-49, the street address is now given as #32 Dexter.

1895-1915 The Providence Directory gives the following residents at #32

Dexter Street:

1895-1896	Herman Goldsmith, jeweler, Hinda Goldsmith, gold plater Goldsmith Manuf. Co., gold platers
1897	Christain J Weissner Edouard Weissner, designer
1898	Edouard Weissner, designer
1899-1901	Edward H. Parks, mechanical engineer
1903-1905	Thomas Rice David H. Pearce, physician, boarder
1907-1909	Mrs. Mary E. Warner, dressmaker Mrs. Ella J. Robbins, boarder
1911	Mrs. Charles Cone Isaac T. Comstock, clerk, boarder Mary Edgecomb, nurse, boarder Anna Earley, nurse, boarder
1913	William E. Arnold, jeweler. George Mason, jeweler, boarder Frank Brown, engraver, boarder Howard Steer, salesman, boarder Thomas Moore, druggist, boarder
1915	William E. Arnold, jeweler. Howard Steere, salesman, boarder

1908 The Providence City Atlas, plate 15, shows #32 Dexter as belonging to Ann Smith.

1916 J. Burtis White and his wife Josephine W. White and Walter E. Hatch and his wife Hattie S. Hatch, all of Prov., for the sum of \$10.00, convey Lot #20 on Dexter Street, a 50' by 100' lot, to John Reid and Bessie M. Reid his wife, both of Prov.. The property bounds westerly on Dexter 50.125' more or less and holds that width back easterly 100.25' and bounds easterly on a gangway now known as Groton Street. At this time Lot #19 is owned by Emma F. Fenner and Lot #21 by Laura L. Phillips. (Deed Book 556:500).

John Reid, son of John and Mary Reid, was born in 1855 and married Bessie M. Fenner June 9, 1892. They had two children, Jean C. Reid born May 28, 1893 and John F. Reid born November 5, 1895. John Reid died August 29, 1917 at the age of 62 years, his wife Bessie died July 6, 1956. In spite of their same last name there appears to be

no connection between Emma and Bessie. Emma F. Fenner was the daughter of Coomer P. Fenner and his wife, Mary E. Tripp. She was born in Prov. on the 10th of May 1859, and had one sister, Adelaide E., and a brother, Frank E.. Bessie Maud Fenner was born in Woodstock, Conn, the daughter of Samuel W. Fenner and Mary F. Warner. She was 25 at the time of her marriage to John Reid. Similarly, the Providence Vital Records give no indication that either Bessie or Emma were related to the Nicholas A. Fenner that Cady's Index for the 1850 Providence Directory lists as residing at #7 Dexter Street. (there are no birth records for either Nicholas or Coomer which might indicate their relationship). As for John Reid, he was a dry goods clerk, born in Scotland and son of a clergy man, and was 37 at the time of his marriage to Bessie.

1917 John Reid died, age 62 years, on the 29th of August 1917.

1917-1969 The Providence Directory shows that during this period members of the Reid family continued to live at #32 Dexter:

1917	John Reid, operative
1919-1955	Mrs. Bessie M. Reid, widow, some times with boarders
1959-1969	Jean C. Reid

1956 Bessie M. Reid died at age 89, July 6, 1956.

1971 Jean C. Reid of Prov., and John F. Reid of Cranston conveyed the property to Richard E. Fuller and Claudette M. Fuller, husband and wife of New York City, as Joint Tenants. (Deed Book 1163:1168).

1973 The Fullers conveyed the property to Raymond Picone of Coventry. (Deed Book 1172:196).

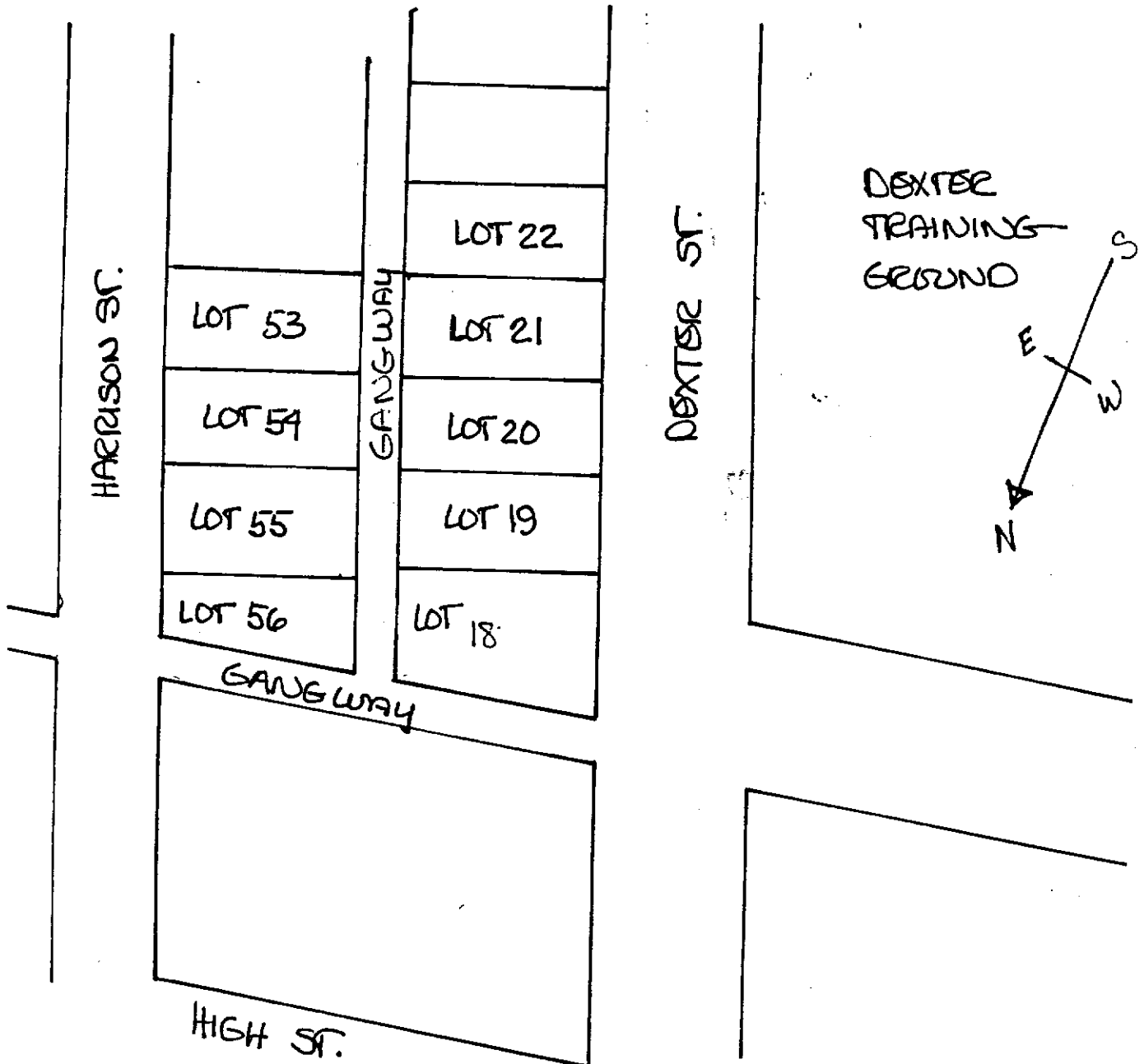
1978 Raymond Picone conveyed the property to Robert Puncheon and Gary Hamelin, both of Boston, Mass., as Joint Tenants. (Deed Book 1209:763).

The existing structure at #32 Dexter St. is dated between 1860 and 1875 on the basis of the following information quoted and detailed above:

- 1857 The structure is not shown on the Walling Map of Prov.
 - 1865 The Deed to Ann Smith show that the value of the property had doubled in 10 years.
 - 1875 The Prov. City Atlas shows the structure for the first time.
 - **** The Prov. Directory is indexed by name only prior to 1893 and is not helpful in tracing early rental property.
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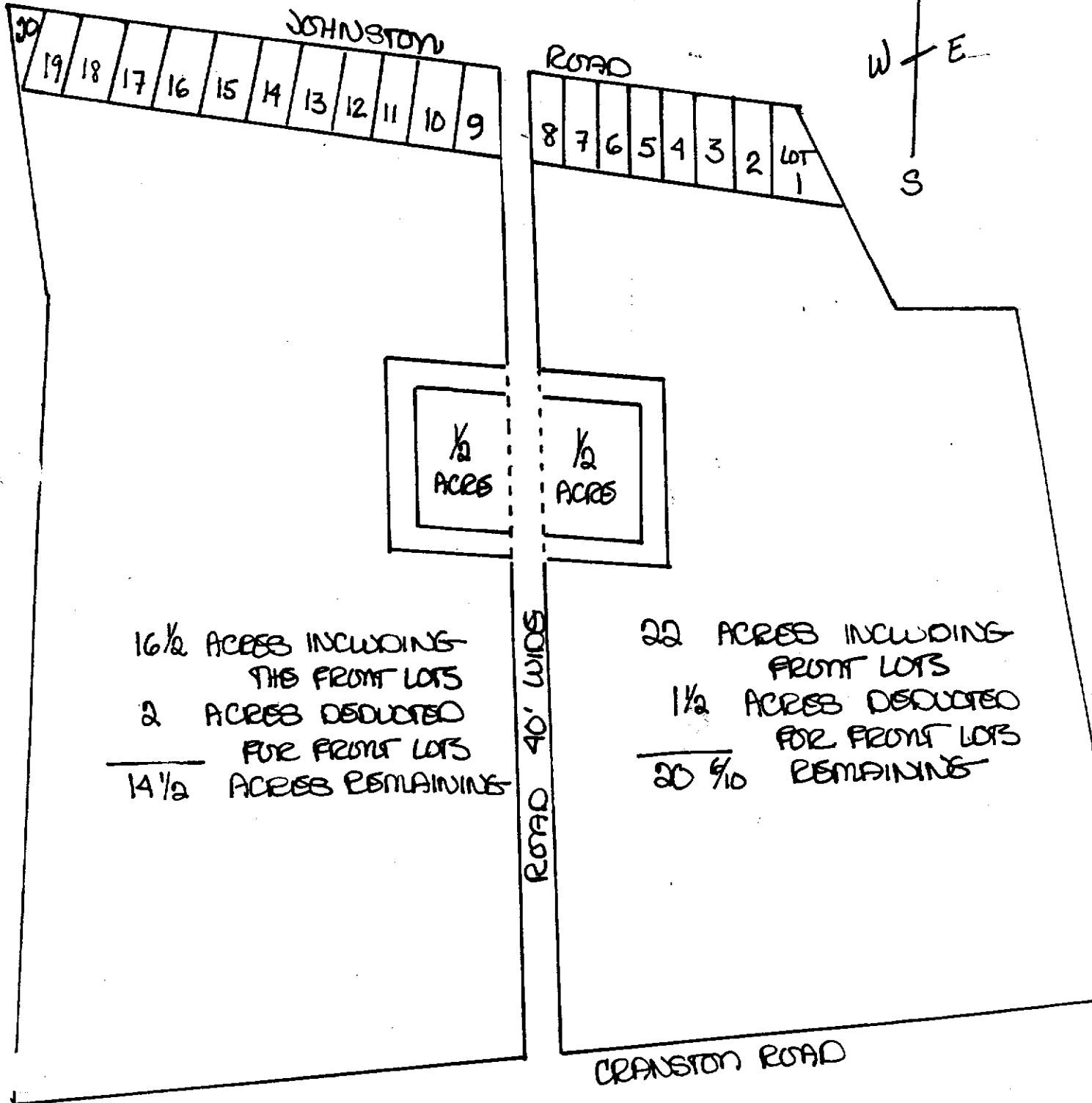
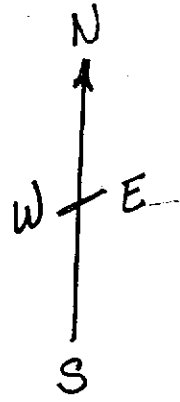
PLAT of LOTS of LAND BELONGING to the DEXTER DONATION

surveyed & plotted Nov. 1843 by Atwater & Schubarth
copied June 30, 1852 by Schubarth & Haines and recorded Dec. 26, 1845
copies ordered by City Council May 20, 1852
PLAT BOOK 2 pg.7.



LAND AS PLATTED by DANIEL ANTHONY

Deed Book 39:225
Proir to 1814



16 1/2 ACRES INCLUDING
THE FRONT LOTS
2 ACRES DEDUCTED
FOR FRONT LOTS

14 1/2 ACRES REMAINING

22 ACRES INCLUDING
FRONT LOTS
1 1/2 ACRES DEDUCTED
FOR FRONT LOTS

20 1/10 REMAINING

ROAD 40' WIDE

CRANSTON ROAD