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Acknowledgements

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“...100 Guilders Seawant, Half a tun of strong beer, 2 half tuns of good beer, 3 guns, long barrels, with each a pound of powder, and lead proportionable –2 bars to a gun–4 match coates.”

Payment recorded in the purchase of the Bedford area (1670)

The Crown Heights Area

Before the Europeans first made contact with Native Americans on what is now Brooklyn and Long Island, large portions of the land were occupied by the Lenape Indians.ⁱ Although no known evidence indicates that large Lenape settlements existed in the Crown Heights vicinity, the area could have held one of their smaller inland campsites, where the Lenape hunted, gathered wild fruits and vegetables, and cultivated corn, tobacco, beans, and other crops.

In the 1620s and 1630s, Dutch troops and settlers, under the auspices of the Dutch West India Company (DWIC), first began to arrive on the continent settling on what would become the island of Manhattan, claiming much of the land they took possession of and purchasing more from local Indians.

It would take some years before these settlers made forays onto Long Island, but when they finally did, they established, amongst others, a settlement known as Bedford. Bedford would be located along one of Long Island’s most important old roads, or cartways, originally

an Indian path, which connected Jamaica with Brooklyn – and eventually the ferry that would connect to New York.ⁱⁱ

As the locus of these highways, Bedford would not only become a strategically important place in the life of Long Island, but it would hold a place in history as a strategically disastrous clash for the Americans during the historically important Battle of Brooklyn.

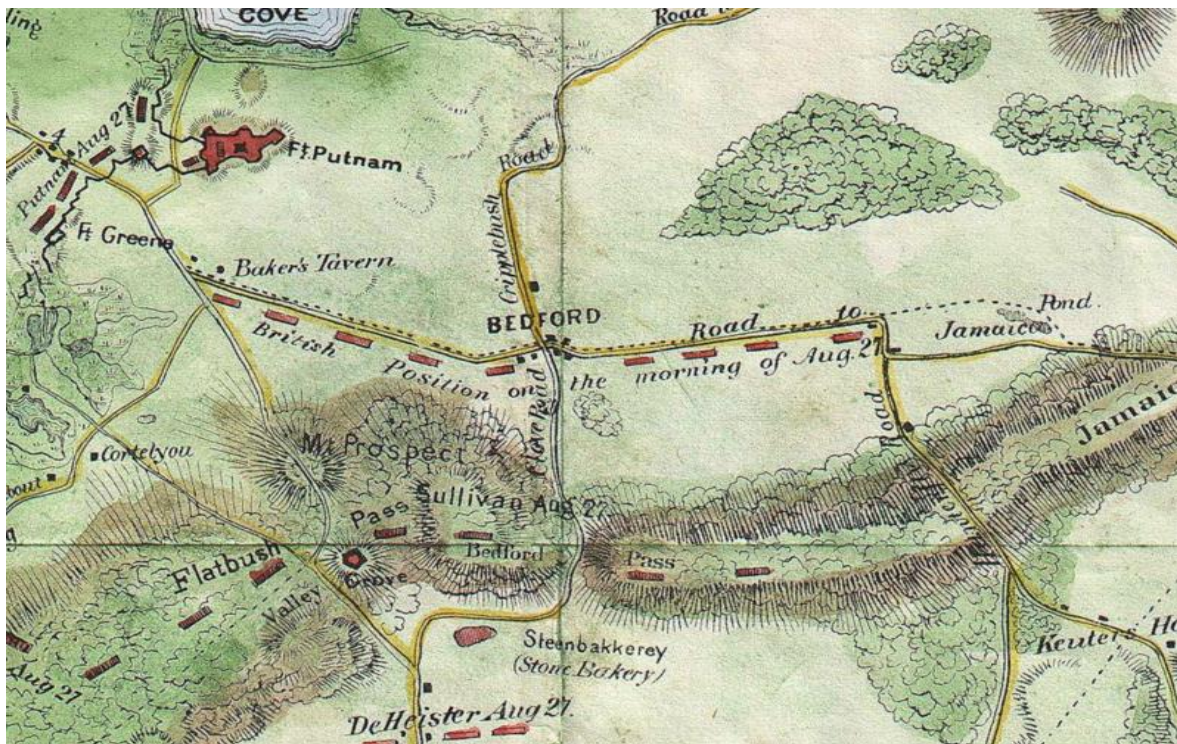
This area, which would someday become Crown Heights, was initially “a deeply wooded, sparsely populated location perched atop soaring hills once known to locals as the Green Mountains.”ⁱⁱⁱ

By the time of the American Revolution, Bedford was a small village consisting of “a tavern, a brewhouse, a schoolhouse, a blacksmith house, and half a dozen farmhouses” centered close to the current intersection of Bedford Avenue and Fulton Street with farming land and woodland that stretched out for miles beyond.^{iv}

Despite its modest size, though, its geographic location would force the spot to bear witness to a military battle that would almost cost the Americans the war. As the British outflanked the American army and overran its defensive positions, they forced Washington’s men to fight a retreating battle until their escape across the East River to Manhattan.

The War, The Thief, & The Vanishing Deeds...

As the British Army began its flanking maneuvers, it captured the American lookouts guarding the Jamaica Pass, leaving those Americans guarding the Bedford Pass (located at approximately today’s Bedford and Rogers Avenues) with no advance warning that the British were coming.



The Revolutionary War fought during the Battle of Brooklyn, in particular a surprise flanking movement executed by the British forces to defeat Washington which marched across Bedford/Crown Heights (Wikimedia Commons).

The Americans holding defensive positions at Bedford Pass likely had their reserves drawn up behind them, covering much of present day northwestern Crown Heights.

The flanking British, though, were able to surprise the Americans by marching north to the Jamaica Pass, roughly where Evergreen Cemetery is today, then pivoting west to march down today's Fulton Street to Bedford Avenue.

At about the same time this flanking movement was taking place, the Hessian forces located south of Bedford near Church Avenue in Flatbush, were preparing to attack through the Bedford Pass. At the sound of the flanking force's guns, they began their northward push.

The Americans, through this surprise tactic, would find themselves fighting a war on two sides, forcing them, as the saying went, to "cut and run."

At this point in time, much of Crown Heights was still a dense and heavily wooded location held as common property by local Bedford residents. In fact it was this density that forced the British to have to find a scout to lead them through the brush during the battle.^v

Throughout this campaign, the southeast section of Bedford (today's northwestern section of Crown Heights) had served as a "Crow's Nest" for Revolutionary Army spotters, who were guarding the Bedford Pass at the juncture of the towns of Brooklyn and Flatbush. Some historians attribute the former name of Crow Hill and the current name of Crown Heights to this observatory role in the important battle.

Another measure, though, attributable to the Battle of Brooklyn was the fate of the town's land records. As the battle ensued and the British began to cement their hoped-for victory, the Tories of the area began to show their mettle, so to speak, and took advantages that may have been daring exploits under less auspicious circumstances.

It was during this time that the town's clerk, John Rapaliye, sought to safeguard the town's records, amongst which were its conveyance titles and deeds. The safeguarding, however, would amount to thievery as they were whisked away to Britain never to return to the United States. In the process, quite a bit of the history of the land conveyances of the town vanished, making it difficult – if not impossible, in some situations – to determine the valid ownership of many plots of land, or the parameters of those plots.

As a result, for the period in question, much of the land ownership is reconstructed only by reviewing maps, old wills, and newspaper stories. Although this history is indeed not solid, much of it can be guessed at sufficiently.

A Road Runs Through It

After the war, through the early nineteenth century, as America got back to building its country, Bedford remained the home of many prominent, old Dutch families. It was "especially the seat of the Lefferts family," though, which had substantial local property holdings.^{vi}

Bedford itself, however, remained a small village up through the middle of the 19th century. And according to one later account it had not yet lost its rural feel, as "farms bordered upon Hudson Street and Bedford village were considered out of the universe."^{vii}

In 1839, a legislative act to develop a Brooklyn street grid plan was ratified for the city. This development initiated the first rush for land in the borough as it was generally believed Brooklyn would develop quickly once streets were laid down.

Due to boom and bust periods and the time it took to physically lay out the streets – not to mention the commuting distance from Brooklyn to New York – development occurred slowly at the time, but it did occur.

By the time the Lefferts heirs auctioned off the Lefferts Estate, improved transportation links with Fulton Ferry, including regular stagecoach and horsecar service, had made what would become northwestern Crown Heights an increasingly attractive residential location. Suburban development, characterized by freestanding villas set on spacious lots, was underway by the 1850s.^{viii}

Only a few permanent structures existed on the Lefferts farm at the time of its subdivision, and despite the auctioneer's glowing language in describing its parcels, they may not have been as attractive as promised.

Into the 1870s, portions of northwestern Crown Heights were characterized by an uneven landscape, with small lakes interspersed with sudden, jagged rises in elevation.^{ix} The roadways were bad enough, but the trip across the East River by ferry was a seemingly never-ending travail.

What was needed, in the mind of the potential future Brooklyn land speculator and investor, was a quicker way for businessmen to cross the East River. That way came about in 1883 with the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge.

In spite of these challenging geographic conditions, the introduction of speculative rowhouse construction to the area came about as rows of brownstones began to join the already present farm villas in anticipation of the opening of the Bridge.

The Bridge Builds a Borough

After the opening of the bridge, another important milestone was met when the Kings County Elevated Railway began operating in 1888, making travel further into Brooklyn easier and quicker. The railway ran through Bedford along Fulton Street, and terminated close to the Brooklyn Bridge, providing the means for a more acceptable commute for Manhattan business owners who may have been considering a move to Brooklyn.

Between 1888 and 1893, due largely to the new commuting options, "hundreds of exceptionally fine freestanding, attached, and row houses were constructed in the area."^x It was at this point that Dean Street was being labelled as "one of the loveliest (streets) in all of Brooklyn."^{xi}

Around the turn of the century, as it was becoming one of Brooklyn's most desirable residential areas, this section of Bedford came to be known as the "fashionable," "select," and "beautiful" St. Mark's District.

In fact, in 1902, the New York Times reported that St. Mark's was one of the neighborhoods that the "richest, the proudest, the most aristocratic folk" of Brooklyn Heights were moving to as their former neighborhood evolved into a "district of boarding and furnished-room Establishments."^{xii}

At some point within the first decade of the 20th century the term "Crown Heights" was coined in an effort to further refine the image of the neighborhood.

The Advent of “Crown Heights”

Building continued apace until the 1920s, when the opening of the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) subway line along Eastern Parkway kicked off a final wave of residential development in St. Mark’s District. Many freestanding mansions – many of which were very much like No. 1375 Dean Street – were demolished at this time to be replaced by middle-class, six-story elevator apartment houses.^{xiii}

Although the building boom subsided and little housing stock was built after 1930, renters and buyers continued to swarm to the area throughout the Depression, increasing the general population density of the neighborhood as home owners rented more space to boarders, squeezing increasingly more people into their buildings than ever before.

In 1936, the Independent Subway (IND), opened beneath Fulton Street, replacing the elevated line and providing direct access to the area from Harlem, which was then the center of New York’s African-American community.^{xiv}

At that time, many of the Caribbean immigrants to New York City moved from Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant to Crown Heights.^{xv}

During the 1960s, Crown Heights, like many other neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx, experienced deterioration of its building stock and intensifying social problems, including rising unemployment and crime rates.^{xvi}

During the 1980s, housing rehabilitation began to take place in the northern section of Crown Heights by a variety of developers and organizations utilizing public and private funds,^{xvii} and the area was designated a Neighborhood Preservation Area.^{xviii}

Finally, in 2006, the George B. and Susan Elkins House was designated a landmark, followed in 2007 when Crown Heights North was designated an historic landmark district.^{xix}

Subsequently, renovation and development in the area increased, bringing about new faces and rising home values.



“1,600 desirable lots situated in the level, beautiful, and most desirable part of the Ninth Ward.”

From the public sale of the Late Judge Leffert Lefferts Farm.

The Land

Around 1640, Director Willem Kieft of the Dutch West India Company (DWIC) “secured by purchase from the Indians the title to nearly all the land in the counties of Kings and Queens.”^{xx} Shortly afterwards, in 1642, part of the northwestern portion of present-day Crown Heights saw its first European settlement, when six men each received, from Governor Stuyvesant and the Directors of the DWIC, “a parcel of free (unoccupied) woodland there.”

This area would soon become the settlement of Bedford, encompassing what would eventually become the village of Bedford (approximately the intersection of today’s Fulton Street and Bedford Avenue) and its surrounding area.

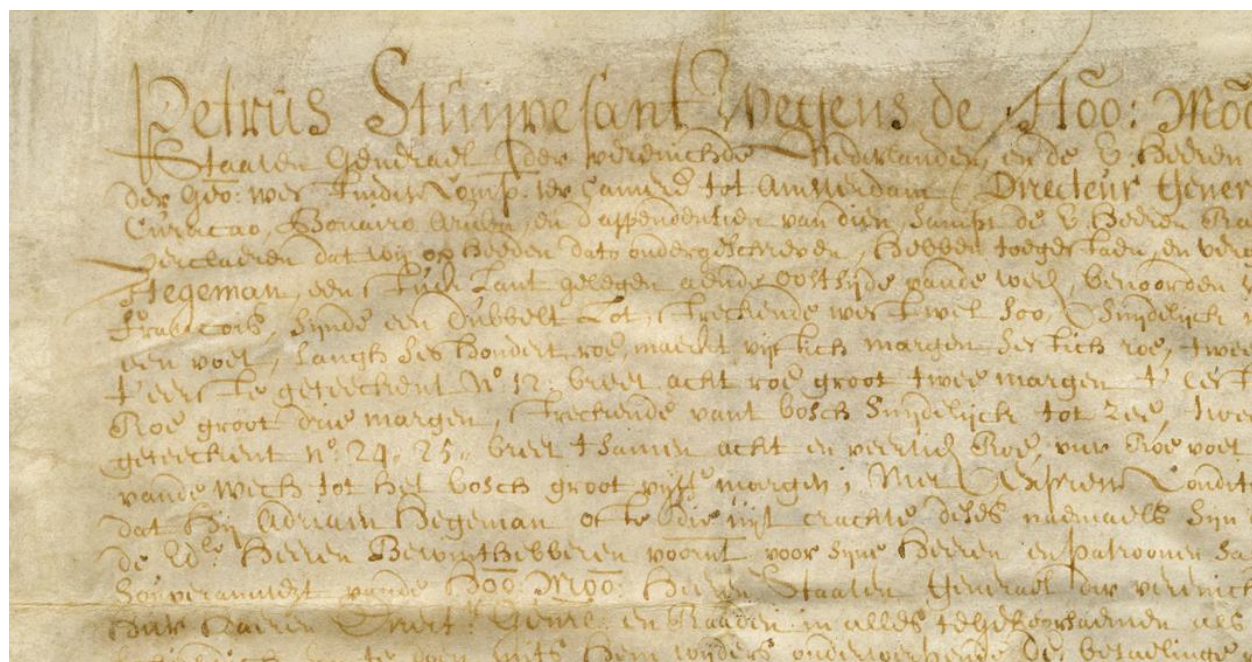
By 1664, when Governor Peter Stuyvesant awarded Thomas Lamberts a grant¹ “within the limits of a certain village known ... [as] New Bedford, Long Island,” the area acquired its name.^{xxi}

¹ In 1668, Lamberts would obtain a license from the British to “sell beer, wine, and other liquors, and to keep an ordinary for the accommodation of strangers” along the highway.

A number of confirmatory patents by individual governors were issued after this which declared that the land owned on paper was reflected in that which was controlled and agreed to by the farmers of the area.

At one point, a number of Indians who challenged the earlier land purchases, forced those who were a part of the Bedford settlement to enjoin the governor to enter into an agreement with these Indians and to “re-purchase” their land so as to make their patents watertight and to “quiet” the title.

The agreed-to payment for the land was “100 Guilders Seawant, Half a tun of strong beer, 2 half tuns of good beer, 3 guns, long barrels, with each a pound of powder, and lead proportionable – 2 bars to a gun – 4 match coats.”^{xxii}



A patent from Peter (“Petrus”) Stuyvesant of the period (Brooklyn Historical Society).

For many years after the arrival of the Dutch, the land would be “common land,” managed by Bedford, and rented or leased out to local residents who wished the use the land either for its farming capacity or for the timbers and woods that it had in some capacity for which residents used to build houses, farming implements, as well as for fuel in the winter.

After this point, in the late 1600s, the land that would someday contain No. 1375, was owned by various farmers, who sold or passed their properties down to other family members through inheritance or as a part of the dowry of one of their daughters.

By the time of the Revolutionary War, however, much of the recording of Bedford land transfers and conveyances of property were lost when Bedford’s town clerk, a noted Tory, stole all of the town’s records and sent them off to England for “safekeeping.” Over time, some of those records were pieced together, but much of the rest has been left to guess at.

With the piece of land in question, though, we know that the Leffert Lefferts family owned and farmed it for approximately 75 years, and that an incomplete list of others also held title to it in some way.

This is that list.

Isaack Deschampes (unknown-1680)

Isaack Deschampes was a merchant who, at some point, gained title to the land, although the records are silent as to when. By 1680, however, he was conveying the land to a bricklayer by the name of John Smith:

"By deed of 17 March 1680, Isaac Deschamps of New York City, merchant, conveyed to John Smith of the same city, bricklayer, for £50, a two-acres home lot bounded north by the highway, east by Peter Palmatier, south and west by the common woods; also 40 acres of upland bounded north by Theunis Jansen south by Peter Palmatier, east and west by the common woods; and four pieces of meadow, all in the town of Bedford in the West Riding of Yorkshire on Long Island, excepting on the west side of the home lot a piece of ground 870 feet wide and in depth from the north or from loine of said lot to the rear thereof, all of which was formerly in the possession of Maillord Journy and Dirick Storme."^{xiii}

FILE BLOCK, 200 SECTION 5 BLOCK 1800

MAP
BLOCK
LOT

ABSTRACTED
COMPARED

Erroneously designated as
Section Block

Should
Section Block

Street No.

ALSO IN SEC. 2

This certifies that this is an abstract made from an original paper put on record in this office, same having been compared with the original paper.
WARNING.—See Penal Code.—Do not Mutilate, Destroy or Remove.

EDWARD H. MADDOX, Register.

Address of Grantor Date Mar 17-1680

GRANTORS	GRANTEES	WHEN RECORDED	
<u>Deschamps Isaac</u>	<u>John Smith</u>	<u>1694/5</u> <u>mar 19</u>	
		LIBER	PAGE
		<u>2</u>	<u>47</u>

Commissioner of the Council of the City of New York

An abstract of the 1680 conveyance of the property from Isaack Deschampe to John Smith (Brooklyn Historical Society).

John Smith (1680-1685)

John Smith was described as “(a) bricklayer of New York City, John Smith purchased land in the Village of Bedford, Town of Brooklyn, Kings County, Long Island, NY. The deed dated 17 March 1680, described the purchased property as consisting of a two-acre home lot, a forty-acre farm, and four pieces of meadow land. Here John erected a house, and here he resided until his death in 1684.”^{xxiv}

Shortly after the purchase, however, in a will dated 7 December 1683, and proved on 8 October 1684, John Smith bequeathed his entire estate to his children. Although he failed to name his children in his will, it is obvious that these children were sons, Thomas and Jasper Smith, as they would sell the property some 14 years later.^{xxv}

Thomas Smith & Jasper Smith (1685-1698)

After John Smith passed around 1685, his estate passed to his sons, Thomas and Jasper. From 1685 through about the time that they conveyed the property, it appears that their guardians (as they were not old enough to legally manage their property) leased the land or parts of it to local residents.

After selling this property, both Thomas and Jasper moved to Maidenhead Township, Burlington Co., N. J., by 1699.^{xxvi}

“By deed of 20 October 1696, Thomas Smith and Jasper Smith, late of Bedford, Brooklyn Township, Kings County, island of Nassau, conveyed to John Bibout of the same place, for £110, the house or home lot containing two acres, and the upland belonging to it, 40 acres, and the four parcels of meadow, with description the same as in the above deed of 17 March 1680.”

John & Neltie Bibout (1698-unknown)

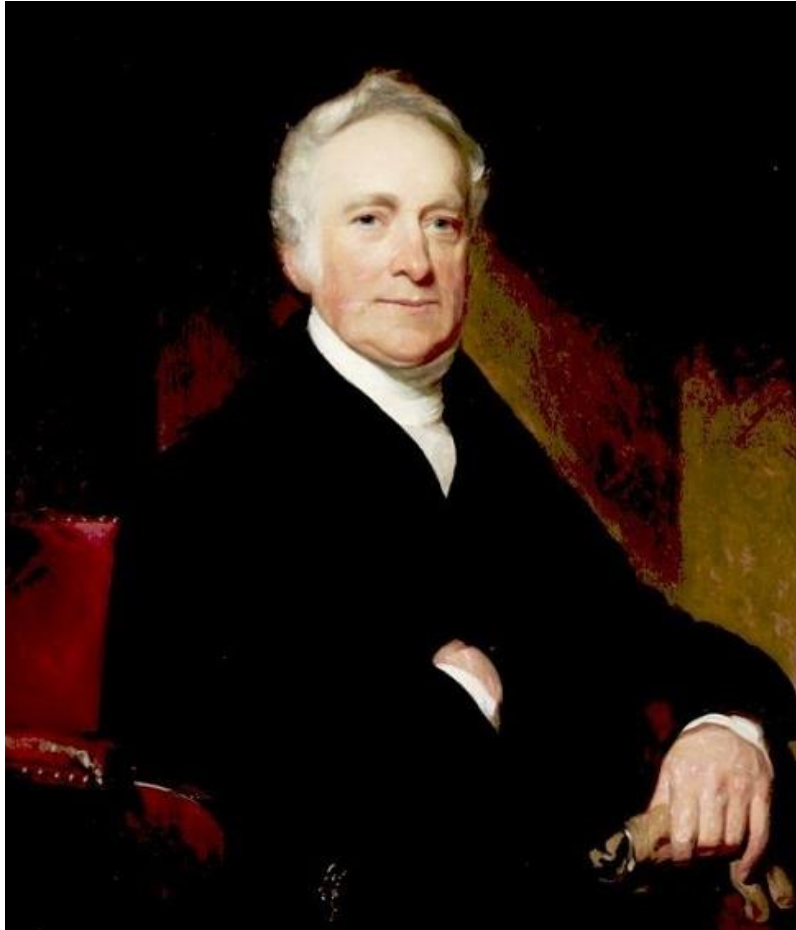
In 1698, the brothers Smith sold the land they had received from their father to John & Neltie Bibout. Not much is known about Bibout, except for a “breach of the peace” connected to him which occurred around this time.

“John Bibout, of Broockland, in the county aforesaid, weaver being committed by the said justices to the common jail of Kings county, for divers scandalous and abusive words spoken by the said John against their majesties justices of the peace for the county aforesaid, to the contempt of their majesties authority and breach of the peace; the said John having now humbly submitted himself, and craves pardon and mercy of the said justices for his misdemeanour, is discharged, paying the officer’s fees, and being on his good behaviour till next court of sessions, in November next ensuing the date hereof.”^{xxvii}

Andris Andriese (1700s)

Andris Andriese appears to have been another owner. Although no record is left of his purchase of this property, a map from the period of the Revolutionary War lists him as an owner of the land.

The Lefferts Family (1774-1855)



Leffert "The Judge" Lefferts (Brooklyn Historical Society).

The Lefferts family is in many ways synonymous with Brooklyn history. They were present near the beginning of the Dutch period when they began arriving in ships, and they are here today, mostly through landmarks and other locations in Brooklyn that bear their name.

Although the Lefferts family did not come over from Holland with the very first wave of settlers, they amassed – over a period of some 200 years – vast tracts of land and made a household and political name for themselves in the region.

The three Lefferts owners of this land, in chronological order, were Leffert Lefferts, Sr. (1774-1804), followed by his son, Leffert Lefferts, Jr. (1804-1847), and then by the son's heirs, notably his widow, daughter, and son-in-law (1847-1855).

The first owner of the land in the Lefferts family was Leffert Lefferts, Sr., also known as “The Squire.” Lefferts, whose house was at the intersection of King’s Highway and Clove Road, was a significant figure, a Brooklyn freeholder for two decades who served as a town clerk and assistant justice, and in the Provincial Congress.^{xxviii} And, like most white Kings County landowners, he was also a slaveholder.^{xxix}

Large portions of the area were owned by the Squire’s son, Leffert Lefferts Jr., also known as “The Judge,” who, like his father, was a person of local prominence and who also appears to have owned slaves.



In the late 1700s, the area of Bedford that would become Crown Heights was still partly farmland and partly woodland (The David Library of the American Revolution).

Born in 1774, his infancy was spent amid the early days of the Revolutionary War and his early childhood spent while the British occupied his father's house.

Legend has it that when peace was declared and the English were about to leave the country, little Leffert asked some of the officers, who had made him a pet during their occupation, why they were leaving. On being answered, "Because you Yankees have beaten us," he exclaimed: "Then why don't you fight it over again?"^{xxx}

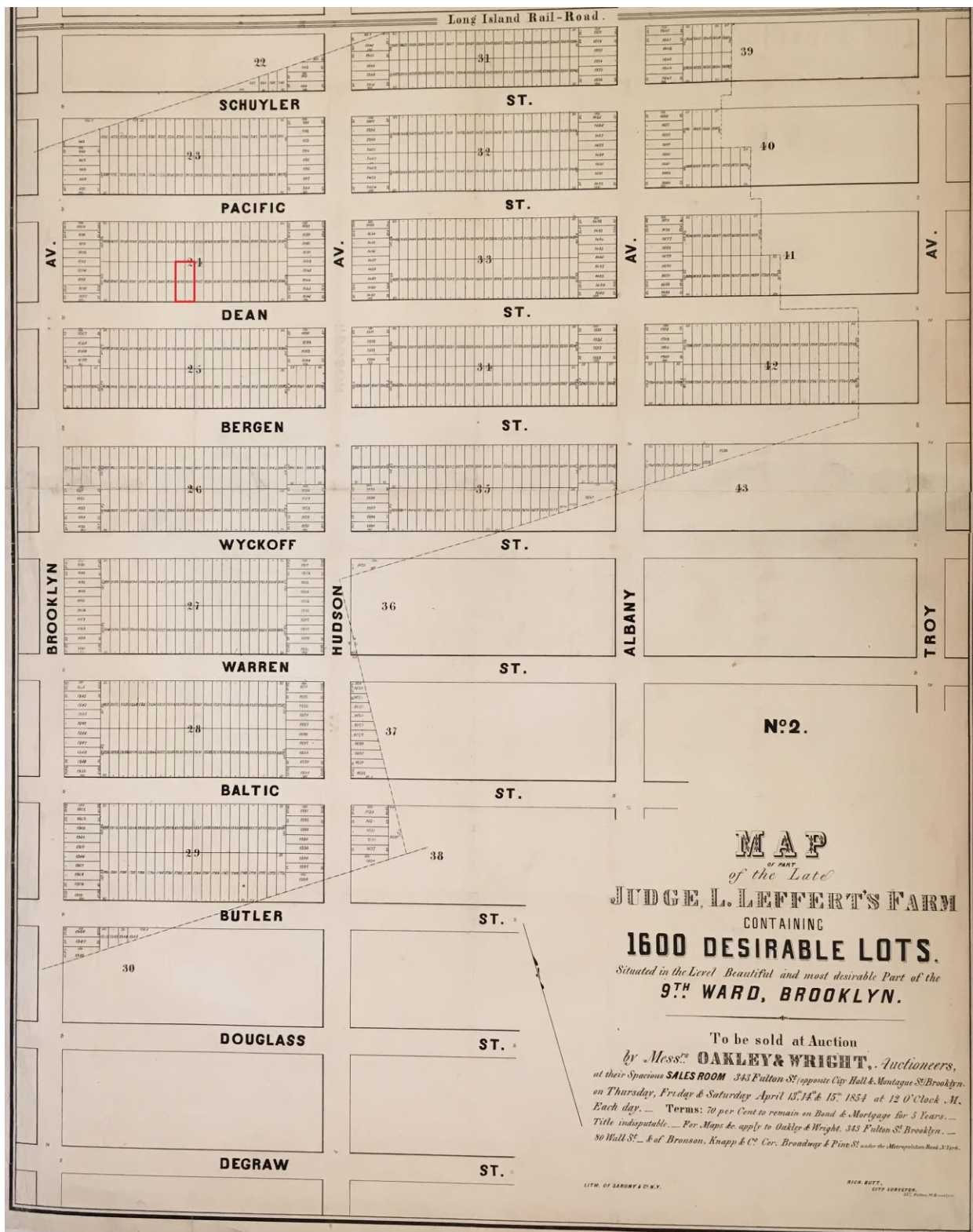
"Judge" Lefferts graduated from Columbia College in 1794, served as clerk of the courts from 1801 to 1816—keeping the clerk's office, like his father had, in their Bedford Corners house—and was appointed first judge of King's County in 1823.^{xxxi}

Judge Lefferts died in 1847, and in 1854, his heirs, James Carson Brevoort and his wife (the Judge's daughter" Elizabeth Dorathea Brevoort), auctioned off his large farm southeast of Bedford Corners, advertising it as "1,600 desirable lots situated in the level, beautiful, and most desirable part of the Ninth Ward."^{xxxii}

MAP
OF PART
of the Late
JUDGE, L. LEFFERT'S FARM
CONTAINING
1600 DESIRABLE LOTS.
Situated in the Level Beautiful and most desirable Part of the
9TH WARD, BROOKLYN.

To be sold at Auction
by Mess^{rs} **OAKLEY & WRIGHT**, Auctioneers,
at their Spacious **SALES ROOM** 343 Fulton St (opposite City Hall & Montague St) Brooklyn.
on Thursday, Friday & Saturday April 13th, 14th & 15th, 1854 at 12 O'Clock M.
Each day. — Terms: 70 per Cent to remain on Bond & Mortgage for 5 Years. —
Title indisputable. — For Maps &c. apply to Oakley & Wright, 343 Fulton St Brooklyn. —
80 Wall St. — & of Bronson, Knapp & C^o Cor. Broadway & Pine St under the Metropolitan Bank N York.

The Legend of the Lefferts map shows that the terms of purchase were that "70 per Cent to remain on Bond & Mortgage for 5 Years" and that the titles were "indisputable" (Map off Part of the Late Judge L. Leffert's Farm Containing 1600 Desirable Lots. Situated in the Level Beautiful and most desirable Part of the 9th Ward, Brooklyn, New York Historical Society)

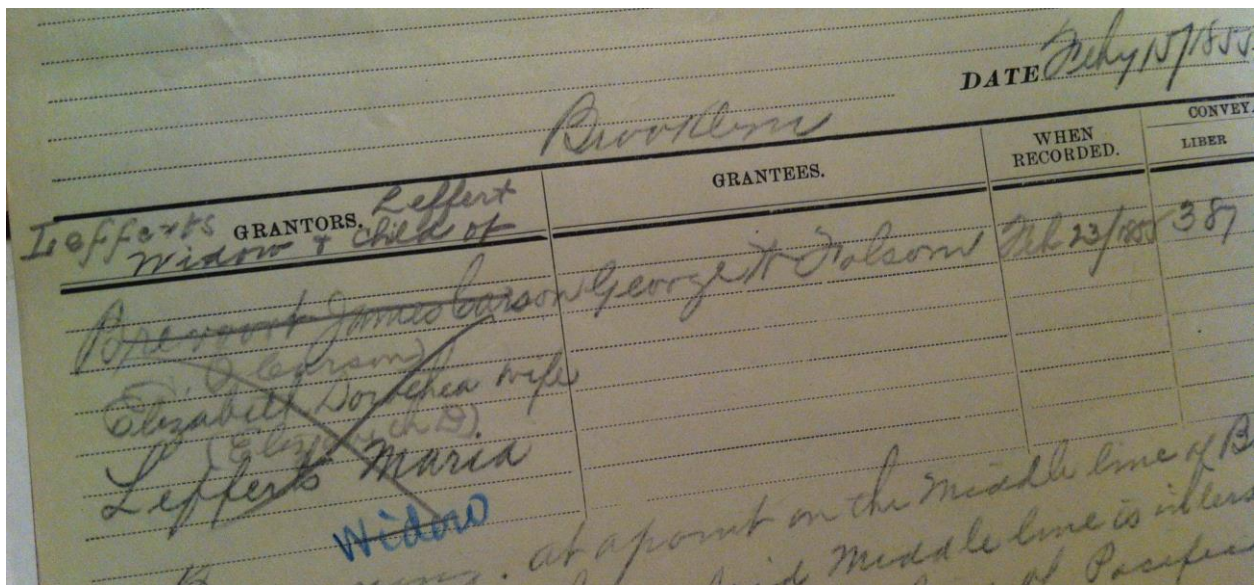


Map of Part of the Late Judge L. Leffert's Farm Containing 1,600 Desirable Lots. Situated in the Level Beautiful and most desirable Part of the 9th Ward, Brooklyn. To be Sold at Auction by Mssrs. Oakely & Wright (New-York Historical Society, 1854).

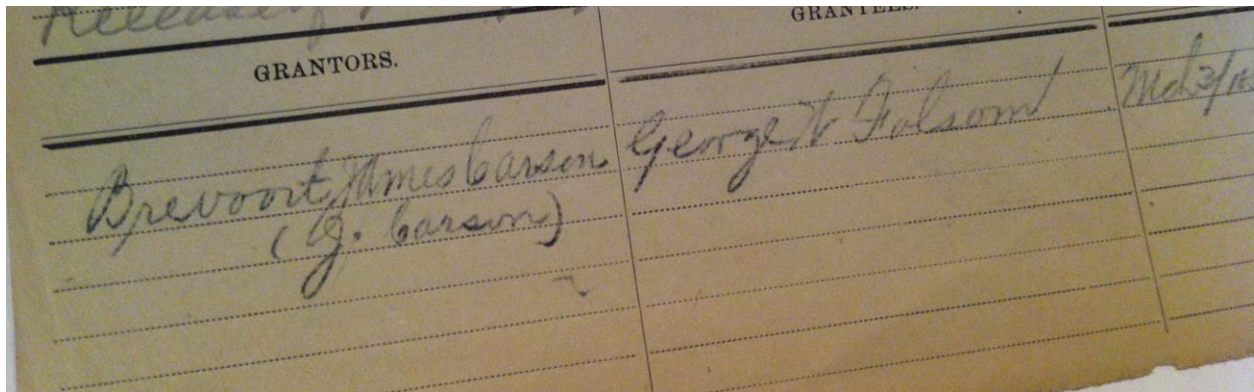


The red star shows the location of the future No. 1375 Dean Street, a lot which would appear near the edge of the “Estate of Leffert Lefferts” (1855 Perris Plan of the City of Brooklyn).

Finally, after owning the property for approximately 75 years, the Lefferts family, sensing its value, placed its farmland on the market in 1854. In early 1855, George W. Folsom purchased two blocks of land, one of which was the block upon which No. 1275 would be built. The other block was that directly south of No. 1275’s.



Conveyance of property from the “Widow and child of Leffert Lefferts” to George W. Folsom on 15 February 1855 (Brooklyn Historical Society).



Release of mortgage and lands from James Carson Brevoort (son-in-law of Leffert Lefferts) to George W. Folsom on 28 February 1855 (Brooklyn Historical Society).

The Namesake of Dean Street

Dean Street was named after Connecticut farmer Silas Deane, an early participant in the Continental Congress and an envoy to France whose efforts proved fruitful in recruiting Lafayette to the American cause.^{xxxiii}



Silas Deane



“This design is an attempt to redeem from the entire baldness of some examples and the frippery ornament of others, a class of cottages very general in the neighborhood of our larger country towns.”

The Architecture of Country Houses, 1852.

The House

As the midpoint of the 19th century passed, the City of Brooklyn was beginning to see itself in the model of New York City. It was then in the very early part of a transition from rustic to suburban and was planning for its future with a street grid design that would turn Brooklyn into a City that people desired to live in.

Around this period, a house, which would become a landmark property approximately 150 years later, was built in what would someday be known as Crown Heights. The design of the Elkins House, while a product of broad architectural trends, was likely influenced by the architectural pattern books of the time, which began to introduce new ideas about planning and design to the American public in the middle of the nineteenth century and were among the most important sources for villa designs.

“As a county cottage, strictly speaking, by which we mean a house not in the midst of streets and other suburban dwellings, but only surrounded by green trees and fields, this design might properly be objected to, as a little cockneyish in character,” noted Andrew Jackson Downing in his 1850 book, *Architecture of Country Houses*. “It is, in fact a design for a suburban dwelling. The full second story gives it a certain air of comfort and space, which will recommend it to many who do not appreciate the more rural expression of the succeeding design.”^{xxxiv}

It was estimated that such a structure could be built at a cost of \$2,000, considering that the builder “built it in a substantial manner” and used “good hard bricks, suitable for hallow walls and outside stucco.”

According to the George B. And Susan Elkins House Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report, No. 1375 Dean Street draws upon:

“...architectural pattern-book designs and incorporating elements of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles” and “is the only-known mid-nineteenth-century, freestanding, wood country house remaining in what is now northwestern Crown Heights. As such, it appears to be the last freestanding example of a building type – the wood-framed cottage or villa – that was once common to its area; at the end of the 1870s, when the neighborhood still had a suburban character, several wood villas sat on spacious lots along Pacific, Bergen, and Dean Streets.”^{xxxv}

If the Elkins House exhibits features that were typical, in general, of country houses of its time,” noted the LPC’s Designation Report, then this transitional residence, which was built



during the waning years of the Greek Revival style and the heyday of the Italianate, also displays features that are characteristic of both styles.^{xxxvi} The house’s bold cubical form and flat roof, for example, are typical of both Greek Revival and Italianate residences; rectangular attic-level windows tucked, as at the Elkins House, just below the roofline, appear on both a mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival house in New London, Conn., and on Staten Island’s Italianate, Hamilton Park Cottage (1859-72), a designated New York City Landmark.^{xxxvii} While the bead-and-reel of the Elkins House’s cornice is a traditional Greek motif, the building historically featured paired windows beneath a shared segmental arch at its second floor’s central bay, which would have been more typical of the Italianate.^{xxxviii} Like this segmental arch, the delicate cusped

window surrounds at the attic floor on the main façade would have been uncharacteristic of the Greek Revival’s severe aesthetic.

Like English villas – built for “those who wish to enjoy the scenery of the country, without removing too far from active life” – American villas were often located on the outskirts of towns and cities. By the middle of the nineteenth century, these “new middle-class suburban homes,” frequently sited on picturesquely landscaped grounds, “came to be a middle-class expectation, the estates of landed gentry replicated in miniature on the modest suburban lot,” according to architectural historian, W. Barksdale Maynard. Calling the rise of the suburban

country house an “example of the kind of trickle-down flow of taste that so often shaped nineteenth-century architecture,” Maynard argues that it laid “the groundwork ... for modern suburban life.”^{xxxix}

Villas or cottages² were a familiar feature of the American landscape by 1850.^{xl} They were especially common around New York City, according to Maynard, who explains that “(a)ppropriate to its size, [New York] was ringed by the greatest number of suburban homes of any city on the continent, all in a diverse and attractive setting.”^{xli} Villas were being constructed throughout the region – on Staten Island, and in Northern Manhattan, Westchester County, and other suburban areas – but they were particularly popular in Brooklyn, the country’s “first commuter suburb.”^{xlii}



Another possible source for the design of the Elkins House was “Design for a Small Residence,” (T. D. W. Dearn’s “Sketches in Architecture,” 1807).

The Elkins House does not appear to be an exact copy of any known pattern book design, but several schemes for modestly ornamented, cubical, suburban homes were published in the middle of the nineteenth century that display a strong resemblance to it. Among these is a two story “suburban cottage in the Italian style” appearing in Downing’s *Architecture of Country Houses*.

Although the Elkins House differs from Downing’s scheme in some respects – particularly in its flat, rather than hipped roof, and in its execution in wood, rather than brick

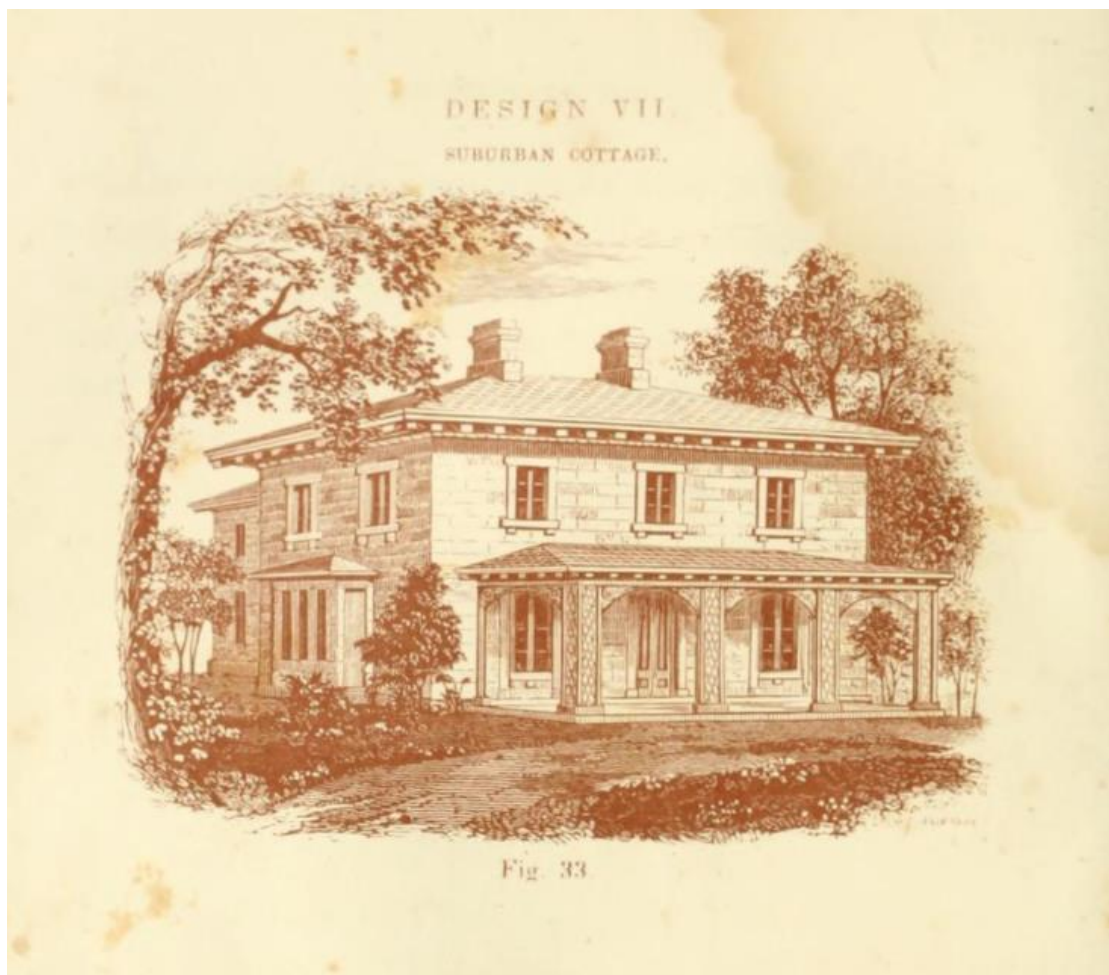
² Generally, “cottage” referred to the more modest types of country houses, although the two terms overlap considerably.

and stucco—the two share a center-hall plan, wide front porch, three-bay main façade, broadly overhanging cornice, and side bay window. Downing emphasized that his house was intended to be simple and comfortable, rather than ornately decorated, calling it “an attempt to redeem from the entire baldness of some examples and the frippery and ornament of others, a class of cottages very general in the neighborhood of our larger country towns.”

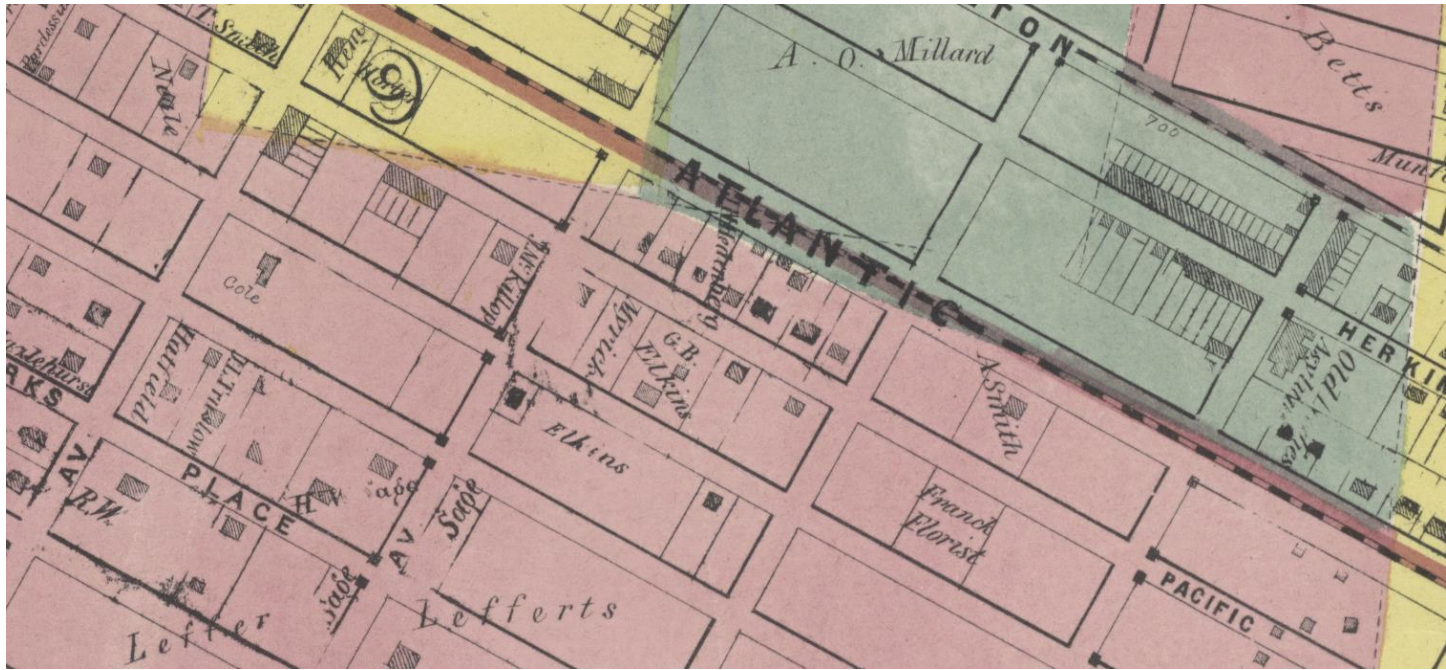
What limited ornament the house did have gave it “the character of the Italian style”; and the front porch and bay window conveyed “at once an expression of beauty arising from a sense of a superior comfort or refinement in the mode of living.” While acknowledging that this design—in contrast, apparently, to the more elaborate villas appearing elsewhere in his book—did not have “much architectural style,” Downing wrote that its example was “one which we should be very glad to see followed in suburban houses of this class.”^{xliii}

In “The Architecture of Country Houses,” which its subtitle described as filled with, “designs for cottages, farm-houses, and villas,” he “transmitted English concepts of rural design and landscape architecture to a broad audience.”^{xliv}

The Greek Revival style, which “dominated American architecture from the late 1820s to the late 1840s,” is widely represented by rowhouses in Brooklyn’s older neighborhoods, such as Brooklyn Heights and Cobble Hill. Brooklyn also had a number of freestanding Greek Revival style farmhouses and villas, but few survive today.



The villa design upon which No. 1375 Dean Street may have been built (Andrew Jackson Downing. *The Architecture of Country Houses*. D. Appleton & Company, 1851).



“FOR SALE – A LARGE AND COMMODIOUS Dwelling House – the late residence of Geo. W. Folsom, deceased...”

From an ad for a house “on Dean street, between Brooklyn and Hudson avs,” Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Sat., 15 May 1858

The Story of the Homeowners

Around the mid-point of the 19th century when the Elkins House was built, the section of Bedford within which it would be built was a rustic back country. Stands of trees and lush forests surrounded the farmlands, some of which was soon to be developed and some of which was still being utilized for the production of crops.

Nearby, however, the center of Bedford and its surrounds existed as a small town that was developed with roads and filled with grand villas owned by rich merchants.

That rustic back country would continue in some places well into the 1880s, although there were rumblings of development and speculators were beginning to slowly push the City of Brooklyn for street openings, water pumps, and gas lamps.

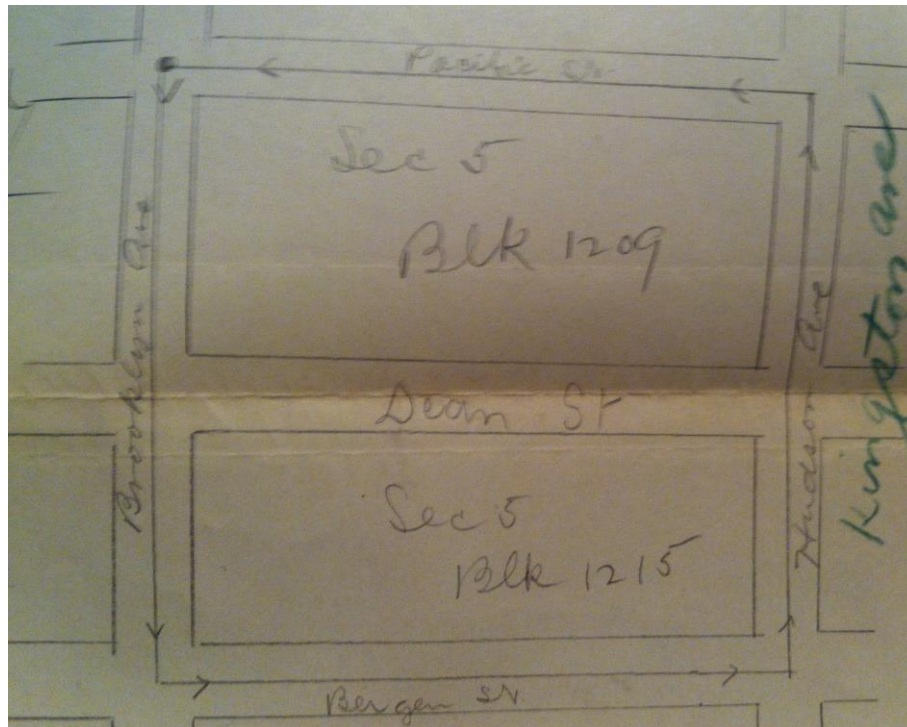
One such speculator was George W. Folsom. A dry goods merchant with a business in lower Manhattan, Folsom saw the potential of Brooklyn properties through its prism as a rural retreat for Manhattan’s wealthier merchants. From this viewpoint, with an eye towards

speculation and one towards building a home, George W. Folsom purchased two “blocks” of land from “the widow & child of Leffert Lefferts.”

George W. Folsom (1855-1859)

On 25 February 1855, George W. Folsom, a dry goods merchant doing business at 164 Pearl Street, purchased from the heirs of Leffert Lefferts two entire blocks in Bedford for \$23,880. This parcel consisted of Block No. 95³ (upon which No. 1275 Dean Street would eventually be built), as well as the block directly south of it.

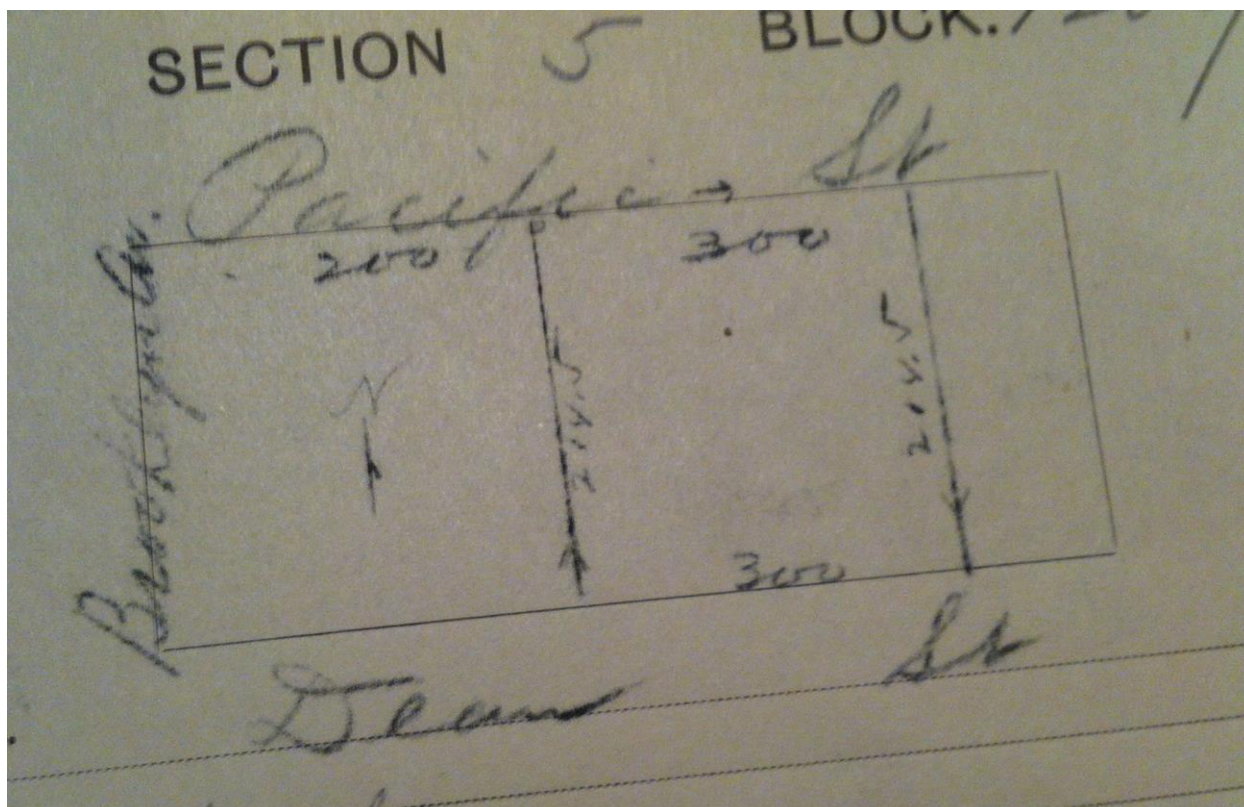
Although these pieces of property were (on paper) conveyed as “blocks” they certainly did not exist as such in reality. While the parcels had certainly been surveyed in order to prepare them for sale, the untrained eye would not have been able to notice it. There was possibly a dirt road at the time, but it was more likely that the land sat in a field looking very much like the farmland that it had been for close to 200 years, possessing a view to the woodlands south of it.



The diagram appearing on the abstract of the conveyance from “the widow & child of Leffert Lefferts” to George W. Folsom in 1855 (Brooklyn Historical Society).

Although it is not definitively known whether Folsom built the Greek Revival home that would become No. 1275 Dean Street, it seems very possible. Like many New York City merchants of the time, he was probably looking for land upon which to build his own country villa.

³ It would later be renumbered Block No. 1209.



This abstract shows three 100-foot through lots, starting 200 feet from Brooklyn Avenue being conveyed to Mary McKillop (Brooklyn Historical Society).

John & Mary McKillop (1859)

Mary McKillop, the official purchaser of the land, was the wife of John McKillop, the merchant who was likely behind the financing of the land purchase. It had been only recently that the State of New York allowed married women to purchase land without the requirement that their husbands allow it. Men, especially those of means, thus found it wise to separate their businesses from the liabilities of their personal purchases by bringing their wives into their land contracts.

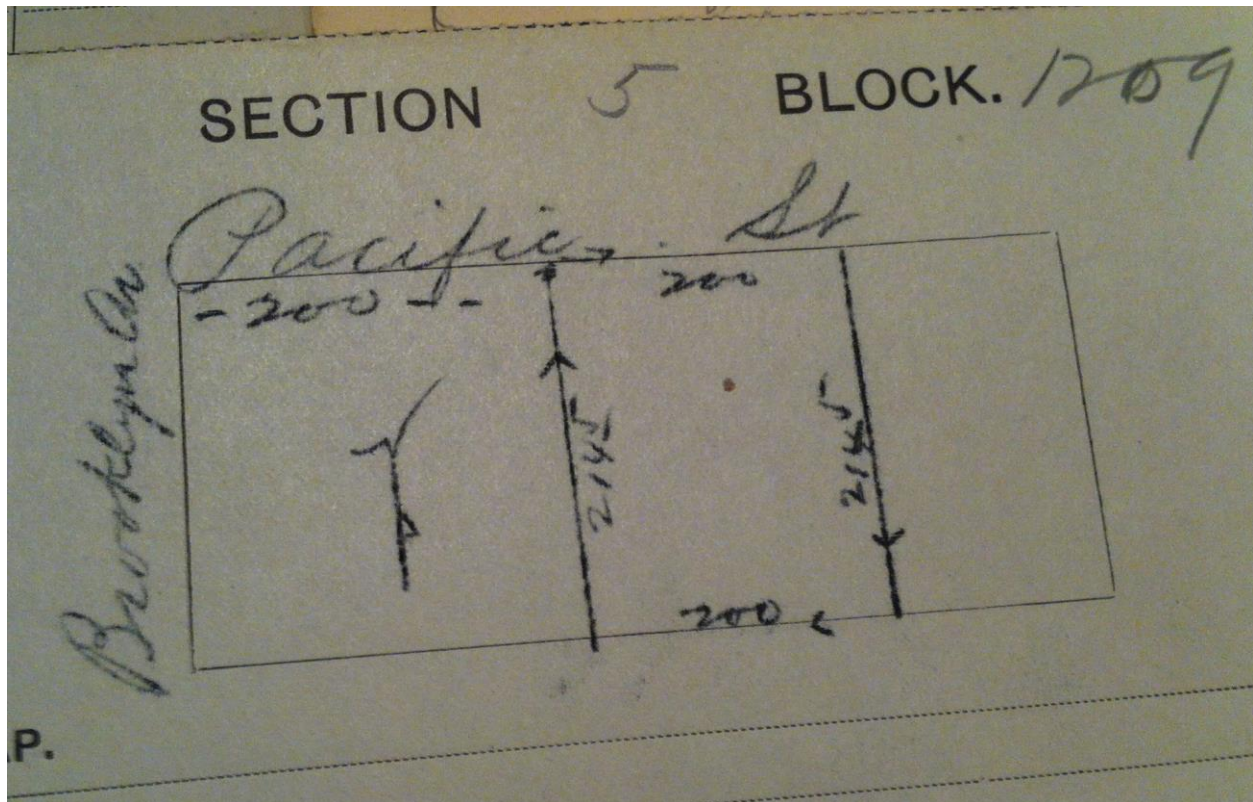
John McKillop was a “mercantile agent,” a partner at Tappan, McKillop & Co., which produced trade reports to business houses. Their primary organ was *The Journal of Commerce*, a sort of *Wall Street Journal* of the time that was devoted to “an earnest interest to the progress of every industry and the development of every resource of our country.”^{xlv}

The reason that the McKillops owned the property for only five days was likely that, with the sudden passing of Folsom, they found the property at a bargain and they knew that they could make a profit on flipping the land to another buyer. Indeed, they may have already had a ready buyer before they purchased the property themselves.

Within five days from purchasing the three lots from the Folsom estate, McKillop and her husband, John, sold to Susan Elkins two of those lots, one of which was the lot upon which the Elkins House currently sits, for \$13,000. The discrepancy in value between the two lots that

the McKillops sold to Elkins and the other lot (\$2,000) implies that the lots purchased by Elkins had been improved in some manner, possibly with a substantial residence.^{xlvi}

As no structure was present in the Elkins House's location on the 1854 Lefferts Farm subdivision map,^{xlvi} and the land value of the lot that would bear the house was higher in 1859 than that of the other lot, it is a good bet that the property was improved somehow in the interim – likely with a house – and that that house was the Elkins House.



Two 100-foot through lots, starting 200 feet from Brooklyn Avenue. McKillop to Susan Elkins on 15 September 1859 (Brooklyn Historical Society).

George B. and Susan Elkins (1859-1883)

A professional broker who, in the 1860s and 1870s, was actively involved in the real estate trade of what would become northwestern Crown Heights, George B. Elkins was born in Massachusetts in 1808 or 1809.

In 1833, he married the former Susan Easton; in 1839, while still in Massachusetts, Susan gave birth to the first of their four daughters, Mary C. (also known as Kate), who would be followed soon after by daughters Georgianna and Fanny. By 1845, the Elkinses were living on Willow Street in Brooklyn Heights, and Susan had given birth to their youngest daughter, Ida.^{xlvi}

In 1845, The New York Tribune noted that the Brig Phillip Hone had arrived from Buenos Ayres "with hides and wool to G. B. Elkins."

Between 1848 and 1859, George was listed as a merchant with an office in Lower Manhattan, and the family lived at various addresses in Brooklyn Heights.

FOR SAN FRANCISCO, California—The splendid coppered and copper fastened live oak ship **MORRISON**, J. Spalding, master, will have immediate despatch for the above port.
The Captain being well acquainted with the Pacific trade, will take charge of consignments.
For freight or passage, having first and second class cabins, with superior accommodations, apply on board, at pier 12 East River, or to **SPOFFORD, TILESTON & CO.**, 48 South st.

FOR SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, ON THE 15th INST.
The splendid, copper fastened, and coppered New York bark **PHILIP HONE**, Benj. Mitchell, master, who has had great experience on the West Coast of America, and has recently returned from San Francisco, will sail as above.
For passage only for a few passengers, having handsome cabin and steerage accommodations, apply on board, at Roosevelt street wharf, or to **G. B. ELKINS**, 69 South st.

Dr. Gould, of eminent professional standing, goes out in this vessel in his medical capacity.

FOR SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA—The fine, coppered and copper fastened clipper built and extra fast sailing ship **TAHMAROO**, four years old, commanded by Capt. A. W. Richardson—who has made several voyages to the Pacific, and is well acquainted with the harbor of San Francisco and other harbors on the coast—will be despatched as above about the 10th of January, and can comfortably accommodate a few more

George Elkins ("G. B. Elkins") was a broker/merchant offering travel aboard the bark Philip Hone in 1849 (Morning Courier & New York Enquirer, Tues., 16 January 1849).

In 1859, Susan Elkins purchased the 200-foot-wide parcel on which the Elkins House sits in 1859, and by 1860, the family was living in Brooklyn's Ninth Ward, which the parcel, at that time, sat within.

After living on Pacific Street near Kingston Avenue in 1861, the Elkinses apparently moved to the house's location by the following year, as an 1862 directory shows their home address as "Dean near Brooklyn." Whether or not they built the existing house at 1275 Dean Street, or whether it was constructed between 1855 and 1859 when its block, and the block to its south were under the ownership of one George W. Folsom, is uncertain.

Although the Elkinses apparently moved to a different location on the same block for 1863 and 1864, they moved back soon afterward, and were again listed as being on "Dean near Brooklyn" in 1865. The Elkinses' address continued to be listed as "Dean near Brooklyn" until the 1870s, when it was listed as 1275 Dean Street.⁴

⁴ No. 1275 Dean Street was the address of the house until a renumbering in the 1890s, after which it became No. 1375.

1859 C C DUNCAN & CO., 117 Wall st.

 **FOR FREIGHT OR CHARTER**—The fast-sailing clipper coppered brig **KING BIRD**, Brown, master, 237 tons register or 2300 bbls. In good order for any voyage. Apply to **L. B. GAGER, 96 Wall st.**

 **FOR CHARTER, EXCURSIONS, PICNICS, &c.**—The splendid new steamer **MASSACHUSETTS**, fitted in an elegant style. Is now ready. Apply to the Captain on board, foot of North-Moore street, or to **G. E. ELKINS, 69 South st.**

FOR SALE.

 **PROPELLER FOR SALE**—The Propeller **NARRAGANSETT**, in good running order, drawing a light draft of water, well found in sails, anchors and rigging, and of good capacity for cargo. Apply to **ALANSON SWAIN & CO., 111 Water st.**

Elkins was advertising the steamer Massachusetts for “charter, excursions, picnics” in 1859 (Morning Courier & New York Enquirer, Fri., 25 February 1859).

18	1058	1434	George B. Elkins	50	m	Merchant	1241	4400	Moats
19			Susan	18	f				" "
20			Kate	20	f				" "
21			Georgia	19	f				" "
22			Fanny	18	f				" "
23			Ida	15	f				" "
24			Charles	23	f				" "
25			Ida	21	f				" "

By 1860, George and Susan were living with their daughters Kate, 20, Georgia, 19, Fanny, 18, and Ida, 15, along with relatives, Sarah and Ida (1860 Federal Census).

Johns 2 04; Oliver Blakeley 2 04; John S Welsh 2 04; John J Glover 0 70.

DEAN STREET GAS LAMPS AND POSTS, BETWEEN NEW YORK AND HUDSON AVENUES.
 George B. Elkins \$12 50; Rachel Wabley 3 98 Wm H Helss 3 98; George W Folsom 18 76; George W Folsom 15 77; John V Cole 6 25; John V Cole 12 50.

SMITH STREET, GAS LAMPS AND POSTS BETWEEN NORTH SECOND STREET AND MEEKER AVENUE.
 John Johnson \$8 95; John Strawson 3 06; John Conselyea 3 06; John Colgan 12 25; Andrew Storm 12 24; Jeremiah Brown

As early as June of 1861, the owners of property on Dean Street between New York and Hudson Avenues had been assessed costs to install gas lamps thereon, and by November of that year the amounts owed by those owners were published in a local paper (Brooklyn Daily Eagle Wed., 20 November 1861).

The family's move from Brooklyn Heights to Bedford coincided with a career change for George B. Elkins. By 1861, his listed profession had changed to "real estate," and by the following year, he had opened an office in Brooklyn, at the corner of Fulton and Clermont Streets.^{xlix} The first evidence that Elkins was actively dealing in properties in what would become northwestern Crown Heights came with an 1863 advertisement in the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*, in which Elkins offered "a very desirable residence with four or eight lots on Pacific Street and Atlantic Avenue, and near New York Avenue ... near the Fulton and Atlantic cars."^l

His ads soon became a fixture of the *Eagle*, and by 1864, Elkins was actively trading in properties in the heart of northwestern Crown Heights, as was made clear in the following advertisement, which confirms the area's suburban character:

"For Sale – very desirable residences at Bedford – on New York Avenue and Pacific Street, with four, eight, 16, or 24 lots, with stable and all modern improvements, fine forest, ornamental, shade and fruit trees, shrubs and vines, greenhouse, flower and kitchen garden, well stocked with choice flowers, fruits, vegetables, etc., etc., near two lines of cars, running to all the ferries every five minutes. Also, very desirable villa sites on Atlantic, New York, Brooklyn, Hudson, and Albany Avenues and Pacific, Dean, Bergen, Warren and Baltic streets and St. Mark's Place, in parcels of four to 24 lots.... Now is the time while lots are low and houses are selling at almost fabulous prices. Apply to G.B. Elkins, 338 Fulton Street, Brooklyn."^{li}

THE BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE			
. 174. BROOKLYN, FRIDAY, JULY 22, 1864			
Eagle EDITOR. Mr. Brooks. Office, at No. 174. Subscription, per annum, \$5. Single copies, 10 cents. Advertising, on application. Sent by mail, on payment of postage. No. 174.	THE MILITARY. COMPANY, 23d REGIMENT, N. G. WM. C. STREET, Captain. YOUNG MEN, With satisfactory references, WILL BE RECEIVED INTO THIS COM. Upon application to the RECRUITING COMMITTEE AT THE ARMORY, From 11 to 12 o'clock P. M. WM. CLOVE, J. A. SAGE, E. M. ABBE, C. C. LEWIS, I. H. CARY.	FOR SALE AND TO LET. FOR SALE—VERY DESIRABLE RESIDENCES AT BEDFORD— On New York Avenue and Pacific Street, with 4, 8, 16 or 24 lots, with stable and all modern improvements, fine forest, ornamental, shade and fruit trees, shrubs and vines, greenhouse, flower and kitchen garden, well stocked with choice flowers, fruits, vegetables, &c., &c., near two lines of cars, running to all the ferries every five minutes. Also very desirable villa sites on Atlantic, New York, Brooklyn, Hudson and Albany Avenues and Pacific, Dean, Bergen, Warren and Baltic streets and St. Mark's Place, in parcels of 4 to 24 lots, which will be sold low and 50 per cent of cost of building, in addition to cost of land, loaned on mortgage at 6 per cent to responsible parties. Now is the time while lots are low and houses are selling at almost fabulous prices. Apply to G. B. ELKINS, 338 Fulton Street, Brooklyn. (206t)	AMUSEMENTS. MOORE'S OPERA HOUSE. FRIDAY EVENING, JULY 22nd, AND DURING THE WEEK OTHER GORGEOUS BILL. ON A LAKE. THE LAMBERT. CUTTING GAMES. DOUBLE GLOBE MEDLEY. TILL BE NO MORE WIFE. ON TO RICHMOND. S. ACTS, DANCES AND PLANTATION SCENES. at 7, to commence at 8 o'clock. Reserved for ladies and gentlemen, occupying judiciously select in attendance.
	OLD ESTABLISHED SUBSTITUTE OFFICE 4 FULTON STREET. SUBSTITUTE OFFICE 4 FULTON STREET. SUBSTITUTE OFFICE 4 FULTON STREET. SUBSTITUTE OFFICE 4 FULTON STREET. SUBSTITUTE OFFICE 4 FULTON STREET. SUBSTITUTE OFFICE 4 FULTON STREET. WM. H. McDONALD & CO.	FOR SALE—ONE TWO STORY BASE- ment and counter cellar frame house, 18x22 feet, filled in to joists with brick, tin roof, marble mantel, grates, gas and furnace, water, &c.; 2 rooms. Lot 18x22 feet, situated on the east side of Third Street, above 1st St.	THEATRE FRIDAY, JULY 22nd. BENEFIT OF MR. W. DAVIDGE. SERIOUS FAMILY. VILLIKINS AND HIS DINAR. in character by Mr. Davidge.

In 1864, Elkins was advertising real estate extensively within the Brooklyn Daily Eagle (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Fri., 22 July 1864).

Elkins appears to have quickly built up a strong local business, as by 1866, he was offering one of the area's most prominent properties, "That very desirable residence on the southwest corner of St. Mark's Place and New York Avenue," which was "large and built and finished in the best manner [with] ... all modern conveniences command[ing] a fine view of the country, all the other corners having splendid mansions."^{lii}

city property will be taken in exchange) for two houses in New York city, Nos. 179 and 181 Madison st., renting to two good tenants at \$2,400 per annum. For further particulars inquire of Dr. ANDREWS, 350 State st., Brooklyn, before 9 A. M. and after 5 P. M. au24 5t*

FOR SALE—AT BEDFORD, SOME OF the most desirable villa sites ever offered, adjoining the finest residences, on high ground, heavily top soiled, well fenced, streets graded, water, gas, &c., &c., terms easy. Apply to **G. B. ELKINS**, 338 Fulton st., or at his residence, Bedford. au21 1m*

FOR SALE—THE PHILADELPHIA brick house No. 612 DeKalb ave, Brooklyn, 2½ stories, high stoop, basement and sub-cellar, contains 11 rooms; price \$5,500, cash down \$2,750, balance can remain

In 1867, Elkins was selling “some of the most desirable villa sites ever offered” (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 26 August 1867).

In the following year, Elkins began transacting business from his Dean Street home as well as from his Fulton Street office, advertising for prospective clients to call “at his residence, Bedford.”^{liii} Elkins brokered a wide range of properties, some pricey, and some inexpensive. In one 1866 advertisement, for example, he offered “several very desirable residences on New York Avenue, St. Mark’s Place and Pacific Street” selling for “\$40,000, \$35,000, \$30,000, \$25,000, \$20,000, \$1,800, \$1,200.”^{liv} By 1870, the year in which Elkins was hired to build a portion of Eastern Parkway, he had branched into the contracting business.^{lv} Four years later, he was hired to extend and pave a 5,000-foot stretch of Brooklyn Avenue.^{lvi}

The suburban, almost pastoral qualities of the house’s setting during its early years were emphasized by newspaper advertisements placed by George at the end of the 1860s, offering “two beautiful fresh cows” for sale, and asking prospective buyers to call at his residence, located at “Dean St, near Brooklyn ave.”^{lvii}

NO. 1 COR FRONT AVE, NEAR FLUSHING AVE. JAS. MCGLONE. 1711 2t*

FOR SALE—A FIRST-CLASS FAMILY Grocery Store, in good neighborhood, together with Stock and Fixtures. For particulars inquire at 61 Sands st, Brooklyn. 1711 2t*

FOR SALE—TWO BEAUTIFUL FRESH cows. Apply morning or evening to G. B. ELKINS at his residence, Dean st, near Brooklyn ave. 1711 3t*

FOR SALE—WE WILL SELL AN IN-terest in a business which pays very large profits to a good business man; none but such need apply. Call on H. G. FARR & CO., 15 Portland st, N. Y. 1711 2t*

FOR SALE CHEAP—THE FIXTURES and stock of store 57 Sands st. WM. A. VAN NOORD

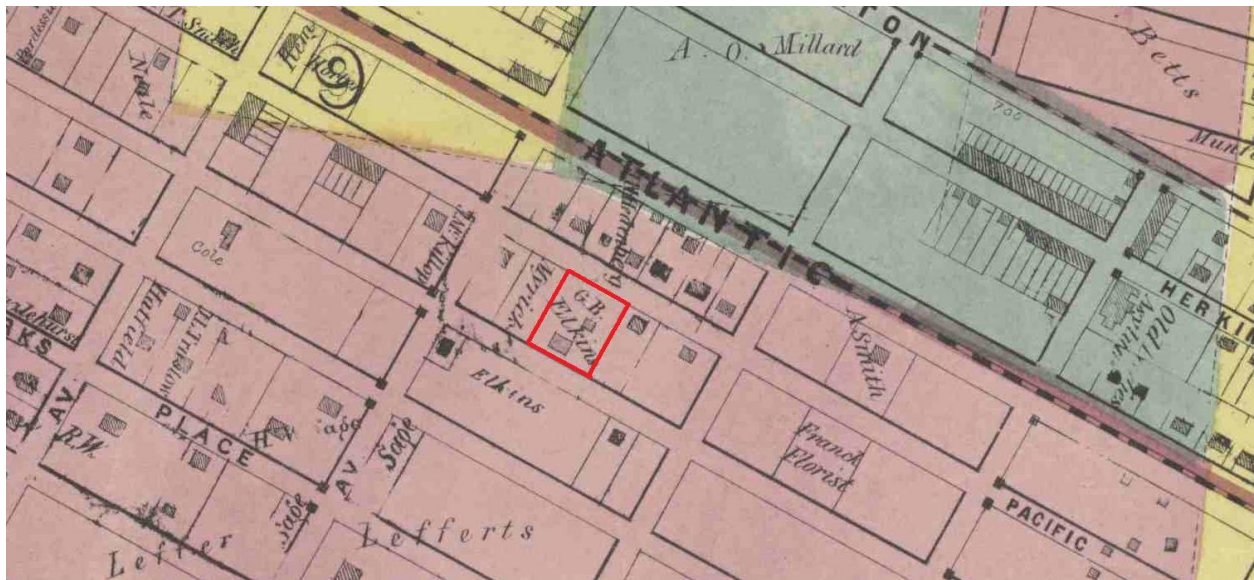
Elkins’s ad offering “two beautiful fresh cows” for sale (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Mon., 13 July 1868).

George B. Elkins' real estate activities in the 1860s and 1870s help illuminate the neighborhood's suburban period – the years following the subdivision of the Lefferts farm, but before the intense urbanization that began in the 1880s.^{lviii}

During these two decades, Elkins actively acquired and disposed of properties, particularly near his Dean Street home; in the 1860s and 1870s, George – sometimes alone, and sometimes with Susan – was listed as the grantor or grantee in approximately 190 property transactions within the area bounded by Atlantic Avenue and Butler Street (now Sterling Place) on the north and south, and by Albany and Brooklyn Avenues on the east and west.⁵

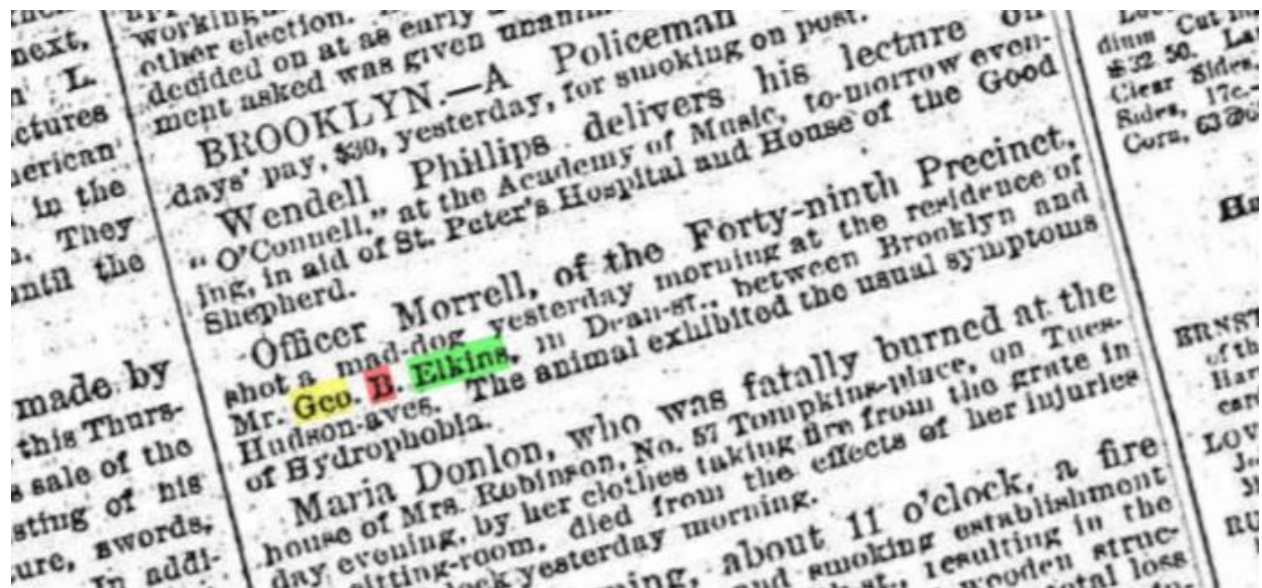
All did not go smoothly for Elkins in the real estate trade, however. According to the LPC's Designation Report, between 1864 and 1875, for example, on the block directly south of his house, Elkins bought back undeveloped properties that he had previously sold, and hung onto buildable lots for several years. These activities, as well as Elkins' apparently bankrupt condition at the time of his death, hint at the difficulties faced by speculators in many parts of Brooklyn that were still developing slowly at that time.

But, as shown in his advertisements and in his trading activities, Elkins encouraged the development of northwestern Crown Heights as a place for freestanding country homes like his. Elkins' work in the area in the 1860s and 1870s opens a window onto its suburban era, and the George B. and Susan Elkins House – which is significant as his and Susan's home, and as perhaps the last remaining example of the freestanding suburban villas that were common in northwestern Crown Heights before its full urbanization – is a unique link to this period in the neighborhood's history.^{lix}



In this 1869 Map of the City of Brooklyn, “G. B. Elkins” owns the property with No. 1275 Dean Street, as well as much of the block across the street (1869 Dripps Map of the City of Brooklyn).

⁵ This was determined by the Landmarks Preservation Commission of New York City which reviewed Brooklyn property conveyance indexes at the Brooklyn Municipal Building.



"Officer Morrell, of the Forty-ninth Precinct, shot a mad-dog yesterday morning at the residence of Mr. Geo. B. Elkins, in Dean-st., between Brooklyn and Hudson-aves." (New-York Daily Tribune, Thurs., 4 March 1869).

31	79	63	Elkins George B	61	m	W	2	\$500,000	Mass
32			- Susan	58	f	W	Keeping House		Mass
33			- Kate	29	f	W	At Home		Mass
34			- Georgie	27	f	W	At Home		Mass
35			- Fanny	26	f	W	At Home		Mass
36			- Ida	25	f	W	At Home		New York
37			Dorcas Mah	33	f	W	Domestic Servant		Ireland

The 1870 Census showed just how wealthy George Elkins had become through real estate, listing his wealth at \$500,000 (1870 New York State Census).

As the 1870s dawned, George began to dabble in Republican Party politics, as by around this time he would partner with William M. Evarts, who served as President Rutherford B. Hayes's Secretary of State, as President Johnson's Attorney General, and was President Johnson's attorney during his impeachment trial. The two would buy land by the Brooklyn Penitentiary that would later become an albatross about their common necks.

In 1872, he was appointed a canvasser by the Republican Party for the Seventh District of the Ninth Ward.^{ix}

Prior to the 1870s, George had been referring to his home on Dean Street by using an approximate location on the street, stating that he lived "on Dean Street between Brooklyn and Hudson aves," or "on Dean near to Brooklyn ave." It is clear that at this time the house had not been assigned – nor had Elkins taken – a street number. At some point after 1870, though, Elkins begins using the No. 1275 in association with his house – a number likely assigned by the city. This number would continue to be associated with the property until some point in the 1890s when it was renumbered – due to a city of Brooklyn renumbering that had taken place at the time – and given the street address No. 1375, which it has retained to this date.

Elison James, bookkpr. h 20 Devoe
 Elkan Louis J. com. mer. h 314 Macon
 Elkington Isaac, mason, h 540 N 2d
 et pl Elkins Alfred C. printer, h 9 2d
 Elkins George B. real estate, h 1275 Dean
 Elkins H. B. foreman, h 272 Carroll
 Elkins H. stationery, 455 Fulton
 Har- Elkins James, jeweler, h 603 B'way
 Elkins Joseph, jeweler, h 603 B'way

One of the first references to the Elkins' house as No. "1275 Dean" Street came in a Brooklyn City Directory which listed Elkins as working in the "real estate" field (1873-76 Brooklyn Directory).

Morrissey, died in this place on Sunday.

CITY JOTTINGS.

The annual reception of the Light Guard, Company A, Seventy-first Regiment National Guard State of New York, will take place at the Lexington Avenue Opera House on Friday evening next.

The residence of George B. Elkins, 1275 Dean street, Brooklyn, was damaged to the extent of \$2,000 by fire this morning. Mr. Elkins is insured in the Continental, of New York, and the Hartford, Phoenix, and Mechanics' Insurance Companies.

Holder of the New York City debt must be grati-

In 1874, shortly after 4 a.m., No. 1275 "was damaged to the extent of \$2,000 by fire" which was caused by a defect in the building's flue (Daily Graphic, Tues., 15 December 1874).

In 1874, Elkins' home caught fire. Just two years earlier another of his houses, "the frame house of George B Elkins, corner of Sackett street and New York Avenue," was "destroyed by fire."^{lx} The "Panic of 1872" was raging at the time and a profound number of land speculators had begun to lose properties to foreclosure actions with their banks or lenders. It might be guessed at the number of homes that were lost to fire, which brought the advance of insurance payments which satisfied a mortgage.



An 1874 map of Brooklyn shows No. 1275 sitting on what had once been the “Estate of Leffert Lefferts” (1874 Farmline Map of the City of Brooklyn).

Elkins remained active in the real estate trade into the mid-1870s, when he was identified by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* as “a gentleman pretty well known in this city.”^{lxii} In 1875, he continued to place advertisements for houses in the area – urging home shoppers that “now is the time and this is the place to buy, while money is abundant and property cheap” – and asking prospective clients to call, at his home, “before 9a.m. or after 4p.m.”^{lxiii}

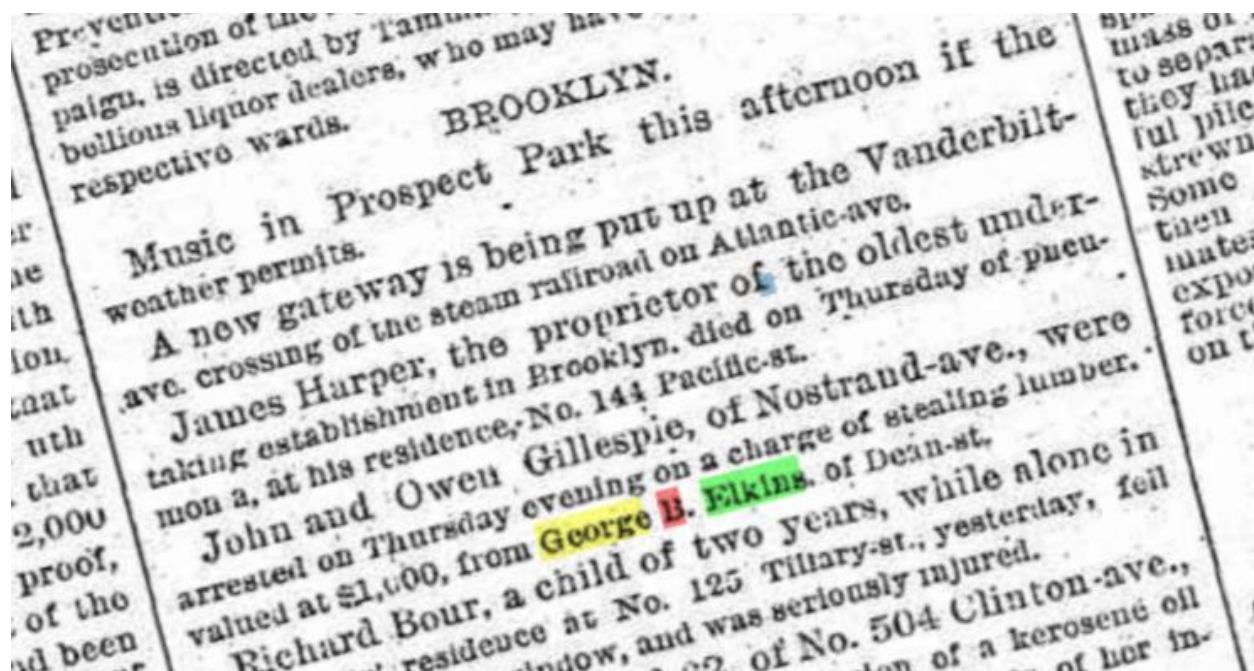
That year appears to be the last in which Elkins advertised frequently in the *Eagle*, although his profession would continue to be listed as “real estate” in Brooklyn directories into the mid-1880s.

37	329	Home	75.000	329	George B. Elkins	60	yr		Mass	1		Real Estate Broker Brooklyn	1
38	1275	Pacific St			Susan Elkins	60	yr	Wife	Mass	1			1
39					Mary Elkins	35	yr	Daughter	Mass		1		1
40					Marganna Elkins	33	yr	Daughter	Mass		1		1
41					Henry Elkins	32	yr	Daughter	Mass		1		1
42					Ida Elkins	29	yr	Daughter	Mass		1		1
43					Olivia Houshion	45	yr	Servant	Mass		1		1
44					Margaret Lee	23	yr	Servant	Scotland		1		1

In 1875, despite the almost decade long panic, George was the only one working in the house and the family supported two servants; note the mistaken address: “1275 Pacific St” (1875 New York State Census).

In 1876, two foreclosure actions were started on property owned by Susan and George Elkins (the plot of land upon which No. 1275 sat) – along with other parties as co-defendants. In February, The Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York started a foreclosure action against

the Elkinses, along with Ferdinand A. Crocker⁶ and Alfred Dickinson.⁷ This action was on the 100 foot wide, 214' 5" deep street-through lot, situated 200 feet from Brooklyn Avenue.^{lxiv} It is assumed that there was a mistake in the foreclosure suit as six months later, in August, the same property was being foreclosed on, again by the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York. This time, however, two new co-defendants were listed in place of the two from February: Alfred Dickinson and William M. Evarts.^{lxv}



In 1877, Elkins was the victim of two thieves who were charged with stealing his lumber valued at \$1,000 (New-York Daily Tribune, Sat., 8 September 1877).

In 1879, No. 1275 was the site of a “large gathering of representative Republican politicians,” for a reception for the Ninth District Assemblyman, Hon. Daniel W. Tallmadge.⁸

“The attendance was very large” noted the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, and had a storm not set in “many other would doubtless have been present, as invitations had been scattered broadcast all over the city.

“Had the weather been fine the reception would have been held in the spacious grounds surrounding the residence of Mr. Elkins. For that purpose the grounds had been elaborately decorated with Chinese lanterns, and under favorable auspices would have presented a very beautiful appearance.

The storm arrived, however, and “the large company of gentlemen assembled to pay their respects to the Assemblymen” were obliged to take refuge indoors.

“The spacious parlors were soon filled and the company overflowed into the hallway and reception rooms.

⁶ A fellow merchant who had a business near to Elkinses address, at No. 52 South Street. He also, like Elkins, was from Massachusetts (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Mon., 10 December 1888).

⁷ A lawyer from New York City (*Brooklyn Daily Union-Argus*, Thurs., 5 January 1882).

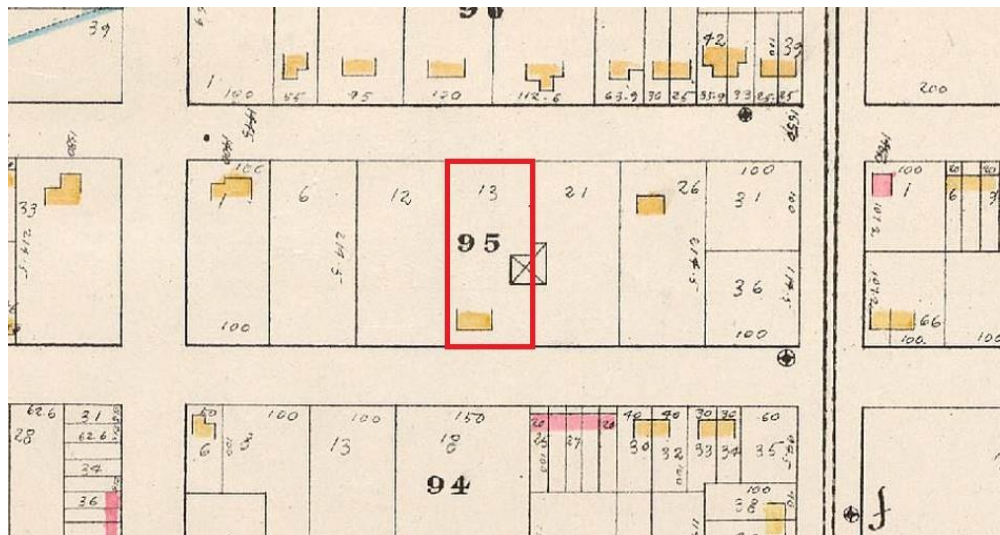
⁸ Tallmadge would be largely remembered for taking a libel suit to the *World* newspaper for a story written by pioneering female journalist Nellie Bly, which implicated him in; Tallmadge won the suit to the tune of \$20,000.

Reception to the Ninth Dis- trict Assemblyman.

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"It was well advanced toward midnight," the *Daily Eagle* noted, "before they separated."^{lxvi}



In 1880, No. 1275 sat square in the middle of the block sharing it with only two other residences (on Pacific); there were, however, an additional two frame buildings (one on Elkins' property and one abutting it on the property just east of his) that were marked as stables or sheds (1880 Map of the City of Brooklyn).

In 1882, No. 1275 was the location of the capture of “a thieving servant” that a certain police detective had been trying to capture.

According to the *Evening Post*, a Detective Kelly had been given a good description of a “girl” who had been employed with various families where she would steal a number of items and never return. She had done this on Putnam Avenue, and then on Hart Street, but she had always escaped. But when George B. Elkins had placed an ad in the paper seeking a servant, Kelly, reviewing the advertisements, for servants, concluded that she had applied for a place at the house of Elkins. Kelly “watched the house from a secluded place on the opposite side of the street, and finally saw the girl come out by the door, when he recognized her by a photograph. She had not had an opportunity to rob Mr. Elkins’s house,” noted the paper. As it turned out, the offender, Mary Jane Row, was “an old offender,” who had been transferred from the Auburn Penitentiary to Sing Sing, and from there to Kings County Penitentiary, where she served a term of two years.^{lxvii}

The following year, in 1883, Susan Elkins passed away, and, George, having increased financial responsibilities, could no longer afford the note on No. 1275 Dean Street. That year, he lost the house in a foreclosure suit. His daughter Mary, however, paid the \$5,500 note and took ownership of the property.

In 1884, the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle* reported that George was having more financial difficulties regarding that piece of land he had purchased in 1872 along with a very well-known politician, William M. Evarts. He was, in 1884, a Senator for New York.

Elkins and Evarts had purchased land near the penitentiary (an institution which existed at the time) south of Eastern Parkway, which had since become an albatross about his neck.

In 1884, shortly before his passing, and just after his wife’s passing, George’s financial problems were compounded when a piece of property that he had purchased from the city became an albatross about his neck.

He was pleading with the Board of Supervisors at that time regarding this “a tract of land” that he had purchased from Kings County near the Penitentiary buildings, paying about \$20,000 in cash and giving a mortgage for the balance of the purchase money, which, with interest, amounts to \$25,000 paid.

Owing \$20,000 on that investment – which he could no longer pay – he was doing his best to lighten the blow by reducing the amount he owed the city.

He afterwards, through misfortune, became unable to pay the mortgage and it was foreclosed and the property purchased by the county and a judgment for deficiency was entered against him. He asked the Board, inasmuch as it had about \$25,000 in cash and interest paid by him, and the property itself, that the Board satisfy the judgment for deficiency.^{lxviii}

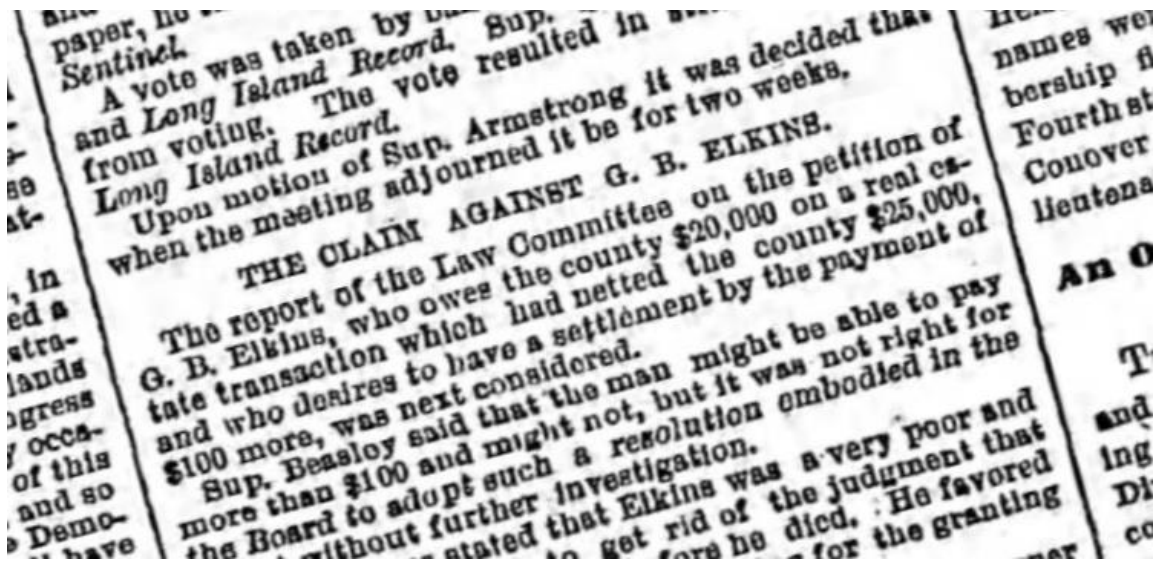
It was noted that George and Evarts “has decided to abandon them rather than pay the heavy assessment for the boulevard and the interest now due the county on the bonds and mortgage.

The County Treasurer began “proceedings of foreclosure, and in case there will be no competition, the lands shall revert to the county.”^{lxix}

A supervisor friendly with George pled his case, claiming that George was “a very poor and old man, and wanted to get rid of the judgment that was hanging over his head before he died.”

Apparently, the pleading worked, as the Law Committee “voted to accept George’s petition to settle with his paying \$100 more.”

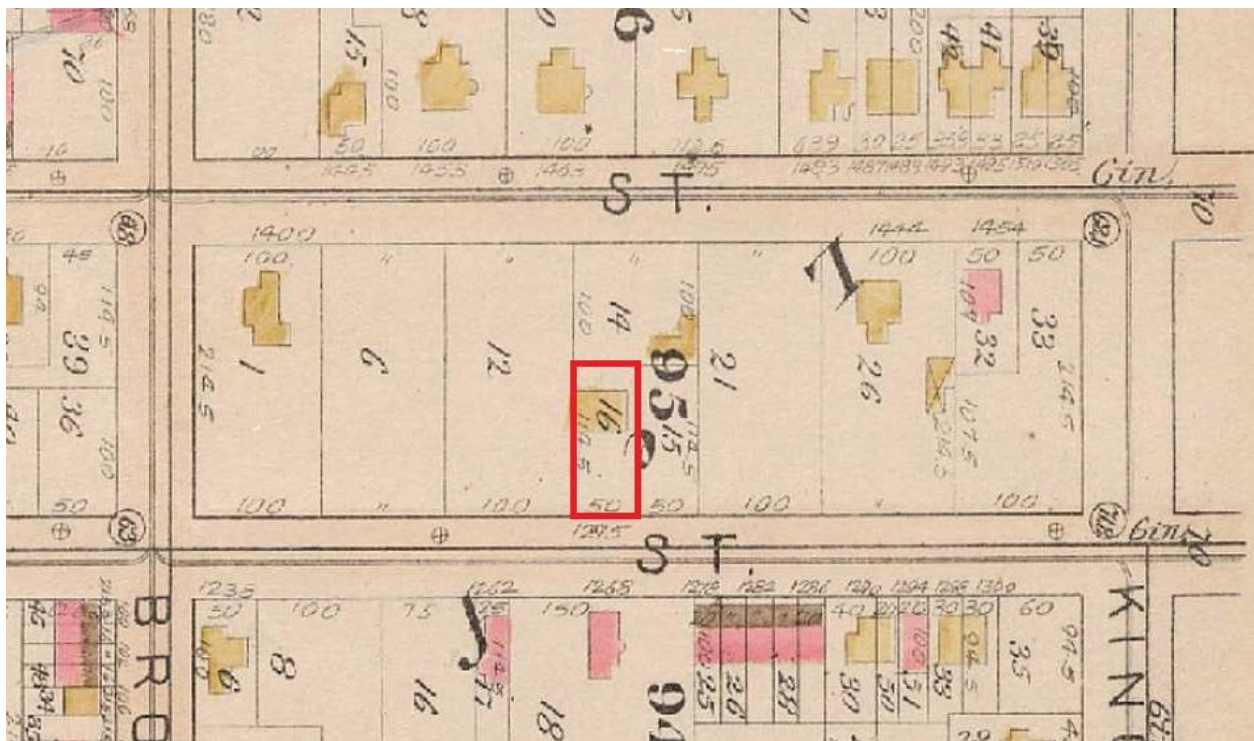
The *Daily Eagle* noted, though, that George “finally relinquished under foreclosure and at a heavy loss.”^{lxx}



The land near the Penitentiary which Elkins and Evarts purchased in 1871 and which they lost to foreclosure in 1884 (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Fri., 19 September 1884).

George B. Elkins died a few years later, in 1886, at the age of 77, and, despite having owned \$500,000 worth of real estate in 1870, he "died poor."^{lxxi}

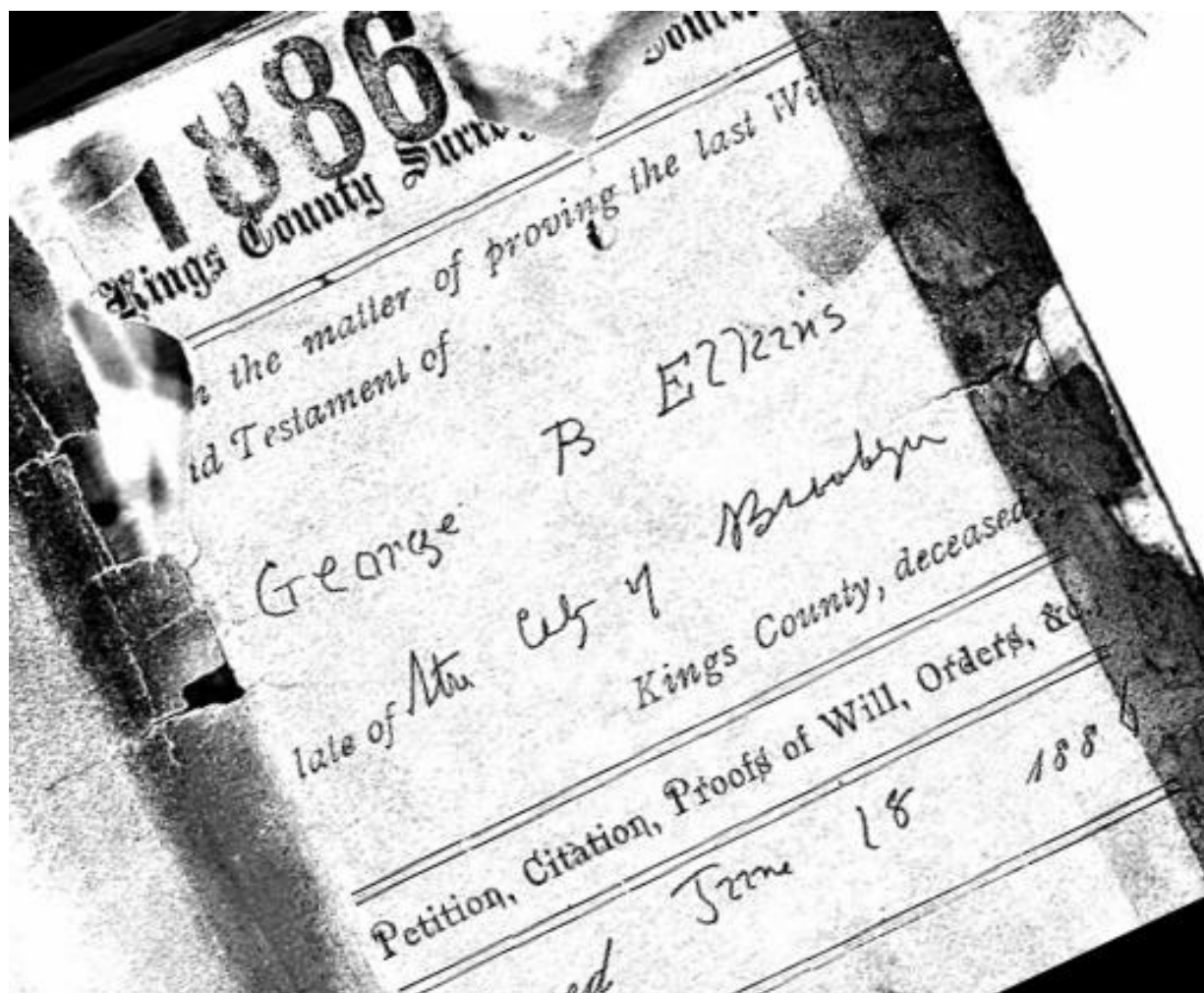
Over the next few years, large portions of Elkins' property holdings would be auctioned off to satisfy judgments against his estate.



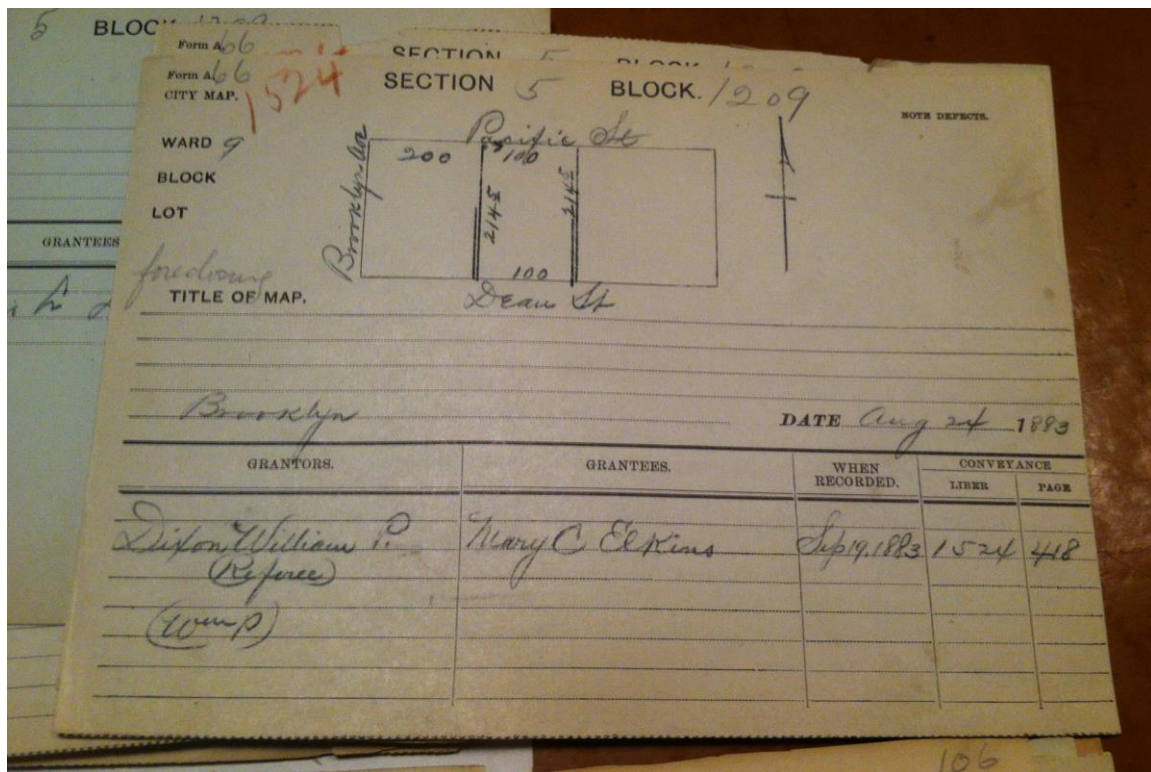
By the time that George passed in 1886, his property had been subdivided further (into lot Nos. 14, 15, & 16); another frame house has been constructed on the property behind him on Pacific along with a single "masonry" house also on that side; sewers have also been laid and a fire hydrant sits down the block toward Brooklyn Avenue (1886 Robinson Map of the City of Brooklyn).

After George passed in 1886, there was an issue with his will that had to be addressed before it could be proved. One of the executors in his will, his former wife, Susan, had passed by this time, leaving one other person, Senator Evarts, as his executor. Evarts, who, in addition to his legislative responsibilities, was chairman of the American Committee at the time, which was raising funds for the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty.

Having no time to address George's will, he was happy to confer his executor's duties onto George's daughters. The will had been written in 1850, and some 36 years had passed, since time George's daughters having come of full age. So it made perfect sense that he would convey his executor's responsibilities along to them.^{lxxii}



The Will of George B. Elkins, written in 1850, was filed in the Surrogate Court after he died in 1886 (Ancestry.com).



The 1883 foreclosure conveyance from referee William P. Dixon (for the City of Brooklyn) to Mary C. Elkins for the 100' X 214' 5" plot of land upon which No. 1275 Dean Street was situated (Brooklyn Historical Society).

Mary Elkins (1883-1916)

By the 1880s, the Elkinses' daughters had come into their own. Fanny and Ida had worked for some time as artists. Fanny, in 1882, was advertising, in a number of medical magazines, her "lecture and anatomical diagrams" which she would make to order.^{lxxiii} Also in 1882, Ida was listed in the United States Art Directory and Year-Book, Vol. 1, which was billed as a "guide for artists, art students, travelers, Etc."^{lxxiv}

The two sisters were also inventors, having patented the plans for a couple of their inventions, chief amongst them an "automatic fan" patented in 1878, and an "apparatus for killing mosquitoes" patented in 1883 (which Ida patented alone).^{lxxv}

Lecture and Anatomical Diagrams

IN BLACK AND IN COLORS, made to Order with Promptness.

Illustrations prepared for Photo Lithographing and Photo-Engraving.

MISS F. ELKINS, 1275 Dean Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

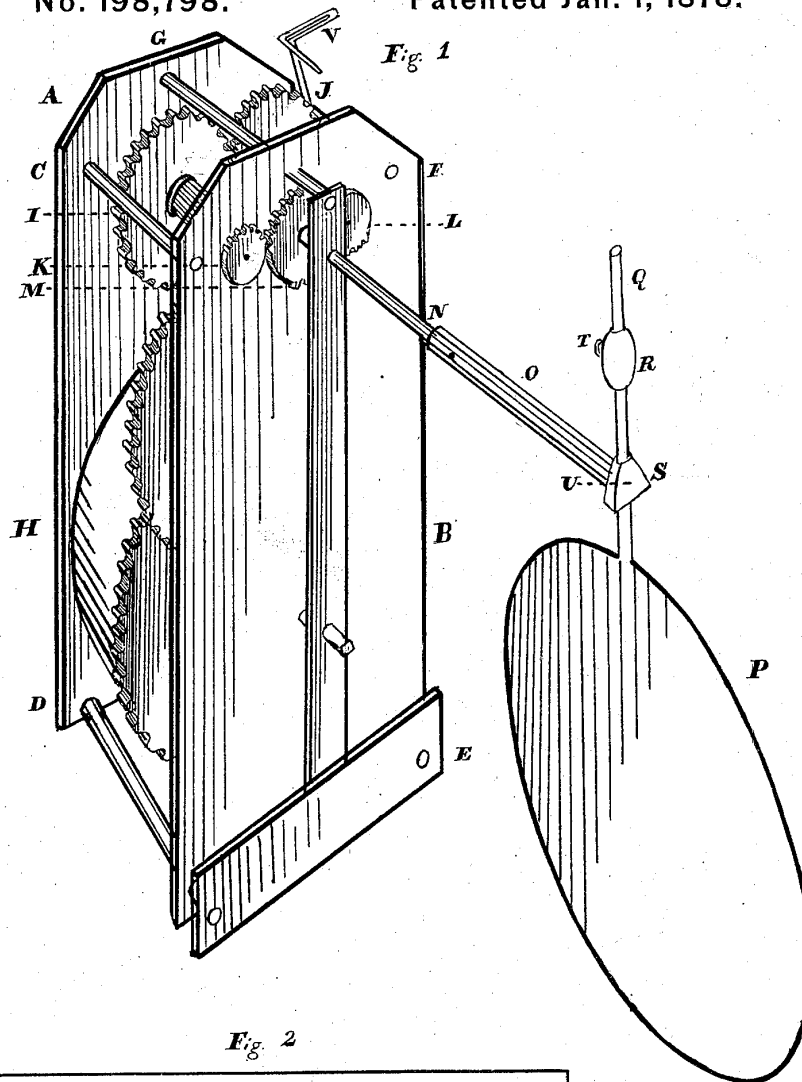
Refers, by permission, to several prominent Professors in the Medical Colleges of New York and Brooklyn.

An ad for Fanny's "Lecture and Anatomical Diagrams" (Annals of Anatomy and Surgery, vol.5. Anatomical and Surgical Society, 1882).

F. & I. ELKINS.
Automatic Fans.

No. 198,798.

Patented Jan. 1, 1878.



Fanny and Ida Elkins's 1878 patent for an "Automatic Fan" (Google Patents).

(Model.)

I. ELKINS.

APPARATUS FOR KILLING MOSQUITOES.

No. 286,407.

Patented Oct. 9, 1883.

Fig. 1.

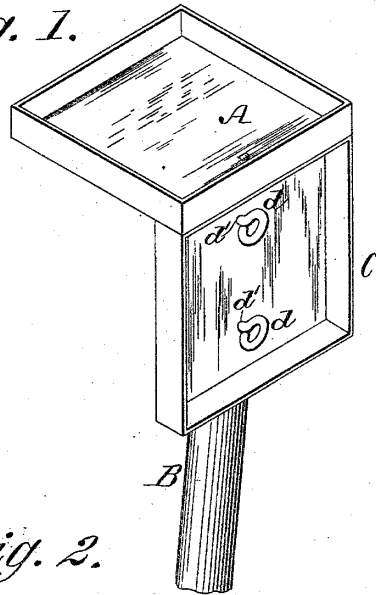
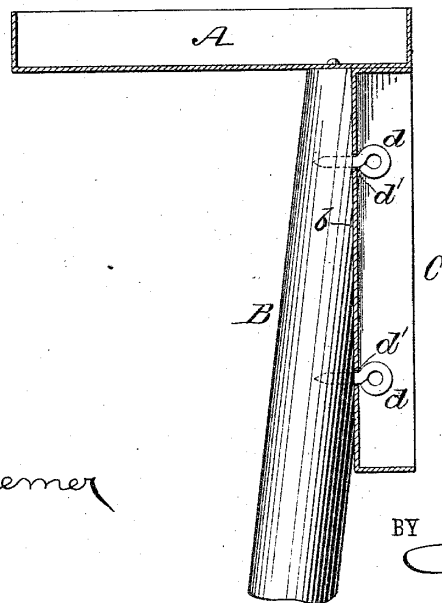


Fig. 2.



WITNESSES:

John V. Deemer
L. Sedgwick

INVENTOR:

I. Elkins
BY *Munn & Co*
ATTORNEYS.

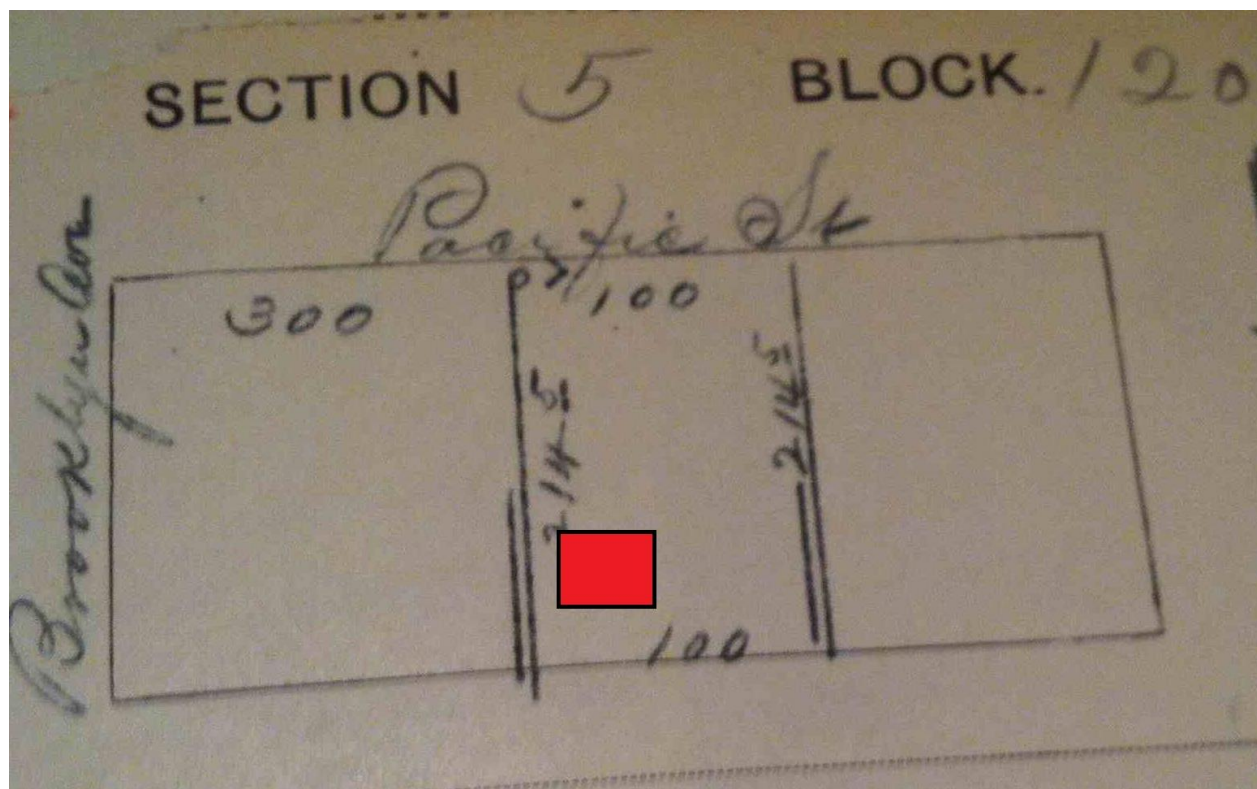
N. PETERS, Photo-Lithographer, Washington, D. C.

Ida Elkins's 1883 patent for an "Apparatus for killing Mosquitos" (Google Patents).

Mary, who had legally taken possession of No. 1275, was likely managing the house and what remained of her father's properties which had been left to her and her sisters. Georgianna seems to have assisted Mary, at least helping to take care of No. 1275, itself.

GRANTORS.	GRANTEES.	WHEN RECORDED.	CONVE LIES
Dixon William P (Refused) (Wm P)	Mary C Elkins	Sep 19, 1883/5	

In August of 1883, George's property (which contained No. 1275) was foreclosed on; the house, though, remained in the family as Mary acquired title to the property (Brooklyn Historical Society).



The property in 1883, a 100' X 214' 5" lot, which stretched from Dean Street to Pacific Street, contained No. 1275 (black-framed red square) and another wood frame structure closer to Pacific Street (Brooklyn Historical Society).

Pacific st. s s, 300 ft e Brooklyn av, 100x214, to Dean st, foreclose; William P Dixon to Mary C Elkins, taxes, etc.....	16,500	Back and Sun past ing.
Pacific st. s s, 200 ft e Brooklyn av, 100x214.5 to Dean st, foreclose; William P Dixon to Mary E Elkins, taxes, etc.....	5,500	
Floyd st. s s, 475 ft e Sumner av, 18.9x100; John Kramer to Charles S Miller, mortgage, \$1,800....	3,800	
Bergen st. n s, 150 ft w Stone av, 50x107.2, Now		

When the foreclosure was recorded later in September, it was noted that "Mary E. Elkins" was the new owner of No. 1275, having paid, or agreed to pay the "taxes, etc." amounting to \$5,500 (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Sat., 29 September 1883).

Following their parents' deaths, the four Elkins daughters, none of whom would ever marry, continued to live in the house, remaining there through the remainder of the 19th – and into the 20th – century.

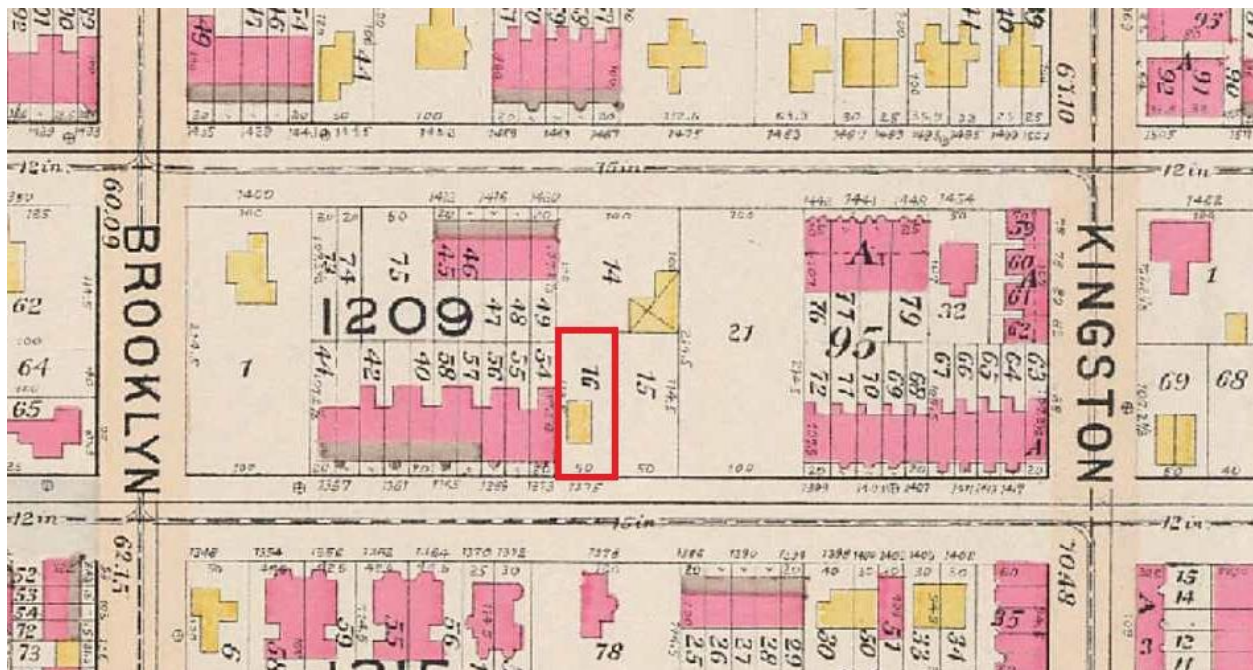
In 1890, Fanny was listed in the Yearbook of the Brooklyn Institute as a member of the Department of Philology as part of its committee on excursions.^{lxxvi}

In the 1890s, the daughters started selling off the lots adjacent to their home, and the Elkins House became increasingly hemmed in by surrounding buildings.^{lxxvii}

Kate Elkins	7	49	U.S.	C	
Georgiana Elkins	7	49	U.S.	C	
Fanny Elkins	7	29	U.S.	C	Artist
Ida Elkins	7	35	U.S.	C	Teacher

The 1892 census showed Fanny still working as an artist and Ida as a teacher (1892 New York State Census)

In 1892, a row of five brownstone houses was built directly west of the No. 1275. In 1897, Mary Elkins sold the five 20-foot-wide lots behind the house that fronted on Pacific Street to John A. Bliss, on the condition that he not erect "any buildings other than private dwellings or first-class flats or apartment houses there (Brooklyn property conveyance section 5, liber 8, page 392, recorded July 9, 1897). Bliss sold these lots later in 1897, and five rowhouses were constructed there soon afterwards (conveyance section 5, liber 8, page 486, recorded November 20, 1897; - 16 - New Building Docket No. 1897-1823). In 1905, Edward J. Maguire purchased the 50-foot-wide parcel adjacent to the Elkins House on the east, and constructed flats there designed by Axel Hedman (liber 37, page 202, recorded July 15, 1905).^{lxxviii}



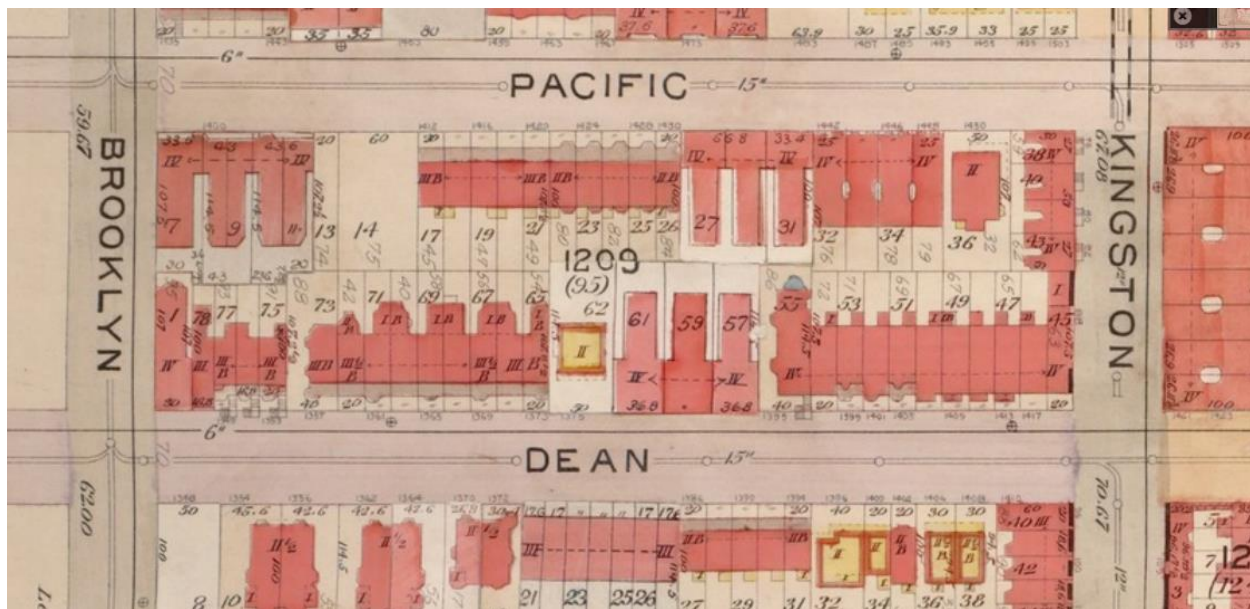
By the end of the century it is clear that much development had taken place on the block and in the vicinity. Masonry houses outnumbered wood-frame structures at that point, and No. 1375 had been surrounded by the new structures (1898-99 Atlas of the Brooklyn Borough of the City of New York).

58	1375	36	98	Elkins, Mary C. 4-1	Head ³ R	W. F. Apr	1839	61 S.
59				— Georgianna B.	Lister	W. F. Apr	1841	59 S.
60				— Fanny	Lister	W. F. July	1843	56 S.
61				— Ida	Lister	W. F. May	1845	55 S.

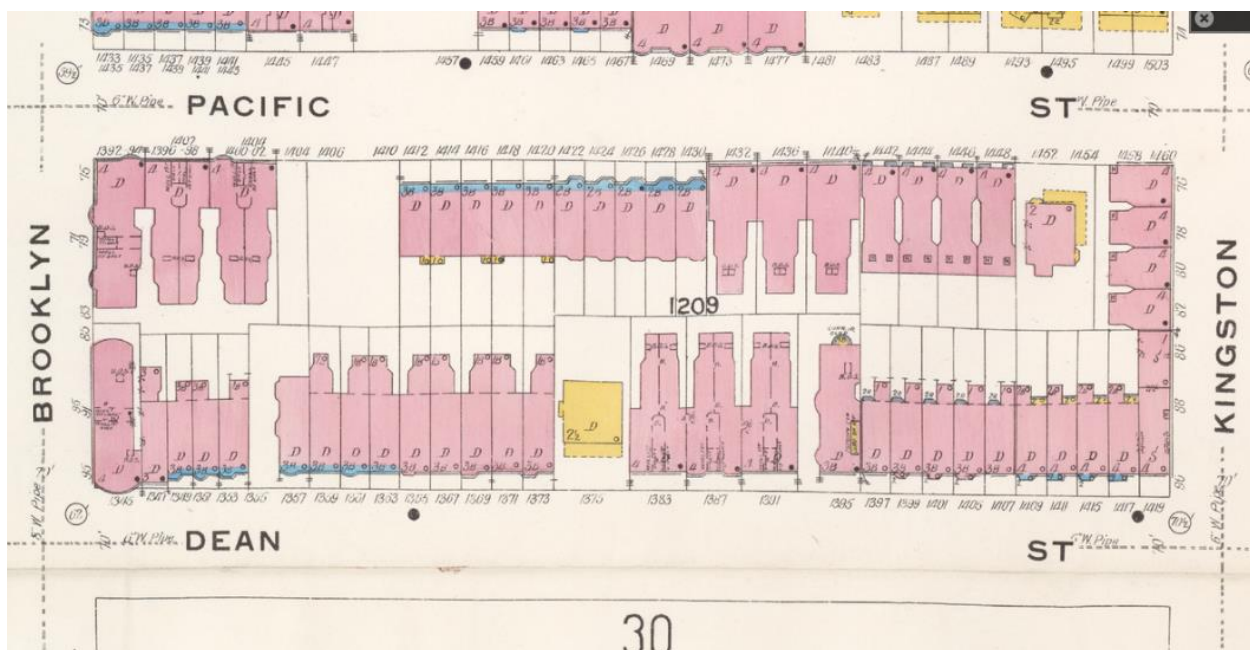
By 1900, Fanny had joined Ida in her profession as a “teacher;” Mary and Georgianna were listed as “housekeepers.” They still owned the property with a mortgage (1900 Federal Census).

In 1900, Mrs. Alice E. Field, Branch Principal of Public School No. 53, was listed as living at No 1375.^{lxxix}

In 1903 Fanny Elkins was identified as a teacher associated with the Public School No. 116, Knickerbocker Avenue, Grove and Ralph Streets.^{lxxx}



Just a few years after the turn of the century, No. 1375 is the only frame house on the entire block and more than 90% of the lots have been improved with masonry houses. No. 1375 is shown here as a 2-story frame building with a “brick or stone foundation,” a front porch, and a side bay window, sitting on a 50' X 114.5' lot (1904 Hyde Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn, Vol. 2).



Another map of Brooklyn from 1904 – this one more detailed – shows similar progress on the block, but also refers to No. 1375 as a 2 ½ story dwelling (1904 Sanborn Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn Map).

In 1910, three of the Elkins sisters remained in the house—Ida had died in 1904—and Mary was still listed as the owner.

1375	18	79	Elkins Mary C	Head	X	W	71	8
1375	X	X	Elkins Georgianna B	Sister		W	68	5
			— Fannie	Sister		W	67	1

By 1910, three of the four Elkins sisters were still living in No. 1375. Ownership was ascribed to Mary, and it was noted that the house was mortgaged. Mary and Georgianna were living on their own income (possibly from some few properties they received from their father when he passed in 1886) and Fannie was still, at 67, a school teacher (1910 Federal Census).

1375	Elkins Mary C	Head	W	F	71
"	" Fannie	Sister	W	F	72
"	Schwaneveld Agnes	Servant	W	F	27
"	Cornby Theresa	Servant	W	F	60

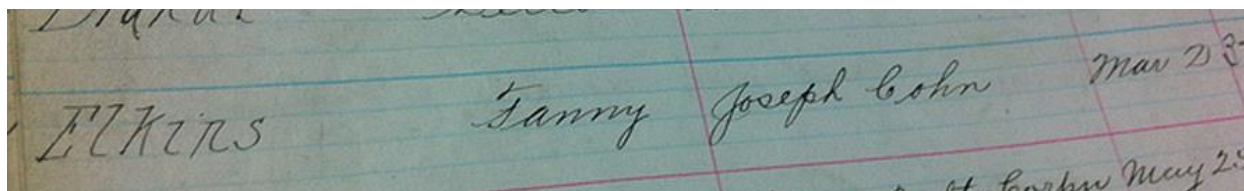
The 1915 Census showed just Mary and Fannie living in the house, but as both were in their 70s, they had two servants which showed that they had managed to maintain their means over the years (1915 New York State Census).

Fanny Elkins (1916-1918)

By 1915, Georgianna passed away and in 1916 Mary would follow her, leaving just Fanny as the sole surviving member of the Elkins family in the house.

By this point, Fanny was 73 years old and was probably ready to settle in to a newer house where it would be easier for her to get around. So, in 1918, she sold the house and its property, moving afterwards to Queens.

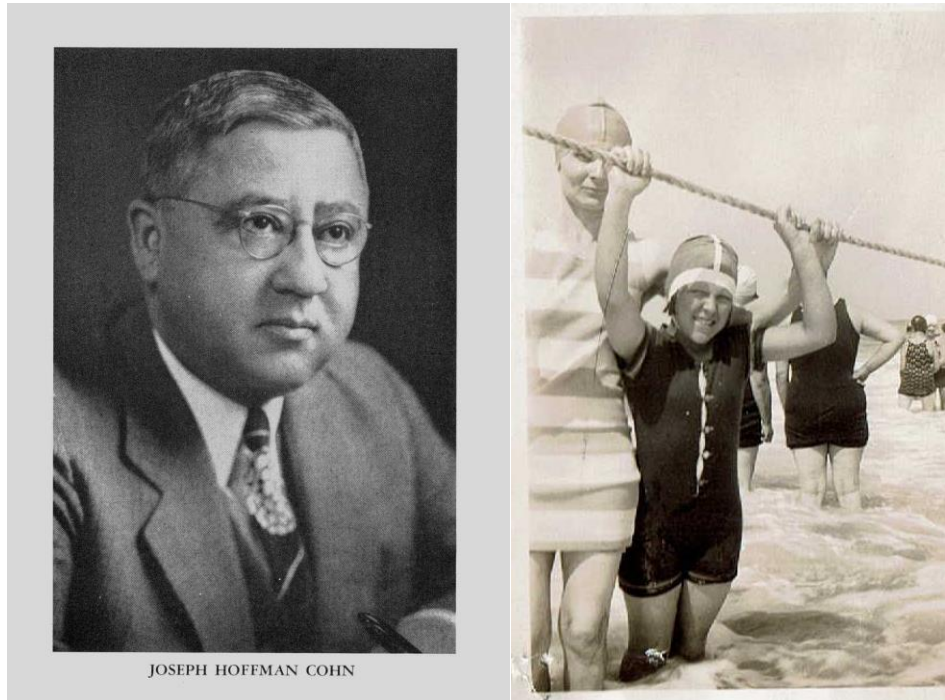
After almost 60 consecutive years of ownership by a member of the Elkins family, No. 1375 was finally sold to a non-Elkins.



An abstract for the 1918 conveyance of No. 1375 from Fanny Elkins to Joseph Cohn (Brooklyn Historical Society).

The Cohn Family (1918-1942)

Just before the 1920s, as development in the area began to slow due to building sites becoming rarer, the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) line was built along Eastern Parkway. Along with the added convenience to Brooklynites for commuting to the City more quickly came a fresh influx of Manhattanites into the borough looking for cheaper housing.

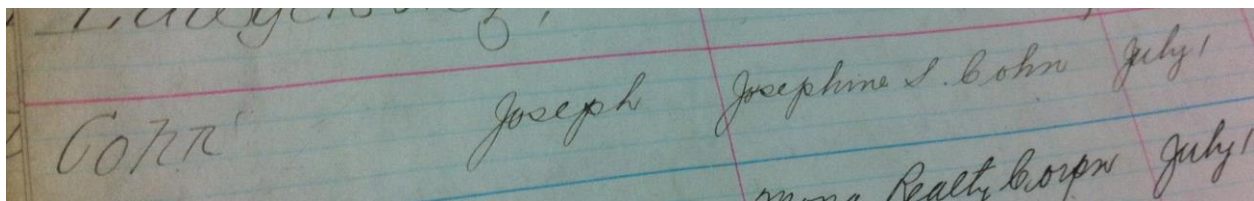


Joseph Cohn (left) and Josephine Cohn (right) with her niece (Jennifer Randolph Stone Family Collection; Ancestry.com).

Developers answered that call with numerous six-story elevator apartment houses, the construction of which began to tilt the makeup of the neighborhood toward that of renters.

After the extended 63-year ownership of No. 1375 by the Elkins Family, the next family to purchase the property, the Cohns, would own it for 24 years.^{lxxx} The Rev. Joseph Cohn, the head of that family and a recently ordained minister, worked with his father, the ex-rabbi Leopold Cohn, who had founded the Williamsburg Mission to the Jews, a controversial organization aimed at converting Jews to Christianity.

Joseph purchased the property from Fanny Elkins in 1918, taking out a mortgage from the Williamsburgh Savings Bank on the same day. He then – just four months later – conveyed the property to his wife, Josephine.



An abstract for the 1918 Conveyance of No. 1375 from Joseph Cohn to his wife, Josephine (Brooklyn Historical Society).

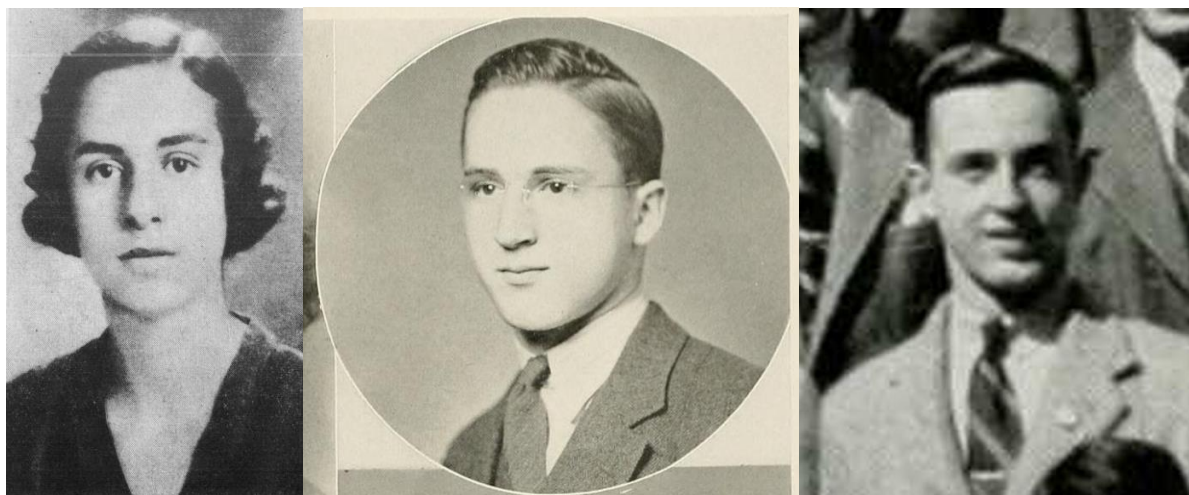
“Josephine and Joseph married May 31, 1916,” said Cohn descendant Jennifer Stone Randolph. “I have only found a short, two-line mention of the marriage in Michigan papers, so that makes me wonder how on board the family was with the union. The couple settled in Brooklyn, and had their three children.”

Josephine, though, unlike Joseph, was not from Brooklyn. She was born and raised – and had lived with her family – in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

“Joseph H. Cohn starts appearing in Michigan to give talks as early as 1912, often at YMCAs,” Jennifer said, “I suspect he and Josephine met over the course of his many visits to Michigan.”

Cohn, who would speak on such topics as “How a Rabbi Found Christ,” was ordained in Grand Rapids, Michigan, just one week before returning to Brooklyn to purchase No. 1375.^{lxxxii}

After four months of owning the property, he conveyed it to his wife, Josephine, who would own it for the better part of 20 years. Throughout this period, Josephine would “keep house” and Joseph would continue to travel and preach.



(Left to Right): Cordelia Cohn (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Wed., 27 September 1933); Hoffman Stone (The 1938 Halcyon Yearbook, Swarthmore College); Huntley Stone (Princeton Yearbook).

After purchasing No. 1375, the Cohn’s settled in to rent out rooms using the additional space in the house. A “Jennie E. Quay” (listed as a Republican on the List of Enrolled Voters for the Borough of Brooklyn in 1919) gave her address as No. 1375 in 1919,^{lxxxiii} and in 1922, Ernest Fred Weise, who was a 1902 graduate of the University of Kansas, was listed as living at No. 1375, as well.^{lxxxiv} So it appears that the Cohns would take in tenants at least during the early part of their ownership of the house,^{lxxxv} and possibly later, as well.

Over time, however, after the production of their three children – Cordelia, Joseph, Jr., and Huntley – Joseph and Josephine began to drift apart.

“They became estranged, however, eventually legally separating,” noted Jennifer, “and Josephine and all the children reverted to using Stone as their surname.

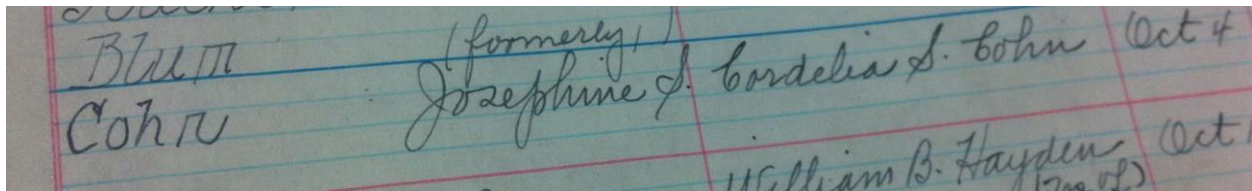
“My Dad recalls Josephine as a quiet, stern woman,” she continued, “and had assumed she was a widowed auntie since he never met her husband.

"He remembers his cousins (first cousins to his father, so first cousins once removed to him), the children, a little bit - but mostly Cordelia, as she settled in Detroit and visited often. She was a talented lawyer.

"Within the family, his understanding was that the cousins reverted to using the Stone surname to avoid discrimination that a Jewish surname might cause... but given the estrangement of the parents, that may not have been the whole story."

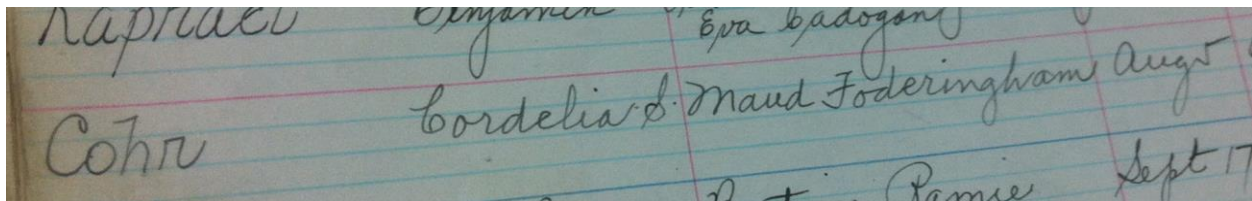
Probably by the end of the 1930s, the couple had legally terminated their marriage and had moved on from one another.

Their daughter, Cordelia, who had taken ownership of No. 1375 from her mother in 1938, sold the property in 1942.



An abstract for the 1938 Conveyance of No. 1375 from Josephine Cohn to her daughter, Cordelia (Brooklyn Historical Society).

Joseph, who served from 1937 to his death in 1953 as the general secretary of the American Board of Missions to the Jews (or ABMJ, now Chosen People Ministries), would begin hosting a nationally broadcast radio show called "The Chosen People" in 1946.^{lxxxvi}



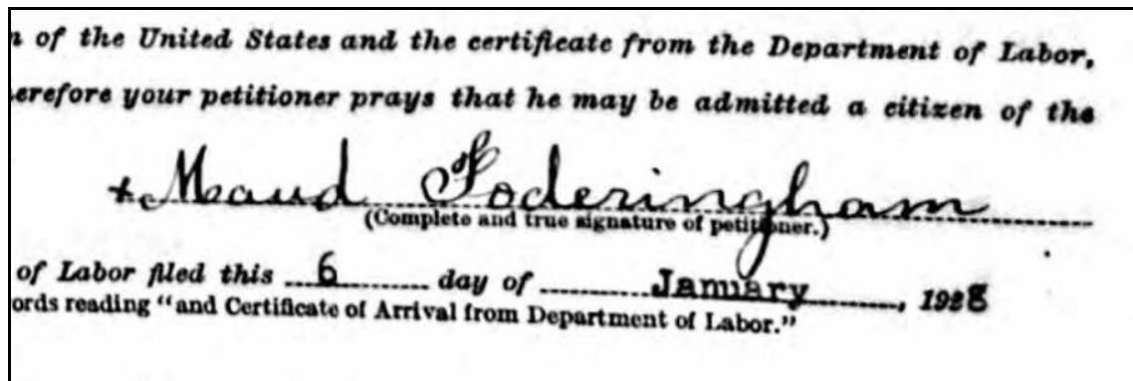
An abstract for the 1942 Conveyance of No. 1375 from Cordelia S. Cohn to Maud Foderingham (Brooklyn Historical Society).

Maud Foderingham (1942-1948)

In 1942, Maud Foderingham purchased No. 1375 from Cordelia S. Cohn.^{lxxxvii}

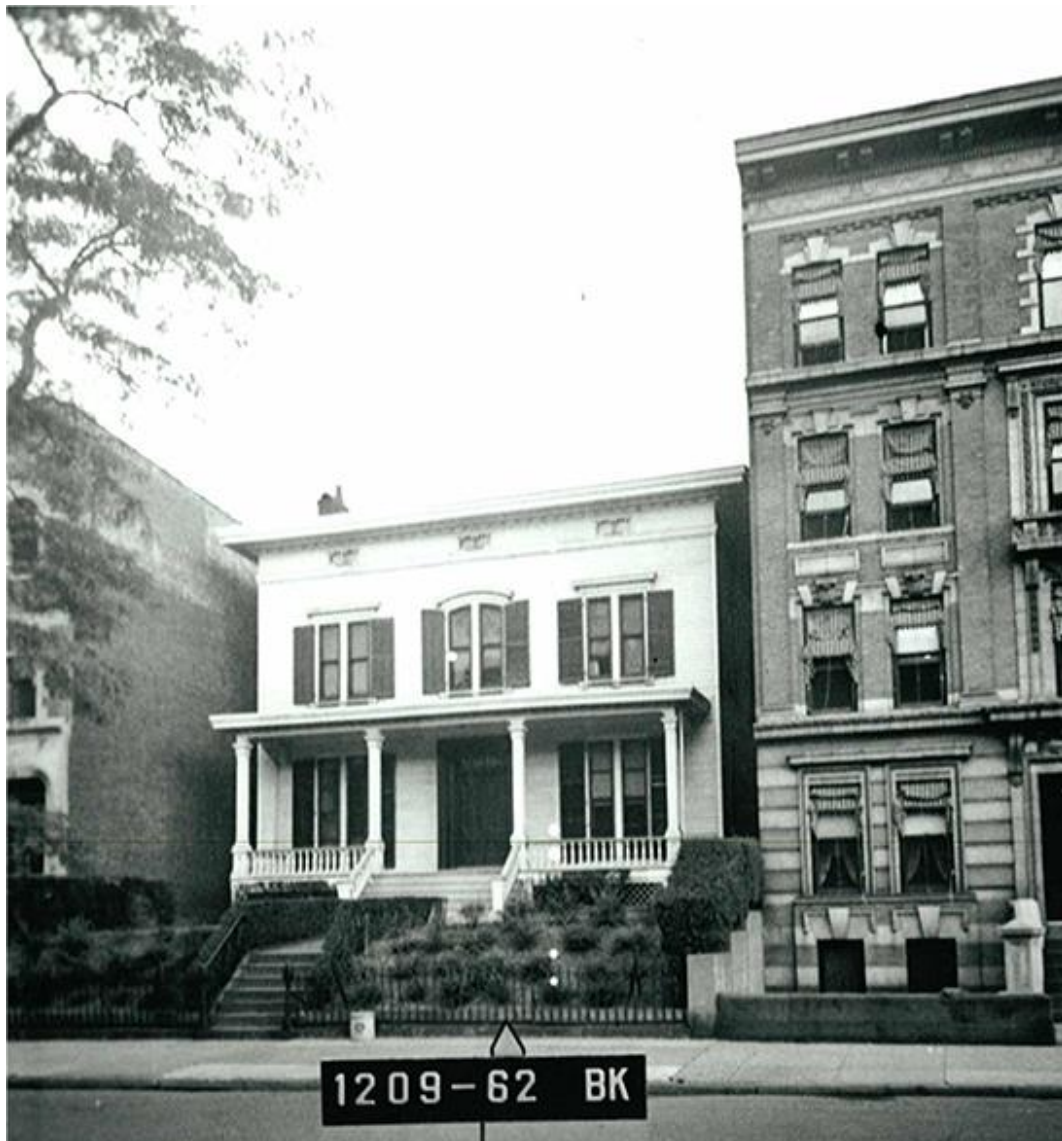
An immigrant of Trinidadian descent, Maud worked initially in Brooklyn as a domestic. She had arrived in the United States in July of 1920, four years later announcing her intention to become a United States citizen, and petitioning for U.S. citizenship in 1928.

The year after purchasing No. 1375, her brother, Egbert, who arrived in the U.S. several years ahead of her, a disabled World War I veteran, was notably "nabbed" at his house, No. 324 Sumner Avenue, in "what police claimed was one of the biggest policy games operated in Brooklyn."^{lxxxviii} It is possible, although not known for sure, that it was from this source that Maud had accessed the money she needed to purchase No. 1375.

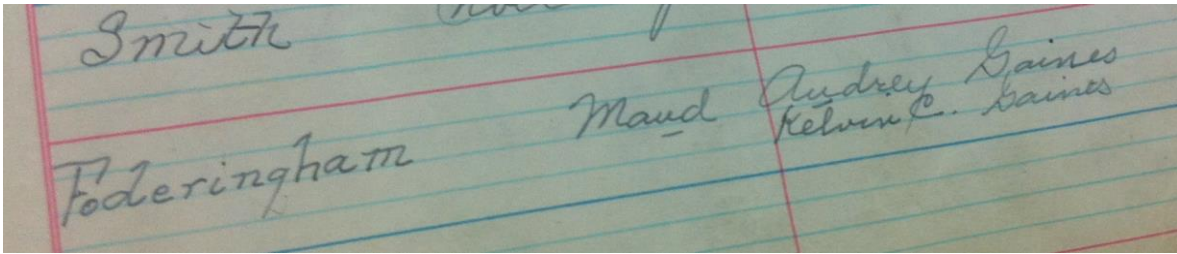


Maud Foderingham's signature on her 1928 "Petition for Naturalization" (Ancestry.com).

It is probable that during this period the house was used as a multiple dwelling home for the first time.



1940s-era Tax Photo for No. 1325 Dean Street (New York City Department of Finance).



An abstract for the 1948 Conveyance of No. 1375 from Maud Foderingham to Audrey and Kelvin Gaines (Brooklyn Historical Society).

In 1948, after six years of ownership, Maud sold the house to Audrey Gaines and her son Kelvin Gaines.^{lxxxix}

Audrey Gaines & Kelvin C. Gaines (1948-1954)



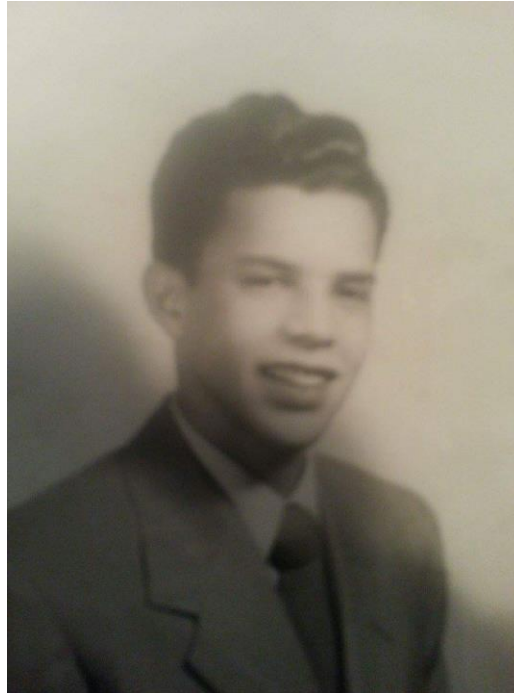
Audrey Gaines (Steven Gaines Collection).

Audrey Gaines, a Trinidadian, and a recent widow when she purchased No. 1375 in 1948,^{xc} took title to the property with one of her sons, Kelvin, who had recently returned home from the Second World War.^{xc}

With this latest purchase of No. 1375, we have the first instance of evidence that the house was used as a multiple dwelling in the form of city inspection documents.

Soon after purchasing the home, the city would pay a visit to the property for an "occupancy" inspection. City inspectors note, during that inspection, that the house had been illegally converted to a "Class B" rooming house. Their report revealed that a total of nine individual families lived within spaces in the house. There were rooms on the "1st sty" rented by the week to transient tenants, apartments on the "2nd sty" rented to two "permanent" tenants and a family by the week, and the rooms on the "3d sty" - where the owner's family lived - were being rented by the week and by the month.^{xcii}

The inspection further noted that there was only plumbing on the second and third floors where a bathtub, water closet, and a basin existed within one bathroom.



Milton Gaines, one of Audrey's children who lived in the house, during high school (Stephen Gaines Collection).

Form 1057-9.5M-701313(49)

CITY OF NEW YORK—DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND BUILDINGS—DIVISION OF HOUSING

AVENUE STREET DEAN NO. 1375 UNIT 577 DATE 10/26/50 O+A

Story	Rooms	Use	Fams.	Rooms Rented How	Furniture Property of	Duration of Occupancy	Perm. or Trans.	Cook	Cook App. Property of	Fixtures State Where W.C.'s Are Located	Names of Occupant
CELLAR					STORAGE						
1 ST F.W.	2	R.R.	1	W.	TENANT	8M.	T	—	—	—	STYLES
" R.W.	1	F.R.	1	W.	OWNER	10M.	T	—	—	—	GREENE
" F.E.	2	R.R.	1	W.	OWNER	10M.	T	—	—	—	LEWIS
" R.E.	1	K.	—	—	—	—	—	✓	OWNER	—	—
2 ND F.W.	3	R.R.	1	M.	TENANT	4 1/2 Y.	P.	—	—	B.T.-W.C.-B. BATHROOM B.T.-W.C.-B.	LEWIS
" R.W.	1	K.T.	—	—	—	—	—	✓	OWNER	BATHROOM PUB. HALL	—
" F.W.	2	R.R.	1	M.	TENANT	4 1/2 Y.	P.	—	—	—	WITT
" F.C.	1	F.R.	1	W.	OWNER	3M.	T.	—	—	—	LEWIS
3 RD F.W.	3	R.R.	1	M.	TENANT	3Y.	P.	✓	TENANT	B.T.-W.C.-B. BATHROOM PUB. HALL	BROWN
" R.W.	1	F.R.	1	W.	OWNER	4Y.	R.T.	—	—	—	A. GAINES
" F.W.	1	F.R.	1	W.	OWNER	4Y.	R.T.	—	—	—	TOUCHSTONE "B"
<p>Refer to Insp. Inspection 10/27/50</p> <p>Inspector <u>[Signature]</u> Date <u>10/26/50</u></p> <p>Y=Yearly. M=Monthly. W=Weekly. P=Permanent. T=Transient. (OVER)</p>											

The first entry for the City's multiple-dwelling inspections starting – for No. 1375 – in 1950 which showed 7-9 families occupying the various rooms - and combinations of rooms - in the house; the inspector noted that the house had been illegally converted to a class B Rooming house (New York City Housing Preservation Department)

"Mike (Furlonge) and I went to visit often and during the summer," Allan said. "Milton⁹ and I began our adventures there. On Saturday the kids did chores through the whole house. Milton had mopping and bathroom cleaning. We played handball on the side of the lawn and stickball on the street. To the left was the Dentist who wrote 'Mo and Jo.' Across the street we used to pay a dollar for the first TV on the block. We would take the trolley car to Ebbets Field. We would walk to the Children's museum on Park Place Holy Victory was close by and Every Sunday the Gaineses and Mike and I would pack up and make the trip to Riis Park, once with Eartha Kitt¹⁰ in tow. Noreen's family rented the top floor for a time and we would tease her a lot because she was dark-skinned (shame).

By 1953, after another inspection, the house is occupied by fewer families – 2 to be exact – leaving several areas of the house “VACANT.” An inspector notes that “only door locked in Bldg that to Mrs. Mapps apt” and that “Mrs. Gaines + children use Bathroom in Hall of 2nd floor” (New York City Housing Preservation Department)

⁹ Milton Gaines was one of Audrey Gaines' children.

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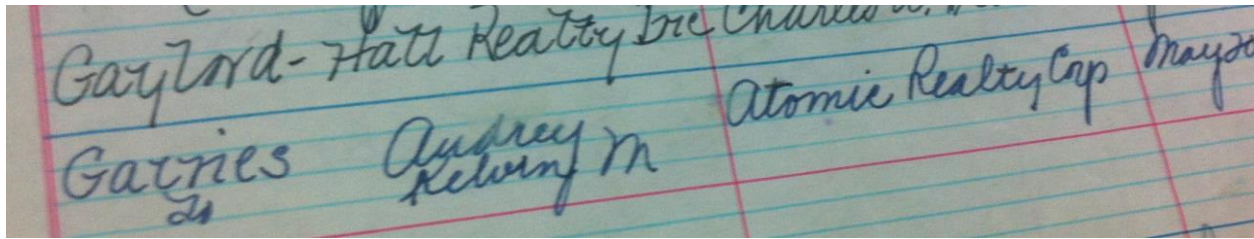


A portrait of No. 1375 painted by Milton Gaines, one of Kelvin's brothers (ca. 1960s, Steven Gaines Collection)



The grown-up children of Audrey Gaines: Milton, Hugh, Joan, Carlton, Eunice and Kelvin Gaines – all of whom lived at No. 1375 in the late 1940s through the 1950s (Steven Gaines Collection).

By 1954, perhaps because the city would not allow Audrey Gaines to utilize her home as a multiple dwelling without having to make expensive adjustments to the structure, and since a lack of boarders may have made it difficult for her to pay the mortgage, Gaines sold the house.



An abstract for the 1954 Conveyance of No. 1375 from Audrey and Kelvin Gaines to Atomic Realty Corporation (Brooklyn Historical Society).

Atomic Realty Corporation (1954)

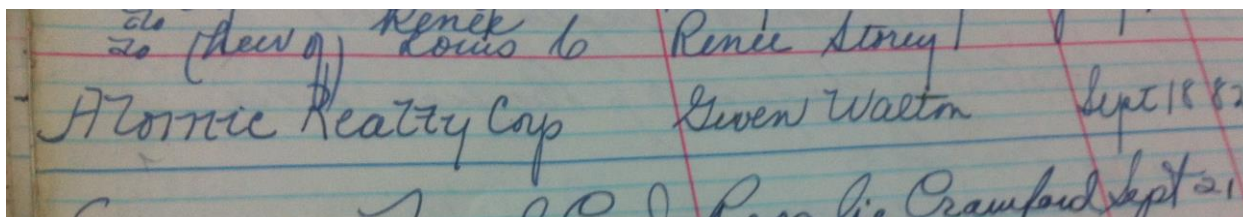
The Atomic Realty Corporation would own the property for just shy of four months.^{xciv} Located at No. 661 Flatbush Avenue, it is likely that the real estate firm was in the business of purchasing old homes, in some cases doing repairs, and then flipping them to new buyers – particularly in the Flatbush area, although they were not restricted to this location. They also represented sellers who were renting rooms.



An ad for Atomic Realty Company in 1961, which noted that "Atomic Stands For Quick Action," a slogan which implied that the company flipped homes (New York World-Telegram and Sun, Fri., 3 February 1961).



An ad for Atomic Realty Company from 1960 shows the company seeking home buyers and apartment renters (New York World-Telegram and Sun, Tues., 7 June 1960).



An abstract for the 1954 Conveyance of No. 1375 from Atomic Realty Corporation to Gwen Walton (Brooklyn Historical Society).

Gwen Walton (1954)

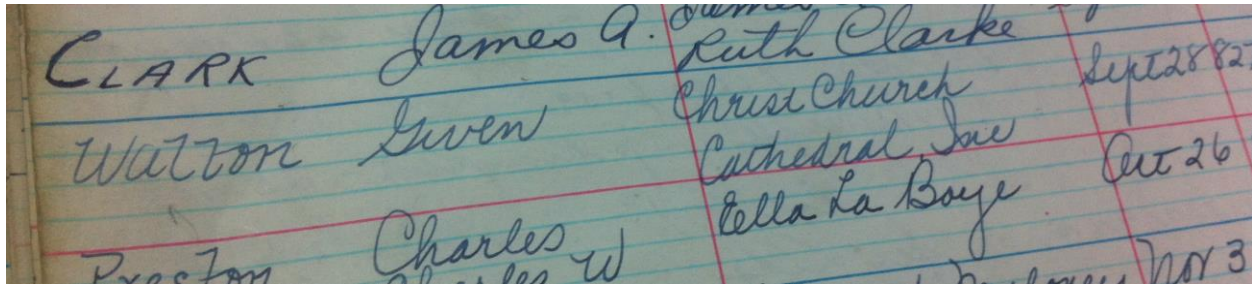
For the next 33 years, No. 1375 would become a part of the Walton-Barrow family, passing from one member to the next a total of four times.

Gwen Walton, the first purchaser, seems to have purchased the property with the sole intention of passing it on to a church – possibly a church to which she belonged.

An immigrant from Barbados, she arrived in New York with her 2-year-old son, Dennis, in 1923 to join her husband who lived in Harlem, remaining there at least until the end of the 1940s, approximately when she was naturalized a U.S. citizen in 1949.

She would later marry into the family of the church's rector and, in the marriage, ultimately recover title to the house. In fact, No. 1375 may have been how she met her future husband. A single woman, it turns out, having the same last name as his first wife – Mapp(s) – had lived at No. 1375 when the Gaines family had owned it. Mapp was also the maiden name of her first husband's mother.

Walton was involved in the social community in Harlem before purchasing No. 1375 in 1954. After buying the house she conveyed it a mere 10 days later to Christ Church Cathedral, Inc., a West Indies Catholic church located in the East New York section of Brooklyn.



An abstract for the 1954 Conveyance of No. 1375 from Gwen Walton to Christ Church Cathedral, Inc. (Brooklyn Historical Society).

Christ Church Cathedral, Inc. (1954-unknown)

Christ Church Cathedral, Incorporated, received No. 1375, possibly as a home for their rector, the Right Reverend Reginald Grant Barrow. It may also have been a purchase as an investment to bring in a rent roll to the church or a church fund.

The rector had had a rather colorful history, placing his mark on Brooklyn – and New York – from the 1920s through the 1970s. In addition to being the father of the first prime minister of Barbados, Errol Walton Barrow, his efforts to bring social justice to African Americans is impressive.

Barrow was born in Barbados, but he left that country in the 1920s for the Virgin Islands where he was “for a number of years active in the agitation for improved conditions among the workers” there. When he had agitated too much for the landed gentry there, however, he was finally ordered out of the Virgin Islands – by its governor – “under the threat of prosecution.”

Traveling to New York City, he became a member of Marcus Garvey United Negro Improvement Association,^{xv} an organization with which he continued to work to improve the lot of the black working class. He was notably one of the founding members of the African Orthodox Church (AOC), a church which began in 1921 and attracted mostly Anglican West Indian immigrants. Originally aligned with the Episcopal Church, the founders believed that black Episcopalians should have a denomination of their own.

After a few year of being in the United States, however, the governor of the Virgin Islands got word that Barrow had gone there after leaving the Virgin Islands. He, thus, alerted the U.S. authorities, “urging them to expel him.”

Barrow seemed to have been perceived enough of a threat that some very powerful men worked to make his life miserable. Ex-Secretary of State Charles Hughes and President Warren G. Harding were involved in a campaign to make things uncomfortable for Barrow while he remained in the United States, attempting to have him deported back to the Virgin Islands as “a dangerous individual.” That campaign ended, however, when a judge of the Southern District upheld the writ of *habeas corpus* that had been obtained by his attorneys.^{xvii}

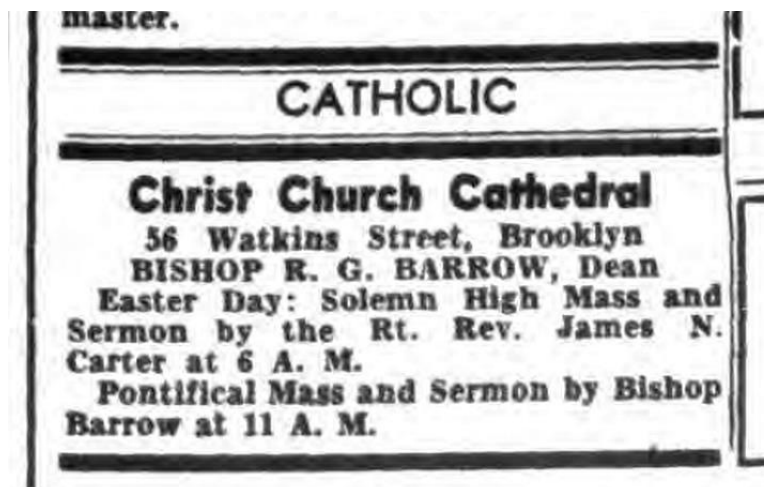
Barrow served as a leader within AOC in its primacy as it eventually realigned with the American Catholic Church. By 1935, he had moved to Brooklyn to oversee Christ Church Cathedral.

Christ Cathedral Church had several subsequent addresses during this period, including one at No. 201 Willoughby Avenue. The church eventually settled at No. 54 Watkins Street in East New York by the 1950s.

Christ Church Cathedral came into ownership of No. 1375 in 1954, possessing it for an undetermined period of time.



The Right Reverend Reginald Grant Barrow is shown seated at center celebrating his birthday with his wife, seated to his right, and more than "60 friends" (New York Age, Sat., 14 October 1950).

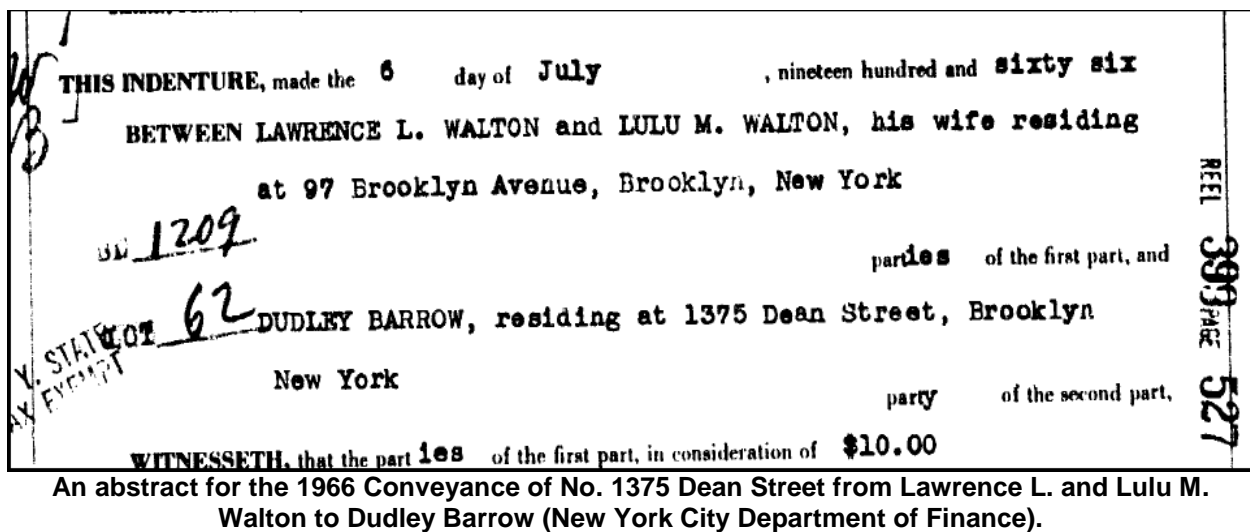


An ad for the Christ Church Cathedral in 1951 (New York Age, Sat., 24 March 1951).

At some point between 1954 and 1970 – likely around the mid-1960s – the title to the property was conveyed to Lawrence L. & Lulu M. Walton, probably a relation of Gwen Walton's, possibly a brother. It was about that time that Gwen Walton married Dudley Barrow, a nephew of the Most Reverend Reginald Grant Barrow, D.D., Archbishop of the African Catholic Church and Dean of Christ Church Cathedral.

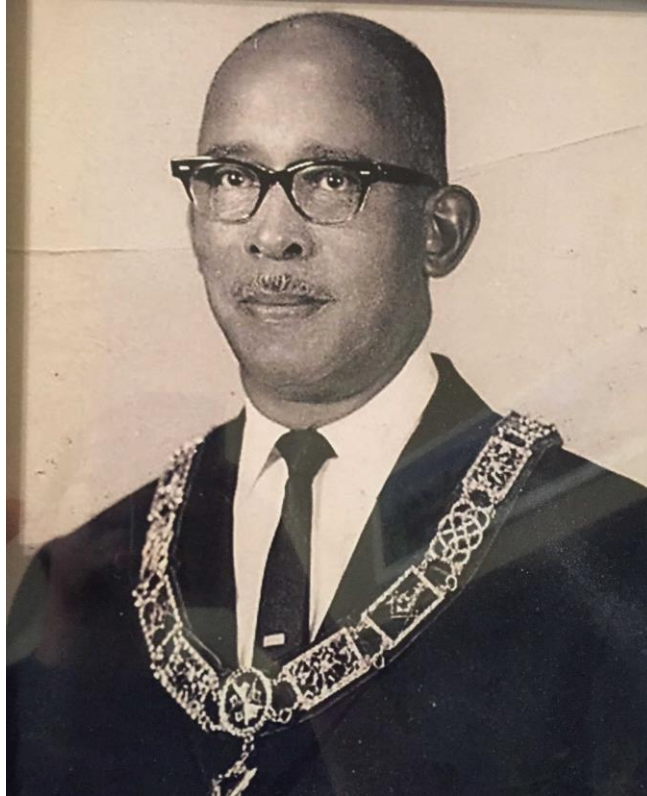
Lawrence L. & Lulu M. Walton (unknown-1966)

The records are silent on this, but it is likely that Lawrence Walton was a relative of Gwen Walton's, and the property, at some point, was returned back – from Christ Church Cathedral, Inc. – to the Walton family through Lawrence.



Dudley & Gwen E. Barrow (1966-1987)

The same year that Dudley Barrow, nephew of the Right Reverend Reginald Grant Barrow, dean and rector of Christ Church Cathedral, and a cousin to the first prime minister of Barbados Errol Walton Barrow, married Gwendolyn Walton (who had originally purchased the property in 1954), Dudley was conveyed the property.



Dudley Ernest Barrow (Ancestry.com).

Five years later, in 1971, he conveyed the property to both himself and his wife Gwen.

CONSULT YOUR LAWYER BEFORE SIGNING THIS INSTRUMENT—THIS INSTRUMENT SHOULD BE USED BY LAWYERS ONLY.	
<hr/>	
THIS INDENTURE,	made the 1st day of November, nineteen hundred and seventy-one
BETWEEN	DUDLEY BARROW, residing at 1375 Dean Street,
	Brooklyn, New York
party of the first part, and DUDLEY BARROW and GWEN E. BARROW, his wife,	
residing at 1375 Dean Street, Brooklyn, New York	
	REL 519 PM

An abstract for the 1971 Conveyance of No. 1375 Dean Street from Dudley Barrow to Dudley and Gwen E. Barrow (New York City Department of Finance).



1980s Tax Photo (New York City Department of Finance).

After Dudley passed five years later in 1976, Gwen continued to live at the house, finally conveying the property 11 years later to Bessie L. Williams of 49 Rochester Avenue.^{xvii}

NYC Form 100 (Rev. 10-1-76) Register and pay \$1.00 with this instrument against recording fee. To be used on separate sheets.

CONSULT YOUR LAWYER BEFORE SIGNING THIS INSTRUMENT - THIS INSTRUMENT SHOULD BE USED BY LAWYERS ONLY

THIS INDENTURE, made the 14th day of December, nineteen hundred and eighty-seven

BETWEEN GWEN E. BARROW, individually and as surviving spouse of DUDLEY BARROW, deceased, residing at 1375 Dean Street, Brooklyn, NY

party of the first part, and

L.
BESSIE WILLIAMS, residing at 49 Rochester Avenue, Brooklyn, NY

An abstract for the 1987 Conveyance of No. 1375 Dean Street from Gwen E. Barrow to Bessie L. Williams (New York City Department of Finance).

The Williams Family (1987-2006)



Bessie Williams with Mayor Rudy Giuliani (Ganter Chronicles, bsganter.wordpress.com).

In 1987, Bessie L. Williams, of 47 Rochester Avenue, purchased No. 1375 from Gwen Barrow. Although there was no purchase price listed, Bessie took out a mortgage for \$82,000, so it is likely that this was – or was close to – the purchase price.

A real estate agent turned addiction treatment facility owner and manager, Bessie founded Williams Residence, Inc., and opened her first treatment center in 1984. Her second came in 1989 after purchasing No. 1375 from Gwen Barrow. A third location – “around the corner” from No. 1375, took in 70 men.

Turning No. 1375 into a treatment center, Bessie insisted on a safe, drug-free, family-like atmosphere. She and two of her sons, Derrick and Terrence, oversaw the residents as they made their transition back into the mainstream. Residents attended school or went to day treatment programs. At night, they went to 12-step meetings. Once a week, they attended a support group offered by the residence. Churches did counseling work and offered prayer sessions with residents.

"The residents stay with us until they feel they're ready to leave," Bessie said, "until they feel strong enough to take the next step," Williams said.^{xcviii}

Over the years Bessie's group homes became harbors for people living with HIV, the formerly homeless and substance abusers.

In 2005, Bessie sold No. 1375 to two of her sons, Derrick and Byron, as a 6-family dwelling. Approximately 1 ½ years later the sons sold the property back to their mother as a “1-2 family with attached garage/or vacant land.” Finally, two months later, she sold the house to Raymond Agoglia for \$800,000.^{xcix}

Raymond Agoglia (2006-2010)

In 2006, after purchasing No. 1375, the latest owner was planning to tear down the historic house. Finance Department records identify him as Raymond Agoglia, of Neponsit in Rockaway Park, Queens, who had just paid \$800,000 for the property.¹¹



Raymond “Ray” Agoglia with his wife, Amanda, at Mar-a-Lago Resort, ca. 1999 (Ray Agoglia Facebook site).

¹¹ The following year he took out two mortgages totaling the amount.

When the Crown Heights North Association, Inc. (CHNA) discovered Agoglia's plans, they considered purchasing it from him in order to both save the historic home as well as to create a much needed Arts and Community Center in Crown Heights North. Organizing quickly in order to save the structure from the wrecker's ball, the house was landmarked moments before Agoglia's bulldozers arrived.

With his plans now irrevocably changed, Agoglia then placed the house on the market where it languished for several years, the price and condition of the house a deterrent to its sale. Although offers were made none were accepted during this period.

Agoglia eventually walked away from the property, having deduced that he would likely not make a profit on selling it. In the ensuing years, the house further suffered from break-ins and theft; and more significantly, from continued water damage from the removal of the roof hatch, as well as open and broken windows.

In the end, according to city records, Agoglia sold the property for \$10.^c

Saxon Mortgage Services (2010)

In July of 2010, Saxon Mortgage Services purchased the property for pennies on the dollar. A mid-sized sub-prime mortgage company, located in Texas, Saxon is a subsidiary of Morgan Stanley. Because of its landmark status and condition, Saxon did not consider the property to be highly valuable, and they set the sale price at \$299K.

U.S. Bank National Association (2010-2011)

About a month after purchase they conveyed the property to U.S. Bank National Association. "U.S. Bank" then, in turn, conveyed the property almost a year later to Real Properties Group.

Real Properties Group (2011-2014)

In 2011, the property switched hand again, when Real Properties, paid \$194,000 for it,^{ci} promising to restore the exterior and convert it to apartments. That renovation did not occur. In fact, Real Properties actually did more damage to the building in the view of community leaders when they gutted what was left of the interior. The company was subsequently sanctioned by Community Board 8 for "demo by neglect" when gaping holes appeared in the roof. At this point, the firm returned the house to the market with a hefty \$1,100,000^{cii} price tag.

Unfortunately, the building was again left open and continued to be looted over the years. The realty company's listing stated that the house would be "(d)elivered vacant and with an interior that has been completely cleared," which would allow the buyer, according to Real Properties, to "project your fantasy home and build out to suit your individual tastes and desires."^{ciii}

While owning the property, Real Properties took out a mortgage from Robert Horowitz, assigning all leases and rents from the property to him. Horowitz assigned the mortgage to the

“Ronald J. Weinheim Retirement Plan.” The mortgage was for \$499,000, of which Real Properties received \$249,000, presumably to make renovations.^{civ}

In 2014, Real Properties conveyed the property, through a “contract of sale,” to developer Nadav “Amber” Mazor, who secured the property for 1375 Dean St. LLC, paying \$995,000.

Komaru Enterprises, LLC (2014-Present)

In 2014, after many years of decay and neglect, an historic restoration specialist appeared who was intent on truly restoring No. 1375 and returning the historic structure to its former glory. Amber Mazor, of Komaru Enterprises, purchased the structure with a commitment to investing in the community by restoring the landmark property.

Being an individually designated landmark building, the process of plan approval for the building's renovation was exceedingly challenging on many levels. Komaru's design firm, nC2 Architecture, however, met the challenge with the same steady and focused manner they apply to all of their projects. After a lengthy approval process – and the enthusiastic support of the community board – the Historic Preservation Committee (Landmarks) unanimously voted to support Komaru's proposed design and plan to restore the building.

"I'm very excited and happy," Mazor told the Brooklyn *Eagle* after the committee vote. "It's been an eyesore for a long time. It's time to stop the neglect and bring back the glory of this neglected jewel." The project entailed not just the renovation of the structure, but also involved adding rear and side extensions to the original building.^{cv}

Now, with the project well on its way towards completion, Komaru is saving the oldest and only free-standing mid-19th Century wooden country house that still exists in northwest Crown Heights. George & Susan Elkins would certainly be proud.

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- IIII Brooklyn Daily Eagle, August 29, 1867.
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