

**The Dennett Homestead on Christian Shore,  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire:  
A Three Hundred Year History**



by  
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## *Introduction*

This study examines the history of the Dennett House on Prospect Street in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. It is not an architectural history, but rather a history of those who lived in the house and on the surrounding land, as well as, the community in which it existed. The study begins with a history of Portsmouth from the time of early settlement, through the Revolution and industrialization. The economic, religious and political influences of this span of years shaped the inhabitants of the Dennett house. Following the history of Portsmouth itself the study examines the neighborhood of Christian Shore, the original land owned by John Dennett and then the occupants of the house for nearly three hundred years.

To date no first hand accounts have surfaced documenting life in the house. Because of this lack of specific documentation we must instead draw conclusions based on the public records left by the inhabitants, such as wills, deeds, census records and tax roles. By piecing together the lives of the inhabitants of the house we are able to better understand how the property may have been changed over time.



## *Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Settlement through Industrialization*

The Province of New Hampshire stood apart in early North America. From the time of early settlement it was inhabited by individuals seeking economic gain rather than religious freedom. Its abundant forests and proximity to the sea provided ideal conditions for the export of lumber and fish. New Hampshire's rich natural resources and accessibility to the sea made the colony very appealing to the British crown.<sup>1</sup>

In 1640 there were four towns in the colony of New Hampshire: Strawberry Banke, now Portsmouth, Exeter, Hampton and Hilton's Point, now Dover. These four towns were very different. Strawberry Banke was home to the "old, free-wheeling adventurers," Exeter and Hampton accepted the rule of Puritan ideology and Hilton's Point remained unpredictable in its leadership. Captain John Mason was one of the earliest individuals to take on a governing role in the colony. However, being like the early settlers, he was more concerned with making a profit and did not form a strong governing body. Leadership was largely left to the inhabitants of the colony. The period of little leadership resulted in the colony of New Hampshire becoming affiliated with Massachusetts. This relationship remained through the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup>

Within the colony of New Hampshire was a region known as Piscataqua. This region, although split east to west by the Piscataqua River and including parts of modern-day Maine and New Hampshire, was thought of as a single region to early settlers. By the 1620s natural resources had begun to draw English settlers to the Piscataqua region. The swift current of the Piscataqua River provided a port that did not freeze allowing for easy export. By the mid 1600s the primary export from the Piscataqua region was lumber. The export of lumber remained the base of the economy for many years. In a single year in the early eighteenth century 915,000 feet of pine boards was exported.<sup>3</sup>

Abundant natural resources and the success of the port resulted in great prosperity for many residents of the region. James Garvin summarized the rise of the Piscataqua's merchant class:

In a pattern that would be repeated until well after the Revolution, the first of Portsmouth's merchants arose during the 1680s by combining native intelligence, experience as ship masters, alliances with upriver loggers and millmen, and good marriages that concentrated economic power within their own families.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Heffernan, Nancy Coffey and Ann Page Stecker, *New Hampshire: Crosscurrents in Its Development*. Tompson & Rutter Inc, Grantham, NH, 1986, pp. 15-17.

<sup>2</sup> Heffernan and Stecker, *New Hampshire: Crosscurrents in Its Development*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Garvin, James L., "That Little World, Portsmouth," *Portsmouth Furniture*, Brock Jobe, ed., Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Boston, 1993, pp. 14-15.

<sup>4</sup> Garvin, "That Little World, Portsmouth," p. 15.

The family with arguably the greatest amount of influence over the region during early settlement was the Wentworth family. John Wentworth became Lieutenant-Governor several years after Charles II established New Hampshire as a province separate from Massachusetts in 1679.<sup>5</sup> From 1715 until the Revolution, the Wentworths continued as the ruling force in New Hampshire. The fourteen children of John and Sarah Wentworth married into some of the colony's most wealthy and powerful families, quickly creating a network of kinship ties. In order to help New Hampshire colonists feel some sense of order and security Lieutenant-Governor, John Wentworth, handed out town charters for previously unsettled areas of the colony. By handing out charters to friends and family, the charters also worked as a tool for the Wentworths to establish friendships that would greatly aid their political agenda. Through marriage and charters the Wentworths formed close networks with the elite members of colonial New Hampshire society.<sup>6</sup> Overall the rule of the Wentworths did result in general prosperity for the colony of New Hampshire during the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

During early settlement the area that encompasses modern-day Portsmouth included portions of many surrounding towns. By the 1680s the primary area of settlement and maritime activity centered around the area known as Strawberry Banke.<sup>8</sup> By the mid seventeenth century power was harvested by two mill ponds, North and South.<sup>9</sup> The power harvested from the North Mill Pond was used at a saw mill starting in the 1660s while the South Mill Pond was used for a grist mill. In *Building Portsmouth*, Richard Candee describes "three granite knolls" in Portsmouth, including the area in the North End (now the site of the Sheraton Hotel) that was used during this early period of settlement for windmills.<sup>10</sup> It was in the 1690s that settlement began to move into this area of north Portsmouth when Portsmouth's largest landowners, Richard Cutt, John Cutt, John Pickering, and the Parish (Glebe Land) began to subdivide land.<sup>11</sup> In 1708, the remaining Glebe Lands (land owned by the church) were rented out to individuals as house lots to create revenue.<sup>12</sup> At this time plots of land were also reserved for a meeting house, a prison, an almshouse, and a burial ground. The meeting house was moved from its previous location on Meeting House Hill (the present location of the Portsmouth Children's Museum) to its present location in Market Square.<sup>13</sup> Therefore between 1690 and 1710 Portsmouth transitioned from a rural settlement to a more urban town with a grid of streets creating the framework for the downtown area we know today.

Religion in Portsmouth had a rocky history during the seventeenth century. As stated previously, New Hampshire held a somewhat unique place in New England, being founded largely for economic reasons, rather than for the religious freedoms that Massachusetts settlers sought. Several ministers were sent to Portsmouth in the early

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<sup>5</sup> Charter of the State of New Hampshire, Portsmouth Athenaeum.

<sup>6</sup> Heffernan and Stecker, *New Hampshire: Crosscurrents in Its Development*, pp. 40-44.

<sup>7</sup> Heffernan and Stecker, *New Hampshire: Crosscurrents in Its Development*, pp. 40-44.

<sup>8</sup> Candee, Richard, *Building Portsmouth*, Portsmouth Advocates, Portsmouth, NH. 1994, p. 1

<sup>9</sup> Candee, *Building Portsmouth*.

<sup>10</sup> Candee, *Building Portsmouth*, p. 1

<sup>11</sup> Candee, *Building Portsmouth*, pp. 1-2

<sup>12</sup> Finding aid for the North Church Papers, Portsmouth Athenaeum.

<sup>13</sup> Candee, *Building Portsmouth*, p. 2.

seventeenth century only to leave after a short period of settlement. In 1671 the Rev. Joshua Moody was ordained in Portsmouth, this remains the date generally accepted as the formation of the North Church (Congregationalist). In 1713 the Congregationalist church split into two parishes, North and South, amidst considerable descent and controversy.

Portsmouth continued to thrive as a port through the eighteenth century. Its houses and buildings were known for their “modern architecture” inside and out. Of Portsmouth houses one 1750 observer stated, “...the rooms are well plasterd and many Wainscoted or hung with paper from England.”<sup>14</sup> Garvin characterizes the mid eighteenth century as the “golden age among Portsmouth’s craft community.”<sup>15</sup> Houses such as the Wentworth-Gardner and the Moffatt-Ladd were constructed during this period. Construction of the New Hampshire Statehouse in Market Square was completed in 1760, solidifying Portsmouth’s political importance to the new state of New Hampshire.

The Revolutionary period was a defining time for the city of Portsmouth. According to one local historian, “politics were the salt of life in colonial Portsmouth.”<sup>16</sup> In the early 1770s Portsmouth residents were troubled by a series of taxes imposed by England. In general the community remained loyal to the crown, as the city was the seat of colonial government. Loyalty to the crown however, did not stop colonists from expressing their dissatisfaction. In 1772 Portsmouth residents produced a manifest that condemned the crown’s tax on tea imported to the colonies stating their dislike for the decision made “without [colonist’s] consent.”<sup>17</sup>

Five months before the battles of Lexington and Concord in 1774, news came to Portsmouth that George III had banned further importation of gun powder to the colonies. Furthermore, a British ship was on its way to nearby Fort William and Mary to remove stores of gun powder. Portsmouth was distraught over the news and some 400 residents decided to storm the Fort and claim the gun powder first. The Fort, manned by only five men was helpless to the crowd and the residents of Portsmouth succeeded in taking the munitions.<sup>18</sup> The event at Fort William and Mary made the final split between those who were disfavored with the actions of the crown and those who would remain loyal English subjects.

The Revolutionary period saw Portsmouth’s rise to importance with the construction of ships for the Continental Navy. A period of brief economic depression in Portsmouth followed the Revolution when Portsmouth merchants were shut out of many British ports.<sup>19</sup> Although private shipbuilding brought some prosperity to Portsmouth,

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<sup>14</sup> Quotation from the 1750 travel diary of James Birket in Garvin, James L., “That Little World, Portsmouth,” *Portsmouth Furniture*, Brock Jobe, ed., Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Boston, 1993, pp. 22.

<sup>15</sup> Garvin, “That Little World, Portsmouth,” pp. 22-23.

<sup>16</sup> Brighton, Raymond, *They Came to Fish*, Peter E. Randall Publisher, Portsmouth, NH, 1994, volume 1, p. 51.

<sup>17</sup> Brighton, *They Came to Fish*, volume 1, p. 54.

<sup>18</sup> Brighton, *They Came to Fish*, volume 1, pp. 57-58.

<sup>19</sup> Garvin, “That Little World, Portsmouth,” p. 27.

greater fortunes were made during and after the Revolution through privateering. Privateers were merchantmen that armed their ships and were authorized to seize goods, called “prizes” from British merchant vessels. Unfortunately many of the materials and men used on privateering vessels took much needed resources away from the new Continental Navy. Privateering did however, save some of Portsmouth’s economy during the Revolution.

With the ratification of the Constitution in 1788 came the promise of returned economic prosperity for Portsmouth. The town began to work on various modern improvements including the aqueduct in 1798.<sup>20</sup> The system, one of only a handful in America at the time, brought fresh spring water to the homes of Portsmouth’s wealthiest residents. In 1802, 1806 and 1813 Portsmouth experienced devastating fires that destroyed much of the area we now know as downtown. Following the War of 1812 the city experienced further economic hardship prompting it to change its economic base from the sea to manufacturing.<sup>21</sup> The city’s downtown was rebuilt in brick and it saw other advancements such as the construction of a bridge that connected Portsmouth’s North End to Kittery.<sup>22</sup> In 1821 the Portsmouth Mill Company was formed “with the purpose of improving the water privilege at the North Mill Pond and exploiting it for the production of woolen fabrics.” Among the original incorporators was a Dennett relative, Ephraim.<sup>23</sup> During the nineteenth century many factories dotted the landscape in Portsmouth, especially in the North End and the Islington Creek area, around the North Mill Pond. The most famous of which was probably the Frank Jones Brewery, at one time one of the country’s largest breweries. Other professional pursuits thrived during this time as well, such as banking and insurance. Naval construction flourished in the community again during the Civil War.

The city had a population explosion between 1840 and 1850, increasing by nearly 24%, from 7,887 to 9,738. The population increase also signified the first significant immigrant populations in the city.<sup>24</sup> In *The Portsmouth Book* Israel Putnam Miller reflects on the changes that Portsmouth went through from the 1840s to the 1890s. He recalls that during the earlier part of the century, “...the population of [Portsmouth] was composed almost wholly of the descendents of early colonists.”<sup>25</sup> This would quickly change, however, by the 1850s when immigrants began to flock to the city. The major influx of immigrants in Portsmouth occurred slightly later than in other New Hampshire towns, due to Portsmouth’s delayed industrialization. Portsmouth was unable to rely on water-powered mills as many New Hampshire towns began to in the 1820s, due to a lack of water-power. Instead, industry did not take hold of the city until the introduction of steam power in the 1840s.<sup>26</sup> As was the case wherever industrialization hit, after industry came to Portsmouth the town was quickly and drastically altered. Increased populations led to increased crime and poverty.

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<sup>20</sup> Garvin, “That Little World, Portsmouth,” p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Garvin, “That Little World, Portsmouth,” p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> Brighton, *They Came to Fish*, volume 1, p. 119.

<sup>23</sup> Brighton, *They Came to Fish*, volume 1, p. 120.

<sup>24</sup> Candee. *Building Portsmouth*, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Miller. Israel Putnam, *The Portsmouth Book*, Boston, Geo. H. Ellis, 1899, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Miller, *The Portsmouth Book*, p. 26.

Portsmouth went through drastic changes in the two hundred years following its settlement in the mid seventeenth century. Through this period of change many houses remained and many remain until today. The houses stood as landmarks to a time gone by, a time often romanticized during the Colonial Revival Period of the early nineteenth century. One such house is the Dennett House on Prospect Street. The house, sometimes called the “Beehive”, has its share of romantic tales appearing in Portsmouth folklore. This study will explore the families of the house and will show how members of the family fit into the history of the city of Portsmouth and the state of New Hampshire.



## *The Dennett House*

### **The Neighborhood**

At the time of the construction of the Dennett House the area where it was built was known as Fresh Creek, named for the nearby freshwater creek. Later called Christian Shore, Charles Brewster in his *Rambles About Portsmouth* suggests that the origin of the Christian Shore name is a bit deceiving. Brewster stated “when there were but few families beyond where the North Mill bridge now is, there were several who were strict adherents to puritan principles, while others were more loose in their habits and might be found sometimes late at night at Foss’s Tavern, enjoying their flip and cracking their jokes. When the hour for parting arrived, ‘well we must leave for *Christian shore*,’ was frequently the jocosse remark; and from it that part of Portsmouth took its name.”<sup>27</sup>

The area of Portsmouth occupied by the Dennett family became much more important to the community in the eighteenth century. Once the forgotten outskirts of the city, the land became an important source of farm goods, even more so when the Piscataqua Bridge, leading from Newington and Durham, was built in 1792. The bridge was connected to the city of Portsmouth by the roads we now know as Woodbury Ave and Maplewood Ave both of which ran through the Dennett property at Gravelly Ridge and Christian Shore. The Dennett’s once secluded farm land became a central thoroughfare for trade by the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>28</sup> An 1805 advertisement for fifteen house lots in the area of present Maplewood Ave were marketed based on their close proximity to this first New Hampshire turnpike.<sup>29</sup> According to Bruce Ingmire the plan for Dennett Street (or Road) was laid out in 1735 with Stokel acting as the surveyor.<sup>30</sup> In 1786 John Dennett conveys the land for Dennett Street to the town of Portsmouth, although in the deed it states that the road had already been “trodden and fenced out by the Inhabitants.”<sup>31</sup> Many of the house lots along Dennett Street were then subdivided in the late eighteenth and very early nineteenth century by Seth Walker.<sup>32</sup>

By 1800 much of Dennett Street had been developed and houses constructed between the Dennett House on the hill and the North Mill Pond. Around 1800 a new school house became a neighbor of the Dennett House. A school had been located on the land since the early seventeenth century when Bridget Graffort, widow of Thomas, gave the town, “...one lot of land in my great field for erecting a school house...abutting...to the east to John Dennett.”<sup>33</sup> This school on Prospect Street was replaced by the brick Franklin School on Maplewood Ave in 1847.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Brewster, Charles. *Rambles About Portsmouth*, C. W. Brewster Publisher, Portsmouth, NH, 1859.

<sup>28</sup> Ingmire, Bruce. *The Dennett Family and the ownership of Gravelly Ridge, Portsmouth, NH*.

<sup>29</sup> Candee, *Building Portsmouth*, p. 29.

<sup>30</sup> Ingmire, Bruce. *The Dennett Family and the ownership of Gravelly Ridge, Portsmouth, NH*, unpublished transcript, undated, Portsmouth Athenaeum vertical file.

<sup>31</sup> Deed John Dennett to the Town of Portsmouth. Rockingham County Registry of Deeds, Book 121, Page 14.

<sup>32</sup> See appendix for list of properties sold by Seth Walker between 1789 and 1834.

<sup>33</sup> Brewster. *Rambles About Portsmouth*.

<sup>34</sup> Candee, *Building Portsmouth*, p. 37.

In the early nineteenth century, the Christian Shore and North Mill Pond neighborhood, once known as farm land, became the home to small industry with a new grist mill in 1817, a glue house owned by John Bowles, the Jackson family's slaughter house, and the Goodrich Tannery.<sup>35</sup> Jabez Dodge operated a pottery shop during the 1820s and 30s and by 1839 a brick manufacturer became established along the banks of the North Mill Pond as well.<sup>36</sup> The neighborhood also had a long tradition of carpenters from the time of John Dennett in the seventeenth century all the way through the nineteenth century when it was still home to numerous builders and joiners.<sup>37</sup>

## The House and Property of John Dennett

Speculation persists concerning the construction date of the Dennett House. No doubt further architectural analysis will shed light on this and many other aspects of the house's physical history. Some early histories, such as Gurney's nineteenth century, *Portsmouth Historic and Picturesque*, claim the house was built as early as 1680. Modern historians have speculated this date is closer to 1700.

John Dennett first appears on the Portsmouth tax list in 1669-1671, however no specific amount of property is listed.<sup>38</sup> The first concrete evidence that exists of John owning land in Portsmouth is in 1673 when he purchased twelve acres of land from John Fernald of Kittery. The land was bounded by land owned by Richard Jackson, who built a house ca. 1664, the Jackson House, which still stands on the northern side of the North Mill Pond. According to John Dennett's deed, the land was at least partly wooded at the time he purchased it. No buildings were mentioned.<sup>39</sup>

By 1678 John purchased an additional fifteen acres of land in the "Fresh Creek" or Islington Creek area of Portsmouth, the area now known as the North Mill Pond. This land, which John Dennett purchased from Matthew Ham Jr., also abutted land of Richard Jackson and had originally been granted to Matthew Ham Sr. by the town of Portsmouth.<sup>40</sup> A 1680 deed shows John purchasing land from Thomas Ham, brother of Matthew Jr., this land is also described as being a fifteen acre parcel formerly owned by Matthew Ham Sr.<sup>41</sup> It is somewhat unclear as to whether this is the same land purchased from Matthew which Thomas may have had joint interest in or if John purchased a total of thirty acres from the two Ham brothers. Regardless, by 1680 John Dennett owned a large amount of land in the area where the Dennett House now stands. John also added to his Christian Shore landholdings in 1688 purchasing fourteen acres of land and an "old

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<sup>35</sup> Candee. *Building Portsmouth*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>36</sup> Candee. *Building Portsmouth*, p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> Candee. *Building Portsmouth*, p. 31.

<sup>38</sup> Tax List, 1669-1671. North Church Papers MS36, Box 1, Portsmouth Athenaeum.

<sup>39</sup> Deed John Fernald to John Dennett. Rockingham County Deeds, Book 3, Page 83B.

<sup>40</sup> Deed Matthew Ham to John Dennett. Rockingham County Deeds, Book 3, Page 135.

<sup>41</sup> Deed Thomas Ham to John Dennett. Rockingham County Deeds, Book 3, Page 158A.

house” from John Jackson. In 1689 John also purchased a house lot from John Graffort at Strawberry banke.<sup>42</sup>

In 1694 John received a grant of land from the town of Portsmouth “in consideration of twentie four pounds thirteen shillings and six pounds which the town is Justly indebted...For work done...” John received a piece of land which appears to be between Christian Shore and the Piscataqua River, heading towards Newington.<sup>43</sup> During the 1690s the original four primary landholders of Portsmouth, one being the town of Portsmouth itself (in the form of glebe land), began to subdivide land.<sup>44</sup> In 1697 John added an additional thirteen acres of land at the entrance of “marsh creek commonly called [Cutts Creek].”<sup>45</sup> The final portion added to the property of John Dennett came in 1700 when he purchased fourteen acres of land located at “Ragged Neck” from Roger Swaine, including “all and singular houses, buildings, stables, gardens, orchards...”<sup>46</sup> By the time of his death John Dennett appears to have had land holdings of at least one hundred acres extending from Christian Shore towards present day Newington, probably near present day Gosling Road.<sup>47</sup>

The will of John Dennett does provide additional information about his land holdings. At the time of his death in 1709 John’s property included orchards, gardens and a house, which presumably included the present day Dennett House on Christian Shore and its surrounding land. The house description in John’s will fits with the general characteristics of houses built by New England’s earliest settlers. These early houses often faced south with a kitchen garden in the front, protected from the winds from the north, which were likely quite intense on the hill at Christian Shore. Specific description of additional outbuildings on the property have not been found, however early settlers would have likely followed English tradition which would have included several small shed structures, one for animals, another for tools and hay or they would have combined these functions into one barn building (the single barn structure was a later “American innovation”).<sup>48</sup> We know that John owned 3 acres of salt marsh in Little Harbor, where he likely would have been harvesting hay to then feed his animals back at his Christian Shore farm.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Deed John Jackson estate, Richard Seward to John Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 4, Page 38A; Deed John Graffort to John Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 4, Page 38b. In the will of John Dennett he describes the land purchased from “Mr Graferd” at Strawberry Banke which is described as the same land purchased on the 1689 deed.

<sup>43</sup> Deed John Jackson to John Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 4, Page 38a. In the deed the land is described as “a parcel of land Lying upon the Southeast side of Mr. Richd. Martins Land a little above the Boiling Rock...”

<sup>44</sup> Candee, *Building Portsmouth*, pp. 1-2

<sup>45</sup> Deed Nathaniel Jackson to John Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 6, Page 171.

<sup>46</sup> Deed Roger Swaine and Margaret Swaine, widow of John Jackson to John Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 4, Page 77.

<sup>47</sup> An 1890 map of Rockingham County shows three Dennett Houses near present day Gosling Road on the boundary with Newington. This land appears to have been in the Dennett family from this early reference in John’s will to the 1890s.

<sup>48</sup> Hawke, David Freeman. *Everyday Life in Early America*, Harper and Row, New York, 1988, p. 42.

<sup>49</sup> Deed Shadrach Walton to John Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 6, Page 81.

Although the original characteristics of the Dennett House have not been documented, to understand how the house may have changed over the years it is important to understand its occupants and their place in the community. The section that follows traces the occupants of the house from its construction through the twentieth century.



## *The Families of the Dennett House*

### **John Dennett (1646-1709)**

John Dennett immigrated to the area known as Piscataqua in about 1668. He came to the colonies from the town on Hurstpierpoint in the southern agrarian county of Sussex, England. According to one genealogy John Dennett came to the colonies with his brother Alexander.<sup>50</sup> In 1672 John Dennett took oath as a freeman.<sup>51</sup> The father of John and Alexander is believed to have come to the colonies either with or shortly after his two sons.<sup>52</sup> In 1678 both “Jno. Dennett, Sen’r” and “Jno. Dennett” appear on a list of Portsmouth Tythingmen.<sup>53</sup> In 1673 John married Amy Sherburne and the two had four children, Ephraim (1683-1741), John (1675-1742), Ammy (1679-1769), and Joseph (1681-1714).

Most early New England settlers essentially had two careers, one being a trade or specialty such as carpenter, cooper, blacksmith, or merchant and the other being a subsistence farmer.<sup>54</sup> In addition to running his farm, John worked as a carpenter, more specifically one 1688 deed describes him as a “house carpenter.”<sup>55</sup> In 1682 John Dennett was paid 11 pounds for carpentry work done at the school house.<sup>56</sup> One genealogical account describes John as becoming a “wealthy and influential citizen.”<sup>57</sup> Evidence of this rise to prominence can be seen in his civic record which included seven years of service as a selectman, service as tax collector in 1689 and as a member of the legislature in 1702.<sup>58</sup> In addition John appears in numerous places in probate records, all giving testament to his position in the community. In 1691 he is listed in the will of John Brewster, naming him and Samuel Penhallow “to be my Overseers” advising his wife and children.<sup>59</sup> In 1695 John Fletcher gives the same position to John Dennett and Samuel Kiese, also leaving John a silver spoon.<sup>60</sup> John appears in numerous additional wills and probates as a witness.

John Dennett was the signer of a petition addressed to the King against “unreasonable demands of our pretended proprietor, Robert Mason, Esq.”<sup>61</sup> Captain John Mason was granted land in New Hampshire in the early seventeenth century, however later in the century when Robert tried to lay claims to these original Masonian patents there was much dissention amongst settlers. John Dennett was amongst this group

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<sup>50</sup> Dennett, Winifred Scott, *Genealogical Tree of Henry Lee Dennett*, Portsmouth Athenaeum.

<sup>51</sup> *New Hampshire Provincial Papers*, volume 40, p. 277

<sup>52</sup> *Piscataqua Pioneers*, p. 155.

<sup>53</sup> *Piscataqua Pioneers*, p. 155.

<sup>54</sup> Hawke, David Freeman, *Everyday Life in Early America*, Harper and Row, New York, 1988, p. 43.

<sup>55</sup> Deed John Jackson to John Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 4, Page 38a.

<sup>56</sup> Receipt, 1682, North Church Papers MS36, Box 1, Portsmouth Athenaeum.

<sup>57</sup> Dennett, Winifred Scott, *Genealogical Tree of Henry Lee Dennett*, Portsmouth Athenaeum.

<sup>58</sup> Selectmen’s Records, 1697, North Church Papers MS36, Box 1 folder 10, Portsmouth Athenaeum and

Dennett, Winifred Scott, *Genealogical Tree of Henry Lee Dennett*, Portsmouth Athenaeum.

<sup>59</sup> New Hampshire State Papers, Probate Records, Volume 31, page 364-365.

<sup>60</sup> New Hampshire State Papers, Probate Records, Volume 31, page 411.

<sup>61</sup> New Hampshire Provincial Papers, Vol. 1, p. 558.

refusing to give weight to what was then viewed as an outdated landlord system that they had already debunked by dividing up the land Robert Mason wanted to lay claim to.

In his unpublished narrative *The Dennett Family and the ownership of Gravelly Ridge*, Bruce Ingmire surmises that John Dennett was able to build considerable wealth thanks in part to the real estate boom in Portsmouth during the period just after the Glorious Revolution around the time of King William's War (the late seventeenth century). Ingmire stated, "Hundreds of settlers retreated to the Piscataqua for safety as Indians attacked up and down the coast. This created a real estate boom in Portsmouth and it appears with land to sell and houses to build John Dennett and consequently his family prospered."<sup>62</sup> Although evidence does not show John Dennett prospering from the sale of his land it is quite likely that his occupation as a builder brought him a great deal of economic success during this time.

John left the property on Christian Shore to his eldest son, Ephraim. In addition he owned land across the Piscataqua, leaving his son John "land which I bought from Isaac Remack in the town of Kittery..." To his son Joseph, he leaves "that track of land which I bought of the town which lyeth in the way to boody Pynt except twenty acres tharof which I give to his brother Ephraim." The area then known as Bloody Point, is now in the town of Newington.<sup>63</sup> The property of John Dennett therefore extended from Christian Shore and the location of the present Dennett House out what we now know as Maplewood Ave, probably to Woodbury Ave in the area of Gosling Road.<sup>64</sup>

John and his wife were listed as members of the parish church (which became the North Church)<sup>65</sup> and is buried in the Point of Graves Cemetery. His eldest son, also John, married the widow of Alexander Shapleigh and lived at the Dennett Farm in Kittery. According to Bruce Ingmire, this land was given to John (Jr.) when he was 19. This farm is speculated to have been built about the same time as the Dennett House in Portsmouth, possibly by the same builder, possibly that builder being John Dennett.<sup>66</sup> John's brother Alexander Dennett also owned land in Kittery.<sup>67</sup>

### **Ephraim Dennett (1683-1741)**

Following the division of John Dennett's estate the Dennett House and its surrounding land became the property of his son, Ephraim Dennett. In addition to the land John left Ephraim, in 1709 Ephraim added the land his father left to his siblings as

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<sup>62</sup> Ingmire, Bruce, *The Dennett Family and the ownership of Gravelly Ridge, Portsmouth, NH*, unpublished transcript, undated, Portsmouth Athenaeum vertical file.

<sup>63</sup> Will of John Dennett

<sup>64</sup> An 1890 map of Rockingham County shows three Dennett Houses near present day Gosling Road on the boundary with Newington. This land appears to have been in the Dennett family from this early reference in John's will to the 1890s.

<sup>65</sup> *New Hampshire Genealogical Record*, original printing 1903-1910, Heritage Books, Bowie, MD (reprinted), p. 50.

<sup>66</sup> According to Armstead and Louise Dennett the two Dennett Houses, in Kittery and Portsmouth bear a resemblance architecturally.

<sup>67</sup> *Piscataqua Pioneers*, p. 154.

well as land left to John's widow Amy. Ephraim purchased the ten acres "granted to [Joseph] by his father Jno. Dennett by his will" "Bought of said Towne."<sup>68</sup> In the same year Ephraim purchased the three acres of salt marsh that his father had left to his mother.<sup>69</sup> In 1712 Ephraim, together with his brother John and brother-in-law Jno. Adams, sells some land (at least a portion of the land their father received from the town of Portsmouth) back to his brother Joseph.<sup>70</sup> However just two years later, following the death of Joseph Dennett, Ephraim purchases twenty acres and then an additional thirty acres from his brother's widow Elizabeth. Joseph had left considerable debt and his widow was ordered by probate court to sell the land in order to cover the repayment.<sup>71</sup> Therefore Ephraim, by buying land from his family, appears to have been able to keep much of his father's estate intact.

Although the exact date of construction of the Dennett House remains uncertain, it can be said with a great deal of certainty that Ephraim resided in the house that stands presently. Further architectural study will tell us whether Ephraim may have remodeled and greatly expanded a more humble dwelling built prior to his father's death in 1709 or if his father John was indeed the builder of the house present today.

Considering his ability to buy his family members out of debt and the considerable public record he left, Ephraim was clearly one of the most well off of the Dennett family. A great deal of his wealth can be traced to his position of prominence and his political connections in the community. Beginning with service as a selectman for the town of Portsmouth from 1715 to 1718, Ephraim then served in the House of Representatives from 1718 to 1728 and then on the Governor's Council in 1732 and 1734 with Jonathan Belcher, the last royal governor to be shared by New Hampshire and Massachusetts.<sup>72</sup> Ephraim was appointed coroner in 1720.<sup>73</sup> As coroner Ephraim was required Ephraim to "make inquests into cause of death by violence or misadventure."<sup>74</sup> Extensive record of bills and votes that Ephraim was involved with during his time in public office can be found in the New Hampshire Provincial Papers. Ephraim also served as Church Warden, lieutenant and then Captain of the Infantry from 1719-1720.<sup>75</sup> In addition to his various civic appointments, Ephraim's occupation in 1727 was described as "merchant/council" on his tax record. Interestingly Ephraim was sometimes identified as a "yeoman" or "husbandman" on deed records and sometimes as "Esquire" or "gentleman", perhaps still a reflection of the reality that although he had a position of prominence he was still a subsistence farmer (or at least manager of his farm).

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<sup>68</sup> Deed Joseph Dennett to Ephraim Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 7, Page 352.

<sup>69</sup> Deed Amy Dennett to Ephraim Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 7, Page 353.

<sup>70</sup> Deed Ephraim Dennett, John Dennett, and Jno. Adams to Joseph Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 7, Page 354.

<sup>71</sup> Deed Elizabeth Dennett to Ephraim Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 9, Page 238; Deed Elizabeth Dennett to Ephraim Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 9, Page 509.

<sup>72</sup> WSD and New Hampshire Provincial Papers, Vol. 3, pp. 240, 658, 680, 703.

<sup>73</sup> New Hampshire Provincial Papers, Vol. 2, p. 737.

<sup>74</sup> Estes, J. Worth, *The Changing Humors of Portsmouth: The Medical Biography of an American Town, 1623-1983*, The Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Boston, 1986, p. 135.

<sup>75</sup> Unpublished genealogical notes of Joseph Frost, Portsmouth Athenaeum, vertical file.

Like many in early New Hampshire, Ephraim's political connections no doubt contributed to his vast land holdings. Accounts differ concerning the size of his landholding at the time of his death, with sources suggesting somewhere between 239 ½ and perhaps as much as 360 acres of land. In addition to the Dennett House and surrounding property, Ephraim retained land in the area known as Bloody Point, which became the town of Newington in 1713, and appears to have considered himself a resident of both Portsmouth and Newington.<sup>76</sup> Ephraim Dennett appears on a list of 101 "residents" of Newington that were original grantees of the town of Barnstead, New Hampshire.<sup>77</sup> Ephraim also had land holdings in the town of Chichester. Both the land in Chichester and the land in Barnstead were sold by Ephraim's estate in 1768 some twenty-seven years after his death. Neither Ephraim nor many of the other original grantees of the town of Barnstead lived to see its settlement, which did not occur until 1765.<sup>78</sup> Instead Ephraim (and subsequent generations of Dennett's) profited from selling his land in outlying communities. Ephraim sold land in Barnstead, Gilmanton, and Chester in 1733, 1734, and 1738, respectively.<sup>79</sup> James Garvin recognizes this trend stating that original proprietor's of many New Hampshire towns reserved "to themselves a generous portion of each township to be disposed of later when the efforts of neighboring settlers had increased its value."<sup>80</sup>

Not surprisingly, given his position of prominence in eighteenth century Portsmouth Ephraim Dennett was also a slave owner. A 1727 tax assessment lists one slave in addition to "1 house, 1 pole, 10 oxen, 2 horses, 2 hogs, 6 [acres] tillage, 20 [acres] meadow..." Upon his death in 1741 his estate still included "1 Ould negro man." No record appears to exist which lists the name or any other information about this enslaved individual. We can infer certain things about the life of this individual based on research done by Valerie Cunningham in *Black Portsmouth*. It is likely that the individual attended the North Church with the Dennett family as slave owners were required to purchase pews for their slaves.<sup>81</sup> It is also possible that he was buried at the recently unearthed "Negro Burial Ground" on Chestnut Street, as it was not until the 1790s that Blacks began to be buried in Portsmouth's North Cemetery.<sup>82</sup> It is likely that this individual worked on the farm described in the estate inventory of Ephraim.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Rowe, John Frink, *Newington, New Hampshire, A Heritage of Independence Since 1630*, Phoenix Publishing, Canaan, NH, 1987, p. 68

<sup>77</sup> Rowe, *Newington, New Hampshire, A Heritage of Independence Since 1630*, p. 293.

<sup>78</sup> Jewett, Jeremiah P., *History of Barnstead, New Hampshire*, Reprinted from 1872 version by Peter E. Randall, Portsmouth, NH, 1992, p. 84.

<sup>79</sup> Deed Ephraim Dennett to Benjamin Plumer, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 101, Page 167, "Barnstead lot of land"; Deed Ephraim Dennett to Edward Pratt, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 20, Page 19, land in Gilmanton; Deed Ephraim Dennett to James Campbell, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 23, Page 489, 100 acres in Chester. In addition to these three lots of land, Ephraim's children sold land, originally granted to their father, in 1758 located in Bow.

<sup>80</sup> Garvin, "That Little World, Portsmouth," p. 21.

<sup>81</sup> Cunningham, Valerie and Mark J. Sammons, *Black Portsmouth*, University of New Hampshire Press, Durham, NH, 2004, pp. 48-49.

<sup>82</sup> Cunningham and Sammons, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 60.

<sup>83</sup> Cunningham and Sammons, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 44.

Ephraim Dennett, like his father, was a member of the church that would become the North Church, listed on the membership roles with his father in 1699.<sup>84</sup> Ephraim married a woman named Katherine (last name unknown) and the two had seven children: Catherine (b. 1714/15) who married John Shackford, “gentleman”, John (1716-1786/7) “gentleman”, Ephraim (1718-1770), Elizabeth (b. 1721) who married Eliphalet Hail, physician of Exeter, Mary (1721/2-1736) who married Jonathan Stoodley, mariner of Portsmouth, George (b. 1725), and Nathaniel (b. 1725/6).<sup>85</sup> Despite his vast wealth, Ephraim left no will and his estate was held in common until 1770 when probate court granted two-thirds of his estate to his son John, including “all ld. N side Mill pd. Except abt 3 acres on E side of sd. Ld. adjoining Nathaniel Jackson’s ld.”<sup>86</sup>

Because Ephraim left no will, we are provided with a very thorough probate inventory of his estate valued at £3781. It included:

1 Dwelling House & barn	...	£440-0-0
239 ½ Acres of land at 12 Pounds	...	2874-0-0
4 Oxen nine cows 6 yearlings 2 heifers 26 sheep	...	196-10-0
1 Desk 2 Tables 1 Doz half Chairs	...	15-10-0
7 Mapes 2 Looking glases	...	8-7-0
Earthen ware 20/Do glass 18/	...	1-18-0
1 Silver Tankard 5 Spoons	...	46-19-0
1 Chest draws 1 ould desk	...	5-5-0
4 Beds 3 Rugs 4 boulsters 2 Pillows	...	75-15-0
2 Chests 30/ Pewter dishes &c.	...	15-5-0
1 Table 1 pr bellows 10 ould chairs	...	2-8-0
Brass & iron ware 1 candlestick	...	13-12-0
2 flax & 2 spinning wheels ...Sadle 50/	...	4-10-0
2 Trammels 2 Guns	...	5-15-0
Ironware	...	6-11-0
1 Ould negro man	...	40-0-0
Cart weels Plow irons & narrow teeth	...	5-17-0
1 Swrod 2 Draught Chains 1 ax 1 dripping pan	...	10-10-0
2 g Books	...	13-18-0

Clearly the estate of a working farm, Ephraim’s possessions are also those of a member securely in the upper part of society. Ephraim’s estate was probated in 1770, dividing his land between his son John and his grandson Jeremiah (see below).

### Ephraim Dennett (1718-1770)

Ephraim Dennett (Jr.) left considerably less in the public record than did his father. Listed as a “gentleman” on deed records and as “Capt.” in many genealogical

<sup>84</sup> *New Hampshire Genealogical Record*, original printing 1903-1910, Heritage Books, Bowie, MD (reprinted), volume 3, p. 55.

<sup>85</sup> Occupational information and husbands names for Ephraim’s daughter we obtained from the 1758 deed between Ephraim’s children and Walter Bryent for land in Bow, NH, Rockingham County Deed, Book 67, Page 224.

<sup>86</sup> *Probate Records*, March 13, 1770.

works, Ephraim Jr. appears to have lived a comfortable existence which was likely largely thanks to the good financial position secured by his father and grandfather. Although his father died when Ephraim was only twenty-three he appears to have never received his portion of his father's estate. The estate of his father was finally probated in 1770 several months after Ephraim Jr.'s death. The probate record divides the property of Ephraim Dennett Sr. between his son John and his grandson Jeremiah (son of Ephraim Jr.).

Nine years after his father's death Ephraim, at the age of 32, married Lydia Waterhouse Colby in 1750/1, the widow of Captain Colby.<sup>87</sup> Brewster describes the courtship of the two in *Rambles About Portsmouth*:

After Colby's death, Capt. Ephraim Dennett of Christian Shore took a liking to [Lydia], and to save the trouble of frequently visiting Kittery in the winter, paid her board at a relative's on Christian Shore by furnishing the family with wood for the winter. In the spring they were married, and took up their residence in the prominent Dennett house...<sup>88</sup>

Brewster's account therefore places Ephraim Jr. living in the Dennett House, however he does not appear to have been the legal owner of the property which was in the possession of his father's estate until 1770.

In 1758 Ephraim Jr., together with his siblings, sold land originally granted to his father in Bow, New Hampshire.<sup>89</sup> Ephraim's landholdings also included land and a house at the Plains in Portsmouth, which he sold in 1754 to Nathaniel Meserve.<sup>90</sup> Ephraim Jr. and his wife Lydia had three children: Jeremiah, Ephraim, and Ephraim, only one of which, Jeremiah (1752-1818), survived to adulthood.<sup>91</sup> Jeremiah inherited and resided at the Dennett Farm at Gravelly Ridge, as will be described in a future section.

### **John Dennett (1716-1786/7)**

In 1770 the Dennett House became the property of John Dennett, brother of Ephraim Jr. In the probate record for the estate of Ephraim Sr. John receives:

...his two thirds of said Estate, the whole of the Land on the North side of Leuius's Mill Pond being about fifty one acres with the mansion House and other buildings of said Land Except about --- acres of Land and House being on the East side of said Land adjoining Nathaniel Jacksons Land, hereafter set off for Jeremiah Dennet, also about Fifty one acres of land

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<sup>87</sup> WSD

<sup>88</sup> Brewster, *Rambles About Portsmouth*, p. 101.

<sup>89</sup> Deed, John and Ephraim Dennett, John Shackford and Catherine, Mary Stoodley, and Eliphalet and Elizabeth Hail to Walter Bryent, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 67, Page 224.

<sup>90</sup> Deed, Ephraim Dennett to Nathaniel Meserve, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 60, Page 237.

<sup>91</sup> Two children named Ephraim Dennett were baptized in 1712/13 and in 1718. *New Hampshire Genealogical Record*, original printing 1903-1910, Heritage Books, Bowie, MD (reprinted), volume 3, p. 58 and p. 102.

lying Northerly of said mansion House called the Pasture, also about two and one half acres of wood land on the North West corn of a tract of land at Gravelly Ridge so called bounded westerly thirty two rods by Thompson land, Northerly thirty two rods by Land belonging to the estate of Charles Dennet, deceased, easterly thirty two rods and southerly thirty two rods hereafter set off to the said Jeremiah Dennet with the ---- of passing through said Jeremiahs Land to said Wood Land to the said John Dennett his Heirs and Assigns forever.

Of this record most important to this study are the first few lines, which gave John Dennett the “mansion house” or the present Dennett House.

The New Hampshire State Papers show an account of John Dennett’s service during the Revolutionary War. When Governor Wentworth put out the call for troops to defend Fort William and Mary against approaching British forces, John Dennett as captain of the regiment was approached by Theodore Atkinson. A letter signed by Dennett as well as James Stoodley stated: “Pursuant to the within Warrant we have paraded the streets, caused the Drums to be beat, & Proclamation to be made at all Public corners & on the Place of Parade, no person appearing to Enlist we wait for further orders.”<sup>92</sup> Despite this somewhat troubled account of failing to enlist the men needed for his regiment, according to one genealogy, John did go on to “[serve] with marked distinction in the Revolutionary War, enlisting as a private and rising to the rank of Captain.” Although John Dennett appears to have initially had trouble mustering support we know that the gunpowder at the Fort was successfully secured for the colonists. The same genealogy cited above states, “For his eminent service [John Dennett] was presented with a sword by the citizens of Portsmouth, appropriately inscribed.”<sup>93</sup>

Like other family members, John Dennett profited from selling land granted to previous generations of his family. In 1773 he sold land that had been granted to Ephraim located in Barrington.<sup>94</sup> Also in 1773 and then in 1775 and 1776 he sells tracts of land in Chester, Brentwood and Cheshire, all originally belonging to his father, Ephraim.<sup>95</sup> In 1785 he formally grants the town of Portsmouth the land for present day Dennett Street. He also sells small pieces of land near the North Mill Pond to various craftsmen that the area would eventually become well known for, including William Cotton, tanner, Henry Sherburne, blacksmith and son-in-law of John Dennett, and Timothy Ham, joiner.<sup>96</sup> John, like his father was identified as a “gentleman” or “Esquire” on all of these transactions, signifying his position of importance in Portsmouth society. From 1770, when he

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<sup>92</sup> Letter originally published in New Hampshire State Papers, also appears in *They Came to Fish* by Raymond Brighton, Vol 2, pp 91-92.

<sup>93</sup> Unpublished genealogical notes of Joseph Frost, Portsmouth Athenaeum, vertical file.

<sup>94</sup> John Dennett to George Ham Jr., Rockingham County Deeds, Book 102, Page 311.

<sup>95</sup> John Dennett to Nathaniel Emerson, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 143, Page 117; John Dennett to Isaac Tucker, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 106, Page 554; John Dennett to Thomas Fowler, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 109, Page 229.

<sup>96</sup> John Dennett to William Cotton, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 113, Page 265; John Dennett to Henry Sherburne, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 142, Page 382; John Dennett to Timothy Ham, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 96, Page 439.

inherited the “mansion house” of his father until the time of his death in 1786, no deed exists showing John selling the house in which he lived. Therefore it is safe to assume that he resided in the Dennett House on Prospect Street until his death at which point he bequeaths, his “Homestead Farm,” to his son John Dennett.<sup>97</sup>

John Dennett Sr. married Phebe Bartlett, daughter of Nathan and Shuah (Heard) Bartlett of Kittery, in 1739 and had eleven children, seven or eight of which appear to have survived to adulthood, being listed in his will. Amongst these seven children he divides his real and personal estate.<sup>98</sup> John’s obituary was in the *New Hampshire Gazette* May 11, 1786. It reads: “Dcd since our last, Capt. John Dennett, 70. He has left soroful wid, 8 chldrn to bemoan the loss of an affectionate husband and kind father.”

### **John Dennett Jr. (1742-1806) and Later Occupants of the Dennett House**

John Dennett Jr. is identified as a “gentleman” in the will of his father in 1786 when he inherited his father’s “Homestead Farm.”<sup>99</sup> He was born October 15, 1742, the second of eleven children born to John and Phebe (Bartlett) Dennett. In 1798 he married Elizabeth Lamson, the daughter of Doctor John Lamson of Exeter. John and Elizabeth had two children, Elizabeth (1799) and John Sherburne (1800).<sup>100</sup> John Dennett Jr. served in several civic positions in Portsmouth including “measurer of wood, corder of wood” in 1775 and pound keeper in 1782 and 1786.<sup>101</sup>

Although John Dennett Jr. appears in the 1800 census in Portsmouth with his two young children and his wife, sometime shortly after this he moves his family to Exeter, the hometown of his wife. John Dennett Jr. died in Exeter in 1806, owning \$600 worth of real estate in that town, but leaving little else in the way of inheritance for his family.<sup>102</sup> The last record of this branch of the Dennett family being in Portsmouth comes when John Sherburne Dennett died in 1821 at the age of 21, his obituary appearing in the *Portsmouth Journal*.<sup>103</sup>

Although the deed descriptions are somewhat difficult to decipher, it appears that John Jr. sold the Dennett House and its surrounding property in a series of four transactions to Seth Walker between 1792 and 1797.<sup>104</sup> Seth Walker, an early real estate developer, then sells the almost fifty-five acres of land around the house on Prospect Street as smaller house lots. Between 1789 and 1834 there are forty-seven deeds for land sold by Seth Walker in Rockingham County, of these eleven lots are in Newington or Exeter, thirty-six are in Portsmouth and of that thirty-six, thirty-two are in the area of the

<sup>97</sup> Will of John Dennett, Rockingham County Register of Probate, 5198.

<sup>98</sup> Will of John Dennett, Rockingham County Register of Probate, 5198.

<sup>99</sup> Will of John Dennett, Rockingham County Register of Probate, 5198.

<sup>100</sup> Unpublished genealogical notes of Joseph Frost, Portsmouth Athenaeum, vertical file.

<sup>101</sup> *New Hampshire Gazette*, March 31, 1775; April 6, 1782; March 25, 1786.

<sup>102</sup> Will of John Dennett, Rockingham County Register of Probate, 7507.

<sup>103</sup> *Portsmouth Journal*, September 15, 1821.

<sup>104</sup> John Dennett to Seth Walker, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 131, Page 313; Book 134, Page 244; Book 139, Page 340; Book 145, Page 283.

Dennett House. Many of those thirty-two properties are described in deeds as “part of the land bought from John Dennett.” Unfortunately it was not possible to decipher which of these tracts of land included the Dennett House on Prospect Street.<sup>105</sup> Thus from about 1800 to 1836 the ownership of the house remains uncertain. We do know that at this time the house had left the Dennett family.

In 1836 the Dennett House is owned by William Jarvis. Jarvis lived in Weathersfield, Vermont, however he had strong ties to Portsmouth. His two marriages first to Mary Pepperrell Sparhawk and second to Ann Elizabeth Bartlett, both had Portsmouth connections. Although he does not appear to have lived in Portsmouth for an extended period, in 1806, his wife and daughter were living in Portsmouth.<sup>106</sup> How Jarvis acquired the property remains a mystery, as does his use of the property. Perhaps he purchased it as an investment with no intention of living there, perhaps he purchased it for his family to live in while in Portsmouth, or perhaps he or one of his wives inherited the property from a family member. The first two scenarios, although possible, are less likely as no deed exists showing Jarvis purchasing the property. The next known owner of the building was Charles Holman who purchases the property from Jarvis in 1836 and then sold it to Jonathan Roberts in 1837.<sup>107</sup>

The next almost one hundred years of occupancy of the Dennett House can first be found in *City Directories*, with ownership verified in probate records. During this time the house remained with Jonathan Roberts and his descendents. In 1851 the *City Directory* began publishing street indexes, listing individuals in order of house numbers for all of the city streets. Because of some confusion resulting from changing street numbers, it is difficult to determine which number the Dennett House was in 1851, however tracing occupants back it appears to be number 9 Prospect in 1851. The *Directory* for this year lists Jonathan Roberts and Daniel S. Barbour as the two occupants of the house. Daniel S. Barbour is likely a tenant or farm hand, as Jonathan Roberts is a farmer.<sup>108</sup> The 1850 Portsmouth census shows Jonathan Roberts owning real estate valued at \$2000 and living with his wife Mary, daughters Mary A. (age 19) and Ester (age 16), and a farm hand, Samuel Sampson (age 26). In 1860 the real estate of Jonathan Roberts is the most valuable in the census area, valued at \$3500 with most surrounding properties valued at \$1000. At this time his children have left and he lives with his wife and a farm hand, James Moulton.<sup>109</sup> Reuben Worster who is listed as a laborer also lives in the house from 1869 to 1871.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> See appendix for list of properties sold by Seth Walker between 1789 and 1834.

<sup>106</sup> A letter in the William Jarvis Papers, 1793-1845, at the Vermont Historical Society Library, Doc. 62-63, from S. Sparhawk of Portsmouth to William Jarvis in Vermont discusses the care of Jarvis's sick wife and daughter.

<sup>107</sup> William Jarvis to Charles Holman. Rockingham County Deeds, Book 284, Page 002 and 005; Charles Holman to Jonathan Roberts. Rockingham County Deeds, Book 285, Page 285.

<sup>108</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1867.

<sup>109</sup> *1850 United States Census*, Rockingham County, Portsmouth, 1624; *1860 United States Census*, Rockingham County, Portsmouth, 630.

<sup>110</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1869, 1871.

The Dennett House is occupied by Jonathan Roberts until 1873 when probate records show he died in 1874. Roberts left the “house, barn and lot where I now reside on Prospect Street” to daughter, Margaret J. Clark, for the rest of her life. Upon the death of Margaret J. Clark he instructs the house should go to her daughter Edith Clark and great grandson Frank Knox.<sup>111</sup> Tax records show the property owned by Jonathan Roberts in 1874 and by Margaret Clark in 1875.<sup>112</sup> *Directories* confirm the tax records and will of Roberts, showing Mrs. Margaret Clark as occupant of the house, with various tenants beginning until 1916. In 1885 Margaret Clark’s tax assessment shows that in addition to the real estate of the house on Prospect Street she had 1 horse and 2 cows, confirming that there was some kind of stable or small barn at this late date.<sup>113</sup> From 1890 to 1908 the house is also occupied by Ashbell Brown, an engineer with the Boston and Maine Railroad.<sup>114</sup> In the 1912 *Directory* a portion of the house is occupied Julia A. Broughton, the widow of James H. Broughton.<sup>115</sup>

Following Margaret Clark’s death in 1916 the house is occupied by her daughter Mrs. Edith B. Brown, widow of Ashville (probably Ashbell above), until she dies in 1925. In her will Edith Brown leaves the house to her nieces and nephews, the Pope children on South Hamilton, Massachusetts. In 1927 the house is vacant when deeds show the group of minors, with Elmer R. Pope as their guardian, selling the house to Margaret Abbott. In 1925 the Dennett House was described as a “double house” confirming that the multiple occupants over the nineteenth century were possibly living in two halves of a duplex, rather than boarding. A detailed inventory of the house’s contents at the time of Edith Brown’s death also exists in her will.<sup>116</sup>

In 1927 the house and land are appraised for \$2700 and are sold for \$3600 to Margaret Abbott.<sup>117</sup> Margaret Abbott’s husband, Elwood, was a grocer at 332 Pleasant and the couple lived at 43 Manning Street.<sup>118</sup> Margaret Abbott receives a mortgage for the property from Piscataqua Savings Bank and not surprisingly at the height of the Great Depression she, like many property owners, lost the property to foreclosure in 1933.<sup>119</sup> Also not surprisingly, although a notice of foreclosure auction was posted for the property in 1933, Piscataqua Savings Bank did not sell the property until 1935. Joseph St. Pierre purchased the property from the Bank for \$1 in 1935.<sup>120</sup> According to Piscataqua Savings Bank’s present president, Jay Gibson, before 1980 it was not uncommon for the bank to sell houses for \$1 if only one bidder came to an auction. This was especially true following the Depression when the bank likely held title to numerous foreclosed

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<sup>111</sup> Will of Jonathan Roberts, Rockingham County Registry of Probate, 1528.

<sup>112</sup> *City of Portsmouth Tax Records*, 1873, 1874, 1875.

<sup>113</sup> *City of Portsmouth Tax Records*, 1885.

<sup>114</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1890-1908.

<sup>115</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1910, 1912.

<sup>116</sup> Will of Edith Brown, Rockingham County Registry of Probate, 22150.

<sup>117</sup> Deed, J. Elmer Pope guardian of Horace E. Pope to Margaret Abbott, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 766, Page 292.

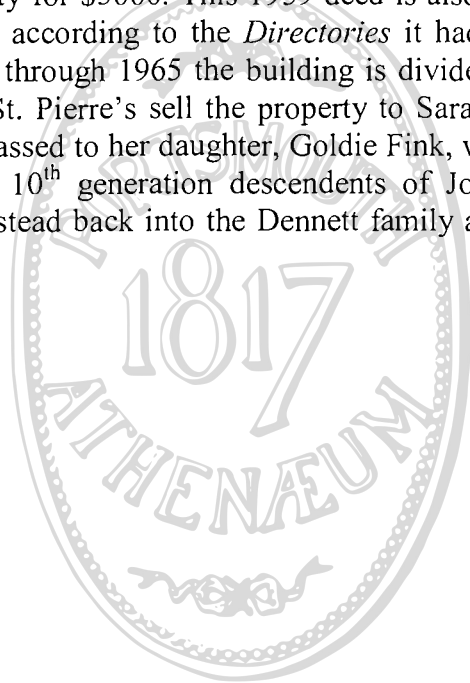
<sup>118</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1929.

<sup>119</sup> Foreclosure, Margaret Abbott to Piscataqua Savings Bank, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 890, Page 211.

<sup>120</sup> Deed, Piscataqua Savings Bank to Joseph St. Pierre, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 906, Page 203.

properties and was itself unable to continue paying property taxes on the numerous properties.

Following the sale for \$1, in 1939 and then again in 1942 deeds give the property from Joseph St. Pierre to his wife Beatrice St. Pierre.<sup>121</sup> Joseph St. Pierre began operating a bakery from the building across the street from the house around 1939, moving his operation from Vaughan Street.<sup>122</sup> The property was divided into as much as four rental units while Joseph St. Pierre owned it. Renters included various individuals working at the various factories in Portsmouth, as well as the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the Wentworth Hotel and WHEB.<sup>123</sup> In 1952 there is further confirmation that the house was divided into at least four apartments as the deed from Beatrice to Donald St. Pierre includes the house as well as “four refrigerators and four stoves.”<sup>124</sup> Donald St. Pierre then takes a mortgage against the property with Piscataqua Savings Bank for \$12,000 in 1957.<sup>125</sup> Donald conveyed the land to Joseph St. Pierre and in 1959 Joseph took a mortgage against the property for \$5000. This 1959 deed is also the first to mention the “bakery” building, although according to the *Directories* it had been there for at least twenty years.<sup>126</sup> From 1959 through 1965 the building is divided into five and then six apartments.<sup>127</sup> In 1962 the St. Pierre’s sell the property to Sarah Bratter. Upon Sarah’s death in 1985 the property passed to her daughter, Goldie Fink, who continues to rent the six apartments.<sup>128</sup> In 2005, 10<sup>th</sup> generation descendants of John Dennett acquire the property, bringing the homestead back into the Dennett family after nearly two hundred years.



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<sup>121</sup> Deed. Joseph St. Pierre to Beatrice St. Pierre. Rockingham County Deeds, Book 954, Page 306 and Book 1000. Page 267.

<sup>122</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1934 and 1939.

<sup>123</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1934-1952.

<sup>124</sup> Deed. Beatrice St. Pierre to Donald St. Pierre. Rockingham County Deeds, Book 1254, Page 064.

<sup>125</sup> Deed. Donald St. Pierre to Piscataqua Savings Bank, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 1443, Page 399.

<sup>126</sup> Deed. Joseph St. Pierre to Piscataqua Savings Bank, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 1498, Page 453.

<sup>127</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1959-1965.

<sup>128</sup> Deed. Donald St. Pierre to Sarah Bratter, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 1622, Page 232; Deed, Piscataqua Savings to Sarah Bratter, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 1735, Page 459.

## *The Dennett Farm at Gravelly Ridge*

John Dennett received a piece of land near Newington as payment for services provided to the Town of Portsmouth in 1694. This land remained in the family until at least the 1920s. Later known as “Gravelly Ridge” the area is now home to shopping malls and department stores such as Kmart, Home Depot, and Shaws. Unlike the Dennett House on Prospect Street, nothing remains as evidence to the long residence of Dennetts in this area. Although some of the information in the following section was at one time believed to be referring to the house on Prospect Street, it is now clear that Jeremiah Dennett and his descendents resided in a house at Gravelly Ridge rather than in the Dennett House on Prospect.

### **Jeremiah Dennett (1752-1818)**

Jeremiah lived on the portion of his grandfather’s estate located at Gravelly Ridge. In the probate record of Ephraim Dennett Sr.’s his estate is divided to give Jeremiah “his third part of the estate viz about ---- of land and House .... Said John Dennetts House down to the creek south of Nathaniel Jackson” [land on the northeast side of present day Maplewood Ave] and “the whole of the land at Gravelly Ridge so called being about eighty one acres except about six and one half acres set off as above to John Dennett with a passage through to said six and one half acres to said Jeremiah his Heirs & assigns forever.”

Jeremiah Dennett was born in 1752, the eldest child of Ephraim and Lydia Dennett and the only child to survive to adulthood. He was baptized at the North Church as a “young man” May 28, 1769.<sup>129</sup> Jeremiah married Susannah Peverly of Greenland in 1772 and the two had ten children. Like his grandfather, Jeremiah appears to have had close ties to the town of Newington as well as Portsmouth. His eldest daughter Lydia is recorded in births for the town of Newington in 1773.<sup>130</sup> Lydia also married into the Shackford family of Barnstead (the town of Barnstead was granted to residents of Newington). In addition Jeremiah’s daughter Catherine and son Mark both married members of Newington’s Fabyan family.

Jeremiah, like his father and grandfather, profited from selling land granted to previous generations in other New Hampshire towns. In 1773 and again in 1804 he sold land in Gilmanton that had originally been granted to Ephraim Jr. and in 1798 he sold land in Canterbury.<sup>131</sup> We also know that Jeremiah was a supporter of the Continental cause during the Revolution, signing the Association Test in Portsmouth in 1776.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> North Church Records. Portsmouth Athenaeum (transcribed volumes).

<sup>130</sup> *Newington Families in the Eighteenth Century*, Portsmouth Athenaeum.

<sup>131</sup> Deed, Jeremiah Dennett to Israel Farrar, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 102, Page 332, land in Gilmanton; Deed, Jeremiah Dennett to Dudley Lyford, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 149, Pages 89-90, land in Canterbury; Deed, Jeremiah Dennett to Joseph Ibbey, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 169, Page 240, land in Gilmanton.

<sup>132</sup> Signers of the Association Test are listed in Brewster’s *Rambles About Portsmouth*, Ramble 44.

Jeremiah was identified as a “yeoman” on deeds dated from 1773 to 1804 and then as “Esquire/husbandman” on later deeds. In the 1790 Census Jeremiah is listed as living in Portsmouth with a household that included 1 white male over 16, 4 white males under 16 and 6 white females.<sup>133</sup>

When Jeremiah died in 1818 his estate was divided in a rather uneven manner. His wife Susannah received one third of his real and personal property, not uncommon due to the previous colonial system that ensured widows one third of their husband’s estates. Among his daughters, all of whom were married, two received a token amount of \$10 while the other two received land in Portsmouth. Among his six sons the remainder of his considerable real estate was divided.

The land specifically mentioned in Jeremiah’s will is on the northern side of present Maplewood Ave, between the Mill Pond and the Cutts Mansion (Route 1 Bypass). He divides this land into house lots for many of his children. Jeremiah left his son George with a lot of land “on which my said son George has built a house” which was also described as being located next to a lot “devised to my son Ephraim.” Other description in the will confirm that this land was on present day Maplewood Ave, as it was “bounded southerly on the post road leading from Walkers mills to Newington.”<sup>134</sup> An 1806 deed describes the land as being located at Jackson’s Creek, likely near present day Northwest Street in Portsmouth.<sup>135</sup> It does not appear that in 1821 George lived on this property as his house was listed as being on the other side of town on South Street in the 1821 *Portsmouth City Directory*.<sup>136</sup> In the same year Jeremiah’s son Ephraim is listed as living on Dennett Street. He was likely living in the house now labeled the “Ephraim Dennett House” located at Christian Shore.

Religiously, through the early 1800s, the Dennetts continued to be faithful to Portsmouth’s North Church. Jeremiah’s children can be found in baptism records<sup>137</sup> and in 1817 the pew tax list includes J. Plumer, Jeremiah, and Nathaniel. However by 1840 no Dennetts are listed in the North Church pew tax.<sup>138</sup>

### **Mark Dennett (1783-1858)**

Although the sixth child of Jeremiah and Susannah Dennett, Mark Dennett did succeed in inheriting the Dennett farm at Gravelly Ridge from his father. Mark married Olive Fabyan of Newington in 1810 and the two had eight children. Following Olive’s death in 1840 Mark married for a second time, Susan Thompson Huntress.

In 1821 and 1827 Mark appears in the *Portsmouth City Directory*, listed as being a farmer on Dennett’s Lane “west of Northroad.” An 1829 deed refers to Mark as a

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<sup>133</sup> 1790 US Census

<sup>134</sup> Will of Jeremiah Dennett

<sup>135</sup> Deed, Margaret Nelson to Jeremiah Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 175, Page 307.

<sup>136</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1821

<sup>137</sup> *New Hampshire Genealogical Record*, original printing 1903-1910, Heritage Books, Bowie, MD (reprinted), volume 6, p. 45, 46 and 79 and volume 7, page 12, 14, 16, 74, and 76.

<sup>138</sup> Pew Tax Lists, North Church Papers MS36, Box 5 folder 1, Portsmouth Athenaeum.

“laborer.”<sup>139</sup> Northroad referred to the stretch of road from the “North Mill Bridge to Newington.”<sup>140</sup> The stretch of road close to the Mill Pond and Dennett Street was known as North Street, whereas the stretch leading to outlying areas and Newington was known as North Road. The 1839 *Directory* further defines the location of Mark’s farm as on North Road nearly opposite the Gravelly Ridge School.<sup>141</sup> Dennett’s Lane in the earlier *Directories* may have been referring to the current Durgin’s Lane located across from the Gravelly Ridge School, the present road from Woodbury Ave to Home Depot.

Mark’s five brothers all remained in Portsmouth at this time, listed as follows in the directory: George B., boatbuilder, shop Church Lane, house South Street; Ephraim, mason, Dennett Street; John P., joiner, North Street (now Maplewood Ave.); William, ship master, Daniel Street; Jeremiah, ship master, house Joshua Street.

Mark was a member of Portsmouth’s Methodist Church which was officially established in 1808.<sup>142</sup> He purchased a pew in the Vaughan Street Meeting House in 1811 from his brother John Plumer Dennett.<sup>143</sup> It appears that John P. returned to the North Church at this time. Portsmouth’s Methodist Society constructed a new building on State Street in 1827 (now the Temple Israel). In 1829 the Society’s thirty-seven members, including Mark, sold their former Meeting House to a group which included, furniture maker and developer, Langley Boardman.<sup>144</sup>

Mark sold a great deal of the land acquired by generations of Dennetts before him. In 1817 he sold land at Gravelly Ridge, to Cyrus Frink. The Frink family went on to construct a sizable farm near the present shopping malls on Woodbury Ave. In a series of deed transactions between 1841 and 1852 Mark appears to mortgage much of the Dennett property. In 1841 Mark mortgages 107 acres including “my homestead” to William Jones for \$400.<sup>145</sup> Then in 1842 Mark mortgages Mark R. Wendell \$8000 worth of land.<sup>146</sup> Apparently in quite a state of financial hardship, in 1852 a deed shows Mark Dennett selling one hundred and eight acres including “the homestead now occupied by myself” to his son, William H. Dennett for four thousand dollars. The same deed allows Mark to “retain a life estate” and to “have free use of the same.” In this deed William Henry assumes the mortgage Mark had with William Jones.<sup>147</sup>

At the time of his death in 1858 the dower record for his wife Susan described his property. Although originally assumed to be the Dennett House on Prospect Street, it now

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<sup>139</sup> Deed, Members of the Methodist Meeting House to Langley Boardman, Henry Bufford, John Goddard, Samuel Shackford, and William Tucker, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 258, Page 476.

<sup>140</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1821, p. 23.

<sup>141</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1839, p. 27.

<sup>142</sup> Gurney, C. S., *Portsmouth Historic and Picturesque*, Strawberry Banke, Portsmouth, 1981 [reprinted], p. 148.

<sup>143</sup> Deed, John P. Dennett to Mark Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 198, Page 66.

<sup>144</sup> Deed, Members of the Methodist Meeting House to Langley Boardman, Henry Bufford, John Goddard, Samuel Shackford, and William Tucker, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 258, Page 476.

<sup>145</sup> Deed, Mark Dennett to William Jones, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 301, Page 295.

<sup>146</sup> Deed, Mark Dennett to Mark R. Wendell, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 307, Pages 332-333.

<sup>147</sup> Deed, Mark Dennett to William Henry Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 353, Page 62.

appears that this document describes instead Mark's House at Gravelly Ridge. The dower record does provide one of the most complete descriptions of this Dennett property. Mark Dennett's property included: garden field, well, burying ground, farm, meadow field, "old" orchard, woodland, Shannon pasture (land had formerly belonged to Nathaniel Shannon, purchased by Jeremiah in 1810), barn, barnyard, cider house, corn loft or granary, "old" corn house, outbuildings, privy, and pond pasture. The dower record provides us with physical description of rooms and how rooms were used. Susan's portion of the house included: kitchen, bedroom, front room, dairy room, bedroom and back sitting room and upstairs rooms including a front chamber, a back chamber, cellar and attic.<sup>148</sup> In the dower record Susan is also given permission to "[alter] her portion of the house for her convenience as she may choose, by building stairs, cutting out doorways and passage ways, putting in doors, or making other alterations and improvements..."<sup>149</sup>

### **William Henry Dennett (1818-1892)**

A provision in the will of Jeremiah Dennett stated that the portion of his estate inherited by Mark should then "descend to the youngest son of his body."<sup>150</sup> Although William Henry stood to inherit the land of his father, he instead purchased it prior to his father's death. In 1852 William Henry purchased the Dennett Farm at Gravelly Ridge from his father Mark. This fact was contested by Mark's widow Susan upon his death however the 1852 deed from Mark to William Henry clearly shows the sale took place.<sup>151</sup>

William Henry was the fifth child of Mark and Olive Dennett, married Mary E. Robertson in 1845 and had thirteen children. The couple was in Kennebunk, Maine at the time of the birth of their third child in 1850. In 1851 William Henry is listed in the *Portsmouth City Directory* as living at 18 Russell Street and working as a machinist. According to Raymond Brighton, William Henry was on the committee supervising the construction of the new brick school house at Gravelly Ridge in 1853. *Directories* in 1856-7 and 1860-1 list William H. as a farmer living on Newington Road, likely with his father Mark, whose house he had purchased. From 1864 to 1871 William Henry resided at 1 Prospect Street, the house on the corner of Prospect and present Maplewood, and is listed as a machinist.<sup>152</sup>

In 1871 for the amount of five hundred dollars, William Henry's brother Joseph sells him the "parcels of land...being part of the Jeremiah Dennett Farm, namely the tracts known as the Gate Field, the House field including the House and all the other buildings on said farm..."<sup>153</sup> This appears to be evidence of the brothers having a temporary mortgage agreement, however on the same date, June 2, 1871, the same

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<sup>148</sup> Dower record of Susan Dennett. Rockingham County Registry of Probate.

<sup>149</sup> Dower record of Susan Dennett. Rockingham County Registry of Probate.

<sup>150</sup> Will of Jeremiah Dennett. Rockingham County Registry of Probate.

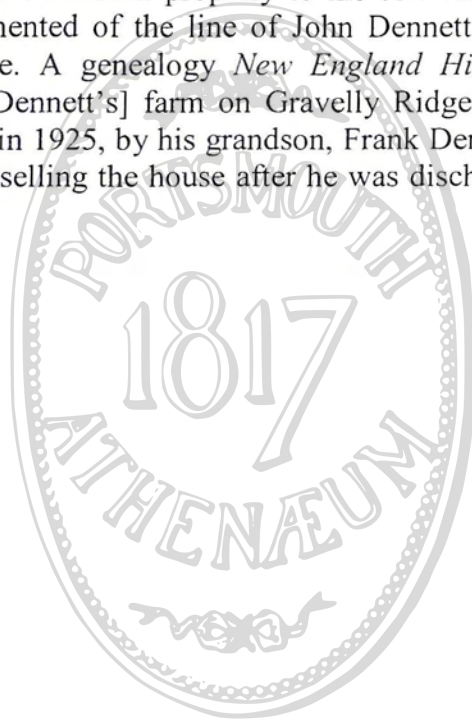
<sup>151</sup> Deed. Mark Dennett to William Henry Dennett. Rockingham County Deeds, Book 353, Page 62.

<sup>152</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1864-1871.

<sup>153</sup> Deed. Joseph Dennett to William Henry Dennett. Rockingham County Deeds, Book 431, Page 496.

agreement is reversed in the next deed in the book. Therefore ownership of the property remains in the hands of William Henry. At this time William Henry's *Directory* listing switches from 1 Prospect Street in 1871 back out to Newington Road (Gravelly Ridge) in 1873, where he remains until the time of his death in 1892.<sup>154</sup>

In 1884 at the age of sixty-six William Henry sells the Dennett property at Gravelly Ridge to his son Frank M. Dennett for one dollar. Frank M., on the same day, takes a mortgage against the property with John Hatch of Greenland. In 1884 the property encompasses only fifty-four acres, including the homestead farm, horse pasture, gate field, buildings, pasture, and woodlands.<sup>155</sup> A note on the deed between Frank M. Dennett and John Hatch releases Frank from his mortgage in 1889, the mortgage of \$1700 "having been fully paid."<sup>156</sup> Another separate deed releases Frank from a mortgage held with John Hatch in 1884 in the amount of \$400.<sup>157</sup> William Henry died in 1892 apparently having sold the Dennett property to his son Frank M. Frank M. Dennett is therefore the last documented of the line of John Dennett known to own the Dennett Farm at Gravelly Ridge. A genealogy *New England Historic Genealogical Society Register* states "[Mark Dennett's] farm on Gravelly Ridge in the northwestern part of Portsmouth was owned, in 1925, by his grandson, Frank Dennett."<sup>158</sup> No deed appears to exist showing Frank M. selling the house after he was discharged from the mortgage he had with John Hatch.



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<sup>154</sup> *Portsmouth City Directory*, 1871, 1873-1892.

<sup>155</sup> Deed, William H. Dennett and Mary E. Dennett to Frank M. Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 442, Page 387.

<sup>156</sup> Deed, Frank M. Dennett to John Hatch, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 491, Page 331.

<sup>157</sup> Deed, John Hatch to Frank M. Dennett, Rockingham County Deeds, Book 492, Page 388.

<sup>158</sup> Dennett Genealogy, *New England Historic Genealogical Society Register*, Vol. 81, Page 144.

## *Conclusion*

Further architectural research will certainly fill out a complete study of the Dennett House on Prospect Street. Certain facts uncovered during the course of this study can be used to better understand when changes may have been made to the house itself. These facts which will no doubt shed light on the architectural history of the building include: when the house passed from one family member to another, what the financial position of the occupants of the house was and when the house was sold and for what purpose it was used (rental or owner occupied). Although a great deal was uncovered during the course of this study, every research project of this type leaves unanswered questions, some are known, some are not yet anticipated. Further documents will no doubt surface that may shed more light on the Dennett Family that descended from John and lived in the house we know are the Beehive or Dennett House on Prospect Street. In conclusion I think it is important to disclose a few such questions that I was unable to answer due to the limitations of sources available.

One question has already been addressed in the text of this report: to whom did Seth Walker sell the house to and how did William Jarvis acquire the property? A gap created by unclear deed descriptions and non-local probate records exists for the property at this time.

The second is in regards to the burial location of several generations of the family. According to Armstead Dennett, his father found a family burial plot near the Newington boarder, or in fact in Newington, where at least fifteen members of the Dennett Family were buried. This plot as well as a plot where Jeremiah was buried "at Gravelly Ridge" (possibly the same plot) were not able to be located during the course of this study. Although extensive searches have been conducted in sources related to Newington and Portsmouth cemeteries as well as me personally surveying the area repeated times, the graves were simply not located. Perhaps destroyed years ago by developers or perhaps still hidden in a portion of land now swampy and overgrown due to the numerous drainage swales created by development around the malls, these cemeteries and the burial location of several generations of this family remain a mystery.

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- Cover:** The Christian Shores Dennett House as it appeared in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. From a watercolor by Sarah Haven Foster, courtesy of the Portsmouth Public Library.

## Appendix:

### Property sold by Seth Walker 1789-1834

Date	Sold to	Book	Page	Description
1789	William Jones	125	306	bounds land of Col. John Dennett
1793	John Dennett	134	241	possibly a mortgage
1793	George Long	137	45	house lot
1795	Paul Rawlings	139	307	land in Newington
1796	Jno Bowles	142	116	Peter Levius purchased from John D.
1797	Germain Castex	145	64	house lot
1797	Jno Bowles	147	115	house lot
1797	Abraham Martin	148	65	lot near bridge
1798	Henry E. Cotton	147	564	lot near bridge
1798	Eliphalet Ladd	148	307	lot at Jackson Cove
1798	Edmund Fernald	148	320	part of house lot "from John Dennett"
1798	Elisha Hill	148	355	house lot
1799	Edward Cutts	152	46	lot bounding creek
1799	Edward Cutts	152	208	house lot
1799	Peter Coues	153	39	house lot
1799	William Jones	153	218	house lot on Bridge Road
1799	Richard Hart	154	256	part of house lot "from John Dennett"
1799	Samuel Huntress	156	17	land in Newington
1800	Nathaniel Jackson	154	306	house lot
1800	Richard Pickering	156	16	house lot
1801	William Walker	158	311	house lot
1801	Jane Smallcorn	160	223	house lot
1801	John Bowles	160	224	house lot
1801	Elisha Andrews	169	263	house lot
1802	Seth Walker Jr.	161	332	house lot
1802	Nathaniel Dennett	161	375	house lot
1802	Gideon Walker	161	414	house lot
1802	Nathaniel Dennett Jr.	166	148	house lot
1803	Thomas Morton	166	142	house lot
1804	John Gains	167	9	house lot
1805	Nathaniel Jackson Jr.	171	358	house lot
1806	Richard Pickering	173	256	land on Congress Street
1806	Nathaniel Kennard Jr.	174	376	house lot near North Mill bridge
1806	Thomas Morton	174	476	land on Congress Street
1806	Jeremiah Libby	174	477	house lot
1806	William Walker	179	312	land on Ladd Street
1806	Daniel Rogers	179	351	land on Congress Street
1807	Dudley Levitt	177	451	land on High and Ladd streets
1811	John Bowles Jr.	190	315	land in Exeter
1816	Amos Dow	212	230	land in Newington
1819	Nathaniel Connor	222	115	land in Exeter
1820	Joseph Boardman	226	313	land in Concord?
1827	Nathaniel Connor	251	464	land in Exeter
1830	Joseph Fernald	262	65	land in Exeter
1830	William Wiggin	260	270	land in Exeter
1834	William A. Shackford	274	116	land in Exeter

\*note all above property described as "house lot" are in the area of Christian Shore, some specifically said they were part of the John Dennett property, although based on the descriptions it is likely that most of them were

