



WILSON BRUCE  
EVANS HOME  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Looking for Mr. Evans

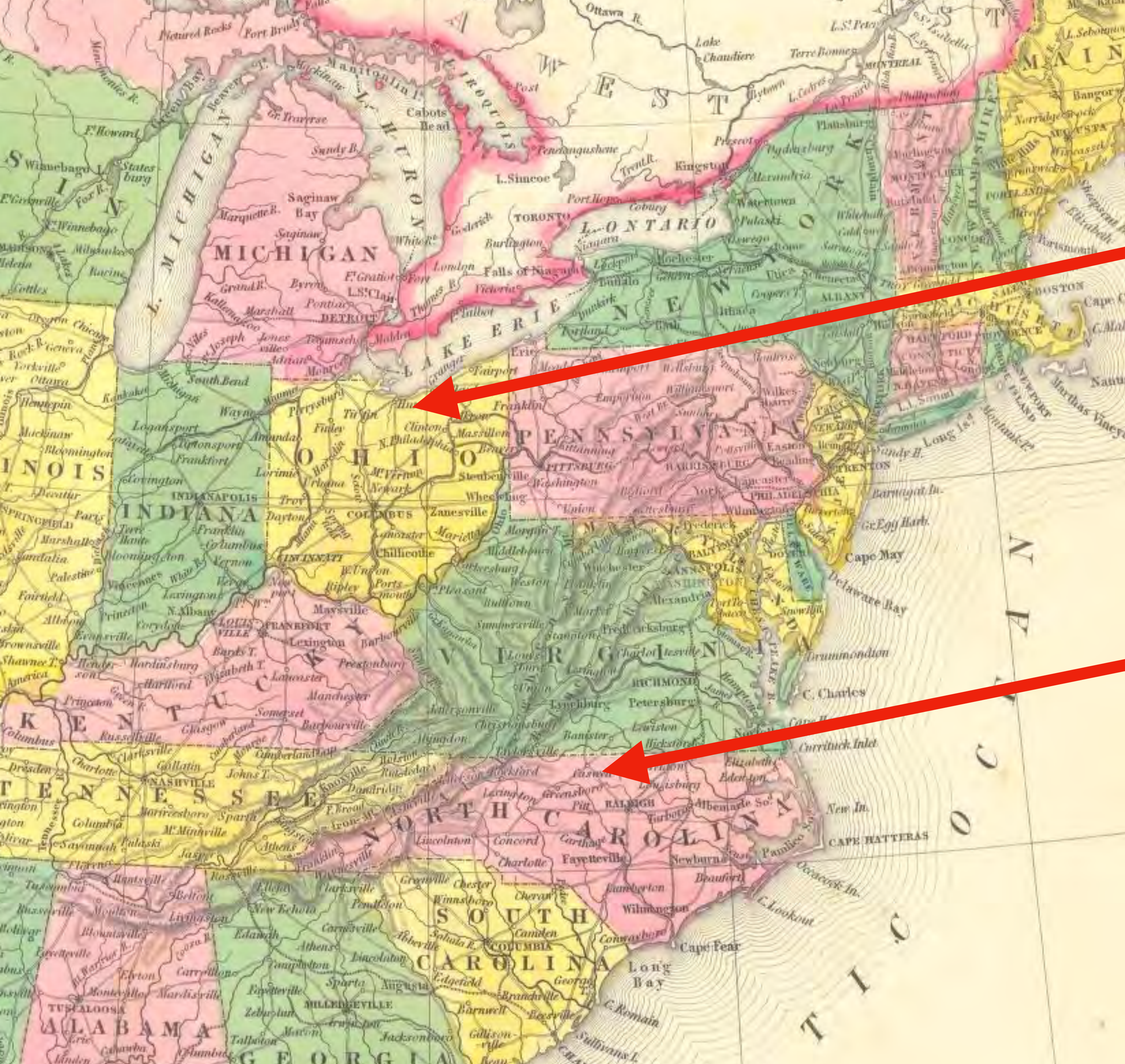
Exploring the home and furniture  
of abolitionist and cabinetmaker  
Wilson Bruce Evans



Presented by  
Jerome Bias & Bill Chapman  
February 12, 2025

# **The Evans Brothers at work in North Carolina**





Oberlin, Ohio

Hillsborough, North Carolina

550 miles (and worlds) apart

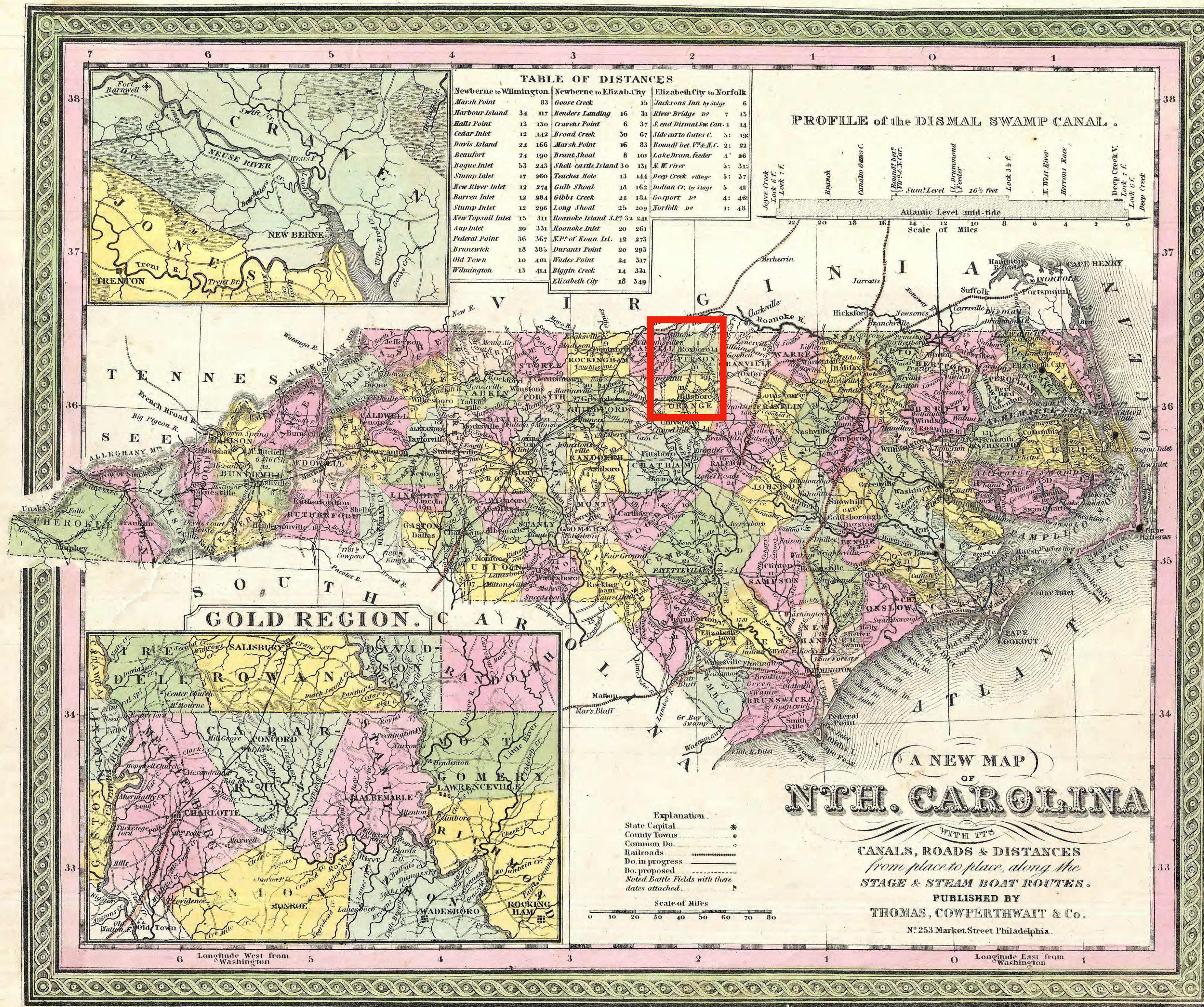
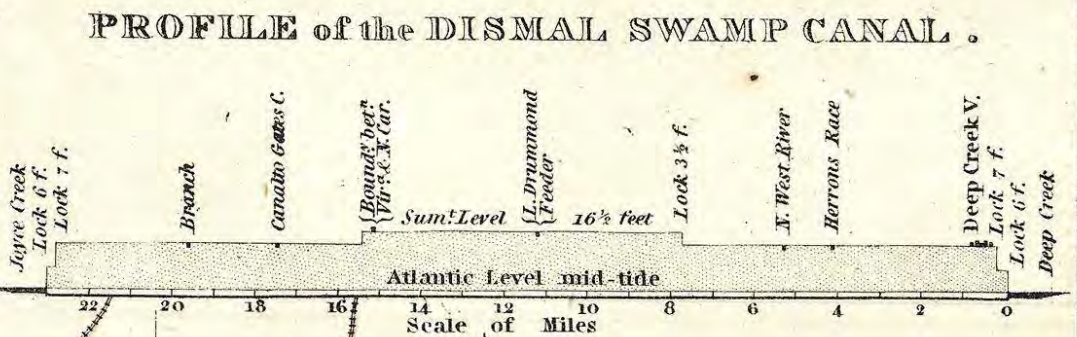
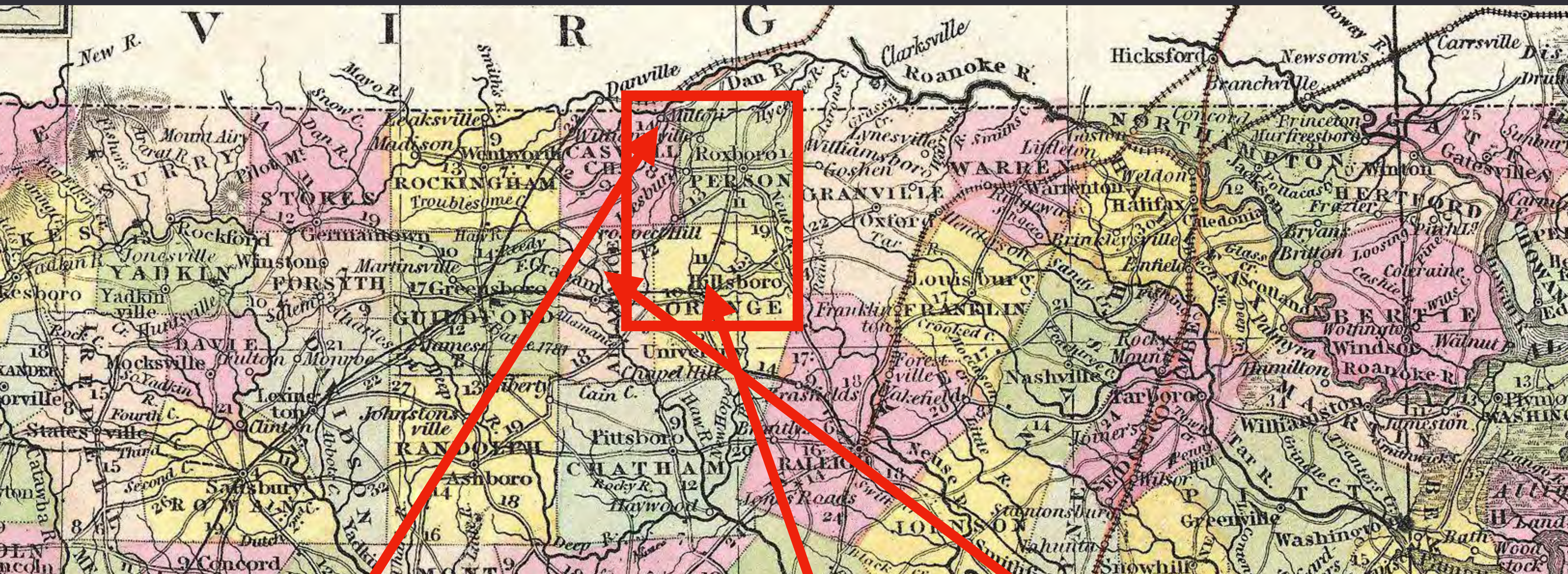


TABLE OF DISTANCES		
Newberne to Wilmington	Newberne to Elizab. City	Elizab. City to Norfolk
Marsh Point 83	Goose Creek 15	Jacksons Inn by stage 6
Harbour Island 34 117	Reiders Landing 16 31	River Bridge 7 13
Halls Point 13 130	Cravens Point 6 37	S. end Dismal Sw. Can. 1 14
Cedar Inlet 12 142	Broad Creek 30 67	Side cut to Gates C. 5: 19
Davis Island 24 166	Marsh Point 16 83	Bound bet. V. & N.C. 2: 22
Beaufort 24 190	Brant Shoal 8 101	Lake Drum feeder 4: 26
Hogue Inlet 53 243	Shell Castle Island 30 131	E. W. river 5: 31
Stump Inlet 17 260	Teaches Hole 13 144	Deep Creek village 5: 37
New River Inlet 12 274	Gulf Shoal 18 162	Jordan Cr. by stage 5: 42
Barren Inlet 12 284	Gibbs Creek 22 184	Gosport 4: 48
Stump Inlet 12 296	Long Shoal 25 209	Norfolk 1: 48
New Topsall Inlet 15 311	Roanoke Island S.P. 32 241	
Aup Inlet 20 331	Roanoke Inlet 20 261	
Federal Point 36 367	K.P. of Roan. Isl. 12 273	
Brunswick 18 385	Durants Point 20 293	
Old Town 10 401	Wades Point 24 317	
Wilmington 13 414	Biggin Creek 14 331	
	Elizabeth City 18 349	





**1850s**

Thomas Day  
Milton, NC

**1850s**

Evans Brothers  
Hillsborough, NC

**Today**

Jerome Bias  
Graham, NC



**1848–1858**

Thomas Day's home  
and cabinetmaking  
shop in Milton, NC

Day's career spanned  
from 1827 to 1860.



## Cabinet-Making.

**T**HE subscriber, grateful for the patronage heretofore received, would respectfully inform his friends and the public generally, that he has newly fitted up his establishment, with a great many conveniences, that will enable him to execute work in a superior style and with more expedition than heretofore; and he now offers his services to the public, with the determination that no pains shall be spared to give general satisfaction.

### FURNITURE,

of all kinds, will be made in the neatest style, of *Mahogany, Walnut, and other precious Wood.*

He will endeavor to keep on hand an assortment of Furniture, among which will be BED STEADS of the cheapest and best quality, with stains of the most durable colors, in imitation of Mahogany, Rosewood, or Satinwood. Persons wishing to buy, will do well to call, as they will be sold on very reasonable terms.

All repairing or varnishing will be thankfully received, and promptly attended to.

Orders requiring haste, will be executed with all possible despatch.

**HENRY EVANS.**

February 3.

58 - 2m

## 1841

At 24 years old, Henry Evans begins advertising his expanded, higher capacity cabinet-making business and continued to do so for the next 12 years.

There is no evidence, but perhaps Wilson, then 17, was part of the growth of his older brother's shop.

## Cabinet Ware-House.

**T**HE subscriber respectfully informs his friends and the public generally, that he has on hand, and will endeavor constantly to keep, a variety of well-made Furniture, embracing all the leading articles, such as.

### **Sofas, Sideboards, Bureaus, Bedsteads, Tables.**

made of Mahogany, Marble, Cherry, Walnut, Birch, and Maple.

He would invite attention to his make of Portable **WARDROBES** and **BEDSTEADS**, which cannot be surpassed for durability, neatness, and convenience.

He would also invite the attention of all persons wishing to buy furniture of any description, to give him a call before purchasing elsewhere, as he intends to sell as low as he can possibly afford, and his workmen are all experienced hands.

He has now on hand eight fine Dressing Bureaus, with Looking-Glasses, two China Presses, two Sideboards, six plain Bureaus, eight Candlestands, one Sofa, and one Secretary and Bookcase, and Bedsteads, which he will sell low.

\* \* \* Timber taken in exchange for Furniture, such as Walnut, Poplar, Cherry, Birch, Maple, &c.

\* \* \* Persons at a distance, buying Furniture, can have it delivered at their doors, ensured safe, for less than they can do it themselves.

He returns his thanks for past favors, and will be thankful for a continuance of public patronage.

**HENRY EVANS.**

February 1.

15—

1848

In addition to his cabinet wares, Henry begins offering carriage services.



### **Accommodation for Travelers.**

**T**HE subscriber is now prepared with a comfortable Carriage, a Hack, and a Buggy, to convey Passengers from Hillsborough to any other place, or to bring them here, by the day, week, or job. He has good horses and an experienced driver, and thinks he can give entire satisfaction. He can be found at his shop, two doors above the Union Hotel.

**HENRY EVANS.**

February 1.

15—

### **25 Dollars Reward.**

**R**AN away in July last, a negro man by the name of **BUCK**. He is yellow complexion, about five feet six inches high, rather bow-legged, very quick in his movements, and when spoken



# Extent Henry Evans NC Furniture



Pair of circa 1850 banquet table ends found in Greensboro, NC.

# Extent Henry Evans NC Furniture



Pair of circa 1850 banquet table ends found in Greensboro, NC.

# Extent Henry Evans NC Furniture



Desk credited to Henry Evans in the Hillsborough Court House

# Extent Henry Evans NC Furniture

Henry Evans was a member of the congregation at St. Matthews Episcopal Church in Hillsborough and is recorded in the parish register as the "maker of chancel furniture." This chair (right) is attributed to Evans by the church.



# 1847

Henry Evans was considered for a large contract to provide architectural woodwork and furniture for the newly enlarged Old East and Old West Dormitories at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The contract was ultimately awarded to Thomas Day.

*Old West Dormitory, circa 1890*



# 1850 Manufacturing Census

According to research conducted by Tom Newbern & Jim Melchor for "Henry Evans: From Cabinetmaker to Abolitionist"

- Evans' Hillsborough cabinet shop was the third largest in North Carolina, following Thomas Day in Milton and William Thompson in Raleigh
- At least four employees worked in the shop.
- The shop's output was impressive. In a single year, the Evans shop produced 100 bureaus and 100 bedsteads, the most of any shop in the state.

This level of production would seem to indicate the use of steam-powered machinery, as Thomas Day was known to employ in his shop.

## Notice.

**A**S I am obliged to raise money to carry on my business and pay my debts, those who are indebted to me, by note or account, are earnestly requested to call and make immediate payment.

**HENRY EVANS.**

N. B. I have on hand a large assortment of well made Furniture, which I will sell low for cash.

I am also prepared to furnish Coffins at three hours' notice, of the plainest or finest style, of Walnut or Mahogany.

Persons at a distance may rely on being served here sooner than they can be at home.

**H. EVANS.**

*Cabinet Maker and General Undertaker.*

Nov. 13.

07—

1850

Henry begins advertising undertaking services.



© Oberlin College Archives

# Free Black Exodus from North Carolina

**1830**

Free Blacks comprised **15.5%** of the population of Orange, County, NC.

**1840**

Free Blacks comprised **2.9%** of the population of Orange, County, NC.

The Evans brothers' sister Delilah and her family migrated to Oberlin in 1843. Her husband, John Copeland, was a carpenter.

John Scott (left) and his family moved from Fayetteville, NC to Oberlin in 1856. John was a skilled saddle and harness maker.

# Land for Sale.



I OFFER for sale a small tract of land, lying two and a half miles Southeast of Hillsborough, on the Raleigh road. It contains one hundred and eighty-five acres, well watered, and has on it a Dwelling House, and a good Barn and Stables; about seventy-five acres of cleared land, and the balance is very well timbered. The Central Rail Road runs through one corner, with the main road, and it has an immense quantity of White and Post Oak timber, suitable for Rail Road Sills. The Plantation is in good repair, and the land produces very well. Persons wishing to purchase are requested to call and examine the premises.

**HENRY EVANS.**

December 14.

65—

## 1852

In December 1852, Henry begins advertising for sale a 185-acre plantation 2-1/2 miles southeast of Hillsborough on the road to Raleigh. (A 30-minute commute to the shop in Hillsborough by carriage.)

This ad ran until February 16, 1853.

# Cabinet Shop & Furniture For Sale.

**A**S I am determined on moving out of the State, I will offer for sale to the highest bidder, in the town of Hillsborough, on the 29th day of November next, (being Tuesday of Court week,) my **Cabinet Shop**, which is a desirable work-shop for any branch of business, especially cabinet making. The House is large and roomy, fitted up expressly for a cabinet shop, and just in the business part of the town, one door above the Union Hotel, and opposite the Court House square.

And on the 27th of December, I shall offer for sale all my Tools, Benches, Turning Lathe, Hand Screws, Stock of Materials of every description, and my Household and Kitchen Furniture, and what New Furniture I may have on hand.

I shall continue to manufacture Furniture until the 25th of December, and will sell low for cash.

☞ All those indebted to me by note or otherwise, are requested to make immediate payment, as no longer indulgence can be given.

**HENRY EVANS.**

October 24, 1853.

07—

## 1853

In November 1853, Henry advertises his intent to sell his cabinet shop/house to the highest bidder and to stop manufacturing furniture on December 25, 1853 so that he may move out of North Carolina.

# 1854

**April 22**

Henry (37) appears before Governor David Reid in Raleigh, NC requesting safe passage to Ohio via "public conveyance" for himself and his wife Henrietta and their six children. Wilson (30) and his wife Sarah, and son Matthew (1 year old) travel with them.

# **The Evans Brothers at work in Oberlin**

# Setting up home and shop

## 1854

**April 22** Henry (37) appears before Governor David Reid in Raleigh, NC requesting safe passage to Ohio via "public conveyance" for himself and his wife Henrietta and their six children. Wilson (30) and his wife Sarah, and son Matthew (1 year old) travel with them.

**May 11** Wilson Bruce Evans purchases the property on Mill Street (now Vine) for \$500. Purchase price indicates that there was likely a building on the property, which from maps appears to be the square building previously located behind the current house.

## 1856

**March 24** Oberlin College agrees to sell Walton Hall on South Main to Mr. Evans (Henry).

A Boy's Letters to His Mother  
—Some Familiar Names.

OBERLIN, Sept. 1st, 1845.

DEAR MOTHER:

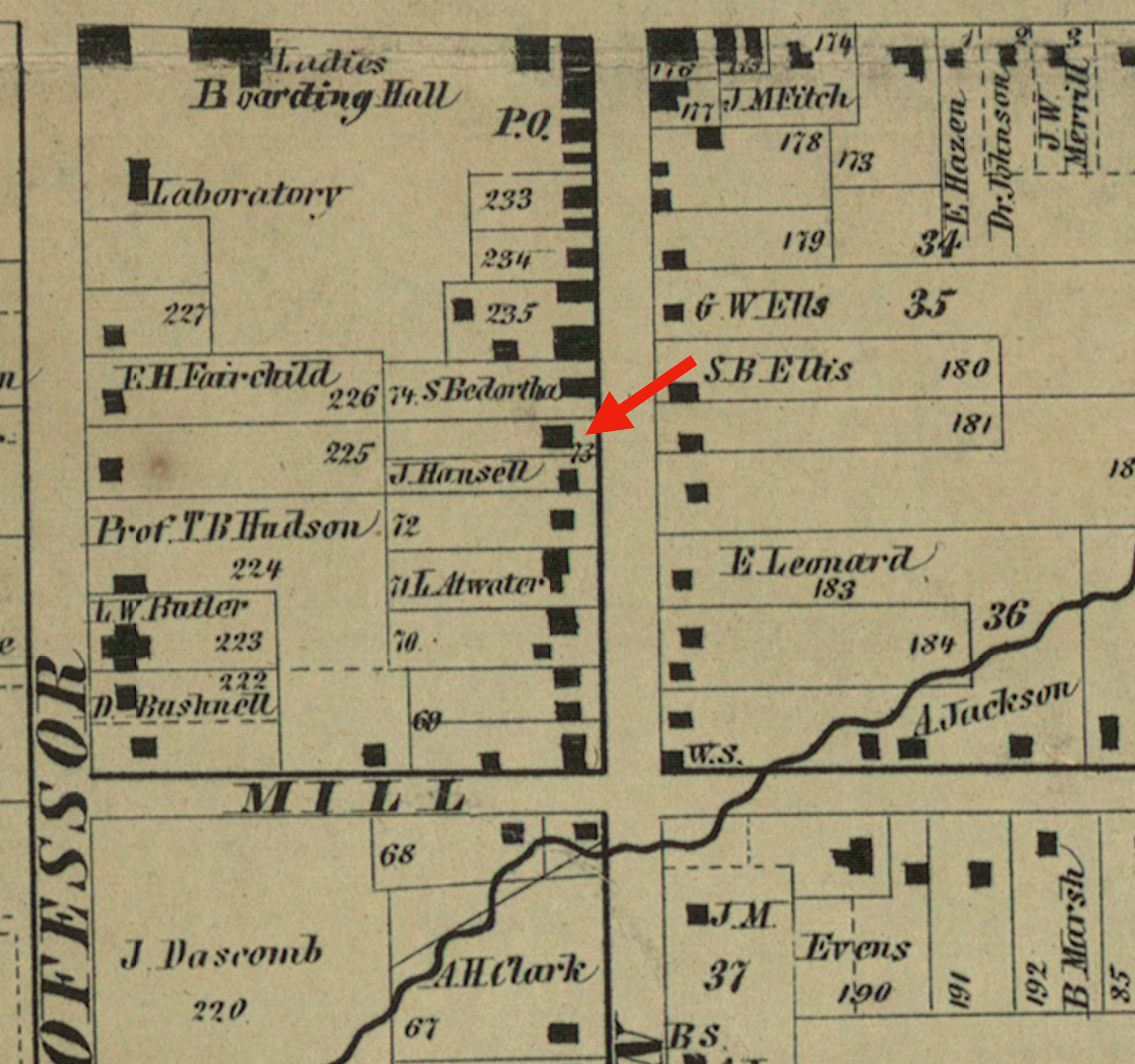
NO XI.

The beginning of this term I changed my rooming place, and went through the experience of renovating and fitting up a new room. This time it is in a building called Walton Hall, I suppose because a man by the name of Walton contributed the money to build it. It is located on South Main street, and is built solely to furnish rooms for students. It is two stories high, and has eight rooms to each story. The rooms are not as large as those in Colonial Hall, and do not contain so many bugs, but there are enough here. I moved here because the rooms are cheaper, and several of my classmates room here. We made a bee and thoroughly cleaned and renovated the whole building, and

# Walton Hall

## WALTON HALL.

Some people at Walton, New York, furnished the means for building a hall for the express use of students from their own place. The building was erected in 1835 on the west side of South Main street, and named Walton Hall. The same year some of the students commenced making chairs there. About the year 1856 Wilson B. Evans and his brother Henry, who had been working at cabinet making two years on East Mill street, bought this building and having moved it down to the street, occupied it as a shop and store.



# DIRECTORY OF OBERLIN

## Blacksmiths

C. O. Parmenter N. 68 Main St.  
I. Penfield, Corner Main & Mill Sts.

## Livery Stables

B. Whitney, N. 19 Main St.

## Harness Shops & Carriage Trimg

J. H. Scott, N. 235 Main St.

## Cabinet & Chair Manuf.

Bedortha & Butler N. 74 Main St.

H. Evens & Bro. N. 73 Main St.

## Stoves, Copper & Tin Ware

Weed & Beckwith Main St. S. of College St.

S. Bartholomew, Main St. S. of College St. N. Mill, E. of Main St.

## Builders & Joiners

L. A. & J. J. Hill E. Lorain St.

A. L. Morris, Corner College & Pleasant Streets

T. P. Turner N. 147 Main St.

Jno. Campton N. 117 Lorain St.

Jno. S. Wright, N. 112 Main Street

S. Bisley, N. 124 Lorain Street

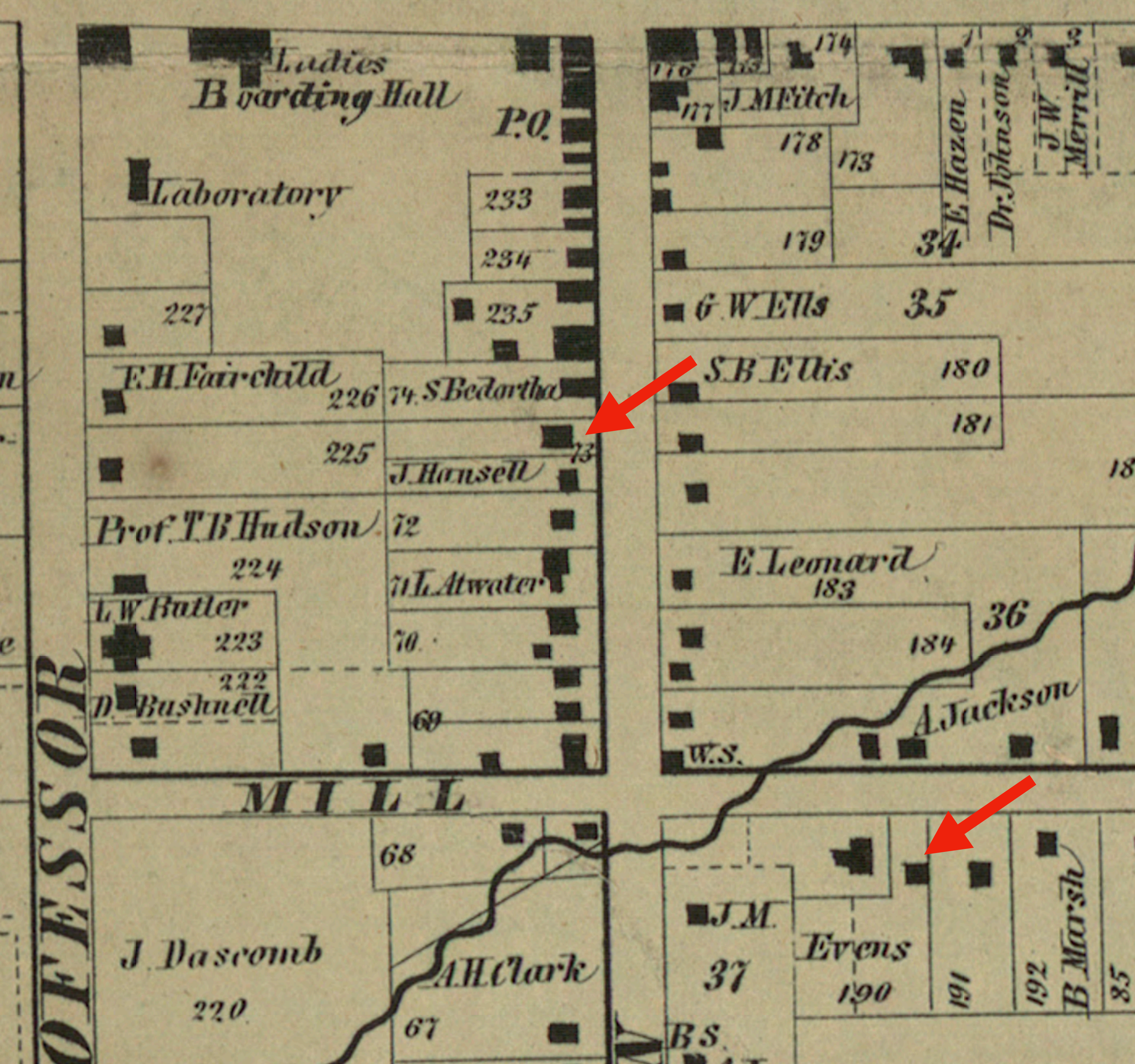
L. R. Fields, N. 87 Mill Street

## Planing Mill & Sash Blind & Door Factory

S. B. Ellis, N. 69 Main Street N. 180.

## General Insurance Agents

1857 Map of Lorain Co, OH by John F. Geil



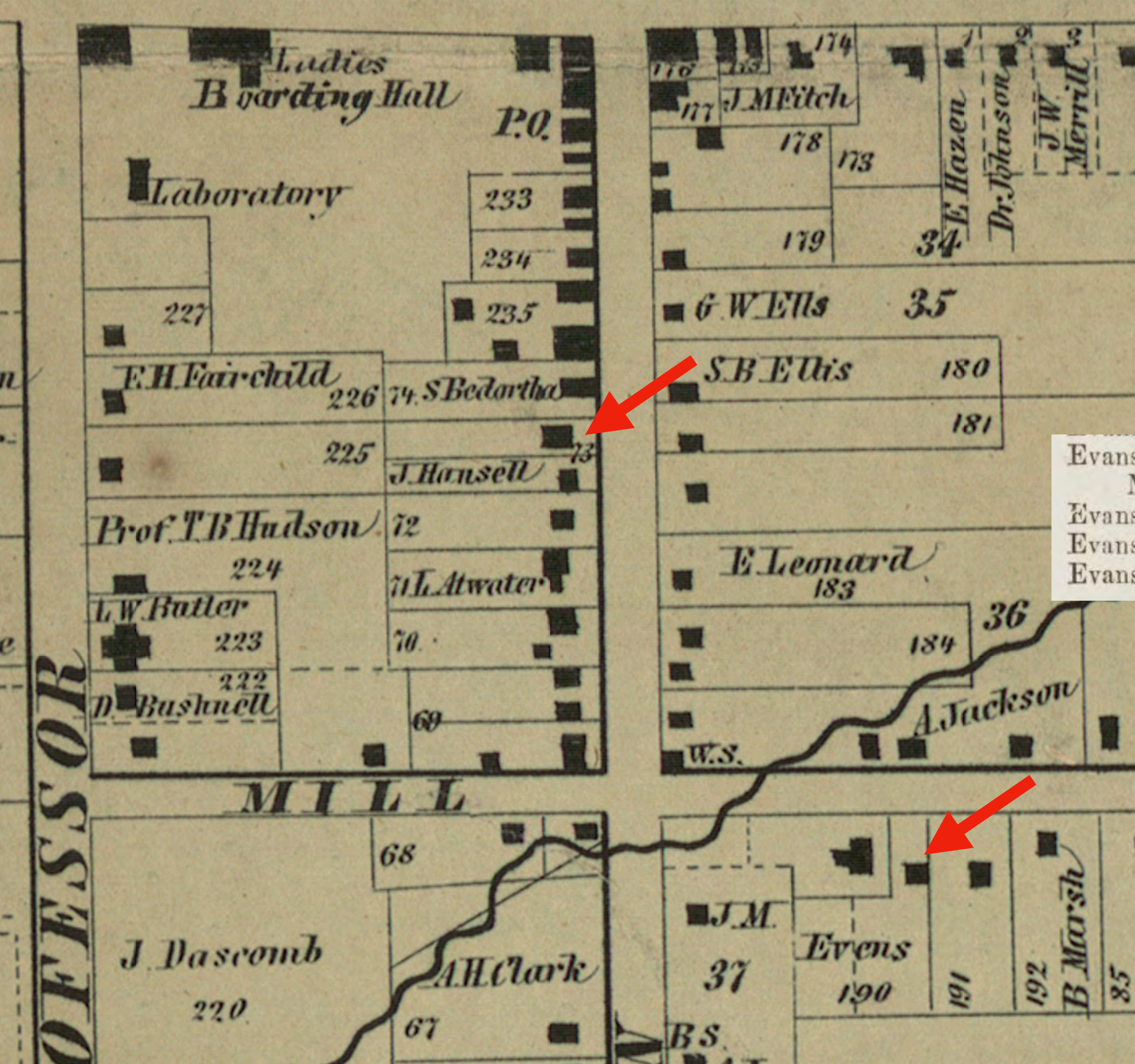
# DIRECTORY OF BERLIN

## Miscellaneous

R. Alexander, N. 42 Main Street  
R. H. Allen, N. 66 Main Street  
Rev. J. P. Bardwell, N. 121 Lorain Street  
J. H. Barnum, Teacher, N. 50 Professor Street  
L. W. Butler, N. 223 Professor Street  
S. Bedortha, N. 74 Main Street  
Rev. H. Cowles, Editor Evangelist, N. 53 Lorain St.  
R. Cole, N. 170 College Street  
J. J. Cox, N. 23 College Street  
H. Evens, N. 73 Main Street  
W. Hazen, Author, N. I. E. College St.  
W. Hovey, N. Corner Lorain & Pleasant Street  
Thos. Hoyt  
Rev. Jno. Keep, N. 101 Main Street  
Geo. Kinney, Lumber Dealer, N. 238 Professor St.

## Residential listings

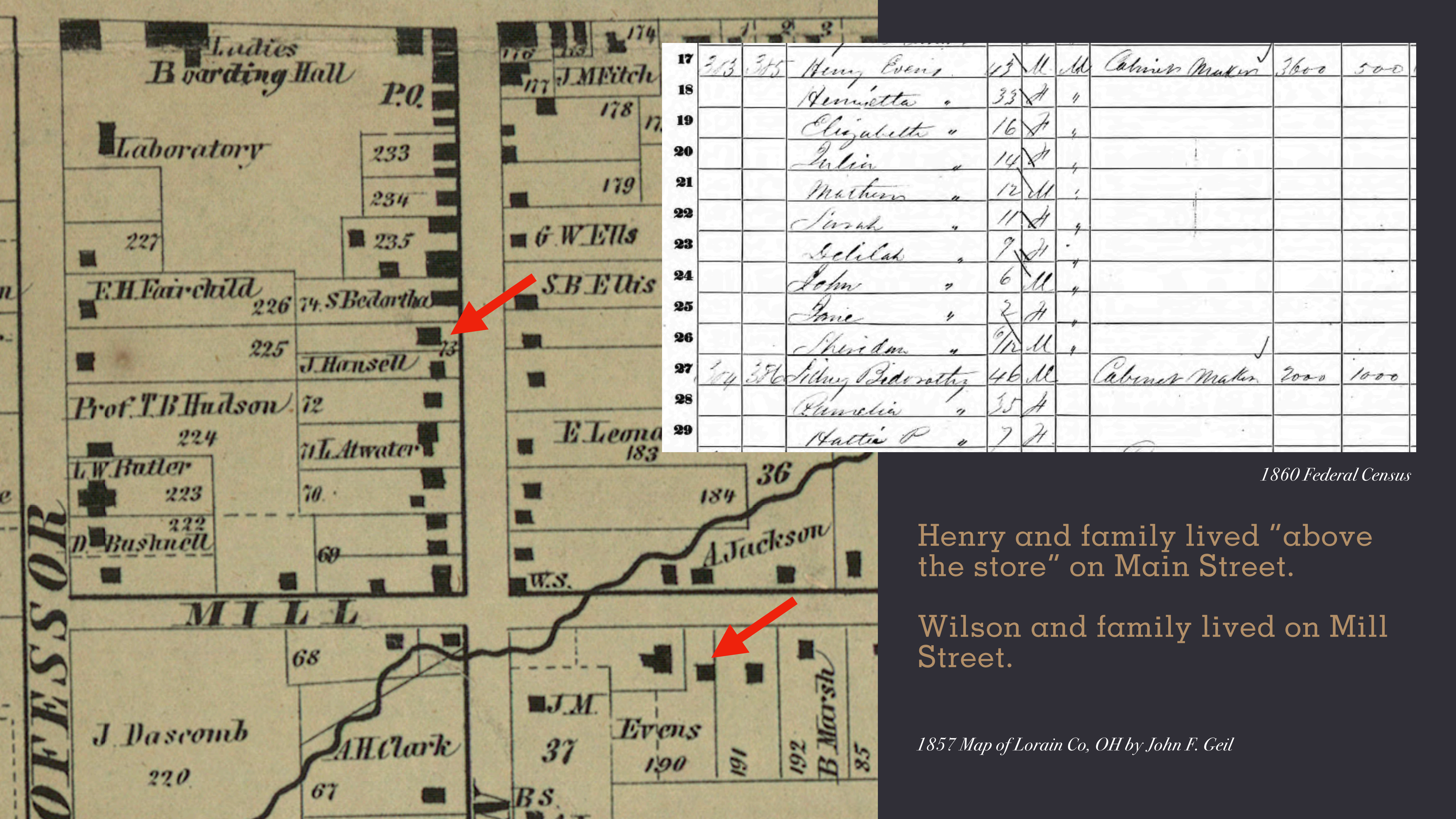
*1857 Map of Lorain Co, OH by John F. Geil*



Evans H. & E. (Henry & Wilson,) furniture warerooms, w s  
Main b Mill and College  
Evans Wm. mason, e s Pleasant s of Mechanic  
Evans Wm. student, bds n s College b Professor and West  
Evans Wilson, s s Mill b Main and Water

*1859 Oberlin City Directory*

*1857 Map of Lorain Co, OH by John F. Geil*



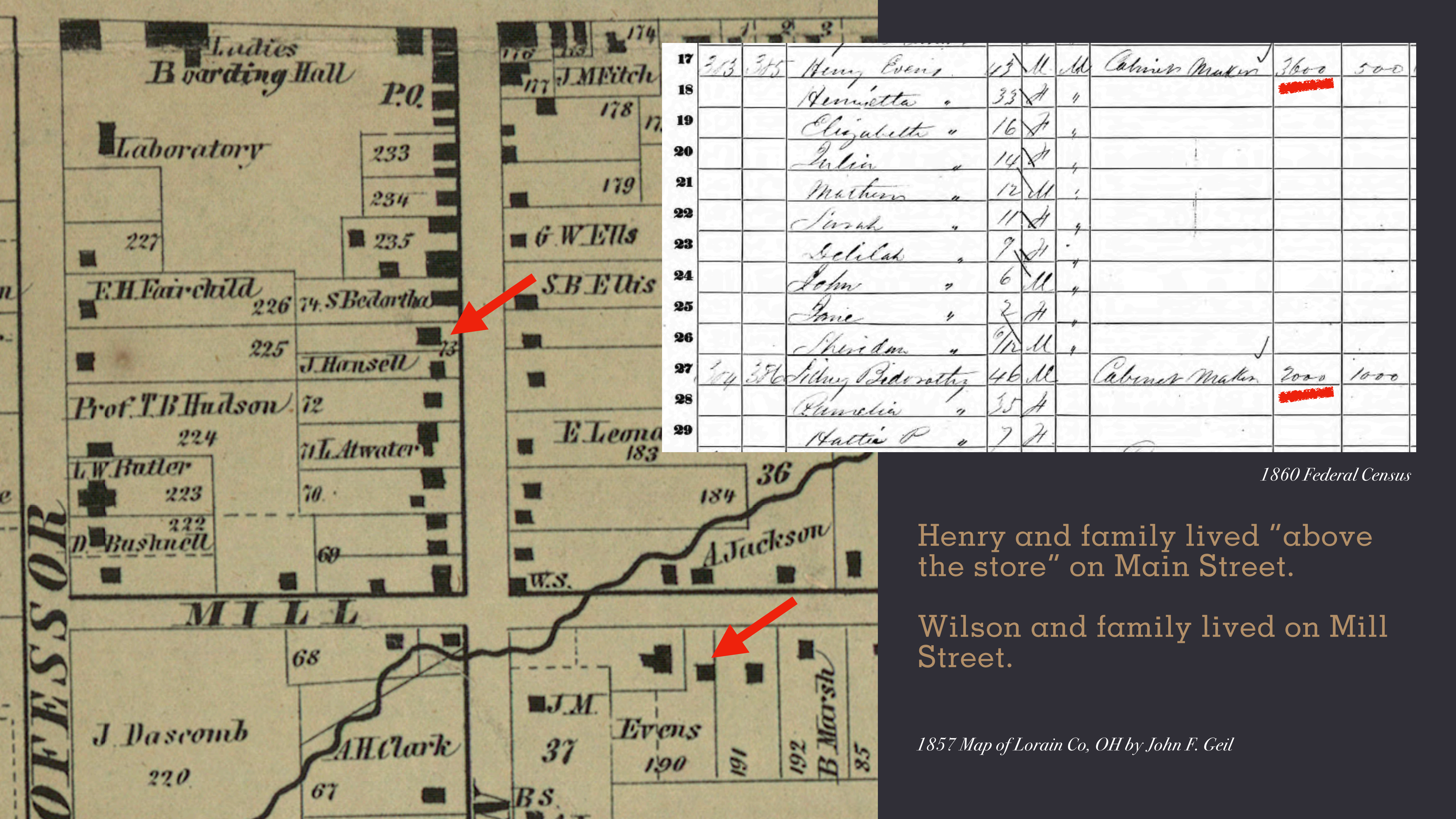
17	363	365	Henry Evens	43	M	M	Cabinet Maker	3600	500
18			Hermietta	33	F				
19			Elizabeth	16	F				
20			Julia	14	F				
21			Mathew	12	M				
22			Sarah	11	F				
23			Selilah	9	F				
24			John	6	M				
25			Jane	2	F				
26			Shirley	1	F				
27	304	306	Henry Bidworthy	46	M		Cabinet Maker	2000	1000
28			Pamela	35	F				
29			Hattie P	7	F				

1860 Federal Census

Henry and family lived "above the store" on Main Street.

Wilson and family lived on Mill Street.

1857 Map of Lorain Co, OH by John F. Geil



17	363	365	Henry Evens	43	M	M	Cabinet Maker	3600	500
18			Hermietta	33	F				
19			Elizabeth	16	F				
20			Julia	14	F				
21			Mathew	12	M				
22			Sarah	11	F				
23			Selilah	9	F				
24			John	6	M				
25			Jane	2	F				
26			Shirley	1	F				
27	304	306	Henry Bidworthy	46	M		Cabinet Maker	2000	1000
28			Penelope	35	F				
29			Hattie P	7	F				

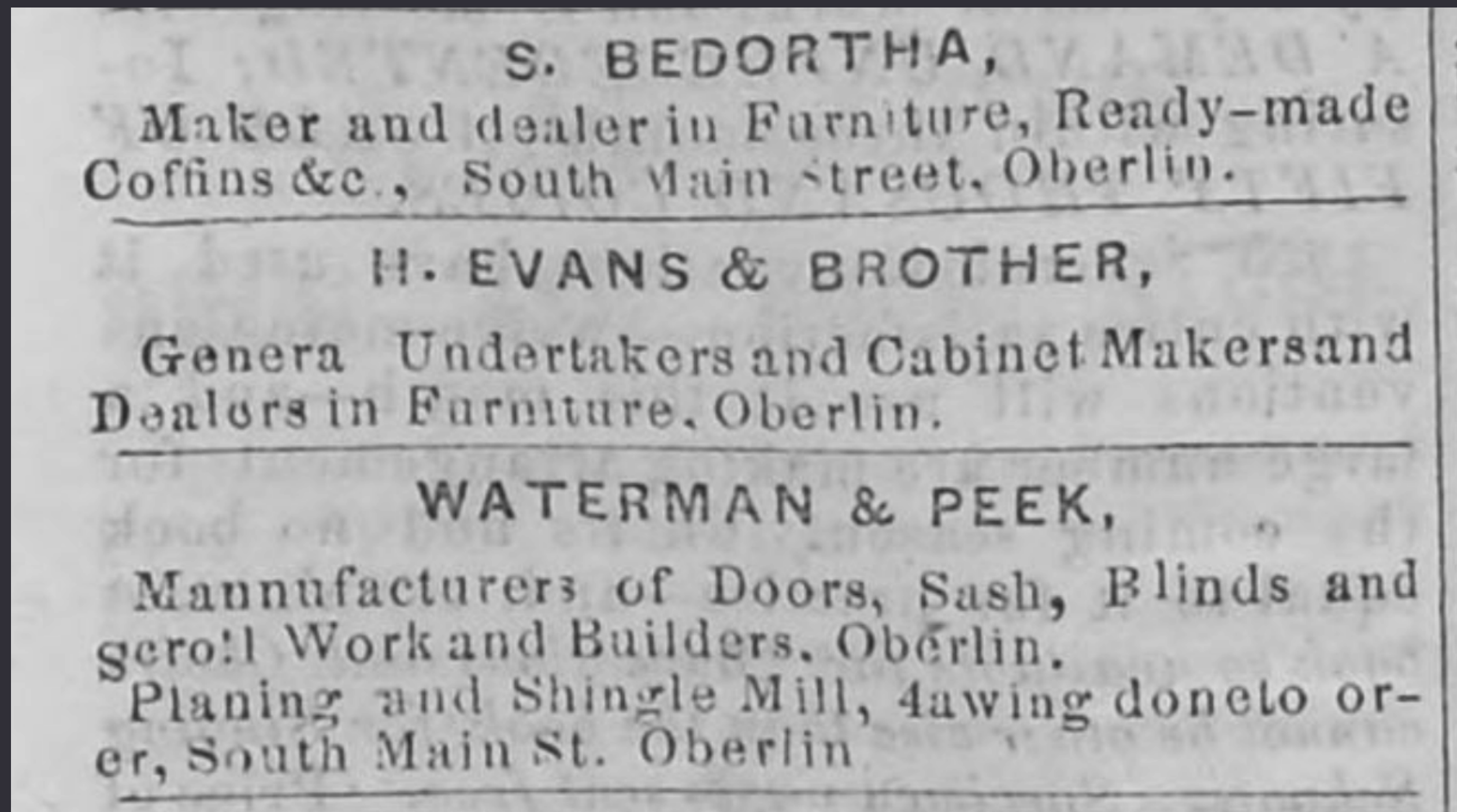
1860 Federal Census

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1857 Map of Lorain Co, OH by John F. Geil

# What do we know about Henry Evans & Brother?



**Cabinetmakers**  
**Furniture Dealers**  
**Undertakers**

*Lorain County News, Business Directory listing  
January 7, 1863 – February 24, 1864*

# What do we know about Henry Evans & Brother?

		Henry Evans	Wilson Bruce Evans
1850	Federal Census (NC)	Cabinetmaker (33)	Cabinetmaker (26)
1860	Federal Census (OH)	Cabinetmaker (43)	Cabinetmaker (36)
1870	Federal Census (OH)	Undertaker (53)	Wood Turner (46)
1873	Oberlin City Directory	Cabinetmaker (56)	–
1877	Oberlin City Directory	–	Undertaker (53)
1880	Federal Census (OH)	–	Cabinetmaker (56)
1883	Oberlin City Directory		Undertaker (59)
1887	Oberlin City Directory		Undertaker (63)
1890	Federal Census (OH)		Cabinetmaker (66)

The primary occupation of the Evans brothers is making and selling furniture. Many cabinetmakers of the period were also undertakers.

STATE OF OHIO.

463

TABLE No. 1.—MANUFACTURES, BY COUNTIES, 1860.

MANUFACTURES.	Number of establishments.	Capital invested.	Cost of raw material.	NUMBER OF HANDS EMPLOYED.		Annual cost of labor.	Annual value of products.
				Male.	Female.		
LORAIN COUNTY—Continued.							
Furniture, cabinet.....	3	5,100	941	6	.....	1,896	3,655

1860

One of three furniture/cabinetmakers in Lorain Co.

- Henry Evans & Bro.
- Bedortha
- Hoyt & Penfield

The three workshops employed a total of six men. (*Employers* not counted.)

Annual value of production: \$3,655

Raw materials: \$941

Labor: \$1,896

Gross Profit: \$818 (for all three shops)

Approx = \$31,092 in buying power today

and promptly formed their evolutions.

A prominent feature of the procession was the industrial exhibition. Messrs. Brokaw & Hendry joined the caravan with a carriage fantastically decorated with wares from their Jewelry and Fancy Store. In the center sat Prof. Firman playing upon a melodeon and occasionally singing a song.

Weed & Beckwith furnished a wagon load of hardware, propelled by one of Stewart's stoves, which was in full blast. In the rear part of the wagon a tin-smith was busily at work manufacturing tin pans.

Mr. Bailey contributed a load of harness, trunks, &c., with a workman busily engaged in pulling the "waxed end."

Evans did the upholstery by supplying a load of first-rate sofas and other furniture.

The Oberlin Sash Factory was duly represented by a planing mill in full operation on wheels, with men at work.

A provision store furnished a dray-load of flour.

The literary character of the town was well illustrated by a miniature

## 1860

Oberlin proudly showcased its various industries in a parade.

The Evans brothers showcased **upholstered furniture.**

# 1863

As in North Carolina, the brothers sought **contract business** for large orders.

Here, they won the bid to supply furniture for the new Italianate Ladies' Hall at Oberlin College.



© Oberlin College Archives

CONTRACTS.--Waterman & Peek have the contract for the doors and sash of the new Ladies' Hall, and are well on with the job. With this added to their increasing regular custom, their shop is driven to its full extent.

Mr. Lyman Hill has taken the contract for putting up the cornice to the new hall.

Messrs. Evans & Brothers, we are told, have a large bill of furniture to furnish for the same.

*Lorain County News, January 7, 1863*

## Note the Roles of the Different Trades

Waterman & Peek (the Mill)  
**Architectural millwork**



Lyman Hill  
**Joiner/Trim Carpenter**



Evans & Brother  
**Cabinetmakers**



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*Lorain County News, January 7, 1863*

# 1863

The Evans brothers employed "moderate" **steam powered machinery** in their shop for the manufacture of common articles of **household furniture**.

Most likely steam-powered machinery in their shop:

- **Planer** for thicknessing rough stock purchased from the mill
- **Lathe** for turning table legs
- **Mortise & Tenon Machines** for joinery
- **Table Saw** or **Band Saw** for dimensioning lumber

*Lorain County News, November 18, 1863*

exports. The machinery consists of the approved circular saw, with other convenient appurtenances, as for drawing logs to the carriage and so on, and turns out from 4,500 to 6,000 feet of timber per diem.

Near by are the manufactories of Messrs. H. Evans and Bro. and Mr. S. Bedortha, Cabinet-makers. Both these establishments employ a moderate steam power and the constant labor of several mechanics in the manufacture of the common articles of household furniture, while they keep always on hand a full stock of valuable cabinet ware of all qualities and descriptions. The people of Oberlin patronize more, year by year, home merchants and mechanics, and it will soon be apparent that it is not the best economy to leave Oberlin even for house furnishing purposes. The two establishments above mentioned, together with the new depot of Mr. T. S. Fuller on North Main Street will now offer so fine a variety in this line, and at such prices, that all occasion for seeking elsewhere will be done away. We must not forget to mention also the manufacture of churns and washing machines which is now carried on at the shop of

Because of a terrible accident, we can confirm that the equipment in the Evans' shop included a **steam powered planer**.



*Cleveland Morning Leader, January 19, 1861*

**DISTRESSING ACCIDENT IN OBERLIN.**—Yesterday, while Mr. Henry Evans, a cabinet maker, was engaged at his steam planing machine, a heavy wrench was jostled from the cross piece above and fell upon the rotating arms of the plainer while in very rapid motion, which sent the dangerous missile with terrible velocity against the face of Mr. Evans, who was engaged in moving the platform under the planer. So terrible was the blow, that the bones of the nose and the entire upper part of the face below the eyes were broken into countless pieces. One eye seems to be entirely destroyed and the other nearly so, while the face was made one complete mass of broken and bruised flesh. Mr. Evans is suffering greatly, but is conscious of every thing that passes. It seems almost impossible that he should recover, but Drs. Johnson and Steele are of the opinion that his temperate habits and good physical condition may possibly carry him through.

The whole community sympathises deeply with our esteemed fellow citizen and his afflicted family.

Oberlin, Jan. 17, 1861.

WAKEMAN, Jan. 21st, 1861.

PUBLISHERS NEWS:—I learn from the Cleveland Leader that our worthy townsman Henry Evans has met with a severe, perhaps fatal accident. The intelligence fills me with me with the deepest sorrow. I have known Mr. Evans well, from the beginning of his residence in Oberlin, and as I was confined with him in Cleveland for nearly three months, my acquaintance with him during that period was intimate. In all my intercourse with him I have found him to be a man of excellent and even admirable character. Indeed I think it would be difficult to find his equal for modesty united with high mindedness and generosity joined with the strictest integrity in any walk of life. His virtues, therefore, which I have seen thoroughly tested, make me greatly regret the calamity which has fallen upon him.

Besides, I have reason to know that his pecuniary circumstances are such that his misfortune will be quite certain

to bring his large family into great straits. With his untiring industry, which has been known of all men, he has scarcely been able to keep good the little store which he brought to Oberlin.

A previous accident, which long crippled him, and the losses growing out of his confinement in jail, while under indictment for being concerned in the Wellington rescue so far taxed his resources that for nearly two years he hardly been able to support the wife and seven little children who look to him for their bread. This new adversity will certainly bring actual want into his household if his friends do not offer relief.

I write this note with hope that many of your readers will be induced by it to extend to our good neighbor that fraternal hand, which, doing its utmost, could only partially lighten the heavy burden which has fallen on him and his excellent family.

Respectfully yours,

H. E. PECK.

*Lorain County News, January 23, 1861*

**1859–1862**  
were hard years.

Mr. Henry Evans who, as our readers know, came near losing his life some weeks ago by an accidental derangement of his planing mill, is rapidly recovering. It will be a long time, however, before he can resume labor. We beg leave to suggest to our friends that while they are making their annual renewal of house furniture they will do well to provide themselves at Mr. Evans' shop. His stock is good and patronage will now be more than commonly useful to him.

*Lorain County News, March 6, 1861*

# Let's Extend the Timeline...

## 1854

**April 22** Henry (37) appears before Governor David Reid in Raleigh, NC requesting safe passage to Ohio via "public conveyance" for himself and his wife Henrietta and their six children. Wilson (30) and his wife Sarah, and son Matthew (1 year old) travel with them.

**May 11** Wilson Bruce Evans purchases the property on Mill Street (now Vine) for \$500. Purchase price indicates that there was likely a building on the property, which from maps appears to be the square building previously located behind the current house.

## 1856

**March 24** Oberlin College agrees to sell Walton Hall on South Main to Mr. Evans (Henry).

## 1858

Sept 13

Henry (41) and Wilson Evans (34) participate in the rescue of John Price. (Oberlin-Wellington Rescue)

## 1859

Apr 15 –  
July 6

Henry and Wilson Evans held at Cuyahoga County Jail in Cleveland

## 1860

Oct 3

Henry appointed Sexton for 1861 by the Oberlin Society "and will soon be prepared to attend to all the business of an undertaker." (Oberlin's first cemetery at Morgan and Professor Streets)

## 1861

Jan 17

Henry's planer accident. He is 44.

# 1863

Jan 7

H. Evans & Brother business directory listings begin running in *Lorain County News*

Awarded large contract for Ladies' Hall furniture

# 1864

Abt  
Feb 20

Fire burns the Evans shop (Walton Hall) and Bedortha's shop next door.

CARELESSNESS.—A block of buildings in town was again threatened with fire the other day from the careless igniting of some dry shavings and other combustibles. People cannot be too careful in handling matches and such.

*Lorain County News, February 24, 1864*

## 1863

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## 1864

Abt  
Feb 20

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Feb 24

Final business directory listing for H. Evans & Brother in *Lorain County News*

Aug 30

Wilson Bruce Evans (40) enlists in Union army (178th Ohio Co. D) and serves 10 months.

# The Mill on Main

**S. BEDORTHA,**  
Maker and dealer in Furniture, Ready-made  
Coffins &c., South Main Street, Oberlin.

---

**H. EVANS & BROTHER,**  
General Undertakers and Cabinet Makers and  
Dealers in Furniture, Oberlin.

---

**WATERMAN & PEEK,**  
Manufacturers of Doors, Sash, Blinds and  
Scroll Work and Builders, Oberlin.  
Planing and Shingle Mill, awaiting orders  
er, South Main St. Oberlin

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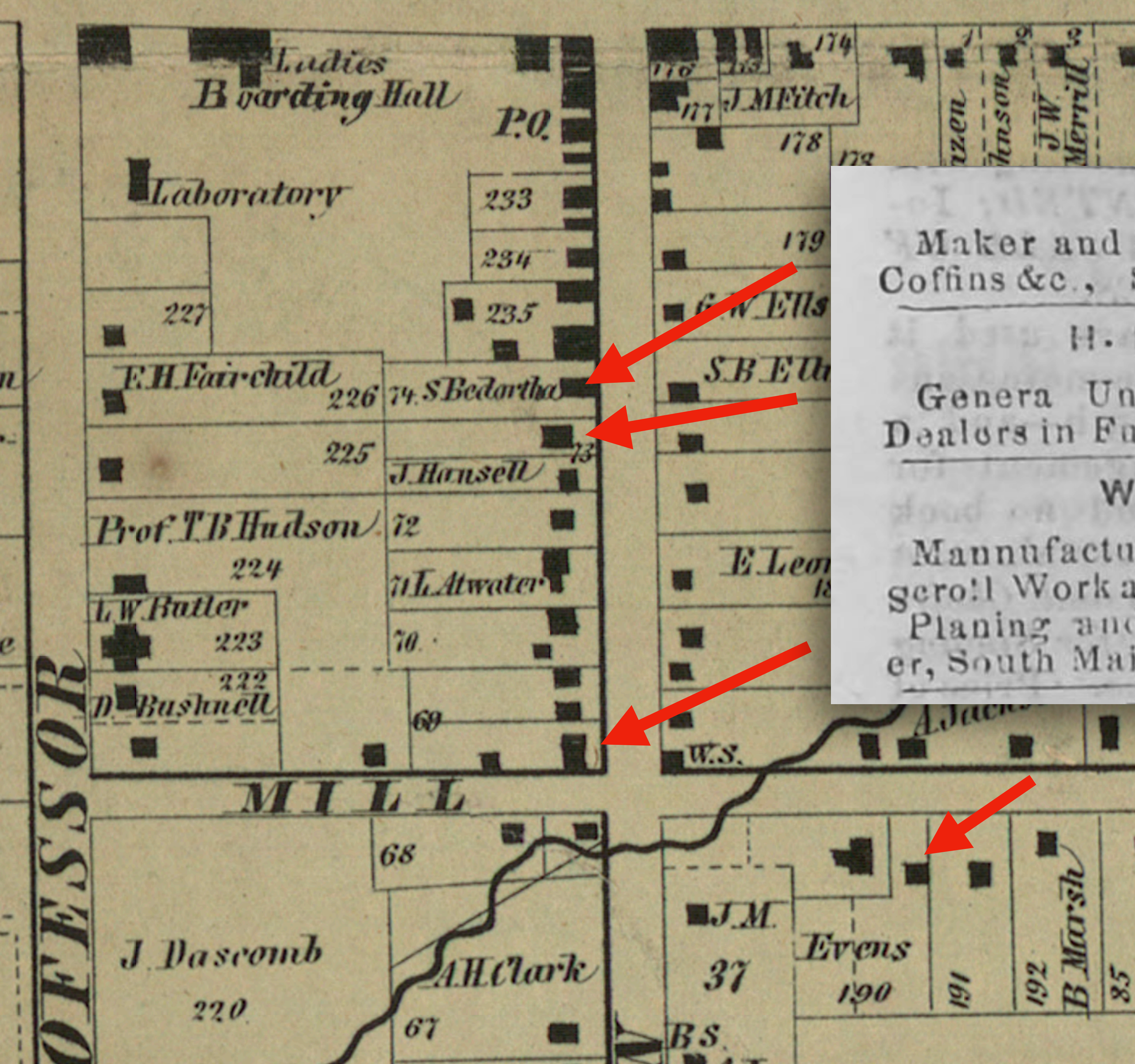
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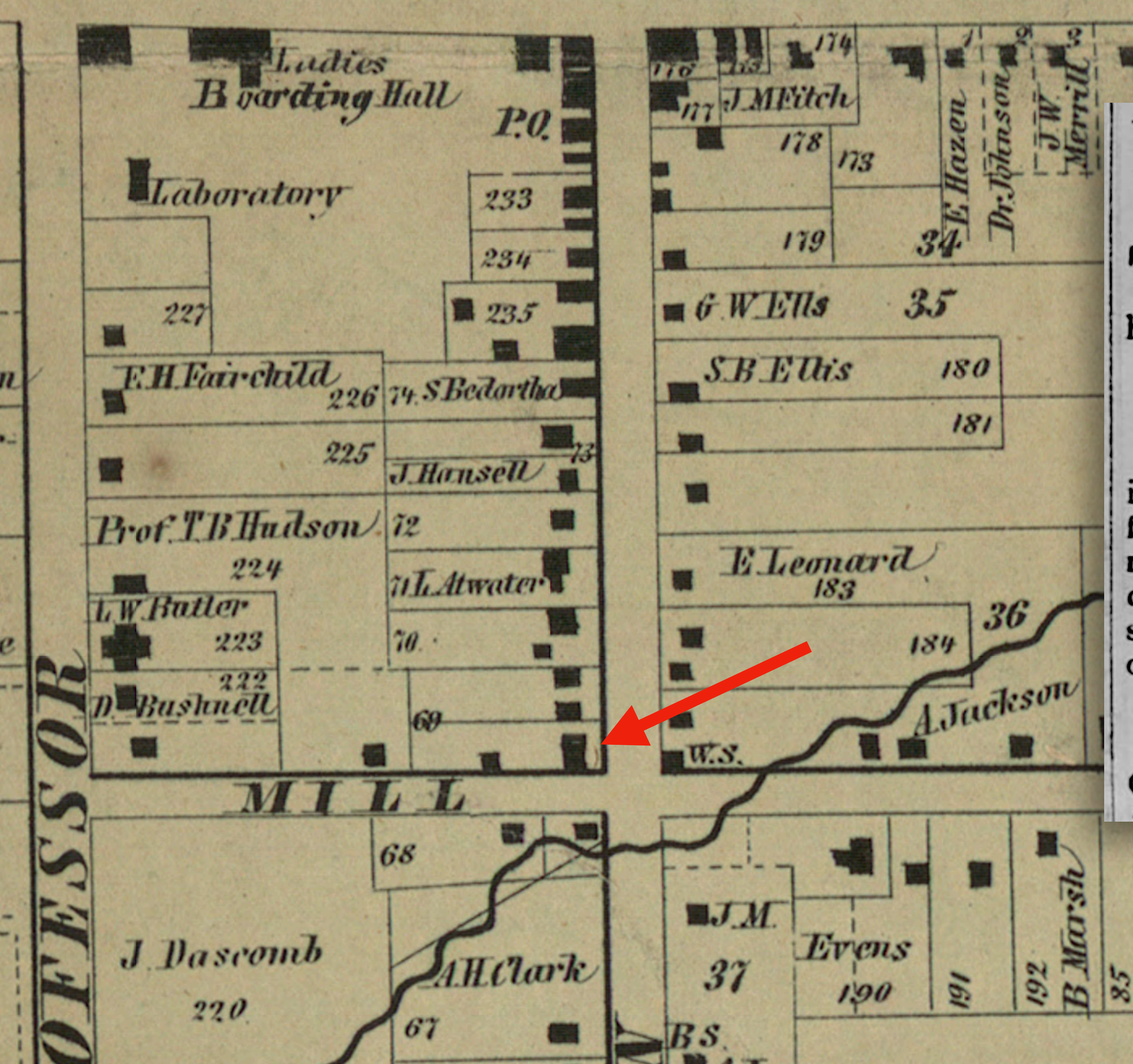
*Lorain County News, October 10, 1863–1864*

*1857 Map of Lorain Co, OH by John F. Geil*

*Lorain County News, October 10, 1863–1864*

*1857 Map of Lorain Co, OH by John F. Geil*





## NEW FIRM.

THE UNDERSIGNED having this day entered into Co-partnership and having purchased a

## NEW PLANING MACHINE!

in addition to the one already in use, of fer persons at a distance special inducement to give us a call, as we are able to dress double the amount of flooring, siding or lumber which we otherwise could.

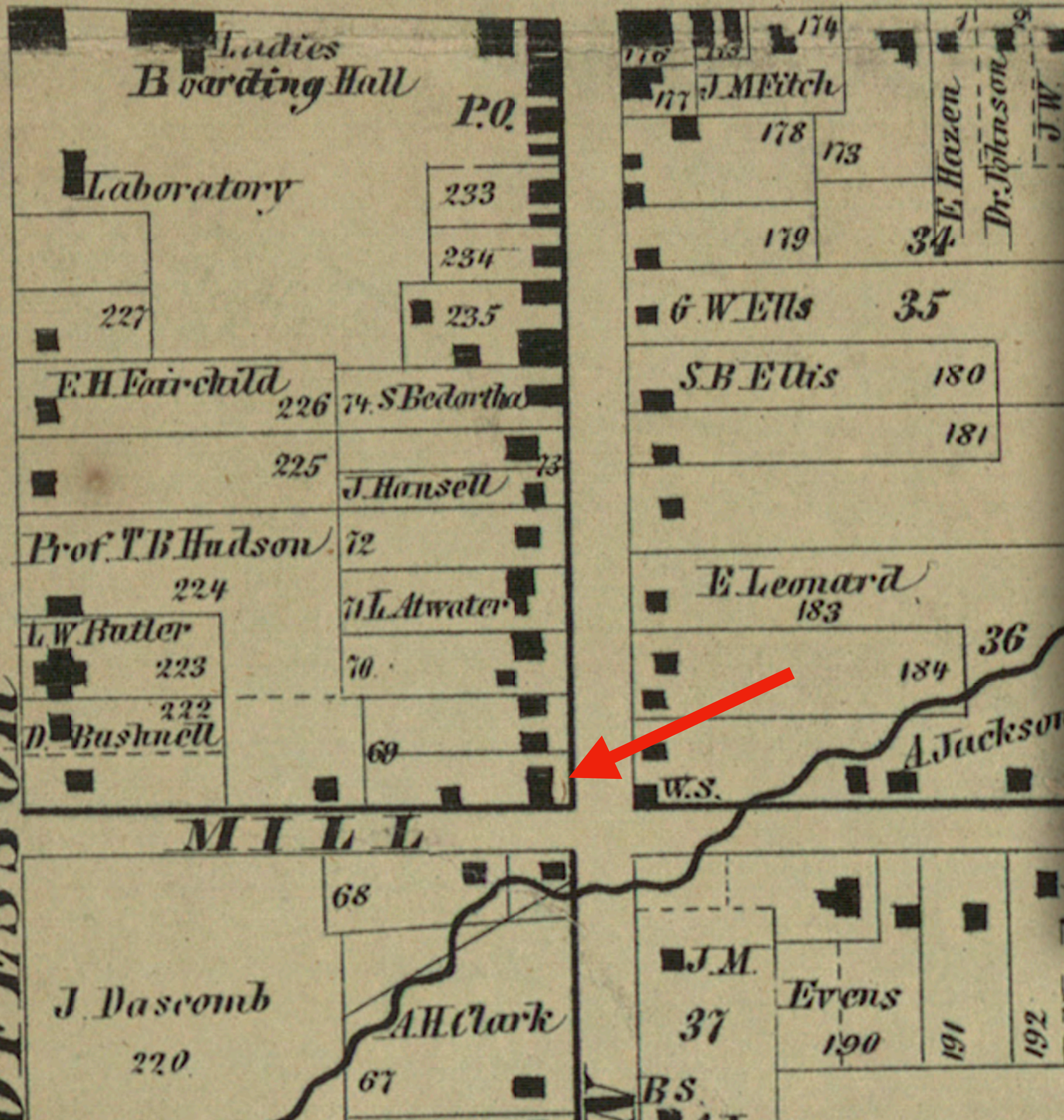
J. W. PEEK,  
L. S. COLBURN.

Oberlin, March 19, 1866.

316-17

*Lorain County News, March 21, 1866*

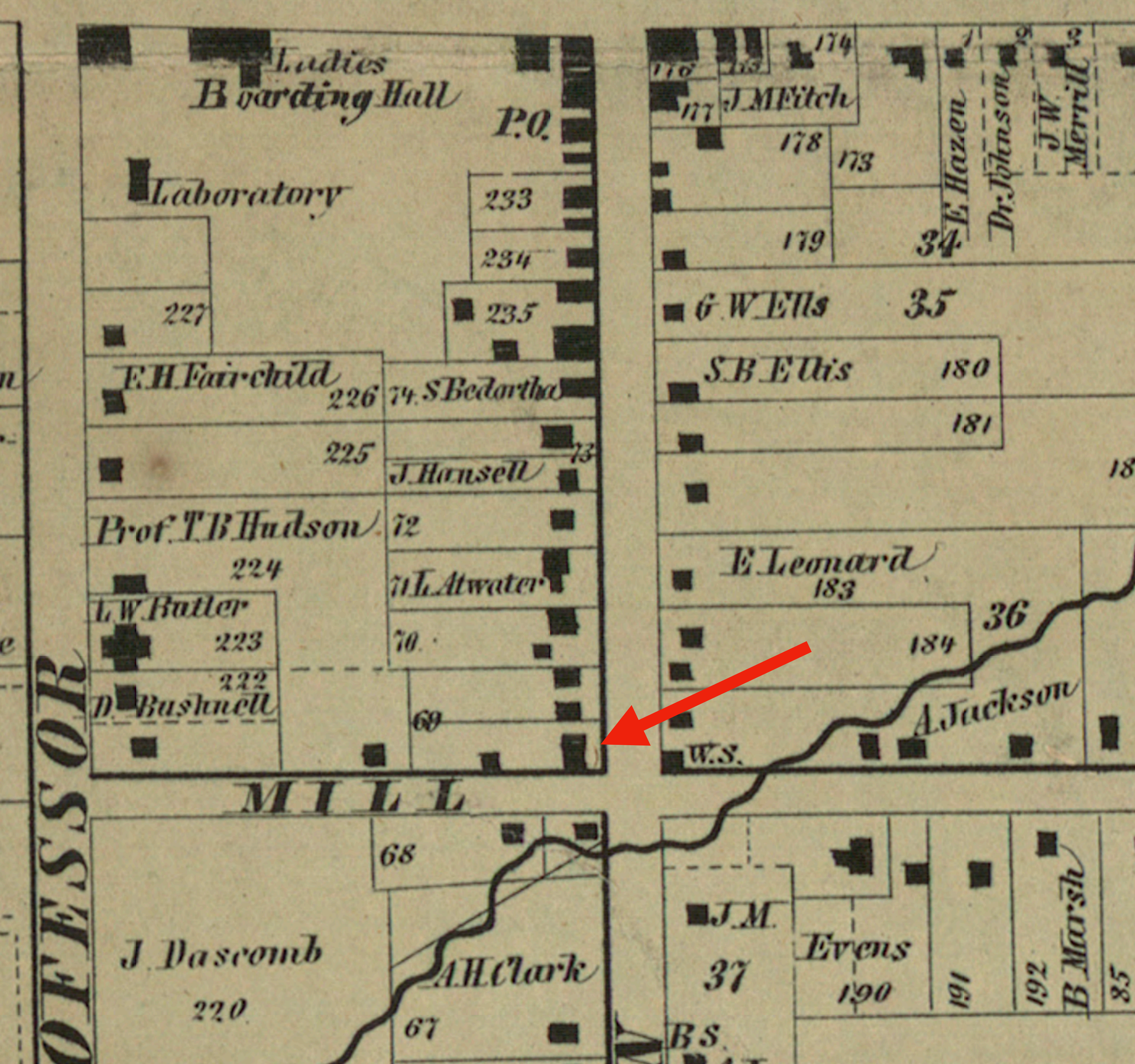
*1857 Map of Lorain Co, OH by John F. Geil*



**Peek & Colburn,**  
 SOUTH MAIN ST., OBERLIN, O.,  
 Manufacturers of Doors, Sash, Blinds,  
 Flooring, Siding and Mouldings, wish to  
 call special attention to their manufacture  
 of  
**BLINDS!**  
 Having completed machinery especially  
 for that purpose, we will, from now on,  
 make Blinds at less than Cleveland prices.  
 We make the narrow beaded Slat, which  
 are the nicest in use.  
 We keep a good assortment of Flooring,  
 Siding, Whitewood and Pine Lumber.  
 All kinds of custom work done on  
 short notice.  
 J. W. PEEK. [L. S. COLBURN.  
 380-408

Lorain County News, April 4, 1866

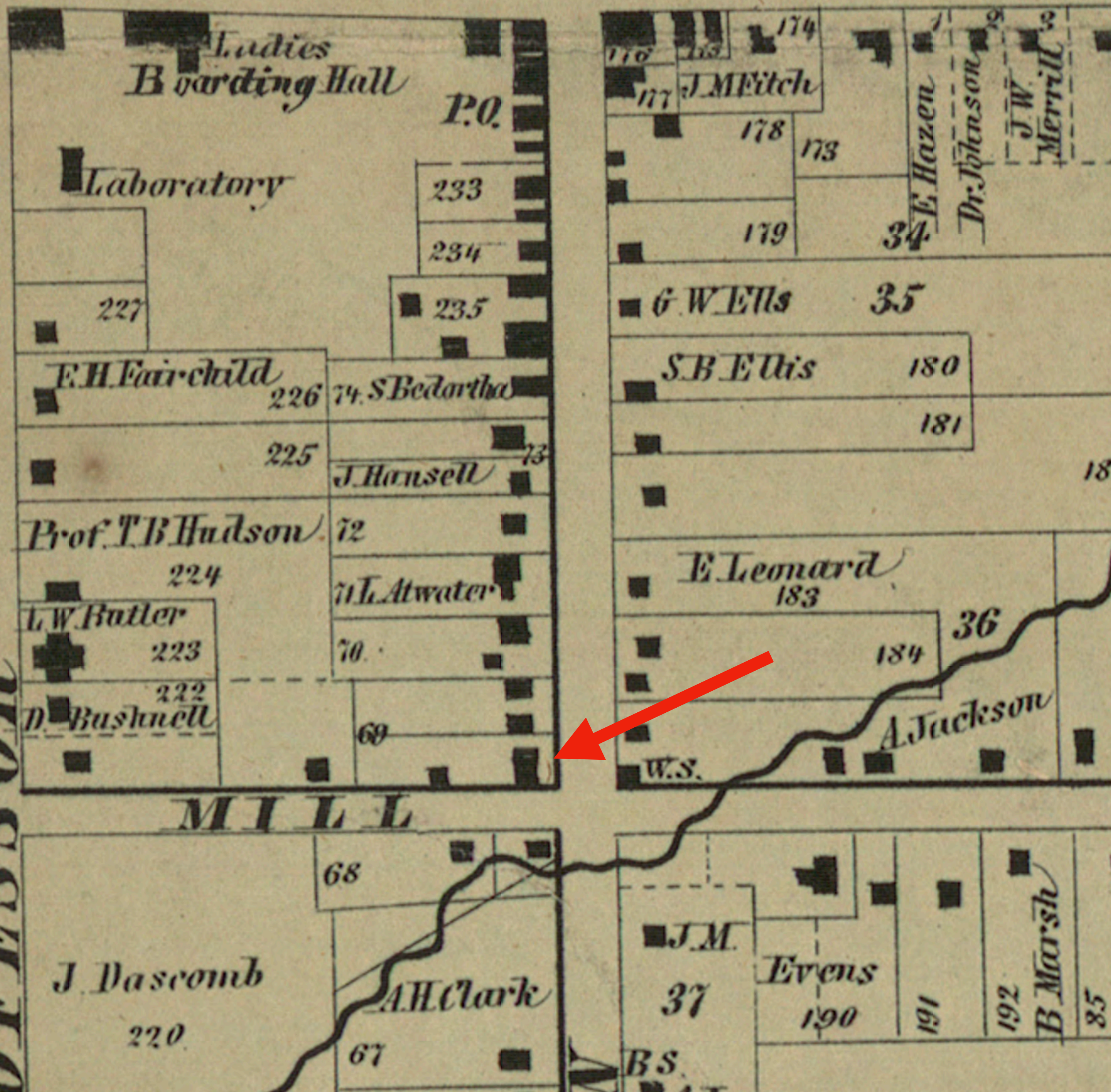
1857 Map of Lorain Co, OH by John F. Geil



**L. S. COLBURN,**  
Manufacturer and Dealer in all kinds of  
**WOOD BUILDING MATERIAL,**  
Including  
LUMBER, FLOORING,  
SIDING, SHINGLES,  
DOORS, SASH, BLINDS,  
MOULDING, BRACKETS  
And Scroll Work of every variety. Also,  
**Newels, Balusters,**  
AND HAND RAILS.  
Shingles sawed on shares or by the thou-  
sand.  
**Machine Shop.**  
I am also prepared to do all kinds of iron  
turning and machine work.

*Lorain County News, August 11, 1870*

*1857 Map of Lorain Co, OH by John F. Geil*



L. S. COLBURN.

49 SOUTH MAIN ST.

**DOORS, SASH &  
BLINDS,**

**An Immense Stock!**

The largest ever in LORAIN COUNTY.

They must and will be sold at

**Greatly Reduced Prices.**

**GOOD PINE DOORS,**

from \$2.50 to \$3.00.

ROLLING BLINDS 38 to 40c a ft.

SASH 10 per ct. less than these  
prices.

**One Hundred Thousand**

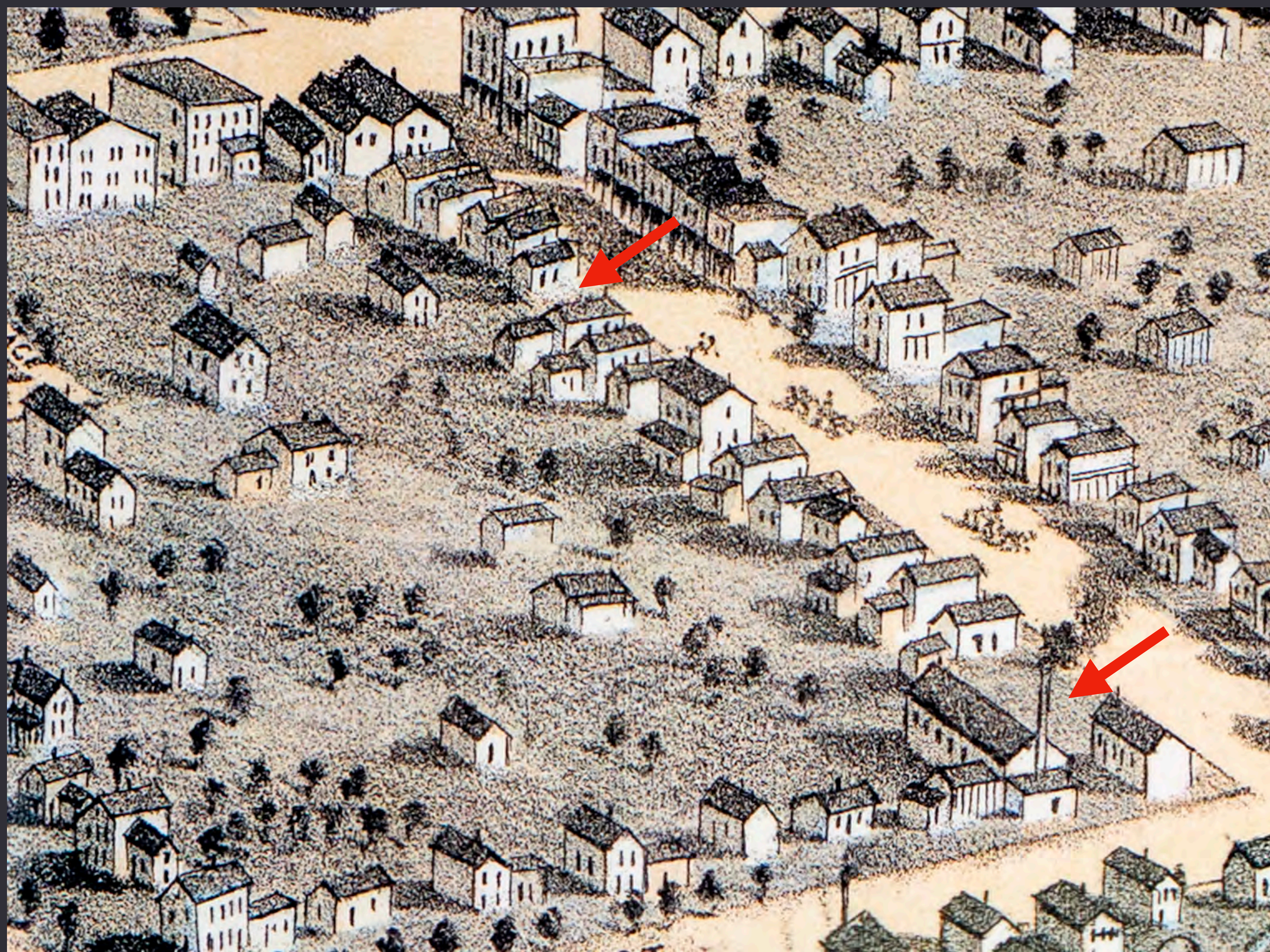
*Best Star Shingles,*

# 1864

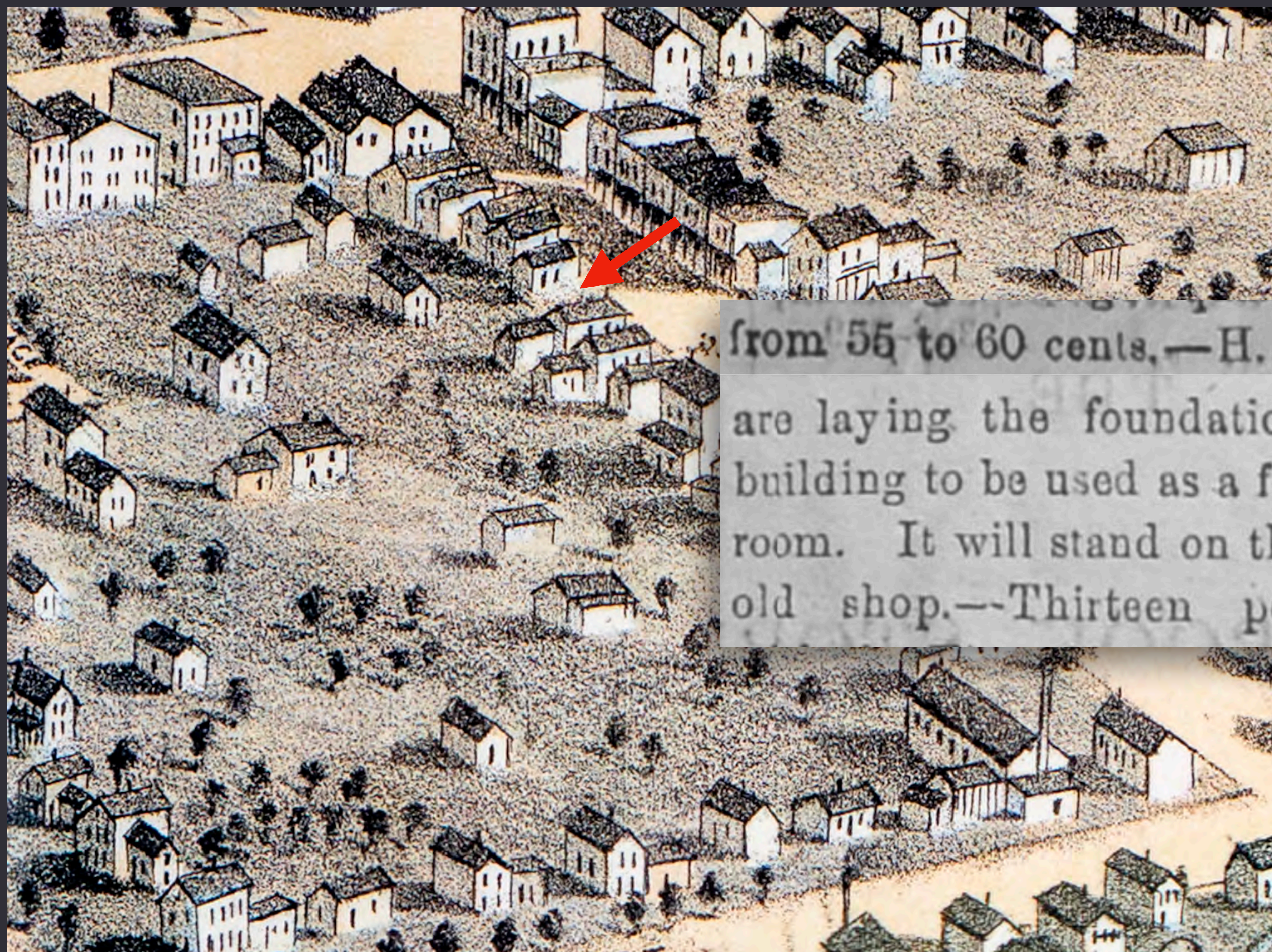
After the fire, the Evans Brothers along with L.W. Butler (a white chair maker from Bedortha's shop) built an addition on the north end of the planing mill where they worked until Butler went west in 1865 or '66.

L. W. Butler in the chair business, a year or two before Bedortha came to Oberlin, in a shop on Mill street west of the planing mill. In '58 he went into partnership with Bedortha for a year, then rented his shop a year, and after that worked for him until the fire. Mr. Butler then united with the Evans Brothers, who were burned out at the same time, and put an addition on the north end of the planing mill, where they worked until he went west in '65 or '66. Im-

*1873 Camp's Directory*



*1868 Bird's Eye Map  
Oberlin Heritage Center*

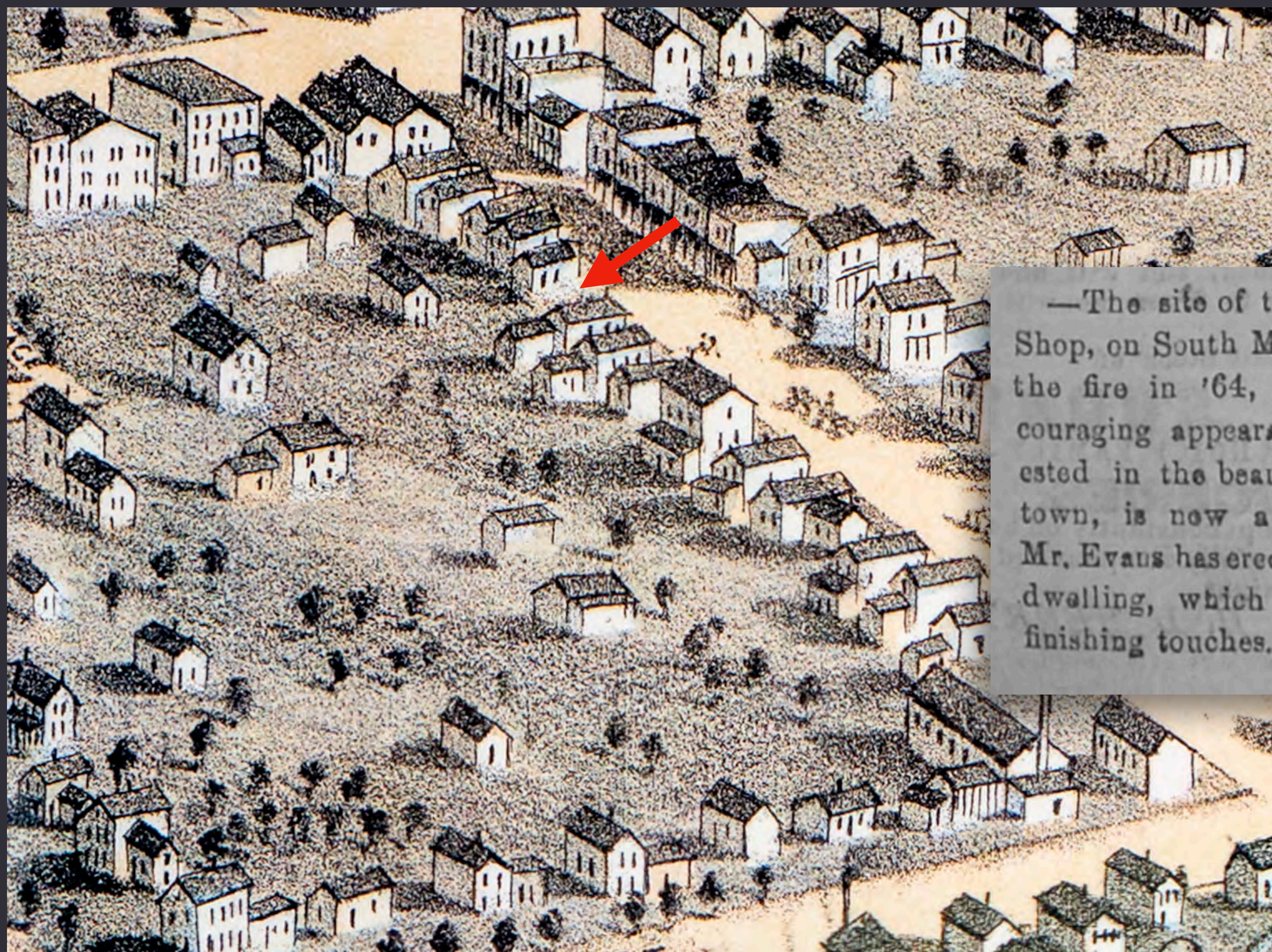


## 1866 Rebuilding

from 55 to 60 cents.—H. Evans & Bro.  
are laying the foundations for a new  
building to be used as a furniture ware-  
room. It will stand on the site of their  
old shop.—Thirteen persons united

*Lorain County News, July 4, 1866*

*1868 Bird's Eye Map  
Oberlin Heritage Center*



## 1867 Change Of Plans?

—The site of the old Evans Cabinet Shop, on South Main St., which, after the fire in '64, presented such a discouraging appearance to any one interested in the beauty of that part of the town, is now a building lot whereon Mr. Evans has erected a handsome frame dwelling, which is now receiving the finishing touches.

*Lorain County News, October 16, 1867*

*1868 Bird's Eye Map  
Oberlin Heritage Center*

**1868-1869**

## FOR SALE.

TWO Dwelling Houses, pleasantly situated near the business part of the village. Houses convenient. One is new, just built, the other nearly new. Persons wanting, would do well to look before they purchase elsewhere. They are situated on South Main Street.

415tf.]

HENRY EVANS.

*Lorain County News, March 11, 1868  
Ad ran until May 7, 1869.*

*1868 Bird's Eye Map  
Oberlin Heritage Center*

# 1868

Following the 1867 newspaper story that the Evans were rebuilding their shop (and then didn't) there are no more references to Henry Evans and Brother. The brothers continued to be referenced as "cabinetmakers" in the Census, but any work appears to have been done for and at the Planing Mill.

Particularly telling, Wilson Bruce Evans' occupation in the 1870 Census is "wood turner" meaning that he was a lathe operator—most likely at the mill, which first started advertising turned items (newels, balusters, hadnrails, etc.) in 1870.



*Lorain County News, July 15, 1868*

# 1870

Wilson Bruce Evans appears to be conducting his undertaking business independent of a furniture-making operation. An account of a fire in 1870 indicates that he was working in a building owned by George Pay, where John Scott (saddle and harness maker) also worked.

**Destructive Fire in Oberlin.**  

---

**SIX BUILDINGS DESTROYED!**  

---

**AND ONE BADLY DAMAGED!!**  

---

**Value of Property Destroyed**  
**\$7,000!**

J. H. Scott is again in his old quarters. He removed temporarily to the old bank building, but Mr. Pay showed so much enterprise in repairing damages that Scott was back in full blast on Tuesday.

Mr. Pay's business was only suspended for a couple of days.

Mr. Evans, the undertaker, saved his entire stock, and is again ready for business in the Pay building.

*Lorain County News, July 15, 1868*

# 1871

Henry Evans (54) opens an account with the Freedman's Bank in Washington, DC where he began to spend more time, while maintaining Oberlin as his primary address. It appears he kept one of the two houses he had for sale.

6488

No. *Record for Henry Evans*

Date of Application, *March 15<sup>th</sup> 1871*

Where born,

Where brought up,

Residence, *Oberlin, Ohio. Residing temporarily 1137*

Age, *Seventh St Washington DC*

Complexion,

*ancestry.com*

Record for Henry Evans

Date of Application: March 18, 1871

Residence: Oberlin, Ohio. Residing Temporarily 1137 Seventh St  
Washington, DC

## 1870–1880

Sometime during this decade, Wilson Bruce Evans built his handsome new brick Italianate home on Mill Street, in front of the existing frame home.

Most likely, 1870–1875.

## 1872

**Nov 14** Young daughter of Henry Evans badly hurt when a sidewalk tipped onto her during its construction on Mill Street.

## 1873

**Jan 2** Reporting of a spate of attempted burglaries in Oberlin, including at Henry Evans' house.

## 1880

Henry (63) is listed in the 1880 Federal Census in Washington, DC. No occupation listed.

**April  
& July** Two accounts of large parties (a wedding and birthday) at W.B. Evans "commodious" residence at 27 East Mill Street.

**Oct 15** Henry Evans and others come home from Washington to vote.

1886

Henry dies  
at age 69.

lin's pastor.—Henry Evans fell from his house while repairing it last week and received serious injuries. His wife, accompanied by her son Bruce, from Washington, arrived Tuesday.—S. G.

*Lorain County News, August 28, 1886*

#### Oberlin News.

Henry Evans, aged sixty-nine years, recently of Washington, D. C., died Sunday evening after a short illness. Funeral from his brother's residence Thursday, September 2, Rev. Robert Hutchings officiating. His daughters Mary, Julia, Anna and his son Lewis, arrived from Washington, D. C., Tuesday to attend the funeral.—Miss Ida Gibbs and C. Sheenoff left Thursday

*Lorain County News, September 4, 1886*

# **The Wilson Bruce Evans Home**



OHIO  
HISTORICAL  
MARKER  
WILSON BRUCE EVANS  
HOUSE  
1847-1848  
Built by Wilson Bruce Evans, a prominent  
merchant and politician. The house was  
the residence of the Evans family for  
many years. It is a fine example of  
Victorian architecture and is well  
preserved. The house is located on  
the corner of Main and  
Washington Streets in  
Cincinnati, Ohio.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

## EVANS, WILSON BRUCE, HOUSE

Page 1

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **EVANS, WILSON BRUCE, HOUSE**

Other Name/Site Number: LOR-239-21

The interior of the house is distinctive because of its original woodwork, which was milled and installed by Wilson Bruce Evans and his brother, Henry. The two brothers were carpenters and furniture makers. The deep molding surrounds accentuate all the doorways, the doors themselves, and the trim around all the windows and the staircase. Constructed of walnut and oak, the woodwork is stained a rich, dark brown. The woodwork has never been painted. The doorways to the first floor rooms are arched, a distinguishing feature of this house. The original floor plan consists of a side entrance hall with the staircase leading to the second floor just behind the front door, on the west side of the house. A narrow hallway



# Our Questions

- What is architecturally or structurally interesting about this house?

“Interesting” – Atypical, unique, unexpected, or puzzling for the period, region, or style

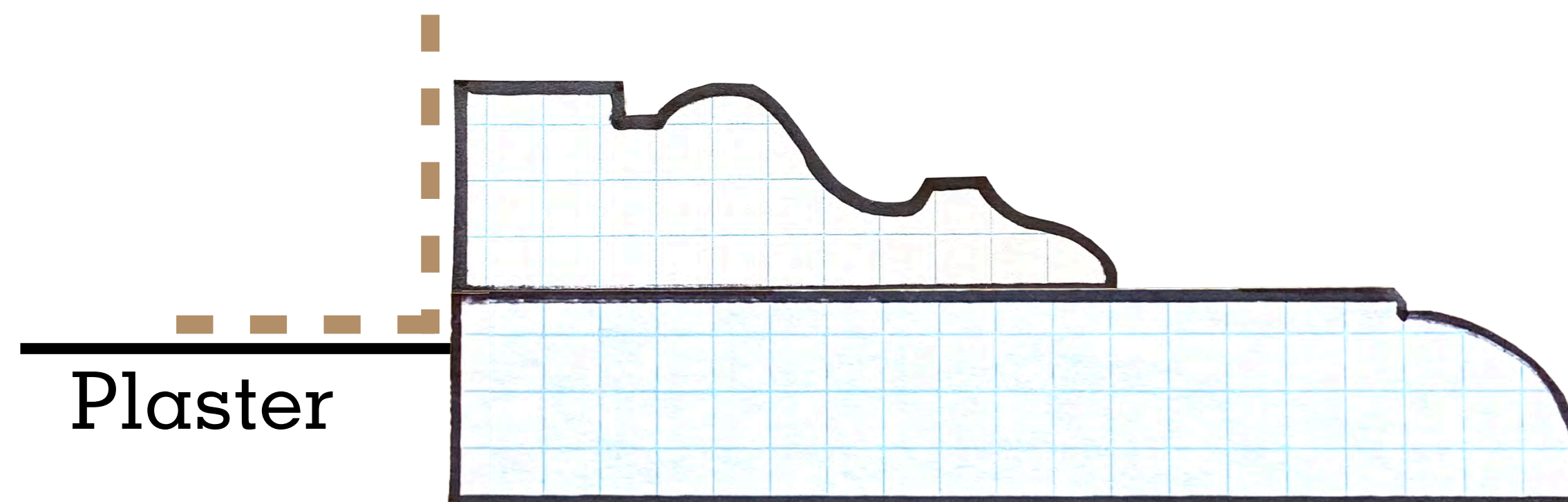
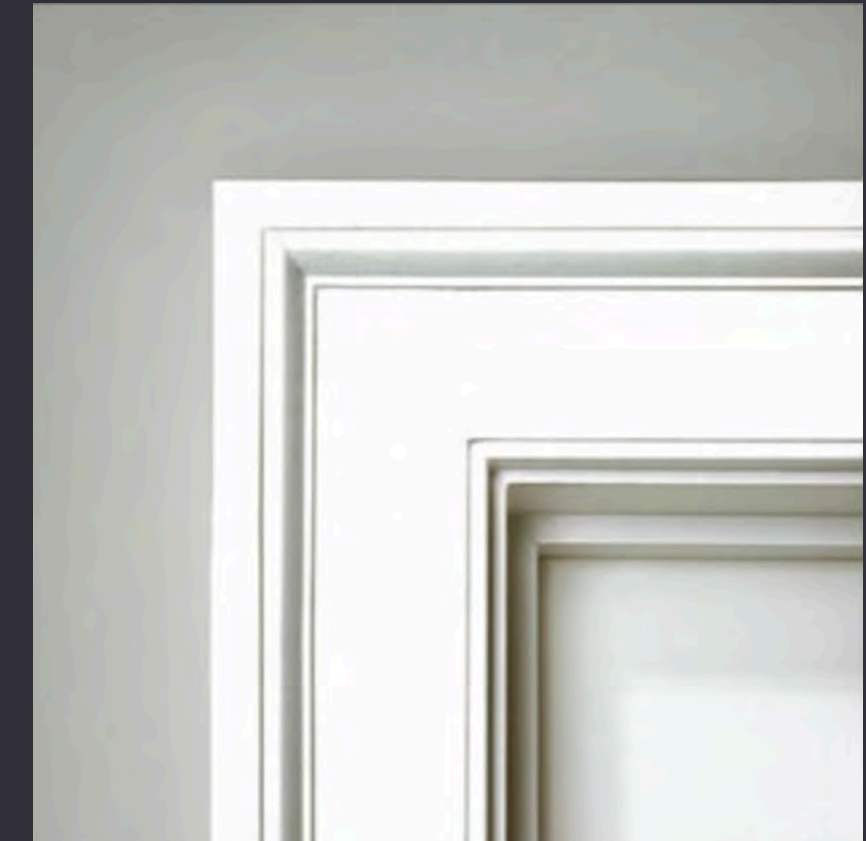
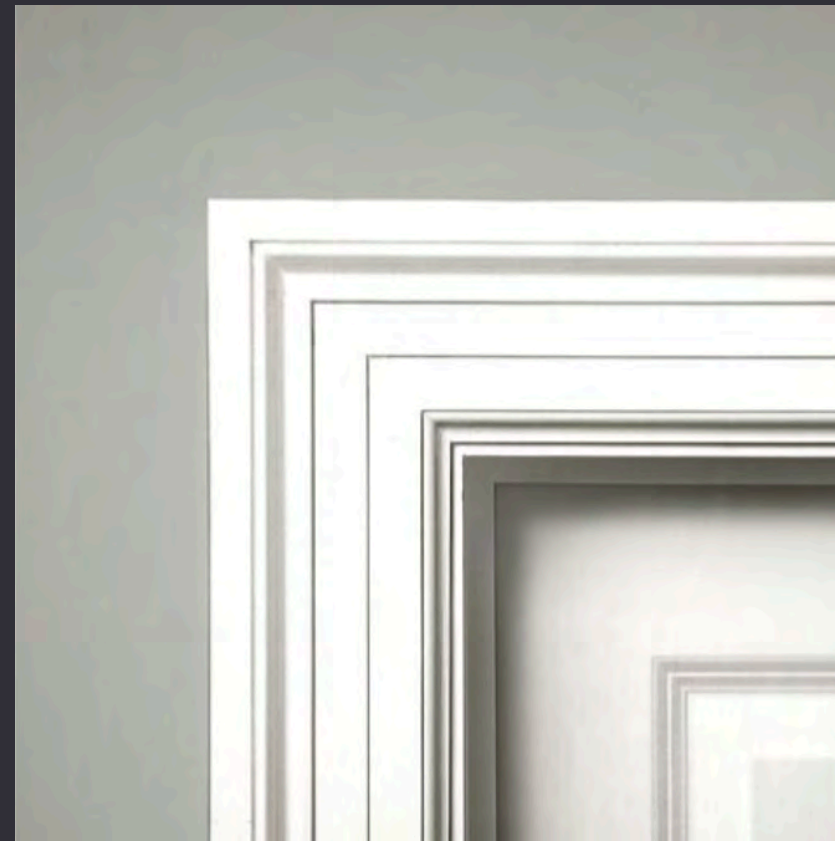
- How does the historic context and record inform what we see in the house?
- Where can we find the Evans brothers in the house?

All of which can help inform the future interpretation of the home.

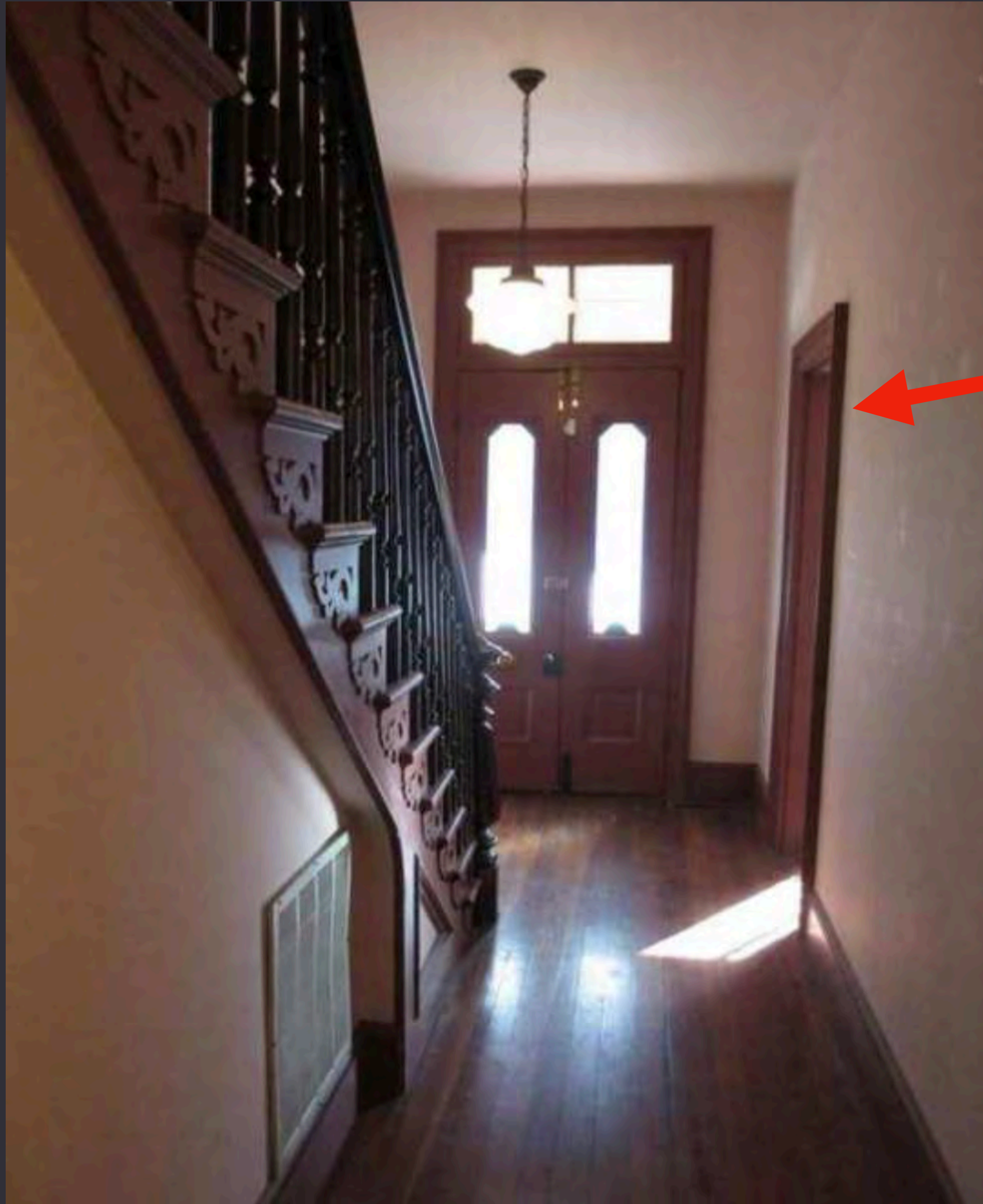
# Trim Work

The trim work in the house is stunning. But, why?

# Conventional Window & Door Trim Anatomy

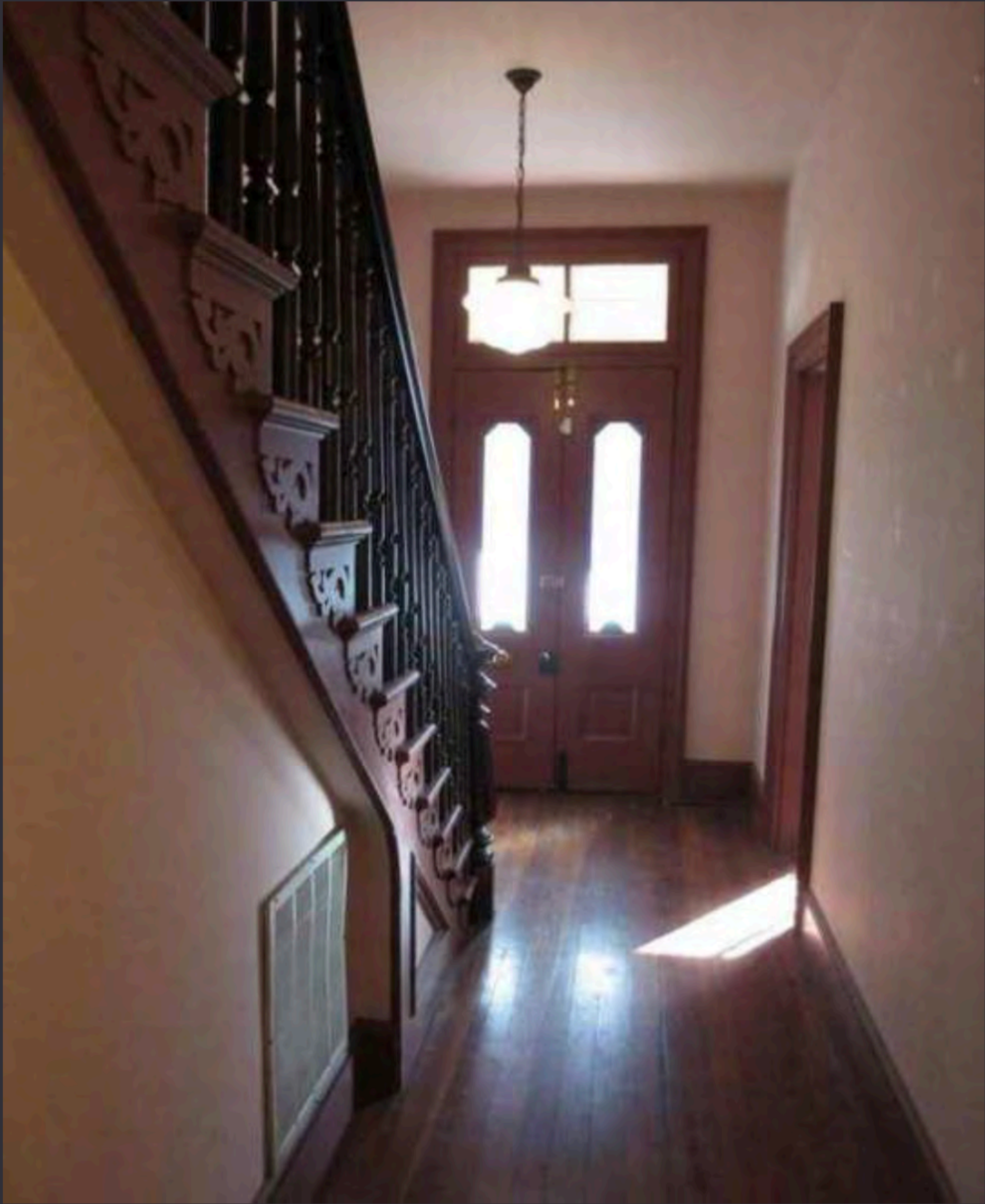


Window/Door  
Opening



The right angle and depth of conventional casing creates a hard shadow line that accentuates doors and windows. (Especially if the trim is painted a color similar to the wall color.)

But something unconventional is happening in the Wilson Bruce Evans home.

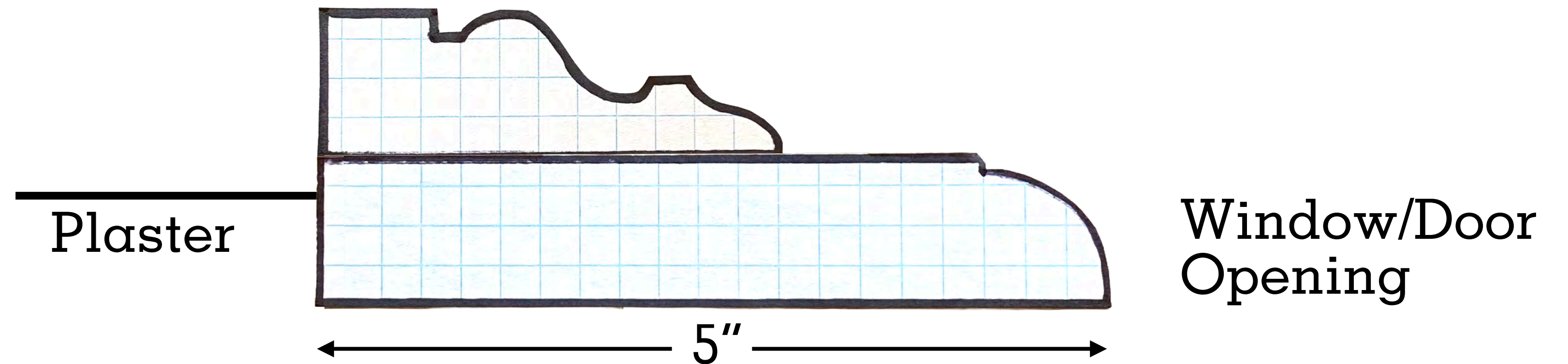




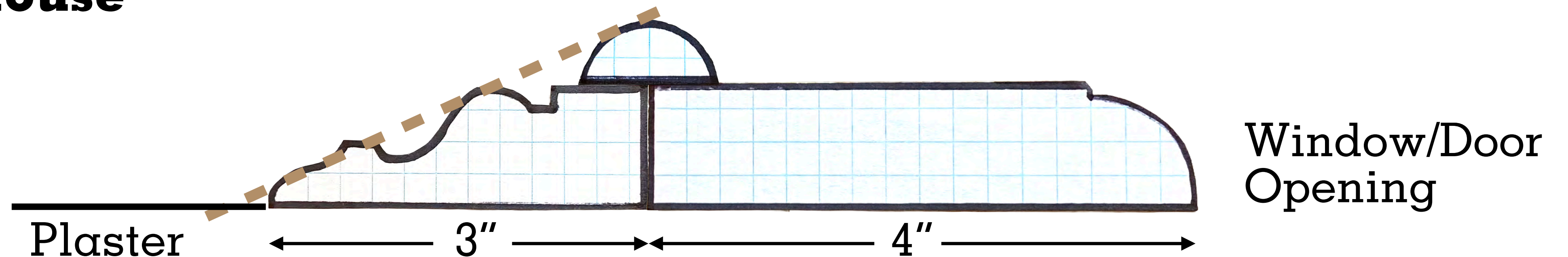


# What's Going on Here?

## Conventional



## Evans House



Dramatically increases casing width by 2" while using a 20% narrower board.





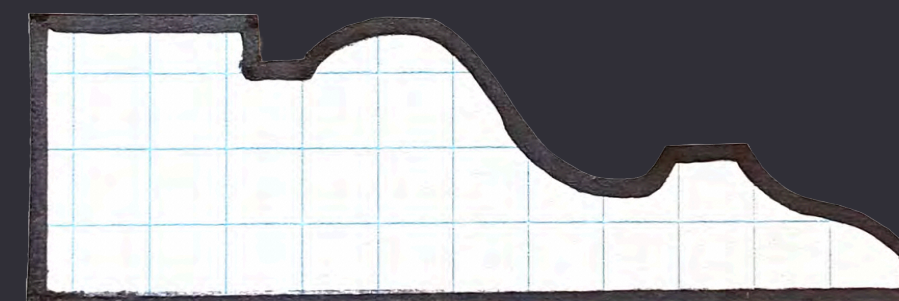




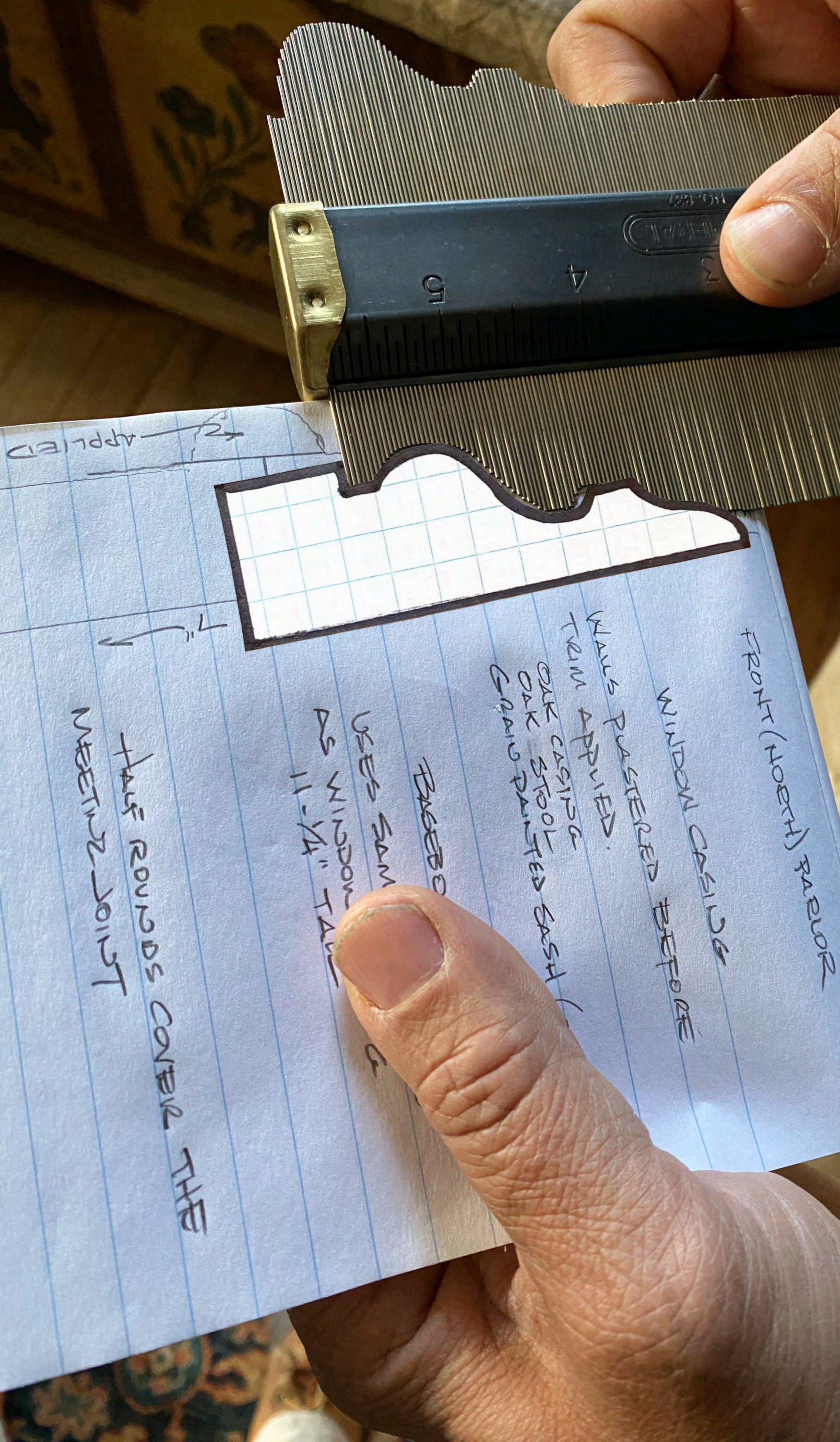




The Drake House - 1874  
237 W. College



The Drake House - 1874  
237 W. College



# THE NEW UNIVERSAL MOULDING BOOK

CONTAINING

Latest Styles of Mouldings

— AND —

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS OF EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR FINISH  
IN GREAT VARIETY,

Giving Full Size of Mouldings and their Exact Measurement in Inches on each Moulding.

RAILS, BALUSTERS AND NEWEL POSTS,  
Architraves, Front and Interior Doors  
STORE DOORS,

Wood Mantels, Pew Ends, Office Counters,

SCROLL AND TURNED BALUSTRADES

Brackets and Drapery.

ELEVATIONS OF DOOR AND WINDOW FRAMES.

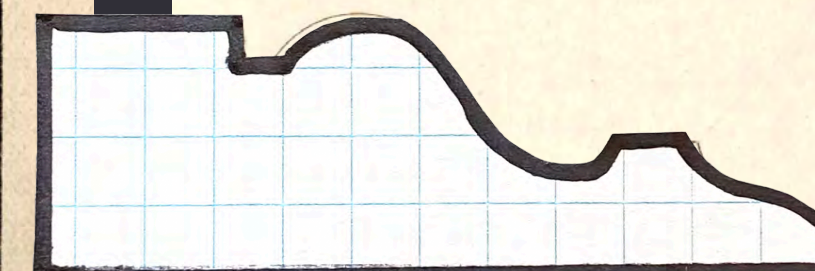
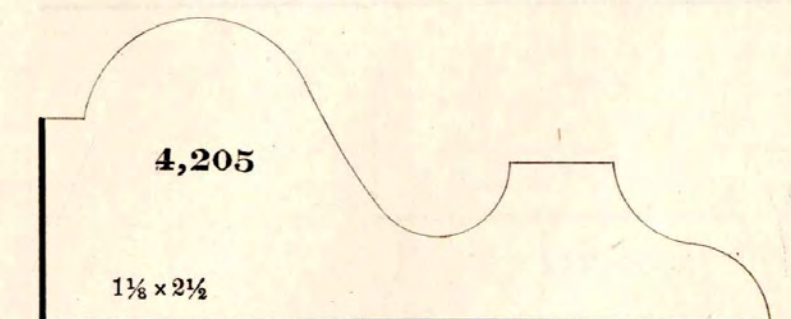
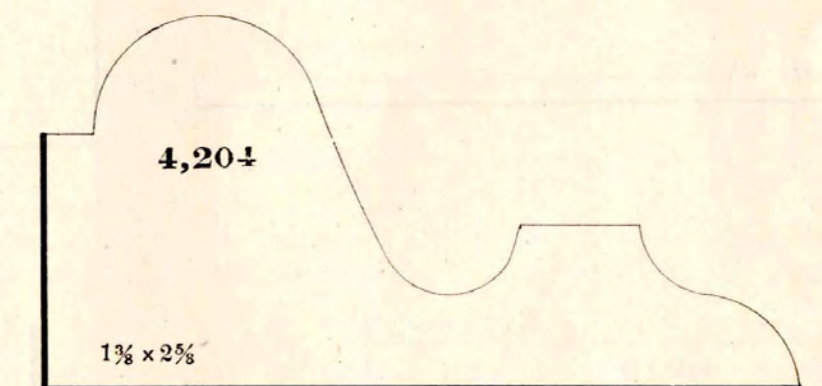
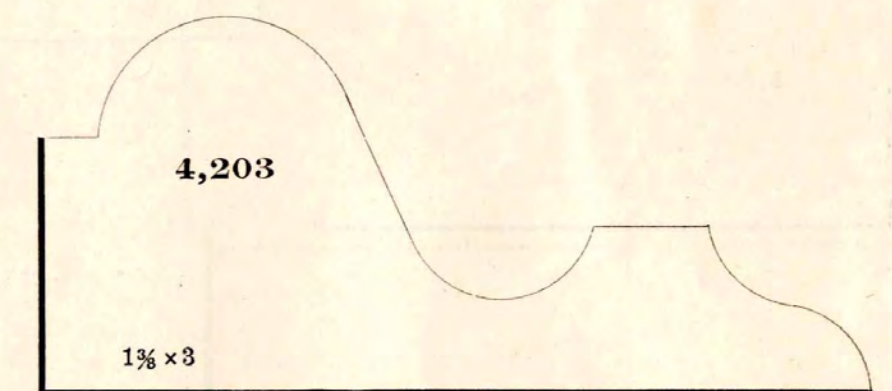
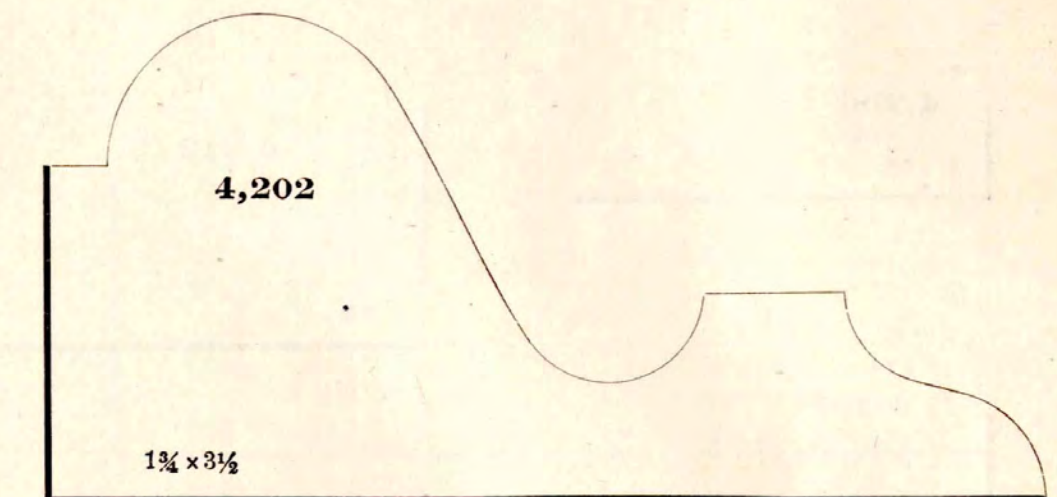
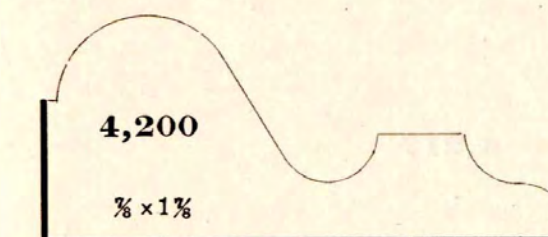
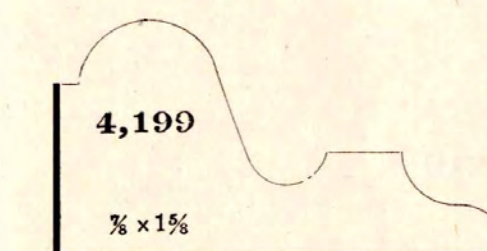
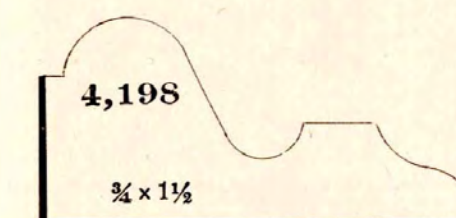
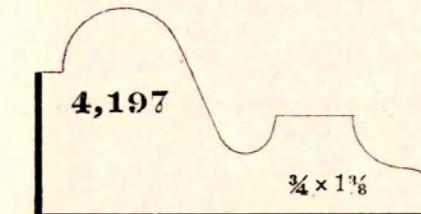
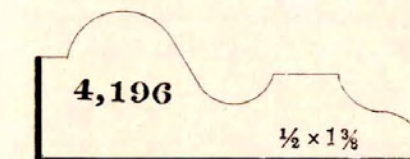
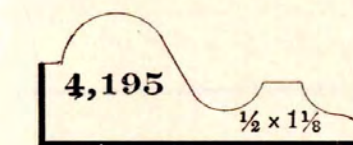
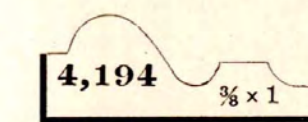
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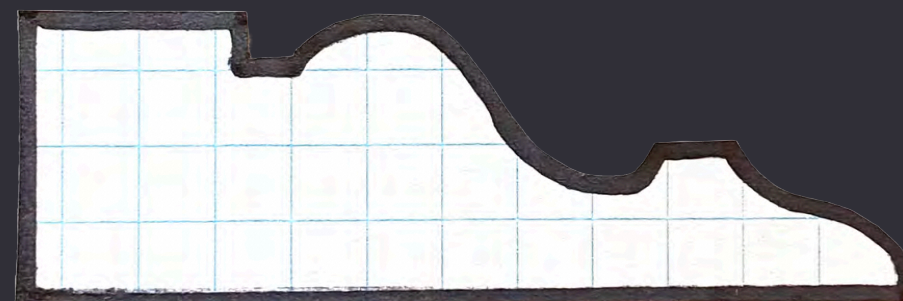
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1884.





The Drake House - 1874  
237 W. College







Lyman Colburn's House - 1876  
30 Groveland



Same moulding profile  
Installed conventionally.

# Trim Work - What's Interesting?

- Creative installation of a standard machine-milled moulding profile for dramatic effect
  - Moulding was almost certainly produced by the robust mill on Main at Mill Street.
  - The same profile appears in other nearby homes, including in the home of the mill owner, Lyman Colburn.
- There is a focus on being economical with material
- The installation of the trim in the home appears to be the work of multiple individuals with differing levels of skill.

# Wood Species

While the overall presentation is intended to look uniformly like dark walnut, multiple wood species are used for the millwork in the Wilson Bruce Evans Home.

Interior Doors – Appear to be Butternut (AKA “White Walnut”)

Window & Door Casings – Oak (window stools) and Butternut

Staircase Newel, balusters, handrail – Walnut

In North Carolina Henry Evans advertised a proficiency in staining various wood species to look like walnut.



# Millwork Source

- The Evans Brothers no longer had their own shop by the 1870s when the brick Italianate was built.
- The brothers had a close working relationship with Lyman Colburn's large mill, which produced a full array of millwork for local homes.
- It appears that by 1870 Wilson Bruce Evans was working as a wood turner at the mill.
- It, therefore, seems nearly certain that all of the millwork for the Wilson Bruce Evans home was produced by Colburn's mill. (Purchase or trade?)
- It also seems highly probable that Wilson Bruce Evans personally turned the newel, balusters, and handrail for the staircase in his new home while working at the mill.
- The Evans, perhaps with the help of others, would have installed the millwork purchased from the mill, which is supported by family tradition.

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**Brackets and Drapery.**

ELEVATIONS OF DOOR AND WINDOW FRAMES.

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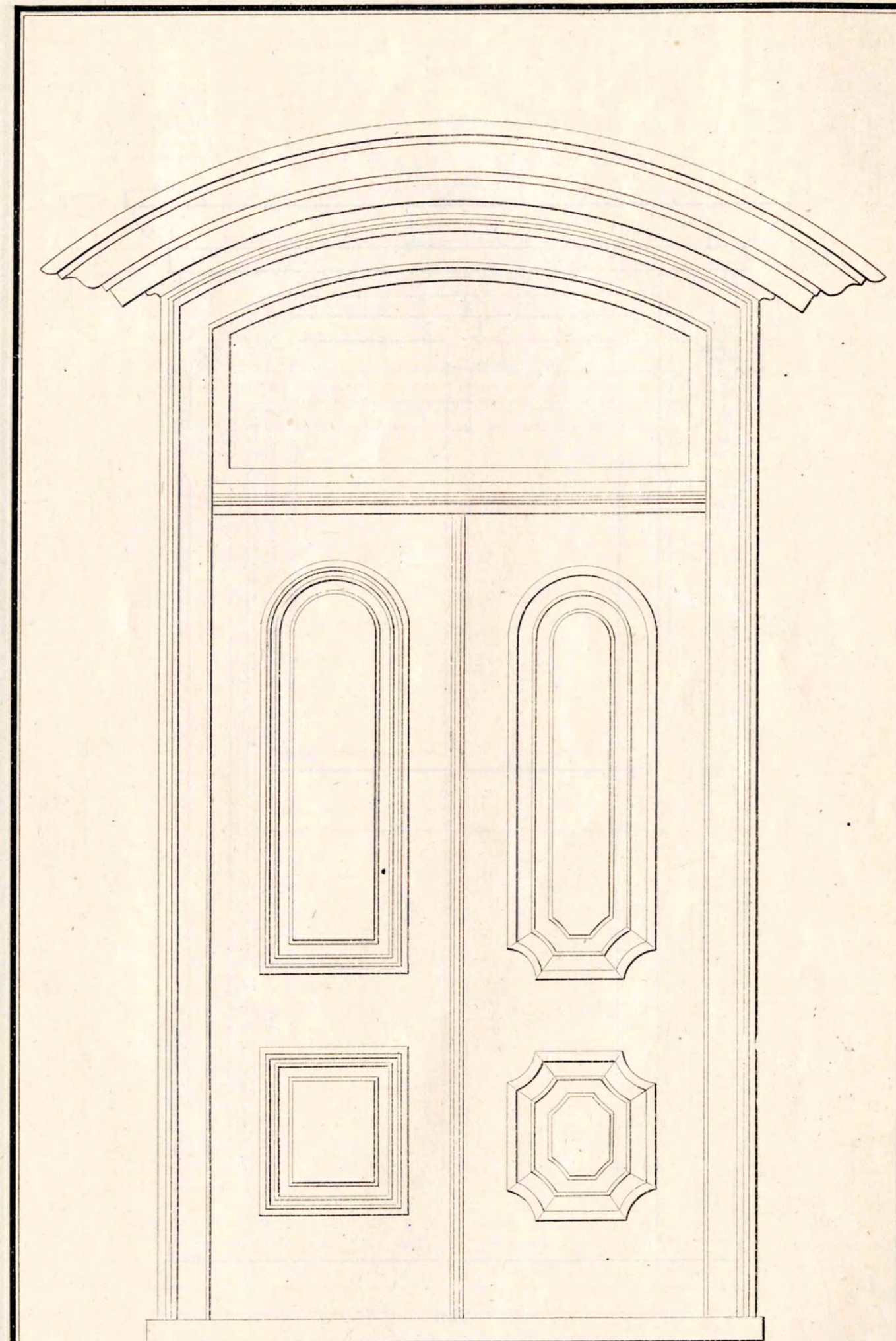
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1884.

*Front Doors and Frame.*

91



*Front Doors and Frame.*

*Left.*

**745**

*Right.*





## The Staircase

These turnings are very likely the work of Wilson Bruce Evans.



It's also likely that his turning work is in other Oberlin homes of the period.

Four additional newels were found in the loft.



# Observations in the Earlier Rear Frame Structure



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- The hewn sill and plate timbers are continuous: 30-feet long



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- The hewn sill and plate timbers are continuous: 30-feet long
- The loft door was framed out in the 20th century, likely to provide access for storage.
- There was not originally a loft. There was a plastered ceiling throughout. Ceiling joists originally ran N/S as evidenced by pockets in the E/W timbers.



# Observations in the Earlier Rear Frame Structure

- The hewn sill and plate timbers are continuous: 30-feet long
- The loft door was framed out in the 20th century, likely to provide access for storage.
- There was not originally an open loft. There was a plastered ceiling throughout. Ceiling joists originally ran N/S as evidenced by pockets in the E/W timbers.
- The 16-inch-wide boards in the loft are tongue & grooved, indicating their intended use as floorboards, not coffin lumber.



# Observations in the Earlier Rear Frame Structure

- The south brick exterior wall is built on top of the end rafter of the frame building. (It's stood like this for 150+ years, but a structural engineer should assess.)



# Observations in the Earlier Rear Frame Structure

- Evidence of salt effervescence in the rear S/E room is a clue to how this space was used. Salt causes the wood to become "fuzzy." This is often seen in period smokehouses.
- There appears to have been a small chimney on the east side of the south exterior wall, likely used to vent a stove or perhaps a small fireplace. There appears to be a pad outside and lower siding boards were replaced when the chimney was taken down.



# **Rear Frame Building: Our Conclusion**


Along with the removed building to the south of this frame structure, this was the original residence of the Wilson Bruce Evans family and does not appear to have ever been used as a cabinetmaker or undertaker shop.

# **The Furniture**

(Not much to report yet.)







—What is the difference between a  
rockery dealer and a cabinet-maker ?  
One sells tea-sets and the other settees.





A photograph of two men standing in a historic room. The man on the left is Jerome Bias, wearing a dark green plaid shirt and khaki pants. The man on the right is Bill Chapman, wearing a red and black plaid shirt and khaki pants. They are standing in front of a large, dark wooden door. A cutout of Abraham Lincoln is visible in the background. The room has peeling paint on the walls and a wooden floor.

Jerome Bias  
@jeromebias

Bill Chapman  
@enonhall

**Questions?**