

1908

Almy, Bigelow & Washburn: Fifty Years 1858-1908

Almy, Bigelow & Washburn

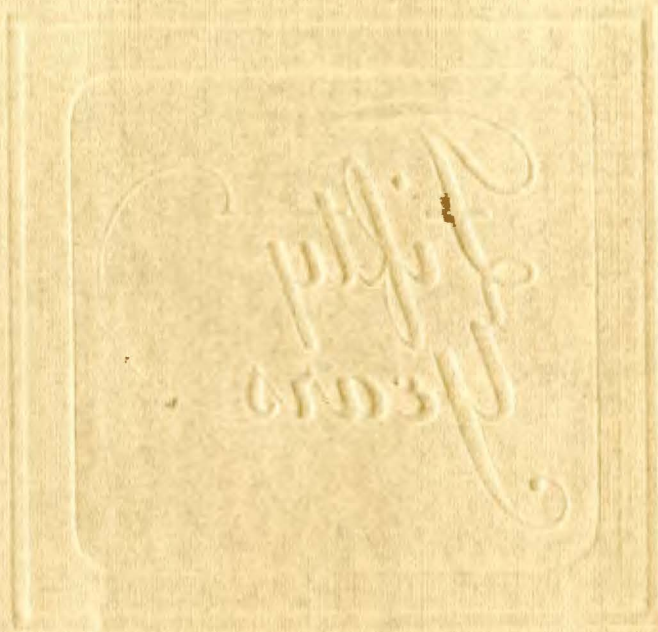
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*Fifty
Years*



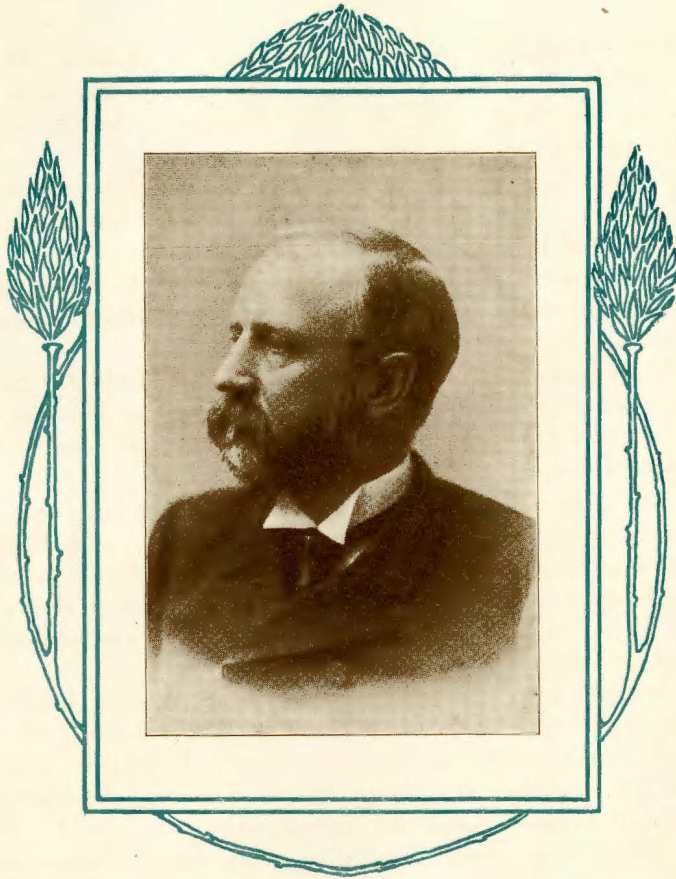
Fifty Years



1858
1908



Almy, Bigelow
& Washburn
SALEM, MASS.



JAMES FERGUS ALMY

The Organizer of the Business

JAMES FERGUS ALMY was born in Adams, Mass., July 24, 1833, of Quaker parentage. He came to Salem in 1854 and entered the employ of W. W. Palmer. At the end of four years he went into business for himself.

Mr. Almy was a man of brilliant mind, great energy and high moral character. He was ambitious, not only for himself, but also for his associates and his city.

He was always ready to recognize ability in others, and by his advice, encouragement and practical assistance led many young men and women toward success in life.

He loved Salem and had great faith in her future. So much so, that he turned away from opportunities for success elsewhere, and by self-sacrifice and constant effort built up a business remarkable in size and strength for a city of the population of Salem.

But not only as a merchant was he loyal to the city. He was active in advancing her prosperity in many ways. In 1867 he with two associates bought the Derby estate of more than a hundred acres in South Salem from the heirs of Elias Haskett Derby, the famous ship owner. This immense estate he laid out in streets and house lots which he offered for sale.

The bringing into the market of this tract of unproductive and unimproved property was a great stimulus in the buying of land and building of homes in that section of the city. It brought new residents to Salem, enlarged the city, increased its beauty and added greatly to the amount of taxes to flow into its treasury.

Mr. Almy was closely identified with the business, social and church life of the city for more than a quarter of a century, and took an active part in its political affairs. He was a leader in the formation of the Salem Board of Trade and its first president. He served as a member of the School Board in 1856, and again in 1896-98; a member of the Common Council in 1864-67, and a member of the Legislature in 1881-82. He also served on the Republican City Committee many years and was for a few years its chairman.

At the time of his death, April 14, 1899, he was president of the Asbury Grove Camp Meeting Association; a director of the Salem Electric Lighting Co., the Merchants' National Bank, the Pettis Dry Goods Co. of Indianapolis, the Lamson Cash Carrier Co., and the Y. M. C. A.; a trustee of the Salem Five Cents Saving Bank, and Boston University, and treasurer of the Salem Great Pasture Co.

The Organization of the Business

The first step in the organization of a business is the selection of a name. The name should be distinctive, easy to remember, and suitable for the business. It should also be available for registration in the state where the business is to be operated.

The next step is the selection of a location. The location should be convenient for customers, accessible by public transportation, and suitable for the business. It should also be available for lease or purchase.

The third step is the selection of a legal structure. The business can be organized as a sole proprietorship, a partnership, a corporation, or a limited liability company. Each structure has its own advantages and disadvantages.

The fourth step is the selection of a manager. The manager should be someone who is experienced, capable, and trustworthy. The manager should be given the authority to manage the business and to make decisions on behalf of the owner.

The fifth step is the selection of a financial system. The financial system should be able to track the business's income and expenses, and to provide the owner with accurate financial information. It should also be able to generate financial statements and reports.

The sixth step is the selection of a marketing strategy. The marketing strategy should be designed to attract customers and to increase sales. It should include a plan for advertising, promotion, and sales.

The seventh step is the selection of a legal system. The legal system should be able to protect the business's interests and to resolve any legal disputes. It should also be able to provide the business with legal advice and representation.

The eighth step is the selection of a tax system. The tax system should be able to calculate the business's tax liability and to file the business's tax returns. It should also be able to provide the business with tax advice and representation.

The ninth step is the selection of an insurance system. The insurance system should be able to protect the business's assets and to provide the business with financial protection in the event of a disaster. It should also be able to provide the business with insurance advice and representation.

The tenth step is the selection of a professional system. The professional system should be able to provide the business with professional services, such as accounting, legal, and tax services. It should also be able to provide the business with professional advice and representation.



A PERSONAL APPRECIATION

WITH many of our friends, we have had opportunities to express our gratitude for their patronage, yet it has not been possible to meet them all personally.

We wish now, on behalf of the corporation, to thank you for what you have done for us during your association with this store.

We very deeply appreciate your loyalty, and hope we may continue to deserve it.

This business has become a part of Salem, and its endeavor must be to afford you the truest and best character of store-service.

C. R. WASHBURN

W. K. BIGELOW

E. A. ANNABLE

THE BRIEF STORY OF FIFTY YEARS' GROWTH OF **Almy, Bigelow & Washburn**

Early History

BORN September, 1858, in a little room 17 x 47 feet, in the Bowker Block, at 156 Essex Street, under the firm name of James F. Almy; this was the beginning of the biggest store in Essex County to-day—Almy, Bigelow & Washburn, Inc., Salem, Mass.

In three short years the business grew large enough to necessitate a move to more commodious quarters, and in 1861, a store 20 x 75 feet was taken in the West Block—its present home—then a practically new building, erected on the site of the old Mansion House, a famous hostelry, still in the minds of the oldest citizens, which had been destroyed by fire two years previous.

Here it passed through a healthy childhood despite the fact that its first few years saw the ruinous hand of the greatest strife ever visited upon this country—the Civil War of 1861-5. Altho' no invading army marched through the old Puritan city, store-keepers felt the stress of the war keenly, for most housewives could not afford many new gowns, when a simple calico cost at least five dollars.

Mr. Walter K. Bigelow Becomes a Partner

EVEN through this trying period the firm continued to flourish. Mr. Walter K. Bigelow, the present head of the corporation, who had been associated with the business from the beginning, became a partner at this time. With this added strength of management, and under the enlarged name of James S. Almy & Co., it steadily increased in size, adding a department here, another there, until it finally became the largest business house in the city.

Changes in Management

IN 1867 the business of F. W. L. Huntoon & Co., 222 Essex Street, was purchased, and Mr. William G. Webber, who had been in the firm's employ since 1864, was made a partner and general manager in the new enterprise. About two years later the Huntoon business was consolidated with James F. Almy & Co.; Mr. Webber was made a

THE BRIEF STORY OF FIFTY YEARS' GROWTH

A Fashionable
Lady of 1865



general partner and the firm name changed to Almy, Bigelow & Webber.

In 1885, Mr. Wm. G. Webber retired from the firm and Messrs. Calvin R. Washburn and E. Augustus Annable, who had been connected with the business since 1867, became partners, under the firm name of Almy, Bigelow & Washburn.

Improved Buying Facilities

ABOUT this time the many advantages of the great buying facilities

of the Syndicate Trading Co. of New York, with its branch offices in all the leading trade centres of the Old World, became so convincing, that an alliance with this powerful combination of large and

reliable stores throughout the country was formed. The wisdom of this alliance is attested by the ever increasing yearly business which now exceeds many, many times the wildest expectations of the future of the little store of 1858.

Extract from Old Advertisement

AS an insight into the firm's ambitions at this period in its career, we print the following brief extract from an advertisement which appeared September 24, 1885. "As to the future enlargements of our business we cannot say. Our success in the past has been due, not to an ambition to 'make haste to be rich' from large profits, but to a fixed purpose to make our store desirable to the public. Enlargements have always been made without hesitation or regard to cost, when public necessity for them has appeared."

This liberal policy of providing for its customers, without consideration of expense, every comfort, convenience and improvement which a wise appreciation of their patronage could suggest, has ever been one of the prominent factors in the success of this store.

The floor space devoted to the selling of dry goods has increased at the rate of 1,143 square feet per year, for it now averages 31,662. This great increase was obtained through seven extensive alterations.

THE BRIEF STORY OF FIFTY YEARS' GROWTH

Death of
Mr. James F. Almy

THROUGH the death of Mr. James F. Almy, the senior partner, in the spring of 1899, the firm sustained the great loss of one whose wisdom and industry had nurtured the success of the store in its early years and did much to place it in the high position which it now holds in the esteem of the shopping public and the respect of the business world.

The Business
Incorporated

SHORTLY after Mr. Almy's death, it was decided that in order to keep pace with the modern and progressive methods of conducting a large department store, the business should be incorporated. This was effected. The board of directors upon whom rests the responsibility of maintaining the store's reputation as "the finest in Essex County" consists of

WALTER K. BIGELOW, President

E. AUGUSTUS ANNABLE, Vice-President EMMA S. ALMY, Executive Committee
CALVIN R. WASHBURN, Treasurer HELEN J. BUTLER, Executive Committee
HENRY M. BATCHELDER WALTER CALLENDER (of Providence, R. I.)

In 1901 the services of Mr. Louis W. Rosskopf as general merchandise manager were secured. To his youth, ability and enthusiasm the corporation owe much for the successful conduct of the business since his association with it.

The Store To-day

THE entire West Block is now necessary for the adequate accommodation of the steadily growing business of the Incorporated Store. On the first floor are located no less than thirty large and complete departments carrying the lines of goods usually found in a first-class department store. Each department is under the direction of a competent manager, who devotes his energy and experience to providing the best and most reliable goods in such a variety of prices and styles as to please every purchaser.

The second floor departments occupy an immense floor space. Windows in the front and rear make it a perfect daylight store. On the third floor the entire space is devoted to the firm's offices, together with a rest-room for employees.

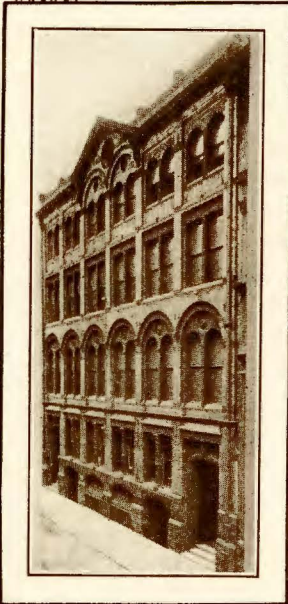
Card given by
Mr. Almy to boys
entering his employ

The boy goes to business, and at his business begins by simply doing the things he is told to do, and doing them in a common and ordinary way. If he stops he remains all his life long a drudge. But if he begins to see that business has a significance, that his life is not merely sweeping the store, not merely writing letters, not merely selling goods, if he begins to see the higher life involved in business, if he begins to see that business is a greater instrument of beneficence than what we call beneficence, that trade is clothing thousands of men where charity clothes ten; that agricultural and milling industries are feeding thousands of men where charity feeds ten; if he begins to see how the whole history of the world is linked together, and is God's way of building up humanity and serving humanity—as he gets this large view and enters into it, life is enriched and becomes the school wherein he is educated into that which is immortal.—*Dr. Lyman Abbott.*



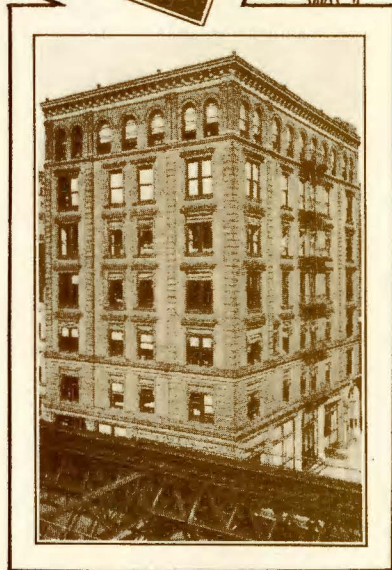
St. Fiden
(near St. Gall)
Switzerland

25 Theater
Strasse, Chemnitz,
Germany



66 Faulkner
Street
Manchester, England

Syndicate
Trading Company
2 Walker Street
New York City



OUR NEW YORK AND
EUROPEAN OFFICES.

THE BRIEF STORY OF FIFTY YEARS' GROWTH

Progress in Advertising

THE advertising has kept pace with the tremendous growth. A Friday advertisement occupies invariably four columns, or one-half the back page of the Salem Evening News (occasionally augmented by an additional whole page "Sale Adv"). A glance at an advertisement printed in 1864, shows that a little space about four inches long, in one column, was then considered most liberal advertising.

For fifty years the city of Salem and this store have developed together. They have been of mutual benefit to each other. The interests of Salem have ever been near and dear to the owners of this store, and because the store has served the public well, it has won the friendship and support of the people of Salem. After all, friendships—personal or commercial—live and thrive upon a system of reciprocal benefits. In the exchange of benefits lie the common interests of Salem and Almy, Bigelow & Washburn, Inc.

Progress in Store Methods

ALMY, BIGELOW & WASHBURN were first in the city to put plate glass in their show windows; first in the city to install a complete cash carrier system; first in the city to install a passenger elevator; first in the city to provide a retiring room and toilet for customers; first to inaugurate the department store idea in Essex county.

Last November, Almy, Bigelow & Washburn introduced a system of ventilation by which the air in the store can be renewed every twenty minutes.

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT

BY NATHANIEL BENTLEY

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME THE FIRST

BOSTON: PUBLISHED BY G. B. LITTLE & CO. 1822

PRINTED BY G. B. LITTLE & CO. 1822

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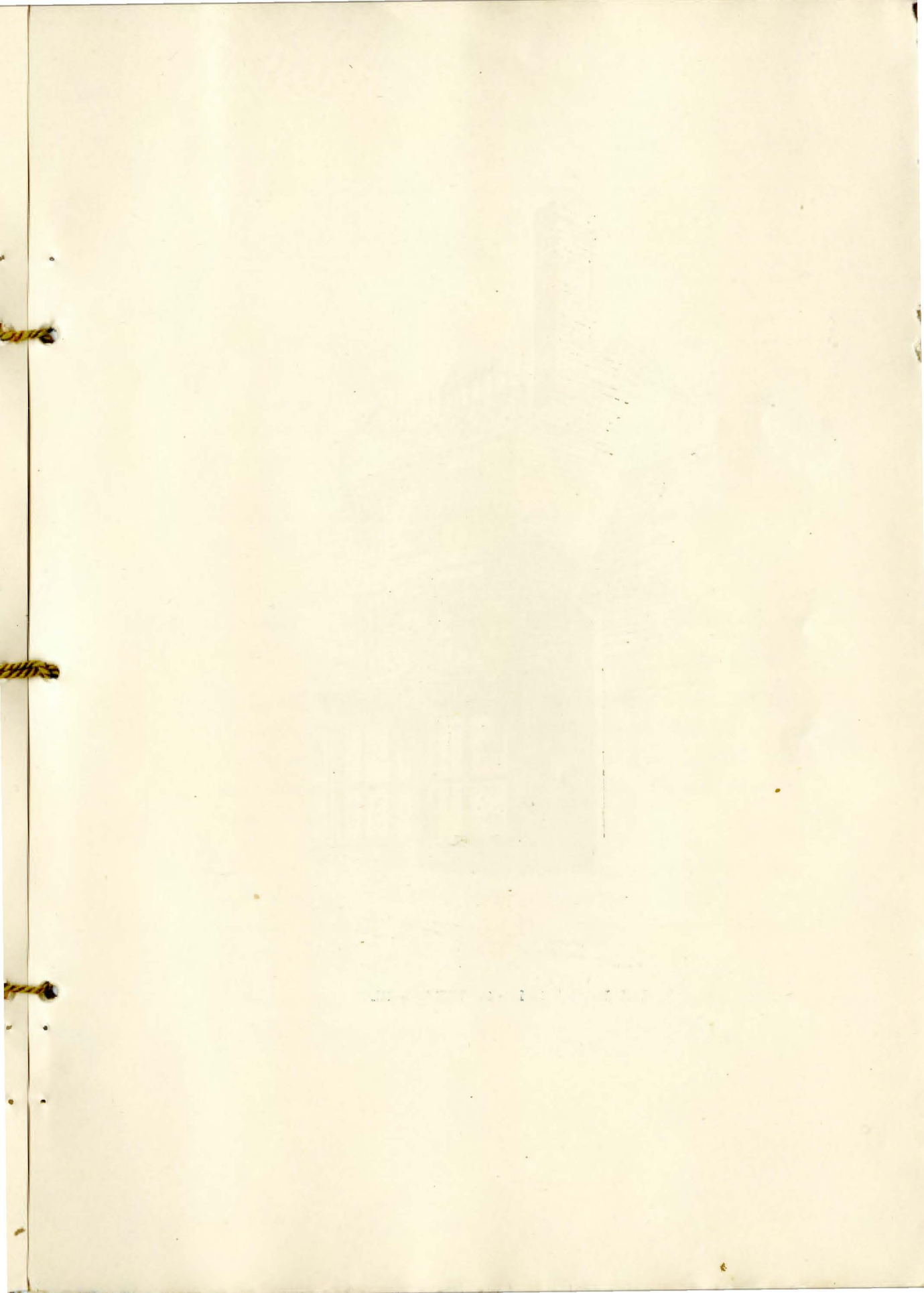
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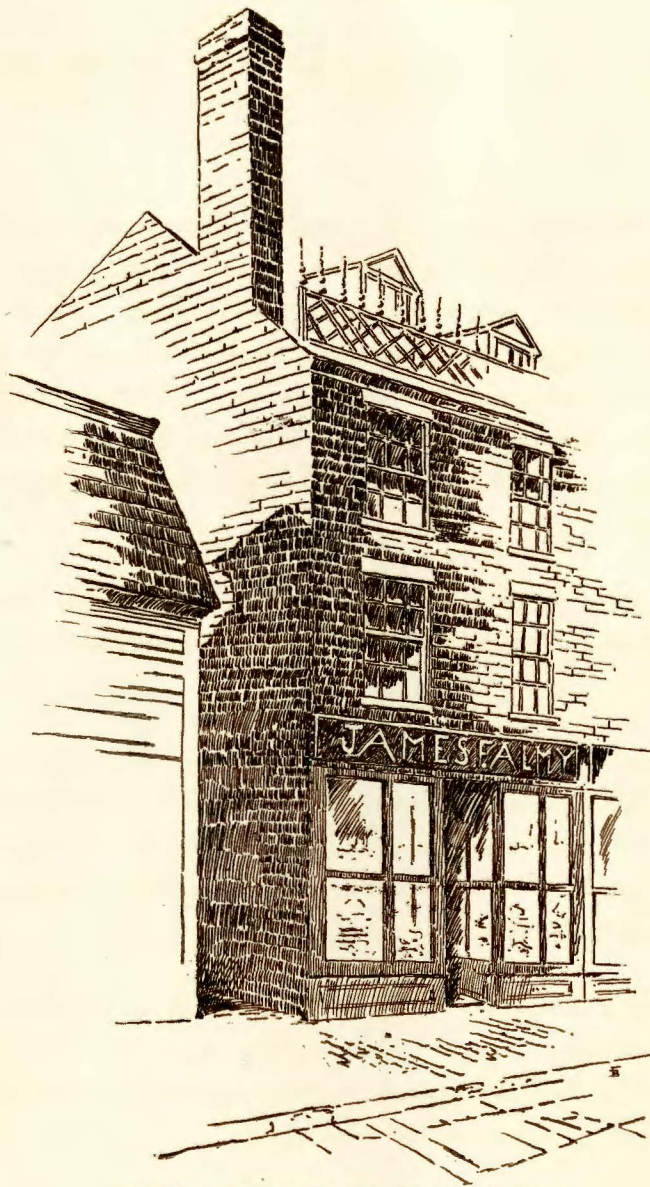
BY G. B. LITTLE & CO. 1822

BY G. B. LITTLE & CO. 1822

BY G. B. LITTLE & CO. 1822

BY G. B. LITTLE & CO. 1822





THE FIRST HOME—156 ESSEX STREET

Looking Backward

IN 1858 there were no electric railways or even horse-cars in Salem; all those living at a distance were obliged to come by steam train or carriage to do their shopping. Tanning and currying were the principal industries. Printed Delaine was one of the most popular materials for woman's dress; Thibets and Cashmeres were also in demand, as well as the handsome Peony Silks and Crepe Shawls, many of which were brought home from the Orient by Salem shipmasters.

The store began with three employees besides Mr. Almy. Last Christmas the names on the payroll closely approached the five-hundred mark.

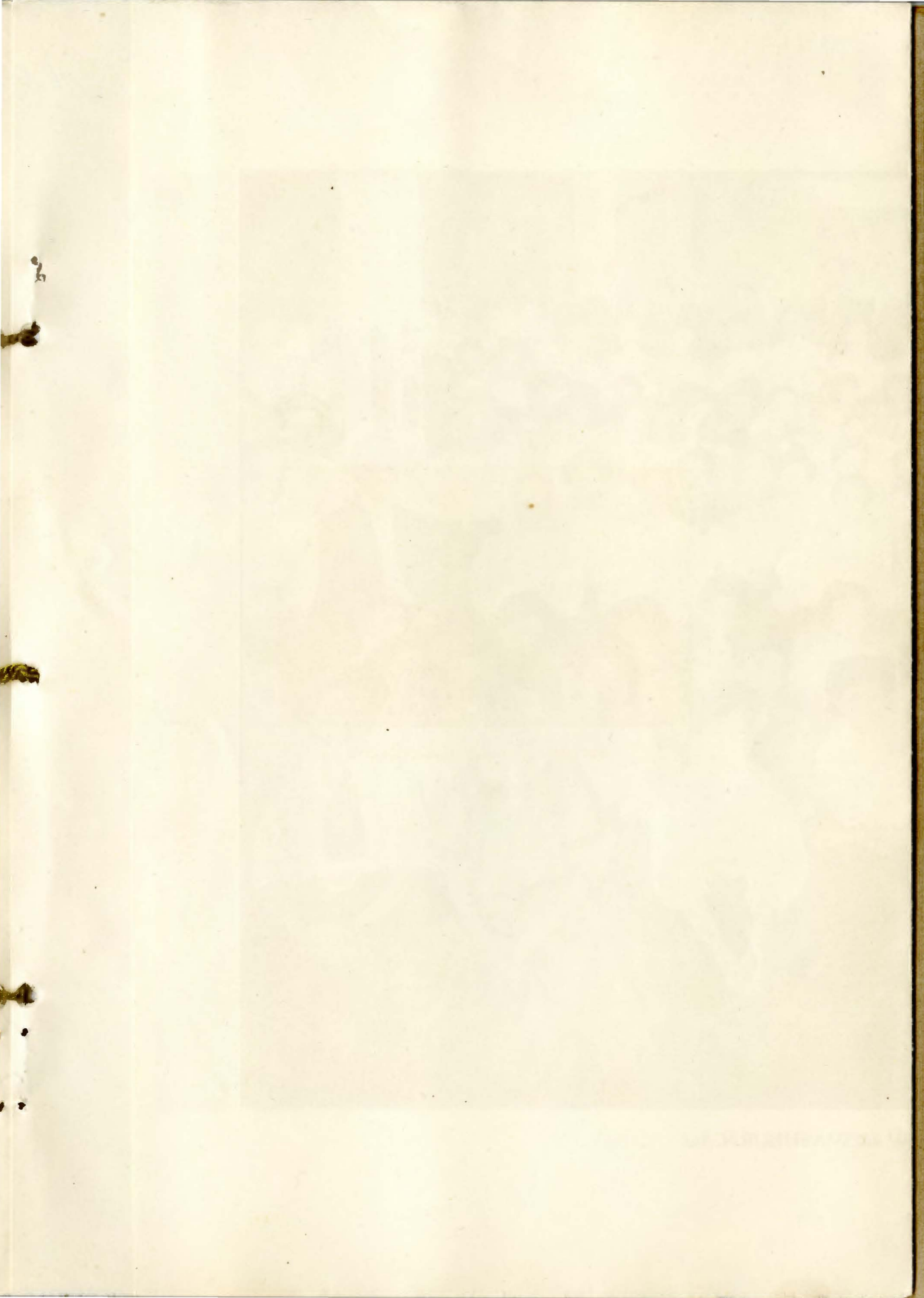
During the winter, after the business was started, the old Mansion House, on the site of which the Almy, Bigelow & Washburn store is now located, was burned in the night. The result of this conflagration was the erection of a business block which enabled the firm to secure a model store at the best location in Salem.

Almy, Bigelow & Washburn believed in the efficiency of newspaper advertising, even in their earliest days, and used both semi-weeklies, the Salem Register and the Gazette, as well as the weekly Observer, in which to tell of their stock.

Almy, Bigelow & Washburn was the organizer and promoter of the Salem Electric Lighting Co.

JAMES F. ALMY,
Wholesale and Retail Dealer, for U.S.A., in
SILKS, SHAWLS, DRESS GOODS,
MANTILLAS, CAPES AND CLOAKS,
HOUSEKEEPING GOODS,
HOSIERY, GLOVES, &c.,
156 ESSEX ST., (Bowker Block.)
SALEM, MASS.

Fac-simile of Original Business Card





EMPLOYEES OF ALMY, BIGELOW & WASHBURN, Inc.



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