



This house once sat on a street that was razed to make way for Gallivan Blvd. In this issue, DCN historian Anthony Sammarco describes the investigative tactics he employs to uncover the secrets of Dorchester's past.

The story of a photograph

by Anthony Sammarco

There are many weekends that I travel to ephemera shows throughout New England, looking for photographs, books and other materials on the history of Dorchester. One such show was in Hartford last fall when I helped friends who were displaying at a show. After numerous walks through this enormous show, I came across a small table covered with postcards, and as I always do, I reached for those marked "Dorchester."

In the small stack of postcards was one actual photograph of a house that looked as if it were about the turn of the century in a country town. Turning over the card, it was addressed to a couple in Wollaston with the note "Come and see us in our new, old house. 861 Adams St. Dor. Mr. & Mrs. F.P. Bartlett."

Knowing Adams Village in Dorchester fairly well, I couldn't place this address, and looking at the postcard I

could not visualize where this house would have been. Returning home that Sunday, I looked into the "Dorchester Blue Books" of the first decade of the century and was pleased to see that the Bartletts did indeed live at 861 Adams Street until 1918, so I opened the 1918 street map of Dorchester and was astonished at what I found.

When I saw the map of the area of Adams Village, it showed that what is now Gallivan Boulevard was separated into three different streets. From Neponset Circle to Adams Village it was known as "Marsh Street," while from the village to the bend in Adams Street leading to the Lower Mills it was "Adams Street." From the bend to Mattapan it was "Codman Street" and the area seemed more rural in 1918 than one might have suspected. The Bartlett House was a one story "Cape Cod" cottage built about 1780 on land owned by the Pierce Family. The area was relatively unbuild until the turn of the century, after which the post

office called this area "New Dorchester."

The map of Dorchester showed the house to have once stood on what is now Gallivan Boulevard, directly opposite Adams Street. The house stood between what is now Fredericka Street on the right and Verdun Street on the left. After 1919, the house was demolished and the land subdivided by Verdun Street where three deckers were built on the site of the barn and farm.

It's ironic that Fredericka Street, which was laid out just prior to the Civil War, was to the east and that Verdun Street, to the right, was named after one of the fiercest battles in France during World War I. Seventy five years ago, this area was much more rural than it is today, and this postcard records a Cedar Grove house lost to development.

Should you have photographs of Dorchester prior to 1940, please share them with Dorchester Community News. Send them to DCN, c/o Anthony Sammarco, PO Box D, Dorchester, MA 02124.

Mark each photograph with your name and address, and the original will be returned. Who knows what will turn up?

Anthony Sammarco's award winning history columns are a regular feature of Dorchester Community News.