

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE DUNHAMS BLOCK

The present Dunhams Block (bounded by North Warren, East State, North Broad, and East Hanover Streets) was originally part of the extensive landholdings controlled by Mahlon Stacy, who established a large plantation at the Falls of the Delaware in 1679. In 1684 he conveyed a 60 acre tract of land from these holdings to Hugh Staniland, his former indentured servant. This valuable property was sited on the north side of Assunpink Creek and included land along both sides of the Upper Road, the former aboriginal trail connecting the Delaware and Hudson River Valleys that had been adopted as one of the several routes connecting East Jersey (and New York) and West Jersey (and Philadelphia). This transaction gave Staniland control of the eastern quarter of the Dunhams Block (see Figure 4.1; he owned the Israel Morris and Robert Singer properties and the eastern two-thirds of the Joseph Milnor property; the west line of the first two lots was originally the west line of the Staniland property and continued south through the Milnor lot, across the present East State Street, and on to the Upper Road crossing of the Assunpink), while Stacy retained the larger western portion of the block (Trenton Historical Society 1929:24,32; Toothman 1977:54,60,80,119,121,125-127).

Stacy sited the nucleus of his plantation (which he called Ballifield) to the south of the Assunpink and built a grist mill on the creek at the Upper Road crossing (a bridge was built at this location sometime before 1707). Staniland built a house on his property and by 1688 he was utilizing it as both a tavern and a dwelling. With his death the entire 60 acre property passed to his son Thomas Staniland, and the younger Staniland divided his father's former holding into five 12 acre parcels and sold them off in 1707. The eastern quarter of the Dunhams Block was divided between two of these parcels, with the northern half (see Figure 4.1; the Morris lot and the northern Singer lot) being part of the property sold to Alburtis Ringo and the southern half (the southern Singer lot and the eastern two-thirds of the Milnor lot) being part of the property sold to Joshua Andrus (see WJ Deed DD 322). Mahlon Stacy died in 1704, and in 1714 his son Mahlon Stacy Jr. sold a tract of 800 acres to William Trent, a merchant of Philadelphia. This huge property included most of what was to be the central core of the City of Trenton, including the western three-quarters of the Dunhams Block (Trenton Historical Society 1929:25,26,33,40; Toothman 1977:54,103,125-127,159).

William Trent had migrated to Philadelphia from his native Scotland during the 1680s and had established himself as a wealthy merchant and as a prominent citizen during the three decades that followed. He built and lived in the noted Trent House and moved there as a permanent resident in 1721. He was also responsible for the development plan that stimulated the nucleated settlement on the north side of the Assunpink that was given the name Trenttown (soon to be shortened to Trenton) in his honor. Trent's activities as a merchant had included trade involving the Delaware Valley to the north of Philadelphia, and it seems apparent that he had recognized the potential for development available at the Falls of the Delaware. The Assunpink offered a source of water power for various processing industries (this had already been partially exploited with the construction of Stacy's grist mill), while the region's fertile lands offered great agricultural promise. The Upper Road provided access to an important cross-colony roadway, and the river offered a second vital transport corridor, with Falls defining a natural transshipment point where cargo could be transferred between deep and shallow draft vessels. It seems likely that Trent recognized that these several undeveloped transportational, commercial, and industrial advantages could combine to support a town providing the needed transport, market, and manufacturing facilities (Trenton Historical Society 1929:44; Toothman 1977:106-116).

Trent's town plan (which is referred to in early deeds but has not survived) was probably drawn up during the latter part of the second decade of the 18th century. The proposed town was shaped primarily by the Upper Road (then more commonly referred to as the Maidenhead, or New Brunswick, Road), with the Assunpink and the Hopewell Road (now Pennington Avenue) serving to define its extent. A new street to be known as King Street (now North Warren) was laid out to run south from the intersection of the Maidenhead and the Hopewell Roads at a slight angle from the former road until it reached the edge of the upland to the north of the creek. That portion of the Maidenhead Road between the Hopewell Road and the grist mill and the bridge over the Assunpink was to serve as the town's second primary street and was to be known as Queen Street (now North Broad). Two connecting streets, to be known as Front and Second (the latter is now East State), were laid out to run east - west and roughly parallel to the creek to provide communication between the two primary streets. Trent quite pragmatically promoted King as the new town's primary street since he controlled all of the land along its course. His holdings along Queen Street were limited largely to the northern portion of the new town as most of the southern frontage along the Maidenhead Road had been sold off by the Stacy family prior to Trent's acquisition of the property in 1714 (Trenton Historical Society 1929:241,243; Turk 1964:39,40,72; Toothman 1977:119-125).

William Trent sold off several town lots along King Street before his death in 1724. The elder Trent was succeeded by his oldest son James Trent, and the latter continued with the development plans of his father. In 1726 he established what was later known as the Trenton Ferry at the base of the present Ferry Street. He also continued the sale of town lots within the town laid out by his father, and by the time of his death in 1734 the Trent family had sold off about two dozen of these properties, with all but a few sited on King Street. The land along Queen Street was subdivided far less rapidly as the Trent interests concentrated their efforts along King and the five former Staniland properties were maintained essentially as they had been created in the 1707 division. Joshua Andrus, or Anderson, sold the entire 12 acre parcel he had acquired in 1707 (including the southeastern corner of the Dunhams Block) to Enoch Andrus, or Anderson, in 1722 (WJ Deed DD 385), while Alburtis Ringo and his heirs retained possession of the adjacent 12 acre property (including the northeastern corner of the block) into the 1730s (see WJ Deeds DD 322 & AF 236). The Dunhams Block sections of the Trent, Anderson, and Ringo holdings do not appear to have been developed prior to 1730 (Trenton Historical Society 1929:45-49; Toothman 1977:115,116,123,127-130,133,134).

In 1729 James Trent sold a substantial portion of his family's property at Trenton, including 300 acres of land, the Trent House, the mill on the Assunpink, and the Trenton Ferry, to William Morris, a merchant from the Island of Barbadoes in the West Indies (WJ Deed D 382). Morris was a member of a wealthy merchantile family from Philadelphia who had made his fortune through an involvement in the West Indies trade, and he was also the half-brother of the widow of William Trent. In subsequent years he acquired additional property at Trenton from the Trent family, and by the mid-1730s he appears to have gained full control of the western portion of the Dunhams Block. He also bought local property from other landowners, and in 1736 he purchased the bulk of the Ringo property, including the northeastern corner of the block, from the heirs of Alburtis Ringo (see WJ Deed AF 236). During the next half century William Morris and his son Israel Morris played the leading roles in promoting the development of the Dunhams Block (Trenton Historical Society 1929:49; Toothman 1977:133,134,141,142).

Development within the said block appears to have begun, however, as a result of the activities of Enoch Anderson during the early 1730s. Anderson was the first to more aggressively pursue the subdivision of his holdings within the former Staniland tract, most notably the lands he had acquired from Joshua Anderson in 1722. His interest in the development of his holdings along Queen and Second Streets was certainly one of the reasons why he provided the lot on which the town's first meeting house was built (the present Presbyterian Church property on the north side of East State to the east of North Broad) in 1727. During the decade that

followed Anderson sold off several town lots on Queen and Second, and the intersection of those two streets appears to have been fully developed by 1735. In 1732 he sold the undeveloped lot at the southwestern corner of the intersection to Joseph DeCow (WJ Deed EF 459; it was noted that Andrus' own house and town lot was sited to the south of this lot on the west side of Queen), and in 1733 he conveyed the vacant property between Queen and the meeting house lot (on the north side of Second) to William Plaskett (WJ Deed E 254) (Toothman 1977:130,131).

By 1732 Anderson had also sold off the lot that he had held in the southeastern corner of the Dunhams Block (no public recording of this deed has survived; see Appendix A - 1-5 North Broad). The above mentioned DeCow deed described Second Street as running along the south side of a "Lot of Land now belonging to Benjamin Smith" and was accompanied by a map that included the notation "Benj. Smiths house" within the northwestern corner of the intersection of Queen and Second (see WJ Deed EF 459). Smith, a wealthy Quaker who eventually acquired extensive landholdings in Hunterdon and Burlington Counties, is said to have purchased the said lot (the southern Singer lot and the eastern two-thirds of the Milnor lot; see Figure 4.1) directly from Andrus. Smith appears to have immediately improved the lot, using materials provided by the quarries, clay pits and brick kiln on his plantation on the Delaware just to the northwest of the town center to build a brick dwelling (brick was the preferred construction material among well-to-do Philadelphians and, therefore, wealthy Trentonians), a stone store, and several supporting structures (Nelson 1895:216,217). In 1738 this property was described as also including a "Boulting House" (see WJ Deed E 381), possibly an indication that some non-water powered agricultural processing (the fine sifting of flour) was being conducted here as an adjunct to the operation of the Trenton Mills (Smith later owned and operated several grist mills elsewhere in Hunterdon County) (Trenton Historical Society 1929:246,316,392; Toothman 1977:191,192).

William Morris appears to have begun to actively promote the development of the remainder of the Dunhams block shortly after his acquisition of the former Ringo property in 1736. He immediately arranged for the establishment of what came to be known as Morris Alley, the precursor of the present East Hanover Street, later that same year (WJ Deed R 540; the section of East Hanover to the east of Queen, then called Third Street, was opened up at about the same time). As originally laid out this 12' wide alley followed a straight course that ran east from King Street within the western half of the present East Hanover and slightly to the south of the eastern half of the said street to end in Queen (the alley was relaid and widened to assume its present

slightly angled configuration in 1837; see WJ Deed AX 109). It seems likely that Morris actively sought to sell his property within the now fully defined city block from this time on, but that he initially had little success (Toothman 1977:141).

It was not, in fact, until the middle of the following decade that the Dunhams Block took the first steps in assuming the actual physical appearance of a true city block. In 1744 Benjamin Smith offered as available for purchase several properties in the Trenton area, including the "Corner Lot" with "a large Brick House, ... a good Stone Store-House and Kitchen," and other outbuildings (Nelson 1895:216,217; see Appendix A - 1-5 North Broad). Morris, apparently seizing on the opportunity to gain full control of the block, is said to have purchased this holding from Smith shortly after the publication of the above advertisement. In 1748 he sold a slightly altered form of the former Smith lot to Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, a noted physician and public figure from Philadelphia who had migrated to Trenton several years earlier. The lot's new configuration (see Figure 4.1; the Milnor lot) included additional land to the west of the old Staniland west line and less frontage on Queen to the north of the brick house on the corner. This was the first subdivision of an original town lot within the Dunhams Block. Town lot subdivision, a common aspect of urban development, had first been seen in Trenton during the 1730s within some of the properties sold off by the Trent family along King Street, but it would not become an important factor within the Dunhams Block until the latter part of the 18th century (Trenton Historical Society 1929:316; Toothman 1977:177,178).

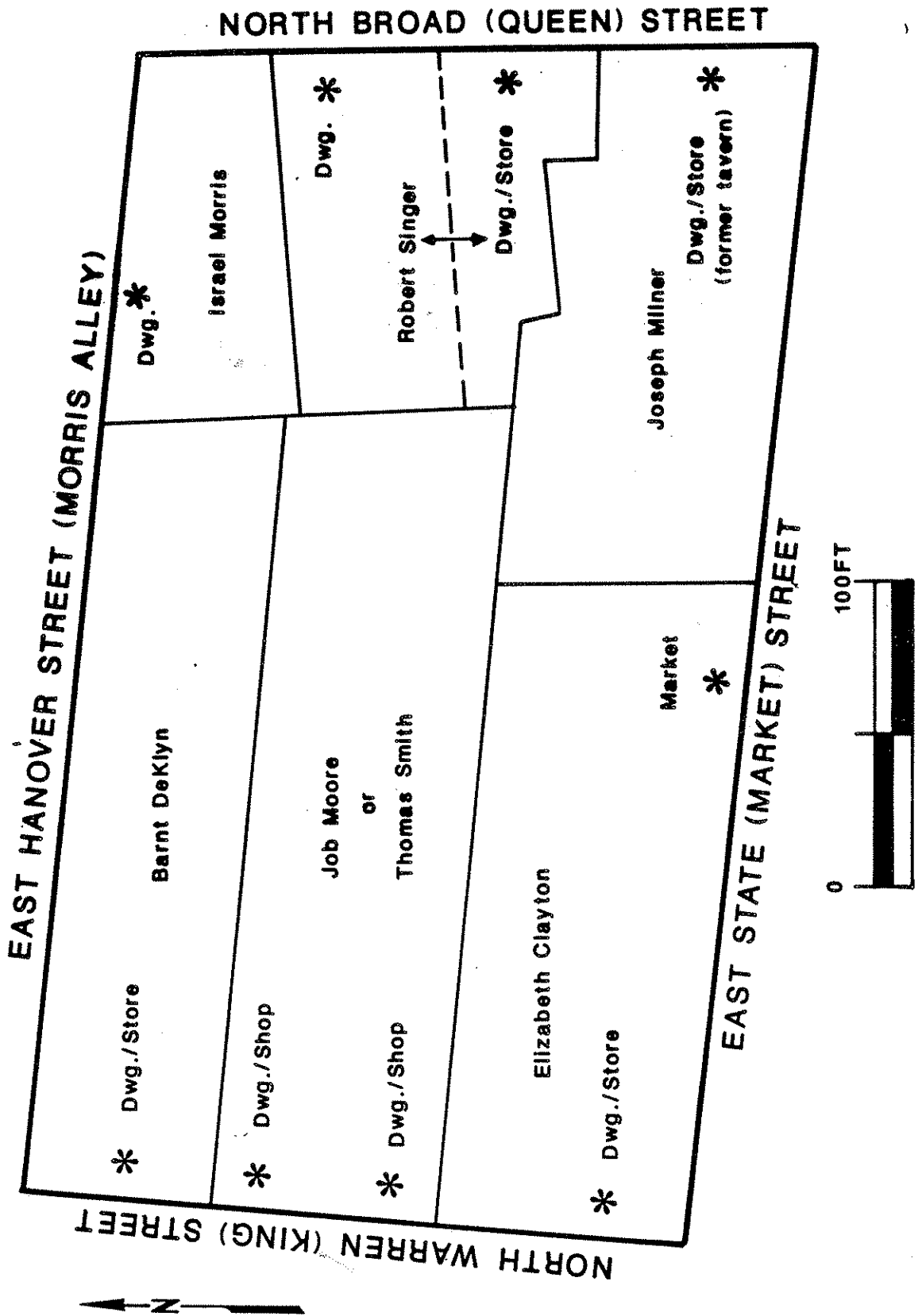
Thomas Cadwalader, who was appointed as Trenton's first mayor (then titled Chief Burgess) in 1746, utilized the corner lot as a rental property during the several years that he owned it. In 1750 he placed an advertisement offering the "corner brick house" for sale, and the description of the "four lodging rooms" in the attic story indicate that it was then in use as a tavern (Nelson 1895:662,663). This use of the structure, which would continue into the period of the American Revolution, may have actually begun during the brief ownership term of William Morris, or perhaps even during Benjamin Smith's term. The resurveying of this lot's north line had served to remove the stone store structure sited just to the north of the brick tavern from the former Smith lot and allowed Morris to retain it, possibly for use within his own mercantile empire (see Figure 4.1; the southern Singer lot; see also Appendix A - 7-9 North Broad). In 1746 an

advertisement for goods available at the store managed by William Morris Jr. sited on the west side of Queen Street (and possibly the former Smith structure) appeared in the Pennsylvania Gazette (Nelson 1895:326; see also Nelson 1898:335,336).

Morris also had some success in developing some of the King Street frontage of his Dunhams Block holdings during this period. The lot at the corner of King and Second Streets (see Figure 4.1; the Clayton lot; see also Appendix A - 2-10 North Warren) may have been sold off at this time, very possibly to William Clayton, who owned this property and resided in a dwelling at the corner during the two decades that preceded his death in 1779 (see Honeyman 1928:41; Nelson 1902:364). Clayton, a hatter who went on to become a prominent figure in local and county government, is known to have been residing in Trenton by 1745 (see WJ Deed K 322), and it seems possible that he may have purchased the corner lot from Morris and built a house there during the mid-1740s. In 1746 Morris advertised all of his King Street frontage within the block as available for purchase with the exception of this property (Nelson 1895:302), suggesting that he had already sold it off. The same advertisement, in describing the two town lots to the north, noted that the lot within the middle of the block (see Figure 4.1; the Moore/Smith lot; also see below, Chapter 6A) included a house, storehouse, and several outbuildings. Morris had apparently recently improved this lot for use as a rental property (and, perhaps, to enhance his ability to sell it).

Development within the Dunhams Block continued during the third quarter of the 18th century, and by the time of the outbreak of the Revolution every lot within the block had been improved. The tavern at the corner of Queen and Second Streets remained active with several names (the Ligonier or Black Horse Tavern, the Royal Oak Tavern, and Stille's Tavern), several proprietors, and numerous owners until 1778 (see Appendix A - 1-5 North Broad). Morris retained the stone store (which probably also included residential space) until 1765, although it seems likely that it served primarily as a rental property after mid-century (see Appendix A - 7-9 North Broad). In 1765 he sold this property to Robert Singer, a Trenton merchant who had already been utilizing the store as a tenant for at least a year. Morris subsequently sold the lot sited adjacent to the north of the store parcel (see Figure 4.1) to Singer, and the latter appears to have built a dwelling on the street frontage of this second holding sometime before the Revolution (see Appendix A - 11-15 North Broad). Morris

Figure 4.1. Dunhams Block c. 1780



retained the northernmost of the Queen Street lots, and a dwelling (used as a tenant property) was built within the western portion of this parcel along Morris Alley sometime before 1783 (see Appendix A - 17-21 North Broad). This latter structure was significant as the first (and, in fact, one of the few) primary structures to be sited along the block's East Hanover frontage (Trenton Historical Society 1929:316,317; Boyer 1962:175-177).

Change and expansion had also come to the lots along King Street during this period. The lot at the corner of King and Second was, as noted above, the site of the dwelling and hat shop of William Clayton until 1779 (see Figure 4.1; see also Appendix A - 2-10 North Warren). The lot adjacent to the north, which had been offered for sale in 1746, was indeed sold off by Morris at mid-century. This property was owned by Gideon Bickerdike and by James and Thomas Smith during the last decades of the colonial period and continued to include two primary structures that were used by both the owners and by tenants as combined residential and commercial space (see below, Chapter 6A). Morris was not able to sell the northernmost of the King Street lots, however, and it (along with the lot fronting on Queen adjacent to the east) descended to his son Israel Morris in 1775. The Morris family did improve this lot, however, as there was a dwelling (which also included commercial space) sited on this holding in 1778 (see below, Chapter 5A).

Another noteworthy addition to the physical profile of the Dunhams Block that appears to have been made during this period involved the erection of a public market. Trenton's first market building was built sometime between 1750 and 1758, and secondary sources variously claim that this important structure was sited within Second Street (or Market Street, as it came to be known) or within King Street. It seems more probable that this first market was sited within the Dunhams Block on the north side of Market Street on rented land within the rear (eastern) section of the Clayton lot (see Figure 4.1). This frame building, the first of many primary structures that would be sited along East State Street, served as a central location for the sale regional produce and contributed greatly to promoting the commercial primacy of the Dunhams Block (Raum 1871:76; Podmore 1927:88,89; Trenton Historical Society 1929:337-339; Turk 1964:68).

By the Revolutionary period Trenton was well-established as West Jersey's dominant town as many of the possibilities envisioned by William Trent a half a century earlier had been realized. Trenton had become a transportation and transshipment center as the river, several important roads, ferries, and landing facilities served to connect and serve the northern portion of the Delaware Valley with Philadelphia and the southern part of the valley. Trenton was also a noteworthy market and commercial center, with

several classes of merchants facilitating the economic connections between the producers and the consumers in the surrounding area and the larger merchants, the manufacturers, and the consumers elsewhere within the Philadelphia market region. Trenton also included several important processing and manufacturing facilities and functioned as the center of the government of Hunterdon County. The physical core of the town at this time was the area roughly bounded by the rear lines of the properties on the west side of King, the south side of Front, the east side of Queen, and the north side of Third (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3). Numerous stores and taverns, the town market, the Hunterdon County Court House, and the post office were all sited within this district. The Dunhams Block, with its several prominent stores and the market, was at the very center of Trenton's extensive commercial network (Turk 1964:95,96,102; Toothman 1977:182,183,214-218).

The block was characterized physically by free-standing primary structures that most often served both residential and commercial purposes (although some were used solely in one or the other of these functions) that were sited on the street frontage of their lots. Most of these structures, as was the case within the remainder of the town, were frame, although several of the more pretentious buildings were brick and at least one was built of stone. All but two of the block's primary buildings were sited along King and Queen, which were without question the town's dominant streets during this period. Various types of outbuildings and secondary structures were sited within the rear portions of the block's town lots and generally reflected the same ratio of frame and masonry construction, with the former being far more common (Turk 1964:95,96; Toothman 1977:183,184,199).

The importance of commerce and trade in Trenton provided an individual operating as a merchant in Trenton with an opportunity for the accumulation of both wealth and community standing. Trenton's merchants were, however, nearly always fully dependent on (and often indebted to) their larger, wealthier, and more influential counterparts operating out of the City of Philadelphia. Only a very few of the members of Trenton's mercantile class were involved in trade that went beyond Philadelphia to New York City and other East Coast ports, to the West Indies, and to England and Europe. Most of these men, including William Trent and William Morris, enjoyed extensive business and family connections in Philadelphia and essentially functioned as merchants of that city who had also established mercantile facilities in Trenton. Most of Trenton's merchants operated at the lower levels of the region's network of commerce and concentrated their activities within their local stores and in trading with the larger Philadelphia firms (Toothman 1977:216,221,222,231-237).

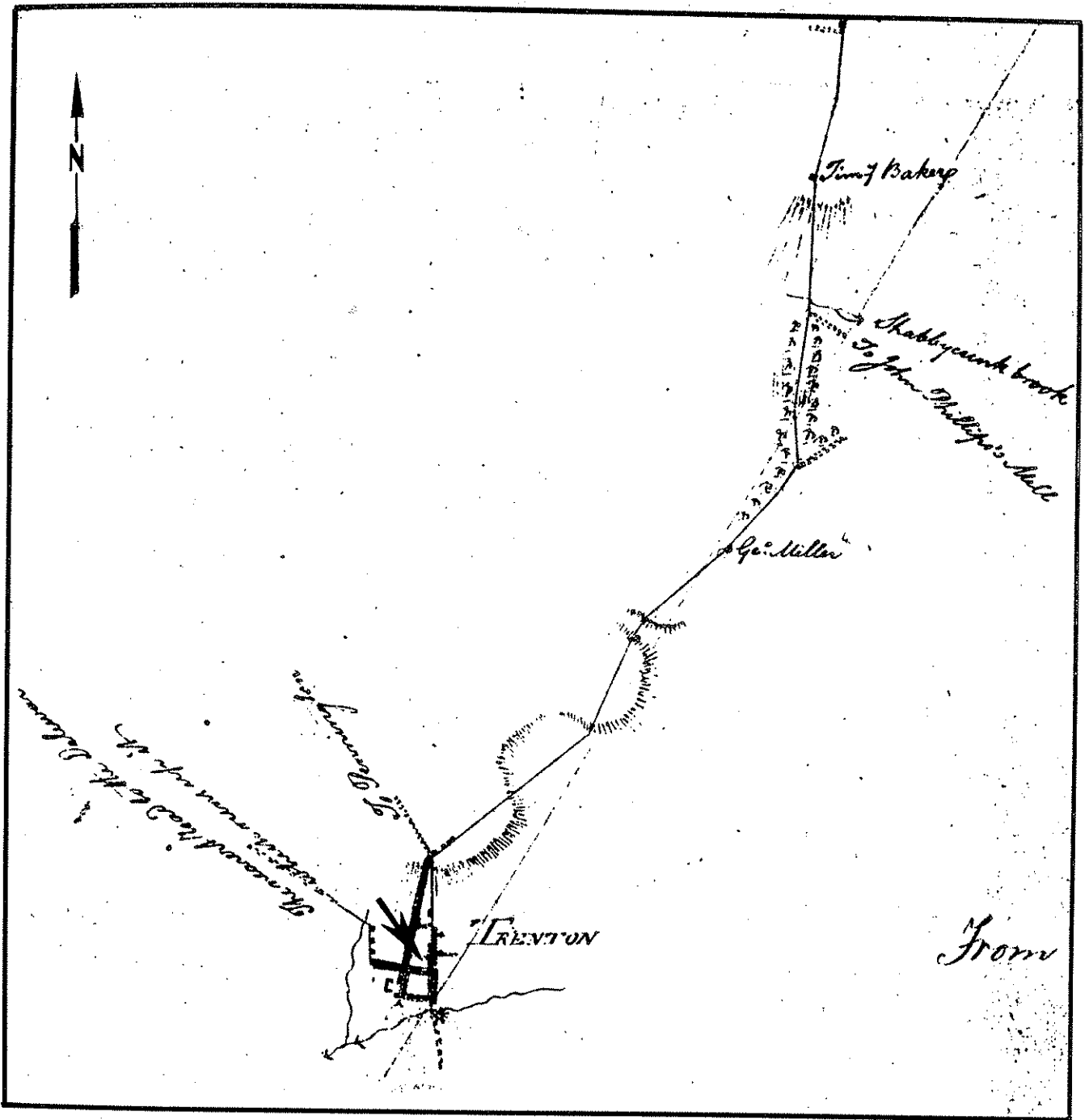


Figure 4.2. DeWitt, Simeon. From Princeton to Trenton. 1781.
 No scale given. Dunham's Block indicated by arrow.

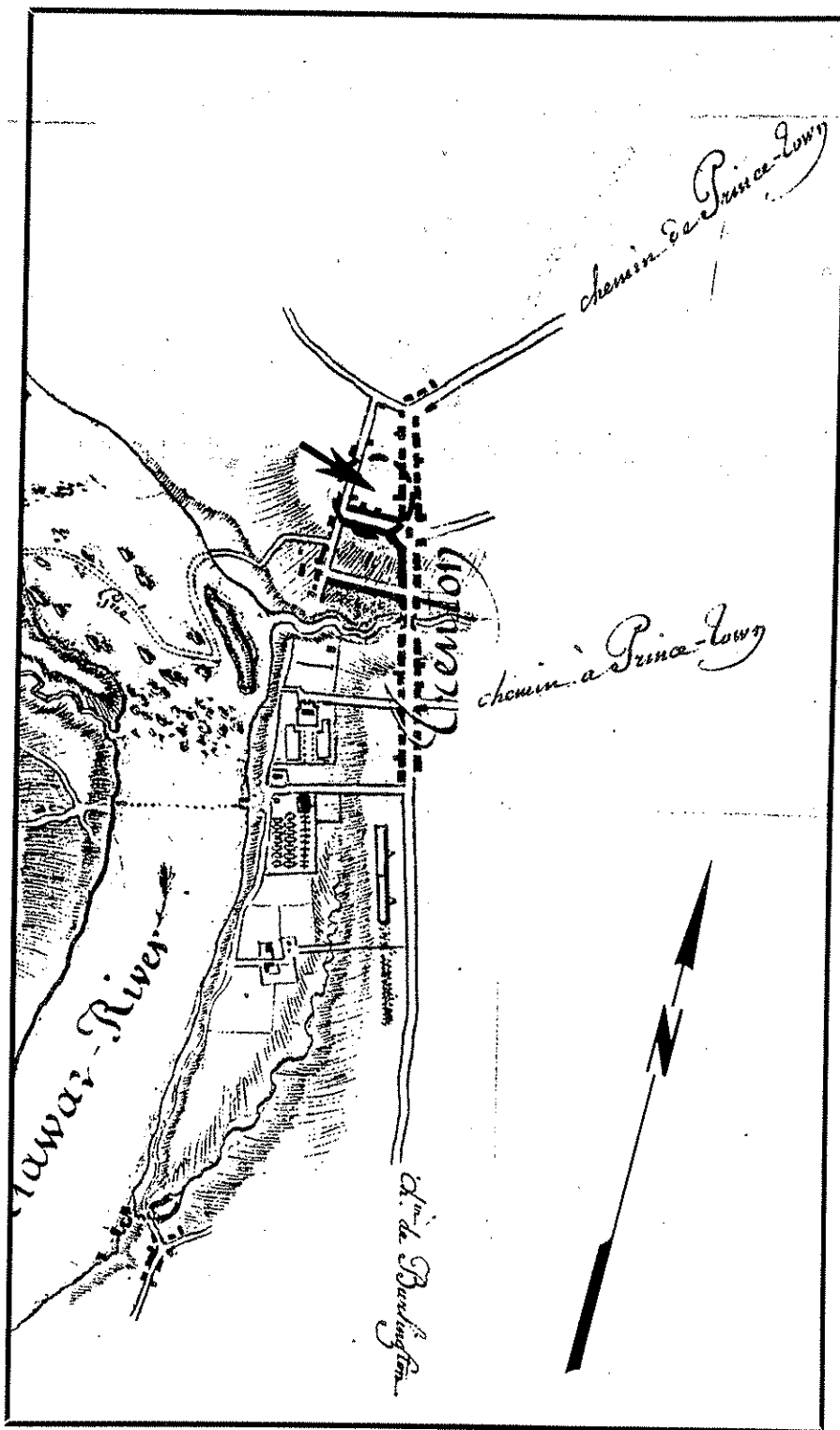


Figure 4.3. Berthier, Louis-Alexandre.
Twenty-fifth Camp at Trenton. 1781.
No scale given. Dunham's Block circled.

By 1780 five of the six town lots that were included within the Dunhams Block were being utilized by individuals functioning within this lower level of the region's trade network (see Figure 4.1). The block's most prominent merchants during this period kept their stores in the two commercial structures built by Benjamin Smith on Queen Street several decades earlier. Joseph Milnor, who had purchased the former brick tavern property at the corner of Queen and State in 1778 and converted to serve as a combined store and dwelling, was perhaps the most successful of the block's merchants, and his family remained active commercially on this site into the following century (see Appendix A - 1-5 North Broad). Robert Singer was another notable Trenton merchant who was active on the lot to the north (which included the stone store built by Smith) for more than two decades, but in 1785 he was forced to give up much of his real and personal property to satisfy the demands of the several Philadelphia mercantile firms to which he was indebted (see Appendix A - 7-9 and 11-15 North Broad). The block's only non-commercial property (and the only lot with undeveloped frontage along either Queen or King) was still held by the Morris family in 1780 (see Appendix A - 17-21 North Broad).

The lots along King Street within the block were all in use as commercial properties in 1780 (see Figure 4.1). The Clayton holding, which had previously included a hat shop (and was also the site of the town market), had been recently rented by John Singer, the brother and former partner of Robert Singer, for use as a dry goods store (see Appendix A - 2-10 North Warren; this property appears to have remained in commercial/residential use until the end of the century). The property at the corner of King and Morris Alley had been sold off by Israel Morris in 1778 and the brick structure included therein continued to be used as both a store and a dwelling for several years (see below, Chapter 5A). The lot sited at the center of the block's King Street frontage still included two commercial/residential structures (see below, Chapter 6A), with the southernmost of these two buildings apparently housing a hat shop during most of the last quarter of the 18th century and well into the 19th century. It was the second of these structures that was of particular note, however, as in 1778 it had been converted to serve as the second home of New Jersey's first successful newspaper, the New Jersey Gazette. This newspaper was the first of many that would be published in Trenton, and the Dunhams Block was consistently at the center the city's journalism activities until well into the present century. This structure would continue in use as a newspaper office, print shop, and stationery store during much of the remainder of the 18th century (Raum 1871:213,214; Lee 1895:242; Trenton Historical Society 1929:779,784; Johnston 1932:6-9,13,14).

During the last two decades of the 18th century the number of buildings within the block that served exclusively residential functions was slightly increased. The brick structure at the corner of King Street and Morris Alley was purchased by William Churchill Houston, a prominent figure in both the state and federal governments (see below, Chapter 5A), and he appears to have used it solely as a residence until the time of his death in 1788. A fairly rapid return to a joint commercial/residential use followed and continued under several subsequent owners into the 1820s. The lot formerly held by the bankrupt Robert Singer was acquired by Dr. Nicholas Belleville, one of Trenton's leading physicians during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and he appears to have resided within the house in the northeast corner of this holding for several decades (see Appendix A - 11-15 North Broad). Belleville also re-subdivided the former Singer property as he sold off a lot that included the old stone store (see Appendix A - 7-9 North Broad). The property to the north also experienced a subdivision and the construction of a building that may have served primarily as a dwelling (see Appendix A - 17-21 North Broad). This lot became the last within the block to be sold off by the Morris family in 1783, and it was subsequently purchased and subdivided by Joseph Milnor, with the new structure apparently being built on Queen Street shortly thereafter.

The most extensive changes to occur within the block, however, were focused within the former Clayton lot at the corner of Queen and Market Streets (see Appendix A - 2 - 10 North Warren and 2 - 22 East State). The town market, which was depicted on its site within the block on a map of the town of Trenton drawn in 1789 (Figure 4.4), was torn down late in 1792. In the wake of the removal of the market and the purchase of the entire property by Abraham Hunt, Trenton's leading merchant during the early federal period, this former town lot was subdivided into five smaller lots that were sold off to five separate individuals just prior to the turn of the century (see Figure 4.5). This form of subdivision, with the larger town lots being fragmented into smaller "city" lots, would eventually come to effect all but one of the several properties within the Dunhams Block. The construction of the new city market in the center of Market Street between King and Queen in 1793 (see Figure 4.6) assured that the block's frontage along the said Market Street would serve as a focus of commercial activities and allowed for the rapid sale of the five new lots. The old building at the corner of King and Market remained in use as a commercial/residential property, and new structures appear to have been built within three of the four other lots by 1800 (Raum 1871:76-78; Podmore 1927:87,88; Trenton Historical Society 1929:339-342).

King and Queen

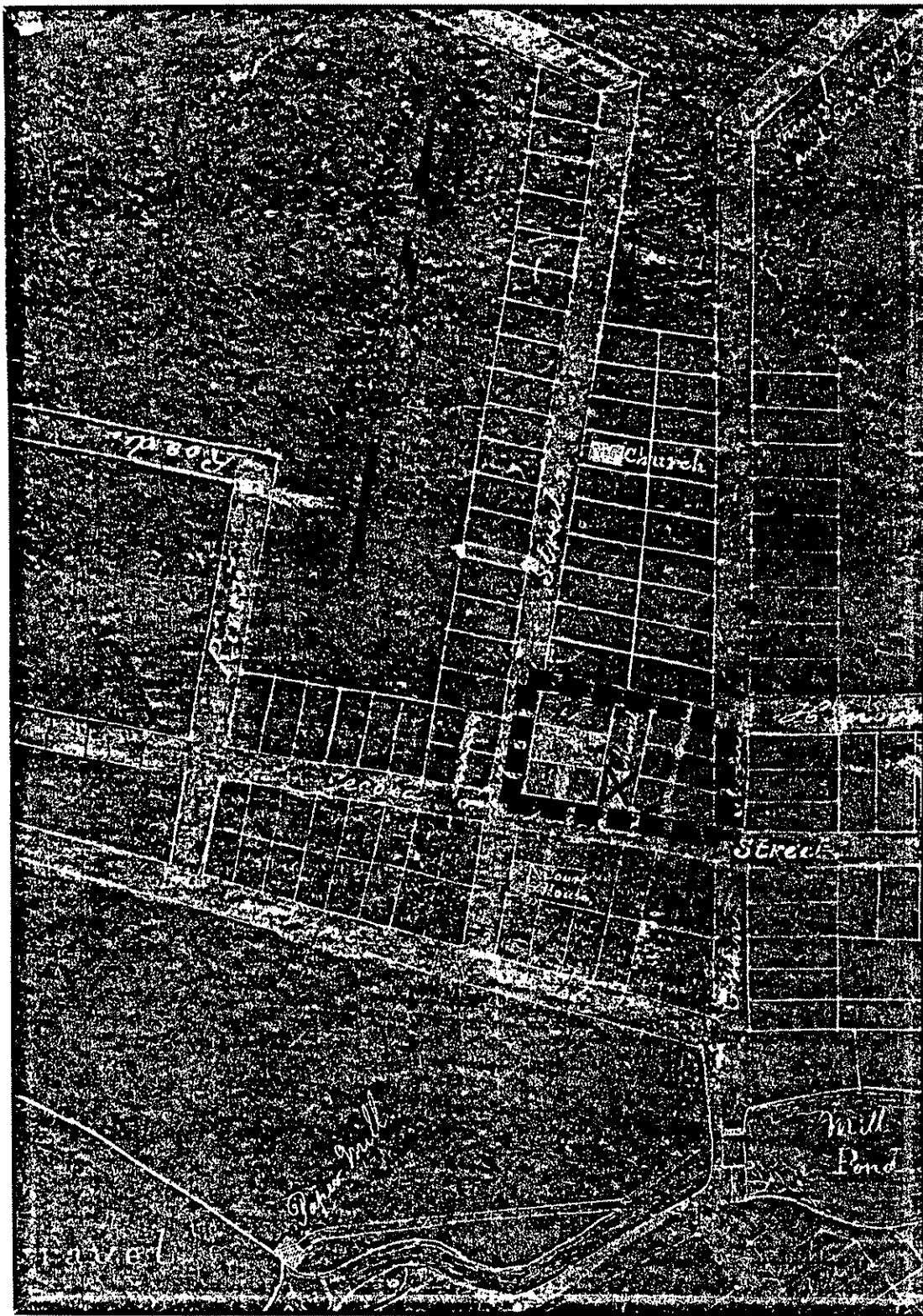


Figure 4.4. "A Plan and Survey of sundry pieces of Land adjoining the Delaware River and Assumpink Creek belonging to John Cox." 1789. Scale 1":400' approx. Dunhams Block outlined; "X" indicates location of Market House.

Figure 4.5. Dunhams Block c. 1800

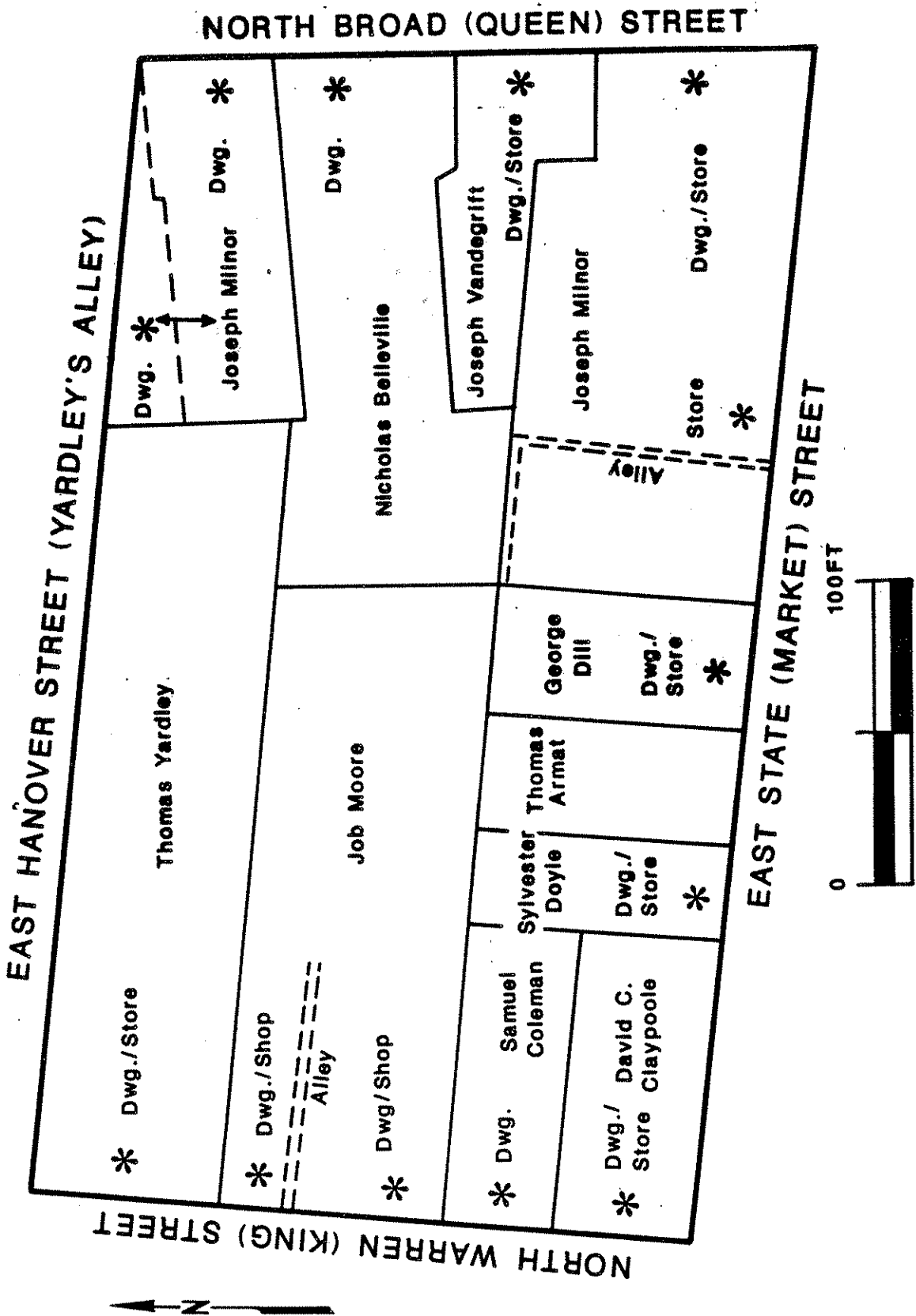




Figure 4.6. "A Plan of Sundry Lots of Land the Property of Daniel W. Coxe, Esquire, Part of His Bloomsbury Estate." n.d. [c. 1800]. Scale 1":275'. Dunhams Block outlined; "10" indicates "Market House."

With the exception of the above lot, the Dunhams Block had changed relatively little since the Revolutionary War (see Figure 4.5). Along Queen Street Joseph Milnor had added some further improvements to his property at the corner of Market Street (see Appendix A - 1-5 North Broad) and he had reacquired and reunited the two sections of the lot at the corner of Yardley's Alley (see Appendix A - 17-21 North Broad). The lot in between the two Milnor properties remained subdivided, with Nicholas Belleville residing within the dwelling within the northern parcel (see Appendix A - 11-15 North Broad) and Joseph Vandegrift holding the old stone structure built by Benjamin Smith (see Appendix A - 7-9 North Broad). Thomas Yardley owned and apparently rented out the brick structure at the corner of King Street and the alley that now bore his name (see below, Chapter 5A). The lot to the south of Yardley's property was owned by Job Moore, who appears to have utilized the southernmost of the two primary structures here (as a hat shop and dwelling) while the other building was in its last year of use as a printing shop and stationery store (see below, Chapter 6A).

Development within the Dunhams Block continued at a steady, if not particularly accelerated, pace during the first three decades of the 19th century. This phase of the block's expansion was nearly fully concentrated along King, which remained the City of Trenton's primary street during this period, and along Market, as the commercial value of the frontage adjacent to the city market was exploited. On King the conversion of the brick structure at the Yardley's Alley corner from from its former use as a store/dwelling into a tavern/hotel (with residential space for its proprietor) known as the Trenton House was of particular note (see below, Chapter 5A). This notable place of entertainment would eventually rank as Trenton's leading hotel and it would remain active on this site into the 1960s. To the south of this property five new brick row houses were built on the street at what would later be 8 - 16 North Warren as the former Job Moore lot and the smaller lot adjacent to the south were subdivided and developed during this period (see below, Chapter 6A and Appendix A - 8-10 and 16 North Warren). All five of these structures appear to have been built to serve initially as residences, but by mid-century all were also serving commercial functions.

The new construction occurring along Market Street during this period was concentrated within the middle of the block. New primary structures were built on all three of the former Clayton property lots that fronted on Market, and while, again, several of these appear to have originally served primarily as dwellings, all were soon also being utilized as commercial space (see Appendix A - 12-14, 16, and 18 East State). The easternmost of these three lots was owned by George Dill, a well-known Trenton merchant, and appears to have included a structure that had been built during the

1790s in the wake of the removal of the old town market in 1792. In 1813 this building served briefly as the first banking house for Trenton's second bank, the State Bank of Trenton, while its purpose-built structure was being completed on King Street. This bank was only the first of several that would occupy quarters sited within the Dunhams Block during the 19th and 20th centuries. During the 1820s Dill purchased additional land in the center of the block to expand the size of his lot (see Figure 4.7), and the double commercial/residential building he subsequently erected here (later known as 20-22 East State; see Appendix A) served to house his tobacco business and included a meeting hall on one of the upper stories (Raum 1871:278; Lee 1895:268; Trenton Historical Society 1929:574).

The other property to be developed on Market Street during this period was created in the first subdivision of the former Milnor lot that fronted on Queen Street. This holding was sold out of the Milnor family in 1814, and a parcel from its western end was divided off in 1817 (see Appendix A - 24-26 East State). This smaller lot was improved shortly thereafter with the construction of a large brick commercial/residential building that overlooked the city market. The larger eastern section of the former Milnor lot, along with the other of the block's properties that fronted on Queen Street, remained little changed as both the former town lots and the structures built upon them reflected an 18th century town landscape rather than the new, more urban physical environment that was developing along King and Market.

The construction of rail lines operated by the Camden and Amboy Railroad and Transportation Company and the Delaware and Raritan Canal during the 1830s signalled the beginning of an era of great expansion within the City of Trenton that would greatly impact the Dunhams Block. During the decades that would follow the city's commercial core would expand out from its original two blocks to encompass numerous blocks, but the area bounded by Warren (formerly King), Second (formerly Market), Greene (formerly Queen), and Hanover (formerly Yardley's Alley) would remain at the very center of this expanded core. Commercial elements became more and more dominant within the block as stores, taverns, banks, newspaper offices/print shops, and the city market overshadowed the few surviving residential elements. Any residential space that survived into the second half of the 19th century was located on the upper floors of buildings whose primary functions were commercial (Turk 1964:133,143).

Change and growth within the Dunhams Block was both rapid and considerable in extent. In 1833 the former Clayton structure at the corner of Warren and Second was torn down and replaced by the large four story brick structure that was then subdivided into the properties later known as 2, 4, and 6 North Warren and 6, 8, and 10 East State (see Appendix A). 6 North Warren was noteworthy as it became the block's

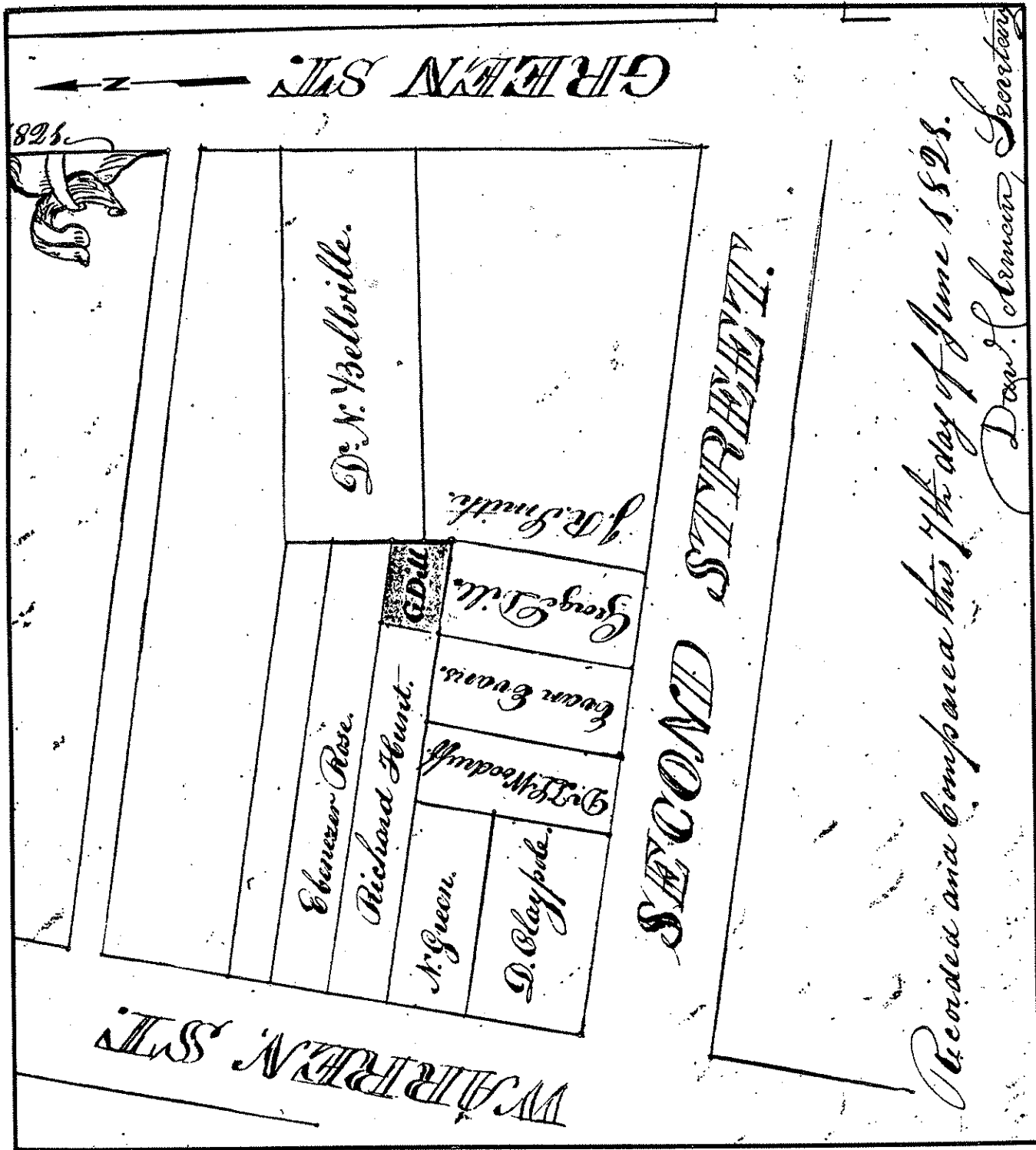


Figure 4.7. "Map of the G. Dill Property." 1821. Scale 1":65 feet approx. Durhams Block outlined.

second banking house as it was used consecutively by the Mechanics and Manufacturers Bank (between 1834 and 1838; see Figure 4.8) and the Trenton Banking Company (in 1838 - 1839) while their new facilities were being built elsewhere in the city. The new building was also the site of the block's second newspaper office, print shop, and stationary store as the New Jersey State Gazette established its headquarters within 2 North Warren and remained there until the Civil War period. A more direct effect of the decade's transportational improvements was seen with the purchase of the Trenton House property and the lot adjacent to the east fronting on Greene Street by Richard F. Stockton, one of the leading figures in the Joint Companies (the powerful company formed to unite the interests of the Camden and Amboy Railroad and the Delaware and Raritan Canal), and Philemon Dickinson, the President of the Trenton Banking Company, a major investor in the said Joint Companies (see below, Chapter 5A) (Raum 1871:215,279; Woodward and Hageman 1883:702; Lee 1895:269,270; Godfrey 1919:46-48,53; Trenton Historical Society 1929:557,558,569,570; Johnston 1932:16,17).

The acquisitions noted above apparently represented a speculative venture based on the expected benefits to be provided by the Joint Companies ongoing transportational improvements in Trenton. The Trenton House was owned by interests related to the said Joint Companies for nearly a decade and was apparently expanded during this period as new corridors of transport promised new business for the city's growing number of hotels. It was also during this period that the Trenton House first gained a reputation as an unofficial center of state governmental activities, and it remained as an influential focus of political affairs throughout the 19th century. The remaining structure on the adjacent Greene Street lot was apparently utilized as the Joint Companies' Trenton office during this period (see Appendix A - 17-21 North Broad), and the Greene Street frontage of this property was increased through the alteration of Yardley's Alley in 1837 (WJ Deed AX 109; see Figure 4.9). The Camden and Amboy also built a small railroad station here in 1837 at the terminus of a short spur line that ran east in Hanover Street to the canal and the Philadelphia and Trenton Railroad (also a Joint Companies' holding). This short horse drawn rail line, which operated for only two years, was the first interurban rail service to be provided within the City of Trenton and a precursor of the city's later trolley line system (Podmore 1927:108; Trenton Historical Society 1929:288).

By the end of this pivotal decade the Dunhams Block was characterized by the presence of the Joint Companies within its northern lots and the nearly fully developed street frontages along Warren and Second Streets (see Figure 4.10). The old town lots in these portions of the block had been heavily subdivided and improved through the construction of multiple story brick row structures. The block's Greene

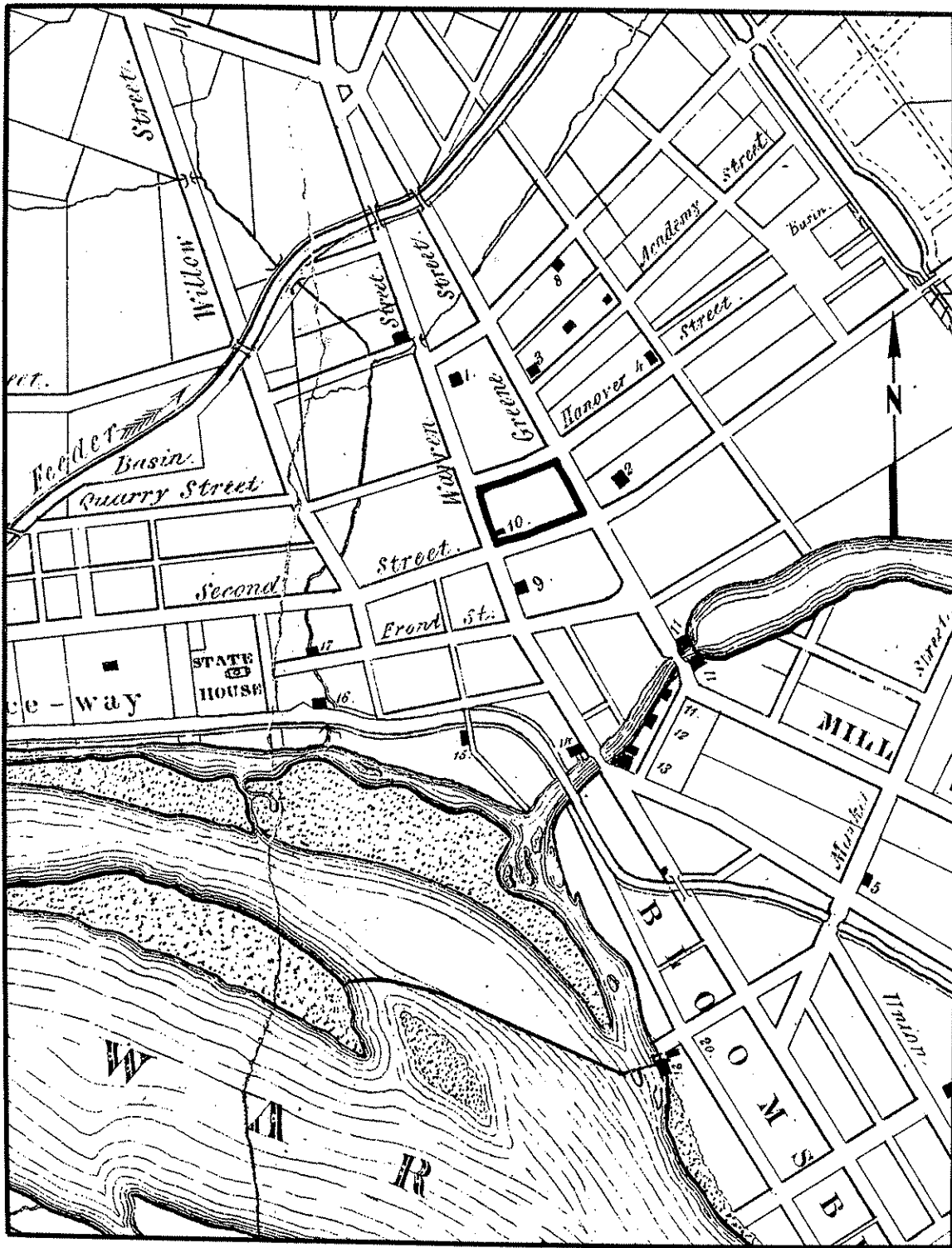
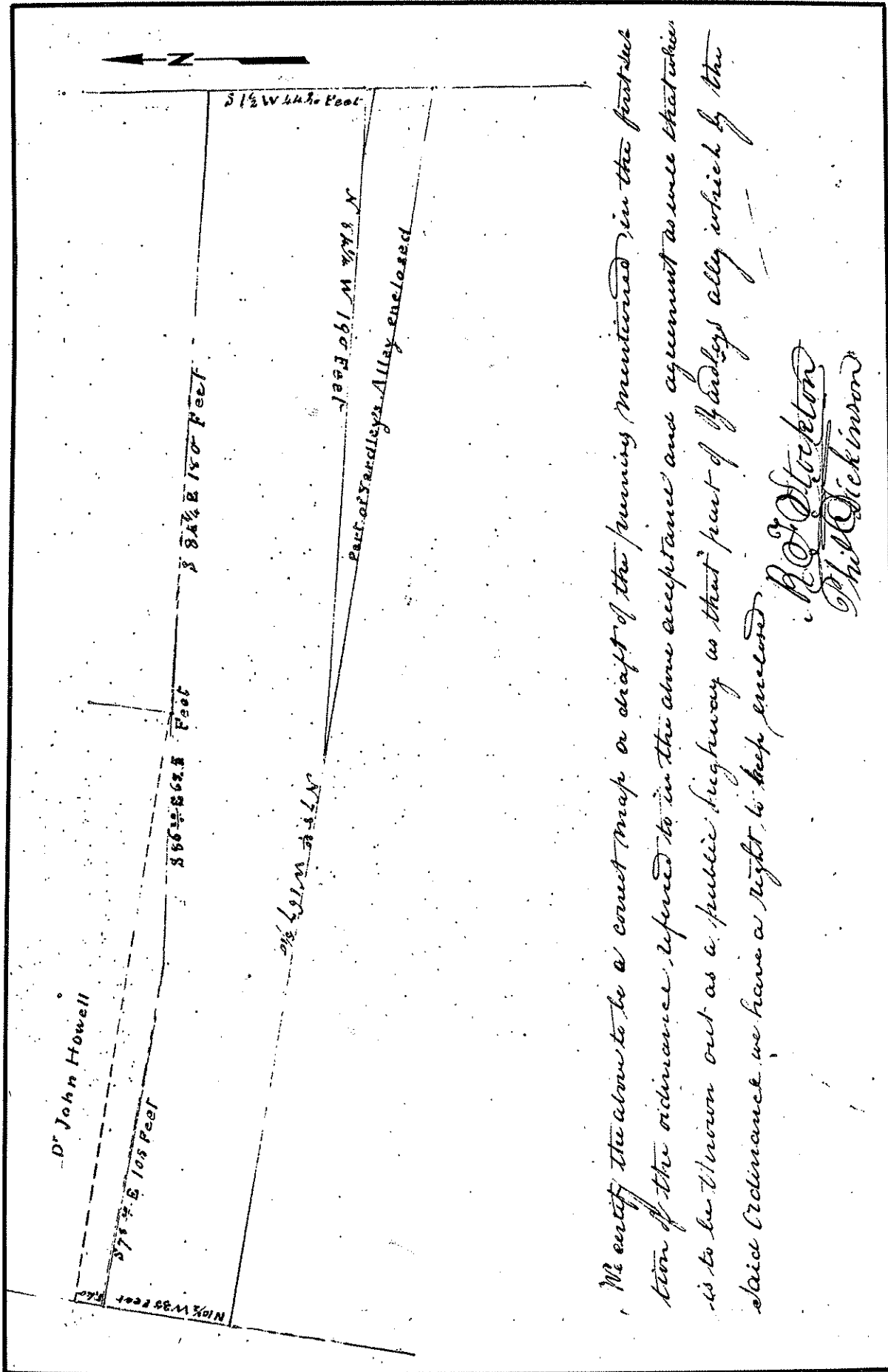


Figure 4.8. Gordon, T. Map of the City of Trenton and Its Vicinity. 1836. Scale 1":670'. Dunhams Block outlined; "10" indicates "M. [Mechanics] & Manufacturer's."



We certify the above to be a correct map or draft of the survey mentioned in the foundation of the ordinance, referred to in the above acceptance and agreement as well that which is to be thrown out as a public highway as that part of Yardley's alley which by the said ordinance, we have a right to keep enclosed.

Figure 4.9. "Map of Yardley's Alley." 1837. Scale 1":40' approx. Yardley's Alley was a predecessor of East Hanover Street.

Street town lots had survived intact and the street frontage of these properties continued to be dominated by free-standing structures of 18th century origin. The urbanization of this section was on the horizon, however, as the construction of the new city market within Greene Street to the north of Second in 1845 (with a second structure added in 1848; the old Market Street building was torn down in 1845) promised to provide the same impetus for commercial development as had been seen along the block's Second Street frontage more than a half century earlier. The Greene Street market was the last city-owned market in Trenton and remained in use until 1870 (Raum 1871:78; Podmore 1927:83-86; Trenton Historical Society 1929:342,343).

Several ownership shifts along Greene Street also served to open the way for the development of this portion of the block. Dr. Nicholas Belleville died in 1832, leaving the old stone structure (at what would later be 7-9 North Broad), which he had sold off and reacquired at least twice, to two of his granddaughters and passing his house (at 11-15 North Broad) to his daughter Ann, the wife of Dr. James T. Clarke (see Figure 4.10). Both of these structures, along with the early buildings on Clarke's corner lot, appear to have remained standing into the Civil War period, but by mid-century they had been fully surrounded by additional structures as all available street frontage within these three properties had been occupied (see Figure 4.11). In 1845 Clarke rented out the former Belleville house and it was adapted to serve as a hotel known as a Lafayette House. The old building was expanded through the construction of two additional stories at mid-century, and it continued in use as a hotel until the 1860s (Trenton Historical Society 1929:325).

The northernmost of the Greene Street lots was purchased by Joseph Wood, one of Trenton's leading citizens, just before mid-century and immediately developed. The brick commercial structure known as the Odd Fellows Building (later 17-21 North Broad; Wood was an important figure in this fraternal organization and included a third floor meeting hall) and the adjacent structure fronting on Hanover (later 25 - 29 East Hanover) were both built by Wood during the late 1840s. The corner building remained in the extended Wood family as a commercial rental property until the middle part of the present century, but the three sections of the Hanover Street building were sold off during the early 1850s. In 1854 the adjacent Trenton House property (see Figure 4.12) was acquired by Peter Katzenbach, and it was during his half-century ownership tenure that this noteworthy hotel achieved the peak of its popularity and reputation (see below, Chapter 5A) (Trenton Historical Society 1929:870).

The Dunhams Block experienced its last major series of subdivisions during the first two decades of the second half of the 19th century as expansion within the entire City of Trenton continued. Further transportational improvements,

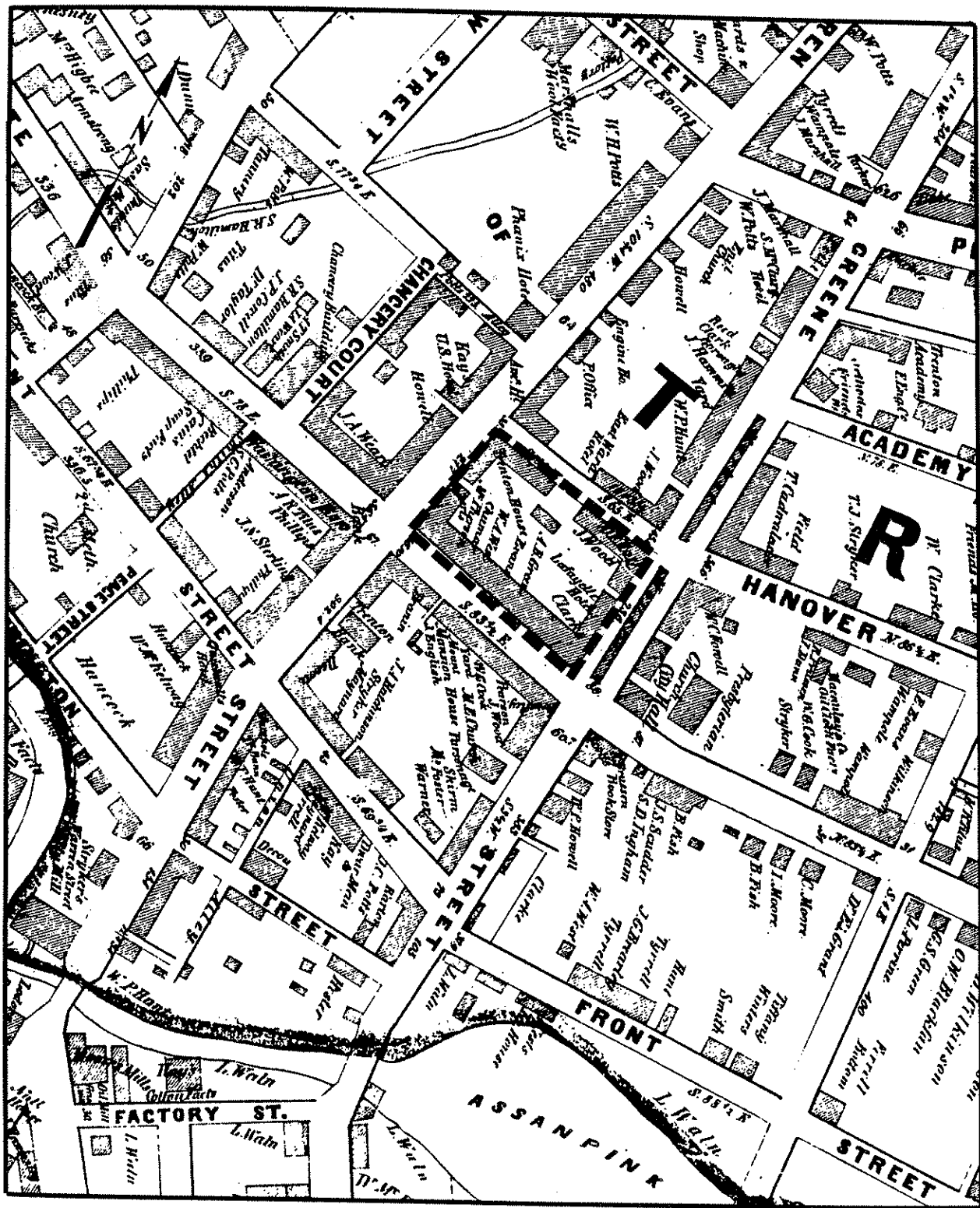


Figure 4.11. Sidney, J.C. Map of the City of Trenton. 1849. Scale 1":260'. Dunhams Block outlined.

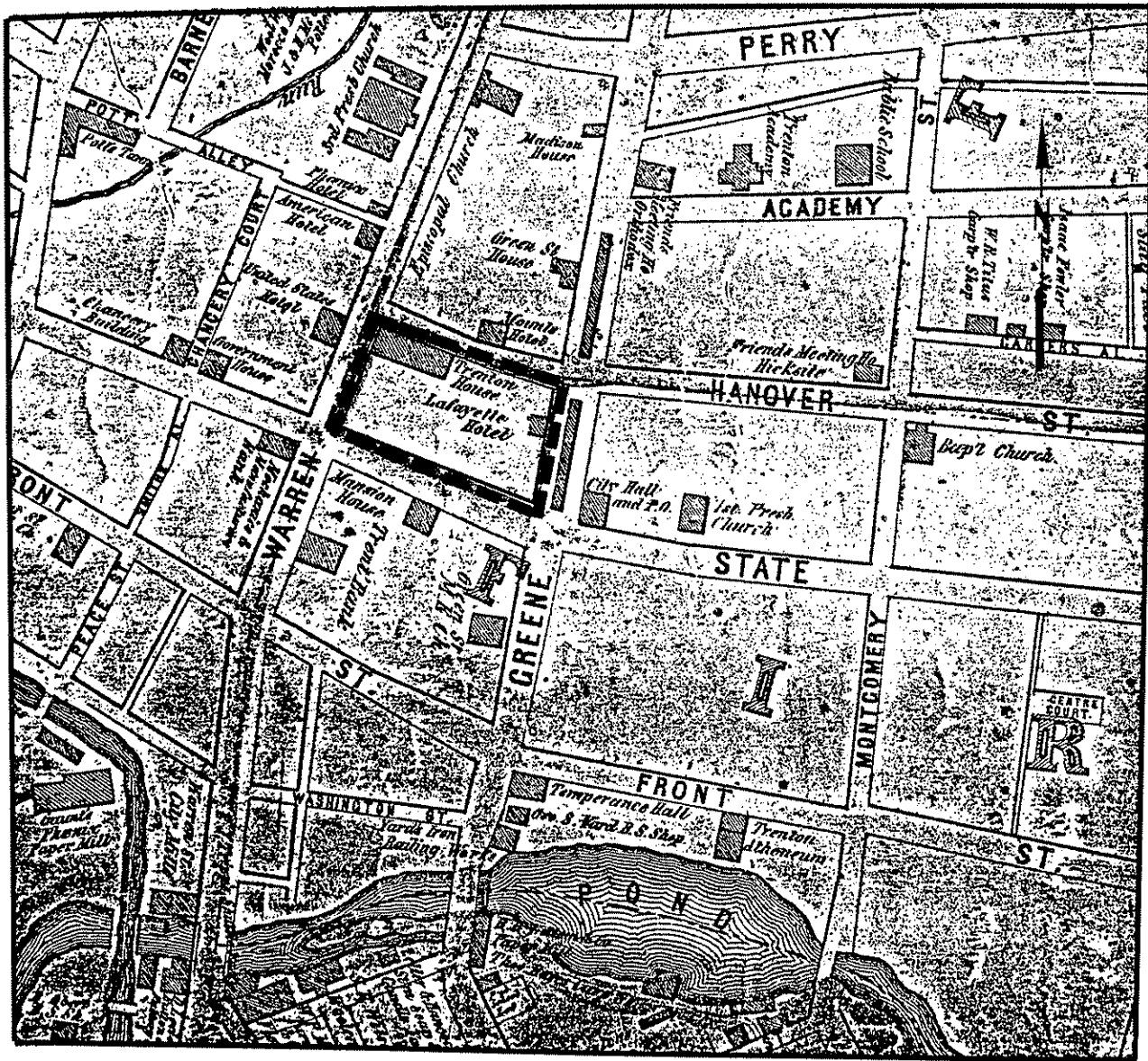


Figure 4.12. Lamborn, Robert H. Map of the City of Trenton and part of Hamilton Township. n.d. [c. 1858]. Scale 1":400'. Dunhams Block outlined.

including the development of the city's system of street railways, allowed for a spatial separation between the workplace and the residence, and more and more former residential space within the still expanding business core of the city was converted to commercial use. By 1870 there were no longer any purely residential properties within the block, and the number of combined commercial/residential structures had been considerably reduced. In addition, the development within the eastern third of the block had, by that time, produced a physical landscape that could now be seen to be fully urban in nature (see Figure 4.13 and 4.14) (Lee 1895:137,138; Trenton Historical Society 1929:290-292; Turk 1964:228).

The block's Warren Street frontage remained unchanged during this period, with the expanding Trenton House standing at the northern end of a string of brick row structures serving largely commercial purposes that had been built well before mid-century (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14). The western two-thirds of the State Street frontage remained similarly unchanged and exhibited a streetscape of closely packed brick buildings erected during the first half of the 19th century housing a variety of commercial concerns. Some of these properties experienced fairly frequent ownership or tenant changes, while others were identified with the same family for many decades. An example of the latter circumstance was the long term ownership of the property later known as 20-22 East State by the Dill and the related Wilkinson family. Various members of the Wilkinson family also later gained control of most of the building at the corner of Warren and State and the structure later known as 18 East State and all of these holdings remained within the family into the 20th century.

One of the several of the block's former town lots that underwent significant change during this period was the property at the corner of Greene and State formerly held by Dr. James T. Clarke. This lot was fully subdivided and sold off by Clarke's heirs in 1864 and 1865, with most of these transactions involving the transfer of existing buildings that had been built or improved by the extended Clarke family during the middle decades of the century (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14). It was with this series of subdivisions and several construction projects that followed that the eastern third of the block's State Street frontage assumed a fully urban character. Two of these new State Street properties were of particular note. The first of these was the holding later known as 32-36 East State, which was the first of the subdivided lots to be sold off by the Clarke heirs. This property was purchased by the newly chartered First National Bank of Trenton in 1864, and the small two story commercial structure then occupying this small lot was immediately torn down. The bank's first permanent banking house, a four story brownstone-faced brick building, was completed on this site in 1865. This building was considered as the finest structure in the City of Trenton at the time of its

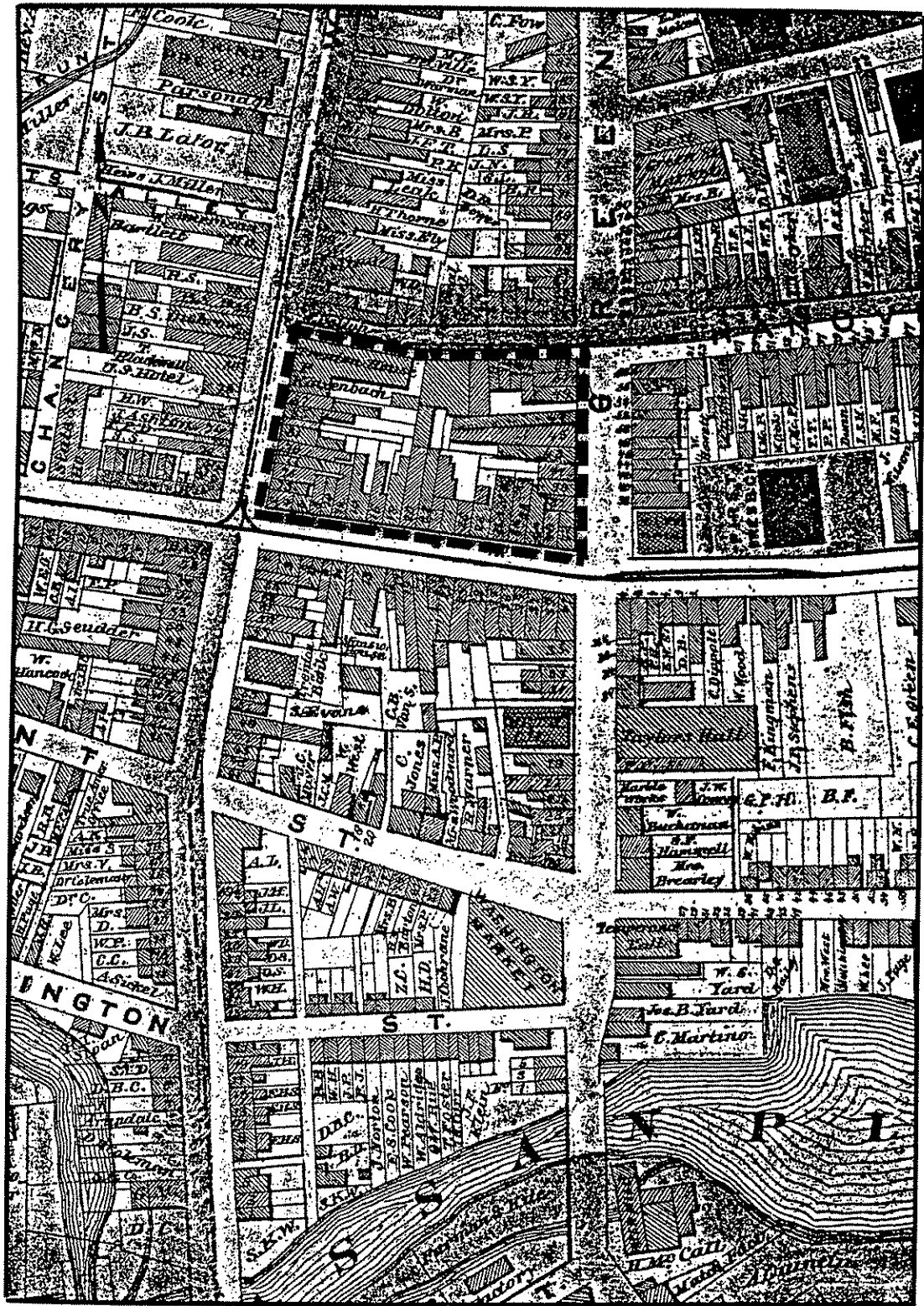


Figure 4.13. Beers, F.W. Map of the City of Trenton. 1870. Scale 1":250'. Dunhams Block outlined.

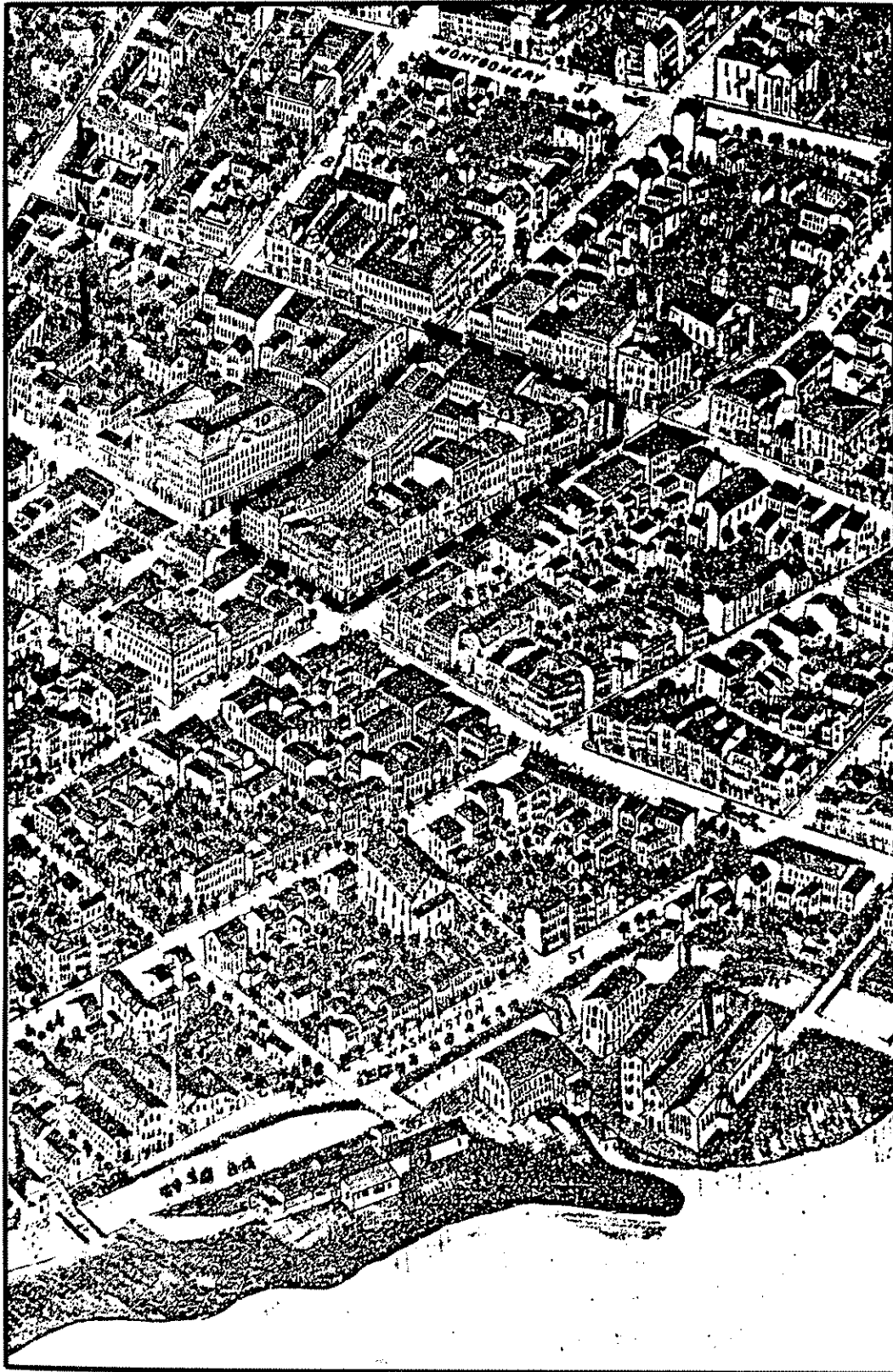


Figure 4.14. Trenton, N.J. 1872. Durhams Block outlined.

completion and would remain in use as a bank (with several expansions) until 1929 (Raum 1871:279,280; Woodward and Hageman 1883:702; Lee 1895:273; Trenton Historical Society 1929:576).

The second noteworthy property to be developed with the former Clarke town lot was the print shop and stationary store established by John L. Murphy and Charles Bechtel at the corner of State and Greene Streets. This intersection gained reknown during this period as a center of publishing and printing activities as several concerns of this type were all sited in close proximity. Murphy and Bechtel had actually commenced their business as tenants within this three story brick building (which may have incorporated portions of the old brick structure built by Benjamin Smith during the early 1730s) several years prior to their purchase of the property in 1865. Although several newspapers published by other individuals (including the Daily Monitor and the New Jersey Volunteer) were printed at their shop, Murphy and Bechtel did not truly enter the newspaper publishing business until 1869, when they purchased the Daily State Gazette (which had previously been headquartered for many years at 2 North Warren). The building at the corner was expanded several times and several adjacent properties were later acquired to accommodate the growth of the business. Murphy bought out his partner in 1875 and published the State Gazette from this site until the time of his death in 1900. The State Gazette Publishing Company remained active here until relocating to a new facility elsewhere in the city in 1908 (Raum 1871:215,219; Lee 1895:245-257; Trenton Historical Society 1929:788,789; Johnston 1932:18-20,49).

The most extensive changes to the block's streetscape during the early part of the second half of the 19th century occurred along its Greene Street frontage with the redevelopment of the former Belleville property. In 1864 the Clarke heirs sold the Lafayette Hotel lot to Nathan Richardson, while Isaac Wyman had gained control of the old stone building immediately to the south several years earlier. Shortly after the end of the Civil War these men subdivided and sold off their respective holdings, with the end result being the establishment of the lots later known as 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15 North Broad. Both the hotel (the former Belleville house) and the stone building were removed and the five section Lafayette Block was completed along this frontage in 1868 (see Figure 4.13). Several of the new owners conducted their well-known businesses in this new building, including the restaurant, bakery, and confectionary of Thomas C. Hill (at 11 North Broad), the furniture store of Alexander V. Manning (15 North Broad), and, most notably, the dry goods store of Henderson G. Scudder (13 North Broad), originally founded elsewhere in the city at mid-century and later to evolve into the Dunham's Department Store chain (Trenton Historical Society 1929:588,589).

The surge in development activity within the block during the 1850s and the 1860s was followed by a decade-long period of relative inactivity. One new structure was built during this period to provide the first of what would be several disruptions in what was previously a decidedly early 19th century streetscape along Warren Street. This mildly decorated three story commercial building (8 North Warren) was built by Joseph McPherson, and in 1887 he moved his harness business from its old stand at 6 East State to this more "modern" space (this harness shop remained active under McPherson's successors until the 1920s and the advent of the automobile age). The old corner building to the south of the new McPherson structure remained active, as did many of the block's buildings, as commercial/residential rental properties, with the newly arrived telegraph companies offering their service from 2 and 4 North Warren (see Figure 4.15; these offices were later succeeded by office space rented by telephone companies within this building and at 8 East State). The decade closed with the acquisition of what was later referred to as 30 East State by the adjacent First National Bank. The bank immediately tore down the existing building on the site and erected a larger four story commercial structure that was sold off, but during the early part of the 20th century the bank reacquired this holding and incorporated this structure as part of their banking facility.

The redevelopment of the above lot by the First National Bank was to be only the first of many changes that would come to the Dunhams Block during the 1880s (see Figures 4.16, 4.17, and 4.18). Several new buildings were built during this period and there were also a number of significant business changes and expansions worthy of note. The block's new structures quite naturally continued to be attached row buildings, but those during the 1880s (and subsequent decades) were commonly larger and more ornate in their decorative elements. 10 North Warren, a tall four story commercial building, was a second disruption of Warren Street's generally older streetscape, while several new structures were built along State Street (18, 24, 26-28, and 38-42 East State). Another interesting development was the establishment of the block of Hanover Street between Warren and Greene as a noteworthy district of hotels and restaurants as several additional businesses had joined the still well-respected Trenton House in offering these types of services. To the east of the Trenton House 25 East Hanover was a saloon between the mid-1850s and 1870, and it was converted to serve as the Exchange Hotel and Restaurant. In 1881 the business expanded to include the adjacent 27 East Hanover, and in its later incarnations as Brandt's Steak and Chop House and Hildebrecht's it enjoyed a

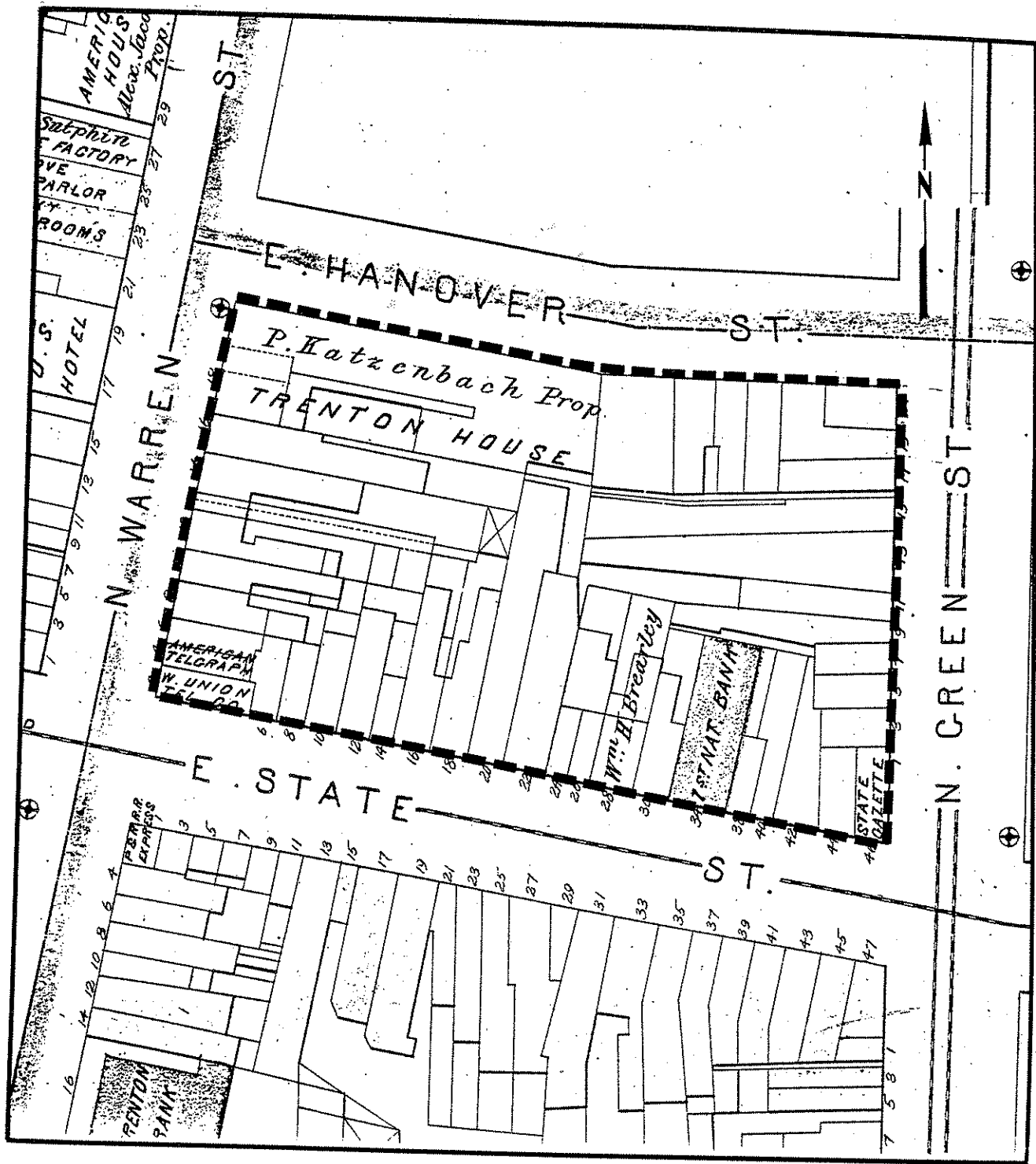


Figure 4.15. Robinson, E. and R.H. Pidgeon. Atlas of the City of Trenton and Suburbs. 1881. Scale 1"=80' approx. Dunhams Block outlined.

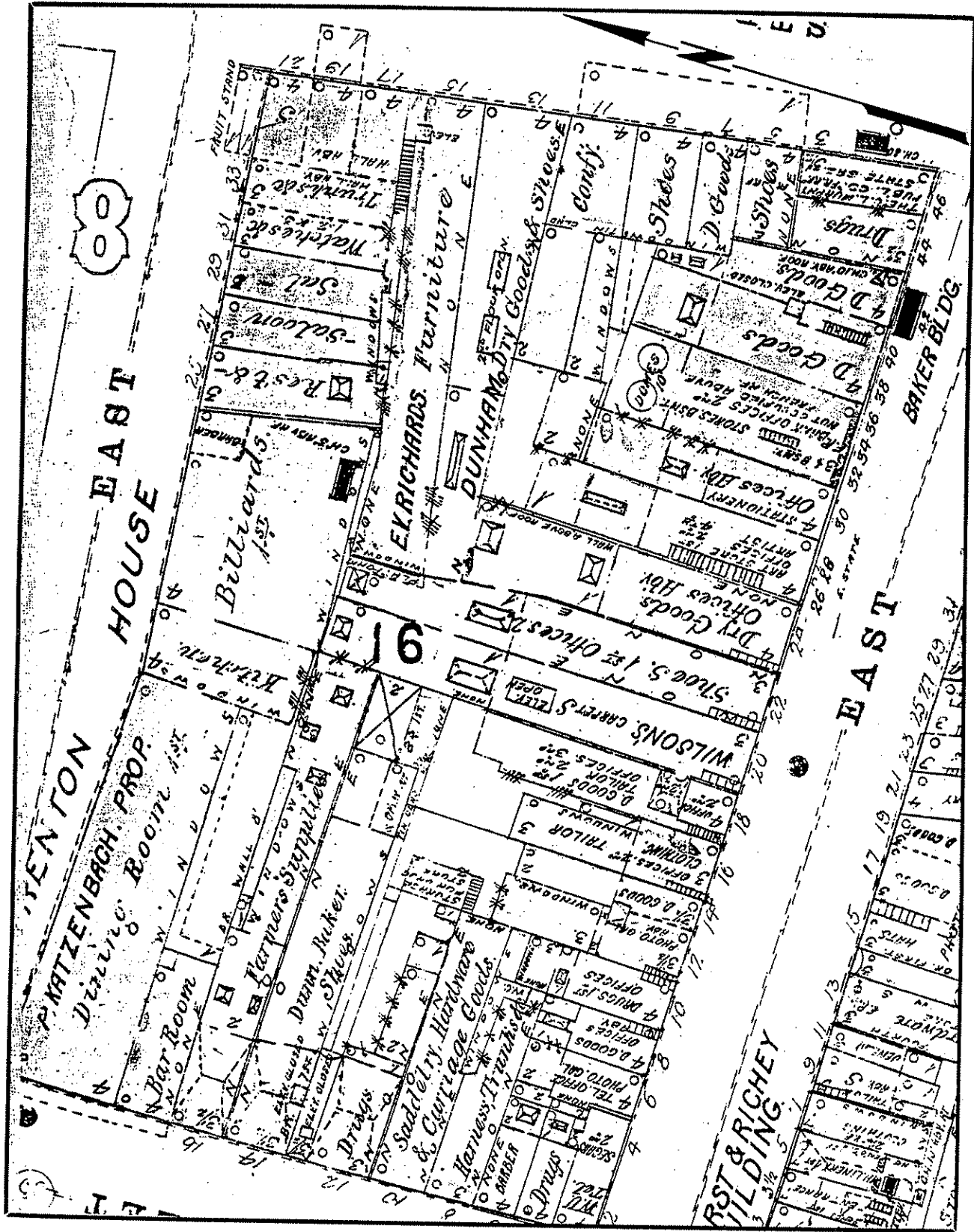


Figure 4.18. Scarlett & Scarlett. City of Trenton. Fire Map of Mercer County. 1890 [corrected to 1891]. Scale 1" : 50'.

reputation as Trenton's finest restaurant. This eating place and the smaller saloon/restaurant next door at 29 East Hanover both remained active into the early part of the present century (Podmore 1927:108,109; Trenton Historical Society 1929:957).

Another business of some interest that was sited within the Dunhams Block during this period was the seed and agricultural supply store that was moved into 16 North Warren in 1884 (Figures 4.16, 4.17, and 4.18). The adjacent building at 14 North Warren had been established as a seed store at mid-century and had been absorbed by the firm of J.W. Cornell & Company during the 1870s. In 1884 the move from 14 to 16 North Warren was made, and in the following year the firm had been reorganized as Tomlinson & Satterthwaite. This business, which was later known simply as Satterthwaite's, continued on this site into the 1960s. In 1894 the former seed store at 14 North Warren was converted to serve as yet another of the block's several newspaper offices, print shops, and stationery stores as it was adapted for use as the headquarters of the influential True American. This important Trenton newspaper was published here until 1913, and the decorative metal facade that was applied to this early 19th century building in 1893 would remain as a prominent architectural landmark along the block's Warren Street frontage into the 1980s (Raum 1871:216,217; Lee 1895:239; Trenton Historical Society 1929:787; Johnston 1932:29-31).

Yet another development which significantly altered the physical environment of the Dunhams Block during the late 19th century was the expansion of the mercantile firm that had been founded by Henderson G. Scudder nearly half a century earlier. As noted above, Scudder had had occupied his new store within the Lafayette Block in 1869, and he remained active there until the time of his death in 1882. In 1884, after a year of management by the deceased's estate, the firm of Scudder & Dunham, consisting of John H. Scudder and Sering P. Dunham, was established to continue the family business. A program of expansion was commenced immediately as 22 East State Street was rented and connected with the original building at 13 North Broad. In 1890 the adjacent 24 East State was also rented to increase the store's frontage along that street (this property was purchased by Dunham in 1901; see Figure 4.19). In 1895 the firm was again reorganized as S.P. Dunham's & Company and the store was expanded into additional rented space in 26-28 East State. The acquisition of 15 North Broad (by rental in 1897) and 11 North Broad (by purchase in 1906) gave "Dunham's" what can only be termed a dominant presence within the block that would later bear its name (see Figure 4.20) (Trenton City Directories; Trenton Historical Society 1929:588).

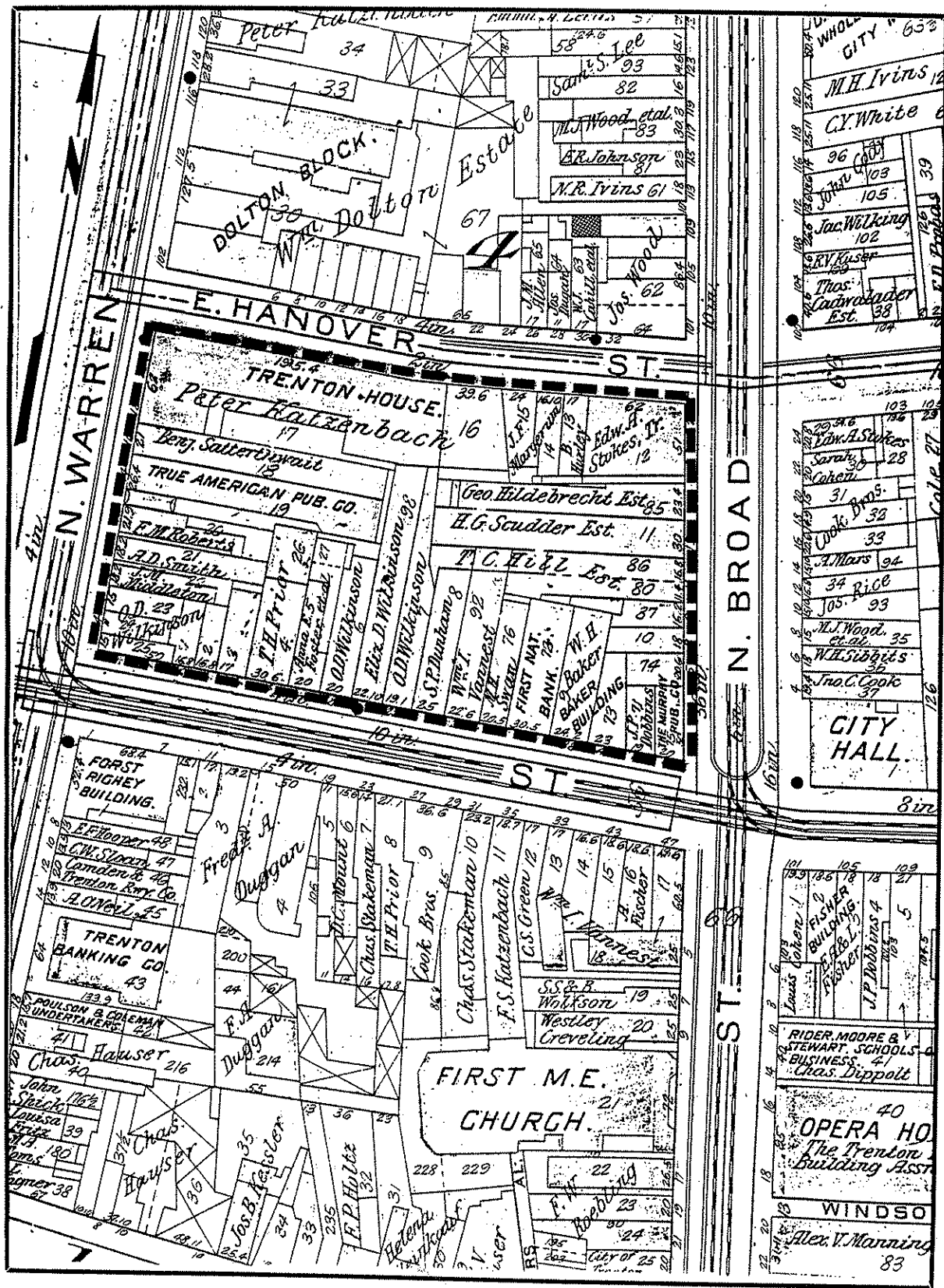


Figure 4.19. Lathrop, J.M. Plate 2. City of Trenton.
 Atlas of the City of Trenton and Borough of Princeton.
 1905. Scale 1"=100'.

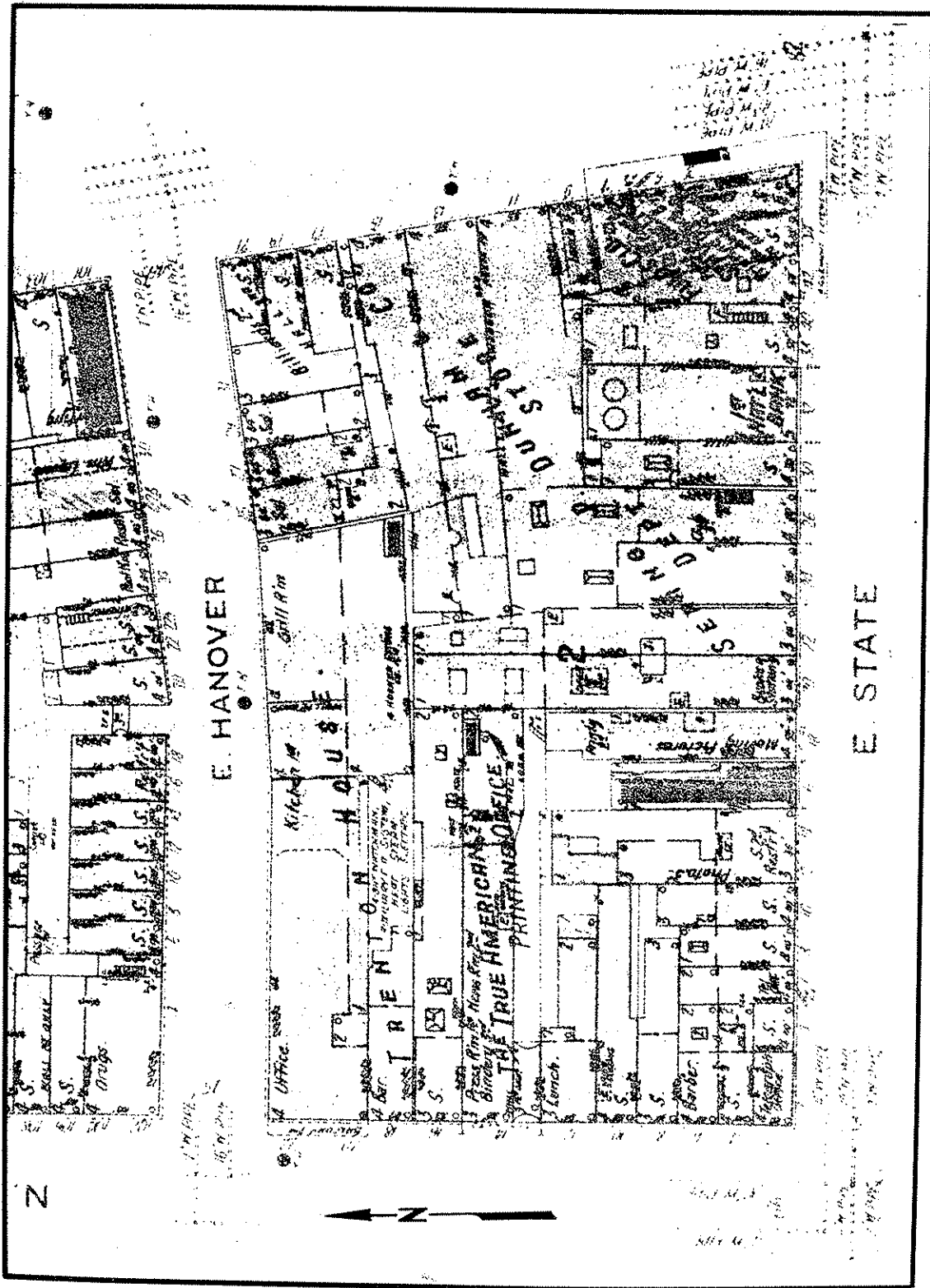


Figure 4.20. Sanborn Map Co. Insurance Maps - Trenton. 1908. Scale 1":65' approx.

The growth of the Dunham's store was part of a more general trend seen throughout the block as commercial activities came to be fully dominant. The amount of space devoted to residential (or other) uses declined steadily during the 20th century as stores, restaurants, saloons, and offices proliferated. This expansion of commercial activities was well-represented by changes seen within the Trenton House property during this period as first floor space previously utilized as part of the hotel operation was divided up and adapted for use as retail space. By mid-century the first floor of the Trenton House, which declined fairly steadily with the death of Peter Katzenbach in 1904 and competition from newer, larger hotels, was dominated by fourteen separate stores. Several new structures were built within the block during this period (12-14, 16, and 20 East State), and all were designed to serve as commercial entities.

The most important of the block's 20th century construction projects followed in the wake of the merger of the Mechanics National Bank (formed in a reorganization of the Mechanics and Manufacturers Bank in 1865) and the First National Bank of Trenton in 1928. The latter had acquired the lots formerly controlled by the State Gazette to the east of their bank building, giving them control of a large united parcel at the corner of East State and North Broad Streets (see Figure 4.21; see also Nirenstein n.d.). The newly formed First-Mechanics National Bank planned to build a new bank at the corner of East State and North Warren, and therefore no longer needed the old banking house at 32-36 East State. The complete redevelopment of the block's southeastern corner resulted, as eight buildings were removed and replaced by the Wallach Building between 1929 and 1931 (see Figure 4.22). This large four story commercial structure was maintained by the bank as a rental property until after the Second World War (Trenton Historical Society 1929:570,1015).

The general decline that struck many American cities in the aftermath of the Second World War was felt heavily in Trenton and severely effected the Dunhams Block (see Figure 4.23). Suburbanization and its various impacts greatly diminished the commercial viability of the urban "downtown", and many of the stores within the block suffered business losses that could not be justified. Only Dunham's, which had sufficient capital to allow for a participation in the suburbanization of the retail business, remained as a strong commercial constant within the block. As surrounding businesses declined and died Dunham's was able to increase its real estate holdings to include the vast majority of what came to be known as the Dunhams Block. This unified holding became the base of the present Capitol Center property that ultimately came to include the entire block.

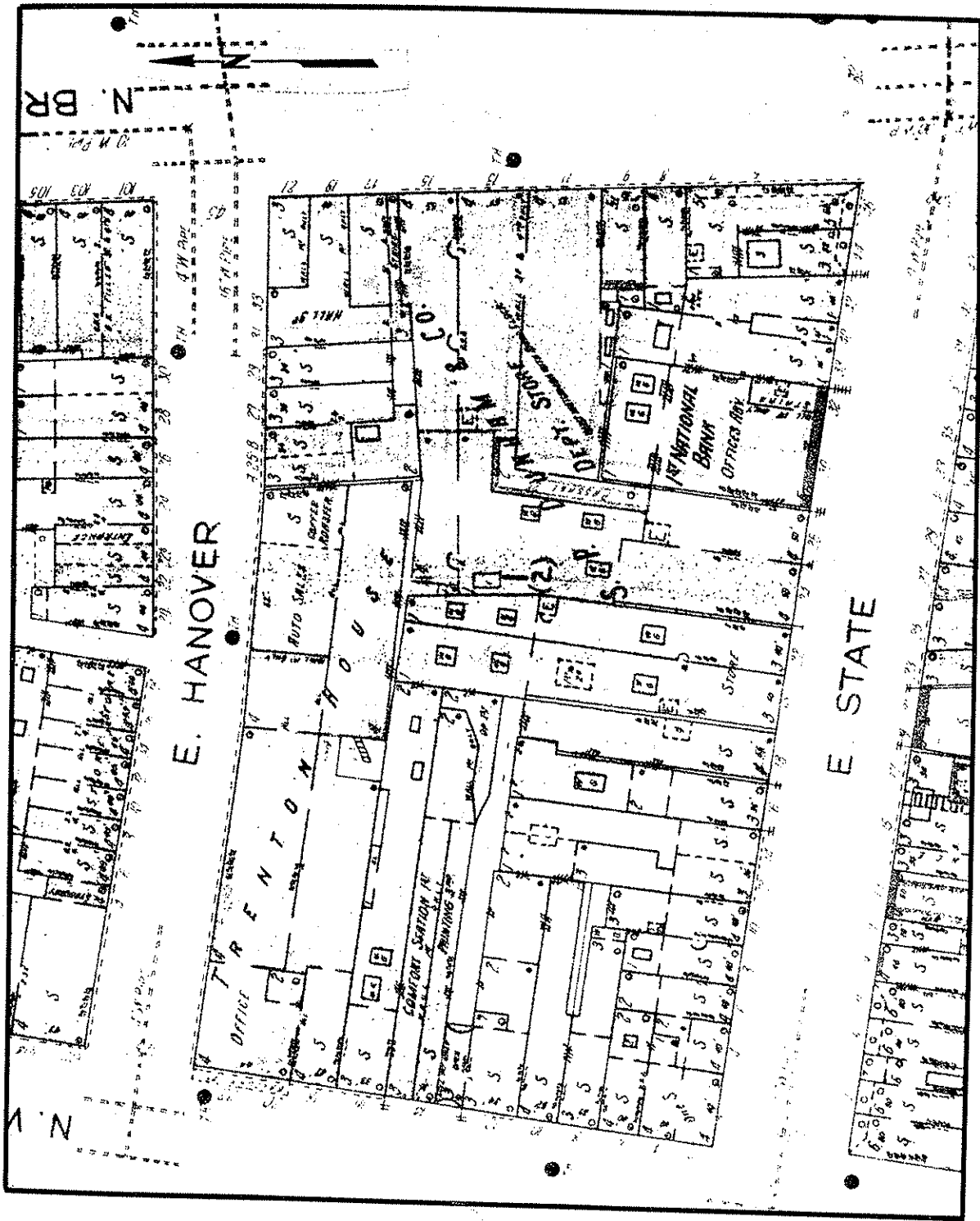


Figure 4.21. Sanborn Map Co. Trenton, 1927. Scale 1":65' approx.

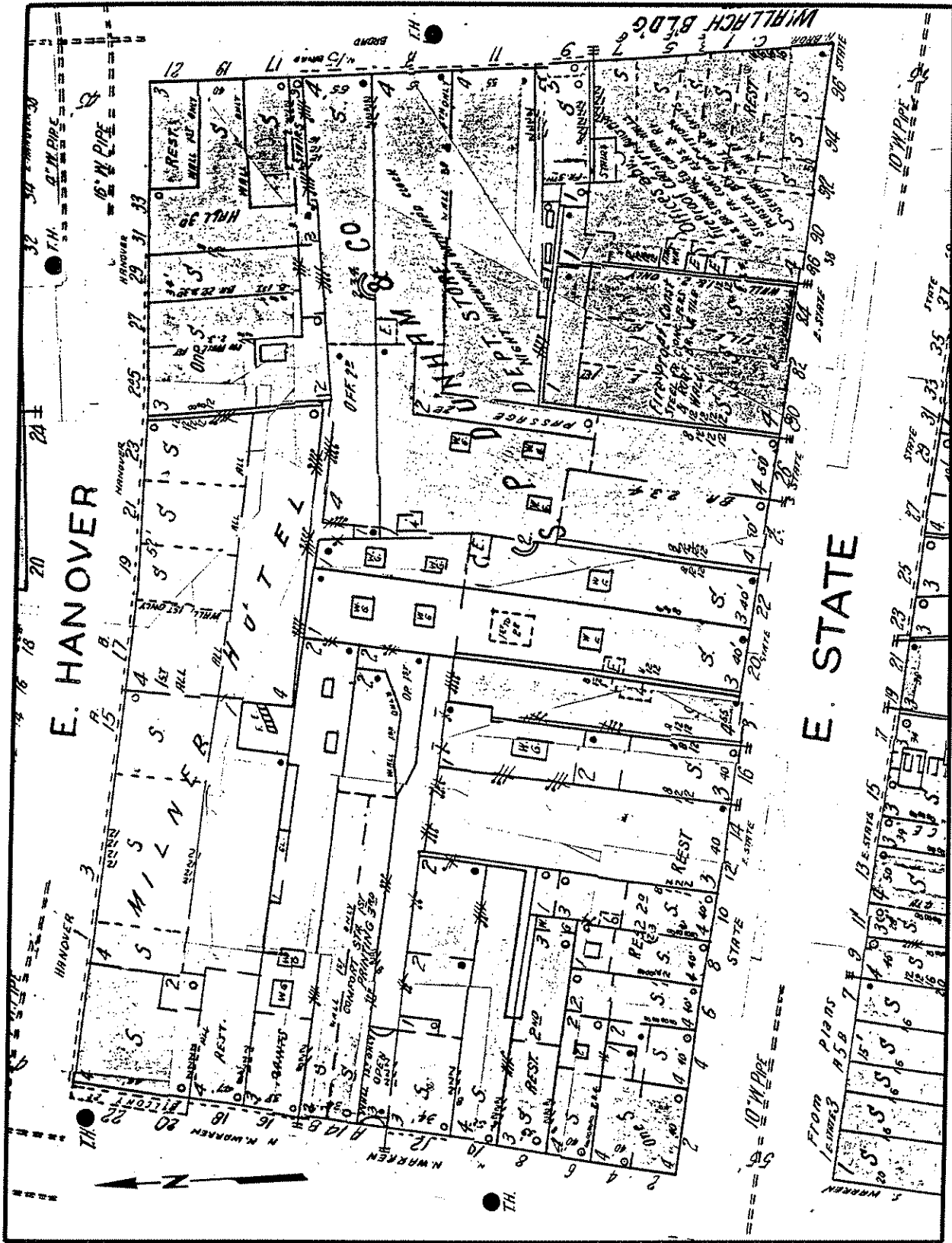


Figure 4.22. Sanborn Map Co. Insurance Maps of Trenton, Volume One, 1927 [corrected to 1944].
 Scale 1"=50'.

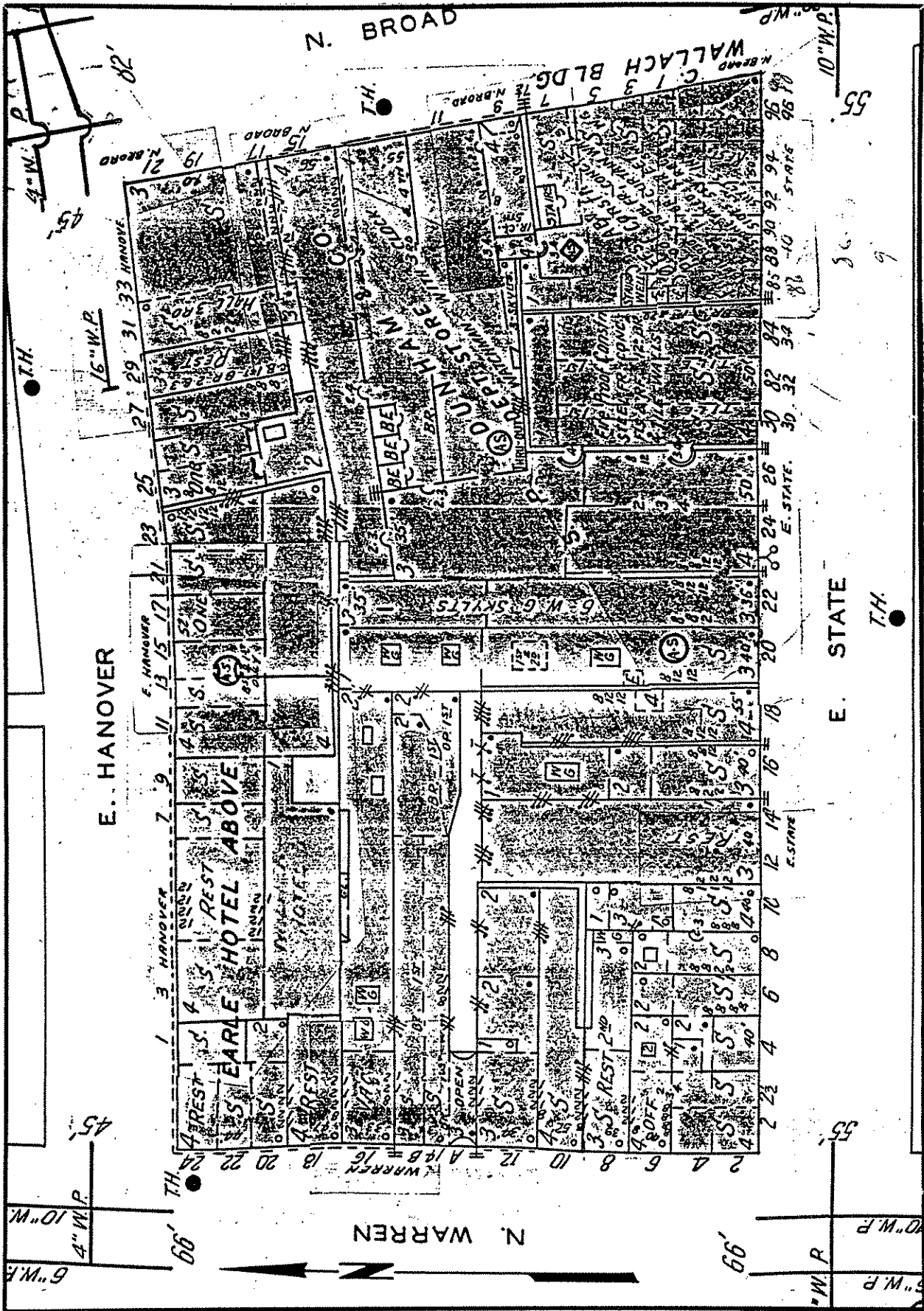


Figure 4.23. Sanborn Map Co. Insurance Maps of Trenton. Volume One. 1955. Scale 1":50'.