

JOHN BROWN'S MANSION HOUSE ON THE HILL - 52 Power Street - is located on lands as originally laid out to William Wickenden; on the 1-1/2 acre lot he bought of his brother Nicholas in 1769. As set forth in his will the house had a frontage of 54 feet, a depth of 50 feet. The garden was on the east side of the house extending approximately to what is now the east side of Brown Street: the green yard on the west side unto Benefit Street.

The house was designed by his brother Joseph and built in 1786-1787: being one of the most magnificent and elegant private mansions of its day, even now famous as such.

John Brown moved there into in 1788 and there at he lived until his death in 1803. He left his wife Sarah, by will, a life interest in the magnificent mansion, with the stipulation that it was to become the property and its 1-1/2 acres of land, of his son James Brown upon the decease of his mother Sarah Brown.

It appears that some five years after the death of his mother in 1825, James Brown, who had become possessed of his father's homestead and its 1-1/2 acres of land, sold to Robert Hale Ives as of December 7th, 1831 that part of said lands laying west of the homestead and as adjacent to Benefit Street, thus reducing the area of the "Homestead Lands" by just so much.

James Brown - deceased 1834 - left by will a 1/6th full part of his estate "whatsoever" to John Brown Francis, his nephew; and "all the rest of his estate" a 5/6 full part to his sister Sarah Herreshoff.

In dividing up the estate of James Brown between John Brown Francis and Sarah Herreshoff as of April 21st 1835, the Mansion with all household furniture and equipment of every kind whatsoever and its lands on Power Street as extending as far east as Brown Street went to Sarah Herreshoff, daughter of John Brown (22). To John Brown Francis went the 3 acre lot at the eastmost of Power Lane.

Sarah Herreshoff, deceased 1846, bequeathed "the rest and residue of her estate" to her grandson James Brown Herreshoff (age 12) son of Charles Frederick Herreshoff -- supposedly as including the John Brown Mansion -- with the provision that her son John and her three daughters Ann, Sarah and Agnes could occupy the mansion until her grandson became of age. She left Ft. Pleasant Farm to her son John with the provision that her son Charles could occupy it with his family until her grandson became of age. The two separate households - as it were - having the right to occasionally occupy part of the household of the other up to the time that her grandson became of age, as hither to during her lifetime.

On October 26th, 1852 the John Brown Mansion and its land which Sarah Herreshoff had received as a part of her 5/6 interest in the estate of James Brown, her brother, was deeded to Hope Ives, the deed being signed by Ann Francis Herreshoff; John Brown Herreshoff; Charles Frederick Herreshoff; and Julia Ann Herreshoff; James Brown Herreshoff being 18 years old at said time.

On February 21st, 1854, Hope Ives deeded to her son Robert Hale Ives "all that part" of the John Brown Estate - so called - conveyed to me by Ann Francis Herreshoff and others as per deed dated October 26th, 1852, which lies west of a line drawn northerly from Power Street parallel with the John Brown Mansion house 30 feet distant from the underpinning on the east side of said house. The lot deeded is recorded as being 156 feet (approx.) on the east; 130 feet on Power Street; being bounded on the West by lands of Grantee 163 feet and on the north by lands of Moses Brown Ives -- 150 feet.

As of the same date Hope Ives deeded to her son Moses Brown Ives that part of the John Brown lot (as above acquired) laying east of the parallel line established as 30 feet east of the underpinning of the Mansion House unto Brown Street: with a depth from Power Street equal to the depth of the lot deeded to her son Robert Hale Ives: a continuation eastward of the north line of the original John Brown 1-1/2 acre tract as also the line between the John Brown 1-1/2 acre tract and Nicholas Brown 2 acre tract as of 1768. The land deeded being the garden part of John Brown original 1-1/2 acre Mansion lot.

As a result of the transfer in title of the western and eastern parts of the original John Brown Mansion lot, the original lot was but of 1/3 its original size as of the transfer of ownership from Hope Ives to Robert Hale Ives on February 21st, 1854.

Robert Hale Ives, deceased 1875, after making other bequests, left all of the rest of his estate, including the John Brown Mansion, its reduced lot and his own homestead estate as along Benefit Street from Power to Charles Field, and as including part of the original John Brown 1-1/2 acre lot to his daughter Elizabeth Amory Gammell (Mrs William Gammell) who as of said date was living in the John Brown Mansion House.

Elizabeth A. Gammell - deceased 1897 left the John Brown Mansion estate as extending to Benefit Street to her two daughters Miss Harriett Gammell and Helen Gammell Herbert. She left the homestead estate of her father, Robert Hale Ives, as at the corner of Benefit and Charles Field to her son Robert Ives Gammell, the division line between the lot left her two daughters and her son ending on Benefit Street at a point 220 feet from Charles Field.

Harriett ~~Safe-Shaw~~ and Helen Gammell Herbert, the two daughters, deeded the John Brown Mansion and its lot as received from their mother to Marsden J. Perry as of October 15th, 1901.