

# *The Allerton Family Journal:* **Newsletter of the Pilgrim Isaac Allerton Society** [www.isaacallerton.com](http://www.isaacallerton.com)

## **Governor's Message:**

**Editor: David A. Furlow: [dafurlow@gmail.com](mailto:dafurlow@gmail.com)**

Hello Pilgrim Isaac Allerton Society Members,

Our Annual Meeting will coincide with the 41<sup>st</sup> General Congress in Plymouth in September. The society will have its tri-annual dinner and meeting on Friday, Sept. 8, 2017, from 5:00-8:00 PM at the Hotel 1620 in Plymouth, Mass.

We are excited to announce that during our cocktail hour, 5:00 PM -6:00 PM, member Dave Russo and archeologist Craig Chartier will present artifacts found near the Kingston area farmhouse owned by Isaac Allerton, his daughter Mary, and her husband Thomas Cushman. Our dinner speaker will be Leo Martin, Jenney House Museum.

Dinner: \$45 per person. Please RSVP to Lisa Pennington [lpennington@bakerlaw.com](mailto:lpennington@bakerlaw.com). You may send your check to her at her address: 4126 Rice Blvd., Houston, TX 77005. We look forward to seeing all our Allerton cousins and friends!

Note that many of us pay our dues at our annual meeting for a 3-year term. If you paid this way in 2014, please remember that your dues of \$10 yr (\$30 for 3 years) are due now or may be paid if you plan to attend our meeting. Dues may be sent to our Treasurer Judy Needham; please contact Judy for payment details [judyneedham@comcast.net](mailto:judyneedham@comcast.net).

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Lastly, with positions opening up on our board, we are looking for volunteers. Our nominees are as follows:

- Governor: Lisa Pennington
- Deputy Governor:
- Treasurer:
- Secretary:
- Historian:
- Captain: David Hess
- Elder: Ken Carter
- Member-at-Large: Deb Yingst

Please consider serving on our board and help us to keep our society going to honor the memory of the Allerton family. If you would like to serve, please let me know.

*Susan E. Roser*

**Susan E. Roser,  
Governor**

## New Allerton Artifacts Found at the Allerton Farm Site

By Dave Russo

On August 16th, 2015 Kathy and I were traveling to Bridgewater, Mass to visit a newborn great-niece. I had suggested that we leave a bit early so that we could drive through nearby Plymouth before the visit. After driving through Plymouth, we drove north towards Spring Street in Kingston—the homestead of Isaac Allerton, my 11th great-grandfather.

I had previously visited the Spring Street site a couple of times previously, the last time about 10 years ago. As we approached the homestead site at the very end of the street ~~on the right side~~, I was shocked and quite dismayed to see a new house being constructed (and another recently completed) on the field just below the "Sgarzi" house (the white house at the very end of the street). I immediately understood that this site was to be lost forever when landscaped. Here was the field plowed up and a new foundation and framed home being built. It was a Sunday and there was no one around so I decided to walk around the plow-up property. To my astonishment, I began to find pieces of ceramic pottery in the exposed dirt. Thinking that these pieces could very well be from the Allerton household, I continued to walk all around the house while Kathy stayed by the car noting that I would probably get arrested for trespassing if anyone reported me there. I found a half-dozen pieces—all white ceramic, some printed with floral design.

Realizing that once the house was completed, access to what may have remained of the homestead would be lost forever, I contacted Plimoth Plantation the very next day. I ended up leaving several messages with the "Collections" department. It was weeks later that I finally reached a person who explained that the long time curator had recently died and that a new person, David Landon, an archaeologist from UMASS Boston would be starting there on Fridays in another month. Feeling a sense of urgency, I contacted David by email at UMASS. I left a few messages explaining the urgency and finally heard back after a couple of weeks with a "So what's the hurry." I explained the situation hoping he might be able to mobilized a "dig" with his students before the site was lost. He told me he could not be available at this time.

In the meantime I had called the Kingston town hall to find out who the contractor was. I was then able to access the company's website and sent an email off, asking permission to dig around the site. He called back and said he would contact the owner and report back to me. Days and then a couple of weeks passed—I wasn't going to wait—I began to gather materials for my own dig. I looked up plans for a screen and purchased the materials, wood, screen and bolts. I constructed the screen, gather shovels, buckets, gloves and plastic baskets for artifacts. By this time I had also discovered a report by Craig Chartier of the *Plimouth Archaeological and Recovery Project* who had recently written a report on the Deetz excavation in 1972 of the Allerton site. The article contained photographs of the site, a narrative of the dig, listing, photographs, and illustrations of many of the recovered artifacts. With this report I now had a much better understanding of what was previously found as well as what I should be looking out for.

Not hearing from the contractor before the next weekend, I headed down to Kingston Saturday the 9th of September hoping for the opportunity to dig. Kingston is 90 miles from home and takes about 90 minutes to drive to. I arrived and explained my purpose to a couple of workers who told me the contractor would be by later and seemed to have no problem with me being there. I had to decide where to begin, realizing I could either dig further into unexposed ground or sift through the mounds of plowed up "back dirt" where I had initially found the first ceramic pieces. I set up by the large mound of dirt at the rear of the house. It was the larger of the plowed mounds where I had found several of the ceramic pieces previously. Also, it was around the back, pretty much out of site from the street. Hoping not to be reported to the authorities, I decided to work on the backside of the new house. I was surprised when different pieces of white, red pottery and colored glass emerged. They all looked old but I had no idea just how old. I just made it a point to save everything I found - assuming I would have someone be able to identify the items at a later date.

*"Mr. Isaac Allerton hath given leave to all other creditors to be fully discharged before he receives anything of his particular debts to himself, desiring rather to lose all than other men should lose any."*

— *Hearing on Estate of Godbert Godbertson, 2 December 1633.*

The contractor showed up eventually apologized for not getting back to me earlier and told me the owner was concerned about liability issues and he did not want me there- but since I was already there that I could continue for the day. I had the feeling that the contractor had not actually talked with the homeowner so the next week I searched for the owners name—I found out he owned the car wash at the beginning of Spring Street. I eventually found Ray's (Tenore) name as the owner but not his phone number. I went down for the second Saturday to dig and Kathy fully expected me to be arrested for trespassing this time. Yet, as Mary Allerton's father-in-law wrote in his 1621 sermon—*Make bold with it!*—I went ahead with my dig. In addition to sifting through the dirt pile, I dug several holes in areas of the yard that may not have previously excavated by Deetz—but came up empty. Early that morning Ray Tenore came by and I explained what I was doing there and he graciously gave me permission to continue at the site while the house was being constructed.

Sure enough on this very dig I found my first nail ~~along with~~ more pottery. During the next week I continued to study Chartier's report and noticed the website had contact information for Craig Chartier. After a couple of brief email exchanges I was able to arrange a meeting with Craig on October 12th at the site. I showed Craig the items I had discovered. He was able to identify the nails I had found—some as 17th century hand forged, some 18th century machine cut and others as modern nails. Craig identified much of the pottery as 19th century white slipware and other decorative ceramics including the very first ceramic piece I discovered on August 16th. Yet, I had also uncovered many 17th century fragments of Redware and Merida Ware.

I continued to travel to Kingston every Saturday through the rest of September, October November and the first two weeks of December. Each of these days were dry and quite warm especially the end of November and beginning of December. By mid-December the temperature had turned into the 20's—just to cold to be out there. The house was nearly completed and the owners son planned to move in by February. It seemed I had run out of time. I said my sad goodbye to Isaac and his home. On January 22nd I met with Dave Landon at Plimoth Plantation to go through my find.

In late February Craig and I met and he was able to inventory all the discovered items. He also asked if I thought there was a possibility to dig again this spring at the site—I told him I didn't think so as the family was supposed to have moved in by now. I wrote to Ray and was told that the final landscaping was scheduled by the 3rd week in April. Craig & I were able to spend both a Saturday and Sunday in our final dig. In the April dig we examined the palisades fence (trench) and found many artifacts from the Deetz excavation. The whole experience was such an unexpected privilege and remarkable experience! I look forward to sharing all of this with our other cousins in September. They'll all have the opportunity to handle some of our grandfather's personal items. For those planning the meeting - I have already asked Craig if he'd be interested in presenting his extensive work and experience on the Allerton site report (he is the one that catalogued all the items from the '72 dig at both the Kingston Library & the plantation) and/or any number of projects relating to the pilgrim sites he's worked. He said "yes"—and at no cost—just something to think about.

Attached is the report Craig wrote on the 2015 -2016 dig. If folks are not aware of his initial report they can find it on the *Plimoth Archaeological and Recovery Project under "Town Reports."* Also, you'll find my connection to Isaac; a complete inventory from the dig; a satellite photo of just where the new house is in relation to the Allerton site; and a photo of my display that shows the 17th pieces from out of the 1,500 or so pieces I found from dating from prehistoric times to more recent. Lisa, you asked if I worked at UMASS. No—I am a Pastoral Counselor and Marriage & Family Therapist in Holden, Massachusetts and now - just a bit more than a wannabe archaeologist!



*“Our history begins before we are born. We represent the influences of our past, and our ancestors live in us.”*

— James Nasmyth

# Artifacts Found at the Allerton Farm in Kingston, Massachusetts in 2016



*"Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced...."*  
 —William Bradford

## Isaac Allerton's New Haven Castle

By David A. Furlow

“For a man’s house is his castle, & *domus sua cuique est tutissimum refugium*; for where shall a man be safe, if it not be in his house.”

Edward Coke, *Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England* (1644), Ch. 73, 162.

A home is not just a house, but a statement. It is a material manifestation of ideas, ideals, and expenditures, it reveals much about the owner’s sense of self. To understand Isaac Allerton’s life, we must see him in a home that manifested his status and success. The home is long since gone. A railroad marshalling yard now stands where Allerton’s house once existed. The site has been excavated through historic layers and, in all probability, down to bedrock. As a result, archaeological excavations are probably impossible. Yet contemporaneous records, maps, and buildings enable us to envision Allerton’s mid-seventeenth century, New Haven home.



Let’s begin our search with the most contemporaneous maps. A 1748 map of New Haven drawn by General James Wadsworth, a skilled cartographer, shows us that Isaac lived on the southwest edge of town near the harbor waters that floated his ships and shallops to distant shores. Born in Durham in 1730, Wadsworth graduated from Yale College in 1748 and went to work as a Durham lawyer. He became a major general during the American Revolution.

Wadsworth filled his map not only with historic houses, important buildings, great trees, **and the ships that connected New Haven with the rest of the world but, most importantly, with an index identifying the lots of New Haven’s first grantees, the town’s founding fathers. The map drew fine distinctions of size and appearance between different types of homes and buildings show the individuality of each individual house as New Haven appeared in 1748.**

The city-plan was published in 1806, when New England citizens of the new United States of America were seeking to understand their roots. The Library of Congress's copy of General Wadsworth's map is worn down by time, brittle, and dark. Yet the pen-and-ink and pencil notes on it tell us much about the hierarchical, status-centered seventeenth century world that was Allerton's home.

New Haven's town-plan depicts a square New England town divided into nine squares. Lion Gardiner, an engineer and a friend of New Haven First Congregational Church minister John Davenport, may have planned the town. The town plan is similar to one Gardiner created for his town of Saybrook. Or the planner may have been Robert Seeley, a colleague of John Davenport's. John Brockett provided the original surveying in 1638, when he drew a grid plan with an orderly arrangement of streets and squares. A courthouse, a meetinghouse, and a school dominate the center of a 1748 town bracketed by the homes and farms of residents. General Wadsworth's 1748 map reflects the growth of the Puritan town John Brockett described as being built under a "Nine-Square Plan":

A perfect square set between two creeks was divided into nine smaller squares. Eight of these were subdivided into house lots, while the central square served at once as marketplace, training field, water source, and sit for the meeting house.

William Lyon, Thomas Kensett, James Wadsworth, and Connecticut Academy of Arts And Sciences, *A plan of the town of New Haven: with all the buildings in 1748 taken by the Hon. Gen. Wadsworth of Durham, etc.* New Haven: T. Kensett, engraver, 1806. Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011589297/>.

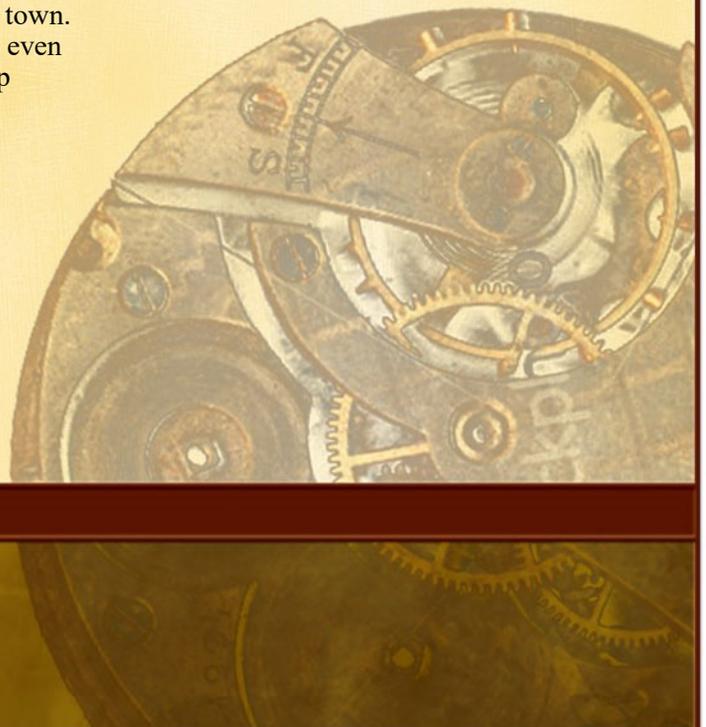
New Haven Puritan town fathers used the Nine-Square Plan to create a city in the wilderness similar to Jerusalem, where Solomon's Temple was at the center of society under *Moses' Ordinances*:

In the plan of their "holy city," the colonists answered God's call, visibly acknowledging the sacred landscape of his covenanted elect. They laid out a compact square, half a mile long on its side, close by the harbor and nestled between two bending creeks....Even this placement between two creeks made reference to the Temple [of Jerusalem] type; Joseph Mede, in comparing its incarnations, had noted that "new Jerusalem followeth Paradise, which having the tree of life in the middle, like Eden, a river doth environ on this side and that side."

Similar town plans existed in parts of England well known to Puritans, including Cambridge.

Allerton's residence shows that he chose to live in a new Puritan's city on a hill accorded with Allerton's mission in the world. The Wadsworth map includes a list of "First Grantees" in the lower, right-hand side. Wadsworth intended to memorialize the origins of the town. He listed "Isa. Allerton," Isaac Allerton, as a first grantee, even though Allerton did not purchase a lot until 1646. The map depicts New Haven in 1748, when Allerton's century-old home was known as "Simon Eyre's" house.

A color Currier & Ives version of the map on the next page showcases the founders' early urban planning, which inspired in Philadelphia (1682), Detroit (1700), New Orleans (1718), and Savannah (1733).

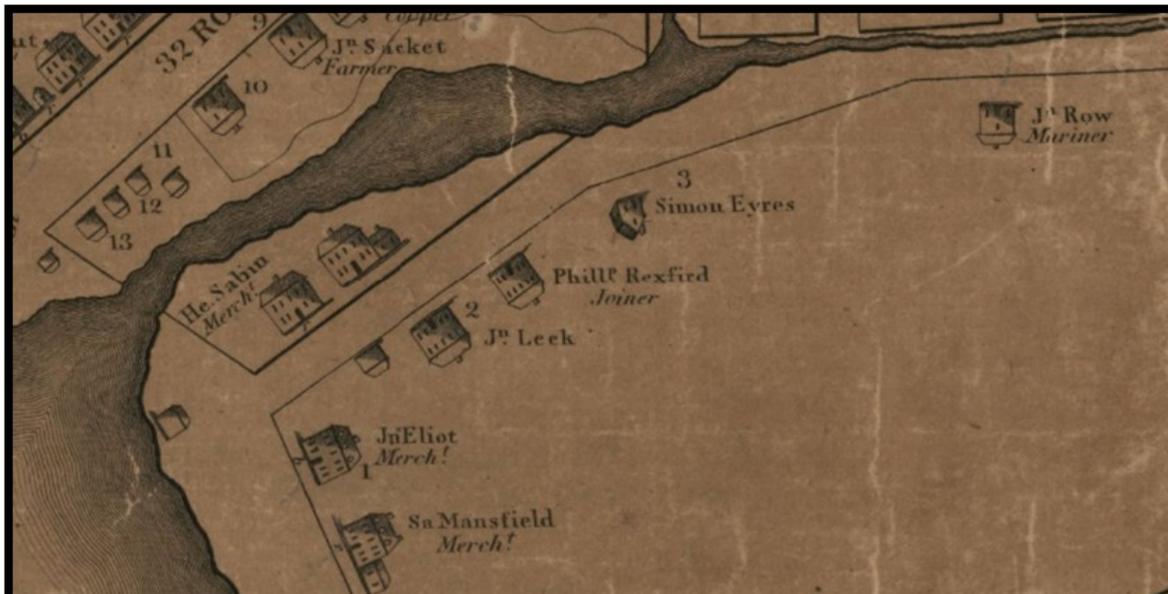




Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps, Inc. , <https://www.raremaps.com/maps/>

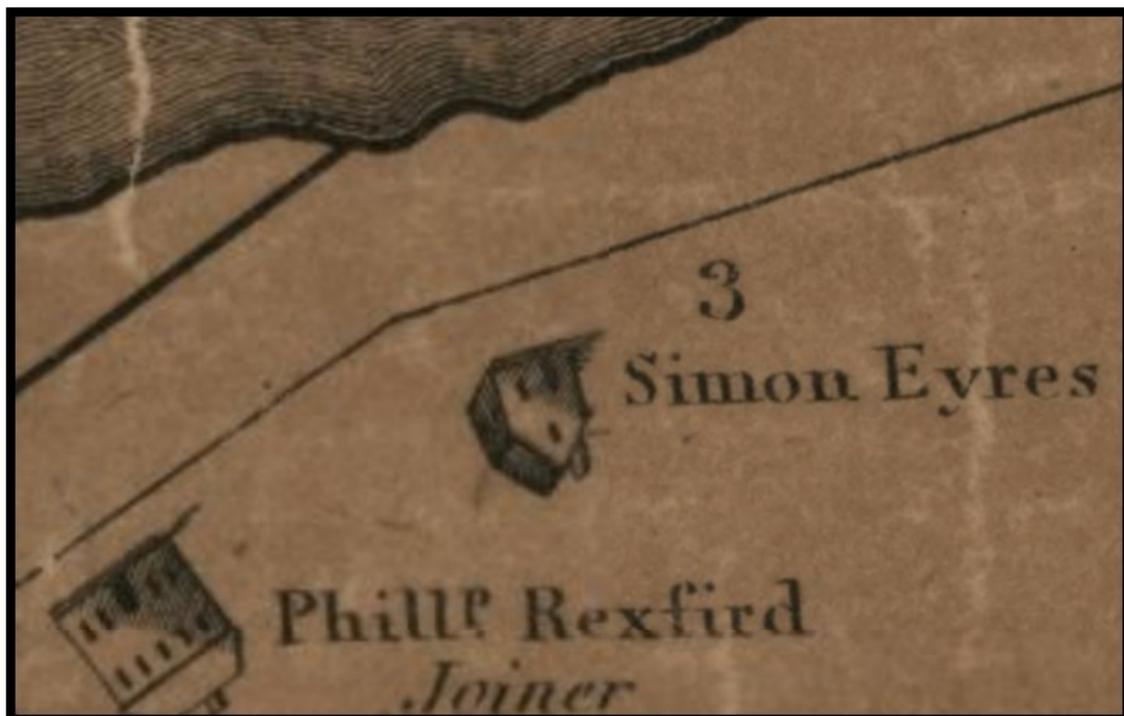
“Isaac Allerton, a remarkable man in many respects and a controversial figure in New England history, was an outstanding entrepreneur whose business extended into several of the colonies, including Virginia.” Charlotte Wilcoxon, *Dutch Trade and Ceramics in America in the Seventeenth Century*.

Close-ups of the 1748 New Haven town-plan shows Isaac Allerton's house as one belonging to "Simon Eyres," where a merchant trader, Simon Eyres, lived. Simon Eyres acquired that land after Isaac Allerton died.



Above: William Lyon, *et al.*, *A plan of the town of New Haven*, Closeup #1.

Below: The flipped image for Closeup #2



“Isaac Allerton was representative of one group of his generation, a generation that belonged with their feet in the traditions of the Renaissance and Reformation, but that left Europe and fashioned a new world in North America.” Cynthia Van Zandt, “All Things to All People: Isaac Allerton, Cultural Broker” (Mss., 2001).

Now we have a map with a roughly contemporaneous, albeit rather crude two-dimensional depiction of Isaac Allerton, Sr.'s house, which was known as Simon Eyre's house a century later in 1748. The house acquired that name because on July 22, 1679, Isaac Allerton, Sr.'s granddaughter Elizabeth Allerton (the New Haven daughter, born 27 September 1653 of Isaac Allerton, Jr.), married Simon Eyres (a/k/a Ayers) in New Haven, Connecticut on July 22, 1679. See Robert S. Wakefield and Margaret Harris Stover, *Mayflower Families through Five Generations, Vol. 17, The Family of Isaac Allerton* (Plymouth: Gen. Soc. of Mayflower Descendants, 1998), 19. See also Barbara Lambert Merri- cke, *William Brewster of the Mayflower and His Descendants for Four Generations* (Plymouth: Gen. Soc. of Mayflower Descendants, 2000), 102.

Allerton family historian Walter S. Allerton, writing in 1888, described Allerton's home as he reconstructed it from New Haven's town records:

About 1647, Isaac Allerton became a permanent resident of New Haven, and at that place he lived the remainder of his life, although making occasional trips to New Amsterdam and Massachusetts. He built himself a 'grand house on the Creek with Four Porches,' on a home lot of two acres, which was situated about where Union street now is, south of Cherry street.

An old plan of New Haven in 1748, shows the house of Simon Eyres, a descendant of his in this location, and mentions Isaac Allerton as original owner. When he lived there the house stood on a gentle declivity sloping to the harbor in front and to the creek on the west, affording a view of the waters of the Sound even to the coast of Long Island, and it must have been just such a home as would be most pleasant for the last years of one who had been so long a follower of the seas.

*A History of the Allerton Family in the United States 1585 to 1885 and a Genealogy of the Descendants of Isaac Allerton* (New York: self-published, 1888), 39-40.



"Allerton was less devoted to the rigid doctrines of the Separatists, and more liberal in his religious views, than most of his partners. His friendship with Roger Williams led to his leaving the colony about 1634, and later to his being requested to leave Massachusetts." Edwin B. Patten, *Isaac Allerton: first assistant of Plymouth Colony* (1908), 15.

Walter Allerton's 1888 book preserved earlier stories about Allerton's house, including Judge John Davis's "Memoir of Isaac Allerton":

In the town-plot of New Haven, the direction of the streets was determined by two creeks, both of which have now disappeared.... What is now State Street, the southeastern boundary of the nine squares, was laid out along the other creek, the course of which is now shown by the Farmington Canal, from where it crosses Grand Street, to where it enters the harbor. Along these two creeks, and along the margin of the harbor between them, was what you must have called 'the Piraeus.'

Allerton's house and home lot must have fronted upon what is now Union Street, between Cherry Street on the north, and Fair Street on the south.

I walked around the ground a few days ago, with Professor Kingsley, to see what might be learned from such a survey. The 'two acres,' if I remember right, which Allerton had there, are now thickly covered with houses, and the original conformation of the ground, is, of course, greatly changed; yet *it is obvious, that when Allerton built his house there, it was just such a spot as would strike the fancy of a 'sea-captain.'* There was a gradual but very considerable slope towards the harbor, on the south, and toward the creek on the west.

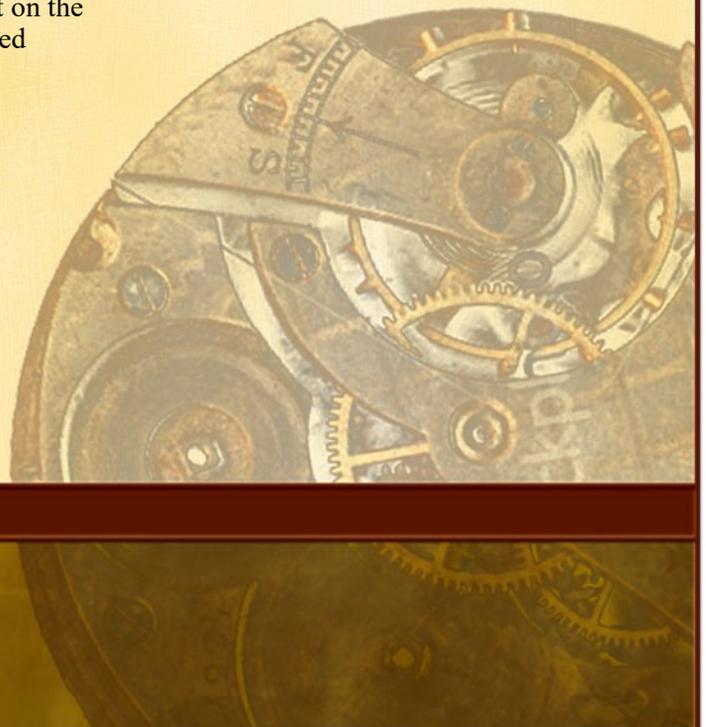
The prospect now is obstructed, in every direction, by buildings, but then **he must have had, from his upper windows, a fair view of a great part of the town, in one direction, and of harbor and sound, even to Long Island, in another**, while, on the north, the fine bluff of East Rock, and very likely, that of West Rock, the refuge of the Regicides, were full in view.

John Davis, "Memoir of Isaac Allerton," *Collections of Massachusetts Historical Society*, VII (3<sup>rd</sup> Ser.) (1838), 243-304 at 302 (bold and italics supplied).

Contemporary Pilgrim historian Robert Jennings Heinsohn noted that Isaac Allerton became a permanent resident of New Haven in 1646 where he and his wife lived for the remainder of his life except for trading voyages and occasional visits to his warehouse in New Amsterdam. Soon afterwards, Allerton became an integral part of town life:

In March 1647 Isaac [Allerton] and Joanna [Allerton] were assigned seats in the New Haven meeting house. He built a stately home with four porches and many fireplaces on two acres of land on the creek on the northwest corner of Union Street between Cherry Street on the north, and Fair Street on the south. The home was located among the grand homes of Davenport, Eaton and other original New Haven settlers.

Heinsohn, 2003, 242. *See also* Edward E. Atwater, *History of the Colony of New Haven to Its Absorption into Connecticut* (New Haven: self-published, 1881), 135 fn.



Allerton's lot placed him in close proximity to the Congregational Church at the center of New Haven life. The central "meeting-howse" in the 1748 map shows where Isaac and "Sister Allerton" (Isaac's wife Joanna Allerton) received prestigious places in pews. Allerton's lot placed him in close proximity to the Congregational Church at the center of New Haven life. The "meeting-howse" in the 1748 map shows where Isaac and Isaac's last wife Joanna Allerton received prestigious places in pews. *See* Charles M. Hoadly, *Records of the Colony and Plantation of New Haven, from 1638 to 1649*, etc. (Hartford, Ct.: Case, Tiffany & Co., 1857), 302-304; Atwater, *History of the Colony of New Haven*, 542-544, Appendix IV.

Nearly a century and a half after Allerton's 1659 death, Yale University President Ezra Stiles wrote about the grandeur of the Allerton home:

*Captain Willmot, aged 82, remembers the story of [the judges'] being hid in Mrs. Eyer's house....He remembers the old house, that it was grand, like Mr. Davenport's, which he also knew, and all of oak and the best joiner's work.* There was more work and better joiner-work in these houses, he says, than in any house now in town. He is a joiner, and helped pull down Mrs. Eyer's house.

Ezra Stiles, *A History of Three of the Judges of King Charles I* (Hartford: Elisha Babcock, 1794); Stiles' *History of the Judges* (1794) (bold and italics supplied).

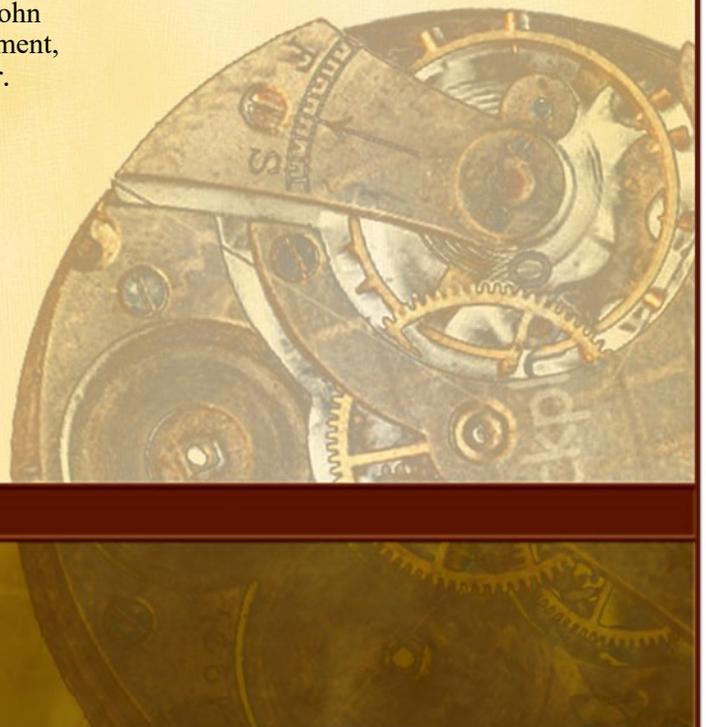
The best, nearly contemporaneous description of Isaac Allerton's prestigious New Haven home appears in a story about how Isaac's widow, Joanna Swinnerton, concealed from British authorities two of the Regicides who had signed King Charles I's death-warrant:

Mrs. Eyers [Joanna Allerton] had on one side of the room a wainscoted closet...full of pewter and brass, and a wainscot door...Her [deceased husband] was Mr. Isaac Allerton, of Boston, a sea captain, who . . . built a grand house on the creek with four porches, and with Governor Eaton's, Reverend Davenport's, and Vice-Governor Gregson's, were the grandest houses in town.

Thomas Trowbridge, Jr., *Ancient Houses in New Haven in 1876* (New Haven: New Haven Hist. Soc. 1877) (bold and italics supplied). Isaac Allerton's house and last wife, Joanna, preserved the lives of two of the Regicides whose signing of King Charles I's death warrant placed them on King Charles II's death list.

Allerton's house placed him not only close to the church but to secular centers of power. He bought an undeveloped lot in Oystershell Field next to a creek that led down to the harbor. That was virgin ground, where no house existed in 1641. But it was next door to New Haven minister John Davenport's massive allotment, and beyond Davenport's allotment, to a large tract expressly reserved for the colony's governor.

The maps above show how Allerton purchased a strategic track of undeveloped land close to the lots of New Haven's colonial elite.



General Wadsworth's map shows us where Isaac Allerton built his New Haven house atop empty land looking out to sea. But the nearly flat image does not convey the sense of prestige associated with prominent porches during New England's seventeenth century. In *Nooks and Corners of the New England Coast* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1875), Samuel A. Drake described the appearance of a seventeenth century townscape:

Old houses, gambrel-roofed, hip-roofed, and pitch-roofed, with an occasional reminiscence of London in Milton's day, are ranged on all sides; little altered in a hundred years, though I should have liked better to have chanced this way *when the porches of some were projecting ten feet into the street.*

(emphasis supplied), 239 (woodcut print, truncated below). <https://archive.org/stream/nookscornersofne00drak/page/10/mode/2up>, accessed April 2, 2017 (bold and italicized). Whether Allerton's porches extended ten feet or less, they made a statement about his status Allerton as a former vice governor of Plymouth colony.

In their article "Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts," archaeologists Mary C. Beaudry and Craig Chartier and the late Karin J. Goldstein, Plimoth Plantation's former archaeologist, explained the symbolic significance of the porch discernible in the archaeology of the porch archaeologists excavated at the seventeenth century Winslow house near Plymouth:

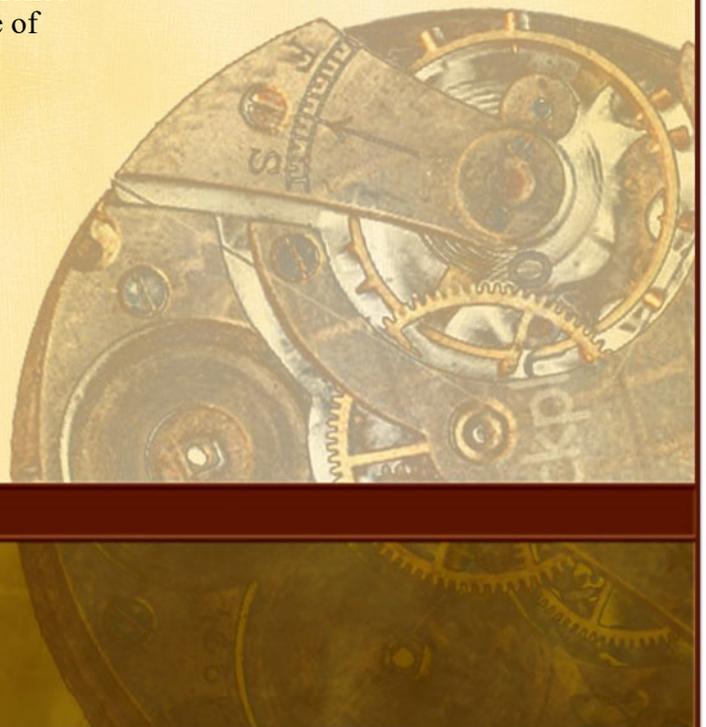
The presence of a porch chamber suggests a porch below. Assuming a typical hall/parlor plan, the "widow's bedchamber might be the hall chamber...

For Goldstein, the most significant room mentioned was the porch chamber. Two-story central projections were often found on the houses of the English minor gentry at the end of the sixteenth century. Cummings (1979) noted that this feature came across the Atlantic with the Puritans.

Porches continued to be symbols of status in New England throughout the century, long after their popularity had faded in England. Several notable figures in Massachusetts Bay had houses with porches, including Governor John Winthrop and Rev. John Cotton, who lived in the house built by Governor Henry Vane. While the architecture of Massachusetts Bay was grander than that of surrounding colonies, Josiah Winslow and his father were governors...Josiah was married to Penelope Pelham, who was related to several elite families of Massachusetts Bay. Both Josiah and Penelope would have been familiar with porches. Indeed, there were several houses in Plymouth Colony with porches – two local merchants' probate inventories mentioned porches, and the Leonard House in Taunton, built by one of the founders of that town, likewise has a porch entry.

\* \* \* \* \*

Through considering possible postholes from Hornblower's maps, analyzing documents, and plotting the spatial distribution of finds, Goldstein offers a new interpretation of the Josiah Winslow as a two-story



double-pile hall and parlor house with a projecting two-story front entrance porch. This was indeed a “mansion” appropriate for an individual with the status of a governor of Plymouth Colony and for a family that was part of colonial New England’s established gentry.

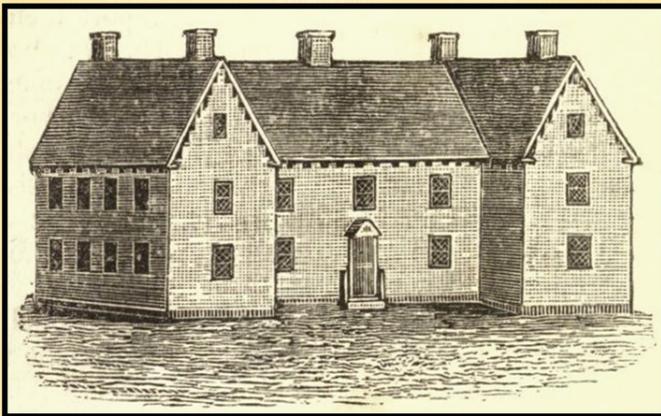
Mary C. Beaudry, Karin J. Goldstein, and Craig Chartier, “Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts,” *Avalon Chronicles* (2003), 8:155-186, at 172-74, citing Beaudry, Mary C., 1988: “Words for Things: Linguistic Analysis of Probate Inventories,” in Mary C. Beaudry (ed.), *Documentary Archaeology in the New World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 43-50.

An answer requires examination of the meaning of the word “porch.” *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary* defines it as “a covered area adjoining an entrance to a building and usually having a separate roof.” The word *porch* arose in Middle English, based on Old French *porche*, from Latin *porticus*, “colonnade,” based on *porta*, “passage.” Synonyms of *porch* include *vestibule*, *foyer*, *entrance* (hall), *entry*, *portico*, and *lobby*. Since the time of the Caesars, colonnades have always marked the presence of powerful people who stride through society. See Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary Online, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/porch>, accessed April 4, 2017. This dictionary offers an “obsolete” meaning of the word, “portico.” See *Oxford Living Dictionary*, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/porch>, accessed April 4, 2017. During the Little Ice Age that shaped the climate of the seventeenth century Atlantic world, a porch sheltered visitors from the cold. Clients of a powerful man, including debtors who owed him money, might wait in the warmth of a porch for a meeting with the man to whom they owed their home, their livelihood, and their life.

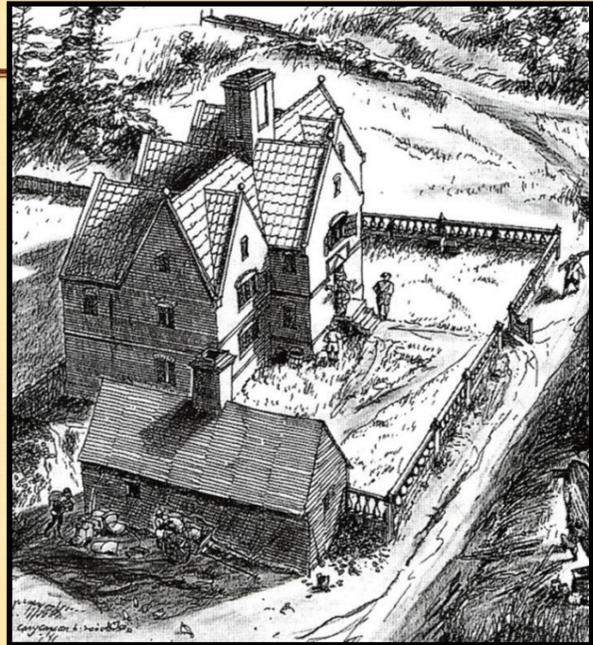
Jonathan Corwin’s seventeenth century “Witch House” at 310 Essex Street in Salem, below, shows how far Isaac Allerton’s four porches might have projected from his New Haven home. Captain Nathaniel Davenport of Boston built this house in Salem, where Allerton frequently visited and traded, between 1642 and 1675; Davenport sold it to Jonathan Corwin in 1675. Corwin, a wealthy merchant, served as one of the judges of the 1692 Salem Witch Trials, thus giving the house its nickname. Late seventeenth century furniture fills the restored interior. The house features a steeply-pitched saltbox roof, large central chimney, five steep gables, triple-casement windows, and a projecting two-story porch. Today, it remains an impressive house.



A nineteenth century sketch of Governor Theophilus Eaton, Allerton's contemporary, reveals the grand nature of New Haven's elite houses. Allerton's house would have had a similarly steep roof to slough off the heavy snows of a New England winter during the Little Ice Age. The house features diamond-shaped glass windows in wooden frames. An 1838 woodcut shows a tiny porch on the front of the Eaton house, one much smaller than the porches on Allerton's home.



Above: New Haven Governor Theophilus Eaton's seventeenth century house at Elm and Orange from Edward Lambert's *History of the Colony of New Haven* (New Haven: New Haven, Hitchcock & Stafford, 1838), 52.



Above: Virginia Governor John Harvey's 1639 house at Jamestown, copied from William Kelso's *Jamestown: The Hidden Truth* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Va. Press, 2006).

Allerton's home may reflect his familiarity with Chesapeake mansions and buildings, where his tobacco trade linked New England, New Netherland, New Sweden, Virginia, and Maryland. A prominent porch projected from Virginia Governor John Harvey's 1639 house when Allerton traded there in 1640. Virginia's general court met in the residence of Governor John Harvey's home, by the 1630s. *Jamestown Structure 112*, now just a collection of three overlapping seventeenth-century buildings, occupies a site erected in 1623.

A series of entries under the date November 10, 1640 in Thomas Lechford's *Note-Book* identify the affidavit of Isaac Allerton, mariner" in papers about business involving Boston merchant Robert Keayne, Thomas Morris of Maryland, Virginia Governor Sir Francis Wyatt Knight and Massachusetts Bay Governor Thomas Dudley. See Thomas Lechford (Edward Everett Hale, Jr., et al., eds.), *Note-Book kept by Thomas Lechford, Esq., Lawyer, in Boston, Massachusetts Bay from June 27, 1638 to July 29, 1641* (Boston: 1638-1641; Camden, Me.: Picton Press, 1988), 352-353.





Projecting  
part of the St.

porches are a  
John's

Statehouse Complex  
in St. Mary's City, as reconstructed by modern archaeologists.

Although Isaac Allerton, Sr. was neither a governor nor a vice governor nor a minister in the New Haven colony where he lived from 1646 until 1659, his house loomed over New Haven like a castle. Grand with four porches, erected out of oak and finished with fine joinery, it nearly matched the size and splendor of the homes owned by the colony's governor, Theophilus Eaton, the vice governor, Stephen Goodyear, and the Minister, John Davenport.

Allerton's house had to appear important because it served many important purposes. He negotiated business there, corresponded with the governors of distant colonies, drafted petitions and answers to file in law courts, and raised a family there.

Allerton's house proclaimed his status as a powerful man and successful merchant, one of the founders of New England, who chose to live on the edge of New World wilderness in a stronghold of Calvinist Christianity. Allerton's English contemporary, former Attorney General Sir Edward Coke, would have approved. Allerton's New Haven home *was* his castle.

