

# Envisioning Carriage Hill Development prior to the fire of April 5, 1888

by

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# Piecing Together Views

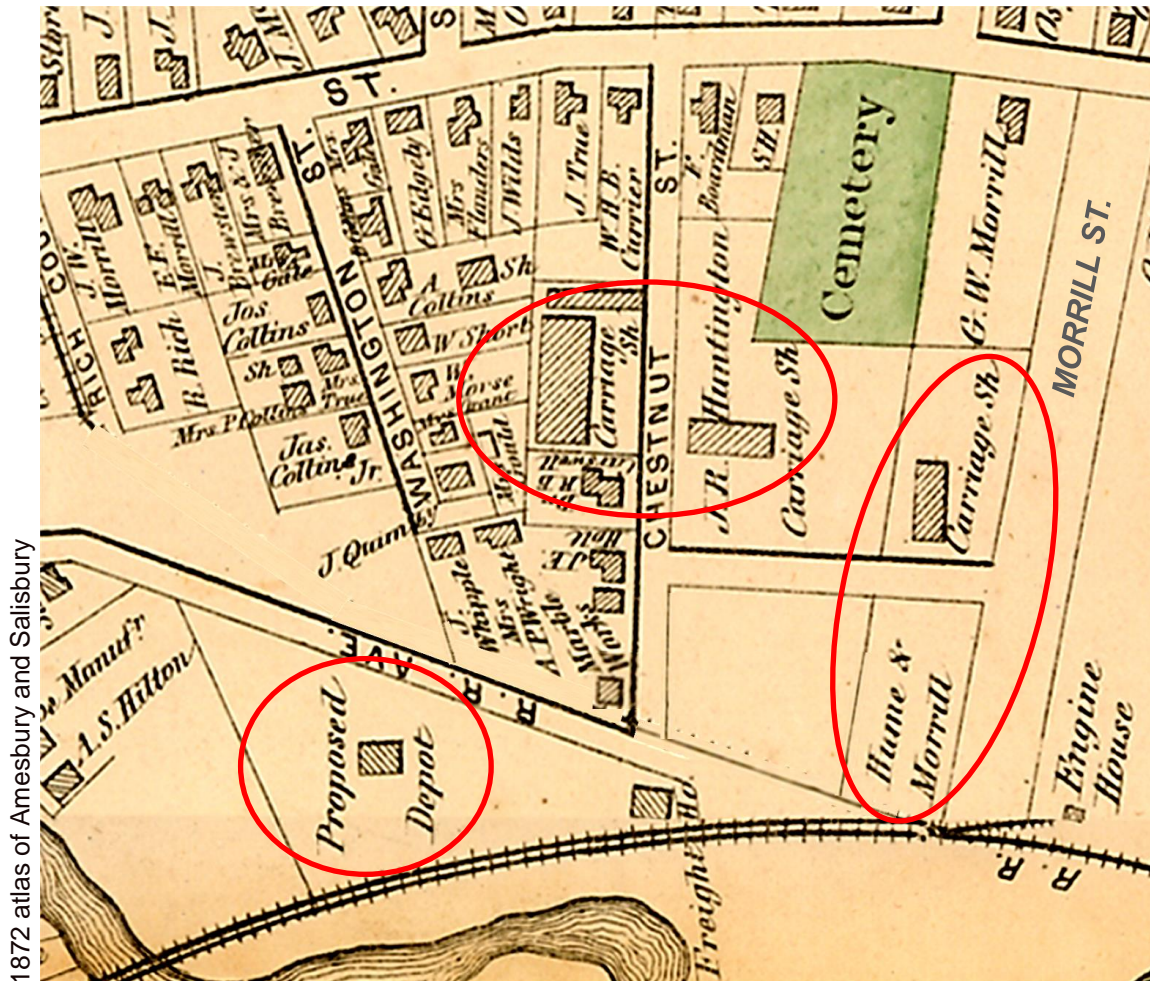
## Finding photos of pre-fire Carriage Hill

The following is a pictorial history of Carriage Hill development up through the catastrophic 1888 fire, which was so completely destructive that the post-fire hill was largely an entirely new community of carriage factory buildings. With few known photographs to draw from, most shown here are enlarged fragments from photos in which Carriage Hill happened to be the backdrop for some other primary subject. Most commonly the photos were of the new railroad passenger depot or of new carriage factory buildings on Water Street or near the railroad that cut through the Railroad Avenue area.

Descriptions are further illustrated using similar fragments of maps showing the buildings and line-of-sight relationships among them, or showing the owners of carriage companies occupying the buildings, as identified on the maps. Among the most important is the set of Sanborn Insurance maps for 1885. In many cases the buildings were owned by somebody other than the carriage company, frequently by J. R. Huntington or James Hume.

# Railroad Ave., Carriage Hill, & Proposed Depot – 1872

Carriage Hill remained relatively empty during the 1870s



1872 atlas of Amesbury and Salisbury

Jacob R. Huntington  
1869 carriage factory  
on Chestnut Street

Wm. Hume & Cha's.  
W. Morrill

Proposed passenger  
depot

The original 1848 Water Street railroad depot, at the very end of the tracks, was an aging freight-handling facility ill-suited for passengers. A passenger depot proposal had moved sufficiently forward that by 1871 the railroad had contracted to fill some land between the tracks and Elm St. to receive a new depot<sup>1</sup> accessed by a relatively new street, Railroad Avenue. The depot was likely built by 1873-4, Carriage Hill thus appearing behind the depot in early photos that looked outbound along the tracks.

1) Amesbury & Salisbury Villager, June 21, 1871, pg. 2

# Early Carriage Hill Development

Jacob R. Huntington brought rationalized carriage production to Amesbury from Merrimac in 1853 (Charles Patten had then been a traditional carriage maker at Market and Cedar Streets for over a decade). Following success and expansion, Huntington moved through a series of locations over fifteen years and, as with many entrepreneurs, invested in real estate along the way. He was joined in carriage making by his brother, Alexander M. Huntington, who operated a separate business, and in about 1854 took into his employ the three Hume brothers (James, William, and John) who had arrived from Galashiels, Scotland.

William Hume went out on his own in 1857 in a small Elm Street shop, opposite today's Drew's Tire, that was probably owned by Seth Clark of Clark Street and Clark's Pond. In 1861 William Hume joined in the carriage business with his brother-in-law, Charles W. Morrill. At that time much of the Carriage Hill area was owned by the Osgood and Morrill families (a longtime Carriage Hill maker was Osgood Morrill). William Hume and Charles Morrill built several shop buildings at the corner of Morrill Street and what eventually became Carriage Avenue (now called Oakland St.), their 1861 business being the first carriage factory on Carriage Hill. Hume & Morrill was purchased by John Hume and several associates in 1870, who went forward with the business under the name of Hume Carriage Company.

Jacob R. Huntington had sold his carriage businesses in the Mill St. area to James Hume in 1858 and was working during the 1860s in a factory on Lincoln Court, and where he and his brother owned land and rental side-by-side duplex dwellings. That factory and a dwelling burned in April of 1869, and within a week he had purchased a large plot for a larger new factory on nearly empty Chestnut Street. In October he bought another sizable lot opposite his factory that extended down to Carriage Avenue and where he eventually built a large long carriage repository that became known as "the Arc". This factory complex was sold to James Hume in 1875, who sold it to Frank A. Babcock in 1885.

The above was drawn primarily from John J. Allen's history of Amesbury carriage making: *History of Carriage Manufacturing and Auto Body Building*, typescript, 1955, John J. Allen, pgs. 121-125

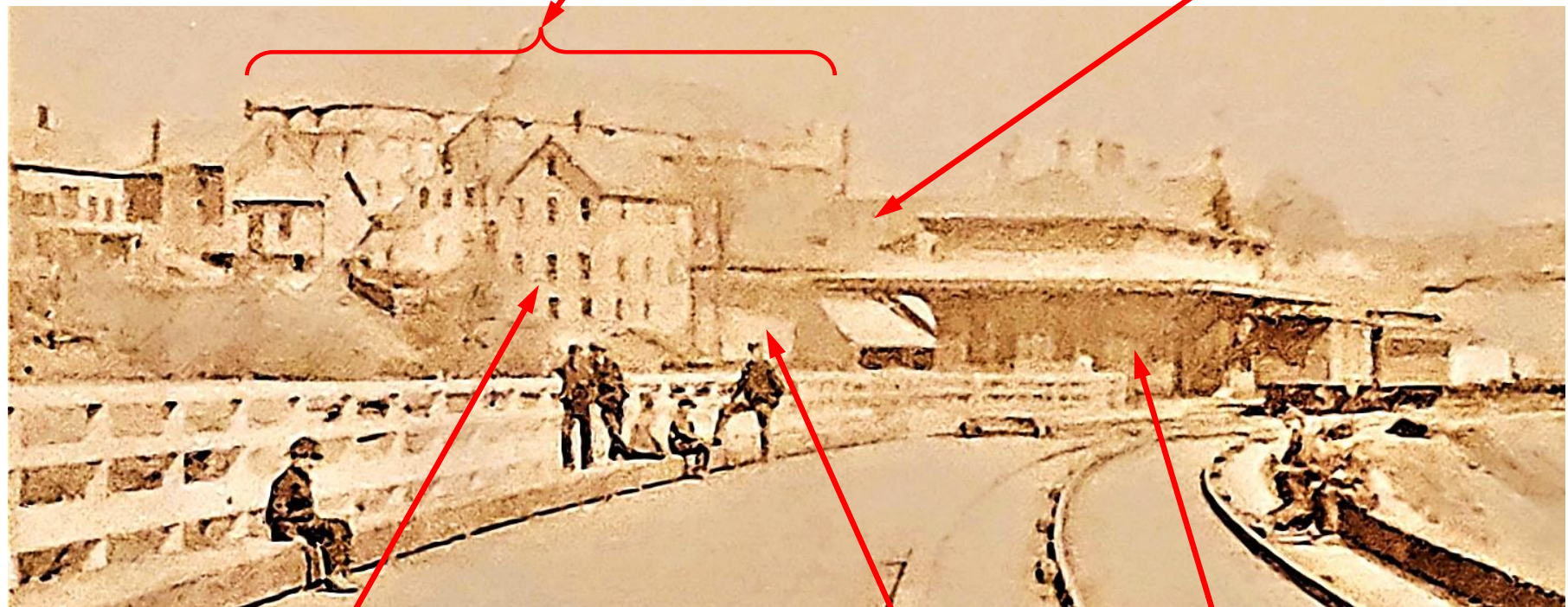


# New Passenger Depot on Railroad Ave., ca. 1878

Viewed from near the railroad trestle over Back River

The passenger depot was built during the early 1870s between rail spurs in the Railroad Avenue area. There were then about four carriage factories on Carriage Hill. Edwin Morrill's wood carriage repository was built around 1878, followed in 1880 by the first buildings along the near side of Carriage Avenue, now called Oakland Street. The edge of Carriage Avenue presents below as a horizontal dark line running along the base of Huntington's long building (the Arc) and behind the depot.

Huntington's Arc was built during the 1870s along Carriage Ave. for storing carriages. The building's entire length is visible, implying that the A. N. Parry factory was not yet present at #1 Carriage Avenue.



Edwin Morrill's white carriage building on near side of Chestnut St.

Chestnut St. hill

Passenger depot



# Carriage Avenue Factories, 1880 Aerial Map Drawing

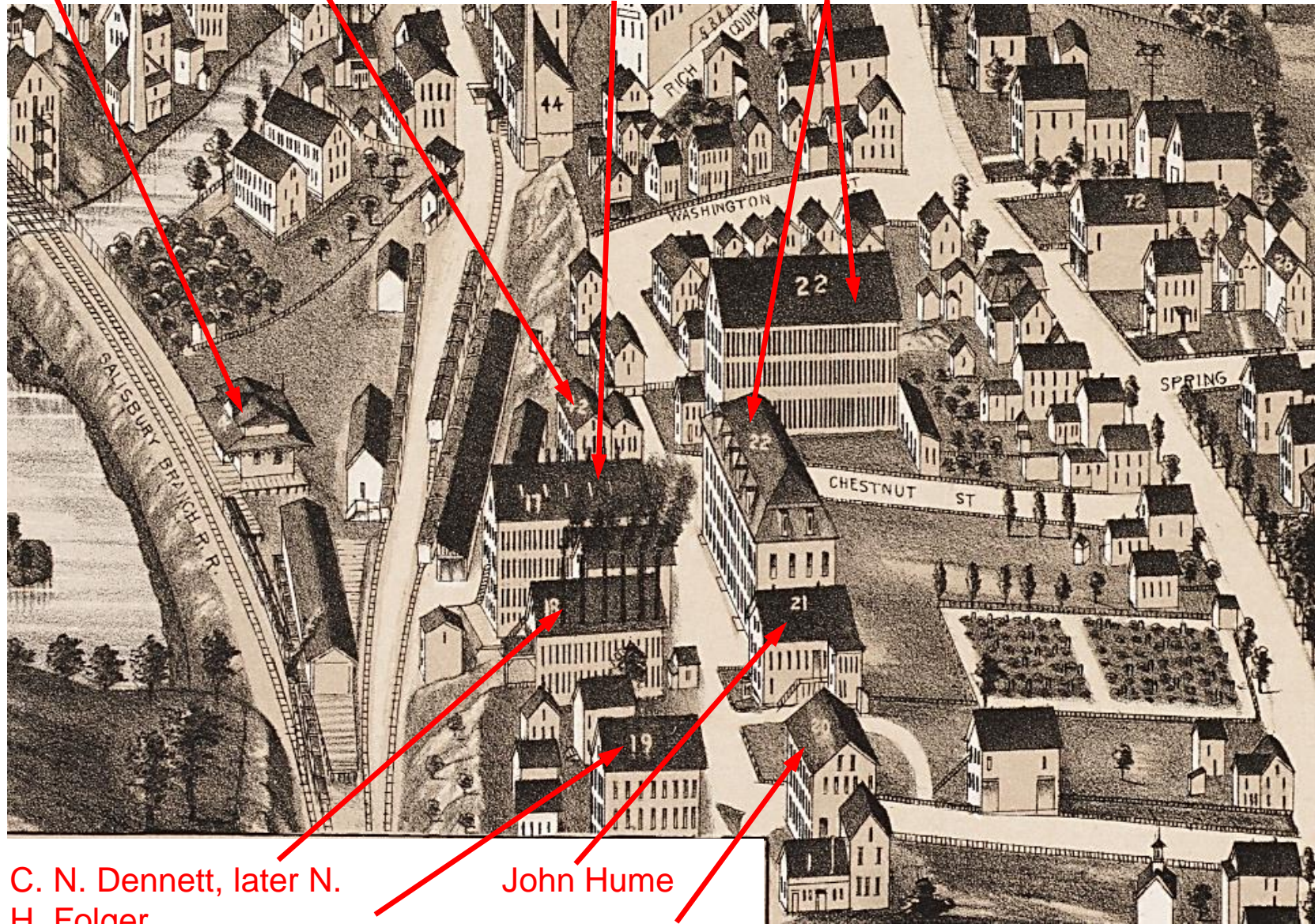
Huntington's Arc is the lower #22 along Carriage Avenue at the corner of Chestnut St.

Depot

Edwin Morrill

A. N. Parry

James Hume, later Frank Babcock



C. N. Dennett, later N. H. Folger

Charles E. Stone

John Hume

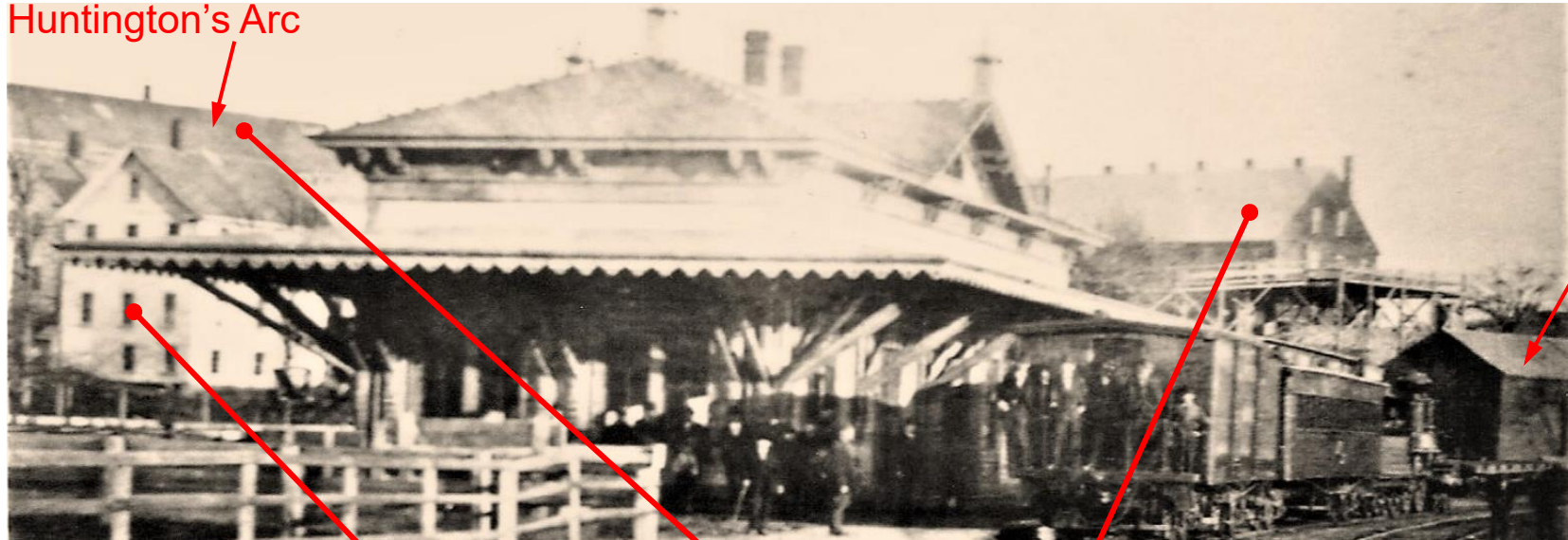
Wm. Smart



# Carriage Hill and Passenger Depot, 1882-3

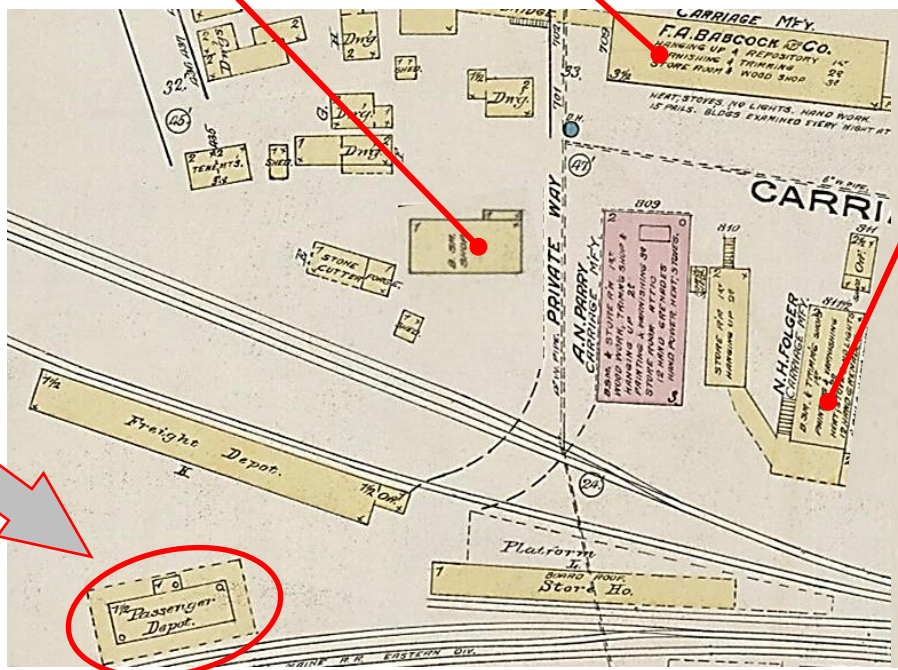
There appear to be no factories (just a tree) at far right beyond the N.H. Folger building, which has elevated walkways for moving carriages between floors and buildings.

Huntington's Arc



Freight shed

Courtesy of Salisbury Point RR Historical Society

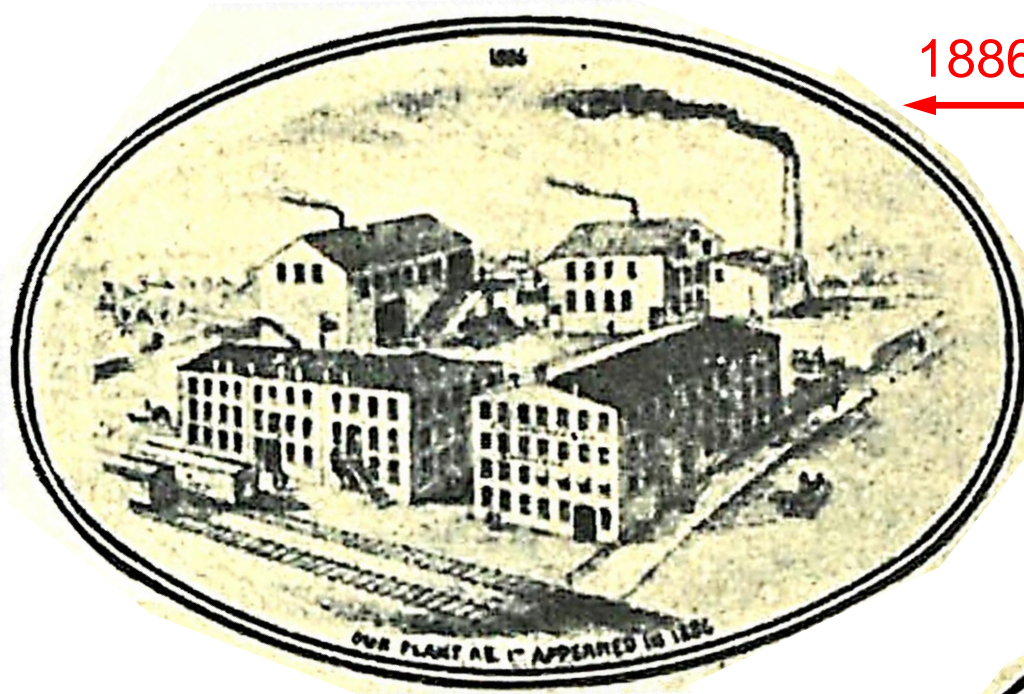


1885 Sanborn Map, sht. 5, modified to show location of the white wood carriage building above at left. That was a repository for storing carriages made by Edwin Morrill, whose factory was at Point Shore. It was purchased by Frank A. Babcock in 1883 to begin his carriage making career.

Depot

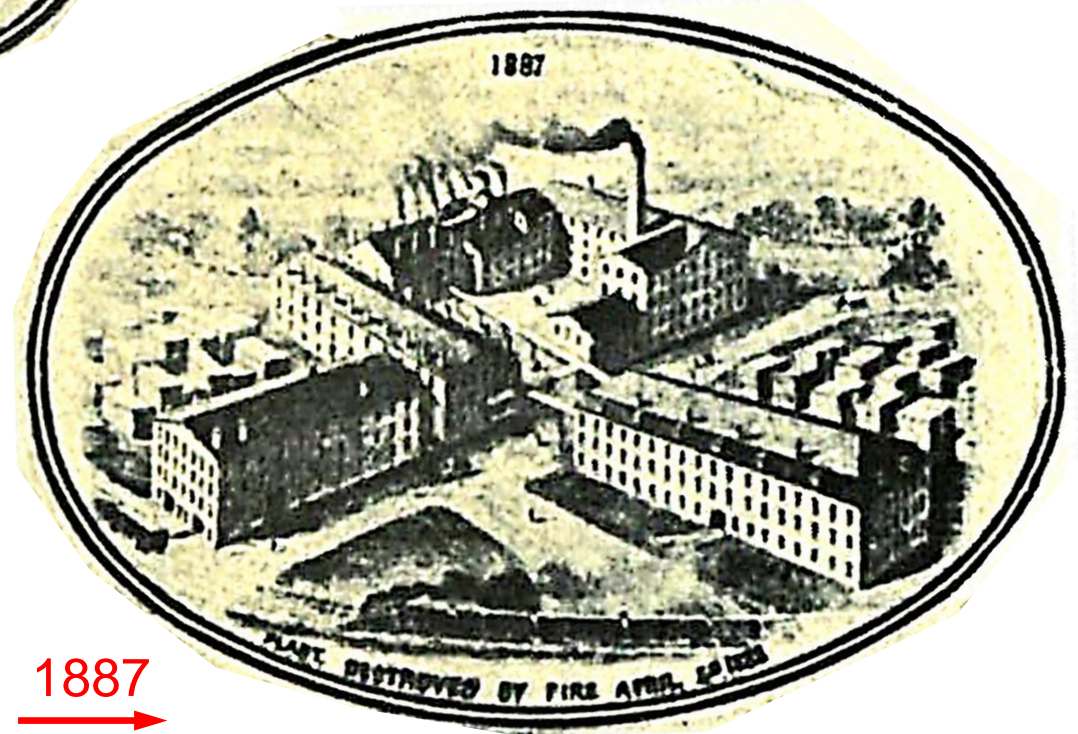


# Frank Babcock's Mid-1880s Factory Expansions of the former J. R. Huntington & James Hume factory



**1886** ← Currently, no photos of these buildings have been found. Babcock built the brick building at lower right in 1883-4, where the wooden Edwin Morrill building had been, and then the horizontal factory that was actually further up the property as seen below. In 1885 or later he added the steam powerhouse at the top of the property and additional brick factories.

In 1886-7 Babcock added a brick building where the wood storage area is seen at far left. The Arc appears here across Chestnut St. along with additional lumber yards. The complex dominated Chestnut Street, including elevated walkways over the street. After the 1888 fire, which started here, Babcock built temporary wood factories where the Arc and lumber piles had been to continue carriage making during the 1888-9 reconstruction.



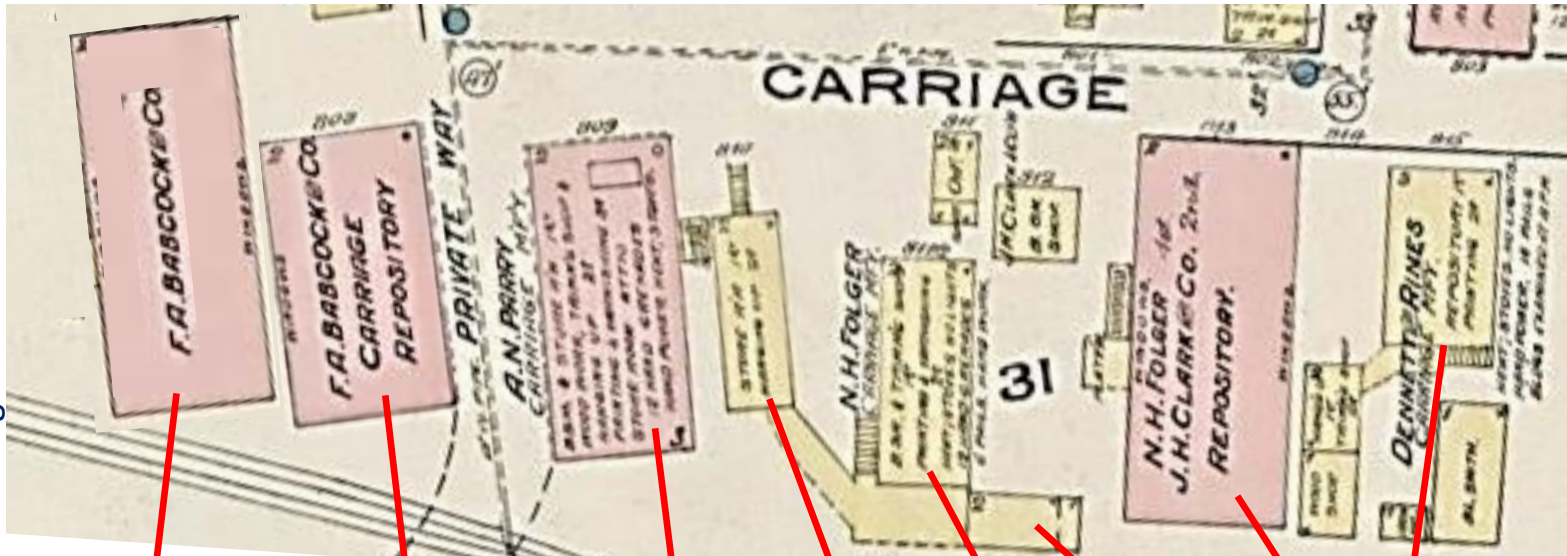
**1887** →



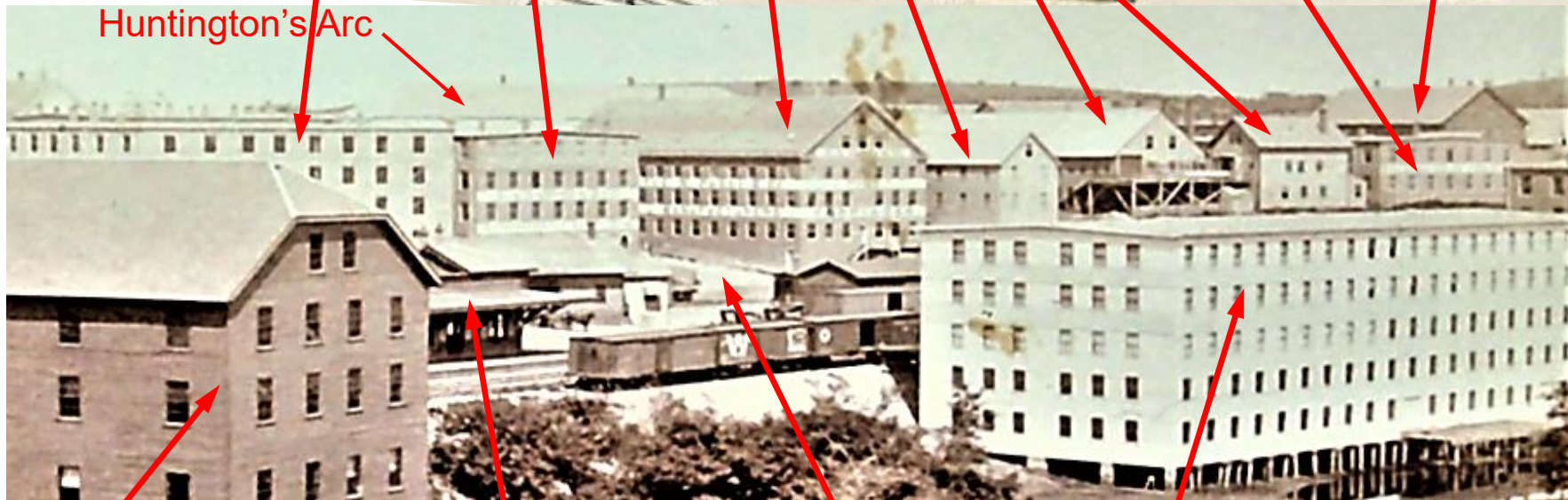
# Carriage Ave. Factories Seen from Water St., 1886-7

The passenger depot was moved from the Railroad Ave. area in 1887, making space for the Folger & Drummond factory at the same location. The brick A. N. Parry building sat very tall at #1 Carriage Ave., having distinctive white stripes lettered with the company name. Two other brick buildings here are similarly painted, which was a common motif on Amesbury carriage factories.

1885 Sanborn Map, sht. 5, modified to show 2<sup>nd</sup> Babcock building



Huntington's Arc



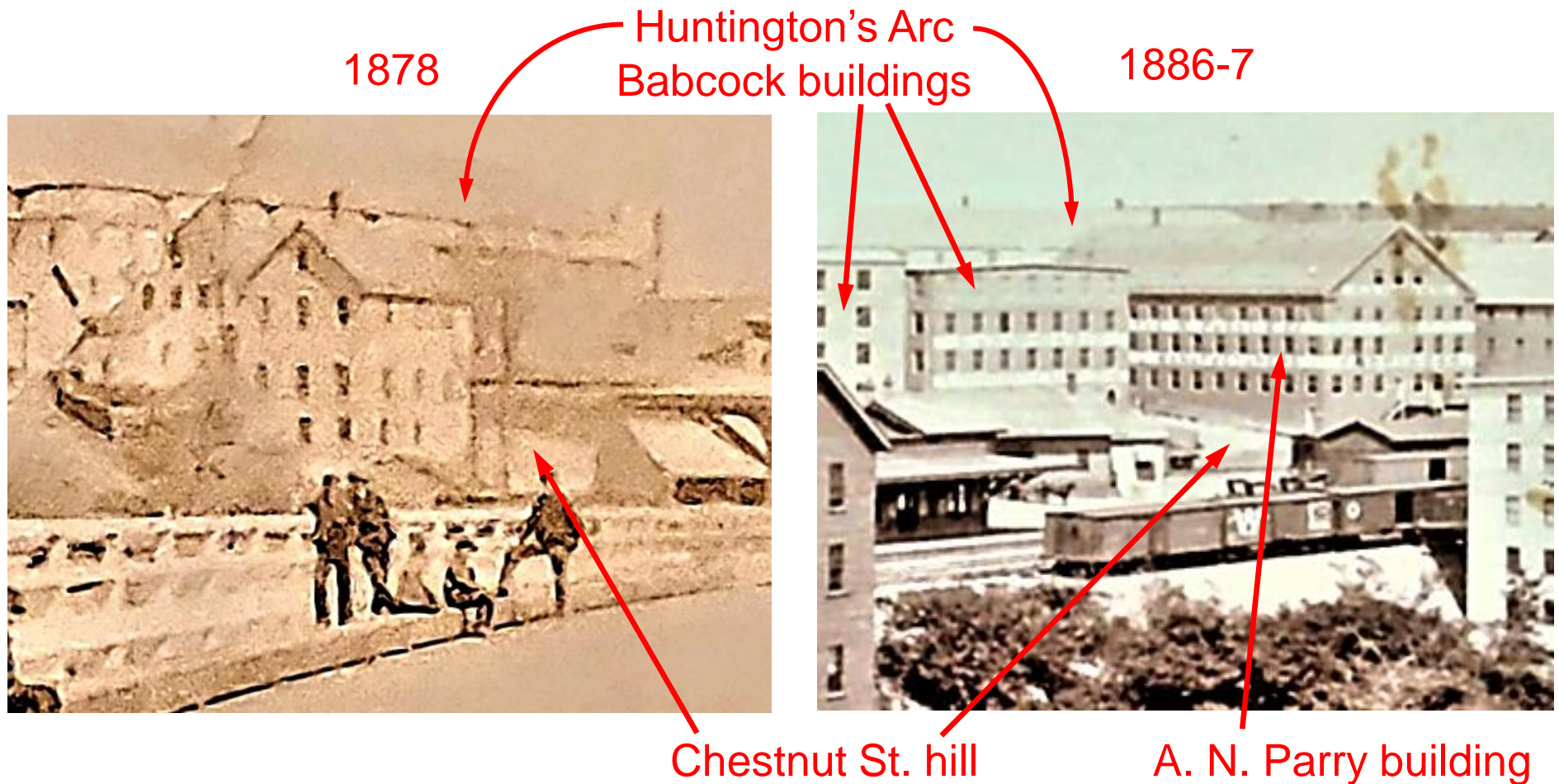
1866 Rowell bldg. Passenger depot Chestnut St. hill 1886 Biddle & Smart White Building

Courtesy of Salisbury Point RR Historical Society



# Comparison of Chestnut Street Hill at the Railroad from 1878 to 1886-7

Carriage Avenue remained largely undeveloped in 1878, but by 1887 had received factories along much of its length that were visible from carriage factories and textile mills over on Water Street. Chestnut Street hill was then bordered by the brick A. N. Parry factory having an appearance more recognizable today.

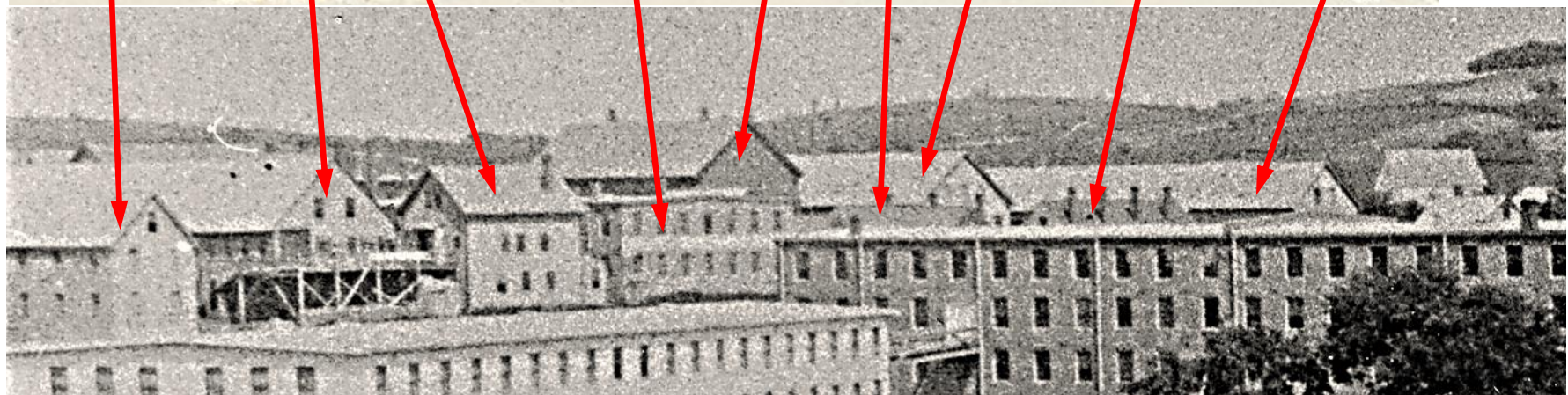
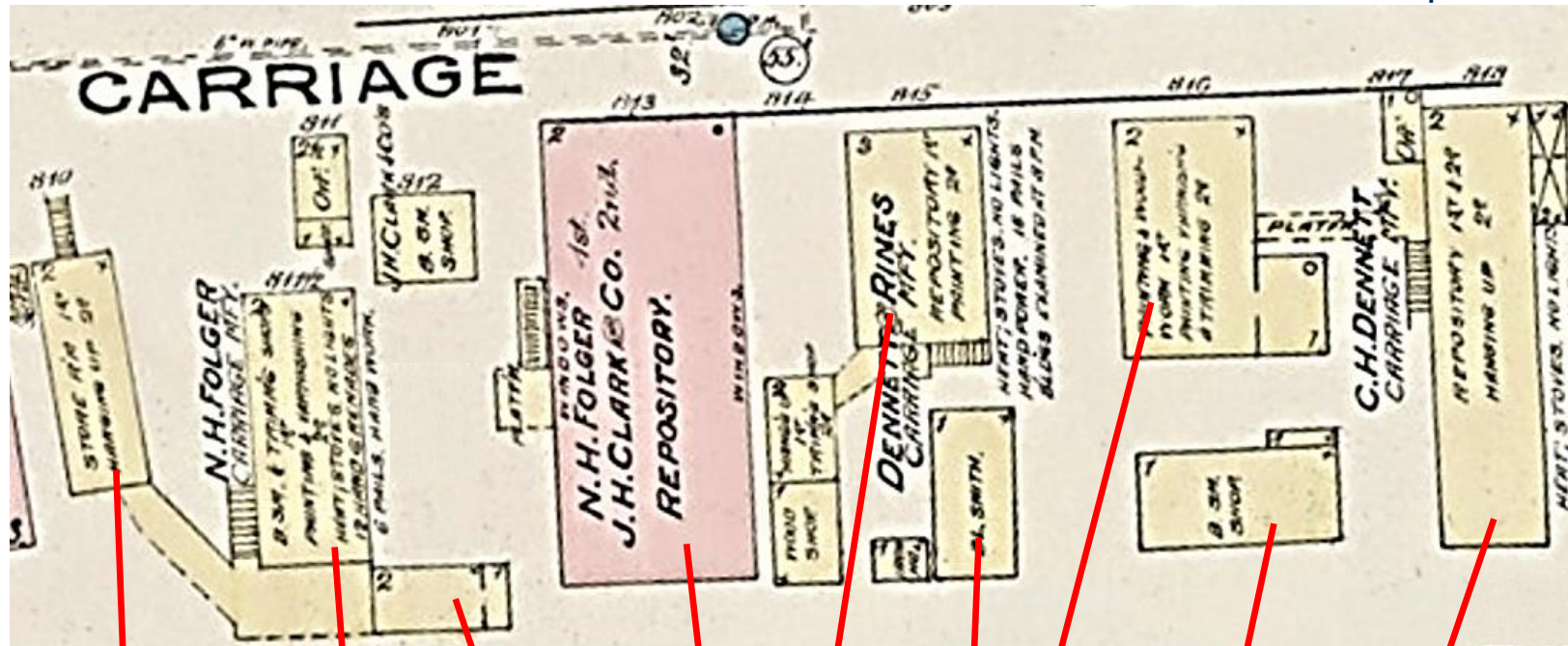




# Eastern Carriage Ave. Factories from Water St., 1886-7

Treeless Brown's Hill is in the background, far right

1885 Sanborn Map, sht. 5



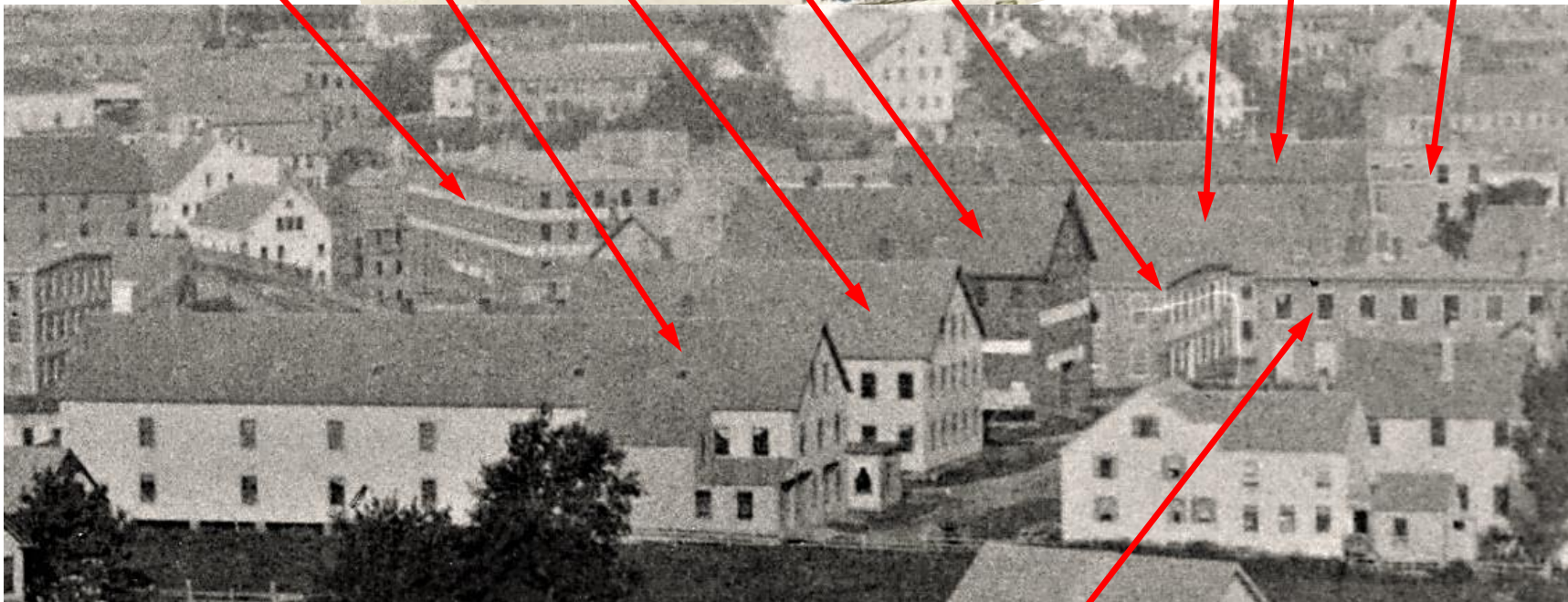
Courtesy of Salisbury Point RR Historical Society



# Carriage Avenue Viewed from Brown's Hill, 1887

the 1887 Folger & Drummond factory appears just left of center

Folger &  
Drummond,  
Amesbury's first  
electrically  
powered factory



Courtesy of Rick Bartley

William Smart factory, still extant at corner of Morrill & Oakland Streets

Carriage Ave. stops (bottom center) at an undeveloped property by the C. H. Dennett factory. Oakland St. begins on the other side of that property. The two streets were later joined and named Oakland Street in 1906.



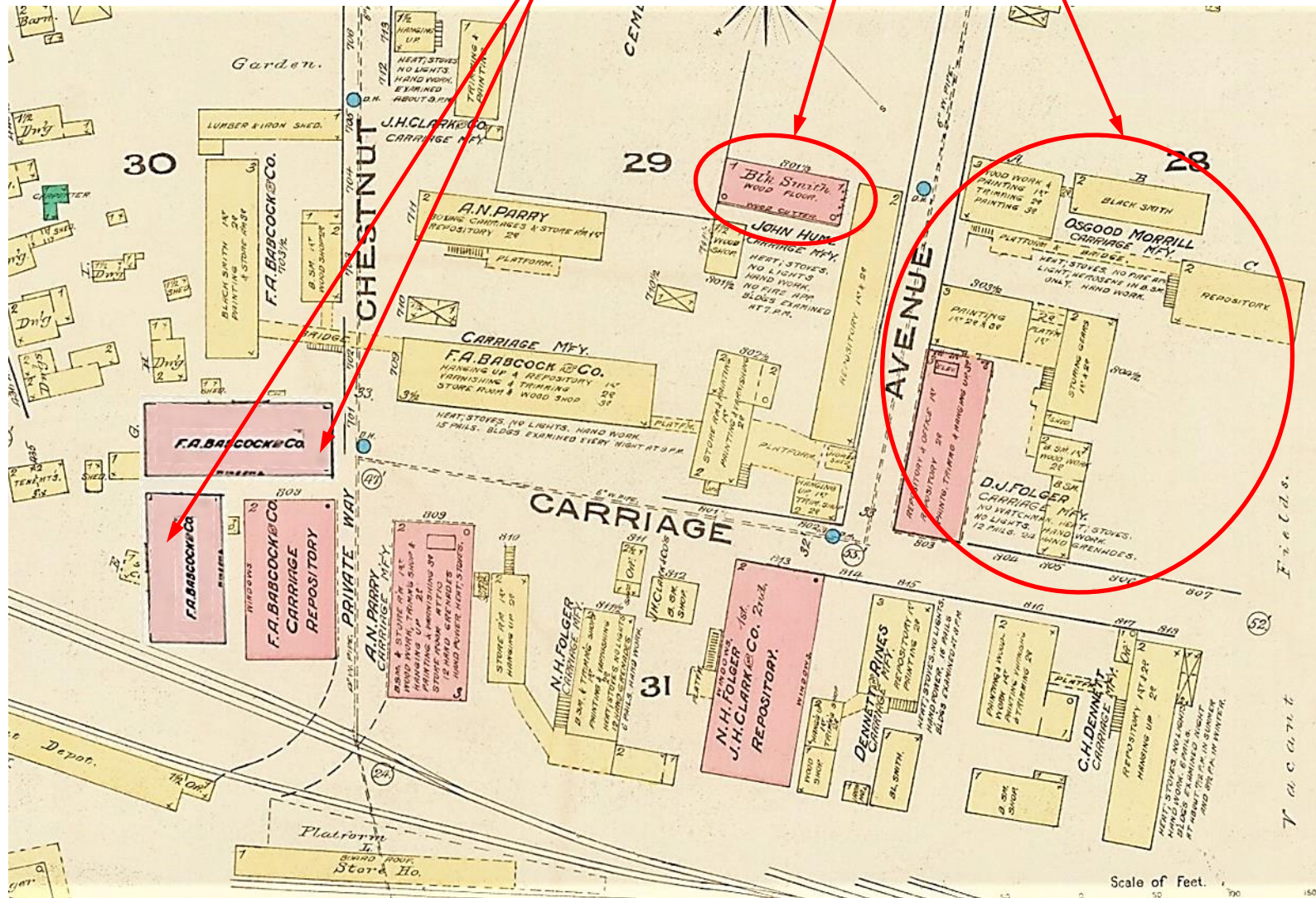
# The Fire

## April 5, 1888

# The Carriage Hill Factory Complex, Pre-Fire

1885 Sanborn Insurance map, sheet 5,  
modified to show two post-1885 Babcock buildings

These buildings survived the fire

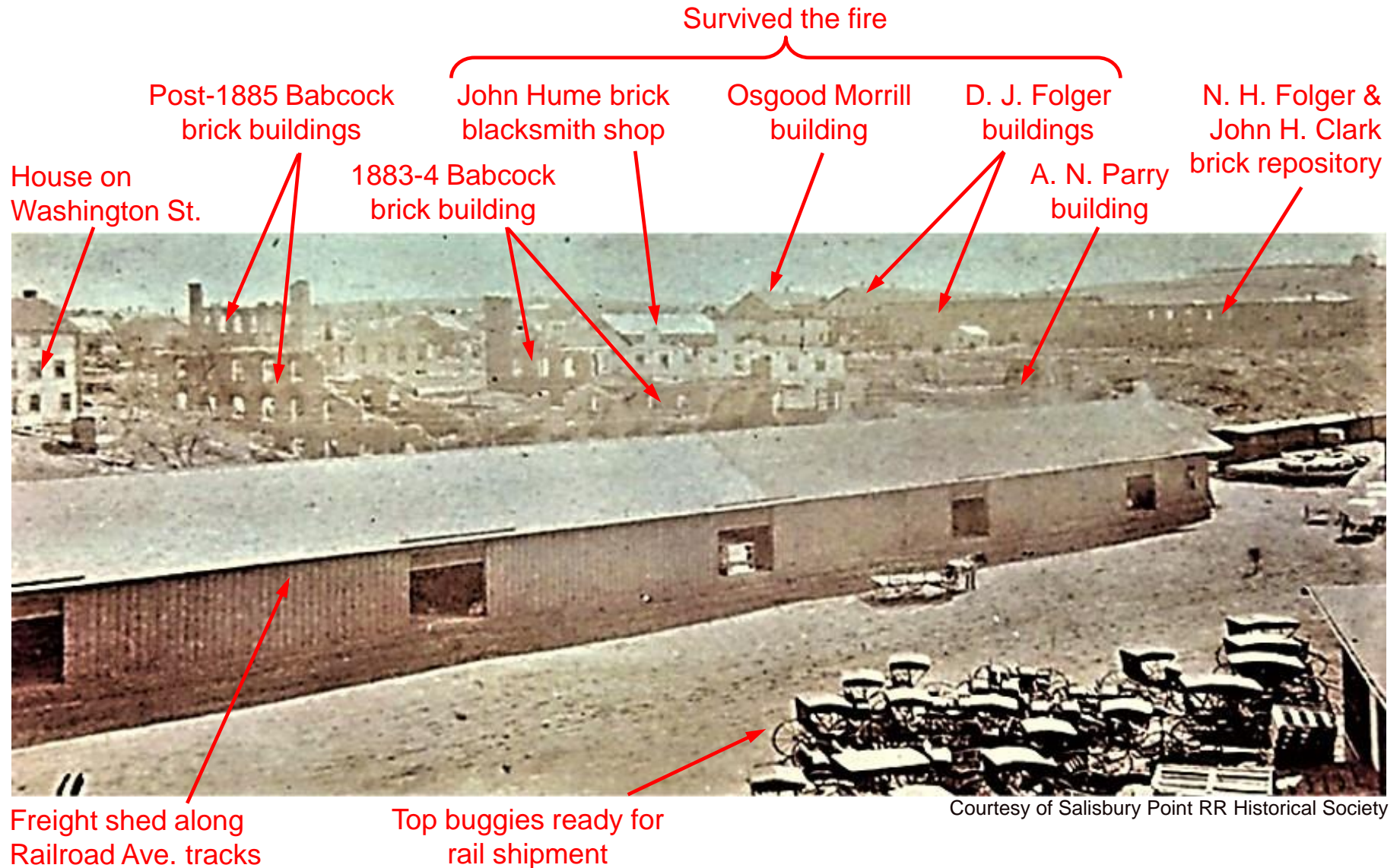




# Morning After Carriage Hill Fire of April 5, 1888

viewed from elevated position in the Samuel Rowell building

The Carriage Hill horizon was flattened by the fire, these buildings having previously loomed over the railroad tracks and buildings down on Back River and Water Street

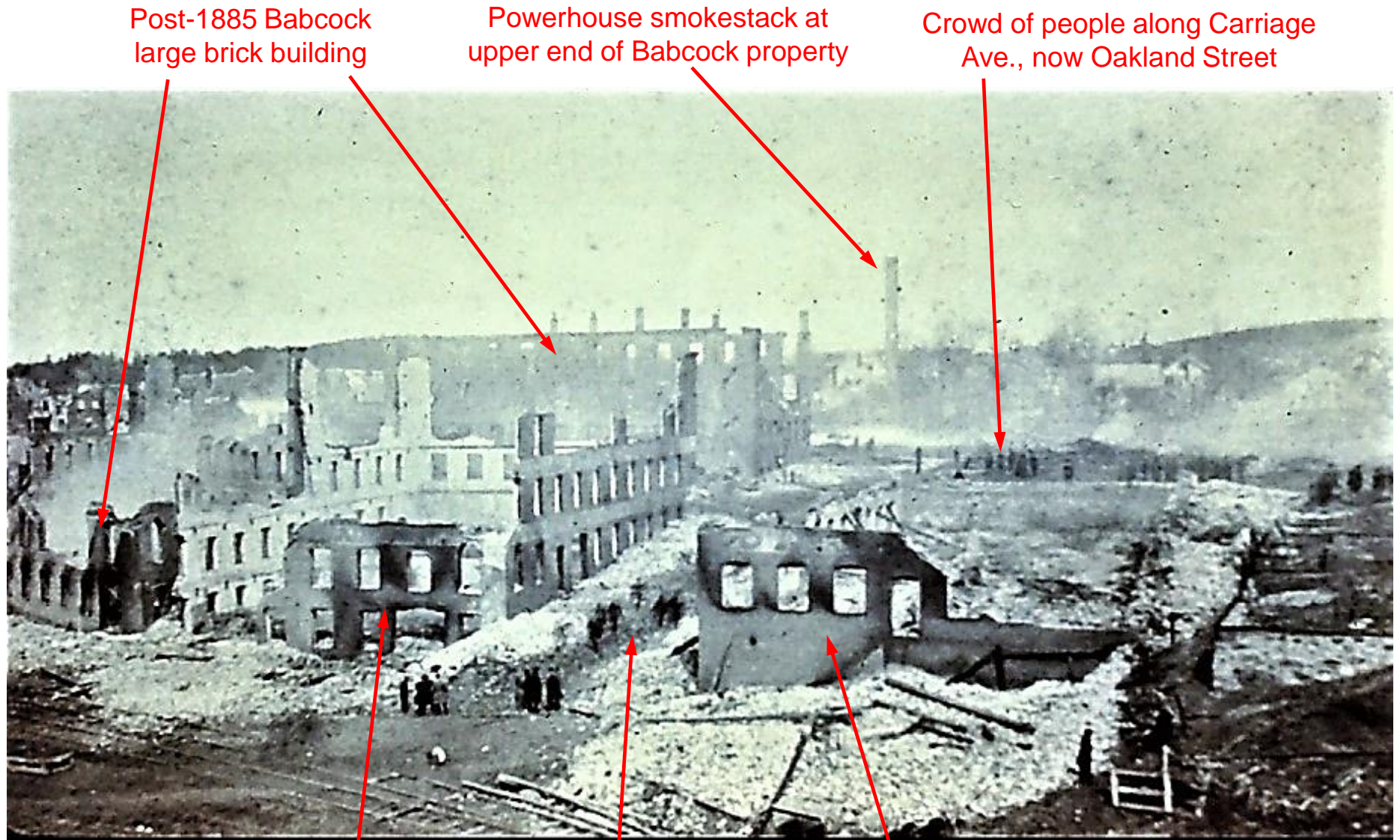


Courtesy of Salisbury Point RR Historical Society



# Morning After Carriage Hill Fire of April 5, 1888

Chestnut St. viewed from 1882 Biddle & Smart building across tracks



Post-1885 Babcock large brick building

Powerhouse smokestack at upper end of Babcock property

Crowd of people along Carriage Ave., now Oakland Street

1883-4 Babcock brick building

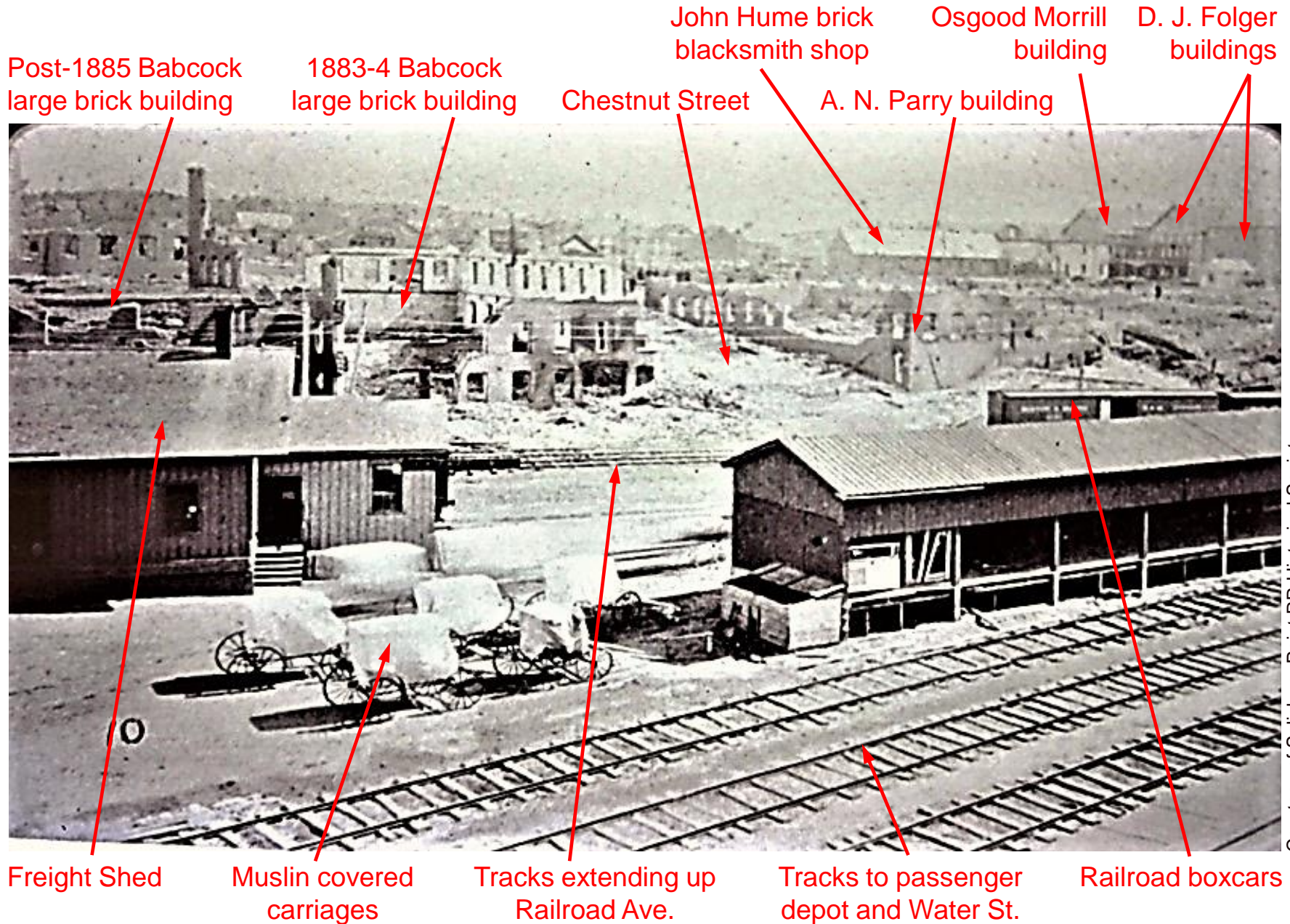
Chestnut Street hill

A. N. Parry building at #1 Carriage Avenue

Courtesy of Salisbury Point RR Historical Society



# Morning After Carriage Hill Fire of April 5, 1888 viewed from elevated position in the Biddle & Smart White Building



Courtesy of Salisbury Point RR Historical Society