A HOUSE HISTORY PREPARED BY DEED DETECTIVES

The Estabrook–Bascom House
98 Orchard Street

Leominster, Massachusetts

BUILT 1888

Built by a carriage-works foreman. Home of a Leominster judge.

Then & Now



Then. A machine-assisted depiction of 98 Orchard Street when it was first built in 1888.



Today. Turret and porch removed, gold siding added, 1970s. The barn at right, separated in 1919, is now its own residence.



An evening on the porch. A machine-assisted depiction of the house in its early years.

We use historic photographs whenever they survive. Where they don't, we create machine-assisted depictions of the house and scenes from its past. Every scene is available as a high-quality print, ready to frame.

II The House at a Glance

ADDRESS **98 Orchard Street, corner of Walnut Street**	BUILT **1888**
BUILT FOR **Alvin E. Estabrook, foreman of the wheel shop, F. A. Whitney Carriage Co.; later in land sales and lumber**	SECOND OWNER **Harry C. Bascom, lawyer and trial justice**
STYLE **Queen Anne, with corner turret and wraparound porch**	BARN **Separated from the house in 1919; now a separate residence**
THREE-FAMILY HOUSE **Since the 1920s**	MAJOR CHANGE **1970s: turret and wraparound porch removed; gold siding added**

III Orchard Street

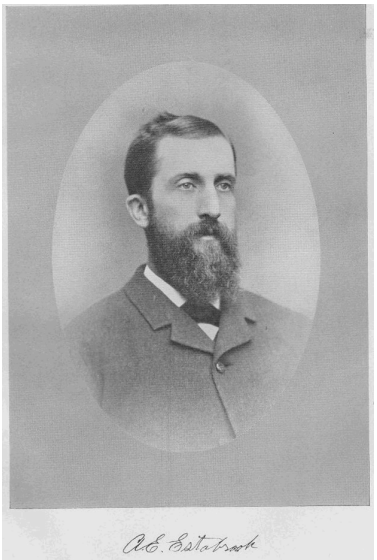
The 1915 Leominster directory describes Orchard Street as running from 91 West Street northeast to 126 Walnut Street. Number 98 stands near the Walnut Street end, on the corner.

The houses along it were built for the men who ran Leominster's factories, and two of them made their homes at number 98: a foreman from the carriage works and a lawyer who became a judge.

IV Alvin E. Estabrook and the Whitney Carriage Works

Alvin E. Estabrook built the house in 1888. He was foreman of the wheel shop at the F. A. Whitney Carriage Company, which cousins Francis A. and Francis W. Whitney founded in 1858. They were the first makers of baby carriages in America.

The company ran its plant off Water Street from 1862 to 1952 and was one of the city's major employers. At its height, in the early 1920s, it turned out 200,000 carriages a year and employed three to four hundred workers. Every carriage rolled on wheels from a shop like the one Estabrook ran.



Alvin E. Estabrook, builder of 98 Orchard Street.

He built a house to match his standing: a Queen Anne with a round corner turret facing the intersection and a wraparound porch on turned columns. By 1915 he had moved on. That year's directory lists Alvin E. Estabrook at 266 Merriam Avenue.

After leaving the carriage works, Estabrook turned to land sales and the lumber trade, dealing in the ground and the timber that Leominster's growing neighborhoods were built from.

V Owners & Residents

Book and page citations from the Worcester Northern District Registry of Deeds appear in a full report.

YEARS	OWNER / RESIDENT	EVIDENCE	NOTES
1888	Alvin E. Estabrook	Family and local history	House built
By 1915	Alvin E. Estabrook	1915 Leominster directory	Living at 266 Merriam Avenue
1915	Harry C. Bascom	1915 Leominster directory	"Lawyer and insurance, 4 Main; house 98 Orchard"
1919	Harry C. Bascom	Family and local history	Barn separated from the house; now a separate residence
1927	Harry C. Bascom	Death record	Died in Leominster, June 21, 1927
1920s – present	Three families at a time	Land records and city directories	Hundreds of residents over a century
1970s	—	Family and local history	Turret and wraparound porch removed; gold siding added

VI The People Who Lived Here

Judge Harry Chester Bascom 1864 – 1927

Harry Chester Bascom was born in Holden, Massachusetts, on December 21, 1864, the son of Artemas Dryden Bascom and Emerette Frances (Davis) Bascom. He graduated from Tufts College in 1889 and studied law at Boston University.

On January 30, 1900, he married Edith Agnes Rice at the Unitarian Church in Leominster. They raised four children: James Rawson (born 1901), Laurence Rice (1903), Frances Elizabeth (about 1906) and Harry C. Jr., born in Leominster on March 20, 1915.

The 1915 directory lists him as a lawyer and insurance agent with an office at 4 Main Street and his home at 98 Orchard. He was a trial justice and was listed in *Who's Who in New England* that same year.

In 1919, during the Bascoms' years, the barn was separated from the house. It stands today as a separate residence beside number 98.

He died in Leominster on June 21, 1927, and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery. Edith lived until 1962.

A House of Many Families 1920s – present

By the end of the 1920s the judge was gone, and the house he had shared with Edith and their four children had become too much for one family to keep. It was divided into three apartments, and it has stayed that way ever since.



The front door, photographed in 2021.

From then on, the history of 98 Orchard Street is not one story but hundreds. The land records and the city directories show a steady stream of people passing through its front door. Some stayed a single season. Others stayed long enough to raise children and see them leave. Few of their names appear anywhere else in the city's records, and none of them built the house or gave it a name.

In the 1970s the round turret and the wraparound porch came off, and the house was closed up in the gold siding it wears today. But the families kept coming. For close to a hundred years the old Victorian at the corner of Orchard and Walnut has been, above all, a place where ordinary people lived, three households at a time.

VII Maps & Records

A full report includes copies of the records behind the story, wherever they survive:

- **Deeds** for each transfer, from the registry
- **Historic atlases** showing the lot and the owner's name
- **Census pages** listing the household
- **City directory** entries by year
- **Photographs** of the house, the family or the workplace
- **Machine-assisted depictions** of the house's original appearance
- **High-quality prints** of any scene, ready to frame

VIII Sources

- *Leominster Directory*, 1915. Entries for Harry C. Bascom and Alvin E. Estabrook; street guide.
- Bascom family genealogy: Harry Chester Bascom (1864–1927).
- *Who's Who in New England*, Vol. 2, 1915.
- National Register of Historic Places: F. A. Whitney Carriage Company Complex Historic District, Leominster.
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, MACRIS inventory.
- Leominster land records and city directories, 1920s to the present.

> *This is a house history, not a title search. It is not a legal opinion on ownership. What we can find depends on what records and photographs have survived.*