

# Nahum Holmes House (c. 1894)



When the railroad came to Needham in 1853, the rail line was directed through the sparsely-populated Great Plain, rather than through the town center at Nehoiden St. and Central Ave. The new ease of travel and freight transport quickly drew economic and residential activity into Great Plain Village and away from the old center. In 1879, when the First Parish Church was moved to its current location on Dedham Avenue, the change was complete and the Great Plain became the town center.

Land in the Great Plain that had been used for grazing cattle or gardening rapidly became valuable as residential property, and local businessmen bought it up as investments, selling at it a profit as house lots for building. Between about 1860 and 1900 there was a boom in residential construction in the Great Plain. The northern half of Warren Street was laid out during this period, and is notable for the number of well-preserved historic houses. Nahum Holmes built this house sometime around 1894. He and his brothers were photographers and builders, and they owned the famous Holmes Brothers Studios. Holmes Brothers had several studio locations, including their primary one in Charlestown, and one in Needham. Numerous photos of Needham in the 1880s and 90s – including pictures of their houses – were taken by Holmes.