

Crisp's Market



Crisp's Market, circa 1900.

This building dates to the 1870s, one of the last survivors of the original growth of Highlandville (old Needham Heights). This has been a busy retail location for 150 years – once part of Calvert's, and before that a pharmacy, a bootmaker, a laundry, and others. When first built (and as seen in the picture), the building extended down West Street; at some point after 1920 the back end was torn down to create the area now used as its parking lot.

From the 1870s to about 1920, the store was Crisp's Meat Market. Oliver Crisp started out as a knitter, first taking over his father's looms, and later working for William Carter. At age 20, he left the knitting business to open his own grocery and meat market. Crisp was a fixture in the Heights community for many years – an officer and choir director for the Methodist Church, a member of the Masonic Lodge, and president of the Heights YMCA. He was a member of the Highlandville Sons of Temperance, and discovered the plot to set fire to the Bemis Block (see Site #3). On his 95th birthday, in 1947, he was awarded the Boston Post Cane, recognizing him as the oldest man in town.