





*Lizzie A. Borden*

# **1892**

**The Lizzie Borden Files**

**The Story of  
Lizzie Borden's  
Arrest and Trial**

**From the Articles  
of the  
Boston Post**

**Jeff Moreno**

**american art series**

**americanartseries.com**

P.O. Box 1907

Studio City, CA 91614

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Dedicated to my wife Ping

ALSO BY JEFF MORENO

***The Farmhouse Seven,***

The history of the making of the  
1968 movie, *Night of the Living Dead*

***The Undertaker In The City of Angels,***

The history of undertaking in Los Angeles

***Silent Cues, Carl Spitz and His  
Hollywood Dog Training School,***

The story of Carl Spitz, the trainer of  
Toto from the *Wizard of Oz*.

# Contents

Time Line and List of Notable Characters and Locations	x
Preface	xii
The Boston Post	xiii
Introduction	xiv
<b>Part One: Murder in Fall River</b>	
1. August 05, 1892	3
2. August 06, 1892	16
3. August 08, 1892	36
4. August 09, 1892	54
5. August 10, 1892	60
6. August 11, 1892	74
<b>Part Two: Lizzie Borden's Arrest</b>	
7. August 12, 1892	86
8. August 13, 1892	102
9. August 15, 1892	116
10. August 16, 1892	126
11. August 17, 1892	128
12. August 18, 1892	140
13. August 20, 1892	148
14. August 22, 1892	154
15. August 23, 1892	158
16. August 24, 1892	160
17. August 26, 1892	164
18. August 27, 1892	168
19. September 2, 1892	170
20. December 3, 1892	172
<b>Part Three: The Trial of The Century</b>	
21. June 06, 1893	176
22. June 07, 1893	210
23. June 08, 1893	226
24. June 09, 1893	246
25. June 10, 1893	268
26. June 12, 1893	278
27. June 13, 1893	280
28. June 16, 1893	292
29. June 17, 1893	304
30. June 19, 1893	310
31. June 20, 1893	314
<b>Part Four: Lizzie Borden's Acquittal</b>	
32. June 21, 1893	318
33. June 22, 1893	324
34. The Jurors Speak	326
35. Edwin H. Porter	330

**Part Five: Lizzie Moves On**

36. Lizzie's New Life 334

**Part Six: Their Final Years**

37. Lizzie A. Borden 344

38. Andrew J. Borden 346

39. Sarah Borden 347

40. Alice E. Borden 348

41. Abby Borden 349

42. Emma L. Borden 350

43. John V. Morse 352

44. Lurana Harrington 354

45. Hiram C. Harrington 355

46. Alice M. Russell 356

47. Aidelaide B. Churchill 358

48. Seabury W. Bowen 360

49. Charles J. Holmes 362

50. Edwin A. Buck 364

51. W. Walker Jubb 366

52. Andrew J. Jennings 368

53. George D. Robinson 370

54. Melvin O. Adams 372

55. Hosea M. Knowlton 374

56. William H. Moody 376

57. Josiah C. Blaisdell 378

58. Albert Mason 380

59. Justin Dewey 382

60. Caleb Blodgett 384

61. Charles S. Sawyer 386

62. Eli Bence 388

63. James A. Walsh 390

64. James E. Winward 392

65. Edwin S. Wood 394

66. William A. Dolan 396

67. Rufus B. Hilliard 398

68. John Fleet 400

69. John W. Coughlin 402

70. George W. Allen 404

71. Mark P. Chase 406

72. Phillip Harrington 408

73. Joseph Hyde 410

74. William H. Medley 412

75. Michael Mullaly 414

76. Patrick H. Doherty 416

77. Bridget Sullivan 418

Bibliography 420

Index 421



**The whole world was watching that  
afternoon's journey, and was  
saying: probably never will the real  
truth of the Borden tragedies  
be known.**

The end of Lizzie's trial, 1893

# Time Line and List of Notable Characters and Locations

## Time Line of Events

August 4, 1892	Andrew and Abby are murdered
August 11, 1892	Lizzie is arrested for murder
December 2, 1892	Lizzie is indicted for murder
June 5, 1893	Lizzie's trial begins
June 20, 1893	Lizzie is acquitted of murder
June 1, 1927	Lizzie passes away
June 10, 1927	Emma passes away

## The Borden Family

Andrew Jackson Borden, (1822-1892), father  
Sarah Anthony Morse Borden, (1823-1863), Andrew's first wife  
Abby Durfee Gray Borden, (1823-1892), Andrew's second wife  
Emma Lenora Borden, (1851-1927), Andrew's first child  
Alice Esther Borden, (1856-1858), Andrew's second child  
Lizzie Andrew Borden, (1860-1927), Andrew's third child  
Lurana Borden Harrington, (1825-1898), Andrew's only sister  
Ferry Street Home, 11-12 Ferry Street, Fall River  
Second Street Home, 92 Second Street, Fall River  
Maplecroft, Lizzie's mansion, Fall River (address omitted)  
Bridget "Maggie" Sullivan, (1866-1948), house maid  
Harriet, house maid after Lizzie's trial

## The Borden In-Law's

John Vinnicum Morse, (1833-1912), Abby's brother  
Hiram C. Harrington, (1829-1907), Andrew's sister Lurana's husband

## The Borden Family Friend's

Dr. Seabury W. Bowen, (1840-1918)  
Dr. and Mrs. Wenelas J. Chagnon  
Dr. and Mrs. Micheal (1856-1916) and Caroline (Cantwell) Kelly  
Miss Alice M. Russell, (1852-1941)  
Mr. Charles Jarvis Holmes, (1834-1906)  
Mrs. Mary Anna Remington Holmes, (1834-1916)  
Mrs. Adelaide B. Churchill, (1850-1926)  
Mrs. Mary E. Brigham  
Edwin Augustus Buck, (1825-1903), Reverend  
William Walker Jubb, (1837-1904), Reverend

### **Fall River Police Officer's**

Rufus B. Hilliard, (1850-1912), City Marshall  
John Fleet, (1847-1916), Assistant City Marshall  
George W. Allen, (1837-1901), Police Officer  
Joseph Hyde, (1844-1933), Police Officer  
Mark P. Chase, (1843-1921), Police Officer  
Michael Mullaly, (1848-1908), Police Officer  
Patrick H. Doherty, (1859-1915), Police Officer, Captain  
Phillip H. Harrington, (1859-1893), Police Officer  
William H. Medley, (1853-1917), Police Officer

### **Other Official's and Locations**

Dr. John Coughlin, (1861-1920), Fall River Mayor  
Andrew R. Wright, (1832-1899), Bristol County Sheriff  
Bristol County Courthouse, New Bedford  
Taunton City Jail, Taunton  
Albert E. Pillsbury, (1850-1930), Attorney General  
Dr. William Dolan, (1858-1922), Medical Examiner  
Edward Wood, (1846-1905), Harvard Professor  
George F. Seaver, (1879-1895), State Detective  
Hanna Reagan, (1848-1924), Police Matron  
Hanna Russell, Police Matron  
Mary J. Wright, (1832-1905), Police Matron

### **Judge's**

Josiah C. Blaisdell, (1820-1900), Lizzie's inquest Judge  
Albert Mason, (1836-1905), Chief Justice  
Justin Dewey, (1836-1900), Associate Justice  
Caleb Blodgett, (1832-1901), Associate Justice

### **Prosecution Lawyer's**

Hosea Morrill Knowlton, (1847-1902), Bristol County D. A.  
William Henry Moody, (1853-1917), Essex County D. A.

### **Lizzie's Defense Lawyer's**

Andrew Jackson Jennings, (1849-1923)  
George Dexter Robinson, (1834-1896)  
Melvin Ohio Adams, (1850-1920)

### **Trades People**

Eli Bence, (1865-1915), drug store clerk  
Charles S. Sawyer, (1843-1907), first citizen to enter the home  
James A. Walsh, (1868-1910), Photographer  
James Ellis Winward, (1853-1916), Undertaker

# Preface

I remember hearing the Lizzie Borden rhyme for the first time when I was in grade school. The rhyme as I remember saying it: *Lizzie Borden took an axe and gave her mother forty whacks. When she saw what she had done, she gave her father forty-one.* I never knew any

of the details of the Lizzie Borden story growing up beyond that rhyme, but as an adult I became interested in horror and history. I visited the Borden home for the very first time in 2019, and I became hooked with the Lizzie Borden story and the history. My desire to write this book began when I discovered the wonderful Boston Post articles about Lizzie's story. Take a trip back to Victorian Fall River, Massachusetts, to 1892, and follow the Lizzie Borden story from murder, to acquittal. A story that will certainly make you wonder about the truth.



The Borden home on Second Street. Photograph, Author's collection, 2019.

Jeff Moreno  
Los Angeles, May, 2022

# The Boston Post

**F**rom 1831 to 1956, the Boston Post Newspaper was a strong voice in Boston and throughout New England. The newspaper was founded in 1831 by Col. Charles Gordon Green.

The first edition of Col. Green's paper was published on November 9, 1831, and for one-hundred and twenty-five years the Post would become one of the largest newspapers in the country. John Fox purchased the Post in 1952, and just four years later, on July 6, 1956, the last edition of the Post was published. In 1892, the Post was one of the most prominent newspapers under then Publisher Edwin A. Grozier, to tell the entire story of the Lizzie Borden case from the announcement of Andrew and Abby's murder, to Lizzie's arrest, to the trial of the century, and finally of Lizzie's acquittal. From Friday August 5, 1892 for one penny, one could read every step of the investigation as it was taking place. The Post's artist "Norman" drew in great detail beautiful illustrations to match that of the Post's writer's like Ernest W. McGready and Amy Robert. Though there were occasional errors in grammar, spelling and facts, what was reported was published in mere hours. The Boston Post comes alive once again to tell the story of Lizzie Andrew Borden, and the other character's of the time.



Boston Post journalist Ernest W. McGready. Illustration, Boston Post, 1892.

# Introduction

**O**n the morning of Thursday, August 4, 1892, Andrew J. Borden and his wife Abby were both found murdered in different rooms of their home. The tragedy occurred in the Borden home at 92 Second Street, in Fall River, Massachusetts, about a two-hour drive south of Boston. The only known people in the home that morning were Abby, Andrew when he returned home early, Lizzie, and a servant girl, Bridget “Maggie” Sullivan. Lizzie’s Uncle, John Morse, who had spent the night but had left early in the morning to visit other family members, had returned to the home minutes after Andrew was found dead. Older daughter Emma was out of town in Fairhaven visiting a friend.

Sometime that morning believed to be around 9:30, Abby was murdered in the upstairs guest room where Uncle John had slept the night before. Lizzie claimed that she was in the dining room ironing and Bridget was outside washing windows when Abby was mysteriously murdered. When Andrew arrived back home earlier than his usual time that morning, just before 10:30, Bridget was washing the inside sitting room windows and stopped to unlock the front door to let Andrew in. Lizzie was upstairs, possibly standing on the upstairs landing, and giggled after Bridget said, “P’shaw” with her frustration of trying to open the front door. What Andrew did when he came home is unknown, but at some point it is believed that he went up to his bedroom through the back staircase. Not feeling well, Andrew made his way down to the sitting room and being comforted by Lizzie, Andrew settled in on the lounge (couch). It is believed that Lizzie attended to Andrew’s comfort, more so than what was Lizzie’s usual custom. Bridget went up to the third floor

to her bedroom as she too was not feeling well. Lizzie claimed that after settling Andrew down, she went out to the barn to look for lead sinkers for a planned fishing trip. However, Lizzie did tell Andrew that Abby had gone out to see a sick friend when he asked of Abby's whereabouts in the home. Just after 11:00, Lizzie claimed that she returned from the barn to find Andrew dead, and called for Bridget to come down quick, knowing that she was upstairs, yelling:

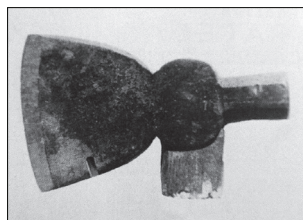
“Someone has killed father!”

Lizzie told Bridget to go get Dr. Bowen and Miss Russell, two neighbor's of the Borden's. Within a short time, Dr. Bowen, Miss Russell, Mrs. Churchill, Fall River Police Officer's Allen, Mullaly and Doherty, Dr. Dolan and a citizen named Charles Sawyer were inside the home. Within an hour of Lizzie calling the alarm of Andrew's murder, Abby was discovered dead and many other police officer's had arrived to the home. It was during this time that Lizzie said her famous line:

“She is not my mother.” When Lizzie was asked about the whereabouts of her mother Abby.

The crime scenes were hopelessly damaged of evidence, with so many different people entering the home and possibly removing anything that looked remotely out of place. In fact, Lizzie, John Morse and Emma when she returned home, were allowed to live in the home even while the investigation of the murders was taking place.

By the end of the second week, an inquest was completed and Lizzie was arrested on August 11, 1892 for the murder of her dear father Andrew and step-mother Abby. Lizzie remained in jail for a long ten months before her trial started on June 5, 1893. After a short trial with great fanfare, Lizzie was acquitted of two counts of murder on June 20, 1893, and released a free woman. No other person was ever arrested for the murder of Andrew and Abby Borden. There are no known interviews that Lizzie provided about the murders that are known to exist. It is a murder mystery that remains unsolved to this very day.



The broken hatchet thought to be the murder weapon. Photograph, Author's collection, 1893.







# **Part One**

## **Murder in Fall River**



# 1.

## Friday Morning, August 5, 1892

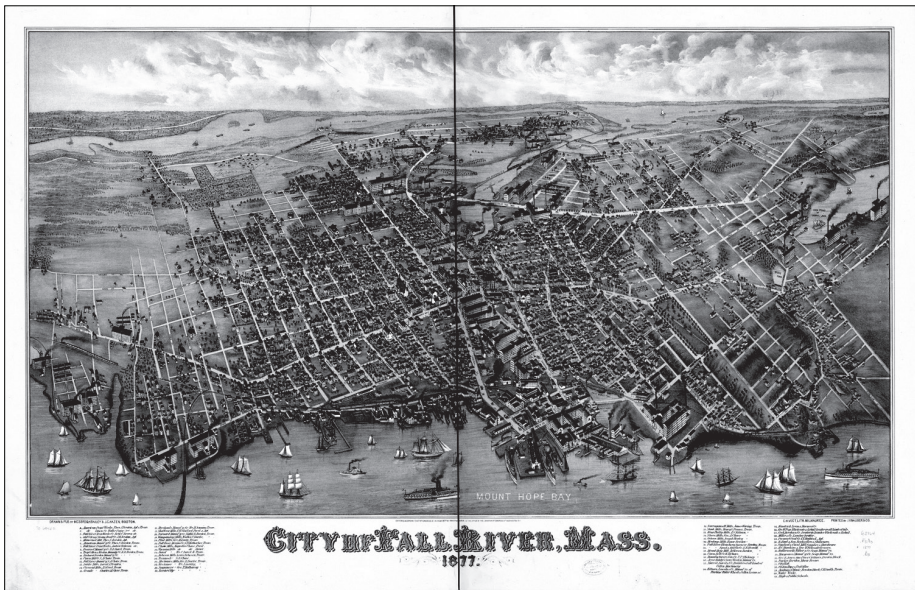
**F**all River has today placed upon the criminal annals of Massachusetts something that scarcely dare be written there before. In midday, the Borden house, which stands upon a leading thoroughfare in the heart of the city, open to whomever might come or go, his family alert and moving about their household affairs, Andrew J. Borden and his wife, were killed and horribly mutilated. The atrocity was discovered almost immediately, yet the murderer, unseen and unknown, escaped at this writing, midnight, no tracer clue of him has been discovered. All the features of the affair are of the most remarkable and startling character of appalling to those who learned them at the first, and, so far, baffling to the authorities. The family of Andrew J. Borden consisted of himself, wife, two daughters and a maid servant. At 10:30 o'clock Mr. Borden was lying on the lounge in the sitting room of his house, having returned from the bank of which he is president. His daughter, Lizzie looked into the room from her ironing in the kitchen and ask him if he had any mail for her. He replied that he had not. Lizzie left the house, going upon a chore in the barn, a few steps away. The servant, Bridget Sullivan, had been called downstairs from her work of cleaning the windows in the third story attic. She, too, looked in and saw Mr. Borden and returned to the attic. Lizzie remained in the barn some minutes, she judges. During that short interval this

**“Two Butchered.”**

**Headline, Boston Post,**

August 5, 1892

frightful tragedy was enacted in the house. She started to enter the room where her father had been, but was stopped on the threshold by the horror of what she saw. Her father's body was lying on the sofa, the head split fairly into, blood staining red the clothes and lying in a great pool upon the floor beneath. Lizzie turned into the passage way and screamed to Bridget to come, "That father has been murdered." She ran to the door and called to Mrs. Churchill, who lives in the next house and when Bridget came down sent her across the street for Dr. Bowen the family physician, and then, not waiting, ran into the front yard and screamed for him to come quickly. Bridget ran for a Miss Russell, an intimate friend of Miss Borden, residing in the immediate vicinity, and everything was excitement and confusion with them all. Up to this time the full measure of the tragedy had not become known, but in their frantic and confused excursions through the house these women came upon the body of Mrs. Borden lying upon the floor in the spare room on the second story. She was lying upon her face, and as the room was not disarranged and there was no appearance of



Fall River, *Spindle City*, was the third largest city in Massachusetts in the 1890s. Lithograph, Author's collection, 1871.

violence, it was supposed that she had seen the body of her murdered husband, ran up here and fallen in a faint. Only after the arrival of the officers and Dr. Bowen was it discovered that she, too, in that brief interval, had met the same terrible fate with her husband.

### Hacked To Pieces

The police authorities had been notified and within fifteen minutes after the discovery they were upon the grounds and had taken charge of the house. Mr. Borden was found lying upon a sofa in the sitting room, a room between the parlor, which fronts the street, and the kitchen, where his daughter had been at work. His head was down on the seat of the sofa, close against the arm, and his body extended diagonally across it, his feet resting upon the floor. His head seem to be crushed down into the sofa by the force of the blows that had been dealt it. The head was hacked to pieces so that it could scarcely have been recognizable, the weapon be a heavy hatchet or axe. One blow had cut through the forehead, eye and cheek, fairly splitting the face open, another had cut off the nose, and others of less effect hacked the forehead and cheek. Blood had been spurted a little over the sofa and wall as the blows struck, but only then, the flowing being steadily downward over the face and neck and through the sofa to the floor in a rivulet.

The newspapers and letters which the man had been reading lay upon the floor as he had dropped them when he, probably, fell asleep. His gold watch was in his pocket, some money and private papers were undisturbed. A sheet was thrown over this horrible spectacle, the doctor and Officer Dougherty went upstairs to see what might be done for Mrs. Borden. She was lying upon her face, her arms extended upward, her hair lying matted about her head. The officer touched her head and said she was dead. He turned the body over and uttered an exclamation of horror. The top of the head had been crushed in with a blunt end, evidently, of the terribly weapon that had been reversed downstairs and brains and blood fell out upon the floor. And who had done it was a mystery. Daughter and servant had seen no one, had heard no sound.

### He Slept There

Just then, John Morse, a middle-aged man, a visitor in the family, who had slept the night before in the spare room where Mrs. Borden's

body was found, stepped up to the side door of the house and was stopped by Charles Sawyer, a citizen whose assistance had been called for by the police, and posted at the door. Mr. Morse explained that he was a visitor, and was told what had taken place.



Charles S. Sawyer (1843-1907) was the first Fall River citizen asked to help guard the Borden home on the morning of August 4, 1892. Photograph, Author's collection, 1890s.

"My God!" He exclaimed, "What is this?"

"What can this mean?"

He was admitted, and has since figured in the incidence about the house and the story of the day.

#### An Autopsy

An autopsy has been held by doctors: Dolan, Leary, Peckhan, Deutre and Bowen, which only succeeds in giving detailed direction and medical names to the character of the wounds. The officers examined the house and vicinity, and took possession of two hatchets and two axes none of which were

supposed to have anything whatsoever to do with the crime. What is sought for is a fitting motive for such an atrocity.

#### A Glance At It

Mr. Borden left his home, No. 92 Second Street, about 9 o'clock in the morning, and went to the Union Savings Bank, of which he was President. He remained there some little time, and is not to have drawn out any money. He transacted some other little business about the street and returned to his home about 10:30, set down in the sitting room, glanced over his papers and is supposed to have fallen asleep on the sofa. The theory of the police authorities is that his murderer was in hiding at the moment in the cellar way, and that favored by the momentary absence of the daughter, he went straight, swiftly and surely to his terrible work. To reach the spot where Mrs. Borden lay from this room it was necessary to go into the hall, climb the stairs, enter the room above and circle a bed which stood between the door where she lay. A dozen theories are advanced as to how and why she





The Borden home, 92 Second Street, Fall River, Massachusetts. The famous barn is seen to the left, and was demolished with a replica built in its place. The home was built in 1845, and was sold to Andrew on April 18, 1872 by Charles Trafton (1805-1878) for \$10,000. The home was originally a two family home. The home remains standing today. Photograph, Author's collection, 1892.

was murdered, that generally accepted that coming down the stairs she had discovered the murderer, turned and fled, and that he gave chase. In view of the fact that a scream would have summoned the servant and her daughter, this seems scarcely plausible. But a plausible explanation is not finished in its stead, except that a succession of circumstances favoring the murderer of such as miracles are made permitted him after committing the butchery in the sitting room to ascend the stairs, cross this room and still come upon the unfortunate woman unaware. She was a woman of over sixty years of age, both of them being healthy, active, and well preserved old people.

#### Suspicious Illness

It came to light this afternoon that for the past three or four days all of the Borden family have been subject to frequent sick spells, attended with vomiting, all except the servant girl, until today, and this morning she was seized with such a spell. It was supposed at the cause of



The back of the Borden home. The door to the cellar is seen in the middle of the home. As seen, the kitchen windows on the first floor, Andrew and Abby's bedroom on the second floor, and Bridget's bedroom on the third floor. Photograph, Author's collection, 1892.

the trouble was in the milk, and it is now thought that attempts at poisoning had been made. Dr. Dolan, Medical Examiner, has taken a portion of the milk delivered this morning to have it analyzed.

The milk is furnished to the family from the decedent's own farm in Swansea, where he has two men employed. They are Frank Eddie and Alfred Johnson, the latter in charge, a Swede, and a servant an employee of long-standing and unquestioned trust in the family. Suspicion was directed against Johnson at once, as a story became current that Mr. Borden had an altercation with one of his tenants. Officers immediately went out to this trail and exploded the basis for suspicion, for Johnson was found to have been on his farm all the morning. This does not as effectually dispel the suspicion of poisoned milk, however, for the milk was brought every morning to the side door of the house long before the family had arisen, and was not taken in for hours afterwards. A couple of months ago Mr. Borden leased the upper apartment of his Ferry Street home to a Mrs. Ryan.



When she moved in she brought her son, who is said to be silly, and daughter and her daughter's husband and their two children. Besides this, Mrs. Ryan took a number of borders. Mr. Simmons and family soon began to complain to Mr. Borden and the neighbors that the new tenants were very disagreeable neighbors; that they got drunk and were noisy and that he would not put up with them. After living there nine years he was compelled at last to move for the reasons stated. Then Mr. Borden sent notice to Mrs. Ryan that she must get out. The neighbors say that the whole Ryan establishment became very bitter against Mr. Borden from that day and even before it.

Mrs. Ryan, it was said, could not speak of anything else but Borden, calling him old manner of evil names; and on the day before she finally moved she said:

"I wish he was dead, I would like to hear of his death."

It was all right when the daughter's had charge of the property, but it has never been all right since, never since old Borden got it back

**"The blood on Mrs. Borden appeared to be more coagulated than her husband's, and this fact gives currency to statements about her having met her death before the old gentleman."**

Boston Post, August 8, 1892

again. The explanation of this last remark is that Mr. Borden presented this property to his daughters, and that they had full charge of it for a while, but found so much trouble with these Ryan's that they concluded to deed it back again. This was only done last week, and it was Mr. Borden's first act after coming into possession of it again to evict the Ryan's.

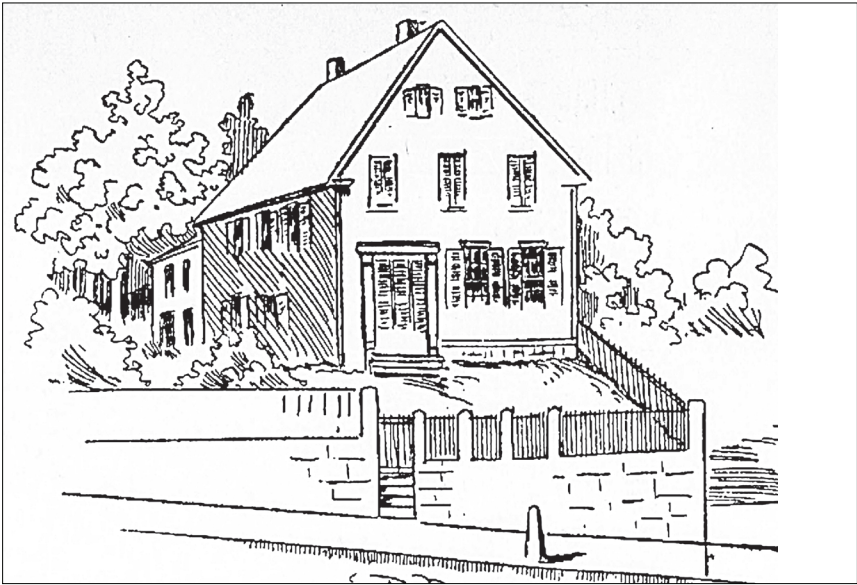
Mr. La Combe and family, wife and two little daughters, moved into the lower part of the house about two weeks ago, and the Ryan's moved out last Monday. Mrs. La Combe says that she would not care to repeat all that the Ryan's said in regard to Mr. Borden, as it was not very choice; but she thinks it's strange that the Ryan's should hear of Mr. Borden's death in such a tragic manner so soon after expressing the wish that they might, for Mrs. La Combe is one of those who heard her say it. On Monday morning, the Ryan's were in the act of moving, Mr. Borden went to the house, went upstairs and remained



only a minute, for the Ryan's set upon him so vigorously with their tongue that he beat a retreat. The La Combe's say that a good deal of profanity was used during the little bout, but that Mr. Borden had little to say.

### The Ryan's At Home

The Ryan's moved into a room up at the corner of Rodman and Fifth Street's in Fall River, so the Post man learned, and at 9 o'clock this evening he undertook to hunt them up, and learn what they had to say about it. To reach their apartment or apartments from Rodman Street, the only way to get there so far as could be seen, it was necessary to pass through a whiskey saloon of lower order, and climb two flights of winding stairs that were inky dark, and required a very careful feeling of the way. At the second landing there was a door before which he stopped to reconsider an instant. The door was just opposite a window in the hall which admitted the dim light of the outside night.



Andrew Borden's childhood home located at 12 Ferry Street, in Fall River. The story is told that Andrew purchased a home for Abby's half-sister Sarah Whitehead, and Lizzie and Emma became angry that such a gift was given to a non-family member. To appease the girls, Andrew gave Lizzie and Emma the Ferry Street home, which they in time sold back to Andrew. The Ryan's lived on the second story of the home. Today, the area has been developed, and the Borden Ferry Street home has long been demolished. Illustration, Boston Post, 1892.

The door opened, a woman's head was thrust out and inquired:

"What's wanted?"

"Is Mrs. Ryan in?"

"Well come in."

The Post man stepped to the threshold and saw the dim outlines of a number of people in the room, for there was no light, except what came through the two little windows.

"Come in," she said.

A man set just behind the door and held it open and said:

"Yes, if you want to see her, come in."

"I want to see Mrs. Ryan alone. Won't she be good enough to come out in the hall?"

"No, she won't come out there. Do you want to see her?"

The Post man looked at the man crouching behind the door, who gave his blunt invitation, and said he guessed not. The surroundings were too indefinite and uncanny. There seem to be at least a dozen people in the little room, none of whom had spoken but the man and woman. No reply was made, and the Post man felt his way along the hall and down the stairs again. He inquired in the saloon for the name of Mrs. Ryan's son-in-law, but they did not know. It was simply Mrs. Ryan and the other Ryans. The La Combe's did not know the name either. But they seemed to be all at home at 9 o'clock tonight, and the lights were out.

As do John V. Morse, about whom many people are inquiring in connection with this terrible affair. He is the brother of Mr. Borden's first wife. He lives in Hastings Iowa, but has been living in the vicinity, coming and going among the Borden's for two years past. Whether wealthy or not is not known, but he is not known to be engaged in any business. It is said that he has been paying marked attention to one of the daughters. The daughter, by the way, is his niece, being daughter of Borden's first wife. Last night he slept in the "spare room" where Mrs. Borden was killed. He was on very friendly terms with the family, and when he left the house at 9 o'clock this morning Mrs. Borden said:

"Goodbye John, be sure to come for dinner."

Mr. Morse says that he visited a niece of his family on Weybosset Street, and left there at 11:30, returning directly to the Borden residence, stopped in the yard to pick a pear from under one of the trees, and he knew nothing of what had happened until the officers