



722- 724 Main: Update #5
The Mystery Foundation
June 2022

To allow for footers to support the vertical steel beams that have been installed in both halves of 722-724 Main, rotting floors were removed from the ground level. Under the floor in 724 was evidence of the foundation of a smaller building. Project manager Roger Edwards is shown standing on part of that foundation. More research was needed to discover what had been at this location before the current buildings.

Early books on the history of Wheeling list buildings and businesses along this section of North Main Street in 1815. Riverboat historian John Bowman sketched a map, based on those narratives, marking a “two-story brick” grocery owned by Thomas Johnston, with the former home of Noah Linsly, who had died in 1814, just to the south of the adjacent alley – later named Walnut Alley. An 1853 city map shows the footprint of two small buildings on the lot. And maps from 1871 and 1890 show the current footprint.



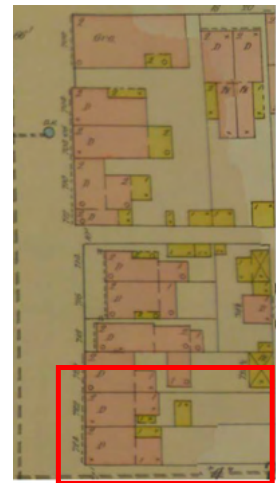
1815 Sketch



1853 City Map



1871 City Map



1890 Insurance Map



Thomas Johnston (1778-1848) was married to Margaret Melhollin (1788-1848). Both were buried in Greenwood Cemetery. The Johnstons had three daughters, Margaret (1817-1846), Mary (1820-1849), and Elizabeth. Mary and Margaret married brothers whose last names were Wallace. The oldest daughter, Elizabeth (1815-1897), whose portrait is shown, married Alexander Rogers (1800-1887), an immigrant from County Armagh, (Northern) Ireland. Her obituary states that she was “born on North Main, between 7th and 8th” – which is where 724 Main now stands.

We thank direct descendant, Oregon resident Bruce DeBolt, for information on the Johnston family and the portrait of Elizabeth Johnston Rogers.

Mystery solved!