

House & Land at 380 Essex Street, Salem, Mass.

This house was built in 1807 for Joseph Sprague Jr (1771-1833), a Salem merchant. Samuel McIntire *may have carved some of the trim, according to Fiske Kimball's surmise in Mr. S.M., Carver.*

The lot was purchased 2 Mar 1791 by Joseph Sprague Sr (died 13 Feb 1808), a Salem distiller, from the executors of the will of Francis Cabot (Southern Essex County Deeds, 154:301); at that time there was a wooden house (formerly the residence of James & Mary Grant) standing where this house now stands--right next to Mr Sprague's mansion house, 384 Essex Street, still standing on the northern corner of Essex & Flint Streets (in those days Flint Street, from Essex St to the North River (now the canal), was called Dean Street or Dean's Lane). About 1806, according to Oliver Thayer, who was born in it, the wooden house was demolished, clearing the way for construction of the present house in the next year, 1807.

That the house was built for Joseph Sprague Jr, on land owned by his father, is established by the inventory (taken 7 June 1808) of the elder Sprague's estate (Essex County probate case #26033, wherein Joseph Sprague Sr's "mansion house & appurtenances, including the land under & adjoining Joseph Sprague Jr's new brick house," was valued at \$15,000.

It is worth mentioning that the Salem Historic District Study Committee Report (vol. III, prepared by Elizabeth K Reardon, pp 57-8) is incorrect in stating that Joseph Sprague Sr lived in a McIntire-designed house at 376 Essex St, next east of 380 Essex St: as a matter of fact, the Wait family owned that lot from Revolutionary times right up to 1830, when the premises at 376 were sold to Nathaniel L Rogers, who had married into the family. So if there was a McIntire house there, it was built for Aaron Wait, and not for Joseph Sprague Sr, who was well content to live & die at 384 Essex Street!

Major Joseph Sprague Sr died 13 Feb 1808; on 28 Mar 1808 his heirs (son Joseph Sprague Jr, and daughter Sarah White (Sprague), wife of Dr William Stearns) divided the estate between themselves: Sarah White (Sprague) Stearns acquired all of her father's house & lot at 384 Essex St; Joseph Sprague Jr took full possession of the land & house (his own) at 380 Essex Street (see Deeds, 182:233).

On 8 Nov 1822 Joseph Sprague, Danvers merchant, by deed 230:151, sold the estate to Joseph Peabody Esq of Salem, whose son Francis Peabody (born 1801) was living there by 1832, even though his father (who lived, according to the Salem Directory for 1837, at 134 Essex Street) had never formally deeded it to him. Francis Peabody decided to build an addition to the house; to do so, he purchased of his neighbor Rogers a narrow strip of land to the northeast of the house, on 16 June 1832 (Deeds, 264:208). By the first of July, 1834, the new brick addition was finished--and causing problems--for on that day Peabody agreed with Rogers to maintain "a copper gutter along the eaves of the eastern end" of the addition, to keep water from pouring off its roof onto Rogers' fence & land below (Deeds, 311:287).

Finally, by deed 311:288, 13 May 1839, Joseph Peabody, still the legal owner, conveyed the premises to their occupant, Francis Peabody, who a day later sold the estate to Samuel Williams (Deeds, 311:289). On 12 Sept 1840, by deed 320:202, Samuel Williams sold his estate to John H Silsbee for \$8500.

Mr Silsbee lived here for the next 51 years. He died 19 Sept 1891, willing the property in equal halves to his son William H Silsbee and his daughter Alice D (Silsbee), wife of Dr. Hall Curtis (see John H Silsbee probate case #71323). William H Silsbee died 18 Mar 1900, unmarried, willing all his estate to his sister Alice D (Silsbee) Curtis, who now came into full possession of the house & land at 380 Essex Street (see William H Silsbee probate case #85951). Shortly afterward, on 5 Jan 1901, Dr & Mrs Curtis, by deed 1631:472, granted the premises to Mary L d'Este of Salem.

Fifteen years later Julian & Mary L d'Este sold house & land by deed 2321:122 to Arthur L Lougee, whose widow, Annah C Lougee, on 30 Dec 1953, sold the 380 Essex Street estate to its present owners, the Sweckers (see Decds, 4037:271).

\* Since writing this, I have found that Col. Francis Peabody was living at 380 Essex St as early as 1830; indeed, Joseph Peabody may have purchased it for his son Francis to live in from 1822 on. On 4 Jan 1830, twenty of Salem's leading citizens gathered at the 380 Essex St home of Francis Peabody to found the Salem Lyceum; this according to the Salem News, p. 6, 1 Aug 1896, a copy of which may be seen hanging in the entry of Salem's Lyceum Restaurant.

Robert Booth  
26 June 1976

Deed Conveyances Relating to 380 Essex Street, Salem Mass.

2 Mar 1791: Whereas James & Mary Grant on 25 Aug 1770, deed 122:194, mortgaged to Francis Cabot, Salem, their house & homestead in Salem, bounded

- s. on the main street;
- e. on Aaron Wait;
- n. on land called Burns', then occupied by Joseph Dowse Esq;
- w. on Dean's Lane;
- s. & w. on John Dean back to the main street;

and whereas said mortgage was assigned to Samuel Orne, who foreclosed it; now the executors of the will of Francis Cabot, Salem deceased, as a favor to the administrator of the estate of Samuel Orne, Salem deceased, for 20 shillings convey the above real estate to Joseph Sprague, Salem, who bought it at public auction for 180 li.

(So. Essex County Deeds, 154:301)

28 Mar 1808: An indenture between Joseph Sprague, Salem merchant, & his wife Margaret, as one party, and William Stearns, Salem apothecary, and his wife Sarah White (Stearns), as the other party:

That for \$1,000, and for the Stearnses' grant & release below, and also for \$1,500 paid by said William for equality of partition, said Joseph releases to sd Sarah White (Sprague) Stearns one undivided moiety of a piece of Salem real estate, bounded starting at the corner of Dean & Essex Streets, and

- runs 261' 4" on sd Dean Street to a post;
- runs n. 70° e. 64' to a post;
- runs 223' 9" straight to a post on Main Street, 73' 9" west of Aaron Wait, and 91' 9" east of the corner of Dean & Essex Streets;
- runs 91' 9" on Essex St to the corner of Dean & Essex Sts;

containing about 66 poles, with the dwelling house, barn, & other buildings thereon (along with several provisos);

And that, for \$1,000 sd William & Sarah W Stearns release to sd Joseph Sprague one undivided moiety of the Salem real estate bounded starting at the s.w. corner of Aaron Wait's land on Essex St, &

- runs 73' 9" to a post 91' 9" from the corner of Essex & Dean Sts;
- runs 223' 9" to a post 64' east of Dean Street;
- runs n. 70° e. 71' 6.3" on undivided land of sd Joseph & Sarah; & on Aaron Wait for 37' 3.3" of that distance;

- runs 196' 4.2" by sd Wait back to Essex Street;

containing about 52.5 poles (along with several provisos).

(Deeds, 182:233)

8 Nov 1822: Joseph Sprague, Danvers merchant, for \$7500 grants to Joseph Peabody Esq, Salem, the brick dwelling house & its land, in Salem, bounded starting at the s.w. corner of the land of Aaron Waite on Essex Street, and

runs 73' 9" by Essex Street to a post 91' 9" from the corner of Dean & Essex Sts;

runs 223' 9" to a post 64' east of Dean St;

runs n. 70° e. 71' 6.3" (34' 3" by Joseph Sprague, deceased, & 37' 3.3" by sd Aaron Waite);

runs 196' 4.2" by sd Waite back to Essex St;

containing about 52.5 poles; being the same premises conveyed by deed 182:233. (Deeds, 230:151)

16 June 1832: Nathaniel L Rogers, Salem merchant, for \$50 grants to Francis Peabody, Salem gentleman, a certain Salem parcel bounded starting at the s.e. corner of the land on which sd Peabody's house in Essex Street now stands, and

runs east 11' 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ " on sd Essex St;

runs nw 97' 4" on sd Rogers till it intersects the eastern division line between sd Rogers & Peabody;

runs from thence back to the point of beginning.

(Deeds, 264:208)

1 July 1834: Nathaniel L Rogers and Francis Peabody, both of Salem, agree that sd Peabody, his heirs & assigns, shall always keep up & maintain a copper gutter along the eaves of the eastern end of the new brick addition lately built by Peabody to his dwelling house on Essex St, which gutter shall prevent water from falling from sd house & addition onto land or fence of sd Rogers; and this is not to be interpreted as an easement to Rogers' land under Peabody's projecting eaves, but Peabody will remove the eaves when thereto requested by sd Rogers, his heirs or assigns. (This conveyance recorded 14 May 1839). (Deeds, 311:287)

13 May 1839: Joseph Peabody, Salem merchant, for \$7500, sells to Francis Peabody, Salem, all that messuage consisting of the brick dwelling house & land in Salem, bounded & described exactly as in deed 230:151 above; being the whole of the estate sd Joseph Peabody bought of Joseph Sprague 8 Nov 1822, 230:151. (This conveyance recorded 14 May 1839.) (Deeds, 311:288)

14 May 1839: Francis Peabody Esq, Salem, for \$8500 grants to Samuel Williams Esq, Hartford Conn., the brick dwelling house & outbuildings in Salem with the land under & adjoining, bounded

- s. 85' 4" on Essex Street;
- e. 194' on 2 courses as fence now stands on Nathl L Rogers;
- n. 71' 10" on sd Rogers & on Stearns;
- w. 224' 4" on Stearns;

said premises being subject to the indenture of 1 July 1834 between Peabody & Rogers re maintaining a copper gutter. (This conveyance recorded 14 May 1839.) (Deeds, 311:289)

12 Sept 1840: Samuel Williams, Salem, for \$8500 grants to John H Silsbee, Salem, the brick dwelling house & outbuildings with land in Salem (bounded & described exactly as above, subject to the same indenture); being the same premises that Peabody granted to Williams on 14 May 1839. (Deeds, 320:202)

5 Jan 1901: Hall & Alice D Curtis, in her own right, Boston, for \$1 & other valuable considerations grant to Mary L d'Este, Salem, a certain lot of land with the brick dwelling house & outbuildings thereon in Salem, bounded

- s. 85' 4" on Essex Street;
- e. 194' on now or formerly (n/f) Nathl L Rogers by 2 courses as the fence now stands;
- n. 71' 10" on n/f Rogers & on n/f Stearns;
- w. 224' 4" on sd Stearns;

subject to the same indenture as above re maintaining a copper gutter; being the same premises as described in deed 320:202. (Deeds, 1631:472)

28 Jan 1916: Julian & Mary L d'Este, in her own right, of Milo Maine, grant to Arthur L Lougee, Salem, a parcel of land with buildings thereon in Salem, bounded

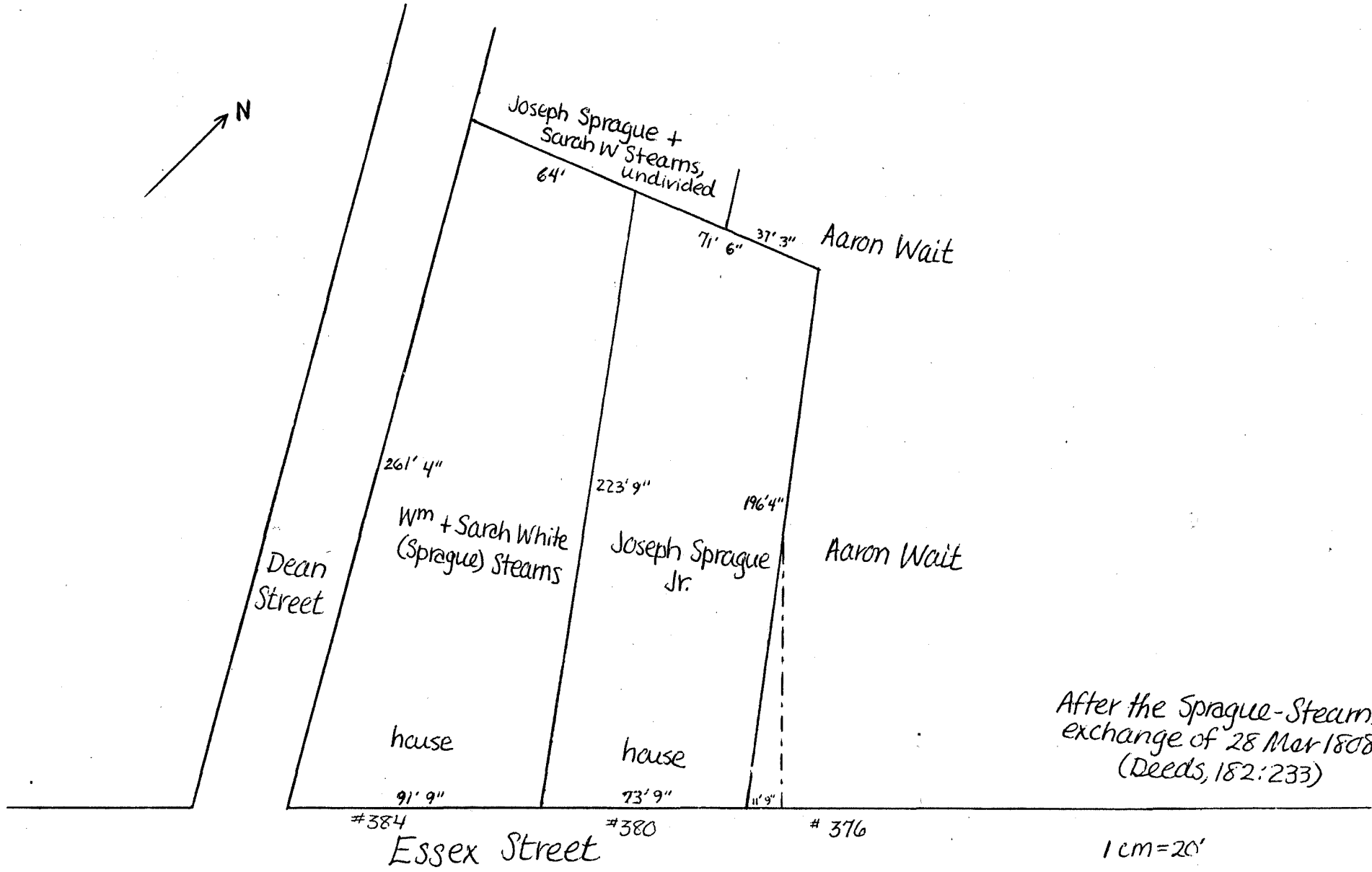
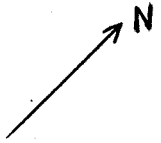
- s. 85' 4" on Essex Street;
- e. 194' on now or late (n/l) Shepard (formerly Rogers) in 2 courses;
- n. 71' 10" on n/l Shepard (formerly Rogers) & on n/l Dole (formerly Stearns);
- w. 224' 4" on n/l Stearns;

subject to the same indenture as above; being the same premises conveyed by deed 1631:472, (Deeds, 2321:122)

30 Dec 1953: Annah C Lougee, widow, grants to O. Palmer & Elma B Swecker, Harrisburg Penna., the land in Salem with the buildings thereon, bounded

- s. 85' 4" on Essex St;
- e. 194' on n/l Shepard in 2 courses;
- n. 71' 10" on n/l Shepard & on n/l Dole;
- w. 224' 4" on n/l Stearns;

meaning to convey the same premises as in deed 2321:122, d'Este to Lougee, 26 Jan 1916. For her title, see Probate of estate of Arthur L Lougee, probate # 236496. (Deeds, 4037:271)



After the Sprague-Stearns  
exchange of 28 Mar 1808  
(Deeds, 182:233)

----- : This represents the strip  
N.L. Rogers granted Francis Peabody,  
16 June 1832, deed 201:208

## Works in Architecture

The county tax book of 1807 assesses him for \$11.36, that of 1810 for \$10.14, the decrease being due doubtless to his sale of a lot from the easterly side to his neighbor Gideon Tucker in 1808 (185:57). It will have been the new brick house which first attracted to him the attention of the assessors, and we may thus suppose it to have been built or building in 1807.

The house was sold to Simon Forrester by Timothy Williams and Samuel Putnam, trustees, under Little's will, April 3, 1815 (205:248), and occupied by Forrester's daughter Nancy and her husband Gideon Barstow, being sold to Thomas Trask by the trustees under Forrester's will April 18, 1844 (343:108). It was later occupied by Robert Brookhouse. At some time before 1910 a wider addition was made in front, bringing the property out to the street line for commercial occupancy, and destroying the old porch. We have, unfortunately, no record of the interior.

### Joseph Sprague, Jr., House

380 *Essex Street*

*Built about 1807, much remodelled*

*Principal owners: Sprague, Peabody, Silsbee*

(Figures 283-286)

The house was not included in the list of brick buildings in Salem published in the *Salem Gazette* February 4, 1806. Oliver Thayer who was born in a wooden house on the site, speaks of it as "torn down, I think, about 1806."<sup>50</sup> The construction of the brick house must soon have followed, for the inventory of the estate of Major Joseph Sprague, who died at 384 Essex Street February 13, 1808, lists his mansion house "adjoining Joseph Sprague Jr's new brick house."<sup>51</sup>

The house has been much remodelled. The mantels of the first floor have been replaced with marble, but those of the second floor which survive are of the type characteristic of McIntire, the mantel in the southwest room having one of his carved baskets, placed, like the one in the Thomas Butman house (1806-1807), in a beaded oval. The cornice has the split dentils which first appear in McIntire work about 1808.

The hall was drastically remodelled during the Greek revival. We may assume that the hall was originally shallower, leaving room for the circular stairs which, in the remodelling, were pushed into a wooden addition behind, in the angle of the ell.

Both the main cornice of the house and that of the portico have forms derived from the *American Builder's Companion* by Benjamin and Rayner, published late in 1806. While McIntire's interior detail elsewhere, from about 1808, was influenced by this publication, there is none of his later houses where such forms were adopted on the exterior. We must assume that McIntire's participation in the work was limited to interior embellishments, of which the mantel illustrated is the only survival.

The stable, much changed, suggests by its central arch the type introduced in Salem by McIntire. The house was later owned by Colonel Francis Peabody, by Samuel Williams, by John H. Silsbee, by Julian d'Este, and by Arthur Lougee.

<sup>50</sup> *Essex Inskitute Historical Collections*, XXI (1884), 214-215.

<sup>51</sup> *Essex Probate Records*, 376:395.