

28 Williams Street  
Salem, Mass.

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Beverly housewright  
Ca. 1810

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This house was built by Peter Woodbury<sup>\*</sup>, Beverly housewright, before 1818 and probably circa 1810.

In 1700 this lot was part of a larger tract owned by the Williams family of Salem; about 1795 a descendant, mariner Henry Williams, opened Williams Street down to the North River (which then came up very close to what is now Bridge Street). By 18 Mar 1799, diarist Rev. William Bentley of Salem noted "... there is a rope-walk, partly covered, on the east side of Williams Street." A ropewalk was a long low shed in which rope was made.

On 26 Sept 1800 Henry Williams for \$216.67 granted to Samuel Hodgdon, Salem mariner, "a certain lot on the eastern side of Williams Street" bounded west 117' on Williams Street, north 67' on the North River, east 150' on Elias M Dupar, and south 57' on Moses Thomas (167:73). Mr Hodgdon sold the southernmost piece of this lot, a parcel fronting 30' on the street and running back 57' on 31 Aug 1805 for \$200 to Benjamin Gardner Jr, Salem ropemaker (178:37).

Mr Gardner owned this small lot until 25 Dec 1806, when he sold it for \$290 to Peter Woodbury, Beverly housewright (181:20). Mr Woodbury, who had just built a house farther up Williams Street, probably built this house on the small lot soon after. It is almost certain that he never lived in either of his Salem houses; both were built as investments, and were rented out.

Mr Woodbury died possessed of the premises on 20 Sept 1818; in his inventory, this, "about seven poles in Salem with a dwelling house thereon," was valued at \$800 (#30484). On 14 Oct 1819 the administratrix of Mr Woodbury's insolvent estate, his widow Debby, for a high bid of \$425 at public auction, sold the premises to Michael Shepard, Salem merchant (220:298). Mr Shepard rented out the house until 17 Mar 1825, when he sold the premises for \$1000 to Daniel Abbot, a Salem man who had advanced from ropemaker to baker to, by this time, merchant (238:3).

It appears that Mr Abbot and his son Daniel Jr occupied the house to the north of this, renting out 28 Williams Street. On 27 Feb 1834 the Abbots, evidently having failed in business, were forced to assign all of their property to their creditors' trustees, Messrs Merrill & Porter; this deed describes this house as "the two story wooden dwelling house situated on Williams Street now occupied by Mr Smethurst" (275:6). On 3 Aug 1835 the trustees for just \$405 sold to David Pingree, Salem merchant, "a parcel of land with all the dwelling houses and buildings thereon," including this house and its land (285:9).

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\* Actually, he spelled his name Woodberry.

More than six years later, on 31 Oct 1841, Mr Pingree, who had rented out the place, sold it for \$1600 to Isaac Pinkham, Salem stage-driver; in this deed he conveyed about 4' more land than the earlier 30' frontage (332:17). Mr Pinkham immediately mortgaged the premises for \$1300 to Mr Pingree (332:28). Isaac Pinkham, stage-driver, lived here until 15 Oct 1851 when, having failed to pay off the mortgage as agreed, he reconveyed the premises for \$1 to David Pingree, merchant (452:204).

Mr Pingree once again rented out the house, John H Batchelder being the tenant in 1854. On 16 Aug 1852 Mr Pingree, then mayor of Salem, had placed his boldings, including this house and land, in a trust (465:285); on 22 May 1856 the trustees for \$1090 sold this place to Mrs Mary Ropes, widow of John Ropes (532:76). In this deed the boundaries of the lot were given exactly as they are today.

At last the house, which was built as rental property and had largely been used as such, was occupied by the same family that owned it. Mrs Ropes owned the property until 13 Jan 1869, when she sold it for \$1300 to her unmarried 54-year-old daughter Abigail Woodward Ropes (1815-92), (763:178).

Miss Ropes owned the premises until her death on 14 July 1892 (#72876). On 6 Oct 1892 the executor of her will sold the premises for \$2675 to Richard Harrington of Salem (1358:78). Mr Harrington soon conveyed the premises to his wife Ellen W, who on 26 Nov 1894 sold the same to Martha T Weeks, wife of William Weeks, of Lynn (1431:28).

She owned the property until 23 Dec 1901, when, as a Salem widow, she granted it to Thomas J Barry of Salem (1662:101). Mr Barry died 9 Ap 1928, at which time the house & land were appraised at \$2780 (#160917). On 15 Aug 1928 the executor of Mr Barry's will for \$4250 to Sarah A and Daniel J Duffy, as joint tenants (2775:542). Sarah Duffy died on 20 May 1937, whereupon Daniel Duffy became sole owner. On 16 Aug 1956 he granted the premises to Mr & Mrs Albert W Hamilton of Danvers (4297:479). On 15 Ap 1959 the Hamiltons conveyed to the trustees of Rylon Realty Trust (4551:558); seventeen years later, 16 July 1976, they conveyed for \$27,900 to Richard A Clemens of Salem (6260:201). At last, on 20 July 1977, Mr Clemens for \$37,000 granted the house & land at 28 Williams Street to the present owner, Robert C Bramble, trustee of Allyn Realty Trust (6373:74).

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27 Sept 1977

## Notes

Referring to Isaac Pinkham, an owner & occupant of this house, Leverett Saltonstall (b. 1825), writing in 1885, stated: "Speaking of stages, one of my great sources of happiness (when a boy) was a drive on top of Pinkham's with my father every year to Haverhill to visit his mother." (from Essex Institute Historical Collections, vol. 81, p. 63.)

It was amusing to discover that one Philip Abbott painted this house in the fall of 1892 for a grand total of \$88.

A daughter of the builder of this house, Peter Woodbury of Beverly, and his wife Debby, married Robert Rantoul, the well-known Essex County political and literary figure.

A figure such as (123:456) refers to So. Essex County Registry of Deeds book 123, page or leaf 456; (#123456) refers to So. Essex County Probate docket 123456.

Each homeowner is encouraged to record what he or she discovers regarding the house and people who lived in it; it is especially important to set down what major changes are made both inside and outside, to the house.

and assigns, the tract of land herein above mentioned and described or however the same is reputed to be bounded or described. To have and to hold the aforegranted premises with all the privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging to him the said Michael Shepard his heirs and assigns forever to his and their use and behoof forever. And I the said Debby Administratrix as aforesaid do hereby covenant with the said Michael Shepard his heirs and assigns, that I was lawfully authorized and empowered to make sale of the same as aforesaid, that I gave public notice of the said intended sale as aforesaid; that I gave bonds and took the oath by law required previous to said sale that it was necessary the same should be sold for the purposes aforesaid; that the premises were struck off to the said Michael Shepard for the sum aforesaid at a public vendue as aforesaid and that he the said Michael Shepard offered most for the same. In WITNESS whereof I the said Debby Woodberry Administratrix as aforesaid have hereunto set my hand and seal this fourteenth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and nineteen.

Debby Woodberry - - - Seal

signed sealed and delivered in presence of us  
 four words erased and one word interlined before delivery  
 George Wood Robert Rantoul

Essex ss. October 14. A.D. 1819. Then the  
 above named Debby Woodberry  
 personally acknowledged the above

instrument by her subscribed to be her voluntary act and deed.

before me Robert Rantoul Justice of Peace

Essex ss. Rec<sup>d</sup>. November 20. 1819. recorded and examined by

Amos Choate Reg

Know all Men by these Presents, That I Debby Woodberry of Beverly in the County of Essex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts widow as I am administratrix of the goods and estate of Peter Woodberry late of said Beverly housewight deceased intestate by an order of the Court of Probate begun and holden at Salem in and for said County of Essex on the third tuesday in May A. D. 1814 was licensed and duly empowered to sell and pass deeds to convey so much of the real estate of the said Peter Woodberry for the payment of his just debts and incidental charges as will raise the sum of one thousand nine hundred and seventy five dollars. And whereas I the said Administratrix having given public notice of the intended sale by causing a notification thereof to be published three weeks successively before the time of sale in the Salem Gazette printed in Salem in said County and having first given bonds and taken the oath by law in such cases required did on the thirteenth day of October instant pursuant to the license and notice aforesaid sell at public vendue in Salem aforesaid the following tract of land being a part of the real estate of said deceased to Michael Shepard of Salem aforesaid Merchant for the sum of four hundred and twenty five dollars he being the highest bidder therefor as follows to wit, a certain lot of land situate in said Salem bounded as follows, viz beginning at the southwesterly corner of Abbots land, from thence running southerly thirty feet and bounded westerly on Williams Street, thence running easterly about fifty seven feet to land formerly Dupars bounded southerly on land of Samuel Hodydon, thence running northerly thirty feet bounded easterly by land formerly Dupars, thence running westerly about fifty seven feet to Williams Street and the bound first mentioned and bounded northerly by Abbots land together with the dwelling house thereon and all other the privileges and appurtenances to the premises belonging or in any wise appertaining it being the same lot of land which said Peter Woodberry bought of Benjamin Gardner junior as will appear by his deed recorded in the Registry of deeds for said County Book 101. Leaf 20 reference thereto being had. Therefore know ye that I the said Debby Woodberry in my capacity of Administratrix as aforesaid by virtue of the power and authority in me vested as aforesaid and in consideration of the aforesaid sum of four hundred and twenty five dollars to me paid by the said Michael Shepard the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge do hereby give grant bargain sell and convey unto him the said Michael Shepard his heirs