

94 Essex Street  
Built c. 1870 for Thomas P. Covell

The population of the United States in 1870 was 39,818,449. Ulysses S. Grant was the President of the United States. On January 15, 1870 the donkey was first used to represent the Democratic Party. The first blacks were elected to congress. Sen. Hiram R. Revels, a Republican, was elected from Mississippi. Joseph H. Rainey, also a Republican, was elected to House from South Carolina. John D. Rockefeller started the Standard Oil Company in the same year. Also in the same year the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company was started. It soon grew to be the largest chain of grocery stores in the country. The first boardwalk in the country was completed in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The house at 94 Essex Street was built circa. 1870 for Thomas Covell. He had the original structure removed before building the current structure. The house is a large two plus story house with a mansard roof with fish scale slate. The house has a high foundation and is trimmed with Italianate brackets. There is an ell behind the house.

Thomas Covell lived in the house until 1890 when the house was sold Joseph F. Hickey, who was the treasurer of the Naumkeag Street Railway Co..<sup>1</sup> Joseph then sold the house in 1898 to Mary E. Hickey, who was a clerk in the Probate Office.

Mary lived in the house until 1904. She then sold the house in to Mary E. Duignan, who was a bookkeeper. She did not reside in the house and she sold in 1921 to Rosanna J. Welch. The Welch's also did not live in the house. They failed to pay their mortgage and the bank seized in 1931. The bank then sold the house to Antoine Theriault. Antoine and his wife Catherine lived in the house until 1956 when the sold the house to George Ahmed.

The house was transferred several times in the Ahmed family finally being handed over to the Ahmed Trust in 1982.

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 724 Page 144

Date: May 11, 1867  
Grantor: Charles A. Jenks of Somerville in the county of Middlesex  
Grantee: Thomas P. Covell of Salem  
Consideration: \$4,450  
Description:

"...certain parcel of land with the dwelling house and all other buildings thereon, situate in Salem...Beginning on Essex Street at a point on a line equi-distant between the dwelling house herein conveyed and the adjoining house now, or late of Ashly and running northwardly about one hundred and four feet parallel

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<sup>1</sup> Salem Street Directory



with the eastern bounds of the estate conveyed, to land now, or late of Benson\_thence running easterly bounded northerly by said Benson's land to land of Edward H. Knight, thence southerly bounded eastwardly by said Knight about one hundred and seven feet to Essex Street thence westward on said street to the point beginning all the above lines being more or less and as the fence now stand."

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 1282 Page 80

Date: June 19, 1890  
Grantor: Thomas N. Covell and Nancy M. Covell, his wife, of Salem  
Grantee: Joseph F. Hickey of Salem  
Consideration: \$1  
Description: See Above

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 1542 Page 426

Date: March 21, 1898  
Grantor: Joseph F. Hickey, unmarried, of Salem  
Grantee: Mary E. Hickey, of Salem  
Consideration: \$1  
Description: "...that parcel of land with the buildings thereon situate in Salem, on Essex Street, so called and numbered ninety four (94) on said street. Said parcel of land being bounded on the East by land of Knight, on the north by land of Benson on the west by land of Ashly and on the south by said Essex Street...for more particular description of which reference may be had to a deed recorded...Book 724 Leaf 144."

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 1736 Page 123

Date: March 16, 1904  
Grantor: Mary E. Hickey of Salem  
Grantee: Mary E. Duignan  
Consideration: \$1 and other valuable considerations  
Description: "...a certain parcel of land and the buildings thereon situated in



said Salem...the premises numbered 92 1/2 + 94 on said Essex Street."

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 2471 Page 584

Date: January 15, 1921  
Grantor: Mary E. Duignan, widow of Salem  
Grantee: Rosanna J. Welch wife of Michael J. Welch of Boston  
Consideration: Paid  
Description: See Above

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 2885 Page 514

Date: June 20, 1931  
The Salem Five Cent Savings Bank seized the property for failure to pay mortgage

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 2885 Page 515

Date: June 20, 1931  
Grantor: Salem Five Cents Saving Bank  
Grantee: Antoine Theriault and Catherine Theriault, husband and wife, both of Salem  
Consideration: Paid  
Description:

"...the land in said Salem with the the buildings thereon bounded and described as follows: Southerly by Essex Street, westerly by land now or late Ashby about one hundred nine (109) feet ten (10) inches, northerly by land now or formerly of Benson and easterly by land now or formerly of Knight about one hundred six (106) feet two (2) inches."

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 4285 Page 73

Date: July 6, 1956  
Grantor: Antoine D. Theriault and Catherine Theriault, husband and wife of Salem  
Grantee: George Ahmed, of Salem



Consideration: Paid  
Description:

"Southerly by Essex Street;  
Westerly by land now or late of Ashby about one hundred nine  
(109) feet, ten (10) inches;  
Northerly by land now or late of Benson;  
Easterly by land now or late of Knight about one hundred six (106)  
feet, two (2) inches.  
Excepting therefrom so much thereof as may have been taken by  
the City of Salem by an instrument of taking recorded with Essex  
South District Deeds, Book 2550 Page 184."

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 4540 Page 429

Date: February 26, 1959  
Grantor: George Ahmed  
Grantee: George Ahmed and George A. Ahmed  
Consideration: Paid  
Description: See Above

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 5733 Page 401

Date: December 5, 1970  
Grantor: Frank A. Ahmed  
Grantee: George A. Ahmed  
Consideration: \$14,000  
Description: See Above

Essex County Registry of Deeds  
Book 6980 Page 608

Date: September 22, 1982  
Grantor: George Ahmed  
Grantee: Ahmed Trust  
Consideration: Nominal consideration  
Description: See Above



COPY  
for  
John Casey

**John Vose Goff**

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Historic Preservation & Design  
Post Office Box 8655, Salem, Massachusetts 01971  
**Telephone / Fax (508) 741-1767**

February 20, 1994

**John Wathne**

Downtown Committee  
Historic Salem Incorporated  
84 Federal Street  
Salem, MA 01970

Dear John:

It was good to see you at the January 25th Downtown Committee meeting, and to receive the meeting minutes. This is to let you know that I visited 94 Essex Street to familiarize myself with the building.

The building which is now numbered 94 Essex Street appears to have been built in the 1870 - 1890 period as a fine single family house built in the French Second Empire (Mansard) style. The building is particularly noteworthy because it has a granite ashlar foundation, "ashlar" style wood boarding on the front, and a slate roof. It appears to be essentially intact on the exterior, with original windows, porches, and decorative trim. The proportions of the front facade are especially fine, as there is a good alignment of window openings in the three-bay front, as well as a balanced use of bay windows which enliven the front facade.

There is also an abundance of ornament e.g. "rosettes" used to highlight the cornice brackets and portico near the front door; also ornamental "Stick Style" vertical boards used as decorative banding. The building is also noteworthy because the profile to the mansard roof is neither curved (like most American mansards from the 1860s) nor single-pitched, like most later mansards, but has a distinct 2-slope profile which adds to the picturesque quality and unique character of the building.

The style, massing, proportions, and ornament lead me to suspect that the building was designed by an as-yet-unidentified 19th century Salem or Boston architect, probably in the early-to-mid 1880s. The building has some strong stylistic similarities with the Kiley House at 389 Essex Street (recently restored by Steven Sass) as well as to the Inn at Seven Winter Street (recently restored by the Cote family). There is a good likelihood that all three of these exceptional Second Empire style buildings were designed by the same person or firm. Together, and as individual buildings, they constitute an important, overlooked, and perhaps irreplaceable part of Salem's architectural heritage.



Given the high quality of this building, a number of preservation options should be explored. I have listed a few of the options below, for your review, and also for review by other members of Historic Salem, Inc; the owner; as well as the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Here are some things you may wish to consider:


- 1) Contract to have plans and elevations made to document existing conditions of the building. Architectural drawings at 1/4" = 1'-0" scale should be made of the building, and given to the Peabody-Essex Museum to document the building for the historical record. Accurate plans could also support future study of re-use options, and contracting for future repairs;
- 2) Contract or do documentary photography, in 35 mm. black-and white, fine grained film, for the same reasons cited above. Document all noteworthy details, as well as major building elevations;
- 3) Undertake additional historical research to determine precise build date, original owner, and architect's name. This information could be used to better promote and preserve the building;
- 4) Explore re-use alternatives. Determine why demolition is being considered, and explore architectural and site alternatives.
- 5) Consider initiating formal procedure with MHC (Massachusetts Historical Commission) to secure DOE (Determination of Eligibility) for National Register listing. I believe that 94 Essex Street may well be Individually Eligible for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to its high architectural and historical significance. It appears to be a rare and good example of a late 19th century single family Second Empire style residence. Listing would contribute to better appreciation of the building in the community, and enable the owner to receive Federal Tax Credits should he or she choose to renovate the building for income-producing purposes.

I look forward to discussing 94 Essex Street with you further in the future, and to assisting all interested parties in determining and achieving best new use for the building.

Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions whatsoever. I have a standard office policy of providing initial consultation free of charge.

Sincerely yours,

John V. Goff

Copy:  John Casey, President, Historic Salem, Inc.  
Paula Richter, Peabody-Essex Museum  
Susan McCane, Massachusetts Historical Commission