

398 Essex Street

This house was built as a Quaker Meeting House, evidently in 1847, probably by David Buffum, Salem carpenter.

The land on which it stands is part of a tract owned by Henry Reynolds in the 17th century; on 6 July 1689, for 40 shillings paid to him annually for the rest of his life, he sold to John Pickering of Salem his dwelling house and one acre of land (8:154). Mr Reynolds died soon after, whereupon Mr Pickering owned the premises outright. About 20 years later, on 29 Jan 1716/17, Mr Pickering (who evidently lived here at the time) sold the westward side of his homestead for 45 li to Robert Buffum, a blacksmith (41:44). In 1722 Mr Pickering died possessed of the rest of the estate; he willed this property, after the death of his wife Sarah, to their son Timothy. On 7 May 1739 Deacon Timothy Pickering, his mother Sarah, and his wife Mary, for 650 li granted the homestead to Henry Williams, Salem mariner; it fronted about 79' on Essex Street, ran back by the "Quaker meeting house land" (the graveyard) about 230', and amounted to 90 poles of ground with the dwelling house (which stood close to the street at the west side of the estate) and outbuildings (76:53).

Mr Williams died possessed of this estate, which descended to his son Samuel, merchant, who on 28 Mar 1794 mortgaged it for 332 li to his brother George; it was Samuel's residence and included a dwelling house, barn, store, and other buildings; this mortgage was discharged 9 Nov 1814, after the brothers' deaths (157:151). On that date, 9 Nov 1814, Israel Williams, merchant and administrator of his father Samuel's estate, for \$2600 granted the premises (fronting about 93' on Essex St, and including the dwelling house and other buildings) to William Wait Oliver, Salem merchant (205:18). Mr Oliver mortgaged the premises 25 years later, 23 Sept 1839, for \$2500 to Elizabeth King, Salem widow (315:78). By 1 July 1845 Mrs King owned the property outright, for on that date for \$2500 she assigned the mortgage and sold the estate to the Naumkeag Bank (355:230). Four days later, on 5 July 1845, the Naumkeag Bank, for payment of \$4017, sold to Nathaniel Frothingham Jr and James C Stimpson, both of Salem, a tract of land "with all the buildings thereon except such as may belong to John Ward," fronting about 90' on Essex Street and running back 250-300' towards Federal Street (356:267). Messrs Frothingham & Stimpson soon laid out a private way through this tract; by 1854 this way was known as North Pine Street.

On 15 April 1847 Frothingham & Stimpson for \$820 granted to David Buffum, a Salem carpenter or housewright, a lot of land bounded southerly by Essex Street 29' 6", westerly by a private way extending from Essex St to Boston St (now North Pine St) 100', northerly by land of Charles Richardson 37', easterly by the Friends Burial Ground 95' 5" (380:236). Mr Buffum was a Quaker; it seems that he bought

this land for the purpose of building a meeting house thereon.

In 1832, at the corner of South Pine Street and Warren Street, the Quakers had erected a meeting house, the builder of which was this same David Buffum. This meeting house burned down in the Great Fire of 1914; the Spiritualist Church now stands on its site.

About 1847, evidently, there was a split within the ranks of Salem's Society of Friends, and so Mr Buffum purchased this land. By 1 Aug 1848 a Quaker meeting house had been built on Mr Buffum's lot; Jonathan Nichols (\$1100), David Buffum (\$300) and Nathan Page (\$200) had underwritten the cost of the new building; by a deed of that date David Buffum for \$820 granted the land in trust to the Overseers of the Salem Monthly Meeting of Friends, who were to hold it forever, unless the Society become extinct by attrition, or the property were no longer needed by the Society, or the Society began to follow what Mr Buffum considered a false doctrine, "or in case the property belonging to it (the Society) which is now in the hands and under the control of those who have separated from said meeting, shall be restored to said Salem Monthly Meeting," in any of which cases the trustees were to reconvey the property to Messrs Nichols, Buffum, and Page, proportionate to their original contributions (402:172).

It appears that these terms were not honored, and that David Buffum et al were forced to institute a suit against the trustees in 1868. In that year the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts ordered the trustees to reconvey the property, and on 30 Nov 1868 this was done (1202:480). Soon after, on 25 Feb 1869, for \$1666.67, David Buffum, Nathan Page, and the heirs of Jonathan Nichols granted the lot "with the buildings thereon" to Sarah, the wife of John F Saul of Salem (770:22). The meeting house was then converted (if it had not been previously) to a dwelling house.

On 14 June 1887 Mrs Saul granted the premises to Ellen D, wife of John Looney of Salem (1200:253). Fifteen years later, Mrs Looney, now widowed, granted the property to Josephine E and Mary L Looney of Salem, perhaps her daughters (2264:94). Mary L Looney died 12 Oct 1904, at which time the premises went wholly to Josephine, who on 11 May 1920 released her rights therein to Daniel F Bresnahan of Salem (2446:543). By the time of this last deed the original lot had been reduced in length from 100' on North Pine Street to 78' on same.

Five years later, 1 Oct 1925, Mr Bresnahan released the property to Mary E Bresnahan, his wife (2656:261). Mrs Bresnahan owned it until

19 Oct 1953 when, a widow, she granted the premises to Ruth I O'Leary of Peabody (4019:64). That same day Ruth O'Leary reconveyed the property to Mrs Bresnahan and to Mr & Mrs Daniel F Bresnahan of New York (4019:65). On 30 Aug 1968, Mr & Mrs Daniel F Bresnahan (Mrs Mary E Bresnahan having since deceased) sold the premises to Mr & Mrs Stanley Kantorosinski of Salem (5554:404). Two years later, 22 July 1970, they sold the estate for \$25,900 to Mr & Mrs Roger W Keith of Salem (5699:163), and two years after that, on 27 Oct 1972, the Keiths sold the place for \$32,900 to Erika I Molloy (5918:672).

On 7 April 1976 Erika I Molloy for \$43,500 sold the 398 Essex Street estate to William F and wife Kathryn H White of Salem, the present owners (6230:382).

Robert Booth
21 June 1977

This was the fourth Quaker meeting house: the first was built in 1688 and stood between 275 and 277 Essex Street; it is now standing in the back yard of the Essex Institute. The second was built in 1716 and stood in front of the present Quaker graveyard on Essex Street, next to this house; a part of this 1716 meeting house was sold to David Buffum, who sold it to a Mr Browne living on "the Lynnfield road," and he used it for a barn. The third was built in 1832 by David Buffum at the western corner of South Pine and Warren Streets, and was burned down in 1914. (See small envelope marked "Statements regarding Friends' Meeting-Houses in Salem" in envelope, "Salem, Mass., Churches, Friends (Quakers), Miscellaneous Papers 1808-83").

Of David Buffum this is known: He was born 2 Feb 1799, married Dolly _____ (b. 9 May 1798), and died in Salem 25 Ap 1875, at which time he lived on Lafayette Street. His wife survived him but a short time. They had four surviving children: a son Charles C. Buffum, and daughters Mrs Eliza B Horton, Mrs Caroline B Slater, and Mrs Anna B Gould. Mr Buffum was at first a carpenter and housewright and by the time of his death had become a lumber-dealer and manufacturer of beds and chairs (see Essex County probate docket #33962).

A figure such as (123:456) refers to book 123, leaf or page 456 at the So. Essex County Registry of Deeds, Federal Street, Salem.

Know all men by these presents, That We Nath^l Frothingham and J. C. Stimpson

Nathaniel Frothingham junior and James C. Stimpson both of Salem in the County of Essex and State of Massachusetts, in consideration of Eight Hundred and twenty dollars to us paid by David Buffum of said Salem, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said David Buffum the following described lot of Land situate in said Salem, viz; Bounded Southerly by Essex Street twenty nine feet and six inches Westerly one hundred feet by a private way, extending from Essex Street to Boston Street, Northerly thirty seven feet by land of Charles Richardson, Easterly ninety five feet and five inches by the Friends Burial Ground, on two courses - all the above distances being more or less. To have and to hold the above granted premises, with the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, to the said David Buffum his heirs and assigns . . .

In Witness Whereof

We the said Frothingham and Stimpson, and the undersigned our wives, who hereby severally relinquish their right of dower in the premises have hereunto set our hands and seals this fifteenth day of April in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and forty seven signed, sealed and delivered

in presence of us,
Jno. H. Nichols, witness to Nath^l
Margaret C. Gray, Witness to Sarah R.
James B. Stimpson, witness to J. C. & M. M.
Nathaniel Frothingham Jr. seal
J. C. Stimpson. seal
Sarah R. Frothingham. seal
Mary M. Stimpson. seal

Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Essex April 15. 1847.

Then personally appeared the above named Nathaniel Frothingham Jr. and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his free act and deed: Before me, Jno. H. Nichols. Justice of the peace
Essex, ss. Recd: April 15, 1847. 6 m. p. 3 P.M. Recorded and Exam^d by W. H. French Jy