

House and Land at 123 Federal Street, Salem, Mass.

This house was built by Jonathan F Carlton, Salem housewright, for Robert S Saunders, Salem merchant, in the year 1843.

Throughout most of the 18th century the land of which this lot is a part was owned by the Ropes family of Salem. Jonathan Ropes (1718-99), eminent merchant and Revolutionary patriot, owned the land from 1754 until his death in 1799; in the year 1760 the "New Street" (Federal Street) was laid out through Mr Ropes' property. The property descended to Mr Ropes' grandson, Jonathan Waldo Jr, merchant, who died unmarried in 1817; his brothers & sisters released their rights to Mr Waldo's estate to their step-father, Rev. John Prince Jr of Salem, who owned it until 6 Dec 1841, when he conveyed a large piece of the Waldo estate for \$6010 to Thomas Perkins, Salem merchant (328:152). Mr Perkins then sold it for \$7600 on 15 Nov 1842 to David Pingree, also a Salem merchant (335:246).

On 21 Ap 1843, Mr Pingree, for \$1500, granted to Robert S Saunders, Salem merchant, the lot (fronting 64' 11") that now comprises 123 Federal Street (339:8). That Mr Saunders intended to build on the lot is reflected in the \$1500 mortgage to the property which he gave to Mr Pingree on the same day, for therein he mortgages not just the lot, but "all the buildings which may be put on the same previous to the cancelling of this deed" (336:213). On 13 June 1843 Mr Pingree assigned this \$1500 mortgage to the same Thomas Perkins from whom he had originally bought the land (338:43); Mr Perkins discharged the mortgage on 9 Mar 1844 (336:213).

On 1 July 1843, Robert S Saunders and Jonathan F Carlton, Salem housewright, signed a contract in which Mr Carlton agreed to do all the carpenter work on the "two story house" that Mr Saunders was "about erecting ... on Federal Street on land recently bought of David Pingree;" Mr Carlton also agreed to provide men to do the work at \$1.75 per day, to provide all materials "at fair market prices" that Mr Saunders himself did not provide, and to allow Mr Saunders' brother, Philip Saunders, to do "such work as he or they may deem expedient" (338:43). The existence of such a contract is a real rarity; without it, we would never know that Jonathan F Carlton was the man who actually built the house.

We may surmise that Mr Carlton's men finished the house before winter, for in the real estate assessments for 1843, Robert S Saunders was noted as living at 53 Federal Street, ward four. This notation has been made in pencil, and he was not assessed a property tax for that year, for by the time the house was finished the time period for 1843 taxes had expired. The pencilled

note does indicate, however, that a house was standing there before the end of the year 1843.

On 23 Feb and 8 Mar 1844, Mr Saunders mortgaged his Federal Street message (a message is an old term for a house, its land, and the outbuildings) once to John Russell and thrice to John H Nichols, both of Salem; these mortgages were discharged at various times up to 20 Ap 1847 (342:80, 163,179,211). The terms of these mortgages clearly imply the existence of a house on the land.

On 13 May 1845 William Whiting, Roxbury lawyer, as the assignee of Robert S Saunders, gave to Mr Saunders' wife, Louisa, the lot of land with the two story dwelling house thereon "being the same now occupied by said Robert S Saunders" (355:127). It appears that Mr Saunders knew he was dying, and wanted his wife to have the estate before his death occurred; he therefore conveyed it to his lawyer, Mr Whiting, who conveyed it to Mrs Saunders. There is no Essex County probate record for Robert S Saunders. He died on 22 July 1846; on 18 Sept 1846, Louisa Saunders, Salem widow, for \$1370 sold the Federal Street estate to Andrew Ward, Salem merchant; the property was still mortgaged for \$2500 to John Russell, trustee (377:94).

Capt Andrew Ward (1793-1860), formerly a sea-captain, and his wife Abigail Richardson (Abbott) (d.1877) now moved into the Federal Street house. Capt Ward and his wife lived here for fourteen years, until his death on 2 Aug 1860. On 21 Mar 1853 old County & Marlborough Streets were incorporated into Federal Street, and so the house number changed from 51 to 123 Federal Street. By his will of 3 Ap 1860 Capt Ward left 123 Federal St. in trust to his wife and his son-in-law, Rev. George SG Spence, who had married the Wards' only child, Abby Richardson Ward, in 1847; on 21 Feb 1861 the house & land were appraised at \$5500 (#56290).

Mrs Ward continued to reside at 123 Federal Street until her death 30 Mar 1877; four years earlier, 23 June 1873, she had purchased for \$7 a triangular piece of land fronting 3' on Federal St from her neighbor to the west, Mary Eliza Gould (974:104 & plan). From 1874 forward, the Salem Directories show Mrs Abby R (Ward) Spence to be the head of the house; she seems to have been widowed. Her sons boarded with her at various times (her eldest son, Andrew Ward Spence, had his name changed to Andrew Ward in 1866). In 1887 her three sons sold their $\frac{1}{4}$ rights to the estate to their sister, Abbie W, wife of Charles F Tay (1207:269, 1213:37;39).

In 1900 the trustees of the Winn estate (121 Federal St) adjusted the boundary of the two estates with Abbie W Tay (1623:225). In that same year George F Jelly of Boston re-conveyed the premises to Mrs Tay (1623:412); she had conveyed the estate in trust to Mr Jelly in 1889 (1243:509).

On 18 Sept 1916, Mrs Tay granted the estate to Margaret G, wife of William F Carney of Salem (2342:442). Less than two years later, Mrs Carney sold the property to Josiah H Gifford of Salem, on 3 May 1918 (2391:230). Mr Gifford soon (25 June 1918) sold the premises to May B, wife of Ralph C Browne of Salem (2392:379).

Mrs Browne owned the estate until her death on 10 Ap 1952. By her will of 8 Oct 1921, she left the property to her husband, Ralph C Browne (#237424). Mr Browne remarried; he died 1 Jan 1960 and left the estate to his wife Florence by his will of 9 Nov 1959 (#263839). Mrs Browne continues to own and occupy the estate at 123 Federal Street.

Robert Booth
8 Feb 1977

Notes

Jonathan F Carlton, the builder of this house, married Mary Ann Buxton on 9 May 1832. I do not know if they had any children. Mr Carlton developed much of lower Federal Street, which was once referred to as Carltonville. On 23 Mar 1843--just about the same time that Robert S Saunders bought this house--lot-- Mr Carlton was authorized to build a bridge across the North River (which was then quite wide all the way back to Boston St) from the foot of Flint St over to Mason St. His bridge lasted until the terrible storm of 18 Ap 1851, when it was swept down the river and came to rest near the North Bridge (now the North St overpass).

Robert Shillaber Saunders (1805-46) was born in Danvers, the son of Henry Saunders of Salem and Sarah Shillaber of Danvers. He married Louisa Courtis of Salem on 27 Jan 1831 and was a merchant, described as a shoe dealer in the Salem Directories for 1842 and 1846. I do not know if he had any children. Mr Saunders died of consumption on 22 July 1846, aged 41 years.

Capt Andrew Ward (1793-1860) was a sea captain who became a merchant. He married Abigail Richardson Abbott 11 July 1819, and they had one child, Abby R, who married Rev George SG Spence of West Wrentham on 6 Ap 1847. Mr Ward was the son of Andrew Ward, a shipwright, and his wife Martha (Babbidge).

Whereas Robert S. Saunders is about erecting a two story house on Federal Street on land recently purchased of David Pingree this agreement made and entered into this day by and between said Saunders of the first part, and Jonathan F. Carlton, Housewright of the second part. Witnesseth: that said Carlton agrees to do all the carpenter work on said house, provide men therefor at \$1.75 per day and furnish, at fair market prices, any such materials as said Saunders shall not himself furnish, or have on hand, and as may be deemed necessary: And said Saunders agrees to pay said Carlton for all such labour and materials as said Carlton shall furnish, at the rates above specified, reserving however, the right to employ Philip Saunders, his brother, in doing such work as he or they may deem expedient: Witness our hands and seals this first day of July A. D. 1843.

in presence of
 the first introduced.
 H. Plummer. }

Robt. S. Saunders. - seal.

Jon^r F. Carlton. - seal.

Essex. ss. Rec^d. July 15. 1843. recorded and examined by R. H. French Reg^r.

49.
 Contract.

Robt. S. Saunders
 and
 Jon^r F. Carlton.

Know all Men by these Presents, That I

David Pingree, of Salem, in the County of Essex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Merchant:

in consideration of fifteen hundred dollars paid by Robert S. Saunders, of said Salem Merchant:

the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge, do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said

Saunders a lot of land situated in said Salem and bounded as follows, beginning at the North-east corner by land this day conveyed to Joseph Winn and running Westerly by Federal Street sixty four feet eleven inches to land of Robt Gould to a corner, thence Southerly by land of said Gould and Ferguson as the fence now stands one hundred twenty one feet, one inch to a corner just north of my barn, thence Easterly by land of the grantor forty one feet a straight line, leaving my barn wholly south of the same, thence Easterly a little more Northerly by my land thirty seven feet five inches to a corner, thence Northerly by land this day conveyed to Joseph Winn one hundred twenty four feet six inches to the corner begun at:

To Have and to Hold the above granted premises with the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging to the said Saunders forever. And I his heirs and assigns to his and their use and behoof for myself, and with my heirs, executors, and administrators, do covenant the said Saunders his heirs and assigns, that I am lawfully seized in fee of the aforesaid premises, that they are free of all incumbrances;

that I have good right to sell and convey the same to the said Saunders, as aforesaid; and, that I will, and my heirs, executors and administrators shall warrant and defend the same to the said Saunders his heirs and assigns, forever, against the lawful claims and demands of all persons.

In Witness Whereof, I the said David Pingree and Ann May wife of said David in consideration of one dollar paid to her the receipt whereof she doth thereby acknowledge, relinquishes all her right to dover in the above mentioned premises: have hereunto set our hands and seals this Twenty first day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty three:

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of us
Thomas P. Pingree.
Joshua Shepley.

David Pingree. seal.
Ann M. Pingree. seal.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
Essex, ss. April 21. 1843. - Then personally appeared the within named David Pingree, acknowledged the above Instrument to be his free act and deed,

before me, J. G. Sprague. Justice of the Peace.

Essex, ss. Received Sept. 4. 1843, 3 o'clock, P.M.

Recorded and examined, M. S. S. Register.