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Daniel Vose and his Inn.

Probably no part of Milton developed more activity and enterprise or witnessed scenes of greater historic interest than the bit of land at the head of tide water at the Lower Mills included by the Neponset River, Adams Street, and the town landing. This lot containing seven acres was purchased in January 1741, by Jeremy Smith, paper maker and later inn holder of Milton. (Suff. Deeds, 62:193.)

Twenty years after this purchase Smith sold to his future son-in-law Daniel Vose and to Joseph Fenno, Jr. of Stoughton, a cousin of said Daniel, a piece of the land for a house lot, forty feet square, lying at the corner of the way to the town landing. (Suff. Deeds, 95:10.)

Daniel's father, Captain Thomas Vose, lived on the paternal homestead on Gun Hill Street until a few years prior to his marriage, when he acquired a farm of eighty acres in the western part of the town and erected a house at the junction of the present Canton Avenue and Atherton Street. There in 1741 Daniel Vose was born, and there he lived until he was nineteen years old. At the age of sixteen he was a member of Benjamin Fenno's troop of horse of which his father was 1st Lieutenant, and one can well imagine young Daniel taking part in the maneuvers of the company with all the vigor and zest of an up-to-date polo player, for he

was a decidedly active young man as evidenced by his subsequent career.

The father of Joseph Fenno of Stoughton died in December 1759. Daniel's father died early in the following March and it was soon after the latter's death that Fenno and Vose bought a portion of Jeremiah Smith's property. Leaving their respective mothers to carry on the farms left by their fathers, the two cousins combined their interests and banked a modest capital on the forty foot square lot at the Lower Mills, the site today occupied by the southern portion of Associates' Building. There they built a house and shop, and there they together dwelt and carried on a varied trade for a number of years. The piece of land was perhaps the most desirable in the town for a business site in the year 1760. From its position at the head of shipping and trade, it was natural that the building should have been an inn; and if heredity, propinquity, and natural inclination of one's spouse wield their alleged influence, then these young cousins should have been model, or at least typical innkeepers; for their mothers, Hannah and Patience, were the daughters of Joseph Billings who kept the well-known Billings Tavern near Blue Hill; the famous Atherton Tavern was just across the road from Daniel's early home, and Fenno married the sister and Vose the daughter of an innkeeper. Fenno married Jerusha, sister of Lemuel Robinson of Dorchester, in 1761. Daniel Vose in 1762 married Rachel, daughter of Jeremiah Smith.

Be that as it may, there at the Lower Mills they were traders and innkeepers until Joseph Fenno's death in 1767, when he was drowned navigating a vessel up the Neponset. The inventory of Fenno's estate taken December 27 of that year, indicates some

of the enterprises on which they had ventured in joint partnership.

It mentioned:

"Dwelling house, shop, barn, bake house, sheds and land on which they stand	L 333.6.8
Vessel on the stocks, burthen 75 tons	150.0.0
Lighter and boat with their appurtenances	102.13.4
Moses boat	3.0.0
Whale boat	2.13.4
Whaling tackle, etc., Whaling irons Blubber Hook, Warps and Druggs and Drug warps, spades, Winding tackle. Fall Try Kettle and dipper and Tramwell. 50 Oil barrels and 6 blubber hogsh.	14.3.4"

With miscellaneous merchandise in the shop, mostly grain, spirits, and products of the fisheries, the total appraisal amounted to £ 664.9.6 (Suff. Probate, 66:267.)

Daniel Vose, now twenty-six years of age, bought his late partner's share of the property, continued as trader and innholder, and also branched out into new fields for the exercise of that energy and shrewdness which distinguished his life. "He was at times the proprietor of a paper mill, The conveyance was recorded in Suffolk Registry of Deeds, (112:222.), but the book was one of a number lost in 1776, in transit from Boston to Dedham. The original deed is in possession of Milton Historical Society. chocolate mill, saw-mill, lumber wharf, grist mill, bakery and a distillery," the latter considered an indispensable in those days. "His grocery store became a distributing centre for a wide extent of country covering not only Norfolk, but also large parts of Bristol and Plymouth counties, extending to Cape Cod and the interior towns. He owned large vessels which transported his mer-

chandise bringing it from remote points." He traded also in real estate, owned a store and wharf in Boston, and in 1783 purchased Gallop's Island. Such a miscellaneous business had its hazards, and in 1798, at the age of fifty-seven, to curtail his liabilities, he advertised for sale house lots in Milton and Dorchester, sundry mill privileges on the Neponset, and for rent, his distil house, bake house, and a building suitable for storage.

Throughout his varied business career, however, he gave unsparingly of his time and filled many town offices-- constable, tithing-man, fire warden, clerk of the market, surveyor of highways, overseer of poor, school warden, and most frequently of all, he was called upon to audit the town finances. He was twice representative to the General Court, receiving a vote of thanks from the town for his services. He was chairman of the Committee of Correspondence in 1775, and delegate to the Provincial Congress the same year.

He joined the militia early, and in 1757 was a member of Major Benjamin Fenne's troop of horse. In 1771 he was Commissioned 1st Lieutenant of the 3rd Regiment of Milton, in Captain Robinson's train of artillery. In 1775 he was the captain of a company which marched to Roxbury and served fourteen days immediately after the Battle of Concord. He was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant of the 9th Company in the 6th Worcester Regiment April 5, 1776.

But the guise of the soldier did not alter the instinct of the innkeeper. When in charge of a company under Colonel Robinson and awaiting orders, he arranged to take a regiment of men out to Milton, and keep them from Saturday night until Monday

morning. He gave orders that the ovens of his bake house should be filled with bread, he sent out to the farmers of Milton to kill and bring in sheep, and with chocolate made in large kettles in the basement of his store, and tin dippers also furnished from his stock in hand, the soldiers were well cared for.

He was in no active military service but the fourteen days above mentioned, but throughout the Revolutionary period he was in constant demand to serve the town and country in various capacities. To enumerate a few of the many phases of civic life in that time of unrest: Daniel Vose was one of a committee to get subscriptions for the sufferers from the Boston Port Bill; to devise means for supporting families of soldiers; to instruct the selectmen relative to assessment of taxes; to consider abatement of taxes of certain individuals; to lease the ministerial land; to adjust fees of collectors; to settle town debts in controversy; to recruit men for the army; to regulate the militia; to collect the letters of the late Governor Hutchinson, to gather supplies; to wait on the minister in regard to his salary; to investigate the title to the ministerial acres. From the record of such diverse activity, one may infer that he was a man of ability in many lines, enjoying the universal confidence of his fellows. Most prominent of all his qualities, stands out his sound business sense and executive ability.

In view of all this creditable public service; it can do his memory no harm to recall the little difference that arose on the question of the boundary between Daniel Vose and the town, and the poetic justice meted out in an age regarded as deficient in humor. A committee appointed in 1787 to establish

the bounds of the town landing gave a pathetic account of their endeavors, hampered as they said by opposing sentiment of abutters. "They have had" they declared, "repeated promises from Mr. Vose that he would repair the damages he has done the Landing in carrying of the gravel and leaving the rocks naked but has not as yet done anything of consequence towards it." After much pains the committee succeeded in establishing the bounds and having a plan of the landing drawn. The line was found to take in the pump, a corner post, and two or three feet of the buildings of the village innkeeper. This condition, a disadvantage to all concerned, was satisfactorily adjusted by allowing Daniel Vose to purchase the few feet of the town landing in question. When the annual March meeting again came around, a committee was chosen, as usual, "to take care of the town's landing places the present year and to see that there be no encroachments made thereon." This time one of the committee was Daniel Vose!

The original Fenno and Vose house which fully occupied the forty foot square lot was built between the years 1760 and 1763. In 1764 Rachel Vose, wife of Daniel, acquired from her father, Jeremiah Smith, a piece of English mowing land, fifty feet by forty-five feet which abutted the house of Fenno and Vose on the south. In 1773 Daniel Vose built a house as appears from memoranda of one William Badcock, in whose account book are entered amounts paid for digging and stoning the cellar, leveling sills, raising the house and working on the step stone. From all the evidence which can be gathered it appears that it was then that he built what he called his "mansion house", which stood on the land belonging to his wife Rachel, and which was apparently attached to the earlier structure— the Fenno and Vose house of 1763. This

would have been in accordance with the custom of the time. When a dwelling had been outgrown, the owner, as need occasioned or circumstances allowed, built on an addition, relegating the older portion to more menial uses.

In this enlarged building in all probability, the Suffolk County Convention met and passed the famous Suffolk Resolves. No picture of this house is known to exist except a very diminutive representation which appears in a small engraving of Milton Lower Mills in Barber's Historical Collections, published in 1848. Nevertheless the building is remembered by many citizens of today and from the combined recollections of various minds a tolerably clear idea may be formed.

The Daniel Vose house was a large colonial house of the same general style as the building called the "Suffolk Resolves House", standing near the old railroad station. A porch with tall columns led to the front door with its brass knocker. From this door a hall extended the entire depth of the house, on the rear of which ran a piazza supported on posts high above the ground. At the right of the porch was a door which led to a stairway to an upper room used in 1860 by the late Nathaniel F. Safford as a law office. The entire ground floor of that end of the building was occupied by the general store, entered by a door on the front and another on the side. Along this south side or end of the building ran an open shed, with a long bench where the villagers smoked their pipes and whiled away their leisure. At the corner of this hospitable lounging place stood the welcome pump, which refreshed Joseph Warren and the patriots on September 9, 1774, and continued its mission, with impartiality to all classes and ages until the regrading of the land a year or two ago marked the passing of the old well at the head of

of the town landing.

This house of Daniel Vose's descended to his son, and from him to his nephew, Edmund T. Baker. While in the possession of the latter the structure met the fate of many a good building of former times, being destroyed by fire about midnight on January 15, 1861. The dwelling house at the time was unoccupied; the store was occupied by Lewis Bowman, harness and saddle maker, while over the store Mr. Safford had his law office. The fire which was thought to be incendiary, was prevented from spreading to the other buildings by the snow on the roofs.

The following is the account of the fire which appeared in the Boston Journal the next day; January 16. "Last night at 11 o'clock fire was discovered issuing from the large mansion house owned by Edmund T. Baker, Esq., at Milton Lower Mills on the corner of Main Street and the street leading to R. M. Todd's coal and lumber wharf. The building was quite old, having been erected in the time of the Revolution. The fire had got such headway before the engines arrived, that it was entirely consumed. Insured at the Norfolk Mutual in Dedham.

There was no family in the house. A part of the building was occupied by H. F. Safford, Esq., as a law office, who lost all his books and papers; he had a small insurance. Lewis Bowman, a harness and saddle maker, lost his stock and tools; no insurance."

The cellar of the Vose house thus destroyed in 1861 remained unimproved for twenty years. Burdocks and chicory took possession, while nearer and nearer the lilac clumps leaned over the quiet doorstep. Finally in 1881 the property which since 1741 had been in the possession of the same family, was sold to the Milton Building Associates, and the present Associates' Building was erected.

It may be well to set forth what is known in regard to the edifice which, after the destruction of the old Vose house, in some unaccountable way, came to be regarded as the meeting-place of the Suffolk Convention.

Daniel Vose was married in 1762, and his house was enlivened ere-long by the presence of several daughters, but not until 1779 did a son and heir appear. The event was evidently a source of gratification to all the family. The boy was promptly provided with two names-- a fashion then just coming into vogue-- one for his father, one for his grandfather-- Daniel Thomas Vose. At the age of two, this baby acquired from his grandfather, Jeremiah Smith, a piece of land on the Plymouth Road just north of the estate of his parents (Suff. Deeds, 137:49.) When this vacant lot was first built upon, is not known more definitely than that it was between 1781 and 1807. (Suff. Deeds, 137:49--Norf. Probate No. 19061.)

Meanwhile two of Daniel's daughters had married. Patience, the elder married Dr. Amos Holbrook and died in 1789, leaving but one child, Clarissa. The younger, Elizabeth, married first, Captain John Lillie, and secondly, Edmund Baker of Dorchester. In 1807 Daniel bethought himself of the advisability of arranging his worldly affairs. In consideration of a bond made by him to his daughter Patience Holbrook, he confirmed by his will a gift of land in Milton and his store and land on Codman's Wharf in Boston, to his son Daniel Thomas Vose, on condition that he, Daniel Thomas, would give Clarrisa Holbrook a deed of his house and land in Milton, situated between Daniel Vose's mansion house and his daughter's store. (Norf. Probate No. 19061.) This store, owned by his daughter Elizabeth Baker, is the building

still standing, occupied so many years by Mr. Samuel Gannett for a grain store.

In conformity with the obligation imposed upon Daniel Thomas, the land and building designated were conveyed in 1810 to Clarissa Holbrook (Norf. Deeds, 36:51,) who married Dr. Henry Gardner and she retained the property until Nathaniel F. Safford acquired an interest in it and finally entered into possession in 1860.

There is no evidence that Daniel Vose ever owned the building. It is antestablished fact that the Suffolk Resolves were passed at the house of Daniel Vose; yet this house, built subsequent to 1781, and belonging to Daniel Thomas Vose, has for forty years been accepted as the meeting-place of the Suffolk County Convention. When the present building was first hailed as an historic spot, there were men living who must have known the facts. Indeed, at the first, protests were raised and denials made, but for reasons inscrutable, the voices subsided, with the exception of an occasional disquieting murmur.

To sum up the evidence in regard to the buildings: The Daniel Vose mansion house and the adjoining house built by Fenno and Vose (which latter building was the inn) were standing in 1808. (Norf. Deeds, 63:201) also the so-called Suffolk Resolves House, which belonged to Daniel Thomas Vose. In a plan of 1787 the two adjoining Daniel Vose houses are represented under one roof, as comprising one building. The same arrangement is followed in a plan of 1835, and in Dr. Gardner's plan of later date; and when the Vose building was burned in 1861, the ground occupied extended up to the town landing, as it did originally. All of which would seem to indicate that the Suffolk

Resolves House remained on its original site and was burned in 1861.

If Daniel Vose could return today, how strange would look that village street corner! His old inn, the scene of the convention which consummated the plan for trying out the great issue of independence, is no more. Where produce was bartered in kind in social fashion in his time, men now, in proper dignity bend over pages of figures or exchange symbols of trade through an iron grating. A railroad crosses his estate. Steam and electricity are evident on every side. Would he not, bewildered by the new, look for the old, and barely recognize even the old landing place though still intact and sloping as of old from the country road to the river!