

December 20, 1923

I, Alexander Hobbs, was born April 10, 1841 in St. Georges, N. B., and came to Milton in 1859. Shortly after arriving in Milton I was apprenticed to Thomas Strangman, at that time a carriage maker. I remained his apprentice one year, more or less, until his place was burned down. Mr. Strangman, after the fire, opened another store, and I worked for him a short time, and then in 1862 enlisted in the 42nd Massachusetts Regiment, and served until I was taken prisoner in Galveston, Texas, on, or about, January 1, 1863. I was released, and finally discharged August 20, 1863, my term of enlistment having been for nine months.

After leaving the army, I went west and lived in Wisconsin for nearly four years, and then returned to Milton, where I bought the jewelry business from Mr. Worcester, whose store was then on Adams Street, in the small building which stood about where the Webb Mill now stands. I continued in the jewelry business in Milton for 51 years, having my place of business during this whole period on Adams Street.

During the life of Mr. Nathaniel F. Safford, I went to him several times, to see if he would lease me, for my store purposes, the building now known as the Suffolk Resolves Building, - the building on which is erected the Suffolk Resolves Tablet. In talking the matter over with him, I stated that I desired to make another doorway into the large room on the ground floor, and also to put in a large new plate glass window, for the purpose of making an attractive window display of my jewelry stock. I quickly found that I could make no headway with him, as he said it would be sacrilege to let that building be used for business purposes, and stated there and then that that was the

building where the Suffolk Resolves had been signed, and that he could not afford to allow it to be used for commercial purposes, and would not think under any circumstances of allowing a doorway to be cut through and a modern store window to be placed in that historic building. I tried him more than once on that subject, going, for that purpose, to see him at his home, which is still standing, on Morton Road, but as I have already said, I could get no lease from him for my purposes.

At the time that I went to see him, he had reserved the large front room on the north side of the building, as an office for himself, although his principal office was in Boston. He always kept a desk, safe and other office furniture there, but I do not remember that he ever let this particular room, (which he said was the room where the Suffolk Resolves were signed,) to anybody else, or for any other purpose. The rest of the house he let for the purpose of residence.

A few years after the death of Nathaniel F. Safford, I spoke a number of times to his heir about the place. He apparently was not at first disposed to let the premises to me, saying again and again that his father always looked upon the place as sacred to the memory of the historic event, which had taken place in it, when the Suffolk Resolves were passed and signed. Finally, however, some years after the death of his father, he did give me a lease, I think of the whole building, but at any rate, of the large front room above described, which his father had occupied as an office.

With his permission, I cut the door leading from Adams Street into that room, and also placed the enlarged front window, which is there now.

To go back - I well remember the meeting at that building in celebration of the centennial anniversary of the signing of the Suffolk Resolves. Mr. Safford (Sr.) invited his friends generally to come there upon that occasion. The Tablet at present upon the house had already been placed there. I do not remember how long it had been there, but I have the impression that he had had it placed there in anticipation of the coming event of the Centennial Celebration. The records show that this was on September 9, 1874. The house was decorated somewhat, several speeches were made, and Mr. Safford Sr. explained to those present, that this was the house in which the Suffolk Resolves were passed.

From the time I first came to Milton, right along, whenever the matter was spoken of, it was understood by everybody, so far as I know, that that house had been originally placed further up Adams Street, on, or next to the corner of Adams St. and Wharf St. but that the necessities of Daniel Vose's growing business, had caused him to remove, what is now called the Suffolk Resolves Building, and in its place to build a commercial building, more suited to the size and needs of his business.

So far as I can recall, until I saw the comparatively recent articles, which I understand were written by Miss Vose and Miss Martin, in the Milton Record, I never heard any question or doubt about the fact that the present building on Adams St., to which the Suffolk Resolves Tablet is now affixed, was the original building in which the Suffolk Resolves were passed and signed.

I remember the building which stood on the corner of Adams Street and Wharf Street before the fire, and I remember the fire itself. At that time I was working with

Mr. Strangman, as already stated. The building, which was burned down, was all one building, and it was not, in any way, of the general type of a residence, such as is the building still standing, which we now call the Suffolk Resolves Building. The Suffolk Resolves Building, as anybody can see, is of the fine old type of residential buildings, which were erected in the Colonial days and down early in the century, while the type of building that was burned down, was of a more modern commercial type, and somewhat ornate, though not expensively so; the corner part had been rounded, and the door was in the corner, or the rounding.

As I recall it, the greatest length of the building at the time of the fire, was not on Adams Street, but extended from the corner down on Wharf Street. I recall also that the whole of the building was not destroyed by the fire, but that a part remained standing for some time (possibly for some years) after the fire, although I do not think the part left was ever, used or repaired. The strong point in my belief that the present building is the original Suffolk Resolves Building is the fact that Mr. Safford, who was born in 1815, and who seems to have had the historic instinct from birth, who himself owned, or was an owner in the building from 1845, and an occupant of it for many years, up to the time of his death, who was a graduate of Dartmouth College, and who was especially interested in the various historical and genealogical societies, always spoke of, and treated this building as the undoubted Suffolk Resolves Building. I can only wonder that anyone can be found to question this fact.

P.S. I should add that it was understood that an ell was added to the building on the southerly or easterly side after it was moved to its present location.

It is also to be remembered that the grade of Adams Street has been raised at this point about 14 ft. This is noticeable where the elm trees stand. Of course the elm trees were not moved, but their trunks were covered to the amount of the filling in. It was thought that this would probably kill the trees, but they are Dutch elms, and of course, there they are today. Of course the building was raised at the time of the change of grade, and so were the other buildings in the neighborhood.