

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FENWAY BOSTON

17 Decem, 24

My dear Wolcott:

In this package you will find two copies of the report and all of the exhibits. In the roll are the plans you sent me and one I add - the Walling inset of 1858. The only thing I could not save was your "folder". Its remains are buried in the package.

I do not apologize for the length of the report.

Sincerely yours
Worthington C. Ford

ember 15, 1924.

DEC 17 Rec'd

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Boston, December 15, 1924.

DEC 17 Rec'd

To

Roger Wolcott, Chairman

Eva B. T. Churchill

Roger L. Scaife

Committee on the Suffolk Resolves House:

According to your request I have considered the evidence offered on the building alleged to be the house in which the Suffolk Resolves of September 9, 1774, were adopted and have made some independent search for additional evidence. My conclusion is that the house now in existence and since 1874 marked by a tablet is not in any part the house in which the county convention of September, 1774, assembled and is not therefore the house of the Suffolk Resolves.

The original building of 1774 and the land on which it stood were owned by Daniel Vose at the time. The history of title is clearly stated by Mr. Rackemann:

In 1760¹ Jeremiah Smith sold to Joseph Fenno, Jr., and Daniel Vose a lot forty feet square, situated at the corner of the road to Boston (now Adams Street) and the way to the town landing. Teele (History, 150) describes it as "near the way

¹ The Vose-Martin Paper of 1912, says, "twenty years after" the purchase of the land by Jeremiah Smith, in January, 1741, which would be 1761.

leading to the public landing-place, where the pump now (c. 1884) stands." The pump has long since passed and its exact location is not known. On this lot, and covering its entire content, they put up a building, part store and part dwelling, forty feet square.¹

In 1762 they purchased a lot abutting on the east of their holding and extending along the way to the town landing some hundred feet or more, and buildings needed in their business were erected, of unknown dimensions, and at unknown times.

In 1762 Daniel Vose married Rachel, the daughter of Jeremiah Smith, and two years later Rachel received from her father a lot rectangular in shape, having a frontage of fifty feet on Adams Street. As the southerly side of this lot abutted the northerly side of the Fenno-Vose lot, the holdings of the two families extended so much the further from the way to the landing place northerly towards the bridge over the river.

In 1767 Fenno was drowned and Vose bought his interest in the land and business. The Fenno inventory of December 27, 1767, mentions "Dwelling house, shop, barn, bake house, sheds and land on which they stand, £333.6.8." Prospering, Vose put up on his wife's land what Mr. Rackemann describes as "a large addition to the existing building," meaning the original house and store on the land purchased in 1760. Teele says the new building was a "store seventy-five feet long and forty-five feet wide, with conveniences for residence above, occupying nearly the same ground as Associates Hall."² Whence he derived his specific

¹ Vose-Martin Paper, 6.

² History, 150.

dimensions is unknown. If the original building was forty by forty and the addition seventy-five by forty-five the length of the entire building would be one hundred fifteen feet and of varying depth, requiring a greater frontage on Adams Street than the land afforded. The addition would thus more probably be thirty-five by forty-five feet and the total length of the completed structure would be seventy-five feet, occupying all but fifteen feet of the two lots owned by Vose. About this time the place became an inn.

Items from an account against Daniel Vose by William Babcock in 1772-1773, are submitted by Mr. Rackemann and Mr. Scaife, but they do not appear to me to throw much light on the question. A large cellar was dug and lined with stone, work was done at the barber shop and barn, (\$1.5.0), an "old shop" was moved (\$22.10.0) and a "house" was razed (\$1.5). In March, 1775, a day was charged for "moving store" (\$1.2.6). The terms are too vague to permit an identification of "shop" and "store." The words "old shop" naturally suggest one of the original structures, but this cannot be pressed. For the original store and house of 1760 covered the entire land owned. On the second purchase were buildings and to them probably the terms were applied. The account probably applies to the building undertaking of 1773.

At this stage it is proper to consider the copy of a plan of the landing place made by John White in 1782 [Mr. Rackemann says 1781]. It purports to be drawn to a scale of a Gunter's chain (sixty-six feet) to an inch. Being a rather crude copy the dimensions may not be accurate. The Vose property is shown in quite good detail. A large building of about seventy-five

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At this stage it is proper to consider the copy of a plan of the Landing place made by John White in 1782 [Mr. Rackemann says 1781]. It purports to be drawn to a scale of a Gunter's chain (sixty-six feet) to an inch. Being a rather crude copy the dimensions may not be accurate. The Vose property is shown in quite good detail. A large building of about seventy-five

or eighty feet (if to scale) is shown at the corner of the Boston road and the way to the landing. Out buildings lie to the east, being on the land purchased by Fenno and Vose in 1762, and a shed E appears to mark the limit of their land in that direction, though the landing does not begin for some sixty feet to the east. A building B is adjacent to the main building and in the key is not described by use, but merely as owned by Vose. It is about one-fourth the size of the barn (C) which was some sixty feet from the house and on the way to the landing. Two small buildings--a barber's shop and a pig sty--both belonging to Vose are about fifty feet to the south of the house. The occupancy of this land by Vose is not accounted for in the statements submitted.

In Baker's plan of the Landing Place, made in 1835, the same detail is indicated in the broad features and the land now stands in the name of Daniel T. Vose: a good sized house at the northeast corner of the Boston road and the way to the landing, with a smaller building on the south; a barn to the east, as in the 1781 plan, and further to the east a "house" in place of an "out-house." Both plans agree in the curves of the line of the way to the landing place and in the location of the buildings. Between 1781 and 1835 no changes had been made except to put a "house" in place of an "out-house [perhaps a verbal change only] and shed" near the eastern bound of Vose's land purchase of 1762.

The Baker plan shows that the property of Dr. Henry Gardner was east of the holding of Daniel T. Vose, son of Daniel, and contained three buildings, only one of which is named--a "store." But the plan of "about 1855" purports to give Dr. Gardner's estate

and it includes all of Daniel T. Vose's land with much to the north. We are interested only in the D. T. Vose lot and there the detail of Baker, 1835, is reproduced: a house at the corner of the way, with its adjacent structure on the south; and two structures to the east--presumably the barn and house of the 1835 plan. Just outside of the eastern bound of D. T. Vose is a large building, answering to the first of the three buildings on Dr. Gardner's land shown in the Baker plan. Between 1835 and about 1855 no changes appear to have been made in the buildings on the D. T. Vose lot.

Mr. Edmonds, State Archivist, after I had seen manuscript maps of Milton of 1795 (Town Plans, 9.28) by an unknown surveyor, ^{and} of 1831 by Baker (Ib., 13.5), suggested Henry F. Walling's printed map of Norfolk County, issued in 1858, a copy of which was in the State Library. I found one inset on the "Lower Mills, Dorchester and Milton," and on it was marked to the south of the railway: Depot and two buildings belonging to the railroad company, a house of E. J. Baker and a Harness shop and N. F. Safford Law Office. These detached buildings stand between the railroad and a way leading down to the river. Baker's house and the Harness shop are wholly detached and apparently some distance apart.

The Vose House or Inn.

The smaller building at the southeast corner of the main house shown on the plans of 1782 and 1835 may have been the original store of Vose.¹ In 1860, according to Mr. Strangman (Doc. C) it was occupied by one Bowman,² as a harness shop. Over Bowman's shop, the same person states, "was what might be called a large room or small hall." The entrance to Bowman's shop was on the way leading to the landing. Preston's diary also states of the fire of January 15, 1861: "Large building at head of Todd's Lane owned by E. J. Baker. Dwelling house, occupied one room by Safford for an office. Nothing saved but books and papers of Lewis Bowman. Mr. Safford lost books and papers." (Doc. D.)

The Martin-Vose Paper supplies a more detailed account of the fire, taken from the Boston Journal, January 17, 1861:

"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

¹ In 1787 it was proved that Vose had put his building-- this smaller one--so as to occupy two, or three feet of the public way to the Landing, for which he made compensation.

² Lewis Bowman, says the Diary of John Preston (Doc. D).

was occupied by N. 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." 1

In his statement Preston refers to a "dwelling house," "house was large" with Safford over Bowman; and Straggman to a building of size ("large room or small hall" on second floor), also occupied by Safford over Bowman, but with an entrance on the way to the landing.

The Martin-Vose paper, in reconstructing the house from "the combined recollections of various minds" gives the following detail:

"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." 2

From 1853 to 1859 the old house was lived in by Mrs. Rebecca Harrington who calls it "the E. J. Baker house, formerly Daniel Vose house." Sixty-five years after leaving the house, she supplied data on which Miss Martin has framed a plan. Dimensions are not given, but it answers in no respect to the carefully prepared plan by Mr. Tucker of the existing house.

1 Martin-Vose Paper, 8.

2 Ib., 7.

Note that no mention is made by any of these witnesses of any building but the house. The structure of the earlier plans placed on the way to the Landing had disappeared, or was unnoted, or was the open shed mentioned in the Vose-Martin paper.

Alexander Hobbs, whose statement was made in December, 1923, when he was eighty-two years of age, testified that Safford had his office in the "large front room on the north side of the building," the rest of the house being rented for residence purposes. That was after 1867 and therefore after the alleged destruction of the original building in 1861. If the Bowman-Safford building was that small structure noted on the plans of 1781, 1835 and c. 1855, the fire might have been confined to that, and the main house have suffered only in part, but the Journal intimates a total loss, and a fire once started in an old house is apt to be thorough.

Mr. Hobbs had been an apprentice to Thomas Strangman, carriage maker, in 1859-60, and left after a year or more when Strangman's place was burned down. Strange to say Strangman does not mention his own loss by either fire. The point in this statement by Hobbs is, that he had known the building in 1859--before the fire--and about ten years later applies to rent a part of the existing building, as if it were the same building:

"From the time I first came to Milton [i.e. 1859], 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" etc. (Hobbs, 3)

His further recollections raise doubts. 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, . . . 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 and the door was in the corner, or the rounding. been rounded. 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" (Hobbs, 4)

This account again might suggest the building on the way to the Landing as the chief victim of the fire, but his account is too vague to warrant much pressing. He is a good witness on a minor matter. He was a tenant in the present building, leasing, as he recalls the entire building, but occupying the large front room occupied by Safford as an office, and he "cut the door leading from Adams Street into that room, and also placed the enlarged front window, which is there now." ¹ This was a few years after the death of Nathaniel F. Safford, which happened in 1891.

¹ Mr. Matthews, without knowing the history, recognized this feature: "The portico or porch now standing in front of the hallway which leads into the left-hand house looks to me as if it were quite late."

While Mr. Hobbs states that "the whole of the building was not destroyed by the fire" he does not remember that "the part left was ever used or repaired." This suggests that the fire did not leave enough to be used for any purpose, even as a basis for rebuilding. The Martin-Vose Paper states that the cellar of the burned house remained unimproved until 1881, when the land was sold to the Milton Building Associates.

Mr. John Shields, a resident of Lower Mills prior to 1861, states in November, 1924, that he remembered the fire of 1861 and also recalls "clearly that the building which is now spoken of as the Suffolk Resolves Building . . . was, prior to the fire . . . , similarly designated as the Suffolk Resolves Building."

In dealing with testimony of this character, prepared about sixty years after the fire, a certain latitude of judgment must be exercised. The character of the witnesses is not in question, but their ability to observe and to carry for so long a time an accurate picture of details. The memory may be excellent on general features, especially when tradition can be cited in its support; yet on minor matters, quite as essential, if not more so, in determining such a question as that before me, memory may mislead. It is unsafe to accept tradition or the recollections of sixty years past unsupported by other evidence.

As the building was insured in the old Norfolk Mutual Insurance Company, a company still in existence, I addressed a question to its officers, intentionally making it so general as to give no possible indication of what use might be made of the reply--if any--or to suggest its application to the problem before me. The correspondence follows:

Massachusetts Historical Society,

Boston, November 25, 1924.

Norfolk Mutual Insurance Company,

Dedham, Massachusetts.

Gentlemen:

I am writing in the hope that you may have the records of the old Norfolk Mutual Insurance, which held a policy on a house in Milton owned by Edmund J. Baker which was burnt on the night of January 15, 1861, and which was insured in the office of the Norfolk Mutual. If there is a transcript of the policy in your records, I would like to have the description of the house or whatever the building was. It stood on Adams Street, corner of Todd Lane, Todd Lane being the way to the landing. I shall be happy to pay any expense and your courtesy will greatly oblige,

Very truly yours,

Worthington C. Ford.

The Norfolk Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Dedham, Mass.,

November 26, 1924.

Worthington C. Ford, Editor,

Massachusetts Historical Society,

Boston, Mass.

Dear Sir:

Replying to your favor of the 25th inst. regarding our records of policy on property of one Edmund J. Baker, would say that we find the following, which may relate to the property in question, though the descriptions at that time were so indefinite as to make identification often almost impossible.

Policy No. 24037 dated October 16, 1858 covered Edmund J. Baker of Dorchester in the sum of \$4100.00 as follows: namely,

- \$3000. On his Vose house and store;
- 450. On house near ^{the} wharf;
- 450. On store and office; and
- 200. On his barn near the Vose house.

This was written for a term of seven years from October 1, 1858, to October 1, 1865.

We also find a record that the Wharf house and barn near the Vose house having been burned, a loss of \$650. on those items was paid in July 1860; and a further record of a loss of \$3016.97 paid on the remaining property, which was approved by the Directors in March 1861. Therefore, it would seem as though a very large portion of the policy had been used up by the payment of these two losses, the actual date of which is left indefinite.

If this information does not suit your purpose, kindly advise and we will be glad to make further investigation if necessary.

Yours truly,

James Y. Noyes, President.
G.M.B.

It seems to me that this reply settles the question. It was the "Vose house" that stood at the corner, a combination of house and store; it was the "Vose house" that burned in 1861, and the full amount of the policy was paid, indicating a total loss. The Boston Journal of January 17, 1861, expressly stated that the building was "entirely consumed." We have thus two contemporary evidences to this fact of the best quality and I

cannot but conclude that the house and store, built by Daniel Vose, and in which the Suffolk Resolves were adopted, was wholly consumed by fire in January, 1861.

The Holbrook House.

One son was born to Daniel and Rachel Vose, Daniel Thomas Vose, born May 17, 1779. In 1781 the grandfather, Jeremiah Smith, conveyed by deed to Daniel Thomas Vose a lot having about ninety-two feet on Adams Street and about one hundred in depth, lying to the north of the Daniel Vose property. There were no buildings on the lot when thus transferred, but it has been conjectured that a "shop" or some structure was moved from the Daniel Vose lot on to it and remodeled into a house. No definite record is offered to suggest or confirm the conjecture. Dr. Amos Holbrook had married Patience Vose in 1783, and resided in this house on D. T. Vose's lot beginning with 1785. Whether he actually built the house or not cannot be determined.

In 1785 "an agreement was entered into between Patience Vose Holbrook and her father Daniel Vose, ^{as guardian for his son, Daniel Thomas Vose,} to the effect that he, Daniel Vose, guardian his son, would see to it that lot No. 11 and the house standing thereon (meaning the lot and house we call the Holbrook house) should eventually be conveyed by Daniel T. Vose to his sister Patience, or her heirs. This agreement was eventually carried out." (Rackemann, 13.) Daniel Vose in his will (December 1, 1807) made a condition that Daniel T. Vose should give to Clarissa Holbrook "a deed of his house and land now occupied by Henry Maurice Lisle, attorney at law, situated between my Mansion House and my Daughter's Store." ¹ Accordingly the land and

¹ Scaife, 18. This store "is the building still (1912) standing, occupied so many years by Mr. Samuel Gannett for a grain store." Martin-Vose Paper, 9.

building were in 1810 conveyed to Clarissa Holbrook, who married Dr. Henry Gardner in that year. Patience Holbrook had died in 1789, and Dr. Holbrook married in the same year, as his third wife, Jerusha Robinson. A daughter by Jerusha Robinson, Catherine, born in 1807, married Thaddeus W. Harris, M. D.

Teele says that Dr. Holbrook "occupied the old house before its removal, and also, for a time, the house in its present location."¹ His statement is all too general and misleading. The Martin-Vose statement repeats the conjecture that the Vose "shop may have been moved onto the D. T. Vose lot [given by Jeremiah Smith in 1781], and incorporated by Dr. Holbrook into his house, built that year" [1785]. The writers confess it is largely a matter of conjecture, so largely as not to be acceptable. Neither the land nor the house which came to Clarissa (Holbrook) Gardner were ever owned or held by Daniel Vose. The land came from the father-in-law of Daniel, direct to Daniel T. Vose, and from him passed to Clarissa.

Dr. Holbrook later built a house on Milton Hill, "now [1864] owned by Mrs. Cunningham, where he resided until his death" [in 1842].² Certainly after the new building was completed he did not occupy the house of 1785 and in 1807 it was occupied by Henry Maurice Lisle. There is a gap in the evidence. For Miss Elizabeth Harris, daughter of Thaddeus William Harris, states that it (meaning the house of 1785) was lived in by Daniel Vose, and on his death (1807) passed by inheritance to his grand-daughter Clarissa Holbrook, who married in 1810 Dr. Henry Gardner of Dorchester. It was first

¹ History, 150.

² Teele, History, 527. The year of building is not given, but I have a pencil note that it was about 1800.

occupied and until his death in 1825 by Clarissa's uncle, Thomas Trott Robinson (who had married Polly Holbrook in 1795 and is the "Mr. Robinson" whose death is given in the Milton Records in 1825, aged 55 years) and after his death by Catherine Holbrook, now married to Thaddeus William Harris. They lived in it until 1832 when Dr. Harris removed to Cambridge. Miss Elizabeth Harris thus ^{positively} asserts on tradition that Daniel Vose had lived in it. Her mother, who lived to 1887 had "frequently told me that old Daniel Vose lived in the house" and "that the house was owned and occupied by 'old Daniel' is beyond dispute." At the same time Miss Harris adds: "I have never heard my mother say that the Resolves were passed there."

In my opinion the Holbrook house was never known as the "Vose house" in a sense associating it with the original Daniel Vose.

Opinions of Experts.

The original Fenno-Vose building was forty by forty feet and the addition is stated to have had about the same depth. The older portion of the existing house is, according to Mr. Tucker's careful measurements, only thirty-two feet in the deeper part and twenty-one feet in the other. The evidence of Hon. Nathan Matthews, of Messrs. Huebener and Mr. Tucker all points to a composite building, dating from the latter part of the eighteenth century, but the two parts are consistent in construction and indicate no dimensions which would be borrowed from a building forty by forty. Mr. Tucker believes that the older or southern part was built "somewhere in the first half of the eighteenth century," but that would rule out any building of Daniel Vose, and would even forbid us to consider the conjecture that so much as a shop or store had been moved from the original Vose holdings.

Mr. Tucker assumes from the construction details that at some time the older portion of the house was "swung around at right angles, or moved here from elsewhere, thus bringing the gable end to face the street. This recalls the statement by Mr. Hobbs that the "greatest length of the building" at the time of the fire was on the way to the wharf, but does not confirm it for Mr. Hobbs was speaking of the original Vose House, which did not so lie on the lane. Mr. Tucker also finds "changes sufficiently marked to demonstrate that the building was something else before it became a dwelling house."

I cannot see that any definite fact is established by the experts which would associate the existing building with the original Vose house.

From our later ideas of historical importance it seems strange that so little attention had been given to preserving in some permanent manner a record of the house and the part it had played in September, 1774. True the War for Independence compelled attention to other questions, more pressing and of greater moment. The Suffolk Resolves came to be forgotten along with the many town and county meetings and resolves which had formed so essential a part of the popular movement towards revolution. When they were later studied for history, it was the resolutions themselves, not the houses, inns or halls in which they were adopted; it was the writers, not the surroundings, which were investigated and recorded. The Suffolk Resolves were but a drop in the movement of events, a day's contribution of sensation, ~~and~~ measured rather by the results they produced in the Continental Congress in Philadelphia than by those produced in the colony of Massachusetts. No attention appears to have been given toward gathering the facts of the county convention; the message sent forth sufficed for the time.

Still, making such an allowance, it is strange to note the indifference of James M. Robbins, who delivered the address on the 200th Anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Milton, June 11, 1862, only some eighteen months after the burning of the Vose house. He mentions in a perfunctory manner the Suffolk Resolutions, "adopted in a County Convention holden at Milton, in the house of Daniel Vose, Sept. 9, 1774, said to have been drawn up by Dr. Joseph Warren."¹ The orator is, however, more interested in the military career of Colonel Joseph Vose than in local relics. The indifference

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may be interpreted in two ways: either the destruction of the Vose house carried with it no sense of historical loss, or not being the Vose house of the Suffolk Resolves, there was no occasion for regret. We fear the first reason is the true one.

Twelve years later, in 1874, and chiefly through the efforts of Mr. Nathaniel F. Safford, then owner of the existing building, a celebration was held. On September 22, 1874, Mr. Safford sent the following note to Mr. Winthrop, President of the Massachusetts Historical Society:

"At a meeting held in Milton which the enclosed will explain, I was instructed to send a copy of the proceedings to the Mass. Hist. Society.

"I enclose the same.

"Yours Respy

1

"Nathl. Morton Safford.

"53 Devonshire St
Sept. 22. 74."

Inclosed in this letter was a copy or portion of a copy of the Dedham Transcript, September 12, 1874, containing five columns on the "meeting" and an editorial. In the account, prepared, we are told, "by a well-known gentleman of Milton at the suggestion of several prominent citizens," we read:

"On the wall of an old house, yet standing beneath the shade of English elms, in Milton Village, we read the inscription, that 'in this mansion, on the 9th day of September, 1774, the memorable Suffolk Resolves were adopted.' . . .

"The house at which the delegates assembled was that of Daniel

1
Son of Nathaniel Foster Safford.

Vose, . . . The old English elms which surrounded the mansion were set at a later period by Dr. Amos Holbrook of Milton. In the general view and aspect of the locality and its immediate surroundings, the lapse of one hundred years has produced some changes; but those are few, and of less importance, perhaps, than have occurred in most of the towns and villages in this vicinity."

That was all that pertained to the house. The five columns devoted to the Resolves treated rather of the history of the time of the Resolves and gave the full text. Only a stickful of matter at the very end related to the actual meeting of September, 1874. The editorial, written in Dedham, after commending the spirit of the Resolves, goes on to say: "and it seems to us to be a part of the duty of the good people of Milton to cherish the old house and its inscriptions, and preserve it intact as the birthplace of Liberty. It may be thought by some that we are taking an undue interest in old houses. . . . but it must be remembered that all these mementoes of ancient times and the Revolution are passing away, and soon there will be left nothing but a few relics to mark the early features of the settlement of the country. With these few remarks in relation to the narrative upon the other page, we close by saying that the sentiments which prompted its celebration were noble and patriotic in the extreme."

The manner in which all historical evidence bearing on the house--after all, the central point of the celebration--was neglected, is notable.

The Boston Daily Advertiser, September 10, 1874, records unquestioningly the tradition and the location:

"Just above the railroad station in Dorchester Lower Mills is an old house, formerly owned by Daniel Vose, esq., one of the rooms of which is famous for having been the place in which was held the meeting of the delegates from all the towns in the county of Suffolk, on the 9th of September, 1774, when the 'Suffolk Resolves' were presented and passed. ...

"Yesterday being the anniversary of this famous gathering, a meeting was held last evening in the same room of the old house, in commemoration of the day and of the event: ...

"From all appearances the old building seems likely to last another century, to perpetuate the remembrance of the first struggles for American toleration."

Henry L. Pierce presided, Edward L. Pierce read the Resolves and addresses "appropriate to the occasion" were made by Nathaniel F. Safford, James M. Robbins, and others.

On the same day the Democratic State Convention sat at Worcester and overshadowed in importance the local item. Furthermore patriotic endeavor was largely absorbed in the preparations for the long series of celebrations of 1875. On the 10th the Massachusetts Historical Society held its stated meeting, and the records show that no mention was made of the Milton celebration or of the centenary of the Suffolk Resolves.

It is not enough to say that the presence of men so distinguished in Milton history gave a full confirmation of the tablet and its claims. Nor is it enough to assert that objection was open to any one who might doubt the truth of the tablet and its claims. What the energy of one man, influenced or not by self-interest, can accomplish in such matters is a well recognized feature of like occasions. Mr. Safford had an interest as owner of the building. He

may have believed his view to be correct and have imposed his belief upon his colleagues; but he offered no evidence at the time to prove his position, and no satisfactory evidence has since been offered. The tablet had already been placed by him on the building before the day of celebration and his townsmen quietly accepted the situation. If Mr. Safford recognized historical methods and a true conception of what they demand, he failed to apply them in this instance. In the memoir of Mr. Safford prepared for the New England Historic Genealogical Register, January, 1893, no mention is made of the tablet or the part he played in placing it on the building.

Ten years later Mr. Robbins served on a committee on the Town History of Milton and associated with him were Rev. Albert K. Teele, Charles Breck and Edmund J. Baker. As is customary in such a committee the labor largely fell upon one member, and while the title of the resulting History speaks modestly of that member, claiming to have been "Edited by A. K. Teele," the authorship has been accepted as almost wholly his. The volume appeared in 1887 (the Preface bears date December 18, 1887), and in it Mr. Teele asserts: "This house [the Vose house of the Suffolk Resolves] is still standing near Milton railroad depot, and is now owned by the Hon. Nathaniel F. Safford. A picture of it is given on the opposite page. Here the convention met as by adjournment on the 9th of September, 1774," etc.

The picture, a wood-cut, answers in general detail to that, a half-tone, in the Milton Catechism printed by the Milton Historical Society in 1910, the latter naturally being the more perfect. The earlier is taken from one angle and the later from another, but both

show a tablet on the right of the door. With all due respect to Mr. Teele and his labors I fail to see that he has produced a consistent story of the Vose house or inn and his statements require more than the weight of his authority.

I believe the evidence now available indicates that the original Vose mansion house was destroyed by fire, and that the house now marked by the tablet is in part the so-called Holbrook house. Nothing in this view is intended to depreciate the historical value of the existing house as a building dating from the late eighteenth century.

Respectfully submitted,

Worthington C. Ford
