The Quincys' Homes In Quincy

By H. Hobart Holly
Society Historian

Quincys of both the Edmund and Josiah lines had homes in Boston, but their homesteads were in what was once Old Braintree and is now Quincy. They were leading citizens of this town, and with few exceptions they rest today in the Hancock and Mount Wollaston Cemeteries. All their homes here were houses of unusual interest. The two that survive as historic shrines are not only outstanding architecturally but are also of national interest as the homes of distinguished members of the Quincy family.

It started at the very beginning. On December 14, 1635, the second land grant from Boston in Mount Wollaston, after Boston's annexation of this uninhabited area in 1634, was to William Coddington and Edmund Quincy. The exact size of the grant is immaterial. We may conveniently define Edmund Quincy's portion as over four hundred acres. Messrs. Coddington and Quincy were business partners but their land ownership was not in common. Quite logically, each built a mansion house on his property, probably in 1636. William Coddington built his on his property on the north side of Furnace Brook where the MBTA bus terminal is now located. Eliza Susan Quincy and John Quincy Adams both mention the cellar hole of Coddington's house as visible in their time. Edmund Quincy built his house on his south side of Furnace Brook in a companion spot to that of his partner. Of the first Quincy homestead we have good descriptive information.

The location of this ancestral home of the whole Quincy family is marked by a granite monument on the grounds of Quincy's Junior High School, just across present Butler Road from today's Quincy Homestead. Eliza Susan Quincy has left us a sketch of this house and the Quincy Historical Society has a photograph that shows it. This was the mansion house for all the Quincy properties for fifty years. Eliza Susan states that the children of the second Edmund were born here; also that Josiah of the fourth generation lived here 1733-1735 and that sons Edmund and Samuel were born here. It was demolished in the early 1890s. E.S.Q's manuscript Memoirs at the Massachusetts Historical Society contain a description of the house.

"The house erected by Edmund Quincy of England in 1635 (6) is now standing in 1882. It is a large one story wooden house with a large attic, one chimney in the centre. I only thought of it as a farmhouse & never realized its antiquity or interest until 1870, when on going into it I found the front door opened into a small entry from which a staircase ascended by the side of the chimney to the second story. On the right a door opened into a large room, 12 or 14 ft. square, with four windows, and a fireplace in the corner. The ceiling was about nine feet high and surrounded by a

Continued on Page 2
Quincys' Homes

Continued from Page 1

carved cornice, which proved that it must have been the residence of the family.

"The house fronted to the southwest, and the sun must have shone into the room the whole day in the winter. The situation of the house proved the judgement of the builder - of E.Q."

Quincy Homestead

The second Edmund Quincy inherited his father's homestead and made it his home until 1685 when he built a new house a few hundred feet northerly from the old house and near the Brook. Of two stories but the same general style as the old house, it faced north and forms the nucleus of the Quincy Homestead of today. In 1706, the third Edmund transformed the house into the beautiful mansion that we know today. He added four rooms and an attic, and changed the fronting to the west. This significant alteration accounts for some unplanned features that have been romantically labeled as "secret" in later years. John Marshall, the local mason and diarist mentions working on this house. The apartment for Tutor Flynt was added later.

In keeping with the changes to the house, the grounds were also beautified. Edmund Quincy laid out walks and gardens, planted trees, and constructed a canal in Furnace Brook. A low weir was built just below the house to form a shallow fresh water pond some thirty feet wide and extending up to about where the road is today. This canal may have had some irrigation function but its purpose was mainly decorative. The canal remained until the 1930s when the present twelve-foot channel was built by the WPA. A recent article in Old-Time New England on the famous Governor Shirley House in Roxbury compares the landscaping and canal there with the arrangement at the Quincy Homestead. Down stream E.Q. built a dam and tidemill where the Southern Artery now crosses, and below it had his wharf.

Edmund Quincy, the fourth, inherited his father's homestead and Upper or Home Farm. Through bad financial investments he lost his property to creditors in 1763. There are indications that he moved from there to his Boston home a few years before that date. After some short ownerships, it passed in 1769 to the Alleyne family who owned it for eighteen years. Moses Black was the owner from 1788 to 1825, and Mr. Quincy's Creek became Black's Creek. Daniel Greenleaf was the next owner from whom it was inherited by Ebenezer Woodward. The Woodwards did not live there, and the longtime tenant was Peter Butler for whom Butler Road is named. In 1894 it was purchased, less most of the land, by the Rev. Continued on Page 3
Quincys' Homes

Continued from Page 2

Daniel Munro Wilson. In 1904 Mr. Wilson conveyed the property to the Colonial Dames of Massachusetts who transferred it to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in an arrangement by which the Dames operate the house open to the public.

Mount Wollaston Farm

This was originally Coddington, not Quincy, land. John Quincy from Boston great grandson of the first Edmund, inherited it from his maternal grandmother, Anna (Tyng) Shepard, daughter of William Tyng who bought the Coddington lands. Shortly after his graduation from Harvard in 1708, he built a handsome home that stood in the area of present Samoset Street not far from Sea Street; which street incidently was referred to in some early records as the Road to Colonel Quincy's. It was one of the important houses of the town. We have little knowledge of its appearance, but have Eliza Susan Quincy to thank for a sketch depicting it.

On Colonel Quincy's death in 1767, it passed to his son Norton Quincy who resided there until his death in 1801. Since Norton Quincy had no children, it was left to his sisters' children. Of these heirs, Abigail Adams bought out the others, and so Mount Wollaston Farm passed into the Adams family who owned much of it for around one hundred years. The mansion house was demolished about 1851.

Hancock Parsonage

Josiah Quincy, of the fourth generation, the first Josiah, had inherited the two hundred acre Lower Farm in present Wollaston from his father but did not build a mansion house on it. He lived and had his business in Boston. When in the mid-1750s he decided to return to his native town, instead of building on his land he chose to purchase the Hancock Parsonage.

This house had been built about 1726 by the Rev. John Hancock, minister of the First Church. He died in 1744 and his widow sold it to his successor, the Rev. Lemuel Briant who describes the place: "A Handsome Country Seat ... containing besides a very commodious well furnished house, a good barn, out-houses, fine gardens, and the best of orchards, with about 40 acres of choice land belonging to it, just by the meeting, not half a mile from the church (Christ Church), and but 2 miles from the flourishing settlement at Germantown." Rev. Mr. Briant left his parish in 1753 and sold his parsonage to Josiah Quincy who lived there until it burned on May 17, 1759. John Adams, a frequent visitor there, notes in his diary his sympathy to Col. Quincy for the loss of his home and furniture.

In setting up the Adams Temple and School Fund in 1822, John Adams who then owned the property, directed that a stone school house be built over the cellar hole of the Hancock Parsonage in honor of his friend John Hancock, The Patriot, who was born there, Rev. Lemuel Briant, and the Josiah Quincys, father and son, who lived there. In this deed is John Adams' famous tribute to Josiah Quincy, Jr., "who was as ardent a patriot as any of his age, and, next to James Otis, the greatest orator." The Adams Academy Building is the stone school house, and the location of the Hancock-Briant-Quincy well is marked in the lawn.

Tranquilia

After the fire of 1759, Josiah Quincy built a new house about which little is known. It was probably on his farm, possibly on or near the site of its successor. That house burned on December 6, 1769.

Colonel Quincy now built himself a mansion house worthy of his position and extensive properties; the very handsome house that stands today on Muirhead Street in Wollaston. It was constructed in 1770 with Edward Pierce of Dorchester as the master builder. The house was the centerpiece of a large estate as shown by a Chinese painting from a sketch by Eliza Susan Quincy in possession of the Quincy Historical Society at the Adams Academy Building. It shows extensive grounds and plantings, many other buildings, and even windmills for the saltworks at the shore.

Colonel Josiah left the house to his grandson, Josiah, the third Josiah and The Great Mayor. Here the great of the nation were entertained. On his death in 1864 it...
Quincys' Homes

Continued from Page 3

was left to his three famous daughters - Eliza Susan, Abigail Phillips and Maria Sophia Quincy. When the last of the three died in 1893, the ownership went to their nephew and neighbor, the fifth Josiah Quincy who subdivided the property. The house was sold in 1895, with some adjoining lots, to Frank E. Hall of Boston. In 1937, Edward R. Hall conveyed the property to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. The Quincy family took an active interest in this matter, and Alice Bache Gould, niece of the fifth Josiah, was a major contributor. The streets in the surrounding developed area, Gould Street for example, are named for families that married with the Quincys.

Quincy Mansion

In 1848, the fourth Josiah, Josiah Quincy, brother of the sisters, built a house on what was once the middle Edmund Quincy farm. It stood on what is now the campus of Eastern Nazarene College in Wollaston. It was a handsome and spacious dwelling with a mansard roof that gave it three full stories. Eliza Susan Quincy mentions that the architect Hammett Billings was designing a house for her brother. Research has shown that this was the only house that either brother Josiah or brother Edmund was building at that time. Also a recent researcher on Hammett Billings' work has identified features of the house as typical of Mr. Billings. Quincy Historical Society has good information on this house including contemporary photos of both the exterior and interior in the Edmund Quincy collection, record photos taken before the building was demolished, and distinctive work from the house that it has preserved.

From the fourth Josiah the house passed to his son Josiah, also known as Josiah Phillips Quincy, who ran a dairy farm here for many years and eventually sold the lands for development. In this house were born Alice Bache Gould and Josiah of the ninth generation. The house and surrounding property was sold in 1896 to Horace Mann Willard who operated there the Quincy Mansion School for girls until 1919. The same year it was sold to Eastern Nazarene College that used the old mansion as its administration building until 1969 when it was demolished and replaced with a new building.

(The author of this article, H. Hobart Holly, is Society historian and was president of the Society for two decades. His paper on the Quincy homes was originally published in "The Quincy Descendant," newsletter of the Quincy Family Association.)

N.H.'s Josiah Quincy; Not Hub's J.Q.

In a review of America's twenty Quincys (Quincy History, Spring, 1982) we opined that New Hampshire's Quincy, a section of Rumney, was named for Josiah Quincy, the 19th Century railroad enthusiast and public servant.

Right name, wrong man. H. Hobart Holly, Society historian, says that the Josiah Quincy for whom the village was named did indeed promote railroads in his state, but his principal occupation was the law:

"Josiah Quincy, lawyer of Rumney, N.H., was born in Lenox, Mass., March 7, 1793, and died at Rumney on January 19, 1875. He was a third generation descendant of the first Josiah Quincy through his son Samuel, The Tory. After education at Lenox Academy, he studied law in Stockbridge. Soon after his admission to the bar, he moved in 1816 to Rumney where he lived the remainder of his life. He became a very prominent citizen and one of the most successful lawyers in the state. Starting in 1824 he served eight or nine terms in the New Hampshire House of Representatives, and two in the Senate, one as its president. He was a man of great public spirit and devoted much time to the promotion of the railway and educational interests of New Hampshire."

Quincy History Sponsor

This issue of Quincy History has been funded by a donation from William A. O’Connell, former president of the Society, and Mrs. O’Connell.
Quincy History: Week By Week, Day By Day

Yesterday's newspaper is today's history.

And, luckily for chroniclers of local history, during Quincy's past 145 years of yesterdays there have been three different daily newspapers and at least seventeen weekly papers.

Copies of most of these newspapers are on file either at the Adams Academy headquarters of the Society or at Thomas Crane Public Library where many of them are on microfilm.

In 1837, the year Van Buren succeeded Jackson in the Presidency and a mob killed Elijah P. Lovejoy, an Illinois publisher of an abolitionist paper, two young men founded The Quincy Patriot with a dour comment: “We do not enter upon our undertaking with any high-raised expectation; the golden days of our profession have gone by.” The paper almost immediately attracted a letter from Cong. John Q. Adams, a former president, who pleaded for the right to petition: “My respect and reverence for the right of petition has been bred in the bone by the law of nature preceding all formations of constitutions of governments, preceding even the institution of civil society.”

In 1843, the year President Tyler urged annexation of Texas despite Mexico’s threat of war, another weekly, Quincy Aurora began publication with high aims: “A family paper should combine in an active form, instruction, purity of sentiment and practical utility -- it should be a Manual of truth, a Museum of curious novelties, and a Chart of busy life.” A dispatch to the Aurora from Washington in 1846 noted that “Petitions being in order, Mr. J. Q. Adams presented a large number on various subjects, but chiefly against admitting Texas as a slave state into the Union.”

The idealistic Aurora ended publication in 1847, and the pessimistic Patriot continued as a weekly newspaper until 1916 when it was merged with the Quincy Daily Ledger.

In 1878 two weekly papers began publication, The Quincy Free Press and The Word of Truth. Their lives were short, as was that of the East Norfolk News of Quincy, born 1880. They emphasized local news: “Mr. E. B. Souther has not yet discovered the party who fell through his window.” -- Item from East Norfolk News, October, 1880.

These weeklies were followed by two newspapers which lasted much longer: The Quincy Advertiser, a weekly, 1884 to 1914, and The Quincy Monitor, a monthly, 1886 to 1898, possibly later.

In 1888, the year that Benjamin Harrison defeated incumbent Grover Cleveland for the Presidency and George Eastman perfected the box camera, The Lamp, a West Quincy weekly, glowed briefly but brightly: “How long will the businessmen of Quincy submit to the present neglect and carelessness of the Old Colony Railroad in regard to the handling of freight? The chief industry of the town, the granite industry, is heavily handicapped by the inefficiency or willful neglect of the railroad.”

This editorial comment by the Lamp was made in November, 1888, the month of its death, an event for which it placed blame: “With this number The Lamp ends a somewhat checkered career. We started out with bright prospects and up to June we issued a well-printed and really good paper. The bitter and active hostility of the Rev. A.F. — however, prevented our success.”

Quincy acquired its first daily...
Quincy Newspapers
Continued from Page 5
newspaper in 1889, the year of the Johnstown Flood, the Eiffel Tower and Nellie Bly. It was the Quincy Daily Ledger, published by The George W. Prescott Publishing Company which owned the Quincy Patriot. It changed its name to Quincy Patriot Ledger when the two were merged, and in 1962, with widening coverage, the name became The Patriot Ledger.

In 1903, a year best known for President Theodore Roosevelt's recognition of Panama and the Wright brothers' flight, The Quincy Leader was founded. The fate of this weekly is unknown, but it printed significant news: "Beginning with next week, the employees of the Fore River Ship and Engine Co. will have 45 minutes for dinner (lunch) and will quit work at 5:30 o'clock. They will then have Saturday afternoon off."

Five years later Quincy acquired its second daily newspaper, first published as "The Houghs Neck News and Quincy Telegram," but changing to The Quincy Telegram in its fifth issue. The Telegram lasted until February, 1927, when it announced its demise: "After 17 years in the newspaper field The Quincy Telegram on February 1 was purchased by George W. Prescott Publishing Co. and it will be merged with the Quincy Patriot Ledger, which proves conclusively that Quincy is a one-paper town."

With regularity during the Quincy years of two daily newspapers, weekly papers emerged and died. In 1911 there was Quincy Merchants Bulletin which became Quincy Bulletin and vanished. The Third Hill Searchlight, which became Wollaston Searchlight, was founded in 1914 by a son of George W. Prescott. It lasted through 1915. In 1920 the Quincy Enterprise was published, becoming merged with another weekly, Quincy Journal in 1922, and then disappearing as the Quincy Journal-Enterprise in 1924.

In 1927 the short-lived weekly Quincy Transcript started business with high hopes: "The Transcript pledges itself to the whole-hearted, fearless support of every movement which tends to improve the living or working conditions of our community, and to oppose with all its might every influence which threatens the welfare of the community. First of all, a newspaper must be a NEWSpaper."

In 1928, the year Herbert Hoover was elected President, another daily, Quincy Evening News was founded by Perley E. Barbour, a former mayor of Quincy. In 1936 it was absorbed by the Quincy Patriot Ledger.

In 1937 a community weekly, Wollaston Times, began a two-year life. In 1945 a labor-sponsored weekly with the same name as a previous paper, Quincy Journal, emerged to last six years.

Still flourishing in Quincy is a weekly, The Quincy Sun, published by Henry Bosworth, and a daily, The Patriot Ledger.

1984 Goal: A Three-Century Exhibit

The Society's newest exhibit, now on the drawing board with the working title, "A Walk Through Quincy's History", will present the essential aspects of Quincy's rich and diverse history between 1625 and 1925.

The exhibit will be installed in the South gallery of the Society's historic Adams Academy Building. It will incorporate a chronological, topically integrated format.

Included will be exhibits on shipbuilding, the granite industry, the development of city government, social and religious organizations, three hundred years of daily life (including objects from the Society's textile, furniture, ceramic and painting collections), the Germantown industries of the mid-eighteenth century, local businesses and the development of schools.

The exhibit will utilize a variety of techniques to communicate its message. Two audiovisual presentations are planned, one focusing on Quincy's geography and geology and the other containing oral historical narratives from current longtime residents. A wide variety of artifacts from the Society's large collection of Quincy related material will be displayed with descriptive text.

Continuity throughout the exhibit will be provided by a series of maps showing Quincy's demographic growth within the 300-year period, 1625 - 1925. Dioramas depicting the first railway, the Germantown glassworks and a Native American settlement are planned.

The exhibit, planned to open in early 1984, will serve as an introduction to the history of the city for visitors as well as residents of the area.