

## AN OLD BURLINGTON HOUSE

*Reproduced from the Woburn News, August 7, 1890*

Probably one of the few "garrison houses" remaining in New England is located in Burlington, Mass., near the junction of Billerica and Bedford.

There is a tradition that John Hancock and John Adams, who were visiting in this locality on the day of the battle of Lexington, hid in this house to escape from the British troops, who were said to be pursuing them. The statement regarding the house is denied by the town historian, Rev. Samuel Sewall, who says "the building was on the same land but was torn down years ago."

The Reed building was constructed of oak and hard pine timber, and there are four living rooms on the first floor and four chambers on the second floor. There is not a closet in the building and the crockery of the present occupants is placed on shelves, constructed in a corner of the dining-room.

Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Reed are the occupants of the house. Mr. Reed is 89 years of age, and his wife 78 years. Their only daughter, now married, was born in this house. She resides with her husband but a short distance away. Mr. Reed says, "The original owner of this territory was Demiah Wyman, who secured 1000 acres, which extended to Shawsheen river. One of his descendants was Abel Wyman, who served in the revolutionary army. He speculated in hops, and as a result was obliged to dispose of the property left to him, to Matthew Skelton of Charlestown, Mass."

Mr. Reed further said: "When Mr. Wyman returned from the revolutionary war, his first undertaking was to construct a well."

This well Mr. Reed pointed out to the *Globe* representative, and the only appliance about it is the pail in which the water was conveyed. The pole to which the pail is attached as it goes down into the well, the sweep and the tree in whose branches the sweep found balance are as ancient as the house in which Mr. and Mrs. Reed reside. Mr. Reed pointed out the holds through which the defenders used their muskets to repulse the Indians, and he gave a singular reason for the appearance of the stairway leading to the upper portion of the building. He believes in the old days there were no stairways, but small blocks extended outward from the left side of the staircase.

The inhabitants when pursued from the fields would run up on these blocks to the upper story. The Indians following would not notice the blocks, and in their eagerness to capture the inhabitants would fall into the cellar. Mr. Reed says: I saw this building up September 1815 before I was married. Rev. Mr. Sewall told me many years ago that the building was 260 years old."

The chimney in the house is about three times the size of a modern chimney and the timbers in the interior of the building are in the rough condition of years ago. Everything about the building are in the rough condition of years ago. Everything about the building is as neat as the industrious hands of Mrs. Reed can make it.

Although off the line of any railroad, there are many visitors to the farm in the summer months, some coming from the South, to see the ancient structure of which they have been told by friends.

It was decidedly chilly on the day the *Globe* representative visited the building, but there was good fire in the modern kitchen stove, beside which Mr. and Mrs. Reed were seated, as they related briefly their story of the house in which they have long been residents.

Mrs. Reed said, "When I was first married, I used the old-fashioned fire-place."

She exhibited the cranes upon which the iron pots were suspended which the victuals were being cooked and the kettle boiled preparatory to making tea.

Mr. Reed in early life was employed as a tanner in Woburn and Billerica Centre and walked from Burlington to each town at that time before and after his days work. He was taken ill at midnight during the past winter.

His aged wife was obliged to go out in a snow storm to a neighbor's to request him to go to Woburn for a physician, six miles distant. The neighbor made the visit, and the physician on his arrival consoled the aged patient by saying, "A few hours longer and there would be no need of any physician's services."

Mr. and Mrs. Reed do not appear to notice their isolation from the busy world, but are as contented and happy as the average of mortals. Mr. Reed makes repairs necessary to keep out the rough winds, the rain and snow from his home, and takes pleasure in giving information to all who inquired about the old "Garrison House."