

OUR COLONIAL HOMES

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649109760

Our colonial homes by Samuel Adams Drake

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SAMUEL ADAMS DRAKE

**OUR COLONIAL
HOMES**



THE HANCOCK MANSION, BOSTON, MASS.

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BY

SAMUEL ADAMS DRAKE

AUTHOR OF "OLD LANDMARKS OF BOSTON" "BURGOYNE'S INVASION OF 1777" "THE TAKING
OF LOUISBURG" "THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG" ETC.

*"All houses wherein men have lived and died
Are haunted houses." — LONGFELLOW.*

BOSTON
LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS
10 MILK STREET
1864

PREFACE.

ONE end which I proposed to myself in this book, besides presenting house and home historically, was to gather up as many distinct types of the colonial architecture of New England as possible, from the rude farmhouse of the first settlers to the elegant mansion of a later generation, as it seems to me nothing could give half so clear a picture of a century and a half of colonial life. It was this idea alone which could give cohesion to a series of sketches having little connection in themselves, except as recording fragments of history that had become scattered with the lapse of time. Most of them were written some years ago for *Appleton's Journal*; but by the addition of several new subjects, besides re-writing the old ones, the collection bears out, I think, the idea conveyed by the title of OUR COLONIAL HOMES.

The selections are typical in another sense. I have considered each of these old houses as one of the bricks belonging to the American foundation. All have their interesting story, their admirable lesson, or patriotic inspiration. They are a legacy from the past, of which our generation is only the trustee. They are the parent hives, from which the outswarms have gone forth over the length and breadth of the land we love. I think myself that the New Englander has some good qualities, one among others being his veneration for the things that have a history or embody a sentiment, like the homes of his fathers.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE HANCOCK MANSION, BOSTON, MASS.	1
THE HOME OF PAUL REVERE, BOSTON, MASS.	17
THE GOVERNOR CRADOCK HOUSE, MEDFORD, MASS.	26
HOBGOBLIN HALL, MEDFORD, MASS.	37
EDWARD EVERETT'S BIRTHPLACE, DORCHESTER, MASS.	47
THE MISOY HOMESTEAD, DORCHESTER, MASS.	57
THE QUINCY MANSION, QUINCY, MASS.	65
BIRTHPLACES OF THE TWO PRESIDENTS ADAMS, QUINCY, MASS.	76
THE ADAMS MANSION, QUINCY, MASS.	91
THE OLD SHIP, HINGHAM, MASS.	105
THE OLD WITCH HOUSE, SALEM, MASS.	117
THE COLLINS HOUSE, DANVERS, MASS.	128
BIRTHPLACE OF GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM, DANVERS, MASS.	143
THE LAST RESIDENCE OF JAMES OTIS, ANDOVER, MASS.	150
THE RED HORSE (WAYSIDE INN), SUDBURY, MASS.	160
THE PEPPERELLS OF KITTERY POINT	169
THE EARLY HOME OF JOHN HOWARD PAYNE, EAST HAMPTON, L.I.	176
THE OLD INDIAN HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASS.	184
THE OLD GOTHIC HOUSE, RAYNHAM, MASS.	194
THE OLD STONE HOUSE, GUILFORD, CONN.	203

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE HANCOCK HOUSE	<i>Frontispice</i>
	<small>PAGE</small>
THE HOME OF PAUL REVERE	77 21
THE GOVERNOR CRADOCK HOUSE	35
HOBGOBLIN HALL	38
BIRTHPLACE OF EDWARD EVERETT	50
THE MINOT HOMESTEAD	58
THE QUINCY MANSION	67
HOME OF JOHN ADAMS	81
HOME OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS	88
THE ADAMS MANSION	92
THE OLD SHIP	106
THE OLD WITCH-HOUSE	122
THE COLLINS HOUSE	131
BIRTHPLACE OF GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM	146
THE LAST RESIDENCE OF JAMES OTIS	151
THE RED HORSE (WAYSIDE INN)	163
HOME OF SIR JOHN PEPPERELL	171
EARLY HOME OF JOHN HOWARD PAYNE	177
THE OLD INDIAN HOUSE	187
RUINS OF THE LEONARD FORGE	195
THE OLD STONE HOUSE	208

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THE HANCOCK MANSION

BOSTON, MASS.

THE old Hancock mansion is seldom mentioned nowadays unaccompanied by regrets that it could not have been preserved in all its elegant simplicity. Nothing was more easy. The opportunity was indeed urged upon the State as one not to be neglected, if the historic mansion were to be saved at all; but the appeal, though eloquently made, and strongly supported, was looked upon with suspicion by some, with indifference by others, as a waste of the people's money by more, and finally met defeat at the hands of its enemies in the legislature, not so much on the score of economy as of a short-sighted public policy.

Could that house be restored to-day, we think it is entirely safe to say that the vote which doomed it to irrevocable destruction would be overwhelmingly reversed. The house, however, has gone beyond a possible resurrection; the regrets we still have with us.

After all, time does bring its revenges. The Old Bay State, rich, polite, learned; high in honor among the great sisterhood John Hancock helped to found with a stroke of that intrepid pen of his, has just caused to be erected at Chicago, for the Columbian Exposition of 1893, a copy of the Hancock mansion, as near as may be to the original, as the expression not only of what she would hold highest before the world, but of what the world best knows and most prizes in her great history. When the citizen of Dakota or of Washington shall innocently