

An Old House and What Became of it (Bradshaw House) Soc. Paper read by George Y. Wellington
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Perhaps to some one of us, there may have been pointed out some old houses built early in the last century, standing back from some roadside gray and worn from age, yet there is a respectability in its appearance and in its surroundings. The old trees that give shade to the lawn in front speak of better times in bygone days, though the present occupants appear to be aliens to the place. We gaze at the old homestead and wonder as to its history, and our curiosity is excited as to who first erected and occupied this house, and what has become of the family in its descent to our time. Of such a house and its occupants I am about to speak to you tonight, its history has never before been written, yet the existence of this house is almost co-equal with the town in which we live. Before speaking of this house I will give a short sketch of the first step taken in the forming of this Town of Arlington. On May 10, 1725, the people on the westerly side of Menotomy River (now known as Alewife Brook) in Cambridge desire to better accommodation for public worship and petitioned the Town of Cambridge to consent that they become a separate precinct. The town withheld its consent; this request was renewed in 1728, and again June 30, 1732. James Cutler and others petitioned for a separate precinct; all of said petitions were denied. But Dec. 27th 1732 the General Court ordered the new precinct to be set off as petitioned. The territory set off is what is now contained in the Town of Arlington, and a portion of Belmont as far as Concord Avenue; another portion of what is now Arlington was set off from the Town of Charlestown on Feb 25th, 1842, and a portion of that territory then given to Arlington was made a part of the Town of Winchester April 30, 1850. This Parish and Precinct set off in 1732 was known as the Second Parish in Cambridge, then generally called Menotomy, the origin of which name yet awaits explanation. This Second Parish being set off territorially as was the custom in those days where the rights of only one church was to be considered then took their next move onward towards erecting a House of Worship of a Meeting House. On April 1st, 1733 Rev. John Hancock of Lexington Baptized at the Schoolhouse at Menotomy a child Thomas Osborn and this was the first child baptized in the new Parish. On July 10th 1733 a parcel of land lying between the Jason Russell's pasture and Ebenezer Stevens (?) field, which was reserved out of the Common for a burying place was selected as the most convenient place for the Meeting House to stand, and near the northeasterly corner of the street. This lot of land comprises the old burying ground on Pleasant Street and the Common on which the first Congregational Parish church now stands. The sum of three hundred pounds was raised by vote Sept 17, 1733 for the defraying the charge of building a meeting house, the structure to be 46 feet long, 36 feet wide and 24 feet on the posts, and to have a suitable belfry. Rev Dr. Fiske, the 2nd pastor of this Parish gives the dimensions at 50 feet long and 40 feet wide, and it stood 70 years. The same building is still standing however after two removals, and is located at # 208 Pleasant Street opposite Kensington Park. The meeting house was built after some delay and was opened and consecrated as a House of Worship on the 1st day of February 1735.