

William Russell with wife Martha, who came to Cambridge in 1630, is noted as being a land proprietor in 1645; in 1656 he purchased land in Menotomy, and probably before 1680 the Jason Russell house was erected from timber cut off the land just below what is now Jason Russell Street, in what is now Jason Street, in what was then a swamp. The house then probably comprised the room known known as the old kitchen and chamber over it with a lean-to at the back. William died 1662. On December 13, 1681 Martha, then Mrs. Humphrey Bradshaw, grants to her sons William and and Jason the privilege and use of one-half the house, including use of one-half of the barn, the well under the elm tree, and the little shop; many a game of hide and seek can I remember playing in my childhood, with the elm tree as "goal". The house was added to and improved from time to time. Four generations occupied the house up to the Revolutionary period, when, on the nineteenth of April, 1775, the house was the scene of a bloody massacre on the return of the British troops from Lexington and Concord. Jason Russell had barricaded his gate with bundles of shingles and a breastwork of earth had been thrown up across Main Street.

A company of men from neighboring towns, had come to the Jason Russell Homestead, to make a stand. Jason Russell, after taking his wife and children back thru the woods to a place of safety, was returning to his home, when he was intercepted by a flank guard of the British on the hill, taken prisoner and brought down to his house and cruelly killed on his own doorstep. Our men were driven into the house to the cellar, where they fired upon the British soldiers. Twelve of our men were killed. The soldiers plundered the house of bedding and dresses and whatever of value could be found.

Noah Russell, who married Eunice Bemis in 1782 occupied the house with his family. At this time, the house was typical as a comfortable farm house, and may be described as having the front door in the middle of the house facing what is now Jason Street. A large room on either side with the chambers over these. A large kitchen at the back on the westerly side and a small room on Main Street end. The outside walls were of brick, the roof slanting down at the back to one story; a room over the kitchen and the large attic across the front. A door on the south side of the living room, thru which our men were driven on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1775 and thence down the cellar stairs, where several bullet holes are to be seen today. The house was heated by fireplaces large enuf for the children to sit inside on a cricket and look up the chimney at the stars. The large brick oven was used for baking the many loaves of bread and, at Christmastime, one hundred pies.

The old barn was the scene of jolly husking bees, while quilting parties were held in the front rooms. Since that time stoves took the place of the fireplaces. Two more generations occupied the house; Lydia Russell, who married Thomas Wall Teel, and who laid out Jason Street through her farm in 1884, died at the age of 93 years. Elizabeth Teel who married Lorenzo H. Dupee and lived to be 103 years.

In 1924 the Jason Russell House became the home of the Arlington Historical Society, having been dedicated on December 9<sup>th</sup> of that year. It houses their interesting collection and there has been added a house-keeping part or suite for the caretaker.

Seven generations of Russells were born in the old house including the writer.  
Emma F. Russell, May 11, 1936