

Looking Back

Manchester's stonemason

By G.S. ADAMS

Cudgo Quaggeryquise, a black man, dropped his first name and became Quaggery Quisy or Quicy. He married Milcha Perkins and their son Alpheus was born in Windham June 1774. Cudgo and his sons Alpheus and Henry dealt in real estate in Southeastern Connecticut.

From the diary of Rev. Levi Nelson, Lisbon, Conn.: "Thursday Nov. 24 1808, Thanksgiving, in the evening married Alpheus Quicy to Lucinda Jackson."

Alpheus Quicy of Ellington married as his second wife Anna Simpson Nov. 30 1815. She was Joanna Quicy when she joined the Methodist church on Spencer Street in 1818.

Quicy built a field stone house on the north side of West Center St. where he lived for the rest of his life. There was a wooden house east of the stone house and his property is described as eight acres, two dwellings, one of stone. In 1840, Chauncey Freeman lived in the wooden house.

Alpheus built a dwelling for Union Mfg. Co. on their land in 1826 for which he was paid five hundred dollars.

In 1830, he mortgaged his Manchester property to carry on business in Farmington.

In 1834, Anne H. Olcott conveyed to A. Quicy "nine acres west on Lewis Bunce and my own land, east on Samuel C. McKee" and "the right of raising the dam across the small stream to make a fish pond and the sole and exclusive right to taking fish in said pond when made and at all times to repair such dam when necessary."

In 1864, Quicy deeded his property to his son-in-law, Robin Lewis Freeman and took a life lease on it — Alpheus and Joanna to have the use of the stone house as long as they lived.

One year later Joanna died and her passing was noted by Rose (Wetherell) Keeney of Manchester who wrote "Mrs. Quicy was buried Sept. 21 1865." Alpheus died Feb. 16, 1876, age one hundred years and eight months and both are buried in West Cemetery.

Mathias Spiess wrote in 1935: "Alpheus Quicy, a stonemason, lived in a stone house which he built when a young man. He also built the stone house on Bidwell Street, still standing, also the Sidney Olcott house. Many dams all over town were constructed by Quicy."

"He was a small man, never seen on Sunday without wearing his stove pipe hat. With cape in hand and a large homemade cigar in his mouth, dressed in his Sunday best, he would strut along the road tipping his hat and bowing to all he would meet, in the friendliest manner. This was A.J. Quicy, the famous stonemason of Manchester."

In 1876, Robin Lewis Freeman sold the Quicy property to Frederick Trebbe, a farmer, who died in 1895. The stone house was used as a barn and later taken down.

J. B. Olcott sent his daughter a picture with the notation: "This is not the old house in which I was born but it looks very like it. She got afire several times in the heavy oak chimney jamb and it took all the oxen in the West District to pull the old house down." The stone house that replaced the wooden house was built by Alpheus Quicy and became known as the Sidney Olcott house. Sidney Olcott (1795-1883) was a strong anti-slavery man and it is said that his house was a station on the underground railroad during the Civil War.

The Sidney Olcott house on the west end of Olcott Street, occupied in 1918 by "the family of the late Martin Hayes, was struck by lightning about eleven o'clock May 10 and the interior of the house was destroyed. The bolt struck in the chimney in the upper part of the house and, as the house was outside the fire district, the fire made great progress before aid was rendered. The fire apparatus was not on the scene until after midnight. All the firemen could do then was to save the adjoining buildings."

The only one of the field stone houses that were built in Manchester by Quicy and still standing today is the one on Bidwell Street. This one was built for Walter Bunce (1822-1876) had a paper mill on Hop Brook for a few years after the 1869 flood.

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