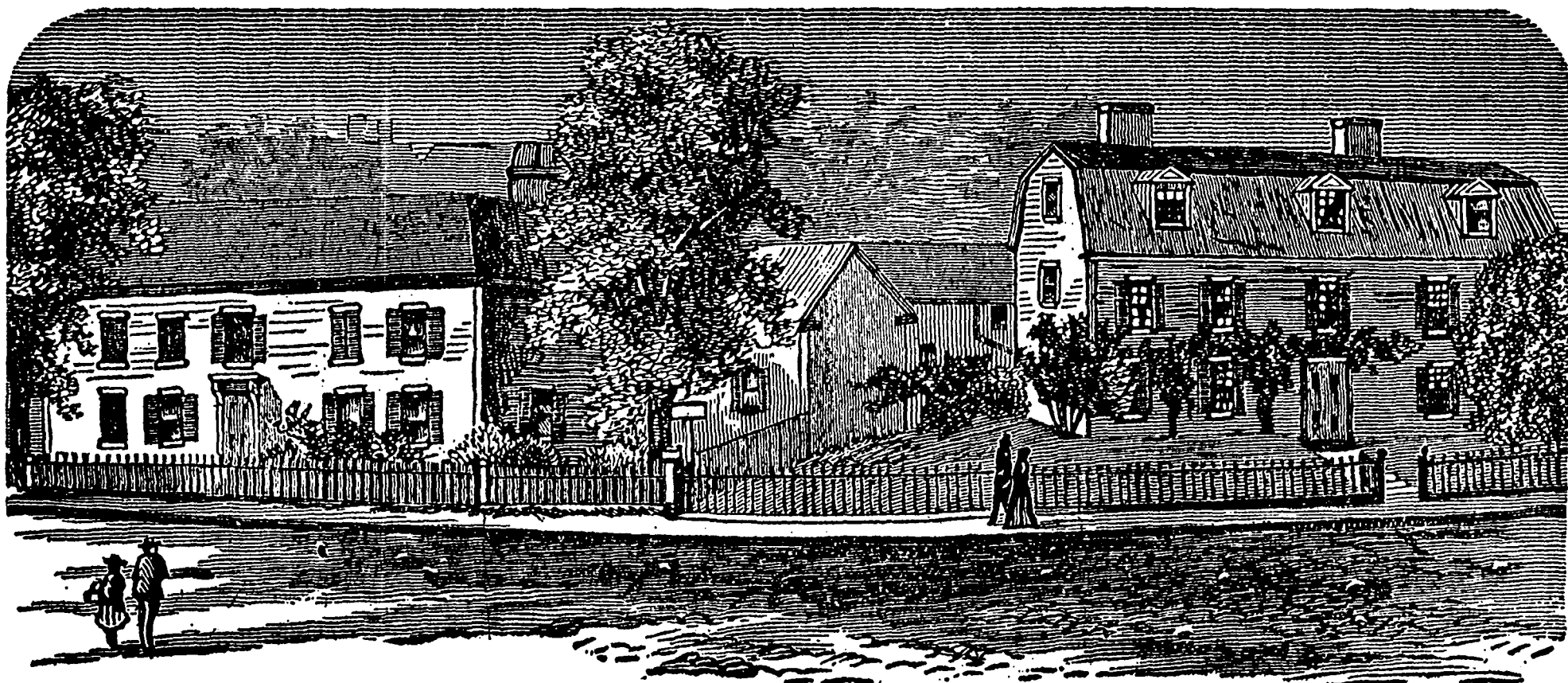


# **RUGGLES HOMESTEADS**





THOMAS RUGGLES, 1637.

JOSEPH RUGGLES, 1721.

HOUSES IN ROXBURY.  
(Copy of an Old Print)



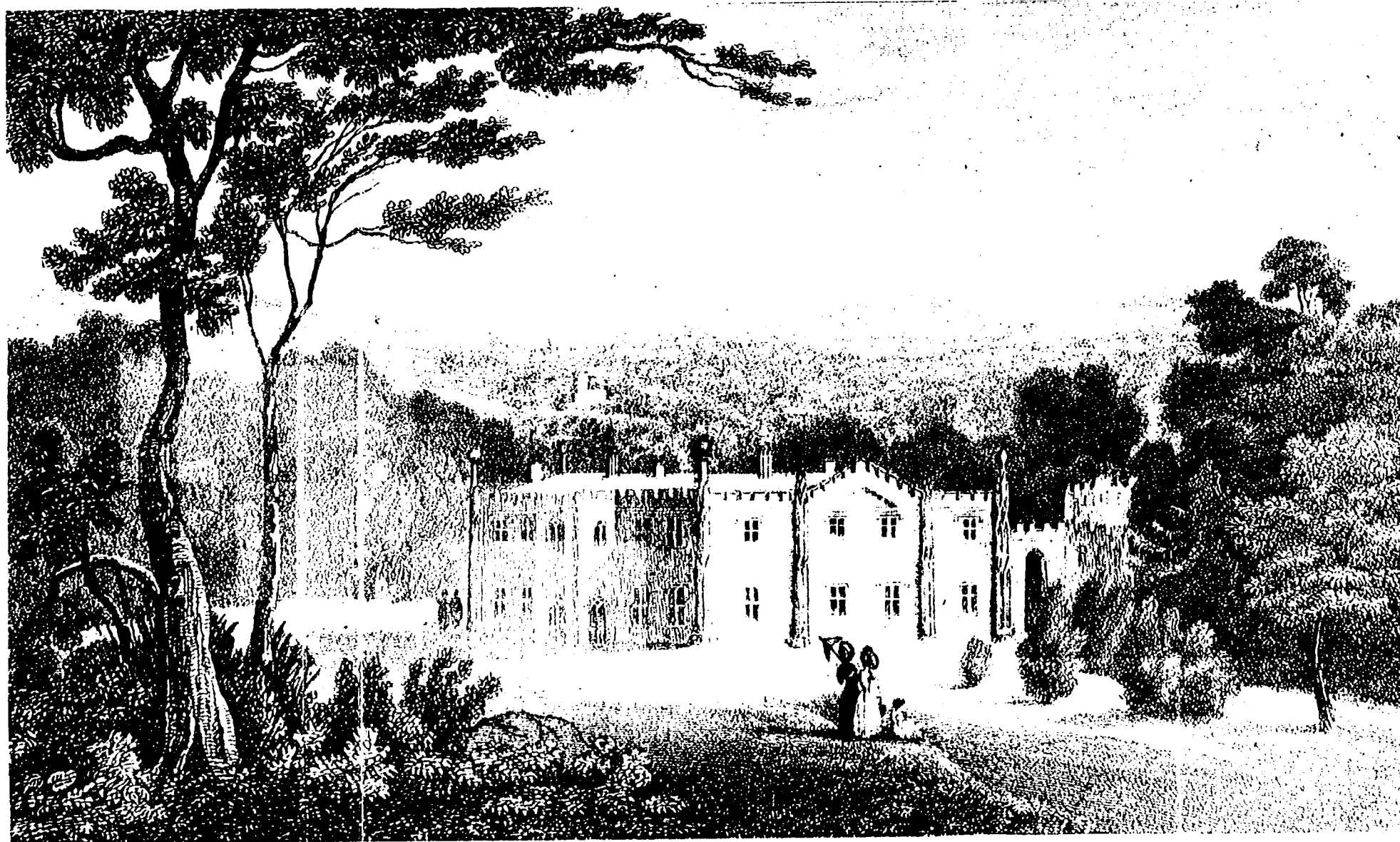
# RUGGLES HOMESTEADS

By HENRY STODDARD RUGGLES

PRIVATELY PRINTED

# Illustrations

1. Roxbury, Massachusetts—Copy of an Old Print.
2. Staffordshire, England—Armitage Park.
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Residence of Samuel Ruggles, 1760.
4. Essex County, England,  
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1800.



STAFFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND.  
ARMITAGE PARK.





# RUGGLES HOMESTEADS

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In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the family of De Ruggele was resident in Stafford, and in the next century, as Ruggeley and Ruggelay, in Stafford and Warwick.\* Their estates have long ago passed to other hands and nothing now remains of the old houses. The ancient manor of Hawkesbeard in Stafford, for generations the principal residence of the senior branch, is now known as Armitage Park.

From Warwick they went to Lincoln, and thence to Suffolk and Essex, † from which two counties last named the American representatives emigrated to New England. The family, now long extinct in the northern counties, became noted in Suffolk through

\* "Ruggles; from Ruggeley, a local name in Staffordshire; *Doomsday Book*: Rugehala, Rugelie. It occurs also as Rogyll and Ruggelay. The arms of Ruggeley and Ruggles are identical. Members of the family emigrated to New England in 1637."—*Barber's British Family Names, 2nd edition*.

† *Wright's History of Essex, England*.



ESSEX COUNTY, ENGLAND. SPAINS HALL.  
RESIDENCE OF SAMUEL RUGGLES, 1760.

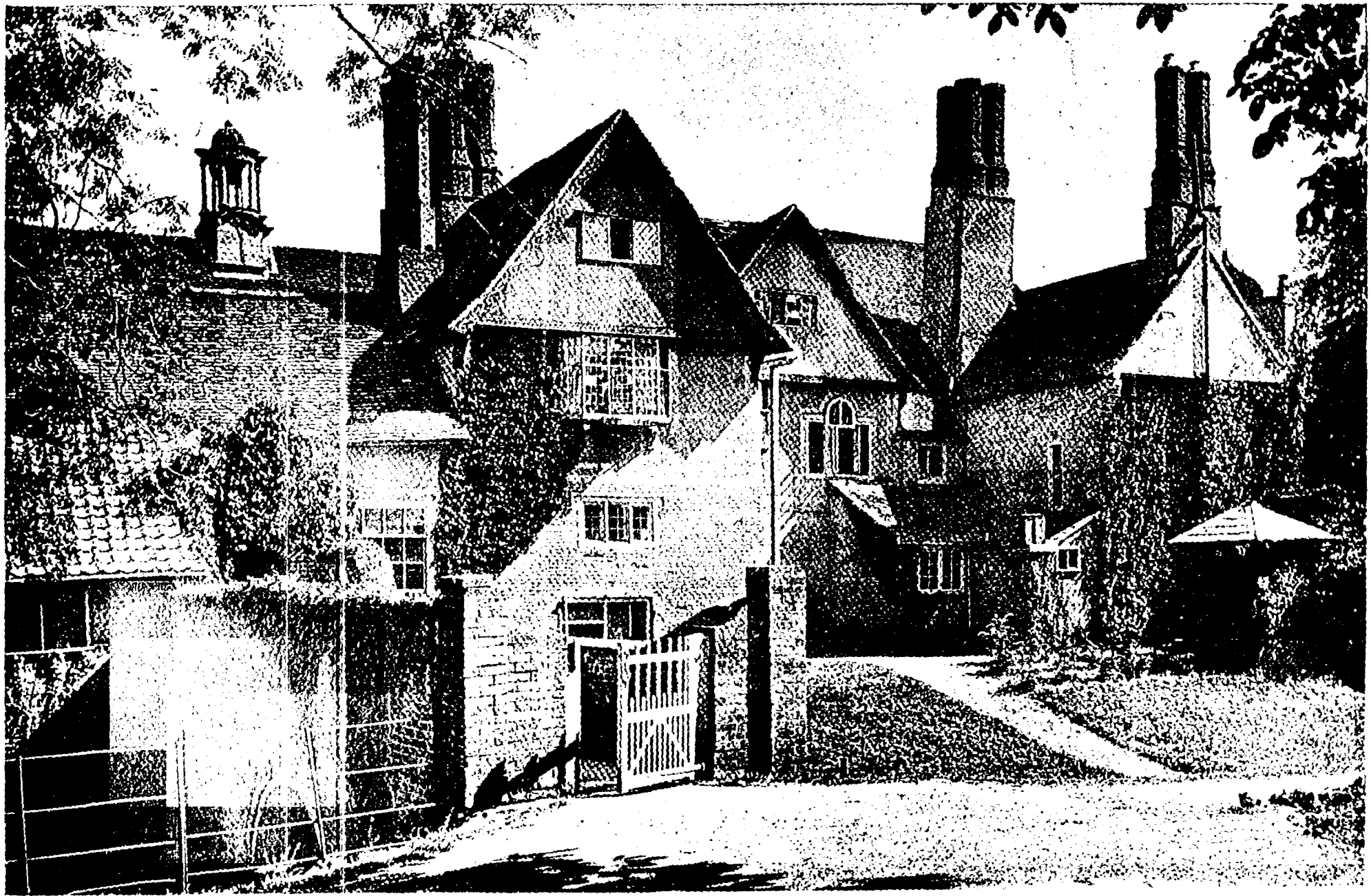


George Ruggles,\* a distinguished member, till his death in 1622, of the London company that founded Virginia; and has been prominent in Essex since 1680, when John Ruggles purchased Headwell Hall in Bocking. Eighty years later, his great-grandson, Samuel Ruggles, acquired the manor of Spains Hall, in Braintree, in the same county, which passed at the death of his only child to his nephew, Thomas Ruggles, whose descendants have since held it. Its present owner is Archibald Ruggles-Brise, whose father, Colonel Sir Samuel Ruggles-Brise, represented the county in Parliament for many years.†

It is one of the most beautiful estates in East Anglia, and though situated only fifty miles from London, is yet distant ten miles from the nearest railway station. It stands in a large and well planted park, and portions of it are thought to have been built during the reign of Henry VIII. Traces of the moat may still be seen and other evidences of

\* A plate of his coat of arms was printed in the *William and Mary College Quarterly*. These bearings are the same as the Ruggles arms in Christ Church, Philadelphia, and in the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

† Major-General John Ruggles, British Indian Army, born in Lewisham, Kent, England, 1827, was of the Essex family. He led the attacking column in the Battle of the Stockades, March 15, 1865, which victory enlarged the boundaries of the Empire by the annexation of the Dooars in Bhootan to British territory.



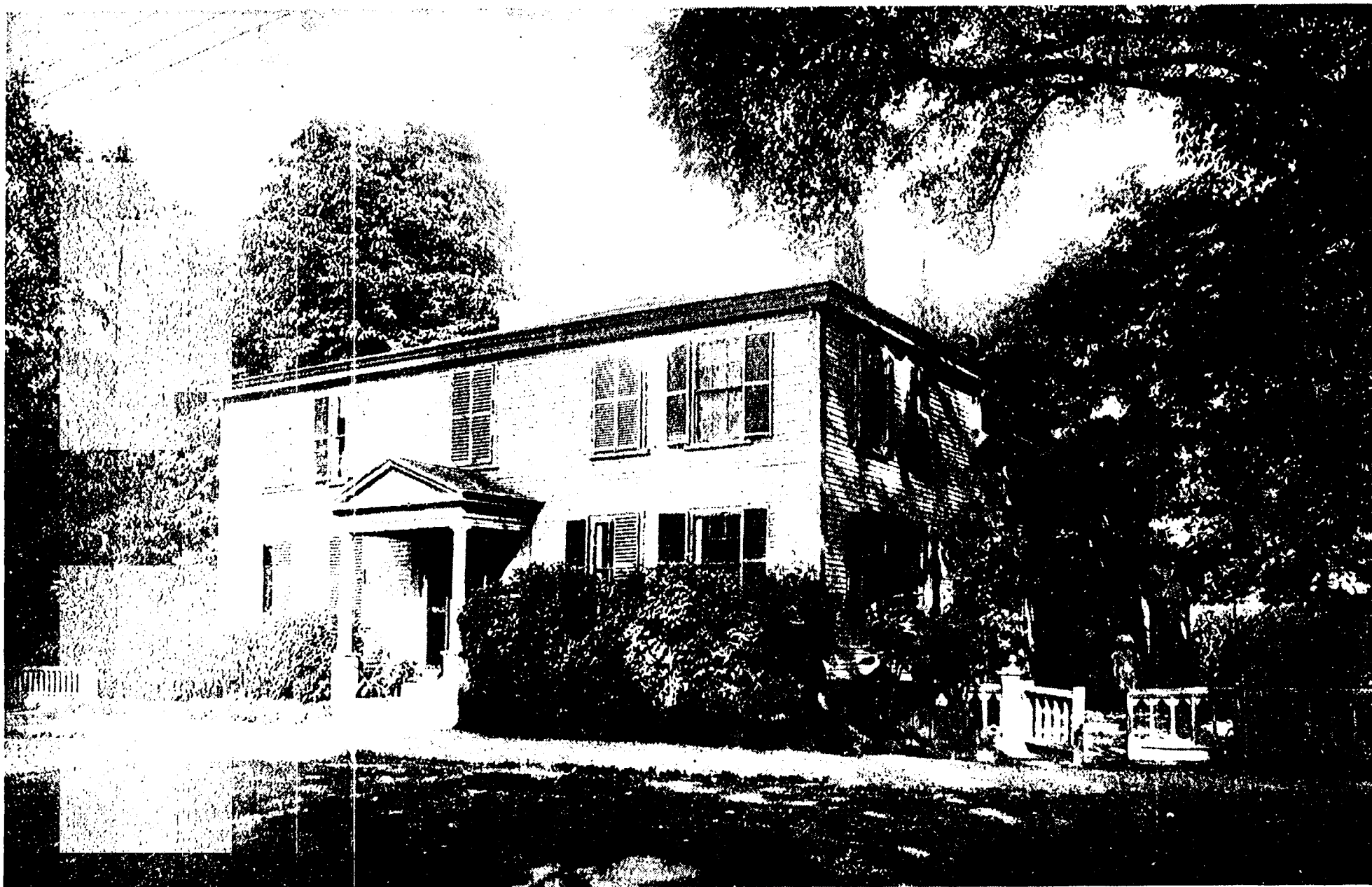
ESSEX COUNTY, ENGLAND.  
THE COVERED MOAT, SPAINS HALL.



the period of its first construction are visible. Its entrance, or west front, ivy-covered, is noticeable for its rich coloring and the massive effect of its stepped gables, tall chimneys and great hall window; and the south front for its bell turret, and the long stretch of windows of liberal width, giving this part an especially genial character, to which its outlook upon the flower gardens is an added attraction.

Of the four New England immigrants, Thomas and John of Roxbury,\* George of Boston and Braintree, and Samuel of Boston, the home of only one remains — the Braintree (now Quincy) house of George Ruggles, who came with Governor Winthrop to Boston in 1630. Three of his children were born in Boston before his removal to Braintree in 1640. This house, occupied in 1902 by one of the Adams family, is numbered 79 Elm Street, Quincy. It possesses a venerable dignity that nearby modern surroundings cannot destroy, though the growth of the neighborhood threatens its existence and it is

\* Adjutant-General George D. Ruggles, U. S. A. 1893-1897, Chief of Staff to General Pope, 1862, and Adjutant-General Army of the Potomac, 1865, was descended from John of Roxbury.



QUINCY, MASSACHUSETTS.  
OLD RUGGLES HOUSE.





unlikely to stand many years more. United States Senator John Ruggles of Maine (1834-1840) was descended from George Ruggles of Boston and Braintree.

The Roxbury house of Joseph Ruggles is now known as No. 2 Centre Street. Much of its former appearance is lost in the proximity of newly erected structures, encroaching upon the grounds about the place. The following account of the house was printed some years ago in a Boston paper:

“The house was built during the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and was for many years occupied by one of the Ruggles family. East of it stood the original Ruggles estate, portions of which still remain. Nearly opposite the old mansion is one of Paul Dudley’s parting stones, with the words, ‘Dedham and Rhode Island — Cambridge and Watertown — The Parting Stone: P. Dudley.’ These were the inscriptions that Lord Percy read as he passed on his way to Lexington that hot April afternoon in 1775, to deliver Major Pitcairn from the ‘blood-thirsty Yankees.’ The house was occupied as



ROXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS. HOUSE OF JOSEPH RUGGLES.  
BUILT 1721.



a barrack by some of the Americans under General Ward. This General Ward, who commanded the right wing of the American army during the siege of Boston, had his headquarters next door in the old Ruggles mansion.\* In later years it passed into the hands of the Turners, and from that time its history has been uneventful.

“The dwelling has been preserved through all these years, as far as was consistent, in its original form and appearance, from the moss-covered foundation to the crumbling brick chimneys, just as it must have looked in the moonlight to Ebenezer Dorr as he flew past on that memorable night in April, 1775, and took the road at the ‘parting stone’ towards Cambridge to alarm the people of the coming of the British.” †

This house was inherited by Captain Joseph Ruggles, one of whose sons was United States Congressman Nathaniel Ruggles of Massachusetts (1813-1819), and who had his home where now is 22 Centre Street, a large brick-end, three-story

\* Built by Thomas Ruggles, 1637, taken down in 1898. The gable is seen at the left of the illustration. The new building is numbered 50 Eliot Square.

† *Boston Daily Advertiser*, May 12, 1887.



ROXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS.  
RESIDENCE OF NATHANIEL RUGGLES, 1786.



structure that even in the decay of recent years retained some suggestion of its former grandeur. Another son was Joseph Ruggles, the Roxbury lawyer, whose imposing residence, upon the site of the present Norfolk House in Eliot Square, was noted for lavish entertainments, and whose social movements were on a scale far in advance of the custom of his day.

Despite the stately reminder in the form of the fine old mansion, numbered 175 Brattle Street, in Cambridge,\* the connection of the Ruggles family with Cambridge was comparatively brief. Its representatives there were Edward Ruggles, who died in 1765, and George Ruggles, the noted Tory, whose property was confiscated and who passed his later days in England, and there died in 1779. They were both men of great wealth for the times; Edward by his will left property in Cambridge, Roxbury, Newton and Warwick, in Pomfret, Connecticut, and in Canada. His wife was Hannah, daughter of Samuel Craft of Roxbury. His granddaughter was the wife of Hon. Caleb Davis, and has many descendants.

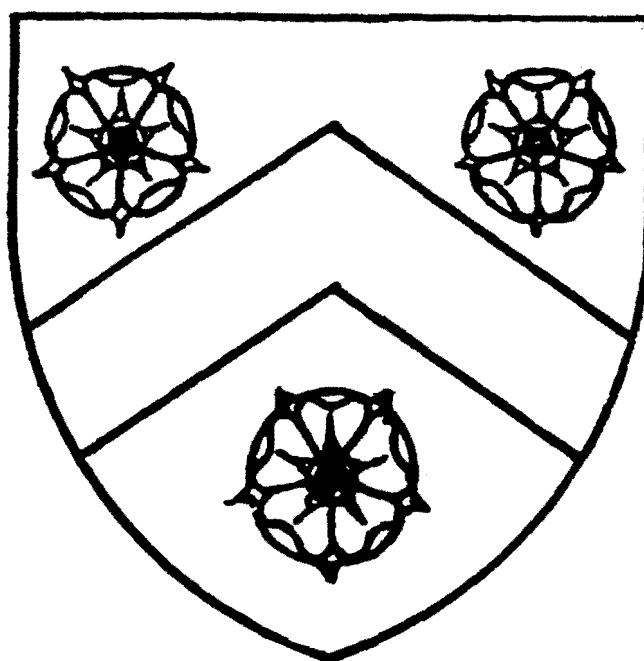
\* "The Ruggles House has a dignity and charm peculiar to itself."—*Freese's Historic Houses and Spots.*





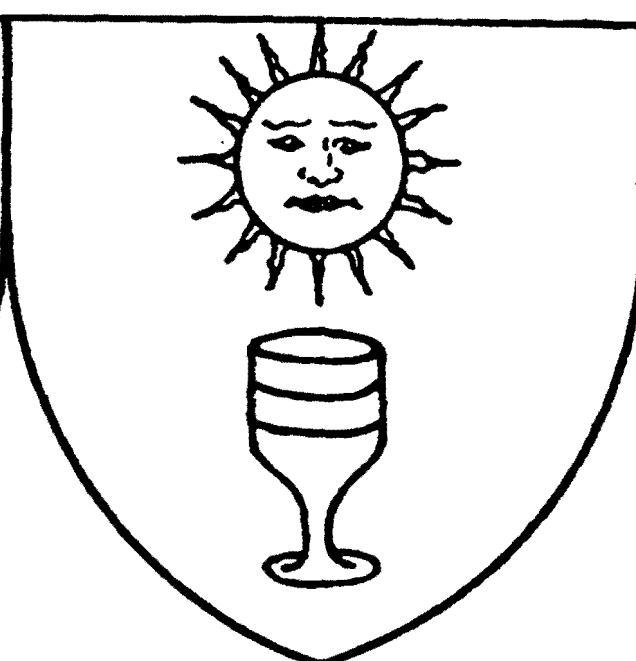
THE RUGGLES MANSION, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

RUGGLES



ARMS: *Argent*, between three roses, a chevron *gules*.

VASSALL



ARMS: *Azure*, in chief a sun, in base a chalice *or*.

The above illustrations appeared in The Boston Transcript



His son Edward inherited the Connecticut estates. Three sons of the latter were Revolutionary soldiers. Benjamin Ruggles, United States Senator from Ohio (1815-1833), was a grandson of Edward of Pomfret. It is interesting to note in the Roxbury town records that Edward Ruggles in 1739 headed the list of owners of African slaves.

George Ruggles married Susannah, a daughter of Major Leonard Vassall, one of the old Cambridge colonial families. At that time the line of superb residences on Brattle Street was occupied by families related or allied by marriage. "Never had I chanced upon such an agreeable situation. Seven families, who were connected with each other, partly by ties of relationship and partly by affection, had here farms, gardens and magnificent homes, and not far off plantations of fruit. The owners of these were in the habit of daily meeting each other in the afternoons, now at the house of one, and now at another."\* This house subsequently became a private school for boys, and had the distinction of including among its pupils James Russell Lowell, William Wetmore Story and Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

\* *Letters of Baroness Riedesel.*

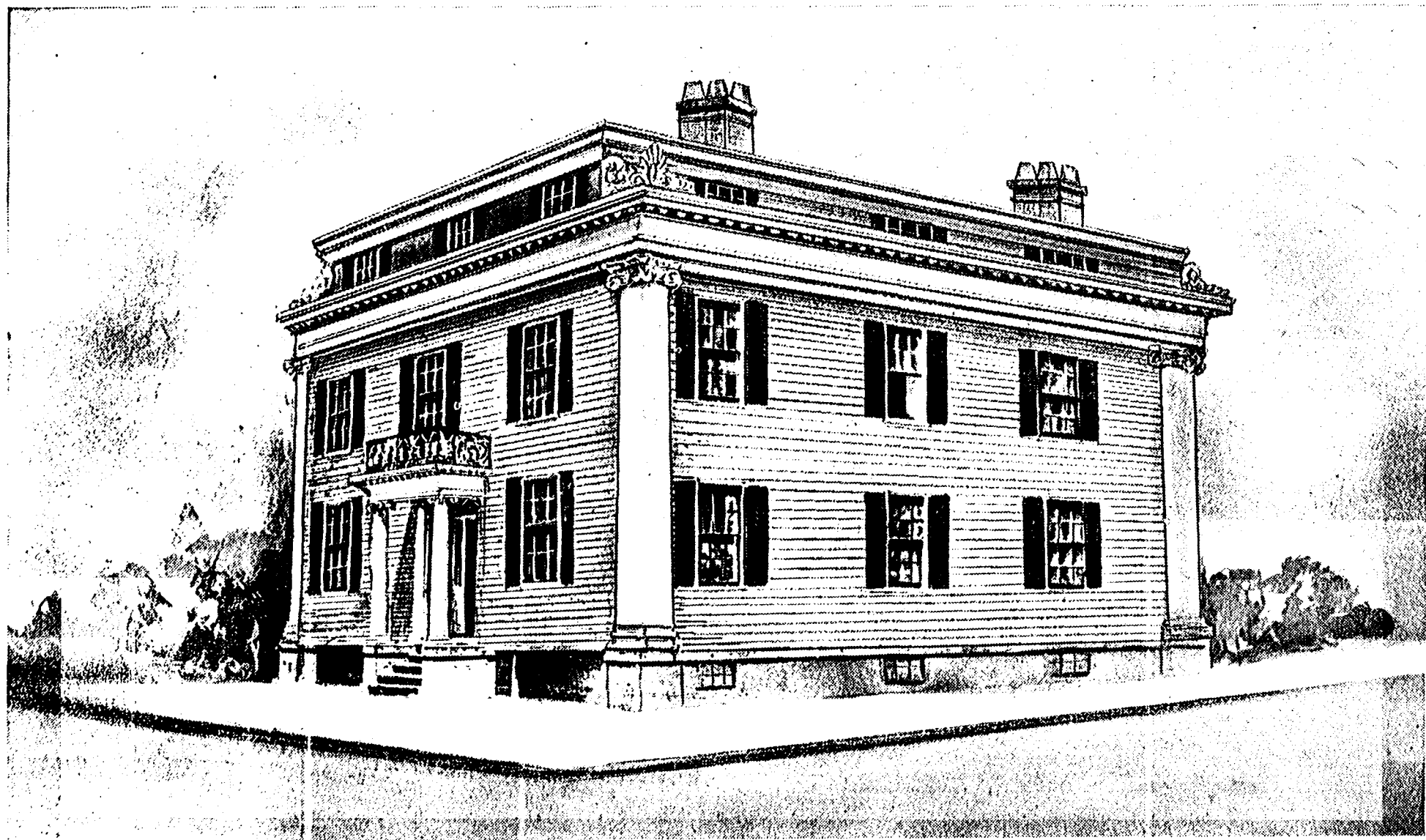


MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
HOUSE OF CAPT. JOHN RUGGLES



The home of Captain John Ruggles, in Milton, stood on Canton Avenue, near the present Atherton Street.\* The property is now included in the Babcock estate and no structure occupies its site. Captain Ruggles was a soldier of the Revolution, and his father was Captain John Ruggles, who commanded the Roxbury company in the Louisburg expedition of 1745. By the old line of primogeniture, this particular family was the senior branch in America. Captain Ruggles, of Milton, married Mary Wadsworth of the same town, and their only son, Hon. John Ruggles, was a prominent figure in the life of Milton. He married also a Wadsworth, and had but one son, John Ruggles, of Brookline, whose wife was a daughter of Hon. Luther Gardner. By his death in 1897, the branch became extinct. The illustration shows the old house after a bay window had been added, which detracts from its appearance as an example of the construction of bygone days. The situation is one of the finest to be discovered in that most beautiful suburb of Boston.

*\*The building was taken down in 1900*



NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND  
HOUSE OF NATHANIEL SPRAGUE RUGGLES





Nathaniel Sprague Ruggles's Newport residence fronted on Thames Street, and was on the corner of Ann Street. On the opposite side of Thames Street, extending to the shore, was his flower garden of uniform frontage with the grounds of his house lot. This garden plot was symmetrically laid out with paths and flower beds, shrubbery and shade trees, and on the water's edge a charming summer house made a cool retreat. In the changes that time has wrought in that part of the city, it is well nigh impossible now to realize the attractions of former days that attached to the stately houses and their surroundings. Mr. Ruggles's wife was Mary Leonard, daughter of James and Martha (Burroughs) Phillips of Newport.

Hon. Micah Haskell Ruggles of Fall River, who first took up his abode there in 1826, was a brother of Nathaniel Sprague Ruggles. He was the treasurer of the Pocasset Company, and for twenty years conducted the increasing business of that corporation. His grasp of commercial and legal points was a



FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS

BUILT BY MICAH HASKELL RUGGLES, 1857



remarkable talent, and his convincing methods of argument in swaying the opinions of his associates, led Rufus Choate to say of him: "Had he been a counselor by training, he would have made one of the greatest lawyers the country ever had;" and EARL'S HISTORY OF FALL RIVER expresses a like view: "It is obvious that had he turned his attention to the profession of the Law, he would have taken rank with the foremost of its great leaders." Mr. Ruggles's first wife was Sophia T. Willis,\* and his second wife was the daughter of Samuel Rodman, of New Bedford.

His home was on North Main, Maple and Walnut Streets, where the present County Court House stands. It was destroyed by fire in 1856, and he erected on the same spot, the following year, the house shown in the picture. After his death this was sold to one of the Borden family, from whom the title passed to the County, and the house was removed to make way for the new Court House building. The location was exceptional at the time of his residence there, the front outlook being a view of the beautiful Mount Hope Bay.

*\*Dr. Edward Ruggles, noted landscape painter, was their son.*



RUTLAND, VERMONT.  
RESIDENCE OF MAJOR JOHN RUGGLES, 1800.



A lineal descendant of Edward Ruggles of Cambridge was Major John Ruggles of Rutland, Vermont. He was born in Pomfret, Connecticut, and settled in Rutland in 1794. His three wives were: Mary, daughter of Henry Gould of Concord, Massachusetts, Eunice, daughter of Phineas Kingsley of Rutland, and Sarah, daughter of Nathaniel Beaman of Rutland. His homestead\* is situated on what was formerly known as "Ruggles Hill," and his holdings once included all that section comprising the business quarter of the city of Rutland. He died in 1831, and this property was soon after sold. The house has suffered somewhat from the action of time, and its environment has changed greatly, yet much still remains to remind us of its old-time elegance and hospitality. The nearest neighbors were the Pierponts. These two families, of close friendship always, over a period of more than two and a half centuries, had both been among the first in Roxbury, and from Massachusetts had removed to Connecticut, and finally to Vermont and Rutland.

\* 31 West Street.



MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
HOUSE OF THOMAS EDWIN RUGGLES  
Built 1635





The Pierpont mansion still exists in good preservation.

Major John Ruggles has numerous descendants in Vermont, Massachusetts, New York and Illinois.



VIEW FROM THE HOUSE OF DAVID RUGGLES, NEWBURGH, N. Y.

From an old steel engraving

