

***139 Federal Street  
Salem***

Built for  
***Capt. Nehemiah Buffinton***  
Shipmaster  
***c.1810***

Enlarged for  
***Ephraim Brown***  
Baker  
***1832***



Capt. Frederick G. Ward and Mrs. Elizabeth (Spencer) Ward,  
who resided here with their children in the 1840s  
(see EIHC 44:18)

*139 Federal Street  
Salem*

**This house was built c.1810 for Capt. Nehemiah Buffinton, shipmaster, and was enlarged in 1832 for Ephraim Brown, baker. It was the boyhood home of Frederick T. Ward (1831-1862), warlord of China.**

In 1785 Capt. Nehemiah Buffinton, Salem mariner, for 400 li purchased from the Joseph Dowst estate a wooden dwelling house and a parcel of land that fronted 76' on the main street (Essex Street) and ran back to "the new Street" (Federal Street), where it fronted 70' (ED 144:29). Capt. Buffinton resided in the house on Essex Street, and used the back land as a garden, evidently.

Nehemiah Buffinton (1745-1832) was born in 1745, the son of James Buffinton and Elizabeth Gould. He was bred a mariner, and followed the sea as a merchant sailor. Salem's trade was based on codfish, which was caught by fishermen far offshore and then brought home to be "cured" until it was hard and dry and could be shipped long distances. This was a staple food in Catholic Europe (Spain and Portugal especially) and also in the Caribbean, where it fed the slaves. To Europe went the "merchantable" cod (high-grade), and to the Caribbean went the "refuse" cod (low quality). Lumber, horses, and foodstuffs were also sent to the Caribbean, whence came sugar, molasses, cotton, and mahogany. From Europe came back finished goods, salt, wine, fruit, feathers, and leather. There was also some trade between Salem and the Chesapeake Bay area, which provided corn, wheat, and tobacco, and between Salem and Charleston, which had rice.

Most merchant vessels were small, under 60 tons. Timothy Orne was the leading merchant of the 1730s and 1740s, followed by his protégé, Richard Derby (1712-1783). Up until the time of the Revolution (1775), Salem's trade was prosperous but modest.

Nehemiah Buffinton may have had the command of vessels before the Revolution. In 1774 he married Elizabeth Proctor, daughter of John Proctor and Mary Epes of Salem. They would have no children, or at least none that survived. With the coming of war (1775-1783), Salem's merchants sent their merchant vessels out as privateers, to prey on the British transport and merchant vessels. Nehemiah went a-privateering, perhaps as commander, in the 1770s. In July, 1780, when he was approved as commander of the privateer ship *Rhodes*, he was 34, a resident of

Danvers, 5' 10" tall, with a light complexion (see pp. 297, 326-7, **Buffington Family in America**). Ship's boy on the *Rhodes* was Francis Warden, 18, 5' 4" tall with a light complexion, the son of housewright John Warden of Essex Street near Beckford (MSSRW 16:552).

After the war ended in 1783, Salem's merchants were ready to push their ships and cargoes into all parts of the known world. Hasket Derby, William Gray, and Joseph Peabody were the leaders in this effort. In 1784, Derby opened trade with Saint Petersburg, Russia; and in 1784 and 1785 he dispatched trading vessels to Africa and China, respectively. It was Capt. Nehemiah Buffinton who commanded Derby's 300-ton bark *Light Horse* on that first-ever American voyage to Russia. The voyage, which began on June 15, was not a success, for there was little market for Derby's cargo of sugar. The return cargo consisted of canvas, duck cloth, iron, and hemp. Although unprofitable, this voyage opened a large and important trade for Salem (see J.D. Phillips, **Salem & The Indies**, p. 40)

Voyages to India soon followed, and to the Spice Islands (Sumatra, Java, Malaya, etc.). Capt. Buffinton participated in this ever-expanding commerce. In 1785, as noted, he purchased the Essex Street house and its land running back to Federal Street. His first wife, Elizabeth Proctor, having died, he married, second, in January, 1786, Elizabeth Ashton (1765?-1845), a daughter of Jacob Ashton, a Salem merchant. Again, they seem not to have had surviving children.

In 1790 (per published census, p. 94, col. 2), the Buffinton house on Essex Street was occupied as a two-family by the families of Capt. Nehemiah Buffinton and his brother-in-law John Treadwell, who became a U.S. Senator. In the Buffinton domicile were two men and two women; in the Treadwell unit were two men, a boy, and four women; the two families were there in 1798 as well (see 1798 Federal Direct Tax for Salem).

The 1798 Direct Tax shows that Capt. Nehemiah Buffinton did not own another house in Salem, so it must be that this house (#139) had not yet been built. Since Capt. Buffinton did not sell off the back land here on Federal Street, and kept it until his death in 1832, it is hard to know exactly when the earliest part of the present house was built. Rental houses were taxed to the people who resided in them, and not to the owner. Judging from the frame and cellar evidence, this house was constructed in two builds, and the second build, along the street-line to the east, took place in the late "Federal" period. Probably the earliest part of the house was built before the War of 1812; it was certainly used for rental income.

Throughout the 1780s and 1790s, the merchants and mariners raised Salem to a place of commercial eminence in Massachusetts and the young nation. In 1798 Salem opened the coffee trade with Mocha (Arabia). The size and number of vessels was increased, and by 1800 Salem was the greatest trading port in America, with some of the wealthiest merchants. It was at this time (1792) that Salem's first bank was founded: the Essex Bank was followed by the Salem Bank (1803) and Merchants Bank (1811).

A "False War" with France lasted from 1798 to 1800, and then an undeclared war with Britain began. Merchant shipping faced new dangers from these enemies, but Salem at the turn of the century was growing and thriving. The town's merchants were among the wealthiest in the country. In Samuel McIntire, they had a local architect who could help them realize their desires for large and beautiful homes built and decorated in the Adamesque style. This style (called "Federal" today) had been developed years before by the Adam brothers in England and featured fanlight doorways, palladian windows, elongated pilasters and columns, and large windows. It was introduced to New England by Charles Bulfinch upon his return from England in 1790. The State House in Boston was his first institutional composition; and soon Beacon Hill was being built up with handsome residences in the Bulfinch manner; and Samuel McIntire, a talented joiner and draftsman of Salem, was quick to adapt the new style to Salem's larger lots, as on Chestnut Street, Federal Street, and Washington Square.

McIntire's first local composition, the Jerathmeel Peirce house (on Federal Street, near North), contrasts greatly with his Adamesque compositions of just a few years later. The interiors of this Adam style differed from the "Georgian" and Post-Colonial by eschewing walls of wood paneling in favor of plastered expanses painted in bright colors or, more commonly, covered in bold wallpapers. In vernacular (less high-style) houses, the "wallpaper" effect was achieved by painted walls with an overlay of stenciled designs. The Adam style put a premium on handsome casings and carvings of central interior features such door-caps and chimney-pieces (McIntire's specialty). On the exterior, the Adam style included elegant fences and houses that were often built of brick, and, sometimes, attenuated porticoes and, in the high style, string courses, swagged panels, and even two-story pilasters.

Salem's boom came to an end with a crash, as, in January, 1808, Pres. Jefferson and the Congress imposed an embargo on all American shipping in hopes of forestalling war. The Embargo proved futile and nearly ruinous in Salem, whose commerce ceased. As partisan Democratic-Republicans, the seafarers of the Derby

Street area, led by the Crowninshield family, loyally supported the Embargo until it was lifted in spring, 1809. Salem, out of patience with Jefferson, furiously resumed its seafaring commerce, but still the British preyed on American shipping, Salem's included; and three years later, in June, 1812, war was declared

The War of 1812 brought riches to a few and destitution to many in Salem, whose ships, sent out as privateers, were often taken, and many of whose men, reduced to privateering for a living, languished in prisons or died of wounds. The war ended in February, 1815.

In 1830 (p.383, census) Paul Upton was head of the household residing here. Paul Upton was born in 1760, the sixth son of a tailor, Caleb Upton, who moved to Amherst, New Hampshire. As a boy, Paul was brought up to be a farmer. He was noted for his great strength and determination, and eventually he became the best farmer in Salem. Paul Upton married Rebecca Peirce in 1785, and with her had seven children, six sons and finally, in October, 1799, a daughter, Rebecca, within a month of whose birth Mrs. Upton died, and was followed into the grave by her infant daughter in December, 1799. Mr. Upton married, second, in 1801, Elizabeth Peirce.

In 1803, Mr. Upton took the lease on the Pickman farm in South Salem, which he improved to such a great extent that the owner, Col. Benjamin Pickman, enlarged it to 500 acres. By the summer of 1816 it was a model farm, with extensive orchards, acres of onions, and parsnips, beets, turnips, carrots, potatos, and currants. Mr. Upton had built more than a mile of stone walls, and had laid out and built roads on the farm, on which were raised hogs, cows, and poultry as well. Rev. William Bentley was a great admirer of Mr. Upton, who received a visit from the minister on 9 July 1816, just as Mr. Upton was about to begin work as manager ("master") of the town's poor farm on Salem Neck (see Bentley's diary for that date, appended).

Mr. Upton & family moved into the large and handsome new Alms (Charity) House on Collins Cove in November, 1816. The Charity House was a combination hospital and poor-house. Mr. Upton tried to organize the inmates so as to farm the surrounding grounds and make it self-supporting (see Bentley, entry 22 Nov. 1816). Paul Upton's efforts were suspended while the town wrangled over what part of the grounds could be farmed. By 1818, Mr. Bentley observed that the House had drawn in many people, some of them drunkards ("Capt. J.W. thinks all they do in labor does not pay for the rum they drink").

By 1830, when he resided here on Federal Street, Paul Upton was 69, living with his wife, Rebecca, with a man & woman in their 20s, a girl 10-14, and a woman in her 80s. All of Mr. Upton's sons had become shipmasters. His son Capt. John Upton had commanded the privateers *Helen* and *Cossack* in the War of 1812. Two of his many grandsons would become U.S. Consuls in Brazil, and one settled there. (See Sidney Perley, **History of Salem**, II:377-379).

Mr. Paul Upton was not well by the time he resided here, and he died on July 24, 1830, of "hydrothorax," in his 70<sup>th</sup> year.

In 1831 this "small house" was occupied by Amos Putnam and owned by Nehemiah Buffinton, per the Salem valuations of that year. Mr. Putnam may have been the same Amos Putnam, carpenter (workshop on Norman Street), who resided on Crombie Street in 1836 (per Salem Directory 1836).

Capt. Nehemiah Buffinton was very old by that time, and he died on 20 March 1832, aged 87 years. Capt. Buffinton devised, in his will of 1816, to his nephew Jonathan Buffinton certain real estate that had belonged to Nehemiah's father James Buffinton; and the rest of the property was to go to Nehemiah's "affectionate wife Elisabeth Buffinton."

On 7 June 1832 Mrs. Elizabeth Buffinton sold the Federal Street land with "dwelling house and all other buildings thereon" to Ephraim Brown, a Salem baker, for \$1,120 (ED 265:170). At that time, the lot fronted 100' on Federal Street, easterly 120' on Shepard's land, southerly 90' on Buffinton land, and westerly 120' on land of Rogers. It is highly likely, from architectural evidence, that Mr. Brown added to the house along the street and to the east of the existing small house there. His additions and interior renovations give the house its present character and appearance. It seems that he did not inhabit the house, but used it for rental income while he continued to reside in an old house on Mill Street, where he owned other buildings too.

Ephraim Brown (1785-1846), born in 1785 in Ashburnham, had come to Salem as a young man, and set up as a baker. He and his wife Rachel would have four sons and a daughter. Evidently he found a ready market for his baked goods; and he purchased a house and bakery on Mill Street, where the family ever afterward resided, overlooking the wharves and warehouses of Salem's inner harbor, and the dam of the mill-pond.

After the War of 1812, Salem merchants rebuilt their fleets and resumed their worldwide trade, to great effect. A new custom house was built in 1819, at the head of Derby Wharf. Through the 1820s the foreign trade continued prosperous; and a new trade in tallow was opened in 1821 with Madagascar. A trade was opened with Zanzibar in 1825, and it soon subsumed that with Mocha and Madagascar. In 1831 Capt. John Bertram of Salem, sailing for N.L. Rogers & Co., purchased the sultan's shipment of gum copal (used to make varnish) and brought it and more back to Salem. This opened a huge and lucrative trade in which Salem dominated; and its vessels thus gained access to all of the east Africa ports. From 1827 to 1870, there were 189 arrivals in Salem from Zanzibar, carrying ivory, gum copal, and coffee.

Despite the Zanzibar trade, Salem's general foreign commerce fell off sharply beginning in 1830. With the advent of railroads and canals in the 1830s diverted both capital and trade away from the coast. American goods were now being produced at a level where imports were not so much needed as in the past, and the interior of the country was being opened for settlement. People moved west, including some from Salem, and the economic attention of the merchants turned westward with them.

One of Mr. Brown's tenants at "63 Federal Street" (as it was then numbered) was Capt. Jeremiah Page, a mariner and ship-owner who resided here with his family in 1836, while next door (at modern #143) was Oliver Carlton, a noted school-master, and his family.

Jeremiah Page was born in 1796, in Danvers, the son of Samuel Page and Rebecca Putnam. He was named for his grandfather, Col. Jeremiah Page of Danvers, a notable brickmaker and military man who had married into the Andrew family.

Young Jeremiah was evidently apprenticed to learn the trade of a mariner. He likely sailed out of Salem as a boy, and was twelve at the time of the Embargo. He may well have sailed on privateers through the War of 1812, after which he resumed his seafaring career. At some point he was promoted to the rank of shipmaster; and in 1821, aged 24, he married Mary Pindar, 21, of Beverly.

Jeremiah Page soon advanced from the quarterdeck to the counting-house, and by the mid-1820s he was a merchant shipowner. In November, 1826, Jeremiah Page and John H. Andrews were owners of the 241-ton brig *Herald*, Capt. Royal Prescott (EIHC 40:229). In November, 1829, Jeremiah Page, John H. Andrews, Stephen C. Phillips, and Allen Putnam were owners of the 298-ton ship *Italy*, Capt.

Allen Putnam, built at Salem in 1829 and sold to New York parties in 1831 (EIHC 40:237). Jeremiah Page was also a part-owner of the merchant vessels *Alfred*, *Patriot*, *Rebecca*, and (in 1839) the 696-ton ship *Susan Drew* (EIHC 41:313,326,375; 45:204, 46:333, etc., also Danvers Hist. Colls. 9:55).

**Jeremiah PAGE (1796-1867) s/o Samuel Page and Rebecca Putnam, died 1 Nov. 1867. He m. 11 March 1821 (Beverly VR) Mary PINDAR of Beverly, b. 9 April 1799, Beverly, d/o John Pindar/Pender & Polly (Mary) Batchelder.**

**Known issue:**

- 1. Mary Elizabeth, 1824, unmarried in 1877**
- 2. Rebecca P., 1826, m. Mr. Glover.**
- 3. Ellen M., 1828, unmarried in 1877**
- 4. Clara L., 1832, m. Charles B. Barnes, of Boston**
- 5. Laura D., 1839, m. Marcus P. Hall, of San Francisco**

During the late 1820s, Salem faded as a seaport. The Zanzibar trade notwithstanding, merchants had to shift their investments out of maritime pursuits and into manufacturing and transportation. Some did not, and were ruined. Many of Salem's prominent younger men moved to Boston in the 1820s. The advent of railroads and canals in the 1830s diverted both capital and trade away from the coast. American goods were now being produced at a level where imports from overseas were not so much needed as in the past. The interior of the country was being opened for settlement, and people moved west, so the economic attention of the merchants turned westward with them. The fading of trade was capped in 1830 by a horrifying crime that disgraced several families in the town, and led many others to move away. Old Capt. Joseph White, a wealthy merchant, was murdered in his house; and the killers proved to be his own relatives, Crowninshields and Knapps. Their trial was sensational, and painted Salem in lurid colors. Several more respectable families moved away.

In 1835 Jeremiah Page, Salem master mariner, became the majority owner of the estate of his deceased father, Samuel Page Esq., of Danvers New Mills (ED 285:28). In 1837, as in 1836, the Capt. Jeremiah Page family resided (as tenants) at 139 ("63") Federal Street (per 1837 Salem Directory). In 1838 Capt. Page purchased the house at 140 Federal Street, and moved in. He and his family resided there for many years, during which he became president of the Marine Insurance Company of Salem. He would die in 1867, aged 71 years.



In 1836, Salem was chartered as a city, and City Hall was built 1837-8. The city seal was adopted with an already-anachronistic Latin motto of “to the farthest port of the rich East”—a far cry from “Go West, young man!” The Panic of 1837, a brief, sharp, nationwide economic depression, caused even more Salem families to head west in search of a better life. Salem had not prepared for the industrial age, and had few natural advantages. The large-scale factory towns of Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill, had the powerful waters of the Merrimack to drive the machinery of their huge textile factories, but Salem had no such river, and could not compete in textiles. The steep upper part of the North River had long been dammed for grist-mills and saw-mills. Factories had been set up in South Danvers (now Peabody), but the lower part of the North River (in Salem) served mainly to flush the waste from the many tanneries (23 by 1832) along its banks. Throughout the 1830s, the leaders of Salem scrambled to re-invent an economy for their fellow citizens, many of whom were still mariners, but without much sea-faring to do. Ingenuity, ambition, and hard work would have to carry the day.

One inspiration was the Salem Laboratory Company, Salem’s first manufacturing enterprise, founded in 1819 to produce chemicals. At the plant in North Salem on the North River, the production of blue vitriol was a specialty; and it proved a very successful business. Salem’s whale-fishery, active for many years in the early 1800s, led, in the 1830s, to the manufacturing of high-quality candles at Stage Point, along with machine oils. The candles proved very popular. Lead-manufacturing began in the 1820s, and grew large after 1830, when Wyman’s gristmills on the Forest River were retooled for making high-quality white lead and sheet lead (the approach to Marblehead is still called Lead Mills Hill, although the empty mill buildings burned down in 1960s).

These enterprises in the 1830s were a start toward taking Salem in a new direction. In 1838 the Eastern Rail Road began operating between Boston and Salem, which gave the people of Salem and environs a very direct route to the region’s largest market. The new railroad tracks ran right over the middle of the Mill Pond; the tunnel under Washington Street was built in 1839; and the line was extended to Newburyport in 1840.

In 1840 (per census), the house here was occupied by George F. Mason, his wife Anne, and their three daughters (all baptized that year): Anna Maria, Caroline Julianne, and Fanny Anne. The Masons were succeeded here in 1840 by Rev. Joseph Banvard (per Salem Valuations, ward four, 1840 & 1841, “65 Federal”). Mr. Banvard, a Baptist minister, resided here until 1842. He was educated at South Reading Academy and at Newton Theological Institution, and for 11 years,

from 1835 to 1846, served as pastor of the Central Baptist Church in Salem. He would go on to serve as pastor of the Howard Street Church in Boston 1846-1851, and then as a minister in Arlington, Worcester, and Neponset (1876-1884). (See Salem obit clipping file, Peabody Essex Museum Library, 30:173,214).

In the 1840s, new companies in new lines of business arose in Salem. The tanning and curing of leather was a very important industry by the mid-1800s. It was conducted on and near Boston Street, along the upper North River. There were 41 tanneries in 1844, and 85 in 1850, employing 550 hands. The leather business would continue to grow in importance throughout the 1800s. The lack of river power was solved by the invention of steam-driven engines, and in 1847 the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company erected at Stage Point the largest factory building in the United States, 60' wide by 400' long. It was an immediate success, and hundreds of people found employment there, many of them living in industrial tenements built nearby. A second, larger, building would be added in 1859, and a third in 1865. Also in the 1840s, a new method was introduced to make possible high-volume industrial shoe production. In Lynn, the factory system was perfected, and that city became the nation's leading shoe producer; but Salem built shoe factories too, and attracted shoe workers from outlying towns and country areas.

In the face of all this change, some members of Salem's waning merchant class continued to pursue their sea-borne businesses; but even the conditions of shipping changed, and Salem was left on the ebb tide. In the 1840s, giant clipper ships replaced the smaller vessels that Salem men had sailed around the world; and the clippers, with their deep drafts and large holds, were usually too large for Salem and its harbor. The town's shipping soon consisted of little more than Zanzibar-trade vessels and visits from Down East coasters with cargoes of fuel wood and building timber. Among the seafaring men who continued to sail from the port of Salem was Capt. Frederick G. Ward, who resided here, with his family, in 1842 and 1843 and perhaps until 1845.

Frederick G. Ward (1810-1865) was a Salem shipmaster who later became a ship-broker and merchant in New York City. He had married Elizabeth C. Spencer, 18, in 1831; and by 1842 they had four surviving children: Frederick Townsend Ward, 10, Henry T., 7, Elizabeth C., three, and Mary T., one. Capt. Ward was master of the brig *Quill*, and then of the brig *Herald* in 1836 and 1837. From 1839 forward he was master and part-owner of the brig *Ganges*, and by 1846 he was master of the schooner *John*, which he co-owned with George Devereux. (See EIHC 72:296).

The Wards' eldest son, Frederick, born on Dec. 29, 1831, was a remarkable boy, active, spirited, and a natural leader. In 1843 and 1844 he attended the Hacker School on Flint Street, and in 1845 he began at the English High School on Broad Street. Away from school, Fred was an organizer of games and sports, and had unlimited access to his father's 15-ton sloop *Vivid*, kept at Crowninshield Wharf in all weathers. He sailed her, night and day, often with a gang of friends on board. But Salem could not hold him long: when a company of soldiers visited Salem early in 1847, headed for the war in Mexico, Ward was so taken with them that he and his buddy Farnum (perhaps the Joseph Farnum later of 143 Federal Street) tried to run off to Boston to enlist. Thwarted, Ward shipped out as second mate on board the ship *Hamilton*, bound to China. He was a stern disciplinarian, as was his father; and his sense of destiny may well have been formed at this early age. His adventures took him to California, where he served as an officer on San Francisco clipper ships in the China trade, and where he adventured in the Mexican army. He arrived in China in 1858, aged 26, and remained there. In Shanghai, his courage and bearing won him a place as an officer in the Chinese army, which was trying to suppress the opium trade. The Tai-Ping rebellion erupted at that time, and a large army was forming to oppose the Manchu emperor and take Shanghai, which was the major trading port of China. The Western governments remained neutral, but Ward offered himself (for a very high fee) as head of the small imperial army. Despite a rocky start, he stopped the much-larger rebel force; then, with arms and supplies, he re-organized his army and went on the offensive. He re-took several cities from the rebels, pushing them far from Shanghai. He was wounded 15 times in battle, but always recovered, and began to be looked upon as invulnerable—a god, come from the West to save the Manchu dynasty. He drilled and enlarged his “Ever Victorious Army,” and continued to defeat the rebels well into 1862; but at the battle of Tsz-Ki he was shot again, and he died the next day, on Sept. 23, 1862. He was 30 years old. Ward's remains were interred at Sung-Kiang, and a temple erected over his grave. The Tai Ping rebellion collapsed in 1863. (See EIHC 72:297-8, and article at EIHC 44:1-64 by Robert S. Rantoul).

By 1846—back when young Fred was still sailing the *Vivid* around Salem Bay at all hours--the Wards had moved on to Derby Street, and then to Essex Street (1850). Mr. Ephraim Brown, the owner, was leasing the house here on Federal Street (then numbered 65) to Miss Sally Frye (per 1846 Salem Directory). Mr. Brown died of “palsy” on 4 Sept. 1846, aged 61 years. By his will, he left all of his property in trust for his wife Rachel, upon whose death it was to be divided equally among their five children: Ephraim Brown 3d, a Registry of Deeds clerk,



*Frederick J. Ward,*

General of the imperial army of China

1862

Mary R. B. Upton (wife of Samuel F. Upton), Daniel Brown Jr. (baker), and Joseph A. Brown and William Henry Brown (both minors) (see # 33613).

The inventory of Mr. Brown's estate was taken on 4 November 1846. His real estate consisted of this "dwelling house No. 65 Federal Street, Salem, with land under & adjoining," valued at \$3800, as well as three other houses on Mill Street, worth another \$4000. He also owned a pew in the Tabernacle Church (\$10).

In April, 1847, the easterly part of the Federal Street lot was sold for \$1520 to Michael Shepard (ED 380:191), who resided at 61 (present 135) Federal Street. This easterly parcel (which became the westerly portion of Mr. Shepard's homestead) fronted 46' on Federal Street and ran back 120' toward Essex Street.

The remaining land, with the house, was sold in August, 1848, for \$2600 to the tenant, Miss Sally Frye (ED 403:85). The lot fronted 54' on Federal Street and ran back 120' where it butted 46' on land of Goodhue.

Sally Frye was born in Salem in 1810, the daughter of John Frye and Mary (Erwin) Frye (see pp. 57-58 of *The Frye Family* by Ellen Frye Barker, NY, 1920). Her father, John Frye, a mariner, was the son of Col. Peter Frye, a very prominent pre-Revolutionary merchant and office-holder who, at the time of the Revolution, had remained loyal to the King and fled to England. John Frye remained in Salem and married Mary Erwin. They had sons John Jr., Benjamin, and Joseph, and daughters Sally, Mary, and Eliza. John Frye was evidently lost at sea. Of the Frye children, Mary married Samuel D. How, and Eliza married Benjamin Cutts.

Sally Frye remained unmarried; evidently she had an independent income, for she is not listed as working at a trade. In 1836 she had purchased for \$1850 a house on Lynn Street, which she sold in 1842 for \$2000 to her brother-in-law, blacksmith Benjamin Cutts (ED 292:114, 331:18). She may have resided with the Cutts family. By 1850 she was forty, and in the census she was listed as residing here on Federal Street alone, with real estate worth \$2600 (1850 census, ward four, house 696). Her neighbors worked as grocers, wheelwrights, wool-pullers, merchants, instrument-makers, varnishers, and tinsmith-workers. Only one was a mariner. By 1850 Salem was about finished as a working port; and its glory days were over. An excellent picture of Salem's waterfront, during its period of decline, is given by Hawthorne in his "introductory section" (really a sketch of Salem) to **The Scarlet Letter**, which he began while working in the Custom House.

In 1860 the house was occupied by Sally Frye, 60, and by her servant Jane Marberry, 18 (see census, house 2109, ward four). Miss Frye had personal estate worth \$5,000 and real estate worth \$2500. She remained very close to her sister Mrs. Eliza Cutts and her family of six daughters, among whom were Sally Frye Cutts and Eliza Ellen Cutts (Jr.).

The symbol of Salem's new industrial economy was the large twin-towered granite train station, which stood on filled-in land at the foot of Washington Street, where before had been the merchants' wharves extending into salt water. The demographics of Salem soon changed, for the Salem capitalists filled their factories with Irish immigrant workers as well as the native-born. Catholic churches were built, and new housing was constructed in North Salem and the Gallows Hill areas to accommodate the workers.

The Civil War began in April, 1861, and went on for four years, during which hundreds of Salem men served in the army and navy, and many were killed or died of disease or abusive treatment while imprisoned. Hundreds more suffered wounds, or broken health. The people of Salem contributed greatly to efforts to alleviate the suffering of the soldiers, sailors, and their families; and there was great celebration when the war finally ended in the spring of 1865.

In 1868 Miss Frye's sister Mrs. Eliza Ellen Cutts died. In 1870, the house was occupied by Miss Sally Frye, 69, her niece E. Ellen Cutts, 32, and a servant, Ann Lynch, 13 (see census, house 221, ward four). Miss Frye did not have many years left. She died in 1873, in her 73d year. By will (evidently), the property went from Sally Frye to her niece, Mrs. Eliza Ellen (Cutts) Walcott. Mrs. Walcott evidently rented out the house for income.

Through the 1870s, Salem continued to pursue a manufacturing course. The managers and capitalists tended to build their new, grand houses along Lafayette Street (these houses may still be seen, west of Holly Street). For the workers, they built more and more tenements near the mills of Stage Point. More factories and more people required more space for buildings, more roads, and more storage areas. After withstanding the pressures of the new industrial city for about 50 years, Salem's rivers began to disappear. The once-broad North River was filled from both shores, and became a canal along Bridge Street above the North Bridge. The large and beautiful Mill Pond, which occupied the whole area between the present Jefferson Avenue, Canal Street, and Loring Avenue, was buried here and there and finally vanished beneath streets, storage areas, junk-yards, rail-yards, and parking lots. The South River, too, with its epicenter at Central Street (that's why

there was a Custom House built there in 1805) disappeared under the pavement of Riley Plaza and New Derby Street, and its old wharves (even the mighty Union Wharf, formerly Long Wharf, at the foot of Union Street) were joined together with much in-fill and turned into coal-yards and lumber-yards. Only a canal was left, running in from Derby and Central Wharves to Lafayette Street and a little beyond.

In 1884 the tenant here was Edward A. Smith 2d, a grocer at a store at 243 Essex Street, and his family (per Salem Directory, 1884).

Salem kept building infrastructure, and new businesses, and expansions of established businesses. Retail stores prospered, and machinists, carpenters, millwrights, and other specialists all thrived. In the late 1800s, French-Canadian families began coming to town to work in Salem's mills and factories, and more houses and tenements filled in what had been open areas of the city. They were followed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by large numbers of Polish and Ukrainian families, who settled primarily in the Derby Street neighborhood.

The house remained a rental property through to the death of Mrs. Eliza Ellen Walcott on 17 January 1912. The property descended to her children, Samuel Walcott and Miss Martha Walcott.

By the eve of World War One, Salem was a bustling, polyglot city that supported large department stores and large factories of every description. Its politics were lively, and its economy was strong.

On June 25, 1914, in the morning, in Blubber Hollow (Boston Street opposite Federal), a fire started in one of Salem's fire-prone wooden tanneries. This fire soon consumed the building and raced out of control, for the west wind was high and the season had been dry. The next building caught fire, and the next, and out of Blubber Hollow the fire roared easterly, a monstrous front of flame and smoke, wiping out the houses of Boston Street, Essex Street, and upper Broad Street, and then sweeping through Hathorne, Winthrop, Endicott, and other residential streets. Men and machines could not stop it: the enormous fire crossed over into South Salem and destroyed the neighborhoods west of Lafayette Street, then devoured the mansions of Lafayette Street itself, and raged onward into the tenement district. Despite the combined efforts of heroic fire crews from many towns and cities, the fire overwhelmed everything in its path: it smashed into the large factory buildings of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company (Congress Street), which exploded in an inferno; and it rolled down Lafayette Street and across the water to Derby Street.

There, just beyond Union Street, after a 13-hour rampage, the monster died, having consumed 250 acres, 1600 houses, and 41 factories, and leaving three dead and thousands homeless. Some people had insurance, some did not; all received much support and generous donations from all over the country and the world. It was one of the greatest urban disasters in the history of the United States, and the people of Salem would take years to recover from it. Eventually, they did, and many of the former houses and businesses were rebuilt; and several urban-renewal projects (including Hawthorne Boulevard, which involved removing old houses and widening old streets) were put into effect.

In September, 1916, Samuel F. Walcott, of Wolfeboro, NH, and of Salem, for \$2000 sold to Miss Martha P. Walcott of Salem his half interest in the homestead, the boundary dimensions of which were the same as given in 1848 (ED 2343:110).

By the 1920s, Salem was once again a thriving city; and its tercentenary in 1926 was a time of great celebration. From that time forward, Salem boomed right through to the 1960s, but the arrival of suburban shopping malls and the relocation of manufacturing businesses took their toll, as they have with many other cities. More than most, Salem has navigated its way forward into the present with success, trading on its share of fame arising from the commercialization of the witchcraft delusion, but also from its great history as an unrivalled seaport and as the home of Hawthorne and McIntire. Most of all, it remains a city where the homes of the old-time merchants, mariners, and mill-operatives are all honored as a large part of what makes Salem different from any other place.

--Robert Booth for Historic Salem Inc., May, 2001



## Glossary

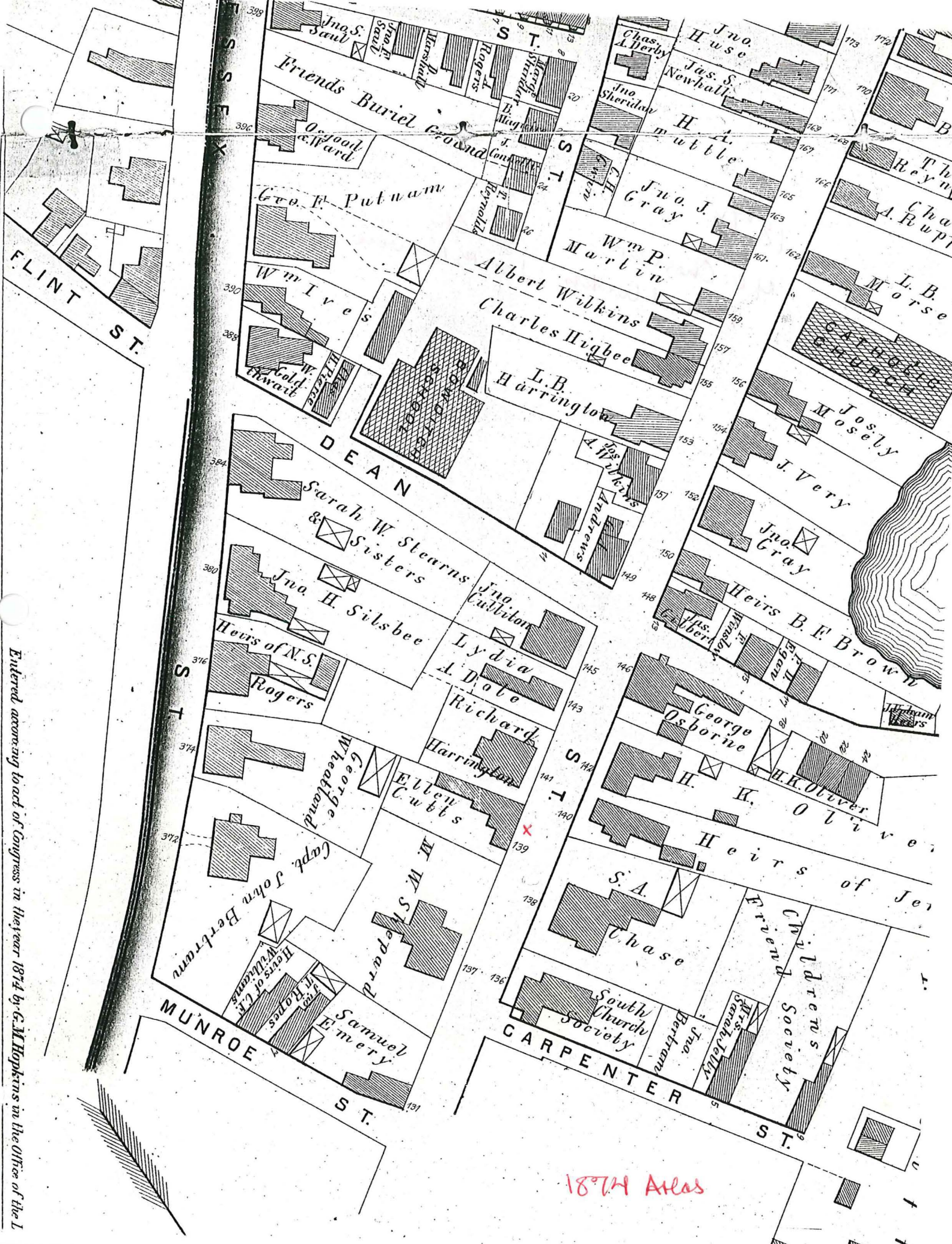
#1234 refers to probate case 1234, Essex County probate

ED 123:45 refers to book 123, page 45, Essex South Registry of Deeds

Salem Directory refers to the published Salem resident directories

Census refers to census records, taken house-by-house with occupants listed.

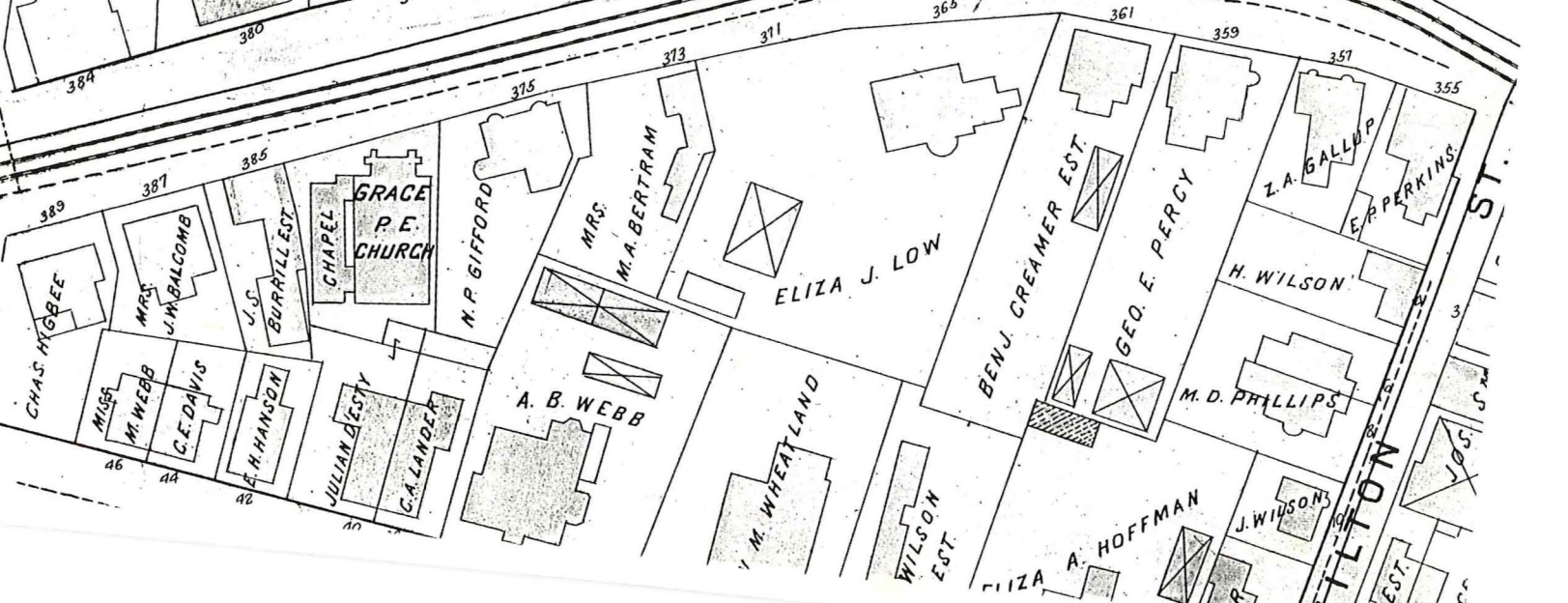
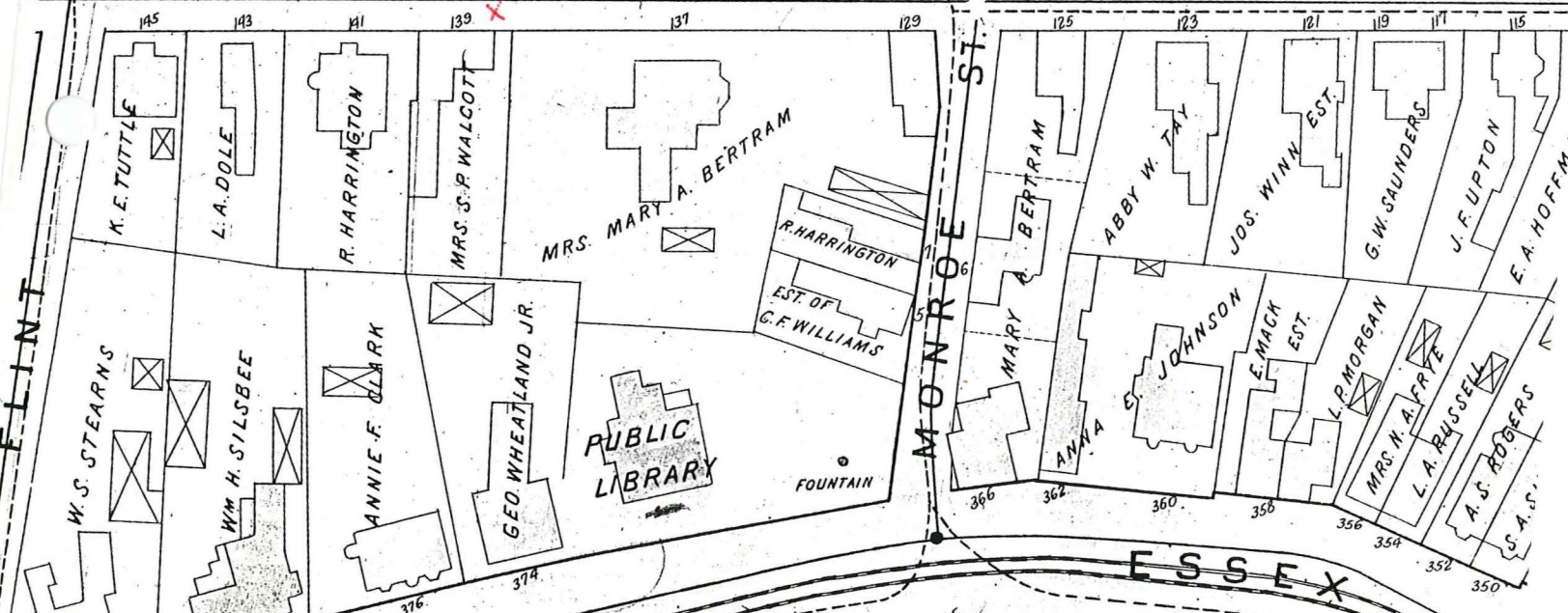
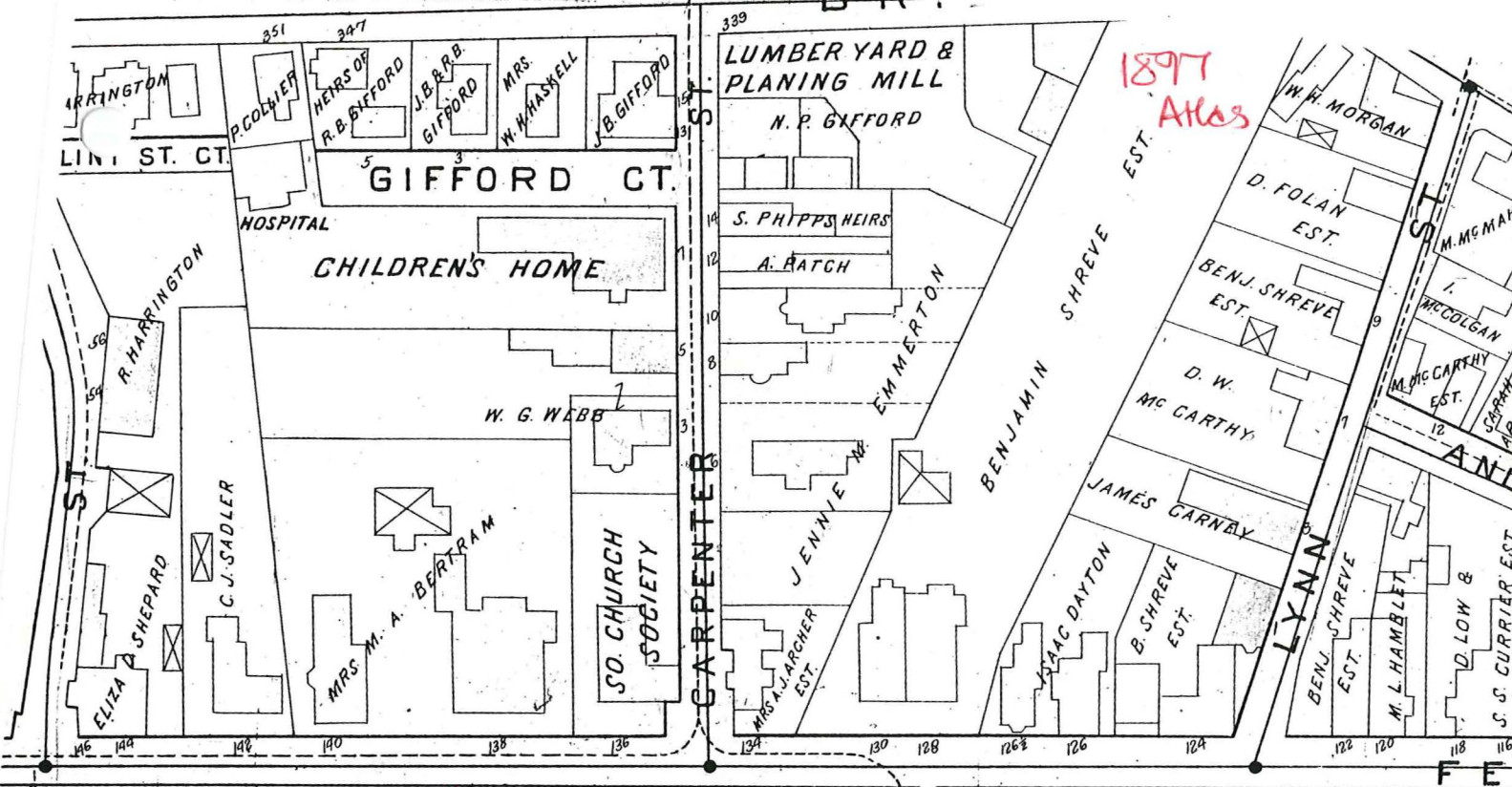
EIHC refers to Essex Institute Historical Collections



Entered according to act of Congress in the year 1874 by G. M. Hopkins in the Office of the L

1874 Atlas

1897 Atlas



1816 Will of Capt. Buffinton

Be it remembered, that I Nehemiah Buffinton, of Salem in the county of Essex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, yeoman, being of a sound and disposing mind and memory, do make and publish this my last will and testament in manner following, that is to say:

First: It is my will, and I hereby order and direct my executor herein after named to pay all my just debts and funeral charges as soon as may be after my decease.

Secondly: I give and bequeath unto my nephew Jonathan Buffinton son of my brother Zadock Buffinton deceased all my right, title and interest in all the real estate, which was formerly my father's James Buffinton deceased, which was given to me in and by his last will and testament which I claim by virtue of said will, or which may be coming to me in any other way; the same lying in common and undivided with the said Jonathan; to have and to hold the same to him the said Jonathan Buffinton, his heirs and assigns forever.

Thirdly: All the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, real personal or mixed, wherever the same may be, or in whatever the same may consist, I give, devise and bequeath the same unto my affectionate wife Elisabeth Buffinton, for her own use and disposal, as an absolute and unlimited estate of inheritance in fee simple forever, and to her heirs and assigns; she paying all my just debts as herein before written.

Lastly: I hereby ordain, constitute and appoint my aforementioned wife Elisabeth Buffinton to be sole executor of this my last will and testament, hereby disallowing and making void any former wills by me made, I ratify and confirm this to be my last will and testament.

In testimony whereof I the said Nehemiah Buffinton do hereunto set my hand and affix my seal, this twenty sixth day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixteen.

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the above named Nehemiah Buffinton to be his last will and testament, in the presence of us, who at his request and in his presence and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses:

Amos Choate,  
Walter Trullingham,  
Jesse Smith jr.

Nehemiah Buffinton here

Recorded from the original, and examined by \_\_\_\_\_  
Prob. Sec. \_\_\_\_\_ N. S. No. 112.

18 Aug. 1848 Browns to Sally Frye, E.D. 403:85.

I know all men by these presents; that we Ebraim Brown junr., Samuel T. Upton and Mary, his wife, in her right, Daniel Brown, Joseph U. Brown and W<sup>m</sup> Henry Brown, all of Salem, in the County of Essex, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in consideration of two thousand six hundred dollars to us paid by Sally Frye, of the same Salem Singlewoman, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said Sally Frye and her heirs and assigns forever, all our right, title interest and estate in and to a certain meffage in Federal Street in said Salem, bounded and described thus, beginning on said street at land of Shepard and running on said Street to land of Rogers, thence on said Rogers to land of Goodhue, thence on said Goodhue to land of Shepard, thence on said Shepard's land to the point started from; meaning to convey all the estate described in a deed recorded in Essex

Registry of Deeds Book 265 leaf 170; except what has been sold to Michael Shep-  
 ard by deed in Book 330 leaf 191; however the same may be bounded and de-  
 scribed, with all the privileges to said estate belonging; for more particulars  
 of boundaries and description reference to said deeds may be had; said  
 land measures fifty four feet on Federal Street, more or less, one hundred & twenty  
 feet on Shepard and Rogers, more or less, and forty six feet in the rear on God-  
 hue, all as the fences now stand: To have and to hold the above granted  
 premises to the said Grantee her heirs and assigns to their use and behoof for-  
 ever. And we the said Grantors for ourselves and our heirs, executors and  
 administrators do covenant with the said Grantee her heirs and assigns,  
 that we are lawfully seized in fee simple of the aforegranted premises, that  
 they are free from all incumbrances, that we have good right to sell and  
 convey the same to the said Grantee her heirs and assigns forever as afore-  
 said, and that we will and our heirs, executors and administrators shall  
 warrant and defend the same to the said Grantee her heirs and assigns  
 forever, against the lawful claims and demands of all persons. In  
 witness whereof, We the said Grantors with Maria wife of said Eph-  
 raim, and Mary wife of said Daniel who release their dower herein, have  
 hereunto set our hands and seals this eighteenth day of August, in the  
 year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and forty eight. -

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of, Geo. R. Cullen to E. B. Jr. Hannah E. Gale. Andrew M. Standley, Charles W. Trumbull.	}	Ephraim Brown Jr. . . . . seal.
		Maria T. Brown. L. . . . . seal.
		Saml. T. Upton. ✓ . . . . seal.
		Mary R. B. Upton. ✓ . . . . seal.
		Danl. Brown. ✓ . . . . seal.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts } Joseph A. Brown ✓ . . . . seal.  
 Essex ss. August 22<sup>d</sup> 1848. } Wm. Henry Brown by Ephraim Brown Jr. & Maria T. Brown . . . seal.

Then personally appeared the above named Ephraim Brown Jr. and ac-  
 knowledged the above instrument to be his free act and deed.

Before me . . . . . Jn<sup>s</sup> V. Nichols. . . . . Justice of the Peace  
 Essex ss. Rec<sup>d</sup> Oct 1<sup>st</sup> 20 1848. Term before 11 C. M. Sec<sup>rd</sup>. Examined by N. H. Merrill J.

Benja. Cutts mtge. to Sally Frye, & discharge therefrom, F.D. 294, 271.

Know all men by these Presents, 271  
 That I, Benjamin Cutts of Salem in County of Essex, Blacksmith, In consideration of one thousand nine hundred  
 forty nine dollars sixty two cents paid by Sally Frye of  
 said Salem, Singlewoman the receipt whereof I do hereby  
 acknowledge, do hereby give, grant, sell and convey unto  
 the said Sally Frye and her heirs and assigns forever,  
 The following real estate, to wit, My dwelling house  
 with the land under and to the same belonging  
 situate in Beckford Street in said Salem however  
 otherwise bounded or described being the same where  
 in I now live. Also my shop with the land under  
 & to the same belonging situate on Sewall Street in  
 S<sup>d</sup> Salem and bounded westerly on S<sup>d</sup> Street and as  
 the same may be otherwise bounded. To Have  
 and to hold the aforegranted premises to the  
 said Sally Frye her heirs and assigns to her and  
 their use and behoof forever. And I do covenant  
 with the said Sally Frye her heirs and assigns, that  
 I am lawfully seized in fee of the aforegranted prem-  
 ises; that they are free of all incumbrances; that I  
 have good right to sell and convey the same to the  
 said Sally, and that I will warrant and defend the  
 same premises to the said Sally Frye her heirs and as-  
 signs forever against the lawful claims and de-  
 mands of all persons. **Provided nevertheless,**  
 That if the said Benjamin Cutts his heirs, executors  
 or administrators pay to the said Sally Frye her  
 heirs, executors, administrators or assigns, the sum of  
 One hundred dollars & interest from the 17 day of  
 April A<sup>d</sup> 1833 agreeably to a note of that date, given  
 by said Cutts to said Frye for that sum and interest  
 payable on demand. And also the amount of an-  
 other note given by said Benjamin to said Sally dated  
 Oct. 21, 1836, for eighteen hundred forty nine dollars <sup>62</sup>/<sub>100</sub>  
 payable on demand, then this deed as also S<sup>d</sup> two certain

B. 11. 11. 15  
 to  
 S. Frye -  
 Epsom N. H. April 27, 1836. The mortgage herein named here  
 received & satisfied for the mortgage on the land hereby being conveyed  
 the sum -  
 Samuel W. Kimball, Sally Frye

was first a pupil at the Dame's School, conducted by the Misses Peirce in a house on the south side of Essex Street just below Liberty Street, and his schoolmate, William Gurdon Saltonstall, has recalled the fact with interest in personal reminiscences written out by him at the close of his career. George Henry Allen was also among the younger pupils. Before 1842, Ward had attended the Old East School on the Common, and there Charles Henry Allen was his school mate, and, when the Phillips School superseded it in that year, Ward was a pupil there. He had among his playmates at that time William Crowninshield Waters, Joseph Francis Tucker and Henry Fitz Gilbert Waters. They well remember the ample barn on Carlton Street, in the rear of the Townsend House, which became, while Ward was living there, the stamping-ground for all down-in-town youngsters of brain and spirit. While the Wards were residents of Federal Street, living at one time at No. 139, just below Flint street, and at another time at No. 65, just below North Street, he attended the Hacker School for the years 1843 and 1844, having George Manton Whipple and George Arvedson for schoolmates. When, in 1845, he reached the English High School, then kept by Master Rufus Putnam in Broad Street, he found himself placed between George Leonard Peabody, a few desks off on the one hand, and Andrew Shales Waters on the other. Henry Appleton Hale and James Ford Hale were among his classmates here.

Ward's school-days were not without some promise of his future. He was quite the boy-hero of the play-grounds and of the wharves, and this both on the score of certain personal qualities,—his generosity, his transparent honesty, and his courage,—but also because he chanced to have for his father the owner of the "Vivid," and was freely entrusted with the sailing of that sloop-yacht of fifteen tons' burthen which danced and strained at her moorings off Crowninshield's Wharf, the year round, awaiting the orders of the family. Captain Andrew Madison Ropes had charge of her during the Summer of 1846. But the "Vivid" had a recognized skipper in "Pat Foy," as he was known to his familiars on the wharves, though his

gravestone at Harmony Grove, with its unique inscription in English, Latin and Hebrew, discloses the fact that the old seaman's baptismal name was Patrick Fahey.

Young Ward's courage, discretion and seamanship had been so well tested that he was allowed to sail the "Vivid" in all weathers and, as the family correspondence shows, he handled her in more than one trying emergency with the skill of a master. He freely extended the hospitalities of the little craft among his playmates. It was his passion to sail her at all hours,—by sunlight or starlight, in breeze or blast,—even in tempestuous thunder-squalls, as though he fain would

"Give her to the God of Storms, the lightnings and the gale."

He enjoyed loading down the "Vivid," as often as he might, with a gang of Wapping urchins,—they could all swim like wharf-rats,—and then listing her over until he had her scudding rail-awash, to the delight of those whose nerve did not forsake them and to the terror of the rest. But salt-water had no terrors for him. From childhood a fearless swimmer,—his father, himself an expert swimmer, whose methods were heroic, would strip him and his

An incident of the Summer of 1843 reveals these traits. An evening sail had been planned to carry delicacies to an ailing friend at Beverly, and a crew of youngsters were taken aboard, together with Ward's mother, who was young and strong and a good sailor,—a younger son and daughter of the family, and the boy-hero, not twelve years old, who was at the helm. A lady-friend, who was a singer, was with them. All went well until the party, on its return, sailed into a thunder-storm, when the tuneful guest began singing hymns with the ardor of Cromwell's Ironsides or of the Plymouth Pilgrims as pictured in the verse of Mrs. Hemans. The smaller boys had already been landed at Beverly and sent home over the Bridge. The darkness became stygian. There was no light-house then on Derby Wharf, and Baker's Island Light was all they had for bearings. They carried neither light nor chart nor compass. The sea ran high. The Aqua Vitae Ledge was near at hand, revealed by lightning-flashes, now bare, now yeasty with foam at every wave. Wind and rain assailed them with all their fury. Little sail could be carried. The situation was full of peril. Towards midnight they reached home safe to find the town awake with panic. Throughout the scene Ward sat with a firm hand on the tiller, speechless as the sphynx. His only comment, when the incident was over, and his father held him in his arms stifling reproof with caresses, was this: "When the lightning-flashes showed us who were there, I wished myself at home. It would have been all right if it had not been for the women."



brother Henry and fling them off the wharf and plunge in after them for practice, when they were little more than infants,—Ward often indulged in a prank which startled rather than amused the unsuspecting. Seated idly on the sill of the wharf, he would suddenly drop into the dock, and this with such art as to raise a cry of “boy overboard”, and he would watch with zest the measures taken for his rescue. Even his boyish pride in a new suit of clothes would not restrain him when conditions favored. If these frequent escapades invited the paternal slipper, and doubtless it was applied, for Captain Ward was an irascible man, the lad had not long to wait before his skill and courage and endurance in swimming, and his home-feeling in salt-water, were to stand him in good stead. When doubling Cape Horn as Mate of the “Westward Ho!” he was thrown over the ship’s side by an angry crew, maddened at what they thought to be the exactions of a boy,—(the “Far East” Magazine for May, 1877, is authority for the statement) and he saved himself without assistance.

Daniel Webster’s younger son, Edward Webster, Captain of the First Company of Mexican War Volunteers raised in Massachusetts, and later promoted to be Major, left Boston with his Regiment for the seat of War, February 22, 1847. On January 20, he passed the day in Salem with his well-equipped command. They carried no colors but marched to their own fife and drum. The hours of the day were given up to drilling on the Common,—to street-parades, to a visit to the East India Marine Museum, and to a dinner at the Mansion House, tendered the company by citizens of Salem. Captain Webster’s elder brother, Daniel Fletcher Webster, had married, in Washington Square, Caroline, a daughter of the Honorable Stephen White. The visit attracted general attention and the bearing of the corps was highly commended by the local press. The sight of troops arrayed in the actual panoply of war was too much for the self-command of a boy like Ward. He had long been dreaming of marches and charges, of camp and field, and “the spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,” so fired his soul with martial ardor that, with a chum and neighbor named Farnham, he

started on foot for the front, each of the truant pair, his pack on his back, believing he had slipped away unnoticed and was off for Boston and the war. They followed the railroad track. But this route, a four hours’ tramp for them, could, by steam-car, be covered by their pursuers in half an hour. Their absence was promptly observed,—albeit they had denounced the direst vengeance on those who should betray them,—and the train which overtook them beyond Revere had one or more members of a searching-party scanning the track on either side. They were spied out from the car-windows, and Ward got no nearer to the War in Mexico than to be captured before night-fall on Noddle’s Island and ingloriously hurried back to Salem.

Ward came upon the stage of life just as Salem commerce was at its ebb. The old town had its schools of navigation still,—its nautical-instrument dealers, its ship-yards and rope-walks and sail-lofts, its plethoric warehouses, its sailors’ lodging-houses and dance-halls and slop-shops. Its wharves were still alive with the activities of a distinctly commercial port. The air was laden with the traditions of old-world voyaging. Could more be needed to fire the quick fancy with what Rufus Choate, a son of Essex, had glorified in his first Salem Lyceum lecture as “The Romance of the Sea!”—with what Doctor Bentley had for years preached about from his favorite text in Psalm CIV,—“There go the Ships: There is that Leviathan!”—and what Longfellow has enshrined as

“The beauty and mystery of the Ships  
And the Magic of the Sea!”

Other sea-coast cities as well as ours have produced a class of navigators of the highest order, but in none of these cities has the ship-master element been so distinctly dominant as in post-Revolutionary Salem. Ship-masters came to be the great merchants and directed the industries and moulded the society of the place. Their manners, even when on shore, had a dash of the quarter-deck about them.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>At one time the city had a retired ship-master for its Mayor and there were always retired ship-masters among its aldermen. The

his share of the ship's duty will fall on the shoulders of his unoffending mates. Thus the recalcitrant, through his misconduct, inflicts a penalty on good-seamanship. He imperils the well-being of the whole ship's company, the success of the voyage, the safety of ship and cargo and crew. Thus officers must be autocrats. Thus sea-discipline becomes an intelligent despotism. Everything is at stake on the sagacity, promptness, vigor of will of the person in command, and he is only responsible, under the law, to the owners of the ship. Instant and implicit submission is to be enforced at any cost. Promptness in observing,—in resolving,—in acting,—these are the lessons taught by life at sea, and Ward learned them all. The martial virtues may not rank first in the scale of human merit, but without courage and ardor and firmness in its captains, the race is destined to achieve little. Ward had born in him the instincts of a leader of men. To him the initiative was a welcome opportunity; to him, domination was a delight. He was steady in his command wherever placed. When those about him wavered, he stood firm; if they vacillated, he pressed on; when they thought to spare themselves, he thought to reach the goal. His purposes were clearly conceived, distinctly declared, vigorously pursued,—not lightly changed. He shrank from nothing. A born fighter, he was no bully. As a boy, it was his ruling passion to champion the weak, and his strength, which was great, was ever on call in the interest of fair play. He was a sort of umpire-in-ordinary of the school-yard and the play-grounds. He was a favorite with his mates,—they all concur in that judgment,—but if a boy was "spoiling for a fight" Ward did not keep him waiting long. A natural organizer, it was proverbial that the side which secured Ward in the school-games was the side that won. Something native to the man,—a strong, masterful, magnetic personality,—a generosity uncalculating in its devotion,—a modesty genuine and free from guile,—a strength of purpose,—a singleness of aim to which obstacles served as incentive rather than as check,—such were some of the qualities which stamped him among men. What he craved was power,—not the semblance of power.

Here was no call for the coward's panoply of subterfuge and deceit. He had that ready courage, both moral and physical, which serves as a passport to the favor of savage and civilized men alike.

A mate of the ship "Hamilton" before he was sixteen, Ward at once displayed the sterling attributes which made him strong. No doubt he was a rigid disciplinarian, and he may have been a severe one, as his father had been before him. But he was not unjust. His appearance was striking. Of no more than medium stature and always slight, compact and wiry, he had the strength of an athlete, and the surviving sister recalled with pleasure the frolics of the "children's hour," when, at the end of their evening's romp, they all rode off to bed on his willing shoulders. He was quick, nervous and animated in his movements, and his thick raven hair, hanging over his shoulders like an Indian's,—his broad forehead, which carried assurance of large intelligence,—his dark hazel eyes, surmounting a strong nose and firm-set mouth,—that heavy under-jaw without which force of will is rarely present,—all this bespoke, as his pictures show, the robust vitality within. His eyes have been described as quick and restless, and as lighted up with fire by the intensity of his purpose. His complexion was sallow, bordering upon olive. Before the taking of the likeness,—his last,—which is here reproduced, his mouth was disfigured, and his power of speech impaired, by a wound received at Tsing Pu, February 10, 1861. This, one of five wounds he received in that bloody action, was from a bullet which passed through his upper jaw, and, with the other hurts, disabled him for weeks. He wore, in his brief military life, no uniform or insignia of rank, the European dress to which he adhered in battle sufficiently distinguishing him from his men, and he was almost always seen either in the close-fitting English frock-coat which came in with Prince Albert, or in the loose, blue-serge tunic much worn by residents of the tropics. He used, for the most part, a gray cloth riding-cap, and, seeming to find the sword an encumbrance, never wore one. For this omission he had the highest military precedent. If need were, he could

**S**ALEM — While he is much better known in China than he is in his hometown of Salem, Frederick Townsend Ward was one of the city's most remarkable and colorful native sons.

Ward was born in Salem in 1831 to Frederick and Elizabeth Ward and raised in a large brick home that still stands at the corner of Carlton and Derby streets.

Frederick's parents were both descended from families steeped in the Salem maritime tradition, and so it was only natural that when he was 15, the young man shipped out on the clipper ship Hamilton bound from New York to China. Three years later he made a second voyage, this time as first mate on the Russell Glover, bound for San Francisco under the command of his father.

On both of these voyages Frederick was given a position of authority over men many years older and more experienced, by the vessels' owners, who recognized the young man's leadership qualities.

But Ward's personal ambition was to pursue a career in the military, not in the maritime trade. Between his two stints at sea he had tried to enlist in the Army during the Mexican-American War. His father stopped him.

Frederick also sought admission to the military academy at West Point, but lost out when the slot was given to the son of a Massachusetts politician.

Ward then briefly attended a smaller military school, later Norwich University, in Vermont.

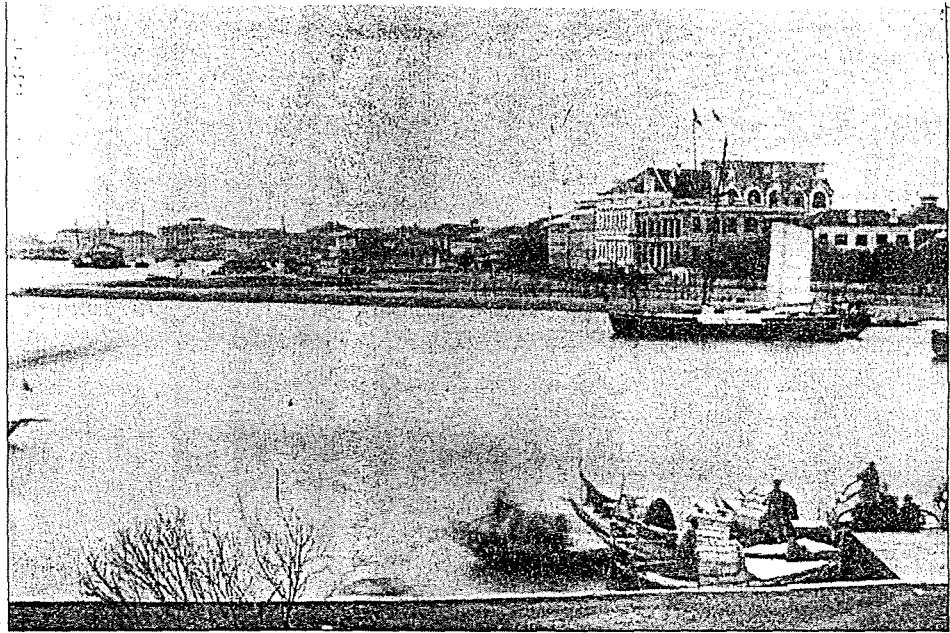
#### Soldier of fortune

But Frederick Townsend Ward was to develop as a first-rank military leader not through schooling, but through his experiences as a soldier of fortune.

In the decade of the 1850s Frederick fought with the notorious William Walker during Walker's attempt to take over the Mexican state of Sonora and set up a new republic. Ward later served with the French army in the Crimea against the Russians, and as a member of the famed Texas Rangers in his native America.

His travels during this time also occasionally took Ward to China, where he worked on river boats. When the Salem native returned to that country for the last time in 1858, the ruling Manchu dynasty was in a desperate fight for survival in the face of the Tai Ping rebellion.

The Tai Ping movement had begun seven years earlier in the Chinese countryside as a religious reform effort and had grown into



A view of Shanghai in the 1860s, showing the British settlement across the water and the great mercantile houses.

## HISTORY of SALEM

a political and military force that threatened to topple the Manchu government. By 1860 a Tai Ping army numbering nearly 20,000 men was assembled within striking distance of Shanghai, one of the most important of the five Chinese port cities in which westerners were allowed to trade and live.

It appeared that Shanghai would fall to the rebels, as the forces of the imperial emperor had been unable to stop the Tai Pings in the past and the British, French, and American governments were committed to a policy of neutrality.

#### 'The devil soldier'

Frederick Ward, an almost unknown westerner, approached local Chinese government officials with an offer to raise an army and drive out the Tai Pings, in return for a substantial fee. The desperate Manchu officials agreed, and the force that would become known as Ward's "Ever-Victorious Army" was born.

Ward's army was funded by the Manchu government and wealthy Chinese businessmen and was originally composed of westerners. Many were deserters from various navies and merchant marines. After an early military



Frederick Townsend Ward, painted by an unknown Chinese artist in early 1862, at the height of his fame in China as the "devil soldier." He was killed a few months later.

fiasco, Ward replaced these malcontents with a contingent of more reliable Filipinos.

Eventually Ward's force would be composed almost completely of indigenous Chinese soldiers serving under western leaders.

Ward initially received little respect from either the Manchu government or those of western nations. But the experienced soldier of fortune learned from early, nearly disastrous mistakes, and

built a fierce and disciplined fighting force that consistently defeated much larger Tai Ping armies.

After Ward's troops had recaptured a number of cities from the Tai Pings and pushed them away from Shanghai, the Chinese, British, French and American governments began committing men and resources to joint military actions with the man the Tai Pings called the "devil soldier." Through the efforts of these integrated forces, with Ward's troops usually leading the way, the Tai Pings were neutralized until the rebellion collapsed after the deaths of its leaders in 1863.

#### Killed at 30

Ward was not around to see the end, however. The man who many Chinese had come to view as invincible because he had been wounded 15 times and survived, died on Sept. 23, 1862, one day after being hit by yet another enemy bullet. He was just 30 years old.

In acknowledgement of his success and his extraordinary leadership, Ward, who had become a Chinese citizen and taken both a Chinese name and wife, had been made a mandarin by the Manchu government and given the rank of general in 1861.

Now that same government decreed that the "devil soldier" was to be worshipped as a deity, and ordered two shrines to be erected in his honor.

Jim McAllister is a Salem historian.