

*7 Hamilton Street
Salem*

According to available evidence, this house was built for Henry Perkins Benson, cotton dealer, in 1898.

On 23 February 1898 Henry P. Benson of Salem purchased from Daniel Low, the noted Salem retailer, a lot of land running northerly 94.5' on Hamilton Street, thence running easterly 65.8' on land formerly of Joseph Smith, thence southerly 92.3' by land of said Low and land of Cloutman, thence westerly 61' by land of Price and land of Endicott (ED 1540:107).

The lot had on it a large stable building, which had belonged to Joseph Smith, whose house was more northerly on Hamilton Street. The stable, or its predecessors, had been here since the 1850s and perhaps earlier. In 1850 it was the site of the livery stable of Smith & Manning, at "9 Hamilton Street," where "Buggies, Phaetons, Barouches, Carryalls, etc," were "constantly on hand," along with "saddle horses, for ladies and gentlemen. Parties and funerals furnished at short notice" (see advertisement in 1851 Salem Directory).

From this lot, Mr. Benson had the stable removed (if it had not been removed already) and proceeded to build this imposing gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival residence, which was designed by his architect brother, John P. Benson.

Henry Perkins Benson was born in Salem in December, 1866, the son of George W. Benson and Elizabeth Poole, and the grandson of a shipmaster, Capt. Samuel Benson. Of his siblings, brother John became a noted architect, and brother Frank became a noted impressionist painter. Henry, as a boy, attended the Phillips School in Salem, and Salem High School. Through the 1870s and 1880s, Salem pursued a manufacturing course. The managers and capitalists tended to build their new, grand houses along Lafayette Street. For the workers, they built more and more tenements near the mills of Stage Point. A second, larger, factory building for the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company (whose first huge mill was opened in 1846) would be added in 1859, and a third in 1865; and by 1879 the mills would employ 1200 people and produce annually 14,700,000 yards of cloth. Shoe-manufacturing also continued to expand, and by 1880 Salem would have 40 shoe factories employing 600-plus operatives. More factories and more people required more space for buildings, more roads, and more storage areas. The tanning of leather was another very important employer in Salem.

Henry went on from Salem High School to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and graduated in 1886. Shortly after, he took a job in Boston with A. Emerson & Co., cotton merchants, and soon became its president. He was highly successful as the head of this firm.

On 11 January 1892 he, 25, married Rebecca A. Broadhead, 22, of Salem, the daughter of Frederick Broadhead, a Salem insurance man, and his wife Eliza T. The couple would have three children, all daughters: Rosamund (1895), Ruth (1898), and Rebecca (1910). In 1897 the family resided (per Salem Directory) at 330 Essex Street in Salem, and before that at 36 Washington Square.

As has been mentioned, Mr. Benson purchased the lot here from Mr. Low in February, 1898, and soon had the house built. At the same time, he became one of the first automobile owners in Salem, when, in that spring, he purchased an electric car from a dealer in Boston. This began a lifelong passion for cars, which he described in his memoir, "Half Century of Motoring in Essex County," published in 1949 (EIHC 85:201-on; first three pages attached to this report). His love of cars is somewhat ironic, considering that his house stood on the site of an old horse stable, complete with buggies of all kinds.

In 1900, Henry Benson, cotton dealer, 33, resided here with his Rebecca, 30, their little girls Rosamund, five, and Ruth, two, and Mrs. Benson's mother, the widow Eliza T. Broadhead, 66. Also residing here were the Bensons' staff, Annie Condon, 41, the cook, Mary Donovan, 26, the second maid, and Mary McAuliffe, 24, the nursery maid (see 1900 census, ward three, E.D. 448). In that year, the new house was valued at \$9800 and the house-lot at \$2200 (see 1900 Salem Real Estate Valuations, Ward 3, Precinct 6).

Mr. Benson was interested in the well-being of his native city, and was elected to the City Council in 1902 and to the board of aldermen in 1906. This public service temporarily satisfied his political appetites.

On 12 Jan. 1905, Henry Benson transferred ownership of the homestead here to his wife, Rebecca A. Benson (ED 1766:51). In that same year, Mr. Benson was elected a director of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company, the one of the largest textile producers in the country, with acres of mills and other buildings located at Stage Point off Congress Street (site of Shetland Park today).

In 1910 Mr. & Mrs. Benson resided here with their daughters Rosamund, 15, Ruth, 12, and Rebecca, an infant, and had a staff consisting of Annie Condon, the cook, Lizzie Ryan, 46, the parlor maid, Mary Browder, 23, the chambermaid, and Sarah Nelson, 48, the nursemaid (see 1910 census).

Eventually Mr. Benson retired from A. Emerson & Co. in Boston, perhaps before the spring of 1914, which was a very hot and dry spring. 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—not far from Hamilton Street--a monstrous front of flame and smoke, wiping out the houses of Boston Street, then crossing Essex Street, and sweeping through upper Broad Street, 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, 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.

The people of Salem turned to Mr. Benson to help them through the post-fire crisis. In 1915 a new city charter was voted in, and so, in December, was Mr. Benson, as a two-year Mayor. He polled 3,607 votes to 2,463 for John B. Saunders and 540 for John D. Burns. Mr. Benson proved to be a very effective Mayor with a clear vision of what needed to be done for Salem, as reflected in his inaugural address of January, 1916 (copy attached to this report).

After serving out his term through 1917, Mr. Benson retired to private business, and in 1920 was elected president of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company. Mr. Benson led a life with a good deal of margin for leisure and socializing. In addition to his cars, he enjoyed yacht racing, golf, and billiards. He belonged to and led various clubs and associations, and enjoyed watching his grandchildren

grow up around him. He remained President of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company through the years of World War II, during which his grandson Lt. John Pickering, an airman, fought in the Pacific. Mr. Benson served as the Company's President until he was 79, in 1946, and himself wrote the annual reports, which were informative and entertaining.

Mr. Benson had a long and productive life, and took an interest in many activities. He celebrated his 90th birthday in December, 1956, in the company of his wife, three daughters, and their families. By then his health was not good, and in the spring of 1957 his illness worsened. Death came on 9 May 1957. His wife Rebecca survived him by a few years.

By 1962, the house was occupied by Wilfred H. Hall & family. Mr. Hall was a member of the family that owned a heating oil dealership, and he himself edited a publication titled the *National Oil Jobber* (per Salem Directory).

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 notoriety arising from the witch trials, but also from its history as a great seaport and as the home of Bowditch, McIntire, Bentley, Story, and Hawthorne. 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.

--24 Jan. 2002, Robert Booth for Historic Salem Inc.

Glossary & Sources

A figure like (ED 123:45) refers to book 123, page 45, Essex South registry of Deeds, Federal Street, Salem.

A figure like (#12345) refers to Essex Probate case 12345, on file at the Essex Probate Court, Federal Street, Salem, or on microfilm at Mass. Archives, Boston, or at the Peabody Essex Museum's Phillips Library, Salem.

Census records (censes were taken every 10 years from 1790 on, and in 1855 and 1865) are available on microfilm; they list the heads of households 1790-1840, and then list family members from 1850 on.

MSSRW refers to the multi-volume compendium, *Mass. Soldiers & Sailors in the Revolutionary War*, available at the Salem Public Library among other places.

MSSCRW refers to the multi-volume compendium, *Mass. Soldiers, Sailors, & Marines in the Civil War*, available at the Salem Public Library among other places.

EIHC refers to the Essex Institute Historical Collections (discontinued), a multi-volume set (first volume published in 1859) of data and articles about Essex County. The indices of the EIHC have been consulted regarding many of the people associated with this house.

The six-volume published Salem Vital records (marriages, births, and deaths through 1849) have been consulted, as have the Salem Directory and later Naumkeag Directory, which have information about residents and their addresses, etc.

Sidney Perley's three-volume *History of Salem, 1626-1716* has been consulted, as has the four-volume *William Bentley's Diary*, J. Duncan Phillips' books, some newspaper obituaries, and other sources.

Salem real estate valuations, and, where applicable, Salem Street Books, have also been consulted, as have genealogies.

There is much more material available about Salem and its history; and the reader is encouraged to make his or her own discoveries.

--Robert Booth

23 Feb. 1898 D. Low to H. P. Benson 1540:107

Know all men by these presents that I, Daniel Low ^{D. Low} of Salem Essex County Massachusetts, in consideration of ^{H. P. Benson} one dollar and other valuable considerations paid by Henry P. Benson of said Salem, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said Henry P. Benson and his heirs and assigns, a certain parcel of land situated in said Salem bounded, beginning at the south-westerly corner by land of Endicott on Hamilton Street and running Northerly by said street ninety-four and five tenths (94.5) feet, thence easterly by land of the estate of Joseph Smith sixty-five and eight tenths (65.8) feet, thence southerly by land of the grantor and land of Bloutman ninety-two and three tenths (92.3) feet, thence westerly by land of Price and of said Endicott sixty-one feet to the point begun at on said street, being the same conveyed to me by deed of Henry M. Batchelder, trustee, dated February 11,

1898, recorded with Essex, So. Dist, Deeds, Feb. 21, 1898. To have and to hold the granted premises, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging to the said Henry P. Benson and his heirs and assigns, to their own use and behoof forever. And I do hereby for myself and my heirs, executors and administrators covenant with the grantee and his heirs and assigns that I am lawfully seized in fee simple of the granted premises, that they are free from all incumbrances, that I have good right to sell and convey the same as aforesaid; and that I will and my heirs, executors and administrators shall warrant and defend the same to the grantee and his heirs and assigns forever against the lawful claims and demands of all persons. And for the consideration aforesaid I, Eliza J. Low, wife of said Daniel Low hereby release unto the grantee and his heirs and assigns, all right of or to both dower and homestead in the granted premises. In witness whereof we the said Daniel Low and Eliza J. Low hereunto set our hands and seals this twenty-third day of February in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight.

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of
Andrew Fitz to D. L.
Bethiah D. Kinsman
me.

Daniel Low seal

Eliza J. Low seal

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
setts. Essex ss. Feb. 24, 1898. Then
personally appeared the above named Daniel Low and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his free act and deed, before me.

Andrew Fitz, Justice of the Peace.

Essex ss. Rec'd Feb. 24, 1898, 20 m. past 11 A.M. Rec. - m. by

Willard J. Hale. Reg.



J.B. GIFFORD
 N.P. GIFFORD
 BENJ. SHREVE EST.
 M. LITTLE
 M. G. GIBSON
 BRIDGE
 LUMBER YARD & PLANING MILL
 GIFFORD CT
 CHILDRENS HOME
 W.G. WEBB
 CO. CHURCH SOCIETY
 CARPENTER
 BENJAMIN SHREVE EST.
 D. FOLAN EST.
 BENJ. SHREVE EST.
 D.W. MC CARTHY
 JAMES CARBY
 W.M. MORGAN
 D. SHREVE EST.
 M. H. HAMILTON
 S.S. CURRIER EST.
 G.P. HARRINGTON EST.
 D. MOORE
 FEDERAL ST
 M. A. GARRATT
 BENNETT BROS.
 JAS. LANDERS
 P. RICHARDSON
 MRS. A. QUINCY
 A.S.A. HODD
 E.L. N. SYMONDS
 & SUSTON CANFIELD
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 R. HARRINGTON
 MRS. S.P. WALCOTT
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 JOHN TANCH
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 MARY C. PRICE
 EMERSON
 EST. OF N. POPPES
 ESSEX ST
 GRACE P.E. CHURCH
 ELIZA J. LOW
 BENJ. CREMER EST.
 GEO. E. PERCY
 H. WILSON
 M.D. PHILLIPS
 A.B. WEBB
 AN. WHEATLAND
 ELIZA A. HOFFMAN
 J. WILSON
 A. GARDNER EST.
 RAMPTON ST
 DANIEL LOTT
 SWEET BRIDGIAN CHURCH
 C.F. CURWEN (TR.)
 E.B.M. GOUDINS
 U.A. GILLIS
 MARY O. CURWEN
 E.S. PALCH
 LUCY JOHNSON EST.
 S.D. AMES
 CHAPEL
 SOUTH CONG CHURCH
 CHESTNUT ST
 AMELIA A. NICHOLS
 A. HUNTINGTON EST.
 G.P. DEBOD EST.
 ELIZABETH W. WELLEN (TR.)
 EST. OF BENJ. SHREVE
 EST. OF BENJ. SHREVE
 ICKERING ST
 GEO. WEST
 B.W. STONE EST.
 J.H. FALLOU
 H.W. PENBODY
 BENJ. SHREVE EST.
 M. EMERSON
 HAMILTON HALL
 E.J. DEGOOD
 E.E. COBBIN
 W.L. BULLOCK
 E.C. BROWN
 EN ST
 WHEATLAND
 BRIDGET TAYLOR
 J. CHAMBERS EST.
 O. TROSPER
 WILSON EST.
 SHREVE EST.
 ESTATE OF JOHN PICKERING
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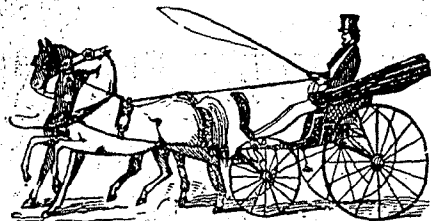
Buggies, Chaise, Phaetons, Barouches, Carryalls, &c. constantly on hand.
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finished at short notice.

*advertisement from 1851 Salem Directory;
site of 7 Hamilton St.*

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AND

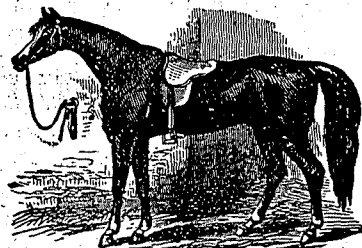
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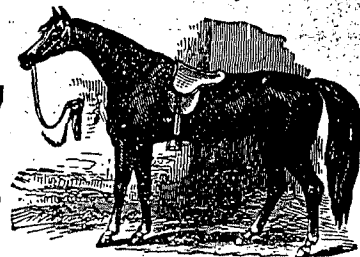
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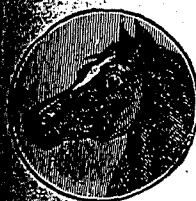
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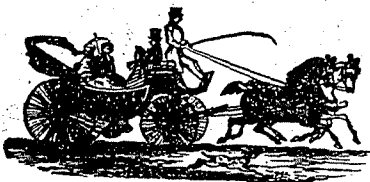
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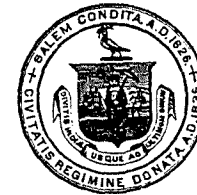
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45 186

INAUGURAL ADDRESS
OF
Hon. Henry P. Benson
Mayor of the City of Salem
TO THE
COUNCIL



JANUARY, 1916

SALEM, MASS.
Newcomb & Gauss, Printers
1916

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

To the Council:—

Gentlemen:

In taking office under the new charter we face a momentous and solemn task, one that is full of opportunities for shedding honor on the city and on ourselves, and of possibilities of failure if we do not read rightly the mandate of the people. Our task is heavier than usual for we have not only to administer a government but to create one, subject to the simple and inadequate provisions of the charter.

Bearing in mind the heavy debt of the city, which is \$2,262,000., and will require approximately \$238,000. for payment of principal and interest in 1916, the need of the utmost economy in every department is apparent to all. The unusual times in which we are now living impose on all intelligent people the necessity of plain living and high thinking. Considering also the peculiarly difficult position of the city due to the fire, we have an opportunity for distinguished service unequalled in the history of Salem.

A close study of our new charter, assisted by the present City Solicitor, leads to the conclusion that the intent of the act is to place the executive responsibility for the running of all departments in the hands of the Mayor, and that committees of the Council, which may be created by ordinance, are intended to have in charge the investigation of the needs of the several departments and the power to make recommendations as to the work of these departments to the Council.

I recommend that as there are only eleven members of the Council, the number of committees be kept as small as possible.

The excessive valuations on the homes of the people have aroused great dissatisfaction among our citizens, who in the main, are anxious to pay their taxes upon a fair valuation. I recommend that the Council urge a revaluation of the city on a basis of market values, that the irritation of the people in this matter may be allayed.

The importance of the safety of the children in our schools has been much in the public mind since the terrible disaster in Peabody. A most searching and thorough inspection of our school buildings has been made under the direction of the Mayor and the School Board, and recommendations submitted for assuring the safety of the children. Some of the measures recommended are very expensive, and will be brought to the attention of the Council by the School Board with their recommendation. In the meantime, many minor faults which increase the hazard have been elimi-

nated, and the schools are safer today than they have been for many years. Some of the hazards are inherent in the construction of the buildings and can only be eliminated by such extensive reconstruction as would make the building of new school houses the more economical procedure. It is but slight exaggeration to say that with the exception of the Practise School, the High School and the new Saltonstall School now building, the school houses of Salem are a disgrace to the city. Old, poorly planned, poorly ventilated, difficult to heat in extreme weather, extravagant to maintain because of these conditions, the earliest recuperation in our financial condition should encourage us to plan for a modern housing of our schools. The number of them could be reduced consolidating probably two or three schools in some instances in one building, and the cost of operating and maintenance could probably be reduced, and at the same time the comfort and safety of the pupils and the efficiency of the teaching staff would be increased.

I invite you to co-operate with me in a strong effort to re-organize and reform the Police Department. Most efforts made in this direction in recent years have been blocked by the operation of the Civil Service laws, but reform has also been retarded by politics within and without the department, and the present demoralized condition is the logical result. Should my early efforts to improve this department fail of effect, I shall later send you a special message urging a drastic policy for reform. I recommend that an ordinance be

passed, giving the City Marshal power to appoint, remove, promote or reduce police officials, subject, however to the approval of the Mayor and subject, of course, to the Civil Service laws.

I recommend that an ordinance be passed giving the Chief Engineer of the Fire Department similar powers in his department.

I recommend that a committee be appointed to keep in touch with the work of the Rebuilding Commission, not in any sense to interfere with its work, but to keep informed on it, to advise it when necessary, and to co-operate in its work to keep its expenditures down for the protection of tax payers.

I recommend that a similar committee be appointed to keep in touch with the school board.

I recommend that every member of the Council exert himself to eliminate politics from the Fire Department. While this department is in good condition at present, it is still capable of much improvement. It will be my policy, with your assistance in promotions, removals and appointments, in this as in every department, to consider fitness only, and political pulls for any individual will operate with me as a detriment instead of a help to that man's chances.

I recommend that a division of public works be established with the City Engineer at its head, and to include the following departments: Streets, Bridges, Sewers, Water, Electrical, Street Lighting, Public Property and Building Departments; Street Lighting to be a division of the Electrical

Department. Power of appointment and removal of Superintendents in each division to be in the City Engineer, subject to the approval of the Mayor. The superintendents in each division to appoint and remove their subordinates with the approval of the City Engineer.

I recommend that a Board of Health be established to be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council, and that it be given in addition to its statutory powers all the powers usually vested in a board of Overseers of the Poor. I suggest that this board be given the power of appointing a superintendent of the Alms House, subject to the approval of the Mayor.

I recommend the passing of an ordinance permitting the continuance of the Purchasing Agent's Department.

I recommend that a committee on city land holdings be appointed to advise the Council and the Executive as to the advisability of sales of city land from time to time which may not be in use by the city, and to advise also on contemplated purchases of land for municipal purposes. The city frequently holds property after its usefulness has departed, and this property so held involves the loss of considerable tax money, which could be collected if it were sold to private owners. The City Engineer could furnish the committee with data which would be a basis for its deliberations and recommendations.

I invite the fullest co-operation of all Council Committees with the Executive, that greater effi-

ciency be secured in all departments. We cannot hope to escape criticism, but it is our own fault if we do not at once establish ourselves as a dignified, responsible business administration, one that will put an efficient and also a polite atmosphere into every office in City Hall. Citizens have complained of rude treatment in several offices there and as Mayor I shall interest myself in any future cases reported to me. When officials have been so long in office that they forget that unflinching courtesy is due every citizen who calls on business, efficiency and long service will not insure their continuance.

The city in the past eighteen months has made a splendid recovery from the disastrous fire of June 25, 1914. All our citizens, all of our civic and trade bodies, all our social, religious and fraternal organizations should co-operate to extend and complete the work of rebuilding. I urge in this connection that the Council and its committees inform themselves of the work done and being done by the City Planning Board, and that its help and advice be sought and utilized as far as practically possible. The good work of this board has been recognized by the Rebuilding Commission, but its very existence has nearly been ignored by preceding administrations. If we are to encourage civic spirit and utilize our assets, it is surely unwise to allow to pass unrecognized the hard and intelligent work of a public spirited and unpaid board like this.

I recommend that a legislative committee be ap-

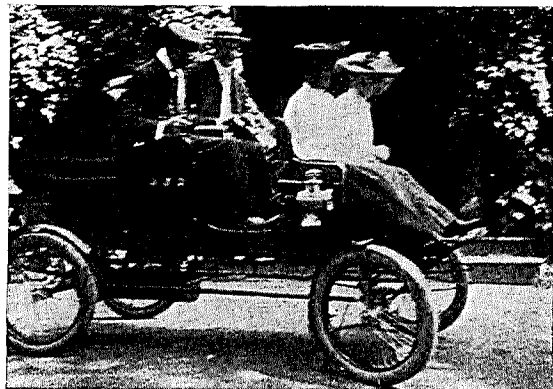
pointed which will keep in touch with our representatives in the legislature to the end that measures introduced there which will affect our expenditures may be reported to the Council, and hearings attended if necessary.

Work, hard work, and then some more hard work lies before us, but if we can at the conclusion of our work show that we have successfully labored to bring the city back to the position she deserves to occupy, we shall feel amply repaid.

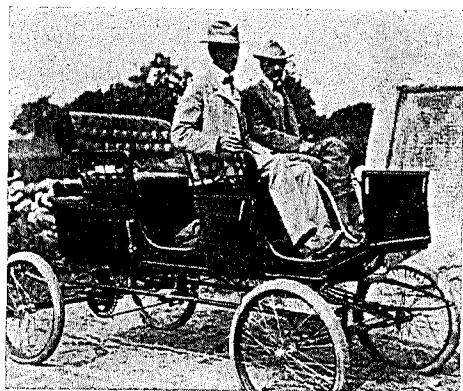
Salem, with its ancient traditions, noble history and sterling character, is in our hands temporarily to manage. The great responsibility that is ours will be well met, I am sure. If we remember that it is not only what we do, but what we are that gives character to our municipality, we shall not fail. I bespeak for our beloved Salem your utmost efforts and devotion.



ELECTRIC, 1898



STANLEY STEAMER, 1899



STANLEY STEAMER, 1902

ESSEX INSTITUTE

HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

VOL. LXXXV

JULY, 1949

No. 3

HALF CENTURY OF MOTORING IN ESSEX COUNTY

BY HENRY PERKINS BENSON

In these times when automobiles are such a common and necessary part of every day living it is hard to realize that when they first appeared they were considered to be a sportsman's luxury. This will appear in my narration of my fifty years' experience with electric, steam and gasoline machines, as that is the order in which they were offered to the public. In the early nineties stories began to appear in the papers of manufacturers who were experimenting with motors attached to carriages. Thus for some time all these contrivances were called horseless carriages and that is exactly what they were. At about the turn of the century a magazine called "The Horseless Age" was published for several years and did material service in aiding users and manufacturers to work together on needed improvements and in the education of the public to acceptance of the new vehicle.

The first trouble on the public roads was the frightened horses and their drivers. The intelligent horse could not be blamed, for being alarmed at the strange sight of a vehicle presuming to move without his services, but he was able very soon to accept the situation and one can imagine the grim pleasure he must have felt when called on to drag a disabled car to its home port. In such a case it was hard to assume an unconcerned manner when yells of "Get a horse" were hurled at the embarrassed driver, but we pioneers managed to do it with a little practice. Great interest was at once shown in the first cars produced and back of it all there must have been an intense

longing for a new method of individual transportation, the first since the bicycle came into use. As a people we wished to go places on our own, where we pleased, when we pleased and in company of our own choosing. In no other way can we account for the enthusiasm for the crude and noisy machines that were first available. The roads were so bad that a true description of them will only be believed by those who have used them and whose memories are as good as mine. They were rough, muddy when wet and dusty when dry. These conditions and the absence of wind-shields account for the costumes,—caps, goggles, gloves, dusters, veils, etc., worn by motorists as seen by the photographs of forty years ago. They were necessary until cars came with closed bodies.

I was interested in mechanical vehicles long before they were on the market and when the news came that Charles E. Duryea and others were having success in attaching motors to carriages, I devoured all the information I could find on the subject and was most anxious to own one. I believe I was sane, normal and conservative in my sporting life as I was in business. I sailed and raced twenty-one foot yachts out of Marblehead, played golf and tennis, and for an indoors sport, billiards was my favorite. But motors did something to me. With them I was not calm or cautious or level headed. I fell for them in the most extraordinary manner. In business I insisted when buying on getting what I bought, but not so with motor cars. A single demonstration by a clever agent decided the matter. I rapidly became a "nut" on them. I even believed what the attractive advertisements claimed for their machines. I can't explain this, but I admit it. Witness my first purchase of a car.

In April, 1898, I heard of a good electric carriage for sale in Boston for \$1000. The obliging agent took me for a ride (in two senses). It was very exciting to be moving in city traffic, smoothly and quietly and after a few miles I was ready to talk business, but it was not the same quality that I habitually talked to making a living. Assuming a rigid stern expression I agreed to buy the machine if he would call at my office in Boston for me

and drive me to my house in Salem without exhausting the battery. He accepted the offer and made an appointment for the next fine day. Soon the great day arrived and with ill-concealed glee on my part and no visible apprehension on the part of the agent the start was made. The route chosen took us down the back side of Beacon Hill on a street which necessitated a sharp left angle turn half way down. I expected he would slow down for the turn and no doubt he did the best he could, but the brakes would not hold us and we slithered around the corner on two wheels, skidding to the curb and luckily met no traffic at that point, but we slowed down to get our breath and stopped to see if we had any brakes. We had, but the trip nearly ended then and there. I was having a wonderful time and all went well until we reached Saugus, about twelve miles on our way. I noticed we were slowing down as we entered town and supposed the agent was resting himself from the strain, but it was the battery which needed rest and it proceeded to take it. The agent, to do him justice, made no excuse. He said the rough roads and grades had probably called for too much power from the battery. I sympathized with him deeply and had no idea of insisting on the terms of our agreement. What vestiges of common sense I possessed when that trip started had completely evaporated. What could I do for the disappointed agent? Perhaps his job or the hopes of his wife and children depended on the success of this demonstration. How wonderful that he was able to find help so quickly in a strange town! No unworthy suspicion entered my mind, only relief at his happy smile as the good old fashioned horse and team and driver, at an expense of four dollars, hauled us slowly but securely over the five or six miles to Salem. I completed the purchase and sent the agent back to his office in a happy mood. My statement that I was a "nut" on motors may now be accepted as an understatement.

It is interesting to note that the development of the automobile in the early years was supported entirely by the users of pleasure vehicles. Industry was slow to realize the economy available as compared with the horse.

(and much more)

URSOME
ement yesterday, these
n enjoyed the sunshine
er Park. Left to right
daughter, Leslie, 16
nessey and son, Steve,
News Photo)

Firefighters and National Guardsmen last night patrolled fire-scarred woodlands to guard against fresh outbreaks of the Manchester fire. In command through the night were Deputy Fire Chief Robert Ahern of Gloucester, Chief John C. Calley

of Beverly, Lt. Col. Nicholas J. of the National Guard's Salem battalion, left to right, who briefed by George L. Allen, ch the Manchester selectmen.
(Salem News P

erty Holdings ifferences' ey in Suit

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y remaining as trustees.
REMOVAL
response to other questions
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or Miss Ganley, Deery
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Ganley working for the
Realty Co., or other firms
ed in the estate, but ob-
to her having any voice in
g company policies.
t by Deery and his sis-
e. removal of Miss Ganley
trustee and executor.
(DEERY—)
ntinued on Page Seven

Ex-Mayor Henry Benson, Plymouth Industrialist, Dies at 90

Hon. Henry P. Benson, 90, of 7 Hamilton street, former mayor of Salem and for 26 years president of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Co., died this morning at



HENRY P. BENSON

home, following a long illness. The retired industrialist and yachting enthusiast was the son of the late George W. and Elizabeth (Poole) Benson. He served in the council from 1902 to 1904 and with the aldermanic board from 1906 to 1907. In 1916, he was elected mayor to succeed Hon. Matthias J. O'Keefe and re-elected in 1917.

Termed one of Salem's greatest mayors, Mr. Benson, in addition to other major accomplishments, led the city through its reconstruction problems following the 1914 great Salem fire.

As a youth he attended Phillips school, Salem High school and was graduated in 1886 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Following his college days he

entered the employ of A. Emerson Cotton Merchants Co. of Boston and soon after, became its president. He was also a director of Sweetland Waste Co. of Boston, dealers in cotton and wool waste.

IN TEXTILES 50 YEARS

His active interest in textiles spanned a half-century. He and the former Rebecca Appleton Broadhead were married on Jan. 11, 1892, in Grace church. He was among the early drivers of the first automobiles and was also among the first members of the Massachusetts Automobile club.

Early interests included golf and he was a member of the Old Salem Golf club and of the present Salem Country club. For years he was active in the Salem Billiard club.

A director of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Co., since 1905 and its president from 1920 to 1946, it is recalled that his annual reports were eagerly awaited for their informative and entertaining observations of general business conditions as well as their summaries of the company's progress and prospects.

Plymouth Most Serious In Bay Sta

BOSTON, May 9 (C) chusetts today was state of emergency l the worst forest fire in 10 years.

Gov. Furcolo dec state of emergency after forest fires lay of acres of forest land ened ruin. He acted, he said, forecast of continued peratures and stiff wi threatened to rekindle fires considered unde last night.

(PLYMOUTH FIRE Continued on Page

Ike's Personal Appeal Se Hazardou

By JAMES MARI WASHINGTON, Ma President Eisenhower i ing on a hazardous pe venture in finally decid peal directly to the support of his record budget of almost 72 b lars.

He is laying on the influence, his popularity leadership in the two t he will make. He is a people to do what he minding to do, put on Congress to get it t

If Eisenhower's broad —if the people do not re pressuring Congress — makers will probably t a fresh license not to him. They've been do little listening to him i (RISKS INFLUENC Continued on Page

bers Mom —

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of cut flowers fresh
unusual novelty or

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Gardner-Pingree house (see A-2) at 128 Essex Street, built under Samuel McIntire's direction at the same time. The three-sided bay window above, rather an abrupt intrusion on the facade, may date from the 1883 remodeling. The 6/6 double sash windows are set in molded "plank-frames" with sills but no lintels. A wooden service ell extends to the rear, and a two-story, hipped-roof, wooden barn is attached to the west side of the house by a one-story shed.

E-10



E-10 BOTT-FABENS HOUSE
18 Chestnut Street at Botts Court
NR; MHD

Before 1800

Although it has not been firmly documented, the Bott-Fabens house is considered to be the oldest residence on Chestnut Street, and supposedly dates from before 1800. In fact, this three-story, hipped-roof building may have been built before Chestnut Street was laid out in 1796, with access to it from Essex Street (north) through surrounding marshy land. The first owner was James B. Bott, who maintained a saddle shop. In 1847 the famed author Nathaniel Hawthorne lived here with his family for a brief time. After a succession of owners, Augustus J. and Benjamin H. Fabens purchased the building in 1888 and converted it to a single-family house, moving the principal entrance from the west side to the south end. This entrance features fine geometric tracery, in the doorway fanlight and sidelights, and an unusual Doric porch. The porch consists of a flat roof with a thin projecting cornice and mutules (no entablature is present) set on reeded side timbers supported by round columns and square attached pilasters. The bay window above was added by the Fabens.

Standing on the west side of Botts Court (and the east corner of Hamilton Street) at numbers 20-22 is a three-story, hipped-roof, wooden double house (NR; MHD) erected for Rev. James Thompson (eastern half) and William Rea (western half) in c. 1836. Highlighting its front matched-board facade is a double Roman Doric entrance porch protecting identical doorways with paneled transoms and full-length sidelights.

E-11



E-11 HENRY P. BENSON HOUSE
7 Hamilton Street
NR; MHD

c. 1898

One of Salem's finest Colonial Revival wooden residences, the Henry P. Benson house has had a most interesting history. From the time that it was built c. 1898 until 1957, it was owned by Mr. Benson and his wife, Rebecca. After his death in that year, Mrs. Benson lived here until 1960. Henry P. Benson was the mayor of Salem in 1916/17, and a director of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company. For a designer the Bensons selected Henry's brother, John P. Benson (1865-1947), a New York-area architect and later an accomplished marine scene painter, who also prepared the plans for the Wheatland-Phillips house (see E-19) at 30 Chestnut Street

(over)