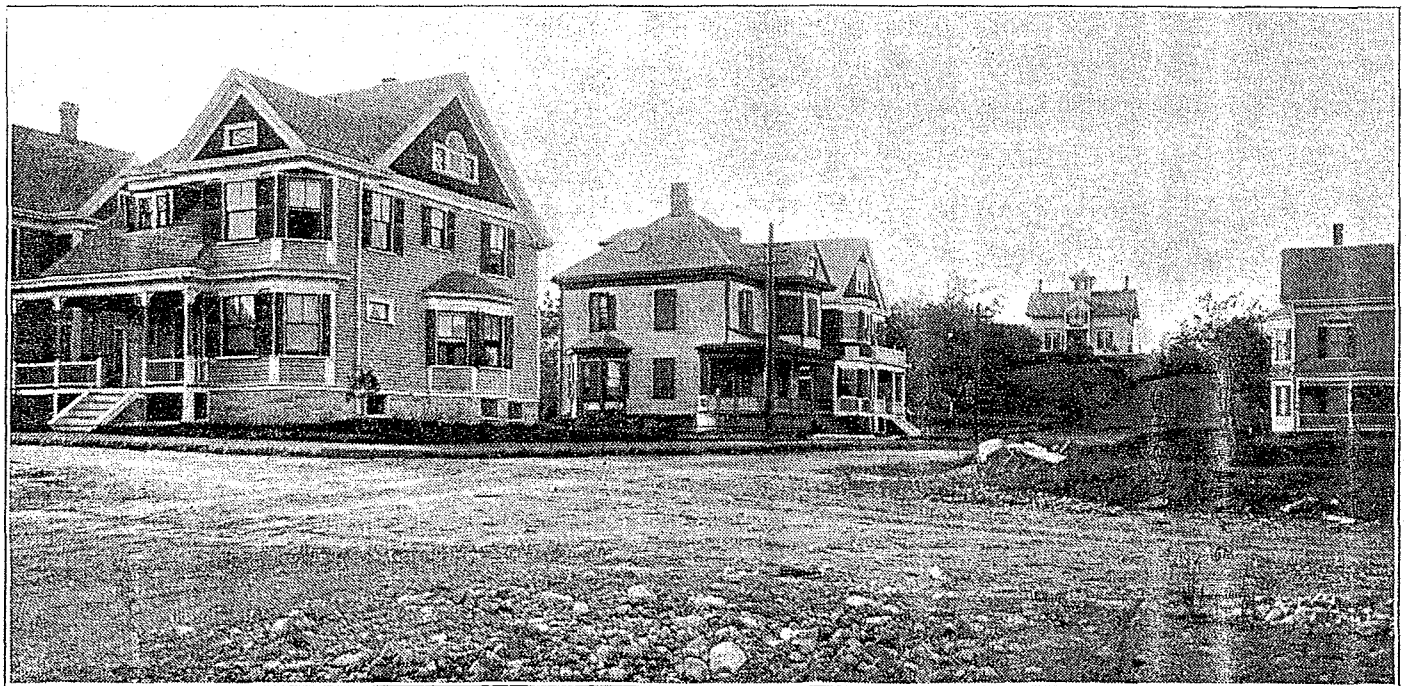


41 Fairmount Street, Salem

Built for
David S. Osborne
Baker
1854

George P. Woodbury,
who resided here in the 1890s



Fairmount Street, 1897, with this house in the distance

41 Fairmount Street, Salem

According to available evidence, this house was built in 1854 for David S. Osborne, a baker.

On 11 July 1854 Parker Cross, Salem yeoman, for \$1500 sold to baker David S. Osborne, 41, of Detroit, Michigan, a lot in the Northfields of Salem, 3 acres and 44 poles (ED 498:70). Mr. Osborne and his wife Peace lived in Detroit but also in Salem.

David S. Osborne was born in Danvers in 1813, the son of David Osborne (also, Osborn), then 38, a native of Danvers, and of Nancy Buffum, 40, daughter of a Salem sailmaker, Samuel Buffum, of Liberty Street. The Osbornes had two older surviving children, Samuel, 11, and John, three; and evidently they had one other child after David, a daughter Sarah Ann. Mr. David Osborne died in 1820, aged 45 years, leaving his widow Nancy and the four children, including seven-year-old David S. Mrs. Nancy Buffum Osborne evidently moved her family to Salem in the 1820s. Her widowed mother, Ann (Stow) Buffum, a native of Newfoundland, would not die until 1828, and Nancy Osborne and family may have resided with her. Nancy also had three siblings living in Salem in the 1820s: sister Sarah L. Buffum (1784-1866) and brothers Samuel Buffum, a sailor (died by 1828, leaving a son Joshua born in 1814), and William S. Buffum, a tailor who died in 1826, leaving a daughter Emily. Sarah evidently raised her nephew Joshua, or at least resided with him in the family house on Liberty Street.

In the 1820s, as David S. Osborne was growing up, Salem had a prosperous foreign commerce; and new markets were opened with Madagascar (1820), which supplied tallow and ivory, and Zanzibar (1825), whence came coffee, ivory, and gum copal, used to make varnish. This opened a huge and lucrative trade in which Salem dominated, and its vessels thus gained access to all of the east African ports.

Salem's general maritime foreign commerce fell off sharply in the late 1820s. Imports in Salem ships were supplanted by the goods that were now being produced in great quantities in America. The interior of the country was being opened for settlement, and some Salemites moved away. To the north, the falls of the Merrimack River powered large new textile mills (Lowell was founded in 1823), which created great wealth for their investors; and in general it seemed that the tide of opportunity was ebbing away from Salem. In an ingenious attempt to

stem the flow of talent from the town and to harness its potential water power for manufacturing, Salem's merchants and capitalists banded together in 1826 to raise the money to dam the North River for industrial power. The project, which began with much promise, was suspended in 1827, which demoralized the town even more, and caused several leading citizens to move to Boston, the hub of investment in the new economy.

In 1830 occurred a horrifying crime that brought disgrace to Salem. Old Capt. Joseph White, a wealthy merchant, resided in the house now called the Gardner-Pingree house, on Essex Street. One night, intruders broke into his mansion and killed him. All of Salem buzzed with the news of murderous thugs; but the murderer was a member of the prominent Crowninshield family. He (who soon committed suicide in jail) had been hired by his friends, Capt. White's own relatives, Capt. Joseph Knapp and his brother Frank (they would be executed). The results of the investigation and trial having uncovered much that was lurid, more of the respectable families quit the now-notorious town.

As the decade wore on, Salem's remaining merchants had to take their equity out of wharves and warehouses and ships and put it into manufacturing and transportation, as the advent of railroads and canals diverted both capital and trade away from the coast. Some merchants did not make the transition, and were ruined. Old-line areas of work, like rope-making, sail-making, and ship chandleries, gradually declined and disappeared. Salem slumped badly, but, despite all, the voters decided to charter their town as a city in 1836—the third city to be formed in the state, behind Boston and Lowell. City Hall was built 1837-8 and 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 fortune and a better future. David S. Osborne may have been one of those who left, at least for a while.

Salem had not prepared for the industrial age, and had few natural advantages. The North River served not to power factories but mainly to flush the waste from the 25 tanneries that had set up along its banks. Throughout the 1830s, the leaders of Salem scrambled to re-invent an economy for their fellow citizens, many of whom were mariners without much sea-faring to do. Ingenuity, ambition, and hard work would have to carry the day.

One inspiration was the Salem Laboratory, Salem's first science-based manufacturing enterprise, founded in 1813 to produce chemicals. At the plant built

in 1818 in North Salem on the North River, the production of alum and 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 were a start toward taking Salem in a new direction. In 1838 the Eastern Rail Road, headquartered in Salem, began operating between Boston and Salem, which gave the local people a 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.

By 1836, although there is no directory listing for Mrs. Nancy Buffum Osborn or her son David S., Nancy's son John B. Osborn, mariner, was residing at then-81 Boston Street, and her son Samuel B. Osborn resided in North Salem. Samuel, a cordwainer (shoemaker), married and had children including a son in 1830, whom he named for his brother, David S. Osborn (he would become a railroad fireman and engineer, and reside in North Salem). Samuel and family resided on Orne Street in 1841 (1842 Directory) and in 1849, when he was listed as a gardener-horticulturalist—an occupation that reflects the rapid development of parts of North Salem for use as large-scale fruit-tree nurseries, farms, and gentlemen's estates.

David S. Osborn, the baker, married Peace P., perhaps a relative through the Buffum family, in which the given name Peace was used. They evidently wed about 1840, when she was 21. In 1841 they had a son, John H., and in 1847 another son, Charles F., and another, David L., in 1849. In the 1840s, as more industrial methods and machines were introduced, new companies in new lines of business arose in Salem. The tanning and curing of leather was very important by the mid-1800s. 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. In 1846 the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company completed the construction at Stage Point of 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 tenements built nearby. 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. Salem had shoe factories too, and attracted shoe workers from outlying towns and the countryside. Even the population changed, as hundreds of Irish families, fleeing the Famine in Ireland, settled in Salem and gave the industrialists a big pool of cheap labor.

The Gothic symbol of Salem's new industrial economy was the large twin-towered granite train station—the “stone depot”—smoking and growling with idling locomotives, standing on filled-in land at the foot of Washington Street, where before had been the merchants' wharves. 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 late 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. By 1850 Salem was about finished as a working port. A picture of Salem's sleepy waterfront is given by Hawthorne in his mean-spirited “introductory section” to **The Scarlet Letter**, which he began while working in the Custom House.

At some point, the Osborns moved to Detroit, Michigan, where Mr. Osborn ran a bakery and evidently prospered. As noted, he bought the 3+ acres hereabouts in July, 1854; and he proceeded to build the house thereon soon afterward. Evidently the Osborns were moving back to Massachusetts, for in the 1855 street books (p. 38), taken in order to do ward valuations of real estate, there was the following listing for Nursery Street: “new house on hill, D.S. Osborn, 3¼ acres bought of P. Cross \$1500, house unfinished \$1000.” And in the 1855, the Osborns are listed as residing at this house: David S., 42, was a farmer, residing with wife Peace, 36, John, 13, Charles, seven, and David L., five (1855 census, house 754).

David S. Osborne, b. 1813, s/o David Osborn & Nancy Buffum of Danvers, m. c.1840 Peace P. _____ (b. 1819). Known issue:

1. *John H., 1841*
2. *Charles F., 1847*
3. *David L., 1849*

In June, 1855, Mr. Osborne, of Salem, granted his right in some Lynn real estate to his sister Mrs. William L. (Sarah Ann Osborn) Alley of Lynn (ED 523:255). In the 1856 street books, the Nursery Street valuations list “on hill, David S. Osborn, baker, \$2000.” In 1856, he was listed as David S. Osborne, “boots and shoes at Lynn, house near Liberty Hill” (Directory 1857). From this, it would seem that he was either selling or manufacturing boots and shoes at Lynn, although residing here in Salem; and in 1858 (per 1859 Directory) he was still residing here. He probably was doing some farming as well; and he likely still owned the Detroit bakery.

Salem’s growth continued through the 1850s, as business and industries expanded, the population swelled, new churches (e.g. Immaculate Conception, 1857) were started, new working-class neighborhoods were developed (especially in North Salem and South Salem, off Boston Street, and along the Mill Pond behind the Broad Street graveyard), and new schools, factories, and stores were built. A second, larger, factory building for the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company was added in 1859, down at Stage Point, where a new Methodist Church went up, and many neat homes, boarding-houses, and stores were erected along the streets between Lafayette and Congress. The tanning business continued to boom, as better and larger tanneries were built along Boston Street and Mason Street; and subsidiary industries sprang up as well, most notably the J.M. Anderson glue-works on the Turnpike (Highland Avenue).

As it re-established itself as an economic powerhouse, Salem took a strong interest in national politics. It was primarily Republican, and strongly anti-slavery, with its share of outspoken abolitionists, led by Charles Remond, a passionate speaker who came from one of the city’s notable black families. At its Lyceum (on Church Street) and in other venues, plays and shows were put on, but cultural lectures and political speeches were given too.

By 1860, with the election of Abraham Lincoln, it was clear that the Southern states would secede from the union; and Salem, which had done so much to win the independence of the nation, was ready to go to war to force others to remain a part of it. 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.

Through the 1860s, Salem pursued manufacturing, especially of leather and shoes and textiles. The managers and capitalists tended to build their new, grand houses along Lafayette Street (these houses may still be seen, south of Roslyn Street; many are in the French Second Empire style, with mansard roofs). A third factory building for the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company was built in 1865. By 1864 the D.S. Osbornes were listed as living in Deroit (see ED 672:113). On 8 Feb. 1868 for \$4245 Mr. Osborne, of Detroit, sold the premises, a dwelling house, other buildings, and 3 acres 44 poles of land, to Mrs. Mary A. S. Osgood, the wife of Capt. Joseph Osgood, Salem master mariner (ED 740:181). The Osbornes evidently did not return to Salem.

The Osgoods moved into the house early in 1868, if not before.

Capt. Joseph Osgood (1825-1877) was a retired shipmaster in 1868. His wife, Mary Ann, was 39, and they had one child, a daughter Josephine, fourteen.

Joseph Osgood was born in Salem on 20 July 1825, the son of Nathaniel W. Osgood (1797-1863) and Mary B. Archer. Joseph had an older brother Nathaniel, and three younger sisters, Caroline, Mary, and Lucy. The children grew up on Federal Street; and their father prospered as a tanner. The father was the son of a Salem merchant, Joseph Osgood (1771-1806), who himself was the son of Dr. Joseph Osgood (1746-1812), who had moved to Salem from Danvers in the 1780s.

Capt. Joseph Osgood was evidently bred to the sea, and rose to the position of shipmaster (for information about his life, see the *History of the Osgood Family*, and James E. Emmerton's *Emmerton Family*). He was distinguished in his calling, and was employed by the Boston firm of Daniel Bacon & Sons as master of ships engaged in trade with the East Indies, including Australia and New Zealand. In 1851 his sister Caroline married Capt. Ephraim A. Emmerton, a shipmaster and merchant; and in 1852 Capt. Osgood married his brother-in-law's sister, Mary Ann Sage Emmerton, 24. In March, 1853, was born their only child, Josephine Osgood. Capt. Osgood's wife and daughter accompanied him on the voyages of the clipper ships *Game Cock*, to San Francisco and Shanghai, and *The Oriental*, to Melbourne and Bombay. In 1851 the family resided at then-97 Federal Street, and in 1854 and 1856 at 10 Crombie Street (per directories).

In the late 1850s, evidently, the Osgoods moved to Pennsylvania, where Capt. Osgood worked in Cooperstown as business agent for an oil company. He was not successful, and returned to Salem. After the Civil War, the family resided in

In the late 1850s, evidently, the Osgoods moved to Pennsylvania, where Capt. Osgood worked in Cooperstown as business agent for an oil company. He was not successful, and returned to Salem. After the Civil War, the family resided in 1863 and 1865 at 13 Summer Street, the Emmerton family house. Capt. Osgood was probably affluent enough not to have to work. He was highly regarded, and would be elected to the School Committee and (in 1871) to the Common Council (predecessor of the city council). As has been mentioned, the Osgoods bought this house and its three-plus acres of grounds in 1868; and in that year Capt Osgood's directory listing was "Joseph Osgood, master mariner, house Osborne Hill" (1869 Salem Directory). In 1870 the household consisted of Capt. Joseph Osgood, 45, with \$3300 in real estate and \$1200 in personal estate, wife Mary, 40, daughter Josephine, 17, and maid-servant, Ellen Kelly, 19, born in Ireland (1870 census, ward six, h. 428).

In 1874, in the G.W. Hopkins detailed atlas of Salem (copy appended), the Osgood homestead is clearly shown. There was no Fairmount Street or Appleton Street, and Nursery Street terminated at the Osgood property line. At just that point, a private driveway extended up to the house. The driveway did not run along the bed of the present Fairmount Street, but along a course parallel and southwesterly of it. The footprint of the house is shown as tee-shaped, with a barn attached to the rear ell. There were no other buildings nearby, so the house must have been quite a landmark in the neighborhood.

Capt. Osgood died on 20 August 1877, aged 51 years, leaving his wife and daughter. Mrs. Mary A.S. Osgood went home to live with her mother, Mrs. Emmerton, also a recent widow. On 1 May 1878, Mrs. Osgood for \$4000 sold the house and land here to Mary Ann Wentzell, the wife of a North Salem farmer, David Wentzell (ED 996:227). The Wentzells did not occupy the Osgood house, but leased it to tenants, one of whom was George Willoughby Rogers (1850-1881), a wealthy young gentleman whose father, Richard S. Rogers (1790-1873) had been a leading merchant and shipowner. In the 1880 census, this homestead was identified as being on "Osgood Hill" (no longer called "Osborne Hill"). The house was occupied by George W. Rogers, 30, "gentleman of leisure", wife Josephine F, 27, son Dudley Pickman Rogers, four, and servants Johanna Geoffernan, 35, born in Nova Scotia, and Anna Mitchell, 30, born in Ireland (house 292, En. Dist. 240, 1880 census for Salem). The 1881 Salem Directory lists George W. Rogers as residing "off Nursery Street". Mrs. Rogers was Josephine F. Lord (1851-1919), originally of Peabody. Their son was born on Oct. 8, 1875 (see **The Pickman Family of Salem**, pp. 36-7).

After Mr. Rogers' death in 1881, Mrs. Rogers moved away and resided in 1885 at 128 Federal Street (see 1886 directory). The owners, the Wentzells, resided at the Cabot Farm, and continued to rent out this house. Eventually they moved to Amherst, Mass.; and on Jan. 31, 1895, they sold the premises for \$5500 to George P. Woodbury of Salem (ED 1436:100). The property was still in its original condition, a little more than three acres, with no roads running across it.

Mr. Woodbury, a builder and developer, resided at 17 Nursery Street at that time, and soon moved his family into the hilltop house here, and began subdividing the homestead. George P. Woodbury was born in 1851, the son of Ezra Woodbury (b. 1820), a carpenter and builder who, in 1845, resided at 4 Woodbury Court, off Northey Street, and worked as a carpenter at Perkins & Co., on Herbert Street (see 1846 Directory). By 1849, Ezra Woodbury, having married Elizabeth Knight, resided at 15 Northey Street and was a partner in Perkins & Woodbury, builders, with William E. Perkins (of 11 Northey Street), with a carpenter's shop on what is now Bridge Street, opposite Mall Street (see 1850 Salem Directory). By 1855 the Woodburys had four little boys: Ezra, George, Albert, and Charles (see 1855 census, ward two).

George attended public schools and then went to work for his father. About 1875 he married Eliza _____ and they would have four surviving children, Grace, George, Marion, and Elinor. In 1876, Mr. Woodbury bought property from his father on Howard Street extension (ED 960:247). In 1870 Salem had received its last cargo from Zanzibar, thus ending a once-important trade. By then, a new Salem & New York freight steamboat line was in operation. Seven years later, with the arrival of a vessel from Cayenne, Salem's foreign trade came to an end. After that, "the merchandise warehouses on the wharves no longer contained silks from India, tea from China, pepper from Sumatra, coffee from Arabia, spices from Batavia, gum-copal from Zanzibar, hides from Africa, and the various other products of far-away countries. The boys have ceased to watch on the Neck for the incoming vessels, hoping to earn a reward by being the first to announce to the expectant merchant the safe return of his looked-for vessel. The foreign commerce of Salem, once her pride and glory, has spread its white wings and sailed away forever" (Rev. George Bachelder in *History of Essex County*, II:65).

Salem was now so densely built-up that a general conflagration was always a possibility, as in Boston, when, on Nov. 9, 1872, the financial and manufacturing district of the city burned up. Salem continued to prosper in the 1870s, carried forward by the leather-making business. In 1874 the city was visited by a

tornado and shaken by a minor earthquake. In the following year, the large Pennsylvania Pier (site of the present coal-fired harborside electrical generating plant) was completed to begin receiving large shipments of coal. Beyond it, at Juniper Point, a new owner began subdividing the old Allen farmlands into a new development called Salem Willows and Juniper Point. In the U.S. centennial year, 1876, A.G. Bell of Salem announced that he had discovered a way to transmit voices over telegraph wires.

In this decade, French-Canadian families began coming to work in Salem's mills and factories, and more houses and tenements were built. The better-off workers bought portions of older houses or built small homes for their families in the outlying sections of the city; and by 1879 the Naumkeag Steam Cotton mills would employ 1200 people and produce annually nearly 15 million yards of cloth. Shoe-manufacturing businesses expanded in the 1870s, and 40 shoe factories were employing 600-plus operatives. Tanning, in both Salem and Peabody, remained a very important industry, and employed hundreds of breadwinners. On Boston Street in 1879, the Arnold tannery caught fire and burned down.

In the 1880s and 1890s, Salem kept building infrastructure; and new businesses arose, and established businesses expanded. Retail stores prospered; horse-drawn trolleys ran every which-way; and machinists, carpenters, millwrights, and other specialists all thrived. In 1880, Salem's manufactured goods were valued at about \$8.4 million, of which leather accounted for nearly half. In the summer of 1886, the Knights of Labor brought a strike against the manufacturers for a ten-hour day and other concessions; but the manufacturers imported labor from Maine and Canada, and kept going. The strikers held out, and there was violence in the streets, and even rioting; but the owners prevailed, and many of the defeated workers lost their jobs and suffered, with their families, through a bitter winter.

By the mid-1880s, Salem's cotton-cloth mills at the Point employed 1400 people who produced about 19 million yards annually, worth about \$1.5 million. The city's large shoe factories stood downtown behind the stone depot and on Dodge and Lafayette Streets. A jute bagging company prospered with plants on Skerry Street and English Street; its products were sent south to be used in cotton-baling. Salem factories also produced lead, paint, and oil. At the Eastern Railroad yard on Bridge Street, cars were repaired and even built new. In 1887 the streets were first lit with electricity, replacing gas-light. The gas works, which had stood on Northey Street since 1850, was moved to a larger site on Bridge Street in 1888, opposite the Beverly Shore.

By the early 1890s George P. Woodbury was a contractor building “substantial structures” and employing “several men” (see p. 123, C.B. Gillespie, *Illustrated History of Salem & Environs*, 1897). After 1894 he focused on developing the land hereabouts in North Salem by extending Woodside and Fairmount Streets, and by 1897 he was described as “interested in real estate, and, besides erecting several houses for speculation, has opened and developed an important section of land which greatly improves the entire section. This property, which consists of about five acres, comprises an extension of Fairmount and Woodside Streets, and what was two years ago but a field is now possessed of comely and comfortable residences, the occupants of which enjoy all the modern improvements, such as water, gas, and electric lights and sewerage. One of these extensions has already been accepted by the city, and when the further extensions are made, it is conceded that the city will also accept them as thoroughfares. In the development of this locality, Mr. Woodbury has shown himself to be possessed of rare judgment as to real estate values, for the territory he has opened up is growing rapidly and destined to become an important and convenient residential section. Mr. Woodbury has served as treasurer of the Fireman’s Relief Association from its formation. He is also a past regent of the Royal Arcanum, and is connected with other organizations. Although not an office-seeker, he has served on the Republican city committee for a decade and was for 15 years a ward officer.” (ibid; see 1897 photo of this house appended).

Things went according to plan in Mr. Woodbury’s development. In 1900, the Woodburys resided here: George, 50, house builder, wife Eliza, 49, and their four children: Grace, 23, a stenographer, George, 19, a student (a future plumber of North Salem), Marion, 12, and Elinor, seven. Their nearest neighbor was Sidney Perley, the lawyer and antiquarian, who was publishing *Essex Antiquarian* magazine and would later publish his *History of Salem 1626-1716* in three volumes. Mr. Woodbury was proud of his neighborhood, and in 1903 placed his ad in the Naumkeag Directory with the photo of Fairmount Street that had been used in the Gillespie booklet in 1897 (see p. 1276, Directory ad, “George P. Woodbury, Carpenter, Contractor and Builder. Jobbing Promptly and Neatly Done. Real Estate Bought and Sold. Shop, 58 Howard Street.”)

Mr. Woodbury died in September, 1903, leaving his grieving family and friends (Mrs. Elizabeth Woodbury would die on 9 March 1906). By late 1904, a Newburyport bank foreclosed on the Woodbury property, and, on 2 January 1905 for \$4550 sold off the homestead buildings and a parcel of land to Arthur P. Gifford of Salem (ED 1766:487). Mr. Gifford and family moved in here. He

worked as foreman at the W.A. Irving box factory at then-340 Bridge Street (see Salem Directory, 1905, 1906). On 8 May 1913 Mr. Gifford transferred the title to his wife Frances E. Gifford (ED 2214:364-5).

More factories and more people required more space for buildings, more roads, and more storage areas. This space was created by filling in rivers, harbors, and ponds. 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, 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 some of its old wharves 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.

Salem kept growing. The Canadians were followed in the early 20th century by large numbers of Polish and Ukrainian families, who settled primarily in the Derby Street neighborhood. By the eve of World War One, Salem was a bustling, polyglot city that supported large department stores and large factories of every description. People from the surrounding towns, and Marblehead in particular, came to Salem to do their shopping; and its handsome government buildings, as befit the county seat, were busy with conveyances of land, lawsuits, and probate proceedings. The city's 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.

The Giffords moved to Florida; and on 20 Jan. 1920 they sold the homestead to James L. Roope, who sold the same ten days later to Elizabeth T. Enos, wife of Benjamin B. Enos (ED 2440:145, 245). She would own it for more than 25 years.

By the 1920s, Salem was once again a thriving city; and its tercentenary in 1926 was a time of great celebration. The Depression hit in 1929, and continued through the 1930s. Salem, the county seat and regional retail center, gradually rebounded, and prospered after World War II through the 1950s and into the 1960s. General Electric, Sylvania, Parker Brothers, Pequot Mills (formerly Naumkeag Steam Cotton Co.), Almy's department store, various other large-scale retailers, and Beverly's United Shoe Machinery Company were all major local employers. Then 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.

--Robert Booth for Historic Salem Inc., 11 Dec. 2003