

335 Essex Street

This house was the residence of Col. and Mrs John Page, perhaps as early as 1793.

The lot was part of the homestead of Thomas Maule, who bought the land from the Neal family, from 1681 forward. Salem's leading Quaker, an author, and a successful merchant, Mr Maule built his house where the large yellow house presently stands at 333 Essex Street. Mr Maule's house stood until about 1856, when it was razed (see illustration in Sidney Perley's History of Salem, vol. II, p. 272). Thomas Maule conveyed this house and its large lot (about 1½ acres fronting 171' on Essex Street) to his son John in 1707. John eventually moved to Philadelphia; after his death his heirs (in 1746, 1747, & 1752) released their rights to the estate (one dwelling house, a shop & smokehouse used by Samuel Hayward, and the 1½ acres) to Gabriel Holman, Salem hatter (88:182, 199,273; 91:43; 96:251). A note: Nathaniel Hawthorne named his "wizard" Maule in The House of the Seven Gables.

In 1780, after Mr Holman's death, his heirs released their rights in the estate to their brothers Samuel and Gabriel (137:52). Three years later, on 22 Oct 1783, the estate was partitioned: Samuel received the mansion house, hatter's shop, and land fronting 104' on Essex Street (including the 335 lot); another heir named Hastie received a small lot to the west fronting 24' on the street (the Hastie lot later went to Gabriel Holman); Gabriel received a small dwelling house on a lot fronting 43' on Essex Street (141:142).

Deacon Samuel Holman, a hatter like his father, lived in the Maule house until his death on 24 Nov 1825; he left "a dwelling house and outbuildings and land on Essex Street, worth \$3500" to his son Samuel Holman and to his daughter Ruth, wife of Col. John Page, as well as to the heirs of his deceased daughter Eunice Carlton (#13585). On 28 Jan 1826, Samuel Carlton, son of the deceased Eunice, released to his uncle Samuel for \$605 his right in the estate (240:94); Samuel Holman thus came to own 2/3 of the rights to the estate. Note that at this time only one house (the Maule house) is mentioned as standing on the property.

On 7 Ap 1826, Samuel Holman and Mrs Ruth (Holman) Page partitioned their father's estate: Samuel received the eastern 2/3 of the homestead, fronting 70' 8" on Essex Street and including the Maule house; Ruth received the western 1/3 of the homestead,

"with all the buildings thereon, except the barn;" Ruth's portion is the present lot at 335 Essex Street (240:167,168). On 28 Nov 1826 Col. & Mrs Page mortgaged for \$500 to John Perkins, Salem housewright, their "certain messuage on the southerly side of Essex Street consisting of a dwelling house and outbuildings and land; this mortgage was discharged 5 Sept 1832 (243:174). This deed is the first mention of a dwelling house standing on the lot.

Col. John Page married Ruth Holman (b. 1761) on 9 July 1793; she was his third wife; they had one child,* Elizabeth, born in 1799. The Salem real estate assessments for the period show that up to the year of his marriage, Col. Page owned a house and part of a distillery; from 1793 on, however, he was assessed for half a house, which soon became half a house and half a shop. I can only assume that Col. Page, on marrying Ruth Holman, moved from his Federal Street house (which he proceeded to rent out for many years, selling it in 1823) to a house which he either moved or built on his father-in-law's property at what is now 335 Essex Street. Once there, he rented out half of the house and shop to someone else, who paid the taxes on the same. The house would not have been mentioned in the probate of Samuel Holman's estate, since Holman himself did not own Page's house, but just the land it stood on.

At any rate, on 2 Aug 1833 Col. Page and his wife Ruth gave the house and land to their daughter Elizabeth (271:60). On 22 Ap 1842 Elizabeth Page granted the premises for \$800 to widow Nancy Felton and her four daughters (331:173). Two years later the Feltons sold the place for \$1800 to Francis Scott, a Salem hosiery merchant (354:188). Up to this point, the house is described, inexplicably, as standing 16' ½" east of the north-west corner of the lot, which has remained the same to the present day. I cannot account for this phenomenon. On 12 June 1848, Mr Scott for \$2475 granted the premises to Capt Thomas Holmes, a Salem mariner; in this deed, the house is described as being 6" east of its western boundary, as it is today (399:23); Capt Holmes immediately leased to Samuel Holman, his neighbor to the east, a small strip of land adjoining his property (399:24).

Oliver Thayer, in his reminiscences, stated that this house was at one time in the mid-19th century the tin-shop of Deacon Richard M Chipman; I tend to think that Mr Thayer was mistaken, since all the information that I have found indicates that Mr Chipman lived & worked up the road a bit, at what was 347 Essex Street; I suppose that his house and workshop could have been separate, but the tax records do not show this (see Essex Institute Historical Collections, vol. 21, p.219).

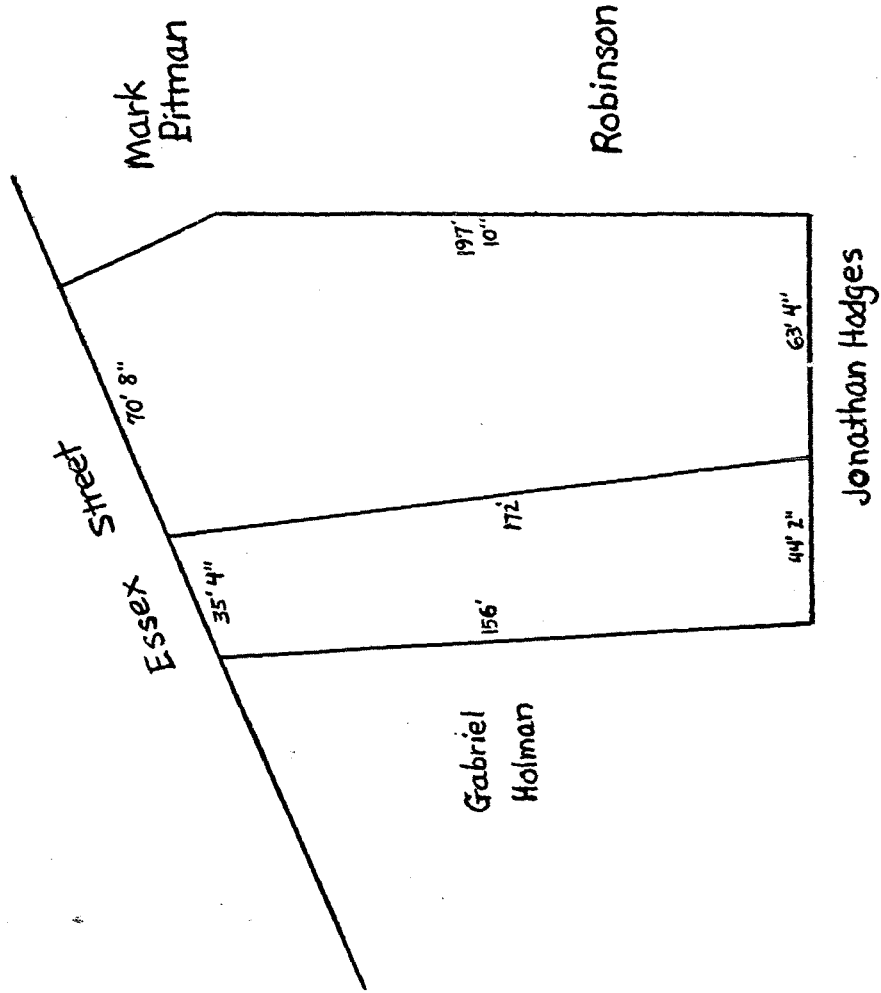
* Actually they had Samuel, 1794; William, 1796; Elizabeth, 1799; and Henry Lawrence, 1802, who died in infancy.

Capt Thomas Holmes continued to own the premises until his death in 1864, at which time the executor of his will sold the estate for \$3500 to Mr Abbot Walker of Salem (672:187). On 30 June 1879 Mr Walker's heirs for \$4760 granted the premises to Mary Cousins of Salem (1019:272). The house and land remained in the Cousins family until 18 May 1926, when the executor of the will of Frank Cousins granted the estate to the survivor of William Crowninshield Waters and Mary Devereux Waters (2680:129). The estate remained in the Waters' possession until the death on 19 Sept 1964 of William C Waters, who by a 1960 codicil to his will devised the premises to the Salem Athenaeum (#280991). After renting out the premises for several years, the Proprietors of the Salem Athenaeum for \$46,000 granted the house and land at 335 Essex Street to Robert H Vickerman and his wife Dana Sue (6242:483).

Robert Booth
11 Mar 1977

Note: According to the Masonic obituary printed in Essex Institute Historical Collections, vol. 3, pp 92-3, Col. John Page was born 20 Nov 1751 in Medford, the son of Samuel & Elizabeth (Clark) Page. He came to Salem in 1772 and in 1773 married Sarah Porter of Danvers, with whom he had four sons, two of whom, John & Josiah, survived to maturity. He next married Esbher Mackay, and after her death married Ruth Holman; they had three children who survived: Samuel, William, and Elizabeth, called Eliza. Col. Page was at one time a public weigher and gauger in the Custom House and afterwards a ship chandler of the firm of Page & Ropes, which firm continued more than 40 years. In 1795, he was Colonel of the Salem Regiment, and he was also an officer in the US Army. During the Revolution, he was a volunteer in the Rhode Island expedition of 1778. He died in Salem on 2 Dec 1838, aged 87 years.

Rev. William Bentley mentions going sailing with Col. Page and Capts Derby & Prince to Baker's Island on 20 May 1798 (Bentley's Diary, v. 2, p271). Bentley also mentions, on 8 Feb 1803, that Col. Page had become embroiled with a Major Watkins over the high price of the Major's services in building tombs: "The proprietors (of the graveyard) deputed Col. Page to make enquiry into the charges. Major Watkins drew upon him and beat him with his hanger (sword). The Colonel took such satisfaction as he chose for his bruises and on Monday got a warrant to apprehend the Major. The major has come out & done penance to the public satisfaction by asking pardon & imploring forgiveness. The reduction of the account will probably be more terrible to him." (v. 3, p 8)



Rough Plan showing
partition of estate of Deacon
Samuel Holman between his heirs,
Samuel Holman and Ruth Page
7 April 1826 (240:167,168)

1 cm = 20'
CLB