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**29 Linden Street, Salem:
A History of the House & its Occupants**

By Robert Booth, for Historic Salem Inc.

According to available evidence, this house was built in 1894 for Mrs. Elizabeth A. Winn, widow; the building contractor was Eben H. Morse, carpenter; it was then numbered 5 Park Avenue.

In October 1872 John F. Cole of Somerville purchased a piece of land (from Almy & Brackett) in this neighborhood, on Ocean Avenue and Park Avenue (now Linden Street)¹. Mr. Cole, a native of Salem, held onto the bulk of the lot for more than twenty years, and left empty the part in which this house would be built.

Mr. Cole's parcel was a small part of the former Derby Estate, owned by E. Hersey Derby, a very wealthy gentleman farmer, son of the merchant E. Hasket Derby, who had opened Salem's trade with the Orient in the 1780s. The Derby farm occupied much of the acreage of the Southfields, as South Salem was known. M.F. Corne painted a landscape of the farm c.1815. Eventually the Derbys moved on; and in 1867 James F. Almy and two partners purchased the entire property; which they proceeded to develop with new streets and subdivided lots. Mr. Almy was the founder of the downtown department store at 188 Essex Street, known as "Almy's" and actually owned by Almy, Bigelow & Washburn.

Through 1893 (per directories), no house stood between what is now 27 Linden and the corner of Ocean Avenue. On 14 March 1894 John F. Cole of Somerville sold the "buildings and land" here to Elizabeth A. Winn, widow, of Salem.² The lot was described as fronting 42' on Park Avenue and 105' in depth. In fact, Mr. Cole did not own buildings here, but construction was just beginning on a house built for Mrs. Winn. On March 28, 1894, a building permit was issued to Mrs. Winn by the City of Salem (per Building Permits Book, 1890-1895, in vault at Salem City Hall); and the permit listed E.H. Morse as the builder of a single family residence with a 12' by 14' one-story addition.

¹ Essex South Registry of Deeds (ED), book 866, leaf 98.

² ED 1408:435

Mrs. Elizabeth Winn was born Elizabeth A. Langredge in August, 1831, in Canada (or England) of an English father and an Irish mother. She came to the United States in 1840. When 21, she married Silas B. Winn, 36, on Jan. 26, 1853, in Greenfield, New Hampshire.

Silas was apprenticed in 1830, aged fourteen, to learn the carriage-maker's trade in Greenfield. He became a journeyman in 1836, and worked for years in Greenfield. In the village circa 1848 the townsmen built a large sawmill, of which Silas Winn served as engineer; but it burned down in June, 1851 (per *History of Greenfield*). Soon after their wedding, Silas and Elizabeth went to California—or perhaps just Silas did. In the gold fields and the camps he made good money; and he returned in Greenfield four years later.³

Silas and Elizabeth moved in 1858 to Salem, where his brother Benjamin ran a bottling plant in the basement of the Lawrence Block (still standing, corner Washington and Front Streets). Silas bought out Ben and conducted the bottling plant successfully, and became a brewer in the process. Elizabeth and Silas had a son, Frank M. Winn, born 1860.

Salem in the 1860s was caught up in the events of the Civil War. Formerly a world-famous international trading port, Salem had not been able to sustain the prosperity of its maritime economy in the 1820s. Throughout the 1830s and 1840, Salem had gone through a transition from seaport to manufacturing center. The Salem Laboratory, a chemical plant, several tanneries, and the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company, a huge textile factory, had led the way in this change.

In 1851, Stephen C. Phillips succeeded in building a railroad line from Salem to Lowell, which meant that coal landed at Phillips Wharf (formerly the Crowninshields' India Wharf) could be run cheaply out to Lowell to help fuel the boilers of the mills, whose output of textiles could be freighted easily to Salem for shipment by water. This innovation, although not long-lived, was a boost to Salem as a port and transportation center. 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

³ Info about S.B. Winn taken mainly from obituary.

behind the Broad Street graveyard), and new schools, factories, and stores were built. In 1859 a second factory building was added for the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company at Stage Point. Nearby, a new Methodist Church went up, as did many neat homes, boarding-houses, and stores 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, just as President Lincoln was assassinated. The four years of bloodshed and warfare were over; the slaves were free; a million men were dead; the union was preserved and the South was under martial rule. Salem, with many wounded soldiers and grieving families, welcomed the coming of peace.

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. As has been

mentioned, the Derby farm was purchased in 1867 and soon was subdivided for residential construction.

In 1870 Salem 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. As an elegy, Rev. George Batchelor wrote, "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" (per *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 retail 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 receive 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.

The Silas Winn family resided at then-107 Lafayette Street. In 1880, the family consisted (per census) of Silas, 64, soda manufacturing, Elizabeth, 50, Frank M., 20, was working for his father, and the family was served by a maid, Catherine Quigley, 23, born in Ireland.

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.

Over the years the Winns built up a thriving business, and moved the bottling plant and brewery to the Flint Block at 191 Washington Street, where they bottled mineral water, soda, sarsaparilla beer, ginger ale, etc., and also dealt in porter, lager, ale, and cider (see advertisements). Frank Winn also ran a fruit dealership in Salem. Silas B. Winn died on 26 December 1892, aged 75 years. Presumably Elizabeth, 62, and son Frank, 32, inherited a fair amount of money.

Shortly after her husband's death, Mrs. Elizabeth A. Winn purchased this land from Mr. Cole, and contracted with Eben H. Morse to build a handsome residence in the Queen Anne style.

Ebenezer H. Morse, 70, was an experienced builder. He had his carpenter shop at 16 Endicott Street.⁴ Mr. Morse had come to Salem in 1840, when he was sixteen, from his native Roxbury. He became a carpenter and in 1849 he married Sarah J. Gower in Salem; and they would have four children, a son William and four daughters. He worked for various builders at first, and then, in the 1860s, went into business with John Pollock, a younger, Irish-born builder, as the firm of Morse & Pollock. Mr. Morse was an active member of the Salem Charitable Mechanics Association, and he served for a long time as its Treasurer. In 1880 he and his wife Sarah were in their fifties; the family unit also included their son William, 28, a carpenter, daughter Catherine, 20, a saleswoman, and younger children Lillian, 15, and Anna, 13 (per census). By 1894 Mrs. Sarah Morse had died and so had William, and Eben was residing at 23 or 25 West Avenue with his daughter Mrs. Arthur Ford (per 1893-4 directory).

Mr. Morse, a great reader, was known as very well-informed citizen. In 1896, he lost a foot by amputation; yet he remained quite active. He died shortly after his 78th birthday, on Feb. 12, 1903, in Salem.

The house was occupied in 1894 by Mrs. Elizabeth Winn, and perhaps by her son Frank M. Winn as well. In 1900, "Lizzie" Winn, 68, was considered a "boarder" here (at "5 Park Avenue"⁵), and she resided with the family of Elbridge C. Drew, 59, a shoe laster (wife Abbie, 57, daughter Etta L., 29, shoe stitcher, daughter Alice G., 27, shoe stitcher, son Charles A., 24, and son William A., 22, both salesmen at a grocery; and Jennie Gregory, 21, servant, born in Canada (1900 census, ED 458, sheet 4).

With some dips, Salem's diversified manufacturing base, including a large leather-making industry, remained productive. 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

⁴ Info about E.H. Morse taken largely from directories, census, and obituary.

⁵ This part of Linden Street was first known as Park Avenue; #27 was initially #1 Park Avenue, and this house was identified at #5. The streets took on their present names, evidently, in the 19teens.

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.

Elbridge Drew (1840-1907) came from Barnstead, Belknap County, New Hampshire. He was a farmer there as late as 1880, with wife Abbie and their four children (per census). When he came to Salem he went to work in a shoe factory. The Drew family moved in 1902, and Mr. Drew would die in 1907, on Dec. 4th, in his 68th year, at his home on One Summit Avenue.

Mrs. Lizzie Winn moved to Somerville and on April 18, 1902, she sold the buildings and land here on the lot, 4410 square feet, fronting 42' on Park Avenue.⁶ The new owner, George E. Lane, was a partner with his father in the firm of G. W. Lane & Son, dealers in coal, flour, and grain at then-187 Derby Street, opposite Curtis Street. He resided here with his family, wife Cora, and children Mary, George W., Sarah F., Leon W., and Lucille M.

George E. Lane was born in Hampton, NH, on 20 March 1859, the son of George W. Lane and Mary F. Towle of Hampton. G.W. Lane (1829-1919) came to Salem (with wife, son Charles, daughters Carrie and Mary) from Hampton in 1886, and took over the business of Augustus T. Brooks, retail coal dealer on Derby Street. His son George E., an graduate of Tilton Academy, had gone west in 1879 to work as a bookkeeper for his uncle, Charles H. Lane, at "Lane's Bazaar," a store in Red Oak, Iowa. In 1882 he and a partner started a general store at Hampton, Nebraska. For one year he went off to the Black Hills and ran a gold mining venture in South Dakota—an adventure that left him with many good stories to tell.⁷

Back in Nebraska in 1888 George E. Lane married Cora Woodward, and they had several children. In 1899 the family moved to Salem, where George joined his aging father in the coal business on Derby Street. The firm became G.W. Lane & Son in 1900. In 1902, the G.E. Lanes moved in here ("5 Park Avenue"); and the G.W. Lane family resided nearby. George E. Lane was an active Freemason, and he and his family attended the Methodist church. In 1910 the family was attended by a maid, Emily Nyman, 24, born in Finland.

⁶ ED 1674:59

⁷ Info about the Lanes from obituaries and Arrington's compendium of businessmen.

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.

In 1910 (per census, house 287) the house at 5 Park Avenue was occupied by George E. Lane, 51, retail coal dealer, wife Cora W., 41, born in Virginia (father b. Va., mother b. Ohio); children Mary B., b. Nebraska, 21, teacher; George W., 19, retail drug salesman; Sara F., 17, Leon W., 15, Lucille M., 11; and servant Emily Nyman, 24, born in Finland.

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 and north of Roslyn Street—not that far from Linden 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 devoured everything in its path: it smashed into the 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.

Old Mr. George W. Lane died in 1919, aged ninety years. George E. Lane carried on the coal company down on the waterfront for several years more. After his retirement, he died here on July 30, 1935, aged 76 years. He was survived by his wife Cora and five grown children, George, Leon, Mrs. Mary Whipple, Mrs. Sarah Wilton, and Mrs. Lucille Ropes.

The Depression had 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 Machine Company were all major local employers.

In June, 1957, the Lane heirs (other than owners of a 2/15 interest) conveyed the premises to their sister Lucille (Lane) Ropes, widow of Harold E. Ropes, of Salem.⁸

Mrs. Lucille Ropes sold the homestead in June, 1965, to Arthur D. and Shirley A. Greeke of Middleton & Salem, who bought the outstanding 2/15 interest from a Lane heir at the same time.⁹ Thus after 63 years the homestead was sold out of the Lane family¹⁰

The arrival of suburban shopping malls and the relocation of manufacturing businesses took their toll on the downtown retail district, as they did 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, ministers, and mill-

⁸ ED 4379:389,390

⁹ ED 5279:748-749, also 4718:195

¹⁰ Almost twenty years later, Shirley A. Greeke became the sole owner in September, 1984.

operatives are all honored as a large part of what makes Salem different from any other place.

--Robert Booth for Historic Salem Inc., November, 2008.