

18 Pleasant Street, Salem

This house was built for George C. Chase, agent (manager) of the Forest River Lead Company, in 1843. It first stood at #15 Winter Street, on the site of an earlier house; but in 1851 Henry Mellus, merchant, had it moved to its present location by contractor Daniel R. Jewett, who probably remodeled it in the process.

George Cook Chase, the agent (manager) for the Forest River Lead Company, had this house built as his residence, at then-15 Winter Street, in 1843 (per valuations and B.F. Browne's statement that it was built for GCC). It stood on the site of the old Brace-Gardner house, which was removed to make way for it. In July, 1843, presumably with this house just finished on Winter Street, George C. Chase, gentleman, for \$500 sold to Stephen A. Chase, gentleman, his right in a house on County Street and some other land (ED 337:272). George lived here in the new house on Winter Street with his family and with his father, Henry Chase (per 1844 street books and valuations). Because Henry Chase lived here in his old age, I will trace the history of Salem through his life, which began just before the Revolution.

Henry Chase (1773-1846)

Henry Chase, when old, lived in this house when it was new and on Winter Street, with his son George & family. Henry was a Quaker—a member of the Society of Friends. He was born into that faith on 8 Dec. 1773, just before the war for independence, the son of Abner Chase (1740-1784), a Salem shoemaker (originally of Swansea, Mass.), and his wife Rebecca Newhall. Henry had several surviving siblings: a younger sister, Rebecca, an older sister, Hannah, and three older brothers, Abner, Philip, and Abijah.

Pre-revolutionary Salem had more than its share of Tories; but the Sons of Liberty were in the majority. Wealthy scions of families like the Curwens, Pickmans, and Brownes, stayed loyal to the King, as did many others who had married into the merchant families. In 1774, military rule was imposed from England as Gen. Thomas Gage became governor of Massachusetts and the port of Boston was shut down in punishment for the Tea Party of December, 1773. On June 2, 1774, Salem became the new capital of Massachusetts, as a reward for its supposed loyalty.

Governor Gage and his officials relocated to the North Shore, and the Customs operation was conducted from Marblehead, while Salem became the major seaport of New England, handling virtually all of the commercial business that Boston had done. Hundreds of new people moved to Salem, and the legislature met in Salem's Court House. In short order that legislature, led by Sam Adams, turned into a rebel body, and voted to ignore British laws and to send delegates to a continental congress. Gage tried to shut it down, but it was too late: he had lost control of Massachusetts to the rebel assembly gathered in Salem. The town still had a powerful and outspoken group of loyalists, led by Peter Frye, a prominent merchant and magistrate whose wife was a Pickman. One night in October, Judge Frye learned just how far the rebels were willing to go: his fine house on Essex Street was burned down and his family barely escaped with their lives as half a block of houses and stores and a church all went up in smoke. Next day, the rebel assembly met again and voted to move their proceedings to Concord. Gage and his officials moved to Boston, and many of the loyalists followed. Outside of Boston, all of Massachusetts was under the control of the rebels. Such were the conditions in the year of Henry Chase's infancy in Salem.

By January, 1775, loyalists had been purged from the Salem militia regiment, and Col. William Browne was replaced by Col. Timothy Pickering, who was writing a book on military drill. One Sunday in February, 1775, the Revolutionary War almost began in Salem. When everyone was in church, Col. Leslie's redcoats marched overland from Marblehead and arrived in downtown Salem, hoping to seize cannon and munitions in North Salem. They came to a sudden halt at the North Bridge—the Salem men, alerted by a Marblehead rider, had pulled up the draw of the bridge. Rev. Thomas Barnard Jr., of the North Church, engaged Col. Leslie in discussion; and Capt. John Felt, warned Leslie that blood would flow if he did not turn back. Negotiations followed, and agreement was reached: the draw went down, Leslie's men advanced a short distance into North Salem, faced about, and marched back through Salem's South Fields and Marblehead, whose own regiment, led by Col. Jeremiah Lee, could have slaughtered them. Instead, the Marbleheaders fell in behind them, marching in mockery of Leslie's Retreat as the British made their way back to the beach and boarded their whaleboats to return to the transport vessel.

With the battle at Lexington & Concord, April 19th, 1775, the die was cast. Of course no one knew how the war would end, and there was little to indicate that the colonials could actually defeat the King's army and navy, but virtually every able-bodied Salem man and boy gave himself

over to the cause. Salem's regiment participated in the siege of Boston, as George Washington took command of the army in Cambridge. The British left Boston in March, 1776, never to return. Washington's army was pushed southward from Long Island in a series of defeats, during which Salem's Col. Timothy Pickering became one of the General's most trusted officers, and Quartermaster General of the army. Washington's first victory was the Battle of Trenton, on Christmas Day, 1776, made possible by the Marblehead regiment of Gen. John Glover. Eventually most of the Salem men came home and sailed in privateers for the duration of the war, which continued at sea until 1783.

In some places, the post-war loss of the former colonial connections and trade routes was devastating, for Americans were prohibited from trading with most British possessions; but in Salem, the merchants and mariners were ready to push their ships and cargoes into all parts of the known world. They did so with astonishing success. For a period of about 25 years, Salem was a famous center of commercial enterprise: by virtue of competing fiercely, pioneering new routes, and opening and dominating new markets, Salem won a high place in the world. Hasket Derby, William Gray, Eben Beckford, and Joseph Peabody were the town's commercial leaders. In 1784, Derby began trade with Russia; and in 1784 and 1785 he dispatched trading vessels to Africa and China, respectively. Voyages to India soon followed, and to the Spice Islands and Pepper Islands (Sumatra, Java, Malaya, etc.). The Chase family was at a huge disadvantage at this time, for Mr. Abner Chase died in 1784, leaving a large family, of which Abner Jr., nineteen, became the head. Fortunately, he was smart and ambitious, and soon opened a successful store.

By the 1790s, the new foreign-trade markets—and the coffee trade, which would be opened in 1798 with Mocha, Arabia—brought great riches to the Salem merchants, and raised the level of wealth throughout the town: new ships were bought and built, more crews were formed with more shipmasters, new shops and stores opened, new partnerships were formed, and new people moved to town. In 1792 Salem's first bank, the Essex Bank, was founded, although it "existed in experiment a long time before it was incorporated," per Rev. William Bentley. From a population of 7921 in 1790, the town would grow by 1500 persons in a decade. At the same time, thanks to the economic policies of Alexander Hamilton, Salem vessels were able to transport foreign cargoes tax-free and essentially to serve as the neutral carrying fleet for both Britain and France, which were at war with each other.

Henry's older brother, Abner Chase, had a shoe store on Essex Street in 1795, and may have employed Henry there: "Shoe Store, Abner Chase, whole sale or retail, in Essex Street between Court and St Peter's Streets, in addtn to former assortments, a variety of thick and thin men's shoes, suitable for the West India or Southern markets; also a good assortment of Florentines and sattinets, cheap for cash" (per 29 Dec. 1794, Salem Gazette).

In the late 1790s, there was agitation in Congress to go to war with France, which was at war with England. After Pres. Adams' negotiators were rebuffed by the French leaders in 1797, a quasi-war with France began in summer, 1798, much to the horror of Salem's George Crowninshield family (father and five shipmaster sons), which had an extensive trade with the French, and whose ships and cargos in French ports were susceptible to seizure. The quasi-war brought about a political split within the Salem population. Those who favored war with France (and detente with England) aligned themselves with the national Federalist party, led by Hamilton and Salem's Timothy Pickering (the U.S. Secretary of State). These included most of the merchants, led locally by the Derby family. Those who favored peace with republican France were the Anti-Federalists, who later became aligned with Pres. Jefferson and his Democratic-Republican party; they were led locally by the Crowninshields. For the first few years of this rivalry, the Federalists prevailed; but after the death of Hasket "King" Derby in 1799 his family's power weakened.

In 1800, Adams negotiated peace with France and fired Pickering, his oppositional Secretary of State. Salem's Federalists merchants erupted in anger, expressed through their newspaper, the *Salem Gazette*. At the same time, British vessels began to harass American shipping. Salem owners bought more cannon and shot, and kept pushing their trade to the farthest ports of the rich East, while also maintaining trade with the Caribbean and Europe. Salem cargos were exceedingly valuable, and Salem was a major center for distribution of merchandise throughout New England: "the streets about the wharves were alive with teams loaded with goods for all parts of the country. It was a busy scene with the coming and going of vehicles, some from long distances, for railroads were then unknown and all transportation must be carried on in wagons and drays. In the taverns could be seen teamsters from all quarters sitting around the open fire in the chilly evenings, discussing the news of the day or making merry over potations of New England rum, which Salem manufactured in abundance." (from Hurd's History of Essex County, 1888, p.65).

Amidst this prosperity, in October, 1801, aged 27, Henry Chase married Betsy Abbott, the daughter of Gen. Stephen Abbot, an officer in the revolutionary army, and his wife Mary (Abbot) Abbot. Henry's brother Abijah Chase, a painter, had married Betsy's sister Mary in 1795. Henry and Betsy would have two children: George Cook Chase, born on 5 Feb. 1803, and William Henry Chase, born on 11 Aug. 1805.

Like most people in Salem, the Chase family found its niche several levels below the eminence occupied by the hard-striving merchant elite. The Crowninshields, led by brother Jacob, were especially successful, as their holdings rose from three vessels in 1800 to several in 1803. Their bailiwick, the Derby Street district, seemed almost to be itself imported from some foreign country: in the stores, parrots chattered and monkeys cavorted, and from the warehouses wafted the exotic aromas of Sumatran spices and Arabian coffee beans and Caribbean molasses. From the wharves were carted all manner of strange fruits, and crates of patterned china in red and blue, and piles of gorgeous silks and figured cloths, English leather goods, and hundreds of barrels of miscellaneous objects drawn from all of the ports and workshops of the world. The greatest of the Salem merchants at this time was William "Billy" Gray, who owned 36 large vessels--15 ships, 7 barks, 13 brigs, 1 schooner—by 1808. Salem was then still a town, and a small one by our standards, with a total population of about 9,500 in 1800. Its politics were fierce, and polarized everything. The two factions attended separate churches, held separate parades, and supported separate schools, military companies, and newspapers. Salem's merchants resided mainly on two streets: Washington (which ended in a wharf on the Inner Harbor, and, above Essex, had the Town House in the middle) and Essex (particularly between what are now Hawthorne Boulevard and North Street). The East Parish (Derby Street area) was for the seafaring families, shipmasters, sailors, and fishermen. In the 1790s, Federal Street, known as New Street, had more empty lots than fine houses. Chestnut Street did not exist: its site was a meadow. The Common was not yet Washington Square, and was covered with hillocks, small ponds and swamps, utility buildings, and the alms-house. As the 19th century advanced, Salem's commercial prosperity would sweep almost all of the great downtown houses away (the brick Joshua Ward house, built 1784, is a notable exception).

The town's merchants were among the wealthiest in the country, and, in Samuel McIntire, they had a local architect who could help them realize their desires for large and beautiful homes in the latest style. While a few

of the many new houses went up in the old Essex-Washington Street axis, most were erected on or near Washington Square or in the Federalist "west end" (Chestnut, Federal, and upper Essex Streets). The architectural style (called "Federal" today) had been developed by the Adam brothers in England and featured fanlight doorways, palladian windows, elongated pilasters and columns, and large windows. It was introduced to New England by Charles Bulfinch in 1790. The State House in Boston was his first institutional composition; and soon Beacon Hill was being built up with handsome residences in the Bulfinch manner.

Samuel McIntire (1757-1811), who was self-educated and who made his living primarily as a wood-carver and carpenter, was quick to adapt the Bulfinch style to Salem's larger lots. McIntire's first local composition, the Jerathmeel Peirce house (on Federal Street), contrasts with his later Adamesque designs. In place of walls of wood paneling, there now appeared plastered expanses painted in bright colors or covered in bold wallpapers. The Adam style put a premium on handsome casings and carvings of central interior features such door-caps and chimney-pieces (McIntire's specialty). On the exterior, the Adam style included elegant fences; and the houses were often built of brick, with attenuated porticoes and, in the high style, string courses, swagged panels, and even two-story pilasters. The best example of the new style was the Elias Hasket Derby house, co-designed by Bulfinch and McIntire, and built on Essex Street in 1797-8 (demolished in 1815), on the site of today's Town House Square.

A new bank, the Salem Bank, was formed in 1803, and there were two insurance companies and several societies and associations. The fierce politics and commercial rivalries continued. The ferment of the times is captured in the diary of Rev. William Bentley, bachelor minister of Salem's East Church and editor of the *Register* newspaper. His diary is full of references to the civic and commercial doings of the town, and to the lives and behaviors of all classes of society. He had high hopes for the future of a republican America, with well educated citizens. He observed and fostered the transition in Salem, and wrote in his diary (2 Dec. 1806), "While Salem was under the greatest aristocracy in New England, few men thought, and the few directed the many. Now the aristocracy is gone and the many govern. It is plain it must require considerable time to give common knowledge to the people." On Union Street, not far from Bentley's church, on the fourth of July, 1804, was born a boy who would grow up to eclipse all sons of Salem in the eyes of the world: Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose father would die of fever while on a voyage to the Caribbean in 1808. This kind of untimely death was all too typical of

Salem's young seafarers, who fell prey to malaria and other diseases of the Caribbean and Pacific tropics.

In 1806 the Derbys extended their wharf far out into the harbor, tripling its previous length. This they did to create more space for warehouses and ship-berths in the deeper water, at just about the time that the Crowninshields had built their great India Wharf at the foot of now-Webb Street. The other important wharves were Forrester's (now Central, just west of Derby Wharf), and Union Wharf at the foot of Union Street; and then, farther to the west, a number of smaller wharves extended into the South River (filled in during the late 1800s), all the way to the foot of Washington Street. Each had a warehouse or two, and shops for artisans (coopers, blockmakers, joiners, etc.). The waterfront between Union Street and Washington Street also had lumber yards and several ship chandleries and distilleries, with a Market House at the foot of Central Street, below the Custom House. The wharves and streets were crowded with shoppers, gawkers, hawkers, sailors, artisans ("mechanics"), storekeepers, and teamsters; and just across the way, on Stage Point along the south bank of the South River, wooden barks and brigs and ships were being built in the shipyards.

Salem's boom came to an end with a crash in January, 1808, when Jefferson and the Congress imposed an embargo on all shipping in hopes of forestalling war with Britain. The Embargo, which was widely opposed in New England, proved futile and nearly ruinous in Salem, where commerce ceased. As a hotbed of Democratic-Republicanism, Salem's East Parish and its seafarers, led by the Crowninshields, loyally supported the Embargo until it was lifted in spring, 1809. Shunned by the other Salem merchants for his support of the Embargo, the eminent Billy Gray took his large fleet of ships—fully one-third of Salem's tonnage—and moved to Boston, whose commerce was thereby much augmented. Gray's removal eliminated a huge amount of Salem wealth, shipping, import-export cargoes, and local employment. Gray soon switched from the Federalist party, and was elected Lt. Governor under Gov. Elbridge Gerry, a native of Marblehead. Salem resumed its seafaring commerce for three years.

By the spring of 1811, Henry Chase had joined his brother Abner as a partner in a store in Essex Street dealing in India goods: in March, the two Quaker brothers advertised for sale 22 bales of Calcutta Goods: berbom gurrachs, mergungee mamoody, becawah emerty, lawherpore sawns, lucknow cossas, johnletty sawns, 3k pair of womens shoes, 2k mens

shoes for the southern or WI market, gen assortment of shoes, morocco skins of various colors” (per *Essex Register* 17 April 1811).

Still the British preyed on American shipping; and in June, 1812, war was declared against Britain.

Although the merchants had tried to prevent the war, when it came, Salem swiftly fitted out 40 privateers manned by Marblehead and Salem crews, who also served on U.S. Navy vessels, including the frigate *Constitution*. Many more local vessels could have been sent against the British, but some of the Federalist merchants held them back. In addition, Salem fielded companies of infantry and artillery. Salem and Marblehead privateers were largely successful in making prizes of British supply vessels. While many of the town’s men were wounded in engagements, and some were killed, the possible riches of privateering kept the men returning to sea as often as possible. The first prizes were captured by a 30-ton converted fishing schooner, the *Fame*, and by a 14-ton luxury yacht fitted with one gun, the *Jefferson*. Of all Salem privateers, the Crowninshields’ 350-ton ship *America* was most successful: she captured 30-plus prizes worth more than \$1,100,000.

Salem erected forts and batteries on its Neck, to discourage the British warships that cruised these waters. On land, the war went poorly for the United States, as the British captured Washington, DC, and burned the Capitol and the White House. Along the western frontier, U.S. forces were successful against the weak English forces; and, as predicted by many, the western expansionists had their day. At sea, as time wore on, Salem vessels were captured, and its men imprisoned or killed. After almost three years, the war was bleeding the town dry. Hundreds of Salem men and boys were in British prison-ships and at Dartmoor Prison in England. At the Hartford Convention in 1814, New England Federalist delegates met to consider what they could do to bring the war to a close and to restore the region’s commerce. Sen. Timothy Pickering of Salem led the extreme Federalists in proposing a series of demands which, if not met by the federal government, could lead to New England’s seceding from the United States; but the Pickering faction was countered by Harrison G. Otis of Boston and the moderate Federalists, who prevailed in sending a moderate message to Congress.

At last, in February, 1815, peace was restored.

Post-war, the Salem merchants rebuilt their fleets and resumed their worldwide trade, slowly at first, and then to great effect. Many new partnerships were formed. The pre-war partisan politics of the town were not resumed post-war, as the middle-class "mechanics" (artisans) became more powerful and brought about civic harmony, largely through the Salem Charitable Mechanic Association (founded 1817). Rev. William Bentley, keen observer and active citizen during Salem's time of greatest prosperity and fiercest political divisions, died in 1819, the year in which a new U.S. Custom House was built on the site of the George Crowninshield mansion, at the head of Derby Wharf.

In June, 1817, after General Abbott's death, there was a division of his property; and Henry Chase, then a Salem trader, and wife Betsy, received as part of their share in the property, a store and land on Church Street, a house on County Street nearby (now lower Federal Street), part of a building on Ash Street, and 1/12 of Phillips Mills in Andover. Probably the Henry Chase family resided in the County Street house. Unfortunately, Henry's business was not able to survive the vicissitudes of war and the post-war alterations in the nature of trade with the orient, as the British rapidly transformed India from a producer of textiles to a producer of cotton to be used in English textile factories. By the end of 1819, Abner & Henry Chase had been forced to declare bankruptcy, and assigned their property to brother Philip Chase and Wm. & Amos Lawrence (31 Dec. 1819 Salem *Gazette*).

Into the 1820s foreign trade prospered in new markets: 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, with the demise of the India trade and the high tariffs imposed on imports by Congress, which was more interested in fostering domestic textile production. 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.

Henry Chase remained in Salem, but one of his sons, George, moved to Newmarket, New Hampshire, to run a textile factory owned by Salem investors. 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, but the effort failed, 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 stabbed him to death. All of Salem buzzed with the news of murderous thugs; but the killer was a Crowninshield (a fallen son of one of the five brothers; after he was put in jail he killed himself). He 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.

Henry Chase was then fifty-six, and entering his final years in active business. It is not clear how he earned his living at that time; but his sons were doing well enough, especially William H., who had a thriving hardware business. Perhaps Henry was clerking for his son in the 1830s.

In 1831 (per the Salem Valuations) Henry Chase resided on Church Street in a house with Robert Bedney & Mr. Berry—probably the Abbot house that he and his wife had inherited.

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. As the decade wore on, and the new railroads and canals, all running and flowing to Boston from points north, west, and south, diverted both capital and trade away from the coast. Salem's remaining merchants took their equity out of local wharves and warehouses and ships and put it into the stock of manufacturing and transportation companies. 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.

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 led 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, at the head of Salem Harbor, were retooled for making high-quality white lead and sheet lead. 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 1840, the future of the Chase family was in the hands of the rising generation of Henry’s nephews and sons. Of them, George C. Chase (1803-1881) had been apprenticed in about 1816, perhaps to learn a trade or to become a merchant’s clerk. Whatever the case, he was seen as a trustworthy manager, and in his early twenties he moved to Newmarket, N.H., to manage a large textile factory built (1822) and operated by Salem capitalists. On 2 July 2, 1827, George, 24, of Newmarket, married Mary Bray of Salem, the daughter of Daniel Bray of Brown Street. The couple lived at Newmarket for some years, and had three children in five years. Between summer, 1832, and spring, 1835, the George C. Cook family moved to Salem.

In 1836 (per 1837 directory) George C. Chase was a clerk at the offices of Francis Peabody at 194 Essex Street, and resided at 20 Marlboro’ Street (now Federal, between North and Washington). His father, Henry Chase, resided at 26 Church Street (not working as a saddler, though listed as such in directory). It is likely that George was already working as a manager of Peabody’s lead-making enterprise. George & family soon

moved to a house on County Street (where lived Wm Chase and Wm H Chase).

George Cook Chase (1803-1881), b. 2 May 1803, s/o Henry Chase and Betsy Abbott; died of pneumonia 14 May 1881. He m. 2 July 1827 Mary Bray (1804-1885+), b. 27 July 1804, d/o Daniel Bray and Mary Hodgdon. Known issue (first three born Newmarket, NH, last two in Salem, Mass.):

- 1. George, 1828, m. 1856 Charlotte A. Fabens.**
- 2. Benjamin B., 1830, killed 15 May 1856 by Indians in Central America.**
- 3. Martha Webb, 1832, m. 1855 Fred M. Creamer.**
- 4. Charles Henry, 1835, d. 1 June 1881.**
- 5. Thorndike, 1838, m. 1863 Sarah E. Dalton.**

In 1841 George was (per 1842 Dir.) still a clerk at 194 Essex, residing at 22 County Street; while William H. Chase, hardware dealer at 186 Essex, resided at 17 Winter, a handsome brick mansion. On 16 Jan. 1843, Mrs. Betsy (Abbot) Chase died, leaving Henry a widower. No doubt he wished to move to a different house rather than live on in his Church Street house without his wife of forty-plus years.

George C. Chase had this house built in 1843 on land that his brother, William H. Chase, had purchased from George H. Devereux in 1841. The old Brace-Gardner house was removed and this new house was built for George C. Chase on its site (per B.F. Browne). The 1844 street books show George C. & Henry Chase at 15 Winter St, and WHC at 17 Winter. By 1845 George C. Chase had moved away: working as "agent, Forest River Lead Co.", he resided on Lafayette Street, and in this house (#15 Winter) resided Henry Chase (per 1846 Directory).

George became general agent of the Forest River Lead Company at its formal incorporation in 1843—a great opportunity, which he seized and enlarged upon. The Company had been started by the fabulously wealthy Francis Peabody of Essex Street, whose father, Joseph, was one of Salem's richest merchants. The Peabodys were likely investors in the Newmarket Manufacturing Company, and thus had become familiar with George Chase's abilities. Francis Peabody had always showed a great aptitude for things mechanical, and was very interested in industrial initiatives. He had purchased an old grist mill on the Forest River, just below the boundary with Marblehead, and converted it into a lead mill, for producing white lead. The lead mill was a success (the building stood

into the 1960s). In connection with its operations, he had a dock and other mills in South Salem, of Lagrange Street.

In August, 1843, he sold a large interest in his lead-mill operations to some men whom he took in as partners: George C. Chase, his brother William H. Chase, and William Sutton, of Salem, and Bostonians Benjamin Howard and Elijah D. Brigham (ED 338:233). The company thereby acquired the lead mills and machinery used in making white lead on the parcel of land on the Forest River, and also a lot fronting on Lafayette Street and running to Salem Harbor, with a dwelling house, counting room, dock, other buildings, machinery, tools, apparatus and fixtures on the premises "used in manufacturing white lead and vinegar" (ED 338:223).

The George C. Chase family in 1843 consisted of George, his wife Mary, and their four sons and one daughter, Martha. They lived here, with Mr. Chase's father, for two years; then, in 1845 the George C. Chase family moved to a fine house on Lafayette Street, not far from the Company's wharf (long after his death, the fine house burned up in the great Salem Fire of June, 1914). His son George would become a machinist and later the superintendent of the Lead Company; and son Benjamin would become an architect (per 1850 census, ward 3, house 170).

George C.'s father, Henry Chase, stayed on in this house at 15 Winter, and died on Monday, June 8, 1846. The Salem *Observer* noted his death at 72, and described him as "a worthy member of the Society of Friends."

The Forest River Lead Company prospered for many years. In the 1855 directory it was described as follows: "Forest River Lead Co., founded 1843, incorporated 1846. Officers: Pres. Benjamin Howard, directors Wm. H. Chase, B.F. Fabens, George C. Chase (General Agent), Elijah D. Brigham. Henry M. Brooks, clerk and treasurer. Mills at Forest River, on the road leading to Marblehead. Counting-room 243 ½ Essex Street (upstairs). The Company manufactured white lead, sheet lead, and vinegar." George C. Chase, its "general agent," or business manager, became affluent, and lived well on Lafayette Street.

Mr. Chase was, in 1849, on the committee of Whigs who had Nathaniel Hawthorne (a Democrat) removed from his office of Surveyor of the Port at the Custom House. On the other hand, Mr. Chase was a friend of the great poet John Greenleaf Whittier (see appended article). George C. Chase died May 14, 1881, in his 79th year; and his remains were interred at Harmony Grove Cemetery.

By 1848 (per street book) #15 Winter (this house) was occupied by Mrs. I.T. Murray and family, and in 1849 (per 1850 directory). The 1850 census listed them here as Harriet L. Murray, 45, born in Nova Scotia; Ellen, 16, Harriet W., 13,; and one James W. Bonham, six, along with Hannah Welch, 22, born in Ireland (1850 census, ward two, house 254).

Henry Mellus (1816-1860)

Henry Mellus, a future Mayor of Los Angeles, was born Aug. 24, 1816, in Dorchester, Mass., son of Capt. William Mellus of Dorchester and Amelia Lyon, originally of Machias, Maine.

By late 1827 the Mellus family was in Salem. The Captain may have been deceased or perhaps just at sea for long stretches; and Mrs. Mellus was earning her living as the keeper of a boarding house, per the issue of Jan. 1, 1828, Salem Gazette: "Boarding. Mrs. Mellus acquaints her friends and the public that she has taken the pleasant and convenient house lately occupied by Mr. Philip Chase at the corner of Court and County Streets, where she can furnish genteel accommodations for five or six gentlemen or lady boarders, or two or three small families" (ad placed Dec. 14).

Henry was a sailor as a young man, and was a deckhand on board the Boston brig *Pilgrim* in its voyage from Boston around Cape Horn to Buena Yerba, California, to pick up animal hides. One of his shipmates, Richard H. Dana, wrote a famous book about this voyage: *Two Years Before The Mast*, in which Henry Mellus is mentioned. Henry loved California, which, in those days, was a possession of Mexico; and he stayed there, and married Anita Johnson, born in Mexico. He had many interesting adventures in California, working as an agent for East Coast merchants (see appended materials). He settled in Yerba Buena, which soon became San Francisco; and he married Anita F. Johnson. A road, Mellus Street, was named for Henry in San Francisco; it was later re-named Natoma Street. For whatever reason, the Henry Mellus family moved back east, and arrived in Salem in March, 1848. Henry set up as a merchant; but when news arrived that gold had been discovered, he left his family in Salem and lit out for California.

On 1 May 1849 Henry Mellus, of San Francisco, for \$10,000 purchased from William H. Chase of Salem, two houses and a large lot fronting 106'

on Winter Street (ED 411:111) and bounded southerly on Pickman Street and easterly on Pleasant Street. The two houses were #15 and #17 Winter Street. The Mellus family moved into #17 Winter Street in 1849, as did the family of Edward H. Payson, cashier (manager) of the Commercial Bank. Mr. Payson was married (since 1827) to Mr. Mellus' sister, Amelia. Mr. Mellus was in California in the spring of 1850; his wife Anita F., 22 (born Mexico) lived at #17 with their baby daughter Anita E. Mellus, one, and other family members, and the Paysons, and some servants (1850 census, ward two, house 253).

1850 census: Mr. Mellus was in California in the spring of 1850; his wife Anita F., 22 (born Mexico) lived here with their daughter Anita E., one, and Mr. Mellus' mother, Amelia, 64, born in Maine, and sisters Maria L., 28, and Ann Eliza, 24; and five others lived here too: the Carney sisters, et al (1850 census, ward two, house 253).

Some members of Salem's waning merchant class continued to pursue their sea-borne businesses into the 1840s; but it was an ebb tide, with unfavorable winds. Boston, transformed into a modern mega-port with efficient railroad and highway distribution to all markets, had subsumed virtually all foreign trade other than Salem's continuing commerce with Zanzibar. The sleepy waterfront at Derby Wharf, with an occasional arrival from Africa and regular visits from schooners carrying wood from Nova Scotia, is depicted in 1850 by Hawthorne in his mean-spirited "introductory section" to **The Scarlet Letter**, which he began while working in the Custom House.

Although Hawthorne had no interest in describing it, Salem's transformation did occur in the 1840s, as more industrial methods and machines were introduced, and many new companies in new lines of business arose. 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. It stood on filled-in land at the foot of Washington Street, where the merchants' wharves had been; and from it the trains carried many valuable products as well as passengers. The tanning and curing of leather was very important in Salem 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. It too benefited from the Zanzibar and Africa trade, as it produced light cotton cloth for use in the tropics. 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 began to transform, as hundreds of Irish families, fleeing the Famine in Ireland, settled in Salem and gave the industrialists a big pool of cheap labor.

On 26 Feb. 1851 Mr. Mellus, Salem merchant, paid \$1600 to Mrs. Abigail Parker, widow, to purchase a house and land that ran s.e. 57' by Pleasant Street, ran s.w. 103' by land late of Buxton, ran n.w. 55' by land late of Buxton and LeMaster, and ran n.e. 119' on Parker's Court (ED 441:204). The house, as shown on the 1851 McIntyre atlas, stood at the end of the court on the south side; the lot for the future #18 was then empty. Mr. Mellus had plans for the Parker's Court land as well as Winter Street. Early in 1851 he contracted with Daniel R. Jewett, housewright, to remove the "cottage" dwelling house to his empty lot at the south side of Parker's Court at its corner with Pleasant Street (and on its site, #15 on Winter Street, Mr. Mellus had Mr. Jewett build a new house).*

The 1851 McIntyre Atlas shows no house here on Pleasant Street, the nearest one being the J.W. Stocker house, occupied by Mr. Goodwin.

Mr. Mellus subdivided his Parker's Court land into two more house-lots, which he sold off in 1852 (Tim Coughlin) and 1853 (Smith & Hutchinson). The second-named house (sold to S&H) was built by Daniel R. Jewett for Mr. Mellus in 1852, per DRJ memoir.

On 20 Oct. 1853 for \$1435 Mr. Mellus, of Salem, sold to Albert Clapp, the dwelling house and land fronting 57' 2" on Pleasant Street and 51' 7" on Parker's Court (ED 486:87). The dwelling house, "cottage" in style (one-and-a-half storeys in height), was not to have its northwesterly attic window obstructed by the house behind it on Parker's Court.

* Notes from Daniel R. Jewett memoirs: Early in 1851 DR Jewett built for Henry Mellus a dwelling house on Winter Street, #15, finished and occupied by July 1, and much later owned by Walter C. Harris. (DRJ memoirs). 1851 Contract with Henry Mellus and removed cottage house from Winter Street to Pleasant Street, the house is now 18 Pleasant Street" (DRJ memoirs). 1852 a two-story house in Parker Court for Henry Mellus. Next a barn for Nathaniel Cleaves in Pickman Street (DRJewett memoir)

* Note: BF Browne (in 1869) says re old Brace House on land now owned by Carleton Dole Esq., in Winter Street that John Gardner (m. Sarah Derby) & his sister Mrs. Bowditch resided in part of the old house (Jonathan Gardner house?) on Winter street, later bought by Capt. James Brace who lived there many years and then it was removed to make way for a house built by George C. Chase, which in turn was removed to give way to a house built for Edward Payson. (EHC 50:7)

Henry Mellus joined Essex Lodge of Masons on Oct. 9, 1857.

He left Salem for Los Angeles in January, 1859, and became a leading citizen there. He was elected Mayor of Los Angeles, and inaugurated on May 9, 1860, aged forty-three. Sadly, he soon died there, on Dec. 26, 1860, aged 44 years, four months (per H.P. Hadley's *Two Hundred years of Masonry in Essex Lodge*, p. 131).

Albert Clapp & Walter Hicks

As has been mentioned, Albert Clapp bought this house in 1853. In 1850 Albert Clapp, 34, tanner, Emily L, 24, and their young son, John A. Clapp, had resided on Cedar Street in house owned by John Messervy.

Albert Clapp resided here on Pleasant for about two years with his wife Emily and children. He ran a sawing and turning business with Luther Clapp at 5 Front Street. On 13 Sept. 1855 Albert Clapp (ux Emily L.) sold the premises to Walter Hicks, both of Salem, for \$1700 (ED 522:108). The "cottage" dwelling house and land were described as in 1853, except that the deed mistakenly referred to the northeast (not northwest) attic window.

George H. Peirson (1816-1881)

Mr. Hicks did not own the premises for long. On 24 April 1856 for \$1700 he sold the same to George H. Peirson, Salem blacksmith, who was also to pay an \$800 mortgage to Samuel R. Honeycomb (ED 530:162). Mr. Peirson and family moved right into the house, which was then numbered 34 Pleasant Street. George Peirson and his partner, Daniel Potter (who resided at 343 Essex Street), did business as Potter & Peirson, Blacksmiths, at West Place in Salem. This was the depot for stage coaches and livery stables. They probably specialized in providing metalwork for carriages (see 1857 Directory). By 1858, Mr. Potter was working as a deputy sheriff, while Mr. Peirson continued to work as a blacksmith at West Place, residing at "34 Pleasant." His business was well described in the advertisement that ran on page 45 of the ad section of the Salem Directory for 1859: "George H. Peirson, Carriage Smith and Manufacturer of Steel Springs, Iron Fence, & Balustrades, West Place. Particular attention paid to all kinds of Iron Work for Buildings."

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. In that year (census)...

George H. Peirson was born in 1816 by the name of George Washington Honeycomb, of British immigrant parents, Thomas and Celia (Peirson) Honeycomb, of Cornwall, in the west of England. George had an older brother, Samuel. His father died in April, 1827, aged 59, and soon after young George was apprenticed to learn the blacksmith's trade. He learned well, and was residing at 8 Sewall Street in 1836, aged twenty. George W. Honeycomb worked hard, and made a reputation for himself among the other mechanics in Salem.

In about 1840 George had his name changed legally to George H. Peirson. He married twice, to Mary E. Cross and to Mary Jane Bruce of Salem, NY. He joined the Essex Lodge of Masons 6 May 1851 and was elected Master, and held that office from 1856 to 1862. (p.122, Hadley's *Essex Lodge*).

He and Mary J. Bruce had just one surviving child, a daughter, Mary.

In 1855 (per census w2: h. 62), George H. Peirson and family (GHP, 34, blacksmith, Mary 29, b. NY, Mary, infant, Sarah Saunders 40) resided in a house with his older brother, Samuel R. Honeycomb, 44, carpenter, and wife Mary B. In that year, George was paymaster of the Sixth Regiment Infantry, commanded by Col. Benjamin Brown of Marblehead, in the Fourth Brigade, commanded by Brig. General Joseph Andrews of Salem (Directory, p.203). This shows Mr. Peirson in his military guise. He enjoyed militia activities.

In the Civil War, GHP was one of Salem's early military leaders. He never joined the regular army, but served as colonel of Salem's volunteer militia on three occasions. He was so prominent that when the Fifth was posted to Newbern, North Carolina, they named their camp after him, Camp Peirson (see copy of 1863 print of Camp Peirson, attached).

George H. Peirson, was Colonel of the 5th Infantry Militia of Massachusetts (per Civil War in Hurd's *History*: p. 200). With the news that South Carolina rebel troops had opened fire on the federal Fort Sumpter, Salem men flocked to sign up for militia enlistments in defense of their country, thinking that the war would not be a long one. On April 20, 1861, "the Mechanics' Light Infantry, under Capt. George Peirson, and the City Guard, under Capt. Henry Danforth, left Salem and went directly to the City of Washington as part of the Fifth Militia regiment." As they paraded in Salem before taking their leave at the downtown railroad station, "at every step of their march through the streets they were cheered by enthusiastic crowds." (p. 201: "everyone was desirous of doing something in aid of the cause. Men and women seemed for the time to lose sight of the petty aims and thoughts of every-day life, and were dignified by a common love of their country and a desire to serve it." In July, it was known that the Union army—including the men under the command of Captains Peirson and Danforth—was advancing in northern Virginia and would encounter the Confederate army. It was hoped that a decisive victory could crush the rebellion and save the nation years of warfare and the loss of thousands of lives. The news of the Union army's rout at the Battle of Bull Run, "struck the people of Salem, as the entire North, like a blow. Stunned at first, they soon recovered and began to grasp the full meaning of this defeat. They saw that a great war was only just begun...and that if the nation was to endure, faith and patriotism must be subjected to a steady strain, and men, money, and effort given without stint." (p. 202).

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.

With the war over, George H. Peirson, in 1865, sold the homestead to Barzilla Ballard (ED 692:227). Mr. Peirson moved into a house on the other side of Pleasant Street, and there lived another 15 years. He died on February 8, 1881, in his 65th year, and his obituary, in the *Salem Observer*, 12 Feb. 1881, read: "Gen. George H. Peirson, postmaster of Salem, died on Tuesday morning last, after suffering many months with consumption... Gen. P. was appointed postmaster of Salem by President Grant in 1869 and again in 1873, and was reappointed by President Hayes in 1877... Gen. P. leaves a widow and one daughter."

Barzilla Ballard

Barzilla Ballard, fifty in 1865, came from Maine, and was in Salem by 1850, at which time he, evidently, was working as a weaver in the factory of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company (per census, ward 3, house 23). By 1855 he was residing on Bridge Street (per 1855 census, wd 2, house 23): Barzilla Ballard, 43, fisherman, Sarah H., 45, children Huldah A., 14, Francis A., 12, and Minerva W., 8. In 1860 Mr. Ballard was 45, a provision dealer, with wife and two children at home. His son, Francis A. Ballard, would serve as a Union soldier in the Civil War, from 1862 through 1865, in the 40th Regiment Mass. Volunteer Infantry for two of those years.

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. 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.

On 9 Nov. 1875 Barzilla Ballard sold this homestead to William H. Nelson (ED 942:85). Mr. Nelson rented it out for income.

In the U.S. centennial year, 1876, A.G. Bell of Salem and Boston 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 1880 (per census w2 6-9), this house (then-#35) was occupied by Oliver D. Goodell, 47, superintendent of chemical works, wife Naomi 50,

son Oliver, who assists in chemical works, and daughters Alice G, 15, and Martha P, 12.

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.

In 1888 W. H. Nelson sold the homestead to Emma N. Entwisle (ED 1216:302). She too seems to have used it for rental income. In 1900 (per census w2 267-351 #18) it was occupied by Joshua G. Towne, 59, wife Mary H., 43, born Maine, sons Walter H., 15, b. Me, Charles A., 14, b. Me., and Frank H., six, b. Mass. Mr. Towne, born in 1841 in Salem, was the son of Rev. Joseph hardy Towne (1805-1897), a minister in Boston and a prominent anti-slavery man. On 16 Nov. 1908 Mr. Towne purchased this house, where he had been residing for years, from Emma N. Entwisle, wife of J. Clifford Entwisle (ED 1944:587).

The Townes continued to live here for many years, into the 1930s.

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.

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., 18 Oct. 2005.

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Historic House Plaque Application

If interested in commissioning a written history of your Salem house and having a plaque to identify its construction date and early owner(s), please fill in the blanks below.

The fee for a professionally prepared house history and plaque is \$350.00. Please send a check for that amount, made out to Historic Salem, Inc., with this application, to the above address.

Name: Marie Beaupre

Name of Owner (if different from above):

Anne M. Baccari

** This is a gift for Anne - Contact Marie at phone # listed*

Contact Information:

Home Phone: 978-745-8541

Work Phone: Same

e-mail: mebeaupre@aol.com

** my address on back*

Street Address: 18 Pleasant St, Salem

Date Purchased & From Whom:

? 70's from George Moulison

Helpful Information about the Building (append copies if necessary):

My mother (anne) started to research the house years ago - She has it dated back to 1853. Possibly the kitchen and room above it was a separate bldg. and attached later on. also, The person ~~who~~ who sold the house had a son who visited my mother years ago and told her that the house was built by Elias Derby. If this is so, she would love to have that