



15 Chestnut St. Salem

built in 1804 by
Amos Towne
and
Capt. Solomon Towne

By S. L. Dea

Historical Summary of House #15 Chestnut St.

The two men concerned with #15 Chestnut St. are brothers from Boxford. Amos, born in 1769 and Solomon born in 1774, sons of John and Anna Towne. Boxford, Topsfield and Andover had a great many Townes and Towns listed, with many repetitions of surnames, so tracing has been difficult. An Amos is listed in Salem marrying Polly Davitt in 1792, however after the first land purchase we are concerned with, (which mentions no wife's name) Amos Towne is listed with wife Rebecca. No children were born to these names. Solomon married a Salem girl Lydia Goodale, from whom he was absent often, on sea voyages. His name is connected to at least four vessels over the years, as a captain: ship "Lucia", ship "Galatea", brig "Baltimore" and brig "Conqueror". Solomon and Lydia Towne had seven children.

To go back in time. Amos Towne first appears in Salem as a young man of 28, paying taxes on a house in Ward 1, and a year later his brother Solomon, then 24 was living in Ward 1, perhaps in Amos' house. Amos Towne was a schoolmaster. In 1799 he had moved to Ward 3, and was paying taxes on a house. (no location mentioned, or deeds recorded.) William Bentley states that Amos opened a new school in the "west end" (Ward 3 ?) in 1802. Meanwhile Solomon Married Lydia Goodale, 19 year old daughter of a Salem family and in 1802 he was paying taxes on a house in Ward 1. A year later he and his wife had moved to Ward 3; and Amos Towne, for \$607, bought a lot of land on the corner of Cambridge and the recently laid out Chestnut St.

In 1804 Amos and Solomon Towne are assessed \$900 valuation each for a "pvt. house" (Wiswall claims that #15, was used as a 2-family house. Both Townes may have been living in it.) The tax jump seems to indicate this year as the year the house was built. In 1805 Amos took out a \$500 mortgage on half of his land, and dwelling house; this was carefully described as the half the present house is on. In 1807 Amos and his wife Rebecca had left Salem for Bath, New Hampshire, and he sold his Chestnut St. property to his brother (land, dwelling house and buildings) for \$5000. The price certainly indicates that a substantial house had been added since 1803. James Duncan Phillips dated this house 1807 or 1808, and Wiswall dated it 1810. Evidence shown in the documentation following this summary seems to point to earlier dating: 1804 possibly, and 1805 at the latest.

At any rate, Capt. Towne and his growing family lived on at #15. They took out a sizeable mortgage on the property in 1812 with William Gray. This was the merchant who in 1803 owned a quarter of all the Salem ships in foreign trade, including at least one of which Capt. Towne was master. Solomon Towne was a member of the "Salem Evangelical Library" and the Salem Marine Society. For unknown reasons, the Townes sold their property in 1821, although a son born in 1823 in Salem may mean they lived on for a while in the house. Tax records for 1823 note "gone"

after his name. Where the family went we can't trace: 12 years later news of his death in Sumatra reached Salem.

James King was a Salem merchant who owned considerable property. His first wife had died in 1809, and he was left with many children. When he was 69 in 1820, he married Elizabeth Grant, a spinster of 53. In 1821 he bought #15 Chestnut St. from Solomon Towne, but apparently he never lived there himself, preferring his house on Essex St. Wiswall names a variety of people who rented the house, including two sea captains Jerimiah Page, and William Pierce. The latter, with his wife and daughters was living there in 1855, when Mrs. King, a widow since 1830, died aged 85. She left a long will disposing of her many pieces of property and possessions. The house at #15 Chestnut St. was willed to Capt. Pierce's father-in-law, Ezekiel Goss. The Cambridge St. corner half of the land, with a house on it, was sold.

The Gosses moved in; daughter Almira Pierce, her husband and family apparently moved to Watertown. By 1892, the elder Gosses had passed away and the 4 children disposed of the estate, selling the Chestnut St. property to Jennié M. Emmerton. There is no record of the Emmertons living there themselves; and in 1901 the widow Jennie sold the house to Nathan and Eliza Osgood.

A notable addition to the property was acquired in 1910, when Shreves sold to Nathan Osgood a 62' lot between houses #15 and the Shreves' #17. This greatly enhanced the Osgood property, and made possible a wing on the house about 20 years later. When Mrs. Osgood died, the property was sold by her married daughter in 1932 to Sally Parker Barton; (it was said) as a wedding present from Mrs. Barton's mother. Twenty one years later in 1953 Alfred and Margery Moses purchased it, and lived there until 1965 when Mrs. Moses sold it to Jeremiah S. Burns, and his wife Abby. This family, including their 3 children reside in the dignified and gracious gray wooden house now, in 1969, 165 years old.

DOCUMENTATION

- Book 173 p. 31 Sept. 10, 1803
David Neal, mariner of Salem for \$607 sells to Amos Towne, Salem schoolmaster, a lot of land. (no buildings mentioned) Beginning at corner of Chestnut and Cambridge St. S. along Cambridge St. 59'6", W. along land of David Neal 103'10", then nearly N. along land of John Pickering Jr. 55' to Chestnut St., E. along Chestnut St. 105'6", containing 21 and 7/10 poles.
- Book 177 p. 12 July 15, 1805
Amos Towne, of Salem, schoolmaster, and wife Rebecca mortgage for \$500 to Susanna Hathorne single, of Salem the following property: dwelling house and land in Salem bounded as follows; beginning at N.E. corner of John Pickering Jr.'s land running E. along Chestnut St. 50', turning running S. to land of David Neal and butting on my other land; then running W. 50' to land of Pickering and butting S. on Neal's land; turning and running N. about 55' to Chestnut St. and point of beginning. Mortgage paid off in 1809.
- Book 181 p.68 March 2, 1807
Amos Towne, schoolmaster, late of Salem now of Bath, New Hampshire, trader, for \$5000 sells to Solomon Towne, a lot of land described: Beginning at corner of Chestnut & Cambridge Sts. S. along Cambridge St. 59'6", W. along land of David Neal 103'10", then nearly N. on land of John Pickering Jr. 55' to a stone sunk in S. line of Chestnut St., then E. along Chestnut St. 105'6" to beginning, containing 21 and 7/10 poles, the premises being same conveyed to Amos Towne by David Neal Sept. 10, 1803 Book 173 p. 31, together with dwelling house and other buildings standing on said land (notes a mortgage on premises held by Susanna Ha(r)thorne, \$500 & interest dated July 15, 1805.) Amos & Rebecca give up right of dower.
- Book 198 p.126 July 7, 1812
Solomon Towne and wife Lydia take out a \$3000 mortgage on the Cambridge St. Chestnut St. property (land, house & bldgs.) with William Gray of Boston. This mortgage was discharged in Sept. 10, 1818.
- Book 226 p.97 April 13, 1821
Solomon Towne, Master Mariner, for \$3000 sells

to James King, Salem merchant, a lot of land with dwelling house and all other buildings described: beginning at corner of Chestnut St. and Cambridge St. running S. on Cambridge St. 59'6", W. along land of David Neal 103'10", then nearly N. along land late of Pickering, now of Stephen Phillips 55' to a stone sunk in the S. line of Chestnut St., then E. on Chestnut St. 105'6" to corner first mentioned, containing 21 and 7/10 poles of land. Provided if Solomon Towne or heirs pay to James King \$3000 plus interest in one year, this deed is void. Solomon and Lydia, for \$1 release to James King rights of dower in premises.

Probate 44491 Elizabeth King (widow) will probate Nov. 1855. She owned 1. house and land corner Chestnut St. & Cambridge St.
2. a lot of land on Cambridge St.
3. house and land at 15 Chestnut St.
4. house and land on Andover St.
5. Store and land on 214 Essex St.

Will signed August 8, 1854

. . . "I give and devise to Ezekiel Goss the (house) on Chestnut St. now occupied by the family of Wm. P. Pierce, to have & to hold the same to said Goss his heirs & assigns forever."

Timothy Ropes, exec. petitioned Probate to sell 1. & 2.

Book 830 p.196 July 28, 1871
Ezekiel & Almira Goss for \$2383 sell to Hannah C. Hatch property described below.

Book 830 p.262 July 29, 1871
Hanna C. Hatch (of Salem) sells for \$2283 land, dwelling house & bldgs. to Almira D. Goss wife of Ezekiel Goss. Property described as follows commencing at post by land of Mrs. Neal, W. on Chestnut St. 53'4" to land of Phillips, S. about 69' to land of Waters, E. 42'5" to land of Mrs. Neal, N. 28'1", E. 17'1", N. 24' (?) all by land of Neal to point started from on Chestnut St.

Book 1335 p.114 Feb. 27, 1892
Francis Goss (of Roxbury) Ellen R. Goss (single of Salem) William T. & Almira P. Pierce (of Watertown) James A. & Elizabeth K. Dodge (of Minneapolis) for \$1 and considerations sell to Jennie M. Emmerton land and bldgs. described as follows: Commencing at a post by land late of Mrs. Neal, now of Kittredge, W. on Chestnut

St. 54.35' to land late of Phillips now of Shreve, S. by land of Shreve 68.75' to land of Waters, E. 43' by Waters' land to Kittredge, then N. 28.1', E. 17'3", N. 42.45' by Kittredge land to point of beginning. This estate coming to their father Ezekiel Goss from Elizabeth King, widow now deceased, and conveyed to their mother Almira D. Goss.

Book 1633 p.140 Feb. 5, 1901

Jennie M. Emmerton, widow of George R. Emmerton sells for \$1 to Eliza Stevens Osgood, wife of Nathan C. Osgood land and dwelling house & other bldgs. described as follows: Commencing at Chestnut St. by land formerly of Neal now of Kittredge, W. on Chestnut St. 54.35' to land now or late of Shreve, then S. by land of Shreve 68'75" to land of Waters, E. by land of Waters 43' to land of Kittredge, by land of Kittredge N. 28.1', E. 17.3' N. 42.45' to point of beginning.

Book 2004 p. 261 Jan. 22, 1910

Octavias B. Shreve & Wm. P. Shreve, trustees under will of Benjamin Shreve, late of Salem sell to Nathan C. Osgood for \$4000 land betw. houses #15 & 17 described as follows: N. by Chestnut St. 62.65' E. by land of Elza S. Osgood formerly of Goss and land now or late of Waters 117.5', S. by land now or late of Waters or Blake 48.5', W. by land of grantors 122' (containing approx. 6580 sq. ft.) subject to this restriction: no buildings will ever be built closed than 30' to house #17 while Shreves own #17.

Book 2871 p.591, 592 Jan. 27, 1931

Eliza S. Osgood, trustee to will of Nathan C. Osgood grants to Katharine M. Jeffrey quitclaim covenant, for land described above. K. M. Jeffrey grants some property back to Eliza S. Osgood same day.

Book 2916 p.235, 236 May 5, 1932

Katharine Osgood Wright & Alfred W. Putnam, exec. of will of Eliza S. Osgood (decree of Probate April 26, 1932) sell to Sally Parker Barton land & bldgs. in Salem bounded & described as follows: commencing on Chestnut St. at land late of Neal, now of Kittredge, W. on Chestnut St. 54.31' to land now or late of Shreve, S. by Shreve land 68.75' to land of Waters, E. by Waters' land 43' to Kittredge land, then by Kittredge land, N. 28.1', E. 17.3', N. 42.45'

to beginning. Also land betw. houses #15 & #17, bounded N. by Chestnut St. 62.65', E. by land of Eliza S. Osgood formerly of Gauss & by land now or late of Waters 117.5, S. by land now or late of Waters or Blake 48.5' W. by land of Shreve 122'. (approx. 6580 sq. ft.)

Book 3975 p.437 May 6, 1953

Robert B.M. & Sally P. Barton sell to Alfred S. & Margery C. Moses land in Salem & buildings thereon bounded & described as follows: Commencing at a point on Chestnut St. at land now or late of Kittredge, running W. on Chestnut St. 52.78' to land (described following) S. by said land 68.75' to land now or late of Waters, E. by Waters' land 43' to Kittredge land, N. by Kittredge land 28.1', E. 17.3', N. 7.85' and 34.7' all by Kittredge land to Chestnut St. and point of beginning. Also land between houses #15 & 17 bounded: N. by Chestnut St. 62.65', E. by parcel above & by land now or late of Waters 117.5', S. by land now or late of Waters or Blake, 48.5' W. by land now or late of Shreve, 122' (approx. 6580 sq. ft.)

Book 5324 p. 530 Dec. 8, 1965

Alfred S. & Margery C. Moses sell to Jeremiah S. & Abby L. Burns land in Salem together with buildings thereon bounded & described as follows: Commencing at a point on Chestnut St. at land now or late of Kittredge, running W. by Chestnut St. 52.78' to land (described following) then S. by said land 68.75' to land now or late of Waters, then E. by Waters' land 43' to Kittredge land, then N. by Kittredge land 28.1', E. 17.3', N. 7.85' and 34.7' all by Kittredge land to Chestnut St. and point of beginning.

Also land betw. houses #15 & #17 on Chestnut St. as follows: N. by Chestnut 62.25', E. by parcel described above & by land now or late of Waters 117.5', S. by land now or late of Waters or Blake 48.5', W. by land now or late of Shreve, 122' (approx. 6580 sq. ft.)

Tax Valuation Data

from City Hall records .

(poll tax is noted down here only when there was no valuation of Property: indicating residence.)

- 1797 Ward 1 Amos Towne - house \$300
- 1798 Ward 1 Amos Towne - house \$300, Solomon Towne - 1 poll
- 1799 Ward 1 Solomon Towne - 1 poll
Ward 3 Amos Towne - house 350
- 1800 Ward 1 Solomon Town - 1 poll
Ward 3 Amos Towne - house 400
- 1801 Ward 1 Solomon Towne 1 poll (he gets married in 1801)
Ward 3 Amos Towne - house 400
- 1802 Ward 1 Solomon Towne - house 500
Ward 3 Amos Towne - house 400
- 1803 Ward 1 Solomon Towne "pvt house" 700 - "to Ward 3"
Ward 3 Amos Towne - House 400 (Amos buys Chestnut St. site)
- 1804 Ward 3 Amos Towne - pvt.house 900, Solomon Towne pvt house 900
- 1805 Ward 3 Amos Towne - house 900, Solomon Towne house 900
(Amos took out a mortgage in 1805)
- 1806 Ward 3 Solomon Towne - house 900
- 1807 Ward 3 Solomon Towne - house 900 (he purchased #15 Chestnut St. land & bldgs. from Amos)
- 1808, 1809, 1810 Ward 3, Solomon Towne $\frac{1}{2}$ house 900
- 1811 Ward 3 Solomon Towne $\frac{3}{4}$ house on Chestnut St. 1200
- 1812 Ward 3 Solomon Towne $\frac{1}{2}$ house 1200 (takes out \$3000 mortgage)
- 1813, 1814 no tax entry at all for Solomon Towne
- 1815, 1816, 1817, 1818 Ward 3, Solomon Towne $\frac{1}{2}$ house 1000
- 1819, 1820 Ward 3 Solomon Towne 1 house 1200
- 1821, 1822 Ward 3 Solomon Towne 1 pt.house 900 (1821 Towne sells property to James King)
- 1823 Ward 3 Solomon Towne "gone" (no tax here listed to James King)

Note: no Salem property deeds are recorded for either A. or S. Towne other than the 15 Chestnut St. site, before 1811.

References

p. 121 "Salem Vessels and Their Voyages" by George Granville Putnam lists "brig 'Conqueror' late Solomon Towne of Salem who died on the coast of Sumatra June 5, 1835"

p. 105 picture of Solomon Towne

p. 39-40 log notation: Oct. 1832 - Feb. 1833 Capt. Millett of ship "Tybee" of Salem - "spoke brig 'Baltimore', Towne, 14 days from Para for this port, was in co. 2 days."

Ship Registers of Salem and Beverly, 1789-1900

p. 109 ship "Lucia" 310 tons, blt. & reg. Salisbury 1795 William Gray owner, Thos. Meek master. Reg. 1805 William Gray Jr. owner, Solomon Towne master.

Merchant Sail by William Armstrong Fairburn

Vol. I p. 553 "Aug. 1804 ship 'Lucia', 310 tons, capt. Solomon Towne, entered from Calcutta with a cargo of sugar, indigo and cheroots" William Gray of Salem owner is spoken of as one of the "greatest merchants in Mass." In 1803 of 132 Salem vessels engaged in foreign trade, 36 were owned by Gray. His son William R. Gray was his agent in Boston.

Vol. V p. 2988 Enos Briggs of Salem in 1791 launched and reg. 128 ton "Baltimore" packet (schooner)

p. 2885 ship "Baltimore", 1832 owner John Sever blt. in Kingston

p. 2991 ship "Galatea" 300 tons blt. by Enos Briggs, Salem launches 1810, sold to Henry Gray. (not reg. from Salem)

Diary of William Bentley contains 2 brief references to "Mr. Town's (Amos') writing school opened in the west end." 1802

p. 264 Salem Imprints by H. S. Tapley lists Solomon Towne as a member of the new "Salem Evangelical Library" of 500 volumes.

Salem Marine Society lists Solomon Towne as a member, joined in 1821. Later noted as "left the society."

P. 291 Salem and the Indies by James Duncan Phillips notes that Capt. Stephen Phillips bought lot at #17 (Chestnut St.) in May 1804 and by end of the year had completed that house . . . "2 or 3 years (after 1805) Capt. Solomon Towne built a wooden house at #15" (no documentation is shown for this 1807 or 1808 dating)

P. 11 Notes on Building of Chestnut St. by Wiswall. He mentions Solomon Towne as Capt. of the "Galatea". He claims the house was built in 1810 by Solomon Towne, as there was "no mention of a house" in earlier deeds. He notes that the house seems to have been a 2-family house and lists the following people as known to have lived at #15; (incl. Townes) E. H. Payson, 1828; Capt. Jeremiah Page, 1829 or earlier; A. F. W. Gayle before 1837; Mrs. Harriet Rose, 1846; John Chadwick, 1841; Ira Cheever, 1846; Capt. William Pierce, wife and 4 daughters lived in whole house 1849-1855; Ezekiel Goss 1869-'81; George Shattuck 1899; the Nathan Osgoods 1901-1932.

settled in Salem in 1640 { William Towne m. Johanna Blessing } → Rebecca Towne Nourse } both hung as "witches"
 → Mary Towne Estey
 → Jacob → Jacob → Elisha → John*

Vital Statistics Information

★
 Children of John and Anna Towne:

Amos - b. 1769 Boxford m. 1792 Polly Gavitt, Salem
 Sarah
 Samuel
Solomon - b. 1774 Boxford m. 1801 Lydia Goodale of Salem
 Lucy
 Joseph
 John Joshua Goodale m. Mary March
 Daniel children: Lydia b. Salem 1782
 Asa Joshua
 Anna Polly
 Thankful
 Hannah
 Nathan

Solomon and Lydia G. Towne (no death date)
 d. 1835 age 61 in Sumatra

Children: Joseph 1810* - became a minister
 Mary Ann 1810
 Joshua G. 1810 - d. 1841 in New Orleans
 Lydia 1812 officer of ship "Talbot"
 Elizabeth S. 1815
 Martha Ellen 1820
 William Henry 1823

*these are baptismal dates - South Church, Salem

No probate on Solomon Towne.

A brief reference (no date) to widow Lydia Towne Marrying a "Hale" in Salem.

James King bp. 1751 m. 1777 d. 1830 Judith Norris b. 1753 d. 1809
 9 children, 3 lived to marry:

Harriet b. 1793 m. 1816 Henry Whipple, 10 children
 John Glen b. 1787 m. 1815 Susan H. Gilman,
 daughter: Caroline H. King b. 1822 wrote
 "When I lived in Salem"
 Judith b. 1779 m. 1814 Capt. Edward Norris

in 1820 widower James King m. Elizabeth Grant b. 1768 d. 1854
 (Elizabeth was daughter of Samuel and Eliz. Dolhonde Grant)