

37 Chestnut Street
Salem

Built For
CAPT. GEORGE NICHOLS
Merchant
1816-17

By
JABEZ SMITH
Master Builder

By
Robert Booth
16 Feb 1978

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37 Chestnut Street

This house was built for Capt George Nichols, merchant, in 1816-17, by master-builder Jabez Smith.

Chestnut Street was laid out as Chesnut Street through the back yards of various estates in 1801. On 9 Nov 1804 Rev. Daniel Hopkins of Salem for \$2500 granted to mariner Benjamin Lander a parcel of land bounded northerly about 86' on Chesnut Street, and running back about 150' to a 74' 8" rear boundary on land of Samuel Putnam (174:205). Benjamin Lander owned this parcel until 8 Mar 1811, when he sold it for \$1750 to George Nichols, Salem merchant (191:269).

The War of 1812 interfered with George Nichols' plan to build on the lot, and it was not until 1816 that master-builder Jabez Smith began construction of the house. Although it was not yet finished at the time, the house was first occupied by the Nichols family in August, 1816. Work continued well into 1817, under the watchful eye of Capt Nichols, who, on the last day of construction, as the workmen finished off the chimney-tops, called up, "Now you may cheat as much as you please!" The total cost of construction was \$13,500.

Valuation records for the time (valuations were usually taken in spring) reveal that in 1815 & 1816 George Nichols was assessed for half of a house (not this one) and the Chesnut St. lot of land, valued together at \$1200. The valuation book for 1817 notes "new house building, \$2000." From 1818 through 1825 George Nichols was assessed for the completed house, worth \$3000.

On 12 June 1815 Capt Nichols and his neighbor to the east, Samuel Putnam Esq, exchanged pieces of land: Putnam received a triangular piece measuring 5' on Chestnut Street and running back along the western side of his estate; Nichols received a piece extending from the back of his lot about 75' to Green Street (now Warren Street), where it butted 63' on the street (207:33, 33).

On 29 May 1821 George Nichols for \$5000 mortgaged his estate to Hingham minor Clarissa Crowninshield, whose guardian, Benjamin Ropes Nichols of Salem, had arranged the transaction (226:138). Five years passed, and Capt Nichols failed to pay off the mortgage; in July 1826 his right in equity of redeeming the premises was attached for a debt to the Exchange Bank,

and on 19 Feb 1827 Thomas Perkins, Topsfield merchant, bought up the equity right for a high bid of \$3284 (245:10). Then, on 21 Feb 1827, Benjamin Ropes Nichols, acting as guardian to Miss Crowninshield, for \$5218.33 assigned the mortgage to this same Thomas Perkins (245:23). George Nichols thus lost possession of the house he had built in 1816.

Thomas Perkins of Topsfield did not long own the premises; on 24 Oct 1827, for "love & affection" and a token \$5 payment, Mr Perkins granted the estate to his nephew, Salem merchant David Pingree (258:287). Mr Pingree, who later became Mayor of Salem, owned and occupied the estate for more than ten years; on 16 Mar 1838 for \$7500 he granted the same to Salem gentleman William A Lander (305:124). Mr Lander owned it about seven years; on 17 Jan 1845 for \$6000 he sold it to Salem auctioneer John H Nichols, a son of Capt George Nichols the original owner (351:34). It would remain in possession of the Nichols family for the rest of the nineteenth century.

John H Nichols owned the premises more than twenty years; on 26 Ap 1866 he granted the same to his brother Charles Nichols, youngest son of Capt George Nichols (704:113). Charles S Nichols and family lived here for many years; on 2 Dec 1873 Charles conveyed the estate in trust (for the benefit of himself and his heirs) to his brother-in-law Calvin C Ainsworth (894:118).

On 6 Oct 1892 Mr Ainsworth conveyed a strip of land on the western side of the estate to neighbor Alice J Barker (1358:258, & plan). At last, on 26 Mar 1900, Charles S and his wife Amelia Ann ("Amelioran") Nichols having died, Mr Ainsworth conveyed the estate to their heirs, sons Charles F and Harry P, and daughter Ellen A Nichols; on 2 Aug 1900 these Nichols heirs granted the premises to Annie Bertram Shattuck, wife of George H Shattuck, of Salem (1616:330, 332). The house thus passed out of the family of the original owner.

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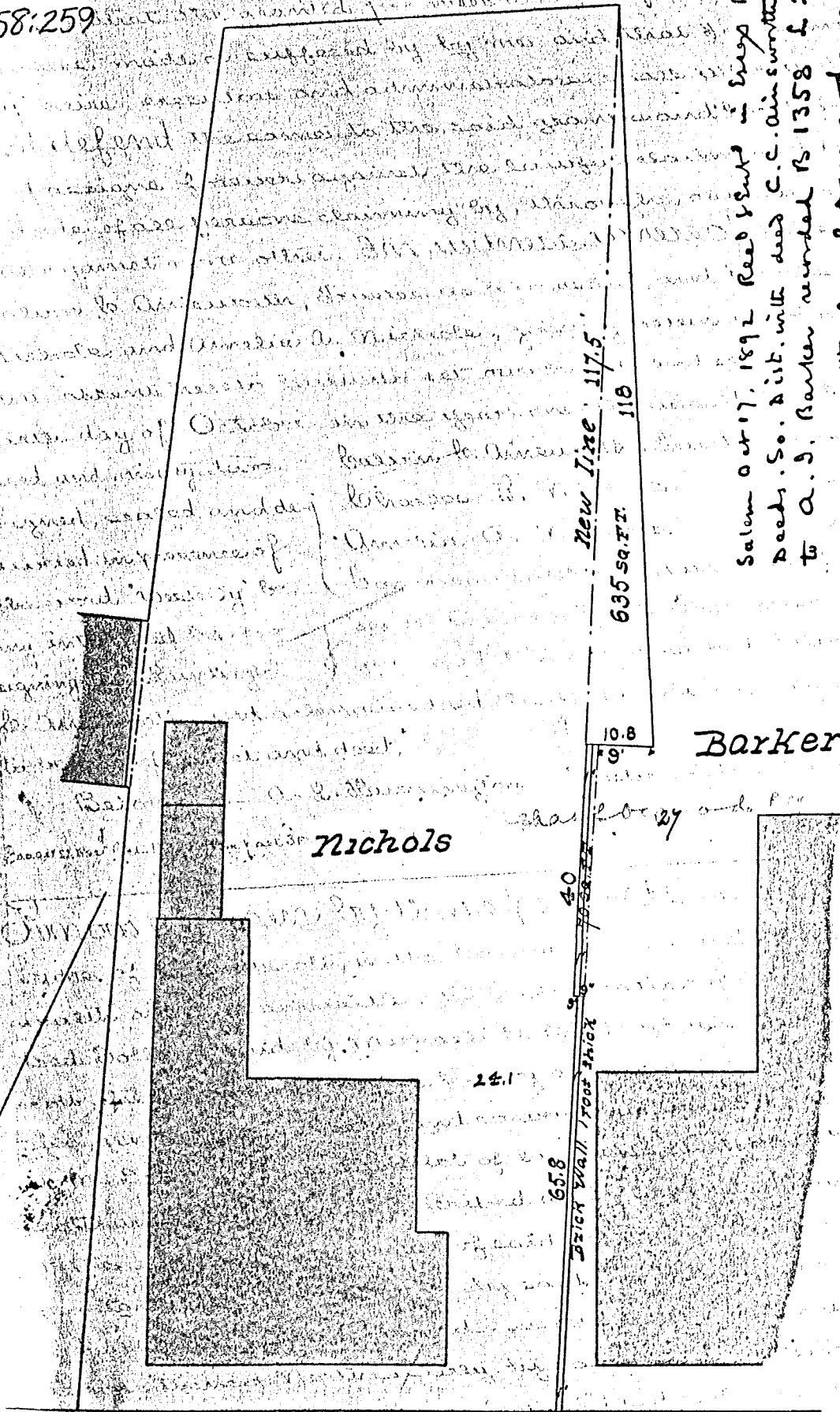
Notes:

This house is treated by Richard H Wiswall in his "Notes on the Building of Chestnut Street," (EIHC 75:218), which is inaccurate in some particulars regarding the dates of ownership & occupancy (esp. of Pingree).

Capt George Nichols and the story of this house are among the subjects of the book Witches' Breed: the Pierce-Nichols Family by Susan Nichols Pulsifer; see esp. page 430.

1358:259

Warren Street



Salmon Oct 17, 1892 Reed & Bent - Eng's Ref.
 Deeds, So. Dist. with deed C.C. Ainsworth trustee
 to A.S. Barker numbered B 1358 & 258
 Att Charles Osgood Ref

Chesnut Street

20' = 1"

By C.A. Putnam
Sept, 1892

1850-1898 Joseph W. Stone was living in the house and it was later occupied by Mr. William P. McMullan 1902-1916, and Mr. Walter L. Abbot, 1920-1924. Robert Stone purchased the house in 1822 from Pickering Dodge for \$10,500. When President Jackson visited Salem in 1833, a levee was held in this house in his honor.

No. 37 This brick house now occupied by Charles Fabens, 1930-1936, was built by George Nichols in 1816-1817 and was first occupied by him. It was offered for sale by Mr. Nichols in 1827 and was then occupied by David Pingree 1817-1827, and was then occupied by William A. Lander, who was living there in 1842. In the 1850 directory, it appears that John H. Nichols, auctioneer, was living there, 1850-1866, and he was followed by Charles S. and Charles F. Nichols, 1869-1898, and George H. Shattuck, 1901-1921. Mr. Pingree was mayor of Salem in 1857, a prominent merchant and President of the Naumkeag Bank and the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Co., and later purchased the brick house next to the Essex Institute where Captain White was murdered. There was no architect for the house but it was built by Jabez Smith at a cost of about \$13,500. The wallpapers were selected in Europe by George Nichols' brother Henry, who was then a supercargo for George Nichols. There was not enough paper for the eastern parlor and Mr. Nichols' cousin, George Ropes, who was an artist and deaf and dumb, supplied the deficiency, presumably by painting on the wall, and this was done so skillfully, that the difference was never noticed by people who came there. Mr. Lander spent a considerable sum on alterations and improvements and put up the iron fence now in front of the house. John H. Nichols bought the house from Mr. Lander in 1857, and lived there until 1866, and added the second story to the pantry for a bedroom and bathroom. The Charles Nichols who succeeded John was John's brother. He bought the property for about \$12,000, and removed the two-story brick stable west of the house. Six of John Nichols' children were born there, including Miss Charlotte S. Nichols.

No. 27 This was the first of the two large brick mansions midway of the street on the southerly side

Wm. P. Peirce	1857	Wm. G. Webb	1874-1896
Pickering Dodge Allen	1860-1861	David Mason Little	1897-1903
Joseph S. Cabot and Mrs. Cabot	1864-1878	Misses King	1903-1910
Miss Elizabeth Howe	1878	Stephen W. Phillips	1913-1939
Dr. Octavius B. Shreve	1879-1929	35 Chestnut St., 31 & 33, brick	
Benj. D. Shreve	1932-1939	Regun by Pickering Dodge (d. 1833), finished by Jno. Fiske Allen	1828
30 Chestnut St. wood		Sold at auction 1851.	
Mrs. Stephen G. Wheatland built	1896	John Clarke Lee	1830-1835
Mrs. Stephen G. Wheatland	1896-1936	Mrs. Rebecca Dodge	1837-1850
Vacant most of the time.		Asahel Huntington & family	1853-1936
John Pickering	1937-1939	Mary T. Abbott	1864-1869
31 Chestnut St. ("33 to 35") brick		Richard D. Tucker	1872-1897
Built by Pickering Dodge	1828	Mrs. E. O. P. Sturgis	1903-1911
Tucker Daland	1830-1832	Warren Butler	1937-1939
Jno. F. Allen & Family	1837-1912	36 Chestnut St. No such number.	
Saml. R. & Mrs. Priscilla Curwen	1840-1842	37 Chestnut St.	
Richard West	1855	Geo. H. Nichols built	1816
Dr. Walter G. Phippen	1914-1939	David Pingree	1817-1827
32 No such number.		Wm. A. Lander	1842
33 Chestnut St. (31 to 35), brick		Jno. H. Nichols	1850-1866
Built by Pickering Dodge	1828	Chas. S. Nichols	1872-1898
Chas. M. & Nathan Endicott	1837	(at No. 6, 1855-66)	
Pickering Dodge Jr.	1842-1855	Chas. F. Nichols	1869-1876
Wm. E. Greeley & Mrs. Greeley	1855-1861	Henry M. Peirce	1874-1876
Francis Boardman	1853	Mrs. C. C. Peirce	1878
Humphrey Devereux	1857	Martha Ainsworth	1878-1879
Geo. P. Osgood & Family	1864-1904	Geo. H. Shattuck & Mrs. Shattuck	
Louis F. Cutter & Mrs. Cutter	1905-1939	1901-1921	
34 Chestnut St. wood		Chas. Fabens	1930-1939
there abt.	1817-1820	38 Chestnut St., brick, double house	
Front removed from Oak Hill by Nathaniel West Sr. abt.	1824	Rev. Jas. W. Thompson and Nathan West built	1845
Nathaniel West Jr. bef.	1837	Joseph Andrews	1850-1861
Wm. Pickman bef.	1837	Samuel C. Oliver	1864
Frederick Howes bef.	1837	Mrs. J. B. King	1865-1866
sold to Mrs. M. T. Ward	1836	Wm. G. Webb & Mrs. Webb	1869-1873
Mrs. Malvina Tabitha Ward had a school and boarding house	1836-1874	Wm. A. Lander and Misses Lander	1879-1894
Wm. B. Peirce	1837-	Vacant	1895-1896
Thos. P. Swett	1837-	Dr. C. H. Williams	1897-1900
Jno. H. Silsbee	1837-	Walter L. Abbot	1901-1911
Pickering Dodge	1837-	Wm. B. Cowen	1914-1920
Miss Elizabeth Davis	1842-1846	J. W. Helbura	1921-1922
Humphrey Devereux	1842-1853	Francis W. Belknap	1924-1926
Sarah Allen	1842	Albert Goodhue	1929-1939
Francis Boardman	1846	Hawthorne Institute	1939-
Horatio Robinson	1846	39 Chestnut St., wood, removed to Essex St.	
Miss E. W. Ward	1864-1874	Brick house built by Thos. Sanders	1805
Arthur S. Rogers	1874	Mrs. Thos. Sanders	1805-1851

Hugh & Jno. Matthews	1837-1842	Walter P. Hall	1926
Geo. T. Sanders	1837	Chas. S. Coxe	1929-1939
Mrs. Leverett Saltonstall and Daughters	1851-1883	43 Chestnut St., brick double house	
Geo. B. Ives	1885-1889	Thos. Sanders built	1810-1811
Wm. G. Barker	1893-1939	Nath. Saltonstall & widow	1820-1881
40 Chestnut St., brick double house		Henry Saltonstall	1851-1855
Jas. W. Thompson & Nath. West built	1845	William Saltonstall	1853-1860
Jas. W. Thompson	1846-1859	William G. Saltonstall	1861-1880
Geo. J. Thompson	1859	Chas. Sanders & Mrs. Sanders	1884-1921
Jno. B. Silsbee	1861-1864	Richard Sanders	1922-1924
Jos. H. M. Bertram	1866-1885	J. Fred Hussey	1926-1939
David M. Little	1885-1896	44 Chestnut St. wood	
Julia D'Esté	1897-1902	Jas. B. Curwen and Wm. G. Webb built	1869
Thos. W. Pierce	1905-1906	Chas. E. Fabens	1872-1874
Mrs. Thos. Belknap	1906-1907	Jas. H. Davis	1876-1882
Chas. A. Brown & widow	1907-1838	Mrs. N. C. Upton	1884-1887
41 Chestnut St., brick, double house		Nathan Nichols	1888-1890
Thos. Sanders built	1810-1811	Geo. Abbot Furness & widow	1893-1904
Leverett Saltonstall and family	1811-1851	Mrs. Mary J. Reed	1895-1896
Francis Tuckerman	1857-1879	Vacant	1905-1906
Jno. F. Tuckerman & family	1855-1898	Mrs. E. D. Looney & family	1909-1939
Susan G. King	1901-1902	46 Chestnut St., wood, double house	
Mrs. W. C. Upton	1903-1904	Jas. B. Curwen and Wm. G. Webb built	1869
Hulings Brown	1904-1910	Wm. G. Webb & Family	1869-1914
Mrs. Chas. Laight and Miss Laight	1913-1939	Mrs. Stephen Webb	1881-1887
42 Chestnut St. wood.		Mrs. Martha D. Webb	1888-1889
Geo. Mullet, Town Crier after	1800	Mrs. & Misses Webb	1890-1891
Maria Ropes built new house	1858	John Kiely & Mrs. Kiely	1915-1928
Maria Ropes	1858-1878	Arthur P. Sullivan	1929-1939
Tobias A. Hanson, bought	1879	47 Chestnut St. wood	
Tobias A. Hanson & family	1879-1894	Mrs. Greenwood (mother of Chas. Sanders) before	1800
Mrs. E. O. P. Sturgis	1895-1900	48 Chestnut St. brick	
Vacant	1901-1911	Miss Caroline Emmerton built abt.	1909
Mrs. C. H. Hagar	1913-1916	Francis A. Seamans & Mrs. Seamans	1910-1932
Vacant	1917-1920	Mrs. Jno. Wooldredge	1933-1939
J. Foster Smith	1921-1924		