THE
NICHOLS FAMILY
OF
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

Lawrence van B. Nichols

Piedmont, California

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The Nichols Family of Salem, Massachusetts, Lawrence van B. Nichols, 1966. Ichabod Nichols, Captain George Nichols, Jerathmiel Peirce, Benjamin Ropes Amelia Ann Ainsworth, Henry Peirce Nichols, Harry Peirce Nichols, Margaret Baxter Nichols Hardenbergh.

FOREWARD

The following narrative was put together sometime ago in response to a request from my brother, Jan, for information about our family history. It is based on material gathered in a rather haphazard fashion over a period of roughly thirty years, supplemented by correspondence with relatives and other research necessary to fill in the gaps. Even so there are missing links, and possibly a few inaccuracies where I have had to choose between conflicting data. It is basically a story of the Salem Nicholses and their close kin going back to the time when New England was settled. Inasmuch as the year 1967 marks the three-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of our first Nichols ancestor in North America, and in the light of certain additional information which has come to me as a result of the original draft, it has seemed appropriate to revise and circulate it among interested relatives and friends.

I have attempted to relate the chronicle of our forebears during this three hundred years to events which went on around them, because, naturally, their lives were as much affected by historical change as ours of the twentieth century have been, and events which molded the lives of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century Nicholses were no less momentous than those which have taken place in our own lifetime.

These introductory remarks would not be complete without acknowledgement to Cousin Susan (Nichols Pulsifer) of the New York branch of the family, and to my Aunt Margaret (Nichols Hardenbergh) who has been my greatest single source of information and, without whom, probably, my interest in the subject would never have been kindled.

ORIGINS AND BEGINNINGS

Nichols, as an English name, derives from the Norman French Nicole. After the Conquest it seems to have been used interchangeably with Lincoln - - Nicole and Lincoln bearing an obvious similarity. "Thus in 1315, first volume, Statutes at Large, Nicole is translated into English, Lincoln." Earlier still, the name traces back to ancient times and is a compound of the Greek words NIKE, meaning victory, and LAOS, meaning people. Hence Nicolaus and Nicholas, both of which appear frequently from early Christian times and are the antecedents of many, many modern variations.

By the sixteenth century Nichols in its varied spellings was a common English surname and, with the settling of New England early in the following century, we find numerous families of the name among the first colonists. The first direct ancestor of whom we have definite knowledge is Thomas Nichols, who came from England and was made a townsman of Salisbury (Massachusetts) in July, 1667. He had a son, also named Thomas, who was born in a part of Salisbury which became the town of Amesbury and who lived there until his death in 1724. He had a son, David, born October 26, 1709, who went to Salem about 1730 and shortly afterward married Hannah Gaskill, daughter of a prominent Quaker family. The Gaskills and their in-laws, the Southwicks, suffered many persecutions for their faith and it is probably on this branch of the family that the Nicholses of Salem have based their dubious assertion to an ancestor who was tried

for witchcraft, although the trials of the Quakers and preoccupation with sorcery were separate phases of Salem's age of intolerance. In the Ballad of Cassandra Southwick John Greenleaf Whittier relates how two members of that family were ordered by the General Court in Boston to be sold into slavery for their sins, and how no shipmaster could be found to transport them to the Southern Colonies or the Caribbean to carry out so cruel a sentence.

CAPTAIN ICHABOD NICHOLS OF SALEM AND PORTSMOUTH

With Ichabod Nichols, 1749 - 1839, son of David and Hannah, we begin to get some details of the life of one of our direct forebears, and also of the community which was home to our branch of the family right down to our early manhood. For during Ichabod's life alone Salem emerged from its embryo to become one of the pre-eminent ports on the Atlantic seaboard. I have heard it estimated that at the outbreak of the War of 1812 no less than a quarter of the total revenue of our Federal Government in Washington was contributed by the Port of Salem. Yet only a very few years later Salem's status was reduced to that of a backwater, and there it has remained for a century and a half, eking out a marginal existence in the shadows of its historical moment of grandeur. Few of its inhabitants were not touched by this abrupt reversal of fortunes.

With Ichabod also our family left, for the most part, the land which had supported it since arriving in North America, and went into commerce.

Like many a young man brought up in a growing shipping community, Ichabod went to sea at an early age. At twenty he was made captain of a ship belonging to Richard Derby, a member of Salem's greatest shipping family of the day. For the Derbys he made numerous voyages to Europe and the East Indies. There is a portrait of him, belonging to the New York branch of our family, in the uniform he had to wear, when, as the captain of a Salem vessel in the Port of St. Petersburg, he was invited to the court of Catherine II of Russia. In the War for American Independence, which began when he was twenty-six, he engaged in privateering against the British fleet and also served for a time as a Captain of Militia. For these activities he was read out of the Society of Quakers. Later, however, when Lafayette made his triumphal tour of the United States in 1824, Ichabod's wartime services earned him a personal introduction and it is recorded that "he was embraced by the Marquis".

As the theater of war moved South from New England, he returned to Salem and his young family. For in 1774 he had married Lydia Ropes and they already had two children. Two years before this marriage, Lydia's elder sister, Sarah, had been married to another prominent Salem merchant, Jerathmiel Peirce. Thus the daughters of Benjamin Ropes engendered a relationship between the Peirce and Nichols families that was to lead, in the next generation, to intermarriage and business partnership, and subsequently to the permanent joining of these two names to the famous house at 80 Federal Street which is their principal legacy to Salem.

The second child of Ichabod and Lydia Nichols was born on July 4, 1778, the second anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This was George Nichols, our grandfather's grandfather in the direct paternal line, and probably the best-known Nichols to bear the name. He was born in a house owned by Richard Derby, which Ichabod apparently occupied by virtue of his employment in the Derby family enterprises. This house, built fifteen to twenty years prior to George's birth, still stands at the head of Derby Wharf and is the oldest brick house in Salem. With the nearby Custom House and other objects of interest it forms part of the Salem Maritime Historical Site directed by the U. S. Department of the Interior. There are some fine pictures and a description of it in Samuel Chamberlain's book Salem Interiors.

Before the new baby was a year old, Ichabod moved his young family to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where, in an imposing Federal-style house at the corner of Gardner and Mechanic Streets, six more children joined the fold. This house, built in 1760, was purchased in 1919 and its interiors moved to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where they are displayed as an outstanding example of early colonial architecture. In Portsmouth, Ichabod went into the wholesale grocery business but he also continued his interests in the East India trade, both as a shipowner and master. The Custom House records at Salem show an entry of June 15, 1790, noting the arrival of the ship Light Horse, Ichabod Nichols master, from Canton, with tea, silks, and chinaware for E. H. Derby, Hy. Elkins, J. Crowninshield, I. Nichols, Jno. Derby

and E. Gibaut, the duties on which amounted to $16, 312. 98. Besides these activities Ichabod was involved in numerous real estate transactions, as the Rockingham County records show. Exactly why he left Salem in 1779, or why he returned in 1793, is not clear, but these moves were undoubtedly a matter of business opportunity. The sea-faring life must have imbued with him a roving spirit, which, coupled with Yankee ingenuity and a seemingly limitless supply of energy, carried him from one promising venture to another. At the age of sixty, his son George having become a leading shipmaster and merchant in his own right, the father gave up his active participation in the shipping business, bought a large tract of land on the outskirts of Salem, and spent the remaining thirty years of his life making it into a successful dairy operation. There is a good description of this period of Ichabod's life in the introduction to George Nichols' autobiography. All told, Ichabod and Lydia had eleven children. (see chart I) The eldest, John, died at the age of twenty-two. Next came George and Lydia whom we'll return to in more detail presently. Ichabod, the second of the sons so baptised (the first died in infancy) graduated from Harvard with highest honors in the class of 1802; was minister of the First Parish Church of Portland, Maine, for fifty years; D. D. from Bowdoin 1821, Harvard 1831. Largely because of having an ancestor among the sixty graduates of the class of 1802, I was able to complete my last two years at Harvard, when the Depression of the early 1930's hit our immediate family. With the help of William Ichabod Nichols, then a Freshman Dean and a direct descendant of this Ichabod, I was awarded one

half of the income of the Class of 1802 Scholarship, which I held for three years and which paid the majority of my college expenses.

The next child of Ichabod and Lydia Nichols, Charlotte, married another member of the illustrious class of 1802, Charles Sanders, whose legacy to Harvard was Sanders Theater. It was for him that our great grandfather, Charles Sanders Nichols, was named.

Besides these children there were Benjamin Ropes, Joseph Peirce, David and two Henrys. It was altogether quite a family.

CAPTAIN GEORGE AND THE PEIRCE CONNECTION

Returning to George, our direct forbear, it is clear that he was a chip off the old block. He went to sea in his father's ships before he was seventeen, became a captain at twenty-two, and had made his fortune and retired from the sea within a month of his twenty-sixth birthday, living for another sixty years without ever wishing, he said, to cross the Atlantic again. For all its excitement and promise of profit, shipmastering was a young man's trade and gruelling for even the hardiest. Those who were lucky made their fortune and then retired to manage their affairs from a counting house on dry land. But the records are full of the notation "died at sea" and many another Salem man succumbed to disease or the knife in some foreign port. The story of George's seafaring life is amply told in his autobiography, the Salem Shipmaster and Merchant. The story of his marriage to the daughter of Jerathmiel Peirce requires a slight

digression in this narrative, since the Peirce family represents one of our primary collateral lines.

Jerathmiel Peirce (1747-1827) was the youngest of seven children born to Jerathmeel (sic) and Rebecca Hurd Peirce of Charlestown. In 1763 the eldest of these children, Benjamin, moved to Salem, taking young Jerathmiel with him. The elder brother's life came to an end at Lexington Green on that fateful date, April 19, 1775, while the younger went on to become one of Salem's most successful East India merchants. As already mentioned, he married Sarah Ropes in 1772 and they had nine children, five of whom lived to maturity. Three of these five married two of their Nichols first cousins and a fourth married into the generation of Ainsworths that was to provide another two Nichols spouses! Here is how it came about:

BENJAMIN ROPES

Sarah m. 1772 Jerathmiel Peirce		Lydia m. 1774 Ichabod Nichols
Benjamin Peirce . . .	married 1803 . . .	Lydia Nichols
Sarah (Sally) Peirce .	married 1801 . . .	George Nichols
Elizabeth (Betsy) " .	married 1836 . . .	George Nichols (in the year following Sally's death)

The marriage of Sally and George is a romantic highpoint in our family history, the daughter of the merchant prince and the dashing young sea captain already well on his way to matching his father-in-law's fortune.

It took place in the recently completed East parlor of the mansion at 80 Federal Street which symbolized, more than anything else could have, the extent to which the younger brother from Charlestown had made his mark in the town of his adoption. To quote Richard Pratt's description of the house in the book Regional Houses: "Samuel Mc Intire was in his early thirties when he designed this house for a wealthy East India merchant of Salem named Jerathmiel Peirce, a man who obviously could afford the best, - and in this case got it. For this was just about the finest wooden house in America. Not only was it Mc Intire's design but every important piece of carving was done by his own hands, from the original urns that capped the fence posts, to the doorways, cornices and mantels within. Like most early American craftsmen, Mc Intire lacked any formal training in architecture; but as far as he was concerned, you could hardly call this a handicap . . . . . (From) an English volume of architectural details . . . Mc Intire got many of the ornamental features which distinguish this extraordinary house, such as the Doric order of the facade and the Georgian mantel of the dining room . . . . . But of course the main conception was Mc Intire's alone; the general mass and plan, and the bold idea of the great Greek corner pilasters that did so much, you can be sure, to please Mr. Peirce as he paced his balustraded roof, peering out across the bay for the tall sails of a clipper coming in from China". Salem vessels did not usually ply the China trade, which was pre-empted by Boston, while Salem's area of dominance was the East Indies. But we noted a voyage of Ichabod Nichols

to Canton (page 4 sup.) and occasionally Salem and Boston seacaptains would penetrate each other's territory. It was the pepper trade that made Salem's fortune and there is no better picture of its risks and rewards than you'll find in Joseph Conrad's tales of Yankee skippers in the Malay Archipelago. Yet while Salem was becoming the world emporium for pepper, many a Salem man died on the Northwest coast of Sumatra with a Malay kris in his ribs.

The bride and groom set up housekeeping in a house at the corner of Washington and Federal Streets purchased for them by Ichabod Nichols and for another two or three years George continued his profitable voyages. In 1803 his sister Lydia married Sally's brother Benjamin (see chart page 7) and the young Peirce couple moved into the Western half of the house, while the young Nichols couple continued on in the Eastern half. (As a consequence, I suppose, this house could be called the original Peirce-Nichols house.) Moreover, the two brothers-in-law formed a business partnership which did very well until the War of 1812, when a series of calamities struck the wealthy shipping families of Salem from which few of them ever fully recovered.

SALEM A HISTORICAL CASUALTY

In the abrupt reversal of fortunes suffered during the opening decades of the nineteenth century Salem can be regarded as a direct casualty of our country's struggle to maintain its newly-won independence. For no sooner had Britain abandoned her efforts to quell the revolt in her American colonies than she was faced with a far greater challenge to her world position.

In many respects the Napoleonic wars were resolved, not on the battlefields of Europe, but upon the high seas, and no nation felt the maritime peril more keenly than our own. For a time at first, under the policy of strict neutrality laid down by President Washington, American merchantmen pursued a very successful, though risk-filled, trade with the belligerents, their allies, and the neutral countries alike. Then, in Jefferson's administration, as the war between France and England became more desperate and each sought to cut the other off from foreign trade, the rights of neutral ships were increasingly impaired. By 1807 British interdiction of American vessels and impressment of our seamen reached such proportions that Jefferson declared an embargo on all American shipping. This not only failed to re-establish our rights under international law but practically paralyzed American foreign commerce, which fell in a year's time from $246 to $79 millions. Finally, when we went to war, we had no navy to speak of, and privateers had to bear the brunt of the fighting at sea. In this all American merchants suffered staggering losses. To quote George Nichols: "When the war broke out in 1812, I was quite a rich man for those times, being worth at least $40, 000 (Bear in mind he was thirty-four years old then). This was a very disastrous war to me. I lost in it nearly one half of all my property, notwithstanding I had a great deal of insurance. Every vessel in which I was concerned was captured. Among them was the Rambler, a beautiful vessel, owned by my brother-in-law Benjamin Peirce and myself. (Launched in 1811, lost the following year.) She was making a fine voyage, but she was taken by the British off the Cape of Good Hope." The Nicholses and the Peirces did not rank among the great shipping families

of Salem, like the Derbys or the Crowninshields, whose greater resources enabled them to weather such storms. As a whole Salemites were prostrated by "Mr. Madison's War", as they called it, and although they tried to make a comeback after peace was declared, the tide had irreversibly turned against them. Between the embargo and the end of the war Salem's overseas trading fleet declined from one hundred eighty-two ships to fifty-seven. Besides, it was becoming recognized that Boston was better situated and had a better harbor than Salem. As sailing ships grew larger, the North River, with its narrow channel and numerous shoals, could not handle them; the harbor silted up and the sandbar at its mouth was a constant problem. The climax to these vicissitudes was the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, which drew foreign trade to New York and sealed Salem's fate.

In 1826 George Nichols, his father-in-law, Jerathmiel Peirce, and two of the latter's sons all went bankrupt. The old man, at the age of eighty, was forced to sell his pride and joy, the 80 Federal Street house, and it literally broke his heart, for he died two months afterwards. George Nichols had to give up the house at 37 Chestnut Street which he had built ten years before and where, on Christmas Eve 1819, his youngest child, our great grandfather, was born. (Under the title "The Captain George Nichols House" there are some fine pictures and a description of this house in Samuel Chamberlain's book Salem Interiors) . The two families doubled up in a house on Warren Street and George went into the ship brokerage business. I found a record of a ship sold by him in 1831, as well as several

advertisements of auctions he conducted, in W. A. Fairburn's Merchant Sail, volume V, and he himself relates walking to Boston, a distance of fifteen miles, many times in his fifties to attend auctions. It must have been a hard existence, but through perseverance he did well enough to support a large family and gradually pay off his creditors.

Then in 1840 Mr. and Mrs. Johonnot, who had bought the 80 Federal Street house, died within a short time of each other, leaving it to George Nichols and his second wife, Betsy (she was the younger sister of Sally, who died in 1835). They were to have it to live in for the rest of their lives, after which it was to go to their four daughters, "the Aunts", as they were called by our grandfather's generation. George lived there for another twenty-five years and when he died, at the age of eighty-seven, the Salem Gazette called him the city's oldest native born citizen. In truth he had been born before the United States had won its independence, and when he died, our seventeenth president had taken office.

George's death brings us to the realm of recall, since our grandfather and great aunt Ellen were in their teens then, and the Ainsworth relationship of the intervening generation had been enlivened for us in anecdotes from Mabel and Gertrude.

At this point another digression is necessary to trace the Ainsworth collateral line, which, in the generation of our great grandparents, became as interrelated with our family as the Peirces had been

a generation earlier.

ENTER THE AINSWORTHS

Ainsworth family history is well documented and they appear to have been people of consequence in England as far back as the fourteenth century. Possibly for this reason they were not among the first to leave for the wilds of North America. By the eighteenth century, however, they were well established in various parts of New England. Our direct descendants settled at Woodstock, Connecticut, near the Massachusetts border. When Artemas Ainsworth was born in 1783, at nearby Dudley, the family had been in the area for three generations, and there probably exists, in the restored village at neighboring Sturbridge, a very close replica of how our Ainsworth ancestors lived in this prosperous farming community. Before Artemas was four years old his family moved to Bethel, Vermont, where they built the farmhouse which I have a photograph of, and also a watercolor, probably done by an itinerant painter. It was given to Mabel Ainsworth in 1942 by our cousin Fessenden A. Nichols, who believes it was painted between 1840 and 1850. We now have this framed and hanging in our living room. It came to us in the drawer of a desk which the antique restorer, who worked on it for us, found to have been made by S. (?) Potter, May 30, 1765. So it is possible that this desk has a connection with the other colonial pieces of local manufacture now gathered together at Sturbridge. Artemas Ainsworth married Catherine Fessenden in 1801, the same year that George Nichols married Sally Peirce.

Catherine was the daughter of the Rev. Thomas Fessenden of Walpole, New Hampshire, and Mabel and Gertrude always used to say that the Fessendens were "much grander" people than the Nicholses or the Ainsworths, although I haven't found anything to indicate that they were any different from the average well-to-do New England family of the times and therefore think this was probably just a tease.

Artemas and Catherine had six children, all born at Bethel, and famous in our family for their alliterative names:

Catherine Calista	1812-1893
Ellen Elizabeth	1814-1893
Amelia Ann	1816-1897
Calvin Chamberlain	1818-1902
Martha Miranda	1820-1887
Joseph Fessenden	1824-1888 (Why a

lovely middle name like Jeremiah wasn't bestowed on him we'll never know, but he made up for it by naming his eldest son Franklin Fessenden, and then apparently thought the better of the practice, for not one of his other six children was thus endowed. None of these left any children, so with the death of Mabel and Gertrude, this branch of the Ainsworth family came to an end.)

OUR GREAT GRANDFATHER'S GENERATION

How this farm family of Bethel, Vermont, made its landfall upon the sea captain's clan in Salem is another mystery, but one of them married a son of Jerathmiel Peirce, while two others married children of George and

Sally Nichols. Here then is the record of our great grandfather's generation. There were four daughters and four sons (see chart II):

Sarah (also called Sally)	(1804-1879)
Lydia Ropes (for her grandmother)	(1806-1894)
Mary Jane	(1813-19XX)
Elizabeth	(1814-1897)

These were "The Aunts", mentioned earlier, who inherited the 80 Federal Street House on the death of their parents. The older three were spinsters. The youngest, Elizabeth, married Calvin Chamberlain Ainsworth; they had no children.

Now for the four sons. First there was George (1809-82). He married Susan Farley Treadwell and the first six of their seven children were girls. Mary, the youngest, married a White, and their son, Austin, became connected with the non-ferrous metal business where our father later worked for over twenty years. The only son, and the youngest child, of George and Susan was John White Treadwell Nichols. It is from him that the New York branch of the family stems. He was H. P. N. 's first cousin and they became good friends when our grandfather moved to New York City to become Rector of Holy Trinity Church in 1899. He and his wife, Mary Blake Slocum, had six children, contemporaries and second cousins of Dad and Aunt Margaret. Susan Pulsifer is one of these. Another is William Blake Nichols, who used to come to Intervale to climb with Grandpa. And another, John Treadwell Nichols, was the father of David Nichols, our contemporary, who is married to Kathleen Chalmers.

The second son in the family of George and Sally was John Nichols (1811 - 1898) who married Susan Augusta Leach. They had nine children, all but four of whom died in childhood. These were "The Cousins" to our branch of the family. Three of them, Augusta, Martha (who published her grandfather's autobiography under the title Salem Shipmaster and Merchant) and Charlotte, lived out their years in the 80 Federal Street house, to be joined by a fourth spinster, our great aunt Ellen. The other, Elizabeth Peirce, went to New York. Apparently it was the intention of "The Cousins" to leave the house to the Essex Institute, in the event that no close relative would make it his residence, for I came upon a rough draft of a will to this effect in a bureau drawer while on a visit to the house in 1948. It was written by Martha in longhand on the back of a call notice of Detroit Edison Electric Railway Co. 5% gold mortgage bonds, due June 1, 1916. (Note Augusta died in 1916, Martha in 1923 and Charlotte in 1935). It offered the house, in order, to: Austin White, George Nichols (son of John Taylor Gilman Nichols of Saco, Maine, a cousin) the unmarried daughters of her cousin N. White, Donaldson Nichols, Benjamin Peirce; but only on the condition that the inheritor would occupy it. Since the choice would have had to be made in the Depression year of 1935, when Cousin Charlotte died, it seems improbable that any of these heirs would have taken it up. We know, of course, that neither Austin White or our father would have been able to swing it, since their business, Richards & Co. had recently succumbed, and probably in those days the house would have been considered a white elephant by almost any one.

What actually occurred, according to Cousin Susan Pulsifer, is that the house was purchased by her father (" and others") prior to Martha's death, with the understanding that it would eventually go to the Essex Institute, as "The Cousins" wished. So that is how the old place finally passed out of the family and I think most of us would agree that, as the property of a historical organization liked the Essex, it is in good hands.

The third of George and Sally's sons was Henry Peirce Nichols (1816 - 1889) named for his uncle, Henry Peirce, the second son of Jerathmiel, and known in the family as "Unky Peirce". Our Aunt Margaret has an amusing series of letters written to him. The first, chronologically, is dated October, 1804, when he had just entered Harvard, and came from his older brother, Benjamin (mentioned on pages 7 and 9 above) - - full of big-brotherly advice for the young freshman. The second is from his father, Jerathmiel Peirce, in July 1807, congratulating him on being appointed Latin Orator for Commencement. The third is from the State Bank of Boston in April 1831, offering him the position of second bookkeeper at a salary of $500 a year. There is appended a list of the duties involved, which would make any latterday banker chortle. The next is written in October, 1863, by a fellow-worker at the bank, who had taken over Unky's duties during an illness which proved terminal, for the last in the series is written two months later by the Cashier of the bank to Unky's widow. It indicates that, after working thirty-two years for the bank, the Latin Orator had advanced to a salary of $1,100 per annum. (Those were the days when a

dollar was a dollar!) Unky's wife had been another of the alliterative Ainsworths of Bethel, Vermont, Catherine Calista, and our grandfather, H. P. N., who was a favorite of hers, loved to tell the story of how Unky wanted to marry her but couldn't get up the nerve to propose, until one Sunday, when he went to Trinity Church and heard Bishop Eastburn announce as the text for his sermon the verse from the scriptures: "Arise and go unto Bethel". Actually what seems more likely to have braced Unky's resolve was the job he'd landed at the bank because, remember, the whole family had gone bankrupt five years before. So I daresay it was the security of a $500 a year position that finally enabled this ageing bachelor of forty-two years to marry his nineteen-year old sweetheart. That the remuneration was adequate for the times is further borne out by the fact that Catherine Calista (Aunty Peirce, as she was called) survived him by thirty years and was always considered rather well-off. Because of the multiple marriages between the Peirces, the Nicholses and the Ainsworths, Unky Peirce was both uncle and great uncle to our grandfather, - - uncle by virtue of the fact that he married Grandpa's mother's sister, and great uncle because he was the younger brother of Grandpa's grandmother, Sally Peirce Nichols. As mentioned above Grandpa was a favorite of Aunty Peirce on account of being named for her husband. However, it could also be claimed that he was named for a closer uncle, his father's brother Henry Peirce Nichols. It was the latter whom I started to write about before

digressing to describe this interesting, though rather confusing collateral relationship. Actually I know very little about Henry Peirce Nichols, except that he was married in 1838 to Anna Gamble and they had no children.

THE REALM OF RECALL

The youngest of George and Sally's brood was our great grandfather, Charles Sanders Nichols, born Christmas Eve 1819 in the house built by his father at 37 Chestnut Street, and named for his Aunt Charlotte's husband . (see page 6) He too married one of the alliterative Ainsworths, Amelia Ann (jokingly referred to in the family as Amelierann). They were joined in matrimony by the Rev. Mark Anthony De Wolfe Howe, a prominent Boston clergyman. The year was 1845. She was three years his senior and she died three years before him. They lived together for fity-two years in the Chestnut Street house where H. P. N. and his brother and two sisters were born, and where two of Amelierann's sisters eventually came to live with the family, - - spinster Martha Miranda and widowed Catherine Calista (Aunty Peirce). Charles Sanders Nichols spent his life between this household and his office on Washington Street where he carried on the brokerage and insurance business started by Old George when the family shipping interests collapsed. He undoubtedly felt strongly about the Great Crusade of his times but, having turned forty and with four young children to support, he did not participate. Instead he underwrote the expenses of a soldier to take his place, a fairly common practice in the North during the Civil War.

The picture we have of life in Salem during the Victorian Era is an unusually somber one. Sudden loss of wealth and prestige apparently had such a demoralizing effect on the community that, while the rest of the country was growing like a weed, what had once been its sixth largest city had weeds growing in the streets. The advent of the steam age found Salem still dreaming of the age of sail. Thus manufacturing industries largely passed her by. Puritan and Federalist beliefs, on which she had leaned so heavily in the past, were of little help with the problems of the present or the future. The writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne are full of these presentments. He himself was so depressed by the atmosphere of his native town that he could not bear to live there once his fame and financial success were assured. Little wonder, then, that members of our family, and others who could, left Salem to make their way in some other, more promising environment.

And yet there were gay times, too, centered largely around family gatherings and the holiday season. Here is Grandpa, writing to the last of his grandfather's generation and the last of "the Aunts" in the old house at 80 Federal Street:

November 28, 1899

My dear Aunt Mary,

My heart goes out to you in the dear old house these Thanksgiving days. It is good to think of you as well and peaceful these days, keeping up the old brightness with which you ever greeted us in the happy times

long gone. We can never be other than blessed by those happy times, and must try to reproduce their gladness for the generations to come. I am old fashioned enough to like everything just as it was at Grandpa's and the Aunts, nothing more and nothing less. Alice humors my desires in oysters; turkey; cranberry sauce; potato, squash and onions; three kinds of pie; baked plum pudding; nuts and raisins; small fruits; cider; "duty to sir and ma'am; etc. Alas! we cannot have Glot Morceau pears, with "Now George, you must try a bit of each kind of fruit from the garden" . . . . . .

DOWN TO THE PRESENT

To tie up the loose ends, our great grandparents both died in their eighty-first year and are buried in the family plot at Harmony Grove. Their four children were:

Charles Fessenden Nichols (1846-1915) whose children, though a generation removed, are contemporaries of ours, - Cherry, Fezz (Fessenden Ainsworth) and Benny (Benjamin Peirce).

Ellen Amelia Nichols (1848 - 1938) poor dear Auntie Ellen, whom we all grew up with, and the last of the family to live in the 80 Federal Street house. She was our last personal tie with Salem and, when we laid her to rest beside her parents in Harmony Grove, it was the end of an era for the Nichols family. I quote the following poem, composed by Cousin Susan Pulsifer at Auntie Ellen's funeral in 1938, as aptly expressive of the change which took place in our family's relationship to Salem on that occasion:

She lies white and fair, who never was a bride, -
While no sail swells with the rising tide . . .

In Salem, - City of Peace.

Her face is set in its last white mould
Carven and fine; her story told . . . .

In Salem, City of Peace.

The master builders long ago
Made her beautiful house in its shell-like row . . . .

For Salem, City of Peace.

The church bell tolls through the busy town,
But she's laid out in her Sunday gown . . .

In Salem, City of Peace.

There's snow in the churchyard, ice on the bar, -
The kinsfolk scatter, - they all live far

From Salem, City of Peace.

Harry Peirce Nichols (1850-1940) our grandfather. Aside from vivid personal memories, the biographical sketch Victorious Mountaineer written with warm affection by Bertrand Stevens, provides a lasting picture of Grandpa. His wife, Alice Martha Shepley, came from a family as ruggedly New England as any ancestors we have. (Can't you still hear her brother, our great uncle Francis, telling about the John Shepley who was carried off by the Indians in a raid on the town of Groton during King William's War and who, after escaping from his captors, made his solitary way back from Canada in the midst of winter?) Beside Dad and

Aunt Margaret our grandparents had three other children: Uncle Shep, who was washed off a sub-chaser in the North Sea during the First World War; and Katherine and Lawrence, who both died in childhood. Katherine Fessenden Ainsworth Nichols (1852-1898) was the youngest of the four. She married the Rev. F. W. Bartlett in 1890 and died only eight years later, leaving no children. She was a great friend of Mabel and Gertrude. The Salem room at Concordia was furnished with pieces of hers which originally came from her room in the house on Chestnut Street. The chest of drawers, called the Bethel bureau, is the piece I chose, when we six grandchildren were offered one of the old family belongings. Having presumably come to us from the Ainsworths, it may conceivably be connected with the desk mentioned on page 13.

So ends the chronicle of the Nichols family of Salem. It played its part when Salem stood momentarily at the forefront of the world stage. Now that the scene has shifted and the players have departed, all that remains, other than the memory of that fleeting moment, is the magnificent stage set. Nevertheless, fully as remarkable as the stately mansions and public buildings erected in Salem's golden age, are the men and women who created them. Born to a Puritanical tradition, poorly educated on the whole, and reared to the rugged life of the sea, they were quite lacking in the social amenities and polish of their aristocratic contemporaries. Yet, elevated suddenly to great wealth, their taste in architecture and decoration proved flawless. To quote

Richard Pratt again, writing about the 80 Federal Street house, "The sudden sight of this house as you come around the corner of Federal Street is almost overwhelming; so little are you prepared for such magnificence in the midst of the commonplace encroachments that crowd about it now". Surely many members of our family have shared this experience and had it followed by a thrill of pride at being associated with so splendid a specimen of Salem's finest hour. We also have the house at 37 Chestnut Street to be proud of, The Captain George Nichols House, as it is called, so typical of the well-proportioned, three-storey, brick, Federal-style houses which make Chestnut Street one of the finest residential districts in America. Then, there is the Richard Derby house, where Captain George himself was born, now preserved as a national shrine, together with the Custom House and Derby Wharf. And doubtless there are others, still inhabited by the spirits of our forefathers in this city of poignant memories.

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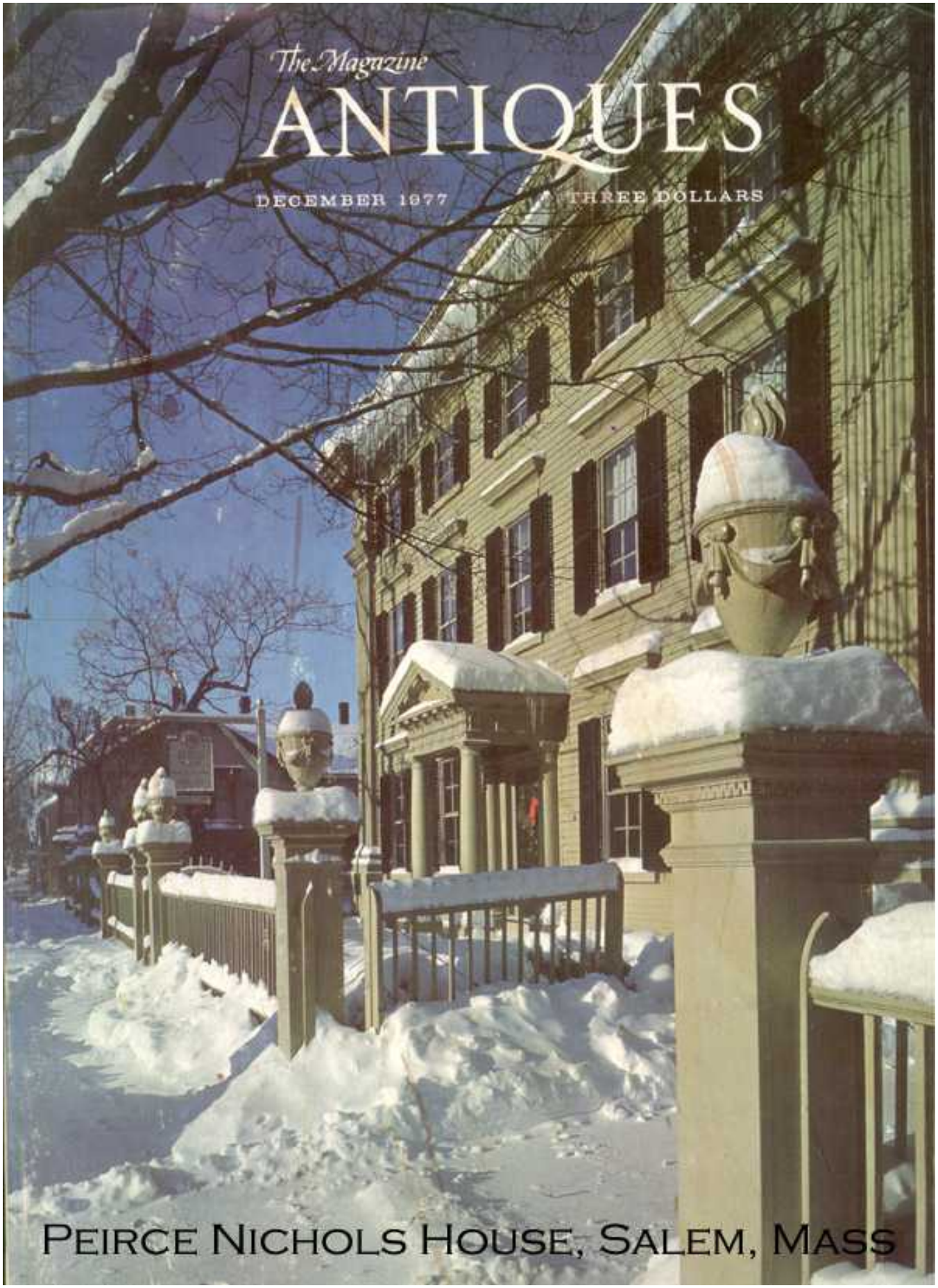
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