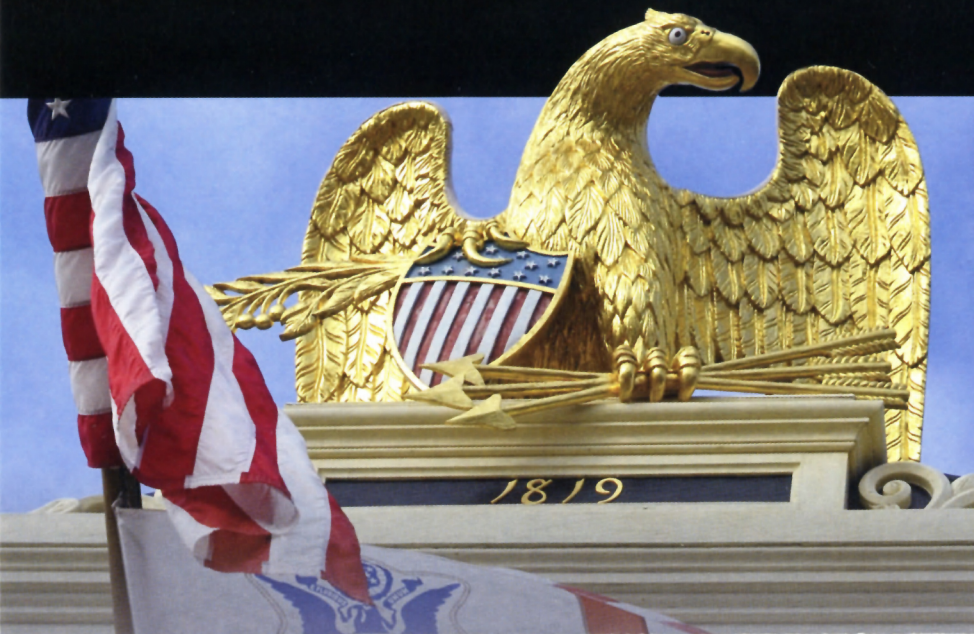




A gilded eagle, symbol of vigilance and fierce, uncompromising pride, surveys Salem Harbor from atop the federal Custom House. It reminds ships' masters that duties must be paid. No cargo of salt, sugar, or molasses, Baltic hemp, or Canton china escapes its sharp eye. The duties collected by the US Customs Service are the new nation's greatest source of revenue, crucial to building and protecting the young United States. The Revolution brought freedom—and Salem's flourishing international trade now brings much-needed economic independence to the growing nation.



Joseph True carved the original eagle, which is preserved in the Custom House (left). *Friendship of Salem* uses 17 miles of rope (above).



The Narbonne House is a good example of a middle-class home in the 1600s and 1700s.



The Hawkes House is typical of houses built by Salem's merchants in the early 1800s.

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After the Revolution, Salem's merchant ships traveled to Asia, Africa, Russia, Polynesia, and South America. International exchanges—goods, people, ideas—brought tangible changes to Salem that reverberated through the new nation and reshaped American culture. Today, within a 9-acre national historic site, you can glimpse Salem's beginnings as a fishing village and its heyday as a center of global commerce and trade.



Mary Narbonne

Customs officials stored massive scales and devices for measuring cargoes here. Weighers and measurers carted scales, dipsticks, and gauges to the wharf. After the surveyor recorded these data, clerks calculated the duties owed to the United States by the ship owner.



Mary Narbonne's diary

1675

Narbonne House

Thomas Ives (ca. 1640–95), a butcher, built this house. A steep-pitched roof shelters the clapboard structure. It is only one room deep, typical of New England's domestic buildings in the 1600s. Seamstress Sarah Narbonne (1795–1890) and her daughter Mary (1823–1905) lived and worked here. Mary's diary (left) shines a light on small business practices in Salem.

1780

Hawkes House

Benjamin Hawkes (1766–1854), a ship builder, counted many of Salem's successful merchants among his customers. He purchased and altered the unfinished house in 1800. Designed by Samuel McIntire (1757–1811), one of the earliest and most influential architects in the United States, the house had been commissioned but never lived in by Elias Hasket Derby.

1762

Derby House

Capt. Richard Derby Sr. (1712–83) presented this home to his son Elias Hasket Derby (1739–99) as a wedding gift. Hasket became one of Salem's wealthiest merchants. He lived here with his wife Elizabeth Crowninshield Derby (1727–99), their seven children, and two enslaved people. The Derbys' slaves and their stately brick home reflected the Derbys' wealth and Hasket's reputation as a successful Salem merchant.



Elizabeth Crowninshield Derby

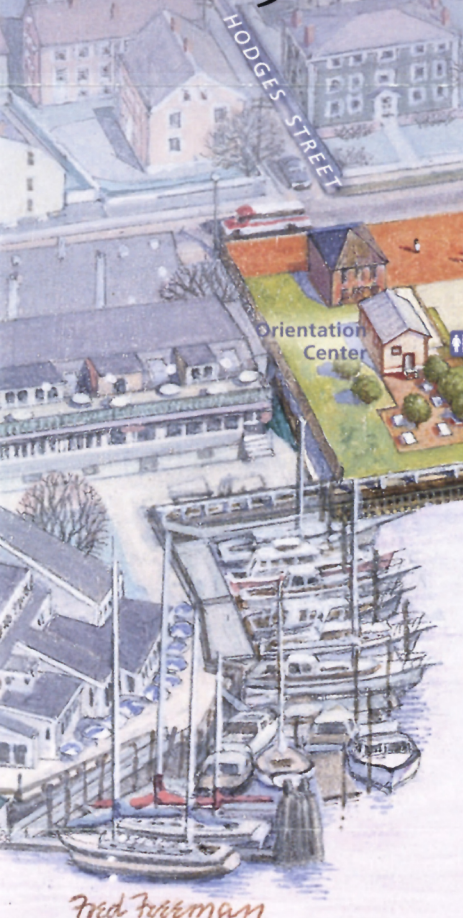
1909

St. Joseph Hall

Built by the St. Joseph Society, the Hall helped create an ethnic and community identity for Polish immigrants. The society offered housing and life insurance, sponsored sports, and hosted weddings and social events. Today, immigrants continue to contribute to Salem's physical, social, and cultural landscape.

Scale House

1829



The US Customs Service monitored the accuracy of weights and measures.



1819

Custom House and Public Stores

From his second-floor office the collector oversaw all the US Customs Service operations for Salem, Beverly, and Marblehead, Massachusetts. The building provided offices for customs employees and storage for records. Writer Nathaniel Hawthorne, who served briefly as surveyor at the Custom House, set the introduction of his gothic romance *The Scarlet Letter* here. He claimed to have found an embroidered "A" among a predecessor's papers.

In the public stores at the back of the Custom House, officials impounded cargo until custom duties were paid.

Arts and Sciences

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–64) became surveyor in 1846. At that time, the president appointed most federal officeholders. After the 1848 election, a nasty political battle in Salem ended with Hawthorne's dismissal from the Custom Service. He channeled his anger into *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), one of the first American novels.



A Palladian window in the Custom House frames the *Friendship of Salem*.



Carved wooden cat head (detail) from *Friendship of Salem*'s bow.

1797

Friendship of Salem

Friendship of Salem is a replica of an East Indiaman ship built in Salem in 1797. The original ship made 15 voyages before its capture during the War of 1812.

1770

Pedrick Store House

The timber frame of this building, moved here from Marblehead in 2004, dates from 1770. During the Revolution Thomas Pedrick stored prizes of war here.

1762

1806

1800

West India Goods Store

Capt. Henry Prince (1764–1846) bought the Derby House in 1796 and built this structure, listed in records as a "store." He sold items from the West Indies—molasses, sugar, coffee—as well as local produce and products. Engaging in mercantilism could be profitable, but was also risky. Henry's financial problems led to the auction of this store and his wife's inherited property in 1827.

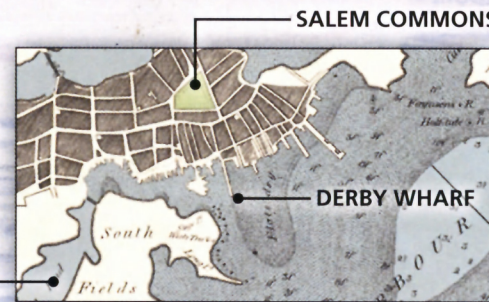


Spices

Derby Wharf

Capt. Richard Derby Sr. and his son Elias Hasket built the wharf for the family's merchant and privateering operation. From here a ship carried news of the colonists' rebellion to London. Hasket's older brother Richard Derby Jr., a member of the Provincial Legislature, outfitted his schooner *Quero* for

the historic trip; Hasket's youngest brother, Capt. John Derby, commanded it. After Hasket's death, his heirs expanded the wharf in 1806. In 1819 the wharf's importance to international trade led the federal government to build the Custom House at its head.



1871

Light Station

One of four lighthouses used to navigate Salem Sound, this is the wharf's only original surviving structure. Derby Light first had a fixed red light fueled by oil. A flashing red signal, powered by acetylene, replaced it in the early 1900s. Now the 300-candlepower light is solar-driven.

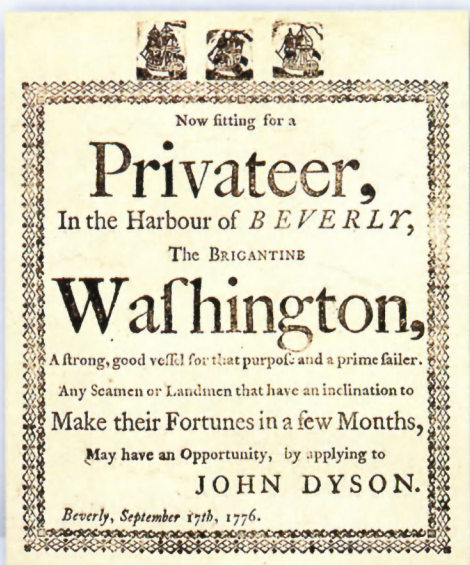


Nathaniel Bowditch
ENGRAVING BY J. SHURY AND SON AFTER G. STUART
© WELLCOME LIBRARY, LONDON

Nathaniel Bowditch (1773–1838) worked as a merchant's clerk, supercargo, and finally, captain. Despite little formal schooling, in 1802 he published *The New American Practical Navigator*, giving the new nation credibility in the world's scientific community. All United States Navy ships still carry his book today.

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Salem artisan James Gale proudly engraved his name on this wooden gauge (below).



Handbill seeking privateersmen.
BEVERLY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Navigating a World in Conflict

From 1600 until Napoleon's defeat in 1815, Europe was almost continuously at war. Nations waged this battle for global domination using war, trade, and money as weapons. Because the European powers had colonies all over the world, any conflict affected international trade. Merchants accepted the

risks of trade during wartime because profits could be enormous.

Until the 1860s, governments licensed privately owned vessels to target enemy nations' supply lines and shipping during war. These "privateers" operated under strict rules. Only after a

court hearing could captured vessels, or "prizes," be auctioned and the profits split among privateer owners, officers, and crew. One prize, sold in Salem, brought over two million dollars in today's currency. Even the crew earned more than a year's wages. But captured American privateersmen risked ending

up in prison or, worse, on a disease-ridden British prison ship. For privateers, the odds were unpredictable.

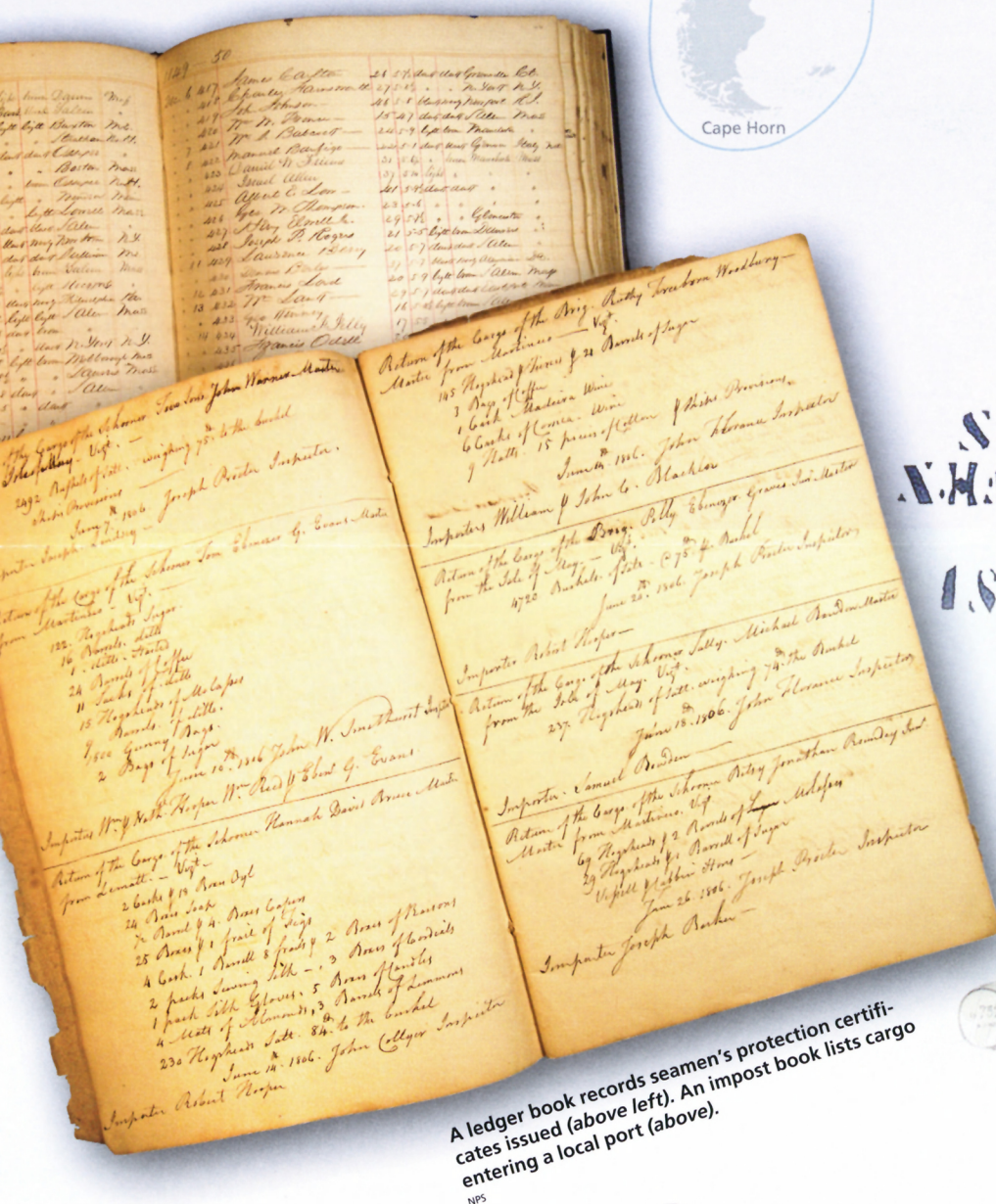
During the Revolution, Salem was the most active American privateering port. Nearly 200 privateers captured about 500 British vessels. American

privateers drove up insurance rates for British ships, disrupted British trade and supplies, and eroded Parliament's support for the war. Later, about 40 Salem privateers captured nearly 300 British vessels during the War of 1812 between Britain and the United States.



Atlantic Trade and the Slave Economy

As a British colony, Massachusetts was vital to the operation of the Atlantic slave economy. Most of Salem's early trade was in supplying products like dried cod to slave plantations and transporting plantation products, such as sugar, indigo, rice, and cotton, to British ports around the Atlantic Ocean. Through trade with slave-based economies, some New England families grew wealthy. They acquired fine European goods imported by Salem ships and, by 1771, most wealthy families in Salem owned at least one enslaved person. This profiteering continued in New England despite the United States' abolition of international slave trading in 1808.



A ledger book records seamen's protection certificates issued (above left). An impost book lists cargo entering a local port (above).



Nathaniel Hawthorne's seal (above left); a surveyor assesses duties on sacks of coffee, calculated by weight (above).

US Customs and Taxes

For centuries, governments relied on revenue from taxes on imports, and the new United States was no exception. US Customs Service staff performed many functions, including collecting duties, inspecting cargo, documenting vessels, and maintaining crew records and seamen's protection certificates. Until 1852 they administered lighthouses.

An impost book for Marblehead (far left) shows the varied cargo that entered Salem in 1806, including "oyl" [olive oil], soap, figs, silk gloves, and salt from the Mediterranean on the schooner *Hannah*. Merchants kept careful records because they were eligible to receive a "drawback," a 100 percent rebate on all tariffs, for any items exported within one year.



Luxuries in Salem's Custom House stores.

World Trade

After the Revolution freed Americans to trade worldwide, they sailed for Russia and China. Merchants took advantage of the wars between Britain and France to boost their profits and the American economy.

Vessels sailing to and from a neutral port like Salem could not be targeted by privateers. Both countries looked to Americans to bring their Asian colonies' products—sought-after luxury items like tea, spices, and porcelain—back to Europe. Merchants planned "broken voyages," sailing between India and London, for example, by way of Salem, earning millions of dollars. When relations between America and Britain deteriorated in 1812, leading to war, the neutral trade ended.

The rise of industry in America increased demand for domestic raw goods like lead, leather, and cotton, though. Salem's port remained busy through the 1800s.



Friendship of Salem rests at anchor beside Pedrick Store House on Derby Wharf.

Harbor Sights and Sounds

At Salem Maritime National Historic Site you will find echoes of past centuries. Boats rest on mudflats at low tide; the *Friendship of Salem* gently bobs and strains at its ropes at high tide. An essence of salt water and damp air pervades narrow streets paved with stones. The park may appear frozen in time, yet ominous changes are taking place in Salem Harbor.

Salem's success as a center of maritime trade led merchants to build more and longer wharves. As many as 50 once filled the harbor, impeding natural currents. The harbor silted up, becoming shallower. Now, storm surges often submerge the remaining wharves (right). Human-induced climate change and sea level rise are increasing the negative



Derby Wharf Light during a storm surge.

impact of waves and water on the park's historic structures and wharves. New management strategies are needed for the park's continued preservation.

Salem Maritime was the first national historic site created in the United States (1938) after Congress passed the Historic Sites Act of 1935. Today, park staff, volunteers, and partners work together here to document, preserve, and interpret New England's maritime history and care for 14 historic structures, a replica tall ship, 66 archeological sites, and over 200,000 artifacts. Park rangers offer free programs and tours that include the historic buildings and the *Friendship of Salem*.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all; call or check our website.

For firearms regulations check our website.

Emergencies call 911

Salem Maritime National Historic Site is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities visit www.nps.gov.

National Park Foundation
Join the park community.
www.nationalparks.org

More Information
Salem Maritime
National Historic Site
160 Derby Street
Salem, MA 01970
www.nps.gov/sama

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A great egret's wings add a gentle flutter to other harbor sounds.

Rock barnacles.