Stereoscopic Salem:
Then and Now.

Stereoscopic images on cards, known as stereographs, were a Victorian sensation. Stereographs were akin to viewfinders or today's virtual reality. Each one presents two images. Though they may appear identical, the left and right do differ. Through a process known as stereopsis, when the images are viewed at the same time by both eyes, the brain senses depth in reflection of reality. It becomes viewable in 3D. This is called stereoscopy. The cards allowed those in their parlors to be transported to and take in scenes as if they were at the site of the images themselves.

In Europe, stereographs became greatly popular in the 1850s, and the craze spread to the United States in the 1860s. In 1861, Oliver Wendell Holmes invented an economical stereoscope, which came into widespread usage. Here in Salem, local photographers began producing scenes depicting Salem and its vicinity in the 1860s. By the 1890s, most local photographers and publishers had either ceased operation or moved on and were replaced by conglomerate publishers such as the Keystone View Company by the early 20th century. The Salem State University Archives and Special Collections possesses views from both eras of stereoscopy. All stereographs on display derive from our large Salem History Collection donated by Nelson Dionne.

For aid of the viewer, these views of Salem's past are accompanied by present day views that were taken by this exhibit's creator with a modern stereoscopic digital camera. Gaze upon them, take in the vantage point, and look back at the original views, taking note of what has changed and what has remained. Dive into the depths and return with a new perspective.

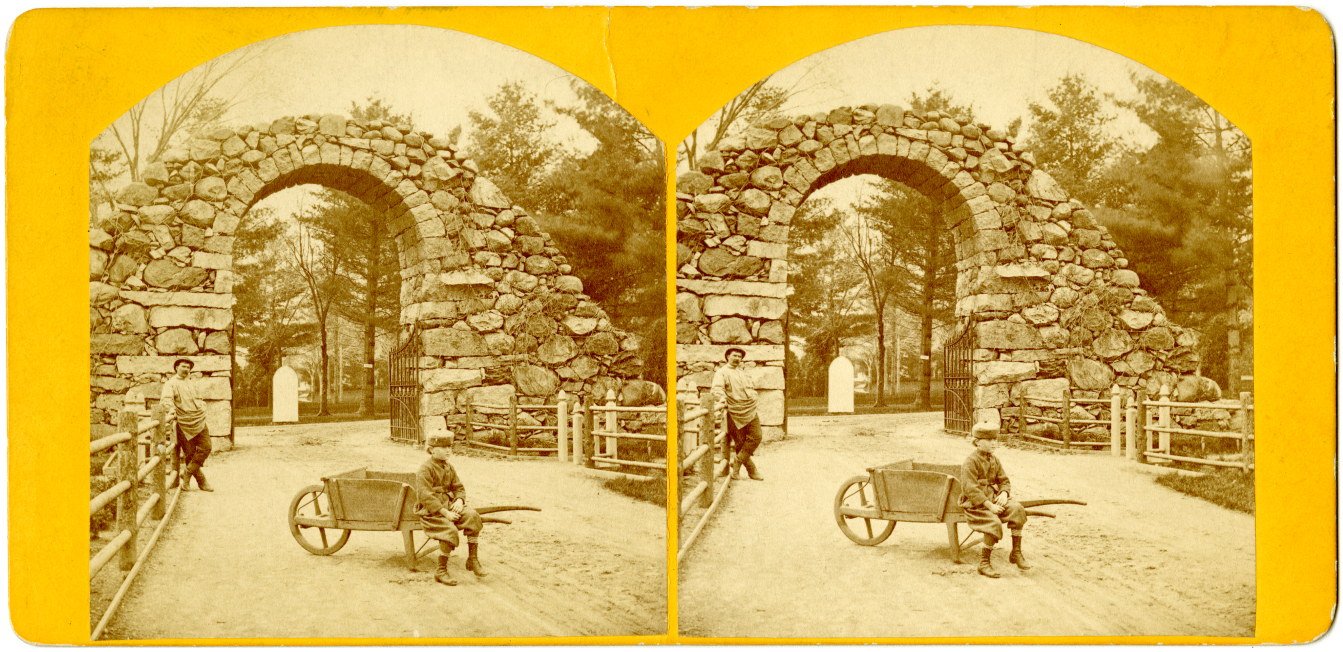
EXHIBIT BY
SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS,
MATTHEW G. SWINDELL.
JUNE 2019.



Court Houses, c. 1870.
View of the courthouses on Federal Street, looking northwest from the corner of Federal and Washington St. Visible, from left to right, are the 1862-built Superior Court Building (as it looked before its 1887-89 renovation) and the 1841-built County Commissioner's Building.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV121).





Entrance to Harmony Grove, c. 1868.
View of the entrance to Harmony Grove Cemetery, looking toward a boy sitting on a wagon and a man leaning on a fence, in front of the cemetery's (non-extant) stone entrance archway.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV359).





Birthplace of Nathaniel Hawthorne, c. 1873.
View of Nathaniel Hawthorne's birthplace, built c. 1740, at its original location of 27 Union Street. The house was moved in 1958 to its current location on the property of the House of the Seven Gables, leaving the original location vacant; the space now functions as a residential yard for a Herbert St. home.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV134).



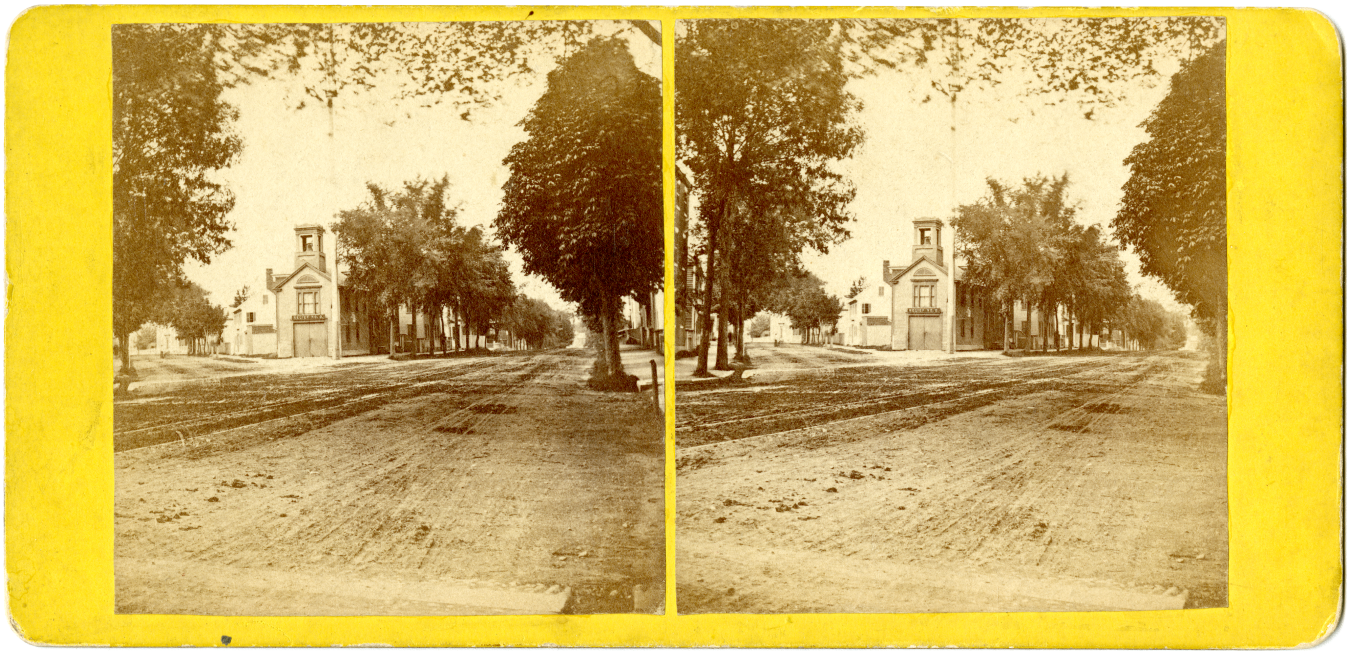


Custom House, c. 1870-73.
Front view of the Salem Custom House on Derby Street. Built c. 1819, it served as an integral part of Salem's waterfront district and remains a city landmark. It is well-known for its connection to author Nathaniel Hawthorne, who worked inside the building during his time in Salem.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV130).



Custom House, Salem, Mass.—May 20, 2019.



Looking Down Lafayette St. at Mill Hill, c. 1868-70.
View at Mill Hill looking northeast down Lafayette Street, toward what was then the "Relief No. 3" Engine House at the corner of Lafayette and Mill (now part of Washington) St. Due to the great Salem fire of 1914, none of the buildings in this view remain today; Lafayette Park is now present in the central block.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV275).





View Toward the Price Building, Looking Down Essex St. from Washington, 1876. View looking toward the Price Building, while looking west down Essex Street from Washington St., at Town House Square. The Price Building stood at this location at the southwest corner of Essex and Washington from 1875 until 1969, when it was demolished to improve traffic flow. The location is now occupied by a widened road and Lappin Park, home of the Bewitched statue.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV066).



Looking to the West Up Essex St. at Town House Square, Salem, Mass.—May 25, 2019.



Town House Square, c. 1870.
View of a gabled business block at Town House Square, at the northwest corner of Essex and Washington Street. This block appears to have been gone by 1872, being replaced by the Northey Building, which was erected in that year, that was in turn replaced by the 1885-built Endicott building, which remains to this day in a renovated state.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV092).



Looking Toward the Endicott Building at Town House Square, Salem, Mass.—May 25, 2019.



Pickering House, 1876.
View of the Pickering House at 18 Broad Street, then inhabited by Mr. John Pickering. Built in 1651, the house was added onto over the years; since an 1841 Gothic-like renovation, however, the house has remained essentially the same in appearance. Owned and lived in by ten successive generations of Pickerings, the house is among the oldest in America to have been continuously inhabited by one family.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV169).





Salem Normal School, c. 1874.
View of the Salem Normal School on Broad Street, after its major 1871 Second Empire renovation. The school, predecessor of today's Salem State, moved from this building to a new building in South Salem (today's Sullivan Building) in 1896. The building itself, now converted to condominiums, remains at the site with this appearance today.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV318).





East Church, c. 1873-78.
View of the East Church on Brown Street (now part of North Washington Square), built between 1844 and 1846 to replace an earlier structure at the corner of Essex and Hardy once pastored by the famous Dr. William Bentley. Today, the building, with its towers reduced in height, no longer functions as a church and instead serves as home to the Salem Witch Museum.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV195).



Salem Witch Museum, Former East Church Building, Salem, Mass.—May 25, 2019.



Eastern Railroad Depot, c. 1873.
View of Salem's famous Eastern Railroad depot. Built in 1847, the depot, with a stone facade resembling a medieval castle, stood for over a century as a prominent city landmark before being demolished in 1954-55; at the same time, a new railroad tunnel was built under the site. The site is now occupied by the busy intersection of New Derby, Norman, and Washington Street at Riley Plaza.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV291).



Site of the Former Salem Depot at the Intersection of New Derby, Norman, and Washington St., Salem, Mass.—May 18, 2019.

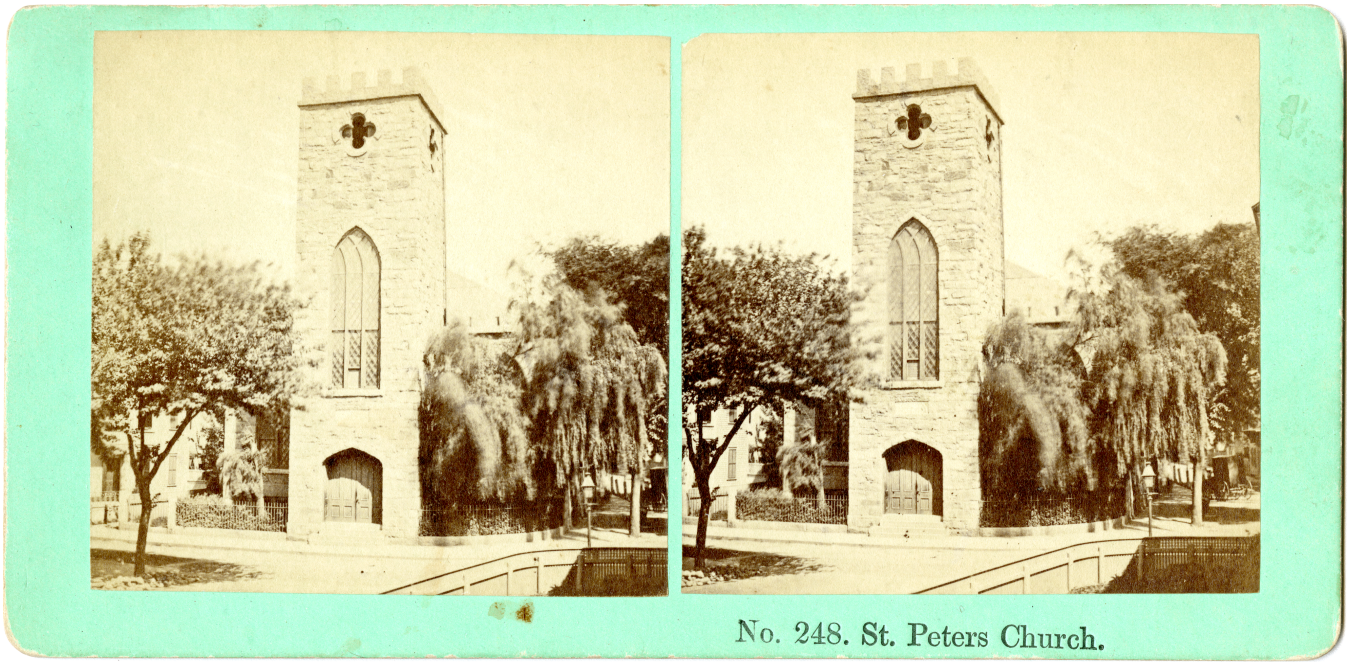


Centennial Arch at Carlton and Essex St., 1876.
View showing a triumphal arch constructed for Centennial celebration on July 4, 1876, at the entrance to Carlton Street from Essex Street.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV353).



Carlton St. at Essex St., Salem, Mass.—May 20, 2019.



St. Peter's Church, c. 1868-70.
View to the east of the granite St. Peter's Episcopal Church, originally constructed in 1833, on St. Peter Street as seen from Church Street.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV236).





First Church and Asiatic Block from Town House Square, 1868.
View from Townhouse Square looking toward the 1826-built First Church building (left), as seen before its c. 1874 High Victorian Gothic renovation, and the 1855-built Asiatic Block (right) at 125 Washington Street, which at the time was home to the Salem Post Office, Salem Savings Bank, and the Odd Fellows Hall. Both buildings are extant, but have since been heavily remodeled.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV044).



Looking Toward the First Church and Asiatic Buildings at Town House Square, Salem, Mass.—May 18, 2019.



Big Tree, Boston St., c. 1873-76.
View of the Big Tree in the middle of Boston Street, a large elm and a local landmark. No longer extant, it stood in the street near the location of the A.O.H. building today.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV049).

Matthew G. Swindell



Boston St. at the Former Site of the Big Tree, Salem, Mass.—May 20, 2019.

Stereoscopic Salem.



City Hall, c. 1872.
View of Salem City Hall, built in 1837 and one of the oldest continuously operated city halls in America, at 93 Washington Street.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV117).

Matthew G. Swindell



City Hall, Salem, Mass.—May 20, 2019.

Stereoscopic Salem.



Market House from Front St., c. 1873-76.
View of the Market House, built in 1816 and also known as old Town Hall in reference to its former municipal function, as seen from Front Street. The marketplace in front of the building appears to be bustling; merchants are visible lining Derby Square with their wares, and the scene is full of people.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV147).

Matthew G. Swindell



Stereoscopic Salem.

The Salem Flea Market in Derby Square, Salem, Mass.—May 18, 2019.



24-28 Church Street, c. 1873-78.
View of the house at 24-28 Church Street. Partly visible in the background, to the left of the house, is the adjacent Church Street firehouse. According to Nirenstein's map of Salem's business section, by 1946 the house had been demolished to make way for the Almy's parking lot; the rest of Church Street's homes would soon succumb to a similar fate.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV014).





Peabody Academy of Science, c. 1870.
View looking at the East India Marine Hall, home of the Peabody Academy of Science (later the Peabody Museum), from the (non-extant) corner of Essex and St Peter Street. Built in 1825 by the East India Marine Society (the Peabody Academy's predecessor), today it forms the oldest part of the larger Peabody Essex Museum, created by the merger of the Peabody Museum and the Essex Institute in 1992.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV156).

Matthew G. Swindell



East India Marine Hall, Salem, Mass.—May 18, 2019.

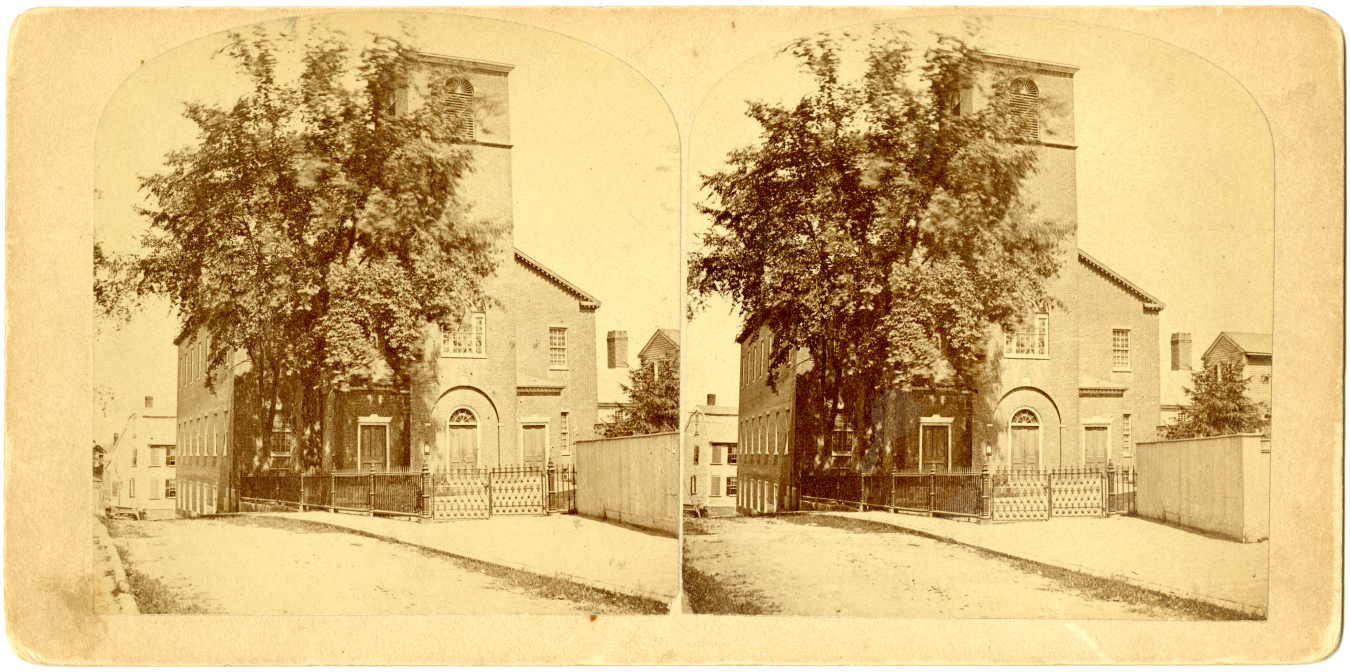
Stereoscopic Salem.



The Witch House, 1920.
View of the 1675-built Witch House, at the corner of Essex and North Street, as it appeared in the early 20th century in an altered state with attached drug store. In those days, it was touted as both the home of presiding Judge Jonathan Corwin during the 1692 Witch Trials and of Roger Williams during his time in Salem; Williams' occupancy has since been disproven. A tourist attraction then and now, its appearance has since been restored with First Period gables, its location has been moved to the northwest, and the drug store has been removed.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV184).





First Universalist Church, c. 1868-70.
View looking north down Rust Street at the First Universalist Church. Constructed 1808-1809 in a Federal style, this view was taken before an 1877-1878 Victorian renovation; the building has since been reverted to a Federal-style form. The church ceased services in 2015, and the building now serves as a community art center.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV236).





North Church, c. 1868-72.
View from the street toward the North Church at 316 Essex Street, built in 1836 to replace an earlier building erected by the congregation after separation with the First Church at Town House Square. Upon reintegration in 1923 with the First Church, and subsequently becoming home of the reunited congregation, the North Church building became known as home to one of the oldest continuous Protestant congregations in the country, with a foundation date of 1629.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV221).





Salem Normal School, c. 1870.
View of the Salem Normal School on Broad Street, built in 1854 in an Italianate style, before its major 1871 Second Empire renovation.

Nelson Dionne Collection (SV280).

